



## **Smear campaign lacks substance and evidence**

Facts are stubborn but statistics are more pliable, observed Mark Twain. However, the activist environmental lobby opposed to commercial fishing does not let facts or statistics stand in its way.

Environmental NGOs, substantial businesses which operate as tax free charities, have embarked on a campaign to demonise the fishing industry, presumably aimed at encouraging the new government to take punitive measures.

So far this year we have seen a concerted attack that has included denigration of Marine Stewardship Council certification of hoki and orange roughy fisheries, claims the industry wants to hide dead dolphins, penguins and sea lions and that it is driving albatrosses to extinction.

In each case there is selective use of data, extrapolations that do not withstand rigorous scientific scrutiny and highly emotive language.

The industry does have entirely legitimate concerns about privacy, intellectual property, commercial sensitivity and the potential misuse of data and video taken out of context.

That is, of course, used as a club by the industry opponents to claim a cover up.

There is no denying commercial fishing has an impact on the marine environment, just as farming does on land, but it is to nowhere near the disastrous extent opponents claim.

Forest & Bird continues to state on its website that commercial fishing boats caught 44 dolphins in the Bay of Plenty last year, despite being advised there

was a coding error and that the Ministry for Primary Industries accepts these captures did not occur.

Similarly, increases in Maui and Hector's dolphin population estimates have been ignored.

Despite the deepwater hoki fishery, New Zealand's largest by both volume and value, having been rigorously assessed by the London-based MSC three times going back to 2001, Forest & Bird and Greenpeace have upped their opposition.

The latest claim is that Salvin's albatrosses are being killed to such an extent in the hoki fishery the species' survival is threatened.

That is arrant nonsense when the latest estimates show 40,000 breeding pairs at the Bounty Islands, a 26 percent increase on 2010.

There is ample evidence that the populations of sea lions, Maui and Hector's dolphins and the majority of albatross species are stable and in some cases increasing.

There are a number of threats to their existence, not least disease, but it is not credible to continue to claim the fishing industry is driving them to extinction.

As economist Ronald Coase put it: "If you torture data enough, it will confess to anything."

This raises the question, who holds the torch bearers to account?

Is it ethical to threaten the livelihoods of thousands of hard working Kiwis, reduce availability of delicious and popular protein and seek to damage a major export industry internationally without regard to the truth?

The modus operandi is well established – take a worst case scenario, ignore any scientific research that contradicts that, attack the messenger (in this case MSC), cultivate sympathetic media and avoid constructive debate and engagement.

There is a better way.

That is to look for solutions, seek partnerships, foster goodwill.

It's not an untried approach - the World Wildlife Fund has managed to do it through a partnership with industry and officials under the Southern Seabirds Solutions Trust, which has made great strides in reducing seabird mortalities. The industry is willing to engage and it is committed to guardianship of a sustainable fishery for future generations.

That is why it has made a promise to New Zealanders to reduce its impact on the marine environment and developed a related code of conduct.

Let us be judged on our performance against that, rather than be continually berated by those who will only be satisfied when there is no more commercial fishing.



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## Event

Presented by Te Arawa Fisheries, the third annual Rotorua Summer Seafood Festival returns to the Rotorua Lakefront tomorrow.

Stan Walker and the Herbs headline the entertainment. Chef and TV presenter Robert Oliver will feature on the Kai Stage, along with Kiwi Masterchef winner Brett McGregor and Rotorua's own My Kitchen Rules contestants Natasha Whitewood and Hera Te Kurapa.

To get tickets, [click here](#).



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## Press Releases

### **Deepwater Group - Fishing industry dismisses claim fishery should not be certified sustainable**

Accusations that the fishing industry is responsible for any population decrease of Salvin's albatross are untrue and has been dismissed by Deepwater Group chief executive, George Clement.

The claim was made by Forest & Bird in a bid to discredit the internationally

respected Marine Stewardship Council organisation which has given New Zealand's hoki fisheries accreditation as sustainable.

“No one wants to catch a bird, but Salvin’s albatross are occasionally caught in the hoki fisheries and this is regrettable, however the assertion that the deaths of up to 50 a year is impacting on a population in excess of 100,000 is untrue,” Clement said.

These represent around 0.05% of the population and the Ministry for Primary Industries’ risk assessment estimates that it would take more than 3,500 mortalities from fishing to adversely affect this population.

[Read more](#)

### **MSC process transparent and scientifically robust, encourages stakeholder input**

The Marine Stewardship Council’s vision is to keep our oceans teeming with life and to safeguard seafood supplies for future generations. Over the last 20 years, the MSC has helped incentivise responsible stewardship of global fisheries - delivering real change in support of healthy oceans.

“The MSC has received recent criticisms in the media from stakeholder groups, including Forest and Bird, that have called into question the sustainability of a number of fisheries in the MSC programme. We stand by the credibility of our programme, a key part of which is the opportunity for stakeholders to submit information or data that might impact the sustainability assessment of a fishery,” MSC Oceania programme director Anne Gabriel said.

"We encourage Forest and Bird to continue its role as an important player in the health our oceans by participating in this process so we can collectively be part of real, lasting change on the water."

[Read more](#)

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## **News**

This summer’s warm sea temperatures may make oysters in Foveaux Strait more susceptible to parasites, *Stuff* reports. Niwa fisheries scientist Dr Keith Michael said warmer seawaters can cause heightened oyster mortality from bonamia exitiosa. The higher temperatures increase the metabolic and reproductive activity in oysters boosting the chance of infection, he said. In 2001 and 2002 bonamia exitiosa killed 1.5 billion oysters – 95 percent of the population.

*The NZ Herald* reports two proposals to relocate Moana Fisheries and Sanford’s vessels during the next America’s Cup have been submitted to the Auckland Council. In one application, it is proposed to relocate the fishing industry berthage, currently located on Wynyard Wharf, Halsey Street Extension wharf, and the Western Viaduct, to the western side of Wynyard Point. [Read the application here.](#)

Mt Cook Alpine Salmon chairman and former Prime Minister Jim Bolger is urging the Government to "be very careful with any change in immigration policy." Speaking to *The Timaru Herald*, Bolger said the company was planning to grow significantly over the next three years, something he did not want to be hamstrung by a cut to immigration numbers. "Any change in the immigration policy has to take into account that if you come into factories, retirement villages, care centres, you will find a significant proportion of those workers are immigrants," he said.