

## Red gurnard (GUR 3) – Eastern South Island, Chatham Rise, Southland, and Fiordland

*A summary of issues for the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council*

### June 2023

Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) is reviewing the sustainability measures for red gurnard in GUR 3. The Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) increased by 180 t in 2020 and 75 t in 2022. At the time FNZ signalled that the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) would be reviewed again following results from the 2022 East Coast South Island trawl survey and stock assessment. FNZ consider there is a utilisation opportunity at a time of high abundance of red gurnard in this fishery.



If you or your club have feedback that can be used in the NZSFC submission, please provide this by 10 July. Please email Sydney Curtis at [sydney@legasea.co.nz](mailto:sydney@legasea.co.nz) or Trish Rea at [trish@legasea.co.nz](mailto:trish@legasea.co.nz). Individual and club submissions can also be made direct to [FMsubmissions@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:FMsubmissions@mpi.govt.nz).

### Gurnard 3

#### Main Points of interest:

1. In GUR 3 about 80% of commercial catch of red gurnard comes from the inshore multi-species trawl fishery also catching flatfishes, elephant fish, red cod, tarakihi, blue moki, rig, barracouta, and leatherjacket.
2. GUR 3 landings regularly exceeded the TACC between 1988/89 and 1995/96. The TACC was increase to 900 tonnes in 1996 and landings dipped over the next 5 years. In 2002–03, the TACC for GUR 3 was reduced to 800 tonnes. Since 2000, catch has steadily increased and has been consistently overcaught since 2004 despite regular increases in the TACC (Figure 1).

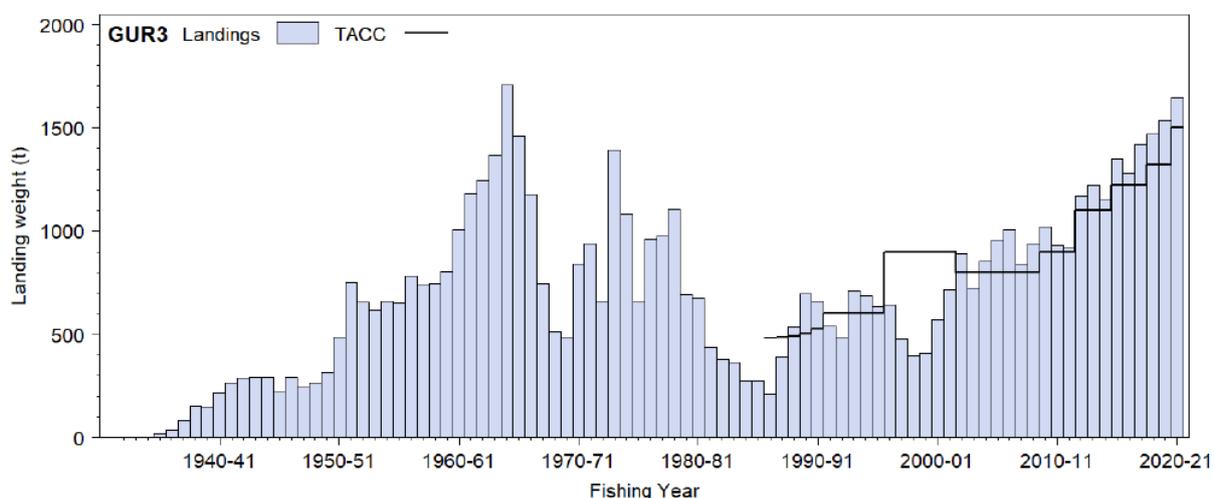
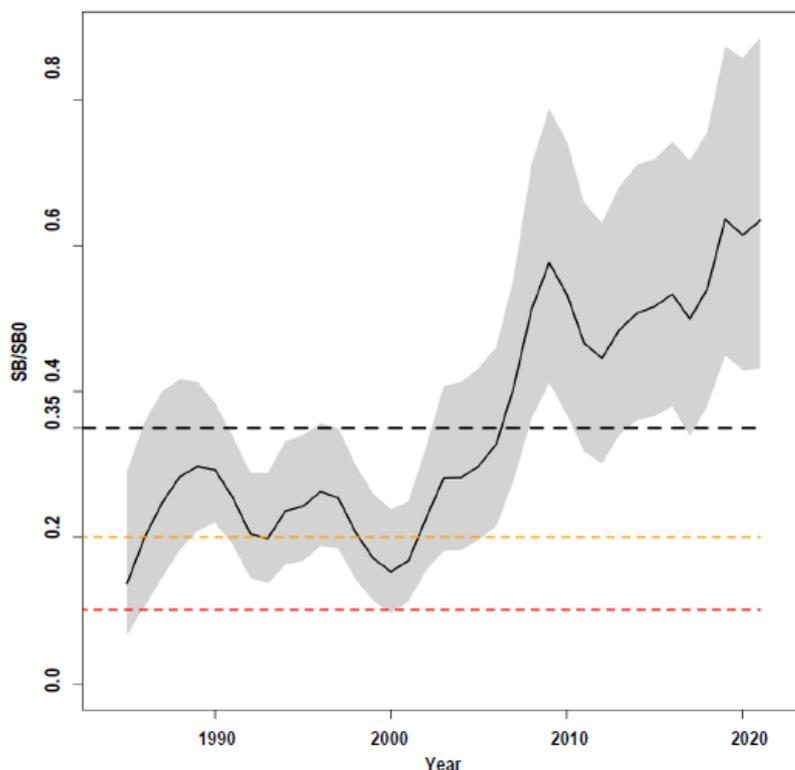


Figure 1: GUR 3 landed and reported commercial catch history to 2020–21 and the TACC since 1986

- The first full stock assessment of GUR 3 was completed in May 2022. The assessment concluded that the spawning stock biomass (**SSB**) fluctuated around 20% of the unfished level until the early 2000s and has increased to around 60% in recent years (Figure 2).
- Projections are not shown, but at the current TAC level GUR 3 abundance was very likely to remain above the target biomass level of 35% Bzero.



**Figure 2:** GUR 3 Stock assessment results plotted as annual estimated spawning stock biomass as a proportion of the unfished level of spawning stock biomass (Bzero).

The grey dashed line at 35% is the interim target for this stock.

- Trawl survey results also show an increase in abundance with a high proportion of gurnard in the 10 m to 30 m depth range.
- The allowance for recreational fishing interests is 6 t and the recent National Panel Survey estimates for GUR 3 have been 2 tonnes per year.

**Table 1: Proposed management options (in tonnes) for GUR 3 from 1 October 2023.**

Option	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Option 1 ( <i>Status quo</i> )	1,695	1,575	3	6	111
Option 2	1,779 (↑ 84 t)	1,654 (↑ 79 t)	3	6	116 (↑ 5 t)

### Recommendations for submission:

- NZSFC support Option 1** for GUR 3 no change to the TAC or TACC.
- NZSFC do not support increases in inshore trawling** especially in the 10 m to 30 m depth range where a high proportion of gurnard and flatfish catch is taken.
- NSZFC review** the stock assessment projections which are likely to show a reduction in gurnard abundance over the next 5 years.