

Southland Fishery Management Area

The Southland Fishery Management Area (FMA) includes all waters lying south and west from Awarua Point, South Westland to Slope Point, on the Catlins south-east coast of the South Island and includes Foveaux Strait, Stewart Island and all adjacent islands and waters out to the edge of the 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This brochure is a summary guide to the main recreational fishing rules for the Southland FMA. The Fiordland Marine Area is a separate area within the Southland FMA where additional restrictions and modified rules apply. For full information check the Fiordland rules brochure.

Why Recreational Fishing Rules matter

Fishing is one of New Zealand's most popular outdoor activities and as a result recreational fishers and commercial fishers retaining amateur catch can collectively take large numbers of finfish and shellfish every year. To maintain sustainable fisheries, Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) sets recreational fishing rules. By sticking to the rules and fishing responsibly, fishers can help make sure that there will be fish today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

What do the rules cover?

The recreational fishing rules include:

- daily species and bag limits to constrain how many fish you can keep;
- legal size limits restricting the minimum size of fish you can retain;
- gear restrictions and method prohibitions apply for some species;
- closed seasons for some vulnerable shellfish species;
- accumulation limits (how many fish you can keep over a period of more than one day);
- closed areas prohibiting the harvest of some species.

Important to remember

- Only those actively taking finfish, rock lobster, or shellfish can claim a catch within the daily limit.
- All fish taken and consumed during any trip must be counted within the daily limit entitlement.
- Spread your fishing effort to avoid localised depletion.
- Unlawful catch in excess of your daily limit, undersize, or unlawful state fish etc must be immediately returned to the waters from which they were taken, dead or alive.
- It is illegal to sell or trade your recreational catch.
- Breaking the rules risks infringement penalties, or hefty prosecution fines and property forfeiture.

A guide to the law

This brochure is a summary guide of applicable fishing regulations, which are subject to change. For fuller details on amateur fishing restrictions, contact your local FNZ office to speak to a Fishery Officer.

How can I check the rules?

Fisheries New Zealand provides lots of free ways to check the rules. This includes a free text service, a free Smartphone app, visit [www.fisheries.govt.nz/rules](http://www.fisheries.govt.nz/rules) or your local FNZ office. For more information see the back page of this brochure.

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.

新西兰捕鱼条例

如果您要在新西兰垂钓或捕获海产品，您需要了解新西兰捕鱼条例。如果您不懂英文，请寻求他人帮助。

条例涵盖：允许捕获的类型及尺寸，允许捕获的位置，以及允许捕获的数量。

条例规定您不能将捕获的海产品进行贩卖或者交易，从而获得任何经济收入或者收益。

若违反规则，将面临被起诉、罚款并没收渔具。请您严格遵守法律，做有责任感的捕鱼者，这样才能确保我们现在、未来、世世代代有鱼可捕。

Finfish

Daily bag limits and size restrictions

In the Southland FMA there is a **combined maximum daily bag limit of 30\* for finfish\*\*** (excluding specified baitfish and freshwater eels). Individual species limits within this combined daily bag limit must also not be exceeded.

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

\*In the Te Whaka ā Te Wera/Paterson Inlet Mātaitai a person must not, on any day, take or possess more than 15 finfish (maximum combined daily limit for finfish).

\*\*Finfish includes all species of finfish of the classes Agnatha, Chondrichthyes, and Osteichthyes, at any stage of their life history, whether living or dead.

Individual species daily limits within the combined daily limit

Finfish Species	Max daily limit per active fisher	Min fish length (cm)	Min net mesh size (mm)
Blue cod – Southern Area (Taiaroa Head to Sand Hill Point)†	15	33	–
Blue cod – Te Whaka ā Te Wera/ Paterson Inlet Mātaitai†	10	33	–
Blue cod – South West Area – Sandhill Point to South Bank of Haast River (excluding Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) Marine Area)†	10	33	–
Blue moki	15	40	114
Bluenose	5	–	160
Blue shark	1	–	100
Bronze shark	1	–	100
Butterfish/Greenbone	15	35	108
Elephant fish	5	–	150
Flatfish (Te Whaka ā Te Wera/ Paterson Inlet Mātaitai)	10	25	
Hammerhead shark	1	–	100
Groper (Hāpuku)/Bass	Daily limit of 5 with no more than 3 kingfish	–	160
Kingfish		75	100
Kahawai	15	–	90
Mako shark	1	–	100
Marlin	1	–	100
Porbeagle shark	1	–	100
Quinnat salmon	2	–	–
Red cod	10	25	100
Red moki	15	40	115
Rig	5	–	150
School shark	5	–	150
Seven gilled shark	1	–	100

Finfish Species	Max daily limit per active fisher	Min fish length (cm)	Min net mesh size (mm)
Skate/Ray	5	–	100
Spiny dogfish	15	–	100
Southern bluefin tuna	1	–	100
Tarakihi	15	25	100
Thresher shark	1	–	100
Trumpeter	15	35	100
Warehou	15	–	100

† Minimum pot mesh size for targeting blue cod is now 54mm for all fishers.

Further size limits for finfish within the combined daily limit

Finfish Species	Min fish length (cm)	Min net mesh size (mm)
Flatfish (except Sand flounder)	25	100
Grey mullet	–	90
Red gurnard	25	100
Sand flounder	23	100
Snapper	25	125
Trevally	25	100
All other finfish	–	100

In addition, you may also take the following:

Baitfish Species	Max daily limit per active fisher
Anchovy	Daily limit of 50 for any combination of these species
Jack/Horse/Chilean mackerel	
Koheru/Scad	
Pilchard	
Piper/Garfish	
Slender/Stout sprat	
Yellow-eyed mullet	

And

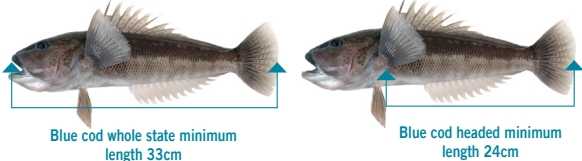
Finfish Species	Max daily limit per active fisher	Min mesh size (mm)
Freshwater shortfin and longfin eels	6	12

Groper (Hapuku)/Bass and Kingfish

Within the combined daily bag limit above, there is a combined daily bag limit of five groper (hāpuku)/bass and kingfish with no more than three kingfish.

Measuring finfish

Measure whole from the tip of the nose to the middle ray or 'V' of the tail fin. Measure and return undersize blue cod immediately.



Blue cod measurable state

Within in the Southern blue cod management area, all blue cod catch in New Zealand fisheries waters on a vessel must be retained and landed either whole, gutted (minimum length 33cm), or headed and gutted state (minimum length 24cm, measured from the base of the side pectoral fin to the middle ray of the tail fin).

While it is unlawful to possess or land unmeasurable state blue cod, fishers on board a fishing vessel, may possess blue cod in a processed state, if it is to be immediately eaten on board the fishing vessel from which it was taken. Any fish eaten forms part of the daily limit. If you have filleted blue cod on shore, you cannot take the fillets back on a fishing boat in New Zealand fisheries waters to take home in an unmeasurable state.

Blue cod accumulation

Within the Southern blue cod management area a two day blue cod accumulation limit applies when legally taken over 2-days or more. Each fishers catch must be held in a separate bag or container labelled with the fisher's surname and first name and the date caught.

When transiting from one blue cod management area to another, fishers must observe the lowest blue cod daily possession limit, including the no accumulation provision if applicable.

Protection of white pointer shark

It is unlawful to take or possess any white pointer shark, which is a protected species.

Finfish Restrictions

Quinnat salmon restrictions

When fishing for Quinnat salmon in coastal waters outside of Fish and Game Council jurisdiction, fishers:

- must only be in possession of, or have control over, 1 assembled rod and running line.
- must not use a rod and running line to take quinnat salmon unless that person is within 15 metres of the rod and has the rod under visual observation.
- may use another rod and running line to jig for sprat or other baitfish, so long as any salmon taken on that rod and running line is returned to the water immediately.

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 a rod and reel line or handline), no more than two lines (other than a rod and reel line or handline) may be used or set from, or possessed on-board that vessel;
- surface floats attached to any line must be legibly and permanently marked with the fisher's initials and surname. A phone number is also useful.

Netting restrictions

There are rules relating to the use of nets, including drag nets, set nets and fyke nets. Please refer to the App, website, or your local FNZ office for a copy of the netting brochure.

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.

Shellfish Species	Max daily limit per person	Minimum size (mm)
Cockles	150	none
Kina (sea eggs)	50	none
Mussels*	25	none
Oysters – Dredge †	50	58
Pāua – Ordinary	10	125
– Yellow foot	10	80
Pipi	150	none
Scallops†	10	100
Toheroa#	Prohibited	Prohibited
Tuatua	150	none
All others (combined) •	50	none

\* Excluding Stewart Island where the mussel limit is 50.

# Toheroa must not be taken, possessed or disturbed unless authorised by a Customary Authority.

† 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.

**Note:** This only applies to the taking of oysters and scallops.

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

Shellfish must be landed in a measureable state

All shellfish to which a minimum size restriction applies (including pāua, 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 onboard 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 (both ordinary and yellow foot pāua species combined) 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 58 mm.



Shellfish Restrictions

Underwater breathing apparatus (UBA)

- no person may take pāua using UBA. This does not include snorkels.
- it is unlawful for any person to be in possession of pāua while in possession of UBA. This includes possession in or on any vessel or vehicle.

Open seasons

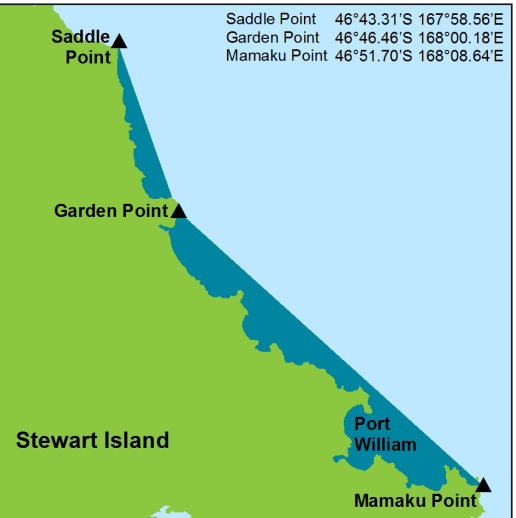
- **Scallops:** 1 October – 15 March inclusive for Southland FMA.
- **Dredge Oysters:** open season is 1 March – 31 August inclusive.

Note: No rock or pacific oysters are known to exist in Southland FMA. All oysters taken within the Southland FMA are subject to season, daily limit and minimum size restrictions.

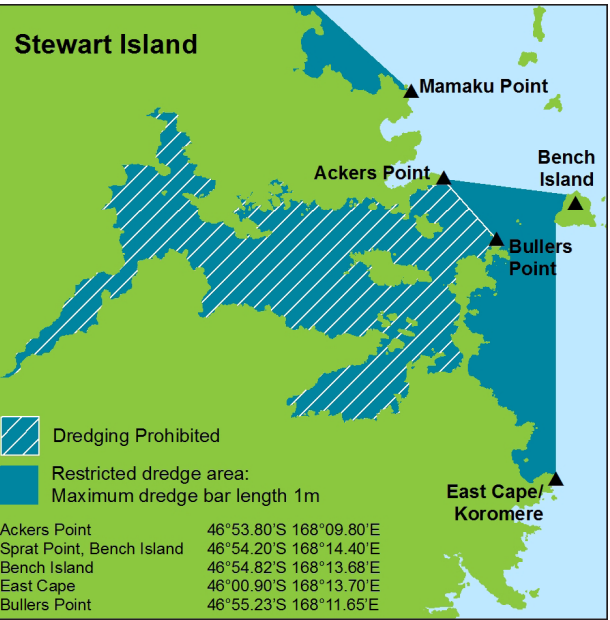
Oyster dredge size restriction

Within the Foveaux Strait dredge oyster fishery waters there are 3-defined areas closed to commercial dredging. For all three areas described below, amateur dredging for oysters is restricted to the use or possession of a dredge with an entrance mouth bar or bit not exceeding one metre in length.

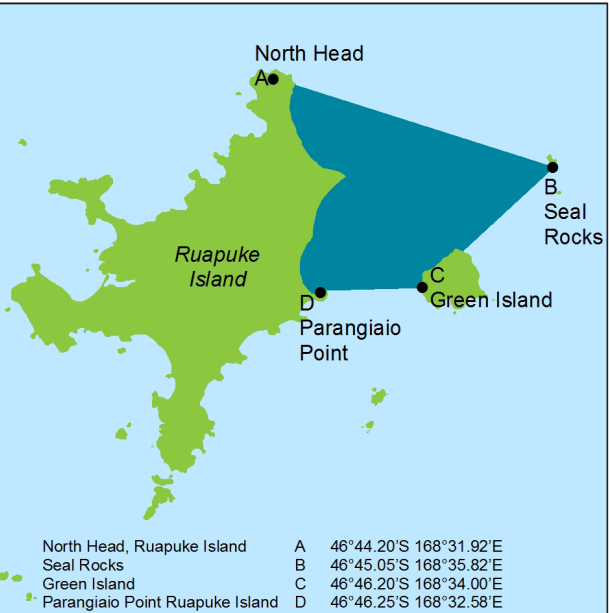
- North-east coast of Stewart Island waters enclosed by a line extending between Saddle Point, Garden Point and Mamaku Point, Stewart Island;
- Outer Paterson Inlet (Te Whaka a Te Wera) waters enclosed by a line commencing at Ackers Point, Stewart Island across to Bench Island and thence southwards to East Cape on Stewart Island;
- North-east coast of Ruapuke Island waters enclosed by a line commencing at North Head, Ruapuke Island extending across to Seal Rocks, thence across to Green Island and proceeding to Parangiaio Point on Ruapuke Island. (Refer to Maps 1 and 3 as follows).



Map 1: North-east Coast Stewart Island amateur dredge area



Map 2: Outer Paterson Inlet, Bench Island amateur dredge area



Map 3: North-east Ruapuke Island amateur dredge area

Protection of Coral

No person may take or possess any black coral or red coral.



## Rock Lobster

### Daily bag limits

It is unlawful for any person to take or possess more than six rock lobsters (both spiny and packhorse rock lobster species combined) on any one day.

### Minimum sizes

No person may take or possess:

- male spiny rock lobster with a tail width less than 54mm;
- female spiny rock lobster with a tail width less than 60mm;
- packhorse rock lobster (either sex) with a tail length shorter than 216mm.

### How to measure spiny rock lobster

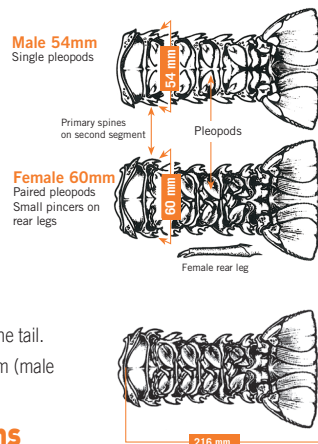
Measure the tail width in a straight line between the tips of the two large (primary) spines on the second segment of the tail.

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

### How to measure packhorse lobster

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 or the tail.

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



## 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 lobsters carrying external eggs (in berry) – these are carried between the pleopods on the underside of the tail;
- any soft-shell stage rock lobster (following moulting where the exoskeleton has not reached full hardness);
- 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, it is unlawful to:

- remove external eggs or the egg bearing appendages from any rock lobster;
- possess any rock lobster seaward of the mean high-water mark in an unmeasurable state, or to land from a vessel any rock lobster in such a state that the tail cannot be measured;
- use a spear or device which could puncture the shell when taking rock lobster or possess any rock lobster that have been speared;
- use a spring loaded loop or lasso, which is prohibited. Only hand operated loops or lassoes may be used;
- use or set a baited net for taking rock lobster, or possess any rock lobster with a baited net.

### 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 legibly 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 'escape gap requirements' below;
- Blue cod pots must use rigid square mesh with inside dimensions of 54mm to allow undersize fish escapement;
- species specific pots (e.g. crab pots) can be used. They are exempt from escape gap requirements but all other requirements (such as marking and pot limits) remain.

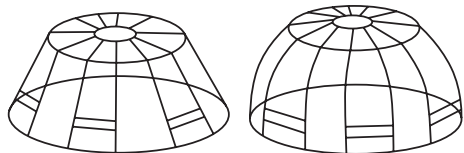
### Rock lobster pots

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, except a loop, bob or ring pot.

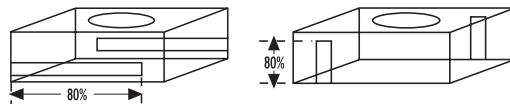
### Escape gap requirements

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 three escape gaps (other than the mouth).



- **Square or rectangular pots:** must have at least two 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 two opposite sides.

## Closed and Restricted Areas

Closed areas are areas where fishing is prohibited for specific species. Restricted areas are areas where the use of a particular fishing method (e.g. set nets) is prohibited or restricted or where catch limits may be different.

### Set net prohibited areas

To protect endangered Hector's dolphins, all recreational and commercial set netting is prohibited in the Southland FMA inshore waters between Slope Point, Haldane to Sand Hill Point, Te Waewae Bay. Between Slope Point and Wakaputa Point, (the western headland of Kawakaputa Bay) the set net prohibition area extends offshore out to four nautical miles. The set net prohibition area for Te Waewae Bay, bounded between Wakaputa Point and Sand Hill Point, now extends out to 10 nautical miles offshore. (Refer Map 4)

**Note:** Recreational set netting is also prohibited in the Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) Marine Area, lying west of Sand Hill Point and extending seaward out to 12 nautical miles. Set netting is also prohibited east of Slope Point up the South Island east coast (Refer South-East area brochure).

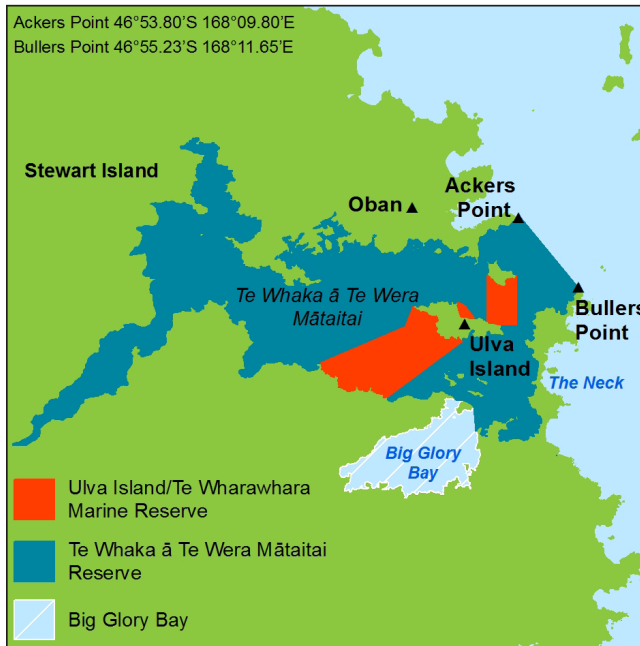
Unless specified, the set netting prohibition does not apply to internal harbours, inside river mouth entrances and estuaries. It is unlawful to take any freshwater sports fish (trout or salmon) using a set net.



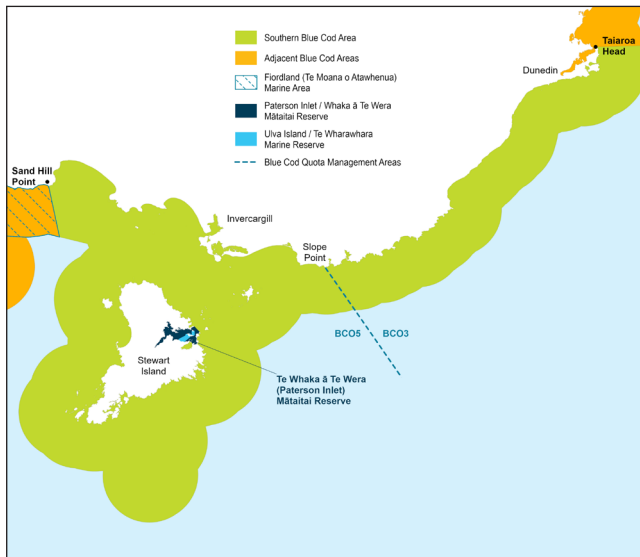
Map 4: Southland Set net prohibited areas, including Te Waewae Bay

### Te Whaka a Te Wera/Paterson Inlet Mātaitai Reserve

Additional fishing bylaws apply within Te Whaka a Te Wera/Paterson Inlet Mātaitai Reserve including area closures, prohibitions and reduced bag limits. Within Paterson Inlet the Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara Marine Reserve is closed to all fishing. Contact the local FNZ office for details or a copy of Te Whaka a Te Wera/Paterson Inlet Mātaitai Reserve brochure.



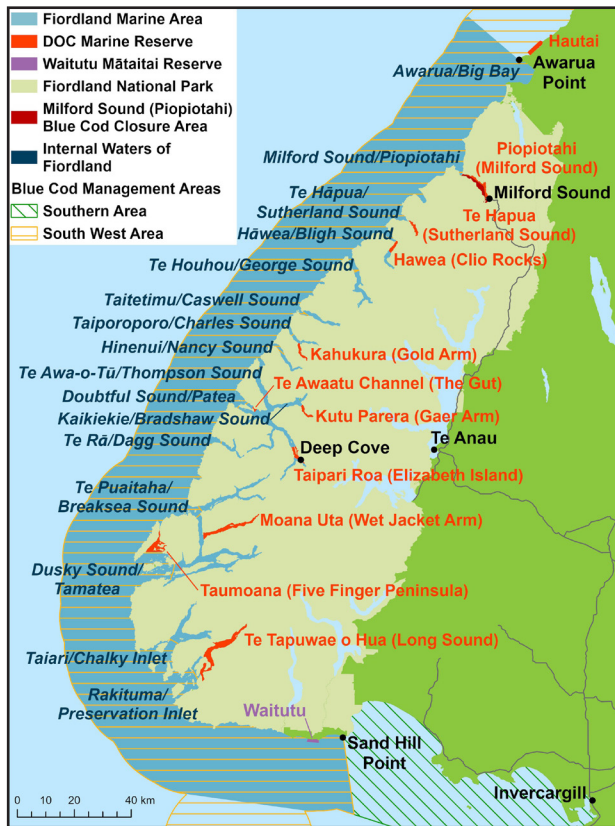
Map 5: Te Whaka ā Te Wera/Paterson Inlet Mātaitai Reserve



Map 6: Southern Blue cod management area bounded between Sand Hill Point and Taiaroa Head.

### Pikomamaku (Women's Island) Mātaitai Reserve

No person may take or possess any fish, aquatic life or seaweed taken from within the Pikomamaku Mātaitai Reserve, in the Northern Titi Islands group, which prohibits all fishing in both the north and southwest inshore waters of Women's Island extending 150 metres offshore. Contact MPI Invercargill office for more details.



Map 7: Fiordland Marine Area and Marine Reserves

### Waitutu Mātaitai Reserve – Pāua Prohibition

It is prohibited to take any ordinary pāua and yellow-foot pāua from within the Waitutu Mātaitai Reserve, South Fiordland. The Mātaitai Reserve encompasses approximately 2.08 sq km bounded between the western side of the Wairaurahiri River mouth and the eastern side of the Crombie Stream mouth and extending seaward 450 metres (0.24 of a nautical mile) from the mean high-water mark.

### Fiordland Marine Area

Specific fishing rules apply for the Fiordland Marine Area including area closures and reduced bag limits. Contact FNZ for details and a copy of the Fiordland Marine Area brochure. Within the Fiordland Marine Area there are 10 marine reserves administered by the Department of Conservation, where all marine life is fully protected and all fishing totally prohibited. For full details on marine reserves contact the Department of Conservation.

## Fishing Sustainably

### Good fish handling

Correct handling and prompt releasing of unwanted or unlawful catch can increase fish chances of surviving to be caught legally another day e.g. when releasing fish use wet hands or gloves. For more information, FNZ has a 'Responsible Fishing Guidelines' brochure available online or through your local FNZ office.

### 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](http://www.southernseabirds.org)

## Poacher Prevention

Fisheries New Zealand's Compliance Team is responsible for protecting local fisheries and stopping illegal activities such as poaching.

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 Southland 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 app:

Download our free NZ fishing rules app by scanning the QR code or visiting the app store. The app works even when you have no coverage.



### Other services

- Free text the name of the species you are fishing for (e.g. snapper) to **9889** and receive a text with the legal size and bag limit.
- Visit [www.fisheries.govt.nz/rules](http://www.fisheries.govt.nz/rules)
- Email [recreationalfisheries@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:recreationalfisheries@mpi.govt.nz) to subscribe to fishing related updates in your area.
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## Contact us 0800 00 83 33 or (03) 211 0060

MPI Office Invercargill, 90 Tweed Street, Invercargill

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Government



Fisheries New Zealand  
Tini a Tangaroa

## Recreational Fishing Rules SOUTHLAND

Effective from: Dec 2023 (subject to change without notice).



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Shared Sustainable Fisheries for the Future