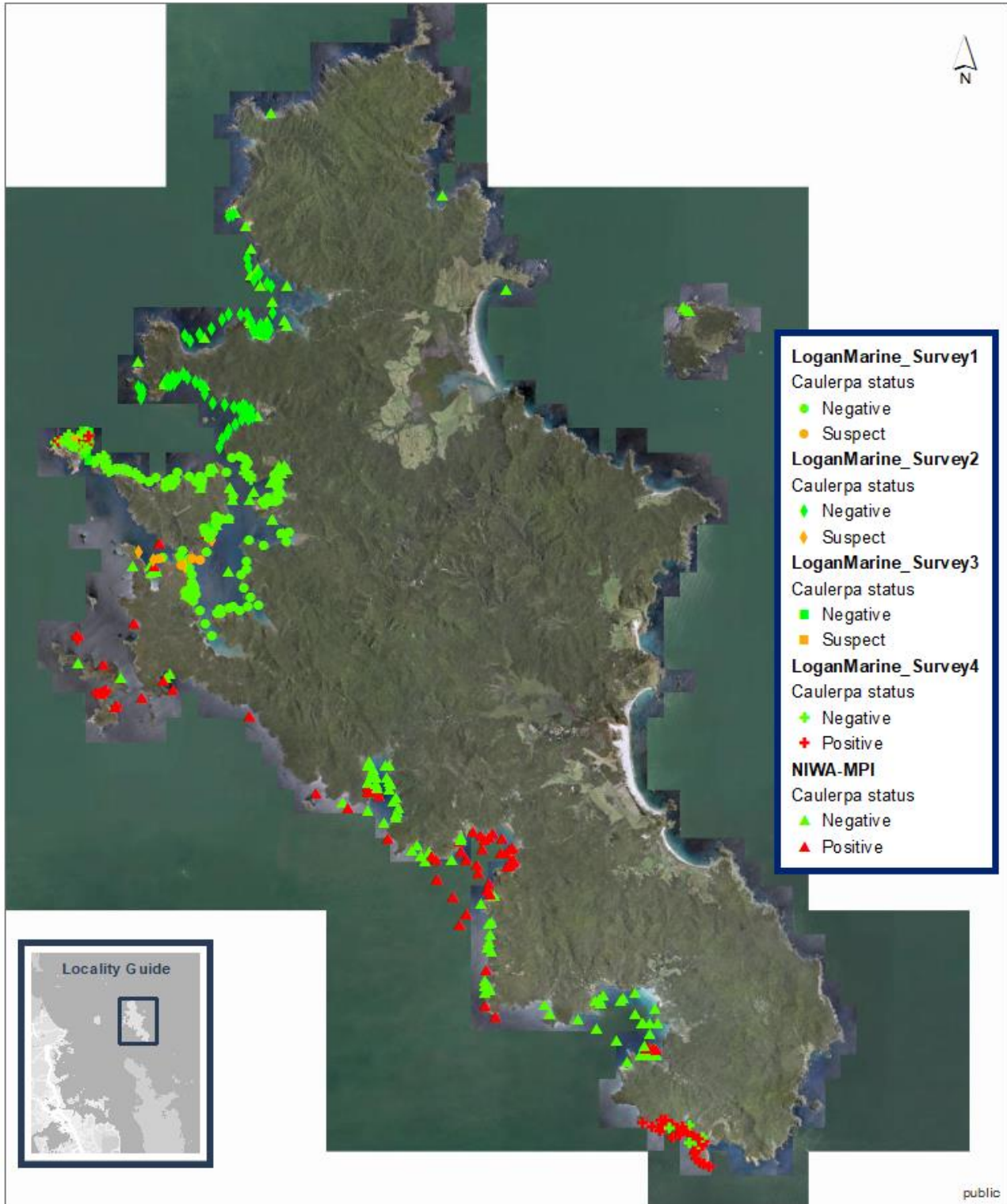


**Aotea
Exotic
Caulerpa
Update**



12 February 2024





public

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**Caulerpa Search and Surveillance
Locations around Aotea
All Surveys as of 8/2/24**

0 750 1500 2250
Metres

Scale @ A4
= 1:150,000

Date Printed:
8/02/2024



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Aotea Exotic Caulerpa Update (up to 12.2.24)

Following on from the changes announced by MPI in December 2023 to update the Controlled Area Notice (CAN) rules on Aotea that enable anchoring and some methods of fishing within certain parts of the CAN, there has been a major effort to raise awareness and increase compliance with the rules. The CAN expires on 30 June 2024. In addition, underwater surveillance is being undertaken to better understand where exotic Caulerpa is and isn't and confirm any new sightings.

This is a summary to update partners, stakeholders and the community on actions to date.

Coordination

A coordinator was appointed to ensure effective ambassador and on-water advocacy was provided.

On-Water Advocacy

Three contracted vessels have been undertaking on-water advocacy to encourage visiting boats to observe the CAN rules and zones for permitted anchoring and fishing activities. There have been vessels out every day except Christmas and New Years days. Locations for the on-water advocacy have been Port Fitzroy, and elsewhere in the CAN area from Cape Barrier to Port Fitzroy.

To date – 235 advocacy patrol hours have been undertaken on water. 162 vessels have been approached – 162 were anchored in the red no-anchor CAN zone. Resources have been provided to 78 vessels. 4 repeat offenders.

Ambassadors – land-based

Kaitiaki ambassadors have been undertaking land-based advocacy for exotic Caulerpa – including at Port Fitzroy and Tryphena. 301.5 hours of ambassador time has been delivered to date, primarily at Port Fitzroy where vessels fuel up. 907 people have been approached by the ambassadors.

There are more ambassadors being signed up at present.

Advocacy and Collateral:

Exotic Caulerpa collateral has been distributed and displayed on island as follows:

1. MPI exotic Caulerpa signage – installed at boat ramps and wharves
2. MPI exotic Caulerpa leaflets distributed at:
 - Claris airport
 - Council Service Centre,
 - Stores at Port Fitzroy, Mulberry Grove, Tryphena
 - NRNWKA (Broken Islands),
 - Glenfern Sanctuary

3. Aotea-specific leaflets - as per MPI leaflets above
4. Aotea-specific posters - as per MPI leaflets above plus community noticeboards and social clubs.

Surveys – Aotea

Logan Marine Projects Ltd have undertaken four survey trips since November 2023 using a camera Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV). Kaitiaki have attended on all survey days. A map is attached of all survey work completed to date – NIWA and Logan Marine:

- #1: 21-23 November 2023, AGBET-funded first survey – 87 ROV transects completed, with five suspicious videos sent to MPI for verification
- #2: 1-3 December 2023 – surveys in Katherine Bay, Port Abercrombie, Port Fitzroy, 78 ROV transects completed
- #3: 12th January 2024, this survey was cut short due to gear failure; 12 ROV transects completed.
- #4: 4-6 February 2024 – surveys at Wellington Heads (Abercrombie), Flat Island hot spots and Sandy Bay / Rabbit Island (South of Tryphena). 90+ ROV transects completed.

New Locations:

Exotic *Caulerpa* has now been confirmed by MPI's taxonomists at the following sites:

1. Port Abercrombie (reported on 8.1.24, from a diver, photos posted on iNaturalist), and positive finds by survey 4.2.24
2. Cape Barrier (snorkeller, reported to Auckland Council Biosecurity advisor on 12.1.24) and positive finds by survey 6.2.24
3. Medlands Beach, a beach cast photo from an Auckland Council Biosecurity Advisor on 20.11.23.

Hauraki Gulf Surveillance Plan:

Site Selection Plan for *Caulerpa* Surveillance outlines:

1. Identifying new areas of potential colonization by the exotic *Caulerpa* (*Caulerpa brachypus/parvifolia*) seaweed species is essential for early detection and the application of management measures. A plan has been developed by the Auckland Council Marine Biosecurity Team to optimize the site selection process for *Caulerpa* surveillance. This plan is a first step in starting discussion and collaboration with all stakeholders and will be adjusted and updated as the incursion response develops over time.
2. The outcome for this plan is to map priority areas for *Caulerpa* surveillance based on the potential risk of incursion. These areas that are represented are chosen based on a set of criteria that represent suitable habitat, the potential risk of incursion influenced by human activities, the ecology of the habitat, and site accessibility for surveillance by field teams. Surveillance can be undertaken using in-water visual surveys via snorkelling or diving, and underwater imaging using a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) and/or a Towed Video Camera (TOV) that are both deployed from a boat.
3. All surveillance data can be stored in a central geodatabase if supplied in a standardised format. This will be curated by Auckland Council's marine biosecurity team, and, if supplied in a standardised spreadsheet format, will enable fast and efficient updates to the ESRI geodatabase as work is

completed by the various partners involved in surveillance work. Everyone involved in collecting data has their own method in doing so. Therefore, the most practical way to receive the data is through a standardised spreadsheet. This will produce a web-based map which will be available to all stakeholders to help inform survey planners and decision makers.

Mainland:

In support of on-island Aotea response efforts, there has also been complementary and supporting efforts on mainland:

1. 6 Marine biosecurity champions (MPI-funded, AC-coordinated) worked at waterfront departure points i.e. marinas and boat ramps. 774 pax were engaged with from 22nd-31st Dec 2023. Caulerpa was the most discussed topic.
2. Inspections at ferry departure points – 100% of GBI ferries are covered by AC biosecurity inspectors and biosecurity dogs, and recently giving out Aotea-specific collateral on Caulerpa
3. MPI Comms programme
4. AC Comms:
 - press releases (Mayor fronting)
 - Safeswim: Caulerpa messaging on 12 Safeswim digital signs (Orewa, Takapuna, Mission Bay, Herne Bay, Maraetai, Browns Bay, Taumanu, St Marys, Clarks Beach, Judges Bay, Point England)
5. Collateral distribution to stakeholders such as yachting, sailing and boating clubs, diving, fishing and boating retailers, marinas.
6. E-newsletters – distributed to all stakeholder groups and networks.
7. Hui for stakeholders

