



Media Release

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Moana New Zealand stepping outside its boundaries to ensure biodiversity

Working on the very edge of Northland's east coast with sand and sea only metres away is both a necessity and an absolute treat for staff at New Zealand's only commercial pāua farm, Moana New Zealand – blue abalone. However, it also means extra care needs to be taken too.

Scientist Lynette Suvalko says that in all its operations, Moana works to minimise its environmental footprint, and taking on the care and restoration of the dunes in front of the Moana site in Bream Bay is a key part of that.

"It's literally our backyard, the sand dunes are right outside our offices and lunchroom on the NIWA Bream Bay Aquaculture Park. They're so important because not only are they part of the natural character of the coastal environment, but they play a huge role in maintaining coastal water quality, and provide the land with protection," she says.

Lynette took the initiative and contacted Northland Regional Council (NRC) to find out if Moana could take ownership of the care of the foreshore. The land is owned by the Crown and managed by the Department of Conservation, and the NRC Environmental Assets Division has come up with a plan for restoration and to improve biodiversity. Local iwi, Patukarakeke is very supportive of such initiatives.

That largely consist of cultivating and planting native species and weeding out exotic species to create an environment that is more hospitable for species such as the endangered Fairy Tern, which are moving further afield from the traditional nesting site at Ruakaka.

The first of what are planned to be monthly working bees was held last week, with both Moana and NIWA staff involved, with the intention to work on small areas at a time and monitor the effect to ensure a long term positive outcome, says Lynette.

She is a member of Moana New Zealand's Sustainability Working Group, which meets every two months to come up with initiatives that further its sustainability journey across the business.

“It’s been really inspiring to be part of the group. Our team have been so supportive of any changes, because they see that it’s not just that we’re sustainable in how we farm, but how we operate, and how we care for our community and the environment,” she says.

Moana New Zealand – blue abalone is also working towards its Aquaculture Stewardship Council certification to meet the toughest global standards for responsible aquaculture. It aims to go through the auditing process later this year and if successful, will be the fourth abalone farm in the world to achieve certification.

In the meantime it is documenting existing processes that already meet the best environmental and social aquaculture standards, and putting in place others to ensure it is meeting best practice in this area and gains certification.

Already Moana’s farmed blue abalone is 100 per cent sustainable in that it spawns abalone, preserving wild brood stock for its equally sustainable wild abalone operation. The majority of production is also through a circulation system and it is self-sustaining in terms of how the abalone are cared for.

In addition, Moana’s blue abalone is traceable as a result of a breeding programme that can tell which trays they’ve been in from when they are spawned to growing them into spats and edible abalone. It’s not only a key part of a sustainable operation, it’s increasingly important in international markets.

“Our business is built on natural resources and people, and sustainability is at the heart of what we do both out in the environment and in our own operations. Our values of whakatipuranga and kaitiakitanga – of being true to nature and to future generations – are the essence of our efforts in this area,” says Moana New Zealand Chief Executive Carl Carrington.

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About Moana New Zealand

Moana New Zealand has been built through the collective efforts of many and is the country’s largest Iwi-owned fishing company. Iwi are the true guardians of the world’s most pristine and sustainably managed fisheries. Moana New Zealand has a deep sense of responsibility to all people and respect for kaimoana, and is dedicated to contributing to the wellbeing of future generations. It connects the world to the true taste and rare magic of New Zealand’s best kaimoana.