



## **FRESHWATER RECREATIONAL FISHING**

## Introduction

United**Future** recognises that New Zealand has a freshwater fishery that is one of the best in the world. New Zealand's freshwater fisheries are currently very well managed by Fish and Game New Zealand's network of regional structures.

The policy support United**Future** gives the recreational sector is based on ensuring the Kiwi right to provide food for the table and the future enjoyment of a traditional recreational activity. This parallels our policy position on marine reserves and the work that we have been doing regarding walking access, tenure review and large game animal management.

Given the high quality of New Zealand's freshwater fishery and its management structure, we are primarily concerned with two issues related to the freshwater fisheries: 1) water quality and (2) right of access.

- 1) The quality of New Zealand's inland waterways has been generally deteriorating as time passes. In some specific areas, public health and the recreational usage of these bodies of water is in jeopardy. This deterioration needs to be addressed quickly through the introduction of appropriate educational tools and the raising of awareness within the industries implicated as part of the cause of this problem. Such a program could include financial assistance to accelerate reforms within certain industries and be reinforced by regulatory intervention such as the establishment of a National Environmental Standard for inland lakes and waterways.
- 2) Access to New Zealand's freshwater fisheries is a basic right that should be accorded to every New Zealander. The exclusion of the average New Zealander from specific fisheries through the denial of access is unacceptable but is a phenomenon that is on the rise. See our "Practical Access to New Zealand's Great Outdoors" policy section for details of how we intend to address the access issue.

It is United**Future** policy to:

- Ensure that a program to improve water quality is developed and implemented through consultation with all stakeholders – this should include financial incentives to assist eligible industries to clean up their act;
- Continue to develop a National Environmental Standard (NES) for the quality of New Zealand's freshwater lakes and waterways;
- Fund and mandate through Biosecurity New Zealand a regime of strict controls to prevent the transfer of undesirable algae such as didymo between water bodies through poorly cleaned boats, trailers and equipment;
- Provide targeted funding for research into didymo in the New Zealand river ecosystem with the intention of exterminating it from our rivers;
- Develop a rapid response unit within Biosecurity New Zealand to respond to future reported potential threats similar to didymo with the mandate to immediately 'close' a waterway from public use;
- Reinstate the Queens Chain where applicable as a pre-requisite before foreign land sales can be approved;
- Ensure that the commercialisation of trout species and other freshwater species will remain illegal in order to preserve our freshwater fisheries for recreation and tourism;
- Promote the principle that all New Zealanders have a common right to access unpolluted freshwater fisheries and waterways for recreational use.

- Reduce the recreational catch allowance for finfish from 20 fish per person per day to 10 fish per person per day to sit alongside the reduction in the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC); ensuring the long-term sustainability of both our coastal and deep-water fisheries.
- Make it easier for recreational fishers to access information pertaining to their daily catch limit and the penalties for non-compliance through more numerous and comprehensive information boards at boat ramps and popular on-shore fishing spots.