

Mark Connor
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cc NZSFC delegates
Andy Doube, MPI manager
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31 October 2013

Snapper 1 decision acknowledgement and Official Information Act request

Dear Nathan,

Thank you for your recent decision regarding the future management of Snapper 1. While the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council rejects the changes to recreational management controls, we are pleased there was no increase in the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC).

We believe the bag limit reduction, from nine to seven, and the increased recreational minimum legal size (MLS), from 27 to 30cm, will lead to increased waste – not an outcome we were seeking. It will also have a detrimental effect on people who need nine fish to feed their family, it will limit the catch of inshore fishers especially in the collapsed Bay of Plenty fishery, and it reduces the opportunities for people to voluntarily conserve fish.

In an effort to address the anticipated increased wastage the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council is currently developing a Best Practice Guide for recreational anglers. We hope to have this available by the time your announced changes take effect in April 2014.

The Council acknowledges that you have taken the offers from industry to reduce waste associated with their bulk harvesting fishing methods. It will be good to see those promises become reality in our lifetime.

However, despite claims made by Andy Doube and others on the recent Gone Fishing TV show, nothing is different from last month. The TACC is the same, the MLS for commercial fishers is the same, the same destructive trawl nets are being used inshore, and the dumping and juvenile mortality continues unabated.

Given the hype and the considerable investment of public money we are keen to understand the progress of the Precision Seafood Harvesting (PSH) trials and how selectivity has improved when compared to conventional cod ends. We are particularly interested in how it may reduce mortality rates of undersized fish and bycatch species.

Pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982 would you please provide the following information regarding the PSH project:

1. The total number of tows with conventional cod ends and new PSH cod ends in the trials to 1 Oct 2013.

2. On average per tow, the proportion of snapper by number and weight < 25 cm and total number and weight of snapper catch in trials with conventional cod ends.
3. On average per tow, the total number and weight of catch by species, excluding snapper, in trials with conventional cod ends.
4. On average per tow, the proportion of snapper by number and weight < 25 cm and total number and weight of snapper catch in trials with the current configuration of precision harvesting cod end.
5. On average per tow, the total number and weight of catch by species, excluding snapper, in trials with the current configuration of precision harvesting cod end.
6. Anticipated rollout date when this precision harvesting technology will be deployed by the inshore fleet in FMA1.
7. What reporting requirements are associated with the PSH project?
8. When will a report be available to the public on the performance of the PSH technology?

Any questions or comments you have are most welcome. Our Council contact is Roz Nelson, secretary@nzsportfishing.org.nz.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Connor', written in a cursive style.

Mark Connor
President
New Zealand Sport Fishing Council