



Marine Reserve
 - no fishing

Nature Reserve
 - no landing



Poor Knights Islands

Marine reserves are protected under the Marine Reserves Act 1971, which states that:

‘The public shall have freedom of access and entry to the reserves, so that they may enjoy in full measure the opportunity to study, observe, and record marine life in its natural habitat.’



Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve

NORTHLAND





Photo: Vincent Zintzen

Popular diving spots

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 Northern Arch | 6 Trevors Rock |
| 2 Barren Arch | 7 Rikoriko Cave |
| 3 Middle Arch | 8 Blue Maomao Arch |
| 4 Hope Point | 9 Jans Tunnel |
| 5 Crater Bay | 10 Tie Dye Arch |



Enjoying the reserve – in the water

Diving, swimming, snorkelling are the best ways to experience the reserve, as these allow you to interact with the underwater world. Please refer to the Diving Care Code before doing so.

The waters around Poor Knights Islands can be deep with strong currents. For a safe and enjoyable dive or snorkel, go with someone experienced and who has local knowledge.

Enjoying the reserve – on the water

If you are not keen to take the plunge, kayaking and boating are fun ways to explore the reserve – but familiarise yourself with the boating rules of marine reserves (see the Marine Reserves Regulations 1993). These are summarised as:

- ▶ The max speed permitted for all boats in New Zealand is 5 knots (about 9 km/h) within **200 m** of shore or any boat with a dive flag, and within **50 m** of any other boat or swimmer.
- ▶ Waste, ballast and sewage must not be discharged within the reserve.
- ▶ Drop your anchor responsibly to avoid damage to the reserve, and use the minimum amount of chain necessary.

Boaties – for the safety of all, please keep a good lookout for snorkellers and divers.

Further information:

Whangarei Office
2 South End Avenue
Raumanga, Whangarei 0110

Email: whangarei@doc.govt.nz
Ph: (09) 470 3300

Please report unusual activities or events that may impact on marine life and habitats to your nearest DOC office or the DOC Hotline.

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468
Report any safety hazards or conservation emergencies
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

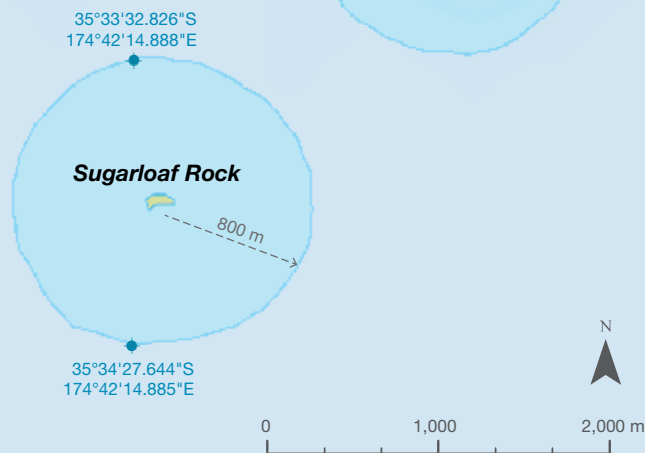


Photo: Dive Tutukaka

DIVING CARE CODE

- ✓ Be neutrally buoyant
- ✓ Know where your fins are
- ✗ Don't let your dive gear drag
- ✗ Do not touch marine life and seabed

ABOVE: Photo: Crispin Middleton
COVER: School of blue maomao. Photo: Vincent Zintzen

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School of starry toad. Photo: Marie Jordan, DOC



Tambja verconis, a brightly coloured nudibranch. Photo: Crispin Middleton



Blue dot triplefin. Photo: Vincent Zintzen



On the land

The Poor Knights Islands, including Sugarloaf Rock and High Peak Rocks (Pinnacles) to the south, are all Nature Reserves and protected under the Reserves Act 1977. The islands are a unique ecosystem that provide a glimpse of life in ancient New Zealand – they are a precious biological gem.

Under the sea

Beneath the waves at Poor Knights is an ocean’s worth of diving. The caves, arches, tunnels and sheer cliffs provide a great variety of habitats to explore. From turbulent sunlit waters and kelp forest on the upper reaches of the tumbling giant ‘staircase’ to the dark waters of the islands’ many caves, the Poor Knights offer an extraordinary variety of underwater experiences.

Sponge gardens and gorgonian fields are inhabited by a multitude of fish, shellfish, urchins and anemones, with black coral found in deeper waters. The steep cliffs that fringe the islands plunge up to 100 m below sea level before reaching a sandy sea floor.

The arches are some of the most interesting places to explore. A rich nutrient soup washes through them, which feeds the countless animals competing for space on the walls. Squadrons of stingrays cruise the waters of the archways during warmer months.

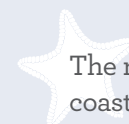
Ngātiwai

Ngātiwai are an ancient people who were known as Ngātiwai ki te moana (those who lived along the east coast and offshore islands) and Ngātiwai ki te tua whenua (those who lived inland e.g. Ngāti Hine).

Ngātiwai descend from Manaia, Tamatea and Tahuhunuioterangi. The mana of Ngātiwai is water and this is remembered by Manaia saying to his descendants: “Although you stand on land, you stand also in the sea.”

Ngātiwai occupied many islands including Tawhiti Rahi and Aorangi (Poor Knights). They are the kaitiaki (guardians) of a sacred covenant placed on the islands by the Ringa Kaha Te Tatua (chief) in 1822. This tapu was placed following the massacre of his people while he and his warriors were absent.

Kia ora and welcome to Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve



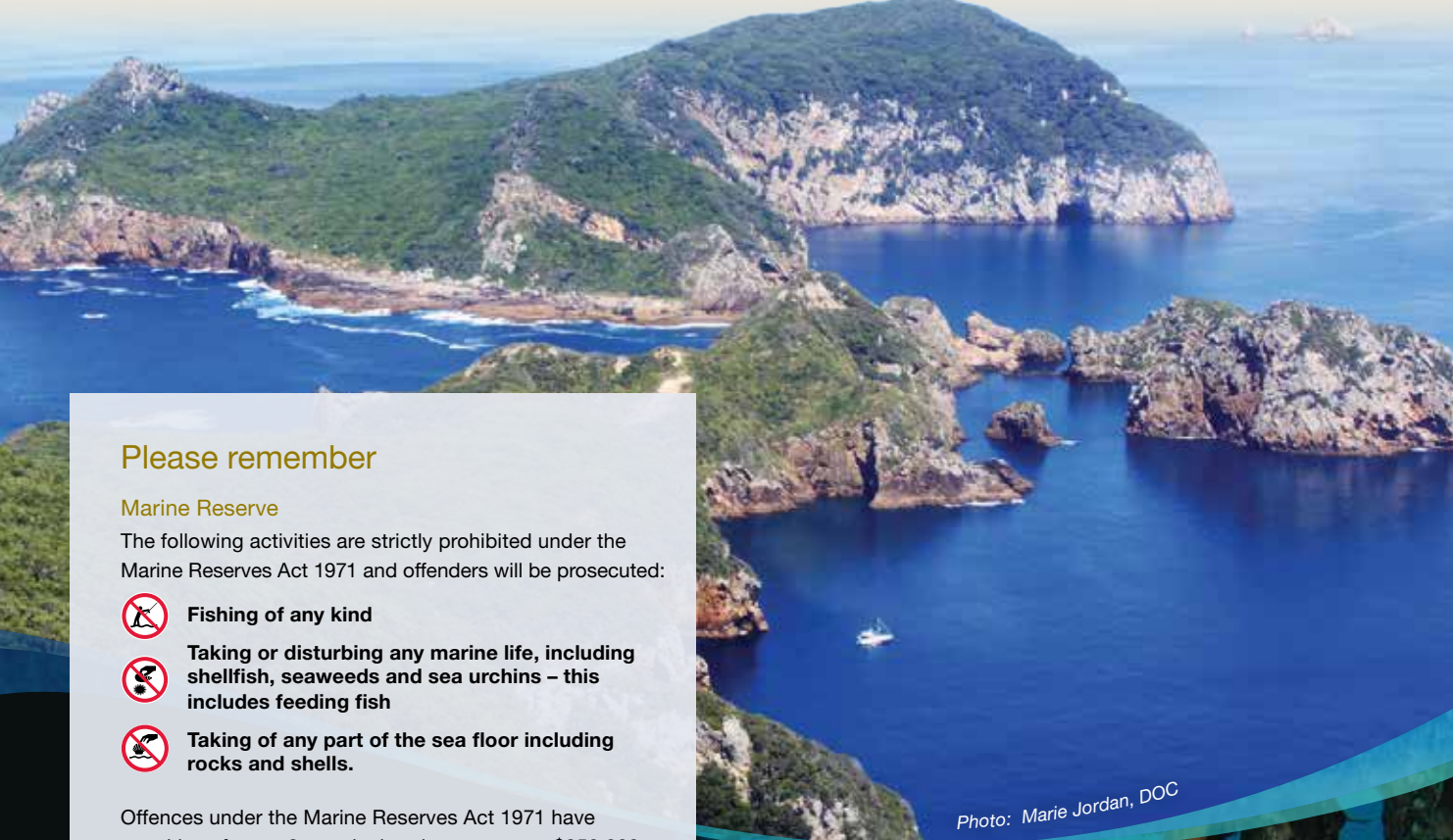
The reserve is located around 22 km off the east coast of Northland. It extends 800 m offshore from all the Poor Knights Islands and associated islets, rocks and stacks including Sugarloaf Rock and High Peak Rocks (Pinnacles).

You are invited to swim, dive and travel within the reserve but you are not permitted to disturb the marine life or to land on any part of the islands or rocks.

What are marine reserves?

Marine reserves are areas of sea where all marine life is protected – fishing, gathering shellfish and any other disturbance of marine life is prohibited.

Free from exploitation, marine reserves return to a near-natural state. This makes them ideal for studying marine life in an environment where there is minimal direct human disturbance, and provides an invaluable reference



Please remember

Marine Reserve

The following activities are strictly prohibited under the Marine Reserves Act 1971 and offenders will be prosecuted:



Fishing of any kind



Taking or disturbing any marine life, including shellfish, seaweeds and sea urchins – this includes feeding fish



Taking of any part of the sea floor including rocks and shells.

Offences under the Marine Reserves Act 1971 have penalties of up to 3 months imprisonment or a \$250,000 fine or both. You may also have your vessel, fishing or diving equipment seized. Any unlawfully taken marine life will be seized.

Nature Reserve

Landing on any of the Poor Knights Islands and associated rocks is strictly prohibited and boats must not be tied to any part of the shoreline.

These rules are to protect the islands from fire and the accidental introduction of pests such as rats, cats and invasive weeds. Any one of these could result in an ecological catastrophe for the islands' habitats and the species that survive on them.

Commercial fishing

Commercial fishing is prohibited in the marine reserve and MPI regulations also state: (i) No commercial fishing except long lining is permitted within a 3 nautical miles of the islands, and (ii) No commercial fishing (all methods) is permitted within 1 nautical mile of the islands.

Photo: Marie Jordan, DOC



Long finned boar fish.
Photo: Irene Middleton

point to compare with other, less pristine, habitats.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) looks after the country's marine reserves on behalf of all New Zealanders. Their protection depends on the care and vigilance of their users.

History of the reserve

During the late 60s and 70s, divers around Poor Knights discovered large numbers of marine plants and animals that had not been seen before in New Zealand. Many were endemic, ie are only found in New Zealand. Others were tropical, carried to Poor Knights by the East Auckland current.

Huge schools of trevally fed on the surface and divers saw kingfish, snapper and hāpuka in numbers unheard of today. Because of the amazing diversity and abundance of marine life, part of the islands became New Zealand's second marine reserve in 1981. In 1998, the islands became fully protected to 800 m from the shore.



TOP: Scorpion fish. Photo: Vincent Zintzen

BOTTOM: Photo: Vincent Zintzen