

Review of temporary closure of Southern Scallop fishery

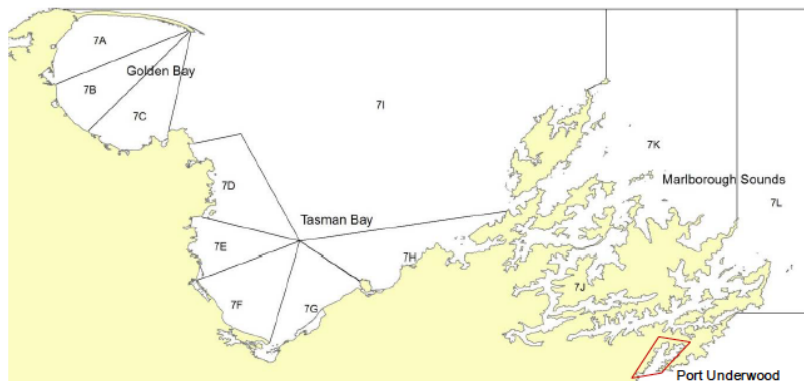
A summary of proposals for the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council and recreational interests

By the NZSFC Fisheries Management Sub-committee



June 2018

Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) has released a [Discussion Document](#) proposing a further temporary closure of the Southern Scallop fishery and Port Underwood. This closure would apply for the coming season starting on 15 July 2018.



The Southern Scallop fishery (SCA 7) and Port Underwood have been closed to commercial and recreational scallop fishing for the past two seasons. Any future opening of the fishery is dependent on the development of a management plan to control future use of the fishery.

In anticipation of submitting, the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council's (NZSFC's) Fisheries Management Sub-committee has prepared a summary of the issues and draft recommendations which can be passed onto club members and others with an interest in this fishery.

Submission: If you have anything information to add to the NZSFC submission please provide your feedback ASAP, **by 21 June at the latest**. This will help strengthen the NZSFC submission. Please send your feedback to john@bluewatermarine.co.nz or trish@moanaconsultants.co.nz.

Individual and club submissions can be made direct to [Fisheries New Zealand](#) by the deadline of **25 June 2018**.

Recommendations:

1. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council support Option 1 – Temporary Closure.
2. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council monitor the results of the research into the wider causes of depletion in SCA 7. [Interim results due in late 2018.]
3. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council submit information and potential actions that can be taken long-term to rebuild and sustain SCA7 and Port Underwood. [This information will be considered by a multi-sector planning group after this current process.]
4. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council participate in the planned multi-sector group to develop a management regime to control utilisation when SCA 7 and Port Underwood are eventually reopened to extraction.

Main points of interest:

5. FNZ propose two options for the upcoming season in SCA 7 and Port Underwood –
 - a. Temporary closure from 15 July 2018; [FNZ preference]
 - b. No closure. Season opens 15 July 2018.

6. The current closure has applied since 2016 and expired on 15 February 2018.
7. Scallop biomass in Golden and Tasman Bays collapsed in the 2000s and remains at negligible levels. Non-dredged areas within the Marlborough Sounds seem to be recovering.
8. SCA7 stock is still likely to be below the hard limit, the biological reference point where closure ought to be considered, as per the FNZ Harvest Strategy Standard.
9. Fishing is not the only driver of scallop depletion. Research is underway to determine other factors contributing to the decline.
10. The current regime was developed when the SCA 7 was at a peak, new management controls will be required when the fishery is reopened.
11. Recreational controls will change when SCA 7 and Port Underwood reopen for harvest.

SCA 7 and Port Underwood fishery

12. In the last open scallop season, 2015-16, commercial fishers harvested 22 tonnes (meatweight), mostly from the Marlborough Sounds. At a port price of \$17 per kilo the landed value was around \$350,000.
13. FNZ acknowledge that the scallop recreational and commercial fishery supports local businesses especially diving, chartering, equipment provision & servicing, and accommodation.
14. The 2011-12 National Panel Survey estimated recreational catch to be around 11 tonnes (meatweight) including 6.6 t harvested from the Marlborough Sounds.
15. Recreational fishers dive or use small dredges to harvest scallops.
16. The recreational daily bag limit is 50 scallops per person, per day. Elsewhere in New Zealand the limit is 20 per person, per day.

Sector views

17. The majority of the Iwi forums at the top of the South Island support a further closure.
18. Recreational fishers involved in the Challenger Scallop Enhancement Company (CSEC) have expressed concern at the generous daily bag limit and longer open season that applies in SCA 7. They are concerned there is a risk of overfishing when the fishery reopens.
19. The CSEC supports an interim closure, with the expectation that it might be lifted later in 2018. They note the biomass is projected to increase by September and consider that decisions on fishing for the season ought to be taken later in the year.
20. The CSEC consider commercial fishers are able to self-manage a limited season to ensure any commercial harvest is sustainable. They also believe that, in some circumstances, fishing can enhance productivity and utilise scallops before they senesce (wither). [Refer to IPP, page 6.]
21. NZSFC has supported the closure for the past two years. We noted last year that the scallop surveys are carried out only for the commercial beds and local divers had found that areas where there had been no dredging were rapidly recovering, with scallops being found in less than two metres of water.

Previous submissions

22. The 2017 NZSFC submission can be [read here](#), with the 2017 process documents [available here](#).
23. The 2016 NZSFC submission can be [read here](#), with the 2016 process captured on [this webpage](#).