



APF Project Web Summary

Project Title:	Sea Change: Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan
Grantee:	Waikato Regional Council in Collaboration with Auckland Council
Grant Number:	12-01
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Summary

The two-year project is known as “Sea Change” and involved the development of a Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan. It is a partnership involving mana whenua and statutory agencies Auckland Council, Waikato Regional Council, the Hauraki Gulf Forum, the Department of Conservation, and the Ministry for Primary Industries. It involved collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders and input from the public.

The Opportunity

The New Zealand Aquaculture Strategy (2006) has set a sales target of \$1 billion per annum by 2025. This is supported by the NZ Government Aquaculture Strategy and Five Year Plan (2012) that endorses sensible and sustainable future growth. Aquaculture production depends on the use of public water space – a finite resource that is under increasing pressure from diverse uses, particularly in the Hauraki Gulf. However, the ecosystem services that services that underpin sustainable long-term productivity are also under increasing pressure.

The Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan (HGMSPP) Project recognised the need for multi-agency planning and stakeholder engagement to ensure that marine resources are allocated to meet economic, cultural, social and environmental goals. A major objective of the project was to identify sufficient and suitable areas for aquaculture. The HGMSPP was completed in December 2016.

Intended Outcomes

The marine spatial plan promotes the Government’s goal of growing a sustainable aquaculture industry. It provides an opportunity to provide for long-term growth of aquaculture by integrating the planning of marine activities across multiple jurisdictions and regulatory frameworks, such as fisheries, resource management and conservation legislation. It provided a forum for the aquaculture industry to



identify opportunities it wishes to pursue and engage in a strategic planning process. Identifying additional space for aquaculture will also assist the Crown with delivering on its settlement obligations.

The project has developed base maps of ecological information for the Gulf. Priority locations for biodiversity or ecological functioning can be determined from this information. Along with other criteria such as minimum depth requirement, or distance from the shore, this information will help guide placement of new aquaculture space.

In addition, the process identified possible new Aquaculture areas and possible marine protected areas. The project aims to deliver an overall increase in the Gulf's ecosystem health and productivity. Additional shellfish aquaculture could be part of this increase.

The Marine Management Model being developed by WRC also will help to ensure that cumulative environmental effects from rivers, other discharges and marine activities are all accounted for when planning new areas for aquaculture. Impacts over time from new inputs or continued trends can also be predicted and managed in advance. Aquaculture's environmental needs, and its impacts, are part of this.

The involvement of iwi and the provision of new space greatly facilitates iwi aquaculture aspirations and provides a real option for economic revival, using the gains from pending treaty settlements. All 26 Tikapa Moana iwi were represented on the project Leadership Steering Group.

The Coromandel community is strongly reliant on year-round employment to provide the ongoing social infrastructure and community functioning required for healthy vibrant settlements. This can be difficult to achieve given that nearly half the homes are owned by non-residents who are only present at peak holiday times. New aquaculture opportunities will create more permanent employment and allow families to remain in the area. It will then support other business growth and help prevent a decline in the permanent population.

Methods

Sea Change was a collaboration between five agencies and manawhenua iwi. The process involves collaboration at governance and management level, and revolved around a collaborative stakeholder group which represented the broad interests of key stakeholders having interests in the area covered by Sea Change. The Collaborative Stakeholder Group was supported by technical policy staff from agencies, and a robust scientific information base through an Expert Advisory Group.

The intent of the marine spatial plan is to 'front-load' some stakeholder and community discussions, making the subsequent RMA plan change process less costly and time-consuming.



Update at Project Completion

Outcomes Achieved

Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari delivered a marine spatial plan for the Hauraki Gulf in December 2016. The plan addresses the ongoing degradation of the ecosystems of the Gulf while promoting economic development opportunities.

For aquaculture specifically, the plan has identified 13 new potential areas to cater for growth in shellfish and fish farming and recommended a range of regulatory changes to improve the management of aquaculture.

The 13 new potential areas provide for inter-tidal farming (see the purple areas on Figure 1), subtidal areas suitable for mussel farming (green areas), and some that are suitable for both mussels and fish (yellow). It is anticipated that these areas could easily accommodate the forecast growth in aquaculture for the Hauraki Gulf by 2035. The plan also identifies areas unsuitable for aquaculture development.

Progression of any of these potential new areas will involve comprehensive assessment and evaluation before any marine farm development occurs.

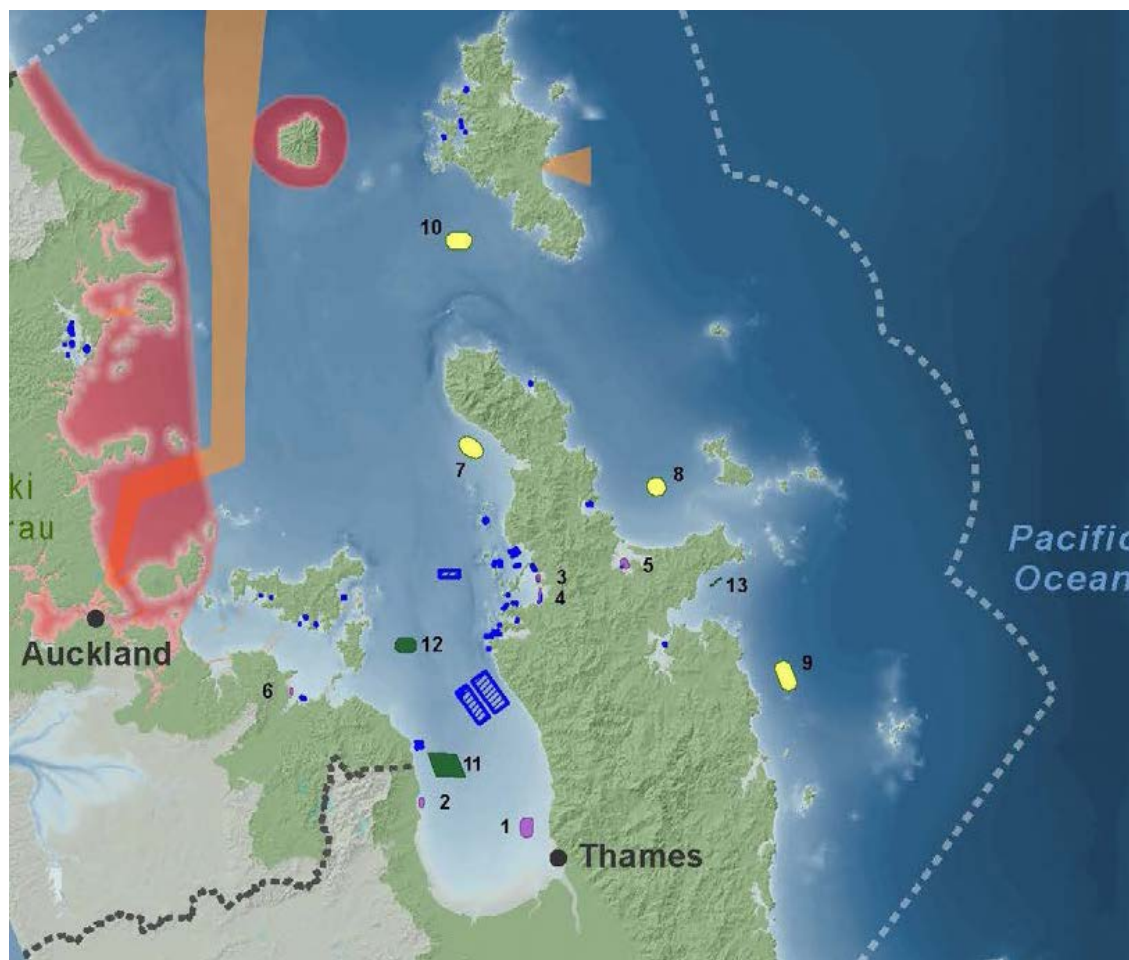


Figure 1: Locations of the 13 indicative areas



SITE	LOCATION	SPECIES
1	Thames	Inter-tidal shellfish (oysters)
2	Kaiaua	Inter-tidal shellfish (oysters)
3	Coromandel Harbour South	Inter-tidal shellfish (oysters)
4	Coromandel Harbour North	Inter-tidal shellfish (oysters)
5	Whangapoua	Inter-tidal shellfish (oysters)
6	Maraetai	Inter-tidal shellfish (oysters)
7	Colville	Subtidal shellfish (mussels and fish)
8	Great Mercury	Subtidal shellfish (mussels and fish)
9	East Coromandel	Subtidal shellfish (mussels and fish)
10	South Great Barrier Island	Subtidal shellfish (mussels and fish)
11	Western Firth	Subtidal shellfish (mussels)
12	Ponui	Subtidal shellfish (mussels)
13	Whitianga	Subtidal shellfish (mussels)

Table 1: List of indicative areas

The Plan's recommended changes to the management of aquaculture in the Gulf provide a good basis for sound economic development while mitigating environmental effects.

Next Steps

The Government is currently considering the *Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan* and decisions on next steps are yet to be made.

The Waikato Regional Council, Auckland Council and District Councils are currently planning for implementation of *Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan*. Refer to the individual agency websites for further details.

Further information

Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari:

<http://seachange.org.nz/>

Waikato Regional Council:

<https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/community/whats-happening/waikato-regional-plan-review/>

Auckland Council:

<http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/planspoliciesprojects/plansstrategies/unitaryplan/Pages/home.aspx>