



## **No sign of greedy recreational fishers**

Allegations of greed have been made against those fishers who wanted to retain the existing snapper bag and size limits of nine snapper at 27cm.

This highlights a couple of points. The first is that some people still don't fully understand the bigger picture of the proposed changes to snapper 1 (and it is complex!), the second is to appreciate the impact these changes will have for many people who fish from the land or close to shore.

Our bag limits have decreased continually over the last 25 years. In 1986 commercial quota in snapper 1 was 4710 tonnes and today it's 4500 tonnes, so at best a 5% decrease compared to 1986. In the same timeframe recreational bag limits have been steadily cut by about 70%.

At this rate of decline it will mean our children and grandchildren will have bag limits of just a couple of fish – unless something changes – and change is at the heart of what we seek.

Change that gives effect to the purpose of the Fisheries Act, the law that governs our fisheries and was written to protect our rights. Ask Doug Kidd, he wrote it and over the years has provided insight to our team about the intent of the legislation.

The purpose of the Act is: *To provide for the utilisation of the fisheries resources while ensuring sustainability. Ensuring sustainability means – maintaining the potential of fisheries resources to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations.* If you fast forward 10 or 20 years, the decision by Nathan Guy to cut our bag limits now, will only continue the woeful trend of cutting back the public while at the same time protecting commercial quota, a trend all too familiar with many fisheries decision being made around the country.

This is not about being greedy and wanting to take nine 27cm fish every fishing trip, this is about our right to be treated fairly by the Ministry and Minister in relation to the commercial sector, protecting the future experiences of our children and grandchildren.

Appreciating the impact this decision has on some people is also important. While many families are happy to take a reduction to seven 30cm fish, a lot of people are not and have provided this feedback to us. It is on behalf of those people that we voice this concern.

Some 40% of people do not go out wide in bigger boats, they simply fish off the rocks, the shore or close to shore in small boats or kayaks. In some areas people have told us they rely on the 27-30cm size fish to take a feed home. This is not

about greed, it's about the reality of the fishing experience some people now face around the snapper 1 region.

Again, the issue is not about the number or size of fish, it's about being treated fairly by the Ministry and the Minister in relation to the commercial sector. Not everyone has the chance to go fishing every day. Other feedback we received is that some people go out once every few months, and they stock their freezer to feed their family until they can get out again.

At the time this went to print we had just received the detailed documentation about the Ministry's decision (164 pages worth!) and our team are working through this to ascertain our next steps. Make no mistake, this is just the beginning. There are a variety of options we will explore, and we will continue to fight.

As the public outreach brand of the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council we support and promote your interests for good management of our precious fisheries resources to ensure that there are abundant fisheries for future generations of Kiwis. By making a modest monthly contribution of \$5 or more to LegaSea (that's one coffee or less than a bag of bait) we can apply the resources required to effectively lobby for better fisheries policy and management practices.

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