

Marine Protection Bill - Talking Points

By the New Zealand Sport Fishing Council

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What is the MPA consultation about?

New legislation for managing the Hauraki Gulf will have a profound impact on all who fish or recreate in its waters. The Environment Select Committee is currently considering the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana [Marine Protection Bill](#), aimed at contributing to the restoration of the health of the Hauraki Gulf.

The Bill supports the establishment **19 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)** in the Hauraki Gulf, comprised of:

1. **2 extensions to present marine reserves.**
 - a. The purpose is to protect marine life and habitats.
 - b. Cape Rodney–Okakari Point (Goat Island) Marine Reserve; and Whanganui A Hei (Cathedral Cove) Marine Reserve.

2. **5 Seafloor Protection Areas (SPAs)**
 - a. The purpose of the SPAs is to maintain and restore benthic (seafloor) habitats within the area.
 - b. These ban mobile, bottom-contact fishing methods, including bottom trawling, Danish seining, and dredging.

3. **12 High Protection Areas (HPAs)**
 - a. The purpose of the HPAs is to protect, restore, and enhance biodiversity within the area.
 - b. These are no-take areas that allow for permitted Māori customary fishing.

If the Bill proceeds, marine protection in the Hauraki Gulf is projected to increase from 6.7% to just over 18% (including the cable protection zones). Please see the [map](#) to understand the placement of proposed MPAs.

DISCUSSION

The proposed protection measures do not go far enough. 100% of the Hauraki Gulf needs protection from destructive fishing practices.

A combined approach encompassing both marine protection and fisheries must be taken to enhance the marine environment and arrest the serious loss of abundance and biodiversity in the Hauraki Gulf.

The main sticking points

1. **100% of the Hauraki Gulf needs protection.**
 - a. The Bill only seeks to protect 18% of the Gulf.
 - b. All of the Gulf must be protected from destructive mobile, bottom contact fishing methods including bottom trawling, Danish seining, and dredging.
2. **More fishing in other areas.**
 - a. The proposed protected areas mean there's likely to be more intensive commercial fishing in Bream Bay, Coromandel and Bay of Plenty.
3. **Increased conflict.**
 - a. The High Protection Areas are no-take zones, only allowing Māori customary harvest with a permit.
 - b. This is a divisive proposal that creates unnecessary conflict in the community, and potentially on the water.
4. **Viable alternative - Ahu Moana**
 - a. Ahu Moana is an iwi/hapū and community driven process that seeks workable solutions to local problems.
 - b. Ahu Moana is being ignored by officials even though it was widely accepted during the Sea Change and [Revitalising the Gulf](#) processes.
5. **No assessment of risks or impacts.**
 - a. Officials have not assessed the environmental, social, or cultural impacts of more intensive fishing in Bream Bay, Coromandel and Bay of Plenty.
 - b. Island communities dependent on the sea as their main source of food will be denied reasonable access to gather food for the table, a serious issue when there is no alternative or local supermarket.
6. **Need to address fundamental problems.**
 - a. The proposed High Protection Areas do not address the fundamental causes of declining biodiversity and abundance - overallocation and destructive fishing practices.

7. **Need a new, effective approach.**

- a. To be effective, marine protection must be supported by fisheries management measures, otherwise overharvesting using destructive fishing methods (bottom trawling, Danish seining, and dredging) will continue in much smaller areas, causing increased damage to the seabed in those areas.
- b. Designating the Hauraki Gulf as a separate fisheries management area is fundamental to rebuilding abundance and biodiversity. This means appropriate fishing controls can be applied.

8. **Not enough public understanding.**

- a. The Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana Marine Protection Bill proposes new tools that have not been widely scrutinised or explained in depth to the public.

9. **Confusing process.**

- a. Two consultation processes affecting the Hauraki Gulf are underway, this is confusing the public.
 - i. The Marine Protection Bill has been developed by the **Department of Conservation**. Submissions are due with the Environment Select Committee on 1 November.
 - ii. Trawl corridors in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. Submissions are due with **Fisheries New Zealand** by 6 November.
- b. It is inappropriate, and unacceptable that officials have chosen to conduct two major consultations simultaneously.
- c. This timing has meant that LegaSea and other organisations could not get any public awareness initiatives underway during the lead-up to the general election.

10. **Feedback to the Environment Select Committee.**

1. Given the lack of public engagement and the impact this will have on the millions of people who access the Hauraki Gulf, people are encouraged to submit -
 1. Their feedback on how the proposals may affect them;
 2. Ask for a hearing with the Environment Select Committee; and
 3. Ask for the hearings to be held in Auckland.