

March 2010

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.

A Message from the Editor

Thanks for passing on comments and suggestions on the Newsletter - Due to your positive feedback on the article on the History of Blanket Bay which featured in the December newsletter- we include with this issue information on the history of the Deas Cove Hut. If there are any other suggestions for articles – please contact me at info@fmg.org.nz,
Alison O'Sullivan, Secretary, Fiordland Marine Guardians

Enclosed along with this newsletter is your Guide to Clean Boats-Living Seas which is a great guide to take with you as you venture into The Fiordland Marine Area.

Deas Cove Hut - Doubtful Sound – the old and the new



The Old Deas Cove Hut – Photograph courtesy of DOC, Te Anau

A new site, not threatened by large-scale earth movements, was selected. The new, 10-bunk, Deas Cove hut was completed in December 2007.

Since then the hut has been used by many boating parties exploring Doubtful Sound on fishing and hunting trips.

For more information about the hut, or to purchase hut tickets, please visit the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre in Te Anau.

Kath Blakemore, DOC, Te Anau

The first hut in Deas Cove, Thompson Sound, was built in 1977.

Twenty-six years later in 2003, a magnitude 7.2 earthquake hit Fiordland, triggering a massive landslide that came down just 10 metres away from the hut. The likelihood that the hut would be destroyed in the event of another earthquake-induced landslide meant a new location was needed. Consideration was given to several sites in Thompson Sound to build the replacement hut, however the anchorage in Deas Cove was deemed the most suitable.



The New Deas Cove Hut – Photograph courtesy of DOC, Te Anau.

Monitoring of The Blue Cod Fishery

You'll be aware from earlier newsletters that the internal waters of both Milford and Doubtful Sounds have been closed to recreational blue cod fishing since mid 2005. Later this year, the Guardians will be discussing how best to manage blue cod in these two fiords in future.

In the meantime, another summer of data has been collected by Alan Key and his survey team, with assistance from scientists from the Ministry of Fisheries. The data has not been analysed yet by The Ministry of Fisheries, but will provide assistance to the Guardians when they are considering how best to manage blue cod in future, particularly in Milford and Doubtful Sounds, which are the two most accessible fiords.

In addition to the blue cod monitoring work, a preliminary study is being undertaken to see if otoliths (fish ear bones) could provide information that will tell us where blue cod have been during their lifetimes and hopefully provide evidence of where the fish in their juvenile state originate from. This is important to determine the extent of colonisation and population spill over from the outside coast.

So far the research suggests the blue cod stocks inside the steep walled fiords are highly territorial and rarely move any great distance, including little movement from one side of a fiord to the other.

If the otolith results are promising, this could lead to further study of the Milford and Doubtful Sounds blue cod populations, and eventually to better information for management of blue cod stocks inside the fiords.

Tania Cameron, MFish, Dunedin



CRA8 Quota Levels To Remain Unchanged

Total Allowable Commercial Catch and non-commercial allowances for CRA8 – which includes the Fiordland Marine Area – will remain at current levels for the new fishing year beginning on April 1st.

Management of the CRA8 fishery is based on the annual catch rate, or Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE). For rock lobster CPUE is measured as the weight of legal lobsters caught and landed per potlift. The latest CPUE result is 3.78kgs. Due to the CPUE being less than 5% different to the previous year's result of 3.81 kgs, no change is made to catch levels.

CRA8 continues to be the most productive rock lobster area in the country and produces 37% of the national commercial catch.

Malcolm Lawson, Chairman, Fiordland Marine Guardians.

Thinking of Using Soft baits?

Have you thought about what happens to lost fishing gear?

Some new research suggests soft baits can be hazardous to fish if swallowed.

Early results of research from the US suggest that some fish have difficulty in passing the baits through their digestive system. This may lead to the fish starving.

So, please think carefully about whether you need to use them if you are going fishing in Fiordland.

Tania Cameron, MFish, Dunedin

Boating to Fiordland? – Register your intent

As part of a joint agency work programme to protect the unique Fiordland Marine Area from the damage caused by marine pest species, Environment Southland with the Guardians, MAF Biosecurity New Zealand, Department of Conservation and the Ministry for the Environment (the agencies) has launched a new register to help keep a track of vessels visiting Fiordland.

The Vessels Intentions Register is a way for the owners and operators of moored boats to notify their intention to travel to Fiordland.

The data will be used to assist in assessing the risk of pest incursions in this most sensitive of marine environments. The register has been introduced as a voluntary measure. Details are kept in confidence by Environment Southland and MAF Biosecurity New Zealand and the information is not shared with any other government agency.

Boaties can access the register to log their intended visit at: www.es.govt.nz/environment/coast/maritime/vessel-intentions.aspx

Any questions about the register can be addressed to: service@es.govt.nz
Jennie Brunton, MAFBNZ, Wellington

Ensure your vessel hull is clean prior to visiting Fiordland

Paul Young of Young Fishing Company Ltd is working for MAF Biosecurity New Zealand inspecting Fiordland-bound vessels that are moored in Bluff and Stewart Island for the presence of marine pests. If you have a vessel moored at Bluff or Stewart Island, it will be regularly monitored and you will be informed if a marine pest is found on your vessel's hull.



As a boat owner you are responsible for regularly cleaning and antifouling your vessel hull prior to visiting Fiordland.

Dirty boats spread marine pests, so regular cleaning and antifouling are vitally important. Introduced pests such as the seaweed undaria or the sea squirt *Styela clava* will readily hitch a ride on the hull of any moored vessel, particularly if it has a dirty surface to take hold on.

The Guardians and the agencies have some simple advice for boaties to help keep Fiordland's waters in their current pristine condition:

- Keep your moored boat hull clean and well antifouled;
- If you're taking a boat over land to Fiordland, or taking marine equipment into the fiords, please make sure your boat and trailer are dry and free of fouling material and any equipment to be used in the ocean is clean and completely air dried before you move it; and
- When you're cruising the Fiordland waters, please report any unusual organisms, mass mortality or illness among any marine species to 0800 80 99 66 straight away.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a biosecurity guide for Fiordland boaties. Please take some time to read it, and keep it onboard your vessel for handy reference.

Jennie Brunton, MAFBNZ, Wellington

Have your say on the Management of the Fiordland Marine Area!

The Fiordland Marine Area User Study for 2010 is underway, and questionnaires are being sent to those people we know who work or play in the area.

Surveyors will also be stationed at the Deep Cove and Deepwater Basin boat ramps for several weeks, coinciding with the Easter holiday period, armed with questionnaires for you to fill out.

The Guardians and management agencies strenuously encourage as many people as possible to participate in this survey, as the information gathered will be helpful to assess what users of the Fiordland marine area think about the management of the area.

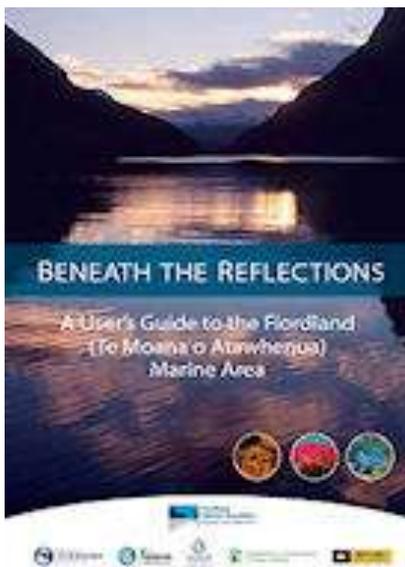
This year's study will build on that carried out in 2007 and is being carried out by the same research company, Lindis Consulting Ltd.

Thanks in advance for your participation!

Kath Blakemore, DOC, Te Anau

Have you got your copy yet?

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 soon 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