

# Omaha petition prompts rock pool protection

An Omaha Beach community petition to stop the plundering of sea creatures from rock pools has made further waves since its presentation to Parliament earlier this year. The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has responded to petition organiser Mary Coupe's request by proposing a two-year ban on the taking of a range of species from the shore.

MPI is seeking public feedback on temporarily prohibiting hand-gathering all species of fish and aquatic life within 360 metres of the shoreline between Cape Rodney and Tawharanui.

However, the ban would not include some shellfish species such as pāua, rock lobster, kina, cockles, pipis, dredge oysters, scallops and tuatua.

Ms Coupe's petition gained more than 3000 signatures and prompted the Petitions Committee in Parliament to request MPI for a response.

In addition to a temporary ban, the petition sought a permanent solution from Parliament, asking it to reduce the legal take limits for various rock pool species.

Currently, a single person is allowed a combined take of 50 crabs, limpets, starfish, periwinkles, cats eyes and sea cucumbers.

In its response to the petition, MPI said it could look at reducing the limit if there was evidence to suggest the current rules pose a "sustainability risk".

It admitted it held little information on the numbers of rock pool species and said that it would undertake a survey within the



Petition organiser Mary Coupe, pictured with Mahurangi ki Kaipara MP Chris Penk.

The proposed area where the ban would be enforced.

Hauraki Gulf Marine Park within the next two years.

Changes to the legal take limits would require regulatory amendment, which MPI says is a "lengthy process".

However, it says streamlining the process is one of the focuses of an upcoming Fisheries Amendment Bill.

Submissions on the ban should be sent to [FMSubmissions@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:FMSubmissions@mpi.govt.nz) by January 31.



## Fisheries New Zealand

Tini a Tangaroa

### CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

#### Request for a temporary fishing closure in the Leigh – Tawharanui area

Pursuant to section 186A of the Fisheries Act 1996, the Protect Rock Pools Committee has requested a temporary fishing closure of the fisheries waters along a coastal strip approximately 360 m wide, between the Cape Rodney – Okakari Point Marine Reserve (commonly known as the Leigh or Goat Island Marine Reserve) and the Tawharanui Marine Reserve, excluding Whangateau Harbour.

The requested temporary closure will prohibit hand-gathering of all species of fish, aquatic life, or seaweed, except pāua, rock lobster, kina, cockles, pipis, dredge oysters, scallops, and tuatua. The requested temporary closure is for a two-year period.

Temporary closures apply to recreational, commercial, and customary fishing.

#### Proposed Leigh – Tawharanui temporary closure

The temporary closure includes all that area of New Zealand fisheries waters enclosed by a line:

- (a) starting at a point on the mean high-water mark on the eastern boundary of the Cape Rodney – Okakari Point Marine Reserve at 36°16.638'S and 174°49.296'E; then
- (b) proceeding in a straight line in a northerly direction to a point approximately 360 m offshore, on the eastern boundary of the Cape Rodney – Okakari Point Marine Reserve, at 36°16.443'S and 174°49.296'E; then
- (c) proceeding in a generally south-westerly then south-easterly direction along a line every point of which is approximately 360 m offshore from the mean high-water mark to a point offshore north of the western boundary of the Tawharanui Marine Reserve at 36°21.486'S and 174°49.256'E; then
- (d) proceeding in a straight line in a southerly direction to a point on the mean high-water mark on the western boundary of the Tawharanui Marine Reserve at 36°21.735'S and 174°49.259'E; then
- (e) proceeding along the mean high-water mark in a generally north-westerly direction to a point at approximately the middle groyne at Te Tamutu Point at the southern entrance of Whangateau Harbour at 36°19.312'S and 174°46.789'E; then
- (f) proceeding in a straight line to a point on the mean-high water mark on Ti Point at 36°19.184'S and 174°47.024'E; then
- (g) proceeding in a generally north-easterly direction along the mean high-water mark to the starting point.

Fisheries New Zealand invites written submissions in response to the request from persons who have an interest in the species concerned or in the effects of fishing in the area concerned.

Submissions must be made by **5pm, on Monday 31 January 2022**. You can email your submission to [FMSubmissions@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:FMSubmissions@mpi.govt.nz).

While we prefer email, you can post your submission to:

Spatial Planning and Allocations  
Fisheries Management  
Fisheries New Zealand  
PO Box 2526  
Wellington 6140.

Further information about temporary closures, including a copy of the request and a map of the proposed area, is available on the Fisheries New Zealand website ([www.fisheries.govt.nz](http://www.fisheries.govt.nz)), or by contacting Fisheries New Zealand at the above address.

#### Submissions are public information

Note, that any submission you make becomes public information. People can ask for copies of submissions under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). The OIA says we have to make submissions available unless we have good reasons for withholding them. This is explained in sections 6 and 9 of the OIA.

Tell us if you think there are grounds to withhold specific information in your submission. Reasons might include that it is personal information or commercially sensitive. However, any decision MPI makes to withhold information can be reviewed by the Ombudsman, who may tell us to release it.

*Blake Abernethy, Team Manager Spatial Planning and Allocations*

