

## **Kahawai Challenge Team**

Update #31, January 2007

After a quick summer break and a spot of fishing the Kahawai Legal Challenge team is gearing up to head to the Appeal Court in late February in defence of sustainability and the public's right to fish. The legal team representing this public interest case, originally brought by the NZ Big Game and Recreational Fishing Councils, is being well supported by option4, Ngapuhi and many other representative groups and individuals.

Sanford Limited, Sealord Group Limited and Pelagic & Tuna NZ Limited have jointly appealed the 2007 High Court kahawai decision. The appeal is due to be heard on February 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> in Wellington.

The Hesketh Henry legal team and Alan Galbraith QC are focussed on defending the principles established in the High Court:

- That all New Zealanders have a well-settled common law right to fish;
- Sustainability is the bottom line; and
- That fisheries must be managed to enable people to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing.

These principles, if upheld, will apply to kahawai and other important fisheries including snapper, blue cod, kingfish, crayfish and paua. A return to previous abundance levels and the need to ensure enough fish is left in the water for future generation's interests is uppermost in the minds of those defending the High Court decision.

Legal representation costs will be at least \$80,000 and will be money well spent considering what is at stake. The recent arrival of \$1000 from the Piako Underwater Club is a fantastic contribution from a club of around 80 members. Based in Morrinsville, their membership hails from all around the Waikato, from Otorohanga to Tauranga.

These keen divers and fishers have noticed a dramatic decline in kahawai numbers over the past ten to fifteen years and decided something needed to be done to protect and enhance everyone's access to healthy fisheries.

Several weeks ago a group of five fishers went out for a day's fishing at 5am and returned nine hours later having caught and released only two kahawai along with a number of snapper. For a group with over 200 years fishing experience between them and the latest technology onboard it was a prime example of the lack of abundance in inshore waters, and a timely reminder of the importance of upholding Justice Harrison's High Court decision.

It is only one month until the Appeal Court hearing. If you want to contribute to this advocacy that seeks to protect your right to fish for food please do one of the following:

- Make a secure online donation at [www.kahawai.co.nz](http://www.kahawai.co.nz)
- Dial 0900 KAHAWAI (0900 52 42 92) to automatically donate \$20 via your phone account
- For larger amounts please contact Jo Harris on 0800 KAHAWAI (0800 52 42 92).
- Cheques made out to the 'Kahawai Challenge Fund' can be sent to the team via *New Zealand Fishing News*, PO Box 12-965, Penrose, Auckland.

Thank you to all previous contributors, the team appreciates your ongoing support.