

19 October 2006

Dear Stakeholder,

## **CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED INTERIM MEASURES FOR HECTOR'S DOLPHINS**

This letter serves as a formal invitation to participate in consultation over proposals for interim measures to manage the impacts of fishing on Hector's dolphins, including Maui's dolphins.

Hector's dolphins are only found in New Zealand waters and are one of the world's rarest dolphin species. There are a number of threats facing the dolphins, such as set net fishing, trawling, pollution, boat strikes, and tourism. As Minister of Fisheries, I am committed to ensuring the adverse effects of fishing on Hector's dolphins are appropriately managed.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Department of Conservation are working collaboratively with tangata whenua and stakeholders to develop a Threat Management Plan for Hector's dolphins. This is important as it will help ensure we have all the relevant information on existing threats, all stakeholders are part of the process, and the best and most robust outcomes are achieved.

The Plan will consider necessary actions to mitigate all known actual and potential threats to the dolphins, both fishing and non-fishing related. The benefit of the Threat Management Plan is that it will allow the impacts of fishing to be placed in the context of all threats that face the dolphins.

However, development of such a Plan takes time. This is important so as to ensure that the complex issues associated with the various threats Hector's dolphins face are thoroughly worked through, and there is real opportunity for stakeholder involvement. The Threat Management Plan is due to be completed next year.

I recognise that there are already a number of regulatory and voluntary measures in place around New Zealand. In particular, I acknowledge the efforts of stakeholders in developing and maintaining voluntary initiatives.

Because the Threat Management Plan will not be in place until 2007, it is appropriate to consider whether further measures are needed to mitigate the impacts of fishing on Hector's dolphins in the interim. The extended summer period (October to March) is when most Hector's dolphin deaths are reported, and when the majority of incidents attributable to fishing occur. I am therefore keen to ensure that fishing threats to Hector's dolphins are adequately addressed over the coming summer and until the Threat Management Plan is completed.

To this end, I asked the Ministry of Fisheries to investigate the need for interim measures to be implemented ahead of the Threat Management Plan. These measures are proposed to enhance existing measures over the short-term to further reduce the potential for the entanglement of dolphins. The attached Initial Position Paper sets out proposals for such measures. There are some areas where the immediate risk is considered to be high, and consequently comprehensive management measures, including mandatory measures, are proposed.

Some of the measures proposed involve talking to fishers to obtain more information, and improving education and awareness of fishing practices considered to reduce risk to dolphins.

I encourage you to work with the Ministry of Fisheries in developing these measures.

Should I decide interim measures are necessary, particularly mandatory ones, I want to emphasise that these will be short-term measures that can be replaced by longer-term solutions identified in the Threat Management Plan.

I will consider all views and relevant information before making my final decisions on the proposals contained in the Initial Position Paper.

Yours sincerely,

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

Jim Anderton  
**Minister of Fisheries**