



H0446

15 September 2009

Minister of Fisheries

## **COROMANDEL SCALLOP FISHERY IN-SEASON REVIEW DECISION LETTER**

### **Purpose**

1. The Ministry of Fisheries seeks your signature on the attached letters to tangata whenua and stakeholders explaining your recent decision to increase the in-season TAC, ACE and allowances in the Coromandel scallop fishery for 2009-10.

### **Background**

2. On 21 July 2009 you agreed to an in-season increase in the TAC for Coromandel scallops. You are required to notify those persons who you believe to have an interest in the fishery of your decision and the reasons for it as soon as reasonably practicable. The Ministry proposes to send this letter to all persons and organisations that were sent the initial position paper (IPP). The Ministry also proposes to send a copy of the final advice paper to those parties who made submissions on the IPP.

**Recommendations**

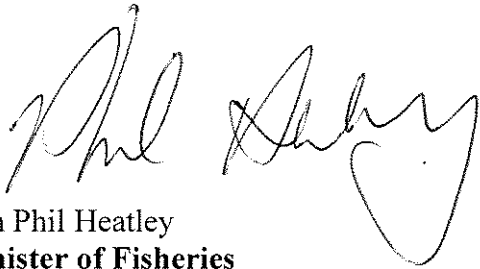
3. I recommend that you:

- (i) **Sign** the decision letters attached.



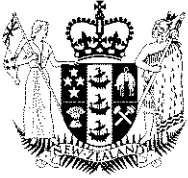
John Taunton-Clark  
for Chief Executive

APPROVED / ~~APPROVED AS AMENDED~~ / NOT APPROVED



Hon Phil Heatley  
**Minister of Fisheries**

17 / 09 / 2009



# Office of Hon Phil Heatley

MP for Whangarei

Minister of Fisheries

Minister of Housing

H0446

Dear Fishery Stakeholder

## **2009 IN-SEASON TAC REVIEW FOR THE COROMANDEL SCALLOP FISHERY**

This letter outlines the reasons for my decisions on the total allowable catch (TAC) for the Coromandel scallop fishery for the 2009-10 fishing year. The Coromandel scallop fishery (SCACS) occupies the area from Cape Rodney in the Hauraki Gulf to Town Point in the Bay of Plenty.

Using information from a biomass survey conducted in May this year, I have decided to set the TAC for the Coromandel scallop fishery for the current fishing season at 155 tonnes meatweight. The adjusted TAC became effective from 4 September 2009.

I have decided to allocate the TAC as follows:

- the allowance for recreational fishing is set at 10 tonnes meatweight;
- the allowance for customary fishing is set at 10 tonnes meatweight;
- the allowance for other sources of fishing-related mortality is set at 35 tonnes meatweight; and
- the annual catch entitlement (ACE) for quota owners is set at 100 tonnes meatweight.

On 31 March 2010, the TAC, and allowances will revert to the baseline values – the TAC of 48 tonnes meatweight, the allowance for recreational fishing of 7.5 tonnes meatweight, the allowance for customary fishing of 7.5 tonnes meatweight, the allowance for other sources of fishing-related mortality of 11 tonnes meatweight, and the ACE will revert to 22 tonnes meatweight.

The change to the TAC was notified in the *Gazette* on 3 September 2009, and came into effect the following working day. This means that additional ACE has been available to quota owners from 4 September 2009. The commercial fishing season for the Coromandel scallop fishery began on 15 July and closes on 21 December. The current recreational scallop fishing season in the Auckland area, which includes SCACS, opened on 1 September 2009 and closes on 31 March 2010.

In reaching my decisions, I have carefully considered the available fishery assessment information, advice from the Ministry of Fisheries, and the issues and information put forward in submissions from stakeholders. I have also had regard to the legislative requirements of both the Fisheries Act 1996 and Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000.

It is pleasing to see commercial stakeholders have again taken a precautionary approach by proposing a cautious harvest level, and seeking to shelve a portion of the available ACE until the performance of the commercial fishery can be assessed during the season. I commend stakeholders for continuing to look at the longer-term potential of the fishery.

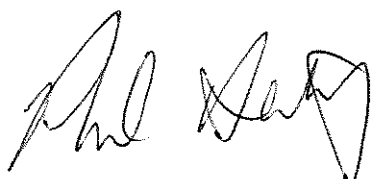
In deciding to set the TAC at 155 tonnes, I was careful to note that the estimated current annual yield was calculated as a proportion of the biomass estimate. As such, the yield estimate had already accounted for the reduction in surveyed biomass between 2008 and 2009. While some recreational sector submitters suggested that the proposed ACE level was too large, I feel that 100 tonnes represents a cautious harvest level, especially when compared to an estimated yield of 190 tonnes. I saw no reason for a greater level of caution than that proposed by the commercial sector this year. Opinion was varied amongst submitters regarding the level of the non-commercial allowances. I note that the biomass survey results relate primarily to the scallop beds fished mainly by the commercial sector. However, I believe it is reasonable to assume that trends in scallop abundance in the non-commercial scallop beds are likely to be similar to those at the surveyed beds. I do, however, understand that there is some uncertainty here, so I look forward to the results of ongoing research to establish a relationship between the non-commercial beds and the beds normally included in the pre-season biomass survey.

I believe the most realistic scenario is that the recreational catch will reflect the current abundance of scallops compared with when the baseline allowances were determined. Therefore, I have set the recreational allowance at 10 tonnes meatweight to provide for the expected greater catch above the baseline level of 7.5 tonnes. I look forward to the results of ongoing research estimating recreational scallop harvest, and hope that this information will inform future decisions.

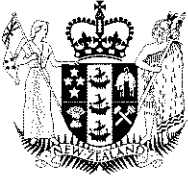
There is no quantitative information available on the overall tonnage of Coromandel scallops taken by customary fishers. Knowing that scallops are important to Maori in the area, I have decided to treat this allowance using similar assumptions as for the recreational allowance. The customary allowance is set at 10 tonnes meatweight.

I thank you for your interest in the management of the Coromandel scallop fishery. It is great to enable all stakeholders to enjoy such an important fishery.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Heatley', written in a cursive style.

Hon Phil Heatley  
**Minister of Fisheries**



# Office of Hon Phil Heatley

MP for Whangarei

Minister of Fisheries

Minister of Housing

H0446

Tēnā koe

## **2009 IN-SEASON TAC REVIEW FOR THE COROMANDEL SCALLOP FISHERY**

This letter outlines the reasons for my decisions on the total allowable catch (TAC) for the Coromandel scallop fishery for the 2009-10 fishing year. The Coromandel scallop fishery (SCACS) occupies the area from Cape Rodney in the Hauraki Gulf to Town Point in the Bay of Plenty.

Using information from a biomass survey conducted in May this year, I have decided to set the TAC for the Coromandel scallop fishery for the current fishing season at 155 tonnes meatweight. The adjusted TAC became effective from 4 September 2009.

I have decided to allocate the TAC as follows:

- the allowance for recreational fishing is set at 10 tonnes meatweight;
- the allowance for customary fishing is set at 10 tonnes meatweight;
- the allowance for other sources of fishing-related mortality is set at 35 tonnes meatweight; and
- the annual catch entitlement (ACE) for quota owners is set at 100 tonnes meatweight.

On 31 March 2010 the TAC and allowances will revert to the baseline values – the TAC of 48 tonnes meatweight, the allowance for recreational fishing of 7.5 tonnes meatweight, the allowance for customary fishing of 7.5 tonnes meatweight, the allowance for other sources of fishing-related mortality of 11 tonnes meatweight, and the ACE will revert to 22 tonnes meatweight.

The change to the TAC was notified in the *Gazette* on 3 September 2009, and came into effect the following working day. This means that additional ACE has been available to quota owners from 4 September 2009. The commercial fishing season for the Coromandel scallop fishery began on 15 July and closes on 21 December each year. The recreational scallop fishing season in the Auckland area, which includes SCACS, opened on 1 September 2009 and closes on 31 March 2010.

In reaching my decisions, I have carefully considered the available fishery assessment information, advice from the Ministry of Fisheries, and the issues and information put forward in submissions. I have also had regard to the legislative requirements of both

the Fisheries Act 1996 and Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000.

It is pleasing to see commercial stakeholders have again taken a precautionary approach by proposing a cautious harvest level, and seeking to shelve a portion of the available ACE until the performance of the commercial fishery can be assessed during the season. I commend stakeholders for continuing to look at the longer-term potential of the fishery.

In deciding to set the TAC at 155 tonnes, I was careful to note that the estimated current annual yield was calculated as a proportion of the biomass estimate. As such, the yield estimate had already accounted for the reduction in surveyed biomass between 2008 and 2009. While some recreational sector submitters suggested that the proposed ACE level was too large, I feel that 100 tonnes represents a cautious harvest level, especially when compared to an estimated yield of 190 tonnes. I saw no reason for a greater level of caution than that proposed by the commercial sector this year.

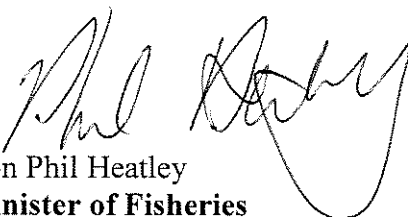
Opinion was varied amongst submitters regarding the level of the non-commercial allowances. I note that the biomass survey results relate primarily to the scallop beds mainly fished by the commercial sector. However, I believe it is reasonable to assume that trends in scallop abundance in the non-commercial scallop beds are likely to be similar to those at the surveyed beds. I do, however, understand that there is some uncertainty here, so I look forward to the results of ongoing research to establish a relationship between the non-commercial beds and the beds normally included in the pre-season biomass survey.

I believe the most realistic scenario is that the recreational catch will reflect the current abundance of scallops compared with when baseline allowances were determined. Therefore, I have set the recreational allowance at 10 tonnes meatweight to provide for the expected greater catch above the baseline level of 7.5 tonnes. I look forward to the results of ongoing research estimating recreational scallop harvest, and hope that this information will inform future decisions.

There is no quantitative information available on the overall tonnage of Coromandel scallops taken by customary fishers. Knowing that scallops are important to Maori in the area, I have decided to treat this allowance using similar assumptions as for the recreational allowance. The customary allowance is set at 10 tonnes meatweight.

I thank you for your interest in the management of the Coromandel scallop fishery. It is great to enable tangata whenua and stakeholders to enjoy such an important fishery.

Heoi ano



Hon Phil Heatley  
**Minister of Fisheries**