



# Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### Hector's and Maui Dolphin Threat Management Plan Review

Portfolios                      Fisheries / Conservation

On 13 June 2019, the Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee, having been authorised by Cabinet to have Power to Act [CAB-19-MIN-0278]:

- 1        **noted** that:
  - 1.1     Hector's and Māui dolphins are taonga for all New Zealanders;
  - 1.2     Māui dolphins are Nationally Critical and face a real threat of extinction;
  - 1.3     both subspecies are an important part of New Zealand's marine biodiversity and natural capital stock;
- 2        **noted** that the 2018 Hector's and Māui dolphin Threat Management Plan review identified potential threats to the dolphins from fishing, toxoplasmosis, seismic surveying, seabed mining, tourism, vessel traffic, oil spill risk, coastal development, pollution, sedimentation and climate change;
- 3        **noted** that in 2018, the Minister of Conservation and Minister of Fisheries jointly agreed that the primary goal of the Hector's and Māui dolphins Threat Management Plan is to achieve subpopulations that are thriving or increasing, supported by an enduring and effective threat management programme;
- 4        **noted** that the Nationally Critical status of the Māui dolphin population justifies managing all potential lethal threats, which include a small residual risk from fishing and an urgent threat from toxoplasmosis, as even small potential effects will impact upon the likelihood of sustaining the subspecies;
- 5        **agreed** that Hector's dolphins are less threatened, but management of potential effects are still required to achieve the goals of the Threat Management Plan;
- 6        **agreed** that the threats from fishing will be addressed through the Fisheries Act 1996;
- 7        **noted** that decisions about the objectives, and management actions to achieve them under the Fisheries Act 1996, will essentially determine the balance between minimising fishing-related mortality and providing for use of the fisheries, which will have cost impacts on users of the resource and are likely to be controversial;

- 8 **agreed** that the options proposed to manage threats from fishing reflect varying degrees of a conservative and precautionary approach for the Hector's dolphins and an especially conservative and precautionary approach for the Māui dolphins because of their critically endangered status;
- 9 **agreed** to consultation on four options to manage fishing-related threats to Māui dolphins, ranging from increased monitoring of the existing closures to closures that extend all the way along the North Island West Coast to a 100 metre depth contour;
- 10 **agreed** to consultation on three options to manage fishing-related threats to Hector's dolphins ranging from increased monitoring of current restrictions to different combinations of set net and trawl closures to eliminate fishing risk in areas where this is highest;
- 11 **agreed** to consultation on an option to declare a moratorium on issuing marine mammal tourism permits targeting Māui dolphins;
- 12 **noted** that:
- 12.1 the Minister of Conservation has directed officials from the Department of Conservation to develop an action plan to address the threats from toxoplasmosis on Hector's and Māui dolphins;
- 12.2 this will be informed by comments received through engagement with iwi and the public consultation process;
- 13 **agreed** that the existing marine management framework does not appropriately manage threats from seismic surveying or seabed mining, and that a regulatory response is required;
- 14 **agreed** to consultation on options to amend the boundaries of existing marine mammal sanctuaries to cover a larger portion of the dolphins' habitat;
- 15 **noted** that options for progressing these regulatory changes include;
- 15.1 requiring compliance with the Code of Conduct for seismic surveying within sanctuaries;
- 15.2 requiring a permit under the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978;
- 15.3 prohibiting seismic surveying within sanctuaries;
- 15.4 prohibiting seabed mining to different distances offshore.;
- 16 **noted** that options to prohibit seismic surveying and seabed mining include exemptions for current Crown Minerals Act permit holders;
- 17 **agreed** that options for pursuing the regulatory changes outlined in paragraphs 12-14 above will be consulted on with the public and iwi;
- 18 **agreed** that existing management regimes for oil spills, vessel traffic, coastal development, pollution, sedimentation and climate change are appropriate to manage the potential threats to the dolphins and no further action is proposed in respect of these;
- 19 **agreed** to the release of the Hectors and Maui dolphins Threat Management Plan public consultation document attached under ENV-19-SUB-0024, no later than 17 June 2019;

- 20 **authorised** the Ministers of Fisheries and Conservation to make minor changes to the consultation document if necessary;
- 21 **noted** that officials from the Ministry for Primary Industries and the Department of Conservation will engage with iwi alongside the public consultation process.

Vivien Meek  
Committee Secretary

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**Present:**

Rt Hon Winston Peters  
Hon Phil Twyford  
Hon Dr Megan Woods  
Hon David Parker (Chair)  
Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Hon Stuart Nash  
Hon James Shaw  
Hon Eugenie Sage

**Officials present from:**

Officials Committee for ENV

**Hard-copy distribution:**

Minister of Fisheries  
Minister of Conservation

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