

CRA 3 Public Drop-In Information Session

- We want your feedback on the CRA3 fishery.
- Please look at the posters and ask questions.
- Your feedback, along with science and compliance information, will be used to see if any changes are needed to the rules.

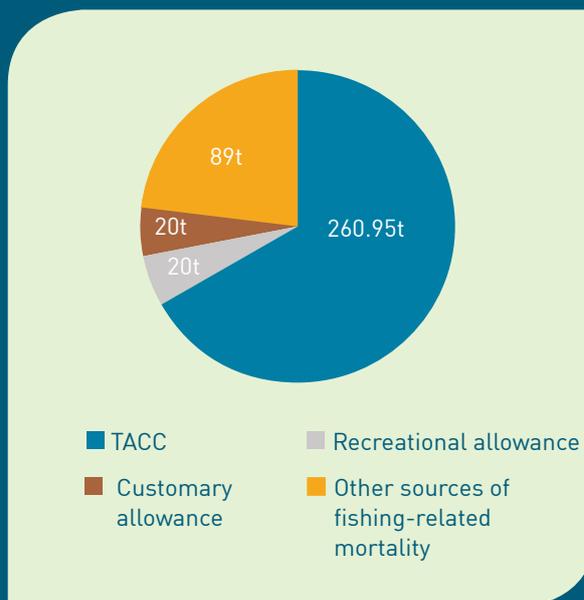


The CRA3 fishery

- Map of the CRA3 fisheries management area:



- The CRA 3 Total Allowable Catch is 389.95 tonnes and consists of the following categories:

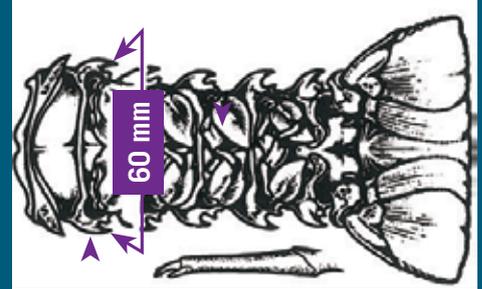
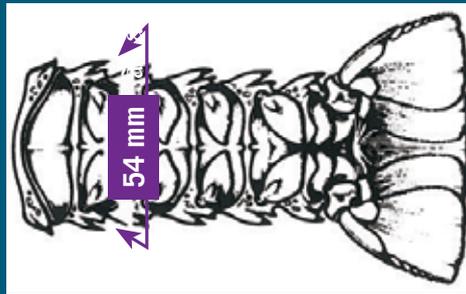


Key recreational rules

- **Daily bag limit** of **6** rock lobsters
- Minimum size year round
 - **54 mm** tail width for males,
 - 60 mm** tail width for females
- **Protected lobsters** – females carrying external eggs, soft-shelled, and unmeasurable lobsters
- **Pot limits** – 3 pots for one person, up to 6 pots for two or more people
- Pot escape gap requirements
- Pot and surface float marking requirements

Key commercial rules and voluntary initiatives

- In statistical areas 909 and 910 – voluntary spring/summer closed season from 1 September to 15 January
- In statistical area 911 (Mahia) – voluntarily do not use the winter 52 mm male size limit and no longer have a closed season.
- **The Mahia fishery behaves differently than the rest of CRA3.**



- **Male minimum size** – 52 mm tail width during June, July and August, 54 mm tail width for the rest of the year.
- **Female minimum size** – 60 mm tail width year round.
- **Protected lobsters** – females carrying external eggs, soft-shelled, and unmeasurable lobsters.
- No pot limits, but escape gap requirements.

The winter commercial size limit

- Pre 1993- Commercial fishers were active in summer.
- 1993 - Male size was reduced to 52 mm in June, July and August. Commercial effort moved from spring/summer to winter.
- Reducing the commercial size down by 2 mm for June, July and August meant commercial fishers could take male lobsters earlier, rather than waiting to take them after the September moult in summer during the popular recreational fishing season.
- **Sector competition was reduced over summer.**



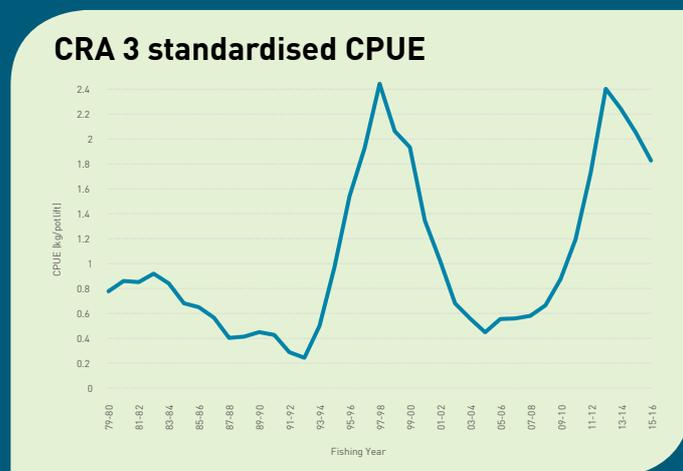
Why are we here today?

- Some recreational fishers are concerned that the male winter commercial size limit is affecting the availability of legal-sized rock lobsters over summer
- The concerns relate to a portion of the CRA 3 fishery in waters close to Gisborne City (within statistical area 910)
- Some recreational fishers also consider that:
 - “slow growth” of rock lobsters in the area and
 - commercial effort displaced close to city from the establishment of the marine reserve...are further contributing to the lack of availability.

Some science

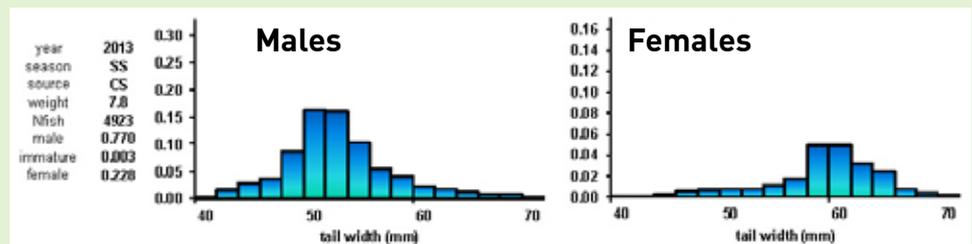
Numbers

- CRA 3 is healthy – 2014 stock assessment suggested abundance was 3.3 to 4.7 times the statutory reference level
- Commercial catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) is a relative indicator of abundance. CPUE increased strongly in the 1990s, peaked in 1997-98, declined and then increased to another peak in 2012-13.



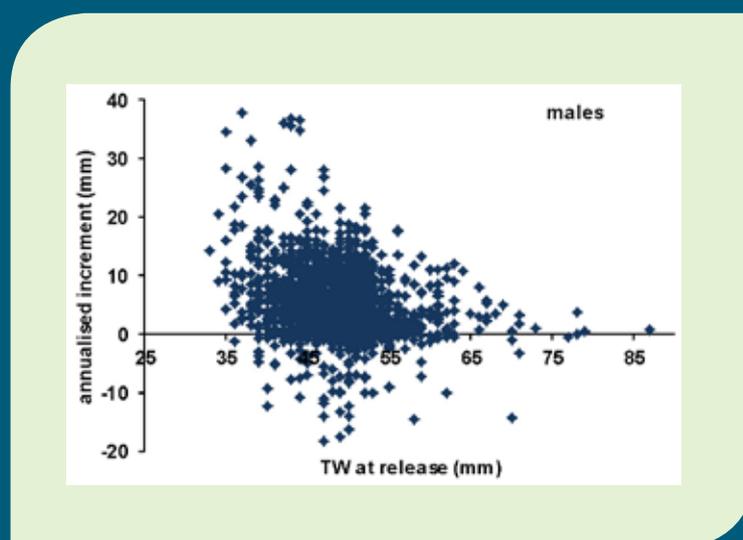
Sizes

- Commercial catch sampling suggests there is a good size range of male and mature female rock lobsters across the fishery.
- Shown below for all of CRA 3 are the proportions of male and mature female rock lobsters from research catch sampling of commercial pots during the 2013 spring/summer.



Is “slow growth” affecting recreational availability?

- To grow in size lobsters must moult their shell – this occurs mainly around September and April in CRA 3.
- Growth of CRA 3 rock lobsters has varied over time – it was low from 1996 until recently, when it may have increased again.
- The graph shows the variation in annual growth (in mm) for male CRA 3 lobsters of given sizes. There is a very wide range.
- Based on tagging studies – just under half of male lobsters near 50 mm tail width grow less than 2 mm annually, while the other half grow more than 2 mm.
- Some sub-legal male lobsters grow during September and become available to the fishery in summer.



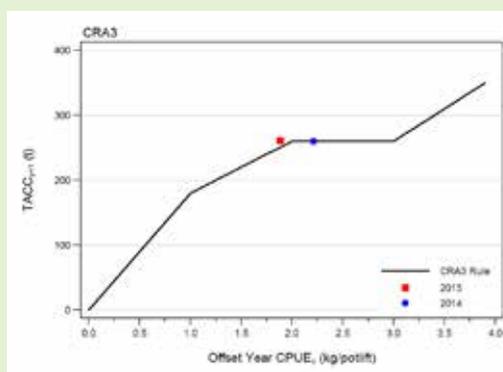
The establishment of the Marine Reserve

- In 1999 the Te Tapuwae O Rongokako Marine Reserve was established between Pouawa and Whangara on prime rock lobster habitat.
- This reduced the potential CRA 3 commercial harvest by about 10%.
- Some commercial fishers displaced by the Marine Reserve started fishing close to Gisborne.
- Establishment of the Marine Reserve combined with a period of very low abundance resulted in low catches for all, mainly around Gisborne.
- At this time recreational concerns with the smaller commercial male size started to arise, despite it being in place since 1993.

Ensuring good levels of stock abundance

- To ensure good levels of abundance across the CRA 3 fishery, a “decision rule” or management procedure has been used in the fishery since April 2010.
- This management approach is highly responsive: it allows for annual changes in the commercial catch limit to reflect variances in rock lobster abundance from year to year.
- The decision rule is designed to ensure a healthy stock size and prevent abundance declining to levels like those experienced in the 2000s.

A graphical representation of the CRA 3 decision rule



- Commercial CPUE is used in November to determine the catch limit for the next fishing year, starting in April.
- The commercial catch limits from rule operations in 2014 and 2015 are shown as coloured shapes.
- The current TACC is 260.95 tonnes.

Trade-offs to consider...

What are the consequences of removing the winter commercial size limit?

Impact	Benefit	Cost
Commercial		Temporal separation gone: Voluntary commercial spring/summer closure will no longer be applied in areas 909 and 910. Short-term economic costs (in the millions). Possible longer-term.
Recreational availability	Availability may improve if abundance of larger males increases	Benefit may be reduced by direct competition at the same time and place with commercial fishers over summer.
Recreational perceptions of "inequity"	Inequity removed	
Illegal take		Greater opportunity for illegal take through commercial pots being in the water for longer periods over spring/summer.
Competition		Likely increase in inter-sector competition over summer, especially with voluntary commercial closure removed. Most commercial catch likely to be taken after September moult.

Your feedback is wanted

Are the current rules working well to manage the fishery?

Email FMSubmissions@mpi.govt.nz before 21 October 2016 to have your say

Your feedback, along with science and compliance information, will be looked at to see whether any changes are needed to the current management of the CRA 3 fishery.

