



**Media Release – for immediate release**

**18 March 2014**

**Key support for crayfish and scallop abundance**

More than 30,000 recreational fishers and environmentalists have joined the campaign asking Nathan Guy to make a favourable decision to enhance depleted crayfish and scallop numbers at [www.legasea.co.nz/crayscallop](http://www.legasea.co.nz/crayscallop).

The Minister for Primary Industries is due to decide on management changes by the end of the month.

Any decision for selected crayfish stocks and southern scallops will apply from 1 April, the start of the next commercial fishing year.

Adam El-Agez, LegaSea spokesperson, said the majority of online public comments support the underlying concerns that the numbers and size of crayfish in many northeastern areas are severely depleted and worsening.

“The greater Hauraki Gulf and Bay of Plenty is the most depleted stock in the country. According to Ministry figures commercial effort has had to double in this area in order for them to catch the same amount of crayfish. Where does that end, and where does that leave the guy who's got one pot or a single tank of air to try and catch a feed for his family?”

Ministry research shows recreational fishers in the northeast are only taking home around 28% of their annual entitlement.

In the same management area, CRA2, commercial fishers are only getting an average of 410g per potlift, compared to 1.7kg in Northland and 2.45kg south of East Cape.

Campaigners are urging Mr Guy to listen, and respect, the concerns of people who have observed what is happening out on the water. Many online contributors have been diving for more than 15 years. These people agree with the Ministry data showing low stock levels and increasing commercial effort, because it matches their own experience of the fishery. They have witnessed the serious depletion of crayfish stocks and increasing commercial effort, even in remote areas that used to be productive.

They urge Mr. Guy to reject the nominal 15% commercial catch reduction suggested by his Ministry, which is predicted to hold abundance to a low, average catch rate of just 0.48 kg per potlift over the next 20 years.

Mr El-Agez believes it would be politically unpalatable for the Minister to ignore the public's concerns about low catch rates.

"I cannot see how Mr Guy could reasonably or deliberately hold the stock levels in that area at an all-time low for the next 20 years, as predicted by the Ministry, just because export prices are so high.

"People want a commitment from the Minister now to double the stock level, to help restore it to an abundant level", continues Mr El-Agez.

Alternative management strategies have been proposed and the online campaign by LegaSea has rallied support for two comprehensive submissions sent to the Minister over the past month.

A plan to rebuild the collapsed scallop fishery at the top of the South Island has also been submitted.

Mr El-Agez says, "People have been grateful for the opportunity to tell their stories of previously abundant scallops in Golden Bay, Tasman Bay and the Marlborough Sounds. Now that the Nelson bays are depleted these experienced fishermen are worried about the long-term environmental damage caused by industrial dredges being dragged around sensitive areas in the Marlborough Sounds".

LegaSea is hopeful the Minister takes time to consider successful management in other areas of the country such as CRA5, around the top and east coast of the South Island, where abundance is high and commercial and non-commercial interests work together for long-term communal benefits.

LegaSea's online campaign tool. [www.legasea.co.nz/crayscallop](http://www.legasea.co.nz/crayscallop)

**ENDS**

**Contact:**

Adam El-Agez  
LegaSea campaign coordinator  
021 318575

**Background information**

LegaSea promotes fisheries management practices that will allow for 'more fish in the water'. [www.legasea.co.nz](http://www.legasea.co.nz)

LegaSea brings together the energies and resources of the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council, other groups and individuals seeking to protect and conserve New Zealand's marine resources for future generations.

An estimated one million Kiwis enjoy fishing. Protecting the marine environment, our fisheries and public access is vital to maintaining our Kiwi lifestyle and national wellbeing.

LegaSea was launched in February 2012 to facilitate people working together, to raise public awareness and promote education.

Also, to provide an opportunity for people to unite in action, to stand for and protect New Zealand's precious marine resources for our people, our communities and for the future.

### **NZSFC-LegaSea submissions**

Submission on the review of rock lobster (crayfish) sustainability measures for 1 April 2014

<http://www.legasea.co.nz/documents/CRA-submission-NZSFC-Feb14.pdf>

Submission on the review of sustainability measures for southern scallops (SCA 7) for 1 April 2014

<http://www.legasea.co.nz/documents/SCA7-submission-NZSFC-Feb14.pdf>

### **LegaSea campaigns**

In 2013 LegaSea managed two successful campaigns –

Hands OFF our marlin

<http://www.legasea.co.nz/marlin-feedback.php>

SOS Save Our Snapper

<http://www.legasea.co.nz/snapper1.php>