

# Fish stock reviews for 1 October 2024

## North Island east coast – Snapper (SNA 2)

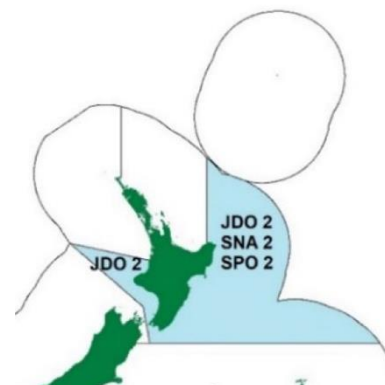


Proposal [online here](#).

### 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
SNA 2	Option 1 ( <i>Status quo</i> )	450	315	14	90	31
	Option 2	540 (↑ 90)	367 (↑ 52)	14	122 (↑ 32)	37 (↑ 6)
	Option 3	585 (↑ 135)	409 (↑ 94)	14	122 (↑ 32)	40 (↑ 9)

Estimated landings – 2022-23	
Commercial	339 t
Recreational	122 t



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

Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) reports the partial stock assessment indicates that the southern part of Snapper 2 (SNA 2S) from Hawke Bay to Wellington, is very likely to be at or above the management target (>90% probability), and that Catch Per Unit of Effort (CPUE) has shown a substantial increase in recent years. Reference points have not been established for the northern part of SNA 2 (SNA 2N)<sup>1</sup>. Future projections of the SNA 2 fishery are unknown<sup>2</sup>.

### 3. Is overfishing occurring?

It is unknown if current catch or the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) is causing overfishing to continue or to commence<sup>3</sup>.

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

Snapper are primarily caught by the bottom trawl fleet targeting tarakihi, red gurnard and trevally. Over the last decade, approx. 99% of commercial landings were trawl caught. The portion of SNA 2 caught while targeting snapper has reduced in recent years.

### 5. What are the associated species and habitats?

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. The Wairoa Hard in Hawke Bay is considered a snapper nursery ground. It was impacted by land runoff due to Cyclone Gabrielle in February 2023. Impacts on snapper recruitment are unknown and may not be evident for 4-5 years. FNZ advise they have no sustainability concerns for Red gurnard 2 (GUR 2) or Trevally 2 (TRE 2) however, there is no accepted stock estimate of TRE 2. A

<sup>1</sup> Review of sustainability measures October 2024: SNA 2, SPO 2, and JDO 2. Fisheries New Zealand. June 2024. At [p.2]

<sup>2</sup> Fisheries Assessment Plenary – Volume 3: Red gurnard to Yellow-eyed mullet. May 2024. Fisheries New Zealand. At [p.1621]

<sup>3</sup> At [p.1621]

future assessment will be done with TRE 1. Tarakihi 2 (TAR 2) is part of the east coast tarakihi stock which is below the biomass soft limit and currently subject to a Ministerial approved rebuild plan<sup>4</sup>. Rig (SPO 2) is estimated to be very likely to be at or above the management target. John dory 2 (JDO 2) is unlikely (<40%) to be at or above target.

**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 SNA 2, preliminary recommendations for the Minister include:
  - i. increase the TAC & recreational allowance to account for current catch;
  - ii. retain the current TACC and allowance for other mortality; and
  - iii. Incentivise the bottom trawl fleet to transition to using lower impact, more selective fishing methods.
- b. The Minister has a statutory duty to make a precautionary decision when setting the Total Allowable Catch (TAC), making non-commercial allowances, and setting the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) for SNA 2. FNZ has identified that an increase to the SNA 2 and/or Rig 2 TAC could lead to an increase in tarakihi catch, given they are caught together. The TAR 2 stock is currently under a Ministerial, time-constrained [rebuild plan](#). The current TAR 2 TACC is fully caught so unless there is a change from bottom trawl, it is inevitable the catch of tarakihi will increase if the SNA 2 TACC increases. This will have unknown sustainability impacts on the rebuild of TAR 2 therefore **the risks of overcatch of this vulnerable species is unacceptable**.
- c. There is negligible observer coverage (<5% based on event-level data), and limited onboard camera coverage in Fisheries Management Area 2 (FMA 2)<sup>5</sup>. 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.
- d. In the 21 years since the SNA 2 TACC was increased from 252 t to 315 t the TACC has been exceeded 16 times. So, the TACC has not acted as a constraint on commercial fishing for snapper and there has been minimal changes to innovate and use more selective fishing techniques.
- e. The efforts by several Napier-based fishers to innovate and develop more selective fishing gear remains largely unsupported by officials. There has been sporadic support, however, the lack of resources and ongoing support for these fishers who have invested so much of their own time and money is a deterrent to other fishers seeking to innovate and better protect the marine environment that sustains us all.
- f. Rewarding excessive fishing by granting more TACC to a fleet that has failed to innovate is offensive and does nothing to encourage any change in fishing behaviour. We look forward to the rollout of onboard cameras in SNA 2 this year.
- g. 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.
- h. Our previous advocacy for SNA 2 and North Island fish stocks are summarised [online here](#).

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

<sup>5</sup> At [p.9]

## 7. Who can you contact?

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

## Appendix – Snapper 2 associated species

### Commercial landings (tonnes)

Species and fish stock	2021-22	2022-23	TACC (2022-23)	% TACC caught (22-23)
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 t	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) <sup>6</sup>

Species and fish stock	2022-23	2017-18
John dory – JDO 2 Lower North Island	1.4 t	3.1 t
Rig – SPO 2 East coast lower North Island	2.4 t	4.8 t
Red gurnard – GUR 2 East coast lower North Island	54 t	39 t
Snapper – SNA 2 East coast lower North Island	122 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

<sup>6</sup> 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.