**ACTIVITY: Fisheries role-play**

**Activity idea**

In this activity, students take on the role of a stakeholder in New Zealand fisheries. In their role, they decide whether they agree or disagree with the statement ‘there are plenty of fish in the sea’.

By the end of this activity, students should be able to:

* examine the issue of fishing in New Zealand from a range of different value perspectives
* use their growing science knowledge to make an informed decision on a New Zealand conservation issue.

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**Introduction/background**

Humans living near the coast have probably always used the ocean as a source of food. However, with advances in fishing equipment, larger ships and new tracking technologies, there is evidence to suggest that many fish stocks around the world have reduced significantly.

In New Zealand, commercial fishing is a major industry worth over $1.3 billion in exports. Our quota system sets catch limits for commercially important species and aims at sustainable management of our fish stocks. It is also estimated that 31% of New Zealanders enjoy recreational fishing.

**What you need**

* 2 A4 size signs: ‘strongly agree’ ‘strongly disagree’
* Stakeholder cards
* Optional: chalk or string/ribbon

**What to do**

1. Set up a continuum line – you can use chalk/ribbon or string to make the line clear if necessary – and place one A4 card at each end.
2. Explain to the students that they are going to hear a statement. When they have thought carefully about the statement they should move to a position on the line that represents their view. For example, if they agree strongly, move to that end of the line and stand as close to the card as possible. If they disagree with the statement, they might position themselves a couple of metres away from the ‘strongly disagree’ card. If students are unsure or don’t know, they should stand in the middle. Make it clear to the students that there is no right or wrong answer and they should make up their own mind. If appropriate demonstrate by moving along the line and discussing different positions with the students.
3. Read out the statement ‘There are plenty of fish in the sea’ and give the students enough time to position themselves on the line.
4. Ask students to share their reasons for their place on the line:
* How did you make your decision?
* Did you draw on personal experience?
* Do you feel you needed more information to make a decision?
* After hearing other people’s points of view, would you like to change your position?
1. Divide the students into groups of 3. Explain to the students that they are going to take on a role of someone who has an interest in fisheries in New Zealand (a stakeholder). Give each group a [stakeholder card](#stakeholder). These can be adapted to suit your class’s ability and your local area. For example, you may want to add a local iwi representative or change the species of seabird.
2. In their groups, they will need to discuss this stakeholder role and think about the issue/statement from this other point of view. (Optional: Give students time to research their stakeholder using a variety of sources.) Explain to the students they will need to be able to defend their position.
3. After a few minutes ask each group of stakeholders to decide where they would stand on the value line in response to the same statement: ‘There are plenty of fish in the sea’.
4. Ask each group to share their reasons for their place on the line:
* Why does your stakeholder feel this way?
* Who has the most to lose if fish stocks are overexploited/reduced significantly?
* Where do fish fit into the marine food web?
* What other organisms will be affected if the numbers of fish decrease?
* Apart from fishing, what other human activities might affect fish stock levels?
1. Ask students to position themselves on the value continuum line again, representing their individual viewpoint:
* Has anyone’s position changed? Why? Why not?

**Stakeholder cards**

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| **Local resident:** You live near the beach and enjoy swimming, walking along the beach and fishing off the pier every now and then. Your family has lived in the area for 80 years. You have noticed that, every year, there are more people fishing off the pier but they are catching smaller fish. |
| **Small locally owned fishing company:** You own a small boat and employ 3 local people. You sell your fish to markets and fish and chip shops in the area. Your family has been fishing here for 3 generations. Lately, you have found it more difficult to catch enough fish to make enough money to keep your business going.  |
| **Large commercial fishing company:** Your company is responsible for a fleet of 5 large boats and a staff of over 100. You have always caught a lot of fish and have spent a lot of money this year on new equipment to track and catch more fish. |
| **Local recreational fisher:** You do not make any money from fishing but most weekends you go fishing with your family and enjoy catching fish for family and friends. You have noticed that, since a new marine reserve was set up in the next bay, that you are catching some bigger fish again. |
| **Local marine wildlife tour operator:** Your company runs daily tours for tourists. You point out dolphins, seals, albatross and other animals that you see along the way. In the past, you also used to run fishing tours but had to stop these as customers were not happy with the amount they were catching. |
| **Forest a Bird member:** You have been a member of the conservation organisation Forest & Bird for a number of years. You use the *Best Fish Guide* when choosing what fish to buy in the supermarket. This guide ranks different fish according to how many there are (fish stock levels), how damaging the fishing methods are and so on. You are really concerned that New Zealand fish stocks are in danger. |
| **Marine scientist:** Your job is to research fish stock levels, using observation, measurement and computer programs to analyse whether numbers are increasing or decreasing. You advise the government on new fishing policies and laws. Over the past few years, you’ve observed a drop in numbers of many species of fish.  |
| **Fish and chip shop owner:** You run a successful business on the waterfront that is popular with locals and tourists. You used to buy fish from local fishermen, but now it is cheaper to buy from the large company who catch their fish outside your area. |
| **Policy-maker at the Ministry of Fisheries:** Your job is to make policies and rules that affect fishing in New Zealand, for example, how many fish people are allowed to catch and what equipment they can use. You think the number of fish being caught should be reduced but are worried how this will affect local businesses and residents.  |
| **Albatross:** You are an adult albatross, a large seabird that feeds on fish, squid and krill. You have a chick in a nest on shore so you spend most of your time out looking for food to bring back for your chick. Each year, you are finding it more difficult to catch enough fish. |
| **Seafood processing company:** You are the manager of a factory that processes seafood products. One of your products is boxed frozen fish sold to supermarkets. You are doing really well at the moment, and there is big demand for your products. |