

File 10/17/2

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES,  
TE MANATU AHUWHENUA AHUMOANA



000070

25 September 1990

Minister of Fisheries

**MANAGEMENT OF KAHAWAI**

1. Proposal

That you agree the individual quotas for kahawai be allocated in proportion to catch histories over the period 1987-89 and consider options for the introduction of a moratorium on fishing kahawai while individual quotas are developed for the fishery.

2. Background

You have agreed that a Total Quota of 6,500 tonnes be set for kahawai and that this be allocated as individual quota. It is not possible to introduce individual quotas by 1 October because of the need to establish and review catch histories prior to any allocation. In the interim the fishery will be without controls on catch. This will likely lead to a strong reaction from recreational fishing groups. The implications of the lack of controls on kahawai catch vary between the Quota Management Areas (QMA) in terms of their implications for management and user group perceptions. You could consider introducing a moratorium of some form on fishing for kahawai to constrain catches until individual quotas can be introduced to the fishery.

This has been discussed with members of the Fishing Industry Association. Submissions have been received from Sanford Limited, Nelson Fisheries Limited and the president of the New Zealand Fishing Industry Association.

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Kahawai is currently subject to a restriction pursuant to Section 65 (1) of the Fisheries Act 1983. Endorsements are currently issued pursuant to Section 65 (2) to allow current participants to fish in the kahawai fishery. The selective issue of Section 65 (2) endorsements could be used as the mechanism to give effect to a moratorium on directed fishing for kahawai, but allow this species to be taken as a by-catch of other fisheries. It is a condition of all fishing permits that an incidental by-catch of non-quota species, for which no fishing permit is held, is restricted to fish and aquatic life taken as an inevitable consequence of the lawful taking of fish or aquatic life for which a permit is held.

Earlier this month you had agreed the total quota should be 6500 tonnes. A decision has to be made on how this should be allocated. In our paper we discussed options of individual quotas on the basis of the most recent reported commercial catches and individual quotas based on average catches over the period 1983-86.

### 3. No Moratorium

We believe a realistic target date for introducing individual quotas for kahawai for the whole fishery is 1 April 1991. If patterns of fishing remain the same as in the past this would suggest that in the south (QMA 3) the bulk of the purse seine fishery would have finished prior to the introduction of catch controls. The fishery in this area operates for most of the year however the bulk of catches occur between October and April. In the north (QMA 1) the bulk of the kahawai catch is taken during winter months and the effect of the delay in the introduction of catch controls would be smaller. It is, however, possible for past practices to alter and effort to shift to summer months prior to the introduction of catch controls.

IQs by  
1 April

MAF believes there would be anger among recreational fishing interests if catch constraints for kahawai are not implemented quickly. This would be particularly the case in QMA 1.

### 4. Total Moratorium

The imposition of a total moratorium on target fishing for kahawai would involve considerable difficulties. Kahawai is taken as a by-catch of many fisheries throughout New Zealand and it would be difficult to determine whether catches were by-catch or part of a directed fishery. This option may receive strong support from recreational fishing groups but would be strongly opposed by the fishing industry. It would also provide considerable enforcement difficulties for MAF Fisheries.

## 5. Moratorium on Purse Seine Fishing

Purse seine accounts for around 80% of the New Zealand catch of kahawai. It is primarily a target fishery for this method. A moratorium on purse seining would restrict the bulk of the commercial catch of kahawai until individual quotas can be introduced. The introduction of a New Zealand wide moratorium would be opposed by the fishing industry. In QMA 1 kahawai is primarily targeted during winter months. It may be targetted in October and November but is also taken as a by-catch of mackerel fishing in these months. During summer months purse seine effort is concentrated on fishing for skipjack tuna; this fishery has no kahawai by-catch.

In QMA 2 purse seine vessels have operated throughout the year although they often operated in the northern skipjack fishery and fished kahawai during winter. These vessels have since moved to ports outside QMA 2. Purse seining for kahawai in QMA 3 is primarily a summer fishery. A moratorium on purse seine fishing for kahawai would substantially disadvantage industry in this area. There has been no purse seine fishing in QMA 9.

## 6. Partial Moratorium on Purse Seine Fishing

The level of recreational concern over declining access to the kahawai fishery is greatest in QMA 1. It is also in this area that the majority of purse seine catches are taken during winter months. There is, however, potential for purse seine vessels to target kahawai in October, November and December prior to the start of the skipjack fishery in an attempt to maximise catches prior to the introduction of catch controls. A moratorium on purse seine fishing in QMA 1 would be effective in constraining the bulk of kahawai commercial catches. This measure would have the support of purse seine interests provided there was an allowance for by-catch resulting from other fisheries. This measure would be seen as an essential interim step by recreational fishing interests.

## 7. Consultation

The New Zealand Fishing Industry Association have advised that purse seine operators

- (i) would agree to a negotiated moratorium in QMA 1;
- (ii) would not agree to a moratorium in other QMAs but would accept a management regime that restrained catches to previous levels.

This view is supported by Nelson Fisheries Limited and Sanford Limited in individual submissions however both raise the issue of access to skipjack tuna fisheries. In addition Sanford Limited state there would be a need to make allowance for by-catch of kahawai in QMA 1 taken as a result of purse seining for other species.

#### 8. Distribution of Quota

Two options for the total quota were presented in the discussion paper and the paper to you of 28 August. The rationale for the option of setting a total quota, and distributing it between areas and methods, based on the average catches for 1983 to 1986 was to bring catches back to levels that were taken prior to the expansion of purse-seine catches. The alternative considered was setting quotas at levels of most recent catches.

You have decided the total quota should be set at 6500 tonnes and that 10% of that be allocated to Maori. We believe it would not be appropriate to distribute this on the basis of catches up to 1986 because that would result in quotas for areas 2, 3 and 9 greater than those taken in those years.

We believe the best approach is to distribute quotas according to average catches over the period 1987-89 as this would keep quotas as close as possible to recent catch histories. The final distribution of quota between QMA's will be dependent on the review of catch and catch histories for the period.

#### Conclusion

You have agreed to the interim management of kahawai by total quota allocated to individuals. It is unlikely that this management system can be fully implemented before 1 April 1990.

You have earlier accepted that current catch levels may not be sustainable and that there is a relationship between an increase in purse seine catches and recreational observations of declining catches.

If you also accept the need to have interim constraints on kahawai fishing until individual quotas are introduced then there is the option of a full or partial moratorium on kahawai fishing in the interim.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- (i) note the potential for adverse reaction from recreational fishers if no controls on kahawai fishing are introduced by 1 October 1990,
- (ii) note the views of the Fishing Industry Association on the introduction of moratorium on kahawai fishing until individual quotas for kahawai are introduced,
- (iii) agree that, until individual quotas for kahawai can be introduced, there be either:
  - (a) ~~no moratorium on kahawai fishing, or~~
  - (b) ~~a total moratorium on kahawai fishing, or~~
  - (c) ~~a total moratorium on purse seine fishing for kahawai, or~~
  - ✓ (d) a moratorium on purse seine fishing for kahawai in Quota Management Area 1 only,
- (iv) agree that after allocating 650 tonnes to Maori the remaining quota be distributed as individual quotas in proportion to average catches during the period 1987-1989.

R. L. Allen  
Deputy Group Director  
MAF Fisheries

APPROVED / ~~NOT APPROVED~~



Ken Shirley  
Minister of Fisheries