



22 August 2014

John Cleal & Richard Wells  
PO Box 1279  
NELSON 7040

Dear John and Richard

### Ministry for Primary Industries support for the Deepwater Group's Certification of NZ Ling Fisheries

Ling fisheries in New Zealand are in the final stages of assessment for certification against the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) environmental standard for sustainable fisheries. The MSC sets a rigorous standard that assesses the stock status, bycatch species, interactions with protected species, information available to monitor the fisheries, and governance of the fisheries.

The Certification Assessment Body has indicated there will be three conditions on this certification, which will need to be achieved within two years to avoid suspension of the certification. Two of the conditions will require improved monitoring and management of seabird interactions specifically within the ling bottom longline fisheries.

To meet the conditions, more information is required on the level of seabird interactions with ling bottom longline vessels. A strategy to minimise interactions will also need to be developed. MPI has allocated additional observer coverage to this fishery to support further information collection. Observed trips to date have shown both good and poor performance with regards to seabird interactions. This shows there is still room for improvement but also demonstrates effective mitigation methods are currently in use.

As you are aware, research has also explored potential mitigation methods that may help minimise seabird interactions in the ling longline fisheries. This research has characterised the nature and extent of seabird interactions amongst bottom longline vessels and provided recommendations to reduce the risk of seabird interactions. This report, 'Seabird interactions with the deepwater bottom-longline fleet' will be available on the Department of Conservation website soon ([www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)).

The Department of Conservation report focuses on vessels 20-34 metres in length, and explicitly notes there is a lack of monitoring compared to the large amount of effort by this group of vessels. It estimates that around 10,000 hooks are set per day, and a total of around 500,000 hooks per year. Less than 5% of this effort observed in any one year.

MPI has committed to supporting the continued MSC certification of our deepwater fisheries in the National Deepwater Plan, and will continue to work with you to effectively meet the conditions raised in regards to the ling bottom longline fisheries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Vicky Reeve'.

Vicky Reeve  
Deepwater Fisheries Manager (Acting)