

March 2009

The Guardians Newsletter

The Fiordland Marine Guardians are an advisory committee who work with government agencies and their Ministers on the management of the Fiordland marine area. They welcome this chance to keep you informed and up to date with happenings in the Fiordland Marine Area.

Blue Cod Research

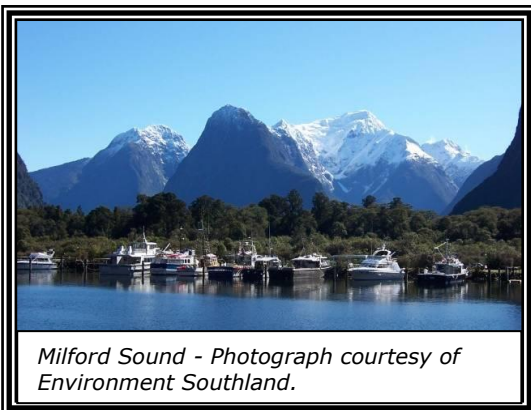
Ministry of Fisheries (MFish) funded research on blue cod is ongoing in the Fiordland Marine Area. One project is looking at blue cod abundance in Dusky Sound. It includes sampling sites in Taumoana (Five Fingers Peninsula) marine reserve, and work is also being carried out in the area for the Department of Conservation by the same researcher. Results of the MFish project are expected to be reported to MFish *around* June 2009.

The research project monitoring the effects of the recreational blue cod fishing closures in Milford and Doubtful Sounds is in its fourth summer. The latest data will be analysed shortly, and an updated project report will be posted on the Fiordland Marine Guardians' website (www.fmg.org.nz).

Tania Cameron, MFish, Dunedin



Blue Cod undergoing dissection - photograph courtesy of MFish



Blue Cod Closures

MFish is consulting on a proposal to continue the recreational blue cod fishing closures in Milford and Doubtful Sounds. The initial position paper is available on the MFish website (www.fish.govt.nz) under consultations, or you can request a copy from MFish's Dunedin office. Submissions close on Monday, 6 April 2009.

Tania Cameron, MFish, Dunedin.

New discoveries in Fiordland's 'china shops'

A Media Release from National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research

9 March 2009

Scientists believe they have found new species after two weeks surveying Fiordland's underwater 'china shops'. Some of the sites have never been dived before, and another survey is due to start soon.

They are called 'china shops' for a reason – areas of particular biological interest or fragility, some of which are designated as no anchoring zones under management



plans implemented by the Fiordland Marine Guardians and the Department of Conservation (DOC). China shops are often sites where protected species such as black or red corals are present in high densities, or where other species are found much closer to the sea surface than usual.

The surveys are a collaboration between DOC and NIWA (the National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research). They used a ROV (remotely operated vehicle) and a team of scientific divers equipped with underwater cameras.

"It's early days yet, but preliminary analyses indicate we have found more than 20 new invertebrates and six new species of algae during the surveys" says project leader Dr Trevor Willis of NIWA. "We have also identified several new areas that are worthy of china shop status and protection – some of these are truly spectacular". Many of the spots had never been dived before. One, for example, was nicknamed Smiley Face after the numerous large, seven-gilled sharks the divers encountered.

Fiordland Marine Guardians chair Malcolm Lawson says "We are very pleased with the results of this project as it will give people more of an appreciation of just what a diverse range of species we have in the Fiordland Marine Area and why it is important to look after it."



Photograph Courtesy of S.Handley, Niwa

A second survey voyage will take place in early April, when the team will work with ROVs and deep water cameras to study life on the fiord walls at depths greater than 100 metres. "Fiordland is still relatively untouched," says Dr Willis. "We probably know more about the marine life of Antarctica than this unique area on our own doorstep. I am certain that further surveys will yield new species, and we will be constantly revising the marine biodiversity of Fiordland."

DOC Marine Ranger, Kath Blakemore, says "It's been great to collaborate with NIWA and the Fiordland Marine Guardians on this project - their expertise and intimate knowledge of the Fiordland marine ecosystem has meant this research will add great value to our knowledge of the area."

A Reminder! **No PWC (Jet Skis) in the Fiordland Marine Area**

A rule in the Southland Regional Council Coastal Plan prohibits Personal Water Craft (PWC or Jet Skis) from operating in Fiordland. However, that has not stopped would be jet skiers from enquiring from Environment Southland how they might "get round" this or gain some exemption.



But Prohibited means just that, and it is no good arguing with Environment Southland staff – there is no leeway to grant an exemption. So if you want to go on the water in Fiordland you will have to use some other form of transport and leave your prized Jet Ski at home.

Kevin O'Sullivan - Environment Southland

Compliance In Marine Reserves

It has come to the attention of the Guardians that there have been recent instances of some people fishing within marine reserves. It is the responsibility of everyone venturing into the Fiordland Marine Area to be aware of the rules regarding fishing and the boundaries of the marine reserves.

If you know of someone who is intending going to Fiordland and may not be familiar with the rules please inform them of their obligations. It is as simple as picking up the various pamphlets from DOC or MFish or getting a copy of the User Guide. It is now three and a half years since the reserves were established and the time is rapidly coming when excuses of ignorance will not be acceptable.

Malcolm Lawson, Chairman, Fiordland Marine Guardians

Minister Sets New Rock Lobster Limit For CRA8

The Minister of Fisheries Phil Heatley has announced his decision to increase the Total Allowable Catch for CRA8 (which includes the Fiordland Marine Area) from 1053 tonnes to 1110 tonnes for the 2009/10 fishing year that begins on April 1st.

The increase will be apportioned by increasing the Total Allowable Commercial Catch from 966 tonnes to 1019 tonnes and the recreational allowance from 29 tonnes to 33 tonnes. All other allowances and the recreational daily bag limit for rock lobsters remain unchanged.

In announcing his decision the Minister expressed his confidence in the management of the CRA8 fishery.

Malcolm Lawson



Fisheries Plans

MFish is working with tangata whenua and stakeholders to develop fisheries plans to improve the way we manage New Zealand's fisheries. For each plan, there is a Fish Plan Advisory Group, the members of which come from tangata whenua, customary, recreational, commercial, and environmental stakeholder groups. Where the plans are relevant to the Fiordland Marine Area, the Guardians are also represented. Good progress is being made on two fisheries plans relevant to the Fiordland Marine Area – PAU 5A and Southern Shellfish.

The Fish Plan Advisory Groups for PAU 5A and Southern Shellfish both welcome community input and will be talking to the community about their plans: PAU 5A toward the middle of 2009; and Southern Shellfish shortly. Details will be published in local newspapers and the MFish website, but if you want to be contacted directly, please provide your contact details to Tania Cameron at MFish's Dunedin office.

The draft Southern Shellfish Plan includes discussion of a proposal to split quota management area 5 for Kina (SUR 5) into SUR 5A and SUR 5B. SUR 5A would take in the Fiordland Marine Area. To view the plan or for more information about either plan, go to the Fisheries Planning pages on the MFish website (www.fish.govt.nz).

Contacts:

Southern Shellfish – Malcolm Lawson (Guardian), Allen Frazer or Mark Geytenbeek (MFish, Dunedin)

PAU 5A – Mark Peychers (Guardian), Allan Kilner or Tania Cameron (MFish, Dunedin)

MFish, Dunedin – Phone: 03 474 0333

Tania Cameron, MFish, Dunedin.

Ministry of Fisheries Consultation

MFish is currently consulting on a number of proposals that relate to recreational fishing in the Fiordland Marine Area:

- 1. Extension of the Recreational Doubtful and Milford Sounds Blue Cod Closure** (see also the MFish Blue Cod article). The current closure ends on 29 June 2009.
- 2. Recreational Rock Lobster Harvesting Regulations** (2 proposals for consideration)
 1. to introduce lassoes as a legitimate method for harvesting rock lobsters. Presently hand operated lassoes are not a permitted method of capture; and
 2. the introduction of an amendment to exclude rock lobster "holding pots" from the rock lobster pot definition. Currently any recreational holding pot must be counted within the allowable maximum number of rock lobster pots a fisher may use in the FMA.
- 3. Recreational Paua Accumulation Limit** - The proposal is to set a maximum number of recreational daily bag limits that a person may possess at any time.

For the full consultation documents and instructions on how to make a submission go to the MFish website www.fish.govt.nz – Consultations – Current Proposals – Review of Regulatory Measures 1 October 2009. Submissions close on Monday 6th April 2009.

This is your opportunity to express your views.

YOUR INPUT IS THE KEY

To Marine Biosecurity in Fiordland

The Fiordland Marine Guardians and Government Agencies (MAF Biosecurity New Zealand, Department of Conservation, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry for the Environment, and Environment Southland) continue to work together to protect the Fiordland Marine Area from marine pests and diseases.

The group, who recently completed a Marine Biosecurity Strategic Plan for the Fiordland Marine Area, is now developing a 5-year Operational Plan for Fiordland, to implement the Strategic Plan. The development of the Operational Plan is being led by a team from the Cawthron Institute. Rather than leave this to the 'scientists', MAFBNZ and Cawthron want Users of the Fiordland Marine Area to be actively engaged in this process, not least because it will be up to many of these same people to implement the operational measures. You can provide information on practical and affordable management measures, and can also spread the word about the importance of compliance. Cawthron, with government research funding, has developed a framework for choosing the most cost-effective biosecurity measures.



Photograph courtesy of The Cawthron Institute.

"When there are many sources of risk, but money and resources to manage these are limited, you need a robust process to set priorities," says Barrie Forrest, Cawthron's Team Leader for Marine Biosecurity.

"Our framework is flexible enough to utilise large amounts of information if this is available. It is also able to work with limited data and focus on one particular aspect of risk management."

Barrie says the Operational Plan for Fiordland, for example, will utilise a pathways approach. "This approach pays particular attention to the risks posed by various types of human activities that can

spread marine pests. Examples of these activities can include tourist ships, private yachts, fishing vessels or visitors travelling overland and entering the Fiordland Marine Area. The Operational Plan will focus on how pathway risks can be reduced through possible interventions and will identify those management measures that provide greatest value for the time and money that will be invested."

User input on costs and expected compliance with possible biosecurity measures will be key factors in assessing alternative management options.

Cawthron social ecologist Marg O'Brien, who is coordinating the stakeholder involvement, says if users can see how the cost-effectiveness of measures is determined by levels of compliance, and will in turn alter the environmental outcomes in Fiordland, it will help to get community buy-in to the practical measures required to protect Fiordland's unique environment. Autumn is a busy time for boaties...please remember "**Clean Boats – Living Seas**"

For further information about vessel cleaning check out the MAF Biosecurity New Zealand website: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/>

By Jim Sinner, Sustainable Business Group Manager, Cawthron Institute and Jennie Brunton, MAF Biosecurity New Zealand

Your Views?

In our last newsletter an invitation was extended to hear about what you have to say regarding the Fiordland Marine Area - Alas there has been no response!

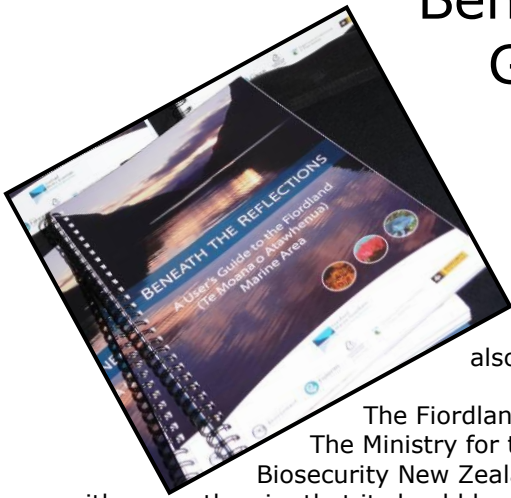
The invitation remains open, as the Guardians are always interested in your comments regarding the area they are passionate about.

Contact Alison at info@fmg.or.nz or write to The Fiordland Marine Guardians, c/- Private Bag 90116, Invercargill.

Have you got your copy yet?

ONLY \$15

**Beneath the Reflections - A Users
Guide to the Fiordland Marine
Area.**



The Department of Conservation report that they still have stock available of the User Guide at their Visitor Centre in Te Anau, as well as at their Haast and Invercargill Offices. Order forms are also available on the Guardians website: www.fmg.org.nz

The Fiordland Marine Guardians have produced this book with the assistance of The Ministry for the Environment, The Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Forestry - Biosecurity New Zealand, The Department of Conservation, and Environment Southland with the aim that it should be a "one stop shop". The book has been heavily subsidised by the Government Agencies involved and retails for only \$15.00

The User Guide contains all the relevant information about the area both practical and informative, and is made from water-resistant paper which is an added attraction for those wanting to make use of all the practical information it contains whilst in the area. Along with the Guide comes the opportunity to register for free updates should there be any regulatory changes in the area, which will be posted to you for filing in the specially designed pocket in the back of the book. The Guardians hope is that everyone who is heading into the fiords will get a copy as it will enhance their visit.

An Invitation to our next meeting:

The Guardians hold regular meetings throughout the year and members of the public are welcome to attend them. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 30th April at 10am, in the Council Room, Environment Southland, cnr North Road and Price Street, Invercargill. We look forward to seeing you there.