



Weaving the Strands

Promoting and facilitating integrated management around the Hauraki Gulf – Tikapa Moana

State of our Gulf seminar

Join us on Tuesday 9 August at the Auckland Museum to explore the findings of the 2011 Hauraki Gulf State of the Environment report.

Every three years the Hauraki Gulf Forum is required to provide a snapshot of the environmental health of the Gulf and the way we are managing it.

This year our report set out to answer some important questions:

- How far from a natural state is the Gulf currently in?
- What are the biggest stressors to the Gulf system?
- Do we know enough about what is going on?
- How can we recognise the relationships tangata whenua have with the Gulf?
- Are we integrating management or working in silos?
- Are our management responses enough to make a difference?

Our comprehensive and ambitious report sets the stage for us to move from the present to a future state sought by the Forum: a Gulf that is “celebrated and treasured”, which is “thriving with fish, shellfish and kaimoana”, which has a “rich diversity of life” which supports a “sense of place, connection and identity” and a “vibrant economy”.



What future for the Gulf?

Join leading researchers and find out about the latest trends in our populations of resident whales, seabirds and marine life. Consider the latest thinking about how we could value and benefit from healthy, natural systems. Ponder how management agencies can set firm targets for environmental quality and work with fishers, farmers, developers and community groups to realise them.

The seminar will be hosted by Auckland Museum in its auditorium from 10am to 5pm, followed by an official launch of the report with invited guests.

Registrations are open to the public and limited to 200 people.

The cost is \$30 and includes a lunch, morning and afternoon tea.

Bookings can be made at www.aucklandmuseum.com/?t=1380



*Mayor John Tregidga,
Chair, Hauraki Gulf Forum*



Co-operation, Capacity, Charisma; Fishing the Gulf; Governing the Gulf; Spatial Planning for the Gulf guides



EDS seeks interest in collaborative planning



Gulf health critical for many uses

Spatial planning

The Hauraki Gulf Forum has published *Spatial planning for the Gulf: An international review of marine spatial planning initiatives and application to the Hauraki Gulf*.

The report examines the application and experience of spatial planning in eight marine areas internationally and concludes it is a tool which could help achieve the integrated management and protection and enhancement required by the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act.

Hauraki Gulf Forum Chair John Tregidga says our state of the environment reports show the large scale transformation of the Gulf over two lifetimes and declines in important areas of environmental health.

The Waikato Regional Council and Auckland Council have agreed to work together in scoping an approach to spatial planning for the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

Significant interest in and support for a spatial plan for the Hauraki Gulf was shown at the Environmental Defence Society's *Coastlines* Conference in June. EDS sought expressions of interest from stakeholders in a pilot collaborative planning process – “which would attempt to reach a consensus view about the way forward for what is New Zealand’s most intensively used waterway” – if sponsored by the councils and the Hauraki Gulf Forum.

The report is the fourth guidance document produced by the Forum.

Available at www.tiny.cc/av5ej

Gulf seabirds at risk

A recent Ministry of Fisheries report reveals the precarious situation facing many of New Zealand’s seabirds.

The report prepared to inform the Ministry’s draft Seabird By-catch Policy uses existing by-catch data, population and vulnerability information to estimate the numbers of seabirds being caught in each fishery type. The report makes grim reading, identifying 21 species with populations likely to be in decline as a result of fisheries by-catch. In the Hauraki Gulf it is estimated between 725 and 1524 Black Petrels may have been killed each year between 2003 and 2009. Black Petrels, classified as vulnerable, only breed on Great Barrier and Little Barrier islands. The report notes “most observed captures were close to breeding grounds, primarily in the bottom longline snapper fishery, but also in the bottom longline bluenose fishery, and inshore trawl fisheries.”

The report also notes that more flesh-footed shearwaters (which breed on a number of Gulf islands) are killed each year than the population can sustain.

www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Environmental/Seabirds.htm

Fishing needs a healthy environment

In a speech to the Seafood Industry Council Conference in June Department of Conservation Director-General Al Morrison warned the fishing industry not to gamble too heavily with nature.

“Our present and future prosperity is tied in to ecological respect for our land and waters.” He proposed that the fishing industry “partner up to show the world that conservation is good for business, and business is good for conservation.”

Mr Morrison drew attention to the value marine ecosystem services provide, citing a 1999 study calculating their worth to the country at \$184 Billion, more than our annual GDP.

“Business, as a particular beneficiary of nature’s services, as a key user of our natural capital, has a lead role to play in the health of those ecosystems that, if played smartly, will benefit it.”

He said marine spatial planning had the potential to integrate the way we use the marine environment so that economic, environmental, social and cultural values are accounted for in a sustainable use approach. “Engaging with the marine spatial planning approach is in your interests,” he told delegates.

www.doc.govt.nz/about-doc/news/speeches/al-morrison-at-seafic/

Ngati Rehua agreement

The Crown and Ngati Rehua-Ngati Wai ki Aotea (Ngati Rehua) have signed an Agreement in Principle to settle all outstanding historical Treaty of Waitangi claims.

Ngati Rehua is a hapu of Ngati Wai based on Aotea/Great Barrier Island with historical grievances relating to old land claims, early Crown purchases, pre-emption waiver purchases and



Mike Lee and common geko on Crusoe Island



Mt Te Aroha and Waihou River



Hirakimata on Aotea - Great Barrier Island

prejudice arising from the operation and impact of native land laws.

The agreement, signed on behalf of the Crown by Maori Affairs Minister Dr Pita Sharples on June 17, includes financial redress of \$4.6 million and a cultural redress that includes the transfer of part of Hirakimata / Mt Hobson and Okivi Recreation Reserve on Great Barrier Island, and the transfer and gift back of the Mokohinau Islands Scenic and Nature Reserve. Sites of significance within Rakitu Island Scenic Reserve will also be vested, subject to conditions including the protection of public access and conservation values.

“The Agreement in Principle marks the start of the next phase in the negotiations process with Ngati Rehua,” Dr Sharples said. “It’s also another important milestone for the Tamaki Makaurau region and I’m positive we will see more milestones in this region in the coming months as we work towards settling all historical claims in a just and durable way by 2014.”

www.feeds.beehive.govt.nz/minister/pita-sharples/release

Crusoe success

A visit to tiny Crusoe Island near Waiheke last month confirmed that skinks and geckos are successfully breeding there.

Shore skinks and common geckos were reintroduced to the 0.7 ha island last year after being absent for half a century.

Auckland Councillor Mike Lee has championed and helped with pest

eradication and restoration of the island, after first carrying out a biological survey of the island as part of his MSc degree in 1996. The island was then overrun with mice – probably introduced when a fishing boat ran aground in 1949 – and its native vegetation infested with *Rhamnus alaternus* – an especially aggressive pest weed plant.

“While most conservation attention focuses on the larger islands like Little Barrier, (Hauturu), Rangitoto, Motutapu, Tiritiri Matangi and Motuihe, it is not generally appreciated that the much more numerous islets (less than 1 hectare in size) of which there are 350 in the Hauraki Gulf alone have significant existing and potential conservation values – especially for seabirds and reptiles,” Cr Lee says.

As well as finding juvenile skinks and geckos, Cr Lee noted a visible increase in spiders and larger invertebrates like native cockroaches and seashore earwigs “suggesting ecological processes on Crusoe Island disrupted by decades of heavy infestation by mice are slowly but surely being restored to full health. All this is very satisfying and augers well for the long term success of the translocations.”

www.mikelee.co.nz/2011/05/leaping-lizards-liberated-native-skinks-and-geckoes-alive-and-breeding/

Tui Mine clean-up funding announced

A \$16.2 million clean-up fund for New Zealand’s most dangerous

contaminated site at Tui Mine on Mt Te Aroha was announced in May by the Government as part of an agreement with local councils and the Green Party.

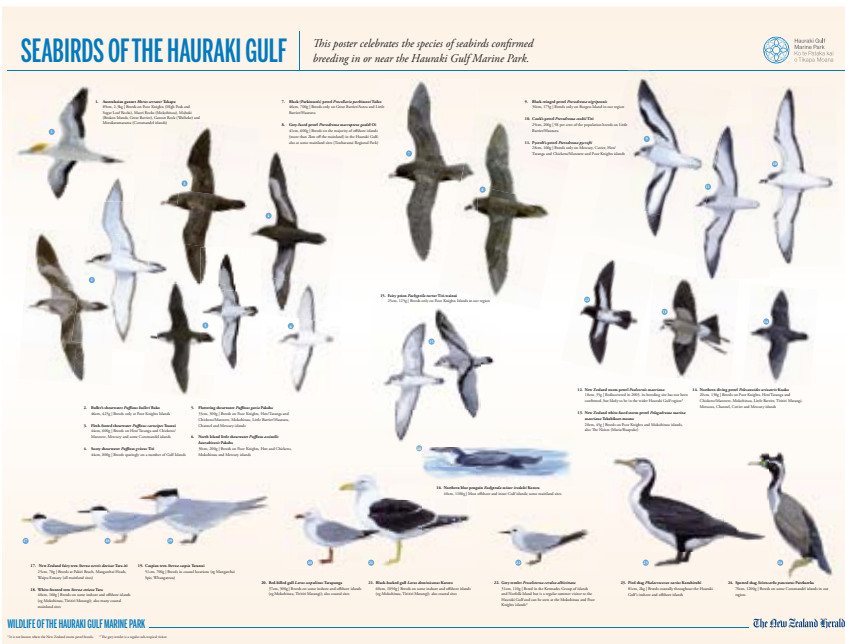
“We need to stabilise and make safe the 160,000 tonnes of contaminated mine tailings that sit precariously above Te Aroha. Geo-technical reports indicate that life would be put at risk and damage of up to \$168 million in the event of a modest earthquake or severe storm,” Environment Minister Nick Smith said.

The \$16.2 million cost is to be met by the Government providing \$15.2 million, and contributions of \$800,000 from the Waikato Regional Council and \$200,000 from the Matamata-Piako District Council.

Matamata-Piako District Council Mayor Hugh Vercoe told Radio NZ “something has to be done to clean up and stabilise the mine’s dam. If an earthquake were to destroy the dam wall in the front, that whole lot would slide down the mountain, go into the Waihou River and finish up in the Hauraki Gulf.”

The clean-up plan involves strengthening the tailings dam by mixing the contaminated soil with cement and rock, compacting the layers of material, and adding a new clay cap to prevent leachate polluting adjacent streams.

www.beehive.govt.nz/release/tui-mine-clean-funding-announced



Seabirds conservation plan supported



Auckland Conservancy



Waikato Conservancy

Conservation among Waikato field day messages

The Department of Conservation’s Waikato Conservancy was among the crowds at the New Zealand National Agricultural Fielddays at Mystery Creek near Hamilton

117,495 visitors passed through the Fielddays’ gates between June 13-16.

Waikato Conservator Greg Martin said “It was a good opportunity to talk about how recreation and tourism might be combined with farming for added value.” Staff gave advice about weed and animal control options for the bush, the farm and the garden, as well as about walking, tramping, cycling, hunting and camping opportunities on public conservation land.

The Waikato and Auckland Conservancies recently recommenced consultation on their Conservation Management Strategies, which set the direction for how the department

manages places and focuses its work over the next 10 years.

www.doc.govt.nz/waikatocms
www.doc.govt.nz/aucklandcms

Fillip for whale and seabird research

The Hauraki Gulf Forum has provided seed funding grants to assist research and conservation of the iconic species of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

The funding will support the preparation of a strategic plan for seabird conservation and research. The Gulf has one of the highest diversities of seabirds in the world with 23 species known to breed in the region. However comprehensive studies have only been carried out on four species and the conservation status of others is poorly known. The Gulf is a dynamic environment and seabirds rely on water and habitat quality, as well as food that is patchy in distribution and ephemeral by nature. Consequently, there is a strong need to understand spatial

and temporal patterns in relation to management decisions that could affect seabirds. Independent researcher Chris Gaskin will produce the plan in consultation with researchers, managers and stakeholders.

Auckland University researcher Dr Rochelle Constantine will utilise her grant to conduct DNA analysis of whale scat. Scooping up and analysing the faeces of whales in the Gulf will enable the identification of prey species in their diets. About 50 critically threatened Bryde’s whales are resident in the Gulf and feed on krill, squid and fish during work ups of schooling and predatory fish, seabirds and dolphins. However, the identity of the prey often remains unknown as scientists are unable to observe what is happening below the sea-surface. Bryde’s whales rely on the availability of tonnes of prey every day to sustain them, therefore it is important we understand the effects of any changes to the availability of food from fisheries removals, a decline in habitat quality or any other environmental change.

Under consultation

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| Waikato Conservation Management Strategy | DOC | www.doc.govt.nz/waikatocms |
| Auckland Conservation Management Strategy | DOC | www.doc.govt.nz/aucklandcms |
| Draft Seabird Policy | MOF | www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Environmental/Seabirds.htm |

The Hauraki Gulf Forum is a statutory body charged with the promotion and facilitation of integrated management and the protection and enhancement of the Hauraki Gulf. The Forum has representation on behalf of the Ministers of Conservation, Fisheries and Maori Affairs, elected representatives from Auckland Council (including the Great Barrier and Waiheke local boards), Waikato Regional Council, and the Waikato, Hauraki, Thames Coromandel and Matamata Piako district councils, plus six representatives of the tangata whenua of the Hauraki Gulf and its islands.

Contact: Tim Higham, Hauraki Gulf Forum Manager, Auckland Council
 Ph 09 624 4749 tim.higham@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz www.haurakigulfforum.org.nz

Photo credits: A Jamieson/Auckland Council, Explore NZ, Waikato Regional Council, Diana Worthy – Gulf News