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1 Description of Fisheries

1.1 PELAGIC FISHERIES

New Zealand conducted no pelagic fishing for *Trachurus* species in the SPRFMO Area during 2012.

1.2 1.2 BOTTOM FISHERIES

The New Zealand high seas bottom trawl and line fisheries are described in detail in the impact assessment 'New Zealand Bottom Fishing Activities by New Zealand Vessels Fishing in the High Seas in the SPRFMO Area during 2008 and 2009' (New Zealand Ministry of Fisheries 2008b) available at http://www.southpacificrfmo.org/benthic-impact-assessments/. Bottom fishing activities conducted during 2012 continued as described in that document, and were conducted in accordance with the impact assessment and management measures described in the assessment.

New Zealand vessels have been bottom fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area since before 1990. Specific high seas fishing permits for the SPRFMO Convention Area were implemented in 2007-08, following adoption of the SPRFMO interim measures in May 2007. The total number of New Zealand vessels permitted to fish in the SPRFMO Convention Area and with the capability for bottom fishing and the numbers of vessels which actually bottom fished in the Convention Area since 2002 are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of the number of New Zealand vessels permitted to bottom fish in the SPRFMO Convention Area and with the capability for bottom fishing, and the number of vessels which actually fished in the Area per year with either bottom trawl or line, since 2002. The data are arranged by permit year, which is a split year from May to April.

Fishing Year	Number of Vessels Permitted to Fish SPRFMO Area	No. of Vessels that Actively Bottom Fished in the SPRFMO Area	Bottom Trawling	Bottom Lining
2002	41*	23	23	-
2003	55*	22	19	3
2004	66*	24	17	7
2005	60*	28	17	11
2006	58*	22	12	10
2007	38	12	8	4
2008	25	7	4	3
2009	21	10	6	5
2010	24	9	7	2
2011	27	9	7	2
2012	24	9	6	3

^{*} There were no specific high seas permits for the SPRFMO Area prior to 2007. These were the numbers of New Zealand vessels issued with general high-seas permits that indicated that they had the capability to bottom trawl.

Bottom trawl fishing effort declined from a peak of 23 vessels in 2002 and has been stable at between 4 and 8 vessels since 2007. The number of vessels line fishing increased from 3 in 2003 to a peak of 11 in 2005 before falling back to fluctuate between 2 and 5 vessel since.

The distribution of vessel size of the permitted vessels from 2007-08 to 2011-12 is shown in Table 2, with no observed trend in vessel size over time.

Table 2: Distribution of vessel size (length overall in metres) for New Zealand vessels permitted to bottom fish in the SPRFMO Convention Area for the permit years (May - April) from 2007-08.

Length						
overall (m)	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
<= 11.9	_	_	_	_	_	1
12 – 17.9	1	1	1	1	1	1
18 – 23.9	6	4	2	3	3	3
24 - 29.9	8		1	1	3	1
30 - 35.9	3	3	3	5	4	2
36 – 44.9	8	8	5	6	8	8
45 – 59.9	2	_	_	_	2	2
60 - 74.9	8	4	7	6	6	6
>= 75	2	2	2	2	_	_
Total	38	25	21	24	27	24

The main areas of bottom fishing utilised by New Zealand vessels outside of the New Zealand EEZ are shown in Figure 1, except for the Louisville Ridge, which lies to the east of New Zealand.

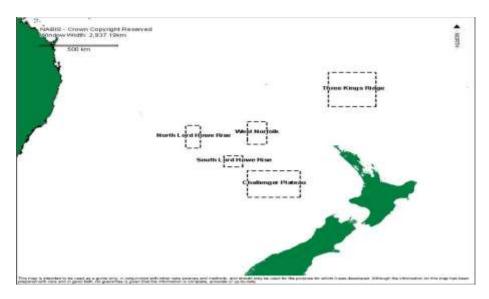


Figure 1: The main areas bottom fished by New Zealand vessels in the SPRFMO Convention Area (from the National Aquatic Biodiversity Information System - http://www.nabis.govt.nz).

2 Catch, Effort and CPUE Summaries

2.1 BOTTOM TRAWL FISHERY

The annual fishing effort (number of vessels and number of bottom trawl tows which recorded a catch) and landed catch of the main bottom trawl target and bycatch species are summarised in Table 3. The number of bottom trawl tows decreased from about 3,000 per year at the start of the fishery, to a minimum of about 200 in 2008, then increasing again to about 1,200 in 2010 and 2011, dropping again in 2012. This essentially mirrors the pattern of the number of vessels fishing over the same time period, as can be seen from the average number of tows per vessel per year (Table 3).

Orange roughy (*Hoplostethus atlanticus*) continues to be the main bottom trawl target species, contributing the majority of the total bottom trawl catch of 78% since 2002 (varying between 67% and 99%) (see Table 3). Other species making minor contributions to catches include oreos (0% to 14%), cardinalfish (0% to 8%) and alfonsino (0% to 13%). There was a substantial increase in the catch of alfonsino in 2010 which was maintained in 2011 but decreased again in 2012.

Table 3: Annual fishing effort (number of vessels and tows) and catch (tonnes) of the main target and bycatch species (identified by FAO species codes) by New Zealand vessels bottom trawling in the SPRFMO Convention Area from 2002 (see Appendix 1 for list of species codes and names). Year is calendar year. The number of tows reported here is the number of tows which recorded a fish catch, and excludes tows where there was no catch.

Year	No. Vessels	No. Tows	Tows/ Vessel	ORY	ONV	BOE	EPI	ALF	SSO	RIB	RTX	SCK	All Species
2002	23	2,944	128	2,578	_	121	159	17	50	43	61	37	3,180
2003	19	2,928	154	1,973	_	62	226	94	25	92	84	56	2,937
2004	17	1,952	115	1,697	_	90	42	85	91	46	34	8	2,188
2005	17	2,186	129	1,597	_	268	189	26	75	63	67	5	2,395
2006	12	1,135	95	1,415	_	57	21	28	6	33	27	15	1,652
2007	8	415	52	866	_	151	_	2	22	9	5	1	1,076
2008	4	208	52	837	2	_	_	2	<0.1	3	0.1	1	846
2009	6	547	91	928	5	_	16	5	<0.1	7	0.1	2	958
2010	7	1,167	167	1,474	9	12	22	244	10	15	6	13	1,864
2011	7	1,158	165	1,079	16	12	108	176	4	22	7	9	1,486
2012	6	652	109	721	10	4	2	39	3	5	7	2	805

The trends in orange roughy catch and effort from 2002 in the main fishing areas are summarised in Tables 4 and 5 and also shown in Figure 2. The decline in orange roughy catches from 2002 to 2008 was associated with the decline in fishing effort (and catch) in the main historical fishing areas of the NW Challenger Plateau and Louisville Ridge (Tables 4 and 5). After 2008, effort on the NW Challenger Plateau increased, as did effort on the Lord Howe Rise and Louisville Ridge.

Table 4: Distribution of bottom trawl effort (number of tows) between the main areas fished by New Zealand bottom trawl vessels fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area by calendar year from 2002.

Year	Challenger Plateau	West Norfolk Ridge	Lord Howe Rise	Louisville Ridge	Other Areas	All Areas
2002	2,152	298	181	890	10	3,531
2003	2,072	88	470	774	95	3,499
2004	853	110	449	1,340	14	2,766
2005	1,039	323	256	838	41	2,497
2006	411	264	139	588	18	1,420
2007	76	176	37	126	_	415
2008	26	104	78	_	_	208
2009	156	252	229	_	11	648
2010	409	58	388	303	12	1,170
2011	437	84	379	258	_	1,158
2012	166	58	121	296	11	652

Table 5: Total annual landings (tonnes) of orange roughy from the main areas fished by New Zealand bottom trawl vessels fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area by calendar year from 2002.

Year	Challenger Plateau	West Norfolk Ridge	Lord Howe Rise	Louisville Ridge	Other Areas	All Areas
2002	1,460	432	96	568	22	2,578
2003	868	25	218	859	3	1,973
2004	347	106	132	1,106	5	1,697
2005	425	327	190	623	33	1,597
2006	202	670	29	493	22	1,415
2007	36	515	34	280	_	866
2008	31	426	380	_	_	837
2009	261	233	403	_	31	928
2010	420	79	385	584	6	1,474
2011	680	113	1	285	_	1,079
2012	255	49	121	288	8	721

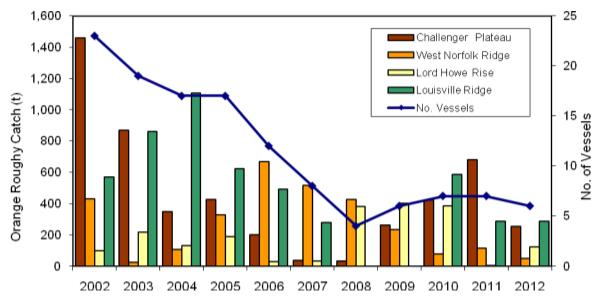


Figure 2: Trends in the annual number of bottom trawl vessels fishing and total landings of orange roughy for each of the four main areas fished by New Zealand bottom trawl vessels in the SPRFMO Convention Area by calendar year from 2002.

2.2 MIDWATER TRAWL FISHERY

2011 saw the operation of midwater trawling for the first time, with three permitted trawlers executing a total of 61 tows with a total catch of 164 tonnes, principally southern boarfish (46%) and alfonsino (39%). This fishery operated again in 2012 with three vessels delivering a total of 59 tows, yielding a total catch of 145 tonnes, principally alfonsino (79%) and southern boarfish (17%).

2.3 BOTTOM LINE FISHERY

The annual fishing effort (number of vessels and hooks fished) and catch of the main bottom line target and bycatch species are summarised in Table 6. The number of active line vessels increased from 3 in 2003, to 11 in 2005, then declined and has fluctuated between 3 and 5 vessels since 2007. Vessel numbers in 2011 remained at 2 but they set about 50% more hooks than in 2010.

Table 6: Annual landings and effort for New Zealand vessels bottom lining in the SPRFMO Convention Area by calendar year from 2002. Effort is presented as the number of vessels and number of hooks set, with catches in tonnes of the target and bycatch species (see Appendix 1 for a list of species codes and names).

Year	No. Vessels	No. Hooks	Hooks/ Vessel	BWA	HAU	DGS	MOW	RXX	YTC	ROK	ТОР	All Species
2002	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_
2003	3	53,438	17,813	6	7	1	1	_	_	_	1	17
2004	7	268,809	38,401	116	24	_	6	2	1	_	3	154
2005	11	384,031	34,912	102	31	13	10	2	3	1	_	163
2006	10	501,810	50,181	271	95	6	6	2	2	2	_	385
2007	4	423,420	105,855	144	31	4	5	3	3	1	_	202
2008	3	302,310	100,770	67	43	1	2	<1	1	8	_	123
2009	5	236,146	47,229	58	23	7	1	<1	_	<1	_	89
2010	2	48,180	24,090	15	24	_	1	<1	<1	<1	_	45
2011	2	71,183	35,592	23	25	6	<1	<1	<1	<1	_	57
2012	3	90,036	30,012	44	40	2	3	<1	<1	<1	_	95

The numbers of hooks set rose from 50,000 in 2003 to peak at 500,000 in 2006 and then declined slowly to 2009 and dropped sharply in 2010 (Table 6).

Bluenose BWA (*Hyperoglyphe antarctica*) was the historic main bottom line target species but catches declined from 2006 until the annual catch was similar to that of wreckfish HAU (*Polyprion oxygeneios* and *P. americanus*) (Table 6). Together these two species have made up between 76% and 95% of the catch since the fishery began. Other species making minor contributions to bottom line catches include spiny dogfish and king tarakihi.

The increase and subsequent decrease in bluenose catches since 2002 is shown in more detail in Table 7, and, together with effort, is also shown in Figure 3. Figure 3 shows that the moderate to high catches in the mid 2000s have fallen to much lower levels recently, in line with the reduction in effort over time.

Table 7: Distribution of total annual catches of bluenose between the main areas fished by New Zealand bottom line vessels fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area by calendar year from 2002.

Year	Challenger Plateau	West Norfolk Ridge	Three Kings Ridge	Louisville Ridge	Other Areas	All Areas
2002	_	_	_	_	_	_
2003	_	5	1	_	_	6
2004	103	12	_	_	1	116
2005	38	27	24	_	14	102
2006	91	114	48	_	19	271
2007	59	47	39	_	_	144
2008	24	33	8	2	_	67
2009	13	29	16	_	_	58
2010	2	13	_	_	_	15
2011	_	11	11	_	_	23
2012	11	15	18	_	_	44

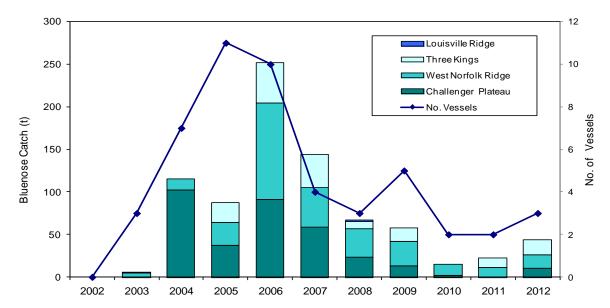


Figure 3: Trends in number of bottom line vessels and total bluenose catch from the four main areas fished by New Zealand bottom line vessels in the SPRFMO Convention Area by calendar year from 2002.

3 Fisheries Data Collection and Research Activities

3.1 FISHERIES CATCH & EFFORT DATA COLLECTION SYSTEMS

The data collection systems implemented for New Zealand high seas bottom trawl and line fishing vessels has been described in detail (Ministry of Fisheries, 2008b). Detailed tow-by-tow catch and effort data for all high seas fishing operations were collected from 2007 using the at-sea catch and effort logbooks and landings recording forms described therein.

Both Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem (VME) Evidence Forms used by observers in the moveon areas and detailed observer Benthic Materials Forms have been completed on all observed bottom trawls to record benthic bycatch to the lowest possible taxonomic level.

3.2 ESTIMATION OF ORANGE ROUGHY SUSTAINABLE CATCH LIMITS

During 2009 the Ministry of Fisheries commissioned a research project on 'Development of Estimates of Annual Sustainable Catches, and of Sustainable Feature Limits, for Orange Roughy Bottom Trawl Catches in Specific Fishing Sub-Areas in the Proposed Convention Area of the South Pacific RFMO'. A final research report for this project has been provided as an information paper to the 9th SPRFMO SWG meeting (Clark et al. 2010, SWG-09-INF-01). A summary of the results of this work has been provided as a paper to the Deepwater Sub-Group (Penney et al. 2010a, SWG-09-DW-02). Figure 4 shows a summary of this work, with the trends in orange roughy catch (t), CPUE (t/tow, with standard errors) and estimated Maximum Constant Yield (MCY), Maximum Annual Yield (MAY), ½MB₀ and 2002-2006 average catch reference levels from Clark et al. (2010) shown for the main fishing areas (from Penney 2010a).

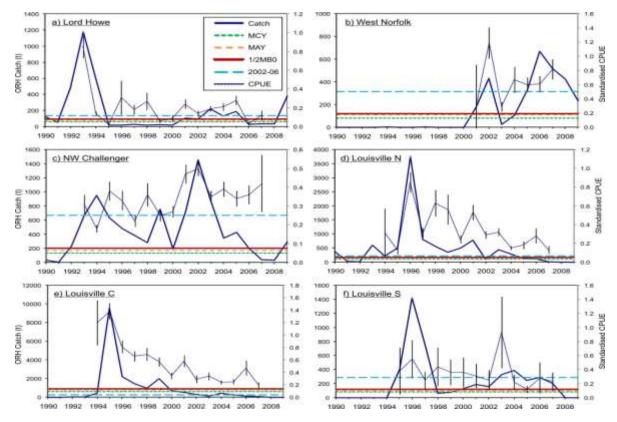


Figure 4: Summary of trends in total orange roughy catch (t), CPUE (t/tow, with standard errors) and estimated MCY, MAY, $\frac{1}{2}$ MB₀ and 2002–2006 average catch reference levels for each fishing area (from Penney 2010a).

3.3 CHALLENGER PLATEAU ORANGE ROUGHY TRAWL AND ACOUSTIC SURVEYS

Due to stock sustainability concerns, the fishery on the straddling orange roughy stock in the Challenger Plateau was closed in 2000. Since 2005 a programme of combined trawl and acoustic surveys has been conducted to re-assess the status of this stock (MPI, 2013). The 2009 survey gave a minimum biomass estimate of 22,700 t, approximately 25% of the B_0 estimated from the assessment in 2000. This was above the soft limit reference point of 20% B_0 established in the New Zealand Harvest Strategy Standard for re-opening of the fishery (Ministry of Fisheries 2008a). The fishery was re-opened on 1 October 2010 with a total allowable catch (TAC) limit of 525 tonnes (see Section 6).

Additional trawl and acoustic surveys have been conducted in, 2010, 2011 and 2012. The biomass estimate obtained in 2009 was substantially larger than those estimated in later years, with the estimates similar for 2010, 2011 and 2012. Average biomass for the periods 2009-2012 and 2010-2012 gave stock status of between 20 and 24% B_0 , remaining above the soft limit reference point (MPI, 2013). Copies of the final research reports for the surveys in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 will be provided to the SPRFMO SC. A further survey conducted during mid-2013 has yet to be analysed, reported and reviewed.

3.4 GEOSPATIAL PREDICTION AND MAPPING OF VMES

New Zealand continues to develop geospatial data files on seabed bathymetry, fishing footprints and VME distribution for provision to the SPRFMO Secretariat and inclusion in the SPRFMO Geospatial Database.

Following publication of the first global habitat suitability models for scleractinian corals (Tittensor *et al.* 2009, 2010), the Ministry of Fisheries initiated work to evaluate the potential for using such predictive habitat models to evaluate the likelihood of encountering VMEs in the SPRFMO Convention Area. A methods paper describing potential approaches to using geospatial data and habitat prediction models to evaluate likelihood of occurrence of VMEs in the SPRFMO Area, was submitted to the SWG Deepwater Sub-Group (Penney 2010b, SWG-09-DW-03). This area of research continues to be progressed and was the subject of bilateral discussions between New Zealand and Australia during 2013. Further papers will be submitted to the SC as they become available following adequate review.

4 Biological Sampling and Length/Age Composition of Catches

The deepwater fisheries continued to be monitored by scientific observers in 2012. A summary of the length-frequency sampling conducted in 2012 is provided in Table 8.

Table 8: Summary of length-frequency sampling conducted by scientific observers aboard New Zealand bottom trawlers in the SPRFMO Convention Area during 2012.

			L	ength (cr	Number	
Scientific Name	Common Name	Measure Used	Min	Mean	Max	Measured
Hoplostethus atlanticus	orange roughy	standard	13	35.5	52	7,052
Beryx splendens	alfonsino	fork	25	36.6	52	567
Pseudocyttus maculatus	smooth oreo	fork	38	43.5	53	20
				Tot	tal	7,429

About 95% percent of the fish measured were orange roughy, the principal target species. 2012 saw a reduction in both the number of species, from four to three, and in total number of all individuals sampled over previous years. Plots of the length-frequency distributions of the species measured are provided in Figure 5.

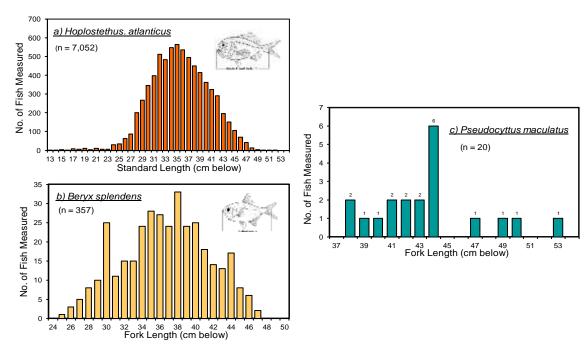


Figure 5: Length frequency distributions for a) orange roughy (Hoplostethus atlanticus); b) alfonsino (Beryx splendens) c) smooth oreo (Pseudocyttus maculatus) measured by scientific observers aboard New Zealand bottom trawl vessels fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area during 2012.

5 Summary of Observer Programmes

Detailed summary tables describing New Zealand observer programme activities in the SPRFMO Area during 2011, are included in the New Zealand SPRFMO Annual Observer Implementation Report for 2012.

A total of six New Zealand bottom trawlers operated under permit in the SPRFMO Area during 2012, all trips carried scientific observers. Scientific observers were present on 9 trips, representing 161 vessel days and 652 bottom tows, of which 648 (98%) were observed. Scientific observers measured fish from 18% of tows (Table 9). The total weight of fish sampled was about 11.7 t, or 1.5% of the 805 t of all species landings. A total of 7,429 fish were measured, 95% of which were the principal catch species, orange roughy.

Three New Zealand trawlers operated midwater trawl gear in the SPRFMO Area during 2012 all vessels carried scientific observers. Scientific observers were present on 5 trips, recording 25 vessel days and 57 midwater tows, of which all were observed. Scientific observers measured fish from 25% of observed tows (Table 9). The total weight of fish sampled was about 0.9 t, or 0.6% of the 145 t of all species landings. A total of 960 fish were measured, all of which were the principal catch species, alfonsino.

Three New Zealand bottom longline vessels operated in the SPRFMO Convention Area during 2012 and one trip carried a scientific observer. During the observed trip, a total of 4 vessel days and all 17 longline sets made were observed (Table 9). The total weight of fish sampled was about 1.1 t, or 1.2% of the 95 t of all species landings. A total of 183 fish were measured, 94% of which were the principal catch species, bluenose.

Table 9: Summary of observer and sampling coverage of bottom trawl, midwater trawl and bottom longlining fishing effort in the SPRFMO Convention Area during 2012.

Method	No. of Trips	Total Tows or Sets	Tows or Sets Observed	Tows or Sets Measured	Landings (t)	Measured Catch (t)	No. Fish Measured
Bottom Trawl	9	662	648	119	805	11.7	7,429
Midwater Trawl	5	57	57	14	145	0.9	960
Bottom Longline	1	17	17	17	95	1.1	183

Note: Tows/sets reported in Table 9 are all tows conducted, including those which made no catch, and so may exceed the tows which made a catch, as reported in the effort summary tables. The total number of midwater tows recoded by observers differs from that reported by the fleet (Section 2.2), as occasionally, vessel recorded midwater tows touch the seabed and are then recorded as bottom tows by observers.

6 Implementation of Management Measures

6.1 DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT MEASURES

A detailed description of New Zealand's implementation of the SPRFMO interim conservation and management measures adopted in 2007 can be found in Ministry of Fisheries (2008b) and Penney *et al.* (2009). The management approach is summarised below: High seas bottom trawling measures were established in the SPRFMO Area in the form of high seas fishing permit conditions, imposed from 1 May 2008. The key elements of these permit conditions include:

- Schedules designating open, move-on and closed bottom trawling areas within the historical (2002–2006) New Zealand high seas bottom trawl fishing footprint, and prohibiting bottom trawling within closed areas and everywhere else on the high seas.
- The move-on rule VME Evidence Process for bottom trawling within move-on areas, with the requirement to report to the Ministry for Primary Industries and move-on 5 nautical miles where the VME Evidence threshold is reached.
- A requirement to carry at least one observer on all bottom trawling trips. Observers are provided by the Ministry for Primary Industries and cost recovered from industry.

The effect of these measures has been to close bottom trawling in 41% of the total 217,463 km² New Zealand bottom trawl footprint surface area, with 30% made subject to a move-on rule, and 29% left open to bottom trawling. The open area represents 0.13% of the entire SPRFMO Area.

The interim measures adopted in 2009 were implemented through high seas fishing permit conditions that came into effect in February 2010. Fishing for *Trachurus* species and the use of gillnets are prohibited, and notice to the Ministry for Primary Industries is required in advance of transiting the SPRFMO Convention Area with gillnets.

6.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VME EVIDENCE PROCESS AND MOVE-ON RULE

The VME Evidence Process and move-on rule implemented within move-on blocks in the bottom trawl fishing footprint are described in Ministry of Fisheries (2008b) and Parker *et al.* (2009). Scientific observers deployed on New Zealand bottom trawling trips in the SPRFMO Area are required to complete VME Evidence Process forms for each tow conducted within a move-on area.

6.3 RE-OPENING OF THE CHALLENGER PLATEAU STRADDLING ORANGE ROUGHY FISHERY

The fishery on the straddling orange roughy stock on the Challenger Plateau, which was closed from 2000-2009, was re-opened on 1 Oct 2010 following assessments that indicated that the biomass has increased above the reference level (20% B_0) for re-opening of the fishery (Ministry of Fisheries 2008a) (see Section 3). Applying a harvest strategy consistent with that implemented for orange roughy fisheries within the New Zealand EEZ would have indicated a TAC of 1,022 t for this stock. However, a cautious approach was taken to ensure continued re-building towards B_{MSY} , and it was reopened with a total allowable catch (TAC) of 525 t. The TAC is comprised of a 500 t total allowable commercial catch (TACC) and an allowance of 25 tonnes for other sources of fishing-related mortality. This TAC may only be taken inside the New Zealand EEZ as the high seas area where the stock straddles is outside of the 2002-2006 New Zealand bottom trawl footprint and is therefore currently closed to commercial fishing.

6.4 HIGH-SEAS FISHING PERMIT NON-COMPLIANCE

In August 2012 a fishing company notified MPI that one of its vessels had fished outside of the New Zealand EEZ within the SPRFMO Convention Area without an appropriate permit and without a Ministry observer.

This matter was fully investigated by MPI compliance officials, which included reviewing VMS data, fishing plans, the vessel navigation logbook, and interviewing company officers including the vessel Master. The investigation determined that the transgression was a genuine mistake on the part of the Master of the vessel, the vessel owner was subsequently ordered to carry observers every time it intends on fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area. The company also voluntarily took off the amount of fish caught in the SPRFMO Convention Area from its own domestic EEZ quota therefore indirectly receiving a significant financial penalty.

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Appendix 1. List of Species Codes, Scientific Names and Common Names Used

FAO Code	NZ Code	Scientific Name	Common Name
ALF	BYX	Beryx splendens, B. decadactylus	Alfonsino & Long-finned beryx
BOE	BOE	Allocyttus niger	Black oreo
BWA	BNS	Hyperoglyphe antarctica	Bluenose
DGS	SPD	Squalus spp.	Spiny dogfish, northern spiny dogfish
EDR	SBO	Pseudopentaceros richardsoni	Southern boarfish
EPI	CDL	Epigonus telescopus	Deepsea cardinalfish
HAU	HPB	Polyprion oxygeneios, P. americanus	Wreckfish (Hapuku & Bass)
MOW	KTA	Nemadactylus sp.	King tarakihi
ONV	SOR	Neocyttus rhomboidalis	Spiky oreo
ORY	ORH	Hoplostethus atlanticus	Orange roughy
RIB	RIB	Mora moro	Ribaldo
ROK	SPE	Helicolenus spp.	Sea perch
RTX	RAT	Macrouridae (Family)	Rattails
RXX	SKI	Rexea spp.	Gemfish, southern kingfish
SCK	BSH	Dalatias licha	Seal shark
SSO	SSO	Pseudocyttus maculatus	Smooth oreo
TOP	PTO	Dissostichus eleginoides	Patagonian toothfish
YTC	KIN	Seriola lalandi	Kingfish