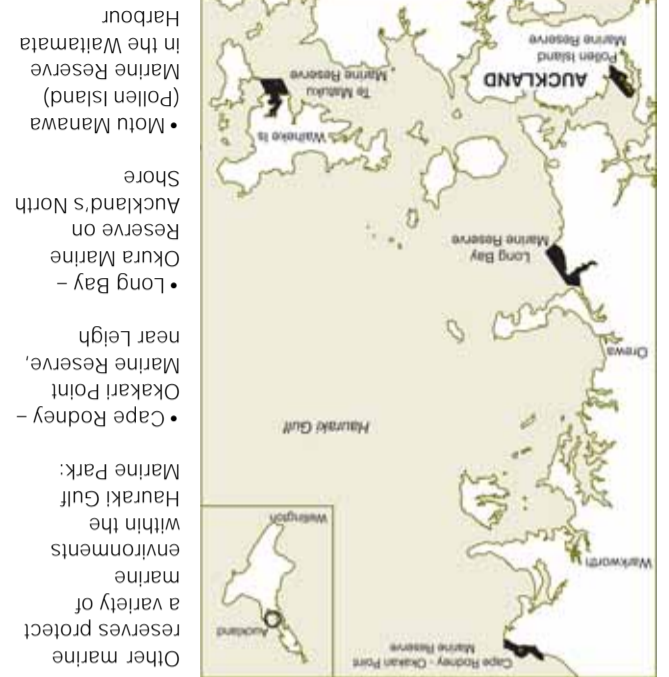


Marine reserves are areas of sea and foreshore where all of the marine life is totally protected. They are the national parks of the marine world and fishing, shellfish gathering and any other disturbance of marine life is prohibited. Marine species and habitats are left to grow naturally and degraded areas allowed to recover. This makes them ideal places to study marine ecosystems, and for comparisons with other unprotected marine areas.

What are marine reserves?



A network of marine reserves

Other marine reserves protect a variety of marine environments within the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park: Cape Rodney - Okakari Point Marine Reserve, near Leigh Long Bay - Okura Marine Reserve on Auckland's North Shore • Motu Manawa Marine Reserve (Pollen Island) in the Waitamata Harbour

Te Matuku Marine Reserve

Te Matuku Marine Reserve protects one of Waiheke Island's largest and least disturbed estuaries and extends seaward to include an area outside the bay in the Waiheke Channel. Te Matuku Bay has many special features. Its outstanding natural areas link native bush with freshwater and coastal wetlands to the sea and is one of the few intact estuarine systems like this left in northern New Zealand.

Te Matuku Marine Reserve Waiheke Island

Hauraki Gulf Marine Park

AUCKLAND

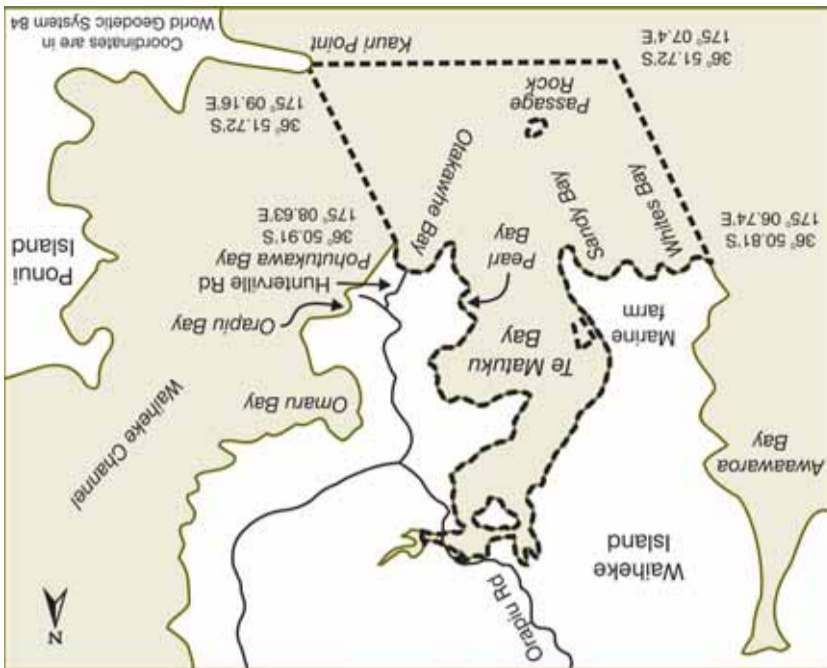
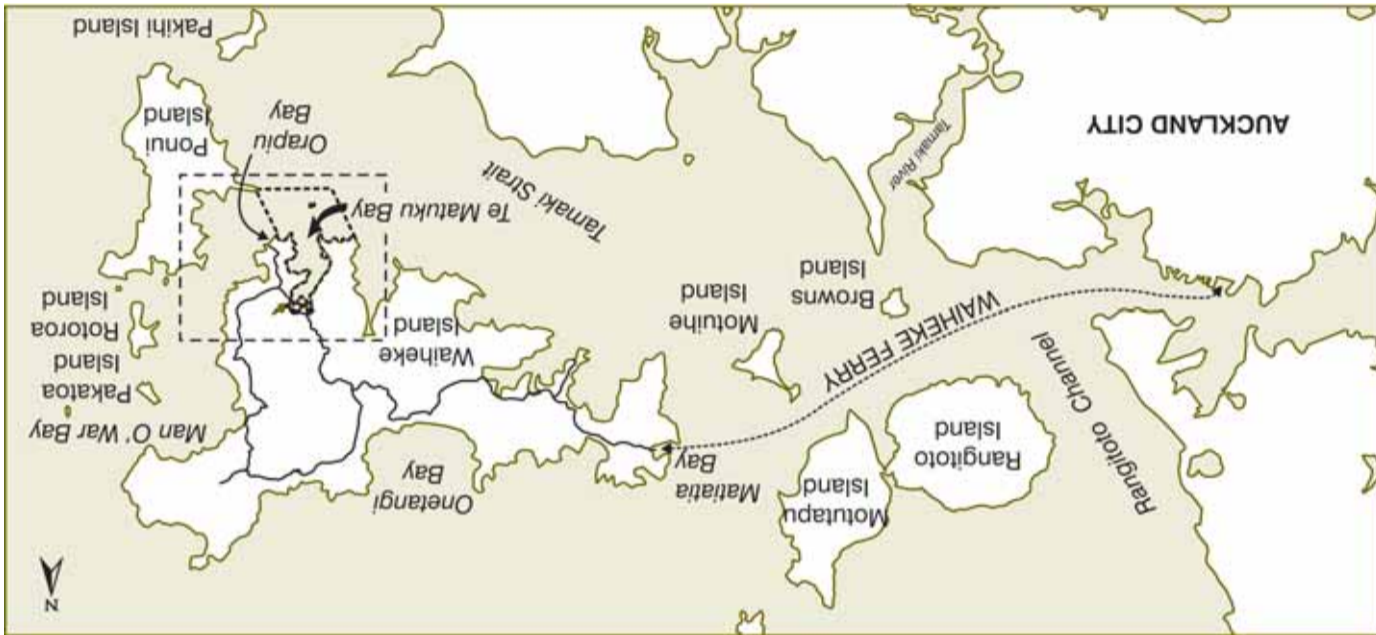


Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai

How to get there

The 690ha marine reserve includes all of Te Matuku Bay, apart from a small marine farm area on the outer western shore, and extends into deeper water across Waiheke Channel beyond Passage Rock. The boundaries are from the mean high water mark around Te Matuku Bay and the bays at its entrance (Whites Bay, Little Bay, Sandy Bay and Otakawhe Bay) out to a line level with Kauri Point on Ponui Island.

Marine reserve boundaries



The reserve is located at the far south-east corner of Waiheke Island and can be accessed by land and sea. By land access is via Orapu Road, which skirts around the head of Te Matuku Bay and continues out to Orapu Bay (about 30 minutes from the wharf in Matatia Bay). There are good views of Te Matuku Bay at several points along this road. Pearl Bay, on the outer eastern side of Te Matuku Bay, is a 20 minute walk from Otakawhe Bay at the end of Hunterville Road.

A place to look and learn

People are welcome to visit the Te Matuku Marine Reserve to picnic, swim, snorkel, dive, take photos, kayak and watch birds. Water within the tidal bay is often murky and not great for underwater viewing.

Te Matuku Bay is home to a variety of bird life, some of which is very sensitive to disturbance. The endangered New Zealand dotterel breeds on the shell spits. Breeding pairs are easily disturbed and may abandon their nests and young if people approach.

Dogs are not allowed on the shell spits as they put ground-nesting birds, like the New Zealand dotterel, at risk.



Boating

Boats are allowed within the marine reserve but care should be taken to avoid damaging marine life by dragging anchors. No waste or ballast water should be discharged within the reserve boundaries.

Passage Rock is an important navigation aid and boats commonly pass between it and Te Matuku Bay through the marine reserve. Navigation within the reserve is not restricted.

Help take care of this reserve

Te Matuku Marine Reserve is managed by the Department of Conservation Auckland Area Office. Its rangers watch over the area and enforce the "no take" restrictions.

All marine life within the marine reserve is protected from disturbance or harm, including all plants and animals. No fishing or collecting marine life is allowed or unnecessary disturbance. The seabed, foreshore and all natural material such as sand, rocks and shells are also protected.



In the interests of visitor safety there is a 5 knot restriction on all vessels within 200 metres of a divers flag or the shoreline, or 30 metres from a person in the water or another vessel.

The success of a marine reserve depends on a caring community that supports conserving the reserve in its natural state for all to enjoy. Please report any breaches of these rules to the Department of Conservation on the 24 hour DOC HOTline 0800 362 468.

For more information or to report any offences contact:

DOC Auckland Area Office
North Head Historic Reserve
Takarunga Rd, Devonport
Ph 09-445 9142 (office hours)

DOC Visitor Centre
Ground Floor Old Ferry Building
99 Quay St, Downtown
Ph 09-379 6476, fax 09-379 3609
Email: aucklandvc@doc.govt.nz
Website: www.doc.govt.nz

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468

Report any safety hazards or conservation emergencies
For fire and search and rescue call 111

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Marks of settlement

In pre-European times Te Matuku Bay was an important food gathering and canoe-landing place for Maori living in the coastal settlements and nearby mountain pa of Maunganui. Thick shell middens in the bay are evidence of its past bounty.

Te Matuku Bay was also Waiheke's earliest European settlement but all that remains are the sites of the first school and the Pioneer Cemetery at the head of the bay, both accessible from Orapiu Road.

Tangata whenua

Ngati Paoa is tangata whenua and traditional guardians for Waiheke and Te Matuku Bay, although other iwi, such as Hauraki, also have ancestral ties with this area. The area is of historic, cultural and spiritual importance to the tribe.

The estuary

The estuary extends from the seaward edge of the intertidal zone, over 28 hectares of mudflats, towards the land. Fine silty muds dominate this area, largely derived from sediment washed from the surrounding land.

A sequence of plants - from eel grass on the mudflats through mangrove and salt marsh, to maritime fringing bush and finally up into lowland broadleaf forest - is special because such natural successions of changing plant communities are now rare in northern New Zealand.

The eel grass (*Zostera*) grows patchily across the lower mudflats and may help stabilise the lower shore. The soft mudflats and intertidal sands of the bay provide habitat for a variety of shellfish such as cockles, pipi and wedge shells, and some seashore snails, crabs and worms.

All provide rich pickings for wading birds at low tide and, as the tide rises, juvenile flounder and mullet move in to feed on this abundant invertebrate marine life in the bay.

A place for birds

Two shell spits on the eastern side of Te Matuku Bay are important roosting and nesting areas for native and overseas migrant shorebirds. The variable oystercatcher, Caspian tern and the endangered New Zealand dotterel nest on these spits.

Annual migrants such as godwits, knots, sandpipers and turnstones, that breed on the Siberian tundra during the northern summer, fly south to avoid the winter there and enjoy another spring and summer in New Zealand.

Our internal migrants, wrybills and pied oystercatchers, that breed along the shingle banks of the South Island's braided rivers, overwinter in northern harbours and are frequent visitors to Te Matuku Bay.

Other coastal birds that live in or use the bay are banded dotterels, white-fronted terns, reef herons and spotless crakes. The Australasian bittern (or matuku), a rare wetland bird, has been recorded in the bay.

Special natural features

A special feature of the reserve is its diverse mix of habitats. It has saltwater wetlands, broad intertidal mudflats, low lying islands, shell spits, rocky shorelines and the deep water of the Waiheke Channel around Passage Rock. Each of these distinct marine habitats provide homes for particular groups of plants and animals.

Close to the head of Te Matuku Bay, mangroves grow in dense stands, especially along the banks of channels that run out onto the mudflats. The mangrove stands are havens for mud snails, mud crabs and other creatures which feed on the leaf litter and they are also a refuge for the birds that feed on these animals.

Behind the mangroves, the salt marsh of glasswort, rushes and sedges is submerged only by the high spring tides. It is fringed by salt meadow that includes a range of mostly herbaceous plants such as sea goosefoot, sea plantain, sea primrose, remuremu, shore celery and bachelor's button.

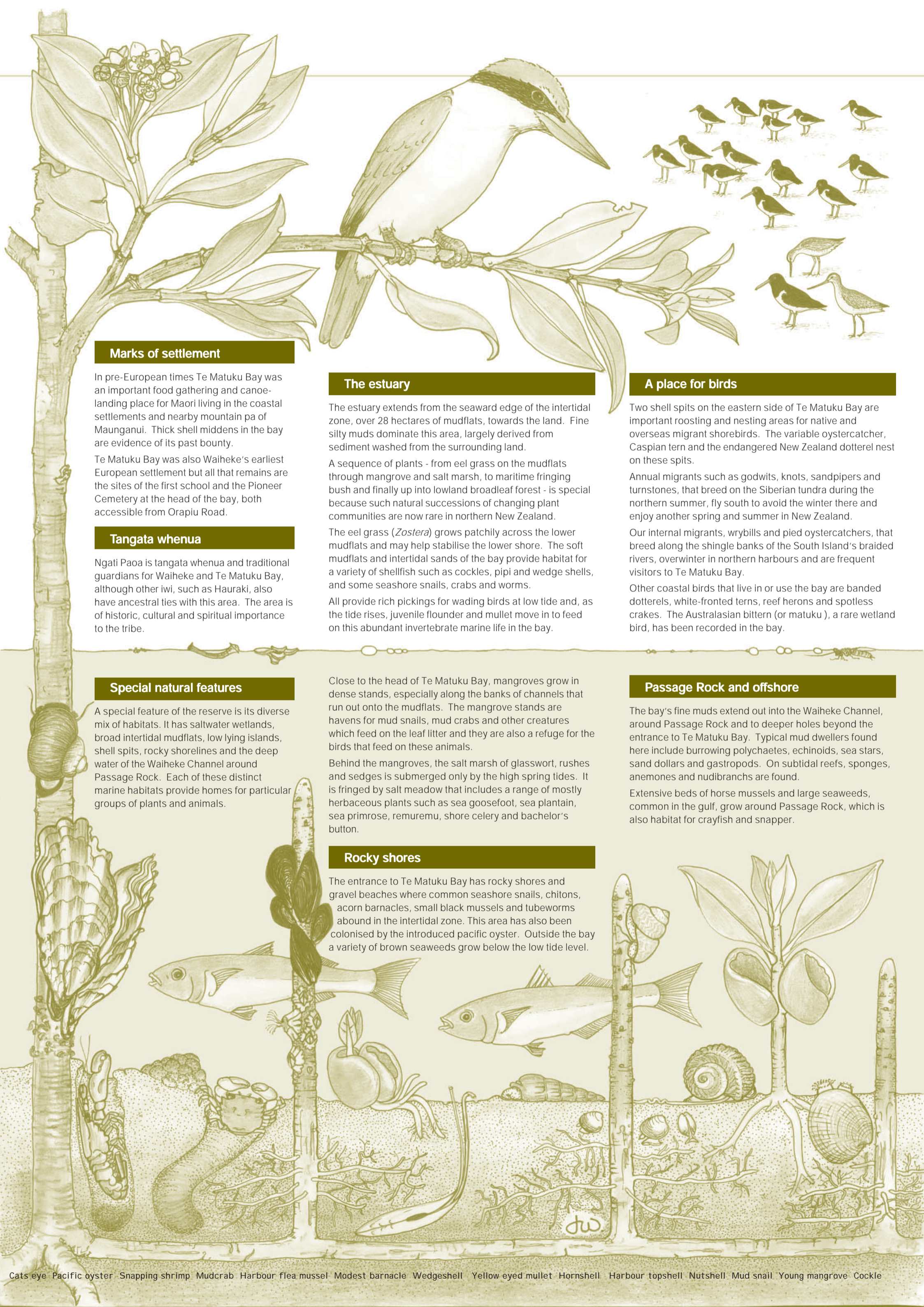
Rocky shores

The entrance to Te Matuku Bay has rocky shores and gravel beaches where common seashore snails, chitons, acorn barnacles, small black mussels and tubeworms abound in the intertidal zone. This area has also been colonised by the introduced pacific oyster. Outside the bay a variety of brown seaweeds grow below the low tide level.

Passage Rock and offshore

The bay's fine muds extend out into the Waiheke Channel, around Passage Rock and to deeper holes beyond the entrance to Te Matuku Bay. Typical mud dwellers found here include burrowing polychaetes, echinoids, sea stars, sand dollars and gastropods. On subtidal reefs, sponges, anemones and nudibranchs are found.

Extensive beds of horse mussels and large seaweeds, common in the gulf, grow around Passage Rock, which is also habitat for crayfish and snapper.



Cats eye Pacific oyster Snapping shrimp Mudcrab Harbour flea mussel Modest barnacle Wedgeshell Yellow eyed mullet Hornshell Harbour topshell Nutshell Mud snail Young mangrove Cockle