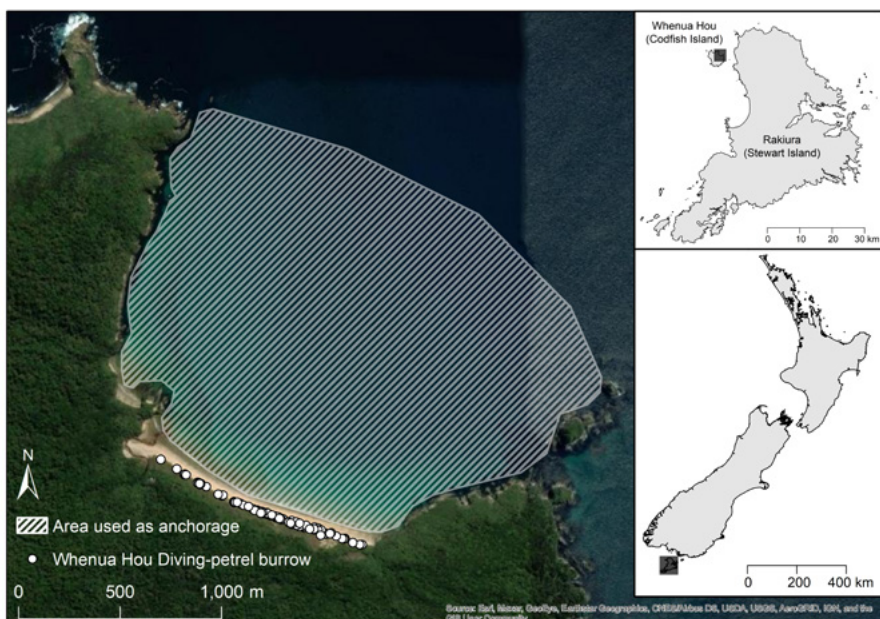


Managing artificial lights to reduce kuaka / Whenua Hou diving petrel vessel strikes



Kuaka / Whenua Hou diving petrel is a Nationally Critical taonga (treasured) species. Kuaka breed only on a 900-m stretch of dunes in Sealers Bay, Whenua Hou / Codfish Island. There are only 210 kuaka left in the world, so managing threats is critical to their survival.



Why is light management important?

Kuaka are attracted to artificial lights at night, leading to collisions with vessels (vessel strikes) and their high flight speed increases risk of mortality. These birds use a tight flight path from their nests to the sea (and vice versa) making them highly susceptible to vessel strikes in Sealers Bay. The risk of kuaka vessel strike is highest during courtship (September) and fledging (January).



Photo: J McTavish

What can you do to help kuaka?

(While maintaining vessel and crew safety)

- Minimise light use, especially spotlights and floodlights, when operating around Whenua Hou (particularly within Sealers Bay).
- Avoid unnecessary movements and activities within Sealers Bay at night.
- Eliminate unnecessary lights.
- Shield lights to only light areas essential for safe operations.
- Use lights with reduced or filtered blue and violet wavelengths (eg 2200 K).
- Use black-out blinds.
- Practice safe handling and release techniques when vessel strikes occur.
- Record and report vessel strikes.

Commercial fishers

- Follow your Protected Species Risk Management Plan and operational procedures.
- Contact your liaison officer for more information.



Photo: J Fischer

For more information contact marine@doc.govt.nz.