

Ministry to open new office in fishing hot spot

The Ministry of Fisheries announced today that it will be opening a new office in Kaikoura later this year.

The new office, to be up and running in time for the next busy summer fishing season, will have two full-time Fishery Officers permanently located in the town supported by between eight and 10 Honorary Fishery Officers. Many high-profile local residents have expressed their support for the initiative.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister Phil Heatley said he was confident the Ministry's presence in Kaikoura would lead directly to more effective surveillance and deterrence of would-be fish thieves in what was a unique and valuable coastal environment.

"Last year the government announced a Budget boost to Fishery Officer numbers. The new office will be established as part of this front-line initiative," he said.

Ministry of Fisheries Chief Executive Wayne McNee said the Ministry had been monitoring the changing fishing patterns around Kaikoura over the last two years and increased activity had led to this decision.

"This move aims to address the changing profile of an important area which has become a magnet for tourists, recreational fishers – and also unfortunately fish thieves," he said.

There has not been a permanent Ministry of Fisheries presence in Kaikoura for over 20 years, with coverage having been provided by staff from Blenheim and Nelson. This is the first new Ministry office to be opened for several years – the last was in Blenheim in December 2003.

"Fishery Officers can't do it all on their own," said Mr Heatley. "I encourage members of the public to remain vigilant as they have been throughout the summer with the Every Fish Counts campaign. Don't hesitate to call 0800 4 POACHER if you suspect illegal activity in Kaikoura or in any of our other favourite fishing spots."

More information

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