



Ministry of

Fisheries

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BLUE COD MANAGEMENT CONSULTATION OPENS

24 AUGUST 2010

Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister Phil Heatley has today welcomed public consultation on the Marlborough Sounds Blue Cod Management Group's plan for reopening the Marlborough Sounds recreational blue cod fishery.

Mr Heatley asked the Management Group, when it formed in March 2009, to develop a sustainable management plan for this fishery.

"I support lifting or relaxing the closure early so we can start fishing for blue cod again in a way we know is sustainable," says Mr Heatley.

He asked for a plan that:

- Would see the fishery opening sooner than the four years, either wholly or partially;
- Is easy for fishers to understand, and practical for them to use;
- Is straight forward for Ministry of Fisheries officers to police;
- Requires some form of recreational catch reporting, so success can be monitored.

Mr Heatley thanked the Management Group for its work to develop the plan to its current stage.

"The Blue Cod Management Group members are leaders of the local recreational fishing sector who have worked very hard on behalf of the whole community, giving many hours of their own time to develop this plan," he said.

"This hasn't been an easy process; fishing in the Marlborough Sounds is an activity many people are passionate about and there is a wide range of views within the community."

Mr Heatley said he would be keeping an open mind throughout the consultation process and wants to hear the views of the wider community before making any decisions.

"Once the consultation process finishes I will consider public submissions, advice from fishery managers and the latest scientific research before making a final decision on management measures for the fishery," he said

The Marlborough Sounds Blue Cod Management Group's draft management plan and an evaluation prepared by the Ministry of Fisheries are [available here](#).

All submissions from the public are welcome and must be received by 5 pm on Monday 4 October 2010.

Proposals

The Marlborough Blue Cod Management Group's draft management plan proposes the following regulatory measures:

- An extended Marlborough Sounds Area, using the existing Marlborough Sounds District Council (MDC) coastal boundary
 - A maximum of two hooks per line when fishing for any species in the proposed Marlborough Sounds Area
 - A maximum daily bag limit of two blue cod for the Marlborough Sounds and Challenger (East) areas
 - A maximum daily boat limit of 10 blue cod for the Marlborough Sounds Area
 - A maximum accumulation limit of two daily bags for the Marlborough Sounds and Challenger (East) areas if fishers are staying on a boat
 - A minimum legal size of 33 centimetres and maximum legal size of 45 centimetres (total fish length). The minimum size would apply to both the Marlborough Sounds and Challenger (East) areas. The maximum size would apply only to the Marlborough Sounds Area
 - Blue cod must be possessed and landed whole or gutted (no filleting at sea), unless for immediate personal consumption in both the Marlborough Sounds and Challenger (East) areas
 - A seasonal opening of the Marlborough Sounds Area from 1 April 2011 to 31 August 2011 and from 1 February to 31 August in subsequent years
 - A no-take zone for all finfish around Maud Island
 - Introduction of an amateur blue cod fishing permit regime. (Government policy is that there will be no licensing of recreational saltwater fishing; however, the Minister wishes to present all of the Management Group's proposals to the public to hear their views.)
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