

## **NZSFC Fisheries Management Update 26**

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### **We can change the predetermined snapper outcome**

Claims there is no predetermined outcome in the Snapper 1 debate are untrue. The Ministry for Primary Industries has already decided in future you will have access to a smaller share of the snapper fishery and your daily take must be reduced. These changes are required to protect commercial interests from a burgeoning population demanding greater access to our fisheries.

This predetermination is evidenced in the Ministry's three management proposals; all are based on the false premise that we have a quota that must not be exceeded. All have a matrix of controversial bag limits and size limit changes that lure attention away from the real agenda, which is to take away our lawful, collective allowance and lock us into a fixed quota, thus fully privatising our snapper fishery and handing control to commercial interests in perpetuity. Forever.

In some respects the Ministry has succeeded, there has been much debate around catch reductions, what size limits are appropriate and who takes what. But LegaSea has managed to turn the spotlight on the proportional share agenda, wasteful bulk harvesting fishing methods responsible for killing masses of juvenile fish and trawling on sensitive benthic areas.

People now understand the proposals mean our children will have access to fewer fish and ever-reducing bag limits unless we convince Nathan Guy to ignore his Ministry's attempt to jam us into a proportional share.

Current legislation is very clear; we are not limited to a collective quota. And how could that be realistically managed anyway?

The Minister is obliged to set aside an allowance that provides for our interests, and more importantly our fisheries must be sustainably managed to meet the needs of future generations.

You have to wonder how Nathan Guy feels about his Ministry dropping these proposals on the deck and leaving him and his party colleagues exposed to the public backlash.

Right now the Ministry is developing its final advice and recommendations for the Minister. This will include a summary of the thousands of submissions received via the LegaSea website.

The NZ Sport Fishing Council believes it would be far more popular for Nathan Guy to follow the law and make a contemporary allowance with our long-term interests in mind.

Because fisheries decisions are political we still have the opportunity to influence Nathan Guy's decision before 1 October. (Visit [www.legasea.co.nz](http://www.legasea.co.nz) to get stuck into the latest campaign.)

We must make it unpalatable for the National Party to privatise the snapper fishery and hand the ill-gotten gains to their commercial cronies.

Commercial interests have been demanding "certainty" for years. This requires recreational fishers to be locked into a fixed quota that must not be exceeded.

Once the public is limited to a quota the industry can start applying the long-promised husbandry to quickly rebuild the fishery, the Ministry can stand back and leave the commercial and recreational shareholders to slug it out over who gets access to the fish, and the Minister will be freed from any political consequences related to his decisions. This would be the death-knell for recreational fishing.

It is a good thing that fisheries decisions are political because we have the numbers and our votes. These add up to much more than any Sanford shareholder can muster.

Nathan Guy is obliged to allow for the reasonable needs of our growing population, and already around two million people have access to Snapper 1, between North Cape and East Cape.

People beyond these boundaries are not immune either, because if a precedent is set in Snapper 1 your favourite fishery could be next. Irrespective of where you live, now is the time to persuade the Minister that our fisheries are public property and need to stay that way.