

4 Submission from Aotea Sea Scouts to Auckland Council's Pest Management Plan

Much of the coast of the Manukau is infested with the invasive Pacific oyster (*Crassostrea gigas*), which was introduced from Asia and became established in the early 1970s. In New Zealand the Pacific oyster has been considered by biosecurity, primary industry, and conservation departments and ministries to be an invasive species. It is a fast growing pest that has quickly replaced the native New Zealand rock oyster. It makes oyster farms more profitable but has no place in the wild, especially on our beaches and intertidal rock platforms, where it forms dense clumps that accumulate mud, changing the character of the rock platforms and beaches.

This marine pest has large, rounded, radial folds which are often extremely rough and sharp, especially when they break up on our beaches. They pose a danger to those engaging in water recreational activities; the sharp shell if trodden on can lacerate feet and cause nasty infections.



Figure 1 - Photograph of foot of one of the Scout Leaders. This was lacerated by oyster shells at the 2017 Onehunga Festival held on Taumanu Reserve.

The beach at Taumanu Reserve in Onehunga has been graded a high-tide swimming beach only. At full tide the water is too deep for swimmers to step on the oysters that litter the mudline at the edge of the sanded beaches, but at half-tide this danger becomes real, even though the depth is still perfectly swimmable at this stage. The full-tide only swimming designation is considered Auckland Council's response to the threat of the oysters. This is inappropriate and for Taumanu beaches to reach their full potential, this threat needs to be removed.

Some say that swimmers can wear beach shoes to protect their feet; this is an inappropriate response to the threat. The oysters form dense clumps that accumulate mud, which along Taumanu beaches has reached such a depth that the mud sucks beach shoes from the wearers feet so that their next steps are unprotected from shells hidden in the mud.



We would like Council to remove the oysters from Taumanu Reserve beaches so that they are not a danger to the public and swimming becomes possible at half-tide. We would also like Council to remove rocks and boulders that have been dumped on the foreshore along the seawall of Onehunga Harbour Road, to remove this breeding ground.