

The Ministry of Fisheries

c.c Department of Conservation

Hector's/Maui Dolphin Threat Management Plan

Submission:

As recreational fishermen with over 25 years experience in the management, politics and vagaries of our chosen area of what has become frustration and disenchantment we oppose any changes to the current fisheries regulation regarding dolphins and also the creation of further closed areas e.g. marine reserves, mammal sanctuaries, and enclosed fishing areas until the need for these is clearly and honestly established.

Reasons for our concerns –

1. The document as presented is a punitive document and at no point is education a priority or even a possibility.
2. If we accept that dolphin protection is necessary we should, in fact, be taking measures that will achieve an acceptable result both for the dolphins and the community at large (stakeholders etc.)
3. We have, in the Fiordland Guardians and the Waiau Working Group, a perfect example of how a community can come together with wide and diverse views and reach a compromise acceptable to all concerned. This was achieved with economy, honesty and communication and should be a required/desired role model for future decision making. This is effective consultation.
4. We believe the present process is being politically and emotionally driven by untruthful and biased information. Decisions based on these premises have the potential to derail any acceptance of future Marine Protected Areas proposals or any future marine management plans.
5. We cannot stress more strongly the importance of community involvement in dolphin protection and also the strong desire of communities to actively participate and to be involved in such protection. The voluntary set netting bans in Porpoise Bay, Kaikoura and Akaroa are cases in point where community involvement is making a difference and objectives are being achieved without the heavy hand of government intervention.
6. We have problems with relevant research pertaining to the endangerment or otherwise of Hector's/Maui dolphins. The Threat Management Plan highlights the shortcomings of current research upon which decisions are to be made.
7. In our view the Crown should be embarking on an extensive programme on the do's and don'ts of set netting rather than simply banning this legitimate method of fishing.
8. We are aware there is a research document commission by the Department of Conservation entitled "Te Wae Wae Bay Hector's Dolphins abundance, distribution, behaviour and threats, May 2007". We also understand that this document will not be available to the minister before he makes any decision and also that it (the document) greatly contradicts the presented research per the discussion document as regards to abundance numbers etc. The Department of Conservation 2007 document reinforces observational data from the local community and should not be ignored.
9. We find it astounding that no research has been done on dolphin sustainability numbers in areas cited in the document. Surely this should have been one of the first issues considered and established before any "ad hoc" banning of set nets etc. was postulated.

10. It is obvious that the only way the ideals of marine conservation will be achieved is if the community is involved in, initiates, and above all, respects the measures proposed. Bridges are being built, particularly in Invercargill, between the Department of Conservation and the wider community in marine and other issues and this should be encouraged and not obliterated by the "Hector's Dolphin Threat Management Plan" sledgehammer. We are sane, sensible and responsible people. Please treat us as such.

Summary:

We submit that any changes in fishing methodology and availability as per location will have major implications, socially, economically and culturally. If you wish to discuss any of these points please feel free to contact either Alan Key or Nelson Cross. We look forward to a transparent, sensible decision which takes all stakeholders into consideration with the minimum of obfuscation, emotion and misplaced zeal.

Alan Key

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Alan Key', written in a cursive style.

Nelson Cross

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Nelson Cross', written in a cursive style.

For any further enquiry please contact

Nelson Cross
Balclutha