

16 January 2008

Dear Stakeholder

## **SBW 6B SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES FOR 1 APRIL 2009**

The Ministry of Fisheries (MFish) is reviewing the management measures for SBW 6B. The Initial Position Paper (IPP) provides you with MFish's initial position on the sustainability measures under review. If approved, these would take effect on 1 April 2009.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a summary of the issues in the IPP, so that you can decide if you would like to examine the issue further, and provide comment to MFish.

MFish is proposing that the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for SBW 6B be increased to 15,000 tonnes for the 2009-10 fishing year, with a Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) of 14,700 tonnes and an allowance of 300 tonnes for other sources of fishing related mortality.

SBW 6B is managed under a constant fishing mortality strategy whereby the TAC is based on stock assessments informed by annual catch-at-age data and regular acoustic surveys.

The results of the 2007 acoustic survey showed a large increase in biomass and this was supported by the 2008 acoustic survey. Estimates derived directly from the 2007 and 2008 survey data indicate a biomass 10 times higher than that seen in the most recent *Tangaroa* survey in 2001, and 6-7 times higher than the previous Industry survey in 2006. The results of both surveys were presented to the middle depths fishery assessment working group (FAWG) and it was accepted that the estimated biomass was representative of the stock size. It appears that the increase in stock size is due to a very strong, slow-growing 2002 year class.


Yield estimates in the order of 13,500 – 22,000 tonnes were determined by the FAWG based on applying a fishing mortality rate of 0.2 to conservative estimates of biomass derived directly from the acoustic survey. The fishing mortality rate of 0.2 is equal to the estimated natural mortality rate which is considered to be an analytical proxy for  $F_{MSY}$ , the fishing mortality rate that if applied constantly would result in the maximum sustainable yield.

Following a review of the available information, MFish discussed possible management responses with industry. While industry are encouraged by the state of the fishery and support an increase in the TAC, they also propose a measured approach to harvesting the 2002 year class. Initial feedback from industry suggests support for a TACC in the order of 15,000 tonnes.

A copy of the full IPP accompanies this letter and the paper can also be found on the MFish website [www.fish.govt.nz](http://www.fish.govt.nz) under the “Consultations” section. If you have difficulties accessing the document, or have any queries on the content of the IPP, you can contact Tracey Steel at (04) 819-4585 or [tracey.steel@fish.govt.nz](mailto:tracey.steel@fish.govt.nz) to request a paper copy to be posted to you.

MFish welcomes written submissions on the proposals contained within the IPP. **Written submissions are due by Friday, 27 February 2009** and should be posted to Tracey Steel, Ministry of Fisheries, PO Box 1020, Wellington. Alternatively, electronic submissions can be emailed to [tracey.steel@fish.govt.nz](mailto:tracey.steel@fish.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aoife Martin".

Aoife Martin  
**Manager Deepwater Fisheries**