



Fiordland Marine Guardians Beneath the Reflections

May 2008

The Guardians' Newsletter

Much has been happening in The Fiordland Marine Area since our last newsletter. We welcome this chance to inform you about what's going on, and remind you that the Guardians welcome members of the public to their meetings – the next meeting is scheduled to take place at The Environment Southland Council Room, Cnr North Road and Price St, Invercargill at 10am on Thursday 12th June 2008.

The Guardians are pleased to hear any concerns or comments on the Fiordland marine area.

Further information is available on their website: www.fmg.org.nz or you can contact them via email: infor@fmg.org.nz

Alison O'Sullivan, Administrator.

Thank You John Steffens

The Guardians held their annual meeting with The Minister for the Environment – The Hon Trevor Mallard - on 20 March 2008 in Wellington. High on the agenda was a presentation to John Steffens who has recently stepped down from his position as a Fiordland Marine Guardian.

John is a past chair of the Guardians of Fiordland and was instrumental in helping them achieve the status and results that have been achieved with the formation of the Fiordland Marine Guardians. He led the process that resulted in the formation of the first two Fiordland marine reserves, Milford Sound (Piopiotahi), and The Gut (Te Awaatu Channel).

“John has given so much to the area and has been a rock for the Guardians right from the outset back in the mid 1990's. While his formal input will be missed, I hope he continues to be involved” Trevor Mallard said.



A presentation is made by the Hon Trevor Mallard (Minister for the Environment) to John Steffens in recognition for all his work on behalf of the Fiordland Marine Area, including his time as a Fiordland Marine Guardian.

Pictured at rear from left are Guardians Ken Grange, Anne McDermott, Alan Mark, Stewart Bull and Alan Key. Front row from left are John Steffens, Hon Trevor Mallard, and Chairman of the Fiordland Marine Guardians Malcolm Lawson.

Absent: Mark Peychers and Jerry Excell.

Photograph courtesy of Ministry for the Environment.

While in Wellington the Guardians met also with the CEO's of the respective Government Agencies involved in the Fiordland Marine Area, fostering the collaborative approach which has been of great benefit to the effective management of the area.

Alison O'Sullivan, Administrator.

Jet Skis Prohibited in Fiordland

As PWC (Personal Water Craft commonly known as Jet Skis) have become larger, owners have been taking them beyond the usual areas of lakes and rivers and are now cruising out to the open sea. Recently Environment Southland received enquiries about taking PWCs into the internal waters of Fiordland. The owners were intending to cruise around South Island waters, launching in Milford Sound, and calling into many of the fiords on their trip south.

In the course of discussions it became apparent that the owners (and possibly many other members of the public) were not aware that the use of PWCs (as well as para-sailing and water skiing) is prohibited in Rule 16.3.1 of the Regional Coastal Plan for Southland:

Rule 16.3.1 - Water-skiing, para-sailing or the use of personal water craft

Water-skiing, para-sailing or the use of personal water craft in all the internal waters of Fiordland is a prohibited activity.

The explanation to this rule notes that “The internal waters of Fiordland have extremely high wilderness and remoteness values in addition to values of peacefulness and tranquillity. Personal water craft make a noise that many people find particularly irritating. For that reason, they are totally inappropriate in an area where silence is a very significant value.”



This rule is beyond appeal so PWCs may not enter the internal waters of Fiordland at all. As the activity is prohibited anyone wishing to operate PWCs in Fiordland cannot apply for a resource consent to do so, and the only way to alter this rule is through a Plan change.

This means that the prohibition on PWCs in Fiordland will remain in force indefinitely.

Kevin O'Sullivan – Environment Southland

Doubtful Sound Dolphin Protection Plan finalised and implemented

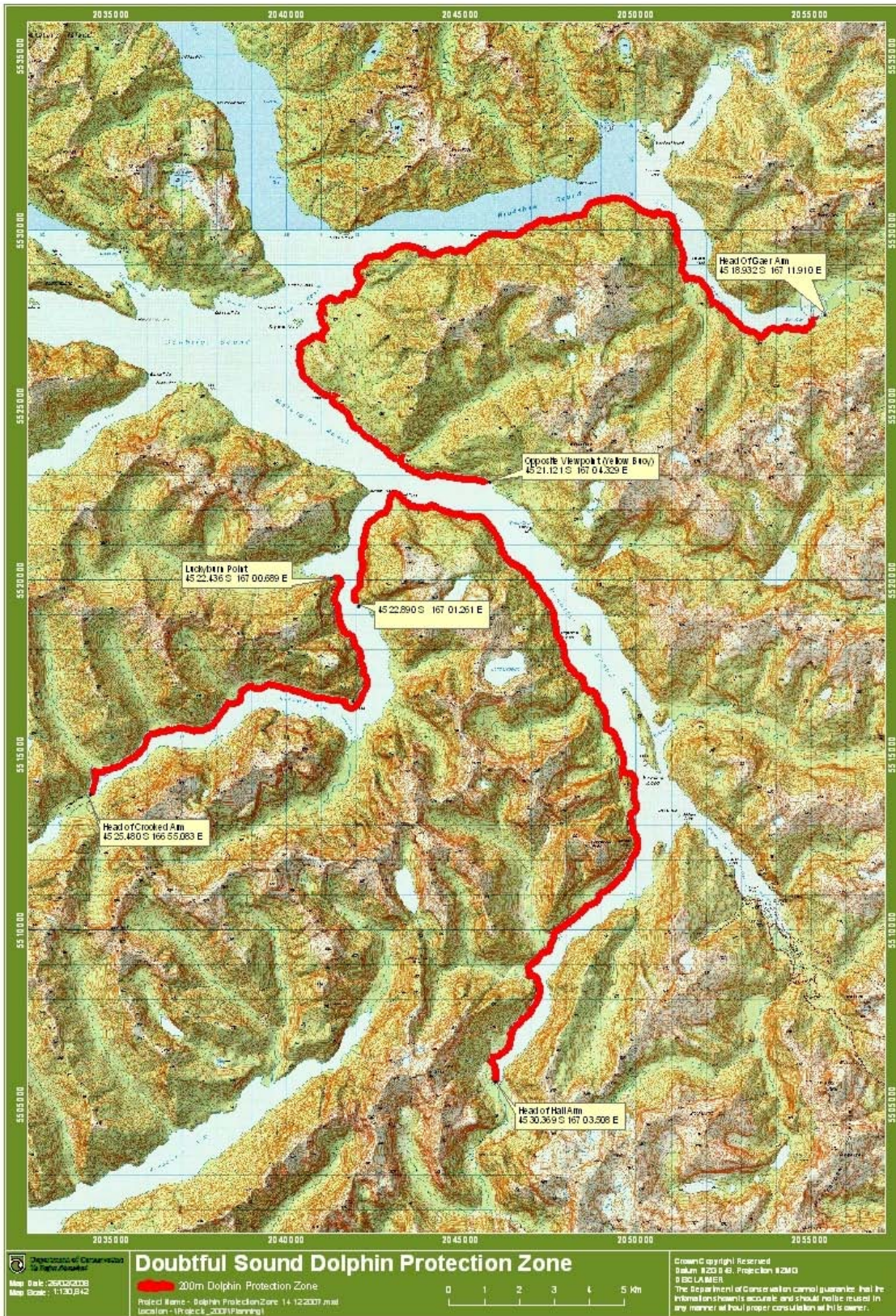
During 2007, a consultation process was run between the Department of Conservation and local stakeholders, resulting in a new protection plan for bottlenose dolphins in Doubtful Sound being finalised and implemented.

Research on these dolphins has shown a marked decline in abundance over the past 12 years by 34-39%, to 56 individuals in 2007. Concerns over this decline drove a public consultation process seeking feedback and possible options for increased protection of this population. Part of the new protection strategy is a Code of Management that all users of the Doubtful Sound area are being encouraged to adopt.

The tourism operators in Doubtful Sound have shown their support for the new measures by signing up to, and adopting, the Code of Management in their daily activities. Other stakeholders are now being urged to join in and adopt the new measures when they visit Doubtful Sound.

There are two main features of the Code of Management that users are asked to take up, in addition to abiding by the Marine Mammal Protection Regulations (1992) when around the dolphins.





Dolphin Protection Zones (DPZ's) have been created where vessel access is restricted. Boats may enter these zones for the following reasons, but only if dolphins are not visible within the zone: dropping people ashore, vessel based interpretation work, and access to anchorage, diving and fishing spots. There are three of these areas in Doubtful Sound that follow the shoreline, and are 200m wide (see map). As under Navigational Safety Bylaws (2003) for any area within 200m of shore, there is a speed restriction of 5 knots or idle within these zones.

The second part of the new plan establishes that all encounters with dolphins within Doubtful Sound are to be left to chance. This means vessels should not seek out or initiate encounters with dolphins, however it is recognised that dolphin-initiated encounters will occur. Vessels should not deviate from their intended route towards a group of dolphins, unless required to do so for safety reasons.

A full version of the Code of Management is available from the Department of Conservation's website www.doc.govt.nz under Publications > Conservation > Native animals > Marine mammals.

For more information, or to show your support and sign up to the new protection plan, please contact Richard Kinsey at the Department of Conservation, Te Anau, 03 249 0200, rk Kinsey@doc.govt.nz
Richard Kinsey - DOC

Bluff Marine Pest Work Helps Fiordland

Although Bluff Harbour is not part of the Fiordland Marine Area, it is a key place for the Fiordland marine biosecurity programme led by MAF Biosecurity New Zealand.

“Vessels with fouling on their hulls could be spreading unwanted marine pests. Bluff Harbour is where many of the vessels heading for the fiords come from, so MAF Biosecurity New Zealand is focussing on looking for marine pests in Bluff.” says Sophie Allen from MAF Biosecurity New Zealand. “This way we are working on preventing marine pests arriving in Fiordland”.

Commercial diver contractor Paul Young, from Bluff, is MAF Biosecurity New Zealand’s ‘eyes in water’ for Bluff Harbour. He and his dive team carry out monthly inspections of vessels, jetties, moorings and so on, for marine pests. So far, no new marine pests that Paul is looking out for have turned up in Bluff. Paul has found that “vessel operators have been really interested in my inspection work. They want to know if their hulls are clean, and how they can help stop the spread of marine pests”.



A NIWA staff member checking the marine growth on a wharf pile. Photograph supplied by NIWA.

Paul Young and his team also check up on plastic pile wrappings, which MAF Biosecurity New Zealand have put around some of the main wharves piles in Bluff. Wrapping piles in plastic is a novel marine pest management technique that has been trialled to reduce the chances that a vessel will pick up marine pests off a wharf. The rough storm conditions experienced in Bluff have raised a few challenges though, so Paul is keeping an eye on them, and fixing or removing them if needed. MAF Biosecurity New Zealand will be assessing the effectiveness of this programme later this year.

In April this year, the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) also carried out surveillance for marine pests in Bluff Harbour on behalf of MAF Biosecurity New Zealand, as part of a national marine pest surveillance programme. NIWA used a variety of techniques, such as crab potting and dive transects to try to find particular pests. Bluff came up ‘clean’, with none of the target marine pests they were looking for found. Finding nothing is good news for Bluff and good news for Fiordland.

The old idiom ‘prevention is better than a cure’ holds true for ensuring protection of Fiordland fisheries and marine ecosystems.

If you are interested to find out more about the marine pests that MAF Biosecurity New Zealand is looking out for, go to www.biosecurity.govt.nz and go to the bottom left “Marine Biosecurity – Click here”

Sophie Allan – MAFBNZ

Joint Agency Waterborne Patrol

Ministry of Fishery Officers recently teamed up with Department of Conservation staff to conduct a joint agency waterborne patrol of the Fiordland Marine Areas using the DOC vessel ‘Southern Winds’.

The patrol coincided with the Fiordland ‘ROAR’ - a good time for deer hunting when the stags are in rut – which every year attracts a significant number of hunting groups to the area. The specific fishing rules that apply to the Fiordland Marine Area, which were introduced back in 2005, were generally complied with, and only a couple of infringement notices and warnings were issued for minor breaches during the patrol. Fishery Officers were generally pleased with the levels of compliance they found during this patrol.

It was particularly pleasing to note the change in behaviour of some Fiordland users after sanction had been imposed for previous well publicised incidents. However there is still some room for improvement by others.



The Department of Conservation vessel ‘Southern Winds’ which was utilised for the ROAR patrol. Photograph courtesy of MFish.

Fishers and vessel operators need to remember that the rock lobster daily limit is 6 per day, and this can only be claimed by those physically involved in the taking. Over multiple days, accumulation of up to 15 rock lobsters is allowed if the daily limit is not exceeded on any one day, and the bagging and tagging requirements are strictly adhered to. In the absence of the required bagging and tagging any more than 6 rock lobsters may be deemed to have been taken/possessed in excess of daily limits, therefore exposing fishers to a \$250 infringement notice or prosecution and confiscation of any excess catch.

The other rule that several people had let slip under their guard is that the use and possession of a shellfish dredge within the Fiordland Marine Area is prohibited. Therefore if fishers have a dredge routinely stored onboard their vessel they must make arrangements to remove the dredge from the vessel before entering the waters of the Fiordland Marine Area.

The best advice for fishers venturing into Fiordland is to take the time to study the rules before you leave. Information brochures are freely available and can be obtained by contacting the Ministry of Fisheries, or alternatively, information can be found on the MFish website www.fish.govt.nz. The Fiordland Marine Guardians website www.fmg.org.nz also outlines some of the regulatory provisions, including details of the 10 Marine Reserves in Fiordland.

Reece Murphy – MFish



*Staff involved in the ROAR patrol.
Photograph courtesy of MFish.*

Increase In Rock Lobster Quota

The Minister of Fisheries recently announced that he has approved an increase of 211 tonnes in the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for CRA8 - the southern rock lobster quota management area that includes the Fiordland Marine Area - for the 2008/09 fishing year beginning on April 1st.

The CRA8 TAC increased from 842 tonnes to 1053 tonnes. The TAC comprises:

- a.. allowances for non-commercial fishing (customary and recreational);
- b.. an allowance for other sources of fishing mortality; and
- c.. the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC)

The Minister agreed with the recommendation that all of the increase should be applied to the TACC and that the three allowances should remain unchanged. He did this for two reasons: while it is accepted that the non-commercial catch is increasing, there is no accurate data available to show that the non-commercial catch is currently exceeding the allowances; and he acknowledged that the CRA8 industry has taken cuts to the TACC in the past that have contributed to the rebuild of the fishery, and that the increase recognises this.

As a result of his decision the TACC increased from 755 tonnes to 966 tonnes.

The Ministry of Fisheries is currently responsible for a project that is aimed at gathering data on the recreational fishing catch within the Fiordland Marine Area. The Guardians are confident that the results of this project will contribute to future Ministerial decisions for a range of species.

Malcolm Lawson – Chairman, Fiordland Marine Guardians



*The FPAG team hard at work.
Photograph courtesy MFish*

Paua Fisheries Plan for Fiordland

The Ministry of Fisheries is working with stakeholders to develop a fisheries plan for paua in the Fiordland area (PAU 5A). The PAU 5A Fisheries Plan Advisory Group (FPAG) has met six times since its first meeting in October 2007. Mark Peychers is the Fiordland Marine Guardians' representative on the FPAG. Stewart Bull also attends as a tangata whenua representative.

The FPAG has been reviewing the draft “Current Situation” for paua in Fiordland, and is working on a vision and objectives for the fishery. The FPAG has also discussed related topics such as the abalone viral ganglioneuritis (AVG) outbreak in Victoria, Australia, and commercial initiatives in Fiordland.

The FPAG wrote to the Minister for Biosecurity in regard to AVG, and had a very positive response. There has since been increased publicity about the importance of cleaning and drying equipment and clothing that has been in or near the marine environment before coming into New Zealand. There have also been changes to arriving passengers’ declaration cards. For more information about AVG, go to MAF Biosecurity New Zealand’s website: www.biosecurity.govt.nz. Look under “Pest & Diseases > Pests and Diseases Lists”.

The FPAG heard from the commercial representatives about initiatives such as data loggers and voluntary increases in minimum harvestable size. It also visited the paua hatchery at Ocean Beach, Bluff, and discussed issues around reseedling.

The next meeting is scheduled for 11 June at Colac Bay. It will focus on tangata whenua aspects of the fishery and the plan.

For more information, go to the website for the PAU 5A Fisheries Plan. You can find it by going to the Ministry of Fisheries website: www.fish.govt.nz - click on the quick link for Fisheries Plans, then on Paua (PAU 5A) on the list of plans *In Progress*.

Tania Cameron – Mfish

STOMP! out marine pests nationwide

Marine biosecurity (preventing the spread of marine pests and diseases) is a relatively new area for New Zealanders to come to grips with. People have traditionally understood better how to handle land-based pests like possums and invasive plants, but managing invasive sea squirts and seaweeds poses a few new challenges.

To help build our national capability to deal with marine pests and diseases MAF Biosecurity New Zealand coordinates a partnership called **STOMP!** (Stop The spread Of Marine Pests!). The partnership of regional councils and central government agencies (e.g. Mfish) has been recently opened up to industry bodies (e.g. SEAFIC, Aquaculture New Zealand, and NZ Shipping Federation) and others. The Fiordland Marine Guardians have been invited to be part of this newly-extended partnership.

The **STOMP!** partnership has recognised that the Fiordland Marine Area is ahead of many other areas in New Zealand for its level of protection against marine pests and diseases. MAF Biosecurity New Zealand leads a specific programme for Fiordland. A key part of this programme is letting boaties know that pests and diseases can be spread on fouled vessel hulls, wet or unclean fishing gear, dive gear and lobster pots etc. The Guardians will be particularly able to help with the STOMP! aim of increasing the level of biosecurity protection for high value marine areas; i.e. Fiordland, the Chatham Islands, the Subantarctic Islands etc.



Applying of antifoul paint to prevent marine growth.



Keeping a boat hull clean with a quick waterblast.

The good news is that **STOMP!** will work both ways, with likely spin-offs for the Fiordland Marine Area in return. This will be from the expertise that the other members will bring to the partnership.

Keep an ear out for the word ‘**STOMP!**’
Sophie Allan - MAFBNZ

Members of the STOMP! partnership would like to see boat cleaning facilities in New Zealand improved.

An update on the Recreational Fishing Survey

Thank you to all who have participated in this survey. Information from log books is presently being collated and analysed by NIWA, as are figures from the boat ramp survey which was completed in April. The information gained from this survey will act as an important management tool which will be used to ensure that the fishing resources in The Fiordland Marine Area are managed effectively. We will keep you updated on the results of the survey.

Alison O'Sullivan – Administrator

URGENT Southern right whale sightings sought



*Southern Right Whale, Preservation Inlet, (Don Goodhue)
Photograph courtesy of DOC – Te Anau*

It's that time of the year again when southern right whales may be spotted in Southland waters. Last year a good number of whales were spotted around the Fiordland coast and thanks to a number of keen eyed people, DOC were able to gather many useful sightings and photographs. Information on these animals that visit mainland New Zealand is vitally important to increase our understanding of them and how they relate to southern right whales observed in sub-antarctic waters. If you are lucky enough to spot one of these animals, we ask that you contact DOC as soon as possible (via Ch 66 or phone 03 249 0200), and record as many details as you can (e.g. location, group size, behaviour).

COMING SOON! A USER GUIDE BOOK ON THE FIORDLAND (TE MOANA O ATAWHENUA) MARINE AREA

The Guardians have been working closely with management agencies (Department of Conservation, Environment Southland, MAF Biosecurity New Zealand, Ministry for the Environment, and Ministry of Fisheries) to develop a guide book on the Fiordland Marine Area that aims to pull several different sources of information into one handy reference.

The book is intended to inform visitors to the area about the rules and regulations contained in the Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) Marine Management Act 2005, and associated changes to fisheries regulations, in a way that fosters understanding, adoption and compliance.

The book outlines some of the special features of Fiordland, the development of the Fiordland Marine Conservation Strategy, and the process that led to the management package that now exists for the area.

It then goes on to provide practical information and agency regulations about marine reserves, marine mammals, fishing, marine and island biosecurity, anchorages and prohibited anchoring areas, pollution and communications in Fiordland.

The third part of the book is broken down geographically, providing specific information for each fiord about marine reserves, china shops, anchorages and other useful bits of information.

A great deal of work has gone into the book already, including feedback from various locals, so thank you to all those who have provided input into the guide already. The book is now at the final draft stage and is anticipated to be published in time for next summer. Watch this space!

Richard Kinsey - DOC