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New Zealand Underwater Association partial support for Joint Recreational Submission submitted by NZSFC-LegaSea, where it applies to Southern Scallop (SCA 7) fishery, including Port Underwood.

On 11 June 2018 Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) advised they were consulting on two options for the future management of the Southern Scallop fishery known as Scallop 7 (SCA 7) and the scallop fishery in Port Underwood. Submissions are due to FNZ by 25 June 2018.

Traditionally the scallop season opens on 15 July and closes on 15 February the following year. The SCA 7 and Port Underwood have been closed to commercial and recreational harvest for the past two years due to poor abundance of scallops. Fisheries New Zealand propose two options for the upcoming season in Scallop 7 and Port Underwood:

1. Temporary closure from 15 July 2018; or
2. No closure. Season opens 15 July 2018.

New Zealand Underwater Association is comprised of three distinct user groups including Spearfishing NZ, affiliated scuba clubs throughout the country and Underwater Hockey NZ. Through our membership we are aware that dive shops, particularly in the Marlborough region, have been significantly affected by the closure of the fishery, this in turn impacts our members.

Consequently, New Zealand Underwater supports a **variation of Option 2** of the FNZ proposal;

The variation for Southern Scallop (SCA 7) comprises:

1. **Allowing low impact, hand gathering methods only**
2. **Moving the season open to 1 September to align with most of New Zealand**

New Zealand Underwater takes this opportunity to support Recommendation 2 and Recommendation 3 of the NZSFC-LegaSea Joint Recreational Submission, as it applies to the Southern Scallop (SCA 7) fishery, including Port Underwood.

The specific excerpt from the NZSFC-LegaSea Joint Recreational Submission referred to in this letter of support is:

“Recommendation 2. The NZSFC supports finer scale spatial management of beds where there is sufficient yield available for harvest -

a. Recommendations from the SCA 7 Multi-Sector Group to the Minister ought to allow a staged resumption of scallop harvest. Some beds may be opened for non-commercial use only while the largest beds in the outer Sounds may be opened when sufficient yield is available to sustain both non-commercial and commercial exploitation.

b. Upon reopening the fishery, non-bottom contact means of collection (hand gathering) ought to be the only methods permitted until such a time as the full effect of bottom contact methods such as dredging are understood and consequences mitigated.

Recommendation 3. NZSFC request a position on the Multi-Sector Working Group formed to review possible options for the future management of Southern Scallops, SCA 7 and Port Underwood.”

FNZ has requested suggestions on what actions might be required to sustainably manage the Southern Scallop fishery in the longer-term. New Zealand Underwater agree with some suggestions from NZSFC-LegaSea in regard to actions required to sustainably manage the Southern Scallop fishery in the longer-term, however we propose:

- a. Increasing the Minimum Legal Size for commercial and recreational harvested scallops;**
- b. Changing the season opening day from 15 July to 1 September, to align nationally;**
- c. Lowering the recreational daily bag limit from 50 to 20 per person;**
- d. Changing the width, ring size and design of commercial scallop dredges;**
- e. Banning recreational scallop dredging.**

On behalf of the New Zealand Underwater Association

Tristan Reynard,

President,

New Zealand Underwater Association

About New Zealand Underwater:

New Zealand Underwater is the country's recognised leading not-for-profit organisation promoting and advocating safe and enjoyable underwater activities in a protected marine environment.

The Association, established in 1953, is comprised of three distinct user groups including Spearfishing NZ, affiliated scuba clubs throughout the country and Underwater Hockey NZ.

NZU's large and diverse audience is bound by a common thread of passion for underwater sports and the environment these activities are conducted in. The Association boasts a social media audience of 43,784 followers and conducts regular marketing campaigns focused on safety and environmental issues.

A snapshot of safety-focused media activity for 2018 to date includes:

- 197,470 safety campaign Video Views on YouTube and Social Media
- 3,465,000 safety campaign impressions across a range of advertising networks