

## Who looks after the marine reserve?

The Department of Conservation looks after the marine reserve, with the advice and assistance of the Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve Committee.

The reserve's continued protection depends on the care and vigilance of all visitors. If you see people taking anything from the reserve, please report the activity to the Department of Conservation as soon as possible.

Remember that all life and natural features in the reserve are totally protected. It is illegal to take, disturb, kill or damage anything within the reserve and anyone who commits an offence may be subject to a fine of up to \$250,000 and/or imprisonment. It is also an offence to pollute or litter the reserve, discharge any firearm in or into the reserve or erect any structure in the reserve.



Wandering anemone.

*Photo: J Quirk*

## Marine Reserve Care Code

The marine reserve has been established to protect representative marine habitats and communities for science and education, and to provide a safe haven for marine life to live and breed.

The success of the reserve in achieving those objectives will depend upon the public showing a caring and responsible attitude, and a commitment to the conservation of the area.



### Things to Remember

- Taking fish and other marine life from the reserve is prohibited
- Keep the ocean and shore clean
- Respect the rights of others to use the reserve for marine environment studies and other educational purposes



**DOC HOTline  
0800 362 468**

Report any safety hazards or  
conservation emergencies  
For fire and search and rescue call 111



For further information about the reserve contact the:

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GISBORNE

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For further information about DOC visit [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

Cover: Scarlet wrasse, 70 feet below the surface.

*Photo: J Quirk*

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# Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve



NORTH OF GISBORNE, EAST COAST



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## Welcome

Welcome to Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve. Established in 1999, the reserve is the result of many years of work by the joint applicants Ngati Konohi and the Department of Conservation. We hope you enjoy your visit to this very special part of the East Coast.



Pouawa to Te Ana o Paikea/Whangara Island.

*Photo: Kerry Fox*

## What are marine reserves?

Marine reserves are special or representative areas of the coastal and marine environment in which marine life and natural features are legally protected. They help allow the ecosystems return to near their former natural state and provide scientists with an opportunity to study marine life in the absence of such activities as fishing.

As with a national park on land, you are encouraged to visit the marine reserve so that you can observe and enjoy the scenery and variety of life that flourishes in a protected environment.

## Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve

The reserve lies on the East Coast of the North Island, approximately 16km north of Gisborne. It can be reached via State Highway 35, with public access at Pouawa.

Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve protects a piece of the coastline of approximately 2450 hectares. The reserve is special in that it contains eight marine habitat types, including inshore reef, rocky intertidal platforms and sediment flats, that are representative of the marine area between East Cape and Mahia Peninsula.

## What to see and do

### On the Water

Some of the wildlife within the reserve is best seen from the water. Many different types of birds, including gannets, terns, penguins and gulls, are dependent on the sea for food. Marine mammals also visit the reserve - New Zealand fur seals and several dolphin and whale species are all regularly observed in the area.



Common dolphin.

*Photo: N Gibbs*

### On Foot

The beach and intertidal reefs are best explored at low tide. There is a sandy beach of about 4km in length, as well as intertidal reef platforms around Pariokonohi Point near the southern boundary. As you explore the intertidal reef, you will encounter a wide variety of marine plants and animals that depend on the rise and fall of the tide for survival, including crabs, barnacles, snails and seaweeds. The intertidal area is also frequented by a number of bird species, such as oystercatchers, New Zealand dotterels, gulls and terns.



New Zealand Dotterel.

*Photo: P Reese*

## In the Water

One of the best ways to learn about the reserve and its inhabitants is to get into the water. Those with a mask and snorkel can explore the rocks close to the shore.



Encrusting sponges.

*Photo: J Quirk*

The shallow moat near the southern end of the reserve provides an ideal place to observe and learn about some of the plants and animals you will encounter.

The subtidal area of the reserve contains several distinct habitats. Down to about 10 metres in depth, a variety of seaweeds such as flapjack and kelp can be found and kina, marine snails, sponges and other animals are common. Some of the fish that you may see include spotties (paketū), banded wrasse (tangahangaha), red moki (nanua), hiwihiwi, butterfish (greenbone, marari), marblefish (kehe) and parore.

The coast around Gisborne attracts high numbers of crayfish and as you explore the crevices and overhangs you may see hundreds of tiny crayfish, depending on the time of year. At between 10 and 20 metres depth, there are extensive kelp forests, which are home to many different fish species, such as scarlet wrasse (puawaihakarua), scorpionfish, sweep (hui) and leatherjackets (kokiri). Sponges, hydroroids, anemones, soft corals and sea squirts thrive on the rock faces and overhangs.



A crayfish.

*Photo: J Quirk*

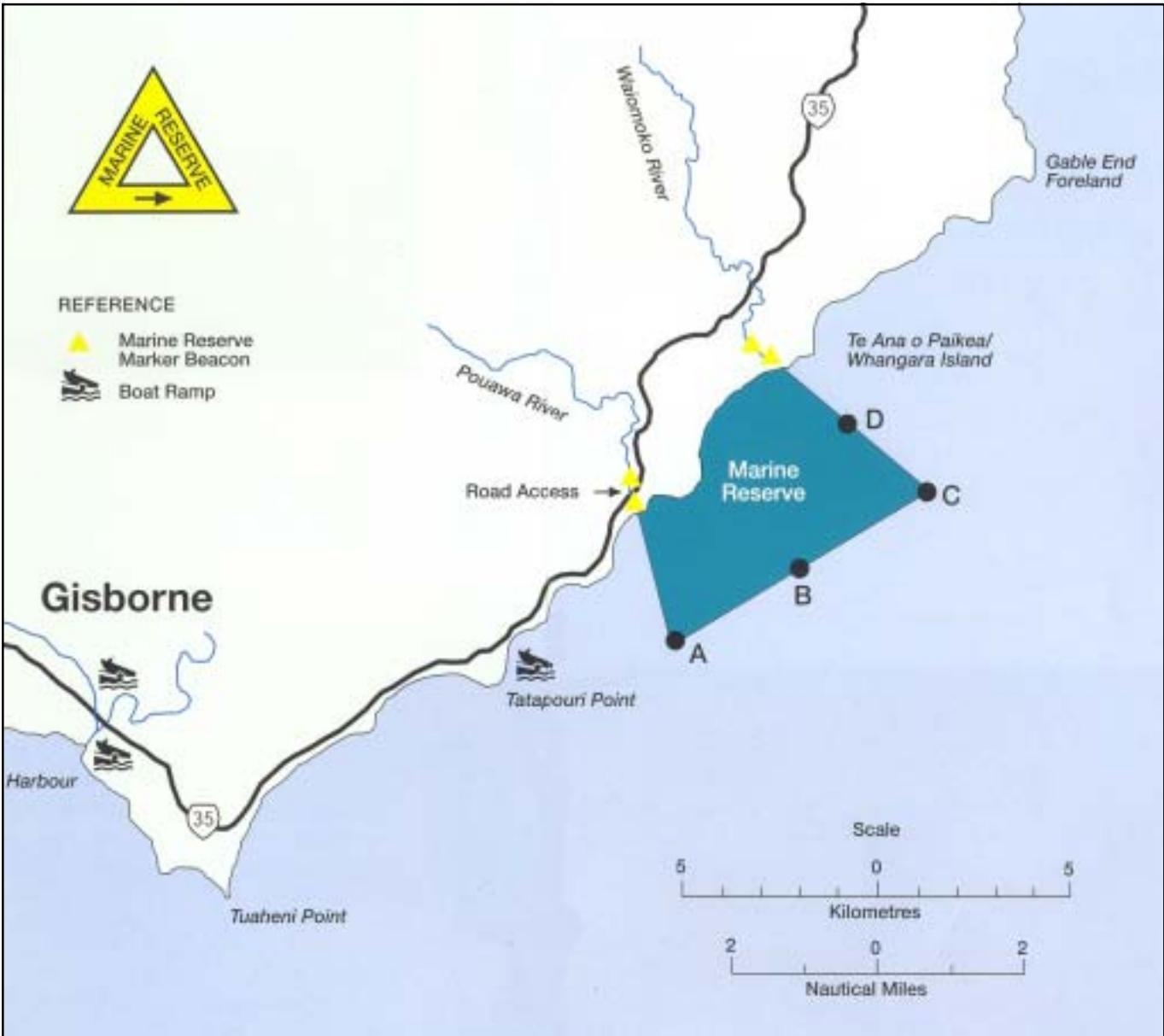
## Reserve Boundaries

The landward boundary of Te Tapuwae o Rongokako Marine Reserve is the 'mean high water springs' mark, which is indicated approximately by the strand line of seaweed. You have access to the beach above this mark, but please respect that this is privately owned land. There is no public access onto the farmland adjacent to the reserve without the permission of the landowners, Whitiwhiti Inc.

The marine reserve extends from near the Waiomoko River mouth in the north, to near the Pouawa River mouth in the south. Both the northern and southern boundaries are marked by paired, yellow, triangular beacons. The northern boundary is 5 kilometres or 2.7 nautical miles in length. The southern boundary is 3.5 kilometres or 1.9 nautical miles in length and the seaward boundary is 7.5 kilometres or 4 nautical miles in length.

Geodetic Latitude and Longitude for points indicated on the map

A	38°38'26.4"S 178°11'50.8"E
B	38°37'17.0"S 178°13'59.4"E
C	38°36'07.4"S 178°16'08.0"E
D	38°35'24.3"S 178°14'39.6"E



## Historical Background

The footprint of Rongokako (te tapuwae o Rongokako), an ancestor of East Coast tradition, is embedded in one of the rocky structures of the marine reserve, close to shore.

Many traditions abound regarding Rongokako. There is general agreement that he was a man of immense athletic prowess and dexterity, a giant who could stride enormous distances. His origins are unclear. Some say he was the father of the famous Tamatea and came from Hawaiki in the Takitimu canoe. Others say he came in the Horouta canoe. Another version suggests that his arrival was as mysterious as his departure.

Local tradition suggests that Rongokako was sent by Kiwa to investigate the late arrival of the Horouta waka to Turanganui-a-Kiwa. On his arrival at Ohiwa, a disagreement arose between Rongokako and Paoa and they engaged in a titanic struggle. This culminated in a chase by Paoa of his fleet footed adversary down the East Coast shoreline.

Paoa was no match for him.

To help overtake Rongokako, he had set a large rat trap to snare the giant's pet, an enormous kiwi. The wily Rongokako sprang the trap which flew inland forming Mount Arowhana. The site of the trap became Tawhiti, an area of land between Te Puia and Tokomaru Bay.

In this epic encounter, Rongokako left footprints in the flat rocks as he strode down the eastern seaboard of the North Island. The first of these tapuwae (footprints) is at Wharekahika (Hick's Bay).



Red moki.

Photo: J Quirk

The second is at Kaiora, south of Whangara mai tawhiti, from which is derived the name of this marine reserve, Te Tapuwae o Rongokako. The next footprint is located at Turanga, another at Nukutaurua, on the Mahia Peninsula.

Rongokako then stepped over to Te Matau-a-Maui (Cape Kidnappers), then to the shores of Raukawa (Cook Strait). He crossed the strait and was gone.

Kaiora, the settlement that overlooks the marine reserve, was a well populated papa kainga (village). The famous East Coast chief, Porourangi, lived here and is buried close by.

Konohi, the local chief, also inhabited the district. He had three sons – Marukauiti, Te Riwi and Wahakapi, from whom the present tribe of Whangara mai tawhiti claim descent.

Top: Nudibrach on reef.  
Centre: Kina.  
Bottom: Banded perch

Photos: J Quirk



Members of the public enjoying the reserve.

Photo: J Quirk



Clown nudibranch.

Photo: J Quirk