

NO CHANGES TO MANAGEMENT OF STRIPED MARLIN

24 MAY 2013

Recreational fishers have had their fears of commercialisation of New Zealand's striped marlin allayed. The Ministry for Primary Industries has announced there will be no changes to the management of striped marlin.

Intensive talks have been held with commercial and recreational fishers on the management of the marlin fishery, and a ban on commercial landings of marlin caught within New Zealand fisheries waters in 1991 stands.

James Stevenson-Wallace, Director Fisheries Management, MPI says he recognises the considerable value striped marlin provides for the recreational gamefishery. He also acknowledges that commercial fishers believe some changes could be made to reduce what they see as unnecessary waste of marlin bycatch in tuna longline fishers.

Both commercial and non-commercial fishers have sought changes to the existing management. The recreational sector would like to prohibit New Zealand vessels from landing marlin caught outside of New Zealand waters, and to prohibit imports. This would strengthen the recreational-only status of the fishery and support the efforts of international game-fishing organisations.

The commercial sector in turn would like to be able to land some or all of the marlin they catch, while noting the wastage that comes from discarding dead marlin. Commercial fishers believe marlin could form a small but valuable component of overall fishery profitability, and would also remove a constraint not experienced by other fishing fleets in the region.

The views of the two sectors remain largely unchanged after talks held in November 2012 and May 2013. The Ministry for Primary Industries believes the current management provides the best balance. It allows for the overall value of the fishery to be maintained, particularly as a consensus has not been reached.

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BACKGROUND NOTES

Striped marlin is a popular gamefish that is also caught as bycatch in commercial fisheries in New Zealand. Its current management consists of a ban on commercial landings of marlin caught within New Zealand fisheries water in 1991. Marlin caught commercially outside of New Zealand may be landed for sale, and imports are also permitted.

The recreational sector would like to prohibit New Zealand vessels from landing marlin caught outside of New Zealand waters, and to prohibit imports. The sector believes this would strengthen the recreational-only status of the fishery and support the efforts of international gamefishing organisations.

The commercial sector would like to be able to land some or all of the marlin they catch, noting the waste that occurs in discarding dead marlin. Commercial fishers consider marlin could form a small but valuable component of overall fishery profitability, as well as removing a constraint not experienced by other fishing fleets in the region.