

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, surfing, 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.



Scarlet wrasse and kina.
Photo: I. Cooper.

Nga Mahanga a Tairi – Tangata Whenua

Nga Mahanga a Tairi gave considerable support to the marine reserve application. Their traditional rohe/tribal area extends across the Tapuae Marine Reserve. The area is of cultural, spiritual, historical and traditional importance to local iwi.

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 Tapuae 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: New Zealand fur seal.
Photo: I. Cooper.

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Tapuae Marine Reserve

Taranaki

WANGANUI CONSERVANCY



Welcome

Kia ora, welcome to Tapuae Marine Reserve. Established in 2008, the reserve is the result of many years of work by the applicants, the Nga Motu Marine Reserve Society (with support from Nga Mahanga a Tairi). This 1404 hectare area adjoins the Sugar Loaf Island Marine Protected Area (SLIMPA) and extends southwest to the Tapuae Stream. It provides a safe haven and nursery for a wealth of underwater life. We hope you enjoy your visit to this special part of the Taranaki coast.



Blue cod.
Photo: B. Williams.

Why is this area important?

The Taranaki coast is known for its wild ruggedness. Near to New Plymouth, this energetic and exposed environment is broken by the Sugar Loaf Islands. These islands, the remnants of an ancient volcanic cone, provide a diverse range of habitats and sheltered areas for marine life. Subtidal habitats include caves, canyons, rock faces with crevices and overhangs, large pinnacles, boulder fields and extensive areas of mud and sand. Distinct from the rest of the Cape Egmont Coastal Unit, these low sea stacks and islands provide the firmest and most stable substrate on the open Taranaki coast. As the habitat is unique to the region, it is considered to be of significant conservation value.

In contrast, the intertidal and subtidal habitats in the southwestern part of the Tapuae Marine Reserve are considered to be a classic example of the wild Taranaki

coastline. Approximately one third of the seabed is rocky reef – predominantly cobble and boulder platform of significant variability in seabed complexity.



Seal rock.
Photo: C. Lilley.

The waters of the reserve contain a diverse range of fish, invertebrate and algal species. Below 10m depth, sponges, compound ascidians (sea squirts) and encrusting coralline algae dominate. The scattered rock reefs are covered with macroalgae, bryozoans, kina, sea cucumbers, molluscs and starfish. Triplefins, other reef associated fish (e.g. red moki, butterfly perch, scarlet wrasse, spotty, blue cod) and short-tailed stingray reside. Pelagic species such as John Dory, kingfish, kahawai, gurnard, snapper, trevally and mullet are just some of the fish commonly seen. The area is also home to many rock lobster.

The reserve also contains an important breeding and haul out site for New Zealand fur seals, and has the northernmost breeding population of this species. Other marine mammals that have been observed in this area include common dolphins, pilot whales, orca, humpback whales and southern right whales.

Visiting the reserve

Good views of Tapuae Marine Reserve and the Sugar Loaf Islands can be gained from several lookouts along New Plymouth's Centennial Drive. The first, Centennial Park car park (immediately south of Paritutu Rock), offers the best view. Toilets are available at the second car park, several hundred meters south. A third car park is located below the second (adjacent to the Herekawe Stream), through which beach access to the northern part of the reserve can be gained.



Crayfish.
Photo: B. Williams.

The southern part of the reserve can be accessed off Surf Highway 45, 8 km south of New Plymouth. Turn into Tapuae Country Estate, park in the public car park and follow the path along the stream to the beach.

For boaties, the reserve is easily accessed via the New Plymouth boat ramp. For those without a boat, contact the Visitor Information Centre at Puke Ariki (located in central New Plymouth) for options to visit the reserve.

It is possible to walk along the length of the reserve from the Herekawe Stream to the Tapuae Stream (6 km/2 hrs). However, the beach walk is only accessible 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 the other end no later than 2 hrs after low tide. We recommend that you leave a vehicle at the opposite end or arrange a pick-up

