

PAUA INDUSTRY COUNCIL Ltd

NEWSLETTER 13 – DECEMBER 2008

'The gods do not deduct from man's allotted span the hours spent in fishing' Babylonian Proverb

The quote has a truth at its core which all fishermen recognise. On the other hand it seems very likely that dealing with all the baggage that being a commercial fisherman entails, most certainly does reduce that allotment of time.

Probably not the space in one newsletter to list all the things that detracts from your ability to simply go fishing to support your family. You are subject to many of the 8,000 regulations on MFish books. You contribute to the \$35million which MFish trousers annually from Industry. You fill out enough paperwork each year to re-forest a small country. However you also work in one of the most environmentally sound industries going.

Wild stock paua fishing in New Zealand has all the ingredients to become a star performer – our harvest costs are low, we do negligible damage to the marine environment, we don't by-catch any other species, we don't harvest anything that is under the minimum legal size and we have the ability to replace what we harvest via reseedling.

But there are two matters that stand in our way – the first being the levels of poaching that still exists and the second is the changing market place and our reluctance to change the paradigm we fish under.

We hope 2009 is the year where our industry starts looking for ways to maximize the value from our fisheries. It might mean that we have to change our 'modus operandi' so we can supply a different market segment but we have to open our eyes. Over the last 20 years the cray fishing industry has complete reinvented what it does with its catch and look at the boom times they are currently enjoying.

It's up to the industry to decide our future and agree on some strategic direction so one of the key projects for PICL in 2009 will be around this theme.

We wish you and your families all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Access Exclusion for Customary Purposes

Loss of coastal access and the consequent threat to fish-stock sustainability by the fishing effort displacement continues to be the most serious immediate threat our fisheries face.

Mataitai applications continue to flow in with no sign that the Ministry of Fisheries has yet managed to reconcile their legal requirements under the Fisheries Act with their obligations under the Customary Fishing regulations.

The whole issue of spatial access and its ramifications for the core Mfish function of enabling sustainable utilisation of fisheries is about to be illuminated nicely.

In Pau6, on the South Island West Coast, 11 mataitai reserves are to be applied for in the South while at the same time the West Coast MPA forum has identified the Northern area between the Heaphy River and Kahurangi Point a preferred candidate site for an MPA/Marine Reserve.

These proposed closures will cover all of the commercially viable coastal area for paua diving.

If they all go ahead, and we have no reason to expect that they won't, Pau6 will cease to support any commercial level of paua fishing. The only Quota owners in the Pau6 QMA are the Crown and Ngai Tahu.

So to satisfy political imperatives Ngai Tahu will have the value of their Settlement in the Pau6 QMA eliminated and the Crown will lose the opportunity to sell its holdings with a consequent loss to taxpayers.

Further there is an opportunity loss for the NZ economy here.

Past stock assessments have indicated that the Pau6 fishery will fish sustainably at 4 to 5 times the current TACC, any TACC increase would have been captured by the current quota owners.

Incoming ministers, Fisheries and Conservation, need to take a good hard look at this mess and sort it out.

Monthly Harvest Returns

Much of the reporting and data collection work required by Mfish is handled under contract by the Industry owned organisation Fishserve.

Fishserve is continually assessing its operations to seek more efficient and cost effective ways to do things. For some time now it has been possible for ACE holders to file their Monthly Harvest Returns electronically. This is an effort to save time and money for both the ACE holder and of course Fishserve.

At the moment you are billed \$28.13 per month for your MHR if you choose to fill out the MHR return by hand, plus of course postage. Should you file the same return electronically it will cost... nothing. Remarkably, over half the Paua ACE holders on the ACE Register still do manual returns at an annual cost of \$337.56 plus 12 lots of postage.

A further benefit to you of switching to an electronic return is that the FishServe website will instantly alert you to any mistakes you might make as you are filling out the MHR. It will also acknowledge receipt by e-mail straight away. If you make a mistake on a manual return however, it will be returned by mail to you for correction, but is not deemed to be received by MFish until the corrected version is returned to Fishserve. Should your corrected return arrive after the 15th of the month you could be liable for an infringement notice.

MFish have recently upgraded the system that allows them to track the receipt of MHR returns which will allow them to monitor this more easily.

So we strongly urge you to polish your single finger typing skills and register with Fishserve for the submission of electronic MHR returns.

Easily done by downloading the application form from the Fishserve website (www.fishserve.co.nz/services). There are links to all the downloadable forms. The form you will need is the *Application to register for online services* or you can call Fishserve on 04 460 9555 and they will post it out to you.



Meet the Ministers who's in and who's out

As a result of the National Party victory at the November elections we now have a new set of faces fronting the Ministry of Fisheries and the Department of Conservation.

FISHERIES

The new Minister for Fisheries, Hon Phil Heatley, replaces Labour's Jim Anderton whose parting gift to the fishing industry was the attempted demolition of the inshore netting industry and whose time in charge was marked by litigation and a deteriorating relationship between fisheries stakeholder groups and Mfish.

Phil Heatley has been the opposition spokesman for fisheries for six years. Phil is 41 years old. He was born, raised and educated in Whangarei. In 1990 he completed a Masters with honours degree majoring in Horticultural Engineering. After finishing his studies he returned to Whangarei, which is now his electorate. In 1993 he worked voluntarily with an international relief agency aboard a hospital ship and when in port jointed the crew to undertake medical, agricultural and construction work in developing countries.

He returned to NZ in 1995 and worked as a Professional Engineer for a NZ Dairy Board subsidiary. Nationally, Phil was responsible for working on behalf of the dairy industry in relation to the Resource Management Act (1991). Phil's personal interests include boating and fishing amongst other things.

So coming from a varied and practical background we have a minister who has stated that the Quota Management System is a solid foundation for managing our fisheries and that he recognises the fishing industry as a critical part of the New Zealand economy. He is committed to seeking more efficient delivery of services from Mfish with more of its resources directed to frontline policing and scientific research.

SeaFICs brief to this Minister pointed out that there is now a ratio of 2.7 commercial fishing vessels per Mfish employee, including observers, indicating that next year will be a busy one for him indeed.

CONSERVATION

Labours previous Conservation Ministers, Chris Carter and Steve Chadwick pushed a hard line and doctrinaire approach to Marine Conservation. It was expensive, divisive and in the end failed to deliver what they had planned. The incoming Minister, Honourable Tim Groser, we hope will bring a more inclusive and rational approach to the job.

He was born in Perth, Scotland and came to New Zealand with his

parents in 1958. After completing his education at Victoria University where he obtained First Class Honours, he served as a policy adviser in a number of key departments including Treasury, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Prime Minister's Advisory Group.

He was New Zealand's Chief Negotiator in the GATT Uruguay Round – which brought agriculture into the system of world trade rules for the first time and conferred substantial benefits on the NZ economy.

Until recently he was NZ's Ambassador to the World Trade Organisation, and Chair of Agricultural Negotiations for the WTO. Tim was elected to Parliament as a List MP in the 2005 General Election and again this year.

Here are some of National's policy statements on the role of DOC, which Tim Groser will be charged with putting into practice:

1. DOC is undermining the QMS. DOC's bulldozing of marine reserve proposals is a frustration to both the recreational and commercial sectors as the 'fight for access' is making the 'right to allocation' irrelevant.

In our view Labour's drive to lock up 10% of the whole marine area has no foundation in reason or science but is simply a slogan. Marine Reserves are there to protect marine diversity. If there is some tourism or educational benefit that is even better, but the primary reason for them is biodiversity protection. They are not a 'fisheries management tool' they are a 'biodiversity protection tool'.

We support their use in certain circumstances, but where science tells us that biodiversity protection justifies it.

We do not support DOC being both the player and referee in reserve proposals, driving them through and ignoring the public and fishers

2. Marine Reserves and Protected Areas.

- Amend the Marine Reserves Act to prevent DOC being both the applicant and decision-maker.
- Give fishers a direct say in the decisions and location of marine reserves.

We should also note that Tims other Portfolio responsibilities include Minister of Trade and Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs which gives an indication that DOC may be required to perform a bit better than it has.

On the political front at least we have reason to be optimistic in the coming year.

Skipper's Ticket

Are you looking to gain your skippers ticket? Nelson School of Marine Studies (Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology – NMIT) are running four courses in 2009 for both the Local Launch Master (LLO) and Inshore Launch Master (ILM). You can visit their website www.nmit.ac.nz and their contact details are ph 0800 422 733 or email them on fisheries@nmit.ac.nz

Start dates: 29th January, 30th April, 30 July and 22 October.

The first two days are the workplace first aid course and this course runs on a Thursday/Friday. LLO runs for five weeks and ILM (with the radar) runs for 6 weeks (add 2 days for first aid).



Webcams

If you want to have a look what the weather is doing in various parts of NZ have a look at www.takeabreak.co.nz.

恭賀新禧

Happy New Year

The Chinese New Year, we have all heard about it, most of us fish to it and the majority of the paua exported goes to customers who will be observing it. It would probably be handy to know something about it then – so why is the Chinese New Year different to ours?

The Chinese calendar is a lunisolar, that is it divides the year up according to a mixture of lunar and solar observations. The solar year is used to number the months, while the lunar year gives dates. In the 11th month the Sun passes its Winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere, Chinese New Year is celebrated on the second new moon after Winter solstice (essentially the start of their spring). Of the 9 or so traditional festivals observed, Chinese New Year is the most important. It is a time when families from near and far travel to be together for the occasion. It is usually held at, or very, near the home of the most senior family member and lasts from between three and 15 days.

Fortunately for us, banqueting forms a very important part of this celebration. Even more fortunately, fish and shellfish are considered a vital ingredient for a New Year banquet.

One of the reasons is that in Chinese the word “fish” and the word “surpluses” are homophones, that is they sound identical though the spelling is different (think “pair” and “pear”) and a surplus for the coming year is highly desirable. To reinforce this concept of future surpluses, some fish is often left over from the main feast to be eaten in following days. Fish is also esteemed for its health and vitality giving properties.

Our paua and abalone generally are processed to fit with the New Year festival.

Between 60 and 70% of our catch is destined for Chinese New Year celebrations. In earlier times those living inland could only get marine fish if it had been preserved by drying or salting. With the advent of canning a whole new market became available, so now, much of our paua is canned to meet that traditional market. The festival dictates much of our fishing patterns, there is an urgency to fill Chinese New Year orders early in our season.

If our product is not out of the water and processed by Christmas it will miss the last date for shipping by sea and so have to be flown at a much higher freight rate.

If it is not caught by early January it will arrive too late for the New Year market and so have to be sold when the demand is lower. Which is why your marketers start getting on your case if the seasons start is slow for whatever reason!

The implications are that we should look to managing our fishery and catch patterns to meet that market demand. Future New Year dates are:

2009	2010	2011	2012
Jan 26	Feb 14	Feb 3	Jan 23

Operation Paid Development

Earlier this year Operation Paid (covered extensively in the last newsletter) dealt a huge blow to organised illegal paua fishing operations in the North Island.

The use of an undercover enforcement officer to penetrate the diver gangs and marketing networks proved a powerful weapon for the Ministry.

In a development which is a very real indication of just how seriously the country now takes fish thieving, that an undercover officer has been named New Zealander of the year by North and South magazine in their environmental awards section.

For obvious reasons, not the least of which was the heavy involvement of gangs in the bust, the officer is not identified.

The operation caught a very large number of baddies, some of who have already been imprisoned.

For the rest, it will mean a spread of suspicion and paranoia which will mean poaching networks will be looking over their shoulder not knowing who they can trust from amongst their own ranks.

The Paua Industry applauds North and South's choice of New Zealander of the Year and welcomes it as a measure of how seriously such environmental crimes are now taken.

Paua Knives

Wild Blue have stainless steel paua knives on special for \$40. Have a look at www.wildblue.co.nz and click on KNIVES



Repairing a Wetsuit

If you are looking to make repairs to your wetsuit have a look at the free advice on www.wildblue.co.nz/gear/wetsuitrepairs.



The screenshot shows the Wild Blue website interface. The header includes the logo 'wildblue' and the tagline 'FREEDIVING & SPEARFISHING'. A navigation menu lists: Home, Trips, News, Fish Tips & Tricks, Gear, Info, Reports, Articles, Videos, FAQs, Contact. The main content area is titled 'Wetsuit Repairs' and contains the text: 'Wetsuit tears are an inevitable and frustrating part of diving – The tear in this suit for example resulted in severe frostbite of the right buttock, a limb and traumatized dive buddy and rendered the scupper largely redundant. Most tears however can be easily fixed at home if you use the right glue and technique.' Below the text is a photograph of a person's hand holding a piece of black neoprene wetsuit material.

Fishing Stunted Stocks

PICL are working with MFish and PauaMacs 3 & 4 to develop methodologies that could allow fish downs of stunted stocks. This would involve harvesting stunted stocks to collect data to see if there is a morphometric marker similar to that which they have identified in Australian stunted abalone stocks (the ratio of shell length to shell height). If this does exist then a two-dimensional harvest tool could be developed which allowed some utilisation of these stocks. The key is the shell height as this is proving a better indicator of the age (and therefore maturity) of abalone. While it is paramount that we protect stocks to ensure they have adequate years of spawning before they can be harvested it is a waste when stunted stocks never reach the minimum legal size and die of old age before they can be harvested.

Notified User Documentation Rules Update

There are around 8,000 fisheries regulations. Some of them seem a bit pointless, but if they are in force we are obliged to observe them. One of these which has raised its head in Pau7 recently is an example.

When a diver holding his own fishing permit uses that permit to catch paua on a registered vessel other than their own, and the vessels owner is not on board at the time, then a 'Notified User' application must be lodged with Fishserve. Most permit holders should be aware of this.

However at a recent diver training day held in Pau7 an MFish Compliance Officer informed those present that all permit holding divers using a registered vessel other than their own must make a Notified User application irrespective of whether the vessel owner was on board or not.

Section 103(b) of the Fisheries Act states that:

No person shall use a fishing vessel, or any tender of that fishing vessel, to take fish, aquatic life or seaweed for sale in New Zealand fisheries waters, unless –

(b) That person is named in that register as an operator of, or a notified user in relation to, that vessel;

The Mfish interpretation is being challenged by Fishserve who are awaiting a legal opinion to settle the matter.

However at this stage the Ministry legal advice is that their interpretation is correct and that a Notified User application is needed whether the vessel owner is present or not.

PICL advice to permit holders must be that you should follow MFish requirements and make a Notified User application when you use your fishing permit to take fish from any registered vessel which is not your own regardless of whether the owner is on board or not.

We note that the application need only be made once in respect of each vessel used.

Our thanks to Nadine and Dave of Pau7 for their work on this one and bringing it to our attention.

MFish Prioritisation of Projects

For the first time MFish have included the industry in their process whereby they prioritise which projects can be dealt with over the coming year. MFish can only do so many regulation changes and so many TAC reviews each year due to both MFish resourcing and PCO (Parliamentary Counsel Office) resources (the PCO draft the regulations).

PICL have been lobbying for paua projects to get on to this list but we are also competing with all other sectors that want changes made. We have just heard that the paua projects to make it on to this list are

The changing of the quota system from green-weight to meat-weight in Pau4. This removes the recovery rate

issue on in Pau4 and will allow the low recovery stocks to be utilized.

Removing regulation 29(3) of the amateur fishing regulations for paua, and setting an accumulation limit for paua (ten for amateur fishing) in the amateur fishing regulations.

This eliminates the opportunity for recreational fishers to use the accumulation defence as an excuse for non-compliance. The benefit is that it will make it easier for MFish to prosecute offending (poachers) because they will no longer be required to prove paua was accumulated over one day.

That's about it for this newsletter. As always if you have issues or information you need to discuss with PIC, contact Jeremy or Storm or your PauaMac PIC representative director. We would like to wish you and your families a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Yours sincerely...



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