

Summary of 2017 CRA2 stock assessment results

Overview of assessment approach for rock lobster

Full scientific assessments of most rock lobster stocks are carried out every four to five years. These assessments estimate the current status of the stock relative to the desired levels of abundance, and also show how the stock has responded to previous management controls. Where an assessment indicates a sustainability risk or utilisation opportunity for a stock, then a review of management controls is undertaken.

Early in 2017, MPI decided to bring a new scientific assessment of the CRA2 fishery forward by a year to see if there were any sustainability risks for CRA2. This was based on ongoing concerns expressed by iwi, recreational fishers, some commercial fishers and many others in the public about the availability of rock lobsters in the fishery. This was despite a 36% reduction to the commercial catch since 2014, through a mix of formal catch reductions and voluntary industry initiatives.

New assessment results

The stock assessment for CRA2 was completed on 30 October 2017. The assessment suggests that the abundance of legally harvestable rock lobsters in 2016 has declined to around 21% of the agreed reference level. It is very likely that the stock is below the soft limit; the level at which it is MPI policy to implement a formal, time-constrained rebuilding plan. However, it is very unlikely that biomass is below the hard limit; the level at which closure of the fishery should be considered.

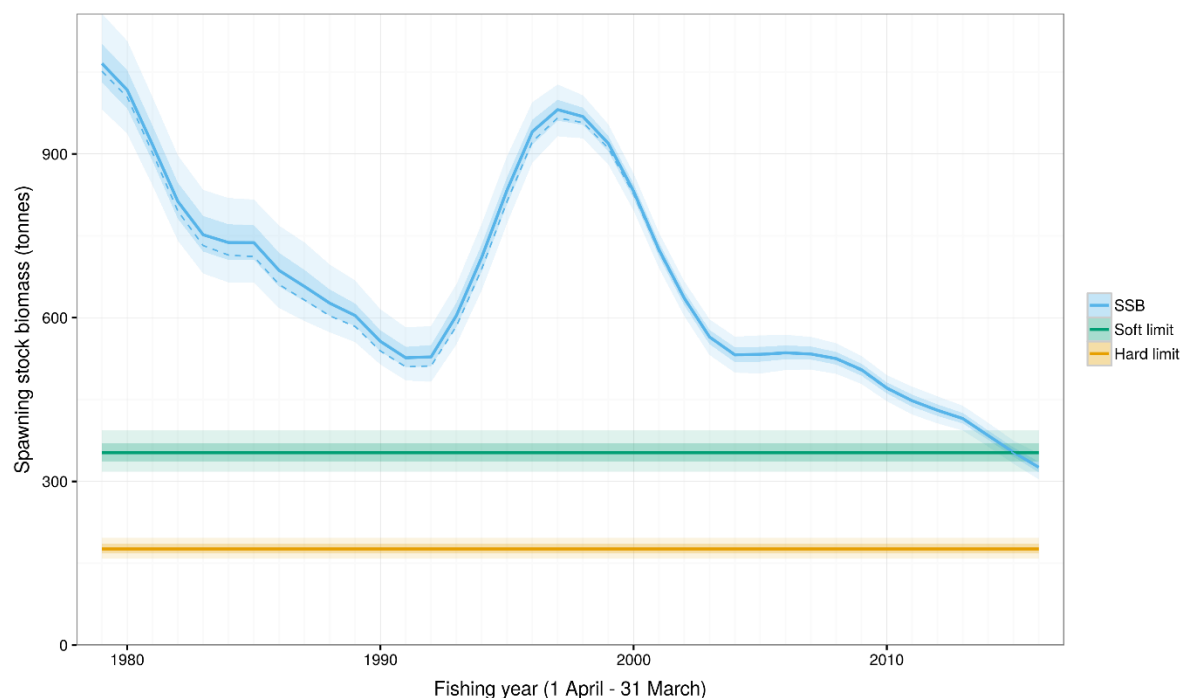


Figure 1: showing the estimated abundance of mature female rock lobsters in CRA2 since 1979 (blue line) in relation to soft limit (green line) and hard limit (yellow line).

Full assessment results

The full CRA2 assessment results are published in MPI's Fisheries Assessment Plenary Report. This report provides biological, stock assessment and stock status information for a number of stocks with an April fishing year, in addition to CRA2. This document is available for download from the MPI website here: <https://fs.fish.govt.nz/Page.aspx?pk=113&dk=24542> [2.6MB].