



Review of rock lobster sustainability measures for April 2017

The National Rock Lobster Management Group (NRLMG) is a national-level, multi-stakeholder group comprising representatives of the customary, recreational and commercial fishing sectors and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

Since its formation in 1992, the NRLMG has been the primary source of advice to MPI (formerly the Ministry for Fisheries) and the relevant Minister on the management of New Zealand's rock lobster fisheries.

Sustainability measures

The NRLMG pursues dynamic harvest strategies for rock lobster fisheries. It is willing to consider and accept changes to the Total Allowable Catch, allowances and Total Allowable Commercial Catch in two situations - where:

- A change is triggered by a fully tested and accepted management procedure;
- Stock modelling demonstrates that a change is required to move the stock to, or maintain the stock at, a size at or above an agreed reference level.

Every year the NRLMG considers the results from stock assessments and the operation of management procedures. These determine whether catch limit changes are required for the upcoming April fishing year to ensure the sustainable use of the rock lobster resource.

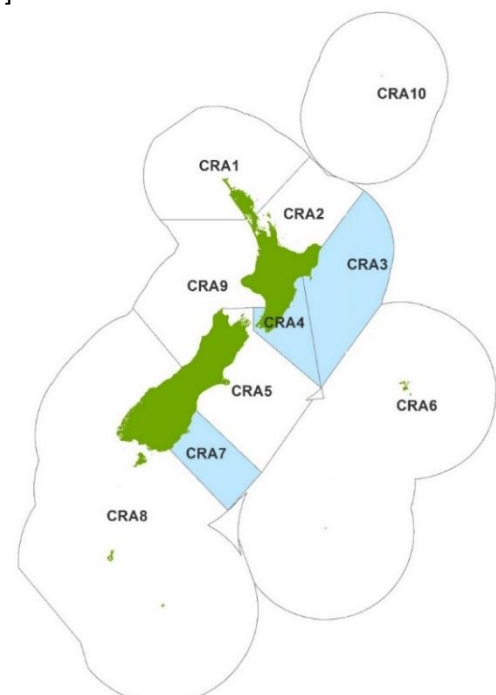
A management procedure is a kind of decision rule that is used to guide the setting of rock lobster catch limits. Management procedures are informed by annual changes in commercial catch rates ('catch-per-unit-effort' or 'CPUE').

The CPUE data are subject to careful scientific analyses and are considered a reliable indicator of abundance in most rock lobster fisheries. The CPUE data are the most important information in the scientific models used to provide an overall assessment of stock status.

The management procedure approach establishes a regime that can respond to changes in stock abundance in the fishery on an annual basis in a way that is consistent with the Minister's statutory obligations.

Management procedures are used in all rock lobster fisheries except for CRA 6, CRA 9 and CRA 10. Each procedure is designed to move or maintain stock abundance well above agreed reference levels and, in turn this provides for good utilisation benefits for all sectors.

For further information on management procedures for New Zealand rock lobster refer to the fisheries research report available for download from the MPI website here: <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/14566> [12MB]



April 2017 sustainability measure proposals

The NRLMG's proposals to change rock lobster Total Allowable Catches (TACs), and Total Allowable Commercial Catches (TACCs) for April 2017 are guided by recent stock assessment information, operation of management procedures, and other fisheries monitoring information.

Two alternative options for a new management procedures are proposed for use in the CRA 4 rock lobster fishery from April 2017, because the current procedure has expired. Both of the new procedures are designed to rebuild the CRA 4 stock with high probability, but result in different TAC proposals for April 2017.

It is proposed that the TAC will decrease for the CRA 3 (Gisborne) and CRA 4 (Wellington/Hawkes Bay) rock lobster fisheries and increase for CRA 7 (Otago). No changes are proposed to non-commercial allowances for any of these rock lobster stocks.

These proposals will be released for formal statutory consultation by MPI on 11 January 2017 for a minimum of 4 weeks consultation. The consultation document and details of how to submit on the proposals will be available on the MPI website from this time: www.mpi.govt.nz

Stock	Option	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
				Customary Māori	Recreational	Other mortality
CRA 3	CRA3_01: Use the <u>current</u> CRA 3 management procedure and decrease the TAC by decreasing the TACC by 9%.	366.86 ↓	237.86 ↓	20	20	89
	CRA3_02 (status quo): Retain the current CRA 3 TAC, allowances and TACC.	389.95	260.95	20	20	89
CRA 4 ¹	CRA4_01: Use the <u>new</u> CRA 4 management procedure (<i>Rule 24</i>) and reduce the TAC by reducing the TACC by 23%.	502 ↓	307 ↓	35	85	75
	CRA4_02: Use the <u>new</u> CRA 4 management procedure (<i>Rule 6</i>) and reduce the TAC by reducing the TACC by 27%.	484 ↓	289 ↓	35	85	75
CRA 7	CRA7_01: Use the <u>current</u> CRA 7 management procedure and increase the TAC by increasing the TACC by 15%.	132.52 ↑	112.52 ↑	10	5	5
	CRA7_02 (status quo): Retain the current CRA 7 TAC, allowances and TACC.	117.72	97.72	10	5	5

The results from the operation of the current CRA 1, CRA 2, CRA 5 and CRA 8 management procedures resulted in no recommended change to the TACs, allowances or TACCs.

¹ The current CRA 4 is 592 tonnes and the TACC is 397 tonnes.

NRLMG background

Purpose

The purpose of the NRLMG is to:

- a) Provide formal engagement opportunities between representatives of the customary, recreational and commercial fishing sectors and MPI on management of New Zealand's rock lobster fisheries; and
- b) Provide the Minister for Primary Industries and/or MPI with good quality, ongoing advice relating to fisheries management decision-making processes, including operational fisheries planning processes, for rock lobster.

Goal

Rock lobster fisheries will be managed and be maintained at or above the assessed and agreed biological reference points, using a comprehensive approach that recognises a range of commercial, customary non-commercial, recreational and environmental concerns and values.

What we do

- a) Provide advice on:
 - i. Catch limit, regulatory and other management actions that apply specifically to rock lobster and, ensure the use of best available information, develop initial advice, prepare final advice, and advise the Minister directly;
 - ii. Management actions that have impacts on fisheries beyond rock lobster and, provide expert rock lobster input into existing management processes.
- b) Provide well informed, credible and consistent rock lobster management information and advice to sector groups, government agencies and Ministers.
- c) Identify rock lobster management issues.
- d) Disseminate information to constituencies and representing the views of their constituencies on rock lobster management matters.
- e) Contribute to key MPI fisheries management processes, in particular to operational fisheries and research planning processes.

Rock lobster research

The projects that are considered essential to informing management decisions for rock lobster are:

- stock assessment
- stock monitoring
- better non-commercial catch estimates, including estimates of illegal removals.

This year a new CRA 4 stock assessment and management procedure evaluations were carried out by a team of stock assessment scientists. Management procedures are generally reviewed every five years unless a review is requested and approved by the NRLMG. The review aims to ensure that TAC setting remains compliant with the statutory requirements set out in the Act.

A multi-area CRA 4 stock assessment model was also carried out on an experimental basis during 2016. This was the first time for rock lobster that a model had been developed at a scale smaller than a quota management area. The multi-area model needs further work before it can be applied to management decisions.

Stock assessment scientists also operated the CRA 1, CRA 2, CRA 3, CRA 5, CRA 7 and CRA 8 Management Procedures used to guide statutory TAC setting in these fisheries.

The NRLMG has every confidence in the stock assessment and management approach for rock lobster. Research information and experience is showing that the current approach is working to rebuild and maintain healthy rock lobster abundance levels. The rock lobster assessment approach is highly sophisticated and is regularly peer-reviewed by independent scientists to ensure that rock lobster continues to be the best managed species in New Zealand.

For further information on the NRLMG, visit our new website [here](#)