

Statement Regarding Auckland Islands Marine Protected Areas

Full Name: Kim Robert O'Brien

Vessel: San Koura Rangī

Qualification: New Zealand Skipper Fishing Vessel Unlimited, STCW-F

Professional Background:

I am writing this submission based on my extensive experience as a Master. Since 2006, I have commanded multiple vessels operating within the Auckland Islands' fishing grounds and anchorages.

In my time at sea, I have commanded vessels of various sizes ranging from Factory Fishing Vessel, that are 67m in length and with a crew of 40 to the smaller scampi vessels 24m in length with a crew of 6.

Currently I am master of the scampi vessel San Koura Rangī a 30m scampi vessel.

12 of the last 20 years sea time as the master of a vessel have been undertaken on scampi vessels fishing in the Auckland Islands Scampi Fishery.

My initial experience in the region began in 2006. Over the past 20 years of navigating these waters, I have maintained a clean safety record,

I am keenly aware of the presence of seals and whales in the area and have never had a negative interaction with them.

I am fully versed with marine mammal interactions, and best practice guidelines supplied through the DWC application this includes DOC guidance material, and have undertaken many reviews and training sessions over my years fishing with their Non-Fish Protected Species Advisors.

Importance of Port Ross.

Access to Port Ross is essential for the safety of vessels and crew operating in the southern fishing grounds. Based on my operational experience, I urge that the following factors be considered regarding the availability of this anchorage:

- **Essential Shelter:** Port Ross provides a vital sanctuary when dangerous sea conditions develop in the southern grounds. It is a necessary safety net for vessels managing volatile Southern Ocean weather.
- **Strategic Weather Windows:** The location serves as a critical staging point. It allows smaller vessels to wait for short "weather windows" of fair conditions, which are required for a safe transit back to the mainland (Bluff).

- **Risk Mitigation:** Port Ross provides a safer alternative to the exposed southern areas and offers the necessary proximity to facilitate a safer passage during limited windows of opportunity.
- **Superior Holding:** Having compared various anchorages in the area, it is my professional assessment that Port Ross offers superior and more reliable holding conditions. In a practical application, if an anchor were to drag you have a materially longer time to react in Port Ross as compared to other locations. Port Ross therefore reduces the risk of an event.

Given my long history of safe navigation in these waters, I believe that maintaining year-round access to Port Ross utilising defined anchorages is a matter of fundamental maritime safety.



Kim O'Brien

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