

## Island sanctuaries

The Hauraki Gulf's predator-free conservation islands provide a safe haven for rare and endangered plants and animals. These special places are the last remaining hope for the survival of some native species whose mainland habitats are destroyed or predator-ridden. Species such as stitchbird and tuatara are the focus of special recovery programmes on some island sanctuaries. Minimising human impacts in these sanctuaries and keeping them pest-free is essential.

Boats anchoring near or landing on island sanctuaries increase the risk of rat invasion. Rats can swim for up to 1500 metres. One pregnant female rat escaping from a boat could devastate entire reptile, bird and insect populations. Cats or dogs let loose in a nature reserve can have equally disastrous results.

Weeds can also be damaging. Seeds carried ashore clinging to shoes and clothing can germinate quickly and soon overwhelm native plant communities.

Fire is another threat with the potential to wipe out entire plant and animal populations. Accidental fires in the past have caused great destruction.

### Island nature reserves where landing is not allowed without a permit

- Poor Knights Islands
- Hen and Chickens
- Mokohinau Islands (all except Burgess Island)
- Little Barrier Island
- Cuvier Island
- Mercury Islands (all except Great Mercury Island which is privately owned)
- Alderman Islands
- Whangamata Islands



Tuatara, Little Barrier Island. Photo: DOC

## Help look after our islands

The Hauraki Gulf and the eastern coastline of the Coromandel Peninsula have a multitude of islands, many of which are protected public lands managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Most are open to the public for recreation and relaxation. Some are sanctuaries for endangered species and to land you must have a permit.

### See the map inside this brochure to identify:

- Hauraki Gulf islands where you can land
- Nature reserves and wildlife sanctuaries where landing is restricted
- Marine reserves

DOC needs your help to look after these special islands and marine reserves.

## Care and beware

You are welcome to explore and enjoy the Hauraki Gulf and its islands but please observe the following rules:

### Nature reserves

- Do not land without a permit
- Do not anchor boats close to the shoreline



Years of conservation work could be undone by just one illegal landing on a nature reserve. Rats, cats and other predators escaping from a moored or shipwrecked boat could decimate skinks, tuatara and birds. Shipwrecked yacht off the Hen and Chickens Nature Reserve, 1997. Photo: D. Towns, DOC

### For all conservation islands

- Check your boat for rats and other unwanted stowaways

## Conservation islands you can visit

Visitors are welcome on most publicly owned conservation islands of the Hauraki Gulf. These include Beehive, Motutara, Motuora, Saddle, Tiritiri Matangi, Rangitoto, Motutapu, Motuihe, Motukorea (Browns), Motutapere (Coromandel harbour) and Mahurangi, off the Coromandel coast. Parts of Great Barrier, Kawau and Waiheke are also public conservation land.

These islands are protected to safeguard their natural and historic heritage. Some are free of animal pests or are in the process of becoming so. Please observe the rules when you visit (see overleaf). Visitor brochures are available from DOC information centres.



Kiwi chick being released on Motuora, a conservation island in the Hauraki Gulf which is open to the public. Photo: DOC

## Marine reserves



Marine reserve at Goat Island. Photo: Tony and Jenny Enderby

Marine reserves are our national parks of the sea – places where the coastal and marine landscapes and all marine life are protected by law. Safe from harvesting and other disturbances, plant and animal communities in these reserves can thrive, for the benefit and enjoyment of all.

You are welcome to visit by boat and go diving, swimming and snorkelling but you must not take marine life or harm

- If part of your boat is closed in, keep a bait station with fresh rat poison or a baited trap on board
- Before going ashore check bags and stores for rodents, and clothes and shoes for weed seeds
- Do not bring dogs, cats or other pets onto island reserves or their beaches
- Do not light fires, except at designated barbeque sites
- Take your rubbish home with you – most conservation islands do not have rubbish disposal facilities

### In marine reserves

All marine life and sand, rocks and shells are protected. It's an offence to:

- Take any marine life by fishing or collecting
- Discard waste or pollutants
- Introduce living organisms to the reserve

These are all offences under the Marine Reserves Act 1971 punishable by fines and imprisonment.

## Need more information?

### See [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

#### Auckland Conservancy

Private Bag 68 908 Newton, Auckland  
Ph 09 307 9279, Fax 09 377 2919  
Visitor Information Centre: Ph 09 379 6476  
Email: [aucklandvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:aucklandvc@doc.govt.nz)

#### Northland Conservancy

PO Box 842, Whangarei  
Ph 09 430 2470, Fax 09 430 2479

#### Waikato Conservancy

Private Bag 3072, Hamilton  
Ph 07 838 3363, Fax 07 838 1004

To report pest alerts, fishing offences in marine reserves, whale or dolphin strandings or injuries, or any other threat, call the 24-hour DOC HOT line:



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Cover: Hauraki Gulf Islands, Rangitoto Island, Motutapu Island, Rakino Island and the Noises.  
Photo: G. Brierly DOC

the natural habitats in any way. Marine reserves of the Hauraki Gulf and nearby waters are:

- Poor Knights, north-east of Whangarei
- Cape Rodney-Okakari Point (known as Goat Island), near Leigh
- Long Bay-Okura, north of Auckland
- Motu Manawa-Pollen Island, in the upper Waitemata Harbour
- Te Matuku, off the southern end of Waiheke Island
- Te Whanganui-A-Hei (Cathedral Cove), near Whitianga

## Whales and dolphins

Whales and dolphins abound in the waters of the Hauraki Gulf. Sei, minke and Bryde's whales are sighted regularly, while humpbacks pass through on their way to and from tropical breeding grounds in the South Pacific. Common and bottlenose dolphins and orca (killer whales) are also frequently seen. These animals are all protected under legislation administered by DOC.

Boats can be a threat to whales and dolphins. If you see marine mammals please observe the following guidelines.

- Do not disrupt the movement of whales and dolphins or assume they will move out of the way
- It is illegal to approach closer than 50 metres to a whale. This increases to 300 metres if there are already three boats close
- Any approaches to dolphins and whales should be made parallel to and slightly to the rear
- Do not swim with juvenile animals
- Any whales or dolphins accidentally struck or any dead carcass should be reported immediately to the Coastguard on VHF Channel 16. Ask them to notify DOC. Please also report any whale or dolphin stranding.



Orca venture up the Waitemata Harbour. Photo: DOC

# Hauraki Gulf Islands & Marine Reserves



Help keep them safe

AUCKLAND



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*