

From: MDC
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To: monitoring
Subject: FW: NZKS - Annual Seal Report 2020
Attachments: NZKS Annual Seal Report 2020.pdf

From: Aine O'Neill [mailto:aine.o'neill@kingsalmon.co.nz]
Sent: Thursday, 25 March 2021 11:01 AM
Subject: NZKS - Annual Seal Report 2020

Good Morning,

Please see the attached New Zealand King Salmon Annual Seal report for 2020.

Regards,

Aine

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Annual Seal Report – 2020

Introduction

The New Zealand King Salmon Co. Limited (NZKS) currently has nine salmon farms (11 sites) in the Marlborough Sounds:

Pelorus Sound fallow.	Forsyth Bay, Waihinau Bay, Waitata, Kopāua (Richmond) & Crail Bay x 2
Queen Charlotte	Ruakaka Bay & Otanerau Bay
Tory Channel	Te Pangu Bay, Clay Point & Ngamahau

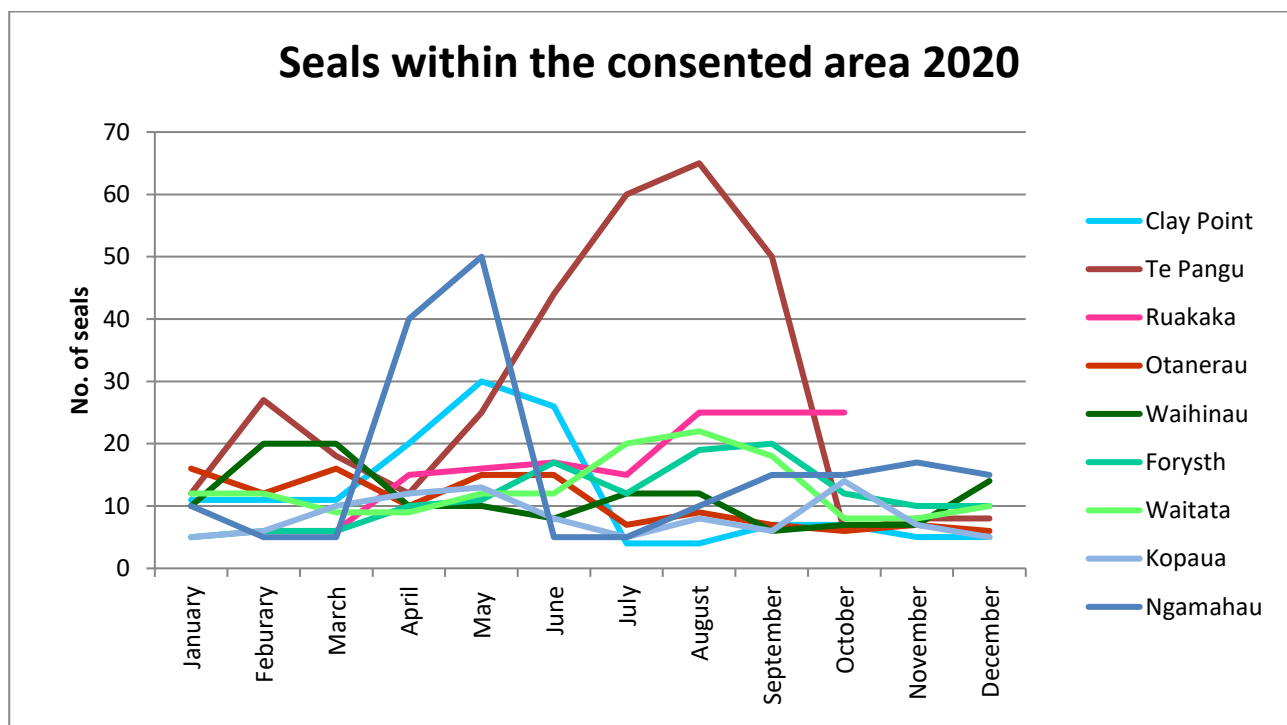
Statutory Requirements

NZKS as the resource consent holder for all the farms listed above has overall responsibility for ensuring that all statutory requirements of the resource consent conditions are complied with and that all activities carried out at the farms occurs in accordance with the NZKS Marine Mammal and Shark Management Plan, and NZKS permit to 'take' marine mammals as issued by DOC, dated 20 June, 2014.

Numbers and Trends

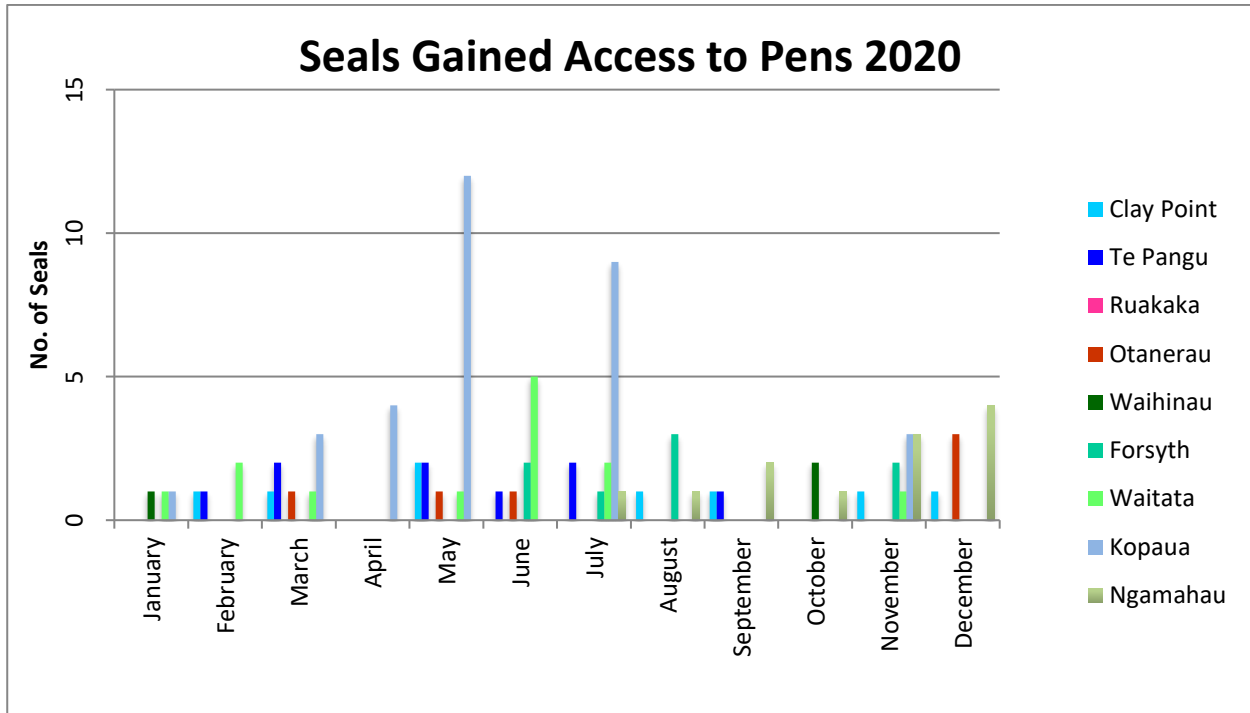
The main source of information has been weekly management reports & Fish Talk reports for the period January to December 2020, all data recorded moved to FishTalk in July 2020.

Bellow is a chart showing the seals within the consented areas for the farms in 2020.



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Below is a graph detailing the number of seals that were able to gain access into fish pens in 2020



Seal behaviour

Clay Point: The deterioration of the prednet continued to cause problems and the number of seals increased until the harvest was completed at the end of June. After this, the prednet was replaced in August and this new network is made of stronger materials. Until now the presence of seals has been minimal, with the occasional entry of one or two, easily removed with the use of the trap using approved methods in the seal permit.

Te Pangu: The deterioration of the prednet caused problems and the number of seals increased until the harvest was completed at the end of September. After this, the prednet was replaced and this new network is made of stronger materials. So far the farm remains seal free.

Ruakaka: New predator net put on the farm at the start of 2020. We had minimal entries into the pens during this time and when we did it was after a storm which caused a surface hole near the mooring points. Regular monthly diving ensures that we find these holes in a timely manner. We have a few seals around the farm but none are actively seeking entry.

Otanerau: Old predator net at Otanerau. We dived regularly to make sure net was hole free, we had minimal entries in 2020. When we did it was from northerly storms which caused surface holes around the mooring points. There are very few seals present at Otanerau all year.

Waihinau: Seal entries were very low through the cycle due in-part to increased checks on the nets. There was one seal death in the farm in March. In this incident the farm team spent many hours using various techniques to try and remove the seal from the farm without success. Unfortunately the seal died while in the farm - DOC was informed and a report was sent through.

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Forsyth: The farm was moved within its licence in the middle of the year. During this move there was a significant tear made to the net which allowed many seals to enter the farm. The team worked hard to remove the seals from the farm. However, one seal would not leave despite extensive efforts from the team. Unfortunately, this animal died. A report detailing this event was sent through to DOC. Outside of this event there were very few interactions with seals in the farm. Regular checks by the teams were successful in finding holes before the seals did.

Waitata: Seal entries were reduced during the cycle. The new net installed in late 2019 has been successful. The increased strength in the top areas of the net resulted in fewer holes. The altered shape of the net reduced interaction between seals and the livestock through the nets. While there were seal entries to the farm, the reduction in numbers at our highest flow site was a success.

Kopāua: The impact of seals was reduced this year due to improvements in defences and increased checks of the net. Seals were still able to enter the farm, however, each time the entry points were located and the seals removed from the farm. There was an extension to the farm in the middle of the year. At this point there was a large influx of seals into the farms and they were able to access the pens. The team got on top of the situation and after that there were relatively few incidents. The improvements made were an increased focus on checks of the top five metres of the predator net where much of the damage had been found. These weekly checks were relatively successful in finding holes before the seals did thus reducing the entries by seals into the farm.

Ngamahau: At the beginning of the year the seals weren't a problem, but since July, when the tides generated mechanical damage to the prednet, making holes, the entrance of the seals increased. Routine maintenance diving has managed to keep the number of seals at acceptable levels. Fish losses and impacts:

Fish losses during the period due to seals are detailed in the table below.

	Clay Point	Te Pangu	Ruakaka	Otanerau	Waihinau	Forsyth	Waitata	Kopāua	Ngamahau
2020	2116	6974			2038	2190	1602	2301	8475
2019	3649	1959	399	51	832	41	7976	4045	8743
2018	3546	1757	554	89	3896	0	10063	1097	17547
2017	9080	3037	1713	632	2594	0	13714	1347	7575
2016	3767	2317	152	5427					6160
2015	2066	2975	503	193					3
2014	2583	2826	684	1268					
2013	1251	2077	3370	0					
2012	149	1541	0	0					

Fatalities

Forsyth: 29-Sep-20. Seal found dead floating in the farm. The Seal was in the farm and would not leave despite repeated efforts from the team to remove it.

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Waihinau: 11-Mar-20. Seal located deceased at the bottom of the predator net. Numerous attempts were made to evict the seal which were unfortunately unsuccessful.

Ngamahau: 30-Apr-20. In a routine morning check, a drowned seal was found caught in the predator net about 2 to 2,5 meters deep, outside of the farming complex. There was no hole in the predator net. It was a small seal and had pushed his head through the 100mm x 100mm predator net.

Defences and way forward

The daily procedure to check the net from above the water level will continue. There will also be monthly visual checks made below the water level. In-water cleaning of the predator net continues to maintain water flow and also identifies any potential entry points and ensures the longevity of the nets. This significantly reduces the interaction between NZKS personnel and the seals.

The nets at the farms are going to be changed out as per new all-in-all out or single year class policy.

Tory Channel Region: The nets are made of a new, stronger material which is showing significant improvements at Ngamahau and Clay Point.

Queen Charlotte Sound Region:

Pelorus Sound Region: The stronger mesh used in the areas closest to the surface of the net have been successful in reducing Seal entries. These modifications will be made to nets to be installed in 2021. This combined with more frequent checks of nets should further reduce Seal entries into the farms.

Shark interactions

Pelorus Sound Region: There were no shark incidents or interactions in 2020.

Dolphin interactions

Pelorus Sound Region: No incidents in 2020.