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Attorney-General

Minister for the Environment

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B22-0540

Tēnā koe

Changes to fisheries sustainability measures for the 2022 October Round

I write to inform you of the decisions I have made on a range of sustainability measures across several fish stocks.

In this round, my decisions relate to Total Allowable Catch (TAC) settings, non-commercial allowances, and Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) settings for 20 fish stocks, and decisions on deemed value rate adjustments for eight fish stocks. Attached to this letter are my decisions along with a brief rationale for each of the changes I have decided on.

In making my decisions, I have considered feedback and submissions received from tangata whenua and stakeholders on initial proposals. I also considered final advice from Fisheries New Zealand, relevant legislative provisions, and my obligations under the *Fisheries Act 1996*.

Where there were opportunities for increasing utilisation within sustainable limits, I have decided to implement appropriate increases to catch limits to reflect this. On the other hand, where sustainability is at risk, I have taken appropriate management action to protect those fish resources.

This sustainability round included proposed changes for several high value fisheries, including our nationwide hoki fishery and East Coast tarakihi fishery. I would like to express my thanks to tangata whenua, stakeholders and members of the public who took time to provide their views on these fisheries. Your feedback and submissions have been important in helping to inform my decisions on their management.

The changes to sustainability measures outlined in this letter will come into effect at the start of the new fishing year on 1 October 2022.

The Decision Document that informed my decisions is available on the Fisheries New Zealand website below:

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/consultations/review-of-sustainability-measures-october-2022-round/>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Parker'.

Hon David Parker
Minister for Oceans and Fisheries

October 2022 Sustainability Round: summary of changes

Species	Stock (area)	Change	Rationale
Deepwater species			
Hoki	HOK 1 - All of New Zealand (excludes Kermadec)	–	I have decided to retain the TAC, allowances and TACC of HOK 1 for the upcoming fishing year noting that there are no immediate sustainability risks with these settings. While the western stock is below the management target range, it is projected to increase under these settings. Both the west and east stocks will continue to be closely monitored and will be assessed again next year. In the meantime, I expect industry to adhere to the proposed shelving arrangement for 2022/23 and to continue implementing non-regulatory measures to support the sustainability of both eastern and western sub-stocks.
Gemfish	SKI 3 & SKI 7 - Entire South Island, Chatham Rise, West Coast off Taranaki and Wellington	↑	Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) analyses indicate that biomass of SKI 3 and SKI 7 has increased in recent years and trends for these stocks suggest that biomass is likely to continue increasing. In line with this information, the TACs and TACCs of both SKI 3 and SKI 7 have been increased to enable greater utilisation.
Scampi	SCI 1 - East Coast of Auckland and Northland, Bay of Plenty	↑	Based on its last accepted stock assessment, SCI 1 biomass was estimated as very likely to be at or above target biomass. An updated CPUE analysis also indicates that abundance in SCI 1 has increased since 2019. In recognition of this, the TAC and TACC have been increased by a similar level to that implemented in 2020.
Inshore species			
Tarakihi	TAR 2, TAR 3, and the eastern portions of TAR 1 & TAR 7 - All East Coast from Northland to Otago	↓	The most recent stock assessment for East Coast tarakihi in November 2021 determined that the stock is currently below a level that would support Maximum Sustainable Yield. In order to rebuild the stock to the management target within a period of 15 years, the TACs and TACCs of East Coast tarakihi stocks (TAR 2, TAR 3, and the eastern portions of TAR 1 and TAR 7) will be reduced from 1 October 2022. These modified allowances will align with a required 15% reduction in current commercial catch levels across the entire East Coast tarakihi stock.
Rough and smooth skates	RSK 8 & SSK 8 - West Coast North Island	↑	Commercial landings of RSK 8 and SSK 8 have remained consistently high in recent years and their catch trends suggest current management settings are no longer appropriate. I have increased the TACs and TACCs of both stocks to allow for utilisation in line with recent information for the fisheries. In alignment with these decisions, I have increased deemed value rates for both stocks to ensure there are appropriate incentives for commercial fishers to balance catch of the stocks with Annual Catch Entitlement (ACE).
Blue warehou	WAR 2 & WAR 8 - Taranaki, Wellington, East Cape, Hawke's Bay	↓	I have set TACs and allowances for these stocks for the first time to account for commercial, customary Māori, and recreational catch, as well as all other mortality caused by fishing. I have also reduced the TACCs of both stocks to levels that will provide more certainty in their sustainability. I understand that the declining landings for these stocks in recent years can largely be attributed to decreasing target effort and changes in fishing behaviour. In consideration of this, I have set the TACCs at levels that will still allow room for utilisation above current catch levels.
Blue cod	BCO 7 - West Coast and Top of South Island	↓	This is the first time a TAC and allowances have been set for BCO 7. I have decided to set a TAC, TACC and allowances for the stock that reduce recreational and commercial catch below recent levels. I have done this in response to recent scientific information which indicates the Marlborough Sounds component of the fishery is very likely (>90%) to be overfished at the level of current catch.

Species	Stock (area)	Change	Rationale
Inshore species			
West Coast South Island multi-species (snapper, red gurnard and rig)	SNA 7, GUR 7 & SPO 7 - West Coast and Top of South Island	- / ↑	Recent assessments and other information suggest the SNA 7 and GUR 7 stocks are in good health. Increases to their TACs will provide for better utilisation of these stocks in line with their high abundance. While there is some information to suggest SPO 3 is also increasing in abundance, this is less certain. Given this and rig's low productivity and susceptibility to overfishing, I have decided to retain the current settings for SPO 3.
Red gurnard	GUR 3 - East Coast South Island, Southland, Sub-Antarctic, Chatham Rise	↑	Based on its first fully quantitative stock assessment conducted this year, the GUR 3 stock is in good health and increasing in abundance. Modest increases to the TAC, allowances and TACC will provide for better utilisation of the stock from the upcoming fishing year.
Rig	SPO 3 - East Coast South Island, Southland, Sub-Antarctic, Chatham Rise	-	There is some information to suggest SPO 3 is increasing in abundance, however, this is uncertain. Given this and rig's low productivity and susceptibility to overfishing, I have decided to retain the current TAC, allowances and TACC. The deemed value rates of SPO 3 will be adjusted to better align them with other adjacent rig stocks from 1 October 2022.
Attached bladder kelp	KBB 3G & KBB 4G - East coast South Island and Chatham Islands	-	A range of scientific opinion was received during consultation on the vulnerability of the KBB 3G and KBB 4G stocks to harvesting, however, little harvest is occurring and there are no immediate sustainability risks. Therefore, I have decided to maintain the TACs, allowances and TACCs while new scientific assessments are commissioned to help confirm the status and vulnerability of KBB 3G and KBB 4G.
Changes to deemed value rates for selected stocks from 1 October 2022			
I have made decisions on adjustments to deemed value rates for the following eight fish stocks. Three of these are stocks which were also reviewed for changes to catch limits and allowances in this round, and the other five are additional stocks for which only deemed value adjustments are being implemented. The deemed value rate adjustments I have decided on for each of these stocks are consistent with my statutory obligations under section 75 of the Fisheries Act. The specific changes and rationale for individual adjustments are provided in this letter under the relevant headings for these stocks. For the five stocks receiving standalone deemed value adjustments, specific changes and rationale is presented at the end of this letter under 'Deemed value rate changes for other stocks'.			
Stock(s) and general deemed value rate changes			
Rough and smooth skates – RSK 8, SSK 8, West Coast North Island ↑			
Rig – SPO 3, East Coast South Island, Southland, Sub-Antarctic, Chatham Rise ↑			
Snapper – SNA 2, East Cape, Hawke's Bay, Wellington ↓			
Trevally – TRE 1, East Coast of Northland, Auckland and Bay of Plenty ↑			
Kingfish – KIN 3, East Coast South Island, Southland and Sub-Antarctic ↓			
Kingfish - KIN 7 & 8, All of West Coast ↓			

Summary Report on the 2022 October Sustainability Round Decisions

Hoki

HOK 1 – New Zealand wide

I have decided to retain the TAC, allowances, and TACC of HOK 1 as follows:

Settings	TAC (t)	TACC (t)	Non-regulatory catch split arrangement (t)		Allowances (t)		
			Western stock limit	Eastern stock limit	Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Settings to be retained	111,140	110,000	45,000	65,000	20	20	1,100

In making my decision I note that while the western stock is currently estimated to be below the lower bound of the management target range, it is predicted to increase over the next five years regardless of whether the TAC/TACC is reduced or not.

On the basis that there is no immediate sustainability risk, the western stock is projected to increase, and noting that the hoki stock will continue to be closely monitored and assessed annually, I consider retaining the current TAC, TACC and allowances for the upcoming fishing year to be an appropriate and pragmatic decision.

I am aware of the difficulties currently faced by industry, including the shortage of labour for shore-based processing. I acknowledge that, for some in the industry, the absence of carry-forward ACE as a result of a TAC/TACC reduction would have affected harvesting and processing plans for the 2023 hoki season.

I expect industry to adhere to the non-regulatory measures proposed for 2022/23, as they have done in recent years. This includes the proposed shelving arrangement for 2022/23 and to continue implementing non-regulatory measures to support the sustainability of both eastern and western sub-stocks.

Gemfish

SKI 3 & SKI 7 – South Island, Chatham Rise, West Coast off Taranaki & Wellington

I have decided to increase the TACs, allowances for other sources of mortality caused by fishing, and TACCs for SKI 3 and SKI 7 as follows:

Stock	Settings	TAC (t)	TACC (t)	Allowances (t)		
				Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
SKI 3	Previous	848	839	1	0	8
	New	1,103 ↑	1,091 ↑	1	0	11 ↑
SKI 7	Previous	848	839	1	0	8
	New	1,103 ↑	1,091 ↑	1	0	11 ↑

The best available information strongly suggests that the biomass of SKI 3 and SKI 7 has increased considerably in recent years from strong year classes recruiting into the fishery. Based on this information I have decided to increase SKI 3 and SKI 7 catch limits further to enable greater utilisation of these stocks.

Gemfish in SKI 3 and SKI 7 are rarely targeted by the commercial fishing fleet but are a common bycatch species of the hoki and squid trawl fisheries. The recent assessment of catch per unit effort (CPUE) indices for SKI 3 and SKI 7 indicates that the biomass of gemfish in these two stocks has substantially increased in recent years and is likely to continue to increase over the short term. In light of this, I have increased the TAC, TACC and allowance for other sources of mortality caused by fishing. Overall, these settings should ensure continued sustainability for these stocks while also providing for a moderate increase in commercial utilisation of gemfish taken as unavoidable bycatch.

Scampi

SCI 1 – East Coast of Auckland and Northland, Bay of Plenty

I have decided to increase the TAC, allowance for other sources of mortality caused by fishing, and TACC for the SCI 1 fishery as follows:

Settings	TAC (t)	TACC (t)	Allowances (t)		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Previous	139	132	0	0	7
New	153 ↑	145 ↑	0	0	8 ↑

SCI 1 is a high value, low-volume fishery. These new TAC/TACC settings represent a conservative increase in catch limits, recognising that the TAC/TACC was recently (for the 2020/21 fishing year) increased by 10% and that there is not an accepted fully quantitative assessment for the SCI 1 stock in 2022. These settings were instead informed by agreement of the 2022 Fisheries Assessment Plenary on the status of the stock for SCI 1 based on preliminary results from the 2022 stock assessment and updated CPUE indices. These settings will provide a modest opportunity for increased utilisation of the stock.

I note that that these changes are likely to have minimal impact on seabird or marine mammal captures, given these occurred infrequently under previous catch settings. Fish bycatch including QMS and non-QMS species could increase from around 375 tonnes per year to 413 tonnes per year with a 10% increase in effort under this option, all other things being equal. There are no known sustainability issues for the major, non-QMS bycatch species (javelinfish and rattails, as well as other crustaceans and echinoderms), nor for QMS bycatch species (hoki, ling, sea perch, dark ghost shark and squid), and I expect bycatch to continue to be closely monitored.

Tarakihi

TAR 1 (East) TAR 2, TAR 3 & TAR 7 (East) – All East Coast from Northland to Otago

I have decided to decrease the TACs, allowances for other sources of mortality caused by fishing, and TACCs for East Coast tarakihi stocks as follows:

Stock	Settings	TAC (t)	TACC (t)	Allowances(t)		
				Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
TAR 1	Previous	1333	1045	73	110	105
	New	1259 ↓	978 ↓	73	110	98 ↓
TAR 2	Previous	1658	1350	100	73	135
	New	1387 ↓	1104 ↓	100	73	110 ↓
TAR 3	Previous	1060	936	15	15	94
	New	793 ↓	694 ↓	15	15	69 ↓
TAR 7	Previous	1154	1024	5	23	102
	New	1121 ↓	994 ↓	5	23	99 ↓

* Note: reductions for TAR 1 and TAR 7 are entirely from the eastern portions of the quota management areas.

East Coast tarakihi is a shared fishery, caught by customary Māori, recreational, and commercial fishers. In making my decision, I am fully aware of both the number and variety of stakeholders who have an interest in this fishery, that this stock is presently below the soft limit¹, and that it is subject to ongoing legal action before the Court of Appeal.

I have decided to implement Option 2 that was consulted on during Fisheries New Zealand's 2022 consultation. Rebuilding the stock to 40% SB₀² within 15 years (by 2037), with a probability of achievement of 53%, requires a commercial catch reduction of 15% from current levels. For the 2022/2023 fishing year the TAC settings for TAR 1, TAR 2, TAR 3 and TAR 7 will be modified to reflect the reduction that is required.

The 2021 stock assessment estimated the East Coast tarakihi stock to be at 19.3% SB₀. This stock has been below the soft limit (20% SB₀) since the early 2000s. Steps taken to rebuild the stock to its target of 40% SB₀ have seen TAC reductions in both 2018 and 2019.

In 2021, the High Court ordered that in making my 2022 decision as to the TAC and TACC for East Coast tarakihi, I should have regard to the findings within the Court's judgment. In making my decision, I have had regard to the findings in the High Court judgment, along with my statutory obligations under the Fisheries Act. Specifically, I have determined a period appropriate to the stock before applying socio-economic factors in my decision. I have also determined an acceptable probability of achieving the target, having regard to both the Harvest Strategy Standard and its associated Operational Guidelines.

The 2021 stock assessment also showed that, while over the long-term the stock is projected to increase under current catch levels, due to below average recruitment in recent years the stock is forecast to decrease over the next year before increasing again. While

¹ The soft limit is a biomass limit, below which the requirement for a formal, time-constrained rebuilding plan is triggered.

² The average biomass that theoretically would have occurred if the stock had never been fished.

this decrease is within the bounds of natural variability, it provides further support that a reduction to the TAC is warranted.

I have set the East Coast tarakihi stock biomass target at 40% SB_0 . During consultation, several submitters advocated for a biomass target of 50% SB_0 or more, with a view that this would align to ecosystem-based fisheries management. Other submitters proposed setting a lower biomass target in light of the stock assessment suggesting the stock has been below 25% SB_0 since the 1970s, and questioned why set the stock at 40% SB_0 when the fishery has been viable over this time. I consider the target of 40% SB_0 is robust and is in line with the best available information for the stock. However, I may reconsider this should future scientific peer-reviewed research show an alternative target is more appropriate.

Several submitters advocated that the start year of the rebuild should be projected from 2018, when the stock was initially subject to a rebuild. I am required to make an assessment based on the best available information as to the period of rebuild that is now appropriate to the stock. I acknowledge that in 2018 the stock was estimated to be below the soft limit, but I am not required to make 2018 the base year for the rebuild. I am not remaking the 2018 or 2019 decisions, nor am I bound by the previous Minister's assessments. Also, this is my first decision taking into account the findings of the 2021 High Court judgment. Therefore, in making my decision, which will take effect from 1 October 2022, I have set the 2022/2023 fishing year as the start year of the rebuild.

When a stock is below the level that can produce the maximum sustainable yield, I am required to determine a rebuild period that is appropriate to the stock, and with an acceptable probability of achievement, having regard to both the biological characteristics and any environmental conditions affecting that stock. When a stock is below the soft limit the Harvest Strategy Standard recommends that a formal, time-constrained rebuild plan is adopted, which should aim to restore the stock to at least the target level of biomass within a timeframe of between T_{min} (the time it takes to rebuild the stock in the absence of all fishing mortality) and $2 * T_{min}$. In the case of East Coast tarakihi T_{min} is considered to be 5 years, giving a default rebuild period of between 5 and 10 years. Juvenile tarakihi grow relatively fast compared to other finfish, and reach sexual maturity after roughly 5 to 6 years. This rapid growth leads to T_{min} being relatively low.

Reviewing international best practice for rebuilding timeframes for stocks that have fallen below biomass limits, in countries with strong fisheries management systems, indicates that a mixture of multiples of T_{min} and generation time are used. This review suggests that $3 * T_{min}$ (15 years) and T_{min} plus generation time (19.7 years) can be considered appropriate time periods for rebuilding the East Coast tarakihi stock. Given the low value of T_{min} for East Coast tarakihi, I consider any period between 5 and 19.7 years is appropriate for rebuilding the stock. I have set the rebuild period at 15 years ($3 * T_{min}$), which I consider to be a period appropriate to the stock.

The 2021 High Court judgment found that setting the probability is an inherent component of the requirement to set a TAC that will result in the stock being restored to a level that can produce the maximum sustainable yield. It also found that both the Harvest Strategy Standard and associated Operational Guidelines are mandatory documents to consider in this regard. I consider that having at least 50% probability of achievement is acceptable and is consistent with fishery science and international best practice.

In deciding the way and rate to achieve the target, I have had regard to the current voluntary catch splitting arrangement in both TAR 1 and TAR 7, the voluntary measures set out in the Industry Rebuild Plan, and Industry's shelving of their annual catch entitlement. I recognise these additional measures that have been undertaken by Industry to support the rebuild of the stock to a sustainable level, especially efforts to reduce capture of below minimum size tarakihi. I strongly encourage Industry to continue to adhere to these measures and to work with my officials in this regard.

I am aware that any reduction in the TAC will be likely to have socio-economic consequences, especially at a regional scale, and will be likely to impact fisher wellbeing and health. However, I also acknowledge there are potential longer-term socio-economic benefits associated with a fully rebuilt stock.

East Coast tarakihi comprises a single biological stock, which results in TAR 2, TAR 3 and the eastern portions of TAR 1 and TAR 7 being managed together. Several submitters raised the current voluntary catch splitting arrangement in TAR 1 and TAR 7, either advocating for a formal regulatory split of the portions into separate east-west quota management areas or that the split arrangement is removed entirely. I consider that the current arrangement has been successful to date and support its continuation at this time. However, I have instructed my officials to continue to monitor the success of this arrangement.

Industry has committed to shelve approximately 10% of its East Coast tarakihi allowance, and I acknowledge the effort that Industry has taken to arrange this. However, given that the stock is presently below the soft limit and subject to a time constrained rebuild plan, I consider that setting a TAC and TACC that incorporates such shelving is not appropriate at this time.

During consultation, the setting 'other sources of mortality caused by fishing' allowance for East Coast tarakihi was questioned, with a lower setting being advocated. I note that this allowance only relates to tarakihi above the minimum legal size. Setting this allowance, equivalent to 10% of the TACC, is standard for inshore stocks that are predominantly caught by trawling. Incidental fishing mortality is difficult to quantify when considering the range of contributing sources, and as a result there is uncertainty in any estimate. For this reason, I have kept this allowance for East Coast tarakihi equivalent to 10% of the TACC. The Fisheries Amendment Bill, currently before Select Committee, and the current nationwide rollout of cameras on commercial fishing vessels, are expected to change fishing practices and enhance fisheries data. This may lead to an opportunity in future to review this allowance for the East Coast tarakihi stock.

Rough and smooth skates

RSK 8 & SSK 8 – West Coast North Island

I have decided to increase the TACs, allowances for other sources of mortality caused by fishing, and TACCs for RSK 8 and SSK 8 as follows:

Stock	Settings	TAC (t)	TACC (t)	Allowances(t)		
				Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
RSK 8	Previous	24	21	1	1	1
	New	43 ↑	37 ↑	1	1	4 ↑
SSK 8	Previous	23	20	1	1	1
	New	60 ↑	53 ↑	1	1	5 ↑

I have also decided to adjust the deemed value rates of both RSK 8 and SSK 8 as follows:

DV settings	Interim DV rate \$/kg	Annual DV rate \$/kg	Annual DV rate at maximum excess \$/kg	Differential
Previous	0.24	0.26 (100-120% ACE)	0.52 (200%+ ACE)	Standard
New	0.32	0.35 (100-120% ACE)	0.70 (200%+ ACE)	Standard

RSK 8 and SSK 8 are low knowledge bycatch stocks with no estimates of biomass or yield. The best available information to guide their management is catch history, which shows that commercial catch has been consistently above the TACC since introduction to the QMS in RSK 8 and trending upwards since introduction to the QMS in SSK 8.

The new catch limits for RSK 8 and SSK 8 better align with the trends in both fisheries. Given that catches are already close to these new limits, the changes should result in only small changes (if any) to actual catch in both stocks. Nevertheless, I have asked my officials to continue monitoring the fisheries to see how they respond to these changes and to consider further management actions if warranted.

In line with the catch limit changes, I have increased deemed value rates for both stocks. These new deemed value rates are aligned with other adjacent skate stocks and should strengthen incentives for commercial fishers to balance catch of RSK 8 and SSK 8 with Annual Catch Entitlement (ACE).

Blue warehou

WAR 2 & WAR 8 – Taranaki, Wellington, East Cape, Hawke’s Bay

I have decided to set TACs and allowances for WAR 2 and WAR 8, and decrease the current TACCs as follows:

Stock	Settings	TAC (t)	TACC (t)	Allowances(t)		
				Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
WAR 2	Previous	N/A	577.835	N/A	N/A	N/A
	New	297	260 ↓	5	6	26
WAR 8	Previous	N/A	232.8	N/A	N/A	N/A
	New	174	160 ↓	2	4	8

WAR 2 and WAR 8 are low knowledge stocks with no estimates of biomass or yield. The best available information used to monitor these stocks is trends in catch.

Commercial landings in WAR 2 have been trending downwards for the past decade, and landings in the 2020/21 fishing year were around 10% of the TACC. Commercial landings for WAR 8 have been more variable over the same timeframe, but the last 3 years have recorded the lowest over the last decade. I acknowledge that there has been considerable reduction in fishing effort within WAR 8 in response to fishing restrictions put in place under the Hector's and Māui dolphin Threat Management Plan.

While submitters highlighted changes in fisher behaviour for the decline in landings, there was also considerable support for a decrease in TACC for both stocks. Both stocks have experienced decreasing effort in fishing, but there is uncertainty if this decline is purely due to changes in fisher behaviour or if there is also a decline in biomass.

Based on this information I have decided to set TACs for both stocks at levels that allow for a moderate increase in catch levels, but also provide a greater level of certainty that the stocks will be maintained at or above a level that can produce Maximum Sustainable Yield.

Blue cod

BCO 7 – West Coast and Top of South Island

I have decided to set a TAC and allowances for BCO 7, and reduce the TACC for the fishery as follows:

Settings	TAC (t)	TACC (t)	Allowances(t)		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Previous	N/A	70.005	N/A	N/A	N/A
New	157	58 ↓	27	58	14

Analysis of a new Marlborough Sounds potting survey suggests that this part of the BCO 7 fishery is very likely (>90%) to be over fished, possibly heavily, at the current level of catch. Further, the sex ratio of blue cod in the Marlborough Sounds is strongly skewed in favour of male fish with ongoing implications for the productivity of the fishery. While some tangata whenua and submitters report good catches of blue cod in other parts of the fishery, the Marlborough Sounds accounts for over 60% of the fishery catch and there is a need to provide a greater level of certainty that the BCO 7 stock as a whole will be maintained at or above a level that can produce Maximum Sustainable Yield. I have decided, therefore, to set a TAC, TACC and allowances for BCO 7 that reduce recreational and commercial catch below recent levels.

Further monitoring and management is also needed to ensure the fishery remains sustainable. Fisheries New Zealand has commissioned a new scientific characterisation of the BCO 7 commercial fishery, as well as a new National Panel Survey of Recreational Fishing. The results of these will be available to a multi-sector technical group, which will be brought together under the auspices of the National Blue Cod Strategy, to help advise by Fisheries New Zealand on further measures to reduce recreational and commercial blue cod fishing pressure in the Marlborough Sounds.

West Coast South Island mixed trawl fishery

SNA 7 – West Coast and Top of South Island

I have decided to increase the TAC, allowances for customary fishing and other sources of mortality caused by fishing, and the TACC for the SNA 7 fishery as follows:

Settings	TAC (t)	TACC (t)	Allowances (t)		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Previous	645	350	20	250	25
New	768 ↑	450 ↑	30 ↑	250	38 ↑

In making my decision, I have considered tangata whenua's commitment to the fishery and feedback from stakeholders regarding the good health of the fishery as well as the uncertain information regarding other sources of mortality.

The fishery is clearly performing very well and I wish to provide the commercial sector with a utilisation opportunity, better reflect customary management practices and take a cautious approach to other sources of mortality while also maintaining the stock above target. I also note that the current allowance for recreational fishing provides for increasing recreational catch in response to snapper availability and fisher success.

GUR 7 – West Coast and Top of South Island

I have decided to increase the TAC, allowance for other sources of mortality caused by fishing, and the TACC for the GUR 7 fishery as follows:

Settings	TAC (t)	TACC (t)	Allowances (t)		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Previous	1,422	1,298	17	42	65
New	1,582 ↑	1,450 ↑	17	42	73 ↑

Red gurnard is also performing extremely well in GUR 7. Given the positive status of the fishery, my decision provides an appropriate utilisation opportunity for the commercial sector, in line with abundance, while maintaining the stock well above target. I consider the customary and recreational allowances are set correctly for this fishery.

SPO 7 – West Coast and Top of South Island

I have decided to retain the TAC, allowances, and TACC for the SPO 7 fishery as follows:

Settings	TAC (t)	TACC (t)	Allowances (t)		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Settings to be retained	373	298	15	33	27

I have taken a cautious approach to the management of rig in SPO 7 to reflect its current stock status, its biological vulnerability to overfishing, and New Zealand's obligations under the NPOA sharks to maintain shark species at or above target.

In making this decision, I note that there is considerable uncertainty in the abundance indices from the West Coast South Island trawl survey, which conflict with increasing commercial Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE). I also note that rig bycatch may increase with the increases I have approved to the SNA 7 and GUR 7 TACCs. Fisheries New Zealand will, therefore, monitor the impact of my decisions for these three stocks which are caught together and evaluate management actions as new information becomes available.

Red gurnard

GUR 3 – East Coast South Island, Southland, Sub-Antarctic, Chatham Rise

I have decided to increase the TAC, allowance for other sources of mortality caused by fishing, and the TACC for the GUR 3 fishery as follows:

Settings	TAC (t)	TACC (t)	Allowances(t)		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Previous	1,614	1,500	3	6	105
New	1,695 ↑	1,575 ↑	3	6	111 ↑

Red gurnard in GUR 3 has been performing well for several years and recent trawl survey results have suggested that greater utilisation would be sustainable.

In light of this I have applied modest increases to the TAC and TACC which will allow an appropriate increase in utilisation for the commercial sector, while also maintaining the stock above target. While even greater increases could also be sustainable, I have taken a measured approach to setting these limits acknowledging that there is uncertainty in the trawl survey indices and considering that catches are now at levels where the fishery experienced a significant decline in the past.

Rig

SPO 3 - East Coast South Island, Southland, Sub-Antarctic, Chatham Rise

I have decided to retain the TAC, allowances, and TACC for the SPO 3 fishery as follows:

Settings	TAC (t)	TACC (t)	Allowances(t)		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Settings to be retained	766	660	20	20	66

I have also decided to adjust the deemed value rates for SPO 3 as follows:

DV settings	Interim DV rate \$/kg	Annual DV rate \$/kg	Annual DV rate at maximum excess \$/kg	Differential
Previous	1.53	1.70 (100-120% ACE)	3.40 (200%+ ACE)	Standard
New	2.70	3.00 (100-120% ACE)	6.00 (200%+ ACE)	Standard

I have taken a cautious approach to the management of rig in SPO 3 to reflect its current stock status, its biological vulnerability to overfishing, and New Zealand's obligations under the NPOA sharks to maintain shark species at or above target.

In making this decision I note that there is considerable uncertainty in abundance indices from the East Coast South Island trawl survey, which conflict with increasing commercial Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) in SPO 7.

While the catch limits and allowances of SPO 3 will be retained, I have decided to increase its deemed value rates to better align with current port prices and the rates of similar adjacent rig stocks.

Attached bladder kelp

KBB 3G & KBB 4G - East Coast South Island and Chatham Islands

I have decided to retain the TACs, allowances, and TACCs for KBB 3G and KBB 4G as follows:

Settings to be retained	Stock	TAC (t)	TACC (t)	Allowances(t)		
				Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
	KBB 3G	1,238	1,236.8	0.1	0.1	1
	KBB 4G	274	272.8	0.1	0.1	1

Bladder kelp beds are critical components of coastal and marine environments and require careful management as key habitats for a wide range of fish and shellfish species. However, the fisheries for bladder kelp in KBB 3G and KBB 4G are undeveloped with little harvest occurring. There are, therefore, no immediate sustainability risks associated with these fisheries.

There was little consensus during consultation on the vulnerability of these bladder kelp stocks were the TACs and TACCs fully caught. Some information provided by experts suggested bladder kelp beds are resilient to harvest and recover quickly, while other scientists suggest this is not the case. To help confirm the status and vulnerability of KBB 3G and KBB 4G Fisheries New Zealand will consider commissioning scientific assessments over the next year.

Deemed value rate changes for other stocks

I have decided to adjust the deemed value rates of five additional stocks in this round of changes. The stocks and adjustments are summarised in the table below, followed by rationale for each of the adjustments.

My decisions on all of these changes are consistent with my statutory obligations for deemed value rate setting under section 75 of the Fisheries Act.

		Previous settings				New settings			
Species	Stock	Interim \$/kg	Annual \$/kg	Annual at maximum excess \$/kg	Differential	Interim \$/kg	Annual \$/kg	Annual at maximum excess \$/kg	Differential
Kingfish	KIN 3	4.00	4.45	8.90	Standard	3.04	3.30	4.00	Special
	KIN 7	4.00	4.45	8.90	Standard	3.04	3.30	5.00	Special
	KIN 8	4.00	4.45	8.90	Standard	3.04	3.30	5.00	Special
Snapper	SNA 2	5.40	6.00	12.00	Special	4.03	4.48	8.96	Standard
Trevally	TRE 1	1.13	1.25	5.00	Special	1.35	1.50	5.25	Special

Snapper – SNA 2 (East Cape, Hawke’s Bay, Wellington)

I have reduced the deemed value rates for the SNA 2 stock to align them with the adjacent SNA 8 stock. The SNA 2 and SNA 8 are stocks are both doing well and the downward adjustment to the SNA 2 deemed value rates reflects the positive stock status.

Trevally – TRE 1 (East Coast of Northland, Auckland and Bay of Plenty)

The port price for TRE 1 has roughly doubled in the past five years. I have made a small upward adjustment to the deemed value rates for this stock in order to ensure that there remain incentives for fishers to remain within their ACE holdings.

Kingfish – KIN 3 (East Coast South Island, Southland and Sub-Antarctic)

Kingfish is continuing to become more common in South Island waters. In KIN 3, most kingfish is taken by set net fishers, who are unable to return any live kingfish to the sea under the provisions of the 6th Schedule of the Act. To create appropriate incentives for fishers to land all catch that is taken, I have decided to reduce the deemed value rates for this stock.

Kingfish – KIN 7 & KIN 8 (All of West Coast)

I have reduced the deemed value rates for the KIN 7 and KIN 8 stocks, where kingfish is taken as a non-target species. The previous deemed value rates were well above the port prices for both stocks. The downward adjustment to deemed value rates will increase the incentives to land all catch that is taken but retain the strong incentives to return live fish to the sea wherever possible.