

# New Zealand Sport Fishing Council Summary

## Scallop 7 – review of management proposals and preliminary view

18 June 2016



On 9 June the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) advised they were consulting on options for the future management of the Southern Scallop fishery (SCA7). SCA 7 extends from Cape Farewell in the west to the Tory Channel in the east, at the top of the South Island.

MPI has proposed to temporarily close parts of the SCA7 fishery for the upcoming 2016-17 season. MPI has asked for feedback on their three proposed management options, and wants feedback on longer term measures to help rebuild the fishery.

Consultation is limited to 16 working days. Any changes will apply from 15 July 2016, the first day of the 2016-17 season.

Please forward your feedback to Josh Barclay at [josh@legasea.co.nz](mailto:josh@legasea.co.nz)

or

Trish Rea at [trish@legasea.co.nz](mailto:trish@legasea.co.nz).

**Submission deadline is 1 July 2016.**

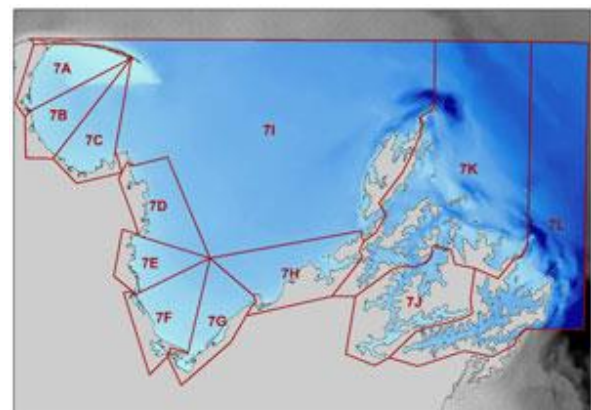


Figure 1. SCA 7 sub areas

### Stock status

The SCA7 stock continues to decline. MPI surveys reveal abundance in SCA7 is at its lowest recorded level. Recruited biomass is estimated to be around 211 tonnes meat weight. Future recruitment is uncertain.

### Proposed Options

<b>Option 1</b>	Temporarily close all of area 7H in Tasman Bay, and some or all of the following parts of the Marlborough Sounds to scallop fishing for the 2016-17 season (until 15 February 2017): <i>Wynens Bank, Guards Bank, Ships Cove, Pelorus Sound and Dieffenbach Point (refer Figure 2).</i>
<b>Option 2</b>	Temporarily close all of the Marlborough Sounds and area 7H in Tasman Bay to scallop fishing for the 2016-17 scallop season.
<b>Option 3 (Status quo)</b>	No new scallop fishing closures are implemented for the 2016-17 scallop season.

### Initial Views

**Option 1** - Temporarily closing some scallop beds in Marlborough Sounds and part of Tasman Bay would safeguard both mature and juvenile scallops in those areas from direct and incidental fishing. This option has an intermediate level of sustainability risk (depending on the areas closed).

**Option 2** - Temporarily closing all of the Marlborough Sounds and part of Tasman Bay has the most impact on fishing, but carries the least sustainability risk of the three options. MPI's preliminary view is that this

option may be appropriate, given the fishery is at its lowest recorded state with only a limited number of beds at fishable density.

**Option 3** - the status quo, has the least impact on fishing but has the highest sustainability risk of the three options. MPI's preliminary view is that the status quo option may not be a responsive approach to the status of the fishery.

## **Conclusion**

There is no strategy that conveys certainty for rebuilding. Any rebuilding will occur via improved recruitment success that requires viable spat, appropriate settlement surfaces, and remain undisturbed through to recruitment. The only part of the rebuilding matrix that MPI can manage is to leave the populations undisturbed, the rest is in the hands of the scallops themselves.

**Scallop 7 is a collapsed fishery**, not a fishery in need of tinkering and inconsequential interventions.

The three options listed in the IPP are incongruent with long term rebuilding of scallop populations. None achieve the only tangible intervention available, which is to **close the fishery entirely**.

A casual glance at the relative abundance plots (Appendix One) confirms closing the fishery is the only rational response.

The last review was in 2014, a mere two years ago. The 2014 proposals also contained options that simply fail to address the real and confirmed state of nature. At that time, the Council submitted that all commercial dredging cease, and a residual small catch allowance for customary and public use be retained. It appeared the only rational response then, and is now confirmed by the latest crisis.

**There is no rationale for allowing any commercial harvest anywhere in SCA7**, and to do so disregards the statutory duties of the Minister and leaves him liable for review.

This isn't about what to allocate to whom, it is about the reasonable and lawful response to a collapsed stock. At some point in time MPI are going to have to man up and actually manage depleted and collapsed stocks, without simply giving in to commercial demands as clearly happened in 2014.

If SCA7 isn't immediately closed, then we can see no point in having a Fisheries Act or stock reviews. If all that happens when stocks collapse is that MPI searches for interventions that have the least effect on quota shareholders, while avoiding the TACC reductions that are obviously needed, then non-commercial interests will need to take a more litigious approach to advocacy.

## **Recommendations**

The NZSFC submit a response by the 1 July deadline –

1. Rejecting the three proposed options in favour of immediate closure of SCA 7 to all fishing until such a time that the abundance surveys indicate a surplus yield is available.
2. When the stock has recovered to a sufficiently abundant level, allow a staged resumption of harvest of scallops, hand-picking methods only: customary and recreational fishing first. Commercial hand-picking second.
3. No dredging in SCA7 until new techniques are developed that protect the seabed and benthic communities.

## Appendix One

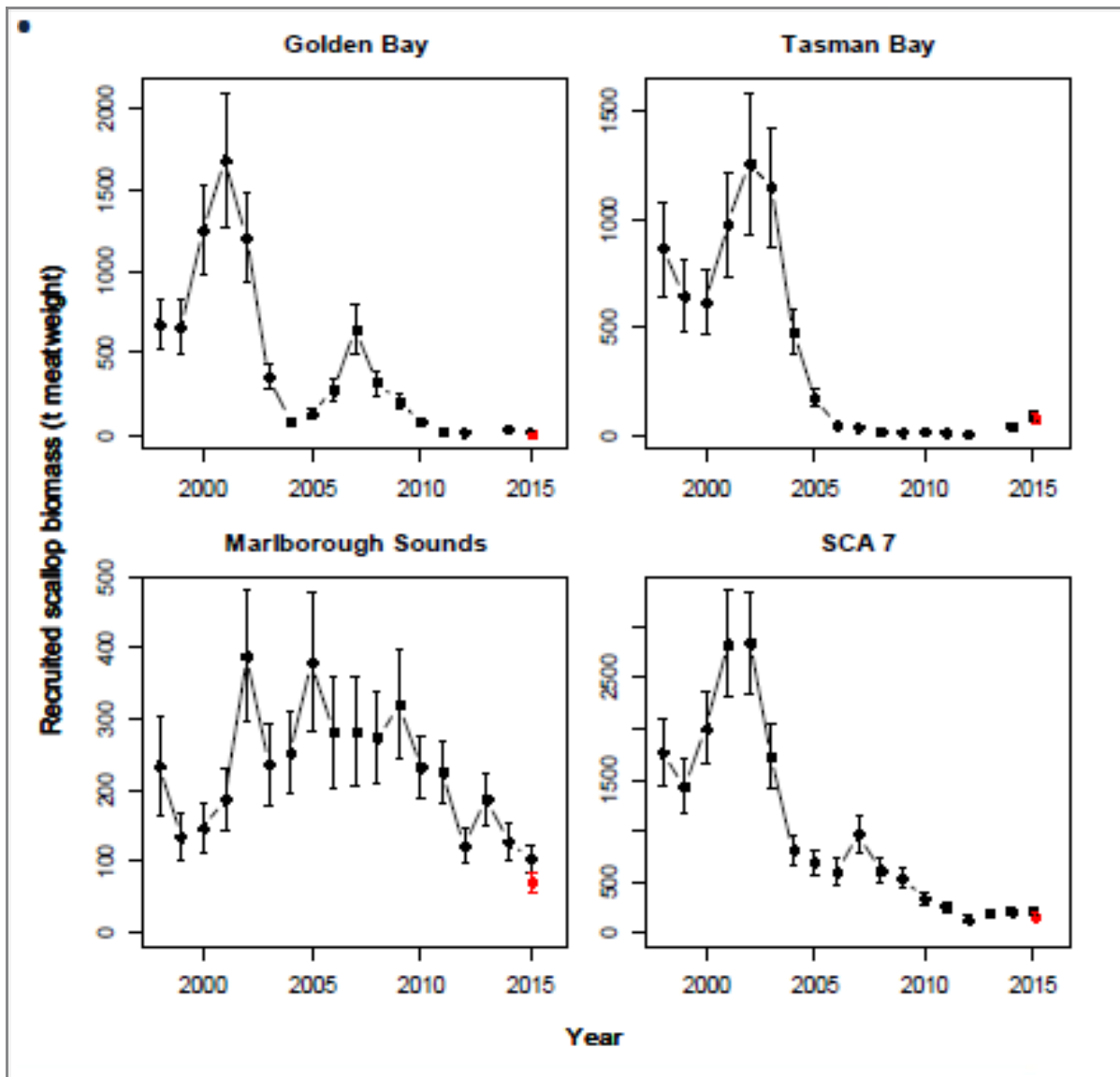


Figure 2. Plots of relative abundance generated by MPI abundance survey