



Hauraki Gulf Forum
Tikapa Moana
Te Moananui a Toi

Weaving the Strands

Promoting and facilitating integrated management around the Hauraki Gulf – Tikapa Moana, Te Moananui a Toi.

A new term

The beginning of a new term for the Hauraki Gulf Forum is a good time to reflect on the waters we have charted and the sea conditions ahead.

When the old maritime park lost out to local government reform it took a decade for the special qualities of the Gulf to be reasserted in statute.

Discussions catalysed the first meeting of the mana whenua of the Gulf since treaty times, affirming tino rangatiratanga over Tikapa Moana/Te Moananui a Toi. The Waitangi Tribunal reviewed the proposed legislation encouraging “all parties to focus on ... the need for the Hauraki Gulf environment to be protected for future generations.”

The Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act legislation was introduced to parliament by National, passed by Labour and officially launched by an Alliance party Minister of Conservation in 2000.

The Forum’s job is to promote the Act’s management objectives – to manage the Gulf in an integrated way, improving environmental quality and its capacity to provide for our wellbeing.

The first terms of the Forum were cautious ones, with political players not welcoming interference in their primary areas of influence. After an external performance review in 2004 and the appointment of a dedicated manager in 2007, the Forum started to gain boat speed.



A series of interpretive guides on the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 showed how consistent resource management, fisheries and conservation policies, plans and programmes could be delivered.

The 2011 *State of our Gulf* report message – of most indicators showing poor or declining environmental quality – resonated widely and stimulated commitments to a joined-up response; now underway with the Sea Change marine spatial plan project.

The Forum has identified five critical areas necessary for success: “Regenerating places, enhanced fisheries, mana whenua integration, active land management and (eco-system-based) knowledge utilisation” – its REMAK response framework.

Recently the Forum has helped broker awareness and responses to threats to

our resident Bryde’s whales and endemic seabirds. It has created partnerships with media and education institutions to share these stories and their urgency with the public.

Next year it will update the triennial *State of our Gulf* report.

As residents and visitors enjoy the Gulf over summer most will realise this special place deserves an extraordinary and integrated management approach.

The 21 faces around the Forum table will be listening, looking to keep a true bearing and wind in the sails. I welcome the new appointment of Liane Ngamane as Deputy Chair to assist in this task.



Mayor John Tregidga,
Chair, Hauraki Gulf Forum



Mussel trials begin.



Minister Guy with precision fishing net.



New bag limits and minimum size for snapper.

Sea Change underway

The Sea Change project, to prepare a marine spatial plan for the Hauraki Gulf, is set to start its work, following the recent appointment of an independent chair and formation of a stakeholder working group.

Nick Main, a former chair of Deloitte NZ and the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development, with international business experience in sustainability issues, will chair the stakeholder working group, charged with developing the plan.

Meetings have been held in Auckland and the Waikato to identify stakeholder working group representatives from sectors and community interests, and mana whenua are selecting their representatives.

The working group will examine information, explore issues and formulate agreements that will shape the plan. They will have an important listening role, feeding ideas and options in and out of the process through their networks with the public.

The project is supported by Auckland Council, Waikato Regional Council, the Department of Conservation, the Ministry for Primary Industries, the Hauraki Gulf Forum and mana whenua.

The sponsoring agencies anticipate creative, practical and durable agreements that can be implemented in statutory processes to ensure the ecological health and economic productivity of the Gulf for the future.

For information and register interest see www.seachange.org.nz

Snapper measures

The Minister for Primary Industries is introducing a range of measures following a review of the management of the snapper from North Cape to East Cape. They aim to continue to rebuild the snapper stock, currently below levels considered optimal for sustainable yield and ecosystem health.

While the Minister Nathan Guy increased the total allowable catch, allocating all 500 additional tonnes to recreational use, other measures have been put in place to address wastage.

The commercial trawl fishery will have camera or observer coverage on 25 percent of the fleet this season and on all boats by October 2015.

Investment is being made in precision harvesting techniques to avoid by-catch and juvenile fish. Other measures include a move on rule when a significant proportion of the catch is juveniles, a requirement to report all undersize fish, and a maximum size limit for long line fishers.

Recreational bag limits will change from nine to seven snapper and the minimum size will increase from 27 to 30 cm from 1 April, 2014.

Nathan Guy described the new measures as “a balanced and fair package which will ultimately mean more fish for everyone in the coming years.”

The Minister is also establishing a Snapper 1 Strategy Group to develop a long-term plan to manage the fishery.

<http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Consultations/Archive/2013/Ministers+decisions+on+2013+Sustainability+Round>

Land use impact

A new report on water quality by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment shows how changes in land use are affecting water quality.

The outcome of the report’s modelling exercise showed that even with best practice mitigation, large-scale conversion of more land to dairy farming will generally result in more degraded fresh water.

In Waikato rivers, nutrient loads were modelled to increase 13 percent for Nitrogen and 1 percent for Phosphorous between 1996 and 2020, due largely to dairy conversions.

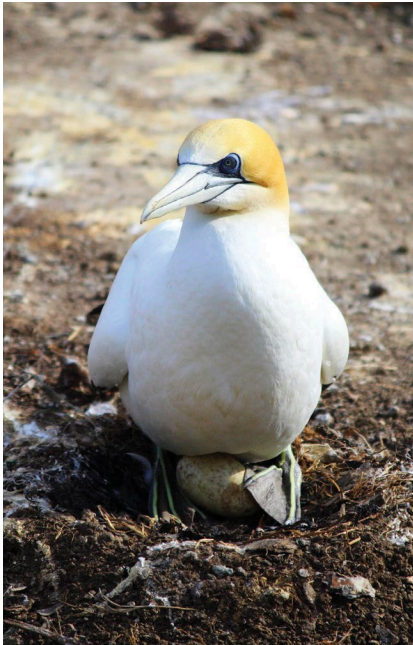
Commissioner Dr Jan Wright said she applauded the effort being put into environmental mitigation on dairy farms. “Unfortunately, it is particularly difficult to control nitrogen. Nitrogen – in the form of nitrate – is so soluble that I think of it as the ‘elusive’ pollutant.”

She expected the report to help inform policy making and consideration of ‘bottom lines’ in the Government’s proposed fresh water reforms.

www.pce.parliament.nz/publications/all-publications/water-quality-in-new-zealand-land-use-and-nutrient-pollution/

Seaplanes back

Floatplanes have returned to the Hauraki Gulf in a new tourism venture launched in December. Auckland Seaplanes will operate an original 1961 De Havilland Beaver from Waitemata Harbour, providing scenic flights and vineyard lunch packages to Waiheke Island.



Breeding success.



Spot the difference: red is real, blue is decoy.

Freshwater reform

In November the Government released proposals for improving freshwater management, including national water standards. It is proposing amendments to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011 that:

- require regional councils to account for all water takes and contaminant discharges
- include a national framework to support communities setting freshwater objectives
- provide explicit recognition of tangata whenua values for fresh water
- establish ecosystem and human health as compulsory values in regional plans
- introduce ‘bottom lines’ for ecosystem and human health that apply everywhere
- include restricted grounds for exceptions to ‘bottom lines’.

“We expect people to debate these bottom lines – that’s the nature of science – but the freshwater scientists’ numbers we are releasing today also reflect the important role of value judgements in choosing how we use our fresh water,” said Minister for Primary Industries Nathan Guy.

www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/water/freshwater/nps-freshwater-management-amendment-proposals.html

Bryde’s whale protocol

The Ports of Auckland have released a new transit protocol for vessels in the Gulf to help protect Bryde’s whales.

The protocol urges ships to slow down to an internationally-recognised safe speed of around 10 knots through careful schedule planning, to report whale sightings and use recommended approaches to the Waitemata.

The protocols follow a series of workshops arranged by the Hauraki Gulf Forum, the Environmental Defence Society and University of Auckland to examine scientific information and methods to address vessel strike; claiming about two deaths a year in a population of around 200 mainly resident Bryde’s whales.

The first of regular report cards have been produced by the International Fund for Animal Welfare, assisted by scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who have dealt with ship strike issues in the US. The reports analyse the speed and movement of all large vessels using the Gulf and are being distributed to shipping companies to encourage awareness and compliance with the protocol.

http://www.poa.co.nz/news_media/2013_mediareleases/20130920_Wholes.htm

Gannets return

A project led by the Motuora Restoration Society to create a new gannet colony appears to have been successful. At least 12 birds have been observed nesting among a set of decoy gannets, located on a headland identified as having suitable aspect and slope.

http://motuora.org.nz/?page_id=65

Seabird action

The Ministry for Primary Industries has begun addressing risks to black petrels and other seabirds, to implement the National Plan of Action – Seabirds published earlier this year.

Workshops are being held to promote awareness of the need and requirements for seabird mitigation and a liaison officer has been recruited to work directly with commercial fishers. The ministry also plans increased observer coverage of the bottom long line fleet this season, with 600 observer days scheduled.

A video clip documenting the ‘seabird smart’ practices of long line fishers has been produced by Southern Seabird Solutions Trust, with support from the Hauraki Gulf Forum.

www.southernseabirds.org/sharing-the-gulf-dvd/

Mussel revival begins

The first trial plots have been established in an ambitious project to revive the Hauraki Gulf. Seven tonnes of green-lipped mussels were deposited off eastern Waiheke Island in December. The Revive our Gulf charitable trust aims to restore some of the mussel beds that once covered the much of the inner Hauraki Gulf and Firth of Thames. It is working closely with the mussel industry, iwi and University of Auckland doctorate students to find if beds can be restored to improve water quality and the diversity and abundance of marine life.

www.reviveourgulf.org.nz



New rangitoto wharf caters for multiple vessels and varied conditions.

Barrier proposal

The Department of Conservation has notified a proposal to reclassify 12,100 hectares of stewardship land on Great Barrier Island into a Conservation Park.

The proposed park contains the largest area of forest in NZ free of possums and mustelids. “Success of this proposed park requires that we get the detail right,” says Conservation Minister Nick Smith.

www.doc.govt.nz/aoteaconsevationpark

Coastal branch line

Cyclists using the popular Hauraki Rail Trail look set to get a taste of the Gulf with a new leg linking Kopu with Kaiaua.

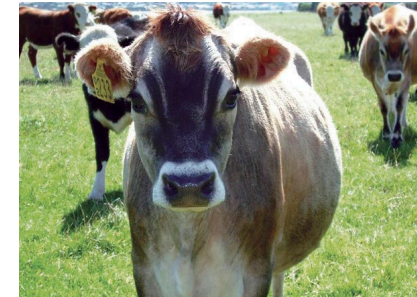
Thames-Coromandel District Council and Hauraki District Council have each committed \$1 million each to the extension of the trail and further \$2 million is being sought from the Lotteries Commission.

Hauraki Mayor John Tregidga said the 46 km Kopu to Kaiaua leg would mainly follow stopbanks, extend multi-day options and introduce visitors to the shorebird habitats of the southern Firth.

The Hauraki Gulf Forum is a statutory body charged with the promotion and facilitation of integrated management and the protection and enhancement of the Hauraki Gulf. The Forum has representation on behalf of the Ministers of Conservation, Fisheries and Māori Affairs, elected representatives from Auckland Council (including the Great Barrier and Waiheke local boards), Waikato Regional Council, and the Waikato, Hauraki, Thames Coromandel and Matamata Piako district councils, plus six representatives of the tangata whenua of the Hauraki Gulf and its islands.

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Photo credits: Auckland Council, DoC, Hauraki District Council, MPI, Shaun Lee, John King/Aviation NZ, Toby Shanley



Hauraki iwi purchase dairy complex.



Pest bust planned for Great Mercury.

raupatu (war confiscations) and predatory Crown land acquisition policy and legislation, the iwi of Hauraki possess only 2.5 percent of our land and are the most landless people in the nation. The Pouarua farm acquisition begins the reversal of this appalling statistic.

Ownership is not just a business proposition. It allows us to exercise kaitiakitanga (care and guardianship) over our natural resources, ensuring they are managed sustainably for future generations. We have begun discussions with our local councils over partnership arrangements to, for example, improve the quality of our ancestral waterways.”

Great Mercury pest bust

The Department of Conservation and Great Mercury Island owners Sir Michael Fay and David Richwhite have announced a joint operational plan aiming to eradicate all animal pests from the island in the winter of 2014. Removal of kiore, ship rats, mice and cats will improve habitat, help threatened to thrive and increase security for other sanctuary islands in the Ahuahu/Mercury Island group.



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