

SCALLOP SEASON – SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS

Submissions received

- Stu Marsh
- Bob Rosemergy (Freediving NZ (Chairman))
- Grant Shaw
- KB Turner
- Dennis Petty (ProDive NZ)
- Bryn Jamieson
- Hilton Leith
- John Robertson
- Piako UnderWater Club
- Kaikoura Boating Club
- Hartley family
- Murray Little
- WJ Waugh (Tarakohe Sea Anglers)
- Coromandel commercial scallop fishers
- Kevyn and Corinne Moore
- Trevor Collings
- Mark Iggo
- Peter Saul
- John Duncan
- Challenger Scallop & Dredge Oyster Recreational Advisory Group
- Tasman & Sounds Fishers Association
- Pohara Boat Club
- Te Runanga o Ngati Whatua
- Ngati Whatua Fisheries Ltd
- Seafood Industry Council
- Whangamata Seafoods Ltd
- Collingwood Boat Club
- NZ Big Game Fishing Council and option4
- MFish Recreational Fishing Forums: Northland, Hauraki Gulf – Bay of Plenty, North-West Coast, North Island South-West, North Island South-East, Top of the South

- Raglan Sport Fishing Club
- Keith Ingram
- John Forest / Wanderers Surfcasting and Angling Club
- Bridget and Tony Orman

Submissions supporting the proposed season change

- 1 **Stu Marsh (North Canterbury)** is in favour of shifting the dates. If scallop numbers decrease, then the season could also be shortened, so they can spawn more.
- 2 **Bob Rosemergy (Freediving NZ (Chairman)** the spearfishing section of NZ Underwater) states that the members were notified by their national newsletter, and the response was immediate, more so than in any almost any other issue taken to the members in the past. Most simply wrote “Good idea” or words to that effect.
- 3 **Grant Shaw (Whangarei)** agrees that the season needs to be changed to start later. He went out in July in the Whangarei Harbor to see what condition the scallops were in. This year they are in the poorest condition Shaw has seen (he has been diving this harbour for 20 years or so) and he will not be diving to target scallops for a further 6 weeks or so. The scallops were the smallest he has seen inside their shells, both the white flesh and the roes.
- 4 **KB Turner (Bay of Islands)** considers that shifting the season forward is a sound idea, but suggested that the closed season could be from 1 April to 1 December. He agrees that scallops are generally in poor condition later in the year. He collected 20 scallops in late July and found that the scallops were pale and anemic looking. The warmer weather is safer for divers that do not dive all year round.
- 5 **Dennis Petty (ProDive NZ)** states that the boating people he has talked to are happy that the season starts later on 1 September and be extended to April. He notes that scallops aren't in good condition nowadays by 1 July. Even this year with a more traditional winter, the scallops aren't in good condition yet. The seasons are getting later. From a diving industry point of view, Petty considers the change is not so good as the traditional scallop opening has always been an unofficial opening to the diving season. However, he feels that the September opening will create more interest especially with the long weekend occurring about then, and with better weather and fatter scallops. A concern mentioned to Petty was that the commercial harvesters should also have the same starting time to avoid the problem of the commercial dredges going in before the recreational season and cleaning out the beds.
- 6 **Bryn Jamieson (Auckland)** is in favour of the proposed season change.
- 7 **John Robertson (Christchurch)** supports the proposed season change.
- 8 **Piako UnderWater Club (Waikato)** strongly agrees with the proposed change of the scallop season to be closed from 1st April to 31st August. The Club hopes that commercial harvesters will be shifted out to line up with the amateur season as this would be beneficial to the scallop's sustainability.

- 9 **Kaikoura Boating Club** supports the change as proposed. The Club notes that the quality of the “early season” scallops is poor. Also, having the season continue to 31st March will allow people who holiday after the Xmas/New Year period a chance to get a feed of scallops.
- 10 **Hartley family (Kaikoura)** supports the change to the later open season. They believe that the original reason for the 15th July to 14th February season was to allow recreational fishers to get some fishing in before the commercial season started, but as pointed out by MFish, the quality of the “early season” scallops is poor. Having the season continue to 31st March would allow those people who holiday after the Xmas/New Year period a chance to get a feed of scallops.
- 11 **Murray Little (Warkworth)** is an MFish Honorary Fishery Officer (HFO) and an active recreational fisherman. He is in favour of changing the season to September – March as proposed for two reasons. Firstly, Little notes that there is always frenetic gathering activity at the beginning of the season and during July and August. In his area, dredgers return 10 undersize for every legal size scallop kept. This unproductive dredging activity damages the abundant immature scallops and unnecessarily damages the habitat. In the endeavour to obtain a reasonable quantity, dredgers and divers are taking scallops in the 97-100mm range in the hope that HFOs will let them through.
- 12 Secondly, Little notes that when HFOs inspect scallops at boat ramps, the scallops are semi-open and it is easy to observe their condition. This can vary substantially, even between beds within close proximity to each other. During the first two months of the current season, two thirds of the scallops Little checked were in poor condition and roes were non-existent or immature. Most fishers commented that they persist early in the season for fear that they will become scarce later on.
- 13 **Kevyn and Corinne Moore (Hawkes Bay)** agree with the proposed season change.
- 14 **Peter Saul (Tutukaka)** has had 45 years recreational fishing experience in east Northland. He spent 25 years involved with fisheries management and research with the Ministry of Fisheries. Saul strongly agrees with the proposal and notes that in the early stages of a season, scallops are generally in poor condition, but are almost invariably in top condition when the season finishes.
- 15 **Raglan Sport Fishing Club** supports amending the regulation to shift the season when the recreational scallop fishery is closed to 1 April – 31 August (inclusive). The Club realises that this shift will not suit all areas, especially Tasman Bay. But, this shift for the North Island region, will allow more amateur fishers to have access to this fishery, when scallops are in better condition and the weather is warmer.
- 16 **Keith Ingram (Auckland)** considers there will be identifiable benefits to recreational fishers as a result of this proposal, as access will be provided to good conditioned scallops in autumn where previously this did not occur. He is not aware of any additional management costs this change will incur, nor has any sustainability risk been identified. Ingram notes that fishers in the Nelson – Marlborough region currently enjoy the opportunity to enter the fishery prior to commercial and may wish to retain the status quo.

- 17 MFish's North Island South-West Recreational Fishing Forum generally supported the proposal to change the timing of the season to take better advantage of roe condition. Concern was raised about the likely increase in recreational scallop harvest given that the proposed season coincides with more favourable weather and sea conditions for fishing. Members supported retaining the daily bag limit.
- 18 MFish's North Island South-East Recreational Fishing Forum noted that the scallop proposal had no implications for them as scallops are generally not found in their respective areas. Wairarapa representatives noted that some club members do fish in Wellington and the top of the South Island.
- 19 MFish's Northland Recreational Fishing Forum generally supported the proposal to change the timing of the season to take better advantage of roe condition.

Submissions opposing the proposed season

- 20 Hilton Leith (Whangarei (commercial scallop quota owner)) supports maintaining the existing closed season for recreational scallop fisheries (15th February – 14th July (inclusive)). Leith comments that scallops are a luxury seafood and the current season provides divers more than adequate access to the scallop beds. Because scallops are often "skinny" at the beginning of the scallop season, Leith supports a delay in opening the season until local beds show suitable condition and are worth harvesting. Leith does not support an extension at the end of the season after 15th February. An extension will obviously coincide with Easter and result in large numbers of scallops being harvested at this time of the year. Leith's suggestion will have the effect of shortening the season when scallops are skinny in July as has been the case for the last two scallop seasons.
- 21 WJ Waugh (Tarakohe Sea Anglers) represents a group of 85 amateur fishing families. He has also been an HFO for 15 years and has fished for scallops for over 40 years in the Nelson-Marlborough area. Waugh is against shifting the the season because the scallops in the Nelson – Marlborough area are generally in good condition at the beginning of the season as shown by the attached photo of scallops taken on 20 July 2006. Waught notes that in February the scallop larvae have turned into spat and have begun to settle on the bottom and to disturb them at this stage would be detrimental to future stocks.
- 22 Trevor Collings (HFO (Manukau Harbour)) opposes the proposed change to the scallop season specifically regarding the southern Manukau scallop fishery. The Manukau Harbour scallop fishery is almost unique in that it is accessible to pedestrian pickers. Collings believes that there should be serious concerns now as to the sustainability of this resource. From Colling's experience and observations over the last twenty years, the following matters need to be given serious consideration before there is any alteration to the scallop season in this area. Over the years there has been an obvious reduction in shell size gathered through the season and available annually.
- 23 Collings notes that for the first month or so after 15 July, harvested scallops are generally of poor condition and few gatherers venture out collecting due to the poor weather conditions and the poor quality of the catch. During mid August to about the end of September catches, usually consist of scallops measuring from 100-115mm in

reasonable condition; there are significantly larger numbers of gatherers during this period. From about the end of September through to December, an even greater number of harvesters return with scallops in reasonable condition, however the size of legal sized scallops drops down to catches generally measuring 100-105mm. The number of undersize scallops being brought in as part of the catch quota increases significantly during this period. During January and February, catches are generally less than 100mm (the legal size).

- 24 Collings notes there does not appear to be any statistical data available, both on the scallop stock and on the natural replenishment of the stock. Compliance records should give some information as to the actual history of quantities of legal size and undersize taken and the harvesting patterns described above. The numbers of harvesters vary greatly seasonally and due to weather patterns, tidal conditions and algal bloom events. Early season numbers range from 50 – 100 harvesters per month. Mid season gatherers can number to over 1000 harvesters per month. On extremely advantageous weather and tidal conditions (with more emphasis on weekends particularly), up to 3000 harvesters have been observed daily.
- 25 Collings considers that shifting the season to start seven weeks later would improve the quality of the early season catches, but will also mean more harvesters will visit the site during the better and warmer weather. It is known that harvesters have come long distances to gather scallops at this location eg. Hamilton/Cambridge in the Waikato, all Auckland suburbs including Henderson, Whangaparoa, and Pakuranga. Consequently, Collings believes this will mean that the quantity of available scallops will still run out in January and February or perhaps even earlier, resulting in more pressure on the undersized portion of the resource.
- 26 Collings believes that more compliance effort would be needed to police the resource if it is to be retained for the future. This in turn means other compliance issues cannot be policed during this very popular recreational fishing period. In particular, snapper fishing is in full swing with an abundance of undersize fish about in all harbours. A huge amount of volunteer compliance officer effort is expended each scallop season. Some days, compliance effort consisting of 8-10 personnel (not enough) can spend some 5 hours or more on the site. A significant amount of enforcement expense will be required to re-educate the public with pamphlets, signs, and Regulation changes.
- 27 Collings states that these comments have been discussed with colleagues from the North Manukau and Kaipara Harbour who concur with his concerns. Similar patterns occur in these areas. Early season - few gatherers with harvests compliant in number but quality of scallops generally poor. Mid season - harvest pressure increases with more gatherers, scallop size reduces, quality reasonable. End season - heavy harvesting pressure, size of scallops reduce to mostly undersize, quality deteriorating.
- 28 Coromandel commercial scallop fishers (Avon Roksted, Erin Hallen, Karl Aislabie, Mike Astwood, Ron Smerdon, Bill Duncan, Paul Aislabie, Mark Aislabie, and Whangamata Seafoods) made a joint submission stating that the season should stay as it is now. They consider that there appears to be a rush to push this proposal through when at the same time recreational, scallop industry, customary and MFish are in discussions regarding the Fisheries Plan for Coromandel scallops. They consider the plan would be the sensible forum to decide on this proposal.

- 29 The Coromandel commercial fishers note that the Minister states in his [decision] letter to stakeholders dated 24th August 2006 that the allocation for both recreational and customary for this fishing season has doubled ie. from 7.5 tonnes to 15 tonnes. The Minister states that the Fisheries Act imposes an obligation to provide for the utilisation of fishing resources as long as sustainability is ensured.
- 30 The Coromandel commercial fishers also note that there is no information as to what the later start will demand of the fishery. As a survey of the recreational areas has only been conducted recently and the results are not yet available, it would seem unreasonable to greatly increase pressure on these areas by changing the season and producing a conflict of seasons between commercial and recreational scallop fishing. They are concerned that MFish will then want to increase the season to stop conflicting dates (ie. restart recreational on 15 July and carry through to 31 March).
- 31 The Coromandel commercial fishers consider that taking scallops in "fat" condition is preferable, but that taking "fat" scallops will also reduce the amount of "spat" for settlement. The scallop industry stops fishing from 21 December to reduce damage to juvenile scallops, and consider it would be a good idea if all sectors did the same. The Coromandel commercial fishers also consider that the recreational fishing has changed over the last 10 years with more boats/divers, and far more use of dredges.
- 32 Mark Iggo (Golden Bay) strongly recommends that the status quo be maintained for the top of the South scallop fishery as most scallops in this area have spawned or just finished spawning by 15 July. In the past five years, scallops have had good roes and flesh weight early in the season, indicating a good healthy scallop. Iggo considers that the other reason for opposing this proposal is that it provides the recreational sector a chance to fish before the industry starts (usually four weeks after opening day). There can be up to 70 [commercial] boats in a local area, depending on what areas have been closed for the season [to commercial fishing].
- 33 John Duncan (Pelorous Boat Club) supports retaining the status quo in the Marlborough Sounds for three reasons. First, based on local Ministry advice, spat settlement in the Sounds occurs principally in the late January to April period, and that prolonging the dredging period would be unhelpful. Second, recreational fishers currently have a two month advantage over the commercial opening season. Third, general opinion is that the local scallops are not necessarily in better condition late in the season.
- 34 The Challenger Scallop & Dredge Oyster Recreational Advisory Group (CSDORAG) is opposed to the proposed change. The CSDORAG was set up over ten years ago with a wide range of fishing club and ratepayer groups as members from the Top of The South. CSDORAG has been the primary consultative body meeting regularly with the Challenger Scallop Enhancement Company and MFish to discuss management and harvest proposals of scallops in Area 7.
- 35 CSDORAG's submission is limited to Area 7 and requests that this fishery be considered separately from other areas around the country. Members consider that in most years they are able to access scallops in good condition from mid-July onwards in various sectors of the fishery. Although not able to state with absolute certainty that scallops are in poor condition in the time covered by the proposed shift into March, it was generally noted that by the time of the present closing date (mid February) scallop

condition is invariably rapidly declining. In addition, concern was expressed around extending the season to a time when spat settlement is known to have taken place, and vulnerable juvenile scallops have fallen to the sea floor. It was agreed that smothering them with the fine silt found in much of the Area 7 fishery at this time would most likely be fatal and may impact on future availability.

- 36 **Tasman & Sounds Fishers Association (TASFISH)** is a recognised group covering recreational fishing issues in Area 7. Overall membership exceeds 1500 and covers much of the Top of The South. As part of the CSDORAG group, TASFISH has submitted that there be no change to the present season dates in Area 7.
- 37 **The Marlborough Combined Divers Association** was formed after the Combined Dive Clubs of Marlborough (7 Clubs) were successful in their application for the first Marine Reserve in the South Island at Long Island in the Queen Charlotte Sound (1992). The Divers Association is not in favour of any amendment to the current scallop recreational fishing season. The Association has found that there is ample good quality scallops available within the Challenger area at the start of the season and that nearing the end of the season the quality of the scallops is deteriorating.
- 38 The Association considers that there is a season by season difference when scallops are at their best, but generally the existing season works extremely well. There is evidence from the early research carried out for the Challenger Scallop Enhancement Company that after spawning the scallop spat settles out of the water column during the months of late February, March and into April. With a change in the season the bottom will be disturbed by the actions of dredging and the spat settlement will be disturbed. Therefore the fishery could come under stress from a less than ideal spatfall with an ongoing decrease in numbers as the seasons go on.
- 39 The Association states that if other areas require a different season, then that can be accomplished as the different scallop areas already have several differences in regulations. The Association asks how have fishers found that scallops could be in better condition later in the year without breaking the law because from 15 February to 14 July the season is closed to all people for any type of gathering.
- 40 **The Pohara Boat Club (Golden Bay)** supports the proposal to maintain the existing closed season for the Nelson Scallop fishery only. The Club believes the Nelson-Marlborough scallop fishery is in decline. Every year they see the same newspaper headlines proclaiming the upcoming season will be difficult but next year will be a boomer as there are tonnes of scallops coming up to minimum legal size.
- 41 The Pohara Club notes that commercial fishers generally work to time their harvest with peaks in scallop condition to maximise export returns. It suits commercial fishing interests to fish for scallops after the hoki season and to leave the scallop fishery when the tuna season starts. Recreational scallop fishing in the Nelson area has traditionally been an important part of amateur fishing effort and fishing enjoyment. The precise dates are extremely important to safeguard this very important recreational fishery.
- 42 The Pohara Club states that the condition of scallops at the beginning of the season does vary according to the season and perhaps the climate experienced over the previous months. Members agree that scallops can be in good condition as late as Easter. The shifting of the season by seven weeks to 1 September would have a huge

impact on the catching ability of the Club's scallop fishers because recreational fishers would be in direct competition with the large dredges on commercial boats. The general public and most of the Club's members were unaware that a shift in the season was proposed or identified as a priority by the NZRFC.

- 43 The Pohara Club understands that the commercial scallop management plan for 2006 will revert to nominated fishing areas and some areas will be closed to commercial fishing. The Club applauds this move. There has been a steady decline in the scallop catch over decades. The Club has expressed its concerns to the recreational advisory board regarding the declining state of the enhanced Nelson scallop fishery. Sustainability risks are real and when the Club questions the Scallop Enhancement Company about the reasons for nearly mature fish dying off before reaching harvest size, the company has no answers.
- 44 The Pohara Club considers that if sustainability is an issue, it should be remembered that the crews of commercial scallop boats legally land recreational catch over the whole season. This amateur catch can be caught in weather that excludes small amateur boats. The commercial gear makes it easy to do one more tow for the crew at the end of the day when the allocated commercial catch has been caught. This amateur catch should always be considered when discussing recreational catch and sustainability.
- 45 The Pohara Club believes that the natural viability of scallops in Golden Bay is of concern to many local people. Tasman and Golden Bays have been dredged for 40 years and the seabed and natural habitat are totally transformed from the original habitat into deep mud sludge. Some of the Club's members want the committee to investigate section 311 of the 1996 Fisheries Act (areas closed to commercial methods) if the present amateur-fishing situation declines further and start dates are altered in Golden Bay to dates that disadvantage their members. They insist that their members' rights are protected by retaining the ability to take their allowance of scallops without the adverse effects of commercial fishing as referred to in this section of the Act.
- 46 The Pohara Club does not believe there will be benefits to recreational fishers if the scallop season is shifted, as there is no guarantee the commercial fishers will continue with the rotational scallop harvest plan. If there is open slather with recreational fishers and commercial fishers starting on the same day, it is obvious who will miss out. Traditionally, commercial fishers have cleaned out the easy access areas close to the harbour and in front of the beaches. This was much worse when there was no rotational fishing. Amateur fishers have always found it very difficult to catch any scallops once the commercial boats have been through an area. Some years the recreational fishery is simply abandoned, as there are no scallops accessible to small boats with small dredges. Last year was an extremely poor year and many of the Club's members did not bother fishing for scallops at all.
- 47 Te Runanga o Ngati Whatua (Kaipara Harbour – Auckland) opposes the proposed change to the scallop fishing year. Ngati Whatua considers that the proposal made by the NZRFC is ill-advised, and believes it would be in direct contravention of section 8 which sets out the purpose of the Act. This section defines sustainable utilisation as “Maintaining the potential of fisheries resources to meet the foreseeable need of future generations”, and “Avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse

effects of fishing on the aquatic environment”. Ngati Whatua also considers that the proposal contradicts section 9 in that scallops would be an associated species to other species within the aquatic environment.

- 48 Ngati Whatua, Te Uri o Hau, and the local Kaipara community sought and were granted a temporary closure for statistical area 044 (Kaipara Harbour) from 15 July 2005 for a two year period. This “rāhui” was sought so that the scallop fishery within the Kaipara would have time to rebuild. The proposal to change the scallop fishing season would undermine any progress made on the Kaipara and in other areas that are in the process of developing and rebuilding scallop fisheries owing to the enormous pressure that will be placed on these fisheries throughout the whole of the spawning period. Consequently, Ngati Whatua recommend that the status quo remain.
- 49 Ngati Whatua Fisheries Ltd (commercial fishing operation) opposes the proposed change and is extremely concerned that a section of the fisheries interests is promoting a change that would accelerate the demise of the scallop fishery. To establish a situation whereby the fishery would be open to fishing only during the spawning period is a formula for disaster and would put the Minister of Fisheries and Ministry of Fisheries in direct contravention of sections 8, 9 and possibly 11 of the Fisheries Act 1996.
- 50 SeaFIC is supportive of some of the ideas behind the proposed change in the recreational scallop season but considers there is insufficient information about sustainability in the Initial Position Paper (IPP) to support the proposed change at this stage. They agree in principle that harvesting should be permitted when scallops are in peak condition, but that any change should be demonstrated to be sustainable.
- 51 SeaFIC notes that paragraphs 18 and 19 [in the IPP] discuss how the change in season might affect sustainability, but there is no information to back up any of the tentative conclusions. Furthermore, the paragraphs are contradictory. Paragraph 18 states that “MFish considers that it is unlikely that shifting the recreational scallop season will have a significant impact on current recreational access or harvest levels because the actual length of the season is not changing”. But, paragraph 19 states that “MFish acknowledges that shifting the recreational scallop season may result in some increase in the levels of take.”
- 52 SeaFIC notes that the IPP states that the minimum legal size limit is the “most important management tool to ensure the sustainability of scallops” (paragraph 19). They do not agree, as the size limit will not stop the total recreational take from increasing. There are no limits on the numbers of recreational fishing events that can take place during a season and no surety that daily bag limits will be observed. In addition, it is likely that a greater number of recreational fishers will participate given the warmer months of the proposed new season. Cumulatively, SeaFIC considers this will result in more scallops being taken than was anticipated when the bag limits were imposed. This could potentially impact on the sustainability of the fishery. SeaFIC considers that the Final Advice Paper should refer to the potential impact on sustainability (and possibly on the Total Allowable Commercial Catch) in the analysis of costs and benefits in paragraphs 21 and 22 of the IPP.
- 53 SeaFIC is concerned that this proposal is being considered in isolation from the fisheries plan that is being developed for the Coromandel scallop fishery under section

11(2A) of the Fisheries Act. SeaFIC states that MFish has promoted fisheries plans as a means by which it will work with stakeholders to build consensus on objectives, develop risk assessments to evaluate management strategies and specify the services and measures that will be applied. Considering the proposed amendment through the regulatory review process cuts across those aims and undermines the credibility of the fisheries plan process.

- 54 SeaFIC is also concerned that the proposal for changing the season is being considered without a working group having had the opportunity to consider the impact on sustainability. They consider that the proposal to change the recreational season should be considered as part of a full review of all scallop regulations, building on the Coromandel Scallop Fishery Plan. As part of that review, the working group and plenary process should also be used. The issues could then be dealt with in a more integrated way. For example, there could be consideration of bag limits at the same time as the implications of the change in season.
- 55 Whangamata Seafoods (commercial quotaholder) holds approximately 34% of the quota for Coromandel scallops and 12% of the quota for Northland scallops. Whangamata considers there is a rush to push this proposal through, when at the same time, recreational, industry, customary, and MFish representatives have been involved with a Fisheries Plan for Coromandel scallops. This plan is one of four initiated by MFish as a guide to other sectors as to what MFish will accept. Many sectors have tried to set up Fish Plans, but none have been accepted. Whangamata was quite shocked when the IPP arrived in the mail when there had been a Fish Plan meeting a fortnight beforehand, yet there was no discussion on the season proposal.
- 56 Whangamata considers that the recreational sector would have to have scientific evidence to back this change up. When industry proposed the change in the commercial size limit from 100 mm to 90 mm there was a lot of study and discussion. But, the recreational sector has done very little research, and NIWA has only just undertaken the first [biomass] survey of the recreational beds.
- 57 Whangamata considers that if “fat” scallops are important, then the commercial season should also be changed. This would also allow commercial to spread sales over a longer period which would involve taking less fish for the same meatweight. Whangamata considers that when the commercial sector conceded the closed areas, the industry lost all the shallow areas where the “fatter” scallops are found. Whangamata emphasises that there are a lot of New Zealanders who don’t have access to the scallop fishery through work (eg. night nurses and shift workers), who cannot afford the luxury of owning a boat and all the equipment needed to get scallops, and the old-aged. These people have a right to eat these delicacies, and the only way they can get this is through commercial scallop fisheries.
- 58 The Collingwood Boat Club submits that the scallop season in Golden Bay should remain the same for two reasons. First, spatting appears to cease around the end of May. By mid July, the majority of scallop roes have recovered. Second, commercial scallop fishing generally commences in September and they fish the approved beds to extinction. Therefore, the six weeks prior to commercial fishing is the only chance for recreational fishers to dredge undamaged scallops.

- 59 **John Forest / Wanderers Surfcasting and Angling Club (Manukau Harbour)** support the status quo. The seasons for the best quality scallops in many localities vary by a month or more for any year. Additionally they appear to be affected by toxic algae blooms more frequently in the later part of the season, especially the Manukau.
- 60 Members from MFish' **Top of the South Recreational Fishing Forum** did not support a change because they were concerned about the affect dredging would have on settling larvae in late summer and because they considered scallops to be in good enough condition at the beginning of the season. Members also noted that recreational fishers enjoy access to scallops prior to the commercial season. Members considered the proposal might be relevant to the North Island fisheries, but not to the South Island. Some members were concerned that there might be a proposal to increase the scallop size limit, although other members noted they didn't harvest scallops until they reached 100mm anyway.
- 61 **Bridget and Tony Orman (Marlborough)** do not favour any alteration to Area 7, for the current scallop recreational fishing season, as there is clear evidence that spatfall occurs after late February.

Neutral submissions

- 62 **The NZ Big Game Fishing Council and option4** (NZBGFC / option4) provided a joint submission recommending that MFish take the time to engage with amateur scallop fishers in all regions and provide for the input of non-commercial Maori fishers before making the change to the regulations. NZBGFC / option4 note that there is general support for a closed season (annual rahui) as a management tool in the scallop fishery. They agree that a shift in season would increase access by non-commercial fishers who are generally more active in the summer months than the winter months. They note that MFish has accepted the value of anecdotal information on the availability and condition of fish in making fisheries management decisions.
- 63 NZBGFC / option4 note that in scallop beds where the commercial and recreational fisheries overlap, the period of harvest and bed disturbance would be from 15 July to 31 March with the proposed change. There is support for a change to the scallop harvesting season for amateur fishers in some areas, but it is not universal. The best closed season in the Manukau Harbour may not be the same for Coromandel, Hokianga or Akaroa Harbour. They have not had sufficient time or resources to consult with their members and supporters nationally, so cannot agree to a "one size fits all" approach at this time. They note that the Coromandel scallop Fisheries Plan is still working through scallop management issues with stakeholders and a change to this regulation at this time would over-ride that process.
- 64 **MFish's Hauraki Gulf – Bay of Plenty Recreational Fishing Forum and the North-west Coast Recreational Fishing Forum** discussed the proposal and decided not to make a formal submission. Instead, the general consensus was that members would report back to their clubs to discuss the issues before making individual submissions.