

Letter: Paua harvest

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<http://www.stuff.co.nz/southland-times/opinion/8525284/Letter-Paua-harvest>

OPINION: The public meeting in Bluff to discuss the Ministry for Primary Industries consultations on opening some areas previously closed to paua harvesting was addressed by a Dunedin-based lobby group and a number of assertions were made which were incorrect.

The areas under discussion were not closed in 1986, nor did the paua industry decline an offer by the Crown to fish in them at that time. These areas were closed well before the commercial paua industry developed on any scale and have been closed since.

Contrary to claims by a speaker that Pauamac5 has not done any reseeded, it is common knowledge that reseeded has been undertaken on a pretty large scale in Fiordland, Stewart Island and Southland/Otago for a number of years, at a cost to quota owners of many hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Our next planting run is scheduled for later this month and is likely to be in the range of 500,000 to 1 million seed paua.

We chose not to purchase paua seed from that speaker or his company, instead supporting locally based suppliers.

These reseeded paua have been available to anyone who wished to catch them once they grew to legal size.

The consultation timeframe and process was set by the Government, not industry.

We made the application and the Crown administers the consultation, and the minister will make the decision after careful consideration of all submissions received.

Despite claims to the contrary, there is to be no increase in commercial catch levels. That would require the ministry to run a series of stock assessments first, to prove such an increase was justified. We simply want to be able to spread existing catch over a wider area to benefit the whole Otago/ Southland paua fishery.

We urge anyone with an interest to make a submission to the ministry, especially if they feel that they will be prevented from continuing to gather their entitlement of paua should the proposals be approved. Clear and supported facts would strengthen your submission.

S STANLEY Chairman, Pauamac5