

Whangateau Harbour Care Newsletter

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Hauraki Gulf in trouble say Forest & Bird

Four 'state of the environment' reports prepared by the Hauraki Gulf Forum since 2005 show the large scale transformation of the gulf over two lifetimes and declines in several important areas of environmental health. These include:

Fisheries management – overfishing means fish stocks are in serious decline. Crayfish are functionally extinct in the gulf and snapper stocks have reduced by 80%. Fishing methods such as bottom trawling are destroying sea beds.

Seabirds - species such as the endemic black petrel and the flesh-footed shearwater are being caught in commercial long-line fisheries faster than they are breeding.

Poor land management has led to issues with sedimentation and contaminants. Something that is becoming more evident in Whangateau Harbour.

In 2016, the Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan, Seachange, was produced and included recommendations to deliver a vision – "that the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park is vibrant with life, its mauri strong, productive, and supporting healthy and prosperous communities".

The process for implementing this plan now lies with various local councils and government agencies, but as yet there seems to be little evidence that any of the recommendations are being instigated.

Without a comprehensive push from the interested public these plans have a habit of drifting into oblivion with no action being taken. For example the plan recommended 15 Marine Protected Areas (MPA's), including options for 13 'no-take' marine reserves and others with varying levels of protection. Forest & Bird has recommended its branches choose a proposed MPA that they are linked to and become its advocate. Forest & Bird marine staff would provide advice and recommend a 'whole package' approach to the plan – including fisheries management, sedimentation and aquaculture.

Auckland Forest & Bird are keen to bring together a Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan (HGMSP) Campaign Group to monitor and campaign for the protection of the gulf and have invited members of Forest & Bird branches in the Hauraki Gulf area for expressions of interest in being part of the group. This is New Zealand's first marine spatial plan and a huge opportunity to safeguard the health of the gulf.

Submission to Rodney Local Board Annual Plan

The Secretary sent a submission to the Local Board outlining our objectives in areas relevant to the Whangateau Harbour Catchment area. [The submission can be found on our website.]
<https://whangateauharbour.org>

Tipping points in coastal ecosystems

In February and March, a multi-institutional team of researchers and students set up the first nationwide experiment to examine the impacts of the two most important stressors affecting our coasts; nutrient and sediment. They selected 22 sites in 15 estuaries and harbours that span a range of sediment input from Whangarei to Southland, including Whangateau Harbour. Between late October and early November, the teams will be visiting each site to collect samples deploying small sealed chambers over the seabed at high tide to measure plant growth and the release/uptake of nutrients, as well as taking a small volume of sediment to count worms and shellfish. Scheduled sampling in Whangateau is 23 November 2017. [Full report can be viewed on the website].

Ti Point forest harvested



The Whangateau harbour care group has been in contact with Panuku Development Auckland to ask what their plans are for the future of this site.

Events:

Planting at the Sawmill Brewery site:

Planting at the Brewery site on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th October please contact the secretary if you are able to help. We have 1700 trees to plant.

Cockle Monitoring:

Cockle Count with Mahurangi College students Thursday 19th October. Starts at 11.30am. Meet at the playground on Whangateau domain.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday November 7th, 7.30pm at the Whangateau Hall

Pāteke at Jones Road WWTP in Omaha



At the recent Omaha WWTP community liaison group meeting staff announced that several pāteke, or brown teal are in residence at the sewage treatment ponds.

At one point pāteke were nearing extinction and they became fully protected in 1921. Captive breeding and releasing into predator-controlled areas has seen good localised populations re-introduced around the country in recent years.



If you have any news, notices or views of interest please contact the HarbourCare Group secretary, Liz Allen by email:
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