



# Whangarei coastal guide

A guide for those with **DOGS, VEHICLES** or **ON FOOT** who want to enjoy the coast while protecting the **ENVIRONMENT**

## Look after the sand dunes

Coastal sand dunes are an important and distinctive feature of large stretches of Northland's coast. They help to protect land, people and property, and provide shelter for lizards, insects and shorebirds, many of which are endemic to New Zealand, that is, found nowhere else in the world.

But sand dunes are easily damaged by human activity. To protect them, and the wildlife that live on the beach and along the coast, there are some rules about where and when vehicles, horses and dogs are permitted. Please ensure you observe the signs and respect other users of the beach and the wildlife that lives there.

### Conservation and Wildlife Refuge areas



No horses, vehicles or dogs permitted except with a written permit from the Department of Conservation (DOC).

### Public conservation land (includes DOC reserves)



No dogs, vehicles or horses are permitted except on marked beach access points or with a written permit from DOC.

## Protect our precious coastal environment

### Keep off the dunes

Walking and driving over dunes can kill dune vegetation. If even small areas of dunes lose their plant cover, they can become unstable.

### Leave our beaches litter free

Rubbish looks ugly and can be harmful to people and wildlife. Take your rubbish home with you.

### Do not disturb wild birds

Observe them from a distance and use binoculars to get a closer look. Try and keep below the high tide mark and out of fenced-off areas on the beach. Watch where you walk on the beach, and try to avoid areas of shells, plants and driftwood where shorebirds could be nesting. It is not easy to see shorebird eggs and chicks.



Can you see the eggs?

## Contacts

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Whangarei Office: 09 470 3300

NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

24/7 Environmental Hotline: 0800 504 639

General enquiries: 0800 002 004

WHANGAREI DISTRICT COUNCIL:

0800 932 463

WDC Dog and Bylaw Enforcement

Contractor: 09 438 7513

EMERGENCIES: dial 111

To report irresponsible driving on the beach: dial \*555 (from a cellphone)



DOC HOTline  
0800 362 468

Report any safety hazards or conservation emergencies  
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

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## Beaches

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### Vehicles

If you are driving a vehicle on a beach you must:

- Consider other beach users.
- Observe the speed limits.
- Operate the vehicle in a courteous, appropriate and safe manner.
- Remember that all transport legislation applies on beaches.
- Keep off the dunes. Always use designated vehicle access routes on and off the beach and be aware of pedestrians.
- Once you are on the beach, stay on the hard sand below the high tide mark.
- Observe the 'vehicle safe zone' areas.

### Horses

Make sure you understand where on the beach you can take your horse. Observe signage to determine where horses are not permitted.

### Dogs

Dogs are usually permitted on beaches (see summer prohibition note below) but must **always be kept under control**. Dogs are known to kill the chicks of shorebirds.

Make sure you understand where on the beach you can exercise your dog. Refer to the Whangarei Watchdog booklet or contact the Whangarei District Council.

Always pick up and remove your dog's waste.

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### Summer beach dog prohibition

Between 20 December and 31 January inclusive, dogs are not allowed on beaches 9 am to 5 pm excluding dog exercise areas.

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Year round dog exercise areas are:

The beach at Ruakaka, lying between the eastern end of Mair Road and the eastern end of Taotahi Walk, Ruakaka.

The beach at Uretiti lying between Tip Road and the southern point of the Uretiti Camp ground block.

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## Shorebirds

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### Bar-tailed godwit/kuaka

This migratory bird breeds in the Northern hemisphere and then flies south to summer in places like New Zealand, making the longest known non-stop flight of any bird: 10,000 km. They can be found on intertidal estuaries and inlets and feed mostly on worms and molluscs.



### NZ dotterel/tūturiwhatu

Endemic; Status: Nationally Vulnerable  
Dotterels are usually found on sandy beaches and sandspits or feeding on tidal estuaries.



### Oystercatcher/tōrea pango

Endemic; Status: Recovering  
Oystercatchers are found on rocky and sandy beaches. Their diet includes mussels, oysters, limpets and crabs.



### Caspian tern/taranui

Native; Status: Nationally Vulnerable  
The Caspian tern is the world's largest tern and has a distinctive red-orange bill. They are found along the coast, mainly on estuarine shellbanks or sandspits. They feed mostly on surface-swimming fish such as mullet, smelt and piper; however, they plunge into the water at a steep angle, often fully submerged, to catch stargazers and flounder.



### Pied stilt/poaka

Native; Status: Declining  
Poaka are found on estuaries, river beds and on the shores of lakes. They have long legs that allow them to wade into water in search of food. They use their bills to probe into the mud and find invertebrates to eat.



### Black shag/kawau

Endemic; Status: Recovering  
Native; Status: Naturally Uncommon  
Black shags are the largest in New Zealand and may live for as long as 20 years. They can be found in sheltered coastal waters, estuaries, harbours, rivers and lakes. They often nest in trees and like to eat fish as well as crustaceans and invertebrates.

### Red-billed gull/tarāpunga

Endemic; Status: Nationally Vulnerable  
Found throughout New Zealand in inshore water, they feed mostly on krill, although they also feed on marine and terrestrial invertebrates, small fish and earthworms.



### Little penguin/kororā

Native; Status: Declining  
Little penguins are found along the coast and are generally inactive, often seen in shallow inshore waters. They feed on small fish, crustaceans and squid.



### Brown teal/pāteke

Endemic; Status: Recovering  
Although not a shorebird, pāteke live in coastal areas. They feed on invertebrates, seeds, fruit foliage and shellfish, feeding mostly at dusk and into the night.