



Friday update



Captain's Blog

May 20, 2016

Orchestrated campaign to weaken New Zealand fishing industry

The catch reconstruction report headed by Dr Glenn Simmons is part of an orchestrated campaign.

The Simmons report is a highly politicised document that has been embraced by environmental NGOs and the Labour and Green parties in an attempt to embarrass the Government and to weaken commercial fishing.

The report was strictly embargoed until 9.30am on Monday this week but was circulating among Opposition parties and Greenpeace over the weekend. Dr Simmons then broke his own embargo by appearing on National Radio at 9.10am.

The German environmental organisation NABU was aware of the report's contents a month before its release and told Seafood NZ as much.

Spokesperson Dr Barbara Maas visited Seafood NZ on April 14 and warned she had evidence of alleged collusion between the Ministry for Primary Industries and the fishing industry, that she had a copy of an internal MPI document allegedly confirming this, there was reference to it in the Simmons report and she would make her claims public when the report was released.

In the Media

Fishy stories undermine catch estimate

Waatea News (May 19) reported on Seafood New Zealand Chairman George Clement dismissing as fabrication the latest catch reconstruction report by Dr Glenn Simmons. Mr Simmons ignored the audited data coming from the Ministry for Primary Industries and the National Institute for Water and Atmosphere, and has instead constructed a story from anecdotal evidence from anonymous sources, Mr Clement said.

On current audited evidence the extent of under-reporting of the deepwater catch was about 5 percent, not 270 percent, he said.

[Read more](#)



She further claimed she had 105 international conservation organisations ready to back a call for boycott of New Zealand seafood if dolphin protection was not increased. Dr Maas first called for such a boycott in 2012 and again in 2014 but gained no traction, given the extensive protections in place and no Maui captures.

The SNZ response to Dr Maas' latest claims was that it was beholden on her to produce evidence of such serious allegations. Her threats amounted to economic sabotage, if not blackmail.

There was no further contact until Wednesday of this week when Dr Maas made her boycott call through the BBC and Television New Zealand in the wake of the Simmons report.

There is a reference to dolphins capture in the Simmonds report, as Dr Maas indicated, but it relates not to Maui's but to Hector's dolphins, which are not endangered. It claimed "only one of two Hector's dolphins caught was recorded" but gives no other details. MPI said it had investigated, that only one dolphin was confirmed and that was a matter of public record.

The report was also discussed at an invitation only recreational fishing seminar in Auckland in early April attended by Barbara Maas and Dr Daniel Pauly, the lead author of the University of British Columbia-based Sea Around Us project, part-funded by Pew. The New Zealand study, Reconstruction of marine fisheries (1950–2010) is part of that wider study.

The draft New Zealand report became public 14 months ago in March last year. SNZ was alarmed at its unsubstantiated claims and met with Dr Simmons and two other report authors, Business School head Prof Nigel Haworth and Christina Stringer in September at Auckland University. All three are employed by the university. Prof Haworth is also president of the New Zealand Labour Party.

At that meeting Seafood NZ provided a detailed critique of the draft report's flawed methodology plus links to NIWA discards analysis and MPI stock assessments, all of which were ignored in the final report. The authors were on a mission and they were not to be dissuaded.

Seafood NZ's position on the report is that it is not credible to claim the actual catch over 60 years is two to three times that reported to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation.

The only way the conclusions could have been arrived at was to make a guess. The authors were so desperate to shore up a shaky case they even cited the case of a fisherman who fed his cat on discarded fish (which was not deterred by the bones). The same informant who revealed this sinister practice had eaten seafood at fishermen's houses and suspected it had not been declared (Interviewee 189). It was also revealed



Catch data alone weak predictor of fish stock health

Seafood News (May 17) investigated Daniel Pauly's claims about New Zealand's Quota Management System being flawed. The report said Pauly's Sea Around Us project has attempted to estimate the health of global fish stocks based solely on historical catch data as reported to the FAO. Few people would quarrel with the idea that from 1950 to 1980 catch reports were unreliable. But one of the authors' key points is to extrapolate this to say that current day accounting for discards, undersized fish, and non-target species is not sufficient. Unfortunately, the bulk of their analysis covers the period prior to New Zealand's quota management system, and also a period when much of New Zealand fisheries were dominated by foreign fleets, who are notorious for misreporting.

Discard rate 6.6 pc not 20–50 pc

Science Media Centre (May 16) featured NIWA fisheries scientist Owen Anderson's comments on the catch reconstruction report. For 1991–2013, the overall discard rate from the observed part of the fishery (about 20–25 per cent of the total fishing effort) in offshore fisheries was 6.6 per cent. Mr Anderson said. This was in stark contrast to the minimum 20 to 50 per cent reported in the Simmons report. "We also note that the Simmons report relies heavily on anecdotal evidence to apply multipliers to reported catches and discards. It is difficult to independently assess the appropriateness of these multipliers." [NIWA's bycatch and discard reports](#)

Study needs scrutiny

Radio New Zealand – The Panel (May 18) The Panel with Jim Mora featured Chris Wikaira, who noted that there had been serious questions raised about the discards study, and that treating the study as if it were truth without due scrutiny was more likely to damage New Zealand's reputation than the alleged

(interviewed 105). It was also revealed that fishermen sometimes ate fish at sea. The report, which relies upon anecdotes masquerading as facts, would not meet rigorous scientific peer review. The whole point of science is to put data before opinion. The sample is hopelessly biased. It includes interviews with 300 people, none of whom are named, and 200 of whom were crews on foreign chartered vessels complaining about their treatment.

The report's authors also leaked to the media a preliminary MPI report, code named Operation Achilles, into dumping and discarding by several inshore boats recorded in a camera trial off Timaru. That is clearly the report Dr Maas was referring to.

Wide media coverage of the report this week has prompted MPI to launch an inquiry.

The focus on the inshore fishery has served the Simmons team and Greenpeace well.

The bulk of fish are caught in the deepwater, which has high observer coverage and discards of around only 6 percent, according to NIWA peer reviewed scientific reports going back to the 1990s. It defies logic to claim the actual catch is more than twice that recorded.

MPI, NIWA and Victoria University chairman in fisheries science Prof Matthew Dunn have all queried the report's credibility.

If the report was accurate, there could be more than twice as many fish in the sea as previously thought, Prof Dunn said.

"This means sustainable catches and catch quotas could also be higher. If that was true, I'd expect the industry to be saying 'there's loads more fish out there, let us land it'.

"Recently the industry had the option of increasing the quota for hoki but they actually declined. To me, this doesn't suggest that our catch and stock estimates are that wrong. The QMS and the deemed value system is not perfect but it doesn't detract from the fact that a privatised fishery system like our QMS is still considered to be amongst the best, if not the best, way of managing fisheries resources.

"We want our fisheries management and industry to be looking forward, not worrying about what happened 50 years ago."

The QMS continues to evolve and there are issues in the inshore in particular in relation to discarding and dumping rules and the application of deemed values, where fish are accidentally caught outside the annual catch entitlement. That does deserve scrutiny.

One thing is certain in this tangled net – activist academics in concert with green imperialists will continue to pursue a determined anti-fishing agenda.

Tim Beakhurst

misreporting itself. He suggested that this was one of two examples that "gives science a bad name". [Listen to clip, comment at 2:40](#)

Report misses sustainability point

Ministry for Primary Industries (May 16) said the Auckland University report estimating historical catch in New Zealand fisheries misses the point when it comes to sustainability. MPI's Director Fisheries Management, Dave Turner, says its initial review of the report has raised concerns about methodology and conclusions. "We have decades of peer-reviewed science that shows steadily increasing levels of abundance. The situation now is that New Zealand fisheries are healthy overall, and that's because of careful, science-based management," Mr Turner said. [Read more](#)

Also read: [MPI Director General Martyn Dunne's statement](#) in relation to Operation Achilles.

Have your say about SeaCert changes

Maritime NZ wants to hear from seafarers on proposed changes to the SeaCert framework to make it easier and cheaper for some seafarers with older certificates to continue working. One proposal is to "ring-fence" some older tickets to allow seafarers to continue using them. Other proposed rule changes include removing the need for seafarers with Able Seaman certificates to transition to SeaCert, and no longer requiring ratings to renew certificates every five years.

[Click here for consultation info](#)

Public consultation meetings (all meetings start at 6pm unless stated):

- Invercargill – Monday 23 May, Ascot Park Hotel, Tay Street & Racecourse Rd, (midday start)
- Greymouth – Tuesday 24 May, Tai Poutini Polytechnic, 73–87 Tainui St
- Nelson – Wednesday 25 May, Port Nelson Ltd, 10 Low Street
- Auckland – Thursday 26 May, Marine Pollution Response Service (MPRS), 755 Te Atatu Road, Te Atatu, Waitakere
- Whangarei – Monday 30 May, Forum North, 7 Rust Avenue
- Tauranga – Tuesday 31 May, Tauranga Yacht & Power Boat Club, 90 Keith Allen Drive
- Gisborne – Wednesday June 1, The Whitehouse, 69 Peel Street
- Christchurch (Feds Conference) – Friday 3 June 2016 Rvdnes Latimer

— TIM PARKHURST

Friday 5 June 2016, Rydges Latimer Hotel, 30 Latimer Square, 8.30am.

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.

[Subscribe](#)



NZFCF Conference 2016

This year's New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen Conference will be hosted by the Lyttelton Association and held at the Rydges Latimer, Christchurch. Click buttons below to register for the conference and book your stay at the Rydges at special, discounted rates for conference delegates.

Thursday, June 2, 2016
30, Latimer Square, Christchurch 8011



[Register now](#)

[Book stay](#)

Bluff Oyster & Food Festival

The Bluff Oyster and Food Festival tomorrow will not only feature its big star – the sumptuous, meaty Bluff oyster – but also a wide range of other seafood – rock lobster, paua, scallops, salmon and blue cod. There's also a good selection of New Zealand wines and Southern ales. The day long festival includes live music and a host of oyster opening and eating competitions.

[Click to see what's in store this year](#)
Tomorrow, Lee Street, Bluff.

[Click cover to read latest issue!](#)

