

FAQs - Tarakihi management

August 2019



Q: Why were tarakihi catches reviewed again in 2019?

A: On the east coast of New Zealand **tarakihi need a time-bound rebuild plan.**

Tarakihi catch limits were reviewed in 2018; in October the Minister reduced the tonnage that allows for recreational catch by 66% and only cut commercial catch limits by 20%. This was to give the fishing industry time to adjust their businesses and develop a workable plan to rebuild depleted tarakihi stocks. If that plan did not deliver the rebuild required, the Minister advised a further 35% reduction in commercial catch was likely in 2019.

Q: Did the commercial fishing industry deliver a workable plan to rebuild tarakihi abundance?

A: No. The industry's 2019 plan does not have a rebuild timeframe nor actions to reduce the catch of legal sized tarakihi. Their focus was on reducing the catch of juvenile fish. Trawlers towing larger mesh nets for longer to catch the same tonnage of fish is not the sort of "innovation" that is required to rebuild tarakihi abundance.

The Ministry's Harvest Strategy Standard guidelines means that because the tarakihi stock has been assessed at about 17% of the original level the stock must be rebuilt to the target stock size within 10 years. The science shows that because the Minister only applied a 20% cut last year a 40% cut to the Total Allowable Commercial Catch is required this year in order to meet the 10-year rebuild timeframe.

Q: Who developed the commercial fishing industry's management plan for tarakihi?

A: Commercial fishers, through Fisheries Inshore New Zealand, Te Ohu Kaimoana and Southern Inshore Fisheries, developed their own management proposal for the eastern tarakihi stock in response to the Minister's request for innovative options. This plan was released by Fisheries New Zealand as part of the 2019 review documentation.

Q: What is the required management level for tarakihi and how can we get there?

A: On the east coast of New Zealand **the tarakihi stock is around 17%**, less than half the size it needs to be to meet the Ministry's guidelines. The target management level for tarakihi is 40% of its natural, unfished stock size (biomass).

The Minister's 2018 decision to spread the Total Allowable Commercial Catch reductions over two years has delayed the time-bound rebuild of the tarakihi stock. A 40% catch reduction this year is needed to reach the abundance target in the 10-year timeframe.

Q: Did LegaSea make a submission during the recent tarakihi management review?

A: Yes. LegaSea worked with our New Zealand Sport Fishing Council fisheries management team and the New Zealand Angling & Casting Association to develop a response to the tarakihi proposals.

We submitted in support of the Minister using the best available science and applying the Ministry's existing policy to rebuild depleted stocks. The combined commercial catch limit for the eastern tarakihi stock must be reduced by 40% in October. That submission can be found [online here](#).

Q: Didn't LegaSea call for a 65% cut to the TACC last year?

A: Yes. In 2018 LegaSea called on the Minister Stuart Nash to cut commercial catches by 65% to rebuild tarakihi from its all-time low point. LegaSea developed the [Time Out for Tarakihi](#) campaign gathering support for the Minister to make the cuts. Over 9100 people signed the petition supporting the 65% cut to the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC). The Ministers 20% reduction applied to the actual catch in each area at the time. The overall reduction to the combined TACC was 25%, because the TACC was under caught by 5%.

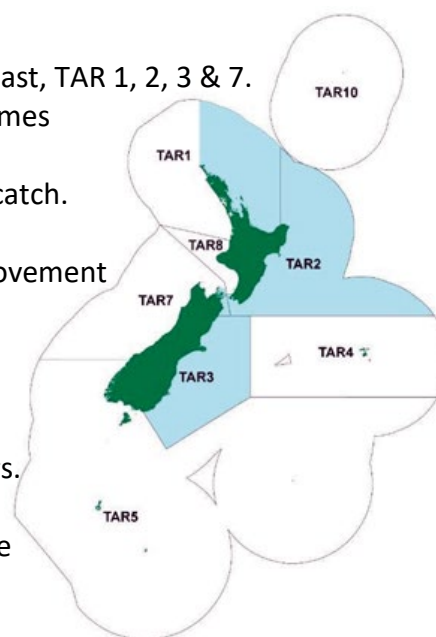
Q: Why is all tarakihi on the east coast assessed as one stock and not separate North and South Island stocks?

A: There are four tarakihi stocks that apply to the east coast, TAR 1, 2, 3 & 7. Most of the information used in the stock assessment comes from catch, effort and population age structure from the commercial fishery, with trawlers taking the majority of catch.

The stock assessment model worked best when some movement of young fish from south to north was allowed between fisheries.

The stock assessment model has been run and independently reviewed each year for the last three years.

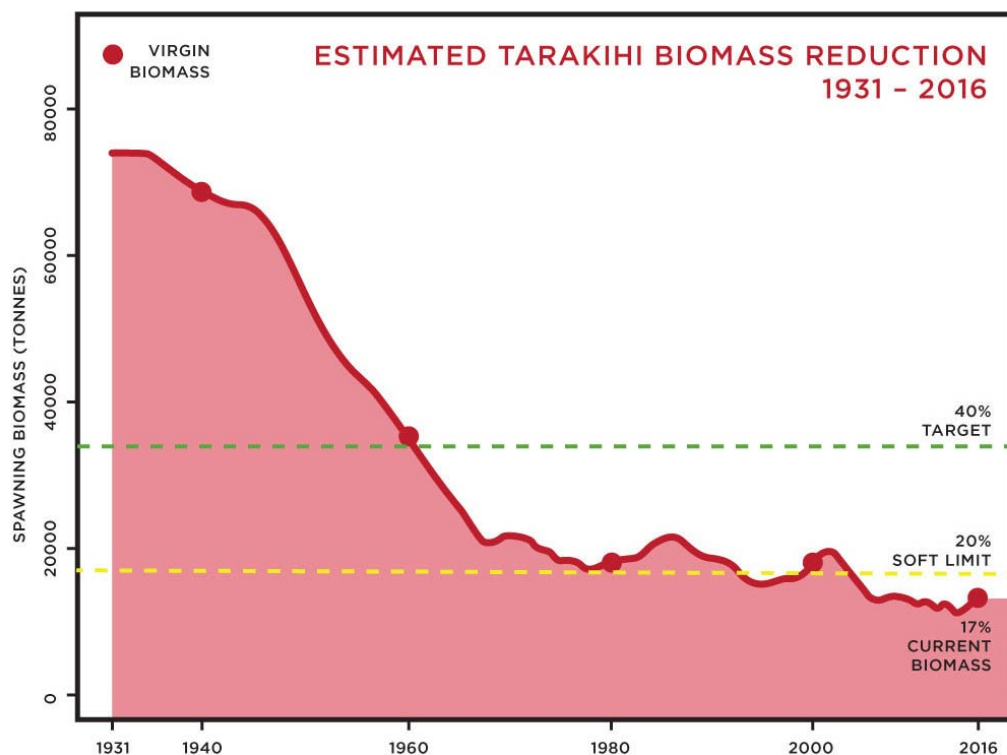
The latest estimate for the 2017-18 fishing year found the **stock has declined further, to 15.9%** of the natural, unfished stock size. The minimum management target is 40% of unfished biomass.



Q: What about the effect on people if tarakihi catch levels are cut?

A: We acknowledge that some people may lose their jobs and businesses, and sympathise with commercial fishers who work hard and bear the lion's share of personal and financial risk to catch fish, while the profits are taken by the quota owners.

Commercial operators have been aware the tarakihi stock has been trending down for some time and those who have not changed their catch plans or are unable to do so will likely bear the brunt of cuts to the Total Allowable Commercial Catch. However, the move away from targeting spawning aggregations and taking less fish from the water ought to contribute to a more rapid rebuild of the tarakihi stock, which will present new opportunities especially for high quality, high value fish.



Eastern tarakihi stock assessment plot of total biomass from 1931 to 2016.

Timeline of tarakihi management - Eastern New Zealand

1986 - TACC set at 4,520 tonnes. One of the largest inshore fisheries.

1988 to 2008 - A series of TACC increases to 5,730 tonnes. Up 27%.

2017 - The first plausible stock assessment for eastern tarakihi. Stock size around 17% of original biomass across the whole area.

2018 – Management review.

LegaSea's [Time Out for Tarakihi](#) campaign, 9100 people signed a petition supporting the Minister to cut commercial catches by 65%.

Minister cuts the tonnage that allows for recreational catch by 66%, and reduces the commercial catch level by 20%.

2019 - Management review.

Minister must apply reductions to commercial catch levels.