

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE 1999 ECONOMIC STUDY OF RECREATIONAL FISHING IN NZ?

The South Australian Centre for Economic Studies (SACES) undertook a large scale survey of mainly boat fishers in early 1999 to apply the contingent valuation method to estimate consumer surplus from marine recreational fishing in New Zealand.

<http://www.option4.co.nz/pdf/ValueofNZRecFishing.pdf>

The SACES study used responses from over 3500 interviews undertaken between 28 December 1998 and 11 April 1999 to assess the value of five individual fish species. Boat fishers were 94% of the sample.

They used a national average number of fishing trips, of 24.7 per person per year, based on fisher recall. This is biased high compared to the number of trips recorded in year-long diary surveys, and is biased toward boat based fishing trips.

The SACES study used the take-it-or-leave-it approach to estimate willingness-to-pay (consumers' surplus) from the current trip, which is a valid approach.

Table 1 reports key SACES results by the main target species per trip.

Table 1
Key SACES results

	Snapper	Kingfish	Blue Cod	Kahawai	Rock Lobster
Average amount spent per trip	\$35.80	\$49.68	\$44.09	\$25.32	\$51.52
Average trips per year	25.9	25.8	18.4	27.4	31.5
Consumer surplus per trip	\$101.8	\$117.7	\$112.5	\$101.4	\$169.0
CS per trip standard deviation	\$52.6	\$65.7	\$72.8	\$54.0	\$74.7
Specific target species caught	10.3	1.33	10.6	3.3	8.5
Specific target species kept	3.3	0.65	4.6	1.7	3.5
Other species caught	5.2	14.9	9.6	12.5	13.7
Other species kept	2.4	5.8	3.4	4.4	7.1
Didn't keep target species	28.5%	71.6%	26.0%	54.8%	19.1%

SACES results are reported on the basis of species targeted. Fishers could be targeting several species on the same trip, so categories are not exclusive. However, it is apparent from Table 1 that catch of the specific target species under analysis was often less than for other species. In addition, many other factors were important drivers of consumer surplus.

Overall, there were some questions about the method and estimates generated. No attempt was made to estimate the economic impact of recreational fishing in New Zealand as a whole, and the report was largely buried by the Fisheries Ministry who had paid for its production.