

Message from the pulpit at ICFA

Last week in Rome 150 nuns from the Catholic Benedictine order met for their four-yearly congress.

They assembled at the Sant' Anselmo Monastery on the Aventine hill above the ancient ruins of the Colosseum and the Forum.

Also meeting in the monastery were leaders from some of the world's major fishing nations, members of the International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA).

The Benedictines pride themselves on their fellowship and thus it came to pass that the less than saintly fisheries representatives were guests at an ample lunch in a sea of black and white habits.

The ICFA annual meeting, always held in this monastery before a second day with fisheries officials at the nearby United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, was attended by the US, Japan, Taiwan, Australia, France, UK, Spain, Denmark and New Zealand.

Fisheries are complex, confronted by many issues.

Topics covered included fisheries management on the high seas, curbing illegal and unreported fishing, the status of world fisheries stocks, seafood marketing and consumption, individual country reports, protection of endangered species, plastics pollution, science and research, development of the blue economy, growth of aquaculture and improved communications.

There is increased emphasis on the need to defend fisheries' interests in the face of determined opponents and better communicate the many success stories and importance of the sector in food production and economic contribution.

"Scientists think in stocks, communicators think in people," the US National Fisheries Institute head John Connelly said.

In that vein New Zealand produces about two billion seafood meals a year, which resonates much more than statistics on tonnages and species and stocks.

Global fish production peaked at about 171 million tonnes in 2016, with aquaculture providing 47 percent of the total.

The fast growing Alaska pollock is the top caught species.

The seafood sector employs 60 million people worldwide.

Consumption of fish has grown from an average of 9kg per person in 1961 to about 20.5 kg today.

"In general, fisheries are managed well but that is not the public perception," Connelly said.

Governments are often not effective advocates.

The growth of third party certification of fisheries, driven by consumer demand, is in part an indictment of governments' governance.

FAO fisheries and aquaculture division director Prof Manuel Barange said the aim of all the world's fishing stocks being sustainably caught by 2020 would not be achieved.

But Marine Protected Areas were "a very poor method to sustain fish stocks - you need to consider the social and economic impacts as well".

He believes the public is very confused when talking about fishing and aims to change that.

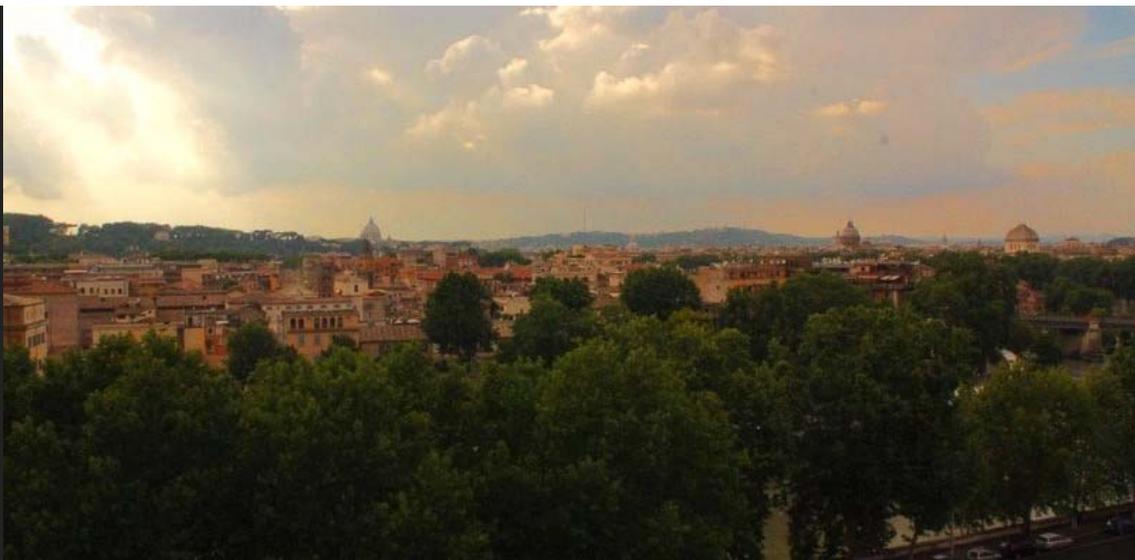
Fifty eight percent of the world's fisheries are sustainably managed, according to the FAO's just released two-yearly voluminous report on the state of world fisheries and aquaculture.

New Zealand sits squarely within that category.

The international outlook is for stable wild fish capture, reduced waste, continued innovation and growth in aquaculture.

As for fishing leaders breaking bread with the Benedictines, St Peter, the most revered of Jesus Christ's apostles, memorialised in the world's largest church, St Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, was a simple fisherman.

And while we now may pay more homage to the God of Quota, fish continue to feed the multitude as they did in biblical lore.



Creating a cure with kīna

Most commonly known for its spiny appearance and as a kiwi delicacy, kīna is now under the microscope for its medicinal properties.

In a collaboration between Hikurangi Bioactives and Cawthron Institute, scientists are investigating the bioactive properties of kīna's non-edible shell and its efficacy in treating heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's and other conditions.

The project has been awarded \$300,000 over two years as part of the Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge.

The research will focus on the potential of the shell that remains once the edible part of kīna has been removed. The offal, spines and roe will also be examined – products that are normally discarded.

Benchmarks will be established to determine how much bioactive content is contained in each shell and the biological effects of the extract will also be measured. It's hoped the data will support the extract's efficacy as a health-promoting food supplement.

"We see huge potential for kīna to provide a novel health-promoting supplement," said Hikurangi managing director Manu Caddie.

"However, we think it could also be very beneficial for the treatment of diabetes, heart disease and inflammation – all of which are health issues of real significance within our community."

Cawthron technical consultant Matt Miller expects the project will bring economic development opportunities for coastal communities too.

"This could be the beginning of a successful and sustainable new niche aquaculture sector on the East Coast. Using good science to support community development is our aim," Miller said.

“We believe there is a supplement offering health benefits in the kīna and it will be of real interest in large and growing markets in Asia – specifically China and Japan.”

As kina are an important source of kaimoana for hapu on the East Coast, a consultation process will be the first stage of the project. Many hapu have already expressed interest and are keen to support the research.

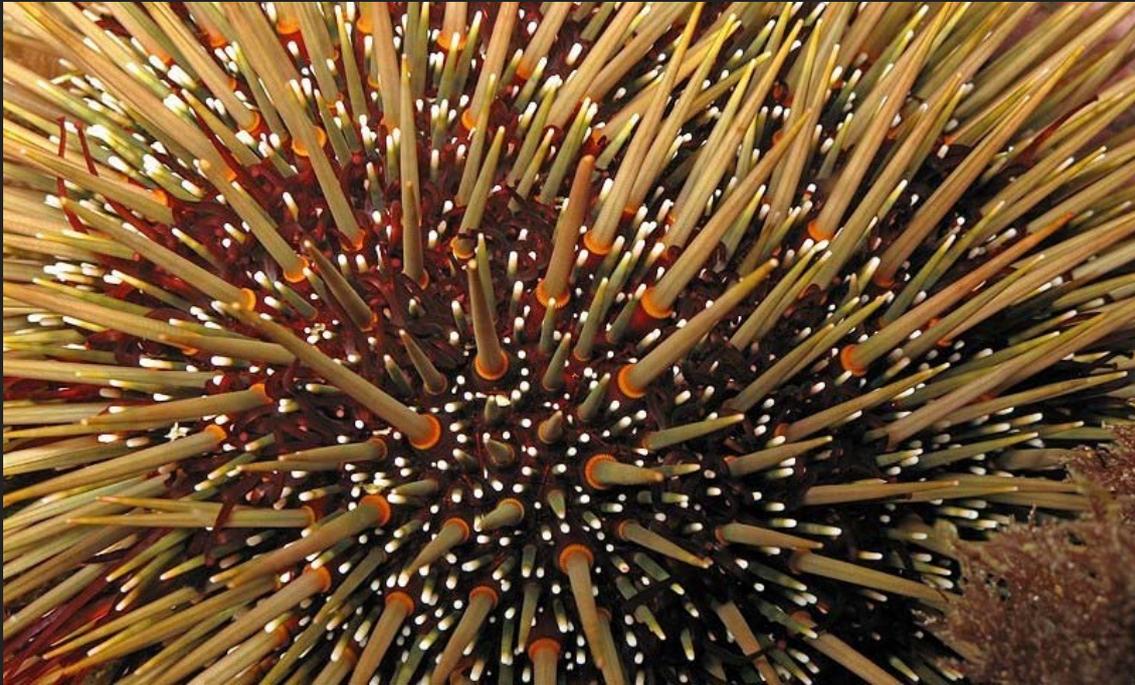


Photo credit: Brian Mayes

Gearing up for submersible farms

New Zealand’s largest salmon-farming company New Zealand King Salmon (NZKS) has taken its first steps towards achieving submersible salmon farms.

Set to be installed in the Cook Strait, the company has applied for resource consent to use 1792 hectares of water, 4.7 nautical miles north of Cape Lambert as the site for several underwater salmon farms.

Cawthron Institute and Blue Planet Marine are supporting the research which is expected to take a year.

During this phase, six buoys will be installed in the Cook Strait and fitted with monitoring equipment to measure temperature, sound and current. A hydrophone will also monitor any whales or dolphins in the area.

NZKS chief executive Grant Rosewarne said the new site would be much cooler than the Sounds and the current would mean fewer environmental impacts.

According to Rosewarne, the proposed area will not affect shipping routes, but a research phase is needed to assess the volatility of the water and the number of marine mammals

that travel through the area. Only then will the company know whether the pens are feasible.

"We don't expect this to be a problem here, but it's something we need to collect data on," he said.

The pens, which are based on Norwegian technology, are designed to withstand harsh sea conditions thanks to their steel structure. They're expected to be well-suited to the rough Cook Strait waters.

The project's data will assist in determining the number of farms that can be built in the area too. Rather than overcrowding the site, Rosewarne hopes to have a single farm in the Strait and acquire new sites for farm expansion.

"Our objective is to find three areas, or ideally six, where we can put one farm in each ... That's just best practice with biosecurity to have them further away," he said.

"But, put it this way, one farm would produce 10,000 tonnes of salmon so that would obviously keep us going for a while."

The best of fish 'n' chips

Over the past few weeks, we have featured some of Kiwi's top-rated fish and chip shops from around the country. Here is this week's feedback on your personal fish and chip favourites:

Paradise Seafoods, Kelburn

Friday nights are packed at this little fish and chip shop. There's always a selection of fresh fish to choose from - gurnard, snapper, trevally, blue warehou, groper and occasionally butterfish. The owner Sophie Chuun fillets the fish herself and cooks them in crumb, batter or on the grill. The battered fish is a winner - crispy, moist and perfectly cooked. The hand-cut potato fritters are also tasty, as are the paua fritters and homestyle range of burgers.

- Rory Hofmans

What fish and chip shop do you rate top-notch? Send us your choice [here](#) with the subject line 'Fish and Chips'.



News

Seventeen New Zealand fisheries harvesting hoki, hake, ling and southern blue whiting have been re-certified against the gold standard for sustainable seafood – the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification. The fisheries were recertified for a further five years with no objections and no conditions. The New Zealand hoki fisheries have been certified since 2001 and are the longest standing MSC certified whitefish fisheries in the world. New Zealand southern blue whiting was first certified in 2012 and hake and ling in 2014. The recertification places New Zealand fisheries in the top four percent of the world for providing the highest international standard of sustainable seafood. Maintaining this standard is testament to the active sustainable fisheries programmes being collaboratively implemented by the New Zealand government and seafood industry.

In an effort to rebuild the stock, Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash announced a 20 percent reduction in the commercial catch of east coast tarakihi this week. Nash signalled that he wants the fishing industry to develop a more comprehensive plan to rebuild the stock before considering further management action next year. Fisheries Inshore New Zealand (FINZ) supported the decision, saying it is good fisheries management. As part of the twice-yearly [sustainability round](#), increases in catch limits were announced for southern bluefin tuna, orange roughy and scampi, while the Kaipara scallop fishery, already closed to commercial fishing, is now closed to recreational fishers too. In total there have been catch increases for 11 stocks and decreases for 12. FINZ submission and strategy for tarakihi can be found [here](#).

Members of the Australian fishing industry are calling for a moratorium on seismic surveys by the oil and gas industry after research shows it has serious impacts on invertebrates such as lobster, scallops, abalone and crab. Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council chief executive Julian Harrington said the surveys are a big issue for the fishing industry and research now backs their concerns. The research found that seismic air guns that are used to search for fossil fuels in the ocean affect the immune systems of lobsters, are correlated with increased rates of mortality of scallops and kill zooplankton at a range of about 1km from the air gun.

[Check out the latest Seafood Magazines](#)