

Our Fishing FUTURE

- *a healthy marine environment enjoyed by all*
- *taking pride in an abundant and healthy marine environment where our community extends manaakitanga over our fisheries and oceans*
- *unity and inclusion within the recreational fishing community*
- *equity of access through stakeholder engagement*
- *understanding and valuing our marine environment and its resources so we can all be responsible for a better future*

28 September 2016

Media Release: Landmark Snapper Decision

“Minister of Primary Industries, Hon Nathan Guy, has made a landmark decision with his recent announcements for the management and allowances in the Top of the South (SNA7) fishery”, said Our Fishing Future president Geoff Rowling.

“He has accepted the growing body of evidence the stocks are improving by increasing the overall tonnage of Snapper allowed taken by all sectors from 306 to 545 tonnes annually. Although it has taken some 30 years of pain and restraint to get the rebuild settled in, recent years have seen all sectors finding snapper much easier to catch and it is good to see this being recognized.

We will never know what the recreational catch was before the dramatic overfishing in the late 1970s and early 1980s. But it was clearly significant and catch rates were high if the stories of our parents and grandparents are anything to go by.

A key part of the Minister’s decision has been the balancing of the allocations between the recreational and commercial sectors. This recognition of the importance of inshore species to public fishers and the reduced availability they have had to endure in recent times from a once plentiful stock is important to us. He also increased the commercial allowance, giving effect to some earlier commitments to restore quota to those who did not receive compensation at the time.

This more equitable and fair balancing of the rights and responsibilities around the management discussion table opens the door to a new era in New Zealand fisheries management. No longer should sectors moan and grumble about each other but rather we can now get on with working in a collaborative and positive way to explore ways we can all grow our respective shares. We at Our Fishing Future believe the Snapper fishing in the Top of The South has a positive future for all sectors if we embrace the opportunity for increased stewardship that is now in front of us.

The Minister has also indicated an ongoing interest in seeing the fishing sectors take up the challenge to work together. The leaders within the customary, recreational and commercial sectors now have an obligation to step up. We see the real potential for snapper to be restored as an iconic Top of the South sport and table fish. Some of us will enjoy catching it, while many others will rely on it to be caught commercially. And our region will be better off socially, culturally and economically.

Many of us have experienced the downside of unsustainable fishing in a number of species and it is crucial we all play our part in learning from the earlier mistakes. If this bold decision by Nathan Guy is to become the template for the future of inshore fin fisheries, the recreational sector will have to find acceptable ways of measuring our take and implementing effective controls when required. We accept our obligation as stewards and that will mean finding ways of fishing within the new limits.

Geoff Rowling
President

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ourfishingfuture.org.nz