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Tini a Tangaroa



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Kaikōura/Te Tai o Marokura

Marine Management Review

Discussion document



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Purpose and background

Your views are vital in informing a report for Ministers and guiding future decisions about the management of the Kaikōura coastal environment.

Purpose of consultation

The marine and coastal area off the coast of Kaikōura is managed under the Kaikōura (Te Tai o Marokura) Marine Management Act 2014. This bespoke legislation resulted from a community-led effort to protect this special coastal area, and your views are vital to inform a review of how well it's working.

The information and questions below are designed to spark discussion and gather your feedback about how you think management of the Kaikōura marine environment is going. What you share will help shape a report for the Ministers of Conservation and Oceans and Fisheries, guiding future decisions.

The Kaikōura (Te Tai o Marokura) Marine Management Act 2014 helps protect and manage the Kaikōura coast and ocean by creating special areas like a marine reserve, marine mammal sanctuaries and customary fishing areas, and by working with local communities through the Kaikōura Marine Guardians to make sure the environment is looked after for future generations.

What is the Kaikōura (Te Tai o Marokura) Marine Management Act 2014?

The Kaikōura (Te Tai o Marokura) Marine Management Act 2014¹ (the Kaikōura Act) was created in August 2014 to recognise the local, national, and international importance of the coast and sea around Kaikōura/Te Tai o Marokura.

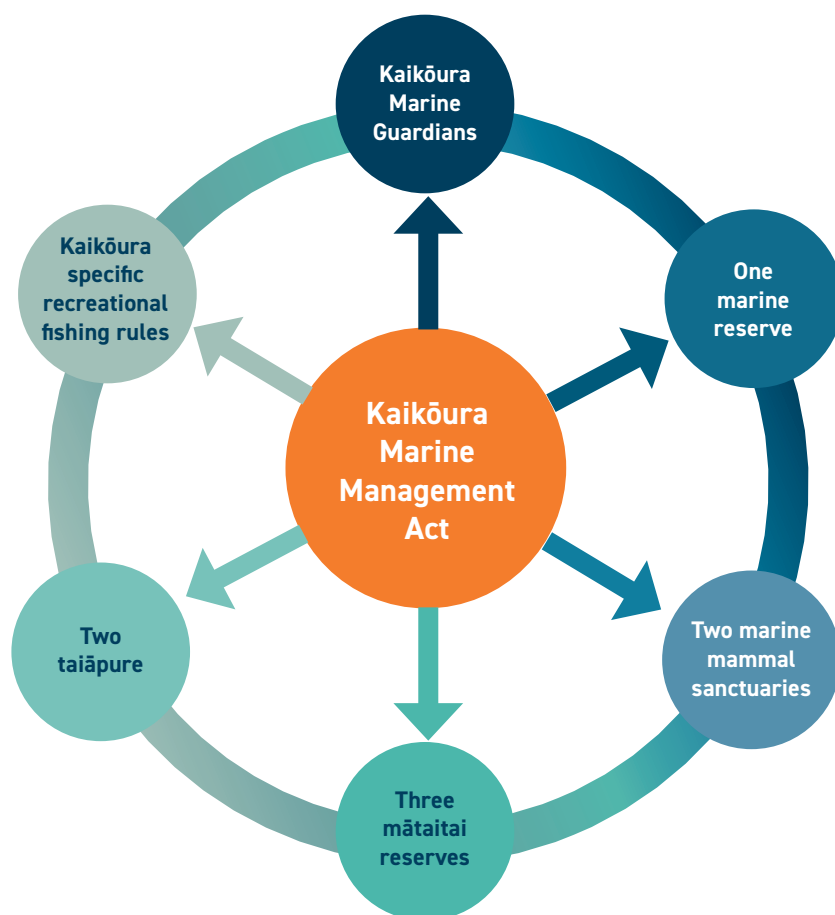
The Kaikōura Act was created in response to the Kaikōura Marine Strategy, which was finalised in 2012 from a community-driven process led by Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura, the Kaikōura Coastal Marine Guardians. The strategy sought to identify solutions for promoting sustainable customary practices, protecting the region's treasures, fishing for abundance, and living sustainably. These solutions were designed to safeguard this coastal and marine environment which holds great significance historically, culturally, spiritually, environmentally, and economically due to its dynamic geography, geology, and abundance of aquatic life and resources.

The Kaikōura Act established specific management measures for this area (Figure 1). The management measures are located in the area between Clarence Point and Gore Bay (Figure 2). More information on these measures can be found at:

www.doc.govt.nz/nature/habitats/marine/kaikoura-te-tai-o-marokura-marine-management-area

¹ Kaikōura (Te Tai o Marokura) Marine Management Act 2014 No 59 (as at 28 October 2021), Public Act Contents – New Zealand Legislation.

Figure 1: Management measures established by the Kaikōura (Te Tai o Marokura) Marine Management Act 2014.



10-year review to assess operation and effectiveness

It's been 10 years since the Kaikōura Act was created and it's time to see if it's working as intended.

The Kaikōura Act states that a review of its management measures be carried out after 10 years. The aim of the review is to assess the “operation and effectiveness” of specific management measures in place – are they helping to protect and manage the Kaikōura coast and marine life in a sustainable way? The review includes all of the management measures established by the Kaikōura Act, except the Kaikōura-specific recreational fishing rules. They are not included as they are Fisheries New Zealand settings that are already regularly reviewed.

The Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai (DOC) and Fisheries New Zealand are leading the review², with support from the Kaikōura Marine Guardians and Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura. Independent experts are also helping to assess how the role of the Kaikōura Marine Guardians is working.

The review will result in a report with recommendations, and these may suggest keeping things as they are if they're working well, or making changes to improve how the area is managed. This report will be considered by the Minister of Conservation and Minister for Oceans and Fisheries, and later become publicly available. The implementation of any agreed recommendations will be a subsequent step to the review process. If any recommendations involve a legal change to any of the areas, the public would be informed of this in due course and further consultation may be required.

² See [Terms of Reference Kaikōura \(Te Tai o Marokura\) Marine Management Act 2014: Ministerial Review 2024](#).

Figure 2: The Kaikōura Marine Area/Te Tai o Marokura and management measures.

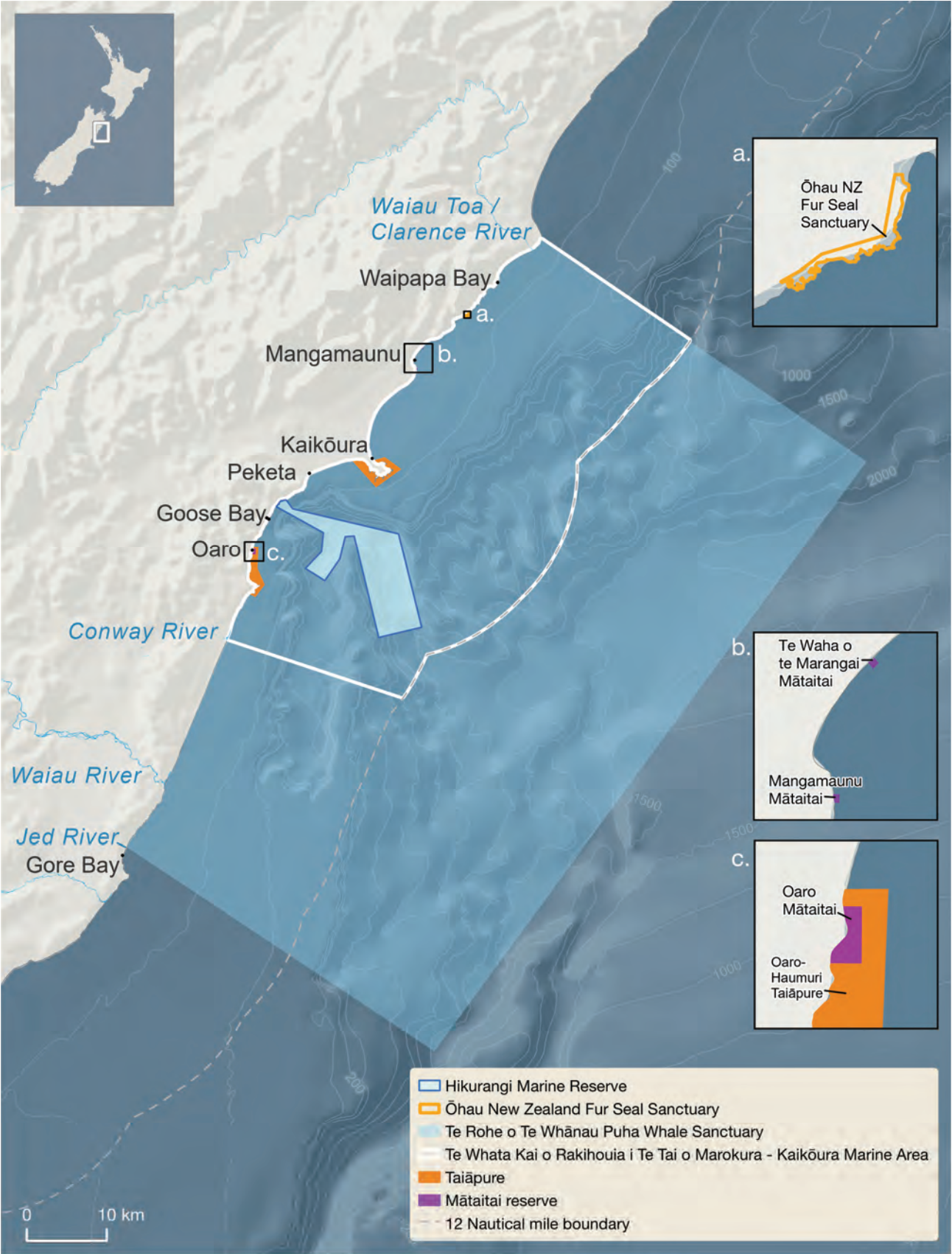




Photo: andrewwalmsleyphotography.com

The management measures being reviewed

Kaikōura Marine Guardians

The Kaikōura Marine Guardians represent diverse interests and expertise as specified in the Kaikōura Act, and operate under Ministerially-agreed Terms of Reference to provide advice to government agencies and Ministers.

While the 2016 Kaikōura earthquake had a major influence on the Guardians' early advisory work, shaping much of their initial focus, they have also played a key role in providing advice to inform broader management decisions – particularly in fisheries management.

What is this management measure?

The Kaikōura Marine Guardians (the Guardians) are an advisory committee established under the Kaikōura Act. The 2012 Kaikōura Marine Strategy originally recommended that a group such as the Guardians be established to ensure effective implementation of the strategy's components, and to ensure an ongoing role and voice for the local community in managing the Kaikōura marine environment.

While the Guardians are similar in name to Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura/Kaikōura Coastal Marine Guardians, Te Korowai are a separate community group that formed in 2005, produced the Kaikōura Marine Strategy in 2012, and are still active today. The Guardians have a statutory role under the Kaikōura Act, while Te Korowai do not.

The Guardians are appointed by the Minister of Conservation and the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries. The committee membership must represent the interests and areas of expertise of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, the Kaikōura community, and biosecurity, conservation, education, environment, fishing, marine science, and tourism.

The committee's role is to provide advice to Ministers and government agencies on biosecurity, conservation or fisheries matters related to the coastal and marine environment of Kaikōura. They operate under a Terms of Reference approved by Ministers.

What has happened since 2014?

Eleven Guardians were appointed in December 2015 and their inaugural meeting was held on 19 August 2016. The night before their second meeting, on 15 November 2016, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck with significant impacts for the Kaikōura region, including its marine environment.

The Guardians focus for the four years following this disaster was on providing advice to support the post-earthquake recovery and rebuild. Important issues they advised on included temporary fisheries closures and reopening within the Kaikōura earthquake-affected area, priorities for post-earthquake research and rebuilding the coastal infrastructure.

As well as their work supporting the earthquake recovery, the Guardians have provided numerous pieces of written advice to Ministers of Biosecurity, Conservation and Oceans and Fisheries, and to agencies. This advice has added value and contributed to decisions made about sustainability of the Kaikōura marine environment. Advice has most often related to fisheries management, but has also included marine mammal management, world heritage status, and marine biosecurity.

The Guardians have generally met four times per year, with additional meetings on specific topics as required. DOC and Fisheries New Zealand work alongside the Guardians providing administrative support and informing the Guardians on topics that are of relevance to their role in the Kaikōura Marine Area.

The original Terms of Reference for the Guardians was reviewed and replaced in 2023. One change was to make provision for the appointment of two representatives of Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura, in addition to representation from Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu which is a requirement of the Kaikōura Act. Following this, nominations were called for and seven new members joined four existing members in August 2024.

DOC and Fisheries New Zealand commissioned an independent expert to evaluate how the Guardians have been operating since the group was formed. Based on interviews with previous and current Guardians, iwi and stakeholders, key findings include:

- The current mix of Guardians is appropriate and aligns with the requirements for representation set out in the Kaikōura Act.
- The process of appointing Guardians is not well understood by the community and could be more transparent.
- The Guardians' advice has made an important difference in managing the Kaikōura Marine Area, particularly in relation to supporting the post-earthquake recovery and fisheries management.
- The focus of the Guardians' advice has been reactive rather than proactive, although this was in large part due to post-earthquake recovery work.
- Some Guardians felt the quality of agency support has been mixed.
- The current level of resourcing limits the Guardians' ability to operate effectively.
- The Guardians' ability to provide well-informed advice is hindered by inadequate access to timely scientific evidence.
- The roles of the statutory group, the Guardians, and the community group, Te Korowai, need to be clarified both with the groups themselves and with the wider community.



Questions

- How effectively do you think the Kaikōura Marine Guardians have functioned as a statutory advisory committee?
- What successes or challenges are you aware of in relation to the Kaikōura Marine Guardians?
- Do you have any suggestions for changes or improvements to the Kaikōura Marine Guardians?



Hikurangi Marine Reserve

Hikurangi Marine Reserve sits south of the Kaikōura Peninsula and includes part of the Kaikōura Canyon with a narrow connection to the shore. While public access for enjoying and observing marine life is permitted, activities that disturb marine life, the foreshore, seabed, or natural features are prohibited. The marine reserve protects several types of marine habitat and associated marine life. The 2016 earthquake caused significant changes, including uplift and major submarine landslides in the canyon. Monitoring of key species has shown mixed responses to the reserve's protection.

What is this management measure?

Hikurangi Marine Reserve is located approximately 12 kilometres south of the Kaikōura Peninsula. It covers 1.89 kilometres of coastline and extends 23.4 kilometres offshore, protecting a total area of 104 km² (Figure 3).

A marine reserve was one of the solutions recommended in the 2012 Kaikōura Marine Strategy and subsequently implemented via the Kaikōura Act. It was designed to contribute to the goal of protecting the most biologically rich and special areas while also representing the region's typical habitats. The marine reserve's shape was designed to balance the effects on fisheries with protecting areas of high biodiversity and habitat representation. When the marine reserve was proposed, it was recognised that the boundary is complex but that a simpler shape would have undesirable impacts on local commercial fishers.

Marine reserves are created by the Marine Reserves Act 1971, which aims to preserve "typical ... or unique" areas of New Zealand's marine environment "as far as possible in their natural state".³ The "typical" and "unique" habitats and associated biological communities protected in the coastal and deepwater areas of the Hikurangi Marine Reserve are: intertidal and subtidal reefs, coastal sand and mud, and deepwater canyon habitats.

Figure 3: Hikurangi Marine Reserve.



Within the marine reserve, activities that involve taking or disturbance of marine life are prohibited, to enable the area to return as far as possible to its natural state. Activities that are prohibited include discharge of pollutants, souvenir collection, placement of structures and fishing.

What has happened since 2014?

The 2016 Kaikōura earthquake had a significant impact on the coastal environment, including the marine reserve. The estimated uplift within Hikurangi Marine Reserve was 0.41 metres. This uplift displaced the intertidal zone seaward by approximately 8.25 metres, as area that was previously intertidal habitat lifted above the high tide mark and became new terrestrial land area.⁴ Sediment inundated coastal habitats making the water cloudy, and there were underwater landslides and sediment flows down the Kaikōura Canyon.

³ The full purpose of the Marine Reserves Act 1971 can be found here: Marine Reserves Act 1971 No 15 (as at 28 October 2021), Public Act 3 Marine reserves to be maintained in natural state, and public to have right of entry – New Zealand Legislation.

⁴ Falconer, T.R.L., Gerrity, S., Schiel, D.R., 2023. Hikurangi Marine Reserve – Intertidal Community Monitoring 2019-2023. A report for the Department of Conservation. 32 p.

Monitoring of intertidal species and communities in the marine reserve does not show any lasting damage from the 2016 earthquake, likely due to the high wave energy of this environment and the relatively small amount of uplift compared with other areas. The abundance of bull kelp (*Durvillaea* spp.) has remained stable (between 2019 and 2023) within the reserve despite widespread declines of bull kelp around the South Island due to recent marine heatwaves.⁴ Monitoring of a range of intertidal invertebrates and seaweed in 2022 and 2023 showed no consistent differences between sites inside and outside the marine reserve.⁴

Pāua, kōura/rock lobster, kina and reef fish have been monitored inside and outside of the marine reserve between 2016 and 2024, using a range of survey methods.⁵ This has shown a variety of trends in species' responses to marine reserve protection, but indicates that after ten years of reserve status the Hikurangi Marine Reserve has had positive effects on several key species.

Potting surveys in 2020 and 2021 found that female kōura/rock lobster were more abundant inside than outside the marine reserve, but the abundance of male kōura/rock lobster did not differ between inside and outside the reserve. Both male and female kōura/rock lobster were larger inside than outside the reserve.

Pāua were surveyed by divers in 2016, 2017, 2022 and 2024. The number of pāua varied widely across all sites, but was generally higher outside the marine reserve than inside, except in 2017. Pāua numbers increased at both reserve and non-reserve sites between 2016 and 2022, but then declined in 2024. On average, pāua were larger inside the marine reserve than outside.⁶

Diver surveys in 2016, after just 20 months of protection, found densities of several common reef fish were significantly greater inside the marine reserve than in nearby fished areas. Blue cod and butterfish were also significantly larger on average inside the marine reserve compared to fished areas, with about 2.5 times more blue cod above the legal-size limit inside the marine reserve. Kina were found in low numbers and were more abundant inside than outside the marine reserve in 2022 and 2024. The size and number of kina increased from 2022 to 2024 both inside and outside the reserve.⁷

Detailed bathymetric mapping⁸ and seafloor imagery shows that extensive areas of soft sediment canyon floor habitat and communities, and the bottom sections of some deepwater ridges, are included in the marine reserve. However, the narrowness of the marine reserve near the coast and its shape and coverage offshore means very little canyon wall, canyon ridge/gully, or canyon rim habitat and associated distinct communities are included within the reserve⁹ (Figure 4).

5 Gerrity, S., Virgin, S., & Ladds, M., 2025 (In prep). Hikurangi Marine Reserve – assessing the effects of protection on the abundance and size of key subtidal reef species and the intertidal reef community, 2016 – 2024. Department of Conservation, Wellington, New Zealand.

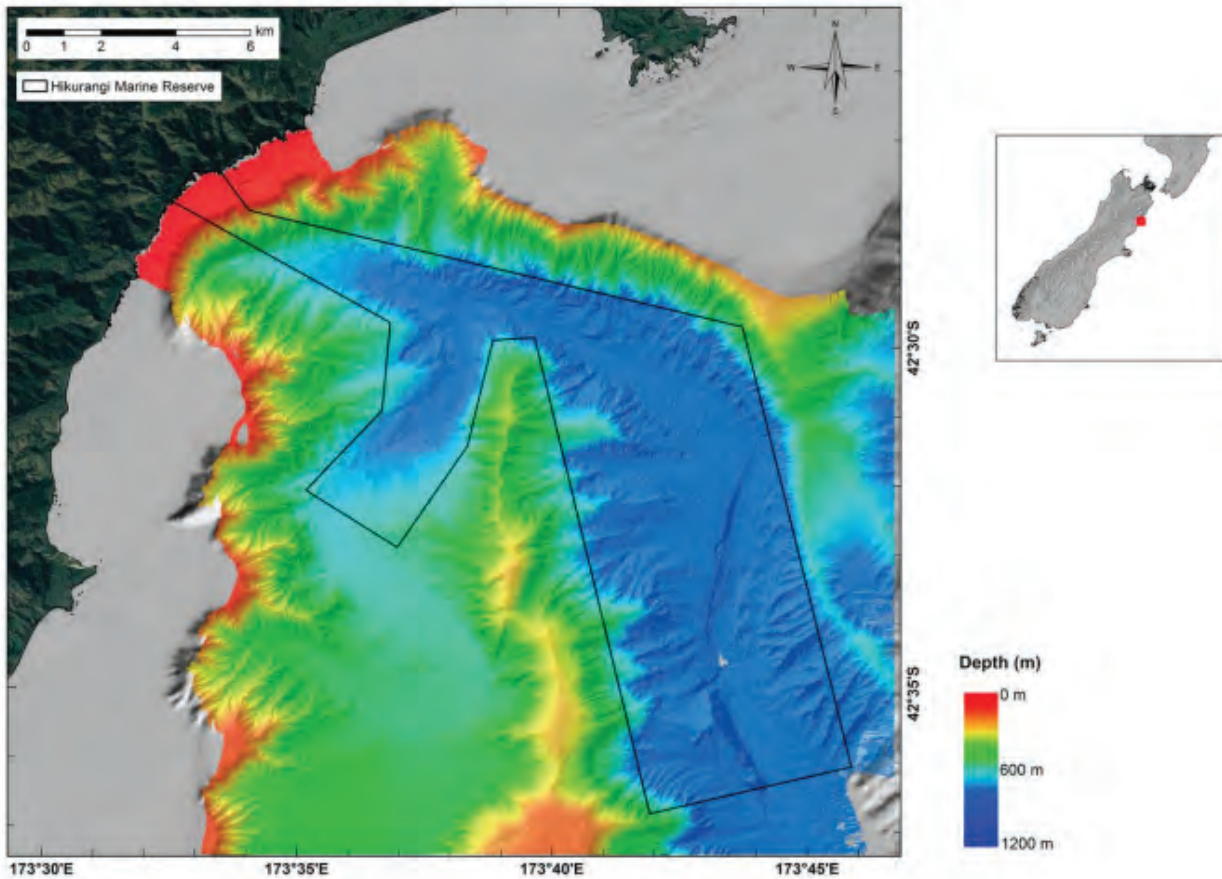
6 Gerrity, S., Virgin, S., & Ladds, M., 2025 (In prep). Hikurangi Marine Reserve – assessing the effects of protection on the abundance and size of key subtidal reef species and the intertidal reef community, 2016 – 2024. Department of Conservation, Wellington, New Zealand.

7 Davidson, R.J. & Laferriere, A., 2016. Hikurangi marine reserve, Kaikoura: baseline biological study. Prepared by Davidson Environmental Limited for Department of Conservation, Nelson. Survey and Monitoring Report No. 841.

8 Neil, H., Mackay, K., Mitchell, J., Pallentin, A., 2015. Multibeam echo-sounder mapping to identify seafloor habitat Hikurangi Marine Reserve. NIWA Client report prepared for Department of Conservation, WLG2015-55, Project DOC15305. 16 p.

9 Bowden, D., Rowden, A., Chin, C., Carter, M., Hart, A., Bigham, K., 2023. Hikurangi Marine Reserve DTIS video analysis. Report prepared for the Department of Conservation. National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research Ltd, Wellington, New Zealand. 42 p + appendices.

Figure 4: Bathymetry imagery of Hikurangi Marine Reserve (Source: Neil et al. 2015).



DOC has had a dedicated marine reserve ranger based in Kaikōura since 2022. This has led to increased effort on education and advocacy, as well as more compliance monitoring. Particular focus has been given to patrolling the marine reserve during the recreational pāua fishing “open” seasons each year. Across 2023 and 2024, DOC staff spent over 700 hours patrolling the reserve (either by sea or on land) and had 400 interactions with the public. Between 2020 and 2024, there have been 12 confirmed offences relating to the marine reserve.



Questions

- How effective do you think Hikurangi Marine Reserve has been in protecting marine life and habitats?
- What successes or challenges are you aware of in relation to Hikurangi Marine Reserve?
- Do you have any suggestions for changes or improvements to Hikurangi Marine Reserve?

Te Rohe o te Whānau Puha Whale Sanctuary

Te Rohe o Te Whānau Puha Whale Sanctuary covers a large coastal and offshore area off the coast of Kaikōura. It restricts seismic surveying and, since 2020, has banned seabed mining (except petroleum). Three low-impact, research-focused seismic surveys have occurred since its establishment.

What is this management measure?

Te Rohe o Te Whānau Puha Whale Sanctuary covers approximately 4,700 km² of the coastal and offshore environment near Kaikōura. It extends from the northern boundary of the Kaikōura Marine Area at Clarence Point, south to near Gore Bay and offshore to a maximum distance of 56 km (Figure 5).

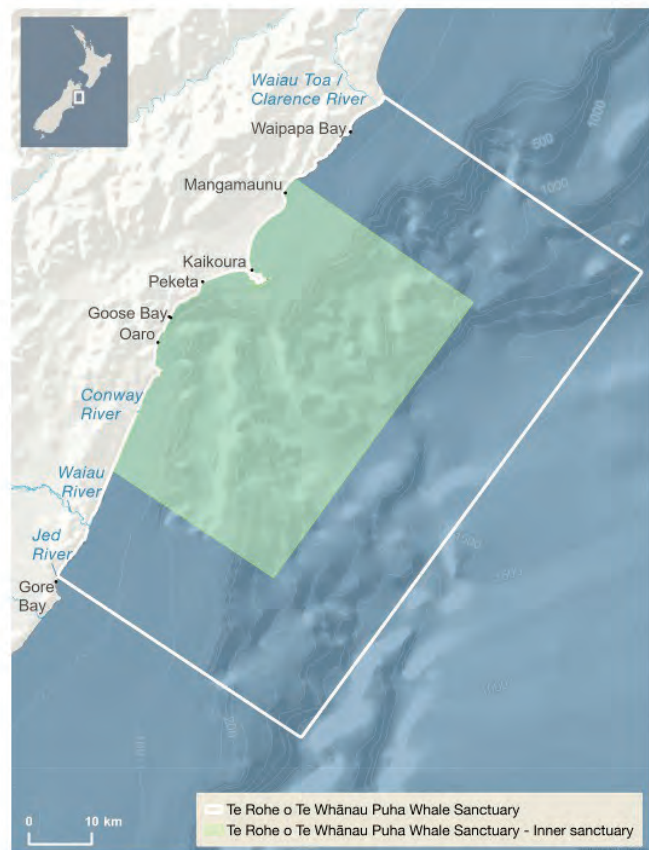
The sanctuary was one of the solutions suggested in the 2012 Kaikōura Marine Strategy to protect the habitat of whales and dolphins from future disturbance, in particular from seismic surveying. The location and shape of the sanctuary was intended to protect the core area for marine mammals (particularly sperm whales) but with a significant buffer to account for transmission of noise underwater. While the name of the sanctuary refers to whales, the original intent of the sanctuary proposal and the restrictions that have ultimately been put in place are to benefit marine mammals more generally.

With its establishment in 2014 came statutory restrictions¹⁰ on seismic surveying within its boundaries. Seismic surveying (categorised into level 1, 2 or 3 surveys) uses noise reflection to produce detailed images of the sub-seafloor geology, and is most often used for mineral and petroleum exploration or geological scientific research. Within the entire sanctuary, Level 1 surveys (the loudest category) are prohibited.¹¹

Within the inner part of the sanctuary, Level 2 surveys (the second loudest category) are also prohibited. Level 3 surveys are permitted. All surveys which are allowed in the sanctuary are required to comply with a code of conduct.¹²

Otherwise within the sanctuary, management of whales and other marine mammals is as per the rest of New Zealand's coastal environment, where research, commercial viewing and other human interactions are regulated under existing legislation.¹³

Figure 5: Te Rohe o Te Whānau Puha Whale Sanctuary.



¹⁰ Te Rohe o Te Whānau Puha Kaikōura Whale Sanctuary (Restrictions) Notice 2014 – 2014-go5215- New Zealand Gazette.

¹¹ With an exception for urgent hazard assessments.

¹² Department of Conservation, 2013. 2013 Code of Conduct for Minimising Acoustic Disturbance to Marine Mammals from Seismic Survey Operations. 36 p.

¹³ Primarily the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978 and Marine Mammals Protection Regulations 1992.

What has happened since 2014?

Three acoustic surveys have been undertaken within the sanctuary since its establishment (in 2018, 2020 and 2025). All three were Level 3 surveys, which are the 'quietest' category and generally produce noise levels no louder than other sources of noise in the marine environment (e.g. commercial shipping). These surveys were research surveys undertaken by NIWA (now called Earth Sciences New Zealand).

In 2020, further statutory restrictions¹⁴ were put in place prohibiting all seabed mining (other than petroleum mining) within the sanctuary. This change was largely to ensure consistency with rules being implemented in other marine mammal sanctuaries at the time. In the period between the sanctuary being established in 2014 and the seabed mining restriction being implemented in 2020, no seabed mining permits existed in the area. The prospectivity of the area for seabed mining is considered low and no minerals permits have ever been issued in the sanctuary area.

Research on the Kaikōura sperm whale population estimates that the number of individuals has declined significantly from 89 individuals in 1991 to 40 individuals in 2017.¹⁵ The research suggests this is likely driven by a lack of new individuals joining the population, particularly during summer months.



Questions

- How effective do you think Te Rohe o Te Whānau Puha Whale Sanctuary has been in reducing disturbance to marine mammals?
- What successes or challenges are you aware of in relation to Te Rohe o Te Whānau Puha Whale Sanctuary?
- Do you have any suggestions for changes or improvements to Te Rohe o Te Whānau Puha Whale Sanctuary?

¹⁴ Te Rohe o Te Whānau Puha Whale Sanctuary (Restriction) Notice 2020 – 2020-go4493- New Zealand Gazette.

¹⁵ Sommerford, T.R., Dawson, S.M., Slooten, E., Guerra, M., Childerhouse, S.J., Richter, C.F., van der Linde, M.L., Rayment, W.J., 2020. Long-term decline in abundance of male sperm whales visiting Kaikōura, New Zealand.

Ōhau New Zealand Fur Seal Sanctuary

Ōhau New Zealand Fur Seal Sanctuary is closed to the public to protect an important breeding area for kekeno/New Zealand fur seals. The 2016 earthquake significantly affected both the area designated as the sanctuary and where kekeno are distributed along this part of the coast. Since then, the shape of the colony has become narrower and more elongated compared to before the earthquake and the rebuild of State Highway 1. The colony now extends beyond the existing sanctuary boundaries that were established in 2014.

The number of pups born in the Ōhau colony has remained the same as it was before the earthquake, despite the new shape. Also, the redesigned road and seawall now act as a partial physical deterrent to public access to the colony. New kekeno breeding areas have now also been identified in other parts of the Kaikōura region.

What is this management measure?

Ōhau New Zealand Fur Seal Sanctuary covers approximately 0.04 km² of the intertidal and shoreline area, from just south of Ōhau Stream and extends approximately 800 metres to the south (Figure 6).

The sanctuary seeks to reduce human disturbance at this important kekeno breeding colony by prohibiting public access (with some limited exceptions).

Prior to the 2016 earthquake, international tourist numbers to the region were around 125,000 per year. While there are no data on the proportion of these visitors that visited the Ōhau Point area to view seals, either before or after the sanctuary's establishment, it is well known that it was a highly visited site. The sanctuary was established to provide respite from human interference, which could disrupt the normal behaviour of kekeno, including causing mother-pup bonds to be broken or triggering stampedes of fleeing animals where pups could be trampled and killed.

What has happened since 2014?

The area of the coastline designated as the sanctuary in 2014 was significantly affected by the 2016 earthquake. The largest landslide from this event occurred at Ōhau Point, with approximately 200,000 cubic metres of material falling over State Highway 1, across the foreshore of the sanctuary and into the sea. Since then, the public have largely been physically deterred from entering the sanctuary, due to State Highway 1 now sitting approximately 20 metres seaward and on top of an 8-10 metres high seawall for more than a kilometre.

Figure 6 illustrates the changes to the sanctuary as a result of the earthquake. The sanctuary's seaward boundary is "mean low water springs" (the average low tide level), however this is now in a different place due to uplift from the earthquake. Also, the redesign of State Highway 1 at Ōhau Point has resulted in a significant portion of the sanctuary now being occupied by road.

Prior to the earthquake, Ōhau Point was the most significant breeding colony for kekeno in the Kaikōura area, with other colonies, albeit much smaller, existing at Lynch's Reef (Kaikōura Peninsula) and Barney's Rock (approximately 10 km southwest of Kaikōura Peninsula)¹⁶. Despite there being kekeno mortality associated with the earthquake itself and the post-earthquake construction activities, overall, the kekeno population at Kaikōura has increased since the 2016 earthquake. The number of pups born at the colony around Ōhau Point, however, has remained relatively constant. This colony is also now distributed throughout a longer but narrower stretch of coast. Recent research has recorded that there are some new breeding areas around the Kaikōura Peninsula, and at two new sites south of the peninsula.

DOC is monitoring other potential threats to local kekeno populations. This follows a large mortality event over the summer of 2023/24, where close to 1000 kekeno were found to have died from starvation. While there was not one clear cause of this, this type of event is likely to occur again, with continued changes to climate, sea temperatures and prey abundance and distribution. Another high mortality event in 2024 has been attributed to a new type of Canine Distemper Virus that had previously not been recorded in New Zealand or the world. DOC, Ministry for Primary Industries and

¹⁶ Hall, A.A., Chilvers, B.L., Weir, J.S., Boren, L.J., 2024. Earthquake impacts on a protected pinniped in New Zealand. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* 34:e4055.

Figure 6: Ōhau New Zealand Fur Seal Sanctuary before (left) and after (right) the 2016 Kaikōura earthquake.



universities are collaborating to understand where else this virus is affecting kekeno. There is also the potential for harmful effects from other new diseases, such as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (bird flu), which is causing significant mortality in marine mammal and marine bird populations globally. DOC and New Zealand Transport Authority have also collaborated to reduce the incidence of kekeno on State Highway 1 by installing motorcycle protection rails at key points along the Kaikōura coastline.



Questions

- How effective do you think the Ōhau New Zealand Fur Seal Sanctuary has been in minimising human disturbance to fur seals in the Kaikōura area?
- What successes or challenges are you aware of in relation to the Ōhau New Zealand Fur Seal Sanctuary?
- Do you have any suggestions for changes or improvements to the Ōhau New Zealand Fur Seal Sanctuary?

Customary Management Measures – Mātaitai reserves and Taiāpure

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu is the tribal council of Ngāi Tahu whānui and the Kaikōura Marine Area is within the Ngāi Tahu whānui takiwā (territory/region). Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura is the administrative council of the hapū Ngāti Kuri, and Ngāti Kuri have manawhenua and manamoana in the Kaikōura region.

Ngāti Kuri and the local community worked together through Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura (the Kaikōura Coastal Marine Guardians) to produce the Kaikōura Marine Strategy which led to the development of the Kaikōura (Te Tai o Marokura) Marine Management Act 2014, as described above.

Mātaitai reserves and taiāpure included in the Kaikōura Act as Customary Management Measures are:

- Mangamaunu Mātaitai
- Oaro Mātaitai
- Te Waha o te Marangai Mātaitai
- Te Taumanu o Te Waka a Māui Taiāpure
- Oaro-Haumuri Taiāpure

What is this management measure?

In 2008, Ngāi Tahu conducted the Customary Fishing Protection Areas project, to identify the most significant mahinga kai areas. These areas were then assessed by Ngāi Tahu Tangata Tiaki and other tribal fishing experts. Specific mahinga kai sites were identified during this process by the lead Kaikōura Tangata Tiaki as the highest priority traditional food gathering areas of special significance to Ngāti Kuri. These were subsequently part of the Kaikōura Marine Strategy. Before the Kaikōura Act, the Kaikōura Marine Strategy was designed to help the community work together to manage the fisheries within the rohe and Kaikōura Marine Area. This Strategy recommended setting up three mātaitai reserves and two taiāpure areas to protect important customary food gathering sites. These recommendations were later included in the Kaikōura Act.

Under the Kaikōura Act, mātaitai reserves are managed by Ministerially appointed Tangata Tiaki/Kaitiaki, and taiāpure are managed by Ministerially appointed committee

members, all are collectively known as Customary Managers. Currently, Te Waha o te Marangai Mātaitai and Mangamaunu Mātaitai both have six Customary Managers and Oaro Mātaitai has eight. The two taiāpure have eleven Customary Managers.

The goal for the mātaitai reserves (as identified in the 2012 Kaikōura Marine Strategy) is to support Ngāti Kuri gaining direct control of their most important food gathering places. All commercial fishing is prohibited within the mātaitai reserves. Bylaws relating to non-commercial fishing can be made by Tangata Tiaki/Kaitiaki and require Minister for Oceans and Fisheries approval.

The goal for the taiāpure is to support Ngāti Kuri in leading local management of fisheries associated with traditional occupation sites. Fishing continues within taiāpure unless fishing regulations are made. These can be recommended by the Taiāpure Management Committee and require Minister for Oceans and Fisheries approval.

What has happened since 2014?

- Tangata Tiaki/Kaitiaki were put in place to manage the mātaitai reserves and committee members were put in place to manage taiāpure. The Customary Managers held fourteen meetings between October 2015 – November 2018.
- Some mātaitai reserves and taiāpure areas were impacted by the 2016 Kaikōura earthquake coastal uplift, particularly those in the northern part of the Kaikōura Marine Area.
- After the 2016 earthquakes, an emergency closure measure was enacted along the Kaikōura coastline, including the mātaitai reserves and taiāpure, preventing the harvest of most shellfish and seaweed species. The closure extended from Marfell's Beach (near Ward) south to the Conway River south of Kaikōura township and offshore by 4 nautical miles.
- In 2017, baseline monitoring of key fish stocks was undertaken at Te Taumanu o Te Waka a Māui Taiāpure. Findings from the baseline monitoring indicated that key customary stocks within the taiāpure were in a depleted state. No further surveys have been undertaken.
- A separate blue cod tag-recapture survey was undertaken in the same taiāpure in May 2017. Findings indicated a small inshore population of blue cod with few fish of minimum legal size. No further surveys have been undertaken.

- From November 2017-October 2018 a package of taiāpure regulations was developed, and pre-consultation was undertaken. These were guided by the baseline survey results and included:
 - closure of Waiopuka reef to commercial and recreational shellfish (other than rock lobster and octopus) and seaweed fishing;
 - restrictions on recreational lobster pot use;
 - restrictions on amateur charter vessel use;
 - reductions in finfish bag limits.
- In 2018, Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura put a hold on progressing these and other customary management measures and these regulations were not implemented.
- The regulations put in place under the emergency closure measure were replaced over subsequent years with sustainability measures enabling reopening of areas to fishing. This was guided by a scientific research programme put in place by Fisheries New Zealand following the earthquakes to monitor the recovery of key fisheries.
- The Kaikōura recreational pāua fishery, closed as part of the emergency measures, reopened in the 2021/22 summer, except for inside the mātaitai reserves and Te Taumanu o Te Waka a Māui Taiāpure. Specific regulations for harvesting of pāua and other species were put in place for the Oaro-Haumuri Taiāpure.

In June 2024, Ngāi Tahu produced a review of the operation and effectiveness of the Kaikōura Act's Customary Measures. This concluded the mātaitai reserves and taiāpure put in place are still in the highest priority areas and suggested no changes are required. Other recommendations from their report include that mātaitai reserves and taiāpure would benefit from:

- benthic surveys every 5 years;
- mapping of critical customary fisheries habitats both inside and outside the boundaries (to aid effectiveness assessments);
- Te Rūnanga re-initiating taiāpure management hui and customary management practices; and
- Fisheries New Zealand consulting with tangata whenua (Māori with ancestral rights to areas of the sea) and developing policies that recognise Māori customary non-commercial fishing use and management practices) by engaging with the committees on management matters relating to the taiāpure areas.

Inspections of non-commercial fishers between 2019 and 2025, in and around the Customary Management Measures, indicate that compliance with customary fisheries rules and regulations was high at around 92 percent.



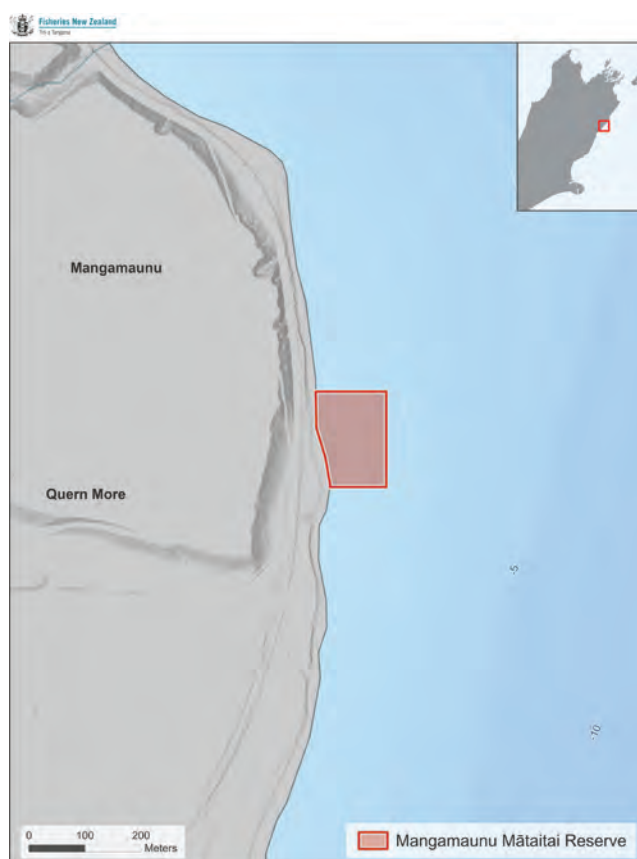


Customary Management Measures – Mātaitai

Mangamaunu Mātaitai Reserve

Covers the reef area immediately in front of Mangamaunu Marae north of the rail crossing and urupa, marked with white and red pou. Includes all the inshore reef structure covering a 200 metre section of the shoreline to a point 100 metres offshore, protecting a total area of 1.97 km² (Figure 7).

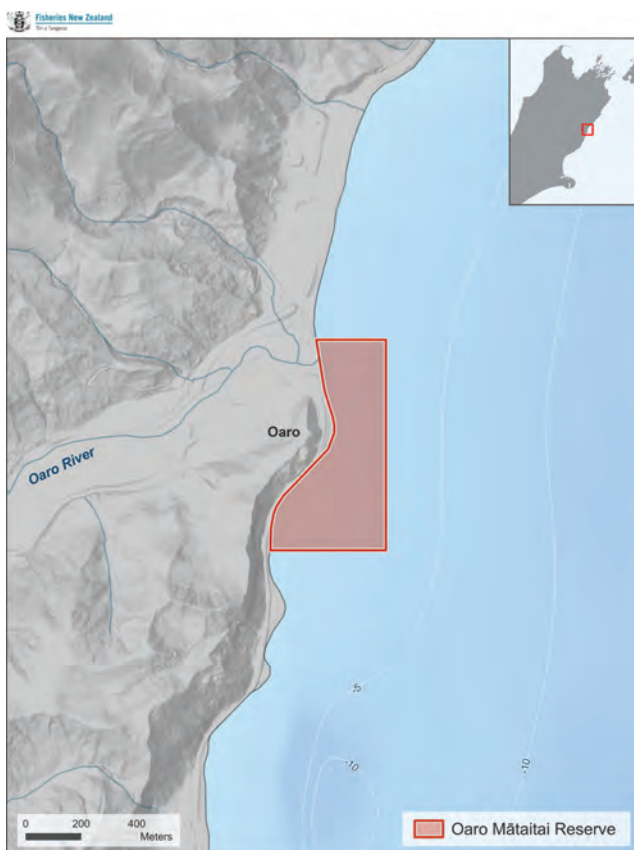
Figure 7: Map of Mangamaunu Mātaitai Reserve.



Oaro Mātaitai Reserve

Covers area of reef immediately south of the Oaro River (also includes catchment of the Oaro River). Encompassing approximately 1km² area of shoreline 100 metres south of the Oaro overbridge, easterly to a point 200 metres offshore, then south for 700 metres to a point directly off the Limestone Cliffs. Then in an easterly direction back to the shoreline at the southern end of The Blocks.

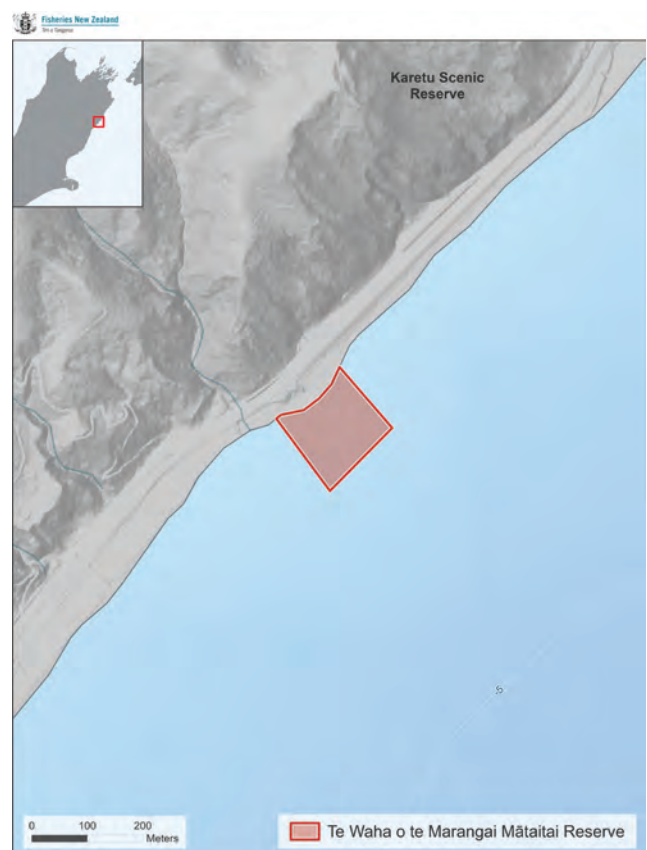
Figure 8: Map of Oaro Mātaitai Reserve.



Te Waha o te Marangai Mātaitai Reserve

Covers an area of reef to the south of Blue Duck stream that encompasses the inshore rocky reef structure located 100 metres north and south around the Mussel rock area to a point 200 metres offshore, protecting a total area of 2.15 km² (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Map of Te Waha o te Marangai Mātaitai Reserve.



Kahutara Mātaitai (Fisheries (Declaration of Kahutara Mātaitai Reserve) Notice 2018) and Tūtaeputaputa Mātaitai (Fisheries (Declaration of Tūtaeputaputa Mātaitai Reserve) Notice 2018) are also within the Kaikōura Marine Area but were not established under the Kaikōura Act and are not covered by this review.

Customary Management Measures – Taiāpure

Te Taumanu o Te Waka a Māui Taiāpure

Covers the Kaikōura Peninsula roughly from the “Lions Pool” reef on the north side to racecourse reef (Caves restaurant) on the south side. From the Lions Pool, proceeds in an eastern direction to the Nine Pin rock, then in a southeasterly direction to 400 metres southeast of Lynch Reef, then to its southernmost point 600 metres south of Atia Point, before proceeding to the shore in a northwesterly heading to a point outside the Caves, protecting a total area of 6.97 km² (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Map of Te Taumanu o Te Waka Taiāpure.



Oaro-Haumuri Taiāpure

Covers an area from north of the Oaro River to south of the Haumuri Bluffs (Claverley) and includes the marine section of the Oaro Mātaitai, heading from shore 100 metres north of the Oaro Overbridge, easterly to 600 metres offshore. Then proceeds south for 2.6 km to a point 900 metres off the Kumara Gardens, bearing southeasterly to a point 700 metres off the Spyglass Point. Proceeding south southwest 300 metres east of the Haumuri Bluffs back to the shoreline at the Okarahia Viaduct, protecting a total area of 5.66 km² (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Map of Oaro-Haumuri Taiāpure.



Questions

- How effective do you think the Customary Management Measures (mātaitai reserves and taiāpure) are at protecting traditional food gathering areas?
- What successes or challenges are you aware of in relation to the Customary Management Measures?
- Do you have any suggestions for changes or improvements to the Customary Management Measures?

Managing the Kaikōura Marine Area as a package

The sections above describe each of the management measures for Kaikōura that were put in place in 2014. The measures were designed to work together as a package, to “assist with the preservation, protection, and sustainable and integrated management” of the Kaikōura Marine Area. So, it's important to also consider how the area is being managed as a whole.



Questions

- How effective do you think the management measures have been in protecting and sustaining the Kaikōura Marine Area?
- What successes or challenges are you aware of in relation to the management of the Kaikōura Marine Area?
- Do you have any suggestions for changes or improvements to the management of the Kaikōura Marine Area?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about the Kaikōura Marine Area or its management?





How to have your say

We want to hear from anyone who uses, values or enjoys the Kaikōura Marine Area to complete the public survey before **5pm 28 October 2025**.

For more information, visit:

www.doc.govt.nz/kaikoura-marine-review

To make a submission:

- Complete the consultation survey found here:
www.doc.govt.nz/kaikoura-marine-review
- Send your submission by post or email to:
Department of Conservation
Private Bag 5
Nelson 7042
Attn: K Blakemore
KaikouraMarineReview@doc.govt.nz

Submissions will inform the final report for the Minister of Conservation and the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries. DOC and Fisheries New Zealand will publish this report on their websites at the conclusion of the process.

Any submission you make becomes public information. Anyone can ask for copies of all submissions under the Official Information Act 1982 ([OIA](#)). Under the OIA, we must make the information available unless we have a good reason for withholding it (sections 6 and 9 of the OIA provide the grounds to do so).

If you think there are grounds to withhold specific information in your submission, please let us know. Reasons for withholding information might include it being commercially sensitive or personal information. The Ombudsman can review any decision DOC/Fisheries New Zealand makes to withhold information and may require its release.



