

NORTH WAIHEKE ISLAND REPORTING AREA

Waiheke Local Board

AUGUST 2016

STATE OF AUCKLAND MARINE FACTSHEET



RIMU worked with research company EcoGIS to carry out multispectral analysis of satellite imagery to identify and classify both physical habitats (reefs, sand and mud) and biological habitats (kelp forest, urchin barrens, algae areas) on Hauraki Gulf rocky reefs down to a maximum depth of 10 metres (limited by light penetration). Results from this work show us that for the northern side of Waiheke Island there are approximately 8.7km² of rocky reef. Of this total 72% (or 6.2 km²) is subtidal while the remaining 28% (or 2.5 km²) is intertidal. The coverage of large brown seaweeds found on the subtidal reefs was estimated to be 59% (or 3.7 km²), making this the dominant habitat found on these subtidal reefs. This was followed by areas of bare rock (we classify bare rock as having no large or turfing algae present). Bare rock composed 38% (or 2.4 km²) of the subtidal reef habitats. Urchin barrens only occupied a small area (1.8% or 0.1 km²) of the reefs underwater.

Large areas of the northern side of Waiheke as well as the nearby islands of Rakino and The Noises are predominantly made up of rocky reef, supporting a wide range of marine life including seaweeds, marine invertebrates (such as sponges, sea squirts and shellfish), as well as associated fish species. These reefs also support edible fish species and intensive recreational fishing is common.

The deeper areas (20-50 m), situated north of the rocky islands of Rakino and The Noises, are mainly soft sediment habitats that support communities of large sponges and horse mussels that provide shelter and food for fish such as snapper (both adult and juvenile), as well as a range of other marine invertebrates

(e.g. sea squirts). Shellfish species (e.g. scallops and dog cockles) are also found in these areas. Also of note are the numerous cetacean species (e.g. Bryde's whale, orca, and both common and bottle nose dolphins) that pass through this area, typically on route to feeding and breeding locations.

NORTH WAIHEKE ISLAND MONITORING SITES



Bathing beach water quality was tested at four sites during the summer of 2015/16. Across all four beaches, 89 tests were completed and 99 per cent of these passed the recreational bacteria guidelines.

In the absence of comprehensive data for some areas, report cards are not available. In these areas fact sheets have been generated until more information is collected.

FIND OUT MORE

This report card is part of a series prepared by Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU), which provides the mandatory and critical evidence to support the council's decision-making, activities and reporting. Report cards and the latest full State of the Environment Report can be found at aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/stateofauckland

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For more information: e-mail RIMU@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or call us on 09 301 0101.