



## Office of Hon Nathan Guy

**MP for Otaki**

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Racing

B13-634

20 MAR 2014

Dear Stakeholder

### **Fisheries sustainability measures for 1 April 2014**

This letter outlines my final decisions on sustainability measures for selected stocks for the April 2014-15 fishing year. My decisions on Total Allowable Catches (TACs), allowances, Total Allowable Commercial Catches (TACCs) and deemed values come into effect on 1 April 2014.

The best available scientific and management information suggests there is an opportunity to increase utilisation from several fisheries while ensuring sustainability. My decisions provide increased utilisation benefits for the commercial sector in the Campbell Island southern blue whiting fishery and the Gisborne, Otago and Westland/Taranaki rock lobster fisheries.

However, for some fisheries I have decided to reduce the commercial catch limit to ensure sustainability. This includes the southern scallop fishery, and the Bay of Plenty and Wellington/Hawkes Bay rock lobster fisheries.

In reaching my decisions I have considered submissions received from tangata whenua and stakeholders on the initial proposals, final advice from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and the National Rock Lobster Management Group, and relevant legislative provisions and my obligations under the Fisheries Act 1996. I would like to thank everyone who participated in the review of sustainability measures for April 2014.

Copies of the final advice papers can be found on Ministry's website at:  
[www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Consultations/Archive/default.htm](http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Consultations/Archive/default.htm)

The specific decisions for each stock are attached

Yours sincerely

Hon Nathan Guy  
**Minister for Primary Industries**

### **Southern scallops (SCA 7)**

I have decided to decrease the TAC for SCA 7 from 827 to 520 tonnes for the 2014/15 fishing year. Within this TAC, I have decreased the TACC from 747 to 400 tonnes and set an allowance for other sources of fishing-related mortality of 40 tonnes. I have retained the Maori customary non-commercial and recreational allowances at 40 tonnes each.

<b>TAC (t)</b>	<b>TACC (t)</b>	<b>Maori customary allowance (t)</b>	<b>Recreational Allowance (t)</b>	<b>Other sources of fishing-related mortality (t)</b>
520	400	40	40	40

The SCA 7 fishery is managed on an enhanced and rotational basis. Despite this provision to enhance abundance in the fishery, SCA 7 is currently at a very low level of abundance. All of the commercial catch currently comes from the Marlborough Sounds, with Tasman and Golden Bays voluntarily closed to commercial harvest to protect the residual scallop beds.

I consider that a reduced commercial catch limit of 400 tonnes takes into account the future enhancement potential of the fishery, while balancing the sustainability risk and utilisation opportunity. This is the first step in stimulating a rebuild of abundance in the fishery.

In addition to a significant reduction to the TAC, I believe that further supporting measures are required to help rebuild the fishery and improve utilisation opportunities for all sectors. My intention is to strengthen the existing management arrangements in the southern scallop fishery.

Through the information provisions in the Memorandum of Understanding between MPI and the Challenger Scallop Enhancement Company:

- I will be seeking timely provision of information with which to make decisions on annual harvest plans. This will include better fine scale monitoring to improve management of the Marlborough Sounds populations.
- I have also directed MPI to review the current biomass survey methodology to ensure the information used to inform harvest estimates is robust.

I want to assure the public that before commercial harvest occurs this year the industry will provide me with harvest plans and proposed sustainable sub-catch limits. These limits will be based on scientific surveys that demonstrate that the level of proposed harvest will be sustainable. I expect MPI to work closely with industry to ensure that levels of harvest will be closely monitored and any risk of localised overfishing is avoided.

I am also directing MPI to undertake a review of the SCA 7 enhancement programme and its reporting conditions, including proposed levels of enhancement in the current and future years.

I recognise that some submissions supported a larger reduction to the commercial catch limit. I do not consider that this action is required at this time.

However, I intend to review the effectiveness of the new management framework in time for any additional measures to be included in the review of sustainability measures for 1 April 2016. In the absence of industry commitment and action or if there is evidence to suggest the management framework is not adequately ensuring sustainability and providing for utilisation for all sectors before the proposed review, I will consider a review in 2015.

### **Campbell Island southern blue whiting (SBW 6I)**

I have decided to increase the TAC for SBW 6I from 30,000 to 40,000 tonnes for the 2014/15 fishing year. Within this TAC, I have increased the TACC from 29,400 to 39,200 tonnes and increased the allowance for other sources of fishing-related mortality from 600 to 800 tonnes. No changes are being made to allowances for Maori customary non-commercial and recreational interests.

<b>TAC (t)</b>	<b>TACC (t)</b>	<b>Maori customary allowance (t)</b>	<b>Recreational Allowance (t)</b>	<b>Other sources of fishing-related mortality (t)</b>
40,000	39,200	0	0	800

The latest stock assessment information indicates that the SBW 6I stock is above the level that can produce the maximum sustainable yield and above the management target (40% of un-fished biomass).

I have made my decision based on an assurance that the industry and MPI will continue to work together to implement an effective mitigation plan to minimise fishing interaction with sea lions in the area. Last year the Minister of Conservation and I requested that sea lion exclusion devices (SLEDs) were used in this fishery for the first time to minimise the capture of sea lions, which had unexpectedly increased. I am pleased to confirm that the industry has agreed to use SLEDs in the SBW 6I fishery for the 2014 season and that this will be accompanied with full observer coverage.

Along with the use of SLEDs, daily reporting between vessels, the deepwater industry body, and MPI will occur to allow real time management responses and monitoring of the fishery.

Given these measures are in place and the collaborative approach being taken by commercial fishers to effectively implement these measures, I am confident that the commercial catch limit increase will not increase the potential risk to sea lions around Campbell Island.

## **Rock lobster**

My rock lobster catch limit decisions are based on advice from the National Rock Lobster Management Group (NRLMG) and were guided by the use of management procedures (or decision rules).

I am confident that the ongoing use of each stock's management procedure is consistent with my statutory obligations for catch setting. The management procedure approach enables me to regularly review catch limits to ensure the limits do not lag behind available abundance.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the NRLMG and their ongoing efforts to maintain each rock lobster stock well above statutory reference levels to provide for greater economic and utilisation benefits for all fishery participants. Best available research and management information suggests each of the rock lobster stocks that were reviewed are likely to be above the level that can produce the maximum sustainable yield (or accepted target).

My decisions for each rock lobster stock are provided below. Overall, the allowances for Maori customary non-commercial fishing, recreational interests and other sources of fishing-related mortality remained unchanged for each stock, except for CRA 9 where non-commercial allowances are set for the first time.

### *CRA 2 (Bay of Plenty) rock lobster fishery*

I have agreed to use a new management procedure (called '*Rule 4*') in the CRA 2 fishery for the first time to guide TAC setting from the 2014-15 fishing year onwards. This approach will provide for a responsive management regime and regular review of catch limits.

Based on the use of the management procedure, I have also decided to decrease the TAC for CRA 2 from 452.583 to 416.5 tonnes, and decrease the TACC from 236.083 to 200 tonnes.

The CRA 2 commercial catch limit has remained unchanged since 1999. I consider that the 36 tonne commercial catch limit decrease will help to increase rock lobster numbers in this important shared fishery. This action should provide benefits for all fishing sectors.

### *CRA 3 (Gisborne) rock lobster fishery*

I have decided to increase the TAC for CRA 3 from 354.5 to 389.95 tonnes, and increase the TACC from 225.5 to 260.95 tonnes. The TAC increase is guided by the application of the CRA 3 management procedure that has been in use in the CRA 3 fishery since April 2010.

Information suggests CRA 3 stock abundance has improved since 2004 and the management procedure is assisting a rebuild of the stock. It is proposed that the CRA 3 stock assessment will be updated later this year which will enable a thorough review of the status of the stock.

#### *CRA 4 (Wellington/Hawkes Bay) rock lobster fishery*

I have decided to decrease the TAC for CRA 4 from 694.7 to 662 tonnes, and decrease the TACC from 499.7 to 467 tonnes. The TAC decrease is guided by the application of the CRA 4 management procedure that has been in use in the CRA 4 fishery since April 2012.

The catch limit decrease will help to ensure the CRA 4 stock is maintained at healthy abundance levels.

#### *CRA 7 (Otago) rock lobster Fishery*

I have decided to increase the TAC for CRA 7 from 64 to 86 tonnes, and increase the TACC from 44 to 66 tonnes. The TAC increase is guided by the application of the CRA 7 management procedure that has been in use in the CRA 7 fishery since April 2013.

I am confident the conservative approach taken to the management of the CRA 7 fishery will provide improved utilisation benefits over time.

#### *CRA 9 (Westland/Taranaki) rock lobster fishery*

I have agreed to use a new management procedure (called 'Rule 4041') in the CRA 9 fishery for the first time to guide TAC setting from the 2014-15 fishing year onwards.

No TAC or allowances have been previously set for CRA 9. Based on the use of the management procedure, I have decided to set a CRA 9 TAC of 115.8 tonnes for the first time, and set an allowance for customary Maori non-commercial interests of 20 tonnes, an allowance for recreational interests of 30 tonnes and an allowance for other sources of fishing-related mortality of 5 tonnes. I have also decided to increase the TACC for CRA 9 from 47.008 to 60.8 tonnes.

The CRA 9 fishery is not fully developed. I consider that the management procedure approach will assist with the development of the commercial fishery. But at the same time provide for a conservative approach that will ensure that the non-commercial fishery continues to provide for high levels of fishing success.

<b>Stock</b>	<b>TAC (t)</b>	<b>TACC (t)</b>	<b>Maori customary allowance (t)</b>	<b>Recreational Allowance (t)</b>	<b>Other sources of fishing-related mortality (t)</b>
<b>CRA 2</b>	416.5	200	16.5	140	60
<b>CRA 3</b>	389.95	260.95	20	20	89
<b>CRA 4</b>	662	467	35	85	75
<b>CRA 7</b>	86	66	10	5	5
<b>CRA 9</b>	115.8	60.8	20	30	5

### Sea cucumber (SCC 3) deemed values

I have decided to adjust deemed value rates for the south-east South Island sea cucumber stock (SCC 3). I have retained the current annual deemed value rate for SCC 3, but have put in place steeper differential rates.

Interim deemed value	Annual deemed value	Differential deemed value				
		> 20%	> 40%	> 60%	> 80%	> 100%
\$ 1.80	0 – 20%	\$ 3.20	\$ 4.40	\$ 5.60	\$ 6.80	\$ 8.00
	\$ 2.00					

Sea cucumber is currently over-caught by commercial fishers in the SCC 3 fishery. I consider that the deemed value adjustments will help to incentivise commercial fishers to balance their catch with annual catch entitlement and also recognises the unavoidable bycatch of sea cucumber in the trawl fishery.

I acknowledge there is limited information to inform decision making for SCC 3. Commercial catch information is key to allowing us to monitor performance of this fishery and make good management decisions. I have directed MPI to work with the industry on reporting obligations in this fishery to improve the standard of this information.