Hauraki Gulf Forum
Tīkapa Moana
Te Moananui-ā-Toi

PĀNUI PĀPĀHO | MEDIA RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rockpools get a two-year reprieve, thanks to mana whenua leadership

The Hauraki Gulf Forum (Forum) today welcomes the announcement by Government to uphold the application made by Ngāti Manuhiri Settlement Trust for a two-year closure on rockpool harvesting within areas of the Trust's rohe (along the east coast of Auckland, including the Hauraki Gulf islands, within the Rodney and Hibiscus Bays Local Board boundaries).

The announcement, made by the Minister for Fisheries Shane Jones, recognises the ecological vulnerability of rockpools and the importance of sustainable management. The concern expressed is heartening in the context of the wider marine environment where there is so much more mahi to do.

The closure provides statutory support (under s.186A of the Fisheries Act) for the rāhui to be laid by Ngāti Manuhiri Settlement Trust. It also gives some much-anticipated clarity on rules. A new map shows where the shoreline restrictions are alongside High Protection Areas and Marine Reserves.

The Forum acknowledges the comments from Oceans and Fisheries Under-Secretary Jenny Marcroft, regarding the importance of collaboration and providing accessible information.

Nicola Rata-MacDonald, Co-Chair of the Forum, says: "People will do the right thing if they know the rules. Connecting with the community enables these rules to be communicated in the most effective way, so that everyone understands them and feels safe."

“Rockpools are essential parts of our coastal and marine environment and the taonga species that live there play a crucial role within the wider ecosystem. They are also where our tamariki get their first glimpse of our incredible marine life. It’s where the learning starts – and the appreciation that everything is connected. This reprieve allows our rockpools to recover and regenerate.”

Many areas of shoreline within the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park have been under significant pressure for years, and the Forum welcomes these restrictions, that come into force on 12th March 2026. It looks forward to engaging in the broader programme of work underway by Fisheries NZ for managing intertidal areas around Tāmaki Makaurau and the Coromandel indicated by the Minister.

Hauraki Gulf Forum Executive Officer, Beth Rose, supported the ongoing strategy development for better management of these sensitive shorelines: "We’re fortunate that mana whenua are keeping watch along the coast; stepping up with rāhui to protect marine life. Ultimately, they shouldn’t have to lay rāhui; it is a stressful point to get to.”

“Government’s support for closing rockpool harvesting in this rohe adds to the broader patchwork of much-needed protections that are gradually increasing in Tīkapa Moana / Te Moananui-ā-Toi, which the Forum has continuously advocated for. An ambitious, holistic, collaborative, and faster-paced approach is needed if we are to see lasting abundance return to this nationally-significant Marine Park,” she said.

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Notes to Editors:

Ngāti Manuhiri Settlement Trust S186a Application

Ngāti Manuhiri Settlement Trust sought a temporary two-year closure under Section 186A of the Fisheries Act 1996 to prohibit the harvest of all invertebrate and seaweed species from the intertidal zone down to one metre below chart datum. The proposed closure area spans the east coast of Auckland, including the Hauraki Gulf islands, within the Rodney and Hibiscus Bays Local Board boundaries.

The application responds to widespread ecological decline and community concern over the unsustainable harvesting of kaimoana and other intertidal species. Long-term monitoring and mātauranga Māori identified significant reductions in the abundance and size of key species such as cockles, pipi, green-lipped mussels, and kina. The closure aims to support the recovery of these taonga species, uphold customary practices, and restore the mauri of the moana.

https://www.mpi.govt.nz/consultations/proposed-temporary-fisheries-closure-in-the-hauraki-gulf

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 – Tīkapa Moana / Te Moananui-ā-Toi

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. 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.haurakigulfforum.org.nz