



## **Media release**

**January 2016**

### **Black market seafood sales driven by demand**

Illegal sales of seafood on social media is worth thousands of dollars and is particularly difficult to combat according to recent reports.

With the exception of whitebait, only registered commercial fishers can sell seafood in New Zealand.

LegaSea and New Zealand Sport Fishing Council, who advocate on behalf of recreational fishers, support moves to identify and stop black market operators.

Spokesman Richard Baker wants the public to reject black marketers in their communities.

“Like all illegal trading, it is the demand that drives the crime; those buying illegal seafood are the real villains as they make the trade worthwhile for criminals.”

Black market seafood can come from a number of sources, caught legally under the amateur regulations or taken by crew from commercial vessels.

Other than the obvious catch in excess of bag limits, black market operations can be hard to detect at the point of landing.

It is at the point of sale that it becomes obvious that the seller is not a legitimate trader and this is where the public can put a stop to the trade.

LegaSea encourage people who see seafood offered on social media to take a screenshot of the post and associated comments, then it send to [ncc@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:ncc@mpi.govt.nz)

Illegal catch is a worldwide problem. A report released this week estimates that global fish catch is under reported by 30% compared to official Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO) figures.

<http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/01/official-statistics-understate-global-fish-catch-new-estimate-concludes>

New Zealand is not immune and a companion study estimates that since the Quota Management System was introduced in 1986 total catch is estimated to be 2.2 times more than the reports to the FAO.

The major discrepancy in records is the unreported catch and discards by industrial fishing vessels, some of which are foreign flagged vessels chartered to New Zealand companies.

## **ENDS**

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### **Who is LegaSea?**

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 restoring abundance in our fisheries for future generations.

### **LegaSea Principles**

LegaSea and the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council team are committed to restoring abundance to grow New Zealand's wealth, people's health and wellbeing by applying the following 5 Principles:

1. Let's rebuild the fishery.
2. Stop senseless waste.
3. The public (NZ Inc) owns the fishery.
4. Equal size limits for all.
5. Value recreational fishing.

[www.legasea.co.nz/5principles](http://www.legasea.co.nz/5principles).