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6 June 2024

## **Submission: Support the request for a 2-year temporary closure at East Coromandel under section 186A of the Fisheries Act.**

### **Submitters**

1. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council (**NZSFC**) is a recognised national sports organisation with over 36,000 affiliated members from 50 clubs nationwide. The Council has initiated LegaSea to generate widespread awareness and support for the need to restore abundance in our inshore marine environment. Also, to broaden NZSFC involvement in marine management advocacy, research, education, and alignment on behalf of our members and LegaSea supporters. [www.legasea.co.nz](http://www.legasea.co.nz).
2. The New Zealand Angling and Casting Association (**NZACA**) is the representative body for its 24 member clubs throughout the country. The Association promotes recreational fishing and the camaraderie of enjoying the activity with fellow fishers. The NZACA is committed to protecting fish stocks and representing its members' right to fish.
3. The New Zealand Underwater Association (**NZUA**) comprises three distinct user groups including Spearfishing NZ, affiliated scuba clubs throughout the country and Underwater Hockey NZ. Through our membership we are acutely aware that the depletion of inshore fish stocks has impacted on the marine environment and the wellbeing of many of our members.
4. Collectively we are '*the submitters*'. The joint submitters are committed to ensuring that sustainability measures and environmental management controls are designed and implemented to achieve the Purpose and Principles of the Fisheries Act 1996, including "maintaining the potential of fisheries resources to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations..." [s8(2)(a) Fisheries Act 1996].
5. The submitters have supported previous s186A fishing closures where there has been a clear purpose to restore abundance and productivity of the marine environment.

6. Our representatives are available to discuss this submission in more detail if required. We look forward to positive outcomes from this process. We would like to be kept informed of future developments. Our contact is Helen Pastor [secretary@nzsportfishing.org.nz](mailto:secretary@nzsportfishing.org.nz).

## Discussion

7. The **submitters support the application** made by [Ngāti Hei for a temporary scallop closure](#) at East Coromandel under section 186A of the Fisheries Act 1996 (**the Act**). Advice was received from Fisheries New Zealand (**FNZ**) on 6 May with submissions due by 7 June 2024.
8. We acknowledge the proposed closure area is within the area covered by the [indefinite closure of the scallop fishery](#) under section 11 of the Act, announced in March 2023.
9. The s11 closure means no lawful harvesting of scallops by commercial or recreational fishers. Ngāti Hei has previously applied a rāhui, meaning no Māori customary harvest of scallops within their rohe on the eastern Coromandel seaboard, from Anarake Point to Ruahiwihiwi Point, including Opito Bay.
10. However, under the s11 closure announced by the then Minister, Stuart Nash in 2023, an annual 10 tonnes allowance was set aside for Māori customary harvest from within the whole scallop management area, between Cape Rodney and Maketū. FNZ has not provided any information that indicates any harvesting of scallops for Māori customary purposes since the s11 closure was announced.
11. FNZ notes that the current s186A application for the 2-year temporary closure would not apply to taking scallops that have washed ashore. Therefore, under the current closure to commercial and recreational fishing, any collection of scallops washed ashore would require a customary permit authorised by Kaitiaki.
12. If the Coromandel scallop beds are to reopen to harvest in the future, we would expect a survey and assessment of scallop abundance in both deep and shallow scallop beds within the closure area, from Cape Rodney in the north to Maketū in the Bay of Plenty. These surveys are important as tidal movements indicate the scallop beds around Coromandel and further south are supported by spat from beds in the Hauraki Gulf and potentially further north.
13. The proposed non-contact surveys currently under discussion with NIWA and FNZ do not adequately cover the Coromandel scallop fishery (SCA CS) and cannot be considered on its own as sufficient to inform an abundance survey for the entire scallop stock.
14. The submitters appreciate Ngāti Hei's stated commitment in their application to "constructive engagement and collaboration in the management of our marine resources for the benefit of present and future generations".
15. We also note their concern of *"the potential risks posed by external pressures, particularly from commercial and recreational interest groups, which may seek to influence amendments to the SCA CS Closure"*. The submitters have no intention to advocate for any amendments to the current closure however, we are keen to work with mana whenua on management measures prior to any future reopening of the Coromandel scallop management area (SCA CS) to harvesting.