

Amendments to amateur Blue cod fishing regulations applying within the Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) Marine Area

Effective from 20 Dec 2015

The Fisheries (Amateur Fishing) Regulations 2013 have been amended with new blue cod fishing rules applying to the internal waters of the Doubtful Sound fiord complex taking effect from 20 December 2015.

New

Blue cod limit for Doubtful (Patea), Thompson and Bradshaw Sounds internal waters

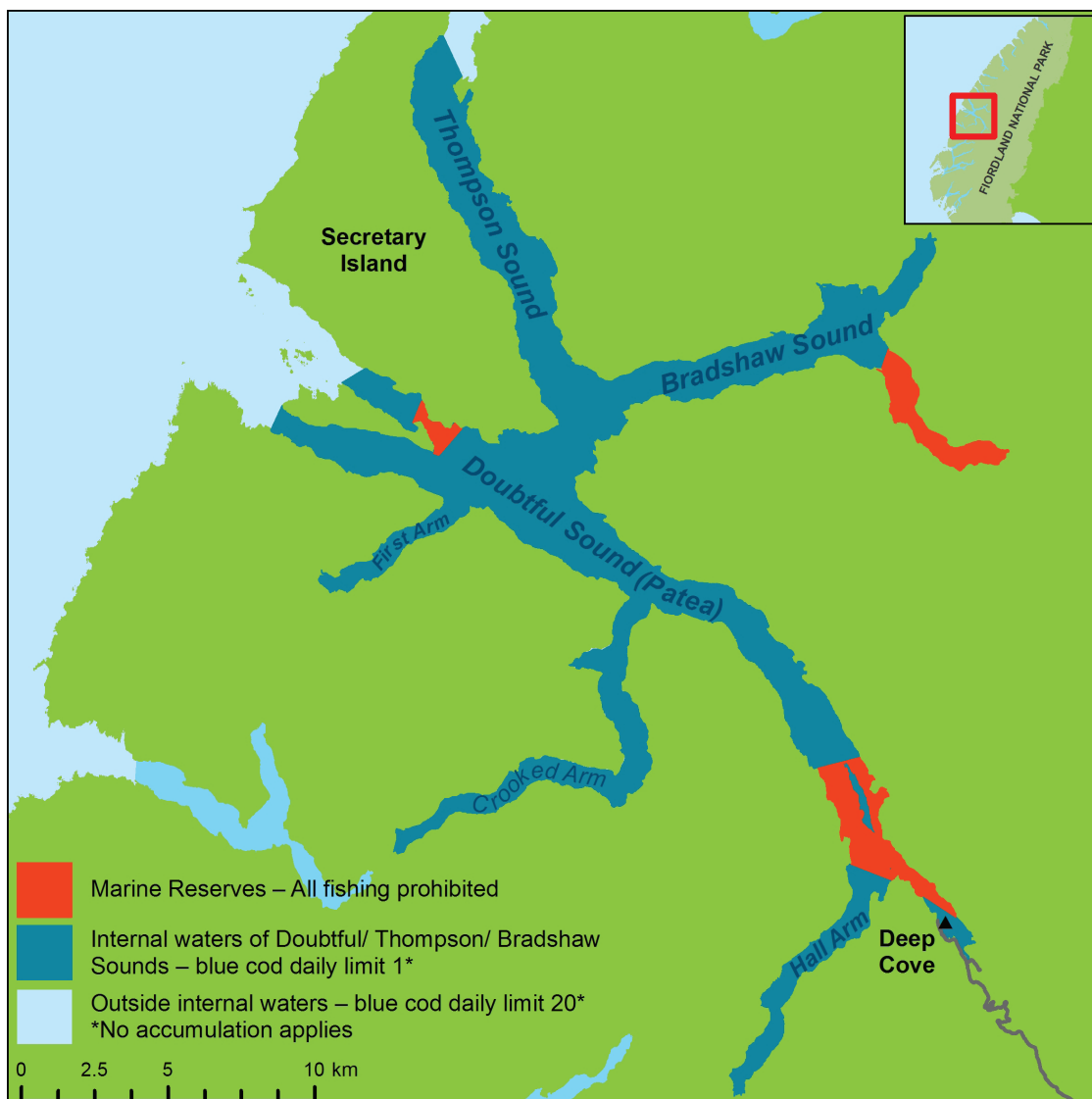
Within the internal waters of Doubtful Sound (Patea), Thompson Sound and Bradshaw Sound the maximum daily take and possession limit is **one** blue cod per person with no accumulation.

Milford Sound (Piopiotahi) Blue cod closed area

It is prohibited to take or possess blue cod taken from within the internal waters of Milford Sound (Piopiotahi) due to natural low abundance and poor recruitment caused by low habitat productivity.

Internal waters of Fiordland

Within the internal waters of Fiordland the daily limit is three (3) blue cod per person with no accumulation. The exceptions are the internal waters of Milford Sound, which remains closed to blue cod fishing and the internal waters of Doubtful Sound (Patea), Thompson Sound and Bradshaw Sound, which have a maximum daily limit of one blue cod per person with no accumulation.



Contact Fishery Officers:

Ministry for Primary Industries, 137 Spey Street, Invercargill

Phone: (03) 211 0060 or for information on fishing rules: www.mpi.govt.nz

Fiord entrances and outside coast of Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) Marine Area

Outside the designated internal waters of each fiord the maximum daily limit is 20 blue cod per person (with no accumulation), while there is a total combined finfish bag limit of 30 finfish with no accumulation. The combined bag limit includes the maximum of 20 blue cod species limit, which can include a maximum of 3 blue cod limit taken from within the internal waters of Fiordland, or in the case of the Doubtful Sound fiord complex internal waters, one blue cod. No accumulation applies.

Doubtful and Milford Sounds blue cod closed area management

The internal waters of Doubtful Sound (Patea) and Milford Sound (Piopiotahi) have been closed to recreational blue cod fishing since June 2005. As the two most accessible and fished fiords, the original intentions of the Fiordland Marine Guardians was a temporary closure to monitor and assess whether or not depleted blue cod fish stocks in both fiords would naturally restore in the absence of fishing pressure.

Scientific surveys to gauge abundance and distribution conducted over the last decade since the closure implementation, indicate that blue cod numbers and distribution have remained low in the inner fiord habitats of both Doubtful and Milford Sounds, regardless of the closures or protection of adjacent marine reserves.

This is largely due to the habitat preferred by blue cod being both limited and relatively unproductive within these steep walled deep inner fiord environments. Adult fish are highly territorial, rarely moving any considerable distance within the fiord. While the size of individual fish has increased, fish reproduction and recruitment is low with little indication of mixing or migration spill over from the outside coast, where blue cod abundance remains comparatively higher than inside the inner fiords.

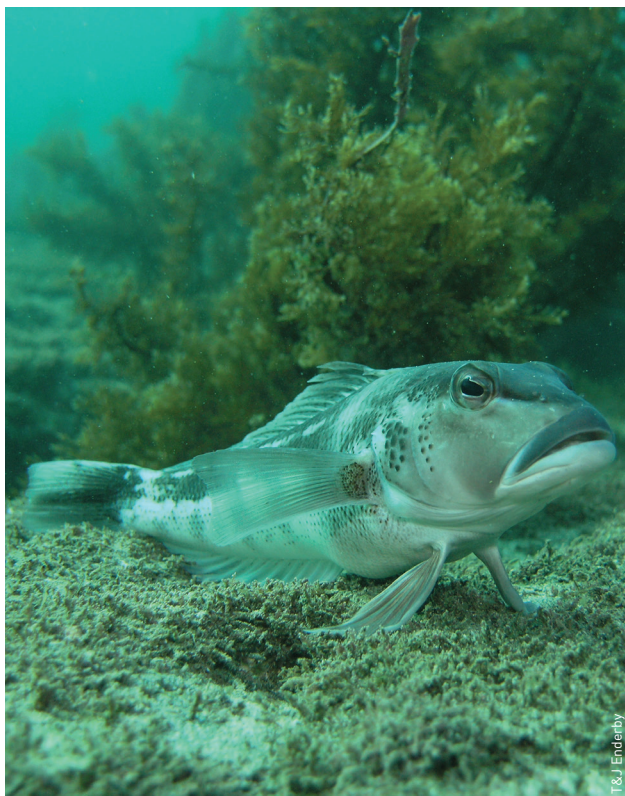
Given the findings of the surveys and the limited suitable habitat inside Milford Sound, it was considered most unlikely that Milford internal waters would ever sustain high recreational fishing pressure if reintroduced.

The Guardians also considered anecdotal evidence that indicated as a result of the closure in Doubtful

Sound, the displaced fishing effort concentrated in the adjoining Thompson and Bradshaw Sounds has over time detrimentally increased harvest pressure on finite stocks in both fiords. This suggests the blue cod population within the entire 3-fiord complex must be carefully managed together.

Fiordland Marine Guardians management review recommendations

After careful deliberations on the research findings, the Fiordland Marine Guardians made final recommendations to the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to request regulation changes. Following stakeholder consultation in early 2015, the Honourable Nathan Guy, Minister for Primary Industries has agreed to reopen the internal waters of Doubtful Sound to limited recreational blue cod fishing by setting a conservative blue cod daily limit of one blue cod per person. The one blue cod daily limit will apply across the entire internal waters of the Doubtful (Patea)/Thompson/Bradshaw Sound's 3-fiord complex, with ongoing monitoring by the Guardians and MPI to assess the fishing impact.



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DOWNLOAD the NZ Fishing Rules Smartphone app, text "app" to 9889

FREEPHONE 0800 4 POACHER (0800 476 224) to report unlawful fishing