Fisheries New Zealand
Tini a Tangaroa

North Island Hector's and Māui dolphin Forum - 2023

FNZ Monitoring Update for 2022-2023*

*Data is provided for the 2022-2023 Financial Year and is provisional unless otherwise stated.

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The following report provides an overview of the Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) monitoring results for the 2022-2023 financial year. The figures presented below are provisional. This is because there is a delay in the loading of observed trips into the Centralised Observer Database. FNZ has also recently transferred to a new centralised database. Due to the merger of different databases, there may be some discrepancies in results.

This report does not include data on the roll-out of cameras on in-scope vessels along the west coast North Island that went live on 1 August 2023. This information was provided by the FNZ Electronic Monitoring Team in their presentation.

Recap of North Island fisheries measures in place to support the Threat Management Plan (TMP) for Hector's and Māui dolphins.

Following the review of the Māui and Hector's dolphin Threat Management Plan (TMP) in 2019, the Government extended and created new areas further prohibiting the use of commercial and recreational set-nets in both the North and South Islands (Figure 1) and extended commercial trawl closures in the North Island (Figure 2). Commercial drift net fishing is banned in all New Zealand waters. A fishing-related mortality limit of 1 *Cephalorhynchus sp.* (Māui or Hector's dolphin) was also put in place in a defined Māui Dolphin Habitat Zone. These changes came into effect on 1 October 2020. See: https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/40883-MPI-Dolphin-TMP-Factsheet-North-Island-June-2020

The Māui Dolphin Habitat zone extends from Cape Egmont to Cape Reinga out to 12 nm (Figure 3). This area covers approximately 96.3% (summer) and 87.8% (winter) of the estimated distribution including harbours, and offshore to the Territorial Sea boundary. Excluding harbours, the Habitat Zone is estimated to cover approximately 93.7% (summer) and 86.6% (winter) of the Māui dolphin distribution.

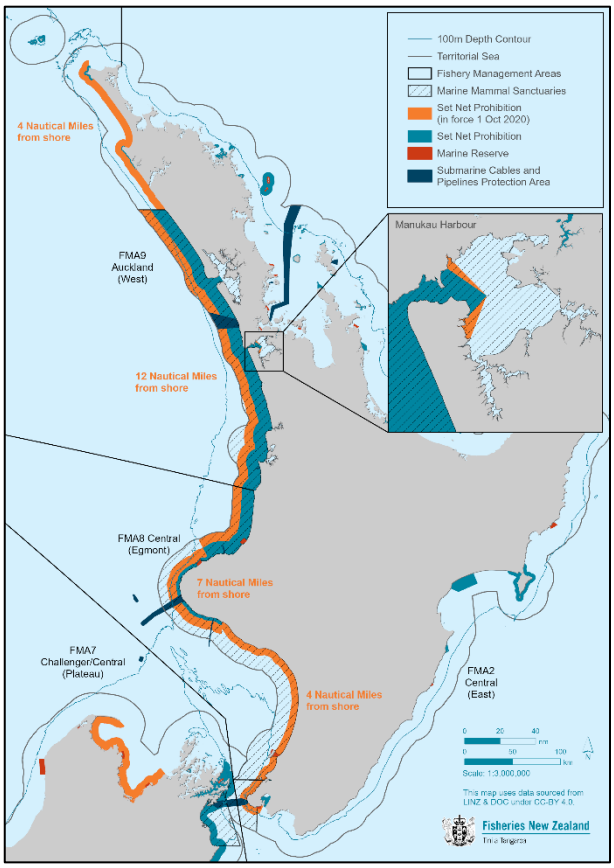

Figure 1. Commercial and recreational set net closures on the west coast North Island.

Figure 2. Targeted "observer coverage area" (blue lines) along the west coast North Island. Orange shows the trawl prohibition areas since 1 October 2020.

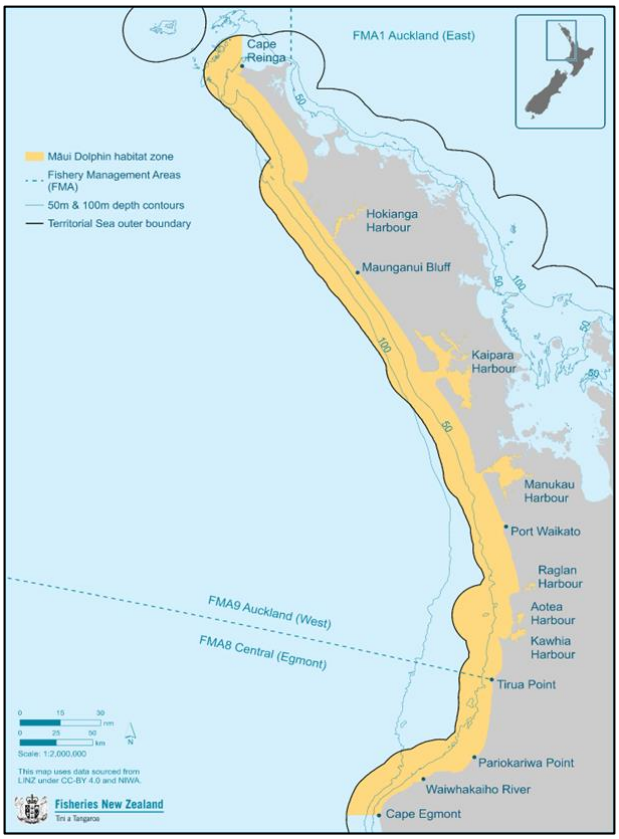

Figure 3. Māui dolphin Habitat Zone

Monitoring

Target monitoring levels vary across different spatial areas. The highest monitoring levels of coverage have been directed towards the areas that pose the greatest residual risk to Māui and Hector's dolphins. The monitoring results for 2022-2023* are as follows:

Coastal set net monitoring

Level of set net monitoring (observers and proof of concept cameras) coverage targeted across the **coastal portion of the Māui dolphin Habitation Zone (excluding harbours): 100%**

For 2022-2023: 71.6% of all set net effort was monitored. The reduction in monitoring compared to last year's 91.3% comes from new entrants to the area that were not subject to monitoring. All coastal set net vessels are now covered under the on-board camera programme.

Trawl monitoring results

Level of trawl monitoring coverage (observers and proof of concept cameras) targeted across the **coastal portion of the Māui dolphin Habitat Zone: 50-70%**

For 2022-2023: 48.7 % of all trawl effort was monitored.

The highest priority area for trawl monitoring (via observers or on-board cameras) has been the 4 - 7 nm offshore area known as the "observer coverage zone" shown as dark blue lines in Figure 1. Monitoring is targeted at 100% trawl fishing events within 4-7 nm from Maunganui Bluff to Pariokariwa Point. The target area covers a lot of the summer and winter distribution of the dolphins.

Over the **last five years**:

- Monitoring coverage within the target observer coverage area (4-7 nm) has ranged between 91 - 99%.
- Overall effort has fluctuated from a high of 860 tows to a low of 473 tows.
- Unobserved effort ranges between 2 and 45 tows.

Electronic monitoring (cameras) are now the default verification tool for in-scope set net and trawl vessels operating on the west coast North Island as noted in the Fisheries (Electronic Monitoring on Vessels) Regulations 2017.

The next forum in 2024 will provide monitoring results from these cameras.