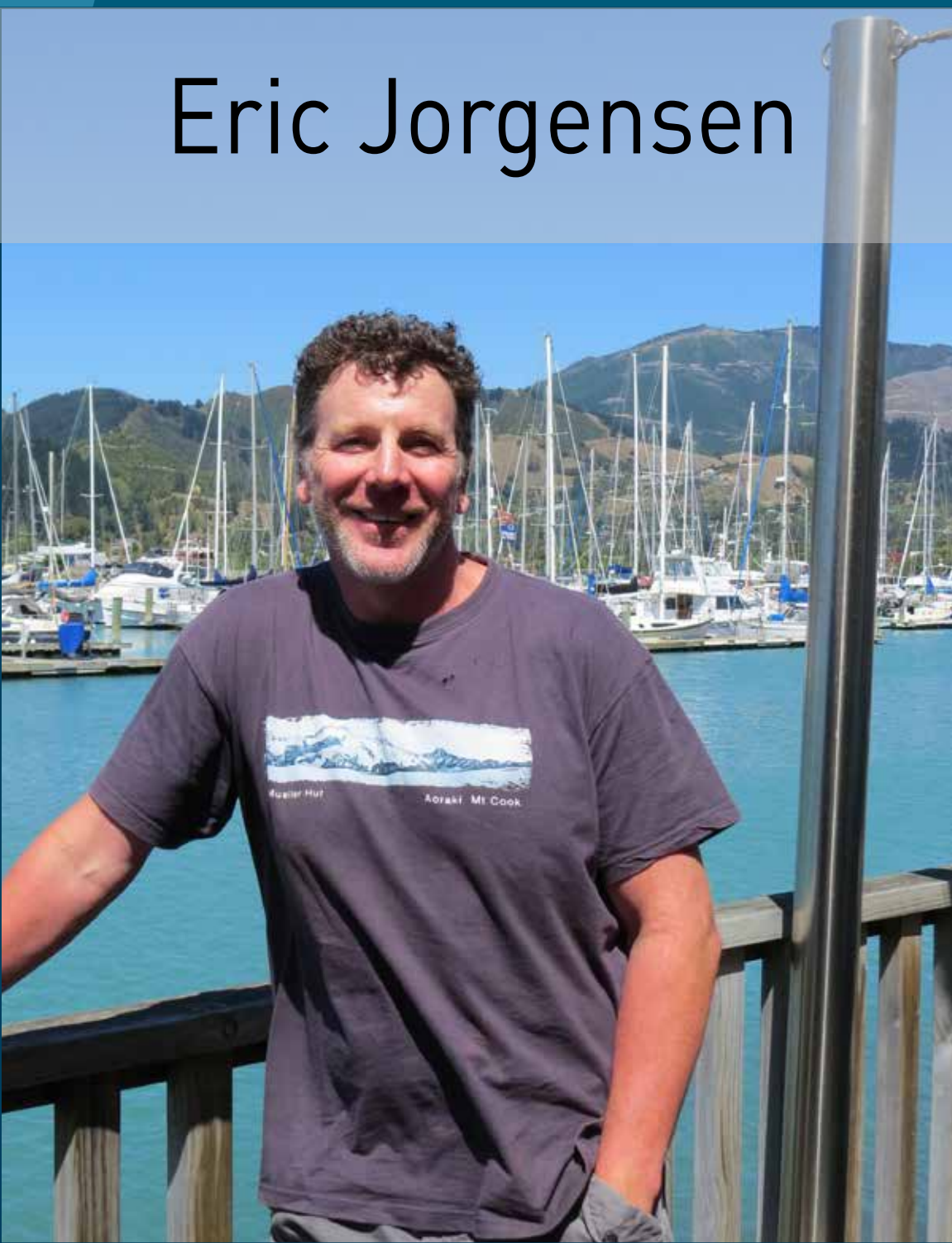


# The Blue Cod Management Group

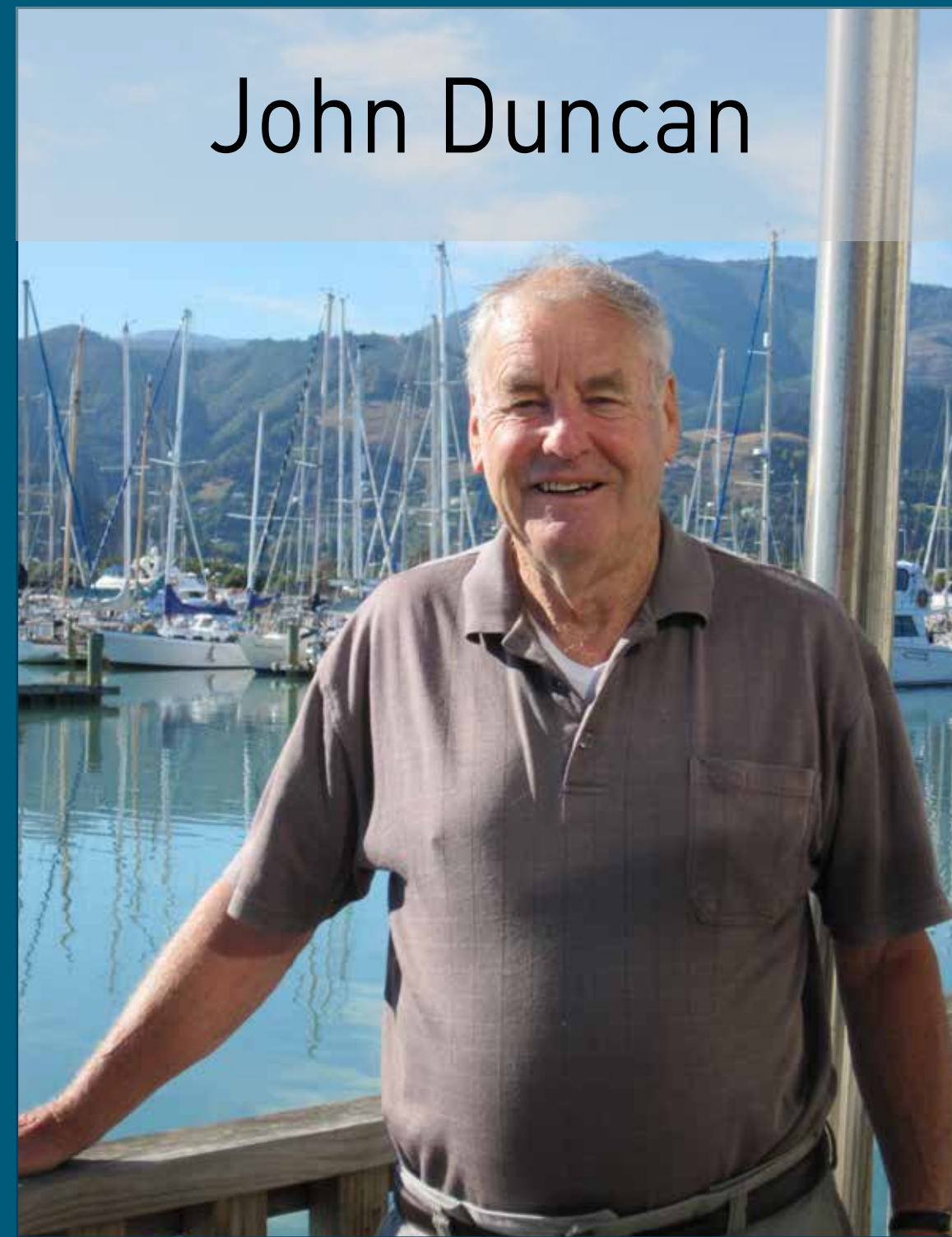
is leading the review of the blue cod fishery  
in the Marlborough area

We want your input into solutions for the fishery.

Eric Jorgensen



John Duncan



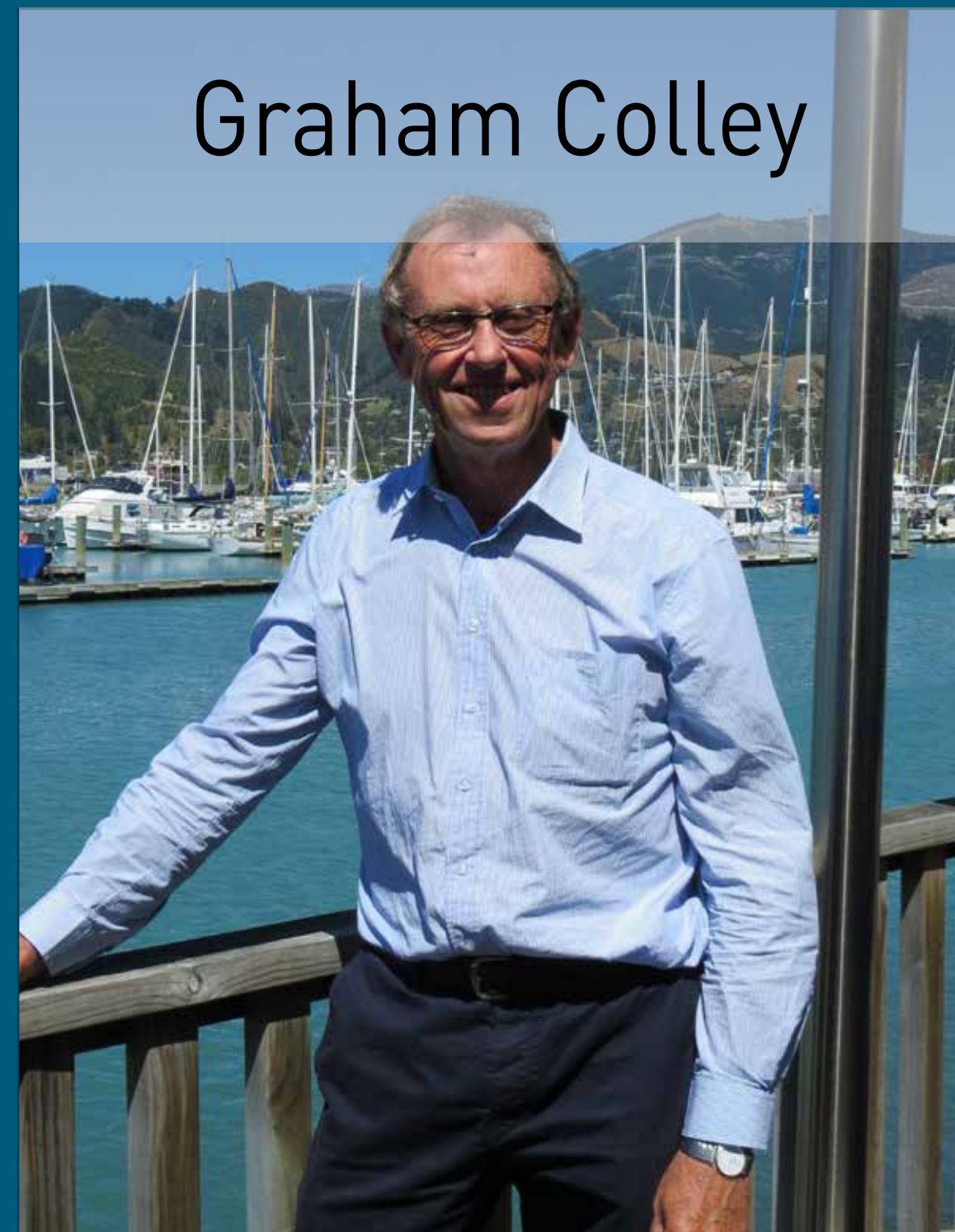
Michael Hill



Allan Davidson



Graham Colley



Michael Connolly



Carol Scott



Steve Halley



**Blue Cod Management Group**

# Why are we reviewing the blue cod fishery?

- The Minister recognises the importance of improving the health of this fishery.
- The current rules are complex and may not be working.
- Changes to the rules are to be in place by the end of this year.



# Blue cod biology

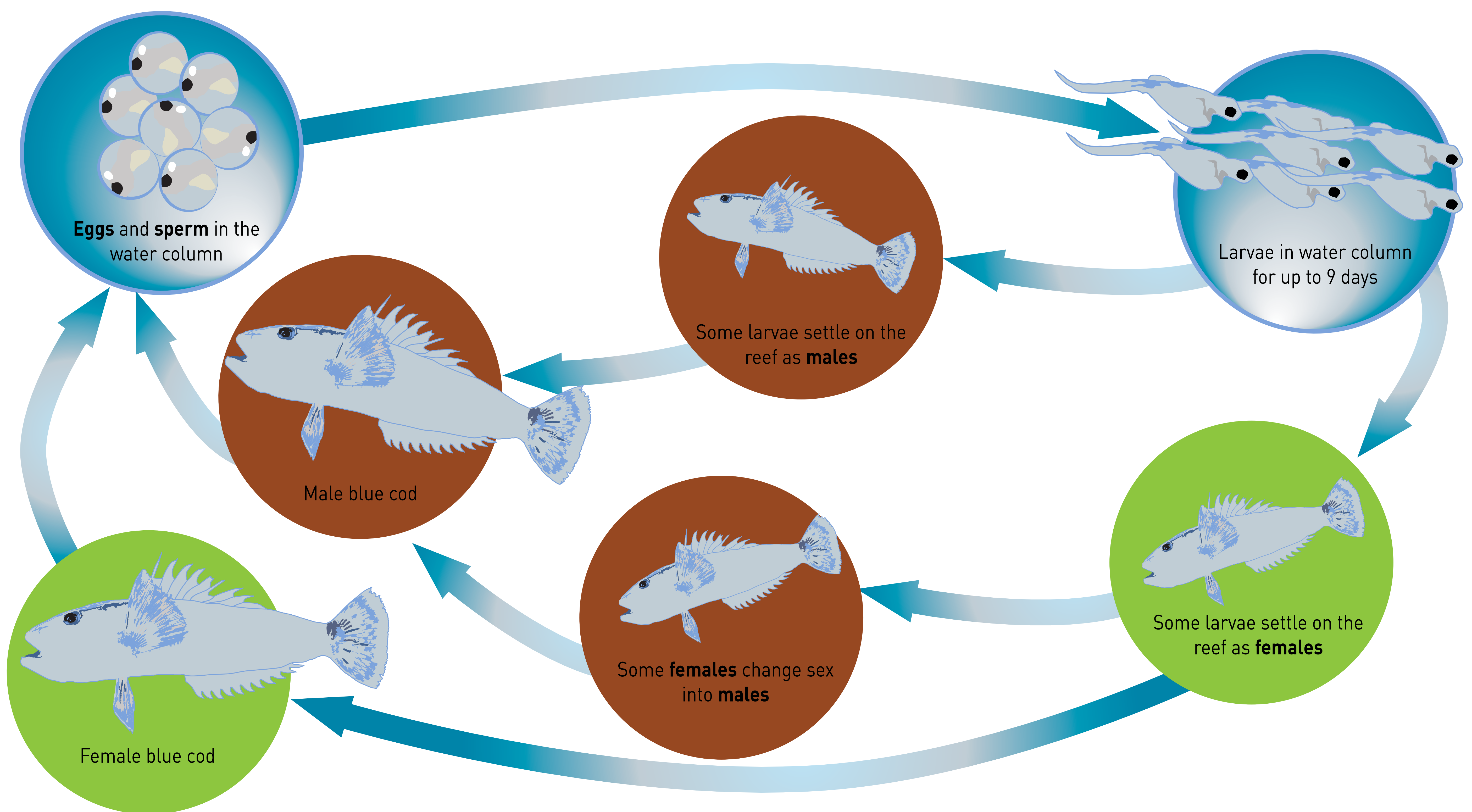
Blue cod are vulnerable to overfishing:

- Take bait easily
- Slow growing
- Long-lived
- Don't move very far
- Change sex

Any female blue cod is able to change sex to become a male. Scientists consider that females change sex to male when there aren't any large dominant males around to bully them.

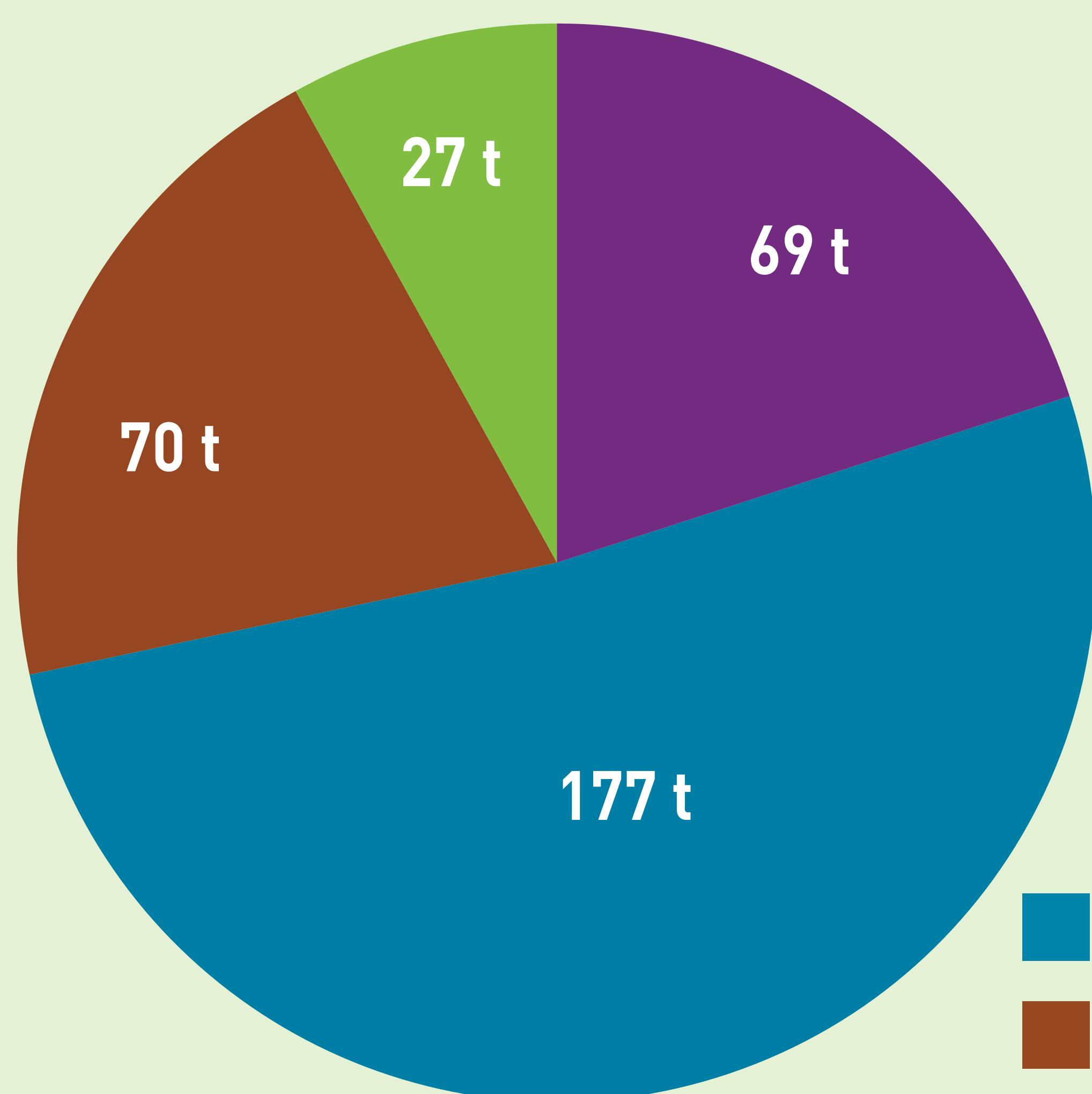
Additionally, some blue cod settle on the reef as males and others as females, but it is not understood why. Whether or not they differentiate into males from larvae is variable, and may be influenced by population size or presence of large dominant males.

Blue cod prefer different types of habitat at different stages in their life cycle.

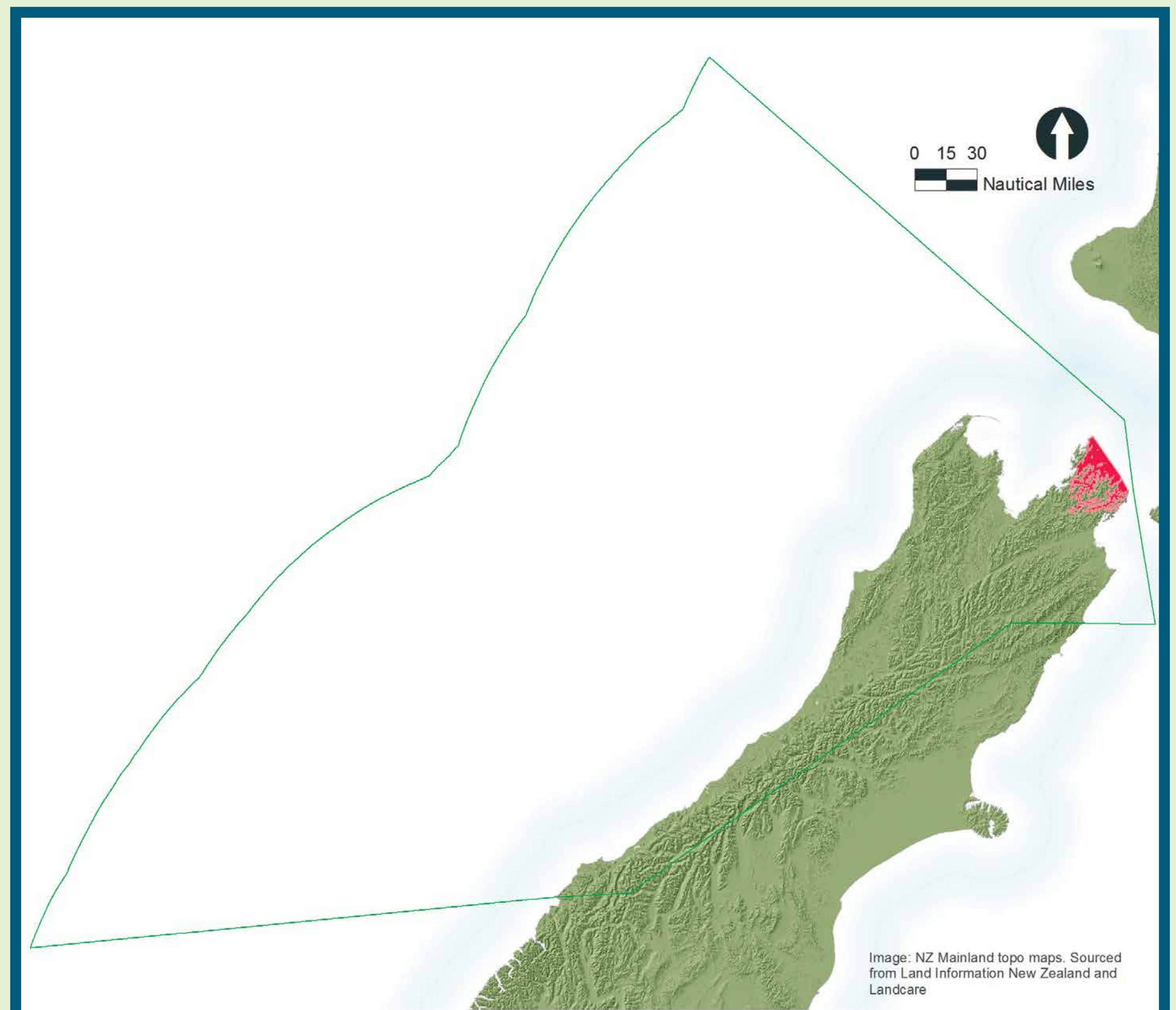


# The blue cod 7 stock

Total Allowable Catch for BCO 7 is 343 tonnes split into the following categories:



- Recreational Allowance
- Total Allowable Commercial Catch
- Customary Allowance
- Other Sources of Fishing Related Mortality



	Commercial	Recreational	Customary
<b>Latest estimates of BCO 7 take</b>	58,176 kg Reported catch for 2013/14, which is not thought to be taken in the inner Sounds	76,760 kg (MPI Panel Survey 2011/12)	Reported customary landings are minimal

Other important recreational information:

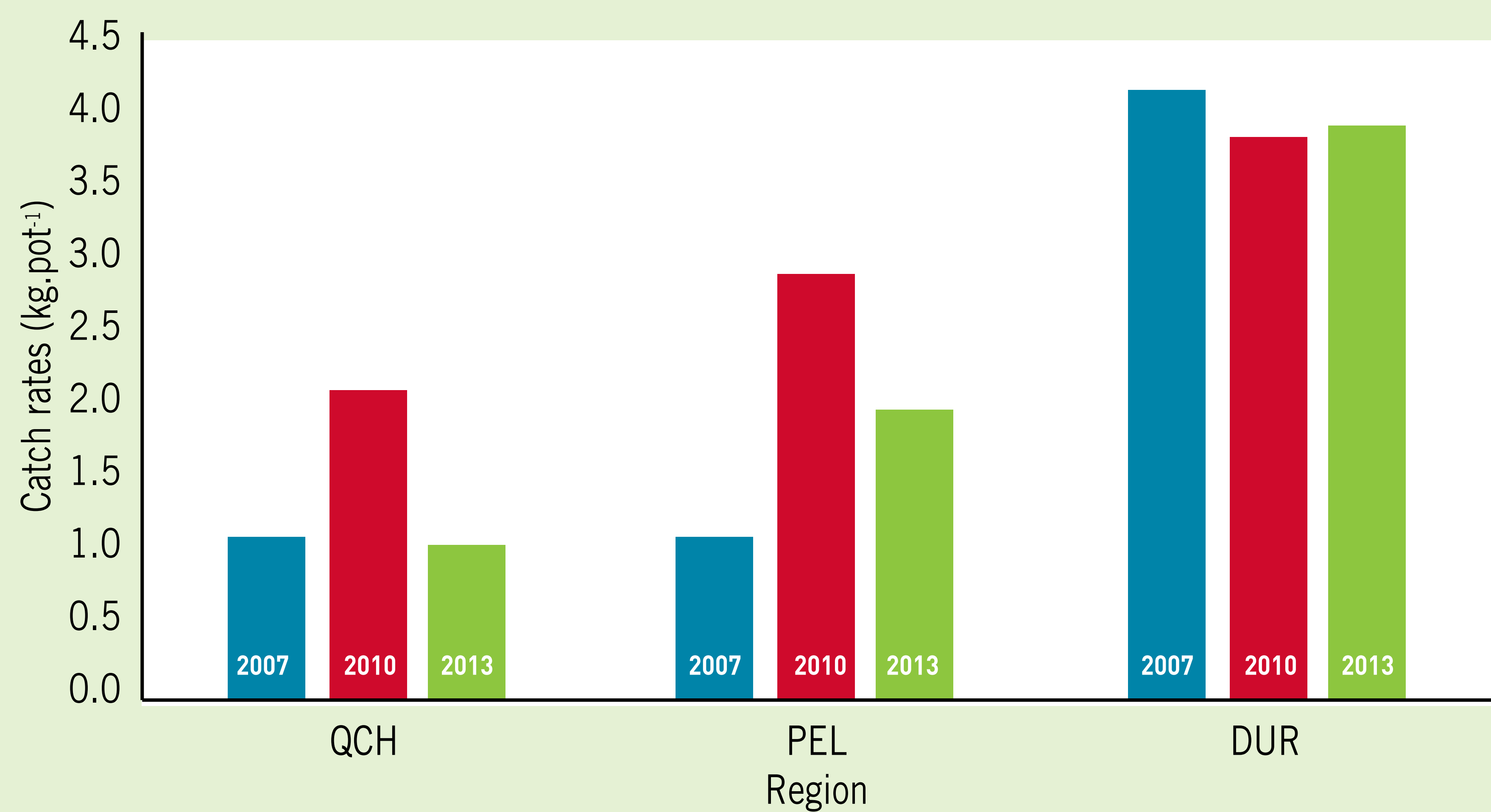
- Peak fishing season: December – February (~42,000 fishing trips in January 2012)
- Blue cod taken predominantly by rod and line (~99% of fish taken in 2011/12)
- Blue cod taken predominantly from trailer boats (~78% of fish taken in 2011/12) – fleet is mobile

# Latest science

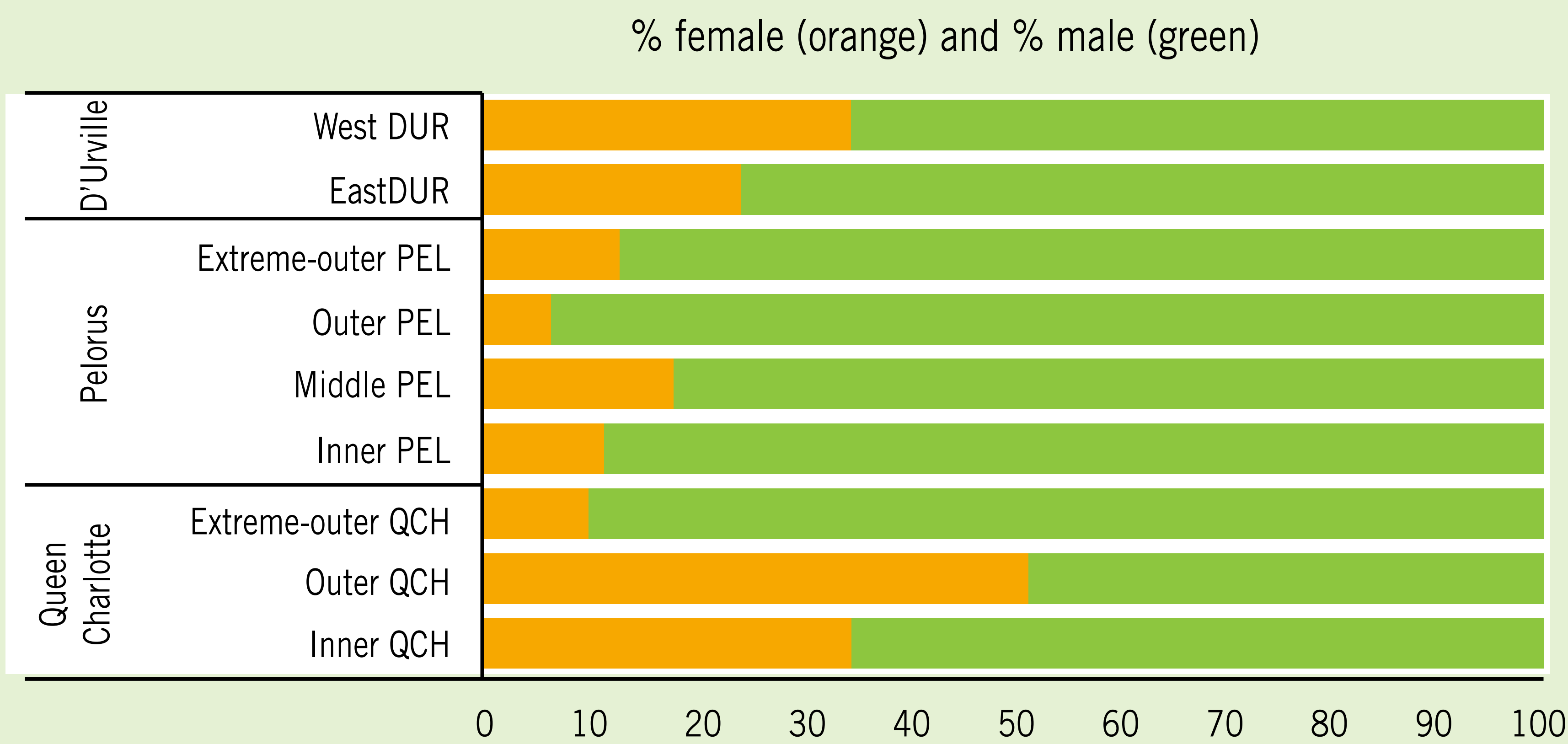


The science shows that we are not much better off than when the fishery was closed in 2008. There are too many blue cod being killed in Pelorus and Queen Charlotte.

Catch rates in Queen Charlotte Sound (QCH), Pelorus Sound (PEL), and D’Urville (DUR) from the 2007, 2010, and 2013 potting surveys for all size classes combined.



The science also suggests that there are too many males, either because of sex change or because too many larvae are settling on the reef as males.



# What do we want from our fishery?

– enjoy access to a healthy blue cod fishery in the future

We want to:

- **Maintain and/or improve abundance.** Abundance varies throughout the Marlborough Sounds.
- **Ensure ongoing use and enjoyment.** Fishers are satisfied with the fishing experience and the management of the fishery.
- **Encourage responsibility.** This is your fishery. It is important that you take guardianship of it. Those using the fishery need to take some personal responsibility for how the fishery is doing.
- **Improve the decision making process**
  - ~ Improve the information used to make decisions.
  - ~ Create a more responsive and efficient framework for decision making.



# The challenges we face

## Too many blue cod are being killed

- Some fishers take fish for a feed, some take fish for the freezer, and some fish die after being returned to the water. It all adds up.

## There is a lot of fishing effort

- High effort means more blue cod are killed.
- Concentrated effort in specific areas and times of year puts extra pressure on the fishery.

**We need more balanced sex ratios.**

**We want rules that are simple, understandable, and FAIR.**

**The public needs to take ownership and responsibility for the rules to work.**

**We need to consider what impact *other* activities in the Sounds are having on the fishery.**

**There are gaps in our knowledge of the fishery.**



**Blue Cod Management Group**

# What can we do?

## Control catch

We need to control catch to make sure that enough blue cod remain in the water to allow the number of cod overall to increase. The two main ways we can control catch from recreational fishers are:

**Maximum daily bag limit** – reduces overall take, doesn't necessarily reduce effort or mortality.

**Minimum size limit** – give fish a chance to breed.

## Improve productivity

We need to improve the productivity of the cod already in the water, so that reproduction is higher and the number of cod can increase. Two ways of doing this are:

**Maximum size limit** – help balance the sex ratio, more reproduction.

**Spawning closure** – leave fish alone to spawn.

## Minimise unwanted mortality

We need to minimise unwanted mortality to stop too many blue cod from dying, allowing fishers to be able to continue to take cod home. Some ways to do this are:

**Method restrictions** (e.g. hook limits) or **restrict all finfish fishing** – reduce the number of blue cod that are caught and put back in the water.

**Education** – inform more fishers of best fishing practices that can reduce unwanted mortality.

## Reduce effort

If unwanted mortality cannot be directly reduced, then it may be necessary to reduce fishing effort overall to bring unwanted mortality down. Some ways to do this are:

**Total closure or additional seasonal closure** – reduce fishing effort.

**Area closures** – need a lot of support from the public, because it takes a lot of Fishery Officers to enforce boundaries.

**Accumulation limit** – fish for a feed. Be aware of how vulnerable the fishery might be in your area.

## Educate fishers

Education may be used to promote guardianship of the fishery, and help more fishers understand responsible fishing practices that will be better for the fishery.

## Simplify the rules

See how rules can be made consistent across locations and sectors.

## Collect more information

Consider use of permits or ballots; consider how recreational fishers could provide harvest information.

# Managing blue cod

## – Current Recreational Measures in the Marlborough Sounds area

The current rules were implemented as a package of measures on 1 April 2011. They were designed to complement one another. The goal of the package was to ensure an increase in blue cod abundance while enabling recreational fishers to utilise the fishery.

The package included:

	The management measure
Primary package of measures for the Marlborough Sounds area	<p><b>Bag limit</b> – maximum of two blue cod per person per day</p> <p><b>Seasonal opening</b> – 20 December to 31 August</p> <p><b>Size limits</b> – minimum legal size of 30 cm, maximum legal size of 35 cm (the “slot limit”)</p> <p><b>Hook limit</b> – maximum of two hooks per rod and reel line or hand line when fishing for any species</p> <p><b>Accumulation limit</b> – personal accumulation limit of one daily bag limit of blue cod</p> <p><b>Filleting rule</b> – requirement for recreational fishers to possess blue cod in a whole or gutted state only, unless for immediate personal consumption</p> <p><b>Transit rule</b> – prevents recreational fishers from transporting blue cod through the Marlborough Sounds Area that do not meet the rules applied to the Area</p>
Additional measures	<p><b>Maud Island no take zone</b> – recreational fishers are prohibited from taking all finfish species from a defined area around Maud Island</p> <p><b>Challenger (East) area</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Accumulation limit</b> – personal accumulation limit of two daily bag limits of blue cod</li><li>• <b>Filleting rule</b> – as described above.</li></ul>



**Blue Cod Management Group**

# How to contribute to the review

We need to work together to look after this fishery and find the best outcomes for everyone.

To do this, we want your input into what will make sense and be effective for the fishery.

We're getting you involved early so you can help determine what tools are used to manage the fishery.

There are a few ways to be involved from here:

- **Now** – email [MSbluecod@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:MSbluecod@mpi.govt.nz) to provide feedback to the Blue Cod Management Group on potential solutions.
- **May/June 2015** – written submissions will be requested from the public on potential changes to the rules. This is a further opportunity to put forward your views and reasons why you think any rules should change.

After consultation, final options will go to the Minister, who makes the decision about what the rules will be going forward.

