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30 September 2024

Submission on the request for a 2-year temporary closure at Taranaki under section 186A of the Fisheries Act

1. The submitters **oppose the new application** made by Taranaki iwi and hapū at Western Taranaki under section 186A of the Fisheries Act 1996 (**the Act**). Any shellfish ban would only be supported with proper management and a long term strategy agreed upon by local iwi, recreational interests and the wider community. Advice was received from Fisheries New Zealand (**FNZ**) on 21 August with submissions due by 30 September 2024.

Submitters:

2. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council (**NZSFC**) is a recognised national sports organisation with over 37,000 affiliated members from 55 clubs nationwide. The Council has initiated LegaSea to generate widespread awareness and support for the need to restore abundance in our inshore marine environment. Also, to broaden NZSFC involvement in marine management advocacy, research, education and alignment on behalf of our members and LegaSea supporters. www.legasea.co.nz Together we are '*the submitters*'.
3. The submitters are committed to ensuring that sustainability measures and environmental management controls are designed and implemented to achieve the Purpose and Principles of the Fisheries Act 1996, including "maintaining the potential of fisheries resources to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations..." [s8(2)(a) Fisheries Act 1996].
4. The submitters have supported previous s186A fishing closures where there has been a clear purpose to restore abundance and productivity of the marine environment.
5. In developing this submission the submitters have worked closely with the NZSFC Zone 6 clubs including the New Plymouth Sport Fishing & Underwater Club and Cape Egmont Boat Club to better understand local concerns and reasoning behind their concerns.
6. Our representatives are available to discuss this submission in more detail if required. We look forward to positive outcomes from this process. We would like to be kept informed of future developments. Our contact is Helen Pastor secretary@nzsportfishing.org.nz.

Acknowledgement

7. The submitters respect Taranaki iwi and community efforts to restore the local intertidal zone and their commitment to managing the overharvest of shellfish and organisms from local reefs, particularly when officials have chosen to ignore the impacts of ongoing depletion on the local community. It's also encouraging to hear that Taranaki Iwi and Taranaki Regional Council are working together to provide education and surveys to monitor the area.
8. It was disheartening to hear that leading up to the existing temporary closure members of the public stripped the reefs bare of important shellfish and plant species using tools such as piano wires, shovels, spades and crowbars. This is behaviour the NZSFC do not condone.
9. The wider community and NZSFC Zone 6 clubs have shown strong compliance to the closure for the past two years and will continue to support efforts to restore the Taranaki coastline.
10. We encourage further conversations between communities, iwi and recreational interests around the future long term management of the intertidal coastline in west Taranaki.

Discussion

11. In our 2022 submission, NZSFC submitted in support of Taranaki iwi for a s186A 2-year temporary fishing closure of the coast to the take of all shellfish, seaweeds, anemones and conger eels. However, due to concerns for the closure to apply out to 2 nautical miles, NZSFC supported a closure out to 1 nautical mile preventing the harvest of rock lobster.
12. Taranaki Iwi's application references "*Initial evidence is clear from our marine survey data to date that there is evidence of potential future growth but an insufficient current stock for sustainable harvesting*". To our knowledge this data has not been publicly shared.
13. This year, after in-depth discussions with Zone 6 Clubs and their members, the **NZSFC does not support** the 2-year temporary closure preventing the harvest of crayfish and shellfish because of the absence of data and the lack of detail to support another 2-year closure. Without clear evidence and the best available information it is difficult for the community and clubs to make an informed decision to support another closure.
14. The submitters understand that due to the failure of the Quota Management System and inadequate responses by FNZ, there are limited tools available to help communities address localised depletion and mismanagement of local fisheries, so local iwi and hapū have resorted to using s186A closures to address these concerns. Hence, s186A closures have become a more common sight along New Zealand's coastline.
15. There is no doubt that the management of local fisheries and shellfish at the Quota Management Area level is failing. The submitters encourage FNZ officials to bring the community together with local iwi and hapū to develop a solution that is both supported by the wider community and seeks to address concerns of a loss of abundance in the inshore and inter-tidal zone. A win for everyone.