



Office of Hon Phil Heatley

MP for Whangarei

Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture

Minister of Housing

H1044

Dear Stakeholder

This letter outlines my final decisions on the in-season review of the catch limit for southern bluefin tuna (STN 1). Copies of the initial and final advice papers are available on the Ministry of Fisheries' website (www.fish.govt.nz).

I have decided to increase the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for southern bluefin tuna within the current (2010-11) fishing year. This brings the TAC to around the same level as applied in the 2009-10 fishing year. In conjunction with the increase to the TAC, I have also decided to make available additional annual catch entitlements (ACE) to commercial fishers, and to increase the allowances for recreational fishing and other sources of fishing related mortality, as outlined in the table below. These decisions came into effect the day after they were notified in the *New Zealand Gazette*, and will be in force only for the current fishing year.

Table 1: TAC, allowances and ACE (tonnes) for southern bluefin tuna (STN 1)

STN 1	TAC (t)	Customary Allowance	Recreational Allowance	Fishing – related mortality	ACE
2010-11 fishing year (in-season increase)	539	1	8	3	558*

* This figure includes ACE generated by the TACC; un-fished ACE carried forward from the 2009-10 fishing year, and an additional 114t of ACE made available through the in-season increase. Taking into account this figure and the other allowances, the total available catch will be 570t.

The initial position paper released on 10 November 2010 also contained options that would apply to the 2011-12 fishing year. I am still considering these options, but will advise stakeholders in due course on my decision.

My decision to increase the TAC within the current season is in line with outcomes of a meeting of an international fisheries body (the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna – CCSBT) in October 2009. At this meeting, New Zealand successfully negotiated to reduce the global TAC to enable rebuilding of the severely depleted fishery, leading to a 20% reduction in global TAC (from 11,810t to 9,449t). New Zealand also successfully negotiated a resolution to a long-standing concern about New Zealand's inequitable allocation in comparison to other countries that also fish for southern bluefin tuna, resulting in an increase to New Zealand's available catch (from 420t to 570t for 2010 and 2011). Other countries' allocations were

reduced further in order to accommodate an increase for New Zealand, so this did not affect the overall outcome for the stock.

The in-season increase in the catch limit enables additional utilisation of the southern bluefin tuna stock, whilst remaining within limits set for New Zealand by CCSBT as part of overall management of the fishery aimed at recovery of the stock. CCSBT has adopted a range of measures that are designed to ensure overall sustainability of the stock. These measures include the 20% reduction in global catches; implementation of a science-based management procedure for setting catch limits in the future; strengthening of compliance measures; and a fall-back agreement on further substantial cuts to global catches if the management procedure is not adopted.

I gave careful consideration to those submitters who were concerned at any increase in catches for this stock, given its low stock status. However, the measures adopted by CCSBT will, when fully implemented, lead to a rebuild of the fishery over time.

I would like to thank all those who participated in the Ministry's consultation process. I appreciate the amount of work and effort that went into the formulation of your submissions.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Phil Heatley', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Phil Heatley
Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture