



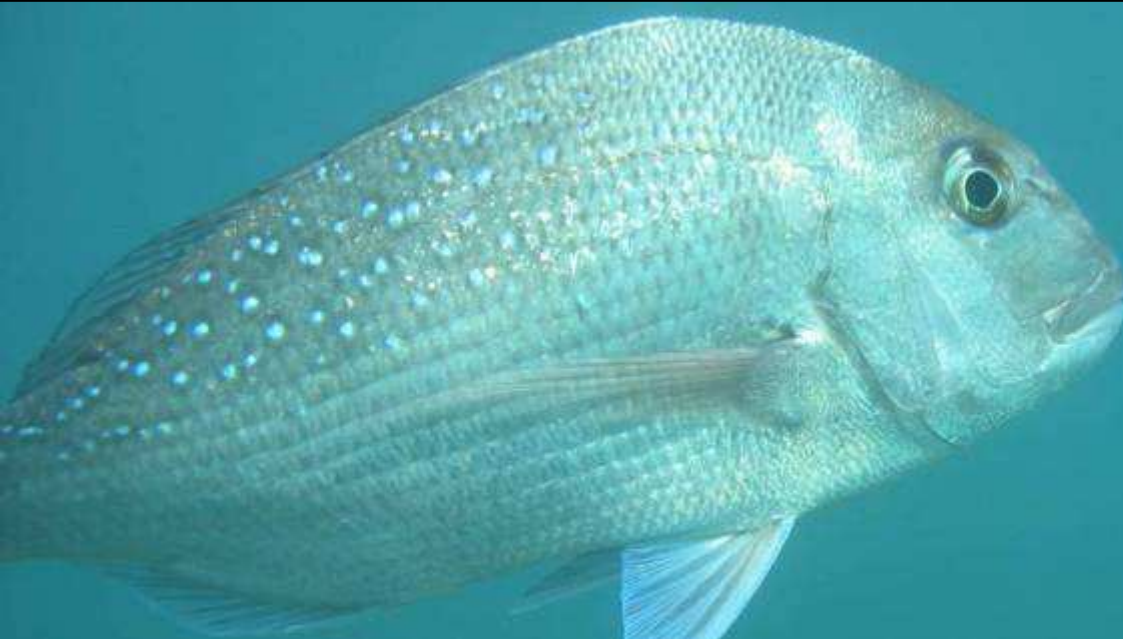
Ministry of
Fisheries
Te Tautiaki i nga tini a Tangaroa

New Zealand Government



Draft North Island West Coast Finfish Fisheries Plan

Summary Document



Karakia/Mihi

"We are all descended from Papatūānuku; she is our kaitiaki and we in turn are hers" Marsden 1992

He Karakia¹

<i>Tau mai ko te mauri Ko te mauri o Ranginui ki runga Ko te mauri o Papatūānuku ki raro Ko te mauri o Tangaroa-whaiariki e hora nei!</i>	Here rests the life-force The life-force of Ranginui, the sky father above The life-force of Papatuanuku, the earth mother below The life-force of Tangaroa, guardian of all seas!
<i>Whakarongo! Tītiro! Ka hikimata te tapuwae o Tangaroa-whaiāriki Ka whaimata te tapuwae o Tangaroa-whaiāriki Ka teretere te tapuwae o Tangaroa- whaiāriki Ka whakawhiti atu e Tangaroa- whaiāriki Ki Te Moana Tapokopoko a Tāwhaki! Tangaroa! Ka haruru! Ka haruru!</i>	Now listen! Now look! As the eager, bounding strides of Tangaroa Cross relentlessly to and fro Across the rough, turbulent ocean of Tāwhaki Tangaroa! Resound! Rumble!

He Mihi

***Tēnā tātou kātoa e whai nei i ngā tapuwae o Tangaroa-whaiariki me ōna
tini me ōna mano. Heoi ano te mihi atu ki te Kaihanga o Ngā Mea Katoa.
Te Tīmatanga me te Mutunga. Rātou ki a rātou, tātou ki a tātou. Tihēwa
mauri ora!***

Greetings to those who follow in the footsteps of Tangaroa and his myriad descendants of the sea. We acknowledge the Great Creator of all things, the beginning and the end. We farewell those who have passed on to the spirit world. To those who remain, we rejoice in the breath of life!

¹ Na Te Hopehuia Hakaraia, Raukawa ki te Tonga/Te Arawa. (Adapted from Nga Moteatea, Part 11, V2, Pg 154)

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Introduction

Finfish fisheries on the west coast of New Zealand's North Island are extremely valuable to the region and to the country. Whether it's the manaaki² that comes with providing fresh snapper for the marae, the thrill of landing a prize kingfish or snapper, the success of selling a bin of trevally at the fish market or the joy at seeing swirling schools of baitfish when diving, finfish fisheries are close to the heart of many of the people who live or visit the west coast.

We need to make sure that our valuable west coast finfish fisheries are managed in an environmentally sustainable way to protect and safeguard these taonga³. We also need to make sure everyone gets best value from these resources.

A key to getting best value for our fisheries is to get the people who actually use and value these resources to assist in managing them effectively.

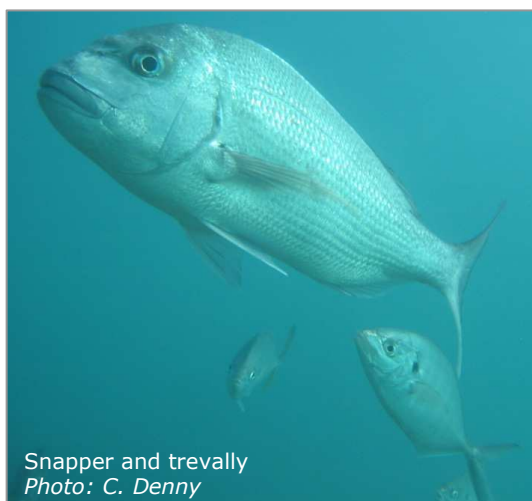
To this end, the Ministry of Fisheries (MFish) together with a Fisheries Plan Advisory Group have developed this draft North Island West Coast Finfish Fisheries Plan.

This plan sets out high-level goals and objectives that:

- Will be taken into account by MFish when providing advice to the Minister of Fisheries on matters that affect west coast finfish fisheries; and
- Will be taken into account by the Minister of Fisheries when making decisions that affect west coast finfish fisheries (if approved under section 11A of the Fisheries Act 1996).

This Plan also requests management tools and services that will:

- Guide MFish management activity in relation to the fishery
- Guide management activity undertaken by the Advisory Group and its members.



More Information: This document is a summary document only. For the full *draft North Island West Coast Finfish Fisheries Plan*, visit the MFish website (www.fish.govt.nz). The website also provides more information on Fisheries Plans in general.

² Manaaki – the act of hospitality

³ Taonga – treasure

The Process to Complete the Plan

In 2008 and 2009 a Fisheries Plan Advisory Group (the Advisory Group), made up of a variety of people who use and value finfish fisheries on the west coast of the North Island, developed a draft Fisheries Plan for the fishery. The plan includes finfish fisheries that are of great importance to all New Zealanders in the north west, including snapper, kingfish, tarakihi, grey mullet, flounder, red gurnard, trevally and kahawai.

The group followed the following stages to develop the plan.



Minutes of the groups meetings and documents outlining the current situation are posted on the MFish website and were regularly mailed to stakeholders.

Having completed an initial draft of the plan, the Advisory Group now wishes to discuss and obtain comments on its proposals with those interested in North Island West Coast finfish fisheries. We welcome your suggestions and input to ensure this plan is the best it can be.

Once feedback from submissions is incorporated into the plan, the Minister will be asked to approve the plan so that strategies and actions recommended in the plan can be put into effect. Any services provided by MFish to support this plan will also have to be approved through MFish internal prioritisation processes. The Advisory Group will then meet periodically to review the progress of the plan.



More Information: Minutes of meetings, and opportunities to participate in the planning process can be found on the MFish website (www.fish.govt.nz).

Stage 1: Document the Current Situation

The group has reviewed all available information on the fishery including biological, economic and management information and has set this out in an “*Information Brief*” for the fishery.

The North Island West Coast Finfish Fishery is a shared fishery, important to customary recreational, and commercial fishers. It is also important to the community.

The key issues for the fishery, identified by the Advisory Group are:

- Ensuring the harvest levels and fishing practices are sustainable in the long term, and that best available information is used when fisheries management decisions are made;
- Ensuring that people are involved in decisions that affect their fisheries, and that information is shared amongst all user groups;
- Ensuring that everyone understands and respects each others’ rights and values associated with the fishery; and
- Ensuring that the impacts of fishing, and impacts on the fishery are minimised, and that a more integrated approach to management is taken by all agencies.

More Information: The *Information Brief* contains the review of the fishery’s current situation, and is available on the MFish website (www.fish.govt.nz).



Stage 2: Develop Management Objectives

“What we want from the North Island West Coast Finfish Fishery”

The Advisory Group has drafted four goals and 18 underlying objectives to guide the management of our NIWC finfish fisheries. These goals and objectives are consistent with the purposes and principles of fisheries legislation, and government objectives for fisheries.

Goal	Objective	
1. NIWC finfish fisheries are sustainable today and in the future	A	Best information is available
	B	Total Allowable Catches (TACs) are set transparently, ensure sustainability and reflect the Information Principles of our legislation
	C	Catches maintain NIWC stocks at, or above, levels that produce the maximum sustainable yield
	D	All fishers use and promote best fishing practices to ensure sustainability
2. NIWC finfish fisheries are managed inclusively	A	Tangata whenua, communities and stakeholders participate in and contribute to decision making about NIWC finfish fisheries.
	B	Tangata whenua, communities and stakeholders are involved in managing their local fisheries with MFish
	C	This fish plan promotes information sharing and integration of processes that affect NIWC finfish fisheries.
3. NIWC finfish fisheries are used and valued for the wellbeing of all	A	All sectors understand and recognise the use and value each gains from NIWC finfish fisheries.
	B	All sectors are made aware of and comply with all fishing regulations.
	C	People’s access to fisheries are maximised by seeking to ensure there is enough fish for everyone where they fish.
	D	Best harvest information is used to allocate catch levels fairly amongst all sectors of NIWC finfish fisheries.
	E	Fishing regulations are clear, effective, practical and enforced.
	F	The rights of all users of NIWC finfish fisheries are recognised, enhanced and protected.
4. NIWC finfish fisheries are part of a healthy marine environment	A	Decision-making reflects the Environmental Principles of our legislation
	B	An awareness of the impacts of non-fishing marine activities is promoted.
	C	All sectors promote best fishing practices to minimise the impacts of fishing on the NIWC marine environment.
	D	All sectors work together to promote and maintain a healthy NIWC marine environment
	E	The impact of land-based activities on the NIWC marine-environment is understood and reflected in decision making



Stage 3: Assessing the Fishery

"Are we on track to meet these objectives ...?"

The Advisory Group discussed whether or not we are on track to meet the goals and objectives outlined for the fishery. Several shortcomings were identified. The summarised assessments of how well the current framework and management services are meeting the objectives are set out in the following pages.

More Information: The *Information Brief* describes fisheries services specific to the NIWC Finfish fisheries, and examples of generic services provided by the national fisheries framework. The group's risk assessment is summarised in the proposed management strategies and is set out in full in the *draft North Island West Coast Finfish Fisheries Plan*. Both documents are available from the MFish website (www.fish.govt.nz).

Stage 4: Deciding on Management Strategies

"...if not, what do we need to do?"

The Advisory Group looked for the most effective and urgent management strategies to address the shortcomings identified in the assessment stage. The summarised assessment and management options together form the management strategies for the fishery, and are set out in the following pages. Also provided is a list of actions that the Advisory Group identified as a priority for the fishery. The numbers following each option in the strategy link to the full analysis of options in the *draft North Island West Coast Finfish Fisheries Plan*.

More Information: The full assessment of options (including an assessment of the benefit/cost of each option) is set out in the *draft North Island West Coast Finfish Fisheries Plan*, available from the MFish website (www.fish.govt.nz).



Mana and Kapiti Islands
Photo: R. Orzecki

Proposed Management Strategies

TACs set transparently, ensure sustainability and reflect the information principles (Objective 1A)

Assessment

The Advisory Group do not believe the current TAC setting process allows for those that use and value the fishery to participate in developing options for management changes. Further, they believe a lack of quality information is a critical problem in finding appropriate management solutions that will ensure long term sustainability.

Performance Criteria

More collaborative approach adopted for setting TACs and management measures.

Actions

- i. Agree on a process to follow when TACs and management measures are reviewed.
- ii. Develop a process to manage urgent sustainability issues.
- iii. Have regard to relevant approved fisheries plans when setting TACs for affected stocks.

All fishers use and promote best fishing practices to ensure sustainability (Objective 1B)

Assessment

The effects of fishing practices on sustainability are not all well researched and best practice fishing methods may need promotion. Further research and education would likely increase the use of best practice by all sectors.

Performance Criteria

Action taken to reduce wastage, juvenile mortality, bycatch and the adverse effects on the aquatic environment.

Actions

- i. Review the fishing methods used on the NIWC and characterise fishing practices e.g. set nets
- ii. Improve education on fish handling and best practices
- iii. Improve reporting of wastage, juvenile mortality and bycatch.

Catches maintain NIWC stocks at, or above, levels that produce the maximum sustainable yield (Objective 1C)

Assessment

The catch rates and biomass estimates for many stocks are uncertain, making managing catches at the desired levels difficult. The large size of some Quota Management Areas can make some areas vulnerable to localised depletion.

Performance Criteria

Harvest strategy in place for NIWC stocks, with special recognition of local management aspirations.

Actions

- i. Apply the harvest strategy standard to NIWC stocks.
- ii. Review sector catch estimates for NIWC stocks and identify information requirements for priority stocks.
- i. Identify impacts of localised depletion on overall stock sustainability.
- ii. Review current management areas and determine if they are set appropriately.

Best information is available (Objective 1D)

Assessment

Some information is detailed and readily available for decision making, such as commercial catch information and scientific information. Other information such as customary and recreational catch information and anecdotal information is more difficult to collect and verify, and at present is less available for use in management decisions.

Performance Criteria

Best anecdotal, kaitiaki and scientific information is used.

Actions

- i. Identify and gather appropriately detailed and geographically scaled information for all sectors.
- ii. Value anecdotal, mātauranga māori and kaitiaki information and determine how this can be effectively used in fisheries management.
- iii. Agree on a process to gather information when it is urgently needed i.e responding to immediate issues.
- iv. Ensure that scientific research carried out is relevant and cost effective.

Tangata whenua, communities and stakeholders participate in and contribute to decision making about NIWC finfish fisheries (Objective 2A)

Assessment

Recreational and iwi forums assist in the participation and influence of customary and recreational sectors. The Advisory Group consider that more effort could be made to ensure that those that use and value the fishery to participate in developing options for management changes.

Performance Criteria

Tangata whenua, communities and stakeholders are made aware of any fisheries management issues that affect them, and are able to participate in identifying ways to manage these issues.

Action

- i. Agree on an improved decision making process to involve tangata whenua, communities and stakeholders.
- ii. Review sector catch estimates for NIWC stocks and identify information requirements for priority stocks.
- iii. Identify impacts of localised depletion

Tangata whenua, communities and stakeholders are involved in managing activities that impact on their local fisheries with MFish (Objective 2B)

Assessment

Some community groups have been formed, but have had limited influence on fisheries management. The existing groups are localised and there is little interaction between them.

Performance Criteria

Networks are established that allow local communities to share information and interact together.

Actions

- i. Improve networks and identify local and regional user groups.
- ii. Local fisheries plans are developed to manage local fisheries and achieve relevant objectives of this Fish Plan e.g. rohe moana plans, and harbour plans.
- iii. Agree on a process to gather information when it is urgently needed i.e. responding to immediate issues.
- iv. Ensure that scientific research carried out is relevant and cost effective.

The NIWC Finfish Plan promotes information sharing and integration of non MFish processes that affect finfish fisheries (Objective 2C)

Assessment

There is no framework for agencies to work together; information sharing is sporadic and localised.

Performance Criteria

This fish plan is recognised and provided for in land use planning documents and other measures that affect these finfish fisheries.

Actions

- i. Notify relevant government authorities on the need to contact MFish and relevant tangata whenua for particular issues where fisheries habitat and/or species may be affected.
- ii. MFish raises awareness with all the relevant government authorities about this plan and their responsibilities to acknowledge or accommodate the plan within their decision making processes.
- iii. The NIWC Advisory group actively share information and participate in non-fisheries processes that impact on the NIWC finfish fisheries.

All sectors understand and recognise the use and value each gains from NIWC finfish fisheries (Objective 3A)

Assessment

The increasing involvement of west coast fishing and environmental sectors in fisheries management is improving understanding and acceptance of other sectors' values and use of different species. As sectors continue to work together the benefits associated with a collaborative approach to management should become clearer.

Performance Criteria

Increased acceptance of everyone's participation in shared fisheries.

Actions

- i. Improve education about fisheries management frameworks for each sector.
- ii. Increase communication between sectors about the values they obtain from fishing.

All sectors understand and recognise the use and value each gains from NIWC finfish fisheries (Objective 3B)

Assessment

There has been a more effective and wider communication of rules over recent years through people's involvement with fisheries management and better use of media, but awareness could always be improved.

Performance Criteria

Improved compliance with fishing regulations.

Actions

- i. Improve education and mātauranga within industry and communities e.g. schools, clubs, marae.
- ii. Improve signage at boat ramps and fishing spots.
- iii. Improve relationships between Fisheries Officers, Honorary Fisheries Officers, Tangata Kaitiaki and local communities to better use compliance resources.
- iv. Improve use of media e.g. TV shows, pamphlets, internet and notifying of offenders and their offences in local newspapers.

All sectors are made aware of, and comply with, all fishing regulations (Objective 3C)

Assessment

There is relatively low spatial conflict between sectors on the NIWC and some regulations separate the fisheries. There is also an improved awareness that people do not have to catch everything they are able to. However, there is a lack of information about the catch levels and sizes of some stocks.

Performance Criteria

Improved compliance with fishing regulations.

Actions

- i. Address fisher concerns about spatial overlap.
- ii. Address fisher concerns about inequality of access.

Best harvest information is used to allocate catch levels fairly amongst all NIWC finfish fisheries sectors (Objective 3D)

Assessment

The lack of quality catch information, particularly for customary and recreational catches complicates decision-making about catch allocations made to all sectors, especially allocations that are fair in terms of varying values and uses for different species.

Performance Criteria

More reliable harvest estimates available.

Actions

- i. Improved collection of harvest information from all sectors.
- ii. Use sector harvest information to better inform the allocation of TACs.

Fishing regulations are clear, effective, practical and enforced (Objective 3E)

Assessment

A review is required to determine the regulations that could be improved.

Performance Criteria

Regulations are supported.

Actions

- i. Review regulations to ensure they are achieving the desired objective, enforceable, cost effective and easy to understand.
- ii. Ensure that penalties reflect the impacts of non-compliance on fish stocks.



Fishing regulations are clear, effective, practical and enforced (Objective 3F)

Assessment

Progress has been made on legislation to recognise commercial and customary rights, but not recreational, notwithstanding, all people in New Zealand have the right to fish recreationally. Legislation exists to protect fisheries and the marine environment, and therefore fisher's rights to fisheries. However, information that feeds into processes that affect fishers' rights could be improved.

Performance Criteria

The rights of all users of NIWC finfish fisheries are recognised, enhanced and protected.

Actions

- i. Review regulations to ensure they are achieving the desired objective, enforceable, cost effective and easy to understand
- ii. Ensure that penalties reflect the impacts of non-compliance on fish stocks

Decision-making reflects the Environmental Principles of our legislation (Objective 4A)

Assessment

The Minister of Fisheries must take into account the environmental principles of the Fisheries Act. However, a lack of information about species relationships and their habitats can make this difficult. In addition, the Principles and the way they work is relatively complicated making it difficult for people to understand the rationale for some decisions related to the Principles.

Performance Criteria

Improved understanding of associated and dependant species, biological diversity and essential fish habitats.

Actions

- i. Characterise the effects of fishing on NIWC species and habitats.
- ii. Improve our understanding of how species interact with each other.
- iii. Identify habitats of particular importance for fisheries management.

Awareness of the impacts of non-fishing marine activities is promoted (Objective 4B)

Assessment

The Minister of Fisheries must take into account the environmental principles of the Fisheries Act. However, a lack of information about species relationships and their habitats can make this difficult. In addition, the Principles and the way they work is relatively complicated making it difficult for people to understand the rationale for some decisions related to the Principles.

Performance Criteria

Values of fisheries and fisheries habitats are recognised and provided for when activities that impact on fisheries are undertaken.

Actions

- i. Identify activities that occur in coastal areas and the marine environment that can affect fisheries.
- ii. Improve working relationships with agencies responsible for managing those marine activities.

All sectors promote best fishing practices to minimise the impacts of fishing on the NIWC marine environment (Objective 4C)

Assessment

The effects of fishing practices are not all well researched and best practices may need promotion. Further research and education would likely increase the use of best practice by all sectors.

Performance Criteria

Best fishing practices are promoted and impacts of fishing on the NIWC are reduced.

Actions

- ii. Document the fishing methods used on the NIWC and characterise impacts on the environment.
- iii. Educate fishers on practices that minimise the impacts on the environment.
- iv. Encourage innovation within the commercial sector to improve best practice

All sectors work together to promote and maintain a healthy NIWC marine environment (Objective 4D)

Assessment

There are several examples of sectors working together to promote and maintain a healthy marine environment but they are in localised geographic areas, with little interaction with each other.

Performance Criteria

The management of the NIWC environment is better coordinated amongst agencies.

Actions

- i. Promote a coordinated approach to the management of the NIWC environment amongst sectors.

The impact of land-based activities on the NIWC marine environment is understood and reflected in decision making (Objective 4E)

Assessment

The RMA provides a legislative framework and councils are monitoring the coastal environment and imposing restrictions on development. While the effects of land-based activities on the marine environment are not fully understood, it is becoming increasingly clear that they must be taken into account for land management in coastal areas.

Performance Criteria

The impacts of land based activities on NIWC finfish fisheries are taken into account and minimised by agencies responsible for coastal land and catchment management.

Actions

- i. Identify the impacts of land-based activities (including climate change) on the NIWC marine environment.
- ii. Identify and promote the fisheries benefits of mitigation methods such as riparian planting and fencing.
- iii. Work together with relevant agencies to ensure current rules and regulations are effective in preventing sedimentation, nitrification and other processes that can be shown to adversely impact marine habitats.

Priority Management Actions

The Advisory Group has provided a list of management actions from the proposed management strategies that they have identified as a priority in the fishery.

The Advisory Group acknowledge that this priority list depends on available resources, both for MFish as well as tangata whenua, communities and stakeholders.

Further, some actions may result in recommended tools or services that require Ministerial approval. These tools and services will only be implemented if, after consultation and consideration of all statutory obligations, the Minister of Fisheries is satisfied that implementation meets the purposes and principles of the Fisheries Act 1996.

Objective	Action
1B	Review the fishing methods used on the NIWC and characterise fishing practices e.g. set nets
1D	Ensure that scientific research carried out is relevant and cost effective
1D	Identify and gather appropriately scaled information for all sectors
2B	Improve networks and identify local and regional user groups
2C	MFish raises awareness with all the relevant government authorities about this plan and their responsibilities to acknowledge or accommodate the plan within their decision making processes
3D	Improved collection of harvest information from all sectors
3E	Review regulations to ensure they are achieving the desired objective, enforceable, cost effective and easy to understand
4A	Characterise the effects of fishing on WCNI species and habitats
4C	Document the fishing methods used on the WCNI and characterise impacts on the environment (e.g. effects of lost fishing gear)
4E	Identify the impacts of land-based activities (including climate change) on the WCNI marine environment.



Bottlenose Dolphins
Photo: T. Smith

Implementation and Monitoring of the Fisheries Plan

Overall responsibility for implementing the plan rests with the Ministry of Fisheries. However, tangata whenua, communities and stakeholders are also responsible for implementing aspects of the plan and actions have been identified that require working with other agencies. It is accepted that these parties (including MFish) have limitations in terms of resources that mean, despite best efforts, implementation of some parts of the plan may be delayed. In addition, many of the actions proposed in the plan involve collaboration between everyone involved in the plan.

Therefore, the plan proposes that implementation be overseen by the Advisory Group responsible for developing the plan. It is proposed that the group will meet once a year to monitor the plan's progress, offer advice where implementation targets are not met, and consider alternative solutions to meet the plan's objectives. The group will invite others with an interest in the fishery to become involved in these meetings.

It is proposed that MFish commence a full review of the plan five years after it is approved, or at the discretion of the Minister.



Fishing off the Taranaki coast
Photo: M. Tamati