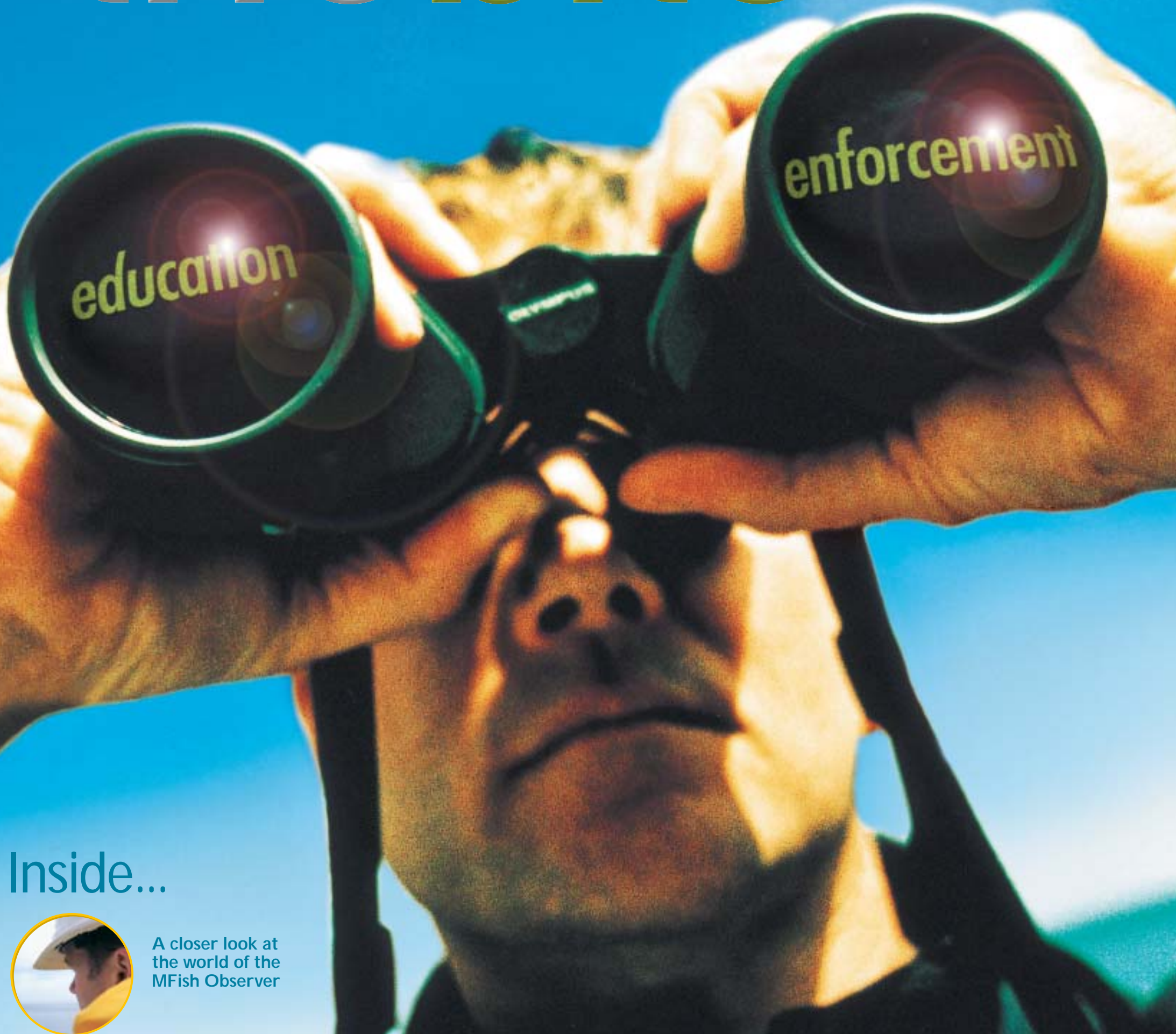


theb bite

NEWS FROM MFish SUMMER 2001/02



Inside...



A closer look at the world of the MFish Observer



Developing a code of practice for dealing with sharks



Unravelling the mystery of Paterson Inlet Scallops

New focus on fishing cheats

A combination of factors has led MFish to harden its approach to enforcing recreational fishing rules. This new strategy will give more "teeth" to enforcing recreational fishing rules, help sustain popular fish stocks, no longer compromise volunteers' safety, and boost MFish's public education role.

Continued inside...



MINISTRY OF FISHERIES
Te Tautiaki i nga tini a Tangaroa



New focus on fishing cheats

...continued from front cover



“We’re looking at a combination of factors,” said Dave Wood, MFish’s National Compliance Manager. “There’s growing pressure on popular fish stocks, together with significant changes in society, plus new fishery laws.

“Changes in society have led to some people being more assertive, more aware of their rights and at times being very aggressive, right to the point of threatening physical action against authority figures such as Fishery Officers.

“Legal changes, with the full implementation of the Fisheries Act 1996, mean that we can now issue the public with infringement fees of up to \$500, a huge change.

“The other factor is that voluntary compliance by recreational fishers is just not working. Frankly, there seems to be a general view that if you take a few extra fish nothing much will happen. However, those few extra fish add up to a great many over time and impact on the fish stocks significantly.

“The result of all these factors put together is that we’ve decided to harden up and refocus our recreational fishing work.”

Until now this work has been spearheaded by a group of volunteers, Honorary Fishery Officers, who have combined education and enforcement

roles. Their work has been co-ordinated by warranted Fishery Officers, and over time, flaws have emerged in the system.

The volunteer HFOs have faced increasing anger from some members of the public, and some have even been threatened physically.

“That’s not on. There’s no way MFish should let volunteers’ safety be compromised,” said Mr Wood.

As well, the introduction of infringement fees mean that fee notices must be compiled meticulously, since they impose a significant penalty and could result in court action.

“To expect an increased level of administration from volunteers who have given up free time to help us out means that we need to provide them with better support,” said Mr Wood.

“After carefully considering the situation we’ve come up with a new strategy: to separate out the education and enforcement roles, and to enhance each role.

“In future, the education role will be carried out by a new network of volunteers, now being established.

“The enforcement role will be carried out by paid Fishery Officers working closely with a

specialist group of Honorary Fishery Officers who will have significantly more training and support than they’ve been given in the past.

“We believe this new strategy will be more effective, improve education and enforcement and, importantly, give our volunteers the safety they deserve.”

Mr Wood said volunteers continuing as HFOs would receive better training programmes, improved uniforms and equipment, and would work in co-ordinated teams, with supervised fieldwork.

As this extra support and training would take more time and effort from full time staff, the ratio of Fishery Officer Co-ordinators and volunteers had been reduced.

Inevitably, this means that in some areas the number of volunteers has had to be limited. It has been suggested that some current HFOs may be suited for the purely educational role in the new education network.

In depth

Setting course 2003 – 2008

Identifying goals and working towards and achieving them are significant factors in any organisation’s success. It’s something which MFish has consistently followed.

Three years after the Ministry was established, we set down our goals for the next five years in a Strategic Plan. It’s been a successful period which is drawing to a close, in 2003. It’s now time to look ahead to the next five years, from 2003 to 2008.

While the next five year Strategic Plan will set the Ministry’s course, it won’t be a completely fresh start.

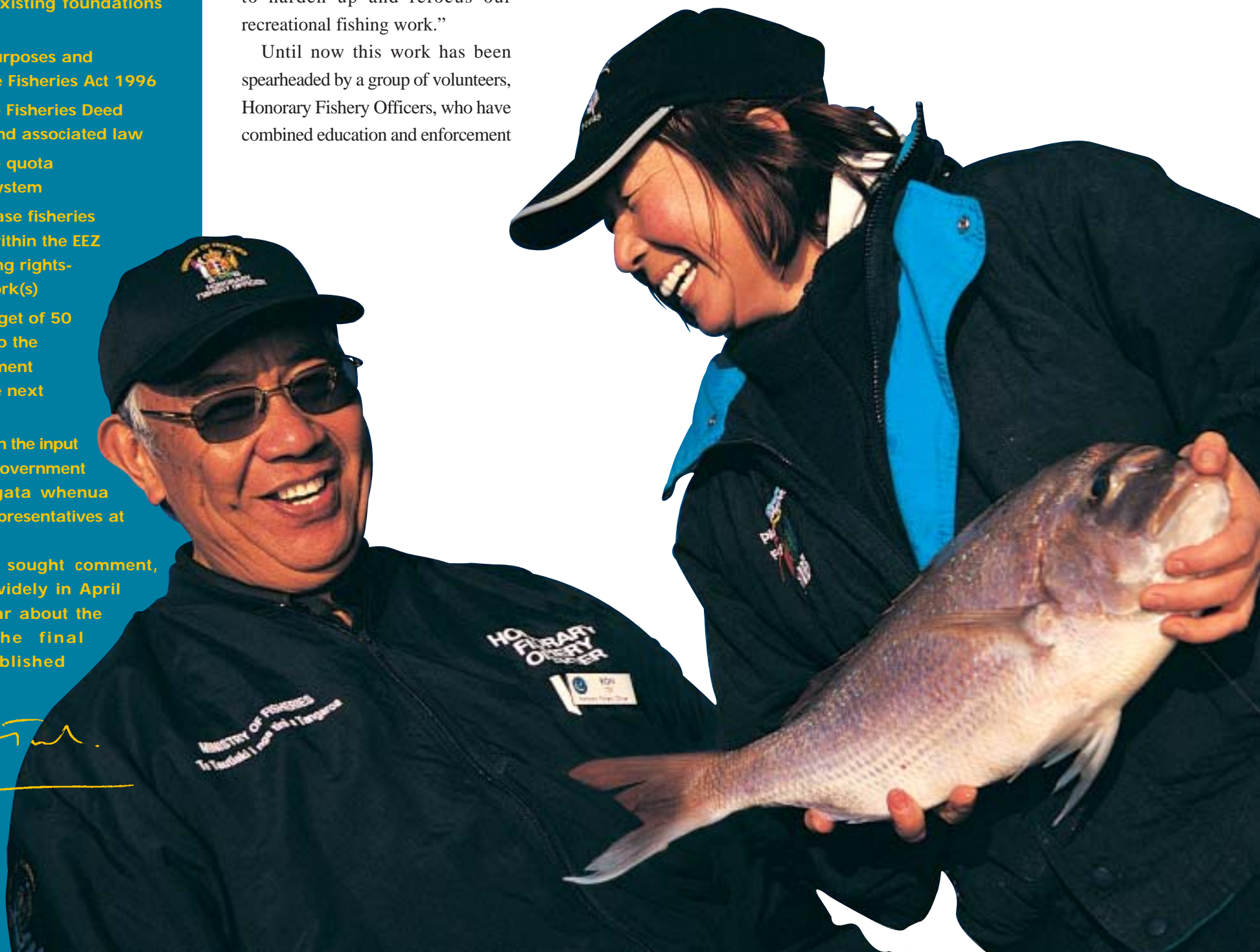
The updated Plan will provide a strategy to guide our business planning, decision-making and our fisheries management services as our contribution to fishing management. It will build on the existing foundations and look forward:

- retaining the purposes and principles of the Fisheries Act 1996
- maintaining the Fisheries Deed of Settlement and associated law
- maintaining the quota management system
- continuing to base fisheries management within the EEZ upon the existing rights-based framework(s)
- meeting the target of 50 new species into the quota management system over the next three years.

It is important to gain the input and views of key government departments, tangata whenua and stakeholder representatives at this early stage.

I have already sought comment, and will consult widely in April and May next year about the initial draft. The final Plan will be published in August 2002.

Warwick Tuck
Chief Executive





Under Observation

Rain lashed the deck. Heavy cloud obscured the bridge. A wave loomed four metres overhead as he hesitated in the hatchway, certain the long grey shape that had just dropped into the hold was an albatross, but wary of letting the watchful crew see him observing them.

This is not a scene from a novel, it's everyday work for a vital group of MFish staff. MFish Observers sail on commercial fishing vessels, collecting catch effort, biological and other information. Once on the ship they are there for 24 hours a day, usually for five weeks at a time, sometimes up to three months.

It's a tough job, often dangerous. While Observers' task is to collect data, at times they may come across a matter breaching the regulations. Then they are obliged to document it, possibly give statements to Fishery Officers and, on occasion, act as witnesses in legal proceedings. This means Observers can find

themselves in a very uncomfortable position on board, made to feel unwelcome and an outsider.

"It can be that no one wants to know you, or it can be that you're treated as just another person – within the first day you suss it out," said Dave Wrightson, one of MFish's most experienced Observers.

"You can get aggro, but it's all about how you carry yourself on board. You have to remember that you need the crews' cooperation. If you want to be a bit of a Hitler you can, but then other avenues can close down. That approach has never worked for me.

"On a six week trip, for example,

you can go through two weeks of finding out, two weeks of hard slog, and it can be that the last two weeks are a danger time, because that's when people will be getting tired, and tense. By-catch can be an issue. The crew may try and get a dead one past you.

"You're not able to spend all the time watching, so you get to know the crew and the environment and get a feeling for what's normal. Often people behave differently if they have something they don't want you to know about.

"If you find an infringement you will always be recording, bringing notice to the captain, explaining the

matter and reminding him of his obligations.

"Usually one discussion is enough, but if it isn't you would bring it up a second time and also contact shore staff.

"A lot of diplomacy is needed. If you get tired you can see things that aren't there. You have to keep an open mind and, if you have good rapport, discuss it. It happens often enough that things aren't as you've been told. At the end of the day it's people...if you've got a good relationship there's nothing you can't do.

"Weather can be awkward, making things hard for safety. Fire is always a huge concern, and serious injury can put you on the line, though we all have first aid skills.

"But the job's a huge challenge, you'd go a long way before you've done it all twice. Though I may say the long timers tend to have developed a bulletproof exterior."

Protecting New Zealand

In September this year a national programme, **Protect New Zealand**, was launched aimed at building public awareness of the importance of protecting New Zealand from pest attack.

It targets awareness of pre-border, border and post-border biosecurity measures and responsibilities, emphasising the responsibilities of individuals as well as government agencies, including MFish.

The campaign launch coincided with the release of a national issues paper, 'Developing a Biosecurity Strategy for New Zealand' which forms the basis of nation-wide consultations that will feed into a final Biosecurity Strategy for release in December 2002.

The idea is that a biosecurity strategy will:

- Provide an overall direction for biosecurity in NZ
- Give guidance to all involved
- Assess biosecurity risks
- Provide a framework for biosecurity decision-making
- Strengthen and set priorities for biosecurity programmes
- Recommend a legislative framework
- Recommend appropriate structural arrangements
- Identify responsibilities for action.



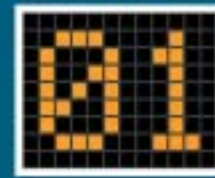
SUBMISSIONS CLOSE
ON 31 DECEMBER 2001.

A Guide to making submissions is included in the Issues paper and is also available on the website:
www.biostrategy.govt.nz

NZ



WORLD



Sustainable utilisation is the goal for the MFish international team when it sits down to negotiate agreements. For that reason, a win for New Zealand is a win for the world – because it underlines the importance of sustainable utilisation.

MFish's International Manager Jane Willing says in the last quarter of 2001, New Zealand has worked hard in a number of forums, developing key principles for sustainable utilisation of fisheries.

There's been the recent (October) annual CCAMLR negotiations, in which New Zealand worked with other countries to ensure the continuing sustainability of the toothfish fisheries, setting high environmental standards, continuing scientific research in Antarctica and providing access for New Zealand vessels.

Although the recent CCSBT meeting was unable to agree on an overall catch limit for southern bluefin tuna, important progress was made in bringing the large fishing interests of Chinese Taipei and Korea into the management framework. New Zealand will continue to fish within its previously agreed national allocation.

Sustainability was also the theme of a recent OECD meeting, which considered the ties between trade and sustainability.

"The OECD Committee looked at the links between the use of subsidies and fisheries resources, and the key sustainability indicators that should be used in fisheries management," said Jane, who attended the meeting.

"By sustainability indicators, I mean using the internationally recognised definition of sustainable development, which has three pillars, economic, biological and social, all of which are linked."

MFish has also represented New Zealand in negotiating a range of new international fisheries organisations, such as a recent meeting in Madagascar which was negotiating a new Indian Ocean fisheries management arrangement.

"We have a twofold opportunity

with new international arrangements," said Jane. "One is to make sure the arrangements enshrine robust sustainability principles, and the other opportunity is to protect New Zealand's utilisation interests in the high seas area."

New Zealand also attended the UN Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO) conference in Reykjavik, Iceland, on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem, which developed international principles to govern ecosystem management.

In its Statement to the Conference, the New Zealand delegation, which included MFish Deputy Chief Executive Stan Crothers and Chief Policy Advisor Jonathan Peacey, pushed for specific issues.

The New Zealand delegation told the conference that lack of knowledge must not put off management actions to conserve and sustainably use marine ecosystems. It called for the removal of incentives and warned that global reduction in fishing capacity must not be done in a way which simply displaced fishing effort from one region to another. It said that the need to develop ecosystem-based fisheries management approaches should not be used as a reason to put off implementing the single stock-based management measures needed to ensure the sustainability of fish stocks.

Jane Willing says an emerging theme in the international negotiations is the need to control illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

"Because MFish has given the New Zealand fishing industry a very strong asset in the form of the quota management system, it has been able to invest further and build on the asset," she said.

"For that reason it has capitalised on its investment offshore. The New Zealand fishing industry is now looking to expand both in the high seas and in other countries.

"We must be aware that, as the New Zealand industry grows it will look to move elsewhere, into areas where there are opportunities where its unique skills can be used to generate return, for example, deep sea demersal trawling. There is, however, a risk associated with situations where international growth occurs in locations where there are fewer regulations or lower environmental thresholds.

"New Zealand vessels are tightly controlled on the high seas through a permit system which ensures we fish on the high seas in a responsible manner. However, if vessel operators consider the costs of those obligations we impose on New Zealand fishing become too great relative to other countries, they have the incentive to reflag their operations to those countries.

"The risk is getting some of the key classic features of globalisation, where fishing effort moves to areas and countries for economic reasons. Unfortunately, those economic reasons can conflict with sustainability, where the fishing effort moves into jurisdictions with the less regulation and lower environmental standards.

"Because that is starting to happen, many international meetings are trying to work out ways to control IUU fishing throughout the world. Basically, trying to stop vessel operators using "flags of convenience" to circumvent conservation and management controls."

To try and combat unregulated fishing, New Zealand supported the adoption of the FAO Plan of Action looking at the control of unreported unauthorised fishing.

Deep concern about the fishing practices used to net the essential ingredient of that oriental delicacy, shark fin soup, has prompted action to make sure the rules are clear to fishers.

There were suggestions that a prevalent practice in pelagic fisheries was to remove fins from sharks and return them to the sea while they're still alive.

The Minister of Fisheries Pete Hodgson says the practice is nothing less than “abhorrent”. He has given strong direction that, if in fact it is occurring, it is to stop.

There is now legal clarification that, although fishing in general is exempt from the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act, when the Act applies in the circumstances in which sharks are caught, finned, and returned to the sea alive, it is an offence under specific provisions of the Animal Welfare Act.

MFish now plans to educate fishers about the issue of ‘finning’ live sharks. It has begun by working with representatives of Tuna New

Zealand Incorporated on a Code of Practice for dealing with sharks and ‘finning’. A draft has been circulated to all Tuna New Zealand members, and MFish has written to all commercial tuna longline fishers outlining the provisions of the Animal Welfare legislation

The thinking is that putting in

place a robust Code of Practice, in combination with provisions in the Animal Welfare Act, which provide enforceable rules if required, should ensure that sharks are treated humanely in our fisheries.

For the longer term, work has already begun on a National Plan

of Action for sharks to provide a framework for sustainable management of this vulnerable species. A number of shark species will be introduced into the Quota Management System over the next three years which will provide the means to manage these stocks at sustainable levels.



Ministry Milestones *please note that these may vary slightly

DATE	STAGE	DATE	STAGE
DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenders advertised for approved research projects (occurs in December, May and October) MFish initial position paper released for 1 April decisions 	JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MFish initial position paper on Review of Sustainability Measures released MFish consultation with sector groups on initial position paper
JANUARY/FEBRUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder submissions due on initial position paper for April decisions 	JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final submissions from sector groups on initial position paper due with Minister Sector Group written submissions on cost recovery levies due Cost recovery levies for fishing year commencing 1 October produced
FEBRUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft annual Business Plan distributed to stakeholders MFish advice to Minister on 1 April decisions 	AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MFish final advice paper on Review of Sustainability Measures provided to Minister with copies to sector groups Minister makes final decisions on TAC/TACCs for fishing year commencing 1 October
FEBRUARY/MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishery Assessment Working Groups (FAWG) meet 	SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Planning Groups meet to discuss research proposals
MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister makes final decisions on TAC/TACCs for fishing year commencing 1 April Annual Business Plan Plenary 	NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Coordinating Committee meets Mid year Plenary (Rock Lobster)
APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector Group submissions on Annual Business Plan due Minister's decisions on Business Plan for fishing year commencing 1 October 	DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research projects for following year agreed and presented by MFish Operational Policy management team
MAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishery Assessment Plenary Report from Fishery Assessment Plenary and production of Plenary document 		

Treaty Strategy Project update

In the last issue of "The Bite" we informed you of the MFish project developing a comprehensive Treaty Strategy for delivering on our obligations under the Fisheries Settlement and the Treaty. MFish is close to finalising the internal scoping work on the Treaty Strategy and hopes to begin discussions with iwi and hapu representatives on a regional basis early in 2002.

Work on the Treaty Strategy to date has involved assessing MFish's obligations arising from the fisheries settlement and the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Those obligations have formed the basis for development of a draft MFish Vision for the Ministry's Treaty Strategy – one that will hopefully interweave with the separate aims and aspirations of iwi and hapu for their fisheries.

The draft MFish Treaty Strategy Vision:

The Ministry of Fisheries is actively delivering on its fisheries settlement and Treaty obligations by achieving the following outcomes:

- MFish and tangata whenua working together to provide for the utilisation of fisheries resources while ensuring sustainability
- Tangata whenua managing customary fishing within their rohe moana
- Māori actively participating in commercial fishing
- Tangata whenua actively involved in wider fisheries management
- MFish recognising and providing for Māori use and management practices in the management of fisheries
- Active protection of the fisheries taonga.

The draft Vision will provide a useful starting point for discussions between MFish and Māori on the Treaty Strategy.

Central to the Ministry's initial thinking about the Treaty Strategy is the relationship between the Ministry and tangata whenua. Without strong functional relationships between the Ministry and iwi and hapu it will be very difficult to achieve the objectives set out in the draft Vision above.

MFish is committed to organising regional meetings with tangata whenua to initiate discussions on the Treaty Strategy. A focus for those discussions must be the ongoing nature of the relationship between MFish and tangata whenua in each region – what are our respective roles in respect of fisheries management and how will we engage with each other on a regular basis to achieve the overall objectives of the fisheries settlement?

The Ministry hopes to send out information regarding regional meetings to discuss the Treaty Strategy Project early in the new year. In the meantime, any questions on the project can be directed to Matthew Hooper or Terry Lynch at the Ministry of Fisheries in Wellington, phone (04) 470-2600.

Kaikoura Purse Seine closed area renegotiated

The purse seine fishing voluntary exclusion zone off the Kaikoura inshore coast has been rolled over for a further 12 months, from 1 October 2001 to 30 September 2002.

The Kaikoura Voluntary Purse Seine Agreement has been negotiated annually since 1992, between recreational and commercial fishers, and establishes a voluntary exclusion zone for purse seine fishing from the Hapuku River in the north to Spy Glass Point to the south. The zone extends one nautical mile offshore from the mean high water mark.

The agreement seeks to address the concerns of recreational kahawai fishers that, since the early 1980s, purse seine fishing has been too close to the Kaikoura coastline, seriously affecting their catch of kahawai within this area. The agreement for the 2001/2002 fishing year represents the tenth year of co-operation between recreational and commercial fishers in this area. Such co-operation is based on open discussions and an appreciation of each other's position.

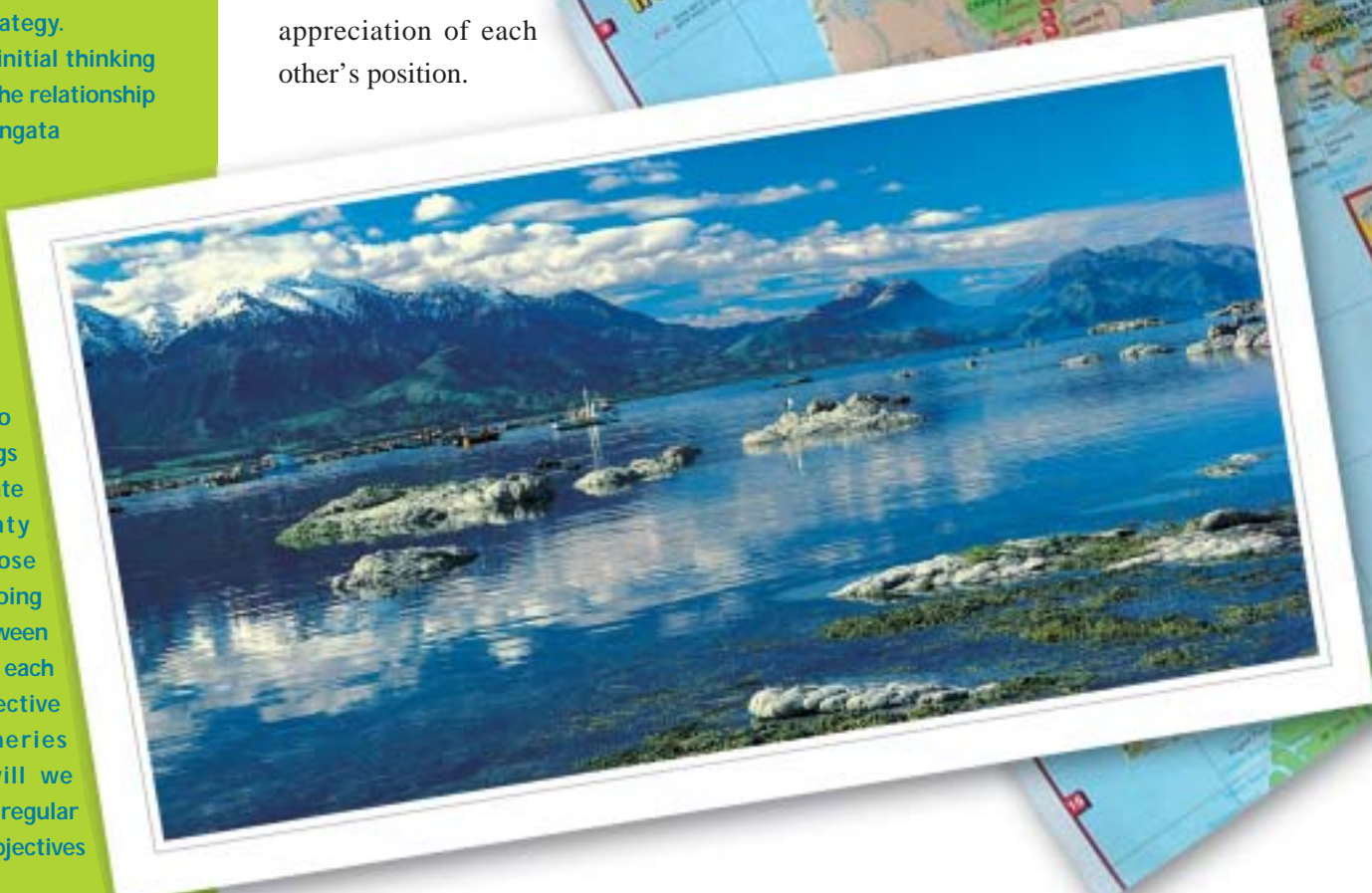
Salmon Conservation Area – Banks Peninsula

The recently negotiated Salmon at Sea Agreement provides for fishing restrictions in the Salmon Conservation Area off Banks Peninsula (SCA) for large fishing vessels during the period from 7 December 2001 to 14 February 2002.

The only large trawlers (23 metres or more in overall length or with a power rating of 250 kw or more) allowed to fish in the SCA during the period are the Austro Carina, Galatea, Hans, Ikawai, Tengawai, Ocean Pioneer and the Resolution.

The owners of the larger trawlers allowed to fish in the SCA have agreed to specific catch limits for salmon and for their fishing operations to be monitored by verifiers whilst they are in the SCA.

This year the industry will again co-ordinate the verifiers needed for Lyttelton based vessels while the Central South Island Fish and Game Council will co-ordinate those required for Timaru based vessels. Resources associated with the verifier programme will be provided by the North Canterbury and Central South Island Fish and Game Councils, New Zealand Salmon Anglers Associations and the Industry.



Gone, no address – Paterson Inlet Scallops

Paterson Inlet Scallops, formerly of Stewart Island, left no known address when they quietly flitted away. In fact, news of their mysterious disappearance took some time to filter through.

Reports of a dramatic decline in the scallop beds had steadily grown over the past year. Members of the public told us about it. Experienced, knowledgeable divers have reported not finding scallops, or only finding a few, despite searching through all the usual areas.

Eventually we were forced to conclude that the Paterson Inlet scallop stock has collapsed. The reason why is a mystery, and we're determined to unravel it and restore the scallops.

We developed a management options paper, and discussed it with tangata whenua and at publicly advertised meetings at Stewart Island and Invercargill in July this year.

The majority of the 37 submissions supported a temporary prohibition for two years on taking scallops from Paterson Inlet, and wanted to see research undertaken on possible disease and its causes, and on the scallop stock.

Because we are not certain of the reason for the decline in scallop stock, we supported a total prohibition. Closure will remove the fishing pressure from the stock, and allow an opportunity to assess the biological characteristics to better determine the appropriate management strategy for the stock when the fishery reopens.

The Minister of Fisheries, Pete Hodgson, has agreed to a two year temporary prohibition. Accordingly, a notice published in the New Zealand Gazette on 27 September 2001 prohibits the taking or possession of any scallops taken from Paterson Inlet, inside a line drawn from Ackers Point to Bullers Point, from 1 October 2001 until 30 September 2003.

As many submissions supported surveys for disease, or required surveys as a condition of their acceptance of the prohibition, we are expanding the work of a research

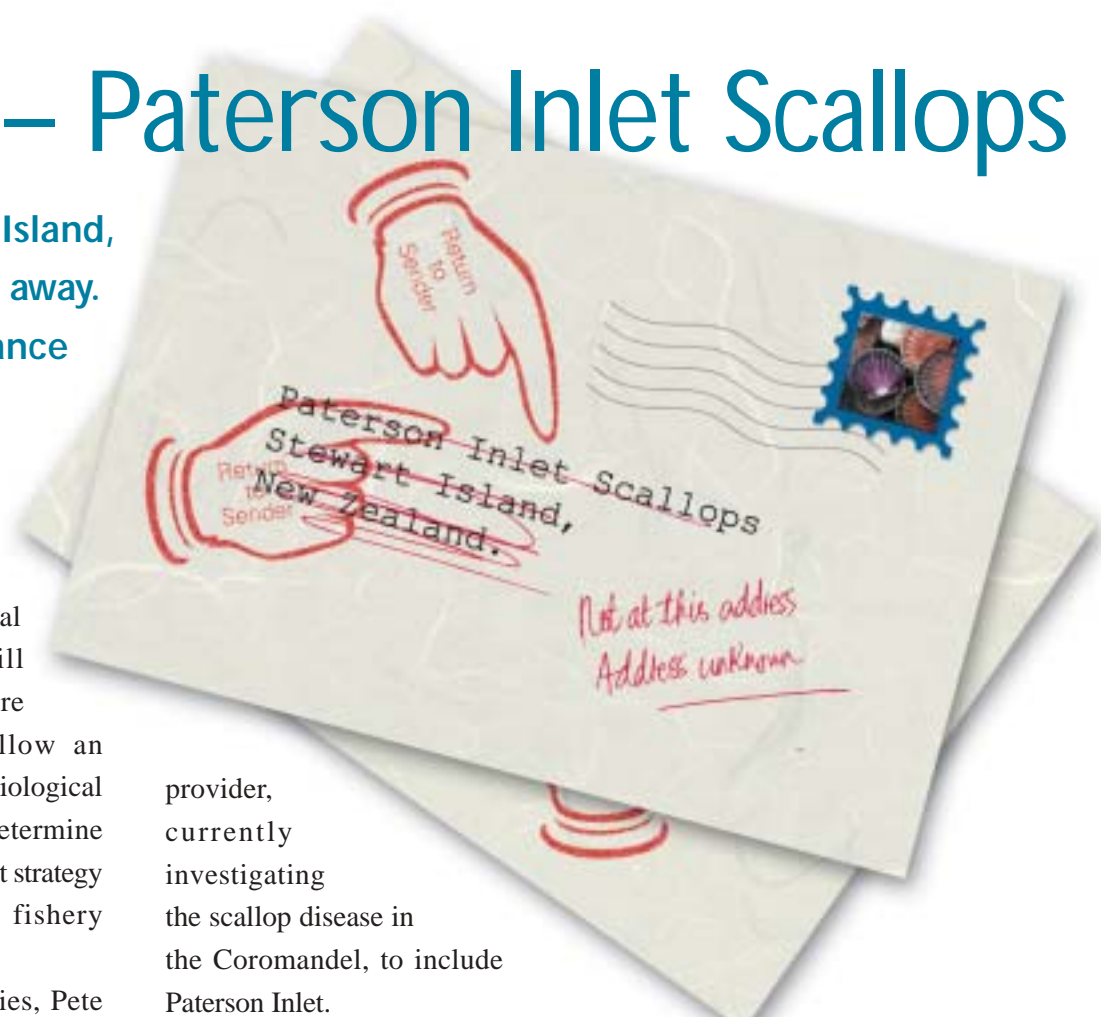
provider, currently investigating the scallop disease in the Coromandel, to include Paterson Inlet.

A research proposal is being developed aimed at providing improved information on the biological characteristics of the scallop stock, such as growth rates, sexual maturity and so on.

Submissions raised a number of other issues, including managing the reopening of the fishery; prohibiting taking scallops using scuba gear; shortening the scallop season; removing the two week overlap in March of the scallop and dredge oyster seasons; reducing the bag limit; and reseeded the scallop beds.

We intend to work with stakeholders involved in the Paterson Inlet fishery on these and other issues and the research results, to determine the most appropriate management for the stock in the future.

By the time the fishery reopens in October 2003 stakeholders and MFish will have had continuing discussion about the management of this fishery, which should improve relationships and knowledge as well as leading to better management of this fishery.



Community action on Kaipara Harbour

A community drawn together by common concern for the marine life around their district has sparked one of New Zealand's first Fisheries Plans, a new concept that allows stakeholders a substantial say in how a fishery is managed.

For some years, local concerns about depleting fisheries in the Northland community of Kaipara had led to conflict with and among commercial fishers.

The dispute found its way to the desk of the Minister of Fisheries, Pete Hodgson. He promptly called for a local solution to the

problem. So two years ago, a group of people from the community, commercial fishing and traditional fishing rights holders got together.

They formed a think tank and recently released a discussion document, which is being discussed at public meetings throughout Kaipara.

The discussion paper outlines separate Codes of Practice for recreational and commercial fishers, and the creation of separate quota

management areas for the Kaipara Harbour.

The group also recommends a compliance plan be drawn up and enforced in a joint effort between the Ministry of Fisheries and local communities, and that more monitoring and research be provided to support a two yearly review of the Fisheries Plan.

The end goal is to produce a locally supported Fisheries Plan, which will then be presented to MFish.

Chunking down paua management areas

Managing paua is different. MFish has found that the large management areas suitable for some fish species don't work for paua. For this reason we are now breaking down the former large paua management areas into smaller chunks.

Part of the reason for doing this is the nature of paua. They are in fact snails, and are a lot like land snails. Adult paua do not move very far or very fast. They eat seaweed much as a land snail eats cabbage. When paua reproduce, their eggs are released into the water and, when fertilised, become tiny free-swimming larvae, only floating around for about five days before settling on a rock and attaching.

Over the next few years, they slowly grow into adult paua and this means paua populations tend to be very localised and their characteristics, such as growth rates, and size at sexual maturity, vary over quite small distances. For instance, on a headland, paua may be fast growing and mature quickly, while in a bay not very far along the coast, they may grow more slowly and may not even reach the minimum legal harvesting size.

In the past, MFish has created large Quota Management Areas, such as PAU 2 which covers the lower half of the North Island. But it has emerged that these large areas are not ideal units for managing paua since research and management can't be tailored to areas that match the paua stocks.

It's clearly time to change. While the Quota Management Areas for paua won't change, a joint initiative between MFish and the commercial paua industry has seen much smaller reporting areas defined within the larger Quota Management Areas. For example, there are now 36 smaller reporting areas on the lower east coast of the North Island.

The boundaries of the new reporting areas are the result of

discussions between MFish, commercial divers, and research scientists from NIWA. This was quite a complex task since the areas had to reflect paua stocks with different characteristics, and allow paua fishers to tell easily which area they were fishing in.

We also needed to consider the places that research had already been done to make sure that one of the new boundaries didn't split it up the middle, and remain consistent with the boundaries of the old reporting areas so historical catch data could still be used.

In future, the Total Allowable Commercial Catches will still be set for the larger Quota Management Areas, just as before, but commercial divers will report their catches within these smaller areas, research will be

focused on the smaller areas, and commercial fishers have already begun to develop voluntary management initiatives for many of the smaller reporting areas.

Accurate reporting of commercial catch will allow new management options to be developed. Options discussed include:

- Increasing and/or decreasing the minimum legal size in some areas
- Voluntary closure of some micro-management areas for a period of time to allow recovery
- Rotational harvesting
- Enhancement/reseeding
- Utilisation of stunted stocks (stocks of paua that don't appear to ever reach the minimum legal size)
- Research to determine the effect of returning sub-legal paua to the seabed.

The new reporting areas have now been defined and entered into the catch/effort computer system. This means that from 1 October commercial paua fishers have been recording catch into the new areas.



First Fisheries Plan developing

When the Minister of Fisheries, Pete Hodgson, learned that the lucrative paua commercial fishing areas within the Marlborough Sounds were stressed out and needed urgent attention, he had two choices.

One was to take the traditional course of action and drastically cut the TACC.

The other was the new way: to involve stakeholders in the rebuilding process by encouraging them to develop a Fisheries Plan for PAU 7.

The new way was the choice he made.

The Challenger Paua Management Company, involving representatives from the commercial, customary, and recreational fishing sectors, and technical assistance from MFish, is now developing a PAU 7 Fisheries Plan, which will be submitted to the Minister for approval.

By providing an opportunity for

developing a Fisheries Plan, Mr Hodgson hopes the result will be an acceptable stock rebuilding strategy that may include a variety of measures.

In recognition of the need to immediately halt stock decline and commence rebuilding, the Minister implemented a phased programme over the next few years. The first step was to reduce the TACC on 1 October 2001 by 10 per cent, in recognition of steps already taken by industry to implement a 20 per cent quota shelving arrangement for the current fishing year, and the fact that the PAU 7 Fisheries Plan is being developed.

Together, these actions provide

for a 30 per cent reduction in commercial catch over the current fishing year, with another review of the TACC scheduled for next year.

In light of the current state of the PAU 7 fishery, recreational fishers have expressed problems in getting a feed of paua along the northern west coast. In response, some fishers have called for a ban on commercial paua harvesting. The Minister is aware of these concerns and has invited the Challenger Paua Management group to resolve the issue through the emerging Fisheries Plan.

The whole thrust of the action is to allow stakeholders themselves to resolve a local allocation issue, using the new Fisheries Plan process. This has the advantage of providing a platform for some give and take, and handing the management back to the stakeholders.



Ministry of Fisheries
PO Box 1020, Wellington
Tel: 04 470 2600
Email: comms@fish.govt.nz
Internet: www.fish.govt.nz



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Te Tautiaki i nga tini a Tangaroa