



# Office of Hon Nathan Guy

MP for Otaki

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister of Civil Defence

Associate Minister for Economic Development

B17-0523

Dear Stakeholder

## **In-season total allowable catch increases for Flatfish 3 (FLA 3) and Red Cod 2 (RCO 2) for the 2016/17 fishing year**

I write to inform you of my decisions on the in-season Total Allowable Catch (TAC) increases for the flatfish 3 fishery (FLA 3) and red cod 2 fishery (RCO 2) for the 2016/17 fishing year. Copies of the discussion document and the final advice to me from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) are both available on the MPI website [www.mpi.govt.nz](http://www.mpi.govt.nz)

A management procedure has been used for FLA 3 and RCO 2 to guide in-season TAC increases above current baseline levels. Using information from the current fishing year, the management procedure output indicates that the TACs for FLA 3 and RCO 2 can be increased for the remainder of the fishing year. Although the management procedure relies on data from the commercial fishery, MPI considers that it is reasonable to assume that the output reflects the increased overall abundance of flatfish in FLA 3 and red cod in RCO 2 and greater availability to all fishing sectors.

MPI has consulted on the most appropriate application of this information and sought submissions on two possible options for each stock, retaining the current TAC, Annual Catch Entitlement (ACE) and non-commercial allowances (*status quo*) or an in-season increase to the TAC, ACE and non-commercial allowances.

In reaching my decisions I have considered the submissions received on MPI's discussion documents and the final advice provided to me. This advice included MPI's analysis of submissions received during the consultation process. I also considered the relevant legislative provisions and my obligations under the Fisheries Act 1996 (the Act). I would like to thank everyone who took the time to make submissions or has been involved in the consultation period for this process.

I consider there to be an opportunity for increased utilisation of the FLA 3 and RCO 2 fisheries for the 2016/17 fishing year. I have decided to increase the FLA 3 TAC from 1,617 tonnes to 2,335 tonnes and to increase the RCO 2 TAC from 500 tonnes to 807 tonnes. I consider the increase in abundance of flatfish in FLA 3 and red cod in RCO 2 is available to all sectors and, in addition to increases to commercial catch allowances, I have also provided for an increase in non-commercial allowances in proportion to the increases in the TACs.

I have decided to increase in the FLA 3 recreational allowance from 150 tonnes to 217 tonnes, the Māori customary allowance from 5 tonnes to 7 tonnes, and the allowance for other sources of mortality related to fishing from 32 tonnes to 46 tonnes.

Non-commercial allowances have not been set for RCO 2 but I have decided to set the in-season RCO 2 recreational allowance at 36 tonnes, the Māori customary allowance at 1 tonne and the allowance for sources of mortality related to fishing at 37 tonnes.

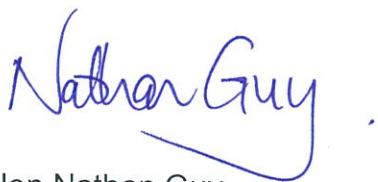
I have decided to allow for additional FLA 3 and RCO 2 commercial catch through the provision of additional ACE under section 68 of the Act. This additional ACE (amounting to 635 tonnes for FLA 3 and 233 tonnes for RCO 2) will be released by FishServe to quota owners as soon as possible.

I consider that the provision for additional commercial catch is to reflect the current increased abundance of flatfish in FLA 3 and red cod in RCO 2 and is unlikely to lead to increased fishing effort or targeting of these stocks. I also consider that this is unlikely to lead to sustainability risks for the FLA 3 and RCO 2 stocks, associated stocks, or flatfish species in the FLA 3 stock complex.

The in-season FLA 3 TAC, ACE and allowances will revert back to their baseline levels at the end of the 2016/17 fishing year. The baseline RCO 2 TAC and allowances are being consulted on as part of the 2017 review of Fisheries Sustainability Measures, to come into effect on 1 October 2017, and the in-season RCO 2 TAC, ACE and allowances will revert to these new settings at the end of the 2016/17 fishing year.

I am satisfied that the magnitude of the FLA 3 and RCO 2 in-season TAC increases adequately allow for increased utilisation of these fisheries by all sectors without risking the sustainability of these stocks over the longer term.

Yours sincerely



Hon Nathan Guy  
**Minister for Primary Industries**