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Microbeads, David Clarkson, Invasive species, Motiti Is Court Case

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"No water, no life.
No blue, no green."
Sylvia Earle



Fish Forever Matters #8 (February 2017)

- [Your Fisheries Review submissions have been noticed](#)
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Fisheries Management Review
Our submissions have been recognised!!!

A big thank you to the 292 of you who took time before Christmas to send a submission on the current review of Fisheries Management. This week Sir Ron Fenwick who is Chair of the Technical Advisory Group has asked Fish Forever to meet with them to to discuss our submission and our vision for the future of New Zealand’s fisheries management. Be sure we shall be saying we want more fish in the sea and more consideration being given to the needs and aspirations of the non-fishing sectors who are impacted by fisheries management decisions.

Tribute to David Clarkson

Sad news, David Clarkson, the man who established Bay of Islands Maritime Park Inc, way back in 2007 (the umbrella organization of Fish Forever and Living Waters) passed away at his home in Kerikeri recently. David, 47 years a practicing vet, had a huge love of the Bay of Islands but was deeply concerned about our degrading streams, rivers and marine life. He put an ad in the local paper calling a public meeting at the Waitangi Copthorne Hotel. He asked those who shared his concerns to attend and to do something about the situation collectively. 140 like-minded people turned up. From that beginning, Bay of Islands Maritime Park Inc was formed and dedicated people started working to realize David’s vision.

David's commitment to marine and catchment protection in the Bay of Islands galvanized the disparate conservationist and eco-minded community groups, and helped Fish Forever to focus on the singular goal of achieving no-take areas here. Alongside his commitment to this goal was his underlying belief that the entire community should walk the path together, Maori in step with Pakeha. This path was not a smooth one, but what remained true was David's integrity to his beliefs.

Fish Forever has endeavoured to capture these values, and let them guide our work. We are saddened that we could not celebrate the ultimate success with our founder and life member, David Clarkson.

Fish Forever, Living Waters and all members of the Bay of Islands Maritime Park

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[extend their respect and condolences to David's family, and want them to know that we will hold the memory of David in the highest regard as we continue to pursue the goals that drove him.](#)

ALIEN INVADERS

By John Booth & Irene Middleton

There are two particularly nasty marine invasive species literally on our door step. They’ve been found both north and south of the Bay of Islands, and would easily grow here too. And yet – if discovered in time – both can be controlled.

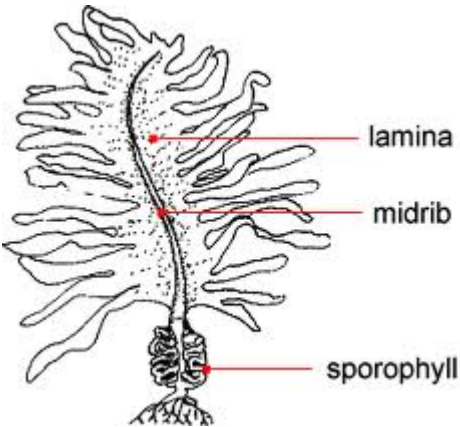
Asian kelp *Undaria pinnatifida*

This kelp has already established in many ports and harbours to the south, including Whangarei and Auckland. In 2014 *Undaria* was found in Rangaunu Harbour and has since been found in Houhora and Parengarenga harbours. Eradication attempts were made at the initial incursion site but the seaweed was soon found to have spread too widely to control.

Undaria is a highly invasive and opportunistic seaweed which spreads mainly as fouling on boat hulls and other submerged equipment. It can form dense stands which lead to the exclusion or displacement of native plant and animal species, and can change the structure of ecosystems, especially in areas where native seaweeds are absent. One particular concern is that, although Undaria is consumed by sea urchins, it might win out over native seaweeds in colonising the kina barrens of the Bay of Islands - should marine reserves ever be established here.

Undaria grows from the low intertidal to about 15 metres depth on both sheltered and exposed shores, and may reach a metre or more in height. Its key characteristics are the midrib of the lamina and, when mature, the frilly sporophyll at the base. Keep a keen watch for it: early detection and immediate eradication is the only way we’ll keep this nasty out of the Bay.

***Undaria* grows on hard surfaces and fronds may reach a metre or more in length.**



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Mediterranean fan worm *Sabella spallanzanii*

The Mediterranean fan worm is typically found in harbours and estuaries, living to depths of between 1 and 30 metres, and can grow to over 40 cm high. The worm has a single spiral fan which extends out of the top of the tube, the tube being tough and flexible and often muddy in appearance.

These worms have become established in Parua Bay and other sites in Whangarei Harbour since the initial incursion in 2012. There have been a number of vessels with fanworm on their hulls found in the Bay of Islands, but prompt action has meant the species has not taken hold.

The Mediterranean fanworm forms dense colonies that could affect native species by competing for food and space. The presence of dense colonies changes the underwater scenery of an area, potentially impacting on dive tourism.

But they are a particular threat to biogenic habitats like horse-mussel beds, and commercially and recreationally important species like scallops and mussels. They will settle and grow on bivalve shells, weighing them down and competing for food.

Sabella spallanzanii worm with fans extended.



MICROBEADS

from our cleaning products to fishes tummies

Nick Smith tells us “Its estimated by 2050 there’ll be more plastic in the ocean than fish!” So, Fish Forever congratulates the Government’s initiative to prohibit the use of plastic microbeads in non-medical products, such as cosmetics. This is a great step towards reducing plastics in our environment.

Tiny plastic beads are widely used in toiletries and cosmetics (such as bath products, facial scrubs and cleansers, and toothpastes). They are too small to be filtered out by our sewage treatment plants. Thousands of tonnes wash into the sea every year adding to the plastic pollution problem. A recent study found that some young fish have been found to prefer tiny particles of plastic to their natural food sources, effectively starving them before they can reproduce. They have also been found in shellfish consumed by humans, raising questions about potential impacts on human health.

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Fortunately, microbeads are one of those rare environmental problems that are actually relatively easy to solve. Safe alternatives to plastics are already available, including ground nutshells, pumice, sugar and salt.

Please use our [super-easy submission form](#) to support less plastic in our seas.

(Your submissions are important. They give Fish Forever credibility when we engage with government about marine issues.)



Damselfish larva that has ingested microplastic particles
(Photo: Oona M. Lönnstedt)

Motiti Island Environment Court Case(s).

by Chris Richmond

On 5 December 2016 the Environment Court released its decision about an application made by the Trustees of the Motiti Rohe Moana Trust (and supported by various parties, including Forest & Bird) for a Declaration. This was about the circumstances under which the BOP Regional Council could lawfully include in its new Regional Coastal Environment Plan specific provisions that would control fishing for the purposes of protecting biological diversity and restoring the relationships of Maori with their waters and the taonga within them. The Trustees were seeking such provisions for defined areas around Motiti Island, Astrolabe Reef and the Rena wreck and had Appealed the decision of the Regional Council to reject such provisions.

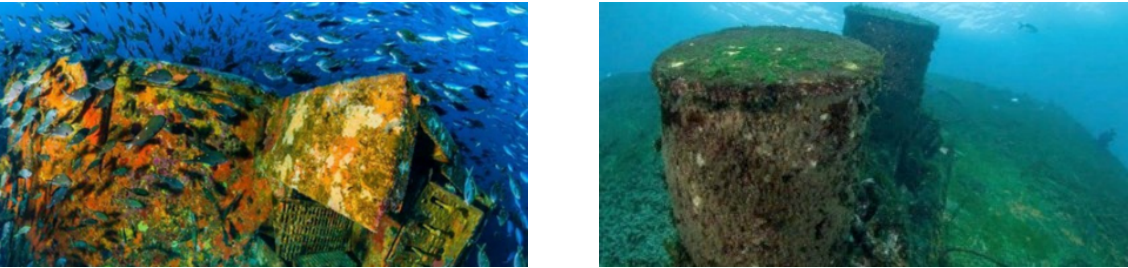
The Environment Court heard the opposing arguments from lawyers for the Council and the Attorney-General (aka Crown Law), and considered the 1995 Report of the Select Committee considering submissions on the new Fisheries Bill, some of which complained about the lack of some specific environmental principles in that legislation. The Committee explained that because the new Fisheries Act and the 1991 Resource Management Act were intended to be complementary there was no need to duplicate the environmental principles of the latter in the new Fisheries Act. For the avoidance of doubt, they said that it was intended that the RMA could be used to curtail fishing and other activities for the purposes of promoting environmental principles that were specified in the RMA but not the Fisheries Act.

With that legislative intention in mind, the EC Declared that RMA Plans could lawfully contain objectives, policies, methods, including rules that avoid, limit or discourage fishing methods with a sole or dominant purpose to achieve a variety of RMA s.6 objectives including protecting indigenous biodiversity and natural character. This was a radical reinterpretation of the statutory separation protocol that MOC and MOF had agreed for 20 years.

However, the legal arguments supporting the decision look robust, so we have to ask why the Crown (aka Attorney General) has recently appealed the EC decision. I suspect it is because the EC evaluation has uncovered a legislative anomaly that this government wishes to address by amending either the RMA or the FA96 to further exclude environmental principles from fishery management decision-making.

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The impending appeals to both the Environment Court and the Court of Appeal are crucial to the future of our marine environments, so do be prepared to contribute to their costs if you care about the outcome.



Six years of marine life recovery on Astrolabe Reef was wiped out within weeks when the Minister of Primary Industries refused an application for a rahui (temporary ban on fishing) while its future was negotiated.

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