**Seafood Sustainability Award finalists leading the way**

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Leaders in seafood sustainability have been recognised in the Seafood Sustainability Awards, which announced its finalists today.

"Everyone has a part to play in ensuring the sustainability of New Zealand's kaimoana. These awards are a chance to recognise the innovation, commitment and excellence of a group of people from across the community who are leading the way," says deputy director-general of Fisheries New Zealand, Dan Bolger.

"They have been selected by an independent judging panel including representatives from commercial, recreational, and customary fisheries sectors as well as aquaculture and environmental NGOs [non-government organisations].

"The finalists are shining examples of those throughout tangata whenua, industry, and communities who contribute to the long-term sustainability of New Zealand's seafood sector and ensure that our oceans are resilient, healthy and bountiful for future generations," says Mr Bolger.

Judging panel chair and WWF-New Zealand chief executive, Livia Esterhazy, says the finalists represent an exciting and diverse range of individuals, teams, businesses, research organisations, iwi, schools and communities who contribute to the long-term health and sustainable use of our moana.

"Every single life in Aotearoa is connected to our ocean. In fact, we all depend on a healthy ocean for our survival. So, a sustainable seafood sector is essential.

"The quality of the entrants has made it a challenge for the judging panel to select the finalists. We are inspired by the calibre of people who are putting in the hard mahi to ensure we can protect, restore, and sustain our ocean.

"We congratulate all of the finalists announced today, and commend every entrant for their dedication to the sustainability of New Zealand's seafood sector," says Ms Esterhazy.

Minister of Fisheries Stuart Nash launched the inaugural Seafood Sustainability Awards to recognise those who actively work towards the innovation and sustainability across the seafood sector. All award winners will be announced at the awards' dinner in Wellington on 18 March 2020.

**NZ Seafood Sustainability Award finalists 2020**

**Operational Innovation Award**

* CRA8 Rock Lobster Industry Association Inc
* Precision Seafood Harvesting
* Richard Wells – Resource Wise

**The Lee-Fish Limited Award for Market Innovation and Value Added**

* Awatoru Enterprises Ltd.
* Better Fishing
* Gravity Fishing
* The New Zealand King Salmon Co Ltd.

**Kaitiakitanga Award**

* CRA8 Rock Lobster Industry Association Inc
* Aaron McCloy – Papa Taiao Earthcare
* Richard Wells – Resource Wise
* Scott and Sue Tindale

**Emerging Leader Award**

* Josh Wyber – High Country Salmon
* Maegen Blom – Mills Bay Mussels
* Nate Smith – Gravity Fishing

The finalists of the Supreme Sustainability Award and Minister of Fisheries’ Award are confidential and the winners will be announced on the evening.