

OUR MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Hawke's Bay Regional Council manages the coastal marine environment out to the 12 nautical mile limit. This covers both water quality and land-based effects on our marine environment.

Other organisations with responsibilities in the marine area are the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) for fisheries management, and the Department of Conservation for protection and conservation responsibilities. While we know a good deal about it, the coastal marine environment is so large and diverse that there is still a lot we do not understand.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO FIX?

We want a healthier coastal marine environment and to restore the abundance of local fisheries.

We want to take a holistic approach to our coastal marine environment.

Council would like to use a potential environmental fund to kick start a programme of marine research to find out what we don't know. We will need the support of recreational, customary and commercial fishers to find out more and decide how we can better manage our marine environment.

Council's goal is to reduce the amount of sediment and contaminants coming off the land into the coastal marine environment, and improve the knowledge of the important habitats found there.



WHAT DO WE KNOW? HABITAT

The Hawke's Bay coastline stretches 353km from the Mahia Peninsula and Mahanga in the north, to just south of Porangahau. The coastline has a wide variety of geology and habitats including intertidal reefs, sandy and gravel beaches, sand dunes, herb fields and estuaries.

Rock platforms and reefs are biodiversity hotspots while fine sand and mud subtidal environments can contain animal communities not found anywhere else in New Zealand.

Estuaries and lagoons are often important gathering and feeding areas for migratory and native wading birds; they are also significant nursery, feeding and spawning areas for fish. Gravel banks are essential roosting areas for sea birds.

The deep ocean ridges support a wide range of fish species, while Mahia Peninsula has subtidal areas of significant ecological value.

Land adjacent to the coastal marine area is a highly modified landscape due to widespread clearance of native vegetation since the mid-1800s for sheep and beef farming. A lot of sediment and nutrients comes off Hawke's Bay land and goes into the marine environment. There is data on the impact of sediment on estuaries and lagoons but its wider effect on marine habitats and species is unknown.



WHAT DO WE KNOW? FISHERIES

The Hawke's Bay region is well known as supporting a mixed-species fishery of terakihi, gurnard, snapper and flounder in its coastal waters. However there is widespread concern among commercial, customary, and recreational fishers over the current state of the Hawke's Bay fishery, as reported in the Hawke's Bay Marine Information: Review and Research Strategy in 2016.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

WHAT IS BEING DONE?



HBRC MANAGEMENT

HBRC routinely samples coastal water quality and monitors intertidal habitats. The HawQi buoy, installed off the coast of Tangoio in 2011, provides a constant data feed on water quality.

A HBRC commissioned report 'Hawke's Bay Marine Information: Review and Research Strategy' was provided to Council in June 2016.

HBRC chairs the Hawke's Bay Marine & Coastal Group which is acting on recommendations from this report and prioritising work for action. The group includes representation from commercial, recreational and customary fisheries, tāngata whenua, DOC, MPI and HBRC.

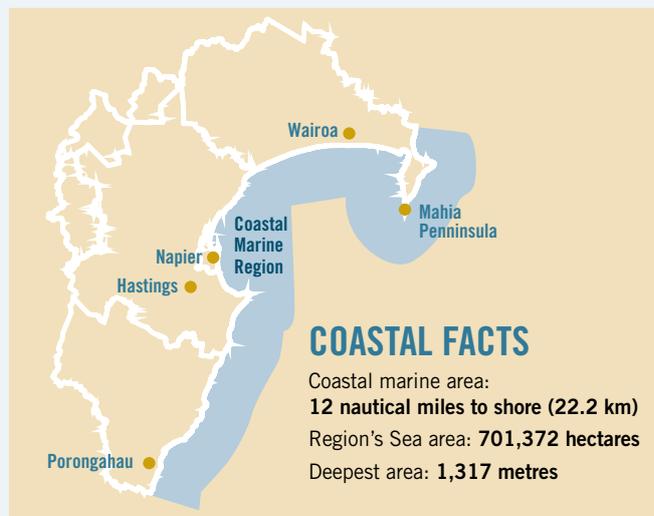


FISHERIES

The commercial and recreational fishing sectors are collaborating on a number of measures to improve the sustainability of Hawke's Bay fisheries including voluntary closed areas and different net designs to release small fish.

TĀNGATA WHENUA

Tāngata whenua have a strong affinity with the moana (sea). In Hawke's Bay there is deep concern over the state of the marine environment. Several groups are being proactive in efforts to restore habitats and monitor and conserve populations of taonga species.



KNOWLEDGE GAPS

The Hawke's Bay Marine Information: Review and Research Strategy of 2016 identified a number of gaps in our knowledge about the coastal marine environment. These gaps highlight how basic our knowledge of the coastal marine environment is.

We lack basic information around the location and condition of the important subtidal habitats in Hawke's Bay. We also don't understand the drivers of fisheries productivity in the bay, the areas that are important and the impact of stressors on these areas. We do not understand how things have changed over time or the influence of climatic variability on the species found within the bay.

The Council's proposed kickstart environmental fund will help to fill some of these knowledge gaps.

FURTHER READING - The following recent reports are available online at www.hbrc.govt.nz. Both are large documents so be aware before downloading and printing.

Hawke's Bay Marine Information: Review and Research Strategy, eCoast/eTakutai & HBRC 2016
search on #coastalecology and look under Related Documents (121 pages)

Hawke's Bay Biodiversity Inventory, HBRC 2014
www.hbrc.govt.nz search on #biodiversity and look under Related Documents (101 pages)



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