

POULTRY

NEW ZEALAND

Election Issue

Valka pin boning machine a processing game-changer

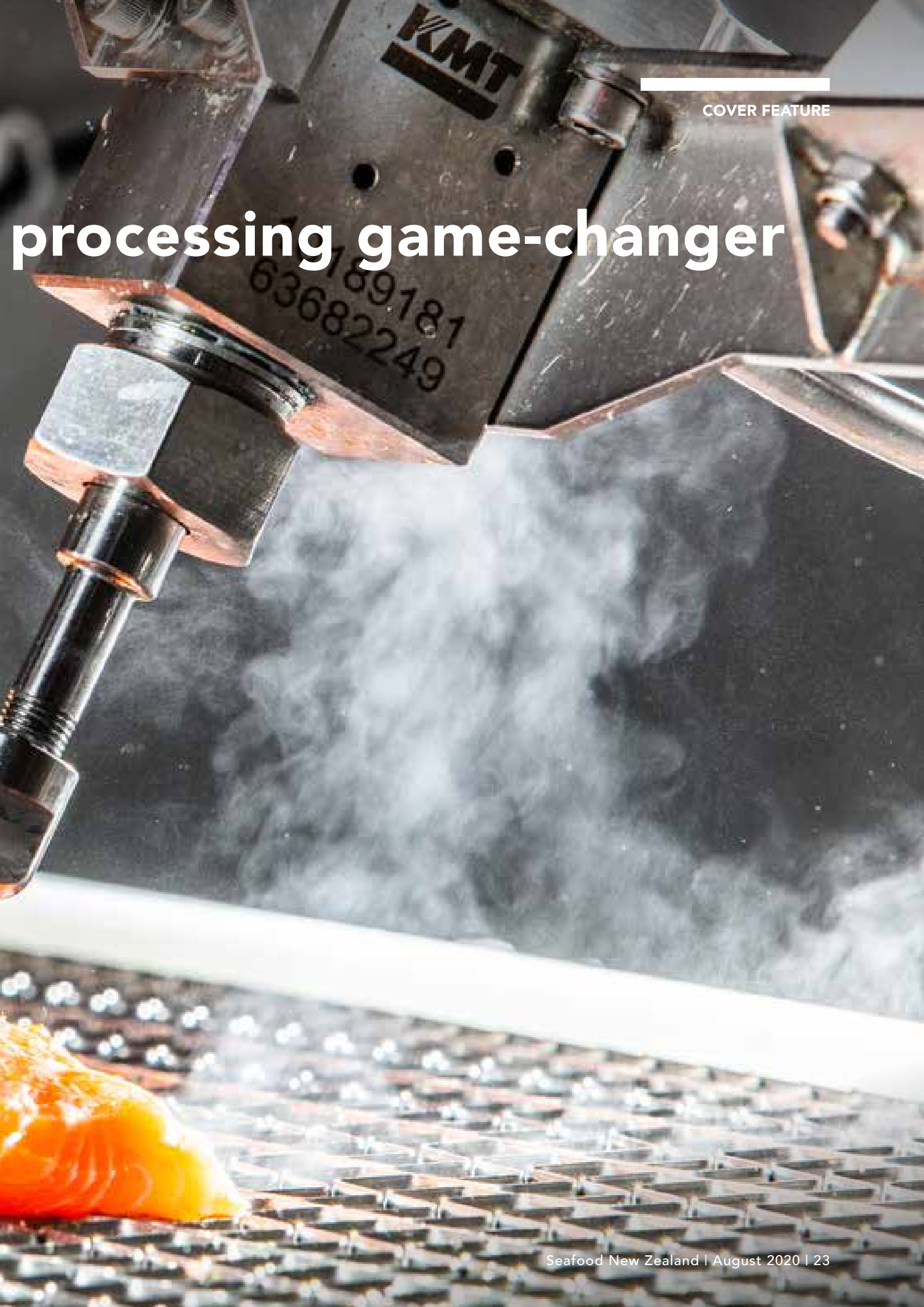


COVER FEATURE

Valka pin boning machine a

Innovative fish cutting technology from Iceland, newly installed at United Fisheries' Christchurch factory, has the potential to transform fish processing in this country. TIM PANKHURST reports.

processing game-changer



COVER FEATURE

The seafood industry has long talked about adding value.

United Fisheries, which developed markets for low value fish that few others wanted, is doing just that.

Company founder Kypros Kotzikas pioneered turning fish guts into valuable products and now his son Andre has taken a bold new step that could revolutionise fish processing in this country.

In concert with Christchurch company MacWay, United has imported Icelandic technology that automatically debones fillets and trims to any size.

It is in the shape of a Valka machine that is billed as the most advanced pin bone and portion cutter that is available for fillet processors.

Its multiple features include dual x-ray and camera giving a 3D image processing that detects bones down to a tiny 0.2mm.

It automatically removes the pin bones area – the line of bones that can extend from the gill plate down much of the length of the fish – and cuts portions to the desired size.

The cutters are not blades, rather high-pressure water jetted from robotic nozzles that can be tilted up to 30 degrees to account for curved bone structures.

The immediate major advantages are increased throughput yield and less labour. And minimum handling and a short time from filleting to packing make for improved quality.

United maintained its 180 staff at its land-based operation through the Covid-19 lockdown and Andre Kotzikas does not envisage laying off staff with the advent of the Valka processor, it is more a case of reassigning them.

“This is a new opportunity,” he says. “If I had a team of 15 doing gurnard, for example, five will be directed to filleting and you need 10 to bone it. With the advantage of the machine, those 15 people can spend their time filleting the fish. This is three times the output with the same number of staff plus a machine.

“It’s so effective. It’s more accurate, cleaner, less handling of fish.”

– Andrew McKenzie

“It’s a new direction. We have made a decision to direct fish that was previously sold whole, through the factory and provide new work for our staff. I would never have done that before because the overall cost of boning is just astronomical.”

Automation also overcomes staffing challenges, as the factory workforce is aging and it is increasingly difficult to find young people who can fillet a fish, or who even





Andrew McKenzie, an electro-mechanics automation expert, persuaded United Fisheries to invest in Valka's processing technology. The company haven't looked back.

want to.

Fillet cutters are made by two companies in Iceland – but Valka is the sole one specializing in seafood. While new to New Zealand, the technology has been in place in Iceland, a country regarded as being at the forefront of fisheries management and innovation, for more than a decade.

Andrew McKenzie, who trained in electro-mechanics automation, founded MacWay in 2011 and has installed processing systems machinery in a number of factories. He persuaded Andre several years ago to view this latest technology.

They finally made the trip to Iceland's capital Reykjavik last year.

“This is a game changer for us. It will also have application for the hoki fishery, more in cutting different sized fillets rather than boning.”

– Andre Kotzikas

They looked at alternative technology first before proceeding to a processing factory where the Valka cutter had been working all day and did a trial at the end of a shift in a production environment.

The Icelandic fishery is largely based on two species – haddock and pollock – whereas there are many different commercial species in this country, of varied sizes and textures.

Andre had sent across 300kg of fish fillets – a mixture of seven or eight species including red cod, gurnard, monkfish, tarakihi, blue cod and perch.

“Andre took over the trial and ran it his way,” McKenzie says.

“He put it through in batches and measured the yield. He knew exactly what he was doing, knew what he wanted.

“It was three o'clock and we had a restaurant booked for seven. Andre said ‘this bloody machine had better be good if we are to make that booking.’”

So it proved. There was no comparison with the earlier trial.

“It was apples with oranges.”

The order soon followed and the machine was shipped and installed at United in January. Two Valka staff took 10 days to set it up and train staff.

The company's Sockburn factory in Christchurch's southern outskirts is geared to inshore species, supplied by five vessels out of Lyttelton, three further south, two in Kaikoura and two in Akaroa.

These independently-owned vessels have a small amount of quota but most are supplied with Annual Catch Entitlement from United, provided they fish exclusively to the company. Sales are nationwide but the priority is given to the local market where fish are auctioned on site every morning going back nearly 40 years.

United also has substantial deepwater quota but chose to reposition its operations 10 years ago when charter operations were under increasing scrutiny.

“Our family expertise is not so much at sea but everything else that follows,” Andre says. “We made a decision to end charter operations with Ukrainian and Korean vessels and to focus and expand the inshore and develop marine farming.

“We sold deepwater quota – squid, mackerel, southern blue whiting, barracouta – the typical mix for charter vessels, but retained our more valuable species – orange roughy, dory, ling, hake, silver warehou.”

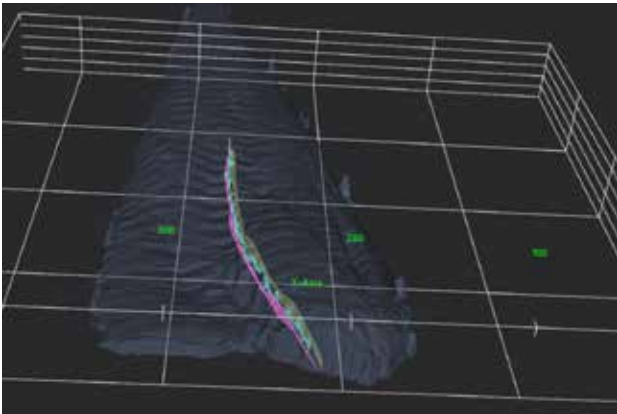
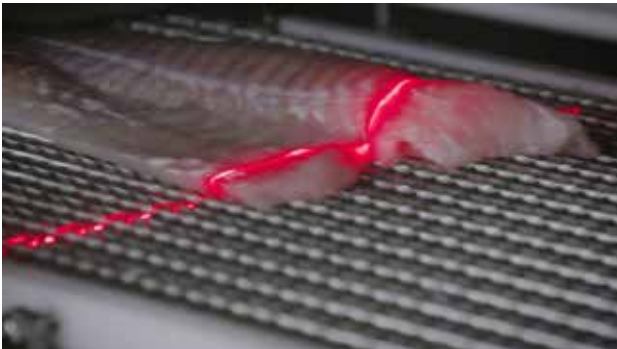
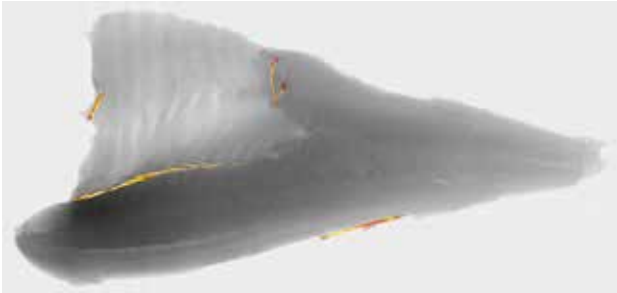
With no vessels of its own, the deepwater quota is leased largely to Okains Bay Seafood and Talley's, with the catch processed at the United factory.

“Our focus here has been on selling the fish in the form it's landed, whole fish and headed and gutted,” Andre says. “This is a game changer for us. It will also have



Ruta Akeimo places fillets on the Valka conveyor belt in the United factory.

COVER FEATURE



First image: An x-ray camera identifies the pin bones. The fillet is rejected if any bones remain.
Second image: A laser is used in combination with a second camera. It measures the volume of the fillet for precise portioning.
Third image: Valka's dual x-ray system identifies the pin bone as 3-dimensional shape for greater cutting accuracy and less waste.
Fourth image: A skin-on fillet that's been portioned using Valka technology. The pin-bones have been cut and automatically removed.

application for the hoki fishery, more in cutting different sized fillets rather than boning.”

There is no waste – 100 percent of the fillet can be recovered.

The section that has been cut out can be centrifuged and the flesh processed for fish bites or nuggets and the bones converted to fertilizer or calcium supplements.

The United factory, with its imposing Grecian columns as a flamboyant salute to the Kotzikas family's Greek Cypriot origins and to their success, is known for its all-encompassing approach.

Fish offal is directed into tanks to produce a liquid fertilizer, Bio Marinus, that patriarch Kypros claims that even Democritus, the Greek father of chemistry, would have been proud to create.

The company's 2000-tonne greenshell mussel production includes powdered health capsules for both humans and animals.

Calcium fish bone and shark cartilage capsules are also produced as dietary supplements.

The decision to purchase the Valka machine was reinforced by changes in distribution.

“Valka cutter has already proven to be as beneficial as we hoped and worked perfectly from day one.”

– Olafur Marteinsson

Door to door, internet, supermarket and retail sales are all on the rise. These customers have limited resources to fillet fish. Instead the demand is for the finished product. That trend was boosted during the Covid lockdown and Andre can only see that growing.

“We are still finding our feet with it,” he says. “There are a lot of possibilities. It definitely bones fish, anything with a short pin bone it does a wonderful job, as good as any human boner would do.”

MacWay's McKenzie believes the Valka fish cutter is a game changer.

“We are now boning fillets accurately and constantly in volumes we couldn't before,” he says. “One important thing is seeing the bones; another is to accurately remove them. This also opens up integrated automated packing. Most of these systems feed directly to a fresh packing line, or to individually quick frozen or chilled options directly, presenting fillets cut to order by value. It's a logical step forward.

“The typical challenge with hand trimming is you give someone a knife and they keep cutting. That's what they are there for. In one experiment, fillets were split into two streams, one requiring trimming, the other not. They are so used to cutting, they lean across to get a fillet from the other line. They just keep cutting yield away.

He sees a market for at least six such machines in this country.

"It's so effective. It's more accurate, cleaner, less handling of fish. Typically, New Zealand firms look at the dollars. What is payback? Will it pay for itself in three months? Six months?"

"This is at a different level. The attitudes are slowly changing towards technology."

McKenzie says the machine does have application to salmon processing.

The high value fish are currently pin boned by hand, each bone grasped in tweezers and wrenched out.

Valka have pin boned and cut Atlantic salmon and have also test cut chinook (king).

"It's a nice clean and simple V cut to pin bone with options also to portion," McKenzie says.

"The machine can do 40-50 sides a minute, against one side every three minutes or so by hand."

"Mind sets may need to change around the presentation but it would be cheaper, certainly worth thinking about."

There is a separate Seafood Innovations co-funded project under way with Mt Cook Alpine Salmon to find an automated pin bone removal solution.

The Valka machine has some high-level international endorsements.

"We use the machine to cut out pinbones from redfish fillets," Icelandic fishing and processing company HB Grandi's production manager Torfi Porsteinsson says.

"The fillets are small and up until this day the majority has been sold with bones as it has been too expensive

to manually cut out the pinbones. It requires too much manual labour per kilo and the chances are the yield is not good enough due to the small size."

Another Iceland fishing company, Rammi hf, is also a convert.

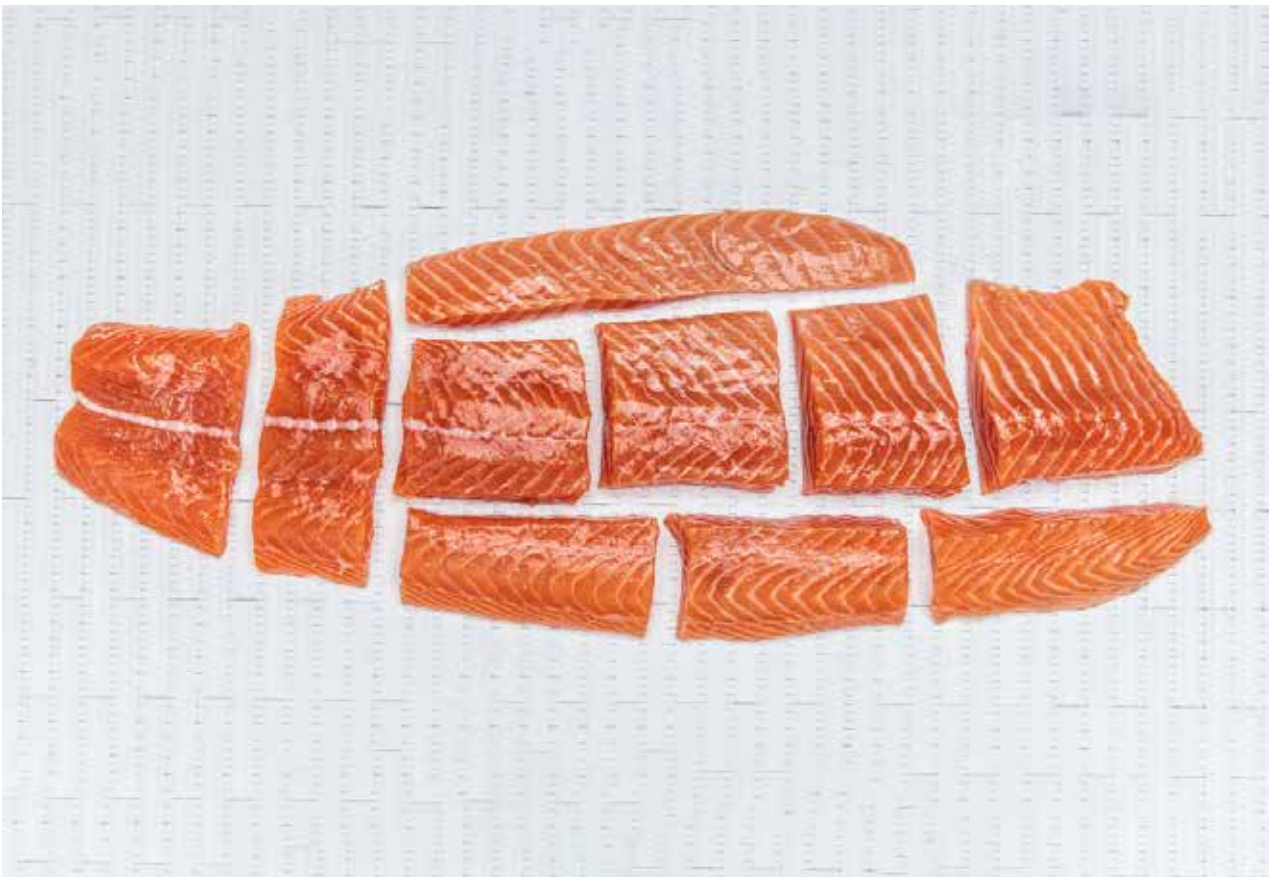
"Valka cutter has already proven to be as beneficial as we hoped and worked perfectly from day one," according to chief executive Olafur Marteinnsson. "We have been cutting the pinbones off and loin portion as well. The products are exceptional, the highest quality, and the market has responded very well."

Valka has also developed a marine version cutter for operation aboard vessels at sea. This version is more rugged with specially strengthened and extra legs for added support and rubber cushions to reduce high frequency vibrations commonly experienced in vessels. The x-ray detector has a specific housing and adjusted conveyor belts with stronger friction to fish. The control unit compartments and electrical cabinets are heated or cooled as required and dry air circulated to prevent condensation.

The sophisticated machine requires technical support and MacWay's Andreas Koehler, formerly a technician with Scott Technology, oversees its operation.

For those wanting to see it in action, United and MacWay are happy to oblige.

"I think this integrated technology will turn the industry on its ear," McKenzie says.



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EDITORIALS

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In this issue

ISSUE #263:

It's official – the seafood sector will help rescue the country's Covid-ravaged economy.

That is according to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern who said last month the primary sector, including fishing and aquaculture, could boost export returns by \$44 billion over the next 10 years.

That will not happen if open water marine farming is not encouraged, more marine reserves are imposed and set net and trawling bans are extended to placate the green lobby.

With a general election looming, little can be gleaned from the bland responses received from questions Seafood NZ put to the three governing coalition parties and the Opposition. Answers were sought on policy positions in relation to five questions regarding support for the seafood sector, the status of the Quota Management System and Treaty rights, wider oceans and environment policy and management of the recreational take.

The Greens appear to be the most unsupportive, hostile even, but at least they are upfront about their policy intentions.

But while policies may bow to the whims of politicians and winds of public opinion, Te Ohu Kaimoana's Dion Tuuta offers a timely reminder on Treaty obligations.

Our cover story features innovative processing technology imported from Iceland by United Fisheries that improves yield and cuts labour costs.

We profile veteran ship broker Godfrey Wilson and ever cheerful Taranaki rock lobster fisherman Allan "Smiley" Mackay.

Lesley Hamilton reviews an updated New Zealand Story and a renewed push to capitalise on this country's production and trading strengths, not least in seafood.

And Te Ohu's Tamar Wells writes about an arduous sea lion survey on remote Campbell Island, complete with stunning pictures.

Our best fish 'n' chips column celebrates the country's number one takeaway – this time we sample Wellington.

All this and more in the vibrant voice of the seafood sector.

Tim Pankhurst
Editor

From the chief executive

Dr Jeremy Helson



Getting locals to take up jobs at sea has been a longstanding headache for the seafood industry and because it is little understood by the public, we face perennial criticism when employing foreign labour.

Being at sea is not a job for everyone with challenges of

sea sickness, strict drug and alcohol policies and extended lengths of time living aboard a vessel. However, with high crew turnover we need hundreds of new people to enter the industry each year to replace those who leave.

Currently, the industry cannot get those people from a local pool, despite extensive efforts. The situation is dire for companies with borders closed due to Covid-19 and foreign crews unable to enter. The industry is working on this urgently because if boats tie up almost 500 land-based

staff will be out of work with no fish to process.

In the more medium term, work on transitioning from reliance on a foreign crew to a local labour force is front of mind for the industry.

Already positions at sea seem attractive; they are high paying, and with trip on, trip off crew are essentially only working six months of every year – but still we struggle to attract New Zealanders.

The industry is hoping the government will co-fund our transition plan which, as well as recruitment advertising, would fund multiple scholarships to the Westport Deep Sea Fishing School and commit significant funds for training that will advance at-sea crew into senior and higher-paid roles.

The Government has already said that it will be the primary industries of New Zealand that lead the way to economic recovery from the pandemic. The farmers, fishers and growers of New Zealand are being relied on for export-led growth.

Our \$4.2 billion industry does not need any more economic blows, so this plan, which directly addresses Covid-caused unemployment and avoids tying up vessels, is worth serious consideration.

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Ocean heroes: A lifeline for injured penguins



The Wildlife Hospital Trust manager Jordana Whyte was part of the team who continued feeding the yellow eyed penguins during lockdown

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on food supply has been well documented when it comes to humans, but it's also been affecting animals and wildlife.

In New Zealand, a wildlife hospital which treats native yellow-eyed penguins - among other animals - found itself perilously close to running out of fish to feed its patients.

"We were all sweating it," says Jordana Whyte, The Wildlife Hospital trust manager. "Our supply was running low and the place where we send our yellow-eyed penguins for rehab were down to their last box."

Step forward Sealord who provided the hospital and a sister-organisation with a tonne of MSC certified southern blue whiting, which in normal times would have been destined for the retail and food service sector.

Sealord, one of New Zealand's largest seafood companies, has had its own challenges with coronavirus:

"The Covid-19 pandemic is an unprecedented situation – and something Sealord has never faced, nor likely to face again in the immediate future," says chief operating officer Doug Paulin.

He's modest about the donation: "Sealord was happy to help."

The Dunedin-based Wildlife Hospital treats a variety of animals such as native birds, penguins, seals, and sea lions.

The hospital is like any other: "We have wards, a surgery and recovery rooms, pretty much what you'd expect in any human hospital but on a much smaller scale," Whyte says.

Its patients include some of New Zealand's most endangered species, such as black billed gulls, keas - the world's only alpine parrot - and kereru.

Their injuries can arise from natural causes such as

storm damage but dog bites and attacks from predators introduced by humans are also common. "We have introduced stouts, weasels, possums and ferrets - they'll take them out pretty easily," Whyte says.

Like a human hospital, its patients need feeding and the 40 yellow-eyed penguins in hospital or rehabilitation can get through a 25-kilogram box of whitefish per day.

The yellow-eyed penguin is known as hoiho to Maori, meaning "noisy shouter".

"They are generally pretty shy and elusive out in their native habitat and afraid of people," says Whyte. "We all have scars from these penguins, they're not friendly even if they get slightly more relaxed when they're in the hospital but they have different personalities and some of them are more charming than others."

The hospital works closely with Penguin Place, a rehabilitation facility for penguins in the area.

"They have a lot of yellow-eyed penguin habitat out there and they have been reinstating that habitat," Whyte says. "They run a tourist operation and have this incredible system of tunnels so people can actually walk through the reserve and view the yellow penguins without them seeing anyone.

"We help with advice and if a penguin comes into their care that needs veterinary care, it comes back to us. It's a nice exchange. If one of us is running out of fish, we'll give the other a call and say 'you got anything in the freezer?'"

But it was a near-empty freezer which resulted in the Sealord donation of 37 boxes of MSC certified southern blue whiting.

The Hospital Trust was trying to source white fish which had become more difficult because the supply



Sealord provided The Wildlife Hospital Trust one tonne of MSC-certified southern blue whiting when the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted supplies.

chain was not operating properly. "The truth is we weren't even asking for a donation we were just trying to locate the right kind of fish and Sealord actually just gave us the fish, which was incredible.

"The sentiment that I heard from the Sealord staff was, 'Oh, we're really happy to help the penguins, and it's just the right thing to do'."

– Jordana Whyte

The Hospital Trust was not the only beneficiary of Sealord's generosity. It also provided 600 cases of product to Auckland City Council for food parcels to people in need; 1,000 tuna snack-it packs for front line medical staff organised by the Starship Foundation and 8 tonnes of crumbed hoki at below cost to Maori communities in need.

Republished with permission from the Marine Stewardship Council's 'Ocean Heroes' series. Images courtesy of The Wildlife Hospital Trust.





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Penalties apply to both the master and vessel owner, including fines up to \$100,000 for fishing or anchoring, and up to \$250,000 for damaging a submarine cable. In addition the Court may order forfeiture of the vessel and Transpower may take legal action to recover repair costs, which could exceed \$30-\$40 million.

Don't take chances. Refer to the publication Cook Strait Submarine Cable Protection Zone. This is located on the Transpower website www.transpower.co.nz

Alternatively contact 0800 THE GRID or 0800 843 4743.

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Godfrey Wilson shipbroker



Godfrey Wilson has the Wellington-based cray boat *Steve Mayree* on his books.

Two and three decades ago, Godfrey Wilson consistently had 250 fishing vessels for sale. Now there are just 10 on the books of his company, Maritime International, TIM PANKHURST reports.

The veteran ship broker has been at the heart of enormous change in the inshore industry.

He has seen it develop from the Olympic fishery of the 1970s and early to mid-1980s when there were few catch constraints and too many boats chasing too few fish, to today's highly constrained, far more efficient and sustainable fishery.

In that time the country's fishing fleet has shrunk from around 3500 vessels at its peak in the early 1980s to just over 1000 registered today.

The fishery is undoubtedly in better shape but has lost many of its characters and there are significant structural challenges and formidable barriers to entry – the boats are old, returns are poor, crew are hard to find, quota is unavailable or unaffordable.

Wilson, who says he "facilitates the sale" rather than sells boats, has done so 400 times in the last 20 years.

He is the only advertiser to have featured in virtually every issue of this magazine and its predecessors since its inception 40 years ago.

Now he is downsizing. The boats and the buyers are no longer there.

"We have got an ancient fleet that costs a lot of money to maintain," he says.

"The oldest boat I've got listed for sale was built in 1934.

"It's in good condition – *Silver Foam* fishing out of Lyttelton. Owner wants \$95k and as a working fishing vessel it's worth that."

But there are few takers for such classically designed, kauri-hulled, totara-decked, well-built workhorses.

"All the boats are really old," Wilson says.

"Why would you sell a 30 to 40-year-old boat to buy another of similar age, unless it was substantially different?"

"People are not changing their boats and they cannot afford to buy new ones."

He says the quota owners have got to find ways to assist the modernization of the fleet.

In other countries the fishing industry would look for a government handout but that is not an option.

"We are not that sort of country anymore.

"If we started subsidising the fishing industry it would have other trade implications. We can't do it.

"The fundamental problem is that the quota is over-valued.

"The return for the boat has got to get better. In some cases, people are getting less return now than they did in the 1980s.

"And hanging over their heads are cameras. That's another cost."

He believes it will not be a case of running out of fish,

FEATURE

rather the people to catch them.

There is little incentive for young men to opt for a career in inshore fishing or go way out on a limb and buy a boat or quota if they can get it, when the returns are so low.

There are also the increasing pressures from the ever more strident anti-commercial fishing environmental and recreational lobbies.

Proposing banning commercial fishing within the three-mile limit, or even out to 12 miles, arguing the fish can be caught further out, shows no understanding of species distribution.

"I don't know how you convince those people," Wilson says. "It's dogma."

He believes the fishing sector has been doing a good job in getting people to appreciate it is protective of the sea and the environment – Adam Clow and his concern for seabirds is a good example – but there needs to be a continuing effort.

Wilson cut his teeth in the insurance business with NZI in the late 60s before starting in marine insurance with Lombard in Christchurch in 1970.

After a stint in Fiji he became Lombard's South Island manager before moving to Wellington and setting up as a marine insurance broker on his own account in 1983.

That led to close association with commercial fishermen through their federation during a turbulent time of political protest and drama in the lead-up to the introduction of the Quota Management System.

As well as insuring members' boats, helping out stuffing envelopes in the federation office and increasingly brokering sales and purchases in partnership with federation president Dick Hall, Wilson had a vital role at the annual conferences.

That was to escort the fishermen's wives on their daytime programmes centred around bus trips to local sights.

"Back then the wives were a lot more boisterous than they are today," Wilson says.

"They filled them up with wine on the bus, there was always plenty of bubbles.

"They were great party trips. We had heaps of fun, so many crazy things."



Silver Foam – a classic fishing boat for sale.



Godfrey Wilson's Maritime International has sold 400 fishing vessels in the past 20 years but now sales have slowed to a trickle.

The men were pretty boisterous too, not least federation general secretary Peter Stevens, who also edited *Professional Fishermen*, a forerunner to this magazine.

"We got on really well, but he could also be very difficult, very stubborn.

"He didn't tolerate fools and you either liked him or you hated him.

"He resigned from the federation about 200 times probably in what was a tumultuous time – definitely a fishing industry character."

Wilson's contribution to the industry was recognized with the awarding of the Electronic Navigation Shield at the 2008 federation conference.

He has been president of the Cook Strait Commercial Fishermen's Association since 2010.

The federation lost membership and influence when the rock lobster, paua and finfish sectors split off to pursue their own interests.

However, Wilson remains an advocate for the benefits of membership, among them access to a discount n3 trade card, a now privately-owned successor to the Government Stores Board.

He says the savings from discounts at scores of retail outlets, from building materials and plumbing to fuel and tyres, more than cover the annual federation subscription.

Despite the challenges, Wilson, a fit-looking, lean 74-year-old, is not about to drop anchor.

At the Seaview Marina in Wellington he admires the sleek lines of Steve Mayree, a well-known Cook Strait cray boat owned by Grant Robinson that formerly tied up opposite the popular Shed 5 and Dockside waterside restaurants and is now a regular in Island Bay.

Wilson has the vessel on his books for \$365k – an 18.5m Marko Sambrailo design with twin screws, each Scania D112 motor developing 650 horsepower, enough grunt to double as a work boat or tug, with a towing post fixed at the head of the roomy deck.

"I've got a long way to go yet," Wilson says, just like the sturdy vessels on his register.

2020 election issue

Seafood New Zealand put question to the coalition parties in government and the Opposition on their seafood sector policies going into the September 19 general election. Who deserves your vote?

Labour Party

1. Please state your policy relating to the seafood sector (wild caught and aquaculture)

Labour is focused on ensuring that New Zealand's fisheries are sustainable and abundant, and that ocean habitats are protected. Those are the principles we rely on in our fisheries policy. We're committed to working alongside the fishing industry to deliver economic growth and jobs in our regions and rural communities. And we're committed to continuing our efforts to strengthen 'Brand New Zealand' by being world-leaders in the production of sustainable, healthy, and highly valued seafood products.

2. What, if any policy, in other portfolios (conservation/environment/climate change/primary industries) relate to the seafood sector?

Labour believes there's a need to balance the cultural, social and economic benefits from fishing, while also ensuring that we maintain the integrity of our natural ecosystems and habitats. New Zealanders can expect to see Labour focus on sustainability, inclusivity and resilience in these portfolios.

3. Does your party accept the property and Treaty rights inherent in the Quota Management System and the Maori Fisheries Deed of Settlement?

Maori have rights and interests in all sectors of New Zealand's fisheries. These rights and interests highlight the shared nature of many inshore fisheries and the importance of upholding Treaty principles when making

management trade-offs between fishing sectors.

Labour will continue to work with Maori stakeholders to ensure that the full range of Maori rights and interests in fisheries and the marine environment are able to be exercised in an integrated manner, consistent with the obligations in the Maori Fisheries Settlement.

4. What economic policies do you have to support and grow the domestic and export seafood sector?

New Zealand kaimoana has an excellent reputation around the world, built on the hard work of generations of fishing operators. As a party, Labour is focused on working with the sector to create more demand, pursue greater market opportunities to generate higher export returns and growing fishing communities with new jobs. For example, in 2019, Labour's Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash delivered a plan for a world-leading aquaculture industry as part of our ambitious goal for it to become a \$3 billion industry by 2035.

5. The commercial seafood sector accepts and respects that it operates in a shared fishery that is highly regulated. What management, if any, do you propose for the recreational fishing sector?

Labour will continue to work alongside the recreational fishing sector to design and implement improved representation of their concerns and priorities at a regional and national level, with the aim of improving the fishing experience for all New Zealanders now and for generations to come.

Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand

1. Please state your policy relating to the seafood sector (wild caught and aquaculture)

Green Party marine policy supports abundant life in our oceans. We support integrated management of fisheries ecosystems to achieve abundance – moving away from a single-stock approach to recognise dependencies between species and supporting ongoing scientific research to ensure we have the expertise to help our marine environments thrive. Our fisheries are a public good, and we support their protection from unsustainable commercial exploitation at the expense of future generations in Aotearoa. We support environmentally sustainable aquaculture based on effective spatial planning in the marine environment and farming methods which do not require artificial feed and/or use of wild caught fish for feed. More use of marine permaculture to farm species can help promote abundance and assist with marine regeneration/restoration. The full Green Party Marine Environment policy can be found here: https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/beachheroes/pages/9626/attachments/original/1585532114/policy-2020_03_25_Marine_Environment_Policy_Ratified.pdf?1585532114

2. What, if any policy, in other portfolios (conservation/environment/climate change/primary industries) relate to the seafood sector?

Overfishing is a significant conservation and sustainability issue in the marine space. By-catch of protected species such as dolphins, New Zealand sea lion and seabirds remains a significant problem. We support cameras on boats to ensure better compliance and address the dumping issues in Aotearoa exposed over the past decade. In Government we pushed hard for increased restrictions on harmful fishing methods such as set netting in areas where Maui and Hector's dolphins are most vulnerable, and successfully rolled out a stronger Threat Management Plan to protect the dolphins for future generations. Our ban on new offshore oil and gas extraction was a significant step to stopping dangerous practices in our waters – we also support bans on seabed mining and seismic surveying for minerals in our oceans. Climate change presents significant challenges for the seafood sector (such as ocean acidification, higher water temperatures, and stock migrations). Green policy has a strong focus on mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Opportunities exist in the seafood space to promote more sustainable activities and increase the sector's potential to assist mitigation efforts.

3. Does your party accept the property and Treaty rights inherent in the Quota Management System and the Maori Fisheries Deed of Settlement?

Green Party policy is to ensure kaitiakitanga is given effect to and ensure Maori fisheries rights are upheld in the transition to a more sustainable fisheries management

system. We expect fisheries policy in Aotearoa/New Zealand to honour and uphold te Tiriti rights and comply with arrangements agreed between the Crown and Maori. We recognise that iwi and hapu have other rights in the marine and coastal area, including kaitiakitanga rights. We would support a process to develop a more integrated and ambitious approach to marine conservation and fisheries that honours kaitiakitanga so that marine resources can be managed sustainably and conserved for future generations, within a tikanga framework.

4. What economic policies do you have to support and grow the domestic and export seafood sector?

The Green Party supports a shift from volume to value in the economy of Aotearoa across all sectors – including seafood/fisheries, where sustainable management presents an economic opportunity. Our oceans are overfished, and marine habitats require restoration and protection. We need improved spatial planning in the marine space, more marine protected areas of various forms, including to protect customary fisheries; and we need catch limits which restore rather than further deplete fisheries and which implement ecosystem-based management. We need to use much more of what is caught and grown and add more value to it; following Iceland's example.

Sustainably sourced fisheries command premium prices and there is an opportunity for Aotearoa to lead the world in genuinely instituting sustainable seafood practices – through improved fisheries management, recognition of best practice stock management, sustainable aquaculture, and responsible fishing practices that eliminate by-catch. The Greens also wish to protect the continued viability of small commercial fishing methods and operations in Aotearoa, which employ people across the country in sustainable operations, and bring money into local communities.

5. The commercial seafood sector accepts and respects that it operates in a shared fishery that is highly regulated. What management, if any, do you propose for the recreational fishing sector?

The Green Party supports recreational fishing that is sustainable and responsible, recognising the intrinsic value to the people of Aotearoa that catching food provides. With an increasing population, the cumulative effects of recreational takes can contribute to overfishing in some areas. We believe unsustainable practice is a greater issue in commercial fisheries than recreational. In line with our views on commercial fishing, we support increasing resources for enforcement to deter illegal and unsustainable take by recreational fishers, prohibitions on recreational fishing methods that result in by-catch of threatened and non-target species (such as set nets). We also support measures to restrict recreational fishing in areas where fisheries need to recover.

National Party

1. Please state your policy relating to the seafood sector (wild caught and aquaculture)

National has a strong record of support for the fishing Industry and will continue to work to enable fishers and their families to make a living in a sustainable and profitable manner. National will support the Aquaculture Strategy in conjunction with the industry. National will ensure cameras and digital monitoring are installed in an acceptable manner.

2. What, if any policy, in other portfolios (conservation/environment/climate change/primary industries) relate to the seafood sector?

National will update the Marine Reserves Act, and work on a New Oceans Management Policy to ensure efficient processes to allocate marine space for aquaculture.

3. Does your party accept the property and Treaty rights inherent in the Quota Management System and the Maori Fisheries Deed of Settlement?

Yes.

4. What economic policies do you have to support and grow the domestic and export seafood sector?

National will work with industry to promote commercial fishing as an attractive long-term career and offer

support to the development of young industry leaders.

National will ensure that the country has universal policies related to the fishery. While we accept the need to conserve marine biodiversity, decisions about the control of fishing should be made under legislation that is fit for purpose.

5. The commercial seafood sector accepts and respects that it operates in a shared fishery that is highly regulated. What management, if any, do you propose for the recreational fishing sector?

National will look at introducing more funding to ascertain recreational fishing catch in New Zealand, including working on a universal introduction of a recreational fishing app. National will focus on recreational catch data collection.

National proposes forming a recreational fishing advisory group, consisting of key stakeholders to better deliver information and advice to the Crown, and believes fishers can take more responsibility for their own activities and the resources they use.

National has always had the sustainability of the recreational fishing sector firmly in our sights and will continue to work with good science and research to ensure it has a great future.

NZ First

1. Please state your policy relating to the seafood sector (wild caught and aquaculture)

NZ First regards the fisheries sector as an important part of our regional economy, and a key contributor to export earnings. We favour a smart regulatory approach which recognises the critical role our primary sector will play in post-Covid. The quota management system is at the core of a robust framework for the ongoing management of this valuable resource. Similarly, the Māori Fisheries Deed of Settlement, 1992 is of foundational significance. Consequently, we will not acquiesce with a Kermadec Marine Reserve until there has been a meeting of the minds including Te Ohu Kaimoana.

Fisheries management is based on a cost-recovery regime. It will be important in the post-Covid economic environment to examine whether this system requires independent oversight and scrutiny to ensure it is fit for purpose. The public have a deep interest in ensuring the industry pays its way and NZ First is keen to ensure efficiencies and competitiveness in this backbone industry.

NZ First has and will continue to back aquaculture, particularly production in off-shore areas, a new economic frontier. We will deliver a fast-track statutory process for aquaculture consents with modest costs. We will provide capital through an entity known as Aquacorp to stimulate investment. This entity will ensure the Crown plays a pivotal role in addressing concerns about whether society is receiving an appropriate return for the use of valuable off-shore water space. There is scope for co-partnership as NZ First has demonstrated in the fostering of regional development through the Provincial Growth Fund.

2. What, if any policy, in other portfolios (conservation/environment/climate change/primary industries) relate to the seafood sector?

NZ First will continue to support regional economic infrastructure through Provincial Growth Fund II. The investment in critical facilities such as Tarakohe Wharf, Sugarloaf Wharf, and the Opotiki Harbour, will be extended to other regions. In respect of fiscal measures, we support a policy of accelerated depreciation as a

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means of encouraging private sector investment in the fishing industry. We will work closely with the industry to establish a programme of fleet renewal which could be a mix of tax depreciation and other fiscal measures.

NZ First will support sectoral vocational training and trades, and our preference is training on the job incentives. An excessive reliance on imported labour has created vulnerabilities in our economy. The seafood sector will require a transition pathway from reliance on total import labour pools. A robust mix of remuneration and training will see more Kiwis undertaking deep sea fishing activity.

3. Does your party accept the property and Treaty rights inherent in the Quota Management System and the Maori Fisheries Deed of Settlement?

The QMS and the Deed of Settlement are two pillars underpinning the present statutory framework of fisheries management. To ignore this is to deny history. Thus, our education curriculum should be strengthened through a specific inclusion of fisheries history and practises.

4. What economic policies do you have to support and grow the domestic and export seafood sector?

Our party supports growth in the seafood sector. We do not support burdening the industry with unnecessary costs. We recognise that our fisheries

sector faces tariffs and quota restrictions in overseas markets. It is important that our trade advocacy efforts are focused e.g. hoki exports into the EU.

5. The commercial seafood sector accepts and respects that it operates in a shared fishery that is highly regulated. What management, if any, do you propose for the recreational fishing sector?

Recreational fisheries are growing in size and it is important that we make progress in achieving balance between the commercial and recreational sectors. Sustainability ought to be at the core of any exercise to achieve such balance. It should be noted that consumers rely on the commercial sector to provide seafood products, and our recreational stakeholders are also commercial players through the provision of tackle and vessels. NZ First will continue to fund key infrastructure facilities such as jetties and wharves in our regional locations e.g. investment in facilities at the mouth of the Whanganui River. Customary fisheries is important in the Maori community, however there needs to be more transparency. NZ First believes that all customary permits issued should be regularly published as a basis for improving decision-making processes and maintaining confidence in this permit system. To this end, support for more fisheries officers in isolated rural areas is important as the seafood resource is an integral part of the local way of life.



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Timely reminder on Maori fishing rights

Dion Tuuta



In the lead up to the 2020 election I was asked to write an opinion piece on the history of the Maori fisheries settlement as a bit of a reminder to people (mainly politically minded readers) that our world leading fisheries system has Maori Treaty rights built into its fundamental DNA. So, there you go - job done.

Now that's over, I thought I'd give a bit of a perspective on the Maori experience of rights in Aotearoa as modern New Zealand grapples with increasing tension between fisheries rights and environmental conservation concerns – mainly to the detriment of fisheries right holders.

To begin with - a pop quiz. How many people does it take to steal something and get away with it in Aotearoa? The answer is 61. Sixty one people who are sensitive to public sentiment and work in a place called Parliament. We're going to hear a lot from them over the next couple of months.

If you can get the right 61 people on your side in this country, then you can pretty much do anything – like dispossess people of their rights. You just need to know the right 61 people and how to get them to agree with you. (Just quietly - in reality, it's less than 61 because the majority of those 61 people do what their party leaders



Te Ohu Kaimoana chief executive, Dion Tuuta.

New Zealand's no fail recipe for taking other people's rights can be described as follows.

- STEP 1.** Identify something that you want and draw some lines around it.
- STEP 2.** Demonise the current owner and undermine their credibility among the masses – use mass media to paint them in a negative light.
- STEP 3.** Concurrently inflate your own agenda in positive terms among the masses – ensure you are seen as the good guy.
- STEP 4.** Grow public support for your cause – if you're lucky some right thinking political operator will take up your cause as their own. If you are really lucky – the actual right holder may voluntarily concede part of their rights in the vain hope that it will satisfy you. Don't fall for this – continue on to step 5.
- STEP 5.** Get your increased political influence to pass a law or regulation giving effect to your wishes - even if this means overriding a law that might confirm someone else's rights. If any legal irregularities are noted during this process get the Government to pass a law validating these irregularities.
- STEP 6.** Rinse and repeat the next time you spot something else you want.

tell them to do and go along for the ride).

Most of the time people agree that rights are real – usually their own. But sometimes people are prepared to ignore rights as if they don't exist – usually when they are someone else's and when they get in the way of them getting something they want.

Historically this process was aimed at Maori to justify taking little things like the land, natural resources and even the language our culture was based on. New Zealand has just spent the last 30 years trying to atone for this through something called the Treaty settlement process.

And yet when it comes to fisheries rights at least - it seems that successive New Zealand Governments have failed learn the lesson of what this process was about – the respect of rights which underpin and support a unique way of life.

The 'rights removal machine' is kicking into gear as we get closer to the election with increasing media hatchet jobs on the fishing industry. It's all heading in the same direction – only this time – it's not just Maori who are affected.

“It's not about money. It's about our identity. But opponents of fishing never believe me when I say this.”

– Dion Tuuta

Maori have always known that the greatest threat to Maori rights, is the Government's sensitivity to public opinion. It seems that some of our fellow New Zealanders in the fisheries fraternity are beginning to understand this reality for themselves as they experience the erosion of their fisheries rights.

Te Ohu Kaimoana has been at the forefront of Maori fisheries rights protection in recent times. It's a tough gig which is getting harder by the day. The purpose of the Maori fisheries settlement was to sustain Maori identity because fisheries represents our ongoing living relationship with Tangaroa. This is why it is so important to us.

It's not about money. It's about our identity. But opponents of fishing never believe me when I say this.

Maori fisheries rights rest on paper thin agreements called the Treaty of Waitangi and the 1992 Fisheries Treaty Settlement which we hold sacrosanct. They are not things to be casually dismissed by 61 politicians out for popularist votes.
Mauriora

Dion Tuuta is chief executive of Te Ohu Kaimoana; a charitable trust advancing the interests of Maori in fishing and fisheries-related activities and returning valuable fisheries assets and funds from the Settlement to iwi organisations.

New Zealand - a beacon of safe seafood production in a post-Covid world



Talking to Rebecca Smith it is difficult not to share her excitement about the opportunities for primary sector growth in a post-Covid world. LESLEY HAMILTON reports.

Smith heads up New Zealand Story, which helps the country's businesses and sectors market themselves globally.

New Zealand Story has just conducted global research on how people are feeling as they move through the global pandemic and Smith says the positivity is surprising.

"The pandemic has really dialled up peoples' perceptions of New Zealand as an innovative and quite creative country," Smith says. "People have always seen New Zealand as a beautiful place, quite isolated and remote but this whole pandemic has shone a light on New Zealand in a different way.

"They are looking for safety, security, people they can trust, places they can trust. So, actually, for the primary sector it has, and will continue to be, a tremendous growth opportunity.

Gillon Carruthers, Ministry for Primary Industries' deputy director-general, has been heavily involved in this project and says the primary industries were seen to really step up during Covid-19 lockdown.

"The crisis brought the sector together to find



NZ Story director, Rebecca Smith.

innovative and effective ways to keep operating safely as essential services to keep the country fed," he says.

"We now have an opportunity to build on that energy and goodwill, with the sector playing a leading role in the country's recovery."

New Zealand

Story has been working with tourism, NZTE, Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and education to present to the world a brand campaign which Smith describes as a unified front to remind the world about New Zealand.

"Now is the time that people are doing things differently. They are creating their new normal, so it is the perfect opportunity to include New Zealand seafood. Our food is authentic, real, and come from a place you can trust. So now is an opportunity."

Smith also runs a primary sector business and knows first-hand the significant financial hit the pandemic has created. She says companies may be reluctant to spend on marketing in such tough times but that is a mistake.

"Look at your travel budget and the time you would have spent traveling. Consider converting that into marketing. Really refresh your story. Get your pitch right. Test it out on loads of people. Now is not the time to spend less money on your brand. Now is the time to spend that additional money that you have put aside for travel."

She says the last couple of months have been refreshing as a marketer because she has seen a new interest, a new falling in love with food domestically.

"And that is something that we have lacked and there is now an opportunity to continue that. It is good to see that refreshed desire and that renewed enthusiasm around cooking at home and I believe the domestic experience will influence the international one."

Smith says it is also time to pay more attention to overseas markets.

"We are good at concentrating on one or two markets, but we should not forget about the others. We did some research in Germany last year and the German buyers of our food said look, you kind of come and go and we are not sure you are dedicated to this market. As soon as another market opens up with better prices, we can't get hold of you. Really work the relationships that will get you through the hard times."

Covid-19 has also opened up opportunities to be innovative in the digital sector because distance doesn't matter.

"I was talking to someone the other day who said how do we get consumers on the west coast of California to taste our wine when we can't do tastings in store?"

"Well, we can develop tasting boxes. We can develop

our own virtual wine tasting programmes. So, there are some real innovative opportunities and I think of all the countries that could do it New Zealand could really be the country that could. We have incredible digital talents here; we are one of the most creative countries in the world. So, I would say, reach out to people beyond your normal network, start gathering some of those ideas and start to test and trial. We have tremendous connectivity with our major markets. Talk about how you could do some things differently. Talk to your teenage kids about ideas that are quite fresh from new ideas and new angles.

"And again, I come back to this whole travel budget. You could probably test something for the price of a return ticket to that market."

Smith says companies need to rethink who they are competing with and often that will not be other New Zealand companies. She says collaboration is the answer.

"Now, I know that sounds easy and I know there are lots of personalities and lots of egos and baggage in every single industry but if not now, then when? So, we might compete here, but we have the same supply chain, the same distributor, we both want to trial this product with an online network so why don't we do this together?"

Smith says across the globe, New Zealand gives the impression we are very good at collaborating and partnering.

"But we are not that good. If that is the opportunity, we should take it and figure out how to do that better. The risk is to miss the opportunity."

Smith has strong advice about using tired clichés in marketing campaigns.

"We really need to differentiate our story. Because if we talk about cold water – there is plenty of that in the Atlantic. We talk about deep oceans – there is plenty of that around. We talk about fish varieties – other countries have many varieties as well. Nobody knows



FEATURE

the type of products we have. They are not familiar with them. We need to go beyond the obvious and beyond the clichés.

“Yes, we have beautiful ocean and a beautiful longline caught fish, but we need to talk about who we are as a people, what our values are, this is what you can do with it. We really need to dial up the less obvious components of our story because we are competing with other countries that, in the minds of global consumers, have similar products to ours.”

Smith is sure the key to differentiating ourselves is our people.

“If this pandemic has done anything it has shone a light on who we are as a people. We get feedback across all this research we do saying that there is something unique about New Zealanders. ‘You do things a little bit differently to everyone else, but you seem to know how to balance growth and productivity with caring for people, place and planet’ – and that’s so important right now. So, emphasise the people in your organisation, highlight the people who are looking after the product. Make sure the consumers can see who is looking after your brand because that’s what they are seeking.”

Smith acknowledges that the primary sector, and fishing in particular have taken a fair few knocks over the past few years.

“It has shaken our confidence a wee bit. We are a bit scared about putting our heads above the parapet in case someone points out there is something we are doing wrong. In New Zealand we are absolutely our biggest critics, but I can tell you that internationally that is not the case.

“We must go out into those international markets and have confidence that we are doing the right thing – not 100 percent in some cases, not quite perfect – but that’s not what people are looking for. Consumers know people aren’t perfect but what they are looking for is what your intent is and your value set underneath that. That’s what we need to dial up.”

Smith’s view is that a lot of the criticism about primary industries comes from the urban consumer who has been less connected with the farm and the fisherman and the grower, but the pandemic is seeing attitudes change.

“That doesn’t mean there is not going to be criticism and that doesn’t mean there is not going to be a high



Deputy director-general Ministry for Primary Industries, Gillon Carruthers.

bar but like I say, you have to continue with confidence. I know it’s tough domestically but internationally I can tell you they are just waiting for our products and they think we are doing brilliantly.

“There are people in LA who say you guys know how to



balance the needs of nature and people with progress and innovation. That is a balance we are constantly anxious about ourselves, quite restless and critical about our ability to balance those things but the rest of the world sees that we are trying. A lot of the world does not try.”

Tens of millions of dollars has been put into a whole-of-government advertising campaign that will remind people about New Zealand and get people feeling positive about it. This includes a specific food and beverage campaign in conjunction with MPI, NZTE and Tourism because of the overlap of people who are interested in travelling to New Zealand but can’t at the moment and those interested in buying products from New Zealand.

This is the first time multiple agencies have come together to promote New Zealand as one.

“Some people have said why did it take so long – well, you should never waste a good crisis,” Smith says.

The primary industries were seen to really step up during Covid-19 lockdown.

The crisis brought the sector together to find innovative and effective ways to keep operating safely as essential services to keep the country fed.

The seafood industry now has an opportunity to build on that energy and good will, with the sector playing a leading role in the country’s recovery.

For example, we’ve had the launch of the Fit for a Better World – Accelerating our Economic Potential roadmap, a document which states primary industry could return \$10 billion in additional export revenue each year from 2030, on top of other growth that takes place, with the cumulative total of additional export revenue over the next decade reaching \$44 billion.

Smith says there’s never been a better time to tell New Zealand’s story.

“With the support of a global brand campaign, the sector can tell our fantastic stories to the world. People around the globe may not be physically able to come to New Zealand right now – but they can still experience our way of life by tasting the amazing produce we have to offer. This will be a vital component of the campaign and is something that we can all get behind.”

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New Zealand sea lion field expedition: Campbell Island

Tamar Wells



Looking back on Perseverance Harbour on the way to North-West Bay – a seven-hour round trip from Beeman's Base.

On 16 December 2019, I departed Wellington, carrying two large suitcases packed with thermal clothing, waterproof gear, gumboots and warm jackets. This was not going to be a regular summer in Aotearoa. Instead, I would spend seven weeks on Campbell Island (Motu Ihupuku) 663km below Bluff (Murihuku) in New Zealand's sub-Antarctic waters. The purpose of this Department of Conservation (DOC) excursion was to monitor the New Zealand sea lion population and contribute to the sea lion Threat Management Plan (TMP).

These sea lions are only found in Aotearoa waters and have an estimated population size of 12,000 individuals, making them one of the rarest pinnipeds in the world. Harvesting of sea lions and fur seals throughout Aotearoa's history once restricted the population to the sub-Antarctic Islands but in recent times breeding populations have returned to the mainland and Rakiura.

The TMP guides a suite of work streams to address factors that currently pose a threat to sea lions, this includes incidental capture of in fisheries. As such, quota owners are levied for conservation research; this is mostly relevant to the squid trawl fishery around the Auckland Islands. Other threats to sea lions include disease, prey availability, and human behaviour. The different sub-populations incur differing levels of each threat. Sea lions living on the mainland have very different threats to those on Campbell Island where for instance human contact

is very limited and strictly controlled but weather is far more intense. The TMP approaches protected species management holistically so that a variety of resources are used to address multiple threats across the different sub-populations. While the latest analysis suggests the population of sea lions is stable/increasing; research continues to monitor their progress towards recovery.

Research on animals who spend most of their time at sea can be problematic. For sea lions, the best time to count them is when they are on land for the breeding season. As a result, six field technicians left Bluff on 23 December heading south. All of us had different backgrounds and brought certain expertise to conduct the work required on the island. We travelled on what was a 23m former koura potting boat through Foveaux Strait to Campbell Island, with a night anchored at both each of Rakiura and Auckland Islands on the way. Although we sailed in favourable conditions, I am extremely grateful that I do not incur symptoms of sea sickness. I thoroughly enjoyed the boat ride, tucking into the lovingly prepared roast lamb on Christmas Day and chatting with the very hospitable crew. Others, however, did not enjoy our transit as much. I wholeheartedly sympathise with those who endured four days of nausea and no Christmas lunch.

We woke up early on 26 December anchored in Perseverance Harbour, Campbell Island; the place we would call home for the next six weeks. Clambering up

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Setting up Shoal Point camp amongst the *dracophyllum*. This was home for four weeks.

to the deck, the cold 4°C wind whipped off the sea while Southern royal albatross used these air currents to glide just above the water's surface in their seemingly effortless way. These incredible birds, with their three-metre wingspan would become a constant part of our life on Campbell Island.

There were a lot of supplies to cater to our stay, so it took the entire day to unpack everything from the boat to the three different sites on the island. We even carried in all our drinking water due to the freshwater on the island being too acidic. Our two teams of three split up, said goodbye to the boat and stared at each other blankly with the realisation of the extended isolation we had before us.

Bush craft skills and ingenuity are a necessity if you want to camp on Campbell Island. Setting up our camps involved a variety of knot tying, tarp securing and general knowledge of living outdoors. Due to the high rainfall and the prevalence of peat mud, it was important to find a naturally draining site to set up camp and stations to collect rainwater for washing clothes and dishes. The aim was to make camp as comfortable and easy to navigate



Unloading the Awesome at Auckland Island for the team studying Gibson's albatross. Photo; Dahlia Foo.

as possible. Fortunately, our team was well adept at this undertaking and we soon co-developed our home away from home.

We were surprisingly fortunate with the weather during our stay. We only had two days where the conditions prohibited us from working on the sea lion colony and we even had a couple of sunny days that reached 10°C! Aside from these extremes, it was mostly 4-6°C with 35 knot winds and showers of icy sleet. But always, it was highly variable, and one could experience four seasons in a matter of hours – we always carried spare jackets. One of the strangest parts about life on the island was the almost endlessness of the days due to the high latitude (52-53° South). The sun rose at 4am and I would do my daily writing in my tent at 11pm without the aid of a torch. In fact, although I brought plenty of spare batteries, I didn't go through a single set in the entire trip.

Working with the sea lions is an experience vastly removed from my usual policy role in Wellington. Each day you pile on layers of waterproof clothing and safety gear, check the tides, and walk along the beach to 'the



A male sea lion lazes about in the tussocks and ferns at North West Bay hut.

office'. Sea lions would be porpoising out in the harbour as they fed or chased each other. These were mostly made up of the sub-adult males who were not in the breeding colonies. We would then spend hours each day amongst the largest, most boisterous and smelliest animal species that New Zealand has to offer. We grew accustomed to each other and eventually learned to understand their individual personalities. We approached the colony with an attitude of least disturbance, the island was the sea lions' home and we were just visiting. So, we were polite guests. We would move from vantage point to vantage point counting the individual pups, females and adult males in the colony. Once the pups were old enough, we would tag, measure and weigh as many as we could access and that looked healthy and resilient. There was a marked change in the habitat as the season moved on. As these large creatures move around the colony, mud slides are formed and the tussocked point was rendered mostly mud by the end of the season.

I was perpetually in awe of the birdlife on this remote part of the world. The Campbell Island shag, skua, giant petrel, Southern royal and light mantled sooty albatross were an everyday occurrence around the coast; none of which seemed to give the slightest care that we existed - except perhaps the skua who may be inclined to swoop and try collect a brightly coloured hat from your head.

A distinct character of sub-Antarctic Aotearoa is the snipe. A small bird which resembles a shorter, stockier oystercatcher but with the plumage of a weka; which I first met when on Tini Heke /The Snares in 2014. These delightful creatures scurry about the ground and only fly if they are really determined. Their long beak is terrific at probing mud for worms. Unfortunately, they have the defence tactic of staying still when frightened so the pest free sub-Antarctic islands are a last refuge for these curious birds.

For me, the sub-Antarctic islands have always been an area of great intrigue and a large factor in driving my interest in island ecology. These islands are isolated, harsh and unrelenting; yet the species that are found here are generally bold and social. This dichotomy is particularly vivid in the meadows of astonishing flowers. Amongst the cold-stunted, wind-swept scrub and the slopes of tussocks, there are basins of groups of plants referred to as 'mega-herbs'. Set across the grey landscape contrasting masses of vivid purple and golden yellow flowers clumped together in meadows that impart no resemblance of the flora on mainland Aotearoa.

When I was asked what my favourite part of my southern adventure was – I have to answer, "Motu Ihupuku". It was the island itself that made the journey. The ever-present weather kept you on your toes and the scenery was almost too much for your senses. This gave the constant feeling that you were privileged to be there. It was a humbling experience, full of learnings and challenges. The island taught me so much about myself and the environment, and through this, I will always have a part of that incredible place with me.

Images courtesy of Tamar Wells and Dahlia Foo.



Top: A southern royal albatross on its nest made of peat and foliage.

Middle: A sea lion pup waits in the bush for its mother to come back from feeding at sea.

Bottom: Australasian pipits have benefited from the removal of rats from Motu Ihupuku.

Out West: Tribute to a true outsider

Gerard Hindmarsh



Swamped as we are by Covid-19 news and death stories, it's easy to miss the odd country milestone. Like the news I got recently of the passing of one of our true outsider characters, Owen (Westy) West of Fiordland. Westy's Hut will be his memorial, one of the more unusual shelters ever to be erected in the whole of Fiordland National Park.

It sits tucked in a large uplifted sea cave, just 15-metres in from the high tide mark roughly halfway along Prices Harbour on the exposed South Coast. It was the home of Westy for some eight years, from 1989 to 1997. Actually, two separate buildings – the 'Main Hut' containing a single bed, table, sink bench, gas cooker and coal range, while the second dubbed 'the

Bunkroom' contains a sofa and two bunks. Although sheltered from direct rainfall by the multiple entrance cave, it is subject to wind driven salt spray.

Westy was a fisherman when he literally jumped ship somewhere off Preservation in mid-1986. Westy had been working skippering an Australian-owned fishing boat which under joint venture regulations had to carry a mandatory Kiwi skipper. On his last trip out, off Puysegur Point, he got into a raging argument with the seven Aussie crew that only got worse and worse as they sailed on. Westy threatened to quit, knowing that action would immediately cancel the boat's license. Eventually he just told them all to "get stuffed" and jumped overboard in just the clothes he was wearing. A strong swimmer, he



Built in a sea-cave at Price's Harbour, Westy's hut still exists today and is used by avid Fiordland hikers.

negotiated the heavy swells for 300m or so before hitting the breakers and body surfing into shore the best he could.

After recovering from exhaustion and drying out on the beach Westy made his way along the South Coast to shelter in a sea cave he had heard about at Prices Harbour. The rudimentary structure built into a multi-exit sea cave was started by Southland fisherman 'Slack' Dawson, who used to shelter here when he wasn't hand-hauling cray pots into his boat along this section of coast. Some of the parts he used were significant, like the main door, salvaged off the fishing boat Rebel, which got wrecked along the coast here in 1986.

Westy so loved the hut and location that he ended up moving in soon after. Using flotsam and jetsam delivered by the sea, plus the odd drop-off from passing fishing boats and helicopters, all his mates, Westy began finishing this uniquely dry hut under the big overhang, later adding the bunkroom so he didn't have to share his space with passing trampers.

Fact is, he welcomed them, his hut just off the route from Waitutu Hut to Big River. Westy even kept a hut book for them to sign, its cover emblazoned with his ball-pen etching of a dope leaf. The pen to sign it with was marked "Invercargill Police". You see, if some people have daily tipples, Westy was a 'hooch' smoke a day man. He hardly touched the piss, just didn't agree with him.

You can see why lots of stories started going around conservative Southland about the ship-jumping fisherman supposedly growing huge crops of dope. The rumours grew and grew until the Police couldn't ignore him any longer, and in Nov 1991, they conducted a surprise raid, using two Airforce Iroquois helicopters to land some fifteen police officers plus two detectives on the beach directly in front of the hut.

Westy knew exactly what they'd come for and was out there to meet them.

"G'day, Owen West is my name, so you wanna see my dope plants then?"

The faces of the new arrivals lit up, only to look

crestfallen when he led them around the back of the overhanging to see three mangy marijuana plants, two of which had been seriously munched off by deer the previous night.

Despite an exhaustive search of the area they found no evidence of any further cultivation, and no charges were ever laid. As they were packing up to leave, he invited them all into his hut for a cuppa but they declined, so he asked them to at least sign his hut book. That's when he flogged their pen.

Westy strongly identified with his southern Maori heritage. Born and bred in Bluff, he had seawater in his blood. He used to joke that it was easy finding his way around the South Coast; 'All I gotta do is keep the same foot in the tide to tell me I'm going one way or the other'.

Some say the reason Westy went into Fiordland was to escape a very problematical relationship but getting the exact story from the man himself was near impossible. One thing was certain. He had a knack of utilizing Fiordland resources, in particular passing personnel, to his advantage, DOC not included, he always avoided them.

Every helicopter pilot around looked out for him, obligingly bringing in all manner of materials and fittings to enhance his accommodation – an old sofa, pot belly, galvanized metal cladding, a small generator to recharge his batteries for the lights, tools too. Even a small gold dredge got dropped in.

When Westy wanted a lift out, he would just hoist a big red banner painted with big bold white 'TAXI' onto his radio aerial atop the bluff above his cave. Chopper pilots would routinely divert over to take a look. If the banner was up, they'd drop down and pick him up. No charges ever incurred of course.

Gold mining was one activity that Westy indulged in while he lived at Price's Harbour. Using a portable suction pump and sluice box, he worked stretches of Big



The old coal-range remains a feature of the hut.

OBITUARY



River with mediocre results. He always wore rugby boots when working outside, the studs he reckoned gave him footing as good as any deer. He got sore as his years ticked over, but two hip replacements done at Invercargill Hospital set him right again.

After living in his hut at Princes Harbour for around eight years, Westy left to 'hut sit' for extended periods in other huts along the South Coast. His last one was a private hut at Te Wae Wae Bay before retiring around age 70 to live back in Invercargill, where his daughter, 'Burt' lived.

When DOC got wind Westies 'private and unlicensed' hut had been abandoned, they began making plans to demolish it. If outdoor enthusiasts (and helicopter pilot) Cliff and Ann McDermott of Invercargill hadn't put in an 11th hour bid to save it in July 2007, offering to upgrade it at their own expense, DOC would have gone in and torn it down, burn what they could on a big bonfire on the beach and haul out the non-burnables by helicopter.

**"Westy strongly identified with his southern Maori heritage."
– Gerard Hindmarsh**

McDermott's application to bring the hut up to DOC standards required first a geologist's report to make sure the cave was actually safe from potential rockfalls. The final report listed many changes to the hut, like removing the wood range which was in a bad state or repair.

Westy had gone to great lengths to seal the buildings from draughts, using left over rolls of wallpaper to line the walls and ceilings. Acknowledging that some compromise had to be made for a hut that could provide emergency shelter along an exposed coast, DOC relented to retaining the flammable wallpaper which gives this structure an absolutely unique protective feeling. Quite possibly the only fully wallpapered back country hut in all New Zealand! The hut today gives shelter to around 50 trampers a year.
RIP Westy, a real legend.

Westy would be well chuffed at all this attention and to have his head in your magazine. The old bugger thrived on notoriety and quietly revelled in his local legend status. He was a bit of a legend-even in our own family. And the cave years are the least of it – Bert West, daughter of Westy.



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From the President – 2020 report

Doug Saunders-Loder

As a result of the unprecedented Covid-19 virus sweeping the world we decided back in March to cancel our 2020 conference and AGM.

This proved to be a wise decision as we saw the country placed in lockdown and life as we knew it took an entirely different perspective. Largely confined to our homes by the Government we all experienced thoughts of uncertainty, confusion and perhaps even fear? Difficult times indeed and on top of all this we have to consider the implications on our well-being and overall future as the dolphin TMP and other politically driven policy decisions are pondered behind closed doors.

As an Industry we have to be thankful that we were recognised as an 'essential service' from the start



Doug Saunders-Loder is President of the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen

and that we could, as long as we could fulfil social distancing rules and the use of appropriate PPE, continue on with our operations. I know that this was not possible for everyone and that the implications have been far greater in some instances than they have been for others. Federation has worked closely with Seafood NZ and SREs to ensure that we could deliver a meaningful outcome wherever we could and it's great to see that many of you could achieve that if you wished.

Whilst we have had to operate under constrained productivity and market demand, just ticking over has been a major relief and things certainly seem to have improved significantly over the past two months. Food service both in New Zealand and Australia has resumed and markets for domestic fish have picked up also.

We clearly operate today in a space that is far from normal, not just in terms of how we catch and sell our fish but also in terms of how the Government apply their policy. We are of course in an election year and that just about guarantees that 'all bets are off' in terms of achieving any momentum in respect of fishing matters throughout the country.

"We clearly operate today in a space that is far from normal, not just in terms of how we catch and sell our fish but also in terms of how the Government apply their policy."

– Doug Saunders-Loder

Just last month the Government announced their intentions in respect of the Maui/Hector's Dolphin Threat Management Plan. Increased environmental pressure has forced them to extend set-net closures across most of the west coast of the North Island, into Tasman Bay/Golden Bay, Kaikoura, Pegasus Bay, Timaru, Dunedin and Te Waewae Bay. I know that this has had a hugely detrimental effect on many of

your businesses and on your general well-being. It is a travesty that we as an industry continue to bear the brunt of this hatred.

Next cab off the rank will be their decisions in respect of the Southeast Marine Protection proposals which have the potential to serve as 'double jeopardy' for those east coast fishermen that have been forced out of their set-netting businesses and have transitioned or stepped up their trawling time, to be further constrained because of unnecessary closures there too.

This hasn't happened yet, but I just can't consider the outcome as anything other than cynically. I do hope I'm wrong.

The use of electronic reporting has improved over the past six months and I hear positive comments all the time about its use. It has not been without its frustrations I know, but generally things in this space are improving. There have been issues with updates on some software and we also know that the costs still need to be rectified. Federation sits on the Commercial Fisheries Forum which essentially represents SREs but we have collaboratively worked with Fisheries New Zealand to address some of the outstanding issues with these platforms and we will continue to work on seeing the costs reduced as well.

Cameras have recently captured the headlines again and the constant rhetoric is that you cannot be trusted and need to be continually monitored. This is of course a load of rubbish and Federation continue to stick their shoulder to the wheel and try to bring some common sense to the debate. Cameras may well be seen as a positive fisheries management and compliance tool and we know that many of you are in fact using them. However, we are also aware that the impending costs (promoted by FNZ as upwards of \$40k a vessel) are simply unachievable. These costs combined with FNZ's inability to provide any guarantees about your privacy, civil liberties, who can see and what they see, remain extremely contentious and need to be resolved before any roll out. These practical matters combined

with FNZ's commitment to addressing key policy settings like landings and discards, TACC setting and Deemed Values, desperately require attention.

Federation as host and Guard Safety as the delivery agent have been successful this year at obtaining a \$280,000 Injury Prevention Grant from ACC. This is hugely positive and allows Federation to deliver a series of key safety messages through electronic forums, workshops and video learning resources. You are aware that we have applied for this before and failed but a considerable amount of work has gone into successfully getting approval for it this year.

"Federation as host and Guard Safety as the delivery agent have been successful this year at obtaining a \$280,000 Injury Prevention Grant from ACC."

– Doug Saunders-Loder

It is disappointing that the circumstances have meant not holding our conference this year, but I guess that will just give us the incentive to make it bigger and better next year.

Big thanks to the executive this year. There are no accolades that come with holding office in an organisation like this. We work hard to represent you all and the role is not made any easier when the Government delivers policy that has the effect of ruining your business or livelihood. The executive are included in this and have directly received the same bad news many of you have. That does not make the role any easier, so I take my hat off to you all.

It is an election year and we all have the opportunity of trying to make change at the polls. Make your vote count.

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Allan "Smiley" Mackay

Tim Pankhurst



Allan Mackay in the wheelhouse of *Rampage*.

Nicknames are often ironic. Thus, big men are Tiny and ginger-haired are Bluey. In the case of Allan "Smiley" Mackay the epithet could not be more appropriate.

He has such a sunny nature his wife Christine bought him the matching number plate.

Well almost, Smiley was not available but 5Milee was.

The New Plymouth-based cray fisherman has much to be happy about.

He has secure quota, a healthy fishery, seven months off a year and the prospect of a new boat.

His current vessel *Rampage*, a 10-year-old 10.4-metre fiberglass Steber design powered by twin Volvo 300s, has served him well but he wants to go bigger and operate more efficiently.

He has commissioned a 16.6m (54 foot) aluminium Schwetz design boat from Saltwater Commercial Workboats in Perth and expects delivery by March or April.

Before he pushed the buy button, Mackay checked out a similar vessel owned by a fellow rock lobster fisherman, Graeme Anderson at Bluff.

Anderson described his boat – *Brojak* – "as a bit lively", by which he meant it was more nimble than a heavier glass boat.

"You can't fault it as a sea boat," Anderson says. "It doesn't roll further than a glass boat, it's just quicker. It's a very easily driven boat, very soft riding and a very good-looking boat."

The boat built to a Legend design is not new, launched in 2001, and is in its fourth season with Anderson on the Southland coast.

He brought it across from Hobart, 66 hours across the Tasman in good weather with no dramas.

Mackay's boat will be trucked across the Nullabor from Perth and he is yet to decide whether to put it on a cargo ship or pilot it across from Melbourne or Sydney himself.

It is powered by an 850 horsepower Caterpillar C12.9, has a big 5.25m beam, two 1500 litre and two 800 litre fuel tanks, can carry up to 12 passengers and has a load capacity of five tonnes on the deck.

The aluminium hull is cut in Australia and then sent to China for assembly and addition of the top deck and wheelhouse.

Then it is back to Fremantle for fitting of the glass, engine, hydraulics and interior fittings.

The turnkey cost, including safety equipment of liferafts and flares, is A\$1.26 million, with another \$70k for delivery.

The local rock lobster fishery is in good health but with other operators, notably Richard Kibblewhite and the Connor brothers from Picton, having a bigger presence, Mackay is having to travel further afield, two hours south to below Opunake.

With a bigger boat with a lot more deck space he will be able to manage a bigger load.

There has been some conflict with recreational fishers and a number of pot floats have been cut off, a \$500 loss for a big pot.

A compromise has been reached with the commercial operators agreeing not to set within 1.5 nautical miles of the Opunake boat ramp.

Last year Mackay had two pots cut off at the 1.6-mile



Mackay with two of his passions – a V8 Mustang and hunting.

mark, but nothing touched beyond that.

In a close-knit community, he knows who was responsible – there were only two recreational boats out that day – and has pictures of them from when they featured in a local newspaper.

Any repeat and Smiley and the other operators may not be so friendly.

Mackay used to wetfish as well, longlining for snapper and gurnard, but found it was not economic, returning as little as \$1 to \$1.50 a kilo.

He has 4.357 tonnes of CRA9 rock lobster quota, leased from his mother Pam. His father Ian, also a fisherman, died of prostate cancer 10 years ago.

Mackay knows engines – he trained as a mechanic, worked on trucks for Ford, then tractors for Norwood and Massey Ferguson before becoming a manager with Gough Gough & Hamer.

“Sitting in an office behind a computer in a white shirt and tie, I had to be credit controller, debt collector and everything else in between.

“It was time for a change. I haven’t looked back since.”

Smiley is one of those guys who flies under the radar, according to Federation of Commercial Fishermen president Doug Saunders-Loder.

“He is a good old New Zealand boy. He’s not a grizzler, he looks for solutions, gets on with it and makes it happen.”

– Doug Saunders-Loder

“He likes the representation and the relationships that brings him.

“He is a good old New Zealand boy. He’s not a grizzler, he looks for solutions, gets on with it and makes it happen.

“There’s some people in life who make you smile. He’s

totally relaxed in life.”

Only working from early July until the end of November at the latest no doubt helps.

Mackay fishes into Port Nicholson Fisheries in Wellington for the live trade to China, although he keeps 100kg aside for Keith Mawson’s Egmont Seafoods for the Christmas trade.

His quota was caught and sold before the Covid pandemic and the closure of the lucrative Chinese market, so his business was unaffected by the lockdown.

He did miss out on a 10-day hunting trip with mates to Stewart Island for the roar in April.

He is a keen hunter and has an impressive trophy stag head in his garage, and another in the house, along with other game.

But he is mellowing, often content to just observe magnificent animals in the wild without pulling the trigger.

“A month ago in Waverley I snuck up on a spiker. He was only 20-metres away and he wasn’t sure what I was. He ran back and forth, stamped his feet. I just sat there, it was just great to see.”

When Mackay told his mates at the Treehouse Hotel he was going to Australia to buy a new boat, they decided to come too.

Ten of them went to the Sydney Boat Show, where Mackay put the order in.

“We had a ball,” he says.

You would expect nothing less with such a genial host.



Stuart the cat checking out the new boat.

Meet new MPI fisheries science and information director Charlotte Austin



MPI's new fisheries science and information director Charlotte Austin, pictured here in Antarctica.

The new Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) Fisheries Science and Information Director Charlotte Austin began her role during what was a challenging time for many people – under the nationwide Covid-19 lockdown.

"It was just after ANZAC Day and I met my new team virtually, working from home. A lot of leadership is about making personal connections, the water cooler conversations are very important to team dynamics. It was definitely an interesting time to start something new," she says.

Charlotte Austin has been employed by MPI for around five years. During this time, she has held various operational senior leadership roles including the *Mycoplasma bovis* programme. She began when MPI was still in response mode to the disease as the National Operations Manager, progressing to the more senior role of National Controller.

The *Mycoplasma bovis* response eventually transitioned into a programme with a regional focus. It was at that point Charlotte took on a Christchurch based position as the Regional Manager for the mid-upper South Island and was responsible for areas north of Timaru to Tasman including the West Coast region. Her last role in the *Mycoplasma bovis* programme, was a Wellington based strategic position as Regional Manager. Along with being heavily involved with cattle,

she has also held other senior roles including Regional Field Controller for MPI during the National Emergency Management Agency response to the Nelson fires in the Tasman District last year.

"I spent six days directing our teams on the ground. That included the movement of farm stock and coordinating animal welfare and rescue teams who were going behind the fire zone to take care of animals, pets and stock and providing reassurance to the communities and owners of those animals" she says.

Charlotte Austin has a strong background in science and holds a Master of Science (MSc) in Zoology from Canterbury University. She specialised in Antarctic fish physiology. In 2011 and 2012 she spent two seasons (19 weeks) living at and conducting research at Scott Base in Antarctica.

"I was doing scientific research work around climate change and how it affects a particular fish species, *Trematomus bernacchii* also known as emerald rock cod," she says.

Very few people get the opportunity to live on the earth's southernmost icy continent and she describes the experience as life changing.

"It was amazing, very humbling. I was very lucky to spend this time down there. It gets into your bones and you can feel the presence of the old timers and history there. Our fishing spot where we would drive two hours to and drill into the ice was literally in front of Scott's Hut," she says.

Charlotte Austin brings a wide range of important skills to her new role. She is practical, operational focused and a strategic thinker.

"My skillset is exceedingly operational and I enjoy that part of the work. However, there also needs to be a strategic element to all operations. You have to head towards an end goal through a strategy or plan. If you don't have one in sight then you do have to question what you are actually heading towards," she says.

While Charlotte's previous roles have been both biosecurity and terrestrial based, her new position as Fisheries Science and Information Director is about the sustainability of New Zealand's fisheries.



"This is something I'm really passionate about. It's partly why I undertook my studies in marine sciences. I'm very lucky to be part of MPI's ongoing sustainable fisheries work," she says.

Charlotte Austin's directorate includes responsibility for the 120 person Observer Programme and to have a leader who has worked extensively in the field, upon vessels and in remote locations on a practical level is a powerful skill set to bring.

Additionally, her scientific background will be an asset to the Science and Data Insights Team.

"Having a scientific background in the fisheries space also means the language is familiar to me. I understand the scientific process, and as the director, I can help convey their messages and data across the rest of MPI and out to stakeholders," she says.

Overall, Charlotte Austin is responsible for 171 staff in her busy directorate. To wind down outside of work she enjoys a range of activities including running and cooking.



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Exciting times for Maori seafood opportunities

Anna Yallop

Matariki has been a great time to reflect and plan for the future. One of the most satisfying findings of 2020 from a research and development (R&D) perspective is the exponential increase in seafood opportunities being investigated by Maori, who are demonstrating their ability to use their knowledge and assets in ways that will generate significant value for New Zealand.

Moana New Zealand, Wakatu and Sealord have, for many years been undertaking and commissioning world-class R&D and product development and continue to do so but I have seen an explosion in the last 12 months of projects initiated by Maori Trusts, tribes and small to large scale Maori companies. This is exciting for the



SIL general manager Anna Yallop.

science system, for iwi, for companies and for New Zealand, as Maori have proven they have no shortage of ideas and ventures. Seafood Innovations Ltd (SIL) has a long history of working with Maori companies to co-fund R&D projects, including ones to optimise chilled seafood, develop protocols for hatchery spat, advance oyster growing technologies and improve paua processing and transportation. Emerging areas of development are impressive and have the potential to be game-changers for Maori.

Moana New Zealand and Cawthron are working together on a SIL project to enhance oyster production using high-tech animal husbandry. Wakatu, with support from Cawthron have invested to domesticate a new shellfish species, following on from their previous investment in their flat oyster – Kiwa. Bye Bycatch is working with Sealord and others on using video footage from fishing nets to observe fish behavior and develop techniques for releasing non-target species and Kahukuraariki Trust is working alongside NIWA to look into re-establishing the Native Rock Oyster in Taitokerau. Other projects in the pipeline include looking at ways that iwi can extract higher value from low-value species, using artificial intelligence to ascertain seafood quality prior to shipment, tagging technology and the bioactivity of certain seafoods compared with others.

Whilst not necessarily initiated by Maori companies, many of SIL's other projects involve iwi either via consultation and engagement, through collaboration or because the projects have the potential to impact on Maori and this involvement up front and throughout projects is increasingly becoming the norm and has positive spin-offs for all parties. This engagement creates the chance for even more value to be added to projects by incorporating practices that may not have been considered, by ensuring buy-in and support and by opening up the possibility of new avenues of exploration that can benefit multiple groups, regions and of course, the R&D pipeline.

What's particularly interesting is the collaboration between different iwi groups who are looking to get scale from their projects so as to maximise the long-term benefits for their people through high-paying jobs, increased skills and by leveraging traditional and new knowledge in different and exciting ways. Attending

"If the last year is anything to go by, these next few years will be crucial and I for one can't wait to see where New Zealand is headed."

– Anna Yallop

last year's Maori Fisheries Conference for the first time was an enlightening experience for me and I came away feeling inspired by the high levels of enthusiasm, innovation, and pride in the potential for Maori by the conference attendees.

Maori seafood companies are in a pivotal place internationally, as I've certainly seen the interest that overseas companies have in Maori business opportunities and this interest is being masterfully cultivated by iwi groups working closely with these multinational organisations.

I look forward to seeing what novel products are developed that are unique and highly valuable because of their Maori provenance. If the last year is anything to go by, these next few years will be crucial and I for one can't wait to see where New Zealand is headed.

anna.yallop@seafoodinnovations.co.nz

Mount Vic Chippery

Tim Pankhurst



Sampling the product – fish supplier Stefan Ioannidis and Komal Parbhu.

Ordering fish and chips used to be easy.

When I was a kid growing up in Nelson the standard order was one shilling and sixpence worth from Peter's in Hardy Street.

There was no choice – it was usually shark – and it was certainly well cooked, crunchy even, but the servings were generous and the seagulls loved the leftovers.

Fish and chips remain the country's number one takeaway, despite the heavy advertising from foreign-based fast food franchises, but the offerings have gone upmarket and the choice can be bewildering.

The Mt Vic Chippery in Wellington's Marjoribanks Street offers six different types of chips alone – crinkle cut, curly fries, beer battered, kumara, halloumi and handcut agria.

The handcut are huge, an elephant in the dining room, worth the visit alone.

You want gluten free? No problem, one fryer is dedicated to the coeliac crowd.

Would you like salad with that? Green, or homemade coleslaw?

Some sauce? Chipotle aioli, tomato, homemade tartare or aioli?

Now it gets complicated.

The market fish menu, depending on catch, includes butterfly tuna, sea perch, moonfish, skate, whole flounder, turbot, ribaldo, hake, alfonsino, hoki, yellowfin tuna, mackerel, sea bream, elephant fish, gemfish, monkfish, trumpeter, bluenose, skin-on John dory, tarakihi, Akaroa salmon, blue cod, butterfish, trevally, moki, lemon fish, blue warehou, gurnard, kingfish, hapuku, snapper.

Prices are at the higher end, starting around \$8 a standard 180g portion for blue warehou and the like, to around \$11 for gurnard and tarakihi, up to the \$16-17 mark for premium snapper, hapuku, blue cod and John dory.

How would you like that cooked?

Would that be beer battered, panko crumbed, tempura battered, gluten free beer battered or grilled?

Or perhaps you are so confused by now, you simply opt for a burger – would that be halloumi, vegan, cajun fish, chicken or beef? – or maybe a pulled pork sandwich.

The Chippery opened in 2012 and is assured of fresh fish supplies.

Co-owner Grant Robertson owns and operates the fishing vessel *Star of the Seas*, a familiar sight moored in Island Bay.

BEST FISH 'N' CHIPS

He has wetfish quota and set nets and longlines for hapuku, butterfish and lemonfish in and around Cook Strait.

The three other owners are former restaurateur Dale Keith, Stephen Piper and Komal Parbhu.

Keith formerly owned Vista restaurant in Oriental Bay, was general manager at the White Swan in Greytown and now manages weddings at Rose & Smith at the Tauherinikau racecourse.

Parbhu, an accountant, manages the Mt Vic store and a second one opened in 2015 in Murphy St in Thorndon in premises previously occupied by the Brer Fox and Le Canard restaurants.

Deepwater and other fish species not caught locally are supplied by Talley-owned Guyton's in Nelson and the Fish Factory in Wellington.

"Guyton's fish is beautiful," Parbhu says. "It comes overnight. We have got a really good relationship, they're lovely."

The relationship with the Fish Factory is strong too, with manager Stefan Ioannidis making personal deliveries.

The Katsoulis-family owned business has operated out of Cuba Street since 1975 and sources fish from Gisborne to Invercargill, with Star Fish in Napier prominent.

Blue warehou, moki and gurnard are the main species.

Parbhu is spoilt for choice in her own cooking and monkfish is a favourite. That's when she is not eating blue cod.

She favours an Al Brown monkfish recipe.

The Chippery, open seven days, has many fans - and the inevitable critics - in the age of social media.

"Delicious chips from here. The fish is always fresh. Best fish 'n' chips in Wellington but yes, a bit more expensive. But the extra cost is sooo worth it," wrote Lucy Smith.

"Insanely good fish and chips here, we picked up a great takeaway and the staff were very nice," Theodore Stratton said.

"Awesome piece of fresh beer battered warehou and my fave potato fritters," was Maisie Mao's verdict.

But the downside of public feedback is that there are also grizzles on the website about price, portion sizes, staff and wrong orders.

Parbhu finds that disappointing.

She always follows up but waits until the next day when she is less annoyed, offering a refund or a voucher.

There is a loyalty scheme for customers, including extra points on a birthday and specials such as \$12 burger and chips on a Wednesday aimed at students.

There is also a delivery service – locally-based Deliver Easy rather than the more expensive Uber Eats – costing \$9 for city delivery.

Or you could opt for the \$12 lunchtime special that includes one piece of crumbed market fish, crinkle cut chips and salad with aioli.

But you must try the amazing hand cut chips.



Co-owner Komal Parbhu at the popular Mt Vic Chippery.

Coconut monkfish curry



Although down-the-line in popularity stakes, monkfish works perfectly in this winter-warming fish curry. With its relatively firm flesh, it holds together well and is even more flavoursome the following day. This is Auckland Seafood School chef Paulie Hooton's take on monkfish curry.

Serves 8

Curry Ingredients

400g skinned & boned monkfish, cut into small even cubes
 200g raw prawn cutlets, de-veined
 1 tbsp vegetable oil
 2 shallots, peeled & finely chopped
 Thumb-sized piece of ginger, finely grated
 3 garlic cloves, peeled & crushed
 1 tbsp fish sauce
 1 small red chili, shredded
 ½ lemongrass stalk, split, then bruised with back of knife, sliced

½ tsp curry powder
 1 tbsp brown sugar
 ½ cup coriander, leaves removed and stems finely chopped
 ¼ fennel bulb, diced
 1 capsicum, diced
 2 cups coconut cream
 2 tbsp water
 1 lime (½ juiced, ½ zested for garnish)
 2 tbsp coconut thread (½ in curry, ½ for rice garnish)
 ¼ cup coriander leaf, to garnish
 2 cups cooked Jasmine rice (prepare while curry develops)

Method

Heat the oil in a large pot with a lid, add shallots and soften for 5 minutes. Increase the heat a little, stir in the ginger, garlic, shrimp paste, chili and lemongrass and cook for 2 minutes. Add the curry powder and sugar, stirring continuously. When the sugar begins to melt and the other ingredients start clumping together, add ½ cup of water, ¾ of the coriander stems, capsicum, fennel, coconut cream and 2

tablespoons of water, then bring to a simmer. Add the fish to the sauce, then the prawns and squeeze over lime and zest. Place on the lid and simmer for another 5 minutes or until the fish is just cooked and flaking. The prawns should be pink through. Season to taste, adding a squeeze more citrus to the sauce if you like. Scatter coriander leaves and coconut thread over. Mix the remaining coriander stalk through the rice, add coconut garnish and serve topped with chili.

The New Zealand seafood industry's Covid-champions



Jason Baker of Saavid Fishing and his crew in full PPE and observing two metres distance during alert level four to bring the paua home.



Sealord chief operating officer Doug Paulin announces a gift of \$215,000 to Nelson Coastguard to kick start their Covid-delayed vessel build. Alert level 2.



New Zealand King Salmon's 'ruler-lady' checked Nelson factory staff were working at two-metres distance.



Moana processing staff keeping two-metres distance.



Sanford staff hit the beach at alert level 1, collecting 59 kilograms of waste from Timaru's North Mole and Caroline Bay beaches.



A Moana employee kitted out with the required PPE.



Peter Herbert's Coromandel Kina factory continued its operations as an essential service throughout NZ's lockdown.



Kai with Love is a local Nelson foodbank that Sealord regularly donates its product to. During lockdown, staff donated \$3795 plus plenty of non-perishable food items.



PVC screens were installed to maintain distance and keep Sealord factory workers safe during alert levels 1 and 2.



Everyone was temperature checked before entering Moana New Zealand's site – a practice they continued until alert level 1.



NZ King Salmon aquaculture technician, Graeme Aldridge, pictured here donating salmon to Allanah Burgess from Te Atiawa Iwi at Waikawa marae.



A Talley's worker grading mussels in full PPE.



A Covid-collaboration between Fisheries NZ and Sealord got hungry hoiho fed during lockdown. Image; The Wildlife Hospital Trust.



NZ King Salmon's staffroom featured Perspex dividers to keep staff safe during breaks.

Seafood industry praises MPI for successful theft conviction on the Chathams

Seafood New Zealand has commended the successful conviction of a commercial fisherman who underreported his shellfish catch.

Kevan Huia Clarke was convicted in Wellington District Court on July 14 for not reporting 11 tonnes of paua and rock lobster worth nearly \$900,000.

The Chatham Islander was sentenced to nine months of home detention, 200 hours of community service and had his vessel seized.

Seafood New Zealand chief executive Dr Jeremy

Helson praised the Ministry for Primary Industries compliance unit, led by Gary Orr, saying it was often difficult to get convictions in this type of case and their hard work was a good result for the industry and the fishery.

"We condemn any illegal behaviour and offending on a scale such as this can cause serious harm to our fishery. It undermines the good work we do in keeping our stocks healthy through the Quota Management System and we will not tolerate it," said Helson.

Focus on primary industry job growth welcomed by the seafood sector

The launch of the Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) new jobs-focused website has been welcomed by the seafood sector.

Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor launched the *Opportunity Grows Here* website on July 27, with the aim of encouraging New Zealanders into primary sector jobs.

Seafood New Zealand chief executive Jeremy Helson says traditionally it has been difficult to fill jobs in the industry, particularly seagoing positions, and this will be a great resource for employers.

Fishers, farmers and growers will be essential to spearhead the export-led growth that will be needed to cushion the economic effects on New Zealand post Covid-19.

"There are great jobs in the seafood industry both land-based and at sea and there are plenty of opportunities to advance into high-paying careers.

"We would love to have more Kiwis in our industry, particularly in on-the-water jobs which are highly skilled and highly paid.

"While those on deepwater vessels could spend weeks at sea, the conditions and remuneration are very attractive," says Helson.

The New Zealand seafood industry employs around 20,000 people and generates more than \$2 billion in export revenue.

"There are also clear, defined career pathways, where you can start as a deckhand and work your way up to be the skipper of a large vessel.

"We need more New Zealanders in our industry, whether it is in science labs, processing factories or on the water," says Helson. "The primary sector of New Zealand has always been the backbone of the New Zealand economy and we are pleased that the seafood industry, as well as other farmers and growers of New Zealand's premium produce will be part of New Zealand's recovery from economic recession."

Visit the *Opportunity Grows Here* website for more information: www.opportunitygrowshere.nz

Kudos to the fishing industry

All kudos and congratulations to the fishing industry, it is the milch cow of the economy. It is mainly out of sight of the general public eye being offshore and scattered around the country but make no mistake it is a huge contributor to the country's economy and employs thousands of people both on and off the water. Yet it is the most heavily controlled and monitored industry on the planet and a target for environmental terrorism. This often dangerous and hardworking profession has never had the government support handed to other essential services.

In the event of natural disasters the government steps up with relief packages and help but fishing has never had any remuneration although it was promised by Mike Donnahue in 1986 for the loss of 191 coastline miles of safe close prime fishing denied to the inshore fleet by a well-orchestrated and totally emotive lie of the Hector's dolphin sanctuary. So, when is this compensation to be paid to those affected so badly.?

Everybody is running round congratulating themselves on the success of the quota system but it is nowhere finished yet. The fish stocks have rebounded back to

healthy levels so why have the government not returned the 28N rights promised at the inception. Is anybody working for and on the industry's side to adjust and monitor the fish stocks? I feel that we just roll over these days.

The fishing industry provides many jobs and opportunities and has a huge spectrum of choice for people prepared to do an honest day's work for an honest day's pay and can lead up to a promising career as long as the parasites do not continue to bleed the life blood from what was once a good living and a lifestyle choice.

The industry is top heavy with bureaucratic interference scientific restrictions and legal pitfalls and is being controlled, not by the experts that are actually catching the fish, but by people without a practical working knowledge except a college degree and is in danger of rolling belly up if not preserved and nurtured on a par with other staples of the economy.

Bob Beggs
Christchurch



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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.

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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.

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