Rock fisher safety in Auckland, New Zealand: Five years on

Dr Kevin Moran, University of Auckland
So what’s the problem?

- 2005, 5 rock fishing fatalities in 4 months in Auckland region
- 2005-2009, 25 land-based fisher drowning fatalities NZ-wide
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- Collaboration between Auckland Council, SLSNZ, and Watersafe Auckland Inc - 2006
- On-site promotion of rock fishing safety through summer months
- Survey rock fishers at key locations to ascertain:
  1. Fisher demographics
  2. Fisher safety K-A-B
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- Temporary rangers employed to conduct the surveys and offer rock fishing safety advice
- Provided on-site advice with a range of visual (DVD’s) and written resources (pamphlets)
- Surveyed at high risks sites eg Muriwai, Piha
- Surveys available in English, Mandarin, Korean
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Key message:
Promoted inflatable lifejacket use
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Five years on
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- Retained funding for employment of field advisers
- Retained a collaborative ‘action research’ model of evolving the project annually
- Collected 5 years of annual data via surveys
- Engaged community groups, new migrants, with emphasis on appropriate educational approaches for cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups
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RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHICS
For the 5 years from 2006-2010:

- Predominantly males - (83%-92%)
- Aged 16-44 years - (68%-86%)
- New migrants <9 years residency - (51%-78%)
- Predominantly Asian ethnicity - (45%-70%)
- Infrequent visitors to site – 31% first time
- Not taken part in previous surveys – 68% in 2010
- Not aware of previous campaigns – 65%
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#### RESULTS - Lifejacket use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When rock fishing, do you -</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wear a lifejacket or other flotation device</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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### RESULTS - Lifejacket use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When rock fishing, do you -</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>95% Confidence levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wear a lifejacket or other flotation device</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Year | Never | Sometimes | Often
--- | --- | --- | ---
2006 | 72% | 23% | 4%
2007 | 53% | 32% | 15%
2008 | 52% | 26% | 15%
2009 | 35% | 40% | 25%
2010 | 35% | 35% | 25%
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RESULTS – “risk of drowning a constant threat”
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CONCLUSIONS: THE GAINS

- Significant change with regards to lifejacket use
- Heightened awareness of the severity of risk of drowning
- Increased awareness of safety signage
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CONCLUSIONS: THE CHALLENGES

- Entrenched risky behaviours eg wearing gumboots/waders
- Lack of familiarity with fishing sites
- Constantly changing population
- Difficult to reach group
- Changing ethnicities?
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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue educational promotion of life jacket use for HIGH RISK sites
- Continue on-site water safety education for fishers
- Continue data gathering to monitor ever-changing fisher population
- Explore new ways to change entrenched attitudes
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CONCLUSIONS

“Paradoxically, the limited, but positive changes observed across the years suggests a strong need to continue funding for the fishing safety interventions that are part of this project rather than curtailing them”

Moran (2011)
TAKE AWAY POINTS

- More rock fishers are now wearing life jackets *often or always* (2010, 31%; 2006, 4%)
- Fewer rock fishers *never* wear a life jacket (2010, 34%; 2006, 72%)
- The rock fishing population is ever changing (2010, only 31% had taken part in any previous surveys)
References

