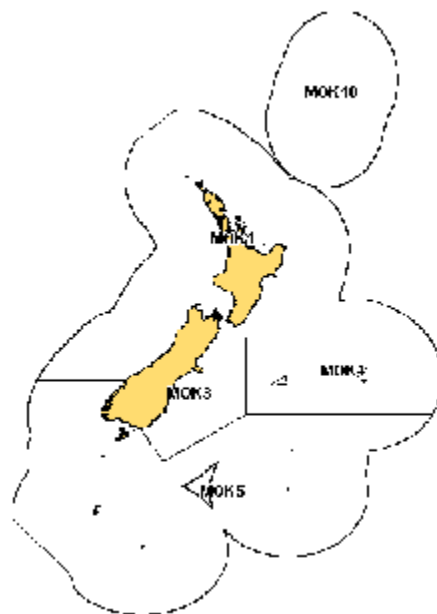


BLUE MOKI (MOK)

(*Latridopsis ciliaris*)



1. FISHERY SUMMARY

(a) Commercial fisheries

Most blue moki landings are taken by set net or trawl on the east coast between the Bay of Plenty and Kaikoura, although small quantities are taken in most New Zealand coastal waters. While the proportions of the total commercial landings taken by set net and trawl have varied over time, set netting has been the predominant method (60%) since 1979.

Blue moki stocks appeared to be seriously depleted by fishing prior to 1975 and this resulted in the sum of allocated ITQs being markedly less than the sum of the catch histories. Landings of blue moki peaked in 1970 and 1979 at about 960 t. Since 1993–94, total landings have been around 500 t. Landings in 1999–2000 (443 t) were the lowest recorded since 1992–93. While there was a slight increase in landings in 2000–01 (499 t), they dropped to 451 t in 2001–02 and remained below 500 t until 2004–05. Reported landings and TACs are given in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Total reported landings (t) of blue moki from 1979 to 1985–86.

Year	1979*	1980*	1981*	1982*	1983†	83–84†	84–85†	85–86†
Landings	957	919	812	502	602	766	642	636

* MAF data.

† FSU data.

Table 2: Reported landings (t) and actual TACCs (t) of blue moki by Fishstock from 1986–87 to 2004–05. Source – QMS data.

Fishstock FMA (s)	MOK 1 1,2,7,8,9		MOK 3 3		MOK 4 4		MOK 5 5 & 6		MOK 10 10		Total	
	Landings	TACC	Landings	TACC	Landings	TACC	Landings	TACC	Landings	TACC	Landings	TACC
1986–87	109	130	52	60	0	20	3	40	0	10	164	260
1987–88	183	142	95	62	0	20	2	40	0	10	280	274
1988–89	134	151	121	64	0	20	3	40	0	10	258	285
1989–90	202	156	89	65	11	25	1	43	0	10	303	299
1990–91	264	157	93	71	1	25	2	43	0	10	360	306
1991–92	285	157	66	71	2	25	2	43	0	10	355	306
1992–93	289	157	94	122	1	25	4	43	0	10	388	358
1993–94	374	200	102	126	4	25	5	43	0	10	485	404
1994–95	418	200	90	126	<1	25	3	43	0	10	511	404
1995–96	435	400	91	126	1	25	3	43	0	10	530	604

Table 2: (continued)

Fishstock FMA (s)	MOK 1		MOK 3		MOK 4		MOK 5		MOK 10		Total	
	1,2,7,8,9		3		4		5 & 6		10			
	Landings	TACC	Landings	TACC	Landings	TACC	Landings	TACC	Landings	TACC	Landings	TACC
1996–97	408	400	66	126	2	25	3	43	0	10	479	604
1997–98	416	400	78	126	3	25	2	43	0	10	500	604
1998–99	468	400	78	126	<1	25	4	43	0	10	551	604
1999–00	381	400	56	126	1	25	5	43	0	10	443	604
2000–01	420	400	67	126	5	25	6	43	0	10	499	604
2001–02	365	403	77	127	8	25	2	44	0	10	451	609
2002–03	380	403	87	127	2	25	6	44	0	10	475	609
2003–04	372	403	60	127	2	25	6	44	0	10	440	609
2004–05	417	403	70	127	3	25	11	44	0	10	501	609

Total annual landings of blue moki were substantially constrained when it was introduced into QMS. In MOK 1, landings have increased as the TACC has been progressively increased; and overcatch has declined since 1995–96, when the TACC was set at 400 t.

Iwi in the Cape Runaway area have a strong view that blue moki are of special significance in the history and life of the community. They believe that blue moki come to spawn in the waters around Cape Runaway and there are traditional fishing grounds where in earlier years fishing took place in accordance with customary practices. In addition, these local Iwi consider the taking of blue moki by nets in this area to be culturally offensive.

Since September 1996, fishing by the methods of trawling, danish seining and setnetting has been prohibited at all times within a two nautical-mile wide coastal band beginning at the high water mark and extending from Cape Runaway to a stream tributary at Oruiti Beach. (Note this is not a legal description, for full details please refer to the Fisheries Act (Auckland and Kermadec Areas Commercial Fishing Regulations 1986, Amendment No. 13).

(b) Recreational fisheries

Popular with recreational fishers, blue moki are taken by beach anglers, set netting and spearfishers. Annual estimates of recreational harvest have been obtained from diary surveys in 1991–94, 1996 and 1999/2000 (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: Estimated number and weight of blue moki harvested by recreational fishers by Fishstock and survey. Surveys were carried out in different years in the Ministry of Fisheries regions: South in 1991–92, Central in 1992–93 and North in 1993–94 (Teirney et al., 1997).

Fishstock	Survey	Total		Survey harvest (t)
		Number	c.v.(%)	
MOK 1	North	6 000	–	5–15
MOK 1	Central	38 000	28	40–80
MOK 1	South	2 000	–	0–5
MOK 3	South	31 000	33	40–70
MOK 5	South	7 000	33	5–15

Table 4: Estimates of annual number and weight of blue moki harvested by recreational fishers from national diary surveys in 1996 (Bradford, 1998) and Dec1999–Nov 2000 (Boyd and Reilly 2002).. The mean weights used to convert numbers to catch weight are considered the best available estimates. Estimated harvest is also presented as a range to reflect the uncertainty in the point estimates

Fishstock	Number caught	c.v.	Estimated harvest range (t)	Point estimate (t)
1996				
MOK 1	63 000	14	80–110	93
MOK 3	16 000	18	20–30	24
MOK 5	9 000	–	–	–
1999/2000				
MOK 1	81 000	37	82–180	130
MOK 3	36 000	32	36–70	53
MOK 5	38 000	89	7–115	61

A key component of the estimating recreational harvest from diary surveys is determining the proportion of the population that fish. The Recreational Working Group has concluded that the methodological framework used for telephone interviews produced incorrect eligibility figures for the 1996 and previous surveys. Consequently the harvest estimates derived from these surveys are considered to be considerably underestimated and not reliable. However relative comparisons can be made between stocks within these surveys. The Recreational Working Group considered that the 2000 survey using face-to-face interviews better estimated eligibility and that the derived recreational harvest estimates are believed to be more accurate. FMA2 catches are nevertheless considered to be over-estimate, probably because of an unrepresentative diarist sample. The 1999/2000 Harvest estimates for each Fishstock should be evaluated with reference to the coefficient of variation.

The MOK 1 recreational harvest estimated during the 1999/2000 survey was almost half (i.e. 44%) of the commercial catch over that period.

(c) **Maori customary fisheries**

A traditional Maori fishery exists in some areas, particularly the eastern Bay of Plenty and East Cape regions. No quantitative information is available on the level of Maori customary take.

(d) **Illegal catch**

No quantitative estimates are available

(e) **Other sources of mortality**

Some blue moki caught for use as rock lobster bait have not been reported. While little information is available, this practice appears to have been most common in Stewart Island and the Chatham Islands, and may have accounted for about 45 t and 60 t in Stewart and Chatham respectively in the past. The use of blue moki as bait has not been considered in the determination of MCY.

2. BIOLOGY

Blue moki grow rapidly at first, attaining sexual maturity at 40 cm fork length (FL) at 5–6 years of age. Growth then slows, and fish of 60 cm FL are 10–20 years old. Fish over 80 cm FL and 33 years old have been recorded.

Many adults take part in an annual migration between Kaikoura and East Cape. The migration begins off Kaikoura in late April/May as fish move northwards. Spawning takes place in August/September in the Mahia Peninsula to East Cape region, the only known spawning ground, with the fish then returning south towards Kaikoura. The larval phase for blue moki lasts about 6 months.

Juvenile blue moki are found inshore, usually around rocky reefs, while most adults school offshore over mainly open bottom. Some adults do not join the adult schools but remain around reefs.

Natural mortality is not known precisely but is likely to be between 0.1–0.2 based on the longevity of the species. M was estimated using the equation $M = \log_e 100 / \text{maximum age}$, where maximum age is the age to which 1% of the population survives in an unexploited stock. Based on the maximum observed age of 33 years, M equalled 0.14.

Biological parameters relevant to the stock assessment are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Estimates of biological parameters for blue moki.

Fishstock	Estimate	Source
1. Natural mortality (M)		
All areas	0.14	Francis (1981b) – from maximum observed age of 33 yr
2. Weight = a (length)^b (Weight in g, length in cm fork length)		
All areas both sexes	a = 0.055 b = 2.713	M.P. Francis (1979)
3. von Bertalanffy growth parameters		
	K t₀ L_∞	
All areas both sexes	0.208 -0.029 66.95	M. P. Francis (pers. comm.)

3. STOCKS AND AREAS

There are no new data which would alter the stock boundaries given in previous assessment documents.

Blue moki forms one stock around the North Island and the South Island north of Banks Peninsula. No information is available to indicate stock affiliations of blue moki in other areas (southern South Island and Chatham Rise) so these fish are currently divided into three Fishstocks.

4. STOCK ASSESSMENT

There are no new data which would alter the yield estimates given in the 1996 Plenary Report. The yield estimates are based on commercial landings data only and have not changed since the 1992 Plenary Report.

(a) Estimates of fishery parameters and abundance

Standardized CPUE analyses (using both loglinear indices of none zero catches and negative binomial indices or the proportion of zero catches) were undertaken for blue moki caught in four separate fisheries operating between Banks Peninsula and East Cape: blue moki set net fishery, blue warehouse set net fishery, tarakihi set net fishery and tarakihi bottom trawl fishery (Langley and Walker 2004).

Senet CPUE trends, particularly those for the target component, proved to be the most promising candidates for future monitoring of the fishery. On account of the poor quality of the data collected up to 2002, however, the current trends were not thought to track abundance. The recently implemented set-net data-form requires higher spatial resolution of catch and effort data, thus promising to provide data of sufficient quality to monitor the fishery in the future.

(b) Biomass estimates

Estimates of current and reference biomass are not available.

(c) Estimation of Maximum Constant Yield (MCY)

MCY for all Fishstocks combined was estimated using the equation, $MCY = cY_{av}$ (Method 4). The national catch, and probably effort, over the period 1961–1986 varied considerably (annual landings ranged from 450–957 t with an average value of 705 t). However, no clear trend in landings over that period is apparent. The value of c was set equal to 0.9 based on the estimate of $M = 0.14$.

$$MCY = 0.9 * 705 \text{ t} = 635 \text{ t}$$

The level of risk to the stock by harvesting the population at the estimated MCY value cannot be determined.

Yield estimates for blue moki have been made using reported commercial landings data only and therefore apply specifically to the commercial fishery. Blue moki have been caught and used as bait and not reported. Therefore, the MCY estimates are likely to be conservative.

(d) Estimation of Current Annual Yield (CAY)

No estimate of CAY is available for blue moki stocks.

(e) **Other yield estimates and stock assessment results**

None available.

(f) **Other factors**

CPUE data from the 1970s for the main northern blue moki stock indicated that the stock had declined to a level low enough to make recruitment failure a real concern. The 1986–87 TAC was set at a level considered low enough to enable some stock rebuilding. An analysis of MOK 1 CPUE data indicates that annual catch rates remained relatively constant between 1989–90 and 1993–94, despite an increase in the total commercial catch during the same period.

Blue moki forms one stock around the North Island and the east coast of the South Island north of Banks Peninsula. As other stock boundaries are unknown, any interdependence is uncertain. If only one stock exists, then blue moki from the southern waters may be moving north and rebuilding the heavily exploited northern population.

5. STATUS OF THE STOCKS

No estimates of current and reference biomass are available. The current TACCs and recent catch levels are below the estimated MCY and are considered sustainable and are probably at levels which will allow the stock to move towards a size that will support the MSY. TACs were originally set at low levels to promote stock rebuilding and higher catch levels will probably be sustainable with a rebuilt stock.

Summary of yields (t), TACCs (t), and reported landings (t) for blue moki for the most recent fishing year.

Fishstock	QMA	MCY	2004–05	2004–05
			Actual TACC	Reported landings
MOK 1	Auckland (East) (West), Central (East) (West), Challenger	1, 2, 7, 8 & 9	403	417
MOK 3	South East (Coast)	3	127	70
MOK 4	South East (Chatham)	4	25	3
MOK 5	Southland, Sub-Antarctic	5 & 6	44	11
MOK 10	Kermadec	10	10	0
Total		635	609	501

6. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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