



1.

What's fishing worth?

In Australia, a recent study found recreational fishers contribute an estimated \$2.56 billion to the nation's economy. But what's fishing worth in New Zealand?

The truth is, no one knows. So the New Zealand Marine Research Foundation has commissioned a full-scale research project to find out. They want to know how much recreational fishers contribute to our national economy through taxes, job creation and GDP growth.

Last year LegaSea surveyed the online database and asked people if they thought valuing recreational fishing was important. The overwhelming response was yes!

We're listening. So this year LegaSea is supporting the "What's Fishing Worth?" research project.

LegaSea is leading the fundraising effort because this research is essential if we want balanced fisheries management decisions that restore abundance to our coastal waters.

While a lucky few can remember times when our fisheries were abundant, most of us only know a world where we fish in depleted waters. A reasonable daily take-home bag is becoming a rarity and more fishers are saying they have had enough of "sustainable depletion".

It is quite clear that Nathan Guy is under constant pressure to deliver increased exports and value. If he had evidence similar to the recently released Australian study then he might feel more confident in making decisions that take account of all aspects of fishing, including recreational fishing in our coastal waters.

As our decision maker we need to give him information that supports more abundant fisheries and a thriving recreational fishing economy.

Because there is more to fishing than just low-value exports of our precious kai moana.

Around 20% of Kiwis go fishing each year. And so do tourists - it's estimated 100,000 tourists dip a rod in our waters while they're here. Add that to the 900,000 locals out

there and recreational fishing's contribution to the national economy could be significant.

Now is our chance to find out what we contribute.

And now is our chance to make a difference, to both our marine environment and the prospects for future generations. Because a shift in management focus will only happen if we come up with the evidence required to show how much our recreational fishing is really worth to our country.

As part of our fundraising efforts, we're asking everyday Kiwis to get behind the cause. This groundbreaking research will impact fishing in New Zealand for many years to come.

Go to www.whatsfishingworth.co.nz to find out how you can help support this research.

2.

All hands to the pump

The "What's Fishing Worth?" fundraising campaign is looking to produce more abundant fisheries, a thriving marine environment, and a robust recreational fishing industry. www.whatsfishingworth.co.nz.

The campaign is raising funds for the New Zealand Marine Research Foundation's recreational fishing research project.

This project seeks to quantify the economic contributions per kilo of fish harvested by recreational fishers. The research is already underway and the results are expected by the end of 2015.

Overall this research project will cost \$400,000. This includes scoping, research, report writing, peer review and, finally, publicising the results. After all that effort, we need to make sure the public (and politicians) know that our fishing is more than just a national pastime. That it's also a source of jobs, income, value-added and a treasure worth passing on to our children and grandkids.

There are three parts to the fundraising effort: grant applications, a public appeal and contributions from organisations which have a vested interest in recreational fishing (including retailers, manufacturers, suppliers, hospitality and transport).

LegaSea is asking the public to pitch in with \$100,000, through a crowdfunding campaign. The beauty of crowdfunding is that everyone can contribute a bit, which adds up to a lot at the end. The 'What's Fishing Worth?' campaign is underway now.

Please go online to www.whatsfishingworth.co.nz to add a donation. 100% of your donation goes towards the project and is tax deductible, because the New Zealand Marine Research Foundation is a registered charity.

Your donation will make a big difference to the project, and we all want to see the project through to a successful conclusion.

3.

Doing our homework

Before we embark on a high value project to determine the significance of recreational fishing in New Zealand it's important to do our homework. Similar overseas research by Southwick Associates has produced some positive outcomes for recreational fishing interests and their national economies.

Southwick Associates has over 25 years international experience in examining the value of fishing in a variety of countries that previously did not recognise recreational fishing as a valuable industry.

Southwick has been appointed to lead the New Zealand research project because of their past performance, particularly in Costa Rica, Panama and Mexico. During their research they developed a robust model that delivered a surprising, but realistic, estimate of the value generated from recreational fishing by retailers, suppliers, boat builders, charter operators, accommodation, transport and tourism.

Having Southwick based in Florida is not an issue given the efficiencies of today's electronic communications. However, two local research providers, Blue Water Marine Research and Moana Consultants, have been retained to ensure a "New Zealand" focus.

Research on New Zealand's recreational fishing economy is already underway and results will be publicly available by the end of 2015.

Overseas studies

Prior to the 2009 research fisheries in Costa Rica were only managed for commercial harvest. Recreational fishing was not formally recognised as an industry. The Southwick study confirmed that sportfishing contributes more to the economy than commercial fishing. Sportfishing contributes approximately US\$599 million and 63,000 jobs per annum. Since the study a National Sportfishing Commission has been established to advise and monitor all issues related to sportfishing.

In Panama there was no official recognition of sportfishing prior to the 2011 research. Government agencies were only managing for commercial impacts on fisheries. The Southwick project found tourism contributes approximately US\$48.4 million to the GDP and there are over 9,500 jobs related to sportfishing. There is now political

recognition of the importance of sportfishing to the economy. Planned marine closures to sportfishing have been abandoned.

Mexico's Cabo San Lucas region is often referred to as the "marlin capital of the world". Despite this reputation and the flocks of fishing tourists the 50-mile conservation zone protecting fisheries from commercial exploitation were under threat from commercial and government interests. Recreational interests invited Southwick to examine the impact of sportfishing to the local and national economy. Since the 2008 Southwick research a Federal Bill to reopen the conservation zone to commercial fishing has been dismissed. More recognition is now given to low-impact and sustainable sportfishing tourism.

Closer to home, Australia has just released results of a study showing that recreational fishing contributes AUS\$3.4 billion just to the New South Wales economy and generates over 14,000 jobs.

Australian politicians are now scrambling to maximise their voter appeal by announcing a range of projects to support recreational fishing. One proposal is to spend \$35 million in New South Wales to phase out commercial netting, increase fish stocks, improve fishing, boating and club facilities, and increase the numbers of recreational fishers by 25%, to one million by 2020.

An estimated 20% of the population fish recreationally, in Australia and New Zealand. Recreational fishing in this part of the world is clearly more than just a pastime.

To ensure a viable future for our fishing and marine fisheries we need decisions made in favour of restored abundance. Those decisions will only be forthcoming if we provide the evidence that supports a thriving national and regional economy.

LegaSea congratulates the New Zealand Marine Research Foundation for having the fortitude to put their reputation on the line in search of robust data supporting recreational fishing. Now it's up to us as individuals, parents and grandparents to support the fundraising effort to make sure this project is a success.

www.whatsfishingworth.co.nz



LegaSea is a public outreach initiative of the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council. The Council has an experienced fisheries management, science, policy and legal team. On behalf of the Council LegaSea raises funds and provides public-friendly information about a variety of processes that are important to restoring abundance in our fisheries for future generations.