



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 2PM. NOVEMBER 20**

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### **Extra effort helps protect vulnerable black petrels returning to nest**

Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd, New Zealand's largest iwi-owned fishing company, is going above and beyond to help protect the black petrel (or tāiko) and boost the population of the vulnerable sea bird.

Staff joined iwi, government officials, environmental groups, children from Okiwi School and other commercial fishing companies on Great Barrier Island on Friday (November 20) to welcome the birds back to our shores and wish them success for the coming breeding season.

The black petrel population, which totals 2700 breeding pairs, now only nests in New Zealand on Great Barrier and Little Barrier islands from November to January, but ranges as far as the Galapagos Islands, Southern Mexico and Northern Peru at other times.

One of the risks to these sea birds is fishing because they scavenge behind boats. The well-wishing event on Great Barrier also celebrated a collaborative effort led by Southern Seabird Solutions Trust to help further protect the birds out on the water.

Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd Group General Manager Human Resources and Corporate Affairs, Allyn Glaysher, says with all fisher arrangements they must do a seabird smart fishing training course, although all of them have volunteered to anyway.

“Once they’ve done the course they also put together a seabird risk management plan to keep on board as a reminder of what they need to be doing to avoid catching the birds,” he says.

Other measures Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd’s fishers use to deter black petrels include weights to sink the line, tori lines (a line covered with flags) to discourage the birds, setting lines at night when there are fewer birds around, and not putting offal over the side of the boats.

Mr Glaysher says Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd prides itself on being a leader in sustainable inshore fishing and aquaculture, and safeguarding New Zealand’s marine environment and seafood supply for future generations.

“Seeing the black petrels at their nesting sites and getting up close to these majestic creatures has been amazing today. We wish them success for this breeding season, and will do everything we can to protect them out on the water.”

“With the recently released *Environment Aotearoa 2015* report highlighting the importance of conservation of threatened indigenous seabird species, we all have a part to play,” he says.

“We want to see the sea bird’s population on Great Barrier and Little Barrier islands grow over time, and we’ve all got a role to play in helping black petrels not only survive, but thrive.

- Ends –

**Note to editors:** Photos of the event on Great Barrier Island to come by 2pm Friday afternoon (November 20).

#### **About Aotearoa Fisheries Limited**

Aotearoa Fisheries is the largest Maori-owned fisheries company in Aotearoa / New Zealand. Our vision is to be the key investment vehicle of choice for Iwi in the fishing industry, to maximise the value of Maori fisheries assets and to ensure that we are a strong seafood business delivering growth in shareholder wealth to Iwi. Aotearoa Fisheries business comprises of AFL Inshore (trading as Moana Pacific Fisheries and OPC Fish and Lobster), AFL Aquaculture (Pacific Marine Farms and Kia Ora Seafoods) and Prepared Foods Limited. In addition, Aotearoa Fisheries owns 50% of Sealord Group Limited.

#### **About black petrels**

The Black Petrel *tāiko* breeds on Great and Little Barrier Islands, where the populations number 1,100 pairs. It migrates to the eastern Pacific Ocean between the Galápagos Islands, southern Mexico and northern Peru and comes back to NZ to breed.

It is a colonial burrow-nesting, annually-breeding species and can begin breeding at six years of age. Most eggs are laid in December, hatch in February and chicks fledge in May at about three months old. Chick provisioning can continue until June.