

Submission summary

Blue cod 3 (BCO 3) review 2025/26

Proposal [online here](#).

Full submission [online here](#).



Fisheries New Zealand proposals

In July, Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) reviewed Blue cod 3 (BCO 3) management (Figure 1). The proposals included changes to the Total Allowable Catch (TAC), Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) and allowances set aside for Recreational and All Other Mortality caused by fishing (Table 1).

Table 1: Proposed management options (in tonnes) for BCO 3 from 1 October 2025.

Option	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Option 1 (Current settings)	243	130	20	83	10
Option 2	192 (↓ 51)	104 (↓ 26)	20	60 (↓ 23)	8 (↓ 2)
Option 3	178 (↓ 65)	91 (↓ 39)	20	60 (↓ 23)	7 (↓ 3)

Background

Blue cod numbers on the east coast of the South Island are declining, indicating this BCO 3 stock is overfished. Since these southern blue cod were introduced into the Quota Management System in 1986, commercial fishers have exceeded the TACC in 19 of the past 20 years. Recreational harvest has halved since 2012, while bottom trawling and bycatch continue to threaten habitats and biodiversity.

Blue cod is a taonga (treasured) species for tangata whenua and prized by recreational fishers. BCO 3 is now overfished with a skewed sex ratio, too many males are threatening future sustainability.

Joint recreational submission

The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council, LegaSea, New Zealand Angling & Casting Association, and New Zealand Underwater, submitted in response to a review of Blue cod 3. Major concerns include:

1. The ongoing decline of blue cod populations.
2. The Traffic Light System (TLS) applying to recreational catches is unfair.
3. Inadequate management by Fisheries New Zealand.
4. Poor monitoring of commercial blue cod fishing, only 4% observer coverage.
5. FNZ's recommended allowance for mortality caused by fishing is unreasonably low.

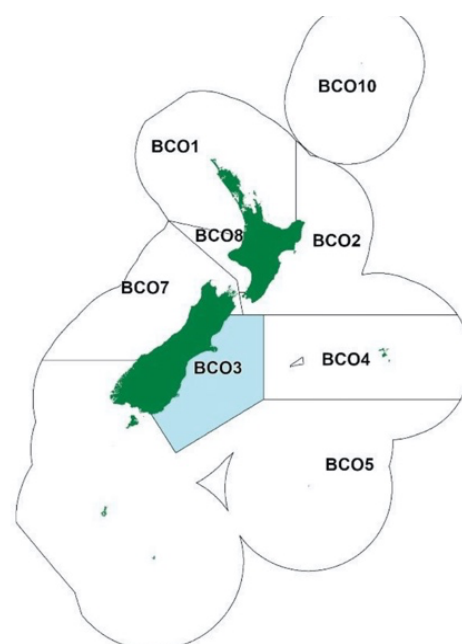


Figure 1. Blue cod 3 Quota Management Area.

The joint submitters call for urgent, precautionary measures, prioritising sustainability over utilisation. Recreational fishers support a daily bag limit cut from 15 to 10 in south Otago waters, if commercial catch limits are effectively reduced. Blue cod numbers must be restored and made available for future generations. Minister Shane Jones is due to make a decision by October 1st, 2025.

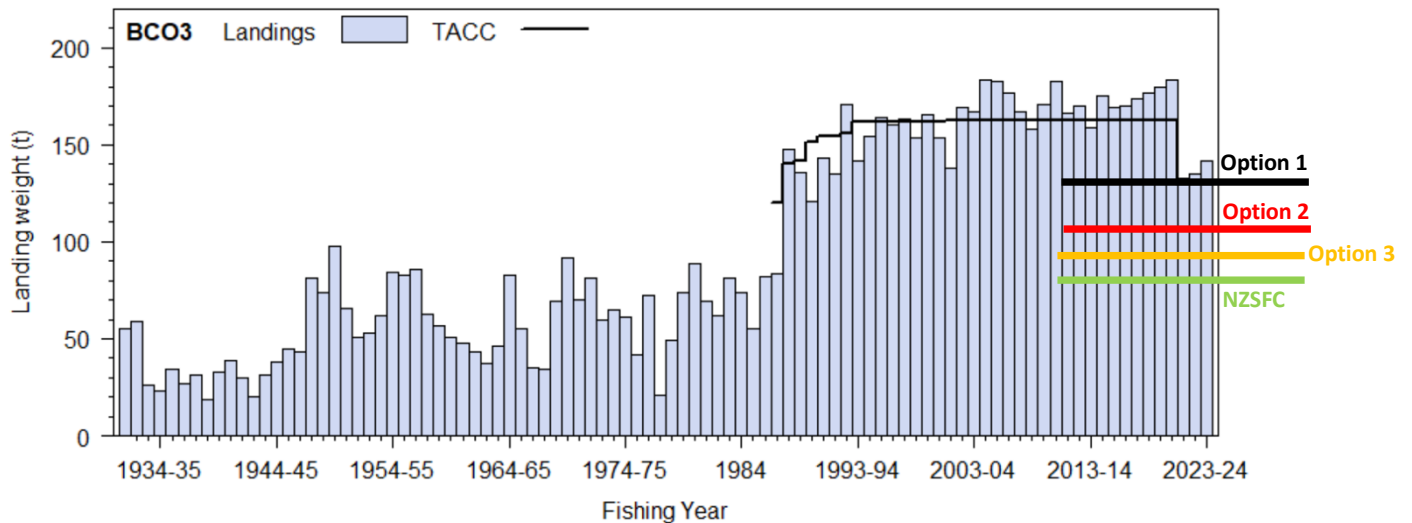


Figure 2. Commercial landings for Blue cod 8 (BCO 8). The black line is the current total allowable commercial catch setting and option 1 (130 tonnes). Red line indicates where the total allowable commercial catch will be if option 2 (104 tonnes) is approved. Orange line is option 3 (91 tonnes). Green line indicates the alternative option recommended by joint recreational submitters (80 tonnes).