

Working with commercial partners: Helping to strengthen marine science and conservation



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Introduction

The task of conserving New Zealand's precious and unique natural environment is far too great for the Department of Conservation to do alone. Many others are passionate about preserving our nature and we want to inspire and support them to get involved. DOC works with a wide range of partners – iwi, communities, government, business and individuals. Businesses and corporates can play a vital role in conservation by setting a lead in their own standards of environmental performance, and through conservation partnerships. In turn, partners get to take part in high profile programmes led by world leaders in conservation management. These partnerships are essential to enable DOC to grow its conservation work in the marine environment.



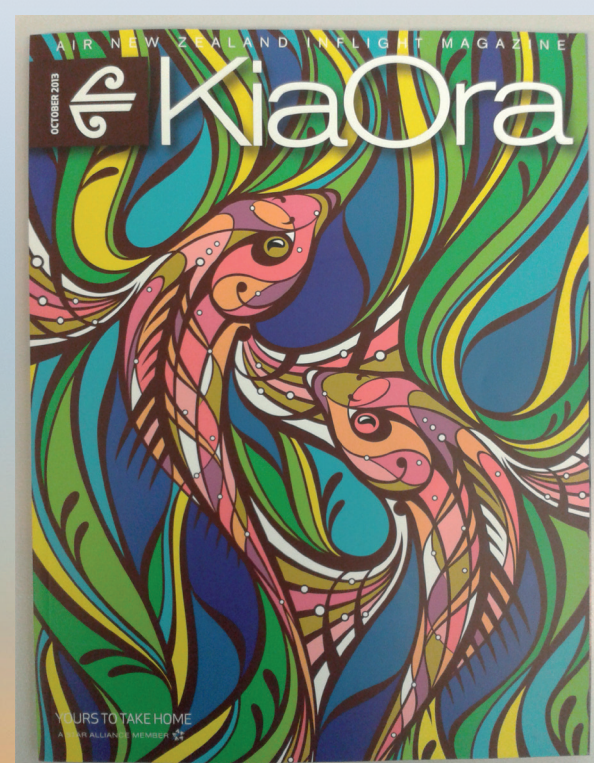
Map of the Coastal Gems marine reserve network

An Air New Zealand example

In 2013, Air New Zealand (Air NZ) announced an extension of their existing partnership with DOC, to focus on marine protection, with a view to benefitting both conservation and tourism. Air NZ is a major partner in DOC's development of a national marine reserve monitoring and reporting programme, which will allow DOC to monitor and report on the ecological integrity of New Zealand's marine protected areas. Air NZ is also a sole major sponsor of DOC's marine experiences network, promoting 10 iconic Coastal Gems as holiday destinations.



Articles about marine reserves and research in Air NZ's in-flight magazine 'Kia Ora'



The benefit to marine conservation through working with an internationally recognised brand

Where we have been and what we have done

Components	November 2012	November 2013	March 2014	November 2014	March 2015
	Tonga Island	Te Whanganui-A-Hei (Cathedral Cove)	Ulva Island-Te Wharawhara	Long Island-Kokomohua	Poor Knights Islands
High quality underwater photographs	Y		Y	Y	Y
Shag species survey	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Little blue penguin tagging to assess foraging dynamics	Y	Y		Y	
Tissue sample collections for stable isotope analysis	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Water and sediment sample collections for contaminants		Y	Y	Y	
Drop camera footage for habitat mapping		Y	Y	Y	
Sled video footage to document benthic species diversity	Y		Y	Y	
Baited underwater video survey for fish			Y		Y
Beach litter survey				Y	
Fish surveys using divers					Y
Benthic community surveys using divers					Y
Seabed sonar surveys	Y				

Different channels where we have been able to showcase our research and marine conservation efforts on both a national and international platform;

- Air NZ in-flight magazine 'Kia Ora'
- Air NZ in-flight entertainment video
- Air NZ in-flight cups
- NBC World of Adventure
- Air NZ social network sites
- NZ Herald and other newspapers
- Dive into Adventure campaign channels also included: Air NZ special offer e-newsletter to customers, billboards, online advertising, and DOC website and Visitor Centres.

Metrics for Dive into Adventure Campaign:

- 1840 entries and 949,000 Facebook Likes, 5 prize trips delivered
- Internal staff campaign with 580 entries, 5 prize trips delivered



DOC and Air NZ summer campaign advertised on Air NZ social network site

A joint investment

The Department and Air NZ have had to work hard on meeting the needs of each partner. A full-time position within DOC's Commercial Partnerships Unit manages the Air NZ account and requires advice and support from technical, scientific, marketing, campaign and brand advisors. Technical and science advisors within DOC's Marine Ecosystems Team provide significant time and expertise in addition to completing the objectives of the funded research programme, including:

- Providing opportunity for Air NZ staff and guests to participate in field work
- Providing a marine scientist presence on competition prizes such as Dive into Adventure campaign
- Expert advice and comment on media articles

Take home message

The partnership with Air NZ has been a huge success and has provided DOC with valuable support and exposure of the research and development work being done in the marine conservation estate. It has also raised the profile of marine protection and has showcased how partnerships with large internationally recognised and visible brands can benefit marine conservation initiatives.

Ecological Integrity

The objective of this programme is to better understand the concept of ecological integrity in the marine environment, and then develop a suite of effective and comprehensive tools for monitoring and reporting on species and ecosystems, processes, functioning and health in the marine environment.

A key area of research and development is identifying and testing indicators of ecological integrity for New Zealand's marine protected areas. The application of these indicators may extend well beyond these conservation areas, to include aspects such as the effects of protected species management and coastal use on ecological integrity.

Coastal Gems

This network adds a new tourism product grouping to DOC's portfolio, similar to the Great Walks concept. It establishes the product group in a way that will allow customers to find consumer-ready experiences and packages that are easy-to-buy.

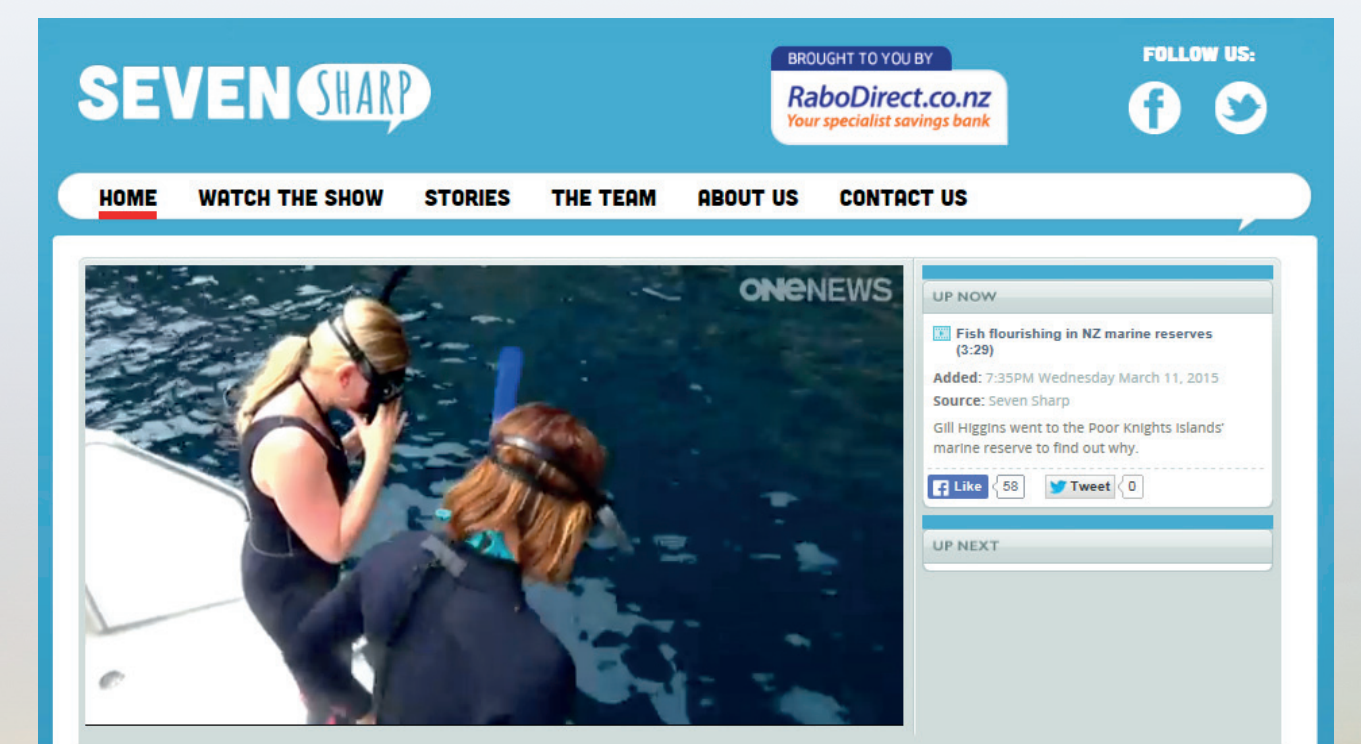
The Coastal Gems initiative will work closely with tourism operators in each marine reserve, in order to build up recreational product packages that are easy-to-buy. The intended result is more New Zealanders experiencing and caring for our unique marine environment.

Belonging to DOC's Coastal Gems network will add significant value and give wide reaching promotional benefits to tourism operators, including:

- Leverage off the marketing of Air NZ during their campaigns
- Association with the DOC brand that is well known, respected and trusted by New Zealanders
- Association with the 'Coastal Gems' brand – with brand associations to be built up similar to the 'Great Walks' brand
- Listings on the DOC website – making use of DOC's large traffic and online advertising. Acting as a funnel and conduit for consumers



Air NZ Greenteam members after a day out participating in fieldwork at Long Island-Kokomohua Marine Reserve. Photo: Vincent Zintzen



Seven Sharp news item about the partnership, filmed during fieldwork at Poor Knights Islands Marine Reserve