

April 2004

Draft Aquaculture Management Areas In Northland

Nineteen AMA Areas for Northland

Nineteen areas – mainly around Northland's east coast - have now been shortlisted as those most likely to be put forward to become the region's first Aquaculture Management Areas (AMAs).

However, in settling on the shortlist, members of the Northland Regional Council's Planning and Policy Committee have also called a temporary halt to further strategic planning work on AMAs until Central Government reveals the shape of its promised new aquaculture legislation - possibly next month.

Regional Council staff recommended the 19 shortlisted areas after two years of extensive public consultation and investigation work. The shortlisted areas average 45 hectares, although individual areas range from 2.5 to 354 hectares.

Most are on the region's east coast between Parengarenga and the Bay of Islands or in the Hokianga or Kaipara Harbours. Just a single site remains in the Whangarei Harbour, a 2.5ha area alongside an existing marine farm within Parua Bay. (Whangarei Harbour now has no other sites earmarked as 'probable' or 'possible' AMAs.)

The 19 areas were culled from 125 areas around the region that had been tentatively mapped as physically suitable for marine farming. (These areas were suggested by the aquaculture industry, the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research or members of the public and were additional to existing marine farming sites).

The 125 areas were evaluated against a number of criteria including:

- maps showing the values and physical nature of the coast
- hundreds of comments from the public
- the findings of any relevant scientific publications

Of the 19 Northland areas that survived the cut, 10 are intertidal (suitable for oysters and similar species) and seven are longline (suitable for mussels). Two 10ha finfish sites round out the mix.

Location of Areas

The 19 shortlisted areas are:

Intertidal

- North of Kaipohue Island and Taraere Point and south of Tiawhakangari Point (Parengarenga Harbour) (25 hectares)
- North of Green Point within Houhora Harbour (15ha)
- Eastern side of Mangonui Harbour (35ha)
- West of Dead Whale Reef, southwest of Ti Tii (Te Puna) (25ha)
- Between Te Karaka Point and Te Mata Point (Hokianga Harbour) (25ha)
- Southwest of Karakanui Point within the Kirikiri inlet (Kaipara Harbour) (4ha)
- Between Puriri Point and Te Kopua Point along the Arapaoa River (Kaipara Harbour) (84ha)
- West of Te Kopua Point within Arapaoa river (Kaipara Harbour) (10ha)
- Within Whakaki River northeast of Ngamotu Island (Kaipara Harbour) (6.7ha)
- Within Parua Bay in the Whangarei Harbour, alongside existing marine farm (2.5ha)

Longline

- North of Stanley Point within Houhora Bay (11ha)
- Within Motukahakaha Bay, south of Wekarua Island (35ha)
- Between Matanohinohi Point and Pa Island off from Frear Bay (Whangaroa Bay) (40ha)
- Just to the west of Stephenson Island (58ha)
- To the west of Flat Island (70ha)
- Between Rangihoua Bay and Hauai (Whale) Bay (36ha)
- Adjacent Elliot Bay and Taupiri Bay (354ha)

Finfish

- North of Whau Bay near Te Ngaire Bay (10ha)
- North of Koutu Point (Hokianga Harbour) (10ha)

Exactly when the Council begins the process of changing its Coastal Plan will depend on when aquaculture law reforms are finalised and what shape the new laws take.

View the Maps

Maps of the 19 shortlisted AMA zones are enclosed with this newsletter.

It's important to stress that even though these areas have been shortlisted, it's still possible not all 19 will eventually become AMAs.

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At this stage, Central Government says it still plans to lift a moratorium (or freeze) on new marine farm development on 31 December this year.

Once that freeze ends, new marine farms will legally only be able to be developed in areas formally designated as AMAs. However, even if an area has been designated as an AMA, marine farms will still not be able to be developed within

them as-of-right and resource consents will still be needed.

Awaiting Government Direction

Any further decisions on community consultation by the Regional Council on the probable AMAs and their allocation and management will be deferred until the intentions of the Government in regard to aquaculture are clear. This may not be for some months.

Any final, formal designation of AMAs will then be done through a change to the Regional Council's Proposed Regional Coastal Plan, which the public will also have the chance to comment on.

Depending on any appeals, this Plan change process could take another two to three years.

Three New Proposals

Meanwhile, the Council has now also received three entirely new AMA proposals, one from an individual oyster farmer in Whangaroa Harbour and two from a Maori group "Te Ao Morunga" based in Whangaruru.

The Regional Council plans to meet the two parties who proposed these new AMAs and with those people who have marine farming resource consent applications that are currently on hold pending the end of the moratorium.

Further Information

If you want to discuss anything raised in this newsletter, or require further information, please contact Tony Seymour, Coastal Planning Team Leader at the Northland Regional Council. Freephone 0800 002 004.

NB: Since this newsletter was first published the number of potential AMAs dropped to 18.

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Caring for Northland and its environment