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18 September 2026

Submission: Consultation on reopening Whangārei Harbour to recreational scallop fishing

Recommendations

1. **The Minister for Oceans and Fisheries acknowledges that** the Northland (SCA 1) scallop fishery remains a depleted, recovering fishery, and there is insufficient information on scallop abundance, connectivity and recruitment to justify reopening any part of it to harvest at this time.
2. **The Minister gives effect to his statutory duty to ensure sustainability** by retaining the current prohibition on scallop harvesting in Whangārei Harbour, and across the rest of the SCA 1 fishery.
3. **The Minister awaits the results of the 2027 biomass surveys** before reopening any of the beds in SCA 1 and Coromandel (SCA CS) scallop fishery.
4. **The Minister directs Fisheries New Zealand** to expand research of scallop connectivity and recruitment across the wider SCA 1 and SCA CS fisheries.
5. **The Minister acknowledges that** the Quota Management System has failed to protect Northland and Coromandel scallops from excessive harvest, ultimately leading to a collapsed and closed fishery.
6. **The Minister directs Fisheries New Zealand** to prioritise the development of an enduring, alternative management strategy for Northland and Coromandel scallops, meeting the principles set out in Part Two of this submission, before reopening to harvest is considered.

The submitters

7. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council **(NZSFC)** appreciates the opportunity to submit on Fisheries New Zealand's **(FNZ)** consultation on reopening Whangārei Harbour to recreational scallop fishing. The Discussion Paper No: 2026/26 was received on 24 August 2026, with submissions due by 18 September 2026.
8. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council is a recognised national sports organisation of 54 affiliated clubs with over 35,500 members nationwide. The Council initiated LegaSea to generate widespread awareness and support for the need to restore abundance in our inshore marine environment. Also to broaden NZSFC involvement in marine management advocacy, research, education and engagement on behalf of our members and LegaSea supporters. legasea.co.nz.

9. The New Zealand Angling and Casting Association **(NZACA)** is the representative body for its 20 member clubs throughout the country. The Association promotes recreational fishing and the camaraderie of enjoying the activity with fellow fishers. The NZACA is committed to protecting fish stocks and representing its members' right to fish.

10. The New Zealand Underwater Association **(NZUA)** represents the interests of distinct user groups, and is affiliated with 49 spearfishing, SCUBA, free-diving, and underwater sports clubs throughout the country, comprising 2,600 financial members. Through our membership we are acutely aware that the depletion of inshore fish stocks has impacted on the marine environment and the wellbeing of many of our members.

11. Collectively we are *'the submitters'.* The submitters are committed to ensuring that sustainability measures and environmental management controls are designed and implemented to achieve the purpose and principles of the Fisheries Act 1996, including "maintaining the potential of fisheries resources to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations…" [s8(2)(a) Fisheries Act 1996].

12. Our representatives are available to discuss this submission in more detail if required. We look forward to a positive outcome from this consultation and would like to be kept informed of future developments. Our contact is Helen Paster, secretary@nzsportfishing.org.nz.

Proposals

13. FNZ is consulting on reopening the Whangārei harbour to recreational scallop harvest at the discretion of the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries **(Minister).**[1] The area proposed to be opened (see page 10) is within the current Section 11 closure. The remainder of SCA 1 outside the Harbour would remain closed.

14. FNZ has presented three options, including the status quo – retaining the current full Section 11 closure and two other options for a recreational scallop season. Options 2 & 3 would be enabled by increasing the SCA 1 Total Allowable Catch (TAC) by 1.2 tonnes, through a corresponding 1.2 tonne increase to the recreational allowance. No changes are proposed to increase the customary Māori allowance, the allowance for all other mortality caused by fishing, or the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC), which remains at zero.

15. FNZ is also consulting on four changes to recreational fishing rules that would apply if the Harbour is reopened under Option 2 or Option 3. These measures include reducing the daily limit to ten scallops per person per day, prohibiting recreational scallop dredging, increasing the minimum legal size from 100 mm to 105 mm shell width and introducing an accumulation limit for scallops at three times the daily limit.

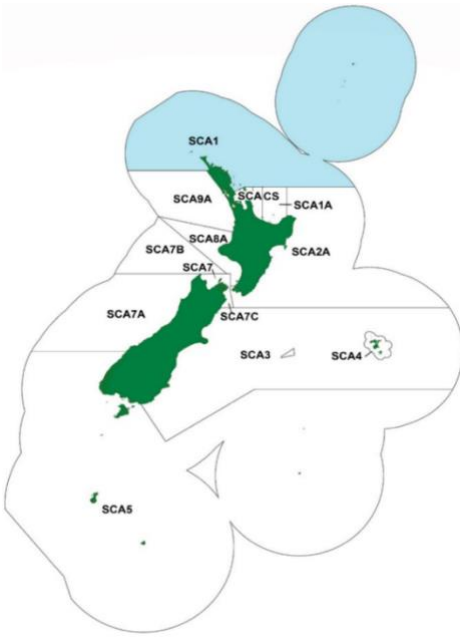
16. The submitters have not been invited to participate in the development of the proposed options set out below.

[1] Consultation on reopening Whangārei Harbour to recreational scallop fishing. Fisheries New Zealand Discussion Paper No: 2026/26. August 2026.

Table 1: Proposed options (in tonnes) for Northland scallops (SCA 1) for either status quo settings, an in-season increase, and/or an enduring TAC.

	Option	TAC	TACC	Allowances			When it will apply
				Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing	
Option 1	Status quo – full closure	8.5	0	7.5	0	1	Ongoing
Option 2	Four-week season starting **1 November 2026 or 14 February 2027**	9.7 (in-season ↑ 1.2)	0	7.5	1.2 (in-season ↑ 1.2)	1	2026-27 fishing year only. Will revert on 1 April 2027.
Option 3	Eight-week season starting **1 November 2027 or 1 February 2028**	9.7 (↑ 1.2)	0	7.5	1.2 (↑ 1.2)	1	Ongoing from 1 April 2027

Background



17. Scallops are a taonga species, a precious resource for all New Zealanders. Northland (SCA 1) scallop fisheries are highly valued by Māori customary interests, recreational fishers and the wider coastal communities. Gathering scallops is a traditional summer activity that brings families and communities together. Its loss over the past four years has been keenly felt.

18. SCA 1 was once a high-value commercial fishery. It is not anymore. Decades of overallocation under the Quota Management System **(QMS)** and the ongoing use of dredges degrading the habitats scallops depend on have seen this fishery decline to the point of closure.

19. The commercial scallop fleet is now tied to the wharf, and those jobs and industry are gone. This is a boom-and-bust outcome that has served the interests of a few, to the detriment of long-term interests in an abundant fishery.

20. The NZSFC has been closely involved in the management of northern scallop fisheries for years. That includes the Scallop Fisheries Working Group (SFWG), the Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan Advisory Group (HGFP AG), and most recently the Coromandel Scallop Management Group established in December 2024.

21. On 8 February 2022, the submitters lodged a joint submission on the review of SCA 1 and Coromandel (SCA CS) fisheries. The submitters supported the closure of both fisheries under section 11 of the Fisheries Act 1996. Along with local iwi and hapū and other stakeholders, our submission strongly opposed proposals to leave the Whangārei Harbour beds open to recreational harvest while the rest of SCA 1 was closed.

22. Having regard to submissions and the best available information, the then Minister for Oceans and Fisheries, the Hon David Parker, made the precautionary decision in 2022 to close the entire SCA 1 fishery, including Whangārei Harbour, under section 11 of the Fisheries Act 1996. As a result, the TACC and recreational allowance for SCA 1 were reduced to zero.

23. SCA 1 has remained closed to recreational and commercial fishing since 2022, and the wider Quota Management Area **(QMA)** is still a long way from recovery. A precautionary approach was the correct basis for the 2022 closure. It remains the correct basis for decision-making now.

Part One: Rationale for not supporting the reopening of Whangārei scallop beds to recreational harvest

Stock status

24. Preliminary results from the 2026 survey were published in the FNZ consultation document for five of the nine survey strata: Smugglers, Urquharts, Urquharts deep, Frenchman's North and McDonald Bank East. On 15 September, FNZ released the preliminary results online for two additional strata; Snake Bank East and Marsden Cove.

25. FNZ advises that these results have not been through its science working group peer review process and are *"subject to change"*. Final results will not be available until after the consultation period closes.

26. On the basis of those preliminary results, FNZ have concluded that biomass at some Harbour beds has persisted since the 2022 closure and *"may be capable of supporting a cautious level of utilisation"*.

27. Absolute biomass across the seven surveyed strata is estimated at 9 tonnes meatweight for scallops 100 mm or larger, and 6.81 tonnes meatweight for scallops 105 mm or larger. Applying the critical density of 0.1 scallops per square metre, those estimates fall to 5.46 tonnes and 3.23 tonnes, respectively.

28. Almost all of that biomass sits in three strata. At the critical density, Urquharts holds 1.31 tonnes, McDonald Bank East 2.32 tonnes, and Snake Bank East 1.83 tonnes of scallops 100 mm or larger. The remaining five strata hold no biomass. FNZ concludes that scallops in those strata may be at densities too sparse to support successful reproduction.

29. Median density of recruited scallops has declined in both Smugglers and Urquharts, for which a time series exists. Length frequency results indicate that Urquharts now has fewer juvenile and pre-recruit scallops than in 2024. FNZ accepts that while abundance may have been stable since 2024, it *"may reduce in future years"*. As there has been no recreational harvest for four years, any recent influence on recruitment is likely due to non-fishing factors.

30. FNZ also confirms that the critical levels of scallop density required to support positive recruitment in scallop fisheries, and specifically SCA 1, *"are not known"*.

31. The 2024 survey[2] estimated that other parts of SCA 1 and SCA CS showed only limited recovery despite the fishery being closed for two years.

32. A biomass survey covering both SCA 1 and SCA CS has been confirmed for 2027.[3] That survey will provide the first comprehensive, peer-reviewed picture of scallop abundance across both fisheries since 2024, including the beds outside Whangārei Harbour that the current proposals do not cover.

33. Taken together, these results do not describe a recovered fishery. Until the 2027 survey results are available, the Minister cannot know whether the wider SCA 1 fishery is recovering, whether the Whangārei Harbour beds are contributing to that recovery, or what level of harvest either could sustain. The uncertainty associated with managing scallops requires the Minister to act in a precautionary manner when making decisions. That uncertainty points squarely to Option 1 - continued closure.

[2] Williams, J.R.; Underwood, M.J.; Rensen, T.; Hughes, R.; Bian, R.; Middleton, C.; Evans, O.; Middleton, I. (2025). Camera, dive, and dredge surveys of scallops in SCA 1 and SCA CS, 2024. New Zealand Fisheries Assessment Report 2025/16. 72 p.

[3] Fisheries New Zealand advice to the Scallop Fisheries Working Group on the 2027 biomass survey of SCA 1 and SCA CS. [Reference to be confirmed.]

Shifting baselines

34. The 2026 survey results for the three strata at Urquharts, McDonald Bank East, and Snake Bank East show an increase in biomass; however, this does not necessarily indicate abundance.

35. In a highly variable fishery, it is easy to assume that what we see today is how it's always been, but we do our predecessors a disservice by ignoring the loss of past abundance. What follows is a personal account from a former Whangārei Harbour resident –

    "There were virtually no scallops in the Whangārei Harbour when I was growing up, until they changed the Portland Cements processing method from a wet to dry system. There used to be huge amounts of silt discharged to the harbour with the wet system (during even relatively small floods the harbour would get very dirty, lucky if you had a foot of visibility). A few years after the change the harbour cleaned up a lot (even during large floods the water never got as dirty again). The first time we got scallops was in knee-deep water in the small sandy bay (about 50m wide) underneath the Gun Turrets at Urquhart's Bay in about 1978, they were almost touching each other they were that thick, all well and truly legal, sadly within a few months they were gone from this area. But we used to snorkel for them after that just before Frenchman Island.

    "Also, we had a very good crayfish rock between Urquharts and the Frenchman with the crays in 3-6 foot of water at low tide. My father got shown it when he was a kid in the early 1940s. His best cray from this rock was 2.5kg, and their best catch was 17 crays in a super low tide when they just walked around grabbing the crays. Oh for those days to be back again.

    "This was all shore-based access, we never had a boat when growing up."[edited]

36. This account describes shifting baselines - What has been lost in one's lifetime while missing what his father and grandfather experienced during their lifetimes.

37. For true sustainability, lived experiences of local fishers must be given credence, because relying on statistical models based on vague measures of the recent past is what enables and incentivises overexploitation.

38. FNZ's science process has been captured by the exploiters. The process does not provide a balanced view of available yield from a diminishing resource.

39. Whangārei Harbour scallops and the overall scallop fisheries of Northland and Coromandel reinforce the shifting baselines, where the bottom line of abundance is reset with each generation.

40. Consequently, the current process merely seeks to justify catch while being blind to what has been lost and what is possible for future generations.

Scallop reproduction

41. Scallops are broadcast spawners. The density of scallops within a bed, and their proximity to one another, are critical factors influencing successful fertilisation of released eggs and subsequent recruitment.[4]

42. Scallops may spawn sporadically from August to March, but spawn prolifically over the summer months. Scallop populations are highly variable and can fluctuate depending on environmental conditions, even in the absence of fishing. Recruitment is both temporally and spatially unpredictable. It does not occur every year, nor across all scallop beds.[5]

[4]Williams, J.R. (2005). Reproductive ecology of the scallop Pecten novaezelandiae. PhD thesis, University of Auckland. http://hdl.handle.net/2292/52304

[5]Smith, S.; Hart, D.; Haddon, M. (2016). Review of New Zealand's scallop fishery stock assessment data and methods. New Zealand Fisheries Science Review 2016/1. 25 p.

43. Scallops are under pressure from a wide range of non-fishing stressors, including nutrient enrichment and sediment loading from land use, changes in salinity, pH and temperature, and harmful algal blooms, invasive pests (i.e exotic *Caulerpa*) and disease.

44. Reproductive output of scallops increases substantially with size and age. FNZ notes that a first-year scallop carries around 500,000 eggs, while a scallop in its fourth or fifth year can carry over 40 million. The largest scallops in the Harbour are therefore the most reproductively valuable, and they are also the ones that would be targeted if the minimum size limit (MLS) is increased to 105 mm. Allowing harvest of these productive scallops could conceivably result in wiping out the population after a single recreational season.

45. This is why concentration of biomass in the Urquharts, McDonald Bank East and Snake Bank strata in the Harbour matters. Reducing the abundance and densities of scallops in these three strata may affect the reproductive capacity and resilience of Whangārei scallops and the wider SCA 1 fishery.

46. In that context, the fishery needs all the resilience we can give it. Recreational harvest, however conservatively managed, would only remove resilience in this instance, for minimal long-term benefit to the marine environment and non-commercial interests.

47. It is also not known how many mature scallops are required to sustain each population, or which beds are producing or receiving the spat. In our view, this means a precautionary decision by the Minister to keep the Whangārei Harbour beds closed is required if the SCA 1 stocks are to rebuild to levels that will enable future use.

Connectivity of scallop beds

48. Scallops are reliant on the tides and currents to disperse their larvae. FNZ notes in the consultation document that research suggests there may be some level of connectivity between scallop beds in northeastern New Zealand. Preliminary results from ocean current models and computer simulations suggest scallop populations across northeastern New Zealand historically formed a large, interconnected network, with larvae moving between many scallop beds.[6], [7]

49. Based on this knowledge, the biomass in Whangārei Harbour is potentially a source of larvae for the wider SCA 1 and SCA CS network.

50. The decline and loss of scallop beds over recent decades may already have weakened those historic connections. The remaining higher-density beds are, in effect, the last well-connected nodes in a fraying network. Removing scallops from those beds now risks breaking connections we may not be able to rebuild.

51. The submitters urge the Minister to take a precautionary approach and wait for better information on the connectivity of the northern scallop network before any part of SCA 1 is reopened.

52. The Minister has a statutory duty to ***ensure sustainability,*** so until the evidence can show that harvesting in Whangārei Harbour will not undermine recovery elsewhere in SCA 1 or SCA CS, the only lawful approach is to leave those scallops in the water. Every scallop we leave alone in the Harbour today may seed the recovery of a bed somewhere else tomorrow.

Tāngata Whenua

53. FNZ's engagement with tāngata whenua holding gazetted rohe moana in Whangārei Harbour - Ngāti Kahu o Torongare, Te Parawhau, Ngāti Tū and Patuharakeke - found that they do not support

[6]Silva, C.N.S. (2015). Spatial and temporal genetic structure of the New Zealand scallop Pecten novaezelandiae: A multidisciplinary perspective. PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington. 158 p.

[7] Chaput, R.; Elvines, D.; Hansard, L.; Vennell, R.; Williams, J.; Croucher, A.; Jeffs, A. (In press). Modelling scallop population connectivity in northeastern New Zealand. New Zealand Fisheries Assessment Report. Cited in Consultation on reopening Whangārei Harbour to recreational scallop fishing. Fisheries New Zealand Discussion Paper No: 2026/26. August 2026. At [59].

reopening at this time, as they consider the fishery has not yet recovered to a level that enables the full exercise of customary fishing rights.

54. The submitters support this position, consistent with our long-standing view that kaitiaki are best placed to identify local depletion. If customary rights cannot yet be fully exercised, it is difficult to see how a recreational season can be justified.

55. The Crown and those exercising authority under the Fisheries Act 1996 have an ongoing obligation under Te Tiriti and the Settlement Deed to provide for Māori non-commercial fishing interests.[8] The ongoing mismanagement of scallops is in breach of those obligations, and the obligations under the Fisheries Act to ensure sustainability (s 8), apply the environmental and information principles (ss 9 and 10), and adequately provide for the input and participation of tāngata whenua, while having ***particular regard to kaitiakitanga*** (s 12). [9]

56. The submitters are strong supporters of locally-led, fine-scale management of coastal fisheries, and of the Ahu Moana approach in particular. NZSFC Policy Statement (4.5) states –

> *The NZSFC recognises Ahu Moana as a form of localised fine-scale spatial adaptive management and will offer assistance and encouragement to build relationships between local fishing clubs, communities and mana whenua.*

57. Ahu Moana was introduced as Initiative Four of the Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari Marine Spatial Plan (2016) as a mechanism for mana whenua and local communities to jointly manage their near-shore coastal areas. It is built on a 50:50 co-management partnership between mana whenua and local communities, and is expressly intended to bring together mātauranga Māori and local knowledge. This enables inclusion of recreational and artisanal fishers' knowledge alongside scientific data to provide responsive and adaptive management. Ahu Moana is now a key component of Revitalising the Gulf: Government action on the Sea Change Plan.

58. Ahu Moana projects are underway at Aotea Great Barrier Island and in Coromandel. Given the connectivity of the scallop beds on the northeast coast, the submitters support the Minister and officials in providing the necessary resources so an Ahu Moana project can be explored and initiated with mana whenua and the local communities surrounding Whangārei Harbour. It is unfortunate that it has taken the prospect of an early re-opening of selected scallop beds to bring the community to this point. The need for a locally-led response reflects a wider failure by officials to manage the scallop population and benthic habitat to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations as required under section 8 (2)(b) of the Fisheries Act 1996.

Reopening Whangārei Harbour is premature, unjustified and unacceptably risky

59. The submitters recognise the very real risks of allowing recreational fishing to resume in any part of SCA 1, specifically Whangārei Harbour, while the fishery as a whole remains closed and depleted. SCA 1 has been closed since 2022, and the wider fishery has not yet recovered to a level that supports harvest. Reopening a small part of it in isolation does not reflect the state of the fishery as a whole.

60. The justification for opening Whangārei Harbour to any recreational scallop harvest rests solely on preliminary results from a small number of surveyed strata. Those results cover seven of the nine strata in the Harbour, have not been through peer review, and will not be finalised until after this consultation closes. That is not a sufficient basis on which to unwind a four-year closure.

61. Considering the biology and connectivity of scallops alongside the most recent survey results, these factors together represent a high sustainability risk. That risk is inconsistent with the precautionary

[8] Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992.

[9] Fisheries Act 1996 Purpose and Principles. Sections 8 to 12.

approach that justified the original 2022 closure, and inconsistent with the purpose and principles of the Fisheries Act 1996.

62. The current closure represents a large collective societal investment. Kiwis have willingly walked away from a traditional summer activity so that the northern scallop fisheries can rebuild. Kaitiaki, hapū and iwi have led with rāhui and section 186A closures, from Northland to the Coromandel. That collective effort, and any potential recovery, should not be spent lightly, and certainly not on a boom-and-bust recreational season.

63. A short, intensive recreational season is highly risky. The Harbour would draw effort well beyond the local community, given it would be the only scallop fishery open to recreational harvest on the North Island's east coast. Every recreational scalloper from Kaitaia to East Cape who wants a feed of scallops will have one place to go on the east coast.

64. FNZ's suggestion that reopening Whangārei Harbour will support local dive shop business is not a sustainability rationale, and it does not sit alongside the goal of rebuilding abundance. The submitters and local businesses need durable, long-term sustainability outcomes for the marine environment and for people.

65. At the current, still-depleted state of SCA 1 and the neighbouring SCA CS fishery, every scallop remaining in the water counts. Every scallop is a potential spawner. Every high-density bed is a potential source of larvae for beds elsewhere. Every year of continued closure is a year of banked resilience for the wider fishery. The scallops that persist in Whangārei Harbour may be doing important work supporting recovery well beyond the Harbour itself.

66. The Minister has a statutory duty to manage the fishery at the broader SCA 1 scale, extending from Ahipara on the northwest coast down to Cape Rodney, Leigh on the east coast - not just small pockets of localised abundance. Reopening Whangārei Harbour in isolation, while the rest of SCA 1 remains closed, repeats the same flawed reasoning the submitters and tāngata whenua successfully opposed in 2022.

67. Like all New Zealanders, our members would love to be back in the water gathering scallops. But we are not prepared to trade four years of recovery for another boom-and-bust cycle and the future of SCA 1. We would rather wait until there is clear evidence of recovery across the whole of SCA 1, and an alternative management strategy in place before any reopening decision is made.

68. Until there is sufficient abundance across the wider fishery confirmed by the 2027 SCA 1 and SCA CS biomass surveys, and an approved management strategy that reflects our points made in Part Two, the Minister must not reopen the Whangārei Harbour beds to recreational harvest.

69. **The submitters support Option 1** - maintaining the current section 11 closure for the entire SCA 1 area. This option recognises that the QMA as a whole needs more time to recover. It also recognises that protecting the localised beds which hold higher biomass and densities could further increase the rate of recovery of other beds in SCA 1 and SCA CS.

70. **The submitters reject the proposals** to reduce the existing daily bag limit from 20 to 10 scallops per person, and to increase the minimum legal size from 100 mm to 105 mm shell width for recreational fisheries. Any changes to amateur fishing controls for SCA 1 ought to be considered when the wider SCA 1 fishery has sufficient abundance to sustain harvest.

Part Two: Rescue Fish - an alternative management plan for Northland and Coromandel scallops

71. The Northland and Coromandel scallop fishery was mismanaged for decades under the QMS, and that system has failed both fisheries. Historic overallocation of the TACC, and the ongoing use of dredges degrading the benthic habitat needed for successful recruitment, drove these fisheries into progressive closure between 2020 and 2023. This culminated in the TACC being reduced to zero in March 2023. No commercial or recreational harvest has occurred since.

72. Despite this, 100 million quota shares still exist in the Coromandel scallop fishery, at least 20 million of which are held by Māori interests as a result of Treaty settlement arrangements. Historic overallocation and entrenched quota rights make it difficult for the Minister to adjust harvest limits quickly in response to changes in abundance.

73. Fundamental to the future success of SCA 1 and SCA CS is a more agile system, not constrained by private quota rights. While both fisheries remain closed, and the TACC and recreational allowance are set at zero, this is precisely the right time to design and adopt an enduring, alternative management framework for these fisheries.

74. Since 2018, the NZSFC has invested more than $1,000,000 into developing a comprehensive alternative to the QMS. After researching overseas and local models, the resulting policy is called *Rescue Fish Ika Rauora*.

75. The Rescue Fish package has been developed to deliver the economic, cultural and social potential that New Zealanders aspired to when the QMS was introduced.

76. The submitters recommend that any future management approach for Northland and Coromandel scallops be built around the following principles from Rescue Fish.

Abundance must come first

77. Any reopening of SCA 1 or SCA CS to harvest must wait until scallop biomass has recovered to a level that can sustain removals across the whole management area, not just in isolated pockets such as Whangārei Harbour.

78. Scallop beds must have variable age structure, including sufficient juvenile recruitment and pre-recruits. Important broodstock beds must also be identified and protected from harvest

79. A reliable, regular monitoring regime must be established to track abundance before any harvest decision is made. Management settings must be able to respond quickly if abundance declines.

No dredging

80. Dredging for scallops must be prohibited for commercial, recreational and research purposes. Dredging damages benthic habitat, disrupts feeding and growth, and increases mortality, directly undermining the recruitment these fisheries depend on.

81. Eastern Coromandel communities, the Waikato Regional Council and Ngāti Hei have been adamant that dredging must be replaced with selective, low-impact harvesting techniques.

82. This builds on the NZSFC's scallop dredging policy, which promotes low-impact harvesting methods such as hand gathering, and on our broader Rescue Fish policy, which seeks to ban all mobile bottom-contact fishing methods from inshore waters within 12 nautical miles of the coastline.

83. The future management approach for scallops is likely to require finer-scale spatial management to protect a portion of high-density scallop beds and ensure continued recruitment. This can be achieved by permitting only selective fishing methods such as hand-gathering across most of the fishery. This will provide natural protection for deeper broodstock beds, such as the Colville Channel in the SCA CS fishery.

84. The submitters also note that hand-gathered wild scallops will only become economically viable once populations have genuinely recovered, and that cultivated (aquaculture) scallops may provide a complementary, shorter-term path to restoring supply while wild stocks rebuild.

Buy back quota and reset with a permit-based system

85. Under Rescue Fish, we recommend the Government buy back the existing quota shares in SCA 1 and SCA CS before either fishery is reopened. This would remove scallops from the QMS and negate the undue influence of commercial quota interests on decisions about when to reopen.

86. Once abundance has recovered sufficiently, a permitting system needs to be established in place of the QMS, with fixed-term commercial harvest permits and resource rentals. Rental revenue from harvesting an abundant fishery would be used to fund repayment of the buyback, fulfil Treaty obligations by providing an ongoing return to Māori from commercial use of the fishery, and support independent monitoring.

87. Permits must only allow selective, low-impact harvesting methods, such as hand gathering (with or without breathing apparatus) or remote underwater gatherers, with effort limits and spatial separation between commercial and non-commercial fishers.

Closing comments

88. We ask that FNZ considers the alternative management regime set out in Part Two and works with stakeholders to implement it before any reopening of SCA 1 or SCA CS, including Whangārei Harbour, is contemplated.

89. If reform is effective, Northland and Coromandel scallops could be rebuilt to levels that will truly sustain harvest, support coastal communities, fulfil Treaty obligations, and meet the foreseeable needs of future generations.

Map of Whangārei Harbour area

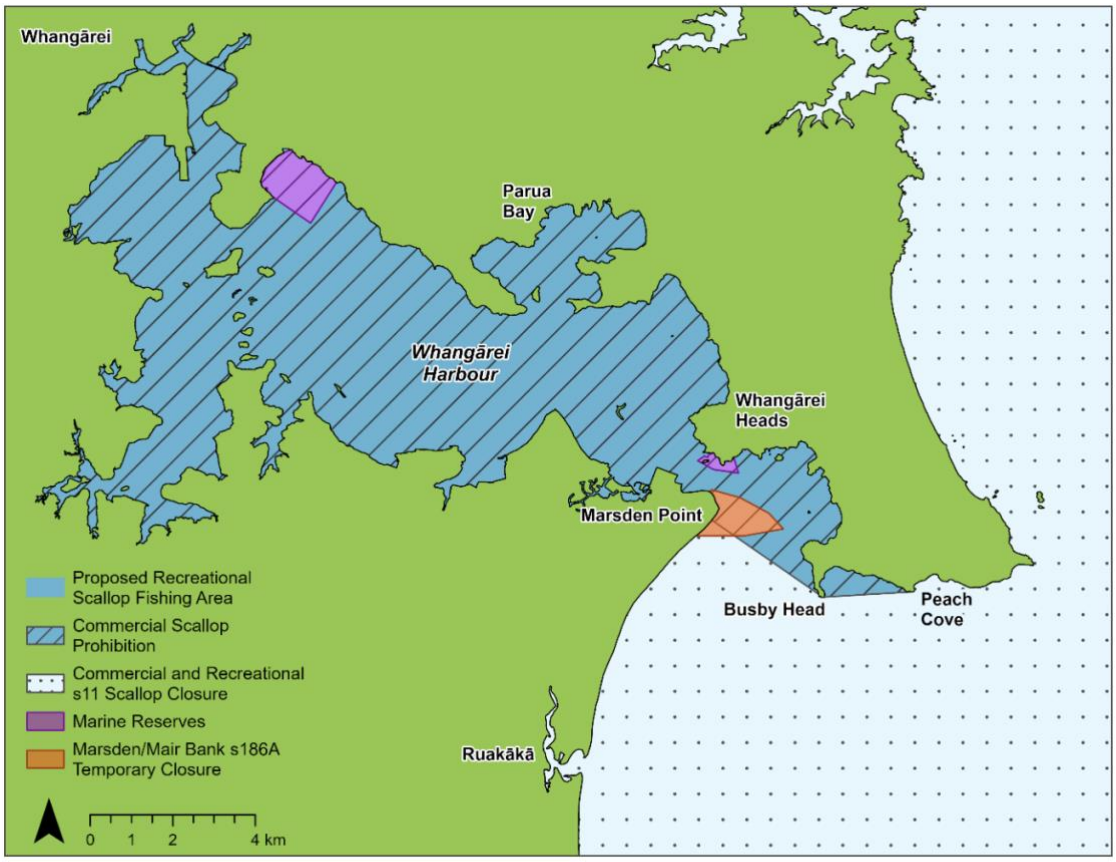


Figure 1: Proposed area that could be opened to recreational scallop fishing in the Whangārei Harbour (in dark blue). Commercial scallop fishing is already prohibited in the Harbour and the rest of SCA 1 outside the Harbour would remain closed to scallop fishing as a sustainability measure.