

ADVICE FOR RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL FISHERS, AND INFORMATION ON PURSE SEINE FISHING IN NEW ZEALAND

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has compiled an information sheet for fishers to create awareness around recreational and purse seine operations interactions. This sheet aims to; 1) create awareness and improve knowledge around maritime rules, 2) provide information about purse seine fishing practices and give context around relevant fish stocks fished by purse seine in New Zealand waters, and 3) provide communication and contact information.

1. MARITIME RULES

The extracted rules set out below are “snapshots” of the Maritime Transport Act - Maritime Rule 22. Vessel operators must understand, and take responsibility for their own obligations, ensuring compliance, and the safe operation of their vessel to the full set of rules set out in Maritime Rules Part 22.

Responsibilities between vessels:

Maritime Collision Prevention Rules **apply to New Zealand ships and recreational vessels, and all vessels within New Zealand waters.**

Any vessel fishing with nets, lines, trawls, or other fishing apparatus which restricts manoeuvrability, is considered to be “engaged in fishing”, but this does not include a vessel fishing with trolling lines, or other fishing apparatus which do not restrict the vessel's manoeuvrability.

vessel engaged in fishing means any vessel fishing with nets, lines, trawls, or other fishing apparatus which restrict manoeuvrability but does not include a vessel fishing with trolling lines or other fishing apparatus which do not restrict the vessel's manoeuvrability:

When meeting another vessel head-on, if able, alter the course to starboard, so to **pass the other vessel on the port side.**

A power-driven vessel underway must keep out of the way of a vessel engaged in fishing (unless the vessel engaged in fishing is in a narrow channel, or is overtaking).

When two power-driven vessels are crossing so as to involve risk of collision, the vessel which has the other on its own starboard side must keep out of the way. The vessel required to keep out of the way must, if the circumstances of the case allow, avoid crossing ahead of the other vessel.

22.18 Responsibilities between vessels
Except where rules 22.9 (narrow channels), 22.10 (traffic separation schemes), and 22.13 (overtaking) require otherwise, the following rules apply—
(1) a power-driven vessel underway must keep out of the way of—
(a) a vessel not under command;
(b) a vessel restricted in its ability to manoeuvre;
(c) a vessel engaged in fishing;
(d) a sailing vessel or a vessel under oars; and
(2) a sailing vessel underway must keep out of the way of—
(a) a vessel not under command;
(b) a vessel restricted in its ability to manoeuvre;
(c) a vessel engaged in fishing; and
(3) a vessel engaged in fishing when underway must, so far as possible, keep out of the way of—
(a) a vessel not under command;
(b) a vessel restricted in its ability to manoeuvre;

Purse Seine lights and signals:

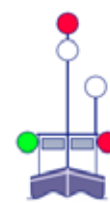
When a purse seine vessel is exhibiting two black cones with their peaks meeting during the day, or two all-round lights in a vertical line with the upper being red and lower being white (shown above), it means the vessel is engaged in fishing, and therefore **other vessels must keep out of its way.**



Day signal



Abeam, port side



Ahead



Astern

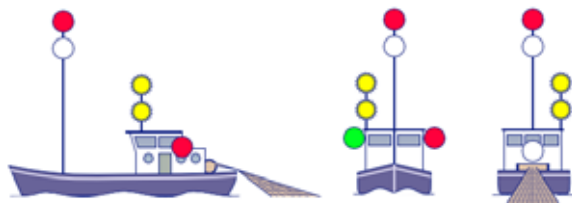
22.26 Fishing vessels

- (1) A vessel engaged in fishing, whether underway or at anchor, must exhibit only the lights and shapes prescribed in rule 22.26.
(2) A vessel engaged in trawling must exhibit—
(a) (i) two all-round lights in a vertical line, the upper being green and the lower white; or
(ii) a black shape consisting of two cones with their apexes together in a vertical line one above the other; and
(b) a masthead light abaft of and higher than the all-round green light, BUT a vessel of less than 50 metres in length is not obliged to exhibit such a light but may choose to do so; and
(c) when making way through the water, in addition to the lights prescribed in this paragraph, sidelights and a sternlight.
(3) A vessel engaged in fishing other than trawling must exhibit—
(a) (i) two all-round lights in a vertical line, the upper being red and the lower white; or
(ii) a black shape consisting of two cones with their apexes together in a vertical line one above the other; and
(b) when there is outlying gear extending more than 150 metres horizontally from the vessel:
(i) an all-round white light; or
(ii) a cone apex upwards in the direction of the gear; and
(c) in addition, when making way through the water, sidelights and a sternlight.
(4) The additional signals described in Appendix 2 to this rule apply to a vessel engaged in fishing in close proximity to other vessels engaged in fishing.

A purse seine vessel may also display two alternative flashing yellow lights in a vertical line, meaning it is **engaged in fishing and it is hampered by its fishing gear**. Other vessels must keep out of its way.

3. Signals for purse seiners

Vessels engaged in fishing with purse seine gear may exhibit 2 yellow flashing lights in a vertical line. These lights must flash alternately every second and with equal light and occultation duration. These lights must only be exhibited when the vessel is hampered by its fishing gear. MNZ



Abeam, port side

Ahead

Astern

Recommendations:

If there is a recreational fisher first on a school when a purse seine vessel approaches, it is **recommended by MPI, that the purse seine vessel will leave the school to the recreational fisher.**

Similarly, if there is a commercial fisher first on a school when a recreational vessel approaches, it is **recommended by MPI, that the recreational fisher will leave the school to the commercial vessel.**

If a purse seine vessel is flying a Zulu flag, it indicates that the vessel is shooting nets, and it is **recommended by MPI that other vessels keep out of its way.**



2. PURSE SEINE FISHERY INFORMATION

New Zealand's commercial purse seine fishery mostly targets skipjack tuna, jack mackerel and blue mackerel. In 2017, there were seven purse seine vessels operating in New Zealand fisheries waters. Almost the entire jack mackerel and blue mackerel catch, and 30 percent of the skipjack catch, occurred within 12 nautical miles from the shore. Purse seine vessels fish the surface and subsurface zone and **do not typically make contact with the seabed.**

Skipjack tuna (SKJ)¹



Skipjack tuna are managed regionally by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, as skipjack tuna are part of the larger Western and Central Pacific Ocean stock. **Total**

skipjack tuna landings within New Zealand fisheries waters make up a very small portion of the overall regional landings for Western Central Pacific Ocean stock (0.6 percent average from 2007-2015, table 1).

Skipjack tuna are fast-growing, short-lived and prolific breeders. The most recent stock assessment by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission determined that the stock was **healthy and not being overfished.**

This fishery has very low levels of bycatch with **skipjack tuna comprising of 99 percent of the catch by weight.**

Table 1) Total skipjack tuna landings (t) within New Zealand fisheries waters, and total landings from the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (t) of skipjack tuna, by calendar year from 2007 to 2015.

Year	Total skipjack tuna landings within NZ fisheries waters (t)	Total Western Central Pacific Ocean skipjack tuna landings (t)
2007	11,392	1,659,557
2008	10,033	1,639,651
2009	4,685	1,777,598
2010	8,629	1,690,145
2011	10,840	1,524,599
2012	9,881	1,727,773
2013	13,312	1,771,822
2014	10,195	2,003,024
2015	12,223	1,819,798

¹ www.fao.org

In 2016, 25 percent of purse seine fishing events by domestic vessels operating in New Zealand fisheries waters were observed. During these observed fishing events, there were **no observed seabird captures and a low level of marine mammal interaction.**²

Jack Mackerel (JMA)³



Jack mackerel stocks are managed under the Quota Management System, and support one of New Zealand's largest commercial fisheries.

"Jack mackerel" comprises of three species; the greenback horse mackerel, yellowtail horse mackerel, and Chilean jack mackerel.

The distribution of all three species differ, but their ranges partially overlap.

Jack mackerels may be caught year-round however the greatest proportion of the purse-seine catch occurs during the spring, early summer and winter months.

The largest proportion of jack mackerel catch is taken from the Bay of Plenty although sometimes significant catches are taken off East Northland and the Hauraki Gulf.

This fishery has **very low levels of bycatch with jack mackerel comprising 96 percent of the catch by weight**, with blue mackerel making up the largest proportion of bycatch.

Interactions with seabirds and marine mammals in the jack mackerel purse seine fishery are rare based on observer and fisher reports.

Blue Mackerel (EMA)⁴



Blue mackerel are also managed under the Quota Management System, and are taken by a variety of methods.

The purse seine fishery accounts for

the largest and most consistent catches of blue mackerel.

This fishery has **very low levels of bycatch with blue mackerel comprising of 98 percent of the catch by weight**, with jack mackerel making up the largest proportion of bycatch.

Most blue mackerel purse seine catch comes from the Bay of Plenty and East Northland, where it is primarily taken between July and December.

There is a low level of interactions with seabirds and marine mammals in the blue mackerel purse seine fishery, from observer and fisher reports.

3. COMMUNICATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

On the water: vessels can establish contact on **VHF Channel 16** and then communicate with each other using **VHF Channel 10.**

Otherwise, **contact Maritime New Zealand** to report an event. This is an easy two-step process:

- 1) Report the event as soon as possible:
 - Contact the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCCNZ)⁵ on **0508 4 RCCNZ**, or **0508 472 269**; or
 - Contact the Maritime Operations Centre on VHF Channel 16.
- 2) Fill out and submit an event form:
 - You can use Maritime New Zealand's online event form⁶; or
 - Download and print an appropriate event report form⁷.

² www.dragonfly.co.nz

³ www.fao.org

⁴ www.unitedfisheries.co.nz

⁵ www.maritimenz.govt.nz

⁶ https://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/report-online/default.asp

⁷ https://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/commercial/safety/accidents-reporting/#contact_us