

Questions and Answers: fisheries and conservation

1. What are the next steps?

The public has until 21 July 2020 to comment on the proposals to vary the marine mammal protected areas to implement the planned non-fishing measures before they are finalised – see www.doc.govt.nz/tmp-review for more information.

In response to feedback from public consultation, we intend to consult further on commercial and recreational set-net closures between the north and south of Banks Peninsula. Other proposals will primarily focus on collaborative and innovative approaches, rather than the full method closures proposed today, to encourage individual vessels/operators to avoid bycatch of Hector's dolphins. To support this new approach consultation will include proposals to significantly expand the Crown-funded on-board camera programme across parts of the inshore fishing within Hector's dolphin habitat.

2. What does this mean for fishing off the North Island?

The west coast of the North Island, from Cape Reinga to Wellington, will be impacted by the new measures.

- New commercial and recreational set-net closures out to 4 nautical miles offshore will be created between Cape Reinga and Maunganui Bluff, and between Hawera and Wellington.
- Set-net closures will be extended between Maunganui Bluff and the Waiwhakaiho River (New Plymouth) from 7 nautical miles to 12 nautical miles offshore, as well as between the Waiwhakaiho River and Hawera from 2 nautical miles to 7 nautical miles offshore.
- Set-net closures within the Manukau Harbour will be extended to Taumatarea Point in the north and Matakawau Point in the south within the harbour.
- An extension to commercial trawl closures between Maunganui Bluff and Pariokariwa Point will be put in place, extending south to the Waiwhakaiho River (New Plymouth) and to 4 nautical miles offshore. This falls within the central Māui dolphin habitat zone.
- Commercial and recreational drift netting will be banned in its entirety in all New Zealand waters.
- A fishing-related mortality limit of one dolphin in the Māui dolphin habitat zone, which extends from Cape Reinga to Cape Egmont, will be put in place
- New measures will enable the use of commercial ring nets within the existing west coast North Island harbour set net closure areas.

3. What does this mean for fishing off the South Island?

The South Island will be impacted by new measures introduced on the north, east and south coasts.

- New commercial and recreational set-net closures out to 4 nautical miles offshore will be created within Golden and Tasman Bay, from Farewell Spit to Cape Soucis (Raetihi).
- Commercial set-net closures off Kaikōura will be extended as per the community proposed boundaries; no change to the current 4 nautical miles recreational closure.
- Commercial and recreational set-net closures will be extended off the east coast to encompass Pegasus Bay, approximately 19 nautical miles offshore southeast from the headland east of Motunau Beach offshore and then southwest to a point 7 nautical miles offshore from Goat Point.
- Commercial and recreational set-net closures will be extended off the east coast from Snuffle Nose southwest to 12 nautical miles offshore across the Canterbury Bight to just south of Timaru to the existing 4 nautical miles offshore boundary.

- Commercial and recreational set-net closures will be extended within Te Waewae Bay (between Sand Hill Point and Wakaputa Point) to 10 nautical miles offshore.
- Commercial and recreational drift netting will be banned in its entirety in all New Zealand waters.
- We intend to consult on additional measures for trawl and set-net fishing to address the remaining fisheries risk in the South Island.
- In response to feedback from public consultation, we intend to consult further on commercial and recreational set-net closures between the north and south of Banks Peninsula.
- Consultation will primarily focus on collaborative and innovative approaches, rather than the full method closures previously proposed, to encourage individual vessels/operators to avoid bycatch of Hector's dolphins.
- To support this new approach consultation will include proposals to significantly expand the Crown-funded on-board camera programme across parts of the inshore fishing within Hector's dolphin habitat.

4. What impact will there be on fishing vessels currently operating in the Maui dolphin habitat with on-board cameras?

The camera systems installed on vessels remain Crown-owned assets. Officials are working through the details of what needs to happen with assets installed on vessels that no longer have a use for them under the new regulations. They will be in touch with affected vessel operators soon, to discuss next steps.

5. Where are the marine mammal protected areas being extended?

The southern boundary of the West Coast North Island marine mammal protected area would be extended from Oakura, Taranaki, further south to Wellington. The Banks Peninsula marine mammal protected area would extend north to join up with the Te Rohe o Te Whānau Puha marine mammal protected area off Kaikōura, and further south to Timaru. It would also extend further offshore, from 12 nautical miles currently to 20 nautical miles.

6. When will the non-fishing measures be finalised?

Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act requires the public to have until 21 July 2020 to have their say on proposed changes to marine mammal protected areas. Following this final stage of consultation the Minister of Conservation will finalise the plans after considering any submissions.

7. What's the evidence behind the toxoplasmosis plan?

While bycatch of dolphins in fishing nets is a major known threat to the dolphins, toxoplasmosis is a significant human-generated threat to Māui dolphins and to some sub-populations of Hector's dolphins.

It's important to address all threats to Hector's and Māui dolphins through the Threat Management Plan if we are to ensure the survival of these special dolphins. The Toxoplasmosis Action Plan to reduce impacts of the disease in the longer term will incorporate:

- Research to better understand the pathways by which the dolphins are infected and the impacts of the disease, as well as assessing and prioritising potential management actions.
- A Strategic Science Advisory Group established at the end of 2019 that will deliver a research plan with input from international experts.
- Steps to increase public awareness of the scale of the issues involved in managing this parasite, and the impact of the disease on the dolphins.
- Strategy to be developed around behaviour change with respect to cat ownership and management options.

- Work with other agencies, including councils, to take action to reduce loading of the parasite into the marine environment, including through riparian planting, storm and wastewater management, and pest management, and through existing programmes that would contribute to the understanding and reduction of transport of the parasite to the marine environment.