

Submission summary

Blue cod 5 (BCO 5) review 2025/26

Proposal [online here](#).

Full submission [online here](#).



Fisheries New Zealand proposals

In July, Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) proposed options for changes to the recreational daily bag limit for blue cod in Blue cod 5 (BCO 5) management (Table 1, Figure 1). There are no proposed changes to the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) or allowances.

Table 1. Fisheries New Zealand proposed options for changes to the recreational daily bag limit in Blue cod 5.

| Proposal | Option | Description |
|---|--------|---|
| Reduce the BCO 5 recreational Daily Limit | 1 | <i>Status quo</i> (remain at 15 blue cod per person per day) |
| | 2 | Reduce the Daily Limit (reduce to 10 blue cod per person per day) |

Joint recreational submission

Blue cod in the waters around Southland are in trouble. Foveaux Strait blue cod are significantly overfished and catches need to be reduced. Since 1986, commercial catches have repeatedly exceeded the statutory limit, while recreational fishers face stricter controls under the controversial Traffic Light System imposed by Fisheries New Zealand.

In July the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council, LegaSea, New Zealand Angling & Casting Association, and New Zealand Underwater, submitted a comprehensive response to the review of the Southland blue cod stock, BCO 5. Main concerns include:

1. Poor management.
2. Too few legal sized female blue cod due to overfishing, this is threatening spawning success.
3. Abuse of the regulations that permit commercial fishers to take thousands of blue cod every year and class them as 'recreational' landings.
4. Serial depletion of blue cod as commercial fishing effort moves from exploited to more abundant areas.

Sustainability must take precedence. Fisheries NZ cannot continue to protect the interests of quota holders at the expense of public access, while serial depletion continues unchecked. Regular, independent reviews of catch levels are required.

A reduction to the blue cod recreational daily bag limit would be acceptable only if fisheries managers take effective action to address the abuse of commercial regulations enabling over 30,000 blue cod to be taken and classed as 'recreational' catch every year.

The submitters urge the Minister to take precautionary action to restore abundance and secure blue cod for future generations. Minister Shane Jones is due to make a decision by October 1st, 2025.

