



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.

Signs of change

Out on the Gulf things are changing.

Recently an observant commercial fisherman off the Coromandel noted the first black petrel of the summer, home from South American waters to breed on our Barrier islands. Rather than seeing a nuisance around his long-lines, he snapped a picture to boast to, and alert, his colleagues. A few weeks later at Leigh industry leaders signed a pledge to ensure black petrels thrive without pressure from fishing.

Auckland's Whale and Dolphin Safari had a tough winter for Bryde's whale sightings, roaming widely in the Gulf to find their larger quarry. But suddenly in early October, groups of two and three whales were frequently seen, delighting passengers. Ports of Auckland broadcast sighting locations and reminded large vessels of its transit protocol to keep speeds below 10 knots.

Snapper have congregated recently into the shallower waters of the Gulf, their bellies fat with roe for their annual spawning season. Keep what you need rather than catch your limit, is increasingly the message of the recreational fishing community. Waiheke Island plans a "biggest fish returned to the water" competition this summer.

On neighbouring Rotoroa, Motuihe and Motutapu Islands dawn choruses are strengthening as new arrivals settle into their sanctuary homes, assisted by armies of volunteers. Even mussels are receiving a helping hand with new beds appearing on fringing muds, with support from a community trust and marine farmers.



Black Petrels back in Gulf for summer.

As pohutukawa turn crimson and we look forward to holiday time at the beach it's nice to observe and reflect on these subtle changes in season and behaviour.

The Hauraki Gulf Forum has documented these shifts in its triennial State of our Gulf assessments. Understanding is growing about the need for and value of environmental investments and improvement.

The New Year will see the Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari process piece together a marine spatial plan aimed at improving the health and productivity of the Gulf.

Recently I sat at Matai Whetū Marae near Kopu overlooking gleaming, wind-buffed waters, hearing voices in Te Reo and English exploring those pathways.

Out on the Gulf things are changing.



*Mayor John Tregidga,
Chair, Hauraki Gulf Forum*



Coromandel great walk.

Coromandel progress

Thames Coromandel District Council has put in place a new Freedom Camping Bylaw.

It means all freedom campers must be in a certified self-contained vehicle. If anyone is camping in their car, a tent, or in a vehicle that doesn't have a certified self-contained toilet on board they need to be going to either a commercial or DOC campsite.

The council has been consulting over the Coromandel Great Walks Project and proposed Cathedral Coast Walkway, being developed in partnership with Department of Conservation and local iwi Ngati Hei. First stages will cover 10km from the iconic "blowhole" at Te Pupuha Recreation Reserve near Hahei through to the Purangi Estuary at Cooks Beach.

Meanwhile, the council has received a new application to subdivide land at popular New Chum Beach. The application is for a four lot subdivision, all 15 hectares in size, together with a fifth "beach conservation lot," 1.2 hectares in size. The beach lot is proposed as a conservation area allowing for public access along the beach, with a Charitable Trust to be formed, to own and manage this beach lot. The application will be publicly notified.

Sun Air announced recently that it would operate two daily flights between Whitianga and Auckland as well as a daily flight to Great Barrier Island and Tauranga.

www.tcdc.govt.nz/Your-Council/News-and-Media/News-and-Public-Notices/

Gulf at crossroads

The Hauraki Gulf Forum's State of our Gulf 2014 report (<http://bit.ly/Hauraki>) has received widespread publicity following approval in September.

Writing in the Sunday Star Times columnist Rod Oram said the report "shows the pressures on its ecosystem are high, increasing and compounding. The Gulf is getting worse not better. The Hauraki Gulf could become one of the great triumphs of the world where a big city, fishing and farming live well and sustainably within a healthy marine environment."

A scan of indicators sets contained in the 195 page report shows the gap between current and desired state is widening, and significant leadership is still required to achieve integrated, ecosystem-based management.

It was a focus for the Forum's Hauraki Gulf Marine Park seminar in October, enabling contributors and commentators to explore findings and implications at greater depth. The highlights video is available here:

<http://vimeo.com/111963731>

Holdaway Award catch

Third generation fisherman, 28 year old Adam Clow has won the 2014 Holdaway Award for leadership in and around the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

Adam uses a range of techniques to minimise bird capture – careful bait handling, tori lines, weights, reduced deck lighting and night setting – and has



Adam Clow wins Holdaway Award.



Mediterranean fanworm.

been an effective advocate for seabird smart fishing among his peers. He has also assisted researchers at the main black petrel breeding colony on Great Barrier's Mt Hiramimata. "Ultimately seabird smart fishing is an attitude, of being alert to bird behaviour and being prepared to move on if they are too aggressive," says Adam.

Forum Chairman John Tregidga and Ann Holdaway presented the award during the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Seminar in October.

<http://tinyurl.com/onm79f2>

Fanworm measures

Waikato Regional Council has initiated a programme to prevent the spread of Mediterranean fanworm into Coromandel harbours.

New rules will require owners to have antifouling treatments on vessel hulls every one to two years. They will also be liable for costs associated with clearing up outbreaks.

Mediterranean fanworm has become well-established in Auckland's Waitemata harbour and in other parts of the country, but its ability to crowd out shellfish is a threat to the Coromandel's \$50 million a year mussel and oyster farming industry.

The council spend around \$100,000 to clear up an incursion last year, believed to be from two barges from Auckland, but was unable to recover costs from the owner.

<http://tinyurl.com/k4897sq>



Riparian planting funding.



Seagrass beds important.



Zoo-hatched kiwi.

Kiwi comebacks

Rotoroa Island is the latest Gulf island with kiwi roaming its shores.

Five North Island brown kiwi chicks, hatched at Auckland Zoo from eggs collected from Te Mata in the Coromandel, have been released on the island over the past month.

The kiwi are left on the island for a year until they are big and strong enough to defend themselves from stoats, then transferred back to their home population of about 1500 wild birds. Up to 20 chicks could be released onto Rotoroa each year for crèching.

Meanwhile, on Motutapu the 19th Coromandel brown kiwi to be released permanently on the island brought a smile to the face of visiting German Chancellor Angela Merkel in front of a large media contingent.

Meg Poutasi, DOC Partnership Director for Tamaki Makaurau, said “it was a pleasure and a privilege to co-host Chancellor Merkel and Prime Minister Key with Ngai Tai ki Tamaki and a fantastic opportunity to showcase what we do with our partners.”

<http://tinyurl.com/ljjtdmb>

Seagrass review

A new study of seagrass meadows as biodiversity and productivity hotspots has been published by the Ministry for Primary Industries.

The report shows Zostera seagrass meadows within northern New Zealand are important nursery areas for juvenile

fish, including snapper and trevally. However, subtidal meadows in the Hauraki Gulf are functionally (and almost physically) extinct, and juvenile snapper recruitment must be coming from other biogenic habitat types such as horse mussel beds, sponge gardens, and other seafloor structure.

Report co-author Mark Morrison, of NIWA, suggests active restoration may be feasible (based on work in Whangarei and Porirua harbours) and natural regeneration can be encouraged through improved catchment sediment and nutrient controls.

Small areas of recovering seagrass beds have been observed in the Waitemata between the Harbour Bridge and Cox’s Bay but are not yet associated with improved fish populations.

<http://tinyurl.com/m5zzq2b>

Crowd funds for rivers

A new website is enabling New Zealanders to clean up waterways, through purchasing a metre or more of riparian planting.

The Million Metres Streams Project was prompted by statistics showing 62% of our rivers are unswimmable due to pathogens; 44% of our lowland lakes are eutrophic or worse; and 74% of our freshwater fish are classified as threatened.

The project provides funds for native plants suitable for planting around listed streams and a counter on the website tracks progress towards a target of a million metres.

www.millionmetres.org.nz

Pledge for petrels

A Black Petrel Working Group – made up of concerned fishers, environmental groups, government agencies, as well local body, and iwi organisations – has taken a stand to help black petrels regain lost ground.

Representatives signed a pledge at an event at Leigh in October committing to:

Expanding the use of seabird smart fishing practices to avoid harming black petrels across the FMA1 fishing area, which the Hauraki Gulf is part of.

Looking for ongoing ways to improve how to avoid catching black petrels while fishing.

Assisting with the deployment of electronic monitoring and cameras on fishing vessels to prove methods are in place and working.

Supporting research into black petrel biology to better understand the status and trend of the remaining populations.

Starting this summer, the commitments will be backed by measurable targets and milestones to be reported on yearly.

www.southernseabirds.org.nz

Set net ban

Set netting will be banned in Army Bay and Te Haruhi Bay within Shakespear Regional Park during summer from this year in an effort to reduce public safety concerns at the popular swimming beaches.



Waterfront brief expanded.

A new bylaw will prevent set nets being laid at these bays between 20 December and 31 March every year. The prohibited area extends 200m offshore.

The council receives dozens of complaints every year about the nets causing an obstruction for people and water craft getting tangled up in them. Set netting will still be permitted at Okoromai Bay and other fishing practices are also allowed in all bays.

Council staff will monitor set net activity on Hatfield, Omaha and Browns Bay beaches this summer in light of similar community concerns and findings will be considered alongside a review of a bylaw prohibiting set netting at Arkles Bay next year.

<http://tinyurl.com/lov556a>

Takahē to Tawharanui

Ten critically-endangered takahē were moved from Fiordland to the predator free open sanctuary at Tawharanui Regional Park in October.

Air NZ transported the birds from the Burwood Bush Takahē Rearing Unit, near Te Anau, as part of its partnership with the Department of Conservation. Mitre 10 is also contributing to the programme, enabling 125 breeding pairs to be placed

in predator free areas outside the population’s Murchison Mountain home.

Auckland Councillor Chris Fletcher said the council was proud to manage parks like Tawharanui, with its 2.5km predator-proof fence which keeps stoats, rats and other pests out, and acknowledged the vital role of Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society and the support of Ngati Manuhiri.

<http://tinyurl.com/muq3dbt>

Development Auckland

Waterfront Auckland is proposed to become part of a new agency to fast track urban development.

Waterfront Auckland has led the redevelopment of Wynyard Quarter and Queens Wharf, championing good design, mixed uses and public spaces, and public and private investment.

Its merger with Auckland Council Property Limited, to be included in the council’s long term plan, would create a new entity, called Development Auckland.

The council says the new council-controlled organisation will enable it to play a much stronger role in urban development through economies of scale, enhanced commercial capability and the ability to partner with others.

<http://tinyurl.com/nwjvt2u>



Tawharanui takahē.



Kawau’s new boating club.

New life on Kawau

Kawau islanders have seized the initiative and turned the Royal NZ Yacht Squadron’s former clubrooms into a community centre.

Threatened with the loss of the rooms, first opened in 1952, a community committee was formed to take over the lease. The Kawau Boating Club will operate a fuel pump, bar and food and will be open to the general boating public.

“The club will be a focus for visitors in addition to historic Mansion House and kids from Camp Benson will be able to walk over the hill and get an ice-cream,” says sailor and Auckland Council Kawau Island Advisory Committee member Lin Pardey. It will also provide a meeting place for the island’s book club, fishing club and the residents and ratepayers association.

Less than 50 people live permanently on the island. Properties are increasingly used as holiday homes, though internet availability is attracting some new full-time residents. The committee aims to raise the island’s profile, encourage more visitors and keep ferry services operating all year round.

www.kawauisland.org.nz
www.kawauboatingclub.nz



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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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