

questioned why he and others should give their time to another meeting.

Members of the South East Fisheries advisory group said they were concerned about the effect of commercial clam gathering on the Papanui Inlet, Doctors Point and Waitati.

BAN PROPOSED FOR AUCKLAND BEACH

The Ministry of Fisheries is proposing a closed season for shellfish gathering at Cockle Bay in Auckland to protect depleted cockle beds. The closure would apply to all shellfish, including pipi, mussels, cat's eyes, crabs and kina.

"Allowing the gathering of some shellfish and not others would confuse fishers and make it difficult for MFish officers to enforce the ban," said a senior MFish analyst, Alan Moore. Only finfish and seaweeds would be exempt.

The proposed closed season would run from October 1 to April 30, while existing bag limits would apply during an open season from May 1 to September 30.

The cumulative effect of large numbers of fishers and people ignoring the bag limit of 50 cockles per person per day threatened the sustainability of the cockle beds, Moore said. A survey of the beds carried out over three years showed cockle numbers at some sample sites had decreased by 65 percent. Public submissions on the proposals close on August 18.

See www.fish.govt.nz/consultations or call MFish Auckland on 09 820 1990.

FOREIGN VESSEL DUMPED UNWANTED FISH

Crewmembers of the foreign trawler *Atria* videoed hoki being illegally dumped at sea while she was working in New Zealand waters, a court was told during a trial that began in the Christchurch District Court on July 24.

The fish were caught on the Chatham Rise hoki grounds on a voyage from May to July last year. It was a "classic over-fishing scenario," said the Crown prosecutors, Chris Lange and Tim Mackenzie.

The master of the 95m vessel, Josef Eugeniusz Popowicz, faces a total of five charges, while the ship's factory manager, Wlodzimierz Pierzchlinski, faces two of dumping fish, and the foreman, Janusz Miroslaw Josefiak, faces one dumping charge. The three men had returned to New Zealand for the trial and pleaded not guilty to all the charges before Judge Michael Crosbie. Mike Sullivan of Ocean Law in Nelson appeared for the accused.

The *Atria* was operated in New Zealand by Raudal Fishing Ltd of Hamilton. Mackenzie said a crewman saw two bunkers of fish weighing between 12 and 16 tonnes being dumped so the crew could begin filleting fresher, firmer fish that had just been caught.

The Ministry of Fisheries laid the charges after a crewmember showed a cellphone video to an MFish observer who was on board for the *Atria*'s next voyage.

FISHING VESSEL HAS LICENCE REVOKED

A Namibian fishing vessel caught supporting illegal fishing in the Southern Ocean had its fishing licence revoked on July 24.

The New Zealand government recommended that the vessel, the *Paloma V*, be blacklisted two months after Ministry of Fisheries officers found evidence that her crew had been working with illegal fishing vessels in the Southern Ocean. The *Paloma V* had tried to unload toothfish in Auckland.

The High Court rejected an application in July by the ship's owner, Omunkete Fishing Limited, to try to prevent New Zealand from reporting its activity to the Commission

for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. The decision cleared the way for the commission to consider blacklisting the *Paloma V* when it meets in October. Should the blacklisting proceed, the vessel will be banned from any port of the 34 countries that support the CCAMLR.

CHATHAM ISLANDS FAMILY OPPOSE SALE

A prominent Chatham Islands family says the sale of his tribe, or iwi's, deepwater fisheries quota is shortsighted. Moriori iwi received the quota through the Maori Commercial Fisheries Settlement with the Crown.

A family spokesman, Dennis Solomon, said they wanted to highlight the issue before a meeting on August 7 to approve the sale. He said it was especially disturbing when the two Chatham Islands tribes – Moriori and Ngati Mutunga – had united to argue successfully for a greater piece of the Maori Fisheries Settlement pie, on the grounds that the Chatham Islands should be treated as a separate fishery.

"Now that we achieved that, the board of the Holotehi Moriori Trust wants to sell it for a few dollars more because it can't meet repayments on some bad deals that it's done," Solomon said. "If we sell this taonga – a treasure we fought for long and hard to get the Crown to return to Maori – we won't get it back."

MFISH AND UNIONS REACH AGREEMENT

The Ministry of Fisheries said on July 25 that it had reached an agreement in principle on the terms and conditions for a new collective employment agreement.

The agreement follows negotiations with the Public Service Association and National Union of Public Employees unions. The unions' negotiating representatives will now go back to their members to ratify the draft agreement.

"All our staff are committed to their jobs and take the protection of our fisheries seriously," said the chief executive of MFish, Wayne McNee.

COUPLE BOTH FINED ON PAUA CHARGES

A Chinese couple, businessman Chin King Pang Chan and his wife, Yuen Skui Chan, have been fined \$10,000 each after what the Ministry of Fisheries described as the biggest known illegal paua operation in Gisborne's history.

Judge Robert Woolf found Pang Chan, aged 74, guilty of possessing undersized paua, and possessing paua for the purpose of sale, after a two-day hearing in the Gisborne District Court. His wife, aged 69, had earlier pleaded guilty to a joint charge of possessing undersize paua.

Judge Woolf said that had the ministry charged Mrs Chan with possessing paua for the purpose of sale she would also have been convicted. For that reason, it was unfair to fine Mr Chan a second time. He convicted him on the second offence but did not impose an additional fine.

Counsel for the ministry, Morgan Dunn, said MFish officers found 790 frozen or dried paua on the Chan's premises worth up to \$8000.

Chan's defence was that his wife had ignored his instructions not to supply paua for a dinner for Chinese opera singers, and had done so behind his back and without his knowledge or involvement. But Judge Woolf said he found that "frankly, impossible to believe".

Mrs Chan had acted out of a noble, "wondersome, even" loyalty to protect her husband.

But he had found the verdict "unavoidable, inevitable and logical" from the presented evidence.

