

New Zealandâ??s Coromandel scallop fishery to remain close

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New Zealandâ??s Coromandel scallop fishery has been fully closed to commercial and recreational fishing to allow it to recover.

Most of the Coromandel scallop fishery and all of the Northland scallop fishery was closed in 2021 due to sustainability concerns, says Emma Taylor, Fisheries New Zealandâ??s director of fisheries management.

"In December 2022, new information led to a temporary emergency closure of the 2 remaining open areas, one around Little Barrier Island and the other in Colville channel. This new 2023 sustainability closure will see those areas remain closed.

"The use of emergency measures to close a fishery is rare, and they are not used lightly."

Stuart Nash, Minister for Oceans and Fisheries, made the decision based on new survey information which showed the 2 open areas in the fishery could no longer sustain harvesting.

"The initial closures followed extensive surveys in 2021, which revealed sustainability concerns. Results from surveys in the areas around Little Barrier Island and the Colville Channel in 2022 revealed further serious declines in scallop numbers.

"In light of this evidence, feedback received during public consultation supported a full and ongoing closure of the fishery as well as reductions to the total allowable catch to give the fishery the best chance of recovery."

The Minister has decided to set the commercial and recreational allowances at zero, reflecting that no fishing will take place while the closure is in effect. The closure will not affect the relatively small amount of customary allowance. We note iwi in the region strongly supports the recovery of the fishery and issuing of customary fishing permits has been limited if not completely ceased, says Emma Taylor.