



Environment

Fish Not Landed.



New Zealand law clearly states the landing and catch reporting requirements for all commercially caught fish in New Zealand. Some fish species can - or must - be returned to sea.

5

The Fisheries Act specifies 5 exemptions allowing for or requiring fish to be legally returned to sea.



6%

Scientists estimate that for every kg of landed catch, about 6% of the catch is returned to sea. This includes both legally and illegally returned catch.



33

The Fisheries Act contains provisions for 33 species to be legally returned to sea.

NEW ZEALAND APPROACH

For the 123 fish species managed within the Quota Management System, New Zealand law generally requires the landing and reporting of any catch. However, there are specific provisions for legally returning fish to the sea. These provisions generally relate to sustainability or vessel safety purposes.

IMPLEMENTATION

Provisions for legally returning fish to the sea including being less than the minimum legal size (16 species); being allowed under Schedule 6 of the Fisheries Act (33 species); being necessary to ensure the safety of the vessel or any crew member; after being lawfully processed on a vessel; or authorised by a government observer.

COMPLIANCE

Returning fish to sea illegally could be deemed a serious offence under New Zealand law, resulting in penalties from up to five years' imprisonment, fines up to \$500,000 and forfeiture of all equipment including vessels, fishing gear and forfeiture of quota shares.

COMPARABILITY

It is known that there is some catch of QMS species which is illegally returned to the sea and not reported on any catch returns. The existing conformance and validation processes will be strengthened with the Government's new Integrated Electronic Monitoring and Reporting System and penalty reform initiatives.