



Office of Hon Phil Heatley

MP for Whangarei
Minister of Fisheries
Minister of Housing

18 NOV 2009

PH0558

Dr Hugh Barr
Secretary
Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations of New Zealand Inc
PO Box 1876
WELLINGTON

Dear Dr Barr

Thank you for your letter dated 23 October 2009 expressing concern about the recreational set net ban on the South Island's east coast, and the Marlborough Sounds blue cod ban.

I appreciate your concern about the recent ban of recreational set netting along the east coast South Island to protect the local Hector's dolphin population.

I assure you there is sufficient information to indicate the government should be concerned about the effects of fishing-related mortality on the Hector's dolphin. The best available information indicates that this population has declined and can only sustain a small number of human-induced mortalities without impacts on the ability of the population to increase in size. I am awaiting the outcome of Hector's and Maui's dolphins' litigation currently before the High Court before I reconsider commercial/recreational set netting or trawling regulations.

Your concern about the blue cod ban is similar to concerns expressed by other groups and individuals. I am conscious of the effect of the ban on recreational fishers and have already expressed my wish to have the fishery open again as soon as practical.

To that end, many of the matters you raised in your letter are being addressed. The Blue Cod Management Group, with support from the Ministry of Fisheries (the Ministry), is working on ways to manage the fishery now and into the future to ensure a healthy fishery for all.

Several relevant research projects are being completed and more are planned for the next few years. I expect the research will support the development of management options and guide the re-opening of the fishery.

The Blue Cod Management Group and the Ministry have developed some guidelines to help fishers to avoid catching cod in the closed areas and to reduce the mortality of any cod caught and returned. I encourage you to follow these guidelines, which can be found on the Ministry's website.¹

If you would like further information, please contact John Taunton-Clark, Team Leader Inshore Fisheries for the Ministry, on 09 820 7687 or John.Taunton-Clark@fish.govt.nz.

Kind regards



Hon Phil Heatley
Minister of Fisheries

¹ <http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Recreational/Most+Popular+Species/Blue+Cod/default.htm>