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# Celebrating the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park

**Monday, 17 December 2007, 10:07 am**

**Speech: New Zealand Government**

Hon. Steve Chadwick

Celebrating the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park

Conservation Minister Steve Chadwick delivered a speech to the Department of Conservation's Auckland Conservancy and guests about the future development of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

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I am delighted to be here this evening to take part in this celebration of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. The special values of the park make it a fantastic asset for both the Auckland region and New Zealand.

The park has great potential to contribute to the social, economic and environmental future of New Zealand. To realise this potential we need to protect and enhance the unique values of the park, and ensure people have the opportunity to benefit and enjoy the park, now and in the future.

Through the four year \$2 million funding package of 'Project Hauraki', many exciting initiatives are already underway that will do even more to enhance the Hauraki Gulf as a visitor destination and centre of island conservation.

Solar power sources have been installed on Tiritiri Matangi, Motuora and Hauturu islands in the Hauraki Gulf. This sustainability initiative has already proven its worth both to the department and the environment by significantly lessening the use of fossil fuels.

It has also included investment in improving visitor facilities so people can enjoy and experience special places like Great Barrier Island, where tracks have been upgraded and new facilities installed at campsites ready for this seasons summer visitors.

Extensive weed control operations on Motutapu, Rangitoto and Motuihe islands Tiritiri Matangi and Motuora islands are having a positive impact, creating space for native plants and animals to thrive.

Results of the Little Spotted Kiwi survey carried out this year on Tiritiri Matangi, have revealed that numbers on the island have more than doubled over the last 5 years - this is a fabulous result and you should all be proud. There are now 60 to 80 of these birds, compared with just 30 in 2002.

## Project Hauraki

The most ambitious "Project Hauraki" initiative is the ecological restoration programme for Rangitoto and Motutapu islands. This restoration will involve removing all seven remaining mammal pests from both islands, in a bid to create the largest pest free island habitat in the Hauraki Gulf.

This is the most complex island pest eradication the department has ever attempted in terms of the range of pest species, the size of the islands and the difficulty of the terrain on Rangitoto.

The department is a world leader in island pest eradications with experience of more than 50 successful island pest eradications in New Zealand, and is confident this eradication will be

successful.

The programme of work to investigate the feasibility of restoring these iconic inner gulf islands was announced last year by the Prime Minister and the former Conservation Minister Chris Carter. I am very pleased to confirm that the feasibility investigations are nearly finished and initial results are looking very positive.

Eradicating pests from Rangitoto and Motutapu is a key step in the ecological restoration of these beautiful and popular Hauraki Gulf islands. It builds on decades of conservation work by both DOC and the community, including removal of possums and wallabies, re-planting parts of Motutapu and weed control on both islands.

This restoration work will allow us to reintroduce species such as kiwi, kaka, tuatara and mistletoe in the future. Native bird populations on the islands such as the endangered NZ dotterel, kereru and white fronted tern would be safe from stoats, rats and feral cats. Rangitoto's unique pohutukawa and rata forest would be able to grow undisturbed by rodents and rabbits.

The department will be looking to move into the operational phase of the programme in June 2008. The first steps will include installing the infrastructure required to carry out pest eradication and beginning the bird and reptile monitoring programmes.

Rodents will be most difficult pests to remove, and they will need to be targeted first. Resource consents have also been lodged to the Auckland Regional Council and Auckland City Council to undertake an aerial bait drop during the winter months within the next three years. The application has been publicly notified, submissions close tomorrow and a hearing is likely to take place in March next year.

The Rangitoto and Motutapu restoration programme is a flagship project for the Marine Park. Restoring Rangitoto and Motutapu and repopulating them with native species would be a huge draw card for visitors. Combined with other pest-free islands in the Marine Park - Tiritiri, Matangi, Motuora, Little Barrier and Motuihe - the gulf will truly be a centre for island restoration.

## Marine Park

To fully realise the benefits of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park, we need to increase its public profile and ensure the special values of the park are recognised and widely supported. There is much work to be done to make the concept of the park a reality in the hearts and minds of the communities who live, work and visit the Hauraki Gulf.

Promoting greater awareness of the Marine Park remains a priority for my department.

Tonight's celebrations mark the start of a programme of planned work to increase public awareness and build support for the park. This programme will include promotional materials, events and other awareness-raising activities.

I am delighted to hear that earlier today, the first networking day for community trusts working in the marine park took place. My department will be providing regular opportunities for community groups, trusts and other stakeholders to share successes and work together for the benefit of the park.

Local communities play a vital role in conservation in this country, and promoting their contribution to enhancing and protecting the park is just one of the things the department can do to increase public awareness and support.

To make the concept of the Marine Park a reality will require the support and involvement of a variety of partners and stakeholders.

In particular I would like to acknowledge the important role of the Hauraki Gulf Forum, which is

carrying out the integrated management of the area. I'd also like to congratulate John Tregidga and Mike Lee on their appointment as the new Chair and deputy Chair of the Forum I would also like to acknowledge the work of Laly Haddon, as the former chair of the forum for his leadership in recent years.

Finally, I'd like to mention all of the community trusts and groups involved in conservation in the Marine Park. Your contribution to enhancing the values of the Marine Park is truly inspirational and I would like to thank you for all your hard work and ongoing commitment to conservation.

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