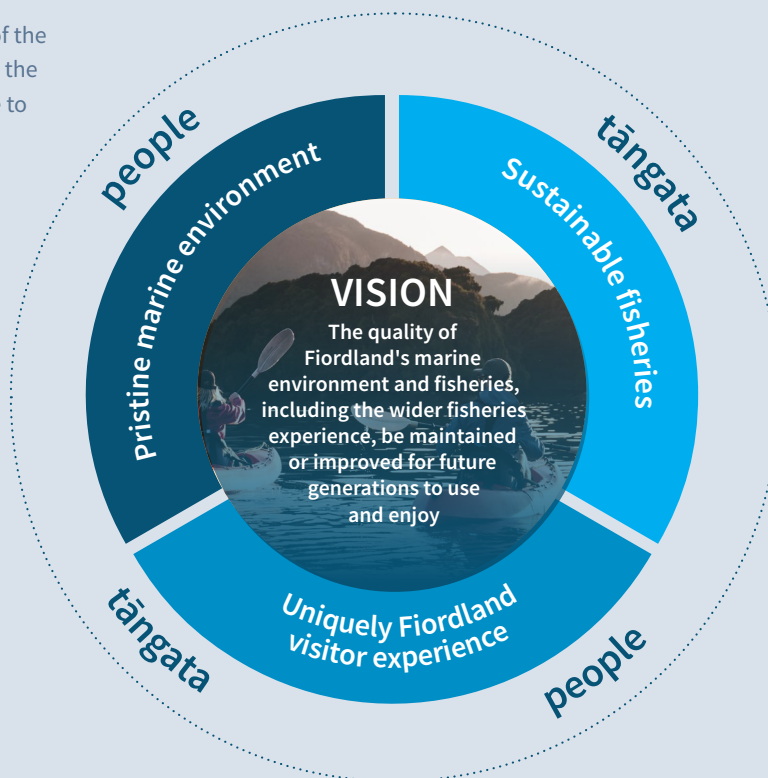




In this issue we introduce the strategy mahi we have been focusing on to ensure that we can deliver our vision. We dig into the back story to amateur charter vessels electronic reporting and the exciting progress being made. We then showcase the amazing expedition of the RV SONNE through Fiordland and some of the outstanding footage from the depths. We highlight Biosecurity New Zealand's new Protect Our Paradise campaign, and appropriately we pay tribute to one of Fiordland's biggest supporters who, after a lifetime in their role, has called it a day.

Strategic priorities for the Fiordland Marine Area

Twenty years on from the formation of the Fiordland Marine Guardians, issues in the Fiordland Marine Area (FMA) continue to emerge. Issues, caused by changing ocean conditions and increasing visitor pressure, require a coordinated response from the management agencies.



Fortunately, the Guardians are here to set the vision, promote collaboration and facilitate integrated management of the area. But lately, we've been finding ourselves overwhelmed by the wide range of activities that we have become involved in. We have recognised we need to better define our strategic priorities to achieve our guiding vision.

The vision, set by our founders back in the 1990s is that *"The quality of Fiordland's marine environment and fisheries, including the wider fisheries experience, be maintained or improved for future generations to use and enjoy"*.

We have engaged with our agency partners to boil down our top three strategic priorities. This is not to say that there are no other important activities or thinking that needs to be done, but rather the critical areas are those that we need to provide additional emphasis on over the next three years.

Critical to achieving our strategy is engaging our mana whenua and agency partners, both those on the ground doing the work and those in the leadership teams that prioritise the allocation of resource. Equally as important is the community that lives, works and plays

in the FMA. We recognise that we could do a better job of engaging with the community.

We not only need our agency partners but we need all of 'Fiordland's people' to help us with our strategic priorities which we have defined as:

1. **Pristine marine environment** – No new marine invasive species are established.
2. **Sustainable fisheries** – The rebuild of iconic Fiordland species over time.
3. **Uniquely Fiordland visitor experience** – The amount of visitor activity is kept within the carrying capacity of the area.

If we can take you, 'our people' on the journey and are successful in achieving our strategic priorities we can positively contribute to the delivery of our vision which sits at the heart of all that we do.

To help bring our strategy alive we will keep you updated as the strategy develops and create awareness of the work being done in these areas, so keep an eye on our journey here. We will be grateful for your help.

German RV SONNE CoralNewZ Voyage



Very little is known about life on the walls and in the deep basins of the fiords that exist well beyond the depths that can be reached by SCUBA divers (~30 m). Scientists on the German research vessel SONNE took the opportunity to explore and sample deep habitats in Fiordland on the voyage SO309 CoralNewZ from 26 – 30 January 2025.

The RV SONNE first explored the steep flanks of Thompson Sound and Doubtful Sound with a deep-sea remotely operated vehicle before traveling to Acheron Passage and Dusky Sound. The deep basins were sampled in an environmentally friendly manner using a video box grab and gravity corer to obtain long sediment cores. Technology also enabled the collection of high-resolution oceanographic data.

The main goal was to record the distribution, diversity, environmental conditions, and associated fauna of cold-water corals in as much detail as possible to compare this data with coral habitats in the fjords of the Northern Hemisphere.

Among other things, we were able to specifically sample the habitat of the unique pearl oysters *Pulvinites exempli*, (see photo) and a file clam *Acesta* found in association with the corals.

Each ROV dive was broadcast live from the ship worldwide to showcase this fascinating underwater world to the public and to highlight its fragility and need for protection.

The study, conducted by the Senckenberg Society for Nature Research and the Center for Marine Environmental Sciences at the University of Bremen (MARUM), was scientifically supported by NIWA, Te Papa, and the Universities of Auckland and Queensland. We are grateful to all parties supporting the research proposal for our work in the Fiordland Marine Area.



Check out the highlights video of the RV SONNE CoralNewZ voyage SO309 [here](#)

Careful sampling of the pearl oyster *Pulvinites exempli* growing on a steep wall in Dusky Sound in 266m water depth (MARUM Squid Remotely Operated Vehicle).



Protecting our boating paradise

Marine biosecurity work in Southland is getting a boost from the new Protect Our Paradise campaign.

This new long-term campaign is connecting recreational boaties with the reasons they like to go out around New Zealand's coast and reminding them to protect it for the future.

Development started in December 2022 and after a trial in northern regions it went live nationwide in October 2024. As the lead, Jackie Bedford from Biosecurity New Zealand's Engagement Programmes team notes, *"it has been a year of learning that will feed into refinements this coming year"*.

The overall aim is to tell the Protect Our Paradise story many times in many ways. This includes digital channels for good reach and more personal methods to get engagement.

The Protect Our Paradise brand and materials are available for use by any partner or stakeholder organisation promoting marine biosecurity. A key advantage of it being used nationwide is boaties who move will see it in their home region as well as places they visit. For example, the Top of the South regions are using it to help with their pushback on fanworm.

Biosecurity New Zealand's team organised activities, including a start-of-season launch event in Picton, several forms of digital advertising over summer, a retail activation with Burnsco, and commissioning and distribution of videos by fishing personality Matt Watson whose efforts reached more than 200,000 people within a few weeks. Large teardrop and pullup banners and merchandise such as neck buffs were shared with partners, as well as simple flyers for use in pre-season mailouts.

Two activities designed to achieve wider awareness in this first year were focused on the Auckland area, where the largest population of boaties is located. These included:

- co-funding of the marine summer ambassadors
- a Protect Our Paradise site at the two large Auckland boat shows.

Protect Our Paradise is also underpinning pest-specific work – for example, the caulerpa communications, engagement and marketing work is now all operating under this banner.

An analysis of activity and results in Southland over the summer shows:

- radio ads during December to February reached an estimated 39,300 people
- 117,300 impressions occurred on Meta, reaching 44,000 people, with 595 clicks and 46 social post engagements
- Understanding activity and engagement on YouTube, TikTok, sponsored Google searches and using Google algorithms helps effectively place adverts across all the platforms.

In addition, Protect Our Paradise continued funding of Clean Vessel Pass digital advertising that reached 129,000 people who might visit Fiordland an average of just under three times over a 17-week period, and 1,427 of these clicked for further information.

The high-level plan for the new year from 1 July is to do another big push in October and strategic pushes over summer, and develop specific outreach to trailer boaties and fishing competitions.



Check out [this clip](#) of Matt Watson talking about why **marine biosecurity** matters



Check out [this clip](#) of Matt Watson talking about why **boatie biosecurity** matters



Stephen Logie

The collaborative and integrated management of the Fiordland Marine Area is absolutely dependent on the engagement of officials from the government agencies. These public servants work incredibly hard and amass considerable knowledge and expertise about the Fiordland Marine Area.

We consider ourselves particularly fortunate when an official works with the group for a long time. We recently farewelled our longest-standing agency official, Stephen Logie, who entered a very well-deserved retirement last year. Stephen will be well known to many fishers – commercial, recreational and customary – as he worked in fisheries compliance in Murihiku Southland for 44 years.

Stephen has been working with the Guardians since their inception back in the 1990's. He was the minute secretary of the group that first formed to share concerns about the state of Fiordland's fisheries and work towards developing a community-led Fiordland Marine Conservation Strategy.

Over this time, and throughout his career, Stephen had a frontline role as a fisheries compliance officer, and even when he worked his way up the ranks he was a trusted contact for many wanting to better understand the fishing rules. He advocated strongly for an education-first approach to improve compliance, always seeking to understand, taking the time to explain to fishers not only what the rules were, but also why they were there in the first place. Despite needing to pursue infringements and prosecutions at times, Stephen is widely regarded as a very respectful and therefore respected operator.

Stephen is a passionate and forthright advocate of the mahi of the Guardians and the collective vision for the Fiordland Marine Area. He has an encyclopedic knowledge and almost forensic memory, which he continues to apply to his hobby as an historian.

In 2010, Stephen was awarded a Queens Service Medal for services to the Ministry of Fisheries, including his work in support of the Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) Marine Management Act – an incredibly well deserved honour. We salute Stephen, extend our appreciation for his support of the Guardians and the Fiordland marine management model over the years, and wish him well as he enters his retirement.

ACV electronic reporting

Since 2008 registered amateur charter vessels (ACVs) were required to report their fishing activity and catch information on paper forms, like those previously used by the New Zealand's commercial fishing fleet.

These forms were submitted by post and manually entered into an old database. This process, and the ongoing usage of the submitted data by the Ministry for Primary Industries was being compromised due to the outdated data collection method, which was prone to error and generally considered to be no longer fit for purpose.

The Fiordland and Kaikoura Marine Guardians hosted a series of ACV operator workshops with Fisheries New Zealand (FNZ) in 2018. Workshop participants agreed that a voluntary trial of electronic reporting for ACV was critical for improving the data used to inform management recommendations for ACV operations. It was proposed to run a voluntary electronic reporting trial with ACVs in Kaikoura and Fiordland (also extending to Hauraki Gulf if required). Unfortunately, funding couldn't be secured to do this trial.

The Fiordland and Kaikoura Marine Guardians continued to encourage FNZ on the development of electronic reporting for ACV's. In December 2024 the FNZ ACV reporting app (built and supported by E-Catch) went live and all ACVs nation-wide moved to this system of reporting.

Initially this is a digitalisation of the reporting requirements as they were in the previous paper form but with the addition of pāua and oyster reporting requirements. This roll out was relatively seamless and the system is performing as expected. Approximately 180 ACVs are actively reporting using the ACV app.

There is now an opportunity to further enhance ACV reporting by the addition of more species reporting. Also, an opportunity for a discussion around non-fish and protected species bycatch reporting that could also be included in the ACV app. Stakeholder feedback may lead to further ideas on what else could be enhanced on the ACV app. Watch this space.

The data captured through ACV reporting app is another tool to help us better manage our fisheries, which will enable us to work towards our strategy of rebuilding our iconic Fiordland species.

Heading to Fiordland this summer?

Be prepared

Hold a clean vessel pass

Applying for a clean vessel pass is a simple process that can be completed online at www.es.govt.nz/fmpp or by calling Environment Southland on **0800 76 88 45** to receive a hard copy form.

Your clean vessel pass comes with a copy of our new book *Fiordland by Sea*. The must have guide for boaties.



Download the Mainland Catch app

Do your bit to help the rebuilding of Fiordland's fisheries. Mainland Catch is anonymous, easy to use, and gives you a record of your catches so you can show off to your mates.



Te Rūnanga o NGĀI TAHU



Fiordland
Marine Guardians
Beneath the Reflections



Biosecurity New Zealand
Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



environment
SOUTHLAND
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Taiao Tonga



Fisheries New Zealand
Tini a Tangaroa



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

FMG-Agency meetings 2025

Tuesday 19 August 2025,
Environment Southland,
Invercargill

Wednesday 26 November 2025,
Distinction Te Anau Hotel & Villas,
Te Anau

For more information visit
www.fmg.org.nz

All welcome

Our quarterly FMG agency meetings are open to the public and agenda items for discussion at these meetings can be sent to the Guardians. The agenda is set three weeks in advance of a meeting.

Keeping in touch

The Guardians work hard to facilitate community-led, proactive approaches that are informed by the best scientific information and knowledge available. We place a high value on the experiences and understanding of the Fiordland community and encourage you to share your thoughts with us. Please let us know if there is anything you would like us to cover in our next issue.

For more information visit fmg.org.nz or email info@fmg.org.nz.

Thank you

Thanks to the following individuals and organisations for the photographs used in this issue: **Ministry for Primary Industries, Environment Southland, MARUM Center for Environmental Sciences Germany, Richard Kinsey, Severin Korfhage.**