

Ko Shaun Lee tōku ingoa

I'm a designer, illustrator and photographer who does science communication work in Tīkapa Moana / Te Moananui-ā-Toi / Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. I worked on the last four State of the Gulf reports. I'm also a diver and citizen scientist with over 4,000 observations of more than 900 species in the Gulf area. You can see the passion me and my company put into the Gulf through the support I give to lots of community restoration groups and my independent research and advocacy for te taiao. You will have also noticed it in my painfully long 30 page submission on the protection bill which I am obviously supporting.

Now I have built myself up a bit here but I have to tell you sometimes it takes me a while to figure things out, and I'll tell you about that shortly.

I've read nearly all the submissions on the protection bill, and earlier submissions on Revitalising the Gulf, even all the submissions on the proposed Waiheke marine reserve. There are so many reasons people don't want marine protection. Lot's of it is 'Not In My Backyard' which I get, I really disagree with the Kawau Residents Association. The rhodolith habit in that HPA is very unique, I haven't dived anything else like it and we need to protect a range of habitats in the Gulf. However the best arguments come from leaders in fisheries management across the recreational, commercial and customary sectors.

I have always found this odd because scientists have been writing about the fisheries benefits of marine reserves for decades. If you haven't had this explained already it's all about fecundity, or just simply gonad size. So unlike us, most things that live in the ocean are broadcast spawners, they just splooge eggs and sperm into the water and cross their fingers, there is not a lot of parenting in the moana. So in order for your species to be successful it really helps to have big gonads that make lots of eggs and sperm. Older larger animals put a disproportionate amount of effort into growing large gonads. So to show you how disproportionate it is...

[Print out fact - lay out on ground]

...here is one 70 cm tāmure / snapper, it takes all these [36] smaller pannies or 30cm long snapper to make the same amount of eggs as this one.

The paper explaining the science behind this fact is more than 10 years old. Yet the fishing lobbyists (who know a lot about fish) just won't accept it, in their submissions they really tie themselves in knots to try and find reasons to oppose MPAs which if you haven't been swimming in one, they regularly contain 30 times more of these big fish, than fished areas. There is just no way changes to fisheries management in the Gulf will close that gap. I've really struggled to understand the cognitive dissonance on this, and it only just occurred to me why, and you guys have probably already figured this out but I have to explain it.

The reason I think anyone responsible for fishing impacts (customary, commercial and recreational fisheries leaders) is really scared and offended (some of the voices are very emotional) by no-take MPAs is just that they show impacts of fishing. It's really just that simple. When an MPA is healthy they can't blame, ocean acidification, sediment and plastics for the state of the ocean. No take MPAs are a big mirror that those responsible for fisheries find repulsive, I'm convinced that the truth behind educated resistance to MPAs.

Also... isn't it funny how many submissions will start with a line like 'I'm not against marine protection per se but...' Yeah right. Anyway the other frustration I have with educated fisheries voices is they only see value in a fish is when it's dead. MPAs provide economic, environmental, scientific, social, and cultural benefits not provided for in the Fisheries Act.

If we just look at the economics of the tiny marine reserve at Leigh. In 2008 it generated more than \$18.6 million a year for the local economy at a cost of around \$70,000 for DoC. That's an incredible Return On Investment.

My submission includes simple math which shows that LegaSeas displacement argument is incorrect, I also debunk their other claims. I share LegaSeas frustration with fisheries management in the Gulf and I will continue to work on that problem (for free) but it's short-sighted, irresponsible and selfish to oppose these MPAs which are part of the solution to their problems.

We don't know exactly what the biodiversity outcomes will be for these MPAs, in that regard they are experimental, if they don't work it would be sensible to provide a path to upgrade the HPAs to no-take MPAs which we know do work. I also support the proposed new Waiheke Marine Reserve one of the reasons is that it would help benchmark HPA performance.

In my submission you'll see detailed analysis of where I think the bill should be extended. We really need to protect some estuaries and other habitats, the logic to extend the Leigh Marine Reserve should be applied to Tāwharanui. If like the people who drafted the bill it is not within your mandate to propose new areas to extend the network then please make sure there is a way forward so that the science based 30% target proposed by the United Nations, supported by the public and championed by various groups here including the Hauraki Gulf Forum is achievable.

I disagree with the rights based objections to customary take that dominate the submissions, but I do have concerns about conflict arising from customary killing of the large animals I've been taking about. I'm also interested in rules around feeding fish. But regarding rights, in your advice please support the right of those (especially children) who want to experience un-fished ecosystems.

In your report please tell Parliament to act with haste, the Gulf has been waiting 24 years for these MPAs, they are sorely needed and have more than enough public support. Every month we wait biodiversity is declining and it will cost more in time and money for people like me who do active restoration to fix.

Hopefully I have a minute left for questions.