



COMM 12 - Report ANNEX 10d

Statement of the HSFG to the 12th Commission Meeting of SPRFMO

High Seas group statement: 2.02.2024

Dear Members,

The Proposal submitted by Australia SC11-DW05 would further impact our ability to fish in the SPRFMO area. If approved, the remaining very small area now open will be reduced by an additional 50%.

Even now it is impossible for our impacts to be significantly adverse. Fishing in the currently open areas simply cannot, as a matter of mathematics, be reasonably regarded as having a significant adverse impact on the area.

There are currently no Australian or New Zealand vessels fishing in the SPRFMO area, due primarily to the decisions taken by this commission.

I highlight the paper submitted by HSFG COMM 12-Obs 01

Decision makers and SC are now ignoring some clear science from HSFG, in favour of the rhetoric from people that suggest NZ commercial fishing in 0.1% of the SPRFMO area is a prime contributor to the destruction of ocean habitats and ecosystems. To repeat – bottom trawling is occurring in only one tenth of one percent of the total SPRFMO area. It is ridiculous to suggest it could be responsible for widespread ecological destruction.

Last year the total allowable catch of sustainably caught orange roughy was halved, in the limited area where we are licenced to fish. Reference to SPRFMO history shows the catch limits and historical footprint years first chosen by Australia and New Zealand were based on historical levels not representative of the actual catches. They also then closed 30% of the areas where our highest catch was taken.

In 2013 Australia presented a Spatial analysis paper based on bottom trawling at SC-01. That paper summarised historic fishing in the area and shows what is fished and what is not. I refer members to that paper, sent in as an information paper .

I invite you all to review the history of SPRFMO, which shows catch levels have not decreased because of ecological and stock collapse caused by bottom fishing – the main reason is restrictive and flawed conservation measures.

A example of poor decision making was New Zealand and Australia convincing the commission to declare that Pelagic or midwater trawling was in fact bottom fishing. I remind you that last week in CTC we adopted para 48 that clearly states what the HSFG has been arguing for years; namely that midwater trawling is not bottom trawling.

Fishing produces high quality food protein, a tangible commodity demonstrated to have a lower ecological footprint than most other forms of protein. With a growing world population, food security is not only needed it is an absolute obligation for all of us.

Thank you