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Seafood New Zealand Proposal: Integrated decisions needed for the Hauraki Gulf

There are two major regulatory measures being proposed by government for the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park (HGMP) that have the potential to significantly affect access by commercial fishers to fishing grounds, as well as jobs, exports, and New Zealander's ability to source fresh fish. The measures to date have been developed largely in isolation from one another.

These measures are:

- The **Tikapa Moana/Hauraki Gulf Marine Protection Bill** and
- The **proposed Bottom Fishing Access Zones** promoted through the Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan process.

The two processes both restrict access to fishing grounds in the Hauraki Gulf. But they do it through separate bits of legislation which is duplicative and inefficient. Also no consideration has been given in either process to the cumulative effects of the proposals on the economy (or the environment).

This sets a dangerous precedent for potential future spatial restrictions around the country.

We propose that decisions relating to the HGMP should be made in an integrated fashion, and appropriate existing legislation be used to enact provisions wherever possible.

The current approach to implementing measures in the HGMP is:

- **Inefficient** – as it duplicates regulatory systems and processes already available adding additional costs
- **Unprincipled** - as it creates mechanisms that circumvent existing legislative standards
- **Biased** – because the proposed closures are not a best match with biodiversity outcomes

To address these concerns, we propose the following amendments and changes:

Tikapa Moana/Hauraki Gulf Marine Protection Bill

- **Remove Seafloor Protection Areas** – noting that this purpose can be achieved through the Bottom Fishing Access Zones proposed through the Hauraki Gulf Fish Plan process (see below).
- **Amend some High Protection Areas (HPAs)** to enable small scale fishing for local food supply and export:
 - Kawau Bay, Motukawao, Rotoroa, Rangitoto and Motutapu, and Otata HPAs
 - Te Hauturu-o-Toi, Cape Colville and Mokohinau HPAs to enable rock lobster fishers to access critical fishing grounds

Bottom Fishing Access Zones

The four options provided during the consultation on Bottom Fishing Access Zones were estimated to protect between 95-99% of benthic biodiversity in the Hauraki Gulf. This came at a cost of the closure of grounds responsible for between 35-60% of catch in the Gulf in the last five years.

We have provided an integrated option for Bottom Fishing Access Zones based on the best available information on biodiversity distribution. Our integrated option delivers biodiversity protection while better providing for continued generation of economic value and community support from fishing.

Please see page four of this document for a map supporting the detail in this document, outlining our suggestions for areas which could be closed to bottom contact fishing methods.

The SNZ Proposed Integrated Option benefits:

- Our integrated option **provides an average of at least 80% benthic biodiversity protection** (using the approach taken in the FNZ consultation on Bottom Fishing Access Zones), which is better than the requirements generally considered to represent global best practice (as defined by the Marine Stewardship Council).
- This option **restricts access to grounds responsible for around 7-10% of historical catch**. These levels are not ideal for commercial fishers but the impacts on them are less harmful.
- It avoids duplicative regulation. For clarity and efficiency, all regulation concerning commercial fishing should be delivered by the Fisheries Act.
- Reduces cost on government. The current proposal sees DOC being responsible for monitoring and enforcing closures, with total cost estimated at \$1.6-3.2

million annually. Instead, these measures would become part of normal MPI Fisheries compliance operations.

- Achieves increased protection of benthic biodiversity based on best available information
- Enables continued productivity of local industry and the provision of affordable, healthy protein to Auckland communities.

Other issues

With respect to the proposed prohibitions on mining and petroleum exploration, those activities would require consent under the Resource Management Act and Auckland Regional Plan. In essence, this means these activities are not allowed without a specific approval, which enables those activities to be declined. Additional legislation is not required to prevent those activities occurring.

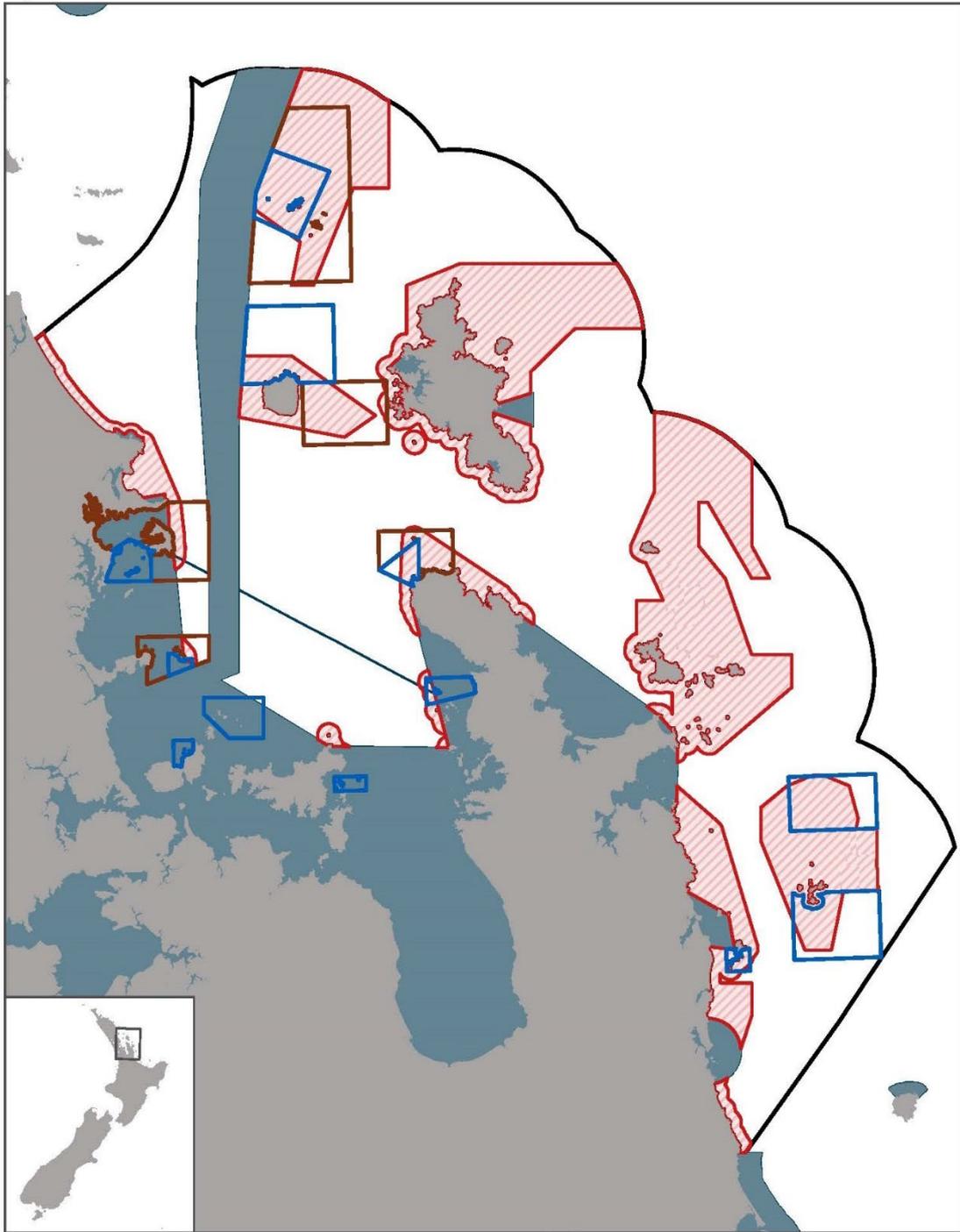


Figure 1: SNZ proposed bottom contact fishing closures in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

Key: proposed closures (draft closures are SNZ proposals as outlined in this document):

 Draft Closures

 HPA

 SPA

Existing boundaries

 Hauraki Gulf Marine Park

 Danish seine and trawl closure

This Amendment Paper amends the Tikapa Moana / Hauraki Gulf Marine Protection Bill.

The Bill establishes 19 marine protected areas in the Hauraki Gulf with a purpose to contribute to the restoration of the health and mauri of the Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana.

The Amendment Paper includes three amendments to better provide for the economic prosperity and wellbeing of local fishing businesses while not compromising the recovery of the health and mauri of the Gulf. (In fact, the amendments will enhance the mauri of the Gulf by supporting local communities to access affordable, healthy seafood.)

Amendment 1:

Allow fishing to be undertaken using the method of ring-netting (defined in Fisheries (Commercial Fishing) Regulations 2001) from a vessel less than 6 metres in length within the following High Protection Areas between March and August:

- Kawau
- Otata – Noises
- Motutapu
- Rotoroa
- Motukawao

This amendment will provide for the continued operation of several local businesses that provide fresh fish to Auckland markets, particularly to Māori and Pasifika communities. Without this amendment, their businesses are likely to become uneconomic as they do not have other areas that they can fish over the winter months.

This reflects a maximum operation of five vessels who currently remove an annual total of 18 tonnes of kahawai, grey mullet, parore and trevally from these areas.

Ring netting as a method has very little impact on the environment beyond the target species removed. It operates from a small vessel with the operator throwing a net out over an identified aggregation of target species and hauling it in by hand.

Amendment 2:

Amend boundaries of 3 HPAs (Mokohinau, Little Barrier Island, Cape Colville) as per Appendix I to allow for rock lobster potting.

These amendments would allow for the continued operation of three vessels and provide up to ^{s9(2)(b)(ii)} in yearly export value, while maintaining a high degree of biodiversity protection by habitat type. These minor adjustments will significantly reduce the adverse effects on these family businesses who are heavily reliant (up to 75%) on these sites for

their livelihoods. These amendments will also minimise the displacement of commercial and recreational fishing for rock lobster in these areas to other parts of the Hauraki Gulf, which would intensify fishing pressure and increase the risk of local depletion that a number of stakeholders have raised concerns about in recent years. This is particularly relevant for rock lobster, as it is a sessile species limited to suitable rocky reef habitat, so closure of these areas reduces the available yield that the TAC and TACC are based on.

This amendment will also allow for some continued set netting and ring netting in the Cape Colville area which further supports the objective of Amendment 1 above.

Amendment 3:

Amend proposed extension of existing marine reserve at Whangai A Hei (Cathedral Cove) to allow for rock lobster potting as per Appendix II.

This amendment would allow for the continued operation of 1 current vessel reliant on this area and provide an estimated s9(2)(b)(ii) in export value.

IF SPAs remain in the Bill:

Amendment 4:

Amend the scope of prohibited activities in Mokohinau SPA to allow commercial rock lobster potting and bottom longlining.

This amendment would allow for the continued operation of 2 vessels and provide an estimated s9(2)(b)(ii) in export value.

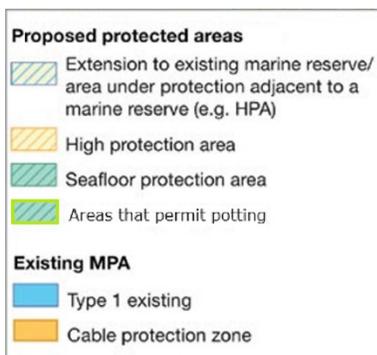
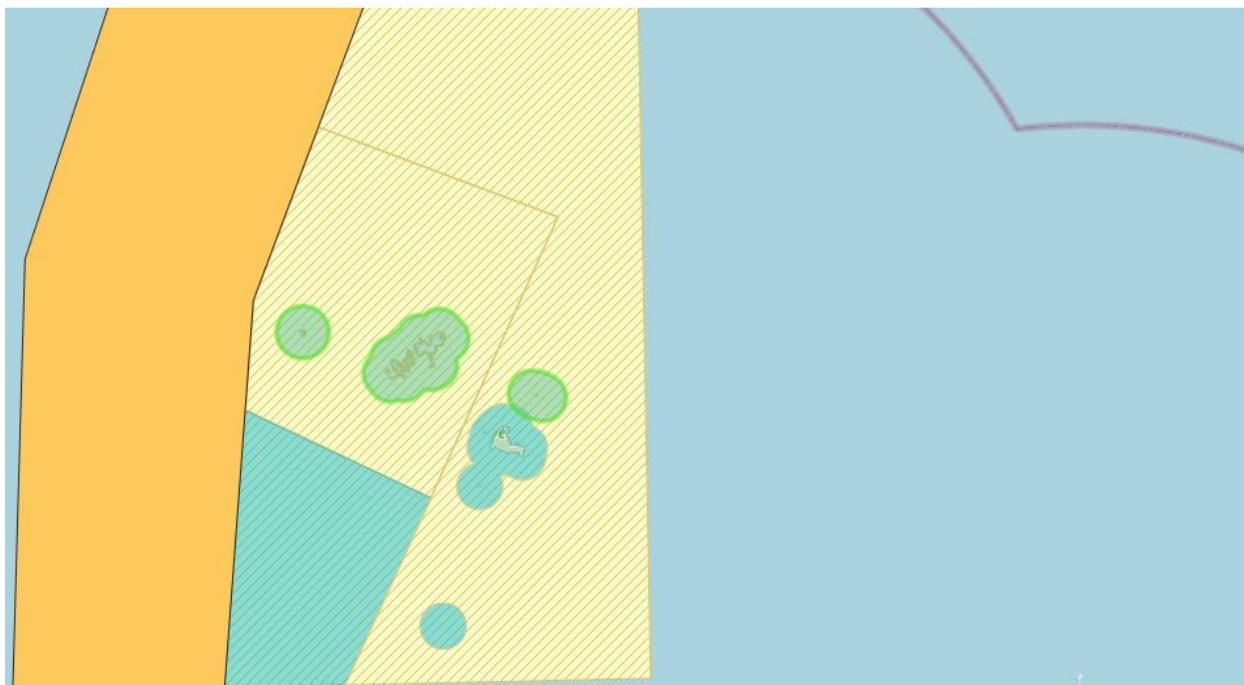
Appendix I: Amendment 2

Mokohīnau Islands

Amend the area around the coastline at:

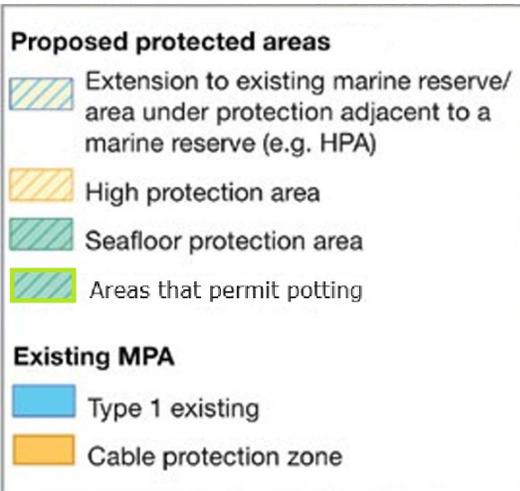
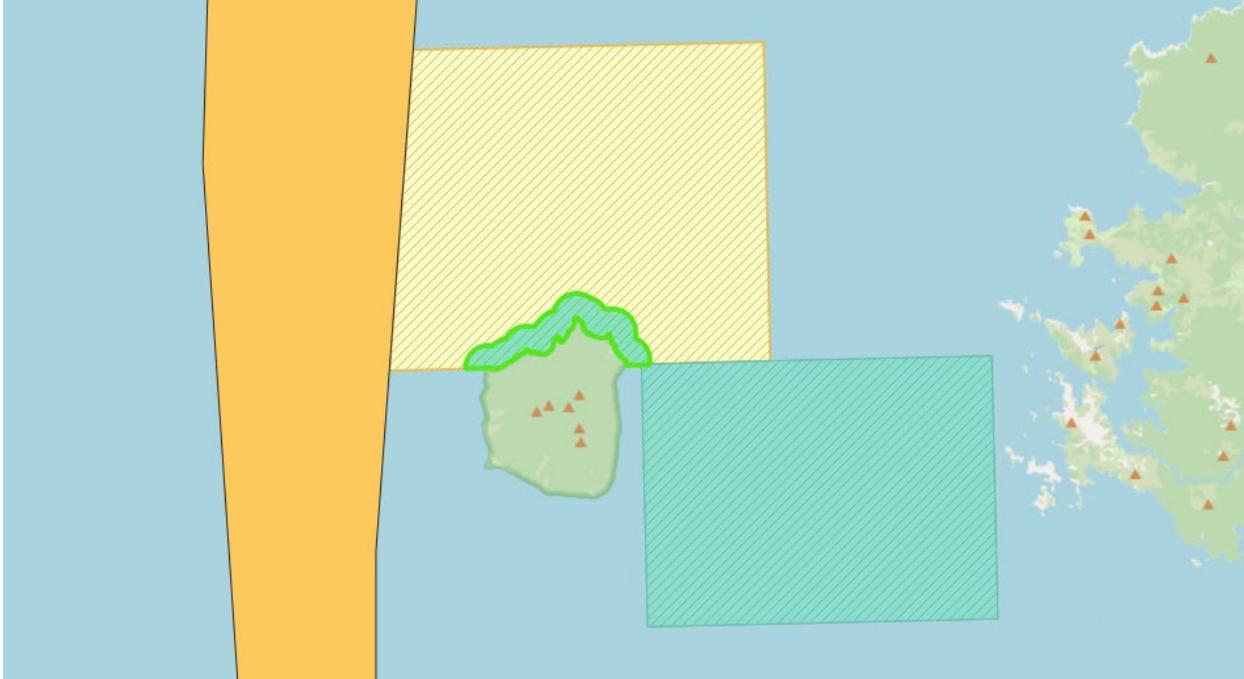
- Tatapihi (Grouper) Island; and
- Pokohinu (Burgess) Island; and
- Hokoromea (Flax) Island; and
- Atihau Island; and
- Maori Rocks

out to 0.5 nautical miles to permit potting (outlined in green below). This will retain the overall level of protection consulted on, while aligning with the amendments at the areas around Motukino (Fanal) Island and Simpson Rock to permit potting.



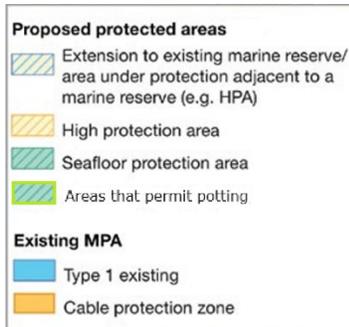
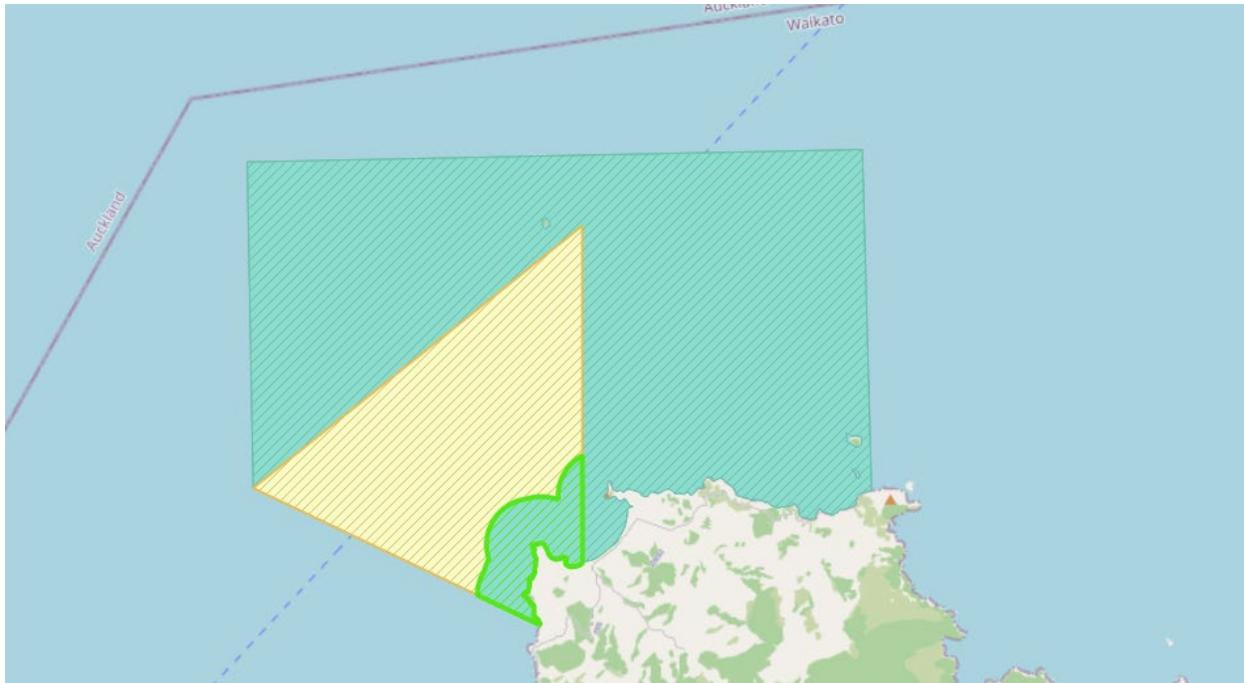
Te Hauturu-o-Toi / Little Barrier Island

Amend the area around the northern coastline of Little Barrier out to 0.5 nautical miles to permit potting (outlined in green below).



Cape Colville

Amend the area around the northern coastline at Kaiiti Point out to 0.5 nautical miles to permit potting (shown in green below).



Appendix II: Amendment 3

Whanganui-a-Hei (Cathedral Cove) marine reserve extension

Shorten the extension of the outer boundary of the proposed marine reserve extension. The sketch below is indicative of the proposed adjustment (dotted line).

