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Media Release

National to create two recreational fishing parks

Conservation Spokesman Dr Nick Smith and Primary Industries Spokesman Nathan Guy today announced a re-elected National Government will introduce two recreational fishing parks covering areas of the inner Hauraki Gulf and the Marlborough Sounds as part of a wider reform of marine protection legislation.

“This is a first for New Zealand. We are going to create a new concept of recreational fishing parks in a new Marine Protected Areas Act. These areas will be reserved predominantly for recreational fishing and will enhance the opportunity for Kiwi families to catch fish in areas like the inner Hauraki Gulf and the Marlborough Sounds,” Dr Smith says.

“These proposed in-shore parks are in two of the most popular areas for recreational fishing in the country. They would be managed for a range of recreational activities by an advisory board of local users, and would exclude most commercial fishing,” he says.

“On a typical summer’s day on the Hauraki Gulf, there can be up to 6,900 recreational vessels on the water – that equals around 21,000 fishers. National wants to preserve the inner Hauraki Gulf exclusively for these fishers, so families in Auckland and across the wider region can continue to enjoy one of the country’s best-loved pastimes,” Mr Guy says.

The proposed Hauraki Recreational Fishing Park would extend across the inner Hauraki Gulf, incorporating Statistical Area 7 in Fisheries Management Area 1 and Omaha Bay, and would exclude all commercial activity. Currently some snapper, flounder, john dory, crayfish and kahawai are caught commercially within the area, although it does not account for a significant part of the catches of any of those species.

The Marlborough Sounds Recreational Fishing Park would cover the current area of the Marlborough Sounds Blue Cod Management Area and exclude commercial finfishing. This means that commercial fishers could continue to have marine farms and fish for species such as paua, scallop and crayfish within the park. Currently the commercial finfishing catch in the area is snapper, groper, bass and blue cod but again, it is not a high-value area for commercial finfishers.

“National is committed to providing fair compensation for commercial fishers who currently operate in these areas. Some will be able to catch their finfish quota outside these new recreational fishing parks, but others will be adversely affected. We will be establishing a legal mechanism based on

current legislative principles for compensating quota holders, and the level of compensation will be decided on following discussions with industry,” says Mr Guy.

Dr Smith says the Marine Protected Areas Act 1971 is outdated and needs reform.

“Our new law will provide for a range of marine protected areas, from no-take marine reserves, recreational fishing parks, species-specific sanctuaries and seabed reserves. The new Marine Protected Areas Act will broaden the purpose to include conservation and recreation, allow for marine protected areas in the Exclusive Economic Zone, provide for a stronger role for local communities and iwi in decision-making, and improve the processes for establishing reserves, parks and sanctuaries.”

“This reform is part of our ambition for New Zealand to be a world leader in the responsible use, management and conservation of our ocean environment. We have established record numbers of new marine reserves and passed new laws for managing activities in our Exclusive Economic Zone. A new Marine Protected Areas Act is the next logical step,” Dr Smith says.

“National is striking the right balance between the interests of everyday Kiwi fishers, environmental responsibility and economic opportunity in our world-leading sustainable fisheries,” Mr Guy says.

“A re-elected National Government will publish a discussion paper on these proposals for consultation in November. We want to work with all stakeholders on these new recreational fishing parks and marine protected areas legislation to enhance the management of New Zealand’s ocean environment,” Dr Smith concluded.

Attached: 2 x maps of proposed recreational fishing parks

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