

# Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

	Unit name – <b>BREAM BAY OCEAN BEACH</b>
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
<b>Land Types</b>  Ocean beach land type.	Characterised by its exposure, simplicity of form and scale, this land type comprises the beach and its immediate backdrop only.
<b>Geology</b> (including geopreservation sites)	The Bream Bay Ocean Beach comprises a holocene coastal dunefield and beach sands.  The Waipu Sandspit comprises a holocene dune barrier, and estuarine sandy intertidal flats and channels to landward, with a low ridge of Pleistocene consolidated dune sand on the western side of the estuary between Q08 453747 and Q08 458742.
<b>Soil Types</b>	The soil type comprises a variety of sands with One Tree Point peaty sand at the northern end and mid beach, Marsden sand to the north of Waipu River and Red Hill sand / Red Hill sandy clay loam as pockets in the vicinity of Waipu River and Ruakaka River.
<b>Ecology</b> (including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)	Ocean Beach is identified in the Waipu Ecological District PNAP report as Q07/128. The report ranks the feature as a Level 1 site comprising 154.9 ha of duneland, 91.5 ha of forest, 474.8 ha of shrubland, and 4.7 ha of wetland, however the landscape area that is the subject of this worksheet only focuses on the beach and a limited portion of the foredune.  The unit also includes Q08/228 (Waipu River Estuary And Sandspit). This Level 1 site comprises 73.9 ha of duneland, 144.6 ha of estuary, and 2.1 ha forest).  The Ocean beach PNAP site comprises an approx. 19 km long band of sand dunes extending from Marsden Point in the north to the Waipu River Estuary (Q08/228) in the south, varying in width from approximately 800 m at the widest to 30 m at the narrowest. Adjacent land use on sand dunes and alluvial flats is generally intense, being a mixture of industrial, pastoral, residential and recreational activities, which are serviced by State Highway 1.  This site is of significance due to it possessing the largest continuous stretch of duneland habitats in the Waipu Ecological District. In addition, it has eight representative ecological units: (b) sandfield habitat on beach and sand dune, (c) pohuehue shrubland on sand dune, (e) kanuka forest on sand dune, (l) pohuehue– <i>Coprosma acerosa</i> shrubland on sand dune, (o) knobby clubrush–pohuehue sedgeland on sand dune, (q) harakeke–gorse flaxland on sand dune, (r) glasswort herbfield in estuary, and (i) spinifex grassland on sand dune.  The site supports populations of two threatened plant species ( <i>Kunzea ericoides</i> var. <i>linearis</i> and pingao) and one regionally significant plant species ( <i>Coprosma acerosa</i> ). It provides habitat for five threatened fauna species (Australasian bittern, NZ dabchick, northern NZ dotterel, black katipo, and Auckland green gecko), and northern blue penguins (Gradual Decline) also wash up but are not using the site as habitat. Two regionally significant fauna species are

	<p>present (variable oystercatcher and Australasian little grebe); and the former is known to breed here.</p> <p>This Waipu River estuary and sandspit has the largest river estuary in Waipu ED, and the second largest area of duneland habitats in Waipu ED. Within the ED the sandspit is unique; it is the only relatively isolated stretch of duneland that is not bordered by housing or other development, and is entirely legally protected for the purpose of wildlife conservation. The spit is a nationally important breeding site for the most threatened bird species in New Zealand, the NZ fairy tern. A further eleven threatened bird species (Caspian tern, wrybill, northern NZ dotterel, reef heron, banded dotterel, white-fronted tern, red-billed gull, black shag, grey duck, white heron, and little black shag) and one regionally significant bird species (variable oystercatcher) are present, as well as a high diversity (and often very high numbers) of international migrant waders (including bar-tailed godwit, lesser knot, turnstone, and red-necked stint).</p>
Archaeological sites	Numerous archaeological sites are scattered along the coastal strip, but these tend to lie in the consolidated dune areas to the rear of the beach.
Heritage Landscapes	None known
<p><b>Landscape characterisation</b> (including the identification of any specific characteristics)</p> <p>The ocean beach extending between Marsden Point and the Waipu River represents the largest example of this land type on the east coast of the Region. It forms a gentle and graceful curve which, when looking north from locations to the south such as that illustrated on the photograph below, is terminated by the distinctive silhouette of the sequence of landforms making up the Manaia group.</p> <p>The beach is backed by low dunes which in places forms an extensive dunefield (described above), however only the seaward margin of the foredunes are included within the landscape given the modification and weed infestation associated with the remainder of the area.</p> <p>The landscape has a powerful simplicity engendered by the limited palette of colours, and the scale and form of the beach.</p>	

<b>EVALUATION</b>		
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Natural Science Factors</b>		
<p><b>Representativeness</b> 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.</p>	<b>5</b>	<p>Whilst not readily seen from the State Highway, Bream Bay the curve of Bream Bay is visible from the crest of the Brynderwyn range in context with Bream Head in the distance. The southern part of the Whangarei District coastline is characterised by the ocean beach that extends for some 20 km between Marsden Point at the mouth of the harbour, and Waipu Cove.</p> <p>The beach has strong endemic associations due to the native spinifex and other dune species present on the foredunes.</p>
<p><b>Rarity</b> Natural features are unique or rare in the region or nationally, and few comparable examples exist.</p>	<b>5</b>	<p>The beach is similar in scale and character to a limited number of ocean beaches within the region, but retains its own character due to the beach backdrop dunelands and</p>

		framing topographical features.
<b>Aesthetic Values</b>		
<b>Coherence</b> 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.	3	The beach and its immediate backdrop retain a high level of coherence as a result of the simplicity of the components, and form of the feature. The modified character of the adjoining land to the west tends to detract from the coherence of the feature where built development, such as in the vicinity of the Ruakaka settlement, or Marsden Point, and encroachment by weed species.
<b>Diversity &amp; Complexity</b> The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.	2	The beach and its setting display a limited degree of diversity and complexity, although the ocean tends to be a dynamic element which provides its own ever changing complexity to the landscape, against the simple foil of the beach.
<b>Vividness</b> Natural features and landscape are widely recognised 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	The simplicity of form and colour, and the scale of the beach and its interplay with the sky results in the feature being particularly striking and displaying a high level of vividness
<b>Naturalness</b> How affected by human activity is the landscape? Does human activity intrude on the landscape? Eg. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of buildings and associated built development.</li> <li>• Presence of infrastructure services.</li> <li>• Extent of indigenous forest cover.</li> <li>• Homogeneity of exotic vegetation.</li> <li>• Presence / extent of modified agricultural land use.</li> <li>• Strength of natural processes / ecological patterns.</li> <li>• Unmodified and legible physical relief and landform.</li> <li>• Presence of water.</li> </ul>	4	Whilst the backdrop to the beach has undergone a level of modification as a result on weed invasion, and with pockets of development encroaching on the dunefield, the beach and its immediate fore dune retain a high level of naturalness that is devoid of built development, and exotic vegetation, and maintains strong natural and coastal processes, both hydrological, and ecological.
<b>Intactness</b> 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.	3	The beach and its immediate backdrop retain a coherence and intactness and does not show signs of modification. The backdrop to the beach does display a greater level of modification and this does, in places detract from the intactness of the landscape.
<b>Experiential Values</b>		
<b>Expressiveness</b> The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.	5	The beach clearly displays the coastal processes, which formed it and continue to shape it.
<b>Sensory qualities</b> (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).	4	The experience of arriving at the beach is a gradual one and one that is generally experienced on foot, passing some distance though the dunes. As such, the moment of experiencing the beach is delayed and the impact of the scale of the beach, the smell of the sea and feel of the wind has greater impact than if the visitor were to arrive in a vehicle.  The level of weed infestation within the back dunes, and the

		level of modification in terms of built development in some places tend to detract slightly, in some locations, from the sense of naturalness and therefore the sensory qualities of the beach.
<b>Transient Values</b> 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.	<b>4</b>	A number of transient values are evident on the beach, including changes evidenced the tides, by changing weather and the seasons, but also by the arrival and departure of migrating birds.

<b>Remoteness / Wildness</b> Does the landscape display a wilderness character, remote from and untouched by human presence? Eg. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of remoteness</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Distance from built development</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>	The beach is accessed from a limited number of locations in its mid and mid southern portion. In this area the visitor is able to experience a greater level of remoteness, which increases as the distance from the access point increases.  At the northern end of the beach where greater development has occurred the sense of remoteness and wildness has been diminished.
<b>Shared and recognised values</b> 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.	<b>5</b>	The Bream bay beach is a widely recognised feature within the Region despite its limited visibility. Its visual relationship with both Bream Head and Bream Tail is striking and an 'iconic' image of the east coast of Northland
<b>Spiritual, cultural and historical associations</b> 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.	<b>4</b>	Consultation was initiated during the mapping process, but has not led to any feedback within the required period.  The beach is, however valued by the community for recreational purposes and is heavily used, especially during the summer period when the camp ground at Uretiti is busy.

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

<b>Land Types</b>
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



**Bream Bay from Uretiti looking north**



**Bream Bay from Uretiti looking south**



**Looking north along Waipu sandspit to Waipu River**