

Recreational Fishing

Why Recreational Fishing Rules Matter

Fishing is one of New Zealand's most popular outdoor activities. Recreational fishers (anyone fishing non-commercially) take large numbers of finfish and shellfish every year. To keep our fisheries sustainable Fisheries New Zealand sets recreational fishing rules. By sticking to the rules and fishing responsibly, fishers help make sure that there will be fish today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

What do the rules cover?

Anyone fishing recreationally has to follow rules about:

- daily bag limits (how many fish you can keep);
- legal size limits (the sizes of fish you can keep);
- species restrictions (the types of fish you can keep);
- closed and restricted areas (where you can fish).

Things to remember:

- it is illegal to sell or trade recreational catch;
- breaking the rules can lead to prosecution, fines and property confiscations;
- unwanted or unlawful catch (catch above your daily limit, undersized fish, fish taken with undersized mesh, unintentional catch or bycatch) must be immediately returned to the waters from which they were taken, dead or alive;
- only those physically involved in taking finfish, rock lobster, or shellfish can claim a catch within the daily limit. See 'Shellfish restrictions' for more information and exceptions.

How can I check the rules?

This brochure is a guide only and may not include local restrictions or rules that have changed since it was printed. To keep up to date, check the rules each time you fish.

Fisheries New Zealand provides lots of (free) ways to check the rules. This includes a free text service, a free Smartphone app, or visiting our website or Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) Fisheries Compliance Team offices. For more information see the back page of this brochure.

Fishing Sustainably

Good fish handling

Correctly handling and releasing unwanted or unlawful catch can increase their chances of surviving to be caught legally another day. When handling and releasing fish, remember:

- use wet hands (or wet gloves);
- be gentle – slide fish into the water from as close to the surface as possible;
- return fish as near as possible to where you found them (especially shellfish and rock lobster);
- the best way to protect undersized fish is not to catch them in the first place. If you are catching lots of undersized fish, change locations, or use a larger hook or mesh size.

For more information, Fisheries New Zealand has a responsible fishing guide online at www.fisheries.govt.nz/rules or at MPI Fisheries Compliance Team offices.

Looking after seabirds

Seabirds are experts at seeing bait and fish scraps in the water and can get hooked or become tangled in fishing line.

Find out how to avoid attracting seabirds and how to handle them safely at www.southernseabirds.org

New Zealand's fishing rules

If you're fishing or collecting seafood in New Zealand you need to know New Zealand's fishing rules. If you do not read English, have someone translate for you.

Tulafono mo Fagotaga i Niu Sila

Afai o e fagotaina po'o e aoina foi figota o le sami e tatau ona e silafia tulafono nei mo fagotaga i Niu Sila. Afai e lē mafai ona e faitauina i le Gagana Peretania faamolemole faafesoota'i sē tasi e mafai ona ia faaliliuina mo oe.

O tulafono e aofia ai: le ituaiga ma le lapo'a o i'a e mafai ona e taofiina, o fea e mafai ona e fagota ai, ma le aofa'i o i'a e mafai ona e taofia.

E matua'i faasaina faaletulafono lou faatauina atu o i'a mo ni tupe maua po o se pōlōfiti.

O le lē usita'ia mai o tulafono nei e o'o ina molia ai oe, sala tupe ma aveesea faamalosi au mea totino. O le tausisi i tulafono ma fagota ma le faautauta lelei, e fesoasoani lea i le faamautūina o i'a mo le asō, taeao ma autupulaga o le lumana'i.

Lao ki he toutai 'a Nu'usila

Kapau ko ha tokotaha toutai ika koe, pe 'oku ke fangota ki ha me'atahi 'i Nu'usila, kuopau ke ke 'ilo ki he ngaahi lao 'o e toutai 'a Nu'usila. Kapau 'oku 'ikai ke ke lava 'o lautohi fakapilitania, pea kole ki ha taha ke ne liliu ki ho'o lea.

Ko e lao 'oku anga pehe ni: ko e fa'ahinga mo e lalahi 'o e ika 'oku lava ke ke ma'u; feitu'u 'oku ngofua ke ke toutai ai; pea mo e ika 'e fiha 'oku lava ke ke 'ave.

'Oku ta'efakalao ke fakatau atu pea ke fai ha fefakatau'aki e ika 'o ke ma'u ai ha fa'ahinga pa'anga, pe tupu fakapa'anga.

Ko hono mau mau'i 'o e lao, 'e ala faka'ilo ai koe, tautea pa'anga, pea to'o mo e koloa 'oku ke ma'ú. Ko e tauhi 'o e lao mo e toutai fakapotopoto, 'e tokoni ia ki hono fakapapau'i 'e ma'u ha ika he 'aho ni, pongipongi, pea mo e to'utangata 'o e kaha'u.

Finfish

Daily bag limits and size restrictions

In the Central FMA there is a combined maximum **daily bag limit of 20** of any combination of species listed in Table 1 (unless shown as 'No limit'). Individual species limit must not be exceeded.

Remember there may be local restrictions or area closures, check the 'Closed and Restricted Areas' section.

Finfish Species	Minimum fish length (cm)	Max daily limit per fisher	Minimum net mesh size (mm)
Blue cod, Taranaki to Titahi Bay	33	10	100
Blue cod, Titahi Bay South	33	20	100
Blue moki	40	20	114
Bluenose	–	5	160
Butterfish	35	20	108
Elephant fish	–	20	150
Flatfish (except Sand flounder)	25	20	100

Finfish Species	Minimum fish length (cm)	Max daily limit per fisher	Minimum net mesh size (mm)
John dory	–	20	100
Kahawai	–	20	100
Grey mullet	–	20	100
Parore	–	20	100
Porae	–	20	100
Red cod	25	20	100
Red gurnard	25	20	100
Red moki	40	20	115
Red snapper	–	20	100
Rig	–	20	150
Sand flounder	23	20	100
School shark	–	20	150
Tarakihi	25	20	100
Trevally	25	20	100

Additionally, individual limits, over and above the combined bag, apply to the species listed in Table 2. There is no limit for species not named in either Table 1 or 2.

Table 2

Finfish Species	Min fish length (cm)	Max daily limit per fisher	Min net mesh size (mm)
Freshwater eels	–	6	12 (Fyke net)
Groper/Hapuku/Bass	–	Daily bag limit of 5 with no more than 3 kingfish	160
Kingfish	75		100
Snapper	27	10	100

Measuring finfish

Finfish length is measured from the tip of the nose to the middle ray or 'V' in the tail.



Finfish Restrictions

Line fishing restrictions

Line fishing includes the use of long lines and dahn (drop) lines but does not include rod and reel or hand lines. In areas where line fishing is permitted, the following restrictions apply:

- no person may use, or be in possession of, more than one line (other than handlines, or rod and reel lines);
- no person may use or possess a line with more than 25 hooks;
- where more than one person is using a line from a vessel (other than rod and reel lines), no more than two lines (other than rod and reel lines), may be used, set from or possessed on board that vessel;
- surface floats attached to any line must be marked clearly, legibly and permanently with the fisher's initials and surname. A phone number is also useful.

Eels

No person shall take any eels from Lake Horowhenua or the Hokio Stream unless that person does so in exercise of fishing rights pursuant to Section 18 of The Reserves and Other Lands Disposal Act 1956.

Netting restrictions

Net fishing includes set, fyke, drag and all other nets. In areas where netting is permitted the following general restrictions apply:

- no person may set or possess more than one drag net, set net, fyke net, or any other type of net at any time (excludes landing net);
- nets must be hauled by hand only;
- any net or nets used either individually or jointly must not extend across more than one-quarter of the width of any river, stream, channel, bay or sound at any time of the tide;
- no person may set or use a baited net (except fyke nets);
- nets must not be staked (except fyke nets).

Drag nets

In areas where drag nets are permitted the following restrictions apply:

- must not exceed 40 metres in length;
- total warp length must not exceed 200 metres.

Set nets

In areas where set nets are permitted the following restrictions apply:

- must not exceed 60 metres in length;
- must not be set within 60 metres of another net;
- must have a surface float that is clearly, legibly and permanently marked with the fisher's initials and surname at each end. A phone number is also useful. (Only one float is required for fyke nets);
- only one set net is allowed to be used from, or be on board any vessel. (An additional net is allowed for bait fishing if it is less than 10 metres long and has a mesh size of 50mm or less);
- may not be used in a way that causes fish to be stranded by the falling tide.

Shellfish

Daily bag limits and size restrictions

Shellfish are taken when they cannot freely return to the water e.g. placed into a catch bag or similar. At no time while gathering may you be in possession of more than your daily limit.

Remember there may be local restrictions or area closures, check the 'Closed and Restricted Areas' section.

The Central FMA limits for taking and possessing shellfish are listed below.

Shellfish Species	Max daily limit per gatherer	Minimum size (mm)
Cockles	150	none
Kina (sea eggs)	50	none
Mussels	50	none
Oysters – Dredge* – Rock & Pacific†	50 250	58 none
Pāua – Ordinary* – Yellow foot* – Taranaki Pāua Area	10 10 10	125 80 85
Pipi	150	none
Scallops – Central +	20	100
Toheroa#	Prohibited	Prohibited
Tuatua	150	none
All others (combined) •	50	none

* Dredge oyster, pāua and scallop must be landed in the shell and cannot be shucked or shelled seaward of the mean high water mark. This does not include dredge oysters and scallops shucked onboard the vessel for immediate consumption within daily bag limits.

† Rock oysters and pacific oysters must not be opened while they adhere to the object on which they grow.

Toheroa must not be taken, possessed, or disturbed unless an open season is declared by the Director-General of MPI.

+ Limited provision allows a diver on a vessel to gather extra bag limits of oysters and scallops for up to 2 other people acting in a dive safety capacity from that vessel. The safety people must be on-board the vessel, and acting in that capacity, when the diving is undertaken. If only one safety person is on-board the vessel, only 1 extra bag limit may be taken. A maximum of 2 extra bag limits may be taken per vessel, regardless of the number of people diving.

- This is a combined, mixed-species bag limit. It applies to all shellfish species not specifically named above, and includes all crabs, limpets, starfish, periwinkles, whelks, barnacles and freshwater crayfish (koura).

Shellfish must be landed in a measureable state

All shellfish to which a minimum size restriction applies (including paua, scallops and dredge oysters) must be landed in the shell and cannot be shucked or shelled seaward of the mean high-water mark. This includes transporting on the water.

Dredge oysters and scallops may be opened for immediate consumption on board the vessel. Any scallops and dredge oysters eaten form part of your daily limit. Any scallops and dredge oysters not eaten must be landed in the shell.

Pāua accumulation limits

When daily limits are accumulated the maximum number or amount of pāua that one person can have in their possession at any one time is:

- 20 pāua or;
- shucked weight (shell removed) of 2.5kgs of pāua;
- this possession limit applies everywhere, including in the home.

Measuring shellfish

Pāua: measure the greatest length of the shell in a straight line. Do not measure over the curve of the shell.

Scallops: measure the greatest diameter of the shell.

Dredge Oysters: must not pass through a rigid circular metal ring with an inside diameter of 58mm.



Open season for scallops: 15 July to 14 February inclusive.

Shellfish Restrictions

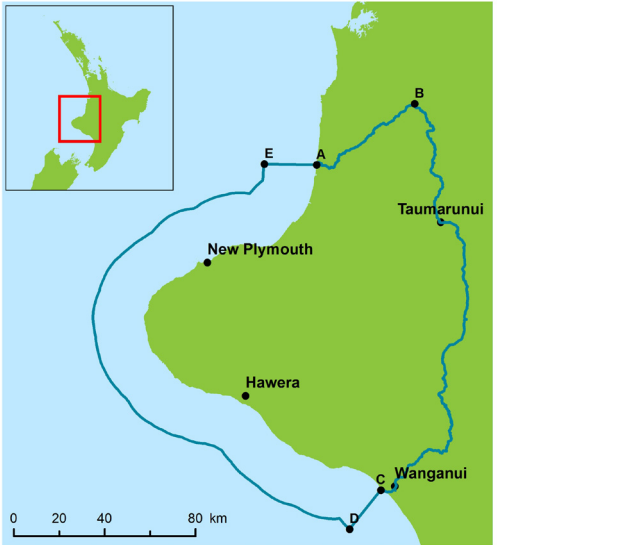
Underwater breathing apparatus (UBA)

- UBA does not include snorkels
- No person may take pāua using UBA.
- No person may be in possession of pāua while in possession of UBA. This includes possession in or on any vessel or vehicle.

Taranaki pāua area

Within the Taranaki pāua area, ordinary pāua must be at least 85mm.

Outside of the Taranaki area, ordinary pāua must be at least 125mm.



A = Northern bank of the Awakino River mouth

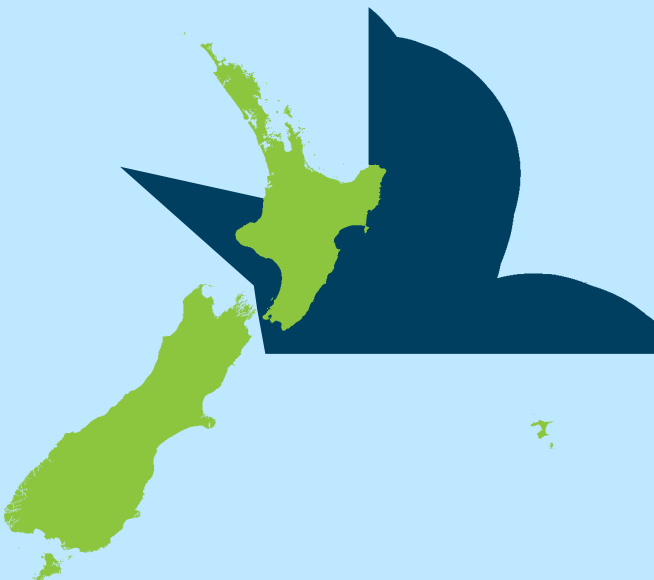
C = Southern bank of the Whanganui River mouth

[Table continues overleaf]



Recreational Fishing Rules CENTRAL

Effective from: July 2020 subject to change without notice.



WANT THE RULES ON YOUR PHONE?

Use our free-text service.

Download our free smartphone app.

Check the back of the brochure for details.

Poacher Prevention

MPI's Fisheries Compliance Team is responsible for protecting local fisheries and stopping illegal activities such as poaching. To do this, please report any suspicious or illegal activity in your area.

If you see people acting illegally, taking more than their daily limit or undersized fish or selling or trading their catch, please report it. Any information provided stays completely confidential.

Report poaching, suspicious or illegal activity – call 0800 4 POACHER (0800 476 224).

New Zealand's Fishing Rules at Your Fingertips

This brochure is a summary of the recreational fishing rules for the Central Fishery Management Area (FMA). It is a guide only and may not include all local restrictions and rules or any changes made since it was printed. To keep up to date, check the rules each time you fish. It is illegal to sell or trade your catch.

Check the rules

Check the rules using our FREE services:

Download our free NZ Fishing Rules **app** by texting the word 'app' to 9889.

The app works even when you have no coverage.

- **Free text** the name of the species you are fishing for (e.g. rock lobster) to **9889** and receive legal size and bag limit via return text.

- Visit www.fisheries.govt.nz/rules
- Email recfishingteam@mpi.govt.nz to subscribe to fishing related updates in your area.
- Follow us on Facebook



MPI Fisheries – Northland
MPI Fisheries – Nelson/Marlborough/Kaikoura
MPI Fisheries – Canterbury/Westland
MPI Fisheries – Otago/Southland



Contact Your Local Office

Gisborne Office (06) 869 0870
Napier Office (06) 835 1065
New Plymouth (06) 755 9311
Masterton Office (06) 370 3590
Wellington Office (04) 576 8040

59 Awapuni Road
21 Domett Street, Ahuriri
Police Station, 31 Wynyard Street, Bell Block
75-77 Ngamutawa Road
40 Bouverie Street, Petone

Closures and Restrictions

Mātaītai Reserves

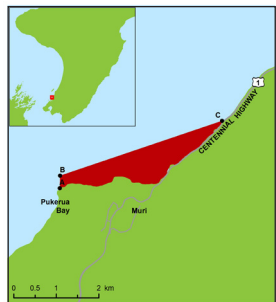
Mātaītai Reserves are areas where tangata whenua manage non-commercial fishing through bylaws. Bylaws apply equally to all individuals. Reserves can only be applied to traditional fishing grounds which are of special significance to tangata whenua. Generally, there is no commercial fishing within these reserves. There are a number of Mātaītai Reserves in the Central Area. For further information on please contact your nearest MPI Fisheries Compliance Office, or visit www.mpi.govt.nz.

Restricted areas

Restricted areas are areas where the use of particular fishing methods (e.g. set nets) is restricted or where catch limits may be different. Some restricted areas in the Central FMA are listed below. However, these are only a guide. Check for local restrictions and recent closures by contacting your nearest MPI Fisheries Compliance Office or DOC Office.

Map 1: Pukerua Bay handlines only to be used. The taking of shellfish, aquatic life, seaweed and the taking of fish except by hand-held lines is prohibited.

Map 2: Tapuae Marine Reserve (orange) closed to all fishing and hand gathering. Ngā Motu/Sugar Loaf Islands Marine Protected Area. Lines with three hooks or less may be used.



Map 1: Pukerua Bay



Map 2: Tapuae Marine Reserve & Protected Area

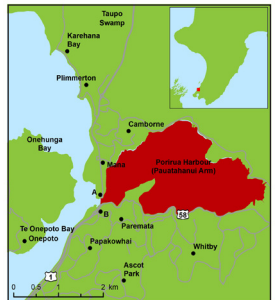
Net Restrictions

Map 3: Netting is banned in Pauatahanui inlet.

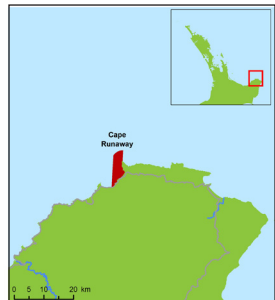
Map 4: Netting is banned around Cape Runaway

Map 5: Wairoa Hard closed to all nets.

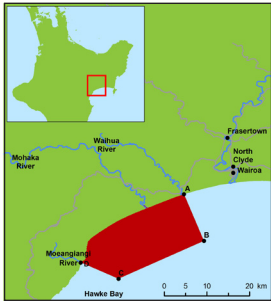
Map 6: Net restrictions extend around Taranaki from Pariokariwa Point south to Hawera then from Pariokariwa Point south to the Waiwhakaiti River between 2 and 7 nautical miles offshore. Closure out to 7 nautical miles extends north to Maunganui Bluff.



Map 3: Pauatahanui Inlet



Map 4: Cape Runaway



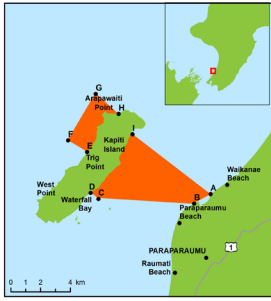
Map 5: Wairoa Hard closed to all nets

Closed areas

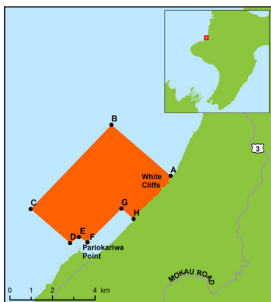
Closed areas are areas where no fishing is allowed. These may be closed by MPI as prohibited areas or by the Department of Conservation (DOC) as marine reserves. For full details of marine reserves contact DOC.



Te Tapuwae O Rongokako Marine Reserve



Kapiti Marine Reserve



Parinihi Marine Reserve



Map 6: Taranaki to Maunganui Bluff set net restrictions

Rock lobster restrictions

Protected rock lobster

The following types of rock lobster are protected by law and must be returned immediately to the water:

- undersized rock lobster;
- female rock lobster carrying external eggs (carried between the pleopods on the underside of the tail);
- soft shell stage rock lobster;
- rock lobster that cannot be measured (e.g. because of damage to the tail preventing accurate measurement).

General restrictions

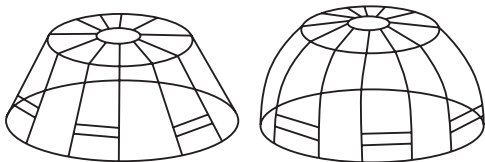
In areas where rock lobster may be gathered, the following restrictions apply:

- only hand operated loops or lassos may be used. Spring loaded loop or lassos are prohibited.
- spears or devices which could puncture the shell must not be used when taking rock lobster. Possessing any rock lobster which has been speared is an offence.
- external eggs or the egg-bearing appendages must not be removed from any rock lobster.

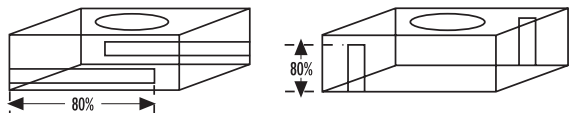
Rock lobster pots

Rock lobster pot means any pot, baited or not, that is capable of catching or holding rock lobster; and includes any other device capable of catching, holding or storing rock lobster. All rock lobster pots must have escape gaps (apertures). These are openings in the pot designed to allow undersized rock lobster to escape. No escape gap shall be incorporated in either the top or the bottom of any pot. Each escape gap must have an inside dimension of at least 54mm x 200mm.

Round or beehive pots: must have at least 3 escape gaps (other than the mouth).



Square or rectangular pots: must have at least 2 escape gaps (other than the mouth) in opposite faces of the pot. Each shall not be less than 80 percent of the height or length of the face of the pot in which the escape gaps are contained.



Mesh pots: any pot constructed entirely of unaltered spot welded mesh with minimum inside dimensions of 54mm x 140mm does not require escape gaps. Mesh pots may be used with covers or liners provided they leave unencumbered at least 80 percent of the surface area of each of 2 opposite sides.

Potting

In areas where potting is permitted the following general restrictions apply:

- individuals may use, set, or possess, up to three pots in any one day;
- all pots and surface floats must be clearly and permanently marked with the fisher's surname and initials;
- two or more individuals fishing from a vessel may use, set, or possess up to six pots in any one day provided they have their name on the pots and that each person is using no more than three of the pots;
- bobs and ring pots may be used to catch rock lobster but all other requirements such as marking and pot limits apply;
- pots used to catch rock lobster have specific escape gap requirements – see 'Rock Lobster';
- species specific pots (cod pots, crab pots etc) can be used. They are exempt from escape gap requirements but all other requirements (such as marking and pot limits) remain.

Rock lobster

Daily bag limits

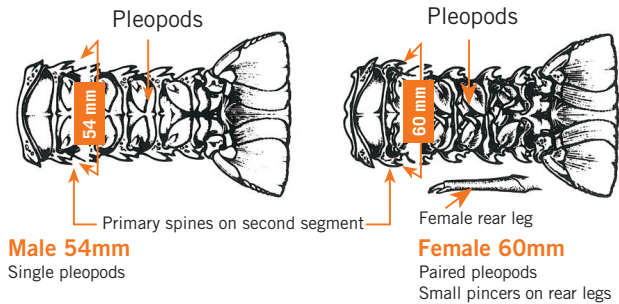
No person may take or possess more than 6 rock lobster (both species combined) on any one day.

Rock lobster may not be possessed seaward of the mean high water mark in an unmeasurable state.

Spiny rock lobster minimum size

Measure the tail width in a straight line between the tips of the two large (primary) spines on the second segment of the tail.

If you are unsure of the sex, use the 60mm measurement.



Packhorse lobster minimum size

Measure the tail length along the underside in a straight line from the rear of the calcified bar on the first segment to the tip of the middle fan of the tail.

Must have a tail length of at least 216mm (male and female).

