



# Friday update



## Captain's Blog

October 28, 2016

### Seafood industry continues to reduce its environmental impact

Global greenhouse gas emissions causing ocean acidification and warming is the major issue facing New Zealand's marine environment.

That is according to the report, Our Marine Environment 2016, released yesterday by the Ministry for the Environment and Statistics New Zealand.

The report is one of a six-monthly series covering marine, fresh water, atmosphere and climate, land, and air, and expands on last year's overall Environment Aotearoa report.

The marine edition focused on climate, birds and mammals, coastal waters and harbours and estuaries, and fisheries and the impact of fishing.

Secretary for the Environment Vicky Robertson said fishing was a highly valued economic, cultural and recreational activity but it also put pressure on marine wildlife and ecosystems.

"There are some areas where we are seeing our use of the sea going in the right direction," she said. "While bycatch remains a considerable threat to our marine life, there have been some significant inroads made in recent decades."

She attributed this mostly to the uptake of mitigation measures such as bird-scaring and sea lion exclusion devices.

According to the report:

## In the Media



### Fishing companies laud 'best season in many years'

Stuff (October 21) reported on the fruitful finish to a great hoki fishing season for the deepwater and inshore vessels that fish the Cook Strait and West Coast.

The 2016 hoki season officially came to an end on September 30.

New Zealand's largest hoki quota holder, Sealord, has recorded a bumper hoki season and general manager of fishing Doug Paulin said the positive results were a good indication of the health of the fishery as well as some excellent teamwork.

- Seabird commercial bycatch numbers decreased from about 9000 birds in 2003 to 5000 in 2014.
- In 1999 the estimated bycatch of fur seals was 1729. This decreased to 490 in 2014.
- In 1996 the estimated bycatch of sea lions was 143. This decreased to 43 in 2014.
- From 1997 to 2014 the number of trawl tows decreased 50 percent and dredge tows by 83 percent.

Loss of breeding habitats, introduced predators and disease were listed as non-fishing threats to marine birds. Ship strike, pollution, disease and habitat changes were among the threats to mammals.

The report estimated 90 percent of New Zealand's 92 native seabird species and 14 shorebird species were either threatened or were at risk of extinction. A quarter of the world's seabird species breed in New Zealand and almost 10 percent breed only here.

Around one quarter of marine mammal species are said to be threatened with extinction.

The Stuff website promptly inaccurately reported "90 percent of New Zealand seabirds at risk of extinction", which was repeated in print today.

What the report did say was that 35 percent (32 of 92) seabird species are threatened with extinction, based on the threat classification system.

While the media concentrated on fishing at the report's launch in Wellington yesterday, the study highlighted degradation of coastal marine habitats and ecosystems.

A massive amount of sediment washed off the land into our estuaries and shores, about 192 million tonnes every year, equivalent to 308,000 fully loaded Caterpillar dump trucks. "This is our top soil, so we are losing one of our big assets out to the ocean," Ms Robertson said. "Furthermore, too much sediment makes life hard for shellfish and other creatures.

"Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus washed off our land into the sea cause problems. Run-off can reduce oxygen in seawater and contribute to algal blooms, which can be toxic. Our coastal areas perform some really important functions like recycling nutrients and human waste, trapping and stabilising sediments, producing oxygen that supports other marine life, and providing nursery grounds for fish."

Ms Robertson defended the fishing industry at the media conference, saying there were a lot of good initiatives under way to protect the marine environment.

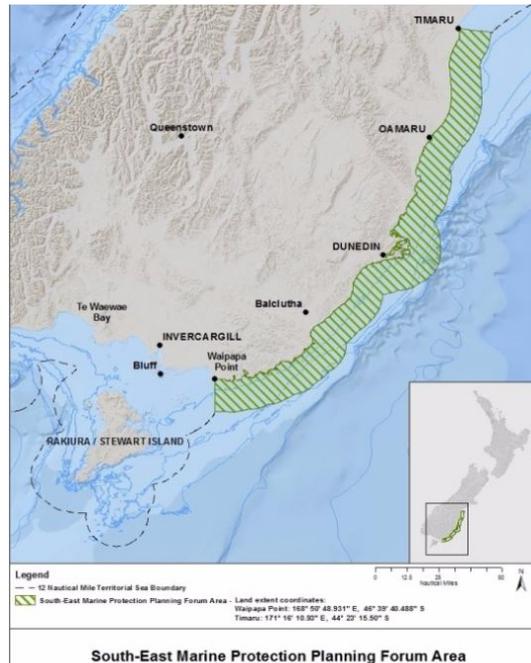
Television Auckland reporter Andrea Vance presented a number of questions at the media conference critical of commercial fishing, suggesting "it was a problem that the fishing industry was

"It's been a very good season from a catching perspective."

As well as a pleasing catch rate, the size of the fish had been generally larger than usual.

"It is positive to see good catching backing up the science, which showed that the fishery is in a very healthy state and that it supports our long term plan to order a new vessel," Paulin said.

[Read more](#)



## South-East Marine Protection Forum Public Consultation – Have your say

The South-East Marine Protection Forum has released a public consultation document and has called for submissions on initial proposals of **20 sites** that could be included in a network of marine protected areas (MPAs) along the South-East Coast of the South Island from Timaru to Waipapa Point.

You can download the public consultation document, submission form and supporting documents [on this link](#), or call 0800 687 729 to request a copy. Copies will also be available for viewing at local council offices and public libraries throughout the region.

*Submissions close 5pm, Tuesday, December 20, 2016.*

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always a barrier”.

Ms Robertson said we were in a good place in New Zealand, the fishing industry wanted sustainable practices and it was “not as black and white as you suggest”.

But it turned out the national broadcaster could not find room in its evening bulletin for any coverage of the report.

Newshub’s Isobel Ewing, Radio NZ’s Kate Gudsell and the NZ Herald’s Jamie Morton provided extensive and accurate coverage.

Statistics NZ released a companion report, New Zealand’s marine economy: 2007–13, that highlighted the contribution of the sector.

There were 47,000 jobs filled in fisheries and aquaculture, according to Government Statistician Liz MacPherson. Marine-related industries contributed \$4 billion, almost 2 percent of gross domestic product in 2013.

“These results show the level of significance of the marine economy to New Zealand’s overall economy,” Ms MacPherson said.

– Tim Pankhurst

Also read:

Media Release –

[Seafood industry continues to reduce environmental impact](#)

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Have your say on issues raised in Friday Update.

Comment



Pan-fried hoki with wholemeal, bacon & herb crumb. Photo: Stephen Goodenough

## Best Fish Guide for sustainable New Zealand seafood launched

(October 28) Consumers can choose sustainable New Zealand seafood with confidence, with the launch of Seafood New Zealand’s updated [Best Fish](#)

## Safer commercial fishing and internationally recognised tickets

New Zealand is adopting international rules on certification for commercial fishermen, aimed at making fishing safer and ensuring New Zealand fishers will have their tickets recognised internationally.

Following public consultation in April 2015, the Government decided to accede to the International Maritime Organization’s International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995 (known as STCW-F).

The Convention covers crew working on fishing vessels of more than 24 metres in length or with propulsion power of 750kW or more, operating beyond 12 nautical miles from shore.

Maritime New Zealand is currently consulting on rule changes required as part of this process.

### Have your say

*The invitation to comment document is available on the Maritime NZ website [on this link](#).*

*Consultation closes on **November 7**.*

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## Seafood Industry Conference

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



Presentations

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Click to browse our latest issue

### [Guide website.](#)

The Best Fish Guide will let consumers check the sustainability credentials of all New Zealand commercial fish species, tips for buying fresh New Zealand seafood, and some great recipes. Seafood buyers can see for themselves just how sustainable and healthy New Zealand's fish stocks are, backed by solid, science-based fisheries management.

Seafood New Zealand Chief Executive Tim Pankhurst says the Best Fish Guide is a great way of helping consumers choose from a wide range of nutritious and tasty seafood.

"We hope this guide helps everyone choose and enjoy New Zealand seafood with confidence.

"New Zealand is internationally respected for its innovative and world-leading approach to sustainable science-based fisheries and aquaculture management." The website will serve as a guide for individual consumers as well as top chefs in New Zealand and around the globe, who are keen to know all about New Zealand seafood's sustainability credentials.

**Browse our Best Fish Guide on**  
[bestfishguide.co.nz](http://bestfishguide.co.nz)

[Download Media Release](#)

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