



THE UPDATE

Captain's Blog



Sustainable New Zealand seafood on the rise

Nearly 14 percent of total global fisheries have now received the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) sustainability tick.

Consumer demand for certified sustainable seafood has driven real improvements in the way fisheries are managed.

The London-based MSC's ambitious goal is to certify 20 percent of the global marine catch by 2020 and 30 percent by 2030, according to its just released annual report.

In New Zealand, that target has been far exceeded already.

Twenty three fisheries across eight species now have MSC endorsement, around 50 percent of New Zealand's total wild marine catch.

That includes deepwater hoki, hake, ling, southern blue whiting, orange roughy, Ross Sea toothfish and albacore and skipjack tuna.

It is not practical or economic to put all of the country's commercial species through the protracted MSC process but that does not mean they are not fished sustainably.

The overwhelming majority of our fish stocks are in good shape. We know the status of 169 stocks and of these, 142 are sustainable, according to Fisheries New Zealand scientists.

New Zealand consistently rates in the world's top four fisheries – along with Iceland, Norway and the US – in terms of abundance of fisheries stocks and quality of management, according to Prof Ray Hilborn of Washington University's School of Aquatic and Fisheries Sciences.

Hoki, which has by far the largest landings, has been MSC certified since 2001.

All fisheries, once certified, must undergo annual audits and be fully reassessed every five years to ensure they continue to meet the required high international standards.

MSC is recognised as the gold standard of global seafood eco-certification schemes.

It was established in 1996 in a partnership between retailer Unilever, concerned about fish supplies, and the World Wildlife Fund.

Third party experts conduct a rigorous independent assessment of the fishery's performance against three principles – stock sustainability, environmental impacts and ongoing management.

Addressing unsustainable fishing is an urgent challenge at a time when the growing global population needs low carbon protein more than ever, MSC chief executive Rupert Howes said.

“Yet a third of fish stocks are overexploited and the ocean faces unprecedented threats from global warming, acidification and plastic pollution.”

Sustainable management of tuna fisheries, one of the world's most popular seafoods, is a priority.

An estimated 57 percent of commercial tuna stocks are considered healthy but tuna stocks are under increasing pressure.

New Zealand's skipjack purse seine fishery, operated by Talley's, achieved certification for the first time in 2017.

“By gaining MSC certification for our skipjack fishery we have not only gained a competitive edge in the market, for which the MSC label is in high demand, but we have also shown that we are fishing responsibly and sustainably,” Talley's fleet manager Andy Smith is quoted in the MSC annual report.

“In doing so we are providing the assurance to the public at large, and to our local fishing communities in particular, that we are committed to maintaining our fishery resources in a healthy state for future generations.”

So, with the science and the management in good shape, what is the reality for those on the water?

For Nelson fisherman Tony Roach it has never been better.

“Our catch effort is going down all the time,” he says in the latest Seafood magazine.

“We're doing less days at sea, less days fishing and we're catching our quota easier every year – our fish stocks are getting better.”



New Zealand Seafood Industry Conference and Technical Day

Registrations open

Registrations for the 2019 New Zealand Seafood Industry Conference and Technical Day are open.

This year the conference will move to New Zealand's tourism capital Queenstown, with the technical day taking place on Thursday 8 August and the conference on Friday 9 August.

The theme for this year's seafood conference is Blue Growth – Charting Seafood's Future, looking at how one of New Zealand's key primary sectors can best position itself for future growth and success.

We have a great array of speakers, details of the full programme will be available soon on the Seafood New Zealand website www.seafood.co.nz/conference-2019.

Seafood New Zealand has negotiated accommodation rates at the conference venue and neighbouring hotels. Details are on the [Information](#) page of the website along with links to Air New Zealand for group flight bookings.

Get in quick to secure accommodation and flights at reasonable prices.

[Register now.](#)

2019 Technical Day research posters

Seafood New Zealand is calling for research posters to display at the 2019 Seafood Industry Conference and Technical Day.

Researchers are invited to show their posters throughout the technical day on 8 August and at the networking function that evening. They will also be displayed at the conference on 9 August.

Posters must align with one of the following themes:

- Our Marine Environment
- Quality Safe Seafood

- Innovation

View more information on the [poster specifications](#) here.

Submissions close 28 June 2019.

Seafood Stars Awards

The 2019 Seafood Stars Awards are open for nominations. The awards are a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our industry people and their achievements. This year's award categories include:

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

For more information on each category [visit our website](#), or [download the form](#) to nominate someone today.



Aquaculture acts for sustainability

Over 250 representatives from 90 countries attended the Conference on Aquatic Animal Health in Chile last week.

Hosted by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), experts from both public and private sectors united in a three-day discussion on how best to collaborate to ensure the safe and sustainable development of aquaculture.

Aquaculture surpassed fisheries production in 2014 and is growing at 6 percent each year according to the OIE. However, the sector will face big challenges as the world population

grows and more animal proteins are required, said Chile Minister of Economy, Development and Tourism Ramon Valente.

“The 7 billion people that we are today, that will become 9 billion by 2050 and have a tremendously increased demand for calories and especially for proteins. This conference will help us to understand the conditions that must exist in the world to encourage food production in a way that is compatible with the environment and the sanitary standards.”

Another delegate raised the challenges brought about by the intensification of aquaculture, including the transnational spread of aquatic animal diseases which has devastated aquaculture production in several countries.

George Chamberlain from Global Aquaculture Alliance stated that the “global sustainability journey is just beginning”.

“When you look at climate change, social issues, plastics in the oceans, antimicrobial resistance, feed ingredients; there is a tremendous amount of work to be done. Collaboration among us is the key going forward.”

A series of recommendations were released by the OIE at the end of the meeting, urging members to:

- Take steps to improve compliance with OIE standards, notably surveillance and early detection; notification to the OIE of aquatic animal diseases and the prevention and control of pathogenic agents in aquatic animals.
- Implement biosecurity measures to mitigate the risk of the introduction or release from the aquaculture establishment.
- Ensure transparent, timely and consistent notification of all OIE listed disease and emerging disease to the OIE through the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) to support other countries in taking appropriate action to prevent the transboundary spread of important diseases of aquatic animals.
- Ensure that the OIE standards and guidelines for responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents are respected at the country level and promote advances in disease management to reduce the need for antimicrobials.

Recommendations will be submitted to the OIE World Assembly in May.

Youthful toothfish in good supply

Juvenile fish populations are changing in Antarctica, according to a recent survey which found Antarctic toothfish stocks to be up from previous years.

Each year, a team of scientists travel north of the Ross Ice Shelf to examine the ocean environment, the age composition of toothfish populations and to observe their interactions with predators.

Researcher Steve Parker has led the project for eight years and said the survey is a great opportunity to detect changes in the Ross Sea ecosystem.

“What we found this year is there were more juveniles around, or more kids in the kindergartens, which means in 10 years, there will be lots of adolescents in the open waters of the continental slope,” he said.

A total of 4207 Antarctic toothfish were surveyed and a further 250 tagged and released. All fish were found to be between 5 and 10 years of age.

Scientists hope that focusing on juvenile toothfish populations will provide insight into the size of adult populations that can be expected in future years.

“Commercial fisheries target college-aged fish (about 15-20 years of age) along the continental slope, so if all of a sudden the juvenile population drops, we’ve got about 10 years to understand why it changed and adapt fishery management,” said Parker.

Antarctica New Zealand chief scientific advisor Fiona Shanhun said the survey’s annual data is key for sustainable fishery management.

“This research is a priority element of the monitoring program for the new Ross Sea region Marine Protected Area and contributes to an international ecosystem-based management approach.”

Researchers will be working with American scientists to track 15 juvenile Antarctic toothfish via satellite over the next year.

The next survey is scheduled for 2020.



Rich Ford appointed to Manager of Fisheries Science

The Ministry for Primary Industries has announced the appointment of Dr Rich Ford as Manager of Fisheries Science.

Ford has worked in fisheries systems for over ten years and brings with him a wealth of expertise in marine science. Previously an academic at the University of Auckland, Ford was heavily involved in contract research on the effects of the continued urbanisation of Auckland upon the marine environment.

Ford also held a range of Fisheries New Zealand science portfolios, including benthic ecology, aquaculture effects, shark research and the marine science component of the Kaikoura earthquake recovery initiative.



News

A successful open ocean research project in the Cook Strait has prompted New Zealand King Salmon to test waters down the east coast of the South Island, *Stuff* reported. NZKS has applied for 13 research sites from North Marlborough to Stewart Island where they hope to monitor waves and currents to gauge whether the sites are suitable for expanding NZKS's fish farming into open waters. The new farms, if successful, would be cooler and have a higher flow than the Marlborough Sounds farms. Testing on the northern most side of the Cook Strait yielded conditions that were "more benign" than the company anticipated. NZKS is now in the process of submitting a formal application to place a salmon farm on the research site. Chief executive Grant Rosewarne said the Cook Strait had a "fierce reputation" but the first site did not prove particularly challenging in terms of waves and weather conditions. Rosewarne predicts open ocean farming technology for the site would be readily available ahead of obtaining the required resource consents. Technology for sites further down the coast could be a decade away due to more challenging weather, he said.

Takitimu Seafoods employees gave the company a promising start to its rebranded life, hauling in a 230kg northern blue fin tuna, *NZ Herald* reported. Steve Harvey, skipper of *FV Danielle*, said it was great pulling up the giant tuna off Hawke's Bay coast. "I've been doing

it for 28 years and I still get a real buzz when we get something like this. It's a real morale booster for the crew." Harvey said they were lucky to be able to bring in a fish of this size. "It's normally these couple of months between March and April when we see the bigger fish, but they are normally too powerful and strong for our gear to compete with them." Ngāti Kahungunu purchased Hawke's Bay Seafoods earlier this year, subsequently rebranding it. General manager Marcus D'Esposito said catching the tuna was a great start to Takitimu Seafood's launch. "Now we will send the fish to the factory where we will process and package them to send it off to Japan. Within 24 hours these fish will be at a Japanese fish market being sold and it all comes down to what the price is on the day to see what we get, it could be anything between \$10,000 and \$100,000, but by the look of fish it could be worth a bit." Being on a percentage wage, the crew earn what they catch. The more fish and the bigger they are, the more they will earn. "Who knows, we might get lucky again?" said Harvey.



First mate Mike Dean and skipper Steve Harvey (right) work to keep the massive tuna under ice. Photo, Warren Buckland.

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