



Sir Mark Solomon and Graeme Sinclair being filmed at Kaikoura for episode one of *Ocean Bounty's* series two.

Look before you leap, says Sinclair

Bill Moore

Graeme Sinclair has a simple message for those who criticise *Ocean Bounty*, his documentary series that centres on commercial fishing: "Why don't you have a bloody look at the programme?"

"Why don't you give it a chance? Why don't you think about what contribution you can make, instead of constantly detracting and delivering negative messages?"

The first season of *Ocean Bounty*, screened last year, was a departure for the presenter of New Zealand's longest-running and much-loved fishing show, *Gone Fishin'*. It drew flak from some recreational fishing quarters. He was accused of selling out – and with series two now screening, the criticism has begun anew.

It doesn't bother Sinclair. Talking the morning after the first episode screened, he said the way forward for fisheries management was about being inclusive, with commercial,

iwi, recreational and environmental groups all working together for what's best. That's what the second series emphasised. All those interests would be represented, along with content on science and Department of Conservation projects.

"There's just a whole lot of stuff that shows that when everyone interacts effectively, great things can be achieved."

Sinclair said the positive reaction to the programme outweighed the negative, which seemed to be mainly coming from one group.

Without industry funding *Ocean Bounty* wouldn't have been possible, he said, but he wouldn't have got involved without a clear understanding around his editorial freedom.

"I said to the commercial guys, 'Here's the deal, I'm really interested in producing a series but I've got to be able to tell my stories, my way. So if I see something I don't like, I'm going to say, I don't like it. If you're okay with that, then



Graeme and Sandee Sinclair.

I'm really interested.'

"The industry has just said, 'You shoot it your way, you tell your story.' That's fantastic. Some of the detractors would do well to learn lessons from that – be transparent, tell it the way it is, but keep your eyes and ears open and be prepared to listen to other people."

Thirty years ago the commercial and recreational sectors had "fired bullets at each other" but the time for that had passed, he said.

"We've moved on, so move with it. Let's stop mucking around and wallowing in mire. Let's work together, let's get this right, we've got a chance to do it."

He said there was one simple thing to understand about commercial fishing: "Unless you farm the resource, you have no business."

The industry commitment to sustainability was genuine and would protect fish stocks into the future.

"The other future consideration that I think is absolutely critically important

is our kids. It's how we pass the baton on – what do we hand to the next generation? Hopefully it's something better than what previously existed."

Impressed by Fisheries Minister Stuart Nash's performance so far, Sinclair said it would be fantastic if the minister achieved his stated vision, and he felt "greatly encouraged" about the future of New Zealand's fisheries.

"There are a number of initiatives underway. The Quota Management System has been successful, now it needs and update – a tweak here and there.

"I think Stuart Nash is really on the right track, and with the sectors starting to think more positively about working together, great things will happen. You can't just say fisheries any more, you've got to think the marine environment."

As in series one, there is a wide range of content in series two of *Ocean Bounty*. It kicked off with an update on the lingering effects of the Kaikoura earthquake and how the community organisation Te Korowai is helping to manage the marine environment.

That was followed by an episode on the work of SPAInz in Nelson – "what they are doing is just phenomenal", Sinclair said – and the mussel industry in Havelock.

Sealord's new trawler *Tokatu* and its voyage from Norway to Nelson is covered, along with a hoki trip on a Talley's trawler.

The iwi perspective on fisheries management is explored and Sinclair looks at industry innovations around protecting marine mammals.

"All I am is a facilitator," he said. "I feel totally privileged because I'm meeting these incredible people from all walks of life who just have a passionate vision and who are doing something about the delivery of their messages. That's just fantastic to be part of."

He said the series including plenty of "good yarns", with the success of season one persuading more people to tell their stories.

"Some of them are a little bit reluctant to front – but by the time we roll into series three of *Ocean Bounty*, I'll

get 'em!"

Series 3?

"Why not?," he said, adding that it was not yet planned and would depend on industry support.

Sinclair is certainly no stranger to television longevity, with 607 episodes of *Bostik Gone Fishin'* completed and series 25 underway – despite having been a wheelchair user since series six, when multiple sclerosis seriously affected his mobility.

With his son James taking a bigger role in front of the camera and his wife Sandee managing production, both shows are largely a family affair.

But Sinclair is still very much the front man. After all those appearances, he said he definitely did not want to be called a fishing guru.

"I'm just a guy who gets swept up in outdoor New Zealand, and loves it."

– *Ocean Bounty* series two debuted on May 14 and screens on Three at 5pm on Sundays.



Upcoming Ocean Bounty highlights

Sunday June 3: New Zealand King Salmon – the world's largest producer of this salmon species.

June 10: Danish seining – Tony Threadwell explains this fishing method.

June 17: Deepwater Group research – a look at the research the Deepwater Group is funding on the Campbell Islands to find ways to reduce sea lion pup mortality.

June 24: Local supply – how inshore fishermen earn their living supplying flounder, mullet and other fish to the home market.

July 1: On the *Independent* – Cameraman Mal Williams is winched aboard a Russian-built factory trawler.

July 8: Scampi – following catching and exporting this sought-

after species to the US market.

July 15: Te Ohu Kaimoana – the Maori perspective on effective fisheries management.

July 22: Sealord's *Tokatu* – following the innovative new vessel from its build in Norway to its first fishing trip.

July 29: Inshore innovation – not just changing trawl techniques, but meeting challenges such as seabird catch mitigation, and safety at sea.

August 5: The Greymouth catch – how Tony Roach supplies to Talley's through the West Coast port.