



Weaving the Strands

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

The bigger picture

A wide-ranging and compelling picture of the unique features, threats and management issues of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park emerged from a 10th anniversary seminar held in March.

Jointly sponsored by the Auckland Regional Council and Auckland Museum, the seminar showcased the breadth and depth of emerging knowledge about the gulf environment.

Environment Waikato's Peter Singleton showed projections of increasing nitrate discharge from farms in the Piako and Waihou river catchments and the potential for algal blooms and anoxic zones in the Firth of Thames. Muddy Feet Project coordinator Bill Brownell explained the productive and dynamic nature of the firth and its broader influence on the health of the Hauraki Gulf system.

ARC research coordinator Alison Reid mapped the social and economic conditions driving environmental change and NIWA scientist Malcolm Green connected some of the dots between urban storm water runoff and the deteriorating state of Auckland's harbours.

NIWA's Mark Morrison explained why the sheltered and shallow gulf, with its island chains, varied habitat and temperate waters particularly suits snapper, heavily utilised by recreational and commercial fishers. The shallow inner gulf is also favoured by Bryde's whales resulting in vessel strikes that could threaten the population, according to new



research led by Auckland University's Rochelle Constantine.

Even relatively common, iconic species like brown teal and chevron skinks could disappear from without predator control, Great Barrier Island Charitable Trust chair John Ogden told 170 seminar participants, while island trustee and farmer Rick Braddock outlined his vision to model sustainable farming on newly predator-free Motutapu.

Researcher Chris Gaskin explained why the gulf is one of the world's seabird hotspots and his quest to locate the breeding places of our rarest species. Chief negotiator Mike Dreaver provided an update on negotiations to settle treaty claims around Auckland while Rachel Trotman showed how support for non-regulatory programmes by councils, communities and government agencies can make a big difference for the gulf.

Author Raewyn Peart advocated using such knowledge in spatial planning and pointed out three quarters of the 'Supercity' will be sea and islands

This is a great idea: a marine spatial plan could map areas of high biodiversity, fish nursery areas, shellfish beds, important benthic habitats, migratory routes for fish and marine mammals, important habitats for seabirds, salt marshes, sea grass beds, sponge gardens, horse mussel beds, mangrove forests...

It would enable management agencies to safeguard ecological processes and resilience to ensure the gulf retains the capacity to support social and economic benefits, as is required by the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act.

Mayor John Tregidga
Chair, Hauraki Gulf Forum



ARC report shows deterioration at best sites: mullet in Whangateau



\$1 billion by 2025?



Te Ahumata from Kaitoke Beach

Mining submission period extended

The public submission period on the government’s proposals in a discussion paper *Maximising our Mineral Potential: Stocktake of Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act and beyond* has been extended to May 26.

The proposal includes the removal of conservation land on Great Barrier Island and the Coromandel from Schedule 4 to allow applications for mineral-related activity.

Seven areas in the Coromandel totalling 2,574 ha and 705 ha of Te Ahumata Plateau on Great Barrier Island are included.

Mining on Great Barrier Island - and all the islands of the Gulf – is a prohibited activity in Auckland City Council’s district plan. That means that a mining company is not able to apply for resource consents to mine.

That status reflects the extraordinary values and sensitivity of the Gulf Islands in the minds of the Council and the wider community. Auckland Central MP Nikki Kaye and Auckland Mayor John Banks have both voiced their concerns about mining on Great Barrier, due to its status within the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

www.med.govt.nz/schedule4

EW welcomes aquaculture plans

Environment Waikato has welcomed government plans to

reform aquaculture and turn it into a \$1 billion industry by 2025.

The reform proposals include streamlining the Resource Management Act, removing the requirement for aquaculture to occur only in aquaculture management areas, and an agreement in principle to establish a power for the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture to amend regional coastal plans in exceptional circumstances where it is of significant regional or national interest.

“This is one proposal we will be watching carefully and working closely with government and industry to balance the economic benefits and the environmental impacts of marine farming in the regional and national interest,” says Environment Waikato chairman Peter Buckley.

The Aquaculture Reform Bill is being drafted and is expected to be introduced in mid-2010.

www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Press/Govt+outlines+plans+for+aquaculture+reform.htm

Marine health check up

A State of the Auckland Region Report was launched by Auckland Regional Council last month.

Its marine section shows high heavy metal contaminant levels in estuaries and tidal creeks within the oldest and most urbanised catchments, with chemical contaminants increasing and likely to be having a negative

effect on the health of the ecological communities.

Sedimentation is also a concern and is an issue that may increase in importance in rural areas in the future, as increasing levels of sediment or nutrient loads were noted at some sites that presently have the best water quality.

The report found the majority of the region’s marine environment still retains its biological diversity and functioning ecosystems and recommended continued investment in monitoring and management of land based activities.

www.arc.govt.nz/stateoftheregion

Stormwater guidelines win awards

Stormwater management guidelines commissioned by the ARC and written by Boffa Miskell won a prestigious award at the biennial New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA) conference in April.

Landscape and Ecology Values within Stormwater Management won the Sustainability Award of Excellence and Gold for Communication & Promotion.

The guidelines, which judges considered well executed, thoroughly researched and to exemplify clear presentation and technical merit, will be released in August.



Shore skinks back



Song bird returns



Duder gets protective buffer

Dairy effluent systems need improvement

Environment Waikato says it is encouraged by progress despite a fifth of monitored farms being noted as significantly non-compliant with council effluent management rules in the latest report of the Dairying and Clean Streams Accord.

Compliance and education manager Rob Dragden said “our overall impression is that offending at the most serious end of the scale is dropping and that, when farmers are being told to sort things out, they are getting on with it more promptly.”

EW has assisted Fonterra to develop a code of practice for effluent system design. It has also welcomed moves by the company to start visual checks of their suppliers’ dairy effluent infrastructure.

Bellbirds make three...

Korimako (bellbirds) have become the third native bird species to make their way back to Motutapu following a successful predator eradication campaign last winter.

After more than 100 years absence the songbirds were sighted in April, joining kakariki (parakeets) and pateke (brown teal) as species to recolonise the 3842 ha sanctuary of Rangitoto-Motutapu.

Bellbirds have been almost completely absent north of the Bombay Hills since the 1860s, surviving on the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park’s Hauturu/Little Barrier

and Tiritiri Matangi. In 2005 they made their way to Rakino Island and Tawharanui Open Sanctuary.

...and get a helping hand

The return of bellbirds will be given a further boost by an Auckland Regional Council and Landcare Research project scheduled to begin this month.

Birds will be transferred from Tiritiri Matangi and Tawharanui Open Sanctuary to Motuihe Island, to Whakanewha Regional Park and the Fenwick Reserve on Waiheke, and to Hamilton’s Te Papapara Garden.

ARC Chairman Mike Lee said he expected the melodic songbirds will once again become common sights on the gulf’s islands and in suburban backyards.

Buffer for Duder Regional Park

The Auckland Regional Council has purchased 13.7 hectares on the Whakakaiwhara Peninsula to ensure Duder Regional Park retains its rural charm.

The \$2.6 million purchase will prevent subdivision and enhance camp ground, horse riding and campervan facilities near the park entrance.

The park provides a popular, pohutukawa-fringed walk to a well-preserved pa site on a peninsula

overlooking the gulf. A coastal kayak trail is also being planned.

Waiheke floats UNESCO idea

A community group on Waiheke has released a discussion document on the merits of the island becoming a UNESCO biosphere reserve.

UNESCO describes such reserves as “sites of excellence to explore and demonstrate conservation and sustainable development.”

Advocates for the idea suggest obtaining the designation could promote a single vision for Waiheke, while shaping long-term policies for tourism, economy, transport, planning, energy, climate change, and social and economic development on the island.

www.waihekeBR.info

Small island gets big hand

One of the smallest of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park’s 350 islands has had shore skinks re-introduced after predator and weed control by the Auckland Regional Council.

Tiny 0.7ha Crusoe Island (Papakohatu) between Motuihe and Waiheke Islands will also benefit from the release of other reptiles, insects and possibly seabirds.

The transferred skinks were captive bred by Massey University and sourced from Tawharanui Regional Park.



Changing fishing practices and expectations documented in guide to fisheries management in the Gulf



Fishing messages find new audiences



Waka head into Pacific

Ocean-going waka set sail

Four traditional double-hulled waka built on the Waitemata harbour and trialled last month in a regatta from the harbour bridge to Motuihe have set sail for the Pacific.

The 22 m vessels, each carrying 16 crew, are sailing from Auckland to French Polynesia, the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Fiji to raise awareness of environmental issues and the connections of Pacific people.

Hoturoa Barclay-Kerr of Te Wananga o Aotearoa said “the experiences that these waka offer are the kinds of rites of passage that have all but disappeared. There’s nothing like being out on the water to learn about the ocean, to reconnect us to the environment, to our tupuna like Tangaroa [God of the Sea] and Tawhirimatea [God of Weather].

Recreational fishing message goes global

The Office of Ethnic Affairs has had information about recreational fishing rules translated into Chinese, Korean, Hindi, Japanese, Somali and Arabic. An article titled “Obey the fishing rules – and there’ll be seafood for everyone” has been widely published on websites and media serving Auckland’s ethnic communities.

Ethnic Affairs Minister Patsy Wong said “fishing can be a good sport and great fun, provided people obey the laws in force”, in the first of a series of monthly newsletters issued in different languages.

www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz/oeawebsite.nsf/wpg_url/Resources-Ethnic-Affairs-Publications-Ethnic-Whispers-March-2010?OpenDocument#fishing

Forum publishes new guidance

The Hauraki Gulf Forum has published two new reports on how the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act can be applied.

Fishing the Gulf: Implementing the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act through Fisheries Management explores how fisheries legislation can reflect the special qualities and fishing resources in the gulf.

Cooperation, Capacity and Charisma: Enhancing the Hauraki Gulf environment through Non-regulatory Approaches shows how partnerships between government agencies, councils and communities can catalyse environmental, social and economic benefits.

The reports build on the guidance published in *Governing the Gulf: Giving Effect to the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act through Policies and Plans* published last year.

The reports are available on the Hauraki Gulf Forum web site.

www.haurakigulfforum.org.nz

Under consultation

Schedule 4 Stocktake	Ministry of Economic Development	www.med.govt.nz/schedule4
Foreshore and Seabed Act	Ministry of Justice	www.justice.govt.nz/policy-and-consultation/reviewing-the-foreshore-and-seabed-act-2004

The Hauraki Gulf Forum is a statutory body responsible for the integrated management of the Hauraki Gulf. The Forum has representation on behalf of the Ministers of Conservation, Fisheries and Maori Affairs, Auckland Regional Council and Environment Waikato, ten local authorities (Rodney, Franklin, Waikato, Hauraki, Thames Coromandel and Matamata Piako District Councils, North Shore, Waitakere, Auckland and Manukau City Councils), plus six representatives of the tangata whenua of the Hauraki Gulf and its islands.

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