

Fish stock reviews for 1 October 2024

South Island – Kingfish (KIN 3)

Proposal [online here](#).

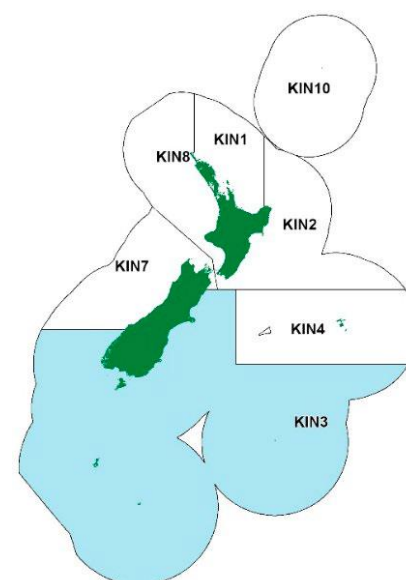


1. Current total allowable catch (TAC) settings and proposed options.

Table 1: Proposed management options (in tonnes) for KIN 3 from 1 October 2024.

Option	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Option 1 (<i>Status quo</i>)	23	11	4	6	2
Option 2	33 (↑ 10)	16 (↑ 5)	4	10 (↑ 4)	3.0 (↑ 1)
Option 3	37.5 (↑ 14.5)	20 (↑ 9)	4	10 (↑ 4)	3.5 (↑ 1.5)

Estimated landings	2021-22	2022-23
Commercial	11 t	16 t
Recreational	N/A	4 t



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

The current state of the kingfish population in KIN 3 (see map) is unknown as there is insufficient information to estimate current stock status. Increased catches and catch per unit effort (CPUE) over the last five years indicate a rapidly increasing abundance of kingfish in the area¹.

3. Is overfishing occurring?

It is unknown whether overfishing is occurring.

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

Kingfish in this area are caught as bycatch in the set net, mixed-target midwater and bottom trawl fisheries.

5. What are the associated species and habitats?

Other species caught with kingfish include hapuku, bass, school shark, rig, tarakihi, marine mammals, dolphins, and seabirds. Bottom trawling is non-discriminative, catching other finfish and organisms in its path whilst leaving extensive, long-term damage to the seafloor. This impacts benthic productivity and function. Set nets can catch and kill protected species.

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

- a. Subject to further discussion prior to finalising a submission, our preliminary recommendation is FNZ Option 2, only if there is a commitment to transition set net fishers to using more selective fishing methods.

¹ Fisheries Assessment Plenary – Volume 3: Red Gurnard to Yellow-eyed mullet. May 2024. Fisheries New Zealand. At [p.791]

- b. The abundance of kingfish in KIN 3 has been increasing over the last five years. Fisheries New Zealand outline in their proposal document that the increase in abundance is potentially due to a natural range expansion from healthy stocks on the West Coast and further north. Yearly increases in average sea surface temperature (SST) have likely made southern regions more habitable, though schools of kingfish have been present in Fiordland's sounds for many years².
- c. The stock status of kingfish along the West Coast (KIN 7 & 8) is estimated to be 'Very Likely (>90%) to be at or above the target' based on available Catch Per Unit of Effort (CPUE) from Jack mackerel trawl trips with FNZ observers on board.
- d. Kingfish caught in KIN 3 have historically been caught in small quantities, primarily in the set net fishery targeting hapukū/bass and shark species i.e., rig and school shark. Other methods include bottom trawl and midwater trawl.
- e. There is no formal assessment of stock status for KIN 3. Landed and reported released catch has been increasing over the last 6 years. The plot in the discussion document of KIN 3 trawl CPUE shows a massive increase since 2018 which is misleading. This plot is not in weight, but relative to the catch rate in earlier years, which was 1 to 5 tonnes with a TACC of 1 tonne until 2017. So, trawl catch or reporting has increased, but off an extremely low baseline.
- f. In the current fishing year, October 2023 to April 2024, 24 tonnes of kingfish catch have been reported with six months of the fishing year remaining. Of the 24 tonnes, 12 tonnes have not been landed but returned to sea under section 72A of the Fisheries Act (the Act). There is some evidence that the increased kingfish catch is seasonal, mainly during the warmer months.
- g. Under section 72A of the Act, commercial fishers are permitted to return live legal-size kingfish in accordance with the Fisheries (Landing and Discard Exceptions) Notice, only if the fish is likely to survive on return and the return takes place as soon as practicable. This excludes kingfish caught by set net. All commercially caught kingfish under the commercial minimum legal size (MLS) of 65 cm are required to be returned to sea, dead or alive.
- h. We recognise that high deemed value invoices will be having an economic impact on individual fishers and natural range expansions of species are unavoidable. However, modest TACC are needed to retain the incentive to release kingfish that are likely to survive and to discourage targeting by commercial set net fishers, which was a major problem in KIN 1 and KIN 2 in the 1990s.
- i. However, the issue at hand is that kingfish is a bycatch species, and many are not able to be returned to sea due to low survival rate because of fishing method utilised and the rollout of cameras on boats. There needs to be a transition to lower impact, selective fishing methods, enabling fishers to have a high chance of returning kingfish live.
- j. Additionally, in a separate proposal paper, FNZ are proposing to increase the total allowable commercial catch (**TACC**) for Jack mackerel on the west coast of New Zealand (JMA 7). Any increases in this stock will inevitably result in higher catches of kingfish caught as bycatch in this region. Depending on the amount of movement from the west coast stock (KIN 7 & 8) to KIN 3, an increase in KIN 7 catch may result in a decrease in KIN 3 abundance. This will need to be monitored by FNZ.
- k. Our previous advocacy for FMA 7 and South Island fish stocks are summarised [online here](#).

² Review of Sustainability Measures for kingfish (KIN 3) for 2024/54. Fisheries New Zealand. Discussion Paper. At [24]

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.

Appendix – Kingfish 3 associated target species

Commercial landings

Species and fish stock	2021-22	2022-23	TACC (2022-23)	% TACC caught (22-23)
Hapukū & Bass - HPB 3	264 t	207 t	335 t	62%
Hapukū & Bass - HPB 5	189 t	124 t	451 t	27%
Kingfish – KIN 3	11 t	16 t	11 t	144 %
Jack mackerel - JMA 3	4858 t	5300 t	8780 t	60%
Rig – SPO 3	700 t	686 t	660 t	104%
School shark – SCH 3	299 t	364 t	387 t	94%
School shark – SCH 5	542 t	554 t	520 t	107%

Recreational harvest estimates

Species and fish stock	2021-22	2022-23
Hapukū & Bass - HPB 3	44.5 t	20.2 t
Hapukū & Bass - HPB 5	7 t	2.5 t
Kingfish – KIN 3	N/A	4 t
Jack mackerel - JMA 3	0 t	0 t
Rig – SPO 3	14.8 t	9.3 t
School shark – SCH 3 (number of fish)	563	252
School shark – SCH 5 (number of fish)	349	80