

SUBMISSION FORM for MPI DISCUSSION PAPER No 2013/16
REVIEW OF COMMERCIAL ACCESS RESTRICTIONS – PĀUA 5D
FISHERIES

Deadline for Submissions: No later than 4pm Friday 19th April 2013

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In respect to the proposals put forward in Paper No.2013/16 our preferred option is:

OPTION 1 – Status Quo to retain existing commercial harvest prohibitions

OPTION 2 – Amend prohibitions to allow commercial harvesting of Pāua in said areas

Our reasons for supporting OPTION 1 are explained in further detail below:

(A) Negative economic/social/cultural impact on non-commercial Pāua fishers

- Pāua is a source of food to many families in the Otago/Southland, many who reside in the restricted areas. The introduction of commercial fishing into those areas will have a negative impact on these individuals ability to collect Pāua, and consequently will have a significant impact on whānau whose staple diet consists of self-collected Pāua.
- Tangata Tiaki inform that most permits they issue are in these restricted areas.
- We strongly disagree with the contention that increasing the area open to commercial fishing will have a net positive effect for recreational fishers in commercially fished areas. The area that will be opened to commercial fishing will not have the effect of providing sufficient Pāua in other areas for recreational fishers. On the contrary, those areas closed to commercial fishing will see a decrease in availability and size of Pāua, while seeing little

improvement in other areas. Already within commercially fished areas our community cannot gather Pāua of legal size.

- We do not believe that the opening of these restricted areas to commercial fishing is consistent with the draft National Fisheries Plan for Inshore Shellfish. It is noted that the original purpose of these restricted areas is no longer relevant. However the restricted areas have developed a new and stronger purpose - ensuring that commercial fishing is done within sustainable limits by maintaining a viable and protected population that is not harvested extensively. The removal of the restrictions will tip the balance in favour of the immediate economic and commercial interests to the detriment of sustainable farming of the resource, contrary to the draft National Fisheries Plan for Inshore Shellfish.
- Past assessments of the sustainability of the Pāua industry in the Pau 5D area have highlighted serious concerns over the sustainability of the Pāua population but were not conclusive. (PS3, *The 2006 stock assessment for paua (Haliotis iris) stocks PAU 5A (Fiordland) and PAU 5D (Otago)*, 2007/9) While these doubts remain as to the current sustainability of the Pāua in the 5D area, local opinion is that the introduction of commercial fishing would be un-sustainable. Any amendment to restrictions on commercial fishing in this area should be done on the basis of an accurate understanding of the Pāua population.

(B) Detrimental Effects of Commercial Fishing

- Some in the Otago/Southland community have personally witnessed unsound commercial practice, including the cutting of kelp protecting Pāua, thereby reducing viability for those Pāua not farmed. If such practices are introduced into the restricted areas the Pāua that are not removed by commercial fishers will not survive, further depleting the population of Pāua open to recreational fishers.

- It is generally believed that Pāua in the areas proposed to be opened have already suffered a decrease in Pāua population and size. This demonstrates the inappropriateness of commercial fishing in the area.
- Individuals from the Otago/Southland and those relocated from the North, have had the opportunity to fish for Pāua in other areas of New Zealand and both have noted the significant difference in size of South Island Pāua compared to North Island Pāua. Due to this the Dunedin Community have developed a strong sense of pride connected to their local Pāua, creating an extra incentive to protect it from induced harm.
- The growth cycle of Pāua at 6 years is relatively long. While minimum size restrictions help to protect the juvenile population, the introduction of commercial fishing will greatly reduce the adult population. Due to Pāua being a vital part of many Otago/Southland family diets this reduction will result in pressure to harvest smaller Pāua with detrimental effects for the sustainability of the Pāua population.
- It is noted that the opening of these areas will not lead to an immediate review of the Pāua quota. However the community fear that the short term abundance of Pāua will result in an inaccurate representation of the Pāua population numbers, leading to irreparable damage.
- Many older members of the Otago/Southland have highlighted the absence of deep freezing when they farmed Pāua. This meant that Pāua were consumed immediately and the population was sustainable. While the benefits of the export of Pāua is noted, doubt remains as to whether an accurate understanding has been developed as to the sustainability of the Pāua population. In particular, concern is expressed within the community over the extent of commercial fishing which takes all legal Pāua, leaving only illegal Pāua for our community.
- The exclusion of large scale fishing in these restricted areas has allowed the Pāua population to develop without large scale interference and therefore the population represents an unique opportunity for scientific study.

(C) Redundancy of Opening these Areas

- The area open to commercial fishing in the Otago/Southland area comprises over 500km. The area proposed to be added to this is 25km. The Pāua 5D quota is 89 tonnes. The Pāua industry are suggesting that from 10-30 tonnes could be gathered from the restricted area, thereby helping to relieve tension from the other 500km of open area. (*Proposal for pāua opposed*, ODT, 14/Mar/2013) Such a suggestion, that a large amount of Pāua could be taken from such a small area, is not sustainable.
- The Otago/Southland community are concerned that the benefits gained from Commercial fishing are not then passed onto the Otago/Southland region, contrasted against local recreational fishers who do.
- The Otago/Southland Māori Community is strongly in favour of protecting locally accessible Pāua for future generations. The restricted areas represent a guarantee of this and future Pāua populations in general.

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