



Office of Hon Phil Heatley

MP for Whangarei

Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Minister of Housing

H0878

Dear Fisheries Stakeholder

I write to inform you of the decisions I have made on the review of fisheries management measures for kahawai stocks. My decisions on total allowable catches (TACs), allowances for Maori customary non-commercial fishing interests, recreational fishing interests, other sources of fishing-related mortality, total allowable commercial catches (TACCs) and other management measures (including deemed value rates) for all stocks took effect on 1 October 2010. Copies of the Ministry of Fisheries' (the Ministry's) initial position (IPP) and final advice (FAP) are available on the Ministry's website www.fish.govt.nz.

In reaching my decisions, I have considered the information presented to me, including submissions received on the Ministry's IPP, relevant legislative provisions and my obligations under the Fisheries Act 1996 (the Act) and, for KAH 1, the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 (the HGMPA), and the information contained in the Ministry's FAP. I would like to thank submitters for contributing their information and views.

The specific decisions for each stock are detailed below.

KAH 1

In making my decision on the TAC for KAH 1, I considered the management objectives associated with the options presented by the Ministry and also by submitters, the respective costs and benefits to each sector, the relative benefit of kahawai between the sectors, and the net overall social, cultural and economic effect of the options. Much of the available information was characterised by uncertainty, and I considered that uncertainty in determining the weight I placed on relevant factors in reaching my decision.

I have decided to decrease the TAC for KAH 1 to 2,220 tonnes, and within this, pursuant to section 21 of the Act:

- i) Decrease the customary allowance to 200 tonnes;
- ii) Decrease the recreational allowance to 900 tonnes;
- iii) Decrease the allowance for other sources of fishing-related mortality to 45 tonnes; and
- iv) Retain the current TACC of 1,075 tonnes.

The reductions to the TAC and allowances are not intended to place new constraints on catch, but rather arise from applying the most plausible estimates of current recreational harvest.

It is clear to me that there was no consensus among sectors on a target biomass level for KAH 1 and that the sectors differed in their views on allocating the TAC. In the absence of consensus, I sought to achieve what I considered to be the best balance between providing for the utilisation of the KAH 1 stock while ensuring sustainability.

Best available information indicates the KAH 1 stock is above the level that can produce the maximum sustainable yield (B_{MSY}), therefore there is not a sustainability issue to address. The information suggests that a TAC of 2,220 tonnes will allow stock size to increase further above B_{MSY} slowly to reach a level about 15% greater than the current stock size by 2028. This will mean more kahawai in the water and, as a consequence, increased catch rates and increased benefit for non-commercial fishers. While there is no immediate cost to the commercial sector in terms of reduced catch, I am aware that the commercial sector might have greater difficulty managing kahawai bycatch in the future as stock size increases.

Considering the available stock assessment and value information, and the uncertainties in that information, I decided that enabling an increase in non-commercial benefits over the medium term through a larger stock size, while minimising short-term impacts on the commercial sector by retaining the current TACC, was the best option.

I also concluded that setting the TAC at 2,220 tonnes is consistent with sections 7 and 8 of the HGMPA and will ensure that the Gulf continues to provide for tangata whenua's cultural relationship with kahawai and the social and economic well-being of people and communities, contributing also to the recreation and enjoyment of the people and communities of the Gulf and New Zealand.

I considered whether or not other management measures would be required to support the TAC, allowances, and TACC for KAH 1. Given that I have set the recreational allowance at a level considered a plausible estimate of the actual catch at this stage, I have decided not to change the current daily bag limit that applies or to introduce other measures. I note that the assessment suggests that recreational catch is expected to increase as stock size increases, and that at a TAC of 2,220 tonnes, additional constraints on allowances might be required around 2017 if the target stock size is to be achieved.

All other Kahawai Stocks (KAH 2, 3, 4, 8, 10)

I have decided not to change the TACs for the other kahawai stocks, or to adjust the allowances under the TACs. In making this decision, I was mindful of the limited amount of information on these stocks and therefore the need for a cautious approach.

I considered the information provided on alternative options for KAH 2, 3 and 8. I concluded that the information, with its associated high level of uncertainty, did not warrant a change to the TAC, allowances or TACCs at this time. For KAH 8, I noted the consensus reached between sectors in 2005, however, current submissions revealed different opinions about stock levels. I therefore decided to retain the existing TAC, allowances, and TACC for KAH 8 in order to continue with the current management objective of increasing biomass from 2004 and 2005 levels. I note that new information on the kahawai stocks should become available in 2013. Depending on the nature of that information, it may be appropriate to revisit TACs, allowances, and TACCs at that time.

I also considered whether or not other management measures would be required to support the TAC, allowances, and TACC for KAH 2, 3, 4, 8 and 10. Given the considerable uncertainty about estimates of recreational catch and the potential for overestimation, I have decided not to change the current daily bag limits that apply or to introduce other measures at this time. I am also aware that more robust estimates of recreational catch will be available from 2012/13 to inform a review after this time.

Deemed Values

I have decided to retain the current deemed values set for all kahawai stocks. Standard ramping provisions will also continue to apply for all kahawai stocks.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Heatley', written in a cursive style.

Hon Phil Heatley
Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture