



Office of Hon Nathan Guy

MP for Otaki

Minister for Primary Industries
Minister of Civil Defence

Associate Minister for Economic Development

MIN17-0568

05 JUL 2017

Phil Appleyard and Peter Campbell
New Zealand Sport Fishing Council
secretary@nzsportfishing.org.nz

Dear Phil and Peter

Thank you for your correspondence of 8 June 2017 regarding the management of the CRA 2 rock lobster fishery.

I can assure you that I, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and the National Rock Lobster Management Group take the sustainable management of the CRA 2 rock lobster fishery seriously. I am aware of ongoing concerns from tangata whenua, some recreational fishers and others over the availability of rock lobster in this important shared fishery, therefore, a number of steps are being taken to improve its health.

The CRA 2 fishery covers a vast coastline from just north of Auckland to the East Cape, it is close to New Zealand's largest city and it supports one of New Zealand's largest recreational fisheries for rock lobster. Hence variation in rock lobster numbers can be expected within this wider management area, particularly given the additional pressures associated with being close to a large city and popular holiday destinations.

As you mention in your letter, some management action has already been taken to increase the abundance of rock lobster in CRA 2. Following a scientific stock assessment in 2013, I made the decision to reduce the commercial catch limit for CRA 2 by 15% in 2014 to help increase lobster numbers. As you note in your letter, the CRA 2 Industry have also voluntarily agreed to cut their commercial catch limit to support the rebuild of the fishery. For the 2016 and 2017 April fishing years, the voluntary commercial catch limit has been set at 150 tonnes (down from 200 tonnes).

MPI has brought a full scientific review of the fishery forward from 2018 to later this year to make sure we have the best scientific information available to assess what needs to be done to improve the fishery. Alongside the updated science, MPI will shortly be commencing stakeholder engagement and gathering local input into the issues and management solutions for the CRA 2 fishery. MPI will be in contact with you directly to invite representatives from your Council to participate in this engagement.

Stakeholder engagement and community feedback will assist in the design of a new CRA 2 management procedure and the determination of new catch limit settings for CRA 2 that will apply from April 2018. It will also help guide the development of other management controls that could be implemented later in 2018. Respondents on your recent survey suggested there was strong support for a seasonal closure for all users and this would be a good proposal to test with wider fishing interests through the engagement process that MPI will be starting soon.

More generally, there are a number of projects underway that will impact on recreational fishing and how we manage important species such as rock lobster.

MPI is implementing a recreational initiative that, to date, has included creating a dedicated recreational fishing team so that concerns of recreational fishers can be better identified and worked on. The team is also looking at how shared fisheries such as CRA 2 should be managed to better take into account local community concerns about our fisheries resources.

MPI is about to commence a new large scale multi species recreational catch survey. This will tell us how many fish recreational fishers are catching and where this catch is coming from. The survey will also provide an updated harvest estimate for the CRA 2 fishery, which will be used to inform management when the results become available in 2019. I also expect that other ideas will be raised through the stakeholder engagement that is about to commence on how to better collect information on CRA 2 recreational catch.

Importantly, there is also a new work programme, "Future of Our Fisheries", that is exploring the way our fisheries are managed to make sure the approach is meeting people's needs. In this year's Budget I was proud to announce a \$30.5 million funding boost over the next four years to support this programme, including the roll-out of cameras, monitoring, and electronic reporting on all commercial vessels. You can find out more about the Future of Our Fisheries programme on the MPI website: <https://mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/consultations/future-of-our-fisheries>.

I would like to assure you that we are working hard to sustainably manage the CRA 2 rock lobster fishery, and to ensure a transparent and robust fisheries management system for the benefit of all New Zealanders, now and in the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nathan Guy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Hon Nathan Guy
Minister for Primary Industries
