



# Friday update



## Captain's Blog

June 23, 2017

### Oyster community fears the worst

The outbreak of a fatal disease in Stewart Island's farmed oysters is aquaculture's equivalent of foot and mouth.

Emotions are running high as the authorities grapple with destruction of millions of flat oysters in Big Glory Bay. And everyone is praying the disease bonamia ostreae does not enter the adjacent wild fishery in Foveaux Strait. Culling of caged oysters began this week in the first stage of an operation to remove all farmed oysters from Stewart Island.

This drastic action will also have to include removal of large quantities of mussels, which harbour oysters on the growing ropes.

In the meantime the Bluff oyster fishery centred on Foveaux Strait continues unabated.

The catch this year has been set at 10 million, with quota holders electing to shelve another five million to protect the fishery, rather than harvesting the total allowable commercial catch set by the Ministry for Primary Industries at 15 million.

There are 11 boats in the fishery which runs through the winter to the end of August.

Barnes Oysters, a co-operative that includes major fishing companies Sanford, Independent, United and Skeggs, handles two thirds of the catch and has so far caught about 70 percent of its quota.

Its operations manager, Graeme Wright, is frustrated and angry, like many others in



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### 2017 Seafood Industry Conference – Registrations now open

Registrations for the 2017 New Zealand Seafood Industry Conference are now open and along with Alex Olsen of A. Espersen A/S, Denmark, our other keynote speakers is Sir Ray Avery.

Ray was New Zealander of the Year in 2010 and will talk about *number eight wire innovators – what makes New Zealanders different*, with his presentation proudly brought to you by Sanford Ltd.

Ray is a pharmaceutical scientist who has received worldwide recognition for his innovation in medical technology and work in developing nations.

Registrations are also open for the Seafood Technical Day, which will be on 2 August.

[Click here to view the programme and register now.](#)

a vital industry that adds \$20 million plus to the local economy.

But he realises the need to be positive and pro-active in dealing with a difficult situation.

And the industry has known hard times before.

"The wild fishery has had some huge ups and downs," Graeme said.

A separate bonamia pathogen – exitiosa – is endemic to the wild fishery and has caused substantial losses, but until now the lethal bonamia ostreae has not been recorded in the deep south.

Neither disease is harmful to humans.

The Bluff fishery was closed for three years in the 1990s due to a bonamia outbreak and suffered a setback in 2014 when an estimated 28 percent of the population, some 250 million oysters, died.

The current conservative catch is estimated to be less than 2 percent of the total biomass.

There is finger pointing over the contamination of the Stewart Island fishery.

A 2015 report into an ostreae outbreak in the Marlborough Sounds recommended removal of all farmed oysters in that region to stop the spread but this was not adopted by MPI.

That report has not been made public but its release has been requested by numerous parties.

Helen Cave, co-owner of Southern Seafoods, employs six people in mussel and oyster farming on Stewart Island and doubts the outbreak can be contained.

"There are oysters everywhere in Big Glory Bay – it's a huge area.

"Killing every last sandfly would probably be easier."

Helen, also owner of Stewart Island's sole watering hole, the South Sea Hotel, is unsure about how compensation should be applied.

"It's not just the money, it's people's livelihoods down here.

"It's not a wealthy community here."

She said there had been poor communication and that some of those sent to oversee the removal operation had little idea of what was involved and had not visited the affected sites.

While the focus is on the plight of Stewart Island, the situation is devastating for Marlborough Sounds oyster farmers as well.

Pioneer mussel and oyster farmer Bruce Hearn faces a loss of "a couple of million" oysters.

He is the biggest of about eight farmers in the Sounds and has been marketing flat oysters under the Tio Point brand for 10 years.

"We're looking at 30 years of dedication going down the tubes," he said.

"We're not getting much sleep."

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## In the Media

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### Application to ban fishing on reef stopped by Government

**Bay of Plenty Times (17 June)**

Recreational fishermen are claiming a victory after Government said no to a ban on fishing around Astrolabe reef. Primary Industries Minister Nathan Guy said a two-year closure on the fishery within three nautical miles of the reef would not be imposed.

The rejection was to an application by Motiti Rohe Moana Trust, which had claimed the ecosystem around the reef was struggling after the Rena crashed into it in 2011.

Recreational fisher and retired lawyer Rob Paterson was buoyant about the decision.

"In a nutshell, it is a victory for recreational fishermen and the average Kiwi," he said.

[Read more](#)

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### EPA put off decision on mining consent

**Otago Daily Times (19 June)**

The Environmental Protection Authority has deferred a decision on whether to grant a mining application to Trans-Tasman Resources.

The application is to mine ironsands off the Taranaki coastline.

The EPA's decision-making committee has extended the deadline to July 27.

The committee said the decision would be released "as soon as practicable after that".

TTR's first mining application was turned down by the EPA in 2014.

[Read more](#)

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### Chinese fishing vessel fined close to \$1 million for under reporting catch

Chinese authorities have deregistered and fined a Chinese commercial fishing company approximately NZD\$825,000 for misreporting bluefin tuna catches and fishing without a licence adjacent to the New Zealand Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Offending by the vessels, the *Da Yangl 5* and *Da Yangl 6*, was detected during

The farms have a destruction notice in place but the oysters remain in the water in the meantime until disposal is organised.

The oyster outlook is dire, for those farmed at least, but the evidence is the species has been hit hard before and it has always recovered.

Oysters will still be on the menu – but they may be scarcer for a while.

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## Seabird Smart Awards 2017

Here's your chance to spread the word about your fleet's achievements.

Nominations are now open for the 2017 Seabird Smart Awards, so if you know someone who is making an extra effort to look after seabirds go online and nominate them.

The awards are run by the Southern Seabird Solutions Trust and aim to recognise outstanding leadership and commitment to looking after New Zealand seabirds.

You could nominate a skipper or crew, a manager, or even a vessel. Basically it can be anyone associated with fishing in any kind of role.

The 2017 awards function is timed to coincide with an international meeting of seabird experts from thirteen countries being held in Wellington in September.

[Click here to learn more or nominate someone!](#)

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## Ocean Bounty

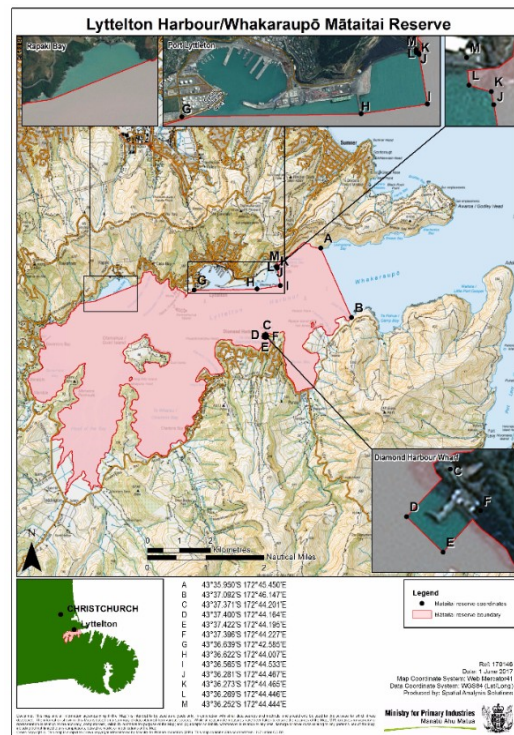
Sam Hayes is a new breed of trawler fisherman using Precision Seafood Harvesting (PSH), which is delivering exceptionally high quality seafood. Ocean Bounty follows Sam's catch from the trawler to Moana New Zealand and in to market.

Tune in to Three at 5pm on Sunday to check it out, and if you missed last week's episode on Orange roughly, [click here to watch it OnDemand](#)

Operation Zodiac, a joint Ministry for Primary Industries and New Zealand Defence Force high seas patrol in July last year.

They were fishing in an area between NZ and Fiji when the navy's offshore patrol vessel, the HMNZS Otago, found them to be in contravention of international law. Under international law, the state to which vessels are flagged is ultimately responsible for taking action against any of its vessels that violate laws.

Chinese authorities have now concluded their investigation and found that the two vessels were not only unlicensed but that they mis-reported over 100 tonnes of high value southern bluefin tuna as another lower value species.



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## Lyttelton Harbour declared Marine Reserve by Government

Minister for Primary Industries Nathan Guy has declared the Lyttelton Harbour/Whakaraupō Mātaitai Reserve and appointed the Tāngata Tiaki/Kaitiaki for the reserve.

The Mātaitai Reserve stops all commercial fishing in the area and allows the Kaitiaki to recommend fisheries by-laws to the Minister.

The reserve covers the inner part of Lyttelton Harbour from the eastern most point of Otokitoki/Gollans Bay to the eastern most point of Deep Gully Bay. The Mātaitai Reserve excludes the Rāpaki



### 2017 Seafood Star Awards

Nominations for the Seafood Star Awards are now open. The categories for this year's awards are:

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

The Seafood Stars Awards will run across all facets of the industry and will be presented to those who have made a significant contribution to the seafood industry.

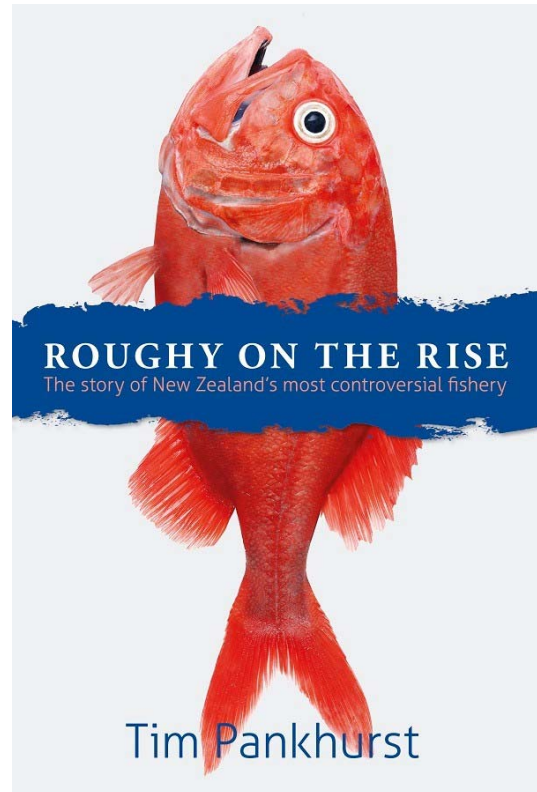
[Click here to download the form and nominate someone.](#)

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[Click here to read our latest issue](#)

Bay Mātaitai Reserve, Diamond Harbour Wharf, Lyttelton Port and Te Awaparahi Bay areas.

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### Roughy on the Rise

You can now purchase a copy of *Roughy on the Rise*, the story of New Zealand's most controversial fishery.

The story of orange roughy is one of cowboys, characters and conservation. *Roughy on the Rise* charts the discovery of this mysterious deepwater fish, its exploitation, its depiction by environmental NGOs as the epitome of unsustainable fishing, the slow unlocking of its secrets, its key role in bankrolling the development of the New Zealand seafood industry – and latterly its recovery.

[Click here to purchase a copy](#)

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### Cawthron Marlborough Environment Awards field day

The Cawthron Marlborough Environment Awards marine category winner, Sanford, is hosting a field day on 12 July in Havelock.

You can see how Sanford's culture of innovation is leading the mussel industry through advanced boat engineering,



biodegradable lashings and recycling initiatives.

Everyone is welcome, but bookings are required. To make a booking contact Peter Hamill, awards co-ordinator – [peter.hamill@marlborough.govt.nz](mailto:peter.hamill@marlborough.govt.nz) or ph 03 520 7400.