



TE RUNANGA O TE RARAWA

Submissions New Special Permit Feral Oysters

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Submitter: Abe Witana

Organization: Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa

Number of Individuals we represent: Approximately 15,000.¹

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Introduction

Te Runanga o Te Rarawa is the iwi authority representing the interests of the marae and hapu that make up the iwi of Te Rarawa. The Runanga is made up of one Trustee and one alternate Trustee for each of the affiliated marae in the rohe of Te Rarawa. Currently there are 23 marae affiliated. The traditional rohe of Te Rarawa is described as the area from Hokianga to Maungataniwha, down through Victoria Valley river to Maimaru, across from Awanui Bridge west to Te Oneroa a Tohe (the Ninety Mile Beach) at Hukatere, then down to Mitimiti and Hokianga.

Organisational Information

The Runanga meets every month on the third Wednesday at Toka Tumoana, Kaitaia. It elects an Executive that oversees the day-to-day operations of the Runanga. The Executive meets in between monthly Runanga meetings to govern the operations of the Runanga working alongside the Executive Officer. It reports back to the Runanga each month and prioritises issues to bring to each meeting. The Runanga offices are based in Kaitaia and it employs more than 50 staff.

Summary of the Proposal

Ministry Primary Industries is seeking submissions on a proposal to establish a new purpose for issuing special permits under section 97(1)(c) of the Fisheries act 1996. The proposed purpose is to:

“provide interim relief so that marine farmers affected by the oyster herpes virus can take wild (feral) Pacific oysters for the purpose of relay and/or transfer onto a marine farm for ongrowing and sale without the requirement to hold a commercial fishing permit and land to a licensed fish receiver, subject to food safety requirements.”

Special permits issued under this purpose will be valid for a maximum of three years and will enable an oyster farmer (whose business is affected by the herpes virus) to take wild (feral) oysters for relay and/or transfer purposes onto their marine farm for ongrowing and sale, subject to food safety requirements.

Special permits issued under this purpose will specifically exempt farmers from the commercial fishing requirements to hold a fishing permit to gather wild oysters and land to a Licensed Fish Receiver (LFR).

¹ Based on the 2006 Census iwi population count. However, on our own iwi estimations our iwi population is nearer to 25,000.

Submissions

Te Runanga O Te Rarawa acknowledges that the intention of this proposal is to provide interim relief to affected oyster farmers in light of high oyster mortalities and associated financial hardship as a result of the herpes virus.

Although Te Runanga O Te Rarawa is supportive of this proposal as we have whanau who are in the oyster and oyster spat industry. Te Runanga O Te Rarawa would like the following matters considered when authorising a special permit:

1. Non commercial fishers are able to continue to gather wild oysters
2. Avoid the spread of the herpes virus during the transfer of wild oysters on to oyster farms
3. Collection of wild oysters for farms are from within the area where the oyster farms are located
4. Regular testing for the virus should be conducted before and after harvesting and planting of wild oysters
5. Research needs to be conducted to better understand the feral oyster populations
6. A method for data collection of wild oyster harvesting be part of the permitting regime

Failure to monitor the virus and collect harvesting data may put this resource at risk due to over exploitation of the wild stocks and may negatively impact the future collection of oysters, both for customary and commercial purposes.