

Memorandum

To: Allen Frazer, Anthony Brett (Ministry for Primary Industries) (MPI)

Subject: SCA 7 – Marlborough Sounds Scallops – MPI Options Paper – Position Statement

1. We have **reviewed** the recent NIWA biomass survey reports, what transpired at this year's multi-sector group meetings and the draft Option Paper MPI circulated on 10 March. We **record** that MPI requested that if possible sector responses be prepared and circulated back to MPI before 17 March. This memorandum represents the current views of the non-commercial representatives from KCSRA, MFRA and PBC in light of that request.
2. We **note** the accumulated background research material available and in particular the results of the NIWA full biomass survey of SCA 7 carried out in November 2015 (NZ Fisheries Assessment Report 2015/79).
3. We **note** that the NIWA report confirms the downward trend of declining biomass in the Marlborough Sounds (MS), the lack of recovery in Tasman Bay and Golden Bay and that the commercially viable area is effectively down to two locations in the Sounds. We also **note** that the poor condition, health and stressed nature of the MS fishery has been highlighted by MPI in its September 2015 advice to the Minister confirming the presence of the disease *Perkinsus* in the Pelorus.
4. We **record** our evidence-based view that the MS fishery is in a very poor state and on the edge of collapse.
5. We **note** that the Options Paper also reflects discussions between MPI and the expert panel, which met recently. In particular the expert panel's advice that available spawning biomass at good density was fundamental to a productive scallop fishery, is **noted**. It is also **noted** that the Options Paper records that cessation or reduction of fishing mortality was a means to boost spawning stock and recruitment for rebuilding the fishery.
6. We **note** our view that the Options Paper is deficient in that it does not record the commercial sector's viewpoint as articulated by the CSEC chairman that they see no need to change the current management system – thus the status quo as an option is not recorded in the Options Paper. This is particularly important given that the majority of the detail of the "categories" making up the Options Paper was as a result of contributions from non-commercial representatives and /or MPI.
7. We **record** the view of the non-commercial representatives that the condition and health of the MS fishery is in such a poor state that the option of the status quo is one bordering on reckless.

8. We **note** that on 11 March we wrote to MPI noting with interest the matters raised in paragraph 5 above and requesting MPI supply operational and technical detail as to how the closure of areas in order to encourage rebuilding of the MS fishery might work e.g. what was a “good density”, was there a critical threshold size for such areas and so on. We also **requested** that the omission noted in paragraph 6 be rectified and **invited** MPI to add in some narrative text for this “option” in the same manner as it has for the other “options” set out in the Options Paper. We **record** that as at the time of writing we have not received a response from MPI.
9. We **record** that the non-commercial representatives’ primary objective is the preservation and rebuilding of the MS fishery so that it is once again a healthy and viable fishery as it was as recently as 2010.
10. We **record** our belief that this objective is consistent with the purpose of the Fisheries Act 1996.
11. We **state** that given the background of research and discussions to date and the seemingly intransigent position taken by CSEC (as the representative of the commercial sector) that it is unlikely that agreement can be reached by the Multi Sector Group (MSG) and MPI as to a set of agreed management proposals to be put to the Minister in April.
12. Accordingly we **record** our belief that our objective and the stated aims of MPI are best achieved (and are consistent with the purpose of the governing legislation) by **recommending** that the SCA7 fishery be closed for the 2016 season to give it much needed breathing space to, we hope, recover.
13. We **note** the previous experience of non-commercial interests where suggestions to maintain the viability of a commercially over fished fishery have been misconstrued. Accordingly, for the avoidance of doubt, we **record** that in the interests of re-establishing a viable and sustainable scallop fishery in MS, the initiative proposed in paragraph 12 above is contingent upon the commercial sector agreeing not to fish SCA 7 in the coming season.
14. We further **recommend** that an MPI commissioned and supervised biomass survey be then carried out by, say, NIWA, in May 2017 to assess the status of the SCA 7 scallop stock and, in particular, the MS fishery.
15. In the intervening period, we **record** that non-commercial interests are prepared to continue to work in good faith as part of a multi-sector group to tease out the components of what would be a sustainable management structure to recommend and implement sustainable fishery practices going forward.
16. We look forward to the response of MPI and urge MPI to take our recommendations to the Minister.

This memorandum represents the views of the representatives attending meetings of the MSG from the Kenepuru and Central Sounds Residents’ Association, Pelorus

Boating Club and Marlborough Recreational Fishers' Association but, bearing in mind MPI's request to keep the contents of the MPI Options Paper within the MSG and the necessity to prepare an urgent response, there has not been time to confirm agreement with the governing bodies of each organisation.

16 March 2016