

25 July 2025

Ministry for Primary Industries
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Wellington
New Zealand

Official Information Act Request – Customary fishing authorisations and catch data inside proposed High Protection Areas of the Hauraki Gulf

Tēnā koe

I am writing under the Official Information Act 1982 to request data needed to assess the potential impact of customary fishing on the 12 High Protection Areas (HPAs) proposed in the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana Marine Protection Bill.

In the Environmental Defence Society's submission on the bill they argued that biodiversity objectives must be compulsory and that customary fishing should not proceed until those objectives are in place.

“Provide for the mandatory development of biodiversity objectives for all protected areas. Prohibit customary fishing and permit applications prior to biodiversity objectives being set for a protected area.”¹

The safeguard that was recently removed by the Government amendment². This may undermine the level of protection afforded by the HPAs.

There is a public interest in knowing what impact customary fishing may have on the HPAs created by the bill. I previously received an OIA release (October 2022) containing partial customary catch figures³. The dataset lacked detail on the location and volume of catch to estimate impacts on HPAs. This follow-up request seeks updated data to quantify biodiversity impacts now that clause 66 will no longer constrain customary take.

Under the Official Information Act 1982 I request:

¹ <https://eds.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/EDS-Submission-on-Hauraki-Gulf-Tikapa-Moana-Marine-Protection-Bill-Final.pdf>

² <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/sop/government/2025/0260/16.0/LMS1017300.html>

³ <https://blog.shaunlee.co.nz/missing-data-from-revitalising-the-gulf-consultation/>

1. All additional fishing data you hold (authorisations, catch returns, or summaries) in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park from 2022 to the present.
2. Any internal or external reports, briefings, or analyses produced since 2022 that use this data, or any other information you hold, to assess or quantify the potential biodiversity impacts of customary fishing within those HPAs.

I look forward to your response within the statutory timeframe. Please confirm receipt of this request at your earliest convenience. If you do not normally deal with official information requests, or you need advice on dealing with this request, guidance is available from the Ombudsman at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Ngā mihi,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Shaun Lee', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shaun Lee