

Kenepuru & Central Sounds



Kenepuru & Central Sounds Residents Association Inc.

The Minister for Primary Industries
Executive Wing
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

*Ross Withell
(President)
Kenepuru Road
RD 2
Picton 7282*

25 Jul 2014

Dear Sir

Scallops – Annual Harvest Plan – Marlborough Sounds

I write in my capacity as Chair of the Kenepuru and Central Sounds Residents' Association. The Association was incorporated in 1991 and currently has around 250 households as members.

Gathering scallops is a much-loved recreational activity for many of our members. Accordingly, the Association submitted on the MPI paper concerning sustainability measures for Southern scallops (SCA 7). We were somewhat astounded and mystified by your subsequent decision (20 March 2014) to set the TACC at 400 tonnes for the 2014 season.

However, we took at face value your assurances as to why you had reached your decision and that you intended to keep an eagle eye on both the industry and the science behind harvest estimates.

Nevertheless the Association also decided to participate more actively on SCA 7 matters going forward. To this end we obtained and reviewed various MPI and NIWA research papers and earlier NIWA Biomass Survey reports on SCA 7 (not a comforting read). We confirmed with MPI that we would send a representative to the Shellfish Working Group meeting at which this years NIWA biomass survey report was to be presented.

In debates of this nature the Association likes to proceed in a considered and researched

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way. Unfortunately, we could not submit on the draft annual harvest plan as submissions closed the same day as the NIWA biomass survey report was presented. This left the Committee no time to review and consider.

However, in due course, we reviewed the report of the Shellfish Working Group meeting held on 9 July. This report carefully and dispassionately reviews the current biomass survey methodology and makes recommendations as to what would be an appropriate exploitation rate for the 2014 season. It is essentially a list of why, how and where the figures obtained from the biomass survey are a significant over-estimate of what is a sustainable commercial take.

The Association has heard that the industry is considering seeking a commercial take in the order of 30-35 tonnes. Such a figure is not supported by the science and would be, we believe, a serious threat to the existence of the Marlborough Sounds scallop fishery. Accordingly, the Association implores the Minister to act on the recommendations of the Shellfish Working Group and set the commercial annual harvest plan for the Marlborough Sounds and thus SCA 7 at around 15-18 tonnes. We suggest this better reflects the science and may save the final commercial scallop fishery in SCA 7 from collapse.

The Association would be happy to discuss this and other fishery matters with you the next time you visit the Sounds. In the interim, we await your determination as to the annual harvest plan for scallops and request a copy of the same.

Yours faithfully



Ross Withell

President

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