



# Waikato Coastal Plan

November 2023

In August 2023 the Waikato Regional Council (WRC) issued its proposed Coastal Plan for public consultation. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council submitted a response in November and requested a hearing in 2024.

The Plan sets out how the WRC will manage the marine waters covering the inner Hauraki Gulf, Coromandel coast, and from Waiuku to Mokau on the west coast.

The objective is to protect areas and ecosystems of significant biodiversity, promoting restoration of the marine environment.

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

There are a variety of threats to the marine environment. These include the discharge of contaminants to water, biosecurity invasions, sedimentation and run-off due to poor land management.

Experts acknowledge that the foremost threat to marine habitats is sedimentation, so marine protection alone will not solve what goes into the water. Stronger action must be taken to prevent land-based pollution and sediments entering waterways.

Additional controls are required on all activities that adversely affect the seabed and seafloor organisms.

On the west coast bottom trawling is impacting on the ecosystem relied on by Māui dolphins. The ongoing risks to this iconic species' survival warrants new rules that prevent trawling activities which disturb the seabed and contribute to mammal mortality.

Purse seining of baitfish is affecting the availability of food for fish, seabirds and mammals. This has significant adverse ecological consequences for marine biodiversity in the Hauraki Gulf.

Using the Resource Management Act to create no-fishing zones does not provide for effective marine protection and enhancement.

## THE SOLUTION

Bottom trawling, dredging and Danish seining must be prohibited from coastal waters to help protect sea life.

Further controls to reduce land run-off and contaminants must also be implemented.

Mana whenua and local communities must be given the tools to collaborate, to solve local depletion issues.

Maintaining access to the coastal environment is a matter of national importance.

## WHAT NEXT?

The Waikato Regional Council will review all public submissions and hold hearings in 2024 before finalising the Coastal Plan. The Plan will be operative for 10 years.

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