



# Issue - Recognising and protecting our mountains and deep sea canyon

## *Issue Statement*

The Kaikoura Canyon together with the landforms of the Kaikoura Mountains form a natural feature of international significance. Currently this area as a whole has no formal recognition or special protection.

## *Our Vision*

Our vision is that our place is recognised by the world and that what makes our environment so special is protected from harm.

## *Current Knowledge*

The canyon itself is part of a landscape that can best be considered as part of the unique combination of land and sea, with the Kaikoura ranges rising steeply inland and the deep waters of the canyon dropping sharply seaward. Together with the nutrient rich water upwelling from the depths close inshore, this adds a richness of wildlife and biota rare in the world. The Department of Conservation has listed the Kaikoura canyon and Kaikoura landscape as a potential World Heritage site. The canyons in Kaikoura hold a special significance to the people of Ngati Kuri. They say that “*The ocean is known as Te Tai o Marokura or the sea of Marokura. Marokura was the atua who with his magical patu, carved the underwater trenches and canyons, which is why we have our whales here, off our shoreline. The underwater trenches also connect up back to where we first came from. It was Paikea the whale rider, who come on the back of the whale from Hawaiki along the whale route. He arrived here along the east coast of the North Island. He had two sons, one of those son’s was Tahu Potiki the ancestor of Ngai Tahu. Tahu people traveled down the east coast of the North island and settled in Kaikoura where we are still today. The Hikurangi trench is what connects us to where we came from some 700 years ago.*”

## **What needs recognising?**

Put simply Kaikoura is one of those special places in the world that deserves international recognition for:

1. Its sheer beauty, the way those snow capped mountains stand so close to the restless sea separated by a thin band of green cultivated land.

2. The wonder of this deep sea canyon so close to the coastline.
3. The outstanding abundance and diversity of marine life flourishing in the nutrient rich upwelling of deep oceanic water and warm and cold current convergence contributing to this abundance.
4. The great diversity of marine habitats in a small geographic area.
5. The whales and dolphins, in great numbers and diversity, with great whales such as sperm whales seen here so reliably by visitors.
6. The second highest number of seabird species ever counted around New Zealand, a country more deservedly known for its seabird diversity than for its famous land birds.
7. As the site that characterises New Zealand in its current mountain building phase so well that our time (24 million years of it) is known as the Kaikoura Orogeny.

## What needs protecting?

The World Heritage Advisory Committee commented that there were *major integrity and management issues that would need to be addressed before a potential World Heritage site could be defined and added to New Zealand's tentative list.*

At present the Committee noted that Kaikoura has:

1. No formal marine protected areas.
2. Lack of protected lowland of high natural character linking the protected mountains to the sea.
3. Lack of integrated planning for the area.

But what is it that really needs protecting?

1. The productive capacity of the marine environment to support the abundance of wildlife, fish and marine mammals.
2. Some parts of the marine environment that people leave intact so we can know how they might more naturally be and so that we can enjoy them.
3. The habitat of the species that we most value just for being there - the whales and birds.
4. The beauty of the coast and its protection from inappropriate and ugly development.
5. The quality of the environment - the clarity of the water and the air and places of natural quiet.

The landforms as a whole do not need protecting as such. We are not about to tear down the mountains or fill in the canyon. But we can destroy the life they hold and it is within our power to forever mar their beauty.

## What can we do?

Recognition and protection of what makes Kaikoura unique can be enhanced in many ways. Foremost in international recognition is the status conferred under widely recognised conventions such as World Heritage and Ramsar. Other ways are to improve the information available to the world or the gain recognition under other awards and conventions. Protection can be achieved by legal means and by other processes such as education and understanding.

## ***Management Ideas - Your Feedback***

We want your opinion on the management ideas we have listed below. The final strategy could include a mix of these, or others that you tell us about. Tell us what you think, below and on the form over the page.

<b>Our ideas</b>	<b>Your comments</b>
<p><b><i>A. Do nothing</i></b> Keep the status quo.</p>	
<p><b><i>B. Control fishing effect on the canyon</i></b></p> <p>Establish a Code of Practice to prohibit bottom trawling, bottom purse seining and dredging in the Kaikōura Canyon. Establish fisheries regulations to prohibit bottom trawling and dredging in the Kaikōura Canyon.</p>	
<p><b><i>C. Area based recognition and protection</i></b></p> <p>Establish a marine reserve part of the Kaikōura Canyon and part of the coastline. Establish a marine mammal sanctuary over the Kaikōura whale grounds (to include the canyon). Establish World Heritage Area classification for what makes Kaikōura unique.</p>	

## Te Korowai: Kaikoura Coastal Guardians - Feedback Form

**Issue: Recognising and protecting our mountains and deep sea canyon**

Your management ideas and reasons for them:

Other comments:

**Name of individual or group:**

I would/would not like (please delete as appropriate) to be kept informed of issues.

**The best way to communicate with me is**  
(choose one or more):

- Email and other electronic communications
- Newsletters
- Issues documents like this one
- Telephone
- Face to face meetings
- Other (specify)

**Please return by 1 March 2010 to:**

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