



Friday update



Captain's Blog

July 8, 2016

Bright fisheries ready for the future

Despite some rough water this year, the seafood industry is in a good spot. Seafood drives commodity prices higher, was a headline in The New Zealand Herald this week.

And Stuff headlined: Big early catches raise hopes for promising hoki season. Those reports reflected record seafood export returns and healthy fish stocks. That good news was reflected in a Seafood NZ presentation to the New Zealand Marine Sciences Society and the Australian Marine Sciences Association joint conference at Victoria University this week.

Several hundred scientists heard scores of presentations over four days supplemented with workshops that included ocean acidification, the Ross Sea toothfish fishery and where to next for the Quota Management System after 30 years.

The Ministry for Primary Industries' Dr Pamela Mace, principal advisor fisheries science, told the conference the QMS had been a successful management system but, like everything else, it needed continual review, refinement and improvement.

The progress made included moving from little to no overcapacity and few to no fishing subsidies. There were high penalties for violations and transparent fisheries management processes with high public participation. And there was a huge increase in the level of information and understanding of fish

In the Media



New secrets of Antarctic toothfish

NZ Herald (July 6) reported on a first-ever fisheries survey of the Antarctic toothfish. The survey, to study the reproduction of Antarctic toothfish, their population distribution, and their role in the Ross Sea ecosystem, was funded by the Ministry for Primary Industries, the Commission of the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and Talley's New Zealand. Researchers from NIWA and the Italian National Programme of Antarctic Research onboard Talley's ice strengthened longline vessel Janas, collected the embryos of Antarctic toothfish for the first time by using plankton nets to sample down to a depth of 500 metres. The new information would be used to improve stock assessment and ecosystem models and advance management of the fishery. [Read more](#)

populations.

"I maintain that defining and implementing targets and limits for the world's wild fisheries has been instrumental in ending overfishing and rebuilding depleted fish stocks, particularly in the last two decades," Dr Mace said.

The challenges included responding to natural variations in the abundance of fish stocks in a timely way.

"Fish populations vary naturally even in the absence of fishing. The current set-up of the QMS makes it difficult to change Total Allowable Catches frequently. For 348 meaningful stocks, most of which have been in the QMS for 10–27 years, TACs for 57 percent have never been altered and there have been two or fewer changes for 89 percent of stocks."

There was also much to be done in addressing conflicting objectives of alternative users of the marine environment.

The QMS did not anticipate conflicts between different sectors and biodiversity conservation considerations. The Seafood NZ address noted consumers globally are increasingly influenced by the health benefits, food safety and environmental credentials of the food they are purchasing and this country is well placed to meet those demands.

The Simmons report alleging gross fish dumping over 60 years from 1950 was also given a flick.

Its claims potentially undermine the QMS, yet its methodology remains a mystery. And if it was correct, then there are an awful lot more fish out there than anyone realised.

On the increasingly bright trade front, while New Zealand doesn't have a dominant global market position for any of its seafood products, what it does have is a biodiverse fishery. "We have a big range of species from temperate waters to the sub-Antarctic, leaving us less exposed to price fluctuations, unlike other primary sectors.

"Sustainable stocks will continue to drive increasing seafood exports that help underpin the prosperity of this remote trading nation with an enviable standard of living.

"And we are not going to run out of fish." And was the good news about the seafood sector, its successful management and its contribution to our economy received with universal acclaim at the conference?

Not exactly.

The first question after the Seafood NZ presentation was from veteran eco-warrior Cath Wallace.

How much are you paying Ray Hilborn? The answer was: Nothing. But Professor Hilborn is one of the world's foremost fisheries scientists and as such has been paid by the fishing industry in the past to carry out stock assessments. There is



Big early catches raise hopes for promising hoki season

Stuff (July 5) reported on good early hoki catches giving fishing companies cause for optimism as the 2016 hoki season enters its busiest period. Many West Coast-based vessels fishing the Hokitika Trench reported exceptional fishing since the start of June, including one boat known to have unloaded six times in a week. Sealord general manager of fishing Doug Paulin said there were usually two starts to the season which commence on either side of a designated 25-mile restricted fishing zone, with larger vessels fishing outside of that line. So far in 2016, catches outside of the 25 mile line have been encouraging and ahead of schedule. "What we've noticed is that outside of that line which typically wouldn't come on until the end of July, catching is very good there right now," Paulin said. [Read more](#)

Seafood leads commodity price rise

NZ Herald (July 5) reported on seafood driving New Zealand commodity prices higher in June. Commodity prices rose for a second month in June, led by more seafood and dairy products. Seafood prices led local gains, up 8.2 per cent with a notable increase in the price of hoki and squid. The ANZ commodity price index rose 3.7 per cent last month, after a 1.1 per cent increase in May. On an annual basis, prices were down 5.4 per cent. [Read more](#)

nothing untoward in that, although Prof Hilborn's view that responsible fisheries management will ensure the world's oceans are not doomed to be fished out gets him offside with the naysayers. However, we should empathise with those who believe the worst – it can't be easy living in such a dark space.

Stewart Island paua quota owners (PauaMAC5) were in the High Court this week. They were seeking a declaration that the Department of Conservation (DoC) was required to have regard to the safety of their divers (and the public more generally) when deciding whether it was appropriate to issue a shark cage diving permit under the Wildlife Act, and if so what conditions should be imposed on that permit. DoC has issued permits to two operators and has said it does not have a mandate to consider public safety, that the Wildlife Act only allows it to consider issues relating to the welfare and safety of the great white sharks concerned.

Judge David Collins, hearing the case on Wednesday, questioned whether DoC had the legal ability to authorise this activity at all. He said the shark cage operators needed to have the chance to be heard and the parties needed time to consider DoC's position and deal with it in their legal submissions. As a result the hearing has been adjourned, possibly until mid-October.

Paua industry counsel Bruce Scott said the development was positive. "While the delay is a bit frustrating, it raises another hurdle for these shark cage operations, which are being authorised without any consideration of the impact on the safety of paua divers or the public more generally."

– Tim Pankhurst

Seafood Stars Awards

Hurry up, nominations close July 31! Seafood New Zealand is marking our Quota Management System's 30th anniversary this year with the launch of a special seafood awards programme – the Seafood Stars Awards. Click link below for award and nomination details.



Maori business booming – kaimoana the top export commodity

TVNZ (July 2) reported on small Maori businesses now exporting to 53 countries reeling in exports worth \$44 million – up 15 per cent from 2014 – according to latest Statistics New Zealand figures. Kaimoana was the top export commodity 59 per cent of the total value of Maori exports in 2015. Other major exports include dairy products, meat and manuka honey. [Read more](#)



Nelson's blessing of the fleet

Nelson's annual Blessing of the Fishing Fleet is scheduled for Saturday, July 16 at noon on Wakefield Quay.

The memorial is timed to bless the local fishing vessels in the lead up to the hoki season.

There will be the usual fireworks on Friday night (July 15) from 6.30pm, with viewing from the waterfront and the port hills. On Saturday the Motueka Brass Band will play from noon at the Seafarers' Memorial, while the fishing boats line up along Wakefield Quay. The blessing ceremony will begin at 12.30pm, led by Bishop Richard Elena, Reverend Jeff Cotton, Father Bill Warwick and Archdeacon Andy Joseph.

The Rotary Club of Nelson will be offering scallop, fish and chip cook-ups, there will be an auction of the Catch of the Day and displays from the Port Nelson tugs, Fire Service and Coastguard. If Saturday is wet the Blessing of the Fleet will be held on Sunday 17 July.



Nomination form

Know someone who's keen to receive Friday Update? Click the 'Subscribe' button, enter your friend or colleague's email address, hit send, and we will take care of the rest.

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Postponement will be broadcast on More FM and The Breeze.



Consultation on SNA7

Submissions to the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) on the snapper (SNA7) fisheries close **July 11**.

[Click here to email submissions](#)



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