

Submission to the West Coast Regional Council on the Proposed Regional Coastal Plan 2016

Return your signed submission to the West Coast Regional Council by 5.00pm, Monday 21 March 2016
Submissions may be: a) Posted to: Proposed RPS, West Coast Regional Council, PO Box 66, Greymouth 7840 b) Delivered direct to the West Coast Regional Council at 388 Main South Road, Greymouth c) Emailed to rcp@wrc.govt.nz d) Sent by facsimile (03) 768 7133

PART A: Submitters contact details

Public information - all information contained in a submission under the Resource Management Act 1991, including names and addresses for service, becomes public information.

Your information is held and administered by the West Coast Regional Council in accordance with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the Privacy Act 1993. This means that your information may be disclosed to other people who request it in accordance with the terms of these Acts. It is therefore important you let us know if your form includes any information you consider should not be disclosed.

Full name: Inger Perkins
Postal address: 231 Revell Street
Email: ingerp@xtra.co.nz
Phone: 03 755 8600
Preferred method of contact: email

PART B: Trade Competition

As per Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991, a person who could gain an advantage in trade competition through the submission may make a submission only if directly affected by an effect of the proposed policy statement that: a) Adversely affects the environment b) Does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition.

Please tick the sentence that applies to you:

I could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission

Signature: Inger Perkins – by email

Date: 18 March 2016

(A signature is not required if you make your submission by electronic means)

PART C: Request to be Heard

I do not wish to be heard in support of my submission

Submission to cover:

- A. The specific provisions of the proposal as required
- B. Expression of support or opposition each separate provision being submitted on, the wish to have amendments made, and the reasons
- C. Amendments sought from the West Coast Regional Council, (as specific and precise as possible).

My submission is as follows:

1. There is reduced emphasis on seabirds and marine mammals

The natural values of the coastal marine area have been mentioned at various places within the Proposed West Coast Regional Coastal Plan (PRCP), but the values have been down played by:

- (a) including them within a shared chapter, Chapter 3 “Natural and Human Use Values” and
- (b) by removing the current Schedule 3.1 “Marine mammal and bird sites above mean high water springs”.

I would like to see

- (a) the separation of the natural values into a separate chapter, followed by a chapter covering the human use values, and
- (b) re-instatement of the current Schedule 3.1 “Marine mammal and bird sites above mean high water springs”.

Without the inclusion of current Schedule 3.1, the proposed plan fails to take into account or mention the fur seal and seabird colonies which are present in and use the coastal marine area for foraging, roosting and access to breeding colonies, and which should be included ideally in a chapter on natural values, or failing that, within a Schedule.

I would like to see a better balance between the natural and human values under the PRCP in order to achieve the sustainable management of the coastal marine area sought by the plan. The natural values need to be balanced with, rather than subservient to the human use values.

In New Zealand, marine mammals, including fur seals, and seabirds are protected in Coastal Marine Areas (CMA) under a range of statutes, including the Marine Mammal Protection Act 1978, the Wildlife Act 1953, and the Conservation Act 1987.

On the West Coast, fur seals and coastal birds, including Blue Penguins or Korora (*Eudyptula minor*), Fiordland Crested Penguins or Tawaki (*Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*), Banded Dotterels (*Charadrius bicinctus*), White-fronted Terns (*Sterna striata*), Oystercatchers (*Haematopus spp.*), Royal Spoonbills (*Platalea regia*), Red-Billed Gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus*), Black-billed gulls (*Larus bulleri*), Fairy prions (*Pachyptila turtur*), shags (*Stictocarbo punctatus* and *Phalacrocorax spp.*) and White-faced Herons (*Egretta novaehollandiae*) and less often other coastal species use the CMA for the range of purposes mentioned above.

In particular, the two penguin species have breeding colonies throughout the length of the West Coast, which they access through, and are adjacent to, the CMA, with Tawaki mainly south of Bruce Bay, and Korora more common north of there. These species require passage to and across the foreshore to breeding sites at all times of the year. Disturbance can markedly reduce breeding success.

I would like to see amendments to the proposed plan so that activities in or adjacent to their breeding colonies and important foraging areas are prohibited and/or non-complying and/or discretionary as appropriate.

In order to achieve this, the WCRC will need to seek input from NZ seabird scientists, the West Coast Penguin Trust and DOC, to ensure that these breeding and foraging areas are recognised, mapped and protected, and to ensure that information is kept up to date.

2. PRCP section 7.3.1 (policy)

I would like to see an additional section (f) be added to 7.3.1 (1) to read “nesting areas for native birds”.

Reason: Although this may be more relevant immediately above the mean high water springs, it could be possible that vegetation clearance is proposed that straddles the MHWS. The natural spread of some weed species, notably gorse and blackberry, provide shelter for threatened native bird species, including blue penguin and weka. The fact that these plants are not indigenous should not mean that clearance can be presumed to be a good idea. Such areas of vegetation may have become established following clearance and they not only provide substitute habitat for blue penguins, but also support dune stability around and above the MHWS.

3. PRCP section 10.3.1 (policy)

I would like to see an additional section (iv) be added to 10.3.1(a) to read: "marine mammals and seabirds;"

Reason: Marine mammals and seabirds can be very sensitive to noise, and their wellbeing severely compromised by it. Reference material is as follows:

- i.) Williams R *et al* "Impacts of Anthropogenic Noise on Marine Life" in Oceans and Coastal Management 115 (2015) pp. 17-24.
- ii.) "Marine Mammals and Noise Fact Sheet" NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast Region.
- iii.) European Science Foundation Position Paper 13 June 2008. "The Effects of Anthropogenic Sound on Marine Mammals".

4. Schedule 3E Outstanding Natural Character Areas

I would like Schedule 3E be revised to include all those natural character areas considered to be High and Outstanding by Brown NZ Ltd.

Reason: This assessment includes habitat among the bio-physical values, which is generally found to be high throughout, and if not, the area is likely to be used for roosting, foraging and breeding by a variety of native birds. For C49, Cape Foulwind, night time values are not rated (nor defined), but sooty shearwaters (*Puffinus griseus*) nest there and they as well as blue penguins arrive and depart during the hours of darkness. For the record, C or NCA 50, Wall Island, is home to an important colony of seabirds including fairy prions, sooty shearwaters, red-billed gulls, white fronted terns and blue penguins; it is the largest West Coast seabird colony between Cook Strait and Fiordland.

It makes sense to join areas assessed as High to the neighbouring areas assessed as Outstanding where contiguous for the purposes of assigning NCA status and protection, and extending seawards where appropriate. Although the assessment conducted by Brown NZ Ltd is useful and well presented, it may be that the assessors are unaware of some local wildlife as noted here.