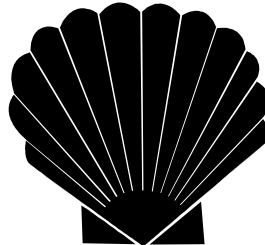


Section Four -

Submissions in full

The five submissions received on the proposal to review the TAC for the Coromandel scallop fishery 2009/10 are attached here in full.



Coromandel Scallop Fishermen's Association
112 Wattle Place, Whangamata

Submission

Proposal to review the TAC for the Coromandel scallop fishery for 2009-10

Introduction

Thanks you for the opportunity to make a submission on the proposal to review the TAC for the Coromandel scallop fishery for 2009-10. This submission has been prepared by the Coromandel Scallop Fishermen's Society (CSFA) which represents all quota owners and ACE holders in the SCA CS fishery. We take the opportunity to set out our opinion on the management of the fishery and then provide our view on the options in the IPP.

Management approach to the fishery

CFSA welcomes the focus of the current government on improving the economic performance of commercial fisheries. CSFA has repeatedly raised in its submissions concerns that the current management approach to the fishery, of a low baseline TACC and in-season increases based on biomass surveys, creates both harvest and market inefficiencies, despite best efforts by the Ministry to mitigate such inefficiencies. The current management approach also results in a high cost framework that erodes fisheries profitability, For example proposed levies for the 2009-10 fishing year were 36% of the port price for SCA CS scallops.

To implement change towards a management approach that is more efficient in providing for utilisation CSFA has recently invested in the development of an industry advancement plan and research into management strategy evaluation that compares the current approach with an alternative based on CPUE decision rules to close areas. This season we are committed to trialing some of the reporting requirements that CPUE decision frameworks would require. Whilst this work is still in development and requires review we are optimistic that alternative management approaches can be developed for this fishery that better provides for utilisation. We

look forward to the Minister's support in moving to an alternative management regime.

Options in the IPP

CSFA continues to adopt a respectful cautious approach to the fishery. Our requested increase in ACE from 22 tonnes to 100 tonnes recognises that; the survey considers only a subset of the total QMA biomass, the proposed increase in ACE is below CAY (for the areas surveyed) and the increase represents less than a 1% risk that the catch at this level might exceed the "true" CAY (for the areas surveyed).

We acknowledge that the survey results indicate a declining trend in scallop abundance. We consider these trends to have underlying environmental causes rather than be the consequence of commercial fishing pressure. Notwithstanding, the biomass abundance is still relatively high compared to when the baseline TAC was set in 2002. In contrast we are aware that environmental factors have removed previously productive areas from the fishery (Waihi, Tauranga and Waiheke) and are concerned that no measures have been taken to investigate the cause or the longer term implications for the fishery

As stated in the IPP (para 6) CSFA members have opted to exercise their property rights to determine how they will fish their ACE to provide an economic return on their investment. Quota owners have agreed by resolution of the CSFA to shelve on a pro rata basis any ACE increase above 65 tonnes into a separate ACE account held by CSFA. The aim of the ACE shelving is to optimize the production of the fishery by spreading effort through the season to maximize recruitment into the fishery and to trial the use of decision rules and weekly reporting. In-season review of the fishery performance by CSFA using criteria such as pre-recruit numbers, meatweight condition and CPUE trends will be used to make decisions on ACE release.

The two options proposed in the IPP focus only the effects on the TAC of varying the allowances for customary and recreational catch. In our view it is nonsensical given that there are no proposed changes to non-commercial management controls, no intended monitoring of the respective catches and no intention to manage the collective catch of each sector to within the allowance. In terms of potential management effect and likelihood that the true CAY ceiling for the entire QMA is likely to be several orders of magnitude above the ACE levels proposed we are unable to make any rational comment on the options. From a cynical economic viewpoint option 1 is preferable marginally from a cost recovery perspective. However from a fisheries management perspective we support option 2 for the same reasons as outlined in the New Zealand Seafood Industry Council's submission.

We support the need for improved catch reporting from the customary and recreational sectors.

Other matters

We note that the IPP mentions a 2008-09 port price of \$14.38 (para 55). Whilst this figure caused some optimism from ACE fishers, CSFA do not consider it to be a true reflection of the current port price. We are happy to provide information to the Ministry, on request, regarding port prices.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Coromandel Scallop Fishermen's Association

Peter Sopp
Chairman

30 July 2009

Murray Bruges
Ministry of Fisheries
PO Box 19747
Avondale
Auckland 1746

Tēnā koe Murray

PROPOSAL TO REVIEW THE TAC OF THE COROMANDEL SCALLOP FISHERY FOR THE 2009 FISHING SEASON

INTRODUCTION

1. This submission is made in response to your invitation to Te Ohu Kai Moana Trustee Ltd (Te Ohu) to provide comments on the proposals contained in the document entitled *Initial Position Paper – Proposal to review the TAC of the Coromandel scallop fishery for 2009-10*.

MFISH PROPOSALS

3. Two options are proposed:
 - Option 1** proposes the TAC be increased to 155 tonnes (meatweight). The recreational and Maori non-commercial fishing increases from 7 tonnes to 10 tonnes. The TACC increases from 22 tonnes to 100 tonnes meat weight.
 - Option 2** proposes that the TAC be increased to 150 tonnes (meatweight) and the recreational and Maori non-commercial fishing allowances remain at 7.5 tonnes each (meatweight). The TACC increases from 22 tonnes to 100 tonnes meat weight.
4. Under both options, the TAC reverts to baseline levels at the end of the fishing year (31 March 2010).

TE OHU POSITION ON IPP

5. Te Ohu support option 2 of the MFish proposals.

Te Ohu Kaimoana supports the submissions made by Coromandel Scallop Fisherman's Association and will not repeat the statements made in those submissions. We would however like to acknowledge the efforts of the Coromandel Scallop Fisherman's Association efforts in the development and implementation of an industry "Advancement Plan". This plan initiative is responsible and can only lead to improvements in the way we manage the Coromandel scallop fishery.

Equally, we must acknowledge the Auckland MFish staff and their support for the industry initiatives contained in the industry Advancement Plan. Our only request is this alignment is not lost in the MFish restructuring currently taking place.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the writer on 049319512

A T Riwaka

Senior Fisheries Management Advisor.



In-season review of the Coromandel scallop TAC

Mt Maunganui Sport Fishing Club
P O Box 5131
MT MAUNGANUI
Bay of Plenty
New Zealand
31st July 2009

Re - In-season review of the Coromandel scallop TAC.
Submission from Mt Maunganui Sport Fishing Club

Mt Maunganui Sport Fishing Club has 1773 members, the Papamoa-Motiti scallop beds are literally right on our front door, commercial dredging is very visible from anywhere along the beach, these scallop beds are an important part of the fishery here not only for gathering scallops but also for feed that attracts many other marine species (primary snapper) to the area which congregate amongst the papa reef systems that stretch along the sandy coastline.

After reading the IPP on the In-season review of the Coromandel scallop TAC we would like to express the following concerns and ask that you take serious consideration in the points that we make in your final decision for the In-season review of the Coromandel scallop TAC.

All of our comments are directed at our local scallop beds only which include Papamoa Beach & Motiti Island areas, many of our members dive on these beds & their feedback is consistent with the points that we are making.

1 – We do not support a commercial in-season increase from 22t to 100t, We strongly disagree that there is an abundance of scallops in the beds off Papamoa & Motiti & that there is no evidence at all that these beds can sustain any increased commercial extraction, recreational divers in the area have noticeably seen huge decrease's of abundance of scallops, some struggling to gather their limit catch of 20 on one tank of air. Survey results from the past 4-5 yrs for our local beds show consistent depletion in scallop numbers & something needs to be done NOW to save them from further depletion.

We want to know what MOF is going to do about the consistent mass depletion of scallops in our area.

If there is to be any increase for the whole of the Coromandel scallop fishery then we say it should be aligned with the decreased results from the surveys.

We recommend that at a minimum you should immediately recommend that all commercial dredges stay away from the Papamoa-Motiti beds until future survey results show that the beds here are recovering to a state that can be sustainably managed.

2 – We are very concerned at the blatant destruction caused by poorly designed commercial dredges of the fragile papa reefs off Papamoa beach, these precious papa reef systems have evolved over many years & provide much needed shelter & habitat for many marine species, they are wiped out in a second with a pass of these unacceptable dredges. Ask yourself

would this be acceptable practise if it were to take place on land where it's all visible for everyone to see.

We strongly recommend that new dredge technologies should be acted on & a plan put in place to replace all current destructive dredges to minimise the damage to the marine environment.

3 – Based on an in-season increase an estimated mortality rate of 35T is extremely high & unacceptable, considering recreational & customary estimate takes jointly are well below this mortality estimate it again points out that something needs to be done with the way dredges function.

Again we strongly recommend that new dredge technologies should be acted on & a plan put in place to replace all current destructive dredges to minimise the mortality rate to a bare minimum.

4 - We feel that the Coromandel scallop fishery is far too big an area to manage in one basket, the two main areas are worlds apart, decisions made for the whole area have massive affects on individual beds, esp the Papamoa-Motiti beds that are currently in very poor shape.

We recommend that the Papamoa-Motiti beds be separated from the main Coromandel scallop fishery so they can be managed in a better for all sustainable manner.

5 - Have starfish been identified in the surveys as a bycatch? if so we believe they are one of the biggest threat to our beds, there are many many thousands of them (see them when diving for scallops) & need to be eradicated somehow.

We recommend that a study be done into the effects starfish populations have on shellfish beds & that any results be acted on.

6- Why is it that there is no information available on customary take, surely if customary permits are being issued & used correctly then there should be a paper trail of some kind to give at least an estimate of customary extraction for scallops.

We recommend a review into why there is no evidence of customary take for scallops in the Coromandel scallop fishery.

Regards

Mark Hemingway

Mt Maunganui Sport Fishing Club

John T Clark
Ministry of Fisheries
P O Box 19747
Avondale
Auckland 1746

Dear John

RE: Submission to the IPP Coromandel Scallops (SCACS) for 2009 Season

The Coromandel Scallop Commercial Stakeholder
Whangamata Seafoods Been in the Industry for 32 years

As a stakeholder I would like to recommend that a TAC of 100 tons
This is based on the survey results and a cautious approach which represents less than a 1 % risk that catch at the proposed level of 100 tons might exceed the true CAY for that proportion of the fishery which was surveyed .I therefore support the proposed increase in ACE to 100 tons even though CAY estimates available indicate the potential for a much higher in season estimate that is been sought

History

The Coromandel scallop beds were commercially discovered in the late 1960 During this time there we approx 80 boats working the beds no limits to the amount of scallops landed .Ministry of Fisheries brought in a controlled fisheries licenses that cut the number of fishing vessels into the industry down to 22 licenses and a dally limit to catch .The Qms Quota Management system was brought in for the industry .With this system there's now seven fishing vessels working the coromandel grounds to catch their Quota that has been recommended by that years NIWA survey .We are sure that over the past years since Quota has been introduced the commercial and industry have always taken a care full look at the annual entitlement and have even during the season reduced this by voluntary stopping fishing to ensure the next seasons catch is not the detriment of the fishery We have also done this at the beginning of this season waiting for the recovery rates to improve so not to take more scallops out of the fishery than necessary

Sustainability

Surveys for scallops were carried out in the Coromandel Dredge fishery in May 2009 .As with previous surveys all areas closed to commercial fishing are excluded .There for there is no scientific information provided to support any bio mass estimate in these areas I am in support of option Two of the proposal where the should be no increases in non commercial allowances due to the lack of quantitative information available

Recreational

Several decisions made by past Ministers of Fisheries just recently have improved recreational access to the Coromandel scallop fishery .The primary taker of the scallop bag limit can take on behalf of the safety person (up to two people) on board the vessel their daily catch during a dive

The recreational fisher is now allowed to shuck open and eat their catch on board if staying out at sea this alone has doubled the recreational take

And the timing of the recreational season between cape Runaway and north cape this past season This was done with out any scientific information this has increased the recreational take by changing the season to warmer weather, yet this was not changed for commercial fishers even though all the reasons given to the minister, if this was such a good reason why d he not change the commercial season

Commercial View

The commercial sector is made accountable for all its moves in the industry NIWA s survey s the areas for the industry gathering scientific information to allow the stakeholders a view on what is available .there is no way of telling g what recreational fishers take out of the sea, as they do not have to keep written records as dose the industry do.

We have been taking conservative amounts well below the amount that science has said was sitting out there for our TAC increase even this year we have opted for a lower figure than was the lowest according to NIWA in there reports of 100 tons with such a low risk i.e. less than .001%

Not everybody can go out diving or dredging for his own scallops The Coromandel industry sells scallops to the local sheds for processing on the Coromandel in doing this provides employment for locals in our case we will have a staff of 32 locals providing a huge boost to the economy let alone other associated trades during the winter months .They are then sold on the local New Zealand market so everybody in our country can enjoy them .This is done with only seven fishing vassals now involved in the commercial industry ,areas are been worked as a farmer would work his land .I E low meat weight or size they move to another area in order to get better meat recovery and reduce the amount taken in order to leave more scallops on the seafloor as we have done this season by not starting on the due date

The scallop fisheries is really becoming two separate identities as the commercial catch is primary taken from beds that are hardly used by the recreational fishers .they have closed off all the best areas to the commercial fishers i.e. all the shallow beds have been closed to commercial theses beds always have the fatter scallops due to the depth that they are found in As the fisheries is very unlike many other fisheries as they are spatially separated

Going from seven days per week down to five days, and by making sure their equipment used on their vessels is in top order

NWIA have done a survey on three different dredge designs to compeer and analysis, which was more efficient for the areas fished .The fishers is also constantly fine tuning the dredges with the constantly changing ocean floor to enable top catch rates .Unlike the dredges used in the south island fishery, our dodges will float to the top of the sea if it be comes full before the crew has cleared the last catch

We also note the comments made by the Coromandel Scallop Fishermen's Association Submission regarding the economic inefficiencies the current management approach creates for commercial utilization of the Coromandel scallop fishery Whangamata seafoods supports the initiatives undertaken by the Association to explore more efficient and less costly management frameworks for the fishery

Because of the short commercial season and to reduce economic inefficiencies we emphasize the importance of a quick decision from the Minister of any in season variation so that the additional ACE becomes available in a timely manner

Whangamata Seafoods recognizes the efforts of the Ministry to prepare and complete the statutory consultation on this TAC variation in a timely manner

The two options proposed in the IPP area based on the same increase in ACE to 100 tons but vary in the allowances made for non commercial catch .Whangamata Seafoods is in support option two no increase in non commercial allowances for the following reasons ;

- 1/ There is no base to assume that the stock has increased on recreational beds in the same way as no commercial beds
- 2/The TACC increase is based on proof through Stoke assessments and there is no similar survey of recreational beds to support any rational basis for an increase in the allowances
- 3/ There is inadequate monitoring of non commercial scallop fishing. We would be concerned that incentives to improve the area were undermined by uninformed change to recreational fishing allowances

Conclusion

With the help of our scientific information it is our opinion that we can safely use option two for our 2009 TAC increase

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any clarification on my proposal contained in this letter and that we support both TOKM s and SEAFIC s proposal

Yours Faithfully

Peter Sopp

Whangamata Seafoods

112 Wattle Place

Whangamata

3620

E Mail peter.sopp@xtra.co.nz

Phone 0274 908 562



N Z RECREATIONAL FISHING COUNCIL

PO BOX 238
Raglan

Keith Ingram,
4 Prince Regent Drive
Half Moon Bay
Auckland

To: John Taunton-Clark

Ministry of Fisheries
Auckland

PM 31 July 2009

Re: Submission to IPP Coromandel Scallops for 2009

The New Zealand Recreational Fishing Council thanks you for the opportunity to have input on this years proposal.

I have already given you a briefing on the history of these fisheries and their importance to the non commercial fishing community. Clearly the Coromandel fishery has significantly more commercial exclusion zones than Northland. This has come about primarily through population numbers and utilisation demands and the fact that we have a differential MLS in the Coromandel fishery. It is also a result of historic past broken voluntary agreements between commercial fishers and the recreational fishing community.

Historically the recreational representation has been limited due to the fact that we are unable to gain a fiscal return from this fishery, which means our participation has been reliant predominantly on MFish advice. We have always maintained a strong participation in this fishery which pre dates the early involvement by commercial fishers in the late 60s and early 70's when the fishery was discovered and thought to have commercial viability. We thank you for your invited earlier opportunity to have input into this years IPP.

We note that both commercial and Maori commercial gain financially from this fishery and yet remain reluctant to contribute to wider research costs and dredge management.

We also note that this fishery remains essentially a boutique commercial fishery and as such has limited commercial viability when considered in the wider scheme of our national fisheries.

In saying this we must acknowledge that the intrinsic values held by the non commercial sector be they Maori, Pakeha or new, New Zealander puts the economic worth of good access to the public at a far greater value than the port price of around

\$14kg to fishermen. When we consider the commercial value of this fishery at about one million dollars, one then must consider the risks associated by the continued draconian use of the adapted Victorian box dredge fishing methods on the marine environment and the true cost of this environmental damage when weighted against the commercial value received to the wider community. While this might seem to be a hearty annual comment the ongoing environmental impact concerns remain real.

While we fully appreciate the low economic returns from this fishery to fishermen and that these commercial fishers are mostly responsible in adopting a precautionary approach. We in essence still place the responsibilities of ongoing associated juvenile mortality and dredge damage to the marine environment squarely with the commercial fishers and as such they have both a moral and legal obligation to improve their fishing behaviour and methods.

We find the unavailability of robust data on amateur catch levels and the status of the recreational beds frustratingly unacceptable, but recognise that the status and those commercial exclusion areas adjacent to the commercial fishing areas must in part be of similar biomass. It is important that we recognise this fact as to do otherwise only leaves us open to challenge from the commercial scallop fishermen, especially at a time when we have been seeking to share in any rebuild of this fishery.

In saying this, we note that the latest recreational survey indicates a higher abundance in 2009 than previously in 2002. However we have no option but to rely on the commercial sampling for the wider fishery and those amateur only areas not surveyed separately and must assume that this official report and IPP is also a fair indication of the state of the commercial closed areas where we boulder the open fishery. We have studied the science from NIWA and have and share concerns that the biomass is showing a further 30% drop on top of the 30% drop last year. This is not good when unexplained. And yet the science suggests that the fishery within the amateur only areas is showing a rebuild in spite of the declining trends in areas fished by commercial. **It is this ongoing downward trend that is of real concern.**

The science of what drives scallop recruitment in shoulder areas is poor. However, to assist we have requested that dive surveys are undertaken in the traditional recreational only areas to assist in making these stock assessments.

We support the current pre-season assessment system and preseason baseline and we see no just reason to change this management approach.

The NZRFC believes that the "conservative baseline" approach is a good one, potentially avoiding a lot of unnecessary costs. However, in the absence of guiding knowledge or research, the onus is on the Ministry to be certain that the baseline remains and is indeed conservative. If it's not, Ministry is simply allowing unrestrained fishing in times of poor information. We believe the existing base line meets this requirement and the Ministers stated policy of managing key fisheries at above BMSY should be reflected in all TACC decisions in this fishery.

Equally, we are unsure of how much reliance the recreational areas or more formally the commercial exclusion or closed areas have on the deeper water beds for reseeded

and spat fall. Given this, it is hard to know how commercial fishing one area affects other areas, especially if they are closely associated.

Scallop larvae spend quite a time in the plankton, and it's likely that some of the known commercial beds support recruitment for others including non commercial areas, though exactly which beds export larvae and which import spat might vary from year to year as feed, weather, and sea conditions vary. We note that one of the true costs of having a dredge fishery is the risk of clear paddock fishing and the destruction of benthic communities and habitat structures that enable spat to settle out.

Costs are always an immediate incentive (to have a high baseline and few surveys), whereas risks are always "down the track" and sometimes "nebulous" (like environmental risk). We think all users should have a realistic input into the level of risk-aversion in the management of their resource.

The NZRFC equally believes that local authorities have a responsibility to ensure that our marine environment and local shellfish stocks are not contaminated or destroyed by urban runoff. This requires enforcement of breaches and implementation of the Resource Management Act measures. We were recently disappointed to find out that MFish chose not to submit on the recent dredge dumping proposals in the Hauraki Gulf.

It would be precautionary to assume that all the beds are inter-linked to an extent. It is important that Mfish play an active role in protecting our marine environment from urban pollution and as such they should be a constant lobby force to local authorities and any RMA process effecting our coastal environment from land development.

Therefore it is essential to set a conservative TAC which allows for the best estimates of the current non-commercial harvest and then the allowance for incidental mortality including environmental impacts and fish thieves needs to be set at a level which allows for the worse situation in harvest methods and illegal extractions, prior to setting the allowance for the TACC.

In saying this, the NZRFC recognises the past willingness of the commercial fishers to communicate with recreational fishers with a view to improve this fishery to a level where they can enjoy some stability away from the boom bust scenarios. We support and encourage the opportunity to work closer with commercial fishers but note the spirit of cooperation appears to have now waned as they have been reluctant of late to discuss these issues openly with the public sector. Opting instead to have closed meetings with the Ministry Staff, which in itself may leave the process open to challenge.

We have also supported their initiatives in the past trial spat fall enhancement program, but note that no more work appears to have been done on this project and ask why? However we do have concerns about comments on lack of information.

As representative of a prominent stakeholder in this fishery the NZRFC would be happy to discuss any fishery plan that might lead to better sustainable management in this fishery and as such we would expect to be consulted in a timely fashion in order that we can consult with our membership and the general public. Unfortunately our

best endeavours to date in fostering fish plans has been met with mistrust and distain from the commercial sector. This is particularly reflective in this case.

The NZRFC supports the current management measures of the commercial exclusion zones, bag limits and open/closed seasons, as appropriate for non-commercial management and allocation in this fishery. But we would wish to revisit the recreational bag limits given the better information now available at some stage in the future.

The commercial dredge method continues to concern us, but it's hard to see a realistic alternative while there is no commitment or support from the commercial fishers. The management group did have a look at two other dredge designs some years ago under duress and we note to date that no further work has been done on dredge efficiencies or design by the commercial fishers.

We note that as a consequence to their dredge inefficiencies and the associated high incidental mortality. We believe this incidental mortality on scallops on the seafloor suggested to be as high as two for every one taken while purported to be sustainable remains totally unacceptable to the wider public and local Maori. Many non commercial fishers continue to question how can this be?

Commercial Fishers in the past have been reluctant to spend money on dredge development and have had little encouragement to be a bit more proactive in seeking to better their individual dredge performance. Fishing "style" probably affects efficiency (and damage) as much as the dredge itself. Some people like to fish "hard and fast" and trade off efficiency on each square metre of ground against covering more ground. Others fish more slow and careful, making the opposite trade-off. In the end, what a fisherman sees is scallops on the tray per hour, not efficiency, nor how many other scallops have been killed. Thus, the "better fishermen" who catch more, may or may not, be doing most damage.

We see no reason why future independent research into commercial dredge design and efficiencies should be delayed any further. It will only lead to further efficiencies and increased operating profits. In saying this we recognise that until the Ministry adopts a hard line conservative approach there will be no incentive for the commercial fishers to revisit their archaic destructive dredge fishing methods.

In presenting this submission we are mindful that the public has shared in the pain of past mistakes in this fishery and its future rebuild. If we are to manage this fishery to the benefit of all stakeholders, it is important that we be seen to share the rewards fairly and not ignore the needs and aspirations of recreational or non-commercial fishers. We are mindful of the highly variable nature of this scallop fishery, but this should not be an excuse for procrastination. We also note that we have spent a long time with a bag limit of 20 through both boom and bust years while our southern fishers have enjoyed greater benefits. Now is the time with the fishery showing all the signs of maintaining a good re-build to consider it is time for the public to share in the benefits of this rebuild.

We are however concerned that the Ministry advisors could be being seen as agreeing with commercial adjustments as an easy out while not taking into account the wider impacts and non commercial concerns.

We note the absence of “black gill” infections and that the tube worm infestations appear to have gone as we have had no reported outbreaks of these problems.

In making our submission on the annual TAC we confirm our support to maintain a precautionary approach to this fishery and this view is reflected in our conservative response by not seeking a bag limit increase this year. However we believe it is now time for the Ministry to consider such and prepare the necessary process to facilitate such. We also believe that the amount allowed for non commercial take is an underestimate and question why this estimate has not been improved upon.

Accordingly, the NZRFC submits the following;

Given the nature of this fishery and while it is essentially the same biomass it is important for us that this fishery continue to be managed with a conservative approach and at above BMSY. Therefore given that the survey has indicated a further 30% drop in the biomass we would expect this 30% to be reflective in this years consideration for commercial allocation. We remain cautious with the broad aspects of the CAY approach.

We recognise that the industry have asked for 100 meat weight (MW) tonnes up on last years allocation of 95 meat weight tonnes. Given that they were through cost of catching and the low CPUE they failed to catch this amount. While we recognise that they could have been bloody minded and continued fishing during poor catches along with the added damage to the beds, we equally recognise the responsible approach of some fishers in exercising restraint. In saying this we do not believe this is an conservative enough reduction at a time when we are faced with many variables. If we were to look at the now 60% reduction in two years, in keeping with the biomass drop the commercial allowance should equate to the same reduction in MW tonnes to maintain the conservative approach in the true sense of what is happening in the commercial scallop beds.

In regards to the recreational allocation we believe that 10 tonnes respectively for recreational and customary is light. While 20 tonnes collectively for non commercial might be close it is really semantics as we catch what we catch. Therefore it is important that we make a realistic allowance and this should be the starting point for recreational should be around 20 to 25 tonnes. It should be recognised that the amateur sector will by effort alone be taking more than customary fishers. Equally what we do not catch gets to stay in the water. On this note we understand that there is no restriction that prevents the Minister from managing a fishery at or above BMSY.

Historically the recreational catch is managed by bag and size limit but the largest managing constraint to allocation is CPEU. Good seasonal and climatic years we catch more and in poor years less. In this situation we believe there is still a degree of uncertainty in the non-commercial take and will leave it to you to make the allocation on best information, as it really does not matter. What does matter is that we maintain

a strong biomass out in our wild fish stock most of which is in the commercially accessible areas to ensure good distribution and spat fall.

We note that the commercial fishers have done little research of any consequence to their dredge efficiencies and the associated high incidental mortality. We believe killing two scallops on the seafloor for every one taken while purported to be sustainable remains unacceptable.

Because the commercial fishers are now expecting to take nearly 5 times their base line allocation is a fishery we asked that the same percentage increase be made for recreational take and the bag limit is increased from 7.5 to 37.5 to reflect our work and support to the rebuild and management of this fishery. However we acknowledge that in ensuring utilisation that this includes conserving fish stocks. This being the case we would recommend a more conservative approach when setting this years commercial allocation that given commercial only caught around 75% of last years ACE that we set this year at 65 MW tonnes with a provision for a later mid season review to increase, if the fishery is responding with an abundance of take-able scallops.

We also recommend and increase in the non commercial allowances to 20 tonnes respectively.

By doing this we believe the Ministry is duty bound to adopt a more precautionary approach to that taken so far this year in this fishery. While we note the science given in support of the commercial claims. We are mindful that frequently we find ourselves reacting to the results of flawed science decisions and given the known variability of scallops we believe it is safer for the Minister to err on the side of caution.

We look forward to discussing this submission further with you if you are unclear on any aspect of its content.

KL Ingram

Keith Ingram
Past President: NZ Recreational Fishing Council
Non-commercial representative,
Coromandel Scallops Management