

# SOUTHERN KAIPARA HARBOUR REPORTING AREA

Rodney Local Board

## STATE OF AUCKLAND MARINE REPORT CARD

2018



### QUICK FACTS

THE SANDBANKS IN KAIPARA SHIFT AND CHANGE POSITION, AND ARE KNOWN LOCALLY AS **THE GRAVEYARD**

IN 2009, THE KAIPARA HARBOUR **ECOLOGICAL MONITORING PROGRAMME** WAS ESTABLISHED TO MONITOR THE HEALTH OF THE HARBOUR

KAIPARA HARBOUR **SCALLOP BEDS**

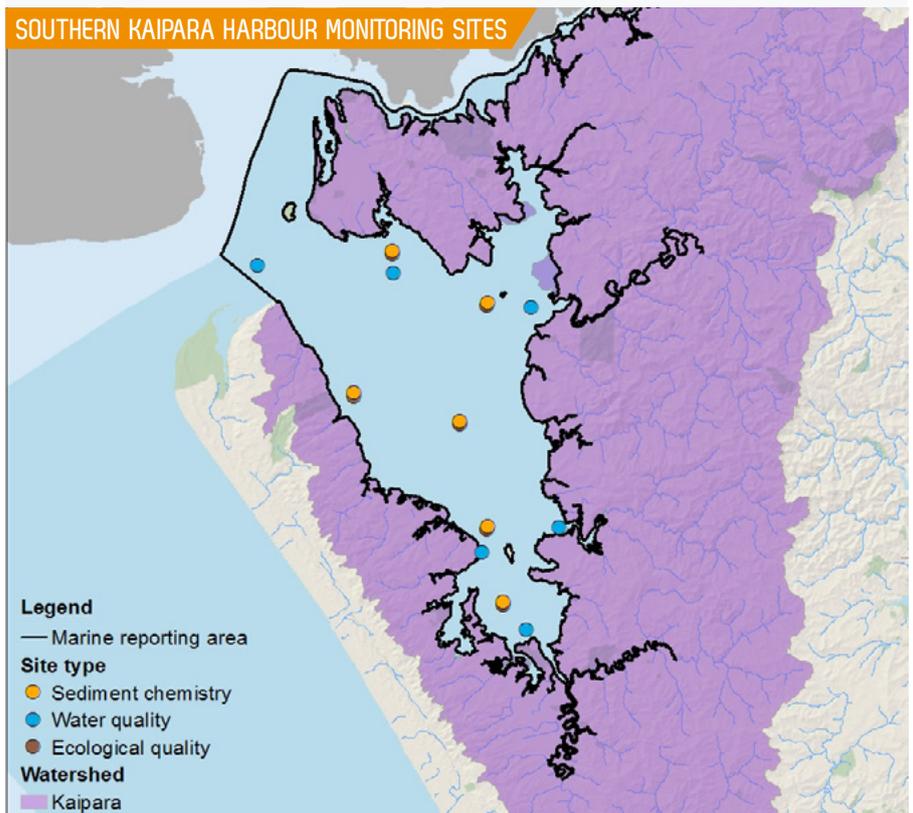
WERE CLOSED IN OCTOBER 2018 TO ALLOW THE BEDS TO REBUILD

THE MAJORITY OF WEST COAST **SNAPPER** USE THE KAIPARA HARBOUR AS A NURSERY AREA

THE HARBOUR EXTENDS FOR SOME 60 KILOMETRES FROM **↑ NORTH TO SOUTH ↓**

THE KAIPARA HARBOUR IS THE LARGEST IN NEW ZEALAND, AND EXTENDS SOME **60 KILOMETRES** FROM THE NORTH TO SOUTH

### SOUTHERN KAIPARA HARBOUR MONITORING SITES



#### WATER QUALITY



#### CONTAMINANTS IN SEDIMENT



#### ECOLOGY



These grades represent a summary of results from individual sites and are not designed to track trends. Each programme samples at a number of representative sites across Auckland and collects parameters specific to the programme which are amalgamated to provide the grade. More detailed analyses are presented in technical reports available on Knowledge Auckland. See the back page for monitoring results and interpretation. Note that the water quality scores have been assessed using an updated methodology which may result in a change to the grade unrelated to a change in quality.



# MONITORING BACKGROUND AND INTERPRETATION

**Water quality:** To measure the health of our marine waters, a comprehensive range of parameters are measured, including nutrients, turbidity, salinity, and pH. Overall water quality is assessed using the Water Quality Index, which was developed by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment in 2001 and adapted by Auckland Council. Scores are calculated by comparing average values from the last three years to water quality objectives. The methods used to calculate the scores for 2018 have changed and sites have been split into open water and estuary sites to better reflect the differing water circulation conditions. This more conservative approach means some water quality grades are lower than in previous years due to the change in index rather than a change in water quality. See Technical Report 2018/027 on Knowledge Auckland for more information on the methodology change.

**Contaminants in sediment:** Auckland Council tests for zinc, copper and lead every two to five years. Environmental Response Criteria (ERC) are used: green indicates low levels of contaminants, amber indicates some elevation and red indicates relatively high levels. The most recent results can be found in technical report TR2016/020.

**Ecology:** At selected harbour and estuarine sites, species living in or on intertidal sand flats are counted. Results are classified according to a five-point health index (TR2012/012), which ranges from 'extremely good' to 'unhealthy with low resilience'. Ecology is also monitored more frequently at sentinel sites, every two to three months for soft sediment sites.

**Bathing beach water quality:** Check Safeswim ([safeswim.org.nz](http://safeswim.org.nz)) for live information on water quality and swimming conditions at your favourite swimming spots.

**Warning:** These State of the Environment indicators **do not** measure or indicate food quality or safety; refer to [foodsafety.govt.nz](http://foodsafety.govt.nz) for more information.

## MONITORING RESULTS



WATER  
QUALITY

Marine water quality monitoring began at Shelly Beach in 1991 and expanded to six more sites in 2009. The overall water quality is graded a 'C'. While most sites have improved or remained stable since monitoring began, many individual parameters still exceed water quality thresholds for the Auckland region that are used to assess ecosystem health. Thresholds were exceeded most frequently in the Manukau and Kaipara harbours (see Technical Report 2018/015).



CONTAMINANTS  
IN SEDIMENT

Sediment quality sampling was carried out in 2010. The levels of copper, lead and zinc were generally very low across all six sites sampled and well within the green ERC category. Only one site near Shelly Beach exceeded the ERC amber threshold for copper.



ECOLOGICAL HEALTH

The overall grade for ecological health has remained a 'B' and most Kaipara sites have moderate to good ecological health. The 2017 sampling saw a decrease in health score for a number of sites with Kaipara Banks now categorized as having poor ecological health.

### FIND OUT MORE

This report card is part of a series prepared by Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit, which undertakes monitoring and research to provide information and evidence to inform the council's activities and reporting. More report cards can be found at: [aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/environment](http://aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/environment). The report card series includes reporting on freshwater, terrestrial, marine, air, soil, capacity for growth, demographics and quality of life.

For more information: e-mail [rimu@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:rimu@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz) or call us on 09 301 0101.

### GET INVOLVED

Auckland Council provides more than 20 environmental programmes across the region that you can get involved in. To find out more on how you can help visit: [aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](http://aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)