

# Salmon Tales

Summer  
2021



New Zealand  
King Salmon

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## Omega Innovations in the running for environment award



The Cawthron Marlborough Environment Awards are held every two years to showcase businesses or community projects in the region which are good for the environment.

Our Omega Innovations team are being considered for an award in the Business Innovation category for their work in maximising the potential of remaining raw materials and the development of the Omega Plus pet food brand.

Judges visited our Nelson processing facility and were impressed with the Omega team's spirit of innovation, collaborative efforts, team culture and forward thinking.

Winners will be announced at an awards dinner held in Blenheim in April.

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If you have pictures you would like to share, suggestions for content, general feedback or you'd like to subscribe please email us at [salmontales@kingsalmon.co.nz](mailto:salmontales@kingsalmon.co.nz)

## DID YOU KNOW?



347

LOCAL  
SHAREHOLDERS

.....

AVERAGE  
HARVEST  
SIZE

4KG



## SNIPPETS



### HAVELOCK SEAFOOD & MUSSEL FESTIVAL

This year's Havelock Seafood & Mussel Festival is set to take place on Saturday 13 March. Seawater Manager Mark Preece will be giving filleting demonstrations in the culinary tent while our team will be cooking up barbecued and hot-smoked salmon tacos, with proceeds going to the Graeme Dingle Foundation. Tickets are available at [www.havelockmusselfestival.co.nz](http://www.havelockmusselfestival.co.nz)



### OMEGA PLUS TV AD WINS AWARDS

Our Omega Plus team have received two AVA Digital awards for their innovative TV ad created during lockdown last year. Plans to film on location were cancelled due to restrictions and instead digital cartoon characters were created to use alongside existing footage. The ad was put together remotely with everyone working from home. The AVA awards honour excellence in digital creativity and branding.



### HOME COOK BUYS 15.3kg TYEE

Robert Palmer of Orlando, Florida, recently bought one of our largest ever premium Ōra King Tye salmon via US online store Goldbelly for \$1700. Robert said he was a "lifetime fan" of Ōra King Salmon, having seen the fish "praised by top chefs". He described the fish produced in Takaka as "beautiful". "We started eating it right away, as sashimi, sushi and grilled." Tye are a rare variety of King salmon, weighing no less than 30 pounds. The name Tye means 'Chief' in the local language of British Columbia where they were originally found.

# DANNIELLE FRIEND

SKIPPER AND NET CLEANING  
OPERATOR

**Net Cleaning Operator and Skipper of net cleaning vessel, Manuka, Dannielle Friend, has been with New Zealand King Salmon for nearly two years and is loving it.**

Dannielle is on a seven on seven off shift rotation, working roughly 10 hours a day, travelling from farm to farm cleaning net pens and coordinating with other shifties and NZKS team members.

No two days are the same and challenges do arise Danielle says.

"If it's a grow net that we're cleaning, there's quite a lot of things we need to do to be able to enter the net. If it's a predator net, then we park up and put the robot over the side. On a rough day we can get stuck and may need help from a diver."

Before her career with NZKS, Dannielle worked on the deep-sea fishing trawlers. She studied her skipper's ticket in 2016 but was determined to break free from the stereotype of female skippers in the maritime industry.

"There are still a lot of people out there who believe a female's job isn't to be driving a boat. My female friends who are skippers, most of them work in tourism. Aquaculture is a really nice break from that expectation. It's a completely different industry to get into and I'm enjoying it a lot."

Dannielle says her career highlights as a skipper include the qualifications she's achieved along the way.

"I think I've done pretty well so far - I've done two maritime audits in my time working on vessels and I feel I nailed both of them."

But Dannielle says there have been things she's had to overcome to get where she is today.

"Being a female working as a skipper has meant working with older generation males who believe I shouldn't be behind the wheel of a boat. A lot of people have tried to stand in the way of me getting to where I wanted to be. But I surpassed them," she laughs.

"When I was 17, I was told I would never work on a boat again. I had Carpal Tunnel in both of my wrists and doctors said no more boats, you'll never skipper, but I showed them all. I wasn't going to let that stop me."

Dannielle loves what she does and says working is one of her hobbies.

"I honestly love being in the Pelorus, the relationships we have with the farm teams as net cleaners is pretty great. It's a very friendly vibe and it's really cool to get along with everyone so well. We're just one big family from all walks of life."

"During my off shift I like doing walks and spending time with family whenever I can. I'm currently learning how to garden," she laughs. "I also recently bought a house in Havelock, so that's keeping me busy."

To all females hoping to get involved in the maritime or aquaculture industry Dannielle says to just get out there and give it a go.

"Don't let anyone get in your way because there will always be people like that, but there are also a lot of people that will help you. I've found that working for New Zealand King Salmon everyone wants to help you, it's awesome! It's just about finding those right people."





# IAN 'BLUE' WALKER

HATCHERY OPERATOR, TENTBURN

**Ian 'Blue' Walker has been working at Tentburn Hatchery for nearly 30 years and there's no sign of him stopping anytime soon. He's a great grandfather and still plays golden oldies rugby.**

It's often asked what's in a name. Well, quite a lot if you are Bluey or Blue from Tentburn. The irony is not lost on Blue when he says his mum christened him Ian so his name didn't get shortened. He got his nickname when he started work as an apprentice carpenter. "I was a redhead and was called Ginge at school but at work I was called Blue which is a common thing for a redhead to be called."

The 79 year old began his career at NZKS on November 7, 1991. He'd been made redundant from his job as a maintenance carpenter at Burnham Military Camp outside Christchurch and found himself at Tentburn where they were doing ocean ranching (raising smolt and releasing at sea).

"The company deemed it wasn't successful so they were waiting for someone to buy it or takeover and they wanted someone to clean the raceways a couple of days a week. I came along and have been here ever since," Blue says.

"Regal Salmon took over the company and they had a sea farm off Stewart Island so we were carting smolt down to Bluff. We loaded the smolt on to barges and took them out to the farm in Big Glory Bay. That then became unprofitable because of the cost of transportation and boats."

New Zealand King Salmon company was formed after the merger of Regal Salmon and Southern Ocean in 1996, which is when smolt started to be transported to the farms in Marlborough Sounds.

"I did the transport up to the Sounds. In those days you had to fill up the tank yourself and then drive the truck on to a barge and went

to Te Pangu with the fish. I spent a week at Te Pangu just to learn about the sea farms. I loved it there as I love fishing, love the sea."

Blue works at Tentburn two days a week, cleaning raceways and using his skills as a carpenter and builder for maintenance work. "If they are short of someone I'll come in. I never turn them down if they want me to come in. I love it, I love the environment. Walking around and looking at fish swimming in the water, feeding and seeing them living and growing. I never got bored here. The company used my skills as a carpenter and builder for maintenance work and I still do that now."

Outside of work Blue's passion is gardening. He has a large veggie garden, growing potatoes, carrots, onions, pumpkins and tomatoes. "I lost my wife but I still have the same size garden because if I don't put veg in, weeds will grow," says Blue.

Not only has Blue got green fingers but he would put most of us to shame with his fitness regime. "I'm still playing golden oldies rugby – if I didn't do that I wouldn't get out and do the exercise and any running. I love it and there is a social side to it. It makes sure I get out instead of sitting at home by myself and it keeps me in good nick."

Blue was born in Christchurch and his father shifted the family out to the area around 1950. "I can't say I'm a local yet," he jokes. "Mind you, I soon will be as no one will be older than me!"

Asked about his colleagues at Tentburn, Blue says they are a good bunch to work with. "They are quite jovial and respect or like me for whatever reason."





# SMOLT HELPING TO FEED NATIVE BLUE PENGUINS

A recent donation of nutritious salmon smolt is helping the rehabilitation of resident Blue Penguins at the New Zealand Bird Rescue Charitable Trust in Green Bay, near Auckland.

The Trust is run by a team of passionate staff and volunteers who take in injured or sick birds brought to them by the public and nurse them back to health, before returning them to the wild. They help more than 6000 birds per year, both native and non-native.

“New Zealand is a pretty awesome place in terms of its species, we have a huge range of birds that benefit from our rehabilitation centre”, says Dr Lynn Miller, General Manager of the Trust.

“We have a lot of seabirds come through here. Auckland is actually the seabird crossing capital of the world. There are more seabirds converging through the region than anywhere else in the world.” The centre see large numbers of Albatross, Shearwaters, Kereru, Petrels, and of course Penguins.

“About a third of our patients end up with us because of an interaction with a cat. Sometimes we have orphaned chicks after Mum has been killed on the road and we often see birds coming in with hooks in them.”

Thankfully the rehabilitation centre have three veterinarians on the team and each bird is thoroughly checked over at their clinic on arrival. “If you can stabilise the birds you actually have a very much higher rate of turn around for them”, says Dr Miller.

Birds are then taken care of by the team of up to 80 volunteers at the centre which covers six hectares, two thirds of which is native bush. “We are incredibly lucky to have a clinic where we can do minor surgeries, as well as a general ward, a kitchen and a laundry because as you can imagine, what goes in one end also comes out the other! We have two nurseries, one for natives and one for non-natives, as well as a seabird unit. We are currently doing a fundraising activity to

build a dedicated seabird enclosure for the penguins so they have a big pool, and that will be completed in the next six months.”

The centre rely on donations from the public to help provide food and supplies for the birds. “As you can imagine, we’re always looking for ways to ensure that the quality of food we can offer our patients is the best we can get. But of course, sometimes the cost is somewhat prohibitive, and our budgets are very narrow. So being given such an incredible opportunity to get hold of such high quality salmon was just stunning. It’s amazing, and we are so grateful to NZKS,” says Dr Miller.

While some birds are able to eat smolt as they come, others need a bit more help. “We can also blend the salmon up and it makes an incredibly nutrient-rich slurry which is great for birds who might be struggling to eat but really do benefit from a fish-based diet.”

Recently one particular native Blue Penguin has been making quite an impression. “Learning about these little characters has just been incredible, they are hilarious. So this little guy has to stay with us for a while and we noticed he keeps coming over and asking to have a swim in the big pool. He’s chatting to you the whole time, it’s like, ‘come on, hurry up, hurry up!’ Your heart goes out to these guys, they’re just coping with a situation they didn’t choose. So he brings us a lot of joy, and he’s looking pretty amazing.”

## How to get involved

The Trust have a wishlist of items which the public can donate to help support their patients including dry kitten food, chicken feed and eggs, mixed vegetables and fruit and old newspapers. You can also volunteer or donate, for more information please visit [www.birdrescue.org.nz](http://www.birdrescue.org.nz)

# Regal win four Best Taste Awards

The prestigious International Taste Institute, based in Brussels, has awarded Superior Taste Awards to four different Regal Marlborough Salmon products.

The Superior Taste Award is the most renowned independent certification worldwide, so not only is this a huge achievement, but this recognition confirms the positive feedback we've been receiving from customers and food fans.

The Taste Awards are given after blind tasting evaluations by a jury of 200 professional food and beverage experts. This includes sommeliers and chefs heading Michelin-starred restaurants from over 20 countries.

The product is then judged on how good its organoleptic – or sensory – qualities are for a consumer product in its category. The judging criteria includes first impression, vision, smell, taste and texture.

So how did we do? Outstanding! The 4 honoured products are:

- Double Manuka Wood Roasted King Salmon \* \* \*
- Beech Wood Roasted King Salmon \* \* \*
- Manuka Wood Cold Smoked Salmon \* \* \*
- Beech Wood Cold Smoked Salmon \* \*



## Ōra King documentary to launch in May

Our Brands and Sustainability team have been busy creating a documentary to showcase the incredible work that goes into producing our world-famous Ōra King salmon for chefs around the world.

This beautifully shot 45-minute feature will follow the lifecycle of an Ōra King salmon, from egg to plate, and will include interviews with a number of NZKS team members from Takaka, Nelson, Tentburn, Picton and the Marlborough Sounds, as well as high-profile chefs and key industry players.

“With global travel restrictions in place for the foreseeable future, we saw an opportunity to bring our Ōra King story to the world without the need to travel to New Zealand”, said Lauren Ellis, Ōra King Global Brand Manager. “This is a chance for us to provide an insight into the care and effort we put in to produce our premium salmon and to highlight the people behind our brand who put their heart and soul into creating a product New Zealand can be proud of.”

The team are working with local agency Lumiere to shoot and produce the documentary and filming got underway in November 2020. “It’s been incredible to work with so many different people around the business to create this story and we can’t wait to show it to the world.”

The documentary is set to launch at screening events in New Zealand and around the world throughout May.





INTERVIEW

# JULIEN STEVENS

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER  
OMEGA INNOVATIONS



**Julien came to New Zealand King Salmon all the way from Hawaii, where he was working as a Research and Developer for marine novel species. Julien's passions include fish, his family, marine science, sustainability, mountain biking, and canyoning, which "basically just involves hiking into remote canyons and dropping into their waterfalls."**

Born in Canada, growing up in South Carolina and then moving to Hawaii when he was just 17, Julien studied a Bachelor of Marine Science only to relocate to Scotland to do a masters in Aquaculture. It was during his time in Scotland that he completed an industry wide research project into raw materials - and from there sparked his passion for "using the whole fish."

"The heads, the frames, it's usually 50% of the whole fish that is thrown away... you put in all that effort and energy and time, so you should use the entire thing."

Having lived all over the world - the United States, Canada, Mexico, Australia and Scotland - Julien came to New Zealand not for the epic canyoning spots, but to work for New Zealand King Salmon.

"As a company, they work really hard to build a brand and utilise their product. This is one of the few places where financials and environmental really match up around food waste."

Julien began his NZKS career as a net cleaning team leader in Picton. This involved coordinating a team of skippers, deckhands and net cleaning operators. He did this for just under a year before moving

into his current role as Research and Development Manager for Omega Innovations, a team dedicated to managing remaining raw materials.

Julien says he hasn't had a single day that's been like another.

"The job is quite varied. Yesterday I was down in processing taking salmon frames and chopping them up for a particular trial, and shortly I'll be taking some clients out to the farms to show them where we produce our fish and what we're about as a company."

Although Julien was proud to be a part of the net cleaning team in Picton, he says he's loving his role with Omega Innovations.

"I really enjoy working with the team. They're so passionate about what they do, they've put a lot of work into making it what it is so far."

When he's not discovering new ways to utilise the different parts of a salmon, Julien can be found exploring Nelson's forests on his mountain bike or climbing his way into a canyon.

"I started out canyoning in the blue mountains of Australia, then I got involved here in New Zealand. In Europe and Asia, a lot of canyons have been run, but in New Zealand there are spaces where people have never been. To know that you're walking through a space that no one has ever been in before, it's really quite amazing."

Julien says he's looking forward to his future with Omega Innovations.

"This is my passion, researching into new technologies and new methods of using more of our fish, maximising the remaining raw materials that we have, I love it!"



# Maritime Festival draws thousands to Picton foreshore

The popular Picton Maritime Festival was on again in January, attracting crowds with live entertainment and an array of local food and drink.

Now in its 16th year, this family-favourite event runs over two days and has something for everyone, from raft building competitions and bouncy castles to live music and Kapa Haka performances.

NZKS Seawater Manager Mark Preece gave salmon filleting and pin-boning demonstrations to locals throughout the day while members of the NZKS team were on the barbecue creating salmon tacos, with all proceeds going to the Picton School Pasifika Group.

"We're really grateful to New Zealand King Salmon as an elite sponsor of the event", said Beryl Bowers, festival organiser. "This year the NZKS sponsorship went towards MC Scott Radovanovich, who did a fantastic job. It's great to see locals supporting locals."



## Spotlight on Koru Native Wildlife Centre

Based in the Marlborough Sounds, the Koru Native Wildlife Centre specialise in breeding and housing some of New Zealand's more uncommonly found and threatened native species.

For the past 20 years, Brian and Ellen Plaisier have been passionate advocates for native animals and through several projects have restored 80 hectares of land in the Marlborough Sounds into a wildlife sanctuary. The Plaisiers offer personal guided tours through the Koru Wildlife Centre's specially-built enclosures where visitors can learn about native animals and the efforts to restore their natural habitats.

Currently home to Yellow Crowned Kākāriki, Giant Weta and Marlborough Green Geckos, the animals bred at Koru Native Wildlife Centre are eventually released into carefully chosen wild areas, permitted by the Department of Conservation, where extensive pest management and control has taken place to give them a greater chance of survival. We are proud to be key sponsors of this project in our community.

To find out more or to make an appointment for a tour, visit [www.koruwildlife.nz](http://www.koruwildlife.nz)