



HAVE YOUR SAY Heads-up boaties!

New rules to prevent the spread of marine pests, how to fairly foot the bill for marine biosecurity, and updates to our harbour safety rules – these are some of the key issues Northland Regional Council wants public input on as we consult on three important documents.

We are seeking feedback on our annual activities and budgets (via the Annual Plan and Charging Policy), how pests are managed (Proposed Northland Regional Pest and Marine Pathway Management Plan), and rules for keeping people safe on the water (Draft Navigation Safety Bylaw 2017).

“These three documents all contain proposed changes that will likely be of particular interest to boaties and the marine industry,” says council chairman Bill Shepherd.

“We’ve rolled all three into a single feedback process to make it easier for people to have their say.”

The biggest change to council’s existing pest plan, says Bill, is the addition of the Marine Pathway Plan, with rules limiting hull-fouling when vessels move to a new harbour or offshore island.

“Having rules targeting the way that marine pests are spread is a much more proactive approach; instead of responding to incursions we can actively prevent them.”

“We believe it’s also much better value for money – the pathway approach provides significantly more benefits than our existing species-led approach, according to our analysis.”

Implementation of the Marine Pathway Plan would

largely be done via the existing marine biosecurity hull-checks programme.

The wider programme to stop the spread of marine pests has expanded rapidly over the last five years; Bill says the council is now weighing up the fairest way to pay for it.

“The reality is, movement of hull-fouled boats is the main way marine pests are spread. That’s why boats are the core focus of our marine biosecurity work – under our Charging Policy we’re now considering whether a boat-focused charge would be a fairer option to pay for it.”

Council’s Navigation Safety Bylaw is also due for an update. While the existing bylaw has served the region well, some updates are proposed to reflect changes over the last five years and to better align Northland with our nearest neighbour, Auckland.

Bill says that with all three documents being consulted on at the same time, council wants to ensure important issues don’t get lost and people have a proper opportunity to have their say.

“We’ve tried to highlight all the key issues, but we encourage people to read the three documents for the full picture.”

“We’re also holding several drop-in sessions where councillors and council staff will be available to talk to people about anything we’ve proposed.

“We really need feedback from the community, especially those directly affected, to make sure we fully understand the impact of these proposals before making final decisions.”

Regional Pest and Marine Pathway Management Plan

P2-3

Managing Northland’s pests – animals, plants, freshwater and marine

Key proposals

- New rules on hull-fouling to prevent the spread of marine pests
- Banning from sale and distribution: Phoenix palms, Taiwan cherry and Agapanthus
- Banning from release: red-eared slider turtles, snake-necked turtles, eastern water dragons and Indian ring-necked parakeets
- More emphasis on partnerships with communities, Māori and other agencies.

Annual Plan and Charging Policy

P4-5

What we’ll do – and how we’ll pay for it – for the coming financial year

Key proposals

- Options for funding our marine biosecurity work, including whether to introduce a new charge on moorings, boatsheds, marinas and three large commercial marine facilities
- Collecting an extra \$822,000 from rates for improved services and equipment upgrades, an average \$8.90 more a year (17c a week) per property
- Amendments to river rates for Awanui, Kaihū, Kaeo-Whangaroa and Kerikeri.

Navigation Safety Bylaw

P7

Rules to keep people and property safe on Northland’s waters

Key proposals

- More clearly defining that the person in charge of a boat is responsible for the safety of others on board
- Requiring free-divers and snorkellers to display a dive flag if they’re not with a boat and there’s a likelihood of passing vessel traffic
- Amending the moorings section, in response to increased demand for moorings and emerging mooring technologies
- Reintroducing the exclusion of kiteboarding and other wind-powered boardsports in Waipū and Ruakaka estuaries, in response to ongoing problems and hazards for other water users.

**FEEDBACK IS OPEN UNTIL
4PM FRIDAY 21 APRIL 2017.
SEE PAGE 8 FOR DETAILS ON
HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY.**

HAVE YOUR SAY ON REGIONAL PESTS

Northland Regional Council is asking for public feedback on its new plan for managing pest animals, plants and aquatic species in Northland.

The Proposed Northland Regional Pest and Marine Pathway Management Plan 2017-2027 identifies all the known pests that are a risk for Northland, and specifies how they would be managed.

The plan builds on our previous pest management strategies (operative since 2010), and includes several changes to reflect new legal requirements and improve the way pests are managed.

The development of the proposed plan has been guided by a series of workshops, meetings and surveys with key stakeholders which began in 2014.

The biggest difference from our previous pest management strategies is the new Marine Pathway Plan (outlined below).

Northland's warm wet climate, wide range of habitats and biodiversity status make the region vulnerable to the impact of both new and established pests.

Pest species considered to have a high enough potential impact on Northland's environment or regional industries are included in the plan. (Species not yet present in New Zealand are not included in the plan because they are the responsibility of the Ministry for Primary Industries.)

Following analysis of 181 pest species, 116 species have been included in the proposed plan: 28 animals, 87 plant species and one disease/pathogen (kauri dieback). For those keen on the detail, the costs and benefits of controlling these pests have been assessed. You can go online to our website – www.nrc.govt.nz/haveyoursay – to read this comprehensive document.

New animal species in the plan are red-eared slider turtles, snake-necked turtles, eastern water dragons and Indian ring-necked parakeets. These are all reasonably common pet species and the rules in the proposed plan are intended to ensure they are not released into the wild.

The proposed plan also bans several new species from sale and distribution to help reduce their

spread, following a survey of plant nurseries and pet shops to assess the potential economic impacts of this measure.

New species banned from sale and distribution include Phoenix palms, Agapanthus and Taiwan cherry.

Other key differences proposed in the new plan:

- Good neighbour rules, which mean if weed and pest control in accordance with the plan is being done on one property, neighbours are also required to do this work in boundary areas. For the first time, these good neighbour rules also apply to the Government, including agencies such as the Department of Conservation.
- Re-categorising all the different pests in line with the National Policy Direction on Pest Management, which specifies the types of management programmes that can be included within pest plans.

Effective pest management requires partnerships with our communities, Māori and other stakeholders, and a suite of non-regulatory measures to support community pest control complements the proposed plan.

The proposed new plan places community pest control initiatives under the new umbrella programme of Biosecurity Partnerships. This will

support current policies of high value areas and refocus the existing programme of Community Pest Control Areas and the way in which grants for pest control work are made through council's Environment Fund.

These non-regulatory pest management methods sit outside the proposed new plan, allowing council more flexibility over what pests are included and how they are managed within communities.

There will be increasing emphasis on providing support and mechanisms that encourage initiatives led by landowners, community groups and Māori to become self-funding over time.

This feedback period on the Proposed Northland Regional Pest and Marine Pathway Management Plan is an important opportunity for Northlanders to have their say over the future of pest management in the region. We encourage as many people as possible to contribute.

To read the full Proposed Northland Regional Pest and Pathway Management Plan – and to have your say – go to:

www.nrc.govt.nz/haveyoursay

Feedback is open until 4pm Friday 21 April 2017



PestControlHub

Need some advice to help you get rid of pesky pests on your patch? Check out our new online tool, Pest Control Hub.

Whether it's wily weeds, animal nasties or aquatic invaders – this is your 'one-stop-shop' for advice on Northland's pests and how best to deal to them.

The battle against pests is a huge job and it needs all of us to be involved. We've developed this Northland-specific tool to make it easier for you to find the information you need to wipe pests out.

www.nrc.govt.nz/pestcontrolhub

THE MARINE PATHWAY PLAN

The biggest change from council's last pest management plan is the addition of the proposed Marine Pathway Plan, which would set limits on the amount of hull-fouling allowed when boats move to another harbour or popular offshore anchorage.

Our current marine pest management plan focuses just on individual marine pest species and rules about those species.

New legislation now allows council to also manage the pathway – which, simply put, is the way pests are transported from one place to another. In the marine environment that effectively means boats, as movement of hull-fouled boats is the single highest risk for marine pest transfer.

Northland's extensive coastal environment is important to our region's aquaculture, tourism and lifestyle; it could be seriously impacted by invasive marine species. Pathway management recognises that it is much cheaper to keep pests out than deal with them once they have moved to a new place.

Marine pests, particularly in their juvenile stages, can conceal themselves amongst other biofouling, making them hard to detect, so having low levels of biofouling reduces the risk of marine pest larvae or juveniles being transported to another location.

The proposed hull-fouling rules would mean that, instead of responding to incursions, council could more actively manage the way marine pests are transported and prevent them from spreading.

Over the last few years we have built up a significant marine biosecurity programme which will include 2000 hull checks in the coming financial year.

New hull-fouling rules will largely be implemented through this existing surveillance programme.



Being able to manage the pathway provides significantly greater benefits to the region than the current species-only approach. Our analysis shows nearly ten times the net benefit compared to our current regime.

The council is conscious that, with a limited number of haul-out facilities in Northland and strict rules around in-water cleaning, the practicalities of people keeping their hulls clean needs to be part of the discussion.

Most boaties genuinely want to do the right thing, as long as it is reasonably practical to do so. However, not all harbours have haul-out facilities, so we are also looking into the availability of tidal grids across the region.

To make it easier for people to keep their hulls clean, the council plans to relax the rules around in-water cleaning (in our Proposed Regional Plan, due for consultation later in 2017).

This would make it a permitted activity to clean 'light fouling' (as defined in the plan) off most boats, provided there are no marine pests and the boat is in commercial and marina zones and within 50m of mapped mooring zones.

The Marine Pathway Plan ties in with the work we have been doing alongside Northland marinas in recent years to combat the spread of Mediterranean fanworm, one of the world's worst marine invaders, which has turned up several times in the region.

Marinas have been requiring owners to provide evidence of complying with their 'six or one' programme prior to being allowed to berth in the marina: either an antifoul within the previous six months, or a lift-and-wash within one month of leaving a fanworm-infected location.

If a vessel meets the 'six or one' requirements it will most likely also meet the 'light fouling' level set in the proposed Marine Pathway Plan.

With the ever-present threat of new marine invaders arriving – or existing ones getting into currently unfested harbours – having more robust rules means Northland will be better geared up to prevent their spread.

For boat owners, having low levels of biofouling when moving to a new location means they are unlikely to be taking unwanted hitchhikers with them.

For more details about the Marine Pathway Plan – and to have your say – go to:

www.nrc.govt.nz/haveyoursay

Hull-fouling rules – who, what, where?

Bear in mind that, regardless of the level of fouling on your hull, it's still an offence to transport marine pests like Mediterranean fanworm, even within the same harbour.

The proposed hull-fouling rule means that you would be allowed no more than light fouling on your boat hull if you are:

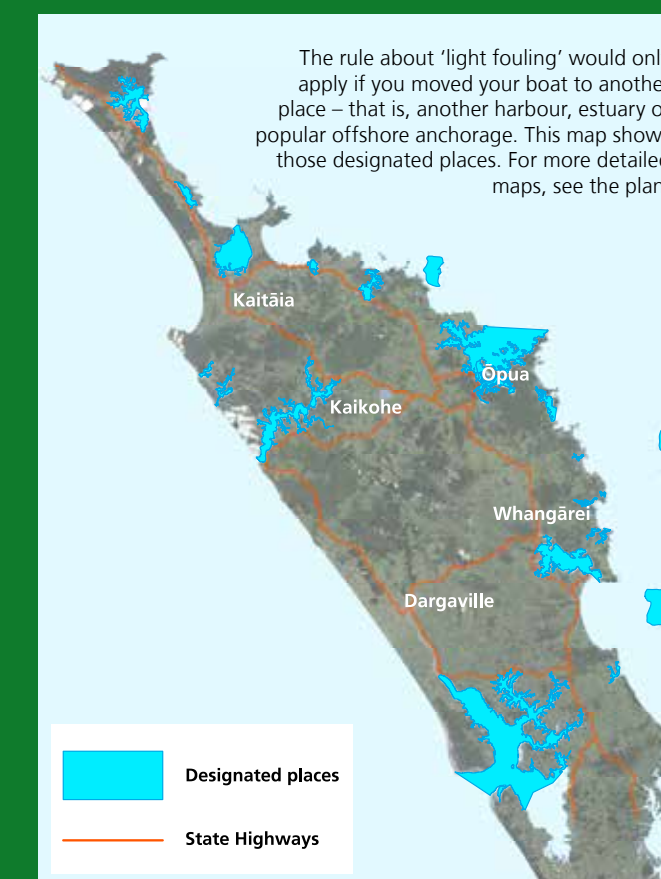
- Bringing the boat into Northland
- Moving between designated places within Northland – that is, another harbour or popular offshore anchorage.

The map here shows those designated places. More detailed maps are in the plan.

It means that if you are staying in a harbour or just heading out for a fish and coming back into the same harbour, you don't need to meet the hull-fouling standard.

'Light fouling' means you will be allowed a slime layer or goose barnacles. As a rough gauge, if the hull-fouling is visible from the surface, it's probably more than light fouling.

This level of 'light fouling' was selected based on research into the risks associated with different levels of fouling, which is detailed in the plan's cost-benefit analysis report (available on council's website). It is also in line with the Ministry for Primary Industries' new hull-fouling limits for incoming international vessels.



The hull-fouling rules would apply to all vessels, not just recreational boats. Most trailer boats wouldn't be affected by the rules as they're normally not in the water long enough to grow fouling. Naturally, the rules wouldn't apply in an emergency situation.

HAVE YOUR SAY AND TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Our Annual Plan sets out what we will do – and how we will pay for it – for the 12 months from 1 July 2017.

The focus is on key differences between what we want to do over this period and what we originally planned for in our last Long Term Plan (which we sought feedback on in 2015). On these two pages is a snapshot of the proposed changes for our Annual Plan 2017/18.

For more detail, check out our Annual Plan 2017/18 Consultation Document, the more detailed Supporting Information Document, and the Charging Policy.

Go online to: www.nrc.govt.nz/haveyoursay

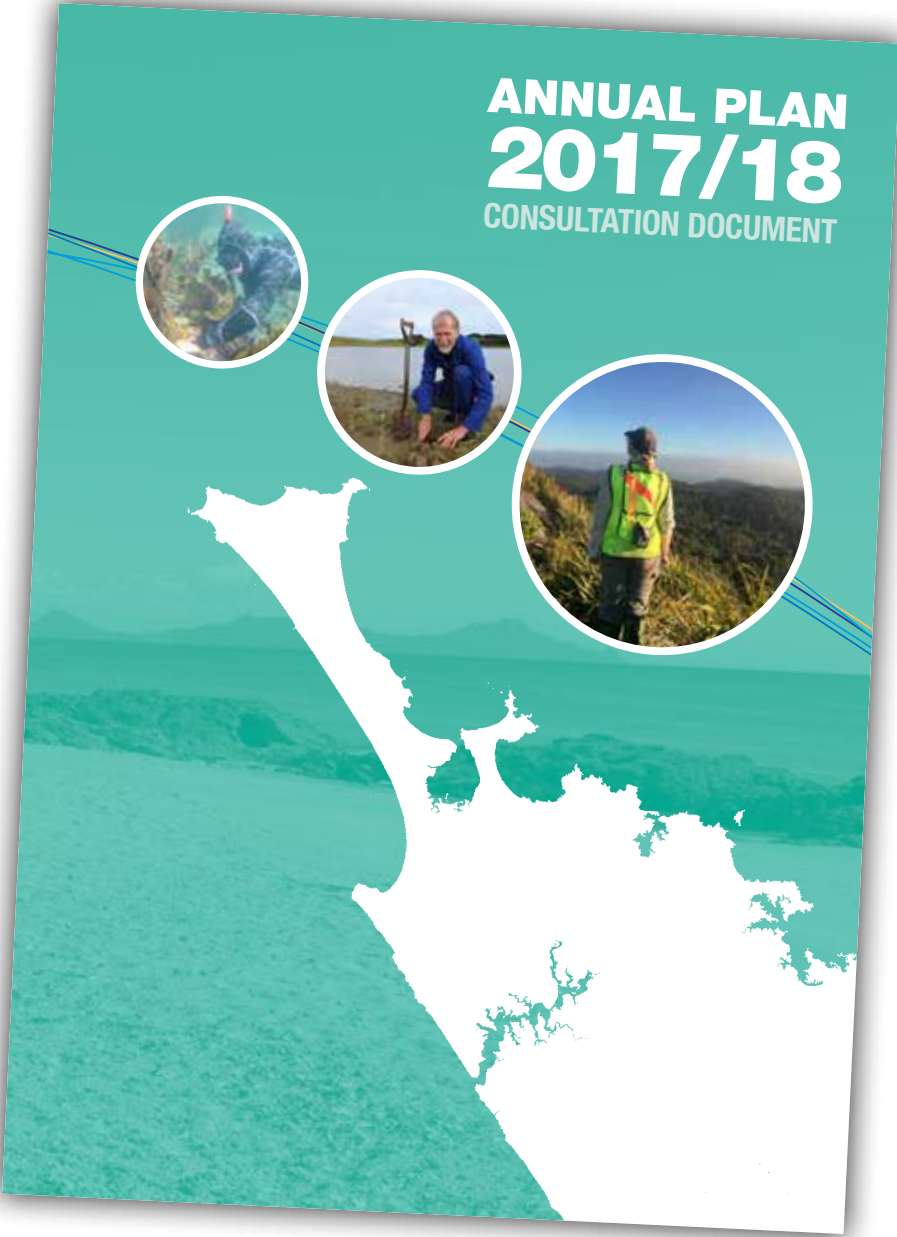
IMPROVING AND ADAPTING

This year, along with delivering on planned activities, we continue striving to provide the best possible services and value for money, responding to change as new opportunities and challenges arise.

For several years council has been able to absorb the effects of inflation through innovation and efficiencies. However, there is a continued demand from our community for new services and a need to respond to real-time challenges.

An additional \$822,000 of rates revenue is needed to improve critical environmental programmes, continue working to keep our communities safe on the land and on the water, further advance shared services with other councils within Northland, and ensure that we are providing the very best level of customer service. This means an average increase of \$8.90 a year (17c per week) per rateable unit. The actual figure will vary, depending on each ratepayer’s property.

For more detail, including an explanation of how rates can vary, see the Annual Plan 2017/18 Consultation Document.



Savings on targeted rates for Kaeo-Whangaroa, Kaihū

We have been able to make savings across two of our targeted river rates, and that means we can pass these savings on to ratepayers. These savings have come about due to repayment of capital works and/or the cost of works coming in under budget.

The Kaihū River Management Rate funds channel maintenance works on the Kaihū River flood management scheme. Savings on the project mean this rate can be reduced by 12%.

The Kaeo-Whangaroa Rivers Management Rate funds operation and capital flood scheme works in Kaeo and Tauranga Bay, and minor river maintenance works to clear flood debris and gravel from streams stretching from Taupo Bay to Te Ngaere. Thanks to savings on this project, we are able to drop this rate by 25%.

Final repayments on the Northland Events Centre

The targeted Regional Recreational Facilities Rate is applied 100% to the development of the regional events centre. The events centre will be paid off sooner than expected, thanks to careful financial management by council, resulting in lower interest payments.

This means that the rate will end part way through the financial year. By lowering the rate by about 20%, we can stretch the final repayments over the full year, which is administratively efficient and more straightforward for ratepayers.

Kerikeri-Waipapa rivers rate to go on hold

The Kerikeri-Waipapa Rivers Management Rate is applied to properties that are identified in the contributing catchments within the Kerikeri-Waipapa area, and was set to fund the operational and capital costs of the flood scheme works in the area.

While the operational works are ongoing, plans for the spillway scheme are on hold pending further investigation. New flood modelling analysis has identified a larger extent of flooding than was expected, meaning the scheme as it currently stands may no longer be viable. No decision has been made to discontinue the scheme, but more work on its feasibility is needed. It means we can suspend the rate for the upcoming year, and the balance collected to date can continue to fund operational works.

Meanwhile, we will continue to investigate the options and bring those back for public feedback in our Long Term Plan next year.

Adjustments within Awanui River rate area

This rate is applied differentially by location and area of benefit, and in our last Annual Plan we let you know that we would be doing some work to ensure that the current split was the fairest way of paying for the scheme.

The work has been done and we now propose to adjust the boundary between the urban and rural areas to better reflect the flood modelling data and the area of benefit. This means that the urban area will be slightly bigger and will fund more of the rate, while the rural area will be slightly smaller and fund less. For more detail on the boundary adjustments and rate classes within the areas, see our Annual Plan Supporting Information Document.

Investigating options for the infrastructure rate



Established in 2007/08, the purpose of the Regional Infrastructure Rate was to fund activities relating to the development of regional infrastructure projects, starting with the Marsden Point Rail Link.

The rate was set for two years in our Long Term Plan, to provide for further decision-making by central Government regarding the rail link.

The future of the rail link is unclear and council is awaiting further direction from central government before reconsidering the purpose of the rate. Rolling over the rate for a further year will allow time for any required investigations. Council will then put forward options in the Long Term Plan and consult on what infrastructure investment the rate is best spent on.

For more detail on proposals for our Annual Plan, go to: www.nrc.govt.nz/haveyour say. Feedback is open until 4pm Friday 21 April 2017.

What’s the fairest way to pay for marine biosecurity?

Fees and charges help pay for some of the work we do. We are now considering whether a fairer way to pay for our marine biosecurity work is a boat-focused charge.

Northland has an exceptional coastal environment, including 3200 kilometres of coastline. Most people would agree it is vital to protect it from the harmful effects of marine invaders. Our coast is central to who we are; our lifestyle, recreational activities, tourism and aquaculture depend on it.

Council’s marine biosecurity programme has expanded rapidly over the last five years, partly driven by incursions of Mediterranean fanworm (one of the world’s worst marine invaders), and the ongoing threat of new pests spreading as the number of vessel movements continues to increase.

These pests degrade our marine environment. They are a threat to our fish and shellfish, harbour water quality and marine tourism industry. We must keep them out of Northland, and prevent those already here from getting into uninfested harbours or to our precious offshore islands.

We now have a robust programme in place for managing marine pests in Northland. However, it is a significant cost – for the upcoming financial year we have budgeted \$480,000, compared with a spend of \$430,000 last year.

Most of the work we do in this space is inspecting and monitoring boat hulls and associated structures, as hull-fouling is the main way that marine pests are spread (see page 6 for more detail on our marine biosecurity programme).

Currently, the cost of our marine biosecurity programme effectively comes out of all ratepayers’ pockets, regardless of whether they have a boat that ‘lives’ in the water (ie, typically not a trailer boat).

Council is now considering whether it would be fairer to recover the cost of marine pest management by increasing charges for the main structures that host boats – moorings, boatsheds, marinas and three large commercial marine facilities.

This is, in effect, a ‘user-pays’ model, which council already uses widely.



We need public feedback, especially from those directly affected, to make sure we fully understand all the issues before making any decision. Outlined here are three options for you to consider.

OPTION 1: Mooring holders, boatsheds, marinas and three large commercial marine facilities pay

APPROACH: Introduce a marine biosecurity charge for the following marine users to pay for the programme: mooring holders and boatsheds (\$122 a year); marinas (\$122 a year per berth); and three large commercial marine facilities – Port Nikau, Northport and Golden Bay Cement (\$5750 a year each). All figures include GST.

ADVANTAGES: Hull inspections and our other marine biosecurity services would be paid for by those that actually own or host boats.

The charge captures both recreational and commercial (via the large marine facilities) vessels. The charge captures a number of out-of-region vessels, including those that stay in marinas (via the marinas charge); nearly one-third of moorings are owned outside the region.

DISADVANTAGES: Some hull inspections of visiting recreational boats and our other marine biosecurity services would effectively be paid for by owners of local boats. (Note that we don’t inspect arriving international boats – these are done by the Ministry for Primary Industries).

The charge doesn’t reflect the wider benefits everyone gets from the protection of our marine environment.

OPTION 2: Everyone pays (current approach)

APPROACH: All ratepayers effectively foot the bill for marine pest management. It equates to about \$5.20 a year for each ratepayer.

ADVANTAGES: It recognises that everyone benefits in one way or another from our marine environment being protected.

DISADVANTAGES: People who don’t have boats are effectively paying for boat hull inspections and our other marine biosecurity services. It diverts funds away from other potential uses.

OPTION 3: Split the bill

APPROACH: The work is partly funded by all ratepayers and partly by a marine biosecurity charge for mooring holders, boatsheds, marinas and marine facilities. For example, a 50:50 split would equate to about \$2.60 per ratepayer, \$61 a year for moorings, boatsheds and per marina berth; and \$2875 a year each for the three large commercial marine facilities.

ADVANTAGES: It reduces the cost carried by those that own (or host) boats.

It reflects the wider regional benefits of protecting our waters from marine pests.

DISADVANTAGES: People who don’t have boats are still paying for boat hull inspections and our other marine biosecurity services, though to a lesser degree.

Council’s preferred approach is Option 1. What do you think is the fairest way to pay for marine biosecurity and, more importantly, why?

Protecting our marine environment

Keeping it safe on the water

Unwanted marine pests potentially harm Northland’s shellfish, tourism and marine industries, and add to fouling problems on structures and vessels. We are working to protect our region’s precious marine environment from the impact of these invaders, now and for future generations. Here is a snapshot of our marine biosecurity programme.

Boat hull checks

An estimated 1500 boat hulls are being checked by divers this season as part of council’s efforts to prevent the spread of marine pests like Mediterranean fanworm. Next season, we aim to increase it to 2000 boat hull surveys. This is the biggest part of our marine biosecurity programme.

Marine pests don’t discriminate when infesting vessels, so the hull checks cover everything from recreational boats, superyachts and fishing vessels to barges – whether they’re moored, berthed, anchored or docked. Both local and visiting vessels receive the same scrutiny.

PHOTO: Northland-based dive contractors Marine Environmental Field Services are inspecting roughly 1500 hulls for marine pests between September 2016 and May 2017.



Supporting industry initiatives

A new biosecurity charter recognising the collective efforts of Far North marinas to reduce the impact of marine pests was signed late last year. The Far North Marine Biosecurity Charter is a joint industry and agency response to managing marine pests in the Bay of Islands, Whangaroa and Mangonui areas.

It follows in the footsteps of Whangārei marinas which established a similar charter in 2013.

The council is also very supportive of Northland marinas’ ‘six or one’ initiative to help stop the spread of marine pests. Under this initiative, boat owners need to prove their vessels have been anti-fouled within six months, or lifted and washed within one month before entering one of the region’s marinas.

PHOTO: The signing of the Far North Marine Biosecurity Charter in November 2016 was a collective effort to reduce the impact of marine pests.



Public education and regional collaboration

Northland has joined forces with other regions to form the ‘Top of the North’ marine pest group. The group, which includes Northland, Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty, shares a website – www.marinepests.nz – aimed at providing information and advice to travelling boaties to reduce the risk of marine pest spread, sharing resources and allowing for consistency of requirements. Northland is among regions that co-present at large public events like Auckland’s Boat Show. We also work with local schools on marine pest education.

PHOTO: The website www.marinepests.nz is a collaboration of four regional councils working to stop the spread of invasive marine pests.



Research

Over the past several years, the council has researched and secured new control devices (eg an inflatable vessel quarantine facility), and had innovative new treatments for marine pests (eg the use of chlorine) approved by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The region is also working with the Ministry for Primary Industries and with other regions to investigate novel approaches to marine pest control and develop improved response tools.

To make it easier for people to keep their hulls clean, council is also looking into the availability of tidal grids across the region and hopes to relax the rules around in-water cleaning (in the Proposed Regional Plan, due for consultation later in 2017).

PHOTO: The council has been involved in researching how best to respond to Japanese paddle crab, an aggressive marine invader that has found its way into Ngunguru estuary.



Readiness and rapid response

Council must be ready to respond if a marine pest is found in a new place.

Council’s biosecurity experts helped develop a portable, inflatable vessel quarantine facility (VQF) – an innovative and possibly world-first tool in the battle against marine pests. It is a modified ‘Fab Dock’, which is an inflatable, self-contained, on-water docking system already used internationally. The concept has been modified so the VQF can be used to treat marine pests in remote locations where there may not be a slipway.

PHOTO: Northland Regional Council has been sharing knowledge with other local authorities, with a training exercise showing how to deploy and use a portable, inflatable vessel quarantine facility (VQF).



HAVE YOUR SAY

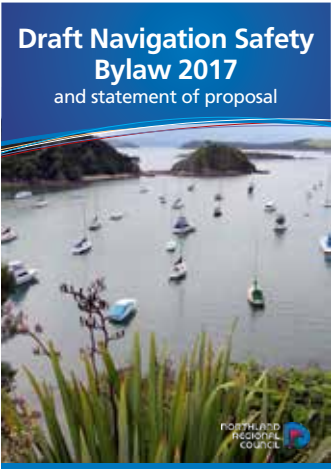
Council is now seeking your feedback on the Navigation Safety Bylaw, which sets rules for keeping people and property safe on Northland’s waters.

It sets out safe practices and rules for activities like recreational and commercial boating, swimming and waterskiing, moorings management, and activities related to commercial shipping.

The bylaw is now due for its five-yearly review and, while the current bylaw has served the region well, this is an opportunity to refine and update it.

We are proposing some amendments to improve our harbour safety rules, better reflect current navigation safety challenges, make them more consistent with neighbouring regions, and incorporate legislative updates. On this page is an overview of some of the changes council is proposing for its new Navigation Safety Bylaw 2017.

Now is your chance to have your say on these proposals, and any other aspect of our Navigation Safety Bylaw.



Vessel identification and owner details

In line with rules in the Auckland region, we are proposing to introduce a requirement for vessels to display an identification mark (this wouldn’t apply to powerboats under 4m and non-mechanically powered boats). For vessels left at anchor or on moorings, it is also proposed that the owner’s name and contact details are displayed. This is so owners can be contacted should the vessel encounter problems such as break-off or foundering.

Kiteboarding and windsurfing in Ruakaka, Waipū estuaries

Wind-powered boardsports came up as an issue in our last bylaw review.

After considering the feedback received, we relaxed the speed restrictions for wind-powered boardsports in estuaries and close to the coast, as it generally occurs in strong onshore winds when few other people are on the water.

The updated rules seem to be working well on the coast; however, high-speed kiteboards and windsurfers inside some estuaries have proven to be too hazardous to other users. Complaints over recent years show an ongoing problem inside Ruakaka and Waipū estuaries in particular.

As a result, we propose to reintroduce the exclusion of wind-powered boardsports from these two estuaries.

Dive flags when snorkelling, free-diving, diving

With the growing amount of boat traffic on Northland’s waters, being clearly visible is an increasing safety issue for snorkellers, free-divers and divers.

The current bylaw is clear that when people are diving from a boat, the boat needs to fly a dive flag and stay within 200 metres of its divers. However, there are currently no specific requirements for people diving from the shore or away from boats.

To ensure the safety of all divers – including snorkellers, free-divers and spearfishers – it is proposed that if you’re not with a boat and there is likely to be boat traffic around, you would need to tow a buoy with a dive flag clearly visible on it.

This proposal is in line with existing requirements in the Auckland region.

Moorings management

Several amendments are proposed for the moorings section of the bylaw, in response to increased demand for moorings and emerging mooring technologies. These include:

- Requiring mooring contractors (who maintain and construct moorings) to be licensed, rather than just approved
- That if a mooring is not properly maintained within a timeframe specified by the Harbourmaster, it may be removed or the licence transferred
- That a mooring should not be left vacant for longer than six months without prior approval. This is to help ensure that, as demand for mooring space continues to grow, existing moorings are being used
- Enabling the Harbourmaster to direct the relocation or removal of a mooring, to achieve navigation safety and efficient use of available space.

Skipper responsibility and lifejackets

The draft bylaw clarifies the responsibilities of the skipper (‘person in charge of the vessel’) in relation to use of lifejackets.

It means someone would need to be nominated as the person in charge of the vessel. That person would be responsible for the safety of everyone on board and being towed, be responsible for carriage and wearing of lifejackets, and manage risk. It would be an offence to be in charge if you are intoxicated by alcohol or drugs.

Related to skipper responsibility is a proposed update to lifejacket rules. This would mean that unless the skipper gives you permission not to, it will be compulsory to wear a lifejacket on any vessel that is 6m or smaller in length.

This is much clearer than the existing rules and brings Northland’s lifejacket rules in line with our nearest neighbour, Auckland.

For more detail, and to have your say, visit: www.nrc.govt.nz/haveyoursay

DID YOU KNOW?

Along with implementing the bylaw, the maritime team does a range of work to help keep Northland’s waters safe and clean.

Piloting cruise ships into the Bay of Islands – 52 scheduled for the current season.

Managing the 2800 moorings across Northland.

Promoting navigation and boating safety.

Maintaining buoys and beacons for safe navigation.

Oil spill readiness and response.

Supporting our environmental monitoring and marine biosecurity teams.

FIND OUT MORE

On our website you'll find plenty more detail on the proposals in these plans and supporting documents:

■ **Proposed Northland Regional Pest and Marine Pathway Management Plan**

- Cost Benefit Analysis
- Frequently asked questions

■ **Annual Plan Consultation Document**

- Supporting Information Document for Annual Plan consultation
- Draft Charging Policy
- Frequently asked questions

■ **Draft Navigation Safety Bylaw 2017 (including statement of proposal)**

www.nrc.govt.nz/haveyoursay

SAY IT ONLINE!

You can give feedback on any (or all) of the three documents on our website at:

www.nrc.govt.nz/haveyoursay

We encourage people to give their feedback online as it's more efficient for us to process and we're conscious of keeping costs down for ratepayers as much as we can.

You can still give feedback by email, mail, or dropping it in to one of our offices if you prefer.

- Email us at: submissions@nrc.govt.nz
- Or mail your submission to:

Combined Consultation 2017,
Northland Regional Council,
Freepost 139690, Private Bag 9021, Whangārei
Mail Centre, Whangārei 0148

COME TO AN INFORMATION SESSION

Want to talk to us? You are invited to our informal drop-in sessions during the feedback period, where Northland Regional Council staff and elected representatives will be available to answer any questions.

- **Whangārei: Thursday 30 March, 3-6pm, 36 Water St (NRC offices)**
- **Mangonui: Thursday 6 April, 3-6pm, Mangonui Cruising Club**
- **Waitangi: Monday 10 April, 3-6pm, Bay of Islands Yacht Club**



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