



Hauraki Gulf Forum
Tikapa Moana

Weaving the Strands

Promoting and facilitating integrated management around the Hauraki Gulf – Tikapa Moana

What is happening?

The Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act asks management agencies to focus their efforts on sustaining the life-supporting capacity of the environment of the Hauraki Gulf.

The act recognises that a healthy natural system is needed to ensure the continued provision of the cultural, social, recreational and economic benefits we value so highly from the Gulf.

Protection and enhancement are the important catch words in the legislation – a call to integrate efforts and step up from the Resource Management Act's requirements to avoid, remedy and mitigate the adverse effects of development and resource use.

Recent events around the Gulf have given us reason to be concerned: the previously unrecorded toxins in sea slugs that have caused illness and death in dogs on beaches, reported incidences of penguin, pilchards and dolphin deaths, and the die back of cockles in the Whangateau Harbour.

Could these be signs that the Gulf system is shifting into a qualitatively different state, losing its resilience and ability to provide the services we take for granted?

Research results reported in this newsletter suggest that these events are in fact unrelated and caused by specific factors, related to natural, temporary fluctuations in population and environmental conditions.

But we shouldn't be complacent.



We know that there are several trends that, left unchecked, will certainly impact negatively on the environment and marine life of the Gulf.

Heavy metals and other contaminants in storm water sediments in urban Auckland's harbours are accumulating. Nitrates being flushed from the dairy farms of the Hauraki Plains could well reach levels that can trigger oxygen-depleting algal blooms.

Changing the trajectory of these trends requires policy direction substantively different that what we have in place at the moment.

The second generation of regional policy statements, currently being developed by Environment Waikato and the Auckland Regional Council, provide an opportunity to map out the critical habitats, processes and linkages that give the Hauraki Gulf its "life-

supporting capacity", and define vital outcomes around which we can target and measure our management efforts.

Regional policy statements describe how the coastal marine area, islands and catchments of the Gulf are to be managed in an integrated way and direct the coastal, regional and district plans prepared by local authorities.

Get involved in public consultation on these plans and make sure the Gulf environment you value is being protected and enhanced.



Mayor John Tregidga
Chair, Hauraki Gulf Forum



Grey side-gilled sea slug



Healthy cockle bed



North Shore beaches affected

Health warnings after dog deaths

The Auckland Regional Public Health Service is advising caution on Hauraki Gulf beaches:

- Children and pets need to be supervised.
- Adults, children and pets should not eat anything found washed up on any beach.
- Parents need to be aware of where their children are swimming or playing and what they are handling.
- Sea slugs on any beach must be avoided.

During August and September, 15 dogs became unwell with symptoms consistent with tetrodotoxin (TTX) poisoning after eating grey side-gilled sea slugs at several Hauraki Gulf beaches. Five of these dogs died. In October a dog died from TTX poisoning on the Coromandel peninsula.

TTX is known to be a potent poison found in tropical puffer fish but not previously described in sea slugs. Grey gilled sea slugs are not common in Auckland but occur around New Zealand in a wide range of habitats from intertidal harbour areas to depths of 250 metres. Populations fluctuate according to breeding conditions and food supply and they may wash up anywhere, possibly related to weather patterns.

Check up to date advisory information at

www.arphs.govt.nz

Parasites and bacteria claim cockles

The death of almost 70 per cent of eating size cockles in the Whangateau estuary between January and May was caused by stress from a long hot summer and pathogens.

Testing by MAF Biosecurity New Zealand concluded heat stress left cockles susceptible to infection by two pathogens: a parasite infecting their gills and a mycobacterium. The coccidian parasite involved is not uncommon in shellfish. Mycobacteria are free living bacteria commonly occurring in aquatic environments, although this is the first time it has been found in a shellfish.

The Ministry of Fisheries is working with iwi and the local community to implement harvesting restrictions before next summer, to give the beds a chance to recover.

Dolphin and penguin deaths unrelated

The Department of Conservation has tested for brodifacoum in penguins, dolphins and dogs due to public concerns that its pest control programme on Rangitoto and Motutapu islands could be the cause of species deaths reported in July.

The post-mortem analysis of penguins by the New Zealand Centre for Conservation Medicine, showed no evidence of an acute poison as the possible cause of death. The analysis

concluded that the birds were in poor body condition and that starvation was the likely cause of death. Low level traces of brodifacoum were found in the livers of two out of the five penguins analysed but this has been ruled out as a contributing factor.

Post-mortem analysis of dolphins by Massey University did not reveal any evidence of brodifacoum poisoning and the cause of the dolphin deaths remains unknown. They also tested negative for TTX.

Tests on pilchards (taken from dolphins' stomachs), mussels and pipis were also negative for brodifacoum.

The Department of Conservation concluded that the application of brodifacoum to remove rodents from Rangitoto and Motutapu Islands had no relationship to the co-incidental death of dogs, pilchards, dolphins and penguins.

The Auckland Regional Council led a multi-agency response to reports of dog deaths, in order to:

- Determine the reason(s) some dogs died soon after visiting Auckland beaches,
- Isolate the incident from other reported mortalities and unrelated activities, and
- Disseminate accurate, consistent and timely information to the general public to minimise potential harm.

A technical report on the marine toxin investigation and response is available at

www.arc.govt.nz/albany/index.cfm?2BCDD228-14C2-3D2D-B97F-A3A82D937347



Waihou River



Pollution signs at Kawakawa Bay



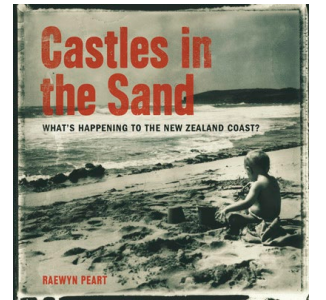
Oi chick



Mike Lee and John Key at open day



Pacific Series racing



Hauraki river ranks poorly

The Waihou River at Te Aroha is one of the worst sites according to national water quality rankings released by the Ministry for the Environment in October. The Waihou, which drains into the Firth of Thames, was ranked 75 out of 77 major rivers for nutrient levels and 70th for suitability for recreational use.

Environment Minister Nick Smith said, "The league tables point to areas of concern – particularly degradation of our lowland water bodies which are most vulnerable to human activities on the land. Good environmental reporting is critical to good decision-making. We are going to need better research, and improved collaboration, regulation and incentives to address the problems identified."

www.mfe.govt.nz/environmental-reporting/freshwater/river/league-table/river-water-quality-league-tables.html

Wastewater plant for Kawakawa Bay

Signs warning the public not to bathe or eat shellfish from Kawakawa Bay may soon be a thing of the past. Manukau Water has announced the start of construction of a wastewater collection and treatment plant at the bay.

Effluent discharge from failing septic tanks has polluted the beach making it unsafe for swimming and shellfish gathering due to faecal contamination. Inspections found about half of the septic tank systems used by the 280 dwellings

in the bay showed signs of failing due to inadequate maintenance and the slowly draining clay soils. The \$29 million plant, to be built by Fulton Hogan in the Kawakawa Bay forest, will be operating by 2011.

Oi Oi Oi – A success

A volunteer at Tawharanui Open Sanctuary has discovered Oi, grey faced petrels, breeding in the regional park.

The burrowing seabirds have been able to breed on the headland for the first time in decades, helped by a predator-proof fence built in 2004 and the eradication of rats, possums and other pests by the ARC and the Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society.

Petrels and other seabirds play an important role introducing nutrients from the sea and enhancing soil fertility in coastal ecosystems and islands.

www.tossi.org.nz

Rangitoto – Motutapu sanctuary update

The third and final aerial rodent baiting operation on Rangitoto and Motutapu was completed by the Department of Conservation in August. Intensive follow-up work to eradicate rabbits, stoats, hedgehogs, wild cats, and any remaining rats and mice, is underway.

At 3881 ha the new sanctuary will be 20 times the size of Tiritiri Matangi and ARC Chairman Mike Lee says the benefits of restoration will be profound. "The creation of a pest-free wildlife sanctuary

on Rangitoto and Motutapu breathes new life into the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. Rare and endangered species such as kiwi, kokako and takahe will be released, and other native birds will find their way there naturally from places like Tiritiri Matangi. This new population will in turn help restore the dawn chorus on Waiheke, and provide significant new opportunities for tourism and education in the region."

The islands re-opened to the public on 15 August. The Home Bay campsite will open for the summer season on 1 November.

520 ha of new marine farming space

The Ministry of Fisheries has approved the final part of the Wilson Bay Marine Farming Zone in the Firth of Thames. The decision releases an additional 520 hectares for shellfish farming. The Ministry determined that the aquaculture management area would not unduly affect fishing or the sustainability of the area's fisheries, though it will have some effect on commercial set net fishing.

Twenty percent of the new space will be provided to the Maori Trustee (Te Ohu Kaimoana) for allocation to iwi. Environment Waikato will be able to process consent applications that have been on hold since the 2002 moratorium, once a three month appeal period has closed.

Waterfront opening

A design completion to transform Queens Wharf into a public space and cruise ship terminal is reaching its final phases. Leading design ideas can be viewed at www.queenswharf.org.nz

Queens Wharf was purchased by the Auckland Regional Council and the Government so it can be developed, with Auckland City Council, as a venue for celebrations and events – the first of which will be the Rugby World Cup in 2011.

Meanwhile, P&O Cruises has announced it will launch its next cruise liner, the 1800-berth Pacific Pearl in Auckland next year and use the city as its base for the 2010-2011 summer cruising season. Each cruise ship visit contributes around \$500,000 in port fees, stores and passenger spending.

Park 10th birthday

Watch out for a flotilla of activity around the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park anniversary on February 27, 2010.

The Department of Conservation, supported by the Hauraki Gulf Forum, is planning a major promotional campaign for the park. Councils and private land owners are also looking at how to strengthen their association with the park, to enhance its profile and to champion integrated management.

The anniversary date coincides with the return of the Louis Vuitton World Series yachting to the Hauraki Gulf. A successful regatta last year, using America's Cup class boats, led sponsors, teams and host cities to announce a three match racing series, in Nice in November, Auckland in February-March and La Maddalena (Italy) in May 2010.

Castles in the Sand

What is happening to the New Zealand coast is illuminated in a new book by Raewyn Peart.

Castles in the Sand describes the natural history of the coast, the ways it was utilised by Maori and European settlers, and the post-war era of bach-building. The book sets out the social, political and economic factors that have fuelled more recent development, and the tensions between private and public interests, Maori and Pakeha, environmental preservation and development, along with the responsibilities of central and local government.

It concludes that it is not too late to change our management of the coast to ensure continued access for all New Zealanders, protection of our natural heritage, and responsible, sustainable development.

www.eds.org.nz/shop/publication

Under consultation

Waikato Draft Regional Policy Statement	EW	www.ew.govt.nz/Policy-and-plans/Regional-Policy-Statement/Regional-Policy-Statement-Review
Coromandel Blueprint	EW, TCDC, iwi	www.coroblueprint.govt.nz
Diversification of aquaculture	EW	www.ew.govt.nz/finfish
Hauraki District Plan Review	HDC	www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz
Henderson Valley Local Area Plans	WCC	www.waitakere.govt.nz/abtci/ne/localareaplans.asp
Draft Regional Parks Management Plan	ARC	www.arc.govt.nz/parks/parksprojects-and-plans
Fort Takapuna - Reserve Management Plan	NSCC, DoC	richard.hughes@northshorecity.govt.nz

The Hauraki Gulf Forum is a statutory body responsible for the integrated management of the Hauraki Gulf. The Forum has representation on behalf of the Ministers of Conservation, Fisheries and Maori Affairs, Auckland Regional Council and Environment Waikato, ten local authorities (Rodney, Franklin, Waikato, Hauraki, Thames Coromandel and Matamata Piako District Councils, North Shore, Waitakere, Auckland and Manukau City Councils), plus six representatives of the tangata whenua of the Hauraki Gulf and its islands.

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