



# Friday update



## Captain's Blog

April 7, 2017

### **Paua and rock lobster make voluntary reductions**

The Chathams paua fishery, the country's biggest, is preparing for a further voluntary catch reduction.

Rock lobster fishermen on the North Island's east coast are taking similar action, reducing the annual catch entitlement by 25 percent – from 200 to 150 tonnes – for the second year running.

The divers on the Chathams are seeing some signs of depletion in some areas and are keen to address that, according to Paua Industry Council chief executive Jeremy Cooper.

"They have been talking to the Ministry for Primary Industries, which is doing a stock status assessment," he said.

"There will be a catch reduction and the divers support that, as do iwi and the community.

"We all want a multi-generational fishery and are prepared to act conservatively to ensure that."

Cooper and PIC chair Storm Stanley were in the Chathams this week to discuss the long-term paua fishery sustainability. About a third of New Zealand's total paua catch of around 900 tonnes comes off the Chathams.

Twenty percent of the Chathams annual catch entitlement has already been voluntarily shelved this year, equivalent to about 200,000 paua.

Managing the Chathams fishery is relatively straightforward, Cooper said. There is no virtually no recreational

## In the Media

### **Greenpeace slams MPI over fishing industry "self-regulation"**

**Stuff (3 April)** Greenpeace will complain to the Auditor-General after they discovered FishServe is owned by Seafood New Zealand.

Greenpeace executive director Russel Norman claims MPI has given extensive powers to industry to self-regulate.

"What this means in practice is that, in order to prosecute fishing companies for legal breaches, the government regulator, MPI, has to rely on data collected and provided by a company owned by the fishing companies themselves, FishServe," Norman said.

"This is a classic example of regulatory capture – where an industry controls the government regulator that is supposed to be controlling the industry."

FishServe chief executive Lesley Campbell said there was no conflict of interest.

"I can see from the outside why it might look to be the case. FishServe was set up under statute for approved service delivery [public sector outsourcing]," Campbell said.

"We have no discretion about any statutory decision-making.

"We don't have any role in monitoring the industry. There's no ability for us to modify decisions to get any industry bent. FishServe has been set up at arm's length. The directors, they have industry background, they're not conflicted by their current interests. The nature of the environment in which we operate has a lot of rigour around it."

Minister for Primary Industries Nathan Guy reiterated FishServe had no

fishery and environmental issues on the mainland impacting on the coastal environment such as sedimentation, dairying and forestry are not factors.

"Community, iwi and the fishing community are all intertwined and have a common interest in preserving stocks," Cooper said.

"If we take some precautionary measures now the paua fishery will be as good as it ever was in five years.

"You sometimes hear the anti-fishing lobby claiming quota holders across all fisheries want to push the limits and are only concerned about maximising profit. That is simply wrong and our fishers are demonstrating that."

Paua returns about \$50 million in exports each year, with sales mainly to China, Singapore and Korea.

Rock lobster fisherman are taking a similar conservative approach on the east coast from Te Arai to East Cape.

"We don't need to be told how to run the business in which we are so heavily invested," fisherman Butch Waterhouse said.

"Fishing is not a lot different to farming. Both are at the mercy of nature.

"The CRA 2 industry has again been guided by good science in seeking a more conservative catch limit. We want it better than okay so we have invested in enhancing stock abundance, giving nature a boost."

Unlike the isolated Chathams, the North Island rock lobster fishery is subject to considerable pressure from other users. Waterhouse called for the recreational sector to step up too.

"Absolutely nothing has been offered by any recreational group, despite its effort and catch increasing every season."

A black market is also active with MPI making a nominal allowance of 60 tonnes, an admission of failure if ever there was one.

Waterhouse said his sector should be applauded for their action to conserve the resource.



regulatory function.

"There is no conflict because FishServe is an administrative tool," Guy said.

"It is like a mailbox for collecting data.

"It has been publicly operating for over 20 years with no issue, and with a range of checks and balances on the data collected."

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## WWF claims \$26m could save endangered Māui dolphin

**Newshub (3 April)** WWF said it would cost government between \$26 and \$40 million to help fishers move away from set netting and trawling in Maui dolphin habitat.

WWF's head of campaigns Peter Hardstaff urged government to step in and fund changes he believed would save the world's rarest dolphin and keep fishers on the water.

"The debate around Māui dolphins has been characterised by people versus the environment, jobs versus nature," Hardstaff said.

"We want solutions that go beyond that."

The WWF report comes on the back of Sanford and Moana committing to phase out set netting by October and trawling by 2022, in Maui habitat.

"We feel that as this is a New Zealand issue, that Government should come to the table too and support the transition," Sanford chief executive Volker Kuntzsch said.

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## Technological innovations showcased at ICES fishing conference

**Stuff (4 April)** Fisheries technology was showcased in Nelson this week at the International Conference for the Exploration of the Sea.

A band being put on a Southern Buller's albatross to help identify and keep record of it when re-sighted. PHOTO: R Wells

### **Press release: Seafood industry funds conservation expedition to Snares Islands**

A science expedition led by scientist Paul Sagar is setting off to the Snares Islands for an annual survey of Southern Buller's albatross, and while there also collecting faeces from the skua seabird for the Department of Conservation (DOC). The endemic Southern Buller's albatross is unusual among albatrosses in that it breeds under tall, dense, woody vegetation on the Snares Islands, a remote Sub-Antarctic island group. Paul has been returning to the Snares every year since 1992 to count the number of breeding pairs, producing one of the longest population data series of any New Zealand seabird.

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Hosted by NIWA, the conference was an opportunity to share the latest fisheries research and innovation.

Sealord displayed its Acoustic Optical System (AOS), used to assess stock sizes in New Zealand's main orange roughy fisheries.

The AOS collects underwater data using acoustic and video technology and allows real-time video to be viewed on the vessel at depths of 1000 metres.

Sealord resources manager Graham Patchell said industry was making advances in technology to ensure fisheries will continue to be managed sustainably in the future.

"There's a quote that we use 'counting fish is like counting trees, except you can't see them when they move' - it's my job to count fish so that I can provide estimates to MPI and that's a bloody hard thing to do, especially when you're trying to count something at 1000m that is there one day and gone the next," Patchell said.

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### **Fishing industry interested in content of MPA submissions**

**Otago Daily Times (6 April)** PauaMAC5 and Paua Industry Council chairman Storm Stanley has penned his displeasure at some actions by the Department of Conservation and the South-East Marine Protection Forum (SEMPF).

With the forum receiving 2800 submissions on the proposed marine protected areas, they asked for more time to consider them.

Stanley said he asked DoC for the submission documents made to the forum under the Official Information Act, with their response initially thought of as a joke.

"DoC took a month to inform us this simple request would cost PauaMAC5 \$66,044.50 for hard copies of the submissions or nearly \$38,000 for electronic copies. And by the way, please pay in advance or you won't receive anything," Stanley said.

"The grossly inflated charges imposed by DoC effectively deny public access to the submissions, but without reference to the statutory criteria for declining to release information under the Official Information Act."

Stanley also questioned the forum's invitation to submitters "to propose other sites in addition to the network of 20 MPAs agreed upon and proposed by the forum."

"This, in our view would be unfair, untransparent and contrary to natural

justice.

"If the forum intends to recommend new MPA sites or expanded MPA boundaries beyond those proposed in the original discussion document, then the forum should go back to the community for a further round of engagement before making its recommendations to ministers."

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