

GET CERTIFIED: Māori seafood school

Getting a qualification in Māori seafood isn't a dry intellectual exercise – in fact you stand a good chance of getting wet.

Customary fishing courses on offer from the Seafood Industry Training Organisation (SITO) put the emphasis on the practical—with trainees likely to find themselves knee-deep in water learning a fishing technique or surveying a species.

Following the success of Certificate courses in customary management and customary practices, the latest course teaches the skills needed by Tangata Kaitiaki and Tangata Tiaki—who manage customary fishing in an area on behalf of tangata whenua.

Two more courses are planned, including a higher-level diploma in customary fishing.

MFish Customary Relationship Manager, Carl Ross, says the new National Certificate in Seafood Māori (Tangata Kaitiaki/Tiaki) is a collaboration between SITO and MFish.

“Being a Tangata Kaitiaki or Tangata Tiaki is about more than filling out the paperwork, and this course is about more than a lecture and a test. It's a first-of-its-kind qualification that teaches by tackling real issues,” says Carl.

“There is no cost to trainees, and no written exam. People are formally assessed on how well they participate in workshops and discussions.

“The job is such an important one and we have great respect for those who take it on. They do not just manage the fishing, they manage the fishery.”

CUSTOMARY FISHING GUARDIANS

New Zealand's customary fishing regulations allow iwi and hapū to manage their non-commercial fishing in a way that best fits their local practices, without having a major effect on the fishing rights of others.

When the government sets the total catch limits for fisheries each year, it allows for this customary use.

Tangata Kaitiaki and Tangata Tiaki (they are generally known as Tangata Kaitiaki in the North and Chatham Islands, and

The Aotea Harbour group used the course to work on draft bylaws for their mātaihai reserve





Ngā Hapū o Aotea Moana Kaitiaki Management Group members are the first in New Zealand to earn the new Certificate qualification.

Tangata Tiaki in the South and Stewart Islands—but local variations of these titles can be used) are responsible for authorising, reporting on and managing customary fisheries in their local area or rohe moana.

They are nominated to the voluntary position by the iwi, hapū or whānau with agreed tangata whenua status over that rohe moana, and their appointments are confirmed by the Minister of Fisheries.

Tangata Kaitiaki and Tangata Tiaki who choose to do the course earn it at a weekend workshop on a local marae or another community venue. They learn about their legal duties and sustainable management by working on solutions to local problems.

The first graduates are a group of Tangata Kaitiaki from Tainui and Waikato iwi who manage the area around Aotea Harbour—the Ngā Hapū o Aotea Moana Kaitiaki Management Group.

Secretary Janeva Thomson, of Ngāti Haua and Ngāti Whakamarurangi, says their September weekend on Motakotako Marae was fulfilling, and even fun.

“It was fantastic, and done in such a way that it didn’t seem daunting. And it was enjoyable for everyone from younger people to kaumātua.

“It gives you a lot of confidence. There’s a lot more to it than writing out permits. Learning about legislation gives us an opportunity to speak knowledgeably in the seafood industry.

“It’s also about having a true knowledge of the life in our harbour—the environment and biology of the species, which is quite fascinating. The opportunity is there, you just have to take the time.”

The course can be customised to the needs and experience of each group of trainees, with follow-up tutorials if required.

RECOGNISING SKILLS

SITO’s Māori Sector Manager, Victor Goldsmith, says the courses in its National Certificate in Seafood Māori series are designed to meet a call from Māori for qualifications that revitalise customary practices and recognise modern management skills.

“Māori want to know how to work with everything from traditional fishing implements to modern legislative tools,” says Victor.

“These national courses have been developed with customary experts from around the country. They recognise regional variations, so trainers must contract with local hapū or iwi. Local kaumātua or other experts must verify trainees’ work.”

The courses fit into the National Qualifications Framework. Credits earned in one can lead on to or be credited towards another. People who already have significant knowledge can be assessed without having to attend a course.

For more information on SITO training courses go to: www.sito.co.nz/st-qualifications

