



17 December 2009

Dear Stakeholder

REVIEW OF SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES FOR CRA 3, CRA 4, AND CRA 7 RED ROCK LOBSTER FISHERIES FOR 1 APRIL 2010

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in the sustainability review process for the Gisborne (CRA 3), Wellington/Hawkes Bay (CRA 4), Otago (CRA 7) and Southland (CRA 8) rock lobster fisheries.

Background

The National Rock Lobster Management Group (NRLMG) is a national-level, multi-stakeholder group comprising representatives of the customary Maori, amateur, and commercial fishing sectors; environmental and conservation interests; and the Ministry of Fisheries (MFish). Since its formation in 1992, the NRLMG has been the primary source of advice to the Minister of Fisheries on New Zealand's rock lobster fisheries.

In December each year, the NRLMG provides the Minister with initial advice on sustainability measures for rock lobster fisheries for the upcoming fishing year beginning on 1 April. On 16 December 2009, the NRLMG provided the Minister with initial advice on sustainability measures for CRA 3, CRA 4, CRA 7 and CRA 8 for the fishing year beginning 1 April 2010.

Proposed sustainability measures for 1 April 2010

The NRLMG has submitted the following two initial advice papers for public consultation:

Consultation 1	Proposal to adopt a management procedure for CRA 3
Consultation 2	Catch Limit Reviews for CRA 3, CRA 4, and CRA 7 as a result of operation of Management Procedures

Proposal to Adopt a Management Procedure for CRA 3

The NRLMG proposes using a management procedure to guide Total Allowable Catch (TAC) setting in the CRA 3 rock lobster fishery.

Two alternative CRA 3 Management procedure options are proposed to guide CRA 3 TAC setting from 1 April 2010: the “Rule 2a” CRA 3 Management Procedure, and the ‘Rule 5” CRA 3 Management Procedure. Both procedures:

- a) use offset year (1 October to 30 September) commercial catch per unit effort (CPUE) to drive the procedures;
- b) specify the management objective as being to rebuild the stock abundance to an acceptable level at or above the agreed sustainability indicators, while delivering an acceptable annual catch;
- c) contain a harvest control rule that calculates a provisional TAC for each fishing year the procedures are operated; this provisional TAC varies with changes in the abundance indicator;
- d) contain minimum change, maximum change and initial TAC components; and
- e) would be used for five years to guide TAC setting and would then be reviewed.

The distinguishing factors between the two proposed CRA 3 Management Procedures (Rule 2a and Rule 5) are the way in which and the rate at which stock targets will be met, and the social, cultural and economic impacts associated with TAC changes that may be invoked by each rule over its five year term of operation.

Catch Limit Reviews for CRA 3, CRA 4, and CRA 7 as a Result of Operation of Management Procedures

The NRLMG proposes varying the TACs and allowances for CRA 3, CRA 4, and CRA 7 for the 2010-11 fishing year beginning 1 April 2010. These proposals result from operation of management procedures.

The following table sets out the proposed TAC and TACC variations for CRA 3:

CRA 3	Option 1 2010-11 Catch Limits from Operation of the “Rule 2a” CRA 3 Management Procedure (Current Catch Limits)	Option 2 2010-11 Catch Limits from Operation of the “Rule 5” CRA 3 Management Procedure
TAC	293 tonnes	273 tonnes
TACC	164 tonnes	144 tonnes
Customary Allowance	20 tonnes	<i>Unchanged</i>
Recreational Allowance	20 tonnes	<i>Unchanged</i>
Other Fishing Mortality	89 tonnes	<i>Unchanged</i>

The following table sets out the proposed TAC and TACC variations for CRA 4 and CRA 7:

Stock		Option 1	Option 2
		Adopt Catch Limits from Operation of Management Procedures	Retain Current Catch Limits
CRA 4	TAC	660.5 tonnes	461 tonnes
	TACC	465.5 tonnes	266 tonnes
	Customary Allowance	<i>Unchanged</i>	35 tonnes
	Recreational Allowance	<i>Unchanged</i>	85 tonnes
	Other Fishing Mortality	<i>Unchanged</i>	75 tonnes
CRA 7	TAC	104.5 tonnes	209 tonnes
	TACC	84.5 tonnes	189 tonnes
	Customary Allowance	<i>Unchanged</i>	10 tonnes
	Recreational Allowance	<i>Unchanged</i>	5 tonnes
	Other Fishing Mortality	<i>Unchanged</i>	5 tonnes

The NRLMG proposes achieving the new proposed TACs for CRA 3, CRA 4, and CRA 7 by varying the commercial catch allowances (ie, the TACCs) only.

I note that the operation of the CRA 8 Management Procedure has resulted in no change to the CRA 8 TAC for the 2010-11 fishing year. This is because the calculation of the decision rule resulted in a 0.5% reduction, which is less than the minimum change threshold of 5% applying to CRA 8.

You will find the NRLMG initial advice on these proposals on the MFish website at: <http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Consultations/default.htm> If you would like a hard copy of the papers, please contact Tracey Steel - email: tracey.steel@fish.govt.nz or phone: 04 819 4585.

Providing Submissions on the Proposals

MFish welcomes written submissions on the proposals discussed above. All written submissions must be received by MFish by **5 pm Friday, 5 February 2010**.

Written submissions should be sent directly to:

Tracey Steel
 Ministry of Fisheries
 P O Box 1020
 Wellington

or emailed to tracey.steel@fish.govt.nz
 or faxed to 04 819 4208.

If you require further information on rock lobster proposals for 1 April 2010, please contact:

Steve Halley

Team Leader – Inshore Fisheries

steve.halley@fish.govt.nz | 04 819 4622

or

Alicia McKinnon

Fisheries Analyst

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Finally, I wish to advise you that all submissions received for the purposes of the sustainability measures process are subject to the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). Should any person or organisation wish for any information contained in their submission be withheld under the OIA, the grounds for withholding the information must be provided in the submission.

Yours sincerely



Leigh Mitchell

Inshore Fisheries Manager

Ministry of Fisheries