

Community key for Chatham Islands pāua management

The Chatham Islands pāua fishery is leading the way in local fisheries management.

The Chathams, designated PauaMAC4, is the country's largest fishery, traditionally producing about a third of the total annual harvest of around 900 tonnes.

Its leaders, supported by the community, have proposed a wide ranging fisheries plan to better manage the resource.

Local community involvement is essential for effective management of fisheries, according to the pāua group's chairman Albert Tuuta.

"The Chatham Islands pāua industry has been carefully managing the commercial harvesting of pāua for many years now," he said.

"The fisheries plan being proposed places those practices in a more formal framework to give more certainty.

"The plan is for all Chatham Islanders and all those who value and depend upon our healthy fisheries."

The pāua fishery, worth an average \$40 to \$60 million in exports annually over the past 10 years, is under pressure from a number of areas.

These include habitat stress caused by climate change, ocean acidification and earthquake, more immediate impacts from land-based pollution, siltation and run-off, increasing competition for coastal space, failure to measure and contain the recreational harvest, competing uses such as shark cage diving and catch reductions.

Pāua fisheries require attentive management at a fine spatial scale, says Pāua Industry Council (PIC) chair Stormalong Stanley.

“Because larvae settle very close to where they were spawned, an area that is depleted becomes stuck in a never-ending cycle of poor spawning that prevents recovery.

“We have addressed that by reseeding in some places.”

The pāua industry has a history of successful voluntary management initiatives.

On the Chathams this includes a voluntary shelving of 40 percent of the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC).

That means a reduction from 326 tonnes to 195 tonnes for this season and next, a considerable hit to incomes but one seen as necessary to ensure a healthy fishery.

TACCs have not been adjusted since the 1980s, prompting a local response.

An absence of policy clarity, flip-flopping government positions, and lack of certainty and confidence among quota owners has hindered fisheries management for too long, the PIC submission on the Chathams plan said.

It added that in the 32 years since PAU4 was introduced into the Quota Management System, the Ministry has put no fine scale management measures in place other than the closing to commercial fishing of 15 small areas in 1993.

“Unless there is a radical increase in government resourcing of fisheries management – which we consider to be unlikely, and in any case, an entirely inappropriate response to the current management failings – fisheries such as PAU4 will never be given the management attention they deserve.”

Stanley stressed the plan did not alter the Minister’s or Fisheries New Zealand’s authority or responsibilities.

Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash has expressed support for stronger local management.

Submissions on the Chathams plan have closed and a decision is expected in September before the new fishing year opens on October 1.

The Minister must determine whether to formally approve the plan under section 11A of the Fisheries Act.

But given Nash has publicly supported industry responsibility, community engagement and innovation in fisheries management, a decision not to proceed would be surprising.

Only one other industry-initiated fisheries plan has ever been approved.

That was under Jim Anderton in 2006, involving the rig fishery on the South Island West Coast and in Tasman and Golden bays.

The Chathams project represents a long overdue reprise of more inclusive, sophisticated management by those directly involved with a huge vested interest in long-term sustainability.

The plan could set a positive precedent not only for pāua and Chatham Island fisheries, but also for inshore fisheries around mainland New Zealand.

Honing in on mussel power

Iconic for their delicious taste, New Zealand's Greenshell mussels are now part of a clinical trial examining the digestibility of mussel's active components and the health benefits they deliver.

The project is funded by the Government's High Value Nutrition (HVN) National Science Challenge and co-funded by New Zealand's biggest producer and exporter of Greenshell mussels, Sanford.

Cawthron Institute, Christchurch Clinical Studies Trust (CCST) and Sanford are working together to validate the anti-inflammatory qualities of Greenshell mussels, specifically, improved joint mobility and bone health.

Cawthron Marine Lipid Chemist and leader of the project Dr Matt Miller said the trial will identify what happens to mussel's active components post-digestion, how much enters the blood and how much is available to be used by consumer's bodies.

"The clinical trial will generate scientific evidence about the health benefits of Greenshell mussels and assist the industry to identify and develop the best Greenshell mussel-based functional food products that will appeal to the emerging market of health-conscious consumers," he said.

To assess bioavailability, eight healthy participants will be fed a soup containing either mussel oil, mussel powder, a food ingredient derived from mussel powder or whole-cooked mussels. Earlier trials have shown promising results around joint health and mobility.

Sanford's general manager of innovation, Andrew Stanley, said "We're really excited to be part of this project. We have had so much anecdotal evidence over the years about the power of New Zealand Greenshell mussels and it will be excellent to be able to explore how these benefits are actually best delivered."

The long-term goal of the research will be to transition Greenshell mussels from a low-price protein product market to one based on high-value nutrition and health products.

"The project aims to grow Greenshell mussel exports, and future-proof New Zealand's important Greenshell mussel industry." said Miller.



Sanford's Greenshell mussel farm.

Seafood worth travelling the globe for

Kaikōura's seafood gems have earned international rankings from travelers and foodies alike this month.

The Lonely Planet published its Eatlist for 2018, placing Kaikōura crayfish seventh amongst 500 top international food experiences and trumping the long-standing favourites – Italy's Neapolitan pizza and Hong Kong's famous dim sums.

The guide encourages foodies and tourists to “go to the New Zealand coast where the crayfish is so good, the town is named after it.”

Kaikōura's iconic food-truck, Nin's Bin, also featured as being one of the top places to eat crayfish with a view. Nested into the coastline, the blue and white caravan is a frequent spot for locals who sit to enjoy fresh crayfish and mussels while overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

The list was compiled from travel-writers and food bloggers who named their most authentic gastronomic encounters. A large part of the ranking was based on the travel experience and the taste of the dish, including the dish's cultural importance and the special atmosphere.

Kaikōura fulfilled many of the criteria the panel were after, especially location.

Crayfish wasn't the only contributor to the list. Whitebait fritters ranked 54th, Manuka honey at 438 and the Pavlova at 429 despite contention from across the Tasman.



Nin's Bin, Kaikōura.

PGF invests in blue mussel plant

The Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) is set to invest \$772,000 into the establishment of a blue mussel processing plant in Marlborough.

The new processing plant will take harvested blue mussels and use them to form useful materials. Crushed shells will be used as an alternative to pesticides and the protein from the shell will be used in pet food.

Regional Economic Development Under-Secretary Fletcher Tabuteau expects the initiative will increase Marlborough's productivity and provide the region with jobs and upskilling opportunities. The new plant will also add economic value to a natural resource that is ordinarily discarded.

"Until now it has been uneconomic to process blue mussels using standard industry practices. In the course of farming for green lipped mussels, they are considered a by-product and an unwanted nuisance on commercial Greenshell mussel farms, and current practice is to strip them from the Greenshell growing lines and throw them overboard," Tabuteau said.

"Having a processing plant of this kind in the Marlborough region opens up a wide array of potential future joint aquaculture ventures with local iwi and private enterprise, including improving the use of Māori and other private assets."

The innovation highlights a progressive enterprise that is economically efficient and will increase the environmental performance of the aquaculture industry.

The Best of Fish n Chips

The contention was hot when New Zealand's best fish and chip shops were featured recently. So much so that NZ Herald has now published part 2 of reader's favourite Kiwi chipperies...

Opunake Fish, Chips and More in Taranaki came out top in round two. Ninety seven percent of reviewers said their meals were very good to excellent and one commented it was the best meal of his life. An Opunake local said the takeaway joint is "as good as fish and chips get," and one tourist described it as the highlight of his road trip through New Zealand.

Toby's in Otahuhu also rated highly. They're notable for their variety of hot and cold seafood meals and large pieces of fish at an affordable price. "This is always my go-to place for great battered mussels and snapper," one fan said.

Mr Grumpy's on Foxton Beach came in third and was praised as being quick, convenient and classic kiwi fish n' chips. Owner Glen Hitchcock attributed the tastiness of his food to using fat as opposed to vegetable oil when cooking. Many Wellingtonians said they would travel up the coast for another visit.

Lockies of Hampden, Otago are famous for their delicious blue cod and elephant fish and attract diners from all over the world. Customers particularly enjoy their fresh fish from the harbour and the crispy, but light batter.

Plimmerton Fish Supply of Porirua also made the list. Their generous servings, thicker fish fillets and golden potato fritters are notable crowd favourites. The popularity of this chippery often means there's a bit of a wait, but it's well worth it according to customers.

What fish and chip shop do you rate top-notch? Send us your choice [here](#) with the subject line 'Fish and Chips'.



News

Judge Jan Kelly sentenced two fishermen to home detention in the Wellington District Court on Monday, *Stuff* reports. The men fished under permits issued to a company in the Hawke's Bay Seafoods group, but did not record crayfish catch in accordance with regulations – and later sold the crayfish on the black market. Karl Harrison, the primary offender, pleaded guilty to 67 charges and was sentenced to 10 months home detention. Prosecutor Andrew Britton said Harrison misreported over 373 crayfish at a value of \$17,590. Garth Stirton, pleaded guilty to 26 charges involving 205 crayfish worth \$14,185 and was sentenced to eight months home detention. Both men also had vehicles forfeited. Other defendants are awaiting trial on charges resulting from the same MPI investigation into Hawke's Bay Seafoods.

New Caledonia has tightened the protection of some of its coral reefs, banning human activity in a 7000 square kilometre zone. The government says a further 21,000 square kilometres will be a nature reserve, covering about a third of New Caledonia's reefs, which are rich in biodiversity. Within the reserve, there is a ban on fishing and motorboats. In 2014, New Caledonia declared a marine park encompassing 1.3 million square kilometres,

in which there are 2,000 species of fish and 310 types of coral. The French government has welcomed the announcement, saying it is a major step forward.

An aerial king shag census in the Marlborough Sounds found a decrease of approximately 200 birds since the first census in 2015, *Stuff* reports. It's estimated there are now 634 king shags in the Sounds. Ornithologist Rob Shuckard said the census findings indicate many of the 12 breeding colonies have shrunk by an average 24 percent. According to Shuckard, the largest colony at Duffers Reef has lost 85 birds, whereas the Tawhitinui colony gained 22 birds and the Ruakaka-Blackwood colony gained five. The census was commissioned by New Zealand King Salmon (NZKS), who check population numbers every three years as part of resource consent conditions for its Waitata and Kopua salmon farms. Shuckard's report identified February's cyclones, climate change, increased susceptibility to infections and naturally-occurring population density changes as possible causes of population changes.

As the region's whitebait fishers dust off their nets, Bay of Plenty Regional Council Freshwater Ecologist Alastair Suren is working on research to map whitebait 'love zones'; the areas where whitebait spawn. "We've spent more than 100 hours in a small tin boat since February, mapping and assessing the current state of whitebait spawning areas on 23 Bay of Plenty rivers," said Suren. According to Suren, changes in water quality and loss of suitable spawning habitats have played a large part in the decline of whitebait species over time. He said that riparian restoration and protection of spawning areas can help turn the tide on that decline. "By gathering more accurate information on spawning areas we'll be able to identify what and where other tactics could make the most difference for whitebait breeding success in future," Suren said.

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