



Ministry of

Fisheries

Te Tautiaki i nga tini a Tangaroa

The Ministry of Fisheries Assessment of Effects of Aquaculture Management Areas on Fishing

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HAVE YOUR SAY ON MARINE FARMING

If you're a fisher, and you want to have your say about a proposed new marine farming area, this pamphlet explains how to get involved. Your feedback will help the Ministry of Fisheries (MFish) decide where aquaculture will be allowed to happen.

HOW MARINE FARMING IS MANAGED IN NEW ZEALAND

On 1 January 2005, New Zealand changed the way it manages marine farming – often referred to as the aquaculture reform. Under the reform legislation, new marine farms can only happen in areas specially zoned for aquaculture – these are called Aquaculture Management Areas (AMAs). Marine farming is not allowed anywhere else.

AMAs are created by regional councils and unitary authorities through a change to the regional coastal plan. The process for creating them is governed by the Resource Management Act. Part of the process involves a check by MFish called the Undue Adverse Effects test, to make sure the new area will not unduly affect recreational, customary or commercial fishing. Fishing means the catching, taking or harvesting of fish, aquatic life or seaweed.

The Undue Adverse Effects (UAE) test is done before notifying any plan changes to allow new AMAs. MFish has six months to make an “aquaculture decision” on the test.

Consultation with fishers

Marine farm developments can sometimes be good for fishers (mussel spat used to seed lines and the harvesting process can attract fish into the area). But sometimes a farm can block people from their favourite fishing spot.

Before doing the UAE assessment and making an aquaculture decision, MFish gathers information about fishing in the area of the proposed AMA. This is the time when fishers can get involved and say how they think the aquaculture proposal might affect them.

Once we have consulted with local fishers and gathered all the available information, MFish makes a preliminary decision. Then all parties to the process are asked what they think about the preliminary decision and can provide comments and/or additional information before a final decision is made. Parties are given four weeks to comment at each stage of consultation.

WHAT MFIISH CONSIDERS WHEN MAKING THE DECISION

MFish's decision comes at the end of a three-step process:

- Step one assesses whether there will be effects on any type of fishing (customary, recreational or commercial);
- Step two looks at the nature and extent of the effects, if any;
- Step three judges whether or not the effects are reasonable and acceptable.

With your help, MFish has to answer the following questions:

- Where are the existing fishing areas in relation to the proposed AMA?
- What effect will the AMA have on fishing, including what proportion of different fisheries might be affected?
- To what extent will aquaculture activities within the AMA exclude fishing from the area?
- What alternative areas are available for fishers?
- To what extent will the AMA increase the cost of fishing?
- What are the cumulative effects on fishing of any previous aquaculture activities?

MAKING THE DECISION

There are three possible outcomes of an aquaculture decision.

Green Light – acceptable effects on fishing

If MFish is satisfied that a proposed AMA would not have any undue adverse effects on any types of fishing, the chief executive makes a “determination” that no changes to the proposed AMA are required to accommodate fishing.

Red Light – unacceptable effects on customary or recreational fishing

If MFish believes the proposal would have an undue adverse effect on either customary or recreational fishing, then the areas where this effect occurs are given a “reservation” and will not be included in the final AMA. Any parts of the proposed AMA where customary or recreational fishing aren’t affected can get the green light from MFish.

Amber Light – unacceptable effects on commercial fishing

If MFish believes the proposal would have an undue adverse effect on commercial fishing, it will put a “reservation” on the areas of the proposed AMA where this effect occurs. This reservation gives marine farm applicants six months to negotiate with affected commercial fishers to try and reach an agreement that will allow marine farming to proceed.

HAVE YOUR SAY – IS YOUR FISHING AFFECTED?

MFish will want to hear your comments on how a proposed AMA could affect fishing.

In particular, we will want to hear your answers to the following questions.

How the proposed AMA may affect fishing grounds you use:

- Do customary, recreational or commercial fishers use the proposed area?
- What species are commonly taken, and how much?
- Does fishing happen all year round, or only at certain times? If the latter, when?

- Are you aware of any social or cultural values associated with fishing in that area?

The effect of the proposed AMA on your ability to fish:

- What fishing methods are normally used by people who fish in this area?
- Will the proposed marine farming area impede or prohibit the fishing methods you usually use?
- Are there alternative methods you could use if the proposed AMA goes ahead?
- Are these alternative methods as efficient at catching fish?

Can you use other fishing sites instead?

- Are alternative fishing sites available for you to fish?
- If so, how will your ability to fish be affected if you use the alternative sites?
- Are there any extra costs if you use the alternative sites (such as increase in petrol or increase in time)?

Any other comments?

MFish would be keen to receive any supporting information (such as GPS trawl lines or catch records), as site-specific information helps us to assess the potential effects on fishing. This information will help to support the other information fishers give us and information that we already hold.

We are also interested in any other comments you may have about the potential benefits and adverse effects of proposed AMAs on fishing. For example, would the proposed area add any cumulative effects on fishing when placed alongside any existing marine farming areas? Or, could the proposed area have a beneficial effect on your fishing?

More information about how aquaculture is managed in New Zealand is available at <http://www.aquaculture.govt.nz>

Information about how Aquaculture Management Areas are created can be found at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/rma/>

If you want to know more about the undue adverse effects test, information is available from the Aquaculture Team at the Ministry of Fisheries in Nelson (03 548 1069).