



Northern North Island Shellfish Surveys

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has funded intertidal shellfish surveys in northern New Zealand since 1992. These surveys monitor the cockle and pipi populations to find out where these shellfish are and how many are there.

WHY SURVEY SHELLFISH?

Shellfish species such as cockles and pipis are treasured as kai moana and in recreational fisheries.

In the northern North Island region, cockle and pipi populations are still relatively widespread. At some sites, however, abundances may fluctuate over time due to harvest pressure, disease or environmental change.

For this reason, MPI commissions surveys to assess the shellfish populations.

WHERE ARE THE SURVEYS DONE?

On sheltered muddy and sandy beaches throughout northern New Zealand.

Survey sites include beaches, harbours and bays in the Auckland Fisheries Management Area (FMA 1), with sites in the wider Auckland metropolitan area, Northland, Bay of Plenty, and Waikato.

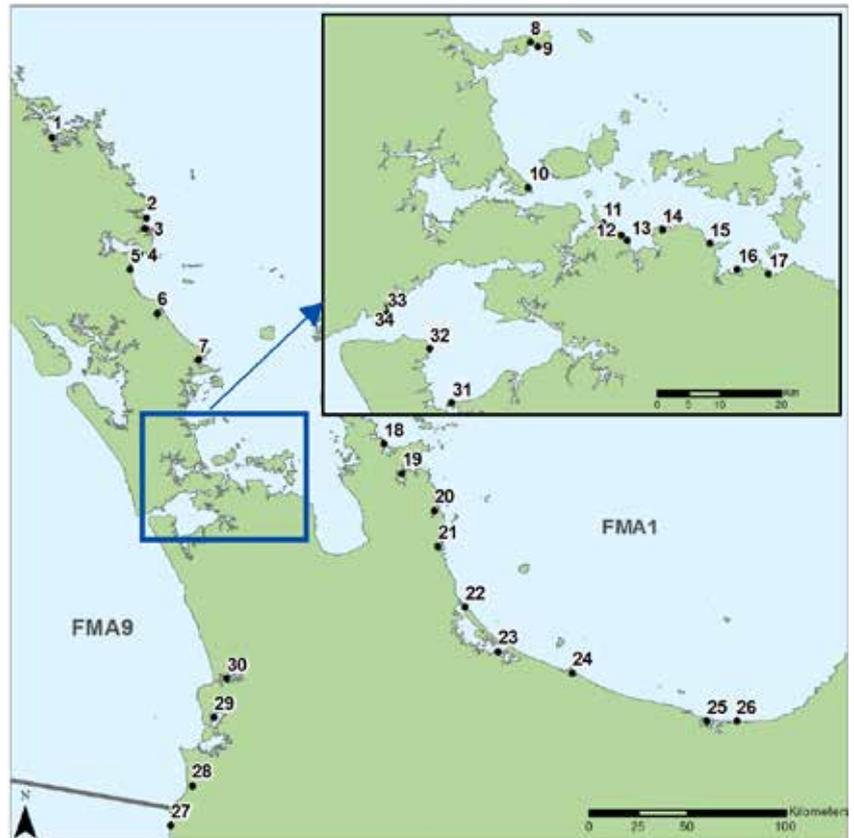
The surveys have been ongoing since 1992, and usually include 12 sites each year.



Cockle *Austrovenus stutchburyi*



Pipi *Paphies australis*



Survey sites include (but are not limited in the future to): 1. Te Haumi Beach, 2. Ngunguru Estuary, 3. Pataua Beach, 4. Marsden Bank, 5. Ruakaka Estuary, 6. Mangawhai Estuary, 7. Whangateau Harbour, 8. Okoromai Bay, 9. Te Haruhi Bay, 10. Cheltenham Beach, 11. Eastern Beach, 12. Howick Beach, 13. Cockle Bay, 14. Beachlands, 15. Umupuia Beach, 16. Kauri Bay, 17. Kawakawa Bay, 18. Whangapoua Beach, 19. Whitianga Harbour, 20. Tairua Harbour, 21. Whangamata Harbour, 22. Bowentown Beach, 23. Otumoetai Harbour, 24. Little Waihi Estuary, 25. Ohiwa Estuary, 26. Waiotahi Estuary, 27. Waikawau Beach, 28. Marokopa Estuary, 29. Aotea Harbour, 30. Raglan (Whaingaroa) Harbour, 31. Clarks Beach, 32. Grahams Beach, 33. Cornwallis Beach, 34. Mill Bay.

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HOW ARE THE SHELLFISH SURVEYED?

At each survey site, cockles and pipis are counted and measured from random locations across each shellfish bed.

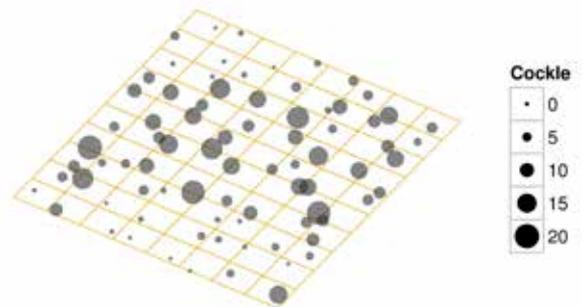
Afterwards, the shellfish are returned to where they were sampled from.



WHAT DO THE RESULTS LOOK LIKE?

The counts and measurements tell us how many cockles and pipis are there. We also find out what their sizes are, and how many juveniles and adults are in the population.

In addition, the survey results can be used for comparisons across years, providing information about population changes.



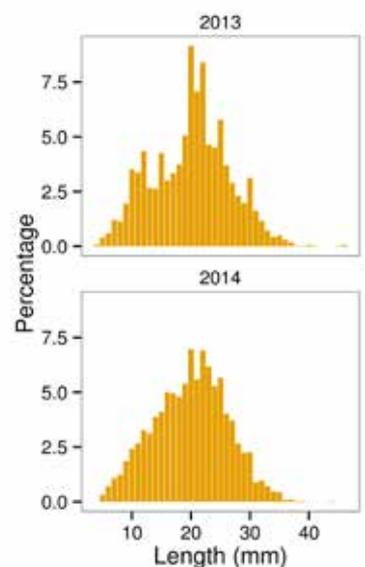
Shellfish sampling grid. Circles indicate the sampling points, and their size increases with the number of shellfish found.



HOW ARE THE RESULTS USED?

The surveys provide important information about changes to shellfish populations that inform fisheries management discussions with tangata whenua and the recreational sector on the sustainable management of these populations.

Past management measures have included seasonal, temporary and permanent closures, as well as changes to bag limits.



Comparison of shellfish lengths between surveys conducted in 2013 and 2014.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For any questions regarding the surveys, or their results, please contact MPI **0800 00 83 33** or +64-4-894 0100.