

Restoring natural values to the Coastal environment.
Identify the causes of the damage.
Eliminate or minimize the causes



Access to beach



Official Vehicle Access Tip Road

Down to the beach



Hard right into the dunes

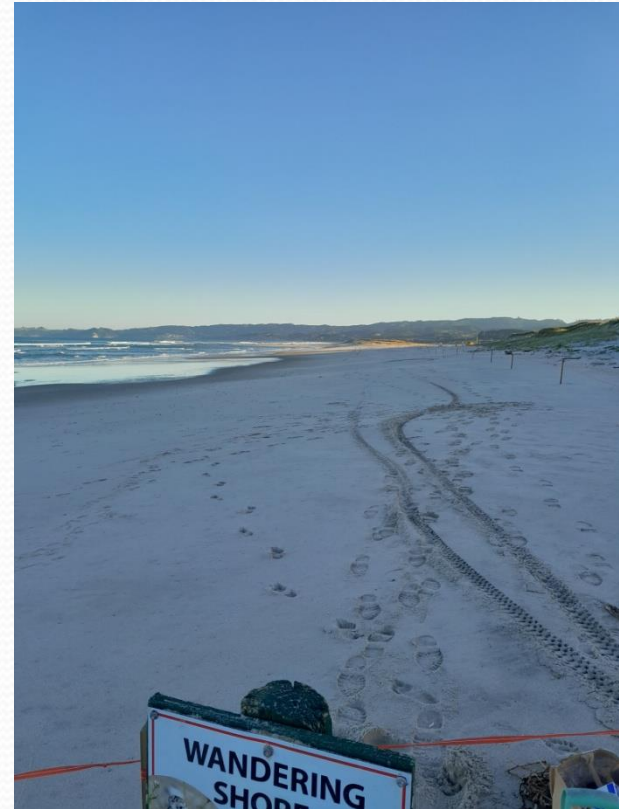


How fencing helps

Unfenced area

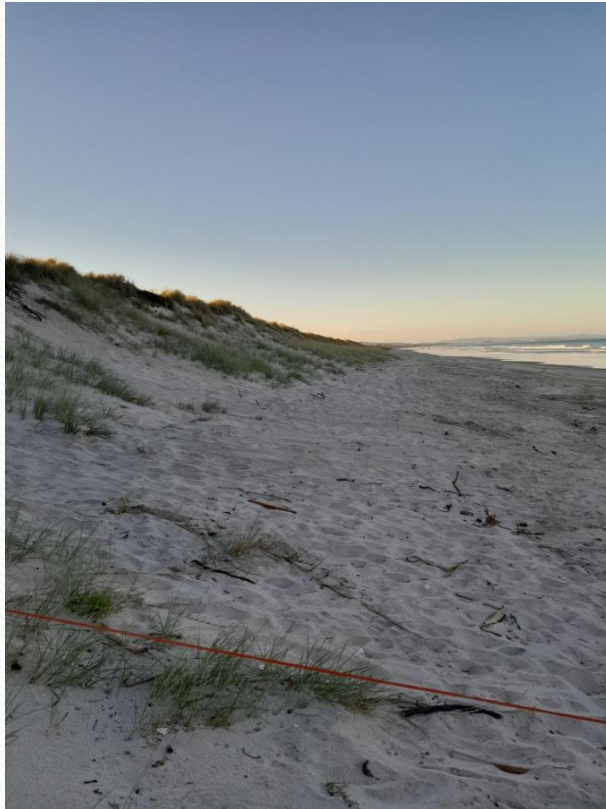


Fenced area

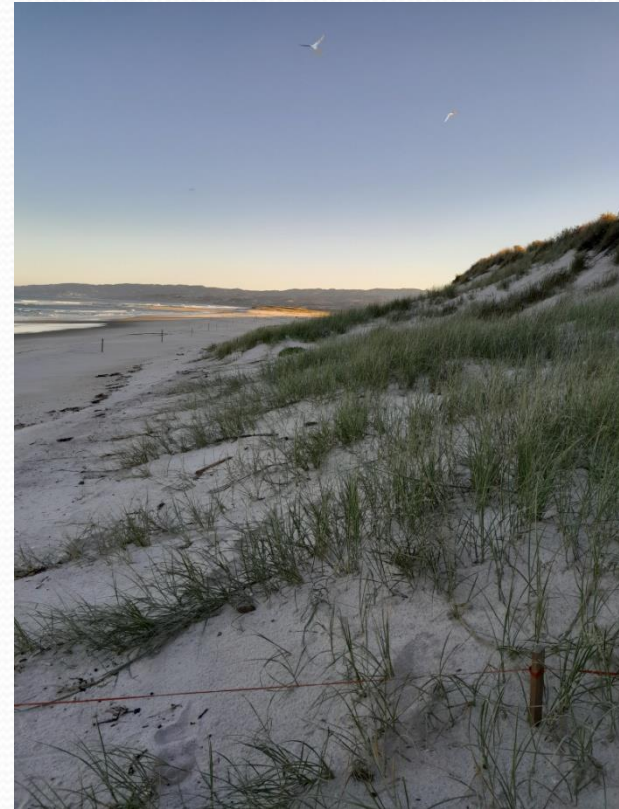


Foot of dune

Vehicles



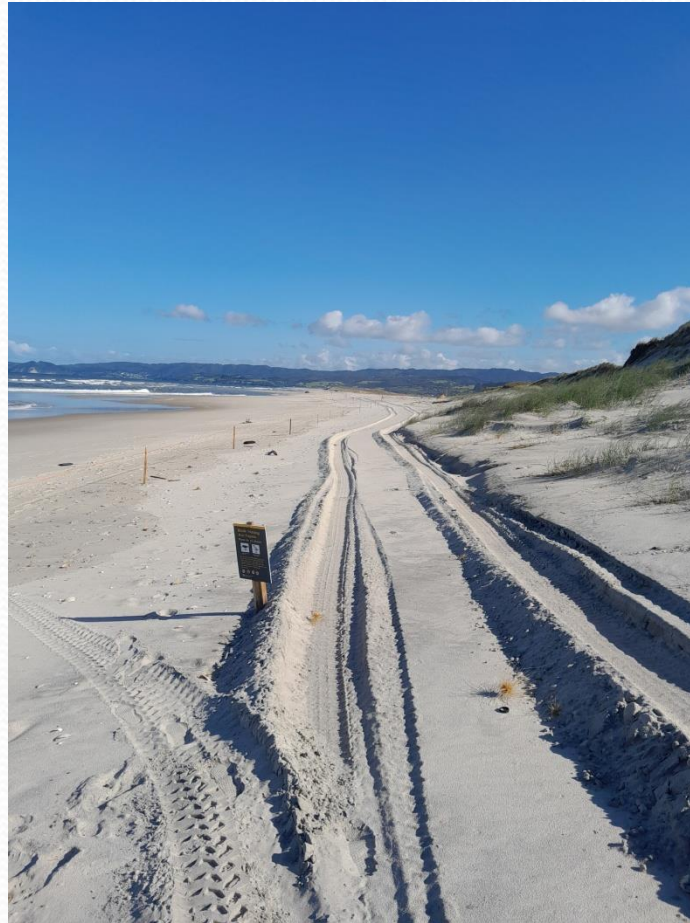
No vehicles



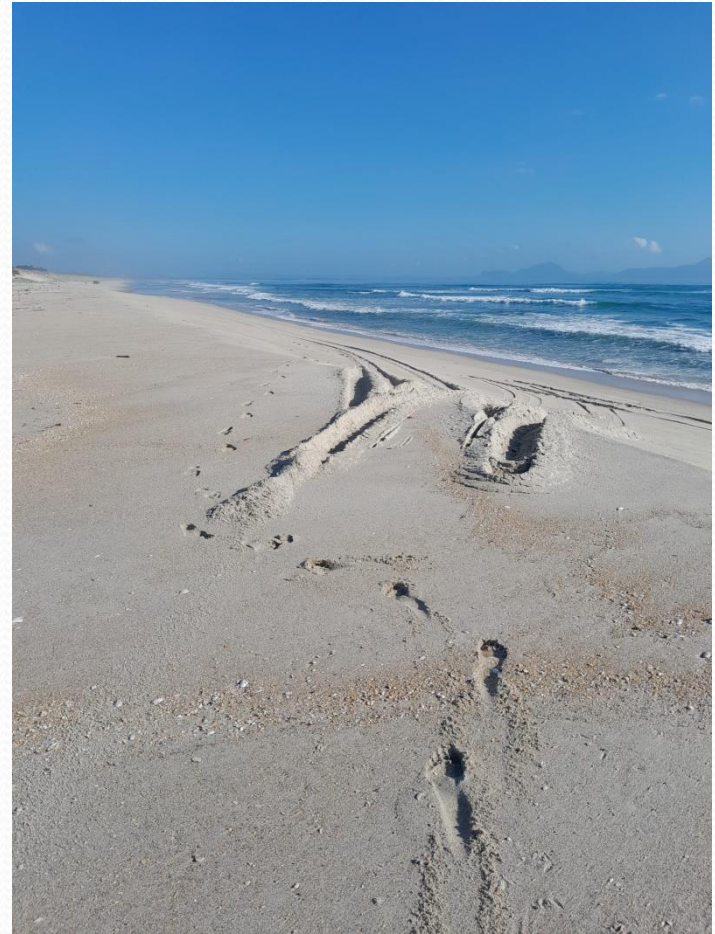
At high tide vehicles drive along the toe of the dunes.



Damage to toe of dune in protected area.



The seaward ridgeline of the spit is its highest point



What have we done.

- Making submissions to Whangarei District Council Vehicles on beaches Bylaw to Prohibit vehicles from using the beach for the last 15 years. Resulting vehicles prohibited in Ruakaka Wildlife Refuge and in front of the Ruakaka Village to the southern side of Ruakaka river mouth.
- Making presentations to the Conservation Board.
- Requested that DOC close the vehicle access at Tip Road.
- Making councils aware of their responsibility to uphold the New Zealand Coastal Policy statement.
- Writing to Surveyor Generals Office to clarify boundaries.
- Writing to the Ministry of Transport to clarify why 'Beach' is included in the interpretation of 'Road' in the Land Transport Act. Investigated legislative amendments required to clarify the purpose of including 'road' in the interpretation of the Act. We started a consultation process to circulate a petition to Parliament to delete 'Beach' from the interpretation of 'road'. Or even replace Interpretation of road with 'Where this Act applies' which is the purpose of the interpretation.
- Visited New Zealand Archives to see original documents and letters concerning the Wildlife Refuges of Bream Bay to read the Refuges Proclamation
- Spent untold hours on the beach monitoring vehicles, photographing flora and fauna, changes to the dunes and estuary, talking to vehicle drivers, reporting offenders, sourcing materials for fences and signs to protect refuge. Worked with existing pest control permit holder.
- Submitting on Regional Council policies and plans. The last being a Regional Plan appeal where it introduced vehicle exclusion zones on the foreshore of various coastal Significant Ecological Areas in Northland including, Waipu River mouth Wildlife Refuge.

Where to from here

The appeal to have vehicle exclusion zones in the regional plan was a hard fight and was only resolved with the threat of having to have it sorted in the Environment Court. We await inter agency action. Only they can negotiate their own boundaries that they are now mapping. We still need signage and a strategy for enforcement which is being decided by the District and Regional councils, Department of Conservation and the Police. The volunteer stakeholders are yet to be invited for their contribution.

There is a Vehicles on Beaches Bylaw review in 2026 that we will prepare ourselves for.

Pursue getting rid of 'beach' from the interpretation of 'road'.

Continue monitoring the beach and dunes alongside the enforcement agencies.

Continue to lobby for improved signage, preferably vandal proof and resistant to ramming by 4WDs

Work towards signage providing links to further information online.

Strategise to close off the dunes to vehicles even though officially these dunes have protection under the Reserves Act.

Work towards having vehicle barriers on the beach to low water that comply with marine and road safety standards for Vehicle Exclusion Zone

Lobby political parties to audit local governments around the country for their compliance with the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.