

SEAFOOD

NEW ZEALAND

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Photographer Bob McAuliffe is always keeping a story in his sights

An inside look at the 2024 Seafood NZ Conference

How three fishers are helping strengthen the weighted hook game

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EDITORIALS

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From the Chief Executive

This is my first column as CEO of Seafood New Zealand, after what feels like a whirlwind three months in the role. These early months included the Seafood New Zealand Conference, work on the Ministerial Forum and many meetings with a wide range of people across this impressive industry. These meetings have confirmed to me what I saw from the outside – that the industry has transformed in the years since I last worked with seafood as a diplomat supporting our efforts in global markets.

What I see now is how things have advanced in terms of our commitment to sustainability and caring for the resource. That aspect of the job gives me heart and motivation, particularly because I can see what we are up against in terms of the challenges and misunderstandings we often face in the public domain. I am determined to support us telling our stories proactively and proudly.

And in this magazine you can find clear examples of that 2024 approach to sustainability. I recommend the story on the Procella 2.0, about three surface longline fishers who have been helping to design and trial this new weighted hook to further reduce accidental seabird captures. Read that on page 10 and then take a look at how Motueka Nets has prioritised re-using and recycling as much of an expired trawl net as possible on page 20.

There were plenty of great people and plenty of great storytelling at the Seafood New Zealand Conference, where 250 of us gathered to share ideas and exchange experiences. You can see some of the highlights on pages 5-9. One of my favourites was the Seafood Star Awards, where we honoured our industry champions. You can check out the winners in five categories on pages 15-17.

Our Conference was focused not just on celebration but on useful information. We got a view from experts on the ground about the challenges and opportunities that we face as exporters into key markets such as the US, Europe and China. In this issue, we take a deep dive into the US market with the Chief Strategy Officer from the National Fisheries Institute. Things are changing rapidly in many of our global markets. You can read on page 28 about how our export partners are raising the bar on their expectations of us in terms of environmental reporting.

We are certainly facing challenging times. Having recently returned from Seafood Directions in Australia, it is clear to me that the New Zealand industry is not alone in this adversity. However, what I've seen so far fills me with confidence that with our wonderful people and partnerships, and a willingness to work together, we can achieve better oceans, better fisheries and a better performing industry.

I hope you enjoy this magazine and that, with spring here, you are also getting to enjoy plenty of fabulous seafood.

Lisa Futschek
Chief Executive

A Conference of champions

The 2024 Seafood New Zealand Conference, held in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland on 7-8 August, was a celebration of the people and businesses committed to everything seafood – from sustainability and science to the arts and economic partnerships. Claire Williamson reports.



Hon Shane Jones presenting the official conference opening.

Minister for Oceans and Fisheries **Hon Shane Jones** opened the conference with a kōrero that combined humour with his clear expectations for the future of the industry. Acknowledging the challenges impacting seafood, Jones said he was “driven to see if they [the Government] can expand exports and revenue coming out of the industry”. This is to be achieved with a separate Aquaculture Act, a pause on the installation of on-board

cameras (to address privacy issues), a reform of the Resource Management Act and – somewhat controversially – the passage of fast-track legislation, which he called a “hard tradeoff”.

“We need to remain relevant to the small, scattered communities who love their marine environment,” he said. Jones’ speech closed with an appreciative waiata from the audience.

Bridget Williams, CEO of Bead & Proceed, followed the minister’s opening address with a challenge to industry to embrace the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals in their daily activities. “Use the goal[s] as a tool to communicate your impact,” Williams said. A Bead & Proceed table was available throughout the conference, where each delegate painted a bead in the colour of the goal that inspired them; the beads were then woven into a wall hanging presented to Seafood NZ CEO Lisa Futschek.



The Bead & Proceed table, set up for delegates to choose a Sustainable Development Goal that spoke to them.

“We need to remain relevant to the small, scattered communities who love their marine environment.”

CONFERENCE

Champions of a sustainable economy

Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (MFAT) Deputy Secretary Trade and Economic **Vangelis Vitalis** spoke about the pressing trade issues of the day. His main message to the industry was simple: "Don't think you're immune from geopolitics."

This was followed by snapshots of key trading partners China, the United States and the European Union. China Ambassador **Grahame Morton** pointed out that while China's economy is still in a post-COVID recovery phase, New Zealand's seafood is well-positioned among high-end consumers, and the industry should actively engage with export markets at trade expos. Then, **Simon Marks**, president and chief correspondent of *Feature Story News*, said the future of New Zealand's exports to the US depends on the US election results in November 2024. And senior correspondent **Lisette Reymer** confirmed that ongoing crises in Ukraine, Israel/Gaza and the key Red Sea transport corridor will continue to have knock-on effects to New Zealand's primary industry exports.

Next on the programme was ANZ Chief Economist **Sharon Zollner**, who offered an overview of New Zealand's economy. In summary, everything is in flux, and the latest Reserve Bank move to cut the official cash rate to 5.25 will only have shifted things further.

"'We've got to be [in the] black to be green,' will soon have to be 'You'll have to be green to be in the black.'"

Collaborating with other champions

Angela Williamson and **Veronica Papacosta** – of the 18-month Futures of Seafood study – outlined why collaboration between industry and government is essential as competition for ocean space intensifies. Their study will use data to profile and map Australia's seafood footprint, with opportunities for New Zealand's industry bodies to collaborate on messaging. "[Seafood] is part of our national identity, but it's not a given. We need to collaborate and work with government to make sure it continues."

Meanwhile, **Gavin Gibbons**, Chief Strategy Officer of the National Fisheries Institute in the United States, presented about the "water to table" approach of the institute's 300-plus members. Read more on pages 26-27.

Champions of our environment

Efficient and sustainable transport options are essential to getting New Zealand seafood onto plates around the globe. From Air New Zealand Cargo, **Bex O'Malley** spoke about the airline's new Cargo



The finished Bead & Proceed data display – as it was Bridget Williams' birthday, the crowd gave her a rousing rendition.

Emissions Platform, which enables tracking of carbon emissions, access to customised reports and the ability to purchase carbon credits. Chapman Tripp Partner **Alana Lampitt** followed with a reminder that disclosing supply chain carbon emissions will be increasingly essential to businesses' international competitive edge. Read more on page 28.

Mark Fitzpatrick of The Aotearoa Circle seconded this, saying the business mindset of "'We've got to be [in the] black to be green,' will soon have to be 'You'll have to be green to be in the black.'"

The Circle is finalising a series of toolkits to assist businesses with sustainability implementation, and is exploring alternative marine fuel pathways and green shipping corridors with Australia.

Josh Donker, General Manager of Motueka Nets in Nelson and **Rui Peng**, the co-founder of clean-tech company Critical. in Auckland, co-presented on their sustainability partnership. Donker has figured out how to recycle 98% of an expired trawl net, and in 2024 he started sending polyethylene mesh to Critical., which is upcycled into sustainable Kingi chopping boards (among other items). "All businesses have problem plastics, zero-waste commitments are challenging to keep, they want a durable and great product, and to tell a good story," Peng acknowledged, passing around an example of the company's signature carbon-neutral Cleanstone panels. Donker and Peng presented an inspiring vision of how the industry could repurpose its own waste products in-house, towards a circular economy. Read more on pages 20-21.

Finally, **Karen Olver** provided an overview of Women in Seafood Australasia (WISA) and why it's essential to champion the achievements and foster the careers of women across the industry.



Seafood New Zealand GM Communications and Marketing Fiona MacMillan moderating the media panel.

Champions of great seafood

Media and the arts are an often-overlooked sector to tap when championing New Zealand's seafood to the public.

The second day of the Seafood Conference kicked off with a media panel moderated by Seafood NZ's Fiona MacMillan comprising **Michael Morrah (NZ Herald)**, **Sally Murphy (RNZ)**, **Tim Murphy (Newsroom)** and Tīmaru fisher **Nathan Hines**. The group debated transparency and cameras, the perceived difficulties of finding fishers willing to go on record about industry issues, and a willingness to run positive stories. "Not all journalists are the same – we're not out to get you," Murphy assured the crowd.



Artist Tim Li peeling off a sheet of cotton from an inked John dory fish, revealing the gyotaku print.

Umar Nguyen – aka The Fish Girl – spoke about her entrepreneurial journey connecting Australian primary producers with chefs, helping facilitate feedback about different species and ensuring fishers are catching what chefs and diners want, thus reducing waste. Her case in point was finding a market for wild scampi caviar. "Food pushes boundaries bringing people together without judgement. Food sustains us, so it's up to us to sustain food."

Artist **Tim Li** then took everyone through a visual feast of his detailed kaimoana sketches and Japanese gyotaku ink prints. His form of 'slow art' is another way to appreciate our seafood, and is an alternative way to display a trophy catch that still allows the fish to be cleaned and eaten afterwards. Li's presentation was followed with a lunchtime live gyotaku demonstration featuring a John dory and snapper provided by Lee Fish.

Champions of sustainable fisheries management

Of course, we wouldn't have any of this seafood to enjoy without sustainable fisheries management. Lisa Futschek led **Dan Bolger, Emma Taylor, Jacob Hore and Simon Lawrence (all Fisheries New Zealand)**, **Tom Searle (Leigh Fisheries)**, **Charles Heaphy (Sealord)** and **Cathy Webb (Seafood NZ)** in a wide-ranging discussion that covered how MPI and industry should work together; maximising returns on the data and science available; and evolving the Quota Management System (QMS).

CONFERENCE



The crucial morning coffee cart (thanks ANZ).

Bolger emphasised how much he appreciated the close collaboration with industry to manage fisheries, and encouraged people to feel comfortable picking up – and answering – the phone.

Then, Searle cited the tight timing around sustainability round decisions with the start of the fishing year, which impacts company resourcing and fisher jobs. A solution would be to have consultation completed a month earlier; Taylor acknowledged the prescriptions of the Fisheries Act and how long it takes to complete the science required to review stocks. Heaphy seconded that completing science in a timely manner was essential, and delays meant that completing reviews on some stocks got in the way of evaluating others. Everyone agreed that gathering data was increasingly expensive, with Bolger saying it “forces [MPI] to innovate” to maintain a focus on sustainability: “Now we have several years of electronic reporting data verified, there’s a lot that we can do with that to get more decisions made quicker.”

Taylor said, “I do think we need to evolve it further between harvesters and quota owners. We do have a number of stocks in the QMS that have low-knowledge, and we’re looking at how we can work within the [Fisheries Act] and data we have to be more responsive to changes. On the horizon is climate change and impact on fish stocks, it will become really important.”

Bolger’s 15-second ‘soundbite on success’ wrapped things up: “Open door, open conversation, but also focus on getting stuff done and reaching conclusions.”

Following the panel discussion, **Philipp Neubauer** of Dragonfly Data Science presented on how the company is working to revolutionise the data that underpins comprehensive stock management. Its Right Time, Right Place platform uses ocean and fisheries data to predict the distributions of fish

species, allowing fishers to catch and avoid the rest. An operational pilot is still some ways off, but the future is certainly going to be driven by accessible visual data.

Champions of good science

With the *Kaharoa II*’s imminent arrival in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington, NIWA Manager Marine Resources **Rob Christie** gave an overview of this groundbreaking marine research vessel. Read more about the *Kaharoa II* in the June/July issue of Seafood Magazine or on the Seafood New Zealand website.

Louise Kregting from Plant & Food Research continued the theme of advancements in marine technology in her presentation about the Crown Research Institute’s new flume tank. With the rising global demand for more sustainable fishing practices, the tank allows scientists to design, test and refine trawl gear and other marine technologies in a controlled environment before progressing to more



Fresh oysters served at the cocktail function.



The festivities from above.

expensive field trials in the open ocean.

Dr Jeremy Price concluded the segment with an overview of his 'length-based assessment of spawning potential' method, which is a minimal-data method for managing artisanal fisheries – and could be implemented in New Zealand to reduce knowledge gaps in the QMS.

Champions of our people

Leading the ACC panel on health and safety, **Darren Guard (Guard Safety)** affirmed that, "None of this happens without our people. No one can do any of these things without collaboration."

Together with **Stafford Thompson (ACC)**, **Sharyn Forsyth (Maritime NZ)**, **Chris Carey (Independent Fisheries Ltd)** and **Darryn Shaw (Sanford)**, the panel discussed how positive employer-employee relationships are essential to reducing workplace injuries. But also, that recovery goes beyond the physical to include mental and emotional support.

And looking to the future champions of the industry, proud Coastie **Amy Jones (Human Impact Leadership)**, challenged the industry to embrace change and think differently in order to attract and retain the key talent necessary to carry the sector into the next generation.

"None of this happens without our people. No one can do any of these things without collaboration."



Comedian Ben Hurley had the crowd in stitches!

Turning frustration into innovation: How three Kiwi fishers are helping strengthen the weighted hook game

Throughout the year surface longline fishers are out on New Zealand waters chasing bigeye, yellowfin, bluefin tuna and other highly migratory species. Most of the time it's a pretty fun gig, but accidental capture of seabirds is an issue for this fishery. This recently prompted three fishers to get involved in a unique gear innovation project.



The Procella 2.0

You'd be forgiven for thinking designing a good fishing hook would be relatively easy – after all, there's not much to them. But when the goal is to design a hook that sinks quick enough to avoid seabird capture, is safe for crew to use, and is still good at catching fish, it can take years.

In 2022, Bay of Plenty skipper of *Teepookana* Josh Mower, along with others in the New Zealand surface longline (SLL) fleet, trialled a new weighted hook called Procella. Fishers were hopeful it would be another

tool they could use to help avoid seabird bycatch. Unfortunately, it wasn't quite up to the task.

"We had no input on it (the hook design) whatsoever," Mower recalls. "We all just looked at them (the hooks) like, 'What the hell? This isn't what we want or what we're going to use.'"

Procella hook designer and international bycatch problem solver Nigel Brothers says the first attempt was a fizzer because the manufacturing quality wasn't there.



Josh Mower, skipper of the *Teepookana*, believes it's important to involve fishers in the design and trial process of new mitigation tools.

"The guys in New Zealand gave them a try but quickly tossed them aside because the hooks were bending. They were bending on big fish, and big fish are the ones they want to get onboard."

Despite a rocky start, Australia-based Brothers wasn't discouraged. He believed it was still worth moving forward to test whether the Procella – which has its weight built directly into the shank of the hook – could prove valuable for the industry.

"This is not at all a business venture. It's about saving birds whilst hopefully maintaining successful fish catch.

"Adding a bit of weight to longline gear can make or break the effectiveness of other mitigation measures," says Brothers. "There are of course safety considerations around this but it's sort of like a bottom line of mitigation."

"To get things going again we needed to get a few experienced fishers onside, to commit to helping us redesign the first hook and, if possible to trial it,"

says Brothers. "This is where Josh Mower, John King and Will Macnicol stepped up and quickly made the Procella their own."

Mower, who fishes for Garcia Fishing Co, says when Brothers approached him, he was pretty keen to help. He saw it as a chance to try things his way – the fisher's way. Macnicol and King felt the same.

Despite being happy with his current set up to mitigate seabird captures, Macnicol was still keen to get involved with the redesign of the Procella because it helps when fishers have a variety of tools in their seabird mitigation toolbox.

Macnicol is a strong advocate for taking an individualised approach to mitigation. "If you're catching birds, you need to ask yourself, 'What are you doing wrong?' or 'What do you need to change?'"

"My crew uses a range of mitigation techniques. We use line weighting – that's important for us. We use Hookpods, which can be a bit of a hassle, but you just have to get it right. We also use tori lines, and we'll dye baits if we have to. And, where we can, we try to fish at night."

When it comes to seabird mitigation, Macnicol's philosophy is simple: do your best to minimise harm. "As long as you're mitigating and trying, that's all you can do, really. You can sleep at night.

"At the end of the day who wants a seabird interaction? I would rather catch a little bit less fish just to not even have an interaction. But we are in a very raw fishery, and you do have wildlife encounters. It's just how you deal with it and how you mitigate to avoid them next time."

So, with the three fishers on board, and with the help of retired SLL fisher Dave Kellian, the Procella redesign process got underway.

Mower says the collaborative design process wasn't easy; it took countless emails ("probably 500" were his exact words), drawings and discussions to get to a design they could all agree on – the Procella 2.0.

When asked how the design process went, Brothers says, "I've been in this business for nearly 40 years now, and this is probably the most enjoyable experience of working with fishers on a mitigation project.

"At the end of the day who wants a seabird interaction? I would rather catch a little bit less fish just to not even have an interaction."

"Fiddling with hooks is dicey business but I think it's been a real success. It's amazing how many variations you can come up with on just a heavy hook. It's a fine



All lined up and ready to go. The Procella 2.0 has its weight built directly into the shank of the hook.

line between a hook that will work and a hook that won't."

Brothers cheekily adds, "Actually, do you know what they've (Mower, King and Macnicol) done? They've forced me to use WhatsApp as a communication method. I think I might have tormented them for six months with emails."

Fortunately, the WhatsApp group was set up in time for the Procella 2.0 trials to start this season and it's been really great for Brothers to be able to talk to Mower and King – who are trialling the Procella 2.0 – when they're out at sea, in almost "real fishing time".

King, who owns and operates *Katrina*, has been using the hooks for the past few months. A man of few words, he reports, "they're going good". So good, in fact that he is now running 100% Procella 2.0 hooks on his vessel.

Mower agrees. "They've (the Procella 2.0 hooks) been a hit. We've been using them for about three or four months now, and they're performing exceptionally well. We're seeing great fish caught, and they're a safer option too."

Safety concerns are always top of mind in the fishing industry. One key feature of the Procella 2.0 is the placement of the weight incorporated into the hook itself, which Mower believes reduces the risk of flybacks – a common hazard when weights are positioned further up the line.

"We've used hooks with swivels and sliding weights before," Mower explains. "But for me the weight at the

"A lot of the time, we're just told what to use. We don't always get consulted, and when we do, we're not always heard. It's great to have a product that's been designed with our input and is proving successful."

hook is the safest option. With swivels, when a shark chews off part of the line, the weight comes flying back. Keeping the weight at the hook minimises that risk and gives seabirds greater protection."

Mower and his crew are also now using the Procella hooks exclusively. "We're at 100% now," he says proudly. "Word is spreading, too. Other fishers are curious to see how they perform, and they're seeing these hooks are making a real difference."

Mower stresses the importance of involving fishers in the design and trial process. "A lot of the time, we're just told what to use. We don't always get consulted, and when we do, we're not always heard. It's great to have a product that's been designed with our input and is proving successful."

Macnicol adds, "Someone in an office can say, 'You need to do this, you need to do that,' but they need to look at individual fisheries and fishers. Every fishery is different, and every fish is different."

Mower has high hopes for the future of the Procella 2.0 hook. "Nigel (Brothers) wants to try getting them made in stainless-steel (currently the hook is made by adding lead with a protective coating), and we're all for it. Our goal is to have the best, safest and most cost-effective weighted hook out there." He believes that with continued fisher involvement, the product will only get better.

Mower's advice to other fishers is straightforward: "Give them a try. I think you'll be surprised. There was some scepticism initially about whether they would work or if they would cause bigger holes in the fish's mouth, but they've proven to be effective."

As for Brothers, he's hoping Seafood New Zealand will be writing a follow-up story on the Procella 3.0 in a year's time – the stainless-steel version of the current design. "By then, we'll have some really solid numbers from our fisher trials which are also feeding into a DOC (Department of Conservation) project to verify the hooks seabird bycatch mitigation effectiveness and the effect on target catch rates. It would be great to have more fishers using them by then; hopefully word of their effectiveness continues to spread."

"They've (the Procella 2.0 hooks) been a hit. We've been using them for about three or four months now, and they're performing exceptionally well. We're seeing great fish catches, and they're a safer option too."



Procella hook designer and international bycatch problem solver Nigel Brothers says fiddling with hooks is dicey business, but it's been a real success.

What is a weighted hook?

Branch line weighting is one of the main ways surface longline fishers keep seabirds safe, as it helps sink baited hooks quickly, keeping them out of birds' reach. While weights have usually been added to the branch line, new options like the Procella 2.0 offer more weight incorporated into the hook. The Procella 2.0 weighs 62g, so when deployed skilfully by a skipper, it should sink quickly out of reach of seabirds. Other options for weighted hooks include using weighted swivels attached directly to the hook.



The *Teepookana* is now using the Procella 2.0 hooks exclusively.

FEATURE

Collaboration at its best

While this story focuses on the fishers' involvement in the design of the Procella 2.0, many others have been instrumental in keeping the Procella project alive. Brothers says, "We've had people and organisations involved from all different directions. It's been a truly collaborative effort to get us to this point."

The Department of Conservation (DOC):

DOC has been supportive of this project from the beginning, helping to secure funding and providing support where needed. Currently, as part of its Conservation Services Programme project MIT2024-03, DOC is analysing the data from the trials to better understand the impact of the Procella 2.0 on target fish catch and seabird bycatch rates.

Retired SLL skipper Dave Kellian:

From the beginning, Kellian has been instrumental in liaising with SLL fishers and Brothers. He also helped with the design of the Procella 2.0 and kept things moving along.

Southern Seabirds Trust (SST):

SST helped Brothers get the project going. They put Brothers in touch with the right people in government and industry, helped with the fund-raising, and have helped to promote this important work.

DOC Liaison Officer Ben Leslie:

Leslie worked closely with skippers to trial the initial Procella hook and made sure fishers were providing their feedback to Brothers.

Humane Society International (AUS):

The society has been an advocate and strong financial supporter of Procella development from day one, along with decades of seabird bycatch advocacy.

Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP):

The Procella 2.0 trial is also of global significance as the manufacturing of these hooks was funded by ACAP.

Tuna Australia:

The health and safety risk of the Procella is also kindly being tested by Tuna Australia.

Segye Fishing Hook Company:

Brothers has been working closely with Korea-based Segye Fishing Hook Company to ensure the Procella 2.0 is well-constructed. The team at Segye Fishing Company is committed to producing a quality product for fishers to use.

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2024 Seafood Stars Awards: celebrating excellence in New Zealand's seafood sector

At the close of the 2024 Seafood New Zealand Conference in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, industry honoured seven standout individuals and businesses making waves in Aotearoa's seafood industry.

For almost a decade Seafood New Zealand has been celebrating the amazing people and work being done within the sector through its annual Seafood Stars Awards.

Lisa Futschek, Seafood New Zealand CEO, said it was a pleasure to recognise so many passionate and committed kaitiaki of our moana.

"We had such a strong mix of people and new innovations, from an AI system to help fishers reduce bycatch and discards to acknowledging one of our big companies that has managed to achieve an incredible reduction in its carbon footprint by 24%.

"Our Seafood Stars Awards have also evolved over time. This year we have two new awards to reflect our work to make sure we are a sector that is both safe and inclusive for all – the 'ACC Workplace Safety and Wellbeing Award' and the 'WISA – Champions of Women in Seafood Award'.

"Congratulations to all nominees and award recipients. These awards serve as a reminder of the ongoing work to ensure a sustainable and thriving future for Aotearoa's seafood industry."

Future Adaptation Award



Dom Talijancich is presented with his award by Lisa Futschek, Chief Executive of Seafood New Zealand.

The Future Adaption Award was jointly presented to Dom Talijancich, the founder of Advanced Conservation Solutions, and Sealord, one of New Zealand's largest seafood companies.

Talijancich's groundbreaking 'Deep Set Fishing Technology' is a game-changer for sustainable fishing practices and is a new tool that takes sustainable fishing to the next level. By combining an underwater camera, advanced species recognition software, and real-time data transmission, this technology allows



Sealord CEO Doug Paulin shares a laugh with comedian and the awards host Ben Hurley.

fishers to make more informed decisions, reducing bycatch and discards. This innovation also minimises the impact on the marine environment by reducing contact with the seafloor.

Sealord's achievement in reducing its carbon footprint by 24% is equally impressive. The company's efforts to cut down fuel consumption across its fleet, coupled with more efficient maintenance on some vessels and the retirement of an older vessel, have led to a significant reduction in emissions. Sealord's commitment to further reducing plastic usage and

FEATURE

improving water efficiency at its Nelson site further cements its position as a leader in sustainable practices.

ACC Workplace Safety and Wellbeing Award



FirstMate Trustee Geoff Donley recieved the award on behalf of this deserving organisation.

FirstMate New Zealand was honoured with the ACC Workplace Safety and Wellbeing Award for its vital work supporting the mental health and wellbeing of fishers and their whānau. As a national charity, FirstMate provides essential resources and guidance to help those in the seafood industry navigate the unique challenges they face. With 16 Navigators across the country, all of whom have firsthand experience in the industry, FirstMate is a lifeline for many, offering support that is deeply rooted in understanding and empathy.

WISA – Champions of Women in Seafood Award



Emma Thompson, managing director at Publik Agency, is the first recipient of the WISA – Champions of Women in Seafood Award.

The WISA – Champions of Women in Seafood Award was presented to Emma Thompson, managing director at Publik Agency. Through strategic communication and public engagement Thompson has been a driving force in improving the seafood industry's social license. She was the catalyst for creating and producing Seafood Saturday in 2023 and 2024, a successful public festival in Nelson. The festival was a collaboration of companies across the industry, drawing hundreds of locals/families to Upper Trafalgar Street to celebrate the country's kaimoana and the kaimahi who deliver it from the sea to the table.

Young Achiever Award



Rosa Edwards, Inshore Fisheries Manager at Seafood New Zealand, was honoured with the Young Achiever Award for her fisher-centric approach to management.

The Young Achiever Award went to Rosa Edwards, whose work at Seafood New Zealand to mitigate protected species bycatch is underpinned by extensive knowledge and a genuine care to see fishers equipped to do their best on the water. In doing so she has gained respect, trust and buy-in from fishers – achieving implementation of seabird mitigation measures in the surface longline fleet that often go above and beyond what will soon become regulation. Edwards played a significant role in the response to the North Island Weather Event, enabling fishers to go back to sea and survey for hazards that were creating major risks for the inshore fleet in the area. Her fisher-centric approach to management produces initiatives that are both implementable and impactful.

Lifetime Membership Award



Laws Lawson, a highly regarded expert on seafood management and policy in Aotearoa, is presented with his Lifetime Membership Award.

The Lifetime Membership Award was jointly awarded to Laws Lawson and Doug Saunders-Loder, two individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the seafood industry.

Lawson's work spans many years, but more recently, he has worked on the design and implementation of the Māori fisheries and aquaculture settlements. He has mentored numerous Te Ohu Kaimoana staff, and is a stalwart for the protection of the fisheries settlement between Māori and the Crown. Laws was the inaugural chair and CEO of Fisheries Inshore New Zealand, staying on as chair and director as the company expanded, in service of quota owners and fishers for inshore fisheries. He continues in service of sustainable fisheries management through his role as chair of the Inshore Council of Seafood New Zealand. His tireless

dedication to supporting the seafood sector and extensive knowledge of historic and contemporary matters has made him a highly regarded expert on seafood management and policy in Aotearoa.

Saunders-Loder is a highly esteemed and dedicated individual who has made an indelible mark on the seafood industry. Over four decades he has held various roles, including as a cray fisher, Resource Manager for Talley's Group, and has been President of the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen for 21 years. His extensive contributions and directorship on numerous industry boards are a testament to his tireless efforts and unwavering dedication. His exceptional rapport with stakeholders, including fishermen, media and industry peers, has cemented his reputation as a respected advocate and go-to expert.



Doug Saunders-Loder, who has been the President of the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen for 21 years and counting, is presented with his Lifetime Membership Award.

'I love being able to draw on my past lives' – a Q&A with Lisa Futschek

A few months into her new role as CEO of Seafood New Zealand, Lisa sits down with Claire Williamson to talk about how it's going. Their conversation ranges from social licence to second-hand shopping, leadership and friendship – with some garden gnomes thrown in for good measure.

Have you learned anything surprising in your first few months on the job?

I suppose I am still surprised by the extent to which public sentiment tends not to be supportive, in general, of the fishing industry, and also the extent to which some media continue to have a slanted view about the seafood industry. And the reason I think I'm taken aback is because I genuinely think it's completely unjustified. But also, what's surprising in a really positive way is there remains a great deal of optimism within the sector, there is still a can-do attitude. We currently have a window of opportunity, so I think that gives everybody hope.

What values are important to you as a leader?

I have very clear views on that. The first one for me is integrity, including making the right decisions for the right reasons, and communicating that to the people who need to understand it. And connected to that is dealing with people in a way that is fair and equitable and generous. And then, where something hasn't gone well, you learn from it, you move on, but you also 'fess up. So transparency and openness are also important to me. Finally, you have



Lisa led the Fisheries New Zealand panel discussion at the 2024 Seafood New Zealand Conference. You can read more about this on pages 5-9.



Lisa says her documentary-making experience behind the camera helps when she's in front of it.

to have a strong sense of vision and be constantly striving towards that whilst also supporting your people so they are empowered to do their jobs.

You've had a pretty diverse career path.

I love being able to draw on my past 'lives' – things I've done professionally and personally. I did a postgraduate diploma in broadcast communications and my favourite thing I produced was a half-hour documentary on the history and sociology of garden gnome culture in New Zealand. So, bringing my experience behind the camera helps when I'm in front of it. And then another out-of-the box experience while working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade was managing the campaign of Sir Kenneth Keith, a New Zealand Supreme Court judge, who was standing for election to the International Court of Justice in the Hague. It was such an amazing variety of work that I needed to do in terms of developing a campaign strategy, conceiving and building his campaign materials, advocating with foreign governments and lobbying a whole range of United Nations members for their vote. I would come up with ideas for eye-catching collateral which included enduring information like a calendar of the key UN meetings. Things that stood out because they didn't necessarily have the look and feel of a government

communication, and which had a reason for people to hold on to them afterwards.

As a kid trying to decide what they wanted to be, what's the best advice you got?

I grew up in a generation where there was, I remember, a campaign on television and posters put up around my school that said: "Girls can do anything." And I know that sounds a bit contrived, a bit naff. But actually, when I read that, it meant something to me as a girl in school. It wasn't just a slogan, it was a bit of a light-bulb moment for me.

So I know you've got kids...how do you think the industry should engage with the younger generation?

I'm acutely aware of the younger generation and their attitudes towards the industry. When my son wanders in for breakfast on a Saturday morning wearing his Sea Shepherd long-sleeve T-shirt, it has certainly promoted some really interesting debates around the dining room table. And I get that the generation in their teens, their 20s, have preconceived ideas based on the way they digest their news. It's made me realise that if we want to influence those people, we have to be using those same powerful channels. TikTok, for example, is where my 18-year-old daughter spends a lot of her time when she's on social media. For me, it's about how we reach the generation who need to be presented with an alternative to the kinds of information they're just taking as fact or truth.

Moving away from the workplace now. You've got such a great sense of style – tell me about that!

I made a decision a couple of years ago that the vast majority of my wardrobe would be recycled. When I have garments that no longer have a use for me, I pass those on as well. My best thrifted item is a pair of French purple leather boots found at Wastebusters in Wānaka. They were in absolutely pristine condition, I was pretty stoked with that find.



The Doubtful Sounds choir rehearsing on the steps of St. Kevin's Arcade, Auckland, ahead of the World Choir Games earlier this year. Lisa is singing 'Lydia' by Fur Patrol.

And I hear you're a singer?

Yes! I'm in The Doubtful Sounds, which is a pop choir and huge fun. I'm also in Whakaahuru - The Gentle Singers, and we comfort people near the end of life with gentle soothing songs. So we do bedside sings and we sing at rest homes and hospices and that's wonderfully rewarding. Singing is that thing where, in that moment, I'm thinking of nothing other than the music and the harmony and the people around me and the joy that it's bringing – both for us, and the audience alike. It is definitely a critical way for me to decompress, because I can't multitask when I'm singing.

How else do you decompress?

If I am feeling stressed or just need some time out, I throw on a pair of running shoes and go for a run. (I'm generously calling it a run, but in reality, it's more like a plod around Oriental Bay and back up into my suburb.) I'm not someone who runs with podcasts or music because I want to be open to all of the elements, everything that I can smell, see and hear. I do lots of great thinking while running. I often find that the combination of physical activity and just being away from all other distractions helps me be creative.

What are the qualities you look for in a friend?

That's a really good one. I suppose I gravitate towards people who are warm, who have a sense of fun, who are a bit adventurous. I think sharing a sense of humor is really important. You don't necessarily have to be talking every moment you're together, but equally, someone you could spend all night chatting and laughing with – which I literally did at the World Choir Games recently with one of my best friends, Sarah. I think the nice thing about friendship is that it's kind of ageless. I've got friends that are decades younger than me and equally, decades older.

OK and finally some quick-fire questions!

Oysters or crayfish?

Oysters.

Golden or maple syrup?

Maple syrup.

Libraries or bookstores?

Bookstores.

Operas or musicals?

Musicals.

Favourite sea shanty?

Is John Denver's "Calypso" close enough?

And because I can't resist, feijoas or spaghetti pizza?

Definitely spaghetti pizza. I've never had it, but eating feijoas is like eating soap!

People and planet before profit for Motueka Nets

Living every day under a modus operandi to ‘get fishers back out fishing, fast’, while reducing as much waste as possible, makes Josh Donker a happy man.



Josh demonstrates net-making techniques at Seafood Saturday in Nelson, March 2024. Photo by Tim Cuff.

Josh is the general manager of Motueka Nets, a fishing-net making and mending business started by his grandfather in 1988.

He took over the role from his father with the blessing of his two brothers who, like Josh, had grown up with the business – built at Port Motueka and later relocated to Port Nelson. Josh clocked-on at Motueka Nets at age 16, learning the ropes and business skills before leaving to train and work in IT.

Although he was doing well in his IT career, Josh didn't hesitate to climb back aboard when his retiring father offered him the helm at Motueka Nets, seeing room to improve on the successful business model.

Improvements aside, the model is still very much to get nets – repaired, modified and more – back to fishers as quickly as possible. This is done without compromising quality in the craft of rigging, knot tying, mending and mesh construction.

To this requirement, Josh has prioritised re-using and recycling as much of an expired trawl net as possible. His success is evident in the near-empty rubbish skip bins, compared to stacked pallets of materials ready for re-use.

There isn't much of a trawl net that Josh hasn't figured out how to keep out of landfill.

In collaboration with Sealord, Motueka Nets now dismantles and recycles entire trawl nets. Metal hardware and chains are recycled in Nelson, polyethylene rope is given away to gardeners and farmers, and nylon netting is shipped in 26-tonne loads to Spain, where it is made into mussel farm ropes and other products. Fifty-two tonnes of trawl net was saved from landfill in one year this way.

Only the nets' polyethylene mesh was left over, but by early 2024 Josh had found a solution. Or rather, the solution came to him.



The Motueka Nets team in 1989. Photo supplied by Josh Donker.

Motueka Nets' sustainability efforts had caught the eye of Rui Peng, CEO of Auckland-based technology startup Critical. Rui especially liked the look of the bright blue and green polyethylene mesh, which Critical now upcycles into a successful range of Kingi chopping boards and office furnishing such as benchtops in those same bright colours.

The journey of the polyethylene mesh, nylon rope and other supplies from their manufacture in Holland to New Zealand is an interesting story as well. Motueka Nets is an MPI-certified transition zone, which means shipping containers from Holland can be opened onsite in its vast yard, following biosecurity procedures.

Shipping has not been straightforward in 2024, with container ships taking the longer route around



Owen Hoggard and Andrew Hope at work at Motueka Nets in the early nineties. Photo supplied by Josh Donker



The craft of net-making – splicing, looping, knot tying, net needlework and more.

Africa rather through the Suez Canal, due to terrorist attacks on ships in the Red Sea. For Motueka Nets, this means containers can be delayed by as much as a month, with a flow-on effect to production schedules – and their core mission to get gear back to fishers as soon as possible.

This year, Josh took his first business trip to meet suppliers in Holland. Shipping delays were on the agenda and Josh also enjoyed seeing little of the country his grandfather grew up in. It was a new experience for him, as the third generation to lead the family business into its fourth decade.

Always keeping a story in

Bob McAuliffe, 82, is a Māwhera Greymouth-based photographer who has made a name for himself documenting the many fishing vessels navigating the Greymouth bar. No two days are the same on the West Coast and entering river ports can be hairy for even the most skilled of skippers. This makes for dramatic photography; Bob shares his images daily with an appreciative audience of over 16,000 people on his Facebook page, and chats with Claire Williamson about the stories behind his visuals.

his sights



Jay Penelope leaving the Grey River and meeting a Tasman Sea wave. Bob McAuliffe Photography.

Growing up, was the ocean a big part of your childhood?

I was born in Hokitika and in my early years lived on Beach Street. It was our backyard – the gate opened on to the beach! There wasn't a lot of boat activity at the time, but we lived next door to the harbourmaster, Garney Howe, and could hear him talking to boats coming in on his radio. It was quite exciting, and we would run down to the beach to watch. My parents fished off the beach, but I haven't gone out on any boats – my interest is in keeping my feet firmly on the ground.

What's your photography origin story?

The first camera I ever used was at age seven. My parents had a [Kodak] box Brownie and were taking pictures of the kids at the house. They gave it to me to take photos of them, but that was the only time. The first camera I bought myself was a basic film camera at 16. I used to take the film to local chemist Tom Lee – he would go through the prints with me and give me tips on composition, to not always put the subject in the

middle. At 16, I took photos of friends, tramping scenery, family...I aggravated my sister by photographing her after her nursing night shift in her pajamas! Today I use an Olympus Micro 4/3 OM-D E-M1 Mark II and two main lenses for boats, depending on the light.

So boats weren't your initial interest.

I considered myself a landscape and nature photographer for a long time. I would hike up valleys,



Tanea towing Jay Elaine into the Grey River after it had broken down. Bob McAuliffe Photography.

glaciers, do lakes, birds, little plants in the bush. The odd time at a river I would take a picture of a boat if it looked nice in the scene. Around 2012 I decided to take my photography further via a diploma in digital photography, which I did distance learning with the Southern Institute of Technology. It took two years to complete. While doing the diploma, one morning I decided to get a sunrise and went to the Greymouth Breakwater with a tripod. I photographed a boat coming in, and in front of my eyes it capsized! I rang 111 and newspapers wanted photos.

Oh my gosh! Did it put you off the subject?

There was definitely a pause. But after I while I came back to the subject. I started thinking about what [fishers] go through when they go out, the risks they take. It became a more serious interest, and I thought, "This sort of thing should be recorded."

What has kept it interesting for you?

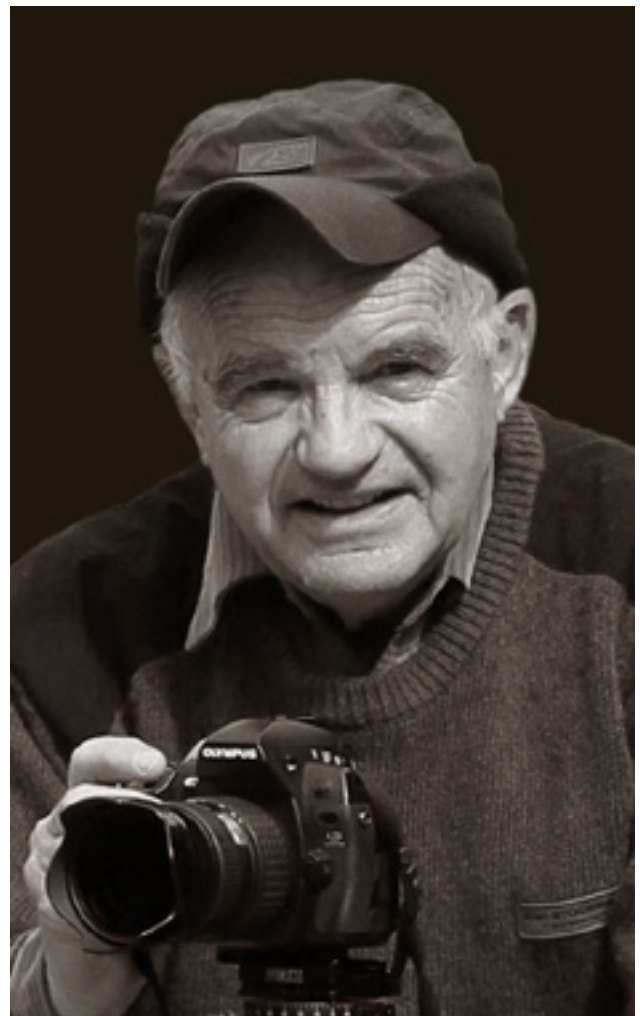
My style has progressed over the years. When I first started again, I just took photos on a nice day. But I started to do more planning and drew on things I'd learned in my diploma – to think, "OK, what is the story here?" Sometimes that is a nice boat on a pretty day. Or it could be that it's a very rough sea, so you need to expand the framing to see the waves and context. I also think a lot about lighting and time of day. I haven't lost interest because it keeps changing and there're always challenges. I've realised the personality of the boat impacts what I do, I have to change my style to show all the masts or antennae that are part of the character of the whole boat.

Have you gotten to know any of the skippers or crew?

I get recognised when out taking photos, and people make a point of speaking to me. A skipper a while ago gave me some free fish! Jay Elaine is what you might expect a fishing boat to look like. Others like *Galatea*, *Cook Canyon*, *Tanea* are regulars. Quite a few skippers and crew will text to say when they're coming in or out. One from the North Island texted when he was coming in on his first trip as a skipper, so that added a personal touch. I have the marine traffic app on my phone, and most vessels are on the app during hoki season.

Tell me about the success of your Facebook page.

Forget 16,000, I was impressed when I got to 30 followers! I'm sort of astounded, really. I get messages from people worldwide, especially from places with similar river bars to Greymouth in the UK, Australia, Ireland. People will comment, "OMG I'm never going to complain about the price of fish ever again." It's blown me away.



Portrait of Bob McAuliffe

And still no interest in going out?

Nope!

Follow Bob on Facebook or online at bobmcauliffe.com



Ocean Odyssey approaching the Grey River from the Tasman Sea. Bob McAuliffe Photography.

Cross-country collaboration

Gavin Gibbons is the Chief Strategy Officer for the National Fisheries Institute (NFI), the US's largest seafood trade association. He joined delegates in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland at the 2024 Seafood New Zealand Conference to share the issues facing the country's fisheries today, and how the US and New Zealand can work together.



Gavin Gibbons says a public misconception that seafood is only a high-end, white tablecloth food can depress consumption of the healthy protein across the country.

As with fisheries around the world, including in Aotearoa New Zealand, Gibbons outlined that the industry in the US is currently facing three primary challenges:

- Economic issues,
- Trade policy issues, and
- An uncertain political climate.

To assess national seafood industry trends, the NFI heads to a surprising location – the land-locked city of Peoria, Illinois.

Will it play in Peoria?

Peoria (population 113,000) is just over two hours' drive from Chicago, tucked on the banks of the Illinois River – essentially in the centre of the country. A long-standing hub of industrial production – manufacturer

Caterpillar Inc. based its global headquarters in Peoria for over 110 years, and still maintains an administrative hub there – the city has become synonymous with the 'American average.' Historically, musical acts and stage shows would trial their material in Peoria; it's also a popular destination for pundits to test the political mood of the nation.

So how is seafood performing in Peoria?

Economy

Although seafood has experienced less inflation than other foods in the US, Gavin says, the average price per kilo of seafood is still higher than the 'big three' animal proteins (beef, chicken and pork). As a result, current sales are down compared to the two-year average, even among shelf-stable products like tinned tuna which are typically stable sellers.

"There are high-end, middle-end and then there's really affordable things like shelf-stable products that are available to American consumers," Gibbons says.

"Understanding that whole waterfront – pardon the pun – is particularly important for consumers, because the idea that everything is just available at white tablecloth restaurants is not true, and that could have the effect of depressing seafood consumption in the United States. Quite frankly, and this is not an overstatement, Americans eating less seafood is a public health concern."

This perception is playing out in the media as well.

"Ninety-five percent of media stories are positive about seafood's health benefits, but the perception is skewed by the 5% of stories that say it's too expensive," Gibbons says. Americans only eat an average of 9.3 kilograms of seafood per capita – a "wild underconsumption" of a healthy protein. Though public gains have been made in promoting seafood's health benefits and consciously pushing back against misconceptions, there's still work to be done on the political side.

Trade policy and politics

A stunning statistic: 85% of seafood consumed in the US is imported – occasionally, even locally caught seafood is exported for processing and the re-imported into the country. The major seafood exporters to the US are China, Canada and India, with Vietnam and Chile hot on their heels.

As the US seeks to reduce its reliance on China, Gibbons says there's opportunities for other players – including New Zealand – to grow their exports of

seafood products at different price points into the US, hopefully making seafood more accessible – and therefore popular – amongst domestic consumers.

Strengthening that economic relationship also opens the door for more industry-to-industry collaboration on shared issues.

"New Zealand and the United States face many of the same issues when it comes to, for instance, misinformation that comes from NGOs. Quite frankly, when they're putting out information that is not true, or talking about certain gear types in a way that is totally inappropriate, that's the same type of thing that we face in the US market. We need to be working on those things together, because pre-competitive collaboration will and is making a difference."

Global collaboration

Even in Peoria, you can see fundamental changes in the issues space is underway. This is thanks to pre-competitive collaboration to push back on issues that paralyse the industry.

Much of this is driven through the International Coalition of Fisheries Associations based in Rome, which has been active since 1988. Effective, public stances from organisations like this are making a difference in the public's perception of seafood in places like Peoria – the bellwethers of social licence.

It's also an important forum where the US and New Zealand can collaborate.

"They can't be everything to everyone. But there are two, three, four things that, across the board, affect all fisheries, and those are the types of things we should and can be working on at an international level."



Peoria is located in central Illinois, in the US.

What we tell the world: the new rules around environmental reporting



Alana Lampitt, partner at Chapman Tripp, says even smaller businesses may find themselves caught up in changing international expectations around environmental reporting.

Environmental reporting is a complex area. Most of our seafood businesses in New Zealand, which are small- or medium-sized, won't have to do it, but the larger ones do. These days however, even smaller businesses may find themselves caught up in changing international expectations about how we report our environmental credentials.

That was the message for delegates at the Seafood New Zealand Conference in August from Alana Lampitt, a partner at law firm Chapman Tripp. Alana was one of three authors on a report published in April for non-profit The Aotearoa Circle. The report, 'Protecting New Zealand's Competitive Advantage', is a snapshot of the big changes happening offshore around what is expected of Kiwi exporters.

In short, expectations are rising that our exporting companies will provide really solid reporting of their environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance.

Alana says, "Our report shows that 80% of New Zealand's exports by value are going to markets that have some form of mandatory climate reporting in force or proposed. That figure has been a surprise to many, but we would say that businesses who want to proactively manage ESG trade risk would do well to stay attuned to these developments."

There are four main ways that Kiwi business could be affected by these international trends:

1. Via **direct regulatory capture**, where New Zealand

businesses are required to report under new overseas reporting and disclosure obligations.

2. Via **supply chain requirements**, where customers of New Zealand businesses are affected by overseas obligations that require them to report on their international supply chains or meet standards or targets within those supply chains.

3. Through **new trade barrier mechanisms** like the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which is being implemented in the EU. It imposes a cost on embedded emissions in certain carbon-intensive products. While the EU CBAM does not currently cover primary exports, it could in the future.

4. Indirectly, **free trade agreements** are also increasingly including environmental standards that New Zealand has obligations to meet as a trading partner. The extent to which domestic action (including domestic laws and regulation) meets those obligations may impact exporters' ongoing access to markets.

Alana says the key thing is to be prepared. "Prudent New Zealand exporters and their suppliers are looking to get ahead of this trend – get across the ESG standards and reporting obligations that your overseas customers and consumers are facing and think about what you might be able to do to assist them to comply. That will help New Zealand exporters maintain and expand our place in the export supply chains of the future."

While not all Kiwi exporting businesses will be directly affected, even non-exporters can be affected if they are supplying current exporters, and may also find they are caught up in these changes.

"While relatively few New Zealand exporters will be directly subject to these ESG reporting requirements, many of our overseas customers are captured and are looking to their supply chains – including New Zealand businesses – to help them comply."

Chapman Tripp's report can be found on The Aotearoa Circle website: theaotearoacircle.nz/reports-resources



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Government and industry work to grow innovation in commercial fishing



Fishers talk gear innovation at the Whangārei workshop in June.

Supporting fishers to stay at the forefront of fishing gear and methods was the focus of a series of eight workshops recently held across the country.

A collaboration between Fisheries New Zealand, Seafood New Zealand, Moana New Zealand and the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen, the workshops brought fishers together to share ideas on more selective and efficient fishing practices, minimising environmental impact.

Mark Geytenbeek, from Fisheries New Zealand's Sector Support & Innovation team and co-facilitator of the workshops, says as an island nation, our oceans and fisheries are important to all New Zealanders.

"Our marine environment is of cultural significance to tangata whenua, provides food for our families and jobs in the regions, and it's a place for recreation. We all want a healthy marine environment that continues to provide now and for future generations, and a key part of this is using the most effective and efficient fishing practices."

Workshop attendees were presented with information about new developments and innovations for commercial fishing. Representatives from NIWA talked about fishing gear adaptations such as drafting gates in nets, different materials and escapement sizes and shape it has tested with fishers from the North Island's East Coast and new gear technology being developed internationally.

Fishers also heard about 'FloMo' – a new modular fish harvesting technology developed by Precision Seafood Harvesting. FloMo improves targeting by allowing small and unwanted fish to escape through strategically placed

escape holes, and its design means fish that are harvested are in better, high-quality condition. Although still at pre-commercialisation stage, developers and fishers alike are excited about the improved quality of the fish and increased selectivity.

Nathan Reid from Moana New Zealand says, "Our contract fishers have been involved in the development of FloMo from the get-go.

"It's great to see this technology get to the point where it's ready for full deployment. We have definitely seen an uplift in product quality and the improved selectivity, like letting the little ones swim away, is better for sustainability of fish stocks and saves inefficiency in processing."

For decades, fishers have been making adjustments to gear and methods to reduce fishing impacts on the marine environment and focusing on adaptations that allow them to fish more selectively to avoid unwanted species and keep their catch sustainable. The workshops provided a valuable opportunity for fishers to share experiences about gear and technology innovations they've trialled, including what is working – and what isn't.

Fishers were also keen to know about how they can use data insights – from electronic catch and position reporting, as well as from on-board cameras – to help improve their practices.

The project team is now looking to set up a platform for fishers to share innovation information and ideas.

Interested in hearing more about innovation across the fishing sector? Get in touch with FisheriesSSI@mpi.govt.nz.

Kaharoa II christened in home port of Wellington

NIWA's newest research vessel, the 36-metre *Kaharoa II* is now working in New Zealand waters.



It arrived in Wellington on 12 August after a four-month-long voyage from the Astilleros Armon to continue the work of its predecessor, the 43-year-old *Kaharoa*. During its maiden voyage, the vessel deployed more than 150 Argo floats across the Atlantic and the Pacific as part of a global ocean monitoring programme.



The blessing of *Kaharoa II* was led by Kura Moeahu, Mana Whenua - Te Āti Awa ki te Upoko o te Ika in a moving ceremony on 14 August in Wellington.

It was officially christened by Science, Innovation and Technology Minister Judith Collins on 19 August in a traditional ceremony with a bottle of New Zealand *méthode traditionnelle* successfully smashing on the hull.



A 170-strong crowd listens as Minister Collins remarks, "This highly sophisticated, significantly enhanced and cost-effective research vessel will transform New Zealand's marine research capabilities."

Kaharoa II Chief Engineer Alex Miller was somewhat more succinct, "It's a bloody good ship."



Nathaniel Rowe (Te Āti Awa representative), welcoming guests to the vessel using a pūtātara (sea conch).

What's next:

The *Kaharoa II* undertook its maiden science voyage on 27 August to collect baseline data on what habitats are present in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. The new technology on *Kaharoa II* has enabled scientists to use a new, state-of-the-art camera system to collect underwater imagery, including capturing fish sleeping on the seafloor with powerful lights. The research is being conducted on behalf of Fisheries New Zealand and is supported by the



NIWA Chief Executive John Morgan and Minister Judith Collins explore the meticulously designed bridge of the *Kaharoa II*.

Department of Conservation and Seafood New Zealand. It focused on seafloor communities, reefs and corals in what is one of New Zealand's most valued and intensively used coastal spaces.

Read more about the *Kaharoa II* in the June 2024 issue of the Seafood New Zealand Magazine at seafood.org.nz.

Workplace training unlocks staff potential

Covering topics from quality assurance to protection of the marine environment and delivered by Primary ITO, workplace training is a sure way to retain and upskill staff, whether they've been with you for two months or 10 years.



Paula Blair and Jessica Tauwhare

Primary ITO's flexible offerings make it accessible to everyone. Some people are able to commit to a two-year apprenticeship, others might start with a micro-credential in receiving fish, or a half-day course in seafood logistics.

Dawn Cooper, General Manager – Human Resources of Sealord, is no stranger to the benefits of workplace training.

"Workplace training is invaluable; people can apply their learnings straight away and it directly impacts their career opportunities while building capability within the organisation. Working in an operational environment makes face-to-face classroom training challenging. Organisations need flexible in-

house approaches so employees can learn on the job. Workplace training allows this."

Two women who have risen through the ranks at Sealord share their stories.

Paula Blair

Paula has deep ties to the seafood industry. As a small child, she remembers going to work with her mum, who cleaned offices for Sealord before going to work in the wet fish factory. As a teen, keen for some spending money, Paula got a job packing fish at Sealord where, minus a few stints in Nelson & Thames, she has stayed for the past 23 years.

Over the years, Paula has worked in almost every

NEWS

part of the business – as a general hand on the shop floor, filleting, weighing, cutting kiriti for the Japanese market, team lead, payroll and now as a Coated Factory Co-ordinator.

In 2022, Paula was offered an Apprenticeship in Seafood Processing through Primary ITO. Having been out of formal education for a while, Paula says it felt a bit daunting to start with, but her fears were quickly put to rest. "The internship is structured in a way that works for people with different learning styles, the hands-on learning, and being able to interact with a tutor in a small group worked well for me.

"It's not always easy balancing work and study. When you've got kids and a life outside of work, it's hard to squeeze it all in. Sealord and my factory manager were very supportive, allowing us the time we needed to learn. Being able to study during work hours was a big bonus," Paula adds. "One thing COVID taught us was that our time is valuable, and with the Apprenticeship I could still enjoy my personal time, especially during the beautiful Nelson summers."

Asked what she would say to someone thinking about doing a seafood apprenticeship, Paula says, "Definitely do it, it's an amazing journey that can open many doors. It's manageable and done in bite-sized pieces, there's lots of support available. The seafood industry offers so many different career

paths and learning opportunities – it's a vibrant and dynamic field to be part of."

Jessica Tauwhare

Growing up, both Jessica's mum and auntie worked for Sealord so after finishing high school Jessica thought she would give it a go. Zooming ahead 14 years, Jessica has worked her way up the ladder from fish packer to production lead where she now works with her mum.

"I'm actually her boss, which is quite strange. I feel like I'm probably a bit harder on her than anybody else," she laughs, "I can't be seen to be favouritising!"

Over the years, Sealord has nurtured Jessica's potential, giving her multiple training opportunities from leadership courses to a Level 4 Certificate in Seafood Processing.

"Sealord supported me into leadership because they saw I had potential. Other people trained in processing, quality and compliance, logistics – you're supported in the area of your strengths and interests.

"I've had loads of opportunities from training in incident analysis through to permit writing. Training has given me the confidence and tools to do the job."

Paula and Jessica are shining examples of the potential workplace training can unlock. Both are dedicated employees who have embraced the opportunities offered to them. Workplace training has helped them grow and have diverse and interesting careers, which is a win for both them and for Sealord.

Check out workplace training opportunities for the seafood industry at www.seafood.org.nz/training.

"The internship is structured in a way that works for people with different learning styles, the hands-on learning, and being able to interact with a tutor in a small group worked well for me."

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Seafood festivals to look forward to

Summer is fast approaching, which means it's festival season. And that means seafood! We've got a list of what's coming up across the motu, so you can save the dates and book your tickets ASAP.



The Twizel Salmon & Wine Festival, held on the shore of Lake Ruataniwha. Tom Neugebauer.

Twizel Salmon & Wine Festival 8 February 2025

The 19th Twizel Salmon & Wine Festival, once again held on the stunning shore of Lake Ruataniwha, is slated to be bigger and better than ever. The star is, of course, the region's local, glacial salmon from notable brands like Aoraki Salmon and High Country Salmon, but there's a wealth of food trucks and beverages to enjoy. Grab your kai, settle on your picnic blanket and groove to the stellar musical acts on the main stage – 2025's lineup features Blake Corbett, The Eastern and more. Tickets are on sale now.

www.twizelsalmonandwinefest.com



A savoury eclair topped with beetroot cured Mt Cook Alpine Salmon, served at the 2024 Twizel Salmon & Wine Festival. Dana Johnson.

Havelock Mussel & Seafood Festival 8 March 2025

A long-standing Marlborough summer tradition, the annual summer Havelock Mussel & Seafood Festival is back with more delicious Greenshell™ mussels, toe-tapping musical performances, mouth-watering cooking demonstrations in the NZ King Salmon Culinary Tent and fast-paced mussel shucking competitions. Head over to the picturesque port town of Havelock for a day of unparalleled fun – and since there's a dedicated kids zone, you can bring the whole whānau. Since the festival is a not-for-profit that provides grants to local organisations across Te Taihu Top of the South, it's an event you can feel extra good about supporting.

www.havelockmusselfestival.co.nz



Held in Havelock, the annual Havelock Mussel & Seafood Festival sees people flocking to the port town for a day of seafood and fun.

NEWS



Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2025, A Taste of Matarangi is a day of beachside fun.

A Taste of Matarangi **5 April 2025**

Held at the Village Green in the seaside Coromandel town of Matarangi, this annual festival is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2025. From humble beginnings, the event has grown into a day of good food, music and entertainment. Expect a range of food trucks selling fresh kaimoana, fritters, ice cream and more, plus a lineup of local artists entertaining you on the stage. With a kids zone and charity auction (with prizes) rounding out the event, it's a day of wholesome family fun.

<https://atasteofmatarangi.co.nz>



Over 20,000 Bluff oysters are opened and eaten each year at the Bluff Oyster & Seafood Festival. Jeremy Pierce.

Bluff Oyster & Food Festival **24 May 2025**

This annual celebration of the Bluff oyster welcomes thousands of bivalve lovers to the deep south for a unique food festival. The "unsophisticated and proud of it" event opens with a recitation of the "Ode To The Oyster" poem before the day's programme of live musical performances, plus oyster opening and eating competitions and more, begins. There are oysters aplenty to enjoy – each year over 20,000 are eaten at the event – plus other seafood (and "land food," if you must), accompanied by local wines and brews. The festival is the perfect opportunity to explore the salty seaside town and surrounds – just don't forget your hat and gloves!

www.bluffoysterfest.co.nz



Crowds gather at Port Otago for the Port Chalmers Seafood Festival. B's Photography.

Port Chalmers Seafood Festival **Late September-early October 2025**

Held at the wharf and cruise ship terminal at Port Otago, the Port Chalmers Seafood Festival is the perfect day out for kaimoana lovers. Packed with local seafood cooking demonstrations, food trucks and top-notch kids and family entertainment, you won't want

to miss it. Past events have also included an under-16 kids' fishing competition. Tickets will be on sale from June/July 2025. Fun festival attire is encouraged!

www.seafoodfest.co.nz

VESSEL UNDER 400 GT?

The environmental emission standards that apply to commercial vessels, including those under 400 GT, are now in effect. Find out more at maritimenz.govt.nz/airpollution

Whānau, air and ocean. Together, let's protect them.



Kia Mataara

Darren's story: the pain of losing someone at sea

Health and safety advocate Darren Guard has lost many mates to the sea and has also come close to losing his own life. So, he's used funding from ACC to set up MarineSAFE – an online training programme to help fishers stay safe at sea.



Former fisherman turned health and safety advocate Darren Guard.

Former fisherman Darren Guard is no stranger to the pain of losing a mate at sea.

Darren, who hails from New Zealand's oldest fishing family of European heritage, lost 11 people he knew in the space of one year.

So whenever he hears about a tragedy in the fishing industry it hits him hard.

"If a fisherman gets badly injured or disappears, it doesn't really matter where they are in the country, the whole industry feels it," the 53-year-old says.

"I get emotional when I think about it, even if I didn't know them, because it's such a close-knit family."

Darren has also come close to losing his own life when a boat he was skippering began taking on water in the Cook Strait during the hoki-fishing season in 1996.

"I rang my wife at one o'clock in the morning to say goodbye - that's how serious I thought it was," he says. "It was pretty scary."

Experienced skippering and a bit of luck helped Darren finally return to shore safely that night.

"Fishing is recognised as one of the most hazardous

"I rang my wife at one o'clock in the morning to say goodbye – that's how serious I thought it was," he says. "It was pretty scary."

industries on earth," says Darren, whose family has been fishing since 1827.

"Up to 100,000 commercial fishermen a year die, globally. It's quite a number and I've certainly seen a lot of friends and family injured and lost.

Enough is enough

His own harrowing experiences and the sad stories of lost friends led Darren to decide "enough is enough".

So the Nelson resident teamed up with the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen to apply for a workplace injury prevention grant from ACC.

"It was something we talked about collaboratively after hearing there was some funding available from ACC," says Doug Saunders-Loder, president of the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen.

The application was successful and the funds provided by ACC were used to create MarineSAFE, an online health and safety programme for people working in the fishing industry.

Making a difference with an online approach

MarineSAFE is a series of online training videos that show how to work safely on fishing vessels. The modules focus on a wide range of relevant topics, such as machine safety, wharf safety, knife safety, risk management and life-saving equipment.

The MarineSAFE team also works with FirstMate NZ – the Seafood Sector Support Network – to cover mental health and wellbeing in the training.

In putting together the programme, Darren felt an online-based learning option would work best for the fishing community, rather than in-person training.

"Training is so difficult for fishers because they spend so much time at sea. When they're home, they don't want to be

sitting in a classroom – they want to be spending time with their family," he says.

"So that's where I thought, 'Well, online has to be the answer.'"

The modules have proved popular so far with about 1,200 people completing the training, which is free of charge.

"The beauty of MarineSAFE is that you'll be emailed a certificate that you can just add to your CV or MOSS training records as crew training evidence for any audit," he says.

"Then you can go from one workplace or vessel to another and you've already got that training pathway with you."

Read more at www.acc.co.nz/newsroom/stories/darrens-story-the-pain-of-losing-someone-at-sea or scan the QR code.



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Sealord organic fertiliser to hit shelves in time for summer gardening



The Sealord team involved in the development of Naked fertiliser in Sealord's fishmeal plant. From left: Stu Yorston (GM Business Development & Sustainability), Graeme Blincoe (By-Products Supervisor), Danny Sheridan (Business Development Manager) and Daniela Stringer (Innovation Manager).

This summer, you can water your tomatoes with fish. A fertiliser made with fish waste, that is.

The Government has committed more than \$2 million over four years to support Sealord's business development arm to transform fish waste into high-value liquid garden fertiliser and pet food.

Sealord GM Business Development & Sustainability Stu Yorston says the grant from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is a huge boost to support business development work underway.

"It's hugely exciting. It's been a year-long effort working alongside the team at MPI."

Stu says it just makes sense to develop new consumer goods from the by-products of Sealord's sustainably harvested fish species.

"We utilise over 99% of the fish currently with the

main by-product (after filleting) being fish meal, however we want to develop new products with better economic returns."

Sealord CEO Doug Paulin says the seafood industry and the Government are keen to work together to grow seafood export revenue.

"We have a shared goal to continue to grow the sector while caring for the marine environment and being focussed on innovative new ways of doing things.

"Our Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures agreement is a significant step forward for Sealord in developing new revenue streams in a very challenging economic environment. The funding is additional to Sealord's own investment in people and marketing spend."

With the funding confirmed, Sealord is accelerating the launch of Sealord Naked, an organic range of garden fertiliser that will be available in all good gardening retailers, including Mitre 10, from late September.

Stu says there has been a lot of time and investment in research and development in the lead up to the bottles hitting the shelves.

"Our work has involved various trials to get the formula just right, testing by Lincoln Agritech – with the results showing Naked is more effective than its nearest competitors – and obtaining certification by Ministry for Primary Industries."

Stu adds that Naked has excellent sustainability credentials.

"It's made from the last bit of fish waste we don't use. All the fish offal gets minced up, dried and made into fishmeal. During the drying process, a liquid concentrate comes off and this is what goes into the fertiliser, along with seaweed from an aquaculture company in the Coromandel called Premium Seas."

The base product – fish-liquid concentrate – is produced in Sealord's Nelson-based fishmeal plant. Seaweed is added, and it then gets bulk-packed

and sent to Auckland for bottling, packing and distributing to retailers.

Sealord also plans to develop a range of pet food ingredients for pet food manufacturers, with the view to eventually launching its own pet food range.

Under-Secretary for Oceans and Fisheries, Jenny Marcroft says Government is always looking out for innovations that will add value to our seafood products and ensure the ongoing success of the sector

"This project will develop sustainable products with better yields and higher prices, maximising the value of fish caught by the fishing industry."

She says the 'Fish Waste Optimisation' programme the Government is supporting through MPI's Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures fund will develop new, higher value revenue streams for fish waste.

"The project contributes to the Government's aspirational goal of doubling the value of New Zealand's exports," she says.

The project will include work on consumer research, the selection of third-party manufacturers, formulation development, packaging development, distribution options and export market selection.

Easy to renew your MTOC

It's important to apply before your Maritime Transport Operator Certificate (MTOC) expires. Maritime NZ (MNZ) can't renew an expired MTOC, so you'd need to apply for a new one, which is a much longer process and you'd be unable to operate until MNZ issue it.

Six months before your MTOC's expiry date, MNZ will now send you all the information you need to apply to renew it.

Previously, the six-month email confirmed your expiry date and informed you that three months before that date we'd send you everything you needed to apply. MNZ will now send you everything you need to apply at six months, and a reminder at three months if you haven't applied already.

To apply for your renewal, please follow the instructions in the email MNZ sends you. These are:

- confirm the details MNZ hold on your operation
- provide the information MNZ needs to issue an invoice
- complete fit and proper person forms and

provide criminal record checks from the Ministry of Justice for each responsible person

- have one responsible person sign the declaration.

The returned email will be your application to renew your MTOC.

If you have any questions about the process or need assistance, please:

- talk to your maritime officer
- email operators@maritimenz.govt.nz
- phone, toll-free, 0508 22 55 22 (press 1 from the menu)



It's not just fish — new framework balances markers of health in the Hauraki Gulf

In a sea of differing anecdotes, motivations, and values, thanks to the work of the Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge (the Challenge) – together with its Māori partners, stakeholders and government agencies – a clearer picture of revitalising Te Moananui-a-Toi, Tikapa Moana Hauraki Gulf is emerging.

Over the course of the 18-month Challenge project, researchers evaluated potential health indicators for the Gulf and developed a framework for Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ). Project lead Darren Parsons (NIWA) says FNZ can use the indicators listed in the framework as part of their toolbox to help with decisions about monitoring the health of the Gulf.

"From here, FNZ will take the recommendations that we've come up with and additional considerations that they're trying to balance. They're the right people to be making those balanced decisions."

What makes a good indicator

An indicator is a measure of change through time of different parts of the Gulf fisheries system. A good indicator is easily measured, easy to understand, has an existing time series, is sensitive to stressors, and complements other indicators. For example, one indicator might cover how many predators are in an area, another how much plastic is on the beach, the number of plankton in an area or how much of the seafloor has been in contact with dredge or trawl gear.

"We used a co-developed process over three years to assess about 150 indicators."

Assessing these indicators – and how a change in one would potentially impact others – is part of a holistic fisheries plan to help people understand how the health of the Hauraki Gulf changes as different management strategies are implemented, says Darren.

"The Challenge is about broadening and adding to the existing way of doing fisheries management – it's a giant leap towards ecosystem-based fisheries management (EBFM) in Aotearoa New Zealand."

An inclusive approach

The project team designed the Challenge framework to

guide the set of indicators. It's aligned with the Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan, which is part of Revitalising the Gulf, as well as the Mana Moana-developed framework Te Niho Taniwha, which enables individual hapū to map specific place-based indicators based on local knowledge or taonga species, adding meaning for their location and values.

Darren says the co-developed Challenge framework is a way of making sure that nothing is missed. "We're identifying all the different aspects or threads across this socioeconomic, cultural system and making sure that we're going to assess indicators for each of those components."

The framework is hierarchical, with multiple levels nesting into each other, with potential indicators sitting at the bottom. Indicators were assessed across seven criteria (as shown in the infographic on the right), with the colours representing each criteria's score in terms of its quality, which determines an indicator's overall colour. For example, an indicator that's green is high-quality, while yellow is medium and red is low. White means there wasn't enough information to assess. The ultimate decision on which indicators to choose rests with FNZ.

Darren says the value of the Challenge framework comes from its holistic approach. "From a fisheries science or management perspective, we often just focus on how many fish there are. But there are additional values, including the health of the broader ecosystem. There's less value in having lots of fish if they're contaminated or poor quality."

The value of EBFM

This project is part of a shift towards ecosystem-based fisheries management and relies on joint understanding of other peoples' values and knowledge of systems.

"These indicators ultimately have great utility as both a communication and management tool in allowing managers and end users to understand how the health (mauri) of the Hauraki Gulf changes as EBFM strategies, and other management interventions, are implemented," Darren says.

"The good oil is in the journey to get there. Even if you don't get to EBFM, you can still have massive gains in terms of two-way learning. This indicator framework will help fisheries managers find the right balance under EBFM."

Hauraki Gulf fishery system indicator recommendations

Number of days
shellfish harvesting
closed due to
bacteria levels



Multi-species feeding
association encounter
frequency



Area of HG in
fisheries-related
rāhui/taiāpure/mātaimai



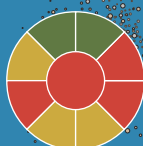
Australasian
gannet nest
count



Aggregated
area of seabed
contacted by
trawl and
dredge gears



zooplankton abundance
& composition



Catch ratios (e.g.
proportion of
predatory fish)



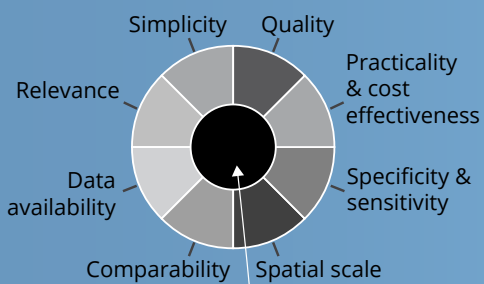
Jack mackerel
abundance
(acoustic indicator)



% of reef that is
kina barren



EXAMPLE INDICATOR KEY



Recommendation

- High
- Medium
- Low
- Wait for more data

"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.



Symbols Relating To Submarine Cables

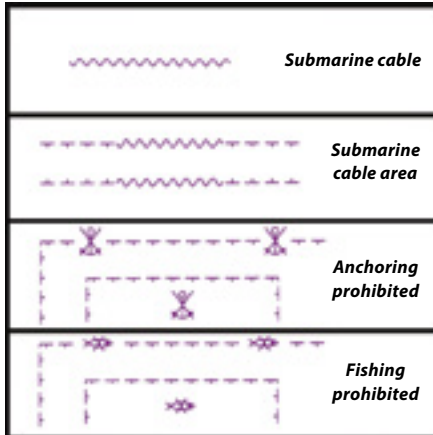


Figure 1.

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.

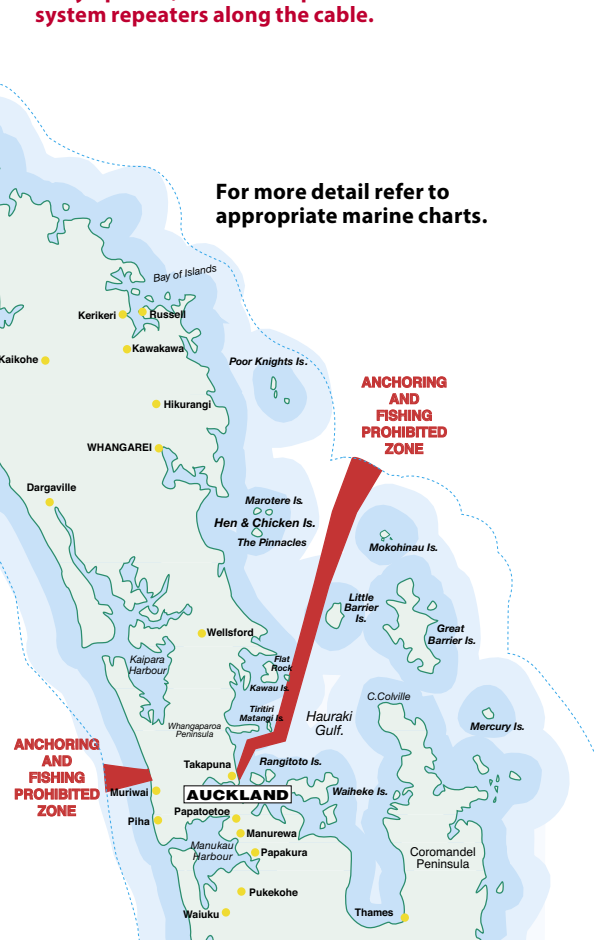
What happens outside the prohibited areas?

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**



Working together for sustainable Pacific Fisheries

By Dan Bolger, Deputy Director General, Fisheries New Zealand

New Zealand has one of the largest Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) in the world, in the largest ocean in the world, and has good systems in place to ensure it remains sustainable for everyone. As a fishing nation and member of the Pacific community we have an important role in ensuring fisheries beyond our borders are managed sustainably, particularly in the Pacific.

Ensuring sustainable fisheries beyond our EEZ benefits everyone, which is why we work closely with Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and Pacific nations.

Our cooperation and engagement within RFMOs means we can help ensure sustainable Pacific fisheries and support Pacific countries to build their fisheries management and compliance capabilities. It also ensures we can advocate for New Zealand's allocation of highly migratory fish in the high seas.

Highly migratory fish species like tuna don't have borders – they move beyond our EEZ and are fished by countries throughout the Pacific. It is essential that we work together with other countries to manage the long-term sustainability of these fish stocks.

One of the RFMOs we engage with regularly is the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). The WCPFC manages highly migratory species in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean except for southern bluefin which is managed by a separate RFMO. Around 52 percent of the world's tuna is caught in this area, and in 2023 this resulted in US\$6.1 billion in sales.

To manage these stocks, the WCPFC sets limits for several key stocks including for New Zealand. New Zealand's participation in the WCPFC, led by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), is directly relevant to the management of fisheries within New Zealand waters.

This year, it is expected that the WCPFC will decide on a Management Procedure for South Pacific albacore which may lead to decisions on a fishing limit within New Zealand waters. Adoption of Management Procedures is key component of a harvest strategy and progress on this is essential to retain Marine Stewardship Council certification of fisheries.

The WCPFC will also consider revised catch limits for Pacific bluefin tuna, including for New Zealand, given the progress in the rebuilding of this stock.

Fisheries provide one of the biggest sources of income for

many Pacific nations, and are critical for their domestic food security. Around 80 percent of the region's tuna is caught within Pacific Islands' EEZs, and Pacific countries rely heavily on fishery resources for subsistence and livelihoods.

We work closely with our Pacific neighbours to help strengthen their fisheries management and enforcement capabilities through the Te Pātuitanga Ahumoana a Kiwa (Te Pātui) programme, delivered by Fisheries New Zealand. This work supports sustainable Pacific fisheries and helps tackle Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the region.

IUU fishing undermines sustainability, hurts local fishers, takes food from communities and impacts the economic stability of Pacific nations. It has no place here.

Global processes affect Pacific fisheries and their management. New Zealand has therefore played an active role in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Committee on Fisheries (COFI) for many years.

This recently culminated in MPI's International Fisheries Manager, James Brown being elected Chair of the 37th session of COFI in July. This is a rare opportunity, and it's the first time a representative from New Zealand has been elected for the role. As a personal appointment, it's a credit to James' contribution to fisheries management in the South Pacific region and at the global level. We're very proud to have James representing us on the fisheries world stage.



Dan Bolger

Having an ear to the ground in New Zealand's media world

FirstMate's Navigators are in almost every port in New Zealand, and they are connected and available to every fisher and marine farmer as a listening ear when times are tough.

One of the things they've been hearing is that fishers and marine farmers are feeling misunderstood by their community and the New Zealand public. That they are feeling vilified for being fishers and marine farmers and that the media write unfairly and negatively about the seafood sector.

Understandably, this causes hurt, anger and frustration. It feels like we're not respected or understood, and that people don't care. We've even heard reports that children are being bullied in school for having a family who fish.

These feelings are real, and they are painful. It's having an impact on our mental health and wellbeing. It can bring us down and can cloud the way we look at the world.

At FirstMate, we know and see the impact it has. We recognise that it's a very real situation and one that we want to be able to help. If you're feeling this way about how you perceive the world sees you, we have some insights that may help you feel a little better about things.

Reading articles online and in papers and magazines is a funny thing. People who work in the sector, are more likely to seek out media and stories written about the seafood industry. As well, because they are subject matter experts, they're more likely to read an article and see things they don't think are completely accurate or representative and perceive it as more negative.

In general, across New Zealand trust in the media is low. In 2023, the Acumen Edelman Trust Barometer, which measures trust in media across the world, measured New Zealand at 41 compared to a global score of 50, which is firmly in the mistrust category.

So, if our trust in what we read is low then it goes without saying that we're more likely to mistrust what we read – but believe that others reading it will believe it.

Once we hear from a few trusted people, such as friends, colleagues and family, that they also perceive something as negative, it reinforces what we think. This is called a cognitive bias, when we create our own subjective reality from our perception of the article.

It's further compounded by the bias of social media algorithms. Facebook, for example, knows a lot about you; it knows what you read, what you click on, and what you view. It creates targeted information to send to you that it thinks you'll

be interested in. If you read a lot about the fishing industry, you'll be sent information and media that align with that – reinforcing your view and bias.

Here's the kicker. When there is independent rating, known as sentiment reporting, on media articles about the seafood sector, most stories are rated as neutral or positive. Certainly, there may be the odd negative article – and we should absolutely push back on misinformation and sensationalism. But we should also remember that most people not connected to the seafood sector won't perceive an article the same way a subject matter expert will. So, the more the industry can share stories in language that's accessible and friendly to the general public, the better.

Knowing this doesn't necessarily help though, especially when we read an article and perceive it as negative and we feel that onslaught of frustration, anger and sadness. When this happens, it can help to do a perception check and ask ourselves, 'is what I'm reading actually negative?' 'What would most New Zealanders take away from this article?' 'Is there balanced coverage in the story?' Often by stepping back and doing this perception check, we may review the article as more neutral than we originally thought.

And if the article is inaccurate, wrong, biased or unfair, then you can contact the editor of that publication and discuss. Most media want to make sure what they write is accurate and will be happy to engage and change things if they're not right.

And ultimately, if you want to see more positive stories about the seafood sector, then share your stories with your community and local media – help people who don't know the industry see what's good about it, and why they should be proud to have a vibrant fishing sector.



Smoked fish salad with lemon and herbs



This healthy dish from The Smokehouse Mapua is packed with colour, flavour and versatility. Perfect for a sunny spring or summer day.

Ingredients

2 cups silverbeet, thinly sliced
1 can white beans, drained and rinsed (try borlotti, cannellini or haricot beans)
1 pear, thinly sliced
2 radishes, thinly sliced
1 large smoked fish fillet, such as warehou
1 bunch dill
1 bunch fresh mint
1 bunch flat leaf (Italian) parsley
Lemon wedges

Dressing

¼ cup natural yoghurt
Juice of half a lemon
Pinch of salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Method

1. For the dressing, mix the lemon juice, salt and pepper into the natural yoghurt.
2. Arrange the salad onto individual serving plates – starting with the silverbeet, then scatter over the beans, pear and radish.
3. Flake pieces of smoked fish over the top, then drizzle with the dressing.
4. Roughly chop the herbs, scatter over and serve with wedges of lemon.

By sea and by land



Alister McDonald

A Golden Bay pioneer of the cockle fishery, Alister McDonald, who passed away on 1 September, lived his clan's motto to the end.

Clan McDonald's motto, "per mare per terras – by sea and by land," sums up Alister "Cockle" McDonald's life.

Cockle grew up on a sheep farm in Woodlands, Southland.

In his mid-30s he moved north to the top of the South Island and established a "wild caught" fishery on Pakawau Beach, Golden Bay.

Over the years he ventured into other fisheries, including New Zealand geoducks, whelks, mussels, eels, rock lobster and, at one time, owned a fishing boat operating in Australian waters.

Cockles became his mainstay.

He was an inventive, innovative and clever man in the classic Kiwi ingenuity style.

Working closely with local industries, he developed and perfected his own harvesting gear and processing

factory equipment, starting with the McDonald/Westhaven mechanical harvesters driven by "cockle jockeys".

Initially, Westhaven exported the cockles as New Zealand Littleneck clams live to United States supermarkets, diversifying in the 1990s to offer frozen vacuum packs, winning a New Zealand Trade Development Board Export commendation in 1998. In 2015, the company launched a new thermally treated whole IQF shell product.

As well as the US, the company has exported individual quick freezing to a variety of markets including the United Kingdom, Australia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines and Japan.

Family was at the forefront of all he did and has been involved in his business from its beginnings.

He also employed hundreds of locals over the years in an area where employment opportunities are scarce.

Cockle enjoyed mentoring his workers. His partner, Jenny Cooper, says he was immensely proud of them when they left his employment and excelled in other roles.

"He was also very proud of being one of a shrinking number of small inshore independent fishing companies," she says.

Cockle was an astute and clever businessman, a loved family man and respected member of the seafood industry and Golden Bay community.



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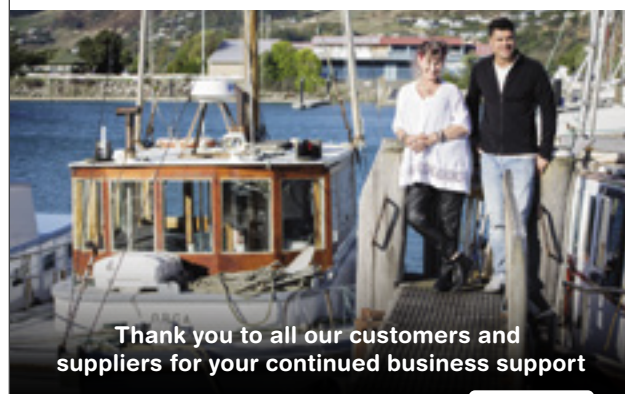


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