



### **Nash warns of ecosystem-based management system by 2020**

An ecosystem-based management (EBM) approach will be introduced to fisheries by 2020, according to Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash.

He told the Maori Fisheries conference in Auckland yesterday strong environmental performance will create added value. He conceded EBM meant different things to different people and he was aware it caused some discomfort.

He said brand New Zealand started as a tourism brand and was valued at adding \$20 billion a year. "If we don't live that brand we run the risk of becoming another small economy selling commodities."

He said terms of reference for a review were still being decided but he could say what it was not - it was not a review of the Quota Management System and it was not a review of the Deed of Settlement. It would ask how we get to EBM and also whether that was what was wanted.

Fisheries New Zealand, to be a standalone business unit within the Ministry for Primary Industries, had been given a mandate of consulting in a meaningful way. It was about looking forward, not re-litigating the past. He said forestry and fisheries had not been well served by MPI and it needed to redeem its reputation.

Sir Tipene O'Regan, an architect of the Treaty settlements, said when he was young gay meant happy. Now he was seeing another change in the language, where ecosystem based management was sliding into biodiversity and evidence-based sustainability was being overlaid with ideology. He regarded this as "dangerously subversive". He advised Nash to nail a review to the principle of sustainability and leave ideology to the ideologists.

Nash noted that when he was young "nailing it" also meant something different. "We will not get captured by the ideology," he assured. "We all want the same thing, that is abundant fisheries."

Earlier, Seafood New Zealand and Ngai Tahu Seafood chair Craig Ellison called for greater collaboration across the sector. "We have great brands, a great brand story - but they are not really utilised to full value as yet," he said. "Your role as managers, directors, participants in this sector is to lead, and collaboration on the basis of shared values is the way forward."

He said the QMS had been under assault by the "illiterate left - those who I would describe as being almost culpable ignorant of the rationale, utility and importance of the QMS". It was built on the goal of sustainable utilisation, incorporating the key concepts of kaitiakitanga (guardianship), of respect of the treaty and of collective Maori mana.

"Is the QMS perfect? No, of course not. Does it need wholesale change? No."

Improvements could include electronic reporting on a much finer scale, flexible in-season management, fine scale management of smaller fish stocks, fallow field strategies and the adoption of fisheries plans for areas and stocks. All of these are possible under the existing system.



### **CRA 2 cuts hit hard - NZ Rock Lobster Industry Council**

After very carefully considering the latest scientific assessment released in November 2017, the CRA 2 rock lobster industry proposed that the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) should be reduced from 200 tonnes to 100 tonnes. The Minister has chosen an even more conservative option.

The CRA 2 industry has strongly supported measures to get this fishery on a secure rebuild trajectory. It had accepted that, even after voluntarily reducing commercial catch by 50 tonnes in

each of the last two years, as well as continuing significant investments in research and monitoring of the fishery, that further measures were necessary to achieve a rebuild of the stock. Their primary concern has been to get this fishery on a rebuild trajectory using best available science and evidence.

The decision is an aggressive cut which will have severe socio-economic consequences for industry participants spread from East Cape to the northern Hauraki Gulf.

Some very difficult decisions will need to be made by the predominately small family businesses that operate in the CRA 2 fishery, and we expect that a substantial number of commercial vessels will be forced off the water, with loss of employment and adverse impacts on associated businesses and smaller coastal communities.

NZ RLIC is encouraged by the acknowledgement from the Minister of his obligations to control recreational catch, and the expectation there will be increased compliance focus from MPI to reduce the levels of illegal unreported removals. It is now critical that adjustments are made to regulatory controls by 1 October to ensure recreational catch is constrained to the allowance and does not compromise the rebuild.

The NZ RLIC will work with government to improve the effectiveness of measures to combat illegal take, to ensure that the rebuild of the fishery provides benefits to customary, commercial and recreational fishers, not fish thieves.

The industry has made a commitment to offer a reward of \$5000 for provision of information to MPI that supports a successful prosecution for illegal take for sale or trade of rock lobster from CRA 2. We expect to see MPI review the very dated estimates of illegal take, and commit to new resources and undertake specific initiatives to combat illegal take of rock lobsters in CRA 2.

The Minister has provided a signal to the operators and businesses that, assuming the new measures work to rebuild the stock, that the investment and large reductions volunteered by industry will be recognised by a reinstatement of the TACC and sharing of the benefits with customary and recreational fishers. This signal may provide some comfort to financial institutions who might be prepared to extend debt arrangements and assist operators to survive economically.

The new Minister has shown himself to be decisive but perhaps unnecessarily conservative. He has cut commercial catches very significantly, and he has maintained recreational catches at current levels. The outcome of these decisions for the stock will be dependent on the actions taken to manage fishing to the allowances he has set as stock abundance increases, and the steps that can be taken to materially curtail fish thieves.

The industry will continue to work constructively with iwi and recreational fishers to rebuild this important fishery and restore the benefits that come from a healthier stock status.

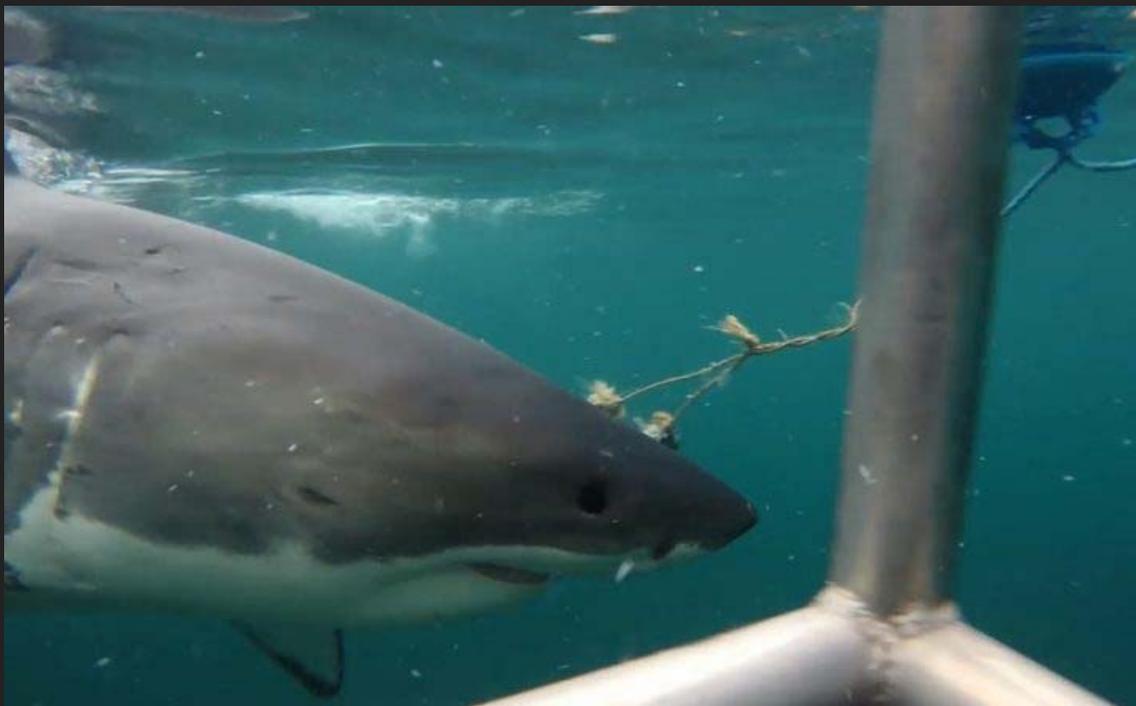
#### **CRA 4, CRA 7, CRA 8**

NZRLIC supports the decisions made for the CRA 4, 7 & 8 rock lobster stocks. These reflect the outcome of the management procedures for these stocks and the considerable investment of

effort and resources made by industry to ensure good science and evidence is available to support the Minister's decisions.

The adjustments to the commercial catch limits for these stocks will ensure they remain on track to achieve their management targets and provide healthy stock sizes and benefit the customary, recreational and commercial sectors.

For all New Zealand's rock lobster stocks there is work to be done to improve the relatively poor information on and management of recreational catch and the substantial levels of illegal removals. For some time management has been very lopsided with a particular focus on the regulation of commercial catch. Decisive steps must be taken by MPI to reduce the unacceptable level of illegal take from our fisheries and ensure the benefits of harvest accrue to legitimate extractive sectors, not fish thieves.



## News

### **Battle continues between shark tourism and divers - Storm Stanley, Chair PauMAC5**

A catchy headline on Stuff earlier this month informed us that "*the most Kiwi great white shark in the sea eats a mince pie off the ocean's surface*". I'm sure many people had a chuckle at the thought of a great white shark eating this unlikely snack, but this is just the latest in a string of stories that reflect very poorly on New Zealanders' attitudes to this apex predator.

These majestic animals are fully protected under New Zealand law – they should be

allowed to roam the oceans in peace. Instead, two commercial shark cage diving operations working out of Bluff have been harassing sharks for the past eight years. These businesses are supposed to comply with a code of practice which includes common-sense requirements such as “sharks must not be fed” and “don’t throw any type of waste or pollutant into the ocean”. The operators have an obligation to inform their clients that it’s not OK to throw a meat pie – or any other food or rubbish – overboard. The natural behaviour of sharks is to hunt for their own food, not to eat our scraps.

For similar reasons, the code limits the use of “throw baits” to attract sharks to the dive cage. Restrictions on the use of baits and other attractants are important – they are aimed at stopping sharks from learning to associate boats or divers with the presence of an easy meal.

We know for a fact that the shark cage dive operators repeatedly breach the code of practice because their clients regularly post videos on Facebook and other social media sites. These videos show the operators breaching their own code of practice by allowing sharks to take baits and using baits in a way that causes sharks to collide with or bite the cage. There is nothing about this practice that is consistent with the way we should be treating fully protected species. Sharks, in their natural state, do not lurk around boats and humans trying to catch a piece of tuna tied to a rope and dangled in front of it. Imagine if a commercial tourist operator was allowed to feed or harass a kiwi in this way.

The Stewart Island community has voiced strong objections to shark cage diving operations as they have experienced increasingly aggressive behaviour by what used to be relatively shy animals. They now fear for their safety on the water – kids don’t jump off the wharf to swim so much, and fishing for cod from a small dinghy is not so appealing when there are great white sharks around that have learnt to associate boats with free food. The community’s concerns are shared by the pāua diving industry which has operated for decades in the waters around Stewart Island.

So what has the Department of Conservation, which is responsible for protected species, done about this unsatisfactory situation? The answer is little that has had any effect on the shark cage operators’ behaviour. DOC has issued permits but failed to impose or enforce meaningful conditions on the operators. In the 1953 Wildlife Act, DOC has a poor legal instrument to deal with this situation. The Wildlife Act should be reviewed to make it fit for purpose again. For example, DOC has argued that it must ignore any impacts on public safety when issuing permits, not required under the Act they reckon. We disagree strongly.

In a last-ditch effort to get some accountability from government regulators, pāua divers initiated legal proceedings. After an inconclusive decision from the High Court, the proceedings will shortly be heard by the Court of Appeal. The main thing we want to achieve is for DOC to be required to take into account the safety of the public and other marine users before issuing shark cage permits. Meaningful and properly enforced permit conditions are vital.

Thankfully, no Stewart Islanders or pāua divers have been hurt by a great white shark, although there are plenty of reports of antagonistic or unusual shark behaviour since the cage diving began. However, until the government regulators accept responsibility for their

actions, danger and fear remains a daily part of the experience of the community and pāua divers at Stewart Island.

Whatever the outcome of the court case, we hope that the new Minister of Conservation will act decisively and demonstrate respect for the fully protected status of great white sharks and accountability for the safety of the local community.

### **Tauranga and Whitianga embrace code of conduct**

Tauranga and Whitianga are the latest ports to embrace the industry-wide code of conduct. Seafood New Zealand chief executive Tim Pankhurst, Fisheries Inshore chief executive Jeremy Helson, and Seafood New Zealand Communications Manager Lesley Hamilton have now completed five road shows around the country's ports to familiarise skippers and crew with the code. Tauranga and Whitianga were the latest to see the presentation and receive an update on electronic monitoring and reporting by Dr Helson. Auckland and Leigh have road shows coming their way next week, with Gisborne, Lyttelton, Timaru, Mangonui, Whangarei, Port Chalmers, Bluff and Hawke's Bay still to come. If you are in a region that is not listed and you feel there may be interest, get in touch. The road shows are also a good opportunity to raise other issues you may have. We are also pleased with the local press the road shows are getting, with newspaper stories about the code of conduct meetings in the Nelson Mail, Greymouth Star, Taranaki Daily News, and Mercury Bay Informer.



## **SAVE THE DATE**

The 2018 New Zealand Seafood Industry Technical Day and Conference will be held at Te Papa, Wellington.

August 1 to August 2, 2018

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