Why is the current snapper fishing quota limit being reviewed within New Zealand?

The Snapper fishing market generates a huge revenue for the New Zealand government through exports. Non-commercial fishermen also have a quota system where they have a limited catch and size if catch. The Ministry of Primary Industries want to cut down this amount that recreational fishermen can catch daily. The current catch limit is nine per person and this is being cut down to seven per person. The size of the fish has also been increased from has also been cut down and the approximate minimum limit is 27-30 cm. But the question is why?

Snapper fish survive on shellfish and rock-bound chitinous creatures, sea eggs (kina), crabs such as estuarine mud crabs, worms, molluscs, crustaceans and plankton, jellyfish, and small fish species such as anchovies, pilchards and sprats. But once they are first hatched they hide where they can from predators. The young fish feed off phytoplankton and zooplankton, marine worms and small crustaceans. Snapper fish are fast growing, they grow about four to six inches in their first six months. Most snapper in the gulf waters reach sexual maturity when they reach 28cm in length. Snapper are also serial spawners which means that they will spawn repeatedly during the breeding season, often on consecutive days. When the eggs are fertilized they float to the top of the water and hatch up to four days later.

The change of the quota is changing because it will make the snapper fish species more populated because it isn’t and with the increase of human population that earns more and more recreational fishers catching more and more fish which will drop the snapper numbers over time. At the moment and the Ministry of Primary Industries want to cut the amount we catch from nine to seven and also the size is changing so we don’t catch the young fish that are not breeding yet. They are changing the quota because they want snapper fishing in the future as well so that everyone has the right to catch a snapper and they won’t be extinct. There is a huge drop in snapper numbers in some areas of the North Island already, these include the North Cape, therefore snapper quota decrease should help to increase these fish numbers up here.

From submissions, Mr Guy said that it was clear that fishers wanted to see further monitoring of commercial operations and less illegal dumping from the commercial ships. Illegal dumping is when undersized fish are caught in nets and then dumped back out to sea, most fish do not live after this. He said camera coverage will be introduced on 25% of all trawl vessels by December this year, with 100% coverage by October 2015. Mr Guy also said scientific tagging is being implemented in order to gather up to date and reliable information on the Snapper 1 stock. He said this will come at a cost of $7 million and will be split between the Government and the commercial sector.


At a public information evening for proposed changes to snapper quotas, recreational fishermen and Richard Baker of Legasea - made their feelings known, describing the proposal as "horrific". Mr Baker said that "The reality is if a man goes out fishing three or four snapper at 27cm isn't going to feed his family." And what’s really got their backs up is the minimal change to commercial quotas.
My opinion on the quota change.

I think that the snapper quota should change. It would benefit the fish in the future and the fish won't become extinct. But however, I think that the amount we are allowed to catch should be cut down lower and maybe should be changed to like five fish we are allowed to catch.