

Submission on the proposed temporary closure around Waiheke Island to the harvest of scallops, mussels, rock lobster, and pāua

Date: 09 March 2020

To: Spatial Planning and Allocations, Fisheries Management, Fisheries New Zealand, PO Box, 2526, Wellington 6140

From: Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Inc. (Forest & Bird), PO Box 108 055, Auckland 1150, Attention: Lissy Fehnker-Heather, Regional Conservation Manager – Auckland

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1. Introduction

The Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Inc (Forest & Bird) is New Zealand's longest running independent conservation organisation. Its constitutional purpose is to take all reasonable steps within its power for the preservation and protection of the indigenous flora and fauna and the natural features of New Zealand. Forest & Bird has a long-standing interest in improving the health and protection of marine ecosystems and coastal areas.

Forest & Bird has for many years had a strong interest and involvement in the greater Auckland area. We have 47 branches throughout the country, seven of which, are in the Auckland region and one of these branches are located on Waiheke Island. All branches are involved in a wide range of conservation and advocacy activities.

Our strategic vision for the region with regards to oceans is as follows:

- **Oceans Alive:** Aucklanders recognise the health of the marine environment is a direct result of on-land activities. Auckland's three main harbours (Manukau, Waitematā and Kaipara) return to their original, healthy states. Fishing and aquaculture activities follow ecosystem-based management principles. Thirty percent of Auckland's marine environment is protected through a network of no-take marine protected areas.

2. Submission

- 2.1. Overall, Forest & Bird supports the temporary closure covering the area within 1 nautical mile offshore from the mean high-water mark of Waiheke Island as outlined in the letter from Herearoha Skipper on behalf of the Ngāti Pāoa Trust sent to Hon. David Parker on 25 January 2021. Forest and Bird acknowledges the mana whenua of Ngāti Pāoa and supports their wish to exercise kaitiakitanga through this application for a rahui. With many marine ecosystems in decline around Aotearoa from overfishing, pollution, and effects of climate change, we're pleased to support efforts to help restore the health of these areas and there support the proposed temporary closure. In particular Forest & Bird supports:

- 2.1.1. The temporary closure of kōura (crayfish) gathering given the substantial reduction in their populations in the wider Hauraki Gulf, and
- 2.1.2. The temporary closure of kūtai (mussel) gathering given that mussel beds have been drastically reduced in the Hauraki Gulf from historical commercial activities and thus the remaining mussel beds are only in intertidal zones.
- 2.2. We use this opportunity to highlight that more research should be undertaken on tipa (scallop) populations given there is little data available of scallop beds in the wider Hauraki Gulf.
- 2.3. We use this opportunity to highlight that a number of species in the Hauraki Gulf are overfished or depleted such as tāmure (snapper) and tarakihi and require urgent attention to rebuild these stocks.
- 2.4. Putting in place proposed temporary closures such as this support the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy's 2020 vision *"the life force of nature is vibrant and vigorous"*. The proposed temporary closure will also acknowledge, and attempt to remedy the challenges facing marine environments as identified in the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020 that *"Biogenic marine habitats support high biodiversity and provide ecosystem services. Many of them have been degraded or lost."*
- 2.5. Lastly, Forest & Bird wishes to highlight that issues facing the Hauraki Gulf are not just over-fishing/over-harvesting but also from the impacts of on-land activities in the Auckland region such as intensification of existing urban areas, urban sprawl, and climate change impacts. We acknowledge *ki uta ki tai* – from mountains to sea – and that the Hauraki Gulf requires a holistic approach if we wish to return it to a healthy, functioning state.
- 2.6. If the Minister or his staff have any further questions about the contents of this submission, please contact me.

Nāku noa iti, nā,



Lissy Fehnker-Heather

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