

Trawling talking points



1. Bottom trawling is an industrial fishing method that involves dragging a large, weighted net along the seafloor with the intention of mass collection.
2. Bottom trawling is an indiscriminate fishing method capturing all in its path and scrapping marine growth off the seabed.
3. Trawl tows are often three or four hours long and cover many kilometres. Some of the catch is damaged and long dead by the time it reaches the surface.
4. 68% of all trawl tows in New Zealand waters occurs in waters 400m or less.
5. The years of trawling have taken their toll with popular species such as tarakihi and snapper now well below acceptable management levels in some areas.
6. The environmental impact of a reduction in filter feeders and three dimensional structure from the seabed is a cost to biodiversity and the public good.
7. Bottom trawling and the damage it causes is no longer acceptable in inshore waters.
8. Alternatives to trawling include long lining and trapping.
9. Public money has been used to fund a joint venture between the government and the commercial fishing industry to develop a modular harvesting system. To make this work safely, larger trawlers with heavier gear are needed, having just as much or more impact on seabed communities.
10. Bigger, more powerful trawl vessels can fish longer and harder than smaller vessels.
11. New Zealand trawl data for the years 2008 to 2012, out to 250 metres deep. [Source: MPI]
 - a. Total tows: 280,000.
 - b. Trawling events per annum: 26,000.
 - c. Total trawl footprint: 360,000 square kilometres.
 - d. Total trawl contact area: 113,000 square kilometres of seafloor.
 - e. Average trawl contact area per annum: 45,000 square kilometres of seafloor.
12. Trawling within 250m deep targets 48 different species. Primary target species are flatfish, tarakihi, snapper, gurnard, jack mackerel, barracouta, trevally and john dory.
13. Within 250m deep most trawl footprint is targeting tarakihi. Double that of flatfish, gurnard and jack mackerel.
14. In 2017 MPI reported that bottom trawling and dredging are the most destructive fishing methods, causing damage to seabed habitats and reducing the density and diversity of species that live there.

Resources

Video: Bottom trawling [Source: LegaSea]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxfyB3-earY>

Map: Trawl footprint 2008 – 2012. [Source: MPI]

<http://rescuefish.co.nz/resource/nz-trawl-footprint/>

Research: Benthic habitat classes and trawl fishing disturbance in NZ waters >250m. [MPI]

<http://rescuefish.co.nz/resource/research-trawling-benthic-impacts-in-250m-depth-mpi-2015/>