

December 2020

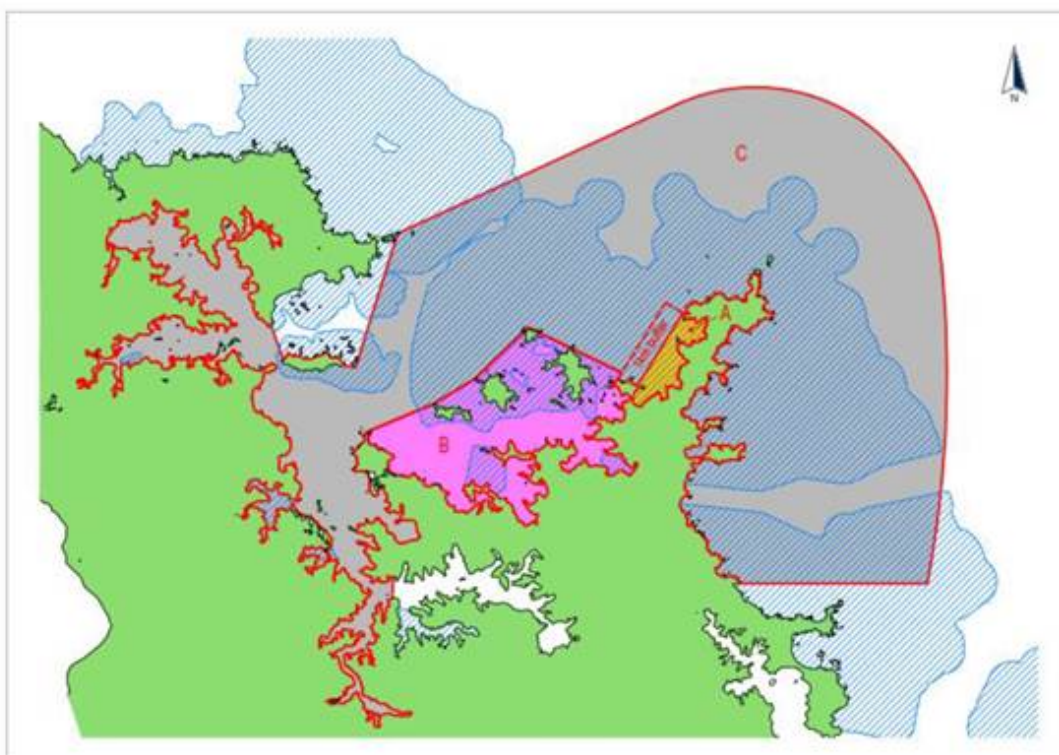
Environment Court appeals under the Resource Management Act

The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council (NZSFC) has become involved in appeals to the Environment Court under the Resource Management Act 1991 which seek to create area closures and fishing restrictions similar to those around Motiti Island, Bay of Plenty. The appeals are in the Northland, Taranaki and Marlborough regions and NZSFC has joined to protect recreational interests. While the proceedings in Taranaki and Marlborough are in early procedural stages, the Northland proceedings are heading to a two week hearing in July 2021. A summary of what is at stake in Northland is set out below.

The Northland appeals are brought by the Royal Forest and Bird Society Inc and Bay of Islands Maritime Park Inc and seek restrictions on fishing across the entire Northland Region. Local hapu Ngati Kuta and Te Uri o Hikihiki have joined in support of the appellants. The outcome sought by the appellants focuses on the Bay of Islands, while also seeking that this case sets a precedent which can be rolled out across the Northland Region.

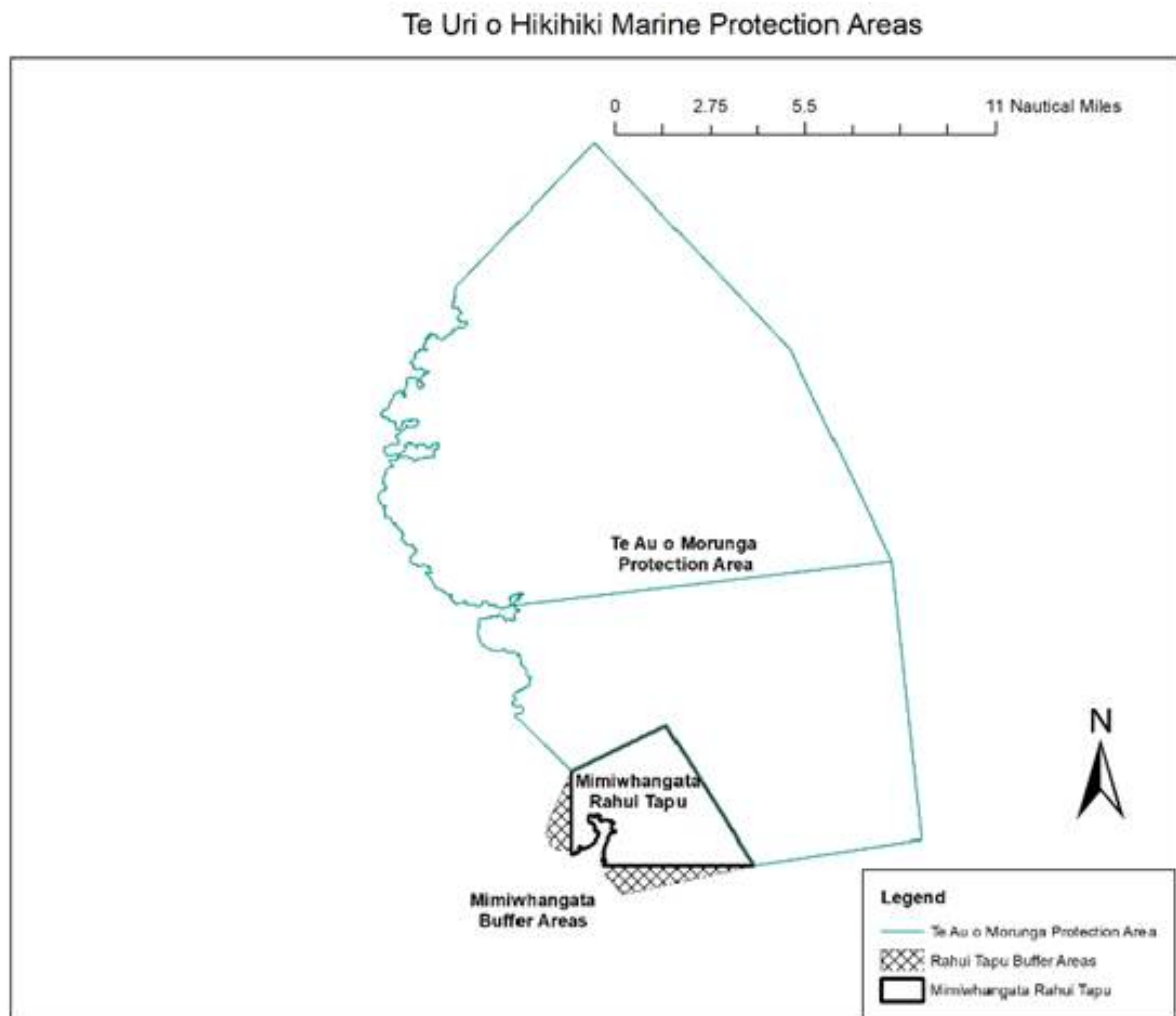
The areas of the Bay of Islands that area affected are shown on the maps below.

Te Hā o Tangaroa Protection Areas - Rakaumangamanga-Ipipiri



The rules which are sought to be applied to these areas are complex and overlap with existing Fisheries Act regulations.

1. The area A (orange above) would be a no-take marine reserve, with a 1km buffer area where only line fishing with a single hook would be permitted. The Mimiwhangata Rahui Tapu area would also be a closed area. The buffer areas to this would be managed by Te Uri o Hikihiki.
2. Area B would be a benthic protection area.
3. The wider areas C and Te Au o Morunga Protection Area would have restrictions on bulk harvesting methods.



In summary

The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council is concerned that if the appellants are successful in closing areas to recreational fishing that this will set a dangerous precedent for the wider Northland coast.

The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council has engaged Rowan Ashton of Brookfields Lawyers to represent NZSFC in these appeals. NZSFC will continue to fight hard to protect recreational interests.