



tourism
INDUSTRY

ASSOCIATION NEW ZEALAND

**Hector and Maui Dolphins – Draft Threat Management
Plan 2007
Submission**

24 October 2007

Introduction

1. This paper is from the Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (TIA), located at level 4, Tourism and Travel House, 79 Boulcott Street, Wellington.
2. Attached as Appendix 1 are details about our organisation and who we represent.
3. If you wish to contact us regarding this submission, in the first instance, please telephone Geoff Ensor, Sector Manager on 496 4889 or e-mail geoff.ensor@tianza.org.nz

Conservation and Tourism

4. The tourism industry supports balanced conservation management policies that sustain economic development, provide a social return for New Zealanders and allow memorable visitor experiences to be delivered. Sustainable tourism businesses that provide a high quality product are dependant on a collaborative working relationship with the Department. Our Association supports the strong environmental focus of its Members who operate concessions on land or water. Their businesses and livelihoods depend and rely on the way they use and care for the natural surroundings and in this regard, we strongly believe managed visitors are among the most responsible of recreational users.
5. New Zealand's environment and scenery is a major draw card for overseas visitors forming the basis of the "100% pure" marketing brand, which underpins the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and economic growth. The land, sea and air operators that ply the national parks and public estates ensure domestic and international visitors are able to enjoy New Zealand's natural environment and it is essential that this access is continued. Tourism businesses also invest and develop public amenities and infrastructure that improve the quality of the visitor experience.
6. TIA supports the following principles for conservation management:
 - a) policies that sustain economic development and tourism businesses while protecting the environment in which they operate;
 - b) legislation interpreted and applied in a way that leads to the achievement of a mutual relationship between use and conservation;
 - c) lands that provide an economic and social return to New Zealand in a way that is consistent with the values that New Zealanders place on them;

- d) a fair rate paid by concessionaires for use of public lands to run their businesses in return for a fair consultative process in the management of that land;
 - e) meeting visitor expectations of excellence by insisting concession holders meet quality industry standards;
 - f) ongoing and robust review of DOC's research priorities and capabilities so future decisions are always made on a sound evidence basis;
 - g) policies that are cognisant of the variety of effects imposed by each user group and the nature of benefits they receive from this use; and
 - h) consistent New Zealand wide conservation management policies and standard operating procedures that acknowledge locally justified variations.
8. TIA acknowledges that visitor numbers are growing and increasing the pressure on New Zealand's natural resources and infrastructure and believes it is vital that the Department continues to work closely with the tourism sector to effectively manage this growth. In many cases we believe the issue is one of under-management rather than overcrowding – prescriptive limits are one tool, but a stronger more effective one is collaborative management that seeks operational and facility based solutions.
9. TIA believes that mutual acceptance of the above principles lays the foundation for a sound and effective working relationship with the Department, based on a “no-surprises”, consultative approach to the management of issues as they arise, as well as encouraging free and frank discussion.

Hector's and Maui's Dolphin Draft Threat Management Plan

10. The Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (TIA) wishes to express the following opinions in relation to the Draft Threat Management Plan:
- a) TIA places a very high importance on the preservation of New Zealand's Flora and Fauna. Environmental sustainability is an imperative and must underpin all management decisions. Individuals and organisations must work collaboratively to protect and enhance our environment for future generations – and ultimately for the health of the planet.
 - b) 6.8.2 *Commercial tourism* – lists 9 proposed actions. While TIA is broadly in favour of the proposals, we believe a 4 year moratorium on the granting of

marine mammal viewing permits is excessive. We believe consideration should be given to reviewing the granting of marine mammal permits *annually* as research is undertaken and a clearer picture of dolphin numbers and health is obtained.

c) 6.8.2 *Commercial tourism* also recommends that no new permits for swimming with Hector's dolphins will be issued to commercial operators. Once again TIA believes that this is too rigid. We believe swimming permit issue should be reviewed *annually* based on incoming research. It may even eventuate that human/dolphin interaction has positive benefits for the dolphin in which case such a clause would be most unfortunate.

d) 7.2.5.4 *Impacts on fishers* lists three distinct groups: Commercial, recreational and customary. Regardless of the Threat Management Plan (TMP) outcome, TIA believes it is not equitable to advantage customary fishers over recreational via authorizations from Tangata Tiaki or tangata whenua representatives – to do so will lead to conflict between the recreational and customary groups and fails to acknowledge the deep connection and sense of guardianship that many non-Maori have with our land and sea. If proposals are genuinely aimed at dolphin well-being then they should apply fairly across all groups and individuals i.e. exceptions should not be made.

e) TIA broadly supports the regional marine mammal sanctuary proposals while recognising that it has insufficient knowledge to comment on their proposed scale.

f) It is difficult and perhaps inappropriate for a national tourism association to comment on the regional 'fishing related' threat management proposals summarised in 6.8.1. – Our overarching view however is that, like the management options proposed for commercial tourism, flexibility should exist to relax or harden requirements as new research-based evidence comes to light.

g) We note in Appendix 2 – Summary of regional discussions, that a wide range of views 'from the coalface' were expressed. While TIA wholeheartedly endorses positive protective action, we remain mindful that this issue is also about managing activity within very different sites around our coastline – added to this is a diverse range of marine users, many of whom have a long history of responsible use. Because of these factors, a 'one size fits all' policy appears unlikely to work.

h) While it is clear that both the Hector and Maui Dolphin populations are endangered, it is unfortunate that no current data appears to exist regarding population trends - with some groups believing that numbers are in fact

growing. Ideally robust research would have been undertaken over the last 4 years and management decision based on the results.

i) Ongoing dialogue with management decisions linked to credible research will underpin the successful implementation, acceptance and ultimately the effectiveness of this Threat Management Plan.

Appendix 1

Background Information on the Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (TIA)

1. The Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (TIA) advocates for the interests of the tourism industry in New Zealand. The businesses we represent generate more than 85% of New Zealand's tourism-related revenue.
2. Tourism is an \$18.6 billion industry (\$8.3b from international and \$10.3b from domestic tourism) with international tourist expenditure accounting for 19.2% of New Zealand's total export earnings.¹ The industry, directly and indirectly employs 1 in 10 New Zealanders in a diverse range of businesses – the majority of which are small and medium sized enterprises. Not only is tourism important because of its size, representing 8.9% of New Zealand's GDP, it is:
 - Highly employment intensive;
 - Regionally disparate; and
 - Very diverse - ranging from large stock exchange listed companies to small cottage industries.
3. These businesses cover a range of tourism-related activities – hospitality, transport, adventure and activities, attractions and retail and related tourism services. In many cases, regional tourism businesses have developed around regional assets divested by other industries and has revitalized those assets and the communities that depend on them.
4. The tourism industry in New Zealand consists of more than 8,000 small and medium sized businesses. Of these businesses, most employ less than five people.
5. New Zealand welcomes more than two million overseas visitors to its shores every year. The domestic tourism industry is also important in helping to sustain a vibrant tourism industry. TIA estimates that over 75 million visitor nights are spent by New Zealanders every year.

¹ "Key Tourism Statistics – July 2007", Ministry of Tourism website