
Review of sustainability measures for snapper on the west coast of the North Island (SNA 8)



MFish consulted on three options to reduce the total allowable catch (TAC) of snapper on the west coast of the North Island (SNA 8).

MFish proposed a TAC reduction to address concerns over the low biomass of SNA 8. It is estimated that the current biomass of the stock is approximately half of the target biomass, and only about 10% of unfished biomass.

Under the previous TAC, SNA 8 biomass was expected to increase slowly but would not reach the target biomass within the next twenty years.



MFish proposed options to reduce the TAC from 2,060 tonnes to 1,922 tonnes; 1,785 tonnes; or 1,510 tonnes.

It was recognised that all of the proposed options would have significant social and economic impacts. The Minister had to weight the benefits associated with the various rates of rebuild against the social and economic impacts of reduced catch limits.

The Minister's decision was to set the TAC at 1,785 tonnes.

The reduction in catch limits is shared equally amongst all sectors, and includes a cut to the recreational bag limit in the northern part of the stock.

The Minister's comment was that:

The annual Total Allowable Catch in the Snapper 8 fishery will be reduced from 2060 tonnes to 1785 tonnes to allow the fishstock to rebuild more quickly...

"The west coast snapper fishery is one of our most important shared fisheries... A 2005 stock assessment estimates snapper at just half the target biomass for this species, and that a rebuild strategy put in place in 1998 hasn't achieved expected results. Fish numbers aren't rebuilding as quickly as I'd like, and we need to reduce our catch.



Copies of the initial proposals and final advice to the Minister are on the MFish website at <http://www.fish.govt.nz/sustainability/decisions/index.html>



MFish consulted on two approaches for allocating the SNA 8 TAC between sectors:

- ❖ Either a proportional reduction to both the recreational allowance and the total allowable commercial catch (TACC); or
- ❖ A non-proportional approach that reduced only the TACC, while the recreational allowance would remain unchanged.

Many submissions commented on the merits of proportional versus non-proportional allocation. MFish outlined the advantages and disadvantages of the different ways of allocating the TAC in the final advice paper. The Minister's decision was to share the reduction in harvest between all users of the fishery (including customary).

The Minister commented that: "To be fair to all New Zealanders, I've decided these reductions should be shared across all sectors."

In association with the reduced recreational allowance, **the amateur daily bag limit in the northern part of the management area will be reduced from 15 to 10**. This brings the bag limit into line with the southern part of the management area. The change will take effect in December 2005.



The Minister also decided to **increase the deemed value for SNA 8 to \$4.25**. The deemed value has been increased so that it provides a greater incentive for commercial fishers to obtain annual catch entitlement to cover their catches.



The following catch limit and allowances were set for SNA 8:

	TAC (tonnes)	Customary allowance (tonnes)	Recreational allowance (tonnes)	Other sources of fishing-related mortality (tonnes)	TACC (tonnes)
NEW CATCH LIMITS	1 785	43	312	130	1 300
PREVIOUS CATCH LIMITS	2 060	50	360	150	1 500

