

Sea Change Fisheries Roundtable Meeting

Leigh Education Centre, Mahurangi, 24 September 2014

A report for the NZ Sport Fishing Council, Hokianga Accord & non-commercial interests
By Trish Rea and Barry Torkington
2 October 2014

Attendees

Commercial:	Laws Lawson (AFL & TOKM), Robyn Garrett (CRA 2), Jeremy Helson (Sanford)
Charter operators:	Megan Andrews (Thames-Coromandel Charter Association)
Non-commercial:	Barry Torkington (NZSFC), Trish Rea (NZSFC/Hokianga Accord).
Customary:	None.
Environmental:	Clive Monds (ECO/Thames), Barry Weeber (ECO)
Technical support:	Victoria Jollands (Fisheries Analyst, Inshore Fisheries)
SWG members:	Alan Proctor, Dave Kellian (group co-leader), Raewyn Peart (group co-leader), Nick Main, Rebecca Barclay (facilitator).
Duration:	5.00 hours
Next meeting:	Thames, 13 October.

Introduction

An interesting 2-hour site visit to Leigh Fisheries preceded this meeting. Members witnessed whole, fresh fish being packed for export or filleted for local supply, and live rock lobster and packhorse crayfish in holding tanks.

Four presentations were given during the day and a panel session was held with three of the presenters. There is some urgency to have more frequent meetings and consolidate some input to the Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) by December.

Discussion

Jeremy McKenzine, NIWA, discussed fisheries management inputs and outcomes. **Productivity, recruitment, growth and mortality** were important factors. Bzero is now considered to represent the current carrying capacity of the ecosystem rather than any notion of virgin biomass. Understanding the spatial extent of the biological fish stock was the most important factor to consider in management terms. While it was difficult to quantify, it is critical to consider ecosystem function when making management decisions, because:

- A precautionary approach is required to compensate for the unknowns;
- Doing so acknowledges infrequent monitoring of stocks;
- Doing so acknowledges the need for conservative future stock predictions;
- There are increasing stressors related to land management and run-off issues; and
- Climate change will have unknown effects on the marine environment.

Currently management revolves around fishing and exploitation. Of more concern is the ability and resilience of the marine ecosystem. To have stability there needs to be more buffering, a precautionary approach and more, not less, monitoring of stocks and habitats. Juvenile fish are dependent on inshore habitats to survive yet these are vulnerable to land-based and fishing related activities. We need to act now, before we lose our nearshore zones.

Robyn Garrett of the CRA 2 Rock Lobster Management Company (CRAMAC2) discussed **contemporary management of CRA 2**. Robyn acknowledged that CPUE is declining. CRA 2 were supportive of the recent Ministerial decision to reduce the TACC from 236 to 200 tonnes, but noted that the “other allowances” were not reduced. CRA 2 is concerned that any potential rebuild will be “lost to other fishers”.

The CRA 2 logbook programme enables management to track locations, catch and every potlift. Catch data

is provided to the Ministry, but the fine scale data is owned by the fishermen and not available to the Ministry or public. CRAMAC2 is trying to get a programme underway to collect puerulus.

CRA 2 is estimated to be 36% above BMSY, but BMSY is unknown. The exploitation rate in CRA 2 is also unknown. Rock lobster is a low productivity stock.

Shane Lavery of Auckland University presented preliminary results of a study to determine if the **snapper within the Goat Island marine reserve** make a difference to recruitment outside of the reserve boundaries. There were an estimated 14 times more snapper inside than outside the Goat Island reserve. Marine protected areas could offer refuge for some species and protect juveniles.

Study results were predictable and followed natural currents around the coastline; there was some tracking of snapper from the reserve to surrounding areas and as far as Mahurangi Harbour.

Glen Matheson's family had farmed the land surrounding the marine reserve for generations. **The marine reserve could no longer be considered a natural environment.** Over time the reserve had become very popular, attracting around 300,000 people annually. He was concerned that the people attracted to snorkelling and diving in the reserve had destroyed the kina population, either deliberately or inadvertently.

A panel discussion followed these individual presentations. A workshop was then held to consider the core issues and potential solutions. Formal notes will be distributed with each presenter's slideshow.

Observation

It is interesting to note that this was the second Fish Stocks Roundtable meeting that Robyn Garrett of CRAMAC2 had attended and participated in. No discussion was held with existing members prior to her attendance at the previous meeting, or before her presentation at this meeting. This is in contrast to the refusal of the SWG to approve the attendance of Trish Rea as an alternate to Barry Torkington at the Biodiversity-Biosecurity Roundtable meetings.

➤ **Recommendation**

The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council write to Nick Main, convener, to highlight the double standard in refusing Trish Rea's attendance at the Biodiversity-Biodiversity Roundtable, while enabling the participation of Robyn Garrett in group discussions at two meetings, noting that this participation is separate to her CRA 2 presentation.