

Fishing in Pre-European New Zealand

by Foss Leach

Jointly published 2006 by *New Zealand Journal of Archaeology* (special publication) and *Archaeofauna*, volume 15. A4 hard cover, dust jacket, 359+iv pp, 123 figs, 24 b/w plates, 4 colour plates, contents, index. ISBN 0-476-00864-6. **Price:** NZ\$78.50. **Add p&p:** within NZ \$6.90; Australia NZ\$18; elsewhere NZ\$42.

This authoritative volume draws together a broad range of information about pre-European Māori fishing in a well illustrated and very readable form. The author uses identifications and measurements of fish remains from 126 archaeological sites covering the full time span of prehistoric New Zealand to describe the range of fish caught by pre-European Māori, explore variations between regions and through time, and examine the impact of Māori on the fishery.

The archaeological information is placed in a series of wider contexts — the Pacific background to Māori fishing, the nature of the New Zealand fishery, climatic fluctuations during the last millennium, and the nutritional requirements of human diet and the role of marine food in it.

The discussion of the technology and material culture of fishing breaks new ground in its treatment of cordage and knots, netting and fish hooks, canoe design, fish preservation and cooking methods. Research on fish behaviour towards hooks provides much needed insight into the reason why the rotating hook, so common amongst early Māori and other Pacific island peoples, was so successful.

The author shows that pre-European Māori had a different approach to conservation of the marine environment than is currently employed in modern fisheries management and that claims of pre-European over-exploitation of snapper and other species are ill-founded. An especially important finding is that the average size of fish increased over time following the strategy of taking large numbers of what would now be considered under-sized fish.

New Zealand had super-abundant fish stocks right up to the time of first European settlement, and all necessary marine food was obtained in shallow waters less than 100 m from the shore. Pre-European Māori fishermen in New Zealand are shown to have been extremely knowledgeable about all aspects of the New Zealand fishery.

Post this Order Form to: NZ Journal of Archaeology,
PO Box 14-359, Kilbirnie, Wellington, New Zealand

Add a Cheque in NZ currency, or enter Credit Card details opposite.



Your Name:

Your Postal Address:

Credit Card Number:

Date Expires: