


March 2019 | Issue 3



Te Pānui Kaitiaki o Ata Whenua

We trust you have enjoyed the long hot summer and have managed to get on the water and enjoy the best that Fiordland has to offer. In this issue we introduce more of our Guardians, and update you on progress with marine biosecurity and the fishing sector. As always, **we welcome your thoughts and feedback.**

Who are the ‘Guardians’?

The Fiordland Marine Guardians are an advisory committee who work with government agencies and their Ministers on the management of the Fiordland Marine Area (FMA).



In this issue we talk to Guardian Jon Clow. Jon first became interested in coastal Fiordland because of its desirability as a fishing and hunting area. In the late 90s he made his first visit to Fiordland on the now retired frigate *HMNZS Canterbury*. Jon’s first experience of Fiordland firmly anchored his interest in the FMA and a keenness to return.

In 2011, Jon moved to Te Anau with his family and took on the role of Marine Manager for Real Journeys Ltd. This role, along with his personal interest in recreational fishing, gave him considerable first-hand experience of the FMA. Jon established a relationship with the Guardians and was appointed in 2013. In 2016, he started a new career away from the maritime industry in software development. Jon still lives in Te Anau and regularly visits the FMA for recreational fishing.

Jon, tell us about where you grew up and how this has shaped your interest in the marine environment?

I grew up on the East Coast of the Coromandel Peninsular in the town of Whitianga, some way removed from the FMA but closely connected to the sea. My immediate family and wider relations were all involved in commercial fishing and boating. We spent a lot of time recreationally diving and fishing. My uncle

introduced me to the basics of coastal navigation when I crewed for him on his fishing vessel and I became really fascinated in marine navigation. I joined the Navy to follow this interest and during that time I studied marine and environmental science at the University of Auckland and had my first visit to Fiordland! Like most young fishing and diving types in the country, I was always interested in Fiordland as it represents the epitome of those pastimes.

You were in the Navy for 15 years. What was your role?

I was a Seaman Officer, which in Merchant Navy terms is a Deck Officer. Like all military careers, there is no one role but a steady progression through many. Over my career I obtained notable specialisations as an Advanced Navigator undertaking training with the Royal Australian Navy, then as a Principal Warfare Officer which I trained for with the Royal Navy.

Tell us about your move to Southland

I was actively looking for roles outside of the Navy and Auckland when the Marine Manager position at Real Journeys was advertised and suited my experience well. My wife and I had separately talked about Te Anau as an attractive place to live having spent time in the FMA on my

father’s fishing vessel and then in Te Anau itself. The rest is history.

And your first trip into coastal Fiordland?

I was a midshipman onboard the old Leander frigate *HMNZ Canterbury*, which in the course of work around the New Zealand coast spent time in the FMA. I can still distinctly recall that visit.

What does being a Fiordland Marine Guardian mean to you?

It is a rewarding privilege to be part of the group and contribute to the community and region.

What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the work of the FMG and their vision for the FMA in the next five years?

Contributing to the coastal plan review to provide an effective, forward-focused management framework. And being able to effectively handle the steady increase in human presence and scope of activity in the FMA while adhering to our guiding principles and community requirements.

What is your favourite kai moana?

Ha! Everything except oysters...



Suspected *Sabella spallanzanii*

The detection of suspected *Sabella spallanzanii* (Mediterranean fan worm) on the hull of a vessel in the southern fiords in January is a stark reminder that the responsibility for keeping marine pests out of Fiordland rests with each and every vessel operator.

The boat was discovered as part of a joint agency compliance and marine biosecurity surveillance trip, and the owners were apparently very upset to discover they had transported a potentially high-risk species into the area. Unfortunately, the vessel's Clean Vessel Pass (CVP) had expired, and the owners now face a hefty bill to cover the cost of hull inspection, relocation to Bluff and cleaning.

The Guardians championed the development of the CVP as a way to get regular up-to-date information to

vessel operators about how to prevent being unwitting carriers of marine pests into Fiordland. Ensuring your vessel is clean is something that needs to be considered well in advance of your visit. Please help us to spread the word – we don't want these pests in our waters! Once they arrive, there is very little we can do about it, and as this latest incident has highlighted, they are only one boat ride away.

Whilst the majority of boaties are taking responsibility, we are frustrated at the number of vessels that are continuing to travel into Fiordland without a CVP. Getting a pass is an easy process and it's free. Complying with the clean vessel standards to obtain your CVP will prevent you from being the one that spreads marine pests into Fiordland.

Important!

Restrictions on anchoring, mooring, gear and water movement are still in place in Breaksea Sound.

Since December 2017 restrictions have been put in place within the Controlled Area in the Beach Harbour-John Islands area of the Sound to help slow the spread of the invasive Asian kelp *Undaria pinnatifida* (*Undaria*) from a known infestation.

A recent statement in the press (Southland Times pg 5, 21 Feb) asserted that efforts to control *Undaria* had been abandoned. This statement is incorrect.

The recent discovery of further spread of *Undaria* in the Sound, however, has prompted the proposal of new rules for boaties. Environment Southland has recommended permanent rules in the Proposal for a Southland Regional Pest Management Plan, as a replacement for the Controlled Area Notice to try and prevent further human-assisted spread.

The rules will place the emphasis on boaties moving in and out of Breaksea Sound to ensure their boats and gear are free from *Undaria* contamination and support enforcement of anybody found in breach of the rules.

In the meantime, the Controlled Area Notice remains in place and vessel operators are reminded about the need for vigilance when coming into Fiordland.

To find out more about the Proposal for a Southland Regional Pest Management Plan and the staff recommendation for *Undaria* go to <http://www.haveyoursay.es.govt.nz/pest-plan>

For the latest information about the controlled area please visit www.es.govt.nz and search "Controlled Area for Breaksea Sound".



Concerns raised about fishing sustainability in Fiordland

The Guardians are aware of a growing level of unease within Fiordland's recreational fishing community about the sustainability of finfish stocks, particularly in the inner fiords (inside the habitat lines). Several fishing charter vessel operators have contacted us to share their experiences that it is getting more difficult to catch finfish, even in the southern fiords where the fishing has historically been 'good'.

This year, we will focus our attention on this matter, and intend to work with the recreational fishing community to define the issue and discuss management options.

We will also draw on data from an Ministry of Primary Industries blue cod stock survey in the southern fiords being conducted at present.

As always, the Guardians will work hard to facilitate community-led, proactive approaches, that are informed by the best scientific and anecdotal information available. We place high value on the experiences and knowledge of the Fiordland community, and encourage you to share your thoughts with us.

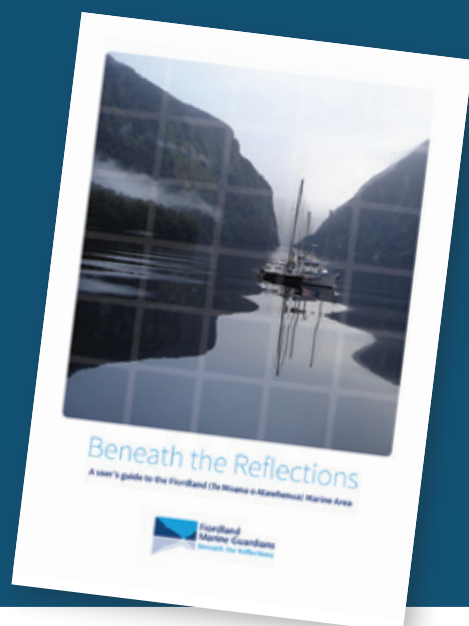
Fiordland user's guide

In July 2017 we released a new edition of *Beneath the Reflections – A user's guide to the Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua) Marine Area*. The guide is packed with information, stunning images, and some really important updates. We would really like to encourage people to replace their original copy (now over 10 years old!) so you are up to date with all of the rules and regulations. The guide is available online at www.fmg.or.nz or you can purchase a hard copy from DOC's Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre:

Lakefront Drive, Te Anau 9600

☎ +64 03 249 7924 e fiordlandvc@doc.govt.nz

Printed copies cost \$25.00 if collected from the visitor centre. Inquire about postage rates within NZ and overseas.



Appointments and farewells

Minister David Parker concluded an appointments round late last year, meaning we have bid farewell to two long-standing Guardians and welcomed two new members.

Anne McDermott and Dr Ken Grange served on the Guardians for 12 years and 13 years respectively, and have both contributed an enormous

amount of knowledge, expertise and insight from their respective networks over this time. Anne and Ken are both beginning their retirement journeys, and we wish them all the best. It's fair to say that Fiordland runs through their veins, and so Anne and Ken join the Guardians alumni who we hope will continue to provide a pool of

knowledge for the current Guardians to draw on as we tackle various issues on the water.

We are very pleased to welcome Ali Timms and Peter Young to the Guardians, and happily acknowledge the reappointment of Dr Kerri-Anne Edge Hill for another term.

Ali is a consultant and Resource Management Act Commissioner, and was previously an Environment Southland Councillor, chairing the board in later years. She is involved with several community-driven conservation programmes including the Wilding Conifer Control Programme and the Waituna Governance Group.

Peter has spent much of his life on the water in Fiordland, as a skipper and fisherman, and played an integral role in forming the Fiordland Marine Conservation Strategy that eventuated in the Fiordland Marine Management Act 2005.



Changes to blue cod fishing rules on the horizon

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) are focusing on the sustainability of blue cod and have recently presented a National Blue Cod Strategy to the Minister of Fisheries, Stuart Nash. This focus is due to increasing concern about the sustainability of blue cod stocks in coastal waters, particularly here in the south where blue cod is the most popular recreational finfish species.

The Strategy encompasses commercial, customary and recreational take of the species, and aims to have a management approach that is more consistent nationally, and one that allows local issues to be addressed more efficiently. Key components of the Strategy include managing blue cod at a smaller spatial scale than the status quo, and introducing a traffic light system that will indicate the

local health of the fish stocks and drive bag limits. The addition of an accumulation rule, like that in Fiordland, and a requirement to land fish in a measurable state are also being proposed.

The Guardians will continue to work with MPI as components of the Strategy are consulted on. As always, our focus is on managing Fiordland in a way that will ensure the marine environment, fisheries, and the wider fishing experience is maintained or improved for future generations to use and enjoy.

We encourage you to engage in the consultation process by downloading a copy of the National Blue Cod Strategy from MPI's website and providing comment.

Community demand for improved haul-out facilities in Bluff



The Guardians have triggered a review of the availability and suitability of vessel haul-out and hull-cleaning facilities in Bluff. This action was taken in response to growing concern and frustration from southern vessel owners trying to service and conduct maintenance on their boats using existing services.

In November, the Guardians called a meeting at Environment Southland to define the problem and begin investigating potential solutions. More than 30 people attended, including vessel operators, commercial and community interest groups, members of parliament, regional and city council staff, and South Port. It was conclusively determined that the current facilities are not able to meet demand, and that there was considerable economic potential for Bluff should a purpose-built facility be developed.

Since November, a steering group comprising representatives from the Invercargill City Council,

Environment Southland and South Port have made significant progress in identifying a potential site for a new hull-cleaning facility, and are developing engineering requirements and investigating commercial linkages. A new facility in conjunction with an upgrade to the existing boat ramp, is now regarded by the councils as a resource of regional importance to Southland.

We are extremely encouraged by the speed and thoroughness with which this important development is progressing and credit the councils and South Port for being responsive to the concerns of the Southland community. The ability to haul vessels out of the water and clean hulls before travel into Fiordland has always been a central requirement of the Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan. In addition to this important biosecurity function, we are delighted that a facility is on the horizon that will support Southland vessel operators and provide development potential for the community of Bluff.

Applying for a Clean Vessel Pass

Applying for a CVP 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.

Since 1 April 2018 anyone applying for a CVP has been offered a copy of *'Beneath the Reflections'* as our way of saying thanks for doing your bit to safeguard Fiordland's marine environment and fisheries.



Keeping in touch – website

We are pleased to launch our new website and encourage you to take a look at www.fmg.org.nz. The website is based on the content and layout of the *User Guide: Beneath the Reflections* and provides helpful and informative information for those wanting to get out on the water.



FMG-AGENCY MEETINGS

NEXT MEETING

Monday 27 May in Invercargill.

Agenda items are due Friday 3 May.

For more information visit www.fmg.org.nz

All welcome

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

Te Panui Kaitiaki o Ata Whenua is available online at www.fmg.org.nz or via e-mail.

In the interest of sustainability we encourage people to opt for an electronic copy. Please e-mail info@fmg.org.nz to update your contact details or to switch to electronic communication with the Guardians.

Thank you!

The Guardians would like to thank the following individuals and agencies for photographs: A McDermott, Biosecurity NZ, J Clow, K Wadsworth, MPI, Pure Salt, R McLeod, Rosco's Milford Kayaks.

