

31 July 2013

Inshore Fisheries Management
Ministry of Primary Industry
PO Box 2526
Wellington 6011

Dear Sir/Madam

SUBMISSION OF THE THAMES-COROMANDEL DISTRICT COUNCIL ON THE 2013 REVIEW OF SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES AND MANAGEMENT CONTROLS FOR FISHSTOCKS - SNAPPER SNA1

1. As is noted on the Ministry for Primary Industries' own website, fishing is one of New Zealand's most popular recreational activities. A study by Lincoln University 2011 estimates that the recreation fishing industry alone is estimated at \$116 million annually to New Zealand.
2. The recreation and lifestyle opportunities afforded by the natural environment of the Coromandel Peninsula are highly valued by our ratepayers, our communities and our visitors.
3. Recreational fishing is a significant factor in the Coromandel way of life, with approximately 50% of our usual residents owning boats, and a similar percentage for our absentee ratepayers (those who own property in the Thames-Coromandel District, but do not live here full time).
4. Recreational fishing and associated service industry represents a significant economic driver for the local economy in the Coromandel Peninsula. Key industries in the Coromandel include charter boats and boat servicing. Charter boats operate from Whitianga, Whangamata, Pauanui and Coromandel. Coromandel Peninsula has a growing boat-servicing industry.
5. Tourism is of fundamental importance to the economic development of the District, and the Council is keen to support the on-going development of that industry on the Coromandel Peninsula. The Hauraki Gulf and the Coromandel Peninsula go hand-in-hand with snapper fishing! Anecdotally, recreational fishing is a major driver of Coromandel as a tourist destination, in particular fishing for snapper.
6. From a commercial standpoint, the fishing industry is considered one of New Zealand's main export commodities with export for primary processed fish, crustaceans and molluscs reaching a record high of \$1.57billion in 2012. The fishing industry was the only main export commodity to grow from 2011 to 2012.
7. There is also continued growth in aquaculture production (mussel farming) internationally. This growth is experienced locally on the Coromandel Peninsula with our mussel and oyster industry contributing 31.4 million to the Waikato region in 2010/2011.
8. There is a link between recreational fishing of snapper and the aquaculture industry in the Haruaki Gulf. Recreational fishing takes place around the mussel farms where the snapper are

feeding. Currently, a complimentary arrangement exists with recreational fishers catching snapper that feed off juvenile farmed mussels.

9. TCDC recognise the importance of recreational fishing, aquaculture and commercial fishing industries and this informs Council's investment in wharf and harbour infrastructure in support of long-term sustainable growth in this sector.
10. Projects and investments include: \$2.1 million committed in TCDC's 2012-2022 Ten Year Plan supporting aquaculture and harbour facilities in Coromandel. Council also provides numerous, well-used, wharfs and jetties throughout the Peninsula.
11. There is also considerable other privately funded facilities throughout the Peninsula in most of our main settlements. Including, a marina in Whanagmata, Whitianga and Pauanui with a new marina planned for Tairua.
12. TCDC would advocate that long-term sustainability of the fish stock is paramount for both the recreational and commercial fishing interests. Particularly, the long term sustainability of recreational fishing is fundamental to retaining our existing lifestyle and local economy.
13. TCDC understands that the quota management system is an important part in long term sustainable fish stock recovery and understands that improved data indicates that for longer term sustainability of fish stocks a new interim target of 40% of "before fishing levels" is necessary.
14. TCDC understands that the long-term benefit of sustainable management approach to fish stocks could result in harvests of almost double that of existing. (i.e. harvests could be "total available catch" 12000 tonnes compared to existing "total available catch" 7550 tonnes currently).
15. Council therefore supports the Ministry of Primary Industry's work on a longer term management strategy to set a long term biomass target level with communities and stakeholders to achieve long term sustainability of the fish stock.
16. We request that the Ministry of Primary Industry consider the importance of the recreational fishing on the Coromandel as well as the Auckland and Waikato region and include appropriate engagement with recreational fishing stakeholders when determining the long term strategy.
17. TCDC also recognise the competition for fishing resource between commercial and recreational fishing practices. Any long term management approach must consider a complimentary management control practice between commercial and recreational fishing (for example, increasing the minimum legal size of fish for recreational fishing must be mirrored by similar control for the commercial fishing industry).

18. TCDC request that consideration for long term fishing management includes a thorough look into fishing practices by commercial fish operators to reduce impacts on killing juvenile fish through non-specific netting.
19. Overall TCDC supports a conservative approach in the short term to ensure a longer term sustainability of fish stocks.

Yours sincerely,

David Hammond
Chief Executive
Thames-Coromandel District Council