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News Release

Sanford offers to stop fishing in Hauraki Gulf if all fishers record and report catch



One of the largest fishers in the Hauraki Gulf says it's prepared to stop all commercial fishing in the area if everyone who 'throws a line in' to the country's most popular fishery records and reports what they are catching.

The offer was made yesterday by [Sanford](#) CEO, Volker Kuntzsch in a speech to the [Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Seminar](#), The [Hauraki Gulf Forum's](#) annual seminar at the Auckland Museum.

Kuntzsch believes the future of fishing in the Gulf is tied to sustainability. He said all commercial vessels in the Gulf now report every snapper they catch including undersize snapper they are legally required to put back in the water. "Complete transparency and data on all fishing in the Gulf is an important future step to preserving the fish stocks for future generations."

It's estimated that more than 200,000 people fish in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park each year. "The issue we have is that around half or more of what's taken out of the Gulf is currently unreported, meaning we have a massive hole in the information available on the health and size of the fish stocks."

Kuntzsch, who has a marine science background, says as Auckland's population grows, so too does responsibility for the shared stewardship of looking after its fish stocks.

"Technology now makes it really easy for everyone to record what they're catching and the size of the fish. The Fish4All app, developed in Wellington for recreational fishers is a great start. But more work will be needed with MPI to get a the reporting system right."

"We all have to make changes to protect the Hauraki Gulf. On our side there will be some smaller commercial vessels that would need to be compensated if we move out of the Gulf."

In the past 12 months, commercial fishers have put new [VMS tracking technology](#) on all their vessels, have adopted a 'move-on' rule when they encounter undersize snapper and [recorded and reported all undersize snapper](#) they catch and are required to return to the sea.

Volker Kuntzsch is predicting that within the next three years all of Sanford's in-shore trawl fleet will also be using the new Precision Seafood Harvesting fishing method, which will also boost sustainability efforts.

"There's a great saying that, 'if you can't measure it, you can't manage it' – if we can start accurately measuring all the fish being caught in the Hauraki Gulf, we will have the best information to know how to keep improving the health of the fish stocks," said Volker Kuntzsch. ENDS.

VIDEO AND IMAGES AVAILABLE FOR THIS STORY

The image of Sanford's vessel, *Ana* along with video b-roll of snapper fishing and fish at the Auckland fish market IS available for download [here](#).

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