

Meeting report: NZSFC and aligned parties meet with Minister Shane Jones

Report date: 10 April 2025

Meeting date: 4 April 2025

Time and place: 4:30pm until 5:40pm, Royal Akarana Yacht Club, Auckland.

Attendees - 24:

Minister Shane Jones (Minister for Oceans and Fisheries)

Minister's team: Dan Bolger (Deputy Director General, MPI), Craig 'Laws' Lawson (Te Ohu Kai Moana), Jacob Hore (Manager Northern Inshore, Fisheries NZ), John (Shane Jones assistant).

Recreational fishing representatives - Scott Macindoe (President, Life Member NZSFC), Andrew Johnson (Vice President, NZSFC, Bay of Islands Swordfish Club delegate), Warren Maher (Vice President NZSFC, Tairua Pauanui Sports Fishing Club), Heyden Johnston (Zone 8 Board delegate NZSFC, President, Whakatane Sportfishing Club), Bill McGarry (Zone 2 Board delegate NZSFC, Whakatakataka Bay Sportfishing Club), Richard Baker (Past President, Life Member NZSFC, NZ Landbased Gamefishing Club), Gordon McIvor (President, Mercury Bay Game Fishing Club), Mark Connor (NZSFC Fisheries Management Standing Committee Co-Chair, Zone 7 Board delegate NZSFC), Wayne Bicknell (NZSFC Fisheries Management Standing Committee Co-Chair, LegaSea Hawkes Bay co-founder, Hawkes Bay Sports Fishing Club), Mark Hemingway (International Game Fish Association, NZSFC Life Member), Manuel Greenland (Good Fishing), Sam Woolford (LegaSea lead), Blair James (Managing Director James Group, LegaSea Platinum Partner), Scott Malcom (Daiwa NZ), Jason Foord.

Supported by: Trish Rea (Life Member NZSFC and LegaSea contractor), Katie Goodwin (NZSFC FMSC and LegaSea contractor), Sydney Curtis (NZSFC FMSC and LegaSea contractor), Rowan Ashton (legal).

Apologies: Peter van Eekelen (Pegasus Bay), David Abercrombie (CEO Yachting New Zealand), Allan Davidson & Josh Barclay (NZ Underwater Association), Jim Yeoman (NZ Angling & Casting Association), Ben Chisell (NZ Fishing Community), Jeff Douglas (President, Bay of Islands Swordfish Club), Barry Torkington (FMSC policy advisor).

The purpose of this meeting was to;

At the Minister's request/invitation we assembled to

- a. Help the Minister better understand the makeup of the recreational fishing community in the upper North island and
- b. Discuss concerns recreational fishers have with the proposed reforms to the Fisheries Act.

DISCUSSION:

1. Introductions:

- a. The Minister advised that he has the mandate to proceed with the proposed reforms that have originated from the NZ First election plan.

- b. The Minister is confident that he is the best politician to push these reforms through Parliament due to his background in fisheries.
- c. The Minister advised he is willing to fight to have the reforms become an Amendment Bill, quoting “If you dish it out, I’ll dish it back”.

2. Fisheries Reform Proposals:

- a. NZSFC representative Andrew Johnson advised that the NZSFC supports a real reform of the Fisheries Act to address the economic failure in the inshore commercial fishing industry including;
 - i. Supporting small-scale ACE (Annual Catch Entitlement) fishermen, instead of serving quota owners.
 - ii. Managing inshore fish stocks at a minimum of 50% of their original biomass (B50).
 - iii. Any amendments to the Act need to include the interests of all stakeholders recreational, customary and commercial.
 - iv. The Minister advised he was unaware that New Zealand kahawai are being exported to [West Africa for less than \\$2 per kilo](#).
- b. NZSFC have developed a reform package titled [Rescue Fish](#) that would involve dismantling the Quota Management System and the Crown buying back the quota.
- c. The Minister discussed that future reforms to the Fisheries Act could include recreational licensing. The Minister made the following comments;
 - i. More research, potential buy-back of quota, stock assessments and better management of our fisheries comes at a cost. And that cost is likely to be absorbed by recreational fishers in the form of licensing.
 - ii. The Green and Labour Party are likely to support recreational fishing licences in the 2026 election.
 - iii. The Minister decided not to pursue the creation of recreational fishing licenses despite commercial fishing interests requests.
- d. NZSFC questioned why the Minister did not include the value of recreational fishing in the proposed reforms.
 - i. The Minister acknowledged that he overlooked this element but warned NZSFC to be “*careful what you wish for*” if the economic value of recreational fishing is to be given the same weight as commercial fishing.
 - ii. Noting that discussions about how much recreational fishing contributes to the economy would lead to more regulation and potentially licensing of recreational fishers.
- e. The Minister asked if NZSFC want more fish allocated to recreational fishers.
 - i. NZSFC stated that we want more abundance of fish in our inshore fishery. Allocation must be based on levels of abundance.

3. The Hauraki Gulf

- a. The Minister doesn't support the Hauraki Gulf Marine Protection Bill (HGMPB), but due to coalition politics he is required to outwardly support the Bill.
- b. Shane Jones recommended that Tama Potaka amend the HGMPB to [permit commercial gillnetting](#) in two HPAs that surround Kawau Bay, the Noises and Motatapu for a period of three years.
- c. NZSFC raised concerns about the proposed High Protection Area at the Alderman Islands that would prohibit recreational fishing. The HPA is intended to protect vulnerable sponges 120 metres deep, however surface fishing i.e trolling & pelagic fishing does not pose a risk to the sponges.
 - i. The Minister advised that he is not in charge of the HGMPB and any concerns would need to go to the National Party.
- d. The Minister indicated that the east coast from North Cape to East Cape could be closed to crayfish harvest soon.

4. Scallops

- a. The Minister and NZSFC discussed aspirations for the future of the [Coromandel scallop fishery](#). NZSFC supported;
 - i. The Coromandel scallop fishery remains closed until abundance returns to levels that are sustainable for harvest.
 - ii. On reopening, a hand-gathering only fishery for commercial and recreational fishers.
 - iii. More fine-scale localised management of scallops, including protecting deeper broodstock scallop beds.
- b. The Minister acknowledged that the Coromandel scallop fishery could be managed differently and is keen to develop localised solutions and a possible fisheries plan.

5. South Island

- a. The Minister referred to the meeting he attended on 8 March 2025 with [recreational fisheries in the South Island](#) and advised that he has no agenda to impose the Fish Mainland recreational reporting app, that would require all recreational fishers in the South Island to report what they catch.
 - i. Jones advised that a future government might support it.

6. Final words from the Minister

- a. Encouraged NZSFC meet with Members of Parliament to discuss Rescue Fish.
- b. Advised (quoted) "If you want to help me protect your constituency, then please support the Fisheries reform".
- c. Requested a record of the meeting minutes and contact details of those attending