Hauraki Gulf Forum
Tīkapa Moana
Te Moananui-ā-Toi

PĀNUI PĀPĀHO | MEDIA RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Auckland Local Boards join call to ban bottom trawling in the Hauraki Gulf

In a historic display of regional unity, the Hauraki Gulf Forum has today welcomed the unanimous endorsement by Auckland's 21 Local Board Chairs for a total prohibition of bottom trawling within Tīkapa Moana / Te Moananui-ā-Toi (the Hauraki Gulf).

Representing over 1.7 million residents in their constituencies, the Auckland Local Board Chairs Forum has issued a formal letter of support, describing the Hauraki Gulf as being in "distress" and identifying bottom trawling as one of the most destructive activities preventing its recovery.

Nicola Rata-MacDonald, Co-Chair of the Hauraki Gulf Forum (the Forum), welcomes the formidable alignment on this kaupapa.

"We are delighted to receive the unanimous backing of every single Local Board Chair across Tāmaki Makaurau which sends an undeniable message that communities are uniting in supporting a prohibition of bottom trawling within the Hauraki Gulf."

"The Hauraki Gulf is a taonga, our playground, and our pātaka kai, but it is in trouble. While the Hauraki Gulf Tīkapa Moana Marine Protection Act 2025 was a step forward, we cannot achieve genuine seafloor regeneration while commercial fishing, by way of bottom trawling, continues to damage and disrupt these ecosystems," she says.

The Hauraki Gulf Marine Park (Ko te Pataka kai o Tīkapa Moana Te Moananui ā Toi) is New Zealand's first and largest marine park, established in 2000 to protect over 1.2 million hectares of marine, island, and coastal areas. There are more than 50 islands within the park, many of which are public conservation lands and waters.

The Forum will be holding its first hui of the year on Monday 23 March 2026, at the Reid Homestead, Home Bay, Motutapu, starting at 1:00pm.

“In receiving a letter of this magnitude, and with our first hui of the year imminent, it provides excitement and energy for this convening of our members. We are positively encouraged by the endorsement from our Auckland community representatives.”

“It increases the wind in our sails to continue our advocacy efforts and to strongly press for a transition to sustainable fishing methods and technologies that align with the restoration of the Marine Park,” says Rata-MacDonald.

The formal letter of support is attached.

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Notes to Editors:

The Hauraki Gulf Marine Park

The Hauraki Gulf Marine Park is New Zealand’s first marine park, established by the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act in February 2000. At 1.2 million hectares (20 times the size of Lake Taupō) it stretches from Te Arai in the north to Waihi in the south and includes the Waitematā Harbour, Gulf Islands, Firth of Thames and the east coast of the Coromandel Peninsula. The Park is the seabird capital of the world, and a whale superhighway, but as successive State of the Gulf reports have shown, it is a shadow of its former self.

The Hauraki Gulf Forum

The Hauraki Gulf Forum is a statutory governance board established under the *Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000* to promote the conservation and management of the natural, historic, and physical resources of the Hauraki Gulf, its islands, and catchments, for the benefit and enjoyment of the people and communities of the Gulf and New Zealand.

The Forum consists of representatives from tangata whenua of the Hauraki Gulf and its islands; the Ministers of Conservation, Oceans and Fisheries and Māori Development; and elected members appointed by the Auckland Council, Hauraki District Council, Matamata-Piako District Council, Thames-Coromandel District Council, Waikato District Council and Waikato Regional Council. See here for the members full list.

The Forum is required to present triennial reports regarding the state of the environment of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. More information on the Forum and the Marine Park is available at www.haurakigulf.org.nz