

“Enough is Enough: He Porohuri Whangarei Terenga Paraoa”

Whangarei Harbour is tipping over



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Patuharakeke
TE IWI TRUST BOARD



Mana whenua, mana moana, kaitiakitanga

The Whangarei Harbour is referenced in our pepeha, reinforcing its crucial importance to our cultural identity. Patuharakeke see the waters of Whangarei Harbour as a taonga passed down by our tupuna. We also have a duty to conserve and protect this taonga for our mokopuna. These waters once teemed with kaimoana, but more than a century of poor management practices has seen an immense decline in marine species as a result of degraded water quality, habitat loss and harvest pressure.



The decline of kaimoana species is accompanied by a decline in traditional knowledge in regard to those species, their uses and management practices. Our mana as tangata whenua is further diminished by an inability to practise manaakitanga to gather kaimoana for the table both for our families and manuhiri. This impacts on our economic wellbeing as well – restricting the ability of whanau to put kaimoana on the table, a practice that has always supplemented low incomes (Chetham, 2013). Today's kaitiaki seek increased control over the management of these places and resources.

Their desire is to prevent further diminishing of the mauri of the harbour and to enhance and restore the important mahinga kai that remain.



Sedimentation/Pollution

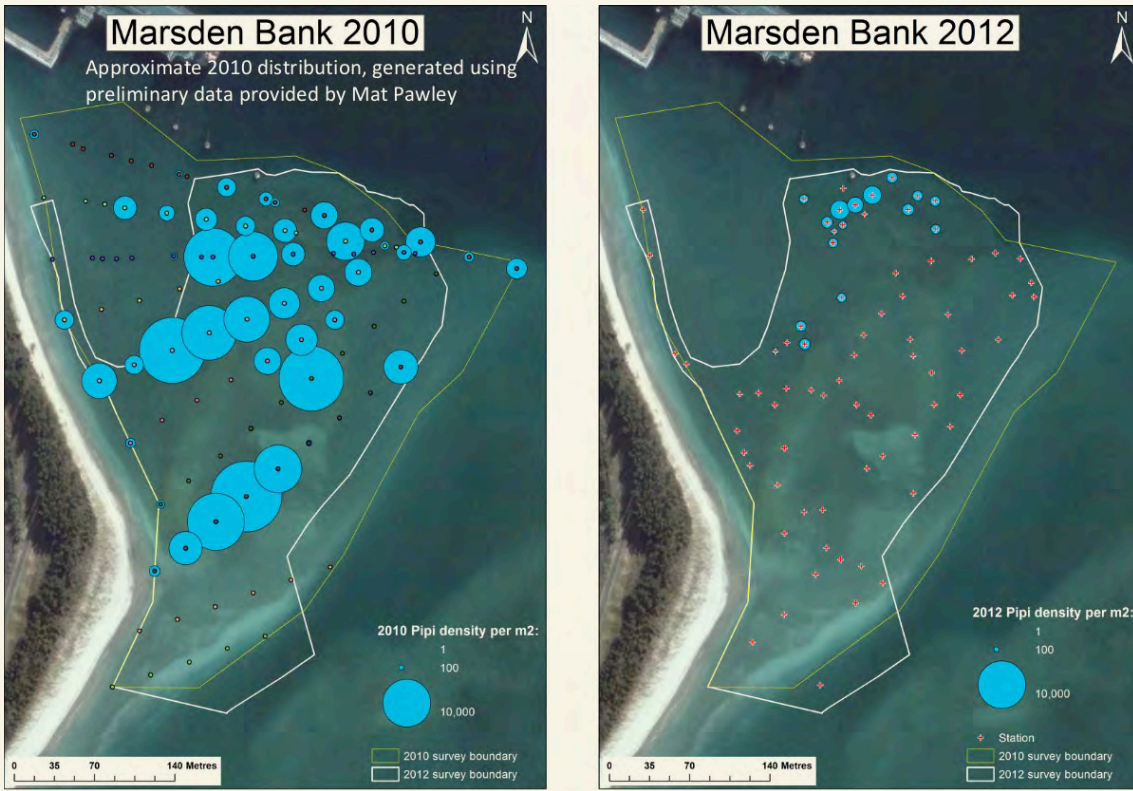
Whangarei Harbour is recognized as a nationally significant ecosystem, serving as habitat for migratory birds and a nursery for species such as snapper and trevally (Northland Regional Council, 2010). The approximate aerial extent of seagrass beds in 1942 was 14.34 km² (Reed et. al, 2004). From the 1960's onwards, 754,000 m³ of sediment was dredged from the main channel and pumped on to Snake Bank and the Takahiwai shoreline. 3 million m³ of cement processing waste from the Portland cement works was discharged into the harbour (Dickie, 1984).

By the 1980's seagrass was virtually non-existent. Up until about 5 years ago, every time there was heavy rainfall, emergency bypass of the city's wastewater treatment plant resulted in untreated discharges entering the harbour. Northland District Health Board data showed that mahinga kai sites including Snake Bank and Mair Bank were closed to shellfish gathering for approximately 85 days in 2010, 94 days in 2011 and 92 days in 2012 (Dr Johnathon Jarman. Pers. Comm). Agricultural run off and sedimentation from subdivision add to the mix of stressors on our harbour.



Collapse of Pipi Beds at Marsden Point

	2010	2012
Biomass	531.8 t	7.6 t
Abundance	290 million	12 million
Density	1961 m ⁻²	104 m ⁻²
Maximum density	21,637 m ⁻²	1,548 m ⁻²



Reclamation/Development

The reclamation of seabed at Marsden Point for the construction of the Timber Port in 2002 resulted in the destruction of arguably the largest remaining (and readily accessible by foot) pipi bed inside the harbour. To date 3 berths have been constructed and a 4th is consented.

Anecdotal evidence from our community is that the reclamation has altered tidal flows and currents contributing to erosion and accretion processes. The stormwater discharge has also been attributed by locals to the further decline of pipi beds at the entrance to the harbour. More recently, the Hopper Development at Marsden Cove displaced remaining cockle beds. The Marsden Cove Marina is now infested with the invasive Sea Squirt “Styela”.

Whangarei Terenga-parāoa

Ngatiwai named the harbour Whangarei-te-rerenga-parāoa (the gathering place of whales) because whales gathered there to feed during summer. A Ngapuhi interpretation is that the harbour was a gathering place for chiefs where they would strategise before heading off to do battle with the southern tribes.



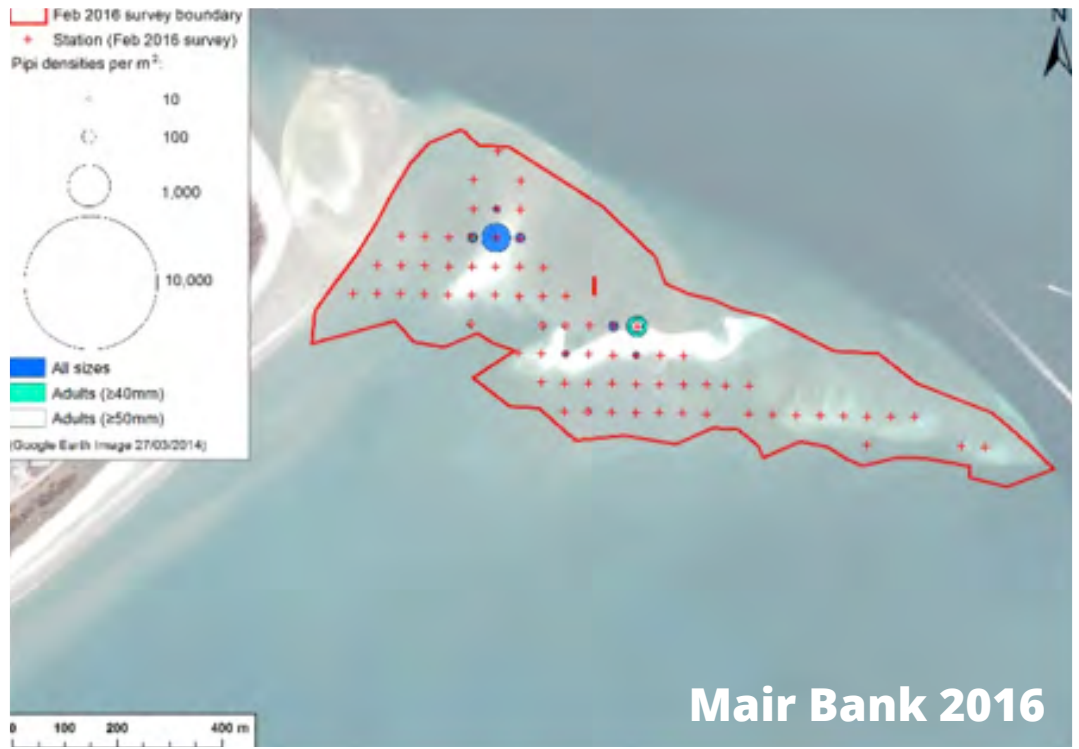
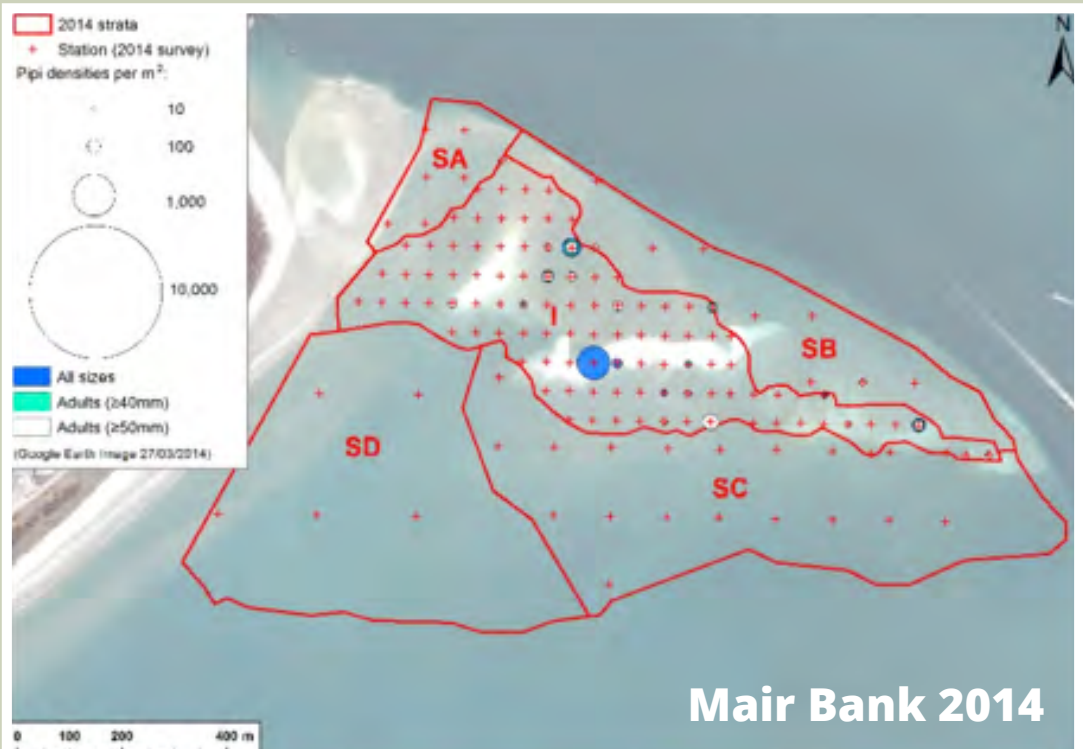
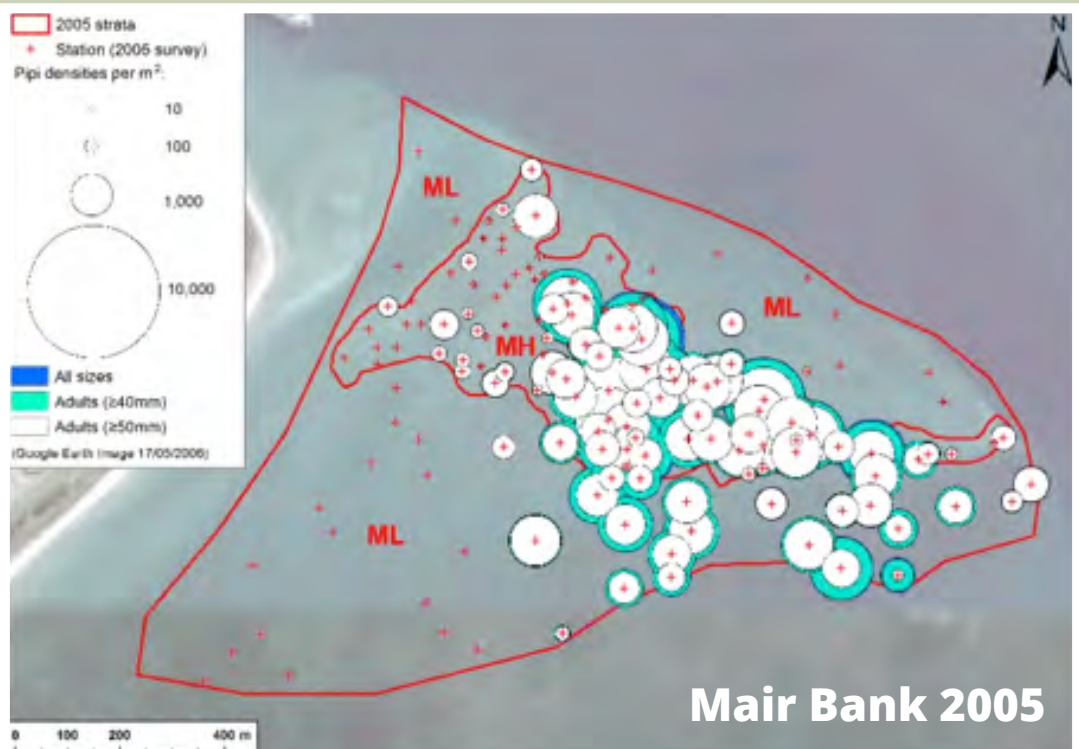
Pepeha:
Ko Manaia te Maunga
Ko Whangarei Terenga Paraoa te Moana
Ko Takahiwai te Marae
Ko Rangiora te Whare Hui
Ko Patuharakeke te Hapu
Tihei mauri ora!

Demise of Customary Fisheries

The management opportunities for us that have arisen from fisheries settlement are Taiapure and Mataitai Reserves (Kaimoana Regulations 1998). Since 1998, Māori have established very few Mataitai, likely a reflection of the onerous process and information requirements, serious time delays, and lack of access to technical support (Stephenson & Kirikiri, 2012). Hapu or iwi must demonstrate how they have engaged with community, the commercial and recreational sector and that preventative tests

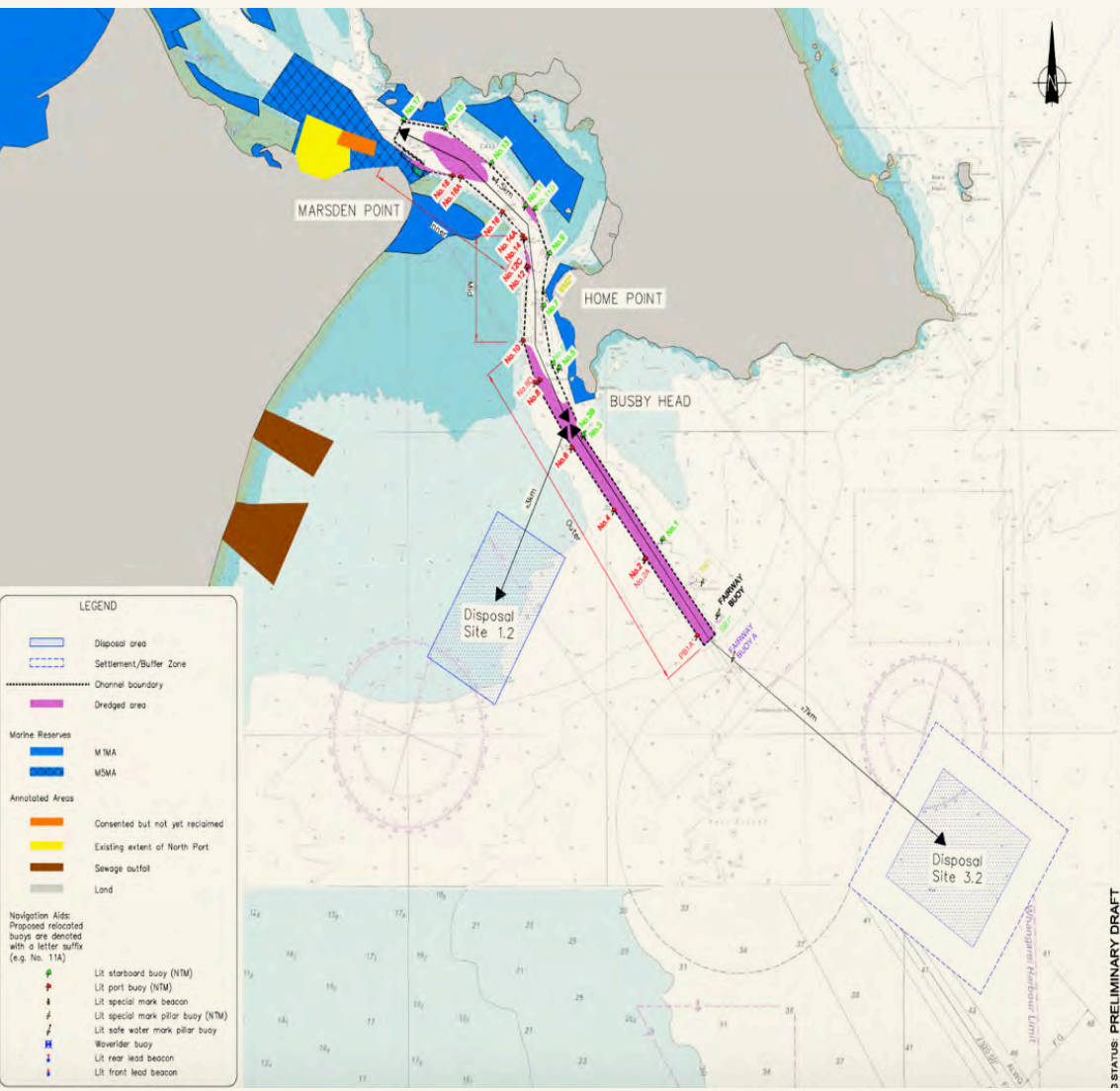
on existing quota holders’ entitlements are not triggered. Our rohe moana and tangata kaitiaki were gazetted in May 2009. However, a perfect storm of unsustainable fisheries practice both in commercial and recreational terms and the disconnect between managing the fish and their habitat has left customary harvest virtually untenable.

In the last decade the biomass of remaining abundant pipi beds at Mair and Marsden Bank has plummeted and customary permits are no longer granted by our Rohe Moana Committee.



NZ Refining Ltd Crude Freight Proposal

Marsden Point is also the location of New Zealand's only oil refinery, which commenced operating in 1964. Refining NZ Ltd are now proposing to dredge and realign the channel approach to Marsden Point and dispose the spoil at two sites in Bream Bay to allow berthing of fully laden Suezmax oil tankers. The expected dredge volume is 3.7 million m³ over 1.95 km² (Tonkin and Taylor, 2017).



Effects were identified in the context of a harbour that is already in a degraded state. Many of the Refinery's technical reports only consider impacts on a small portion of the harbour and identify a number of effects that, in isolation, appear relatively benign. Our frame of view looks at the harbour in a holistic sense and in light of our collective experience particularly in relation to previous developments.

We contend that the potential effects on marine mammals, benthic organisms, coastal processes, kaitiakitanga, and mauri for example, are significant when they occur concurrently and in conjunction with past impacts.

At a collective hui on 12th May the following resolution was passed:

“That ngā hapu katoa oppose Refining NZ's Crude Freight Proposal resource consent application/s”.

Cumulative Effects

Some initial feedback from the Refinery was that while they acknowledged the “wider cultural concerns held by tangata whenua in relation to historical or future allocation, use or development of natural resources – these concerns are more appropriately dealt with in other forums”. Our stance of not recommending any mitigation was also questioned. We are sticking with our position but of course run the risk of being excluded from any negotiations around mitigation.

In our experience dealing with resource consent applications over the last two decades, cumulative effects are generally ignored by decision makers. Also, the narrative of past impacts we have outlined tends to work against us – ie. is utilised by developers to illustrate that the environment is not “pristine” or has been “substantially modified” and therefore additional development should be allowed. Ultimately we appear to be participating in a planning regime that does not give appropriate weight to cumulative impacts, nor recognise the holistic worldview and collective experience of tangata whenua and kaitiaki.

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