

## WCNI - ANNEX 2

Submission towards the Maui Dolphin Threat Management Plan

Submitted by:

[REDACTED]

I am [REDACTED] for whom I am the sole provider. I have been commercial fishing in the Manukau Harbour for 15 years full time [REDACTED]. I am also a member of the New Zealand Fishing Federation and the In Shore Fishing Federation. I have been a recreational fisher in the Manukau Harbour for over 18 years.

I target rig, flounder and mullet and use the method of set netting which is the only method used to take these species, there are no other options. The rig is my main target species and is fished in the deep and I fish on the line of the current set net banned area in the Manukau Harbour. These fish do not move further up the harbour and therefore would not be able to be caught if the current line is moved. My mullet and flounder fishing are done in mid to shallow water further in the harbour.

I do 50% of me fishing at night and change of lights therefore if there was a night setting ban my income would be reduced by half or more. I run 1000m of net which consists of 3 separate sets of 330m which are set in 3 different places at any one time to cover ground most efficiently as fish are only in concentrated areas at different times of the year. If attendance was a requirement the 50% of remaining fishing time would be reduced by two thirds leaving my fishing effort to about 12% of my current income. If I ran 1000m in a line I would still only catch 1/3 of the fish, attendance would still not work because it takes 40 minutes to an hour to lift 1000m and I believe it only takes 2 minutes to drown a dolphin. Therefore no night setting and attendance would send me broke as would a line change.

I own approximately [REDACTED] of equipment which includes [REDACTED] commercial fishing boats, a chiller truck, a chiller on premises, mullet, rig and flounder gear some of which are still being paid for. Half of my property is solely committed to my business and is mortgaged. Without commercial fishing these assets would be worth nothing.

I supply fish to the local and export markets. If netting was to be banned with no mullet or flounder being caught in the West Coast Harbours there would be no affordable fish for working class people. These species make up approximately 25% of local shops sales. The run on effect would mean staff cut backs and maybe the closing down of local shops due to lack of supply as other species, such as Snapper and Tarakihi would go up in price and become unaffordable.

If set netting was banned, restrictions were imposed or the line changed I would not be able to afford my current living situation, which is average with a [REDACTED] mortgage and money owed on equipment. I have an annual turnover of [REDACTED] from fishing which keeps me in my current life style. If I had to find other work I would struggle as I am unskilled in any other industry and would not be able to sustain my current mortgage and debts therefore ruining my life and the lives of my wife, child and [REDACTED].


In all my years of commercial fishing the Manukau Harbour I have never even seen a Maui or Hector Dolphin let alone caught one and I do not know a single recreational or commercial fisher that has seen or caught either of these Maui or Hector dolphins in the Manukau Harbour.

I oppose the proposals for the Maui Dolphin Threat Management Plan and marine mammal sanctuary at the West Coast of the North Island where I support the choice of status quo options for dealing with commercial set netting.

My reasons are as follows:

1. No adequate evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the numbers of Hector's/Maui's dolphins are declining.
2. The level of recorded deaths attributed to commercial fishing in the Manukau Harbour region is zero.
3. Proper research should be undertaken to determine the status of the dolphins and the level of risk they are exposed to before decisions are made that could significantly and unnecessarily impact on many communities, individuals and companies.
4. Existing measures (both regulatory and voluntary) are working well and are sufficient to protect the dolphins.
5. There is no adequate evidence to demonstrate that the dolphins are found within the harbours on the West Coast of the North Island.
6. Significant costs will be imposed on the fishing industry, individual fishers and communities by the imposition of any more restrictions that far outweigh any extra benefit to the dolphins.
7. If a Maui or Hector Dolphin was to swim into the Manukau Harbour I think it would be unlikely to be caught in a set net as the currents in West Coast Harbours are very strong and the water passing through the nets makes them hum/vibrate which the dolphins are able to detect.

I endorse the submission on the Hector's and Maui's Dolphin Threat Management Plan sent by the New Zealand Seafood Industry Council.

  
- 21/10/07