

Ministerial Briefing Paper – Meeting - Marlborough Scallops – Friday 23 March 2018

To: Minister Nash (Minister of Fisheries)

From: Concerned Non-Commercial Stakeholders

Subject: A new collaborative governance approach for the Marlborough Sounds Scallop Fishery

Dear Minister.

We, representatives of the Kenepuru and Central Sounds Residents' Association (**KCSRA**), Pelorus Boating Club (**PBC**) and the Marlborough Recreational Fishers Association (**MRFA**) are pleased you have made time in your busy schedule to talk with us on our concerns and vision for the above. We thought it might provide useful focus if we supplied a short background paper for your reference.

Background – The Sounds Fishery - how has it been governed?

1. In 1994 most of the management responsibilities for the scallop fisheries in the top of the South Island (SCA7) were transferred from government to the industry representative Challenger Scallop Enhancement Company Limited (**CSEC**).
2. In 1994 SCA7 was then made up of three commercially viable scallop fisheries - Golden Bay (**GB**), Tasman Bay (**TB**) and the Marlborough Sounds (**the Sounds**).
3. In 1998 CSEC and government documented certain of their understandings and arrangements in a Memorandum of Understanding (**MOU**). Among other things the MOU was intended to enhance self-management opportunities for CSEC.
4. The MOU set out a regime whereby CSEC would be responsible for the collection of biomass information meeting certain parameters and standards, supply to the government agency tasked with oversight (now the Ministry for Primary Industries or **MPI**), preparation of harvest plans based on that information, consultation with non-commercial stakeholders, obtaining approval of the seasons harvest plan by the Minister of Fisheries.
5. For various reasons under the MOU the Sounds was to be treated as a discrete scallop sub-fishery.

How did this arrangement pan out?

6. By 2006 the scallop fishery had so declined in TB that commercial fishing effort **ceased**. By 2010 the scallop fishery in GB had so declined that commercial fishing effort **ceased**. All commercial fishing effort was thus concentrated in the Sounds.

7. The table below showing commercial landings of scallops from the Sounds illustrates vividly what then happened to the Sounds Fishery¹.

Fishing Year	Actual Catch (meatweight tonnes)
2009/10	101
2010/11	74
2011/12	60
2012/13	48
2013/14	43
2014/15	22
2015/16	21

8. In 2013 non-commercial stakeholders become alarmed that the pattern of collapse was repeating itself in the Sounds. We believed the commercial fishers acting out a “tragedy of the commons” scenario drove this impending collapse. The consultation process envisaged by the MOU did not work. Direct action was required.

What happened then?

9. After several years of hard work both publicly and behind the scenes non-commercial stakeholders such as us successfully secured the closure of the Sounds fishery in 2016 and again in 2017.
10. MPI has taken a more proactive role in directly managing the collection of independent biomass data. That data now indicates that in the Sounds’ few remaining viable scallop beds (5) a potential recovery may be underway. Year on year we can point to an encouraging 25% increase in measured biomass albeit off a very low base.
11. Removal of fishing pressure and wresting direct management control of the fishery from the commercial sector has, fingers crossed, given the Sounds scallop fishery a much needed chance to rebuild.

What Next?

12. We believe the MOU should be varied so as to remove the Sounds fishery from its ambit and a collaborative management structure for the Sounds scallop fishery be agreed.
13. The objective is to achieve a collaboratively sustainably managed Sounds scallop fishery allowing, in due course, both a non-commercial and a commercial take.

What would this new collaborative governance structure look like?

14. The Minister of Fisheries (**Minister**) would sanction the creation of a collaborative group made up of representatives from non-commercial stakeholders (recreational and customary (iwi) representatives) and commercial stakeholders (representatives from CSEC). In overview, the role of this group (**MSG**) would be to make **recommendations to the Minister** as to how the sustainable management of the Sounds scallop fishery might be best achieved and maintained.

¹ Data taken from MPI Plenary document - SCA7 - 2017

15. A senior member of MPI would chair meetings of the MSG. The secretariat support for the MSG would be provided by MPI. MPI would be responsible for the commissioning and collection of the necessary biomass and other fisheries data at regular intervals.
16. The Minister (with assistance from officials) would accept, reject or modify MSG recommendations as the Minister thought appropriate. The Minister would (or direct officials to) take the necessary administrative steps to implement accepted recommendations and/or such other measures as the Minister thought necessary or desirable.
17. The MSG would not only be tasked with annual fishing measures for the Sounds scallop fishery but also be tasked with considering and putting forward recommendations concerning medium and longer-term sustainable management initiatives.
18. Longer term measures might, by way of example only, include putting forward recommendations as to a rotational fishing regime, reviewing fishing methods, optimal season duration and/or where additional or new research effort might be directed or such other matters as the Minister might from time to time direct the MSG to consider.

Minister, we look forward to discussing these matters with you.

For and on Behalf of

KCSRA, PBC, MFRA

Andrew Caddie
Vice President KCSRA
21 March 2018

Appendix One

Graph Showing Projected Biomass in the Sounds over time

