

Protecting sites of significance on the seafloor

Marlborough's seafloor is a complex mosaic of underwater mountains, valleys, plains and gullies just like on the land. It's overlaid with a myriad of ecosystems and habitats that are marine biodiversity hotspots, providing homes for fish, seabirds and many other marine creatures.

The areas of special importance to marine biodiversity are identified by Council as Ecologically Significant Marine Sites. The ecosystems and habitats at these sites are often created by seafloor dwelling organisms that are fragile and slow growing.

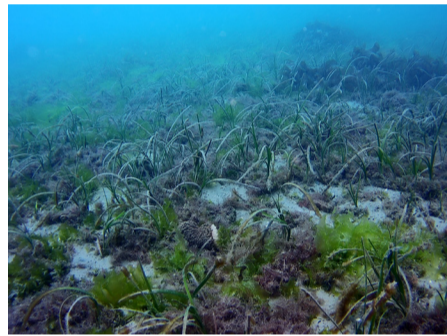
Monitoring has shown that many of these sites are being damaged by activities like anchoring, dredging and trawling which cause physical damage to structures that can grow as little as one millimetre a year.

The Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan (PMEP) provides rules on managing activities in and around the Ecologically Significant Marine Sites listed in the plan. Council is currently progressing a variation to the PMEP adding additional Ecologically Significant Marine Sites and adjusting existing sites. The submission period for the variation is now open and will close on Tuesday 11 April.

To make a submission or to find out more go to: <https://bit.ly/3ZBIsN3>



Tubeworm mounds on Perano Shoal, Tōtaranui/Queen Charlotte Sound



Subtidal seagrass bed in Kura Te Au, Tory Channel

Shade sails and seats for Picton

Anyone visiting the Picton foreshore lately will have noticed some improvements.

The pirate ship, bench, seats and picnic tables in the children's playground have all been painted and a new shade sail placed over the grassed area near the fountain. There is also a new outdoor shower and drinking fountain.

Two large umbrella sails have been installed at the shuttle bus waiting area to provide shade for cruise ship passengers on sunny days.

A donated bench seat has been placed near the town wharf which provides great views over the harbour and port, a popular rest and reflection spot.



Kids' edible garden booming bounty

Summer is a favourite time for children in the Kids' Edible Gardens programme.

Created by a Christchurch trust in 1995, it aims to teach students to re-use organic waste, grow organic edible gardens and eat the produce they grow.

The Marlborough programme, adapted with permission from the Christchurch one and supported by Council, has 21 schools participating. There is a school facilitator and teaching resources have been developed to help integrate gardening with the classroom programme.

Ongoing professional development training for teachers is also provided.

Waikawa Bay School and Linkwater School have embraced the concept, Council's Environmental Educator Angela Wentworth said.

"At Linkwater, water is important and children wanted to ensure it wasn't wasted," she said. "They discovered Olla Pots, a traditional Italian irrigation method where unglazed terracotta pots are filled with water which seeps through the pores into the soil keeping it moist."

Children also made their own fertiliser using weeds from the garden soaked in a bucket of water for a week or two.

At Waikawa Bay School, children have been busy tidying and weeding the garden beds, uncovering treasures of fruit and vegetables after the summer break.

"Term four turned out to be one of their most successful growing and harvesting seasons which they attributed to the rain and using good compost," Angela said. "Children harvested cauliflower, spinach, lettuces, sugar snap peas, broad beans, radishes, celery, leeks, garlic and potatoes in time for Christmas."

Growing garlic was a particularly valuable learning experience for children as they saved bulbs from the previous year for replanting as well as growing, harvesting and drying the crop. Students are now harvesting tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, corn, basil and lettuce.

"The pumpkins still have a way to go, but they are confident that their trial of planting companion sunflowers alongside them will prove to be a winner," Angela said.



A great crop of leeks grown by children in the Kids' Edible Gardens programme in Marlborough

Council's Harbours team - working to ensure our waterways are safe for everyone to enjoy.

Contact the Harbourmaster's Office if you need advice or information about Marlborough's harbours.

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