



## Fact sheet 3 – Fishing for koura

### 1. Introduction

There are two species of koura (freshwater crayfish): the northern koura and the southern koura. The regulations apply to both species without distinction.

The taking of koura for any purpose is controlled by the Fisheries Acts 1983 and 1996 and regulations made under those Acts. The Fisheries Acts are the responsibility of the Ministry of Fisheries (MFish). Further information on Fisheries Act requirements can be obtained from your local MFish office.

MFish has 18 offices around the country. There locations can be found by looking at the MFish website

<http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/info/contactus>

The four main regional offices are located in Auckland (09) 820 1990, Wellington (04) 470 2600, Nelson (03) 548 1069 and Dunedin (03) 474 0333

The Fisheries Act 1996 distinguishes between the taking fish for commercial, customary and recreational purposes. In general terms the regime is as follows.

### 2. Commercial fishing of koura

Neither species of koura is currently within the quota management system (QMS). However koura stocks in the South Island are listed in Schedule 4C of the Fisheries Act 1996. This means that MFish has concerns about the sustainability of the fishery and will not be issuing any new fishing permits (There are no existing permits). This means that commercial fishing of koura in the South Island is not possible under current law.

To fish commercially for koura in the North Island you would need to be issued with a fishing permit from MFish. No commercial fishing permits are believed to have been issued to date.

One of the reasons why there is no commercial fishing is that Regulation 71 of the *Freshwater*

*Fisheries Regulations 1983* “no person shall sell or trade or have in his possession for the purposes of sale or trade any freshwater crayfish or koura”.

The listing of koura in Schedule 4C of the Fisheries Act indicates MFish’s desire to bring koura within the QMS.

### 3. Recreational fishing of koura

You don’t need a fishing permit to take koura for recreational purposes but you do need to comply with the Fisheries (Amateur Fishing) Regulations. There is however, a daily combined bag limit of 50 that applies to shellfish that do not have specific limits such as freshwater crayfish.

Although there are few, if any, controls on recreational fishing, the prohibition on the sale or trade of koura under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 applies. This means that any koura taken must be used only for personal use or gifts/koha.

### 4. Customary fishing of koura

In addition to controlling recreational fishing, the *Fisheries (Amateur Fishing) Regulations* provide for *customary* fishing. Under Regulation 27A you can fish for a traditional hui or hangi provided the rules specified in the regulations are followed.

If fishing in the South Island, the Fisheries (South Island Customary Fishing) Regulations may apply rather than the Amateur Fishing Regulations.

Because there is no bag limit on recreational koura fishing it is unlikely that those wishing to fish for koura will need to rely on the customary fishing regulations. They are, however, described in some detail in Fact Sheet 1.

More information on customary fishing rules including brochures can be found at <http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Customary>.

Email enquiries can be made to [info@fish.govt.nz](mailto:info@fish.govt.nz)

## 5. Koura aquaculture

There are already several koura farms in New Zealand. To farm koura you need to obtain a license from the Minister of Fisheries under the *Freshwater Fish Farm Regulations 1993*.

A resource consent under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) is also likely to be required. Information on resource consent requirements will need to be obtained from your local territorial authority (i.e. city or district council) and your regional council.

Transferring koura from the wild (or from another koura farm) to stock a new farm is controlled under the Conservation Act 1987 and by the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983.

Under the Conservation Act 1987, before koura can be transferred to from one place where koura are present to another where koura are present (or between islands) approval must be gained from the Minister of Fisheries.

Under the same Act, before koura can be transferred to from one place where koura are present to another where koura are not already present (including a fish farm) approval must be gained from the Minister of Conservation.

Under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations, approval may be required from Fish and Game and/or the Director General of Conservation. These regulations are complex and contradictory and any one wishing to transfer koura should discuss what approvals are required directly with the Department of Conservation.

It must also be remembered that the prohibition on selling or trading, or having in possession koura for the purpose of sale or trade, appears to apply regardless of whether koura are farmed or caught in the wild. There is, therefore, some doubt about the lawfulness of existing farms and anyone wishing to establish a koura farm should discuss how regulatory agencies (DoC and MFish) currently apply and enforce the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations with regard to koura aquaculture.

The Department of Conservation's head office is in Wellington ph. (04) 471 0726. There are also regional offices in Hamilton (07) 858 0000 and Christchurch (03) 353 0580 and 13 conservancy

offices around the country. Contact details for your closest conservancy office can be found on the DoC website

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/templates/officebyname>

Enquiries can be made by email to [enquiries@doc.govt.nz](mailto:enquiries@doc.govt.nz).

## 6. Managing koura in the wild

Maintaining a healthy koura fishery in the wild requires management of two risks:

- habitat disturbance
- predation by pest fish

Koura are susceptible to land use practices and discharges of waste and other contaminants that effect water quality. This includes any activity that disturbs the river beds and banks (such as "stream cleaning") and point source and non point source (uncontrolled run-off from land) discharges.

These are all activities that can be controlled under the RMA by district and regional plans and individual resource consents. People and communities have an opportunity to have a say about the level of control that ought to be exercised over the activities.

If you have an interest in maintaining and improving the koura fishery you should talk to your district and regional council to find out what opportunities there are to participate in RMA processes.

Koura are also susceptible to predation by introduced pest fish, notably catfish. Whether and how a concerted effort is made to manage pest fish is determined largely by regional councils through their regional pest management strategies (RPMSs). There are also opportunities for the public to participate in the preparation and review of RMPSSs.

A map of district and regional councils along with contact details and links to district and regional plans can be found at:

<http://www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/councils>