

Editor: Keith Ingram  
Manager: Vivienne Ingram  
Editorial assistant: Mark Barratt-Boyes  
Contributors: Baden Pascoe  
Carol Forsyth  
Michael Pignéguy  
Hugh Ware, USA  
Kelvin Hiatt  
Stuart Cawker  
Lindsay Wright  
Alan Moore  
R. Lea Clough  
Lynton Diggie  
Trevor Coppock  
Hayley Campbell  
Louise Deehan-Owen  
Rod McCullum  
Bob McDavitt  
Rodger Grayson  
Dave Wooff  
Jo Bascombe  
Justine Inns  
Advertising: Hamish Stewart  
Designer: Rachel Walker  
Printers: GEON  
Distribution: Gordon and Gotch Ltd

Subscriptions: *Professional Skipper* is published for the maritime transport industry. It is available on subscription in NZ and overseas.

General: Reproduction of articles and materials published in *Professional Skipper* in whole or part, is permitted provided the source and author(s) are acknowledged. However, all photographic material is copyright and written permission to reproduce in any shape or form is required.

Contributions of a nature relevant to the maritime transport industry are welcomed and industry participants are especially encouraged to contribute.

Letters to the Editor should be signed and carry the writer's full name and address.

Articles and information printed in *Professional Skipper* do not necessarily reflect the opinions or formal position or the publishers unless otherwise indicated.

Material and information of a formal nature provided by the MSA, MoF or TAIC is identified by the use of their logo.

All material published in *Professional Skipper* is done so with all due care as regards to accuracy and factual content. The publishers and editorial staff however cannot accept responsibility for any inadvertent errors and omissions which may occur.

*Professional Skipper* is produced bi-monthly.



JUDGED HIGHLY COMMENDED  
EDITOR OF THE YEAR – MPA AWARDS 2009

Finalist 2008 Qantas Media Awards



MPA Associate Member



EDITORIAL

## Common sense **does** **not apply** to tuna

I am trying not to show my frustration with the bureaucratic ineptitude we have had to endure. Unfortunately, I now have a deep feeling of loss that forces me speak out, if only to let the industry know I have failed. That's not an easy admission for me, believe me.

I believe that for the most part I have always been fair in my representation and any advocacy work I do on behalf of the wider maritime industry I live, breath and work for. Yes the pay is crap and one could question why do I bother to do it? My wife does, so why not others. I have no answer for this, other than to say I am passionate about the industry I work within and the many friends I have gained, and after 47 years on the waterfront I feel I might have served my apprenticeship in the school of hard knocks, along with becoming a bit more streetwise.

Otherwise, why get involved with idiots who appear to have no sole purpose in life other than to make life difficult for commercial operators. I am vocal at times and yes, I am on record as being one who is not afraid to speak out for the silent and oppressed, or even those who are frightened of industry persecution and official repercussions. Likewise, I am not one to give pain unless there is a gain and to this end we are at a stalemate.

We have the prospect of an exciting tuna sportfishing industry on the West Coast of the South Island going begging. Most will have read about the opportunities to hook and land southern bluefin tuna and the even larger Pacific blues during the winter and spring in the wild waters off Greymouth and Westport.

This opportunity is only available during a short window when the commercial deep-water fleet is fishing for hoki during their aggregation and spawning season in these waters. It remains a seasonal opportunity where the trawlers, on hauling their gear, attract monster tuna and along with this, the very real chance for a recreational angler to get alongside and target these huge fish with a rod and reel. Fantastic, you might say. Let me at 'em.

Sadly, the West Coast is not to be treated lightly and it is only by the grace of God that we have not seen a tragedy involving small recreational craft. Most of the boats that are used to fish these waters lack the endurance to stay at sea if the weather cuts up and the bars protecting the safe havens are closed.

A small number of owners of well-found commercial or charter boats, which are, for the most part, fit for purpose to work our coastal waters within the law, are attempting to develop what could be a world-class tourist fishing destination capable of bringing in hundreds of thousands of tourist and local dollars.

While these vessels are allowed to operate some 80 miles off Raglan, for instance, off Cape Foulwind they are restricted to 21 miles because of Maritime New Zealand's arbitrary coastal limit line on a chart.

The problem is if hoki or other fish move

north off Cape Foulwind they can be up to 50 miles off the coast. While most of our boats can operate safely at this distance, the step from coastal to offshore created by this line means a step up in manning.

Because most of these boats have high-powered twin engines, the engineering steps up for many to MEC4. To get the prescribed sea time for this qualification a person needs to serve on a large offshore, unlimited or foreign-going ship or fishing vessel.

For many skipper/engineers operating these vessels, most of which are less than 20m in length, it is not a happening thing. Two seasons ago, Maritime NZ took five well-found charter vessels to court because a Royal New Zealand Air Force Orion crew filmed them operating beyond the coastal limit off Cape Foulwind.

Does this mean they were unsafe? Some Maritime NZ officials will try and convince us the answer is yes. Bollocks, and those within officialdom will know whom I am talking to. Over the past three years I have spent countless hours and many meetings trying to reach a resolution, to no avail.

A developing safety problem is anglers who cannot charter boats, so they are towing 6-7m trailer boats over the pass to Greymouth, just so they can be a part of the action.

Then we saw a light in MOSS and QOL, which includes operating limits. Maritime NZ was listening and was going to address the situation within this review.

Meanwhile, some of the problem deadwood within Maritime NZ had been moved on and the prospects were looking good. Sadly, no. We have just been told both MOSS and QOL will not happen until 2013, two further tuna seasons away. Opportunities will be lost.

My pleas for common sense and any short-term solutions I have offered to try and solve this dilemma have fallen on deaf bureaucratic ears, and not because they were not listening, because I was beating a bloody loud tom-tom, believe me.

Crown Law says you cannot give exemptions in anticipation of a law or rule change, because this is creating or changing rules by stealth. Bollocks!

My actual words were probably stronger, but the net result is we have too many folk protecting their arses for fear of a legal challenge and no-one, apart from me, appears prepared to stand up and make a difference.

On this note, I apologise for appearing to have let the many operators committed to developing this tourist opportunity down. Sadly, even Mohammed could not move the mountain.

Keith Ingram, Editor