

Pāua 2 TAC Review

Pāua 2 March 2023

Pāua – not just an export fishery



Pāua are highly valued by traditional, recreational and commercial fishers. Pāua grow well in the cooler waters around the lower North Island. The fishery from East Cape, around Wellington and up to south Waikato is called Pāua 2.

It is one of the largest pāua fisheries in the country.

Across such a large coastline it is inevitable that easily accessible areas will be heavily fished and others will be left alone. The downside is that local depletion issues are masked by total commercial catches across the entire Pāua 2 fishery. Most of this catch is exported.

Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) recently reviewed the fishery, advising there are no sustainability issues. There are pockets of concern, so FNZ suggested cuts to recreational daily bag limits while leaving the commercial catch limit intact. Their proposals drew a strong response.

BIASED PROPOSALS REJECTED

In March 2023 LegaSea worked with the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council, the New Zealand Angling & Casting and New Zealand Underwater Associations to submit against the biased FNZ proposals.

It's unreasonable for officials to protect quota holders' interests at the expense of the public's access and interests in an abundant pāua fishery.

Five recommendations were made to the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries.

Officials cannot effectively manage Pāua 2. It must be split into at least three areas so separate catch limits can be applied. The Minister must wait for the 2024 release of the updated research on recreational catch before setting new daily bag limits.

In future, the Minister must ensure FNZ produces more balanced options for the future management of our precious fisheries.

WHAT NEXT?

The Minister must recognise that pāua is a species ideally suited to fine-scale management. Splitting the large quota area into more manageable units will help to maintain a high value niche fishery that can support local interests and provide for export opportunities.

A Ministerial decision is expected in mid-2023.

This decision needs to include a commitment to providing more resources to mana whenua and the community, to encourage hands-on management of pāua and other inshore species.

[Pāua 2 timeline](#)

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