Vanguard sets new standard for mussel industry

Swimming with sharks at the Chathams
OUR PROMISE

This is our promise to every New Zealander. A promise about one of our most valued and treasured resources. We are the men and women of the New Zealand seafood industry and we want you to be proud of each and every one of us.

We promise to be guardians of our oceans and to continue finding new ways to lead the world with sustainable practices – right now and for decades to come. We may not always get it right, but we’re committed to always exploring ways to do things better.

We have nothing to hide and much to be proud of. So come with us and share our stories at seafood.co.nz.

OUR PROMISE
IN PRACTICE

OUR CODE OF CONDUCT

We do not condone illegal behaviour.

We will always aim to do the right thing. The law surrounding fishing is both technical and complex and, at times, some people may make mistakes. When the law is breached, we will accept the consequences and make changes where needed.

We will work with Government and other interested parties to develop and implement principled and practical policies to ensure the use of fisheries resources is sustainable.

If we don’t fish sustainably our industry has no future; it’s the cornerstone of our business. We must ensure the economic gains we derive do not come at the cost of long-term sustainability. Working constructively with Government is vital to strike the best balance between current resource use and future opportunities for all New Zealanders. Striking this balance requires application of sound principles to develop evidence-based policy that uses robust information.

We will continue to actively minimise our impacts on the marine environment and encourage others to act similarly.

It is important to us we look after our marine environment. All New Zealanders derive benefits from our natural resources today, but we are also guardians for future generations. This responsibility requires that we take care when we harvest, that we are conscious of our impacts, and that we work hard to reduce them. All food production has an impact on the environment, but we will strive to get ours as close to zero impact as we can.

We will continue to invest in science and innovation to enhance fisheries’ resources and add value.

Our fisheries are a treasured resource and, like all other countries, New Zealand uses these natural resources for food, recreation and commerce. We commit to harvest the commercial component of these resources responsibly. We commit to investments that add value to the resources we harvest to deliver optimum value to New Zealand.

We look after our people and treat them fairly.

We value our people. Whether they are working on land or on vessels at sea, we will work hard to keep them safe and to create an environment that fosters their passion for the seafood industry.

We will be accountable for delivering on Our Promise and will support increased transparency.

We will report annually on the progress we are making. We understand that much of what we do is over the horizon and out of sight, and we welcome the public becoming better acquainted with how we operate. Increased transparency is part of building that understanding and trust, but it must be affordable, practical and respect the privacy and dignity of our people.

We give our word
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Cover photo, Tim Cuff.
It’s always good to begin a new year on a positive note. That’s why the cover story of our first issue is so welcome.

The building of MacLab’s multi-million mussel harvester Vanguard by Q-West in Whanganui is not only an affirmation of the aquaculture industry’s bright future but marks a return to the seafood sector of a long-established boatbuilder with an impressive record of producing quality aluminium boats of many types. As readers will see, Vanguard is not only a standout for its design, capabilities, crew comfort and finish, but also has some features that set a new standard helping to show the way towards open ocean aquaculture.

There is more good news in the way the Chatham Islands Fisheries Forum has brought the community, the industry and the Government together in producing a locally-driven paua management plan that could serve as the model for other fisheries in other parts of New Zealand, ending the frustrations and enmity that can be so counter-productive to sensible, sustainable management. Seafood New Zealand staff were on hand for a recent forum meeting and the same visit produced the full story of how paua divers deal with the threatening presence of great white sharks – and how Val Croon survived an attack and got straight back to work.

There’s much more to read about in this issue, from the comments of industry leaders gleaned from a timely and well-balanced New Zealand Herald series, to an interview with vastly experienced Whakatane surface long-liner Steve Haddock, and photographer Tamzin Henderson’s strong message – and pictures – asking that fishermen get the respect they are due.

We also show how the Australian seafood industry has borrowed our Promise campaign because of its success here, proving the old adage that imitation is the best form of flattery. Not forgetting the many challenges our industry faces and the need for a unified response, 2020 has got off to a promising start.

Tim Pankhurst
Chief Executive
“Twitcher, definition: A twitcher is a type of birder who seeks to add as many species as possible to their life list, often without detailed or long-term observation of individual birds.”

While I don’t strictly consider myself a twitcher, and I am not a scientist, I am definitely a bird-nerd. I love being out on the water, watching the seabirds, noting which species I see the most of in each area, and how they interact with vessels.

Until this year, I had never sailed off the west coast of New Zealand. I was eager to get out for longer than a few days, and I desperately wanted a west coast trip, so I asked Sealord if they would let me sail again. This time, it was on Thomas Harrison at the end of the 2019 hoki season for 10 days.

I had great plans for another articulate and easy-to-read blog about my time on board.

The article I ended up writing was clinical, fact and statistic heavy, soulless, and it didn’t reflect how I felt about the guys I was out there photographing.

From my first trip, these men have become my family and I am sad and frustrated on their behalf. As a business owner, as a fisherwoman, and as a Kiwi, I am angry that decisions can be made which could cost fishing families their livelihood without walking a day in their shoes, or spending a day on their vessel. Decisions that are often made from public pressure through scaremongering, lazy journalism and organisations that shout the loudest.

What we don’t see in the media are the fishermen’s eyes trained for hours, day and night on the bridge computer screens, watching for marks that indicate schools of fish, sea mounds that might snag the net, other vessels or approaching weather patterns. Those same eyes showing bewilderment, confusion, disappointment and sadness when a lean net doesn’t reflect the promise indicated by the sonar or sensors.
What we don’t hear in the media are the shudders of the ship as she starts to haul, the groans of protest from the winches, the creaks of strain from the ropes and net, and the same tension reflected on the face of the skipper as he anxiously waits to see if the last tow has been a good one.

We don’t hear the whoop of elation when a large full bag of quota species is brought on board, or the thud and soft sigh as one of the boys collapses into his chair in the mess after a long and hard shift, at the end of a long and tiring season.

Unless we are on board, we don’t hear the communication, camaraderie, banter, encouragement, cooperation and more than occasional colourful word exchanged between skippers and crews fishing our waters – working as a team to fish with the best result for the vessel, the crew, the industry, and the sustainability of our seas.

Every time I head out with these boys, I am encroaching on their lives, their home on the water, and their workplace, yet every time I’ve been welcomed without question.

I’ve been fed, cared for and respected. They’ve told me stories about seabirds, they’ve asked me questions about species, they’ve delightfully texted, emailed or messaged me when they’ve sighted a species they now recognise, even if I have to tell them, there is no such thing as a diesel bird, they are all petrel powered of course.

One of the coolest things about the west coast trip was the number of white morph southern giant petrels. They may be a common sight to the fishermen but it was the first time I had seen them around the New Zealand mainland, and we had at least three present for the whole 10 days.

The fishermen learnt from me, and taught me. They’ve told me about bad fishing years, low fish stocks, and bags full of low-paying fish. They’ve also talked about advances in science, improvements in environmental impact, and conscious and voluntary decisions being made to protect fish stocks. As a nation hopefully we can learn to trust again, and hopefully more Kiwis might think about the people behind this industry and hear their stories before trying to silence them further.

Tamzin Henderson is an accomplished nature photographer who has a special interest in photographing seabirds, and has made several trips on deepsea fishing boats in pursuit of great images. With her sister Lana, she co-owns Henderson’s boat chandlery and fishing supplies shop in Blenheim. A portfolio of her stunning pictures, and her blogs on her voyages, are at tamzinnz.com.
Swimming with sharks at the Chathams

Spending five days on the Chatham Islands teaches you a lot about great white sharks. Lesley Hamilton talked to the divers who share whitey’s environment and risk their lives daily.

The commercial paua divers of the Chatham Islands are a tough lot. Dealing daily with great white sharks will have something to do with that.

They are also the only divers permitted to dive on air tanks, or Underwater Breathing Apparatus (UBA).

Chief executive of the Paua Industry Council, Jeremy Cooper, said they won the fight to allow the divers to use UBA in 2013.

“We went through a process to show the Ministry for Primary Industries and the wider industry that we were completely genuine. That it was all about diver safety. That we didn’t want UBA in any other part of New Zealand. Then we had to get a special permit to allow us to trial it and report on it. We did that for three to four years before they were confident enough to change the regulations.”

Cooper said it was purely about safety in their work environment, which is the largest commercial paua fishery in New Zealand.

“On snorkel, when you are working at the bottom, a shark is less likely to go you but as you’re coming up to get your next breath that’s when they get you – mid-water column or on the surface.

“With UBA you can stay on the bottom and still have the chance to back into a rock. Great whites are into self-preservation. They will not do anything stupid like charge into a rock or the sea floor. They will swim around you, check you out and then attack. Our paua divers are head down, scooping out paua and while the great whites can see you, you don’t see them until it’s too late.”

So, are wetsuit-clad divers just another seal dinner? Cooper claims not.

“These are built-to-kill machines. But they are smart enough to know a diver is not a seal. It is only when they are in attack mode, when they have smelled blood or just fresh from a seal kill, that they attack humans. If they thought we were seals no one would be safe in the water.”

And the threat is very real. Great white sharks can grow to more than six metres and the waters of the Chatham Islands are directly on their historical migratory path. They have been fully protected in New Zealand waters since 2007.

“A guy out at Owenga here has a great white shark jaws that I could swim through – probably a metre in size with three rows of teeth on the way in.”

– JEREMY COOPER

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“These guys taught us how to do military field dressing tourniquets, which won’t save your limb but will stop you dying from blood loss.”
– JEREMY COOPER

Chatham Island paua diver Val Croon had a close encounter last year and reckons wearing tanks saved his life.

“The one that grabbed me would have been eight to ten feet. It was like getting hit by a freight train. I am getting rag dolled and getting powered through the water. My head is hard up against the shark’s belly and he’s got me by the tanks. It felt like he had me for eternity, but it was no longer than 15 seconds.”

Croon’s regulator was being pulled out of his mouth and he was taking in salt water when he managed to get his paua hook into the shark and it let go.

“I just saw the flash of its tail and it was gone. I was hyperventilating but backed into a ledge where I knew I was safe.”

Croon, who was in five metres of water, decided not to risk going up to the boat but instead hugged the bottom for 20 metres to the shore. On the way he spotted his paua kit and realised the shark had propelled him 10 metres through the water.

“There is no doubt in my mind that having tanks saved my life that day.”

While Croon was relatively unscathed by the attack, another Chatham Islander, Vaughan Hill, lost most of his right arm to a great white while free-diving in 1996.

Cooper said the remoteness of the Chatham Islands, 800 kilometres east of New Zealand, adds to the risk.

“We had a specialised first aid guy come here because going through a normal first aid course is not what you need when there is a shark attack. These guys taught us how to do military field dressing tourniquets, which won’t save your limb but will stop you dying from blood loss. They made up these $400 first aid kits of stuff that would actually help in a massive bleeding trauma event. Pretty sure they all have them in their boats.”

Croon admits that they sometimes illegally dived...
“The one that grabbed me would have been eight to ten feet. It was like getting hit by a freight train.”
– VAL CROON

on tanks before the regulations were changed.
“Certain dive places around the island we would risk diving with air illegally because the shark risk was so high. People would think we were just raping and pillaging but they just had a lack of understanding about the real risk we faced on a day-to-day basis.”
And it’s not the first time Croon has been attacked. The first was in 1992.
“I’ve been attacked twice and had over twenty encounters.”
South Australia has the same problem with great whites and the Paua Industry Council is arranging for some of the Chatham divers, including Croon, to visit their Australian equivalents next month.
Jeremy Cooper explained that the Australian divers have a self-propelled shark-proof cage operation.
“It is a mesh-type device that you can fill with air, so it floats above you. So, if a shark come barrelling down to attack you, he has a whole lot of metal to deal with first because you are underneath it. Hopefully they will buy a full-blown working rig and bring it back to the Chathams.”
While being allowed to use UBA legally has been a relief, Croon and other paua divers will look at any protection methods.
“I have kids and I am not sure I want them diving in those waters.”
Great whites are pretty much the apex killer, but Cooper said they do have one enemy.
“The orca, or killer whale, will smack them over. In South Africa, where they have shark diving operations, there are no great whites [at the moment] – because the orca turned up this season. They come up underneath the great whites and just chomp their liver out.”
Which begs the question about using orca to keep divers safe.
“Could we have sound effects of orca playing as we dive? We haven’t tried it, but we’ll try anything,” Cooper said.
In Australia, abalone divers use “Shark Shield”, an electronic wire they tow behind them that puts out an electronic field. Some swear by them, some don’t. In other parts of the world, where great whites are not protected, divers carry powerheads, or shark sticks, which are specialised firearms you can carry underwater.
But would you have the presence of mind to use one in an attack? Cooper doubts it.
“Unless you have been underwater and had your face mask knocked off and try to get it back on, unless you know what it’s like to have a regulator pulled out of your mouth so you can’t breathe anymore – and to have this happening while a great white has its jaws on your tank, yeah. Probably not.”
The Australian seafood industry has launched its version of New Zealand’s Promise aimed at protecting its social licence to operate.

Called Our Pledge, the initiative that was two years in the pipeline was launched by Seafood Industry Australia (SIA) at the biennial Seafood Directions conference in Melbourne in October.

SIA chief executive Jane Lovell acknowledged, tongue in cheek, its debt to its trans-Tasman counterpart in thanking Seafood New Zealand for “trialling” its Our Pledge campaign.

The Promise by the New Zealand industry to do the right thing on the water and protect the resource was launched in 2017.

And it is having a positive impact, according to the annual Nielsen trust and reputation survey commissioned by SNZ.

There is significant improvement in the proportion of New Zealanders who agree the industry is striving to reduce its impact on the environment and that it harvests seafood in a sustainable way.

An increasing number also recognise that the Quota Management System leads the world in ensuring sustainability of fish and stocks by controlling harvest levels.

Of those who had seen the television advertisements and online content featuring fishers, communities, innovation, careers and endangered species protection, 61 percent said they felt more favourable towards the industry as a result.

Seafood’s reputation measures were below wine and sheep and beef but ahead of forestry, dairy and oil and gas.

The seafood figure was 69 percent – good, very good or excellent – with 15 percent neutral, seven percent don’t know and only nine percent rating reputation as bad.
The Aussies face similar challenges in not always receiving the support they believe they deserve. There is a disconnect between people eating seafood and the industry behind it.

“AT SIA’s inception our members identified social licence as a top priority and we’ve been working hard to develop an open and honest way to respond to community concerns and secure the future of Australia’s seafood industry,” Lovell said.

“There are too many instances of mistruths being peddled as fact. We want the community to hear the real stories of our industry and to be confident that our aquaculture and wild catch industries are well managed, scientifically based and sustainable.

“We also want the community to be confident that we are committed to looking for better ways to do things – it’s part of the way we care for our environment and our people.

“Being able to provide the seafood industry with security, particularly around access to resources, is one of the reasons we continue to strive for improved social licence.

“After all, we have a responsibility to keep putting great, healthy Aussie seafood on the table for families to enjoy for generations to come.

“Our Pledge recognises shared concerns and provides a way for us, as an industry, to work together to actively communicate and address these critical issues.”

SIA chair Veronica Papacosta said KPIs and industry stories would be developed that underpinned and demonstrated each Pledge statement.

“We are committed to ensuring that Our Pledge is more than just words and that every one of our statements can be backed up with facts and figures,” she said.

Community pressure in Australia has resulted in a decline in commercial fishing activity and catch. SIA had more than 120 signatories at its Pledge launch including Austral Fisheries, Sydney Fish Market, OceanWatch Australia, Humpty Doo Barramundi and Raptis Seafoods.

Assistant Fisheries Minister Senator Jonathan Jane Lovell Australian seafood industry participants were quick to endorse the Pledge with their names and signatures.
Duniam, who gave a rousing endorsement of the seafood sector in opening the conference, was also among those to sign, as was Seafood New Zealand.

Keeping Australians favourably disposed towards seafood is critical if we are to maintain access to resources, according to Austral Fisheries chief executive David Carter.

The same applies in this country.

Social licence to operate and sustainable seafood are identified as two of the top five materiality issues among stakeholders in Sanford’s 2019 annual report.

It was recognised in introducing the Promise three years ago that it had to have substance, feel good words were not enough.

That led to the Code of Conduct and a candid, and at times uncomfortable, assessment of industry performance against six key measures – highlighting and condemning illegal behaviour, sustainability, minimising impact on the marine environment, investment in science and innovation, protecting our people and increased transparency.

Gaining industry support was vital.

That was achieved through an annual countrywide roadshow, visiting a dozen fishing ports and talking directly with fishers and processors.

Many admitted to feeling beleaguered, that their contribution was not recognised, even denigrated. “We should have done this years ago,” was the comment from one veteran skipper as the Promise campaign was launched.

Regional Economic Development Minister Shane Jones, a former chair of Sealord and Te Ohu Kaimoana, took up the theme in opening the 2019 SNZ annual conference in Queenstown.

He urged the seafood sector to unite and act against “a largely metropolitan power culture” seeking to damage it.

He warned “millennial attitudes” were changing New Zealand industry, with farming and forestry in the firing line as well as fishing.

A “doubting Thomas” mentality was driving global trends against historical extractive industries.

“I think that is just a new level of tripe, but we have to deal with the fact as industry leaders that there is a higher level now of expectation.

“We’ve got to muster a higher level of organisation, messaging and ability to deliver,” he said.

The New Zealand – and now Australian – seafood peak bodies are seeking to do exactly that.

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Seafood production and procurement can be a complicated business. Finding the facts behind the New Zealand seafood industry shouldn’t be.

FIND OUT MORE AT OPENSEAS.ORG.NZ
As cracking fishing yarns go, the one about New Zealand’s seafood industry is hard to beat.

That was the compelling introduction to an extensive three-part series on issues facing the seafood sector that ran in the New Zealand Herald in December.

Award winning journalist Andrea Fox, whose usual beat is the dairy industry, spent weeks amassing a wealth of detail and interviewing key figures.

Admitting to knowing almost nothing about a key export industry that is also woven into the fabric of communities all around the country, Fox found the deeper she delved the more complex the assignment became.

She soon learned every New Zealander has a stake in fishing and the sea and there is no shortage of strong opinions.

Her intro continued: “With high seas adventure, a whiff of danger, obsession and superstition, fierce rivalries, big money, big and small boats and human struggle, it’s a compelling script which usually delivers a satisfying ending – at the barbecue after a great day out, or a deep sea bounty to keep export customers happy.

“It’s odd then that that this multi-billion-dollar industry is considered the least understood of our food producing sectors.”

Fox found a consistent response from fishing leaders was their industry should be celebrated – not criticised.

Andrew Talley, described as “scion of the Talley’s fishing and food group”, was quoted at length.

“I haven’t met a fisherman or a company that’s not an environmentalist,” he said.

“I think they all say the same thing, want to do the same thing, they just talk about it in different ways.”

Like other industry leaders, Talley is in good spirits. “There’s really strong demand, the resource is sound ... sustainable and healthy.

“All the big-ticket items, the resource, the demand, where New Zealand fits in terms of its practices, its skill level in harvesting these resources, the science ability in working out sustainable yields – they’re all excellent and in good health.

“But it’s not without challenge – I don’t see any primary industry today that’s not.”

Those challenges – which include a tight employment market, rising costs, trade tensions,
the need to decarbonise, climate change and environmental issues such as the critically endangered native Maui dolphin – aren’t going away, says Talley.

But they need to be faced.

“We are 100 per cent dependent on the health of the oceans to harvest our resource,” he says.

Lowering the industry’s impact at sea - whether that’s reducing the bycatch of mammals, more selective fishing, better packaging choices, better energy options – is a must, but a challenging must, says Talley.

“All those things have trade-offs, whether it’s lower catches, higher costs, less efficiencies - but people need to understand what those trade-offs are.”

Talley’s is the third largest quota holder out of about 800 quota owners in New Zealand’s unique fisheries management regime. As well as 10 big deepsea vessels, the Motueka-based group’s fishing division is serviced by a fleet of more than 80 individual owner-operators.

He says there are “a lot of myths and half-truths” around the fishing industry.

“Look at the science and the facts. It is frequently described as well managed, as the best in the world. And it will get better.”

The industry is also frequently characterised as a bunch of large quota holders, says Talley, when in fact it’s far wider than that.

There are more than 1000 commercially-registered fishing vessels in New Zealand. Ninety per cent of the industry are small owner-operators, processors, retailers and wholesalers, he says.

With 25,000 people employed, it’s quite diverse. Look at Greymouth, Motueka, Bluff, Westport, Picton – the fishing industry is a large part of those communities and reaches deep into coastal communities.

Volker Kuntzsch, chief executive of listed industry heavyweight Sanford, is another in whom the passion runs strong.

“Look at the science and the facts. It is frequently described as well managed, as the best in the world. And it will get better.”

The German-born, Arnold Schwarzenegger sound-alike says having worked internationally for 25 years, he can look at the industry from the outside.

“People complain and find all sorts of reasons why it should be discredited but on an international scale we do a fantastic job.

“I’m a scientist originally and I know we look after our fish stocks.”

“We have the most diverse array of species. We are a South Pacific nation with over 130 species under management, which no other nation can claim, and most of these are in a good state.”

If these industry leaders sound a tad defensive, it’s little wonder.

The anti-fishing voices of environmental groups such as Greenpeace – and closer to home, recreational fishing lobbyist LegaSea - are growing more strident.

Kuntzsch acknowledges that the commercial side has made mistakes.

“We are responsible for degrading the substrate in areas like the Hauraki Gulf. The mussel beds that were there were trawled away by heavy gear on the bottom of the ocean. We have over-caught.

“People thought the same all over the world – that fish were forever. They’ll just grow back.”

But that was before 1986, when it was a race for the last fish, stocks were near collapse and the Government stepped in with legislation and a world-leading control regime called the quota management system (QMS).

Kuntzsch isn’t taking the recreational sector’s criticism on the chin.

“As a scientist I would love recreational fishermen to monitor their catches, and also to highlight how much has gone back overboard because it wasn’t the legal size – because the impact is massive.”

Like Tim Pankhurst, chief executive of fishing industry association Seafood NZ, Kuntzsch says it’s a myth that fish stocks are in big trouble.

“We are not in a situation where we are facing the extinction of certain fish stocks … a lot of effort has gone into doing the right thing because we have realised these resources are finite, so we find different ways of handling things. We want to be in business for a long time and create value for a long time.”

Pankhurst: “Yes, it has its flaws but overall our fisheries management system is proven, it has been adopted worldwide and it is sustainable. We are not
going to run out of fish.

“With all those advantages, we should be hailing our fishers and harvesters as heroes – not constantly denigrating them as the anti-commercial fishing lobby does.”

Te Ohu Kaimoana chief executive Dion Tuuta heads an organisation which ensures that the integrity of Maori legislated fishing rights – commercial and customary – are protected and upheld. Iwi are major stakeholders in the industry, owning more than 33 per cent of total quota.

A charitable trust, Te Ohu Kaimoana is the eyes, ears and mouthpiece for the collective fishing interests of 58 iwi organisations. It works with Aotearoa Fisheries, which trades as Moana Fisheries and includes the biggest quota holder, Sealord.

“The vast majority of people don’t understand how New Zealand’s commercial fishing industry operates. Most New Zealanders don’t understand anything about their food source,” says Tuuta.

“Because of what I would classify as a significant amount of misinformation, there’s quite a negative media, social media and NGO (non-governmental organisation) view of fisheries.

Tuuta says recreational fishing is a “huge” pastime for Maori, but he doesn’t pull any punches on what the industry sees as an imbalance in the regulation of commercial and recreational fishing.

He and Seafood NZ’s Pankhurst claim politicians are terrified to impose regulations on the country’s 600,000-odd pleasure fishers because of the potential voter backlash.

“No politician will mess with recreational fishing rights, and they certainly would be brave to restrict Maori customary fishing rights,” says Tuuta.

Talley says there’s “definitely” a growing concern about the politicisation of fishing.

But he thinks the Fisheries Act helps.

“We’re lucky to have it. Any fishery management system in the world that’s been politicised has failed. It’s important our fisheries management decisions and our marine management generally is driven on facts and science, not politics.”

It’s little wonder the fishing industry isn’t well understood. It’s complex, diverse and according to Pankhurst, probably New Zealand’s most regulated.

Talley says that’s because fisheries resources are complex.

“These are living, dynamic biological masses which change daily. We operate in a public environment and the ocean is something we learn more about every day.

“The regulatory and legislative environment is very complex. The very core of that is the QMS and the Fisheries Act, which are both a wonderful piece of legislation and a wonderful concept.”

Talley says the QMS is the “bedrock” that ensures fisheries are sustainable.

“It’s the QMS that provides for the science, the research and the funding to ensure that’s the case, and it’s the QMS that then provides the commercial framework and certainty for investment … it remains world-leading.” Which isn’t to say the system is perfect.

Sanford’s Kuntzsch says the QMS needs to be more agile.

“Rising water temperatures, increasing algal blooms, changing salinity and rising sea levels definitely have an impact on fish stocks. We would not want to be in a position where we have quotas for fish that are not in our fisheries management area, and fish in our management area we have no quota for.”

Fox also interviewed LegaSea mouthpiece Scott Macindoe but appeared to have little truck with his extremism, witness his likening of the commercial sector to terrorists with reference to “inshore fishing jihad”.

Fox says recreational fishing warriors’ emails indicate they are feisty people.

“Perhaps they should go fishing more to relax. “A visit to a fishing social media site or the magazine stand of a bookstore implies the situation is not as dire as LegaSea and like-minded fishers would have it. All those photos of beaming fishers and their catch, all those tales of a great day out on the water.

“Social media and the more extreme end of the pleasure fishing advocacy continue to be venomous about commercial operators, claiming they’re running amok and being allowed by governments to pillage the seas.

“This is despite scientific research showing that 97 percent of all fish landed in New Zealand come from stocks that are sustainable and healthy.”
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

![Submarine cable symbols](image)

*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.

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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**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.
Vanguard sets new standard for mussel industry

A multi-million-dollar mussel harvester built by Q-West in Whanganui for Nelson-based MacLab quickly proved itself ideal for the job. Bill Moore talked to the builders and their happy clients.
Vanguard sets new standard for mussel industry
Q-West has built many boats of many types, but Vanguard is the first mussel harvester to be launched from its yard at Castlecliff, Whanganui.

Constructed over 12 months and completed on time and on budget, the 30-metre aluminium vessel incorporates several features new to the mussel industry.

Most notably it has ballast tanks to improve its stability when working on the mussel farms and travelling across Tasman and Golden bays – areas that are more challenging than the sheltered waters of the Marlborough Sounds.

This is just one of the reasons that MacLab is so satisfied with the new vessel, which was officially welcomed to Nelson just before Christmas.

“I’ve been part of a few big projects and I’d have to say this was one of the most pleasurable to be part off,” said MacLab marine farming manager Scott Gillanders.

“It didn’t take long working with Q-West to develop confidence and trust with them. It was a no-surprises journey – they did exactly what they said they would do and we’re very happy with the outcome.”

This is the sort of compliment that Q-West works to win with every build.

Chief executive Colin Mitchell said the company – which can be working on up to five vessels at any one time – strives to develop good working relationships with every client.

Customers require detailed records and a high level of confidence that they will get what they order, on time, he said.

“That’s what we bring to the table – we’re going to put realistic delivery dates and we have the resources that if we find the projects are falling behind for whatever reason, to bolster the numbers to bring it back into line.

“We run in-depth production charts and provide lots of feedback to the client about where the boat is and where the materials are.”

Mitchell said although Vanguard was the first mussel harvester for Q-West and it was working...
with Oceantech designers Richard McBride and Kirk Mullen for the first time, its long experience and established production system worked as well as for other boat types.

“The first thing was, have we costed it correctly without having any historical data to fall back on? In the end we’ve done pretty much as we expected.”

He was very proud of the 25-strong team that built Vanguard, he said, with operations manager Chass Wardle doing an “exceptionally good job”.

Q-West had been lucky to have MacLab choose it over other boatbuilding companies, Mitchell said.

“Scott [Gillanders] was very knowledgeable and so was Stoney Bourke, the skipper who runs the boat, and very easy to work with, to make sure the boat could be its absolute best.”

A lot of detailed work on the specifications meant that MacLab knew what it was getting for its money from the start, with no budget blow-outs.

“If they wanted something extra during the build, it was crystal clear if it was in or out, with none of that animosity that you might otherwise get – that made life very easy.”

It also meant that Vanguard left Whanganui fully operational and was hauling mussel lines within days of arriving at Port Nelson.

Mitchell said Q-West worked hard to make the boat easy to service and maintain, with additional systems and materials to minimise corrosion and maintenance, and an emphasis on easy accessibility in the engine room.

“It’s not like a pleasure boat where you hide everything behind panels. It’s going to have a hard-working life and you need to make it easy to work on.”

Vanguard skipper Michael “Stoney” Bourke was glad to see Q-West incorporate his ideas into the design and fit-out of the new MacLab mussel harvester.

Bourke, who partners in the boat with MacLab through his company Tasman Bay Aquaculture, has been a part of the industry since 1985 when he joined the crew of Havelock legend Ivan Godiff.

“I look up to him big-time. I worked with him for eight years and I like to think I run a boat like he did.”

Very pleased with Vanguard, he particularly likes the fact that it has a proper galley away from the bridge, and the detachable safety rails that can be quickly set up on the deck when the boat is steaming anywhere.

“It’s one of those safety features I’ve always liked the idea of.”

As far as he knows they’re a first on mussel boats, just like the ballast tanks which provide stability on a boat that at 70 tonnes is “quite light and quite lively” when the tanks aren’t in use.

“It’s a great sea boat, it performs and manoeuvres really well and when you put the ballast in it performs even better. We’ll get more sea days in Tasman Bay.”

It was Bourke’s idea to have two seats side-by-side in the wheelhouse instead of the usual one.

“I want to be teaching people. I feel the industry is lacking in that side of things.

“You get a young fella, you just keep them on deck, they’re going to leave. If you show them what they can become, put them in the wheelhouse, put them in the seat, they’re going to stick around.”

Other stand-out features he mentions are the bilge system, the fuel system and the set-up of the gear built by Ansco.

Bourke and his crew currently tend to 150 submerged mussel lines in Tasman and Golden Bays, holding an average of 40 tonnes each, and also carry out mussel seeding.

He said Vanguard was one of the biggest mussel harvesters in the South Island and offered many improvements on previous boats, but he always remembered those working onshore too.

“You can have a nice boat like this, but you’ve got to have the people in the factory as well.

“It’s a big circle. They’re part of the boat as much as me and my crew.”
“A big project like that, it kind of ends up being a partnership. We wanted a vessel delivered on time and on budget, that was very important to us.”

– SCOTT GILLANDERS

Q-West’s boatyard got started in the 1960s and the current business employs skilled boatbuilders who trained as far back as the 1970s.

Its works in progress include a 24-metre quad-engined vessel for long-term client Whale Watch Kaikoura, RIBs for America’s Cup police work, and pilot boats.

Projects it has completed in the past few years include a 19-metre tourist catamaran, a 16-metre crayboat, 17 and 19-metre Hamilton jet-powered catamarans for the Victoria Maritime Police and the New Zealand Customs Service, ferries for Fullers in Auckland and an 18-metre flat-deck barge for use in the Marlborough Sounds.

Vanguard’s vital statistics

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<td>Ansco</td>
</tr>
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A birds-eye view showing the spacious deck layout. Photo, Q-West.
Generally, clients came back for another Q-West build after the first one, Mitchell said.

“We’ve got a good little business here that does a huge, diverse range of boats and every one of them goes out with a happy customer – it just happens to be boats we’re building. I guess if we were building houses, we’d have the same philosophy.”

MacLab’s Gillanders said the Vanguard project had received some very competitive tenders but the job was about quality and reputation as well as price.

“A big project like that, it kind of ends up being a partnership. We wanted a vessel delivered on time and on budget, that was very important to us.”

Q-West’s boatbuilding experience allowed it to work closely with the designers to make the vessel more maintenance friendly, and through the fit-out Q-West put a lot of innovative things into the vessel to make it more maintenance free and easy to use.

Vanguard’s hull was built upside down, then flipped using four cranes before construction continued inside the shed.

Harvesting in progress.
“That’s what you get when you work with a company that has so much experience – an evolution of fitting out vessels and getting better on each one that they do,” Gillanders said.

Vanguard was designed to deliver two days’ worth of processing in a day’s harvest, 80 tonnes, and to be stable and safe in the open waters of Tasman and Golden bays.

Its two 12,000 litre ballast tanks are there for that reason, making Vanguard the first of its type in New Zealand.

“It certainly makes a big difference in terms of stability, so it’s great when they’re working and also when they’re transiting empty.”

The vessel carries a high-speed optical sorter to weed out all the marine waste from the crop it is harvesting or the spat it is seeding, and a grader to separate nutraceutical grade mussels from half-shell food grade, allowing MacLab to get more value from its crop.

The privately-owned Nelson company focuses on producing high-quality mussel powder for nutraceutical manufacture and has invested heavily in boosting production over the past two years.

Gillanders said Vanguard had a high standard of crew comfort, being comfortable, spacious, well-insulated and air-conditioned.

It’s also good to look at inside and out.

“When we designed the vessel, we thought you can put just as much effort into making an ugly vessel as you can an aesthetically pleasing one – we wanted to do a few things to make it not just practical but to look good too, I guess as a good showcase for our company, and our crew.”

There are two crews of four working four days on, four off, sometimes overnighting in port.

Gillanders said the success of a project was measured when it came into use. After arriving in Nelson Vanguard spent two half-days on MacLab’s mussel farm for crew training and running up some of the gear.

“On its third full day it went out, did an 80-tonne harvest in Golden Bay and delivered it to Nelson. That’s a testament to Q-West, [harvesting equipment supplier] Ansco and [hydraulic systems supplier] Fluid Power Systems, but also everyone involved in the project, and the crew. It’s about people’s attitudes to making things happen. It was extremely pleasing for us.”

When he first heard Colin Mitchell say that people who got a boat built by Q-West usually came back for the next boat, he “didn’t think much of it”, Gillanders said.

“But after building the boat I can see exactly what he was meaning. There’s a whole range of things that Q-West are very good at.”

For more, including a portfolio of completed boats, go to Q-West.com
The peak celebration of New Zealand craft beer, Beervana, draws more than 16,000 hop enthusiasts to Wellington each August – with seafood taking a growing role.

Beervana manager Ryan McArthur says the festival, now in its 19th year, has become a prime event for vendors, with plenty of opportunities still available for seafood.

"Beer covers such a wide gamut of flavours. Whether you’re looking for a contrast of flavours, or to refine them – beer can be a blank canvas."

"We’re seeing the use of seafood in beers – kina, paua, crayfish, oyster stout. Brewers are being bold, using herbs and spices and experimenting with infusing new ingredients. They’re playing with salt-based and umami flavours that aren’t typically expected with beer."

Seafood has the potential to expand on the festival’s offerings, McArthur said.

"With beer festivals, the crowds often expect deep-fried, festival-friendly food. We keep the favourites, and they’re of the highest quality, but we’re increasingly trying to steer towards more local, fresh food that appeals to the tastes of everyone."

There are 18 food vendor spaces available for 2020.

Purveyors submit menus that are curated by the Beervana team to ensure there is a variety of culinary offerings.

"We aim to pair breweries with food vendors that will collaborate and complement each other’s fare,” McArthur said.

Restaurants or food producers with a focus on
seafood are encouraged to take part, or businesses, small or large, can look to supply those serving food on the day.  
“We have a number of food vendors looking to use seafood in their menu, so we really encourage seafood suppliers to get involved.”  
This could be through sponsorship or using the event to promote seafood products available around New Zealand.  
With the seafood conference the day prior and Visa Wellington on a Plate coinciding, the two-day festival could be a great platform for building business connections, he said.  
“For someone coming to exhibit, it’s an opportunity to meet a large proportion of the community and the industry. It’s not just about turning up and showing your wares, but collaborating with that industry, meeting people and building relationships.  
“Above all else, it’s a focus on deliciousness.”  
Beervana 2020 will be held at Sky Stadium in Wellington on August 7 & 8. Vendor applications open on March 1 and close on April 30. For more information on participating as a seafood vendor, contact Ryan McArthur: ryan@beervana.co.nz.
Collaboration gets it right at 44 degrees south

A collaborative Chatham Islands forum bringing together fishers and the public is setting an example for other parts of New Zealand, writes Lesley Hamilton.

It was a rare still and fine November day on the Chatham Islands when a small group gathered in the fisheries office at the island’s main port and settlement, Waitangi. Fishers were taking control of their future.

The fisheries office adjoins the tourism office, is around the corner from the café, the tiny building containing the police station, courthouse and holding cells and just up the road from the pub and the general store and diesel pumps.

That is the sum total of Chathams central. The rest of the 966 square kilometre island holds a handful of ocean-side fishing settlements reached by hundreds of kilometres of dusty gravel roads snaking across a barren, peat and gorse landscape.

The Chatham Islands lie 800 kilometres due east of New Zealand. Once you get there, it is 10,000 empty kilometres due east until you hit Chile. It defines isolation.

Wild horses gallop on white sand beaches and small settlements like Port Hutt and Kaingaroa offer up surprising oases of greenery and crystal-clear aquamarine seas from condemned wharves.

There are 600 residents on the Chatham Islands. Ninety-three voted in the last New Zealand election. It would seem that, on the Chathams, life transcends politics in favour of fishing and farming.

There are 10 people crammed into the tiny fishermen’s office. This is a good Chatham Islands Fisheries Forum turnout. They are here to hear Stuart Anderson and Mark Geytenbeek of Fisheries New Zealand update them on the Chatham Islands Paua (PAU4) Fisheries Plan.

This is not any group. Some say it is the way of the future. Some hope it will be a template for other groups throughout New Zealand.

The Chathams is New Zealand’s largest paua fishery, traditionally producing about a third of the total annual harvest of around 900 tonnes. It has been worth $40-$60 million in exports over the past 10 years.

But there are problems on the horizon. Habitat stress caused by a changing climate, ocean acidification, land-based pollution, competition...
for coastal space and a failure to measure the recreational catch are all having an impact.

Rather than wait for the policy wheels to slowly creak into action in Wellington, the industry took the initiative and delivered Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash its own management solution, locally driven and agreed with by the community.

Nash has now approved that plan saying he supports the efforts to develop a collaborative and effective management plan involving iwi, imi (Moriori), quota holders and the community. He has been consistently supportive.

This is a leap of faith for the Government. Only once before has an industry-initiated fishery plan been approved. That was under Jim Anderton in 2006, involving the rig fishery on the South Island’s West Coast and Tasman and Golden bays.

However, the paua industry, by necessity, has good form in voluntary management of the Chatham Island fishery and no doubt that was a contributing factor to the plan’s approval.

In the 32 years since PAU4 was introduced into the Quota Management System, the ministry has put no fine-scale management measures in place other than the closing to commercial fishing of 14 small areas in 1993.

The Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) for paua on the Chathams had not been adjusted since the 1980s.

Wanting to maintain a healthy fishery, the local paua industry voluntarily shelved 40 percent of the TACC, which was a reduction from 326 tonnes to 195 tonnes.

While a community-led fisheries plan is unusual, Paua Industry Council chief executive Jeremy Cooper said the Chathams was the perfect place to get one going.

“The whole community focus out here is totally different from anywhere else in New Zealand.”

– JEREMY COOPER

While you still have bad blood between iwi and imi – understandably given the history between them – they are actually easy groups to work with.

“If you go to the ministry, and it’s the Forum speaking, you’ve covered off every stakeholder. You have iwi, imi, tourism, council, DOC, and quota holders involved. Surely if you go to MPI and say the Forum agrees it must be just a rubber-stamping exercise, and that’s got to be a good thing for the community and MPI.”

Cooper cites the example of marine reserves, saying it is inevitable more will be proposed for the islands’ waters.

“Why not get in first? Why wouldn’t the Forum work out where the best places for marine reserves are and front foot the issue? Have it agreed, typed up, and put it on their desks?”

He is adamant that the most urgent action should focus on saving the paua fishery.

“Crayfish, scallops, oysters have all been fished to critically low numbers and they have all recovered. We now have to make sure that doesn’t happen to paua, but we are very close. If you talk to the old guys about the biomass that was here 20 years ago...”
you’ve got to be worried. With paua, once you get down to one paua every 1.6 square metre the eggs and sperm will struggle to meet up and once you get to that stage, it doesn’t matter what you do, your fishery will never recover.”

Cooper said they fought for 10 years to get authorities to cut the quota because they could see what was happening, but it fell on deaf ears.

“In the end we shelved the quota voluntarily, but at least it’s not getting caught.”

The local commercial paua harvesters also set their own size limits on paua catch.

“We monitor every fishing area. We know how much is being fished, we set size limit limitations on

Biggest changes for NZ ship standards!

Do you have problems with the rules? Have your say

After talking with surveyors, Maritime NZ is starting to review the rules for design, construction and equipment of New Zealand commercial ships (40 series).

We want to hear from you

If you have had problems with the current rules for the design, construction and equipment of ships in New Zealand, let us know.

We want to hear from everyone in the industry – owners and operators, boat builders, equipment manufacturers, importers, associations – by Friday, 27 March 2020.

Please email 40.Series@maritimenz.govt.nz

Send us any thoughts about any problems you have and changes you would like.

Or drop us a line with your phone number and we will call you to listen to what you have to say.

For more information visit our project webpage:
Russ, you’re going to be skipper of this boat one day. And your friends might want some work. But these ships are rocking, dangerous factories on the sea. Don’t be tired, right. Don’t be out of it! I know some of your friends like the stuff. BUT IF THEY ASK FOR A JOB, TELL THEM TO SORT THEMSELVES OUT, FIRST.

Mark Geytenbeek is a senior fisheries analyst for Fisheries New Zealand and has been deeply involved in the Forum and the various bodies that preceded it.

“In the Chathams, if you are a customary fisher, you are probably a recreational fisher and a commercial fisher and early forums were a good starting process, but they fell by the way and we reverted to talking to individual groups.

“We were not making headway on a variety of issues and when we were here for the Moana factory opening about three years ago, I talked to my boss at MPI and said I would like to have a go at starting a community-type forum.

“I talked to iwi and imi about it, but it started getting a bit of traction when iwi and imi were doing their land settlements and the Treaty Settlements Office sent Fran Wilde out here as lead negotiator. Everywhere she went she heard the same story – that they didn’t agree about the land, but they agreed about the fishing.” Wilde approached Geytenbeek and asked if MPI could come along to the treaty negotiation meetings as a unifier.

“It was clever of Fran and resulted in a collective customary fishing agreement. On the back of that, we approached iwi and imi again and asked if they would consider re-forming the Forum and they said no, but they would be interested in a wider forum.” Geytenbeek said the Forum, when it is fully functioning, will streamline the processes Fisheries New Zealand runs.

“So, say you have the issue of changing bag limits, which there is quite of lot of moving parts to it, and you go to the minister and say, ‘This is what we want to do, we have agreement’. It is going to go straight through. And they love that. It takes a lot of the consultation risk out of it.”

Gary Cameron, who is the manager of PauaMAC on the Chathams, was born in Nelson but lived on the island during school years and came back permanently when he married a Chatham Islander in the 1980s. He said the location of the Chathams made it crucially important that the islanders’ way of living and their view of customary, commercial and recreational take were taken into account when determining the future of the fishery.

“Fishing is more than 60 percent of the islands’ income. The benefit of that is pretty much everyone in the community understands the importance of fishing.

“If you talk to anyone on the island, they all know where they are going. Some might have a different way of paddling their waka there but, while we don’t always agree, the key to the Forum is we get in the room, discuss it and form a consensus to move forward positively,” Cameron said.
RUSS, YOU’RE GOING TO BE SKIPPER OF THIS BOAT ONE DAY. AND YOUR FRIENDS MIGHT WANT SOME WORK. BUT THESE SHIPS ARE ROCKING, DANGEROUS FACTORIES ON THE SEA.

DON’T BE OUT OF IT! I KNOW SOME OF YOUR FRIENDS LIKE THE STUFF. BUT IF THEY ASK FOR A JOB, TELL THEM TO SORT THEMSELVES OUT, FIRST.

DON’T BE TIRED, RIGHT.

For tips on safe fishing go to www.maritimenz.govt.nz/intoxicated

Safe crews fish more
Compliance demands sadden Whakatane longline specialist

Bill Moore

Steve Haddock has fished successfully for 40 years from his home town of Whakatane and hopes to keep going for a long time to come.

But the 58-year-old surface longlining specialist fears that increasingly demanding compliance regulations and costs are going to shorten his career.

An outspoken critic of the Primary Industries Ministry, Haddock has seen a string of other established longliners drop out of commercial fishing.

He thinks relentless pressure from NGOs such as Greenpeace, Forest and Bird and LegaSea is drowning the fishing industry in negativity, with politicians less interested in the facts than where the votes are.

Ironically, catches of southern bluefin tuna, the fish that the public hear most about, are the best in years. It is more important than ever for fishermen to join and support the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen, he maintains.

“Guys are getting out because compliance is killing us, right throughout the industry. “You’ve got to have a voice, and there’s no question, the Federation is a good place to start.”

Haddock went fishing from Whakatane in 1979 after local businessmen got together with American interests to run a pair of 14-metre...
(45-foot) sport fishing boats, mainly targeting yellowtail kingfish around White Island.

He did his charter fishing apprenticeship under American skipper Rick Pollock, who is still in the area and has just finished running charters. The boat did some commercial fishing during winter.

After that he had a stint as a bottom long-line fisherman with John and David Plews on Morning Star and then for former Federation president Peter Jones on Suniva, fishing hapuku, bluenose and ling between Gisborne and Port Ohope.

After several years as crew Haddock ran Suniva for several more years. Then came a short stint in Australia and six months on the Amaltal Explorer out of Nelson, when “I realised that trawling was not for me”, he said.

It was back to Whakatane where in 1992 he bought his own charter boat, Ocean Invader, working up after four years to the 18m (60ft) Zambucca, running charters through the ’90s.

Surface longlining was showing very good returns and in 2000 he converted Zambucca, initially dividing his work between charters and commercial longlining.

“In the end we decided to take on surface longlining full time, which we have been doing for 20 years now.”

He said his dream was always to own two boats by the time he turned 50 and he achieved it, buying an 18m West Coaster from Australia, Teepookana, and then a second, Bigeye, after selling Zambucca.

The Australian boats, purpose-built for surface longlining tuna and swordfish, each carry a skipper and two crew on trips lasting up to 10 days. Carrying up to a tonne of squid bait, they fish close to 100 miles offshore, shooting about 1000 hooks over 26 or 27 miles in summer, and 1200 hooks over 16 or 18 miles in June, July and August when southern bluefin are the target.

Their summer targets are swordfish, bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna, with albacore tuna also taken. All the swordfish goes to the US market, the tuna to Japan.

Summer catches have been disappointing in recent years and Haddock said this could be partly attributed to a combination of too much use of Fish Aggregation Devices by purse-seiners in the Pacific catching juvenile tuna, with Chinese and Spanish boats sitting on New Zealand’s 200-mile limit to catch swordfish.

Conversely, southern bluefin catches in winter have almost been too good, with copious numbers caught in Australia and New Zealand bringing down prices. This was not something any NGO was likely to publicise, he said.

Even so, many longliners had exited the industry, fed up with both the level of compliance requirements and the cost to implement them. Minister Nash seemed to emphasise aquaculture ahead of wild catch, he said, while he sometimes suspected that MPI’s hidden agenda was to get fishermen out of the industry, using compliance as a weapon.

“I feel Stuart Nash has forgotten about the true hard grit of the New Zealand fishermen at the coalface.

“There’s nothing good for the fishermen themselves … it’s just compliance, compliance and the cost of it.”

Haddock said that when highly migratory species (HMS) came into the quota system at the end of 2000, there were 136 active tuna longline vessels in New Zealand. Today there were 12 during the peak of the summer season, rising to 27 or 28 in the bluefin season.

“\textbf{The fact is the most endangered species in the quota management system for the past 10-15 years has been the fisherman.}”

- STEVE HADDOCK
“I’m in it because I’m very passionate about fishing and about my boats. However, I’m really not so sure now for how much longer. I’d like to be in until the day I die, but compliance is absolutely killing us. I now feel guilty until proven innocent all the time.”

He said setting up electronic reporting had cost $8,000-$10,000 for each boat and he understood that cameras would be around $20,000 for each.

“I’ve just got this feeling that MPI wants to whittle the fishermen down to next to nothing to satisfy the NGOs, and the emphasis is on aquaculture. What it’s about is politics.

“The fact is the most endangered species in the Quota Management System for the past 10-15 years has been the fisherman.”

Haddock said he got active in the Federation several years ago when he saw there was no point in getting worked up about the issues facing the industry on his own. The Federation had excellent leadership and “with the way things are” he recommended that all fishermen should become members.

“We’ve got so many issues constantly pounding away at us, if we don’t stand up and have a united voice, we’ll be extinct.”

He said fishing had done well for him, he hadn’t had to leave his home town of Whakatane, and he’d had some fantastic experiences.

“But it’s got to the stage now where it saddens me that I may have to give this all away because of regulations and compliance, way earlier than I anticipated.”

He’d like to keep his two vessels operating,

Haddock said, but he had to put his emotions aside and look at the business, with the possibility of soon reducing to one boat coming closer.

It had also been a business decision to follow other fishing companies and begin hiring Indonesian crews 18 months ago. Sadly, this had turned out to be “the best move we’ve made”.

Kiwi crew often brought too many problems aboard the boats, Haddock said – drugs, alcohol, unreliability. “It’s just got worse and worse since the advent of P.”

The Kiwis wanted to be millionaires in their first week, and weren’t prepared to put in the time or the hard work and sacrifice of previous generations.

“What we find with Indonesian crew is that they’re thankful for the jobs, they’re clean, they keep the boats immaculate, they work hard – they’re just a pleasure to have aboard.

“It’s a shame to see that young New Zealanders aren’t taking it up as a profession.”
Looking back, 2019 will not be well remembered as a year that delivered much positivity for the inshore sector. A consultation process in respect of “Your fisheries, Your say” provided an opportunity that had the potential to make some real meaningful change but was sidelined and never saw the light of day.

The Maui/Hector’s Dolphin Threat Management Plan was released bearing little resemblance to the work that had been done by the working group that discussed it over the past several years. The consultation document was a surprise to everyone and provided a series of options that simply threatened the business and livelihoods of inshore fishermen the length of the country.

Today these fishermen still live in a world of uncertainty and the information that we have at hand is that Fisheries New Zealand has not yet made any decisions in respect of the options provided. This is singularly the most challenging issue that came out of last year and I can only hope that FNZ has seriously considered the implications that the wrong decision will have.

The Government introduced cameras on to all vessels that fish within the range of the Maui dolphin in an attempt to deliver more transparency and rationalised its position by paying for both the cameras and installation.

The roll-out of electronic reporting continued and whilst concern remains about costs, the performance of some solutions and the implications in the event of breakdowns, the positive aspects associated with delivering real time information should not be undermined.

So, in reflection (and I have only touched on a few key concerns) 2019 should be a year that we try to forget. I fully acknowledge the decision pending in respect of the Maui and Hector’s dolphins but we can only really hope that FNZ sees the need for sensibility and come up with something that continues protecting dolphins whilst allowing you to continue fishing.

However, we also need to recognise that there were some positive things happening that sadly, were overshadowed by more concerning issues.

In the last quarter of last year the minister appointed an independent working group to look specifically at the implications of the deemed value regime. This dedicated group worked quickly and was able to make meaningful change to a number of constraining deemed values.

FNZ has a consultation process that is requesting feedback on what we think. The discussion in respect of this will continue but we must recognise both the minister and FNZ for taking on this challenge and working towards a desirable outcome. In addition to this FNZ is now seriously looking at approaching the matter of discards in the same way.

These are two of the management settings that industry has sought urgent clarification on for years in order that we can continue to operate both practically and without fear of cost imposition. These are two work-streams that FNZ must be congratulated on for finally wanting to address.

The Federation continues to remain abreast of these issues and will work with FINZ and other SREs to work for positive outcomes. That’s optimistic at times, but walking away, no matter how difficult the challenge, will never be an option.

Looking forward to catching up with you all in a more positive 2020.
FUNDING AVAILABLE

FOR SEAFOOD INDUSTRY RESEARCH PROJECTS

FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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Mobile +64 21 799 314
enquiries@seafoodinnovations.co.nz
www.seafoodinnovations.co.nz
The looming end for polystyrene

Anna Yallop

Virtually the day I started at Seafood Innovations Ltd I was (albeit politely) instructed by industry spokespeople to help solve the challenge the food industry has of finding effective polystyrene replacements. Essential requirements that the replacement had to have were:

• To be made from a more environmentally friendly material
• To have at least the same thermal properties as traditional polystyrene
• To be able to withstand impact, whilst still protecting the seafood product inside
• To have the potential to be stacked up to five high whilst carrying up to 20kg of product per box
• To be leak-proof
• To be comparably priced with polystyrene (but could be slightly more expensive if found to be a comparable product)
• To be at least industrially compostable
• To potentially be recyclable

For reasons including food safety, cost of transport and logistical requirements, traditional poly boxes are often not recycled. It seems to have generally been accepted that when it comes to chilled products, once a shipment of goods is received, what the receiver then does with the poly boxes is not the sender’s problem – there was no expectation that the boxes would be returned to the supplier, to be used again or disposed of.

This is where things have started to change. It is increasingly expected that suppliers of product are held accountable for what happens to their packaging even once the product is delivered.

As a result, more producers are looking for ways to ensure no-longer-wanted materials are reduced (in the first instance), recycled, reused, composted or returned to base to be dealt with by the supplier. This “end-of-life” responsibility for product packaging is fast becoming the reality for companies and while it’s not yet regulated in New Zealand, this is happening in some overseas markets.

This change in accountability is starting to make producers think differently about how...
ZealaFoam beads have been used by BPN to create a range of other products including bean bag fill, bee boxes, toys and safety helmets. The list of potential applications is only limited by what can be moulded, so if there are other opportunities the fishing sector can see to replace other commonly-used items with new E-PLA-based products, let me know: anna.yallop@seafoodinnovations.co.nz.

Anna Yallop is general manager of Seafood Innovations Ltd (SIL).
The Chatham Islands were abuzz with activity in December, as locals fished, hunted and foraged for ingredients in the lead-up to the community’s second Wild Food Challenge.

More than 150 festival-goers attended the Admiral Gardens gathering, with locally-sourced seafood starring in the spread.

They feasted on grilled crayfish, paua and kina crostini, whitebait fritters, lamb on a spit, truffle tastings and delicious Chathams blue cod.

Specialty fare included fat kina roe, hapuku slabs, soft-shell clams and edible seaweeds.

“Dumpling Queen” Vicky Ha was a crowd favourite, serving up her slow-cooked paua dumplings with coriander and squid ink pastry as part of a live cooking demonstration. Judge Rosemary Sloman showcased international flavours with her Moroccan fish tagine.

Meanwhile contestants were busy presenting their dishes and the stories behind them.

Francesca Bonventre received the grand prize for her “spaghetti ai ricci di mare”, kina spaghetti. Inspired by the cuisine of her Italian homeland, Bonventre accompanied her dish with a message in a bottle – a recipe of the sea, she said, with Chatham Islands kina reminding her of the smaller sea urchins that her family cooked up with pasta back home.

Shyne Day Preece also impressed the judges, taking out the junior grand prize for her weka and watercress pie with a homemade tomato relish.

Linda Caldana and Kerrie-Ann Smith were close contenders with their whitebait three ways and a platter of wild black rice, paua salad, raw cod and tuatua fritters.

Live music, super-sized portions and generous donations from sponsors made for a cracker of an atmosphere, said founder Bill Manson.

“We had a fantastic day of food, exchanging ideas and techniques, with spectators and contestants really embracing what the festival is all about,” Manson said.

“The most enjoyable aspect was the all-out, unfettered hospitality of the locals and the enthusiasm of the kids who really get stuck into the event.”

The next Chatham Island Local Wild Food Challenge will be held on December 12 this year.
Local children also took part in the event, foraging for ingredients in the lead up to the day.

House of Dumplings director Vicky Ha was there, serving up paua and squid ink dumplings.

Chef Huey Blues from Kiwi Kids Can Cook (left) and Local Wild Food Challenge founder Bill Manson.

Junior entrant Kerrie-Ann Smith’s whitebait three ways.

Bonventre’s winning dish “spaghetti ai ricci di mare”.

Francesca Bonventre (right) received the grand prize for her dish of kina spaghetti.
Chatham Island paua and squid ink dumplings

Makes 32 dumplings

**Dumpling skin dough**
3/4 cups of boiling hot water
2 cups of flour
10g of squid ink

**Chatham Island puha mix**
1 bunch of fresh coriander, finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
1 tbsp of neutral cold pressed vegetable oil

**Filling**
1 paua, minced with half of guts
1 knob of ginger, finely chopped
5 cloves of garlic, minced
2 tbsp of good quality fish sauce
2 tbsp of neutral cold pressed vegetable oil

To make the dumpling dough, mix hot water, flour and squid ink together with a wooden spoon. Wait until it cools slightly, then knead the dough until smooth (approx. 10 minutes). Form the dough into a ball, glad wrap it and set aside at room temperature or in the fridge for a minimum of 30 minutes. The dough can be refrigerated for up to one day.

While the dough is resting, make the filling. On low heat, add the vegetable oil and caramelize the onion, cooking it slowly for 10-15 minutes. When the onions are soft, transparent and golden, remove from the heat and set aside.

Mince the paua to your desired thickness. Place oil in a pan and sauté the ginger and garlic on medium heat until golden. Add the minced paua, fish sauce and white pepper to the pan, stirring and cooking slowly for a minimum of 30 minutes. Ensure the paua is tender and melt-in-your-mouth, then leave to cool at room temperature.

Combine the coriander, caramelised onion and slow-cooked paua, and set aside in the fridge.

To roll out the dumpling skins, cut the dough into four parts. Flatten each portion with your palm, dusting flour on both sides of the pastry. If using an Italian pasta machine, adjust the equipment to the second to last setting. If using a rolling pin, roll the pastry evenly until it is 3mm thick. Use a 10cm pastry cutter to cut out approximately 30-34 pastry rounds.

**Assembly**
Place one tablespoon of filling in the middle of the dumpling skin and fold the dumpling skin in half. Use your finger to tightly seal the edges. Brush a little tap water onto the edge of the dumpling skin if it is not sticking. Repeat until all dumpling skins are filled.

**Cooking**

- **Steaming method:** Lightly spray or brush any mild flavoured vegetable oil onto your steam tray. Carefully place the dumplings onto the tray, ensuring you leave enough spacing between each. Steam over boiling water for 7 minutes.
- **Panfrying method:** Add vegetable oil to a pan on medium heat. Place the steamed dumplings into the hot pan, panfrying all sides until crispy.

Serve with House of Dumplings “Mum’s sauce” and chili oil.

Recipe courtesy of House of Dumplings.
Negative fish stock narrative wrong, says Hilborn

The narrative that fish stocks are declining around the world and new management solutions are needed is “totally wrong”, leading fisheries scientist Ray Hilborn said in the wake of a major international study.

Hilborn, professor in the University of Washington School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, was the lead author of the study, published last month in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

“Fish stocks are not all declining around the world. They are increasing in many places, and we already know how to solve problems through effective fisheries management,” he said.

The research project builds on a decade of international collaboration to estimate the status of fish stocks or distinct fish populations, helping scientists to know where there is overfishing and where more fishing could be done.

Its database has grown from 20 percent of the world’s fish catch in 2009 to nearly 50 percent today. It includes about 880 fish stocks, with information paired to fisheries management activities in 30 countries. However there are still gaps in the data covering Indonesia, India and China, which represent 30 to 40 percent of the world catch.

New Zealand fisheries are consistently rated as among the world’s best managed, with 95 percent of fish landed coming from sustainable stocks. Fisheries New Zealand principal adviser fisheries science, Dr Pamela Mace, is one of the 23 international co-authors of the updated research.

Seaweed snacks catch on in US

The increasing demand for more nutritionally-balanced snacks coupled with the health benefits attributed to seafood and marine-based products mean seaweed and finfish are growing ingredients in the US snack category.

Seaweed has long been popular in Southeast Asia, with Americans introduced to the sea vegetable more recently – most notably as a way to wrap sushi. Now more and more seaweed products are finding greater interest from consumers, and increased placement in mainstream healthy food and grocery stores in North America, the online industry service SeafoodSource reported.

While healthy living advocates recognize and appreciate the nutritional value that seaweed represents, a tremendous amount of education still needed to take place among consumers and retailers with products in this category, gimMe Health Foods chief executive Steve Broad said.

“There are still a lot of people out there who see seaweed as an alien food. Getting moms to understand that this is an enjoyable treat for their kids and, even better, a nutritionally dense snack, is a huge challenge,” he said.

Seaweed snacks are now available in numerous configurations with a wide range of flavours that include spicy tempura, roasted sea salt, jalapeno, olive oil, toasted coconut, wasabi, sriracha, sesame, and almond.

With finfish, the popularity of beef jerky – the best-selling snack food in the US healthy living sector – coupled with an ever-increasing demand for nutritionally beneficial snacks, has driven the creation of new several fish jerky products. Younger outdoor adventurers, as well as individuals following keto and paleo diets, have a particular fondness for this new type of snack, SeafoodSource reported. With high levels of selenium and omega-3 fatty acids – nutrients said to promote brain development during pregnancy and early life – expectant mothers had become an important target market, it said.
Sealord’s profit jumps
Sealord Group reported a net profit after tax of NZD $32.2 million for its financial year ended September 30, 2019. The result is 32.6 percent higher than the 2018 result. Revenue increased 4.5 percent to $359.8 million.

Chief executive Steve Yung said the group enjoyed a stellar year on the back of strong pricing in both export and domestic markets, a favourable squid season and a record profit year for Petuna Aquaculture, its Tasmanian salmon joint venture.

Following a poor 2018, Petuna’s 2019 result was particularly pleasing, Yung said. “Focus on operational excellence at the hatchery, sea farms and factory promoted strong fish growth, low fish mortalities and provided high-quality product for the sales team.”

He said Sealord’s new vessel Tokatu proved its worth catching New Zealand deep-sea species. Fishing results showed continuous improvement as the crew became more familiar with the vessel and catching and processing each species as the year progressed.

Nga Tapuwae o Maui, the arrangement announced in March 2019 between Sealord and iwi allowing Sealord access to Annual Catch Entitlement (ACE) on a long-term basis, with greater returns to iwi, enables Sealord to work with a more consistent catch plan.

“Nga Tapuwae o Maui is founded on tikanga Maori, where Maori work collectively together for the benefit of all,” said Sealord Chairman Whaimutu Dewes.

“Our achievements are brought by the effort of many.”

Sanford sets up Southland grant scheme
Sanford has set up a “10 cents per salmon” grant scheme that could provide $100,000 a year to the Stewart Island and Bluff communities.

Funded by 10 cents from every Sanford salmon that it processes, the scheme began accepting applications from February 1, in under $10,000 and over $10,000 categories.

Chief operating officer Clement Chia said the fund was a way to help bring people together.

“Our aim is to promote fun, happiness, pride, care and safety. In short – the overall health and well-being of the area. We mean it when we say that our people and communities are important to us, and this is Sanford putting that philosophy into action.”

Anyone in the region with a sport, art, culture or health project in mind should think about applying, Chia said.

Sanford farms its salmon in Big Glory Bay at Stewart Island and processes it in Bluff, selling it around New Zealand and overseas.

It says demand has been growing dramatically as its reputation spreads.
62nd NZFCF Conference & Annual General Meeting

Thursday 28th and Friday 29th May 2020
Distinction Hotel, 6 Liverpool Street, Dunedin

Go to www.nzfishfed.co.nz/conference to register online
or call Mellissa Waiari on 04 802 1501

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**DOMINIC PREECE**  
Managing Director

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