



Coastal Environment



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HAWKES BAY
REGIONAL COUNCIL
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What do we know?

Hawke's Bay has over 350 kilometres of open coast and estuary shoreline. This includes rocky shores, cliffs, dunes, sandy beaches and gravel beaches. The natural geology of the region's coastline provides a diverse range of homes for the creatures that live at the edge of the coast and in the sea.

In the south, coastal cliffs, sandy beaches, extensive dune systems and rock platforms characterise the coastline between Cape Turnagain and Cape Kidnappers. River mouths, estuaries, gravel beaches and herb fields are typical coastal habitats between Te Awanga and Tangoio.

In central areas north of Tangoio, steep cliffs and associated rocky reefs extend up to the Waikari River mouth. Between the Waikari and Nuhaka river mouths the coastline is typically low-lying dunes and sand and gravel beaches.

In the north of the region, the Māhia Peninsula has large sandy beaches, extensive dune systems and expansive rock platforms.

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The Hawke Bay coast and marine environment has:

5 major estuaries:
Pōrangahau, Waitangi, Ahuriri, Wairoa and Maungawhio

21 significant coastal areas

A **sub-tidal area** that covers **701,372** hectares

Large rocky reefs at Bull Rock, Portland Island and Long Point (Māhia Peninsula), Pania Reef, Black Reef, Hinemahanga rocks and inshore reefs between Aramoana and Paoanio Point

Deep reef and sandbanks in the Lachlan ridge, southwest of Māhia

Coastal Environment

The health of the coast and the sea life it sustains support customary rights and practices, native species, mahinga kai, landscape and natural character, extensive recreational activities and underpin a substantial economic contribution to the Hawke's Bay region.

Wairoa and Northern Coast

The coastal areas of northern Hawke's Bay include Māhia Peninsula, which attracts thousands of people every year to its local beaches, for fishing and other recreational opportunities. Some valued coastal ecosystems are being negatively affected by associated human activities including vehicles, structures and discharges. Wastewater discharges to the coast and estuaries, including from the Wairoa township, are of concern to local people.

Research has enabled better understanding of a key ecological area, the Wairoa Hard, an important area for biological diversity. Further research is underway on the seabed around the Māhia Peninsula.

Coastal erosion is a problem for parts of the coast, but further analysis of the effects of climate change on erosion and inundation risk is required.

Coastal water quality and shellfish monitoring show occasional issues with contamination, especially in the Maungawhio Lagoon.

Three Mātaitai reserves are in place to protect local iwi values at Te Hoe, Toka Tāmure and Horokaka.

Mohaka

Water quality monitoring is carried out at the coast near Mohaka River. High levels of sediment enter the marine environment from Mohaka River due to land use activities. Hydro-dynamic modelling is helping to show the distribution of this sediment.

Erosion and inundation hazard areas along the Mohaka coastal environment need to be updated.

Esk and Waikari

Water quality monitoring is carried out at the coast near Whirinaki, and Waipātiki as part of the swim-season recreational water survey.

Erosion and inundation hazard areas along the Esk and Waikari coastal environment need to be updated.

The Moremore Mātaitai reserve is located along the coast just north of the Esk River.

Heretaunga and Ahuriri

The estuary and coastal waters of the Heretaunga and Ahuriri catchments are valued highly for their natural functions and biodiversity.

The Napier Port and inner harbour are located at Ahuriri. The Port is a pivotal link in a national and international shipping network, connecting local businesses and facilitating trade as well as tourism via the cruise industry. The inner harbour provides marina and local fishery facilities and is the focus of a key community recreation and business hub.

Coastal water quality monitoring, including a swim-season recreational water survey happens every year in estuaries and along the coast.

The Ahuriri and Waitangi estuaries are showing signs of stress from freshwater inputs, including sediment and nutrients. Contaminants enter these estuaries from the nearby urban areas of Napier and Hastings in stormwater and wastewater discharges, and from rural land uses.

The Regional Council is leading a community based coastal hazards strategy to address the climate change effects of inundation and erosion alongside Hastings and Napier Councils.

The Moremore Mātaitai reserve covers Pānia Reef which is highly valued by local Māori.

Tukituki

The physical extent of the Tukituki River mouth is smaller than other catchments in the region, but it contributes 20% of the dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) into Hawke Bay.

Pōrangahau and Southern Coast

The significant and valued ecosystems along the southern coast include several intertidal platforms, the Pōrangahau Estuary and Cape Kidnappers.

Te Angiangi Marine Reserve is the only marine reserve in Hawke's Bay. Pōrangahau has an identified taiāpure, a local fishery of special significance.

Water quality monitoring is carried out at the Pōrangahau Estuary which shows signs of sediment stress.

Erosion and inundation hazard areas along the Pōrangahau and Southern coastal environment need to be updated



How we are doing?

The marine and coastal environment area is managed under a range of national and local legislation including the Resource Management Act (RMA) and New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS), the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and Regional Coastal Environment Plan (RCEP). This area, including its fisheries, is also managed by other legislation under the Marine and Coastal Area Act (Takutai Moana) and the Maritime Transport Act.

The current RPS and RCEP do not give full effect to the NZCPS. A range of amendments would be required to give effect to the NZCPS to better recognise and enable appropriate use and development and to better protect valued ecosystems.

A report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the RCEP identified management gaps relating to coastal erosion and inundation risks from climate change, including gaps relating to new information about sea level rise and the management of use and development activities (especially structures) that are likely to be impacted.

Non rule-based implementation methods are being successfully carried out with ongoing commitment to environmental education and land-based restoration and rehabilitation programmes, such as erosion control schemes and wetland restoration projects.

While State of the Environment (SoE) monitoring shows that estuaries remain under significant stress due to land-uses in their catchments, targeted environmental funding is enabling restoration in the Pōrangahau and Ahuriri estuaries. Recreational water quality monitoring shows that beach sites are swimmable 97% of the time and estuary/lagoon sites are swimmable 88% of the time.

An increasing concern is the freshwater inputs – including nutrients enriching estuary ecosystems and sediment – into the wider coastal environment.

Coastal water quality and ecosystems

- Generally ok, but some water quality issues near Awatoto and Haumoana are impacting chlorophyll levels
- Low dissolved oxygen at times, means it's harder for fish to breathe
- "Heat wave" occurrences
- Concerns about sediment levels impacting water clarity and depositing into sensitive areas.
- Elevated algal growth near the Tukituki river

Estuaries

- Sediment stress evident in lower and upper Ahuriri, the Pōrangahau, Waitangi, Tukituki and Wairoa Estuaries
- Nutrient enrichment and contaminants from urban and rural areas are a risk to the Waitangi and Ahuriri estuaries
- Phosphorous enrichment in places
- Some sites have consistently poor recreational water quality, including at Waipātiki, Kairākau and Pōrangahau Estuary.

Sandy beaches

- Sand dune ecosystems are under stress from pests
- Vehicles and farm animals on beaches and sand dunes

are a developing issue – poses a safety risk and damages the ecology.

Intertidal reefs

- Appear stable but are impacted by marine heatwaves
- Seagrass is an important coastal habitat – vulnerable to loss and decline in some places
- Impacts from vehicles in some valued coastal ecosystem areas.

Research Strategy

The Regional Council worked collaboratively with the Hawke's Bay Marine and Coastal Group to prepare a research strategy in 2016. The aim was to work out how to fill knowledge gaps about the marine environment with representatives from commercial, recreational and customary fisheries, iwi groups, the Department of Conservation, the Ministry for Primary Industries, and the Regional Council. The Group is now acting on the recommendations of the report.

The group is currently working with the Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge to model stressor levels in the Hawke's Bay marine environment. The goal is to help inform an ecosystem-based management approach. The research outputs will inform the review of the Regional Coastal Environment Plan.

Where to from here?

The current plans to manage the coastal environment and marine areas of Hawke's Bay are out-dated. They require review to ensure they give effect to national policy, particularly the NZCPS.

Freshwater also needs to be managed in a more integrated way, given its direct inputs into estuaries and open coastal waters.

The Kotahi Plan will review how:

- Contaminants are managed, especially sediment and rural and urban pollutants entering estuary and coastal areas
- The sustainable use and development of coastal environments is recognised and provided for, such as activities associated with energy generation and transmission, aquaculture, ports, walking and vehicle access, coastal erosion and inundation
- Significant areas are identified and managed, with adequate protection for areas of outstanding natural character, landscapes, biodiversity and landscape values in both the coastal margin and the coastal marine area
- Coastal hazards are recognised and managed for the impacts of climate change, considering national climate change guidance and new sea level rise scenarios, including a review of current hazard zones. Also refer to the Natural Hazards fact sheet.