



ESTUARINE & WETLAND HEALTH



HOW ARE WE DOING?

Doing well

- Reclamation in estuaries largely halted
- Spartina and other invasive plants eradicated in Waimea Inlet
- Discharges of sewage and industrial contaminants has reduced.

Must improve

- Natural vegetation segments around the margins of estuaries, particularly estuarine shrubland and rushland
- Manage fine sediment discharges to waterways more carefully
- Protection of significant bird species from disturbance such as vehicles and dogs, as well as predation
- Control vehicle access at critical points to avoid vehicles damaging fragile estuarine habitats.



Since 2002, Tasman District Council has monitored the state of five estuaries and one harbour to determine the condition and trend of the ecosystem and selected human use values.

What is the state of our estuaries?

The majority of Tasman's estuaries are in a healthy state and contain significant ecological values. Many of our estuaries are nationally or internationally important for many birds, both endemic and international migratory birds.

The overwhelming issue in this coastal environment is the loss of saltmarsh rushland, reedland, coastal scrub and forest around the land margin and the habitat and biodiversity loss that goes with it.

Pest species such as stoats, ferrets and dogs have been responsible for reduced numbers of threatened birds such as the Banded Rail and Marsh Crane.

Within the tidal flats the area of seagrass meadow is relatively low compared to other estuaries in less developed parts of the district such as Whanganui Inlet. A loss

of seagrass has been recorded in Waimea estuary in recent years. Seagrass meadows are important as they are host to high diversity and abundance of invertebrate life which is important for the whole ecosystem including birds and fish that depend on them.

Nuisance algal blooms occur regularly in the upper Motupipi estuary.

Valuable saltmarsh, tidal flat and seagrass habitat in all estuaries are susceptible to loss through predicted acceleration of sea level rise.

Limited monitoring of the effects of discharges from farm and rural-residential run-off and sewage shows these effects are not widespread. The effects of major industrial discharges and Nelson Regional Sewage discharge to the Waimea Estuary appear to have reduced over time.

Trend in estuary condition

Aerial photography since 1940 shows the major losses of estuarine habitat due to human intervention in all our estuaries occurred prior to 1940, with ongoing losses since then at a slower rate. Since 1990, there has been very little loss of saltmarsh in most estuaries.

Since the 1940s, visual evidence shows there has been a large increase in fine sediment discharged to estuaries.

The habitats and condition of the mudflat ecosystem of Waimea Estuary was similar in 2006 to that in 2002, with any changes attributed to natural variation.

The proportion of soft mud coverage in the Waimea and Motupipi is very high and is expanding in the Waimea. Mud decreases the oxygen in the sediment and lowers diversity and abundance of life.



Waimea Estuary

TASMAN DISTRICT ESTUARY HEALTH

Ruataniwha	0.86Km ²
Effects of nutrients	☺
Disease risk for bathing	☺
Toxic contaminants	☺☺
Sedimentation	☺☺
Habitat loss (hectares)	- 48 ☹

Motupipi	0.16Km ²
Effects of nutrients	☺
Disease risk for bathing	☹
Toxic contaminants	☺☺
Sedimentation	☹
Habitat loss (hectares)	- 35 ☹

Motueka	0.75Km ²
Effects of nutrients	☺☺
Disease risk for bathing	☺
Toxic contaminants	☺☺
Sedimentation	☺
Habitat loss (hectares)	-300 ☹☹

Moutere	0.76Km ²
Effects of nutrients	☺
Disease risk for bathing	☺
Toxic contaminants	☺☺
Sedimentation	☺
Habitat loss (hectares)	-40 ☹

Waimea	34.6Km ²
Effects of nutrients	☺☺
Disease risk for bathing	☺
Toxic contaminants	☺☺
Sedimentation	☹
Habitat loss (hectares)	-170 ☹☹

What is Tasman District Council doing about improving the health of our estuaries?

- Running workshops and events to highlight the importance of our estuaries and how we should go about restoring them
- Working with key stakeholders to better manage the values of the Waimea Inlet
- Helping provide ecological assessments for private landowners
- Identifying and removing barriers to fish migration
- Ecological restoration in Tasman District Council reserves such as Sandeman Reserve in Waimea Inlet and Parapara Inlet in Golden Bay.



Bells Island

What can you do about it?

- Report to Council any rubbish dumping, pollution, vehicles, reclamation and other disturbance. 24 hour Pollution hotline: 03 543 8400
- Get involved in your local Coast Care Group

For a full report on estuarine restoration see the Council website: www.tasman.govt.nz click on "Environment" pages, then click "Coastal Marine"



Vehicle damage to the Motupipi Estuary