



**The
Aotearoa
Circle**

Mā te Kaitiakitanga
ko te Tōnūtanga
Prosperity Through
Guardianship

The Legal and Political History of Māori within the Seafood Sector Briefing Paper

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Executive Summary

This Briefing Paper presents a historical overview of New Zealand's seafood sector, tracing its evolution from He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni in 1835 to the present day. It is essential to acknowledge the pivotal role of Māori in the development and sustainability of this sector. The Briefing Paper seeks to chart the transition from Māori's initial possession and cultural practises to the contemporary fisheries governance and industry structure. By examining this history, we aim to provide readers with a nuanced understanding of how legal developments, legislation, and settlements have shaped the sector.

The Briefing Paper is organised to provide an overview of each significant period, detailing critical changes and developments from He Whakaputanga to today. It includes an analysis of the seafood sector's evolution, with a particular focus on Māori contributions and perspectives.

Beginning with a summary of key highlights, the Paper then discusses notable historical events, offering insights into the dynamic relationship between Māori and the seafood industry. Additionally, the Briefing Paper addresses historical grievances experienced by Māori, the measures taken to address these issues, and the ongoing efforts to balance environmental sustainability with the recognition and preservation of Māori customary fishing rights.

This Briefing Paper 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.



Key Highlights

1. He Whakaputanga & Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840):

- **Establishment of Rights:** He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratana o Nu Tirenī (the Declaration of Independence) of 1835 and Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) in 1840 affirm Māori sovereignty and ownership, including their fisheries. Subsequent legislation often overlooked or undervalued these rights, leading to significant tensions and long-term legal disputes.
- *He Whakaputanga* asserted the sovereignty of Māori chiefs over Aotearoa New Zealand and laid the groundwork for Māori to claim their rights and sovereignty, including the management and use of marine resources.
- *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* recognised Māori ownership and stewardship of their fisheries, ensuring their ability to sustain and benefit from fishing activities in both cultural and economic contexts. It provided a foundation for Māori to assert their fishing rights and has ongoing implications for Māori cultural identity and communal practises.

2. Early Legislation and Impact (19th and Early 20th Century):

- **Oyster Fisheries Act 1866 & Fish Protection Act 1877:** These Acts were the first aimed to regulate fisheries but often restricted Māori access to traditional fishing grounds, conflicting with customary practises and contributing to significant grievances. As a result, it undermined Māori economic and cultural activities, eroded cultural practises and knowledge systems tied to fishing, and set a precedent for further legislation marginalising Māori fishing rights.

3. Landmark Legal Cases:

- **Wi Parata v Bishop of Wellington (1877):** This case set a precedent by dismissing the Treaty of Waitangi as a legal nullity, undermining Māori claims to customary rights. This led to long-term grievances and diminished legal protections for Māori fishing rights, necessitating future legal redress.
- **Te Weehi v Regional Fisheries Officer (1986):** A pivotal case reaffirmed Māori customary fishing rights, recognising that Māori could fish for customary purposes without a permit. This decision had significant social effects for Māori by strengthening cultural identity, inspiring advocacy and activism, and enhancing community cohesion. The case underscored the importance of legal mechanisms in achieving social justice for Māori communities.

Key Highlights

4. Significant Settlements and Acts

- **Māori Fisheries Act 1989 & Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992:** These legal instruments addressed historical grievances by transferring fisheries assets in the form of commercial quota shares to Māori, establishing frameworks for the co-management of resources, thereby recognising and restoring Māori fishing rights under the Treaty. It facilitated substantial participation in the commercial fishing industry and contributed to the economic well-being of Māori communities.

5. Resource Management and Environmental Legislation

- **Marine Reserves Act 1971 & Resource Management Act 1991:** These Acts, while aimed at environmental conservation often restricted Māori traditional fishing practises over land that was newly established as Reserves. However, in contrast to legislation introduced 100 years earlier, these recognised the importance of including Māori perspectives in managing marine resources.
- *The Resource Management Act* introduced a comprehensive approach to managing New Zealand's natural and physical resources with sustainability at its core. It acknowledged the special relationship between Māori and their ancestral lands and waters, incorporating principles of the Treaty of Waitangi to safeguard Māori fishing rights and ensure their voices were heard in environmental decision-making processes.

6. Modern Legal Developments

- **Attorney-General v Ngāti Apa (2003) & Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004:** Landmark decisions and subsequent legislation that shaped the legal landscape concerning Māori rights over foreshore and seabed areas, affecting their customary marine practises and access rights.

Key Highlights

7. Waitangi Tribunal Reports

- **WAI 22 Report (1988) & Ahu Moana: The Aquaculture and Marine Farming Report (WAI 593, 2000):** These reports investigated breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi and made recommendations to restore Māori rights and ensure their inclusion in future aquaculture developments.
- This Briefing Paper highlights a small selection of examples of Waitangi Tribunal claims that include fisheries components. Please note that there will be many more examples but for the purposes of this Paper, we have selected a number of examples to provide a representative overview of the historical context.

Through this exploration, readers will gain a nuanced view of how legal developments, legislation, and settlements have shaped the interactions between the seafood sector and Māori. This document acknowledges the challenges and injustices faced by Māori, while also emphasising the progress made towards achieving equitable resource management and envisioning a hopeful future for collaborative and sustainable fisheries management.

Introduction

The relationship between Māori and the seafood sector in Aotearoa New Zealand is steeped in a deep history that spans centuries. For Māori, the moana and its resources hold profound cultural, spiritual, and economic significance. This connection is rooted in tikanga (customary practises), which have governed the use and management of marine resources long before European contact.

The arrival of European settlers and subsequent legislative measures significantly disrupted these traditional practises and undermined Māori rights. Early laws often failed to recognise Māori sovereignty and customary rights, leading to enduring grievances and tensions. The signing of He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni (Declaration of Independence) in 1835 and Te Tiriti ō Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) in 1840 were pivotal moments that affirmed Māori tino rangatiratanga over lands and fisheries. Yet, the true recognition and respect of these rights have been a contentious journey marked by legal dispute, landmark court cases, and numerous policy reforms.

This document aims to provide an overview of this historical trajectory through a high-level timeline that encapsulates key events, legal milestones, and significant settlements. By exploring these developments, we seek to highlight the progress made in addressing historical injustices and underscore the ongoing efforts required to achieve equitable and sustainable management of marine resources that respect Māori perspectives and rights.

Through examination of the past, this document contextualises the present-day dynamics within the seafood sector whilst offering insights and directions for future collaboration. By honouring the cultural and environmental values inherent in Māori customary practises, there is a pathway towards a better future for the seafood sector in Aotearoa New Zealand.

High Level Timeline

High-Level Timeline

The relationship between Māori and the seafood sector in Aotearoa New Zealand is complex and multifaceted, grounded in centuries of customary practises and deep spiritual connections to marine resources. Throughout history, this relationship has been significantly influenced by various legislative measures, legal cases, and settlements that have aimed to regulate and manage marine resources. However, some of these have had the effect of impacting Māori access and rights to these resources.

This high-level timeline outlines the major milestones in this historical journey, highlighting significant developments from the early 19th century through to the present day. It seeks to provide an overview of the legal and regulatory landscape as it pertains to Māori fishing rights and the broader seafood sector.

By examining these pivotal moments, we aim to better understand the evolution of the sector and the ongoing efforts to achieve equitable and sustainable management of fishery resources that respect and incorporate Māori perspectives. For more information on each of these, please click on the relevant **Further Reading** link under each milestone in the Summaries section.

19th Century

1835	He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni (Declaration of Independence) Māori chiefs declare Aotearoa New Zealand’s independence, affirming their sovereignty and rights over their lands and resources, including fisheries.
1840	Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) Treaty signed between Māori chiefs and the British Crown, guaranteeing Māori full authority over their fisheries and other properties.
1866	Oyster Fisheries Act 1866 Regulation introduced to control oyster fishing, impacting customary Māori practises.
1877	Fish Protection Act 1877 Early legislation aimed at protecting fish stocks that often-restricted Māori fishing rights.
1877	Wi Parata v Bishop of Wellington Legal case dismissing the Treaty of Waitangi as a nullity, undermining Māori claims to land and taonga including fisheries.

Early 20th Century

1908	Fisheries Amendment Act 1908 Amendment to existing fisheries law, affecting Māori customary fishing rights.
1909	The Native Land Act 1909 Legislation impacting Māori land and related fishing territories.

Mid to Late 20th Century

1971	Marine Reserves Act 1971 Establishment of marine reserves, balancing conservation efforts with Māori customary rights.
1975	Land March 1975 Protest march highlighting Māori land grievances, including issues related to fisheries.
1975	Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 Establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal to hear claims of breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi.
1977	Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, and Exclusive Economic Zone Act (updated in 2021) Legislation defining Aotearoa New Zealand 's maritime boundaries and jurisdiction over resources.
1978	Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978 Protection of marine mammals, influencing fisheries management and Māori customary practises.
1982	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) International agreement defining the rights and responsibilities of nations with respect to their use of the world's oceans, promoting the peaceful use of marine resources. It also established Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). This later influenced domestic legislation.
1983	Freshwater Fish Farming Regulations 1983 Regulation of fish farming activities, affecting Māori freshwater fishing interests.
1983	Fisheries Act 1983 Comprehensive fisheries management legislation

Mid to Late 20th Century

	Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 (Amendment)
1985	Amendment to the 1975 Act extending the Waitangi Tribunal's jurisdiction to hearing and reporting on Māori grievance claims against the Crown from 1840.
1986	Te Weehi v Regional Fisheries Officer (1986) 1 N.Z.L.R. 682 Landmark case reaffirming Māori customary fishing rights.
1986	Quota Management System Introduction of a system to manage fish stocks, incorporating Māori customary and commercial interests.
1986	WAI22 - Muriwhenua Fishing Claim Significant Waitangi Tribunal claim focusing on Māori fishing rights in the Muriwhenua area.
1986	WAI27 - Ngāi Tahu Claim Comprehensive claim covering various issues, including fisheries.
1987	NZ Māori Council v Attorney-General and others (1987) 6 N.Z.A.R. 353 Case confirming the government's obligation to act in accordance with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.
1989	Māori Fisheries Act 1989 (Interim Settlement) Interim legal settlement acknowledging Māori fishing rights and allocating fishing quotas.

1990s

1990	Fisheries (Recordkeeping) Regulations 1990 Regulations mandating recordkeeping for fisheries operations.
1991	Resource Management Act (updated in 2024) Act integrating resource management, considering both environmental and Māori customary concerns.
1991	WAI262 - Indigenous Flora and Fauna and Cultural Intellectual Property Claim Comprehensive claim addressing broader issues of flora, fauna, and intellectual property.
1992	Convention on Biological Diversity International treaty aimed at conserving biological diversity, promoting sustainable use of its components, and fair sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.
1992	WAI27 - Waitangi Tribunal Ngāi Tahu Sea Fisheries Report 1992 Tribunal report addressing Ngāi Tahu sea fisheries claims.
1992	WAI307 - Waitangi Tribunal The Fisheries Settlement Report Report focusing on the broader fisheries settlement with Māori.
1992	Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992 & Deed of Settlement Māori fisheries claims were settled with the signing of a Deed of Settlement (commonly referred to as the Māori Fisheries Settlement or the Sealord Deal)

1990s

1995	World Trade Organisation Agreements Set of agreements under the WTO that govern international trade, including fisheries subsidies and trade policies.
1996	Fisheries Act Updated fisheries management legislation.
1998	Fisheries (Kaimoana Customary Fishing) Regulations 1993 Regulations enabling the management of customary fishing rights.
1999	Fisheries (South Island Customary Fishing) Regulations 1999 Similar regulations specific to the South Island.

Early 2000s

2002	WAI 593 - Waitangi Tribunal - Ahu Moana: The Aquaculture and Marine Farming Report Tribunal report on aquaculture and marine farming issues.
2003	Attorney-General v Ngāti Apa [2003] 3 NZLR 643 (CA) Landmark case recognising customary interests in the foreshore and seabed.

Early 2000s

2004 **Māori Fisheries Act 2004**

Legislation consolidating Māori fisheries assets and management.

2004 **Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act (updated in 2023)**

Settling Māori aquaculture claims and providing for future aquaculture development.

2004 **WAI1071 - Report on the Crown's Foreshore and Seabed Policy**

Tribunal report criticising government policy on the foreshore and seabed.

2004 **Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 (repealed in 2011)**

Controversial legislation addressing ownership of the foreshore and seabed.

2004 **Hikoi in protest of the Foreshore and Seabed Act**

Major protest march against the Foreshore and Seabed Act.

2004 **Aquaculture Reform (Repeals and Transitional Provisions) Act 2004 (updated in 2023)**

Act reforming aquaculture management and addressing Māori claims.

2004 **Formation of Aotearoa Fisheries (now trading as Moana New Zealand)**

Establishment of Aotearoa Fisheries Limited (Moana New Zealand).

2007 **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**

International instrument adopted to recognise and protect the rights of indigenous peoples, including their rights to natural resources.

2011 to Present

2011	WAI 262 Waitangi Tribunal Report - Kō Aotearoa Tēnei Comprehensive report on claims concerning Māori culture, flora, fauna, and intellectual property.
2011	Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 Legislation replacing the Foreshore and Seabed Act, recognising Māori customary rights.
2012	Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act Environmental regulation of activities within Aotearoa New Zealand's maritime zones.
2013	Fisheries (Amateur Fishing) Regulations 2013 Regulation governing recreational fishing.
2015	Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary Proposal Proposal for a large marine reserve, which impacted Māori fishing interests.
2019	Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act Legislation recognising customary marine title and management rights.
2020	Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020 Regulations impacting freshwater resources and related Māori interests.

2011 to Present

2020	Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Marine Aquaculture) Regulations 2020 Standards for marine aquaculture, affecting Māori customary and commercial interests.
2021	Re Edwards (Te Whakatōhea No. 2) [2021] NZHC 1025 Legal case further affirming customary marine title.
2024	Treaty Principles Bill - Hikoi Proposed legislation and protest march addressing Treaty principles.
2024	Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary Bill scrapped Decision to abandon the contentious marine reserve proposal.
2024	Māori Fisheries Amendment Act 2024 Recent amendment addressing contemporary Māori fisheries issues.

Summaries

19th Century

The 19th century was a transformative period for Māori and Pākehā (European settlers) in Aotearoa New Zealand. It marked the initial establishment of treaties and laws that were meant to define the relationship between these groups. The signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) in 1840 was a significant event, intended to guarantee Māori sovereignty while allowing British settlement. However, the subsequent decades saw numerous breaches of the Treaty, leading to conflicts and land confiscations. Early fisheries legislation and court rulings conflicted with the collective notion of traditional Māori customary rights and practises, resulting in socio-political tension and disenfranchisement.

1835	He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni / Declaration of Independence
<p>He Whakaputanga is a foundational document asserting the sovereignty of Māori Rangatira (chiefs) over Aotearoa New Zealand and their lands, resources, and seas. He Whakaputanga laid the groundwork for Māori to assert their rights and sovereignty, which includes the management and use of marine resources. This assertion of independence and self-governance has ongoing relevance in contemporary discussions particularly in the context of the Treaty of Waitangi and subsequent legal and political developments.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni / Declaration of Independence• O'Malley, Vincent. He Whakaputanga The Declaration of Independence, 1835. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2017	

19th Century

1840	Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi
	<p>Te Tiriti o Waitangi, signed in 1840 between Queen Victoria representing the English Crown and Māori iwi, is a foundational document in New Zealand's history. Under Te Tiriti, Māori were guaranteed tino rangatiratanga (absolute authority) over their lands, villages, and all their possessions, as well as their taonga (treasures). This included explicit recognition and protection of Māori fishing rights. Article Two in both the English and Māori versions of the Treaty guaranteed to Māori the full, exclusive, and undisturbed possession of their lands and estates, forests, and fisheries.</p> <p>This specific reference to fisheries in both versions was particularly significant as it assured Māori that their traditional fishing practises and rights to marine resources would be respected and preserved. The moana and its resources are taonga (treasures), vital not only for sustenance and economic well-being but also for maintaining cultural practises, customs, and identity. Māori are kaitiaki (guardians) of the moana, responsible for the sustainable management and preservation of marine resources for future generations. The acknowledgment and protection of these rights under Te Tiriti o Waitangi ensure the continuity of Māori traditions, support community resilience, and affirm the special relationship Māori have with the marine environment.</p> <p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi• Report of the Waitangi Tribunal on the Muriwhenua Fishing Claim• Palmer, Matthew S. R. The Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand's law and constitution. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2008.

19th Century

1866	Oyster Fisheries Act 1866
<p>The Oyster Fisheries Act 1866 regulated the harvesting of oysters without acknowledging Māori customary rights and traditions. By imposing licencing requirements and restrictions on traditional fishing practises, the Act effectively excluded Māori from participating in oyster harvesting unless they complied with regulations that were alien to their customary ways. This not only undermined Māori economic activities, which had relied heavily on seafood harvesting, but also eroded their cultural practises and knowledge systems tied to fishing. Furthermore, the Act set a precedent for future legislation that continued to marginalise Māori fishing rights, contributing to a broader pattern of disenfranchisement and the erosion of Māori sovereignty over their natural resources.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oyster Fisheries Act 1866 - Legislation	

1877	Fish Protection Act 1877
<p>The Fish Protection Act 1877 was enacted to manage and conserve fish populations in Aotearoa New Zealand's inshore waters and rivers by implementing regulations such as closed seasons and restrictions on certain fishing methods. These measures aimed to prevent overfishing and ensure sustainable use of marine resources. However, the Act had significant implications for Māori, as it did not explicitly recognise or protect their customary fishing rights guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi. Māori communities, who relied on fishing for sustenance, cultural practises, and economic livelihood, faced potential disruptions to their traditional ways of life due to the Act's regulations. The lack of consideration for Māori fishing rights and knowledge highlighted the need for more inclusive legal frameworks, eventually leading to subsequent legislation like the Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992, which aimed to address and resolve these issues more equitably.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fish Protection Act 1877 legislation	

19th Century

1877

Wi Parata v Bishop of Wellington

The 1877 Wi Parata v Bishop of Wellington case arose when Wi Parata, a Māori chief, challenged the Anglican Bishop of Wellington over the ownership of a piece of land in Porirua that had been gifted by Māori for educational purposes. Parata argued that since the land had not been used for the agreed purpose, it should revert to its original Māori owners. However, the court, presided over by Chief Justice James Prendergast, dismissed the claim, ruling that the Treaty of Waitangi was a "simple nullity" with no legal standing in the court.

It set a precedent that often disregarded the application and interpretation of Māori customary rights in subsequent rulings and legislation, leading to diminished control and access to traditional fishing areas. Consequently, Māori were increasingly marginalised in resource management, impacting their participation and opportunities in the seafood sector.

Further Reading:

- [Wi Parata v Bishop of Wellington](#)
- Williams, David V. A Simple Nullity? The Wi Parata Case in New Zealand Law and History. Auckland University Press, 2011.

Early 20th Century

The early 20th century was characterised by continued colonial legacy and the systemic marginalisation of Māori. Legislative measures such as the Fisheries Amendment Act 1908 and The Native Land Act 1909 further entrenched restrictions on Māori access to their customary fishing grounds and territories. During this period, Aotearoa New Zealand's legal system progressively incorporated European concepts of individual property rights and resource management, frequently undermining Māori autonomy and the principles of collective ownership and responsibility. Efforts to conserve and manage marine resources typically ignored or undervalued Māori traditional knowledge and practises. This era set the groundwork for the Māori activism that would emerge later in the century, as Māori sought to reclaim their rights and preserve their cultural heritage.

1908	Fisheries Amendment Act 1908
<p>The Fisheries Amendment Act 1908 sought to enhance the regulatory framework for managing Aotearoa New Zealand's fisheries, introducing additional measures to control fishing methods, enforce closed seasons, and implement fishing licences to promote sustainable harvesting of marine resources. While the legislation aimed to mitigate overfishing and preserve fish populations, it continued the trend of earlier laws by not explicitly recognising Māori customary fishing rights. This oversight meant that Māori communities, who traditionally depended on fishing for their cultural practises, sustenance, and economic activities, faced ongoing limitations and potential disruptions due to the new regulations. The Act's lack of specific provisions to protect Māori rights underscored the ongoing tensions and challenges in balancing resource management with indigenous customs. These inadequacies highlighted the necessity of more inclusive and equitable legal frameworks, eventually contributing to the establishment of legislation like the Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992, which aimed to properly address and secure Māori fishing rights within Aotearoa New Zealand's legal system.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fisheries Amendment Act 1908 - Legislation	

1909	The Native Land Act 1909
<p>The Native Land Act 1909 aimed to individualise Māori land ownership and facilitate its sale, resulting in significant loss of land adjacent to rivers, lakes, and coasts. This loss disrupted Māori access to fishing grounds and weakened communal management practises (katiakitanga), which was crucial for sustainable fishing. Displacement from these areas led to economic challenges and diminished ability to rely on fishing resources for subsistence and income. Additionally, the Act did not recognise Māori customary fishing rights, putting Māori at a legal disadvantage in asserting control over these resources.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Native Land Act 1909 - Legislation	

Mid to Late 20th Century

The mid to late 20th century was a time of growing Māori political activism and increasing acknowledgment of historical injustices. The 1970s marked the beginning of the “Māori Renaissance”, a period of cultural and political movement that aimed to revitalise Māori identity and securing rights guaranteed under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975 provided a formal mechanism for addressing breaches of the Treaty, including those related to fisheries. Significant legal cases, such as Te Weehi v Regional Fisheries Officer in 1986, reaffirmed Māori customary fishing rights. In addition, international treaties had both positive direct and indirect influences by shaping domestic legislation and regulations that govern marine resources, trade and indigenous rights. The introduction of the Quota Management System represented an attempt to balance ecological sustainability with economic interests, incorporating a degree of Māori participation. These developments were part of a broader push towards recognising and addressing Māori grievances and integrating Māori perspectives into national legislation and resource management.

1971	Marine Reserves Act 1971
<p>The Marine Reserves Act 1971 aimed to preserve marine areas in their natural state for scientific study and conservation purposes. The creation of these marine reserves often restricted all forms of fishing, including Māori customary fishing practises, which had implications for Māori communities. For example, traditional fishing grounds that were central to the sustenance and cultural practises of local iwi and hapū were sometimes included within these newly established reserves, limiting their ability to access and harvest seafood species such as pāua (abalone), kina (sea urchin), and kōura (crayfish).</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Marine Reserves Act 1971 - Legislation	

1975	Land March 1975
<p>The Land March of 1975, led by Dame Whina Cooper, was a pivotal event in raising awareness of Māori grievances over land loss and the need for the recognition of Māori land rights. While primarily focused on land issues, the march also underscored broader concerns about Māori sovereignty and resource rights, indirectly influencing their fishing rights and interaction with the seafood sector by highlighting the importance of customary rights and self-determination in managing natural resources.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">NZ Geographic, Inside the Land March 1975	

Mid to Late 20th Century

1975	Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 (updated in 1985)
<p>The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 marked the first formal recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi in Aotearoa New Zealand law, acknowledging its significance and laying the groundwork for addressing historical grievances. This landmark legislation established the Waitangi Tribunal, a body tasked with investigating claims made by Māori regarding breaches of the Treaty by the Crown. By setting up the Tribunal, the Act provided a legal framework for Māori to seek redress for injustices and enabled the examination and recommendation of settlements in an attempt to honour the Treaty's principles and promote reconciliation between Māori and the Crown. The Act only empowered the Tribunal to hear and address Waitangi Tribunal claims (WAI claims) after the Act's passage in 1975. This was subsequently amended 10 years later (see below).</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 - Legislation	

1977	Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, and Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1977 (updated in 2021)
<p>The Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, and Exclusive Economic Zone Act defines New Zealand's maritime boundaries and jurisdiction over its marine resources. The Act delineated New Zealand's territorial sea (up to 12 nautical miles from the baseline), contiguous zone (up to 24 nautical miles), and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) (up to 200 nautical miles). It granted New Zealand sovereign rights for exploring, exploiting, conserving, and managing natural resources within these maritime zones. The Act sought to acknowledge and maintain Māori traditional fishing practises, ensuring that Māori could continue their traditional and cultural activities in these maritime zones.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, and Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1977 - Legislation	

Mid to Late 20th Century

1978	Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978
<p>The Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978 was enacted with the primary aim of conserving marine mammals in Aotearoa New Zealand waters, including whales, dolphins, and seals. The Act provides comprehensive protection by prohibiting the taking, harming, or disturbing of marine mammals without specific permits. One significant area impacted by the Act is Māori customary fishing rights due to historical and cultural connections to marine mammals, which are integral to Māori traditions and practises. The Act's stringent regulations may sometimes interfere with customary harvesting and the use of marine mammal products for cultural, medicinal, or ceremonial purposes.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978 - Legislation	

1982	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)
<p>This international treaty governs the use of the world's seas and oceans. It established Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), giving NZ rights to manage its marine resources including fish stocks up to 200 nautical miles from its coast. As a party to this Treaty, NZ has implemented measures through legislation to prevent overfishing, protect marine biodiversity, and ensure fish stocks are harvested at sustainable levels.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)• Treves, Tullio, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982	

Mid to Late 20th Century

1983

Freshwater Fish Farming Regulations 1983

The Freshwater Fish Farming Regulations played a role in regulating the emerging aquaculture industry in Aotearoa New Zealand, with a focus on environmental sustainability and biosecurity. These regulations had the effect of potentially impacting Māori customary fishing rights by imposing compliance requirements and limitations on access to traditional fishing areas. However, the regulations also presented an opportunity for Māori to engage in regulated fish farming and contribute to the seafood sector.

Further Reading:

- [Freshwater Fish Farming Regulations 1983](#)

1983

Fisheries Act 1983

The Fisheries Act 1983 was designed to manage and regulate Aotearoa New Zealand's inshore and deepwater fisheries by implementing licencing requirements and provided the legislative framework for the Quota Management System (QMS) to promote sustainable fishing practises (not formally implemented until 1986). However, this regulatory approach significantly impacted Māori fishing rights, as it conflicted with traditional fishing practises and communal rights guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi. For example, the introduction of individual transferable quotas limited Māori access to customary fishing areas and reduced their catch allocations, thereby diminishing their ability to participate in the commercial seafood sector.

Further Reading:

- [Fisheries Act 1983](#) - Legislation

Mid to Late 20th Century

1985	Treaty of Waitangi Act 1985 (Amendment)
<p>The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 Amendment expanded the jurisdiction of the Waitangi Tribunal to investigate historical Treaty breaches dating back to 1840. This amendment enabled Māori to address long-standing historical grievances related to land confiscations, loss of resources, and other injustices that occurred since the Treaty's signing. As a result, it opened the door for Māori to seek redress and negotiate settlements, facilitating the restoration of rights, lands, and cultural assets that had been unjustly taken. This legislative change was pivotal in enhancing the ability of Māori to pursue meaningful reconciliation and justice for historical wrongdoings.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treaty of Waitangi Act 1985 (Amendment)• NZ Parliamentary Library, Historical Treaty Settlements	
1986	Te Weehi v Regional Fisheries Officer (1986) 1 N.Z.L.R. 682
<p>The Te Weehi v Regional Fisheries Officer case arose when Tom Te Weehi, a Māori fisherman, was charged with the unlawful possession of undersized paua (abalone) under the Fisheries Act. Te Weehi pleaded not guilty and argued that he had a customary right to take paua because he was fishing with the approval of tribal elders and was exercising rights guaranteed by the Fisheries Act 1983.</p> <p>The court ruled in favour of Mr. Te Weehi on the grounds that his actions were protected by customary Māori rights. The court determined that these customary rights continued to exist unless explicitly extinguished by legislation. This ruling was significant because it legally acknowledged the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in guaranteeing Māori customary fishing rights, reinforcing their legal standing and influencing the way fisheries were managed in Aotearoa New Zealand. This case laid the groundwork for further legislation and settlements, including the Quota Management System and the Treaty of Waitangi fisheries settlement (the Sealord Deal), both of which aimed to include and respect Māori fishing rights and interests in commercial and customary fishing.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report of the Waitangi Tribunal on the Te Weehi Claim to Customary Fishing Rights, 1987• Te Mana Whatu Ahuru – Waitangi Tribunal Report, Volume 3, page 2771	

Mid to Late 20th Century

1986	Quota Management System
<p>During the time of the Te Weehi case, there was national discussion surrounding the dwindling of fisheries stocks, and in 1986 after consultation with the fisheries sector, the Crown introduced and implemented the Quota Management System (QMS). It marked a significant shift in Aotearoa New Zealand's approach to managing its wild capture fisheries, establishing specific catch limits to ensure long-term sustainability. However, the implementation of the QMS also had immediate implications for Māori fishing rights, as it did not initially take into account the traditional and customary fishing practises guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi. This oversight led to tensions and challenges surrounding the recognition of Māori interests and their ability to participate equitably in the seafood sector under the new regulatory framework.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Te Mana Whatu Ahuru – Waitangi Tribunal Report, Volume 3, page 2771• Ministry for Primary Industries, About the Quota Management System	

1986	WAI22 - Muriwhenua Fishing Claim
<p>The Muriwhenua Fishing Claim (WAI22), initiated in the 1980s by five northern iwi, addressed grievances related to the loss of traditional Māori fishing rights due to colonial and government actions. The claim underscored the detrimental impact of commercial fishing on the customary fishing practises of the Māori communities in the Muriwhenua region, emphasising the urgency to recognise and restore these rights. This legal action spotlighted the significant cultural and economic losses experienced by the Māori, prompting immediate calls for the protection and acknowledgment of their traditional fishing practises and rights. This claim was reported on by the Waitangi Tribunal in the Muriwhenua Fishing Report.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waitangi Tribunal Report, The Muriwhenua Fishing Report, 1988	

Mid to Late 20th Century

1986	WAI27 - Ngāi Tahu Claim
<p>The Ngāi Tahu Claim (WAI27), filed in 1986, addressed significant historical grievances of the Ngāi Tahu iwi from the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand regarding the Crown's failure to honour the terms of the Treaty of Waitangi, particularly in relation to their traditional fishing rights. This claim was reported on by the Waitangi Tribunal in the Ngāi Tahu Report in 1991. The claim highlighted the detrimental impact of various government policies and fishing regulations, including the introduction of the Quota Management System, which restricted Ngāi Tahu's access to their customary fishing grounds and undermined their economic base and cultural practises. The iwi argued that these actions led to the loss of valuable marine resources and affected their ability to sustain traditional customs and livelihoods, seeking redress to restore their rights and re-establish their role in the seafood sector.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waitangi Tribunal Report, The Ngāi Tahu Report, 1991• Ngāi Tahu website with background of the claim	

Mid to Late 20th Century

1987	NZ Māori Council v Attorney-General and others (1987) 6 N.Z.A.R. 353
<p>The genesis of the 1987 case of the NZ Māori Council v Attorney-General occurred during a period when the Government was seeking to commercialise state-owned assets, including land, through the State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986. This Act facilitated the transfer of Crown assets and land to State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), which were government departments restructured to operate as companies.</p> <p>The Waitangi Tribunal expressed concerns that land transferred to SOEs such as the Forestry Corporation or Land Corporation would be beyond the Crown's ability to return to iwi, in line with previous Waitangi Tribunal recommendations. This was due to the possibility that the SOEs might sell the land to private buyers or be unwilling to sell it back to the Crown. As a result, the court directed the Crown and the Māori Council to collaborate on a: "...scheme of safeguards giving reasonable assurance that lands or waters will not be transferred to State enterprises in such a way as to prejudice Māori claims that have been submitted to the Waitangi Tribunal on or after 18 December 1986 or may foreseeably be submitted to the Tribunal."</p> <p>The New Zealand Court of Appeal also recognised and affirmed the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, reinforcing the government's duty to adhere to those principles. At that time, the Crown was undertaking significant reforms in the management of natural resources, including fisheries. The court's ruling emphasised that the Crown must actively protect Māori interests and consult with Māori, ensuring their rights were not compromised by these reforms. This decision had profound implications for Māori fishing rights, mandating that any policies or regulations, such as the Quota Management System introduced in 1986, must consider and incorporate Māori claims and interests.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NZ Māori Council v Attorney-General and others (1987) 6 N.Z.A.R. 353• Hill, R. S. (2009). Maori and the State: Crown-Maori relations in New Zealand/Aotearoa, 1950-2000. Victoria University Press.	

Mid to Late 20th Century

1989	Māori Fisheries Act 1989 (Interim Settlement)
	<p>Māori sought a declaration in the High court and in various claims to the Waitangi Tribunal that the Quota Management System (QMS) as introduced by the Fisheries Amendment act 1986 was unlawful and in breach of the Treaty of Waitangi and has no application to Māori fisheries.</p> <p>Representatives of Ngai Tahu, Muriwhenua, Tainui, and the New Zealand Māori Council reached an interim agreement that marked a significant milestone in Māori fishing rights. The Māori Fisheries Act 1989 facilitated this agreement, allowing the implementation of the QMS while ensuring that Māori interests were recognised. Under this agreement, Māori were to receive \$10 million in cash and 10% of all fish stocks introduced into the QMS, with the quota being provided progressively at 2.5% per year over four years, or its cash equivalent if the Crown was unable to provide the quota. To support Māori involvement in the fishing industry, the Māori Fisheries Commission was established (now known as Te Ohu Kaimoana). This body aimed to enhance Māori participation and address concerns that the QMS might infringe on Treaty of Waitangi rights. This interim settlement was an essential step towards the final settlement in 1992, which further solidified Māori fishing rights and their capacity to engage with the seafood sector.</p>
	<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Māori Fisheries Act 1989 (Interim Settlement) - Legislation

1990s

The 1990s were a pivotal decade for the recognition and settlement of Māori rights within Aotearoa New Zealand's fisheries sector. This period saw the implementation of significant legislative changes and Treaty settlements aimed at redressing historical Treaty breaches. The Māori Fisheries Act 1989 and the subsequent Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992 were landmark developments that provided Māori with substantial settlement packages, including fishing quotas and management roles within the sector. These measures marked a shift towards more equitable resource sharing and tried to ensure that Māori had a meaningful stake in the nation's maritime resources. The passage of the Fisheries (Kaimoana Customary Fishing) Regulations 1998 and similar regulations for the South Island in 1999 further recognised and formalised Māori customary fishing rights.

1990	Fisheries (Recordkeeping) Regulations 1990
	<p>The Fisheries (Recordkeeping) Regulations 1990 mandated comprehensive documentation and reporting for all commercial fishing activities, ensuring rigorous monitoring and sustainable management of fish stocks. This regulatory framework was particularly significant for Māori, as it upheld the fishing rights allocated to them under the Māori Fisheries Act 1989 (Interim Settlement Agreement), which recognised and formalised their historical and cultural connection to fishing. By necessitating accurate recordkeeping, the regulations facilitated greater transparency and accountability within the seafood sector, enabling Māori to effectively manage and leverage their fishing quotas. This enhanced their participation in the commercial fishing industry, ensuring that their interests were safeguarded and that they could sustainably benefit from their allocated resources, thus reinforcing their role and presence in Aotearoa New Zealand's seafood sector.</p>
	<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fisheries (Recordkeeping) Regulations 1990

1991	Resource Management Act 1991
	<p>The Resource Management Act (RMA) introduced a pioneering approach to managing Aotearoa New Zealand's natural and physical resources with sustainability at its core. At the time, the RMA represented a significant shift by integrating environmental, economic, and cultural considerations into resource management. Importantly, it acknowledged the special relationship between Māori and their ancestral lands and waters, incorporating principles of the Treaty of Waitangi to safeguard Māori fishing rights and ensure their voices were heard in environmental decisions. This legislative framework provided Māori with enhanced opportunities to manage and develop marine and freshwater resources, fostering their participation in the seafood sector and enabling the growth of Māori-led aquaculture ventures.</p>
	<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource Management Act 1991 - Legislation• Anderson, Atholl, Judith Binney, and Aroha Harris. Tangata Whenua: An Illustrated History. Bridget Williams Books, 2014.

1990s

1991

WAI262 - Indigenous Flora and Fauna and Cultural Intellectual Property Claim

The Wai 262 claim, also known as the "Flora and Fauna Claim," represents a significant and far-reaching legal action undertaken by six Māori iwi (tribes) in New Zealand. The genesis of this claim occurred in the late 1980s, when members of the iwi recognised the need to protect their traditional knowledge, cultural practises, and rights related to indigenous flora and fauna, as well as other taonga (treasures).

The claim was submitted to the Waitangi Tribunal in 1991 by representatives from six iwi: Ngāti Kuri, Ngāti Wairiki, Ngātiwai, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Koata, and Ngāti Kahungunu. The genesis of the Wai 262 claim was driven by concerns that existing legal and regulatory frameworks in New Zealand were inadequately protecting their rights to native plants, animals, and the associated traditional knowledge. There were growing fears that without recognition and protection, these resources and knowledge could be exploited or lost. The Waitangi Tribunal released its comprehensive report on the Wai 262 claim in 2011, titled "Ko Aotearoa Tēnei: A Report into Claims Concerning New Zealand Law and Policy Affecting Māori Culture and Identity."

The WAI262 claim underscored the significant rights and interests that Māori have in fisheries, particularly their traditional inshore fishing areas.

It highlighted the concept of kaitiakitanga, or guardianship, which is central to Māori interactions with marine and coastal resources. The claim argued for greater recognition and protection of Māori customary fishing rights and traditional knowledge within Aotearoa New Zealand's fisheries management framework. It called for meaningful involvement of Māori in decision-making processes and the sustainable management of these resources.

Further Reading:

- [Statement of Claim for WAI 262](#), submitted to the Waitangi Tribunal
- [Wai 262 claim background](#)
- [Waitangi Tribunal Report, Ko Aotearoa Tenei, 2011](#)

1990s

1992

Convention on Biological Diversity

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), adopted in 1992, aims to promote the conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair sharing of benefits from genetic resources. It emphasises the development of national strategies for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Promoted through Article 8(j) is the recognition of Māori traditional knowledge, encouraging sustainable use practices, ensuring fair benefit-sharing, and influencing national policies to support indigenous rights and participation in biodiversity management. NZ, as a party to this, has integrated the principles into legislation and has over the years led to increased involvement of Māori in developing and implementing management plans that protect marine biodiversity while allowing for the harvesting of seafood in a sustainable manner.

Further Reading:

- [Convention on Biological Diversity](#)
- Te Aho, Linda. "Indigenous Challenges to Enhance Freshwater Governance and Management in Aotearoa New Zealand—The Waikato River Settlement." *The Journal of Water Law*, vol. 20, no. 5-6, 2009, pp. 285-292

1990s

1992

WAI27 - Waitangi Tribunal Ngāi Tahu Sea Fisheries Report 1992

The WAI27 claim was lodged with the Waitangi Tribunal in 1986 by Ngāi Tahu, seeking recognition and restoration of their rights to fisheries resources, which they believed had been unjustly curtailed by Crown actions and legislation such as the Fisheries Act 1983. Ngāi Tahu argued that the Crown's policies and actions over many years had severely impacted their ability to manage and utilise their customary sea fisheries, thus infringing on their rights as guaranteed by the Treaty.

The WAI27 Report was a critical investigation by the Waitangi Tribunal into the Ngāi Tahu iwi's claims against the Crown for breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi, focusing on unfair land purchases, loss of natural resources, and economic and cultural impacts. The Tribunal found that the Crown had failed to protect Ngāi Tahu's legal and customary rights, leading to significant social, economic, and cultural deprivation. These negotiations culminated in the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, which provided a comprehensive settlement of all Ngāi Tahu's historical claims, including those related to fisheries.

Key recommendations included substantial financial compensation, return of culturally significant lands and resources, rights of first refusal for certain Crown properties, and enhanced customary fishing rights. These measures aimed to redress historical injustices and support the socio-economic and cultural recovery of Ngāi Tahu.

Further Reading:

- [Waitangi Tribunal Report, The Ngai Tahu Sea Fisheries Report 1992](#)

1990s

1992

WAI307 - Waitangi Tribunal the Fisheries Settlement Report

The WAI307 Report, issued by the Waitangi Tribunal, examines the breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi by the Crown concerning Māori fishing rights. The report highlights significant issues such as the Crown's failure to sustainably manage fisheries resources, the inequitable allocation of fishing quotas, and the subsequent loss of traditional Māori fishing areas and practises. The Tribunal found that the Crown had not adequately recognised or compensated Māori for these losses, leading to profound impacts on their culture and livelihoods. Key recommendations included the establishment of measures to ensure Māori had a sustainable share of the commercial fisheries, better mechanisms for Māori involvement in fisheries management, and appropriate compensation for past breaches. The report ultimately facilitated the Māori Fisheries Settlement, which aimed to restore Māori fishing rights and secure their active participation and benefit within the seafood sector.

Further Reading:

- [Waitangi Tribunal, The Fisheries Settlement Report, 1992](#)

1990s

1992

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

Māori fisheries claims were settled with the signing of a Deed of Settlement (commonly referred to as the Māori Fisheries Settlement or the Sealord Deal) on 23 September 1992. This Deed was given effect through the Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992 and saw the reconstitution of the Māori Fisheries Commission into the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Commission, chaired by Tā Tipene O'Regan. The settlement funded the purchase of a 50 percent stake in Sealord Group Limited and committed to provide Māori with 20 percent of quota for all new species entering the QMS and undertook to make regulations to empower self-management of non-commercial customary fishing.

The commission was charged with developing, in consultation with Māori, a scheme for the allocation and distribution of its assets to iwi. The Settlement restored Māori property rights and established commercial enterprises, such as Aotearoa Fisheries Limited (trading as Moana New Zealand), which in turn is the sole or joint shareholder of a number of New Zealand commercial fishing companies. This commercial involvement has provided an income stream for Māori to sustain their iwi and communities.

The Act was an important milestone, as it provided Māori with the opportunity to exercise their mana motuhake (self-determination) and rangatiratanga. For Māori, fisheries are more than an economic asset; they are a vital taonga that must be protected and managed sustainably. The authority to regulate and manage their own fisheries empowers Māori to safeguard these resources for future generations, ensuring the continuation of cultural practises and economic prosperity.

Further Reading:

- [Te Ohu Kaimoana Website \(Our History\)](#)
- [Treaty of Waitangi \(Fisheries Claims\) Settlement Act 1992 No 121 - New Zealand Legislation](#)
- [The Fisheries Settlement Report 1992 - WAI307](#)

1990s

1995

World Trade Organisation Agreements

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreements comprise a comprehensive set of rules and commitments that govern international trade, including provisions on reducing trade barriers, regulating fisheries subsidies to prevent overfishing, and establishing fair and transparent trade policies to promote global economic cooperation and sustainability. These have influenced NZ's trade policies, which in turn affect market access and economic opportunities available to Māori-owned seafood enterprises. All were accepted in 1995 when Aotearoa New Zealand became a WTO member.

Some examples:

- **Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS):** TRIPS establishes minimum standards for the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights. This agreement can help Māori enterprises protect traditional knowledge and unique seafood products in international markets.
- **Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM Agreement):** The SCM Agreement regulates the use of subsidies, including specific provisions on fisheries subsidies to prevent overfishing and overcapacity. New Zealand adheres to these regulations, ensuring that its seafood industry, including Māori enterprises, operates sustainably.
- **Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement):** The TBT Agreement aims to ensure that technical regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures are non-discriminatory and do not create unnecessary obstacles to trade. This enables Māori-owned seafood businesses to access global markets more easily by adhering to these standards.

Further Reading:

- TRIPS: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/trips_e.htm
- SCM Agreement: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/scm_e/subs_e.htm
- TBT Agreement: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tbt_e/tbt_e.htm

1990s

1996

Fisheries Act 1996

The Fisheries Act 1996 is critical in recognising and operationalising Māori fishing rights as settled under the Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992. It integrates Māori into the quota management system, providing them significant commercial fishing quotas and opportunities within the seafood industry. Additionally, it respects and facilitates customary non-commercial fishing through permits and protocols aligned with Māori traditional practises. By embedding principles of sustainable management, the Act supports Māori in practising kaitiakitanga, ensuring that fishery resources are preserved for future generations and aligning with cultural values and economic interests.

Further Reading:

- [Fisheries Act 1996](#) - Legislation

1990s

1998	Fisheries (Kaimoana Customary Fishing) Regulations 1998
	<p>The Fisheries (Kaimoana Customary Fishing) Regulations 1998 are designed to uphold and manage Māori customary fishing rights in the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. These regulations authorise tangata kaitiaki/tiaki (appointed guardians) to issue permits for customary fishing, allowing Māori to fish for cultural events and sustenance in alignment with traditional practises. The Regulations also emphasise sustainable fishing methods and designated areas to prevent overfishing and ensure the conservation of marine resources. By embedding these practises into legal frameworks, the regulations recognise the significance of customary fishing to Māori culture and provide mechanisms for sustainable management and compliance.</p>
	<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fisheries (Kaimoana Customary Fishing) Regulations 1998
1999	Fisheries (South Island Customary Fishing) Regulations 1999
	<p>The Fisheries (South Island Customary Fishing) Regulations 1999 are designed to uphold the customary fishing rights of Māori in the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. These regulations enable tangata tiaki (customary fishing guardians) to issue permits allowing Māori to fish for cultural events, sustenance, and other significant purposes. By specifying traditional fishing methods and designated areas, the regulations ensure that these practises are sustainable and culturally appropriate. They also establish a framework for the appointment and authority of tiaki/kaitiaki, who oversee and manage customary fishing in their regions. Additionally, the regulations include provisions for monitoring and reporting to ensure compliance and conservation of marine resources, thereby integrating Māori cultural practises with sustainable fisheries management.</p>
	<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fisheries (South Island Customary Fishing) Regulations 1999

Early 2000s

The early 2000s marked a continuation of efforts to address Māori grievances and integrate Māori rights into New Zealand's legal and regulatory frameworks. Significant legislation, such as the Māori Fisheries Act 2004 and the Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004, aimed to solidify and expand Māori interests in marine and aquaculture resources. However, controversial laws like the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004, which was later repealed, sparked significant protest and highlighted ongoing issues surrounding Māori land and resource rights. The introduction of the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 sought to remedy some of these issues by recognising customary marine title. These years underscored the ongoing challenges and dynamic nature of Māori and Crown relations in the realm of marine and coastal management.

2002	WAI 593 - Waitangi Tribunal - Ahu Moana: The Aquaculture and Marine Farming Report
<p>The "Ahu Moana: The Aquaculture and Marine Farming Report" was commissioned by the Waitangi Tribunal to investigate Māori claims related to aquaculture and marine farming. It detailed concerns from Māori communities about the impact of aquaculture on their customary rights and practises. The Tribunal found that the Crown had failed to adequately recognise and provide for Māori interests in aquaculture and recommended greater inclusion of Māori in future aquaculture development processes. This included promoting co-management practises and ensuring that Māori had equitable access to marine farming opportunities. The report has played a significant role in shaping subsequent policies and settlements related to Māori aquaculture rights.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Waitangi Tribunal - Ahu Moana: The Aquaculture and Marine Farming Report	

2003	Attorney-General v Ngāti Apa [2003] 3 NZLR 643 (CA)
<p>Attorney-General v Ngāti Apa [2003] 3 NZLR 643 (CA) is a landmark decision by the New Zealand Court of Appeal that established Māori customary rights to the foreshore and seabed had not been extinguished by the Crown without explicit legislative action. This case arose from claims by Ngāti Apa and other iwi that parts of the Marlborough Sounds were held under Māori customary title. The Court of Appeal's decision held that the Māori Land Court had the jurisdiction to determine these claims, challenging the Crown's assertion of ownership. The ruling prompted extensive public and political debate, leading to the enactment of the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 and its subsequent replacement by the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011, which aimed to reconcile customary rights with public access and use. This decision profoundly influenced the legal framework governing Māori interactions with marine and coastal resources, including their fishing rights.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Attorney-General v Ngāti Apa [2003]Charters, Claire, and Andrew Erueti, editors. The Foreshore and Seabed. Victoria University Press, 2007	

Early 2000s

2004	Māori Fisheries Act 2004
	<p>The Māori Fisheries Act 2004 formalised the allocation of commercial fisheries assets to Māori iwi as part of the Treaty of Waitangi settlements. This Act ensures that Māori have a tangible share in the fishing industry by distributing fisheries quota, shares in fishing companies, and financial resources. It established governance structures, including Te Ohu Kai Moana (the Māori Fisheries Trust) and Aotearoa Fisheries Limited, to manage these assets responsibly and transparently. By balancing traditional fishing rights with commercial opportunities, the Act supports Māori economic development and sustains their cultural connection to the moana (sea).</p>
	<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Māori Fisheries Act 2004 - Legislation

2004	Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act (updated in 2023)
	<p>The Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004 addresses and resolves Māori claims to commercial aquaculture under the Treaty of Waitangi. It ensures Māori receive a guaranteed percentage of new marine farming areas identified after the Act's inception, facilitating their active participation in the expanding aquaculture sector. The Act necessitates the formation of regional iwi aquaculture organisations (RIAOs) and the Takutai Trust to manage and hold these aquaculture assets on behalf of Māori. Additionally, it provides financial compensation where direct allocation of space is impractical. By creating clear governance and management frameworks for these assets, the Act ensures transparency, responsibility, and the sustainable development of Māori aquaculture interests, promoting both economic growth and cultural continuity for Māori communities.</p>
	<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004 - Legislation

Early 2000s

2004

WAI1071 - Report on the Crown's Foreshore and Seabed Policy

The WAI1071 - Report on the Crown's Foreshore and Seabed Policy is a pivotal document issued by the Waitangi Tribunal in 2004, which scrutinises the Crown's proposal to assert ownership over the foreshore and seabed. The Tribunal determined that this policy was incompatible with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, as it would extinguish Māori customary rights and disproportionately favour public interests over those of Māori. The report underscored the deep historical and cultural connections Māori have with these areas, highlighting the significance of these regions for traditional fishing, resource gathering, and cultural practises. The Tribunal recommended abandoning the proposed policy and instead engaging in genuine negotiations to find a solution that respects and acknowledges Māori customary rights. This report played a crucial role in the national dialogue regarding the management and ownership of the foreshore and seabed, ultimately influencing legislative changes aimed at better balancing Māori interests with public access.

Further Reading:

- [Waitangi Tribunal Report, Report on the Crown's Foreshore and Seabed Policy](#)

2004

Hikoi in protest of the Foreshore and Seabed Act

The Hikoi in protest of the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 was a significant demonstration that saw thousands of Māori and allies march from Te Hāpua to Wellington to oppose the government's proposal to vest ownership of the foreshore and seabed in the Crown. This legislation was seen as a direct threat to Māori customary rights and their traditional access to inshore fishing areas. The protest began in late April 2004 and gained momentum as it progressed southward, drawing attention from both national and international audiences. Upon arriving in Wellington on 5 May 2004, the demonstrators gathered at Parliament to voice their strong opposition and demand respect for Māori Treaty of Waitangi rights. Although the Act was passed, the Hikoi played a crucial role in raising public awareness and political discourse, ultimately contributing to the Act's repeal in 2011 and its replacement with the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act, which aimed to better balance Māori customary rights with public access to coastal areas.

Further Reading:

- Harris, Aroha. "Maori Land Legislation and the Foreshore and Seabed: Changing Acts, Changing Times." The Journal of Polynesian Society, vol. 113, no. 1, 2004, pp. 25-46
- Ruru, Jacinta. "The Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004." The Contemporary Pacific, vol. 18, no. 1, 2006, pp. 344-348

Early 2000s

2004

Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004

The Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 was a legislative response to a Court of Appeal decision that recognised the potential for Māori to hold customary title to the foreshore and seabed. The Act declared these areas to be owned by the Crown, ensuring public access and preventing private ownership. While it offered a process for Māori to seek recognition of certain customary rights, these rights were limited and did not equate to full property ownership, leading to widespread discontent among Māori communities. The Act was criticised for extinguishing Māori customary title without adequate consultation or respect for Treaty of Waitangi principles. The controversy and opposition from Māori and other groups led to widespread protests and legal challenges, ultimately resulting in the Act's repeal in 2011. It was replaced by the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011, which aimed to establish a more equitable framework for recognising and protecting Māori customary marine rights while maintaining public access to these coastal areas.

Further Reading:

- [Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004](#) - Legislation

2004

Aquaculture Reform (Repeals and Transitional Provisions) Act 2004 (updated in 2023)

The Aquaculture Reform (Repeals and Transitional Provisions) Act 2004 was introduced to modernise the regulatory framework governing Aotearoa New Zealand's aquaculture industry. The Act repealed outdated legislation and integrated the management of aquaculture under the Resource Management Act 1991, ensuring a more streamlined and cohesive system. This reform aimed to promote sustainable development and environmental protection within the sector, providing clearer and more comprehensive guidance for stakeholders. Importantly, the Act recognised and protected Māori customary rights and interests in aquaculture, facilitating greater participation and partnership opportunities for Māori within the industry. The transitional provisions included in the Act ensured the effective management of existing marine farming permits and leases, facilitating a smooth transition to the new regulatory environment. This legislation was a significant step in advancing the growth and sustainability of Aotearoa New Zealand's aquaculture industry while ensuring inclusivity and respect for Māori rights.

Further Reading:

- [Aquaculture Reform \(Repeals and Transitional Provisions\) Act 2004](#) - Legislation

Early 2000s

2004

Formation of Aotearoa Fisheries (now trading as Moana New Zealand)

Aotearoa Fisheries Limited, now trading as Moana New Zealand, was established following the 1992 Māori Fisheries Settlement, a historic agreement between the Crown and Māori to settle claims related to fishing rights guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi. This settlement provided Māori with significant fisheries assets, including quota shares and commercial fishing interests. Aotearoa Fisheries was formally created in 2004 under the Māori Fisheries Act 2004 to manage these assets on behalf of iwi.

As the largest Māori-owned seafood company, Moana New Zealand stewards the commercial fisheries assets that Māori regained as part of the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Settlement with the Crown, the Government of New Zealand. Moana operates across harvesting, processing, and marketing of seafood products. The company commits to sustainability and upholding Māori values, providing income streams that support iwi through economic development, cultural preservation, and community well-being initiatives.

Further Reading:

- [About Us - Moana New Zealand](#)
- [History | Te Ohu Kaimoana](#)
- [Introduction to fisheries legislation | NZ Government](#)

2007

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Adopted by Aotearoa New Zealand in 2010, UNDRIP reinforced the right of Māori to participate in decision-making processes concerning marine resources. It has led to legislative and policy changes that incorporate these rights, such as the development of customary fishing regulations and the establishment of tāngata tiaki to manage customary fishing areas (mātaitai reserve).

Further Reading:

- [UNDRIP - Document](#)
- [UNDRIP - Te Puni Kōkiri Information](#)

2011 to Present

From 2011 to the present, the focus has been on refining and implementing legislative measures to ensure sustainable resource management and equitable inclusion of Māori in decision-making processes. Significant reports, such as WAI 262 and legal advancements like Re Edwards (Te Whakatōhea No. 2) [2021], have reinforced Māori rights to their traditional resources and highlighted the importance of cultural heritage. Environmental sustainability has become critical, with regulations introduced to balance economic activities and environmental stewardship. The continued development and amendment of acts, such as the Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary Bill, reflect the dynamic and evolving landscape of marine resource management. Efforts to address past grievances and ensure Māori participation in the seafood sector remain ongoing, striving towards a future that honours the Treaty of Waitangi and acknowledges the integral role of Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand’s environmental and cultural heritage.

2011	WAI 262 Waitangi Tribunal Report - Kō Aotearoa Tēnei: A Report into Claims concerning New Zealand Law and Policy Affecting Māori Culture and Identity
<p>"Kō Aotearoa Tēnei" is an extensive report resulting from the WAI 262 claim, which scrutinised Aotearoa New Zealand law and policy affecting a wide range of aspects of Māori culture and identity. Among its many issues, the report includes a focus on how these laws and policies impact Māori in the fishing and aquaculture sectors. It highlights the need for greater recognition and protection of Māori fishing rights and interests, advocating for equitable participation and management in these industries. The report proposes changes that would ensure Māori cultural and economic interests are safeguarded, including mechanisms to integrate traditional knowledge and practises into contemporary resource management. These recommendations aim to rectify past grievances and ensure sustainable development that respects Māori rights, fostering a more inclusive and respectful relationship between the government and Māori communities.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Waitangi Tribunal Report, Ko Aotearoa Tenei, 2011	

2011	Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011
<p>The Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 establishes a framework that repeals the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 and aims to provide a more balanced approach to the ownership and management of Aotearoa New Zealand’s marine and coastal areas. This Act declares the marine and coastal areas to be the common marine and coastal area, which means they are not owned by any person, group, or the Crown. It provides mechanisms for Māori to seek recognition of their customary rights through applications for Customary Marine Title and Protected Customary Rights, thereby acknowledging their historical and ongoing relationship with these areas. These titles and rights can impact access to and management of marine resources, including fishing rights and participation in aquaculture. The Act ensures public rights to access and use the marine and coastal area for fishing, navigation, and recreation, while also aiming to protect the natural environment. This legislation is significant for Māori as it restores the opportunity to assert and protect customary interests and supports the sustainable management of marine resources.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 - LegislationLaw of the Foreshore and Seabed - Te Ara	

2011 to Present

2012	Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012
<p>The Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 is a legislative framework aimed at regulating activities in Aotearoa New Zealand's EEZ and continental shelf to mitigate environmental impacts. It encompasses activities such as oil and gas exploration, mineral extraction, and other industrial undertakings that could affect the marine environment. The Act mandates that such activities undergo environmental impact assessments and obtain permits from the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). This regulation is essential for ensuring the sustainability of marine ecosystems, which are of significant cultural, customary, and economic importance to Māori. The Act also provides mechanisms for incorporating Māori perspectives and traditional knowledge into the environmental management process, thereby protecting Māori fishing rights and interests in marine resources.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 - Legislation• EEZ and Continental Shelf Act - Māori Involvement	
2013	Fisheries (Amateur Fishing) Regulations 2013
<p>The Fisheries (Amateur Fishing) Regulations 2013 set rules for recreational fishing in Aotearoa New Zealand, and it contains provisions that recognise and protect Māori customary fishing rights. By allowing customary fishing permits, the regulations enable Māori to practice traditional fishing for cultural events, helping to preserve their heritage. Additionally, these regulations contribute to sustainable fish stock management, ensuring the ecological balance and availability of marine resources for future generations while respecting Māori cultural practises.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fisheries (Amateur Fishing) Regulations 2013 - Legislation	

2011 to Present

2015	Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary Proposal
<p>John Key announced the plan to create the Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary, a proposed marine protected area equivalent to 15 percent of Aotearoa New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone. This vast sanctuary would be twice the size of Aotearoa New Zealand's land area, 50 times larger than the country's largest national park, and 35 times the combined size of all existing marine reserves. However, the government did not consult with iwi on this proposal, which would have negated their rights established under the 1992 Fisheries Deed of Settlement and the Māori Fisheries Act 2004. The plan included a 20-year ban on all commercial activities in a 620,000km² area of the EEZ around the Kermadec Islands, known as Fisheries Management Area 10, raising significant concerns about the infringement on Māori fishing rights.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary Bill• The Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary - Research Paper	
2019	Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019
<p>The Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 (the takutai moana legislation) provides for recognition of customary interests of iwi, hapū and whānau in the common marine and coastal area of Aotearoa New Zealand and its offshore islands. The takutai moana legislation also provides for the right of all New Zealanders to access and use the common marine and coastal area (subject to any lawful restrictions, including for the protection of wāhi tapu and wāhi tapu areas). It solidifies recognition of customary interests of iwi, hapū and whānau in regards to marine areas within NZ control.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 - Legislation• Takutai Moana: Background to Nga Hapu o Ngati Porou Foreshore & Seabed journey	

2011 to Present

2020	Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020
	<p>The Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020 establish comprehensive guidelines aimed at improving and safeguarding Aotearoa New Zealand's freshwater resources. The regulations place restrictions on activities that negatively impact water quality and freshwater ecosystems, such as intensive farming practises and modifications to wetlands and streams. This framework enforces stock exclusion from waterways and ensures the maintenance of fish passage in structures like culverts and dams. These measures are particularly relevant to Māori, as they help protect freshwater habitats that are integral to traditional cultural practises, customary fishing rights, and the overall health of ecosystems that many Māori communities depend on. Compliance and monitoring requirements are included to ensure that these environmental standards are met and maintained for the benefit of all New Zealanders.</p>
	<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020 (LI 2020/174) (as at 01 January 2025) Contents – New Zealand Legislation

2020	Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Marine Aquaculture) Regulations 2020
	<p>The Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Marine Aquaculture) Regulations 2020 outline a coherent framework for managing marine aquaculture activities in Aotearoa New Zealand, aiming to foster sustainable industry growth while safeguarding marine ecosystems. These regulations standardise the consenting process across regions, set clear environmental performance benchmarks, and provide guidelines for site selection and management to minimise ecological impact. They also emphasise monitoring and reporting to ensure compliance and transparency. For Māori, these regulations are particularly significant as they align with the principles of kaitiakitanga, or guardianship, ensuring that marine aquaculture operations respect cultural values and preserve customary fishing rights. The standards facilitate the inclusion of Māori perspectives in decision-making processes and management practises, enhancing the protection of culturally important marine areas and supporting the sustainable use of marine resources vital to Māori communities' cultural and economic well-being.</p>
	<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Marine Aquaculture) Regulations 2020 - NZ Legislation

2011 to Present

2021

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

In Re Edwards (Te Whakatōhea No. 2) [2021] NZHC 1025, the New Zealand High Court considered an application by members of the Te Whakatōhea iwi for recognition of customary marine title and protected customary rights under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011. The court granted recognition in part, affirming that Te Whakatōhea had maintained continuous and exclusive use and occupation of certain marine areas from 1840 to the present. This decision is significant for Māori as it legally acknowledges and protects their rights and longstanding relationship with the marine environment. The recognition of customary marine title allows Te Whakatōhea to exercise greater authority and stewardship (kaitiakitanga) over the specified inshore areas, ensuring that their cultural practises and traditional fishing rights are upheld. This also impacts their interaction with the seafood sector, as it secures their ability to manage and utilise these marine resources in accordance with their customs and traditions.

Further Reading:

- [Whakatohea Kotahitanga Waka Edwards Ors v Te Kahui and Whakatohea Maori Trust Board Ors 2023](#)
- [First substantive appeal of Marine and Coastal Area Act decision clarifies legal principles - Fiona Wu](#)

2021

Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, and Exclusive Economic Zone Act 2021

The Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, and Exclusive Economic Zone Act 2021 (TSCEZ) amended the 1977 Act. The 2021 amendments to the TSCEZ Act aim to modernise New Zealand's maritime laws, promoting sustainability and environmental protection in line with international standards. For Māori, these changes bring opportunities to align with traditional values of guardianship and sustainability while potentially introducing new challenges related to regulatory compliance and resource access.

Further Reading:

- [Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, and Exclusive Economic Zone Act 2021 - Legislation](#)

2011 to Present

2023	Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act (updated in 2023)
<p>The 2023 updates to the Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act build on the foundation of the 2004 Act by enhancing the allocation processes, supporting sustainable development, ensuring more robust consultation with Māori, and providing better dispute resolution mechanisms. These changes are designed to better recognise and support Māori rights and interests in the aquaculture sector, promote environmental sustainability, and facilitate the growth of Māori commercial aquaculture enterprises.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2023 Legislation	
2024	Treaty Principles Bill - Hīkoi
<p>The hīkoi to Parliament featured an unprecedented gathering of protesters against the Treaty Principles Bill, with a crowd triple the size of the 2004 Foreshore and Seabed protest. Estimates varied from 42,000 to over 50,000 people who poured into central Wellington, causing significant state highway delays and swelling Wellington Railway Station's foot traffic up to 40,000. Participants, including those on foot, vehicles, and horseback since the march began at Cape Reinga, created a vibrant scene of waiata, chanting, and emotional displays as placards reading “can’t spell kiwi without iwi” and “honour it, don’t edit it” underscored their message. Despite police warnings, Act Party leader David Seymour was booed off Parliament's forecourt, while Prime Minister Luxon, who did not attend, later stressed the need for unity amidst the challenges. The protest concluded peacefully, with the Wellington District Commander commending the cooperation and conduct of the participants, although minor incidents and medical emergencies were swiftly managed. The day ended with a concert and farewell at Waitangi Park, as the city returned to normalcy.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hīkoi to Parliament: Tens of thousands energised for change after protest against Treaty Principles Bill - NZ Herald• 42,000 join as Treaty Principles Bill hīkoi reaches Parliament - RNZ	

2011 to Present

2024	Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary Bill scrapped
<p>In March 2024, the Aotearoa New Zealand Government announced its decision to withdraw the Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary Bill, ending nearly a decade of efforts to establish an expanded marine reserve. This decision acknowledged that the current 12-nautical-mile marine reserve around the Kermadec Islands was sufficient to protect the environment and marine life, eliminating the need for an expansion that would cover 15 percent of Aotearoa New Zealand’s Exclusive Economic Zone. The government recognised that creating such a vast no-access area would have unduly impacted those whose livelihoods depend on the sea, particularly Māori iwi with fishing rights secured under the 1992 Treaty of Waitangi settlement. The move also reflected confidence that the stringent regulations already in place effectively mitigated any risks posed by existing commercial activities. The decision was seen as a balanced approach to maintaining environmental protection while safeguarding the economic and cultural interests of the Māori community.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary plan halted - Beehive.govt.nz• Govt scraps long-contested Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary plans - NZ Herald	

2024	Māori Fisheries Amendment Act 2024
<p>The Māori Fisheries Amendment Bill passed its third reading in July 2024 and received royal ascent as the Māori Fisheries Amendment Act 2024. The amendments represent the most significant changes to the Māori fisheries settlement infrastructure in 20 years and it began as a part of the statutory review process that began in late 2014 and early 2015. The amendment aims to give iwi more control over their fisheries assets, and it also aims to improve efficiency and benefits for all Māori.</p>	
<p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Māori Fisheries Amendment Act 2024 - NZ Legislation• Te Ohu Kaimoana Resources	

Conclusion

This document has provided an exploration of the historical and political background of the seafood sector's interaction with Māori, highlighting the significant legal, historical, and policy developments that have shaped this relationship over time. By tracing key events from the pre-European era to contemporary legal milestones and international influence, we aim to illustrate the deep-rooted cultural and spiritual connection between Māori and their marine resources, as well as the challenges and successes in recognising and preserving these customary rights.

The historical narrative reveals numerous grievances faced by Māori, stemming from early legislative measures that often disregarded or undermined their traditional fishing practises. Landmark legal cases and significant settlements, such as the Māori Fisheries Act 1989 and the Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992, mark crucial steps toward addressing these injustices and recognising Māori rights.

Modern legal developments and environmental legislation have further refined and redefined the interaction between Māori and the seafood sector, emphasising the importance of integrating Māori perspectives in resource management. Waitangi Tribunal reports have also played a critical role in investigating breaches and recommending restorative actions, adding sustainable practises and equitable management.

By gaining an understanding of the historical grievances and the strides made towards rectifying them, this document not only reflects on past challenges but also fosters a vision of hope for the future. It highlights the possibilities for the seafood sector and Māori to work together to achieve sustainable, culturally mindful, and fair management of marine resources. By honouring both environmental sustainability and Māori customary rights, there is potential for a harmonious and prosperous future for the seafood sector in Aotearoa New Zealand.



The
Aotearoa
Circle

Mā te Kaitiakitanga
ko te Tōnuitanga
Prosperity Through
Guardianship