



Te Pānui Kaitiaki o Ata Whenua

Summer came and went rapidly in Fiordland. We have experienced an unprecedented combination of rainfall, flooding and damage to infrastructure, and global events that have left a mark on our region in many ways. One thing is for sure, our communities have certainly shown some resilience and a willingness to work together. These are precisely the qualities we need to foster as stewards and kaitiaki for the Fiordland Marine Area.

Mo tatou, a, mo ka uri a muri ake nei – For us and our children after us.

In this issue we introduce another of our Guardians, outline our plan to engage formally with recreational fishers about fisheries sustainability in the Fiordland Marine Area, and update you on progress with marine biosecurity and Fish Mainland. As always, **we welcome your thoughts and feedback.**

Who are the ‘Guardians’?

The Fiordland Marine Guardians are an advisory committee who work with government agencies and their Ministers on managing the Fiordland Marine Area (FMA).



Rebecca McLeod

In this issue we talk to Guardian and Chair, Rebecca McLeod.

Rebecca first became interested in coastal Fiordland when she was studying at the University of Otago. Rebecca's first experience of Fiordland was shortly after the magnitude 7.2 earthquake in 2003. She vividly recalls SCUBA diving during aftershocks with a 'full body experience' of feeling the shock waves and sound travelling through the water. Once the rain started to fall, the freshwater layer in Patea / Doubtful Sound was loaded with sediment and trees from all the landslides, much like a flood raging on the surface of the sea.

Rebecca watched the progress of the Guardians during the early 2000s with keen interest. Conversations with outgoing Guardian Sir Alan Mark motivated her to put herself forward, and she was appointed in 2012.

Rebecca, tell us about where you grew up and how this has shaped your interest in the marine environment? Growing up in Nelson, my family spent every spare moment in the Marlborough Sounds. Over the years we found it harder and harder to catch a feed, and well, we all know where that story has got to. All this

time on and under the water sparked something in us kids – we've all ended up with careers in science.

You did your PhD research in Fiordland. What was this about?

From the Mountains to the Sea... I wanted to know whether the marine life in the fiords had any reliance on the rain forest in terms of their food and energy requirements. Using chemistry techniques, we found that there are a whole range of creatures in the mud who feast on the compost heap of rotting trees and vegetation that piles up on the seafloor. This energy is then passed on to animals higher up the food chain that prey on them. We found that hagfish in the deepest parts of the fiords get more than half of their energy from the rainforest. Amazing!

Tell me something about your first trip into coastal Fiordland? My first big trip was aboard the old DOC boat, the *GV Renown*. We travelled from Bluff to Milford and dived throughout every fiord. I was blown away by how different each fiord was – particularly underwater. And the expanse... incredible.

What does being a Fiordland Marine Guardian mean to you? It is such a huge responsibility. From ensuring that

the Fiordland Marine Area remains as this incredible place, to engaging with others who have a connection to the place and together fulfilling our stewardship responsibilities. It is also a responsibility to the people that started this whole thing – I want to do them proud.

What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the work of the FMG and their vision for the FMA in the next five years? We spend a lot of time focusing on the future, identifying risks to Fiordland and then figuring out how these might be mitigated. I expect we will start to get a much better idea of how climate change will play out in the FMA, in terms of the rate and magnitude of physical changes and how these will affect marine life. The challenge for us will be factoring these environmental predictions into the management approach. We'll need to draw on plenty of science to figure out how best to manage this incredible place for the future.

What is your favourite kai moana? We've been experimenting with pāua – the best creation so far has been pāua dumplings loaded with chilli and coriander. Delish.

Paul Young

We wish to acknowledge the unexpected passing of Paul Young (PY) in early January.

PY was well known in the south, and for many years delivered the hull inspections contract for Biosecurity NZ. PY was a strong advocate for the Fiordland Marine Area and supported the work

of the Guardians. He was a key contributor to the establishment of the Pathways Plan for the region. Our condolences to PY's partner Julie and their family, and his many close friends.



Fishing sustainability in Fiordland

In our last issue we started to grapple with concerns raised among Fiordland's recreational fishing community about the sustainability of finfish stocks, particularly in the inner fiords (inside the habitat lines). Many folk with a keen interest in the FMA are telling us that they are noticing the fish stocks declining, that they believe bag limits are too high, and that they want something done about it before it is too late.

Late last year we hosted a workshop with operators of amateur charter vessels on the issue of sustainable fishing practices in the FMA. We were extremely impressed with the leadership demonstrated by these operators, who collectively have immense knowledge and experience of the fisheries and the place. There was unanimous agreement among operators at the workshop that many fish stocks inside the habitat lines are at risk throughout the FMA, and that rapid action was required to halt their decline. As a result, charter operators agreed to develop a Code of Practice for their sector, and the Fiordland Marine Guardians and Kaikoura Marine Guardians provided joint advice to the Minister of Fisheries about the management of amateur charter vessels.

But of course, not all recreational fishers visit the region on charters. Despite its relative isolation and limited access, coastal Fiordland is a highly sought-after destination for many independent fishers with their own vessels. It's critical that their knowledge, experience and perspectives help shape future solutions for fisheries sustainability within the FMA.

Consulting with such a large and dispersed group of people is a massive challenge. Last year saw us lay the groundwork for formal engagement with independent recreational fishers as part of our response to concerns about fish stocks, including working with Randall Bess and the 'Fish Mainland' working group (see article in this issue), articles in The

New Guardians sought in 2020

The Minister for the Environment has statutory responsibility for the appointment and reappointment of the Guardians. Within the next few months, the Ministry will be running a process to identify new candidates for appointment as Guardians to replace those who are stepping down. The Ministry will seek nominations from a wide range of sources.

If you are interested in becoming a Guardian and want to know more about the role, email info@fmg.org.nz and we'll get in touch to talk about it with you. You can also find out more about becoming a Guardian on our website: www.fmg.org.nz/guardians/become-a-guardian.

2018/19 Annual Report

For a more in-depth look at what we have been up to check out our Annual Report for 2018/19 available online at fmg.org.nz/publications. A hard copy can also be requested from the Guardians or by e-mailing info@fmg.org.nz

Fishing Paper, and conversations with many people who fish recreationally within the FMA.

So, what happens next? In March we are bringing together a focus group of 20–30 independent recreational fishers to help us identify and describe the current issues and future risks facing fisheries sustainability within the FMA and discuss possible solutions to giving these fish stocks the protection they require over the next 20+ years. The workshop will be held in Te Anau on 6-7 March.

We will then work with these groups (recreational fishers and amateur charter vessel operators) and Ngāi Tahu whānui to develop options for the future, make these publicly available, and encourage everyone to contribute to the conversation. We are looking for solutions that are future focused and practical. Fiordland has always led the way with community-driven initiatives, and once again we are faced with an opportunity to tackle the thorny issue of fisheries sustainability before it is too late, and more drastic measures are required.

As always, the Guardians will work hard to facilitate community-led, proactive approaches that are informed by the best scientific and anecdotal information available. We place a high value on the experiences and knowledge of the Fiordland community and encourage you to share your thoughts with us. If you are a regular fisher within the FMA and are willing to contribute some constructive time to this mahi either face-to-face, by phone, or in writing, we'd like to hear from you. Please email info@fmg.org.nz.



Applying for a Clean Vessel Pass

Applying for a CVP is a simple process that can be completed online at www.es.govt.nz/fmpp or by calling Environment Southland on **0800 76 88 45** to receive a hard copy form.

Do you read The Fishing Paper?

Since July 2019 we have been working with Daryl Crimp (Crimpy), publisher of The Fishing Paper and NZ Hunting News, to build awareness nationally about the FMA among the recreational fishing sector. The Fishing Paper is a free monthly tabloid that has been in circulation for 9 years. Initially a South Island publication, its popularity has seen demand increase across the North Island and is now available through the Smith's City stores and leading marine outlets nationwide. More and more recreational fishers are visiting coastal Fiordland and we want to ensure they are well informed about their responsibilities before they hit the water. With a readership estimated at 110,000, the coverage we have had through The Fishing Paper certainly helps.





Important!

If you are venturing into the fiords, check the latest rules regarding the invasive kelp *Undaria*. Under the Southland Regional Pest Management Plan 2019, it is prohibited to harbour *Undaria*, including having *Undaria* growing on a vessel's hull, within the Southland region.

Two exemption areas are where *Undaria* has already established. The exemption areas do not prevent vessels from entering, but do put in place the following requirements when leaving exemption areas:

- vessels must be free of *Undaria* when they leave the Southern *Undaria* Exemption Area and the Breaksea Sound *Undaria* Exemption Area
- all marine gear and equipment, including but not limited to lobster pots, mooring lines and

dive gear, must be free of *Undaria* when it leaves the Southern *Undaria* Exemption Area and the Breaksea Sound *Undaria* Exemption Area

- all on-board residual seawater collected in the Exemption Area must be treated or discarded within the Southern *Undaria* Exemption Area and the Breaksea Sound *Undaria* Exemption Area.

For more information please visit www.es.govt.nz and search 'Undaria exemption areas'.

Hull checks

If you are planning to head to Fiordland from Bluff or Stewart Island and would like your hull inspected, please contact Rob Emmett or Luke Simeon:

Rob 027 444 4279 • Luke 027 275 7015



Biofouling and vessels arriving from overseas

We frequently get asked about clean vessel standards for international visitors, and especially vessels arriving in Fiordland from overseas. You may be aware that Craft Risk Management Standards for Biofouling (CRMS-BIOFOUL) came into force in May 2018. We asked Jen Brunton from MPI to provide a rundown on these standards and what they mean for the Fiordland Marine Area.

These standards require vessel operators to take preventative measures to manage biofouling before arriving in NZ. The standard, which is administered by MPI/Biosecurity New Zealand, applies to all vessels arriving in NZ from the territory of another country, and aim to reduce the biosecurity risk associated with international vessel biofouling.

To comply with the CRMS-BIOFOUL, vessels must demonstrate that one of the three measures outlined in the standard has been undertaken:

1. the vessel has been continually maintained following best practices, or
2. the vessel has been completely cleaned within 30 days before arrival to NZ, or
3. the vessel has proof of a booking for haul out at an MPI-approved facility within 24 hours of arrival to NZ.

The evidence provided by the vessel must show that one of the above has been undertaken, so the vessel has a 'clean hull' on arrival to NZ. The definition of 'clean' is outlined in the standard and depends on the vessel's itinerary in NZ. 'Short-stay' vessels, defined as those vessels visiting NZ for 20 days or less and only visiting approved ports, are allowed a slime layer, goose barnacles, and small amounts of early stage macrofouling. Vessels staying longer than 20 days or visiting non-approved ports are required to meet a stricter threshold and are only allowed a slime layer and goose barnacles as fouling.

Vessels that cannot meet the requirements of the CRMS-BIOFOUL by undertaking one of the measures outlined in the standard can apply for a Craft Risk Management Plan (CRMP). CRMPs must be approved by MPI and outline alternate biofouling management measures to be undertaken by the vessel to manage the risk to an equivalent level as is outlined in the standard. CRMPs are generally suited to certain vessel classes, including military, fishing, and cruise vessels.

Cruise vessels generally fall into the 'long-stay' category of the CRMS-BIOFOUL, as most cruise voyages include a call at a non-approved port, such as Fiordland. However, due to their operational profiles, most cruise vessels cannot meet the requirements by undertaking one of the measures outlined in the standard. Therefore, all cruise vessels that visit non-approved ports are required to apply for and comply with an MPI-approved CRMP to ensure biofouling has been appropriately managed. Each CRMP application is reviewed by MPI and is only approved if MPI is satisfied the plan manages the biosecurity risk to an equivalent or higher level than required by the standard.

During the 2018-19 cruise season, 100 percent of cruise vessels that visited non-approved ports successfully applied for and complied with an MPI-approved CRMP. This means all cruise vessels visiting Fiordland last season complied with the biofouling requirements. During the 2019-20 season, MPI is again requiring cruise vessels to operate under CRMPs. This season, however, MPI is requiring cruise vessels with higher risk itineraries (eg, long seasons in NZ), to propose even stricter biofouling management measures for their CRMP to be approved. This will ensure the risk continues to be managed to the appropriate level throughout the cruise season.



Fish Mainland website soon to go live

Fish Mainland is a new organisation designed by a working group comprising South Islanders and Stewart Islanders to represent the 100,000+ fishers who fish in South Island marine waters. Over the past 18 months we have been reporting on our work with Dr Randall Bess, an advisor for Fish Mainland, and the working group. The following update was provided by Randall in a January article in Stuff 'Fish Mainland – a new approach for the future of South Island recreational fisheries', (read the full article from 16 Jan 2020). www.fishmainland.nz

Fish Mainland's establishment has received an unprecedented level of support. Its benefits are apparent to fishing clubs, other organisations and individuals. Many of them have recognised the need for collective representation. They realise that if joined together, they can accomplish a lot more than if they continue to work individually or in small groups.

The South Island Iwi and commercial fishing interests also recognise the benefits of having an organisation that is mandated to represent recreational fishers' interests. Fish Mainland has the in-principle support of all nine South Island Iwi, along with the support of the commercial fishing representative organisations that will directly engage with Fish Mainland.

Fish Mainland's website will go live soon (www.fishmainland.nz). It will accommodate individuals and groups signing up as members for free. Membership is open to anyone, though South Island and Stewart Island residents or property owners who are members have voting rights.

The website also provides for members and non-members alike to make donations, with the assurance donations will go towards ensuring sustainable use of the marine environment and its resources. Since Fish Mainland is incorporated, its financial records will be publicly available.

At this early stage, Fish Mainland needs your show of support, especially while working with Government and others to find the best way to secure adequate, long-term funding.



Keeping in touch

Our website www.fmg.org.nz is based on the content and layout of the User Guide: Beneath the Reflections and provides helpful and informative information for those wanting to get out on the water.

You can e-mail us at info@fmg.org.nz

FMG-AGENCY MEETINGS

NEXT MEETING

Thurs 27 Feb, Invercargill
– Environment Southland,
Council Chambers

Agenda items Tue 04 Feb
Board reports Tue 11 Feb

Remaining meeting dates:

Tue 26 May
Wed 19 Aug
Thurs 12 Nov

For more information visit
www.fmg.org.nz.

All welcome

Our quarterly FMG-agency meetings are open to the public and agenda items for discussion at these meetings can be brought to the Guardians. The agenda is set three weeks in advance of a meeting.

Te Pānui Kaitiaki o Ata Whenua is available online at www.fmg.org.nz or via e-mail.

In the interest of sustainability we encourage people to opt for an electronic copy. Please e-mail info@fmg.org.nz to update your contact details or to switch to electronic communication with the Guardians.



Thank you!

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