

Submission summary



Blue mackerel 7 (EMA 7) review 2025/26

Proposal [online here](#).



Fisheries New Zealand proposals

In July, Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) is proposed to increase the commercial catch limit of blue mackerel despite uncertainty over the ecological impacts of taking more baitfish from New Zealand's west coast waters, EMA 7 (Figure 1). The proposals include changes to the Total Allowable Catch (TAC), Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) and allowances for Recreational and All Other Mortality caused by fishing (Table 1).

Table 1. Proposed management options (in tonnes) for EMA 7 from 1 October 2025.

Option	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Option 1 (<i>status quo</i>)	3,352	3,350	1	1	0
Option 2	4,236 (↑ 884)	4,188 (↑ 838)	1	5 (↑ 4)	42 (↑ 42)
Option 3	4,743 (↑ 1,391)	4,690 (↑ 1,340)	1	5 (↑ 4)	47 (↑ 47)
Option 4	5,081 (↑ 1,729)	5,025 (↑ 1,675)	1	5 (↑ 4)	50 (↑ 50)

Joint recreational submission

The Blue Mackerel 7 (EMA 7) management area extends west from North Cape to Fiordland. The commercial catch limit of 3,350 tonnes has not been reviewed since 2002.

In July, the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council, LegaSea, NZ Angling & Casting Association, and New Zealand Underwater, jointly opposed FNZ's proposal.

We need stronger incentives for commercial fishers to maintain catches within the legal limit, and monitoring cameras need to be onboard all trawl vessels.

The Minister has a duty under the Fisheries Act to make a precautionary decision given the inadequate information about abundance, and the ecological role of blue mackerel as a key food source for predators.

Significant catch increases put at risk marine mammals, seabirds, and larger fish that rely on blue mackerel as a primary food source. FNZ is downplaying the ecosystem effects of fishing, yet we cannot ignore the risks associated with bulk harvest fishing, seafloor impacts, and inadequate monitoring of bycatch species.

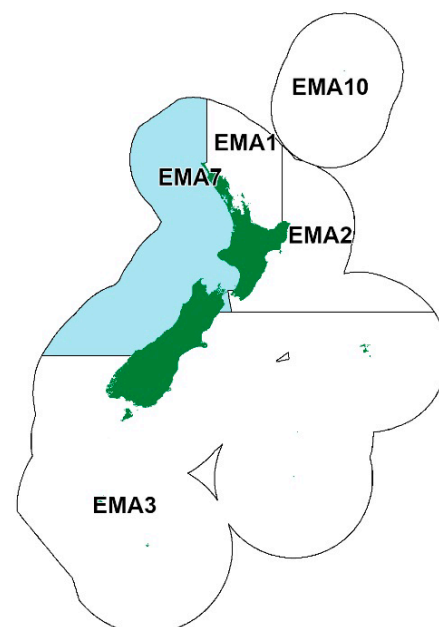


Figure 1. Fisheries Management Areas for blue mackerel. Blue are is under review.

Given its high ecological value, bulk exporting blue mackerel for less than \$2 per kilo makes no economic or environmental sense. At that price they are best left in the water.

Sustainability, ecosystem health, and future generations' needs must take precedence over short-term commercial gains.

The Minister for Oceans and Fisheries must announce his decision before October 1st, 2025.

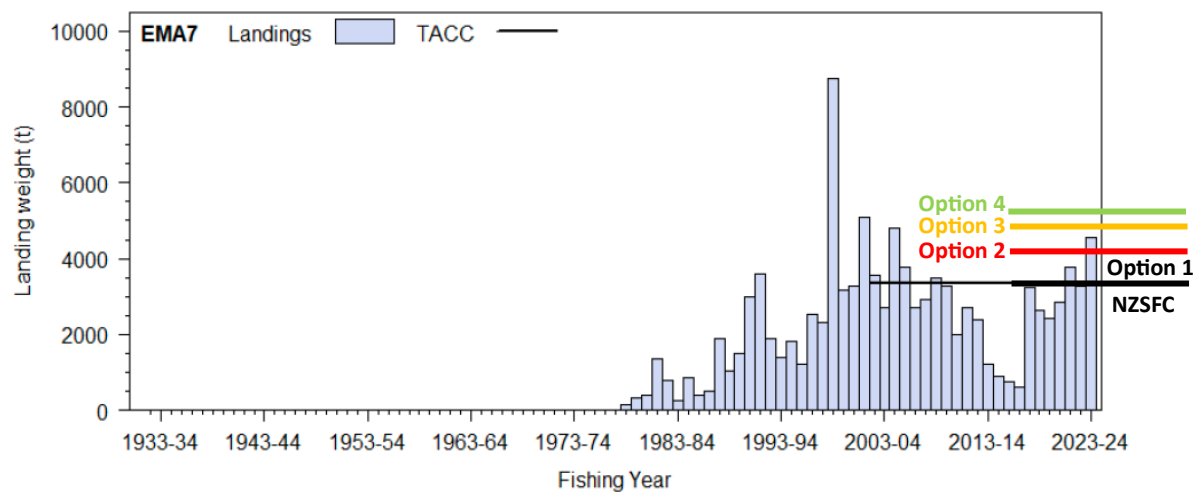


Figure 2. Commercial landings and total allowable commercial catch (TACC) for blue mackerel 1 (EMA 1). Black line is the status quo where the TACC would be if option 1 is selected (3,350 t). Red line is option 2 (4,188 t), orange line is option 3 (4,690 tonnes) and the green line is option 4 (5,025 tonnes). The joint recreational submission recommended the Minister supports option 1.