Fisheries New Zealand
Tini a Tangaroa

New Zealand Hoki

New Zealand hoki is a fast-growing fish that can grow up to 1.3 metres long. Hoki are found in waters around New Zealand and occur in greatest abundance at depths of 200 to 800 metres. They reach adulthood in 3-5 years and can live for up to 25 years.

Hoki fishing takes place at several fishing grounds around New Zealand including the Stewart-Snares shelf south of Stewart Island, the Sub-Antarctic, the west coast of the South Island, Cook Strait, and the Chatham Rise east of the South Island (see map on next page).

The hoki fishery is managed as two stocks; an eastern stock and a western stock. Scientific research is carried out on both stocks and separate catch limits apply to the eastern and western stocks as part of the overall catch limit set annually by the Minister of Fisheries.

How do we manage our hoki fish stocks?

New Zealand's hoki fisheries are managed using the best available scientific research. This research is carefully reviewed by expert scientists, with active participation by fisheries managers and representatives of environmental and commercial fishing interests.

Each year scientists estimate the number of hoki in each stock. Because hoki grow and reproduce quickly, these numbers can change a lot from year to year. How many young hoki reach adulthood from one year to the next is one of the factors involved in this variation. Other factors include changes in water temperature as well as the numbers of fish caught in previous years.

Fluctuations in the number of hoki are taken into account when decisions are made on setting catch limits, to make sure the fishery is sustainable over the long term. Reducing or increasing catch limits in response to changes in the numbers of fish is a sign that a fishery is being well managed.

Between 2001 and 2007 hoki catch limits were cut from 250,000 tonnes to 90,000 tonnes because there was a significant reduction in the number of young fish reaching adulthood. This is believed to have been largely caused by environmental conditions.

Scientific research showed that as of 2009, both hoki stocks had fully rebuilt to target levels, and could sustainably support increased catches. Based on this information several changes to the hoki catch limits were made between 2009 and 2015, increasing them from 90,000 tonnes to 150,000 tonnes. In response to information indicating the hoki population may be declining, the catch limit was reduced to 115,000 tonnes in 2019 to ensure the stock remains sustainable.

In addition to catch limits, the fishing industry has implemented two voluntary measures to support the health of the hoki population. These include closing each of the main fisheries for a week during the spawning season to support successful spawning, and closing four large areas to hoki fishing which provide important nursery grounds for young fish – this helps to ensure that more young fish will survive to adulthood and be able to breed.

How do we know the hoki fisheries are being sustainably managed?

An independent certifying body, the internationally recognised Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), has certified both New Zealand hoki stocks as being sustainably managed. In 2001, hoki was the first fishery in New Zealand – and one of the first in the

world – to achieve MSC certification. Certification lasts for five years, and the fishery was re-certified in 2007 and again in 2012. In September 2018, several hoki, hake and ling fisheries were recertified by the MSC, and are now referred to as the New Zealand Hoki, Hake and Ling Trawl Fishery.

How do we ensure that hoki fishing does not damage the marine environment?

Fishing, like any human activity, almost always has an impact on the environment. The Ministry for Primary Industries monitors hoki fishing to ensure this impact stays within acceptable levels. If this is not the case, the Ministry works closely with the fishing industry to alter fishing practices so that impacts are reduced.

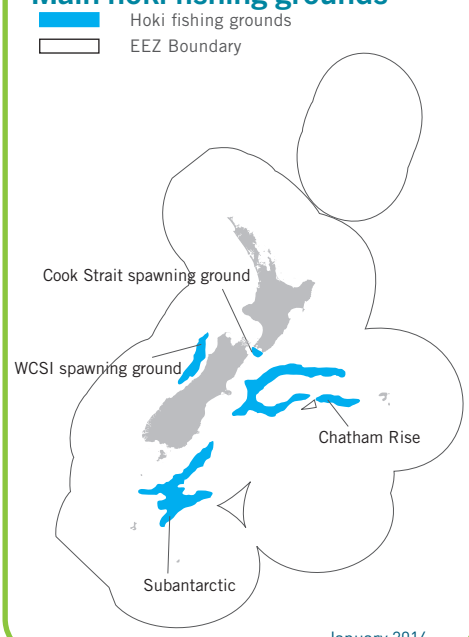
Hoki fishing boats are known to accidentally catch protected seabirds such as albatrosses and petrels. Fishers on larger vessels (greater than 28m long) are legally required to take measures to avoid harming seabirds, such as using bird-scaring devices to keep birds away from the fishing gear where they can get caught. Fishers must also be careful about both the amount and type of fish waste that is returned to the water, because this can attract seabirds to the boat.

The Ministry assesses the risk to seabirds from commercial fisheries. The most recent assessment found that the hoki fishery contributed to three seabird species being classified as "medium risk" or above. The fishing industry and the Ministry are continuing to work collaboratively on ways to ensure a continual reduction in the capture rate of seabirds.

New Zealand fur seals are also accidentally caught in fishing gear when they try to eat fish caught in the nets. The fishing industry, with government support, has developed guidelines for both larger and smaller hoki fishing vessels to reduce the risk of accidentally catching fur seals.

Some fishing vessels use bottom trawling nets to catch hoki. However, the Ministry monitors bottom trawling carefully and, with support from the fishing industry, has closed large areas of New Zealand waters to bottom trawling. More about these closures can be found in the information sheet *Protecting New Zealand's seabed from the impacts of bottom trawling.*

Main hoki fishing grounds



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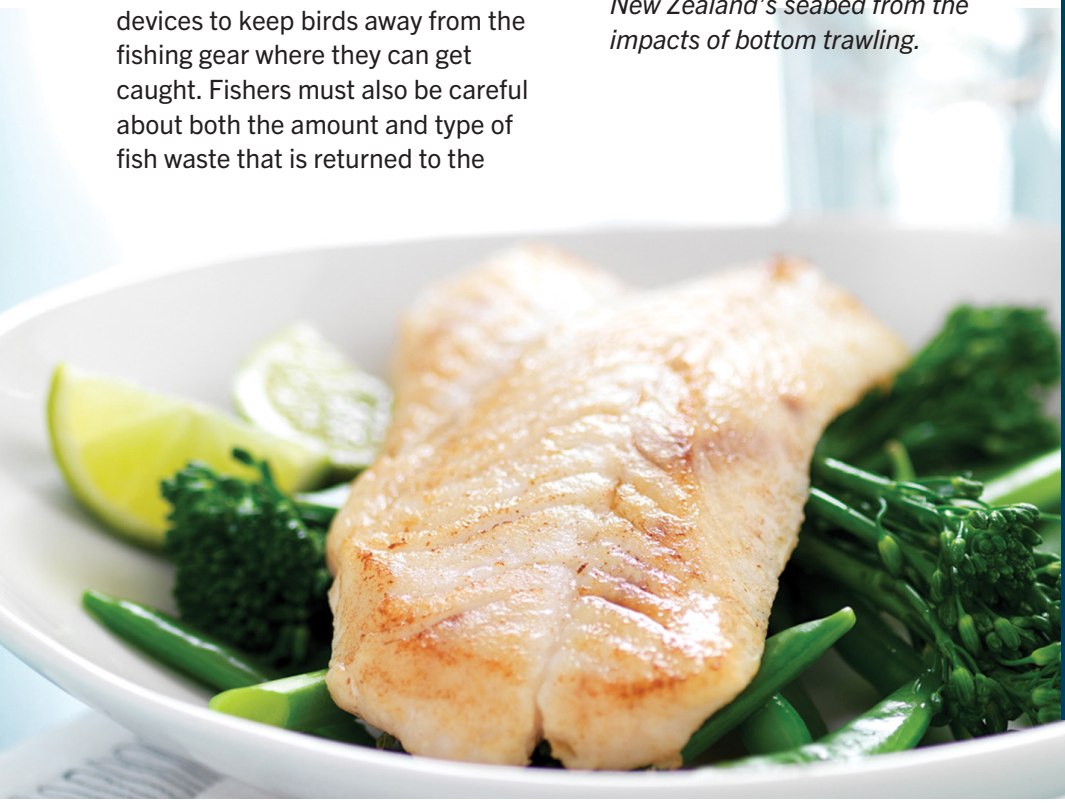

Did you know:

- The value of hoki quota in 2018 was approximately $1,368 million.
- Hoki is New Zealand's largest fishery, with around 42,000 tonnes of processed fish exported in 2019.
- In 2017, hoki exports contributed more than $230 million to the New Zealand economy.
- Hoki is exported all over the world – including Australia, China, Europe and the United States.

This information provides a high-level overview of an aspect of the New Zealand fisheries management regime. To find out more about how New Zealand's fisheries are managed to enable sustainable seafood for future generations go to the fisheries site of the Ministry for Primary Industries: **www.fish.govt.nz**

New Zealand Government

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