

Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

	Unit name – ISLANDS OF THE BAY OF ISLANDS INCLUDING MOTUMARIE ISLAND, MOTUARAHI ISLAND BUT EXCLUDING MOTUROA ISLAND
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
Land Types (refer to list overleaf) Reefs and islands	A cluster of predominantly rocky coast islands, reefs & islets that is predominantly focused in the area between Rawhiti & Tapeka Point but with two outliers in the form of the islands situated immediately offshore of Paihia. Most of the islands have a moderately steep rolling relief with coastlines consisting of a mixture of steep rocky coastal flanks with fringing reefs or contained sandy embayments, defined typically by moderately pronounced headlands. The majority of these land bodies are less than 3 km ² in area, although Urupukapuka & Moturua Islands are noticeably larger than other islands.
Geology (including geopreservation sites)	Paleozoic – Mesozoic Waipapa Terrane greywacke
Soil Types	Marua light brown clay loam
Ecology (including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)	<p>Motumaire is possum free and is an important habitat for threatened and regionally significant bird species. Its kanuka dominant coastal forest is an example of a nationally rare vegetation type. Nearby Motuarahi is noted for the presence of threatened and regionally significant species.</p> <p>Motuarohia Island has 3 ecological types; pohutukawa-dominant, kanuka dominant, and a combination of both. It is cited as an example of a nationally rare vegetation type and a representative site for pohutukawa coastal forest. It is also important for the presence of threatened and regionally significant birds and the threatened Pacific gecko</p> <p>Moturua island group displays a diversity of bird life including several threatened bird species, two of which have been successfully introduced to Moturua Island. It hosts threatened and regionally significant plant species and a threatened snail species. Representative site for type (a) kanuka coastal forest. It also has areas of coastal shrubland.</p> <p>Motukiekie is predominantly covered in kanuka coastal forest. It is free of rodents and most of it has an overhead canopy, which would favour bird introductions.</p> <p>Okahu Island is noted for the presence of threatened and regionally significant bird species, with recent breeding records for northern New Zealand dotterel and variable oystercatcher. It is a representative site for kowharawhara–hangehange coastal association, harakeke–kowharawhara–pohutukawa coastal association, and kanuka–harakeke coastal association. Only record of the two initial types in the Ecological District. It contains an example of coastal forest, which is a nationally rare vegetation type, along with the presence of a threatened plant species</p> <p>Waewaetoria Island is noted as a representative site for pohutukawa coastal forest, which is also a nationally rare vegetation type. It also</p>

	<p>contains kanuka coastal forest. The island provides important habitat for threatened and regionally significant species.</p> <p>Urupukapuka Island and its surrounding small islets contain 4 ecological units: kanuka coastal forest, kanuka pohutukawa coastal forest, pohutukawa coastal forest, and exotic (primarily kikuyu) grassland. It is recorded as being an example of coastal forest, which is a nationally rare vegetation type and a representative site for the 3 forest types mentioned above. Urupukapuka Island is also a significant habitat for threatened and regionally significant plant and bird species.</p>
Archaeological sites	Islands contain a number of pa including Hikurangi, Haikai & an intensity of recorded sites of pre-European occupation & use, with these being particularly focused on the coastal margins. The islands also feature a number of post European arch sites.
Heritage Landscapes	Recorded site of anchorage by Captain Cook near Motarohi Island (Robertson Island) and old hospital site on Moturua. The islands have a long standing role as anchorages and early European utilisation related to mission activities. There are associative relationships to early parliament and whaling at Russell. Deep Water Cove and Urupukapuka have connections with the earliest deep sea gamefishing in NZ.
Landscape characterisation (including the identification of any specific characteristics) <p>The Bay of Islands is amongst New Zealand's most publicised & well known coastal landscapes, both in terms of tourism promotion & national identity.</p> <p>The islands' role as an outer "breakwater" to the inner Bay of Islands creates an area of generally sheltered water within which a multitude of small coves, beaches, channels & headlands offer a considerable diversity of spaces & areas of character. Arguably there is no other area in New Zealand that offers such complexity of coastal landscapes within such a small area. Repeated patterns of landform, vegetation cover, coastal profile, fringing reefs and islets, and similarly scaled embayments creates a strong sense of unity across these island groups (whilst noting that Motumarie and Moturahi are spatially disconnected from the main body of islands).</p> <p>As a cruising destination, the Bay of Islands is regarded as one of the best in New Zealand and internationally. It is also favoured for recreational day boating, fishing and summer camping in the DoC reserve on Urupukapuka. That island also features a private resort development. A proportion of the land area of the collective of islands is private, with the balance administered by the Department of Conservation. Most of the islands have a mix of those tenures present.</p> <p>The mainland from Cape Brett around to Tapeka Point is closely associated with the main body of the Bay of Islands, acting as a southern/eastern definition to the Bay. Whilst parts of that coast are considerably more developed, in general it shares much in common with the coast of the islands and therefore is experienced as having a rather similar character.</p> <p>A high measure of complexity, naturalness and limited evidence of human intervention is experienced in the strongly coastal context of the Bay of Islands, and these factors are pivotal in its identity.</p>	

EVALUATION		
Criteria	Rank	Comment
Natural Science Factors		
Representativeness Natural landscapes are clearly characteristic of the area, district or region. The key components of the landscape will be present in a way that defines the character of the place and distills its character and essence. Endemic associations.	5	The Bay of Islands is one of Northland's most distinctive and representative areas in terms of its geophysical characteristics and ecology. The scale of the respective islands, their coastal setting in close proximity to the Cape Brett peninsula with its extensive areas of forest and natural shoreline, and the terrestrial and marine ecology of the islands themselves are unique to this area.
Rarity Natural features are unique or rare in the region or nationally, and few comparable examples exist.	5	An assemblage that is not replicated anywhere else in New Zealand.
Aesthetic Values		
Coherence The patterns of land cover and land use are largely in harmony with the underlying natural pattern of the landform of the area and there are no significant discordant elements of land cover or land use.	5	Repeated patterns of landform, orientation, coastal morphology & mixes of vegetation & relic pasture land lead to the islands being highly unified & identifiable as a coherent grouping. Their spatial arrangement and generally close proximity to each other further reinforces that consistency.
Diversity & Complexity The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.	5	Highly diverse by virtue of their existence as a cluster of variably sized islands, associated reefs, convoluted shoreline profiles, developing diversity & indigenous cover & connecting islets & reefs all contribute. Differing levels of coastal exposure, and the geomorphology and ecological responses to varied wave energy, are also an important contributing factor.
Vividness Natural features and landscape are widely recognized across the community and beyond the local area and remain clearly in the memory; striking landscapes are symbolic of an area due to their recognisable and memorable qualities.	5	Strongly memorable as the centerpiece of the wider Bay of Islands area (that includes Opuā, Paihia, Waitangi and Russell), strongly promoted & recognised as both a tourist mecca by recreational users & as part of New Zealand's broader identity.
Naturalness How affected by human activity is the landscape? Does human activity intrude on the landscape? Eg. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of buildings and associated built development. • Presence of infrastructure services. • Extent of indigenous forest cover. • Homogeneity of exotic vegetation. • Presence / extent of modified agricultural land use. • Strength of natural processes / ecological patterns. • Unmodified and legible physical relief and landform. • Presence of water. 	5	<p>Very limited settlement & that which is present tends to be focused in contained areas. Islands are typically either completely clothed in developing indigenous cover or rapidly advancing through phases of colonisation to that state. Planting efforts on some of the islands is assisting that process.</p> <p>A clear expression of coastal processes & very little interference with those forces through human intervention. Outer northeast faces of the "barrier" that includes Urupukapuka evidently more exposed to sea conditions than the sheltered southwestern embayments.</p> <p>The relationship with the sea that is so critical to the identity of this area is highly varied and responsive to wave exposure, tidal movement, deposition of sediment and a highly diverse collection of shorelines that represents most forms of shore other than ocean beach / dune associations and estuarine coast.</p> <p>Remaining past grazing land is undergoing a rapid transition to indigenous shrubland.</p>

Intactness Natural systems are intact and aesthetically coherent and do not display significant visual signs of human modification, intervention or manipulation, visually intact and highly aesthetic natural landscapes.	4	Limited extent of human settlement & productive land use sees most of the islands in a relatively natural & evolving state. Areas of pasture & exotic tree cover appear to be in a process of transition towards native forest types.
Experiential Values		
Expressiveness The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.	5	Self evident as an inter-related cluster of islands, within a broader embayment, very distinctive & arguably unique.
Sensory qualities (These are landscape phenomena as directly perceived and experienced by humans, such as the view of a scenic landscape, or the distinctive smell and sound of the foreshore).	5	A very evocative part of New Zealand's coastline that is a strong draw for a considerable body of recreational boaties & tourist ventures alike.
Transient Values The consistent and repeated occurrence of transient features that contributes to the character, qualities and values of the landscape; landscapes are widely recognised for their transient features and the contribution that these make to the landscape.	5	Character of islands in related CMA highly responsive to light conditions & sea state. Clear water & white sand in many of the embayments makes these particularly vivid in the bright light conditions of summer when the area is most used.
Remoteness / Wildness Does the landscape display a wilderness character, remote from and untouched by human presence? Eg. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of remoteness • Accessibility • Distance from built development 	4	Whilst the islands are largely unsettled & separated somewhat from the mainland by moderate channels, there is a sense of relatedness to settled areas around Rawhiti, Parekura Bay etc. The few buildings & man-made facilities on the island groups are less challenging to wilderness. A seasonal peak of use through summer sees large numbers of recreational boat users in the area and the few low key camping areas well used. There is also a regular passage of vessels in adjacent channels. These uses are, however, clearly short term and impermanent, so do not have an enduring impact upon the sense of remoteness experienced in the area.
Shared and recognised values Natural features and landscape are widely known and valued by the immediate and wider community for their contribution to a sense of place leading to a strong community association with, or high public esteem for the place.	5	The intensive use of the area for recreational purposes & the widespread awareness of the islands as one of New Zealand's key maritime landscapes and through tourism, publicity, coffee table books and other media, demonstrate a high level of awareness and value amongst the wider community.
Spiritual, cultural and historical associations Natural features and landscapes can be clearly and widely known and influenced by their connection to the spiritual, cultural and historical valued in the place and includes associative meanings and associative activities valued by the community. These can include both activities and meanings associative meanings are spiritual, cultural or social associations with particular landscape elements, features, or areas, whilst associative activities are patterns of social activity that occur in particular parts of a landscape, for example, popular walking routes or fishing spots.	5	A strong record of historic use by Maori & Pakeha cultures & a legacy of recreational use particularly over the past century as transportation has improved and leisure time become more widely available. Includes many recorded sites of cultural & heritage importance. Consultation was initiated during the mapping process, but has not led to any feedback within the required period.

Rank scale between 1 (low) and 5 (high)

Land Types
Coastal cliffs / escarpment
Low escarpment
Bays and headlands
Beach
Dune complex
Reefs and islands

Estuarine / inlet
Open harbour
Coastal plain
Rolling hills
Steep hills; moderate to high relief
Ranges; high relief
Strongly rolling land
Low rolling land
Valley floors and flats
Plains
Volcanic cones
River mouth
Wetland
Watercourses
Lakes and water bodies

Photographs of unit









