

New Zealand Sport Fishing Council Update

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Growing New Zealand's wealth and fisheries

An inshore zone with limited commercial fishing, managing to higher environmental standards and lowering commercial catch levels are simple measures to increase fish abundance, improve catchability and provide for the public's expectations, health and wellbeing.

These points were raised alongside a raft of other legislative, administrative and management solutions in a recent submission responding to a review of New Zealand's fisheries management system. The submission was sent to the Ministry for Primary Industries in December 2015.

Joint submitting parties were the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council and affiliated members, the New Zealand Angling and Casting Association and LegaSea supporters.

A 2-page summary is available online for easy reading, or printing for your work or community noticeboard. <http://goo.gl/p1DtTf>

Generating greater value

Despite the constant cheerleading, the Quota Management System (QMS) is not all it is cracked up to be. The QMS may have delivered some economic benefits to corporates from exploiting large volume, deepwater stocks, but the same system burns value in inshore stocks.

Many communities have despaired at the lack of action or ability to address depletion in their local fisheries. Some groups are now seeking marine protected areas, spatial plans or marine reserves because there seems to be no viable alternative.

In our view, the sooner the Government realises there are alternative ways to use fewer resources and deliver greater value for New Zealand the better.

Transitioning from low value, high volume commodity trading to a higher value economy won't be easy, but can be achieved with some management changes and legislative amendments.

Establishing a strong environmental standard and sticking to it will be the first challenge. Over time the country's economy and people will benefit from having abundance, productivity and diversity in the marine environment.

Our submission maintains that to comply with this new environmental standard a comprehensive inshore coastal zone will need to be established. Within this zone commercial methods and gear would be tightly controlled. This would offer relief from the remorseless exploitation of local fish stocks important to the public and provide protection to juvenile fish and their habitat.

Part of our rebuild strategy is to cut excessive commercial catch allocations. Some catch limits have not been reviewed since the quota system was introduced in 1986, and many have never constrained commercial effort in those 30 years!

We agree with the Minister, it is time for a refresh, but we cannot stop there. The review is a good time to make the system more transparent, and ensure commercial users pay a fair fee for the exploitation of common property marine resources.

A review of Iceland's quota system resulted in both an inshore buffer zone to protect and enhance the commercial and non-commercial fishing opportunities of small regional ports, and a resource rental so the nation benefits from commercial fishing.

In New Zealand the social and cultural reasons for establishing a coastal zone and applying a resource rental

on every kilo of commercially harvested fish are compelling. It is time to stop giving away our marine resources.