



World Fisheries Congress goes totally virtual

The World Fisheries Congress, underway now in Adelaide, South Australia, has gone to a 100 percent virtual format due to global travel restrictions from COVID-19.

The Congress is held every four years, and this year 1,100 delegates from over 60 countries will take part.

The Congress began on Tuesday and concludes today and has featured speakers from all around the globe including scientists, NGOs, regulators and researchers in the fisheries field.

Topics have been diverse, including the Spanish development of iObserver. The system takes images of every species that is brought onboard. The recognition software automatically analyses every image, identifies all the individuals, estimates their length and generates a report containing the results.

Recreational fishing catch and the need to develop app-based tools to measure effort was discussed by Australian scientists. Unlike probability-based surveys, the data collected from apps is unlikely to be representative of the entire population. A study in South Australia is now comparing the efficacy of traditional recreational surveys and apps.

The Netherlands is devising fish species recognition tools using broadband acoustics, or echosounders. Echosounders have been developed to now have the ability to effectively cover a broad frequency band instead of individual frequencies and providing a higher resolution. This has potential for more accurate species recognition to avoid unwanted bycatch.

New Zealand's Plant & Food Research speaks on the future of the Modular Harvesting System (MHS) also known as Precision Seafood Harvesting (PSH). MHS replaces the lengthener and codend sections of a conventional trawl, and has focused on delivering low-damage, low-fatigue capture of wild fish and the unharmed escape and release of unwanted catch. Plant & Food believe MHS is just the beginning and adaptable, fish focused fishing technology is in its infancy.

An innovative alternative to trawl surveys has come out of the UK. They are conducting a study combining hydro acoustics and environmental DNA (eDNA). Hydro acoustics are limiting in species identification but combined with eDNA, which is the collection of trace genetic material from the water, can validate the findings of the hydro acoustics.

An interesting presentation out of the North Pacific fishery in the US claims electronic monitoring is not all it is cracked up to be. The North Pacific fisheries of the USA are monitored by one of the largest observer programs in the world and when the option came in 2013 to have either an observer or an electronic means of reporting, many chose the latter. The resulting performance over the next five years has revealed that although electronic monitoring is preferred by those that choose it, it is not better, it is not faster, and it is only marginally cheaper than observers.

For a little light relief, the presentation entitled *Sharks are not just mindless killing machines* shows science proving they are not driven by pure instinct and are far more complex and considered than previously thought. We are not sure that is comforting.

The World Congress of Fisheries is a valuable forum. Whilst species, fisheries, and management programmes differ around the world, most are facing the same problems, avoiding bycatch, climate change and warming waters, pressure to reduce the environmental impact, plastics, marine mammal and seabird protection, and a global push to lock vast tracts of ocean in no-take marine protected areas.

It was a Herculean effort to stage a forum of this size and complexity virtually and the organisers deserve our thanks for bringing the world of fisheries into our offices all over the globe.



Sanford Announces Appointment of Chief Financial Officer, Paul Alston

Sanford Limited (NZX: SAN) has appointed a new Chief Financial Officer, Paul

Alston, former Chief Executive Officer of Cavalier Corporation.

Mr Alston replaces outgoing CFO Katherine Turner who ends her tenure on 30 September.

Sanford CEO Peter Reidie says “we are delighted to announce that Paul will be joining us as CFO. He is a highly experienced listed company executive who will bring great capability and leadership to Sanford. His background includes CEO and CFO roles at Cavalier Corporation and Turners and Growers, two significant New Zealand businesses.”

Mr Alston’s experience also includes several years in Europe at J P Morgan and Deutsche Bank. He says he is excited to join a company he sees as a New Zealand icon.

“I believe that Sanford has a bright future and is well positioned for success and sustainable growth. We need to feed the world in a sustainable fashion and Sanford is well placed to meet that need.”

Mr Alston will start at Sanford in mid-October

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