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NZ Recreational Fishing Council
Submission on the proposal for an In-Season increase to the total allowable catch for Southern Bluefin Tuna

The Council and its Representation

Since 1978, the New Zealand Recreational Fishing Council has been participating in fisheries management and advocating for recreational fishing. They have been doing this work to advocate for the 600,000+ New Zealanders who fish for recreational and sustenance purposes and to provide a voice in partnership with commercial and customary representatives, to ensure sustainability of all marine species around the NZ coast.

The Council has a role to ensure the Minister and Ministry of Fisheries have comprehensive and informed knowledge from the recreational sector, to balance the views of all parties and ensure abundant and healthy fisheries remain the objective when decisions are being made.

There have been notable achievements with the Council's work in influencing decisions on fisheries management. A few examples would include the establishment of recreational only areas for scallops in the Coromandel, heavy involvement in the Hauraki Gulf Maritime Park establishment, restraining commercial drag netting in Tauranga Harbour and getting cray loops legitimised as a valid method of crayfishing.

In short, the NZRFC have been an informed voice speaking for recreational fishers in New Zealand for over 40 years. The Council is recognised by the Government and the Courts as a representative body and are the only national body directly offering membership to individual fishers. The Council works on all fish species, in all regions and for all fishers across New Zealand.

Executive Summary

The New Zealand Recreational Fishing Council is heartened to see the increased stock status of the Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) which is now allowing for an increase in the allowance to New Zealand. This shows that the management procedure is working for this species and the target level of biomass will be reached by 2035. It is important that New Zealand takes the opportunity to utilize its increased allocation as given by the CCSBT. It is imperative that this highly migratory stock continues to be managed within the Pacific, with New Zealand taking its full part in the management of this very valuable resource.

Last year 2017 the recreational sector had an exceptional year catching SBT. The increasing ability of social media to spread the word of Bluefin catches meant that recreational fishers flocked to the East Coast mainly Waihou Bay.

Now that this event has happened, will it happen again? With good weather and sea conditions. These fish have always been there with recreational fishers just not aware of their proximity. Our total allowable catch (TAC) needs to be accounted for so that New Zealand stays within its allowance of 1,088 t allocated to New Zealand.

The recreational catch from last year was reported to MPI but you are several tonnes short in your allocation. This needs to be adjusted.

Value of Recreational Catch

Within the document emphasis is placed upon the value of SBT to the commercial fishery. The domestic worth of recreational fishing is significant. There is also a huge opportunity for the New Zealand tourist industry to take advantage of this fishery too, with the majority of these fish being released.

Option 3 – In Season Increase with Change to Commercial and Recreational Allowance

It is important that New Zealand fully accounts for all sources of mortality and profits from its full allocation.

Acknowledgment must be given to the growing importance of the recreational sector in this fishery, both on the domestic front and long term within the tourist industry.

The New Zealand Recreational Fishing Council supports Option 3

Stock	Option	TAC	TACC	ACE	Customary	Recreational	Other Mortality
STN 1	3 t	1,088 t	971 t	76 t	1 t	20 t	20 t

Southern Blue Fin Tuna Review 2018 & Recommendations

The recreational sector has identified some additional issues that need to be addressed during the review of Southern Bluefin review set to take place during 2018

- The recreational sector wants to suggest that MPI considers placing a limit on recreational fishers of 1 Southern Bluefin Tuna per angler.

- Make the dumping of fish by recreational fishers illegal. This would then line-up with the standards that the commercial fishery are subjected to. This dumping is not just occurring at sea but also on land and this needs to be addressed in legislation.
- Education on the correct handling practises on board vessels within the recreation fleet, that produce good quality Tuna for consumption. This includes putting in place the necessary infrastructure before the season starts e.g. Ice.

Thanks again for the opportunity and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this in more detail if this option is available.



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This submission was drafted by Sheryl Hart, NZRFC Executive