



# THE UPDATE

## Captain's Blog



### **Industry bait setter a potential seabird game changer**

Leigh longline fisherman Dave Kellian has long worried about protecting the seabirds that teem in New Zealand waters.

Twenty years ago he experimented with setting his baited longline hooks and worked out that if they were released at a depth of 10 metres, seabirds would be safe from being hooked.

But there were a few hurdles to overcome, not least setting the line, ensuring the baits were not whipped off and stopping the turbulent backwash from lifting the line back up.

After a lot of trial and error in Australia and here and considerable cost, a new bait setting device is about to undergo sea trials, the \$350,000 cost met by the industry through Fisheries Inshore New Zealand, the Auckland Zoo Charitable Trust through the Southern Seabird Solutions Trust, Fisheries New Zealand and the Department of Conservation.

Southern Seabirds is a collaborative alliance between the fishing industry, World Wildlife Fund, DOC, the Ministry for Primary Industries, and the Te Ohu Kaimoana.

New Zealand is one of the most challenging places in the world to fish without catching seabirds, because of the huge diversity of species and their varied foraging behaviours.

Our remote land and waters are the global centre of biological diversity for seabirds, with 84 species breeding here.

A range of albatrosses and petrels, which forage behind tuna longline vessels during the line setting process, are at particular risk.

The innovation was announced jointly by Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash and Conservation Minister Eugenie Sage this week.

This device could be a game changer, not only in New Zealand, but in time, in international fisheries as well, according to Nash.

“Often the best solutions are those developed by people involved in the industry,” he said.

“I’m very pleased we can help get this device through its final testing phase.”

Nash and Sage saw the project as an excellent example of industry and conservation agencies collaborating to achieve better results for our unique seabirds.

The device is being installed on a Nelson-based fishing vessel Sarda owned by Altair Fishing and will be trialled for six weeks during normal fishing in the Bay of Islands targeting bigeye tuna, overseen by a trained engineer.

It consists of a stern-mounted, hydraulically operated and computer controlled device that catapults baited hooks underwater in a steel capsule. The baits are flushed from the capsule by water pressure through a spring-loaded bait release door.

Fisheries Inshore NZ chief executive Dr Jeremy Helson said the baitsetter initiative was another aspect of wider measures to mitigate the risk to protected species.

These include three major fishing companies and environmental NGOs working collaboratively to reduce the risk to the threatened black petrel.

While extensive mitigation measures are already practised, a programme has also been developed in conjunction with MPI and DOC to have all vessels fitted with an individual plan and the crew trained in risk reduction techniques.

The vessel-specific plans are retained on board and their implementation assessed by Fisheries NZ observers.

“We share our seas with birds, marine mammals, protected fish and marine reptiles and, on occasion will unavoidably capture some,” Helson said.

“We recognise these impacts and will do all we can to reduce harm to a minimum.

“Our vision is to get as close to zero bycatch as possible through innovation and smart fishing.”

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## **Foodstuffs hooks a winning deal**

Kiwi owned and operated supermarket cooperative Foodstuffs has struck gold with the purchase of one of New Zealand’s largest independent quota holders, Leigh Fisheries Ltd.

The acquisition will allow Foodstuffs North Island to provide a steady supply of premium New Zealand seafood for New World, PAK’nSAVE and Four Square customers.

Founded in 1958, Leigh Fisheries has become a leading supplier of premium chilled longline fish. The company still operates from its historic site in Leigh, where it catches, processes and delivers fresh fish from the ocean to domestic and international markets in less than 48 hours.

Food Stuff's national seafood manager Dave Jose said Leigh's commitment to quality and sustainability made the company an attractive purchase.

"A great customer seafood experience results from quality, range and consistent supply, so the prerequisite for this is quota ownership," he said.

"This acquisition further extends our ability to meet growing consumer demand for fresh, premium, sustainably-caught species. Our customers will get to take the seafood journey with us, as we look to unlock the story of provenance, sustainability and kaitiaki behind our quality New Zealand seafood."

Consumers can expect Lee-Fish branded snapper, tarakihi, hapuku and line-caught tuna in-store from August 1.



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## **Ocean Bounty gears up for series three**

Ocean Bounty series three is gearing up once more to showcase the best of science, innovation, communities and the fishing industry in New Zealand's marine environment.

Host Graeme Sinclair will traverse the country with his crew, exploring the depths of the Hauraki Gulf, all the way to Antarctica, the Campbell Islands, Nelson and more.

The crew will revisit the Chathams and Fiordland for an update on changes in the fisheries before heading to look at an eel fishery – a first for the show.

Industry efforts to protect marine life will feature in the line-up, including projects working to protect yellow eyed penguins in the south, and shearwaters and albatross in the Chathams. We will also hear from scientists, sea captains, deckhands and business leaders.

Catch up on reruns of series two at 11am Sundays on TV3, before series three premieres on September 15.



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## News

Plans to improve the state of the Hauraki Gulf moved forward this week with the Government's announcement of its Ministerial Advisory Committee for the Sea Change Plan, *NZ Herald* reported. Nine members were appointed, including Catherine Harland (Co-Chair), Paul Majurey (Mana Whenua Co-Chair), Volker Kuntzsch, Dr Jeremy Helson, Raewyn Peart, Dr John Montgomery, Tame Te Rangi, Dr Valmaine Toki and Liane Ngamane. The committee will spend the next 12 months shaping responses to various Sea Change Plan proposals. The committee will provide the Department of Conservation and Fisheries NZ with a vital sounding board and independent, solutions-focused expert advice, said Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash. Any proposal will be subject to a thorough public consultation process.

The Southern Scallop Working Group and Fisheries New Zealand are seeking input into a [draft Marlborough Sounds Scallop Strategy](#). The Southern Scallop fishery (including the Marlborough Sounds) is currently closed. The draft strategy outlines the group's immediate priority, which is to ensure that any future scallop fishing in the Marlborough Sounds is sustainable and allows the fishery to rebuild to healthy levels. Feedback on the draft strategy can be completed [online](#) or emailed to [FMsubmissions@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:FMsubmissions@mpi.govt.nz). Submissions close 5pm, August 13. The final strategy will be released later this year.

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## New Zealand Seafood Industry Conference and Technical Day

### Conference 2019

Registrations for the 2019 New Zealand Seafood Industry Conference and Technical Day are open and the [programme](#) is now available.

Seafood New Zealand has negotiated accommodation rates at the conference venue and neighbouring hotels. Bookings can be made through the [information](#) section on the conference webpage along with [links](#) to Air New Zealand for group flight bookings.

Please note, there are now a limited number of tickets remaining for the [ANZ cocktail function](#), so be quick to secure your place.

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