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Animal Welfare Strategy and
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NZ Sport Fishing Council submission on Animal Welfare Matters: Proposals for a New Zealand Animal Welfare Strategy and Amendments to the Animal Welfare Act 1999

Summary

NZSFC agrees that animal welfare matters. In our view it is important to rely more on science based assessment, rather than emotive or animal rights based assessment of the welfare of animals when developing strategy and legislative proposals. We support the objectives of the review, to have clear and enforceable standards for welfare, but to regulate only where necessary.

NZSFC supports the Government's view that hunting and fishing are important and legitimate activities in New Zealand. For many of our members fishing is their pastime of choice, providing food for the table and the soul, and occasionally a large or special capture. Here in the South Pacific we must embrace the principles of kaitiakitanga and manaakitanga. Guardianship and use of food from the land and sea are values which underpin all parts of New Zealand society.

NZSFC supports the continuation of the provision which exempts killing fish from the full provisions of the Act. There are instances where common commercial or amateur fishing practice may catch fish of size or number which makes quick dispatch impossible. Many fish that are caught are not killed, but are released or tagged and released. We remain committed to supporting and promoting high welfare outcomes for fish caught by amateur fishers using best practice guides and fishing club networks, and look to develop closer links with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to effect these outcomes.

NZSFC seeks clarification on the definition of "willfully or recklessly ill-treat an animal in a wild state". We agree that there should be clear minimum standards for animal welfare that should not be crossed. Sanctions should be used to prevent extreme conduct that goes beyond acceptable practice when hunting or fishing. The NZSFC and amateur fishers would not want to fear prosecution when using traditional fishing methods like hook and line, netting, spear fishing, or potting. The NZSFC submit that the definition of "willfully or recklessly ill-treat an animal in a wild state" includes that it applies where extreme conduct goes beyond acceptable practice when hunting or fishing.

NZSFC supports the third option to replace the Welfare Codes with standards and enforceable regulations. The key to success will be getting the balance right between requirements under regulations and obligations under animal welfare guidelines. This will require input from stakeholders.

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Introduction

1. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council (NZSFC) appreciates the opportunity to submit to the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) on proposals for a New Zealand Animal Welfare Strategy and amendments to the Animal Welfare Act. MPI released their proposals on 13 August with submissions due by 28 September 2012.
2. New Zealand Sport Fishing Council representatives are available to discuss this submission in more detail if required. We look forward to positive outcomes from this review and would like to be kept informed of future developments. Our contact is Roz Nelson, secretary@nzsportfishing.org.nz.
3. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council is recognised by Sport NZ as a National Sports Organisation with over 32,000 affiliated members from 57 clubs nationwide. Our members have a wide range of interests in amateur fishing, the marine environment and ocean recreation.
4. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council has launched a new initiative called LegaSea to generate support for the ongoing effort to protect and enhance the public's access to abundant fisheries in a healthy marine environment. www.legasea.co.nz
5. The intention is to broaden NZSFC involvement in marine management advocacy, research, education and working together on behalf of our members and LegaSea supporters.

Summary of the proposals

Animal Welfare Strategy

6. The Government is not proposing radical change, but acknowledges that attitudes to animals and the way we use them are changing, and some practices from even the recent past are no longer acceptable today. The draft strategy documents some of the essential features of New Zealand's animal welfare system and provides a focus for where improvements can to be made.
7. The draft strategy proposes three animal welfare **values** that capture most New Zealanders' views about the treatment of animals:
 - It matters how animals are treated – it matters to the animals and it matters to us.
 - We have responsibilities toward animals in our care and animals affected by our activities.
 - Using animals is acceptable as long as it is humane.
8. The draft strategy proposes two **outcomes** that reflect both the domestic and international dimensions of animal welfare:
 - Better care of animals: New Zealanders meet the needs of all our animals, and avoid unreasonable harm to animals affected by our activities.
 - Reputation for integrity: New Zealand's animal welfare practices add value to our exports and contribute to our reputation as a responsible agricultural producer.
9. The strategy suggests that the best **opportunities** to improve animal welfare are through:
 - Better planning to prevent animal welfare issues before they arise – many animal welfare problems are avoidable.
 - Better skills, practices, science and technology.
 - Clear rules and sanctions, with help for people to comply.
 - Measuring animal welfare performance.
10. Delivering the strategy requires action from Government, industry, and individual New Zealanders.

Amending the Animal Welfare Act 1999

11. The Animal Welfare Act 1999 shifted the focus of animal welfare in New Zealand from preventing cruelty, to placing a duty of care on people who own or are in charge of animals. The legislative proposals being considered are directed at improving the way the Act operates by providing greater clarity and enforceability.
12. The major legislation proposal is to replace codes of welfare and the rules for live animal exports with a mix of mandatory standards and guidelines. These would be backed up by specific penalties and a range of compliance tools.
13. Currently, codes of welfare can allow practices that do not meet the general obligations of the Act in "exceptional circumstances". The Government proposes that this provision be replaced by two options:
 - A new standard of welfare is being adopted, but current practices are allowed during a defined transition period (such as phasing out sow stalls by 2015).
 - There is a need, in genuinely exceptional circumstances, to exempt a practice from animal welfare obligations for an indefinite period (such as a religious practice).
14. The Animal Welfare Act does not make hunting or fishing illegal and the Government does not propose to change that. However, the Government is proposing to clarify in the Act that extreme conduct that goes beyond acceptable practice when hunting, fishing or controlling pests could be subject to a charge of ill-treatment.

Structure of submission

15. Our submission is structured on the sections in the order they appear in the *Animal Welfare Matters* discussion document. There are some general comments but we tend to focus on areas that may affect our constituents. A few of the questions have been answered and these are identified. Our national survey on people's perceptions of hunting and fishing is summarised and a copy of the report is appended. A discussion of fishing related proposals and NZSFC views is at the end.

New Zealand Sport Fishing Council Submission Proposal for a New Zealand Animal Welfare Strategy

Values

16. NZSFC agrees that animal welfare matters. In our view it is important to rely more on science based assessment, rather than emotive or animal rights based assessment of welfare of animals and proposals for welfare legislation. There is a wide range of views about what is reasonable. However, we recognise that an incomplete understanding of how some species experience pain is incomplete no excuse to avoid the animal welfare issue.

Responsibilities towards animals

17. NZSFC believe there are welfare gains to be made with better catching, handling and dispatch of fish caught by amateur fishers.
18. NZSFC and LegaSea are working on a Best Practice Guide to help educate fishers to take a responsible approach to animal welfare and to make good use of the fish that they catch and keep.
19. As a first stage in developing the guide, and to inform this submission, NZSFC commissioned a nationwide survey of peoples attitudes to animal welfare and fish. The results discussed below show that most fishers would read a guide and would change their behaviour to achieve better welfare outcomes for fish.

Animal welfare and fishing survey (New Zealand Sport Fishing Council, June 2012)

20. A survey using the Horizon Poll online panel was completed by 2581 respondents in June 2012. Weighting was used to match the adult (18+) population averages for age, gender, ethnicity, employment, education level and, to ensure a sample aligned with 2011 voter support, party vote at the 2011 general election. At a 95% confidence level the maximum margin of error is $\pm 1.7\%$ overall. A full report is attached in Appendix 1.

Q 3. Do the values defined in the draft strategy reflect New Zealanders' views about animal welfare?

21. Yes. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council conducted a nationwide survey on current fishing practice and attitudes to animal welfare when hunting or fishing. This survey showed that over 80% of those respondents who catch fish felt that protecting the welfare/wellbeing of fish that are caught in the sea or estuaries in New Zealand was important. Just 4% said that fish welfare/wellbeing was unimportant.
22. There is general acknowledgement of the importance of ensuring the welfare/wellbeing and protection of wild animals that are hunted and fish that are caught in the sea or estuaries in New Zealand. A small majority feel that the welfare/wellbeing and protection of animals in New Zealand is better than in other parts of the world. While a small majority also think that there is not enough importance placed on this, those who hunt and fish are less inclined to feel that way.
23. Overall, 62% want to know more about animal welfare/wellbeing and protection in New Zealand. "Expert" hunters and fishers are even more likely than the general population to want to know more.

24. Hunters differ from fishers in their attitude to animal welfare generally. While a majority of hunters do not think that the welfare/wellbeing and protection of the animals they hunt needs improvement, fishers do not feel that way – a majority want to see improvements.
25. Nearly all of those who fish do so, at some stage, in the sea. Most of them use a rod or hand line, which they believe is best for fish welfare. Over half say their fishing and fish handling methods are influenced by possible stress or pain to the fish, and 68% would accept a slightly lower catch rate to reduce damage to fish that get off the hook or are released.
26. There is a clear opportunity to provide fishers with more information about good catching and handling practice, and they are generally keen to know more. While a minority do not support a Best Practice Guide for recreational fishing, 80% of fishers say they will read one if it is produced. Regardless of how often they fish, 78% are receptive to changing their behaviour in line with a guide.

What is humane?

27. NZSFC believe that there are more fish killed in New Zealand than any other vertebrate group. Most fish are caught in commercial trawl and purse seine nets. Bulk harvest methods make it hard to improve welfare. For example, if we assume an average weight of hoki is three kilos and the Total Allowable Commercial Catch of 120,000,000 kg is caught there would be 40 million hoki caught in a year. Millions of fish are also caught on commercial surface or bottom longlines. Often these lines “soak” for many hours before they are retrieved. The total commercial catch is about 430,000 t (MPI New Zealand fisheries at a glance, Statement of Intent 2009 to 2014).
28. Most fish caught by amateur fishers in New Zealand are taken on hook and line, one or two fish at a time, and pulled straight to the surface. Small fish come to the boat quickly and if hooked in the jaw can be released quickly with minimal handling. Larger fish may take longer to get to the boat but tend to be killed and kept. The scenario is not so good if the fish is hooked in the gill or gut, or where barotrauma occurs (expansion of gasses in the fish as it is raised from deep water) and the fish is released. There are types of tackle and fishing techniques that can help avoid or mitigate these problems.
29. Fishers were asked in our national survey to rate fishing methods according to the impact they felt each had on fish welfare, using a scale of 1 (worst for fish welfare) to 5 (best for fish welfare). Hook and line was rated as 5 by 45% of fishers and as a 4 by a further 25%. Spear/speargun was quite divided with 27% saying it was best, while 14% said it was worst. Hook, line and live bait was rated best by 32% and worst by 5%. Set net and drag net methods had the highest ratings in 1 and 2 worst (Appendix 1). This question was aimed at amateur fishing methods for finfish. However, drag netting could be interpreted by respondents as including commercial trawl nets.

How best to improve animal (fish) welfare

30. We intend to:
 - Work more closely with MPI staff and others to coordinate strategies for improving fish welfare.
 - Raise awareness amongst amateur fishers about the need for high welfare for fishing practices.
 - Develop and distribute a Best Practice Guide that will cover fish welfare, handling for catch and release or catch and keep, full utilisation of kept fish and some of the preferred tips and techniques to become responsible fishers.
 - Educate media people. Discuss animal welfare issues with people in the fishing media to ensure that best practice is considered in print and electronic media.
31. The goal is to get voluntary/willing uptake of high welfare practices by the fishing public widely accepted and used out on the water where it counts.
32. To achieve high acceptance for the right reasons the government needs to be careful that new regulations or sanctions do not apply to common fishing methods. There is a vocal minority that would react to that.

33. Two thirds of the fishers in our survey said that they would accept a slightly lower catch rate when fishing in the future, to reduce damage to the fish that get off or are released. 78% said they would most likely change the way they caught and handled fish if a Best Practice Guide were developed that promoted better welfare/wellbeing for fish. There are a range of benefits and good welfare gains to be made through well-presented voluntary measures.

Roles and responsibilities

34. NZSFC is a national organisation that coordinates and provides leadership for its affiliated members. It is also mindful of the wider recreational fishing sector. We fall outside the definition of the main groups used in the Welfare Strategy of: Individual, Industry, and Government. We don't see ourselves as part of the fishing industry. Sector groups, NGOs, Universities and the like should be recognised for their leadership roles.

Implementation

35. NZSFC would like to encourage the "*Government to work with the fishing and aquaculture sectors to raise awareness of animal welfare*" and would like to be part of the discussion about how to implement that.

Proposals to amend the Animal Welfare Act 1999

Objectives

36. There is general support for the objectives of the review, to have clear and enforceable standards for welfare but to regulate only where necessary.

Options

37. There are three options discussed with the only viable one the third option to replace the Welfare Codes with standards and enforceable regulations.
38. Regulations have been used extensively to implement fisheries management objectives and work towards conservation outcomes. In fisheries they allow area-specific measures to protect juvenile fish, unique habitats, or vulnerable species.
39. However, welfare issues are not easily defined or measured as lines on a map and method controls. Care must be taken that regulations designed for specific purposes are not applied broadly across all species with unintended consequences.
40. The use of regulations in fisheries over many years has led to an unwieldy, large number of regulations, many of which overlap and are hard for new entrants to learn and comply with.
41. We agree that option 2 is unwieldy. The key to option 3 is getting the balance right between requirements under regulations and obligations under animal welfare guidelines.

Q 29. What impact will the proposed changes have on you and/or your organisation or sector?

42. Little effect on fishers, except for the possible area of transporting live bait fish at sea. Potentially research regulations could affect constituent based fish tag and release programmes which are widely accepted in salt water fisheries. In New Zealand the data management and control of programme objectives of the tagging programme is with MPI. Killing these fish would not be a better welfare outcome for most large billfish, tuna or sharks. These fish have good recovery rates from capture and release proven from tracking with electronic tag technology.

Other offences

Quote from discussion document

Ill-treatment offences apply to animals in the wild

“The Animal Welfare Act does not make it illegal to hunt or kill any animal in a wild state, any wild animal, any pest, or any fish caught from a constructed pond. “Hunt or kill” is defined in section 2 of the Act, and includes killing, taking, catching, trapping, capturing, tranquillising, and immobilising an animal by any means, and pursuing or disturbing any animal.

A captured animal must be killed in a manner that does not cause unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress. The Act excludes animals caught by fishing from this provision.

If an animal in a wild state is captured without an intention to kill it imminently, then the person who has captured that animal is subject to all the responsibilities of a person in charge of an animal and the provisions of the Act apply in full.

The Animal Welfare Act allows hunting and fishing and the Government is not proposing to change that. But the Government proposes to prevent extreme conduct that goes beyond acceptable practice when hunting, fishing or controlling pests by clarifying that it is an offence to willfully or recklessly ill-treat an animal a wild state.

It will be important to ensure that generally accepted hunting and pest management activities are not prevented by this proposal.”

Discussion

43. For many years welfare issues for fish caught commercially or recreationally were largely ignored. The advent of markets for high quality whole fish in the Japanese markets led to Iki Jime (rapid kill with spike to the brain), ice slurry, careful handling and packing. There was a realisation that quick dispatch had benefits for the quality and appearance of the fish for the consumer and that stress in fish had a physiological effect.
44. The science has moved on from the views of J D Rose (2002) who suggested that that: (1) behavioral responses to noxious stimuli are separate from the psychological experience of pain, (2) awareness of pain in humans depends on functions of specific regions of cerebral cortex, and (3) fishes lack these essential brain regions or any functional equivalent, making it untenable that they can experience pain.
45. The work summarised by Victoria Braithwaite suggests that fish have evolved separate pathways to process information from the nervous system. *“Fish have a very thin layer over the cover of their outside of the brain that's doing similar things to what our neocortex is doing, but because it's so less well developed, it just isn't going to have the same sophistication and capacity for interpreting and understanding fear, for example.”* (Radio NZ 28-07-2010) *“The weight of evidence now shows fish do feel pain”* (Braithwaite 2010).
46. Policy makers in highly urbanised western countries (Switzerland, Germany) have outlawed certain fishing practices, but measures such as banning catch and release are far from universal.
47. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) have published a Code of Practice for Recreational Fishers developed by European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission with an Article on Fish welfare which accepts *“by nature of the activity recreational fishing may result in killing, will induce physical damage and may induce a stress response in individual fish”*. They then set out best practice guidelines

to minimise harm to the fish and maximise welfare in the capture, handling, dispatch and if legal release of fish (FAO 2008).

48. Attitudes within the NZSFC have also changed in recent years. In the past many members preferred not to discuss fish welfare as it may fuel debate and encourage animal rights groups to target fishers. Now the Council's position is that it better to be proactive and encourage high welfare practices and look for welfare gains. There is still work to do to spread this message and change behaviours of those who "have always fished this way", but a good start has been made.
49. The animal welfare matters review has generated a NZSFC project funded through a grant from New Zealand Marine Research Foundation to investigate public perceptions on fish welfare through a national survey, to compile information for this submission, and to develop best practice fish catching and handling guidelines for recreational fishers. While there are existing codes of practice for fishers internationally, it is important to understand the nature of fishing and fisher attitudes in New Zealand to adapt practices to New Zealand conditions, culture and species.
50. NZSFC supports the Government's view that hunting and fishing are important and legitimate activities in New Zealand. For many of our members fishing is their pastime of choice, providing food for the table and the soul, with occasionally a memorable day or special capture. Here in the South Pacific we must embrace the principles of kaitiakitanga and manakitanga. Guardianship and use of food from the land and sea are values which underpin all parts of New Zealand society. Free and fair access to quality recreational fisheries in a clean environment are an increasingly rare Taonga (treasures that are to be passed on to the next generation) in this world.
51. NZSFC supports the continuation of the provision which exempts killing fish from the full provisions of the Act. There are instances where common commercial or amateur fishing practice may catch fish of a size or number which makes quick dispatch impossible. Many fish that are caught are released or tagged and released.
52. NZSFC will support and promote high welfare outcomes for fish caught by amateur fishers using Best Practice Guides and fishing club networks. We seek to work with MPI and other interested groups to produce the material and coordinate strategies
53. NZSFC seeks clarification on the definition of "willfully or recklessly ill-treat an animal in a wild state". We agree that there should be clear minimum standards for animal welfare that should not be crossed. Sanctions should be used to prevent extreme conduct that goes beyond acceptable practice when hunting or fishing. The NZSFC and amateur fishers would not want to fear prosecution when using traditional fishing methods like hook and line, netting, spear fishing, or potting.
54. In the modern world there are experienced fishers pushing the boundaries of their fishing endurance. The NZSFC submit that the definition of willfully or recklessly ill-treating an animal in a wild state includes that this is for extreme conduct that goes beyond acceptable practice when hunting or fishing.

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Appendix 1 National survey on Animal Welfare and Fishing

**Animal Welfare and Fishing Survey
August 2012**

**Conducted by Horizon Research Limited
for the
New Zealand Sport Fishing Council**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council (NZSFC) has funded a nationwide survey on current fishing practice and attitudes to animal welfare when hunting or fishing. This information will help inform the NZSFC submission on the review of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and to produce a Best Practice Guide for fishers.

This report summarises the results of a survey of 2581 respondents in June 2012. Weighting was used to match the adult (18+) population averages for age, gender, ethnicity, employment, education level and, to ensure a sample aligned with 2011 voter support, party vote at the 2011 general election. At a 95% confidence level the maximum margin of error is $\pm 1.7\%$ overall.

There is general acknowledgement of the importance of ensuring the welfare/wellbeing and protection of wild animals that are hunted and fish that are caught in the sea or estuaries in New Zealand. A small majority feel that the welfare/wellbeing and protection of animals in New Zealand is better than in other parts of the world. While a small majority also think that there is not enough importance placed on this, those who hunt and fish are less inclined to feel that way.

Overall, 62% want to know more about animal welfare/wellbeing and protection in New Zealand. “Expert” hunters and fishers are even more likely than the general population to want to know more.

Hunters differ from fishers in their attitude to animal welfare generally. While a majority of hunters do not think that the welfare/wellbeing and protection of the animals they hunt needs improvement, fishers do not feel that way – a majority believe that improvement is necessary.

Nearly all of those who fish do so, at some stage, in the sea. Most of them use a rod or hand line, which they believe is best for fish welfare. Over half say their fishing and fish handling methods are influenced by possible stress or pain to the fish, and 68% would accept a slightly lower catch rate to reduce damage fish that get off the hook or are released.

There is a clear opportunity to provide fishers with more information about good catching and handling practice, and they are generally keen to know more. While a minority do not support a Best Practice Guide for recreational fishing, 80% of fishers say they will read one if it is produced. Regardless of how often they fish, 78% are receptive to changing their behaviour in line with a guide.

Key findings:

Welfare/wellbeing and protection of animals:

- Just over half of the respondents felt that the welfare/wellbeing and protection of animals is better in New Zealand than in other parts of the world.
- Those who fish or who said that they were expert hunters or fishers were significantly more inclined to believe that welfare/wellbeing and protection is better in New Zealand.
- 51% overall think there is not enough importance placed on animal welfare/wellbeing and protection in New Zealand. The figure is lower (41%) among those who fish or hunt.
- 40% overall think there is the right amount of importance placed on animal welfare/wellbeing and protection and 7% think there is too much.
- 62% would like to be more informed about the welfare/wellbeing of animals in New Zealand.
- Those who described themselves as expert hunters or expert fishers were more likely than average to “certainly” want to know more.

Knowledge of the Animal Welfare Act and Code of Welfare:

- 57% overall have heard of the Act.
- A further 8% are familiar with it.
- 15% believe that the Act covers all animals including fishes. 17% thought it did not and 68% were unsure.
- 37% have heard of a Code of Welfare for animals or are familiar with one.

Hunting and Fishing:

- 50% of respondents overall feel not well informed or not informed at all about the conditions and methods under which wild animals on land are hunted in New Zealand.
- 71% of expert hunters said that they were very well informed or well informed about hunting conditions and methods.
- 69% of total respondents felt that protecting the welfare/wellbeing of wild animals that are hunted in New Zealand was important.
- 75% of expert hunters feel that way.
- 36% overall are unsure whether, in general, the welfare/wellbeing of wild animals that are hunted in New Zealand needed to be improved.
- 39% of the overall sample thinks that there need to be improvements.
- Knowledge of recreational fishing is greater than knowledge of hunting Over 80% of those respondents who fish felt that protecting the welfare/wellbeing of fish that are caught in the sea or estuaries in New Zealand was important.

Fishing:

- 43% of respondents said that they go fishing in rivers, lakes or the sea or gather shellfish
- Only 5% of those who fish never fish in the sea.
- Fishing in the sea has the highest frequency and fishing in rivers or lakes the lowest.
- 19% do not gather seafood like shellfish by hand.
- 86% of sea fishers use a rod or hand line with a hook and bait or lure.
- Nets are seen as being worst for fish welfare.
- Rod or hand line with bait or lure and hook is seen as being best for fish welfare.
- 41% always use a “J” hook.
- 41% never use a barbless hook.
- 60% always use “bait”.
- 35% never use live bait.
- 68% would accept a slightly lower catch rate in order to reduce damage to the fish that get off or are released.

Handling fish:

- 51% of sea fishers said that the way they catch and handle fish was influenced most or all of the time by possible stress or pain the fish may feel.
- 64% believe catching and handling methods can influence the quality of the fish eaten.
- 67% of fishers say that they “Always” kill kept fish immediately.
- 39% say that they never store caught fish in a bag or bin without ice.
- 47% don’t know how to determine whether a fish is stressed.

Best Practice Guide:

- 78% would definitely or most likely change their fishing practice if a Guide was developed for recreational fishers.
- 80% would want to read any new Guide.
- Boating and fishing magazines, internet boating and fishing sites, and television are seen as the best options for communicating a new Best Practice Guide.

REPORT

1. Welfare/Wellbeing and protection of animals

1.1 New Zealand versus other parts of the world

Just over half of the respondents felt that the welfare/wellbeing and protection of animals was better in New Zealand than in other parts of the world. As shown in the following table, those who fished or who said that they were expert hunters or fishers were significantly more inclined to believe that welfare/wellbeing and protection was better in New Zealand.

Welfare/wellbeing and protection of animals in New Zealand	Total	Fish in rivers, lakes or the sea or gather shellfish		Expert hunter		Expert fisher	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Better than in other parts of the world	54.0%	60.3%	49.5%	67.5%	53.6%	70.7%	52.4%
Worse than in other parts of the world	7.1%	7.5%	6.8%	4.9%	7.1%	5.8%	7.2%
About the same as in other parts of the world	30.4%	27.7%	32.4%	25.1%	30.7%	20.8%	31.4%
Don't know	8.5%	4.2%	11.3%	2.5%	8.6%	1.9%	9.0%

<i>Base</i>	2549	1084	1436	100	2427	223	2286
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1.2 Importance placed on animal welfare/wellbeing and protection

Overall, half of respondents thought that not enough importance is being placed on animal welfare/wellbeing and protection. However, among the 54% of respondents who thought that New Zealand was better than the rest of the world in this area, the figure was only 40%.

Animal welfare/wellbeing and protection	Total	Welfare/wellbeing and protection of animals in New Zealand is...			
		Better	Worse	Same	DK
Too much importance	7.0%	8.4%	1.4%	7.0%	2.9%
Just about the right level of importance	36.9%	48.4%	4.3%	27.2%	24.4%
Not enough importance	50.9%	40.7%	93.4%	62.3%	39.7%
Don't know	5.2%	2.4%	0.6%	3.4%	32.6%

<i>Base</i>	2550	1383	169	854	156
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1.3 Information on animal welfare/wellbeing and protection

62% of respondents overall (23% “certainly”, 39% “probably”) said that they would like to be more informed about the welfare/wellbeing of animals in New Zealand. It was of lesser interest to those who were confident that New Zealand’s animal welfare/wellbeing and protection was better than elsewhere, but there was still a majority of that group - 57% - interested in knowing more.

Those who described themselves as expert hunters or expert fishers were more likely than average to “certainly” want to know more.

Wish to be more informed about the welfare/wellbeing of animals in New Zealand	Total	Welfare/wellbeing and protection of animals in New Zealand is...			
		Better	Worse	Same	DK
Yes, certainly	23.0%	21.0%	52.8%	20.7%	18.4%
Yes, probably	39.1%	35.8%	35.2%	44.3%	44.9%
No, probably not	28.8%	35.8%	9.0%	22.5%	23.6%
No, certainly not	3.2%	2.9%	1.1%	4.3%	3.1%
Don't know	5.9%	4.5%	1.5%	8.2%	9.9%

<i>Base</i>	<i>2564</i>	<i>1373</i>	<i>169</i>	<i>853</i>	<i>155</i>
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2. Hunting and Fishing

2.1 Knowledge of recreational fishing

In general, respondents were better informed about recreational fishing than about hunting methods and conditions. A quarter of respondents claimed to be informed or very well informed about recreational fishing, with 32% somewhat informed and 44% saying that they were not well informed or not informed at all.

Those who are not well informed are primarily those who do not fish. As shown below, only 18% of those who do fish feel uninformed compared with 62% of those who do not.

Knowledge	Total	Fish in rivers, lakes or sea or gather shellfish	
		Yes	No
Very well informed	5.9%	12.6%	0.8%
Informed	18.6%	32.6%	8.4%
Somewhat informed	31.9%	36.1%	28.6%
Not well informed	28.2%	15.4%	37.8%
Not informed at all	15.4%	3.1%	24.3%

8.3% of respondents claimed to be an expert fisher. As might be expected, expert fishers appear to be far more informed about recreational fishing – 49% claim to be very well informed and 37% say they are “informed”.

2.2 Importance of protecting the welfare/wellbeing of fish that are caught in the sea or estuaries in New Zealand

Over 80% of those respondents who fish felt that protecting the welfare/wellbeing of fish that are caught in the sea or estuaries in New Zealand was important. 14% of them thought that it was unimportant and 3% were unsure.

Protecting the welfare/wellbeing of fish was generally important – 75% of respondents overall felt that way.

Importance of welfare/wellbeing of fish that are caught in the sea or estuaries	Total	Expert fisher		Fish in rivers, lakes or sea or gather shellfish	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Very important	39.4%	57.3%	37.5%	45.2%	34.8%
Important	36.1%	30.5%	36.2%	37.1%	35.0%
Somewhat unimportant	14.6%	9.2%	15.2%	11.8%	16.6%
Unimportant	3.9%	0.8%	4.1%	2.7%	4.8%
Not sure	5.9%	2.1%	6.3%	2.6%	8.4%

<i>Base</i>	2497	223	2274	1075	1422
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2.3 Improvement in the welfare/wellbeing of fish that are caught in the sea or estuaries in New Zealand

54% overall believe that, in general, the welfare/wellbeing of fish that are caught the sea or estuaries in New Zealand needs to be improved. That opinion is even higher (63%) among those who fish and higher again (67%) among those who say that they are expert fishers.

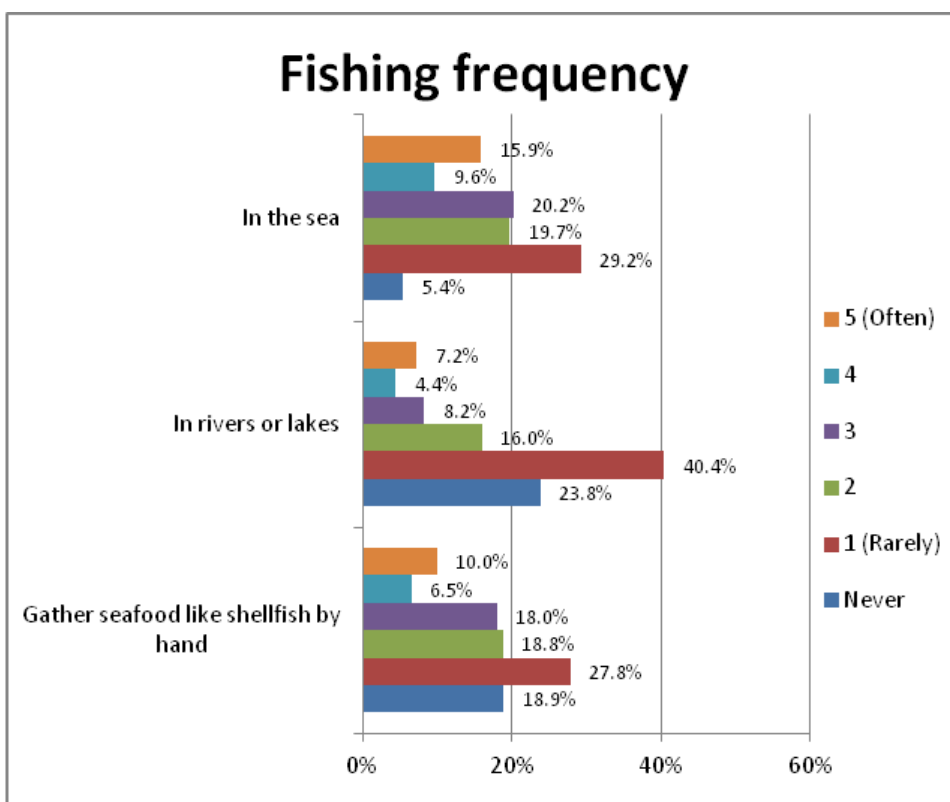
Welfare/wellbeing of fish that are caught in the sea or estuaries needs improvement	Total	Fish in rivers, lakes or sea or gather shellfish	
		Yes	No
Yes	53.6%	63.4%	46.1%
No	15.2%	17.0%	13.7%
Don't know	31.2%	19.4%	39.8%

3. Fishing

3.1 Fishing frequency

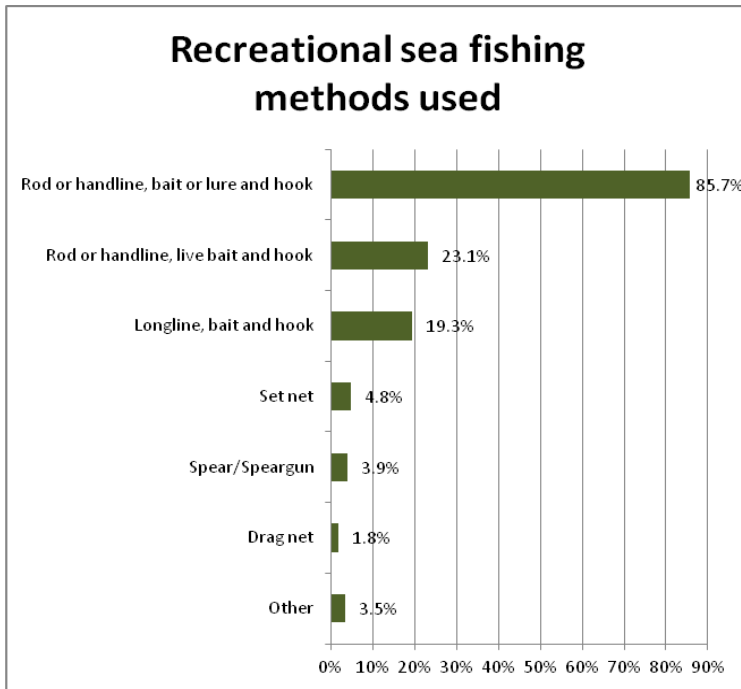
Frequency of fishing in the sea, in rivers or lakes, or gathering shellfish was measured on a scale from 1 (rarely) to 5 (often). The frequency distribution is shown in the following chart, but some key points are:

- Only 5% of those who fish never fish in the sea.
- Fishing in the sea has the highest frequency and fishing in rivers or lakes the lowest.
- While 76% do fish in rivers or lakes, they do so infrequently, on average.
- 19% do not gather seafood like shellfish by hand



3.2 Fishing methods

Marine fishers use a range of methods most use a rod or hand line with a hook and bait or lure. 23% say that they use live bait sometimes and 19% a longline. Net usage is relatively small with the most common type of net being a set net.

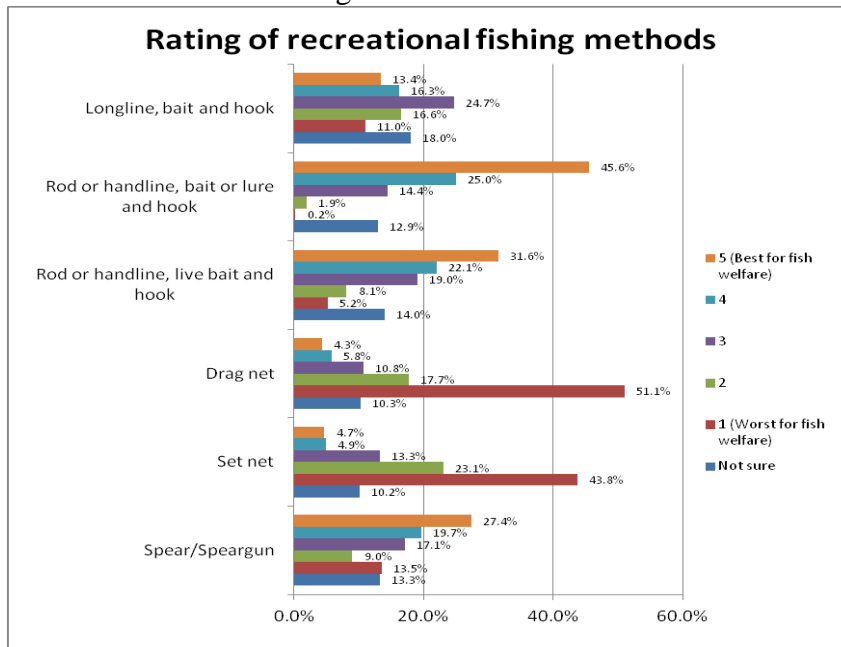


3.3 Recreational fishing methods and fish welfare

Fishers were given a list of recreational fishing methods and asked to rate them according to their impact they felt each had on fish welfare, using a scale of 1 (worst for fish welfare) to 5 (best for fish welfare). Key points are:

- Nets are seen as being worst for fish welfare
- Rod or hand line with bait lure or hook is seen as being best for fish welfare, ahead of other methods

Results are illustrated on the following chart:

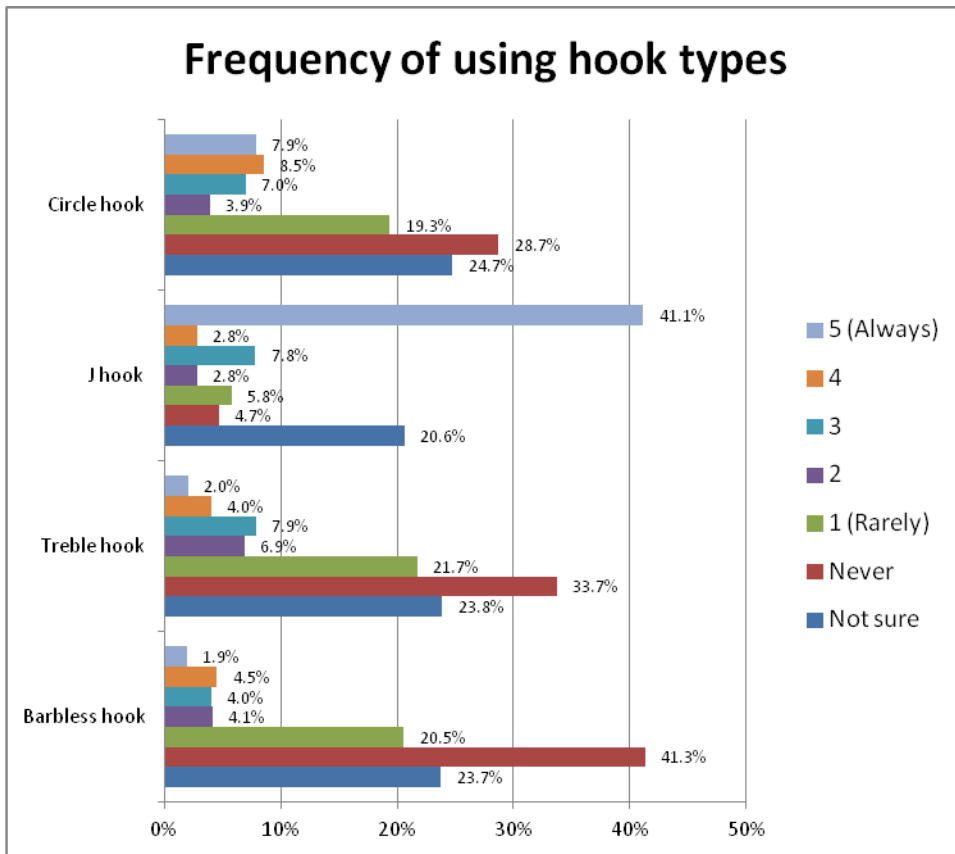


3.4 Types of hook used

Nearly a quarter of fishers were unsure what sort of hook they used.

“J” hooks are the most frequently used hook type, well ahead of all other types in frequency of use. Only 5% of sea fishers never use them. Barbless hooks are the least commonly used with 41% saying that they never use them and only 1.9% saying that they always use them.

Circle hooks are used approximately half as frequently as “J” hooks and treble hooks about one-third as frequently.

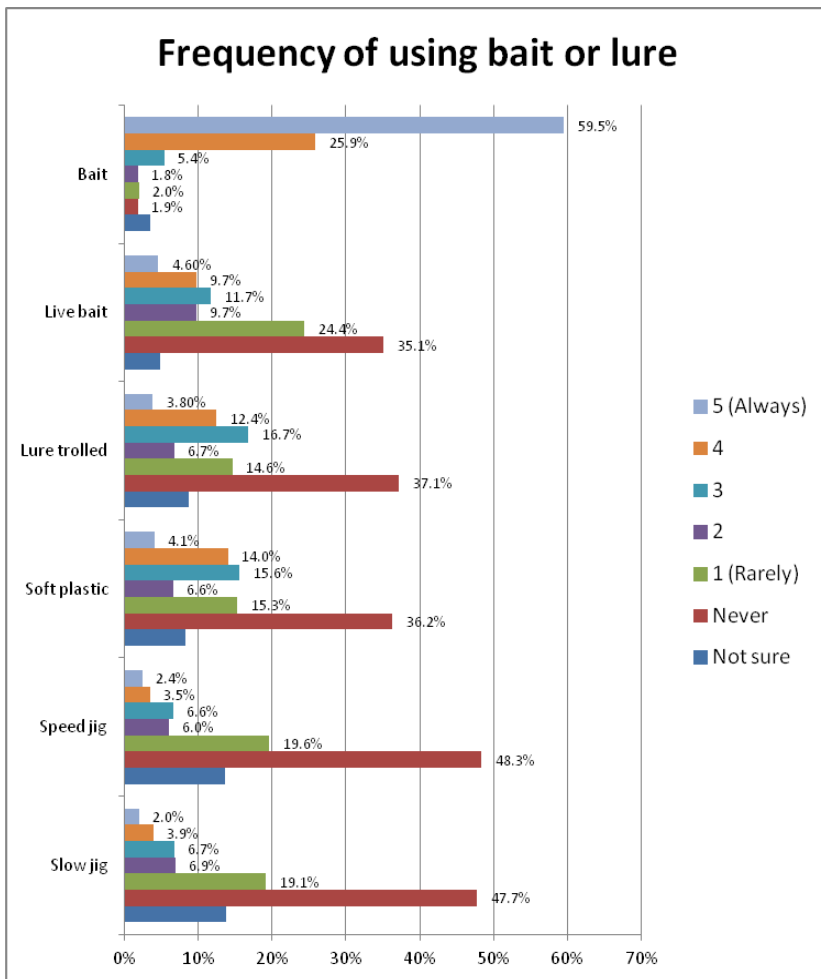


3.5 Bait or lure type used

Fishers were asked how often they used various types of bait or lure when they fish in the sea using a rod and reel. Again, a 1 (Rarely) to 5 (Always) scale was used.

Key results were:

- “Bait” is the most frequently used, with 60% saying that they “Always” used it. Only 2% never use it.
- Soft plastics bait is used marginally more frequently, on average, than a trolled lure or live bait. 35% to 37% of respondents did not use any of these forms of bait/lure.
- Speed or slow jigging is the least used. 48% do not use jigging.



3.6 Acceptance of catch rate reduction

Sea fishers were asked if they would accept a slightly lower catch rate when fishing in the future, to reduce damage to the fish that get off or are released.

68% said that they would accept that; 10% said that they would not.

Fishing club members and those who fish often were less inclined to accept a lower catch.

Accept lower catch	Total	Fishing club member		Frequency of fishing in the sea					
		Yes	No	5: Often	4	3	2	1: Rarely	Never
Yes	68.3%	56.4%	69.4%	57.6%	67.5%	67.5%	68.8%	75.7%	63.5%
No	9.9%	10.7%	9.8%	19.7%	11.7%	6.3%	6.7%	8.3%	13.1%
Not sure	16.0%	10.2%	16.4%	7.8%	10.9%	21.8%	20.1%	13.7%	22.0%
"Depends"	5.9%	22.7%	4.5%	14.9%	10.0%	4.5%	4.4%	2.3%	1.4%

4. Handling fish

4.1 Influence of stress or pain fish may feel

51% of those who fish in the sea said that the way they catch and handle fish was influenced most or all of the time by possible stress or pain the fish may feel. A higher percentage of frequent fishers and fishing club members felt this way.

There were over 750 comments on this issue. A selection of them follows:

Always

"It is essential that the fish that is caught is ike spiked quickly to prevent cruelty and unnecessary stress to the fish."

"I return fish as quickly as possible and try to be gentle removing hook, handling, and returning to water."

"Because there is no point in stressing them, stressed fish don't taste so good. For the ones you put back, the less handling and stress you cause the more likely they will grow to legal limit size."

"I don't like the fish to suffer unnecessarily - a quickly killed catch may be harder to do, but I feel it's the responsible thing to do."

Most of the time

"I always use a cloth to handle fish that are to be returned and carefully remove hook NOT using a method which rips the guts out of the fish, and then return to sea carefully."

"I feel for the fish and kill as quickly as possible."

"If I catch a fish that I am going to release, then I try to release the fish with minimal contact and time out of the water. I then release it gently back into the sea. If I am keeping it I will try to dispatch it quickly."

Some of the time

"I hardly ever successfully get a fish! But I will hold them with a towel to put them back in the sea rather than touching with hands. I don't really know anything else about handling them correctly though."

"Because we are stewards of fish stocks for the next generation."

"If we fish we know something has to die for us to eat it so can't delve on what the fish is feeling or we would go hungry."

Not often

"I have no empathy with a fish"

"Does it really matter... they are going to be eaten anyway."

“It's a fish and I'm catching and killing it for food - quickly as possible but not worrying too much.”

“I'm not convinced they feel pain”

“Just not a consideration”

“Haven't considered it before.”

“In the excitement of the catch, one tends to overlook the stress the fish is in.”

“Because I hardly ever actually catch a fish so if I do get one I'm more influenced by the accomplishment than the fish's stress..”

Not at all

“Fish have a tiny brain – ‘no brain, no pain!’”

“I'm interested in catching the fish. Not how it feels.”

“I come from Asia and animal welfare is not important there-human welfare is!”

“Don't care about how they feel”

“I intend to eat what I catch, not make friends with it.”

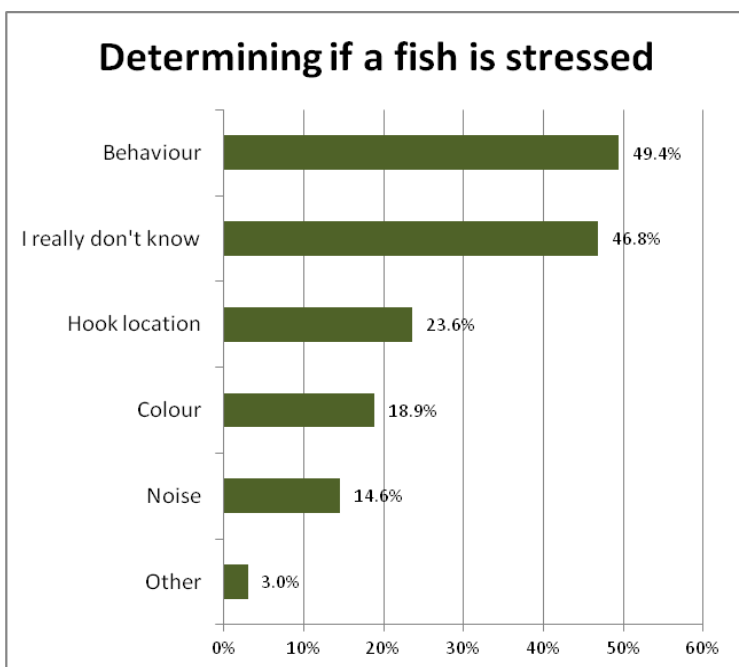
4.2 Effect of catching and handling on the quality of the fish eaten

64% of fishers believe that the way fish are caught and handled affects the quality of the fish when eaten. Fishing club members are even more certain about this - 79% believe there is an effect. This belief increases with increasing frequency of fishing from 47% of those who never fish in the sea to 80% who fish “often”.

Catching and handling influences quality of fish eaten	Total	Fishing club member		Frequency of fishing in the sea					
		Yes	No	5: Often	4	3	2	1: Rarely	Never
Yes	63.7%	79.2%	62.4%	79.6%	73.8%	69.1%	50.4%	58.5%	47.3%
No	18.3%	14.5%	18.9%	15.4%	13.4%	14.5%	25.0%	18.1%	32.3%
Don't know	18.0%	6.4%	18.9%	5.0%	12.8%	16.4%	24.5%	23.4%	20.3%

4.3 Determining if a fish is stressed

While 49% said that they could determine if a fish was stressed from its behaviour, 47% said that they didn't really know.



5. Best Practice Guide

5.1 Changing behaviour

Fishers were asked whether they would try and change the way they caught and handled fish if a Best Practice Guide were developed that promoted better welfare/wellbeing for fish caught by recreational fishers. 78% said that they definitely or most likely would change. The level among fishing club members is lower, at 64%, and 33% of this group said that they were not likely to change behaviour. Some fishers believe they are aware of best practice and are using those methods already.

Change catch and handling fish as a result of a Best Practice Guide	Total	Fishing club member		Frequency of fishing in the sea					
		Yes	No	5: Often	4	3	2	1: Rarely	Never
Definitely	32.9%	27.3%	33.3%	31.4%	28.2%	32.2%	35.8%	34.9%	23.4%
Most likely	45.2%	36.3%	46.2%	34.7%	51.9%	46.6%	53.5%	40.8%	52.5%
Not likely	9.0%	13.3%	8.7%	19.6%	8.4%	6.9%	7.4%	7.5%	1.7%
Not at all	4.6%	19.4%	3.3%	12.9%	3.5%	2.6%	0.0%	3.9%	11.1%
Not sure	8.2%	3.7%	8.5%	1.3%	8.0%	11.7%	3.2%	12.9%	11.2%

5.2 Reading a new Best Practice Guide

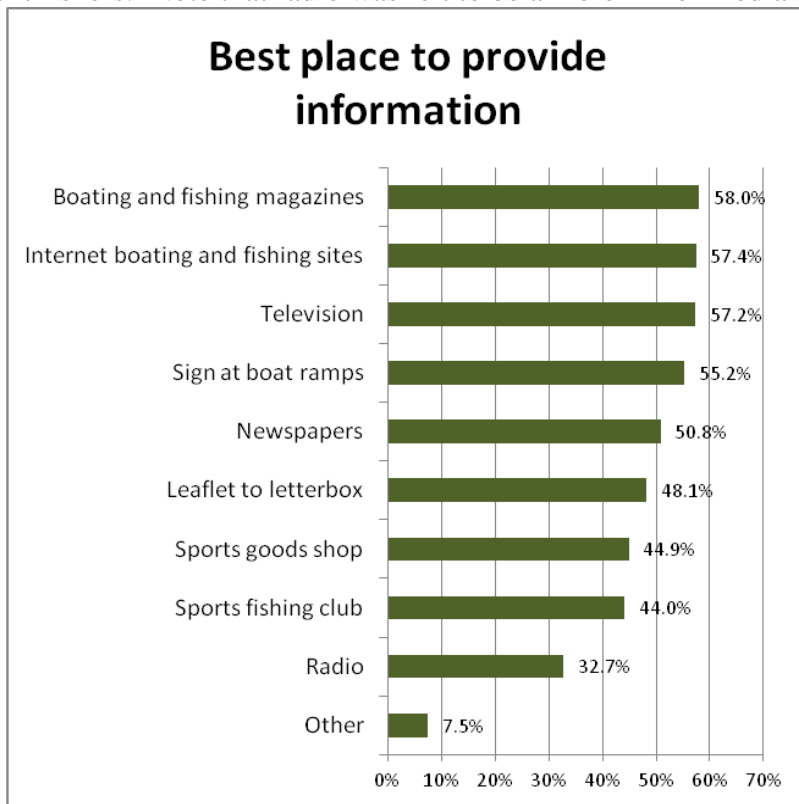
It is clear that if a Best Practice Guide is produced it will be read, and not just by frequent fishers or fishing club members. Although a higher percentage of these groups say that they would want to read it, significant levels of readership are likely to extend to even those who rarely fish. Note that only 6%

said that they would not read a new Best Practice Guide; these people are largely those who do not fish in the sea.

Want to read a Code of Practice	Total	Fishing club member		Frequency of fishing in the sea					
		Yes	No	5: Often	4	3	2	1: Rarely	Never
Yes	80.5%	88.9%	79.6%	88.1%	84.3%	80.2%	85.6%	74.6%	64.7%
No	6.0%	1.8%	6.4%	4.6%	4.4%	5.2%	4.7%	5.9%	23.9%
Not sure	13.5%	9.5%	13.8%	7.3%	11.3%	14.7%	9.8%	19.6%	11.4%

5.3 Distributing a new Best Practice Guide

Fishers believed that communicating a Best Practice Guide would be best in a mix of magazines, internet sites, television, press and a raft of physical places, with boating and fishing magazines, internet boating and fishing sites and television being the top selections, all selected by 57% or more of respondent fishers. Note that radio was felt to be a more minor media to use.



APPENDIX 1 – SAMPLE

Sample

This survey is of 2,581 respondents who are members of Horizon Research’s HorizonPoll panel, which represents the New Zealand adult population. Post-sample iterative raking weighting was used to match population averages for age, gender, ethnicity, employment, education level and, to ensure a sample aligned with 2011 voter support, party vote in 2011.

For the total sample the maximum margin of error at a 95% confidence level is $\pm 1.7\%$ overall.

Dates

Interviewing was undertaken between May 18 and June 8, 2012.

Area type

The sample from this survey showed a type of area split as follows:

Area type	Total
Large town or city	57.3%
Small or middle-size town	26.1%
Rural area	16.7%

Fishing Club membership

5% of respondents were members of a fishing club.

Member of fishing club	Total
Yes	4.8%
No	95.0%
Don't know	0.2%

Analysis

All analysis shown in this report is taken from the weighted data.

Contact

For more information about this survey or additional analysis, please contact Roz Nelson secretary@nzsportfishing.org.nz