

PRIMARY PRODUCTION COMMITTEE

Post-Hearing Questions

**2020/21 Annual Review
Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua**

**Hon David Parker
Minister for Oceans and Fisheries**

Q1. When will the Kermadecs become a marine reserve?

The proposed Rangitāhua/Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary is undergoing a legislative process and the Bill to establish the Sanctuary is at its second reading. The Government remains committed to progressing the Rangitāhua/Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary. An inter-agency group comprising Ministry for Environment (lead), Te Arawhiti, Department of Conservation, and Ministry for Primary Industries/Fisheries New Zealand provides advice to Government in support of this process.

Q2. How many additional fisheries officers were employed FY 21 and will be employed in FY22?

FY 21 and FY 22 are taken to mean 'financial years' 2020/21 and 2021/22 respectively. For the year ended June 2021 no new fishery officer positions were established. For the year ending June 2022 no new fishery officer positions were established or planned to be established.

Q3. How many Rahui are currently in place around NZ?

Fisheries New Zealand does not hold information on how many rāhui are in place around New Zealand.

Q4. What is the legislative framework that gives effect to local Rahui?

A traditional rāhui is a restriction implemented by kaitiaki that prohibits access to an area or its resources. Fishery Officers cannot enforce rāhui, but they may take a role in providing the public with information about rāhui to support kaitiaki.

Fisheries New Zealand does not have a role in implementing rāhui, however rāhui can be provided statutory support by a temporary closure.

There are currently ten temporary closures in place around New Zealand: seven in the North Island, and three in the South Island. Temporary closures are imposed under section 186A or 186B of the Fisheries Act 1996 and are enforceable by Fishery Officers.

Q5. How many fishing vessels have cameras fitted as of 1 February 2022 and what is the percentage of the total fishing fleet?

As of 1 February 2022, cameras are installed on 15 vessels with a history of fishing off the West Coast North Island, which equates to approximately two percent of the vessels that fished in the 2020/21 fishing year. In late 2021 the Government consulted on the proposal to rollout on-board cameras on up to 300 inshore fishing vessels. These vessels are responsible for approximately 84 percent of the total catch from inshore fisheries and would increase the total percentage of fishing vessels fitted with on-board cameras to approximately 35 percent of the entire fleet.

Q6. What is the next steps in establishing a Hauraki Marine Reserve and when will the process be concluded?

Fisheries New Zealand and the Department of Conservation are following the timeline set out in Revitalising the Gulf: Government Action on the Sea Change Plan to implement the management actions contained in the Strategy. This includes the establishment of 11 new High Protection Areas and five Seafloor Protection Areas within the existing Hauraki Gulf Marine Park, the development of an area-based fisheries plan for the Hauraki Gulf and a suite of other actions to improve the health and mauri of the Hauraki Gulf.

Officials from FNZ and DOC are currently engaging with mana whenua on the new protected area proposals including the definition of customary practices and on the draft Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan. Following completion of that engagement the legislative process to establish the new protected areas will commence, including public consultation.

Q7. Where is the Government response to the Chief Scientist of the PM report on Oceans, how many of the recommendations been adopted and progressed?

In June 2021, Cabinet considered an initial response to the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor Report on commercial fishing. Officials are developing a Government response to the recommendations of the Report which is expected to be completed by mid-2022.

Q8. What is the next steps around constraining bottom trawling activity in NZ?

Fisheries New Zealand and the Department of Conservation have been working to establish a multi-stakeholder forum to provide input to the development of options for additional management of bottom impacting fishing methods in the EEZ. The first meeting is expected to be held by the end of March.

Under the Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan, a key part of the Government response to Sea Change, there will be a significant reduction in the area where commercial bottom trawling is permitted, with trawl fishing to be restricted to carefully selected corridors. 18 new MPAs are also to be established.

Marine protected area proposals for the south-eastern South Island are also being considered that would restrict the area where bottom trawling is permitted.

Q9. What actions are being implemented to fix the gaps of data of fish stock levels and ecosystem health?

Fisheries New Zealand allocates over \$21 million to fisheries research every year, which funds both stock, environmental impact and ecosystem related research. We aim to improve our science iteratively every year and focus research on the highest priority stocks, environmental issues and understanding the ecosystem in order to deliver maximum benefit from available funds. The percentage of scientifically assessed stocks remains at around 2/3 of landed tonnage for commercial species, which represents 85 percent of value.

Increasingly funding is supporting fisheries independent trawl surveys which provide a wide range of benefits to both assessing commercially targeted fish stocks and the state of the broader ecosystem (we currently support five inshore and three deepwater trawl surveys).

Electronic reporting provides more timely information about a wider range of species than previously and we are working to develop improved catch analytics to provide early-warnings of possible depletion for those stocks where we are unable to complete more comprehensive assessments. We actively assess risk to bycaught species (like marine mammals and seabirds) using risk assessments and quantify our impacts on the seafloor as part of our broader fisheries impacts considerations. We also carry out broader ecosystem research including a current project investigating the role of low- and mid-trophic level fish in the Hauraki Gulf ecosystem.