

December 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.



Photograph courtesy of Real Journeys.

Seen any Whales lately?

There seems to have been an increase in the number of whales cruising up or down the coast recently. Since September the Te Anau DOC office has received four sightings of Southern Right Whales, one Minke Whale sighting, and five separate sightings of Humpback Whales.

This is more reports than DOC have had in other years, and they hope that it is a trend that will continue! Thanks to those who have passed on the information. *Kath Blakemore & Richard Kinsey, DOC, Te Anau.*

New rock lobster holding pot rules for Fiordland

As from the 1st October 2009 new rules apply expressly allowing for 'rock lobster holding pots' to be used in addition to 'rock lobster (catching) pots' within the Fiordland Marine Area. The new rule change was initiated by the Fiordland Marine Guardians. Unlike the rest of New Zealand, the new regulations make specific provision for the use of rock lobster pots and holding pots with the following separate definitions:

Rock lobster pot means any pot, whether baited or not, that is capable of catching or holding rock lobster; and includes any other device capable of catching holding, or storing rock lobster except a loop, bob or ring pot.

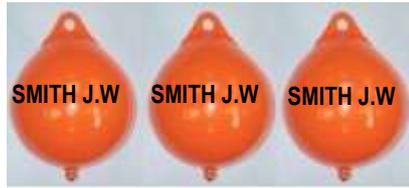
Rock lobster holding pot means a pot that is used, or can be used for holding or storing rock lobster but does not include any pot that is capable of catching rock lobster.

- Holding pots are excluded from other rock lobster pot limits and escape gap requirements.
- Restrictions apply limiting fishers to **one holding pot per person** or a **maximum of 2 holding pots per vessel** if there are two or more persons.
- Holding pots and attached **surface floats** used from or transported on a vessel must be clearly and permanently marked with the **vessel name** and the **characters HP 1** for the first holding pot and (if applicable) **HP 2** for the second holding pot.
- Holding pots and attached surface floats used other than from a vessel must be clearly and permanently marked with the fishers surname, initials and the characters **HP**. *Reece Murphy, MFish*

See overleaf for scenarios of the new regulations.

Rock lobster pot and holding pot marking scenarios

a/ No Fishing vessel: One person



b/ Fishing vessel: One person



c/ Fishing vessel: Two (or more) persons



User Guide Update on this change in Rules

If you have registered for updates to your User Guide, this new information will be included with this newsletter. To register contact info@fmg.org.nz. The update can also be downloaded from the Guardians website: www.fmg.org.nz

Blue Cod Research Continues

Researchers contracted by the Ministry of Fisheries will continue to monitor the abundance of blue cod in Milford and Doubtful Sounds over the summer. The results from previous years do show an increase in size, but no real change in abundance so far. Blue cod are real “homebodies”, and the tagging work done as part of the monitoring shows they don’t move far from their “home patch”.

As well, another researcher is investigating whether we can use otoliths (fish ear bones) to tell us more information that would help in future management of blue cod. Certain chemical signatures are laid down in the ear bones that can tell us where a fish was living at a particular time in its life. With this information, we may be able to tell where the adult populations found in the inner fiords originated.

In 2010, the Guardians will again consider the recreational blue cod closures in Milford and Doubtful Sound and how to best manage blue cod in the Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) Marine Area in future. Look out for your opportunity next year to let them know what you think about managing blue cod. *Tania Cameron, MFish*

Boating in Doubtful Sound this summer?

Don't forget the bottlenose dolphins

Seeing any kind of marine mammals when boating is always a welcome addition to any trip to the coast. However, as well as the marine mammal protection regulations please remember that the resident bottlenose dolphins in Doubtful Sound have special protection measures associated with them to help reduce the amount of time they come in to contact with vessels.

- Dolphin Protection Zones (200m strips along parts of the fiord wall), you can still access these areas to go fishing or diving etc, but please don't travel in these zones.
- If there happen to be dolphins in this DPZ (Dolphin Protection Zone) when you want to access them, keep out until the dolphins have passed by.
- Also, let any encounters with the dolphins be on their terms, so don't intentionally approach a group of dolphins, let them come to you.

There are brochures available at the kiosk in Deep Cove or online (www.doc.govt.nz) that will explain the rules more fully if you are heading in to Doubtful Sound.

Please also remember the other regulations that apply when boating around marine mammals, including:

- reduce your speed when within 300m
- approach marine mammals from behind or to the side (not in front)
- don't make any sudden or repeated changes in direction
- don't cut through a group of marine mammals
- do not disturb or harass any marine mammals – *Kath Blakemore & Richard Kinsey, DOC, Te Anau.*

Ever Wondered about the History of

Blanket Bay?

The fishing depot at Blanket Bay was initiated during the mid 1960's.

Fishing company owner, Two Ton Johnson, had an oyster boat moored in Blanket Bay – 'The Marina'.

The Marina had a freezer on board, and Two Ton would buy tails from the many boats fishing in and outside the Doubtful Sound complex. To improve the capacity, permission was granted to build the depot on the western side of Blanket Bay Island from Duncan McIntyre, of the Marine Department, with the condition that it had to be built below the high water mark.

This depot was manned most of the year and it supplied fuel and bait to the local fishermen. The caretaker would buy and freeze the cray tails and then the fish would be flown out by float plane when the weather would allow. Often two plane loads of frozen tails would leave each day.



Around 1990, when the crayfish industry switched to live fish export, a live crayfish plant was installed at Blanket Bay that could hold about two tonnes of live fish. The fish was then packed into tubs and flown out by helicopter or carted out over the Wilmont Pass and down Lake Manapouri.

In the mid 1990's the depot became uneconomic and was closed down with the fuel tanks being removed and eventually the freezer decommissioned.

David and Neville Excell now hold the consent for Blanket Bay and have repaired and rebuilt the hut to its present glory. *Jerry Excell, Guardian*

Help keep Fiordland's islands free of pests

Mouse incursions on rodent-free Secretary and Rona Islands this year have highlighted the potential risk that boats bring to these island sanctuaries. The message is simple: The Department of Conservation need everybody's help to keep unwanted visitors from getting established. You can never be too careful about checking your boat and equipment for stowaway rodents.

Boat Owners:

- have a really good clean-out of your boat after it has been stored away over the winter months,
- use rodent poison baits or traps on the boat;
- check all obvious hiding spots for stowaways before leaving shore;
- keep doors and hatches closed when the boat is moored.

Individuals:

- check your personal gear before boarding a vessel and prior to going ashore
- plan your trips ashore so as to visit pest-free islands before going to the mainland.

NB: Rats can squeeze through a 12mm gap and mice through a 7mm gap!

Kath Blakemore & Richard Kinsey, DOC Te Anau



'Escaping Mice' – drawing
by Sonia Frimmel

Vessel Intentions Register

Environment Southland is presently working on a voluntary 'Vessel Intentions Register' which will be in the form of on-line registration to a specific website or by phone. This register will be similar to the DOC intentions register for trampers, and will be used as a 'safety net' and to monitor vessel movements. Vessel owners are able to register their intention to go to specific areas, and when plans change (as they do) alter their intentions on the register.

One of the recommendations in the Fiordland Marine Biosecurity Risk Management Plan was for Environment Southland to establish a voluntary Vessel Intentions Register for all vessels entering Fiordland. Registration would be free and accessible e.g. via the internet or telephone and those making multiple trips, e.g. fishing vessels or tourism operators, could register once a year with their operating intentions and locations.

The register will initially be voluntary but after a year public consultation will determine whether registration of intentions should be made mandatory.

Environment Southland is driving this project and coordinating between their website Manager ZILT, MAF– Biosecurity New Zealand and other stakeholders. Environment Southland is hopeful that the website will be operational before Christmas.

So 'watch this space' for news of this exciting project. *Keith Crothers, Environment Southland*



Keeping Marine Pests OUT of Fiordland

As you are aware the Fiordland Marine Area is a precious and unique environment that is worthy of protection.

Marine pests pose very real threats to the things you value. As a boatie there are a couple of simple activities you can do to protect the FMA from marine pests:

- ❖ Keep your boat bottom clean – regularly clean your hull and keep your antifouling paint on good condition – dirty boats spread marine pests; and
- ❖ Ensure equipment to be used in the ocean is clean and completely air-dried before moving into the Fiordland Marine Area.

Be alert for sea life that looks different when boating, fishing or diving. If you spot something unusual take a note of its location, collect a sample or photograph if possible, and immediately call the MAF Biosecurity New Zealand hotline **0800 80 99 66**. *Jenny Brunton, MAFBNZ*

For further information on vessel cleaning please visit the MAF Biosecurity New Zealand website:
<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/biosec/camp-acts/marine/cleaning>

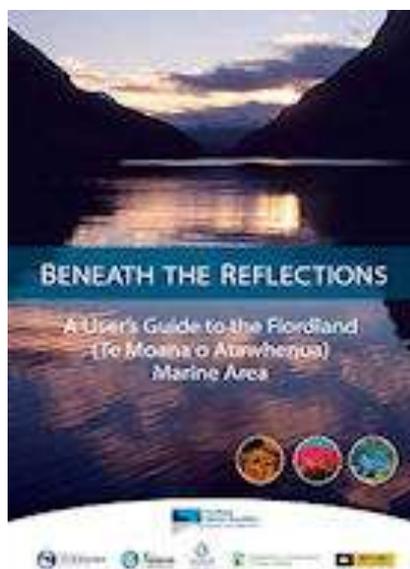
Regularly cleaning the slime layer off your hull will stop fouling from building up. Watch out for a new Fiordland marine biosecurity guide coming out just after Christmas

The Fiordland Marine Guardians and agency staff would like to wish you a safe and happy holiday season and thank you for your continued support .



The Perfect Christmas Present!

BENEATH THE REFLECTIONS –



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

This is a practical Guide to everyone who visits, or intends to visit the Fiordland Marine Area.

It has all the relevant information pertaining to the area including the history of the area, practical user information, Fisheries information and guidelines, along with a Fiord-by-Fiord guide containing maps of each Sound with navigational information. The book is full of beautiful colour photographs of the area and is a **MUST HAVE** for all.

Water resistant paper is an added attraction of the User Guide for those people wanting to make full use of all the practical information it contains while in the 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

The User Guide is heavily subsidised by the Government Agencies involved and retails for

the low price of only \$15.00