

## 10. Marine

### 10.1 OVERVIEW

#### Description

The Wellington Conservancy coastline is 480 km long and includes a variety of substrate types, wave climates and current regimes.

The coastal and marine environments of the Conservancy fall into four general categories:

- The west coast from Manawatu River to the Fisherman's Table Restaurant dune at Paekakariki is an open sandy coastline, with gentle slopes, backed by an extensive dune system and divided by a repetitive sequence of rivers. This is a high-energy shore with wave heights commonly exceeding 3 m. Only in the lee of Kapiti Island, where a cusped headland has developed, is the region protected to a degree.
- From Paekakariki around the Wellington South Coast to Cape Palliser, the coastline is a series of steep cliffs backing wave-cut rocky platforms and narrow gravel and sand beaches. Palliser Bay is the exception, with its long exposed beach of alluvial gravel and cobbles broken by the estuarine Lake Onoke. The coast is open to prevailing westerly, northwesterly and southerly winds and is a high-energy shore.
- From Cape Palliser to Cape Turnagain, much of the Wairarapa coast consists of wave-swept rock platforms backed by boulder and cobble beaches. Limestone cliffs occur at Castlepoint and Cape Turnagain. River mouths have usually formed alluvial flats that meet the sea as sandy bays with a northward-facing spit. The coast is a high-energy lee shore, with a prevailing deep water wave of southerly origin.
- Porirua and Wellington Harbours provide more sheltered marine habitats. Porirua Harbour has a area of 15 km<sup>2</sup> and consists of two inlets with common access to the sea via a narrow entrance to the north. The harbour contains the only extensive tidal mud flat and estuarine shore along an otherwise exposed rocky coastline. Wellington Harbour is the only large sheltered embayment on the Wellington South Coast. The harbour has a surface area of 85 km<sup>2</sup>. The sea floor slopes down to a maximum depth of 31 m near its centre; the bottom is silt and sand. Beaches are wave-cut rock platforms interspersed with sandy beaches.

#### Values

- Habitats from sandy seabed on the west coast to rocky platforms and reefs on the Wellington South Coast and Wairarapa coast, and estuaries at Pauatahanui Inlet and some river mouths. Seven marine ecological districts are recognised, and two marine biological zones overlap.
- Commercial and recreational fishery resources, and recreational activities in the marine environment, are an important component of recreational activity in the Conservancy.

#### Threats

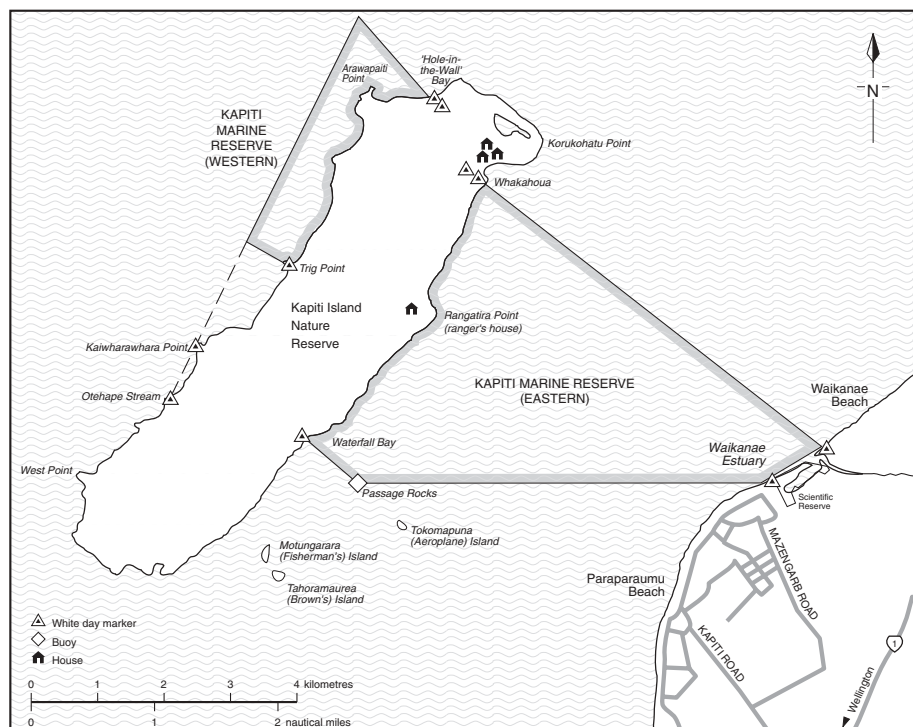
- Pollution from untreated shoreline discharges on the Wellington South Coast, the Kapiti Coast, and in Wellington and Porirua Harbours.

**Key Conservation Issues for the Conservancy**

- Risk to indigenous marine species by accidental introduction of exotic species via hull fouling and discharge of ships' ballast water.
- Siltation caused by poor land management practices, particularly in Pauatahanui Inlet and Lake Onoke.
- Depletion of some species due to unlicensed and illegal fishing.
- Damage to seabed habitats resulting from fishing and aquaculture.
- Lack of knowledge nationally about the coastal sub-tidal zone. Information is limited to a few discrete areas, generally close to urban centres where development proposals have required investigations. Expanding the Department's knowledge will be a key task.
- The need to advocate for land management practices which will reduce the amount of silt and any other contamination reaching sheltered marine environments.
- Identify, propose and assess extensions to and new proposals for marine reserves, including proposals put forward by other organisations. [refer Section 17, p 169]
- Participation in contingency planning for marine pollution events, such as oil spills.
- Involvement in planning of coastal marine area, to fulfil the Department's functions under the Resource Management Act 1991.
- Advocating for the conservation of marine resources as part of New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity.
- The need for improved water quality in the coastal environment . [refer Section 18, p 173]

10.2 KAPITI MARINE RESERVE

Map 38:  
Kapiti Marine Reserve



**Description**

Kapiti Marine Reserve comprises two areas covering 2167 ha.

The boundary adjoining the mainland is a line between mean high water spring points on the boundaries to the northeast and southwest of Waikanae Estuary, and the Kapiti Island boundaries extend to mean low water spring.

The Reserve protects representative areas of four seabed habitat types:

- Silt, sand and gravel bottom to depths of 80 m subject to strong currents in channels, partly sheltered by Kapiti Island; seaweed uncommon; worms, shellfish, gurnard, goatfish and skate common.
- Narrow boulder-rock reefs with sand patches; strong tidal currents; sheltered by Kapiti Island; moderate seaweed cover; spotties, eagle rays, goatfish, blue cod, and tarakihi common.
- Extensive boulder reefs; large blocks of rock at headlands; clear water; exposed; luxuriant seaweed cover; butterflyfish, butterfly perch and red moki common; wide range of bottom dwellers such as sea sponges.
- Sheltered shallow sand habitat of Waikanae and Paraparaumu Beaches around Waikanae River outlet.

**Management Structure**

Management of the Kapiti Marine Reserve involves a Kapiti Marine Reserve Committee. Representatives of the community, including scientific and local recreational interests, are on the committee. Half of the places on the committee are representatives nominated by iwi. Iwi who nominated representatives to the Committee were Ngati Toa Rangitira, Ati Awa ki Whakarongotai and Ngati Raukawa ki te Tonga. The Committee has been established under section 56 of the Conservation Act and has been appointed as a sub-committee of the Wellington Conservation Board, in accordance with the provisions of section 6 N(2)(b) of the Conservation Act.

The Committee provides a direct link between the Kapiti Coast and the wider community and the Crown on matters relating to the management of Kapiti Marine Reserve. The role of the committee is to advise on objectives and implementation to be included in the conservation management plan for the reserve and approve the plan, to provide advice about the CMP's implementation to the Department, provide local information to aid management of the reserve, and to advise on conservation matters related to the marine reserve.

**Values**

- Kapiti Marine Reserve provides protection for examples of a wide range of southern North Island marine habitats, a mixture of northern and southern species and areas of outstanding underwater scenery features. The Eastern Reserve provides a link of protection between Kapiti Island Nature Reserve [*refer Section 9.2, p 109*] and Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve [*refer Section 7.4, p 86*], which adjoin the Marine Reserve.
- The Western Reserve is notable for outstanding water clarity, spectacular large boulders and a wide diversity of underwater plants and animals. Arapawaiti Point has an outstanding area for sponges, including at least 10 regionally rare and four nationally rare species.
- The Eastern Reserve adjoins an intertidal area typical of a rocky coastline of central New Zealand.
- Because of its non-extractive management, the marine reserve will result in greatly enhanced marine habitat. It will, therefore, give

valuable insight into the functioning of marine ecosystems where human influence is minimised, provide an invaluable scientific “control” against which to compare other, non-reserved, areas, provide a rare opportunity for recreationists to experience an unexploited marine world, and serve as a centre from which reef fish and shellfish species may colonise adjacent areas.

- Integrated protection of the land and sea around Kapiti Island where Kapiti Island Nature Reserve adjoins Kapiti Marine Reserve.

### **Management Issues**

The theme of management for the Marine Reserve will be management of the human influences on the reserve and its values, rather than management of the natural characteristics of the reserve itself, having regard to the management objectives set out in section 11(a) of the Marine Reserves Act.

Key issues will be:

- Compliance with and enforcement of the no-fishing restriction
- Control of the effects of recreational uses of the marine reserve
- Encouragement of and control of scientific study in the marine reserve, especially where this involves experimental modification of habitats or species.
- Boundary marking – particularly important for compliance and enforcement.
- Education and interpretation which will become increasingly important as pressure of recreational use of the marine reserve increases.

### **Objectives**

- 1 Protection and preservation of the marine life and marine habitat in the Kapiti Marine Reserve.
- 2 Provision for scientific research within the marine reserve.
- 3 Monitoring of the effect of the establishment of the reserve on marine habitats, and flora and fauna.
- 4 Encouragement of recreational enjoyment of the reserve.
- 5 Increased public awareness of the reserve and of its values and place in conserving New Zealand’s marine environment.
- 6 Co-operative working relationship with tangata whenua to conserve and manage the Reserve.

### **Implementation**

- 1 Prepare a Conservation Management Plan for the Marine Reserve pursuant to section 17 E of the Conservation Act and section 8 of the Marine Reserves Act [*refer Section 25, p 209*].
- 2 Mark the boundaries of the reserve so that the public can clearly identify the boundaries.
- 3 Provide information and advice to users of the marine reserve about the marine reserve boundaries, the various habitats of the marine reserve, particular special features of the marine reserve, conditions in the marine reserve relating to navigation and safety, and compliance and law enforcement.
- 4 Provide administrative support and technical advice to Kapiti Marine Reserve Committee.
- 5 Encourage monitoring and research; in particular, ensure the baseline inventory is surveyed regularly.

- 6 Undertake regular patrols to ensure compliance, and prosecute offences within the marine reserve – especially those which have a serious impact on its values, are repeat offences or are for commercial gain.
- 7 Investigate interpretation and community involvement opportunities in management to increase public understanding and appreciation of the conservation values of the marine reserve.
- 8 Consult with tangata whenua and involve them in the Kapiti Marine Reserve Committee to identify and have regard to their interests.
- 9 Consult with the local community, recreation and boating groups and other interest groups, and involve them in the Kapiti Marine Reserve Committee to identify and have regard to their interests.

