



LegaSea Hawkes Bay
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To MPI and Commercial fishers

To recap on LegaSea Hawkes Bay's position from our recent meeting;

MPI are currently facilitating talks between recreational and commercial fishers to see if agreement can be reached to reverse the declining fish stocks trend in the Hawkes Bay area. Catch data collected from the recreational and commercial sectors fishing inside the 50-meter contour in Hawke Bay both indicate a serious and severe stock decline in recent years.

With both sets of individually collected data confirming the same result, it is no wonder the local recreational anglers are bitterly complaining about their fishing experience.

While solutions such as spatial separation in selected areas may give recreational anglers an area with near zero commercial harvesting to enhance their fishing experience, this does not actually "make" more fish. To increase fish biomass and rebuild stocks, then simply less fish must be killed.

Spatial separation plus a harvest reduction must be implemented if fish stocks are to rebuild, especially within the 50 meter contour where fish stock depletion is severe as evident from the recorded data.

If commercial interests are not considering a harvest reduction, LegaSea Hawkes Bay requests commercial effort move outside the 100 meter contour, to have a meaningful effect on the rebuild.



Clearly the fishing mortality rate (the exploitation rate) must be reduced if commercial wish to harvest fish closer to shore than the 100-meter contour.

The over-riding factor to these discussions is that the Ministry acknowledge a long standing, (ten year plus), issue of local area depletion. The Minister is falling short of his legal obligations of "ensuring sustainability" under section 8 of the Fisheries Act 1996, and of ensuring that recreational fishers are offered a reasonable fishing opportunity by having fish available where recreational fishers fish.

Currently the recreational fishing experience is unsatisfactory, unacceptable and declining as well as the original stock biomass being well under the best practice target of 40%. If commercial interests do not offer a meaningful way of rebuilding inshore fish stocks to the satisfaction of recreational interests then we will insist that the Minister acts to restore recreational fishing success in the Bay.

Quota cuts to reduce mortality and/or spatial separation are the only options that will start the recovery in a meaningful way while the necessary science is being gathered. We await with interest at what commercial will offer to stop the decline of fish stocks and the marine environment in order to enhance the recreational fishing experience in the Hawke Bay.

Yours sincerely
'The Team' at LegaSea Hawkes Bay