



East Coromandel scallop fishery to close for 2 years

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The east Coromandel scallop fishery will close for a period of 2 years from this Saturday, 11 September following a request from the Ngāti Hei Trust.

The closure covers scallop fishing in an area extending along the east Coromandel coastline from Anarake Point to Ruahiwihiwi Point, where Ngāti Hei exercise mana moana, and includes Opito Bay. Other fishing in the area can continue under existing rules.

Director of fisheries management, Emma Taylor says public consultation on the request took place between April and May.

"We received more than 2,000 submissions, with the majority supporting a closure.

"The feedback from tangata whenua and the public reflects the results of recent scientific surveys, commissioned by Fisheries New Zealand. These highlight concerns around the sustainability of scallop stocks right across the northern scallop fisheries, including the east Coromandel area.

"While addressing fishing activity is part of the picture, we also know that scallops are affected by land-based impacts such as sedimentation, and by changes to water quality.

"The closure will relieve some of the pressure while work continues by central and local Government to address fishing and non-fishing related impacts.

"A large part of Opito Bay was already closed to commercial scallop harvesting, on top of seasonal restrictions for both recreational and commercial fishing.

"The new closure area is much larger and applies to both recreational and commercial scallop fishing. This will support scallop populations, across a larger area of the coastline and is part of the overall scallop management picture that Fisheries New Zealand is currently considering.

The closure follows a customary rāhui placed by Ngāti Hei on the Opito Bay area in December, to take pressure off the scallop fishery.

"Customary management tools and temporary closures such as rāhui, provide an important mechanism to support the protection of our fisheries resources.

The closure will be legally enforceable from Saturday. Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) fishery officers will continue to patrol the coast supporting public awareness and enforcing the rules.

Anyone with information about suspected illegal fishing should contact MPI on 0800 4 POACHER to report it.

Background information

- The Ngāti Hei Trust requested a 2-year temporary closure of the scallop fishery over waters of the east Coromandel coast.
- Their application included the extended waters of east Coromandel from Anarake Point to Ruahiwihiwi Point and encompassing offshore waters around the Cuvier, Great Mercury, and Aldermen Islands. This includes Opito Bay which had been subject to a voluntary rāhui put in place by Ngāti Hei.

- Public consultation on the Temporary Closure request took place between April and May, including consultation with Ngāti Hei and other tangata whenua, along with commercial and recreational fishers, and environmental interests.
- Fisheries New Zealand received a total of 2,381 submissions with the majority of submitters in support of a closure.
- The Minister for Oceans and Fisheries approved the temporary closure to the take of scallops for a 2-year period in east Coromandel, pursuant to section 186A of the Fisheries Act 1996, to recognise and make provision for the use and management practices of Ngāti Hei by improving the availability of scallops in this area.
- The closure takes effect from Saturday, 11 September 2021.

Image file

[East Coromandel closure map \[dmsdocument/47488-East-coromandel-closure-map-2021-2023\].\[JPG, 7.3 MB\]](#)