

Kāpiti-Mana Forest and Bird Newsletter

June 2025

Editorial: Protection of the sea

Decades ago, Dr Bill Ballantine who spearheaded the establishment of the Leigh Marine Reserve (one of the first in the world) and advocated for the 1971 Marine Reserves Act, said that 10% of New Zealand coastline should be reserved and that would provide better fishing for everyone. You only have to look at the boats fishing beside Kapiti's marine reserve to know that fishing near the reserve is much better than elsewhere.

In 2022, New Zealand was one of 196 countries that committed to protecting at least 30% of the world's coastal and marine areas by 2030 under the Global Biodiversity Framework. We used to be pretty good supporters of these global agreements so how does our record compare?

We have now reserved 0.4% of our coastal waters. You can see them on the map below if you look hard. They are the red dots around our coast. So Dr Bill Ballantine did not get his wish. New Zealand has also placed marine reserves around our remote islands of Kermadec, Auckland, Campbell, Antipodes and Bounty. There are of course not many people out there to protest. So now we have 9.8% of our seas in marine reserves.

The Global Biodiversity Framework states *"Ensure... that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed... through ecologically representative, well-connected ... and other effective area-based conservation measures,... while ensuring that any sustainable use,... is fully consistent with conservation outcomes... ."*

I decided to investigate this because of the film "Oceans" by BBC, narrated by Sir David Attenborough. It shows how wonderful and rich the sea is, then it shows what happens when the fishing methods below are used, and finally it shows just how fast the ocean can recover and its positive effect on climate change.

While most nature based methods of tackling climate change take many years to sequester significant amounts of carbon, oceans act very much faster. If we protected 30% of our oceans, as we have committed to do, then fishing and our sequestration of carbon would start to change and change dramatically. David Attenborough thinks that this is the only natural mechanism that acts fast enough to save the planet.

We could reserve more ocean using the Marine Reserves Act. The Act requires that the areas preserved *"contains underwater scenery, natural features, or marine life, of such distinctive quality, or so typical, or beautiful, or unique, that their continued preservation is in the national interest."* Identifying these would take a huge amount of time.

We have other methods of protection but they need to meet the Global Biodiversity Framework conditions where any sustainable use is fully consistent with conservation outcomes.

Mataitai Reserves, which can be established in areas where tangata whenua have a special relationship with the fishing grounds and traditional fishing practices, prohibit commercial fishing so they may meet the criteria but are likely to be small.

Taiāpure are similar and only apply to local fisheries.

Type 2 MPA protection prohibits trawling, Danish seining and dredging. It is the best of the other protection methods but it and all the others allow long-lining. In my opinion, they will not meet the criteria.

Long-lining can be a hook laden line longer than 50 kilometres. There are three problems:

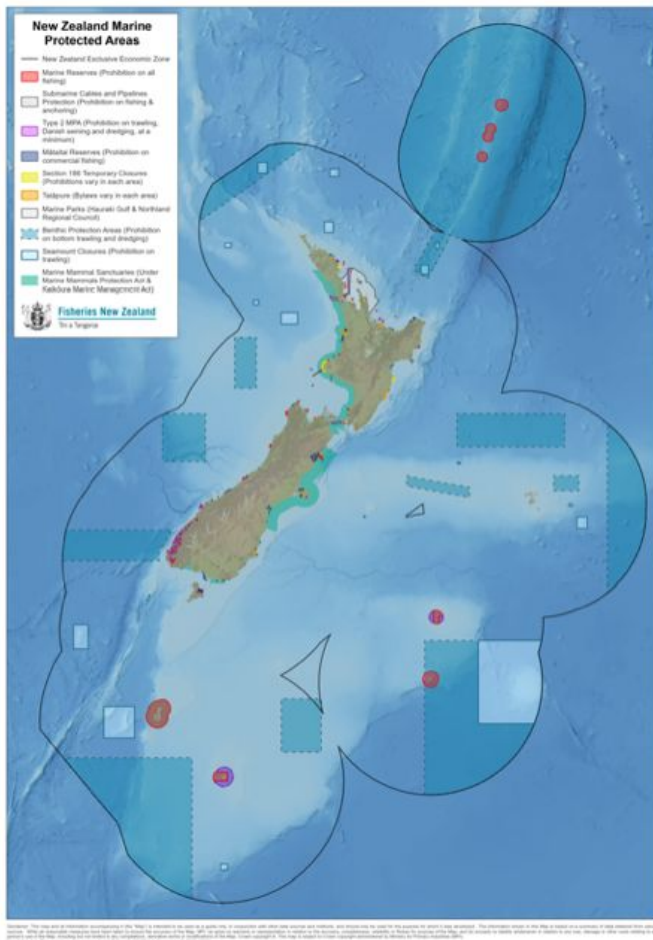
- Bycatch of birds as the line is fed out
This can be overcome by sophisticated methods.
- Bycatch of unwanted fish and mammals
This cannot be overcome.

- Lines break or are cut and remain a hazard on the sea floor, and over 600 years turn into microplastics.

The other three protection methods definitely won't meet the criteria because:

- Benthic protection areas prohibits trawling and dredging.
- Seamount closures prohibits trawling.
- Marine Mammal Sanctuaries prohibit set nets and trawling.

The [map](#) below shows the various methods of protection and where they are. You may have to look quite hard to find marine reserves.



Trawling

Dragging a huge net behind the boat is indiscriminate. It catches anything in its path. Mid-water trawling is when the net is 1m or higher above the sea floor. Bottom trawling uses heavily weighted nets which scrape along the sea floor. You can imagine that corals and sponges simply get ripped out, the environment is ruined, anything that does not burrow is bundled into the net, fish that sit on the sea floor or swim above it get caught, dragged up to the boat and emptied out.

Unwanted species are separated and pushed back over the side. The area of NZ ocean that is trawled is 68,000km² but because some areas will be trawled multiple times per year, all the trawls over that seafloor add up to 169,000km². Trawled fish are 69% of the NZ catch. The NZ Conservation Authority said to the Ministry of Conservation in 2022 that *it would not be unreasonable to state that the continuing of bottom trawling practices will lead to depleted and permanently damaged marine environments, not to mention the loss of their biodiversity and ecosystems.*

Dredging

Steel teeth rip up the sea floor to dislodge scallops, oysters and clams. This essentially ploughs and destroys the sea floor and it may take decades to fully recover.

Size and importance

NZ's Exclusive Economic Zone is 15 times its landmass and is one of the biggest in the world. That means that what we allow carries global significance.

The evidence that we are overfishing is that the amount of fish taken has been steadily decreasing over the last decade and you may have noticed that the fish in our markets are getting smaller and smaller because they do not have sufficient time to grow.

What to do

To allow NZ's oceans to thrive, to allow us to use the oceans as a source of food, and to use the oceans to sequester carbon, we need to reserve 30% of them. NZ is committed to doing this by 2030. That is only 5 years away. This government will not honour our commitment and it seems there is little pressure on them to change the status quo.

The first step is to become informed. That is why I wrote this. To see what goes on, go and see the film *Oceans*. Although the areas I have concentrated on are the negative aspects, the film is more balanced and you will enjoy it. On the big screen, it is spectacular *).

*) Currently showing at The Embassy, and Lighthouse Cinemas.

Russell

Public meetings

Kāpiti Conservation Group's Mix & Mingle

Our recent public meeting on 18 June at Waikanae Community Centre provided an opportunity for local conservation groups in Kāpiti to meet up and talk with others about their projects. About 40 people came and an informative evening was enjoyed by all.



Viola Palmer (Greendale Reserve), Pene (F&B),
John Whitelaw (Waikanae Estuary Care Group)

Next public meeting: Save Denniston Now

Come along to St Andrews Church Hall, 22 Steyne Avenue, Plimmerton on Sunday 13 July at 2.15pm to see the amazing Denniston movie clip and hear from Richard Capie, Forest & Bird's Group Manager, Conservation Advocacy and Policy, about how we can defend the plateaux from mining.

Did you know that the existing Stockton Mine (also by Bathurst Resources) has obliterated the landscape for an area the size of Nelson City? If they get permission to opencast mine the Denniston Plateau and beyond, the area destroyed will be about three times that size. Revegetation/putting back the top layer simply doesn't work as it is too damaged to recreate the habitats the unique plants and critters of this area need. It also doesn't bring any significant financial return to New Zealand. Come and learn more.

Ngā Manu Winter Lecture Series

Wednesdays 1pm - Book here:

<https://tinyurl.com/2rvksh4>

2 July: D H Meudt - *Why New Zealand's Forget-Me-Nots Are So Special*

16 July: G Clarkson - *Drawing the natural world, an illustrator's perspective*

23 July: Paul Ward & Jeff Hall - *The Capital Kiwi Project*

Critter of the month: *Dolomedes minor*, Nursery web spider

Pene Burton Bell

The nursery web spider (*Dolomedes minor*) is a reasonably common native spider. They are large (females can reach 6cm in leg span, males a bit smaller) and are fast-moving.



Nursery web spider on weedmat – Pene Burton Bell

Males would make a tasty treat for females so they always bring a food gift then jump her while she's distracted eating that. While they do make webs, they do not use them to get food, rather the females are attentive mothers. First they roll a tight ball of web silk and use this to hold their eggs. When the eggs are about to hatch, she uses the ball of silk to weave a nursery for her spiderlings and watches over them for about a week, leaving

food parcels, then they venture out of the nest and are carried by wind currents to new places.



Nursery web - Creative commons, © kiwilassee

The spider then returns to being a night hunter chasing down her prey or lying in wait for insects, invertebrates and even small fish. This spider is one of few that can walk on water, or even dive and stay under water to hunt. One distinctive feature is the yellow stripe running down her abdomen, but the most common way to see them is to find an active nursery web in a field and to look for the attentive parent.

Local planting events *) **)

It's great to see local volunteers of all ages (you rock!) have been out there planting on dunes, in inlets and wetlands, beside streams, and more; here are some upcoming opportunities:

Waikanae Estuary Care Group: 28 June, 9am - noon, meet at their nursery on Hana Udy Place, Paraparaumu Beach

Pāuatahanui Inlet: 6 July, 10am at the eastern end of Motukaraka Point (with Plimmerton Rotary Club and GOPI) – tools, drinks & snacks provided, rsvp to brettjones55@gmail.com

Whareroa Farm: 6 July and 20 July, 9am-noon in Carex Valley; follow flags, boots best

Battle Hill: 20 July, 9-noon, meet at the Dell

Whitireia Park: 20 July, 9.30am-noon, Onehunga Valley (near Onehunga Bay carpark), followed by 20th anniversary restoration celebratory BBQ; wear lots of layers

Queen Elizabeth Park: Planting every Tuesday and Wednesday, and the second Saturday mornings of each month

*) If you need more details on the above, contact the group using the list provided with this newsletter.

**) If we missed your group's event please email future details to kapitimana.branch@forestandbird.org.nz

Have Your Say

NZ Garden Bird Survey

1 hour between 28 June and 6 July, in your garden or local park.

Watch & listen and record which birds you see and how many on the website

<https://gardenbirdssurvey.nz/> where there's lots more help provided. We'd love you to copy your results to our branch inbox too please: kapitimana.branch@forestandbird.org.nz

This survey provides valuable base line data for scientists, and it can be used for trapping and conservation efforts. You can review last year's results here:

https://gardenbirdssurvey.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/NZGBS2024_WellingtonRegion.pdf

Kāpiti Coast District Council Heritage Fund (closes 4 August 2025)

This fund supports landowners in preserving heritage features like historic buildings, ecological sites, significant trees, or wāhi tapu. It is open for applications until 4 August. Find out more and whether your project is eligible here:

<https://www.kapiticoast.govt.nz/services/grant-s-and-funding/heritage-fund/>

MfE consultation on Freshwater National Direction (closes 27 July)

This consultation is wide-ranging and includes proposed amendments to the National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management and the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020. Find out more here:

<https://consult.environment.govt.nz/resource-management/freshwater-national-direction/>

MPI Sustainability Measures for Fisheries

MPI is consulting on new quota limits for a range of species. (closes 23 July 2025)

DOC consultations closing soon

New Zealand's Biodiversity Strategy (closes 30 June 2025)

The Predator Free 2050 Strategy to 2030 (closes 30 June 2025)

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/have-your-say/all-consultations/2025-consultations/give-your-feedback-on-two-important-plans-for-nature/>

The Financial Markets (Conduct of Institutions) Amendment (Duty to Provide Financial Services) Amendment Bill – closes 4 July 2025

[350.org](https://www.350.org.nz/) have nicknamed this the "you must bank with coal" bill. If it passes, banks would be barred from cutting ties with climate-wrecking companies.

In section 12 of subpart 6 a new clause 446JA has been inserted which says "*Financial institutions must not withdraw or refuse to provide financial services except for commercial reasons to companies causing significant environmental or social harm*".

Even a short submission against this outrageous requirement will help.

Read more and find the link to submit here:

https://350.org.nz/must-bank-with-coal-bill/?akid=472969.6024441.7w_ASp&rd=1&t=7

Upcoming Forest & Bird Events

Date	Title	Where
13 July	Save Denniston Now	Plimmerton
27 July	Parkwood Village Walk	Waikanae
20 August	Public meeting – speaker Manaaki Barrett re Kapiti Island	Waikanae
?? September	Public meeting – speaker Wendy Ambury re Australasian Bitterns	Plimmerton
22 October	Public meeting – speaker Bruce Brewer re Argentine Ants ^{*)}	Waikanae

***) Argentine Ants have arrived in Paekākāriki**

These ants rank in the top 10 of the world's invasive species and they have been in Kāpiti (particularly Waikanae) for a while.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/animal-pests-and-threats/argentine-ants/>

From a conservation perspective, they outcompete our native fauna and use up resources that they would otherwise use (nectar and invertebrates). Birds, lizards and invertebrates are all affected, as are humans (they're aggressive and territorial and they bite). It is therefore a serious environmental risk that they have now been discovered in Paekākāriki. Read more about the ants and that invasion here:

<https://paekakariki.nz/invasive-argentine-ants-have-established-in-paekakariki/>

We had already arranged for GW expert Bruce Brewer to speak on this topic on 22 October in Waikanae (as the colonies will start becoming more active) and we encourage members to come, especially if there are known populations of these nasties in your area, and bring a neighbour or two along too. Don't forget to put that date in your diary.

Other Items

Transmission Gully Project – actions outstanding

At their recent AGM, GOPI invited Craig Nicholson from NZTA to update them on what work remained outstanding. His informative presentation covered remaining construction work, stream work and environmental work to achieve agreed outcomes. It can be viewed here:

<https://gopi.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/TG-Presentation-to-Guardians-of-Pauatahanui-Inlet-GOPI-AGM-18-June-2025-v2.pdf>

Rediscovery of a rare endemic plant

The only parasitic plant endemic to Aotearoa, Te pua o te Rēinga / Wood Rose, has been rediscovered in the Wainuiomata water collection area after wild populations of the species were thought to be extinct from the region for more than a century.

<https://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/news/rare-endemic-plant-te-pua-o-te-reinga-rediscovered-in-regional-park/>

In our region, you can also see these at Ngā Manu at the right time of year.

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Your feedback on this newsletter would be most welcome as would contributions to future newsletter

Russell and Pene