

NZ seafood worthy of its buzz

Sustainability is the buzzword in an environmentally conscious world.

It is often an ill-defined term but in the case of New Zealand seafood it is well aimed.

The vast majority of wild caught fish in New Zealand waters is sustainable, that is stocks are carefully managed to ensure that the overall health of the fishery is maintained.

That is why the London-based Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) has certified New Zealand's deepwater fisheries as among the world's best managed.

Some 97 percent of the overall catch by weight is sustainably fished, according to Fisheries NZ scientists.

That is a fact, even if the anti-commercial fishing lobby prefers not to want to recognise it.

In September New Zealand hoki, hake, ling and southern blue whiting fisheries were recertified against the MSC Fisheries Standard, a global third-party certification standard and market-based program that recognises and rewards sustainable fishing practices.

The New Zealand hoki fisheries have been certified since 2001 and are the longest standing MSC certified whitefish fisheries in the world. New Zealand southern blue whiting fisheries were first certified in 2012 and those for hake and ling in 2014.

The assessments were carried out over a 12-month period by independent auditing body Lloyds Register (Acoura), attesting that each of these fisheries are well managed with health stocks and harvest strategies in place.

It is a testament to the combined efforts of the New Zealand government and industry that fisheries for eight species are now MSC certified (hake, hoki, ling, orange roughy, southern blue whiting, albacore tuna, skipjack tuna, and Ross Sea toothfish). This commitment to independent certification of fisheries sustainability places New Zealand amongst leading sustainably managed fishing nations in the world, alongside the USA, Canada, Denmark, Norway and Iceland, each of which has 50 percent or more of their commercial marine wild catch MSC certified.

A no doubt well-meaning addition to the sustainability bandwagon is a just published book, Truth Love & Clean Cutlery that purports to be an international guide to restaurants that behave in "ethical, organic and environmentally sustainable ways". It lists 15 restaurants in New Zealand, selected by Listener food columnist Lauraine Jacobs, that supposedly qualify.

The inference is that if an establishment is not on the list, it somehow doesn't measure up.

In the case of seafood, this is, of course, nonsense.

Every restaurant that serves fish and every fish'n'chip shop in the land is rightly able to declare that it serves sustainable seafood, whether it be hoki, shark, warehou, mussels or any other species.

It is commendable that consumers increasingly want to know where their food comes from.

Retailers are increasingly sensitive to sustainability, traceability and locality as a result.

But cost, practicality and truth also need to be essential ingredients in the sustainability recipe.

Eat New Zealand, a self-described New Zealand food movement, meeting in Christchurch last month, was totally misled by recreational fishing group LegaSea about the state of our fisheries.

"Our fisheries are in a state of sustainable extinction," spokesman Scott McIndoe cried.

Such a contradiction is laughable, followed by the equally ludicrous claim that our "fish are currently out of reach for New Zealanders, with the bulk being exported for a poor price".

Hoki anyone?

And how is it that despite the many millions in advertising spent by American-based chicken and hamburger fast food chains, fish'n'chips remain New Zealand's number one takeaway?

New World supermarkets are currently promoting fish for Christmas, caught from their own quota.

"Our New Zealand seafood is something the business is particularly proud of," New World head of marketing and customer experience Dominic Quin said.

"We know the fishing boats by name and the fishing families that own them, so we only select the best."

At Wellington's celebrated Capitol restaurant they also get it right.

On a recent night the waiter knew immediately the provenance of the fish of the day (tarakihi).

What's its name?, one of the diners facetiously asked.

"Gerald," he deadpanned.

Not a fish named Wanda then.

Oysters bring opportunity and growth for Kaitaia youth

Seafood company Moana New Zealand has teamed up with Papa Taiao Earthcare Academy to provide secondary school students the opportunity to earn NCEA credits.

Papa Taiao's moana restoration programme engages students in marine-based sustainability projects that equip them with practical and industry-relevant skills.

Students attend the hands-on training once a week to gain NCEA qualifications in aquaculture, sustainability or biology once the classes end.

This year, Kaitaia college students revisited a small oyster farm in the Parengarenga Harbour.

The farm was established as a sustainable business 'Tasty Tio' in 2017 by year 12 students as part of their Young Enterprise Scheme. With the help of Papa Taiao and Moana fisheries, the group placed over 60,000 oyster larvae in the harbour for future students to harvest.

The replanted oysters have been keeping Parengarenga waters clean for nearly a year, filtering more than 8,000,000 litres of water a day.

Twelve months later, at 5am in the morning, Kaitaia students harvested approximately 44,000 oysters from the farm – the result of four years of planning and collaboration.

The student's efforts yielded a sizeable return of \$9,218.78 – all of which will be donated to Kaitaia youth.

Tasty Tio have continued their involvement and recently developed a chicken feed supplement made from the farm's oyster grit. It's high in calcium, aids digestion and doubles as a gardening product.

Papa Taiao sustainability officer Marty Taylor said students gain a lot from the process.

"They learn resilience and persistence and how to solve their own problems."

The project originally started as a way of helping Northland teens who had experienced a spate of suicides in their community.

"There's a sense that when you live in Kaitaia the only way to make a living is to leave Kaitaia," said Taylor.

"Students were interested in how they could generate opportunities for other young people in the community."

Now the project has given students skills, experience and the opportunity to invest in their future.

"It's a new direction and it's another opportunity," said Taylor.



Students harvesting this year's oysters in Parengarenga Harbour.

News

Lightning Lab GovTech Accelerator held its inaugural demo day event in Wellington on Tuesday, explaining how new technology and entrepreneurial thinking could help save the Antipodean albatross from extinction. Lightning Lab GovTech provides an opportunity for local and central government agencies from NZ and abroad to tackle problems using proven innovation frameworks, methodologies and support. EARS, the Electronic Automated Reporting System created by team 'Safer Seas for Albatross', took home the CISCO People's Choice award for their innovative measurement system designed to reduce bycatch mortality of the Antipodean albatross. The goal is to stop or reverse the current decline. The team, made up of Sally Hett, Paul 'Scratch' Jansen and Nathan Walker, are creating a product that incentivises fishing companies to better understand their fisherman's catch while ensuring it is caught in a sustainable way.

The Transport Accident Investigation Commission has opened an inquiry into a fatal accident that occurred on board Sanford's deepwater factory vessel *San Granit*. The accident occurred 55 miles East of Banks Peninsula on the 14 November. The Rescue Coordination Centre notified TAIC of the incident on Wednesday morning. Sanford spokeswoman Fiona MacMillan said the company was unable to provide more detail as the facts are still being established. "The family has been advised and we are offering

every support that we can," she said. "Our thoughts are with the family, friends and workmates of our team member as they are dealing with this terrible incident."

New Zealand King Salmon was named as one of New Zealand's top export companies at the New Zealand International Business Awards in Auckland last Thursday, *Stuff* reports. The company received the Inspiring Preference for NZ award. Judge Rebecca Smith said NZKS won the category for their commitment to sharing the product's story - from supply chain to retailers, distributors to consumers. "That commitment, that consistency was simply outstanding," she said. NZKS has taken its Regal Salmon and Ora King Salmon story worldwide, with Ora now featuring on the menus of more than 1000 international restaurants.

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CONTACT

Email info@seafood.org.nz

Phone [+64 4 385 4005](tel:+6443854005)

Physical address

Level 6

Eagle Technology House

135 Victoria Street

Wellington 6011

New Zealand

This email was sent to emily.pope@seafood.org.nz

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