

## PPC85 to the operative Kaipara District Plan

Introductory summary

A J Beauchamp

Senior Technical Officer

On Behalf of the Director General of Conservation

My evidence covers how Mangawhai Harbour supports at least 10 threatened or at-risk birds during their breeding season and as overwintering grounds and is impacted by human disturbance with dogs.

### TARA ITI

The sandspit and harbour are by far the most important breeding habitat for the nationally critically tara iti, which are dispersed in defended foraging territories over the sandflats. Considerable effort has been expended in holding and then increasing the tara iti population but that cannot be done without Mangawhai Harbour.

- Mangawhai harbour is partitioned by tara iti feeding territories
- Feeding territories are used at two high risk times for disturbance female egg formation and new fledging provisioning
- Any loss of tara iti at present will lead to a potential increase in the probability of extinction.
- Key pairs have produced 31% of the natural population productivity over the past 5 years.

### RECREATION

A key attraction at Mangawhai is the harbour which is used for recreation by residents and their dogs. However, people with dogs on-leash or off-leash pose a threat to birds through displacement, and the higher numbers are, and more dispersed the people and their dogs are the more likely that the displacement will lead to birds deserting sites or reducing productivity.

The Kaipara District Policy on Dogs includes areas of the harbour where dogs are required to be on-leash, but most of the sand flats are not classified, and there, dogs can be off-leash.

One study has shown that off-leash dogs disturbed birds 35.4% (n = 145) of the time while on-leash dogs disturbed waders 9.1% (n = 38) of the time.

### SOUTHERN AREA

The area along the southern boundary between Insley Causeway and the sandspit, opposite the proposed plan change area, is one of the least used area of the harbour by people and dogs.

The proposed Private Plan Change 85 abuts the southern arm of Mangawhai Harbour, and the application proposes to allow dogs to be held contained on private properties and on-leash at other times.

Dogs from the PPC85 area when walked will have off-leash access to much of neighbouring Mangawhai Harbour where it is highly likely they will disturb birds including tara iti. If dogs are permitted as part of the plan change, then an additional 0.4 dogs per residence could be expected.

## WALKWAYS AND SIGNAGE

The application also proposes to put in place walkways around two proposed special natural areas (SNA). Both areas will need to be buffered to retain threatened birds. This may be possible to do this around the southern walkway, but the proposed northern walkway route is on esplanade reserve would need to be put in a coastal area if it were to in the esplanade reserve to prevent disturbance and displacement of wetland birds. The applicant is proposing signage will reduce the likely impacts of people and dogs on wildlife if the exit into the harbour. There is considerable signage in the harbour and that has not deterred people for accessing the harbour with dogs.

Any walkway on the coastal margin and will direct people and dogs into a lesser used part of the harbour and closer to the sandspit where threatened bird breeding occurs.