



## LOCAL LEADERS WANT MORE DOLPHIN PROTECTION

Two government ministers have welcomed a petition from local government leaders to increase protection for the endangered Maui's dolphin.

The petition by the chairs of the Northland, Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty regional councils, the Mayor of Rodney District and some councillors, was sent by Christine Rose, the deputy chair of the Auckland Regional Council, on May 2.



A Hector's dolphin

It calls on the Ministers of Fisheries, Jim Anderton and Conservation, Chris Carter, to extend the existing set net ban to protect Maui's dolphins, create a marine mammal sanctuary and introduce a species recovery plan.

"This is a very strong message being sent by the leaders and other local government representatives from a large part of northern New Zealand," Anderton said. It would be carefully considered as part of the threat management plan for Maui's and Hector's dolphins.

## MEN PAY FOR TAKING UNDERSIZED PAUA

Two Gisborne men whose actions could have "detrimental effects on the sustainability of local marine life" have been fined over \$4000.

Eugene Tui Burkhardt, aged 41, and Michael Western Patterson, aged 34, both pleaded guilty in the Gisborne District Court on April 10 to possessing undersized paua.

Burkhardt also pleaded guilty to one charge of possessing undersized rock lobster and more than three times the daily legal paua limit. Patterson also pleaded guilty to possessing excess paua.

Burkhardt was fined a total of \$2750 plus costs, and Patterson \$1250 plus costs.

## PROHIBITION ON WHITE POINTERS

It is now an offence to take white pointer sharks from anywhere around the New Zealand coast. The Minister of Conservation, Chris Carter, announced the regulation, which took effect on April 1.

The regulations previously allowed one white pointer shark per day to be taken from the southern region fishery management area.

## KILL CATFISH

Amateur fishers must now kill any catfish immediately after catching it. Catfish prey on small, native fish and fish eggs, stir up sediment and degrade waterways. They can survive out of the water for long periods and are difficult to kill. This makes it easy

for people to spread them to other waterways.

Catfish were introduced to freshwater areas around Auckland in 1877 and have spread south to Taupo and one area on the West Coast of the South Island. They are most often caught in eel nets. In addition, commercial fishers cannot sell live catfish.

See your local MFish office, [www.fish.govt.nz/recreational](http://www.fish.govt.nz/recreational) or [www.recfish.co.nz](http://www.recfish.co.nz)

## MEN TOSSED PAUA FROM CAR

Three men led fisheries officers on a chase around Hawke's Bay recently, who threw paua out their car window as they fled.

The Napier district compliance manager, Ray McKay, said the officers first tried to inspect the trio's catch as they left Aropaoanui Beach.

"The driver ignored the officer's direction to stop, and sped off toward Napier," said McKay. They were seen throwing paua from the vehicle.

Fisheries surveillance officer Kelly Pouwhare said the men were finally arrested for obstruction when they stopped near Tangoio. Their vehicle, diving gear and a small amount of paua were seized.

Pouwhare said paua was found in three locations on the roadside. They may also face driving-related charges.

## SEABED AREAS UNDERWATER HABITATS

A ground-breaking fishing industry initiative now protected some of New Zealand's most significant seabed habitats from bottom-trawling and dredging, the Minister of Fisheries, Jim Anderton, said on April 4.

"Many of our most striking and fascinating underwater features will be protected, including cold-water corals, seamounts and hydrothermal vents, each of which are specifically noted by the United Nations as vulnerable ecosystems," he said.

The Benthic (seabed habitat) Protected Areas Accord covers 17 different areas covering over 400,000sq km of the exclusive economic zone. "In one action, New Zealand will protect 30 percent of its seabed," Anderton said.

Together with the 19 existing seamount closures, the areas protect 88 percent of all known active hydrothermal vents and 52 percent of all known seamounts.

Off-bottom trawl fishing is permitted as long as two MFish-approved observers are on board, the vessel is monitored by satellite, and an electronic net monitoring system establishes exactly where the fishing net is in relation to the bottom at all times.

The chief executive of the Deepwater Group, George Clement, says the BPA accord will allow commercial fishermen to continue fishing, while protecting more than a third of New Zealand's EEZ.

The accord was slightly different from the original proposal put forward in February 2006, with the government asking for three further areas to be added.

## WOMEN LOSE CARS OVER COCKLES

Two women who collected more than 2000 cockles from an Auckland beach were fined \$1800 each on May 29 and had their four-wheel drive vehicles forfeited.

Ministry of Fisheries officers caught Mangere seamstress Sinai Fonua, aged 42, and Losaline Elone, 36, a meat packer from Mt Wellington, at Cackle Bay beach in February.

The women and their three children were still collecting the cockles when they were caught. After deducting 50 cockles for each of the three children, the women were in possession of 1099 each, nearly 22 times their daily limit. ▶



An MFish district compliance manager, Ian Bright, said the women didn't know how many cockles they were allowed to gather. "It is very disappointing to see these two women setting such a bad, greedy and selfish example to the three children they had with them that day," Bright said.

### PAUA POACHER SENTENCED

Kaikoura diver Anton Pinnell was sentenced to 140 hours community service and fined \$5000 plus costs on May 25 after earlier pleading guilty to taking 500 paua and 36 rock lobsters from the Kaikoura area in March.

The maximum daily limit is 10 paua and six rock lobsters. Fisheries officers believe that the paua and rock lobster were destined to be sold on the black market in Christchurch.

"If everybody acted like that we'd run out of fish pretty quickly," said the Ministry of Fisheries' Nelson district compliance manager, Geoff Clark.

Judge Crosbie said the offence undermined the Paua 3 management committee's efforts to rebuild the sustainability of the paua fishery in the Kaikoura area, and directed that \$3000 of the \$5000 fine be paid to the committee.

Clark said fisheries officers caught Pinnell after receiving information from a member of the public. "It allowed us to catch a serious poacher. It's heartening that people are looking out for the future of our fisheries."

Anyone with information on illegal fishing anywhere should ring MFish Poacher, 0800 4 POACHER (0800 476 224).

### ELDERS NOTE DROP IN SHELLFISH GATHERING

Anecdotal but richly detailed reports by tribal elders left little doubt that the size and abundance of inter-tidal shellfish around Banks Peninsula had declined noticeably over the last 40 to 60 years, says the Ministry of Fisheries.

MFish said it commissioned the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research to study recreational shellfish harvesting around the peninsula in response to concerns that stocks were becoming depleted.

Archives going back to 1929 had identified trends in size and abundance in the Avon-Heathcote Estuary. "But for most stocks such data is limited or non-existent."

The study recommended methods for a recreational survey to quantify the shellfish harvest at sites of concern, including questionnaires and a monitoring programme.

### QUOTA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CELEBRATES MILESTONE

A seven-fold increase in export revenue from fishing over the last 20 years was a measure of the success of the quota management system, says the Minister of Fisheries, Jim Anderton.

"We have an internationally competitive industry with no subsidies," he told guests at a dinner on May 23 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the introduction of the QMS.

New Zealand was not the first country to introduce the idea of a QMS, but it was the first to apply it to an entire fishery.

He said the fishing was currently not enjoying the best of times. "But imagine if the pressure was compounded by collapsing fish stocks? The QMS helped to preserve our fisheries resource. It is an example of a truly sustainable way to run an economy."

One disappointing feature of the industry was the degree of litigation, he said. "If litigation is an inevitable feature of the quota system, then it is a weakness. But I don't think it has to be inevitable. Lawyers can clean, gut and fillet the system more efficiently than any fishing boat, and in future we have to find a better way for points of view to be reconciled than going to court."

### PACIFIC TUNA FISHERIES UNDER THREAT

"The state of Pacific tuna fisheries is the key issue on the table," Fisheries Minister Jim Anderton said on May 31 at the annual meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Committee in Wellington.

"Healthy tuna fisheries are the economic engine for most Pacific Island countries and, for some, these fisheries are their greatest source of income. But Pacific tuna fisheries have reached a critical point," Anderton said. "The scale and intensity of fishing is ever-increasing."

Two of the key target species - bigeye and yellowfin tuna - were already subject to unsustainable levels of fishing. "If we don't address things now, the whole Pacific region will face huge economic issues in the long-term."

The highly migratory tuna fisheries in the Pacific are worth about US\$2 billion per year. They were probably the only remaining healthy tuna stocks left on the planet, as most high-value tuna in other oceans were now seriously depleted, or were fast heading that way.

"The FFA has to address the economic integrity of this huge and shared resource," Anderton said. "To do this, we must now work together as a unified Pacific region. We must act with foresight, and we must act soon."

### NEW FISHING AGREEMENT

New Zealand-flagged vessels now have official access to fish in the Solomon Islands' exclusive economic zone under licences issued by the Solomon government.

The agreement formalised friendly ties regarding fisheries between the two nations, the Minister of Fisheries, Jim Anderton, said at the signing ceremony on May 29.

The agreement follows a provisional arrangement developed in 2004 for New Zealand-flagged vessels to fish in Solomon Islands' waters.

"The agreement gives our government a role in ensuring New Zealand-flagged vessels play by the rules of other fishing nations when fishing in their waters," Anderton said.