



What is fishing worth? New study to put definitive value on recreational fishing in NZ

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The New Zealand Marine Research Foundation (NZMRF) has today announced plans to carry out the first ever definitive study of the true economic value of recreational fishing in New Zealand.

NZMRF Chairman Jeff Romeril says the \$250,000 study will unlock new insights and generate new debate about the appropriate balance of emphasis on commercial and recreational fishing interests in New Zealand.

"Recreational fishing is an immensely popular pastime in New Zealand with over 900,000 Kiwis and 100,000 international visitors going fishing here each year, but surprisingly its total value to the New Zealand economy has never been studied," Mr Romeril says.

"This will be the first ever definitive study of the real economic value of recreational fishing in New Zealand, taking into account both the direct value of what Kiwis buy, rent and catch and also the indirect benefits like tourism and the extensive recreational fishing media," Mr Romeril says.

The ground breaking study will be conducted by Florida-based Southwick Associates, who have over 25 years experience as specialists in the economics of recreational fishing and have carried out a number of similar studies in different locations around the world. Southwick Associates has retained two local research providers; Blue Water Marine Research and Moana Consultants to ensure the global methodology is appropriately tailored to New Zealand conditions.

Similar research internationally has shown that in many countries recreational fishing was a higher-value use than commercial fishing, leading to changes in fisheries allocation policies, the establishment of more conservation areas, less industrial-scale commercial fishing, a focus on reducing waste and increased tourism and regional income.

Recreational fishing in New Zealand is currently estimated to account for around six per cent of the total catch and Seafood New Zealand estimates that about 90 per cent of all New Zealand seafood by value is exported.

Leading recreational fisheries advocacy group LegaSea is getting behind the NZMRF, saying it believes in the value of quantifying New Zealand's recreational fishing and calling on Kiwis to help fund the study.

LegaSea, which has 50,000 registered supporters, has launched a crowdfunding campaign to help pay for the study.

“We are calling on all New Zealanders and especially our own supporters who wish to hand on a healthier and more abundant fishery to their grandchildren to check out our campaign at www.whatsfishingworth.co.nz and help make it happen,” said LegaSea spokesperson Richard Baker.

“100% of the net funds raised through the crowdfunding effort will go directly to the NZMRF to conduct the research and promote the findings of the research, ultimately to support healthier and more abundant fisheries in New Zealand.

Although New Zealand runs a Quota Management System on commercially caught fish, many species’ numbers are still greatly reduced. Snapper in the SNA1 region are only at 20-25 per cent of their pre-fishing biomass – considerably below the internationally recognised 40 per cent target.

“We’ve seen what failure looks like in other parts of the world. It is vital that we manage our fish populations so that present and future generations can enjoy the Kiwi tradition of going fishing and more fish in the water for everyone who loves and works in our marine environment.”

Money can be donated to the campaign at www.whatsfishingworth.co.nz

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