

# SEEAFED

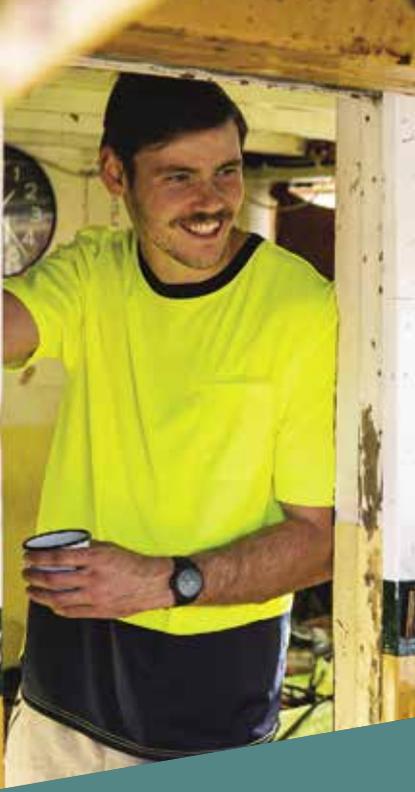
NEW ZEALAND

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The settlement that drove  
the major Māori stake in the  
fishing industry

Cameras - where is the vision?





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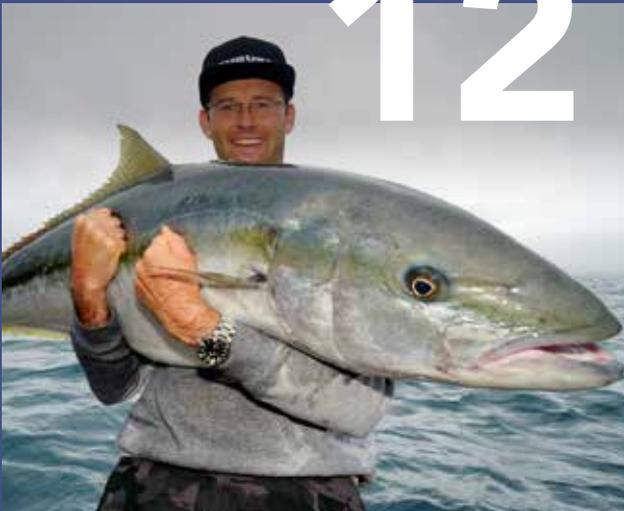
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## From the Chief Executive

The first major review of the Fisheries Act in 20 years is before Parliament and all political parties have fired their opening salvos.

The Fisheries Amendment Bill covers a raft of changes, including landings and returns, offences and penalties, and onboard cameras.

Labour, National, and the Greens support the Bill, with ACT the only party opposing.

Oceans and Fisheries Minister David Parker referred the Bill to the Primary Production Select Committee to be reported back to the House by 12 September.

In First Reading speeches, the process was criticised for the short submission and report-back timeframe, which seeks to have the Bill passed by the beginning of the fishing year.

National's Todd Muller said the party's support was caveated, criticising both the cost of cameras and the failure to address privacy issues. He also noted the need for pragmatism and to ensure that any changes would work on the water.

Green Party fisheries spokesperson Eugenie Sage was concerned Labour was not intent on moving to an ecosystem-based fisheries management system and said the camera roll out was too slow.

ACT's Nicole McKee considered the Bill was an unnecessary and costly solution that appeared to be looking for a problem. Further, she said that what was proposed had not been subject to proper cost-benefit analysis.

Labour's Kieran McNulty simply said "This is a great Bill. It makes sense. Looking forward to getting to Select Committee. I don't see any need to delay it any further. I therefore commend the Bill to the House."

Which prompted National's David Bennett to retort that Labour members who were supposed to be supporting New Zealand's primary industries were trying to rush through legislation without full discussion.

It is unlikely that the main tenets of this Bill will change substantially during the Select Committee process, however the Primary Production Select Committee is the best forum for its brief scrutiny.

All of this has a very real impact on real people – our fishers who have been dealt blow-by-regulatory-blow for years now.

In each issue of the *Seafood New Zealand* magazine, we aim to tell the stories of our people and how tough these changes are. This edition delves into the onboard camera issue in the Fisheries Amendment Bill.

We also have a feature on Port Lyttelton, part of a series we will be running on fishing ports around the country, where we talk to the fishers, profile their businesses, and listen to their concerns.

**Dr Jeremy Helson**  
**Chief Executive**

# Wake up to fatigue

WHAT WAS THAT THING I WAS MEANT TO BE DOING?

GETTING SOME SLEEP, SON.

## Are you experiencing any of these signs?

### MOODY

Feeling grumpy  
Not saying much  
Getting frustrated  
Not caring

### DISTRACTED

Stuck on one part of a problem  
Can't stay focused  
Can't make sense of a situation  
Can't finish tasks  
Forgetting things

### UNPRODUCTIVE

Cutting corners to get things done  
Can't properly judge distance, time or speed  
Doing things in the wrong order  
Can't think logically  
Making mistakes

### TIRED

Yawning a lot  
Nodding off  
Slurring speech  
Got sore eyes or blurry vision  
Feeling clumsy or slow

## Do these risks ring alarm bells?

- Been awake for more than 16 hours
- Short of sleep
- Slept badly
- Are working alone in the early morning hours
- Feel exhausted

Be aware that it's possible to both look and feel alert when being at risk of falling asleep. If **two or more of these risk factors ring true**, you're fatigued and at risk of falling asleep.

## ACT NOW!

- Tell another crew member
- Get some sleep (ideally around 2 hours – including at least 15 minutes to wake up)
- Drink some water
- Eat a light meal or snack
- Do a job with minimum risk

SAFETY =  + HSWA

For tips on safe fishing go to [www.maritimenz.govt.nz/fatigue](http://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/fatigue)

## Safe crews fish more

Nō te rere moana Aotearoa  
 **MARITIME**  
NEWZEALAND

# The Fair Pay Agreements Bill

The Fair Pay Agreements Bill, introduced into Parliament on 29 March 2022, aims to bring together employers and unions within a sector to bargain for minimum terms and conditions for all employees in that industry or occupation.

Unions initiate the Fair Pay Agreement (FPA) process after either meeting a representation threshold of support from 10 percent or 1,000 workers in coverage, or a public interest test. Once the process has been initiated, employees will be represented by unions, and employers will choose representatives who meet specified requirements.

During the process, both sides will be supported with a limited amount of funds—assuming that there is not more than four FPAs a year, training, and a government provided bargaining support person. Employees will directly receive updates from the union and must be allowed to attend two 2-hour paid meetings during the bargaining process. There is a dispute mediation system in place as well.

FPAs must include certain topics like base wage rates,



ordinary hours, overtime, and penalty rates. Some other topics must be discussed but don't have to be agreed, like redundancy, leave, and health and safety. Other topics will be included if both parties agree.

The Bill is currently going through the parliamentary process. The Select Committee accepted submissions until Thursday 19 May 2022.

The FPA aims to be implemented by the end of this year.

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# Learning the ropes

**Justin Hough is from a long line of fishermen but his decision to live the dream of potting in the Marlborough Sounds has not been without its challenges. After months attempting to get operational, Hough is now catching fish bound for the Sydney Fish Market but, as Lesley Hamilton reports, it's been a journey of learning and discovery.**

The mist is still floating above the water as *Lady HR* steams into Havelock marina at the top of the South Island.

It has been a three-hour, pre-dawn journey for Justin and Rebecca (Bec) Hough who have brought Scooter the chihuahua and Kina the Sydney silky-foxy cross for the ride. Hough says it is a rare treat for the dogs as Kina is too fond of swimming.

"He jumps off for seabirds, for other boats, for dolphins." He shakes his head.

"The number of times we have realised he is not on board, and we have had to go back and find him."

The Hough's home, Pokokini, is deep in Pelorus Sound, at Southeast Bay.

"The house dates back to the 1860s and we are told it is the second oldest homestead in the Sounds," says Justin.

"It was originally a farm and more recently was bought by people wanting to start a commune. That fell over and we managed to buy it with the help of our parents. We spent a year in tents while we made it marginally habitable."

Hough was working at King Salmon at the time but took a year off to work on the house.

Camping out was not the end of the challenges faced by living so remotely. Because his two daughters didn't want to go to boarding school, he ferried them from Southeast Bay to Havelock every morning so they could then bus to Marlborough Girls' College.

"We did that for four years. Every day, through rain, fog, and wind. We only had a little boat because we were broke, and it used to overheat," says Hough.

It was a journey that started at dawn and surprisingly didn't result in a lifetime hatred of boats for the younger Houghs. Both young women now work in the marine industry.

Justin Hough is a Chatham Island boy; and still deeply attached to the people and place, but he has no regrets about making his home at the top of the South Island, where he fishes the deep, clear waters for cod and gurnard and snapper – and flounder, the big fat yellow bellies, when he can get them – which all go into the Sydney Fish Market through Donna Wells at Nelson's Finestkind.

Hough's journey, from an idea to realisation, has not been smooth. His frustration at the tangled bureaucracy deemed necessary for getting operational is still bugging him.



*Lady HR* gliding into Havelock Marina.

## FEATURE



Justin Hough with Scooter and Kina.

"It was six months from the time I purchased the vessel until I was able to fish," he says of the hoops Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) requires in order to operate.

Hough admits paperwork is not his forte but, even so, the duplication of documentation and proof of ability is perplexing and that six months he battled the system was six months he couldn't fish.

Bec Hough grimaces in agreement and heads off to take the dogs for a walk – it is a story she has no desire to relive.

Hough is from a fishing family, with a long history of catching cod in pots.

"My father was a fisherman on the Chathams, a pāua diver mostly, but he codded. My grandfather was a coddler, and my great-grandfather coddled back on the island.

"I stopped going back to the Chathams because I get so homesick when I leave."

A personal tragedy took Hough back there one last time, and he returned knowing that life was too short not to pursue his own dreams.

Hough was helping his cousin Pita Thomas of Waitangi Seafoods look for a vessel for an aquaculture venture when he saw another friend's vessel appear on TradeMe.

A short time later, Hough owned not only *Lady HR* but the whole kit and caboodle.

"We got a truck, a second vessel, walk-in freezers and, most valuable of all, the connection with Donna [Wells] at Finestkind."

The couple now had a going concern and Hough resigned from King Salmon to pursue his own fishing business.

Hough rolls his eyes ruefully. "We thought we would be fishing in a month."

The optimism was misplaced.

"I had started the transition of my ticket to Skipper Restricted Limits (SRL) while I was still at King Salmon. My boss at King Salmon sent the email to MNZ (Maritime NZ) about my sea time five times before they accepted it.

"On the second to last time, they said my sea time did not add up and I didn't have enough hours. They had simply added it up wrong."

Then there was the process around the requirement to be a 'fit and proper person'.

"The fit and proper person form needs to go with everything you apply for. So, you are repeatedly filling out this form, which goes off to the New Zealand police. You fill out one for the SRL, one for the Marine Transport Operating certificate (MTO) for the vessel, and then I had to do one for the Four Winds, which is my small alloy runabout. Granted, if the applications come in quick succession they may refer back to the previous form, but it is a real bugbear of mine. I really am not planning on committing a crime between applications."

Hough is quick to point out that he was warned by MNZ that the fit and proper process was taking three months to complete by the police but, as it is required for all other applications, there are vessels sitting on the hard for months waiting for sign off on information that had been supplied multiple times.

"I don't have a criminal history, I haven't even had a speeding ticket, so you would think it could just be done online," he points out.

Hough is keen to praise most of the people he has dealt with at MNZ, saying even they realise some of the systems are overly complex.

Not all the delays were the responsibility of MNZ. Bad



Bec Hough and Kina, who is fond of a swim overboard.

luck and bad information had to be added into the mix.

Hough received an email saying the MTOP application, which was sent courier mail, was lost.

Turns out, the email was a scam, but that wasn't picked up by NZ Post initially and they launched a full-scale investigation.

"Unfortunately, when MNZ finally looked at my application they started, rightfully, to pull it to bits. I had done a twink job on the previous owner's MTOP which, in my defence, MNZ said would be okay, but turned out it was way out of date, so we had to start from scratch."

He says, in retrospect, doing the MTOP from the very beginning was the best thing he ever did.

"It was a marathon effort, but it was worth it."

Six months after purchasing *Lady HR*, Hough finally had the paperwork to go fishing.

He says the fishing is tough in the Sounds, but Bec gives some perspective.

"When you've been fishing in the Chathams, anywhere else will seem tough," she says.

Hough is currently potting for cod and doing a bit of lining.

"I am probably at about half where I want to be on volume but as my local knowledge increases, so will the catch."

Hough says he really tries to look after the fish.

"One of the things Donna told me at the start was she was all about quality, not quantity. I used to hand-catch and iki my cod in the Chathams and got a massive premium, so I understood the importance of quality.

"Pots and hooks are the future. If I am only getting 50 percent of the volume I want to catch I will still be getting 75 percent of value from that because of the way I handle the fish."

A few weeks ago, his first load of pot-caught snapper



*Lady HR* has fished for 16 years, with three consecutive owners; Chris and Craig Aston, Adie and Maxine Aston and now Justin and Bec Hough.



Donna Wells with Hough's catch for Sydney Fish Market.

went to Sydney Fish Market.

"I've finally cracked it."

He is also tinkering with the design of his pots.

"It's hard to make small pots catch, but where I want to fish with the wee boat, the pots need to be small. So, I have a prototype on the go which is still catching cod, which is perfect, but I am being stymied in my new design because the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) are not keen on me changing the rigid mesh. I want it to be flexible on the base because currently it's too hard on the fish," he says.

Hough aims to catch between 150-300 kilograms of fish each time.

"People have trouble believing me, but I can cover the costs of the vessel with 150 kilograms as long as I look after the fish."

Today's catch is snapper, cod and red mullet, all pot caught but Hough wants to land other species.

"There is only so much cod ACE. If I can land other fish, particularly non-quota species like the red mullet I can increase my return."

Whilst Hough is happy with potting, he has chased a bit of butterfish, but *Lady HR* struggled towing the tender he inherited for the purpose.

"Every time I took that thing out, I had to cross what they call the 'mad mile', and it was a nightmare."

Hough bought a new tender and is also building new butterfish nets to reduce bycatch.

He says anything Finestkind don't take, he wants to sell off the back of the boat and has permission from Port Marlborough to do so.

"They were really supportive. There are rules around it

## FEATURE

of course but every time I pull in here to land, someone will approach me wanting to buy fish.

"Our export fish is cranking. Donna is doing a great job and that will always be our mainstay, but if I can avoid putting fish back in the sea that won't sell in Sydney and sell it to a local, it's a win-win."

Hough also intends to up his flounder game so he can still fish when the weather is bad further out.

"The first time I targeted them, I went out there with 1000 metres of new flounder net, didn't realise it was stingray season, and came back with only 600 metres intact. They just destroyed it."

Hough, who admits he has a soft spot for stingrays, did his best to release the stingrays from the net unharmed.

"So, there am I cutting brand new nets to save them and the last stingray on the boat that day put its barb through my hand."

There is a lesson in there somewhere.

Hough will truck his catch through to Nelson before dawn the next day, where it will be graded and packed before starting its journey to the Sydney Fish Market.

It takes a brave person to begin fishing in the current environment, but Hough is a determined man.

Determined to challenge the old ways and innovate his way to greater sustainability and ever better product.

### The Journey to Sydney

Donna Wells of FinestKind is at Aquafresh in Nelson before 6am the next day to meet Hough's catch.

The pot-caught snapper, cod, and red mullet is inspected, graded and packed under the Finestkind brand for export: next stop Christchurch airport and from there it is flown to Sydney.

The Sydney Fish Market will, pretty much, take all the fish Wells can send them but some species are just not viable because they don't fetch a good price.

"They love our snapper, flounder, blue cod, and groper but we don't bother sending shark or rig in," Wells says. "These are better received in Melbourne."

She says the volume of New Zealand fish exported into Australia is diminishing as the number of fishers continues to drop off.

"We've lost Nino [Basile], so there is a big gap in the market for ling, and there are a number of others," she says.

Export tonnages have plummeted in the past few years.

New Zealand is exporting only a quarter of the seafood it was in 2017/18, a stark demonstration of the state of the industry, with regulations, Covid, and costs chasing players out.

# SEA INTO THE FUTURE

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"Last year was the lowest volume in years but we started off quite strongly this April so it will be interesting to see if that continues. ACE is king and while some of our fishers own their own quota, others are at the mercy of the ACE market," says Wells, whose company sources quota for individual operators and companies, as well as selling seafood.

Wells says Covid hit her business early and hard.

"Everything was impacted. Our fishers were dealing with PPE, they couldn't get access to ice from the major companies because no one was allowed on site, and the fish supply just dried up. In April 2020 I hadn't exported for three months, and I was starting to wonder, was this it? And then on April 29 I got a phone call from a fisherman saying he had some snapper, and would I be able to export it for him? And that was it, we were off again."

Well, not quite. The commercial flights that took export fish in the past were not flying and some in the industry resorted to chartering planes to get the product out.

"The government had to move quickly to set up a whole new network to keep the exporters going."

Wells looks after her fishers with a passion. Her insistence on absolute quality in product also extends to the men and women catching it; it is all about quality, not quantity.

"I have nine vessels fishing to me and everyone who operates those vessels operates to a high calibre and only delivers me premium product."

The business of exporting a perishable product is fraught with potential disasters.

"Such as happened just recently when you get an email late at night saying you have an AOG (Aircraft on the Ground) in Auckland and it is not going tonight. So, instead of that fish arriving in Melbourne at 11.30 that night it's stuck on the tarmac. It eventually got out early the next morning, but we were very lucky it still met the temperature requirements. It was close."

Wells says stories of flight delays and cancellations are way too common at the moment.

"Leading into a long weekend in the past few months, there was a Thursday flight to Australia cancelled. It had 250 bloody poly bins of seafood on it. They lost 50 bins to cancelled orders because the buyers wanted the fish for the long weekend."

Wells says the risk at the moment is phenomenal.

"With every load of fish there is a better than 50 percent chance something will go wrong," she says.

But there is no finger pointing, just a will to work together to pull a rabbit out of the hat.

"The airlines and freight forwarders all have their own issues they are dealing with. Covid means they might not have the people to crew the flight."

Wells knows you have to be resilient when you work in an industry full of variables.



Justin Hough and Donna Wells.

"The weather, the fish, vessel breakdowns, Covid. Will our market hold up? Will our exchange rate hold up? All of those things come into it. Like that day they cancelled the flight and I thought, if this fish doesn't go today, which was a Tuesday, it won't go until Sunday. And, you know, I am pretty resilient, but I looked at the wall that day, I saw the writing on it, and I didn't like it. I felt very vulnerable."

Wells inspires great loyalty from her fishers and her reputation as a top-class operator is recognised internationally.

She was a finalist in the Sydney Fish Market 2022 Seafood Excellence Awards in the Primary Producer interstate and overseas category, but it's not the first time.

"I have been a finalist seven or eight times and never won," she says, "but I believe it shows a consistency of standard because just surviving in the current times is a win. To be recognised, particularly in the challenging environment we are currently working in, is an honour and it makes some of the hard yards seem worth it."

Wells' last word is to the government.

"I have great confidence in our industry. But what makes me angry is the lack of support for our industry from the government. On one hand we are an essential industry and on the other hand they are throwing us under the bus and closing areas. When that announcement about area 8 came out during lockdown, I just couldn't believe it. It had such a profound effect on our fishers I did a recording. It is still on my phone, and it is very emotional."

"I look at Australia and their model – their government gave them \$3 million to promote their seafood during Covid, for goodness' sake. Here, they're closing us down."

We watch Hough's catch as it is prepared for transit to Sydney and give silent thanks to the fishers who remain in the industry.

# Sealord skipper soars after seabird award



**Sealord skipper Jesse Crasborn was surprised but honoured to hear that he and his crew were to receive the Innovation Champions Award at the most recent Seabird Smart Awards. Fiona Terry finds out why the accolade means so much to the man who's passionate about fishing and sustainability, and why, when it comes to great workspaces - both on the bridge and within Sealord - he sure does love his.**

News of the award follows Crasborn's voluntary involvement in a group aiming to find ways to protect New Zealand seabirds, as well as the crew's willingness to trial solutions.

"It's nice to be recognised for the work that gets put in behind the scenes," says the 39-year-old, who captains *Rehua*, a 66m-long factory vessel.

Passionate about sustainability and protecting the environment and oceans for future generations, Crasborn became involved as part of the Seabird Net Capture Reduction programme run by the Deepwater Group. He was invited to join the first gathering three years ago and has continued to attend the meetings and workshops in his own time - a process he intends to carry on.



Jesse Crasborn with his award (credit: Tim Cuff).

He's quick to highlight that the award pays tribute to the whole crew, with everyone fully engaged in the process of trialling solutions, which have included water cannon, offal management, coloured streamers, and rigid panels on the trawl.

"It's definitely more work for the crew when you're trialling these," says Crasborn. "Especially when you're trying to fish and on a schedule, it does take a bit of effort to set things up, but everyone wants to be involved in helping to make a change."

He notes that since he joined the industry in 2001, he's seen a positive shift with regards to the environment and wildlife, and some years ago was also involved in trialling seal mitigation measures.

He's proud to be part of a company that is open to being part of these processes and which isn't afraid to invest well in sustainability – reinforced, adds Crasborn, by its recent proposal for greater seamount protection.

"Right down to supporting stock management, the company makes financial losses to ensure its practices are sustainable, rather than putting financial gain first," he says.

"Alongside that are other programmes to try to limit environmental impact, like swapping plastic wrapping for canned products to cardboard."

Other initiatives have included a carbon footprint challenge for staff, with prizes for those making the biggest reduction carbon emissions, as well site waste-management initiatives, investment in electric forklifts, and even a nifty cup recycling device fashioned from pipes, initiated and designed by Sealord CEO Doug Paulin to enable effective recycling of paper cups on the business' Nelson site.

"It feels great to be part of a company like this. Not only do I fish commercially but also recreationally, so it's a big part of my life outside of work too. For future generations it's important everyone has that culture towards looking after our oceans and environment."



Crasborn fishing with son Arlo.

It seems Crasborn's two-year-old son Arlo is developing a love for the ocean too, as he's already accompanied him a number of times, fishing on one of his two recreational boats.

"As soon as I could walk, I always had a fishing rod in my hands," says Crasborn. "I used to go with my dad and we'd fish from the shoreline, but when I was 10, because I was so mad keen on fishing and the ocean, he arranged to take me on a day trip on a little inshore commercial trawler out of Napier. I loved it, and I was just amazed seeing all the different species of fish. It was something I got a real buzz out of."

Crasborn had been planning to go to university to study marine biology, but a spontaneous collapsed lung in his last year at school scuppered his chances of finishing his course. Instead of returning the following year, he decided to attend the Westport Deep Sea Fishing School, after seeing a *Country Calendar* programme about the industry. He's grateful to have secured a Sealord sponsorship to have seen the process through.

From an early time, his aim was to become a skipper. "It's something I was really focused towards. I knew it was going to be a long process but starting with Sealord meant there was progression available with pathways."

His first trip was a week on *Taimania*, and to his dismay involved him being badly sea-sick for the entire voyage. Thankfully after that he found his sea legs and went out again, still as a cadet, on *Taimania* and also on *Rehua* for six weeks. After that he was offered a job on *Taimania* – as a trainee deckhand/factory assistant working with Skipper Pete Connolly. "It's funny that now, 20 years later, I'm the opposite skipper with Pete on *Rehua*. It's been good to have him through that period as a mentor



Crasborn's first trip on a fishing vessel.

and then working alongside him now."

After being on *Taimania* for seven years and progressing to Bosun/2nd Mate - he then moved to 2nd Mate on *Aukaha*. His journey on the bridge started when he joined *Thomas Harrison* in 2010 as 1st Mate with Roger Connolly (Pete's brother). After 18 months he moved to the twin-rigged *Rehua* as 1st Mate, back with Pete Connolly – where he's been since, taking the helm as skipper in 2017 for the opposite crew of 42 people.

"I did a few relieving trips as skipper and although the first one as full-time skipper was obviously a big moment, it was something I'd built up to for a long time.



Crasborn on his recreational boat, up close to *Rehua* (credit: Jesse Crasborn).

## FEATURE



Crasborn as a young boy.



Crasborn with a 40kg kingfish.

That's an important part of the progression - to learn the whole operational side of the vessel first, because you can't manage something if you don't understand how it operates. During that time there's also a chance to build good relationships with crew and other people, and when you're working at sea it's nice to know that people have got your back."

Crasborn never takes his position or responsibilities for granted. "You can't ever become complacent - there's a lot of responsibility, as well as running a business you need to take compliance and quality seriously, as well as the crew's welfare and safety. That's another thing that's stood out to me at Sealord - how hard the company works to put safety first - it's everywhere."

Outside of fishing Crasborn still makes looking after the environment a priority, including planting 10,000 native trees at the new section he and his wife Cindy have bought overlooking Tasman Bay, which was previously gorse-ridden, and where they're building

a new home. He's also a keen mountain biker and has even installed an exercise bike in the bridge to keep up his fitness at sea.

"Doing the right thing by the environment is something I'm always interested in - keeping a pristine environment for future generations and being active in looking after the resources we have. The culture at Sealord sits well with that philosophy. Even the little things the company is doing, including replacing polystyrene cups on the vessels and trying to reduce fuel consumption, means people see it as a genuine focus, and then everyone gets on board with it.

"Finding ways to achieve solutions isn't easy, but it's well worth the effort. For instance, bird mitigation takes a lot of time to work on little things and develop, but it's something that needs to be done.

"At the end of the day, myself and those I know in the industry have a real passion for the environment so to be making a difference is really important."

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# Lyttelton

**Our Port Focus series aims to zoom in on the many great port towns of Aotearoa, highlighting how the fishing industry uplifts the local community economically, socially, and culturally. This issue, Janan Jedrzejewski travels to Christchurch to find out more.**

Lyttelton, also known as Ōhinehou, sits on the northwestern end of Banks Peninsula and is close to Christchurch, around a 20-minute drive. It's the largest port in the South Island, with around 35 commercial fishing vessels landing into the port every year.

About 70 percent of the vessels that use the dry dock are from the commercial fishing sector and, as Andrew Stark of Stark Bros points out, it's a vital hub.

"It's the second biggest dry dock in the country. The one in Auckland doesn't do so much, doesn't really do very many fishing vessels. It does basically the naval vessels and then the Japanese boat, *Tomi Maru*, which won't fit here... apart from that, pretty much everything else from industry dry docks here.

"Pre-Covid, there was quite a number of ships from

Argos [Froyanes] from UK-Norway. They won't come back until after the borders open and Covid sort of settles down a wee bit."

We're on the top floor of his office, boasting an enviable vista out onto the harbour. I step outside onto the veranda, into the slightly brisk, crisp sunny air to take a few photos. Despite its status as an essential hub, bustling with ships, everything feels still and peaceful.

Of course, a busy port means the freshest of fish. That same morning I'd swung by United Fisheries to catch their Thursday morning auction, which took place at the user-friendly time of 7 in the morning. During my time in Japan, it was common for eager tourists to rock up to Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market from 3am, so this came as a great relief.

We pulled up to the United Fisheries building on



All three Independent vessels docked in Lyttelton.

Parkhouse Road, an unexpectedly ornate structure reminiscent of classic Greek architecture fitted out with high ceilings, columns, and a triangular pediment adorned with a sculpture. It's an eye-catching addition to the industrial landscape, clearly standing out from the drab neighbours.

The boundary-breaking aesthetic makes a lot of sense when you dig a little deeper into the history of the family business – with founder Kypros Kotzikas once telling *Stuff* that he “wanted to make a statement with this place so people realise it is not a smelly business”.

“People look at the front and see it's more like a Temple of Aphrodite than a fish factory. And I think it works.”

Local businesses, such as Fresco Fisheries Upper Riccarton, have been coming to the United auction for years to get fresh fish for their restaurants.

United is one of the many multigenerational establishments in the area, with all four of Kotzikas's sons; Kyriakos, Emilios, Andre and Demetrios, running the company.

It's eldest Andre, Chief Executive, who presides over the auction, sounding almost indistinguishable from a professional at the craft. It's not as raucous as I, an industry newbie, had anticipated. With little fanfare the winner ploughs his bare hands into each of the five containers, full of ice and fish, assessing the thickness, firmness, and freshness in a matter of seconds before rejecting or accepting each in turn.

“‘Oi”, I hear a man's voice from behind me, “those fish will come back to life when they see your pink shoes.”

“That's what I was hoping for,” I tease back, “zombie fish.”

He laughs and introduces himself as Russel Hewinson, now 80, the former auctioneer of the same site Andre is now running. He has been with United over 40 years, used to dance rock and roll, and to this day has 14 pairs of dancing shoes in various vibrant colours – including pink.

Three weeks into the role, Hewinson explains, he was asked to be the resident auctioneer, with Kypros, the architect of the very tower in which we stood, jokingly telling him “well, if you can't do that, you haven't got a job”.

Hewinson still loves his work; he's always enjoyed van driving and meeting people. With him, comes decades of invaluable experience.

An auction winner drains the ice from his haul and comes over to weigh it. The sticker on the side is marked 20kg. The digital scales beam back the true weight – just over 19.5kg.

“See,” Hewinson turns to me and smiles, “I wasn't far off”.

Although the 2011 Christchurch earthquake was not kind to the town of Lyttelton (even more unfortunate



The United Fisheries auction.

was that the Historic Places Trust had bestowed it 'Category I Historic Area status' only a few years prior in 2009); it's still a worthy destination for tourists and industry stalwarts alike. It's hard to not feel at home when it becomes clear the wider community pulls together.

Industry players here view each other as allies and friends – not competition. At the auction, I spotted a lone elephant fish in one of the containers – which, at the time, struck me as rather odd. Later, Andre explained that United sells on behalf of some other fisheries in the area, because, well, why not? It's his attitude, along with his peers, that there's no need to create a competitive atmosphere.

This sentiment is echoed throughout my travels; Stark's outfit repairs ships, as does the nearby Lyttelton Engineering. While there are some differences (Stark builds ships, Lyttelton Engineering does boilers), the two firms are constantly collaborating.

“There's a lot of working together that goes on. We'll provide additional labour... and vice versa. So, usually, it's if there's a bigger project, sometimes we'll split the jobs up,” Stark says.

“Lyttelton is different from what we perceive the other ports around the ship repair locations to be, so there is a lot of genuine working together. And that bodes well, really.

## PORT FOCUS

"Part of that's driven by the fact that the facility is a multi-user facility. So, nobody can sort of hold one over the other, and it's important for the port because it means that we're all out there attracting ships to Lyttelton for the dry dock.

"The port has repair booths alongside the wharf, so when they come, they can go there first before they come to dry dock.

"Fishing vessels bring a lot to Lyttelton. They get repaired here, they fuel here, they send their containers of fish out from here."

Nick Jessop, 40, is the Marine Manager at Lyttelton Engineering, and his journey showcases how the industry offers career progression.

"This is the only job I've ever had," he says, sitting in the break room with a freshly poured cup of coffee. The afternoon light pouring in through the window behind him, the still harbour in view. He started as a 17-year-old fitter and turner on an apprenticeship programme (which are still running to this day, with 12 in-house at any given time). From there he became a charge hand supervisor and is now a major shareholder and one of six directors.

Lyttelton Engineering was founded 59 years ago and has a total of 87 staff. Having grown up in the industry, he understands – and relishes – his role, getting vessels fixed up and out to sea as quickly as possible.

"You can't catch fish against the wharf.



Russel Hewinson has been in the industry over 40 years.

"[I love] the short turnarounds. I'm up against it timewise.

[However], There's a whole lot of red tape coming along, which I don't like, but that's okay... health and safety stuff.

"We used to just get on and do the job. Now you've got to make sure that the lug has been engineered and the beam it's attached to is good. It's a whole lot of stuff [where] common sense is normally okay, but the way to get there now takes another three days... it's frustrating the way that people that don't know make the rules."

It's also a job where Jessop gets to travel; his work on the Interislander Cook Strait ferry takes him up to Wellington, and he's ventured much further afield.

"We used to have 12 Korean boats, we've only four now. We've got a good relationship with them, I've been to Korea five times, every couple of years, I go over there."

It's not just Stark Bros and Lyttelton Engineering who help each other out, as Jessop explains, Independent Fisheries Ltd (IFL) up the road are part of the close-knit network that help each other out.

"Mark Allison [Managing Director, IFL] does supply me some fire watchers. When we're doing hot work on a ship, anything flammable, combustible within a 10-metre radius, we have to supply a fire watcher, who sits there watching.

"The first time they had Covid, they laid their boats up and all the crew went home. We ended up using his cold store staff. They came here to fire watch, and [were working on] another boat, and it was quite cool.

"And then, his boys are in rugby teams, so there'll be a rugby team here on the weekend and then they're all doing the fire watch."

Allison doesn't only help out other industry folk, but IFL has many charity initiatives, with hundreds of thousands of dollars annually being donated to various non-profit community organisations. Like his neighbours, his business contributes to the local economy, directly employing around 100 full-time and casual employees in Christchurch and Lyttelton.

However fuzzy and feel-good my experience is, all is not well on the ground. As with the rest of the world, Aotearoa is struggling with the cost of fuel and closed borders – which means staffing shortages.

Tony Threadwell of Pegasus Fishing has some significant concerns about the industry in this current, challenging context.

"I can't see the price of fuel coming back... it might keep going. We'll be stopping fishing at that stage.

"The price of fish has to go up to accommodate it... [if] it'll cost you \$40 a kilo to produce fish and the public's only prepared to pay \$35 – have you got a fishing industry?"



The co-directors of Lyttelton Engineering (left to right); operations manager Mark Collins, Marine Manager Nick Jessop, Industrial Manager Brendon Beyers, and General Manager Richard York.

Allison echoes Threadwell’s worries.

“The cost of fuel alone has gone up in excess of US\$1,000 a tonne in 12 months and everything that we need to provision the boats is going up too,” Allison says.

“On top of that, wage costs have increased significantly as well.”

On the subject of labour, he adds that, “unfortunately, industry participants can’t find enough qualified crew for inshore and deepsea vessels, hence we are seeing vessels starting to tie up. Life at sea is not for everyone and it is a select group of people that have that skill.

“There is no quick fix. I strongly believe that change needs to start with the education system so that young New Zealanders clearly understand protection methods, and the sacrifices that industry, iwi and

government constantly take to protect our oceans and resources for the future of all New Zealand.

“We need sound decisions based on factual evidence that allow the industry to prosper so we can continue to provide more jobs for New Zealanders on land.

“Without the ability to bring in foreign crews economically to New Zealand, many vessels will cease to operate resulting in many New Zealanders’ jobs across various industries on land being lost, along with thousands of tonnes of iwi quota not being able to be caught.”

Allison explains foreign workers make up a large part of the crew – mostly Russian and Ukrainian – who he speaks highly of. They’re part of the fabric of the town, work hard, and put money back into the local economy when they head off to the local establishments for some well-earned down-time.

I visited the dock with Allison, where all three of his vessels were berthed. He has made the savvy move of ensuring that all their fleet of vessels’ specification are identical and operate accordingly. “Our vessels are the same type and class, which does have its benefits of some streamlined efficiencies. They generally operate throughout the year in the same fisheries at the same times. We are not forced to carry excessive inventory of spare parts and equipment on land due for the vessels, being all the same. It also helps that our standard operating procedures for crew and product specifications on board are more or less the same across our fleet.”

After seeing how much a primary industry such as fishing contributes to the local community – I step on the plane back to Wellington already looking forward to seeing more ports in the coming months.



Andrew Stark of Stark Bros.

# Cameras – where is the vision?

**With the inevitability of onboard cameras staring the industry in the face, the method chosen by the regulators to implement the roll-out is increasingly being questioned. Lesley Hamilton investigates the current proposal and talks to industry about how it falls short.**



Cameras will be rolled out to 300 inshore fishing vessels.

Discussions about putting cameras on fishing vessels have been going on for years but, unfortunately, little thought appears to have gone into the end game, despite cameras being a component of the Fisheries Amendment Bill currently going through the parliamentary process.

Despite the New Zealand fishing industry repeatedly stating its support for cameras, any commentary on the roll-out details is seen as an objection to cameras themselves.

Fisheries Inshore New Zealand chairman Laws Lawson says the opposite is true; cameras are an opportunity to enhance fishing operations, but Fisheries New Zealand appears to be oblivious of the untapped opportunities for fisheries management that cameras on vessels would offer.

He says approaching the camera rollout as stand-alone is a mistake.

“Fisheries management needs to be strategic. All the parts need to be pulled together – the law,



Pat Nyhon, owner-operator  
Cressy, Bluff.

the policies, and the cameras.”

Lawson says at the moment there is a total lack of vision and, at a cost of \$68 million, this will be an expensive mistake.

“Imagine having cameras that identify what fish species are returned to the sea and what species are landed. Imagine cameras being

able to harvest data electronically so we could do at-sea monitoring without having to bring all fish back to be counted.”

Under the current plan, that will not happen.

Seafood New Zealand chief executive Dr Jeremy Helson says the seafood industry has long supported the use of on-board cameras as a management tool and willingly participated or initiated its own trials.

“We don’t want to see this initiative fail, but equally, we want to see it done well. New Zealanders are being led to believe that just installing a camera and collecting screeds of footage will somehow be the answer to fisheries management. It won’t, and we can do much better. If better fisheries management is the aim, the current proposal is not a good use of \$68 million of public funds.”

Pat Nyhon has been fishing for 25 years and as he steams Cressy out of Bluff, he points out all the upgrades he has done to his vessel. That includes new electronics, better nets, and better gear. He has installed catch sensors and net monitors so he can tell when the cod end is starting to fill and bring it up with the fish in good condition.

He says the rollout of cameras, in its current form, will add little value.

“They’re not going to get the level of detail they think they will from the footage.”



Dr Jeremy Helson, chief  
executive Seafood New Zealand.

And what would a camera capture on Cressy? Nothing particularly useful, says Nyhon.

“You’d see the nets landing at the back of the boat, what comes out of the cod end, and the trawl warps [ropes].”

It’s highly unlikely you’d see any seabird bycatch, and dolphin bycatch is not an issue where Nyhon fishes.

“We see dolphins playing out the back, but they steer clear of the nets.”

What is certain however is that the cameras will capture crew going about their professional and personal business – a loss of privacy that he says is yet one more weight on loaded shoulders.

Nyhon would like to see fishers given more credit for the proactivity. He’s seen a big shift in attitudes over the years, with fishers more likely now to hold each other to account for sustainable fishing practices.

“If you see someone who should be using seabird catch mitigation, like a tori line, you’ll speak up about that.”

The government has now introduced a Bill to make changes to the current Fisheries Act and, as it stands, it does not take advantage of the opportunities that camera technology can provide.

“We would far prefer the government provide a strategy for the future of the industry where cameras could be an integral component. Putting cameras onboard to replicate the job that government observers currently perform is hardly visionary and we believe there is a better way.”

Ant Smith fishes for Talley’s out of Carey’s Bay in Port Chalmers on *Donna Marie* and shakes his head when we ask about cameras.

“I’m happy to come under scrutiny. We welcome fishery observers on our trips, even when it means

**“They’re not going to get the level of detail they think they will from the footage.”**

one of our crew has to stay home and miss work, so the observer has a bed. They gather high-quality, useful information and it’s got to be beneficial to the science.

“But cameras aren’t going to achieve much, on my boat at least. It’s intrusive monitoring and there won’t be much to see in the footage. It might be a way of confirming that what we are reporting about our catch and discards is true, and I’m happy with that. But the cost is going to come back on fishers, when most can’t afford it, and when we’ve not been told enough about how this is all going to work.”

Smith, who is president of the Port Chalmers Fishermen’s Cooperative Society, would like to see the policymakers and government leaders try to understand the real fishing environment.

“It’s the disconnect that bothers me most. If you look at the proposals around landing and discards and didn’t know any better, you’d think it was an easy



Ant Smith, owner operator of *Donna Marie*, Port Chalmers.

thing to bring everything we catch back to shore.

“I’d rather not be bringing spiky dogfish and undersized fish back home for landfill when we can return them to sea.”

So, what about other types of by-catch? Will cameras help towards greater protection for protected species?

“I’ve caught two or three fur seals over 30-

plus years and that’s not a nice experience at all. I’ve never caught a dolphin and don’t know any inshore fishers who have.”

Smith has caught a mine, however – netting a stray air force training bomb. Thinking it would be an interesting ornamental garden feature, he brought it back to shore and called the police. The response was more than he’d anticipated however – the port was closed for half a day while a bomb squad from Christchurch inspected Smith’s peculiar ‘bycatch’ and took it away to be defused.

The \$68 million to implement cameras on 300 inshore fishing vessels is the single largest investment in fisheries management in New Zealand’s history and Helson says it cannot be allowed to fail.

Craig Jones is a Coaster, operating *Cook Canyon* out of Greymouth on the rugged West Coast of New Zealand’s South Island.

**“It’s the skipper’s job to enter the data via satellite phonelines, and it beats doing it on paper like when I started out.”**

He’s also pleased to contribute to the data and science that informs the Quota Management System (QMS), via onboard electronic monitoring required for each trawl.

“It’s the skipper’s job to enter the data via satellite phonelines, and it beats doing it on paper like when I started out.”

Jones also appreciates the more detailed data collection by fisheries observers; the 150 tonne *Cook Canyon* can accommodate an observer comfortably enough although it’s harder in hoki season when they need all bunks for a bigger crew.

He is less keen on the idea of mandatory onboard cameras.

“They won’t get what they want from cameras and it’s going to be harder for fishers. The cameras will catch footage of the catch coming on board, how it’s handled, some offal management and legal discarding. But you could watch 10 years of footage and never see a dolphin on my vessel.”

A camera would capture some impressive seafaring, however. There’s only one way out to sea from Greymouth and that’s over the infamous Grey River Bar. Jones describes *Cook Canyon* as a ‘good bar boat’ but his skippers will delay departure by a day when the bar is too risky to cross.

“Bars are unpredictable, and you need to respect them and plan your crossing carefully.”

What is often overlooked in the public debate over cameras, is that industry has already implemented cameras in areas where protected species are at risk.

Ten years ago, industry implemented camera technology on vessels, and it knows what they can do and what they cannot. They are concerned that Fisheries New Zealand has not reached out to industry and take advantage of its hard-won experience in this field.

While the current Fisheries New Zealand proposal mentions the success of a camera trial on vessels fishing on the west coast of the North Island, industry has seen no details of the trial nor any evidence the cameras worked.

Helson says there needs to be way more ambition by Fisheries New Zealand.

“We need a plan that tells us how the industry can use cameras to benefit fisheries management and allow us to take a global lead in this space. We need a generation of cameras that have far greater resolution than those currently proposed, and we need artificial intelligence (AI) to identify species and species details. AI is a critical partner to cameras, but it is not being proposed.”

Industry’s submission to the proposal suggests staggering the roll-out of the first basic cameras, and an early commencement of a programme to develop AI.

“What we also need,” says Helson, “are processes that will detail what can be gained from the footage, because currently they will only deliver screeds of footage showing coarse measurements.

“What we really need, is a vision.”



Laws Lawson, chairman, Fisheries Inshore New Zealand.

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# The settlement that drove the fishing industry

**The historic Māori Fisheries Settlement recognised Māori fisheries rights embedded in the Treaty of Waitangi. Thirty years on, its architect, Ta Tipene O'Regan, sees it as a bittersweet legacy. Tim Pankhurst reports.**

# the major Māori stake in



Ta Tipene O'Regan's sight is failing at the age of 83 but the architect of the Māori Fisheries Settlement's mind is as sharp as ever.

It was his vision, political acumen, and dogged determination that led to the Treaty of Waitangi's promise to preserve Māori fisheries rights becoming reality. He's quick to observe, though, he had some top advisors on his team. "I couldn't have done it without them."

That historic agreement is about to record its 30th anniversary and in that time Iwi across Aotearoa have built up fisheries assets to the point they collectively own about 40 percent of all quota.

A conversation with the canny Kaumātua, recently honoured both as the 2022 Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Te Pou Whakarae o Aotearoa and admission to the Order of New Zealand, limited to 20 living New Zealanders, is a privilege and an education.

In nearly two hours it traverses politics, legal battles, entertaining insights and anecdotes, the metaphorical, the nuances of race relations, history, pronunciation, some score settling and, of course, fishing.

He likens himself to an elderly gannet he once observed while moored alone on a flat calm Marlborough Sounds anchorage. The old bird, likely

blinded by years of crashing into the sea to skewer bait fish, was being guided by two younger birds. They led it to a school of fish and then, having enjoyed his last feed they guided him in over the adjacent rocks, where the old bird dived to his death.

O'Regan laughs that he is not ready yet to make such a fatal dive, or to set off on an iceberg, but knows his remarkable life is drawing to a close.

His legacy is the recognition by the Crown that it had failed to live up to its Treaty obligations with regard to Māori fisheries and the subsequent substantial compensation and ongoing stake.

The introduction of the Quota Management System (QMS) in 1986 delivered a perpetual right to catch a certain amount of fish, based on catch history over the preceding three years.

This was a double whammy for Māori, many of whom were part-timers who had fished seasonally for cash, on a part-time basis, frequently paid under the table.

With no taxation or catch history, they were excluded from directly owning a slice of the fishery that had been guaranteed to them in the Treaty. This brought Māori fishing rights to the fore, particularly in the Far North.

The Fisheries Act 1983 and earlier statutes going back to 1877 had similar provisions that "nothing in the Act

shall affect any Māori fishing rights” but the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries advice was that this had no application to commercial fishing.

Sir Geoffrey Palmer QC told this writer “I can’t think of any decision or piece of advice ever given by lawyers in the New Zealand government that cost more grief and more money than that. They just didn’t think they had any obligations. Now that, as a matter of law, was quite wrong”.

An interim agreement was reached in 1989 for the allocation of 10 percent of all quota to Maori but that was only a starting point.

Four parties negotiated the subsequent Māori fisheries settlement – Muriwhenua, represented by former Labour minister Matiu Rata; Tainui; Ngāi Tahu and the New Zealand Māori Council representing Iwi generally. These were the parties that brought the litigation and they were generally described as the Māori Fisheries Negotiators (MFN).

But it was Ngāi Tahu that carried the can, both financially and intellectually.

The claim was bound up in acrimony and litigation and, besides, the Crown had already allocated quota, it did not have a parcel available to compensate Māori.

O’Regan took care of that. He approached then Fisheries Minister Doug Kidd at a reception and said “how would you like all this nasty litigation to go away?”

“Where do I sign?” Kidd responded.

“Buy us Sealord,” was the answer.

Sealord’s then owners, Carter Holt, had been bought by International Paper Corporation and the new owners had no interest in fisheries. O’Regan had spotted the shift and circumstances and the opportunity it presented.

That solution was subsequently agreed to and the asking price of \$150 million for a half share was provided by the Government. The problem was the settlement was parcelled out at \$50m a year for three years and



Doug Kidd, Tipene O’Regan, and Brian Rhoades.

O’Regan and his colleagues of the then Māori Fisheries Commission needed the full amount to clinch the deal in partnership with Brierley Investments.

New Zealand banks, despite their claims to serve the community that swelled their coffers, would not touch the deal. O’Regan was forced to look offshore and went to Hong Kong’s Shanghai Bank.

In a meeting with its distinguished head, Sir William Purvis, he was asked, if New Zealand banks would not lend the money, why should a Hong Kong one?

“This is something you should do for your grandchildren,” O’Regan replied. “You are on the hinge of history.”

Purvis leaned across the desk, offered his handshake and said “Mr O’Regan, you have an agreement”.

Half an hour after he walked into the bank, O’Regan emerged with a guarantee for \$100 million.

“And we paid it all back,” he says. “Every cent.”

Protracted wrangling and expensive litigation ensued over distribution of the catch to the country’s tribes, with the eventual settlement weighted 75/25 towards population rather than coastline in the deepwater sector.

This was depicted as Māori squabbling. “Māoris squabble, Pakeha debate,” is the way O’Regan sees it reported.

The agreement that was finally reached rankles with O’Regan and remains his major regret over the fisheries



Ta Tipene O’Regan being presented with his portrait by the artist Craig Primrose at the 2019 Seafood NZ conference in Queenstown.



Ta Tipene O'Regan and Hon Sir Doug Kidd address the Seafood New Zealand conference.

settlement he sees as “bittersweet”.

He says Shane Jones as chair of the Fisheries Commission, with the “connivance” of then Prime Minister Helen Clark, ensured Ngāpuhi in the Far North got an unfair allocation.

“The Waitangi Tribunal had found that fish in the waters offshore from your coast, as with nations, should belong to you. It’s your domain. It used to be three miles, then it became 12 miles and then it went to the EEZ (200 miles). On that basis, Ngai Tahu shouldn’t have any snapper and Ngāpuhi shouldn’t have any hoki.”

In reality, the northern tribe, the country’s largest, has more South Island deepwater quota than Ngāi Tahu, the Iwi based there. Ngāpuhi does not directly fish its quota but rather leases it.

After the QMS was in place and National was in power, O’Regan had a meeting with then Prime Minister Jim Bolger and Finance Minister Bill Birch where the intention to charge a resource rental on quota was raised.

O’Regan was challenging the proposal as chair of the Māori Fisheries Commission.

“When you have passed quota to Māori in terms of the Treaty of Waitangi and agreed on an allocation to the original owners, you can’t charge rentals for something that is ours,” he said. “It has always been ours and has never been yours.”

“But Prime Minister, you should feel perfectly at liberty to charge Pakeha, but you can’t charge Māori.

“Whereupon Bolger turned to his finance minister and said ‘forget it Bill’.”

## Lisa te Heuheu on the Settlement



**Chief Executive of Te Ohu Kaimoana Lisa te Heuheu offers her view of the Māori Fisheries Settlement and where it will be in another 30 years.**

It’s a significant milestone to celebrate 30 years of the Māori Fisheries Settlement. As the first Settlement, and only pan-iwi Settlement of its kind and importance, it provided our people a stake in fisheries and further enhanced our relationship with Tangaroa. It also saw the beginning of a new phase in Crown/ Māori relations.

Yes, the commercial interests were part of the Settlement, and that is often the focus, but the re-affirmation of customary rights is what speaks to our

A few weeks later O'Regan attended a fisheries conference at the Duke of Marlborough Hotel in Russell when a large man strode across the foyer and embraced him.

"Tipene, Tipene," he cried, "thank God for the Treaty."

It was Peter Talley, an industry leader along with Sanford head Eric Barratt, who had strongly opposed the Māori fisheries settlements.

The irony of those settlements effectively extinguishing the threat of resource rentals was not lost on either man.

"That was one of the richest moments of my life,"

O'Regan says. "I think it was pretty big for Peter too."

While the QMS has served Māori, the wider commercial sector and the country as a whole well, it is time for a more sophisticated model, O'Regan believes. He says distinctions between inshore and deepwater and different areas are artificial and do not take sufficient account of the interactions between species.

For instance, rig feed on paddle crabs, which feed on pipi. It is a triangular multiple dependency, yet species are treated in isolation.

And he cannot understand why blue mussels are treated as a pest by the aquaculture sector focused on farming the endemic greenshell mussels.

"Blue mussels are what most of the world eats," he says. "At Belgo in London [a now-defunct a chain of restaurants based in England's capital specialising in Belgian cuisine] they would go through half a tonne a night. You buy a pail, choose your sauce, crusty bread, and a jug of beer.

"In Germany and Belgium, you don't eat mussels without beer. We've got this obsession with green. And we no longer make canned mussel chowder. It was brilliant stuff."

As for Sealord, the enterprise at the heart of the settlement, O'Regan says it is quietly rebuilding.

The company, half-owned by Moana NZ with Iwi assets administered by Te Ohu Kaimoana, has the largest hoki quota, remains the biggest deepwater quota holder in Australia and veteran vessel Will Watch continues to fish on the High Seas in the Indian Ocean into Mauritius.

And Ngāi Tahu has markedly increased its fisheries assets in becoming the single biggest shareholder in Sanford, the country's biggest fishing company, with a 19.9 percent stake. Ngāi Tahu chief executive and former Seafood New Zealand chair Craig Ellison now sits on the Sanford board.

Ngāi Tahu has largely exited its extensive tourism holdings, hard hit by Covid, but has stayed in the black thanks to its fisheries assets, O'Regan says.

At the time of the Sealord deal, then Prime Minister Jim Bolger said in parliamentary debate there had not been a settlement like it anywhere in the world. That is thanks to the Māori negotiators led by Ta Tipene O'Regan in concert with Sir Graham Latimer, Denese Henare, Sir Bob Mahuta, and Matiu Rata – and the foresight and goodwill on the Pakeha side of Sir Geoffrey Palmer, Sir Douglas Graham, Sir Doug Kidd, and Jim Bolger.

O'Regan echoed that when speaking at the Seafood NZ conference in 2016.

"We are one of the only societies in the world where the indigenous population has maintained a significant component of their rights," he said. "That is almost unique in international terms as a political and economic achievement."

identity as Māori. It speaks to our responsibility and our reciprocal relationship with Tangaroa me ona tamariki - Te hā o Tangaroa kia ora ai tāua.

I think it's important to point out that contention has been part of the story of Māori Fisheries Settlement - and still is. Iwi hold different views on the Settlement itself and a spectrum of views in regard to their rights and interests in fisheries and the moana. For me, that speaks to the diversity and complexity of Iwi and the challenging role they have every day in serving their people. We are not homogenous in our thinking and it's important to recognise and provide for our own diversity in crafting our future.

The Settlement now provides for our people in many different ways. In addition to the quota, there's the evolution of pātaka kai, funding for freshwater projects and governance training programmes, and a much-needed voice in the protection of Iwi rights

which are consistently challenged and slowly eroded in the face of present-day issues.

It's an interesting time in Māori Fisheries, I think the challenges we face in the next 30 years will be huge. Dealing with the impacts of climate change, environmental degradation, and also the increasingly divergent approach of western frameworks versus tikanga based approaches to manage environment, social and economic issues.

For me, the next 30 years will see a focus on our people. What tools and support do our iwi, hapū and whānau need to ensure they're prepared for these challenges and to maintain their relationship to Tangaroa in the face of these challenges. Even more importantly, that they are able to continue to identify with their cultural identity with the moana and see themselves and their own decision making in regards to their future prosperity.

# The unique Bluff oyster fishery

Tim Pankhurst

The Bluff oyster harvest is New Zealand's oldest commercial fishery.

Generations of the same families have set out into Foveaux Strait every winter to dredge the delicacy from cold, stormy waters between the mainland and Rakiura/Stewart Island.

Harvesting began here as early as the 1860s, beset by huge currents, westerly gales, and massive swells.

Today, 10 vessels, half the number of 40 years ago, supply an increasing demand that cannot be fully met.

The total allowable commercial catch remains at 15 million oysters from March 1 when the season opens to its closure at the end of August. A formal decision on the harvest level will not be made until later in the season but the total is likely to be only half the allowable total at around 7.5 million.

It is a closely managed fragile fishery beset by disease, marked population fluctuations, wild weather and, latterly, Covid.

"Our biggest issue going forward is biosecurity," says industry veteran Graeme Wright who has managed the major processor, Barnes Oysters in Invercargill, for 26 years.

Oyster farms in Big Glory Bay on Rakiura and in the Marlborough Sounds were destroyed on Ministry for Primary Industries orders several years ago when the deadly parasite *Bonamia ostreae* emerged.

There were fears the parasite would also enter the wild Foveaux fishery and destroy its stocks.

That has not materialised and a more benign, although still harmful, strain of *Bonamia* – *exitiosus* – which has been a longtime presence in the wild fishery is currently at low levels.

The *exitiosus* strain is not harmful to humans but can be devastating to oysters and forced the fishery's closure for three years in the 1990s.

However, while this season's oysters are virtually disease free, they are disappointingly small, not the usual plump specimens that are so popular.

Wright is unsure why this is, but was upfront with buyers at the start of the season.

"We made it plain from day one, the oysters haven't been as good this year," he says.

"Normally, second grade oysters make up 10 to 20



Graeme Wright loves his oysters.

percent of the total. This year it is close to double that.

"An old boy in the shop said to me 'they're not so big'.

"I replied 'they still work alright'.

"Yeah, they do', he agreed."

Buyers are not deterred and Wright says "demand is crazy".

He is interrupted by a staff member asking if she can sell 10 dozen to a customer in the shop.

He considers for a moment, like a court official conferring a favour, and gives approval.

The company is not taking any private orders this year, prioritising its long-term loyal distributors around the country and the factory retail shop.

The risks of delivery delays with such a perishable product are also seen as being too high.

Covid has also caused disruptions, both with crewing and onshore processing.

The Barnes factory employs as many as 22 openers at peak times. A top opener will earn \$400 a day.



Bluff is famous for its oyster.

The catch has remained at around 7.5 million oysters for the past three years, despite a quota of double that.

“It is driven from the bottom up,” Wright says. “We take recommendations from the skippers back to the quota holders.”

The price at the Barnes premises, where oysters are opened on site, is \$28.50 per dozen for first grade, a \$1 increase on last year, reflecting increased wage, transport and supplies costs.

Second grade are \$34 for two dozen.



Elsewhere, they are considerably more expensive. Foodstuffs, owners of the New World and Pak'nSave supermarket brands, is selling first grade for \$42 a dozen.

The supermarket chain is increasingly investing in seafood and now owns 8 percent of the Bluff oyster fishery quota, which it leases.

Barnes remains the dominant player with about 70 percent of the fishery. Seven companies make up the co-operative, with Dunedin-based Skeggs having the largest shareholding.

Ngāi Tahu is the other significant operator with 20 percent of the quota.

This year has been tough, with some unusual features in addition to the Covid challenge, Wright says.

The sooty shearwaters/muttonbirds that normally blacken the sea in their hundreds of thousands were absent in February when they usually feed on krill. And there were no big sou'east and westerly blows, the wind more sou'east and east. The birds only began arriving in mid-April.

Wright is unsure whether such current and nutrient and weather changes signal more significant environmental shifts but on the plus side, oyster recruitment is at a level not seen in years.

“There is huge recruitment of juvenile oysters, numbers in the billions. Every oyster is smothered in baby oysters. You can have eight to 10, up to 12 years, where there is no recruitment at all.”

That bodes well for oyster lovers in future years.

# The Council meets



From left to right; Roger Rawlinson (RMD Marine Ltd), Andrew Lucas (Talley's Ltd), Dave Taylor (Aquaculture NZ), Di Finn (MPI), Chanel Gardner (Harbour Fish), Angela Cummings (Consultant), Peter Wales (Customs Brokers & Freight Forwarders Association), Cathy Webb (Seafood NZ), Nick Hopman (MPI), Marie McDonald (Sanford Ltd), Adam Rusk (Fiordland Lobster Co Ltd), Lisa Olsen (MPI), Piers Harrison (MPI), and Jim Sim (MPI). Absent is Denver McGregor (NZ King Salmon).

The Seafood Standards Council (SSC) meeting met last month, on 10 May. The SSC acts as a consultative forum between the New Zealand Seafood industry and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). The council meets up to four times per year, with this being the first hui for 2022 due to Covid.

The topics on the SSC radar include seafood safety,

biosecurity, animal welfare, training and competencies, and other technical matters relating standards, trade, and market access and verification.

Appointed members in attendance were Andrew Lucas, Angela Cummings, Chanel Gardiner, Dave Taylor, Marie McDonald, Adam Rusk, and Roger Rawlinson.

## Calling all seafood stars

Excellence and innovation in the seafood industry are again being rewarded with the Seafood Stars Awards.

"The awards are a great way to celebrate innovation and excellence within our industry and tell stories about our seafood, our people and our ongoing commitment to producing the best seafood in the world," says chief executive Jeremy Helson.

"We are seeking nominations now and urge you to select your star achievers and tell us why you think they are the best choice."

Seafood Stars Awards will run across all facets of the industry and will be presented to those who have made a significant contribution to the seafood industry:

**Future Development Innovation Award** - presented to the entity that has developed a new technology that does one of the following;

- Reduces waste by adding value to by-products or waste, or
- Reduces adverse impacts on the marine environment of fishing or farming seafood, or
- Reduces adverse impacts of fishing or farming seafood on protected species, or

- Increases the efficiency of production of seafood, or
- Makes a significant contribution to health or science

**Young Achiever Award** - presented to a person, 35 years of age or under, who has demonstrated that he or she has made a positive difference to the seafood industry and has the potential to continue to develop as an effective and respected seafood industry leader or role model.

**Longstanding Service Award** - presented to a person who has demonstrated that he or she has made a substantial positive difference to the seafood industry over many years, and who has been a highly effective and respected seafood industry leader.

Nominations close on June 30. Winners will be announced at the Seafood Conference in Nelson and in the Seafood magazine. Nomination forms can be downloaded at [www.seafood.nz/](http://www.seafood.nz/) events or requested from [Karen.olver@seafood.org.nz](mailto:Karen.olver@seafood.org.nz).



# "catch fish...not cables"

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

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

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

## These areas are:

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

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



**Spark  
New Zealand**



## Symbols Relating To Submarine Cables

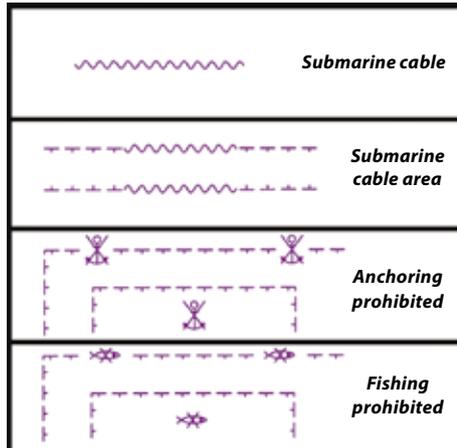


Figure 1.

## 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.

## 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.

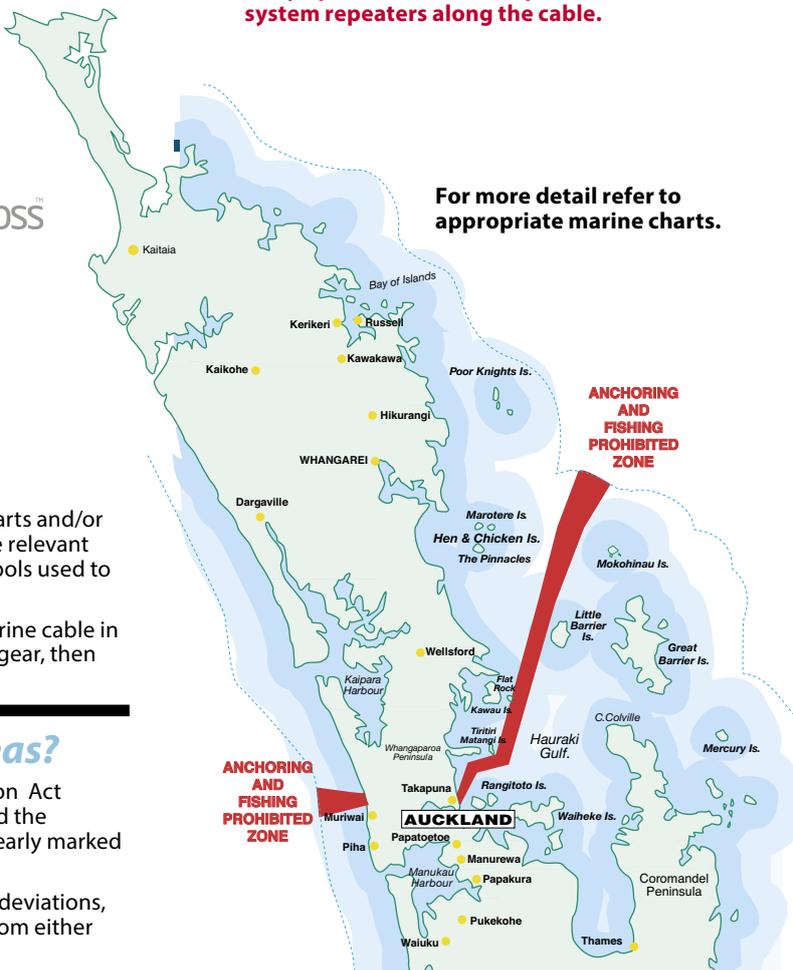
## What happens outside the prohibited areas?

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**



For more detail refer to appropriate marine charts.

# The truth about bottom trawling

In this edition of Mythbusters, we look at both inshore and deep-sea bottom trawling, because they differ.

## INSHORE FISHING

**Myth: There are hundreds of trawlers churning up the seabed off our coasts**

**Fact:** We actually have half the number of trawlers operating in our inshore waters compared to 2008. There are now 103 trawlers (under 32m) compared with more than 200 in 2008.

**Myth: They are churning up all of our coastal seabed. I can see them from my bach.**

**Fact:** Only 17 percent of our territorial (inshore) waters are trawled, and most of this takes place on loose sediment areas of gravel, sand and mud. The inshore trawl footprint is reducing. Last year the footprint was 83 percent of what it was in 2009, and where fishers trawl varies a little each year. In any year, nearly 99 percent of the area trawled will have been trawled before, with around 60 percent of that trawled every year. We don't trawl new ground because we neither have to, nor want to.

**Myth: They are depleting our coastal waters of fish by trawling it all up in big nets**

**Fact:** Inshore trawl vessels are small. The average size is 16m, but ranges from 10m to 30m, and the average bag they catch each tow is less than 500 kg.

**Myth: There is no need to trawl for our fish, you can catch it by other methods**

**Fact:** It is true that some of the species, like shark and flounder, could be caught by set netting, but the opportunities are more limited with 31,500 km<sup>2</sup> of our inshore waters now closed to set netting.

**What about catching fish on a line?**

**Fact:** Catching costs for longline fishing are some 2-3 times the cost of trawling—and that cost will be reflected in what you pay for your fish.

**Myth: You are operating in the past. Trawling is a fishing method that is outdated**

**Fact:** You'd be surprised at how trawling has changed over the years:

- the net mesh has become larger, often now 150 mm, to let small and juvenile fish escape the net.
- more nets are cut differently to ensure the mesh stays open to permit small fish and unwanted species to exit the net.
- there is a greater use of nylon fibre in warps rather than the more traditional wire – this allows seabirds to see the net and not be captured on the warp.
- modern inshore trawl rigs are lighter all round, lightening the impact on the seabed and lowering the fuel used to tow the nets.
- a number of fishers have moved to use Precision Harvesting Nets which allow the fish to swim inside the net until it is hauled on board the vessel.
- trawls are shorter to keep the fish in better condition for the consumer.

**Myth: Isn't trawling a big contributor to climate change because carbon is released when the seafloor is disturbed?**

**Fact:** Any carbon caught in the seabed is largely released the first time it's trawled. Once it's released, trawling in the same area doesn't release any new carbon—it all went in the early years of trawling. The seabed can only accumulate marginal new carbon between trawls. It's one more myth that is misleading.

## DEEPWATER FISHING

**Myth: Huge boats are vacuuming up everything in their path**

**Fact:** Well, we have way fewer trawlers these days. In fact, there are 47 percent fewer trawlers larger than 28 metres than there were in 2005. Interestingly though, we are harvesting the same volume of fish (around 350,000 tonnes) and that is because we have scientifically improved our fishing methods and, at the same time, reduced our environmental impact.

**The vessel numbers may be down, but they still Hoover up the seafloor**

**Fact:** The area fished annually by deepwater trawlers has been reduced by 46 percent since the peak in 2002. Each year, deepwater trawlers contact only 1.1 percent

# OCEAN CONSERVATION

## Deepwater trawling - the facts



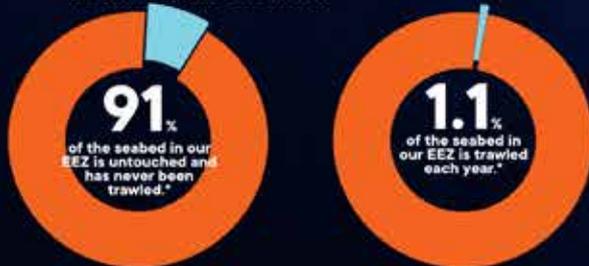
91% of the seabed within New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) has never been bottom trawled.

1.1% of our EEZ is contacted by bottom trawls each year, most occurring over sand and mud on fishing grounds that have been trawled year after year.

We are using fewer trawl tows to harvest the same sustainable catch.

31% of our EEZ is closed to bottom trawling by law, covering:

- 1.2 million square kilometres of seabed (an area 4.5 times the size of New Zealand)
- 71 seamounts (features higher than 1,000 meters)
- 93 smaller hills and knolls



Of the 142 seamounts within our EEZ, 127 have never been trawled and 71 are closed to bottom trawling (NIWA, MPI 2021).

NIWA records show 20% of seamounts are known to support coral. Corals are widespread throughout our EEZ, only 9% of which has ever been contacted by bottom trawl.\*



To ensure our fisheries management remains world class, New Zealand's main deepwater fisheries are annually audited against the Marine Stewardship Council's science-based ecosystem standards for sustainable fisheries. These fisheries are independently ranked amongst the top 5% of the best managed in the world.

**127**  
 (89%) of the 142 seamounts in our EEZ are either closed to trawling or have never been trawled.\*

**15**  
 (11%) of the 142 seamounts in our EEZ have been trawled once or more since 1989.\*

The New Zealand seafood industry is full of passionate, inventive and resourceful people, who are natural problem solvers with an inherent conservation focus. Conservation to us means wise use that keeps our marine resources secure for future generations. We back ourselves, supported by New Zealanders, to maintain healthy marine ecosystems while continuing to deliver sustainable and healthy seafood to our customers, locally and internationally.



Committed to  
**Healthy Oceans**  
**Sustainable Fisheries**

\*Please scan the QR code for references and to read our 2021 report **Towards a Deeper Understanding**



## MYTHBUSTERS

of the seabed in our large EEZ and, since records began, only 8 percent of the seabed in the EEZ has ever been touched by trawling.

### **How is the industry reducing its environmental impact?**

**Fact:** Compared to 2005, the number of albatrosses captured is down 74 percent, fur seals are down 90 percent, sea lion captures are down 80 percent, and common dolphins are down 99 percent. That means we have gone from the capture of 1186 albatrosses to 307 birds. In 2005, we captured more than 1000 fur seals and that number is now down to around 100 and decreasing. Sea lion captures are down from 45 to nine on an annual basis and common dolphin captures have reduced from 85 to close to zero.

### **That's still too many**

**Fact:** We agree and expect those numbers to decrease as we continue to find better ways to mitigate our encounters with seabirds and marine mammals.

### **Myth: Weren't you lot responsible for wiping out orange roughy?**

**Fact:** In the 1980s, when we first started fishing orange roughy, the management was not as responsive to the needs of the fishery as it is now.

No one back then knew how productive orange roughy were, how long they lived for, nor did they have any clue about how many there were. However, now we know a lot more about our orange roughy fisheries and our management of them is robust. In 1986 with the introduction of the Quota Management System (QMS), managers relied on best available science and technical information for the management of our fish stocks. This information included research into the distribution, abundance and productivity of our orange roughy fisheries and their maximum sustainable yields. The QMS provides for only a small number of fish in each stock to be caught to ensure there are enough left in the population to keep the numbers at a sustainable level.

The really good news is that the abundance of our orange roughy stocks has improved markedly, with three of our orange roughy fisheries certified sustainable against the Marine Stewardship Council's fisheries standard—putting these fisheries in the top 5 percent of the best managed fisheries in the world.

### **Myth: No one can see what really happens at sea and you and you pretty much can do what you like**

**Fact:** Every vessel is under constant monitoring and must electronically report every fish it catches, every fish that is returned to the sea, and every interaction

with a seabird or other protected species. Furthermore, all deepwater vessels have government observers on board, with coverage averaging a little over 30 percent overall, however in some fisheries, observers can be aboard up to 85 percent of all fishing vessels.

### **Myth: Bottom trawling is totally indiscriminate, hauling up everything**

**Fact:** In New Zealand fishing is subject to the QMS. For every fish that is taken, the fisher has to have quota for it—if they do not, then they must pay a government-imposed deemed value until they can procure some quota.

Fishing is very selective, with fishers only targeting what they have quota for and want to catch, and no more. Fishers are not interested in catching unmarketable species, or other bycatch, and do all they can to improve their selectivity. To this end, technological innovation plays a big part in making catches more selective. Innovations such as the Acoustic Optical System (AOS) provides skippers with acoustic data and video images of target stocks which assists in their management.

### **But sometimes you catch protected corals?**

**Fact:** Yes, sometimes that is inevitable. While we fish in the locations where the fish are, sometimes fishing gear can incidentally encounter corals. Just under 5 percent of all deepwater tows encounter corals. Catches of coral vary, but on average coral catches per tow are less than 1 kg, and much of that is usually dead coral rubble.

Corals are protected in New Zealand, and as such all coral captures are reported to the Ministry for Primary Industries.

### **What about trawling seamounts?**

**Fact:** This edition of the magazine features an article about seamounts by Deepwater Group (DWG). DWG represents the owners of quota in New Zealand's major deepwater commercial fisheries, including those for hake, hoki, jack mackerel, ling, orange roughy, oreos, scampi, southern blue whiting, and squid. Shareholders of DWG collectively own around 91 percent of the quota for deepwater fisheries in New Zealand.

There are 142 seamounts in our EEZ, with 127 (89 percent) of those either closed to trawling or have never been trawled. We understand there may be confusion about this, as environmental groups claim there are over 800 seamounts in the New Zealand EEZ. These groups are counting every underwater feature that stands 100 metres, whereas the Standardised International definition of a seamount is at or above 1000 metres, with features of 100 metres defined as hills and features over 500 metres defined as knolls.

# The science keeping sharks safe in New Zealand waters

Simon Lawrence, MPI Director Science and Information.

To many people, sharks are mysterious and frightening creatures. But sharks play a crucial part, as apex predators, in maintaining healthy ocean ecosystems. Here in New Zealand, sharks have special significance in te ao Māori, including as guardians of the ocean.

Protecting sharks means protecting the living systems that depend on them. From a commercial perspective, healthy shark populations help ensure abundant fish stocks. Several species of shark are also a valuable target catch, while others are prized by game-fishers.

There are 113 species of sharks and their relatives (rays, skates and chimaeras) found in New Zealand's waters. A high percentage (approximately 20 percent) of these, such as the dark ghost shark, are found nowhere else. A few, like the whale shark, prefer more tropical climes and are rarely spotted here, and mostly in the north. Though in recent years, potentially encouraged by the warming effects of climate change, there have been whale shark interactions as far south as the Bay of Plenty.



Simon Lawrence, Director Science and Information.

As with other members of the chondrichthyan class, part of what makes sharks distinct is that, while they're generally long-lived, they grow slowly and have low fertility rates. Their populations are sensitive to adverse impacts and can take a long time to recover.

The importance and fragility of sharks makes it crucial that we have the best possible understanding of the threats they face and how to manage them. At Tini a Tangaroa Fisheries New Zealand, we're looking at new scientific approaches to help us do just that. We know good science is fundamental to good fisheries management. When we develop options or make decisions, we need to understand what effects they're likely to have (such as the likely effects of different fishing restrictions on a fish stock or protected species).

At the moment, the data we have about sharks is highly variable and species-specific. That's often due to factors like a low number of sightings, or the rarity of a species. The approaches we're trialling are designed to put the data available to good use. One approach we've already developed for seabirds and marine mammals, and are now trialling with sharks, is called a Spatially Explicit Fisheries Risk Assessment (SEFRA). This is a modelling tool that helps us compare the natural rate of mortality of a species with the degree of mortality it can withstand from other causes while maintaining or growing its population levels.

SEFRA also helps us identify how certain we can be in our estimates, and where further data would be helpful – including data on threats not related to fishing (such as climate change effects, and pollutant runoff from land). In that respect, it will be an important part of the next iteration of our National Plan of Action for sharks.

As the science continues to improve, we're moving increasingly towards ecosystem-based fisheries management, where we can more effectively consider the interconnections between different species and habitats. This will mean more opportunities to work with a wide range of partners and stakeholders, including other government agencies, iwi, and industry, on identifying and solving complex problems.

Our aim is to drive improvements in shark research, conservation and management – both at home and through international collaboration – to secure the long-term viability of this precious and beguiling animal.

# Glenn and Pat: helping fellow fishers stay on



**FirstMate New Zealand is a charity set up to support the health and wellbeing of hardworking people and their whānau across the commercial seafood sector. Each issue, the team behind this pilot project will aim to outline how it's going, the challenges the industry face, and the people that are ensuring it thrives.**

Crewing on inshore trawl and crayfish vessels is how both Glenn Robinson (in 1991) and Pat Nyhon (in 1987) got their start in the commercial fishing industry, in the South Island – Te Waipounamu. They each went on to own and operate their own vessels and are still fishing today, as well as being involved in professional bodies like the NZ Federation of Commercial Fishermen.

Since November last year, they've been bringing their passion for the industry and its people to their roles as Navigators for FirstMate. "I got the fishing bug when I went on my first trawler at 16 years old, though I grew up on a farm," Nyhon says. "There's a sense of freedom in being out on the water, and sights you don't get anywhere else."

In his years as a deckhand then skipper for other

companies, Nyhon targeted cod, crayfish and tuna, and spent time harvesting oysters. He eventually ended up with two of his own trawlers, *Antares* and *Cressy*, the latter he still operates, based in Bluff.

Nyhon loves being part of the fishing community and has always enjoyed helping others, whether it's with the practicalities of electronic reporting, or talking through the big issues.

"The fishing industry is like no other, in that we're making good use of this wild, untouched product. It's hard work and worthy of respect," Nyhon says. "But negative public perception is a problem, when you can be out there doing everything right, and that's something most of us feel."

Nyhon says the main thing people should know about



Glenn Robinson.



Pat Nyhon.

FirstMate is they can talk about anything on their mind – and it’s all confidential. “We’ll help with everything we can,” he says, “and it’s not just fishers who can give us a call. We’re available to talk with family members who might need a hand as well”.

Robinson also comes from a farming background, and left school to turn his love of recreational fishing into something that paid. Then, after a stint mining in Australia followed by work and travel in the UK, time on an Australian prawn vessel convinced him fishing was the way to go. Returning to New Zealand, he skippered the trawler

*Solitaire* before purchasing and operating it himself, out of Port Chalmers.

“You’re in your own time and space on a boat, and that flexibility is really appealing,” Robinson says. “Of course, you’re at the whim of the weather too. If it’s looking good, you might be at sea for four or five days on a trawler, or if you’re a day fisher, having to suddenly miss your kid’s birthday.”

The demands of fishing on family life is a conversation Robinson’s had many times over the years with fellow fishers. Solutions aren’t always easy, but the first step is often talking them through.

“Sometimes I can help by offering a sympathetic ear,” Robinson says. “Other times, it can be useful to put people in touch with a counselling service.”

While there’s a mental wellbeing element to FirstMate, Robinson echoes Nyhon, saying the support spans a range of topics, including talking through budgeting challenges. Again, if it’s helpful, Navigators can then connect people with specialist advisors.

“Not everyone has the same social connections,” Robinson says, “and solving a problem can be a matter of just having a number you can call to ask a question.”

Call 0800 ADRIFT (0800 237438) or visit [www.firstmate.org.nz](http://www.firstmate.org.nz) for more information and advice.

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# Doing business by 'doing good'

**'Restorative marine economies' are practical models that foster new investments and business enterprises aiming to reverse environmental degradation, and protect and enhance natural capital.**

The concept is gaining traction overseas but isn't common in Aotearoa New Zealand's coastal and marine spaces yet, says Drew Lohrer, a marine ecologist at National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), and co-leader of the Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge project *Restoring marine economies*.

"We're trying to provide a more holistic view of economies and help people to contribute to the commons rather than just take away from it. It's not just about making money. These activities also cycle back and contribute to values in the community, protect the environment, or help promote cultural identity – economic activities that benefit well-being in many ways."

Lohrer says much of the research has national relevance but will happen at a local level. It is looking at community-led restoration projects to understand the factors that influence their success.

"A broader goal is to examine local initiatives and not necessarily make them bigger, but replicate them in different areas."

The research is a business and research partnership. Nigel Bradly, Chief Executive of EnviroStrat co-leads alongside Lohrer.

Bradly says EnviroStrat is focusing on the role of investors and opportunities for financing restorative

business models that actively restore marine ecosystems, while generating a financial return.

For the past three years, EnviroStrat has been leading the development of domestic seaweed farming, adapting the US-based GreenWave regenerative farming business model to the Aotearoa context.



Drew Lohrer  
(Credit: Stu Mackay, NIWA).



Drew Lohrer diving in Opito Bay (Credit: NIWA).

## What do restorative economies look like?

Restorative economies seek to generate revenue from restorative activities like blue carbon sequestration or utilising pest species for monetary gain. For example, removing kina from barrens to a 'ranching' facility on land to develop the roe for high value Asian markets – then using the profits to restore kelp forests.

The challenge is how to generate enough reliable revenue to meet investor expectations of return, while also generating impact, Bradly says.

This is why the potential impact of restoration must be measurable and verifiable. Part of Lohrer's role is to work out how to quantify the ecosystem benefits of restorative economies.

"You can't factor environmental impact into your economic models if you can't quantify the values and services associated with marine restoration.



Nigel Bradly EnviroStrat  
chief executive.

“You might be interested in a seagrass bed restoration programme because it contributes to carbon sequestration or supports food webs, or one of the many other ecosystem services associated with seagrass. But it’s not a ‘box-ticking exercise’ – just because there’s some seagrass doesn’t mean all those ecosystem services are being delivered.”

**Making restoration ‘investable’**

Quantification is essential for investors and businesses that want to support restoration.

“It’s still a business decision, even if investors aren’t looking for an economic return. They want to know they’ll get good ‘bang for buck,’” says Lohrer.

Bradly says the money and desire from investors to ‘do good’ exists, but there still isn’t enough investment into restorative projects. There are two completely different languages at play; that of the investor and how they perceive risk and what impacts are sought from restoration, and the project developers’ environmental aims. This is a global problem, so this type of research is internationally relevant.

“There are inherent conflicts between these perspectives. Investors might be interested in



Example of kelp being used in the project (*Ecklonia*), Esk Point (Credit: Lucas Evans).

restorative projects, but their risk tolerance is often lower than restoration project developers. Uncertainty about potential revenue sources such as blue carbon or biodiversity improvement is a barrier to investment.”

Bradly says if a restoration project can generate revenue and direct some of the profit back into the restoration, it reduces reliance on traditional restoration funding streams - government grants, philanthropy, or a mix.

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# FishServe reflects on its journey as it farewells those who got us here

Caroline Read, chief executive, FishServe

There have been a lot of big changes at FishServe this year. Our senior leadership team has undergone a change of guard; we said goodbye to our long-term chief executive, Lesley Campbell, followed by another two senior leaders, Tony Bowler and Dan Martin.

Campbell had been with FishServe since its inception, Bowler and Martin both for well over a decade.

This month, we will also farewell Cheryl Tipoki, a great role model in customer support and a valued mainstay of our Client Services team. Many of you have likely dealt with her as she helped you through the administrative hoops of the Quota Management System (QMS).

As we reflect and celebrate each of their contributions to FishServe, we are also able to celebrate the success story of this incredibly diligent and dedicated business. Anyone involved in fisheries would agree that the QMS, the Fisheries Act 1996, and the regulations that manage it, require significant and sometimes complicated administration. Everything from the processing of permits and applications to the monthly balancing of annual catch entitlement (ACE) required a dab administrative hand, precise record-keeping, and

accuracy. It would also be agreed that having to recover costs from the industry put a significant incentive on ensuring that our administrative services were delivered in the most cost-effective way possible.

As they strived for efficiency over the years, Campbell and her team shifted FishServe from paper-based record keeping systems to online software systems. The redevelopment of the FishServe system in 2016 provided fishers greater visibility and control of their transactions and reporting obligations. The modular design of the system, designed to a large extent by Dan Martin, ensured it could adapt to future evolutions in fisheries management. FishServe, in a new online state, faced its first big test with the introduction of electronic reporting. Suffice to say, it rose to this challenge - providing fishers tools to support their new reporting requirements and having the system set up to collect and host electronic reporting data.

Creating online systems to capture data has seen our organisation shift from managing paper to investing in the technical skills and capabilities needed to support digital platforms. This has enabled a shift in focus from cutting costs to finding value. The improvement in efficiencies over the years is clearly shown on the organisation's balance sheet. Campbell, Bowler, and the team shifted business costs in the order of \$8M in 2002 to \$4M by 2011, and we have maintained that since then despite inflation and other cost pressures.

This is the success story of FishServe. Following 20 years of efficiency gains in the reporting system, our focus has shifted to ensuring fishers, quota owners, and the whole industry can get value out of the system they pay for. Valuable extensions to the FishServe software are still in development but this direction is more relevant than ever. The industry is under increased pressure to demonstrate its sustainability amidst continuous regulatory change.

So, as we farewell those who have shaped the success story of FishServe, we take a lead from te ao Māori and we look backwards to steer us forward into the possibilities that those who came before us have created space for.



Caroline Read.

# The Food and Fibre Youth Network – He Tātai Rangahua

Established in 2021, The Food and Fibre Youth Network (FFYN) enables young people in the primary sector to add their voice to shaping the future of our food and fibre sector.

NZ Young Farmers, in collaboration with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), Beef and Lamb NZ, DairyNZ, and AGMARDT launched the network, creating an opportunity for young representatives across the food and fibre sector to raise industry issues and provide input into critical decisions about the sector's future.

Nine young people from across the country have been selected as the Council for the newly established Food and Fibre Youth Network - He Tatai Rangahua.

The founding Council members are Sarah Crofoot, Amy Moore, Lincoln Roper, Emma Subtil, Anthony Taueki, Alex Tomkins, Cheyenne Wilson, Callum Woodhouse and Memphis Wright.

Amy Moore is our seafood representative. A proud West Coaster from an intergenerational fishing family based out of Greymouth, she has a passion for the seafood sector and provides consulting services in both the dairy and apiculture industries.

The network will explore and consider issues;



Amy Moore.

connect to sector action plans and any other initiatives that are current in the industry; provide advice to Ministers, MPI and other stakeholders on issues relating to young people in the food and fibre sector; and act as young ambassadors.

The council have held several events to gain wider pan-sector feedback from across the primary industries and provided recommendations to the Primary Production Select Committee in 2021.

Recommendations were made around education. For example, a cross-sector focus on using the current transition to work programmes like trades academy, Gateway to represent a more united approach, provide influencers of students (parents/whānau, teachers, and the wider community) with full, accurate, and honest information about the sector. This must include young people telling their stories of involvement in the sector.



# Extending Further Protection to Seamounts

George Clement, Chief Executive, Deepwater Group

The deepwater seafood industry is responding to concerns about bottom trawling on underwater seamounts and the impacts this might be having on the seabed and on the creatures that live there.

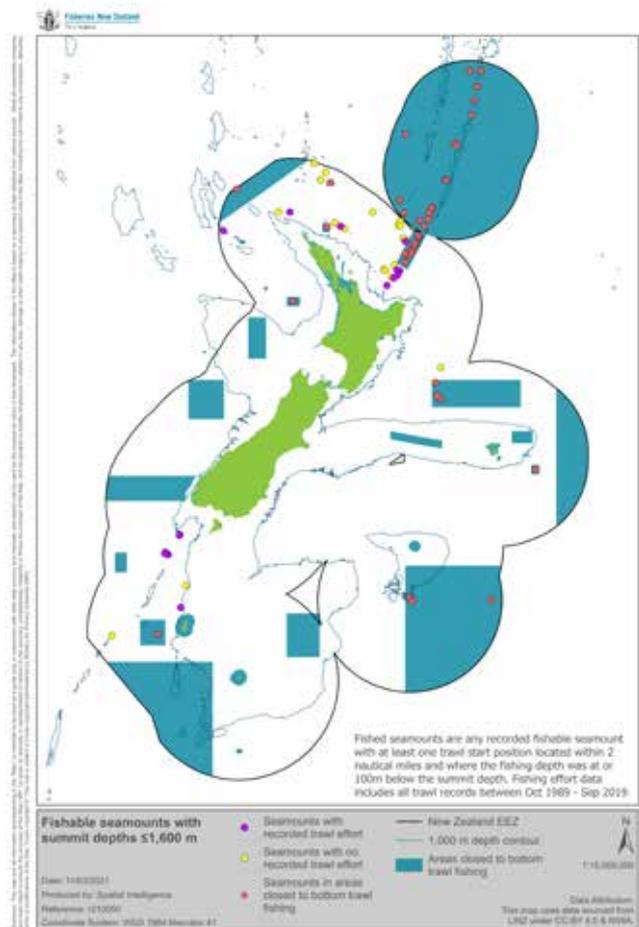
The National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) has identified 142 seamounts within New Zealand’s Exclusive Economic Zone. Fifty percent (71 seamounts) of these are closed by law to bottom trawling and only 11 percent (15 seamounts) have been bottom trawled (Figures 1 and 2). In addition to seamounts, which are large structures that rise 1000 m or more from the seabed, there are numerous other smaller underwater features including hills and knolls, which also require careful management. Work is ongoing.

The seafood industry has long recognised the international importance of seamounts as large underwater structures which maintain their own oceanographic environmental niches. Just as on land, where we manage National Parks around large mountains, such as Mt Ruapehu and Mt Taranaki, the industry recognises the need to manage seamounts appropriately by setting aside and protecting large marine areas—an approach that has already been implemented. Smaller features on land (such as the volcanic cones in the Auckland area) or underwater (such as hills and knolls) also require management but to a lesser extent, and do not warrant protection as “National Parks” (Figure 3).

Sealord, the largest deepwater fishing group, co-owned by Iwi, is proposing to extend the legal protection for seamounts from 50 to 89 percent (from 71 to 127 of the 142 known seamounts).

This is consistent with the deepwater industry’s support for a balanced approach to both marine conservation and sustainable seafood production. In future, if additional seamounts are discovered, the need to manage fishing on these would also be considered.

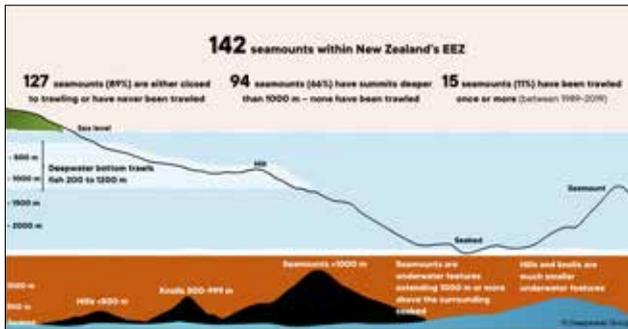
Within our large Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which extends from 12 to 200 nautical miles offshore, this approach will continue to provide for adequate marine protection, while ensuring that New Zealand sustainably conserves and utilises our rich ocean bounty—as we are obliged to do under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).



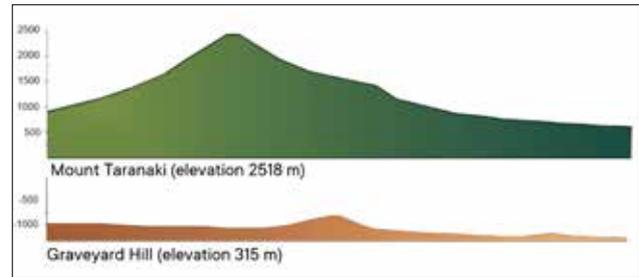
Seamounts with summit depths ≤1600 metres in New Zealand’s EEZ showing those that have been fished, those that have never been fished, and those that are closed to bottom trawling. For a larger version of this graphic go to <http://tinyurl.com/MapSeamounts>.

The claim by some conservation groups that trawling is destroying the seabed and the accompanying call for a complete ban on bottom trawling of seamounts and smaller underwater features is simplistic, misleading, and is inconsistent with both conservation and sustainable utilisation.

Let’s look at the facts for context; 91 percent of the seabed in our EEZ is untouched and has never been trawled, 89 percent of seamounts have never been trawled (Figures 1 and 2), and each year only 1.1 percent of the EEZ is trawled to produce 700 million servings of healthy seafood.



Comparison between hills, knolls and seamounts. For a larger version of this graphic to go <http://tinyurl.com/SeabedFeatures>.



Size and aspect comparison between Mt Taranaki on land (a National park) and Graveyard Hill on the Chatham Rise (open to fishing). For a larger version of this graphic go to <http://tinyurl.com/MountHill>.

The baseless claim by some is that all seamounts and all smaller underwater features warrant protection as “National Parks” to protect the coral habitats. But seamounts and smaller underwater features do not all have the same ecology. In New Zealand waters, the vast size of seamounts (seamounts average 723 km<sup>2</sup> and the largest covers 2170 km<sup>2</sup>) dwarfs the average size of underwater hills, where most fishing occurs (hills average 6km<sup>2</sup> and the largest covers only 20 km<sup>2</sup>) (Figure 3).

If the premise is to protect corals, then further information is needed on the distribution of coral. Simply put, not all of these underwater features are coral habitats. NIWA, industry and the Government have video and photographic records showing many are covered in mud or sand. NIWA has advised that only 20 percent of seamounts within our EEZ are known to support coral. This is in line with industry knowledge that not all seamounts, knolls or hills support widespread coral habitats.

There is no acknowledgement by those in the marine protection lobby of the extensive marine protection and conservation measures already in place—31 percent of New Zealand’s EEZ is closed by law to bottom trawling (Figure 1), and little or no recognition of the value the deepwater seafood industry makes to the country’s wellbeing—employing over 8,500 people and generating an annual economic output of \$2.7 billion to New Zealand’s economy.

All forms of food production have impacts on the environment, not least farming where native ecosystems (plants and animals) have been removed and replaced by exotic species (pasture and farm animals). We should all acknowledge this as it is the context that food production plays in New Zealand’s overall economy, and enables us to afford our enviable standard of living.

We must minimise the environmental impacts due to food production as much as possible. Within our EEZ there is ample evidence of that in practice.

The move to close 31 percent of the EEZ to bottom trawling in 2006 across the full range of marine habitats from sub-tropical to sub-Antarctic waters was

initiated by the deepwater seafood industry.

The Sealord proposal adds to this and will be included in the discussions underway with the Ministry for Primary Industries, the Department of Conservation and eNGOs as part of the forum that is considering the impact of bottom trawling within our EEZ along with possible further management measures.

This forum had its inaugural meeting in April and is due to make recommendations to Oceans and Fisheries Minister David Parker later this year.

The deepwater sector has three representatives on the forum—Doug Paulin, CEO of Sealord Group, Andy Smith, who has many years of experience as a deepwater skipper and a vessel manager, and myself a marine biologist with many years of international experience in fisheries management.

Parliament’s Environment Select Committee is currently considering a petition from eNGOs calling for a ban on bottom trawling on all seamount features.

The seafood industry contends that the most effective approach to fisheries management is to agree on where we should produce food from our oceans, agree on the rules for fishing in those areas and what ongoing research is needed to ensure these fishing activities remain sustainable.

Most of the seabed that we trawl over is mud and sand. We continue to trawl the same grounds and trawl paths as have been fished for many decades—still productively producing food. As our fishing activities are progressively made more efficient, our impacts are being progressively reduced. Since 2004/05 the annual number of tows by large trawlers in the EEZ has reduced by 45 percent with 46 percent fewer vessels fishing sustainably to catch the same amount of fish.

The current discussions must be driven by the requirements of the Fisheries Act, which has the objective of the utilisation of fisheries resources while ensuring sustainability and informed by scientific knowledge, rather than being driven by the dictates of emotion, ideologies and misinformation.

# A passion for kaimoana

Janan Jedrzejewski

We arrive to Fisherman’s Wharf just before the lunchtime rush, and it’s already being frequented by a fair number of fellow early-birds. From the outset the atmosphere is warm and welcoming – even though you can’t quite put your finger on exactly why.

One of the chefs smiles at me as we walk in. Eying up my DSLR camera, he’s enthused by the fact I’ll shortly be running around taking photos and was not remotely worried about a wayward journalist he’d only met five seconds prior running around their Tardis-like kitchen (which would have been an entirely understandable reaction).

Of course, we’re also rather hungry, so opt for a traditional Fijian Kokoda (fresh raw fish marinated in lemon and coconut milk), some classic salt and pepper squid, and the seafood sizzle plate - slated on the menu as their most popular dish.



The chef’s salt and pepper squid.

As I set about taking photos, almost comically contorting myself around tight corners and low-slung utensils, it seems we flukishly ordered the most photogenic of dishes, both in and out of the kitchen

Head chef Kelly Te Mete, 36, is calm and collected – cracking jokes as she cooks. She’s been with the restaurant for just under two years and has been a chef ever

since she finished school, cutting her teeth in Australia. A former military brat, her family was relocated across the ditch when her father was sent to the Gold Coast.

Along with co-owner and manager PJ Gemmell, 49, we



Kelly Te Mete and PJ Gemmell.

slip into one of the cozy booths overlooking the harbour. “It’s hard to be mad with a view like that,” Te Mete quips.

She’s not wrong; it’s one of the most relaxing places I could think of for a coffee, a yarn, and some moreish seafood. Speaking of which, the produce here is more than an ingredient – it’s the star of the show and one that Gemmell and Te Mete have a lot of love for.

“[Fish]; it’s fresh, it’s light,” Gemmell says, “People feel good when they eat it.

“I think it’s good for us, so many great elements, minerals... Fresh fish has come in from our water.

“We should be not exporting at all,” she laughs.

“I think a lot of people don’t realise how lucky we are to have all of this. I just I feel really privileged to be from New Zealand, living where we live, and working here. I love the team -- everyone has that passion... they all have that respect for the seafood. They understand Pāua costs us \$137 a kilo [and is] hard to find - let alone purchase.

“We’ve really got to care [for] and respect it [- we] don’t just throw it around.”

Te Mete adds that there’s more to life besides fish and chips.

“There’s so many things you can do with seafood... and coming from Māori background, kaimoana is what we do. It’s in our blood. So, you see a nice fillet of fish and it’s like ‘oh my god’.”

Having a great relationship with the wider community of fishers is valuable to the duo, as Gemmell explains that “with some of the fishing boats, we’ll get a text sometimes to say [they’re] coming with fish, say, sole or whatever. So, then it’s



The popular sizzle plate did not disappoint.

like ‘cool send us up 30 kilos.’”

The customers, Gemmell adds, are discerning and “interested in where our fish comes from, because there’s a difference between the blue cod from Southland or the Chatham islands, [even though] it’s still just as beautiful”.

Turns out, my intuition about the ‘feel-good vibes’ was right, Gemmell and Te Mete are hospo veterans and have been working together for years, and that clearly translates into a positive work culture.

Te Mete has had a passion for cooking from her



childhood, where she describes herself ‘cruising around the kitchen’ and offering to make family dinners. She recalls watching her father when she was around seven or eight “cook his wee chowders and stinking out the house with seafood and stuff, it just made me real intrigued as to what was happening and how he was doing things”.

“[I] never helped, no, he wouldn’t let you do that. That’s his game. Always watched and kind of learnt from there and watched all the cooking shows.”

Te Mete’s love for kaimoana is clear – but as for her favourite seafood? Mussels.

“The perfection of a mussel is just amazing, and they aren’t the easiest to cook because you’ve got so many different elements against you. [It] might not even be alive when you’re putting it in. Perfect amount of steaming required because if you over steam, your mussels are going to be tough, but if you under steam, it’s just going to be raw.”



# Fisherman's Wharf Chowder



The chowder at Fisherman's Wharf in Lyttelton is one of their top sellers, with head chef Kelly Te Mete explaining the kitchen whip up at least 20 litres a week. More often than not, there will be one ordered per table. Created by previous head chef Robert Dickey, previously of Christchurch's iconic Volcano, this dish isn't going anywhere soon.

## Ingredients

500g firm fish (gurnard, elephant fish)  
 500g seafood marinara mix (prawns, mussels, squid tentacles, clams)  
 4 onions, sliced  
 6-8 carrots, cut into strips  
 ½ celery, chopped  
 2l milk  
 2l water  
 ¼ cup dashi (shrimp stock)  
 500g butter  
 500g flour  
 salt & pepper (to taste)  
 100g garlic butter  
 fresh ciabatta loaf

## Method

1. Add dashi to water, then combine water with milk in a big pot, slowly bringing to a simmer. Don't let it boil.
2. Fry onions and carrots until soft and put to one side.
3. In a large pot, melt butter then add flour, mixing slowly to make a roux.
4. Slowly add dashi, water and milk mix, 1 litre at a time, each time mixing until smooth.
5. Once combined, add onions and carrots and cook out for about half an hour
6. Add seafood, fish and celery and turn off the heat.
7. Add salt and pepper to taste.

## To serve

Ladle into bowls, garnish with croutons and chopped parsley and serve with a lemon wedge and warm garlic bread on the side.

## Croutons

Take 2-3 slices from a fresh ciabatta loaf and cut into cubes. Melt butter in a large frying pan and, over medium heat, toss the bread in to coat it before spreading the croutons out over a baking tray. Pop into a pre-heated 180°C oven for 10 minutes, until crisp and golden. Slice the remaining ciabatta, slather with garlic butter and warm in the oven ahead of serving.

# Vote for your favourite fishy toastie

If you're a sucker for sourdough and love a good loaf, get ready for the best gourmet experience one could possibly have between two slices of perfectly toasted bread.

The Great NZ Toastie Takeover, New Zealand's only national toasted sandwich competition, is well underway and there's still time to get your fill of the delicious fish-based creations on offer and vote for your favourite.

Now in its fifth year, the competition rules remain the same. Each toastie must be sandwiched between two slices of bread and able to be eaten by hand (if necessary). The toasted sandwich must also contain cheese and pickles from the McClure's Pickles range.

Everything else is up to the toastie maker's imagination – and there's everything from cold smoked salmon paired with crunchy cornflakes to a clam chowder to be found among the fillings.

You can vote by going to <https://www.toastietakeover.com/>. Voting closes on 22 June 2022.

You can find them in the following locations:

## Auckland

**Cheese on Toast - Prawn + Pickle 2.0:** Garlic prawns, sweet & spicy pickle salsa, pickle juice sauce, three-cheese blend on sourdough

**Kohi Beach Store - Clam & Cheese:** Cloudy Bay clam chowder, smoked provolone, Bread & Butter Pickles on sourdough.



Kohi Beach Store, Auckland, is serving up a Cloudy Bay clam chowder with smoked provolone on sourdough.

**The Cav - Prawn Thermidore:** Poached prawns, pickle hollandaise, tomato, shallots, brioche wrapped in prosciutto and served with potato crisps.

## Rest of North Island

**Best Ugly - Lucky Strike (Auckland & Wellington):** Sesame bagel, smoked kahawai, garlic & dill pickle, double cheese melt.

**Urban Remedy - The Kiwiana Melt (Ruakaka):** Local smoked fish bound in a parmesan roux, sweet & spicy pickles, pastrami on dill buttered white bread.



Ruakaka-based eatery Urban Remedy's The Kiwiana Melt, stuffed with local smoked fish, parmesan roux, and pastrami.

**The Redoubt Bar & Eatery - The Redoubt Fisherman (Morrinsville):** Crumbed snapper toastie, kowhai gruyere cheese, bread & butter pickles, topped with peach salsa, dill hollandaise and served with hand cut chunky fries.

## South Island

**High Country Salmon - Loco Mexicano (Twizel):** Cold smoked salmon, sweet & spicy pickles, corn salsa, avocado, cheese, spinach, cornflakes, chilli mayo in a rye sourdough and served with fries.

## NEWS

### **Mikey's KAI Dunedin - Capt. McClure's:**

Apple wood smoked green lip mussels, zesty lemon cream cheese cheddar melt, pickles, wild samphire toasted on ciabatta with dill butter.

**Roasted x Toasted - The Lumsden (Lumsden, Southland):** Pickle brined Stewart Island Blue Cod, venison salami, Swiss cheese, bread & butter pickles, and kalamata olives.

Last year a seafood offering garnered The People's Choice Award, with the then new kid on the block Toastie Picton winning over the public with their 'Pete from Picton', stuffed with Marlborough salmon, cream cheese with lemon, dill and capers, pickles and Parmesan.

Fingers crossed a fishy toastie will scoop the accolade again for a second consecutive year

Alternatively, if you're the 'Ultimate Toastie Fan' and are renowned for making your own fish-filled dill-icious toasties (complete with pickles and cheese, of course), you can enter your recipe for a chance to win a prize pack (worth over \$350) and the chance to brag to your friends (priceless).



Southland's Roasted x Toasted presents The Lumsden with pickle-brined Stewart Island blue cod and Swiss.

For more information and the full list of participating venues by region, see [toastietakeover.com](http://toastietakeover.com) and follow @cookandnelson on Instagram for regular competitions and updates.



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# Lyttelton's graving dock is getting a major facelift

Chris Carey

One of two dry dock facilities in the country and the only one in the South Island, the graving dock at the Port of Lyttelton is undergoing a much-needed upgrade.

Designed by harbour board engineer Charles Napier Bell, the graving dock was opened on 3 January 1883, when the gaily decorated NZ Shipping Company ship Hurunui, reported to be the 'very perfection of neatness and order', broke a blue ribbon as she sailed over the sill.

Twenty tons of powder and three tons of dynamite were used to bring down the nearby cliff face and 1600 feet of the harbour was reclaimed in the process. At the time, the graving dock was considered a great status symbol for the new colony.

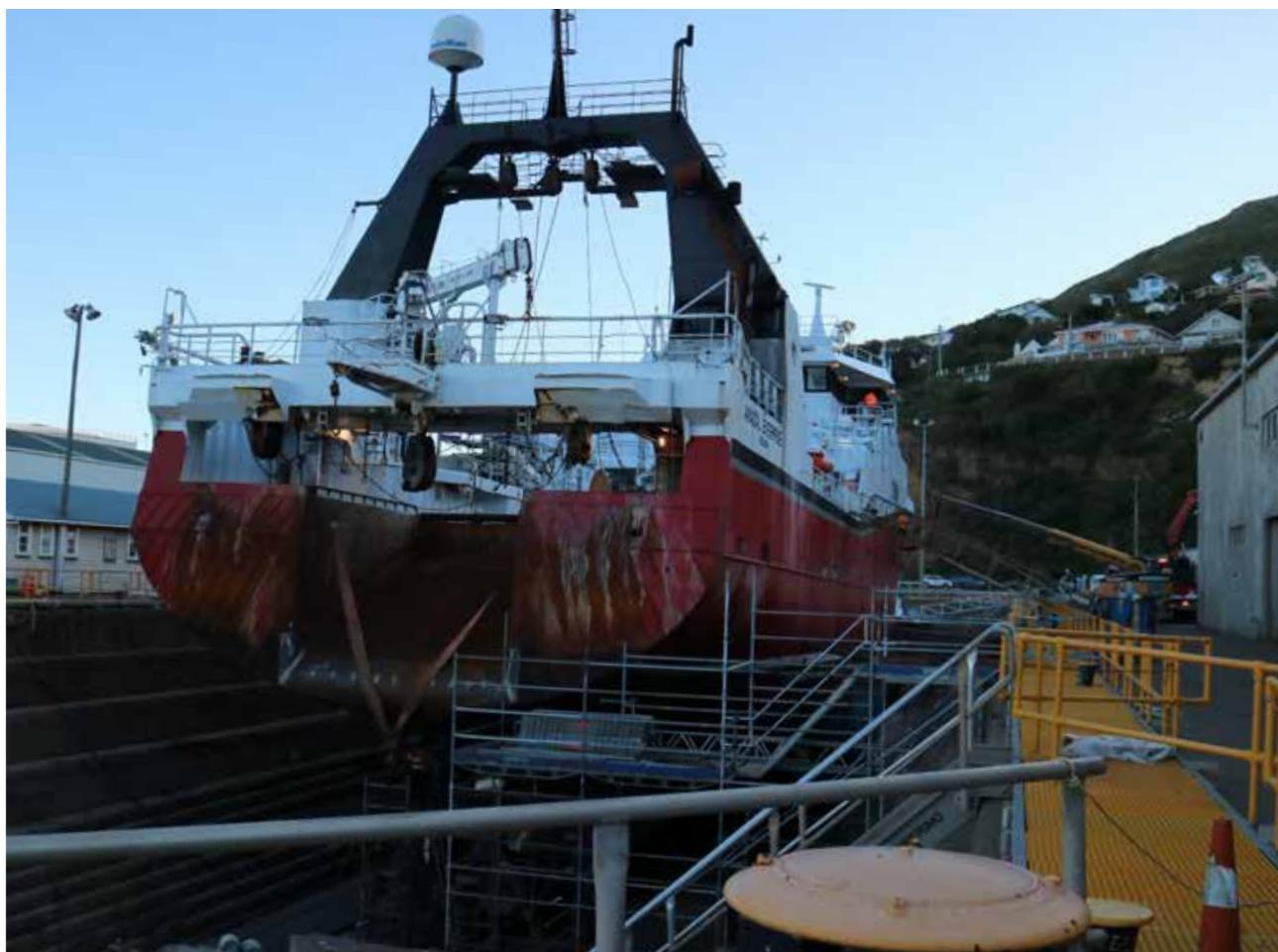
A graving dock is a dry dock where ships' bottoms were cleaned and smeared with tar, a process known as graving,

possibly derived from graves or greaves, the dregs of tallow.

The dock has floor dimensions of 137.15m x 14m and a top length of 146.75m. The entrance width over the sill is 18.8m.

With a maximum draft of 6m, it can cater for a wide range of vessel types, and it is not uncommon to see ships of various size and shape sitting on the blocks together; harbour tugs docked with a sub-Antarctic long-liner, or an offshore PSV sitting on the blocks forward of a deep-sea factory trawler.

The three Lyttelton based 105m BAT-M class factory trawlers are among the larger of the regular users of this facility, and there's not a lot of room left when one of these settles and the shores are in place.



## NEWS

While the pumps have remained relatively unchanged over the past 130 years, now electrically driven, they take approximately three hours to pump the dock dry.

"I'm hugely excited with the plans we have for the dock" Hannah Fyffe, Lyttelton Port Company project manager, says. "The new upgrades are expected to take two years and we're progressing well."

Health and safety will play a major role in the upgrade.

"New safety rails and a walkway around the top of the dock were installed last year and new working at heights facilities will be a key part of the upgrade as well," Fyffe says. "Reengineered gangways will provide better access on and off the vessels along with safer stair access down into the dock itself. Better signage will be also placed around the dock enclosure."

The old wooden shed #162 will be demolished later this year once the new, two-storey crew amenities building is completed. Built over the winch room of the patent slip, it will house modern ablution facilities for crews living aboard vessels. There will also be offices for the various contractors and a dive store for two divers.

"With shed #162 gone, it creates a large open space and provides better access for LPC staff and the many contractors working within the dock site, particularly when using Hiab crane and self-propelled boom lifts," Fyffe says.

A state-of-the-art CCTV system will provide adding security for those vessels sitting on the blocks, unmanned.

"This year, we're also upgrading the electrical supply to more safely meet the dock demands by installing two new substations. The existing fluorescent lighting will also be replaced with LEDs providing better lighting in the dock particularly when setting up the keel blocks or docking / undocking vessels in the dark."

The installation of eighteen-metre-high light towers with dimmable LED lights will reduce glare when bringing vessels into the dock at night.

"Large quantities of water are produced with UHP blasting so there are plans afoot for upgrading the

treatment of wastewater. Its costly to remove with tankers so if we can properly treat this water at a rate that meets demand, it's a win-win for everyone."

The caisson was renewed several years ago and is still fit for purpose; however, the sluice gate will be replaced.

"It's the original sluice gate. It is an important part of the dock and I'd like to keep this as some sort of feature that members of the public can enjoy."

Alongside the graving dock is the patent slip available for repair of small craft up to 150 tonnes and with a maximum draught of 2m. On the northern side, there is a grid for vessels with maximum draught of 1.83m, ideal for repairs which can be completed through a complete tide. South of the patent slip there is a one-lane slipway for trailer boats.

"This is a Category 1 heritage site and aside from the infrastructure on the hard apron surrounding the dock, it hasn't changed much since it was first built. The altars, for example, are as they were in 1883," Fyffe says.

"My role is to not only provide a first-class facility that will take ship repair and maintenance forward, but also to promote better workplace practices by those working within the dock area."

The dock is a vital piece of the port company's infrastructure. Days over a calendar year where the dock sits flooded, empty, can be counted on the fingers of one hand. As such it plays a huge part in the maritime repair and maintenance infrastructure that has sprung up around it. The financial injection into the economy of both Lyttelton and Christchurch is often misunderstood, largely hidden, seldom acknowledged but nevertheless substantial.

"Those using the dock are enthusiastic about the changes but what we also need is buy-in from the public," Fyffe says. "Those living here or visiting Lyttelton need to know what an historical asset they have here and the significant employment and financial input into the community this dock brings. I hope to be able to do this."



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Main Caterpillar 3412. Aux Caterpillar 3306 –  
hydraulics. Doosan (new) 96kVA alternator  
Heimdall CCP  
Fuel 50,000 litres Water 16,000 litres  
Chiller hold 105m<sup>3</sup>. 80tns bulk or 35 tns in bins  
Jaden winches 8 tonnes pull. 2500m 16mm wire  
Offshore survey 200 miles to June 2023  
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**\$3,200,000**



5322 BARGE BUILT 2019  
L11.95m x B3.3m x D4278m  
2 x Volvo 370hp ZF boxes  
2 x shaft & 4 blade props  
Steel blade rudder  
Fuel 900 litres  
Hiab 044 D-4 crane  
Simrad GPS/Radar  
Inshore survey to 06/2024

**\$850,000**



5318 AUTO LINER  
22.5m x 6.1m x 3.2m  
Cummins KT19 500hp (2016)  
Perkins 80kVA genset  
Cummins 100kVA genset  
Fresh or Freezer holds = 30 ts  
Ice maker. Water maker  
Mustad auto line system  
8 berths. Good electronics

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5309 LONG LINER TROLLER  
L15.5m x B4.9m x D2.3m  
Detroit 6/71 180hp  
Sea Wasp 10kVA genset  
5,000 litres fuel  
Fish rooms 9 tonnes total  
Long line drum. Tuna poles  
Good electronics  
Survey 100 miles May 2026

**\$220,000**



#5305 NETTER & BOTTOM  
LINER. L21.2 x B6.7m x D2.6m  
Iveco main 285hp  
Aux driving 40kVA generator  
Fish hold 27 tonnes  
Gill net drum. Rope roller  
Nets & bottom line gear  
New survey February 2022  
Possible ACE package to  
approved buyers. **\$190,000**



5307 STERN TRAWLER  
L22.87m x B6.7m x D2.7m  
Detroit 12V71 500hp  
Perkins 6 cyl 50kVA genset  
Perkins 6cyl hydraulics  
24 tonnes refridge hold  
Spacious accommodation  
Large capacity hydraulic  
winches. Assorted nets

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5308 BOTTOM LINER/TROLL  
L13.53m X B 4.88m  
Cummins KT19.  
Isuzu 20kVA genset  
4 berths. Good galley  
15 tonnes chiller hold.  
6 miles line plus gear  
Good electronics.  
Stabilizer arms HIAB  
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LOA17.55m x 5m x 2.1m  
Detroit 6V/92 TI DDec 291hp  
Allison 4.5:1 gearbox  
Fuel 3650L. Water 500 L  
Fish hold squared for 400 bins  
Winches hold 1,000m x 13mm warp  
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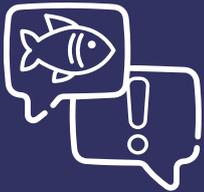
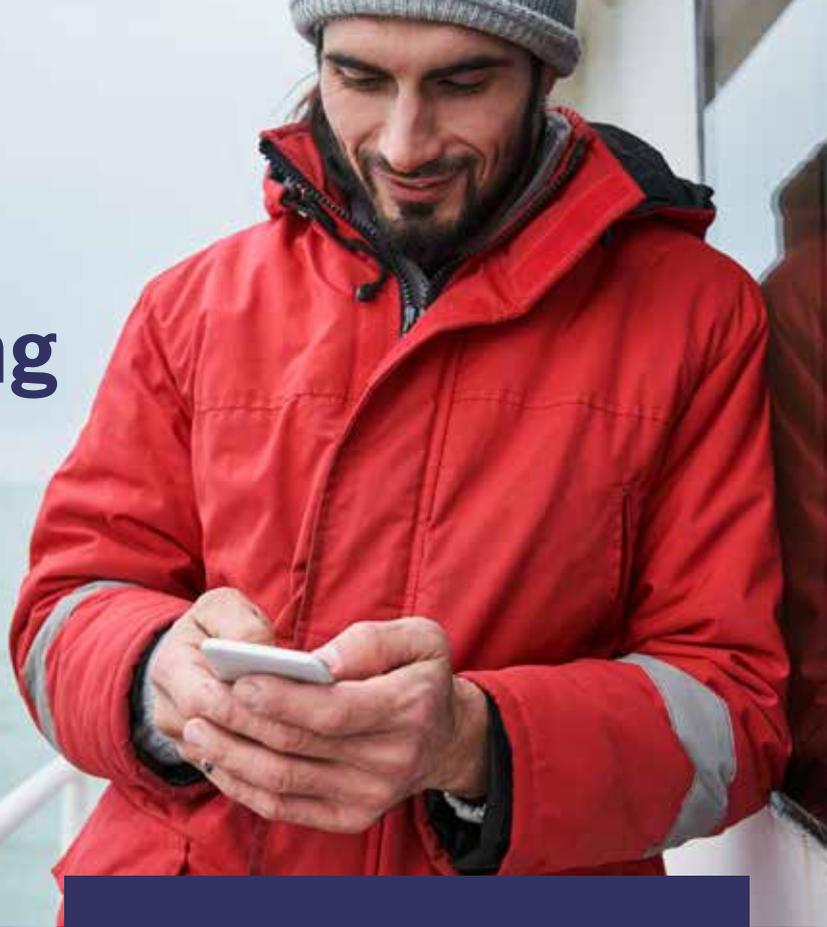
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