Measuring New Zealanders’ attitudes towards their oceans and marine reserves

A Colmar Brunton report for WWF-New Zealand
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This survey was conducted using Colmar Brunton’s telephone omnibus, with the methodological details as follows:

- 1,003 telephone interviews with New Zealanders aged 15 and over
  - Please note interviews were not conducted in Christchurch this year due to the fieldwork’s proximity to the Christchurch earthquake
- Interviewing conducted using random phone number generation
- Interviewing was conducted in two waves of the omnibus, from 15 to 21 March and 29 March to 4 April, 2011
- The data is post-weighted to reflect New Zealand population statistics in terms of gender, age, household size, and region.

All demographic differences between subgroups shown in bold are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level; those not in bold differ from the New Zealand average but not significantly so.
Summary and conclusions
Seven out of ten New Zealanders think their marine environment is under threat (71% cf. 73% in 2005).

25% believe there is no threat (22% in 2005).

5% are unsure.
Amount of total marine environment actually protected in marine reserves (<1%)

Perceived to be currently protected (31%)

Percentage of marine environment want to be protected (36%)

Q3a/Q3b/Q4a/Q4b

Base: All respondents (n=1,003). Excluding Don’t Know (DK)
This equates to over **three million** New Zealanders (or 96%) who think a larger proportion of their oceans should be protected in marine reserves than currently is the case.

Population projection is based on New Zealanders aged 15 years and over, e.g. 3,160,386 people according to the 2006 census. This equates to 3,033,971, or 96% of people believing more than 1% of NZ’s marine environment should be protected in marine reserves.
Perceived level of threat to New Zealand’s marine environment
Compared to 2005 fewer New Zealanders perceive there’s a high level of threat to their marine environment.

Significantly fewer New Zealanders compared to the last survey see the level of threat as ‘very high’, and significantly fewer think it’s high (either very or quite high).

Q6: Do you think overall NZ’s marine environment is under threat? Q7: What do you think that level of threat is?
Base: All respondents (2011 n=1,003, 2005 n=1,001)
Although in general Māori and older Kiwis perceive there’s more of a threat.

Q6: Do you think overall NZ’s marine environment is under threat? Q7: What do you think that level of threat is? Base: All respondents (2011 n=1,003, 2005 n=1,001)

Very or Quite High: 44%
- Māori (60%)
- 60+ year olds (52%)
- Asian background (25%)
- 16 – 29 year olds (34%)
- 30 – 39 year olds (37%)

Very Low or No Threat: 25%
- Asian background (43%)
- 16 – 29 year olds (32%)
- Māori (19%)

*Significant differences at 95% level shown in bold, those not in bold differ from the NZ average but not significantly so

Q6: Do you think overall NZ’s marine environment is under threat? Q7: What do you think that level of threat is?

Base: All respondents (2011 n=1,003, 2005 n=1,001)
Perceived marine environment threats
The top three perceived threats to NZ’s marine environment remain the same as in 2005.

1. COMMERCIAL FISHING
   TOTAL POPULATION: 50%
   - Male (56% cf. 46% female)
   - 40 – 49 year olds (63%)
   - 16 – 29 year olds (42%)

2. POLLUTION & SEWAGE
   TOTAL POPULATION: 47%
   - Female (51% cf. 43% male)
   - 40 – 49 year olds (54%)
   - Asian (40%)
   - ‘Other’ ethnicity (34%)
   - Auckland (40%)
   - Small town rural (58%)

3. RECREATIONAL FISHING
   TOTAL POPULATION: 19%
   - Wellington (26%)
   - 60+ years (12%)

*Significant differences at 95% level shown in **bold**, those not in bold differ from the NZ average but not significantly so.

Q8: What do you think are the top two or three threats to the marine environment?
Base: All respondents who think the marine environment is under threat (n=710)
So fishing/taking of marine animals – both commercially and recreationally – continue to be perceived as big threats to the marine environment.

Q8: What do you think are the top two or three threats to the marine environment? Base: All respondents who think the marine environment is under threat (n=710)
And New Zealanders think it’s reasonable to ban recreational and commercial fishing, collecting, and dredging in marine reserves.

Q5: When an area is protected by becoming a marine reserve, this means that people who are currently using the area will have to stop activities such as commercial and recreational fishing, collecting and dredging. Do you think it is reasonable this happens?

Base: All respondents (2011 n=1,003, 2005 n=1,001)

Significantly more New Zealanders compared to the last survey think it’s reasonable (either definitely or probably), and significantly more think it’s ‘probably’ reasonable.
Q5: When an area is protected by becoming a marine reserve, this means that people who are currently using the area will have to stop activities such as commercial and recreational fishing, collecting and dredging. Do you think it is reasonable this happens?

Base: All respondents (2011 n=1,003, 2005 n=1,001)
Q5: When an area is protected by becoming a marine reserve, this means that people who are currently using the area will have to stop activities such as commercial and recreational fishing, collecting and dredging. Do you think it is reasonable this happens?

Base: All respondents (2011 n=1,003, 2005 n=1,001)
New Zealanders’ knowledge of marine reserves
In general New Zealanders know marine reserves help protect natural habitat for scientific use and allow some recreational activities.

Q1: Please let me know which statements you think are true and do apply to NZ’s marine reserves, and which ones don’t. Marine reserves...

Base: All respondents (n=1,003)

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Although there is differing knowledge amongst demographic subgroups about what a marine reserve permits:

- Although there is differing knowledge amongst demographic subgroups about what a marine reserve permits
- Asian background (68%) are least likely to know this
- Wellingtonians (58%) and 50 – 59 year olds (63%) are least likely to know this
- Females (53% cf. 63% males) and younger NZers (50% 16 – 39 year olds) are least likely to know this
- Māori (31%), Asian background (42%), ‘other’ ethnicities (41%), and those aged 60+ years (29%) are most likely to agree this is allowed
- Asian background (19%), ‘other’ ethnicities (20%), and younger NZers (14% 16 – 29 year olds) are most likely to agree this is allowed
Protecting New Zealand’s marine environment in reserves
Before being told, over nine in ten thought more of their marine environment is currently being protected.

95% of New Zealanders overestimate the percentage of the marine environment protected in reserves (cf. 90% in 2005)

Mean percentage think is protected:
- 2011 – 31%
- 2005 – 23%

Q3a: What percentage is it? Q3b: What would you guess that the percentage might be?
Base: All respondents (n=1,003). Excluding Don’t Knows
There is differing perceptions of how much of the marine environment is in reserves; in particular younger Kiwis, Māori, and Asian background believe more is currently protected.

Q3a: What percentage is it? Q3b: What would you guess that the percentage might be? Base: All respondents (n=1,003). Excluding Don’t Knows

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<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Mean percentage think is protected:</th>
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<td>2011 – 31% 2005 – 23%</td>
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**Percentage of NZ’s marine environment perceived to be protected – by subgroup**

- **Total population (n=1,003)**: 31.3%
- **Male (n=440)**: 25.1%
- **Female (n=417)**: 37.8%
- **New Zealander (n=726)**: 27.6%
- **Māori (n=69)**: 42.9%
- **Asian (n=57)**: 57.3%
- **16-29 years (n=210)**: 40.5%
- **30-39 years (n=124)**: 28.8%
- **40-49 years (n=206)**: 27.9%
- **50-59 years (n=125)**: 29.4%
- **60+ years (n=192)**: 27.6%
- **Auckland (n=254)**: 36.1%
- **Wellington (n=81)**: 34.2%
- **Provincial cities (n=295)**: 29.5%
- **Small towns/rural (n=227)**: 27.1%
And New Zealanders think a much higher percentage of their marine environment should be protected

96% of New Zealanders think a greater percentage of New Zealand’s marine environment should be protected (cf. 95% in 2005)

**Percentage of marine environment believe should be protected**

Mean percentage should be protected:
- 2011 – 36%
- 2005 – 36%

Q4a: Less than 1% of New Zealand’s marine environment is currently protected in marine reserves. What percentage do you believe should be protected in marine reserves?

Base: All respondents (n=1,003). Excluding Don’t Knows
They believe on average 36% of their oceans should be protected (same as in 2005)- in particular younger Kiwis, Māori, and Asian background think protection should be even higher.
And compared to the average New Zealander nearly half think they care more about their marine environment

Q4b: And what percentage of the marine environment do you think the average New Zealander believes should be protected in marine reserves? Q4a: Less than 1% of New Zealand’s marine environment is currently protected in marine reserves. What percentage do you believe should be protected in marine reserves?

Base: All respondents (n=1,003). Excluding Don’t Knows
In particular Females, Māori, and those in Provincial cities think they want a larger percentage of the marine environment protected than the average New Zealander.

Q4b: And what percentage of the marine environment do you think the average New Zealander believes should be protected in marine reserves? Q4a: Less than 1% of New Zealand’s marine environment is currently protected in marine reserves. What percentage do you believe should be protected in marine reserves?

Base: All respondents (n=1,003). Excluding Don’t Knows

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