

SUBMISSION SUMMARY



Image credit: Sam Wild

Crayfish management 2018

February 2018



Crayfish are an important part of the marine ecosystem, they are a target species for many people and a taonga, a treasure, that is important to the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of all New Zealanders.



An alliance of the largest representative recreational fishing organisations in Aotearoa has responded to the Ministry for Primary Industries' latest proposals for the future management of four crayfish stocks. The Minister of Fisheries Stuart Nash will make a decision in March and it will apply from April 1st, 2018.



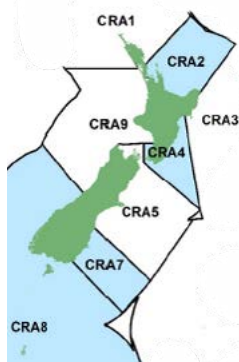
MPI propose to use pre-determined management rules to increase the total allowable commercial catch (TACC) in CRA 4 & CRA 8 and decrease the TACC in CRA 7.



A complete review of the CRA 2 stock (Hauraki Gulf - Bay of Plenty) shows it has been declining for a long time. CRA 2 is at an all time low. Recreational interests are calling for immediate, effective action to restore abundance.



A joint submission advocating for precautionary management of all four crayfish stocks was submitted by the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council – LegaSea teams and the New Zealand Angling & Casting Association. The submission has the support of Spearfishing New Zealand. There is also strong support for the CRA 2 submission from the New Zealand Underwater Association, representing recreational divers.



Joint submission recommendations

- **CRA 2** – Closure is an option given the low stock status compared to the target set five years ago. The Minister can choose MPI's 80 tonne TACC, but that is risky.
- **CRA 4** – No TACC increase, retain status quo.
- **CRA 7** – Support a TACC reduction of 15.5 tonnes, from 112.5 to 97 tonnes.
- **CRA 8** – Retain status quo.
- **CRA 2 Recreational allowance** – Support reduction from 140 to 50 tonnes, being the best estimate of potential recreational catch.

LegaSea initiated the Crayfish Crisis public awareness campaign and survey in February. In the first 12 days over 3,900 people responded. People want conservative management, 42% want the Minister to close CRA 2 to all fishing for a period while 39% want the Minister to severely reduce the CRA 2 TACC and recreational allowance so the fishery can rebuild.

What next?

LegaSea will continue to gather survey responses. The Minister must weigh the environmental, economic, social and cultural costs of his decision for each stock. For stocks with uncertain, unreliable or inadequate information the Minister needs to make precautionary decisions. In 2010 the Supreme Court ruled that sustainability must be ensured. Providing for the public's cultural and social wellbeing are key factors when the Minister makes his decisions. A review of regulations which may include changes to individual recreational bag limits will occur in mid-2018.

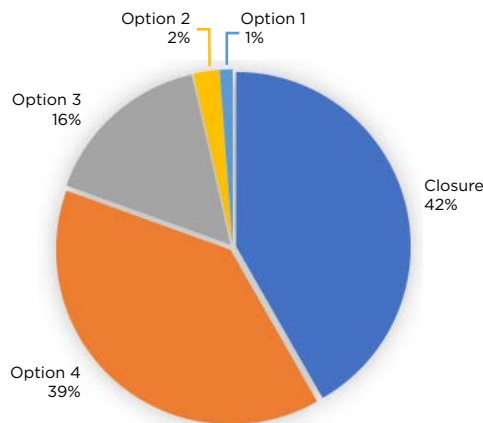


CRA 2 SURVEY

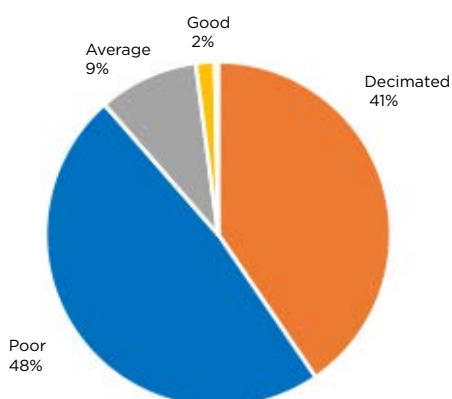
LegaSea launched the CRA 2 survey on February 2nd 2018 through their database and social media.

Over 3,900 survey responses were received in the first three weeks, including 2231 people who had caught crayfish in CRA 2 between Pakiri in the north and East Cape.

The largest group had between six and 10 year's experience fishing for crayfish in CRA 2. This group were in favour of the conservative management options - either Option 4 (44%) or Closure (33%). CRA 2 fishers with 31 to 60 year's experience were more conservative, choosing Option 4 (41%) or Closure (39%).



Of the 3808 respondents who selected an option, 81% favoured conservative management and 42% want the Minister to close CRA 2 to all fishing for a period.

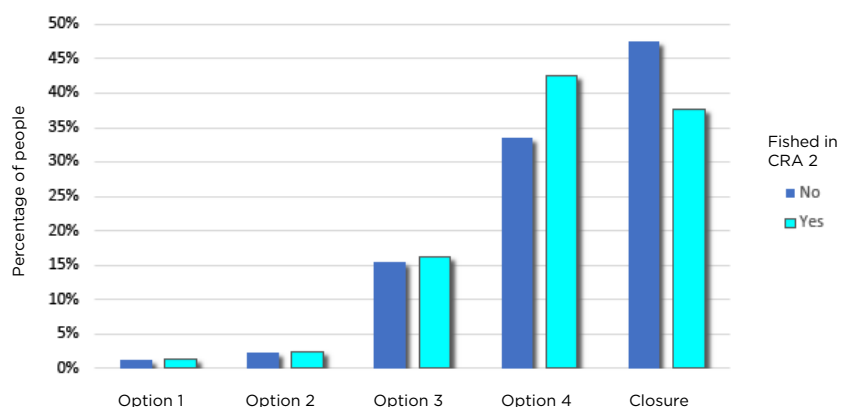


People who said they had fished in CRA 2 were asked to rate the size and availability of crayfish. 89% rated CRA 2 as poor or decimated. Less than 0.2% rated CRA 2 as plentiful.



Potential management options for CRA 2 from 1 April 2018. In tonnes (t).					
Option	Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC)	Allowances			Estimated time to double current stock size
		Customary Maori	Recreational	Other mortality	
Status quo	200	16.5	140	65	N/A
Option 1	140	16.5	50	45	9 years
Option 2	120				7 years
Option 3	100				5 years
Option 4	80				4 years
Closure	0	0	0	0	2 years

Option chosen by people who have, and have not, caught crayfish in CRA 2



Wider public concern about the state of the CRA 2 is expressed by survey respondents who have not caught crayfish in CRA 2. This is reflected in the graph above showing strong support for closing the fishery (47%), while those who had fished in CRA 2 gave the most support to Option 4 (42%).