



Top of the South  
Marine Biosecurity  
Partnership

# Operational Plan 2025/26

08 July 2025



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## Document Quality Assurance

<p><b>This document may be cited as:</b> Boffa Miskell Limited 2025. <i>Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership: Operational Plan 2025 - 2026</i>. Report prepared by Boffa Miskell Limited for Nelson City Council, Tasman District Council, Marlborough District Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council and Biosecurity New Zealand.</p>				
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Revision /version:	Issue date:	Prepared by:	Description:	Reviewed by:
Draft	08/07/2025	Sarah Thwaites Biosecurity Project Coordinator  Kane McElrea Biosecurity Consultant Senior Principal  Anne Cunningham Engagement Specialist	Draft plan issued to TOS Marine Biosecurity Partnership	Kane McElrea Biosecurity Consultant Senior Principal
Final	05/08/2025	Kane McElrea Biosecurity Consultant Senior Principal	Final plan issued to TOS Marine Biosecurity Partnership	Sarah Flynn Ecologist Senior Principal
<p><b>Approved for issue:</b> Kane McElrea   Biosecurity   Senior Principal   5 August 2025</p>				
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File name & Project number: BM230666  
Cover photograph: Abel Tasman National Park, New Zealand by David Tip

# Contents

1.0	Purpose of this Operational Plan	4
2.0	Background	4
3.0	Strategic Framework	4
3.1	Partnership Roles and Responsibilities	6
3.2	Marine Biosecurity Resourcing	8
4.0	Workstreams	9
4.1	Workstream 1: Partnership Coordination and Planning	9
4.2	Workstream 2: Surveillance and Response	10
4.3	Workstream 3: Stakeholder Communications and Engagement	13
4.4	Workstream 4: Greater Wellington Support	15
4.5	Workstream 5: Working with Tāngata Whenua	15
4.6	Workstream 6: Wider Initiatives	16
4.7	Workstream 7: Infrastructure and Technology	16
5.0	Implementation of Operational Plan	17
6.0	Partnership Coordination Budget 2025/26	18
7.0	Programme Risks	19

## 1.0 Purpose of this Operational Plan

This Operational Plan details the collective operational and behaviour change activities being delivered by the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership ('the Partnership') for the 2025/26 financial year. The Partnership is a collaboration between Nelson City Council (NCC), Tasman District Council (TDC), Marlborough District Council (MDC), Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC), and Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) (a business unit of the Ministry for Primary Industries) and the Partnership Coordination Team (Boffa Miskell Ltd).

## 2.0 Background

Since 2008, the TDC, MDC and NCC have collaborated with BNZ under the Partnership in response to managing marine biosecurity at the Top of the South/Te Taihu region. The Partnership is aimed at preventing new marine pests from being introduced or establishing in the Top of the South marine environment, managing established pests, and responding effectively to new incursions. The Partnership has now grown to include Greater Wellington Regional Council, and is currently coordinated under contract by Boffa Miskell Ltd.

## 3.0 Strategic Framework

The Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Strategy was reviewed in May 2024 to help guide collective action and behaviour change through the development of this operational plan which includes communication and engagement planning. The Strategy (Figure 1) outlines the purpose, aims, opportunities and challenges of the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership, guided by a 10-year vision statement:

The Top of the South's marine ecological function is maintained and continues to be a rich and healthy ecosystem that sustains the needs of present and future generations

# TOP OF THE SOUTH MARINE BIOSECURITY STRATEGY 2024

REGIONAL MARINE BIOSECURITY IN THE TOP OF THE SOUTH: FROM TE WHANGANUI-A-TARA, ACROSS RAUKAWA MOANA TO TE WAIPOUNAMU

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

### CURRENT OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

- **Partnership:** We are a successful partnership, leading the way in marine biosecurity in Aotearoa since 2010. Three councils founded the partnership with Biosecurity New Zealand and allies, to explore how to control, manage and prevent the spread of marine pests within our region. We are now four councils with Biosecurity New Zealand, as we have been joined by GWRC.
- **Capability:** We are continually learning and innovating together by drawing on both practical experience and evolving scientific understanding. GWRC are joining to consider their future approach.
- **Capacity:** We are continually growing our capacity to respond in our region and have a track record of exploring innovative approaches. We do not yet have consistent infrastructure, facilities, and capability in our rohe. GWRC are building their capacity and resources.
- **Alliances:** We have relationships with other regional and national initiatives. We will continue our work with iwi to develop regional partnerships to understand how we support their efforts around marine restoration. The entire marine environment throughout Aotearoa faces similar challenges, and each region's success impacts others.
- **Behaviour change:** Marine pests are not understood by the public as well as terrestrial pests. This impacts the pace and ease of behaviour change.
- **Scope:** Our focus is on preventing the establishment of marine pests and managing new incursions.

### OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- We see an opportunity for a consistent approach to marine biosecurity across Aotearoa NZ relating to surveillance, guidance and application of legislation, and behaviour change. So, we can **use our experience to provide practical advice and thought leadership** to the key agencies responsible for that.
- **Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) has joined the partnership** and is developing its marine biosecurity capability. We are exploring if and how we can grow our regional partnership with other regions.
- We are working on how to build sustainable partnerships with iwi that support them in their aim to restore marine environments, including **taking better account of mātauranga Māori**.
- We want to better **capture the imagination of marine users** with stories that help them contribute to protecting the marine environment.

## TO GET THERE, WE WILL WORK AT...

### STRATEGIES

1. Maintaining and innovating how we do surveillance and respond to incursions.
2. GWRC learning from experiences of the Partnership and tailoring an approach to their context.
3. Contributing to the case for both technological and physical infrastructure development.
4. Encouraging and informing a consistent national approach— through communication campaigns, behaviour change, guidance, policy and legislation.
5. Maintaining programme sustainability through an equitable division of support, effort, and resources, maintaining a clear collective focus on our strategic outcomes.

## HOW WILL WE MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

### WORKSTREAMS

1. **Hold regular internal strategic conversations** that ensure effective delivery of our programmes, including fair cost and resource allocation and future programme sustainability.
2. **Efficiently survey and respond to incursions** of marine pests throughout the year. This includes communicating behaviour change to marine users.
3. **Develop and deliver a plan** for how we build and maintain our capability and capacity across our region to surveil, respond and communicate.
4. **GWRC will scope out the inclusion of marine pests in the RPMP** by 2025, leading to a response plan in place by 2026.
5. **Support our partners to build iwi relationships** that enable us to support tāngata whenua in their marine restoration efforts.
6. **Contribute to local, regional and national marine biosecurity initiatives**, e.g., consistent national guidance, policy and legislation and behaviour change campaigns.
7. **Build relationships with other regional alliances and maintain existing relationships with allies** within our region that enable us to influence marine users' behaviour.
8. **Continue to identify gaps in our infrastructure**, technology and capability across our regions and support partners to develop an approach.

## WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

### OUR PURPOSE

**Prevent marine pests from being introduced or established in our marine environment, manage established pests, and respond efficiently to new incursions when they are detected**

### OUR 10-YEAR VISION

**The Top of the South's marine ecological function is maintained and continues to be a rich and healthy marine ecosystem that sustains the needs of present and future generations**

### OUR 3-YEAR OBJECTIVES

1. Most **marine users clearly understand good practice** as it relates to their use of the marine environment and are increasingly motivated to prevent the spread of marine pests in our region.
2. We have **sufficient resources and capability** to provide or support a rapid response to new pest incursions, and to support our long-term pest management objectives.
3. We have **maintained and enhanced our operational delivery and behaviour change programmes**.
4. We have **identified critical infrastructure priorities** and are working to gain support from key agencies.
5. We have **established relationships with other alliances** around the motu, and we share good practices and advocate together at a national level.
6. We **regularly connect with tāngata whenua**, who have set principles for marine restoration, and we work together to ensure they are well supported to deliver their biosecurity aims.

Figure 1 The Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Strategy Review 2024.

## 3.1 Partnership Roles and Responsibilities

### 3.1.1 Councils

Councils play a critical role in managing marine biosecurity threats within their respective jurisdictions. Under the Biosecurity Act 1993, they are responsible for implementing and enforcing regional rules through Regional Pest Management Plans (RPMPs), which aim to prevent the introduction and spread of marine pests.

The MDC RPMP provides a framework for managing specific marine pests, including *Sabella spallanzanii* (Mediterranean fanworm), which is classified as an Exclusion Pest. The goal is to prevent *Sabella* from establishing in the Marlborough region.

NCC and TDC share a combined RPMP that targets the efficient management and eradication of marine pests. *Sabella* is classified as an Eradication Species, with the objective of reducing its presence to zero in the short to medium term and eradicating it in the intermediate term.

To ensure consistency with adjoining regions, NCC and TDC recently amended their RPMP to better align with MDC's rules. Under the updated regulations, all marine craft entering the Tasman-Nelson region must not exceed Level 2 on the Cawthron Level of Fouling (LoF) scale. Level 2 is defined as macrofouling present in small patches or isolated individuals/colonies, covering 1–5% of the visible surface.

Vessels exceeding this fouling threshold must be hauled out within 24 hours of arrival, and boat owners may be required to provide proof of haul-out. Exemptions may apply, such as for vessels complying with the Craft Risk Management Standard (CRMS) for biofouling or those undertaking short trips.

Currently, GWRC's RPMP does not include marine pest species or biosecurity rules. However, funding has been allocated through their Long-Term Plan to support the development of a marine biosecurity programme. GWRC plans to appoint a marine biosecurity specialist in 2025/26 to lead this initiative.

### 3.1.2 Ministry for Primary Industries / Biosecurity New Zealand

BNZ is responsible for overseeing the Biosecurity Act and the development of national policies and regulations. They are responsible for border controls and inspections of international vessels. BNZ is currently developing a national behaviour change initiative and developing consistent national approaches to managing marine biosecurity risk. BNZ funds and manages the Marine High Risk Site Surveillance (MHRSS) programme, which is carried out every six months at 12 high-risk international shipping ports and marinas throughout New Zealand.

BNZ plays an important support role in the Partnership, including providing funding towards the coordination of the Partnership and providing regular updates and information on MPI-led initiatives. BNZ has also developed the **Protect Our Paradise** campaign, a nationwide initiative aimed at engaging recreational boaties in marine biosecurity practices. The campaign promotes simple actions, such as cleaning boat hulls, gear, and anchors, to prevent the spread of invasive marine pests and protect New Zealand's coastal waters.

### 3.1.3 Marine Industry Stakeholders

Marine industry stakeholders such as the marine aquaculture industry, marina managers, port operators, shipping companies, and the fishing industry are crucial to marine biosecurity. Their operational activities are key pathways for the introduction and spread of marine pests, making their role in early detection and prevention vital. By encouraging and adhering to good marine biosecurity practices, these stakeholders can help minimise biosecurity risks.

The Partnership will continue to support and work alongside marine industry stakeholders to help with education and advocacy within their marine communities, ensuring broader awareness and compliance with biosecurity measures. Their ongoing participation in the Partnership protects both the marine environment and the economic interests of their industries.

### 3.1.4 Top of the South Partnership Coordination Team

The Partnership coordination team oversee and support the coordination of councils, BNZ, stakeholders and iwi. The coordination team plays a key role in enabling the partners to share information and raising awareness of marine biosecurity. This is done through regular meetings, workshops, presentations, and engagement activities, including managing the Partnership's website, newsletters, and stakeholder connections.

Additionally, the coordination team provide science advice, oversees regional surveillance work, and analyses data to inform the Partnership's strategic efforts in marine biosecurity and provide support when responding to biosecurity incidents as needed.

This comprehensive approach aims to enhance public understanding, engagement, and regional surveillance, supporting the successful implementation of marine biosecurity activities and fostering a productive partnership.

## 3.2 Marine Biosecurity Resourcing

Table 1 outlines the funding and resources for marine biosecurity activities in the Top of the South region for the 2025/26 financial year. There are activities funded under the Partnership (e.g. the Partnership coordination team activities, summer hull surveillance) and separate council-led activities (regional surveillance, incident response) that are funded under OPEX funding.

Table 1 Resourcing for marine biosecurity activities for the 2025/26 financial year.

Partner	Partnership	OPEX	FTEs	Other Resources
MDC	\$42,624	\$194,000 BNZ contribution for <i>Sabella</i> *	0.2 spread between 2 people consisting of Senior Biosecurity Officer and Biosecurity Manager	Note that \$35k is provided by Marlborough Marinas for surveillance. Included in OPEX
TDC	\$42,624	\$40,000 BNZ contribution for <i>Sabella</i> *	Marine biosecurity is in the job descriptions for the Team Leader Biosecurity and Biodiversity, and for 4 Biosecurity Officers  Marine Biosecurity is also part of the role for the 2 x Harbourmasters	Harbourmaster staff time and boat  Biosecurity staff time  \$15k contingency budget for incursion responses
NCC	\$42,624	\$51,096 BNZ contribution for <i>Sabella</i> *	0.2 FTE coordinating the Council's marine biosecurity programme, including chairing the Partnership Management Committee; managing Partnership coordination contract and dive survey contracts, managing responses when required	Harbourmaster
GWRC	\$40,000	\$100,000	1.0 FTE	
BNZ	\$25,000	> \$2,000,000 Marine High Risk Site Surveillance programme	0.1 BNZ coordinator for the Partnership 0.1 BNZ national <i>Sabella</i> Programme lead	
Total	\$192,872	\$385,096		

\*BNZ contributions are subject to MPI budget confirmation.

## 4.0 Workstreams

The Partnership aims to prevent marine pests from being introduced or establishing in the Top of the South marine environment, manage established pests and respond efficiently to new incursions when they are detected.

This requires all partners to work together and collectively contribute to the programme and undertake a range of activities to achieve the Strategy objectives, as well as to support each other and stakeholders in achieving their objectives. Workstreams identified in the Strategy guides the activities of the Partnership.

### 4.1 Workstream 1: Partnership Coordination and Planning

Hold regular internal strategic conversations that ensure effective delivery of our programmes, including fair cost and resource allocation and future programme sustainability.

The Partnership is coordinated by a team from Boffa Miskell Ltd. This coordination team has developed this operational plan and will deliver key components of the plan. The coordination team will also support the TOS partners to deliver their activities under this plan.

This operational plan has been developed to support overall Partnership coordination and to ensure all activities can be linked back to the Strategy.

#### Activities

##### 1.1 Monthly Partnership Meetings

Partnership meetings are held online monthly and chaired by the contract managing council (NCC for 2023 – 2026).

##### 1.2 Coordination of marine biosecurity activities

Partners will provide regular updates on marine biosecurity activities that have been undertaken and ensure coordination of future activities to maximise value and improve efficiency.

##### 1.3 Develop and finalise operational plan and review annually

This operational plan has been developed by the coordination team and will be reviewed and endorsed by the Partnership. It will be maintained as a 'living' document and will be regularly updated throughout the year. Ahead of the 2025/26 financial year, this plan will be reviewed and updated with the activities planned for 2026/27.

##### 1.4 Annual Reporting

An annual report will be provided to the partners at the end of each financial year. This report will be used to measure progress towards the Strategy objectives. The report can be used by the Partners to meet council reporting obligations, including reporting on the council's biosecurity operational plans.

## 4.2 Workstream 2: Surveillance and Response

Efficiently survey and respond to incursions of marine pests throughout the year.

Marine biosecurity surveillance and response activities are generally undertaken by all project partners and collectively through the regional hull surveillance programme coordinated by Boffa Miskell on behalf of the partnership.

Mediterranean fanworm has been the focus of a significant amount of surveillance work over the past 10 years, with project partners working to detect, control and eradicate small populations of *Sabella* when they have been discovered on boat hulls or marine structures and the seabed.

### Activities

#### 2.1 Marlborough District Council – council-led surveillance

MDC undertakes surveillance activities using divers in Picton Marina, Waikawa Marina, Queen Charlotte Sound, Havelock Marinas, Port Underwood, and the outer sounds. This surveillance consists of vessel checks, moorings, and structures, as well as some transect lines in high-risk areas.

Currently, Mediterranean fanworm is not established (no evidence of a self-sustaining populations) in Marlborough. It has been detected in Picton Marina, Waikawa Bay Marina, Grove Arm and Port Underwood (East Arm), and it has been detected on vessels that have arrived from out of the region, however, there is no evidence of establishment after response actions. The MDC Biosecurity Operational Plan sets out the following targets relating to Mediterranean fanworm.

- **Target 18.1** Each year, a minimum of two dive surveillance and removal operations are undertaken in Picton Marina, Waikawa Marina.
- **Target 18.2** Each year, one dive surveillance operation is undertaken in Waikawa Bay, Picton Port, Shakespeare Bay, Grove Arm, Port Underwood and Havelock Marina.
- **Target 18.3** Each year, any situation that comes to Council's attention with regard to suspected Mediterranean fanworm or a fouled vessel recently arrived into Marlborough, has an investigation started within 24 hours.

The proposed programme of work for Mediterranean Fanworm for the 2025/26 financial year in Marlborough is as follows:

*Surveillance works to be undertaken by TC Environmental*

- Oyster Bay and East Arm Port Underwood – September/October
- Shakespeare Bay – September/October
- Queen Charlotte high-risk vessels – September/October
- Waikawa marina – March – June
- Picton marina – March – June
- Elaine, Duncan, Tennyson – September - November

*Surveillance works to be undertaken by Diving Services NZ Limited*

- Picton marina - September/November
- Waikawa marina - September/November
- Havelock marina - November/December

*Surveillance works to be undertaken by Marlborough Commercial Diving Services*

- Picton Port – March – May
- Grove arm
- Picton swing moorings and moored vessels
- Kaipakirikiri Bay, Kumtoto Bay and Kaipapa bay - TBC
- Waikawa and Picton Marinas, small scale surveillance works in high-risk areas (additional to scheduled surveillance)

## **2.2 Tasman District Council – council-led surveillance**

TDC undertakes annual dive surveillance in Port Tarkohe, and hull surveys on moored vessels throughout the year. The relevant Delivery targets for TDC in the current Tasman Nelson RPMP Operational Plan include:

- TDC works with NCC, MDC and BNZ under the TOSMBP to destroy any *Sabella* infestations as and when they are identified.
- All known infestations of *Sabella* are treated.

The current proposed programme of work for Mediterranean Fanworm for the 2025/26 financial year in Tasman is as follows:

*Surveillance works to be undertaken by Diving Services NZ Limited*

- Port Tarkohe – October 2025 and May 2026

*Surveillance works to be undertaken by TDC biosecurity staff, NCC marina staff, Diving Services NZ*

- Incursion responses to *Sabella* either through summer dive survey or other detection (harbourmaster, DOC, biosecurity officer surveillance) – all year, but focused on summer

## **2.3 Nelson City Council – council-led surveillance**

Nelson City Council undertakes dive surveillance twice annually in Nelson Haven. The relevant KPI in the NCC Long Term Plan for biosecurity (including marine biosecurity) is:

- Compliance with the Tasman Nelson Regional Pest Management Plan reporting requirements (e.g. annual reporting on yearly operational targets and progress towards 10 year Plan objectives).

The proposed programme of work for the 2025/26 season is as follows:

*Surveillance works to be undertaken by Diving Services NZ Ltd*

- Nelson Haven – two surveys in October/November and April/May

*Surveillance works to be undertaken by NCC biosecurity staff, Nelson marina staff, Diving Services NZ*

- Incursion responses to *Sabella* either through summer dive survey or other detection (harbourmaster, Nelson marina officer surveillance) – all year, but focused on summer

#### **2.4 Greater Wellington Regional Council – council-led surveillance**

With support from the Partnership, GWRC will develop an annual surveillance plan that will aim to survey vessels prior to the busy summer season and ensure vessels travelling from the Wellington region are not spreading marine pests to other harbours or regions (including the Top of the South region). Potential survey sites include:

- Evans Bay Marina and Moorings
- Clyde Quay - Wellington Marina and Moorings
- Port Wellington
- Seaview Marina
- Mana Marina

#### **2.5 TOSMBP Annual Summer Hull Surveillance Programme**

Each year, the Partnership carries out a summer hull surveillance programme, which involves surveying active vessels across the Top of the South regions and inspecting vessels for marine pests. The summer hull surveillance programme aims to reduce the risk of new incursions into the region by actively surveying recreational vessel hulls, educating vessel owners on biosecurity risks, and collecting data to help inform management decisions.

A summer hull surveillance plan is prepared and approved annually by the Partnership, ready for implementation over the summer months.

This year the Partnership will aim to undertake vessel hull surveillance throughout the summer period (December – March), on days that are more likely to have a higher number of active vessels on the water. This can be achieved by giving local contractors flexibility in which days are chosen to undertake the surveys, with preference given for fine weather windows, weekends, and holiday periods.

#### **2.6 National Marine High Risk Site Surveillance (MPI/BNZ):**

The national MHRSS is conducted biannually in summer and winter by NIWA (under contract to BNZ) at 12 of New Zealand's busiest international shipping ports and marinas, which include Wellington, Picton and Nelson harbours.

Its primary objectives are to detect incursions of high-risk non-native organisms or Unwanted Organisms, identify previously unrecorded non-native or cryptogenic organisms, and monitor

range extensions of established non-native or cryptogenic organisms exhibiting pest characteristics.

This surveillance focuses on high-risk sites where international vessels first enter, targeting habitats most likely to harbour these species. The current proposed programme for the 2025/26 financial year is:

- Picton Harbour winter survey
- Wellington Harbour winter survey
- Nelson Harbour winter survey
- Nelson and Mapua summer survey
- Picton, Waikawa and Havelock summer survey
- Wellington Harbour summer survey

## 2.7 DOC Motueka Marine Reserves Monitoring and Maintenance

Nationally, DOC partners with BNZ and mana whenua to help monitor and control the spread of invasive marine species. DOC Motueka undertakes a robust marine reserve monitoring and maintenance programme in the Top of the South region. The programme includes monitoring species and habitats, six monthly buoy cleaning, and restoration. DOC Motueka has an active dive team that has been briefed on how to identify and monitor invasive species. This team is also available for incursion response as per the TOS response manual and can conduct extra surveillance if it is considered a priority by DOC.

## 2.8 Incident response and reporting

If marine pests are detected during surveillance activities, the partnership has developed an incident response manual that sets out guidance so that decisions and processes are approached in a consistent and agreed manner by all Councils and stakeholders with regional responsibilities under the Partnership.

The incident response manual can be found [here](#).

Partners will provide updates / reports on incidents to the wider Partnership group to share critical information and lessons learned. Incidents are also recorded in the [Incident Register](#).

## 4.3 Workstream 3: Stakeholder Communications and Engagement

Develop and deliver a plan to engage stakeholders in the delivery of communication and engagement to boaties, to support behaviour change.

This workstream focuses on building strong, informed, and collaborative relationships with stakeholders to support behaviour change among boaties and other marine users. Through targeted communication and engagement activities, the aim is to foster a shared understanding of marine biosecurity risks and encourage proactive actions that protect the TOS marine environment. This includes aligning with national campaigns such as *Protect Our Paradise*, and working closely with partners to ensure consistent messaging, effective outreach, and the development of a community of practice that supports long-term programme success.

## Activities

### 3.1 Develop / organise / circulate information on relevant workshops, events and training programmes

Objective	Tasks
To provide key stakeholders with up-to-date information and support a community of interest/practice that underpins the programme delivery going forward.	1. Annual Forum Co-ordination, to inspire and motivate – strengthen the working relationship through knowledge sharing in the local context of TOS.
	2. Quarterly meeting with key stakeholders with compelling content and co-ordination to understand their aims and objectives to inform the wider programme
	3. Develop a programme of training and delivery (making use of the engagement programme to identify training needs).
	4. Stakeholder management, including regularly updated stakeholder register to support on-going comms via C2GG2G and wider project.
	5. Ad hoc attendance at events attended by our community of interest/practice

### 3.2 Coordinate the delivery of a quarterly newsletter and associated updates to the website (including CBG2G collaboration)

Objective	Tasks
To work in partnership with the Clean Below Good to Go Comms team to align our comms channels and so ensure a more national approach to communication.	1. To align our approach and update CBG2G website content with TOS information e.g. rules
	2. To update TOS website to reflect key content from CBG2G/Newsletter etc
	3. To work with partners to gather content and co-ordinate with Clean Below external comms provider. This includes aligning with national programmes such as 'Protect our Paradise'. According to the Comms Operational approach taken by TOS and CBG2G
	4. Stakeholder management, including regularly updated stakeholder register to support on-going comms via TON and wider project.

### 3.3 Provide support to TOS Councils to support their public engagement with boaties and on-the-ground stakeholders

Objective	Tasks
To work with on-the-ground key stakeholders, such as Harbour Masters, Marinas and Ports who are in regular contact with boaties	1. To co-ordinate with key stakeholders to identify what support is required to undertake October activation that gets key messages to boaties. This includes considering what support partners can provide e.g. Protect Our Paradise programme, and co-ordinating with areas whose boaties impact TOS e.g. Fjordland, Auckland and Canterbury.
	2. To work with the partners to prioritise activities in that programme, to have most impact by balancing where risk lies vs where public reach is possible.
	3. To support key stakeholders to deliver a programme of activations – this may include content for boatie packs, events at ports/marina/ yacht clubs, and provision of information of TOS rules.
	4. Stakeholder management, including regularly updated stakeholder register to support on-going comms via TON and wider project.
	5. To identify training needs and other stakeholder awareness to inform the wider programme

## 4.4 Workstream 4: Greater Wellington Support

GWRC will scope out the inclusion of marine pests in the RPMP by 2025, leading to a response plan in place by 2026.

GWRC has recently joined the Partnership as a first step to doing more to protect their region and the top of the south regions against marine pests. The GWRC RPMP does not currently include marine pest species or rules relating to marine biosecurity; however, they have committed to joining the Partnership as a first step towards understanding how they can do more to protect their region and others against marine pests. GWRC intends to develop their marine biosecurity programme with support from the Partnership.

### Activities

#### **4.1 Provide information, advice, and support to GWRC to enable their council to establish a marine biosecurity programme and framework through their RPMP.**

The Partnership will support GWRC through the process of including marine pests in the Greater Wellington Regional Pest Management Plan. This may include providing examples or relevant information to support the process of undertaking a review or developing rules for marine pests in the RPMP.

## 4.5 Workstream 5: Working with Tāngata Whenua

Support our partners to build relationships that enable us to support tāngata whenua in their marine restoration efforts.

The Partnership have identified a desire to better connect and engage with tāngata whenua within their respective council jurisdictions. Each council is responsible for ensuring they are meeting the needs of Māori within their rohe and will need to engage with Māori through appropriate mechanisms determined by each council.

The Partnership has identified that this is critical and will work on ways to better engage with tāngata whenua about marine biosecurity, and to keep them informed with the Partnership activities and progress towards the objectives.

### Activities

#### **5.1 Partners engage with tāngata whenua regularly to provide updates on marine biosecurity activities within their rohe and to understand the needs of tāngata whenua**

Partners have identified the need to continue to engage with tāngata whenua within their council jurisdictions during the review of the strategic plan. The Partnership will support councils to engage with tāngata whenua on marine biosecurity issues, including providing regular updates about marine biosecurity activities being undertaken through the partnership.

#### **5.2 Standard agenda item in monthly meetings to enable skills sharing**

It is proposed that iwi engagement becomes a standard agenda item at the monthly Partnership meetings to enable skills sharing. The coordination team will support the Partners where required – this may include coordinating hui, providing collateral or operational updates.

## 4.6 Workstream 6: Wider Initiatives

Contribute to national marine biosecurity initiatives, e.g., consistent national guidance, policy and legislation and behaviour change campaigns.

The involvement of the Partnership in wider marine biosecurity initiatives will ensure a cohesive and comprehensive approach to protecting marine environments across Aotearoa. This collaborative approach will help to strengthen the overall resilience of marine ecosystems against biosecurity threats. It will also provide opportunities for knowledge and skill sharing.

### Activities

#### 6.1 Attendance at national meetings

Partners or representatives of the Partnership will attend national meetings, including:

- Biosecurity Working Group
- National Marine Biosecurity Forum

#### 6.2 Attendance at national conferences

Partners may attend relevant conferences such as the NETS Biosecurity Conference. Partners to provide an update to the wider Partnership group on key learnings from conferences.

#### 6.3 The Partnership maintains connections with other regional alliances and initiatives

The Partnership will connect with other regional alliances, such as the Top of the North Marine Biosecurity Partnership, Fiordland Marine Guardians, and others to share information and resources.

## 4.7 Workstream 7: Infrastructure and Technology

Continue to identify gaps in our infrastructure, technology and capability across our regions and support partners to develop an approach.

This workstream aims to ensure the Partnership actively identifies critical gaps in marine biosecurity infrastructure and technology and can support partners and stakeholders to improve regional infrastructure that will help to reduce the likelihood of marine pests establishing in the regions and utilises the best technology to reduce the risk of new marine pests from establishing and improve operational reporting.

## Activities

### **7.1 Support project partners and stakeholders to undertake a review of critical marine biosecurity infrastructure requirements within each region**

The Partnership will support councils and stakeholders to review current marine biosecurity infrastructure and identify opportunities to improve.

### **7.2 Continue to review and integrate new technology to improve delivery of marine biosecurity activities**

The Partnership will regularly review and integrate new technology and systems to improve the operational delivery of marine biosecurity activities.

### **7.3 Continue to monitor and review the capability of the Partnership and partners to ensure an appropriate level of capability within the Partnership**

The partners will regularly review capability within the Partnership to ensure effective operational delivery of marine biosecurity activities.

## 5.0 Implementation of Operational Plan

The corresponding [Excel Operational Plan spreadsheet](#) outlines each activity of the operational plan, who is responsible for delivering each activity and the resources / funding available for that activity. Progress against each activity will also be recorded in this document. Updates on the delivery of the operational plan will be discussed at the monthly online meetings with the Partnership and coordination team.

An annual report (Activity 1.3) will be provided to the partners at the end of each financial year. It will summarise the work completed throughout the year and the progress made towards the Strategy objectives.

## 6.0 Partnership Coordination Budget 2025/26

The budget below (Table 2) outlines the financial resources allocated to the Partnership Coordination Team to support the implementation of the marine biosecurity operational plan for 2025/26. It enables delivery across core workstreams, including planning, surveillance, stakeholder engagement, and infrastructure, ensuring the programme is well-coordinated, responsive, and aligned with national and regional priorities.

*Table 2 Proposed Partnership Coordination Operational budget 2025/26.*

Workstream	Coordination Budget
Partnership Coordination and Planning	\$ 63,872.00
Surveillance and Response	\$ 64,000.00
Stakeholder Communications and Engagement	\$ 50,000.00
GWRC Support	\$ 5,000.00
Wider Initiatives	\$ 5,000.00
Infrastructure and Technology	\$ 5,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 192,872.00</b>

## 7.0 Programme Risks

Effective delivery of marine biosecurity activities requires proactive identification and management of potential risks. Table 3 outlines key risks that could impact the success of the operational plan, along with their potential consequences and proposed mitigation strategies. This approach ensures that the programme remains resilient, responsive, and capable of adapting to challenges as they arise.

*Table 3 Potential risks, impacts and possible mitigations for the delivery of marine biosecurity activities in the Top of the South.*

Potential Risk	Potential Impacts	Mitigation
New marine pest incursion	Marine pest species establish in new areas Impacts on economic, cultural, biodiversity and recreational values	Regular surveillance of vessels and structures Efficient and well-resourced incident response
Lack of community awareness and compliance	Increased risk of marine pest incursions	Deliver a communication and engagement programme to raise awareness and improve education within the community Engage regularly with the community and provide updates on progress of activities
Lack of sufficient or reduced long-term funding	Delays or failure to deliver marine biosecurity activities Current established pests are unable to be managed effectively New incursions are not able to be resourced and responded to adequately	Key agencies to secure adequate, multi-year funding to support the implementation of marine biosecurity activities
Limited contractors, control tools or product availability	Delays or failure to deliver marine biosecurity activities	Programme timeline is well planned Supply needs are understood and secured each year/control season Contractors are contracted well in advance of operations Alternative contractors are procured
Health and safety incident (contractors)	Injury or death Delays or failure to deliver marine biosecurity activities	Review contractor H&S documentation ahead of work Undertake H&S audits