

## Help us protect the marine reserve

DOC looks after the reserve, with the advice and assistance of the Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve Committee. The Friends of Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve Charitable Trust (established in 2012) works in partnership with DOC and Marine Reserve Committee.



### Please remember

- It is an offence to pollute or litter the reserve, discharge any firearm in or into the reserve, or erect any structure.
- Weather and sea conditions can change rapidly - be prepared by checking the local tide tables and the weather forecast.

### Protect our marine reserves

They are special places that protect the species and habitats within them.

- No fishing of any kind.
- Don't take or kill marine life.
- Don't disturb any marine life or remove any materials.
- Don't feed fish - it disturbs their natural behaviour.

Call 0800 DOC HOT  
(0800 362 468) to report any  
illegal activity.

**DOC HOTline**  
**0800 362 468**  
Report any safety hazards  
or conservation emergencies  
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111



Scarlet wrasse, 20 m below the surface.

# Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve

Gisborne



### For further information visit [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) or contact:

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Cover photo: View over the marine reserve.  
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*Published by:*  
Department of Conservation  
Turanganui-a-Kiwa/Gisborne Office  
New Zealand  
June 2017

*Editing and design:*  
Publishing Team, DOC National Office  
R115481

This publication is produced using paper sourced from well-managed, renewable and legally logged forests.

**New Zealand Government**

Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## Discover a wealth of marine life

Te Tapuwae o Rongokako (“The footprint of Rongokako”) Marine Reserve offers the rare opportunity to encounter New Zealand’s intriguing marine life at close range, in a protected environment.

The reserve was established in 1999 after many years of work by Ngāti Konohi and the Department of Conservation (DOC). It is located 16 km north of Gisborne. As national parks protect species and habitats on land, so marine reserves protect marine life and coastal and marine habitats. They are a wonderful opportunity for conservation—allowing ecosystems to return to a near-natural state—and for scientists to study marine life in isolation.

Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve protects about 2,450 ha of coastline, and its marine life, from the outside world. It features eight marine habitat types—including inshore reefs, rocky intertidal platforms and sediment flats—typical of the area between East Cape and Mahia Peninsula. There are plenty of great snorkelling, scuba-diving and marine sightseeing opportunities too.

Enjoy the fascinating marine life in this exceptional environment on New Zealand’s East Coast.

## Getting there

The reserve is 16 km north of Gisborne; it can be reached via State Highway 35, with public access at Pouawa. There are car parks, public toilets, picnic tables and information signs for visitors. There are pōhutukawa trees, which will grow and provide shade in future.



Lagoon at Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve.



Pōhutukawa.



New Zealand dotterel.



Common dolphin. Photo: N Gibbs



Encrusting sponges.



Aerial view.



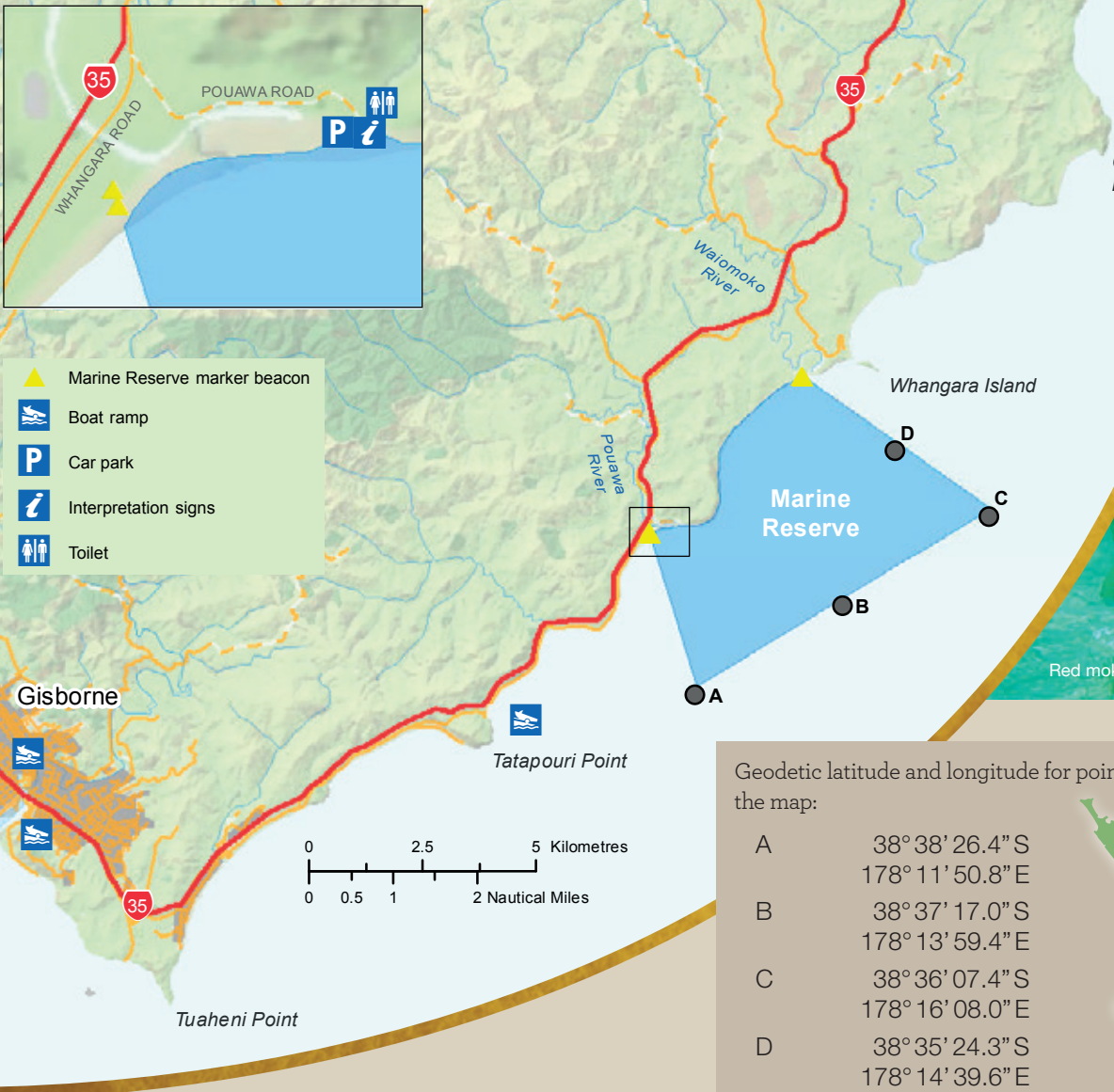
Blue cod.



Crayfish.



- Marine Reserve marker beacon
- Boat ramp
- Car park
- Interpretation signs
- Toilet



Gable End Foreland

Whangara Island

Marine Reserve

Tatapouri Point

Gisborne

Tuaheni Point

Geodetic latitude and longitude for points indicated on the map:

A	38° 38' 26.4" S 178° 11' 50.8" E
B	38° 37' 17.0" S 178° 13' 59.4" E
C	38° 36' 07.4" S 178° 16' 08.0" E
D	38° 35' 24.3" S 178° 14' 39.6" E



Seaweed Education Day March 2010.  
Photo: Trudi Ngawhare



Red moki.



Nudibrach on reef.



Kina.



Clown nudibrach.



Banded perch.

## Reserve boundaries

The landward boundary of the marine reserve is the 'mean high water springs' mark, indicated (approximately) by the strand line of seaweed. The beach above this mark is privately owned—you may use it, but please respect the landowners. There is no public access to the farmland adjacent to the reserve without the permission of the landowners, Whitiwhiti Inc.

The reserve extends from near the Waiomoko River mouth in the north, to near the Pouawa River mouth in the south. The northern and southern boundaries are marked by paired yellow triangular beacons. The boundary lengths are:

- northern boundary: 5 km (2.7 nm)
- southern boundary: 3.5 km (1.9 nm)
- seaward boundary: 7.5 km (4 nm).



## Reserve highlights

### On the water

Many different birds, including gannets, terns, penguins and gulls, depend on the sea within the reserve for food. Marine mammals such as New Zealand fur seals, dolphins and whale species are regular visitors.

### On shore

The beach and intertidal reefs are best explored at low tide. There is a sandy beach about 4 km long, and intertidal reef platforms around Pariokonohi Point near the southern boundary. A beach walk to the northern end of the reserve takes around 1 hr 30 min. You will see remnants of the old coach road along the beach, and the remains of the pā (village) on the cliffs above. You will also get a great view of Whangara Island/Te Ana o Paikea.

Exploring the intertidal reef, you will meet a variety of marine plants and animals that depend on the tide for survival: crabs, barnacles, snails and seaweeds. The area is also frequented by birds like oystercatchers, tūturiwhatu/New Zealand dotterels, gulls and terns.

### Underwater

One of the best ways to learn about the reserve and its inhabitants is to explore the rocks close to the shore with a mask and snorkel. The shallow moat near the southern end of the reserve is ideal for observing and learning about its plants and animals.

The subtidal area of the reserve contains several distinct habitats. Down to about 10 m in depth, a variety of seaweeds such as flapjack and kelp can be found. Kina, marine snails, sponges and other animals are also common. Some of the fish you may see are paketi/spotties, tāngahangaha/banded wrasse, nanua/red moki, hiwihiwi, mararī/greenbone butterflyfish, kehe/marblefish and parore/black bream.

From 10 to 20 m in depth there are extensive kelp forests, home to many fish species—including pūwaiwhakaruā/scarlet wrasse, scorpionfish, hui/sweep and kōkiri/leatherjackets. Sponges, hydroids, anemones, soft corals and sea squirts thrive on the rock faces and overhangs. The Gisborne coast also attracts lots of crayfish—you may see hundreds as you explore the crevices and overhangs, depending on the season.



Members of the public enjoying the reserve.

### When to go

Diving, snorkelling, and beach-walking are all ideal at low tide, when deep pools and channels in the reef are exposed. The reef platform is almost cut off from the open sea at low tide, creating a shallow and sheltered area for entering the water and exploring the rocky shore. Underwater visibility can be poor at low tide, but on a calm day the deep channel running through the reef is a good place for scuba divers or snorkelers to see crayfish, and species like blue moki.

There is sometimes a current in the channel draining the reef platform during incoming and outgoing tides; if planning to snorkel or scuba dive, check the tide times and plan accordingly.



Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve 10 years celebration.

## Te Tapuwae o Rongokako

The footprint of Rongokako (Te Tapuwae o Rongokako), an ancestor of East Coast tradition, is embedded in one of the rocky structures of the marine reserve, close to shore.

Many traditions abound regarding Rongokako. It is generally agreed that he was a man of immense athletic prowess and dexterity, a giant who could stride enormous distances. However, his arrival is as mysterious as his departure: some say he was the father of the famous Tamatea and came from Hawaiki in the Takitimu canoe—others say he came in the Horouta canoe.

Local tradition suggests that Rongokako was sent by Kiwa to investigate the late arrival of the Horouta waka to Turanganui-a-Kiwa. On his arrival at Ohiwa, a disagreement arose between Rongokako and Paoa and they engaged in a titanic struggle. This culminated in a chase by Paoa of his fleet-footed adversary down the East Coast shoreline; but Paoa was no match for Rongokako.

To help overtake him, Paoa set a large rat trap to snare the giant's pet, an enormous kiwi. The wily Rongokako sprang the trap which flew inland, forming Mount Arowhana. The site of the trap became Tawhiti, an area of land between Te Puia and Tokomaru Bay.

In this epic encounter, Rongokako left footprints in the flat rocks as he strode down the eastern seaboard of the North Island. The first of these is at Wharekahika (Hicks Bay). The second is at Kaiora, south of Whangara mai tawhiti, from which the name of this marine reserve is derived—Te Tapuwae o Rongokako. The next footprint is located at Turanga, another at Nukutaurua on the Mahia Peninsula.

Rongokako then stepped over to Te Matau-a-Maui (Cape Kidnappers), then to the shores of Raukawa (Cook Strait). He crossed the strait and was gone.

Kaiora, the settlement that overlooks the marine reserve, was a well-populated papa kāinga (village). The famous East Coast chief, Porourangi, lived here and is buried close by.

Konohi, the local chief, also lived in the district. He had three sons: Marukauiti, Te Riwai and Wahakapi, from whom the present tribe of Whangara mai tawhiti claims descent.

