



NZ Fishing World – January 14 Edition.

2013 - turning the tide in fisheries management.

By Mandy Kupenga

Let's take a quick look at the positive outcomes for our fisheries in 2013. Passionate advocates, with a common cause worked hard for a better future for our fisheries resources. If you supported any of these causes then you are in good company my friend!

Of course we're not short of future challenges, but there's plenty of time for those.

Let's start with tuna. Greenpeace and a host of others have been battling corporates for years to stop the sale of yellowfin tuna caught using Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs). We have been vocal about the demise of yellowfin in New Zealand for some time and bycatch of juveniles around FAD's is a real problem. In 2013 the final New Zealand company Sealords caved in to public pressure. FAD caught tuna sold here will be gone in the next two years. Thank you Greenpeace and Karli Thomas for giving it heaps!

We stopped striped marlin being added into the quota management system with the LegaSea "Hands off our Marlin" campaign. Within three days of our campaign kick off the Minister quickly announced a decision to retain the recreational only status for marlin.

This was followed up with a challenge to the nonsensical snapper management proposal published by the Ministry in July 2013.

We gained a groundswell of support from you, the people who care about our fisheries and took a stand with us to protect them. Good on you!

We didn't get the ultimate outcome because our bag limits were reduced unnecessarily, but we showed the government that we will stand together to fight for our fisheries, and they must show some respect for the people they represent, proving they deserve our votes.

LegaSea salutes the NZ Shark Alliance for putting enough pressure on the Ministers of conservation and primary industries and, to preempt more public backlash, they have announced a proposal to stop shark finning in New Zealand. This is a great outcome.

However, the law hasn't been passed yet and three year lead time translates into another 400,000 sharks that will be killed and dumped!

For those of you who got in the scrum and took a few minutes or spent a few dollars to support any of these causes, be proud. Together we made a difference. Without your support these outcomes would not have been achieved, full stop.

We've seen first hand that coordinated public pressure can be effective when advocating for more favourable decisions by our fisheries managers, the Ministry for Primary Industries. It's only part of the equation though.

Productive input into strategic decision making processes the Ministry manage is critical. The strategies being developed in snapper 1 will shape the future of all our fisheries.

Sustainability, environmental and the non-commercial fishing interests of all New Zealanders must come first when considering how our fisheries are managed. That's what we strive to achieve.

Our experienced team of advocates, scientists, legal and policy specialists are ready. The question that remains is – will the Ministry run open and transparent processes that we can engage with effectively?

Time will tell and we'll keep you informed.

For 13 years the Ministry have sought to integrate the public into the Quota Management System (QMS). A system put in place in the 1980s to restrain commercial fishing, because our fisheries were being plundered. Pure and simple, stuff needed fixing.

There have been improvements, but not enough to secure the future, far from it.

The QMS has its inherent flaws and there are issues that need addressing to minimise waste and ensure healthy fish stocks. On top of

this the Ministry are driven to meet export targets so they continue to push our marine resources, sometimes beyond their limits.

The Ministry had another crack at forcing us, the public, into accepting proportionality or a quota, during the recent Snapper 1 review. We're relieved these recommendations were rejected by the Minister.

This type of management will degrade our fishing experience, dilute our rights and affect future generations of Kiwis.

Repeatedly our fisheries management professionals at the NZ Sport Fishing Council have exposed the inappropriateness of proportional allocation, and the dire effects it will have on our children's fishing future. The same battle continues today.

In 2013 LegaSea shone a beam of light into New Zealand's fisheries so that you could learn more about the decisions being made that affect you, your children and your grandchildren.

Many of you heeded our call and took a stand with us to challenge poor fisheries management decisions. Thank you so much for playing your part... really though, this is only the beginning.

Over the years, this advocacy has been funded by NZ Sport Fishing Council members, via their affiliation fees. Thanks to the Council and the courage and dedication of a handful of people and sponsors we have held the line, but more resources are needed.

Only 5% of the people who fish in New Zealand are resourcing the voice we need to stand up for our fishing future.

Many more Kiwis enjoy free access to fish, gather kaimoana from the sea and rejuvenate in nature.

More funding means more resources, more time and energy working for better outcomes.

Imagine how strong our voice would be if 100% of those that love their fishing got on board. The alternative? Salt water licensing...

Issues continue to arise in our fisheries. There's much more work to be done throughout New Zealand.

We need funds to resource the advocacy, research and education required to ensure the legacy of more fish in the water for future generations.

In 2013 we, LegaSea and you, grabbed the opportunity to work together to achieve success, greater public awareness and make fisheries management a political issue.

2014 is an election year, a prime time to shake things up further and get our point of view across. We got John Key's attention in 2013, now let's get his commitment in the form of great fisheries policy and action. Anything less would be an empty promise.

Find out more about LegaSea and how working together has made a big difference. Visit our website www.legasea.co.nz or check us out on Facebook www.facebook.com/legasea

Please step forward and make a modest, regular contribution. It will go a long way to fund the resources required to lobby for a better, more secure fishing future.