

NZSFC Fisheries Management Update 30

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Turning the spotlight on snapper, crayfish and tuna

Snapper 1 action group

One of Nathan Guy's aspirations for the future management of Snapper 1 was to establish an action group by year's end, to develop a management plan by October 2015. Nominations for the SNA1 Strategy Group have been sought, two from each sector, commercial, customary and recreational. The Minister expects a range of issues will be considered including splitting SNA1 into smaller regions to improve management outcomes and finding a desired stock target level.

People in the depleted Bay of Plenty, and those struggling to find a reasonably sized snapper or enough take-home fish, may yet have something to celebrate.

But there is a fishhook. The Ministry (MPI) is insisting on selecting the two recreational representatives.

The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council has written to the Minister objecting to MPI's inadequate process, their attempt to control representation and membership, and their expectation that appointees will take responsibility for ensuring buy-in from the rest of their sector.

Representatives must be appointed by mandated bodies exercising good process and not selected by third parties. You can bet MPI are not selecting the commercial or customary representatives!

We await the Minister's response, as we are keen to get on with advocating a broader management approach, to enhance snapper and other species in the marine ecosystem.

Achieving success in Snapper 1 augurs well for more abundant fisheries in other areas.

Crayfish 2

We expect MPI to be taking submissions on the future management of Crayfish 2 (CRA2) from now until early February. It seems likely that future commercial catch rates will be used in a formula to adjust the commercial quota level for the following year.

CRA2 runs from Waipu in the north to Waihi, Bay of Plenty. It is an important fishery, yet it is the worst performing. Amateur fishers catch around half their 140 tonne allowance and commercial catch is 0.4kg per potlift. At 0.3kg the fishery is reportedly uneconomic.

Any proposals to either increase the 236 tonne quota or reduce the recreational allowance to reflect depressed catch levels will be vigorously opposed.

Te Puna Mataitai

Maori in the northern Bay of Islands have finally succeeded in gaining Ministerial approval for a mataitai reserve that excludes all commercial fishing. At this stage non-commercial fishing rules remain the same. Any potential future changes will be publicly notified.

Te Puna Mataitai runs from Te Puna inlet, across to Motorua Island, east to the Black Rocks, northwest past Whale Bay to Cape Wikiwiki, including the Ninepin.

If you are in the area and not sure of the boundaries or the fishing restrictions applying in Maunganui Bay and Deep Water Cove, near Cape Brett, ask Russell Radio for the details.

Southern bluefin tuna

Southern Bluefin tuna (SBT) is one of the most valuable and overfished oceanic species in the world. An international Commission manages this fishery. They recently recommended the catch taken by Commission

member states be increased by a third over the next two years.

New Zealand's allocation will reach 1000 t in 2015 and MPI is proposing to allocate most of that to commercial fishers. This proposal will mean NZ's commercial quota will have increased 135% in six years.

While the catch rate of SBT in NZ has increased lately there has been no global stock assessment since 2011 and it is likely that the current spawning stock is below 10% of unfished level.

NZSFC has urged the Minister to be cautious and more patient when considering maximising tuna catch under the international allowance.

The NZ Sport Fishing Council fisheries management team hopes you have a safe, abundant Christmas and New Year. We'll be back in 2014.