

March 2013

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.

Promising Progress in Undaria Response

The programme remains on track to eliminate *Undaria* from Sunday Cove. Promising progress has been made in the last year towards totally removing the pest seaweed, *Undaria pinnatifida* (*Undaria*), from Sunday Cove in Breaksea Sound.

Since the single mature *Undaria* specimen was found in April 2010, 33 control operations have been conducted in the area. Over the past 12 months, only 53 immature *Undaria* specimens have been found in the search area despite an increased level of search effort. The January, February and March surveys in 2013 have proved even better with no plants being detected at all.

Although results are very exciting it is still too early to say whether the war has been won. However the Response Team (Environment Southland, DOC and MPI) and the Fiordland Marine Guardians believe the project is firmly on track to achieve the goal of ridding Fiordland of *Undaria*.

The group is urging boaties to continue to play a very important role in ensuring no more *Undaria*, or indeed any other marine pests, are transferred into Fiordland.

What you can do to help:

- Please do not remove seafood from the Sunday Cove area. Shellfish may have been infected with *Undaria* spores and removing them may spread *Undaria* to other areas. Also Kina have been placed in Sunday Cove and play a key part in the elimination programme.
- Please do not move lobster pots out of the Sunday Cove area, as they may be infected with *Undaria* spores.
- Ensure any marine equipment especially dive and fishing gear is clean and dry, or treated prior to using it in Fiordland's waters.
- Ensure your vessels' hull is clean and well anti fouled before visiting Fiordland.



Signage on structures in Sunday Cove explaining the *Undaria* response programme.

Photographs courtesy of Jennie Brunton, MPI, Wellington

It is hoped that within the next one to two years, Fiordland will once again be free of *Undaria*. This will be significant for the area's unique marine biodiversity, as well as being very important in protecting its commercial, recreational and cultural uses.

Jennie Brunton, MPI Biosecurity, Wellington

Options arise for Gut Hut's future

The Department of Conservation's scheduled removal of Secretary Island's Gut Hut is being reconsidered, after a group of local users expressed an interest in taking over the hut's ongoing management.

No recorded overnight use during the 12 months prior to an August 2012 hut inspection, and identification of critical maintenance required due to deterioration to the point where it is considered unsafe, contributed to DOC's decision to close the hut. Currently the hut requires significant floor repairs in both the hut and the toilet, and also replacement of the hut's fireplace.

Also influencing the decision to close the hut were concerns regarding biosecurity risks linked with visitors to Secretary Island. Unlike much of the rest of New Zealand, several introduced pest species including rats, mice and possums have never reached the island. As a result Secretary has a diverse range of native plant communities, habitats, and is a potential location for native species restoration programmes.

In response to the decision to close Gut Hut, DOC has been approached by local users keen to take responsibility for ongoing management of the hut. Negotiations are now underway to come up with a suitable agreement to try to enable this to happen. Any agreement will include biosecurity provisions as well as hut management provisions.

Anna Star, DOC, Te Anau

Do you think the Gut Hut is worth saving?

If you would like DOC to reconsider the removal of this hut because it needs some maintenance and also because of biosecurity risks, please contact Recreational Fishermen and frequent hut user Geoff Milne.

Geoff is prepared to organize a group at no cost to DOC to do some long overdue maintenance.

Geoff's contact details are:

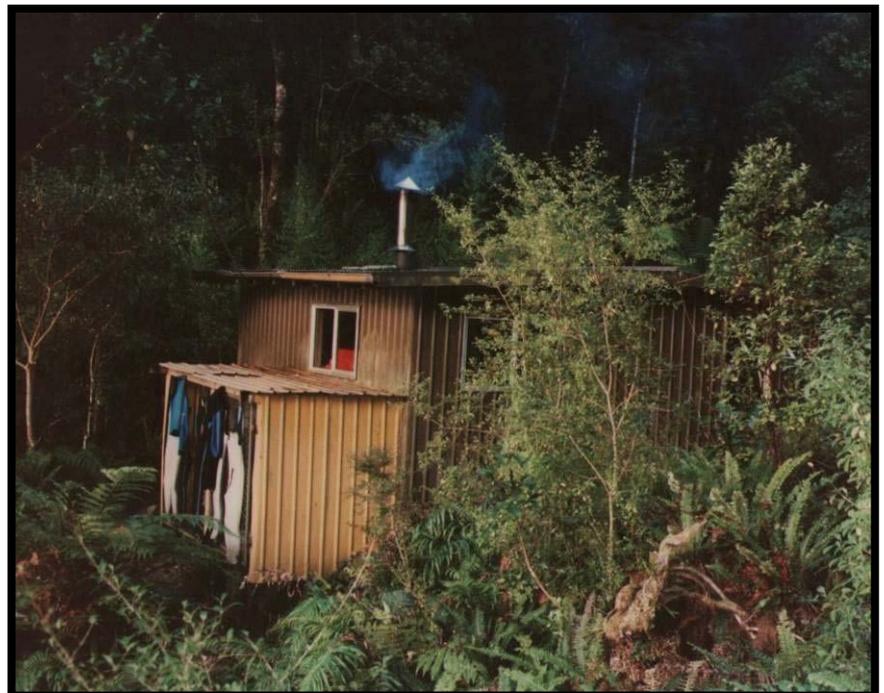
6 McLew Road,

Kennington,

Phone (03) 230-4870

or mobile 0274 353 191

email g.milner@slingshot.co.nz



The Gut Hut.

Photograph supplied by Anne McDermott, Guardian

Minister sets Total Allowable Catch for CRA8 for 2013/14

The Minister for Primary Industries, Nathan Guy, recently announced his decisions on the Total Allowable Catch for the CRA8 quota management area. The Fiordland Marine Area is within the CRA8 area.

There will be no change to the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) of 962 tonnes or to the current non-commercial allowances.



A catch of crayfish.
Photograph courtesy of CRA8

Just as important for the CRA8 industry is that he has endorsed the management strategy (known as a 'management procedure') for the next 5 years that the CRA8 industry recommended. Since 1998 the CRA8 area has operated under management procedures based on the rate of catch of legal sized lobsters per potlift. This is called Catch Per Unit of Effort (CPUE). CPUE is used as a relative index of abundance, in other words changes in CPUE reflect changes in abundance in the fishery. Under the management procedure, the CPUE result from the previous year dictates the setting of TACC for the next year. The new management procedure sets the TACC at 962 tonnes when CPUE is between 1.9kgs per potlift and 3.7kgs per potlift. Currently CPUE sits at 3.35kgs per potlift.

Minister Guy is quoted as saying, "I understand from my officials that the CRA8 industry could have requested the development of a management procedure that resulted in higher yields from the fishery. The industry has instead opted to continue to take a conservative management approach. I applaud this long term vision for the sustainable utilisation of the CRA8 fishery."

Malcolm Lawson, Chairman, FMG

Milford and Doubtful Sounds Blue Cod Fisheries

These two fisheries have been closed since 2005 following concerns over the state of the stocks. The Guardians have been grateful that fishers have supported the closures to allow a range of research to be carried out to help us better understand the nature of the fisheries. For our part we have always said that this information would help us in making decisions on the future management of the areas. At the most recent Guardians/agencies meeting all of the results were considered. The research shows that there is very little movement of blue cod into or out of the fiords and, as expected, that productivity in the inner fiords is low. As a result, while individual fish in these areas have increased in size, the overall stocks in the inner fiords have not increased in number in any meaningful way over the last eight years. This shows that fishing does not have the degree of impact that we thought. It also

shows that for the numbers to build up would mean leaving the fisheries closed for many years. It also confirms that the best fishing will continue to be enjoyed in the outer coastal areas.

The Guardians have recommended to the Ministry for Primary Industries that the regulations be amended to allow the fisheries to reopen with a small daily bag limit. We have also said that it is important to consider the whole of the Doubtful Sound complex, which also includes Thompson and Bradshaw Sounds, so any decisions will apply to all of this area. The recommendations will now be considered by MPI when the Ministry sets its priorities for regulatory changes for the next year. A public consultation round will be held at the appropriate time.

Malcolm Lawson, Chairman, FMG



Jennie Brunton displays a very tasty looking Blue Cod.
Photograph courtesy of MPI

Best ever Blue Cod Recipe!

First catch your Blue Cod and fillet it.

Dust the fillets in a little seasoned flour and fry lightly in butter. Squeeze some lemon juice over each fillet prior to serving.

In this recipe Blue Cod is the star, and so doesn't need a lot of other flash ingredients which could mask its beautiful, delicate flavor.

Bon Appetit!

Do you have any great seafood recipes or other ideas for articles (or indeed articles!) for our newsletter? Please flick them through to Alison at info@fmg.org.nz It would be greatly appreciated.

Alison O'Sullivan, Secretary to the FMG



Bottlenose dolphin photographed in the FMA.
Photograph courtesy of T.Brough, DOC, Te Anau

Doubtful sound bottlenose dolphin update:

The bottlenose dolphins of Doubtful sound are a unique population of dolphins that inhabit an extreme environment at the ecological and geographical limit for the species. The population has been the subject of research for over twenty years via a partnership between the Department of Conservation and the University of Otago, which has documented changes in the population size and survival rates over the years as well as interesting features of the population.

Population monitoring trips took place throughout 2012 and into the 2013 summer season to determine the current state of the

population. Throughout 2012 a stable population of 60 individuals was observed during each trip, this included three new calves born during the seasonal calving season (October-March). The summer 2013 monitoring trip discovered eight calves had been born during the 2012/13 calving season, making it one of the most productive recorded to date. If the calves survive their first winter in Doubtful sound it will be very good news for the population. One older, adult male has disappeared from the population and is assumed to have died as immigration is very rare, thus the current population size in Doubtful sound is 67 individuals.

Research into the drivers of low calf survival rates was continued during 2012, with researchers identifying that female dolphins were more likely to give birth to a calf that survived if the mother was of larger size and gave birth at an optimum time (January). An additional study focussing upon the effects of vessels on dolphin behaviour and acoustic communication was also carried out during 2012, results of which will be available later in the year.

For any queries regarding bottlenose dolphins in Fiordland, please contact Tom Brough at the Department of Conservation, Te Anau- tbrough@doc.govt.nz or Ph- (03) 2490200.

Tom Brough, DOC, Te Anau

DON'T FORGET YOUR COPY OF BENEATH THE REFLECTIONS

A User's Guide to the Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) Marine Area

Stocks are still available at The Department of Conservation Visitor Centre in Te Anau and at the DOC office in Invercargill. The User Guide will also be available in selected retail outlets in Te Anau, Invercargill, and Gore