

Hon Shane Jones

Minister for Oceans and Fisheries
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Resources
Associate Minister of Finance
Associate Minister for Energy



B24-0563

Tēnā koe,

Changes to fisheries sustainability measures for the 2024 October round

I write to inform you of the decisions I have made on changes to Total Allowable Catch (TAC) settings, non-commercial allowances, and Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) settings for 18 fish stocks. Attached to this letter are my decisions along with a brief rationale for each of the changes I have decided on.

In making my decisions, I have considered feedback and submissions received from tangata whenua and stakeholders on initial proposals. I also considered final advice from Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ), relevant legislative provisions, and my obligations under the Fisheries Act 1996 (the Act).

Where there were opportunities for increasing utilisation within sustainable limits, I have decided to implement appropriate increases to catch limits to reflect this. On the other hand, where sustainability is at risk, I have taken appropriate management action to protect those fisheries resources. I have also decided on changes to the deemed value rates of three fish stocks. Deemed value rates are an important component of the quota management system and help to support appropriate balancing of commercial catch with Annual Catch Entitlement (ACE).

This sustainability round included proposed changes for several highly valued fisheries, including multiple snapper stocks, orange roughy on the Challenger Plateau, and the Kaikōura pāua fishery. I would like to express my thanks to tangata whenua, stakeholders, and members of the public who provided their views on these fisheries. Your feedback and submissions have been important in helping to inform my decisions on their management.

The TAC changes outlined in this letter will come into effect at the start of the new fishing year on 1 October 2024. The change to the minimum legal size for blackfoot pāua in the Kaikōura area (PAU 3A) will be published at a later date.

These changes are outlined in the attached summary report. The decision documents that informed my decisions are available on the MPI website here: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/consultations/review-of-sustainability-measures-for-fisheries-october-2024-round/>

Nāku iti noa, nā,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Shane Jones', written over a large, faint circular watermark or stamp.

Hon Shane Jones
Minister for Oceans and Fisheries

Summary report on decisions for the 2024 October sustainability round

Silver warehou

SWA 3, SWA 4 – East Coast South Island, Chatham Islands, Southland, and Sub-Antarctic

Stocks	Previous			
	Interim \$/kg	Annual differential rates (\$/kg) for excess catch (% of ACE)		
		100-110% (basic)	110-130%	>130%
SWA 3 SWA 4	\$0.63	\$0.70	\$1.00	\$2.00
	New			
	Interim \$/kg	Annual differential rates (\$/kg) for excess catch (% of ACE)		
		100-150% (basic)	150-200%	>200%
\$0.63	\$0.70	\$1.00	\$1.40	

I have agreed to adjust the differential annual deemed value rates for these two South Island silver warehou stocks.

The previous rates were set to deter deliberate targeting in excess of annual catch entitlement (ACE). However, the majority of silver warehou catch is currently taken as non-target catch in other fisheries. For this reason, I consider it appropriate for the current differential deemed value rate increments to be adjusted so that they are less stringent.

I note that while it appears that abundance of silver warehou in the area is increasing, evidence to support this is equivocal. I encourage quota owners to work with Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) to strengthen the information available to inform management of these stocks.

Jack mackerel / hautere, kingfish / haku, and pilchard / mohimohi

JMA 7, KIN 7, KIN 8, PIL 7, PIL 8 – West coasts North and South Islands

Stock	Setting	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
				Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
JMA 7	Previous	N/A	32,536.763	N/A	N/A	N/A
	New	35,907	35,537 (↑3,000)	5	10	355
KIN 7	Previous	98	44	6	40	8
	New	116 (↑18)	60 (↑16)	6	40	10 (↑2)
KIN 8	Previous	167	80	19	55	13
	New	190 (↑23)	100 (↑20)	19	55	16 (↑3)
PIL 7	Previous	165	150	5	10	0
	New	136 (↓29)	115 (↓35)	5	10	6 (↑6)
PIL 8	Previous	80	65	5	10	0
	New	157 (↑77)	135 (↑70)	5	10	7 (↑7)

Jack mackerel

The best available information shows that biomass of the two jack mackerel species that make up almost all catch in JMA 7 has remained at a high level for the last decade, and that the amount of effort to catch the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) has decreased over this period. This information suggests that a utilisation opportunity exists. I have therefore decided to increase the TACC by 3,000 tonnes (around nine percent).

I have also agreed to set a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for this stock for the first time. JMA 7 is one of a decreasing number of stocks that were introduced into the Quota Management System (QMS) in the 1980s for which a TAC has never been set. I am confident that the allowances for customary Māori and recreational fishing (which have also been set for the first time) will adequately provide for current and future catch.

This increase is the first time the TACC has been reviewed since JMA 7 was introduced into the QMS in 1987. Development of an accepted stock assessment represents a significant step forward for the management of this stock.

Jack mackerel stocks collectively, of which JMA 7 is by far the largest, were ranked third in terms of wild capture export earners during 2023 behind rock lobster and hoki. The increase to the TACC will help to boost export revenue by an estimated \$6 million.

Kingfish

The most recent stock assessment, also completed in 2023, shows that west coast kingfish abundance remains at a high level. Based on this, I have decided to increase the TACCs for both stocks; KIN 7 by 16 tonnes and KIN 8 by 20 tonnes. I have not changed the allowances for customary Māori and recreational fishing, as I consider they adequately provide for current and future catch.

I note that the amount of live kingfish returned to the sea by commercial fishers is roughly the same as the amount that is retained. I also note that almost all commercially caught kingfish is taken as non-target catch, with the highest proportion of this taken by the vessels that target jack mackerel. On these vessels, any kingfish that cannot be returned to the sea represents unwanted catch. I also acknowledge efforts by commercial fishers of jack mackerel to avoid catching kingfish.

For these reasons, I do not expect that the TACC increases will necessarily result in fishers intentionally retaining and landing more kingfish than they currently do. However, by increasing the TACC, there will be a reduced likelihood of deemed value costs being incurred if kingfish are unable to be returned to the sea alive. This will contribute to reducing the costs of operating in the fisheries where kingfish is taken as non-target catch.

Pilchard

I acknowledge that there is little information regarding the abundance of pilchard on the west coast and around the top of the South Island other than the non-target catch recorded by vessels that target jack mackerel well offshore. The hypothesis is that most pilchard biomass is found in areas that are inaccessible to the jack mackerel fleet and that environmental conditions probably determine the extent to which schools venture offshore where they are incidentally taken in jack mackerel target trawls.

I have decided to make adjustments to the TACCs for both west coast stocks, which are likely to be the same biological stock, based primarily on where catch has been taken since

QMS introduction in 2022. As most catch is taken in PIL 8, I have increased the TACC for that stock from 65 to 135 tonnes. This should enable catch to be balanced with ACE in most years. For PIL 7, where only around 30 percent of catch has been taken, I have decreased the TACC from 150 to 115 tonnes. This 23 percent reduction acknowledges the concerns raised by some submitters who did not agree with the initial proposal for an almost 50 percent reduction to the TACC.

For both pilchard stocks, I have also decided to set the allowance for all other mortality to the stocks caused by fishing at a level equivalent to five percent of the TACC. These were set at zero in 2002, although it was noted that they would be reviewed in future years. This allowance is higher than for other stocks taken by the deepwater fleet. I consider this approach to be appropriate, however, based on pilchard being smaller and less robust than other species encountered by the fleet.

Collectively, the changes I have decided on for these pilchard stocks mean the overall TACC will increase slightly, from 215 tonnes to 250 tonnes. As with kingfish, pilchard is taken by the jack mackerel fleet as unwanted catch. For this reason, I do not expect fishing effort to change as a consequence of the overall TACC increasing. The changes will, however, decrease the likelihood of fishers incurring deemed value costs, and, in doing so, enhance utilisation of these stocks.

Although utilisation of PIL 7 and PIL 8 has, for at least the last 20 years, taken the form of non-target catch, I note the expression of interest by some submitters in developing a market for pilchard. I hope that quota owners and fishers are successful in encouraging new market opportunities.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the concerns raised by some submitters regarding the possible ecosystem effects of increased harvest of jack mackerel and the ongoing removal of pilchard. I note that vessels targeting jack mackerel are prohibited from operating in large areas off the west coasts of the North and South Island, as well as the entire top of the South Island.

Additionally, now that the jack mackerel stock assessment has been accepted, it will be updated every three years and can inform more responsive management where needed.

Orange roughy / nihorota

ORH 7A – Challenger Plateau

Setting	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Previous	2,163	2,058	2	0	103
New	942 (↓ 1,221)	885 (↓ 1,173)	2	0	55 (↓ 48)

The best available information for ORH 7A comes from the 2024 stock assessment, which estimates current biomass to be at 35 percent B_0 (unfished biomass), within the management target range of 30-50 percent B_0 .

I note that projections of ORH 7A stock status at current catch levels indicated the stock is expected to decline. This is driven by historic overfishing that reduced the spawning stock biomass to a very low level, with fewer fish now recruiting into the fishery as a result. There is considerable uncertainty in the estimate of stock status (and future projections of stocks status) as the most recent abundance information (from acoustic surveys of spawning aggregations of fish) included in the model is from 2013. Other assessment models that considered more recent acoustic survey information were much more pessimistic, indicating stock status below the soft limit.

The more recent survey information from 2023, while excluded from the final model by the Fisheries Assessment Plenary, indicates the absence of spawning aggregations in some areas. Recent catch trends and feedback provided from submissions indicates there is a broad concern with the recent performance of the ORH 7A fishery, consistent with the observations from this survey.

Considering this information, the uncertainty in the assessment information, and the vulnerability of orange roughy to fishing pressure, there is a strong need for caution when managing this fishery. A significant reduction to the TACC is warranted, and I have therefore decided on a 57 percent TACC reduction to 885 tonnes, which is the largest reduction that was consulted on.

Blue cod / rawaru

BCO 5 – Southland, Sub-Antarctic

Setting	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Previous	925	800	20	85	20
New	677 (↓248)	580 (↓220)	20	62 (↓23)	15 (↓5)

The best available information shows there is a sustainability risk for blue cod in BCO 5. A potting survey carried out in 2023 suggests relative abundance of blue cod has declined in Foveaux Strait by 57 percent since 2018, and that this area is significantly overfished. The sex ratio of blue cod in this area also indicates overfishing, with negative implications for spawning and recruitment. Catch per unit effort (CPUE) has declined in all statistical areas important to the fishery, with industry’s CPUE-based harvest control rule recommending a TACC reduction.

Given this information, most submitters and input from tangata whenua supported a significant reduction to the TAC, however views were mixed on the appropriate amount. To enable a rebuild of this important fishery, I have decided to reduce the TAC from 925 tonnes to 677 tonnes, and the TACC from 800 tonnes to 580 tonnes. This is lower than the TACC recommended by the industry harvest control rule (665 tonnes) and takes into account the significant concerns regarding the fishery and potential for ongoing impacts from marine heatwaves.

I have reduced the allowance for recreational fishers by a similar proportion as the TACC. It is important that all sectors contribute to recovery of the fishery, particularly given the most affected part of the fishery (Foveaux Strait) is also the area most fished by recreational fishers. FNZ will consult further on changes to recreational management settings (such as

daily limits) which were suggested during consultation. This will include public sessions in Southland where issues and options for the fishery can be discussed with FNZ staff.

Kina

SUR 3 – East coast South Island

Setting	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Previous	42	21	10	10	1
New	84 (↑ 42)	42 (↑ 21)	20 (↑ 10)	20 (↑ 10)	2 (↑ 1)

SUR 3 is a shared fishery with harvesting by customary, commercial and recreational fishers. Kina are culturally significant to iwi and are recognised as taonga in Te Waka a Māui me Ōna Toka Iwi Fisheries Forum Plan. However, there is limited information available on the stock, and the TAC has remained at a low level since SUR 3 was introduced into the QMS in 2002.

A survey carried out by quota holders in 2024 suggests there are more kina in some parts of SUR 3 than previously thought, and FNZ consulted on options to provide a higher level of utilisation, including significant increases to the TACC.

Most submissions and input from tangata whenua supported retaining the status quo TAC, or more cautious increases to the TAC and TACC than proposed in the consultation document. Many submissions were sceptical of the biomass estimates derived from the industry-led survey.

Taking into account the cultural significance of kina, the uncertainty regarding the kina stock and how fishing will impact on this stock, I have decided to implement a small TAC increase. While small relative to the biomass estimates suggested by the survey, it will double the TACC allowing for some expansion of commercial fishing while the impacts of fishing of the stock can be assessed through future surveys.

I have also decided to increase the allowance for recreational and customary fishing in line with recent data on catch by these sectors, which suggests recreational catch has increased.

Kingfish / haku

KIN 3 – East Coast South Island, Southland, and Sub-Antarctic

Setting	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Previous	23	11	4	6	2
New	37.5 (↑ 14.5)	20 (↑ 9)	4	10 (↑ 4)	3.5 (↑ 1.5)

Kingfish in KIN 3 is taken in small quantities as non-target bycatch in commercial inshore set net and bottom and midwater trawl fisheries, targeting a range of other species.

There is no stock assessment information available to estimate the current stock status of KIN 3. However, increased catches and catch per unit effort in the last five years suggests the abundance of kingfish within KIN 3 is increasing.

This increase is likely to be a range extension from healthy kingfish stocks further north (KIN 7 and KIN 8, for which FNZ is also recommending TAC increases) and warmer sea temperatures, with kingfish now found as far south as the Snares Shelf below Stewart Island/Rakiura.

Options to increase the TAC, TACC and recreational allowance were consulted on, with mixed support received. Commercial fishing interests supported a TAC of 37.5 tonnes but also wanted a greater increase in anticipation of increasing catch in future years as the kingfish range moves further south.

Taking into account the feedback received and the information strongly suggesting an increase in abundance, I have decided to increase the TAC to 37.5 tonnes. This will help commercial fishers balance their increasing bycatch of kingfish with ACE, while still recognising the value of this species to recreational and customary fishers.

Leatherjacket / Kōkiri, Hiriri

LEA 3 - East coast South Island, Southland, and Sub-Antarctic

Setting	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Previous	164	140	1	2	21
New	224 (↑ 60)	200 (↑ 60)	1	2	21

Leatherjacket in LEA 3 is landed as bycatch by the commercial trawl fleet. While there has been no commercial targeting of leatherjacket in recent years, reported bycatch of LEA 3 has increased, with landings significantly exceeding the TACC resulting in large deemed value payments.

Available information suggests LEA 3 abundance is at least stable at current catch levels and likely to be above the management target. FNZ consulted on options to increase the TAC. Commercial fishing interests supported a TAC of 224 tonnes but also wanted a greater increase.

Considering the available information, I have decided to set the TAC at 224 tonnes and increase the TACC by 60 tonnes. This will provide additional ACE for fishers to cover LEA 3 bycatch, while taking into account that the reasons for the apparent increase in leatherjacket abundance in LEA 3 are not fully understood.

Pāua

PAU 3A – Kaikōura

Setting	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Previous	40.5	23	7.5	5	5
New	78.5 (↑ 38)	46 (↑ 23)	7.5	18 (↑ 13)	7 (↑ 2)

Ongoing monitoring since the 2016 earthquakes and a new assessment of the stock in 2024 indicates there is now a high biomass of pāua in PAU 3A. I acknowledge the contribution from all sectors to rebuilding the Kaikōura pāua populations through initiatives such as closures and fishing at reduced levels.

PAU 3A spawning stock biomass is above the management target and projected to increase at current catch, suggesting an opportunity to provide for greater utilisation. FNZ consulted on a range of options to increase the TAC, developed following discussion with iwi, the Kaikōura Marine Guardians, and stakeholders, including industry through the approved PAU 3 Fisheries Plan. All options are expected to maintain pāua spawning stock biomass above the management target over at least the next five years.

A large number of submissions were received expressing a wide range of views. Most submitters supported increases to both the TACC and the recreational allowance. More cautious increases were favoured by some due to the vulnerability of pāua to ongoing habitat impacts from the earthquakes and climate change. Others noted the measures in place under the approved PAU 3 Fisheries Plan provide additional confidence that a higher TAC would be sustainable or considered that a significantly higher recreational allowance was needed to allow recreational access beyond a short autumn/ winter season.

Taking this information into account I have approved TAC and TACC increases that are similar to those recommended by the Kaikōura Marine Guardians, but with a slightly higher recreational allowance. This places weight on the measures commercial fishers have in place under the approved PAU 3 Fisheries Plan as well as the submissions seeking greater recreational access through a longer season.

Along with the increase to the TAC, I have also decided to increase the minimum legal size for the wider Kaikōura recreational pāua fishery (Marfells Beach to Conway River) from 125 millimetres to 130 millimetres. This will protect a greater proportion of spawning pāua and align with the industry minimum harvest size which is higher 130 millimetres or higher. While recreational submitters did not, in general, support this change I note the majority of pāua taken by recreational fishers in the past three seasons were well above 130 millimetres in size.

I will decide on other management settings for the 2025 Kaikōura recreational pāua season following further discussion with the Kaikōura Marine Guardians, iwi, and stakeholders.

Snapper / tāmure, kouarea; Rig / pioke, makō, mango; John dory / kuparu

(SNA 2) (SPO 2) – East Cape to south coast of Wellington, and (JDO 2) – East Cape to Taranaki

Stock	Setting	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
				Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
SNA 2	Previous	450	315	14	90	31
	New	585 (↑ 135)	409 (↑ 94)	14	122 (↑ 32)	40 (↑ 9)
SPO 2	Previous	146	119	5	10	12
	New	190 (↑ 44)	159 (↑ 40)	5	10	16 (↑ 4)
JDO 2	Previous	N/A	269.5	N/A	N/A	N/A
	New	152	135 (↓ 134.5)	1	2	14

The best available information shows that snapper and rig are increasing in abundance across the lower east coast North Island. In line with this information, I have decided to increase the TACs of both stocks by 30 percent to support greater utilisation. For snapper (SNA 2), this increase will account for a higher level of recreational catch and enable greater commercial utilisation. For rig (SPO 2) this will provide for a moderate increase in commercial utilisation.

I acknowledge the concerns raised during consultation about potential cyclone impacts on these stocks, and uncertainty about ecosystem impacts, particularly for snapper, where high abundance may support to controlling local kina populations. However, I have been advised that these increases will be sustainable and are relatively cautious considering the strength of the observed positive trends in abundance. The high and increasing abundance of these stocks should help to mitigate any cyclone impacts and potential ecosystem effects resulting from these changes.

For John dory (JDO 2) the available information suggests a sustainability concern with the current catch limits, particularly for the eastern part of JDO 2 which is assessed to be below its management target. In response to this, I have decided to set the TAC of the stock at 152 tonnes and reduce the TACC by 50 percent. These settings should help to ensure that catches remain within sustainable limits until the stock is next assessed.

My officials have provided me confidence that these changes will be closely monitored, and reviewed further if needed, with updated assessments planned for 2026.

Snapper / tāmure, Flatfish / pātiki, and Elephantfish / makorepe

SNA 7, FLA 7, and ELE 7 – West Coast and top of the South Island

Stock	Settings	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
				Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
SNA 7	Previous	768	450	30	250	38
	New	1,116 (↑ 348)	720 (↑ 270)	60 (↑ 30)	275 (↑ 25)	61 (↑ 23)
FLA 7	Previous	N/A	2,065.6	N/A	N/A	N/A
	New	584	524 (↓ 1,541.6)	10	10	40
ELE 7	Previous	127	102	5	10	10
	New	149 (↑ 22)	122 (↑ 20)	5	10	12 (↑ 2)

Regular stock assessments and reports from all fishing sectors demonstrate a rapid increase in abundance of snapper in SNA 7 over the last decade, with further growth projected over the next five years as strong year classes of fish mature into the fishery. The rebuild of this stock from low levels is a success story, with clear benefits for local communities, recreational fishing access, and stock sustainability. However, rapidly increasing abundance has also led to issues for the inshore commercial fleet, with vessels struggling to avoid or source ACE to balance snapper catches. There is now a clear opportunity to increase utilisation while ensuring sustainability.

FNZ consulted on a range of options to substantially increase the TAC, non-commercial allowances and TACC. These options were developed through multisector workshops in Nelson and were based on stock assessment results. Several submissions raised concerns about the scale of the proposed TACC increases and the uncertain effects of any significant increases in trawl activity. Maintaining the ecosystem function of snapper in controlling kina barrens was also noted as a key consideration.

Taking into account this feedback as well as the stock assessment and other information showing the fishery is doing well, I have decided to increase the TAC by 45 percent and the TACC by 60 percent. These increases are substantial and will enable commercial fishers to balance snapper catches with ACE, but are lower than other options proposed during consultation. They provide a high degree of confidence that abundance of snapper will remain high and continue to increase, while ongoing monitoring occurs that could inform future review of the fishery.

The available information for ELE 7 also suggests that abundance has increased, so I have decided to increase the TAC, TACC, and allowance for all other sources of mortality to the stock caused by fishing. The increases are moderate, acknowledging the low productivity of elephant fish and that it can be caught alongside New Zealand sole (which has a poor stock status) on the West Coast.

For flatfish (FLA 7), recent declines in catches of all flatfish species and the current stock status for New Zealand sole demonstrate that catch at the level of the current TACC would pose a sustainability concern. While FLA 7 is known to be a highly variable stock, I have decided to reduce the TACC substantially to address the risks associated with increases in fishing pressure. I am also setting a TAC and non-commercial allowances for the first time.

Research is currently being prioritised to update FLA 7 stock status, assess fishing pressure for each species, and investigate key environmental stressors.

I note while input on the recreational daily limit for snapper in the Marlborough Sounds Area was canvassed, information on abundance trends in this part of the fishery remains too limited to support a change at this time. Opportunities to better understand movement and connectivity of snapper in the Marlborough Sounds Area are being explored by officials.

Snapper / tāmure

SNA 8 – West Coast North Island

I have decided to increase the TAC, TACC, and allowance for all other mortality caused by fishing of SNA 8 as follows:

Settings	TAC	TACC	Allowances		
			Customary Māori	Recreational	All other mortality caused by fishing
Previous	3,065	1,600	100	1,205	160
New	3,769 (↑ 704)	2,240 (↑ 640)	100	1,205	224 (↑ 64)

I have also decided to adjust the deemed value rates of SNA 8 as follows:

Settings	Interim \$/kg	Annual differential rates (\$/kg) for excess catch (% of ACE)					
		100-120% (basic)	120-140%	140-160%	160-180%	180-200%	>200%
Previous	\$4.68	\$5.20	\$6.24	\$7.28	\$8.32	\$9.36	\$10.40
New	\$4.05	\$4.50	\$5.40	\$6.30	\$7.20	\$8.10	\$9.00

Stock assessments completed in 2021 and 2024 and reports from all fishing sectors demonstrate a rapid increase in the abundance of snapper in SNA 8 over the last 15 to 20 years. SNA 8 biomass is projected to continue increasing over the next five years as strong year classes of fish grow, mature, and recruit into the fishery. The rebuild of this stock from low levels is a success story with clear benefits for local communities, recreational fishing access and stock sustainability. However, rapidly increasing abundance has also led to issues for the inshore commercial fleet, with vessels struggling to avoid, or source ACE to balance, snapper catches. There is now a clear opportunity to increase utilisation while ensuring sustainability.

I have therefore decided to substantially increase the TAC, the TACC and the allowance for all other mortality caused by fishing for SNA 8. My decision provides an appropriate utilisation opportunity for the commercial sector by increasing the TACC, in line with increased abundance, while maintaining the stock at the management target. I am satisfied that the current customary and recreational allowances are appropriate for this fishery, so have decided to not change these allowances. In making my decision, I have considered the ecosystem functions of snapper, mixed fishery linkages, and the significance of this fishery to tangata whenua, recreational fishers, and the seafood sector alike.

I acknowledge concerns raised during consultation about the potential impacts of increased trawl activity on other stocks, associated species, protected species, and the benthos, as well as the potential for localised depletion in areas such as Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe (Ninety Mile Beach) where commercial fishing effort is concentrated. While this increase in TACC is

substantial, it is supported by recent stock assessments which provide a high degree of confidence of maintaining a high and increasing abundance of snapper. I also note that on account of the trawl prohibitions that have already been put in place to protect Māui dolphin, that more than 55,000 km² of seafloor in the SNA 8 fishery is currently protected from the impacts of bottom trawling.

To further alleviate concerns around the potential impacts of fishing, I have asked officials engage with the fishing industry, tangata whenua and stakeholders to develop options for appropriate spatial measures to (a) address risks of fishing impacts on significant habitats, and (b) to address the concerns of recreational and customary fishers regarding localised depletion and competition with commercial fishers. I have also directed officials to continue to monitor the SNA 8 fishery following this decision and to assess the SNA 8 stock and catch settings within five years.

I note that in 2021, the then Minister for Oceans and Fisheries indicated an intention to manage the SNA 8 fishery at a higher biomass. While I have not changed the management objective (which remains 40 percent of the unfished SNA 8 biomass), increasing recruitment to the fishery and increased productivity of the stock means that under the TAC settings I have chosen, that the biomass of SNA 8 will continue to grow and will attain a biomass that is greater than it has been at any time in the last 40 years.

I have also made the decision to lower the deemed value rates for SNA 8 from 1 October 2024. This decision was made following careful consideration of the recent SNA 8 stock assessment and after reflecting on input received from tangata whenua, fishers, and industry representatives. My decision, alongside the catch setting decision detailed above, aims to promote sustainable fishing practices, and support the health of the SNA 8 fishery while acknowledging the economic needs of the fishing community.

Due to the rapidly increasing biomass of the SNA 8 stock, I believe it is an appropriate time to adjust the deemed value rates for this stock. I consider that the previous deemed value settings would now be overly punitive, given the positive status of the stock. I have set new rates that are less punitive for low levels of catch above ACE but should also provide appropriate incentive for commercial fishers to balance their catch with ACE. This approach is in line with FNZ's Deemed Value Guidelines and gives effect to the Government priority of supporting growth and reducing unnecessary costs on industry.

I have asked my officials to closely monitor deemed value payments for SNA 8 over the next fishing year and, if there is concern deemed value rates are not having the appropriate effect, they will be reviewed again in 2025.