

Friends of Nelson Haven & Tasman Bay Inc. P.O. Box 365, Nelson 7040

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Our AGM will be on Thursday 27 August 2015 at 7 pm at Hearing House,

354 Trafalgar Square, Nelson

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The AGM will be followed by a talk by three NIWA scientists at **7:30 pm** on
**NIWA modelling of Tasman/Golden Bays' physical, biological and
ecological data**

NIWA speakers are:

Alistair Dunn – Principal Scientist in the field of fisheries modelling

Peter Horn – Fisheries Scientist

Vidette McGregor – Fisheries Modeller

Tasman/Golden Bay is the first area in New Zealand to be studied using the Atlantis ecosystem model. It has been applied to multiple marine systems in Australia, Europe and the United States.

The bays support numerous marine activities and large populations of wildlife. Much of the surrounding land is modified by farming, horticulture, forestry, other industries and residential development, all of which impact on the marine environment.

The Atlantis model will be used to evaluate the effects and trade-offs from fishing, management scenarios and climate change across social, conservation and economic outcomes in the bays.

Public welcome.

Annual Report - July 2014 – June 2015

We continue to actively watch coastal activities of Tasman, Nelson and Marlborough. Our central concern is maintaining a healthy coastal environment in the face of continual pressure to extract economic returns, often with insufficient, or no, knowledge of the impacts. The less information one has the easier it is to make a decision. A recent case in point is the government MPI (Ministry of Primary Industry) decision to make 2000 ha in Tasman/Golden Bay available for aquaculture. They claimed to have consulted widely, but it came as a surprise to many, including TDC and the scallop industry, which plans to challenge the decision. As Mark Twain observed over a century ago:

“All you need in this life is ignorance and confidence and then success is sure”.

HELP!! If any members, or people known to members, wish to help with the work of Friends' committee, please let us know. Our coastal conservation efforts are limited by the quantity and quality of our voluntary input.

A. Research Report Update

Boat surveys to establish the distribution and species of bird, fish and mammals in Tasman and Golden Bay have been ongoing. Since Dec 2010, the August 2014 boat trip was the fifth trip to collate base line information on biodiversity in both bays. The last three surveys are part of the Wakatu Inc and Friends mediation settlement for consent to grant a 450 ha mussel farm south of D'Urville Island.

A monitoring proposal was also a part of the same mediation process. This farm will develop in four stages from 2 lines to 200 lines in 2021. This staged program is developed to identify adverse effects on the environment that may arise as a consequence of the development and was submitted in September 2014.

Two components of monitoring are recognised:

- Part 1- Characterize seabird and mammal population's SW of D'Urville.
- Part 2 – Identify implications of the development of a marine farm on seabirds and mammals SW of D'Urville Island

All the baseline data that were gathered over the years, necessary for making science-based decisions about aquaculture development, were unfortunately not available at the time to designate 2000 ha for aquaculture in both bays by MPI.

B. Nelson City Council (NCC) area activities in which Friends is involved

1. The NCC Biodiversity Forum has produced a Strategy called Nelson Nature, with 10 projects of which Coastal Habitats is one. Friends was part of the smaller Group consultation. The wider Tasman Bay is excluded as being too complex. Baseline data gathering and monitoring (e.g. eelgrass) are part of the programme. This Strategy Plan, as well as the Integrated Management Plan of Tasman Bay, is on hold waiting for funding.
2. The Boulder Bank has been added to the New Zealand Heritage List as wahi tapu.
3. Friends made submissions to NCC on a) the Draft Annual Plan on the following matters; gravel removal, rising main problems, Maitai River flood protection, York Stream, Brook Stream, Wakapuaka, and the need to destroy or recover methyl bromide at the port, and b) Reserves bylaw 2014, where some of our suggestions were accepted.
4. Friends is a member of the Port Nelson Ltd (PNL) Environmental Consultative Committee. The Calwell Slipway is the fourth highest priority for the Government's Contaminated Sites Remedial Fund which has so far paid out \$42.5 million around the country. The Government and PNL are jointly putting up \$400,000 to design a plan to clean-up the contaminated sea bed. It would seem this subsidises the polluters and socialises the clean-up costs.
5. Corder Park wastewater pump station was earmarked for a much overdue upgrade. Friends advised on environmental impacts on nearby Corder lagoon and foreshore. An Oldham Creek assessment, carried out by Tom Kroos, showed a good range of fish and invertebrate species.

6. After extensive consultation and site visit, Friends were pleased with the new collection and disposal system installed at North Nelson Ponds. Dewatering via large inflatable bags will happen over the next 12 months before disposal to land fill. Friends advocated sludge disposal as per the Rabbit Island scheme.
7. Following a break in the Atawhai rising main pipeline and leak into the Haven, urgent repairs were carried out. A portion of the old rising main, north of the pump station, needs replacement and Friends advised on maintaining adequate flow to the lagoon during repairs.
8. Friends has been consulted and put in a submission on accidental raw sewage discharges from the Regional Sewage Scheme into the Waimea estuary. Friends' concern was with ongoing monitoring and environmental assessment.
9. Wakapuaka Sandflats. NCC has undertaken modelling for the potential impacts of climate change on flooding and overtopping of the Boulder Bank, and the effects on the occupiers of the land from the Glen to Boulder Bank Drive and Todds Valley. A number of short and long term options have been raised by stakeholders, which will be further traversed by Council. The Friends want to see restoration of the Wakapuaka Wildlife Reserve adjacent to the sandflats (in association with Forest & Bird) and want to see natural tidal flows restored.

C. Tasman District Council (TDC) area activities in which Friends is involved.

1. Landscape Issues. The protection of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes (ONF&L) from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, a requirement for councils under s.6(b) of the Resource Management Act, has long been a country-wide contentious issue. For the past 5 years, the Friends has been in the small working group of 8 (due to a commitment from TDC resulting from our Environment Court appeal) which has assessed the landscape values of Golden Bay – the rest of the district should follow. The working group comprises representatives of many community interests and there has been wide consultation with the release of a Draft Report "Golden Bay/Mohua Landscape Project", in October 2014. The (draft) Final Report from the Small Group was received by TDC on 16 July. A workshop is planned for September to ensure councillors understand the Group's reasoning, to clarify areas where the Group had not reached consensus, and to have more information from staff in regard to policies, objectives and rules. The Friends' focus has been mainly on coastal areas to Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) with inclusions up some rivers, and the Aquaculture Management Areas (AMAs), spat catching sites in Wainui Bay, wharves, Tarakohe Harbour, some headlands and peninsulas as the Coast Marine Outstanding Natural Landscapes (CMONL). The North Western CMONL, of one km width from MHWS, has some land-based features and coastal ONFs which include Wainui Bay, Farewell Spit, Whanganui Inlet and Big River Estuary. This is the beginning of an important process that will result in a Tasman Resource Management Plan (TRMP) change in 2016. The Friends anticipate further involvement in the Schedule 1 RMA process.
2. Friends submitted on the possible coastal impacts of the Lee Valley Waimea Community Dam, which was granted consent with 100 conditions. Forest & Bird

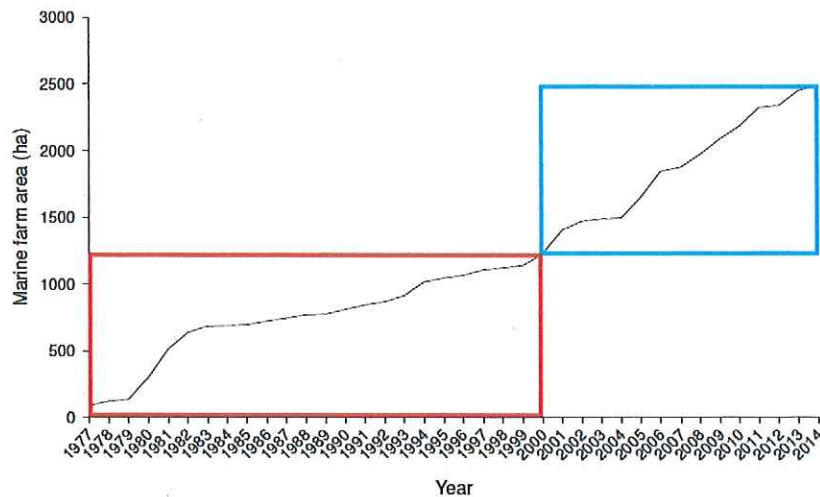
and Fish & Game successfully appealed the conditions. Friends has concerns about downstream effects of the dam and subsequent use on the water quality of the Waimea River and Waimea Inlet. These issues were not addressed as no water take/use permits were considered in the applications (unlike Ruataniwha). From the end of June the Council "owns" the consents.

3. The Waimea Inlet Forum has speakers, field trips and restoration projects which Friends support and are happy to see people acting on knowledge gained.
4. We have also attended TDC's Biodiversity Forum of lectures and discussions.
5. Friends has submitted on granting of leases for private boathouses on public land (LEH Baigent "reserve") at Kina Peninsula where there is too little concern, thus far, for aesthetics and access. Friends will watch the resource consent process closely.
6. Friends has made submissions on coastal matters to TDC on the following:
 - 6.1 the Draft Annual Plan with special interest in TDC's wetland mapping.
 - 6.2 the Long Term Plan.
 - 6.3 the Draft Dog bylaw
 - 6.4 Tasman Erosion and Sediment Control Guidelines
 - 6.5 the Global river works and consents for spraying woody weeds and grasses which may impact on inanga spawning.
 - 6.6 Motueka waste water treatment plant.
7. We were pleased that the Tasman School Muddy Buddy event has been shifted to a less sensitive area in Moutere Inlet.
8. Friends is concerned that Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has given the green light for 2000 ha to be available for aquaculture outside Tasman/Golden Bay. This is a consequence of the NZ Marine Farming Association decision (Judge Kenderdine). Challenger Scallop Enhancement Company will mount a legal challenge to the decision with the support of Talleys, which handles the bulk of scallops.
9. The Mapua chemical "clean up" process has been used as a case study for an Auckland University engineering PhD thesis. The poor consultation with the community, Forest & Bird, Greenpeace (as appellants to the decision) as well as other groups, is discussed and a better consultation process is recommended. Barry Carbon (former CEO of Ministry for the Environment) commenting on the report noted the lack of attention to adverse environmental effects of the "clean up" and does little to enhance the Ministry for the Environment's profile in this matter.

D. Marlborough District Council (MDC) area activities in which Friends is involved.

The increasing demand for space for aquaculture in the Sounds has accelerated to where Friends has serious reservations about maintenance of ecosystem functionality and as such the overall sustainability of the proposals. The acceleration of aquaculture expansion started straight after Friends won the battle for maintaining open mid bay waters in early 2000. At that time, aquaculture developed to about 1200 ha over 23 years. Since, aquaculture occupied areas more than doubled in 14 years. The industry changed its drift for expansion from inside the ribbon development into the non

complying areas of Coastal Marine Zone 2 of the Marlborough Sounds. The overlap between the original designation of 'mid bay water' and expansion from the ribbon development into these waters is unclear.



Cumulative area (ha) of Pelorus Sound marine farms with a status of "granted" by Marlborough District Council, 1977-2014.

In August 2014, Friends, together with Sustain Our Sounds (SOS), submitted on the MDC draft review of the Marlborough Regional Policy Statement and Resource Management Plan concerned with obligations of MDC to guarantee sustainable management in the coastal marine zone. We believe this obligation has not been well served with proposed changes. In particular the monitoring of the cumulative impact of aquaculture is underwhelming. With ongoing uncertainty about the impact of this industry on the environment, a more precautionary approach would have been expected. A summary of feedback on draft framework for marine farming was presented in October 2014. The implications of the various responses to the draft on the plan to be notified are uncertain.

MUSSEL FARMING APPLICATIONS

1. Friends submitted against an application by the Davidson Family Trust (May 2014 – U130797) for a farm in front of one of the last non developed areas in Beatrix Bay. The application was not granted and the applicant appealed the decision. Commissioner Kenderdine concluded that the proposal invokes cumulative adverse effects which are major and fails one of the gateway tests for non-complying activities. Friends supported MDC as a S.274 party, together with Kenepuru Central Sounds Residents Association (KCSRA). The Environment Court decision is pending, and will address the cumulative effects of aquaculture.
2. Friends submitted against the continuation of two mussel farms in Port Gore (July 2014 – U140391 and U140392) in the aquaculture prohibited area of the

Marlborough Sounds. The consent expired last year and the operator is currently using an extension provided by MDC. The farms have a discretionary status as per Appendix D2 awaiting various landscape issues to be dealt with. Both farms are inside where NZ King Salmon applied to expand their farms, but failed due to landscape issues. The process is a significant breach of consistency and clarity in applying MDC's own Plan.

3. Friends submitted against an application for a farm near the western entrance to Pelorus Sound, Blow Hole Point (October 2014 – U140195). The Commissioner stated that the adverse effects that can be identified are less than minor by quite some margin, but the application was granted by MDC. Friends did not have the resources to appeal.
4. Friends submitted against an application near the southern entrance of Waitata Bay (December 2014 – U140250). The expansion was in front of an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) designated in MDC's Plan, but the Environment Committee of MDC granted this application despite the strong ruling from the Supreme Court in addressing the importance of ONLs. Friends believe that this decision has lowered the bar for ongoing applications, especially where ONLs have been identified. Friends did not have the resources to appeal.
5. Admiralty Bay – In 2000, a 24 ha application by Marlborough Aquaculture Ltd (MAL) was declined by MDC. In 2001 MDC granted extensions of 158 ha to eight existing marine farms grouped together as Admiralty Bay Consortium (ABC). MAL appealed being declined, and Friends appealed the granting of seven of the ABC extensions (144 ha) and also opposed the MAL appeal. After the council hearings and decisions it became known that Admiralty Bay was an important winter habitat for Dusky Dolphins and DOC joined our appeals. DOC and MDC brought expert witness on Dusky Dolphins, Prof Bernd Wursig of Texas University, to an Environment Court (EC) hearing on dolphin issues in 2006. A full hearing, on all issues, took place in 2009. ABC and MAL both offered seasonal occupation to avoid conflict with the dolphins, but the judge felt there was insufficient information to make a decision. ABC offered to do a three year base line study of the dolphins. In September 2011 the EC judge was astonished to learn the study had not yet begun, but allowed the delay. The study has now been done and found that dolphins occupy the bay for eight months of the year. Another EC hearing will go ahead later this year for MAL and ABC applications. Despite the findings, ABC want all year-round occupation. Friends, DOC and MDC hope to make a strong case against granting of the applications.
6. Friends submitted against another expansion of mussel farming in Admiralty Bay (April 2015 – U150184). There has been a strong recommendation to acknowledge the importance of the Admiralty Bay for dolphins (see 5). Friends are of the opinion that no further expansion in Admiralty Bay should take place until a holistic approach has been reached to accommodate the significant values for wildlife identified.
7. Friends submitted against an expansion of a mussel farm in the Tawhitanui Reach (June 2015 – U141078). An area with sensitive habitat of brachiopods and nearby reef are concerns to challenge the validity of the environment assessment report which had conclusions based on insufficient data. The RMA requires protecting both

significant sites and representative sites and the need to recognize connectivity as an important factor in protecting ecological patterns and processes.

8. Friends lost an appeal against another marine farm in Beatrix Bay. The loss of this appeal resulted in an application for Friends to pay costs of the applicant. In October 2014 the court decided against the awarding of costs. The judge said that Friends conducted its case in a professional manner and since the application was for a non-complying activity the Society was entitled to have the Council's decision checked.
9. Friends submitted against an expansion of a mussel farm (July 2015 – U150179) between the Waitata salmon farm and the Waihinau salmon farm. Overlapping benthic footprint, not only from the salmon farms but also from existing and neighbouring mussel farms are of great concern towards the cumulative impact of the activities on the health of the benthic environment and the impact on feeding habitat of King Shag.

SALMON FARMING APPLICATONS

10. Friends participated in the successful mediation process for renewal of a salmon farm of NZ King Salmon in Crail Bay (NZKS) (July 2014 - U090660). The new conditions better reflect sensitivity of the local area to the effect of the farm's activity on the benthic environment.
11. Friends was a main party involved in a successful appeal to maintain the significance of Outstanding Natural Landscapes (August 2014 – KPF Investments). This case was guided by the principles provided by the Supreme Court, NZKS versus the Environmental Defence Society (EDS) and Sustain Our Sounds (SOS) case. The transformation of a mussel farm into a salmon farm in front of, or near, an ONL was recognised by the Court as inappropriate.
12. Te Pangu Bay, Tory Channel. NZKS applied for a renewal with conditions of shifting the farm closer to Tory Channel once during the consent period. Both Friends and SOS submitted on parts of the application which would expand the benthic footprint, together with the anchors, into the prohibited zone. Also, the existing position of the farm is 'static'; the farm is not allowed to move around. Friends and NZKS used the mediation process and agreed that the farm can try once to move outside its existing area. If that does not provide an alternative for NZKS, they will go back to the original site. The outside proposition will be vacated from then on. Friends have not agreed to allow shifting the anchors into CMZ 1, the prohibited zone.
13. Friends, together with SOS, wrote a joint letter to MDC in March 2015 about compliance issues with NZKS's farm in Waihinau Bay. Since December 2014 people have reported complaints of gassing underneath the farm, an indication that production levels have been pushed beyond sustainable levels. Since then, regular mort transports have been recorded and these have been continuing on almost a daily basis. We have asked MDC when Section 17 of the RMA was going to be used where NZKS is not able to avoid, remedy, or mitigate adverse effects, and as such is not compliant with the broader environmental parameters for sustainable management.

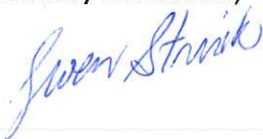
E. General Matters - between Councils, National Issues and Other

1. The Regional (NCC + TDC) Sewage Business Unit (NRSBU) has a draft report on the biological impacts of sewage overflows, which are beneath consent levels. Cawthron is monitoring the discharge at Bell Island. The NRSBU emergency discharge consent is deficient and there should be a hearing. Consent process needs to look at receiving waters. Saxton Creek takes abattoir water into the bay, bypassing the sewage plant.
2. Four committee members were invited to give talks to the NMIT second year aquaculture students. We covered Friends history in coastal conservation and aquaculture, Resource Management Act's relevance to aquaculture policy and planning, world fisheries and aquaculture, and maintaining essential biodiversity for general long term health of the coastal ecosystem.
3. We discovered a conservation song written by Perrine Moncrieff (a founding member) and her husband and sung regularly for several years at the Nelson College for Girls.
4. Shell Oil Company is drilling illegally (we are told) north of Farewell Spit, with no action from the Environment Protection Authority.

F. Acknowledgements

1. Many thanks for the huge amount of voluntary work done by committee members.
2. Support from our membership is essential, so thanks to you-all.
3. The pro-bono and reduced fee work by various experts is essential and very much appreciated.
4. Financial assistance from the NZ-T GEAR Charitable Trust has been invaluable.
5. Thanks to the New Zealand Nature Co. (www.nznature.co.nz, 107 Bolt Road, Nelson) who support us and who feature Friends of Nelson Haven on their personalised children's growth charts and placemats.
6. Thanks to Nimbus Software of Nelson for support.
7. Thanks to Birds New Zealand (formerly Ornithological Society of NZ) for voluntary assistance in research projects.
8. Thanks to Network Tasman Charitable Trust for funds to update Friends' history.
9. Thanks to the Ministry for the Environment, Environmental Legal Assistance Fund.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Gwen Struik, chair (with essential help from committee members)

Five years' work comes to fruition

HELEN MURDOCH

A local group has taken what it sees as a significant new step toward gaining protection for Golden Bay's outstanding natural features.

The Golden Bay/Mohua Landscape Project working group gave a draft report to Tasman district councillors this week.

The report has been filed five years after the group began the task of deciding what Golden Bay natural features and landscapes should be recommended for protection.

"It's all part of an important process. The landscape of the Tasman District is truly important," said group member Helen Campbell.

Tasman District Mayor Richard Kempthorne said it was a significant step in addressing which landscape features should be protected, but there was still a long way to go before any final decisions could be made.

"We've got various interests with different views [on what landscapes should be protected]. It will be a very challenging process," he said.

"It's one thing to come up with the map, it's another thing to decide what the rules will be."

Councils are required to identify outstanding landscapes for protection under the Resource Management Act. Friends of Nelson Haven and Tasman Bay coastal conservation group have been trying to get the areas protected for more than a decade, including taking the TDC to the Environment Court on the issue.

The proposed landscape features in the report do not include most of the already developed country, including the Takaka and East Takaka valleys, much of the coast to Tata Island, the coastal area out to Parapara, the Aorere Valley and on to the base of Farewell Spit. Parcels of land along Golden Bay's western coast have also been left out.

Kempthorne said there was potential scope for broadening the list of landscapes outside of Golden Bay, but their focus was on the areas

mapped out by the group. "It's taken four years for the group to work on this, that shows how difficult it has been," he said.

Its work sprung largely from council-contracted reports in 2005 and in 2011, the latter of which recommended that all rural land in the bay, and the northwest coast, be considered an outstanding natural feature and that land zoning laws and management practices be reviewed.

Interested parties also met in 2010 and a 30-member working group formed in 2011.

This was reduced to a group of eight which started the job in 2012.

Campbell said the group specified areas to be considered mostly by visiting them on the ground and by using local knowledge of the landscapes.

In presenting their draft report spokesman Doug Saunders-Loader said he wanted to thank the voluntary group for working closely together, having robust discussions and, while they did not always agree, respecting the views of others. He also thanked council staff for their support.

Group member and iwi representative Trina Mitchell said there would be other areas iwi would like to see included, not just for the landscape but for the elements that were important to iwi, and the community.

Member Joan Butts, of Port Tarakohe Ltd, said the process had been hard work but she was proud of the group's achievement.

"Six months ago I never thought we would reach such a consensus.

"But the thrust of this is the need to protect our environment and provide jobs and economic opportunity."

Councillor Michael Higgins noted the Wainui Bay spat catching area was within an area designated as a possible Outstanding Natural Feature.

Campbell said the inclusion made no difference to the operation.

She said the report was a step forward, but

NATURAL BEAUTY

Proposed Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes in Golden Bay include:

- Northwest Coast Marine - seaward one kilometre
- Whanganui Inlet
- Big River Estuary
- Northern Northwest Coast
- Southern Northwest Coast
- Golden Bay/Mohua Coastal Marine
- Wainui Bay Inlet
- Port Tarakohe Cliffs
- The Grove
- Paynes Ford
- Te Waikoropupu Springs
- Aorere River
- Part of Abel Tasman National Park
- Kahurangi Ranges

Safeguarding Bay's beauty

Continued from page 1

there was still a long way to go. "There is still more to come. It's the first step in the process," she said.

Golden Bay Federated Farmers president Sue Brown said that while she was not on the working group, she believed it had been a worthwhile exercise.

Brown said she thought the decision by the council to put this to the formal working party and have them thrash out a lot of different issues was appropriate. It will still not be easy to finalise the policy.

She said she believed the best policies were ones where the community collaborated.

Brown said the most important thing for farmers was to retain flexibility in their business.

It would be a better option than becoming encumbered with extra layers of consents.

Councillors decided a workshop with the group would be held in September to consider options and planning provisions in preparation for a plan change. Such a change would be open for public submissions.

Continued page 2



Aorere River at Rockville.



Wainui Bay. Photo: ALDEN WILLIAMS

Nelson Mail 18.7.15



Slow movement on heritage features

A strong case could be made for declaring the entire Golden Bay region an area of outstanding natural features and landscapes.

The long and winding Takaka Hill road serves to isolate the beautiful Golden Bay almost as much as it connects it to the rest of the Mainland.

It is not a journey those prone to car-sickness enjoy taking, and the journey from Nelson to Takaka often seems much longer than the 100km of highway involved. Its charms can lull us into thinking we are in another, slower-paced

part of the world, even if the provincial capital is just 90 minutes away by road. That does not mean that Golden Bay is subject to different laws from the rest of New Zealand. Three-quarters of the bay's 244,000ha land area is under some form of Department of Conservation jurisdiction.

Like much of the West Coast, its sparse population and numerous natural heritage features make it a national treasure, and a strong case could be made for the TDC declaring the entire Golden Bay region an area of "outstanding natural features and landscapes".

Indeed, that step was suggested at a council planning meeting five years ago - just one small footnote in a lengthy chapter of the council's pro-ratification of the council over its statutory planning obligations. Councils are required to identify outstanding landscapes for protection under the Resource Management Act.

The Tasman District Council seems to be taking an extraordinarily long time to meet what ought to be a straightforward stocktaking task. It started to address the issue in the 1990s, but threats of action, both from forestry landowners and ardent conservationists, have seen it ducking for cover ever since.

Alarm at marine damage in Sounds

Significant marine ecosystems in the Marlborough Sounds are being degraded or lost at an alarming rate, a new report shows.

Marine biologist Rob Davidson said more than 1431 hectares of seabed ecosystems, the size of Blenheim and its suburbs, had disappeared in the Sounds since the late 1980s.

Nine sites, ranked as significant because of their biological values, had decreased by 71 per cent. Those worst affected areas were deep, offshore, soft-bottom sites, Davidson said.

Five sites at Port Gore, Ship Cove to Cannibal Cove and Hiraia Bay Estuary showed a decline in size because of trawling, dredging, and sedimentation from forestry activities.

Sedimentation from logging was smothering some ecosystems and trawling and dredging from commercial fishing saw anchors being dragged along soft sea floors damaging vulnerable habitats, Davidson said.

It was the first time the level of degradation had been revealed. Presenting the report at the Marlborough District Council's environment committee, he said his findings were demoralising.

If the council did not move to protect offshore soft-bottom habitats that support medium and high biological values they would continue to disappear, he said.

Davidson analysed 21 significant marine sites in Queen Charlotte Sound, Tory Channel and Port Gore and compared them

with 2011 data. Sedimentation caused by forestry activities saw large volumes of fine sediment smother and clog low-lying estuaries, reducing their productivity, Davidson said.

Oyster racks in Kaimua Bay had gathered up 0.7 metres of sediment in four years. It damaged habitats, removed species and destabilised the sea floor.

Dredging from commercial activity and anchors dragging along the sea floor threatened habitats.

Fourteen per cent of Perano Shoal in the Marlborough Sounds was damaged by anchors scouring out channels, threatening fragile, dense tubeworm mounds. Davidson urged the council to

retain the most significant sites. "Despite the intense and widespread level of human pressure and the knowledge that few significant sites remain, there is a poor record of marine protection in Marlborough."

Council coastal scientist Dr Steve Ulrich said the report had pulled back the aquatic curtain in Marlborough for the first time. "Because sites are unseen we are unaware our collective impact is causing severe disturbance and decline of our most significant habitats, of which there are relatively few remaining. If we think about these habitats as Marlborough versions of coral reefs which are being damaged and destroyed, they need protection and restoration."

Davidson urged the council to

retain the most significant sites.

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28.7.15

Fairfax NZ