

Limited fish for your chips

By Eloise Gibson

New Zealand's biggest commercial fish species has been given the tick of sustainability, despite one of its two stocks dwindling to less than 20 per cent of what it was in the late 1990s.

The hoki industry's sustainability rating was renewed last week for another five years, after a failed appeal by the Forest and Bird Society.

The renewal comes as Fisheries Minister Jim Anderton announced he was reducing the hoki quota by 10 per cent overall, and requesting the fishing industry to reduce its catch of dwindling west coast stock by nearly 50 per cent.

New Zealand hoki is one of only two large scale fisheries of white fish to carry the Marine Stewardship Council's sustainable tick, giving it preferred access to overseas buyers like Sainsbury's, Marks & Spencer and McDonald's.

But Forest and Bird says the certification was "shoddy" and sends the wrong message to the fishing industry.

The society appealed the decision by the London-based marine council to an independent review panel, after the fishery scraped in with a score just 0.01 per cent above the pass mark.

The panel agreed with Forest and Bird that hoki should have been given a lower score, saying it had been certified "by the skin of its teeth".

However, it could not overturn the marine council's decision because the appeal was limited to procedural issues.

Forest and Bird spokesperson Kevin Hackwell says the decision shows there are not enough checks and balances to stop "dodgy" decisions.

The marine council relies on assessors hired by the fishing companies to assess fisheries against the council's sustainability criteria.

"[The assessors'] client is the fisheries company, not the marine stewardship council," says Hackwell.

When the hoki fishery was assessed last year, the assessor reduced its scores on some criteria after hearing from Forest and Bird and the World Wildlife Fund.

However it then increased hoki's scores against other criteria to give it an overall pass, a decision Hackwell says was "suspicious".

Richard Wells, of the Deep Water Group of fishing companies, says the decision to certify hoki was fair.

"It passed. You could say only just, and that would be correct, but let's not forget the pass mark is 80 per cent."

Wells says Forest and Bird's view of sustainability is at "one end of the continuum", and it is up to the New Zealand Government to decide what sustainable means.

"Everyone's idea of what sustainable means is different."

"There will always be some who say [a fishery] is not sustainable."

But Hackwell says leaving it up to the Government is a "cop out", as the industry has chosen to seek a sustainable rating from the marine council and should meet its standards.

"We want them to have the certification, but it has to mean something."

Hoki stocks have declined drastically since the fishery was first certified by the marine council in 2001.

Hackwell says the catch has reduced from 250,000 tonnes in 2001 to about 80,000 tonnes, "and all while it has been certified as sustainable".

Of New Zealand's two fisheries, the west coast has declined more than the east. West coast stocks are now thought to be less than 20 per cent of late 1990s levels.

"We need to close down the west coast fishery or it will not recover," says Hackwell.

Wells says fishing companies are wor-

ried about declining stocks, but blames environmental conditions, not over-fishing for the drop.

He says the fishing industry has acted responsibly by complying with reduced hoki quotas.

"The industry has been prepared to accept quite draconian cuts because we recognise it is needed," he says.

"There has been a reasonably sudden change [in stocks]. So we need to back off the gas."

In July, big fishing companies Sealord, Aotearoa Fisheries and Sanford called for the hoki quota for 2007/08 to be cut to 80,000 tonnes from the current level of around 100,000 tonnes.

Hackwell says greed is to blame for falling stocks, and consumers need to be aware of what they are eating.

Forest and Bird publish a *Best Fish Guide* for consumers worried about sustainability, ranking fisheries from a sustainable 'green light' to the worst, 'red light' species.

There are currently no fisheries in the sustainable 'green light' category, but Hackwell says concerned consumers should eat fish from the top of the 'orange light' list, such as terakihi.

"I still enjoy terakihi on a Friday night," he says.

AUT rookies stun industry topdogs

By Lauradanna Radesic

Air New Zealand Fashion Week was the culmination of a year's hard work for AUT fashion and design students and launched their work to international acclaim.

Australian fashion bible *Karen* labelled the ROOKIE show as one of the highlights of this year's fashion week, and also proclaimed the student designs to be the best the writer had ever seen.

Mandy Smith, head of fashion and design at AUT, said this year's show was the best the school had ever put on.

"We've had some great feedback. People really enjoyed the show and I've had some of the country's top designers contact me to offer students work at the end of the year."

ROOKIE, now in its fifth year, provides students with industry contact and interest as well as inspiration for future careers.

This year's garments were well made, consisted of good designs and had plenty of interesting cuts, said Smith.

Annabel McAleer, communications manager for the Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies said the show went off without a hitch.

McAleer said the ROOKIE show is a coup for AUT because it generates realistic industry experience for the students.

For student Rebecca Spratt, being a part of ROOKIE was an amazing experience.

"It went really well. It's great to be able to get your name out there and get recognised. It offered an opportunity that other design schools didn't get," she said.

Grace Min, another student who debuted her designs, felt honoured they were chosen to appear at fashion week.

Although the lead-up was hectic, Min said seeing her designs strutted down the catwalk made the whole process worthwhile.

"Having people see your work for the first time was an amazing experience. My friends and family were so proud of me."

One guest who was particularly impressed was Virginia Brown, fashion and beauty editor for *Crème* magazine.

As an ex-AUT fashion and design student, Brown's own designs featured in the ROOKIE show three years ago.

"ROOKIE has come a long way since I participated. The designs were more cutting edge, more modern, and the workmanship looked impeccable."



PHOTO: JAMES LITTLE

ROOKIE: AUT University fashion and design students' work was modelled at the Air New Zealand Fashion Week. Grace Min's designs are featured above. See pages 12-13 for more on the AUT ROOKIE show.

Iconic K'Rd cafe closing

By Justin Henehan

Café Brazil on Karangahape Rd has been party to many of Auckland's growing pains during its 12 years in business.

A hangout for cycle couriers, students, artists, local workers and K'Rd regulars, Brazil has been a haven away from the tumult of the city, but is set to serve its last coffee.

On September 30 the iconic Karangahape Rd café, situated in the Norman Ng building, will close permanently.

In 1995, brothers Simon and Dominic Taylor and Ben Harris (who left in 1997) opened Brazil as a "place to just serve great coffee".

Over time it became a community, says Dominic Taylor.

Taylor's partner Lili Ahken has been involved in the day-to-day running of Brazil from its inception.

Many people made best friends at Brazil and it has become part of Karangahape Rd, she says.

"It's seen a lot in its time, like Auckland's power crisis - we had generators running the coffee machine and tea-candles all through the café."

Brazil has also been the site and subject of many creative projects, from music videos, to theatre performances, to architecture studies. "We even had a fashion show once," says Ahken.

Jamie Ritchie was a cycle courier when Brazil opened 12 years ago and has been a regular ever since.

"I'm really gutted. I don't know where else I'm going to get coffee that good and strong. No one else's coffee even comes close and it's the only place that plays decent music."

Ritchie says Brazil was an icon and its closing will take something away from the feel of K'Rd.

For a number of years the brothers ran a coffee roasting business from the café basement.

The roasting machine was a feat of creative improvisation, says Taylor.

"It was real fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants stuff operating that machine."

"Once the fire department had to come out: We thought they were going to shut us down, but the guy just said I think you can get that going again."

But for Taylor, Brazil has done its dash.

"I think we're done with the hospitality industry. Hospitality is a finite thing - you can only do it for so long."

Each of the current owners has their own reasons for closing Brazil, but agree if they can't give 100 per cent, they would rather it came to an end.

Brazil was named after former Python Terry Gilliam's 1985 film set in a stylized Orwellian future.

Correction

In issue 19 of *Te Waha Nui* an article headlined "Native bush flourishing on island, thanks to volunteers" spelt Lawrence Thoms' surname Thomas. *Te Waha Nui* apologises for the mistake.