

Attachment 34

Correspondence received from
Department of Conservation

RC3276

01 August 2024

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

S95E request Re: Port of Auckland consent applications for Bledisloe North Wharf and Fergusson North Wharf

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your consent application for the proposed wharf extensions to accommodate larger-scale cruiser and container ships in the near future.

Further to your presentation and initial discussion with [REDACTED] in July 2004, and in response to your formal application lodged with Auckland Council, please find below our pre-application advice.

It is well known that kororā/little blue penguins live throughout the Hauraki Gulf and utilise not only natural habitats but also manmade structures adjacent the coast that offer sheltered burrows for roosting and/or breeding. This includes rock walls or breakwaters similar to those we understand the port has at both the ends of Bledisloe North and Fergusson North wharves.

If these rock walls are to be disturbed during construction there is potential for either habitat loss, death or injury to these native seabirds. There have been instances in the past of kororā being crushed in similar coastal construction projects.

In the first instance, we advise you inspect these structures thoroughly for evidence of occupation by these seabirds. This should be undertaken at various times as the species can be transient at times or alternatively, during breeding, permanently occupying burrows over a four-to-six-month period (e.g. July/August to November/December). Again, during January/February kororā will be landbound for three weeks as they moult.

If you find evidence of kororā utilising the wharves, you should prepare a penguin management plan. As mitigation you could pro-actively propose installing artificial burrows to mitigate any loss or simply to enhance. If there is the possibility that kororā will require moving to avoid them being injured or killed through the works, you will need to apply for a permit under the Wildlife Act 1953.

Similar consideration should be given in your plans to other marine mammals that frequent the inner harbour including seals and dolphins, with regard to keeping them from potentially harmful works or exposure to loud underwater sound which can be disorienting.

Any ecological assessment of the rock revetments should also assess the presence of protected skinks which, if found, would also require a management plan.

Finally, we strongly advise that you pro-actively engage with mana whenua iwi on your consent application. As our Treaty partners DOC will similarly raise this proposal with them and it is often helpful if they have already been fully appraised and had any concerns addressed in advance.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to get in touch with [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Department of Conservation - *Te Papa Atawhai*

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