



Fisheries 2030 will guide future success

Wayne McNee, Chief Executive, Ministry of Fisheries

The Fisheries 2030 goal highlights what we are seeking to achieve for the fisheries sector: *New Zealanders maximising benefits from the use of fisheries within environmental limits.* This goal will help guide the approach to fisheries management, and provide more certainty to tangata whenua and stakeholders as decisions are made about investments and fishing activities over the next 20 years.

Supporting the goal are Use and Environment outcomes, governance conditions, and a plan of action to deliver on the goal and outcomes. The outcomes and conditions set the scene, and the action plan is the implementation mechanism we will all be focusing on in the medium to longer term. The action plan gives guidance on the Government's priorities for the next five years and beyond. Cabinet has approved Fisheries 2030, including the principles and values it incorporates, and the Ministry is now beginning to implement the plan of action.

A large part of the value of Fisheries 2030 is that all fisheries stakeholders provided their input - tangata whenua, industry, recreational and environmental groups. I would like to acknowledge the support of the Seafood Industry Council, the Deepwater Group – and the industry in general – for recognising that a fisheries management framework is desirable and necessary, and for your sterling work in helping bring the project to the launching point it has now reached. Joint stakeholder processes are always challenging, we all learnt from this one and we will bring all stakeholders together again this month (February) to work on Fisheries 2030 implementation.

The industry recently presented the Government with its own economic development strategy. This strategy incorporates goals and actions that are consistent with those in Fisheries 2030. This will give us a solid platform for moving forward in a concerted and focused way.

Targeted and constructive engagement between the industry, Government and other fisheries stakeholders will allow us to work together towards achieving results that will undoubtedly improve the already world-leading management of our fisheries – and the economic health of our industry.

I have no doubt that in five years' time – the initial period to deliver key priorities – we will be able to reflect with satisfaction on the progress we have made towards achieving the Use and Environment outcomes, and the governance conditions in Fisheries 2030.

Outcomes

The first outcome in Fisheries 2030 reads: *Fisheries resources are used in a manner that provides greatest overall economic, social and cultural benefit, including an internationally competitive and profitable seafood industry that makes a significant contribution to our economy...*

The fishing industry is an essential component of the Government's economic growth programme. A strong and vibrant industry, competing vigorously and marketing effectively, is vital to this country's economic success.

The industry has significant potential. With the management regime being promoted by Fisheries 2030 and Government policy support, I am very confident that the industry and other stakeholders can build on the

\$1.3 billion plus export revenue that seafood currently delivers - while also sustaining our marine environment for future generations.

Priorities

The Government has identified a number of priorities for fisheries. These include aquaculture development, Treaty and obligations to Maori, regulatory reform, and recreational charter vessel reporting.

By the time Fisheries 2030 was launched in September last year, a number of projects identified as high priority for delivery were well under way. Two of these are collaborative projects with industry which are covered in this feature – the Research Services Strategy, and the Observer Services Strategy.

Maintaining the momentum, we are now focusing on a range of projects of significance to the industry and other stakeholders, including Fisheries Plans, Standards and the Discarding at Sea Strategy.

Common to these projects is a desire to streamline processes, to seek cost-effective solutions, and appropriately to address the Environment outcome as well as the Use outcome.

Delivering on the priorities requires highly effective governance and management. Governance conditions are specifically focused on in Fisheries 2030. The Ministry recently completed a review of its own organisation design which is closely aligned with the Fisheries 2030 goal and outcomes. For example, fisheries management and science are now integrated to ensure delivery of the right research at the right time to make effective and durable fisheries management decisions.

Fisheries 2030 is a long-term plan of action with implementation phasing and rigorous performance monitoring processes, the results of which will inform future work and influence priorities. Market access will be an ongoing challenge for New Zealand and for the fishing industry. We must look to work together to meet the challenges, pooling all the available expertise to best possible effect.

Following through on the Government's general direction with regard to consultation and engagement processes, the Ministry will operate a highly efficient engagement model. This means that all fisheries stakeholders will need to take the opportunities to have input into projects of relevance to them when they are made available.

We are entering an exciting phase for the fisheries industry in New Zealand. We need to make sure we maximise the benefits from our well managed wild fishery. New Zealand has a sound platform to build from - the international recognition we have received recently for the soundness of our fisheries management system gives us confidence for the future and is a justified source of pride; however, we cannot afford to be complacent.

I am confident that Fisheries 2030, together with the industry's own economic development strategy, is the right framework for continuing this good work and building on it for the future.

I encourage you to read and digest the document, to identify the areas and projects of interest and relevance to you, and to participate in the engagement processes as they come on stream.

I also welcome your feedback on progress. We will update you in these pages and elsewhere as important milestones are reached.



Lyttelton Harbour

What are fisheries plans?

By **Gavin Lockwood**, Deputy Chief Executive Fisheries Management

You may already have heard about the role fisheries plans are going to play in helping to manage our fisheries. Fisheries plans will be the way the Ministry and stakeholders guide the management of fisheries to achieve the goal and outcomes in Fisheries 2030.

Fisheries plans describe and set out the objectives for fisheries management - put simply, what we want our fisheries to look like and how we want them to be managed. These objectives will in turn drive the services the Ministry and others will provide to ensure our objectives (such as observer coverage, research, sustainability rounds, regulation and compliance effort) are met and how we will monitor the performance of fisheries.

Building from Fisheries 2030, the new Ministry organisation design and, importantly, feedback from our stakeholders, the Ministry is reorganising the way we are developing fisheries plans. This reorganisation will affect some areas of fisheries management more than others.

The biggest change will be in Inshore Fisheries, with the planning processes for Deepwater and Highly Migratory Stocks based more closely on work that was already under way.

We are looking at a new way of developing fisheries plans because the old approach was not working well, particularly for inshore fisheries. Despite some successes, there was widespread concern that the old planning process was too resource intensive for both the Ministry and stakeholders, and was taking too long to deliver.

The new approach will establish five national plans - one each for Deepwater, Highly Migratory Species, Inshore Finfish, Inshore Shellfish

and Freshwater Fisheries. Each of the plans will contain:

- A description of the fisheries covered by the plan.
- Objectives for the management of each fishery or group of fisheries and a description of how we will achieve those objectives.
- Direction for the services required in each fishery, including those the Ministry will provide. This will help ensure that only the services necessary to meet fisheries objectives are provided and that this is done in the most cost-effective way.
- The approach for annual monitoring of performance against objectives.

Because of the number of fisheries covered by inshore plans, these plans will categorise fishstocks based on concepts such as benefits and vulnerability, then prioritise where to put effort.

If there is value in doing so, more effort will be put into some fishstocks than others. We don't want to lose the benefit of the good work that has already been done, so plans approved under the old approach will become "chapters" of the new plans. In designing the new approach we are seeking consistency across all plans, driven from a coherent national focus.

Having established the high-level approach to fisheries plans described above, over the next two months the Ministry will decide on the specifics of how we will make the new approach work in a way that delivers results in a shorter timeframe, and with more targeted engagement with stakeholders than before. We will keep you informed of progress.

Industry - Ministry initiatives forging ahead

By **John Beaglehole**, Manager, Office of the Chief Executive

The Ministry of Fisheries and the fishing industry are currently working on three important collaborative projects - Research Services, Observer Services and Discarding at Sea. These are all good examples of the industry and the Ministry working together effectively to achieve durable outcomes aligned with the goal and outcomes of Fisheries 2030.

Research Services

Information - particularly biological information - is critical for effectively managing fisheries so that New Zealanders can maximise the benefits from the use of fisheries within environmental limits.

The ever-changing nature of the marine environment, the high cost of carrying out stock assessments and limited research funding mean fishery managers often need to work with less than comprehensive information and that management needs to take into account and address that uncertainty.

This makes it crucial that we get the most out of the investment in scientific research to support fisheries management. We need to choose research projects carefully and make sure that all research is provided as cost-effectively as possible.

The Research Services Strategy review is a Ministry of Fisheries led project, working collaboratively with the industry. The review is one of a series of initiatives designed to improve the economic performance of the seafood sector and is an important action point in Fisheries 2030.

The project aims to develop *an effective, efficient science research process that delivers high-integrity science information that represents value for money in its contribution to fisheries management decisions.*

Three high-level areas of Research Services have been identified where there is room for improvement: planning and prioritisation of research; the "procurement model"; and funding and financial management.

Some recommendations identified so far are designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the research planning and prioritisation processes, give greater value for money and increase the transparency of the way decisions are made and how costs are imposed.

We expect the review and final report to be completed in early 2010.

Observer Services

The work of observers is a vital part of the fisheries management process; it gives independent scientific information and benchmarks that fishery managers can use to make decisions across each fishery.

The Observer Services review aims to improve the value of the Observer programme through changes to increase both efficiency and effectiveness.

The project started in April 2009 and has an experienced project

team made up of industry and Ministry expertise. The project has been on hold for the last few months, but it is now gearing up to start again early this year.

The Observer Services review aims to:

- develop specifications on the need for and level of observer coverage to support fisheries management and scientific research;
- identify options for delivering observer coverage and what the observers do out on the water that will improve efficiency and effectiveness;
- identify anything constraining a more efficient way of delivering observer services; and
- define a process for putting any recommendations into practice.

Discarding at Sea

The nature of how fish live and interact in their natural environment, combined with the fact that many fishing methods are "non-selective" in terms of what species they catch, often results in both target and non-target fish being caught during normal fishing operations.

Because different species of fish are caught as part of normal fishing operations, there are recognised difficulties in avoiding or landing unwanted catch, which can in turn give incentives for discarding fish at sea.

Discarding these unwanted catches (such as small fish, damaged fish and non-commercial species) at sea is a well reported and researched global problem. Discarded catch that is not reported undermines sustainable fisheries management because fishery managers don't have a complete picture of what is actually being caught in a fishery.

Internationally, discarding is being viewed increasingly as a threat to sustainability. It has long been a matter of concern for New Zealand fisheries management. We know discarding does happen in New Zealand waters, but the level and extent is unknown.

In future, New Zealand will need to demonstrate that its discarding practices match international best practice, so starting this review now is timely. Government and industry have identified a number of concerns about the effectiveness and consistency of the current reporting and discarding framework. A project working group has been set up including Ministry and industry members.

The project aims to improve the management and reporting of discards in all New Zealand commercial fisheries.

A project plan is being developed on ways to clarify and strengthen the framework for policy and management of reporting and discarding. The aim of this group is to develop a comprehensive analysis of existing issues to provide recommendations by July 2010.



Fishery Officers at work

Field Operations aiming for collective responsibility

By **Andrew Coleman**, Deputy Chief Executive Field Operations

Collective responsibility and voluntary compliance are strongly emphasised in the fishery service delivery model promoted by the Fisheries 2030 goal and plan of action.

The Ministry of Fisheries Field Operations group, formerly the Compliance group, has an important role to play in ensuring the integrity of New Zealand's fisheries management system.

To achieve this we apply a graduated model in terms of response level - from Informed (voluntary), to Assisted, to Directed, to - finally - Enforcement (prosecution).

The emphasis on Informed and Assisted is akin to prevention being better than cure, with the key activities at these points of intervention being education and communication. Once we decide that the risk profile of an individual, group or activity is low, the response level will reflect this.

A good example is the compliance facts sheets the Ministry has started putting together on topics of direct interest and concern to the industry and the Ministry in respect of our interactions with the

fishing sectors.

The first of these was on area misreporting (trucking) and the second on compliance benchmarking. The latter identifies a series of performance indicators and targets relating to the deepwater fisheries sector. The purpose of these indicators is to:

- clarify and standardise compliance reporting monitoring across the deepwater sector;
- enable compliance benchmarking over time and across sectors of the deepwater fleet; and
- provide regular assessments of compliance in the deepwater sector in a format that can be widely understood.

Buy-in to this type of approach cannot be achieved without constructive engagement and agreement, and I would like to acknowledge the contribution to the "Informed and Assisted" model that groups such as the compliance subcommittee of the Deepwater Group have made.

Recently Field Operations has become more involved with other

sectors such as inshore coastal commercial council and recreational fishers.

This is the type of activity that will help make the Fisheries 2030 goal and plan of action achievable in the medium to long term.

The new Field Operations group is made up of three business units – Regional Services, Strategy and Programmes – which include multi-disciplinary teams for service delivery. Regional teams are based on a hub and satellite model to help us focus our effort throughout the country.

Regional Services provides a range of interventions that are aimed to encourage and influence fishers' behaviour to comply with all relevant fisheries legislation. Patrol, surveillance, investigations and tactical intelligence analysis are delivered by this group.

Strategy undertakes analysis from a basis of strategic intelligence, forensics and maritime planning. Information on the cost-effectiveness of compliance activity and advice to fisheries managers on intervention choices are provided by this group.

The Programmes team provides Ministry-wide support services through the development and implementation of educational and training initiatives, Special Operations, Observer Services, Community Liaison and Honorary Field Officer support groups.

The resources at our disposal are comprehensive. We have just over 200 full-time staff and close to 180 Honorary Fishery Officers, 28 vessels (we also have access to Navy patrol vessels) and 70 vehicles.

The staff comprise Fishery Officers, investigators and intelligence analysts, business analysts, training and education specialists, intelligence analysts, maritime operations, data and forensic analysts,

international liaison, observers, and communications centre operators. They are located almost literally from Cape Reinga to the Bluff – Kaitaia to Invercargill in fact.

To achieve our compliance objectives we also work with a number of other enforcement agencies. Examples are the Organised and Financial Crime Agency of New Zealand and the National Maritime Communications Centre.

The Field Operations group has an important role to play in contributing to a range of priority actions in Fisheries 2030. For example, we are looking to develop a model for the deployment of observers against fisheries management needs as well as compliance risks.

We are providing input into a review of commercial fishing regulations clearly to differentiate between administrative, regulatory, legislative and criminal offending.

We are looking to ensure that Field Operations information and intelligence is factored into policy frameworks and the various standards discussed on the next page of this feature.

Field Operations currently spends just under 40 per cent of its time working with the commercial fishing industry. We hope that the "Informed and Assisted" model will allow us to redeploy staff and assets to areas of high risk. At present this means activity associated with poaching (theft) and black market fish trading activities.

We look forward to working with all sectors of the industry to achieve a compliance regime that is as flexible as possible while delivering the key priorities in the Fisheries 2030 goal and plan of action.

Environmental standards help manage fishing impacts

By **Tom Chatterton**, Manager Regulatory and Standards

The goal of Fisheries 2030 is *New Zealanders maximising benefits from the use of fisheries within environmental limits*. A major means of achieving this, and one of the objectives of Fisheries 2030, is to manage the impacts of fishing and aquaculture on the environment.

Tied to this objective is a specific strategic action to set and monitor environmental standards, including for threatened and protected species such as dolphins and seabirds, and the impacts of fishing on the seabed.

The Ministry of Fisheries' newly appointed Standards Team will be leading the work in this area.

Environmental standards will set minimum requirements, or bottom lines, that fisheries can be measured against. They will link directly to the sections of the Fisheries Act that require the effects of fishing on the environment to be avoided, remedied or mitigated, and require habitats of particular significance to be protected.

Priority work for the coming year includes formalising the Standards Framework, completing a revised Seabird Standard, implementing the Harvest Strategy Standard, monitoring the

effectiveness of measures to protect Hector's and Maui's dolphins, and managing the impacts of fishing on the seabed.

Standards Framework

The Standards Framework will define the nature of standards generally, including their purpose, development and how they will be implemented as a part of fisheries plans.

Standards are a critical component of the fisheries plan framework. Their main purpose is to give transparency and consistency to the management of the environmental impacts of fishing, and to put in place clear, specific and measurable statements of the results required.

Seabirds

The Seabird Standard will define the maximum acceptable level of risk to each species of seabird coming from New Zealand fishing. The National Plan of Action for Seabirds gives a framework for managing seabird bycatch to ensure, among other things, that the Seabird Standard is met.



Seabird mitigation at work

The current National Plan of Action for Seabirds was written in 2004 but has not proved as effective as had been hoped. The Minister of Fisheries requested that it be revised and reworked.

A revised Plan of Action and Seabird Standard were consulted on in 2008; however, feedback from stakeholders was such that the proposals were not implemented. Instead, a Seabird Stakeholder Advisory Group was established to work on revised proposals together with the Ministry of Fisheries and the Department of Conservation.

A revised National Plan of Action for Seabirds and a proposed seabird standard will be consulted on early this year.

Seabed impacts

The Ministry's Fisheries Act obligations also include managing the impacts of fishing on the seabed. A number of measures are already in place and are helping to manage these impacts.

They include the deep-sea Benthic Protection Areas (BPAs) and current work on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as well as other fishing regulations such as existing area closures to inshore trawling and dredging.

Starting in early 2010, the Ministry will be examining the extent to which these measures are meeting our obligations under fisheries law to manage seabed impacts.

Hector's and Maui's dolphins

In 2008 the Minister of Fisheries put in place a number of

prohibitions and restrictions on trawl and set net fisheries as part of the Hector's Dolphin Threat Management Plan. The Plan aims to reduce the risks that commercial and recreational fishing pose to the dolphins.

The Minister also put in place a programme to monitor how effective the measures were by placing observers on board inshore fishing vessels.

Some of the commercial set net fishing closures are the subject of a legal challenge by the inshore fishing industry. At the time of writing the High Court's ruling had not yet been delivered.

Future work on Hector's and Maui's dolphins will be guided by the outcome of the court case and information from observer monitoring, together with any other new information.

Harvest Strategy Standard

The Harvest Strategy Standard was approved on 24 October 2008. This included a set of draft operational guidelines that indicate how the Standard will operate and be implemented.

Further work will refine the operational guidelines and ensure they are aligned with Fisheries 2030. The guidelines will work to manage stocks where we have low levels of information so they meet the Harvest Strategy Standard and will implement and monitor the Standard across New Zealand's fishstocks.