

NZSFC Hooked Up

Fisheries Management summary

July 2016

Gamefish species

In 2014-15 the number of fish tagged and released (2280) was more than the previous year, but down on the long-term average. The tagging percentage for striped marlin last season was 56%, excluding the 233 striped marlin tagged by three boats at the Wanganella Banks. NZSFC catch records show a very high proportion of mako (97%) and blue sharks (93%) caught by club members were tagged and released rather than landed. A total of 32 recaptures were reported in the 2014-15 season, comprising 30 yellowtail kingfish, and one striped marlin tagged off Piha and recaptured at the King Bank 27 days later.

There is high-tech research underway that will help build our understanding of the links between New Zealand Highly Migratory Species (HMS) and where they have come from in the Pacific. Volunteers at some NZSFC clubs have collected tissue samples this past season and a summary of results will be distributed when this research is published.

John Holdsworth, Pete Saul, and others have completed a report summarising tagging data. Worth a read when you cannot get out fishing. *Synthesis of New Zealand Gamefish Tagging Data, 1975 to 2014*. <http://goo.gl/g67tO2>

National Fisheries Plan for HMS species

There was a recent fisheries plan meeting to discuss the Annual Review Report, which outlines progress on key focus areas over the past year. There has been a major change in the Southern Bluefin Tuna fishery. Three large Japanese longliners that have fished under charter for a few months a year off the west coast of the South Island are not coming in future. This could mean an increase in the domestic tuna longline fleet in New Zealand year round. NZSFC suggested that developing some performance indicators for fisheries could be useful, such as, trends in the fishery, number of boats, hooks set by region, average catch and effort per vessel by method in the main species groups. MPI will finalise and circulate an Annual Operational Plan for the coming year.

Hawke Bay

Discussions amongst LegaSea Hawkes Bay (LHB), the Ministry and Area 2 commercial interests have stalled. LHB issued a public statement in mid June expressing their frustration that no meaningful changes have been implemented to improve recreational fishing in the Bay. LHB's media release generated some interest from local media, a separate article has been published in the local Bay Buzz magazine. www.baybuzz.co.nz.

Hauraki Gulf Spatial Plan

The Hauraki Gulf Spatial Planning process is almost completed. Scott Macindoe has been wading through this process since January and making good progress in prioritising fisheries management issues. A panel of Ministers, Primary Industries, Environment and Conservation, will consider the plan before any decisions are made about the Plan's implementation.

Snapper 1 Strategy Group report

A draft SNA1 Strategy report is due to be released by MPI, for consultation, by the end of the month. The NZSFC can expect an opportunity to provide feedback on the report. No further details are available.

Fisheries Symposium

The New Zealand Fisheries Symposium 2016 was held at Snells Beach Retreat in early April. Six internationally renowned speakers contributed their expertise to the event attended by around 100 people. Attendees included politicians, media personalities, mammal experts, marine reserve exponents, commercial and recreational fishers and freshwater fishing advocates. The outcome was a collective commitment to

identify the existing management and policy gaps, and then communicate the need and benefits of restoring abundance and productivity to New Zealand's waters.

Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary

John Key announced the Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary (KOS) in September 2015. The KOS Bill was introduced to Parliament in March this year and Select Committee hearings were held in April. Te Ohu Kai Moana and commercial fishing interests filed papers in the High Court on April 29th challenging the Government's decision to establish the Sanctuary and extinguish fishing rights in Area 10.

Our team has met with legal Counsel Rowan Ashton and Stuart Ryan, Barrister, to discuss this challenge to the Government's sovereignty, and potential effects on non-commercial fishing interests. Dangerous precedents could be set that could require compensation for future changes in coastal marine space use, including conservation, local area management, or even TACC reductions. This would have serious implications for future advocacy, for NZSFC members and wider public interests.

On June 22nd the NZSFC Board unanimously agreed to proceed with an application to the High Court to join the proceedings as an intervenor, given that the Crown has in the past not well represented our fishing interests. We are now considering whether to join as an intervenor or as a full party; those discussions are ongoing as we seek the best outcome for our members. The Board will be fully informed before making any further commitments.

By prior agreement, all costs associated with involving Stuart and Ashton in these proceedings will be capped and paid for by grants or public donations, not from the Council's Fisheries Management budget. In the unlikely event that costs are awarded against the NZSFC by the Court these will also be covered by public donations, so there is no financial liability for the Council from joining the KOS proceedings.

Recent submissions

A variety of fisheries management and marine protection submissions have been made since March, these are online at <http://goo.gl/jh4kE8> and include –

- Crayfish aggregation limits – oppose application to increase aggregation limits.
- Astrolabe reef s186A closure – oppose application for a 2-year closure.
- Umupuia Beach s186A closure – support application for further 2-year closure.
- Southern Scallops – support closure of SCA7 fishery.
- Paua 7 – support MPI and paua industry in cutting the TACC.
- John dory 7 – oppose TACC increase.
- Snapper 7 – oppose TACC increase.
- Jack mackerel 3 – support MPI in halving the TACC.
- Bluenose – support MPI in reducing the TACC by 44%.