

It's the time of year when tools are downed, offices are locked up, the boat finally gets used and breakfast lunch and dinner are cooked on the BBQ. I had been sent out (regretfully) for a days diving south of Oamaru to get paua for the Xmas lunch along with fisherman and families the country over just last week. Although the water was reasonably murky I managed to get a feed and introduce my mate to free diving at the same time. I was also with my cousin and Uncle and we had a blast, naturally they wanted to know about this "fishing organization" that I was involved in. I asked them a simple question "How many saltwater fisherman are there from Oamaru to Dunedin?" "I don't bloody know!" was the answer. I replied "Neither do I...ok so who represents the recreational interests of this group?" Again the response was "I've got no idea but there must be someone?!" These replies were expected and the very reason Our Fishing Future Inc was established as the way forward for a holistic national body to enhance and protect the interests of the massive proportion of Kiwis who fish.

Many of the fishing population will be participating in the coming weeks in what may be their only fishing excursions of the year. Others will be nervously watching the sea everyday for the right conditions to get the boat or their line in the water and naturally when we have a bit of time off we do what we love. The ability to do what I did with my family spontaneously is an enormous privilege that we have been known to take for granted in this country. We don't have to look far

Our Fishing Future is in the process of building long term working relationships with all the stake holders who use one our most valuable resources including Government, Iwi, Science, Commercial, Tourism and many more. Our mandate is to collaboratively arrive at solutions that are reasonable for all who use the space. It's quite simple really. Nothing antagonistic. Nothing confrontational. Just intelligent input into decision making processes that will affect us all. Collectively anglers could have a voice unrivalled in size nationwide. Our Fishing Future sees this as a realistic and attainable outcome within the next few years and will work tirelessly to make this happen. New Zealand needs to begin a conversation about how much their right to fish means to them-especially over the summer and about what recreational anglers need in a representative body for future generations. At the end of the day the right to fish wont eventually be the problem, it will be the cost of going fishing to catch 3 snapper or 3 cod or 3 Paua each or whatever your targeted species may be.

We have a resource that relative to other countries is extraordinarily abundant. Unfortunately the trend is going the wrong direction with less fish and more fisherman reducing fish stocks. We need to come together and decide what we are going to do to ensure it remains sustainable in future. So lets start small, what are you prepared to do for what you love? Are you prepared to become a member of Our Fishing Future at no cost to you other than the time it takes to sign up? Are you prepared to offer your thoughts on what the future of fishing should look like in NZ? Are you prepared to offer services and expertise in getting this organization into the mainstream nationwide?

That's a question you ask yourself but before you do know that there are already people who are getting on board, that have taken the first step and can see the vision we are working towards. Your support is needed. Remember your best interests are also ours.

The time for fisherman to come together is upon us. To join the movement go to <http://ourfishingfuture.fishinfuturesearch.co.nz/membership/>

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