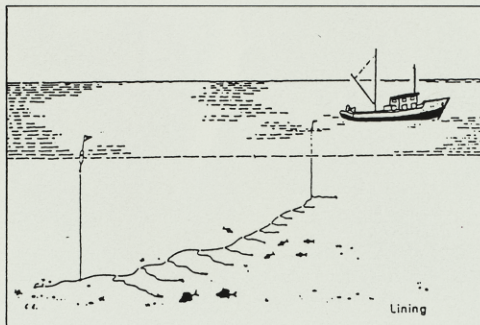
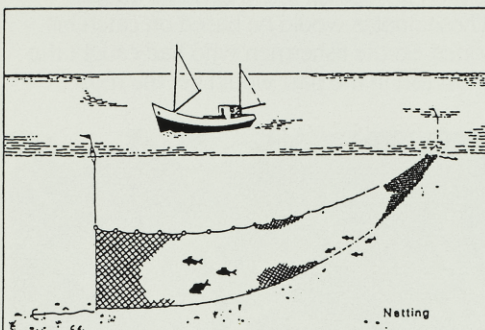
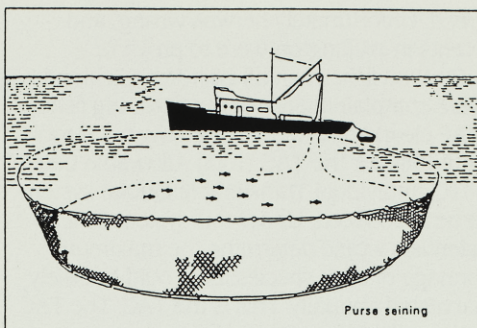


quota species the amount of quota any fisherman received would be based on the previous three season's catch. Basing quota on the previous three year's catch was a particularly insipid MAF policy that achieved nothing but considerable waste and false interest in the fishery. It would have been far wiser to announce, in 1986, that kahawai would be brought into the Quota System within a few years and quota allocation would be based on catch histories up to 1986!

Realizing how foolish MAF policy was, the executives at X, Y and Z companies knew that they could maximize their long term profits by securing the most quota. That meant they had to catch as many kahawai as they could until the time MAF declared it a quota species, even if it was not profitable! So by 1986 the race for quota was on. It did not matter to these executives or MAF that these valuable sport fish would end up as fish meal for pig food or Australian cray bait. All that mattered was the race for a quota!

### Seen It Before

Because our American tourist had seen it all before he was able to predict all these developments with ease. Despite a multitude of letters to luminaries like Moyle, Moore and Lange, nothing was done. The press showed some interest in the problem. Warren Berryman did a series of investigative articles for the *Auckland Star*. His articles made clear what a financial boon the Quota System was for the big fishing companies. The *New Zealand Herald* wisely pointed out in an editorial that the Quota System had no hope of



How purse seiners, gill netters and long liners catch fish.

providing effective fisheries management without additional regulation. The *Top Half* show dispatched a team to Mangonui and did a show on the depletion of the kahawai in Doubtless Bay and the illegal commercial fishing in Parengarenga Harbour. But all this activity had no effect on the bureaucrats in Wellington.

MAF officials did not seem interested in preventing depletion of the fishery. They dismissed the growing complaints of the recreational sector as unscientific hearsay. They also ignored the fact that recreational fishermen, using rod and reel, could detect the decline of a fishery long before their commercial friends who used mass fishing techniques like purse seine nets. MAF policy appeared to be to wait until the commercial fishermen were crying about the decline of a species and then do something. Or, in the words of a former director of fisheries research, Duncan Waugh, the actions of MAF are usually "too little and too late."

By 1988 other voices were being raised around the country. Even casual sport fishermen were able to see that the kahawai and kingfish were disappearing. Gill nets seemed to be plucking the kingfish off every reef on the North Island. Purse seiners were cleaning the kahawai out of the Bay of Plenty and even dared to invade the Hauraki Gulf: a move that infuriated Auckland-based sport fishermen. Conditions for shore-based and small boat sport fishermen had deteriorated from bad to worse.

The only bright spots were a slight improvement in the numbers of snapper and

## What the tourist would like to see done

The National Policy for Marine Recreational Fisheries reflects New Zealand law when it states: "Where a species of fish is not sufficiently abundant to support both commercial and non-commercial fishing, preference will be given to non-commercial fishing."

MAF has not enforced the law or this policy. If it was, the following things would be done NOW to restore the populations of our kingfish and kahawai.

1. To avoid future mistakes MAF needs the maximum amount of information on the stocks of sport fish. Given financial restraints, the best way to get accurate information is by polling recreational fishermen. Studies around the world have shown clearly that recreational fishermen detect a declining fishery first and are almost always accurate in their assessments. These polls can be conducted at fishing contests, by phone and through New Zealand's two fishing papers.

MAF's history of relying on the data supplied by commercial sources is a grave error. These sources are highly biased for two reasons:

- A. Financial executives of large fishing companies know that fishing out a highly valued species will lead to a maximum short term profit that can be invested elsewhere. Such profits make their corporate image look good but is a threat to our children's fishery. Information supplied by their lobbyists will be deeply biased.
- B. Fishermen who use mass fishing tech-

niques like purse seiners guided by spotter planes can actually fish out the last school of an aggregating species without realizing what they have done.

2. New Zealand needs a ban on the use of gill nets by amateurs and commercial fishermen. The only exceptions would be for mullet and flounder fishermen who would have to use nets no higher than about one metre, and for amateur fishermen using hand held nets to catch baits. Mullet and flounder fishermen should have to man their nets. Nets left for extended periods are wasteful and the by-catch of parore and trevally in nets left overnight is significant.

Banning gill nets would decrease the kingfish catch by about 50 percent, save birds and reef ecosystems from destruction, and help protect our kahawai too. Only a complete ban will be enforceable, given MAF's financial restraints.

3. 300,000 amateur fishermen land around 2,500 tonnes of kahawai annually. Most amateur fishing is in Zone 1 (see map). This is the Zone with the most marked decline in the kahawai population. Within this Zone there should be a daily limit of four kahawai per recreational fisherman until the kahawai populations are restored. This will stop recreational anglers from filling their boats with fish when they are lucky enough to find a school of kahawai.

4. Purse seining in Zone 1 should have been stopped before the season began this year, in April. This is the only way to effectively pro-

tect the remaining kahawai in that area since purse seiners catch almost 90 percent of the kahawai!

5. The kahawai should be brought under the Quota System immediately to end the race for quota. The maximum TAC should be less than the 5,200 tonne figure determined by scientists some years ago. This would allow recovery of the species. None of that TAC should be allocated to Zone 1 until amateur fishermen and scientists agree the kahawai have recovered.

6. There should be a total ban on commercial fishing for kingfish. Kingfish attract Japanese and American tourists to come to New Zealand. They spend an average of \$5,000 EACH while they're here. It is insane to let commercial fishermen take them for a \$1.50 a kilogram.

Most commercially caught kingfish are landed by a few operators who target them with gill nets and long lines. These people will try to label their kingfish a by-catch. There can be no exceptions for kingfish that are a "by-catch". Any kingfish brought into port should be forfeited to the Crown.

7. There should be a limit of two kingfish per day per amateur fisherman.

8. Attempts to increase the harvesting of anchovy, pilchards, mackerel and other baits must be stopped. Our sport fish require these species as food. If we turn these bait fish into fish meal we will lose the whole inshore fishery!