



# Friday update



## Captain's Blog

October 20, 2017

### Time to hit pause on IEMRS

The biggest change to the commercial fishing industry since the introduction of the Quota Management System 31 years ago continues to cause headaches. New regulations will help revolutionise the way New Zealand's commercial fisheries are managed, then Primary Industries Minister Nathan Guy announced in July.

For its part, the seafood industry signalled its support for improved fisheries outcomes through electronic data transfer and other technology. It recognised enhanced fisheries management, properly applied, would also serve to strengthen the public's confidence in the industry and the ministry.

That was fine in theory.

The reality has been the ramming through of Integrated Electronic Monitoring and Reporting System (IEMRS) regulations that are simply not fit for purpose.

The hardware and software systems required to deliver the system do not even yet exist.

MPI did not consult on the regulations before promulgation, despite their profound consequences.

Fisheries Inshore New Zealand, representing the smaller fleet primarily fishing territorial waters out to 12 miles whose members are most affected, has called for the suspension of IEMRS and convening of a working group of industry experts to address more than 100 outstanding issues.

## In the Media



### Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary part of coalition negotiations – report

The *NZ Herald* reported the Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary is part of the Green Party's negotiations to form the next Government.

The proposed bill was announced in September, 2015 by then Prime-Minister John Key and would exclude fishing and mining from 620,000 sq km.

Green's leader James Shaw would not be drawn in on whether the sanctuary would be part of any deal.

"I have no comment on any of the negotiations and neither have I had any comment on the content of the negotiations at any point," he said. National put the bill on hold last year after Maori raised concerns it would impede Fisheries Deed of Settlement rights.

Te Ohu Kaimoana chief executive Dion Tuuta told [Waatea News](#) all political parties claim to support Maori rights, but that is not always reflected in reality. "If it is on the table for coalition talks then last time it was really only the Maori Party that stopped the rights being

MPI has tacitly admitted its IEMRS regulations are not workable in that it has provided interim exemptions from the provisions applied to the deepwater fleet on Oct 1.

The rushed timetable was politically driven. The poorly delivered process has ridden roughshod over fishermen who believe they are being treated like criminals.

Now that the election is out of the way and everyone is wondering what to make of the Labour/NZ First/Greens coalition government and the policies that will unfold, there is no valid reason not to pause and take stock.

Even the environmental and recreational fishing lobbies, which have been consulted on a Future of Our Fisheries (FOOF) review, of which IEMRS is a part, are saying better to take more time and get it right than to rush ahead and risk derailing the process.

The first two stages of digital monitoring – geospatial position reporting (GPR) and catch reporting via new e-logbooks – were brought in on Oct 1 and applied to 36 vessels, trawlers 28 metres and over fishing the deepwater.

The remainder of the fleet, more than 1000 vessels, is required to comply by April 1 next year. Cameras are required to be installed on all vessels from Oct 1 next year.

The difficulty is MPI has adopted a command and control approach, specifying requirements and saying it is up to fishers to meet them.

But even if the legal requirements were realistic, the technology to comply does not yet exist and has not been tested at sea.

It is highly unlikely to have crew trained and the GPR equipment installed on the entire fleet, including small, unpowered boats that operate as tenders to larger vessels, in the next five-and-a-half months. The blanket imposition of cameras on vessels will create even bigger challenges. And for what end?

The Government's Budget this year included \$30.5m over the next four years to support the changes.

Whether this will be clawed back from the industry remains to be seen – MPI's cost recovery regime is opaque and a review has stalled – but the costs of cameras and other equipment will be foisted on the operators. A request to MPI under the Official Information Act on June 1 seeking a breakdown of the budget bid and any advice to the Minister has not been responded to.

As one frustrated inshore fisher wrote to MPI officials last week: "What's happening in regards to IEMRS? Only six months to comply and I still have no idea as to what needs to be done. No one I know has had any information or

taken," he said.

"Now they are no longer there we are looking to those incoming Maori members of parliament to step up and understand what is going on here and to defend Maori interests."

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Sanford chief executive Volker Kuntzsch is calling for a Ministry for the Oceans to protect and manage New Zealand's vast marine resources. In an editorial on *Stuff*, Kuntzsch said with so many ministries and agencies having a stake in the marine environment New Zealand was facing a 'tragedy of the commons'. "That is why I believe a Ministry for the Oceans is a good solution for our country," he said. "A ministry that manages the marine environment by effectively combining recreational, environmental and business objectives to create shared value."

The Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology has started a new masters course aimed at getting graduates straight into local businesses. The post-graduate degree will have a range of electives, including management in sustainable aquaculture and risk management. Susannah Roddick oversaw the programme's development and told *Stuff* NMIT worked with employers to ensure students got the skills they needed to enter the workforce.



direction from MPI on how we are to comply and still no answers to my questions from previous correspondence. I am actually hoping there will be a change in government and some common sense is injected into the whole procedure. As it stands the whole thing is a mess.”  
Well, we have a change of government. Now for the common sense.

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#### Watch: Snapper family ties provide new evidence on marine reserves

A new University of Auckland study claims the Goat Island Marine Reserve is acting as a giant snapper nursery. Researchers found at least 11 percent of juvenile snapper up to 40km away were the offspring of spawning adults from the reserve at Leigh, north of Auckland. The UoA team tested 1000 adult fish from inside the reserve and 1000 from outside.

Lead researcher John Montgomery said the results show a direct link between adults in the reserve and juveniles kilometres away.

“This is the first estimate of the larval contribution of adult snapper from the reserve into the surrounding fishery and shows that even though the reserve is a tiny percentage of the area studied, it is more than pulling its weight in contributing to snapper populations outside,” he said.

[Read more](#)

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#### Mussel power prevails – SPATNZ wins at innovation awards

The team at Nelson based SPATNZ are delighted to have won the Innovation in Agribusiness & Environment Award at the New Zealand Innovation Awards in Auckland.

SPATNZ is a Sanford owned company that has developed methods to breed New Zealand native Greenshell™ mussels in captivity at commercial scale. Their work could be worth up to \$200 million a year to the New Zealand economy, once it is shared across the industry.

SPATNZ programme leader Rodney Roberts says the win caps off an incredible year for the team.

“2017 really has been good to us. We have started harvesting the first of the mussels grown in the new hatchery and the results are already very good,” he said.

“Our aim is to breed faster growing, more resilient mussels from a large number of select families to ensure that we are giving farmers the best of what nature has to offer.”

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#### Industry responds to the research on sea lions

Seafood New Zealand refutes findings from an Otago University study that sea lion exclusion devices (SLEDs) may be causing, rather than preventing, [sea lion deaths in fishing nets](#).

New Zealand’s Ministry for Primary Industries recently reviewed the main squid fishery (SQUID 6T) and came to the following conclusion; the direct impacts of fishing are not the major factor of the observed (sea lion) population change and that the population appears to be stabilising.

Further, the most recent Aquatic Environment and Biodiversity Annual Report says: The threat management plan (TMP) recognises that there is no single threat that is impacting the sea lion population and recovery will require



mitigation of multiple threats at the four main breeding sites.

There were three sea lion deaths attributed to commercial fishing this season and last year, with 92 percent independent observer coverage on the fishing vessels, there were no deaths recorded. There were on average 1300 tows each season.

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## Fanworm detected on Coromandel Peninsula

A harbour surveillance programme on the Coromandel Peninsula has led to the quick identification of the marine pest fanworm, preventing its spread to other vessels.

Waikato's biosecurity pest animals team leader Brett Bailey said the fanworm can have a big impact on the marine environment.

"Early detection is essential if we're going to stop their spread, and that's why we've teamed up with Bay of Plenty Regional Council to check high risk and high-value areas on our region's east coast for signs of Mediterranean fanworm," he said.

[Read more](#)