Welcome to Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara Marine Reserve

This reserve was established in 2004 and covers 1075 hectares, or about 15%, of Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera adjoining Ulva Island. Managed by the Department of Conservation, it is surrounded by Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera Mātaitai Reserve, an important Māori fishing and food gathering area where commercial fishing is prohibited and fisheries are managed to ensure its sustainability.

Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara Marine Reserve itself provides a safe haven and nursery not only for fish and shellfish, but also for animals such as seals, penguins and other seabirds that breed on land but feed at sea. It’s also a place for the public to experience and enjoy. Picnicking, swimming, boating, diving and photography are all encouraged, provided the reserve is treated with respect. We hope you enjoy your visit.

Further information

- For Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara Marine Reserve, contact the Department of Conservation:
  
  PO Box 743, Invercargill 9840
  Email invercargill@doc.govt.nz
  Ph. (03) 211 2400  Fax (03) 214 4486

  PO Box 3, Stewart Island 9846
  Email stewartislandfc@doc.govt.nz
  Ph. (03) 219 0002  Fax (03) 219 0003

  www.doc.govt.nz

- For Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera Mātaitai Reserve, contact:

  Ministry for Primary Industries
  www.mpi.govt.nz

KEEP ULVA ISLAND RAT AND WEED FREE!

- Check your clothes and boots for seeds
- Check your boat for rats
- Check and re-pack your bag before you leave for Ulva Island

DOC HOTline

0800 362 468

Report any safety hazards or conservation emergencies
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

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Cover image: A variety of fish species found in Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara Marine Reserve.
Photo: Kim Westerskov
Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara Marine Reserve
Boundary Co-ordinates

Datum is WGS 84 GPS format - degrees.minutes.minutes' e.g. 46° 56.02'

1. Trumpeter Point
   46°56.78' S
   168°03.72' E
2. Tamihau Island
   46°56.02' S
   168°06.32' E
3. West Ulva Island
   46°55.53' S
   168°06.57' E
4. West Snuggery
   46°56.30' S
   168°08.03' E
5. West Paua Beach
   46°57.52' S
   168°05.77' E
6. Flagstaff Point
   46°55.52'S
   168°07.92' E
7. Sydney Nugget
   46°55.57' S
   168°08.12' E
8. 46°55.85' S
   168°08.45' E
9. Manawahue Nugget
   46°55.83' S
   168°08.82' E
10. East Ulva Island
    46°56.11' S
    168°09.30' E
11. East Native Island
    46°56.00' S
    168°09.73' E
12. East Native Island
    46°54.95' S
    168°09.77' E
13. West Native Island
    46°54.93' S
    168°08.85' E
Why is Paterson Inlet / Whaka a Te Wera so special?

Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera is a shallow ria – an ancient river valley that has been submerged. It provides one of the largest sheltered harbours in southern New Zealand. Because the rivers that flow into it drain pristine, undeveloped land, they carry little sediment or nutrient run-off. As a result, the inlet waters nurture a rich range of plants and animals. This lack of sedimentation has created a unique environment where many species that don’t usually live on sandy ground, including kina, sea cucumbers, starfish and brachiopods, are equally at home on sandy inlet floors as on rocky reef. The inlet is also an important habitat and nursery for more than 50 species of fish. Warm subtropical waters mix with cool subantarctic waters in the currents around Stewart Island/Rakiura to create an affinity with both regions. This has added to the diversity of species found within the inlet.
Visiting the marine reserve

In the water
The best way to view the marine reserve and its inhabitants is in the water. From land the best snorkelling is found off the beach at the north end of Sydney Cove on Ulva Island, but wear a wetsuit as the average February water temperature is 16°C, dropping to 8°C in July. Scuba diving is most rewarding off the north east end of Ulva Island in 5–12 metres of water. Use a flashlight to illuminate the colourful array of life hiding below the kelp canopy and carry a dive knife in case you become entangled in the giant kelp forest – but remember, no catch bags or fishing spears!

On the water
Boat passengers and sea kayakers gain a perspective of the reserve not available to those on land. The southern coast of Ulva Island has particularly pristine coves that are only accessible from the sea. Wildlife is best viewed from the water too. Fur seals, sea lions and yellow-eyed penguins are regular visitors to the inlet and can often be spotted. There are several boat launching ramps in Oban; contact the Rakiura National Park Visitor Centre for further information.

From the beaches
ULVA ISLAND is a 10 minute boat ride from Golden Bay. A water taxi can be booked from various information centres in Halfmoon Bay. There are two beaches in the marine reserve that are easily accessible from well-formed gravel tracks.

SYDNEY COVE is a 5 minute walk from the Ulva Island Wharf at Post Office Bay. The cove is a 200 metre stretch of golden, sandy beach with a shelter, toilet and picnic area. There is a rocky point at the north end and a small island out the front that offer interesting snorkelling from the beach.

BOULDER BEACH is a 30 minute walk across the island from Post Office Bay. As the name suggests, it is a boulder-strewn beach, and there is usually a band of weka picking through the drift seaweed above the high-tide mark. There are no facilities at Boulder Beach.

Looking after the reserve
In the water
The marine reserve’s success depends on the care and attention of visitors. All marine life is totally protected. If you see people taking fish or other marine life from within the reserve, please report this to DOC as soon as possible.

- No catching, taking or killing marine life
- No discharge of pollutants
- No introduction of living organisms to the reserve
- No removal of any natural thing from the reserve e.g. shells, rocks, seaweed

What lives here?
- mussels, limpets, chiton, whelks, crabs, barnacles, sea squirts, small red, green and brown seaweeds, penguins, fur seals, sea lions
- rock oysters, paua, tubeworms, 11 armed starfish, anemones, large brown seaweeds, spotlifes, triplefin, wrasse, blue moki, southern pigfish, leather jacket
- kina, seacucumbers, rock lobster, seaturps, brittle star, octopus, sponges, bryozoans, encrusting algae, blue cod, sharks
- brachiopods, scallops, red algal mats

Brachiopods – living fossils
Brachiopods or lamp shells are the most ancient of filter feeding shellfish. They were abundant in prehistoric oceans at the dawn of life 300 to 550 million years ago. Today their fossils are common, but living examples are comparatively rare. Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera is home to brachiopod species that live both on rock and sediment, thriving at depths of less than 20 metres. This makes the inlet one of the richest and most accessible brachiopod habitats in the world.

Forest of seaweed
Stewart Island/Rakiura has more varieties of seaweed than anywhere else in New Zealand. Paterson Inlet/Whaka a Te Wera is home to 70% of these, including 56 brown, 31 green and 174 red seaweed species. Seaweed forests provide habitat, protection and food to support diverse populations of fish, invertebrates and marine mammals. Meadows of small, red seaweed grow on the sandy inlet floor. They help to stabilise sediment and also provide an important shelter for scallops and a surface for spat and larvae to settle on.