

Marine Reserves Off Banks Peninsula...

Agreement has been reached between Ngai Tahu, fishers and conservation groups on the establishment of a new marine reserve surrounding Flea Bay on Banks Peninsula.

The proposed new reserve (which has yet to be gazetted) will be known as the Pohatu Marine Reserve in recognition of an ancient pa site on the southern headland of the area to be protected. It will be the first marine reserve on the east coast of the South Island and the 14th in New Zealand.

The Flea Bay proposal will protect some 210 hectares of coastal waters, including the shores of a

Bird is disappointed, however, that the agreement means further ministerial consideration of the other application for a marine reserve — in the Dan Rogers area within Akaroa Harbour — has been ‘put on hold’ until a taiapure (local fishing area) has been established.

‘Support for a taiapure in Akaroa Harbour is a key part of the agreement,’ says Dr Smith. ‘All parties believe taiapure are an effective fisheries management tool well suited to Akaroa Harbour and believe it would be complementary to a marine reserve,’ he says. ‘Taiapure give Maori and local people a greater role in fisheries management but the law requires



Left: Flea Bay, Banks Peninsula, is the centre of the proposed Pohatu Marine Reserve, named after an adjacent pa site. The designation will protect 210 hectares of coastal waters, and the shores of a colony of white-flipped little blue penguins.

significant colony of white-flipped, little blue penguins (see ‘Helping the Penguins’, page 36).

‘There is a wide diversity of marine life from the beaches of the inner bay to the huge rock faces of Dyke Head,’ according to the Minister of Conservation, Dr Nick Smith. ‘The agreement also promotes the acquisition of farmland to protect penguin nesting sites adjacent to the marine reserve.’

The agreement brings together proposals from various groups wanting to protect Flea Bay, and also other waters within Akaroa Harbour. The parties involved are the Onuku, Waiwera and Koukourarata runanga of Ngai Tahu, the Akaroa Harbour Protection Society, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Canterbury Marine Recreational Fishers Association and the Akaroa Commercial Fishers Association. They began meeting with the Minister nearly a year ago to try to reach a compromise agreement on applications for two marine reserves, and a taiapure application.

North Canterbury Forest and

that the same rules apply to Maori and non-Maori alike.’

‘Forest and Bird supports the principle of a taiapure as long as provision is also made for a marine reserve within the harbour,’ says its field officer Eugenie Sage. ‘While Flea Bay is a useful addition to the network of marine reserves, it is very small and is not a substitute for a reserve within Akaroa Harbour. This has a distinctive marine environment, different from Flea Bay, so some of it also deserves protection. There is substantial public support for this.’

‘A no-take marine reserve within Akaroa Harbour would allow fish, seaweed, sponges, crayfish and shellfish to flourish undisturbed, and help replenish adjacent areas. It would complement the taiapure by providing a useful baseline to assess the success of management mechanisms within the taiapure.’

‘Forest and Bird will seek to work constructively with Ngai Tahu towards the establishment of both a taiapure and a marine reserve within Akaroa Harbour,’ she says.

...And Off the Taranaki Coast

A marine reserve off the north Taranaki coast is to go ahead but its size has been cut in half in response to submissions from fishing interests.

The Parininihi Marine Reserve will cover 1812 hectares and protect almost all of the Pariokariwa Reef, but an area almost as large, and including the Waikiekie Reef, has been excluded from the reserve. The amended reserve boundaries run from Pariokariwa Point in the south to Katikatiaka Pa in the north.

‘Marine conservation is very contentious and there are highly polarized viewpoints in Taranaki about the reserve proposal,’ says the Minister of Conservation, Dr Smith. ‘I have decided to proceed and protect the most ecologically significant parts of the reserve but also to exclude

almost half of the proposal to reduce the impact on recreational and customary fishing.’

The proposed reserve will be New Zealand’s 15th, and the second marine reserve on the west coast of the North Island after Kapiti. The reserve is 5.5 kilometres long and includes 3 kilometres of coastline adjoining the White Cliffs. Overall the marine reserve amounts to 2 percent of the Taranaki coastline.

‘The Pariokariwa Reef is a magnificent marine garden of unique sponge life and soft corals,’ said Dr Smith, announcing his plans. ‘It is a marine treasure chest of national significance and marine reserve status can easily be justified. It is as precious as the kauri forests of Northland or the kiwi populations of Whanganui National Park.’

