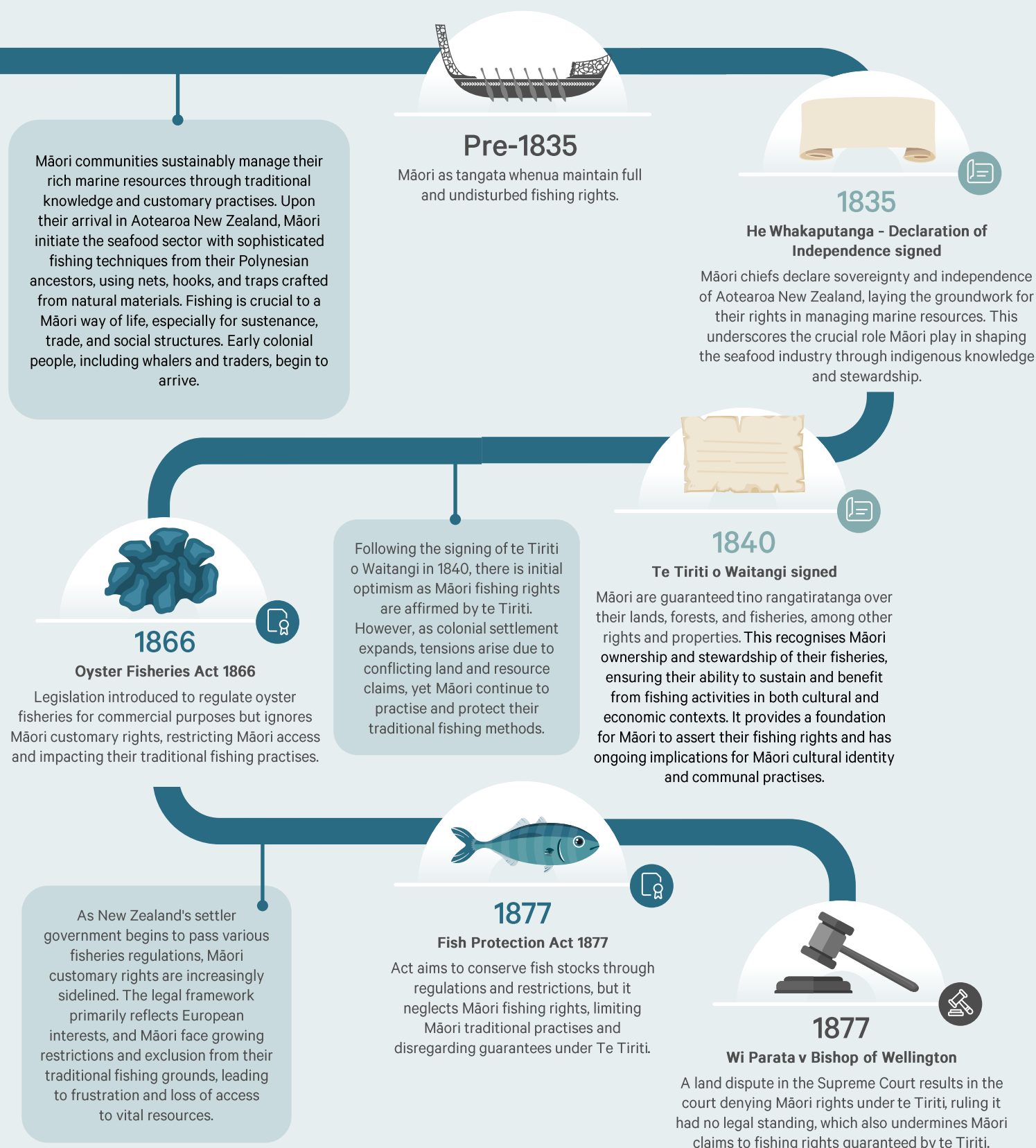


Māori and the seafood sector

The following timeline presents a historical overview of New Zealand's seafood sector, tracing its evolution from He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirenī in 1835 to the present day. It highlights how Māori, as the original stewards of the marine environment, established the seafood sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. Additionally, it emphasises the importance of sustainability and the integration of indigenous knowledge in modern fisheries management, reflecting a journey of resilience, advocacy, and cultural preservation. The timeline serves to not only reflect on past challenges but also to inspire hope for the future – a future where the seafood sector and Māori can collaborate effectively to ensure sustainable, culturally respectful, and equitable management of marine resources.



Māori face significant challenges as commercial fishing expands and government policies continue to marginalise Māori interests. Despite these pressures, Māori communities persist in advocating for the recognition of their rights. Social and economic disparities widen, but traditional fishing remains a critical part of cultural identity and local economies.

By the 1970s, there is a growing sense of grievance among Māori due to historical injustices, including land alienation and loss of access to fisheries. The broader Māori renaissance sees increased activism and political mobilisation, with Māori demanding the recognition and restoration of their traditional fishing rights.

1909

Native Land Act 1909

Act facilitates the alienation of Māori land, disrupts access to traditional fisheries, and undermines Māori control and management of fishing areas.

1975

Land March

National protest led by Dame Whina Cooper to advocate for Māori land rights, including issues related to traditional fisheries access.

1975

Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

Establishes the Waitangi Tribunal to address breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi which occur after 1975.

1986

Te Weehi v Regional Fisheries Officer (1986) 1 N.Z.L.R. 682

In the High Court, the status of Māori customary fishing rights are argued, and the Court affirms these rights as legally valid. This landmark decision sets a precedent for protecting these rights under New Zealand law.

1986

Quota Management System

System is introduced to sustainably manage fish stocks through annual quotas, but it excludes Māori fishing rights.

1983

Fisheries Act 1983

Act introduced to manage fisheries; the Act acknowledges Māori interests but does not adequately protect their customary rights under te Tiriti.

1986

Waitangi Tribunal Muriwhenua & Ngāi Tahu Claims

Significant claims by Muriwhenua iwi and Ngāi Tahu are lodged in the Tribunal regarding historical grievances related to Māori customary fishing interests, seeking better recognition and protection of Māori fishing rights.

1989

Māori Fisheries Act 1989 (Interim Settlement)

Legislative measures are introduced to allocate a portion of national fishing quotas to Māori which acknowledges Māori fishing rights and provides economic opportunities.

The seafood sector sees significant developments as Māori demand greater participation and rights within the industry. Advocacy and legal challenges result in some initial concessions and acknowledgements of customary fishing practises.



1991

Resource Management Act 1991

Act introduced to manage New Zealand's natural and physical resources with provisions that acknowledge and protect Māori environmental and cultural interests.

This period is marked by the settlement of significant claims that recognise Māori fishing rights and provide substantial commercial assets. Environmental concerns lead to the implementation of more sustainable fishing practises, with Māori playing a pivotal role in the stewardship and management of marine resources. Co-management arrangements emerge, reflecting a more collaborative approach to fisheries management.



1992

WAI27 - Ngāi Tahu Sea Fisheries Report

Highlights the historical grievances related to Ngāi Tahu's fishing rights and the Crown's failure to uphold guarantees under te Tiriti. Underscores the importance of these rights for Ngāi Tahu's well-being and sets a precedent for the recognition and protection of Māori fishing rights.



1992

WAI307 - The Fisheries Settlement Report

Addresses the settlement of Māori fishing claims, highlighting the Crown's commitment to resolving grievances under te Tiriti and ensuring equitable access to fisheries resources.



1992

Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992 & Deed of Settlement

Māori fisheries claims are settled with the signing of a Deed of Settlement (commonly referred to as the Māori Fisheries Settlement or the Sealord Deal).



1996

Fisheries Act 1996

Updated legislation to incorporate Māori customary rights into fisheries management, granting Māori greater authority and involvement in managing and protecting fisheries.



2003

Attorney-General v Ngāti Apa [2003] 3 NZLR 643 (CA)

The status of Māori customary title to the foreshore and seabed is contested, and the Court of Appeal rules that these titles had not been extinguished, allowing Māori to prove customary ownership.



2004

Māori Fisheries Act 2004

Implements the 1992 Fisheries Settlement, establishing structures for managing Māori fisheries assets and allowing Māori greater control and stewardship over their fisheries.



2004

Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004

Legislation introduced which extinguishes Māori customary title to the foreshore and seabed.

Māori continue to secure significant gains in the seafood industry, highlighted by strategic investments and increased participation in fisheries management. There is a growing emphasis on sustainable practises, ecological stewardship, and the integration of traditional knowledge into modern fisheries governance.



2004

Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004

Settles Māori claims to the commercial aquaculture space, ensuring Māori receive a share of aquaculture opportunities and resources, supporting Māori aquaculture enterprise growth, and recognising customary rights and economic interests.



2011

Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011

Repeals the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 and introduces a legal framework to recognise Māori customary interests, allowing for Customary Marine Title and Protected Customary Rights while balancing public access and environmental management.



2019

Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act

Ngāti Porou hapū rights and interests in their customary marine territory are recognised, and a legal framework for customary marine title is established.



2015

Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary Proposal

Proposal made for a marine reserve likely to affect Māori fishing interests without consultation.



2021

Re Edwards (Te Whakatōhea No. 2) [2021] NZHC 1025

In the High Court, Te Whakatōhea's customary marine title under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 is recognised and this sets a precedent for future title claims.



2013

Fisheries (Amateur Fishing) Regulations 2013

Recognises Māori customary fishing practises within updated recreational fishing regulations, allowing traditional practises to continue sustainably alongside recreational fishing.



2024

Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary Proposal Scrapped

Proposal scrapped and Māori fishing rights, established under the 1992 Treaty of Waitangi settlement remain protected.

Ongoing developments see Māori continuing to assert their rights and influence in the seafood sector. Changes in marine and coastal legislation reflect a greater recognition of Māori customary rights. There is a focus on sustainability, environmental protection, and the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in fisheries management. Māori enterprises thrive within the commercial seafood sector, contributing to the national economy while maintaining cultural and community ties.