

Selected Heavily Infested Areas for Farming Undaria – October 2011

Purpose

The purpose of this information paper is to outline selected heavily infested areas around New Zealand where undaria farming is considered appropriate under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's revised policy for the commercial use of *Undaria pinnatifida* (*Undaria*), dated May 2010 (<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/biosec/pol/statements>).

Key Points

- In May 2010, MAF released a revised *Undaria* policy that allows for greater commercial use of undaria. The general scope of the new regime includes:
 - allowing undaria to be **farmed** in certain heavily infested areas; and
 - allowing undaria to be **harvested** when it is growing on artificial surfaces (e.g. marinas), when it has been cast ashore onto the beach or when part of a programme specifically designed to control undaria.
- To implement the farming component of the policy MAF has identified heavily infested areas around New Zealand where it would be appropriate to consider undaria farming.
- To harvest and farm undaria, permission under sections 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act is required¹. To farm undaria, permission under the Biosecurity Act is required in addition to generic legislative requirements relating to aquaculture. For more information on how to apply for such a permission, refer to <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/biosec/pol/statements/unwanted-organisms-permission>. MAF does not guarantee the outcome of any applications, all applications will be assessed in accordance with the Biosecurity Act 1993.

Selected Heavily Infested Areas

MAF has assessed that it would be appropriate to consider undaria farming in the following heavily infested areas:

- Wellington Harbour excluding the port area,
- The Marlborough Sounds in zones approved for marine farming under the Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan; and
- Lyttelton Harbour excluding the port area and Akaroa Harbour excluding the entrance to Akaroa and port area

Note: while the above harbours have been identified as areas where it would be appropriate to consider farming undaria there are logistical reasons as to why is unlikely to occur within the port areas of the harbours.

To identify these areas MAF established an undaria Expert Advisory Group (the Expert Group) to help identify areas that are heavily infested with undaria and provide advice

¹ Undaria, an Asian seaweed, was accidentally introduced to New Zealand in the mid-1980s. Under the Biosecurity Act 1993, Undaria is an unwanted organism throughout New Zealand and a pest in five regions.

on whether it would be appropriate to consider farming undaria in these areas. The Expert Group consisted of individuals with conservation, ecological, Maori and industry (aquaculture) perspectives and represented a New Zealand wide distribution. MAF also consulted regional councils, Iwi and environmental stakeholders before finalising the location of these areas.

Heavily infested areas are considered to be areas where undaria is present and conspicuous over an 'extended spatial area' and where undaria has been present for greater than five years. The term 'extended spatial area' is considered to be those situations where undaria is present on the shoreline or on marine farms on a 1 km or larger scale, including areas where undaria is spatially or temporally patchy throughout the year.

MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS

MAF will consider applications to farm undaria in areas in the Marlborough Sounds that are in alignment with the coastal marine zones in the Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan (MSRMP) (see Map 1). This would mean that undaria farming would be prohibited in Coastal Marine Zone 1 but considered in areas within Coastal Marine Zone 2. The rationale for constraining undaria farming in the Marlborough Sounds to Coastal Marine Zone 2 is outlined below.

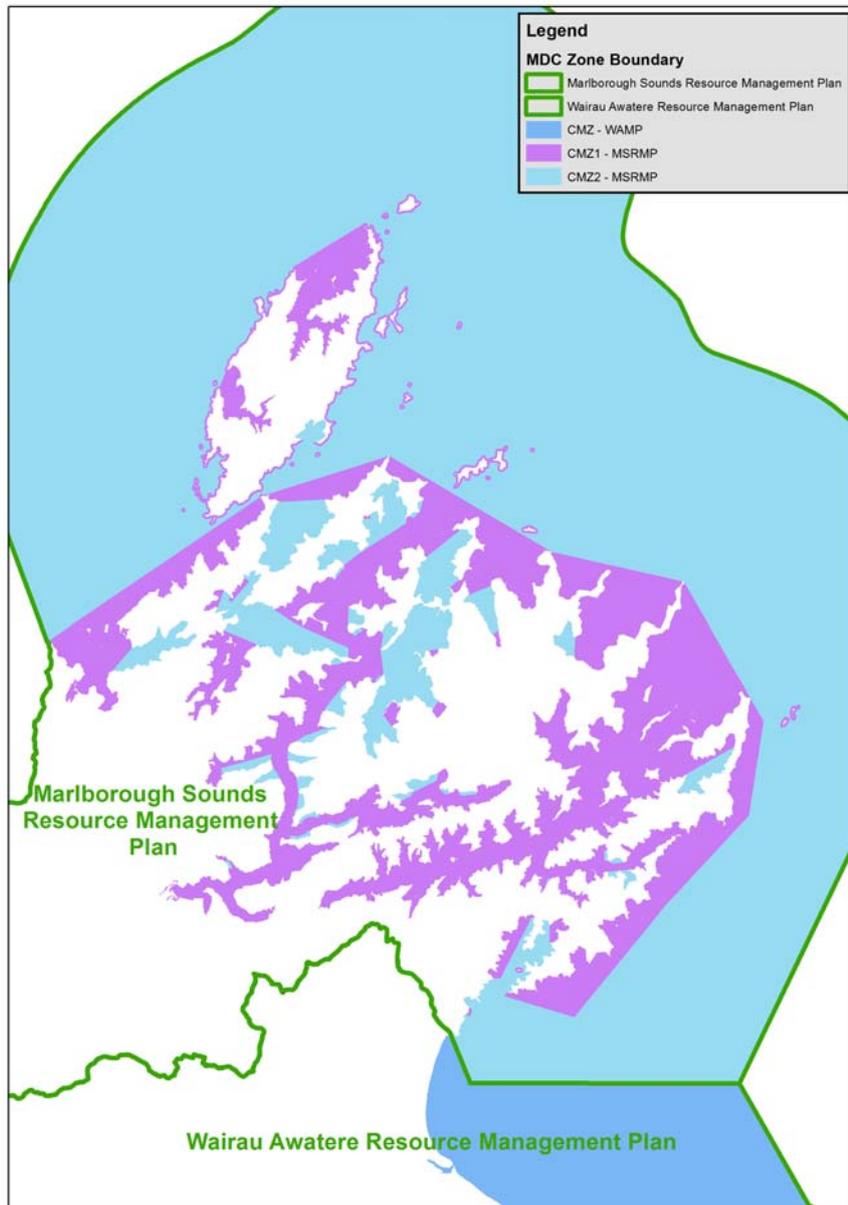
- The Expert Group advised that they considered farms in the Marlborough Sounds to be heavily infested with undaria. As farming occurs extensively throughout Coastal Marine Zone 2 it is reasonable to assume these areas would meet the definition of a heavily infested area.
- There is very limited farming outside of Coastal Marine Zone 2, and as such these areas are unlikely to meet the definition of a heavily infested since the Expert Group previously indicated that it was the farms, rather than the shore line, that were heavily infested in the Marlborough Sounds. Also, where farms do occur outside of Coastal Marine Zone 2 they are limited in size and number.

The MSRMP identified that in Coastal Marine Zone 1 any type of marine farming would have significant adverse effects on, among other things, natural character, ecological systems or cultural, residential and amenity values.

Within Coastal Marine Zone 2 it is proposed that undaria farming be restricted to areas that are close to and adjacent to the shore as these are the only areas that have been characterised as heavily infested with undaria. Farming undaria outside of heavily infested areas could exacerbate the impact of undaria. In addition, under the MSRMP establishing a marine farm within 50 m, or beyond 200 m, of the mean low water mark is a non-complying activity.

A map of the Marlborough Coastal Zones is below however for more detailed information on the zoning please refer to <http://www.marlborough.govt.nz/Your-Council/RMA/Marlborough-Sounds-Resource-Management-Plan/Volume-3/Zoning-Map-Index.aspx>

Map 1: Marlborough Coastal Marine Zones

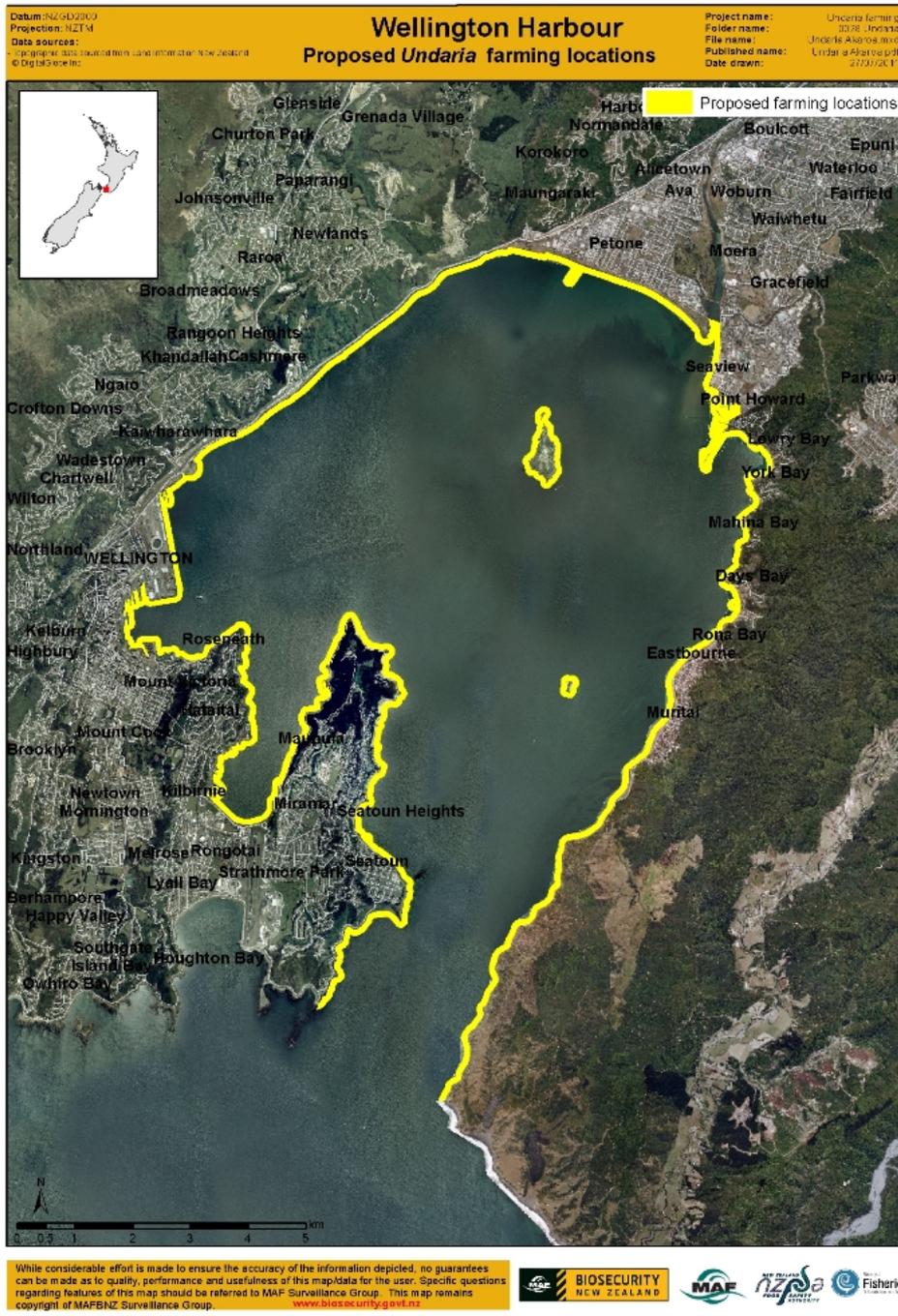


WELLINGTON

MAF will consider applications to farm undaria in Wellington Harbour. The Expert Group considered Wellington Harbour to be heavily infested with undaria and that farming was likely to pose limited additional risk to the values within the vicinity.

Following consultation with Greater Wellington Regional Council the port area of Wellington harbour is not considered suitable for farming undaria (see Map 2).

Map 2: Proposed *Undaria* farming locations in Wellington



BANKS PENINSULA

Lyttelton harbour

MAF will consider applications to farm *Undaria* in Lyttelton Harbour (excluding the port area). The Expert Group considered Lyttelton Harbour to be heavily infested with *Undaria* and that farming was likely to pose limited additional risk to the values within the vicinity (see Map 3).

Akaroa Harbour

MAF will consider applications to farm *Undaria* within Akaroa Harbour (excluding the entrance to the harbour and port area) (see Map 4).

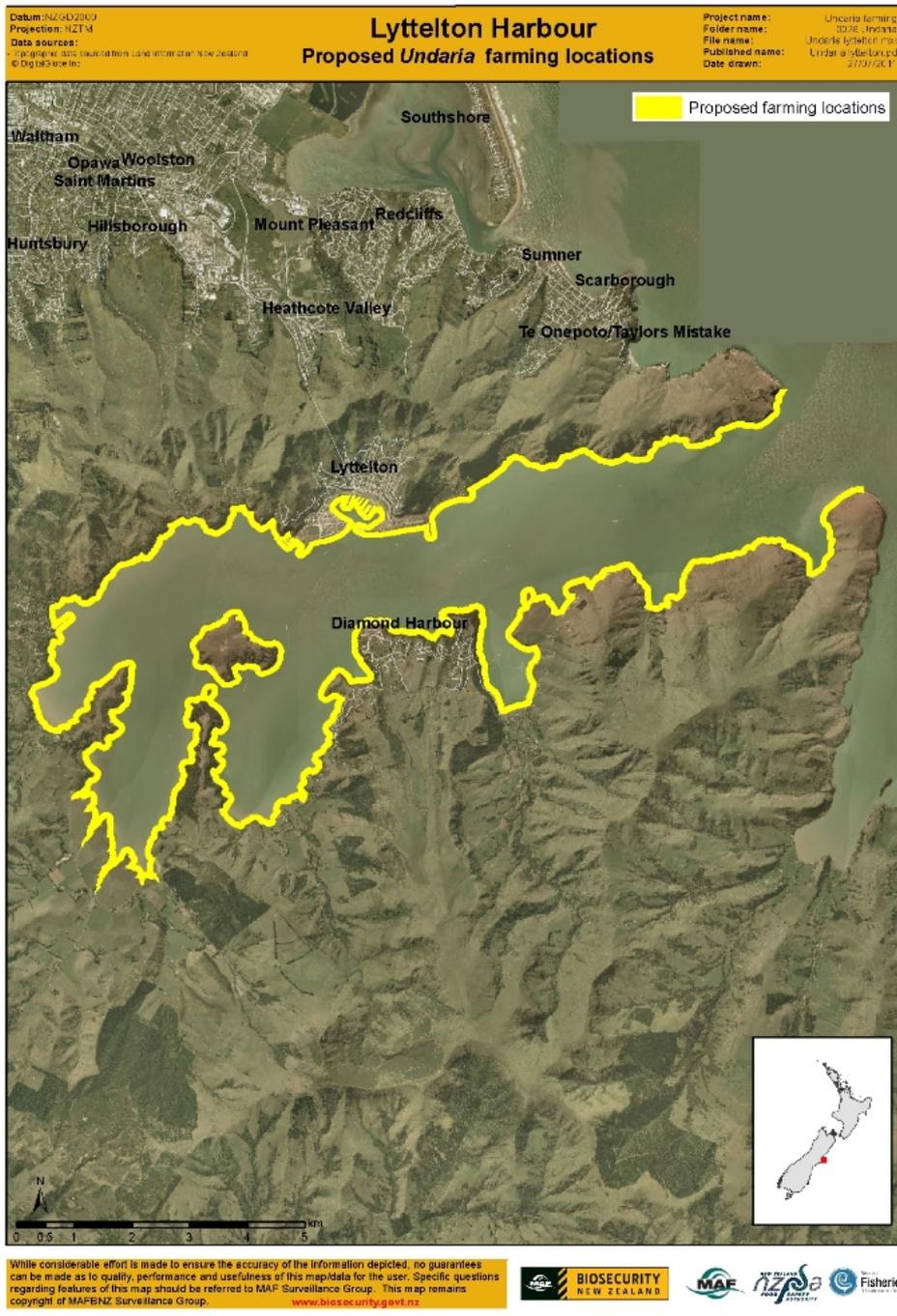
The Expert Group considered that marine farms and boats within Akaroa were heavily infested with *Undaria* and noted that *Undaria* was first detected in Akaroa Harbour in 2000. However, they considered that further information was required for Akaroa Harbour before any decision could be made about whether it would be appropriate to consider *Undaria* farming in this area. Therefore, the Department of Conservation (DOC) in the Canterbury conservancy undertook an on the ground survey of Akaroa Harbour based on MAF's definition of a heavily infested area.

The results of DOC's survey indicated that *Undaria* was present throughout the majority of suitable habitat in Akaroa Harbour. In addition, significant proportions of the central stretches of the Harbour were classified as heavily infested.

DOC indicated that some areas classified as 'present' may actually have had heavier levels of infestation than areas classified as 'heavily infested'. A lack of historical information on the length of time *Undaria* had been at a particular site prevented some of these areas classified as 'present' being classified as 'heavily infested'. MAF's definition of 'heavily infested' includes the criterion that *Undaria* has been present for greater than five years.

The Akaroa Harbour, excluding the existing marine farms, is a Taiapure under the Fisheries Act. A Taiapure is an area of special significance to Iwi or hapu either as a food source or for spiritual or cultural reasons.

Map 3: Proposed *Undaria* farming locations in Lyttelton Harbour



Map 4: Proposed *Undaria* farming locations in Akaroa Harbour

