Commercial fishing industry welcomes Fish Mainland

The endorsement by government of a new recreational fishing lobby group has put wind in the sails of Fish Mainland.

Fish Mainland, established over the past two years by Randall Bess and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), aims to provide a unified voice for the marine recreational fishing community in the South Island and Stewart Island.

Randall Bess says they have received an unprecedented level of support, including from all nine South Island iwi and the commercial fishing sector.

Priorities under the COVID-19 emergency has meant the government cannot commit funding to Fish Mainland at this time but Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash has written to say he supports the group’s advocacy of recreational fishing.

Jim Crossland who is chairman of Fish Mainland says the willingness and ability of the group to work constructively with government was key to the level of support they have received.

He says they are grateful that TNC’s expertise which will contribute to building Fish Mainland’s fundraising ability. He says the working group has already begun to work with their professional fundraisers to pursue opportunities that will allow them to become operational soon and build capability.

Building membership is key to their success and while membership remains free, they are seeking donations from fishers who are happy to help and want a voice in management discussions for important recreational fisheries. Fish Mainland members will have the right to nominate and elect five regional directors, and iwi will appoint two other directors.
The collaborative nature of Fish Mainland is something that the commercial fishing industry welcomes. For too long, a fractious relationship between recreational and commercial fishers has been the norm.

This need not be. A shared fishery is just that and respect for all users is essential.

A professional recreational lobby group with a solid business plan and good, transparent governance will be welcomed in the boardrooms of commercial fishing companies and in the offices of government ministers.

It is an opportunity for the recreational sector to have a seat at the table and while Fish Mainland is South Island-based, we encourage recreational fishers from all over New Zealand to support them.

After all, many of you will be commercial fishers as well.

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**Salmon set to put a smile on Southland frontline workers**

New Zealand King Salmon are lending a helping hand to those on the frontline, donating portions of king salmon for health workers to take home.

Over the following week, salmon will be delivered to over 500 workers at Nelson Hospital, Nelson Tasman Hospice staff, Wairau Hospital in Blenheim and to health workers at covid-19 testing stations.

Each box will be delivered with the message “Thank you for being an essential worker in our community”.

New Zealand King Salmon chief executive Grant Rosewarne said the gesture was a way of thanking those in our communities who had selflessly committed themselves to minimising the impact of Covid-19 for the benefit of the rest of us, “which we are extremely grateful for”.

Over 300 staff have been working in NZKS’s processing plant, hatcheries and farms during the lockdown.

"I had a number of our team members contact me wanting to show their appreciation for those who are on the frontline,” Rosewarne said.

"I want to acknowledge the outstanding work they are doing for us as an essential service during this unprecedented time. It's all about us caring for those in our community and supporting them where we can."

The donation is part of NZKS's commitment to communities and the environment in which the company operates.
Scientists turn to omega-3s in the fight against COVID-19

Scientific communities are turning to treatments containing omega-3 fatty acids and fish oil in an effort to stifle the spread of COVID-19.

KD Pharma Group and SLA Pharma will soon hold clinical trials to test the effectiveness of its new drug, EPAspire, on patients with inflammatory cytokines – a symptom believed to play a part in COVID-19’s progression.

The drug consists of highly-purified eicosapentaenoic acid free fatty acid (EPA-FFA) in a capsule form.

The trial will recruit patients with positive COVID-19 results and treat them with EPAspire within a day of hospitalisation. Treatment will continue for one month, with a two-week follow-up.

It’s hoped the drug will reduce the risk of coronavirus complications progressing to serious outcomes, such as the need for artificial ventilation and intensive care.

“This unique preparation has potential, to not only modify the COVID-19 disease process, reducing harmful, excess inflammatory responses, but to do so without suppressing the immune response to the virus,” KD Pharma chief executive Oscar Groet said.

The United Kingdom’s Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has moved to advance trials of the drug, while discussions with European countries are also underway.
Sustainable Seas Challenge - Innovation Fund

The Sustainable Seas Challenge is calling for expressions of interest in proposals that will contribute to building a blue economy in New Zealand, with blue economy being defined as marine activities that generate economic value and contribute positively to social, cultural and ecological wellbeing.

Details on the Innovation Fund can be found on the Sustainable Seas website. Calls for Expressions of Interest for projects close at midday, 18 May 2020.

News

The New Zealand rock lobster industry was among the first and hardest hit by Covid-19, with the export of live lobsters from New Zealand stopping in late January when China closed its restaurants and freight to the country was restricted, Stuff reported. But the sector is showing signs of recovery, with Te Anau-based Fiordland Lobster Company, which exports about 40 percent of New Zealand lobster to China, starting up again this week. Its product will arrive in Shanghai this weekend. Lobster Exporters of New Zealand chairman Andrew Harvey confirmed lobster exports into China had resumed after "stopping dead" in late January. New Zealand's live lobster [crayfish] industry is worth around $320 million annually and directly and indirectly employs 2500 people. Though a couple of North Island companies had exported small numbers of lobster to China in February and March, the industry was now getting started again. "So far it's looking good,
China is buying and prices are recovering," Harvey said. Lobster fishermen had done it tough while industry activity was put on hold but most would get through if the market held up, he said. Fiordland Lobster Company chief executive Alan Buckner said they could have exported live lobster to China during New Zealand’s lockdown because the company was classed in the essential service category. Instead, the company opted not to, deciding to support the lockdown and protect its staff. Demand for the product in China was also low at the time and there was limited freight space. It was good to be underway again, Buckner said. "We have got boats landing [with lobster] every day now, we have made some sales into China for delivery this weekend and we are really encouraged at the level of customer interest." Due to restricted flights in New Zealand during lockdown the company was improvising by using Air Chathams planes to get its product from Manapouri Airport to Auckland where it was packed and flown to Shanghai. Buckner was predicting a "stop start year" as the demand for live lobster settled in China and as flight connections improved.

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