



# THE UPDATE

## Captain's Blog



## Engagement key for new phase of fisheries management

Current fisheries management reform proposals are the most significant in a generation.

The Quota Management System (QMS) has served the fishery well but it has become increasingly obvious it is not the complete fix.

Every system can be improved and after 33 years the QMS is no exception, although there have been a number of changes along the way.

The industry has been arguing for years that discards, deemed values and penalties in particular all need review.

Now, after much foofing around, these contentious areas are being at least partially tackled.

A newly released Fisheries New Zealand discussion paper, *Your fisheries – your say*, admits the current rules around landings and returning catch to the sea are “complex, open to interpretation, can be difficult for fishers to comply with and for FNZ to monitor”.

Offences and penalties are out of kilter too, with extreme sanctions including loss of vessel and quota for minor indiscretions.

Feedback, ahead of any legislative changes later this year, is sought on four main areas of reform:

- amending the rules for what fish must be brought back to port and what fish can be returned to the sea, including options to tighten the rules so fewer fish are returned to the sea, or increasing flexibility so that more can be returned

- reviewing the offences and penalties regime to ensure it's fair and effective
- streamlining and updating the ministerial decision-making process for setting catch limits
- technical changes to the Fisheries Act

This next phase of fisheries management reform follows the introduction of electronic reporting of commercial catches and of vessel positions.

The first commercial vessels switched from paper-based to electronic reporting in 2017 and this is being rolled out across the entire fleet this year.

Recreational fishing, said to be enjoyed by as many as one million New Zealanders each year, is not part of the review and catches will remain unrecorded.

"A recreational minimum legal size limit, in combination with a daily bag limit, is the most effective and sustainable way to control a recreational catch allowance," according to Nash.

That is even though we do not know what that catch is, although in the popular Hauraki Gulf snapper fish the recreational catch is thought to at least equal the commercial take.

Charter businesses, too, will escape wider scrutiny.

On board cameras remain on the agenda but Nash has taken the sensible view, despite the hysteria from the anti-commercial fishing lobby, that any application needs to be fit for purpose and developed with adequate engagement.

"There is a process to follow before on-board cameras can be considered and I need to first ensure the regulations are practical to implement, the technology is operationally ready to go, the systems are in place, and the fisheries management framework is clearly understood," he said.

Public meetings on the discussion paper were held in Whangarei, Auckland and Tauranga this week.

It's Nelson's turn on Monday, Christchurch the following day, New Plymouth on Wednesday and Wellington on Thursday.

The consultation round concludes the following week with Dunedin (26th), Napier (27th) and Invercargill on the 28th.

The timeframe is tight – submissions close on March 17 - and there is a marked lack of detail and no analysis.

The Seafood Promise roadshow, updating on current issues including the proposed reforms and industry reputation, is also connecting with industry - in Tauranga yesterday and in Auckland today at noon at Sanford.

Change is in the wind and it is up to the industry to engage and shape that.

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## Overcoming ocean acidification

Ocean acidification will be top of mind next week, with New Zealand leading the Commonwealth into a discussion on how to combat it.

The Commonwealth Ocean Acidification Action Group workshop is being hosted in support of the Commonwealth Blue Charter strategy – an agreement made between 53 countries to collaborate on solving ocean-related problems.

The ocean has absorbed around 525 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere since the industrial era, dropping pH levels significantly and increasing acidity by 30 percent.

It's [pH level] one of the greatest influencers of ocean health, according to New Zealand Ocean Acidification Council chair Christina McGraw.

"Ocean acidification is something that is happening now. We can't stop it until we reduce carbon emissions, but we can start thinking about ways to plan and mitigate for it now."

Forty-five experts from around the globe will take part in the workshop, discussing their experiences and knowledge to better address the impacts of ocean acidification.

Presentations will explore four objectives:

- Deepen understanding of ocean acidification and its impacts
- Identify options for effective monitoring and research
- Assess potential mitigation, adaptation and resilience measures based on existing local, national and international activities
- Identify potential actions and governance strategies for addressing the impacts of ocean acidification.

University of Washington Principal Oceanographer Jan Newton will be bringing first-hand experience of ocean acidification, share her learnings from the oyster mortalities that occurred in Pacific Northwest farms and will give insight into the monitoring and practices that were undertaken to recover production and help the farms adapt.

Leader of NIWA's Oceans-Climate Interactions programme Cliff Law will also be in attendance and expects the workshop will be a valuable source of knowledge for scientists.

"Ocean acidification has the potential to significantly impact marine ecosystems and economies, both around New Zealand and in the global region.

"Knowing more about the issue and what can be done to prevent this is crucial for future generations."

The broader strategy will look to expand research in the near future, specifically, how ocean acidification impacts economically important New Zealand species such as abalone, Greenshell mussels, snapper larvae and more.

The workshop will be held from 17 - 19 February, University of Otago, Dunedin.

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**New app communicates sustainability measures for deepwater fisheries**

Deepwater Group's new app lets you access the Operational Procedures right from your phone.

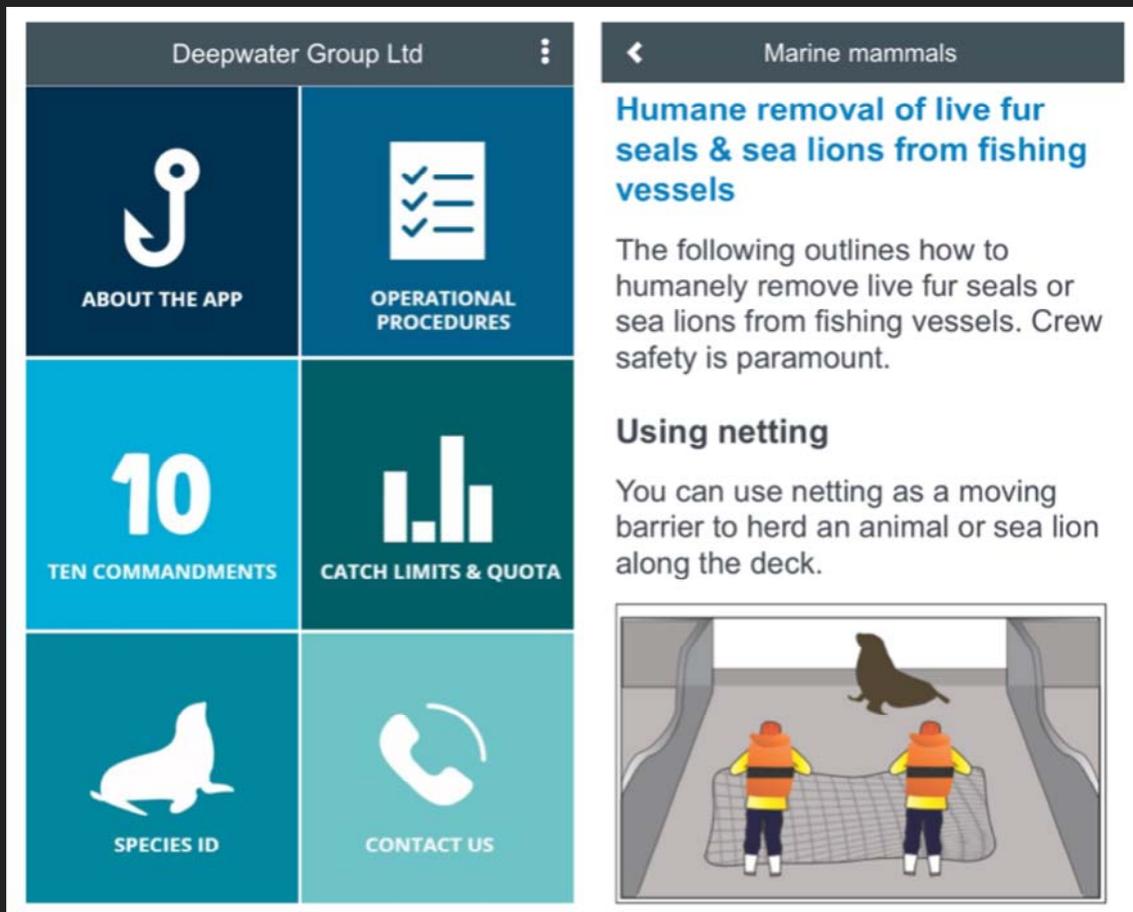
The Deepwater Group Operational Procedures outlines industry-agreed sustainability measures for deepwater fisheries. These range from industry-agreed spatial closures to best practice on how to release animals with care.

While these measures are non-regulatory, they complement government regulations and conformance against them is audited by at-sea government observers.

The app was developed to ensure these procedures are on hand at all times and to provide vessel managers and crews with tips and reminders via push notifications.

Download the "DWG OP" app from:

[Google Play](#) (Android users) or [App Store](#) (IOS users).



## Blessing draws a crowd

Island Bay's Esplanade in Wellington was abuzz on Sunday, as crowds gathered by the coastline to watch the annual blessing of the fleet ceremony. Fishing boats from around the region could be seen venturing out to Tapu te Ranga Island and returning to be

blessed by local and visiting clergy. Food stalls, several bands, and a summer swim event completed the atmosphere, along with an official blessing of Island Bay's new sea wall.



## News

Four sea lions have been killed by a fishing vessel trawling for squid off the remote Auckland Islands, *Stuff* reports. The incident brings the total New Zealand sea lion deaths to five this year. Two of Sanford's fishing vessels were responsible for the deaths, of which the skipper and crew were "extremely upset". The vessel was immediately pulled from the southern squid fishery as an "ultra-cautious approach", said a spokeswoman. "When the five captures happened in quick succession, we pulled all Sanford vessels out of the entire fishing area, regardless of whether they had captured a sea lion or not, while we assessed the situation," she said. "The recent spate of sea lion captures in one area of the squid fishery has been shocking to us at Sanford. We have taken an extraordinary set of actions as a result." Government observers were present on each vessel, as was the use of Sea Lion Exclusion Devices. Sanford are currently investigating the situation. "We are committed to sustainable fishing. Our ethos is to catch fish sustainably without harming endangered species. That is why we are taking this so seriously."

Duncan Garner has slammed Minister of Fisheries Stuart Nash over the lack of cameras on commercial fishing boats. Conservation groups are calling for cameras on boats, claiming endangered animals are being caught with fish. On Monday, Fisheries New Zealand said it had received two reports from commercial fishers about rare Hector's dolphins caught off the South Island's East Coast this summer. Forest & Bird chief executive Kevin Hague told *The AM Show* that it's not good enough and emphasised that immediate action was needed. "Literally hundreds of marine mammals, including these

critically endangered ones we talked about earlier on, thousands of birds... will be extinct within 20 years if we don't take action."

Garner expressed his disappointment in Nash for the lack of movement on cameras, which were proposed by the previous National Party Government. Hague said he thought of Nash as a "good bloke" who has been caught between two warring parties.

"I think that he's had a model of the right path as somewhere in between the industry and what the conservationists are saying.

"The reality is, the industry itself is trying to exploit the minister and use him for their own purposes, he has to resist it.

"We need that monitoring right now, because otherwise species like the antipodean albatross, the New Zealand sea lions... will be lost forever."

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