



Media Release

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FROM THE OFFICE OF VRFISH – VICTORIAS' RECREATIONAL FISHING PEAK BODY

WHY A BAG AND SIZE LIMIT?....

VRFish looks at why we have bag and size limits for recreational fishing.

Most bag limits are for social/ethical reasons and not stock conservation reasons. However, Southern Bluefin Tuna, School Sharks, Elephant Fish, Flora & Fauna Guarantee listed species and some others are an exception!

Bag limits seek to share the catch amongst recreational users and are usually based on what is perceived to be socially acceptable amount of fish to take for personal use.

Attitudes concerning socially acceptable bag (catch) limits can change with changes in the fishery and snapper is a good current example of this. Most minimum size limits are based on allowing a species to spawn at least once before capture (Snapper in Victoria is an exception with the size of first sexual maturity considerably higher than 27cm).

The biological reasons for using bag and size limits are to enhance growth, control fishing mortality and ensure adequate egg production. Consequently, it could be argued that a minimum size limit should ensure that juvenile fish reach their maximum growth potential in order to optimise the fishery yield or catch.

It is probable that setting a minimum size at a length or age when a fish is growing rapidly may reduce the productivity of the stock. Minimum sizes play a major role in egg production by ensuring that sufficient reproduction occurs before fish are large enough to be caught.

Ideally, the minimum size needs to be greater than the size of maturity to allow some egg production before legal size. Bag limits are used to alter the catch in order to modify the levels of fishing mortality.

When stock abundance is low because of fishing or for environmental reasons, the fishery yield and spawning potential can be improved by adjusting bag and size limits and allowing the stock to recover through growth, increased survival and greater egg production.

Recreational bag limits should ideally be kept as simple as possible to avoid confusion. Categories or grouping of bag limits are a good way to simplify bag limits for a variety of popular species and help achieve the above objective.

You still have an opportunity to have some input to VRFish's review on the Fisheries Regulations and the bag and size limits. So get your submissions in by Monday 19 February 2007 and email fishregs@vrfish.com.au

Input to the above from Fisheries Victoria and Primary Industries Research Victoria is acknowledged.

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