



**Embargoed Until: Thursday, 15 December 2016 at 6.00am**

## **MOANA NEW ZEALAND & SANFORD MĀUI DOLPHIN PROTECTION PLAN**

**The Māui dolphin** or *popoto* (*Cephalorhynchus hectori maui*) is the world's rarest and smallest marine dolphin. They are only found off the west coast of New Zealand's North Island in relatively shallow waters.

According to the Government's own science advice, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and the International Whaling Commission's Science Panel Māui dolphin habitat is from Maunganui Bluff in the north to Whanganui River mouth in the south out to the 100m depth contour and within harbours.

The population is so dangerously low that the species is on the brink of extinction. The last survey estimated that there are only 63 dolphins over the age of one year. New Zealanders are privileged to share our waters with Māui dolphins and as commercial fishing companies we have a responsibility to do everything possible to remove fishing-related threats to their survival.

Gillnetting/set-netting is considered the main fishing threat to Māui dolphins, followed by trawling. Other threats include the disease toxoplasmosis and acoustic disturbance from seismic surveying.

This is a conservation emergency requiring concerted and collaborative action. We support decisions informed by the best available science, which means we cannot wait – we must work collaboratively and proactively to ensure the Māui population can recover and expand.

### **Our commitment**

Fishing companies Moana New Zealand and Sanford want to see a future where the Māui dolphin population rebounds and expands. We are committed to the goal of removing the fishing related threats across the entire Māui dolphin range and we call on the Government to work proactively with all fishers in supporting them to transition, as quickly as possible, to fishing methods that pose no threat to Māui dolphins.

Sanford is the largest quota owner and catcher of fish along the west coast of New Zealand's North Island. Moana New Zealand is a significant west coast quota owner who leases their catching rights to contract fishers who catch on their behalf.

Moana New Zealand and Sanford Limited acknowledge that larger companies have a responsibility to lead so have collaborated with WWF-New Zealand to identify actions that the companies can take unilaterally in order to move towards the goal.

One of these actions is, within the Māui habitat north of New Plymouth, from October 2017, no Sanford or Moana New Zealand annual catching entitlements<sup>1</sup> will be leased to fishers using set nets in the coastal fishery. The full list of actions is set out in the Action Plan below.

We believe our actions will reduce the risk to Māui dolphins from commercial fishing vessels and create greater impetus for a lasting solution that can only be achieved with the involvement of the Government and other fishers on the west coast of the North Island.

We welcome other fishers, marine users and the Government joining us in this commitment.

### **Government Partnership**

Sanford, Moana New Zealand and WWF-New Zealand believe it is critical that the Government, on behalf of the New Zealand public, proactively engages with fishers and finds ways to actively support vessels to transition as quickly as possible to dolphin-safe fishing. In addition to financial implications for fishermen and their families, and fishing companies, there are complex catching and fish stock management issues to be resolved that require Government involvement.

While for some fishers it may be possible to transition to existing alternative methods such as long lining this will impact on both the quantity (volume) and range of fish species caught. Transitioning to new methods may also require fishers to adapt their catching skills, or have access to different catch (fish species) entitlements. This will require everyone involved in the fishery including quota owners to collaborate.

### **New technology may offer different solutions**

Moana New Zealand and Sanford are already investing in trialling different ways of catching fish so as to avoid or mitigate by-catch. This could present different opportunities for the transition.

Sanford and Moana New Zealand will transition all vessels within their reach away from conventional trawling. The companies are committed to ensuring their fishing methods are dolphin-safe by December 2022 but if we cannot demonstrate that we can avoid or mitigate dolphin by-catch by that date, we are committed, with government support, to remove our net fishing from Māui habitat and urge government to support others involved in trawling to also transition to dolphin-safe methods.

### **Commercial fishing inside harbours**

Sanford and Moana New Zealand commit to remove harbour set netting that poses a threat to Māui dolphins inside West Coast North Island harbours. There are already set netting restrictions inside harbour mouths, but more work is needed to determine whether fishing taking place outside of these areas is posing a threat. This can be done with the use of vessel monitoring systems to determine where the fishing effort is happening. In addition research is needed to determine where the dolphins are swimming and where they are likely to go in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Annual Catching Entitlements (ACE) are derived from quota ownership and reflect their proportional share of the total allowable commercial catch that each quota owner is entitled to.

Sanford and Moana New Zealand will financially support the installation of vessel monitoring systems on all harbour set net vessels whose skippers are willing to join this initiative, will collaborate with scientists investigating where Māui dolphins swim within harbours and will support action to ensure set netting is only taking place outside these areas.

### **Supporting science**

Sanford and Moana New Zealand support further scientific work being undertaken and support the coordination of this work through the Māui Research Advisory Group, but emphasize that there should be no delay in the transitioning away from coastal set net and conventional trawl fisheries.

### **Work on transitioning plans**

Sanford and Moana New Zealand will support more detailed work aimed at getting a better understanding of the financial and fisheries management issues associated with transitioning from set-netting and conventional trawling. While we believe that this should be led by MPI, we commit to engage constructively and proactively in these discussions including being willing to shift catch entitlements that could help with this transition.

With government assistance Sanford and Moana New Zealand will commit to supporting the transitioning away from coastal set-netting and from conventional trawling from Māui habitat.

### **Electronic monitoring**

Sanford and Moana New Zealand support creating a regulated system for electronic monitoring across New Zealand's fishing fleet as soon as possible. Both companies support the principle that the regulator should be responsible for overseeing the gathering, review and analysis of footage.

### **Public Engagement**

Sanford and Moana New Zealand acknowledge all those New Zealanders who have worked hard over many years to secure a future for Māui dolphins.

While there is still much to be done we are proud to have a role in removing the remaining commercial fishing related threats from inside the Māui dolphin habitat.

We urge all New Zealanders to take an ongoing interest in the plight of Māui dolphins and to support fishers to transition to dolphin-safe practices so that a lasting solution is implemented as quickly as possible.

## **Māui Dolphin Action Plan – What We Commit To:**

- We recognise the Māui dolphin habitat as an area of coastal waters and harbours between Maunganui Bluff in the North, to the Whanganui River mouth in the South, out to 100m depth (see the attached map).
- Within the Māui habitat north of New Plymouth, from October 2017, no Sanford or Moana New Zealand annual catching entitlements<sup>2</sup> will be leased to fishers using set nets in the coastal fishery.
- Within the Māui habitat south of New Plymouth, from October 2017, all set net fishers leasing Sanford or Moana New Zealand annual catching entitlements will have installed full electronic monitoring (video cameras and tracking) ensuring full transparency.
- Within the Māui habitat south of New Plymouth, Moana New Zealand and Sanford support a process whereby the government engages with set net fishers on a transitioning process to join this commitment.
- Within the Māui habitat harbour fisheries we will work with the more than 130 individual owner operators who catch by set net inside the sheltered coastal harbours, and financially support the installation of vessel monitoring (tracking) systems on their vessels if they wish to join us in this commitment.
- Within the Māui habitat harbour fisheries, from April 2017, we will require all harbour set net fishers leasing Sanford and Moana New Zealand annual catching entitlements, or landing fish into our markets, to have installed vessel tracking systems when working along the west coast of the North Island. We will ask scientists to work with these fishers to aggregate their tracking data to understand whether areas of commercial catch and dolphins overlap. In case of an overlap, we support action to ensure set netting is only taking place outside the areas where dolphins swim and we will review the leasing conditions of those fishing for Moana New Zealand and Sanford.
- Within the Māui habitat Sanford and Moana New Zealand will transition away from conventional trawl fishing methods.
- We will invest resources in dolphin avoidance and/or mitigation measures to ensure we can confidently avoid or mitigate dolphin by-catch including having this work reviewed by a science-management panel that makes recommendations on the next steps.
- Any fishing method deployed by Sanford or Moana New Zealand from December 2022 has to be recognised as Māui-safe. We are committed, with government support, to remove all dolphin-unsafe net fishing from Māui habitat and urge government to support others involved in trawling to also transition to dolphin-safe methods.

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<sup>2</sup> Annual Catching Entitlements (ACE) are derived from quota ownership and reflect their proportional share of the total allowable commercial catch that each quota owner is entitled to.

- We support full transparency during the transition process and will work towards delivering video monitoring of coastal fishing (trawl and coastal set netting) within the Māui dolphin habitat on Sanford and Moana New Zealand linked vessels and on trawl fishers' landing into our markets as soon as possible, aiming for April 2017.
- We will provide financial assistance to aid the installation of on-board cameras and vessel monitoring systems on trawl vessels that are likely to stay in the fishery. In the absence of a regulated electronic monitoring system that can accept a constant stream of footage, we commit to provide the Ministry for Primary Industries with 100% access to all footage from on-board cameras for their review.
- We will set up a Māui-safe fishing open-governance group, allowing for full transparency and participation on our decision making team. This group will meet on the last Friday of every second month, rotating between New Plymouth, Raglan and Auckland. This group will feed information into / take advice from the Māui Science Advisory Group.
- Through the governance group and working with WWF-New Zealand we call on Government to work proactively with all fishers in supporting them to transition, as quickly as possible, to fishing methods that pose no threat to Māui dolphins throughout their range.



**Volker Kuntzsch**  
CEO Sanford Limited



**Carl Carrington**  
CEO Moana New Zealand

Dated: 12 December 2016

## Māui Dolphin habitat

Attached is a map of the Māui dolphin habitat



### Key fish stocks affected by this commitment

Barracouta  
Flounder  
Grey mullet  
Gurnard  
Jack mackerel  
Kahawai  
School shark (Rig)  
Snapper  
Spiny dog fish  
Trevally  
Terakihi  
Warehou

### Fish landing ports affected by this commitment

Kaipara	Manukau	New Plymouth
Auckland	Raglan	Mangonui
Whanganui		