



Friday update



Captain's Blog

September 23, 2016

Fishing discards issue complex but not unsolvable

The current fuss around fish discarding can have a positive outcome.

That is to find a workable solution to a problem that is common to fisheries worldwide.

Discarding is a pejorative term that resonates badly with the public.

What is not widely understood is that in many cases fishermen are observing the law, rather than breaking it, when returning unwanted fish to the sea.

That is in the case of fish that are undersized, or are low value species that are not subject to a quota.

The fact some of those fish are alive and will swim off is also not widely recognised.

The real concern lies with illegal dumping, that is fish that are thrown overboard because the catcher does not have quota for them.

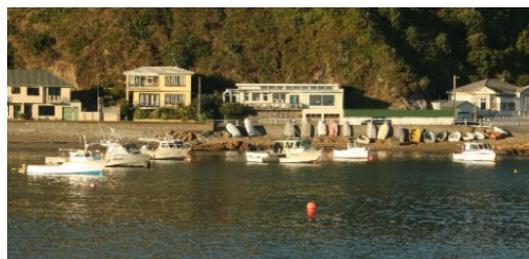
That is wasteful and is supposed to be addressed through what are termed deemed values.

That is a system whereby excess fish are landed and the fisher pays the sum that has been deemed by the Crown.

This is meant to be cost neutral, so that fishers are not incentivised to catch fish they do not have quota for but neither are they financially penalised when they do so.

The reality is the values in some cases are so out of kilter that it is uneconomic for such fish to be landed. This situation

In the Media



Fish dumping problem 'exaggerated'

Radio New Zealand (September 21) reported on Fisheries Inshore chief executive Jeremy Helson saying the extent of fish dumping in New Zealand waters was exaggerated.

There were issues that needed to be addressed, but they were not were systemic, Dr Helson said.

"I think it's also a little unfair to make generalised statements like that, and impugn the integrity of fishers, most of whom are pretty hard-working, honest people."

Dr Helson said the industry had worked with the ministry for some time to get a solid grasp on exactly what is being caught. He said combating the dumping of fish was complex but the industry was willing to help. [Read more](#)
Listen to [Dr Helson's interview on Morning Report](#)

Also read:

[Media Release – Industry keen to resolve complex fisheries issues](#)

is exacerbated when fish stocks increase and catch limits are not adjusted accordingly.

The incentive is to break the law.

That is not excusable but it is understandable.

The issues are complex but they are not unsolvable and industry is keen to do so.

Electronic monitoring on vessels is part of the solution but it is the end point. It will improve transparency but can only be fully effective if the settings and policies are prudent. Monitoring a problem is not necessarily solving it.

Much has been made of an internal email from MPI Director of Fisheries Management (Dave Turner) published in the Heron report that offered the opinion that "if we found the golden bullet to stop discarding, we would probably put over half of the inshore fleet out of business overnight through lack of ACE (Annual Catch Entitlement) availability to cover by-catch".

But as Fisheries Inshore chief executive Jeremy Helson pointed out on Radio NZ's Morning Report, the email went on to say:

"Industry themselves are very keen on getting a better handle on this problem as they recognise the sustainability issues and the fact they could have higher TACCs if accurate reporting occurred."

Helson said the impression being given that inshore fishermen were routinely breaking the law was untrue and unfair. For example, it did not reflect what was happening in the Hauraki Gulf, the country's most important snapper fishery, where companies had voluntarily invested in camera trials on their vessels.

He welcomed working with MPI to address discarding concerns and reassure the public.

The discarding issue has a fair way to travel yet, just as the Kermadec debate has markedly changed course. Environment Minister Nick Smith has been sidelined, given the rift created with coalition partners, Act and the Maori Party, and Prime Minister John Key and deputy Bill English in his absence are now taking a much more conciliatory approach.

That includes allowing time for the consultation that should have been done in the first place, however long that takes.

Whether the same consideration is given to commercial property rights remains to be seen.

While the next election is still more than a year away, the Government is firmly fixed on a fourth term and instructions have gone out to Ministers to secure alliances and avoid controversy. Even the Greens have come to the belated realisation that conservation ideals do not transcend Treaty rights and that the two can and must sit alongside each other.

Industry keen to improve NZ fisheries management system

FMCG Business (September 19) reported on the New Zealand seafood industry welcoming the independent report into fisheries compliance operations, released by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). "This report raises some very important issues for the future management of New Zealand fisheries," Fisheries Inshore New Zealand Chief Executive Dr Jeremy Helson said. "Where there is unlawful behaviour occurring we support actions by MPI to address it. This report provides a pathway to sit down with MPI and address some difficult and long standing issues."

His comments were in response to the release of the findings of the independent review by Queen's Counsel Michael Heron into circumstances surrounding specific Ministry for Primary Industries fisheries compliance operations. [Read more](#)

Also read:

[Media Release – Industry keen to improve fisheries management system](#)



Kermadec sanctuary on ice if no agreement with Maori Party

New Zealand Herald (September 20) reported on Prime Minister John Key effectively confirming the Kermadec Marine Sanctuary would be put on ice indefinitely if an agreement with the Maori Party over fishing rights cannot be reached. Speaking from New York yesterday, Key said there was strong support for the marine sanctuary among Pakeha and many Maori but he was not willing to risk instability for his government over it.

"We are not about to go and do something that is going to cause the Maori Party to walk away. If we have to wait a while, we have to wait a while. "There is zero chance of this causing instability issues with the Government so if we have to wait we have to wait."

[Read more](#)

– Tim Pankhurst

Seafood Industry Conference
Speaker presentation slides and videos are now loaded on our website. Click the button below to browse and play.



Presentations

Enjoy Friday Update or have suggestions to make it better? Click the 'Feedback' button, and drop us a line.

Feedback

Click to browse our latest issue

Also read: [Te Ohu Kaimoana meets Maori Party over Kermadec Sanctuary](#)



NZ King Salmon float aims to raise \$76 to \$82 million

NBR (September 22) reported on the New Zealand King Salmon float aiming to raise between \$76 million and \$82 million, including the already announced \$30 million in new capital. The investment banks running the float, First NZ Capital and Macquarie, confirmed full details of the book build's parameters on Wednesday, following the leak of some of the details to the Australian Financial Review. The indicative price range for the book build, which begins today, is \$1.10 to \$1.20 per share with the number of shares to be issued depending on the final price. [Read more](#)



The Burkhart brothers, Trevor (left) and Dennis.

Marlborough's Burkhart Fisheries to star on Country Calendar

Stuff (September 20) reported on rock lobster fishers Dennis and Trevor Burkhart of Burkhart Fisheries and their multi-million dollar exporting business being featured on Country Calendar. The special episode features Dennis and Trevor's journey, from their early days crayfishing and running Burkhart Fisheries with their respective wives, Barbara and Cathy, to owning more rock lobster quota than any other family in New Zealand. [Read more](#)
Watch Country Calendar's episode on Burkhart Fisheries on September 24 at 7pm.



New Zealand Aquaculture Conference 2016

Just a week until the 2016 New Zealand Aquaculture Conference. This year's conference will be held over three days.

September 27: Research day, 9am – 5pm.

September 28: Technical day, 9am – 5pm.

September 29: Conference, 8.30am – 4.45pm; cocktail function, 6.30pm – 10pm.

[Book now](#) to secure your spot or view [Conference Agenda](#).

Rutherford Hotel, Nelson

Eliminating harmful fisheries subsidies

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is seeking input from industry as it prepares for negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to prohibit harmful fisheries subsidies.

New Zealand has joined with 12 other WTO members to work together with other like-minded WTO members on the negotiations.

A Joint statement from the group of 12 nations says that fisheries subsidies, estimated to be in the tens of billions of dollars annually, create significant distortions in global fish markets and are a major factor contributing to overfishing and overcapacity and the depletion of fisheries resources.

“We will seek to strengthen the reporting and transparency of fisheries subsidies. We will also seek, as part of these WTO negotiations, to enhance co-operation to help developing countries to strengthen their capacity to implement these types of subsidy disciplines.”

MFAT says the initiative will build on the work New Zealand has been doing in this area, including as the Co-ordinator of the “Friends of Fish” group of countries at the WTO who committed to pursue ambitious outcomes and reinvigorate work on fisheries subsidies disciplines in the WTO underpinned by the UN Sustainable Development Goals which requires the elimination of harmful fisheries subsidies by 2020.

MFAT's Trade Division says they want to talk with industry about the implications that subsidies have on their operations and profitability.

