

SEAFOOD

NEW ZEALAND



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Make this a Kiwi kaimoana summer

Zero bycatch breakthrough in the jack mackerel 7 fishery

Fifty-plus years of that iconic fish species poster



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!



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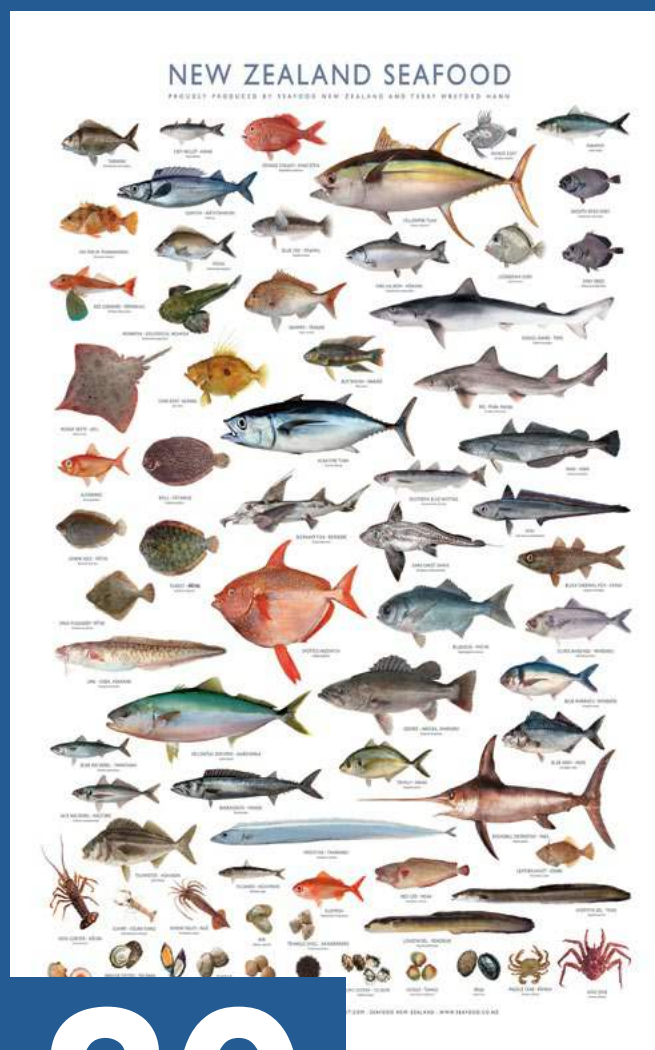
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From the Chief Executive

I can't quite believe this is only my second column for the Seafood New Zealand magazine. Time is passing so quickly and there is so much on the go. A huge part of the work we are doing at Seafood New Zealand is working constructively with Government officials to look at ways we can streamline legislative and regulatory settings for our sector, thereby lifting some of the cost burden on the industry. That's been a significant focus for me and several of the team since the last edition of this magazine. Because of the long lead times on printing this and getting it to you, anything I write now would be out of date by the time you read it, but for Seafood New Zealand members and industry participants, we hope to have a substantive update before Christmas or soon after.

Of course, there's plenty to think about over the Christmas period besides work. You might already be considering the different ways to serve up your fresh kaimoana over the festive season. If so, you'll find inspiration in our feature story on page 10, where some familiar seafood faces share their favourite summer seafood dishes.

However, we know for many fishers and processors, Christmas is the busiest time of year. Many of you are on the water right now, bringing in the beautiful seafood that is a staple of the Kiwi summer diet. We always want to celebrate you as outstanding food producers and help tell that story. You'll see that nominations for the 2025 New Zealand's Outstanding Food Producer Awards (see page 17) are now open; we'd love to see more seafood entries this year as it's a great way to showcase the amazing work you do.

You can also take a look at a Kiwi fisher who addressed delegates at the recent COP16 meeting in Colombia via a video made on the Tīmaru foreshore (see page 28). And get to know another Kiwi fisher, Troy Harper, in our first 'Catchin' up with' Q&A on page 26.

We're striking a summery and celebratory tone throughout and that includes a look at the evolution of our iconic Kiwi seafood poster (page 20). It didn't always look the way it looks now and there have been a few creative spinoffs, too.

Things are constantly changing and that includes this magazine. You might notice this issue is slightly slimmer than usual. To be frank, this is a decision we have made to help reduce costs. We know our magazine is loved – we recently did a survey of Seafood New Zealand members and industry people. The feedback about this magazine was incredibly positive. We know you want it to keep going and we want to keep bringing it to you. Next year we invite you to enjoy four editions of the magazine, which will move to a seasonal publishing schedule. If you are an advertiser already, we thank you for your support. If you're not yet an advertiser, this publication reaches 17,000 readers in seafood. If you're interested in that audience and in supporting the future of this magazine, please get in touch.

We know our magazine can help share the great news about our industry and build pride. There is much to be proud of. Whether you are working or relaxing over summer (or a combination of both) we wish you all the best. There will be plenty of opportunities and challenges ahead in 2025 and we wish you the best for those too. Meantime, I hope you manage to take some time for rest, relaxation and family in the weeks ahead.

Lisa Futschek
Chief Executive

Bycatch breakthrough: New Zealand fishery celebrates year of zero bycatch of protected species

After more than a decade of proactive engagement, bycatch mitigation trials and innovations, and significant industry investment in observer coverage, New Zealand's largest jack mackerel fishery (JMA 7) achieved an impressive milestone for the 2023/24 fishing year (1 October 2023 – 30 September 2024): zero captures of protected species. That's no seabirds, no fur seals, no dolphins.



Jack mackerel fisheries are currently worth over \$66 million in export revenue.

While small in size, jack mackerel (hauture) is a significant species for New Zealand's commercial fishing sector, currently worth over \$66 million in export revenue.

Located off the west coast of New Zealand's North and South Islands, JMA 7 is the largest of the JMA fisheries, with a total annual catch of 32,000 tonnes. Calling this fishery vital to our industry is an understatement.

Seafood New Zealand CEO Lisa Futschek says this result is all about hard work and cooperation.

"It's such good news and it didn't come easy. The people operating in this fishery have developed multiple measures over many years to prevent bycatch. They have worked together to understand what works and what doesn't, supported by Seafood New Zealand and other industry groups."

JMA 7 is a highly monitored fishery with close to 80% observer coverage annually over the past 10 years. Industry has been supportive of this high observer coverage to help verify protected species interactions and to demonstrate the improvements in the fishery over time.

"It's taken a lot of effort over many years to get to this point, but it was worth it," says Futschek. "Protecting marine mammals and seabirds is so important to the people in this industry and everyone is working on this. The work in JMA 7 shows a successful approach to protected species risk management and Seafood New Zealand is keen to spread the knowledge."

FEATURE

"Protecting marine mammals and seabirds is so important to the people in this industry and everyone is working on this."

The skippers, vessel managers and companies involved have developed procedures for all protected species, but in the early days, common dolphin captures in JMA 7 were the biggest concern. Significant dolphin capture events in the early 2010s triggered the industry to make changes to their fishing operations and how they responded to capture events.

The changes involved implementing a variety of tools and processes. These included:

- Crews' yearly briefings with Deepwater Environmental Liaison Officers and reviews of capture events
- Open dialogue with skippers and vessel managers about risk factors
- Use of audio devices that deter dolphins
- Reducing the number of nighttime tows during the 'higher-risk period'
- Open communication between skippers, notifying the whole JMA fleet if/when a capture does occur
- Avoidance of new moon fishing at shallow depths.

The three fishing companies currently involved are Sealord, Independent Fisheries Limited and Maruha.

The JMA 7 fishery uses audio devices to deter dolphins.

Tim Law, the GM of Operations at Maruha, says the result was achieved through massive efforts by fishing experts and others looking for practical solutions.

"Communication and cooperation between the three main companies involved in the fishery has been key to the success.

"The vessel managers and crew should also be commended for adopting new practices, equipment, and abiding by the operating procedures and the 'ten commandments'. This was disruptive at the beginning to the crew, but they fully adopted them, knowing it would prevent the interactions with the mammals and birds they share the environment with."

While there is widespread delight with the result, Futschek acknowledges the industry can't rest on its laurels.

"We know there will always be more work to do. Even in this fishery, with all the effort put in, we may not get a zero-result next year. But the point is we have a decade's worth of figuring out what works.

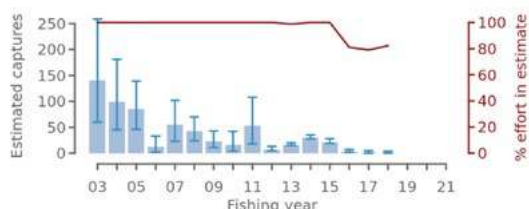
"We must acknowledge that every fishery is different – different fishing vessels with vastly different operations interact with different species across different parts of New Zealand's oceans – so there is not a one-size-fits-all approach. But this demonstrates what can be achieved through proactive engagement, collaboration with knowledgeable skippers, supportive crews and industry-led measures."



AT A GLANCE

Captures of common dolphin in jack mackerel trawl fisheries

Estimated captures



- In the early 2010s, common dolphin captures were identified as a key issue in the JMA 7 fishery (see graph above). Industry and government took immediate steps to improve monitoring and develop risk-reduction measures.
- From 2012, this fishery became one of the most highly monitored fisheries in New Zealand, with an average of 78% of tows observed annually. This high observer coverage was supported by industry as an integral part of improving our monitoring and understanding of common dolphin captures in the fishery.
- In the years that followed, Deepwater Group and members of the fishery worked closely together to build an understanding about dolphin interaction and developed tools and procedures to reduce risk of captures.
- After more than a decade of proactive engagement, development of tools and a huge investment from industry in observer coverage, this fishery has successfully achieved zero protected species captures for the whole of the 2023/24 fishing year (1 October 2023 – 30 September 2024).



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Fish fingerprints point the way to the future

Research and development by New Zealand's leading fish biology and genomics scientists for the aquaculture industry also has huge potential for wild-capture fisheries.

A unique pattern of iridescent blue spots can be seen on this young snapper swimming in its tank at Plant & Food Research's finfish facility at the Nelson Research Centre.

Over the past few years, Dr Maren Wellenreuther and her group at Plant & Food Research in Nelson have developed innovative methods using image-based technologies to 'fingerprint' individual snapper, opening the way to transfer this technology to other species like Chinook salmon.

"A snapper's 'fingerprint' is its unique patterns of iridescent blue spots – no two snapper have the same spots. So we can take a photo of a baby fish and find it again as an adult years later based on its fingerprint," says Dr Wellenreuther.

"Other species like salmon and trevally have unique patterns around their body, distinctive enough to be a fingerprint."

The fingerprints mean that the team can repeatedly measure a fish's performance traits as it grows – such as its body shape and size.

This work was part of a larger \$5.5 million Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)-funded project led by Dr Wellenreuther to develop new aquaculture-ready species in New Zealand. This will help diversify the sector, with a focus on species such as snapper that thrive in warmer ocean waters.

"In any population of captive-raised fish there will be some that do better than others – they have desirable traits for aquaculture," Dr Wellenreuther says.

Combining the fingerprinting of individuals with methods in fish genetics, Plant & Food Research scientists can then identify some of the important genes responsible for desirable traits. This is invaluable information for a selective breeding programme to help raise fish that carry these naturally occurring genes that ensure they will not only survive but thrive in aquaculture conditions.



Dr Maren Wellenreuther, Science Group Leader, Seafood Production at Plant & Food Research.

'Fingerprinting' our wild-capture fisheries

With the demonstrated success in identifying snapper based on their spots, the image-based and AI-enabled methodology has exciting applications for surveying and wild-capture stock monitoring.

In 2022, Dr Wellenreuther's team imaged the fingerprints of more than 2,000 snapper in the Plant & Food Research finfish facility in Nelson. Those fish were then relocated to a sea pen in the Marlborough Sounds and were successfully re-imaged after two years.

Dr Wellenreuther explains the image-based AI method is more efficient.

"If you used video to try and record thousands of fish in a sea pen, and then measured each fish caught on video, you might be taking hundreds of measurements of the same fish that has repeatedly swum into view.

"This does not give you good data. But if you know exactly which fish you are getting images of and measuring, then you can account for this in your data analysis."

The new methodology is the digital equivalent of catching, tagging and releasing fish one at a time. But it's much faster and less expensive.

"Catch, tag and release is an expensive method because you need people on vessels to tag and release, and because the rates of recapturing a tagged fish are so low it takes a lot of time and resources to find enough tagged fish to estimate things like survival and growth," Dr Wellenreuther says.

This is where the new methodology can be applied. A camera can be used in many places – onboard a vessel, underwater attached to the hull of a vessel or mounted over a conveyor belt in a factory – to recognise a species like snapper.

When the camera recognises a snapper it will automatically store a photo. That information can then be evaluated by the software.

"It means we can identify an individual fish based on its unique fingerprint, then extract the traits that belong to this individual from the images rather than having to handle and measure the fish by hand. This means we don't have to take the fish out of the water and handle it, which is great for animal welfare and for reducing the overall footprint of such work.

"Fisheries scientists can then draw conclusions from the data about how a population is aging and growing in a certain environment."

As at November 2024, the method and technology is in the process of being commercialised, with an announcement due that will be of interest to the commercial seafood sector.

Epigenetic clocks could replace aging fish by otolith

Dr Wellenreuther's team are using a recent breakthrough in epigenetics to develop 'clocks' used to estimate the age of fish and shellfish species.

Epigenetics is the study of changes in gene expression that do not involve any changes to the underlying DNA sequence; the gene activity (expression) has changed but the DNA code (sequence) has not. Epigenetic changes occur naturally in all living organisms – it is a normal biological process.

While different species undergo different epigenetic change over time, there are some common patterns in the epigenetic changes that occur as animals age (for example, the loss of histones – a type of protein). And because some of these changes occur in a predictable clock-like nature with age, a unique clock can be

developed for some species. Clocks have been developed and are in use for humans and other mammals.

The epigenetic signature of an individual animal is defined by which genes are switched on and off and how that changes with age. The signature, obtained by taking a tiny and usually non-lethal biological sample from an animal, can then be measured against that clock to estimate its age.

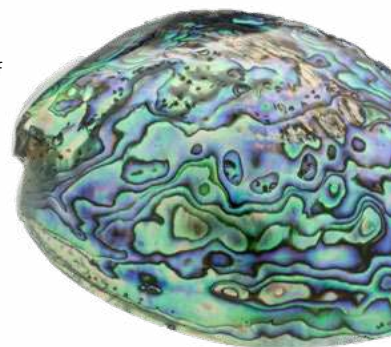
Dr Wellenreuther says that epigenetic clocks are used for mammals to about 99% accuracy and have been proven for about 10 finfish species – including the snapper clock her own team has developed.

With a new 2024 Smart Ideas MBIE government grant, she is now developing an epigenetic clock to age pāua in wild fisheries. This will be the first clock developed for a mollusc and Dr Wellenreuther's team already has a prototype clock working to 97% accuracy.

The novel (unique) epigenetic clocks have caught the attention of the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) for their potential use in fisheries management and quota setting.

Plant & Food Research scientist Dr Maren Wellenreuther is leading the development of a technique in epigenetics to determine the age of pāua in wild fisheries.

Dr Wellenreuther says that the clocks offer an exciting alternative to the current method of aging fish where you count the growth rings (like a tree trunk's rings) in ear bones of fishes, also called otoliths.



"It will be interesting to explore whether our clock can replace otolith reading, as it may prove to be more accurate and cost-effective.

"MPI uses otolith reading for more than 5,000 hoki each year – cutting into the head to extract the otolith before putting it under a microscope to count the rings," Dr Wellenreuther says.

"It's a very labour-intensive process but it has to be done in order to assess the age structure in a population. This is important to understand variability in recruitment strengths across years and to make sure a stock has enough mature breeders to support the next generations to come.

"These are all the things you need to know for sustainable fisheries management and regulators and fisheries managers are interested in knowing if they can use epigenetic clocks on a commercial scale for fisheries management."

COVER FEATURE

A Kiwi kaimoana summer



When summer arrives in Aotearoa, it's not just the sun and surf we look forward to – it's the fresh kaimoana that comes with it. Whether it's snapper on the BBQ or that satisfying feeling you get when you crack into a crayfish, seafood brings joy and is as iconic to Kiwi summers as jandals, road trips and long days at the beach.

Three familiar seafood stalwarts share their favourite summer memories, plans and go-to kaimoana recipes.

BBQ and bevvies with Sealord CEO Doug Paulin

Growing up in a busy fishing family in Southland, Doug Paulin always had big aspirations. With fishing in his blood and following years of hard work, his appointment as CEO of Sealord in October 2020 seemed like a natural fit.

The past year has been a busy one for Doug and the entire Sealord whānau, filled with both challenges and achievements. Here, Doug reflects on his favourite summer memories, touches on the year that was and shares a delicious kaimoana recipe.

Tell us about you. What did you do before seafood?

As long as I can remember I had the aspiration to run a significant New Zealand business, and I set my mind to doing that. I had to find a way to get further education with no money (Royal New Zealand Airforce), build a career with a corporate to get broad business experience (Lion Breweries New Zealand), get experience as a CEO in a smaller business (Hubbards), before joining New Zealand's now largest seafood company, Sealord.

Have you always been a seafood enthusiast?

I grew up in Riverton as part of a fishing family, so seafood has been in my veins from a young age. My dad, Colin, was a skipper (unticketed in those days) of the *FV Da Vinci*; his brother Ron also had his own boat, so fishing was very much "in the family". I have many memories of being in Foveaux Strait with Dad, getting the thumbs up as I stood in the bow with waves crashing around me – not something I would allow my kids to do these days, life jackets are a must.

Do you have an underrated species you love to talk about?

Silver warehou has a beautiful flavour, with good fat content (at certain times of the year) and a firm white texture. It's very versatile and great for sashimi. The fish is highly prized in Japan but less familiar to Kiwis.

What are your favourite summer seafood memories?

For me it was trips to Monkey Island (between Orepuki and Tuatapere) with our whānau and then having open-fire BBQs on the beach. We would cook flounder, crabs (caught in drag nets in the surf) and crayfish from Dad's and Uncle's boats – mostly legs, as the bodies were worth too much even in those days.

We got free rein to disappear and just turn up at some stage back at the cars, which were driven on to the beach. That's probably why cars rusted so quickly in Southland. PS: there are no monkeys at Monkey Island.

How would you describe 2024 – pleased to see the back of it or looking back at it fondly?

A bit of both – it's been a challenging year with a range of obstacles to overcome, like a poor squid catch to name just one. Together with the Sealord whānau, we all worked really hard to deliver a positive outcome and it's great that all three parts of the Sealord Group (Independent Fisheries Ltd, Sealord and Petuna) hit their plan number. Pleasingly the mahi has paid off.

What do you have planned for summer 2024/25?

All my whānau are gathering in Riverton for Christmas and we'll enjoy a seafood extravaganza with blue cod, oysters, crayfish and more, plus a nice bit of steak thrown in. It'll be our first Christmas without Mum so that'll be a bit sad. Then back home to Nelson to relax, before heading to the Sounds for a New Year's Eve getaway with friends.

What do you recommend we serve with your summer seafood recipe?

A nice cold Steinlager Classic or six, a fresh salad and some homecooked, crunchy potato roasties – par-boil potatoes first, smash them up a bit, bake with olive oil and salt in a hot oven for 40 minutes, then add crushed garlic and chopped rosemary to the baked spuds for another 10 minutes at the end.



Doug's Sealord BBQ orange roughy

Ingredients:

- 2 orange roughy fillets
- 1 large lemon, sliced into thin rounds
- ½ small red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp capers, drained and rinsed
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Aluminium foil (heavy-duty works best for BBQ)

Method:

Rinse the orange roughy fillets under cold water and pat them dry. Season both sides of the fillets with salt and pepper.

Cut two large pieces of aluminium foil, enough to fully wrap each fillet. In the centre of each piece of foil, layer a few lemon slices to act as a bed for the fish. Place one fillet on top of the lemon slices and top each fillet with red onion slices, garlic, capers and a sprinkle of parsley. Drizzle with olive oil for added moisture and flavour.

Fold the foil tightly around the fish and toppings to create a sealed packet, leaving a bit of space inside for

steam to circulate. Preheat your BBQ to medium-high heat.

Place the foil packets directly on the grill. Cook for 8–12 minutes, depending on the thickness of the fillets. The fish is ready when it's opaque and flakes easily with a fork.

Carefully open the foil packets (watch out for steam) and transfer the fillets and toppings to a plate. Spoon over any juices from the packet and garnish with extra parsley or a fresh squeeze of lemon juice.

Trevally and tequila with Tamar Wells

Tamar is Seafood New Zealand's inshore policy manager, responsible for all things related to our fisheries policy or regulations. She has been heavily involved in the seafood industry forum process this year and is always looking to make the lives of Kiwi fishers better while making sure our fisheries are sustainable.

Tamar, a former chef, was roped into preparing her dish for the Seafood New Zealand office one dreary Wellington day. It was devoured in seconds and, of course, the sun came out the following day.



Tell us about you. What did you do before seafood?

I grew up in Nelson and worked as a chef for about 12 years. I was working in some incredible restaurants in Australia, but I wasn't quite contented. That spurred my decision to work in sustainable resource management for Aotearoa – so here I am now, seven years into my seafood career.

Have you always been a seafood enthusiast?

Absolutely. I was lucky enough to spend a lot of time as a kid at our family land in the Marlborough Sounds so I have lots of fond memories of catching and, importantly, eating seafood. It is a dangerous move to get between me and a bowl of mussels or cockles.

Do you have an underrated species you love to talk about?

Kahawai – many people don't appreciate what an incredible and versatile fish it is! People tend to box it in as a smoked fish (it is an amazing smoked fish) but also it is my favourite sashimi. It's great as a whole roasted/grilled fish on the BBQ and works perfectly in ika mata (raw fish salad).

What are your favourite summer seafood memories?

Catching fish off the rocks or getting up early to get the low tide and collect cockles. Eating the fresh kaimoana as simply as possible – our seafood is so great,

it doesn't need a bunch of flash ingredients to shine! Steamed cockles or raw fish with some soy or lemon is my idea of heaven.

How would you describe 2024 – pleased to see the back of it or looking back at it fondly?

A bit of column A and a bit of column B, I have had an interesting, exciting and challenging year. I look back at it fondly but also very much looking forward to summer and what the next year has in store.

What do you have planned for summer 2024/25?

Time with friends and family back in Nelson! There's nothing I enjoy more than cooking for and eating with the people I love. I'm looking forward to hot summer afternoon food comas and ocean swimming.

What do you recommend we serve with your summer seafood recipe?

I think this dish is the kind that never reaches the table! Best served handed around while the BBQ is cooking the main event. Goes great with a crisp lager or light beer. But if you are feeling flash and festive, whip up a batch of Lageritas!



Trevally ceviche

Ingredients:

- ½ kg trevally (or another robust fish, like kingfish or kahawai)
- 1-2 fresh limes
- 2 tbsp good-quality olive oil
- Bunch coriander (or parsley/mint if you aren't a coriander fan)
- Pomegranate (or cherry tomatoes)
- Salt and pepper

Method:

Slice fish into 0.5-centimetre thick bite-size pieces and arrange in single layer on serving plate. Zest lime and squeeze juice over fish, leave for 20 minutes in fridge.

Drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper to taste. Garnish further with plenty of herbs and pomegranate (or chopped cherry tomatoes). I also like to add fresh chilli or jalapeños for a kick.

Serve with tortilla chips.

Lageritas

Ingredients:

- Salt, to rim
- 60 ml tequila
- 22 ml Cointreau (or similar orange liqueur)
- 30 ml lime juice, freshly squeezed
- 120 ml of a pale lager like Corona

Method:

Slice a lime and use it to rim your beer glass before adding salt. Fill with ice and set aside.

Add the tequila, orange liqueur and lime juice to a cocktail shaker with ice and shake for about 15 seconds.

Strain into the prepared glass and top with beer. Garnish with a lime wheel. Cheers!

Smoking hot with Richard Kibblewhite



Richard Kibblewhite will be a familiar face to many, as he showcases his energetic auctioneering skills annually at the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen's charity auction.

Alongside his wife, Jean, Richard owns Splashzone Marine, a family-run business where all three of their children – each a certified skipper – are also actively involved. With three boats working the waters off New Zealand's North Island and a fourth operating in partnership with Gisborne Fisheries Limited, the Kibblewhite whānau rarely get much downtime. But, when summer rolls around, they prioritise their beach hut retreat, spending time with family, relaxing with a good book and enjoying their freshly caught kaimoana.

Tell us about you. What did you do before seafood?

Before I got into fishing, I was a mechanic. When I was about 21, my wife, Jean, and I decided to do a stint in northwest Australia. I'd always loved the sea, so I was keen to get involved in the pearling industry. I first joined a vessel as the mechanic, but once I had fixed everything that was broken, they asked if I'd stay on full time. I said, "Yeah, but I want to be one of your pearl divers." That's how it all started – diving for pearls by day and doing engineering work at night.

When it was time to move back to New Zealand to start a family, we continued our passion for fishing over here. We got into crayfishing and pāua diving, and we bought up small amounts of quota whenever we could. Jean and I have been involved in fishing since I was 21 – that's a lot of years!

Have you always been a seafood enthusiast?

Always. I did my PADI Diving Ticket at 14. We've got such a lot of cool species to eat here in New Zealand, and we are happy to catch any of them. We'll eat anything, really.

Do you have an underrated species you love to talk about?

Well, sea perch is a really underrated fish. When we retailed, we sold the sea perch as the poor man's blue cod. So, yeah, the little orange sea perch. Some people call them the Jock Stewart. You just fry it up with butter, lots of butter. We never use oil to cook our fish (unless it's in batter).

What are your favourite summer seafood memories?

Eating pāua with the family at the camp after going diving. It's a pretty cool thing to do. Our hut is on the beach close to our family farm in Pōrangahau, Hawke's Bay.

How would you describe 2024 – pleased to see the back of it or looking back at it fondly?

It's been challenging dealing with the China market, but the flip side is the Aussie market for wet fish has been strong, which has helped us diversify. In 2023, we got hit hard by the floods and it was a tough time. We're glad that is behind us now and that we're getting a clear run at fishing again. 2024 has been about getting things back to normal, so it's been a relief.



The Kibblewhites' smoked fish

Years ago, when we ran our fish truck, we regularly hot-smoked fish to sell at the market. Nowadays, we just smoke fish at home for our family and friends using our almost 20-year-old, handcrafted macrocarpa smoker. Below is our simple but tried-and-true recipe for beautifully smoked fish.

Ingredients:

- Fish (kahawai is our favourite but you can just about use any fish; kingfish is what we are smoking in the photographs)
- Coarse salt
- Brown sugar

Method:

Lay the fish flat on a tray, flesh side up, and add a liberal amount of salt and brown sugar – don't be shy with how much you use. Massage this in with your fingertips.

Let the fish set for 2 hours or overnight, in the fridge or somewhere cool.

Before you smoke, leave to air for 30 minutes and wipe off any visible moisture. Pop into the smoker with mānuka sawdust for 1–2 hours, depending on its thickness.

Serve warm with fresh bread or crackers, or store in the fridge for up to a week. You can also chuck it into a delicious fish pie or mix it with some sour cream and thyme to make a tasty dip.



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Emma Creighton, Marketing Manager
Chatham Island Food Co

Paul 'the shark guy' is back searching for new species on Sealord's *Will Watch*

A shark scientist who discovered a dozen new shark species on trips with Sealord vessel *Will Watch* in the Indian Ocean a decade ago is back on board hoping to learn more about the fascinating predators of the deep. Sally Kidson caught up with Paul early in his trip.



Paul Clerkin, hard at work on *Will Watch*.

Paul Clerkin from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science is researching sharks as part of his doctorate in marine ecology. He was on *Will Watch* in 2012 and 2014 when he found a dozen new shark species – a favourite being *Chimaera willwatchi*, aka the seafarer's ghost shark, named after the *Will Watch*.

Paul has a number of things he wants to achieve on this current trip. He is trying to catalogue shark and bony fish species in the Indian Ocean while working on ways to better study sharks.

He is also collecting samples to help with research about what these sharks eat, how big they are when they reproduce and how they use their ocean habitat.

"A lot of my work is identifying sharks and strange fish species using taxonomy and genetic methods."

Taxonomy is the branch of science concerned with the classification of something, especially organisms.

Occasionally sharks are caught and landed on board when fishing in the deep ocean, providing an opportunity to carry out important research on the dead fish.

Paul's major hope is to encounter a shark species new to science and says even some of the regularly encountered species on *Will Watch* have never been scientifically documented.

Describing and naming a species is a necessary first step in studying that species, he says.

"Without a name, scientists cannot communicate about a species, publish about it or make any kind of assessment about its populations."

Establishing a biological baseline of data can also help researchers learn about these sharks and compare changes over time."

He would also be excited to see ancient and rare shark species such as the fascinating looking goblin, frilled sharks and bigeye sand tigers. While these sharks are widely distributed globally, they are rarely seen or caught.

Paul says being on a commercial fishing vessel is a huge advantage to his research largely because of *Will Watch's* infrastructure.

"As a marine biologist, being on a commercial fishing vessel is fantastic. I have access to samples and specimens daily and I can study them however I want. I can study their diet, look for parasites, examine their reproduction or collect the whole specimen."

"It is kind of the dream to have fresh specimens arrive daily and my only obligation is to pursue my curiosity," he says. "Securing access to a ship, crew and fishing equipment would normally require a major grant, which is difficult for even large institutions, let alone student researchers."

Paul says the fisher knowledge accumulated by crew is also invaluable and, after years of underappreciating this knowledge, the scientific community is realising the merit of co-operating with crew who spend so long at sea.

"Even if I was given access to a research vessel, I wouldn't know where to go and how to get my samples in the way that I can by piggy backing on *Will Watch's* routine fishing. Some of the semi-regularly caught bycatch fish might be considered mundane in *Will Watch's* factory, but it would make a fish taxonomist's eyes pop out of his head."

Paul hopes to work with the crew to determine how to improve species identification tools to make shark identifications swifter, more intuitive and more accurate.

If time allows, he wants to collect other samples including tissues, stomach contents, parasites and a photo archive to be used for artificial intelligence identification models in the future.

"My sampling plan might be a little overambitious, but I think any samples and data I am able to collect will go a long way for a lot of future research."

His research will go directly into his dissertation project and into smaller papers published in scientific journals.

"The species catalogue and the improved species guide will be used by FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) and the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) to understand sharks in the area and hopefully improve the collection of shark data in the southwestern Indian Ocean."

Will Watch Captain Christopher Neighbours says Paul's findings of new shark species from 10 years ago were "pretty exciting".

"He's very passionate about his research and interested in the marine sciences, so it's great that we're able to accommodate him. Some of the contraptions he has and the science he wishes to achieve are fascinating."

Captain Neighbours says the crew is always keen to get involved and help "Paul the shark guy" out.

"They have been putting aside even the smallest of specimens for him even when he's not around. Some of the species of fish caught even after one week may be new to science – it's pretty exciting."

Sealord feeds Paul and provides him a bunk, and SIOFA also sponsors him. His university and the Smithsonian society provide some funding.

Captain Neighbours says the crew are looking at what they catch in a different way. "It's early days, but already he has us gaining more appreciation in what lurks beneath in the great abyss."

"We do have our own guys and Cook Islands Scientific observers taking otoliths (small oval calcareous bodies in the inner ear of vertebrates), samples, sexing and measurements of our orange roughy and alfonsino every trip, but that's for our fisheries stock management analysis. The research that Paul is doing is something else again."



The *Will Watch* crew is always keen to get involved and help "Paul the shark guy".

NEW ZEALAND SEAFOOD

PROUDLY PRODUCED BY SEAFOOD NEW ZEALAND AND TERRY WREFORD HANN



Fifty-plus years of that iconic fish poster

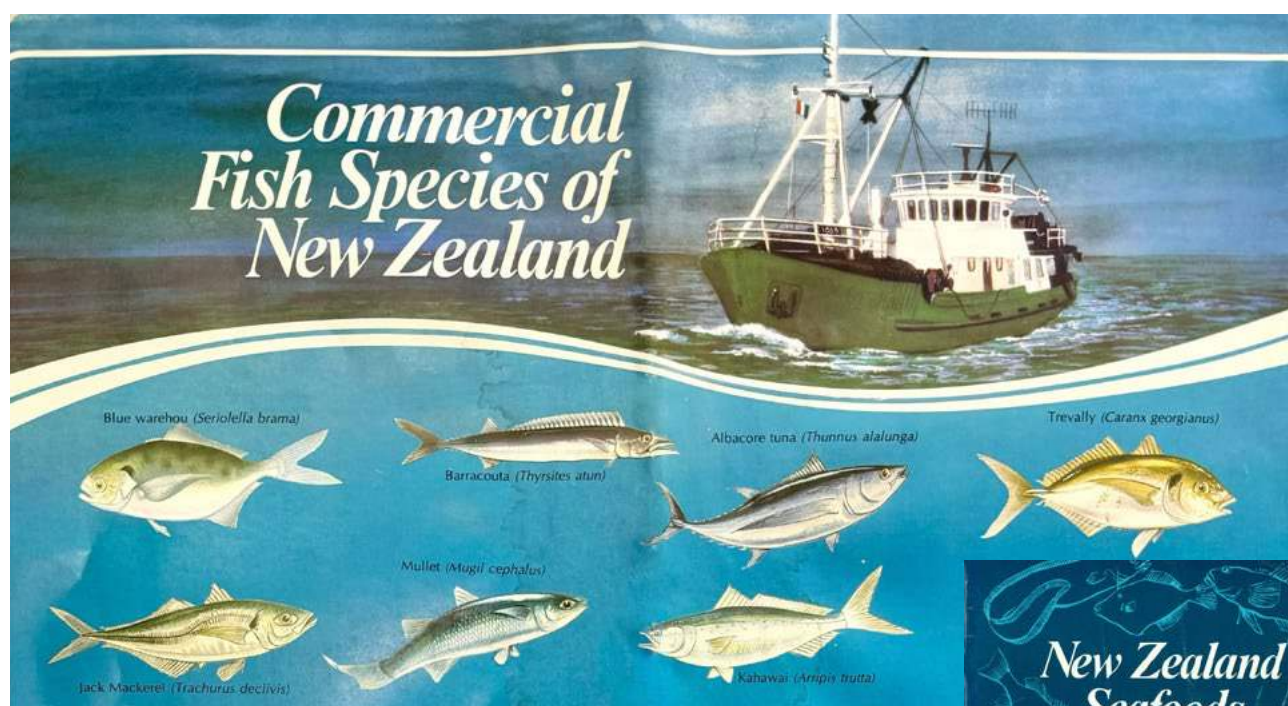
The New Zealand Commercial Fish Species Poster has not only graced the walls of nearly every fish 'n' chip shop but also inspired its fair share of creative spinoffs. But what's the story behind this quintessential bit of Kiwiana? Claire Williamson investigates.

On series nine of the UK series *Taskmaster*, five comedians were asked to bring “the best thing from a shed” for judgment by Taskmaster Greg Davies.

New Zealand contestant Rose Matafeo confidently shared the best thing from her Kiwi “shid” – a classic pre-2000s fish species poster by Seafood New Zealand. It launched the undeniably Kiwi visual touchpoint into the global waters of the internet – in other words, it went a bit viral.

Three years later, in 2022, *Taskmaster NZ* paid homage to Matafeo’s joke by actually putting the poster in a shed and challenging contestants to memorise as many names as they could in 100 seconds.

Versions of this Seafood New Zealand poster began circulating in the 1970s. Its riveting depiction of the country’s best kaimoana has provided a visual distraction and boredom-buster for generations of New Zealanders waiting for their hot-from-the-fryer scoop.



Above: The original illustrated poster from 1977, printed by E C Keating Government Printer. Right: This 1977 guidebook accompanied the original illustrated poster, with information and recipes about common New Zealand seafood. Courtesy of Auckland War Memorial Museum.

The early versions

The first poster was produced in 1977 by the New Zealand Fishing Industry Board (FIB), an early Seafood New Zealand predecessor. Printed by E C Keating Government Printer, it featured 28 species illustrations by noted New Zealand cartoonist Eric Heath. A green and white trawler – one good guess is it’s the Gisborne-based *Marine Star* – floated idyllically on the waves above.

Established in 1963, the FIB’s mandate was to foster the development of the seafood industry and to market and export seafood; the poster was intended to educate people about the types of fish they could buy – and how to cook them. This mandate gave birth to some pretty catchy campaigns; there was the “Enjoy Fish the Family Dish” slogan, and Alison Holst whipping up seafood recipes out of the FIB home economics unit’s test kitchen in Wellington.

As a companion to the poster, the FIB also published its second species guidebook, *New Zealand Seafoods: A Buying and Catering Guide* in 1977.

“The earlier [1969] publication was almost a pioneering venture,” wrote then-FIB General Manager J.S. Campbell in the guide’s foreword. “It was aimed at bringing to prospective as well as to established overseas buyers, information about some of the many species of fine flavoured and textured fish available from New Zealand.”

“The poster was everywhere in fish ‘n’ chip shops.”

Alastair Macfarlane, former deputy chief executive at the FIB and former general manager of the subsequent Seafood Industry Council, said the poster and species guidebooks underwent several revisions over the years.

"The main use was to promote the wide variety of commercially caught fish species. Implicit within it and the guidebook was the need to promote and develop the domestic market for deepsea fisheries, such as orange roughy and hoki, which were relatively unknown prior to the '80s.

"The guidebook in particular was comprehensive and was freely handed out at trade promotion events, especially in the US."

Throughout the '70s and '80s, the poster and companion recipes continued to evolve and expand, with the illustrations swapped for colour photos on a plain white background.

"The poster was everywhere in fish 'n' chip shops," Macfarlane says.

Refreshing the fish photos

Though Seafood New Zealand's poster has featured photographs of fish for some time, the quality of images in its latest versions has taken a big step up – thanks to photographer Terry Hann.

Hann, who immigrated from the UK to New Zealand in the 1960s, has been a photographer since he was 19, working his way up the ranks at the National Publicity Studios. He started photographing fish when he was commissioned by the FIB to take photographs of fish for their export profiles.

This exposure to the industry later inspired Hann to spend six years re-photographing the species in even higher-quality – on his own dime – as a personal passion project. He published his first version of the poster in 1994, featuring 71 species.

"The quality of imagery is what resonates and has had an impact. It's of paramount importance because it's how we represent our seafood," Hann says.

And getting those high-quality shots wasn't easy – it required multiple trips out on trawlers and surface longliners to catch the best example of the species to photograph. The white warehouse was the last fish eluding Hann's lens – a fisher finally sent him a frozen one only a few years ago.

One time he went out on a smaller trawler. "One of the crew was sick, so they asked me if I wouldn't mind cooking the food. So I slept on the floor and cooked all the meals – pasta bakes and fresh fish."

The poster has undergone minor tweaks since, including rescaling some of the species and re-adding

"The quality of imagery is what resonates and has had an impact. It's of paramount importance because it's how we represent our seafood."

the te reo Māori names (which had been left-off of an earlier iteration) for the fish in 2018.

"There's some stunning detail in some of these fish. I use them in artwork."

New posters for new campaigns

Given the posters' omnipresence in fish 'n' chip shops – and, apparently, sheds – it's no surprise the design has inspired a few spinoffs.

From New Zealand-based developer Black Salt Games, there's the Dredge Commercial Fish Species Poster based on their 2023 indie horror game *Dredge*. In the award-winning game, you play a fisher exploring the waters around the village of Ironhaven, filling orders. Their poster features species you'd recognise – barracuda and cod – and some spooky ones you might not...anyone want to eat a "many-eyed mackerel"?

Another example is from 2015 when Te Papa Press released a Fishes of New Zealand poster, featuring a whopping 222 species from its landmark four-volume *The Fishes of New Zealand*.

And then there's the Trash Species campaign and accompanying poster by Sustainable Coastlines Charitable Trust and creative agency Augusto, shedding a light on the most common "species" of litter polluting New Zealand beaches.

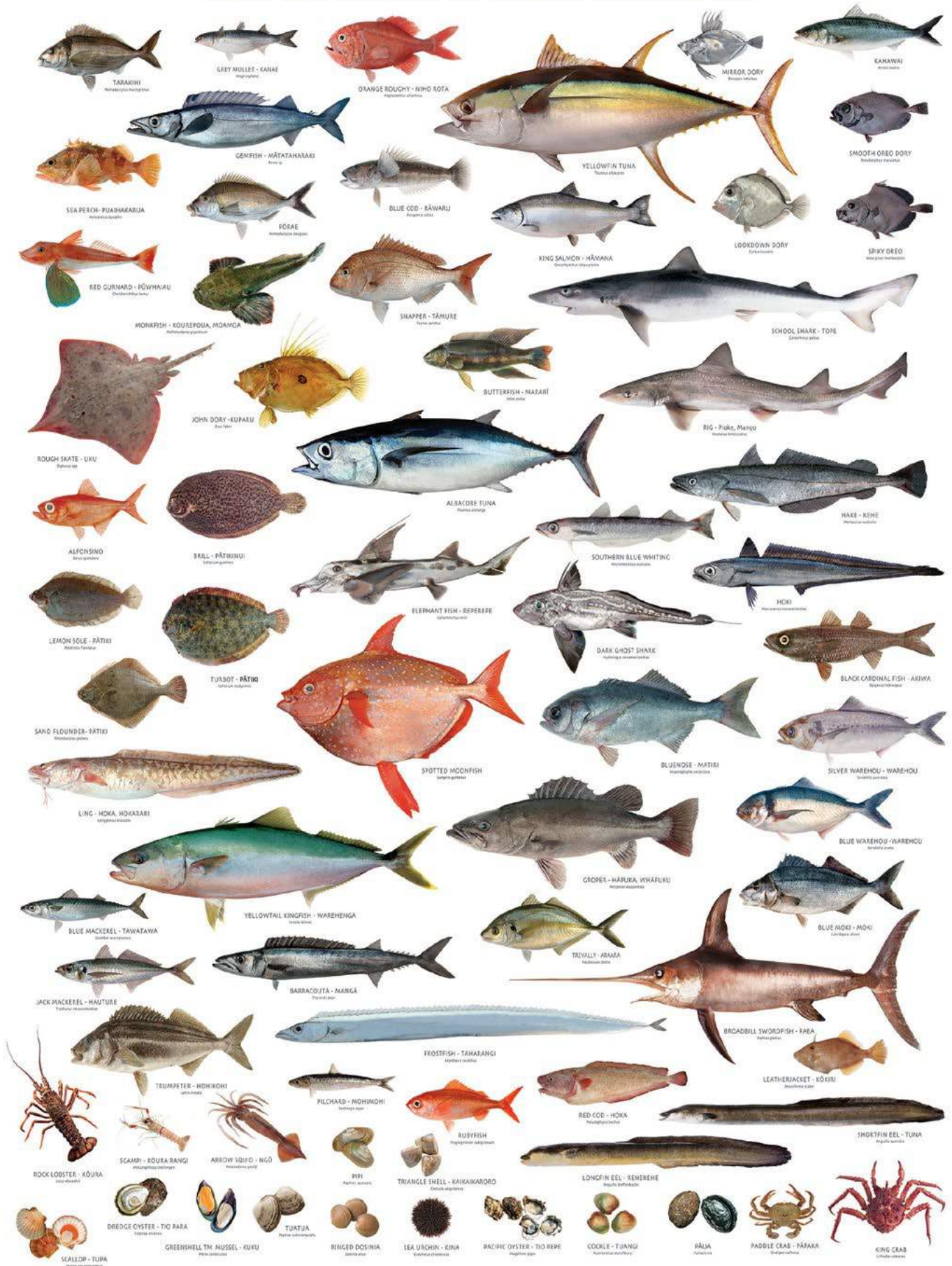
Augusto creative director Adam Thompson said the idea came about out of 2021 lockdowns, when members of the team were taking more walks on the beach – and spotting all the rubbish.

"It's very iconic, retrospective Kiwiana; it's beautiful and has an eye-catching design. We had lots of tropes to play with."

"It's very iconic, retrospective Kiwiana; it's beautiful and has an eye-catching design. We had lots of tropes to play with."

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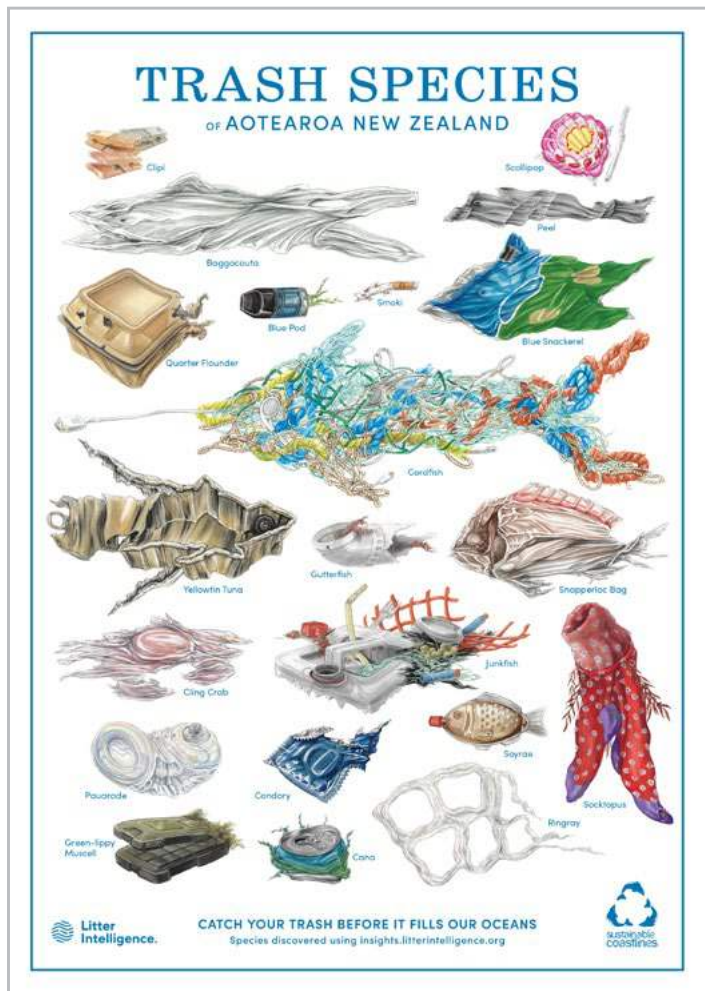
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TERRY WREFORD HANN : WWW.THEARTFULROUT.COM : SEAFOOD NEW ZEALAND : WWW.SEAFOOD.CO.NZ

The current version of the Commercial Fish Species Poster features 71 species, all photographed by Terry Hann. Courtesy of Terry Hann.

FEATURE

Below left: Released in 2023, in *Dredge* you play a fisher in the village of Ironhaven, just trying to make a living by filling your orders... or are you? Courtesy of Black Salt Games.

Below right: Litter Intelligence provides the data that inspired these 21 “trash species.” For example, the Gutterfish is part of the construction waste family, and makes up more than 20% of the litter removed from Litter Intelligence coastal survey sites by weight. Courtesy of Sustainable Coastlines/Augusto.



Using data from Sustainable Coastlines' programme Litter Intelligence, where citizen scientists monitor 100-by-20 metre sections of 414 beaches across New Zealand and the Pacific, their poster features 21 “trash species” – punny hybrids of many well-known commercial species and common types of litter cleverly painted in watercolour by noted natural history illustrator Erin Forsyth.

There's the “twisted, metallic pest” that's the Yellowtin Tuna (yellowfin tuna + tin can), or the pervasive Smoki (cigarette butts + hoki) – Little Intelligence has reported over 18,890 cigarette butts to date. Blue Pods (blue cod + vape pods) are a newcomer, though no less invasive.

“We made the shapes fish, to mimic the poster, then worked together to come up with names and stories. Once you start with the sea puns, it's quite hard to let go. But it needed to be substantiated with data,” says Thompson.

“People do a second take when they see it. We wanted something beautiful, with a hard-hitting message.”

Sustainable Coastlines' communications manager Helen Adams-Blackburn says the key message is about preventing litter in the first place. (Hence their poster's tagline: “catch your trash before it fills our oceans.”)

“We wanted something beautiful, with a hard-hitting message.”

“You don't inspire people to take action by just emphasising how bad the problem is. Approaching it in a lighthearted way that actually gets people thinking is more likely to motivate people.

“People aren't exposed to many of the classic species on the original poster unless you're a fisher or a diver – but you do see the litter on the coastline. It's not just at the beach where you can make a change, and we encourage people to reconsider purchasing single-use plastics and go for reusable alternatives where possible.”

A parallel poster from United Fisheries

The Fisheries Industry Board wasn't the only seafood entity out there producing a commercial fish species poster.

At some point, Kypros Kotzikas – founder of Ōtautahi Christchurch-based United Fisheries – spotted the FIB version.

"I liked it and liked the idea of introducing fish and teaching young kids about fish," Kotzikas says.

Using the FIB photos, Kotzikas produced a United Fisheries version, which the noted South Island exporter still gives away for free – you just pay for postage. He estimates they've given away "hundreds of thousands" of posters.

"Probably every house in New Zealand has one, plus plenty overseas. It hasn't changed at all – it still has the 'Kypros touch.'"

That touch included resizing a few of the fish – hoki and squid – and tucking a black-and-white line drawing of a seahorse in the bottom right, overlaid with the words "good luck" in Greek, where Kotzikas is originally from.

"It's been a very successful exercise," Kotzikas says.



The New Zealand Commercial Fish Species poster from United Fisheries.

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Catchin' up with Troy Harper

Ever wonder who's out there catching fish? Each edition of the Seafood New Zealand magazine we will catch up with kaimahi working across our seafood sector, from fishers to scientists and everyone in between.



Nelson-based skipper Troy Harper with his vessel, *Aleatha T.*

This issue we caught up with Nelson-based Troy Harper, 35, skipper and owner of *Aleatha T.* Troy is part of the surface longline fleet, which chases swordfish, bigeye, yellowfin, bluefin tuna and other highly migratory species.

How did you first get into commercial fishing?

I grew up in Nelson as a teenager, so was surrounded by it. I worked in the factories on land and some friends were out fishing, so it was just kind of a natural thing to go and try it. And it stuck.

What do you love about your job?

Probably, more often than not, it's the scenery and the marine life that I love. I do get jaded some days, especially when I'm busy at work, but every now and then when I've got the camera out taking some photos for the wife, I realise that not everyone gets a special office like we do. Sometimes we're steaming around the place and there's just pods and pods of dolphins jumping around and hanging out with us. It's pretty special – people pay good money to go do that for an afternoon.

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

There's a reason it's called fishing and not catching. So, don't stress too much, just try your best.

"There's a reason it's called fishing and not catching. So, don't stress too much, just try your best."

What's a fishing myth that you wish people would stop believing?

I mean, it's probably a lot like most of the primary industries, where people see the end result and what they're paying for and assume that's what we're getting paid. But just because snapper is 50 bucks a kilo at the supermarket doesn't mean we're getting paid 50 bucks a kilo. The myth that rich fishermen are out to pillage and plunder isn't right. We're just like anyone else, we're scraping by most of the time. We're just feeding a lot of people while we do it.

What's your most memorable day on the water?

I mean, there's good and bad. We have really nice days fishing, where we're escorted by dolphins and whales all the way back to the wharf. And then we've had really bad ones – I've been in 50, 60, 70 knot storms with 10-metre swells.

More often than not though it's when everything goes smoothly, when nothing breaks down and you're catching fish – the run-of-the-mill days – that you think back and go, "Man, I wish every day was nice and easy like that."

What's the coolest piece of fishing gear you can't live without?

These days, probably the electronic plotter. I can't imagine how the old guys did it just from just the GPS locations or their memories. To have imagery at the snap of a finger and being able to look at it from different aspects (2D and 3D) helps a lot. Technology is a huge help.

If you weren't a commercial fisher, what would you be doing?

I honestly don't have a clue what I would have fallen into. I can't imagine doing the 9 to 5 or being stuck in an office.



Tell us about your life outside of work.

I have a couple of kids, a wife and dogs. Usually, when I'm not working, I'm at home with the kids and we try to get outside in the sunshine as much as possible. Between raising toddlers (my wife does a very good job) and fishing, there's not a lot of time to do anything else.

What is your favourite sea shanty (or music) when out on the water?

Honestly, just about anything that's not jazz. I have old-school country and rock, drum and bass. Everything plays. Especially with technology now, I just have YouTube playlists playing all day, every day. So just about any kind of music is good to break up the monotony, and the sea spray and the wind sounds.

What is your favourite kaimoana?

Blue nose. Blue nose by far. It's just a tasty, well-rounded fish. It's got good flakes and it holds well together. You can cook it any way. Just straight in butter, you can bake it, fry it or put it in a curry.

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From Tīmaru to Colombia – a Kiwi fisher's contribution to COP16

Nathan Hines spends his days on the waters off Tīmaru. He fishes solo on *Latham Bay*, a 12-metre trawler. It truly is a world away from high-level biodiversity negotiations, but Nathan's face and voice were a part of the COP16 meeting held in October and November in Cali, Colombia.

COP16 (where COP stands for Conference of the Parties) was focused on the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. Governments at the meeting were expected to show how they are getting their national biodiversity strategies up to date with the agreed global framework.

Nathan contributed to a video collated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations highlighting what fishers in various parts of the world are doing to help preserve biodiversity in their fisheries. Nathan has been focused on keeping his dolphin interactions at zero. But his message to COP was more general than that. Essentially, Kiwi fishers are focused on doing the right thing and are committed to innovations that will see our fisheries management continuously improve.

Nathan's had a bit of a profile lately, not that he's asked for it. He's a typically humble Cantabrian, but



Commercial fisher Nathan Hines had an important message for attendees of COP16.

after he agreed to host a TVNZ reporter on his boat, he was then asked to sit on the media panel at the Seafood New Zealand Conference. Then the COP16 request came along.

You can see the full video here
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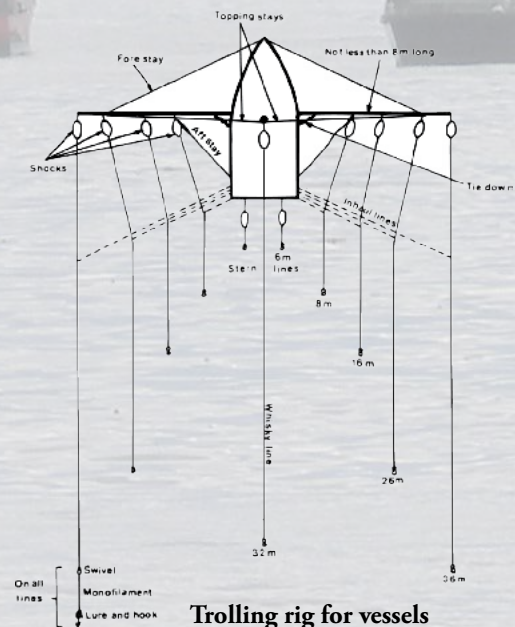
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Yarns with Young Fish

The seafood industry has long been a cornerstone of New Zealand's economy but, for many young people, breaking into it and finding like-minded peers can be challenging. That's where Young Fish can help.

Founded in 2022 by young aquaculture professionals Ben Pierce and Maegen Blom, Young Fish connects young people across the seafood industry – from fishing and marine farming to processing, marketing and marine science. The group also aims to inspire the next wave of young people to consider careers in seafood. Co-founder Ben Pierce and Auckland Young Fish member Tommy Glass share their stories with Seafood New Zealand's Sarah Wright.



Young Fish Co-founder Ben Pierce in Dusky Sound.

Young Fish Co-founder – Ben Pierce

Aside from a stint working in a fish and chip shop on the Sunshine Coast, Ben wasn't exposed to the seafood industry until a university friend suggested he spend a summer with him working on mussel boats in Marlborough. Ben decided to give it a go – and was instantly hooked.

"I loved the work and the lifestyle," he recalls. "At the end of that summer, I was tempted to stay in Havelock, but I went back to uni and changed my degree from sport and recreation to a bachelor of commerce to make it more versatile."

After graduating, Ben returned to Marlborough. "Life on the water was pretty cool," he says. "I got used to having four days on, four days off. I was under a great skipper and crew, who I still look up to as mentors, making it a really positive experience."

By 22, Ben amassed some impressive achievements: leading a health and safety audit at Sanford, completing a postgraduate diploma in sustainable aquaculture, earning his skipper's ticket and co-founding Young Fish.

When asked about his motivations for creating Young Fish, Ben reflects, "I was talking with a couple of friends about how it can be isolating for young people in the seafood industry and the importance of support networks. You see it in the agriculture industry, in areas with a strong Young Farmers club, there seem to be happier young people on the farms."

"Also, during university, I never once heard about seafood careers – it was pure chance that I found my way into it. We set up Young Fish to help others settle in, build networks, and promote career opportunities."

Young Fish – Tommy Glass



Young Fish member Tommy Glass.

Armed with a commerce degree, Tommy moved to Auckland and took a job as a fishmonger at Sanford & Son's shop. "I thought it was a good way to get experience handling fish, learning about different seafood, and understanding the customer base," he explains.

Seeing the need for a dedicated network for young people, Tommy reached out to Ben to get involved and has since been an integral part of the Young Fish team.

Tommy is keen for young people to feel supported in their careers. "It can feel isolating when you don't necessarily see where that next step upwards is going to be – I think there is an opportunity to capitalise on the optimism of young people, to show them future pathways and foster talent. I think this is pretty crucial for our industry."

Quickfire Q&A with Ben and Tommy

What advice do you have for young people thinking about a career in the seafood industry?

Ben: Why are you thinking about it? Just do it already!

Tommy: Get stuck in and learn as much as you can, talk to as many different people in as many areas as possible. If you're in aquaculture, talk to inshore or deepwater. If you're based down in Bluff, talk to people up in Auckland. Expand your networks.

What advice do you have for employers of young people?

Ben: If they are a good worker, do what you can to keep them! And tell them to join Young Fish – so we can help you keep them, too.

Tommy: Give young people the ability to have conversations with a wide variety of people, don't isolate them to just one area. Share the knowledge that you've learned in the industry – be someone who supports young people to step up.

What's your favourite seafood?

Ben: Raw mussels, straight off the harvesting shoot.

Tommy: New Zealand green-lipped mussels in white wine sauce.

Keen to get involved?

Whether you're a young fish, a middle-aged fish or an old fish, there are many ways to get involved and help support the young people in the seafood industry. You could host a networking event in your community, encourage your young employees to join Young Fish, or come along to a careers event to inspire more "young fish" to join the industry.

To learn more, get involved, or join our mailing list email: hello@youngfish.co.nz

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"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.

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- **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.



Symbols Relating To Submarine Cables

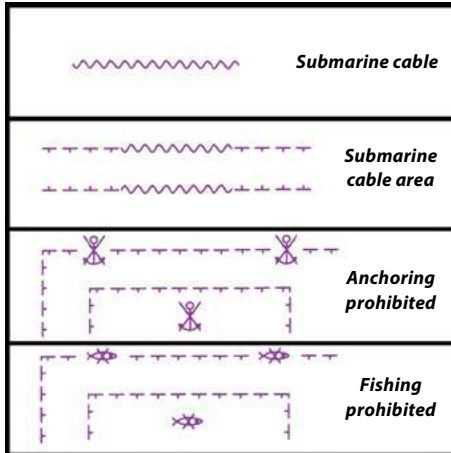


Figure 1.

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.



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**



Growing our seafood sector

By Dan Bolger, Deputy Director General, Fisheries New Zealand

At the start of the year, the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries set up the seafood industry forum to identify opportunities for export value growth in the seafood sector. Innovation in the fishing sector has been the topic of many conversations throughout the year, including at the forum.

Fisheries New Zealand has partnered with industry (Moana New Zealand, New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen, Seafood New Zealand and Southern Inshore Fisheries Management) to deliver eight gear innovation workshops from Whangārei to Invercargill. It's been great to see the enthusiasm and ideas at these workshops.

We'll be keeping the conversation going with participants and organising more sessions in the future. New fishing methods and approaches are an increasing focus to ensure fishing is fit for the future and supports ongoing economic and environmental sustainability.

Over the course of the year there have been several wheels in motion to reduce barriers faced by the fishing and aquaculture industries to help contribute to export growth.

In 2023, aquaculture employed over 3,000 people and generated \$575 million in export revenue, and there is potential to grow the sector to \$3 billion by 2035.

The Government recently extended coastal permits for marine farms by 20 years. Without the law change, an estimated \$6 million would have been spent in 2024 alone on re consenting by 200 marine farms.

The extension of coastal permit duration is intended to provide the aquaculture industry confidence and security to invest further, particularly in the regions.

In addition to this, seven aquaculture projects would be listed in Schedule 2 of the Fast Track Approvals Bill. Once the Bill is passed, they will be able to apply to the Environmental Protection Authority to have an expert panel assess the project and apply relevant conditions. Faster consenting would enable more timely progression and development of significant aquaculture projects.

As the summer season ramps up and more recreational fishers head out on the water, we'll be kicking off our annual summer campaign to remind people about the fishing rules and encourage use of the NZ Fishing Rules App. We'll also have an increase of Fishery Officers out and about during the season patrolling our coasts to make sure people are following the rules, and to help educate those who are not as familiar with them.

While the moana is the workplace for commercial fishers, we know that many of you also fish for fun and for kai especially over the summer months. If you're heading out for a spot of recreational fishing with friends and whānau over the holiday season, spread the word about the NZ Fishing Rules App. It's free, and once downloaded it will work even if there's no mobile coverage. By promoting the latest recreational fishing rules, you're helping manage the fisheries for all users. You can find details about this on our website at fisheries.govt.nz/rules.

I'd like to wish you all a happy and festive holiday season. For those who are working through it, stay safe out there.



Dan Bolger

The power of connection: Why taking a break is essential for mental health



In collaboration with The Gleam Team Trust, FirstMate has been out in the sun, promoting careers, safety and wellbeing in the seafood sector.

The holiday season is a time for rest, reflection and reconnection with the people who matter most. For many of us, Christmas offers a chance to step away from the daily grind, take a breath and recharge. But for fishers and marine farmers, especially those who need to continue to fish, the holidays can sometimes feel like an especially hard time being away from family, friends and familiar comforts.

Taking a break and connecting with loved ones isn't just a nice thing to do – it's vital for mental health. Research shows that quality time with family and close friends provides a major boost to emotional wellbeing, reducing stress and fostering resilience. For fishers, who often face long and isolating hours at sea, the positive effects of connecting with family and taking time away from work can't be overstated. It's not just about rest, but about recalibration – a chance to reset the mind and body.

However, taking a break isn't always as simple as it sounds, particularly when you feel the pressure of an industry that runs 24/7. That's where FirstMate can help as it's run by people who understand what it means to be part of New Zealand's dynamic and – at times – challenging seafood industry. FirstMate Navigators across the country understand the highs and lows you experience and are here to support you with your mental health and wellbeing and to navigate the challenges unique to the sector.

FirstMate: Supporting wellbeing and connection

FirstMate's core mission is to make sure no one in the fishing industry has to face mental health challenges alone. FirstMate can connect fishers with a variety of support services, including access to mental health professionals and a confidential helpline for anyone in need of assistance.

The team behind FirstMate is passionate about reducing the stigma around mental health in the seafood community and creating an environment where seeking help is seen as a sign of strength, not weakness.

In the leadup to Christmas – a time that often comes hand-in-hand with additional pressures – the FirstMate team has been partnering with aligned organisations to promote wellbeing and ensure that commercial fishers and our seafood whānau know where to find support if they need it.

In collaboration with The Gleam Team Trust, FirstMate has also been out in the sun, promoting careers, safety and wellbeing in the sector. *Gleam*, one of Nelson's oldest and most elegant fishing boats, has a new lease of life, giving educational tours in Nelson Harbour.

At the recent Marine Safety Expo in Nelson, the FirstMate team engaged with more than 80 people on the *Gleam*, sharing safety tips, discussing mental health and promoting sustainable seafood careers. The focus was on raising awareness of the mental health challenges that fishers face, and how FirstMate can help those who are struggling.

The collaboration has also delivered successful trips in the Nelson Harbour with local schools, including Nelson College Preparatory School and Nelson Intermediate.

Together, FirstMate and *Gleam* are working to ensure that mental health remains at the forefront of conversations within the fishing industry, creating an environment where people feel supported, heard and valued.

Why this matters

As we head into the festive season, remember that taking care of your mental health is just as important as any work you do out on the water. Whether it's spending time with loved ones, reaching out for help, or simply taking a moment to breathe — it all makes a difference.

So, this Christmas, take a break, connect with those who lift you up and know that support is always just a call away. Your mental health matters and taking care of it is the best gift you can give yourself.

Call **0800 ADRIFT** for support any day between 7am and 10pm or email info@firstmate.org.nz to access the support you need.

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seafood.org.nz/shop



SEAFOOD
NEW ZEALAND

Dealing with harassment and abuse: A new guide for fishers

When you think about bullying, your mind likely goes to individual victims. You don't usually associate it with entire industries being targeted. Yet that is exactly how it feels some days for those in the commercial fishing industry, and it's taking a toll.

To help fishers and others in the seafood sector who are experiencing harassment and abuse, Seafood New Zealand has created a short guide on what to do if you experience abuse online or in person. The guide includes advice on what to do if you're physically threatened, how to respond online (if you choose to engage) and where to seek further help.

The sad reality is that commercial fishers are increasingly being threatened, harassed and abused, both online and in person. This behaviour is affecting fishers and their families, including children. Businesses have also lost hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of property to vandalism. One business was even forced to install cameras on a local wharf because someone was repeatedly slashing the tyres of commercial fishers' vehicles.

Talk to a Kiwi fisher for just a couple of minutes, and you quickly get a sense of what it's like for them.

One fisher, whose name we won't use for their own protection, shared that he and his crew like to give other vessels a friendly wave as they pass by, as you do. Unfortunately, they don't always get the same response and have become accustomed to having rude gestures and abuse thrown back at them.

"It doesn't feel great," he admits, though he attributes the behaviour to misinformation rather than malice.

"I mean, it's of no fault to the general public, you know. They really only know what the media has told them.

"People think we're the bad ones all the time, but they don't realise that we're so highly regulated, we're so aware of what we're doing, and we work really bloody hard to do it the right way and make a living out of it."



If you are experiencing or have experienced abuse, take a look at our guide on how to manage these situations at seafood.org.nz/dealingwithabuse or scan the QR code.



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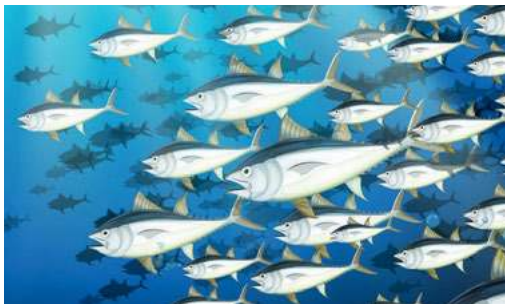
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A strong, resilient, viable commercial seafood sector is in all our interests. It provides you with a living. It feeds New Zealanders. And it ensures that our coastal communities can thrive.

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