

26 March 2018



## Media statement

### **Positive decision on the Hauraki Gulf/Bay of Plenty rock lobster fishery, but more still to be done**

The Minister of Fisheries released his decision earlier today on the review of the CRA 2 (Hauraki Gulf/Bay of Plenty) rock lobster fishery, reducing the Total Allowable Catch from 416.5 to 173 tonnes, with the Total Allowable Commercial Catch reducing from 200 to 80 tonnes and the recreational allowance reducing from 140 to 34 tonnes.

“It’s great to see Minister Stuart Nash making a substantial reduction in the allowable catch for the crayfish stock,” said EDS Policy Director Raewyn Peart.

“The stock has been overfished for years and is in a desperately diminished state.

“His decision indicates a change in fisheries management direction, with greater priority now being given to the long-term sustainability of the stock rather than short-term exploitation and political expediency.

“We consider that full closure would be warranted given that crayfish numbers are at historically low levels coupled with very low recruitment over the past four years. However, a substantial reduction in the TAC and TACC is a still good outcome and heading in the right direction.

“But this change needs to be coupled with close and transparent monitoring over the next few years, so that if there are further signs of decline, or lack of rebuild, the public can be assured that another downward adjustment or closure will be implemented without delay.

“We also need to put in place a range of complementary measures to ensure that our reef systems can recover as the crayfish population rebuilds. This includes protecting reefs that are susceptible to the loss of kelp forests due to crayfish overharvesting.

“In addition, we need to increase our marine protected area network in the Hauraki Gulf and Bay of Plenty regions so we are providing safe havens for juvenile and breeding crayfish populations. The *Sea Change Tai Timu Tai Pari* Plan has identified such areas within the Gulf through agreement amongst stakeholders.

“We are keen to work with the Minister and the rock lobster industry to ensure a rapid rebuild of this important marine species,” concluded Ms Peart.