

Tauranga Sport Fishing Club Inc.

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Fisheries Management

Ministry for Primary Industries

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Submission on the proposed Temporary Closure to Te Tau o Taiti / Astrolabe Reef application.

Background & History

Tauranga Sport Fishing Club, originally named Tauranga Big Game Fishing Club and formerly Tauranga Game Fishing Club Inc, was formed in the late 1950's and was originally based in South East Bay, Mayor Island (Tuhua). The club was one of the original 5 founding members of what is now known as the NZ Sport Fishing Council Inc. The club has been in continuous existence since the late 1950's, and came "ashore" to Tauranga in 1989. Our recreational fishing area has included all of the greater Bay of Plenty, and Astrolabe reef has been a central part of that fishing area. We currently have a membership in excess of 2300 members, many of whom have fished in the area for many years. Our membership is diverse, and includes all types of recreational fishers, charter boat operators, day fishers, and most importantly, a large number of customary fishermen, and from a diverse hapu base.

Submission:

We, the office holders of Tauranga Sport Fishing Club Inc, on behalf of our members, oppose the extension of the exclusion zone, for time and spatial extensions, on the grounds that the application under Section 186A of the Fisheries Act 1986, does not meet the requirements of that section.

Contentions:

1. We contend that the Ministry has not allowed for sufficient time for us to consult properly with our membership, or with other interested parties. In the 21 working days available from gazetting the notice, to the close of submissions, we have only been able to gain a very limited response from our total membership. Those opinions are diverse, but overwhelmingly in favour of the reef being re-opened at the conclusion of clean up as stipulated in the resource consent recently granted.
2. We contend that, following the four and half years existing exclusion zone around the reef, sufficient time has already passed for fish stocks to accumulate, and that the fishery is probably healthier at this time than it has been for many years. There is no science presented that shows anything other than this being so.
3. There is no public evidence in support of the applications that shows either, current fish stock depletion, or that re-opening the reef would cause a serious depletion to occur. The

Minister would have to show this to allow the application to succeed under S186A of the *Fisheries Management Act 1986*.

We are sympathetic to Nga Hapu o Te Moutere o Motiti hapu's representation, however contend that the Astrolabe Reef area is of equal importance to a much wider hapu and recreational base. We have already commenced dialogue with the hapu concerned, and would prefer those discussions to continue un-fettered by any further restrictions. The state of the overall BoP fishery is of concern to all of us, and further local discussions are the best way forward, in our view.

We are the largest fishing club in the area, and represent a substantial number of fishers, of all types. We strongly believe that much wider public discussion needs to occur before any extension can be granted. We will do everything we can to support the Ministry facilitating such discussion.

We are party to, and have seen, the submission being made by NZ Sport Fishing Council / Legasea. We fully support that submission, and rely on it for further detail on the points made above.

We have also seen the submission made by Mr Russ Hawkins, charter vessel operator on the state and the history of the reef. We concur with his conclusion regarding the pre-existing state of the fishery around the reef, and the natural protection afforded to it by the conditions.

Yours Faithfully

Don Brock
President, Tauranga Sport Fishing Club Inc.