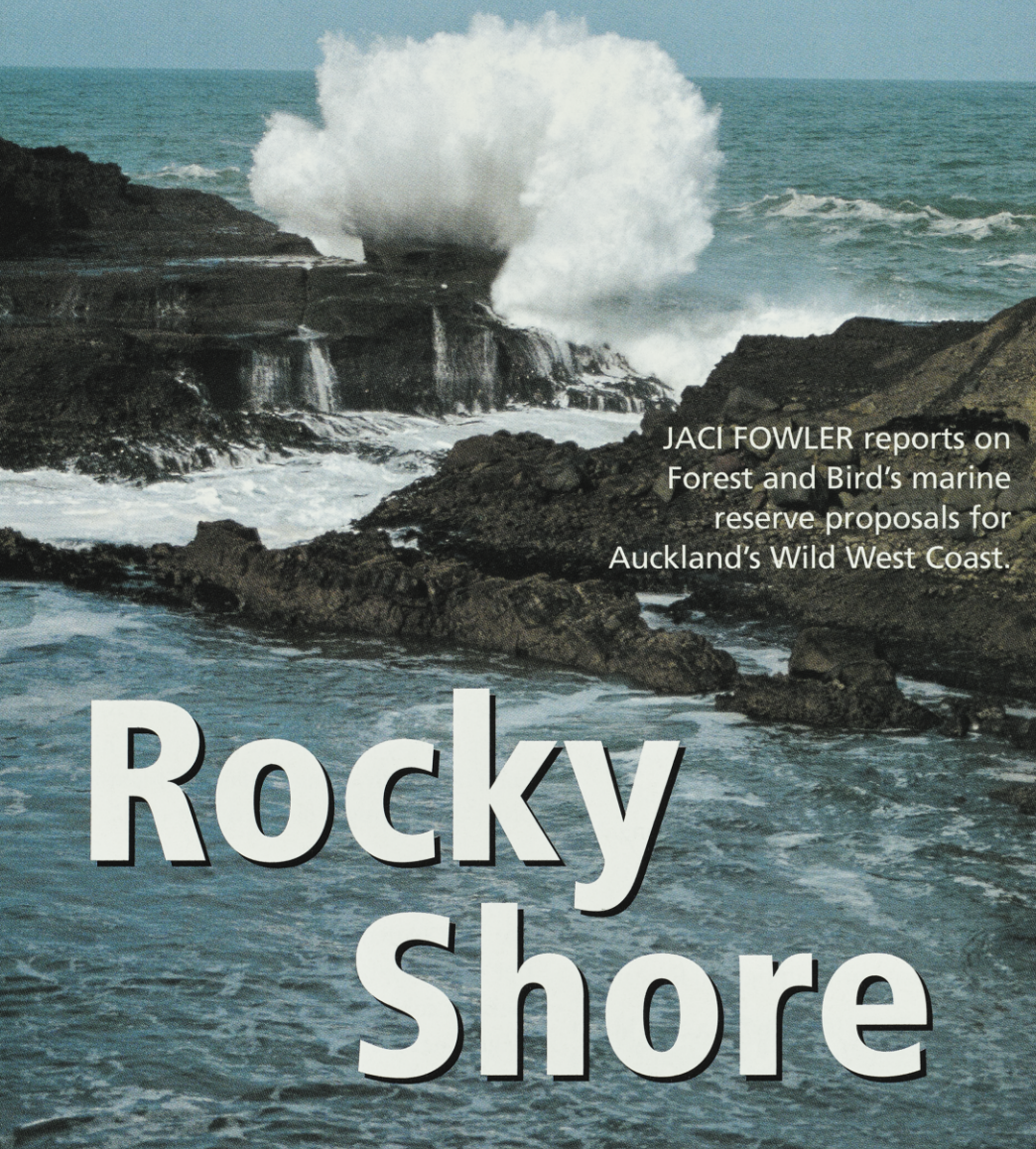


# Protecting the



JACI FOWLER reports on Forest and Bird's marine reserve proposals for Auckland's Wild West Coast.

# Rocky Shore

The rocky coast beyond the Waitakere Ranges from Auckland has retained its wilderness character despite proximity to New Zealand's largest urban area. Nowhere else is such a wilderness so close to so many New Zealanders.

Auckland's booming population, however, now threatens the natural wonders of the wild west coast.

Forest and Bird's bids for marine protection come at a pivotal time, when the Minister of Conservation says marine conservation is at the forefront of his agenda. The Auckland west coast is a perfect place for New Zealand to take a bold approach to marine protection.

Problems have already begun there as increasing numbers of visitors to the coast have seen some of the most accessible rock platforms stripped of marine life. Many of the new cultures in New Zealand value different plants and animals on the rocky shore for food. This has meant that not only is harvesting increasing but also that new species are being targeted. As society becomes more mixed culturally, new arrays of intertidal organisms have made their way to the dinner plate. Animals such as limpets, barnacles and whelks are a delicacy for some.

Crabs and octopus are also popular among fishers for bait.

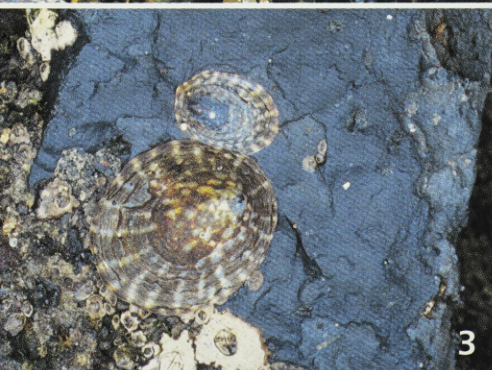
*The intertidal rocky shores are often explained in zones. Specific plants and animals can be found in different zones depending on their adaptations to the environment. At higher levels organisms must be able to withstand long periods of dry air, whilst those at the lower levels are adapted to living submerged for the greatest part of the day. In practice, zones in the intertidal area overlap because of microhabitats provided by shelter, such as crevices and rock pools.*



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1. Bull kelp can grow up 10 metres in length on the Auckland west coast. Bull kelp is a huge, buoyant seaweed that grows in cooler waters and is at its northern limit here.
2. Red waratah anemones growing on mussels.
3. Limpets.
4. Grape weed.

The methods by which these animals are removed are often extremely destructive. It is not uncommon for people to use crowbars to take urchins and other animals. As a result, not only are animals reduced in number, but their entire habitat can be destroyed.

The dramatic landscapes of the Auckland west coast are world-renowned. Black ironsand, rocky outcrops and exploding waves, contrast with the sandy bays and

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