

# SUBMISSION SUMMARY

## Southern Bluefin tuna management 2018

New Zealand Sport Fishing Council

February 2018



The sudden success of the Southern Bluefin tuna fishery off Cape Runaway in the winter of 2017 captured the imagination of aspiring anglers around the country and no doubt sent ripples around the world.

More effective international management has helped the Southern Bluefin tuna stock rebuild and New Zealand's allocation has been increased by 88 tonnes. The allocation is now 1,088 t for the 2018 - 2020 fishing years.

### Realistic allocation required

In January 2018 the Ministry for Primary Industries released proposals for an in-season increase to the Southern Bluefin tuna total allowable catch. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council responded with a submission in February.

The NZ Sport Fishing Council supports the allocation of the increase as it will have no effect on the global spawning stock biomass, which is currently rebuilding strongly.

Recently New Zealand's commercial catch has been under caught by about 40 tonnes per year. The current recreational allowance is eight tonnes, which was always under caught until last year's run of tuna off Cape Runaway.



Settled weather and a very successful Southern Bluefin tuna fishery off the Cape combined to attract hundreds of anglers to the eastern Bay of Plenty last July. Based on club weigh station records and some conservative assumptions, the NZ Sport Fishing Council estimated total recreational catch for the last fishing year was 24.3 tonnes.

In January MPI proposed a new allowance of just 20 tonnes, based on the assumption that fishing will not be as good this year as it was in 2017.

The Minister has a statutory obligation to set aside an adequate tonnage to allow for anticipated catch. All catch from NZ waters must be managed within the 1,088 tonne allocation. If 2018 is as successful as 2017 a 20 tonne allowance will not be sufficient.

The Ministry will be consulting on potential measures to limit to individual landed catch in July this year.

### Recommendation

The NZ Sport Fishing Council recommend a 40 tonne recreational allowance is set aside to allow this exciting new fishery to develop responsibly.

### What next?

A Ministerial decision is expected around July. The Minister's decision needs to be precautionary to ensure the national allocation is not exceeded. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council is promoting responsible fishing, including FishCare guidelines to encourage both catch and release and ways to look after fish that are kept.