

Fishing Companies Launch New Vessel Monitoring System [\(+ VIDEO\)](#)



Image: A new dawn for commercial fishers with in-shore vessels like Sanford's Ana being fitted with a Vessel Monitoring System.

Video: North Island fishers are being watched like never before and they're embracing the idea.

Fishing companies, [Aotearoa Fisheries](#), [Sanford](#) and [Leigh Fish](#) are stepping up their efforts to bring greater transparency into the inshore fleet. They are some of the first companies to commit to fitting vessel monitoring systems (VMS) on all trawlers within their fleets operating on the east coast of the North Island from the Far North to the bottom of the Bay of Plenty.

This voluntary action will see vessels catching more than five tonnes of snapper annually having VMS fitted before October this year and these companies are not mucking around, the installation has already begun.

Knowing where fish are being caught is an integral part of sustainable fisheries management.

Aotearoa Fisheries CEO Carl Carrington says "We are absolutely committed to a sustainably managed fishery and we need to dispel the myths about what happens on the water. It makes no sense for us to be doing anything on the water that compromises the long term health of the fish stocks. So having this technology on the boats gives everybody confidence that what is happening, is what we say is happening".

The VMS units are a little bit like a sat nav system in a car. They send back data, 24/7 which can be monitored by the vessel owner, [Ministry for Primary Industries](#) and fisheries research company, Trident Systems. Trident's role is to efficiently gather data and information that can be used to more effectively manage fish stocks.

Darren Guard, FishEye Project Manager from [Trident Systems](#) says "We'll be able to gather plenty of information that will help us understand the status of stocks so we can react quickly where there are fluctuations or downturns. It gives us the ability to make better decisions, so it makes VMS a very proactive fisheries management tool."

Recently, skipper Steve Lines welcomed the installation of VMS on his Danish seine vessel da Vinci. He says “technology is a good thing, if you don’t keep up you fall behind. It’s as simple as that.”

This project is being co-funded by quota owners and vessel owners, and the investment is significant.

Sanford CEO, Volker Kuntzsch says “What we want to create is transparency. We have a lot invested in our vessels, inshore and off shore and we need to ensure that we’ve got a profitable return on those so there’s nothing more important for us than having a healthy fishery. A lot of effort has gone into understanding exactly how much fish we take, where that’s happening and what we can do in order to ensure that a very healthy percentage actually remain for future breeding.”

VMS means that should an incident occur on the water, the vessel involved can be quickly identified by Trident Systems who will then work with MPI to respond. But it’s not just about fisheries management. There is also the safety aspect. “Our fishers are out on the water in all sorts of conditions to put fish on our tables. We need to know exactly where these boats are at any point in time should something go wrong” says Carrington.

Steve’s message to all other fishers using our shared resource “Embrace it, don’t fight it. It’s going to help you in the long term.” -ENDS -

The image of the ANA for publication with this story is available [here](#).

Video of this story is available [here](#) including:

V/O edited version

Non V/O edited version

B-roll footage and interviews.

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