

In response to the possible introduction of bag limits for recreational anglers.

Dear scrutiny panel,

My name is Mick Ward, I own and run a fishing tackle shop at First Tower with my brother Doug. I would just like to express some of our concerns over the proposed introduction of bag limits for recreational anglers.

I would firstly like to state that although I initially do not see a problem with bag limits, I do not understand the reasons why a bag limit is being wanted to be brought in. If they were being brought in for conservation reasons, along with other measures, I am sure most anglers, if not all, would think it is a great idea.

What exactly is trying to be achieved by this? I am lead to believe it is to stop black fish sales by non commercials, that is bringing down the demand and prices of commercial fishermens fish. It seems strange to me that 99% of pleasure anglers do abide by the laws that are already in place, and in yet, you are wanting to persecute all anglers with restrictions. Surely there are other ways of trying to stop the black fish trade, and these should be looked at before a bag limit is brought in.

Will bag limits stop the black fish trade? I dont think so, and I am sure an already over worked and under manned fisheries dept will not want to spend even more valuable time checking peoples bags, when like I say, 99% of these people already abide by laws. There are boat anglers, shore anglers and recreational fishermen I know of that repeatedly catch fish and sell them to restaurants, hotels and fish mongers. I am sure if these guys could catch five bass a day and sell them they would be very happy, and a bag limit will only reduce the amount of money they make sometimes.

If you are looking for suggestions on other ways to reduce black fish sales here are some of mine.

- 1) Make it illegal for anyone to sell fish that does not have a commercial licence. At the moment it is not illegal for shore anglers and shore netters/longliners to sell fish. I know of one guy that catches bass from a boat and sells them to fish mongers under the pretence that he caught them from the shore.
- 2) Make it illegal for people to buy fish from a non reputable source, restaurants etc will have to have receipts for all the fish on their premisses. Their fish purchases cannot be paid for from petty cash, a cheque must be used for all fish payments. I am sure the tax dept would also agree this is a good idea!

- 3) Make shore netting/longlining illegal for non commercials. I just do not understand why a guy can lay as much net or hooks on a beach as he likes. All for the freezer? I don't think so. So many times I hear of abandoned nets and lines on beaches that are a risk to animals, fish and the enviroment in general. Stopping this would put an end to so many worries.
- 4) Make it possible for restaurant customers to know that the fish in the restaurant have been bought from repetable scources. Stickers on the window or a mention on the menu that the premisses supprt commercial fishermens best interests.
- 5) In Cornwall, some bass fishermen have set up a tag system that allows customers to look online and see who caught the fish and other information. If money is to be spent policing bag limits, I think it would be better spent on setting something like this up that premotes our island and its fishery.

I do hope the states consider other other options before bringing in bag limits, as I, and many others do think it is not the solution they are looking for.

Kindest regards,

Mick Ward

