

SUBMISSION SUMMARY



Fisheries Change Programme 2019

New Zealand Sport Fishing Council

March 2019



In February Fisheries New Zealand issued its *Fisheries Change* proposals to remove size limits for commercial catch – instead undersize fish would be recorded, landed and sold. It would also mean more small fish for sale here and overseas. Is that what New Zealanders really want?

FNZ claim this land-all policy will incentivise commercial fishers to provide more information on what is caught and encourage them to avoid small fish. There are few details on how a ban on dumping of catch will be enforced or how damage to the seabed and the effects on depleted fish stocks would be reduced.

The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council-LegaSea responded with a [submission](#) in March. Included were 15 recommendations addressing concerns that the proposals are devoid of details about reporting, landings, monitoring and enforcement or whether commercial quotas will increase.

It seems inevitable that quota owners will insist on Total Allowable Commercial Catches (TACC) increases, granting them greater benefits while largely ignoring the needs of small-scale, independent commercial fishers, and increasing the risk to fish stocks, the environment, and public fishing access.

We must reduce fishing mortality not encourage it. Removing regulations and applying management rules will not rebuild our depleted fisheries. World's best practice of managing fish stocks at higher levels will restore abundance and resilience.

Solutions to rebuilding fisheries

Incentives are not a solution. Cameras onboard fishing vessels are part of the solution. Fundamental is a Royal Commission of Inquiry to examine both the Quota Management System and the principles of managing our fisheries resources for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

Comprehensive camera monitoring of commercial catch and an increase in resources for fisheries compliance are required if we are serious about rebuilding our inshore fish stocks and improving at-sea behaviour.

The way to reduce waste from catching and releasing undersize fish is to not catch them in the first place. Removing bottom trawl effort from inshore waters would largely negate the debate and quell growing public concern about how to reduce juvenile mortality.

What next?

If significant changes are to proceed new regulations and legislation will be developed later in the year.

The Council and LegaSea will proactively monitor and participate in future developments of this process. It is important to ensure the serious failures in the current fisheries management system are addressed so fish abundance and marine diversity can be restored.

