



# Friday update



## Captain's Blog

January 26, 2018

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### There is no cover up

Images of dead dolphins and seabirds are shocking.

They were used to maximum effect by some media last week in damaging footage that claimed the fishing industry was guilty of a cover-up.

The coverage arose from a letter sent last July to the Ministry for Primary Industries raising concerns about unfettered access to camera footage of fishing operations and the way this might be misused.

The detailed letter, on behalf of Deepwater Group, Fisheries Inshore New Zealand, Paua Industry Council, New Zealand Rock Lobster Industry Council and Seafood New Zealand, called for exemption from the Official Information Act for such footage.

It also reiterated industry support for the obtaining of robust information to better inform fisheries management decisions.

That, of course, was not reported or acknowledged by the anti-fishing brigade.

What did emerge, once the letter was supplied in December to Forest & Bird under the OIA, was highly emotive pictures, taken 10 years ago in one case, of dead common dolphins in a trawl and an albatross caught on a longline.

Ironically, the distortions, generalisations, selective use of material and overall bias confirmed the industry's fears.

The fact is huge strides have been made

### Moana chief executive steps down

Moana New Zealand chief executive Carl Carrington has resigned after six years in the top job. He leaves the iwi-owned company in April as he and his whanau pursue a change in lifestyle.

Moana New Zealand chairman Whaimutu Dewes, in a letter to stakeholders, said Carrington has positioned the company for future growth.

"While we will miss his transparent leadership and vision, we sincerely wish Carl and his whanau the best with his future endeavours," Dewes said.

Chief operating officer Steve Tarrant will take over as interim chief executive whilst the company look for a permanent replacement.

In December, Moana New Zealand announced their largest ever dividend payout to shareholders, who received their share of \$9.7 million. The company made an overall profit for the year ending September 30, 2017, of \$19.27 million.

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### In The Media

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*Stuff* reports Esplanade No.3, a Hawke's Bay seafood company, has been charged with 36 counts of operating commercial fishing vessels that failed to comply with seabird mitigation measures while using a surface longline. Skipper Stephen Harvey faces 17 similar charges and David Macale, another skipper, faces 19 charges. The sole director of Esplanade No.3 is Nino D'Esposito. The Ministry for Primary Industries alleges the offending took place between May and June, 2016.

in reducing endangered species bycatch. Such catches are recorded and are made public.

For example, in the Southern Ocean squid trawl fishery weekly reports are filed and made public under an MPI operational plan to manage the incidental capture of sea lions. They show that after four weeks of the current season there have been 54 tows, observer coverage has been 100 percent and the number of sea lions caught is zero.

The fishing sector is not in denial. It does have an impact on the marine environment just as farming does on land, and is closely monitored accordingly.

What it is concerned about is footage being taken out of context and used to damage a major export sector in international markets.

Activist environmental NGOs have a clear agenda, that is to stop commercial fishing.

We have already seen a German-based eNGO, acting in collusion with local sympathisers, call for an international boycott of New Zealand seafood.

That was based on demonstrably untrue allegations that Maui dolphins were being killed in the deepwater hoki fishery.

The regulator, in the form of MPI, will receive hundreds of thousands of hours of video footage if cameras are widely installed on the New Zealand fishing fleet.

No other industry is subject to such scrutiny.

Such footage should not and cannot be subject to random access by outside bodies for malicious use.

Imagine if cameras were mounted on the dashboards of every truck in the country and the resulting footage combed to show every time a centre line was crossed, speed limits were broken, passing was risky or there was a collision.

Such a selective compilation would portray an alarming – and inaccurate – picture of an industry seemingly out of control.

Calls for its closure, regardless of cost and practicality, would promptly follow. MPI has yet to advise on its stance on public access to camera footage but Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash has assured he will not allow outside bodies to go on “fishing expeditions”.

But he has stated he has not seen a compelling case to change the Fisheries Act around the application of the OIA. He said there were already provisions within the OIA to protect people’s privacy and commercially sensitive information.

Fisheries management director Stuart

Esplanade and Harvey have pleaded not guilty, whilst Macale is yet to enter a plea.

A marine heatwave is being blamed for the odd behaviour of fish this summer. *The New Zealand Herald* reports fishers have seen snapper spawning much earlier than normal. Motueka commercial fisherman Chris West said after weeks of good fishing near the end of 2017, the snapper just vanished one morning. “It was quite amazing really... they just disappeared overnight, just, see ya, buddy,” he said. West thought snapper had spawned six weeks earlier than normal, with scientists believing the warmest December on record for the Tasman Sea was to blame. *The Otago Daily Times* reports kingfish have become “almost prolific” along the southern coastline. Commercial set netter Allan Anderson said 10 years ago they would catch one or two a season. “We’re catching one or two every day now, if not 10 sometimes,” he said. However, the increased catch was an issue as there was very little quota (only 1,000kg) for the area, forcing unavoidable fines on them, Anderson said.

Two major seafood festivals have been cancelled. The 2018 Whitianga Scallop Festival has been cancelled due to upgrades to the marina and town centre. “This decision has not been made lightly by the committee but logistics and costs to relocate for one year was not feasible for the festival. We will be back for 2019, ready to brighten what will be Whitianga’s town centre new look,” the festival’s website said. Kaikoura’s Seafest has been canned permanently, with drunk festival goers and a lack of resources and volunteers being blamed for the cancellation after 23 years in business.

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## Upcoming events

The United States Government is holding an event to build technology solutions that address worldwide overfishing and other ills harming global fisheries. The event will see over 4000 participants from more than 30 countries design and develop solutions to problems endemic to the seafood industry. Fishakathon will be held in Auckland on February 10–11, with competitors to tackle issues relating to enforcement, sustainability and the marketplace. To sign up or learn more, [click here](#).

With a great line up of live music and entertainment, delicious food, fine local beer and wine and seafood, summer in Marlborough wouldn’t be complete

Anderson earlier stated options were being developed for the roll-out of digital monitoring.  
“Industry has proposed changes to how fisheries data held by MPI should be released,” he said.  
“Those proposals are being considered alongside other options including maintaining the status quo. No decision has been made yet.  
“There are many elements to consider carefully in balancing the responsibilities of transparency and public interest while protecting privacy and other sensitive information.”  
Seafood New Zealand’s response was that industry hoped the current protections under the OIA were sufficient to address serious concerns around privacy, IP, commercial sensitivity and the potential misuse of data and video taken out of context. That needed to be clarified.  
They key thing is there is no cover up and there never has been.  
Putting cameras on vessels which the regulator has 24/7 access to is the opposite of a cover up.

without the Havelock Mussel and Seafood Festival. Held on the 17 March, the Black Seeds will headline and be supported by a great line up of live entertainment, with all sorts of fun stuff to enjoy such as cooking demonstrations, market stalls, industry displays, celebrity chef Nadia Lim, a strong man competition and a kids zone. [Click here](#) to learn more or buy tickets.



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### Exclusive: Stuart Nash speaks to Seafood New Zealand

The fishing industry “is full of incredibly hard-working men and women who are trying to make a living, and often in dangerous and uncomfortable situations. We need to ensure that they can continue to do that, but we also need to ensure that the industry moves with the 21st century.” – Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash  
[Read the exclusive interview here](#)

