

Our Harbour

Our Strait

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Marine Biodiversity

The Wellington Harbour Case Study

With a varied coastline and a high energy environment created by Cook Strait tides, currents and weather, Wellington's marine environment is truly distinctive. Lying in the confluence of warm, cold temperate and sub-Antarctic ocean currents, the area has a wide variety of habitats and a unique collection of plants and animals, with many species occurring at the northern or southern limits of their range.

Properly cared for, the Wellington marine area is a major source of marine biodiversity – the variety of life in the sea.

Maintaining this biodiversity is vital for retaining a wide range of plants and animals that occur nowhere else in the world. Doing so ensures opportunities for scientific research, economic development, community well-being, physical health and the enjoyment of our natural and cultural heritage – both now and in the future.

Biodiversity is much more than protecting native species and 'fencing off' conservation land. Biodiversity is about all parts of our land and sea, and all our plant and animal species, and it's also about using the resources we have available to us.

Many parts of the community have an interest in protecting Wellington's marine biodiversity, including Maori, Crown agencies, commercial, recreational and customary fishers, divers, conservationists and scientists.

Now two agencies, the Ministry for the Environment and the Wellington Regional Council, will work with the community on a case study of the area's marine biodiversity.

Want to know more or join in the study?

Please check out the Wellington Regional Council's website www.wrc.govt.nz or contact Paul Denton at the Regional Council on 04 384 5708 or email paul.denton@wrc.govt.nz.

The community, the Iwi and managers sharing their knowledge and energy to ensure a healthy harbour - from Sinclair Head (Rimurapa) to Turakirae

Working together

The case study forms part of the Council's and the Ministry's biodiversity work.

Marine ecosystems are a core element of the Council's Ecosystem and Biodiversity Implementation Plan. Recent Council research (ACNielsen report, *Me and the Marine*) about the community's attitude towards their marine environment identified a broad interest in the environment. It also identified differing connections with the marine environment, a range of knowledge and understanding, and a wide range of concerns.



"The study is one of partnerships in action. The meetings we had last year between different agencies (Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry for the Environment, Maritime Safety Authority, Department of Conservation and NIWA), really accelerated the process, more so than perhaps we could have achieved on our own. That's it really – we must work together, the marine environment is too big just for one organisation to tackle." – *Hon Margaret Shields, Chairperson Wellington Regional Council*

The Ministry's involvement stems from the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy, which was prepared in response to the decline of New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity. The Ministry is leading working on case studies to identify how national goals and objectives can be achieved at the regional and local level.

"New Zealanders from every part of the country have a key role to play in 'turning the tide'. The strategy is not just a high level policy document - it is about practical actions on the ground, and the Wellington Marine Area case study is just one example." – *Rebecca Maplesden, Ministry for the Environment*

Collectively, we aim to sustain and improve marine biodiversity in Wellington Harbour.

From "Me and the Marine"

"It just jars me to go around and see things all over low tide at extreme ends of Oriental Bay – see things floating past in water near wharves"

Wellington resident

"It needs us to look after it and respect it"

Wellington resident

"Strong connection with the sea because I live near it... recreation, fishing, like walking along the beach – have a view of the sea"

Island Bay resident

"Connected people with that word marine environment, invasion of people. It wasn't that nice. Also thought of more creatures in the sea"

Young person

"Always been around sea. I like watersports- surfing and fishing. My dad grew up on an island off the South Island; his life was based around sea. I got it through my blood from him"

Young Maori

Mana Moana

The study area is of great significance to the Mana Whenua Iwi, historically, now and in the future. Iwi hold considerable information on the area and have a very intimate involvement with it.

"This study is of great importance to us – we look forward to working with the Ministry for the Environment and the Wellington Regional Council on it."

Liz Mellish, Wellington Tenth's Trust

"Our people have a deep interest in the health of the study area – our wellbeing depends on it."

Teri Puketapu, Te Runganganui o Taranaki Whanui ki te Upoko o Te Ika a Maui

"I've had a long-standing passion for the marine environment, and it's been a privilege to work with like-minded people to get this project off the ground.

Our partnership with the Ministry for the Environment is fantastic and has significantly enhanced our capability and capacity to deliver positive outcomes."

Wayne Hastie, Wellington Regional Council

"While the NZ Biodiversity Strategy has set targets and priorities nationally, it is local management and effort that will determine successful outcomes. One of the exciting challenges for the Ministry is learning how national priorities and targets can be translated into on-the-ground action. Our partnership with the Wellington Regional Council, and involvement from iwi, agencies and the community, is crucial in developing these key learnings."

Rebecca Maplesden, Ministry for the Environment

"The ocean is such a powerful, wonderful place - but yet totally vulnerable. I feel we need to look after it better than we do. This project is starting in the right direction..."

Paul Denton, Wellington Regional Council

"As a scientist concerned with marine biodiversity research, I have been very excited to be involved with the Wellington Harbour study. The initiative taken by all involved, and the sheer determination to get things moving has impressed me no end. I look forward to watching the progression of the project, learning about marine biodiversity in the Wellington area and seeing the gains that can be made by interagency and community co-operation."

Jolene Key, Ministry of Fisheries

"In DoC we are responsible for marine reserves, marine mammals and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement which promotes the sustainable management of the natural and physical resources of the foreshore, seabed, coastal water and airspace in the study area. We co-ordinate responses to whale strandings, injured marine mammals and seabirds, provide input into resource consents and plans that effect the coastal environment and are processing the Taputeranga Marine Reserve proposal."

Sally Airey, Department of Conservation

"This study really fits in with our work – making people more aware of Wellington, City and Sea. We look forward to having an active role"

*John Gilberthorpe, Executive Director
Wellington Museums Trust.*

"We fully support all community efforts that promote the enhancement, appreciation, and protection of Wellington's valuable and vulnerable South Coast marine environment. We strongly believe that the best means of promoting the conservation of our marine heritage is through public education programmes and community activities which foster awareness of issues affecting both local, national, and global marine environments. This project 'fits.'"

*Victor Anderlini and Judy Hutt, Directors
Island Bay Marine Education Centre*



What is the project?

The study is about promoting a healthy and diverse Wellington Harbour. This will be achieved through three work themes:

- **Collaborative management and coordination** – This case study adopts a coordinated approach to marine management through involvement of multiple agencies. This coordination is essential if we are to work for a healthy Wellington Harbour.
- **Community involvement** – Developing innovative ways to actively engage and involve the Wellington community in protecting the region's marine environment
- **Information and knowledge** – There is a body of knowledge about the marine environment held by scientists, recreationalists and residents, which has not been captured in a form that can be shared and applied. This knowledge, together with traditional Maori knowledge, will help fill key gaps in the current knowledge base for the Wellington Harbour.

The initial study will run to June 2004.

Who will be involved?

The Wellington Regional Council, The Ministry for the Environment and the Mana Whenua Iwi lead the study. There is support from the Department of Conservation (DoC), the Ministry of Fisheries (MFish), the Maritime Safety Authority of New Zealand (MSA), the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research Ltd (NIWA), the city councils and strategic alliances with the Museum of Wellington City and Sea and the Island Bay Marine Education Centre. The success of the study will in large part depend on developing a solid relationship with the local communities, harbour users and interest groups.

How can you become involved?

We are building a database of people and organisations who are interested in the project. We will be contacting them to determine how they wish to be involved. We will be:

- Sending newsletters
- Meeting with groups and people
- Making information available

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