

Marlborough Express
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Third option insult

I note the issue over the Marlborough Sounds scallop fishery ["Fishers decry scallop options", *Express*, March 5] in which commercial fishing interests, seemingly backed by Nelson corporate companies, appear to want a bigger slice of the remaining scallop beds of the Sounds, having left the Golden Bay and Tasman Bay scallop beds depleted.

The introduction of a third option favouring a staggering increase from option 2 (46 tonnes) to 416 tonnes, is sheer greed and effrontery on the part of those lobbying for it. Acquiescence by Government to the adoption of this option would in my view indicate a possible bias by the Fisheries Minister Nathan Guy, in favour of commercial fishing.

I remind the minister that under the Fisheries Act, his obligation, besides sound, sustainable management, is to treat "social, cultural and economic" sectors

equally. In case he does not understand, that means recreational, customary and commercial.

The introduction of the third option just before submissions were set to close is an insult to the supposedly democratic process. I would suggest that the Government has no moral right to rudely and undemocratically shove in a third option, on the eve of closure of submissions.

NZ First wants a fair deal for the recreational public, with guaranteed access for recreational fishers and the protection of existing game species – and no recreational licence for saltwater fishing.

A healthy fishery will benefit all sectors, but wrecking already overstretched scallop beds with shortsighted over-fishing will not. The recreational public deserves not to be trodden on by the National Government and its corporate buddies.

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