SEAFOOD NEW ZEALAND

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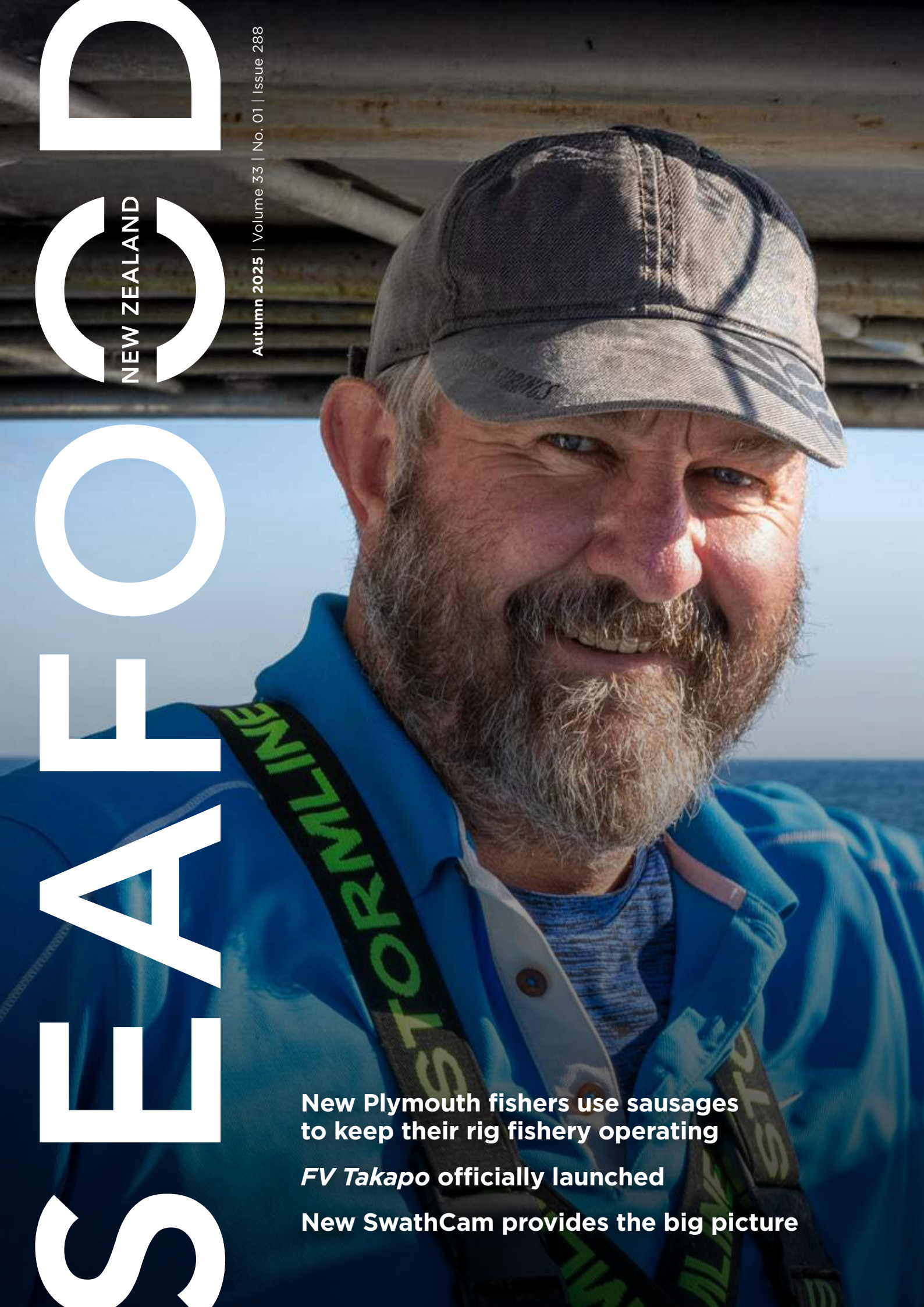


New Plymouth fishers use sausages to keep their rig fishery operating

***FV Takapo* officially launched**

New SwathCam provides the big picture

Young Fish Aotearoa NZ

Ngā Taiohi o te Moana

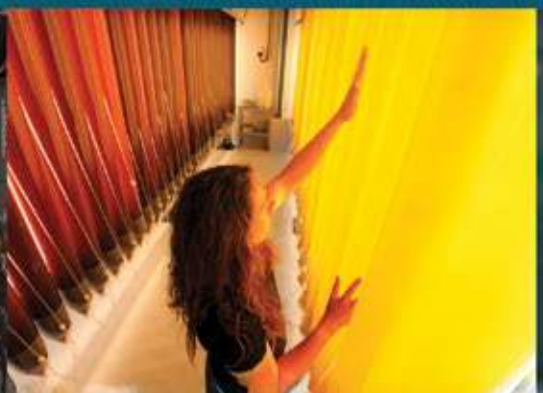
Connecting young people in Aotearoa's seafood communities

Young Fish NZ is a networking group for young people (under 35) involved in all parts of our seafood industry, from fishing and marine farming, to seafood processing, marketing, and science.

If this sounds like you, head to our website to get involved!

Not working in the industry? We have careers information too!

www.youngfish.co.nz



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EDITORIALS

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From the Chief Executive

Welcome to the autumn edition of our Seafood New Zealand magazine. While the longer days may be over, and the BBQs may be quiet, there are plenty of seasonal ways to eat seafood, as you'll see in the start of a new recipe series from a couple of emerging celebrity chefs – Tamar Wells and Zak Olsen (see page 32).

There's also plenty to celebrate in our industry and plenty to say thank you for. I want to start with a thank you to all in our industry who have offered their feedback on the proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act. We've described the suggested changes as "common sense", because they are. They are about updating and simplifying our fisheries management systems. As the introduction from the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries says (and we agree) the intention is to "make the fisheries system more responsive, certain and efficient."

Some of the expressed opposition to these changes has been highly exaggerated in terms of emotion and rhetoric. But anyone who has read the proposals will appreciate that these proposed changes will actually help bring some of our legislation up to date, recognising that we have better technology in our fisheries now – we should use it.

And speaking of technology, in this edition is a story about NIWA's new camera technology being used to survey our ocean floors. It's called SwathCam and, given our love of data and science at Seafood New Zealand, we are excited to see what it can do.

There are also new technologies to celebrate on the brand-new vessel commissioned by Nelson-based Solander Group. This impressive addition to the commercial fishing fleet is still being finished in Turkey, but the first pictures are available and we have them for you along with some of the details of this large-scale build.

Technology is exciting, but fishing is also about being close to nature. As you'll read on pages 9–10, I was able to get very close to nature when I travelled to Aotea Great Barrier Island to see firsthand the work being done to protect the tākoketai black petrel. These precious birds are currently classified as "nationally vulnerable" on the New Zealand threat classification system. But the research, education and advocacy programmes run by organisations such as Wildlife Management International Limited and the Southern Seabirds Trust are having a positive impact.

When fishers change their activity to protect seabirds or marine mammals it inevitably has an impact on their businesses. Our cover story is an example of how we find clever ways to stay sustainable in every sense, focusing on some New Plymouth-based fishers who have developed a seafood sausage which helps them catch rig on a hook – proof that seafood people know how to collaborate to develop innovative solutions.

And that brings me back to reflecting on the process around the proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act. The work to develop the suggested amendments was an excellent display of respect and teamwork. The proposals are owned by the Ministry for Primary Industries but we are grateful for the time they took, over many months, to hear from industry representatives about what works and what doesn't in our current system. As an industry, we would like even more change to address the huge cost burden we face. However, we are deeply appreciative of the thoughtful and thorough process that has led to this consultation. We believe it bodes well for the future of our industry and our fisheries, putting sustainability front and centre for the fish stocks, the oceans and our businesses. Thank you again to all who took part.

Lisa Futschek
Chief Executive, Seafood New Zealand

Seafood for Thought: Register early for the 2025 Seafood NZ conference

Join us for the 2025 Seafood New Zealand Conference, where fishers, industry leaders, scientists, researchers and policymakers come together to share knowledge, exchange ideas and explore opportunities for this $2.2 billion industry.

This year's theme, *Seafood for Thought*, challenges us to really think about seafood's role in our economy, environment and communities. With climate change, sustainability and consumer expectations evolving, it's more important than ever to collaborate, innovate and embrace science.

We'll dive into sustainability, technology, new research and global market trends – plus explore how storytelling can shape public perception. As an industry, we need to be doing more to showcase the people, passion and innovation behind the kaimoana.

With expert speakers, people from the coalface sharing their ideas, interactive panels and great networking, this is a must-attend event for anyone invested in the future of New Zealand seafood.

Make the most of the early bird prices and register now. The conference programme will be available online in May.

FEATURE

Bigger, better, clearer – NIWA's new SwathCam provides the big picture

There were a few nervous moments watching a giant piece of pioneering equipment go over the side of NIWA's new research vessel for the first time, but this game-changing marine science tool is a winner.

SwathCam's nine-metre metal frame is fitted with five downward-facing video cameras, one forward-facing one and an array of extremely strong lights to illuminate the ocean depths.

The ability for scientists to see what's on the sea floor just got a whole lot brighter with the invention of an underwater multiple-camera system – and some ingenious thinking – at the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA).

The system, known as SwathCam, was the idea of NIWA marine ecologist Dr Mark Morrison and takes advantage of a new fibre optic cable installed on NIWA's recently commissioned research vessel *Kaharoa II*.

SwathCam is essentially a nine-metre metal frame fitted with five downward-facing video cameras – and one forward-facing one – and an array of extremely strong lights to provide crystal-clear visibility in the dark depths of the ocean.

Suspended from *Kaharoa II*, SwathCam is towed through the water about two to three metres off the seabed, sending high-resolution live video back on board for viewing in real time.

Most of NIWA's current imaging systems are fitted with single cameras with relatively narrow fields of view – the SwathCam provides up to 10 times that ability, both at fine spatial scales (seeing how individuals of different species associate with each other and their habitats) and broader spatial scales (how many fish are present in an area, how are they distributed across different habitats).

For Dr Morrison, this is a game changer, not only for estimating fish species abundances and sizes, but also in understanding what seafloor habitats are present and how fish interact with them.

"We can now get a lot more information when surveying for the same effort and money, with the much higher spatial extent of the imagery. You can also use the cameras seamlessly over reefs and protected or vulnerable seafloors you really don't want to damage. It is a really good way of looking at things like marine reserves.

"The more we can measure, the stronger the data support for statistics and modelling, and the greater the new knowledge gains.

"By using this camera system we're going to get up to six times as much spatial data overall for the same amount of tow effort, as well as being able to 'stitch together' at fine scales the five cameras' fields of view to create local image mosaics.

"You can also use the cameras seamlessly over reefs and protected or vulnerable seafloors you really don't want to damage. It is a really good way of looking at things like marine reserves."

"These local image mosaics will allow us to ask questions about the fine scale associations of different species and their importance, which was not previously possible."

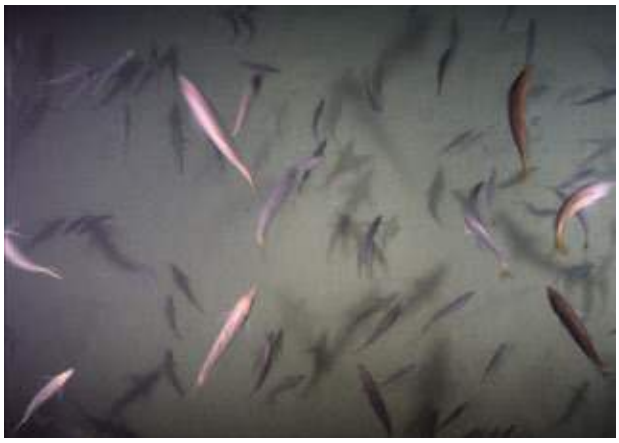
SwathCam was built by NIWA's Marine Technology Group, led by Will Quinn. During the design and build the team found some smaller and less-sophisticated cameras recently built overseas, enabling the team to build on some aspects of the simpler systems for the SwathCam.

"We've managed to improve on those overseas examples by adding more capabilities and video cameras on a much bigger frame," says Dr Morrison.

SwathCam has a variety of applications, with more likely to be discovered. For counting fish, it has 24/7 operability.

"Night-deployed SwathCam is particularly effective at counting and measuring fish species that sleep on the seafloor at night, such as snapper and tarakihi – which, during the day, are largely 'invisible' to towed cameras, as they actively move away and avoid being seen," says Dr Morrison.

SwathCam is less invasive than other methods of estimating fish abundance, like trawling, and is more able to distinguish between species compared to other technology such as echosounders, which bounce sound waves off different animals.



Stills from SwathCam's six cameras, allowing scientists to collect baseline information on habitats, fish abundance and more.

> **"When you know how many fish can be taken out of the system, you have a sustainable, productive fishery."**

To keep the large SwathCam stable during tows, NIWA uses a bridle system with two cables off its wings and a solid weight in the centre.

Dr Richard O'Driscoll, NIWA's chief fisheries scientist, says knowing how many fish are out there is vital information for fisheries managers. "They need to know how fast a fish grows, how old it gets to and what its reproductive rate is," says Dr O'Driscoll.

"We also need to know what the standing stock is – how many sheep are in the paddock, if you like. That data and advice allow managers to set commercial quotas or recreational bag limits and understand what species need to be protected or whether we can catch more.

"When you know how many fish can be taken out of the system, you have a sustainable, productive fishery."

Testing SwathCam produced a couple of heart-in-mouth moments, with fears the huge bar would swing around in the water and keep on spinning.

"I think everyone was nervous when we went out and tested it for the first time. Looking at it on the deck, it's a big piece of kit and there was some concern it wasn't going to fly straight," says Dr O'Driscoll.

"But the crew of *Kaharoa II* and the technical team have worked out a way which means it's very stable when we tow it, and the images were really good."

Dr Morrison says he had many sleepless nights worrying about how SwathCam was going to perform in the water.

"It's a beast. Most things we deploy are much smaller and much less awkward, so this was a real challenge. We've used a bridle system that has two cables off the wings and a big solid weight in the centre, so that seems to keep it pretty much rock solid. It doesn't have a lot in the way of fins to keep it in the current, but it still manages."

The initial deployment trials took place in Wellington Harbour.

"We were really wanting to make sure that it flew right, that it towed correctly and as expected. I had a contingency plan, but it worked out really, really well."

A dynamic GPS tracking system also shows in real-time where SwathCam is behind the vessel, and how 'square-on' its nine-metre frame is relative to the survey vessel's track. This information is used by the survey vessel to make small adjustments such as counteracting water current and/or wind effects, using its bow thruster.

The high-precision GPS tracking data also allows later office-based analyses to accurately overlay SwathCam

To keep the large SwathCam stable during tows, NIWA uses a bridle system with two cables off its wings and a solid weight in the centre.

over other independent spatial data coverages, such as high-quality multibeam sonar seafloor maps and water current models.

The SwathCam had its inaugural scientific outing in Tīkapa Moana Hauraki Gulf at the end of last year – also the first voyage for *Kaharoa II*. Scientists collected baseline information on habitats in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park in a survey funded by Fisheries New Zealand, Seafood New Zealand and the Department of Conservation.

Almost 300 sites were surveyed over three weeks, delivering incredible imagery and a rich set of data.

"There was a lot of sand and mud down there but also an incredible diversity of habitats; the number of fish we saw was really promising," says Dr O'Driscoll.

Dr Morrison says scientists are expecting protected areas in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park to change over time as the seafloor and the habitats it sustains recover. "We expect the fish to respond to that habitat recovery positively as well.

"So, by using the SwathCam to capture both habitats and fish at the same time – and over time – we'll get a really good idea of how fish populations are benefiting (higher abundances, faster growth, better survivorship). Benefits which, in turn, flow on to us as well. Such knowledge will also help us in identifying where our best prospects lie for active habitat restoration."

SwathCam's multiple camera technology also enables the creation of 3D imagery using photogrammetry. Such imagery has strong potential for habitat and geological applications, such as quantifying how structurally complex different habitats are, and how different fish species respond to that complexity, or how soft sediment and reef seafloors are being shaped and changed by storm events.

"As a technological science organisation we're always looking to improve and develop our equipment. Here, we built on an internal new innovative NIWA staff idea with the assistance of some overseas parallels, and made it bigger and better," says Dr O'Driscoll.

"It's really exceeded our expectations."

Taking to the bush for the tākoketai

Earlier this year, Seafood New Zealand Chief Executive Lisa Futschek spent two days on Aotea Great Barrier Island observing and participating in the tākoketai black petrel research and conservation programme undertaken by Biz Bell and her team at Wildlife Management International Limited (WMIL). Lisa sits down with Jen Vallance to talk about this unique 'out-of-office' experience.

What inspired you to go on this trip?

I see understanding the impact of our industry on the environment, ecosystems and protected species as a key part of my role. This was a fantastic opportunity to step out of the office and learn from Biz, who manages the tākoketai black petrel study. I had heard about her work and was keen to learn more, especially the efforts to educate fishers by including them in her advocacy programme, and whether we – as an organisation and industry – could do more to support this work.

Can you share a standout moment from your time on Aotea Great Barrier Island?

Well, there were several standout moments, but one of the highlights for me was when it was my turn to check one of the burrows. Stepping off the boardwalk, I had to clamber up a reasonably steep, mossy forest bank and lie wedged between the various pieces of undergrowth in order to access the burrow.

Then, with a leather glove on, I reached in, not knowing if anything was inside. I found out quickly. Something clamped onto my finger. I then did what we were taught – brought my other fingers in on top to hold the beak securely and gently but firmly, guided the bird out. And a bonus, we discovered the burrow had an egg inside, so after the petrel's band had been checked and recorded it was placed straight back inside to continue incubating its chick to be.

What stood out to me about this whole process was how calm the bird remained throughout. It didn't struggle or seem frightened – it just cooperated. The whole interaction felt natural, not stressful.

Lisa and her chick.

Wildlife Management International Limited managing director Biz Bell sees huge value in including fishers in the programme.

The other stand-out moment was band-checking at night as the petrels came in to land after foraging. Heading out into the dark of the forest shortly before midnight, I wondered how on earth we would be able to spot them. I needn't have worried. There is nothing smooth about a tākoketai landing! They crash land in a kind of loud, shambolic tumble, so it's not hard to find and band-check them. On my second night on Aotea, three unbanded black petrels touched down, so banding them for adding to the study database was pretty exciting.

If you could bring one lesson from this trip back to others in the industry, what would it be?

I learnt a lot, but there was one important message from Biz I would like to share: there is no need for fishers to be fearful. She doesn't want us to be afraid if we accidentally catch a banded petrel. If it's still alive, we just need to know how to handle it correctly; if it has died the most helpful thing we can do is report the band information, as it represents key data for the study.

What role does the fishing industry have in protecting seabirds?

As an industry, our role is to do everything we can to mitigate the impact we have on all protected species, including seabirds. When it comes to black petrels, these birds are classified as "Nationally Vulnerable" – we would all love to see this improve. We certainly don't want it going in the other direction.

As an organisation we have a duty to help raise awareness, to make sure fishers are deploying the right mitigation measures during the right times, and that they know how to correctly handle these birds. We also need to continuously look at new ways to reduce our impact.

It was encouraging to hear Biz talking about the commitment of fishers to black petrel conservation efforts. Like me, many fishers have participated in Biz's advocacy programmes over the years, coming away with a strong appreciation for mitigation measures and what to do if an accidental interaction does occur. How to handle, untangle and wrangle petrels is a practical focus of the education Biz imparts.

What do you see as the biggest challenge in balancing a sustainable and productive fishing industry with effective seabird conservation?

For me, it actually comes down to collaboration and relationships. Working with WMIL and Southern Seabirds Trust (which we and several fishing companies are part of) is fantastic because being in the same tent produces results. I think it's counterproductive when organisations are at loggerheads. Our industry is constantly under attack from environmental groups who are not willing to meet around the table or even acknowledge the work that is happening to reduce the impact of fishing on the environment and wildlife. Over 100 commercial fishers have participated in WMIL's Great Barrier programme so far.

Yes, there is always more we can do, new ways we can do something, but it's not fair or respectful to constantly have the finger pointed in our direction. Ensuring our fishers are part of the solution is important to us.

Any final thoughts?

I spend a lot of time in an office, so being on Great Barrier Island – clambering up cliffs at midnight, waiting for black petrels to dive-bomb into the scrub, then carefully capturing them and checking their tags – brought the creatures and their situation to life in a way nothing else could.

Thank you Biz and Southern Seabirds Trust for the work you do and this wonderful opportunity!

About Wildlife Management International Limited (WMIL)

WMIL has been contracted by the Department of Conservation and Ministry for Primary Industries since 1996 to carry out tākoketai black petrel monitoring on Aotea Great Barrier Island.

The work studies the population trends, breeding success, recruitment and survival of tākoketai at the main colony on Hirakimata Mount Hobson to help assess the risks these birds face on land and at sea.

The tākoketai black petrel is endemic to New Zealand. Predators, such as feral cats and pigs, caused their extinction on the mainland from the 1950s and as a threatened species they are currently classified as "Nationally Vulnerable" on the New Zealand Threat Classification System.

Tracking data from the longitudinal study has revealed that these birds travel thousands of kilometres and forage over a wide area, including the waters off the coasts of Central and South America, returning exclusively to Tīkapa Moana Hauraki Gulf to breed.

Learn more about WMIL and the work they do here in Aotearoa and around the world at *wmil.co.nz*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Seabird-smart individuals honoured

On 12 February 2025, the biennial Seabird Smart Awards – an initiative of the Southern Seabird Solutions Trust (Trust) – were presented to three deserving industry leaders.

From left: Celebrity chef Al Brown, John Ellwood, Rosa Edwards, Greg Summerton, Dame Cindy Kiro and Dr Richard Davies. Photo: Focal Point Photos

Her Excellency The Rt Hon Dame Cindy Kiro presented the awards, which recognise commercial and recreational fishers who have shown outstanding leadership and commitment to looking after New Zeland's seabirds, at Government House in Auckland.

"As a country, New Zealand has a particular affinity for birds – and I'm sure it wouldn't be an overstatement to say that they're a significant part of our national character," she said in her congratulatory speech.

Seafood New Zealand Chief Executive and Southern Seabirds Trustee Lisa Futschek says, "New Zealand's seabirds are such an important part of our environment. You become even more invested in protecting these birds when you experience them up close, which I was recently able to do on Aotea Great Barrier Island, so it's great to see these three individuals honoured for their achievements – and we are particularly proud of Rosa, of course!"

Supreme Award
Greg Summerton / Okains Bay Seafood

The owner of Ōtautahi Christchurch-based Okains Bay Seafood, Greg Summerton has spent four years developing a potting method to replace the hooks and lines he previously used to target ling, a deepsea fish.
The pots are lightweight and collapsible, making them easy to store on the vessel, and government officials have confirmed there is zero risk of seabirds becoming caught in his pots.

Seven New Zealand boats – five longliners and two trawlers – have already pivoted to Greg's potting method.

Trust Chair Bill Mansfield said, "The potential for this method to be used in similar fisheries targeting the same types of fish overseas is very good news for our seabirds. New Zealand is the breeding ground for a third of the world's seabird species, and many of these birds are caught by other countries fleets outside our waters. Greg's pots could make a huge difference."

> **"New Zealand's seabirds are such an important part of our environment...so it's great to see these three individuals honoured for their achievements."**

Advocacy Award
John Ellwood / Marine Adventures

Whitianga charter skipper John Ellwood takes about 2,000 people fishing every year, giving him a wide audience to promote seabird-smart fishing practices and motivate recreational fishers to protect seabirds from getting hooked while fishing.

John's 40-year career gives him both the experience and influence to impact recreational fishing habits for the better.

Leadership Award
Rosa Edwards / Seafood New Zealand Inshore Council

Rosa Edwards, who just concluded her four-year tenure as an inshore fisheries manager at Seafood New Zealand, was recognised for her work supporting commercial fishers to be seabird-smart, working with them to develop innovative solutions and a solutions-focused mentality.

About the Southern Seabird Solutions Trust

Founded in 2006 by a combination of seafood industry leaders, conservationists, New Zealand government, scientists and more, Southern Seabird Solutions Trust is committed to improving the conservation status of Aotearoa New Zealand's seabirds.

The motto "conservation through cooperation" is the key to the charitable Trust's goal of finding effective, long-term solutions to seabird bycatch in the Southern Hemisphere. The Trust helps develop, test and monitor seabird mitigation devices with commercial fishers and promotes smart fishing practices amongst recreational fishers and in international fisheries. In 2023, their work included supporting Australian organisation CSIRO develop AI solutions for seabird detection and mitigation; providing seabird-smart toolkits to APEC fishing companies; and assisting high seas tuna fishing fleets with their transition to seabird-smart fishing practices. Trust representatives also conducted awareness campaigns around key New Zealand recreational and commercial fishing hubs.

Today, its board of trustees includes members of Fisheries New Zealand, Seafood New Zealand, WWF-New Zealand, the Department of Conservation, Te Ohu Kaimoana and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. His Royal Highness King Charles III is the Patron of the Trust.

For more information about the Trust and Seabird Smart Awards, visit *catchfishnotbirds.nz*

FV Takapo officially launched

In Yalova, Turkey, on 14 March the newest member of Aotearoa New Zealand's deepsea fleet was officially launched: Aurora Fisheries' 80-metre factory trawler *FV Takapo*.

Designed by Norway's Skipsteknisk and built by one of Turkey's largest newbuild shipyards, Tersan Shipyard, *Takapo* is the first New Zealand-flagged ship built in Turkey.

Purpose-built to New Zealand's fisheries conditions, featuring advanced refrigeration systems, sustainable fish processing technology and an energy-efficient design, it will replace Aurora Fisheries' (which is part of Nelson-based Solander Group) existing vessel.

Solander Group CEO Paul Hufflett travelled to Yalova for the launch, saying the vessel's design will not only increase productivity but also reduce the company's carbon footprint.

"As we continue to face global challenges such as rising operating costs, climate change and global uncertainties, the New Zealand seafood industry needs to evolve to meet these challenges head-on," he said at the event.

"This trawler embodies our commitment to innovation and sustainability. It is designed with the latest technological advancements to ensure that we not only meet the needs of today but are prepared for the demands of tomorrow."

Tersan Shipyard CEO Mehmet Gazioğlu said, "This project is very important for our shipyard and country because she will be one of the pioneering vessels equipped with the latest technologies to catch and process region-specific fish in the southern hemisphere, within New Zealand's waters."

New Zealand Ambassador Greg Lewis, Turkey's Deputy Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Durmuş Ünüvar, Yalova Governor Hülya Kaya, Tersan Shipyard board members and other dignitaries also attended the launch.

The vessel can sleep up to 50 people, including spacious living areas and social amenities, and a state-of-the-art bridge and factory. In its on-board advanced processing factory catch will be processed and packaged as fillets or head and gutted products, then frozen at -30 degrees Celcius and stored in cold storage. Additionally, the ship is equipped with a surimi processing system to turn fish into paste and a 250-tonne capacity reverse osmosis system.

Solander Group CEO Paul Hufflett speaks at the launch of *Takapo* in Yalova, Turkey.

For the next six months, *Takapo* will undergo final work on the water, including painting, and will arrive in Tīmaru in the last quarter of 2025, ready to sustainably fish for species such as southern blue whiting, jack mackerel, ling, squid and hake in sub-Anrarctic waters.

Takapo is also the first new trawler built for New Zealand's fishing fleet since 2018, which Hufflett says is an "essential revitalisation" of New Zealand's deepwater fishing fleet and greatly expands its export capabilities.

"We are embarking on a new chapter in fishing innovation, and I am confident that this factory trawler will serve as a cornerstone for future successes."

"We are embarking on a new chapter in fishing innovation, and I am confident that this factory trawler will serve as a cornerstone for future successes."

Takapo fast facts

VESSEL TYPE: Factory freezer trawler

LENGTH: 80m

BREADTH: 15.4m

CLASS: DNV+1A1, E0, TMON, Clean, "Sterntrawler", Ice 1B

TOP SPEED: 15 knots

ACCOMMODATION: 50

FREEZER CARGO HOLD: 2,135 m^3

FLAG: New Zealand

Scientist uses art to breathe life into bycatch research

A scientist has found a unique way to help communicate her research on bycatch and fish behaviour by using a comic book to bring her findings to life. Sally Kidson reports.

"I really wanted to make it in a format that skippers and fishers would read, not just a dry academic paper that is just going to sit somewhere," Dr Sunkita Howard says.

Dr Howard says her artistic approach initially raised eyebrows, with some of her supervisors questioning if the report was serious science. However, she was adamant her reports should be useful to skippers and fishers and wanted to ensure important parts of her work would stand out and not get lost.

"I don't think the skippers I've worked with would appreciate the value or usefulness of my research findings unless I make it accessible to them."

The resulting comic, *Bluenose Bycatch Final Report*, is the culmination of a five-year project looking at ways to reduce bluenose bycatch in the alfonsino fishery. The work was co-funded by Sealord, Westfleet, Sanford and a grant from the Seafood Innovation Fund.

A standout memory from her last trip on the *Tokatu* was finding the second mate reading her comic. This sparked a conversation which showed he understood her research's findings and its relevance, she says.

"He was excited about it, and I was stoked because my work relies on fisher input."

The comic is not just pretty artwork, though. The B-side of each page contains material supporting Dr Howard's findings, with links to data sets, graphs or video footage.

Dr Howard has a long interest in using art to communicate science. She decided to use a comic after trialling different ways to share her bycatch research, none of which were fully successful.

The cover of Dr Sunkita Howard's *Bluenose Bycatch Final Report*, featuring a quote from *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

Left: The introduction to chapter one of Dr Sunkita Howard's research report, explaining how to use the comic.
Right: Dr Sunkita Howard with Sealord *Tokatu* Skipper Rex Chapman.

She wrote technical reports but, when she asked for feedback, discovered most people hadn't read them. She also tried video reports – but discovered most didn't watch to the end of the video.

"I'm no David Attenborough... Also, the points I'm making about fish behaviour can be hard to see when there are 10,000 fish all moving at once in a video. Once you've had a simplified example it is easier to recognise."

Her research involved analysing hours of video footage and studying fish behaviour around trawl gear to develop a device to reduce bluenose bycatch. The project was slated for three years but took five – with a lot of the useful information coming in the last year. The past 12 months have been self-funded.

> **"My mentors have been the skippers. It's been such a privilege; it has been really amazing."**

"We've just been running on pure love for quite a while now."

During the project, Dr Howard found herself without other scientists as mentors, so she turned to skippers, which she believes was one of her work's strengths.

"My mentors have been the skippers. It's been such a privilege; it has been really amazing.

"At every step of the process I've tried to find out what skippers know and value and respond to that. Any success I've had has been thanks to their contributions.

"It would have been easy to go in the wrong direction if I hadn't had their input. So many times, skippers have had to bang me over the head with things to help me get to their perspective because it is so different to mine."

Dr Howard says the project was not successful in developing a device that prevented bluenose bycatch. However, bluenose bycatch is much less of a problem on the vessels she worked with – something she puts down to skippers making changes themselves and the project drawing attention to the need to reduce bycatch in those fisheries.

"I can't claim the reduction in bycatch – but I don't think it's a coincidence it has reduced. It has just come about in a different way than what I thought.

"We've been having meetings every six months and discussing my findings and the skippers have been sharing information with each other. At management level there's been a greater emphasis on the importance of not catching bluenose and I think that probably contributed to skippers figuring out their own innovations."

Dr Howard can't share details of her research until it is published, but believes some of her findings around fish behaviour in relation to the speed of the trawl net are "groundbreaking". And – if proven – could improve the quality of fish being caught.

One of her big takeaways is the need for scientists to work more closely with skippers to find ways and devices to reduce bycatch.

"I think a lot of fisheries science, especially bycatch mitigation technology development, fails because it doesn't involve skippers in a truly meaningful way. People build things for skippers while involving them only at a tokenistic level, then wonder why skippers don't use their bycatch reduction devices."

Ultimately, Dr Howard enjoyed sharing her ideas around fish behaviour with skippers and felt encouraged and supported by them.

"It does feel really audacious for a younger woman telling someone who has spent their whole career developing their knowledge and skillset to say, 'I've got an idea. Have you tried such and such?'"

Tokatu Skipper Rex Chapman says Dr Howard's comic will appeal to some skippers and crews.

"I myself prefer academic reports but these were available through links in the comic. I understand that Sunkita doing comics was an effort to get engagement. My previous first mate really liked the comics."

He found her ideas on fish behaviour in relation to trawl speed, and their reactions to oxygen levels and lights, very interesting.

"The more I learn about behaviour of different fish species, the better fisherman I can become.

"I found if you engage and have questions or theories on fish behaviour Sunkita will strive to look into these areas and has extensive knowledge which in turn explains why fish react in certain ways in regard to trawling and environments."

Sealord's Resource Manager Charles Heaphy really likes the way Dr Howard has communicated her findings, which is a natural fit with her love of art and science.

"I work with the scientists and the fishermen, and they've got completely different ways of communicating. We want to break down that barrier, and scientific writing is a massive barrier. It's really great to recognise that and try to work around it."

Dr Howard is now working on publishing her research in scientific journals, where it will be peer-reviewed. Working with the seafood industry to reduce bycatch is work she hopes to keep doing.

"I really feel this work is a calling and I enjoy it so much. I feel like it is meaningful and a contribution I can make to the world."

Sausage to the rescue

A group of Ngāmotu New Plymouth fishers are using cooperation, innovation and sausages to keep their rig fishery operating.

Keeping dolphins safe has become a priority for New Zealand's commercial fishing sector, particularly for fishers operating on the west coast of the North Island in Māui habitat. When set netting and trawling were banned in certain areas in 2020, it was suddenly much harder for fishers to catch rig – a popular fish and chip species.

So how to adapt?

Rob Ansley (right) and Jerome Chua on board *Layla* off the New Plymouth coast, discussing the latest bait sausage results.

Rig were traditionally caught in set nets and trawl. It was received wisdom that they were reluctant to take a hook, so longlining was supposedly not an option.

However, some fishers weren't giving up and wanted to try something new. Among them was Rob Ansley, skipper and managing director of Ocean Pearl Fisheries.

At work in the rig fishery hauling longlines on board *Layla*.

"We can get a good boat price for rig, it's a popular fish and there's strong demand. We had the ACE (Annual Catch Entitlement) but with the need to prioritise protecting dolphins, we just couldn't catch it.

"I had this idea that crab would be a way to get the rig to take a hook. But that was problematic. We couldn't get the crab in the numbers we needed plus the flesh was too soft to stay on the hook. We were back to square one, but then I had the idea of trying cray legs. Rig love cray, and that worked better than crab, but we needed to take it to the next level."

> **"Rather than seeing natural mortalities go to waste, we saw an opportunity to support innovation in another fishery while also contributing to a more sustainable seafood industry."**

That's where Keith Mawson of Egmont Seafoods and a whole boatload of supporters came in.

Crucially, these supporters included Fiordland Lobster Company, which was looking for ways to reduce waste. Inevitably in any fishery there are natural mortalities. Normally these would go to landfill, but a partnership with rig fishing offered an alternative.

Egmont Seafoods' Keith Mawson, a driving force behind the sausage bait project.

Rig processing at Egmont Seafoods.

Fiordland Lobster Company Director Mark Peychers says, "For us, it's about making sure every part of the lobster is valued. Rather than seeing natural mortalities go to waste, we saw an opportunity to support innovation in another fishery while also contributing to a more sustainable seafood industry.

"The collaboration with Rob and his team is a great example of fishers working together to find smart, practical solutions."

Rob's trials with crayfish legs showed rig were willing to take the bait. But an even better method was yet to come – one that used *all* the waste crayfish.

This next method involved a much larger cast of characters, with the Ministry for Primary Industries coordinating some introductions and then offering support to trial the new product. Funding was provided by a Bioresource Processing Alliance Fellowship grant and Massey University suggested Jerome Chua, a masters student with an inventive streak.

Jerome started experimenting with how to get cray mince to stick to a fishing hook. The solution – a sausage.

"Drawing from my expertise in food technology, I developed the sausage bait with a unique binder system that enhances durability and attraction for rig fishing – applying food science to drive innovation in the fishing industry. This approach highlights how science and technology can create sustainable solutions for the future of fishing."

Massey University's Eve Kawana-Brown, the business development manager for Taranaki, said the chance for the university to assist was welcome.

"It's always exciting to work with local industry who are keen to innovate, while at the same time providing an emerging scientist with a real-life context for developing his technical and research skills."

And in this real-life context, the 'sea sausages' were a huge hit with rig. Rob says the results were a very pleasant surprise.

"Initially I was worried that the rig wouldn't be attracted to the bait because it wouldn't appeal to them visually, but as soon as we started and I saw the results I thought, 'Nah, we're away.'"

For Keith Mawson, whose Egmont Seafoods team is processing the rig, the most satisfying aspect is the number of common-sense sustainability boxes the cray sausage ticks.

"The cray bodies, which would previously have been going to landfill, are now being utilised. Plus, bait is becoming expensive, and this product is a better alternative in that sense. There is also the circular benefit to Fiordland Lobster Company because rig predate crayfish, so continuing the rig fishery helps ensure that the cray fishery isn't being adversely impacted by an overabundance of rig."

The group are yet to explore commercial opportunities. For now, testing continues. But they are very open to the idea of sharing access to the sausages – there's enough for everyone to have a bite.

Watch the video here by scanning this QR code

"catch fish...not cables"

There are a number of international submarine cables which come ashore in the Auckland area. These cables supply international communications for both New Zealand and Australia to the rest of the world.

New Zealand is a very isolated nation and as such is extremely reliant upon global communication via submarine cables. Here in New Zealand over 98% of all international communication is carried via submarine fibre optic cables. These cables are a key component of New Zealand's infrastructure and play a significant role in our everyday lives, the general economy and future growth of New Zealand.

These cables are laid in three submarine cable corridors in the greater Auckland area where anchoring and fishing is prohibited under the Submarine Cables & Pipelines Protection Act.

These areas are:

- **Muriwai Beach** out to the 12 mile territorial limit where both anchoring and fishing is prohibited.
- **Scott Point to Island Bay** in the upper Waitemata Harbour where anchoring is prohibited.
- **Takapuna Beach t**his runs from Takapuna Beach in the south to just north of the Hen & Chicken Island (opposite Taiharuru Head) where anchoring and fishing is prohibited.

Note: These protected areas are monitored by sea and air patrols.

Symbols Relating To Submarine Cables

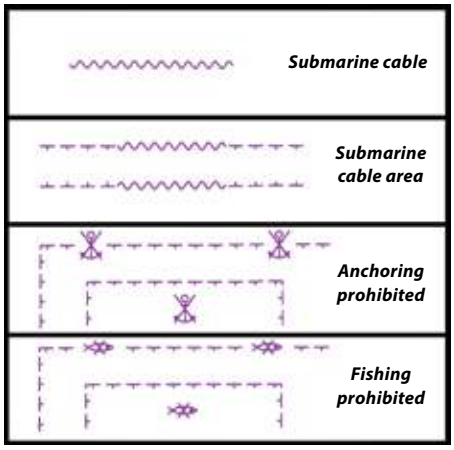


Figure 1.

These are some of the penalties

- **A maximum fine of $20,000 for a non-commercial vessel.**
- **A maximum fine of $100, 000 for a commercial vessel.**
- **A maximum fine of $250,000 for damaging a submarine cable.**

Additional to the fine for damage, the cable owners would inevitably pursue the recovery of costs associated with repairs, this could be up to $100,000 plus a day; a typical repair can take up to two weeks.

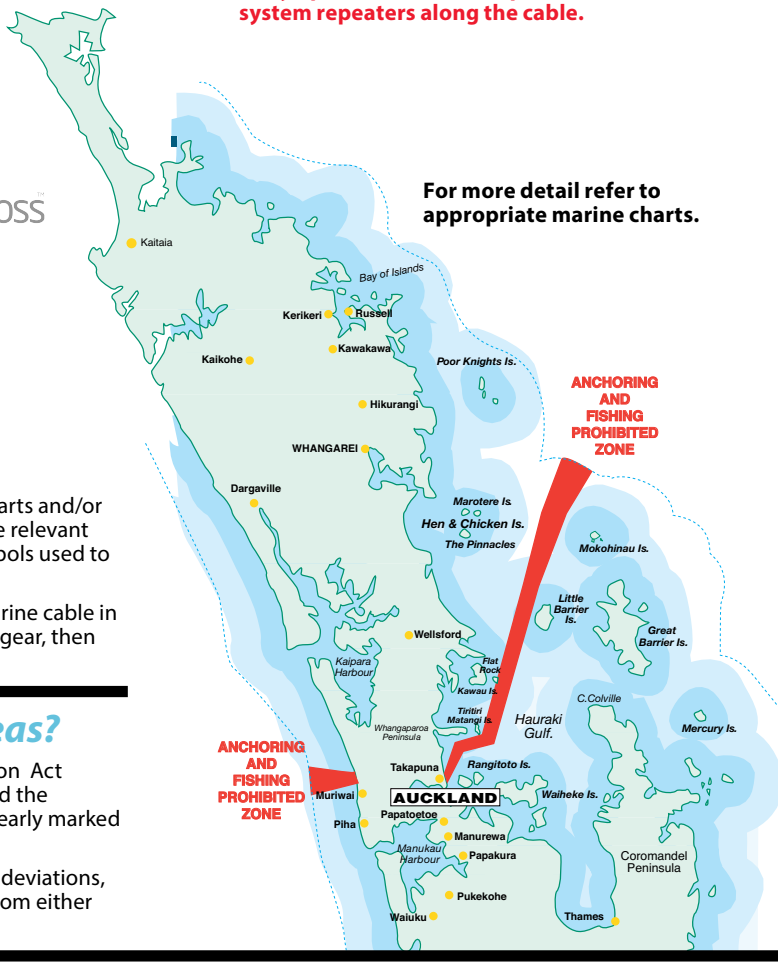
Be Aware

These International submarine cables carry up to 10,000 volts to power the system repeaters along the cable.

International Cable Protection Committee

Spark New Zealand

SouthernCross Cable Network



For more detail refer to appropriate marine charts.

What should you do?

- If you are going into any of these areas, be sure to check your marine charts and/or GPS plotter so you know the exact locations of the prohibited zones. The relevant charts are NZ53, NZ5322, NZ532, NZ522, NZ52, NZ42 and NZ43. The symbols used to mark the zones are detailed in Figure 1.
- If you suspect you have snagged your anchor or fishing gear on a submarine cable in one of these areas, don't try to free it. Note your position, abandon your gear, then call 0800 782 627.

What happens outside the prohibited areas?

These cables are covered by the Submarine Cables and Pipelines Protection Act regardless of whether they are inside or outside a prohibited area. Beyond the confines of the "anchoring and fishing prohibited" areas, the cables are clearly marked on the appropriate marine charts.

Considering possible positioning inaccuracies and repaired cable section deviations, fishermen are advised to keep a minimum distance of one nautical mile from either side of charted cables.

Note this number:

For any queries regarding submarine cables call: 0800 782 627

VPS131

FEATURE

Built for growth: Wellington Kaimoana Hub makes a splash in Porirua

The Wellington Kaimoana Hub (the Hub) marks Moana New Zealand and Tātai Kōura's third joint kaimoana processing venture – and includes a multi-use seafood processing factory with export capability built to meet growing demand for premium kaimoana from Aotearoa. The Hub is the largest facility for Tātai Kōura and is Moana's second-largest facility.

The Wellington Kaimoana Hub in Porirua, Wellington.

The $16.5 million investment by Moana and Tātai Kōura is a true testament to the businesses' commitment to the region, with it being the largest seafood processing facility in the lower North Island. The Hub will enhance production capacity, business continuity (including export) and serve as a key site for international visitors, showcasing Māori-owned businesses. The Hub is a significant investment for both organisations, built to increase output through processing efficiencies and for future growth.

Tātai Kōura is the second-largest exporter of live kōura in New Zealand. Moana is the largest inshore finfish operator and also the largest processor of wild pāua in New Zealand. This new facility supports the expansion into live export of wild pāua, having been co-located on a trial basis with Tātai Kōura previously. Historically, Moana has operated a domestic finfish business in the Wellington region since October 2009, and its two retail outlets can be found in Moore Wilson's fresh markets in central Wellington and Porirua.

Tātai Kōura Board Chair and Moana Inshore General Manager Mark Ngata says, "We see the consolidation of our Wellington operations as a continuous testament to kotahitanga and living true to our shared values of kaitiakitanga, whakapapa, manaakitanga and whakatipuranga."

Moana New Zealand CEO Steve Tarrant says the Hub is proof of Moana's long-term commitment not only to the region, but to iwi.

"We operate in an entirely unique business model as the only pan-iwi-owned business. Working with local and regional fishers, businesses and communities whilst investing in infrastructure ensures we continue to add value for our iwi owners. In 2023, Moana New Zealand acquired all of Sanford Limited's North Island inshore

annual catch entitlements (ACE), which has seen the company increase our total allowable commercial catch by 50%. The Wellington Kaimoana Hub is intended to support the increased volume of fish we now process, which is significant. I'm pleased our people worked hard to get this project off the ground to deliver this fit-for-purpose facility."

Tātai Kōura CEO Grant Absalom says, "We are very pleased with the new Kaimoana Hub in Porirua – it's an incredible facility with room to grow for our businesses. This has been a great, collective effort for the project team, and we should all be very proud of the collaboration and time, energy and hard work of all involved in the creation of this facility."

During the construction of the Hub, both businesses' management teams were actively involved in the design process, build and transition, providing valuable insights and ensuring the facility met their operational needs. Moana's Wellington kaimahi provided insight throughout the process and Moana supported a bottom-up approach to the design and construction.

The project incorporated several sustainability features, such as LED lighting throughout the facility, long-life refrigerants with less global warming potential and water-saving fixtures which include metering that is electronically reported.

Tarrant adds, "The decision to invest in a larger facility now, rather than retrofitting later, was a key outcome for both businesses. This approach not only reduces future construction costs and operational disruptions but also enhances current capacity and provides scope for incremental growth over the medium and long term. This is whakatipuranga in action – contributing a solid infrastructure base for future generations. It's a brand-new environment for our kaimahi to operate from and we'll be measuring our carbon emissions monthly to track usage and the impact of any process changes as a result."

The Hub is the largest facility for Tātai Kōura and is Moana New Zealand's second-largest facility.

The project incorporated several sustainability features, such as LED lighting, long-life refrigerants and water-saving fixtures.

Moana New Zealand's Southern Regional Operations Manager Terry Gittings showing Moana's ika chillers.

Catchin' up with Reel Seafoods

In this issue, we caught up with Dave Brosnahan who, along with his fiancée, Kelly, are the new owners of Paraparaumu-based Reel Seafoods (formerly Waikanae Crab). It's been a busy nine months for the couple but they're loving the challenge of providing Kāpiti Coast locals with top-quality, locally caught seafood.

Dave and Kelly standing in front of their Reel Seafoods headquarters.

How did you first get into commercial fishing/the seafood business?

I pretty much grew up rec fishing. I worked on a few charter boats on Lake Taupō as a real young fella. Fast forward to 2019 and I brought a charter boat that runs out of Waikanae – Reel Charters – and also worked as a deckie for the old owners of this company. Then, almost a year ago, when the owners decided it was time to move on, we just decided to bite the bullet. Kelly quit her job and I moved the charter business down the list of importance and here we are.

What does a typical week look like for you both?

Each week, I head out on *Seahorse* three to four times. Depends on weather, really. Sometimes Kelly comes too. We do a mix of set netting, potting and longlining and try bring in whatever is in season – blue cod in winter, tuna in summer and butterfish year-round.

Kelly runs the shop. She's a great cook, turning some of our fresh catch into smoked fish pies, chowders, curries and more.

What do you love about the job/business?

Probably the challenge, I'd say. The challenge and the satisfaction of feeding Kāpiti locals high-quality fish. Just because our fish is so fresh. And the utilisation of our fish, nothing ever goes to waste. Even the frames are turned into burley that we then sell.

What's the best piece of fishing/business advice you've received?

The main one would be that hard work always pays off in some way or another. And then trust that what you know is right. Because some days you have bad days, especially when it comes to fishing. When you have bad days you want to blame things on your gear or the tide or whatever, but in the end you've just got to trust that you know what you're doing. It's simply that some days the fish aren't going to be there – that's life.

Hard at work behind the counter. As well as fresh fish, Dave and Kelly sell smoked fish pies, chowders, curries and more.

Is there a common fishing misconception that you'd love to help set the record straight on?
Easy: it's that fishermen aren't getting rich very fast. You have all the levies and the red tape and the rules and the regulations; it's not cheap. I just don't think people realise this when they see the price of our fish. In our shop, when we hear, "Whoa, that's expensive!" we try our hardest to educate customers. Most don't realise that we have to pay for every kilo that we take out of the ocean. Or the fact that you must be a registered skipper, have a Licensed Fish Receiver licence, a permit and all the rest.

What's your most memorable day on the water so far?
It was a few years ago now, when me and Kelly went out in the afternoon after work to have dinner on the boat. And as soon as we launched, there were like 10 orcas hanging around the boat. Even going underneath the boat. They followed us for a bit, too. But every day, every day is a good day out there. I'd much rather the sea than the land.

What's the coolest piece of fishing gear/business gear you can't live without?
We definitely can't live without our chiller. But there are actually lots of things we can't live without.

Our boat is small, only six metres, so it's very busy gear-wise. When we bought the boat off the previous owners, the first thing I did was change the sounder and it has changed the whole way that we fish on that boat. It's made it easier to target certain species – as we try to get a variety of fish over the week. So now I can say: tarakihi on that reef, and then butterfish over there and then warehou over here. Without that piece of equipment, it makes things very difficult – you don't know what you're going to get when you pull up your gear.

Dave uses a mix of set netting, potting, and longlining to bring in whatever is in season – blue cod in winter, tuna in summer and butterfish year-round.

If you weren't in the seafood business, what would you be doing?
I'd be on the charter or farming. I was a farmer before, many, many years ago. I'm very connected to the land and the sea.

Tell us about life outside of work.
We're a very busy family – we've got four kids combined. We like to go to the beach and the river. But fishing and this business pretty much consumes our time. And we're not kidding about it. All of our kids know what hard work looks like because they're in here with us. They help out by cleaning bins or grabbing me this or that. They might help Kelly do the cooking too. Our son, who is 10, can already fillet fish. He's learning to smoke the fish too.

What is your favourite music when out on the water or in the shop/factory?
Kelly is a hard rock girl. Some days I come in and she's cooking, she's got all the doors locked in the factory and I can't get in if I don't have my key. The music's so loud, I'm left banging on the door. For me on the boat, it depends on what we're fishing for, anything from Metallica to Bob Marley to house music.

What is your favourite kaimoana?
Mine's creamed pāua and Kelly loves smoked tuna belly.

Anything else you'd like to add?
Since we've owned the business, it's been pretty up and down fishing-wise and customer-wise but overall it's a feel-good industry to be in. There's a lot of genuine people who are willing to help. And probably worth mentioning that working together as a couple has also been challenging but rewarding, too. We're lucky because we make a great team.

Keen to share your story in "Catchin' up with"?
Email us at editor@seafood.org.nz

Mana Moana

In February 2025, Auckland University Press released a comprehensive history of Māori fisheries – *Mana Moana* – tracing the significance of kaimoana from the arrival of Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand to contemporary business. Here, we share an extract from the introduction.

Two men with a catch of fish in the Far North.
Photograph by Arthur James Northwood, c. 1920s. Alexander Turnbull Library, 1/1-006326-G.

Fishing and methods

Extensive records, both orally transmitted and documented, indicate that pre-colonial and early colonial Māori fishing techniques were advanced and varied according to location (Best, 1929b; Johnson & Haworth, 2004; Leach, 2006; Leach & Boocock, 1993; McClurg & Arbuckle, 2009; Nims, 2022; Paulin, 2007; Te Rangi Hīroa, 1949). Some people refer to these as 'traditional fishing methods'. This would include pre-European and early colonial contact (New Zealand Law Commission, 1989). It is important to acknowledge that the term 'traditional' does not imply a static or unchanging set of practices. Rather, traditional fishing methods have evolved over time, adapting to new challenges, technologies, and environmental conditions (Waitangi Tribunal, 1988, p. 31). Oral histories (Wehi et al., 2013), whakapapa, pūrākau, and whakataukī provide various insights into traditional Māori ecological knowledge.

For example, Whaanga et al. (2018) analysed 2669 Māori ancestral sayings, to analyse the ecological and cultural information embedded within Māori whakataukī, and found 35 per cent of these sayings referenced marine and freshwater fauna, with significant mentions of fish. Certain species such as snapper and eel were frequently discussed, and the study revealed that specific species symbolised cultural values and practices offering insights into practical and cultural connections Māori have with the marine and freshwater environments. Records produced by researchers and early Europeans as well as anthropologists and historians, particularly Sir Peter Buck (also known by his conferred name, Te Rangi Hīroa) and Elsdon Best, provide valuable insights.

The notable work by Te Rangi Hīroa, *Vikings of the Sunrise*, first published in 1938, explored the history,

migration, and culture of the Polynesian people, likening their oceanic voyages across the Pacific to the expansive endeavours of the Vikings. Te Rangi Hīroa also wrote detailed accounts of Māori fishing techniques and the socio-economic importance of fishing to Māori communities. Elsdon Best, born in New Zealand in 1856, was a pioneer in documenting Māori society, including contributions such as *Fishing Methods and Devices of the Maori* (1929) and *Polynesian Voyagers: The Maori as a Deep-sea Navigator, Explorer, and Colonizer* (1923). Although sometimes criticised for perceived racial biases in his work, Best also gained recognition for his efforts to preserve Māori heritage.

Missionaries and settlers offered anecdotal evidence about the local abundance and availability of certain fish species, contributing to the understanding of traditional Māori fishing practices and the marine environment of the time (Paulin, 2007). For example, prominent Christian Missionary William Colenso described his observations of Māori fishing around the time of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi:

> The seas around their coasts swarmed with excellent fish and crayfish . . . The rivers and lakes (in their season) contained plenty of ducks and other wild fowl, and plenty of small fish and fine mussels, and small crayfish; the marshes and swamps were full of large rich eels . . . In seeking all these, they knew the proper seasons when, as well as the best manner how, to take them . . . Sometimes they would go in large canoes to the deep sea-fishing, to some well-known shoal or rock, 5 to 10 miles from the shore, and return with a quantity of large cod, snapper, and other prime fish; sometimes they would use very large drag nets, and enclose great numbers of grey mullet, dog-fish, mackarel [sic], and other fish which swim in shoals; of which (especially of dog-fish and of mackarel) they dried immense quantities for winter use. They would also fish from rocks with hook and line, and scoop-nets; or, singly, in the summer, in small canoes manned by one man and kept constantly paddling, with a hook baited with mother-of-pearl shell, take plenty of kahawai; or with a chip of touhua wood attached to a hook, as a bait, they took the barracouta in large quantities. Very fine crayfish were taken in great numbers by diving, and sometimes by sinking baited wicker-traps. Heaps of this fish, with mussels, cockles, and other bivalves, were collected in the summer, and prepared and dried; and of eels also, and of several delicate fresh water fishes; large quantities were taken in the summer, and dried for future use. (Colenso, 1868, p. 9)

Māori fishermen setting kōura (crayfish) pots on the Bay of Plenty Coast, North Island.
Photographer unknown. Auckland Weekly News, 24 February 1910, p. 6

Te Rangi Hīroa / Sir Peter Buck shows a display of Māori kupenga (fishing nets) and hīnaki (eel traps), 1921.
Photograph by James McDonald, 1921. Alexander Turnbull Library, PA1-q-257-72-3.

Extract from *Mana Moana: Ngā Urungi o Te Ohu Kaimoana Toitū mō Anamata / Navigators of Sustainable Fisheries for the Future* by Carla Houkamau and Robert Pouwhare. Published by Auckland University Press, 2025. Nonfiction, $49.99.

Meet the next generation of seafood superstars

The seafood industry is full of exciting career opportunities, and we're making sure young people know about them.

Seafood New Zealand's latest initiative is a new graduate booklet featuring five young professionals who have launched their careers in seafood. Through their stories, we aim to showcase the variety of opportunities for graduates and highlight why our industry is an exciting and rewarding choice.

With the help of Young Fish, we will be taking the booklet to university career expos around the country, ensuring that young people get a first-hand look at the opportunities in our industry.

Below is one of the stories featured in the booklet.

Wynne Nguyen
Human Resources Training Coordinator – Sealord

Degree: Bachelor of Design in Visual Communication

Favourite seafood: Her mum's steamed seafood with Vietnamese dipping sauce

As a child growing up in a fishing village in Southern Vietnam, Wynne loved watching the boats come in with fresh seafood for the local market. At home, her mum often cooked steamed fish with spicy dipping sauce, or stir-fried crab with garlic and chili paste.

When she was 16, her family immigrated to Nelson and her parents found work at Sealord. The move was challenging for Wynne, who didn't speak English, and she found herself far away from everything that was familiar to her. Wynne reflects: "It was hard, but I learned a lot. I got along with quite a few teachers who helped me, we're still good friends now."

After finishing school, Wynn received a Sealord Scholarship for children of Sealord employees entering tertiary education. The scholarship enabled her to go to Massey University, where she studied a Bachelor of Design in Visual Communication.

After finishing her degree, she moved back to Nelson "I was looking for something short term to save money and figure out what to do next, then the Training Coordinator role at Sealord came up, and I got it! My role is super varied, I look after a range of training across the company, I really love helping people!"

Asked about the future, Wynne says, "I've been exposed to lots of different fields in the seafood industry, not only management, but purchasing, operations, fleet fishing – there are so many more things I can explore and learn! Sealord has development plans and encourages you to move across to different areas."

Wynne would encourage anyone who is thinking about a career in the seafood industry. "You will be surprised. After working in the industry for a short time, I was like, 'Wow, there are a lot of really interesting opportunities, I am excited about my future!'"

Share your story

It's great having people in our industry share their story! Now we need you to share yours.

We are on the lookout for people to visit schools through Inspiring the Future. This is a programme where kids learn about different jobs and why people love doing them, as well as their pathway and challenges they faced along the way.

> If you are keen to sign up or to learn more, please contact Sarah Wright: *sarah.wright@seafood.org.nz*

Fifteen medals awarded to 2025 outstanding seafood producers

There were a record number of entries – 405! – to the *Outstanding Food Producer Award 2025*, which celebrates the best of New Zealand's food and drink producers, including kaimoana. Ultimately, a panel of 27 judges, headed by noted food writer and chef Lauraine Jacobs, awarded 151 gold, 105 silver and 57 bronze medals in total across all award categories.

The Seafood New Zealand-sponsored Seafood category received twice as many entries as it did in 2024, with entries including salmon, blue cod, crayfish, mussels and pāua. Judges awarded entrants nine gold medals and six silver medals, praising Waitangi Seafoods' blue cod fillets in particular as an "outstanding product, it's simplicity and freshness were great. Beautiful to look at, great flake and tremendous flavour!"

High-scoring gold-medal winners are in contention for the Category Champion Awards, announced in Auckland on Thursday 10 April 2025.

> Congratulations to all 2025 Outstanding Food Producer Award winners. We'll be sharing more from this year's seafood medalists in future issues of *Seafood Magazine.*

Outstanding Food Producer Award judges assessed products over seven categories – aroma, visual appearance, taste and flavour, texture, consistency and quality, and business sustainability – in order to determine medal winners. Photo: Outstanding Food Producer Awards

Seafood New Zealand Seafood Award 2025 Medal Results

Gold Medals

Blue Cod
- Waitangi Seafoods, Blue Cod Fillets

Crayfish
- Tora Collective, Wild Caught Crayfish

Mussels
- The Kutai Guy, Smoked Mussels (Sweet Chilli)

Pāua
- Waitangi Seafoods, Chatham Islands Minced Pāua
- Tora Collective, Wild-Caught NZ Blackfood Pāua

Salmon
- Akaroa King Salmon, Fresh Portion (150g)
- Akaroa King Salmon, Fresh Salmon Fillet
- Akaroa King Salmon, Mānuka Hot Smoked Salmon
- Aoraki Salmon, Original Artisan Cold Smoked Salmon Slices

Silver Medals

Mussels
- The Kutai Guy, Smoked Mussels (Natural)
- The Kutai Guy, Smoked Mussels (Garlic Butter)

Salmon
- Akaroa King Salmon, Mānuka Cold Smoked Salmon Fillet
- The Wee Smokehouse, Cold Smoked Salmon
- The Wee Smokehouse, Gravadlax

Salmon Spreads
- Aoraki Salmon, Zingy Salmon Spread (Sriracha & Horopito)

Bronze Medals

None awarded

RECIPE

Coming soon...watch Tamar and Zak cook fish!

What started as a joke between two seafood industry mates quickly became a reality once the Seafood New Zealand communications team got wind of it.

This year, prepare to be entertained by this dynamic cooking duo.

When former chef turned Seafood New Zealand Inshore Policy Manager Tamar Wells was featured in the December Seafood Magazine – showcasing her recipe for trevally ceviche – she got a message from former commercial fisherman (now Quota and Supply Support for Moana New Zealand) Zak Olsen joking, "We should do a collab."

Always eager to get our quality, sustainable seafood into the spotlight, the communications team jumped on the idea. By mid-March, Tamar and Zak were in front of several cameras filming six different recipes – twice over. It was a marathon effort.

There were a few nerves to work through, but it didn't take long for this duo to get into a very entertaining rhythm. Worth mentioning is although this was Tamar's first time in front of the camera, it wasn't Zak's, who had previously cooked up a storm on season two of TVNZ's *Cooks on Fire*.

Together, Tamar and Zak have created six simple and tasty recipes featuring some of New Zealand's lesser-known fish species, including kahawai, monkfish, leatherjacket and more. Their goal is to showcase these often-overlooked fish as an easy and delicious way to feed a crowd. A big thanks to Moana New Zealand for supplying the fish.

Over the coming year, we'll be sharing the recipes in Seafood New Zealand's magazine and on our social channels. Each recipe is accompanied by an entertaining video – expect both censored and uncensored versions!

These tasty dishes prepared by Tamar and Zak will feature in the Seafood Magazine in the coming year.

Scan the QR code to watch Tamar and Zak cook this dish or visit the Seafood New Zealand Facebook page

Leatherjacket baked in herby cream

Feeds: 4 | Prep time: 10 mins | Cook time: 20 mins

The perfect comfort dish. Leatherjacket, often called cream fish in shops, is a perfect example of an overlooked seafood option. Leatherjacket has firm white flesh, a delicate flavour and few bones, making it a versatile fish to cook with and a great option for people who don't like their fish to be too "fishy".

Zak and Tamar's favourite way to serve leatherjacket is by supporting its delicate flavour with a rich, creamy sauce – warm and comforting on an autumn evening, what's not to like?

Note: You'll see in the video that Zak has a unique way of preparing the fish (he skins them by hand!!!). Don't worry, you don't have to do that: you can get them from your local fishmonger or supermarket skinned and ready to cook.

Ingredients:

- 4 leatherjacket, whole and skinned
- Butter or oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, diced/crushed
- 150ml white wine
- 400ml cream
- Pinch of salt, pepper and paprika
- Bunch of mixed fresh herbs – thyme, rosemary, oregano, parsley (use what you like, dried is OK too), chopped

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 200° Celsius.

Add butter or oil to a large frying pan on a medium heat, add the diced onion and garlic and soften (not brown).

Add white wine and reduce before adding cream and seasoning, and let simmer for a couple of minutes to reduce.

While reducing, put your fish in a roasting dish big enough to fit them in with at least a centimetre of space between them.

Stir the chopped herbs through your cream mix and pour over the fish. Bake for about 20 minutes.

This goes great with crusty bread and roasted tomatoes. But you can choose your own favourite carbs – a pasta and salad would be just as good.

Remember, whole fish have bones so be careful! It's a good reminder to take your time to enjoy a meal.

MPI

Boosting productivity in the seafood sector

By Dan Bolger, Deputy Director General, Fisheries New Zealand

Last month, the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries, Hon Shane Jones, launched the government's new Aquaculture Development Plan (the Plan) at the Havelock Mussel & Seafood Festival.

The Plan sets out pathways for growing New Zealand's aquaculture industry to $3 billion in annual revenue by 2035.

Currently, aquaculture brings in more than $760 million in annual revenue and supports communities with around 3,000 people working in the sector. The number of jobs in aquaculture is expected to double over the next 10 years as the industry grows.

The Plan outlines key factors for growing the industry, including maximising the value from existing aquaculture space, extending aquaculture into the open ocean, realising the potential of the aquaculture settlement, and identifying and implementing the best opportunities for commercialisation of new species and technologies.

The government has made significant steps over the past year to further develop aquaculture, including extending marine farm consents, passing the Fast-track Approvals Act and investing in projects to boost mussel spat supply.

Ministers also recently announced government investment of $11.72 million, through the Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures fund, in a project to boost open ocean aquaculture around New Zealand. This $29.3 million programme, being led by New Zealand King Salmon, will increase production and exports of New Zealand's globally recognised and sought after aquaculture products.

Consultation on a range of changes to the fisheries system closed on 11 April. The proposals aim to support the commercial fishing industry to be more efficient and productive, while ensuring the long-term health and sustainability of fisheries and the marine environment.

The proposed changes leverage new data and tools to enhance fisheries management and include:

- proposals to improve responsiveness, efficiency, and certainty of decision-making;
- greater protection for on-board camera footage and ensuring the on-board camera programme is workable;
- implementing new rules for commercial fishers that set out when Quota Management System (QMS) fish must be landed and when they can be returned to sea.

A wide range of submissions have been received on these proposals, which will be carefully considered before final decisions are made. I would like to thank everyone who took the time to have their say.

In September, we'll be celebrating the good work and innovation going on in the seafood sector at this year's Seafood Sustainability Awards. More details about this will be out soon including a call for nominations. I encourage you to nominate some of the great people and organisations you know doing important work to innovate and support sustainable fisheries.

Dan Bolger

FirstMate Navigators: Supporting New Zealand's seafood community

At FirstMate, we're dedicated to the wellbeing of the hardworking people who make up New Zealand's vibrant seafood industry. We know that working in the seafood sector is rewarding, but it also comes with unique challenges – whether it's regulatory pressures, financial uncertainty, or the physical and mental demands of the job.

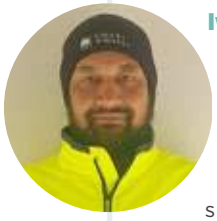
That's where FirstMate's Navigators come in. With a team of 19 experienced professionals spanning the country, our Navigators provide vital support to fishers, marine farmers and their whānau. Many of them have spent decades in the industry, giving them firsthand insight into its demands and pressures. They are here to listen, provide guidance and connect you with the right resources.

Meet three of our Navigators

Cindy Bailey – Far North / Te Tai Tokerau

Cindy Bailey arrived in New Zealand from Canada in 1982 and settled in the Bay of Islands. With a background in nursing and deep ties to the commercial fishing industry, she has spent years supporting the seafood community, serving on the Leigh Commercial Fishermen's Association and the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen executive.

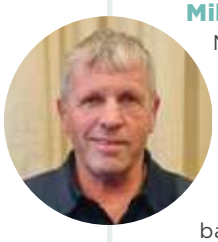
Cindy has deep respect for seafood workers and their families. She has witnessed the resilience required to succeed but also recognises the growing challenges the industry faces. As a FirstMate Navigator, she is committed to offering support to those who need it, ensuring they don't have to navigate difficult times alone.



Iwiroa Wairua – Chatham Islands/Wharekauri | Rēkohu and Pitt Islands/Rangiaotea | Rangiauria

Iwiroa has worked in the fisheries industry for over 20 years as a contract pāua and kina diver. He also has strong ties to the farming sector and has served as a trustee for Ngāti Mutunga o Wharekauri Iwi Trust, as well as a representative on the Chatham Islands Community Fisheries Forum.

His work in the innovation space, including kina management and developing underutilised fish stocks, gives him a broad industry perspective. As a Navigator, he is passionate about helping those in the industry access support, ensuring that people feel heard in an ever-evolving sector.



Mike Holland – Marlborough / Te Tauihu-o-te-Waka

Mike has worked in marine farming for more than 35 years and lives in Renwick, Marlborough, working from Havelock South. He started his career as a deckhand on a mussel boat in 1988, eventually earning his Skipper's Ticket and later becoming Operations Manager at Clearwater Mussels. In 2011, he was named Marine Farmer of the Year by the Marine Farming Association.

Mike understands firsthand the contributions aquaculture makes to regional economic growth, but he's also familiar with the pressures and hardships industry workers face. As a Navigator, he's passionate about giving back to the sector, offering a listening ear and practical support to those who need it.

A helping hand when you need it most

Navigators like Cindy, Iwiroa and Mike play a vital role in FirstMate's mission to support New Zealand's seafood industry. Whether you need mental wellness support, financial or legal guidance, or just someone who understands your challenges, our team is here to help.

Confidential support

If you or someone you know is feeling the strain, reaching out to FirstMate is simple. Call our free helpline at *0800 ADRIFT (0800 237 438)* any day between 7am and 10pm. You can also access a wealth of free resources at *firstmate.org.nz/get-help*.

Why we're here

FirstMate exists because we believe in the value and importance of New Zealand's seafood industry, and we're proud to advocate for those who work within it. Thanks to the support of MPI and industry bodies, we can continue to provide essential services to the seafood community.

Our goal is to give people and businesses the support they need to navigate the pressures and complexities of the job while rising to potential challenges. If you're a fisher or marine farmer and need someone to talk to, don't hesitate to reach out.

> For more information about FirstMate and our Navigators, visit *firstmate.org.nz/our-navigators*

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5516 NEAR NEW JET CRAY PASSENGER

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Cummins C12.9 985hp driving Jet HTX42
ZF gear box. Onan 6kW genset
Speed max 36 knots service 28 knots
42 bin insulated fish room
Double Capt berth + 3 crew. Good galley saloon
Toilet/shower/HW. Pot hauler + slack line hauler
Very good electronics including WAASP
Coastal survey to12/07/2027.

$1,200,000

5527 LONG LINER & TROLL
L16.48m x B4.8m x D2.7m
Caterpillar D3406B 382hp
Onan genset. Twin disc box
Bottom & Surface long line drums, poles & gear
F 7,000 litres. W 1,000 litres
12 knots. Ice hold 20 tons
Toilet/shower. H/W
Good electronics
Survey 100 miles to 6/2027

$99,000

5508 GBB CRAY & CHARTER
L18.29m x B5.47m x D1.6m
Doosan V222TIL 987hp 2015
Isuzu 60kVA genset. Solar panel. Large Bow Thruster
Fuel 4,000 litres
Speed 24 knots/18 knots
3 x fiosh rooms. 6 berths
Good galley and saloon.
Good electronics
Coastal survey 30 miles

POA

5479 MARKO LONG LINER
1999 LOA 21.34 x B 6.1m
Doosan 600hp new 2022
Aux Cummins new 2022
80kVA alternator
Gearbox ZF rebuilt 2022
Fuel 10,000L Water 2,000L
Brine tanks 15t tuna. Bait freezer. Good electronics
Vessel refurbished 2018
Survey 200 miles.

$850,000

5487 BREEKVELT COASTAL TRAWLER & LINER
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Detroit 6V/92 TI DDec 291hp
Allison 4.5:1 gearbox
Fuel 3650 L. Water 500 L
Fish hold squared for 400 bins
Winches 1000m x 13mm warp
Good electronics. 3 berths
Surface & bottom line drums.
Offshore Survey 100 miles

REDUCED $150,000

5463 CRAY, LINE, NET, PAX
L 13m x B 4.04m x D1.8m
Legend Boat Builders 2006
Yanmar 6C x BM GT 324kW
ZF V drive 2:1. 4 blade prop
2 station steering. 18 knots
Fuel 1300L. Wet well 40 bins = 1.2 tns. + 80 fwd on deck. 2 berths. Dickinson stove. Net drum. Trailer
Survey **Inshore fish & pax**

REDUCED $295,000

#5472 OFFERS - TROLLER, NETTER & BOTTOM LINER
LOA 21.2 x B 6.7m x D 2.6m
Iveco main 285hp. 40kVA gen
Hold 27 tonnes. Fuel 8,000Ltrs
Galley. Toilet/shower. H/W.
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Rope roller 28 kms rope. Nets, bottom line gear including extra stored ashore.
Offshore survey to Feb 2027

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5515 FAST BARNETT FISHING & PASSENGER

Built 2006 Profab.
LOA 12.5m x B3.55m x D1.2m
Caterpillar C9 510hp. ZF 1.5:1 V drive
Max speed 22 knots. Working 15 knots @ 1750rpm = 50 lph.
Pot hauler. Anchor winch & anchors to survey
4 berths. Toilet/shower. H/W
Well equipped galley saloon. Good electronics
Inshore survey 10 pax 2 crew
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Marine Engineer Class 6
Marine Engineer Class 5

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VIPS161

SUPPORTING YOU TO

STAY ON COURSE

A strong, resilient, viable commercial seafood sector is in all our interests. It provides you with a living. It feeds New Zealanders. And it ensures that our coastal communities can thrive.

But being a member of our seafood community isn't always easy. We need to have each other's backs. FirstMate is an organisation to support our seafood whānau. We want you and everyone around you to have not only what they need to survive, but thrive.

FirstMate offers a friendly ear to talk about anything on your mind or causing you difficulty. Things like:

- **Building personal and business resilience**
- **How to navigate regulations**
- **Any issues you are having mentally and/or physically**
- **How you can make all your hard work pay off financially.**

For support or advice call

0800 ADRIFT

0800 237438

www.firstmate.org.nz

first mate

SUPPORTING OUR SEAFOOD WHĀNAU