



THE UPDATE

Captain's Blog



What about the wellbeing of our fishers and their families?

The dolphin threat management plan (TMP) released this week is all about image.

While targeting commercial fishing, the Government is more concerned about marketing.

Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash said as much, admitting there would be an economic impact on the fishing industry “but there would be a positive effect for Brand New Zealand”.

The plan proposes a dramatic extension of set net and trawling bans along the North Island west coast and harbours from Cape Reinga to Wellington and large areas both north and south of Bank’s Peninsula on the South Island’s east coast.

This is additional to the 6000 square kilometres already closed to commercial fishing, the introduction of a camera trial supported by Sanford and Moana, observers on vessels and confirmation disease represents a bigger threat.

And it is despite the latest Department of Conservation five-yearly threat status review recording an improved outlook for Hector’s, with an estimated population of 15,700.

Maui dolphins, an indistinguishable sub species of Hector’s, remain critically endangered with an estimated adult population of less than 100 and the industry is highly supportive of science-based measures to protect them.

The TMP estimates commercial set netting causes one Maui dolphin death every 10 years and one in every 50 years in the trawl fishery.

Nash correctly says no one wants to catch a dolphin but is on shakier ground declaring “the fishing industry understands what we’re doing and why we’re doing it”.

That does not mean the industry agrees with it.

As Radio NZ headlined “cats, not fishing nets, are by far the biggest threats to dolphins”.

The TMP confirms that.

Toxoplasmosis, a disease caused by a hardy microscopic parasite that is spread by cat faeces and carried in streams and rivers to the ocean, is the main cause of mortality, according to research led by NIWA marine scientist Dr Jim Roberts.

An action plan is proposed but moggies are safe - there is no mention of radical Gareth Morgan-style measures.

Scores of Maori families fishing in North Island west coast harbours are among those standing to be affected by the proposed extensions to current restrictions.

The Treaty partner is acknowledged in the announcement although there is no specific reference to the Government’s obligations under the Deed of Settlement, which recognised the fishing rights embodied in the Treaty of Waitangi.

The previous government stumbled over those obligations in failing to consult on its unilateral declaration of a Kermadecs sanctuary.

Further disadvantaging Maori and wider coastal communities throughout provincial New Zealand does not sit easily with the professed “wellbeing” approach to governance.

While Nash and Conservation Minister Eugenie Sage fronted the media conference on Monday, they repeatedly referenced the Prime Minister.

The Beehive ninth floor is clearly driving this one.

As New Plymouth-based trawlerman Curly Brown said on Radio New Zealand’s Morning Report, he had been fishing for 38 years and is yet to see a Maui dolphin, let alone catch one.

Brown, the sole remaining Taranaki-based trawler operator, stands to be driven out of business if further fishing grounds are closed.

The independent Egmont Seafoods, which processes and retails the catch from the port’s six fishing vessels, providing employment for 40 people and their families, will also be among those businesses in jeopardy.

“A big concern is people’s physical and mental health,” embattled owner Keith Mawson said.

For the anti-commercial fishing lobby, whatever restrictions are imposed are never enough, ludicrously labelling even the most extreme option presented “a pathway to extinction”.

They will seemingly only be satisfied when all boats are tied up and chips are served with tofu rather than fish.

“Consultation” on the revised restrictions closes on August 4 but everything points to a done deal.

There are some rough waters ahead.

Artificial Intelligence assisting in aquaculture

Artificial Intelligence is giving Cawthron scientists in Nelson a new way of identifying algae.

The Nelson Artificial Intelligence Institute (NAII) and Cawthron Institute have spent the last nine months using computer vision and "deep learning" technology to detect and automatically identify various types of algae samples.

NAII Institute Director Brian Russell said the technology works in a similar way to face recognition which can identify a face amongst a series of images.

"Essentially, computers can do that for algae."

Manually detecting and counting the different types of algae in a sample is a challenging task and one that takes qualified and trained biologists up to two years of training to achieve.

"In a sample, there's thousands and you've got to count them and detect the one or two toxic ones," Russel said.

"They're [scientists] what's detecting things like toxic algal blooms in the sounds."

The newly designed software automates identification, takes photos of each sample and records the algae's label each time a new species is identified.

As the software's database grows, scientists will be able to scale it and improve efficiency.

"The technology can automate massive amounts of information and generate data sets that no human analysis could possibly do in any realistic time frame," said Russel.

Identification time has already been reduced by an hour.

The new software is expected to assist in the timely detection of toxic algae, build a data catalogue and build on the region's aquaculture advantage.

Fiordland Lobster's success recognised at awards

The success of New Zealand's largest live crayfish exporter, Fiordland Lobster, was recognised at the HSBC NZCTA China Business Awards on June 6.

The company took home the Supreme Award and received NZCTA's New Zealand Trade & Enterprise award for excellence in trade.

Established 30 years ago in Te Anau, Fiordland Lobster now holds 15 sites across New Zealand, Australia and China and is expected to send 1.5 million live crayfish to China this year alone.

The company has supplied Chinese supermarket chain Hema for two years and employs a system of tagging each crayfish with QR codes to provide Chinese consumers with information on the origin of their seafood.

“We’re absolutely delighted with this recognition of the journey we’ve been on,” said Fiordland Lobster Company chief executive Alan Buckner.

“China is a challenging market and the pace of change there is incredible. It’s actually shaped who we are by focusing our organizational culture onto constant innovation. Managing this while at the same time holding onto our founding values, you could say has been our own formula for success.”



Fiordland Lobster Company chief executive Alan Buckner (left), with HSBC New Zealand chief executive Chris Russell, NZCTA chair Martin Thomson, Minister for Trade and Export Growth Hon. David Parker and Cathay Pacific country manager Mark Pirihi (right).

News

New Zealand’s oyster industry has welcomed Biosecurity New Zealand’s two year commitment to continue monitoring Foveaux Strait for the presence of *Bonamia ostreae*, *Stuff* reports. The Government allocated \$1.4 million to the programme in its latest budget announcement. A multi-sector governance group comprised of local government, industry and iwi, Fisheries New Zealand and Biosecurity New Zealand has been established to oversee implementation. The programme will cover surveillance and restrict movements of shellfish and farming equipment to reduce the risk of spreading the disease. Funding will also go towards promoting biosecurity best practice and establishing a *Bonamia ostreae* technical advisory.

The latest Situation Outlook for Primary Industries (SOPI) shows New Zealand’s exports are performing well for a second consecutive year, *Newsroom* reports. Total farm, fishing

and forestry exports for the year are forecasted to rise to \$45.7 billion by June 2020 – a 7.1 percent increase. Seafood export revenue is expected to increase by 7.3 percent to \$1.9 billion.



New Zealand Seafood Industry
Conference and Technical Day

Conference 2019

Registrations for the 2019 New Zealand Seafood Industry Conference and Technical Day are open and the [programme](#) is now available.

Seafood New Zealand has negotiated accommodation rates at the conference venue and neighbouring hotels. Please note, there are now a limited number of rooms available at the [Rydges hotel](#), so be in quick to secure remaining accommodation and flights. Bookings can be made through the [information](#) section on the conference webpage along with [links](#) to Air New Zealand for group flight bookings.

Seafood Stars Awards

The 2019 Seafood Stars Awards are open for nominations. The awards are a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our industry people and their achievements. This year's award categories include:

- Future Development and Innovation Award
- Young Achiever Award
- Longstanding Service Award

For more information on each category [visit our website](#), or [download the form](#) to nominate someone today.

Check out the latest Seafood Magazines

