



(Meredith, 2009b)

Te hī ika – Māori fishing

## Fisheries management and practice

### Settlements: 1989 and 1992

Māori are the largest group in the New Zealand fisheries, controlling over a third of the industry. This is primarily due to two Waitangi Tribunal settlements:

- a 1989 interim agreement that awarded Māori 10% of the fishing quota, and a cash settlement
- a final settlement of Māori claims to commercial fisheries in 1992. Known as the Sealord deal, this granted Māori a 50% share in Sealord Products, New Zealand's largest fishing company.

Sealord Products was to hold 22% of the total quota under the Quota Management System, by which New Zealand's commercial fisheries are run. In addition, the final settlement guaranteed Māori 20% of all new species brought into the Quota Management System.

The Māori Fisheries Commission, established under the 1989 settlement, became the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Commission in the final settlement. It was charged with facilitating Māori entry into the fishing industry, and allocating fishery assets to tribes. How this was to be achieved has been the subject of much litigation.

### Māori Fisheries Act 2004

The matter was finalised with the Māori Fisheries Act 2004. When this was passed it was anticipated that tribes would receive around half of the estimated \$750 million of settlement assets.

The act disbanded the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Commission, allocating its assets to a new company, Aotearoa Fisheries Limited, and its sole voting shareholder, Te Ohu Kaimoana. This second body manages and oversees:

- Aotearoa Fisheries
- Te Putea Whakatupu Trust (which promotes Māori interests in the fishing industry)
- Te Wai Māori Trust (which promotes Māori interests in freshwater fishing)
- the distribution of assets to tribes.

### Contemporary tribal fishing

Many tribes are already in the fishing business, including the Tainui affiliated tribes Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Raukawa and Waikato, partners in the deep-sea fishing company Raukura Moana. The South Island tribe, Ngāi Tahu, operates one of New Zealand's leading seafood companies, Ngāi Tahu Seafood Group.

Māori continue to take fish and other seafood for personal consumption and traditional gatherings.



Sealord Products  
(1st of 3)



Ngāi Tahu Seafood  
Group



Coastal fishery

At a hui at Ōkahu marae, Kāwhia, in the early 2000s, visitors were presented with a variety of traditional Māori delicacies, including pātiki maroke (dried flounder) and kōkī (shark-liver sausage), from fish caught in Aotea Harbour. The local Ngāti Te Wehi tribe there is committed to retaining knowledge of such traditional foods, and to safeguarding the harbour and its fisheries.

The 1992 settlement also recognised Māori fishing for customary purposes, as opposed to commercial use. There are now a number of statutory enterprises, such as the Taiapure and Mahinga Mātaitai reserves established with the Fisheries Act 1996. Subsequently, the Kāwhia–Aotea Taiapure was set up in 2000. Such measures give Māori better access to local fisheries, and greater involvement as kaitiaki or guardians.

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