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Fish Now, Fish Forever

Hon David Basham MP
Minister for Primary Industries
and Regional Development
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10 May 2021

Dear Minister,

RE: Commercial net fishing for Yellowtail kingfish

Thank you for your letter of 20 March 2021 regarding commercial net fishing for Yellowtail kingfish (*Seriola lalandi*). As you correctly state, kingfish are an extremely important species for the recreational fishery, and we are appalled by the practice of netting and gaffing large fish for little commercial benefit. The practice of netting kingfish has ceased in all other Australian jurisdictions due to the potential for rapid stock decline and it is incomprehensible that SA continues to ignore this management approach.

The classification of kingfish as “sustainable” fails to recognise that sustainability is not merely measured by biological status but is also a function of achieving meaningful social and economic outcomes for the community of SA. The current management of kingfish does not do this.

The outrage caused by netting kingfish highlights that the community does not accept this as a socially responsible practice and wants it to cease. These concerns not only relate to the recreational fishing sector but also the environmental and aquaculture sectors. Further, there is no economic benefit in capturing wild kingfish in the manner described. The multi-million-dollar aquaculture sector has expressed their significant concern about flooding the market with poor quality fish which drives down prices and they believe that their brand is being damaged by this practice. It is indisputable that the economic value of recreational fishing for kingfish exceeds the economic value of the commercial fishery by several orders of magnitude and it therefore beggar’s belief that PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture have ignored these factors in advising you that the commercial kingfish fishery meets the triple bottom line measures of sustainability.

Minister, there are simple solutions to appropriately managing kingfish for the benefit of all users which include;

1. Cease the practice of netting Yellowtail kingfish in all SA waters.

2. Limit commercial fishing of kingfish to line methods only, excluding the use of multi-hook longlines.
3. Limit the daily commercial take of kingfish to 3 fish, in line with regulations for Samson fish (*Seriola hippos*) in SA.
4. Establish a formal allocation of the species between recreational, commercial and indigenous fishers in line with historical harvest estimates from 2013, when the most recent recreational fishing data was collected.

I look forward to positive response and encourage you to contact me directly to discuss this important matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, sweeping initial 'M' followed by several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mick Wilson
Chair