



# NEWSLETTER

## "Real Progress" - Outlook on Sounds Research Project



As time permits work is proceeding on the samples collected in the plankton hauls. This is a laborious job since many of the more interesting animals, particularly the small fishes, are present in low numbers and so it is not really effective to sub-sample.

In addition some animals like the ctenophores (sea gooseberries) have sticky surfaces and other animals adhere to them and have to be carefully removed.

As we complete the samples a number of interesting observations become apparent - the most significant being that there is considerable variation from year to year in the plankton composition and abundance, so that occasional collections reveal nothing about the productivity of the Sounds.

There is also quite large variation in the water temperature and salinity.

*Dr John and Dr Jenny Leader ably assisted by Piero Rocco and backed by the Marlborough Recreational Fishers' Association are researching the ecology of the Sounds relevant to blue cod. Here's an update on work to date*



To a biologist, one of the most unexpected results so far is that the great majority of the crab larvae collected are from a single species of masking crab. I would have expected to find many more specimens of the intertidal crabs like the mud crab, *Helice*, or the shore crab *Hemigrapsus*. Presumably larvae of these species are released close inshore and do not enter the main currents in great numbers.

With other tasks out of the way it is hoped to make real progress this coming winter and to be able to collate and publish our findings later this year.

At the same time we are accumulating a collection on larval fishes, and should be able to prepare a key to their identification, linking DNA evidence to their morphology. This will be an important step towards discovering more about the life history and behaviour of fish, particularly blue cod, in the Sounds.

*- John Leader*

**MRFA CHASES UP THE “NO REPLY” FROM THE MINISTRY IN THREE MONTHS!**

Your committee continues to battle away over the unfair and damaging rules the Minister and his ministry have imposed on (only) the recreational fishing public. But we need every member to stand up and be counted. You can do your bit in more ways than one. E mail the prime minister, minister, any MPs and especially your local Member of Parliament.

Following is a letter that was sent on our letterhead to Fisheries Minister Nathan Guy back in late August. We haven't had a reply so at the end of November we wrote reminding the minister of "no reply." He acknowledged the lack of reply - but no apology - but as at the end of January we still haven't had a reply!

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**COPY OF MRFA LETTER TO THE MINISTER**

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Nathan Guy  
Minister Primary Industries,  
Parliament,  
**Wellington**  
28 August, 2013

Dear Nathan,

**Re Marlborough Recreational Fishery**

Thank you for your time on July 11 and discussion on the recreational blue cod and set net situations.

We hope we conveyed the strong frustration of the recreational public over the matters.

**Blue Cod**

We have noted continued reference by ministers and the ministry to the “depleted state” of the blue cod fishery. Nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed the 2007 NIWA survey, despite flawed methodology, referred in its conclusions to “increases” in the Sounds’ outer zones and “no significant changes” in inner zones.

Another independent survey about 2008 showed a 20 percent increase in blue cod over the previous three years.

The results of the 2010 survey still have not been officially although we understand that the draft results contradict many of the earlier findings about cod movement and abundance. If these findings are confirmed by the survey which you have brought forward to later this year, it is to be hoped that this will expedite in timely fashion, adjustments to the rules for recreational cod fishing. We request the report be released in order to verify its conclusions.

A major source of annoyance for the recreational public is about the injustices, discrimination and lack of science of the cod ban. For example currently there is a ban on recreational fishing. The ban does not apply to commercial or customary.

If the ban August 31 to December 20, is on the supposition of protecting spawning cod, then surely it should apply to all, rather than discriminating against one sector of stakeholders?

Not only is it unjust but makes a mockery of the intention to protect spawning cod.

In any case the supposition has deep doubts as the majority of Queen Charlotte blue cod according to life long local commercial fishermen, spawn outside the Sound (Contd...)

and to the south. Anecdotal - yes- but in the sad absence of any meaningful research, it is a lead.

In addition the period of the ban (Aug 31 to Dec 20) is very probably flawed. It has left out the important month of August and included the probably insignificant months of October, November and December.

Also relative to spawning is the controversial slot rule, ostensibly implemented to protect the larger breeding stock. It ignores that blue cod which begin spawning at 20-22 cms size. change gender into males at about 33-34 cms. So in essence the slot rule is forcing anglers to kill the important larger breeding female fish.

It also is causing the needless destruction of many fish outside the 30-35cm slot that have to be returned these fish dying of injuries sustained in catching, or to predation by opportunistic shags and barracoutta.

We note the voluntary commercial size limit is 33 cms.

We suggest the immediate abolition of the slot rule and that the recreation size limit become 33 cm, consistent with the commercial figure.

We reiterate the time and location of spawning is not sure.

In the four years since the closure in 2008, the Ministry has done little or no research relative to the all-important details of spawning, ie when and where. You will recall MRFA is conducting its own research on cod larval movement with John Leader and Jennifer Bedford as scientists.

The transit rule is also unsatisfactory, targets only Marlborough recreational fishers and is unfair too.

### **Set Nets**

We discussed the recreational set net ban with you also. Again recreational set netters are limited to four months of the year, commercial can fish 12 months of the year. The ban is purported to be to prevent dolphins being caught in set nets yet some 90 years. of historical records show there has never been a dolphin entanglement in a recreational fishing net in the Marlborough area. The maximum allowable length of a recreational set net is 60 metres and limited to one net per boat. In contrast commercial are allowed nets to 500 metres and "submerged nets" to 1000 metres.

It is illogical to say recreational nets of 60 metres are a threat to dolphins whereas 500 to 1000 metre nets are not. In addition recreational set nets for moki and butterfish are set close to rocks and kelp, which is not dolphin habitat.

We also take issue with the requirement for recreational set netters to stay with their nets - whereas commercial do not. It is totally misleading for MFish advisors to run the argument that a recreational fisher net handling ability is a threat to dolphins when there is no evidence to support such a stance. We also take issue with "nit-picking" implementations by compliance staff who regard being within the vicinity (or close by ashore) to not be in close proximity.

### **Scallops**

We also raised the matter of scallops and the intrusion of the commercial fleet into areas of the Pelorus and Queen Charlotte Sounds into areas of traditional recreational use. We remind you the Tasman and Golden Bay areas have been depleted where the commercial boats worked. The recreational public do not wish to see new areas depleted. Unfortunately greeds knows no bounds.  
(Contd...)

## Summary

In summary, we urge you to take the following steps:-

- a. Slot rule be abolished and replaced with a (voluntary?) size limit of 33 cms (same as for commercial fishers)
- (b) A blue cod bag limit of 4 or 5.
- (c) Closure to all cod fishing August-September
- (d) Abolish transit rule to be commensurate with Cook Strait limit.
- (e) Restore recreational set netting rights, 12 months year, (same as commercial sector) and abolish the need for recreational fishers to remain with their nets (same as commercial sector).
- (f) Ban overnight set netting for all sectors.

Thank you for your time. We were appreciative of your time and obvious attention to our concerns. We look forward to a quick solution and resolving of the unfairness.  
yours sincerely

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## - HOW YOU CAN HELP -

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**Letters to the editor of newspapers are effective, Political parties and government departments use contractors to clip items of interest. Besides a letter tells the public - thousands of them - of the issue. Some hints on writing letters.**

1. Be aware of the maximum length required. "The Marlborough Express" has a maximum word limit of 250 words, "The Blenheim Sun" about 100. If you do it on your computer, there will be a "word count" on your machine.
2. In the first sentence try to clearly and emphatically state your opinion.
3. Make sure your letter is checked for spelling and grammar errors.
4. Be timely. If a news item has been in the paper then move quickly. Your letter will become irrelevant very quickly. If you can, you need to get it into the very next edition.
5. Be Concise. Nothing beats a short letter. Short letters will get read more than those of "maximum allowable length." Sentences should also be kept short. Staying brief will help you get your point across clearly. Keep in mind that the letters page is a jigsaw puzzle and there are many places a

short letter will fit where a long letter would not.

6. Be Bold. Timid writing is for losers. If you are taking the time to write a letter, surely you have an opinion. State it in no uncertain terms right up front. Avoid personal attacks. Debate the issue. "Play the ball, not the man."

7 Be funny if the chance arises. Funny letters get published. Humour is one of the most effective ways of communicating.

8 Important details. Follow their rules regarding letters. Spell everything correctly. Keep within the word limit. Include your name, full address, and phone number.

9 Impact. Thousands of people will read your words.

10. (a) E Mail local newspapers

11. "The Marlborough Express"  
<[mailbox@marlexpress.co.nz](mailto:mailbox@marlexpress.co.nz)> "Blenheim Sun" <[news@blenheimsun.co.nz](mailto:news@blenheimsun.co.nz)>

(b) E Mail politicians

Send an e-mail to your local MP, the party political leaders and any other MP. MP's e-mails can be googled but here's the e-mail pattern: first name, dot, surname then [@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:@parliament.govt.nz)  
e.g. [colin.king@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:colin.king@parliament.govt.nz)





## SNAPPER NEED PATIENCE - BY BEN HOPE

It's snapper time with top months February and March and success to catch snapper usually requires patience and sometimes oodles of it!

I remember once in the Kenepuru fishing for several hours. It was dead. So we headed out into the Pelorus and anchored towards Nydia Bay. It was quiet there too until about 4 p.m. somebody told the snapper to bite on an outgoing tide and the action was hot and fast.

Blank days will happen too. But learn from them. Analyse what you might've done differently.

Remember too as one very experienced snapper fisherman told me, "The successful fishermen obviously no more than most about fishing but they never stop learning!" Be eager to learn from your own trips and of others.

First rule he said for any successful day or night fishing for snapper is enthusiasm and being positive.

He reckons tidal flow is crucial. Research your timing. Pick the time when the tide is flowing either in or out. Slack water at low or high tides is mostly poor. Best times are when the tidal flow is highest, i.e. some tides are weak others strong.

Top times are often "change of light" i.e. early morning or late evening into night. Check the bite times as listed.

On bait, my learned friend said squid is very underrated. Pilchards are good of course but the best bait is fresh bait especially garfish. Sprats such as herrings (yellow eyed mullet) and garfish often come



John Dory are rarely targeted in the Sounds. Yet they are arguably the best or at the least one of the best table fish. They are found mostly in areas of foul ground and up to 120 metres in depth. Wharves and jetties are prime spots too.

The John Dory is a thinnish, deep bodied predatory fish that stalks and engulfs small bait fish with its relatively monstrous mouth. The best bait is a ledger with dropper and a small live bait. They can sometimes be taken on a small jig or moving soft bait. But the best bait

around the berley pot. Have a light rod, a very small hook and a tiny piece of bait and flick that out. It'll be fun and you've got the best of bait.

Kahawai can be excellent bait too. Even freshwater eel has been successfully used.

Finally berley is very well worth using - almost a must.



And in the Sounds you don't have to have a boat. Snapper fishing can be done from the shore tossing a running rig out 40 or 50 metres. In February and March, don't neglect shallow water particularly early morning or late evening. Snapper can be in water only knee deep at times.

For shore fishing, Karaka Point, by the Queen Charlotte Yacht Club at Picton, Bob's Bay, Wai-kawa, Grove Arm, Mahau and Kenepuru Sounds have plenty of scope for catching snapper from the shore.

Keep a diary and you'll see a pattern for spots you try. Some fish better on an in-coming tide, some on the out-going.

## TRY FISHING FOR JOHN DORY IN THE SOUNDS

of all for John Dory is a live bait.

Any area with plentiful bait fish may be John Dory territory. When they take, make sure the fish has fully engulfed the bait. A landing net is advisable. Enjoy the dining. They're superb.

## CHEAP EFFECTIVE BERLEY!

My good friend told me of a budget berley to brew up. Get a bottle of fish oil such as tuna oil and half a bucket of oats. With the oats in the bucket, tip boiling water over the oats to soak in. Wait until the water starts to disappear just like hot water will into weetbix at breakfast!

Now add fish oil. Keep adding oil until it stops absorbing it. Leave for two hours to soak. Let it dry or use it like that. Keep it in an old ice cream container, or you can add a bit of water and freeze it to use in the near future when tides and weather are right!

## SUBSCRIPTIONS!

Please if you haven't paid your sub, can you do so ASAP? Your association is battling on your behalf against the injustices and unfair discrimination being meted out to the recreational public. The sub is not much. We don't pay a saltwater fishing licence like trout anglers do - which is about \$120. So what's \$15 or \$20 for a family membership? It really can help.

## MORE! MEMBERS

We want MRFA to be bigger. There's strength in numbers when you're talking to MPs. So if your fishing companions aren't members put the hard word on them. Get them to join.

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

# Marlborough Recreational Fishers' Association Inc

P O Box 384,

## BLenheim 7240



**Please Print Clearly**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Address

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E Mail:**

**Membership:**    \$15 Adult,   \$20 Family   \$30 Assn/Club   (Circle)

**Total** (attached) \$

**Details for SBS Bank: 03 1355 0509847 00 (use your name as reference)**