



THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE – 27 October 2022

Whale fossil removal

The West Coast Regional Council, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae and Department of Conservation, in conjunction with other agencies, have been working closely together following the removal of a whale fossil from the foreshore in Northern Buller at the weekend.

“We are deeply disturbed by the removal of this taonga,” said Heather Mabin, Chief Executive of the West Coast Regional Council. “It is a significant piece of history for those living in the area, and all of us on the West Coast and New Zealand.”

A cross agency investigation, launched Tuesday after coming to the attention of the organisations, is progressing well.

“We would like to assure the public that we are working with the police and exploring every avenue available to us and other agencies,” said Ms Mabin.

The location of the removal of the fossil within the Coastal Marine Area is covered by the Regional Coastal Plan. Ms Mabin said that no consents had been issued under the Coastal Plan for removal of the object.

The Resource Management Act prevents the removal of any sand, shingle, shell, or other natural material from the foreshore.

“Council is investigating whether the removal of the fossil would be allowed under the Coastal Plan. If people are unsure about the rules of collecting any natural material, they can contact the Regional Council and ask.”

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