

WHAT WAS THE FISHING LIKE?

A collection of historical records, events,
recollections by locals and data.



A Community Project compiled By Mary Ralph

This is the only publication that is totally devoted to reporting on **what the fishing was like in** the Doubtless Bay area.

It is a collection of stories and recollections by locals who have had a connection with the sea for many years. Most of the interviews were recorded and broadcast on the radio.

Commercial fishing data is included where appropriate and historical information etc that focuses on events over 100 years ago.

Quotes from historians and researchers are included to give the reader an overall picture of what was happening Nationally at the time. Many small towns, harbours and bays would have similar stories as ours to tell.

Northland is unique because of it's geographical isolation and the strong ties that people feel for the land (manawhenua) and sea (manamoana).

This research project undertaken in 2009 was instigated to create a picture of what it was once like.... so that we can be better informed to manage what we have got.



This work is dedicated to J.K. and the
Doubtless Bay Marine Protection Group

This compilation is primarily a snapshot of a local area. A time-line of the history of the New Zealand fishing industry is briefly included. For a more comprehensive study, refer to Jenny Haworth & David Johnson's *HOOKED the story of the New Zealand Fishing Industry* and *TIDES ORF CHANGE The story of the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen*.



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FORWARD

Joni Mitchell once famously said that “you don’t know what you’ve got ‘till it’s gone.”

Establishing an environmental history of our marine area, to find a baseline of what it was like in the past, is a management tool to assist us to make informed decisions on how to manage the future. Rather than just use fisheries data from 40 years or so ago (a standard much below the ocean’s potential), this work is an effort to realise that once the sea was ‘teeming with living creatures’ – and God saw that it was good.

And then, to ask ourselves.... What are we going to do about it.

Memorial to Early Landing near Taipa Bridge – the first fishermen.



In the beginning.

The anthropologist Foss Leach found from middens in the North that snapper was the most common fish, up to 100% at some sites. Comparisons of archeological evidence with present day trawl data suggests that the average size of snapper from middens was about 13cm longer and 2.2.kg heavier than today (Mossman, S 2008).

From the earliest contact, Explorers documented Maori fishing methods . Joseph Banks (the Botanist on the Endeavour) wrote in 1769 of the 'abundance of nets, up to 1000m long.'

1814 – J.L. Nicholas said 'nets ere larger than any used in Europe'.

A Dr. Thomson noted that some of the nets were 1,000 yards long and required 500 people to draw them properly. Such nets were owned by the community.

1855-1875 – R.H. Matthews described a shark fishing exhibition involving 1000 people and 50 canoes. Read complete version on p.11-12

1890 – Grey Mullet were supplied by Northern Maori for a canning factory at Unahi.

Hundreds of fishing grounds were named and identified in detail, up to 25miles at sea. Muriwhenua fishermen worked the whole of the inshore seas and workable depths were known .

It appears apt that the creation myth of the North Island (Te Ika a Maui) is based on the biggest catch ever made!



Local Maori and French sailors hauling a seine net on the beach at Russell, in 1831.
Painting by Barthelemy Lauvergne. *Alexander Turnbull Library, B-098-005*

Canning

Mullet congregated in dense schools and could be fished in quantity from the North Cape to the Bay of Plenty, as well as the West Coast. Mullet boats called 'fishing smacks' or 'half-deckers', were common by the 1890's.

A canning factory called 'Messrs Peace' in Whangarei was so successful that they processed year round, regardless of spawning, which normally took place in December-January.

This advertisement was
placed in the Auckland
Weekly News, 1901



They exported to England, Australia, India and China as well as replacing the imports of canned fish into New Zealand.

By the mid 1890's canning was established. Refrigeration started with the export of frozen fish and trawlers began to make their mark on the fishing industry.

Lindo Ferguson and Butler's Whaling Museum

Lindo was a medical doctor and at one time he was the Deputy Mayor of Auckland. His family is only the 4th owner of Butler Point (near Hihi). Captain Butler purchased the property in 1839.

Whalers used Mangonui harbour as a trading port. Such was the demand for trade that up to 30 American Whalers were anchored in Mangonui Harbour at one time! Cooper's Beach is named after the 'coopers' whose trade it was to mend ship's barrels.

The area was once a pa site and has archaeological sites. Visitors to this private museum are always impressed at what the Ferguson's have committed to preserving our history. It is open by appointment.

Lindo standing beside the whaling pot found on the property.



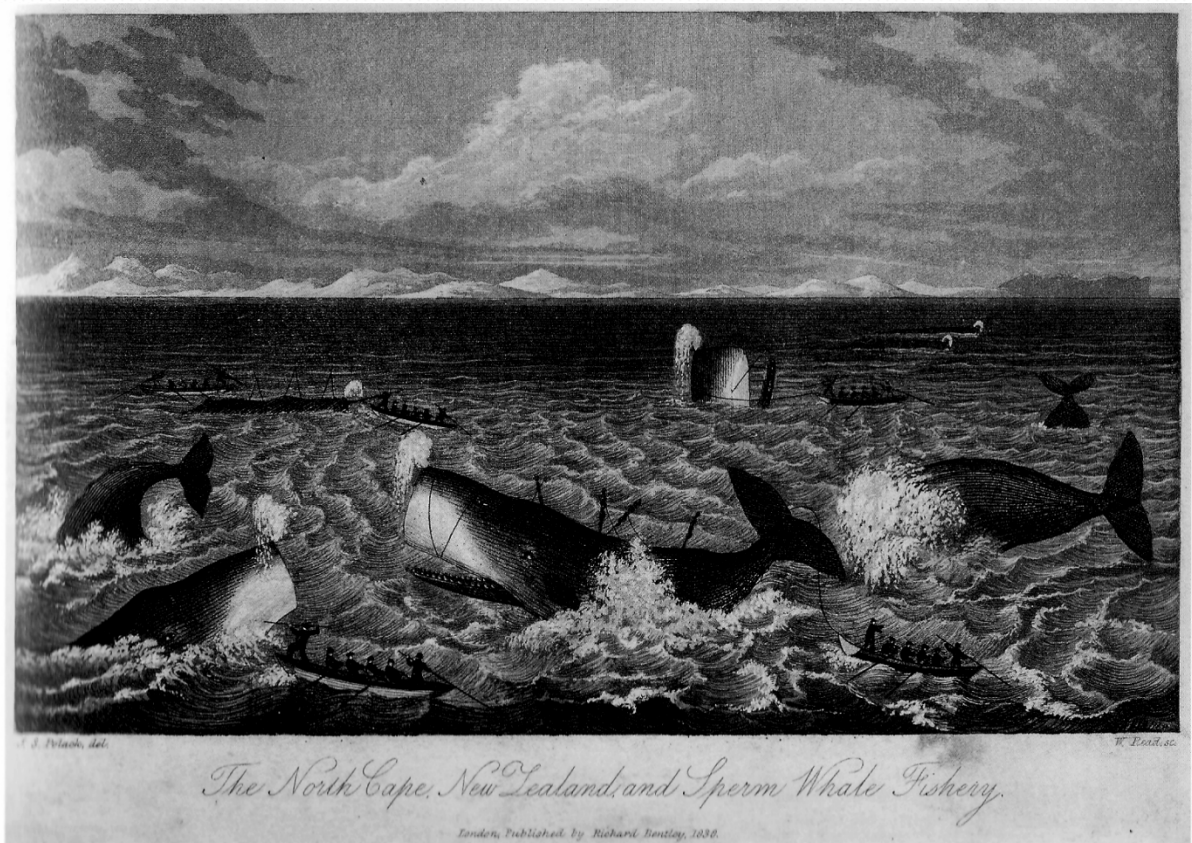
Painting by....Mangonui Harbour looking towards Butler Point.

WHALES

Did you know that way back in the 1700's whales were becoming scarce in the Northern Hemisphere? That's why whalers came down to the Pacific..explorers reported that they 'couldn't believe the numbers '.

According to one study it was estimated there were 27,000 southern right whales off New Zealand, but by 1925 they had been reduced to about 25 reproducing females.

The last whale caught in the Far North was in 1904 by Te Maro Maori and the last whaling ship to visit New Zealand was the *Charles Morgan* in the following year.



The North Cape, New Zealand, and Sperm Whale Fishery (1838),
Engraving by Joel Samuel Polack (1807-82).

A-032-026, Drawings and Prints Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.

TRADITIONAL SHARK FISHING

Introduction: The following excerpt was transcribed by the Royal Society at Auckland in 1910. It was an address given by **R H Matthews** describing shark fishing excursions at Rangaunu along customary lines in 1855 and 1875.

The traditional customs were strictly observed and rigidly enforced.

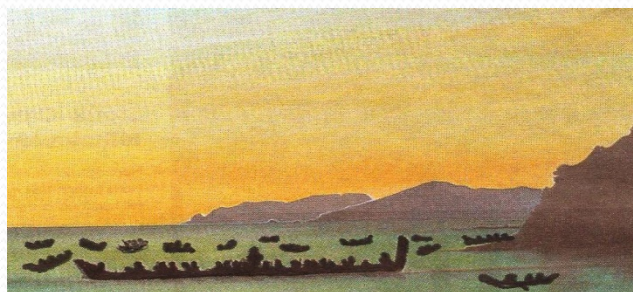
The season for fishing the kapeta (dogfish) was restricted to two days a year. The first time was about full moon in January, held during the night, and two weeks later just after the new moon, held in daylight. Anyone who killed a shark after this would be liable to the custom of muru, and would be stripped of his property.

At the time, mana over the kopua (the deep) was exercised by **Popata Te Waha**. He exercised the authority of the timing of this event over surrounding tribes coming from Taemaro, Kohumaru, Victoria Valley, Herekino, Ahipara, Parengarenga and Rangiwahia. There would be about fifty canoes, each with a crew of about twenty, making a total of at least a thousand, besides the many that remained in camp to cook.

I (**R H Matthews**) received an invitation from chief **Pukewhau** to go fishing with him. For many days prior, Natives were to be seen going to Te Unahi on the Awanui River, Okuraiti and Pukewhau, the three principal rivers flowing into Rangaunu Harbour. All were intent on getting plenty of dried mango (shark) for during the winter.

There were canoes of all sizes, from the large wakataua (war canoe) to the small tiwai. Mullet was used as bait. Short wooden clubs called 'timo' were used to kill the sharks, but the jawbone of a horse or an ox was also used.

After a signal gun was fired by **Popata te Waha** at Okuraiti the canoes were launched and joined the fleet at **Te Ureroa** facing the Pukewhau River to wait until the tide ebbed and the sharks were intercepted by the fleet. After **Popata** shouted 'charge' there followed a most exciting race for the fishing ground. It was a brilliant moonlight night and the whole fleet could be plainly seen paddling furiously for the channel. The shouting, yelling and cheering, together with the noises that only the old-time Maori could make, were indescribable.



Within five minutes from the time of anchoring, and for the space of at least three hours, the sound of the timo (club) could be heard incessantly all around . All this time the fleet was gradually working down towards the mouth of the harbour. As the tide flowed we pulled up-river at Te Mutu to unload our catch. Any canoe had the right to continue fishing until high water.

The sharks were all landed and laid out in separate heaps. Many of them had notches cut out of the fins and tails to identify them to individual owners. The catch in our canoe totalled 180. In one canoe 265, or 6 tons in weight were caught.

The cleaning and drying of the sharks commenced. Only the heads and entrails were discarded. The livers were compressed by using large stones and the oil was caught.

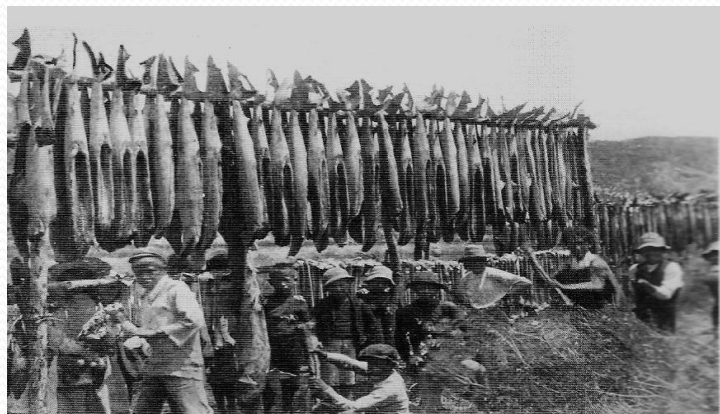
The total number of sharks caught, including those taken a fortnight later was about seven thousand, an average of about sixty-five per canoe.

The dried sharks were stacked in food-houses like fire-wood. Narrow strips would be cut and cooked on hot stones and beaten with a pestle to soften the flesh.

Shark oil was used in a variety of ways. It was mixed with kokowai (red ochre) for painting war-canoes and carvings, to anoint the bones of the deceased and as a cosmetic for the body and hair.

The teeth of the mako were greatly-prized. I saw two bullocks given for a pair in 1855.

Footnote: This address was read-out in full by **Warren Matthews** in 2009 on a radio broadcast. A complete copy can be found at the **Far North Museum** or searched for on www.waitangi-tribunal.govt.nz/reports



1914 Drying sharks.
Auckland City Libraries, A14507

Eeking out a living

Large inshore stocks of fish made it easy for pre-European Maori to sustain themselves. The Treaty of Waitangi guaranteed the continuance of this. Up until 1962 Maori fishing rights were protected by law. After 1963 the fishing industry was deregulated and financial incentives given to develop inshore fisheries, especially snapper. The fisheries suffered badly and so it was intended that the 1983 regulations and Quota Management System (QMS) in 1986 would address this. Many part time fishermen were excluded, many of them Maori. Eventually Maori groups challenged the QMS through the courts and eventually the Maori Fisheries Act of 1989 was passed (Mossman, S. 2008).

Large group fishing activities declined after the late 1800's but Maori day.



This whanau is drying snapper in the sun, before packing in flax kete. Taupo Bay, 1902.

Auckland War Memorial Museum
2159

Early settlers mixed farming and fishing for sustenance and sale. Mangrove estuary in Northland. Watercolour by John Philemon Backhouse. *Alexander Turnbull Library, NZ.B-107-001*



What they said....

In 1961 I was fishing and diving around the Cavalli Islands in pristine water chocker full of sea-life.

There was a special cave at Whangamumu where you had to swim into it, climb out onto rocks and go underwater again. There were hundreds of crays. I went back recently but the sea had changed the entrance and there were no more crayfish.

You could catch fish anywhere and anytime. You would see large flocks of birds and acres of fish. Brodie's Creek was a particularly good place to fish.

I could spear up to 25 red moki an hour. Once I caught 18 crays in 6 minutes. **Fred Flowers. Cooper's Beach.**



Fred with a 17lb 'Packy' caught off Matauri Bay, 1961.

Doubtless Bay is rated highly by NZ divers for its diversity and some of the best beach and pinnacle dives. When I first started diving at Matai Bay (2001), it looked like the place was strewn with cobwebs because of all the fishing line everywhere. I was part of a team of 'cleaners' who have collected up to 500kgs of lead, kilometers of fishing line and nets. In contrast to what it must have been like.... it has been stripped and over-fished. However, there is still much of interest to be seen, like seahorses, nudibranchs, shrimps, triple-fins and octopus that can be found in the nooks and crannies that lie in the wide-spread dispersion of kina barrens at Matai. **Andre Kunz. AtoZ**

Diving, Whatawhiwhi.

Local marine management is not about individuals.

It is about a community working together to manage, monitor and foster the marine environment



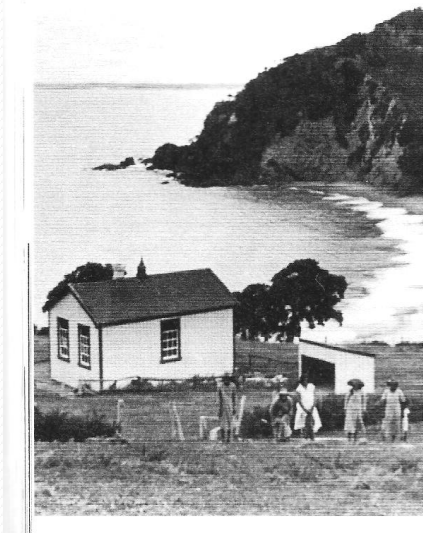
What they said.....

In 1973 I realised that fishing in New Zealand was far better than anything I had ever experienced in other parts of the world (after losing six lures, all on big fish on the beach). **Mark Feldman (DrMed). Kerikeri and USA.**

The bird life was amazing (at Rangaunu Harbour) you name it... it was there. There were heaps of fish, big snapper along the edge of the mangroves, around the 1970's. It only took one drag of the net to catch lots of fish. **Celia Christensen. Awanui Harbour.**



Karikari Peninsula was 'untouched' in the 1960's. There is a warm current that occasionally hits the top of the Cape. You used to see sub-tropical fish, turtles, sea snakes spotted groper. Sword fish would come into the Bay. **Alex (Dobby) Dobbins.**



Growing up at Waiari Bay, Karikari Peninsula (early 1900's)...we were self sufficient, there was plenty of fish, we never went hungry. **Millie Windlebourn. Kaitaia.**

Millie's school at Rangiawhia .
Photo: Northwood Collection

What they said.....

As a commercial fisherman in 1951 I would handline snapper and lift Cray pots by hand. It was simple to get a fishing license then (from the Post Office). We tried in 1967 to regulate it and asked MAF in Wellington to limit them – but they wouldn't hear of it. There were about 65 boats fishing then. Now there are just 2 fishing for snapper. It's not economical for Commercial fishermen now.

Japanese Long-liners would come right into the Bay. . One boat had 5 Doreys – they took 780ton. Also, I was rammed once by a Taiwanese Trawler that was poaching paua on the West Coast. It took 2 days for the police to arrive, but they found two and a half ton of shelled paua, they took everything, from the size of a 20 cent piece upwards. **Malcolm MacMillan, Cooper's Beach.**



1960 Japanese Dory leaving its mother ship to set snapper longlines.
Photo: Ron Greig



Northwood Collection

It was a totally pristine environment on the West Coast around Reef Point in the 1960's. Everything was so readily available. The stocks of crayfish and paua were so abundant in shallow water they could just bob for whatever they wanted. No need for a mask, it was their (Maori) diving method to touch and feel. **Laurie Austin, Awanui.**

Grandfather used to go eel fishing around 1948 with me near lake Puheke. There was lots of fish back then. In the 1970's the fishing was thrashed. Gill nets stripped the reefs and there was damage by trawlers.

I had a charter boat operation in 1988. I would take out diving parties to the Pinnacles off Brodie's Creek they would liken it to parts of the Poor Knights with the colour and fish life. Divers would be so enthusiastic and happy with their dive. But fishermen with gill nets used to target these areas. It was very disappointing to see. **Doug McColl, Cooper's Beach**

What they said....

I remember an abundance of fish. As a boy I would make nets with scavenged materials and catch fish up rivers. I've observed many changes over the years and am very concerned about the loss of the sandy foreshore from Pukewhai to Rangiputa, today it is thick with mangroves. For example, the 'Shark Shed' on the Rangaunu Harbour, would not now be accessible by boat. **Bronco Ulrich, Kaiangaroa,**



100 Year old shark shed. Once a place where 40foot boats unloaded their catch, now surrounded by reclaimed salt marsh and mangroves.



Peter and his brother caught these huge teraki off Mangonui Heads. 1950's.

We lived off the Mangonui harbour in the 1950's. It was full of shellfish; so abundant with pipis around smokehouse Bay (Maori Point). There were huge cockles at Dacre's Point (Butler Point) I believe they are not there today, I went back and looked for them. We used to flounder in the upper harbour, now it is so silted up **you** would flounder!

Once, on the Hihi side of the harbour, we caught so many mullet in a dingy there was no freeboard, you could only see the rope around the top of the dingy.

I remember taking cream across the Oruaiti ford, it was full of mullet, they were going back to spawn at Paranui. You could catch snapper up the Oruaiti river at a place called Paiparaki, past Kenena Marae

What they said...

I can recall when I was a boy there was a lot of snapper down the harbour (Rangaunu). There was so much native bush that it would stop the sludge coming down into the river and sea. The sea was blue. I do not remember colour discoloration of the sea after a big rain that you see today. Kaimaumau area was so clean and blue. There was no run-off.

In the old days the whole place was bubbling with school fish. It's like a desert today. **Whiti Awarau, Awanui.**



Fishing boats tied up at Unahi.

The streams around Awanui were so pristine, you would see kokopu and fresh-water crayfish.

Fishing off Ninety-mile beach when I was a boy was amazing, in the early 1950's.. We would get tuatua and toheroa. It was easy to catch snapper. Dad only caught enough for a feed.

I will never forget seeing snapper spawning off Karikari – it was a phenomenal thing and very moving for me.



The Awanui River and Rangaunu Harbour. Photo: James Titford (Northland Age)

What they said.....

I consider the huge downturn in abundance of Kahawai in Northland waters as a national tragedy because of its most important role in ecological, recreational and food fish terms. It was not under quota and therefore 'available' to commercialism – a gross environmental blunder. Many people are familiar with the seabird 'feeding frenzy' associated with kahawai. My personal observations over 36 years and others that I have discussed this with, all strongly agree that both the numbers and size of kahawai/plankton/bird feeding melees have decreased dramatically and progressively since the mid-late 1980's. This coincided exactly with the huge increase in commercial fishing purse seine vessels on kahawai (which no quota applied). This has had very considerable impact on the traditional recreational and customary fisheries everywhere. I have made a comparison of fishing effort (in time) required to catch a kahawai, see table .

Lew Ritchie, (MSc Hons) Matapouri.

Table of catch rate data derived from my 'Sealog' 1991-92 and boat log 2004-6.

	1991-92		*	2004-06	
	Summer	Winter		Summer	Winter
No. of fishing trips	32	27	*	18	28
No. hours fished	28.1	26.9	*	58.25	39.5
No. kahawai caught	99	29	*	29	16
No. of hook-hours/fish	0.57	1.86	*	4.02	4.94

DATA ON FISH STOCKS

The following table was recorded for the County of Mangonui October 1985.

3.7 FISHING

The fishing industry has a substantial economic involvement in the County. 127 registered fishing vessels operate out of the five harbours of Mangonui (49), Rangaunu (36), Houhora (28), West Coast (9), and Parengarenga (5). This figure is double the number of registered 16 years ago.

Processing activities are based at Mangonui and Houhora. Sixteen main species of wetfish are landed at our ports, the majority being Snapper, Shark, Hapuka and Grey Mullet.

The tonnages landed for wetfish, shellfish and crustacea at the various ports for 1980-1983 are illustrated below in Table 16.

TABLE 16
LANDINGS AT VARIOUS MAIN POINTS
(Tonnes)

	1980	1981	1982	1983
Ahipara	41	119	63	143
Awanui	393	303	269	464
Houhora	363	279	361	521
Kaimaumau	12	21	51	24
Mangonui	838	678	518	714
Parengarenga	33	8	14	13
Taipa	54	24	20	73
Others	58	15	58	73
<u>TOTAL</u>	1792	1447	1352	1963



Continued from Council records....

TABLE 17
MAIN SPECIES LANDED
(Tonnes)

	1980	1981	1982	1983
Blue Nose	0	--	63	85
Flounder	--	--	--	6
Grey Mullet	63	80	138	192
Red Gurnard	18	26	20	47
Hapuka (Groper)	297	174	174	257
Kahawai	30	24	33	52
Yellowtail Kingfish	--	--	15	21
Parore	29	18	20	42
Porae	27	23	18	23
Shark	305	253	107	290
Skipjack	--	--	--	--
Snapper	707	557	525	592
Rig	--	--	12	57
Tarakihi	24	18	20	36
Trevally	148	155	156	88
Mixed Fish	62	47	11	52
Minor Species	82	72	42	123
Eels	7	6	4	--
Crustacea & Other Shellfish	283	493	708	708

Whilst catches of most species are increasing, catches of Shark, Snapper and Trevally have decreased notably.

Figures for reported snapper landing throughout New Zealand.

* 1978 = 18,000 tons

* 1980 = 12,000 tons

(Fishing Industry Board data)

Data from Ministry of Fish 2009

Total landings for north-east inshore finfish stocks* 2007-2008

	Landing Site	Total Number of Landings	Landings (tonnes)
Greater than 1000t	Auckland	10096	3485
	Tauranga	6481	3024
	Manukau	5793	1727
	Whangarei	5327	1393
500-1000t	Mangonui	2264	715
	Kaipara Harbour	7361	681
	Coromandel	6931	676
	Thames	4481	590
200-500t	Leigh	3261	543
	Houhora	2204	337
	Manukau	1635	151
	Rangaunu	1160	126
100-200t	Raglan	941	112
	Bay of Islands	447	93
	Weymouth	1087	92
	Port Waikato	339	90
50-100	New Plymouth	163	88
	Gisborne	186	87
	Awanui	465	58
	Whakatane	1005	51
	Ahipara	575	51

* Snapper, Kahawai, Red gurnard, Pilchard, Tarakihi, Flatfish, Trevally, Grey mullet, Bluenose, Kingfish, School shark, Rig, John dory, Hapuku/bass.

Tonnage of landings at Mangonui for selected species 2007/08 fishing year

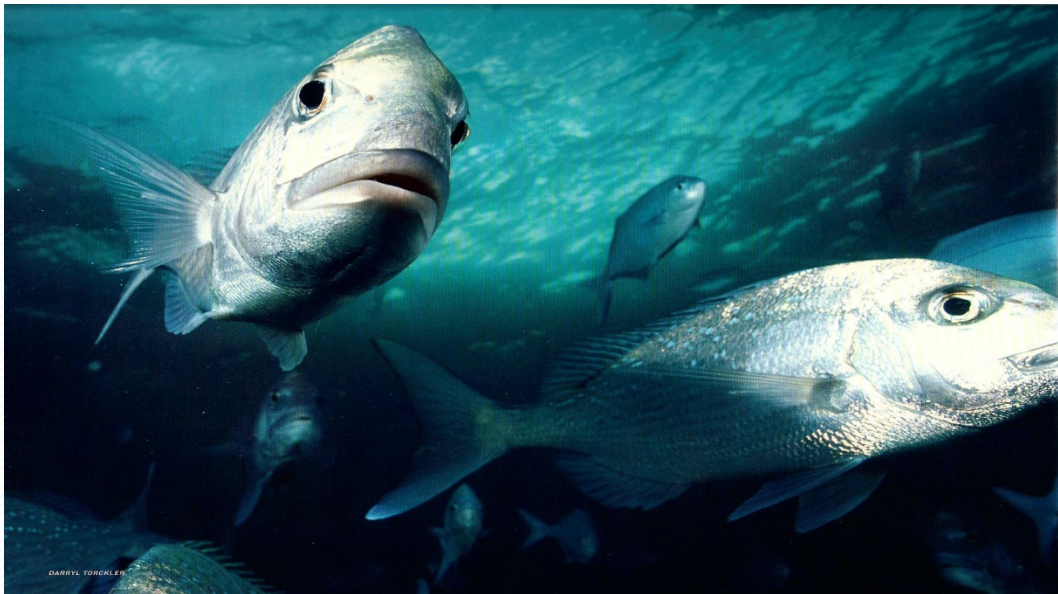
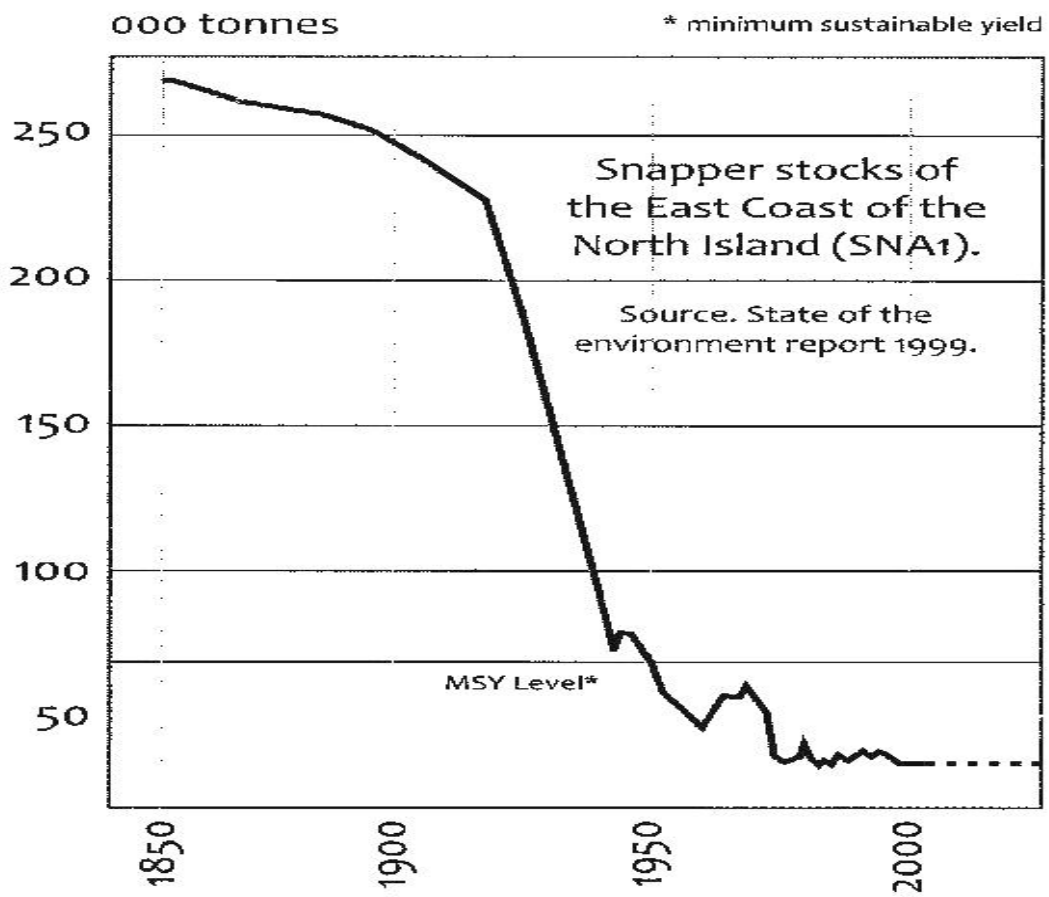
Species Code	Fishstock Code	Total landing (kgs)	Total landings Tonnes
Rock lobster*	CRA1	40465.65	40
Red gurnard	GUR1	48728.4	49
Hapuku/bass	HPB1	87016.71	87
Kahawai	KAH1	2685.3	3
Kingfish	KIN1	2056.4	2
Parore	PAR1	2	0
Porae	POR1	1517.95	2
School shark	SCH1	38618.89	39
Skipjack tuna	SKJ1	423.55	0
Snapper	SNA1	153695.19	154
Rig	SPO1	11154.67	11
Tarakihi	TAR1	81001.8	81
Trevally	TRE1	37940.7	38
Grand Total		505307.21	505

*nb. Rock lobster only crustacean/shellfish in table. No Scallops (SCA1), Pipi (PIP1A, PIP1B), Cockle (COC1A COC1B), Paua (PAU1) or Paddle crab (PAD1) showed landing for this year at Mangonui.

Compare this data with 1980-83.

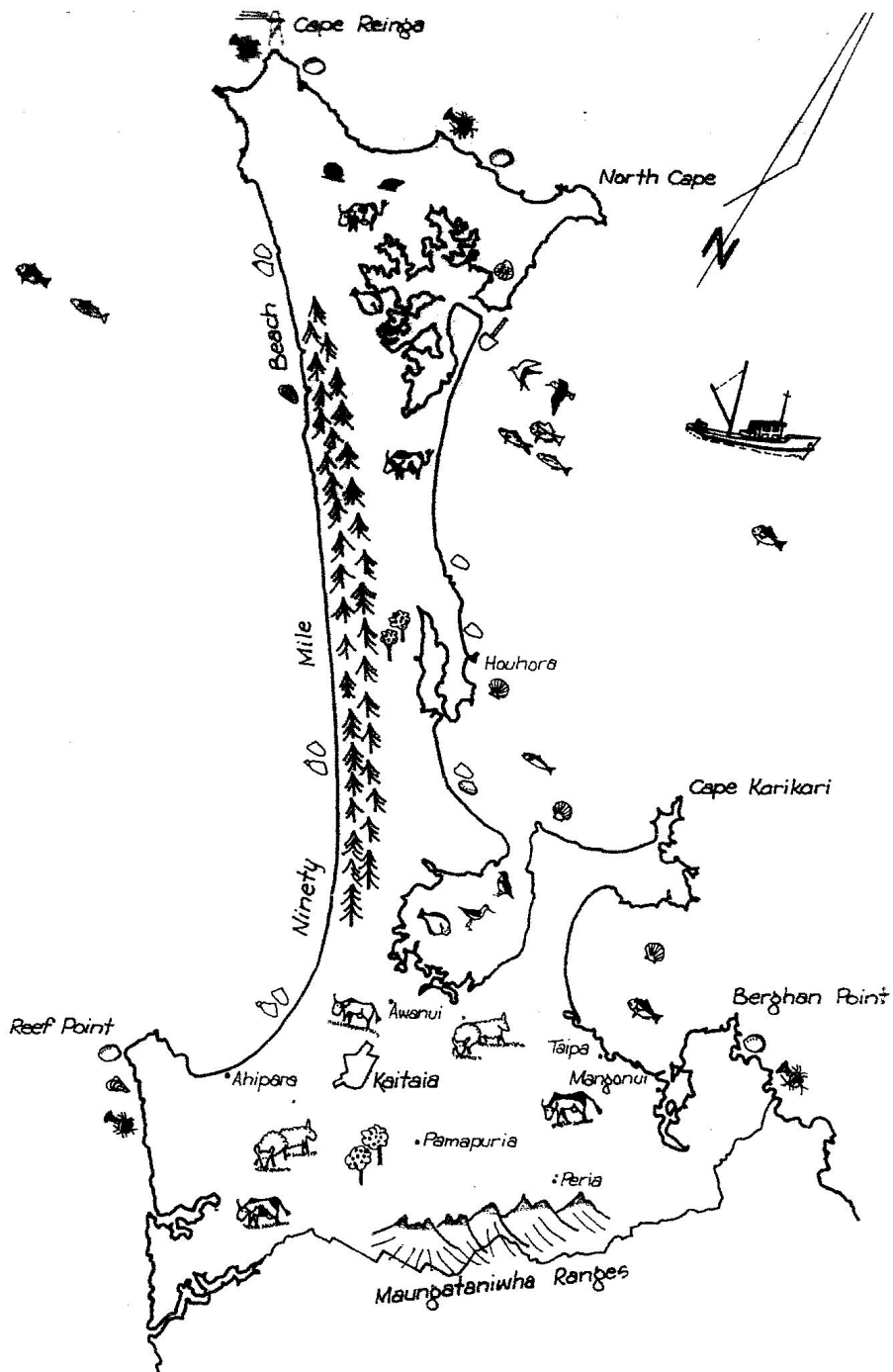
There has been a significant reduction in landings of snapper at Mangonui wharf.

Also only 9 fishing boats were operating from Mangonui in 2009, compared to 49 in the 1980-83 season.



Resource and Land Use Map 1980.

Mangonui Council information.



EARLY CONSERVATION/PROTECTION

Maori had developed a set of practical rules to protect stocks of fish and shellfish. Only certain species of fish could be taken at certain times and places. A rahua (total ban) could be applied to allow heavily-fished area to recover or to protect spawning fish. It was forbidden to dump waste into the water. If someone drowned a tapu was put in place. Some of these customs are still observed by both Maori and Pakeha fishermen.

The first endeavors to protect fish be Europeans were sparked by political interests in fishing.

- * In 1865 a committee were concerned that Picton's herrings would be fished out.

- * In 1866 leases were introduced to stop overharvesting of oyster beds. Maori were very concerned at the commercialism of oysters because of their reliance on them as a regular source of food.

- * A closed season was legislated between November and March.

- * Politicians were also concerned about the 'wholesale and indiscriminate slaughter of young fish but were shouted down in the interests of promotion and development.

- * The Fisheries Conservation Bill was passed in 1884.

- * In 1886 oyster beds were closed (in Whangarei and north of the Bay of Islands), to prevent their 'absolute destruction'. The use of spades for stripping rocks was banned.

- * 1903 fishermen petitioned to prevent trawling within 3 miles of land

- * In 1905 trawling was banned in some areas.

- * In 1926 grounds were closed to any form of netting during spawning season.

Up to the late 1950's the Marine Department conserved fisheries through restrictive licensing. However, fishing licenses were about to be opened up. Also, about this time the the Japanese, having largely fished out their own waters became a bigger threat and they could not be controlled beyond the 3 mile limit. (Johnson, 2004)



Good catches in the early days. Southland Museum & Art Gallery.

MORE RECENT CONSERVATION or OVERFISHING?

New Zealand's remoteness limited fisheries up to the 1960's. However Japan's landing of 7 million tonnes of fish in 1966, was huge compared to New Zealand's 56,000 tonnes.

Changes taking place at that time were to protect, promote or exploit fisheries were:

- * 1957 Japanese reported to be longlining for snapper off our west coast.

- * 1963 the end of restrictive licensing, permits introduced instead. Some fishermen considered this 'open slather'.

- * 1964 Fisheries Research established

- * 1965 the 12 mile limit was adopted

- * 1973 Fishing Industry changed name to Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries.

- * mid 1970's the Government provided loans and incentives – resulting in larger catches and different species of fish landed. Some companies with no previous involvement joined the gold rush. A few fishermen complained that they weren't catching as much fish as they used to.

- * 1974 Russian trawlers took more than 90,000 tonnes of wetfish – twice the amount of the Japanese catch. They took 3 times as much as the domestic fleet landed.

- * 1977 Foreign vessels caught 361,000 tonnes.

- * 1978 200-mile exclusive zone declared.

- * 1982 the 'Effort Reduction Scheme' presented because of concerns about depletion of fish.

- * Pair trawling banned in Great Exhibition Bay.

- * 1986 ITQ's (Quota system) introduced.

- * 1988 Muriwhenua claim by the Waitangi Tribunal made public and Maori Fisheries Bill introduced into Parliament. The Government would buy quota in recognition of their rights.

- * 1975 The first Marine Reserves at Goat Island introduced.

- * 1995 A separate Ministry of Fisheries set up.



Overcrowding.

Commercial Fishing. April 1983



Overfishing. Orange roughy.
SeaFIC

Marine Reserves

Data on marine reserves:

- 14 times more snapper than numbers outside of reserve
- average size of snapper is 15cm longer
- Noticeable change in reduced number of sea urchin/kina (kina are grazers of kelp)
- provides base-line information for researchers
- tourism and visitors bring more money in the area, providing jobs



MANGONUI FISH SHOP

1866 A small bakery was shown to be here (on an old map).

? Hubert Dacre a dentist, practiced here.

Ernie Beaver was the first to sell fish 'n chips at a shop south of the Mangonui Hotel. Roy Morey carried fish 'n chips up to the school for lunch.

1940's Norman Coutts purchased the business off Ernie Beaver and moved it to its current site. In 1948 Norman used a Bullock team of 12 to move Bernie Shepherd's house from Fern Flat (assisted by Alf Shepherd and Bill Wrathall) and then loaded it onto Harry Moffat's truck. The house was then set on piles over the water. A chiller and smokehouse (that was moved from Maori Point) were added. Fish and chips were sold. Neil Moffat peeled potatoes and was paid with fish & chips. It was also the Coutts' residence .

1954 Wally Adams also used it as a residence. He sold 'wet fish' from the front door. He used a wooden army hut with a deep-freeze to store the fish.

1958 Morrie Vincent added two tables to the deck area.

1959 Bill and Jane Atkinson cooked fish, their five children helped in the process. In one of Pickmere's books there is a quote that they had 'the best fish'n chips in the world'. Bill said his secret was 'getting everything just right'. Bill extended the shop. He used Totara piles from the P & T depot. (Totara does not get eaten by worms). The children were known to fish from their beds by dangling a line out the window. Fish & chips were not sold after the early 1970's.

1981 Keith Allen and later, Chester Long owned the place but only sold wet or smoked fish.

1984 Neil & Bruce Moffat. In 1986 Neil & Joy Moffat updated legal requirements and reintroduced Fish & Chips. Neil remembered Mrs Coutts' wonderful batter and experimented until he created something similar. It must have been memorable because Backpackers promoted the Fish & Chips worldwide.

1993 Errol Dean. In 1998 he procured a liquor license.

2001 A consortium of three people from Whangarei owned it.

2008 Lee Graham and Nina ?



Watercolour used
with permission
from Bill Atkinson.

What they would like to see....

I would now like to restrict politician's 'growth economics' and limit commercial fishing near the coast. **Fred Flowers.**

Youth who complete a dive course see the world from another perspective . They gain more respect for themselves, their peers and the environment they are interacting with.

I would like to see more EMR programmes (Experiencing Marine Reserves) where students experience a local beach and then go on to a marine reserve to compare the difference. **Andre Kunz.**

The pollution of Rangaunu harbour is apparent in 2009. It is also claimed that oysters brought here from Waikari may be responsible for an unwanted pest – sea squirt. **Laurie Atkinson**



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