

FAQ – Why not apply a ‘land-all catch’ policy to commercial fishing?

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A land-all catch policy is regularly promoted as a means of determining what is actually caught by commercial fishing vessels. However, applying a land-all policy to discover actual at-sea commercial catch is flawed for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to:

1. Making land-all catch compulsory does not provide a powerful incentive to avoid catching those fish in the first instance, and may not prevent the discard of uneconomic fish -
 - The opportunity and incentives to discard unwanted catch remains unmodified, and the policy's success rests on the rate of compliance. The need to put official observers on board to record the actual catch composition remains.
 - Compelling fishers to undertake unprofitable activities does not have a great record; the deemed value regime is a prime example of this.
 - In effect, the most significant change is that fishers would then have the choice to land species and sizes below current statutory minimums, if it is profitable to do so.

2. An economic dependence develops as fishers are able to land sizes and species that are currently illegal –
 - International demand for seafood is insatiable. Fishers will develop markets that will accept these smaller sizes and variety of fish.
 - Fishers will target parts of the ecosystem that were previously left intact. These assemblages sustain the very ecosystem on which the fish and fisher depends.
 - Developing a dependence on landing small and vulnerable species, that are currently illegal, becomes an own-goal. For example, concessions in selected rock lobster fisheries has developed to the stage where commercial fishers now rely on taking crayfish smaller than the current recreational minimum size limit.

3. In reality, the land-all catch policy is directed at trawlers -
 - Trawling is the method receiving increasing and intense criticism for its detrimental effects on the environment.
 - Trawling was developed in a bygone era, when there was no understanding of the benthic effects or bycatch consequences.
 - In this time of greater awareness we cannot justify retaining trawling inshore simply because we do not want to interfere with someone's livelihood.

Summary

The land-all catch policy fails to achieve its primary purpose - that landed commercial catch will equate to what is actually caught at sea. Compounding on this is the economy created around fish that are needed by the ecosystem, while future yields from the fishery are diminished. Applying a land-all catch policy is a misdirected attempt at curbing the damage inflicted by inshore trawlers.

Solutions

- LegaSea promotes moving non-selective fishing methods beyond the 100m-depth contour line because that is considered the limit of small fish vulnerable to trawling and seining.
- LegaSea promotes the need to identify and protect nursery and fragile areas that are vulnerable to indiscriminate bulk harvesting methods.
- LegaSea promotes fisheries management practices that will allow for 'more fish in the water'.

What can you do?

Help us protect the future of fishing in New Zealand by getting on board with LegaSea-

1. Visit: www.legasea.co.nz
2. Sign up for our updates at www.legasea.co.nz/subscribe
3. Like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/legasea
4. Email: info@legasea.co.nz
5. Phone: 0800 LEGASEA (534 273)
6. Make a modest, regular contribution to LegaSea. www.legasea.co.nz/contribute

LegaSea has developed discussion on the Frequently Asked Question of '[why not apply a land-all catch policy to recreational fishing?](#)' This can be downloaded from the LegaSea website.



LegaSea is the public face of the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council. The Council has an experienced fisheries management, science, policy and legal team. On behalf of the Council LegaSea provides public-friendly information about a variety of processes that are important to the sustainable management of fisheries for future generations.