

Submission summary

Blue mackerel 1 (EMA 1) review 2025/26

Proposal [online here](#).

Full submission [online here](#).



Fisheries New Zealand proposals

For the first time since 1986, Fisheries NZ is reviewing the catch limits for the Blue mackerel 1 stock (EMA 1) on the northeast coast of the North Island (Table 1, Figure 1).

Table 1. Proposed management options (in tonnes) for EMA 1 from 1 October 2025.

Option	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Current settings (status quo)	7,690	7,630	20	40	0
Option 1	7,741 (↑ 51)	7,630	20	15 (↓ 25)	76 (↑ 76)
Option 2	8,127 (↑ 437)	8,012 (↑ 382)	20	15 (↓ 25)	80 (↑ 80)
Option 3	8,512 (↑ 822)	8,393 (↑ 763)	20	15 (↓ 25)	84 (↑ 84)

Joint recreational submission

A recent submission by the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council, LegaSea, New Zealand Angling & Casting Association, and New Zealand Underwater supported Fisheries NZ's proposal to retain the commercial catch limit while setting aside 76 tonnes annually to account for mortality caused by fishing.

Concerns raised in the submission include:

1. **Insufficient consultation timeframe**, risking unlawful process.
2. **Lack of stock assessment**; FNZ had previously advised the Minister to halt the review until more data is available.
3. Risks of **ecosystem disruption**, as blue mackerel are a key food source for seabirds, marine mammals, and larger predatory fish.
4. **Localised depletion** from purse seining and bulk harvesting, with seabird populations already showing signs of food stress.
5. **Climate change impacts** on baitfish availability, making reliance on historic catches risky.

What's required:

1. A **full stock assessment** of EMA 1.
2. Greater monitoring of environmental impacts.
3. Management to prioritise **sustainability of bait fish** as ecosystem linchpins.
4. Effort-spreading measures to prevent localised depletion.

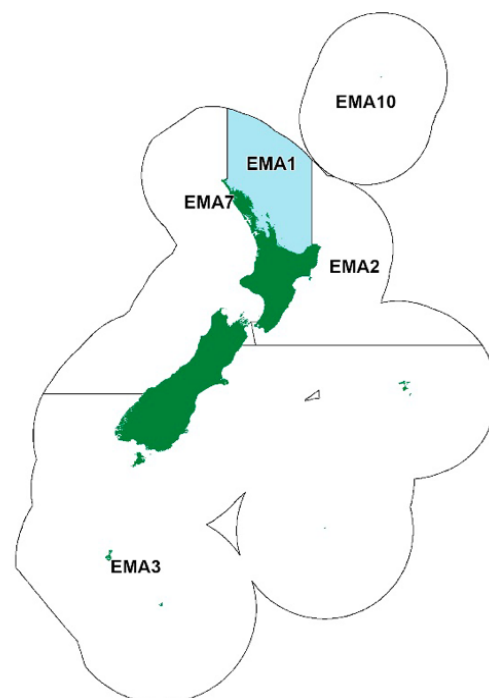


Figure 1. Quota Management Areas for blue mackerel.

Blue mackerel are particularly susceptible to overfishing by purse seining, even at low biomass due to their schooling behaviour. There is inadequate, uncertain, and unreliable information on blue mackerel abundance and ecosystem impacts. So, until sufficient data is available EMA 1 ought to be managed as a bycatch-only fish stock.

The Minister for Oceans and Fisheries, Shane Jones, is due to make a decision by October 1st, 2025.

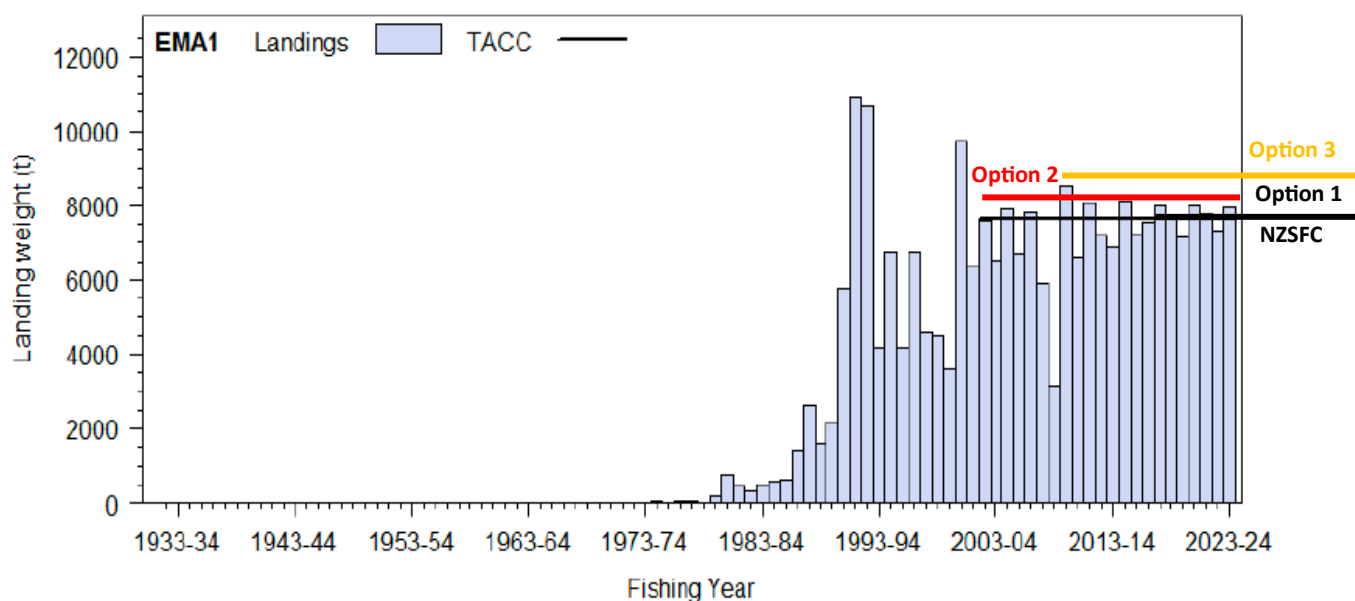


Figure 2. Commercial landings and total allowable commercial catch (TACC) for Blue mackerel 1 (EMA 1). Black line is the status quo and where the TACC would be if option one is selected. This is the option supported by the joint recreational submission (7,630 tonnes). Red line is option 2 (8,012 tonnes), orange line is option 3 (8,393 tonnes).