



Recreational fishing is not a waste

Summer is a hectic time of year for the LegaSea team as there are so many fund raising events, fishing contests and community gatherings to attend. It is such a buzz to see people enjoying the fishing, the camaraderie with their mates, and spending quality time amongst family. And this is just a snapshot of how fishing provides for our wellbeing.

We must all work together to ensure we have abundant fisheries so our kids can enjoy a meaningful fishing experience. While hard to imagine, their lives are likely to be much busier than ours so they will need time-out, and simple pleasures like fishing, just to stay sane.

One of LegaSea's 5 Principles is to value recreational fishing. Our fishing supports a vast array of businesses, from boat builders, tackle dealers, bait and ice suppliers and the assortment of fishing media.

Many coastal communities rely on the summer influx of tourists, including fishing families, to maintain their accommodation, fuel and goods supply businesses.

It is irrefutable that recreational fishing adds value not only to our lifestyle but also to our communities and national wealth.

In 2013 Seafood New Zealand, the lead industry fishing organisation, submitted against the Minister adjusting the recreational allowance for snapper to meet current needs. Instead they submitted, (in part) "we would note that the interests of New Zealand are better served by:

- The generation of export receipts rather than the **high value consumption of imported components**;
- The need to ensure that available savings are channelled into productive investment and **not wasteful consumption**.

So what does this mean? We stop buying tackle and imported fishing gear? We stop building boats and outboards and seaside infrastructure? Forget about coastal communities who thrive during the summer months?

Not likely!

LegaSea is adamant, recreational fishing and the economy of our fishing activities is not “wasteful consumption”, it is pure gold.

Seabirds and fishing

The Hauraki Gulf has been described as the seabird capital of the world. If fishing in the Gulf this summer please take care to firstly avoid catching birds, and if you do hook them, learn how to release them with as little damage as possible to the animal (and you).

A basic release kit includes items you would most likely have on board anyway:

- Line clippers or scissors
- Towel
- Pliers
- Landing net.

Small changes in the way we fish can make a big difference to seabird survival. We might even catch more fish if we learn how to be smart around these natural fish finders.

Fish tidy

- Seabirds are hunting for food. Keep unused bait and scraps in covered bins until you have finished fishing.
- Gut and fillet your catch once your hooks are out of the water.
- Never feed seabirds while you are fishing. It only encourages them to hang about, get in your way when fishing and steal your baits.

Fish fast

- Sink your bait fast and well below the surface, particularly when there are lots of seabirds in the area.
- Take particular care around boil-ups or “meatballs”.
- Seabirds move fast – if birds are nearby keep a keen watch when setting and retrieving your fishing gear.

Burley well below the birds

- Sink burley containers deep, further from the birds and closer to the fish.

Deter birds from your gear

- Create a ‘safe zone’ so you can get your gear up and down.
- Some fishers tie streamers to a spare rod or outrigger with a half-filled plastic milk bottle tied securely to the end. This bounces over the water and distracts the bird from your fishing gear.
- Others throw a bucket of water towards the birds to shoo them away from hooks and baits.
- A deck hose sprayed off the back of the transom is a good deterrent too.

Seabirds and fishing go together – as Kiwi anglers we can make a difference out on the water. Let’s fish seabird smart this summer.

You can download a copy of the full Safe Seabird Release Guidelines from the web www.southernseabirds.org.

LegaSea appreciates the support of the Southern Seabird Solutions Trust in providing this information. www.legasea.co.nz/seabirds.php

ENDS



LegaSea is a public outreach initiative 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 raises funds and provides public-friendly information about a variety of processes that are important to the sustainable management of fisheries for future generations.

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