



1 April 2025

A Message from the President: This is the Line in the Sand

Dear Members,

Our New Zealand Sport Fishing Council (NZSFC) is unique. For nearly 70 years we've tried to be the voice of reason and often the last line of defence for non-commercial fishers.

Recreational fishing sits deep in the cultural identity of all Kiwis. Fish are a natural resource and belong to the people of New Zealand. No matter your background, catching a feed of fish for your whānau is part of who we are. Every time that right has come under threat, the NZSFC has stood up and fought to protect it.

Many of you will remember some of the big battles:

The Soundings Public Consultation (which spawned option4.co.nz) In 2000/2001 we had to push back on unjust proposals to redefine public access.

The Kahawai Legal Challenge (2005–2009) – Defending kahawai as a fish for the people, not for export.

Hands off our Marlin (2013) - We headed off a really clumsy attempt to allow the commercial exploitation of marlin.

The Save our Snapper campaign (2013) – New Zealanders united to stop the proportional allocation and draconian approach to adjusting recreational snapper limits in Northland, the Hauraki Gulf and Bay of Plenty.

Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan / Sea Change (2013–2020) – We stood for real reform and ecosystem protection, not marine park tokenism

Coromandel Scallop Closure (2021–2023) – Alongside iwi and communities we fought to end destructive dredging.

Fisheries Amendment Bill (2022) – We challenged efforts to give more power to commercial interests under the guise of "flexibility".

Each time, our members have stood shoulder to shoulder. And now, we must do so again.

Shane Jones, the current Oceans and Fisheries Minister, is no stranger to the commercial fishing sector. Minister Jones is one of the authors of the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Settlement Deed

New Zealand Sport Fishing Council Inc.

(Previously New Zealand Big Game Fishing Council Est. 1957)

Patron: P Saul

President: S Macindoe

Administration Officer: H Pastor

www.nzsportfishing.org.nz

PO Box 54242

The Marina, Half Moon Bay, Auckland

M: 027 485 3600

secretary@nzsportfishing.org.nz

(1992), a former chair of Sealord and Chair of Te Ohu Kaimoana. He is a self-confessed apostle for commercial fishing.

Minister Jones has recently proposed drastic changes to the Fisheries Act. It seems like a last-ditch effort to resuscitate a failing Quota Management System in the interests of a handful of powerful quota owners.

Make no mistake, these changes will weaken our voice, reduce transparency, and hand more ownership of our fishery to commercial operators.

Here's what the Minister and Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) have put on the table:

1. Less say for the public, more bad science and less independent data.

FNZ is seeking to introduce "multi-year catch decisions" and management procedures. This means fewer sustainability rounds (and less input from the public). But it gets worse. To do this they will rely on CPUE (catch per unit effort) ie how many fish per hook/pot/trawl. This data alone tells us almost nothing about the health of a fishery. Why is CPUE used? Because it is cheap and easy. It costs less to collect than independent data, and it can easily be manipulated (massaged) to show the results FNZ want. The best example of CPUE being used to mask depletion is the disgraceful mismanagement of Crayfish in Northland (CRA 1), and Auckland and the Bay of Plenty (CRA 2). By the time CRA 2 was reviewed in 2018 the stock had collapsed and urgently needed a rebuild plan.

2. Bureaucratic Decision Making

"Management procedures" and "multi-year catch decisions" shift decision-making away from elected Ministers and hand it to a small group of unelected bureaucrats.

The minister's responsibility to weigh up between interests when setting catch levels is a fundamental part of the Fisheries Act. If this is removed and pre-defined decision making is put in place, that is proportionality. Proportionality is the slippery slope towards introducing the public to being minor (less than 3%) shareholders in the dysfunctional Quota Management System. This means compulsory catch reporting, registration and inevitably New Zealanders will be required to purchase an annual licence to fish.

3. Reduced monitoring, more waste

Cameras on boats isn't about invading people's privacy. Cameras are there so people obey the rules, the same way we have speed cameras. The introduction of cameras has led to a 950% increase in reported kingfish discards and over 1000% increase in snapper reported discards, so is it working? Yes, more people are following the rules and reporting.

In terms of more wastage, rather than transition to more selective harvest techniques, the commercial fishing industry is pushing officials to legalise dumping and discarding under the guise that fishing will be visible on cameras. This serves to entrench the ongoing use of indiscriminate destructive fishing techniques, thus circumventing land-all catch rules.

This isn't what good industry reform looks like, it does nothing to improve the long term viability of industry.

4. Retrospective legal cover

Through the integration of what they call "Better Social, Cultural and Economic Factors when

deciding a rebuild” officials are seeking to change the law and legalise previous decisions, that the High Court have already ruled illegal. For example, in 2024 the Supreme Court ruled that management decisions to rebuild a fish stock must be made before the Minister considers the social, cultural and economic impacts on fishers.

Put simply, you can't fish your way out of a problem, you need to prioritise the marine environment and the fishery.

5. Commercial control of public fish

Part of the changes are new provisions that seek “Recognition of non-regulatory sustainability measures”. This means things like shelving quota and industry making their own rules (Fisheries Management Plans). While this would be welcomed as a voluntary measure, the proposal wants these baked into regulation.

Self-management is not regulation. Even worse, it actually gives the regulator an excuse not to intervene. It's like putting the fox in charge of guarding the hen house. We don't allow this in forestry or farming. Why allow it with our fisheries?

6. Commercial fishers will be allowed to catch yesterday's bag limit, today.

The government wants to allow quota owners to voluntarily stockpile catch entitlements instead of reducing catch limits when fish stocks are struggling. That means more fish taken out of the water in the long run, regardless of the state of the fishery.

Minister Jones is calling this a reform, but it's actually just an attempt to fortify the interests of the private quota owners and entrench the dysfunctional Quota Management System.

We need you to speak up now!

Submissions close **11 April 2025**. LegaSea has created a simple online submission tool, it only takes a few minutes:

👉 www.legasea.co.nz/scam

We urge you to:

- **Share the tool with your clubmates and communities**
- **Make a submission**
- **Speak or email your local MP. Let them know what these changes mean for real people**

We've defended the public's right to fish for generations, now's the time to do it again - **PLEASE**

Yours sincerely



Scott Macindoe
President - New Zealand Sport Fishing Council Inc