

Election 2023 – Party policies on Oceans and Fisheries

In 15 September we sent questions to the major political parties (ACT, Greens, Labour, Te Pāti Māori, National, and NZ First) about their Oceans and Fisheries Policies if they were in government.

As of 28 September, we have received answers from ACT, Greens and National. The questions and their answers are below. We will update this document if / when receive answers from parties that have not responded yet.

ACT Party

***Does your party have an Oceans and Fisheries policy?
Can you share it with us?***

ACT agrees that sustainable fisheries are important to New Zealand ecologically, commercially, and culturally. However, ACT has identified the increasing cost of living, increasing division of New Zealand's society by race, and out-of-control-crime as the most important issues facing wider New Zealand society at present.

Although ACT has not yet developed an Oceans and Fisheries policy, we do note that we voted against the Government's divisive Fisheries Amendment Bill.

Does your party have any plans to phase out destructive fishing methods, such as bottom trawling and scallop dredging, after the 2023 election?

ACT currently has no confirmed plans to phase bottom trawling and scallop dredging out of New Zealand's inshore fisheries after the 2023 election.

Would you ban bottom trawling, Danish seining and scallop dredging from the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park?

ACT acknowledges that many New Zealanders hold commercial, customary, and recreational fishing interests in the Hauraki Gulf. ACT is also aware of the fact that the Hauraki Gulf faces a raft of ecological issues. Damages to reefs, excessive nutrient runoff, and sewerage discharges, combined with fisheries pressures, have had a significant impact on the environment and fisheries biomass contained within the wider Hauraki Gulf.

ACT has no confirmed plans to ban bottom trawling, Danish seining and scallop dredging in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. Act is nonetheless supportive of initiatives which strike a balance between maintaining all fisheries interests in the Hauraki Gulf and ensuring sound environmental protection of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

Does your party envisage a future for fisheries of:

A. the status quo, or

B. a transition to smaller vessels catching fewer fish in less impactful ways, prioritising building regional communities and feeding New Zealanders first with high-quality kaimoana?

The commercial fisheries sector plays a crucial role in supporting the wider New Zealand economy. ACT supports the development and implementation of innovative technologies which will help the commercial fisheries sector to grow product value in a sustainable manner. As a party based on free market principles ACT would allow industry to pursue the means that will best allow them to meet environmental standards as determined by Government.

Green Party

Does your party have an Oceans and Fisheries policy? Can you share it with us?

Yes – this year we are campaigning on our Healthy Ocean Act: https://www.greens.org.nz/healthy_ocean_act. As part of this plan, we will make a Green Party Minister for the Oceans and Fisheries a priority in post-election negotiations so action to create an Ocean Commission can be taken in the first 100 days of a new government. The top priorities for a Green Minister for the Oceans and Fisheries would be to:

- Establish the new, politically independent Ocean Commission to work with iwi, hapū, and local communities to advise the government on solutions that work for people and nature.
- Pass a new Healthy Ocean Act in the next three years to create a legally binding framework to protect at least 30 percent of Aotearoa's ocean by 2030
- Ban the most destructive fishing methods such as bottom trawling and set netting and create a \$60 million fund to support the transition to fishing within sustainable limits

Our full Marine Policy can be found here: https://www.greens.org.nz/marine_policy

Does your party have any plans to phase out destructive fishing methods, such as bottom trawling and scallop dredging, after the 2023 election?

Yes – this will be a priority for a Green Minister of Oceans and Fisheries. We will act with urgency to end bottom trawling on seamounts and other vulnerable marine ecosystems. We will ban recreational set netting and dredging by 2026, and will phase out commercial set netting and dredging by 2028.

Would you ban bottom trawling, Danish seining and scallop dredging from the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park?

Yes – the Green Party will urgently phase out the most destructive commercial fishing practices such as bottom trawling, dredging, and Danish seining in the Hauraki Gulf.

We will also:

Restore the health of tributary rivers and streams through stronger earthworks controls, improved stormwater management, more riparian planting and freshwater clean-up programmes

Reduce recreational bag limits and implement boat catch limits for key species until they recover, based on scientific assessments

Invest \$10 million to restore shellfish beds and coastal ecosystems

Invest \$15 million in the first year for the response to the invasive Caulerpa, including \$5 million to support locally led responses by iwi, hapū and communities

Does your party envisage a future for fisheries of:

A. the status quo, or

B. a transition to smaller vessels catching fewer fish in less impactful ways, prioritising building regional communities and feeding New Zealanders first with high-quality kaimoana?

B – Our vision is of healthy and thriving shorelines and oceans for all. The Green Party will protect the health of our oceans, all the creatures that live in and on them, and the people and communities who depend on healthy oceans for our survival and wellbeing.

National Party

***Does your party have an Oceans and Fisheries policy?
Can you share it with us?***

We are yet to release our policy in this area.

Does your party have any plans to phase out destructive fishing methods, such as bottom trawling and scallop dredging, after the 2023 election?

In order to address overfishing, we will identify potential legal amendments to incentivise responsible fishing practices and accurate reporting of fishing activity.

Would you ban bottom trawling, Danish seining and scallop dredging from the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park?

We're worried that the current government's recently established consultation on options to ban bottom trawling in parts of the Gulf will have the effect of merely pushing the practise out to other parts of the Gulf or to areas beyond the Gulf. In government we will assess both the policy drivers and science used by the current government in determining the options they have presented and review as and if required.

Does your party envisage a future for fisheries of:

A. the status quo, or

B. a transition to smaller vessels catching fewer fish in less impactful ways, prioritising building regional communities and feeding New Zealanders first with high-quality kaimoana?

Guided by our Bluegreen principles, National is committed to developing a modern system that fosters collaboration between local communities, recreational fishers, iwi/Māori, businesses, and stakeholders. This updated approach will ensure the continued abundance and accessibility of our marine resources while safeguarding the health and diversity of our oceans for future generations to relish and benefit from.