

# HOOKED INTO A GREAT LIFESTYLE

## YOUNG FISHERMAN LOOKS UP THE LADDER

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Being out on the ocean catching prime New Zealand fish is what **BLAKE HAWES-GOURLEY** loves doing. At 17, he is one of the younger deep sea fishermen working off the South Island coast.

Blake went to Nelson College. He left to go fishing part-way through Year 13 after taking double Automotive Engineering, Maths and Career Pathways.

"I always wanted to do a diesel mechanic apprenticeship before I started fishing. My dad was a fisherman for 15 years and he told me he really enjoyed the job, so I thought I would try it as well," says Blake.

He started in February and for the last five months has been working on Sealord's vessel *Aukaha*.

"I am a deck hand, so my role is helping to haul and shoot the gear (nets) and work down in the factory processing all the fish. The work itself isn't very difficult. The hard part is being away from friends and family for long periods at a time.

"Normally the boat does four-week trips but from June–September the trips are two-and-a-half weeks as it is hoki season and the fish school together, so we can fill the boat up quicker. We normally finish a trip with around 300–330 tonnes of processed fish. During the season, we mainly target hoki but a common bycatch is ling and hake."

Blake says there are plenty of benefits in being a fisherman both in terms of lifestyle and financially.

"I really like the whole lifestyle about fishing. No shift is ever the same, you have three cooked meals a day waiting for you, and once you finish the trip you have plenty of time and money to go do things that you want to."

Career prospects in deep sea fishing are looking good for Blake.

"I will be doing my deck hand ticket before the end of the year at the Westport Deepsea Fishing School where it takes four weeks' class learning



in addition to the six months' sea time. I would definitely like to work my way up the ladder as much as possible and potentially get into one of the senior vessel roles."

He says the key to doing well when you first start out as a fisherman is to have a good attitude and be motivated to work hard.

"The important thing is to try your hardest at whatever job you get put on. A good attitude keeps everyone around you motivated as well."

Blake says fishing is definitely not for everyone but you just might find it could be your dream job.

"Even one trip is an experience you will keep with you forever."

General Manager Human Resources at Sealord Group Ltd, Dawn Cooper, says Sealord has a strong focus on people development through on-job and external training, career pathways and internal promotion.

"Career pathways are mapped out for vessel crew, right from trainees to skipper. Training for Maritime NZ ticketed positions is financially supported by Sealord, as are on-land qualifications toward NZQA certification.

"Being a fully integrated business, careers in supporting functions such as finance, engineering, IT, sales and marketing, health and safety, human resource, quality and compliance, customer service, supply chain and vessel and operations management are also available with no barriers to moving for motivated and committed people."



### KEY FACTS



- **BLAKE HAWES-GOURLEY** WORKS AS A DECK HAND ABOARD **SEALORD GROUP LTD'S** VESSEL **AUKAHA**.
- HE WILL BE GAINING HIS **DECK HAND TICKET** THROUGH **WESTPORT DEESEA FISHING SCHOOL** BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR.
- **BLAKE** SAYS HAVING A **GOOD ATTITUDE** AND **BEING MOTIVATED TO WORK HARD** ARE **KEY REQUIREMENTS** FOR **SUCCESS** AS A DEEP SEA FISHERMAN.



For more information on a career in the fishing industry with Sealord, visit [www.sealord.com/nz/careers](http://www.sealord.com/nz/careers)