



Office of Hon Nathan Guy

MP for Otaki
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Racing

B12-582

Dear Stakeholder

This letter outlines my final decisions on sustainability measures for selected rock lobster, surf clam and scallop stocks for the 2013-14 fishing year. My decisions on Total Allowable Catches (TACs), allowances and Total Allowable Commercial Catches (TACCs) come into effect on 1 April 2013.

This year's review of sustainability measures was guided by an annual planning process that supports the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) Draft National Fisheries Plan for Inshore Shellfish. This process provides tangata whenua, stakeholders and MPI with opportunities to work together to identify priority management initiatives.

The best available scientific and management information suggests there is an opportunity to increase utilisation from several shellfish fisheries while ensuring sustainability. My decisions provide increased utilisation benefits for the commercial sector in the Gisborne and Wellington/Hawkes Bay rock lobster fisheries, the Central (Egmont) surf clam fishery and the Coromandel scallop fishery.

I have also decided to reduce the catch limit for the Otago rock lobster fishery. Robust information suggests that this measure is required to ensure the long-term sustainability of the fishery.

In reaching my decisions I also considered submissions received from tangata whenua and stakeholders on the initial proposals, final advice from MPI and the National Rock Lobster Management Group (NRLMG), and relevant legislative provisions and my obligations under the Fisheries Act 1996 (the Act).

Copies of the final advice papers can be found on MPI's website at:
www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Consultations/Archive/default.htm

The specific decisions for each stock, and my reasons, are provided below.

Rock lobster

The advice provided by the NRLMG on the setting and allocation of rock lobster TACs is supported by robust scientific information and management processes. I appreciated being provided with an agreed view from MPI and all fishery stakeholders involved.

I support the continued use of an innovative management strategy, known as a 'management procedure', in rock lobster fisheries to guide the setting of catch limits within the statutory structure of the Act. This management approach enables me to regularly review catch limits to ensure the TAC does not lag behind available abundance. This is particularly important for rock lobster fisheries because availability can be highly variable.

I am confident the ongoing use of management procedures will help to ensure the goals for each rock lobster fishery are met, that are in accordance with my statutory obligations under the Act.

The allowances for Maori customary fishing, recreational interests and other sources of fishing-related mortality will remain unchanged at this time for each of the four rock lobster stocks discussed below. I note, however, that the management procedure approach in each fishery is also expected to improve or at least maintain utilisation benefits for non-commercial fishers.

Gisborne (CRA 3) rock lobster fishery

I have decided to increase the CRA 3 TAC from 322.3 to 354.5 tonnes, and increase the CRA 3 TACC from 193.3 to 225.5 tonnes. The TAC increase is guided by the application of the CRA 3 Management Procedure that has been in use in the CRA 3 fishery since April 2010.

The last CRA 3 stock assessment indicated the stock was well below the agreed reference level in 2008. Since this time a reliable indicator of relative stock size, catch-per-unit-effort (or CPUE), has increased steadily. This information suggests CRA 3 stock abundance has improved and the management procedure is assisting the rebuild of the stock. The TAC increase should not pose a risk to stock sustainability or the stock rebuilding goals.

Wellington/Hawkes Bay (CRA 4) rock lobster fishery

I have decided to increase the CRA 4 TAC from 661.9 to 694.7 tonnes, and increase the CRA 4 TACC from 466.9 to 499.7 tonnes. The TAC increase is guided by the application of the CRA 4 Management Procedure that has been in use in the CRA 4 fishery since April 2012.

Best available information suggests the CRA 4 stock size is well above the agreed reference level. I am confident ongoing application of the CRA 4 Management Procedure will ensure utilisation by all sectors can continue in a sustainable way.

CRA 7 (Otago) Rock Lobster Fishery

I have agreed to use the new *Rule 39* CRA 7 Management Procedure to guide TAC setting in CRA 7 from the 2013-14 fishing year onwards. Based on the application of the management procedure, I have also decided to decrease the CRA 7 TAC from 83.9 to 64 tonnes, and decrease the CRA 7 TACC from 63.9 to 44 tonnes.

Best available information on CRA 7 stock status suggests the current stock size is near the agreed reference level. I am confident application of the new CRA 7 Management Procedure will improve utilisation benefits for all sectors as stock size increases from its current size.

I am highly supportive of the conservative approach taken to the management of the fishery by the CRA 7 industry. Opting to have a lower TACC of 80 tonnes when CPUE is between 1.0 and 1.75kg/potlift is a responsible initiative that can only benefit the long-term sustainability of the fishery.

CRA 8 (Southern) Rock Lobster Fishery

I have agreed to use the new *Rule 13* CRA 8 Management Procedure to guide TAC setting in CRA 8 from the 2013-14 fishing year onwards. Based on the application of the management procedure, I have also decided to retain the current CRA 8 TAC of 1053 tonnes and retain the current allowances and TACC for the 2013-14 fishing year.

Best available information on CRA 8 stock status suggests the current stock size is well above the agreed reference level. Ongoing application of the new CRA 8 Management Procedure is expected to ensure the high utilisation benefits experienced by all sectors in the CRA 8 fishery will continue into the future.

I understand from my officials that the CRA 8 industry could have requested the development of a management procedure that resulted in higher yields from the fishery. The industry has instead opted to continue to take a conservative management approach. I applaud this long-term vision for the sustainable utilisation of the CRA 8 fishery.

Surf clams

A biomass survey of surf clams on the Manawatu coast shows there are large quantities of surf clams available for sustainable utilisation. I have, therefore, decided to increase TACs, allowances and TACCs for four species of surf clam in the Central (Egmont) management area as outlined in the table below.

Stock	TAC	Customary Allowance	Recreational Allowance	Other sources of fishing-related mortality	TACC
Deepwater tuatua (PDO 8)	296 tonnes	10 tonnes	9 tonnes	15 tonnes	262 tonnes
Triangle shell (SAE 8)	1821 tonnes	10 tonnes	0 tonnes	91 tonnes	1720 tonnes
Large trough shell (MMI 8)	631 tonnes	10 tonnes	0 tonnes	32 tonnes	589 tonnes
Ringed dosinia (DAN 8)	236 tonnes	10 tonnes	0 tonnes	12 tonnes	214 tonnes

The increased TACs for each surf clam stock reflect the developing nature of the fishery. I consider that these TACs will not have an adverse impact on the sustainability of the surf clam stocks in the short to medium-term, or on customary and recreational use opportunities.

The TACCs will increase by 261 tonnes for PDO 8, 1712 tonnes for SAE 8, 564 tonnes for MMI 8 and 181 tonnes for DAN 8. This will allow for greater utilisation and economic return for the commercial sector.

The allowance for Maori customary fishing has been increased to 10 tonnes for each stock to reflect the estimated harvest for the coming fishing year. Whereas the allowance for recreational interests will remain unchanged at this time, because best available information suggests most surf clams are usually inaccessible to recreational fishers. The allowance for other sources of fishing-related mortality has been increased to approximately 5% of each TAC.

Coromandel scallops

I have decided to increase the Coromandel scallop TAC from 48 to 131 tonnes (meat weight) and increase the TACC from 22 to 100 tonnes. I have also decided to increase the allowances for Maori customary fishing and recreational interests from 7.5 to 10 tonnes each, while the allowance for other sources of fishing-related mortality will remain at 11 tonnes.

The best available information indicates that the abundance of scallops in the Coromandel scallop fishery supports an increase to the TAC. A survey of the beds carried out last year shows a large biomass of scallops in the Hauraki Gulf.

This TAC increase will improve the efficiency of management of the fishery and assist in reducing research and management costs for the commercial sector.

Thank-you for your involvement in the review of sustainability measures for April 2013.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan Guy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hon Nathan Guy
Minister for Primary Industries