

Fish stock reviews for 1 October 2024

Lower North Island – John dory (JDO 2)

Proposal [online here](#).



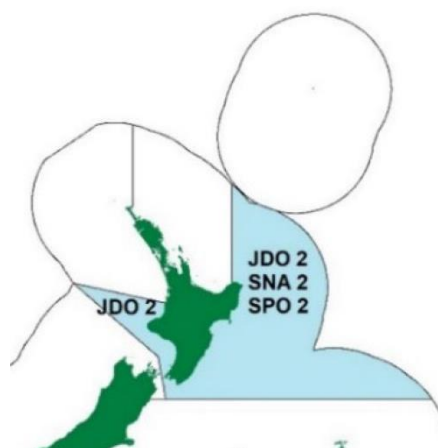
1. Current total allowable catch (TAC) settings and proposed options (tonnes).

Stock	Option	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
				Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
	<i>Current settings</i>	N/A	269.5	N/A	N/A	N/A
JDO 2	Option 1	299.5	269.5	1	2	27
	Option 2	211	189 (↓ 80.5)	1	2	19
	Option 3	152	135 (↓ 134.5)	1	2	14

Estimated landings – 2022-23	
Commercial	90 t
Recreational	1.4 t

2. What is the current status of this fish stock?

Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) reports the last assessment was in 2023, it found the JDO 2 stock was unlikely (<40%) to be at or above the management target. The assessment was informed by Catch Per Unit of Effort (CPUE) from bottom trawl trips targeting John dory, tarakihi and red gurnard. Without information on recruitment, FNZ advise it is not possible to predict how the stock will respond in the next few years¹.



3. Is overfishing occurring?

FNZ advise overfishing is unlikely (<40%) to be occurring².

4. What is the primary fishing method used to catch John dory in this area?

John dory are primarily taken off the east coast by bottom trawl targeting tarakihi and red gurnard.

5. What are the associated species and habitats?

FNZ reports that JDO 2 is caught as bycatch in the trawl fisheries which also catch snapper (SNA 2) and rig (SPO 2). Substantial proportions of John dory 2 are taken as bycatch in target trawl fisheries for jack mackerels in FMA 8, lower west coast. Around 30% of JDO 2 is taken as bycatch targeting tarakihi, and red gurnard (25%). The remainder is taken by midwater and set set fisheries³. The status of FLA 2, WAR 2, MOK 1, GUR 1 and TAR 8 are unknown. Bottom trawling is non-selective, catching target and non-target species or organisms in its path, whilst leaving extensive, long-term damage to the seafloor. This impacts benthic productivity and function.

¹ Fisheries Assessment Plenary – Volume 2: Horse mussel to Red crab. May 2024. Fisheries New Zealand. At [p.715]

² At [p.714]

³ At [p.695-7]

6. What are the primary concerns of the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council & LegaSea for this review?

- a. Subject to further discussion prior to finalising a submission for JDO 2, preliminary recommendations for the Minister include:
 - i. The TAC is set at 124 tonnes.
 - ii. The allowance set aside for Māori customary interests is 1 tonne.
 - iii. The allowance set aside for recreational interests is 2 tonnes.
 - iv. The allowance set aside for Other Mortality is 11 tonnes.
 - v. The TACC is set at 110 tonnes.
- b. The above recommended settings for JDO 2 are based on a TACC that reflects the average catch of John dory 2 over the past 5 years and that landings have declined annually since 2018. The allowance set aside for Other Mortality is based on 10% of the TACC given that it is mostly trawl caught.
- c. It is a major concern that the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (**TACC**) for John dory 2 has never constrained fishing effort since John dory was introduced into the Quota Management System (QMS) in 1986.
- d. The TAC and TACC reductions proposed by FNZ for JDO 2 will still not constrain commercial effort in this vulnerable stock.
- e. There is a risk that increasing the Total Allowable Catches (**TACs**), as proposed, for SNA 2 and SPO 2 could result in increased catch of John dory (JDO 2).
- f. FNZ caution that a large TACC reduction could lead to John dory become a 'choke' species in some areas, such as Snapper 8 on the west coast⁴. We reject this assessment on the basis that single trawl has poor selectivity and the species most abundant and susceptible to trawling will be caught in greater numbers, regardless of the TACC. So, there is a selectivity issue not a quota issue. This is particularly apparent given the declining catches of JDO 2.
- g. A precautionary decision by the Minister is required because the impacts of the 2023 Cyclone Gabrielle are uncertain and may not be apparent for 4-5 years.
- h. The Minister has a statutory duty to make a precautionary decision given that JDO 2 is unlikely to be at or above the management target, and there is poor information on recruitment so no future projections can be made.
- i. There is negligible observer coverage (<5% based on event-level data), and limited onboard camera coverage in Fisheries Management Area 2 (FMA 2)⁵. Monitoring cameras are due to be activated on trawl vessels in FMA 2 later in 2024, however, the Minister has earlier indicated [a review of the camera programme](#) so these installations may not proceed as planned.
- j. We note the [1 April 2024 MPI report](#) that highlights the change in fisher reporting for vessels operating cameras, compared with the period from 2018 until cameras were operating. That report notes 1) A 3.5 times increase in albatross interactions, 2) 6.8 times increase in dolphin captures, 3) 34% increase in the number of fish species reported in catch, and 4) a 46% increase in the volume of fish discards.
- k. Our previous advocacy for SNA 2 and North Island fish stocks are summarised [online here](#).

7. Who can you contact?

- a. **Email submission to:** FMSubmissions@mpi.govt.nz
- b. **Email NZSFC fisheries team:** FM@legasea.co.nz
- c. Submissions are due with Fisheries New Zealand by 29 July 2024.

⁴ Review of sustainability measures October 2024: SNA 2, SPO 2, and JDO 2. Fisheries New Zealand. At [p.3]

⁵ At [p.9]

Appendix – John dory 2 associated species

Commercial landings (tonnes)

Species and fish stock	2021-22	2022-23	TACC (2022-23)	% TACC caught (22-23)
Jack mackerel – JMA 7 West coast New Zealand	27 782 t	34 549 t	32 538	106%
John dory – JDO 2 Lower North Island	98 t	90 t	270 t	33%
Red gurnard – GUR 2 East coast lower North Island	405 t	338 t	725 t	47%
Rig – SPO 2 East coast lower North Island	128 t	122 t	119 t	103%
Snapper – SNA 2 East coast lower North Island	337 t	339 t	315	108%
Trevally – TRE 2 East coast lower North Island	275 t	271 t	241 t	112%
Tarakihi – TAR 2 East coast lower North Island	1230 t	1117 t	1104 t	101%

Recreational harvest estimates (tonnes) ⁶

Species and fish stock	2022-23	2017-18
Jack mackerel – JMA 7 West coast New Zealand	2.6 t	6.2 t
John dory – JDO 2 Lower North Island	1.4 t	3.1 t
Red gurnard – GUR 2 East coast lower North Island	54 t	39 t
Rig – SPO 2 East coast lower North Island	2.4 t	4.8 t
Snapper – SNA 2 East coast lower North Island	121.9 t	93.1 t
Trevally – TRE 2 East coast lower North Island	8 t	16 t
Tarakihi – TAR 2 East coast lower North Island	44 t	108 t

⁶ Recreational harvest totals include recreational fishers estimates from National Panel Surveys, amateur charter vessel reported catch and recreational take from commercial vessels under s111 landings, where available.