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To: <mpaconsultation@mfe.govt.nz>
Date: Sat, 12 Mar 2016 23:46:28 +1300
Subject: submission.
Kia Ora, To whom it may concern.

My apologies, I'm 2 days late with this submission, I have been out on a charter and just returned today.

We have run an Eco -Tour Business in Totaranui, (Queen Charlotte Sounds for the last 20 yrs) , we used to run fishing charters for up to 25 people, but when the fish stocks dropped that low that we were spending all day throwing back undersized Blue Cod , I said to my wife , I cant do this any more I don't want to be guilty of catching the last Fish !) we changed tack and started an Eco tour business focusing on History , culture and environment.

We steam right out to the outer limits of the Sounds most days over the summer, we look for dolphins seals penguins, visit iconic sites and take guided tours on island bird sanctuaries.

There are two issues that I would like to bring to your attention :

The thing that all of our tourist want to see more than anything else is the Dolphins, we see Orca , Bottle Nose, and Duskie and Hectors in our Sounds at different times during the year.

The Orca cruise in or past the Sounds about every 2 months, the Duskie migrate South to Kaikoura about Christmas when the water temperature rises, but we have always had the Bottle nose and Hectors to fall back on.

But in the last few years the Bottle nose have stopped coming in, they are absent now between Christmas until after Easter, I don't know why , suspect that its either because the boaties and swim with dolphin companies have put then under too much pressure or there just aren't enough fish in the Sounds to sustain them.

People say we should shoot all the seals because they eat all of our fish ! they forget that 50 bottle Nose need a colossal amount of fish to sustain themselves, 20 years ago there was a pod of Bottle nose that stayed in the Sounds year round. We once took a marine biologist out to study that pod, they wintered over in East Bay until the commercial scallop fleet came in and dredged the bay , they destroyed the bentic life and that was the end of it, they left a week latter.

So now the most valuable attraction for the Marlborough Sounds tourism industry are the little Hector Dolphins, but there are only 20 of them left . Between Christmas till after Easter they are the only dolphins to be found in Totaranui.

Its important for you know this and to understand that they are bottom feeders, all other dolphins are midwater feeders, the Hectors feed off the Red and brown algies , flounders, paddle crabs etc.... when the scallop boats both commercial and recreational, bottom dredge they destroy the habitat and nearly every recreational craft in the sounds has a scallop dredge.

It is vitally important that you put some form of protection in place to protect these beautiful creatures. In my mind the only thing that will work is to place a complete ban on bottom dredging both commercial and recreational.

There should also be research done into why their numbers have dropped so low and wheter or not they inter breed with pods outside the Sounds, I suspect that the numbers are so low because 20 is all the habitat that remains can sustain. Without bottom dredging the bentic habitat would recover ..

2nd issue;

30 yrs ago the Sowman whanau in Resolution Bay placed a voluntary Marine Protected Area in their Bay, most of the Soundies respected it and the whanau feed the fish. The Blue

Cod are fantastic, the biggest I have ever seen, (and I have been a commercial fisherman!) over the years we have taken literally thousands of tourists into see these fish, (hundreds and hundreds of school children on our school camps.

However the MPA is only a voluntary reserve it has no basis in Law and since the slot rule has been removed the recreational fishermen have been going in and slaying these beautiful fish. Again, this reserve is vitally important to our Tourism industry and I urge you to please check it out and give their MPA protection under law , you have done it for double Cove . All of the tourist boats call in every day to see these fish.

We believe that all the islands in the Sounds with the exception of Arapawa and durville should be surrounded by marine reserves as all of them are DOC reserves and most are bird sanctuaries, a reserve on the land should be mirrored by the same around its coastal fringe. This would at least stop bottom dredging around islands and give the little Hectors some habitat protection.

Last thing is ,why is it that MOFisheries don't demand a standard long shank COD hook size that is too big to be swallowed and allow foul hooking , when we were charter fishing these were the only hooks I allowed and I used to close all the barbs up with pliers, after a quick lesson and being instructed to keep a steady upward pressure the punters would catch just as many fish and if they were undersize, a quick flick and they were off the hook without having to handle them.

My Whanau have lived , fished and farmed the sounds since 1850, we have lived the history and are very saddened by the current state of the fish and kaimoana stocks but believe that with the right management it could be made sustainable for recreational fishing.

Thank you for reading my Submission,

Pete & Takutai Beech.