

Legasea Accountability Report

AUGUST – DECEMBER 2024



Image: Alex Wallace

Introduction

Often we find ourselves asking the same question over and over: is anyone at Fisheries NZ actually looking at the science, or are we just watching them pander to industry lobbyists and their political mates?

Because right now, it sure feels like the latter.

Take their latest head scratcher: after years of community input and hard evidence, FNZ has listened to neither and approved a harmful dredge survey of scallop beds in the Coromandel management area – an area stretching from Leigh, Rodney, through the Hauraki Gulf to Maketu in the Bay of Plenty. This region's been off-limits to both commercial and recreational harvest since March 2023 due to severe depletion, and now they're going to rip it up again.

If that wasn't enough, there's a good chance this move could also spread the nasty invasive seaweed *Caulerpa*. There are less destructive, more efficient methods out there, and we all know that NIWA has a camera survey in the works. So why pick the most harmful approach?

Then we've got the last-minute changes to the Hauraki Gulf Marine Protection Bill. The Minister of Conservation wants to allow commercial fishing in supposedly "High Protection Areas." We never liked these HPAs – at all – because they push Kiwis out of their favourite fishing spots and simply displace fishing pressure onto other areas. Now we're giving commercial interests a free pass in places that are off-limits?

While all of this seems (and is) extremely negative, there is always a silver lining. We're not taking any of the above lying down and we've got our gloves on, ready to fight for abundance with your support. We've also seen continued growth of The Kai Ika Project, with a new arm recently established in Hawkes Bay to help deliver free delicious kaimoana to the region. We also relaunched the Free Fish Heads app with Matt Watson to help facilitate Kai Ika's experience around the country in places we simply can't logistically be. We've had an overwhelming response to our Cans for Kai initiative with a huge amount of businesses, organisations and individuals reaching out to give us their cans.



Free Fish Heads app launch event

Image: Alex Wallace

Public Awareness

Campaigns

THE KAI IKA PROJECT: AUCKLAND

Demand for this project continues to grow. While this may seem like a good thing, it is an indicator of increasing food insecurity issues throughout the country. In an attempt to share more kaimoana, we have launched our Free Fish Heads app and established another regional Kai Ika Project in Hawkes Bay.



However, keeping up with demand requires upfront investment. Initially, project management and establishment costs are high – particularly when compared to the amount of kaimoana being distributed. However, we see this as a long-term investment. For example, now the Free Fish Heads app is live, anyone can download the app and begin sharing fish in their community. This gives us a platform nationwide so Kiwis can share more fish heads from Cape Reinga to Bluff. Plus, with community involvement, Free Fish Heads will reduce reliance on our current distribution services.

The same applies to our Cans for Kai programme. Through this, we are collecting empty aluminium cans and our partner, Phoenix Recycling Group, buys and recycles them. It took time to establish the income streams, but in the last three months, Cans for Kai revenue has increased by 400%. We now have had Eden Park and Sky Stadium committed and are donating their cans. Currently, these are not huge sums, but in 12 or 24 months, these recurring revenue streams could be a reasonably significant percentage of the project's funding needs.

We will continue to invest prudently in systems that can reduce overheads while increasing kaimoana distributions, as well as develop long-term revenue streams that we hope will pay dividends for years to come.

In September, [The Kai Ika Project](#) participated in the Ocean Festival in Whitianga. Our team was responsible for filleting the line-caught fish used at the event. We filleted over 400kg of fish, with all the heads and frames donated to the local Ngāti Hei and Whitianga Filipino communities. Additionally, we collected and crushed all the aluminium cans from the event, recycling 120 kgs of cans at Phoenix Recycling on our way home.

The project was featured on Newshub and Stuff, celebrating Hilton Foods and Woolworths joining us as new suppliers of fish heads and frames. Watch [here](#).

The Kai Ika filleting service attended several fishing competitions, including the ITM Whangarei and The Ecolab Raglan Dairy Farmers competitions. These events provided excellent opportunities to engage directly with fishers and promote the new Free Fish Heads app.



THE KAI IKA PROJECT: WELLINGTON

The Kai Ika Project Wellington was featured in the AA quarterly magazine, highlighting our mahi in the region, watch [here](#).

We also received a new single-cab Hilux ute with a dedicated chiller and signage, donated by [Rutherford and Bond Toyota](#), to assist with Kai Ika Wellington distributions.

FISH CARE / CHARTER BOAT CONDUCT

Our FishCare charter boat code of conduct has proven to be a good tool for consolidating like-minded charter companies who are all encouraging their clients to adjust their fishing behaviour. Each time we onboard another charter company, the group of advocates who have a desire to help educate fishers about our FishCare programme and how they can reduce their impact on the environment grows. To date, we have 28 charter companies who are following our code of conduct. Through these partners we can talk to thousands of non-commercial fishers every year.



Supporter Engagement

Volunteering

Are you passionate about protecting our oceans and marine life? LegaSea is looking for dedicated volunteers to help make a difference. Whether you're passionate about conservation, community outreach, or simply want to be part of a cause that matters, we'd love to have you on board. By volunteering with us, you'll play a key role in supporting our mission to safeguard marine ecosystems and create a lasting positive impact. [Sign up](#) today and become a part of the LegaSea family – together, we can help ensure a healthier, more sustainable future for our oceans!

Interested in volunteering with The Kai Ika Project? The Kai Ika Project relies on volunteers to help our small team recover and share enough kaimoana to feed our growing community.

Our volunteers help with kaimoana collections, community distributions, fish handling and processing, assisting with POS transactions, community engagement, gardening at the Papatūānuku Kōkiri Marae, assisting at special events and in a number of behind the scene roles.

We have a range of [opportunities](#) available for individuals or groups of any size.

Social Media update

Over the reporting period, LegaSea's social media efforts reached an impressive 108,000 people, with 6,700 visits to our Facebook page and a follower growth of 200. A total of 18 pieces of content were published, sparking meaningful engagement across key topics. On Facebook, our best-performing posts included the "Effects of Trawling," which reached 19,500 accounts, generated 240 reactions, and received 147 comments, as well

as the “Dredging Survey,” which reached 17,623 accounts, with 260 reactions and 63 comments.

On Instagram, the “Commercial Fishing in HPAs” post stood out, with 19,126 views, 442 interactions, 318 likes, 93 shares, and 20 comments. The “Dredging Survey” also performed well, with 9,018 views, 346 interactions, 247 likes, 55 shares, and 32 comments.

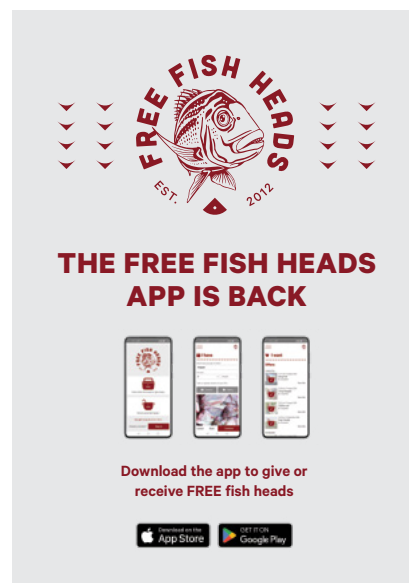
Our paid content for the Hauraki Express subscriber campaign, running throughout October, delivered exceptional results for a modest \$20 investment. This campaign brought in 500 new newsletter subscribers at a cost of just \$0.42 per lead, with a strong click-through rate of 3.72%. These results reflect the success of our efforts to inform, engage, and grow our community across platforms.

THE FREE FISH HEADS APP IS BACK!

This platform connects people who’ve caught fish and don’t need the heads with those of us who love to cook and eat them.

Originally launched by Matt Watson in 2016, our team at The Kai Ika Project have recently dedicated a lot of time to rebuilding and improving the app. The new version is now live in beta on both the [Google Play Store](#) and the [Apple App Store](#) (under Fish Heads App on IOS). Feel free to download it, sign up, and explore its features – you’ll be all set when fishers start offering their fish heads!

There might be a few hiccups as we fine-tune the app and work out any bugs. Initially, there may be more people looking for fish heads than those giving them away, so please be patient as the community grows and activity increases.



LegaSea Fundraising

Grants

Lotteries Auckland – \$50,000 successful application for The Kai Ika Project

Hutt Mana – \$3,600 for Wellington Cans for Kai

Donations

Despite the rising cost of living, we remain optimistic about the future and the support we receive from the public. Although this crisis may lead to lower-than-usual public donations this year, we are determined to continue our vital work. Rest assured, the four essential pillars of our organisation – Advocacy, Research, Education, and Alignment – will be upheld thanks to the unwavering commitment of our Partners, supporters and dedicated team at LegaSea.

We believe in the power of collective effort and remain grateful for the ongoing support of our generous donors. Together, we can make a lasting difference in our mission to restore marine abundance and secure a fair go for Kiwis. We do this by supporting the advocacy work of the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council and LegaSea's public fundraising.

Fisheries Management update

Father Christmas or rather Shane Jones, Minister for Oceans and Fisheries has delivered a generous gift to quota owners after the latest review of catch limits in a range of fish stocks. For most proposals our concerns for conservative catch limits were ignored. Most of Jones' decisions were favourable to commercial fishing interests, with catch limit increases from October 1st.

In July we went all out to complete [15 submissions](#) within 21 working days. We could have done five more submissions if there was more time. We put our best arguments forward to best protect the marine environment and productivity, so we have fish available in the future.

LegaSea issued several [press releases](#) following the adverse Ministerial decisions expressing our concerns about the higher catch limits and the impacts of increased bottom trawling on the marine environment and [vulnerable species](#) such as dolphins and seabirds.

The Bill to extend [marine farm permits](#) for another 20 years was officially signed into law on 2 September. Our [June submission](#) opposed the Bill because it does not account for the social, environmental and cultural impacts of extending existing consents.

In August our New Zealand Sport Fishing Council fisheries team submitted in opposition to the proposed mātaimai around the [Ruapuke Island Group](#) in Foveaux Strait. We have previously supported the use of Māori customary management controls on the basis that there is a genuine attempt to engage with the community and collaborate on improving the marine environment for the benefit of all. In [our August submission](#) we raised the issue that this application and potential bylaws are clearly biased towards supporting ongoing commercial fishing while seeking to constrain recreational harvest.

On the flip side, in September we worked alongside the Whakatane Sport Fishing Club to [submit in support](#) of the proposed mātaimai around [Whale Island](#) in the eastern Bay of Plenty. Support was given on the basis that the mātaimai would benefit the community including mana whenua and recreational fishers.

In October Fisheries New Zealand advised they had authorised NIWA to use an industrial dredge to survey scallop abundance in the Hauraki Gulf and Bay of Plenty (Coromandel scallop area SCA CS). This was contrary to our understanding that the FNZ Shellfish Working Group had agreed in May 2024 that a no-contact survey method using cameras

and divers was the only survey method to be used. NIWA has recently finished using cameras to survey the Coromandel scallop beds and preliminary reports suggest there were few scallops found. The entire [Coromandel scallop fishery has been closed](#) since March 2023 because of depletion.

We're challenging the government's last minute announcement of changes to the Hauraki Gulf Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill to allow commercial fishing inside two of High Protection Areas (HPAs) in the Gulf. Any such change will mean gill netting can occur in Kawau Bay, around the Noises Islands, and west of Motutapu Island. This commercial activity will be in winter using small vessels targeting kahawai, trevally, mullet and rig. We understand there will be a brief opportunity for the public to submit on those changes and we're committed to make our voice heard even though this feels like another predetermined process.

Over a 12 month period from October 2022 to September 2023 Fisheries New Zealand ran a nationwide survey to estimate how many fish we collectively harvest. Results from the National Panel Survey have been released. You can find the [full report here](#). Overall the Survey found that fewer Kiwis are going fishing and not as many fish are being taken home to feed the whanau. Since the 2011-12 survey this continues a downward trend in catches in 2017-18 and now 2022-23. We aim to analyse the full report soon, to get a better understanding of catch trends in each area of the country.

We are anticipating a major review of crayfish catch limits in several areas, in time for changes in April 2025. That will no doubt chew up a good chunk of December and January, so no let-up in effort for some of our team over the holiday period.

Seasons greetings to everyone who cares about increasing the abundance of fish and a fair go for Kiwis.

Partnerships

Partners

We are thrilled to enjoy the support of the following new Partners:

NEW GOLD PARTNERS

[Silk Design](#), [Pacific Media](#) – Adventurer Sea and Snow Magazine

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the products and services of these outstanding companies and brands.

Our Partners are our lifeblood

They help us with funding, communication, social engagement, materials support and motivation. Their ongoing support demonstrates a real commitment to the people of New Zealand. Restoring our inshore fisheries to an abundant level is now a shared vision.

Please [contact us](#) if you wish to join our growing list of outstanding Partners.

LegaSea Hawkes Bay

The Kai Ika Project

We are pleased to report on the progress of The Kai Ika Project, a new initiative in partnership with LegaSea Hawke's Bay and Sustainable Hawke's Bay. This project aims to tackle both food insecurity and seafood waste by distributing free, healthy kaimoana to communities in need across the Hawke's Bay region.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The goal of The Kai Ika Project is to provide nutritious, sustainable seafood to local communities while reducing waste from our fisheries. We believe in the principle that food is medicine, and this initiative prioritizes feeding those who are most vulnerable. Our distribution efforts will help ensure that Kiwis, particularly those facing economic hardship, have access to fresh seafood.

LAUNCH PLANS

We have recently soft launched in December. Distribution events will be held in various locations across the region, and full details (including dates and venues) will be shared on our social media platforms and the The Kai Ika Project – Hawke's Bay page.



Kaimoana distribution

Image: Alex Wallace

PLATINUM



GOLD





**BUILDING
LEGASEA**

LEGASEA SPONSOR/ BUILDING LEGASEA

The building industry of New Zealand have a common passion for fishing and if any group of businesses are going to help us rebuild our fisheries then the construction industry should be at the forefront. Subsequently, we developed a category of sponsorship ideally suited to them. Priced at \$2000 plus GST per annum it enables sponsors to help build up LegaSea and rebuild our fish stocks.

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| Avoca Group | Apex Roof 'n' Clad Ltd | Strait Construction Ltd |
| Robinson Asphalts | Blacklock Rose Ltd | Sansom Construction |
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LEGASEA WORKS

LegaSea Works is our entry level business sponsorship allowing any business large or small to show their support and receive recognition. LegaSea Works is priced at \$500 plus GST per annum with an automatic renewal, it is a simple way for a business to invest in the future health of New Zealand's fisheries for the benefit of their customers and community.

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| Fantail and Turtle Garden Bar and Eatery | Services | Topcat Bobcat Excavations |
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| Waipa Bricklayers | GT Marine | Peter Campbell |
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| Rogers Boat shop | Kerry & Carol Martin | Consilium Residential |
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