JUNE 2025 NEWSLETTER

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IMPORTANT DATES

Q1 Light audit due
31 July 2025

Board meeting
18 July 2025

ECSC meeting
11 July 2025

MFA/MSQP AGM & Conference
15 August 2025

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President's Comment

It is with great pride and optimism that I report the year has been marked by a series of positive developments across our sector, from strong growth in our key aquaculture products to robust market conditions and a successful spat season.

Our mussel farms have experienced remarkable growth, driven by ideal environmental conditions and the continued dedication of our teams. Harvests have been plentiful, and the quality of our product remains outstanding—something we can all take pride in. Demand for our mussels continues to grow, both locally and internationally, further enhancing New Zealand's reputation for producing premium shellfish.

This success is not only confined to mussels, both the oyster and salmon sectors have also enjoyed favourable market conditions. Oysters consistently met the high standards our consumers expect, and the salmon industry has continued to benefit from excellent market prices.

This year's spat season was exceptional, laying the foundation for strong production in the years ahead. We must also extend a special note of thanks to our vessel crews, whose work is fundamental to our operations. They continue to uphold the highest standards of safety and efficiency, often under challenging conditions. Their dedication is crucial to the progress we have achieved, and we deeply appreciate their commitment.

Looking ahead, we are eagerly awaiting the 15th of August and the upcoming MFA Conference. With a change of scenery this year, and the event being held at the Nelson Yacht Club, it will be a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas, share knowledge, and celebrate the milestones we've achieved.

Tickets are available for members and industry partners, please contact the MFA office team (office@marinefarming.co.nz) to secure your spot – they sell out every year, so get in quick! There are also opportunities to support the event via sponsorship, so reach out if you're interested.

I encourage all members to attend, as the conference will offer insights into the future of marine farming and highlight the innovations shaping our path forward, offers an opportunity to make valuable industry connections and finally to celebrate at the awards dinner.

Thank you once again for your continued support, and I look forward to seeing you at the conference.

- Jono

Marine Farm Compliance Audit Programme

Declarations are Due

31st July 2025

If you have not sent in your declaration for the 3rd quarter, please do so as soon as possible

ONE **DECLARATION FORM PER SITE**
DUE BY THE END OF EACH PERIOD

November, December, January	(1)
February, March, April	(2)
May, June, July	**(3)**
August, September, October	(4)

Tickets are now available

MFA MSQP AGM & Conference

Date: 15 August 2025

Start: 9:00am

Location: Nelson Yacht Club

MSQP
Marlborough Shellfish Quality Programme

mfa
MARINE FARMING ASSOCIATION
To Promote & Nurture Sustainable Marine Farming

To secure your tickets, or support via sponsorship, contact: office@marinefarming.co.nz

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Associate / Non Members $100 +GST

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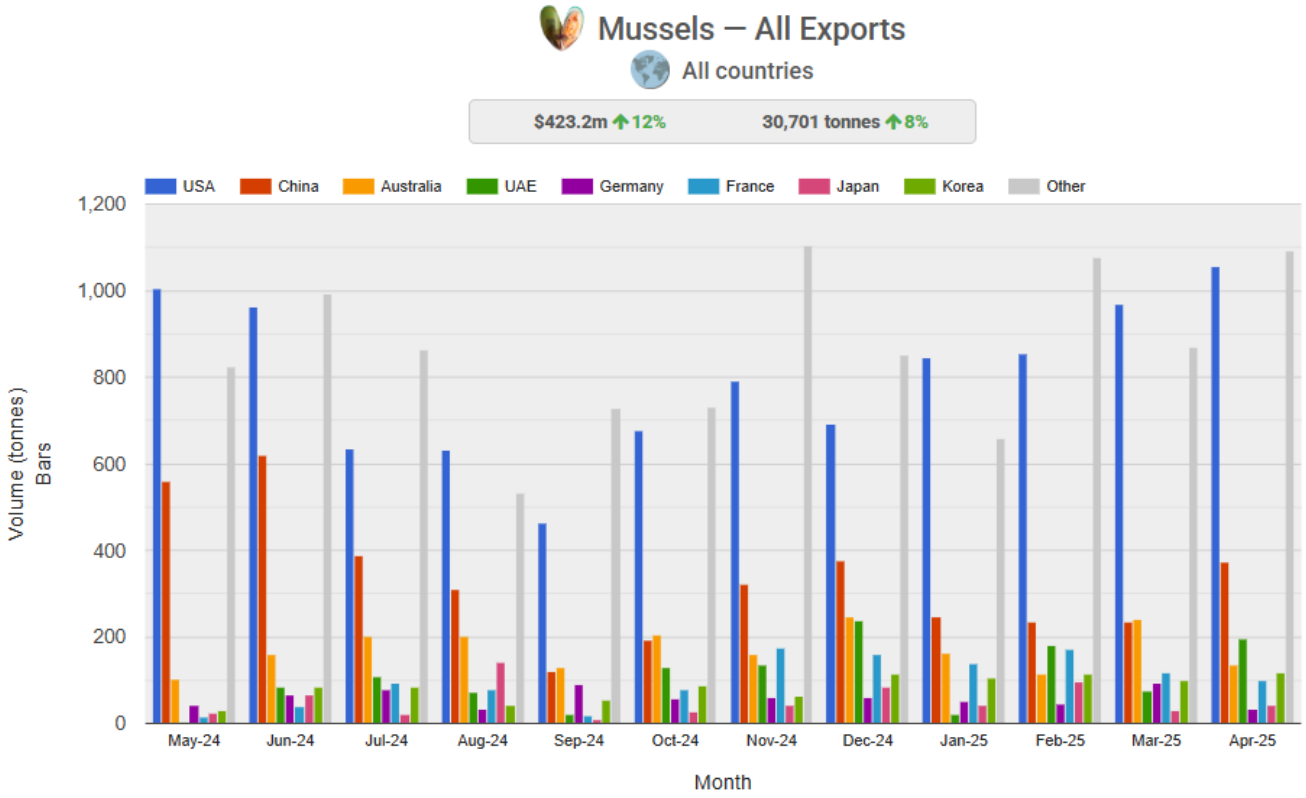
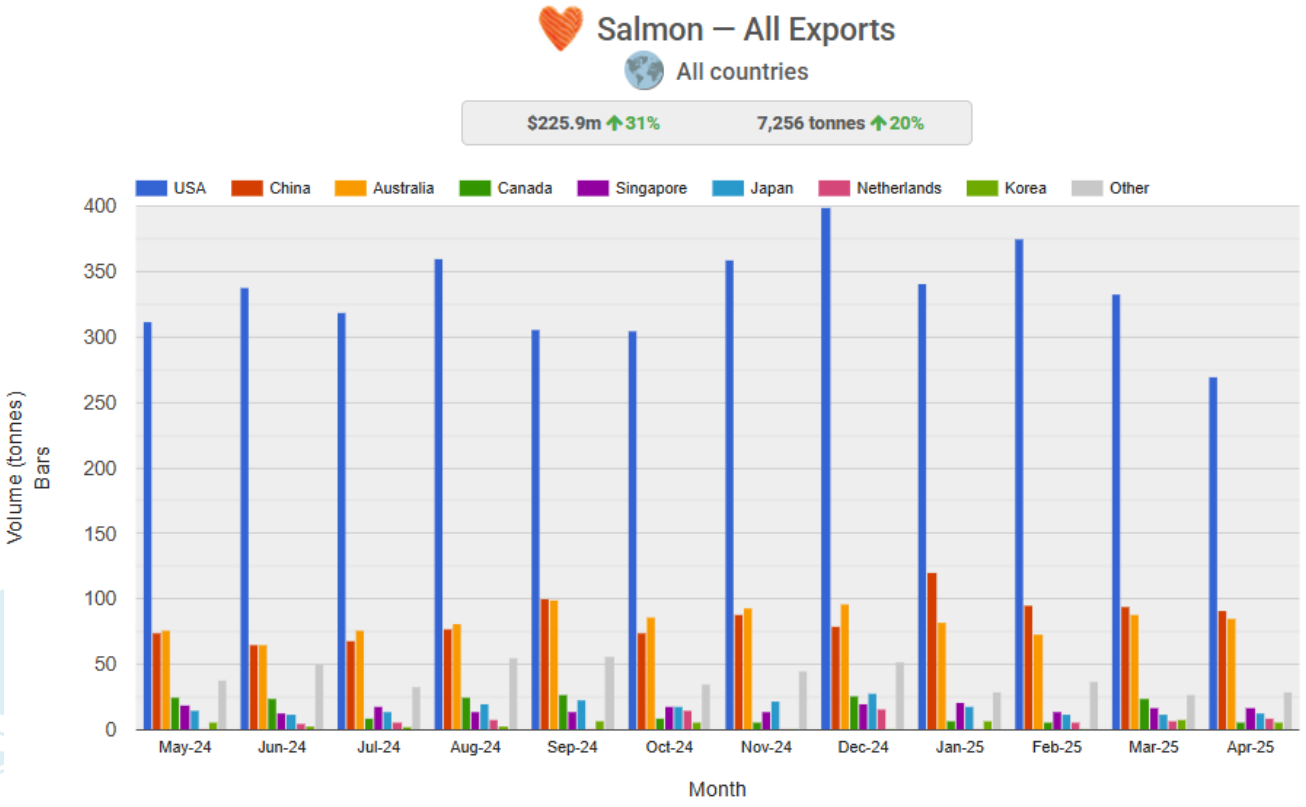
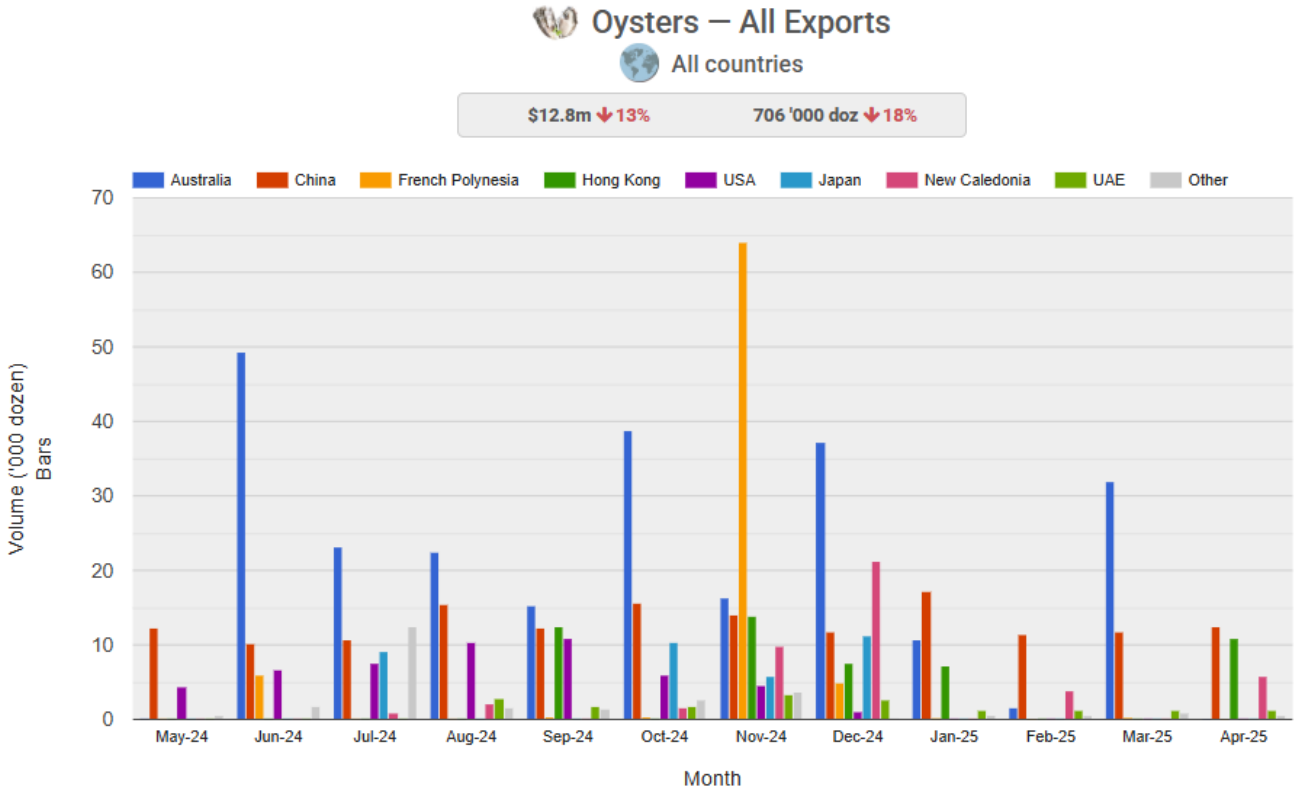
AQNZ export data







The 23rd annual Blessing of the Fleet

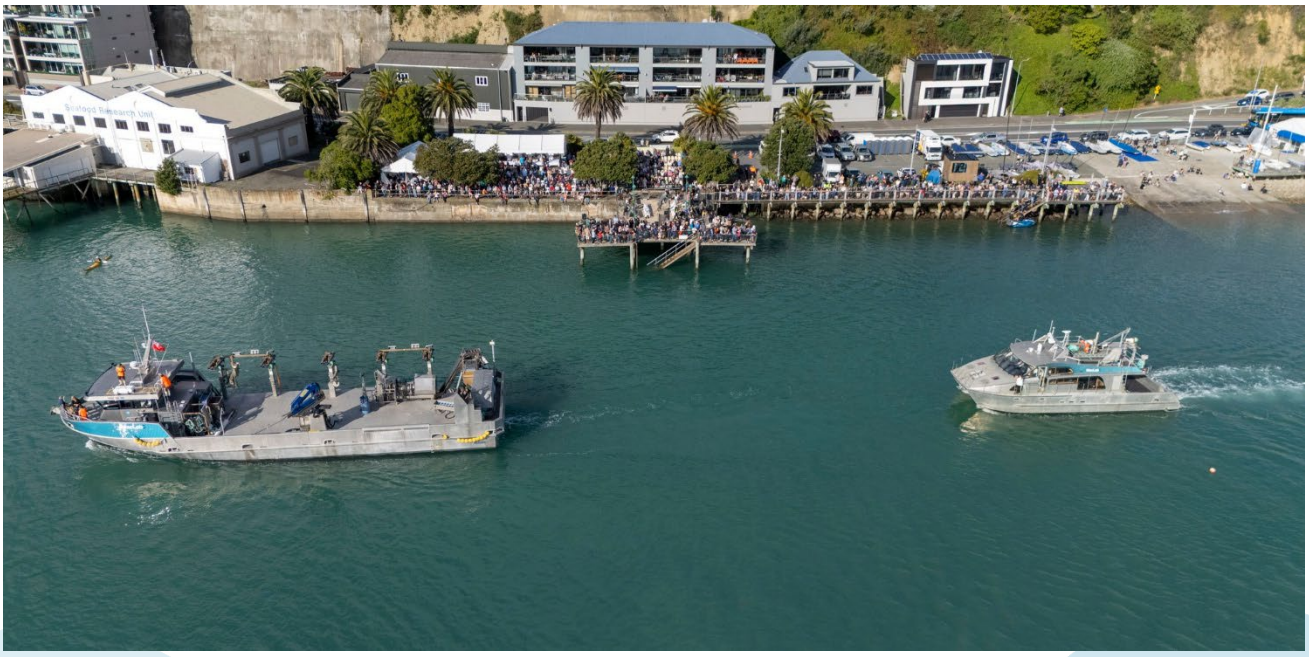
The 23rd annual Blessing of the Fleet on Saturday went off with a bang and saw about 2000 people attending the day's events and we estimate about 4000 attendees lined Tahunanui beach to see the fireworks on Friday.

The Fireworks display was one of the largest in Nelson, with an extra special 10-inch shell one of the largest ever let go in Nelson. To support the crowd waiting for the fireworks launch at 6:30pm Friday there were local food carts at the Able Tasman Car Park, Tahunanui Beach. People and kids could be heard screaming with joy as the display kicked off, lighting the Nelson Haven with a spectacular range of colours. The display lasted about 8 minutes and was extremely well received by the community, and we are hoping next year it will be bigger again with industry and community support.

The actual Blessing of the Fleet event on Saturday was larger than last year and we were fortunate to have a range of commercial fishing and aquaculture vessels take part.

Maclab were well represented with the Vanguard and Grey Heron on show, and we were lucky enough to have FirstMate Navigator Mike Holland (Clearwater) at the stand with Amba (Guard Safety) to talk about their great work.

There were 16 dignitaries including, MPs, Mayors, and other heads of the industry and community. The crowd enjoyed cost-effective Fish and Chips and were able to buy prime seafood at very fair prices.



The Vanguard (left) and Grey Heron (right) in the Blessing of the Fleet Parade

Th weather was amazing, and it held off until the event ended and then she lit rip with strong winds and rain – we have always been able to defy poor weather reports with this event which is a great thing!

The event MC was Pete Cara from Coast Guard and the Water Safety Council, and Darren Guard from Guard Safety provided the vessel descriptions as part of the vessel parade.

Coast Guard, Surf Life Saving, Nelson Yacht Club, Harbours Master, Nelson Diving Services, Haulashore Ferry, Gleam Team Trust, Port Nelson and many others had vessels on the water as well as many local fishing vessels such as the Corsair, Progress, Gleam, Kathleen G, Joy Maree, Natalie J, Tempest, Carol Maree.

Port Nelson Tugs gave a presentation on their pushing and manoeuvrability skills which was great to see.

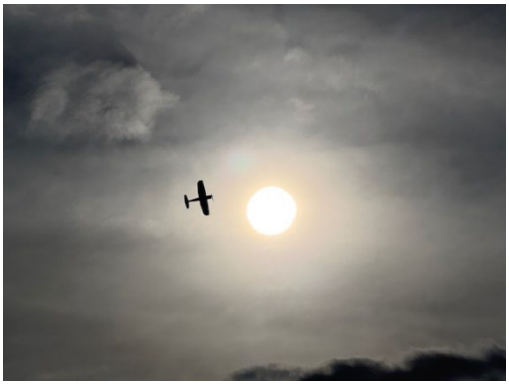
We were very spoiled with the arrival of the ex RNZAF FG-1D Corsair WWII aircraft which did an amazing air show for the crowd while visiting from Ardmore Airport, Auckland. The aircraft flew down especially for the show, and it was the first time one of these aircraft had ever landed at Nelson Airport, so pretty special.

The Blessing of the Fleet was started 23 years ago by Mike Smith, Robert Plamer, Charles Hufflet and Peter Talley, and it goes from strength to strength today, now receiving support and sponsorship from many local companies who look after our industry.

The Blessing is about connecting people with the fishing and seafood sector and allowing us a time and place to remember those who have gone before us lost at sea. It's always emotional, especially at the time of the blessing, with the ringing of the bell and blasts from the ships horns and then the 1 minute's silence that seems to go on forever.

Next year let's make it bigger! It would be great to see more aquaculture vessels attend in support of their fishing friends.

- Darren Guard
  Photos by Seafarers Memorial Incorporated and Darren Guard



Oyster hatchery's solar energy system equivalent to nearly 1000 mature trees

Kirikiritātangi is a ground-breaking, $5 million, purpose-built, tio (oyster) hatchery in Nelson that was built to support the increase of Moana New Zealand's tio production capacity and ensure a reliable supply of oyster spat.

Moana New Zealand CEO Steve Tarrant says, "As a seafood business, we're constantly innovating and thinking of ways in which we can improve our operations and lighten our touch on Papatuanuku as well as Tangaroa. Moana has always taken a long-term view with our aquaculture and wild harvest fisheries operations, and Kirikiritātangi was designed with that in mind.

"Our investment of $72,000 in a solar power system for our hatchery has produced some very exciting results. Over a 42-month period from August 2021 (when we first used our solar panels) to January 2025, our solar power system has reduced our carbon footprint by 23 tonnes of CO_2. For the business, we're thrilled to see the system perform so well by reducing emissions for just this one site, which is equivalent to the work of nearly 1,000 mature trees in a year, given that a single mature tree absorbs around 25kg of CO_2 annually."

The use of solar energy reduces carbon emissions because it displaces electricity that would otherwise come from the national grid, which has a carbon footprint. In New Zealand, every kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity supplied from the grid results in 0.08 kg of CO_2 emissions, according to the Ministry for the Environment. By generating and using solar power instead of drawing from the grid, the hatchery is contributing to a lower overall carbon footprint for the business.

Mr Tarrant adds, "We've also made good progress to recover a portion of that cost over the past 3.5 years. With increasing electricity costs I'd expect we'd recover the remainder of that investment in another three years. At times, we've generated enough energy to return some back to the grid.

"What that looks like in actual numbers is from August 2021 (our first month of usage) to January 2025, we generated 271,187kWh of electricity, resulting in cost savings a little over $31,400.

"Moreover, we sent 21,871kWh back to the grid and received a $1,746 credit. In total, these savings amount to over $33,000 for the 42-month period."

In addition to the solar-generated savings, Moana has designed a building that operates within its own ecosystem as much as possible, creating a heating system that recycles and redistributes heat to help rear the oyster larvae and spat.

"Growing baby Pacific oysters in a hatchery and nursery requires a lot of energy as they like to grow in really warm water," says Mr Tarrant.

"When we thought about where else heat and energy could be captured and then distributed, we included a system that helps retain heat from our large greenhouse space and installed a fan to drive that heat from the greenhouse into the production spaces. Our heat pumps also use the warm air drawn from the ceiling in the greenhouse to heat the water rather than just using the ambient external air, which can fluctuate throughout the year and makes us more self-reliant and less dependent on external resources.

"With all the energy-saving features, Kirikiritātangi also collects rainwater for use throughout the facility. Its wooden framework is a special LVL material, which looks like plywood but is actually made up of layers of thin veneer strips that are glued together, which is extremely strong and durable—and is also more rust resistant than steel. What's more, it's created from a renewable local resource, Nelson Pine."

- May Tien, Moana Communications Manager
  027 880 4522 | may.tien@moana.co.nz

MFA Newsletter Stories

Do you have a story you would like to see published in our newsletter?
For consideration, please forward it to:
office@marinefarming.co.nz

Our newsletter is released quarterly – March, June, September, and December

Trout bacon and salmon with ants among Seafood Excellence Award winners

The winners of this year's Seafood Excellence Global Awards, as presented yesterday, were not lacking in originality and included salmon topped with ants.

Perhaps the most outlandish winner was Vičiūnai Group's cold-smoked salmon loin with black ants, which won the innovation award. A first for the competition, the ants provide a striking appearance and notable crunch when contrasted with the rich, buttery texture of the salmon. Vičiūnai also won best retail product for its cold-smoked Atlantic salmon with truffles. The judges noted the perfect balance of the truffle and salmon flavours and the expert cutting that included just the right amount of truffles on each slice. They completed their hat-trick with the award for retail packaging, for their cold-smoked mussels in chilli oil.

Kalaneuvos Oy of Finland won the grand prize for Best HORECA (hotel/restaurant/catering) Product for its trout bacon. This product offers a completely new way to serve fish. It is cooked like bacon in a pan, oven, or air fryer and becomes very crispy, so it can be served like bacon in pizzas, burgers, pasta, baked potatoes, or as part of a healthy breakfast. The judges noted the great flavour and texture of the product and its nutritional benefits, as well as the menu versatility it gives chefs and recipe developers.

Kalaneuvos Oy of Finland's trout bacon. © Seafood Expo Global

Frime of Spain was awarded the convenience award for its tuna pibil. This ready-to-eat product is made with yellowfin tuna cooked at a low temperature and sauced and shredded, pibil-style, with Mexican aromas and spices. The result is an easy-to-use, high protein filling for tacos, burritos, sandwiches and other quick meals.

Isstormur of Iceland won award for best seafood product line for its line of unique shelf-stable fish meals – hawaiian salmon salad, mackerel with chickpeas in a spicy Moroccan sauce, and tuna risoni. This line was recognised by the judges for the overall quality of the products, the attractive pouch packaging, and the convenience offered to the consumer.

- First published by *TheFishSite.com,* republished with thanks. https://thefishsite.com/articles/

Vičiūnai Group, from Lithuania, won three awards, including the innovation award for their cold smoked salmon loin with black ants © Seafood Expo Global

Looking to global literature to understand why green-lipped mussels are not naturally recruiting to the seabed

As the mussel industry knows well, mussel spat never behave the way we think they will. In the last ten years of mussel restoration research, we have had little to no juvenile recruitment into our restored mussel reefs. This finding paired with a lack of natural recovery of mussels onto the seabed post dredging has driven us to pursue a series of research projects on recruitment to understand why these processes are not occurring.

Looking to global scientific literature, we have found 309 research papers from the last 45 years that have studied the recruitment for reef-forming bivalves. Throughout recent years there has been an upward trend in paper published, indicating that recruitment is a global issue, and the research has started to diversify with greater focus on more species globally from Chile to China.

Factors affecting recruitment appear to be diverse and numerous, with most studies looking at substrate, predation and hydrodynamics. From an industry perspective, some solace can be taken from the fact that the recruitment issues appear to be a challenge for most bivalve aquaculture industries.

Overall, this review highlights that bivalve recruitment is a complex story, with lots of factors appearing to influence success. However, there is an opportunity to learn from a growing body of work on both the underlying biology of recruiting bivalves and from other's practical endeavours to overcome bottlenecks.

The full systematic review will be published later this year.

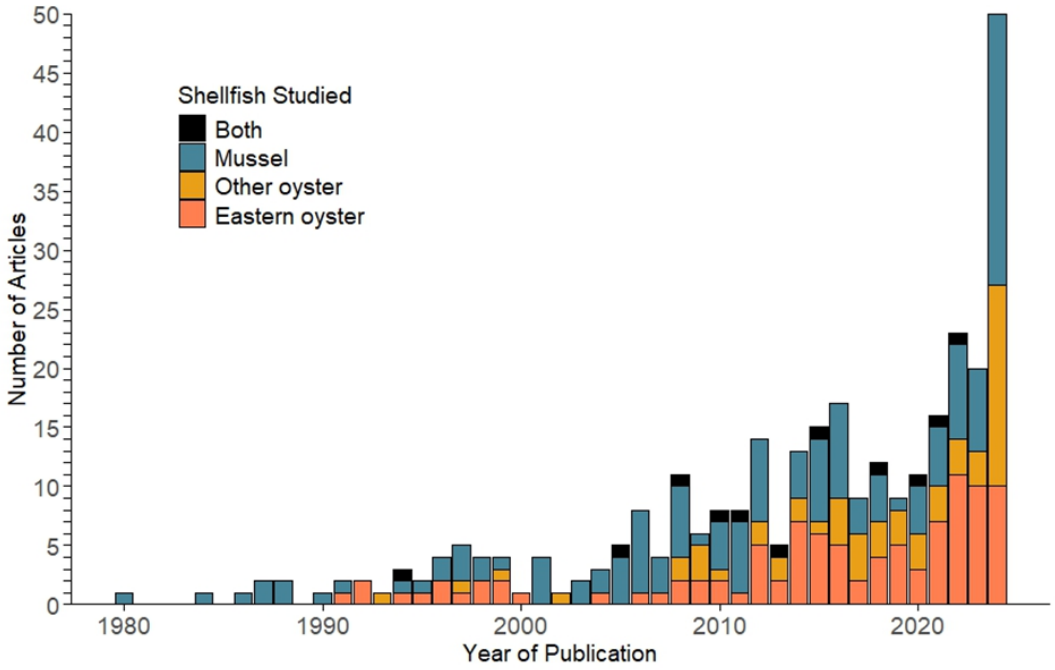


Figure 1. Number of articles included in the systematic review for year of publication from 1980 through to December 2024 (n = 310).

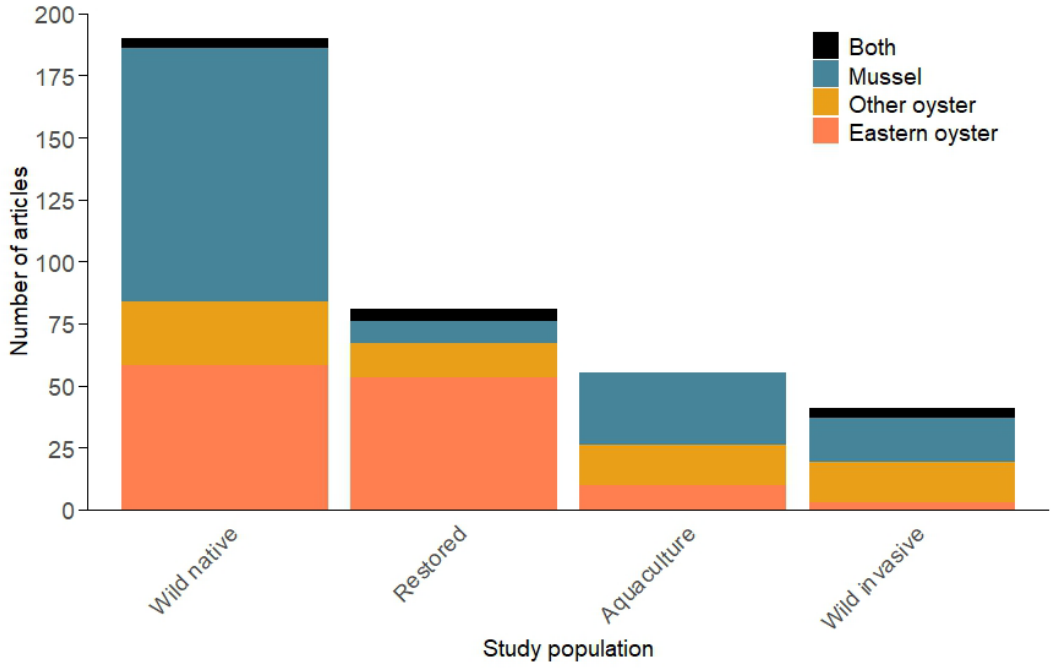


Figure 2. Number of articles included in the systematic review for each source type of bivalve population (n = 367). There were 55 articles that included multiple study populations hence total number of articles is > 310.

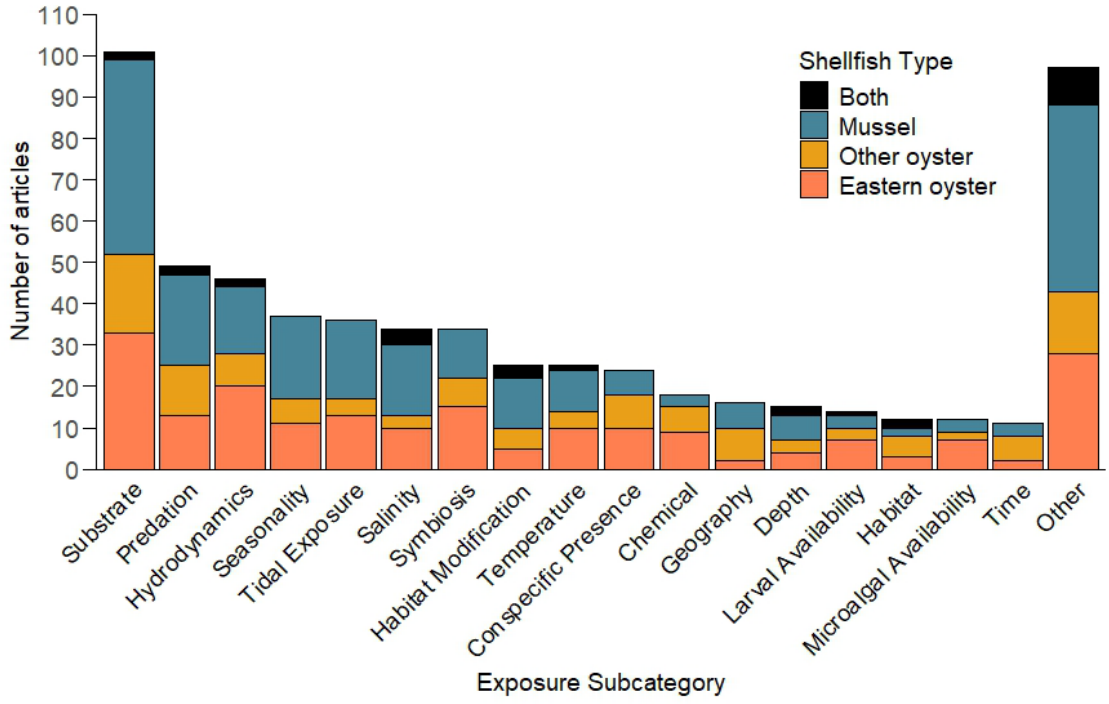


Figure 3. Number of articles included in the systematic review for various exposure sub-categories (n = 396). There were 178 articles that included multiple exposure sub-categories. There were 27 sub-categories with < 10 articles that were grouped as "Other".

Feel free to contact Luke Johnston with any questions at ljoh533@aucklanduni.ac.nz

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"For me, learning the theory, then going out on the boat to practice it - that's what made it make sense, even for someone like me, where the theory usually goes in one ear and out the other."

- Jo, 2023 SRL Graduate

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Teaching a new generation – and a few teachers

Stoney Bourke left school at 15, convinced — like many of his teachers — that he wouldn't amount to much. Today, he's shaping the next generation of skippers.

As someone who quickly showed his worth – obtaining his skipper's ticket at the age of 18 – he's now actively recruiting and training young individuals. Many of these trainees have faced challenges in finding career direction, particularly due to difficulties with traditional educational pathways.

Stoney sees himself in many of the young people he mentors today "I like working with them because I can see a lot of people out there like myself. I think some people can learn more out of school than in it."

His advice to the young people who join him from school on the Gateway scheme as he skippers the Vanguard is simple.

"I tell them if you are willing to work and learn, you can do anything."

After earning his skipper's ticket at the earliest allowed age, he went on to gain his coastal skipper's qualification; later, he surprised everyone by mastering algebra and trigonometry to qualify for his deep-sea certification.

"My old teachers might be surprised. In school, I often thought, 'Why do I need this?' School wasn't really for me," Stoney says. In fact, a former teacher recently told him: "I enjoyed the days your dad or grandad took you out of class to go fishing."

Stoney's father, Don, and grandfather, Donald, were fishermen. He spent a lot of his childhood on Don's boat, mastering how to operate it at a very young age.

"I took it out myself at 11 or 12." He also had his own clinker dinghy. At an even younger age, he was catching snapper in the Havelock estuary to sell around the town's houses.

In 1985, on leaving school at 15, he worked for Rob Pooley and Chris Godsiff on the mussel vessel "Sealord" for NZ Shellfish Holdings, where Ivan Godsiff was the skipper.

"I learned a lot on the sea and how to look after a crew from Ivan."

During Cyclone Bola in 1988, Ivan and his son Clive co-skippered the Wakatiri. In Admiralty Bay with a load of mussels, returning to Havelock was a hair-raising experience.

"I'll never forget that night. The head wind and big swells were so strong it took three hours just to get from Clay to Harding Point." Some 8 tonnes of mussel were lost overboard but Stoney says he never felt frightened. "I had Ivan and Clive at the helm."

Whakatiri on a calmer day

His first skippering job was on the Pelorus Trader, sharing the job with Ivan.

The vessel's role included targeting the mussel sack market. It was very physical work having to manhandle 30kg bags of mussels. Jim Jessep was often aboard overseeing the product. At night, Jim would join the crew to play 500 or Euchre. (Jim would later go on to represent New Zealand at bridge.)

Stoney's first job skippering Pelorus Trader with 100 bags aboard

"Us young fellas tried to beat him at cards; if you won a single hand off him you were lucky."

These days Stoney says the crew are on their cell phones at night and he thinks something has been lost. "I sometimes wish we could play cards again – they were good times."

He says it was also great to work with marine farming pioneers like Jim Jessep, Rob Pooley, John Pickering, Robbie Brownlee as well as many others.

In 1990, an algal bloom devastated the industry, but it was followed by a significant boom. "The industry couldn't keep up." Even for someone in their early twenties, the hours were brutal. "Every week was 100 hours. You'd start on Saturday night and not get to bed until Tuesday."

In 1992, Stoney decided he needed to broaden his horizon. He went deep-sea fishing, working out of Australia, Cape Town and Mauritius for Austral Fisheries in waters as far south as near Antarctica.

Chasing Patagonian Toothfish in Antarctic waters.

He started as a deckhand, was bosun in a year and then worked for his First Mate's ticket. He served for 10 years, including an 18-month period at sea with only brief 2-3 day port calls to unload and re-provision.

During this time, he began reading books and studying, activities he had never engaged in before.

"Then I got married to Rondy". He had known his wife from earlier times in Havelock.

Stoney returned home to captain the Beverly S for Bruce Hearn. Later, he worked in Tasman Bay's open water mussel farms when he was approached by MacLab's Gary Rountree about forming a joint venture, which they successfully established as MacLab Tasman.

"It's become a real blessing. Everything they said they'd do they kept to their word." The JV has been a success, farming and supplying quality mussels to Maclab. It has grown rapidly from working in Tasman Bay to Golden Bay and Croisilles Harbour and is expected to keep growing.

To advance MacLab Tasman, it was necessary to acquire a new vessel capable of functioning effectively in the exposed environment. Stoney worked with MacLab's Scott Gillanders on the design and build of the "Vanguard" which was launched in 2019.

"It's probably the highlight of my career. You work on boats all your life and think you know a lot until your start building a boat."

The Vanguard operates a two-crew roster. Stoney puts in long hours, overseeing the operation and relief skippering as required.

"To do what I do you have to have a very understanding wife."

Now at age 55, Stoney's starting to try and wind back a bit and find some work/life balance. He admits it's hard to learn after always putting work first.

That now extends to mentoring young people coming into the industry. He works with the Gateway program for high school students and is an assessor for the Primary ITO New Zealand.

Under Stoney's mentorship, many young people have advanced their careers, working on the Vanguard, earning aquaculture or maritime certifications, or finding opportunities with other mussel companies. Many are now skippers.

Next year, a planned well-earned break will lead the Bourkes to the UK for a holiday. Unsurprisingly, the holiday includes boats – in fact a canal trip though the waterways of Scotland.

From selling snapper as a boy to mentoring the next generation of skippers, Stoney Bourke's journey proves that learning doesn't stop when you leave school — and success often starts far from the classroom.

**While very young, Michael Bourke was nick-named after Stoney Burke, the main character in a 1960s television series about a travelling rodeo rider.*

Building Skills from the Inside: Aquaculture Training with Primary ITO

In 2024, Primary ITO opened enrolments for an updated suite of on-farm aquaculture training programmes — including the New Zealand Certificate in Aquaculture (Level 3) with a shellfish strand. With mussel harvesting and marine farming at its core, the Level 3 programme is designed to support real-world learning, right where it's needed most: on the farm.

These fully funded programmes are work-based and tailored for current employees. To enrol, trainees must be working in the industry, ensuring that the skills learned can be immediately applied on the job. The qualification includes components in sustainable environmental practices, marine farm operations, and teamwork — all essential building blocks for a safer, more effective marine farming workforce.

But what makes this training model so effective is the use of Workplace Assessors. 'This is training done on the job, onsite and on-farm with companies often using their own expertise and training staff with our help," said Daniel Edmonds, Primary ITO's Seafood Sector Manager. "It means staff are learning the right skills, at the right time, and in the right place – at work, where they need to apply those skills".

The Power of Peer-Led Learning – Workplace Assessors

The Level 3 programme uses qualified Workplace Assessors to deliver and verify training. These assessors can be either experienced company employees who gain a unit standard (4098 – Assess an Adult Candidate) or external contractors who travel to farms across the country.

That real-world integration is also what makes the role of the assessor so critical. Assessors understand the context, know the systems, and can help learners gain confidence through supported, practical learning.

Clearwater Mussels Ltd is one employer offering their staff this opportunity. Marine Manager and Workplace Assessor, Dean Condon, said that the benefit for the company is the benefit for the crew – they get recognition for the jobs they do day in and day out. He pointed out "some people can come into the mussel/aquaculture industry, work for years and leave without any qualifications other than maybe a 1st aid and/or crane certification.

"The Level 3 Aquaculture certificate gives them a nationally recognized qualification and recognition that the work they do is more than just grunt work, that there are skills and knowledge needed to be able to perform their jobs."

Primary ITO offers full support for assessors, including assistance with enrolments, administration, and access to dedicated regional Seafood Training Advisors — including one based in the Nelson/Marlborough region.

Michael Stewart – Seafood Training Advisor

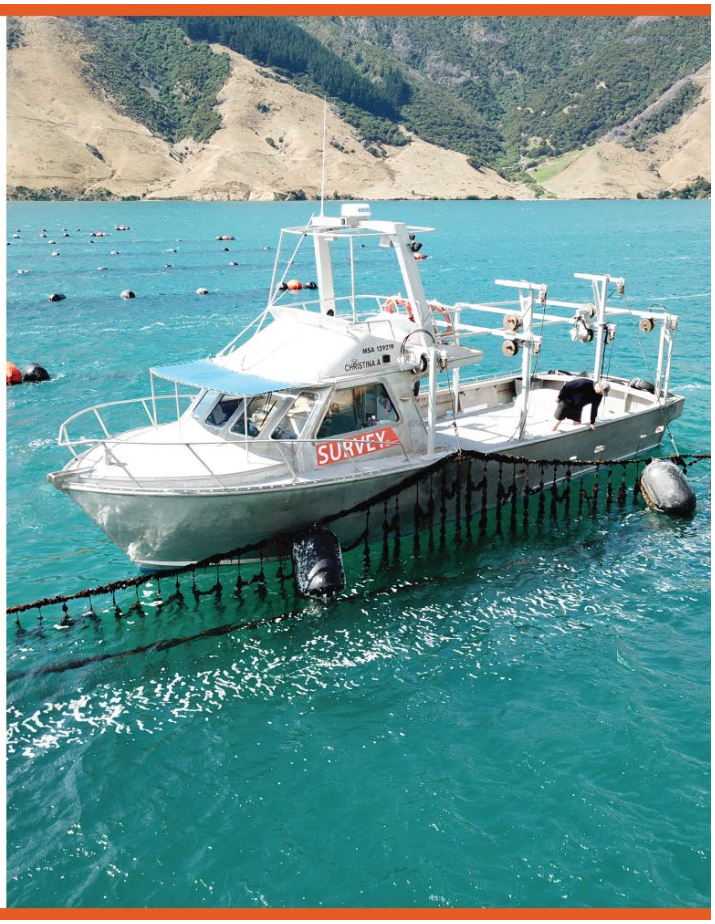
Nationwide Reach, Local Relevance

More than 60 trainees are currently enrolled across New Zealand, from the Marlborough Sounds and Golden Bay to Stewart Island and the Chatham Islands. As more companies get involved, the hope is to increase uptake and build an even stronger base of skilled marine farmers.

"This is the first major revamp of aquaculture training since the late 1990s, and we're really pleased with how the industry is engaging," said Daniel Edmonds.

Want to Get Involved?

To learn more about the New Zealand Certificate in Aquaculture (Level 3 – Shellfish Strand), or to register as a Workplace Assessor, visit www.primaryito.ac.nz, call 0800 20 80 20 or email info@primaryito.ac.nz.



Aquaculture Careers on Show at Fantastic Futures

The Marine Farming Association was proud to be part of *Fantastic Futures* in May - a high-energy careers event hosted at Founders Heritage Park in Nelson. With over 260 students from 13 local high schools attending, it was a brilliant opportunity to showcase aquaculture and the rewarding career pathways it offers.

We were thrilled to host the mussel farming stand, giving students the chance to get hands-on with mussel floats and learn how to tie the knots that keep everything secure out on the water. A big thank you to Stoney and Callan from MacLab Tasman for joining us and helping bring the experience to life, they made the stand a real hit with the students.

Just a few stalls away, the world of oyster farming was also on display. Students got a close-up look at oyster spat and the algae they feed on, sparking great questions and conversation. A huge thanks to Aquaculture New Zealand and Moana New Zealand for running this engaging stand and giving rangatahi a glimpse into the science and care that goes into growing high-quality oysters.

From interactive activities to inspiring speakers and a stall quiz challenge, the day was a great reminder of how many exciting futures are available right here in the Top of the South. We're grateful to the Nelson Regional Development Agency for organising such a fantastic event, and to all the students who stopped by to learn more about life on (and under) the water!

- MFA

Marlborough Environmental Awards

The Marine Farming Association team was proud to attend this year's Marlborough Environment Awards ceremony, which was generously supported by one of our partners, Port Marlborough New Zealand.

It was a fantastic evening showcasing the mahi being done across the region by individuals, community groups, and businesses, all working to improve environmental outcomes and drive sustainability. Awards were presented across six categories: Forestry, Business Innovation, Marine, Community Innovation, Electrification and Energy Efficiency, and the Wine Industry. The evening was capped off with the Supreme Award, drawn from the category winners.

With Mark Unwin returning as MC, the night was full of laughs and kicked off with a heartfelt Karakia. It was great to see new companies stepping up with creative, practical environmental initiatives.

A highlight of the evening was seeing another of our partners, *Future Post*, take home not just one, but two awards. They were recognised in the Wine Industry category and also received the top honour, the Supreme Award. Judges praised the company's circular economy model, which sees over 4,500 tonnes of New Zealand plastic waste recycled each year into high-performance fence posts, vineyard posts, and landscaping materials. Their commitment to local sourcing, staff safety, strong industry partnerships, and ongoing R&D impressed across the board. Ka pai, team!

If your Marlborough-based business or community group is adopting sustainable practices—or you're keen to learn more—check out the Marlborough Environment Awards website: www.mea-nz.com.

- MFA

MFA team from left: Ned Wells (General Manager), Nicola Russell (Office Manager), Jonathan Large (MFA President), and Kiah Holdaway (Administration Assistant) at the 2025 Marlborough Environment Awards.

Green-Lipped Mussels Featured in Leading U.S. Pet Industry Journal

New Zealand's Green-Lipped Mussels were recently featured in *Pet Age*, one of the United States' most widely read journals for pet industry professionals. Established in the 1960s, *Pet Age* covers emerging trends and leading products across the pet retail and supplement markets. The latest issue includes a spotlight on the health benefits of GLM for companion animals, giving international recognition to one of New Zealand aquaculture's most valuable species.

Author Dave Merrell went into great length promoting the efficiency and peer-reviewed publications showing the success that GLM supplements have when administered to both cats and dogs. He emphasised the positive effects that supplements have on reducing and minimising joint pain and stiffness, improved mobility and quality of life, improved and minimising recovery time from physical exertion, and essential coat and skin health. He highlighted the fact that New Zealand's native shellfish is abundant in many key essential fats, vitamins, and minerals that are crucial for overall health and wellbeing and noted that the GLM is far superior to Blue Mussels in terms of levels of eicosatetraenoic acid (ETA), a rare omega-3 fatty acid which has exceptional anti-inflammatory properties.

In addition to the health benefits, the article also referenced the sustainability credentials of New Zealand's mussel farming practices. Citing a 2022 study, Merrell noted that GLM are considered one of the most sustainable forms of aquaculture globally, thanks to their minimal environmental footprint and their positive contribution to marine ecosystems.

This international recognition comes at a time when the U.S. pet supplement market is experiencing significant growth. In 2024, the market is valued at approximately $4 billion and is expected to continue expanding steadily. This growth is fuelled by the rising awareness of pet nutrition and wellness, with pet owners seeking supplements to enhance their pets' health and longevity.

While the local aquaculture sector is well aware of the health and environmental benefits of New Zealand's Green-Lipped Mussels, it is encouraging to see this recognition gaining traction in major international markets.

- MFA

Community and Stakeholders Unite to Restore Havelock | Motuweka Estuary

Located adjacent to the town of Havelock, the 'Greenshell Mussel Capital of the World,' and fed by the surrounding Te Hoiere and Kaituna River catchments, the 800-hectare Havelock | Motuweka Estuary is the largest in the Marlborough Sounds. It is renowned for its rich biodiversity, marine life, cultural significance, and regional economic importance.

The vast estuary boasts some of Aotearoa New Zealand's most valuable wetland, intertidal, and salt marsh species. It plays a crucial role in carbon sequestration, supports high biodiversity, serves as a natural buffer against coastal hazards, and provides a safe port and marina for the marine farming industry and local community.

However, the estuary faces pressing issues due to increased sedimentation and habitat modification, loss of seagrass and shellfish, and the introduction of invasive species. Identified as one of New Zealand's muddiest estuaries, it requires urgent attention to improve its health and wellbeing.

Funded by and building on the work of the Te Hoiere Project, a new collaborative effort between the community, iwi, Marlborough District Council (MDC), Department of Conservation (DOC), Port Marlborough New Zealand, Fish and Game, and the local marine industry has begun. The aim is to identify effective engagement and restoration actions that will help maintain and enhance the estuary's unique ecology, while accommodating stakeholder needs for use and access.

The groundwork for this initiative has been laid by recent efforts, including wild mussel restoration, the Department of Conservation's near-complete eradication of invasive Spartina (cord grass), and extensive education and the planting and restoration work in the upper catchments under the broader 'Mountains to Sea' Te Hoiere Project—of which this estuary restoration project is a part.

Building on these past successes, the Havelock | Motuweka Estuary Restoration Project will explore a range of options to identify the most impactful and sustainable opportunities. One of the first initiatives will be a community planting day, scheduled for winter 2025, where salt marsh rushes grown by local nursery Ngā Tai Pūrua will be planted in the estuary. This event will contribute directly to restoration efforts and raise awareness about the importance of protecting this unique ecosystem.

By working together, the community and stakeholders aim to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of the Havelock | Motuweka Estuary for future generations.

Any suggestions for restoration activities or offers of direct or in-kind support are very welcome.

- Monique Day | monique@solucom.co.nz or Leigh Stevens | leigh@saltecology.co.nz

About the Project: The Havelock | Motuweka Estuary Restoration Project is a collaborative initiative between the community, iwi, agencies, and the local marine industry, aimed at restoring the health and biodiversity of the estuary through effective restoration plans and community engagement. Funded by Te Hoiere Project, this work is focussed on the receiving environment of the catchment at the critical point where freshwater meets the sea.

Te Hoiere Project Celebration - 19 June

Join with us to reflect on the past and look to the future at the Te Hoiere Project Celebration this June.

From 9am at the Havelock Town Hall where it all began all those years ago, hear from key speakers and stakeholders involved with Te Hoiere Project including a welcoming address from Marlborough Mayor Nadine Taylor and Te Hoiere Project co-chairs Waihaere Mason and Councillor Barbara Faulls.

This part of the day will be 'expo-style' allowing invited guests and members of the public to circulate and chat informally with organisations involved in Te Hoiere Project.

Late morning we will depart Havelock (own transport required) on a field trip to two Project sites and including a communal lunch at Pelorus Bridge.

All are welcome but spaces are limited.

Please email Wilhelmina.Borst@marlborough.govt.nz by 12 June to register.

Te Hoiere Project | HAERE, KAKEA TE ARA POKA HOU

Infant Formula for Greenshell™ Mussel Spat

Growing Greenshell™ mussel spat on dropper lines at coastal nursery sites can be extremely inefficient, with much of the spat lost from the lines within the first few months. The spat losses typically reach over 80% in the first six months after seeding into nursery farms as the spat often struggle to get established or migrate off the dropper lines in search of a better place to make their home.
Wild spat are particularly prone to high losses, partly because they are often in poor nutritional condition when harvested from the wild, so they struggle with the additional stress of the transfer and seeding out process.

Holding and on-growing shellfish spat in contained nursery systems is widely used for rearing spat to larger and more resilient sizes before seeding into the coastal environment. These nursery systems are used for oysters, clams and scallops, but very rarely for mussels, given the relatively low value of mussels compared to the cost of rearing them in the contained nursery systems.

A significant cost for using contained nursery systems is maintaining an ample supply of high-quality food, sufficient to keep large numbers of hungry small shellfish growing quickly so that they can be moved along quickly and out of the nursery systems. In the wild shellfish spat prefer to consume wild microscopic algae (phytoplankton), but providing these in large quantities to shellfish nursery systems in logistically challenging and costly, as it usually involves high intensity or extensive culture systems.

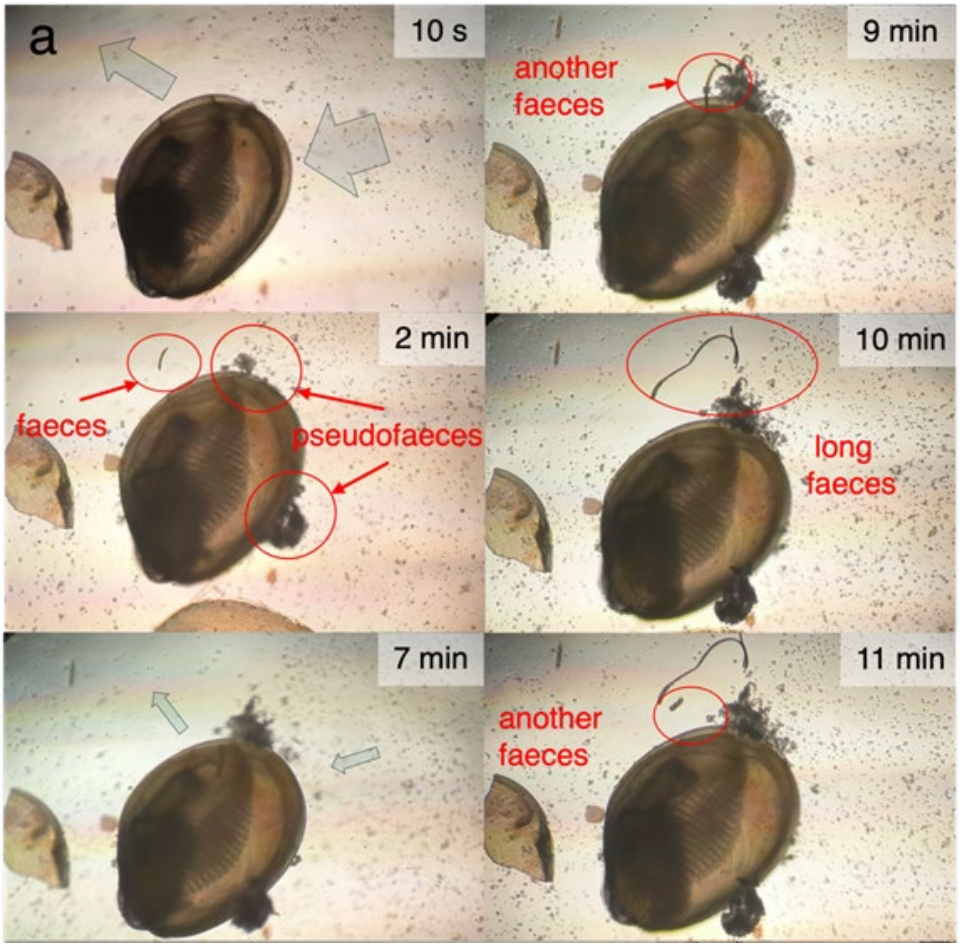
The current focus of our research is developing an off-the-shelf feed for spat – a bit like infant formula for spat. It is a significant challenge because the food needs to be stable on the shelf and when added to seawater. It can't dissolve or fall apart in seawater, it needs to be sufficiently buoyant to stay in the water column so spat can suck it in to consume it, and it needs to be in a very specific size range of particles for the spat to be able to catch it and swallow it, and once swallowed it needs to be easily digested.
Together, that is a lot of specifications, before we even get to ensuring that it contains all the nutrients the spat needs to grow fast!

We have now developed and tested a range of laboratory methods for fabricating artificial feeds for mussel spat, using a variety of ingredients that help to keep the food particles stable whether on the shelf or in seawater. Most of what we have made has proved totally useless.

But some of our artificial feeds are now facing the ultimate test – being fed to mussel spat. We do this by supplying spat with artificial feed in seawater and closely following the fate of the feed particles over time, to determine whether the spat will consume these particles and digest them to form faeces or spit them out quickly as pseudofaeces.

Using this approach we have now identified a small number of ways of fabricating artificial feeds that Greenshell™ mussel spat will reliably consume.
We will now proceed to use these artificial feeds to attempt to raise mussel spat to larger sizes in contained nursery systems, with a focus on identifying the food nutrients they need to maintain fast growth.

Greenshell Mussel Spat, *Perna canaliculus*



Picture: The same mussel spat surrounded by tiny artificial feed particles photographed at different times over 11 minutes. This spat filters out plenty of artificial feed particles, but many are rejected as clumps of pseudofaeces which begin appearing after two minutes. A smaller proportion of the particles are swallowed and processed through the gut, with the first faeces being produced after only two minutes

- Wenjie Wu, Maria Mugica, Andrew Jeffs – University of Auckland

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New research programme uses innovative strategies and technologies to help the fight against marine pests

A research programme to develop new strategies, tactics, and technologies for the eradication and management of marine pests has recently been awarded funding through the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) Endeavour Fund. "*Effective eradication: strategies, tactics, and technologies for successful marine invasion management*" will be led by Cawthron Institute and includes a cross-disciplinary team of experts from the University of Auckland, Canterbury University, Victoria University, Otago University, Patuharakeke Te Iwi Trust, The Smithsonian Environmental Research Institute (USA), and CSIRO (Australia). The programme will be undertaken across the next five years in close partnership with the Ministry of Primary Industries, regional councils, the Department of Conservation and the Environmental Protection Authority.

Invasive marine pests are a priority threat to Aotearoa New Zealand's coastal environments. They can damage and irreversibly alter the ecosystems we depend on for our identity, food, jobs, and recreation. These threats are escalating in a changing climate, and now more than ever, there is a need to front-foot effective defences to manage marine pests and limit their impacts. Developing effective strategies, tactics, technologies, and tools is the essential next step in managing an extensive legacy of pests and inevitable ongoing incursions.

The research programme will develop practical decision-making frameworks and strategies to deal with a range of marine pest management goals, including full eradication (nationwide extinction), extirpation (localised extinction), functional eradication (managing populations below unacceptable ecological impacts), and suppression (managing populations for cost:benefit). To develop these strategies and frameworks, researchers will use concepts from invasion ecology, bioeconomics, social science, and Mātauranga Māori, and also look at how previous responses to pest invasions have worked. Tools such as an *Incursion Response Simulator* and a *Spatial Triage Tool* will be created to guide decision-makers on how to best manage incursion responses and allocate resources for pest control. Researchers will also explore a suite of innovative marine pest control platform technologies to enable effective implementation of the strategies, including:

- Aquachemicals – selective marine pest control agents designed using medicinal chemistry
- Biogenic control – restoration of native keystone species to win territorial battles with pests
- 'Blue gene' drives – deleterious genes that self-spread throughout pest populations
- AI-enabled trapping – engineering and machine learning for pest detection and destruction
- Taputapu Moana – traditional practices applied by Māori to protect/enhance marine habitats

This research will have an immediate, real-world impact and address the growing need to take a more proactive approach to managing marine pests. Researchers will work closely with those involved in marine pest management to ensure that the new strategies and frameworks achieve the desired outcomes.

For more information, contact Patrick Cahill at **Patrick.Cahill@cawthron.org.nz**

- *Patrick Cahill, Cawthron Institute*


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Havelock Mussel Festival 2025

What a day! The 21st Havelock Mussel & Seafood Festival delivered big time, with crowds pouring in to celebrate all things seafood—rain or shine. From fresh, sizzling mussels to top-notch oysters, the festival was packed with flavour, live music, and good vibes. Even when the rain rolled in later in the day, the crowd didn't miss a beat, dancing and enjoying every minute of the entertainment, including crowd favourites The Black Seeds and Nadia Lim's kitchen magic on stage.

It was a big day for mussel-opening talent too, with DeokChan Kang from Talley's taking out the overall individual opening competition—part of the annual face-off between Talley's and Sanford crew.

DeokChan also took on the world record for opening 100 mussels and came impressively close, missing it by just four seconds!

And a shoutout to Mark Burnaby for winning the Mills Bay Mussels raw shucking competition.

As cornerstone sponsor, the Marine Farming Association was proud to once again host the MFA Industry Tent—home to 13 stallholders showcasing marine innovation, research, and community partnerships.

Thanks to everyone who stopped by and helped make this celebration of aquaculture such a success.


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Thanks for coming along! See you in 2026…

Photos by festival photographer – to see more head to:
https://www.facebook.com/musselfestival