



# THE UPDATE

Captain's Blog



## Seafood industry looks to build the blue economy

A settlement to the vexed issue of a Kermadecs ocean sanctuary must be based on objective science, not subjective ideology.

That is according to former Attorney-General and Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations Minister Christopher Finlayson in a forthright address to the annual Seafood NZ conference held in Queenstown today.

He said the scourge of plastics in the oceans was a more pressing issue. That could only be done if an international clean up fund was established with contributions from all nations bordering the Pacific Ocean.

"In the Kermadec zone there is no evidence of fish stock depletion or abundance in any species.

"The case for the sanctuary cannot on any evidence be made on any observable danger to biodiversity or ecology."

In the rush to declare a sanctuary covering 620,000 square kilometres midway between New Zealand and Tonga, there had been inadequate consultation with Maori and an undermining of rights in the 1992 fisheries settlement.

"The legislation giving effect to the sanctuary is now in limbo because the issues have not been resolved," Finlayson told the 280 conference delegates.

"I don't think it will be resolved by further consultation.

"In any event, a strong argument can be made that with the Quota Management System, there is in fact no need for such a large marine reserve.

"Conservation of fisheries species is an essential ingredient of the QMS. It is the intelligent and proper recourse to that system on which we should rely for the conservation and management of our fisheries resources."

The best way to address stock depletion in this part of the world was to tackle the flotilla of tuna fishing boats around the northern end of the Kermadec zone on the edge of New Zealand's 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone.

"The tuna fleet is mainly based out of American Samoa," he said.

"The USA needs to address this issue."

He suggested a fresh start with the Kermadecs discussion, one without anger or recrimination.

"Let's maintain the basic principles of the Treaty relationship and the Treaty-based agreements we have made. And this time let's get it right.

"Any solution has to be based on ecology, not ideology.

"If the sanctuary proposal goes ahead some fishing must be permitted.

"That is not an absurd proposition. It has been agreed to in Rapa Nui (Easter Island).

"The integrity of the 1992 Settlement must be safeguarded at all costs."

The conference was opened by Regional Economic Development Minister Shane Jones in the absence of Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash.

Speakers today include US Ambassador to NZ Scott Brown on trade; Seafood NZ chair Craig Ellison with a critical assessment of the industry's performance under its code of conduct; Department of Conservation director-general Lou Sanson on predator free Auckland Islands and co-operation with the seafood sector; fisheries science manager Dr Rich Ford on the healthy state of our sustainable fish stocks; an international perspective on seafood markets from Rabobank analyst Gorjan Nikolik; a panel discussion on Treaty and property rights; a preview from Graeme Sinclair of the third series of the Ocean Bounty television series; and the presentation of Seafood Stars awards.

The conference was preceded by a packed technical day that included innovation in bioactives from marine resources; ocean warming; marine mammals and seabird protections; electronic reporting update and a Seafood Innovations Ltd project with Scott Technologies and Mt Cook Alpine Salmon to add value to king salmon by automatic removal of pinbones from fillets.

A transtasman rock lobster conference is also in Queenstown - on Monday and Tuesday (Aug 12-13) next week.

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**Warming oceans a bigger threat than fishing**

The world's oceans could lose up to 17 percent of its marine life by the end of the century if climate change continues on its current path, according to a [new study](#). That's a five percent decrease per degree of global warming.

The six-year effort used a combination of climate and ecosystem models to understand how rising ocean temperatures could affect marine populations over time.

“Our study represents a major undertaking,” said co-author Marta Coll. “We used for the first time a comparative and standardized approach of six global marine ecosystem models forced with two Earth-system models and four emission scenarios with and without fishing.”

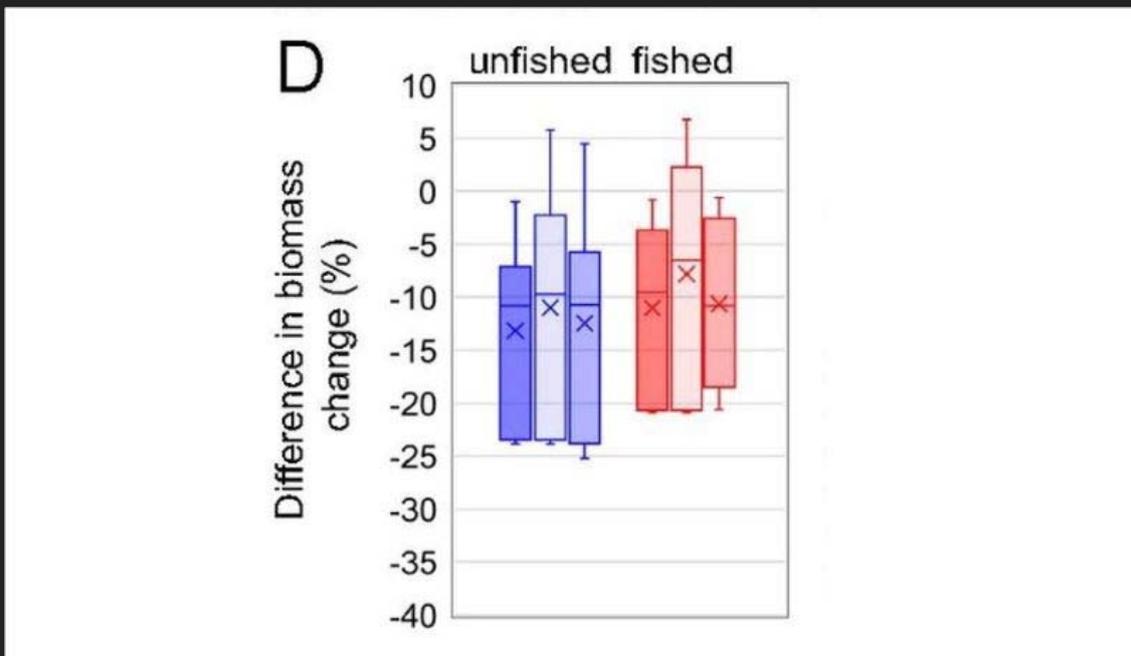
The model predicted that fishing will have little to no impact on the ocean's biomass in the future and that temperature will dramatically change the composition of fish in the ocean.

“We will see a large decrease in the biomass of the oceans,” said one of the study's authors William Cheung. “There are already changes that have been observed.”

Marine life low in the food chain is expected to be most affected, amplifying through the food web and leaving larger marine mammals most vulnerable. Most of that lost biomass is expected to come from a sharp decrease in organisms larger than 20cm – an event which could have wide spread implications for fishermen and seafood consumers.

“The fact that the estimated climate change impacts are independent of fishing provides an added incentive to develop sustainable and adaptive fishing, responsive to climate change, which we need to feed a world of nine billion humans,” said co-author Manuel Barange.

The study concluded that reducing emissions remains the most important thing society can do to protect the ocean.



The three boxes per color represent, from left to right, total biomass, biomass >10cm and biomass >30cm. You can see slightly higher total relative biomass in the fished models, though the errors bars are much higher in the unfished scenarios. *Lotze et al. 2019.*

## 2019 Seabird Smart Awards

The 2019 Seabird Smart Awards are open for nominations.

The biennial awards are an opportunity to recognise those who go the extra mile for seabirds.

Individuals, companies, vessel crews, or anyone involved in fishing that's committed to making a real difference for seabirds, can be nominated.

Visit the [Seabirds Smart Awards site](#) for more information. [Nominations](#) close on 31 August.

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## News

Fisheries Inshore chief executive Jeremy Helson believes tarakihi numbers could be boosted without the need for any cuts to catch limits. Instead, changes to fishing practices could achieve the desired goal within 25 years, he said. "We're proposing to close some areas where there are high concentrations of juvenile fish," Helson said. "We are proposing that when vessels catch large numbers of juvenile fish, they will move out of those areas. We're in the middle of conducting some trials with more effective fishing gear to try and be more selective about the fish we take." Cuts to commercial catch would have a severe economic impact. "You will put a lot of people out of business, a lot of regional communities will suffer and tarakihi in supermarkets might dry up and certainly get a lot more expensive." Fisheries New Zealand is putting advice together for Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash based on industry and other feedback ahead of the decision to make tarakihi cuts.

Fisheries New Zealand is seeking feedback on its proposals to manage the Auckland Island squid fishery to protect the local sea lion population.

*Options include:*

- The maximum impact fishing can have on the sea lion population before the fishery is closed for the season
- The proportion of fishing trips that are required to have a government observer on board
- Rules around the use of sea lion exclusion devices to ensure that if a sea lion does enter a trawl net that it has the best possible chance of escaping and surviving.

Director of Fisheries Management, Stuart Anderson said there remains a range of threats to sea lions outside of fishing, including disease and environmental factors. "The evidence is telling us the measures in place to manage fishing impacts are effective," Anderson said. "We've undertaken a science programme which has confirmed that tools used to allow sea lions to escape from fishing nets, called Sea Lion Exclusion Devices (SLEDs), have

significantly reduced the threat from fishing.” The proposals are designed to ensure that if fishing reaches the point where it’s having a large impact, action can be taken, said Anderson. For more information, or to make a submission, visit the Fisheries New Zealand website [here](#).

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