



10 July 2009

Dear Stakeholder

DECISION ON OTAGO HARBOUR SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION

This letter is to inform you that the Ministry of Fisheries has decided to approve the special permit application from Southern Clams limited to carry out research trials on commercial cockle fishing in Otago Harbour.

The special permit has been issued for three years, with the possibility of a conditional extension for a further two years. The trials will take place in three phases, with each dependent on the results of the previous phase and a recovery of the cockle beds. Ministry scientists will evaluate each phase.

Cockles will be taken under fishing quota already held by Southern Clams and will be commercially sold. There is no change to the Total Allowable Commercial Catch for Otago cockles as a result of the special permit.

The trials will be closely monitored and there are safeguards in place to protect sensitive areas such as eelgrass beds. The impact of the trials on cockle numbers (including juvenile cockles), the ecosystems in the cockle banks, sea birds in the area and the structure of the cockle banks themselves will be assessed.

Consultation on the application showed mixed views within the community. The Ministry carefully considered all submissions before approving the special permit and, where appropriate, altered the research programme or imposed special permit conditions to address submitter's concerns.

More information on the research programme and special permit is available from the Ministry's Dunedin office.

Yours sincerely

Rose Grindley
Inshore Fishery Manager