

# SEAFOOD

NEW ZEALAND



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Optimism and infrastructure on the wild West Coast

Reduced NZ seabird catch a focus internationally

Seafood Saturday a resounding success



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## From the Chief Executive

# West Coast thrives

It is not often enough that we get down to the West Coast of the South Island, but it is a region that just quietly gets on with the business of fishing, graciously pausing when Wellington calls in.

And who can blame them?

The new infrastructure and resulting positivity on the West Coast is hard won by the men and women who live there, the businesses that have enough faith in the region to just 'get things done'.

That's always been the Coast's way but over the past few years, a phenomenal amount of progress has been made in the marine space.

Money from the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) has supercharged the building of floating wharves at both Greymouth and Westport and a covered slipway is almost finished construction in Greymouth. This alone is a gamechanger for the fishing industry there. In a region that is renowned for its rain, somewhere dry to maintain and repair vessels is a godsend. It also coincides with a change to the slipways in Nelson and will complement what will be on offer there.

The magnificent photography of Cobden local photographer Bob McAuliffe graces the front cover and centre of this edition.

Elsewhere in the magazine, we have a rundown of what is hoped to be an annual event in Nelson, the first Seafood Saturday, Chris Carey talks to DGI Morgan who has taken over many of Stark Brother's team and is continuing to offer a comprehensive dry-docking service in Lyttleton.

Fiona Terry has a yarn from Motueka Nets, a family business whose service to the industry has been over decades.

There was a major meeting of the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) in Edinburgh and Tim Pankhurst analyses the results of those discussions on seabird bycatch.

We say goodbye to Roger Belton of Southern Clams and former fisherman and harbourmaster Curly James and look at the memories and contribution both of these larger-than-life characters made to the industry.

Our next edition is August and will be around the Seafood NZ conference in Wellington.

We hope to see you there.

**Dr Jeremy Helson**

**Chief Executive**

# Calling seafood stars



## Calling all seafood industry stars.

Nominations for the 2023 Seafood Star Awards are now open. The categories are;

- Future Adaptation Award – This award is presented to the entity or individual that has adapted their fishing or processing practices to:
- Reduce adverse impacts on the environment that lead to a lower carbon footprint,
- Reduce waste, Reduce adverse impacts on the marine environment, or
- Reduce adverse impacts on protected species
- Seafood Sector Leadership Award This is awarded to the entity or individual that has delivered high impact results that have contributed to creating a positive future for the industry.
- Young Achiever Award – This award is presented to a person, 35 years of age or under, who has demonstrated that he or she has made a positive

difference to the seafood industry, and has the potential to continue to develop as an effective and respected seafood industry leader or role model.

- Life Membership Award (maximum of two awarded per year) – This award is presented to a person who:
- Has worked in the seafood industry for a minimum of 15 years, and
- Has made a substantial positive impact on the seafood industry, and
- Has been a highly effective and respected seafood industry member.

Nominations will close on 14 July and winners will be announced at the Seafood Conference in Wellington as well as in the Seafood New Zealand Magazine.

Details of the categories and nomination forms can be downloaded at <https://www.seafood.co.nz/news-and-events/events> or requested from [Karen.olver@seafood.org.nz](mailto:Karen.olver@seafood.org.nz).

## SAVE THE DATE

# 2023 SEAFOOD CONFERENCE

16-17 August 2023

The annual seafood conference is returning to Wellington for the first time since 2018.

The conference programme will focus on the theme, “Seafood for a new generation”.

The programme will explore what a successful future looks like for the sector and how the industry will need to adapt to meet new expectations. We’ll celebrate the exceptional work that is already underway including the development of new

technologies, how we are building stronger communities, and how we are broadening our markets.

### Registrations will open mid-June 2023.

Go to [www.seafood.co.nz/news-and-events/events](https://www.seafood.co.nz/news-and-events/events) to keep up to date.

# Industry Transformation Plan looks to the future

Stories of investment in the commercial fishing industry are demonstrating that the tide is turning on a difficult few years.

The fleet is renewing. Confidence is now at a level that at least four companies are in the process of building new vessels – and that is no small investment. Last month Damon Cooper at Harbour Fish in Dunedin launched *Elodie*, a 16-metre potting and multi-use vessel at Carey’s Bay to much fanfare.

The West Coast has been the recipient of a multi-million-dollar investment, mostly courtesy of the Provincial Growth Fund. New floating wharves have been put in at both Westport and Greymouth, and Greymouth has a covered slipway under construction.

Craig Boote of Westfleet, which is jointly owned by Boote and Sealord, is having the \$6 million, 26 metre *Te Rununga* built in Nelson and expects that to launch late July. It will be one of only two longliners built in New Zealand and the biggest by nearly 10 metres.

The industry has long been concerned about an aging fleet, but regulatory and financial impositions have made investment back into infrastructure a difficult proposition.

Despite the challenges, some players have taken the risk and bet on new technology paying long term dividends. Sealord’s *Tokatu*, and Moana’s *Santy Maria* have both been rare builds in recent years.



Damon Cooper and Chanel Gardner at the launch of *Elodie* at Carey’s Bay.

Craig Boote says while everyone is suffering from crew shortages, he has found that above all else, including pay rates, a comfortable, modern vessel is the key to attracting and retaining staff.

The Industry Transformation Plan, launched for consultation last month,

acknowledges this issue.

*“Refreshing Aotearoa New Zealand’s fishing fleet is a key part of the transition to an efficient and environmentally sustainable fishing industry. The age of the current fleet indicates investment is required, particularly in inshore vessels. Replacing older vessels with modern vessels would enable lower emissions, less impactful fishing methods and more attractive living quarters for crew across the industry. There were 840 active fishing vessels in this country in 2022 and the mean age of the vessels is 44 years. For the 169 vessels between 16-24 metres in length, 89 percent are older than 20 years and 25 percent are older than 50 years. Older vessels tend to have higher repair, maintenance, and fuel costs, are more difficult to retrofit with improved fishing gear, and have older-style living quarters.”*

The transition plan, developed with industry, NGOs, Government, and iwi also offers a way forward.

*“An inshore fleet renewal innovation project with a strong regional development focus has been developed by Northland Incorporated (Regional Economic Development Agency). A business case, funded by government, has been prepared and is an input into industry and government decisions on the project. The project proposes replacing 169 vessels that are 16-24 metres with 70-100 vessels based on a sister ship design. The sister ship approach would provide collective benefits to the industry through the development of expertise in the building and maintenance of these vessels. The project seeks funding and support from government and industry.”*

Investment in the industry not only demonstrates confidence in its future but also a willingness to embrace new, more efficient, and environmentally palatable new technologies”.

Damon Cooper’s new vessel is more fuel efficient and is fishing more sustainably. It was also built locally by DG Engineering and contributed to the Dunedin economy – as Westfleet’s new vessel has contributed to the Nelson and West Coast economies.

When the seafood industry, already worth \$5 billion to New Zealand, invests in its business, it is good for the entire country.

Some 17,000 people rely on the industry for work and a reinvigorated confidence in the industry’s future can only benefit the wider economy and those whose livelihoods are tied to seafood.

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# Reduced NZ seabird catch a focus internationally



Salvin's albatross, Campbell albatross and giant petrels squabble over a feed - image Tamzin Henderson.

## The southern squid fishery continues to focus on reducing seabird captures, with encouraging results. Tim Pankhurst reports.

A study showing the number of seabirds captured in the New Zealand deepwater fishery has decreased markedly in the last decade has been presented to an international forum.

Experts from around the world met in Edinburgh in mid-May to discuss the latest developments in reducing accidental seabird captures in fishing gear.

A paper presented by Deepwater Council's Ben Steele-Mortimer shows the number of seabirds caught in the southern squid trawl fishery, verified by Ministry for Primary Industries independent observers, has halved in the 10 years to 2020.

The Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) Seabird Bycatch Working Group that met over three days in Scotland includes members from governments, NGOs, academic institutions and the seafood industry.

Its member countries and territories include Australia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, France, New Zealand, Peru, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, Uruguay, and Vanuatu.

These countries have agreed to work together to conserve albatrosses and petrels in particular, both within their national territories and in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

In this country a Net Capture Programme was established in 2019 by the Southern Seabirds Trust, which includes industry and the World Wildlife Fund, and the Seafood New Zealand (SNZ) Deepwater Council representing New Zealand's deepwater fisheries, to investigate, innovate and trial operational approaches to minimise net captures of seabirds at sea.

The focus of Steele-Mortimer's presentation was on the southern squid fishery due to its high observer coverage (more than 80 percent of all trawls have been observed by government observers over the past 10 years) and its overlap with the breeding season and range of many seabird species.

The arrow squid fishery, the second largest in New Zealand by volume after hoki, is largely based on the stormy waters of the Stewart Snares shelf and the Auckland Islands in the Southern Ocean, with other smaller fisheries off the Otago

coast and on the Chatham Rise.

The squid fisheries have become more efficient in the 20 years since 2003. The same quantity of squid is caught with 50 percent fewer trawl tows, which reduces the seabirds' exposure to danger by half.

The ocean environment in the southern squid fishery is known for its hostile conditions (Roaring Forties and Furious Fifties) due to its proximity to the Southern Ocean. Down here, large swells above three metres are very common, and the relatively shallow shelf makes for difficult seas even in summer. Over two-thirds of the time, wind speeds are between 38 and 50 km/h, and frequently exceed 50 km/h (Meteoblue – Auckland Islands).

The southern squid fishery overlaps with the foraging range of many seabirds notably due to the proximity of breeding areas of sooty shearwaters (*Puffinus griseus* approx. 10 million pairs) white-chinned petrels (*Procellaria aequinoctialis* 200,000 pairs) and two mollymawks or small albatross species, white-capped and southern Buller's (*Thalassarche cauta* and *T. bulleri* – approx. 95,000 pairs and 12,000 pairs respectively).

These foraging birds which are aggressive feeders around fishing vessels, end up interacting with fishing gear.

Consequently, the Deepwater Group, now the Deepwater Council, placed considerable focus on reducing the risk of seabirds interacting with mobile fishing gear, with warp (cable) mitigation equipment, effective fish waste management and dedicated operational procedures.

Steele-Mortimer says there is no silver bullet in ensuring the birds' safety, it is more a matter of incremental reductions.

**“Skippers, shore staff, fisheries and conservation managers and MPI observers have all played an important part in reducing the interactions of seabirds with fishing gear.”**



White-chinned petrel - image Ed Dunens, CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

Tori lines made from colourful streamers to deter birds from striking the wire warps attached to the net have long been in place, as has delayed offal disposal.

“We are always innovating, and investigating new ways to reduce interactions even further, we have looked

at high-pressure water sprayers, noise and strobe lights but these were found to be impractical or ineffective,” Steele-Mortimer says in the seabirds study.

Richard Wells, the co-author of the New Zealand ACAP presentation, notes that seabirds are attracted from up to 10 km away. Possible cues include sight, the sound of engines and winches when hauling, smell and other seabird activity.

“It’s very difficult to reduce seabird attraction to fishing vessels, our effort is better placed at reducing interactions when they are in the vicinity of the vessel and the fishing gear,” the paper says.

It was found a key risk is the pooling area immediately astern of the vessel where birds can enter the net mouth or become entangled in the mesh.

Turning the vessel to close off this space and sinking the gear quickly has proved to be effective at minimising the time birds have access to the trawl net.

Most birds caught in the net are petrels and shearwaters, where they are at risk of drowning. Albatrosses don’t usually get captured inside the net, but they can get caught in the net mesh.

Deepwater Council general manager Aaron Irving says minimising interactions and reducing risk to seabirds has always been a priority for the seafood industry.

“Our people do not want to interact with birds or other species when they are fishing and that is why they do all they can to reduce vessel interactions,” he says.

“Since 2005-06 when Deepwater Group was established, the total estimated number of reported seabirds captures in the squid fishery by the deepwater fleet has fallen by 60 percent from 1213 to 481 in 2019-20.

“Capture rates and trends do fluctuate to some extent but, importantly, the trend continues to travel downward.

“We all want to see the number continue to drop. How cool would it be if we could bring the risk of net captures all the way down?”

“It has been a long journey and while we are not there yet, we are determined.”

The Net Capture Programme worked collaboratively to ensure all possible mitigation tools and approaches were considered and prioritised ideas for further work based on feasibility (i.e., the mitigation had to be practical within regulatory bounds and safe to use). A long list of mitigation tools and approaches were initially considered, seven were trialled at sea, and two had shore-based trials. All potential options were categorised into one of three themes – attraction, deterrence and prevention.

The most plausible approach to reducing internal net captures (attributing to approximately 44 percent of captures) was prevention, by reducing the surface area encompassed by the headline to the end of the wings (referred to as the pooling area) in the last moments of hauling. However, some vessels have operational and engineering challenges with using this operation to close the headline of the net.



Sooty Shearwater - image Mike Baird.

The members of the programme concluded that operations to restrict or prevent birds from being physically entangled in the trawl was the most plausible approach to reducing net captures. Additional work was undertaken by Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) to analyse net mesh differences at different locations on the net and associated risk, but results were inconclusive due to heavy data bias for captures attributed to diamond mesh trawls (which predominate in the gear).

The group decided to discontinue investigating mesh alterations due to the lack of supporting evidence for alternatives. Other tools such as retractable net covers or the use of synthetic sheet material to cover the top panels of the net, had operational and engineering challenges. The volatile conditions of the southern squid fishery make the deployment of devices difficult and potentially unsafe during shooting and hauling.

The wide white strips trialled in this programme did not show any effectiveness and also made it more difficult to remove stickers once the net was on deck – something which is a priority and recommended by ACAP. Additionally, mitigation to restrict birds from getting entangled externally in the meshes will only have a potential effect on the number of birds getting caught in the wings, lengthener or codend (depending on the mitigation). None of the feasible ideas investigated would be effective for the whole external area of the net, attributing to approximately 56 percent of net captures.

Also, modifying trawl gear may have a significant effect on the water flow of the net and therefore fishing performance. Fish bycatch rates may increase as a result and possible gear failure and potential loss of economic revenue were also factors.

The interrogation into observer data has shown that for

net-captured birds, approximately 44 percent of birds are caught on the inside of the net with most of these being recovered dead. Therefore, any approach to minimise the surface area between the headline and the stern of the vessel will theoretically reduce the risk of internal net captures.

This was supported by conversations with observers as they explained the key risk area being the ‘pooling area’ immediately astern of the vessel during the haul. Skippers from some of the most improved vessels (in terms of reducing seabird capture rates), noted they turn the vessel while they haul if space allows.

While there is insufficient data to directly relate the reduction in capture rates from these vessels to the approach of minimising the pooling area, it is logical that any attempts to minimise the surface area of the headline and close off the meshes in the wings of the net will reduce risk. However, it must be acknowledged that some vessels may be unable to turn the vessel while hauling for operational reasons, such as vessels that haul directly onto a net drum.

Other operations such as sinking the gear quickly, and net binding help to minimise the time and area that birds can have access to the trawl net during setting. However, as with other mitigation measures trialled in this programme, the ability of vessels to execute operations effectively and safely, without increasing the risk to seabirds, varies from vessel to vessel.

The study notes the importance of good communication and developing feedback loops were imperative to ensure the process was transparent and efficient. Skippers, shore staff, fisheries and conservation management and observers all played an important function in the process, but the information needed to be communicated effectively between groups.

Since 2006, DWG has been an information conduit between government officials and the deepwater fishing fleet, providing protected species risk management advice and support, and facilitating conversations between groups. The constructive and trusting relationship between DWG and the government has enabled significant progress in managing risks to protected species and was particularly valuable for the Net Capture Programme.

Supporting observers to think more analytically about capture events (e.g., where the risk is, and what contributed to the risk) encourages more comprehensive information to be reported back to the managers and then to the industry. A poster developed by FNZ and DWG for observers and skippers helps them think more about net interactions and risk factors. The poster also encourages observers and skippers to discuss these risk factors with one another, think about solutions and report back to shore staff.

Despite challenges, the bottom line is seabird capture rates in the New Zealand squid fishery have been trending downwards from above 20 captures per 100 tows in 2014 to around 10 captures per 100 tows in 2020.

## **VESSEL UNDER 400 GT?**

The environmental emission standards that apply to commercial vessels, including those under 400 GT, are now in effect. Find out more at [maritimenz.govt.nz/airpollution](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/airpollution)

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**Kia Mataara**

# Motueka Nets - a long contribution to fishing

It's raining heavily in Nelson, but the net detectives are hard at work, undeterred by the conditions, diagnosing what the problem is with a tangle of ropes urgently needed for a trawler to return to sea, as Fiona Terry reports.

The 220m-long midwater trawl, delivered to Motueka Nets for significant repair, appears to the untrained eye as an impossible spaghetti-like mess. Partially hanging from a forklift some ropes have already been eked out and spread across the lengthy yard by the experienced team. It takes patience, skill, and determination to not only disentangle, but also diagnose the cause of the problem so the team can implement tweaks in their repair work to help the fishing crew avoid a repeat.

"Some of the best days are when you pull out a net to find it's totally destroyed and might only have two days to fix it," says operations manager Glen Curtis, who joined the firm 30 years ago. "The damage looks like absolute carnage, but everyone just gets straight to it, working as a team, and then it all comes together in a phenomenal amount of time.

**"At the end, when everyone can see they totally smashed it, and helped get the boat back out fishing quickly, that's a good day and everybody's proud of their**



Untangling the spaghetti.

"Fishing's not a nine to five job, five days a week, so when bad things happen, we're here to give the best service possible, including ongoing aftercare."

Service isn't the only thing the family-owned business prides itself on, says manager Josh Donker, whose grandparents Hank and Jean took over the company in 1988 from owner Murray Timms to complement their fishing business. Providing a quality, reliable product that lasts the distance is also key to the class reputation the company holds in its manufacture and repair of midwater and bottom trawls. Creating this is a combination of workmanship and the quality of materials used in manufacture, Donker says.

"What we're using a lot these days is Dyneema, a synthetic fibre material with the strength of wire that we import from Holland. We have an extensive range of it - rope, twine and netting. It's strong and light."

Donker knows the ropes - he spent 15 years as a net maker at the firm after leaving school at 16. A change of tack in 2015 saw him return to study, taking a Diploma in IT for three years, then working in industry, including with DataCom. He returned to the family business at the start of this year after his father Steve - who bought Motueka Nets in 2002 following Hank's passing - expressed a desire to take semi-retirement. It's definitely a family affair - Steve's wife Cathy has been much involved in the business too, along with their other sons Steven and Matt, who both are full time net-makers.

"Dyneema is incredibly light, which is better for fuel economy, and is double-knotted so it doesn't distort, which is crucial," says Josh Donker, who'll often pick up a needle to help if the workshop and yard are busy. "It's produced by Van Beelen, which uses German technology in its machinery, so makes an exceptionally good product. It's absolutely



Steve Donker, Cathy Donker, Josh Donker, Matthew Donker and Glen Curtis.



The team at Motueka Nets.

crucial it's woven together with exactly the same tension in all places so that all areas take the strain equally - and they do this really well."

Where once Motueka Nets' business involved a good deal of repair work, these days it's mainly production of new nets. "This is because of a combination of things," says Curtis, who started at the firm aged 23, after four years working with the gear at Sealord and some overseas travel. He still likes to get hands-on with a needle, net making. "It's not just that the materials we use have advanced, but also the technology on boats is far superior now, so incidents of breaking things are nowhere near as high because those on board know much more accurately where the gear is, and how full it is."

For the company's continued success, it's vital the operations manager keeps his finger on the pulse. "I have a lot to do with fishermen around the port," Curtis says. "They're good characters and have a wealth of knowledge. A lot of the innovation we implement comes from the feedback we get from them.

"The industry is always changing, materials change, fish numbers and species vary – especially as we're experiencing warmer water temperatures. Knowing what customers' needs are is very important so we can stay on the ball, give

the best service we can and come up with ways to keep them fishing."

Nets are like a giant windsock with wings, he jokes, but what the company also has in its armoury to turn each one into an accurate piece of gear is technical net designer Owen Hoggard, who's been with the firm since 1988 and who uses years of experience and feedback to create the ideal solutions.

Nets are generally comprised of four panels, one each at the top and bottom, one on each side. Ready-made netting is sent in giant bales, as is the twine and rope, then cut to size and sewn together by the skillful team according to the plans. Small variations can be crucial, says Donker. "Thirty-five years ago when my grandad bought the company, it was pretty much a case of one net catches everything. These days it's much more selective, and that's the product of a good quota system."

A huge amount of the firm's design work is around mitigation – not catching fish - with the driving force for innovation being bycatch and endangered species. "You need to understand each different species," Curtis says. "It's really hard to come up with ways of splitting them out to target specific species unless you know how those fish act.

"A net that works well in one area, won't necessarily work on another coast. Adapting can be as simple as changing the weight on the bottom, or adjusting the floats, depending on variables like the sea floor, target species, horsepower of the vessel towing it, the trawl doors. We specialise in technical alterations that benefit our customers and we're really lucky we work with fishermen willing to experiment with things."

With the controversy over bottom trawling continuing, Curtis anticipates more adaptations in this space. "We used to run quite heavy ground ropes with a lot of steel weight on them and nowadays we've taken a lot of that steel weight out and use more rubber on the ground rope to help protect the seabed because it's very light in the water. Then by the time you've got floats on your headline, it's essentially lifting the gear."

The firm's proud to have been involved with the design of the Sea Lion Exclusion Device (SLED), having worked in

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## FEATURE

conjunction with fishing companies and scientists. Members of the team travelled to Tasmania for this, where they tested solutions in special flume tanks. Motueka Nets became the first company in Aotearoa to produce the successful outcome. Other testing involves putting the same nets on different boats, seeing where the stress points are, working with the fishermen to ascertain the adjustments needed. It's worked extensively with NIWA too in trawl surveys and wherever possible, Curtis and other team members review camera footage from boats - something that back in grandad Hank's day would have been unheard of.

When Hank Donker bought Motueka Nets in 1988 he took on Andrew Hope as manager, who stayed working for the firm for many more years. Hank had been running a successful fishing company, Donker Marine, for over a decade at that point, starting out from Coromandel with a Danish seine boat, then sizing up to the 32m *Rijnmond V*, which he brought out from Holland. Later, the firm sold that boat, instead purchasing *Tasman Viking* and *Recovery*.

With Hank's passing in 2000, the family decided it was time to sell the vessels and quota, but Steve Donker and his wife Cathy, who'd both spent some time as teenagers working with Murray Timms net making, decided to buy that side of the business.

"In the earlier days, we tended to build nets very heavy, to sustain a lot more damage," says Steve. "But if it got pulled out of shape, you'd never get it back square and then it wasn't as efficient. Nets have come a long way since those days - we weren't using fancy stuff like Dyneema, but instead just normal polyethylene. These days they stay a lot squarer and there's so many different materials."

"Van Beelen now supply us everything - ropes, twines, nettings. They've tweaked things themselves and are producing better materials all the time with new technologies."

Another advance Steve's seen during his time is the

introduction of a smooth-surfaced knotless net for cod ends to protect catch from bruising. "More of our trawls are finished in a larger mesh now, and we've turned the mesh on its side so the diamond stays open when it's under strain, which also enables the smaller fish to get out."



Inside massive workshop.

From the outside, Motueka Nets' corrugated iron building at the roadside looks stark, but inside, giant beams at a lofty height set a grand scene for the tidy workshop as team members beaver away with large needles on nets suspended by ropes hanging at uniform spacings. Music plays and there's clearly friendly banter among the team of 16.

Very much a skill, an art, netmaking is still mostly done by hand, but with the addition of technology here and there - like the hydraulic hand to assist in tightening crucial ropes. For the most part though, the general cutting out, stitching together and manufacture of the trawl is pretty much all done by hand.

Says Curtis: "We're massively proud of how long we've been here. Most of the guys have worked with me for 15 to 20 years. We've got an awesome team spirit, we're passionate about what we do."

"Getting school leavers to think of this type of work though is a challenge. We can't offer the money you can make fishing but you get to sleep in your own bed! You get a good workout too because it's a very physical job that involves lifting chains, for instance, and these guys can walk 14km in a day, up and down the ropes, checking for damage on nets that might be 60m high, 80m wide and well over 200m long."

There are also travel opportunities - during hoki season the firm has people on standby with passports ready to assist vessels fishing in Australia.

"Crews do upkeep repairs to nets on boats still, but they tend to be make-do fixes, rather than permanent repairs that we can sort them out with, partly also because they just don't have the space to work on deck," Josh Donker says.

With environmental matters also a key concern for many customers these days, Motueka Nets is working hard on solutions to maximise opportunities for recycling. "We have a contact in Europe that can recycle nylon waste, so we're in the process of providing one customer with a proposal to take care of this waste in a sustainable way," adds Josh. "This is another example of problem-solving for our clients and we're happy to do whatever we can to eliminate gear going into landfill."

Any changes in the future for the industry, Steve Donker says, will be determined by advances in materials and changes in the fisheries, rather than innovation for the sake of it.

"We've got an awesome fishery here, an awesome quota system," adds Donker. "Sadly, there's so much pressure on the fishing industry based on what happened years and years ago. It's a lot different now and what we can do is help our customers work with the quota system efficiently and maximise their returns."

"Both myself and Cathy are humbled and proud to have such an awesome team of people - the 'Mot Nets Family' we call them - and are really grateful for what they've done for us. Without them, we wouldn't have a business. That was my dad's philosophy and he passed it on to me. We're very fortunate it's now going into the third generation."

# Judges commend seafood producers at Awards

The Outstanding New Zealand Food Producer Awards have honoured the seafood industry's top performers again.

Congratulations to Troy Bramley and Claire Edwards of Tora Collective who were named the Seafood New Zealand Water Champion. At the tasting assessment the judges noted the appearance of Tora Collective's wild-caught crayfish was as good as its flavour; 'Beautifully sweet flesh. Wonderful to see antennae and legs with nothing broken.'

When commercial fisher Troy Bramley and his partner, marketer Claire Edwards, realised the best kaimoana left our shores they established Tora Collective. They fish sustainability off the southern Wairarapa coast to supply 'kaimoana fresh as, straight from the ocean'. Their live pāua was Seafood New Zealand Champion in 2021.

Sanford's Big Glory Bay won a special award, with their New Zealand King Salmon portions taking out the FMCG Business Outstanding New Product Award. Rakiura/Stewart Island salmon farm Big Glory Bay is one of the world's most



Judges savouring the Big Glory Bay salmon.



All aspects of the product were assessed.

remote aquaculture farms. The cool water temperature of around 12 degrees Celcius means growth of its King Salmon is slow, giving it time to develop a rich, distinctive flavour. The judges noted the salmon was 'very clean' with a sweet flavour, fine texture, and delicious.

Congratulations as well to our other Gold Medal winners; Akaroa Salmon, Matakana Smokehouse, and the Wee Smokehouse and to Pacific Harvest's edible seaweed, which won gold, silver and bronze. The company won gold for the Manuka Smoked Dulse Flakes, silver for New Zealand Wakame Flakes, and bronze for Chilli Seaweed & Sesame Seasoning.



Tora Collective's wild-caught crayfish was a winner.

# UK-NZ FTA now in force

The New Zealand seafood industry is celebrating the coming into force of the UK-NZ FTA after a meeting in London last month with Prime Minister Chris Hipkins and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

The agreement, signed on 28 February 2022, has significant benefits for the seafood industry.

Some 45 percent of New Zealand’s fish and seafood trade with the UK will enter the UK duty free from the end of this month.

Of the remaining 55 percent of products, most (99.5 percent) will enter duty free within three years, and 100 percent within seven years.

Seafood New Zealand chief executive Jeremy Helson says this is particularly good for our hoki, which has tariffs eliminated from entry into force.

“That is a \$2.2 million export market. Within three years, mussels, which are worth \$6.4 million in exports, will be tariff free as well.

“New Zealand relies on free trade agreements to compete with goods from other global exporters and welcomes all diplomatic efforts to level the playing field.”



# Kibblewhite – sheepdog hero

Richard Kibblewhite of Splashzone, already a legend in the fishing industry, is now the man of the moment for his help in the dramatic rescue of Hercules the sheep dog from a 300 metre high cliff off a coastal Hawke’s Bay farm.

Hercules went over the cliff on Tautane Station on Sunday but shepherdess, Carolyn Albert, and farm manager Jason Gunson had no land-based way to rescue him.

So Gunson called in Kibblewhite, based at Porongahau at the first sign of good weather to mount an ocean-based rescue.

There was still a big swell knocking them about when they attempted the rescue on Tuesday, but when they finally located Hercules on the cliff and Carolyn Albert whistled to him, he couldn’t get down the cliff to the beach fast enough.



Kibblewhite

That’s when Gunson, in wetsuit and fins swam the choppy 200

metres to the beach, while Kibblewhite and Albert anxiously waited in the boat.

Gunson, who Kibblewhite hails as the real hero, then swam the 200 metres back through crashing waves while towing Hercules behind him.

All involved are now safe and well.

 <p><a href="http://www.splashzone.co.nz">www.splashzone.co.nz</a> All enquiries to Richard or Jean fish.man@xtra.co.nz or 027 230-2333</p>	BNS	CRA	HPB	KIN	BCO WAR GUR LIN SPO
	TRU	<b>ACE &amp; SHARES</b>			
	TRE	Inshore Parcels			
	TAR	North Island			
	SNA	<b>WANTED</b>			
PAU	MOK	SCH			

# "catch fish...not cables"

There are a number of international submarine cables which come ashore in the Auckland area. These cables supply international communications for both New Zealand and Australia to the rest of the world.

New Zealand is a very isolated nation and as such is extremely reliant upon global communication via submarine cables. Here in New Zealand over 98% of all international communication is carried via submarine fibre optic cables. These cables are a key component of New Zealand's infrastructure and play a significant role in our everyday lives, the general economy and future growth of New Zealand.

These cables are laid in three submarine cable corridors in the greater Auckland area where anchoring and fishing is prohibited under the Submarine Cables & Pipelines Protection Act.

## These areas are:

- **Muriwai Beach** out to the 12 mile territorial limit where both anchoring and fishing is prohibited.
- **Scott Point to Island Bay** in the upper Waitemata Harbour where anchoring is prohibited.
- **Takapuna Beach** this runs from Takapuna Beach in the south to just north of the Hen & Chicken Island (opposite Taiharuru Head) where anchoring and fishing is prohibited.

**Note:** These protected areas are monitored by sea and air patrols.



## Symbols Relating To Submarine Cables

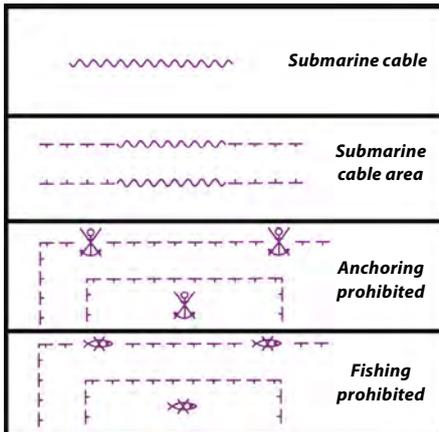


Figure 1.

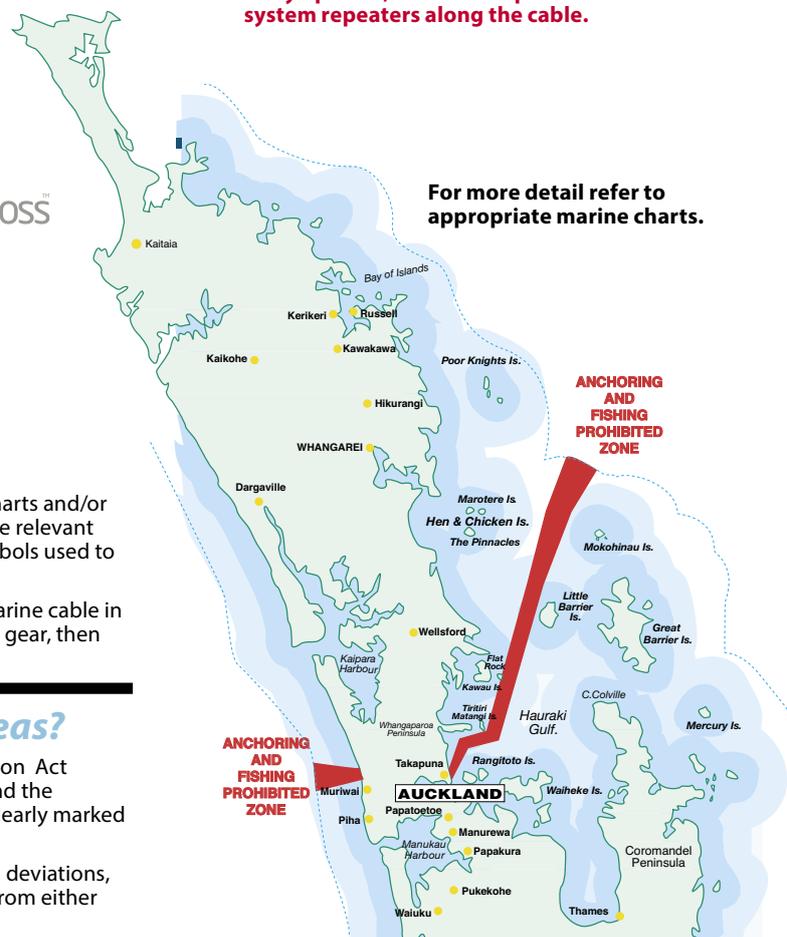
## These are some of the penalties

- A maximum fine of \$20,000 for a non-commercial vessel.
- A maximum fine of \$100,000 for a commercial vessel.
- A maximum fine of \$250,000 for damaging a submarine cable.

Additional to the fine for damage, the cable owners would inevitably pursue the recovery of costs associated with repairs, this could be up to \$100,000 plus a day; a typical repair can take up to two weeks.

## Be Aware

These International submarine cables carry up to 10,000 volts to power the system repeaters along the cable.



For more detail refer to appropriate marine charts.

## What should you do?

- If you are going into any of these areas, be sure to check your marine charts and/or GPS plotter so you know the exact locations of the prohibited zones. The relevant charts are NZ53, NZ5322, NZ532, NZ522, NZ52, NZ42 and NZ43. The symbols used to mark the zones are detailed in Figure 1.
- If you suspect you have snagged your anchor or fishing gear on a submarine cable in one of these areas, don't try to free it. Note your position, abandon your gear, then call 0800 782 627.

## What happens outside the prohibited areas?

These cables are covered by the Submarine Cables and Pipelines Protection Act regardless of whether they are inside or outside a prohibited area. Beyond the confines of the "anchoring and fishing prohibited" areas, the cables are clearly marked on the appropriate marine charts.

Considering possible positioning inaccuracies and repaired cable section deviations, fishermen are advised to keep a minimum distance of one nautical mile from either side of charted cables.

## Note this number:

For any queries regarding submarine cables call: **0800 782 627**

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COVER FEATURE



# Optimism and infrastructure

**The West Coast of the South Island is getting on with the business of fishing with an abundance of underlying optimism, fuelled by a big investment into infrastructure and people, as Lesley Hamilton reports.**



# on the wild West Coast

## COVER FEATURE



Greymouth's covered slipway under construction.

### **The West Coast of the South Island is getting on with the business of fishing with an abundance of underlying optimism, fuelled by a big investment into infrastructure and people, as Lesley Hamilton reports.**

Seafood New Zealand visited Greymouth and Westport to look at the progress.

In Greymouth, Grey District Mayor Tania Gibson has a lot on her plate. Her district, like all other regions is battling with Three Waters and the reform of the Resource Management Act. Add that to the importance of extractive industries such as mining and fishing in a region that is largely conservation estate, and it is not surprising that consensus is hard fought for.

The West Coast is a jaw-droppingly beautiful part of the world thanks to its unique, and largely untouched, natural environment.

Some 1.9 million hectares of land on the West Coast is public conservation land, with permission to use that land given out to 58 mining concession holders and 682 non-mining concession holders who collectively pay the Department of Conservation about \$1.3 million per year to use the public conservation lands. The non-mining concessions are mainly farming and tourism.

Mayor Gibson is well aware of the value of the fishing industry to the region as well.

"We have built our new covered slipway, at a cost of almost \$3 million, so that is a great achievement," says Gibson. "The money has come from the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) and that is a big thing for the

fishing industry. We believe it will attract vessels from Bluff northwards, that would normally go to Nelson. And the floating pontoons are also up and running and look great."

The covered slipway dominates the landscape, visible from most parts of Greymouth and in a region known for rain, it will be a gamechanger. The West Coast is New Zealand's wettest region, with annual rainfall at high elevations regularly exceeding 10,000 mm, with coastal locations typically recording between 2000 and 3000 mm of rainfall annually.

This climate has been challenging for vessel maintenance and repairs, but the covered slipway will make all the difference.

Gibson says she shares the concern of the industry as far as getting young people into the industry and says through the Mayors for Jobs Taskforce they are offering to cover the costs of training, transport, and gear for the fishing and other West Coast industries.

**"We've had a bit of a struggle with our Port but getting all this infrastructure upgraded has been a saviour really."**

It is already attracting other businesses. A marine coatings business has just located here, and we expect others to follow.”

Gibson says she has been talking to industry and, like other industries in the region, attracting staff is one problem, but it is compounded because they have no accommodation to house them.

“We have a mining company wanting 130 staff for next year and there are another 50 potential staff needed at Barrytown. There are another 87 indirect jobs as well but there is not much on the rental market.”

Gibson says a lot of people are moving to the West Coast from up North and overseas and that has seen property prices remain steady.

She says the Coast is reliant on primary industries and fishing is one of the most important.

“Construction is the biggest sector at the moment but farming and fishing are well up there in importance. Now all the construction work for the slipway and the wharves is underway, people are realising how big a contributor fishing is to the region.”

Gibson says they value the seafood industry and points out that the new Westfleet factory was a huge boon to the district.

“It was a huge undertaking and a big commitment to Greymouth, but Craig Boote (Westfleet owner) has always supported this district so well.”

Gibson says the funding for the new infrastructure was a direct result of New Zealand First coming to town and looking at the facilities and then deciding to fund them through the PGF.

She says everyone, particularly the hospitality sector, is desperate for workers.

“But the Coast keeps going ahead. Apparently wages here are rising quicker than most places in the country.”

The faith in the district is underlined by a multi-million-dollar investment by DOC, *Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio*, and *Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Wae Wae* in conjunction with Weta Workshop.

“Pounamu Pathways is a big interactive experience that will tell the story of the West Coast through interactive visitor centres in Greymouth, Hokitika, Westport, and Haast.”

The \$18 million cost is also coming out of the Provincial Growth Fund, which has invested a total of \$145 million for projects in the West Coast region.

A few minutes down the road from the council chambers we meet North Beach Fishing owners Craig



Penny and Craig Jones of North Beach Fishing.

and Penny Jones.

Craig Jones admits that times are tough for the industry and adds that the fishing this year has not been at its best.

“Three years ago, it was great,” says Craig. “I put it down to temperature myself. We have never had temperatures like 22 degrees on the surface here before and that obviously affects the water column all the way down.”

“At this time of year on the Coast we are targeting tarakihi, blue warehou, some stargazer and a bit of gurnard. The temperatures are starting to drop off now, so we hope the hoki will be around in June and July. The last two hoki seasons have been pretty good.” He says like most other operations he struggles to get good, reliable staff.

Penny Jones says they are not alone.

“There is just such a worker shortage on the Coast that places have closed because they can’t operate. Even if you could lure staff from somewhere else, there is no accommodation available for them,” she says.

Craig says they did apply for migrant workers but didn’t have any luck but they will try again at the next intake.

The Jones operate the 27 metre *Cook Canyon*, employing two skippers and between 3-5 crew depending on whether they are targeting inshore species or hoki.

They also try to have an extra crew member on who is just learning the ropes.

“They come from all over,” says Craig. “The latest guy is from the Westport Deepsea Fishing School, and he is quite good but time will tell whether he stays. He is on his third trip at the moment.”

Penny says because the crew do a three-trip rotation, coming off the third trip when they have a couple of

## COVER FEATURE



New floating wharves, courtesy of the Provincial Growth Fund.

pays in their pocket is often when they lose them.

They are hoping the new slipway brings more investment and people to the Coast.

Penny says that is starting to happen.

"There is a place called Top of the South Marine Coatings that have already moved down here, and I am sure that is in part because of the slipway."

The company does boat building, maintenance, and marine spray-painting.

Owners of Top of the South Marine are Greg and Keely McDonald, and Greg says the fact the Greymouth council were building the covered slipway was certainly a big draw card.

"It has been my goal to continue building boats like the ones we did at Carey's boatyard in Picton," he says.

"We were in Greymouth on holiday and found out about the plans the council had for the port so started talking to them about moving down. Everyone was very excited about us coming here so we started planning our move.

"Our staff decided that the coast was the place for them too and packed up and moved as well.

"We hope to be able to create jobs here and my goal is to train people."

Another illustration of the investment in Greymouth is Westfleet's factory.

Owner Craig Boote, usually resident in Nelson, is on the West Coast while his general manager takes some time off.

He is rightly proud of the 3000m<sup>2</sup> factory and office building they had designed and built for the waterfront site in 2014.

"Yeah, it's quite nice, for a fish factory," Boote says.

Boote says the covered slipway is a game-changer.

"And the timing is perfect, with the redevelopment at Nelson catering to the bigger boats. It will take smaller

vessels, but this is now a covered option."

Boote says they have tried everything to attract staff.

"We tried paying them more and that backfired because they had too good a time when they had a trip off. We reckon one of the main attractions is a good boat. We're getting *Te Rununga* built in Nelson and that is next level for the crew."

He says if you tell crew that they will be on a vessel that has high speed internet, has two trips on and one trip off, and is like living in a townhouse, they're in.

Westfleet is employing mostly Indonesian crew, except for *Galatea* but Boote says it is going in that direction.

"We bought a Lockwood house here for our Indonesian crew and they think they are kings when they get off the boat for the night. It is absolutely immaculate. A good vessel attracts good crew and that makes it a necessary investment."

*Te Rununga* is due to be launched around the end of July.

"It's a bloody good-looking boat and I am really quite proud of it. It is going to be coming out of here, Greymouth, and that is what the Coast needs. The confidence of investment."

He says he, like many in the industry was pretty deflated last year but it feels like the mood is turning.

"Westfleet is not the only company building a new vessel. I know of at least another three in the works."

The company is bringing 100 to 150 tonnes of fish in a week and in the hoki season, up to 300 tonnes.

Boote says the fish is landed pretty much adjacent to the factory, processed, and then most is trucked to Christchurch, with a lot of fresh fish shipped to Australia.

Boote says it has been a disastrous year for tuna.

"Worst year we've ever seen. Usually, we do between 200-400 tonne per year. This year we got 47 tonnes – I just don't know where they went."

He says they probably went the same place the squid went to – they haven't showed up either.

"They were seeing the tuna in Tasman Bay and as far down as Bluff. We don't know what's happening, but it is probably just too warm for them.

"Having said that, I asked some of the old guys about it and they said 1971/72 was the same, a 40-tonne year, so who knows?"

Boote says NIWA are telling them there will be a

weather change next year but he says the game has changed.

"I think, if you really want to be a serious operator in the next decade or two you need scale. You need to be big."

The new covered slipway will attract other business. Boote, who is also an owner and director of Aimex Engineering based in Nelson says Aimex will have a presence down on the Coast in a temporary way to service vessels using the slipway.

"A mobile facility that you can bring down a heap of workers to do the servicing as necessary. But we think we will see some engineering companies permanently relocate here because of the slipway."

He says it will be great to have the slipway up during winter.

"Winters are brutal here. I remember being a 17-year-old mending nets on this wharf here. I had white gumboots on sitting next to the parked RD350 and it was just so, so cold. That gap in the hills there? We get the easterly come through there that we call 'the barber'. It just funnels down and takes the chill factor off the chart."

Boote says the slipway, combined with the new floating wharves is very good news for the region.



Westfleet's Craig Boote.



Grey District Mayor Tania Gibson.

**"Everyone criticised the idea of new floating wharves because of the surge and the weather, but they are friggin' brilliant."**

Westfleet currently owns *Galatea*, *Moonshadow*, *Ocean Odyssey*, *Jay Elaine*, and *Tasman Viking*, and when *Te Rununga* comes on later this year there will be six vessels to the company's name. Any fish landed into Westport comes straight into the state-of-the-art factory.

As we leave Greymouth to head up the Coast to Westport to see Peter Maich who runs the Westport Deepsea Fishing School, Boote sings his praises.

"Pete does a great job. Don't know what we would do without him."



Home for up to 100 students each year at the Westport Deepsea Fishing School.

The drive from Greymouth to Westport is spectacular. It is the West Coast at its raw best and a part of the country that remains relatively remote. Probably because you actually have to travel to the West Coast; you don't pass through on the way to anywhere much.

In times of low unemployment and difficulty finding crew, the Westport Deepsea Fishing School is a lifeline for seafood companies and a lifetime passion for its owner Peter Maich.

Maich is currently contracted by the Ministry for Social Development to take people on the benefit, put them through a 10-week training programme in a drug and alcohol-free residential environment to get them ready for work.

"With residential, we remove any peer pressure situations they had and get them ready for a job," Maich says.

The new recruits tend to be recently unemployed people.

"Going back 10-15 years, we would never take people over 50 weeks unemployed, we would aim for 20-30 weeks, but these days these guys are recently out of school or work,"

The criteria for getting a place at the school are no criminal convictions, no mental health issues, and nothing physically that would prevent them going to sea.

Maich says those criteria are flexible.

"If we have someone who is on the verge of being acceptable but has a small criminal conviction, we will send the Justice records to the potential employer and let them decide. There are a range of small

offences that employers would not accept 3-4 years ago but they are now starting to give some of those people a start."

The school also puts seasoned crew through different accreditations to maintain a skill or upskill.

At the heart of the complex is a huge wooden building dating back to the fifties when it was used as a nurses' hostel. Maich owns this, also another building around the corner with office space, and the house next door to the former nurses' home. As part of the complex there are speciality buildings covering a number of skills. One teaches basic engineering and has donated engines for the students to be hands on with.

However, Maich is keen to put parts of each course online to make the course cheaper for the companies and more convenient for the students.

"As far as the accreditation system is concerned, I don't want to get into distance learning, I don't want to get into total online learning, as you want to get people together as a class. The interaction of five different people from five different boats in the room enhances knowledge massively.

"All I want to do online is course prep. I don't see any point of them travelling all the way down here for two weeks and spend three days watching training DVDs that they could be watching at home."

For the pre-employment recruits he says as long as they emerge alcohol and drug free, fit, and have a good attitude, it wouldn't matter if he taught them how to bake cakes – they would be employable.

"So, if we can get those foundation stones in place,

train them in the skills the industry wants, it's a no-brainer they'll be employed."

Maich says letting the recruits know how much money they'll earn and how much time they'll have off will sell them on the job in 30 seconds.

"On the deepsea vessels you get on and six months later they tell you they're going to put you through the deckies ticket, and then in another six months you'll be put through the engineers and skipper's ticket."

Inshore, he says, has also been a major success with support from companies and the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen. There are now fully developed pathways taking crews through to offshore skipper and engineering licences.

The 14 staff Maich employed at Westport Deepsea Fishing School is down to around seven this year and Maich says they are almost all retired industry people who want to give back in some way.

Standard Training Certification of Watchkeeping (STCW) is a qualification that is not mandatory in New Zealand but as it is almost everywhere else in the world, Maich is teaching it.

He says firefighting is one of the main skills they need, but they also learn sea survival, personal safety, social responsibility, and first aid.

In the grounds is a specially made construction of containers designed to school the students in firefighting.

"We fill it up with smoke and do search and rescue in a smoke-filled environment with smoke machines. We fill it with foam so they can try that environment, and we light actual fires in here and the walls get so hot you can't touch the side of it. All of these are international requirements for the firefighting component of the course."

Maich has had the school for 22 years. Before that, he fished for 20 years on inshore vessels and skippered deepsea factory vessels. He knows what youngsters need to keep them engaged.

"In the residential programme we can accommodate up to 100 students here."

Thirty percent of the intake is women, something that may surprise people.

"Women are generally more precise at, better at, and faster at work in a factory, have a finesse with bookwork and so you are sowing the seeds of factory managers when they start. We are also seeing a few more female skippers come through, particularly in inshore.

"There is a nice groundswell of females coming through the industry gaining licences. We are seeing the odd deckie coming though in the deepwater fleet. There are no barriers as far as physicality anymore. When I was doing it, it did require physical

grunt, but technology and winches have made the job more about teamwork and safety."

Despite saying he has no favourites, there are a couple of stand outs as far as success that Maich likes to talk about.

"Joel Moet is a Chatham Island boy who came here to do his Skipper Restricted Limits (SRL) and now he has bought his own vessel with his own crew, is now looking at a second vessel, and all this has happened over 18 months.

"And Baylee Reriti, who was just 18 when he turned up here and did his SRL ticket and is now skippering for his father in the family business and sending his crew here to the school for training.

"You know the industry is changing, but there is no lack of hope, and there's a lot of young blood in there wanting to go out and catch fish."

Maich also takes part in Work and Income's He Poutama Rangatahi (HPR) scheme, which is a pathway for youth who are most at risk of long-term unemployment.

"We had 14 young people from Te Aupōuri in the far North come down for a trial programme. As a pilot programme it was good as we got a fair percentage of them working and we have since brought down another four young people so hopefully we will end up have around 80 percent of them employed."

Maich says when you do the maths, investing in training is the best thing that can happen to regions.

"If we train 100 people and got them into work.

Say they're earning 50 grand, that's \$5 million.

And they're probably going to be earning more than that – probably \$60-70,000 – but we could put 100 people into a small town in Northland, put \$5 million back into the economy and in turn, contractors are employed, and houses are being built. What I'm saying is the industry can provide a lot of employment and can make a huge difference to a small place. These students go out to sea for six weeks and return that value to their economy for the



New wharves in Westport.

## Capturing the drama of Greymouth bar crossings



Jay Elaine.

The first fishing vessel captured going over the Greymouth bar by Cobden photographer Bob McAuliffe almost stopped him taking images of the boats forever.

McAuliffe was only after a sunrise image when he positioned himself on the breakwater on 20 May 2013, but saw the fishing vessel *Lady Anna* making her way in.

The seas were rough, and the wind was up as he took photos of the approach to the treacherous bar, when suddenly a wave flipped the 15 metre *Lady Anna*.

At the time, McAuliffe told the media: "I was taking pictures and I saw the thing tip right before my eyes. I couldn't believe it ... I was looking through the camera and I see the thing go over."

The 36-year-old skipper Nicholas Eklund died in the tragedy, the last fatality in recent times on the infamous bar.

Two crew survived the crossing and McAuliffe, just a student photographer at the time, was too traumatised to go back for a while.

"I was a landscape photographer. I like taking photos of flowers and insects and scenery and stuff. That I was at the breakwater at the same time as the tragedy was



Firefighting instruction is a mandatory module at the Westport Deepsea Fishing School.



Student accommodation at Westport Deepsea Fishing School.

six weeks they are back."

Down at the new floating wharves, another demonstration of the PGF's largesse, Maich shows us the vessel he bought for training his students.

*Blythe Spirit* is a 9.7 metre alloy Senator vessel that Maich has put a state-of-the-art electronics system by Furuno on so it can match the deepwater fleet.

The wharf looks packed with vessels, but Maich says it is not like in the heyday.

"In the mid-eighties there were 100-120 fishing vessels on the Coast and this year, because it was such a poor tuna season, there were probably fewer than 30."

Maich's final word is on funding.

purely coincidence because I had to take different types of photos for my photography course," he says.

The skipper was just unlucky, he says.

"A wave came up behind him and lifted him up, then



Resolution, Bob McAuliffe.

broke underneath him and his nose went down. It was surreal. I couldn't believe what I was seeing."

McAuliffe's photographs of the tragedy were picked up by news media all over the country but for a while he was hesitant to go back to the breakwater.

"For a while I couldn't take a photo of another boat. You think weird thoughts when you see something like that, and I thought if I took another photo, I would jinx the boat."

Ten years later, and the images of vessels crossing the bar are the most popular with his customers. He says the skippers and crew often give him a heads up that they will be on their way out at a certain time in the hope he will get a pic.

McAuliffe, who now teaches a photography class at Greymouth High School, took the cover image took the cover image of Mako and centre photograph of Moonshadow and his work can be found at [www.bobmcauliffe.com](http://www.bobmcauliffe.com)



Whitebait fritter sandwich - a local delicacy done to perfection.

"It's insane, because the set-up is brilliant, everything is here, and what I would love is to have some sort of sustainable model where stable cash flows come into the school that enables us to train people for pre-employment and for licences.

**"The benefits to young people and to regional New Zealand are too valuable to keep constantly scrapping for funding."**

**Crimps Singlesleeve**  
A, B, C, CD, D, DE, E, F, G

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# Seafood Saturday surfs to success



A happy crowd at Seafood Saturday – image Tim Cuff.

**Held on 25 March, Nelson’s inaugural Seafood Saturday rode waves of enthusiasm in a public celebration of the region’s deep connection to the seafood sector and blue economy.**

“There were nearly 700 people who attended the event throughout the afternoon, and we have received so many amazing messages from people about how well the day went,” said Seafood New Zealand chief executive Jeremy Helson. “We were very pleased to be platinum sponsor of this inaugural event, and we give a huge thank you to the other sponsors, Sealord, Publik Agency, Oceanlaw, FirstMate, FPS, Intepeople, FinestKind, The Federation of Commercial Fishermen, and Nelson Port Fishermen’s Association – we couldn’t have done it without you.”

Festival goers packed the pedestrian area of Nelson’s popular upper Trafalgar Street, taking the opportunity to make the sunny day an outing for the whole whānau. Children with faces or arms newly painted like octopi happily tugged their parents from one ocean-themed activity to the next, from making their own fish-on-a-line in the Nelson Provincial Museum to decorating pāua shells with paint and glitter with the FirstMate crew.

Meanwhile, a rapt audience watched Sealord fish

filleters use their knife-skills to expertly break down orange roughy, silver warehou, ling and other sustainably caught New Zealand species, offering everyone a chance to appreciate the whole fish before they are filleted for the dinner table.

And, of course, there was plenty of kaimoana to be devoured. The build-your-own crumbed hoki fish burger station had a constant queue, with proceeds going to Coastguard Nelson. Children munched on fish and chips donated by Sealord and local restaurant The Vic Public House.

**“The starring attraction was the sold-out degustation meal, where 160 diners were treated to six seafood tasting plates.”**



Kiwi Kai plating salmon at Seafood Saturday.

featuring oysters, clams, orange roughy, salmon, snapper and mussels – expertly paired with wine from regional vineyards. You can find popular recipe for confit Marlborough salmon with horopito reduction and dukkha, created by Reni Wereta-Gargiulo from Kiwi Kai specially for the event, in this issue.

Thanks to seafood suppliers Talley’s, Guyton’s Sealord, Sanford and New Zealand King Salmon, and Nelson wine suppliers Neudorf, Seifried, Kahurangi and Waimea Estates wineries.



Free fish and chips went down a treat – image Tim Cuff.

Helson said the inaugural event highlighted the community’s recognition of the important role the seafood sector plays for Nelson Tasman.

“The event ended up quite timely, coinciding with the Government’s announcement of funding for the Nelson-based Moananui blue economy industry cluster. Top-down support for the industry will only increase the economic and community benefits sustainable fishing bring to regions around New Zealand.

“Coupled with events like this, our seafood kaimahi are able to connect with the community and tell their own stories and take pride in their achievements.”

Nelson Mayor Nick Smith said the event was a success and hoped it could be made into an annual celebration in Nelson.

“One of my ambitions for Nelson is to raise the profile of our links with the ocean – the seafood industry and the science and environmental expertise to support it, the port and many marine industries there as well as recreationally with our marina and sea sports.

“We need to celebrate the many businesses and their hundreds of workers who work so hard to produce such delicious products for us and earn the country hundreds of millions in exports. The event was a stunning success.”

Visit [seafoodsaturday.nz](http://seafoodsaturday.nz) to learn more about the event and the kaimahi who underpin the industry.



Children’s activities at Seafood Saturday – image Tim Cuff.

# Mental health matters



A FirstMate Navigator knows the industry and is ready to talk when you are – image, Tim Cuff.

You may have been hearing talk about the mental health and wellbeing of our fishers and marine farmers. These terms, once rarely used, are now becoming part of our everyday language.

At FirstMate, these terms are more than just words and they are at the heart of what we do. But we know there is some confusion about what wellbeing means and why it's so important.

Wellbeing is the state in which an individual copes with the normal stressors of life, works productively and fruitfully, and contributes to their community. Wellbeing often includes optimism, getting on well with others, having meaning and purpose, and feeling energised. Wellbeing encompasses both mental and physical health. In short, wellbeing is feeling good and functioning well.

Mental Health reflects our emotional, psychological, and social states (how we think, feel and act). Your state of mental health determines how you handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Just like physical health, our mental health is not always bad or good, it is a continuum, and everyone will fluctuate between good and poor mental health at different points in their life.

What we're learning about people who work in the primary sectors, and for us, particularly those who work in the seafood sector, is that mental health indicators for many are not as good as they should be.

This means that people aren't coping with stress as well as

they normally would, they are not working as productively as they could, and they are not feeling optimistic about life or their future and therefore are less energised.

And we see this first-hand at FirstMate, as our fishers and marine farmers reach out to us for support and advice. Many people want to talk about an issue they are having and get some advice on how to tackle it.

We know life has become more complicated, and there is evidence that people's overall mental health has deteriorated. For fishers, their mental health challenges are above average due to isolated working environments, increasing regulations, Covid, a hard working environment, increasingly volatile weather, and operating costs.

FirstMate is not here to solve the problems that are causing excess stress for our fishers, but we are here to help people find ways to manage the pressures and find pathways that work for them. That's why we have Navigators who are embedded in our fisher communities across Aotearoa.

It's okay to ask for help. There are resources and information – and more all the time – available to fishers and their whanau. And there are people at the end of a phone who understand what our fishers are going through.

So please, if you begin to feel that your wellbeing is being adversely affected by something going on in your life, know that FirstMate is here to support you, as we have with so many others already.

We're only a phone call away.

# Footprints on the sea floor



Sensors in action in Hawkes Bay. Photo credit: Shade Smith.

Knowledge is power — and knowing exactly how large a trawl footprint is on the sea floor can help fishers and fisheries managers shift to making decisions based on empirical data instead of relying on assumptions.

New research from the Sustainable Seas Science Challenge has shown that innovative sensor technology can give accurate information about trawling footprints on the seafloor — and make visible the effects of different gear set-ups on those footprints.

Trawling is a key fishing method used for more than 100 years in New Zealand and the method that catches most of our finfish in tonnage terms. According to the Ministry for Primary Industries, in the 2020–2021 fishing year, 68 percent of all fish caught commercially in New Zealand was caught using bottom trawl or mid-water trawls.

This research helps meet the Challenge’s ambitions for a prosperous blue economy that’s sustainable, accountable, and in line with ecosystem-based management of the ocean.

Project leader Oliver Wilson, director at Sustainable Horizons Ltd, says the research shows that bespoke sensor technology can give fishers the information

they need to avoid or reduce contact with the seafloor. Unwanted impacts of trawling include damage to habitats, bycatch, higher fuel costs, damage to fishing gear, higher fleet carbon footprint, and derelict gear left in the ocean.

Wilson says accurate, high-resolution information helps answer the call to fill data gaps and use new technology from New Zealand Chief Science Advisor Dame Juliet Gerrard in the report on the future of commercial fishing in New Zealand.

“Our research project is a stepping stone to using real-world data to help make evidence-based decisions,” says Wilson.

The project itself was a feasibility study to determine whether sensors attached to fishing gear could determine empirically based footprint information, based on real world observations. And could they tell differences between different gear setups?

“The project has answered that yes, they can. The technology and methodology trialled in this research project showed differences in seabed contact when making modifications to trawl gear.”

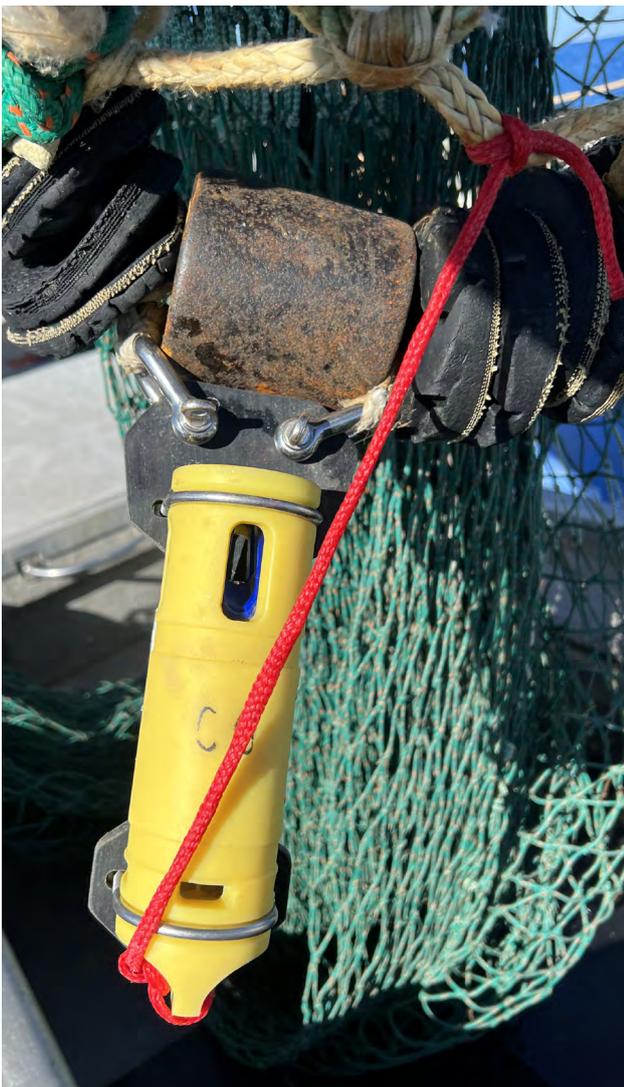
Previous assumptions about bottom contact were based on a logical rationale. In the absence of any

## SUSTAINABLE SEAS

data, 100 percent of the line between the doors, multiplied by the distance the net was on the bottom, constituted the trawl footprint — the net contacted the seafloor for that full width 100 percent of the time in every tow.

“It’s time to move to a data-driven approach because we should and can do better. But you can’t do better until you understand. And understanding in this context means quantifying those differences and using the data to make appropriate decisions.”

The study deployed tilt-sensors, designed by ZebraTech, onboard an inshore trawler in the Hawkes Bay. The sensors collected bottom contact data at seven sites across different bottom gear parts over five voyages. The angle measured by each sensor was converted into an estimate of height above the seabed.



ZebraTech sensor onboard the vessel. Photo credit: Oliver Wilson.

Cameras were used on the net close to the sensors to verify clearance values and independently review the data. Researchers calculated contact adjusted footprints and compared them to assumed (nominal) trawl footprints.

Research results showed that the sensors can record accurate differences in bottom contact compared to existing assumptions, which tend to overestimate and oversimplify the extent of contact.

Read the report, *Quantifying and reducing interactions between commercial fishing gear and the seabed in New Zealand* on the Sustainable Seas website.

Sensors in the study could also accurately distinguish the effects of different gear on bottom contact and in different depths.

Two gear setups were tested in the study. Gear setup 1 used lighter sweep materials and discs to create lift in the sweeps, and gear setup 2 used heavier sweep materials without discs.

Results showed the sensors detected a 64 percent reduction in contact-adjusted trawl footprint for gear setup 1, compared to a standard assumed footprint. Gear setup 2, with the heavier material, still showed a 57 percent reduction in the trawl footprint when using the sensors, compared to a standard assumed footprint.

Both are significant results, says Wilson. The first highlights the importance of empirical results rather than working on assumptions. The second result shows a material difference between the two gear setups, associated with the sensor attachment sites.

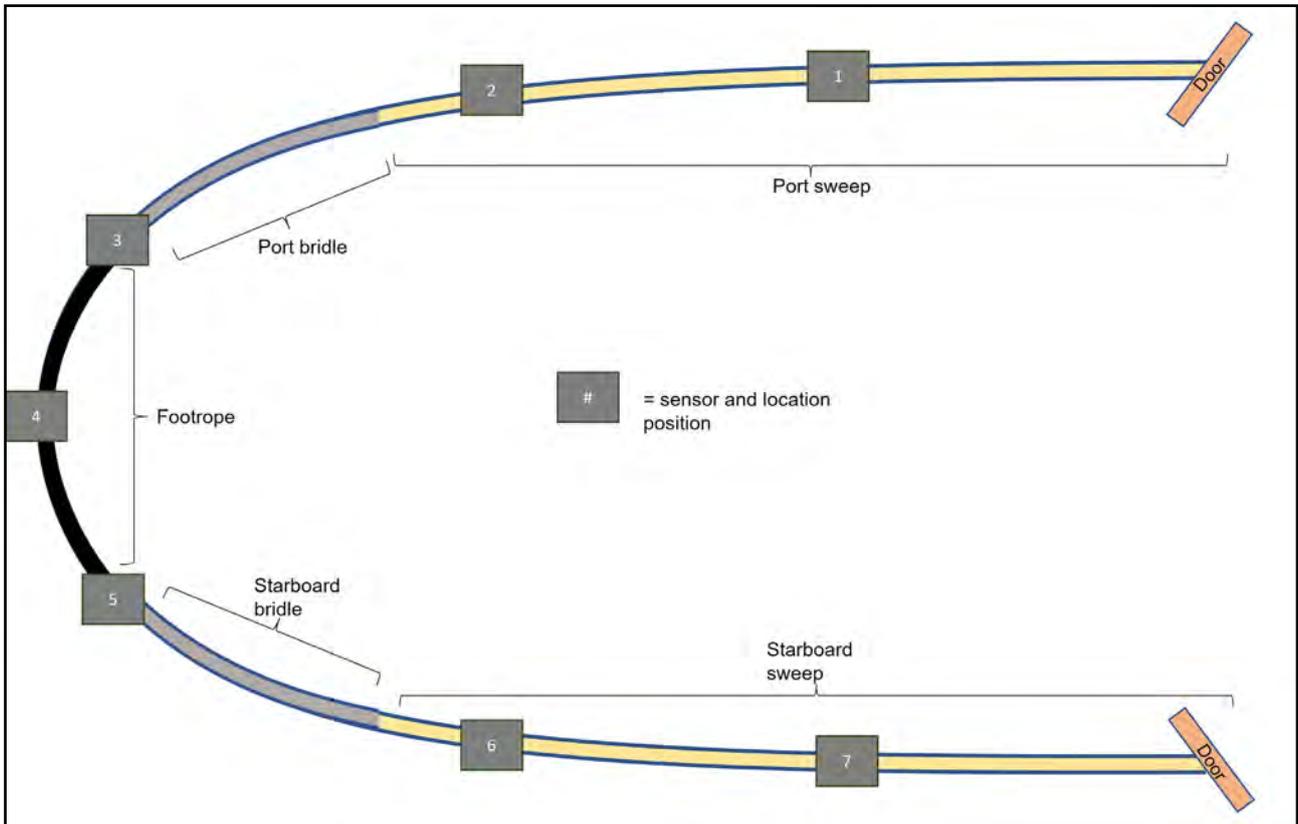
These results reinforce that lightening parts of the fishing gear can lighten the extent of bottom contact. Contact also depends on the speed at which the gear is towed, and the characteristics of the location and seabed.

Accurate sensor data helps fisheries managers, policy makers, and kaitiaki accurately analyse trawl footprints to better understand and manage fisheries. It is about a data-driven future.

“For a policymaking or a regulatory framework discussion, you are going to better understand how the gear is interacting with the seabed. You can overlay different data to inform your assessment of whether trawling is what you want in a particular area or not — and what is appropriate in different areas.”

Fishers will be able to understand the extent to which their gear is contacting the bottom and for how long. They can then decide how they might want to alter gear or operations to reduce that level of contact and improve trawl efficiency.

“Trawl efficiency is about minimising fuel use and the wear and tear of gear while optimising catch compositions and catch-per-unit-effort returns.



Sensor positions - image credit, Oliver Wilson.

“The study demonstrated the capability of the technology and represents the start of a development pathway.”

Measuring seabed interactions supports the sustainable use of fishery resources for economic returns and improved social outcomes, while conserving the health of New Zealand’s marine ecosystem. Understanding interactions with the seabed will help meet objectives of ecosystem-based management and support long-term food security in a way that reflects the need to minimise environmental impacts while harvesting seafood.

This study shows a methodology is available to generate a baseline of physical interaction between gear components and the seabed. The researchers recognise that the results are specific to the vessel and location in the study. But broad uptake of the sensors across the fleet and with different bottom gear will give much more refined data.

“The results are very encouraging and demonstrate the benefit of doing more work in this area.

“Broader uptake of the sensors and the collection of empirical data will advance our knowledge of how environmental and operational factors can influence trawl footprints.”

A collaborative work programme that allows for a comprehensive comparison of bottom contact across

a range of gear setups and circumstances will support fishers and decision makers in the future.

Researchers recommend developing reference sheets that indicate the potential bottom contact changes associated with a range of gear changes. That information will support broader innovation and uptake of sensors across the commercial fishing fleet and integrate data collection into normal fishing operations. They recommend expanding the number of sensors per tow and expanding camera validation work to improve understanding of what causes differences in sensor readings.

“Trawling is often a highly emotive and debated subject. A lot of that discussion is around assumptions and emotions, and we are trying to provide data for a more informed discussion.

“Our research has demonstrated the feasibility of sensor technology for a more informed data-driven position on bottom contact. We recognise our work has been conducted on one vessel in one area of New Zealand. However, this project has met its objective to prove that we can move to empirically informed operational improvements in trawl efficiency and associated management decisions.

“We are not trying to make the decisions. We are trying to provide the data that people can then use to make decisions.”

# Regulatory changes under Fisheries Amendment Act

Emma Taylor, Director Fisheries Management, Fisheries New Zealand

A key regulatory change that came into force late last year was the new Fisheries Amendment Act, which updated the Fisheries Act 1996. The Amendment Act made significant changes to tighten the rules for landing and discarding Quota Management System (QMS) species, which are being rolled out over the next few years.

Commercial fishers are prohibited from returning or abandoning QMS fish species to the sea, unless an exception is in place. With the tightening of the rules under the updated Act, Fisheries New Zealand is now reviewing some existing exceptions against a new set of criteria for various QMS species, primarily related to finfish and sharks. For an exception to be provided the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries must be satisfied that at least one of the new criteria is met. These reviews will take place around twice a year until 2026.

Consultation on the first round of QMS landing exception reviews, beginning with red cod, is due to start in late May and run for six weeks. Spiny dogfish and rough and smooth skate reviews are expected to follow in June, with kingfish, butterfish, and blue, mako and porbeagle sharks expected to follow in December 2023.

The full schedule of reviews can be found at <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/implementing-fisheries-amendment-act-2022>.



Emma Taylor, Director Fisheries Management, Ministry for Primary Industries.

As the details of each consultation are confirmed, we'll provide more information about how you can get involved and contribute to the conversation. We will be inviting you to provide input and feedback to grow our understanding about the survivability of these species under different harvesting methods, handling practices and environmental condition, as well as better understanding how certain species can damage other catch if they are retained.

Late last year we also consulted on proposed new infringement and alternative disposals regulations empowered by the Amendment Act. I'd like to thank everyone for their input into the consultation process and submissions.

Although the updated Act is designed to encourage greater selectivity in fishing and greater use of the catch, it also recognises the need to provide alternative, legal disposal options in the event fishers are unable to land all of their catch through existing avenues (LFRs and wharf sales). Our Fisheries Policy team is now progressing the alternative disposal options and the infringements and penalties regulations.

The new regime brings graduated penalties and infringements that provide for more proportionate responses to offending, including for lower-level discard and retention offences. We're exploring these latter options in further detail following the feedback received and will provide advice to Ministers.

There is a lot underway with each aspect of the reforms. At the core of these changes is a simple goal; to strengthen the fisheries management system so that it supports and encourages fishers to catch fewer unwanted fish and make greater use of the fish that are caught.

By the time this edition comes out the NZ Federation of Commercial Fishermen conference will have happened. We're looking forward to talking with fishers at the conference about the work underway including implementation of Fisheries Amendment Act, and the draft Fisheries Industry Transformation Plan. These conversations and the feedback you provide contribute to developing good policy, so please make sure you take the opportunity to have your say during the upcoming consultation processes.

# Supporting the needs of fishers into the future

Caroline Read, CE FishServe

I have always had an appreciation for how intrinsic fishing is to New Zealanders' identity. During a recent visit back to my home turf to watch Martinborough defeat Greytown in club rugby, I was reminded just how close to people's minds fishing is.

While watching the game I was asked by friends and members of the community about how, in my role at FishServe, I could help to protect paua along the Wairarapa coast. My explanation of the tools used by the commercial fishing industry to monitor and manage the paua take along the coast was received well. What struck me was not only the deep connection to kai moana and how important this is to protect but how much opportunity there is to make more of the use of tools in that protection – and from that how important it is to constantly look to develop new tools for evolving needs.

FishServe's refocused strategy supports exactly this, with our unifying purpose to enable successful and sustainable fisheries through smart information services. Our work to deliver this aligns well with the Government's recently released Industry Transformation Plan (ITP) and its vision for Aotearoa New Zealand to be 'acknowledged globally as the

world leader in the innovative and sustainable production of premium seafood and bioproducts'.

The draft ITP outlines a clear plan to deliver change with the sector. Central to its success will be how well industry and government can continue their demonstrated efforts to work collaboratively to deliver the outcomes identified to achieve

meaningful change for the industry and our wider communities.

FishServe's close work with the industry through our role in supporting the QMS system means we have a good understanding of what is possible. Delivering these services over almost a quarter of a century means there is a wealth of knowledge and an understanding of the data available to inform this programme of activity to deliver change.

In the past I have talked about the huge opportunity we have to improve the information that is available to fishers to help them make informed decisions to support more sustainable fishing practices.

Our teams' daily interactions with fishers and the wider fishing industry means we are a logical connector and distributor of this useful information. We are well placed to support the ITP's stated priority area 1, using existing data and information services to inform future fishing practices to strengthen the sector's environmental operations. In the future we will expand on this offering, working with others who can provide useful insights that will further benefit the industry.

Our new look brand supports this change in direction and is the next step in our work to reposition the company for the future. Acting as a visual reference of our stated purpose, vision and strategic drivers it reinforces our proven dedication to the fisheries sector and showcases the wealth of experience we have at hand to provide the support the sector needs.

I was proud to unveil our refreshed brand at the FED's conference this month. FishServe has a unique role as kaitiaki of the industry's data, and our brand now appropriately aligns with the responsibility that comes with the role – that of guardianship, balance, care and wise management.

I believe that the future can be bright for the sector and we at FishServe look forward to maintaining our unwavering service to provide consistent support and guidance to both industry and government. We have a fantastic opportunity to use our proven strengths to innovate for fishers, making the necessary reporting easy while adding value wherever possible to enable the sector to feed generations to come.



Caroline Read.



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# Good fisheries management saves world's wild abalone



China dominates world aquaculture production of abalone.

## **New Zealand has one of the last surviving significant wild harvest abalone fisheries in the world, and that is due to exceptional management, as Lesley Hamilton reports.**

At a recent gathering of abalone experts from around the world, the dire history of many of the world's wild abalone stocks was made starkly apparent.

New Zealand is one of just a handful of countries that are still able to commercially harvest pāua and like the other remaining healthy fisheries, it is a robust and longstanding fisheries management regime that has allowed them to survive.

Pāua Industry Council chairman Storm Stanley says Australia, Tasmania, which is usually treated as a separate fishery, Mexico, and New Zealand are the last commercial abalone fisheries of any size left standing, and all three owe that to good management driven by good science.

Of the 245,000 tonnes of abalone commercially available in the world, 240,000 tonnes is derived from aquaculture, with China producing 220,000 tonnes of that total.

The small amount remaining, about 5000 tonnes, is caught from fisheries that have quota management, or equivalent, fisheries management systems. What these surviving fisheries have in common is a quota management system.

Australia has a full Quota Management System (QMS) and produces 2400 tonnes of wild abalone. Mexican abalone fisheries are managed similarly with Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) being set and catch rights issued by way of quota and that country produces about 300 tonnes. Tasmania is responsible for about 750 tonnes of wild

## FEATURE

abalone, and New Zealand production is about 740 tonnes.

Stanley says South Africa did have a QMS but lost control of it and it is now an unfettered illegal fishery with no legally wild caught fish available for market.

California, which once had a thriving abalone fishery, peaking at about 2500 tonnes in the late sixties, was overfished so much in the 1970s that it collapsed, and no commercial abalone fishing has taken place for more than 20 years.

The China farmed abalone market, while dominating tonnage of the shellfish, does not have a significant impact on the wild fisheries left, as China's 220,000 tonnes is mostly consumed domestically, and has actually increased demand.

Stanley says there is very good reasons that the New Zealand industry gets exercised about carelessness around the pāua fishery, as noted recently at the first Kaikoura opening after the 2016 earthquake saw enormous over-harvesting by the recreational sector.

"The pāua industry, iwi, and scientists spent years nursing that fishery back to life. We have a vested interest in taking every care possible to maintain our wild pāua fishery, not just because it is a local taonga, but because it is one of the few left in the world. To see it ransacked was heart-breaking."

Stanley says the Stewart Island pāua fishery in particular is a standout amongst even the few wild fisheries still operating worldwide.

"As far as we can ascertain, the Stewart Island pāua fishery is the only fishery in the world that has been turned around. It was rapidly failing in the late 1990s but appropriate and timely intervention by the Ministry, followed up by innovative industry efforts led to the very first TACC increase last year."

An interesting aspect of attending the International

Abalone Symposium (IAS) was to hear of the high regard that the New Zealand fisheries management system seemed to be held by overseas attendees, particularly for managing abalone species.

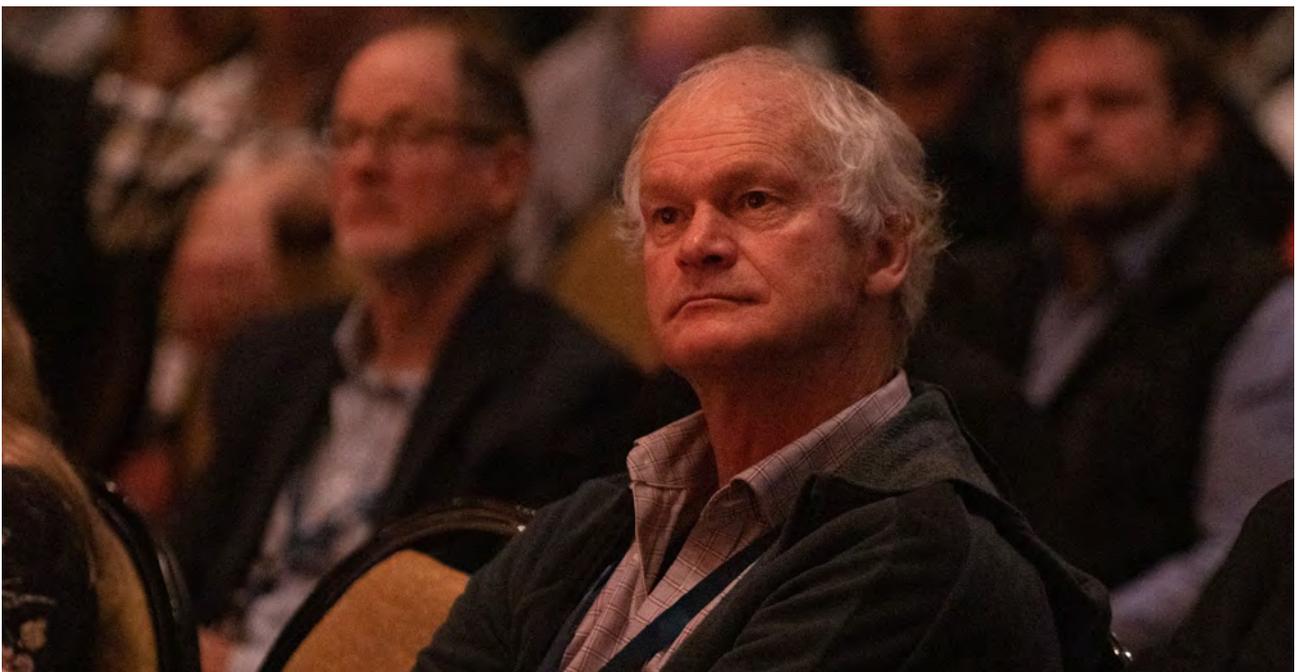
Delegates we spoke to were perplexed by the ongoing attacks we see domestically on the QMS, a system which they thought a logical way to manage wild capture fisheries.

There was also a very high level of interest, and this was reflected in the many presentations on it, in indigenous approaches to fisheries management. Once again, the New Zealand situation attracted a great deal of interest.

A number of iwi presenters were able to explain the intertwined relationship between Māori customary fishery interests and their commercial fishery rights through the Settlement. Delegates were interested to learn that over half of pāua quota is owned or controlled by iwi interests here. In Tasmania by way of contrast that dynamic has only just begun.

The commonality of the types of research being done by indigenous groups in places like Alaska and California was not surprising. Much thought and effort was going into ways of identifying problems, then to use traditional approaches to try to rehabilitate customary fishing grounds, re-establishing healthy populations of shellfish, and ensuring that the fisheries come first in the future.

The last word goes to Stanley: "We at PIC work closely with our Australian colleagues and through the IAS try to keep up with what we might learn from overseas, but we have a competitive streak too, and our aim is to have New Zealand as the best managed abalone fishery in the world. And right now, we don't think we are too far short."



Storm Stanley, chair of the Pāua Industry Council.

# DGI Morgan takes on Stark's craftsmen and contracts



DGI Morgan staff, many of them from the Stark Bros restructuring.

## Facilities for dry docking are continuing at Port Lyttelton under new ownership, as Chris Carey reports.

Throw a stone in the water and the ripples eventually wash up on the shore in every corner of the pond. When Stark Bros announced they were selling off parts of their business, rumours, like the ripples, were felt throughout our fishing industry. What about the dry dock? Who's going to do that stuff?

Yes, what about the dry dock?

**“Can I first state that for all users of the dry dock and associated services, its business as usual,”**

DGI Morgan director David Morgan says. “Nothing has changed other than the name of the service provider.”

David Morgan served his time with Stark Bros as a shipwright and boat builder.

“I left Stark Bros around eleven years ago as a tradesman. I’m the last shipwright to serve my time with them and was involved in building a few wooden boats

in their workshop, and a few clinker dinghies from time to time. I’m not sure if I’m the last to train nationally in wooden boat building and get a certificate particularly in the ship wright trade with traditional carvel planked vessels, but I doubt there’s many who are now.”

Re-entering the marine industry in December 2022, DGI Morgan’s first job involved the Lyttelton Port Company and Lyttelton Engineering putting two boats into dry dock, one of them being Port Taranaki’s tug *Kinaki*.

“And from that humble beginning, we’re back into full swing now, full steam ahead.”

DGI Morgan has employed most of the Stark Bros staff, made redundant with the restructuring.

“This not only provides continuity of employment for them, but it also allows us to complete contracts that were already out there and gives an assurance to our customers that the same quality of service previously supplied, will continue,” Morgan says. “Once that skill set is lost, its lost for ever, so we saw how important it was to preserve and consolidate those skills by providing



Work on the derricks on *Iringa* as required by the 5-yearly Lifting Gear survey, checking tolerances, and replacing bushes and pins as required.

employment to these craftsmen.

"We've taken on 14 additional staff increasing our staff numbers to 42 with a great team of shipwrights and carpenters, glaziers, boilermakers and sheet metal fabricators, welders, fitters and turners and general and technical engineers. We're busy upskilling our guys to fill these and other roles as and where required. We also want to get into heavy diesel engineering, so watch this space."

As a vessel manager and speaking from a personal perspective, that's really good news. I've worked with many of these craftsmen for decades. They're part of the fabric of the Lyttelton repair and maintenance scene and they know our vessels inside and out.

Wanting to allay any fears, Morgan was quick to point out they offer the full range dry docking services with linesmen, the Turfer operators for centering the ship on the blocks, shoring up, the ranging of anchors and cables, inspection and repair of sea chests and valves, underwater penetrations and transducers repairs, along with general shipwright work.

"In other words, you'll get the same service from us as you've come to expect in the past."

DGI Morgan can be found working out of their building at 7 Dublin Street, Lyttelton.

"We're currently working with the port company over the lease of the existing buildings alongside the graving dock. We've put in an expression of interest, as have other parties and at this stage waiting to see what the outcome will be. Despite that, we are still offering a full dry-docking service as expected by our clients."

I was told once by an old seafarer that you can always bring a wooden vessel back to her former glory, but you can't do that with steel, so I asked the question of Morgan. Do you think there will be any more wooden commercial fishing boats built?

"Commercially? I doubt it, because sadly, it's a skill that's dying out. I'd like to build a small wooden workboat for what we do, but that's a nice to have and not a necessity at this time. But I'd never say never. If a client approached us and wanted a wooden boat, we'd definitely look at it.

"While I try to get my hands dirty from time to time, I'm aware I don't want to step on anyone's toes. Most of my time these days is in front of a keyboard. But yes, I still mess around with boats in the background."

"So, if anyone has any concerns around the drydocking their vessel, we can assure them that's its business as usual."

# Online atlas of marine life and habitats - NIWA



The Atlas of Seabed Biodiversity can provide estimates of distribution for demersal fish species like John Dory, around New Zealand's coastal marine environment. Photo: Richie Hughes/NIWA.

Researchers have developed New Zealand's most comprehensive online atlas, providing an overview of nearly 600 marine species, to guide management and conservation of the country's unique seafloor communities.

Our marine region spans more than 4.2 million km<sup>2</sup> of the South Pacific Ocean with a high number of endemic seafloor species, but data gaps and remote areas make it difficult to map and manage the rich diversity of seafloor life.

To fill that knowledge gap, NIWA and the Department of Conservation produced the Atlas of Seabed Biodiversity, a freely available online tool for resource managers, researchers and the public to address the environmental issues faced by subtidal ecosystems.

The New Zealand atlas project was led by ecologists Fabrice Stephenson formerly of NIWA but now at the University of Waikato, Tom Brough from NIWA, and 25 taxonomists and ecologists from around the country.

**Brough says the atlas provides a detailed understanding of hotspots for key marine species, such as those which are threatened or in decline.**

It can also show areas of "species richness", the number of species within a defined region.

"It is hoped that the atlas will provide invaluable information for Māori organisations, government agencies and territorial authorities with responsibilities or aspirations for the protection of seafloor ecosystems," Brough says.

"Knowing where species are distributed is vital for making evidence-based decisions on ocean and coastal management."

The atlas was created by pooling national data sets on marine life to develop species distribution models (SDM), which predict the occurrence of marine life in relation to environmental variables.

SDMs can provide estimates of biodiversity patterns where data are sparse and it is a method widely used in marine spatial planning, impact assessment and customary management.

The atlas uses SDMs to provide an overview of predictions for 579 species of demersal fish, reef fish, subtidal invertebrates and macroalgae or seaweed.

It is hosted on the DOC Marine Data Portal, which also shows online maps for habitat classification, hydrology, protected areas and species. People can use it to view information about a particular species or location.

## FEATURE



Distribution of Sea Stars and other subtidal invertebrates can be investigated on the new online atlas tool. Photo: Malcolm Clark/NIWA.

“The SDMs in this database incorporated the best available information on seafloor species at the time of its development,” the project researchers said in a report.

Modellers have tested the accuracy of the predictions and this information is provided alongside the predicted species distribution models.

The atlas provides a broad scale indication of where species are likely to occur.

But the models used do not consider seasonal or decadal variation in environmental conditions or the human impact on the environment which may influence biodiversity patterns.

“However, substantial gaps in our knowledge of some taxa and in some areas of Aotearoa New Zealand’s large Economic Exclusion Zone (EEZ) still exist, and the atlas will be updated when new information becomes available,” project researchers said.

Surveys of remote areas of the EEZ and areas deeper than 2000m are ongoing and will yield valuable new information on the presence and absence of seafloor taxa that can be used to update the SDMs.

The next phase of the research will aim to develop models of where species are likely to occur under future climatic conditions, involving taxonomic experts, collection managers and ecological modellers.

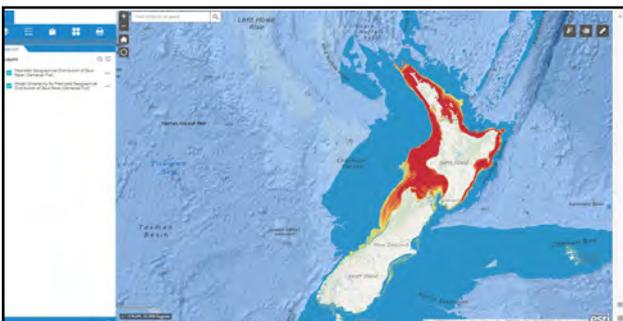
### About this project:

This project was funded by NIWA’s Strategic Scientific Investment Fund, Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge, Fisheries New Zealand and the Department of Conservation.

For more information on this project, contact:

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A screen picture of the Atlas tool showing a species distribution model for John Dory.

# Kiwi Kai's confit Salmon



Confit Marlborough King Salmon.

Reni Wereta-Gargiulo and her skilled team at Kiwi Kai Nelson created this recipe for the degustation meal at Nelson's inaugural Seafood Saturday festival in March. Pair it with Kahurangi's Mt Arthur Reserve Chardonnay 2022.

## Ingredients

- 1 kilogram duck fat
- 1 side of fresh Marlborough King Salmon
- 3 tablespoons Atutahi dukkha
- 330 millilitres Atutahi Horopito Blackcurrant & Boysenberry drink
- 1 jar Atutahi Kanuka & Beetroot chutney
- 200 millilitres blackcurrant concentrate or similar syrup
- 2 fennel bulbs
- Wild cranberries, for garnish
- 2 lemons, juice and zest
- 1 bunch of micro watercress

## Method

### Confit Salmon

Preheat oven to 130°C. Put the duck fat in a baking dish and heat until the fat reaches 38°C. Immerse the salmon side in the warmed fat in the oven for 10 minutes. Try to keep the temperature in the oven as stable as possible.

Remove salmon from duck fat and rest – the salmon should be tender and slightly pink inside.

### Horopito Reduction

Put the Horopito Blackcurrant & Boysenberry drink and blackcurrant concentrate in a pot and simmer over medium heat until it reaches the consistency of runny honey. Set aside.

### Fennel Salad

Finely slice the fennel. Gently mix in the lemon juice, season with salt and pepper to taste, then add the micro watercress. Toss lightly.

### Plating

Paint a thick band of the reduction on a plate. Place the salmon on the reduction and generously sprinkle with some dukkha. Place a portion of the fennel salad slightly on top of the salmon and top with lemon zest to taste. Generously spoon some chutney on the side. Sprinkle 5–6 wild cranberries around the plate.

# Nelson's Blessing of the Fleet shines again



Founder of Nelson's Blessing of the Fleet, Mike Smith, was honoured in the 21st celebration of the fishing fleet and seafarers in Nelson in late May.

Nelson Mayor Nick Smith presented Mike Smith with a

flag of Nelson City for his dedication to the celebration over the years.

A big crowd attended the occasion and Tim Cuff was there to capture the day.





# Misinformation on bottom trawling

Matt Hardymnt, President Port Nelson Fishermen's Association

Dear Editor,

It is incredible the amount of misinformation that is being fed to the public of New Zealand over bottom contact fishing in the coastal waters around our shoreline. Yes, bottom trawling, Danish seining, bottom lining, set-netting, purse-seining they all can have negative effects on the small amount of seabed that is commercially fished around our coasts.

But they are not totally destroying the coastal or inshore eco-systems like the billions of tonnes of silt that is pumped into our inshore waters, smothering every living thing, every time we have a weather event, and they don't have to be big weather events. If bottom trawling is causing the starving fish in Auckland and Tasman Bay, how come this problem has only just been noticed?

Some 40 to 50 years ago we had 10 times the amount

of bottom trawling and other bottom contact fishing happening, and no starving fish. Talk about barking up the wrong tree. And yes, the forestry industry is the main player in all the silt with their clear-felling agenda, which is banned in most overseas countries.

The current Government has deleted silt from the conversation at the moment and only talking about slash, as most of the silt is out of sight in the sea. There is only one critter in the sea that likes silt to eat, and that is the sea cucumber. It eats the silt and sand comes out its backside and also acidifies the sea in the process.

And what are we doing about that? Catching them and sending them to Asia with the logs. So, we will be waiting a long time for a healthier sandy seabed, which is what we had 50-60 years ago.

Look at Aitutaki's crystal clear waters, the lagoons were full of sea cucumbers after the 2011 storms there.

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# Roger Belton

Tim Pankhurst

Roger Belton, whose Southern Clams Ltd company pioneered live shellfish exports to numerous overseas markets, died on March 6, at aged 71.

Southern Clams' success was hard won. It grew from picking by hand into buckets in the early 1980s and took at least a decade to make headway, battling numerous regulatory and environmental setbacks, designing and refining systems to harvest and handle clams for commercial sale and dealing with closure of clam beds due to run off and toxic algal blooms.

Roger worked as a drainlayer to supplement income in the company's infancy and sold household goods and remortgaged, while French-born wife Christine worked as an interpreter at Dunedin Hospital. Once the business was finally established, the family moved to France for several years, developing a property in the Dordogne, complete with a large forest that was later devastated in a storm. Roger was a fluent French speaker.

Southern Clams currently harvests the Littleneck Clams (commonly known in New Zealand as cockles/tuaki, although Roger would hate to hear them called cockles, as they were not the same species as the English cockle, exporting live clams to US restaurants and supermarkets, as well as the domestic market. It has smaller markets in Hong Kong, Singapore, the Pacific and Europe.

Roger loved having a niche business, and thrived in finding value in species that are not typically valued. Roger and Southern Clams also developed a deepwater Queen scallop fishery, dredging at depths of 150m from its vessel Lady Dorothy, but this proved uneconomic. Southern Clams also processes some fish, as well as doing contract pack work. Roger's latest foray was into seaweed, specifically looking



Roger Belton.

at harvesting Undaria/Wakame, with the overall goal of developing a marine farm for aquaculture.

Much like the clams, the Wakame holds only a small amount of importance culturally in New Zealand, but is prized by other cultures,

particularly in southern and eastern Asia. With the idea that marketing seaweed from New Zealand would play well in export markets, the company has completed six harvest seasons, growing the harvested amount of wild Wakame from 2 tonnes to 16 tonnes last year. Roger's hunch that there might be some value in seaweed in New Zealand looks like a winner, as the 16 tonnes of seaweed was all sold domestically within six months. Southern Clams remains only one of two companies in New Zealand that harvest seaweed as a food product. Roger's love of forestry looks certain to translate to growing forests of seaweed in the ocean.

Roger was born in Nelson in 1952, the fourth in a large family of seven. His father Humphrey was a general practitioner and mother Aileen a teacher. She died at an early age and Humphrey remarried – to Margaret Fanselow, another doctor with five children of her own. The family of 12 became 13 with the addition of Humphrey and Margaret's son and were christened the Fanbelts.

Roger was renowned for his perennial lateness and forgetfulness, but also for his inquisitive nature, love of academia and complaining about the wastefulness of government spending. Despite insisting that he had no head for business, he was shrewd and resilient.

Close friend and tramping companion Paul Roy, who spoke at Roger's funeral celebrated as a picnic over five hours in a Dunedin park, rated his enviable set of bush skills, including route finding, fire lighting, toughness, drive and utter reliability in difficult situations. But given Roger's disregard for punctuality, he was surprised Roger turned up on time for his funeral.

With the lakes, rivers and mountains of Nelson as a backdrop, Roger became a keen trumper and retained a love of the outdoors throughout his life. He was at ease in the bush, and his affinity with trees in developing a block of land on Ben Ohau Station, where he built a hut and declared war on the hares savaging his seedlings. He drove a Southern Clams investment in forestry in 2011, planting around 92 hectares of diverse forest in old gold mining hill country at Livingstone in the Waitaki district. The forest is planted in 12 different species, most of which will not mature for 50 years.

Last Christmas he was diagnosed with inoperable pancreatic cancer and given only weeks to live, an enormous shock to all given he was fit and abstemious, the first of the 13-strong extended family to die. He had referred to older age as "sniper alley" before his diagnosis. Those attending his funeral cum picnic were asked to bring a plate and lay a leaf on his custom-made casket.

He is survived by his wife Christine (sep), children Lucie, Sophie and Alexis and partner Toni.

# Trevor "Curly" James

Tim Pankhurst

Trevor "Curly" James went fishing at 15 and ended his maritime career as Westport harbourmaster.

He died suddenly in Westport on Mar 11, 2023, aged 66.

Curly, as he was universally known, was a renowned cray fisherman on the Fiordland coast who operated with one arm, lost not to a shark but in a drunken motorcycle crash as a teenager in Stoke, Nelson.

Trevor James was born in Mataura in Southland where his father Bill was a meatworker and mother Elsie maintained a family of four.

They moved to Stoke in Nelson when Trevor was seven, learning to sail boats at Monaco and with the Iron Duke Sea Scouts on Rocks Road.

He began fishing as a deckie on *Joshua P* scalloping in Pelorus Sound.

He was then taken on by Bill Bourke on *Pandora* to go crayfishing in Fiordland, an unknown area that was to become his workplace for 40 years.

A convoy of Nelson boats to Milford Sound included *Tainui*, *Talisman*, *Seeker2*, *Spindrift*, and *Pandora*.

Curly then joined Peter Ballantyne on *Enbee* and crewed for him for nine years, latterly on *Xanadu*. He did not allow his disability to limit his fishing. He skippered *Hope* for Ballantyne, who had the newly built vessel fitted with toggle steering rather than a wheel.

At 18 Curly gained his skipper's ticket and promptly tore the stern out of a scoop boat.

"From hero to zero in three days," he said.

When he bought his first boat – *Duncan* – with assistance from Peter Talley, he was 25 and owed the then astronomical sum of \$320,000.

The only option was hard out fishing, longlining for shark and trolling for albacore tuna during the summer season.

Being a cray fisherman, he admitted to knowing nothing about longlining and "had some really sad days those first few years" until he worked out the depths and areas where fish were at certain times of the year.

What he lacked in knowledge, he made up for with sheer hard work and determination, setting two 800-hook lines twice a day regardless of the weather.

One year he worked 240 days fishing and another 63 days steaming from as far south as Stewart Island to as far north as Raglan and across to the Wairarapa coast, catching around 10 tonnes of shark a week. In the summer he chased albacore on the west coast, generally landing around 50 tonnes.

In the early 80s fishing out of Westport, he met Vanessa who was fishing on her brother's boat. His loud cars, cheeky grin and curly mop of hair led Vanessa to jump ship, the start of a long personal and working relationship. For the

next 20 years his deckie was Vanessa, whom he referred to as his manager.

After longlining for eight years, he sold *Duncan* to go back crayfishing with Vanessa.

They fished with *Tenko*, which later sank, and then purchased the 32 foot (9.8m) alloy *Cyclops*.

Curly was in another serious vehicle crash in 1992

when he and Vanessa travelling in their RX7 were t-boned by a drunk driver on the Owen River bridge.

Both were hospitalised with broken bones – legs and ankle in Curly's case.

Once rehabilitated, they opted for a more comfortable vessel that was less hard on the body, commissioning the 38 foot (11.6m) Miller & Tunnage alloy boat *Nemesis*.

They continued to work 160 pots, with Vanessa as sole deckhand, for 10 years.

That meant long trips and long hours – described as "just head down, arse up".

Curly lost his reliable deckie when Vanessa became pregnant with their first daughter Anika.

His final vessel, a 45 foot (13.7m) alloy, was renamed *Vannika*, combining his wife and daughter's names.

He fished that for 15 years with "Mr Reliable" Matt Blanco as sole deckhand.

With his body crying enough and a willing buyer, Curly retired in 2017.

But he struggled to adapt ashore without the fishing life and was surprised and then delighted when he was offered the Westport harbour master's job.

He spent the next five years guiding craft over the notorious harbour bar and being involved in safety, search and rescue, oil spill co-ordination, building of a new marina, and pilot training.

He is survived by wife Vanessa and daughters Anika and Alantis.



Curly James.



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Good electronics. Survey to June 2027

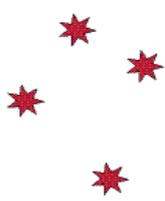
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