



# Cape Kidnappers- Gannet Reserve

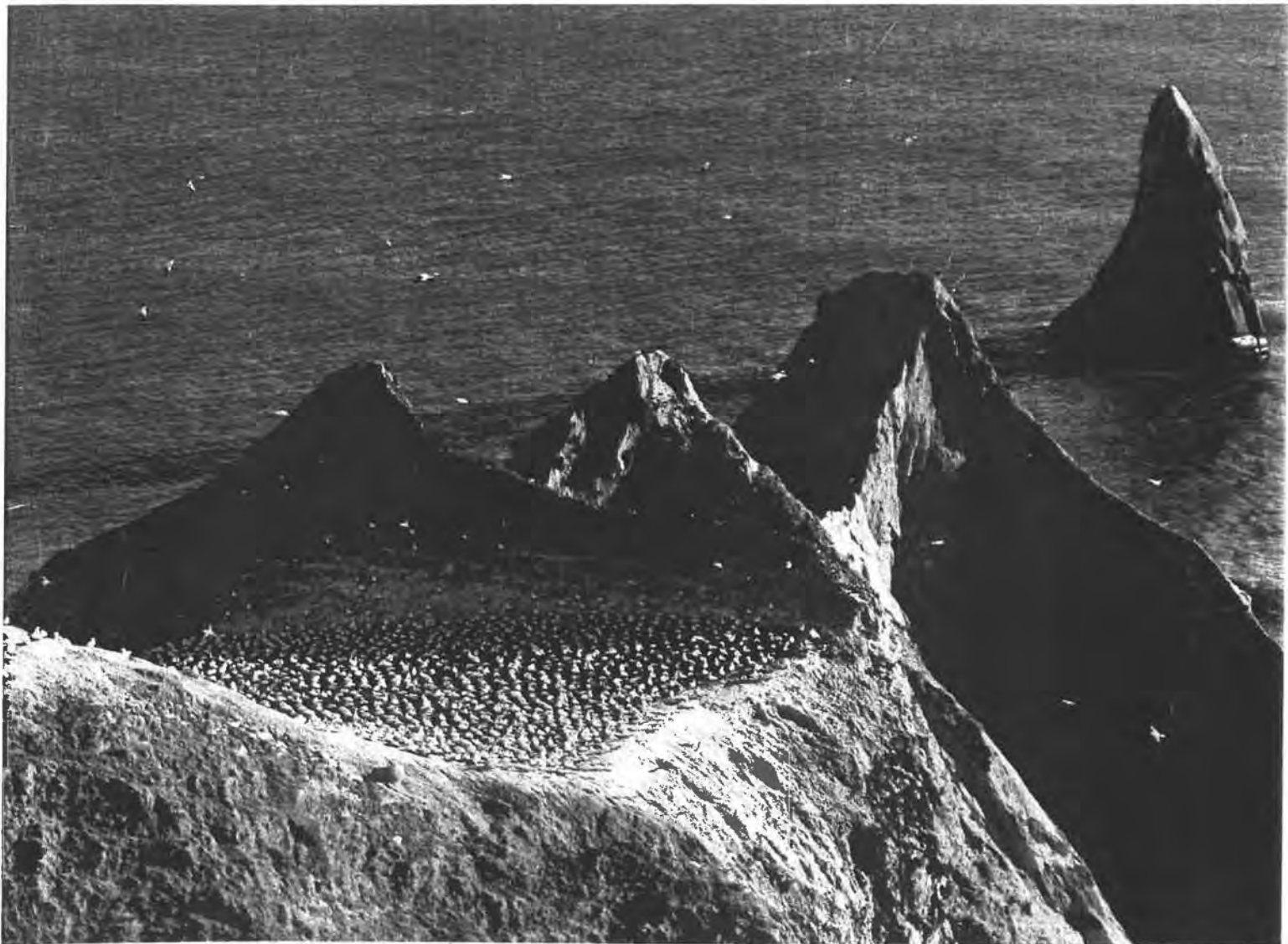
Te Kauae O Maui  
Conservation Management Plan

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Department of Conservation  
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Conservancy

AUGUST 1998

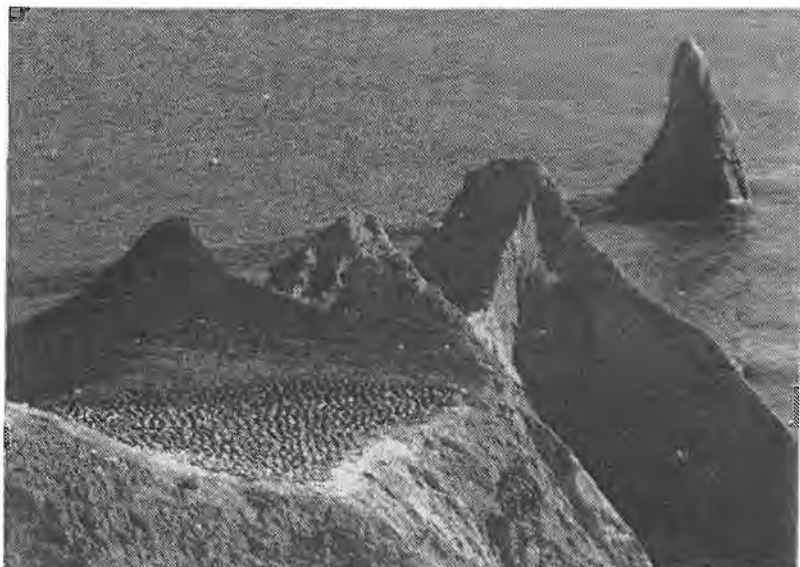


Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

# Cape Kidnappers Gannet Reserve

Te Kauae O Maui  
Conservation Management Plan

Department of Conservation, East Coast Hawke's Bay



*Cape Kidnappers*  
*Photo: Pat Sheridan*

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## FOREWORD

This Conservation Management Plan sets out the policies and objectives for management of Cape Kidnappers Gannet Reserve, which is a composite of four separate reserves which are described on page 13. This plan has been prepared by the Department in consultation with and with the approval of the Rangitikei/Hawke's Bay Conservation Board.

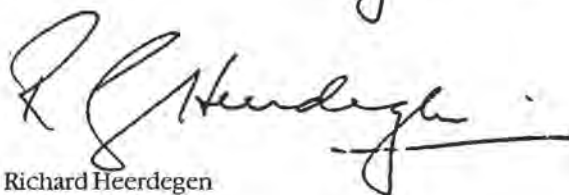
It has been prepared after considerable public consultation. Initially a discussion document which identified a range of issues was commented on. This was followed by the draft management plan released in May 1997. Public meetings and discussions with concessionaires, interested groups, individuals and iwi were held after the release of both documents.

After considering all submissions the Board requested the Department to amend the draft conservation management plan. The amended plan was subsequently presented to the Board for approval.

The policies and objectives in this plan represent the Board's aspirations for the Reserve. It is a working document that provides vision and long term objectives for management of the reserve during the next 10 years. It reflects a commitment to protection and visitor appreciation and enjoyment of the reserve, providing this is consistent with protection.

Therefore, pursuant to Section 17 of the Conservation Act 1987 the Rangitikei/Hawke's Bay Conservation Board approves this plan.

Dated this 31st day of August 1998



Richard Heerdegen

Chairperson

Rangitikei/Hawke's Bay Conservation Board

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 VISION FOR THE RESERVE

The Cape Kidnappers Gannet Reserve is where:

- the gannets can nest protected from harmful disturbance
- landscapes are mainly natural and the former coastal forests and dune systems are restored
- adjacent waters and lands are managed so that the natural character, cultural and spiritual values of the reserve are safeguarded
- visitors can observe, learn about and appreciate a natural environment
- visitors can come to understand the wider needs of a unique bird and appreciate them in context of a greater land and sea habitat
- people are well informed about this area and respect and appreciate it for its special values
- access is facilitated by nature tour operators, whose operations are sensitive to the natural and historic values of the reserve.

## 1.2 OVERVIEW

Cape Kidnappers is a significant breeding site for the Australasian gannet (takapu) and is one of the few mainland gannet colonies in the world. It contains approximately 14% of New Zealand's gannet population.

The small number of gannets first reported in 1870 at the present Saddle Colony has expanded to approximately 6,600 pairs in four sub-colonies (C.J.R. Roberston 1996). Since 1945 when close monitoring commenced at Cape Kidnappers the population has grown at a 2% mean annual rate. While parts of the colony may decline, stabilise or increase for short periods, the overall population increase indicates a healthy colony. This reflects positively on past management practices as disturbance can result in gannets migrating to other colonies and there is no evidence that large numbers of birds do this.

The reserve includes the Saddle and Black Reef colonies. It does not include the expanding Plateau and Whale Bone Beach colonies and part of a colony on the mainland adjacent to the Black Reef colony, all of which are on the privately owned Summerlee Station.

The reserve has provided adequate protection for the nesting sites of the gannets and enabled control of animal pests. In addition, restrictions have been placed on visitors, tour operators and the erection of buildings and structures. These measures may have contributed in part to the growth in numbers of nesting gannets. However a more likely reason for this growth is favourable conditions such as the availability of food.

An increased acceptance and respect of the nesting colonies by the public and the adjacent owners in recent years has reduced the need to seek reserve status for private lands on which the new and existing colonies are spreading. The preferred option for the Department however is a joint management agreement with Summerlee Station to secure formal protection for these colonies. Protection of the gannets on private land is adequately covered through the Wildlife Act.

The nesting colonies are only part of the wider habitat on which the gannets are dependent. The more obvious threats to the gannets outside the colonies are oil spills, discarded marine debris such as nets, litter and the accumulation of toxins or pollutants in the food chain. None of these are known to be significant at present within the Cape Kidnappers gannet habitat. However, these threats are partly addressed in the Hawkes Bay Regional Councils Regional Coastal Plan and the Oil Spill Contingency Plan, as well as the Marine Pollution Regulations.

The reserve lies at the tip of the Cape Kidnappers peninsula, a prominent landmark at the southern extremity of Hawke Bay. The peninsula has striking cliffs of geological significance and an isolated and natural coastline which contribute to its being an outstanding landscape feature in Hawke's Bay.

The peninsula's underlying soft sandstone formations are susceptible to erosion. Erosion occurs on the cliff faces and slipping and slumping occurs on steep slopes. It has partly contributed to a diminishing of the gannet nesting area at both Black Reef and the Saddle Colony. Parts of the visitor access track between the beach and the Plateau Colony are threatened by erosion. There can be a danger to visitors on the beach through materials falling from the cliff faces.

The area is largely denuded of its former coastal forests and is now predominantly pasture. Occasional flax and boxthorn are present as well as various coastal grasses such as marram and spinifex on the beach frontages. The reserve and adjacent area are suitable for restoration planting in an area which has inadequate representation of native coastal vegetation.

Te Kauae O Maui (Cape Kidnappers) is important to the Maori. Mythologically it represents the tip of the hook which Maui used to fish up the North Island.

The iwi of Ngati Kahungunu consider the coastal marine area stretching between Clifton and Flat Rock to be spiritually and culturally important. Here there are many pre-European archaeological sites, most of which are outside the reserve. Additionally, the intertidal and near-shore reef systems continue to be an important source of kaimoana for the tangata whenua and are used by recreational fishers.

Cape Kidnappers is a major tourist attraction in Hawke's Bay. It is easily accessible from Napier and Hastings, and provides striking natural coastal scenery and enables visitors to closely observe nesting gannets. Annual visitor numbers have ranged from 14,000 to 25,000 with the most recent years averaging approximately 16,000 visitors. Four commercial organisations are involved in transporting visitors either via the beach or overland on a private road. The three beach operations are licensed by the Department and must meet certain conditions relating to conservation and visitor safety requirements.

The reserve is closed to the public each year from 1 July until the Wednesday before Labour weekend. This is to prevent visitor disturbance during the most critical pre-mating and egg laying stages of the gannet breeding cycle.



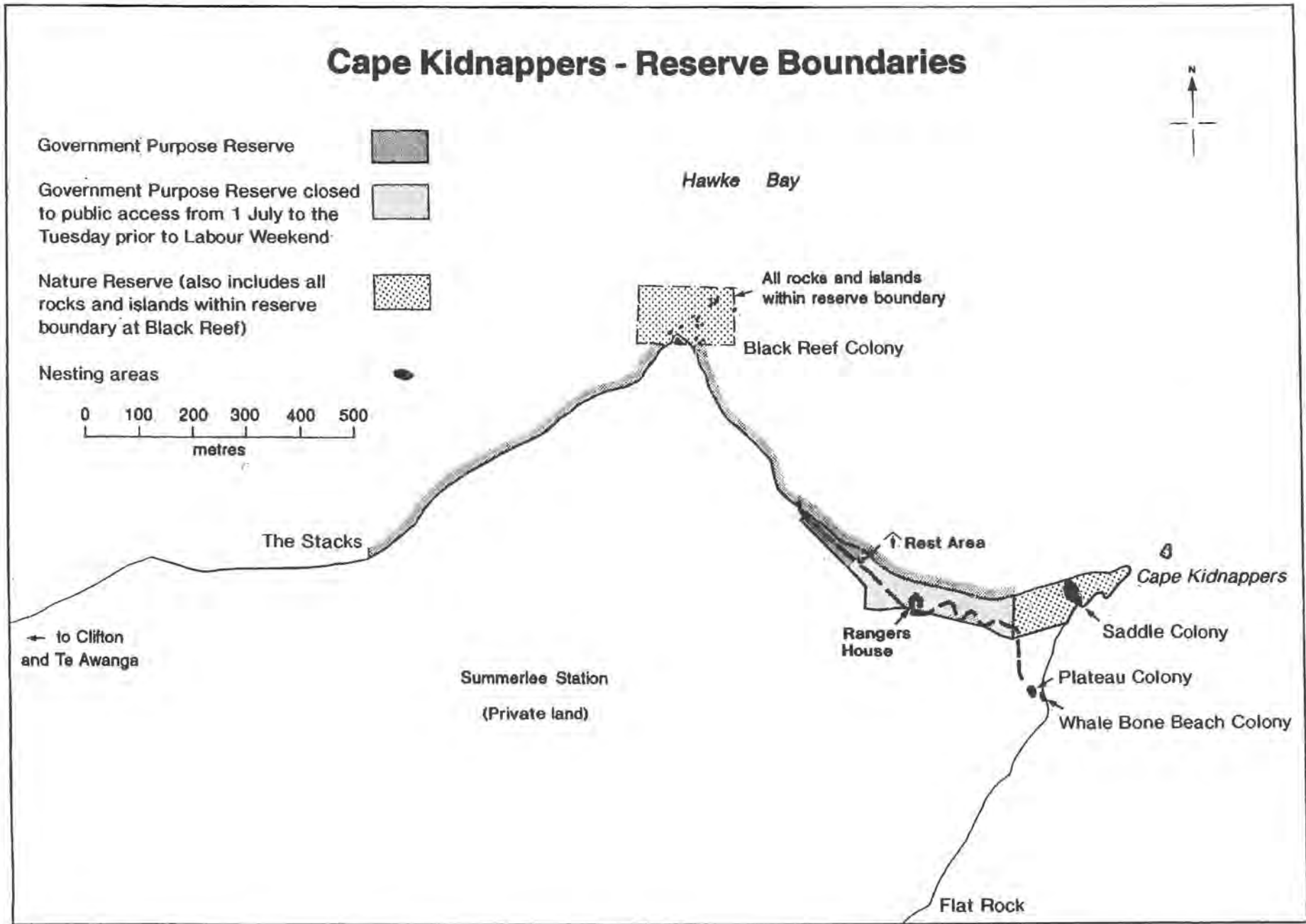


FIGURE 1. RESERVE BOUNDARIES AT CAPE KIDNAPPERS

### 1.3 THIS PLAN

This plan is prepared under the Reserves Act 1977 and is in effect a sub-document of the Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for the East Coast/Hawke's Bay Conservancy. The CMS provides a broad overview and sets strategic directions for the conservancy's activities. It contains management objectives for the Cape Kidnappers Gannet Reserve which are outlined in Appendix 1. The contents of this plan must be consistent with the CMS.

This conservation management plan sets out how the reserve is to be managed. It is a "working" document to:

- provide a vision and long-term objectives for management of the reserve during the next 10 years
- implement integrated management strategies
- guide day to day management decisions including the preparation of the Conservancy's annual business plan
- provide the mechanism for preventing or resolving conflict
- provide appropriate policy support for controls on the use of the reserve
- encourage co-ordination and integration of the Department's functional activities
- increase public awareness of the purpose and aims of the reserve.

The reserve's management is influenced by other legislation, including the:

- Wildlife Act 1953
- Conservation Act 1987
- Resource Management Act 1991
- Civil Aviation Act 1990 and Regulations
- Historic Places Act 1993.

Under section 4 of the Conservation Act, the Department is required to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in its administration of this Act and the Acts listed in the first schedule to that Act. The views of the local hapu were specifically sought and taken into account prior to and during preparation of this plan. Management of the reserve will involve ongoing consultation with the local hapu.

#### 1.4 MANAGEMENT GOALS

The general goals which apply throughout this document and will guide the Department's actions relating to this reserve are to:

- protect the gannets and their nesting areas within the reserve
- improve by agreement the legal protection of present and any future colonies on adjoining private land
- maintain and/or enhance public and tangata whenua support for the reserve
- allow adequate and safe public use of and access to the reserve, provided this is consistent with the protection aims
- advocate for wider appreciation, understanding and protection of the gannets habitat outside the reserve.

#### 1.5 TENURE AND STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITY

The Department administers this reserve under the provisions of the Reserves Act 1977. This Act and the Conservation Act 1987 contain the conservation management planning provisions.

##### ***Reserves Act***

The purposes of reserves as stated in the Reserves Act section 3 are:

- "(a) Providing, for the preservation and management for the benefit and enjoyment of the public, areas of New Zealand possessing-*
- (i) Recreational use or potential, whether active or passive; or*
  - (ii) Wildlife; or*
  - (iii) Indigenous flora and fauna; or*
  - (iv) Environmental and landscape amenity or interest; or*
  - (v) Natural, scenic, historic, cultural, biological, geological, scientific, archaeological, educational, community, or other special features or value;*
- (b) Ensuring, as far as possible, the survival of all indigenous species of flora and fauna, both rare and commonplace, in their natural communities and habitats, and the preservation of representative samples of all classes of natural ecosystems and landscape which in the aggregate originally gave New Zealand its own recognisable character:*
- (c) Ensuring, as far as possible, the preservation of access for the public to and along the sea coast, its bays and inlets and offshore islands, lake shores, and riverbanks, and fostering and promoting the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment and of the margins of the lakes and rivers and the protection of them from unnecessary subdivision and development."*

The Cape Kidnappers Gannet Reserve is a composite of four separate reserves (figure 1). They are classified under the Reserves Act as either nature or Government purpose reserves. These two forms of reserve classification allow for various options for reserve management.

### **Nature reserves**

They have the highest possible protection status for natural values under the Reserves Act, the primary purpose being the protection and preservation of all natural flora and fauna. Public access is by permit only.

The two Nature Reserves are:

- (a) Saddle Colony Nature Reserve (4.94 ha) which includes the eastern extremity of the peninsula from the high water mark, including the Saddle Colony and offshore rock outcrop. This colony represents approximately 30% (in 1996), of the local gannet population.
- (b) Black Reef Nature Reserve (0.5 ha approx.) which includes the offshore rock outcrops and contains approximately 38% (1996) of the local gannet population.

### **Government purpose reserves**

These include areas set aside for wildlife management or wildlife purposes. They allow for public access and provision of facilities associated with the protection of gannets.

The two Government Purpose Reserves are:

- (c) Government Purpose Reserve (7.96 ha), a narrow coastal strip between the beach and the Saddle Colony. It extends inland for approximately 100 metres from the high water mark.
- (d) Beach Government Purpose Reserve which includes the narrow strip between the high and low water marks and extends from The Stacks to the boundary of the Saddle Colony Nature Reserve.

These reserves, outlined in (a) to (d) are collectively referred to as the Cape Kidnappers Gannet Reserve, which is administered by the Department of Conservation according to the policies laid out in this conservation management plan and the Conservation Management Strategy for the East Coast/Hawke's Bay Conservancy and the relevant legislation.

### **Wildlife Act**

Wildlife outside and within the reserves is also protected through the Wildlife Act 1953 section 3.

*"Wildlife to be protected - subject to the provisions of this Act, all wildlife is hereby declared to be subject to this Act and (except in the case of wildlife for the time being specified in the First Schedule, Second Schedule, Third Schedule, Fourth Schedule or Fifth Schedule hereto) to be absolutely protected throughout New Zealand....."*

### ***Hastings District Council***

The reserve lies within the administrative area of the Hastings District Council. The Proposed Hastings District Plan (details and priorities are subject to change through the public submission process) indicates this area as Rural Zone. Pastoral farming is a 'Permitted Activity' in this zone and occurs adjacent to and in parts of the Government Purpose Reserve and Saddle Colony Nature Reserve.

The Proposed Hastings District Plan also identifies a number of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes in the District, with Cape Kidnappers Gannet Reserve being identified as one of them. Within the Cape Kidnappers Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape Zone, buildings greater than 50sq metres gross floor area and plantations are Non-Complying Activities. Also the placing of network utilities are a Discretionary Activity. It is recognised that these activities can have significant adverse effects on the landscape value of Cape Kidnappers.

### ***Hawke's Bay Regional Council***

The Proposed Regional Coastal Plan (Hawke's Bay Regional Council 1994) identifies the coast and a 2 km wide strip of seawater between Clifton to south of Cape Kidnappers as an area of significant conservation value.

The Proposed Regional Coastal Plan accords with the reserves management policies set out in this management plan. The desired environmental outcomes for this area, outlined in the Proposed Regional Coastal Plan are:

- 1 preservation of the scenic values associated with the coastal cliffs between Clifton and Cape Kidnappers
- 2 preservation of the physical integrity of the intertidal rock platforms between Clifton and Cape Kidnappers
- 3 minimal disturbance to washing and preening gannets, or those nesting immediately adjacent to the Coastal Marine Area
- 4 maintenance of public access along the foreshore where this is consistent with the protection of the gannets
- 5 protection of any archaeological sites situated within the Coastal Marine Area
- 6 special protection given, in the Hawke's Bay Regional Coastal Plan, to areas of significant conservation value.

## 2 Management Objectives and Implementation

### 2.1 PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

#### ***Objective***

*To protect and enhance the reserves ecological and historic values and to allow appropriate public use consistent with the protection of these values.*

#### ***Explanation***

The primary objective of management in the reserve is the protection of the gannets and their nesting area. Where consistent with the above, public use will be facilitated.

The Department depends on regular monitoring by staff to ensure that any threats or potential threats to the nesting birds are detected early and addressed. In addition, peer pressure helps to prevent visitors from wilfully disturbing the birds and concessionaires are required to supervise their clientele.

Over the past fifty years, there has been increasing public use of the area. Over the same period the number of nesting gannets has increased at an average rate of 2% each year. However the Department will take a precautionary stance in managing public use of the reserve to ensure that the primary objective is achieved.

The Department provides facilities and services including pre-visit and on-site information, with the intention of fostering understanding, appreciation and respect.

The objectives of the Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for Hawke's Bay have been used to derive the detailed objectives and guidelines of this Conservation Management Plan

## 2.2 RESERVES

### ***Objective***

*To use dual reserve classifications to obtain varied options for the management of the reserve.*

### ***Nature Reserves***

The nature reserve classification for the Black Reef and Saddle colonies provides a high level of protection for approximately two-thirds of the resident gannets at Cape Kidnappers.

In order to protect the nesting gannets and their habitat, public access will remain restricted. Entry is by permit only and applications for entry will be assessed using the following criteria:

- the visit will benefit conservation and science
- the size of the party will not have an adverse effect on the natural values
- no practical alternative sites exist for the activity being undertaken.

### **Implementation**

- 2.2.1 Maximum protection will be given to the gannets and their habitats within the nature reserves.
- 2.2.2 Visitor facilities will not be provided on the nature reserves.
- 2.2.3 Permits will be granted only under circumstances where entry is required for management and research.

### ***Government Purpose Reserves***

The primary functions of the two Government purpose reserves are to allow for public access, facilities and information services as well as to provide for a buffer zone adjacent to the main nesting colonies. Protection requirements may be less stringent here allowing for a diversity of management and visitor activities. Visitors also have freedom of access during the open season from the Wednesday prior to Labour weekend to 30 June.

All visitor structures and facilities will be confined to the Government purpose reserves and provide for day use only. Overnight camping will continue to be prevented due to problems associated with rubbish and human waste disposal, limited water supply, the threat of fires and keeping these reserves as natural as possible.

Removal or alteration of any rocks on the beach within the reserves can contribute to changes in beach dynamics and requires prior consent from the Hawke's Bay Regional Council and the Minister of Conservation.

## **Implementation**

- 2.2.4 Any development of visitor services and research activities will be limited to those which do not adversely impact on the natural values of the area, and which will increase public appreciation and understanding of the area.
- 2.2.5 Pastoral grazing may be used in the government purpose reserves as a management tool to reduce fire hazards.

## ***Adequacy of Reserves***

The expanding colonies at the Plateau, Whale Bone Beach, part of the Black Reef colony on the headland, and parts of the access track between the rest shelter and the Plateau Colony are on Summerlee Station. The cooperative assistance of the station owners is essential for long term protection of these gannet colonies. The Department will continue to work with the owners of Summerlee Station to seek to ensure that the ecological values of the area are protected.

Other areas which should be considered for more permanent means of protection are the foreshore and sand dune areas adjacent to the reserve. They are fragile areas where a planting programme will add to their stability and improve the natural landscape in the Cape Kidnappers area.

To obtain a more permanent form of protection for these areas and an adequate buffer zone around the colonies, the possible options are to:

- obtain a formal joint management agreement with the owners of Summerlee Station
- negotiate for a covenant on some parts of Summerlee Station
- purchase further land for the reserve.

## **Implementation**

- 2.2.6 The Department will consult with and involve the owners of Summerlee Station in management of the reserve with the aim of ensuring that gannet colonies outside the existing reserve and the foreshore and sand dune areas adjacent to the reserve are protected.



## 2.3 ADJOINING LANDS AND WATERS

### **Objective**

*To advocate and foster management practices on adjacent land and water which assist or complement reserve management objectives.*

### **Explanation**

The impacts of activities on land and water adjacent to the reserve can be just as significant as those within the reserve.

Adjoining land uses have generally been compatible with reserve objectives and good co-operation exists between the owners of Summerlee Station and the Department. The Department will work towards continuing this co-operation, particularly relating to the management of the Plateau and Whale Bone Beach Colonies, access for staff and the public through Summerlee Station, and plantings of native trees and shrubs on station land.

The Department will advocate to the Hastings District Council during preparation and review of its planning documents seeking to prevent the erection of any structures or facilities and the planting of exotic forests on private land within 500 metres of the colonies.

The sea within one kilometre of the shore is used by the gannets for washing and preening to maintain their plumage. High water quality and protection of the marine inshore area are essential. The provisions of the Regional Coastal Plan provide an effective means for protecting these values.

Unchecked pollution of the sea water is a potential threat to the gannets. The most likely causes are passing ships flushing their bilges and shipping accidents. Gannets are susceptible to oil spills. Oiled birds transfer oil to eggs, which then do not hatch. The shipping restrictions which apply and are administered by the Maritime Safety Authority of New Zealand are:

- all ships must keep at least 5 nautical miles (9.25 km) from Cape Kidnappers;
- tankers can discharge oil at sea provided they are proceeding at least 50 miles offshore and the discharge is less than 60 litres per mile;
- ocean-going vessels can discharge bilge water provided they are proceeding at least 12 miles offshore and bilge water goes through an automatic oily water separator to limit oil content to 100 parts per million.

The Port of Napier plans to construct an onshore facility for oil waste from coastal ships and an Oil Spill Contingency Plan is administered by the Hawke's Bay Regional Council.

There is potential to use the adjacent waters for some undesirable activities. Water-based transport can disturb the gannets and any associated structures may interfere with coastal processes and be a visual intrusion.

## Implementation

- 2.3.1 The Department will work with Hawke's Bay Regional Council and Hastings District Council to achieve compatible management of activities on the water and land adjacent to the reserve.
- 2.3.2 The Department will continue to develop a co-operative relationship with the owners of Summerlee Station.
- 2.3.3 The Regional Coastal Plan will be used as a mechanism for ensuring protection of the reserve's adjacent waters.
- 2.3.4 The Department will advocate against planting trees within 500 metres of the colonies where they could interfere with birds flight paths, pose a fire threat or are not indigenous to the area.
- 2.3.5 The Department will advocate to prevent the erection of structures or facilities, excluding seating, signs, barriers and lighthouse structures within 500 metres of the colonies.
- 2.3.6 The Department will advocate for an undeveloped coastal area adjacent to the reserve.
- 2.3.7 The Maritime Safety Authority of New Zealand's shipping restrictions and Marine Pollution Regulation will be supported.
- 2.3.8 The Port of Napier's intention to establish an onshore facility at Napier for the disposal of waste oil will be supported.



## 2.4 INDIGENOUS WILDLIFE

### *Objective*

*To protect and enhance indigenous wildlife and their habitat.*

### *Explanation*

Indigenous wildlife is protected in the reserve through the Reserves Act 1977 and outside the reserve by the Wildlife Act 1953 (sections 3 and 63) which prohibits any disturbance of or injury to protected wildlife.

As discussed, the gannet colony is the most significant feature of the reserve. However, other important wildlife that either nest, forage or pass through the reserve are white-fronted tern (tara), variable oystercatcher (torea pango), reef heron (matuku-moana), New Zealand fur seals, leopard seals and elephant seals. Black Reef is one of the few roosts in Hawke's Bay for the spotted shag. The offshore reefs are rich in marine life including the unusual sand mason tubeworms which construct sand tubes on the rocks.

Monitoring and researching of wildlife and its response to the effects of people are important requirements for the management of the reserve. The focus will be on detecting changes of any biological factors and assessing human impacts on the nesting gannets. Programmes will provide early detection of undesirable changes and trends and will recommend corrective management changes.

### **Implementation**

- 2.4.1 Population patterns of the individual colonies will be monitored.
- 2.4.2 Visitor numbers and any effects of this usage on indigenous wildlife will be monitored.
- 2.4.3 Monitoring programmes will focus on determining the health and status of the gannets and their ability to interact with visitors.

### *Threats*

The Department's role is to minimise or eliminate current or potential threats to gannets and other wildlife.

**Black-backed gull** predation on gannet eggs and young chicks is likely to occur when the gannets leave their nests as a result of visitor disturbance. Once gulls learn to poach they tend to continue and to predate in undisturbed areas. Predation can be reduced by encouraging visitors not to disturb the gannets.

### **Implementation**

- 2.4.4 The impacts of black-backed gulls will be monitored and where necessary control measures will be implemented on them.

**Livestock disturbance** of the gannet colonies is principally caused by cattle at the beginning of the gannet breeding season. This can be alleviated if all cattle are absent from areas where gannet colonies are located during the period 1 August to 30 April. Stockproof fencing of the Saddle Colony will also increase its protection. Although difficult to achieve, it is an option that will be considered by the department.

### **Implementation**

- 2.4.5 Visitors will be encouraged to observe the gannets in a way that does not threaten the gannets.
- 2.4.6 The Department will continue to liaise with the owners of Summerlee Station and will seek an agreement that there will be no cattle grazing which conflicts with the protection of the gannet colonies - particularly in the early nesting period
- 2.4.7 The Department will investigate means of protecting and where practical implement actions to protect the saddle colony from the impact of livestock

**Vehicles on the beach** can disturb wildlife, particularly when parked or driven close to the nesting gannets at Black Reef. Also subject to disturbance on the beach are variable oystercatchers and colonies of black-backed gulls and white-fronted terns. The noise and excessive speed of motorbikes and four-wheelers can be reduced by implementing a 20 km per hour restriction on the beach within the Government purpose reserve. Bylaws will be sought under the Reserves Act to impose prohibition or restrictions on speed and noise.

The remaining beach outside the reserve is a legal road where speed limits and dangerous driving conditions apply.

Motorised off-road vehicles such as trail bikes and four-wheel-drive vehicles have the most potential to cause damage to the sand dune areas and historic sites.

### **Implementation**

- 2.4.8 Bylaws will be sought to put in place a speed restriction of 20 km per hour within the Government purpose reserve.
- 2.4.9 Restrictions on parking of concessionaire vehicles at Black Reef will be implemented in consultation with concessionaires prior to the beginning of each visitor season
- 2.4.10 The Department will liaise with NZ Police to enforce road rules on other beach areas.

**Introduced animals** such as cats, mustelids, goats and dogs are a threat to indigenous wildlife. Occasionally cats prey on terns and gannet chicks and goats walk amidst the nesting birds early in the nesting season. Dogs taken by visitors can disturb the birds. Control of these animals will be carried out when necessary and dog entry can be prevented by creating a controlled dog area using provisions of the Conservation Act.

The demand for horseback riding is currently low. Conflicts between horseback riders and walkers are most likely to occur on the track from the beach to the Plateau Colony. Horseback riding will not be permitted there.

### **Implementation**

2.4.11 Goat, dog and cat control will be carried out when required.

2.4.12 Horses will be restricted to the beach.

**Fires** are a potential problem in the frequent dry and windy conditions, particularly where there is dry long grass close to the gannet colonies. This threat can be reduced by mowing the grass, grazing livestock and continuing to prohibit camping and the lighting of fires within the reserve. Smoking will be discouraged at times of high fire risk.

### **Implementation**

2.4.13 Staff to monitor fire danger and where necessary reduce any potential fire threat

**Disturbance by aircraft** is prevented by a Civil Aviation Authority restriction on aircraft flying below 600 metres (above mean sea level) within approximately a 500-metre radius of Cape Kidnappers and Black Reef.

### **Implementation**

2.4.14 Aircraft flying below 600 metres (above mean sea level) within the restricted area around Cape Kidnappers will be reported to the Civil Aviation Authority.

## 2.5 VEGETATION

### *Objective*

*To maintain and where practical restore indigenous plant communities in the area.*

### *Explanation*

The reserve and the wider coastal environment are largely denuded of their former coastal vegetation and sand dune communities. The area is predominantly pastureland with scattered exotic trees and shrubs and recent plantings of native trees and shrubs and the native sedge, pingao.

The reserve provides an excellent opportunity for restoration of areas of lowland coastal forest, a forest type which is inadequately represented in protected areas in Hawke's Bay.

The planting of native trees, shrubs and other plants in selected areas would have many advantages including providing shade for visitors, stabilising the erosion-prone land and providing nesting habitat for birds. It would provide a natural scenic backdrop and demonstrate to other landowners the values of restoration planting. It would also provide an opportunity for community groups to be involved in restoration of this important area.

Any plantings would need to take account of present and future open space, flight path requirements of the gannets, ways in which vegetation might benefit predators, and its fire risk potential (see also 2.3).

Plantings should provide a natural linkage with native vegetated areas on adjoining lands so that there is a common landscape pattern and an interconnection of indigenous ecosystems.

Many of the areas suitable for planting are on Summerlee Station. There is close liaison between the owners and the Department and, some areas of the station have already been planted. The Department will continue to foster close liaison with the owners of Summerlee Station with a view to extending the planted area.

A long-term aim is to phase out exotic plants within the reserve. However, it is recognised that some serve useful roles such as providing shade and stabilising the erosion-prone land and could therefore be retained until their role is taken over by native plantings.

The main plant pests include, boxthorn, nettle and variegated thistle. These species require control to reduce encroachment onto the gannet colonies and visitor areas.

### **Implementation**

2.5.1 A long-term vegetation enhancement plan, that is compatible with protection of natural and historic resources, patterns and communities of existing and original native vegetation and bird flight paths will be prepared.

- 2.5.2 The Department will encourage and where practical assist adjacent landowners to plant appropriate native plants in the area.
- 2.5.3 Priorities for plantings will be;
- to strengthen and extend the recent plantings on the coastal and sand dune areas
  - to encourage and aid the owners of Summerlee Station to plant native species on the coastal and sand dune strip between Cape Beach and Black Reef
  - to reduce erosion close to the walking track to the Plateau Colony.
- 2.5.4 Community involvement in revegetation programmes will be encouraged.
- 2.5.5 Problem plants which pose a threat to the gannets or indigenous vegetation or impede visitor use will be controlled or removed.
- 2.5.6 Where suitable, native species which are least susceptible to burning will be planted in the area.

## 2.6 HISTORIC RESOURCES

### *Objective*

*To protect and preserve historic resources.*

### *Explanation*

Historic resources include archaeological sites, historic places and wahi tapu as defined in the Historic Places Act 1993. This Act provides that archaeological sites may not be destroyed, damaged or modified without authority from the Historic Places Trust.

In association with tangata whenua and the Historic Places Trust the Department is responsible for the conservation of historic resources on lands which it administers. Guidelines for their protection are outlined in the Department of Conservation *Historic Resources Strategy - Hawke's Bay Conservancy (1993)*.

The Cape Kidnappers peninsula has been an important site of Maori settlement and there are many pa and kainga sites, pits, midden and urupa, including the Rangaiika pa.

Some kainga and urupa sites are within the reserve, so it is the function of the Department of Conservation to preserve and protect them consistent with the provision of the Conservation Act and the Historic Places Act. An authority from the Historic Places Trust is required for all activities including planting which may damage, destroy or modify any archaeological site. The main threats are natural erosion (mainly coastal), disturbances from vehicles and unsuitable grazing practices.

There is an extensive area of midden on private land adjacent to the reserve. This extends along the coastal foredunes between the track departure point on the beach to Black Reef. These midden are threatened by grazing animals, inappropriate planting, erosion and off-road vehicles.

### **Implementation**

- 2.6.1 The Department will liaise with the Historic Places Trust, iwi and adjacent landowners with a view to ensuring adequate protection of historic sites within the reserve.
- 2.6.2 The Department will protect historic and cultural resources on land it manages by minimising the impacts of visitors, visitor facilities and services.
- 2.6.3 In and close to the reserve, the Department will advocate for farming practices which have minimum impact on the sites.
- 2.6.4 The Department will investigate the possibilities of formal land protection of the foredune midden sites adjacent to the reserve.



## 2.7 VISITOR USE

### *Objective*

*To allow appropriate public use of the area and to provide good quality and safe services to visitors that are consistent with the primary objective of protection and enhancement of the reserve's natural values.*

### *Explanation*

Visitors are welcome at the government purpose reserves and will be encouraged to respect and care for them, consistent with the conservation requirements, particularly the sustained protection of the gannets.

The reserve is a key high priority visitor destination for day visitors in the Hawke's Bay Conservancy. Of approximately 16,000 visitors recorded in 1996, 75% used concessionaires' nature tours and 25% walked. On peak days 300 visitors have been recorded and in January 1996 visitors averaged 200 per day.

Facilities tend to act as an assembly point for visitors and therefore they will be located at least 500 metres from the gannet colonies. At the Black Reef and Plateau colonies, facilities should be restricted to signs and seating.

The facilities and services which are designed to meet the needs of about 200 visitors at one time, are adequate for the present level of visitor use. Prior to any extension of facilities, careful thought will be given to the impacts these could have on increasing visitor congestion.

Many features and qualities attract visitors and contribute to the visitor experience. The more important ones, highlighted in the 1996 Visitor Survey (summarised in Appendix 2) include being able to closely observe the gannets in their natural setting, experiencing a natural isolated and undeveloped coastal area and participating in the trip or walk.

Qualities associated with the above which are important for the visitors' experience are inspiration, enjoyment, learning and natural quiet. Management of visitors and concessionaires will aim to retain these.

The coastal area also provides opportunities for snorkelling, fishing and swimming and is an important place to observe wildlife and geological formations.

Recently a greater variety of visitor opportunities has been created by two additional transport concessionaires. There has been a 5% increase in the proportion of walkers in the past six years but no notable change in annual visitor numbers.

There is potential for higher visitor numbers in the future. Monitoring of environmental impacts, visitor patterns and access provisions will be ongoing in order that good management decisions can be made. It is appropriate that visitor management strategies be cautious and integrated over the whole of the reserve.

An informed visitor is more likely to have a satisfying and safe experience and to respond to an involvement in conservation of the reserve. Interpreting the reserve's features and providing on-site and pre-visit information about the recreation opportunities will raise the level of visitor appreciation and will emphasise the need for a shared role with the public in caring for the reserve.

Conservation practices such as the carrying in and carrying out of rubbish will be implemented.

### **Implementation**

- 2.7.1 Visitor facilities will be designed and sited to ensure they do not adversely impact on the gannets and other natural and historic features while maintaining visitor appreciation and enjoyment of the area.
- 2.7.2 Visitor use will be managed to avoid or remedy impacts on the natural values.
- 2.7.3 Bylaws or other means of restriction will be implemented to avoid any conflicts created by mechanised transport, to and through the area.
- 2.7.4 Passive use such as photography, birdwatching and walking will be fostered and educational opportunities enhanced, that are consistent with protection of the natural and historical values of the area.
- 2.7.5 The environmental impacts of visitor and transport use will be monitored.
- 2.7.6 An appropriate standard of basic facilities and services will be maintained to ensure that a cross-section of the community comfortably enjoys the area and gains an appreciation of its values.
- 2.7.7 Facilities at the Plateau and Black Reef colonies will be confined to barriers, signs and seating. Cooperation with the owners of Summerlee Station will be sought to achieve this at the Plateau.
- 2.7.8 Facilities and services will be located and designed to discourage visitors from staying close to the gannet colonies longer than necessary.
- 2.7.9 The reserve will be kept for day visitors' use only. Bylaws will be sought to prohibit overnight camping and lighting of open fires. A carry in, carry out rubbish policy will continue to be practised.

## 2.8 VISITOR/GANNET INTERACTION

### *Objective*

*To minimise visitor impacts on the gannets.*

### *Explanation*

Disturbance of the nesting colony can be caused by several factors, either singly or in combination. Loud noises such as people shouting and noisy vehicles, rapid movements such as people rushing around, brightly coloured flapping clothes, or just very large numbers of people in one place are all disturbances. Their effects tend to be cumulative, with young birds being particularly susceptible to disturbance. It is therefore critical to prevent or discourage direct disturbance by visitors being too close to the nests, prompting birds to stand up or move off their nests and expose the eggs or chicks.

Gannets are susceptible to these disturbances at all times but it is clear from observations that the pre-egg laying and incubation stages are the most critical in terms of effects on breeding. This is normally the period from August to mid-January. At the end of the breeding season the late chicks can be prone to disturbance. During these times close monitoring of visitor impacts is essential.

The number of birds subject to direct effects from visitors (ie., those on the colony edges exposed to close visitor observation at the Plateau and Black Reef colonies) is small in relation to the number of birds within the Cape Kidnappers colonies. These Gannets there are only exposed to visitor interaction for limited time because most visitors are confined to low tide times. People are normally at the Plateau Colony for up to one to two hours each day and for up to two hours at Black Reef. There are, of course, additional periods at the Plateau Colony when overland visitors are present.

The restricted visitor season will continue to minimise visitor contact during the most susceptible period. Traditionally the open season extends from the Wednesday prior to Labour Weekend (October) to June 30. As there is inadequate knowledge of the consequences to the gannets of extending the visitor season, therefore the status quo will remain.

Where practical a minimum distance of five metres will be maintained between visitors and the nesting gannets. A five-metre gap allows sufficient space for juveniles to court, parade and land. This requirement reduces the impacts on the birds and allows visitors adequate observation.

The low chain barriers at the Plateau Colony will be located at least five metres from the nesting birds. An assessment will be made each year in association with the landowner to determine whether there is a need to relocate the chain.

Enforcing a five-metre gap at Black Reef can be difficult, and other management techniques, such as improved signage and requesting concessionaires to monitor their clients will be considered.

When visitor impacts approach a level detrimental to the gannets, varied management techniques will be explored before restrictions are made on public access. This could include encouraging visitor use outside peak periods or discouraging visitor use where impacts are serious.

### **Implementation**

- 2.8.1 Bylaws will be sought to close to the public the reserve beyond the visitor shelter (see Figure 1) during the period 1 July to the Tuesday prior to Labour Weekend.
- 2.8.2 Where practical, a minimum separation distance of five metres will be maintained between visitors and nesting gannets.
- 2.8.3 Management will retain the option of limiting visitors if their behaviour or numbers result in any detrimental affects on the wildlife or the reserve.
- 2.8.4 The Department will endeavour to spread visitor use and reduce impacts by:
  - encouraging overland safaris to avoid visits when beach accessed visitors are present
  - locating interpretation facilities away from the gannet colony at places such as the picnic shelter
  - channelling visitors through Black Reef with the least disturbance to the wildlife
  - encouraging visitor use outside the peak period of January (excluding the closed season)
  - monitoring visitor patterns, so that staff are alert to any undesirable impacts on the gannets
  - promoting a code of acceptable behaviour for visitors with signs and written material

## 2.9 CONCESSIONS

### **Objective**

*To manage existing and consider new applications for commercial activities so that they are compatible with management objectives.*

### **Explanation**

#### **Scope**

The existing concessionaires provide transport and information for their clients and in some cases also provide refreshments. Any future concessions must be compatible with the management objectives for the reserve (see 2.1).

Commercial activities, such as the sale of goods and services to the public may detract from the area's naturalness and peaceful atmosphere. Sales by concessionaires will be permitted but restricted to their clients. Advertising and touting are intrusions that many visitors are trying to escape from and will not be permitted within the reserve. Concessionaires will be encouraged to assist the Department in the reserves management, thereby promoting a guardianship responsibility for the reserve.

#### **Assessment**

Section 3.6 of the CMS (Commercial and Extractive Use of Areas Managed by the Department) gives guidelines for assessing the appropriateness of new applicants.

In addition, the Conservation Amendment Act 1996 places responsibilities on applicants for concessions to identify possible effects of their proposed activities and to suggest ways that any adverse effects can be avoided or reduced. The onus is therefore on the applicants to provide all information if they wish their applications to be successful.

The chief factors to take into account in considering a concession application are:

- the nature of the activity and any associated structure or facility
- the effects of the activity, structure or facility
- any measures that can reasonably and practically be taken to avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects of the activity
- any relevant submissions received as a result of public process
- impacts on ecosystem sustainability
- impacts on visitors and other recreational activities
- impacts on current facilities and level of information services provided
- long-term and cumulative impacts
- direct and indirect impacts.

## **Guidelines for Managing Concessions**

A main goal when managing tourism concessions at Cape Kidnappers is to allow appropriate visitor facilities and services without compromising the natural and historic values and the experience or opportunities of visitors.

To achieve this goal, the following factors will be considered over and above the generic factors listed above.

- A concessionaire's service can reflect positively or negatively on the values of the area. The emphasis on concessionaire services should be to provide consistently high standard transport and information, and to ensure clients comply with the code of acceptable behaviour as recommended in 2.8.4.
- The number, speed and noise of concessionaire vehicles on the beach can compromise the experience of some visitors and can be damaging to wildlife.
- Controls may need to be placed on the number or timing of visitors if the visitors' safety and satisfaction level are compromised and there are adverse impacts on the gannets. This might include placing restrictions on the combined seating capacity of the tour operators' vehicles, the numbers of vehicles operating and the frequency of vehicle trips at each low tide.
- The congestion of moving and stationary vehicles at Black Reef can be disturbing to the nearby gannets and may create a danger for visitors. Parking and speed restrictions are necessary in this area.

## **Visitor Experience**

Concessionaires transport 75% of Cape Kidnappers visitors. The positive aspects of this form of access, as identified by visitors in the visitor survey are the information obtained from the operators, the adventure and the sociable experience through mixing with other people. Department staff monitor the conditions within the concessions licences to ensure that high standards are maintained.

## **Implementation**

- 2.9.1 The Department will assess and process applications for concessionaires within the reserve in accordance with the Conservation Act 1987 and the Conservation Management Strategy. Applications for commercial recreation that will benefit conservation through nature tourism or education will be favoured ahead of those that do not.
- 2.9.2 Further applications for concessions will not be supported if it is considered that increased numbers of operators and levels of use could result in adverse impacts on natural and historic values or on other visitors experience, or put public safety at risk.
- 2.9.3 The Department will ensure that concessionaires maintain a high standard of visitor experience and practice conservation ethics.
- 2.9.4 Restrictions may be placed on the numbers of trips and visitors transported by concessionaires.

- 2.9.5 Bylaws will be sought to restrict vehicle speed on the beach within the reserve and to manage parking (see also 2.4.8 & 2.4.9).
- 2.9.6 Advertising and erection of any concessionaire structures which detracts from the reserve objectives will not be permitted on the reserve.
- 2.9.7 Concessionaires may sell refreshments but only to their clients.
- 2.9.8 The Department will, with concessionaires, develop an informal means of resolving issues and conflicts, seeking concessionaire involvement in providing/maintaining facilities and promoting mutual harmony.

## 2.10 KAITIAKITANGA

### *Objective*

*Subject to the limits of legislation to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, in particular by liaison and involvement of tangata whenua in management of the reserve.*

### *Explanation*

Section 4 of the Conservation Act gives the Department the responsibility to consult and be responsive to the views of Maori in carrying out its functions. This involves the Department recognising tangata whenua customary values and practises provided they comply within current laws and policies. The Conservation Management Strategy (sections 3.1 and 3.10.2.1) sets up the basis for giving effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Close consultation and mutual information sharing between iwi and the Department will continue to develop a working relationship ethic relating to the reserve and adjacent areas.

Ngati Hawea, Ngati Kurukuru, Ngati Whakaiti, Ngati Hikatoa, Ngati Ura ki Te Rangi, Ngati Whaitiri, Ngati Uru and Ngati Putanoa are the hapu which claim mana whenua over the Cape Kidnappers area. Through the traditions of the ancestors and whakapapa they maintain kaitiakitanga over the land and seas and derive their mana from it. The management of the reserve recognises these spiritual and cultural links by seeking hapu advice and co-operation.

The iwi of Ngati Kahungunu consider the entire coastal marine area, and coastal strip of land on the Cape Kidnappers peninsula, to be spiritually and culturally significant. The intertidal and near-shore reef systems continue to be an important source of kaimoana.

In a mythological sense Te Kauae o Maui (Cape Kidnappers) is also important to the Maori. It represents the tip of the hook with which Maui pulled up the North Island.

### **Implementation**

- 2.10.1 The Department will consult with and have regard to the views of the relevant hapu and iwi in management of the reserve.
- 2.10.2 Wahi tapu will be given appropriate protection in accordance with the wishes of the tangata whenua and the appropriate legislation.



# Appendix 1

## CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR HAWKE'S BAY CONSERVANCY 1994-2004 (PAGE 72)

### ***2.5.11.2.5 Management Objectives for the Cape Kidnappers Gannet Reserve***

- (i) To manage the Cape Kidnappers Nature Reserve for the purposes of the protection of gannets and their nesting area.
- (ii) Where consistent with the above, to facilitate public access and enjoyment of the reserve.
- (iii) To investigate, and implement where appropriate, protection and management options for the areas of gannet colony outside the existing reserve, for the foreshore area adjacent to the reserve and for the sand-dune area, in consultation with the owners of Summerlee Station.
- (iv) To facilitate revegetation of parts of the Government Purpose Reserve, in appropriate coastal species, by volunteer effort.
- (v) To prohibit camping and encourage and enforce a rubbish removal policy.
- (vi) To prohibit vehicles (including trail bikes and bicycles) within the existing reserve and to advocate the prohibition of vehicles on sand dune areas and other sensitive areas outside the reserve.
- (vii) To prohibit the taking of dogs into the Government purpose reserve. (Bylaws will be sought to enforce this).
- (viii) To prepare a new Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Cape Kidnappers Nature Reserve and the Government Purpose Reserve.

# Appendix 2

## SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS - VISITOR SURVEY (1996)

- Total visitors for 95/96 season was estimated at approximately 16,000.
- During the survey period (4 January to 12 March 1996) there was an average of 154 visitors per day, with an average of 206 visitors per day during January and a high of 282 recorded on 8 January.
- The increase in proportion of visitors in the 16-23 and 24-35 years age groups from the previous survey in 1987/88 reflects the increase of overseas visitors in these groups.
- 14% of visitors only go as far as Black Reef or the public shelter.
- The ratio of overseas visitors to New Zealand visitors has reduced by 5% since the 1987/88 survey. 33% of the 1996/97 visitors are from overseas
- There is an increase in the number of overseas visitors from Europe and Asia and a corresponding decrease in numbers from North America.
- Visitors obtain information about Cape Kidnappers more often by word of mouth or other sources, followed by brochures and advertising.
- Information centres are a popular source of information for overseas visitors.
- The main attraction for visitors is being able to closely view nesting gannets. However, this is supplemented by the scenic and natural environment experienced on the whole trip commencing at Clifton.
- Judging by the number and nature of positive comments (1368 likes vs 366 dislikes) visitors are satisfied with their experiences at Cape Kidnappers and with the existing concessionaire services.
- Beach walkers have higher expectations for an experience that involves unspoilt natural settings and natural quiet.
- Departmental visitor services and facilities are rated highly by visitors and appropriately match visitor preferences.
- The concessionaires' beach rides are a highlight for many visitors due to the social nature of the experience, informative narrations and the adventurous ride.
- Vehicles on the beach are the most common cause of reducing the visitors' quality of experience.

# Appendix 3

## MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS- VISITOR SURVEY (1996)

The following are recommended for consideration in future management policies and directions.

- 1 Develop management techniques to eliminate concentrations of visitors spending long periods close to the nesting gannets. Some suggestions to consider:
  - encourage Gannet Safaris (overland operator) to avoid visits when beach-accessed visitors are present and to park vehicles away from the nesting gannets;
  - conduct most interpretation off-site at picnic shelter and through brochures; - place additional seating at least 10 metres from nesting birds.
- 2 Consider improving the following facilities and services:
  - reduce track gradient and reduce height of steps on lower track;
  - provide more seating at Plateau Colony and adjacent to track;
  - improve toilets by including hand basin and water and directional signs;
  - improve supply of drinking water;
  - plant additional trees for shade;
  - replace damaged signs at Plateau Colony.
- 3 Assess means to reduce/eliminate impacts of vehicles on beach and tidal platforms.
- 4 Improve signage at Black Reef and consider placing an informative sign at the end of Clifton Motor Camp.
- 5 If bilingual signs are required, German and Mandarin are the most appropriate languages.
- 6 Restrict the numbers of vehicle trips that concessionaires can make during each low tide.
- 7 Safeguard the qualities of solitude, peace and natural quiet for visitors as far as possible.
- 8 Due to gaps in knowledge of visitor impacts on the gannets, it is recommended that a precautionary approach be taken with management decisions.

# Appendix 4

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED BYLAWS

- 1 Place a speed restriction of 20km per hour within the beach area of the Government Purpose Reserve (2.4.8)
- 2 Prohibit overnight camping within the Government Purpose Reserve (2.7.9)
- 3 Prohibit the lighting of open fires within the Government Purpose Reserve (2.7.9)
- 4 Close to the public the reserve beyond the visitor shelter during the period 1 July to the Tuesday prior to Labour Weekend (2.8.1)