

What are Marine Reserves?

Marine reserves are special or representative areas of the coastal and marine environment in which marine life and natural features are legally protected. Free from exploitation, they help ecosystems to return to their natural state and provide an opportunity to study marine life in the absence of extractive activities such as fishing. Under the Marine Reserves Act 1971 areas can be protected as marine reserves if they contain underwater scenery, natural features or marine life of such distinct quality, or so typical, beautiful or unique that their continued preservation is in the national interest. As with a national park on land, you are welcome to visit – picnicking on the shore, swimming, boating, diving and photography are all encouraged. Here you can observe and enjoy the scenery and variety of life that flourishes in a protected environment. Educational and scientific activities are also allowed, provided they do not unduly disturb or endanger the reserve's plants and animals.



Sponge garden.
Photo: I. Cooper.

Ngati Tama - Local Iwi

Ngati Tama is one of the eight generally recognised iwi of Taranaki. Their traditional area / rohe is located in northern Taranaki and they have approximately 1,000 members. Parininihi is of cultural, spiritual, historical, and traditional importance to Ngati Tama.

An integrated management approach has been established in relation to the marine reserve at Parininihi. The Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), including Ngati Tama, the Conservation Board and DOC, has the role of approving a management plan for the reserve.

How can you help?

The marine reserve has been established to protect representative marine habitats and communities for science and education, and to provide a safe haven for marine life to live and breed.

For this to be achieved we need your help. Boaties please:

- in the interest of preserving the reef system, use the minimum of chain necessary when dropping anchor;
- take care not to touch or disturb organisms while diving.

Enjoy your visit to Parininihi Marine Reserve, but please remember all animals, plants and the seabed are protected (Marine Reserves Act 1971):

- no fishing, netting, spearing, taking or killing of marine life including seaweeds. All methods of fishing from the shore or at sea are prohibited within the reserve area;
- no activities that pollute, disturb or damage marine life or the seabed;
- no removal of any natural material from the marine reserve.

Note: This is not a complete summary of offences within the Marine Reserve Act. Go to www.legislation.govt.nz to access the Act. Offence penalties carry up to 3 months imprisonment or a fine up to a maximum of \$250,000, depending on the seriousness of the offence.

If you see people fishing in the marine reserve or harming the reserve in any way, please report the activity to DOC as soon as possible. Call the conservation emergency hotline 0800 DOCHOTline (0800 36 24 68).

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468

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



Find out first

Stay on established tracks and use existing facilities

Take care of your gear

Remove rubbish

Dispose of toilet waste properly

Be careful with chemicals

Respect our cultural heritage

Take only the food you need

Consider plants and animals

Consider other people

*Toitu te marae a tane
Toitu te marae a tangaroa*

Cover Photo: Foreground - Parininihi Marine Reserve, background - Mt Taranaki.
Photo: C. Lilley.

Published by
Department of Conservation
Wanganui Conservancy
Private Bag 3016
Wanganui, New Zealand
March 2008
New Zealand Government

Parininihi Marine Reserve

North Taranaki

WANGANUI CONSERVANCY



Introduction

Pariokariwa is an isolated offshore reef in the shadow of the towering White Cliffs / Parininihi. Located in the south-eastern most reaches of the North Taranaki Bight, it is home to a variety of fish species, large rock lobster populations and a colourful tangle of rare and exotic sponges that spread across the reefs of the area. Traditionally, tangata whenua knew the area as an abundant site for kai moana / seafood and fishers from all over North Taranaki caught onto the abundance of marine life in the area. However, although many species were largely protected by the region's wild weather, better boats and increasing technology available to fishers have meant that protection for marine life is no longer there.

In the mid-1990s, the Department of Conservation (DOC) promoted the idea of a marine reserve at Parininihi. After a long process of community consultation and Government review, an Order in Council was signed in September 2006. The following month, Parininihi Marine Reserve officially joined the network of marine reserves protecting a portion of our unique underwater environments for future New Zealanders.

Why is this area important?

Marine scientists consider the 1800 hectare Parininihi Marine Reserve area to be a "classic" section of the wild North Taranaki coastline. It is a "high-energy" part of the coastline in which sand is constantly on the move and the environment is forever changing.



Whitecliffs. Photo: C. Lilley.

The reef and surrounding areas are home to a variety of fish species (such as blue cod, blue moki, red moki, gurnard, John Dory, kahawai, red cod, tarakihi, trevally and snapper) and rock lobster populations. However, what makes the area particularly special is its collection of rare and exotic sponges which spread in a vividly coloured carpet across reefs in the area. These dense assemblages cover about 75% of available boulder surface. Marine biologist Chris Battershill (a renowned expert on marine sponges) rates Pariokariwa Reef as one of the top sponge spots in the world. Many of these fantastic "undersea gardens" remain unexplored and may yield further scientific discoveries.



This bright orange treasure, *Polymastia crassa*, is lucky enough to be named - there are many more down there waiting their turn. Scientists in many places in the world are currently investigating sponge chemicals known as alkaloids for potential anti-cancer, anti-malaria and anti-microbial applications. Photo: I Cooper.

Visiting the reserve

Road access to the area is via Pukearuhe Road, north of Urenui. Car parking is limited, so please park to allow access to the ramp and farm property.

A good view of the reserve area can be gained from the cliffs above the reserve from the White Cliffs Walkway.

The walkway begins at the Pukearuhe Historic Reserve and passes through private land. Please respect the landowners' property by keeping to the walkway, using the stiles and not disturbing livestock. The walkway is



Blue cod. Photo: DOC.



Jason mirabilis. Photo: B. Hartley.

closed from 1 July to 30 September because of lambing on the private farmland.

Follow the ridge tops before descending to the Waipingau Stream. Here, divert from the track and return to Pukearuhe by following the stream to the coast (1.2 km) and walking south along the beach (tide permitting).

Warning: The beach between the Waipingau Stream and Pukearuhe (4.5 km, 1.5 hr) is

accessible only at low tide. If you have planned a walk along the beach as part of your trip, please check the tide times before you go. For your own safety do not attempt the beach walk unless you can reach Pukearuhe no later than 2 hr after low tide.

Please note that there are limited visitor facilities in this area. There are no rubbish bins – please take your rubbish with you. The Department of Conservation promotes a pack in, pack out policy.

