

SEAFOOD

NEW ZEALAND

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A celebration of hoki season

From our 2025 conference: Seafood for Thought

Catchin' up with Chase Hann



Sustainable fishing means more for tomorrow*

***Sustainable fishing helps secure the future for 34 million people employed in fisheries around the world**



**Together we
protect our
ocean through
sustainable
choices**

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From the Chief Executive

Welcome to the Seafood New Zealand Spring magazine. Time has flown – it's September already. It's always lovely to see the first signs of a new season, and a bit more sunshine is welcome after a long, wet winter.

You can see a celebration of the 2025 hoki season on pages 16–21. We had to have two goes at getting you these photos. On the first trip, our poor photographer was hit with particularly rough weather which made remaining upright tough, let alone getting good images. It's a reminder to the rest of us and to everyone who appreciates New Zealand seafood how hard our guys work and what they put up with to bring hoki and all the other seafood they supply home to the public.

Also in this issue, we celebrate the 2025 Seafood New Zealand Conference. This year, 250 of us met in Nelson to hear about the complex range of issues facing our industry and to supply us with ideas and inspiration for continually improving our sector.

I particularly enjoyed the keynote presentation from leadership coach Harold Hillman. He gave us a moving account of his extraordinary life, covering his time in the US armed forces and his work with high-profile New Zealand companies such as Fonterra. His key insights are around empowering people to be themselves at work, encouraging a culture where people don't have to pretend. If you're not using your energy to create a mask to hide behind, you can be more comfortable and ultimately more successful in your job.

All our speakers were interesting, but I do want to highlight a couple more who particularly inspired me. David Downs, the CEO of The New Zealand Story reminded us that we have so much to be proud of. He told us that "Brand NZ" is one of the country's most significant financial assets, and is worth nearly USD \$300 billion. He also mentioned our seafood industry, referencing that 97.6% of stocks landed by weight today are in good shape.

Then I was lucky enough to host our panel discussion on the state of global trade, which happened just days after we learned New Zealand exports to the United States will be subject to a 15% tariff. Given the tough global picture, it is important to remind ourselves the world really does want our products. Our distinguished panellists of seafood exporters and importers, diplomats and trade experts all talked about the high regard US customers have for the seafood we provide.

You can see extensive Conference coverage on pages 5–11.

And some behind the scenes intel here too – we were joined over the two days by some protestors from Greenpeace and the Dolphin Defenders. The Greenpeace team came armed with a camera and an activist in a shark suit. I am proud to say that all they got were polite remarks and gentle refusals to participate in their photo opportunities. We hope that these visitors went away with their eyes opened to the reality of what our people are like – great human beings with a sense of humour, good manners and a desire for genuine engagement.

There's plenty more to enjoy in this Spring edition. Our Catchin' Up With this edition is with Chase Hann from Leigh Fish. Plus, meet the new CEO of Aquaculture New Zealand on pages 24–25. I also recommend the kahawai bagel recipe from our chefs Zak and Tamar on page 38.

We hope your spring is full of sunshine and good seafood.

Lisa Futschek

Chief Executive, Seafood New Zealand

Seafood for Thought

On 6–7 August, over 250 delegates descended on the Rutherford Hotel in Nelson for the 2025 Seafood Conference. Claire Williamson reports on the buzzy two-day event, which was marked by a sense of camaraderie and enthusiasm.

Photos by Steve Hussey.

Minister for Oceans and Fisheries **Hon Shane Jones'** early announcement on 6 August that the Government would be progressing a key package of reforms to the Fisheries Act 1996 was an uplifting jolt to conference proceedings. Discussions of what the announcement would mean for the industry dominated news headlines and coffee cart chats – and attracted more than a few journalists to the media table; Seafood NZ Chief Executive Lisa Futschek had given at least seven interviews or statements by noon on Wednesday!



Hon Shane Jones.

Official remarks

Both **Nelson Mayor Nick Smith** and Minister Jones took the stage to voice their support. With the blue economy sitting at 5% of the region's GDP and employing thousands of people, the success of seafood and its associated industries are key to the success of Nelson Tasman itself. "You've got to acknowledge the people at the forefront of the businesses that create the wealth, put their capital at risk," he affirmed. "I hope we have turned a corner in our attitude to primary industries."

Minister Jones then addressed the crowd with his trademark combination of humour and bombastic oration. His speech reflected a deep commitment to the economic growth of the seafood industry, epitomised by the proposed adjustments to the Fisheries Act so it functions in line with evolutions to data and technology.

"So there's no doubt in the room about what I think I'm doing on your behalf through the agency of our government. Number one, there's too much litigation afflicting our sector," he declared. "It's become almost promiscuous the amount of litigation that is directed both to our industry but to our Government over the statutory allocation decisions that are made year after year as to what is an appropriate and defensible level of fish caught."

FEATURE



Left: Public speaker and executive coach Harold Hillman walks delegates through his life story – and how top-down empathy can transform organisations. Right: Mingling at the all-important ANZ coffee cart in between sessions.



Perhaps the sleeper hit of the conference followed. **Harold Hillman**, a public speaker and executive coach, shared his journey from New York to New Zealand, emphasising the importance of authenticity and empathy in leadership. Walking the length of the stage to look each quadrant of the audience in the eyes, Hillman discussed the challenges of being a closeted gay man in the US Navy and the impact his silence had on reinforcing discrimination – and how his experience illuminated why leaders must foster a sense of belonging, purpose and resilience among their teams, so people can bring their true, complete selves to work. Practicing purposeful listening in meetings and conversations – “listening to understand, not to retort” – was a key suggestion. It’s one we can take forward when speaking to ourselves, to government and to our detractors.

Real solutions for challenging environments

ANZ Chief Economist **Sharon Zollner** is a regular at Seafood NZ’s conference thanks to the bank’s ongoing support of the event, and once again she provided an insightful update into the wider economic picture. Much of the current situation is understandably uncertain – the country is grappling with fluctuating international tariff rates, supply disruptions and unemployment ticking just over 5%. The South Island is faring better than its northern neighbour, thanks to the strength of its agriculture – primarily red meat and dairy – and population growth in Ōtautahi Christchurch. Zollner identified the baseline the industry is navigating, and the need to appeal to consumers and demonstrate value.

Many of our primary industries, seafood included, are a significant component of “brand New Zealand” – which The New Zealand Story CEO **David Downs** reminded us is worth USD \$300 billion.

It’s this combination of values and overarching sustainable approach to business that makes our produce, meat products and seafood so sought-after and trusted abroad.

And it’s environmentalism the seafood industry in particular can back up with data and certifications. **Matt Watson** from the Marine Stewardship Council validated how well New Zealand’s fisheries are performing – 45% of New Zealand’s catch is currently MSC-certified, including our hoki fishery, which was the first large-scale whitefish fishery to achieve certification, and has held it since 2001. **Mike Kraft** then introduced Certified Seafood International, a new certification providing industry and customers more choice and confidence for ensuring seafood harvesting is held to high sustainability standard.



Mills Bay Mussels Operations Manager Maegen Blom joined a panel with Mary Lambie, Chase Saunders-Loder and Tim Barnett to talk about sharing our stories authentically in an online world.



Delegates enjoying the fresh kaimoana from across the motu.



A spread of delectable sashimi and maki rolls at the Ngāi Tahu Seafood Showcase.



Briny, moreish Pacific oysters supplied by Moana New Zealand were a crowd favourite at the Ngāi Tahu Seafood Showcase.



Storm Stanley, Chair of the Pāua Industry Council, speaks on a panel about fit-for-purpose marine protection with Charles Heaphy (Sealord Group), Raewyn Peart (Environmental Defence Society) and Kirstie Knowles (Department of Conservation).

Attracting and protecting our people

Of course, when speaking to our business partners and seafood lovers, it helps to have something substantive to say. A major way our credibility and trustworthiness with consumers is enforced is through data, science and storytelling.

Well-known inshore skippers **Roger Rawlinson**, **Josh Mower** and **Salve Zame** joined Seafood NZ GM Inshore Tiff Bock for a riveting panel on “skippers doing science” – and why it’s so important, particularly with governmental funding increasingly tight and NIWA’s amalgamation with GNS Science into Crown Research Institute Earth Science New Zealand.

Mower spoke about his involvement developing and trialling the effective Procella weighted hook (read more about this in the September 2024 issue of Seafood Magazine!), and how skipper input was crucial to ensure the hook was effective and safe to use. Rawlinson and Zame each explored their extensive experience collaborating with independent scientific organisations to conduct biomass and trawl surveys, informing stock assessments in key fisheries management areas. It’s a balance of trust and professionalism – the ultimate goal being, as Rawlinson put it, that, “decisions about us aren’t made without us.”

Another area where decision-making is fraught and fisher collaboration essential is marine protection. Perhaps the most invigorating of the event’s panels, **Charles Heaphy**, **Storm Stanley**, **Kirstie Knowles**, and **Raewyn Peart** from the Environmental Defence Society discussed what “fit-for-purpose” marine protection should be. How do you ensure an appropriate representation around the table between fishers, local to national governments and the community? Is a holistic approach – considering land and ocean-based impacts – required? Does legislation need updating?

No questions had ready-made answers, but there were renewed calls for mutually respectful collaboration between industry and related players, and dialogue that is designed to support understanding, rather than finger-pointing.

**“Decisions about us
aren’t made without us.”**

— Skipper Roger Rawlinson

“When we step up to champion our sector, we not only bring balance to the conversation — we also build credibility.”

— Lisa Futschek



Seafood New Zealand CE Lisa Futschek delivering her address to the crowd.



Sealord Chief Executive Doug Paulin.

Telling our seafood story

Official proceedings ended on a positive note, with two interconnected media and storytelling presentations. **Mary Lambie** – many of you may remember her from *Good Morning* – provided an overview of the shifting New Zealand media landscape and how to confidently prepare for a media enquiry. Her tips? Know the journalist’s style, practice tough questions, and use stories to convey key points.

This advice transitioned into a final panel, featuring **Maegen Blom, Chase Saunders-Loder** and **Tim Barnett**, all of whom have found online success within their respective brands. “Authenticity” was a key point – Blom in particular emphasising that you don’t have to be overly produced or edited, just genuine and passionate for your topic; your audience will naturally find you.

Overall, the two-day ‘Seafood for Thought’ conference rode a wave of positive momentum, whether it was through presentations of new technology, scientific achievement or practical advice on how to put yourself out there online.



Opportunities to reconnect, share stories and a few belly laughs at the Seafood Conference is always a highlight.

We hope to see everyone at next-year’s event! You can find more photos from 2025 online now at [flickr.com/photos/seafoodnz/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/seafoodnz/albums)

The stories behind our seafood stars

As it has for the past decade, the official Seafood Conference proceedings closed with the Seafood Stars Awards. It is a moment for the industry to uplift the mahi of those whose work can go unnoticed, and to show appreciation for those at the coalface.



This year, there were nine winners over six categories, presented by Seafood New Zealand CE Lisa Futschek.

The Future Adaption Award was presented to **Jerome Chua**, who was instrumental in developing the 'bait sausage' made of crayfish waste that has been undergoing trials to catch rig via surface longline off the coast of New Plymouth. His research has great implications for future commercial use, both in reducing bycatch and reducing waste.

There were two **Young Achiever Awards** presented this year to Chase Saunders-Loder and Sealord's Lu Ee Lee. Saunders-Loder is a well-known face among the inshore fleet. Since the age of 18 he has worked his way up from crew member to owner of the *FV Resolution II*.

Whether it's appearing in an episode of *Ocean Bounty* or filming a video about his career, Chase is always willing to lend a face or voice as an ambassador to how great the fishing industry can be.

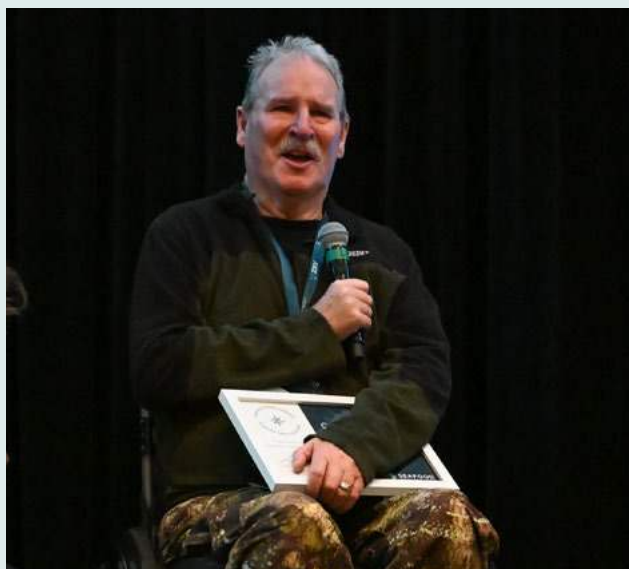
Lee – though newer to the deepwater fishing sector – has already introduced multiple game-changing initiatives to Sealord's wetfish factory. Her combination of technical expertise and people-focused leadership has helped improve the factory's process flow and encouraged others to take on new training and leadership opportunities.

Returning for the second year were both the **ACC Workplace Wellbeing Award** and the **Women in Seafood Australasia Championing Inclusion Award**.

The team at Nelson-based Guard Safety was presented with the ACC Workplace Wellbeing Award for their many years of effort to improve the industry's safety record through its many health and wellbeing initiatives such as MarineSAFE and the NZ Fishing Health and Safety Forum. Caroline Gilbertson and Aine O'Neill jointly won the WISA Championing Inclusion Award for their roles co-founding networking group Women of Aquaculture Aotearoa, which is an inclusive space for women across the sector to develop, grow and celebrate success.

The inaugural **Telling Our Story Award** went to Seafood New Zealand board member Tom Searle. Searle has worn many hats for the industry over the years, but has always been a staunch advocate for independent owner-operators and small-scale fishers. He's contributed to everything from promotional campaigns with Air New Zealand, Foodstuffs and Cuisine magazine to holding governance roles on various area management councils and on the Leigh Commercial Fishermen's Association.

The final two awards of the evening – the **Life Membership Awards** – were the most emotional.



There was not a dry eye in the audience when Graeme Sinclair accepted his Life Membership Award.

First, Graeme Sinclair was presented with the prestigious acknowledgement for his work as the host and producer of the popular *Gone Fishin'* TV series (the longest-running recreational fishing show in New Zealand) and *Ocean Bounty*, which is on its seventh season. His dedication and courage to showing the world what commercial fishing in New Zealand is actually like has no equal.

In his acceptance remarks, Sinclair emotionally thanked his wife, Sandee, and the crew members behind his popular series, bringing tears to eyes across the audience.



Tā Tipene O'Regan performing a waiata after accepting his Life Membership Award.

And finally, Tā Tipene O'Regan, a kaumātua of Ngāi Tahu and Member of the Order of New Zealand, was honoured for the central role he played in developing and implementing the Māori Fisheries Settlement, which culminated in the historic Sealord Deal in 1992. As the founding chairman of Te Ohu Kaimoana, his leadership has fundamentally transformed and improved the seafood sector in Aotearoa and led to meaningful, ongoing iwi participation in the industry.

O'Regan, 85, recounted a memorable story starring another pivotal member of the sector, Sir Peter Talley. In O'Regan's telling, Jim Bolger and Bill Birch had just shot down his protest that the recently passed fisheries settlement wouldn't allow the government to claim ownership over the country's fishing quota. But a few days later, O'Regan bumped into Talley – often on the opposing side of industry issues! – who greeted O'Regan like he was a brother, proclaiming, "Tipene, Tipene, thank God for the Treaty!"

At the conclusion of O'Regan's speech, his whānau and others from across the industry gathered at the front of the room and performed a moving waiata, with O'Regan rising to his feet in front, gesturing emphatically with his carved tokotoko. It was a fitting, powerful conclusion to the ceremony – one that left all delegates with a feeling of mana in their varied contributions to the industry.

The history of the Māori Fisheries Settlement in film

Toby Mills (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngaiterangi) is an award-winning filmmaker with decades of experience both behind and in front of the camera. This year, together with Julian Arahanga, Mills co-directed and co-produced *Mana Moana Mana Tangata*, a new documentary about the seminal Māori Fisheries Settlement – aka the 1992 “Sealord Deal.”

How did the *Mana Moana Mana Tangata* documentary come to be?

Well, it’s an interesting journey because Moana NZ is based in Auckland and Te Ohu Kaimoana is based in Wellington and someone from Te Ohu Kaimoana had approached Julian to do a documentary on the fishery settlement, but unbeknownst to them, Moana NZ had approached me to do a documentary on the same subject. We found out that we were both doing the same story so we rang up each other and Julian said, “OK, should we just work together?” We’ve got a really good working relationship, and we had a few hui with all the the main stakeholders and we got ideas for the story. We’re both coming from different styles, backgrounds, perceptions. That was really good because it made us always debate and have discussions around the issues.

But probably more than that, through my previous work around the Treaty settlement space [Wai 262] I knew quite a lot about it. When they approached me to do something based around the fishery settlement or the Sealord Deal, as it’s known, I was very, very, very interested.

What drew you to this particular story?

The timeline of the negotiations and all the characters that were involved – it’s very seminal as one of the first pan-tribal iwi settlements that led and helped us realise a lot of other other settlements for different iwi. [The Sealord Deal] built capacity and it sort of became like a sounding board and a template for how iwi could negotiate with the



“We did it for the future.”

Crown around their own tribal settlements. Going down to the marae for your meeting on the Sunday wasn’t gonna cut it anymore. We had to form rūnanga boards. We had to take minutes. It was very important in the time too, because all the shakers and groovers – you know, Matiu Rata, Sir Tipene O’Regan, Bob Mahuta – everyone who was anyone was involved, so it was a pretty exceptional and amazing time and moment in New Zealand history.



Signing the Māori Fisheries Settlement in 1992.

Julian and I were pretty in the dark [about fisheries] when we started the project, so what we wanted to really do was bring what is happening today in the Māori fishery. Who are the players working in the industry today? How are Māori still involved in the fishery? Because there's been a lot of things happen over 35 years; it was important for us to find people who could talk to that story.

How did you balance all the different perspectives?

We didn't want to make a corporate video – we were very clear on that. We went out and found different fishers who are working in different areas of the fishing sectors in New Zealand, right from recreational to commercial iwi. And then, of course, Sealord themselves as our main players in the industry today.

But also principles around kaitiakitanga were really important to us. How are we going to sustain this resource for our future generations? We need to walk the talk of our ancestors. They can't just be catchphrases and words; they need to be somehow amalgamated into the heart of the industry.



Fishing at dusk.

“...principles around kaitiakitanga were really important to us. How are we going to sustain this resource for our future generations?”

“Fishing is in our bones.”

There’s a lot of people who are still against the fishery settlement. That’s never gonna change. But for us, we wanted to honour the people who had been around at that time and who had seen into the future when the fishery was about to be privatised and said, “I’m sorry, you can’t do this.” They stood up and took the government on – it was a huge responsibility, but it was in that time of renaissance as well within Māoridom on a national and iwi and individual level.

The effort and coordination it took was amazing.

We owe a great deal to those that have come before us, for their resilience, their perseverance, the work that they’ve done. They come from all different walks of life, and they had their own jobs. The negotiations were never a full-time thing. It was always a part-time thing when you could fit it in. So they gave of their time, their energy, to try and put Māori back on the map, to give us some sustenance and some breath of life so that we could revitalise our culture and us as a people, too.

In addition to the history of the negotiations, the visuals of flensing the whale were very striking. What was the thinking behind it?

For me, that was a way for us to represent what’s going on in Māoridom. That we are in a process – and continually in a process – of revitalisation and reclaiming our ancestral knowledge. We’re always looking backwards to stand in the now to move forwards and that’s what that [scene] represents to me. We’re reclaiming our space and place in this country. It’s a connection to land. It’s connection to the sea. It’s a connection to animals and it speaks so loudly to who we are and what we want to be moving forward.

And what was it like spending time with all the fishers?

For them to invite us in to share this story and allow us to just partake in their day-to-day lives was really



Politician and recreational fisher Tākuta “Doc” Ferris landing a trevally.

amazing. It was fun, you know, having good yarns, having a drink, having a kai. One of the joys of documentary is the amount of people that you meet in all different aspects of life. These are people who have committed to a lifetime in this industry. And man, they work hard! I don’t think people realise how hard the fishing game is. When you’re out on that ocean, it’s a total different space. Anything can happen at any moment when you’re on the seas fishing. They’ve got to be very attuned to their environment.

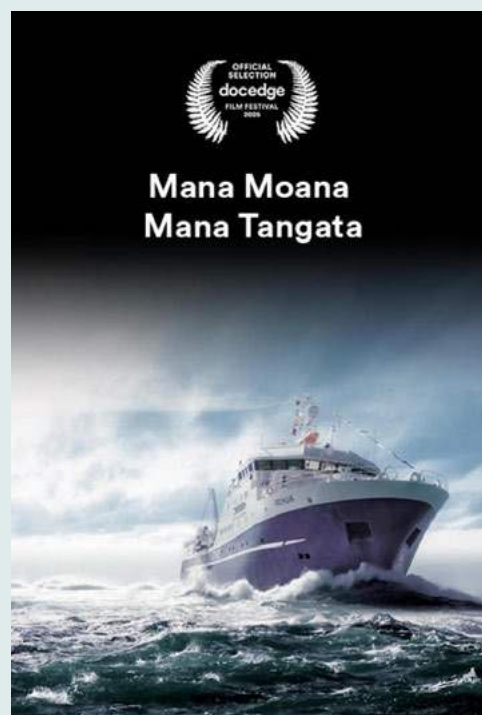
Yes – the documentary is filled with moments of poignant silence.

The change of pace was so we could give the environment something to say, too. It’s really important as a filmmaker to let your environment speak because it’s got its own language. They have a lot of those moments at sea. It’s fast and furious when they’re pulling in the net, but then there’s a lot of moments of silence and beauty. The fishermen talk about those moments. It’s a rare person who can be a fisherman.

Is the mark of a successful documentary the conversations it sparks?

Yes – that's all it's about, really. My school is making documentaries and I learn so much about the world, about myself, about other people. I don't think today's generation really knows those stories anymore, so one of the best things for me about this documentary is that we've been able to tell their story so it won't be forgotten.

Watch *Mana Moana Mana Tangata* online for free on Whakaata Māori and Māori+: www.maoriplus.co.nz/movie/mana-moana-mana-tangata/play



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A celebration of hoki season

Late June to early September in New Zealand is hoki season, when many of them spawn off the West Coast of the South Island and in the Cook Strait. As the first-ever whitefish fishery in the world to be certified by the Marine Stewardship Council, since 2001 this fish has endeared itself to seafood lovers around the world. Photographer Steve Hussey headed out with *Resolution II* owner-operator Chase Saunders-Loder to capture some of the sun-drenched moments that make this fishing season so special.

“I’ve been on quite a few boats, and it’s always felt really friendly and welcoming. You often have the idea that it’s going to be a tough, harsh environment, but the people themselves seem genuinely open and caring. I like their attitude. I like the way that they embrace working in the environment they do. They all love it. You know, the challenges just add to the rewards.”

– Photographer Steve Hussey

Above: The *Resolution II* as shot from a drone. Steve always has someone ready on deck to catch the drone when it returns, rather than trying to land it on a moving deck.

Right: “There’s a number of pelagic birds around you all the time – it’s quite a serene, beautiful moment,” photographer Steve Hussey says.

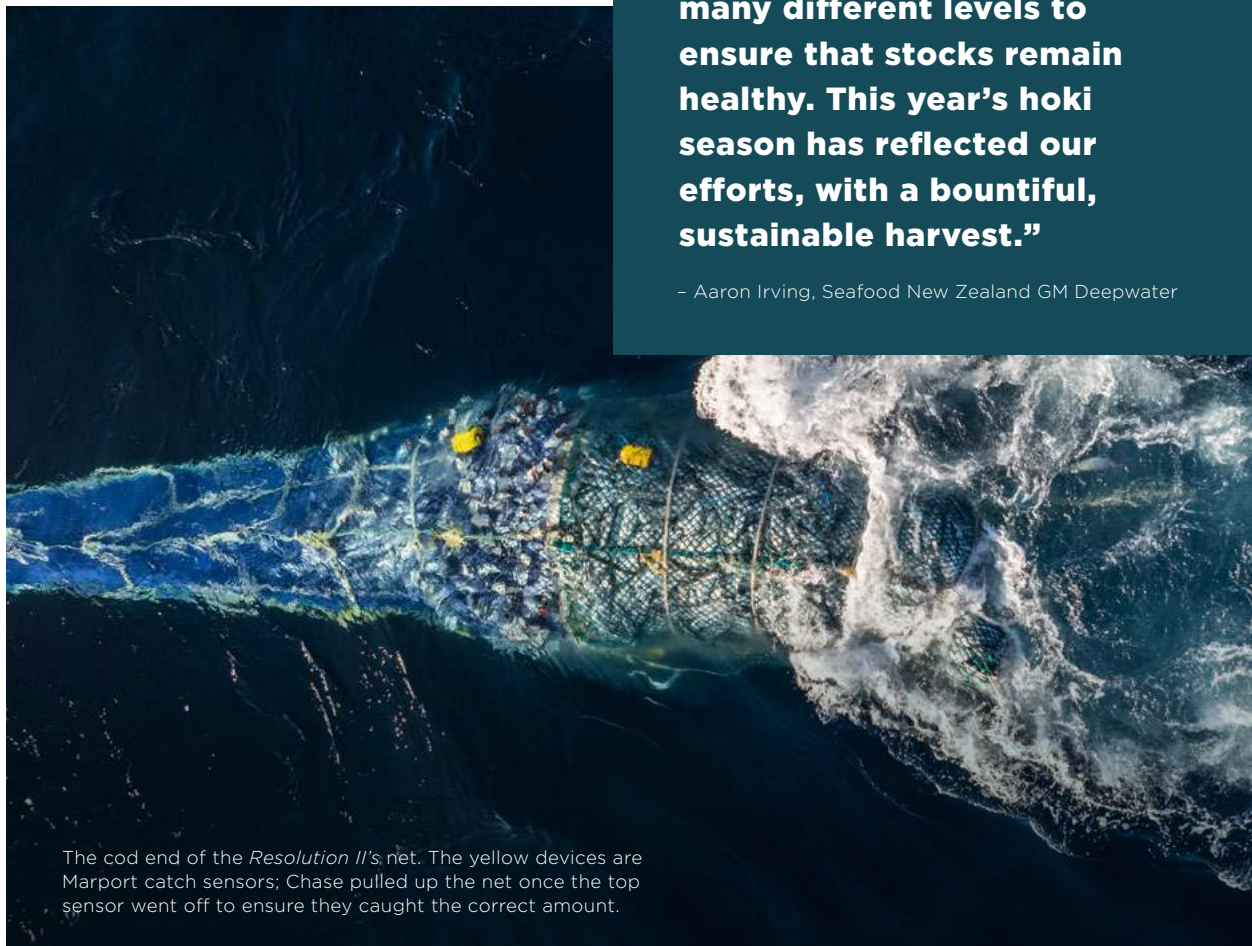




Hauling a bag of hoki – around 12 tonnes! – up the stern ramp. Seabird mitigation streamers are easily visible.

“Our hoki fishery is so important to us, and the entire industry works on many different levels to ensure that stocks remain healthy. This year’s hoki season has reflected our efforts, with a bountiful, sustainable harvest.”

– Aaron Irving, Seafood New Zealand GM Deepwater



The cod end of the *Resolution II*'s net. The yellow devices are Marport catch sensors; Chase pulled up the net once the top sensor went off to ensure they caught the correct amount.

COVER FEATURE



“I don’t know what the photo of me is – something’s obviously funny. It was quite a nice day, actually, nice and calm, which was a bit of a change.”

– Owner-operator Chase Saunders-Loder

Above: Jai tying the cod ends, getting ready to shoot the net again. The ends are chain-stitched together through the end of the cod end, sealing it off (but can still be unstitched easily later). **Above right:** Franklin pulling a gemfish out of the hoki. **Right:** Chase Saunders-Loder, clearly finding something funny. **Below:** The last hoki bag of the day. Chase aims for three tows of about 12 tonnes each – a manageable amount that retains the quality of the fish.





Top left: Talley's staff, Phoenix, holding the ice shoot, which unloads ice in bulk. **Top right:** Unloading at Greymouth. They unload two stacks at a time, seven-high, with each bin averaging 28 kilograms. **Above right:** Freshly caught hoki in the pound.

"It's exciting to go out over the the Greymouth bar – it's an exciting part of navigation and New Zealand coastal history. I just see myself as a storyteller when I'm there. I'm just trying to set the scene for a viewer that shows extraordinary locations and people who are authentic. What they're doing is a rewarding career with feeding lots of people through their hard work. Chase is incredibly competent. He's great communicator, and he leads a team and you really feel like everybody respects him."

– Photographer Steve Hussey

CATCHIN' UP WITH...



Chase Hann.

Catchin' up with Chase Hann

Growing up in Taranaki, Chase Hann spent every spare moment out on the moana, jumping on any boat that would take him. That early passion carried him through all sorts of maritime adventures – from local fishing boats to superyachts and merchant ships. These days, Chase is managing the small but mighty team at Leigh Fish.

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

I grew up in rural Taranaki, where my family were keen recreational fishers, so from a young age I was dead keen on fishing and everything to do with it. By the time I was 15, every school holiday was spent jumping on any boat I could – from small gill netters and albacore boats to potters, auto-liners and charter boats. I just wanted to be at sea, gaining as much experience as possible and building my sea time.

After earning my Commercial Launch Master, I stepped away from seafood for a while and moved into the wider maritime industry, working on ferries, superyachts and merchant ships. Then in 2015, I returned to the seafood industry, bringing with me the skills and perspective I'd gained along the way.

What is your role and what do you enjoy most about it?

I've recently stepped into the role of managing Leigh Fish, and no two days are the same. One moment I'm connecting with fishers and quota owners, talking catch plans, landings and boats – always with a good yarn

along the way. The next, I'm working alongside our customers, suppliers and partners here in New Zealand and overseas. There's always a variety of challenges in our business, but we're a small team with plenty of energy – everyone mucks in to get the job done.

What's the best piece of advice you've received about business or working in this industry?

Every link in the chain is important – whether you're a vessel or quota owner, a fisher, a Licensed Fish Receiver (LFR), factory or admin staff, a logistics operator, a customer or a supplier. Respect, understanding and appreciation of each other is essential, because without any one of those links doing business becomes difficult, if not impossible.

What skills do you think are most important for someone working in this industry?

Work ethic and having the ability to adapt and change direction when required. There are so many variables that can change or shift year on year with seafood and if you don't pivot, move or diversify as things change, it's easy to fall behind.



Some of the Leigh Fish team: Chase (right), Jake Dikstaal (centre) and Jek Torio.



Chase in his happy place – on the water.

Have you noticed much change in the fishing industry since you started?

Absolutely. Growing up, the coast had a lot of smaller boats and small ports thrived – now vessels are getting bigger and bigger. Smaller vessels and smaller ports are shrinking, which is a shame for some of the supporting towns that relied on this industry/business.

Also, the onset and advancement of electronics has changed how and where we fish hugely! The good side of this is we can now harvest more precisely and sustainably. The downside is fish have nowhere to hide, the seafloor is all but mapped and spots are hard to keep as your own with the likes of GPS/AIS. The old days of chuffing out under the cover of darkness, lining up the row of pine trees with the house behind and work a depth are all but gone.

Is there a common misconception about commercial fishing or the seafood industry you'd like to set straight?

As most have heard before, the general public perceive the commercial fishers to be out there to take everything, pillaging our oceans and leaving nothing behind. But the fact is, for the most part our fishers are the custodians of our oceans and fisheries. They are the ones out there every day observing, recording, protecting and harvesting sustainably. Using generational knowledge to know when to harvest and when to let it rest, ensuring we have a fishery/industry for our sons and daughters to carry on with.

What's been your most memorable day at work?

There are a number of them, but one that comes to mind was when I was young, bluenose fishing. It was an oily calm day, with a reasonable sized long swell, as a line of bluenose floated to the surface. It felt like the line of bellies went on forever! The excitement of a good payday, outstanding weather, watching large albatross

swan above waiting for their next opportunity and all us crew happy. It always puts a smile on my face thinking about it.

If you weren't working in the seafood industry, what do you think you'd be doing instead?

Good question, it would still be something to do with the ocean. I have my Second Mate Foreign Going Certificate also, so I would probably go back to merchant shipping or the maritime sector.

Outside of work, what do you enjoy doing?

I'm an active relaxer, so enjoy the outdoors. I fish (go figure), dive, hunt and a good bit of Saturday morning sport with the kids. Love getting out and spending time with my wife, son and daughter camping or at the beach.

What's your favourite kaimoana (seafood), and how do you like to enjoy it?

Ooooh yeah that's a tough one, so many delicious treats! Cooked, would be crispy skinned john dory or some garlic butter scallops (haven't had them in a while) and on the fresh front, you can't go past a nice bit of sashimi southern bluefin or yellowfin tuna.

Is there anything else you'd like to share about what you do or the industry?

I think we have a great industry, full of characters, hard workers and people who have a true love and care for our moana and everything that surrounds it. I feel grateful to be a part of it.

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

A kōrero with Tee Hale-Pennington

Five weeks into her new role as Chief Executive of Aquaculture NZ (AQNZ), Tee (Teena) Hale-Pennington sits down with Seafood New Zealand to share what brought her to the role, her vision for the industry, why it's okay to make mistakes and the regional opportunities on the horizon.



Tee on her bike during a trip around New Zealand.

Tell me about your early connection to aquaculture.

My grandmother lived near the water – she loved oysters, and she bought me an oyster shucking knife when I was five, gave me gloves, and we would sit down on the rocks and talk about various things, picking these amazing treasures of the rocks, and we'd eat them. Her grandmother passed it on to her, so she was just handing on something that was pretty much part of her relationship all the way down. So she'd talk about the weather and what things she observed and other bits and pieces. She passed away the end of last year and, you know, I go back and sit on rocks and try and find the elusive oyster on the rocks, and it makes me sort of feel like she's still sitting there with me.

And since then, you've had a pretty fascinating career trajectory.

I've spent time in local government, professional services, not for profit. I have been part of the Royal Commission for the amalgamation of Auckland Council and creating the supercity, and part of project leading moving a 500 kV transmission line, which is the national

grid in New South Wales and Victoria. So I've watched people out the side of a helicopter with reflective suits on moving live electricity lines to facilitate and enable urban growth and development.

Most recently, I spent 11 years with Te Kāhui Whaihangā, New Zealand Institute of Architects, and that has been amazing. There's lots of parallels with what I'm finding in Aquaculture New Zealand, in that the public understanding of the importance of an industry and a sector to New Zealand's economy, well-being and prosperity is not always well understood.

What drew you to this executive role?

It was the story of aquaculture and its importance to the New Zealand economy. When you start doing some of your due diligence and thinking about the sector, you see that there's enormous ambition and passionate people involved. So how do we get that momentum to unlock its potential?

The other part of it is it puts my education into practice. I did an

undergraduate degree in environmental science. One of my subjects was advanced environmental systems modelling, and the practicality of that was working out how many fish could live in a water space of X dimension at a breathing rate of Y, eating food at a regularity. Who knew that I was already doing well in aquaculture when I was studying many, many moons ago?

How do you define leadership?

All sectors need to be fundamentally centered around people. You cannot do or achieve anything without passionate, dedicated, courageous, inspired people who are doing great work each and every day. Your challenge as a leader is to create an environment where people are valued, people are supported, people have the opportunity to grow and learn and, importantly, make mistakes. Mistakes are learning opportunities.

One of the best pieces of advice I had was never accept "no" as the answer. No just means no in that moment. And there is a reason why the no might exist, but don't forget about the opportunity, because it might come along in a different set of circumstances.



At the inaugural New Zealand pavilion exhibition – titled “Last, Loneliest, Loveliest” – at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2014.

What are the current challenges aquaculture is facing?

I haven’t bumped into anyone yet who has not had the regulatory setting environment as number one or number two on their list. It’s complicated, complex, uncertain, costly, unable to cope with innovation and change, and there’s a high risk borne by a marine farmer in the environment. We have fast track legislation and other reforms going through, but we haven’t really found that optimum balance in terms of de-risking the regulatory setting so we actually can grow sustainably.

The other is probably the quality of the wai, so the importance of the quality of water as the growing medium for aquaculture. I have not yet met a marine farmer who isn’t interested in their contribution to the environment and their care for it, in terms of how they operate, because their survival as a producer depends on the quality of the environment.

And opportunities?

How science plays a big role in aquaculture and that need for coordinated investment. It’s that ability to actually link science to the needs of the sector in the

NEWS

timeframes that we need it. Things like AI give farmers a huge advantage now compared to when aquaculture first started, because they can have access to real-time information in their pocket.

Another part of the ambition and strategy is to have iwi and hapū-led partnership aquaculture activity. I think aquaculture is an opportunity for iwi and hapū to create sustainable, resilient communities. There’s clearly an economic benefit, but it also provides employment, well-being, and other attributes to communities across New Zealand.

Anything you are particularly excited about?

The Murihiku Southland Aquaculture Pathway, which has been developed from Great South and just launched. It represents Southland’s aspirations to develop aquaculture into a multibillion-dollar industry over the next 20 years. It’s a collective body of stakeholders and interests coming together to galvanize around aquaculture and seafood. It’s the first of its kind in New Zealand, and I think it’s a fantastic model that we should be encouraging in other parts; I’d love to see a similar model adopted for Top of the South so we could have that strategic vision and mindset that weaves people together. The total industry ambition is \$3 billion by 2035 – double our export earnings in 10 years – and that Southland strategy area is potentially \$1 billion of the \$3 billion. A role for AQNZ is to support that great work, and to play our part ensuring that aquaculture is delivered in a way that’s collaborative rather than single-interest.

Our footprint is predominantly in regional and rural communities, so it’s really important to New Zealand’s future to have supported, growing businesses and have those places thriving.

Off the job, what brings you joy?

I love jumping on my bike and going for a ride. It’s a big part of how I like to relax and also how I travel. So many of my holidays with my family are based on a bike, and we find it’s a great pace to see, enjoy and discover things.

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The passion at the core of seafood's hardworking people

On 11 September, the winners of the New Zealand Seafood Sustainability and Innovation Awards 2025 were announced at Parliament, recognising the many contributions of fishers, marine farmers, community groups and researchers from around the country.



The 2025 Seafood Sustainability and Innovation Awards winners. Photo by Mark Tantrum Photography.

Eleven individuals or businesses were recognised over eight awards.

Minister for Oceans and Fisheries Shane Jones said, “The Seafood Sustainability and Innovation Awards celebrate the many people and organisations who look after the marine environment and ensure the seafood sector continues to grow.”

University of Waikato Professor Kura Paul-Burke (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Whakahemo) won both the Seafood New Zealand-sponsored Supreme Sustainability and Innovation Award, and the Tangata Tiaki/Kaitiaki Award sponsored by Te Ohu Kaimoana, for her mahi combining mātauranga Māori with marine science to lead community-based restoration efforts reseeding pāua around Aotea Great Barrier Island and Waiheke Island.

Seafood New Zealand is a proud sponsor of these awards, and outgoing GM Communications Fiona MacMillan said that Professor Paul-Burke's efforts empower her community made her a deserving choice.

“It's quite something to lead an initiative that can restore a declining green-lipped mussel population from 80,000 to 45 million thriving mussels. My favourite detail is that she used cabbage tree leaf fibre instead of plastic for the mussels to attach to. To achieve that using a combination of science and mātauranga Māori, while bringing a whole community with you, is deeply impressive. Innovation and sustainability succeeds best when everyone is involved, and we can't wait to see the ongoing results of Professor Paul-Burke's research.”

Adding to the good news, Seafood New Zealand Inshore Principal Policy Manager Tamar Wells won the Future Leader Award. The Ministry for Primary Industries praised

her personal approach and essential contribution to the Seafood Industry Forum Sub-Group, ensuring industry voices informed the design of fisheries reforms aimed at improving responsiveness, efficiency and certainty of fisheries decision-making.

In her heartfelt acceptance speech, Tamar said, “I got into my career in seafood as a science graduate and I cared about the ecology, the ocean and the creatures in it. What I didn't expect to care about so much was all of the people in the seafood industry. That's what's keeping me in it – the passion they all have and how it's part of your identity. It's not just a job.”

Read about all the winners at www.mpi.govt.nz



Tamar Wells (left), winner of the 2025 Future Leader Award, with Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Oceans and Fisheries Jenny Marcroft. Photo by Mark Tantrum Photography.

Congratulations to all the winners and finalists of the New Zealand Seafood Sustainability and Innovation Awards 2025

- **Operational Innovator Award, sponsored by Fishserve**
Sustainable Pioke Longline Bait Project by Rob Ansley (Ocean Pearl Fisheries), Keith Mawson (Egmont Seafoods), Jerome Chua (Massey University), and Mark Peychers (Fiordland Lobster Company)
➔ Read all about the sausage bait project in our Autumn 2025 issue!
- **Tangata Tiaki/Kaitiaki Award, sponsored by Te Ohu Kaimoana**
Professor Kura Paul-Burke, University of Waikato
- **Market Innovator Award, sponsored by Aquaculture New Zealand**
Jake Dikstaal and Chase Hann, Leigh Fish
➔ Chase is our Catchin' Up With feature this issue. Read more on page 22!
- **Future Leader Award**
Tamar Wells, Seafood New Zealand
➔ She's also great at recipes! Tamar and Zak's beetroot-cured kahawai gravlax bagel how-to is on page 38.
- **Ocean Guardian Award, sponsored by Dragonfly Data Science**
Fiordland Marine Guardians
- **Special Recognition Award**
Jim Aitken, Mahurangi Oysters
- **Supreme Sustainability and Innovation Award, sponsored by Seafood New Zealand**
Professor Kura Paul-Burke, University of Waikato
- **Minister for Oceans and Fisheries Award**
John Young, Clearwater Mussels

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SPONSORED CONTENT



Sam Hardwick and Connor Balmer from FPS installing a retrofitted SAFE STOP safety system on MacLab's aquaculture vessel, the *Vanguard*.

‘The Rolls Royce of safety systems’

FPS’ accredited SAFE STOP Safety System offers a fully integrated suite of customised safety solutions, engineered to reduce user error and protect staff like never before.

FPS director Gary Allen has spent over 54 years working in marine engineering – he’s one of those 16,500 Kiwis working under the seafood industry umbrella. An engineering industry stalwart, Allen is well-known for his innovation and solutions-focused approach to design.

Hydraulic systems are fundamental to the performance of industrial and marine operations where precision motion and control are essential for manipulating mechanical components and systems.

“Staff safety and wellbeing are massively affected by these systems,” Allen says. “The simplest error or lack of understanding can lead to lifelong consequences. No one wants that. So here at FPS we came up with a solution, originally for maritime industries but SAFE STOP can be incorporated into any hydraulic system.”

Enter, the FPS SAFE STOP safety system.

Designed by Allen, with all components developed and manufactured by the team at FPS in their Port Nelson workshop, SAFE STOP is an integrated suite of hydraulic valves and modules that vessel owners and skippers – or on-shore factory managers – can incorporate into their existing hydraulic systems (or new ones, when refurbishing or building new vessels). They’re built in FPS’ proprietary, marine-grade technology to resist corrosion (though they can also be produced in standard materials for below-deck if desired) and designed to be easy to maintain and service.



SAFE STOP systems are built in FPS’ proprietary, marine-grade technology to resist corrosion.



SAFE STOP Manifold on MacLab's aquaculture vessel, the *Vanguard*, including a Reset Module and three Sensing Modules.

Each SAFE STOP system is comprised of fully customisable modules tailored to the specific operating environment and system, meaning the safety solutions are targeted to what the actual risk is, rather than a general system that isn't specifically designed for what could happen on a vessel or seafood factory setting. They can work alone or be combined for even greater security. There are six types of modules that can be incorporated depending on what is required, from the Hydraulic Position-Sensing Valve Module that prevents harm before it happens to the Reducer Module that helps control hydraulic pressure within the safety system, ensuring reliable operation across components.

For example, the SAFE STOP Sensing Module prevents shut-down machinery from unintentionally reactivating by verifying that all components are in a safe, isolated state before any restart. If a machine was left running at the time of an emergency stop, engine failure, or the opening of a guard or access panel, the Sensing Module ensures it cannot resume operation until all controls are returned to a safe condition.

Working with then-Engineering Manager Darren Brown, Sanford was the early adopter of this technology. Brown had tried mechanical stops and electronic stops, but found they didn't do a very good job and failed in the saltwater environment. So, FPS created and installed their advanced safety measures which are now used across the fleet.

SAFE STOP was also recently installed on the *Vanguard*, a mussel harvester owned by MacLab and skippered by Stoney Bourke, when FPS was commissioned to supply and install their purpose-built hydraulic system. Stoney calls SAFE STOP the "Rolls Royce of safety systems."

"We looked for the best system on the market that we could find. They covered all the bases of safety on the *Vanguard*. From day one we had no issues and it worked straight away. I feel a lot better, I can sleep at night knowing that they put the safety system on the boat," he says.

"We just want to make it as safe as possible for the guys. You can open a guard probably 20 millimeters and it'll shut off. You can't start it up again until everything is in neutral."

And having FPS based in New Zealand? "It makes the process a whole lot easier. Knowing the parts are available locally for anything required is good," Bourke says.

Allen, though gratified by all the praise, isn't in it for the kudos – just in it for a job well done, knowing his hard work means people come back safe each night. "Having frequently worked on vessels around the country for 50-plus years, we know what these ships and production sites go through in order to fish and prepare food safely. I'm just glad to contribute to that."

SAFE STOP systems are available exclusively from FPS

Contact Brent Brown to discuss a custom SAFE STOP solution tailored to your safety needs.

Email brent@fluidpower.co.nz or call (+64) 3 548 4850 EXT 105. Learn more at fluidpower.co.nz/services/safe-stop-system-design

From Moana Project to AMOS

In 2023, funding for The Moana Project scientific research programme wrapped up. Over the five-year project, hundreds of commercial fishing vessels around the country helped collect over 38 million observations to form a comprehensive ocean temperature monitoring system. To keep the network and its essential scientific data going for as long as possible, its collaborators have transformed the network into the Aotearoa Moana Observing System (AMOS) charitable trust.

“The value of these observations increases the longer we can maintain them,” says Dr Brett Beamsley from MetOcean Solutions. “If we have them for two years, it’s great. If we have them for five years, we can start seeing longer trends. If we have it for 10 years, we start to get a real feel for what’s happening in the ocean.

“It’s really, really, really critical that we maintain that momentum and don’t drop off, because if we drop off and stop it’s going to be 10 times as hard to start it up again.”

Comprehensive, long-term ocean temperature data are essential for marine and weather forecasting, climate change research, fisheries management and more; AMOS gets requests for the data from the scientific community and fishing operators. Moana sensors are typically deployed in waters less than 1,000 metres deep, covering ocean areas that fall out of the scope of more deepwater sensors, like the ARGO floats.

The majority of Moana sensors – 65.5% – were deployed by potting vessels, followed by bottom trawling vessels at 15.2%. Altogether, commercial fishing accounted for well over three-quarters of all participating vessels.

“The value of these observations increases the longer we can maintain them...If we have it for 10 years, we start to get a real feel for what’s happening in the ocean.”



Retrieving a sensor.



The Moana sensors, developed by ZebraTech Ltd. in Nelson.

A secure source of funding hasn’t yet come through for AMOS, so while the team looks at financial opportunities they are transitioning to a tax-deductible, user-pays model.

“It’s anywhere between \$50,000 to \$100,000 per annum to keep the whole project running, which is minuscule for a national observing infrastructure. At \$380 a year to maintain a sensor and deck unit, it’s now slightly more than a dollar a day to be in the programme. For anyone who can’t continue, we’ll look at getting the instruments back and refurbishing them and distributing them to people who are interested.”

The contribution covers sensor calibration – which needs to happen every two years – data transmission and processing and ensuring the data remains open-access for anyone who uses it, including domestic and international researchers and marine forecast suppliers.

“This is fantastic capability we’ve developed working collectively with industry rather than against it,” Dr Beamsley says, explaining that in the future he hopes to expand the number of participating industry vessels and add additional measuring capability as well – for salinity or dissolved oxygen – to feed into the overall understanding of what the marine environment is doing.

“We’ve worked really hard to build a relationship with the industry and have them as a partner.”

Learn more at amos.org.nz



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Management material: how a logging trial could help manage our fisheries better

It's a well-worn cliché that you can't manage what you can't measure. In fishing, that means understanding how many fish are in the sea so we know how many we can sustainably catch.

Under New Zealand's Quota Management System, assessments of biomass are needed to guide the setting of Annual Catch Entitlements. Good information begets good decisions. And with hundreds of stocks to manage – 642 of them to be precise – there is a lot of scientific assessment to be done to understand what is really going on beneath the waves.

The fishing vessels themselves are vehicles for the data collection needed, as Ben Steele-Mortimer from Seafood New Zealand explains.

“We rely quite heavily on collecting biological information from the vessels about what fish is being caught, how big they are, how old they are and the sexes of different fish. That information is used along with a lot of other information to model and provide estimates of total biomass in our fisheries.”

Right now, this type of work is mostly done by Government observers on the deepwater fishing vessels.

Ben is the Environment Programme Manager for the Deepwater part of Seafood New Zealand. He focuses a lot on helping fishers avoid interactions with protected species such as marine mammals and seabirds.

“Prioritising observer placement on vessels is driven by several factors and the focus of a lot of observer coverage is on protected species and compliance. At times the need for fish sampling is put down the priority list. Although the observers obviously do collect a lot of biological data, sometimes it's not weighted enough in that area for us to have the data needed to support stock assessments.

“So what we're working on is getting vessels across our hoki fleet to collect biological data, such as length frequency data from the vessels. It's been several years since we've tried to get something like this off the ground. But it's all been a very paper-based and resource-intensive operation.”

And paper-based has proved to be a very impractical way to do things, as Ben explains.

“Basically, in the past crew were provided with A4 sheets of paper and required to write tallies on how many fish, different sizes, all of that. And then that information is then sent to us [at Seafood New Zealand], where it was manually transcribed into a digital format. But this was a logistically cumbersome process which was ineffective for the long-term.”

However, the information is needed, so a new approach had to be tried.

That's where Ben and the team gratefully borrowed an idea developed by the rock lobster industry and involved a Nelson-based tech company called ZebraTech. That tech company has developed “deck loggers” which can be used to log information about every cray or fish caught.

“The crew would use these loggers, measure out fish and plug it into these loggers, and it records it all in a useful way. And then when they get to shore, they can send this data off via cellular. There's a quick switch in there that sends it off remotely, and it's all sent to a central database where it's stored, able to be analysed and then used for stock assessments in the future.”

Ben says the loggers are easy to use, practical and durable, although some manual labour is still needed – crew have to measure 100 fish from each tow and plug in the measurements. In total, crew across just three vessels have measured over 38,000 fish in only a few months.

The loggers are currently being trialled on a small number of hoki vessels. The trial has been quietly going on for six months and Ben is pleased with the results and feedback so far.

“We've had a really good success and good uptake from the crew and operators. And we're now looking to scale it up to the rest of our hoki fleet. And with that, we'll also work on a back-end data management system, where we can ensure that the data is robust enough to be used in stock assessments.”

The unit is also useful for management in our fisheries. For example, if a vessel has caught a large number of small fish and is close to a certain threshold, the logger alerts them and triggers a move on protocol.

Ben's next steps are working on ensuring the robustness of the data, so that everyone inside and outside the fishery can confidently rely on the information collected. He says there are various statistical approaches which can be used to ensure the data is reliable and can be compared against existing observer figures.

Using this logging system could help reduce costs and could increase the volume of useable data we get from across the fishery. Helping ensure we can measure and therefore can manage better.



A ZebraTech deck logger.

"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** this 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.



**Spark
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Symbols Relating To Submarine Cables

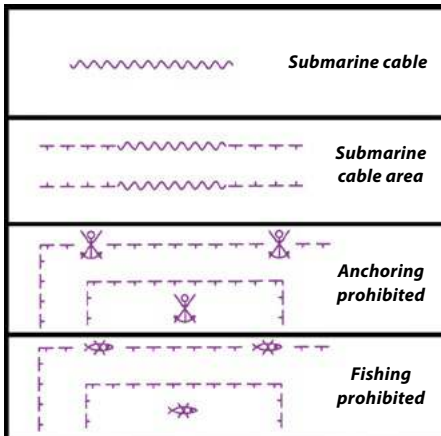


Figure 1.

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.

In addition 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.



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.

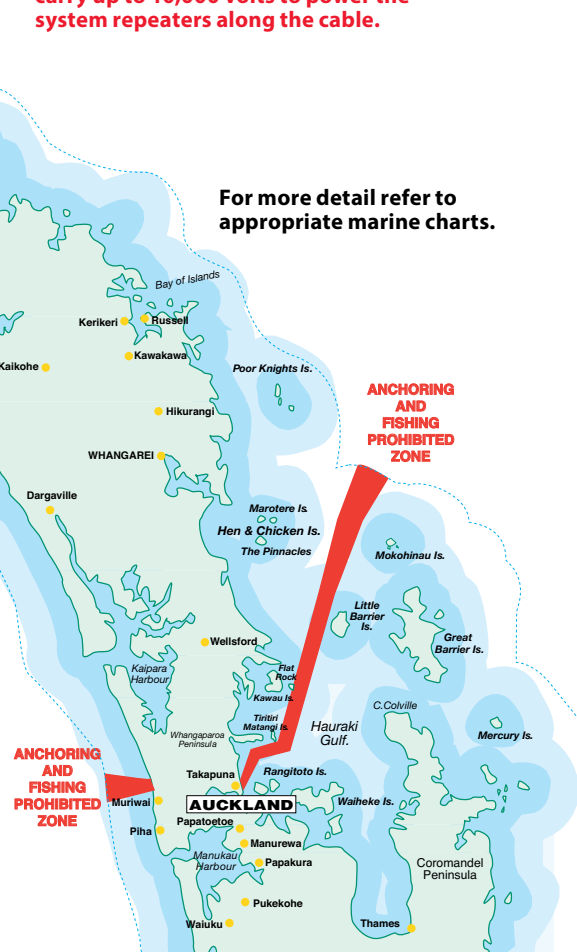
What happens outside the prohibited areas?

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**



Three career opportunities not to be missed!

Whether you're on the water, in the lab or getting stuck-in to logistics or policy, there are exciting opportunities out there for you to grow your skills and help you shape the future of the industry.

Here are three outstanding opportunities, from travelling the globe as a Nuffield Scholar to Fisheries New Zealand scholarships that will help you get deep into fisheries science. If you are keen to boost your career to the next level, one of these opportunities could be just the thing for you.

Nuffield New Zealand Farming Scholarship

The Nuffield Farming Scholarship is one of the most prestigious rural leadership awards in the country. Each year, up to five scholars are selected to embark on a global journey of learning and research. The programme includes international conferences, a four-week Global Focus Programme across multiple continents, and an individual research project that contributes to New Zealand's food and fibre strategy.

While traditionally focused on farming, the Nuffield Farming Scholarship is increasingly relevant to seafood professionals, especially those interested in global supply chains, sustainability and leadership. Scholars gain access to an international network and return with insights that can reshape industry practices.

ruralleaders.co.nz/nuffield-farming-scholarships/

Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme

Established in 1979, the Kellogg Programme is designed for leaders in the food and fibre sectors. Delivered by the New Zealand Rural Leadership Trust, the six-month course involves 18 days of intensive learning across Christchurch and Wellington. Scholars undertake a research project on a topic of their choice, such as sustainability, policy or innovation.

The Kellogg Programme provides the ideal platform for seafood professionals to build leadership skills, sharpen strategic thinking and connect with a diverse network of peers across the primary industries.

ruralleaders.co.nz/application-kellogg/



The 2025 Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme cohort.

Fisheries New Zealand Scholarships

Fisheries New Zealand offers two scholarships – one for undergraduates and one for Master's students – aimed at developing skills in quantitative fisheries science. These scholarships are helping fill a critical skills gap in New Zealand, where trained quantitative researchers are in short supply.

- **Undergraduate Scholarship in Quantitative Marine Biology**
\$5,000 for students in their final year who are planning an Honours degree or a double major in biology or marine biology with statistics, computing or maths
- **Master's Scholarship in Quantitative Fisheries Science**
\$20,000 per year for up to two years, supporting students in quantitative marine science, particularly stock assessment modelling or ecosystem modelling



Fisheries New Zealand

Tini a Tangaroa

These scholarships are perfect for students with a strong background in statistics, computing, or applied mathematics who want to apply their skills to the sustainable use of fisheries.

mpi.govt.nz/about-mpi/our-work-at-mpi/mpi-scholarships-and-awards/fisheries-new-zealand-scholarships/

Whether you're a deckhand with your sights on leadership or a student keen on crunching fisheries data, these opportunities are chance to grow, connect and lead. The seafood industry needs people who are curious, innovative, and ready to tackle the challenges ahead, and with the right support that person could be you!

	When can I apply?	How long is it?	Who can apply?	What does it offer?
Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme	Open now – closes 19 October 2025	18-day programme over six months	People who want to develop as leaders	Workshops, leadership development and an independent research project
Nuffield New Zealand Farming Scholarship	Visit their website to register your interest	12-month programme including 14 weeks of travel	People committed to solving industry challenges	International travel, leadership development and an individual research project
Fisheries New Zealand Undergraduate Scholarships in Quantitative Marine Biology	Open now – closes 31 October 2025	One year	Undergraduates planning Honours or a double major in biology/marine biology with maths, computing or statistics	\$5,000 for your final year of undergraduate study
Fisheries New Zealand Undergraduate Scholarships in Quantitative Marine Biology	Open now – closes 31 October 2025	Up to two years, full-time study	Master's students in quantitative marine science (e.g., stock assessment or ecosystem modelling)	\$20,000 per year for up to two years



Zak Olsen and Tamar Wells.

Zak and Tamar's 'fishy' collaboration – the tasty combo that's getting a lot of attention

The six-part recipe series has only just launched, but already plenty of people are talking about *Zak and Tamar's Fishy Bits* on social media. Fiona MacMillan sits down with the dynamic duo.

Everywhere you look on the internet, there are recipes. Often these are peddled by gorgeous influencers who seem to have all the time in the world to prepare restaurant-style dinners for their telegenic families.

You will not find that kind of content in the new Seafood New Zealand recipe series, *Zak and Tamar's Fishy Bits*. Instead, you'll get casual chaos, unplanned banter and simple recipes using seafood anyone in New Zealand can buy for a reasonable price.

When you watch Zak Olsen and Tamar Wells in action, you get the feeling they are making it up as they go along. That's because they are.

"We sorted out the ingredients list the night before, going back and forth and going shopping, so we got all the things we knew we'd need, but that was the first time we'd cooked together at all," Tamar says of the video production and recipe process.

"People can know that if these idiots can make fish finger sandwiches, anyone can."

But the chaos factor doesn't seem to have hampered Zak and Tamar's popularity. Even with the series having only just started, the videos are generating enthusiastic comments and likes on the social media platforms.

Perhaps people are warming to the message that cooking seafood can be easy. And that it doesn't have to be expensive.

Zak says, "I know people are worried about the cost of living right now and they see fish as expensive. But it doesn't have to be. That's why we focused on species that are really good value for money and more accessible. Plus, honestly, as Tamar says, these recipes are so easy."

"People can know that if these idiots can make fish finger sandwiches, anyone can."

For Tamar, focusing on lesser-known species was a way to showcase New Zealand's entire seafood story. "There are all these amazing fish out there that most people won't have tried before... might not even have heard of. But if you give them a go, you're enjoying the full range of what our seas have to offer. New Zealand has diverse seafood, it's a real strength – let's learn to use it."

So what is it about this combination of fisherman-cum-pen-pusher plus fisheries policy expert that's working so well in the kitchen? Zak is complimentary about Tamar's 14 years of hospitality experience. But he's also quite complimentary about himself.

Fiona: "What do you bring to the party Zak?"

Zak: "Charisma, uniqueness, nerve and talent."

Tamar: "I think you've got heaps of creativity with the food."

Zak: "I bring a bit of roughness, but also experience from harvesting seafood, water to plate."

However, after listing his own favourable attributes, Zak genuinely has good things to say about his on-screen cooking buddy.

Zak: "Tamar brings more polish and more conciseness. I'm OK with ideas and big picture, but she has the refinement and the finer detail. She's also hands-down a much better cook than me."

Tamar: "Don't say that. I would not agree with that."

Zak: "I think your skills are very different to mine. You've got more complexity and knowledge."

Tamar: "Yeah, I'm also the funny one."

Fiona: "So you, Tamar, bring the looks, the humour, the precision and the brains. And Zak brings the fish from Moana (thank you Moana)."

Zak: "Yeah the fish and the borderline knife skills."

That constant banter and nonsense chat is a compelling watch. It's hard to interview them without laughing, and it's hard to watch the series without smiling. In fact, like a blood line in a kahawai, a lot of the jokes had to be left on the cutting room floor because they definitely weren't PG.



Baked leatherjacket in herby cream, from *Zak and Tamar's Fishy Bits*.

While Zak and Tamar like to talk smack about themselves, there's no holding back in their enthusiasm for what they've created.

Zak: "My favourite part of the whole thing was the process. And getting to work with Tamar on this passion project, bringing creativity to work."

Tamar: "Yeah the creating. We want people to feel comfortable cooking fish rather than only having it when they go out. I loved that moment where we just tried the fish finger burger and I was genuinely surprised, it was amazing, because a lot of these things we hadn't eaten before, we'd made them for the first time on the day and it was so good."



Scan the QR code to watch the *Zak and Tamar's Fishy Bits* recipe series.

Who are Zak and Tamar?

Zak Olsen is a former inshore skipper who is now in Quota Supply and Planner for Moana New Zealand. He has experience in hospitality as a former restaurant and café owner, and contestant on season two of TVNZ's *Cooks on Fire*.

Tamar Wells has a background in hospitality, working in restaurants in Auckland, Wellington, Melbourne and Sydney. She is currently Inshore Policy Manager at Seafood New Zealand.

Fish for *Zak and Tamar's Fishy Bits* was supplied by Moana New Zealand.

RECIPE

Zak and Tamar's

Beetroot-cured kahawai gravlax bagels

Serves: 4 | Prep time: 10 mins + overnight chill | Cook time: 5 mins



We reckon kahawai is underrated and underutilised! Usually, it's destined for bait or confined to the smoker. But it's a great fish and not everyone has a smoker. Zak has a great, simple way of curing kahawai to make a delicious and beautiful gravlax that's a perfect alternative to salmon for your brunch bagel or poke bowl.

Ingredients:

For the cure:

- 1 whole kahawai filleted and skinned (2 fillets, could also use trevally or kingfish)
- 1 large beetroot
- 1 orange
- 1 lemon
- Salt and pepper

To serve:

- 4 bagels
- Cream cheese
- 1 bunch dill
- Capers
- Lemon



Tamar and Zak slicing the beetroot-cured fish.

Instructions:

In a large dish (big enough to fit the kahawai fillets flat and side by side) grate the beetroot and juice the orange and lemon, add a decent whack of salt and pepper and mix.

Lay the fish in and make sure all surfaces are coated. Cover and pop in the fridge overnight.

You can also do this in a vacuum-sealed bag or glad bag. Suck the air out but don't vacuum it – this will speed up the curing.

In the morning, take the fish out of the cure, let the liquid drip off and remove bits of beetroot.

Slice the fillets width ways to your desired thickness – we recommend about 3-4mm. When you're done, the rest of the fish can be stored in a sealed container or bag for up to 3-4 days in the fridge. The cure will help preserve it and the flavour will intensify the longer it is kept.

Toast your bagels and smear with a generous helping of cream cheese. Layer your cured kahawai on top and garnish with copious amounts of dill, a sprinkling of capers and some zest and juice of a lemon. Too easy! If you're feeling a bit saucy like us, try a drizzle of sesame oil.



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

Major changes supporting certainty in the seafood sector



**By Alastair Cameron, Director Primary Sector Policy,
Ministry for Primary Industries**

It's been an eventful few months in fisheries policy marked by progress on the Fisheries Reform proposals and the passing of changes to the way the Resource Management Act (RMA) works with the Fisheries Act.

In early August, the Government agreed to progress the Fisheries Reform package, which proposes a suite of changes to make the fisheries system more responsive and efficient, provide more certainty about how fisheries are managed and support economic growth in the fishing industry.

Sustainability will always be the bottom line for all of us. If we don't have fish in the water nothing else we do will matter. To that end, the changes will enable more efficient and effective decision making when setting sustainable catch limits, all backed by robust scientific evaluation and consultation processes.

In some fisheries, rules will be able to be set to automatically respond to changes in abundance for up to five years. Critically, we'll be able to act more quickly and effectively to changes in fish stocks with faster action to increase catch when stocks are doing well, and likewise with supporting a stock's recovery if it's in trouble.

The changes also leverage the power of onboard cameras to offer fishers more options when deciding what to do with unwanted catch. For vessels monitored by onboard cameras or observers, fishers will be able to choose whether to return fish and record it as discards, or land it if they think it is worth it. Regardless, all catch will still be accounted for against fishers' Annual Catch Entitlement or incur deemed values.

Other changes include protecting privacy for fishers with onboard cameras and limiting the timeframes for legal challenges to fisheries decisions.

An amendment bill will be introduced later this year and will go through the usual select committee processes, which will be another opportunity for people to provide feedback before it is expected to pass into law next year.

In late August, changes to the RMA to provide certainty around fishing controls under the RMA were also passed into law.

These changes clarify and constrain council processes by putting safeguards in place to ensure proposed council plans do not have undue adverse effects on fishing, and reduces duplication between the RMA and the Fisheries Act.

Like all business-people, commercial fishers want certainty to do business. The changes remove last-minute surprises by front-loading the council decision-making process on fishing rules. New fishing rules or proposed changes to fishing rules within a council plan now need to be assessed early in the process to determine if there would be any undue effects on fishing. Any proposed changes to fisheries rules under council plans must also have agreement from the Director-General of the Ministry for Primary Industries before the plan is progressed.

Other changes include removing councils' ability to require a resource consent for fishing and removing the ability for customary fishing regulations to be overridden by the RMA.

Further changes to the RMA are underway and people will have the opportunity to provide feedback on this. I encourage you to keep an eye out for the consultation, which is being led by the Ministry for the Environment.

Lastly, I'd like to congratulate the winners of the 2025 Seafood Sustainability and Innovation Awards, and acknowledge all of the nominees and finalists. There's some fantastic mahi and collaboration going on out there amongst fishers, researchers, businesses and community groups. I encourage you all to keep doing this important work to support our oceans and fisheries.

Supporting Nelson Tasman's seafood sector following severe weather

June's severe weather brought more than heavy rain and flooding to the Nelson Tasman region – creating a complex and ongoing challenge for the community. While much of the media focus has been on damage to homes, roads and farmland, those working on the water are facing their own set of impacts due to substantial quantities of debris and freshwater entering marine environments.

FirstMate's team has been on the ground – and on the phone – throughout the event and its aftermath, listening to fishers and marine farmers, sharing information and connecting people with the right support.

With 19 experienced Navigators across New Zealand, many of them long-time seafood industry professionals, FirstMate provides a trusted and confidential point of contact for fishers, marine farmers and their whānau.

Impacts still unfolding

Reports from Nelson, Tasman and Golden Bay highlight hazards ranging from floating logs, apple crates and deceased livestock, to hundreds of metres of orchard netting tangled in marine farms and trawl gear.

Inshore vessels have mostly shifted operations to deeper waters, while trawlers fishing further offshore have been dealing with increasing debris caught in nets, leading to more net mending and lost fishing time. Floating debris remains a navigational hazard, with vessels reporting they cannot safely operate at night in affected areas.

Some mussel farms in Tasman and Golden Bay have had significant logs removed to prevent structural damage, and there are concerns about possible mussel spat mortality due to large volumes of freshwater. In many cases, fishers are avoiding waters inside the 20-metre depth contour altogether due to the risk from submerged debris.

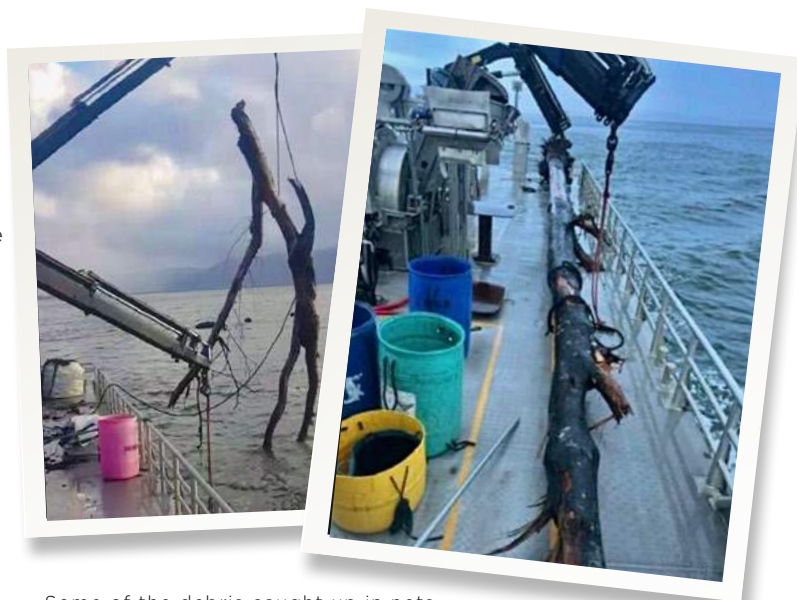
A local fisher described the conditions during his first trip after the storm:

"Debris levels were okay around Motueka but as I got to Adele Island, Marahau, Totaranui, Separation Point and into Golden Bay, there was heavy floating debris of logs, posing serious navigational hazards. Three logs were caught in the net, one weighing two to three tonnes, which took an hour and a half to haul aboard – only possible due to calm seas. The net was damaged and needed mending, and the boat's paintwork was also damaged. Time spent dealing with debris reduced fishing time and increased operational risk."

A 'double hit' for those on the water

FirstMate Operations Manager Darren Guard says the situation highlights how those working in the seafood sector can be impacted twice by severe weather events.

"There's the immediate loss of fishing or harvesting days when the weather makes it unsafe to operate. Then there's the delayed impact as debris comes down rivers, much of it from land-based activities, and starts to affect marine operations. We're seeing increased costs in gear repairs, more time spent mending nets, and reduced productive time on the water," says Darren.



Some of the debris caught up in nets.

In the Nelson Tasman case, FirstMate and local Navigators have been keeping close contact with fishers and marine farmers, gathering information for MPI and industry bodies and offering practical support, whether that's help with navigating financial assistance, connecting people to mental health services or simply being there for a conversation.

The full impact of the June weather event is still unknown, and FirstMate will continue to monitor the situation in the coming months. Beach clean-ups and hazard removal are ongoing, and the sector remains on alert for the long-term effects of debris settling on the seafloor.

Darren says the need for support can go beyond the operational. "Extreme weather events like this don't just hit business operations – they can put a lot of extra strain on people. FirstMate is here to help the people in our seafood sector navigate those pressures, whatever form they take.

"Our message is simple. If you need someone to talk to, call us. We're here to listen, to connect you with help and to make sure you don't have to face challenges alone."

FirstMate also encourages fishers and marine farmers to take proactive action ahead of future adverse weather events. The FirstMate Preparedness Plan Templates are designed specifically for the seafood sector, helping workers and their families create a clear, practical emergency response plan in just 30 minutes. It's not just paperwork – it can be a lifeline in a disaster. Visit firstmate.org.nz/disaster-and-emergency/ to get started or email info@firstmate.org.nz.

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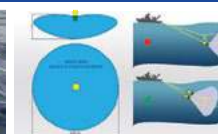
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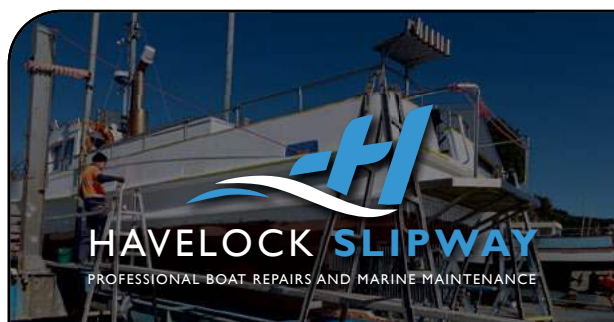
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Flexible start dates.

All certificate programs are approved for student loans, hardship sponsorship available in some instances.

If you have existing licenses or qualifications, contact us for future pathways.

CONTACT PETER ON: 0274 507585 | 0800 DEEP SEA – 0800 333 7732
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