



Top of the South
Marine Biosecurity
Partnership

Annual Report 2024/25

30 June 2025



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This document may be cited as: Boffa Miskell Limited 2025. <i>Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership: Annual Report 2024/25</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.				
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Revision /version:	Issue date:	Prepared by:	Description:	Reviewed by:
Draft	03/06/2025	Sarah Thwaites Biosecurity Project Coordinator	Draft report issued to TOS Marine Biosecurity Partnership	Kane McElrea Biosecurity Consultant Principal
Final	30/06/2025	Kane McElrea Biosecurity Consultant Principal	Revised after client review, final report issued to TOS Marine Biosecurity Partnership	Sarah Flynn Ecologist Senior Principal
Approved for issue: Kane McElrea Biosecurity Principal 30 June 2025				
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File name & Project number: BM230666

Template revision: 20210624 0000

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1.0 Executive Summary

The 2024/25 year marked a period of strong delivery, strategic alignment, and expanded collaboration for the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership ('the Partnership'). Across eight workstreams, the Partnership continued to protect the region's marine environments through coordinated surveillance, rapid response, stakeholder engagement, and national alignment.

Key achievements included the completion of over 3,600 hull inspections across Marlborough, Tasman, Nelson, and Wellington, with targeted responses to pest detections and no new incursions of Mediterranean fanworm (*Sabella spallanzanii*) in Nelson for the second consecutive year. The expansion of hull surveillance into the Wellington region and the integration of Greater Wellington Regional Council into the Partnership marked a significant step forward in regional coverage.

The Partnership strengthened its communications and engagement efforts, supporting national campaigns such as *Protect Our Paradise* and *Clean Below Good To Go*, while also refining its stakeholder engagement strategy. A summer marketing campaign reached over 300,000 people through digital and print channels, reinforcing key marine biosecurity messages.

Collaboration with tāngata whenua was deepened through regular engagement and representation within the Partnership. Infrastructure and technology advancements, including the use of the Marine Vessel Portal and investment in new haul-out facilities, further enhanced the region's biosecurity capability.

Looking ahead to 2025/26, the Partnership will focus on refining its operational planning, expanding surveillance coverage, formalising communications partnerships, and continuing to build capability across the region. With strong foundations and a shared vision, the Partnership remains committed to safeguarding the Top of the South's marine ecosystems for future generations.

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2.0 Introduction

2.1 Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership

This Annual Report describes the collective operational and behaviour change activities delivered by the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership ('the Partnership') for the 2024/25 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). In addition to these core funding partners, the Partnership engages a broad network of key stakeholders from across the top of the South and wider New Zealand. These include regional councils, central government agencies, research institutions, marinas and marine industry representatives. Notable key stakeholders include Aquaculture New Zealand, Auckland Council, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Taranaki Regional Council, the Cawthron Institute, the Department of Conservation, Environment Canterbury, the Marine Farming Association, the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), and Port Marlborough. Together, these organisations contribute to the shared goal of protecting marine environments through coordinated biosecurity efforts.

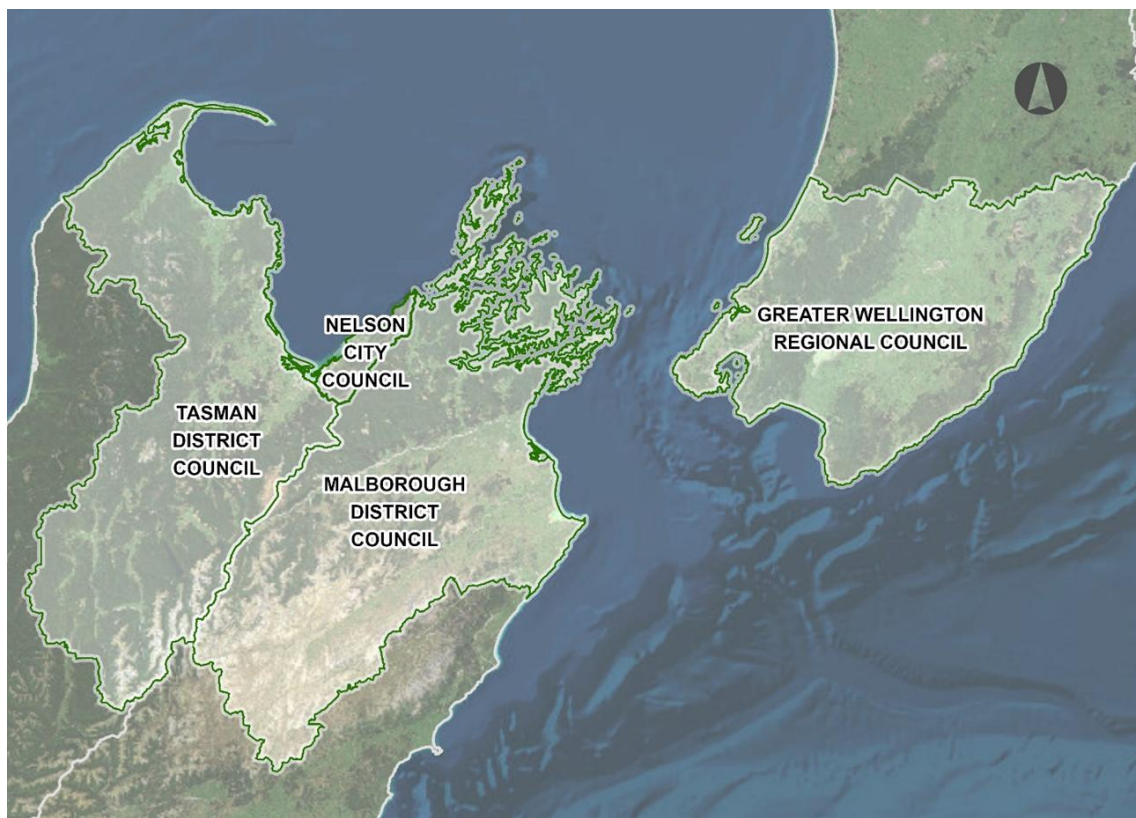


Figure 1: Regional Councils involved in the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership.

The Partnership aims to:

1. Prevent new marine pests from being introduced or establishing in the Top of the South marine environments,
2. Manage established pests and prevent their spread, and
3. Respond effectively to new marine pest incursions.

The Partnership members work closely with mana whenua and key stakeholders to achieve the objectives of the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Strategy.

2.2 Strategic Framework

The Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Strategy (reviewed May 2024) guides the marine biosecurity activities delivered by the Partnership. The Strategy (Figure 2) outlines the purpose, aims, opportunities and challenges of the 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 2: The Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Strategy Review 2024.

3.0 Annual Report

Key	Achieved	In Progress / Achieved in Part	Delayed	Not Achieved
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This summary table outlines key operational activities and progress made towards each activity for the 2024/25 financial year. Further detail is provided for each workstream in Sections 2.1 – 2.8.

Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership - Annual Report Summary							
2024 - 2025 Financial Year							
	Workstream	No.	Activity	Description	3-Year Objective	Status	Annual Progress Report
Partnership Coordination	1. Hold regular internal strategic conversations that ensure effective delivery of our programmes, including fair cost and resource allocation and future programme sustainability	1.1	Monthly Partnership Meetings	Partnership meetings are held online monthly and chaired by the contract managing council (NCC for 2023 – 2026).	2,3		Organised monthly meetings with Partners, prepared agendas and minutes. Reinstated quarterly stakeholder meetings, and held 2x in-person partnership meetings.
		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.	2,3		Helped align the timing of surveillance activities across regions and share information about marine biosecurity activities between partner agencies and stakeholders.
		1.3	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.	2,3		On track to deliver report by June 30, 2025.
Surveillance and Response	2. Efficiently survey and respond to incursions of marine pests throughout the year. This includes communicating behaviour change to marine users.	2.1	MDC council-led surveillance at high risk sites	<p>Surveillance completed by TC Environmental: Oyster Bay and East Arm Port Underwood, Shakespeare Bay, Queen Charlotte high-risk vessels, Waikawa marina, Picton marina.</p> <p>Surveillance completed by Diving Services NZ: Picton Port areas, Waikawa marina, Grove arm, Picton marina, Waikawa marina, Grove arm, Havelock marina, Picton swing moorings and moored vessels.</p>	1,2,3		<p>Comprehensive surveillance programme delivered, including over 2,225* hull inspections undertaken in the 24/25 season.</p> <p>Mediterranean fanworm populations continue to be detected in Waikawa, and removal efforts are ongoing.</p> <p>Marine pests detected: 7 Mediterranean fanworm 6 clubbed tunicate 246 lightbulb ascidian</p> <p><i>*includes TOS summer hull surveillance inspections</i></p>

		2.2	TDC council-led surveillance at high risk sites	<p>Surveillance completed by Diving Services NZ in Port Taranaki.</p> <p>Additional surveillance undertaken in Taranaki, Bark Bay and Anchorage in June 2025.</p> <p>Incursion response completed.</p>	1,2,3		<p>Surveillance programme completed.</p> <p>Mediterranean fanworm was discovered on a vessel in Taranaki, triggering a response operation.</p> <p>88* hull inspections recorded in MVP for 24/25.</p> <p>Marine pests detected: 1 lightbulb ascidian 1 Mediterranean fanworm</p> <p><i>*includes TOS summer hull surveillance inspections</i></p>
		2.3	NCC council-led surveillance at high risk sites	<p>Diving Services NZ completed two surveillance rounds to be undertaken at Nelson Haven.</p>	1,2,3		<p>Diving Services NZ Ltd undertook first round of surveillance in Nelson Haven in September/October 2024. Another round was started in March and completed in May. No Mediterranean fanworm found to date.</p> <p>718 hull inspections recorded in MVP for 24/25.</p> <p>Marine pests detected: 39 clubbed tunicate 64 lightbulb ascidian</p>
		2.4	GW council-led surveillance at high risk sites	<p>Develop a surveillance plan and carry out surveillance at the following marinas: Chaffers Marina, Clyde Quay Boat Harbour, Evans Bay Marina, Mana Marina, Seaview Marina.</p> <p>Other activities will include marina manager interviews and scoping for updates to RPMP.</p>	1,2,3		<p>2024 Surveillance plan developed and implemented. Level of fouling survey completed in Dec 24 throughout five marinas in Wellington Region.</p> <p>607 hull inspections recorded in MVP for 24/25.</p> <p>Marine pests detected: 3 Mediterranean fanworm</p>
		2.5	Annual Summer Hull Surveillance Programme	<p>Summer surveys in Tasman, Marlborough and Wellington, December 2024 - January 2025.</p> <p>Surveillance completed by Wai Dive and TC Environmental</p>	1,2,3		<p>Surveillance operational plans prepared for TOS and GW.</p> <p>TOS summer vessel hull surveys conducted in Tasman and Marlborough regions (Dec 2024 – Jan 2025).</p> <p>352 vessels inspected during TOS annual summer surveillance programme with behaviour change messaging delivered to vessel owners.</p> <p>2024/25 Operational Surveillance Report prepared for the Partnership.</p>

		2.6	National Marine High Risk Site Surveillance	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.	1,2,3		Seven rounds of the national MHRSSS were completed in 2024/25 in Picton Harbour, Wellington Harbour, Nelson Harbour.
		2.7	DOC Motueka Marine Reserves Monitoring	DOC Motueka undertakes marine reserve monitoring and maintenance programme in TOS. 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.	1,2,3		Marine reserve monitoring completed. Divers mostly observed <i>Styela clava</i> but are unsure how much of a negative effect it is having. DOC supported TOS summer surveys, working with Wai Dive for a day.
		2.8	Incident responses	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.	1,2,3		Collectively, 11 individual incidents were recorded and responded to during 2024/25 The incident response manual can be found here . Incidents are recorded in the <u>Incident Register</u> .
		2.9	Incident response reporting				
Planning, Communications and Engagement	3. Develop and deliver a plan for how we build and maintain our capability and capacity across our region.	3.1	Develop and finalise an operational plan and review annually	Operational Plan developed by the coordination team and reviewed and endorsed by the Partnership. Maintained as a 'living' document and will be regularly updated throughout the year. Ahead of the 2025/26 financial year, the Plan will be reviewed and updated with the activities planned for 2025/26.	2		Operational Plan developed and kept updated throughout the year. Annual report includes an operational review (looking forward). A new operational plan has been prepared for the 2025/26 financial year.

		3.2	Communication and Engagement activities are identified and integrated into the Operational Plan	<p>The coordination team will develop a programme of activities that builds on good practice from previous programme activities and aligns with the BNZ national behaviour change programme. The activities will be agreed with the Partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop programme of activities • Identify stakeholders / audiences • Communications and Engagement actions developed and agreed • Implement activities 	1, 3, 5, 6		<p>A programme of communication and engagement activities was identified and integrated into the Operational Plan, and implemented throughout the year.</p> <p>A stakeholders/audience management approach was developed, including creating a usable contact database.</p> <p>Improved communications between council and BNZ comms staff to improve TOS comms and engagement activities. A review process is now underway to ensure the best use of comms resources to support an integrated national approach.</p>
		3.3	Deliver / organise workshops, training programmes or events	The coordination team is responsible for delivering workshops, training programmes or events to develop marine biosecurity capability amongst partners and stakeholders.	2,3,4,5		<p>Held quarterly online and in-person events for stakeholders, including networking, guest speakers and informational talks.</p> <p>NIWA/BNZ Marine Pest ID workshop held in October 2024 in Picton.</p> <p>Promotion of <i>Clean Below Good To Go</i> marine pest ID workshops through newsletter channels.</p>
		3.4	TOS Marine Biosecurity Newsletter review	The coordination team will undertake a review of the current newsletter.	2,4,5,6		<p>Newsletter reviewed and process streamlined. Improved functionality of the newsletter to enable better reach and readability. Uploading new articles to the website.</p> <p>Additional stakeholders have been added to the mailing list.</p> <p>Newsletter statistics added to Partnership reporting.</p>

		3.5	TOS Marine Biosecurity Newsletter	The coordination team will coordinate a quarterly newsletter.	2,4,5,6		<p>Coordinated four quarterly newsletters (August, November, December, March) and currently preparing a June newsletter. Writing and collating content, editing and reviewing content, sourcing images and formatting into Campaign Monitor template. There are currently 611 subscribers to the quarterly newsletter.</p> <p>Top 3 articles from the newsletter this year were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine Pest surveys in five Wellington marinas • New Marine Biosecurity rules in Tasman-Nelson • Ongoing surveillance for Fanworm in Waikawa Marina
		3.6	Top of South website review	The coordination team will review the current website (what and why it is being used), to ensure it is relevant and is up to date.	2,4,5,6		<p>Website review initiated but placed on hold.</p> <p>Initial review identified that improvements are required, and various options presented to the Partners.</p> <p>Agreed to consider the big picture of comms – and consider website in light of other elements, e.g. alignment with TON / <i>Clean Below Good To Go</i></p>
		3.7	Maintaining Top of the South website	The coordination team will maintain the Top of the South website throughout the year to ensure that content is relevant and up to date.	2,4,5,6		<p>Top of the South website was maintained throughout the year to ensure that content is relevant and up to date.</p>
GWRC Support	4. GWRC will scope out the inclusion of marine pests in the RPMP by 2025, leading to a response plan in place by 2026.	4.1	Provide information, advice, and support to GWRC to enable their council to establish a marine biosecurity framework through their RPMP	Provide information, advice and examples to assist GWRC with the process of including marine pests in their RPMP.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6		<p>Information and examples provided to GW as required.</p> <p>GW internal processes underway; Partnership support available as needed.</p>
		4.2	Scope out GWRC Communication and Engagement approach	Meet with GWRC to understand needs and scope out an approach for marine biosecurity communications and engagement.	2,4		<p>Initial meeting completed; communications needs identified.</p> <p>Communications and engagement activities under Workstreams 3 and 7 will complement GW's programme.</p>
		4.3	Develop an annual surveillance plan for GWRC	Assist GWRC to develop an annual marine biosecurity surveillance plan, building on baseline information gathered through regional surveillance.	2,3,4		<p>Development of the surveillance operational plan led by the coordination team.</p> <p>First annual hull surveillance programme completed in December 2024.</p>

							Results from surveillance were provided in the Wellington Recreational Vessel Biofouling Survey 2024 report and distributed to the five marinas and Partnership.
Working With Tāngata Whenua	5. Support partners to build iwi relationships that enable us to support tāngata whenua in their marine restoration efforts.	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	The Partnership will support councils to engage with tāngata whenua on marine biosecurity issues, including providing regular updates about activities undertaken through the Partnership.	6		The Partnership is one of the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance (KMTT) strategic projects and regularly updates this group on key activities. A new iwi representative has been appointed to the partnership and is attending partnership meetings when possible.
		5.2	Standard agenda item in monthly meetings to enable skills sharing	A standing agenda item in the Partnership monthly meetings allows time for regular discussion between tangata whenua reps and partnership members. Coordination support is available where required.	6		Standard item established. Coordination team supporting partners with hui coordination and collateral development. A more defined engagement workstream is being developed.
Wider Initiatives	6. Contribute to national marine biosecurity initiatives, e.g., consistent national guidance, policy and legislation and behaviour change campaigns.	6.1	National behaviour change campaigns are supported, or content used to support local behaviour changes initiatives and campaigns (if relevant)	A recent national behaviour change initiative has been launched by BNZ. Some of the Partners sit on the national advisory group for this initiative and the Partnership will utilise the resources where suitable.	3,5		The Partnership actively supported the national <i>Protect Our Paradise</i> (POP) campaign by attending meetings, updating branding to include Wellington, and distributing POP banners in both Nelson and Wellington. A public awareness campaign for the new Level of Fouling (LOF) rules in Tasman and Nelson included website updates, newsletter articles, flyers for marinas, and social media posts by TDC. The Partnership also supported the <i>Clean Below Good to Go</i> initiative by collaborating on a summer media campaign, sharing content online and participating in the Hutchwilco Boat Show. Two TOS communications meetings were held, with a shift toward a more strategic communications approach planned for 2025/26.

		6.2	Attendance at national meetings	Partners or representatives of the Partnership will attend national meetings, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biosecurity Working Group National Marine Biosecurity Forum Fortnightly Campaign Advisory Group 	5		Attendance at Campaign Advisory Group – now reconvened to meet less regularly. Attendance by council reps at MVP working group.
		6.3	Attendance at national conferences (e.g. NETS)	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.	5		TDC presented on the TOS Marine Biosecurity Partnership at the NETS Biosecurity Conference in July 2024. BNZ also presented at NETS, and BNZ had a national behaviour change campaign stand at the conference.
Stakeholders and Alliances	7. Build relationships with other regional alliances and maintain existing relationships with allies within our region that enable us to influence marine users' behaviour.	7.1	Relationships with key stakeholders are maintained through regular communication, and their needs are identified	The Partnership will continue to connect and engage with key stakeholders to ensure their needs are identified and priority activities can be undertaken.	5		Reinstated quarterly stakeholder meetings. 3 meetings were held online, with one in-person meeting held in February 2025. These meetings provide an opportunity to hear from other regional councils on their marine biosecurity programmes and initiatives.
		7.2	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.	3,5		The Partnership remains close with Aquaculture NZ. The industry works under the A+ Sustainability Framework, which includes Biosecurity, and the A+ checklists for 2024 have now been completed with a very high level of participation across the industry. TOS representative working alongside colleagues from Auckland Council at the <i>Clean Below Good To Go</i> stand at the Hutchwilco Boat Show. Relationship with Top of the North Marine Biosecurity Partnership (TON) developed through shared comms activity and developing proposal for streamlining shared comms in 2025/26.
		7.3	Marine Stakeholders Campaign	A campaign focused on marine industries (both operators and peak bodies) such as the aquaculture industry, marina operators and marine infrastructure owners. Tasks included: stakeholder identification, collateral	1,5		A master Stakeholder List was reviewed by the TOS coordination team and Partners. Each stakeholder was assigned an IAP2 level, which determines their level of participation in the Partnership. This list is kept live within the Microsoft Teams group and regularly updated.

Infrastructure and Technology				developed by TOS, or co-ordinated with national or other regional campaigns to access existing collateral, organisations are provided with information to support understanding of rules and other key knowledge e.g. newsletter, articles, flyers, Identify content and develop relevant collateral, identify a rolling programme of work – prioritising the most impact via the Partnership meetings. The coordination team will co-ordinate the delivery of comms and engagement activities e.g., events and webinars, newsletter content and provision of collateral.			Collaboration with TON for 2025/26 is currently being planned to increase communications with marine stakeholders.
		7.4	Annual Partnership Forum	An in-person forum will be held each year. This event will be an opportunity to connect with those working across the marine sector, celebrate progress, share learnings, and stay at the forefront of marine biosecurity trends.	1,5,6		The Annual Forum was held in September 2024 in Nelson.
		7.5	Summer Season Public Campaign	This campaign recognises the summer season as a key opportunity to reach marine users, at a time when they are aware of the benefits of the marine environment and are at risk of behaving in ways that risk its future – and so are motivated and able to learn new behaviours.	1,3,5		The Partnership partnered with TON to deliver a summer campaign through multiple online and print media channels. The campaign focused on helping boaties to know and understand regional rules that relate to marine biosecurity and encouraged boaties to check the rules to avoid having their travel disrupted.
	8. Continue to identify gaps in our infrastructure, technology and capability across our regions and support partners to develop an approach.	8.1	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.	4		Nelson Marina has ordered a new 110T Travel Lift, which is expected to be operational in the third quarter of 2025. A new runway will also be constructed. Water blasting will be relocated away from the water's edge into a dedicated wash bay.

		8.2	Continue to review and integrate new technology to improve the 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.	3		<p>The Marine Vessel Portal (MVP) was a key technology used in surveillance programmes across the Partnership. Reps from MDC and TDC are on the working group of the MVP driving operational improvements.</p> <p>Cawthron Institute's 5-year research programme on marine pest eradication. Cawthron are also working with MPI to develop a scalable chlorine treatment for treating large volumes of water in marine environments (encapsulation).</p>
		8.3	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.	3		<p>A new biosecurity officer has joined the MDC Biosecurity team on a fixed-term contract and is having input into their internal investigations and responses for Mediterranean fanworm.</p> <p>Greater Wellington is recruiting a Marine Biosecurity Officer in 2025/26.</p>

3.1 Workstream 1: Partnership Coordination

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

Annual Summary

Effective coordination across the Partnership ensures that all partner agencies are aligned in their efforts and that resources are allocated efficiently, and is fundamental to the successful delivery of the Top of the South (TOS) marine biosecurity programme. Coordination is achieved through structured planning, regular communication, and shared decision-making.

The Partnership's coordinated approach enables timely responses to biosecurity risks, maintains consistency in operational delivery, and strengthens collective accountability. The coordination process maintains regular communication and facilitates collaboration.

The Partnership coordination team led the development and coordinated the implementation of the *Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership Operational Plan 2024 – 2026*. The Operational Plan detailed the collective operational and behaviour change activities being delivered by the Partnership for the 2024/25 financial year, to ensure effective coordination and delivery of the programme.

Monthly Partnership meetings were held online (as well as two in-person meetings) to facilitate regular updates between partner agencies and stakeholders. These meetings allowed the coordination of marine biosecurity activities, collective decision-making and sharing of knowledge and learnings throughout the year.

Looking forward (2025/26)

- Finalise the 2024/25 Annual Report based on partner feedback.
- Review and finalise the 2025/26 Operational Plan, informed by 2024/25 outcomes and partner input.
- Confirm funding and resources for marine biosecurity activities in the Top of the South region for 2025/26.
- Continue monthly Partnership meetings, with a goal of holding at least two in person.

3.2 Workstream 2: Surveillance and Response

Efficiently survey and respond to incursions of marine pests throughout the year. This includes communicating behaviour change to marine users.

Annual Summary

Surveillance and response activities were successfully delivered across Marlborough, Tasman, Nelson, and parts of Wellington over throughout 2024/25. Collectively, over 3600 hull inspections were undertaken and recorded in the Marine Vessel Database for the Top of the South regions for 2024/25 (01 July 2024 – 30 June 2025) (Figures 3 and 4).

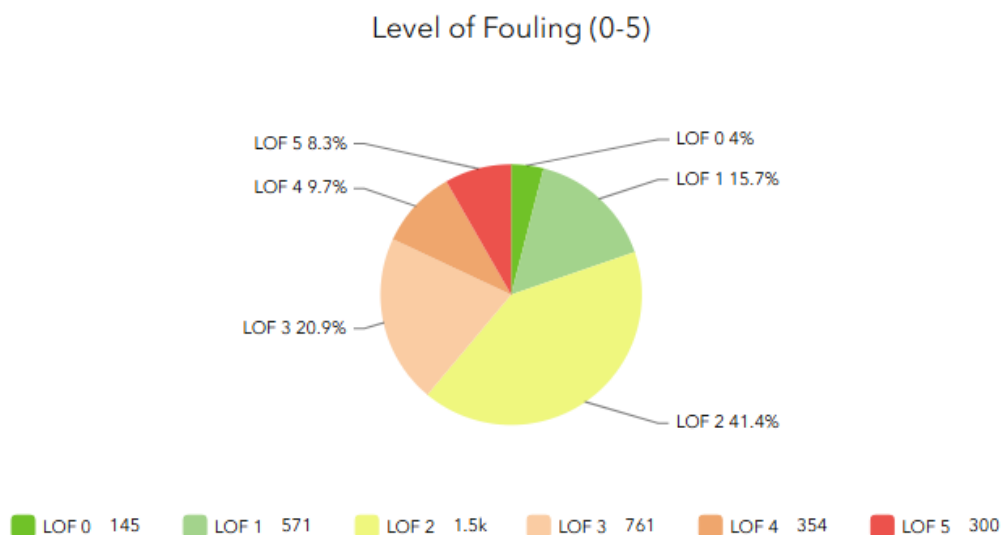


Figure 3: Combined LOF results for the Top of the South regions for 2024/25 (01 July 2024 – 30 June 2025).

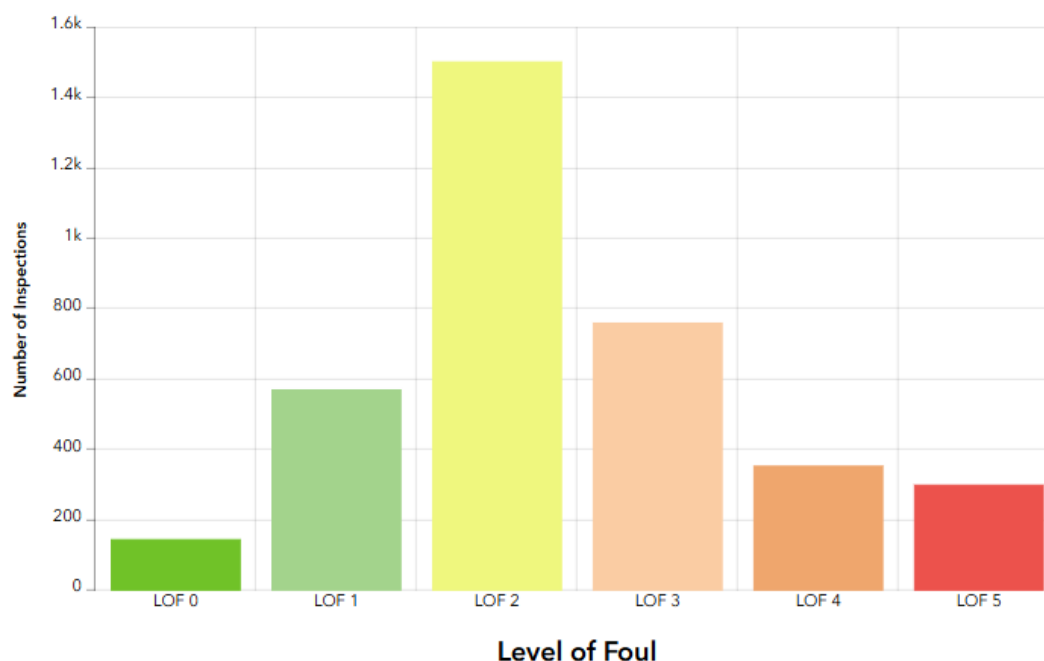


Figure 4: Combined LOF results for vessel inspections undertaken in the Top of the South regions for 2024/25 (01 July 2024 – 30 June 2025).

Vessels arriving from Northland, Auckland and Lyttleton, which are known locations for heavy infestations of Mediterranean fanworm, continue to pose significant risks of spreading marine pests to the TOS regions. It has also been observed that there is constant pressure from vessels arriving harbouring Mediterranean fanworm after insufficient cleaning procedures.

Marlborough District Council

Over 2200 hull inspections were undertaken this season. High-risk vessel inspections were completed during September/October in Oyster Bay and East Arm, Port Underwood, Shakespeare Bay, and Queen Charlotte. Waikawa Marina and Picton Marina inspections were completed between March and June. TC Environmental will complete Waikawa Marina in June

2025. Surveillance work contracted to Diving Services NZ Limited was carried out across the following locations:

- Picton Port areas, Waikawa Bay swing moorings and moored vessels.
- Picton Marina, Waikawa Marina, and Picton swing moorings and moored vessels (September/November)
- Grove Arm and Havelock Marina (1 more day remains for Havelock and Grove Arm combined which will be completed in the next few weeks).

Challenges from MDC this season include the cost of maintaining the surveillance programme to a high standard, while still responding to ongoing Mediterranean fanworm incursions.

Tasman District Council

Surveillance efforts this year focused on Port Tarakohe, Waiapu Wharf, and Bark Bay. All structures, vessels, and high-risk areas were inspected. Mediterranean fanworm was discovered on a vessel in Tarakohe, triggering a response operation.

Seabed surveys were also conducted at the sites of both Mediterranean fanworm detections from the previous year at Bark Bay. Summer survey work included three dive days. No vessels were found to be carrying Mediterranean fanworm, and most boats were generally considered clean.

Nelson City Council

Diving Services NZ Ltd undertook the first round of surveillance in Nelson Haven in September/October 2024. Another round was started in March and completed in May. No Mediterranean fanworm has been found to date.

Greater Wellington Regional Council

A significant milestone was the expansion of the summer hull surveillance programme into the Wellington region, delivering the first recreational biofouling surveys in the region. Survey results are provided in the report *Wellington Recreational Vessel Biofouling Survey 2024* and shared with key stakeholders, including participating marinas.

Annual Summer Hull Surveillance Programme

The annual summer hull surveillance in Tasman and Marlborough was completed across December 2024 and January 2025 and included rapid and coordinated responses to marine pest detections. Contractor management was led by the TOS coordination team, including the onboarding of a second contractor, local company TC Environmental, which improved delivery capacity and maximised weather opportunities. As this was a new contractor, the coordination team went out on site with TC Environmental during the first survey and conducted a health and safety audit. Survey findings were captured in the *TOS Recreational Vessel Biofouling Survey 2024*.

Biosecurity New Zealand - National Marine High Risk Site Surveillance

Biosecurity New Zealand, in collaboration with NIWA, continued the National Marine High-Risk Site Surveillance (NMHRSS) surveys and led the response to marine pest detections in the Wellington region.

The following NMHRSS rounds were completed:

Location	Season	Dates
Picton Harbour	Winter	8 – 12 July 2024
Wellington Harbour	Winter	29 July – 2 August 2024
Nelson Harbour	Winter	16 – 20 September 2024
Nelson Harbour	Summer	2 – 6 December 2024
Wellington Harbour	Summer	9 – 13 December 2024
Picton, Waikawa and Havelock	Summer	3 – 7 March 2025
Nelson Harbour	Winter	19 – 23 May 2025

Non-indigenous species found at new locations during these surveys included two ‘range extensions’ (found at a new location but previously reported from New Zealand):

- Colonial ascidian *Lissoclinum perforatum*; detected during the Wellington winter survey as a range extension.
- Australian dog whelk *Tritia burchardi*; detected during the Nelson summer survey.

In addition, one New-to-New Zealand species was detected:

- Red algae *Pterothamnion yezoense*; detected for the first time during the Nelson winter survey in 2024.

Note – several species collected during the Picton summer survey in March are still to be identified.

BNZ remains a committed member of the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership and continues to collaborate with the councils towards their marine biosecurity goals, in particular, achieving elimination where marine pest incursions have been detected. BNZ’s restructuring has impacted the ability to get contracts for services signed off within the current year in a timely way, which has created significant uncertainty; however, BNZ remains committed to the joint, long-term responses to Mediterranean fanworm.

DOC Motueka Marine Reserves Monitoring

DOC undertook monitoring in marine reserves with divers trained to identify invasive species. Divers were mostly observing *Styela clava*, which is modifying marine habitats, but DOC are unsure how much of a negative effect it is having. DOC assisted with the summer surveillance and worked with Wai Dive Services for a day.

Incident responses and reporting

Detections of Mediterranean fanworm remain low for the TOS region, and detected infested vessels are quickly responded to as a result of the council’s surveillance. There have been no detections of Mediterranean fanworm in Nelson over the past two years.

Looking Forward (2025/26)

- Greater Wellington is now in the process of developing its marine biosecurity programme. This will likely include ongoing annual hull surveillance in the Wellington region.
- Review and update the TOS Marine Biosecurity Summer Hull Surveillance Programme approach to increase vessel coverage during peak times and more favourable weather windows.
- Continue to deliver council-led surveillance programmes and BNZ / NIWA National Marine High Risk Site Surveillance programmes in TOS.

- Continue to record all incidents in the Incident Register and share updates and learnings at the monthly Partnership meetings.

3.3 Workstream 3: Planning, Communications and Engagement

Develop and deliver a plan for how we build and maintain our capability and capacity across our region to undertake surveillance, respond and communicate.

Annual Summary

This year has been particularly productive in developing our understanding of the region's capability and capacity. The Partnership is producing or has access to quality information and collateral through established relationships (e.g. BNZ, TON, and Cawthron Institute). We have worked this year to build strong stakeholder management systems, to support and sustain the Partnership's relationship and influence in the short and mid-term.

The Partnership has also made a number of adjustments to current communications channels to ensure they are working effectively as a more strategic approach is developed. This has involved clearly identifying the different levels of engagement required for each group of stakeholders and applying targeted engagement approaches to each group. This is a key task to inform our comms and engagement approach, and will continue to be a focus going forward, enabling us to target stakeholders effectively for communications activities (e.g. managing and distributing collateral, event invitations).

During the year, it became apparent that we need to connect the work of the Partnership and coordination team with that of the wider council communications teams. A workshop was held to understand the similarities and differences between the Partners' needs, capacity and ways of working. Similarly, the coordination team has been in conversation with TON and BNZ about their role in the Partnership's strategic aims. The objective is to build collaboration through providing a targeted and strategic communications programme that helps inform and coordinate future work.

Looking Forward (2025/26)

- Work with Partners and other national programmes and providers to identify potential events and workshops. Developing the regular rhythm of quarterly stakeholder sessions to include informative presentations.
- In response to the council comms teams' request, increase on-the-ground engagement with partners and stakeholders in each region. The coordination team have staff in both Nelson and Wellington who can deliver this work, support relationship management and coordinate the Annual Forum and quarterly stakeholder events.
- Formalise a communications partnership with Clean Below Good To Go to further develop a coherent communications approach for boaties and other marine users. This will also streamline communications delivery (reducing duplication with their work), enabling more TOS Partnership resources to be put into on-the-ground engagement and stakeholder relationships.

3.4 Workstream 4: Greater Wellington Support

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) will scope out the inclusion of marine pests in the RPMP by 2025, leading to a response plan in place by 2026.

Annual Summary

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) continued to integrate into the Partnership and has started to establish its regional marine biosecurity programme. Initial discussions were held to outline the steps required for GW to build its marine biosecurity framework.

The first annual hull surveillance programme was delivered in the Wellington region this year. Most vessels in Wellington marinas were LOF 2 or cleaner (375 vessels, 62%) and would meet the biosecurity requirements for travel to other regions such as Marlborough, Nelson, and Tasman (Figure 5). However, 38% (232 vessels) had LOF 3 or higher and do not meet inter-regional biosecurity standards without cleaning prior to departure which presents an opportunity to educate boaties about good vessel hygiene.

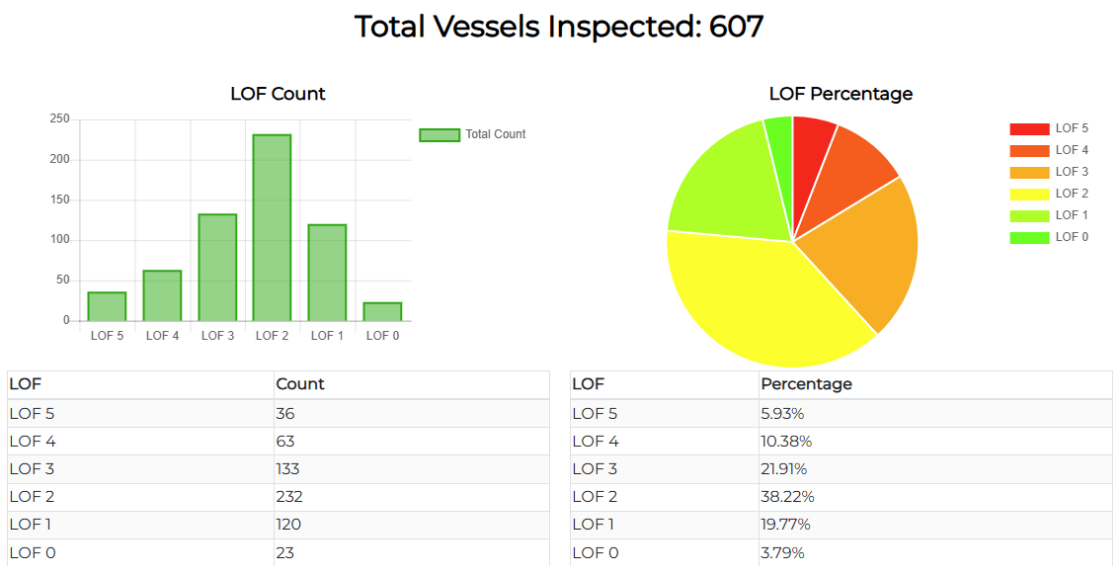


Figure 5: Combined LOF results for the Wellington region (December 2024).

Looking Forward (2025/26)

- Recruitment of a dedicated marine biosecurity officer.
- Development of a marine biosecurity programme, including additional surveillance to cover other risk areas and all vessels in the Wellington region.
- Inclusion of marine pests in the Regional Pest Management plan, pending further analysis and consultation.

3.5 Workstream 5: Working with Tāngata Whenua

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

Annual Summary

The TOS Marine Biosecurity Partnership has been recognised as a key project within the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance (KMTT) Alliance, and regular updates are being provided to KMTT on the Partnership's progress. A new iwi representative has joined the Partnership, strengthening engagement processes. Discussions are continuing on improving engagement with tāngata whenua.

Looking Forward (2025/26)

- Continue to improve engagement with tāngata whenua through connection with iwi representative.
- Keep iwi engagement as a standing agenda item in the Partnership monthly meetings allows time for regular discussion between tangata whenua reps and partnership members.

3.6 Workstream 6: Wider Initiatives

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

Annual Summary

The Partnership has made significant progress in contributing to local and national marine biosecurity initiatives, including the following:

Protect Our Paradise

The Partnership is actively supporting the BNZ-led national behaviour change campaign 'Protect Our Paradise' (POP). Activities include attending national behaviour change meetings, coordinating collateral and receiving regular updates from BNZ on the POP campaign at Partnership meetings.

Level of Fouling – updated rules for Tasman and Nelson

A public awareness campaign for the new Level of Fouling (LOF) rule has been ongoing and has been positively received, with minimal compliance issues noted during the summer surveillance period. Activities included an updated 'Rules' page on the Partnership website, an article in the quarterly newsletter and the development of a flyer with the updated rules, which were provided to marinas and handed out to boaties during surveillance.

Clean Below Good To Go (Top of the North Marine Biosecurity Partnership)

The Partnership regularly partners with and supports the *Clean Below Good To Go* initiative, including providing updates to the websites, sharing articles with CBG2G for promotion through their channels, and having a presence at the Hutchwilco Boat Show in May 2025.

A \$5,000 investment in the *Clean Below Good To Go* summer campaign supported a multi-channel summer marketing campaign, with \$2,000 allocated to Meta advertisements and \$3,000 for print and digital placements in key marine publications including *Boating NZ*, *Fishing*, *Sail World*, and *Pacific Powerboat*. Despite technical issues with Meta's ad platform during peak summer, the campaign achieved strong engagement through a combination of ad accounts. Combined, the digital ads delivered over 302,000 impressions, 4,628 clicks, 1,073 landing page views, 4,418 engagements, and 94,674 video views.

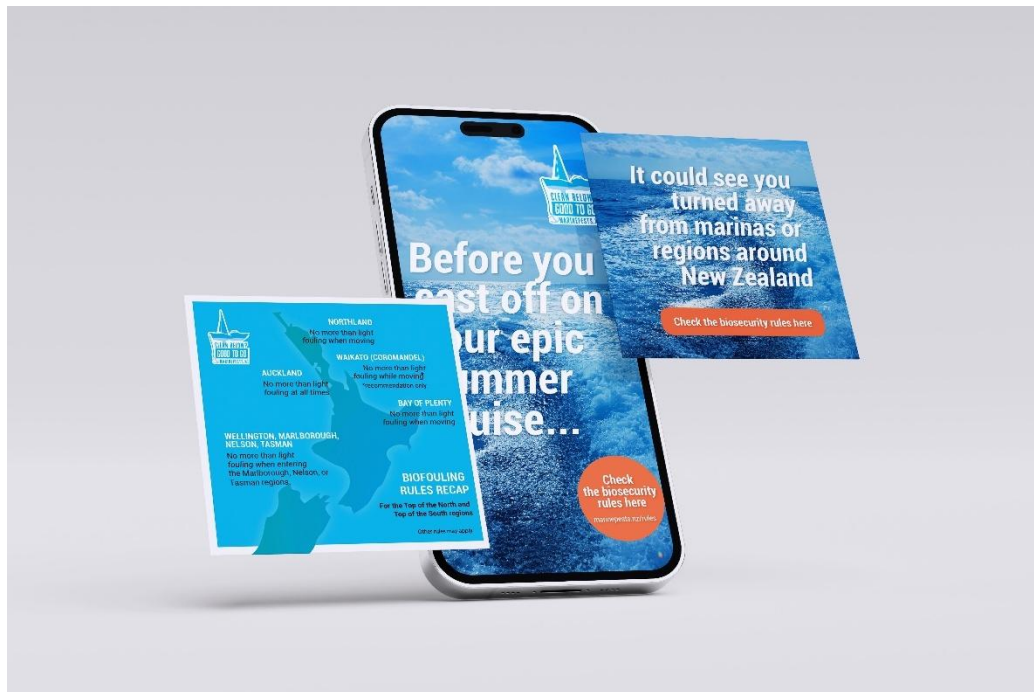


Figure 6: Clean Below Good To Go summer campaign content.

National meetings

In terms of national engagement, partners have continued to attend key meetings such as the Biosecurity Working Group, National Marine Biosecurity Forum, and the Campaign Advisory Group. Council representatives have also participated in the Marine Vessel Pathway (MVP) Working Group. The Partnership was well-represented at the NETS Biosecurity Conference in July 2024, where TDC presented on the Partnership, and BNZ presented and promoted the national behaviour change campaign.

Looking Forward (2025/26)

- Continue to develop a more coordinated and strategic approach to communications and engagement –taking account of BNZ and TON programmes – to provide a more integrated/coherent, and therefore impactful, national experience for boaties.

3.7 Workstream 7: Stakeholders and Alliances

Build relationships with other regional alliances and maintain existing relationships with allies within our region that enable us to influence marine users' behaviour.

Annual Summary

The Partnership has made strong progress in building and maintaining relationships with regional allies and marine sector stakeholders to influence behaviour and strengthen marine biosecurity outcomes this financial year.

Regular communication with key stakeholders has been re-established through quarterly meetings. These meetings have provided valuable opportunities to exchange updates between stakeholders on marine biosecurity activities and initiatives, and often include a number of presentations from guest speakers.

The annual forum held in September 2024 was another excellent opportunity for key stakeholders to reconnect with the Partnership, share updates and learnings, and also included a workshop to help identify stakeholder priorities for TOS marine biosecurity going forward. The highest priority was the development of a national pathway plan with standardised rules (score: 11). This was closely followed by strong support for a cohesive public communications strategy under the *Protect Our Paradise* campaign, highlighting the importance of public engagement.

Other key priorities included:

- Advancing eDNA surveillance tools (7)
- Implementing a risk assessment framework for incoming vessels (6)
- Supporting technology development (6)
- Valuing partnerships (5)
- Coordinating funding for toolbox tools (5)
- Strengthening collaboration between regional biosecurity programmes and the Fiordland Guardians (4)

Looking Forward (2025/26)

- Continue with quarterly stakeholder meetings (with at least one in-person meeting).
- Coordinate and deliver the Annual Forum on Thursday, 9 October.
- Strengthen the marine biosecurity network, both within the TOS Partnership and nationally.

3.8 Workstream 8: Infrastructure and Technology

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

Annual Summary

In September 2024, Nelson Marina received Clean Marina accreditation from the New Zealand Marina Operators Association. Nelson Marina is one of only 10 in the country to accomplish this significant achievement. It provides independent verification that they are managing the biosecurity, wastewater, rubbish and emissions at the marina in a way that minimises the effects on the environment.

Nelson Marina plans to install a new 110T Travel Lift, which can lift vessels from 1 to 110 tonnes and anything up to 8.5m wide and 30m long. This is a significant upgrade from the current travel lift, which is limited to 44 tonnes and 5.5m wide. The new machine is expected to be operational in the third quarter of 2025, pending delivery and the construction of the new runway. Water blasting will also be relocated away from the water's edge into a dedicated wash bay to better ensure that any runoff is captured, filtered, and treated.

The Marine Vessel Portal (MVP) was successfully used this year to capture surveillance data during the summer hull surveys carried out throughout the year. This required the digitisation of marinas in the Wellington region which was done by Bay of Plenty Regional Council staff. Representatives from MDC and TDC are on the working group of the MVP driving operational improvements. A public portal has been developed to share MVP data publicly, which allows users to access aggregated hull surveillance data for each region.

Cawthron Institute is working on a 5-year research programme on marine pest eradication that is being funded by the MBIE Endeavour Fund. The programme aims to develop better strategy, tactics, goal setting, and tools. Cawthron Institute is also working on a project with MPI on developing a scalable chlorine treatment for treating large volumes of water in marine environments (encapsulation). Trials are being carried out in Auckland. A SOP will be finalised that can be shared with partners.

Aquaculture New Zealand works under the A+ Sustainability Framework, which includes Biosecurity. The A+ checklists for 2024 have now been completed with a very high level of participation across the industry. Aquaculture NZ has also recently been involved in Environment Court hearings relating to marine biosecurity rules in the draft Waikato Regional Coastal Plan. Aquaculture NZ remain vigilant around Mediterranean fanworm in TOS, following the incursion of Mediterranean fanworm in marine farms in two new areas of Auckland and Waikato.

Looking Forward (2025/26)

- New travel lift operational in the third quarter of 2025.
- Continue to utilise the MVP and dashboards / reporting tools.
- Receive regular updates from Cawthron Institute on research programme progress.
- Aquaculture NZ are working with NZ Salmon Farmers Association and external experts to update the A+ Salmon Biosecurity Standard.

4.0 Financial Report

4.1 Financial Contributions 2024 -2025

Table 1 outlines the funding and resources available for marine biosecurity activities in the Top of the South region for the 2024/25 financial year. There are activities funded under the Partnership (e.g. the Partnership coordination team activities, summer hull surveillance) and separate council-lead activities (regional surveillance, incident response) that are funded under OPEX funding.

Table 1. Resourcing for marine biosecurity activities.

Partner	Partnership Funding	OPEX Funding	FTEs	Other Resources
MDC	\$42,624	\$135,000	0.2 FTE (shared between Biosecurity Officer and Manager)	BNZ contribution for Sabella (TBA)
TDC	\$42,624	\$40,000	No dedicated FTEs; marine biosecurity included in roles of Team Leader and 4 Biosecurity Officers, plus 2 Harbourmasters	Harbourmaster and biosecurity staff time; vessel use; \$15k contingency for incursions
NCC	\$45,274	\$61,435	0.2 FTE for programme coordination and response management	Harbourmaster and Nelson Marina Manager support
GWRC	\$40,000		No dedicated FTEs	Harbourmaster staff time
BNZ	\$25,000	>\$2,000,000 (national HRSS programme)	0.2 FTE (0.1 for Partnership coordination, 0.1 for Sabella programme lead)	

4.2 Partnership Coordination Expenditure

Table 2 outlines the proposed budget and total expenditure for Partnership coordination activities delivered in 2024/25 financial year.

Table 2. Partnership coordination and surveillance activities

Activity	Item	Budgeted Total	Total Spent	Percentage Spent
Partnership Coordination	Partnership coordination and administration; monthly / quarterly Partnership meetings; annual Partnership forum	\$52,000.00	\$47,684.22	91.7%
Awareness and Engagement	Comms group coordination and development; quarterly newsletters; summer campaign – <i>Clean Below, Good To Go</i>	\$51,000.00	\$51,085.78	100.2%
Science Advice / Surveillance	TOS and Wellington surveillance plans; contractor management; health and safety – audits	\$25,350.00	\$29,580.00	116.7%
Regional Surveillance	Marlborough 9 days; Tasman 3 days; Wellington 4 days	\$64,350.00	\$64,350.00	100.0%
	Total	\$192,700.00	\$192,700.00	100.0%

5.0 Looking Ahead To 2025/26

The 2024/25 year has been one of significant progress and consolidation for the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership. Through strong collaboration, strategic planning, and a shared commitment to protecting our marine environments, the Partnership has delivered a comprehensive programme of surveillance, response, engagement, and innovation. The expansion of surveillance into new regions, strengthened stakeholder relationships, and alignment with national initiatives such as Protect Our Paradise and Clean Below Good to Go have all contributed to a more resilient and coordinated marine biosecurity system.

The year ahead (2025/26) will focus on building momentum through strategic coordination, expanded surveillance, and deeper engagement with stakeholders. The Partnership will finalise its 2025/26 Operational Plan and secure funding to support delivery across all regions. Surveillance will be enhanced, particularly in Wellington, with updated summer hull inspection approaches and continued collaboration with BNZ and NIWA. Communications will be strengthened through a formalised partnership with Clean Below Good to Go and a more targeted stakeholder engagement strategy. Greater Wellington will continue developing its marine biosecurity framework, while engagement with tāngata whenua will be deepened through regular dialogue and representation. National alignment will remain a priority, with continued participation in behaviour change campaigns and forums. Infrastructure improvements, including the new travel lift in Nelson, and ongoing use of the Marine Vessel Portal will support operational capacity. These forward-looking actions reflect a proactive, collaborative approach to protecting marine ecosystems across the Top of the South.

With a clear roadmap for 2025/26 and continued support from partners and stakeholders, the Partnership is well-positioned to continue safeguarding the region's marine ecosystems, ensuring they remain healthy, resilient, and capable of supporting the needs of current and future generations.