

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.

Guardians meet with Minister in Fiordland



The Fiordland Marine Guardians meet with the Minister for the Environment in Doubtful Sound aboard the 'MV Southern Winds'. From left Mark Peychers, Malcolm Lawson (Chairman), Anne McDermott, The Hon Dr Nick Smith, Minister for the Environment, Stewart Bull, Alan Key and Jerry Excell. Sitting in front from left Ken Grange and Alan Mark.

The Minister for the Environment, the Hon Dr Nick Smith, and his family spent time in Fiordland recently with the Fiordland Marine Guardians as part of his annual meeting with the Guardians. Government Agency representatives accompanied them on the visit to Doubtful Sound and gave presentations to the Minister on their roles in the Guardians management regime of the Fiordland marine area. Dr Smith enjoyed the unique meeting onboard the Department of Conservation vessel 'Southern Winds' which provided a real insight to the area. He pointed out that the National Party had always been supportive of the Guardians initiative, and that he was delighted to be able to now work with them. He felt that the Guardians approach of collaboration and the mix of economic and environmental policy was an important one, which could well be replicated by other groups in the future. He was delighted that his wife Linley, and children Hazel and Logan were able to accompany him and briefly experience the special area that is Fiordland. - Alison O'Sullivan, FMG Secretary

Experiences from the recent Earthquake in Dusky Sound

The earthquake that was felt around the South Island on the 15th of July provided an "interesting experience" for those who were close to its epi-centre in Fiordland.

Peter Young, skipper of the DOC vessel MV Southern Winds and one of the original Guardians, was in Dusky Sound at the time. He reports that there was a loud rumble followed by very strong movements and tidal surges. He commented that Luncheon Cove seemed to empty out before the water rushed back in again. The extent of the surge was apparent the next day when Peter and the DOC staff were checking stoat traps near the south east corner of the entrance to the Acheron Passage - In the edge of the bush he saw starfish, a blue cod and a spotty! He said that at the time of the earthquake the tide was low so he estimates that for these to be thrown up into where he saw them the surge had to have been about four metres in height.

Peter also reports that while there did not appear to be many landslips, the water in Dusky Sound the next day was quite stirred up and milky. - Malcolm Lawson, Chairman, Fiordland Marine Guardians

Underwater Research in Fiordland

Over the past summer, two biological field surveys have been carried out in the Fiordland Marine Area by DOC and NIWA.

The first project was aimed at carrying out a comprehensive survey of the 'china shop' areas of the fiords, which are areas notable for containing particularly high diversity or high abundance of uncommon or fragile species. The data collected is still being worked through, but observations on the trip were that each china shop had distinctive characteristics, some with extremely high diversity of species, and that a number of new and undescribed species have been found.



Diver at work during the research – Photo-DOC



The second project involved utilising two types of remote camera systems to survey life in the deeper areas of the fiords, down to 200 metres in some places. One camera system was a manoeuvrable ROV (remotely operated vehicle), which was flown down the fiord walls from the boat by an operator watching a screen displaying the live video. The second system, called a BUV (baited underwater video), was deployed independently from the boat. It is made up of a frame with a video camera attached that focuses on a small container of fish bait below. The system is designed to attract scavenging fish and invertebrates that are caught on camera and able to be measured. This work will provide great information on the types of habitats and communities found in the deeper areas of the fiords, and it already seems that new and undescribed species, including a seapen and possibly a new fish, were recorded on this trip also. - Kath Blakemore, Department of Conservation.

Butterfly Perch & Sponge – Photo Richard Kinsey-DOC

Marking of Fiordland's marine reserves

Recent discussions between the Guardians and DOC have resulted in an agreement to install boundary markers at all of the marine reserves in Fiordland.

Currently just one of Fiordland's ten reserves, Te Awaatu Channel (The Gut) Marine Reserve, is marked with large white triangle markers (a common method for DOC to mark their boundaries). It has been decided that the other two reserves in Doubtful Sound will be marked in the same manner for consistency, but the reserves outside of Doubtful Sound will be marked in a manner more in keeping with the wilderness values of those areas. A suggestion by Guardian Stewart Bull of using Pou pou (carved posts) to signify the entrance or boundary points of the reserves has been adopted. The Guardians are now working with DOC to decide the style and material these are to be made from, before work begins on constructing and then installing them. - Kath Blakemore, Department of Conservation, Te Anau



Current DOC Marine Reserve Markers – Photo Alan Key

Fiordland blue cod closures extended

In June, the closures in Milford and Doubtful Sounds to amateur fishing for blue cod were extended to allow stocks to rebuild.

Both Milford and Doubtful Sounds have been closed to amateur blue cod fishing since 2005, following recommendations to the Minister of Fisheries from the Guardians. All Fiordland's inner sounds have been closed to commercial fishing since 2005 and Milford Sound has been closed to commercial fishing since 1994.

Blue cod stocks in Milford and Doubtful Sounds have been monitored since the summer of 2005/06, to see how they were responding to the amateur fishing closures. Monitoring is scheduled to continue, with a research project planned for summer. But, there is not yet any clear trend in blue cod abundance.

During next year's review of the overall management of Fiordland's marine environment, the Guardians will be seeking the views of the public and user groups about a long term plan for the blue cod fishery in Milford and Doubtful Sounds. The Guardians consider that it would be unwise to reopen the areas without more information from the research programme and before undertaking the review. – *Tania Cameron, MFish, Dunedin*

Watch what you tie up to while fishing in Fiordland!

Commercial Fishermen have informed The Guardians that there have been occasions where recreational fishermen are using their fishing equipment to tie up their boats. This causes damage to the equipment- particularly buoys, ropes and chain - which then have to be replaced. One commercial Fisherman suggested that replacement gear costs him thousands of dollars every year.

Please show some consideration and do not tie up to any such equipment. – *Alison O'Sullivan, FMG secretary.*



Buoys indicating commercial lobster pot – Photo Kevin O'Sullivan, Environment Southland

Accolades for our Guardians

We would like to extend our congratulations to two of our hardworking Guardians:



Alan Mark

Alan Mark was recently honoured with an Environmental Achiever Award by Environment Southland. An Emeritus professor of Botany at Otago University Alan has been described as "New Zealand's answer to David Bellamy". Alan won the award for more than 40 years of "great work" conserving the South's special environment. Alan considers that ecology and environmental issues are his passion, not just his vocation. His knowledge in these areas is a real asset to the work of the Guardians in Fiordland.



Stewart Bull

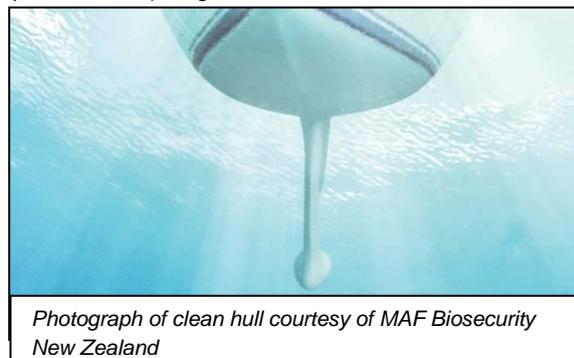
Stewart Bull has recently been appointed to the Southland Conservation Board as iwi representative. Stewart is very knowledgeable regarding tikanga maori and is a much valued member of the Fiordland Marine Guardians. The Conservation Board and The Fiordland Marine Guardians are looking towards having an ever closer working relationship than at present with Stewart's new position giving him 'a foot in both camps'. We congratulate Stewart on this position. *Alison O'Sullivan, FMG secretary*

Fiordland Marine Biosecurity Plan well underway

MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (MAFBNZ), The Guardians, Environment Southland (ES), the Department of Conservation (DOC), the Ministry of Fisheries, and the Ministry for the Environment continue to work together to protect Fiordland from marine risk organisms. MAFBNZ has worked with the above parties to coordinate the development of the Fiordland Marine Biosecurity Strategic Plan 2009/10 - 2013/14, that was completed and signed up to by all the Agencies and the Guardians earlier this year.

The Cawthron Institute under contract from MAFBNZ has recently developed a risk management Operational Plan 2009/10 - 2013/14, which outlines recommended activities that will be undertaken by MAFBNZ, other relevant agencies and the Guardians to achieve the goals identified in the Strategy. The Plan is pathway-based that aims to reduce risk from a wide range of potential invasive species irrespective of source region. Activities focus on reducing risk from pest pathways such as vessel biofouling, ballast water discharge, equipment transfers (e.g. pots, nets, ropes, anchors), bilge water and fouled dive gear. To achieve this, scientists from the Cawthron Institute recommend most effort be directed to vector management, with supporting measures in terms of surveillance, agency coordination, and a communications strategy that engages regional and national stakeholders.

In addition, MAFBNZ, DOC and ES are developing a Joint-agency Marine Biosecurity Response Agreement that is nearing completion. This Agreement will provide a framework for a joint-agency response to an incursion of a marine risk organism in the Fiordland Marine Area. The recently developed MAFBNZ Response System is the basis for the Agreement which adopts a Coordinated Incident Management Response System approach. The System is intended to cover a response in any situation and can be scaled up or down as appropriate.



“The priority now for the Fiordland Marine Biosecurity programme is for the affected parties to implement the agreed recommendations in the operational plan, says Marine Adviser Jennie Brunton”.

Jennie also wishes to note that to achieve the objective of maintaining Fiordland’s unique biodiversity, all users of the marine environment need to understand their roles and responsibilities in its protection.....so 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/> - Jennie Brunton, Marine Adviser, MAF Biosecurity New Zealand

Reappointment of Guardians

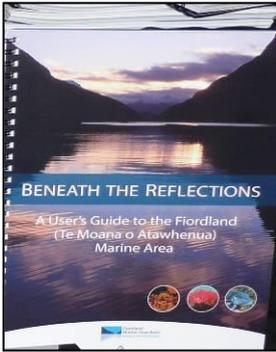


On his recent trip south the Minister for the Environment, Hon Dr Nick Smith, announced the reappointment of three of the Guardians. He acknowledged the efforts of Alan Key of Gore; Anne McDermott of Invercargill; and Stewart Bull of Riverton who is the Ngai Tahu representative, and welcomed their continued input.

All of the eight Guardians are appointed by the Minister for terms ranging from two to four years. They can be appointed for subsequent terms. Alan and Anne have been reappointed for three years and Stewart for four years. – Malcolm Lawson, Chairman, Fiordland Marine Guardians

Your Feedback

Thank you to those who have contacted our Secretary (Alison O’Sullivan) regarding previous newsletters. It is good to know that the newsletters are appreciated and informative. Should you know of anyone who would like to be included in our mailouts or If you have any comments please don’t hesitate to contact Alison on info@fmg.org.nz



Southland Boat Show

Look out for The Fiordland Marine Guardians stand at the Southland Boat Show on 1 & 2 August in Stadium Southland (Velodrome). There will be copies of the Fiordland User Guide on sale at the stand and there will be Guardians in attendance during the weekend who would welcome your comments on the management of the Fiordland Marine Area.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for 10am, Tuesday 8 September in the Council Chamber at Environment Southland, cnr North Road and Price Street, Waikiwi. The meetings of the Fiordland Marine Guardians are open to the public – members of the public are welcome to attend.