

President
NZ Sport Fishing Council
PO Box 54242, The
Marina, Half Moon Bay,
Auckland 2144
secretary@nzsportfishing.org.nz



Fisheries Management
Spatial Allocations
Fisheries New Zealand
FMSubmissions@mpi.govt.nz



12 September 2024

Submission: Support the application for a mātaimai reserve around Moutohorā Island and the Rurima Island Group, Eastern Bay of Plenty.

Submitters

1. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council (**NZSFC**) is a recognised national sports organisation with over 37,000 affiliated members from 49 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.
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 previously supported Māori customary management controls 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.

Discussion

7. The **submitters support the application** made by Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa (Ngāti Awa) for a mātaimai reserve around Moutohorā Island (Whale Island), and the Rurima Island Group in the eastern Bay of Plenty, out to 500 metres (m) offshore. We give support on the basis that the mātaimai is being created to benefit the community, including non-commercial fishing interests both Māori customary and recreational, as explained at the public meeting on 21 August at Te Whare o Toroa (Wairaka) Marae, Whakatane.
8. Fisheries New Zealand (**FNZ**) advised of the application on 31 July, with submissions due by 16 September 2024. We note a further process to consult with people having a fishing interest in the stock or stocks in the application area will follow the current public consultation process.
9. This current application follows years of negotiation between Ngāti Awa and FNZ since the original mātaimai application was made in 2011. That application covered waters out to 1 nautical mile (nm) offshore of the Islands. The area in this application has been reduced to 500 m offshore to address the concerns of commercial fishers.
10. FNZ has issued a map of the proposed mātaimai area and a copy of the public notice FNZ placed in the *Whakatāne Beacon* on Wednesday 31 July and 14 August 2024. A public meeting was held at Te Whare o Toroa (Wairaka) Marae, Whakatane, on 21 August.
11. The proposed mātaimai area encompasses waters that are significant for local families, providing a space where people gather food, and nourish their cultural, social and personal wellbeings.
12. The Whakatane Sportfishing Club has been affiliated to the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council since 1968. The submitters support the local club members and their families having access to safe fishing areas within a reasonable distance from shore.
13. As expected with these applications, there is a level of concern about maintaining access to the Island waters for non-commercial fishing for food. However, the assurances given at the hui on 21 August, that the mātaimai is for the benefit of the community, has allayed some of those concerns.
14. The submitters have supported previous mātaimai applications on the basis that there is a genuine attempt to engage with the community and collaborate on improving the marine environment for the benefit of all. The local club has indicated their willingness to contribute to future discussions regarding the ongoing management of the area, if the mātaimai is approved.
15. Heyden Johnston is President of the Whakatane Sportfishing Club and has fished the area with his father and grandfather. His connection to the Islands runs deep.
 - a. “My father was an Honorary Fisheries Officer for years. He was committed to protecting the waters for my family and the community. He passed his commitment and passion for the environment onto me. My dad looked after our local waters for years, so long that he was named by local Māori as one of the few Kaitiaki for the Rangitikei River. A massive achievement for a man of Scottish-Irish descent. I’d like to think that I can continue that work to protect fishing for future generations of Bay of Plenty families.”

16. The submitters were active supporters of hapū in the Bay of Islands in their long-standing efforts to establish Te Puna Mātaitai in the northern waters of the Bay. We have also supported numerous 2-year temporary closures under section 186A of the Fisheries Act. The submitters have participated fulsomely in these successful outcomes because it has engaged the community and generated ongoing interest and support for the use of a Māori customary tool to manage the local marine environment. It's a successful pathway and we encourage Ngāti Awa to embrace their community in the ongoing management of the area, irrespective if the mātaitai is approved or not.