



Office of Hon David Carter

Minister of Agriculture
Minister for Biosecurity
Minister of Forestry

H0663

Dear Stakeholder

This letter outlines final decisions on sustainability measures for three rock lobster fisheries: CRA 3 (Gisborne), CRA 4 (Wellington/Hawkes Bay), and CRA 7 (Otago) for the 2010-11 fishing year, beginning 1 April 2010.

In reaching my final decisions on the proposals, I have taken into account my obligations under the *Fisheries Act 1996* ("the Act"), submissions received on the National Rock Lobster Management Group's (NRLMG) initial advice, final advice provided by the NRLMG, and stock assessment information.

Copies of the NRLMG's Initial Advice and Final Advice are available on the Ministry of Fisheries website at www.fish.govt.nz

CRA 3 (Gisborne)

I have decided to adopt the "Rule 2a" CRA 3 Management Procedure to guide Total Allowable Catch (TAC) setting for CRA 3 until the 2015-16 fishing year. Based on the application of "Rule 2a", I have also decided to retain the current CRA 3 TAC of 293 tonnes and retain the current allowances for the 2010-11 fishing year. This is consistent with my obligations under sections 13, 20 and 21 of the Act.

Best available information on CRA 3 stock status suggests stock size is just above the minimum reference level and well below its target level. I am confident the "Rule 2a" CRA 3 Management Procedure will provide a mechanism to rebuild the CRA 3 fishery from its current state of low abundance to the desired target stock level as required under the Act.

In making my decision, I also considered the cultural, social, and economic impact of application of the management procedures on fishery participants and the community. I believe "Rule 2a" provides the right balance between ensuring a rebuild of the stock while not unnecessarily restricting utilisation.

CRA 4 (Wellington / Hawkes Bay)

I have decided to increase the CRA 4 TAC from 461 tonnes to 610.625 tonnes, and increase the CRA 4 Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) accordingly from 266 tonnes to 415.625 tonnes. This is consistent with my obligations under sections 13, 20 and 21 of the Act.

A management procedure designed to maintain stock size above the target level, with a high degree of certainty, was adopted by the industry in 2007 and subsequently adopted by the previous Minister of Fisheries in 2009. Application of the CRA 4 Management Procedure in 2009 suggested that the TAC could be increased from 461 tonnes to 660.5 tonnes. Stakeholders and the NRLMG were divided in

their views on whether the full increase suggested by the procedure should be adopted. A number of stakeholders, including some industry participants, suggested I take a cautious approach given the fishery's recent history of catch limit reductions and "bank" some of the increased abundance.

The management procedure in place for this stock is designed to maintain the stock size well above legislative target levels. The intent of the management procedure approach is to provide greater certainty of achieving management objectives and provide stakeholders with greater transparency in decision-making. Following a management procedure that meets statutory requirements once one is in place is therefore preferable. However, I support stakeholders taking a cautious approach to managing their fisheries. It is clear from submissions that industry could not reach agreement internally on a preferred option and a number of other sector group stakeholders wished to take a cautious approach to managing the fishery given its importance to all fishing sectors and the recent history of catch limit reductions. I have therefore decided to increase the CRA 4 TAC from 461 tonnes to 610.625 tonnes, and set a TACC of 415.625 tonnes. The smaller increase may provide greater utilisation benefits to all fishery participants by resulting in a larger stock size in the short-term.

The allowances for customary and recreational remain unchanged at this time as best available information suggests the existing non-commercial allowances are not being caught. I note the voluntary amateur bag limit implemented by some fishing clubs in CRA 4 to help increase stock abundance. Due to the decision to increase the CRA 4 TAC and because of the suggested increase in CRA 4 stock size, these fishing clubs may wish to review their voluntary measure from 1 April 2010.

CRA 7 (Otago)

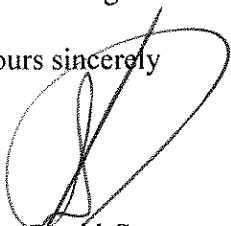
I have decided to decrease the CRA 7 TAC from 209 tonnes to 104.5 tonnes, and decrease the CRA 7 TACC accordingly from 189 tonnes to 84.5 tonnes. This is consistent with my obligations under sections 13, 20 and 21 of the Act.

The setting of the TAC for CRA 7 is guided by the management procedure adopted by a previous Minister of Fisheries in March 2008. I am confident the ongoing application of the CRA 7 Management Procedure will, as expected, maintain an average stock size well above the target level.

The allowances for customary and recreational remain unchanged at this time as best available information suggests the existing non-commercial allowances are not being caught.

Finally, I would like to thank tangata whenua and fishery stakeholders for their time and efforts in contributing to the management of these valuable rock lobster fisheries.

Yours sincerely



Hon David Carter
Acting Minister of Fisheries