



Fisheries New Zealand

Tini a Tangaroa

2023 – 2024 Annual Review Report

For the Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan

December 2024

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Background

How to read the Annual Report

The [Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan](#) (the Fisheries Plan) is an output from the Government's strategy, [Revitalising the Gulf](#), published in 2021. *Revitalising the Gulf* is the Government's response to the [Sea Change Plan's](#) marine proposals including fisheries management, marine protection, protected species, habitat restoration, aquaculture, marine biosecurity, and localised management.

The Fisheries Plan sets out the long-term outcomes sought and the objectives which will guide the management of fisheries in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park over a five-year period. The Management Objectives and associated Actions in the Fisheries Plan describe the goals and discrete steps that will be taken over the five-year period to achieve the plan's objectives.

The Annual Operational Plan (AOP) underpins the Fisheries Plan and describes the activities Fisheries New Zealand will undertake each year to support delivery of the plan's objectives.

The Annual Review Report (ARR) reviews the delivery of tasks identified in the AOP in any given year as well as providing an overall commentary on the progression of the Fisheries Plan. Where relevant documents are publicly available, links are provided.



2023 – 2024 year in review

Achievements and highlights

Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management

This annual review report marks a significant milestone as Fisheries New Zealand continues its journey towards implementing an ecosystem-based fisheries management (EBFM) approach, both for the Hauraki Gulf and within the wider New Zealand context. Moving away from traditional single-species management to a more holistic and integrated approach that considers the entire marine ecosystem comes with wide ranging opportunities and challenges. The intention of EBFM is to maintain resilient, productive ecosystems to amplify the economic, social and environmental value of fisheries while ensuring their sustainability. Over the past year, we have worked to turn the ambitious Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan into meaningful action.

We have:

- Actively engaged with our treaty partners and stakeholders to gather diverse perspectives and work towards inclusivity in decision-making processes.
- Progressed two significant proposals for spatial management measures which consider the broader environmental effects of fishing, including supporting the Department of Conservation (DOC) with the Hauraki Gulf/Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill and consulting on evidence-based options to limit trawl and Danish seine fishing to small areas to limit impacts to benthic biodiversity.
- Progressed a range of initiatives that consider the wider ecosystem within which fisheries stocks are managed, including specific measures to address the impacts of sea urchins and formation of sea urchin (kina) barrens.
- Considered the socioeconomic importance of fisheries, including the livelihoods and wellbeing of fishing communities in our management decisions.
- Embraced adaptive management principles by working with Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge to set up a Fisheries Monitoring and Indicators Framework. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of new management measures will allow us to adjust our strategies in response to new information and changing environmental conditions, ensuring flexibility and resilience in our approach.

The effectiveness of EBFM is influenced by a myriad of factors, including Government priorities and cultural expectations. In New Zealand, a new government was elected in late 2023 bringing with it a change in focus across resource management, economic development, environmental conservation, and social welfare issues. These dynamic influences underscore the need for adaptive and inclusive approaches to sustainable fisheries management. By recognising the interconnectedness of species and habitats, people, and values, we are better equipped to address the complex challenges facing our marine resources and environments. This annual report documents our collective efforts and achievements in advancing EBFM within the Hauraki Gulf, laying the foundation to apply lessons learnt to other coastal marine environments across New Zealand.

Forage fish and food web dynamics

Applying ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries management requires an understanding of not only the direct impacts of fishing i.e., bycatch mortalities, but also the indirect impacts of prey removal upon predators of fished species. This is especially true for forage fish, which act as a link between the bottom of the food chain and higher trophic levels and therefore have a disproportionate role in ensuring energy transfer in marine ecosystems.

A research project delivered by NIWA in January 2023 (**AEBR 301– Role of Low and Mid Trophic Level Fish in the Hauraki Gulf Ecosystem**) that looked at the role of low- and mid-trophic level fish in the Hauraki Gulf ecosystem found that a decrease in the abundance of forage fish could reduce the total biomass of marine predators, such as seabirds, marine mammals, and predatory fishes. However, the response was dependent on the degree of diet flexibility, i.e., ability to prey switch, of predators, which was poorly described for all groups.

A project proposal has been prioritised for tender in 24/25 that will address the current knowledge gaps around predator diet flexibility. The study will draw on techniques such as stable isotope analysis to investigate dietary niches of predator species that have been identified as particularly vulnerable to prey removals both at the species level (e.g., dietary niche breadth) and community level (e.g., dietary niche overlap) in the Hauraki Gulf food web.

The outputs of this study will go some way towards allowing fisheries managers to determine how future catch settings for key fisheries might influence food web dynamics, inform management procedures, and help to prioritise specific fisheries for more precautionary management and further research.

Urchin barrens and kelp restoration

Urchin barrens are areas on the seabed where sea urchins, predominantly the native Kina, have multiplied in large numbers and consumed all the vegetation. This leads to a barren seafloor with a loss of habitat and biodiversity, impacting the overall health of coastal environments. Urchin barrens are prevalent in north-eastern New Zealand and pose significant ecological risks as they expand, leading to the degradation of marine ecosystems. Addressing urchin or kina barrens requires novel and integrated management approaches that support the sustainable management of kina fisheries while addressing the causes and effects of barrens.

In 2024, the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries publicly recognised the importance and complexity of kina management, particularly in Northeast New Zealand, and Fisheries New Zealand committed to undertake a range of work to address them, including:

- Consultation on a recreational bag limit increase for kina (public consultation ran from 26 March to 3 May 2024).
- Consultation on a new special permit purpose that would allow kina removal or culling for the purpose of kina barrens management (public consultation ran from 26 March to 3 May 2024).
- Engaging with tangata whenua representatives on establishing an additional non-commercial traditional fishing use under regulation 52 of the Amateur Fishing regulations. Once finalised, the new purpose would be immediately available to hapu and iwi once they appoint tangata kaitiaki to manage the taking and disposal of kina in accordance with the conditions of the approval.
- Research to improve our understanding of kina barrens, and to map the extent of kina barrens and macroalgae over time.
- Partnering with Sustainable Seas to model options for kina barrens management in Northland.
- Forming a multi-stakeholder working group to co-develop a management plan for restoring kelp forests in the Hauraki Gulf.

By integrating community engagement, regulatory measures and research projects with habitat restoration and ecosystem monitoring it is possible to address the challenges posed by kina barrens in an ecosystem-based fisheries framework and promote the health and resilience of our unique marine ecosystems.

Spatial management of bottom-contact fishing methods – the ‘trawl corridors’ proposal

To address the range of pressures on benthic habitats in the Gulf and support integrated management, the Sea Change Plan recommended that bottom trawling and Danish seining should be transitioned out of the Gulf completely through a phased approach. Bottom contact fishing can affect seafloor habitats and communities by damaging or removing structure forming species, reducing habitat complexity and altering the seafloor structure. The greatest impacts from bottom trawling are on hard complex grounds. While the effects are less on sandy bottoms, sediment plumes caused by trawl gear contacting the seabed can also have indirect impacts on animals living on the seabed.

The Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan proposed that a spatial management approach, known as the ‘trawl corridors’ proposal would allow evidence-based management of trawl and Danish seine fishing in a manner that could achieve a high level of biodiversity and ecosystem benefit, while providing for continued utilisation and minimising the range of potential impacts of a complete exclusion.

Following an extensive multi-stakeholder collaborative approach, options for the placement of trawl corridors were developed and consulted on in late 2023. Fisheries New Zealand received 8,909 submissions, including those from our Treaty Partners/tangata whenua and six broad stakeholder groups (commercial fishing industry, recreational fishers, statutory and advisory bodies, environmental interests, CRIs/independent experts, and the public).

The Minister is considering these proposals and a decision on next steps is likely in the 24-25 financial year.

Concerns and Trends

Climate change, marine heat waves, invasive seaweeds, more frequent storms, and acidifying waters all pose serious new threats to the health of the Gulf. The ongoing threats of exotic *Caulerpa* and the Milky Flesh Snapper Syndrome have been felt throughout this year.

Exotic *Caulerpa*

Exotic *Caulerpa* was first found in New Zealand in 2021 in Aotea Great Barrier Island in the Hauraki Gulf and has since spread to a number of other locations in the Gulf and in Northland. It can spread rapidly, forming large underwater fields, competing with native species for space and upsetting the balance of local ecosystems. This presents a risk to cultural, recreational and commercial marine activities. There has been a comprehensive effort by Biosecurity New Zealand, mana whenua, regional councils and the Department of Conservation to understand this marine pest and its distribution, prevent it spreading and explore ways to remove it.



Milky Flesh Snapper

Snapper with 'Milky White Flesh Syndrome' have increasingly been observed throughout the inner Hauraki Gulf, near Auckland, and around Doubtless Bay near Northland. Fish with the condition appear to be skinny and have mushy, white flesh rather than their usual translucent, firm flesh, and are malnourished. An independent investigation by NIWA ([Distribution and potential causes of milky fleshed snapper in SNA1](#)) found no definitive causes of the Syndrome, but highlighted a number of factors that could be at play including high abundance of snapper competing for food sources, climate change, and weather patterns affecting the early stages of the food chain. This is a complex issue and consideration of it will continue to be necessary in fisheries assessments in the Hauraki Gulf.

These trends underscore the vital importance building resilient ecosystems in the Gulf. Fisheries management must consider the impacts of these variables and adapt to changing environmental conditions and work to protect critical habitats, enhance ecosystem resilience and help ensure sustainable fish populations. The following sections provide further detail around progress made against each management action within the three broad outcomes sought by the Fisheries Plan.



Photo credit: Moana New Zealand



Outcome 1 – Achieving healthy, functioning aquatic ecosystems that support sustainable fisheries

Progress against management actions

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
1.1.1 – Exclude bottom trawling and Danish seining from the Hauraki Gulf except within defined areas or bottom fishing access zones	Public consultation on trawl corridors ran from 30 August 2023 to 6 November 2023 with late submissions accepted until 4 December 2023. FNZ received 8,909 submissions. This included submissions from our Treaty Partners/tangata whenua and six broad stakeholder groups (commercial fishing industry, recreational fishers, statutory and advisory bodies, environmental interests, CRIs/independent experts, and the public). The Minister for Oceans and Fisheries is considering the proposals and submissions.	Discussion document: Bottom Fishing Access Zones in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park AEBR 306: Spatial Decision Support Tools For Trawl Corridors – Hauraki Gulf
1.1.2 – Develop a plan for managing the scallop fishery in the Hauraki Gulf	The northern scallop fisheries have been fully closed since 2023 due to sustainability concerns. Commercial scallop fisheries have historically been based exclusively on dredging. This year the required regulatory amendment has been drafted by the Parliamentary Counsel Office to provide for use of Underwater Breathing Apparatus (UBA) for commercial scallop harvest. This amendment could support lower-impact commercial harvesting in some areas should the fishery reopen. There has also been significant work carried out on camera-based survey techniques and associated AI to increase the efficiency of survey data analysis. FNZ provided innovation funding as part of the 2023/24 research budget to further this work and support improved, lower impact and lower cost future scallop surveys.	FAR 2024/36 Dive and dredge surveys of scallops in SCA 1 and SCA CS, 2021 (fish.govt.nz)

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
	Biomass surveys for SCA 1 and SCA CS were commissioned in May 2024 which will provide a good comparison across core recreational and commercial scallop beds to assess recovery both at a local bed and wider stock scale. Results are anticipated in September 2024. NIWA also progressed research to help determine suitable reference points for scallop fisheries and assess the efficacy of a catch per unit effort-based management approach. The results of these research projects are due in the second half of the 24-25 financial year and we expect that this new information will underpin any consideration of reopening the scallop fisheries and inform how to monitor and manage scallop populations in the future. Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: • Establish a multi-stakeholder scallop advisory group. • Consider the latest stock assessment survey results and integrate new reference points and targets for scallop fisheries into a scallop management plan.	
1.1.3 – Identify funding opportunities and support research into alternative methods for scallop harvesting	Given the significant investment being made into scallop research within FNZ budgets this year, no additional funding opportunities were pursued. Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: • Progress Management Action 1.13 through the multi-stakeholder scallop advisory group set to be established (Management Action 1.1.2).	
1.1.4 – Support further data collection, model improvements and monitoring to improve the available information on benthic habitats and their distribution, including biogenic habitats	Research project <i>BEN2022-06: Design of a benthic habitat recovery monitoring programme for the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park and a baseline survey</i> was scoped and commissioned to complete a baseline biodiversity survey of benthic habitats in the Gulf, taking into account the location of proposed trawl corridors.	

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
	Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: • Conduct field work and analyse the data. • Validate the habitat suitability index models used to develop trawl corridor proposals.	
1.2.1 – Using section 9(c) guidelines, identify habitats of particular significance for fisheries management in the Hauraki Gulf and document in a habitats database	Following consultation in 2022, the guidelines to support implementation of s9(c) of the Fisheries Act 1996 were reviewed, and a summary of submissions prepared in response to consultation feedback. FNZ is considering this feedback and working towards finalising the guidelines. Through a review of existing research and targeted engagement, FNZ has also collated the available evidence on potential Habitats of Particular Significance (HoPS), including several areas for the Hauraki Gulf. Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: • Finalise the guidelines and publish the first iteration of the Habitats of Habitats of Particular Significance (HoPS) register.	
1.2.2 – Design and implement a protection and monitoring regime for habitats of particular significance for fisheries management in the Hauraki Gulf, prioritising according to estimated level of risk	Due to delayed finalisation of the guidelines to support taking HoPS into account, no specific progress towards designing a protection and monitoring regime for HoPS in the Gulf occurred this year. However, work progressed on two key proposals (the Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill and the trawl corridors package) which, if implemented, will provide protection for a range of the draft HoPS identified. Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: • Develop a protection and monitoring regime, and implementation plan, for HoPS within the Gulf.	

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
1.2.3 – Collaborate with the Department of Conservation to implement marine protection proposals in Revitalising the Gulf for the protection of habitats and biodiversity	FNZ supported DOC with Environment Select Committee hearings on the Hauraki Gulf/Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill. Following the Committee’s report back to Parliament, the passing of the Bill, and all the recommended changes through the Department of Conservation’s Report were unanimously agreed. The next step is the second reading of the Bill. Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: Support DOC with the co-development of biodiversity objectives, including customary access criteria, for protection sites as well as with monitoring and enforcement planning (dependent on the Bill passing).	
1.2.4 – Collaborate with the Department of Conservation and regional councils to evaluate the benefits provided by the marine protection in the new Hauraki Gulf Marine Protection Bill for supporting fisheries and ecosystem resilience in the face of changing climate	FNZ participated in early planning work on monitoring for future protections; however, specific evaluation of the benefits provided by new marine protection areas is dependent on the Hauraki Gulf/Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill passing. Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: Undertake joint research planning to identify a research and monitoring framework and determine how monitoring and research by respective agencies and councils can complement each other.	Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill 282-2 (2023), Government Bill – New Zealand Legislation Hauraki Gulf/Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill (selectcommittees.parliament.nz) Hauraki Gulf/Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill (bills.parliament.nz)
1.3.1 – Scope and commission further research to assess the impacts of forage fish (small and medium pelagic species) removals on the marine food chain in the Hauraki Gulf and any additional research	A research project to investigate the diet plasticity of predators in the food web of the Gulf was scoped and prioritised to FNZs proposed 24/25 research list (ZBD2024-07). The research aims to describe diet flexibility for key predators of forage fish in the Gulf and improve our understanding of fishing impacts on the food web. Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: Undertake research project ZBD2024-07	Proposed Fisheries Research Services for 2024-25

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
1.3.2 – Review the management settings of important forage species in FMA 1 as needed to ensure impacts of removals don't adversely affect the marine food chain in the Hauraki Gulf	FNZ initiated an internal review of the current sustainability measures for pilchard, anchovy, and sprat in Quota Management Areas PIL 1, ANC 1, and SPR 1. Pilchards, anchovy, sprat are low value stocks; however, being forage fish, they play an important role in maintaining ecosystem structure and function as they are common components of a diverse range of marine predators' diets. This not only includes protected species, such as fish-eating seabirds and marine mammals, but also predatory fishes which represent important shared fisheries e.g., kingfish. PIL 1, ANC 1, and SPR 1 are low knowledge stocks with no reliable estimates of current or reference biomass, nor sustainable yield. Scheduled review of these stocks is recommended to improve our information and ensure management settings are appropriate for their long-term sustainability, including whether the settings sufficiently consider the importance of the stocks as a food source for marine mammals, seabirds, and predatory fishes in the ecosystem. Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: • Develop a review schedule for sustainability rounds for forage species and continue to review management settings of these species as new information becomes available.	
1.3.3 – Advance scientific research on kina populations to improve understanding of the variation in their spatial distribution, density and condition	• FNZ has contracted research project ZBD2023-03: <i>Summarising and updating knowledge on the distribution of kina barrens in key regions of New Zealand</i> to the University of Auckland. This project will collate existing data on the spatial and temporal extent of sea urchin barrens in New Zealand, identify information gaps, and collect additional data for priority regions. Data from this work will then be used to develop a series of updateable GIS layers. The spatial dataset will act as a baseline to monitor future change or recovery of kelp forests on rocky reefs and help to inform spatial management measures to address kina barrens.	

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
1.3.4 – Facilitate the co-development of a management plan for restoring healthy kelp forests which will consider the causes address the environmental impacts of kina barrens, and include management considerations for predator species such as snapper and crayfish	A range of engagement, research initiatives and management measures were progressed this year which will underpin the successful development of a strategic management plan for kelp restoration. Public consultation occurred on some of these measures, including a proposed change to the recreational bag limit for kina from 50 to 100 or 150 in the Auckland Fisheries Management Area (FMA1), which covers the east coast of Northland, the Hauraki Gulf, Coromandel, and Bay of Plenty, and a special permit for removal of kina and long-spined sea urchins. The proposed special permit would allow the removal of kina and long-spined sea urchins from areas where there are already barrens or areas that are at risk of forming new barrens. Special permits would also enable kina to be moved to other areas with low kina density to improve their food value, or to be used in aquaculture projects. FNZ also undertook early engagement on potential measures intended to improve the abundance of spiny rock lobster and address kina barrens in northeast New Zealand. FNZ attended fisheries forums in Northland and the Bay of Plenty, and engaged with the National Rock Lobster Management Group and the Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan Advisory Group. We also worked with scientists from the Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge to develop a decision-making tool for evaluating management approaches to kina barrens using a Bayesian Belief Network model. The report summarises lessons learned, information gaps, and next steps. FNZ is now considering what is needed to use the tool in management discussions.	AEBR 324: Fishery-induced trophic cascades and sea urchin barrens in New Zealand: a review and discussion for management Public consultation on management tool proposals to address kina barrens Assessing potential recovery solutions to shift from kina barrens to kelp forests.pdf

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
	Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: Bring together a working group to look strategically across the range of initiatives underway and develop a coherent management plan for restoring kelp forests in the Gulf.	
1.4.1 – Implement the NPOA-seabirds framework, continue to support the ongoing refinement, improvement and uptake of seabird mitigation measures for commercial and recreational fishers	Progress against the NPOA objectives can be found in the Seabird Annual Report.	National Plan of Action Seabirds 2020 NPOA-Seabirds 2020 (Annual Report Summary 21/22) (mpi.govt.nz)
1.4.2 – Devise policies and procedures for guiding Fisheries NZs response to protected species bycatch notifications received through Non-Fish and Protected Species reports and coordinate this process with DOC and the commercial fishing industry	At a national scale, there has been excellent progress towards updating the protected species response protocols framework and improving information sharing with DOC's protected species liaison programme. Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: Work towards implementing a near real time system to alert industry of high-risk areas to seabirds to enable dynamic management.	National Plan of Action Seabirds 2020 Implementation Plan
1.4.4 – Implement a programme to better estimate recreational fishing protected species bycatch and the risk to the population. To be considered alongside 2.3.5	Seabird interactions with recreational fishing were recorded at boat ramps within research project MAF2019-01: <i>Web camera monitoring of key marine amateur fisher access points</i> and on Amateur Charter Vessels through MAF2023-01: <i>Characterisation of recreational fishing activity for snapper and estimating release mortality</i> which is monitoring the 2024 calendar year. In addition, research funding was prioritised to conduct rock lobster focussed monitoring through the national boat ramp monitoring programme in CRA1 and CRA2 which cover the Gulf (MAF2024-02).	Proposed Fisheries Research Services for 2024-25 FAR 2024/53 Trends in recreational boat effort and harvest from 2004–05 to 2022–23 (mpi.govt.nz) FAR 2024/51 National Panel Survey of Marine Recreational Fishers 2022–23 (mpi.govt.nz)

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
1.4.5 – Develop a work programme to address risks to protected species in the Hauraki Gulf focused on education, outreach and other measures targeted towards recreational fishers and boaters to reduce harm to protected species including through bycatch	An outreach campaign targeting recreational bycatch of seabirds was trialled by Southern Seabirds over the 2022/23 summer period with support from FNZ. This initiative is linked to the activity to implement an effective communications campaign to reduce seabird bycatch in recreational fisheries under the NPOA Seabirds.	National Plan of Action Seabirds 2020 Implementation Plan
1.4.6 – Continue to support regional collaborations focused on black petrel recovery	The Black Petrel Working Group (BPWG) met in July 2023 and discussed key workstreams including compliance, population research, and the protected species liaison programme. Collectively, the group agreed that the new goals and objectives of the BPWG would be to maintain an information sharing and collaborative function with the aim of identifying priority work areas and technical solutions to support effectively managing the risks facing black petrel and flesh-footed shearwater populations from fisheries at the FMA 1 scale. FNZ and DOC continue to support research and monitoring on black petrels to facilitate better conservation and management.	Black petrel conservation services programme reports (doc.govt.nz)
1.4.7 – Prioritise observer coverage on inshore bottom longline fishing trips that overlap with black petrel distribution until the wider rollout of onboard cameras on commercial fishing vessels	The black petrel electronic monitoring project provided good coverage of black petrel captures on bottom longline vessels targeting bluenose and snapper from 2016 (in 2018/19 the focus shifted to bottom longline vessels targeting snapper only). Inshore commercial vessels in the Gulf have been operating cameras since June 2024 which provides a mechanism for verifying captures in this fishery.	AEBR 318 Comparing results of black petrel capture interactions with bottom longlines using different data collection methods (mpi.govt.nz)

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
1.4.8 – Implement the National Plan of Action for sharks in the Hauraki Gulf	FNZ contracted research project BYC2022-02: <i>Risk assessment for selected shark species</i>. This project assesses risk from fishing to a selection of shark and chimaera species and will be the first quantitative risk assessment performed for these species in New Zealand. In early 2024, FNZ contracted research project BYC2023-03: <i>Identification and mapping of habitats of significance for sharks</i>. This project will collate information on important habitats for various shark, skate, and chimaera species across the EEZ and Territorial Sea and map these areas to support fisheries management decision making.	National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks 2013 (mpi.govt.nz) Consultation on the national plan of action for sharks 2022

Outcome 2 – Working towards fisheries resources being at levels which meet the needs of treaty partners and stakeholders

Progress against management actions

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
2.1.1 – Work with tangata whenua and stakeholders (recreational, customary, commercial, non-take) to determine and document their fisheries resources needs and priorities within the Hauraki Gulf	FNZ broadly sought priorities of iwi and stakeholders for fisheries resources within the Gulf including research needs and priority species for stock assessments and sustainability reviews. Engagement occurred with iwi individually and with stakeholders primarily through the HG-FPAG, regular industry meetings and through ongoing recreational harvest monitoring programs. Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: • Design a targeted outreach strategy for fisheries stakeholders in the Gulf (to be delivered under management action 3.3.1). • Ensure the full range of iwi and stakeholder priorities and views are communicated in sustainability review papers and how these are taken into account when developing options.	
2.1.3 – Identify and prioritise stocks or groups of stocks for management interventions. Input these recommendations into annual sustainability round and research prioritisation process	The TAC/TACC for kina in SUR1A and SUR1B was increased in October 2023 to provide for additional take of kina. FNZ also publicly consulted on measures relating to kina (as described in management action 1.3.4) in 2024. Surveys of the SCA 1 and SCA CS fisheries were progressed in June 2024 in acknowledgement of the high priority for a review of this species from iwi and stakeholders.	October 2023 Sustainability Round Decisions Public consultation on management tool proposals to address kina barrens

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
	Early engagement was undertaken on a review of crayfish in the CRA1 and CRA2 fisheries, the latter being of particular importance in the Gulf. FNZ intends to progress measures aimed at increasing crayfish populations to reach a level that enables them to meaningfully contribute to the control of kina populations. A review of the SNA 1 stock assessment (delivered in Nov 2023) was undertaken to determine whether changes to SNA 1 management measures should be considered through the October 2024 sustainability round. Ultimately a decision was made not to go ahead due to the stock being in a positive state, with increasing trajectory, but not yet at the target, and due to a range of uncertainties including the milky fleshed snapper syndrome and potential impacts from exotic <i>Caulerpa</i>. Early engagement also occurred for a review of the North Island West Coast snapper fishery (SNA8) with conversations also touching on SNA1 with Gulf stakeholders. Research to understand forage fish dynamics was short-listed and an internal review was initiated for PIL 1, ANC 1, and SPR 1 (as discussed in Management Actions 1.3.1 and 1.3.2).	Review of sustainability measures for snapper – SNA 8 – Discussion document
2.1.4 – Work with stakeholders and treaty partners to develop a long-term management strategy for scallops, informed by a review of recent declines in abundance	Refer to management action 1.1.2.	
2.1.5 – Develop biological reference points for the Coromandel scallop fishery to inform future management support sustainable utilisation	Research project SCA2022-01: <i>Review of reference points (management targets and limits) for scallops</i> progressed this year with final results due next financial year.	

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
	Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: • Present results of SCA2022-01 to the Shellfish Working Group and integrate new reference points and targets for scallop fisheries into a new scallop management plan.	
2.3.4 – Work with tangata whenua and kaitaki throughout the Hauraki Gulf to improve collection of and access to customary data	No specific progress was made towards achieving improved collection of, and access to, customary data. However, ongoing engagement with mana whenua with interests in the Gulf occurred. Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: • Establish needs, interests, and desires for customary data.	
2.3.6 – Explore methods to increase funding for research to improve information on recreational fishing	A dedicated stocktake and efforts to explore innovative new funding pathways for research to improve information on recreational fishing was not progressed. However, funding opportunities are discussed regularly within FNZs research planning processes. Relevant research that was prioritised this year included: • The national boat ramp monitoring program (MAF2024-01) • A specific rock lobster focussed survey for CRA1 and CRA2 (MAF2024-02). Fisheries New Zealand also co-funded an MSc student through the University of Auckland to investigate the use of cell data to improve characterisation of recreational fishing effort in the Gulf. In addition, a range of previously funded research on recreational fishing information has been finalised this year (see associated links to publicly available information). Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: • Undertake a stocktake of existing funding sources and engage with those sources to discuss research needs and opportunities within the Hauraki Gulf.	Proposed Fisheries Research Services for 2024-25 FAR 2024 28 Mean weight estimates for recreational fisheries in 2022-23 FAR 2024/51 National Panel Survey of Marine Recreational Fishers 2022-23 (mpi.govt.nz)

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
2.4.2 – Review available data to evaluate the effectiveness of existing management measures intended to decrease the mortality of undersized fish caused by the commercial sector and respond accordingly	Fisheries Assessment Reports (FAR) for INS2022-01 and SEA 2022-09 were published in February 2024, which present an assessment of post-release survival of various inshore finfish and pelagic species. Work also progressed on project <i>FAB2023-01: Estimation of release mortality for Schedule 6 and minimum legal size exception</i> species which assesses post-release survival of scallops, queen scallops, sea cucumbers and paddle crabs. This information will inform most of the exception reviews that FNZ is required to undertake under the new landing and discard rules arising from the Fisheries Amendment Act 2022. Of most relevance to the Gulf, Kingfish and Snapper have been investigated for exception reviews for commercial minimum legal size and in the case of Kingfish for live release also. The timing of these consultations is still to be confirmed. Focus to date has been on pre-engagement on the upcoming consultations, seeking feedback from the Iwi Fisheries Forums, commercial representatives and other stakeholders.	FAR 2024/07 Estimation of release survival of pelagic sharks and fish in New Zealand commercial fisheries. (mpi.govt.nz) FAR 2024/07 Estimation of finfish release survival from New Zealand inshore commercial fisheries
2.5.3 – Support community efforts to monitor/restore intertidal and shallow subtidal species	Sites were selected for the annual northern shellfish survey base on their importance to recreational and customary harvesters. They included Whangateau, Whitianga and Tairua which are surveyed every 2 years and Umupuia and Te Mata / Waipatukahu which are both under temporary closures. Research project CSM2021-01: <i>Establishing a framework for community shellfish monitoring</i> was concluded. Refer to management action 3.1.5 for support of ahu Moana pilot projects. Outstanding tasks for inclusion in 24/25 AOP: Finalise the Ahu Moana Framework	FAR 202435 Intertidal shellfish monitoring in the northern North Island region 2023-24

Outcome 3 – Achieving inclusive and integrated regional participation in the governance of fisheries

Progress against management actions

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
3.1.1 – Facilitate the ongoing input and participation of tangata whenua in fisheries planning, prioritisation and management, through Hauraki iwi fisheries forums or other platforms	FNZ staff regularly attended established Iwi Fisheries Forums (adjacent to the Hauraki Gulf) to support input and participation of tangata whenua in fisheries management decisions relating to the Gulf. In addition, several hui were held to support the establishment of one or more Hauraki and Tāmaki Iwi Fisheries Forums. While no agreement has yet been reached on these new forums, FNZ continues to engage directly with individual iwi who have interests in the Gulf on key fisheries issues.	
3.1.2 – Maintain a collaborative Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan Advisory Group to provide opportunities for regional participation in fisheries management in the Hauraki Gulf	The HG-FPAG met 7 times in the 2023-2024 financial year. The annual operational plan was reviewed and confirmed by the group. A range of priority management actions were discussed in depth, including the trawl corridors proposals, kina barren management, forage fish removals and impacts on the food web, fisheries indicators, and a monitoring framework. The Terms of Reference was reviewed and updated.	
3.1.3 – Clearly communicate research prioritisation and sustainability round processes and identify opportunities to improve the early input and participation of tangata whenua on research prioritisation and planning and subsequent stakeholder input	Research planning and sustainability round reviews were brought to Iwi Fisheries Forums (adjacent to the Gulf) and stakeholders throughout the year with sufficient time to provide for their input and participation. Input from Iwi not associated with a forum was facilitated through direct engagement where possible.	

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
3.1.4 – Identify and incorporate local knowledge including mātauranga Māori in fisheries management decision making, and where appropriate, in fisheries science	Mātauranga Māori was incorporated into a range of fisheries management and fisheries science projects through direct engagement on a case-by-case basis and through feedback via iwi fisheries forums on all sustainability round consultations. Some specific examples include: • A mana moana indicator framework and indicators that were informed and aligned with iwi, hapū, and whānau outcomes for EBFM in the Hauraki Gulf was developed. • Fieldwork was completed and a draft report developed for research project <i>PAU2022-04: Piri Pāua Mātauranga Māori approach to growth rate and ecology in the Bay of Plenty</i> which was developed by the Mai I Nga Kuri a Whareki Tihirau iwi fisheries forum. • Approaches for local iwi/hapū to monitor shellfish were developed through research project CSM2021-01: <i>Establishing a framework for community shellfish monitoring</i>.	Fishery-system-indicators-Tikapa-Moana.pdf (sustainableseaschallenge.co.nz)
3.1.5 – Alongside the actions under Management Objective 3.3, assist in the design and piloting of Ahu Moana projects for co-management of intertidal and nearshore environments in relation to fisheries outcomes	FNZ supported two Ahu Moana pilot projects and those communities' monitoring and restoration aspirations. The Aotea Ahu Moana group conducted marine ecological monitoring in Katherine Bay and Schooner Bay (Tryphena) and engaged with the wider community to discuss options for introducing bylaws to address localised depletion. Fisheries priorities for Ngāti Tamaterā for Ahu Moana at Te Mata and Waipatukaha included enabling more effective community-based management, monitoring of intertidal shellfish and compliance with fisheries regulations. Three community members were trained as Honorary Fisheries Officers to manage section 186a closures.	

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
3.2.1 – Facilitate transition to customary fishing regulations (either fisheries (kaimoana customary fishing) Regulations 1998 or new regulation under s186 of the Act) and support iwi in efforts to use their customary and other management tools including mataitai, taiapure, and rahui (s186a closures)	No requests for rāhui (s186A closures) were approved in the 23/24 financial year in the Hauraki Gulf.* *On 7 August 2024 three closures became effective: • Waiheke Island – Mussels, pāua, rock lobster (the Minister declined to close beach cast scallops) • Umupuia Beach – Cockles • Te Mata and Waipatukahu – Cockles, mussels, oysters, and pipi. The Minister also declined a request for a scallop closure at East Coromandel.	Customary fisheries management areas, rules, and maps NZ Government (mpi.govt.nz)
3.2.2 – Explore ways to support mātauranga Māori researchers to conduct research of their own determination that is relevant to fisheries outcomes	Research priorities were sought from iwi fisheries forums adjacent to the Gulf. The ‘Piri Paua’ research project, which uses a Mātauranga Māori approach, was developed and initiated by the Mai I Nga Kuri a Whareki Tihirau iwi fisheries forum and funded through FNZ. FNZ also continues to support an annual Customary Research Fund, although no applications specific to the Gulf were received this financial year.	
3.4.1 – Build and strengthen relationships with councils to enable integrated management of complex issues that affect the Hauraki Gulf	Engagement with councils occurred through: • The Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan Advisory Group. • FNZs Coastal Planning Team, including providing submission(s) on the Waikato Regional Coastal Plan. • FNZ/DOC regular hui with Auckland Council and Waikato Regional Council on Revitalising the Gulf workstreams. • The Hauraki Gulf Forum quarterly public meetings and the technical officers meetings. • Science working groups. • Other hui on a case-by-case basis.	

Management Action	Progress Update	Links to publicity available information
3.4.2 – Collaborate with the Department of Conservation on efforts to develop, implement and monitor marine protection proposals in Revitalising the Gulf. Further collaborate with DOC to support monitoring within the Hauraki Gulf	Refer to management actions 1.2.3 and 1.2.4.	
3.4.3 – Support participation in habitat restoration and assist these restoration efforts, incorporating mātauranga Māori where appropriate	FNZ funded a hapū-led kina management project in the Rehuotane Ki Tai 186A temporary closure in Tutukākā / Ngunguru. The aim of this pilot project is to survey and map shallow subtidal habitats within the closed area, gather local ecological knowledge and mātauranga māori to document the change in kelp forest and kina barrens over time and undertake targeted kina removals.	
3.4.4 – Actively encourage and support an integrated central and local government approach to substantially reduce sedimentation, other contaminants and biosecurity threats that affect fisheries in the Hauraki Gulf	Specific work that FNZ undertook to support an integrated approach to issues that affect fisheries in the Gulf include: • Funding and supporting the multi-stakeholder Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan Advisory Group • Consulting on guidelines to support implementation of s9(c) of the Fisheries Act • Providing input into Biosecurity New Zealand’s review of the Controlled Area Notices for exotic Caulerpa in the Gulf. • Funding research into the causes of ‘milky fleshed’ snapper syndrome in the Gulf. • Submitting on the Waikato Regional Coastal Plan.	
3.4.5 – Support regional and district councils to adopt resource management measures to reduce sedimentation and other impacts on the Hauraki Gulf	See management action 3.4.4.	

Taking forward into 2024 – 2025

A number of new management actions will be prioritised in the 2024-2025 Annual Operational Plan as well as continuing to progress many that are already underway. Three examples of key priority areas that FNZ will be focussing on are scallop management, kelp forest restoration, and improving recreational fishing information; these are highlighted in more detail below. For the full range of proposed work see the [2024-2025 Annual Operational Plan](#) for the Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan.

Scallop management

Scallops are an important shared fishery, highly valued by tangata whenua as well as recreational and commercial fishers, and an important part of the marine ecosystem. All of the main scallop fisheries in New Zealand – Northland (SCA 1), Coromandel (SCA CS), and Southern (SCA 7) – remain closed to commercial and recreational harvest, following sustainability concerns identified through extensive surveys. Likely reasons for the decline in scallop abundance include the effects of land-based activities, warming sea temperatures/climate change, as well as direct and indirect impacts of fishing activity.

Fisheries New Zealand has been working with the Coromandel Scallop Fishermen's Association, Treaty partners, research providers, and stakeholders on long-term monitoring and management approaches for the Northland and Coromandel fisheries to ensure their recovery and ongoing sustainability.

A number of research projects were progressed in the past year and further surveys were conducted to assess how scallop stocks have responded to the closures. In 2024-2025 these research projects will be finalised, and we will prioritise developing improved management approaches for these fisheries, pulling together all the new information and working with a dedicated multi-stakeholder group.

By taking an integrated approach, FNZ can work towards sustainable scallop management following the recent closures, balancing the ecological health of scallop populations with the socioeconomic needs of all our fishing communities.

Improving recreational fishing information

FNZ will continue to build on work underway to improve recreational fishing information in the Hauraki Gulf, including characterisation of recreational release mortalities, boat ramp monitoring and targeted rock lobster monitoring surveys within the crayfish fishery which covers the Gulf (CRA2).

Another way FNZ can improve recreational fishing information is to prioritise the migration of amateur charter vessel (ACV) operators to electronic reporting in 24/25 which will provide a better user experience and improved data quality. The requirement for ACV operators to report fishing activity and catch information was brought into effect in 2010. Several of the species ACV operators are required to report are considered vulnerable to localised depletion and for others, the ACV fleet is believed to take a significant proportion of the catch as part of the recreational fishing sector. Analysis of the available data and trends is used to support fisheries management decisions; however, currently ACVs report their catch by completing paper-based forms and returning these to FishServe for manual entry. This is inconvenient for the providers and manual data-entry can lead to data inaccuracy, lowering our confidence in the quality of the data.

Kelp restoration plan

FNZ intends to build on momentum gained this year to understand and address the impacts of kina barrens by progressing a key management action in the Fisheries Plan which aims to design a kelp restoration plan for the Gulf. The Kelp Restoration Plan will need to be co-designed effectively, ensuring the inclusion of diverse perspectives and scientific evidence and that the achievement of ecological and social benefits for the ecosystem and the fisheries it supports.

Measuring Success

In addition to the deliverables set out under the Fisheries Plan, this year we partnered with the Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge to develop appropriate indicators that can be monitored to provide an assessment of how the Fisheries Plan is progressing towards its stated goals. A diverse suite of indicators has been described and a monitoring framework has been finalised this year ([Fishery-system-indicators-Tikapa-Moana.pdf \(sustainableseaschallenge.co.nz\)](#)). The indicators cover a broad range of social, economic, cultural and environmental issues and represent substantial progress towards EBFM beyond the traditionally narrow scope of indicators considered under conventional single species fishery management.

Existing data sets can support indicators describing habitats, protected species, food webs, fish population condition, socio-economic values, fishing pressure, and management implementation whereas conventional fishery management largely just utilises indicators of abundance/biomass for individual species as per the [Harvest Strategy Standard](#). In addition, monitoring gaps have been considered with a view to utilising a broader, more comprehensive suite of indicators in the future and sampling efficiencies have been considered.

Aside from aiding management decisions, indicators can support communication about the status of the fisheries system, for example by displaying what management actions are being implemented, the level of stress the system is under or any improving trends of interest. Looking forward, Fisheries New Zealand will be making decisions about which indicators to adopt, monitor against and report to communicate trends observed, the responses to management interventions and overall progress towards shared objectives. An immediate first step will be to coordinate and align the recommendations in the Indicators Report with the broader research and monitoring plan set out for Revitalising the Gulf. Ultimately, the creation of a web portal to communicate the status of the indicators would be ideal after final decisions have been made about which indicators to adopt.

Progressing an ecosystem-based approach and operationalising this plan will continue to require strong partnerships, collaboration, transparency and adaptive management. Fisheries New Zealand would like to thank our Treaty Partners and the Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan Advisory Group for their collaborative input into shaping the Plan and helping to implement a range of actions this year.





Fisheries New Zealand

Tini a Tangaroa