

## Election crucial

Editor,

Congratulations to the Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations of New Zealand (CORANZ) for its election charter, which was presented to political parties for comment on key issues.

It is unfortunate that Kiwis are generally reluctant to discuss politics and quite a few don't seem to care, to the extent that towards a million of them could not be bothered voting in the 2011 general election. I hope this election on September 20 will see those apathetic people get off their butts and vote!

The outdoor fraternity is a very large voting sector – probably close to a million strong, counting saltwater and freshwater anglers, hunters, shooters, trampers and the like.

One cannot separate politics from the threats to, and possible future of, recreational sport. Auckland saltwater anglers admirably rose up in wrath at the government suggestion of cutting the bag limit to three snapper, while leaving the commercial quota untouched. In the end the Ministry for Primary Industries reduced the bag limit from nine to seven, but still left commercial users with the status quo, which is an insult to the recreational fishing public for sure.

Further south in Marlborough, the government has treated recreational fishers in a similar shabby fashion, at one stage banning recreational fishing for blue cod while allowing commercial fishers to make increased catches – up to 50 percent – to 70 tonnes. Recreational moki and butterfish set-netting has been banned for eight months, while commercial gets to fish 12 months a year.

One has to realise the threats are invariably political in origin. Corporate fishing companies lobby the ministries and ministers. The saying goes “meeting fire with fire”, so since threats are political, the outdoor sector must be political and use their right to vote accordingly on September 20.

Many of us fish and hunt. Similarly, hunters have had opportunities diminished by the selling of hunting access, the use of commercial helicopters and public lands being doused with 1080 and other poisons.

The government has introduced a game council. Some hunters have been beguiled into thinking it is of value. But its value is to the Minister of Conservation and department, who have a statutory council that's advisory only, politically appointed, and beholden to the minister and department.

Trout fishers are faced with government plans to weaken the RMA to allow economic development such as irrigation for large-scale dairying in low rainfall areas while over 60 percent of rivers are unfit to swim in.

Backcountry trout anglers, hunters and trampers finds DoC more interested in corporate sponsorship than serving the public. They are giving outdoor recreation a low priority. DoC, through Minister Nick Smith's ludicrous ‘Battle for the Birds,’ is currently bombarding lands with 1080 poison.

The recent sales of assets involving public water, dams and lakes created by the taxpayer, are another example. Government has given foreign oil companies the right to drill and explore in the public's coastal waters and forest parks. So the list goes on – space prevents inclusion of others.

It is a bleak outlook and the election is crucial.

Kiwis interested in outdoor recreation should understand that under the MMP system there are two votes, each independent of the other: one for the party, the other the candidate. Examine the policies and think, then vote accordingly. But above all else, please vote!

Laurie Collins

Convenor, Sporting Hunters outdoors Trust  
West Coast

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### Size slot limits – way of the future?

Editor,

I have recently been to Bar Harbour in Maine, USA, where lobster is the principle catch, and went out on a local tour boat, *Lulu*.

I was impressed to learn that the industry has recovered a low catch of about 25 million pounds (12 million kilos) to current 123 million pounds (56 million kilos) per annum.

Most of the measures instigated to achieve this success similar to those used here, with the main exception being the maximum size lobster that can be kept commercially pounds (2.3kg), which recognises that these bigger fish are best breeding stock and must therefore go back to do just.

I understand that at least some states in Australia impose maximum size limits on certain fish species, and as this to make so much sense (the largest fish produce the most and are therefore undoubtedly the best breeding stock), don't we do the same thing here? For example, why not impose a maximum size of snapper that can be kept of, say, 4.5 or 10 or 12 pounds, particularly as these larger fish are relatively coarse eating-wise anyway. With cameras available everywhere male egos can still be satisfied by recording the event.

I am sure if we had introduced a maximum snapper size within the last 10 years, that the fishery would be in much shape today, to the extent that the recent catch-limit reduction from nine to seven would have been unnecessary. Judging a successful example of the lobster catch in Bar Harbour, a maximum fish size on snapper in NZ would produce far better results than reducing the number limit by two.

Mark Winter

Mount Maunganui

*Correspondence selected as the 'Letter of the Month' wins a \$50 voucher from Fishing Camping Outdoors to be spent at any one of their outlets.*

*Letter writers should include their name and postal address and write in of good faith. Letters can be emailed to [grant.dixon@fairfax.co.nz](mailto:grant.dixon@fairfax.co.nz) or posted to 'Letters', NZ Fishing News, PO Box 6341, Wellesley Auckland 1141*



### Common ground

Editor,

We applaud the focus on working together that Alan C highlighted in last issue's 'Letter of the month' but we need to correct the inaccurate description of NZRFC and NZAO differences that need settling.

These two organisations have consistently worked together for decades to promote recreational fishing interests in an increasingly complex world. The sheer magnitude of the challenges and increasing vulnerability of recreational fishing in New Zealand these two organizations – along with many other stakeholders – participate in a national conversation in February 2013 FISHinFuture Search, this event brought 66 voices from across the country to consider the future of recreational fishing.

Eight areas of common ground were unanimously agreed upon at the event, and although they have been reported on in the past, before, bear repeating: