

Piharau / Kanakana (Lamprey) Special Session

Piharau / kanakana (lamprey) are significant to Māori. They are valued customary fishery for many iwi.

Since 2014, Te Wai Māori Trust (Wai Māori) has supported the Whanganui, Taranaki and Murihiku iwi to protect and manage piharau/kanakana as a customary non-commercial fishery. Those involved are sharing knowledge to improve the management of the fishery and build greater understanding of this iconic species.

Iwi continue to be concerned about the Lamprey Reddening Syndrome (LRS) which resulted in unusually high mortality of kanakana in the Mataura River in Southland in 2011. They consider more work needs to be done to understand the fishery.

In July 2016, the Ministry for Primary Industries concluded that the LRS was not the result of a biosecurity problem although they recognised efforts were needed to improve management of the fishery. They approached Wai Māori to help coordinate a national process to improve management. Wai Māori agreed to:

- seek interest from Murihiku, Taranaki, and Whanganui iwi to establish an iwi steering group to develop a piharau/kanakana strategy
- facilitate greater iwi involvement
- coordinate hui of all stakeholders including iwi, Wai Maori, Department of Conservation, NIWA, Ministry for Primary Industries, Iwi and relevant Regional Councils to progress the piharau/kanakana strategy.

In June, Sam Tamarapa, Ben Potaka, Jane Kitson and Wai Māori representatives met with the Department of Conservation, Ministry for the Environment, Ministry for Primary Industries and NIWA representatives. The meeting was very positive and everyone agreed to work collectively to develop a piharau/kanakana strategy to improve knowledge and management of piharau/kanakana. The following actions were also agreed:

- complete a baseline report of all research on piharau/kanakana
- develop a communications strategy that includes all interested parties
- develop a visual medium that maps out key roles of all interested parties
- representatives of the Department of Conservation, Ministry for the Environment, and Ministry for Primary Industries peer review the NIWA taonga species research project (piharau/kanakana section) commissioned by Wai Māori
- run a special session for piharau/kanakana at the National Tuna Conference on 17 and 18 July in Whanganui
- draft action plans for further discussion and development to be developed by Wai Māori.

At the Special session on piharau/kanakana, representatives of Murihiku, Whanganui and Taranaki iwi will discuss the work they have been doing to protect and enhance the fishery and share their views on the benefits of collaboration to advance the health and wellbeing of piharau/kanakana.