



Your opportunity to Tip The Scales

1.

For many people fishing and politics is like trying to mix oil and water, it just doesn't work. But if you are interested in abundant fisheries politics is our saviour, because every three years we get to decide who manages our fish and what priorities ought to apply. If we do not support decisions made in one parliamentary term we can toss that team out and get a party that is serious about rebuilding our fisheries.

This year we have the opportunity to Tip The Scales, so we have developed five key principles and sent them to the aspiring politicians. We want these representatives to commit to rebuilding depleted stocks and respecting our interest in abundant fisheries, but they will only do so if you ask.

All you need to do is take a few simple steps:

1. Register your support for five key principles, online at LegaSea.co.nz/tipthescales.
2. Share the Tip The Scales link with family and friends.
3. Make an appointment with your local MP and tell them you want their party to support abundant fisheries.
4. Stand up for your future fishing interests by voting on September 20th.

And, if you're really keen to volunteer, get in touch and we will gladly accept your assistance.

In September LegaSea will be analysing and scoring each party's fisheries policy. They can earn up to 100 points. We will put their scores online so you can quickly tell which party has the most public-friendly policy.

Last election around a million people did not vote. If you want 'more fish in the water' and an abundance of fish for future generations you need to vote on September 20th.

Each of us has two votes, an electorate vote and a party vote.

You use your electorate vote to support the best person to represent your community.

Your party vote is the significant vote because it determines who the decision-makers are and who is relegated to the parliamentary bench.

LegaSea acknowledges we all have different issues that influence how we vote. Since last year more of us are tuned into fisheries. But hey, you don't even have to fish to care about having abundance. Together we can show our politicians that we expect them to have positive fisheries policies.

Ultimately we want parties to both support fisheries abundance and protect our fishing interests, but they will only do that if you speak up between now and election day. Please visit LegaSea.co.nz/tipthescales and have your say.

2.

Real snapper wastage being hidden

Addressing wastage was a big issue during our 2013 SOS Save Our Snapper campaign. LegaSea is concerned that proposed new measures have done little to reduce the unnecessary waste caused by trawling inshore. But who knows?

The Ministry for Primary Industries is stonewalling requests for data from trials that measure how much fish is being killed in the process of commercial fishing.

Recent trials using new net technology is producing masses of data, but none of that is available for public scrutiny despite \$26 million of taxpayer investment. Both Ministry and industry remain tight-lipped when this information is repeatedly requested.

This behaviour is not new.

In 1994 recreational advocates were made aware the Ministry had commissioned research into juvenile snapper mortality caused by commercial fishing. That year requests for the research results were requested and refused on least three occasions.

A formal request for the data was submitted on 30 August 1994 and just a day later the Ministry refused its release. The Ministry suggested an application had been made to the High Court for orders prohibiting the release of the report, so any decision would have to wait for completion of the Court process.

Last year it was apparent that the level of wastage associated with commercial fishing, particularly bulk harvesting methods such as trawling and Danish seining inshore, was impacting on snapper yield. So another request was made to Ministry for the release of the 1994 trawl mortality report.

That request was submitted in July 2013 and Ministry had 20 working days to respond. On day 20 the Ministry advised they needed more time to search for the report and they would reply by 18 September.

A week after that deadline Ministry again wrote refusing to release the report as it could not be found in their records. Instead, they provided an excerpt from a 1994 note to the Minister discussing snapper mortality in the Hauraki Gulf.

In May this year our legal counsel submitted another Official Information Act request for the snapper mortality research results. Close to the 20-day deadline Ministry advised they would not be able to respond in time, and advised a new delivery date of 30 June.

What follows next is good news and bad.

On 24 June the Ministry provided us with good news. The 1994 snapper mortality report had been located. The bad news is that they were unclear if the report was (ever) subject to a Court order, so they could not release the research results until a thorough records search had been completed.

We await further correspondence with unreserved interest.

3.

Reducing waste is a priority

LegaSea is advocating a bottom-up approach to rebuilding our fisheries. That is because mortality on small fish can be reduced at minimal cost and yet it has the greatest benefit to the rate of rebuild.

Snapper caught in trawl and Danish seine nets need to have a strict maximum juvenile mortality rate applied to the method. These methods are singled out due to the ability to catch huge numbers in one shot. LegaSea believes a default standard of 5% by number is a logical starting point.

Under the new 'move-on' rule applying since 2013 commercial vessels must move if more than 15% of their snapper catch, by weight, is less than the 25cm (commercial) minimum legal size.

LegaSea considers the 15% by snapper weight is too risky because that is equivalent to around 36% of catch by number before any action is required. We are promoting a standard of 5% by number because that enables a realistic measure of mortality to be assessed and monitored for future changes.

Recreational fishing often occurs in shallow waters and estuaries, and can result in several species being killed. This matter requires wide engagement with the recreational fishing community, especially now the minimum legal size has been increased to 30cm.

Prior to last year's snapper review we urged the Ministry to hold off on any changes until we had the time and resources to consult widely and come up with innovative ways to conserve fish.

We wanted to avoid the situation we have now, where recreational fishers are responsible for killing and wasting juvenile fish. And where the public holds Nathan Guy and the National Party responsible for reductions in their limits.

It seems a no-brainer that we would get the biggest savings from reducing or avoiding practices that kill small fish. These small fish are most often wasted. If allowed to survive beyond recruitment these small fish would give substantial growth to the overall biomass, stock size.

Current juvenile mortality in Area 1, between North Cape and the eastern Bay of Plenty, runs into the millions of fish each year. Eliminating this waste, as far as practical, needs to be assessed.

There are other issues in the quota system that contribute to wastage, and those need to be addressed as well. In the meantime, LegaSea is promoting improved practices that are affordable, achievable and meaningful. We must reduce our impacts on the snapper population if we want to have an abundance of fish in the future.

4.

Big work up in Northland

LegaSea received a real boost last month from a group of Whangarei based companies. In mid July around 50 people representing 20 businesses with links to the construction industry gathered for a Building LegaSea presentation.

Warren and the crew from Warren Hay Marine were superb hosts. They have to be rated as one of the most outstanding boat and tackle stores you will find anywhere in the country.

Scott Macindoe led the LegaSea presentation with his passion and commitment clearly demonstrated.

The crowd was understandably amazed when Scott read out some core arguments made by Seafood New Zealand in their 2013 submission on snapper. Seafood NZ refers to the money we spend on our passion for recreational fishing as "wasteful consumption".

How dare they.

Seafood New Zealand is the commercial fishing industry and their words project the thoughts and feelings of that industry.

To really get an idea of what recreational fishers are up against we suggest you read page 5, section 26, of their submission to the Ministry. You will find it at legasea.co.nz/snapper1.php - Latest news

Their sense of entitlement and arrogance will shock you, especially given some of their own wasteful trawling practices.

It was therefore very refreshing for LegaSea when 10 Northland entities

immediately signed up to Building LegaSea, at a contribution rate of \$100 per month.

To really have a chance of achieving change in fisheries management and rebuilding our fisheries we need to have significant public support, and the support of New Zealand's construction industry through the Building LegaSea initiative.

Thank you Whangarei. You really understand what fishing means to your community.

For those of you wishing to follow Whangarei's lead simply contact LegaSea.

For more information on how to join the Building LegaSea initiative visit www.legasea.co.nz/building

ENDS

P: 0800 LEGASEA (534 273)

E: info@legasea.co.nz

W: www.legasea.co.nz

FB: www.facebook.com/legasea