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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE WELLINGTON REGION COASTAL MARINE AREA

ANDY DODD
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The Wellington Region Coastal Marine Area ('CMA') comprises just under 500 kilometres of coastline from Otaki on the west coast across to Mataikona and Castlepoint on the east coast (Figure 1). It encompasses an area of over three-quarters of a million hectares of foreshore and seabed from mean high water springs (MHWS) out to the 12 mile limit (Figure 2), including Wellington and Porirua harbours, parts of Cook Strait, Palliser Bay and the seas around Kāpiti and Mana Islands.

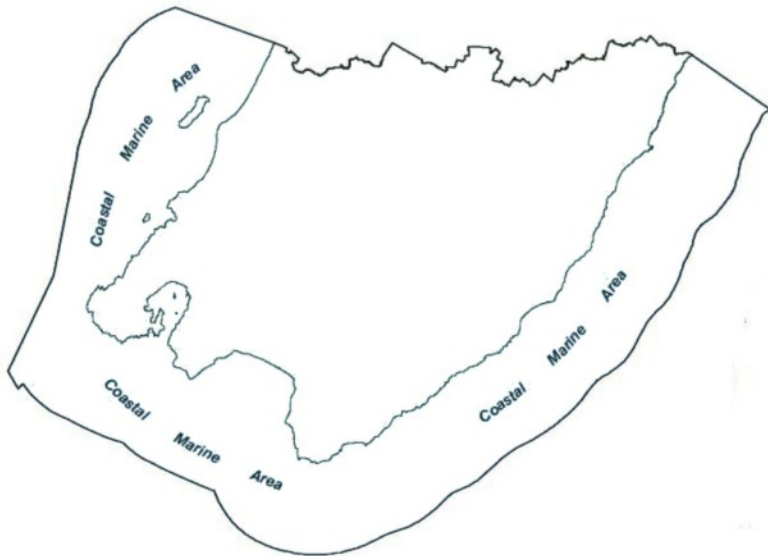


Figure 1: Wellington Coastal Marine Area (after GWRC 2000)

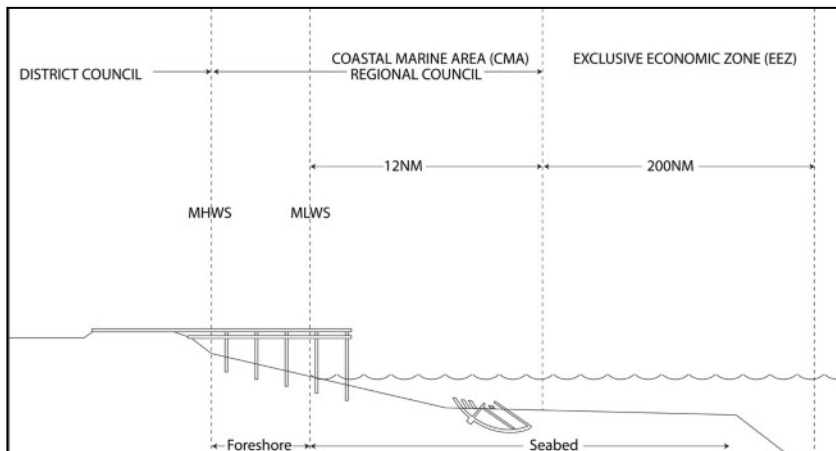


Figure 2: Coastal Marine Area jurisdictions and definitions

Coastal Plan review

A number of regional councils around New Zealand are now in the position of reviewing their coastal plans. The current first generation regional plan for Wellington is made up of five separate documents concerning air quality, soil, coastal waters, freshwater, and discharge. It is intended to combine these in to a single cohesive second generation plan that addresses all of these aspects, and Greater Wellington Regional Council is presently in the process of compiling information that will support the plan review. Since the first coastal plan was made operative in 2000, there have been changes to both legislation and to council policy which have necessitated more detailed information and robust assessment of scheduled sites. These changes include the review of the previous plan in 2008, the regional policy statement which was adopted in 2009, and the National Coastal Policy Statement which was adopted in 2010.

The heritage schedule for the operative coastal plan presently identifies 22 features and buildings of historic merit (GWRC 2010). A number of issues with this list were highlighted during the review. These included the limited geographical range of listed sites, bias towards built heritage sites over archaeological sites, and uncertainty of the physical extent of listed heritage features. The current list is limited to structures within Wellington Harbour, and archaeological values are not recognised. The extents of sites are poorly defined, the heritage fabric is not described (or differentiated from modern additions), and there is no supporting information about heritage values.

The Greater Wellington Regional Council presently issues on average approximately 50 coastal permits per year (Swierczynski 2008). The types of

activities for which coastal permits are required are varied and include activities that negatively impact on archaeological values. The construction, repair and removal of coastal infrastructure such as wharves, jetties, landings, slipways, moorings and seawalls can affect archaeological deposits and in some cases the infrastructure itself is of nineteenth century date or has been assessed as being of heritage value. Exploration and mining for minerals, oil and gas often involve destructive methods, but sensitive areas can be avoided if this is considered early enough in the planning process. Gravel extraction and dredging often involve the removal of large volumes of sediment. Sometimes this occurs within an existing footprint, but these areas are being increasingly expanded. Salvage activities also have considerable potential to destroy underwater archaeological sites. As technology advances it becomes increasingly viable to recover historic wreckage for scrap metal.

The first part of the inventory process was an archaeological scoping study which was commissioned by the council (Dodd 2012). The scoping study compiled a list of over 400 potential sites in the CMA based on historic records and existing inventories (eg. Boffa Miskell 1988). The study also established a thematic framework which enabled a representative selection of 50 sites to be shortlisted for further assessment. The shortlist contained some overlap with sites selected during the assessment of built heritage in the CMA carried out earlier that year, with 17 sites common to both studies (Cochran, Kelly and Murray 2012). Sites were assessed according to the heritage criteria set out in Policy 20 of the Regional Policy Statement 2010 which has its own assessment criteria. For each site included in the inventory, documentation included a brief history, description of location and environmental setting, a physical description of the site and its heritage fabric, a chronology and a significance statement.

Shipwrecks

Shipwrecks were by far the most common site type in the CMA and of the 151 documented shipwrecks in the Wellington region, 21 sites were shortlisted for further assessment. The earliest documented shipwrecks in the Wellington region were the two-masted brig *Hunter* which wrecked on Kāpiti Island in June 1828 (Ingram 2007:16-17), and the schooner *Waterloo* which wrecked opposite Kāpiti at Waikanae Beach in 1833 (Ingram 2007:20). Their exact locations, and whether any archaeological remains survive, is unknown. The earliest shipwrecks in Wellington to have been rediscovered since the widespread availability of recreational SCUBA equipment are the barque *Tyne* which wrecked on Wellington's South Coast in 1845 (Ingram 2007:40) and the barque *Subraon* which wrecked near the harbour entrance in 1848 (Ingram 2007:47-48). Aside from their early dates these vessels have considerable historical and archaeological significance. The *Hunter* and *Waterloo* are representative of some of the earliest traders and whalers operating on the Kāpiti

Coast. One of the long boats from the *Tyne* went on to be refitted and converted into a gunboat which was used by the colonial forces at Porirua against Rangihaeata, and the *Subraon* was wrecked while evacuating refugees from the 1848 Wellington earthquake.

Approximately three quarters of the reported shipwrecks in the Wellington region occurred prior to 1900, and over 85% were built prior to 1900. Many of Wellington's rediscovered shipwrecks were wrecked post-1900 though, so listing in the heritage schedule of the Coastal Plan is one of the most effective means of legal protection. Wreck sites such as the *Ben Avon* (Figure 3), *Woollahra* (Figure 4) and *Defender* (Figure 5) are among the best preserved shipwrecks in the Wellington region, but are not covered by the archaeological provisions of the *Historic Places Act* 1993. Wellington's largest shipwreck, the 5489 gross ton *Devon* (Figure 6), also wrecked post-1900.

One of New Zealand's most historically significant shipwrecks, the steamer *Penguin*, which wrecked on Toms Rock in Cook Strait in February 1909 with the tragic loss of 75 lives (Collins 2000), falls into this category. It was built in Glasgow in 1864, and as an iron hulled vessel archaeological remains are likely to survive. The final resting place of the *Penguin* is unknown, but has attracted recent attention from wreck hunters and is therefore vulnerable. Such remains fall within the definitions of underwater cultural heritage in the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage 2001. The convention, which came into force in 2007, has now been ratified by 40 countries. New Zealand is not yet a signatory.

As a result of the fieldwork undertaken for the coastal plan review several prominent Wellington region shipwrecks have now been added to ArchSite. These include the *Halcione* (Figure 7), *Waitaki* (Figure 8), *Tui*, and *Phyllis*. Previously recorded shipwreck sites for which locations were confirmed and records updated include *Willie McLaren* (Figure 9), *Progress*, *Opua* (Figure 10) and HMNZS *South Seas*.

Wharves and jetties

The earliest wharves and jetties in the region were located on the old waterfront between Pipitea and Te Aro, which is now buried beneath reclamation. Remnants of many of these structures are likely to survive archaeologically, but were excluded from the coastal plan review as they no longer fall within the CMA. Evidence of the potential for such remains to survive includes the remnants of the *Inconstant* partially excavated from below the Old BNZ Building in Lambton Quay (O'Keeffe 1999), and the remains of W. B. Rhodes' 1841 wharf uncovered during excavations below Anvil House (*Evening Post*, 19 May 1965). The earliest surviving wharves still in use include the Queens Wharf, constructed in 1862, and the Waterloo Wharf built

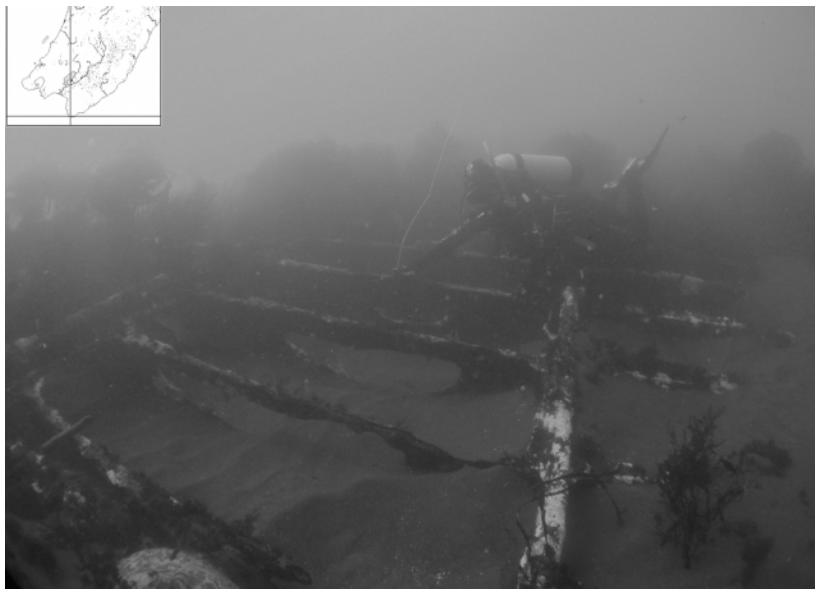


Figure 3: Ben Avon [1885-1903] steel hull remains (S28/193), Cape Palliser

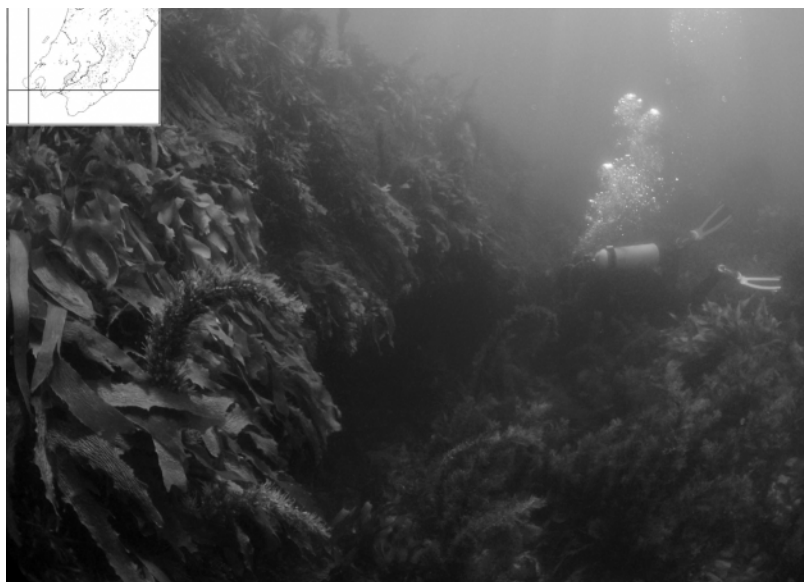


Figure 4: Woollahra [1875-1907] diver next to upturned bow (Q27/300), Tongue Point

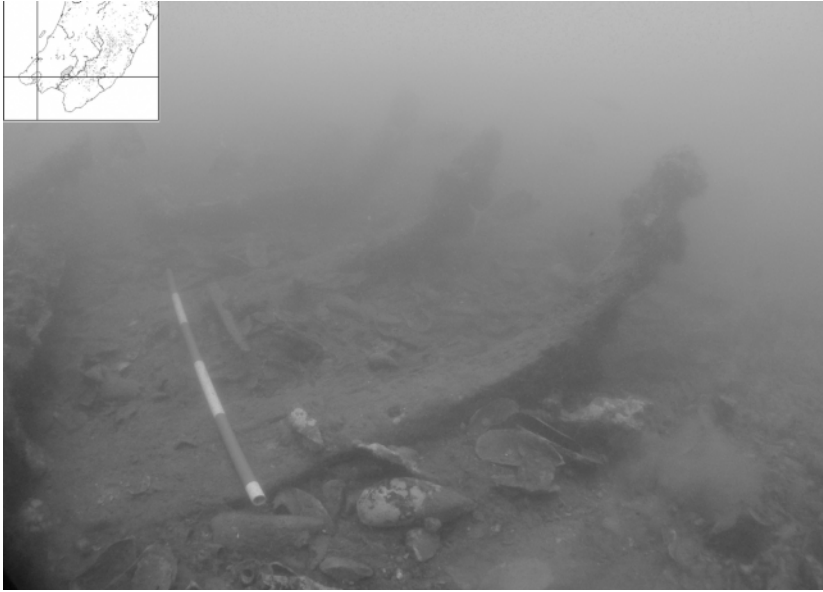


Figure 5: Defender [1901-1918] wooden frames (R27/480), Wellington Harbour

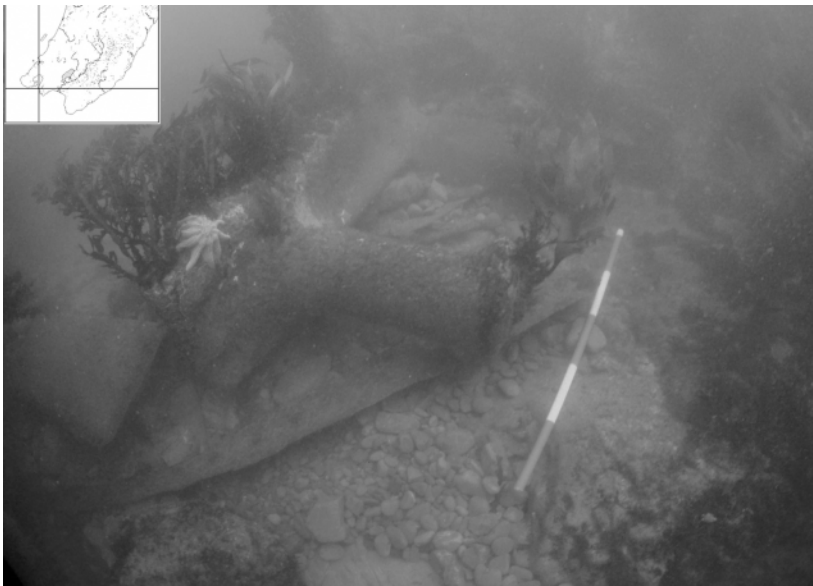


Figure 6: Devon [1897-1913] bollard amongst scattered remains (R27/206), Pencarrow Head

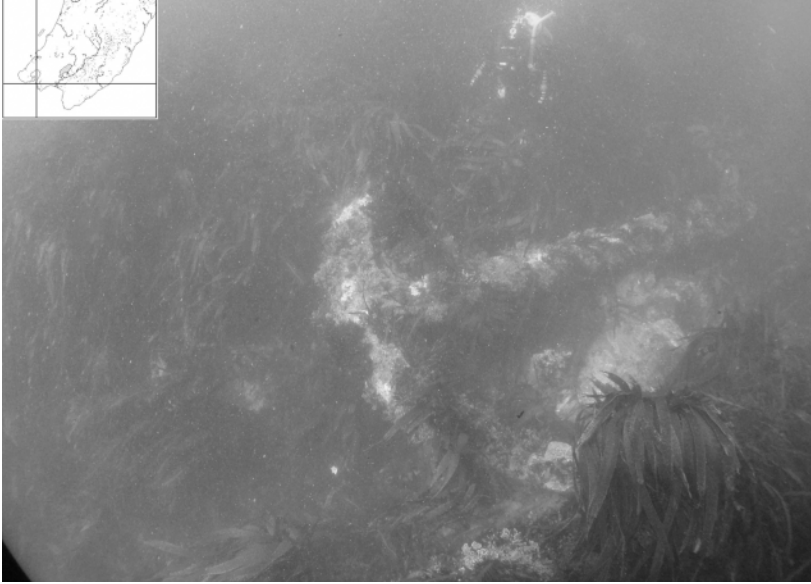


Figure 7: Halcione [1869-1896] admiralty pattern anchor (R27/482), Fitzroy Bay



Figure 8: Waitaki [1876-1887] brass tubes from inside the boiler (S28/194), White Rocks

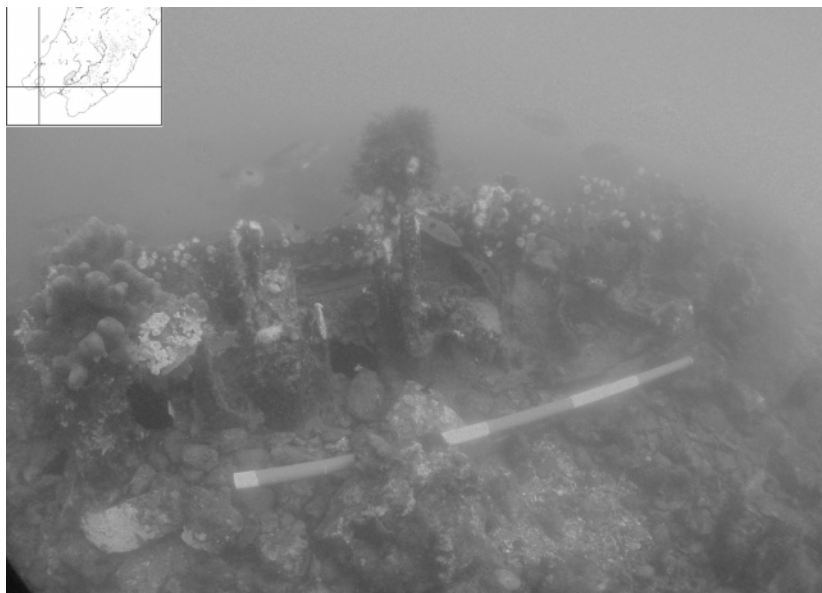


Figure 9: Willie McLaren [1874-1890] wooden hull remains (R27/205), Wellington Harbour



Figure 10: Opua [1902-1926] viewed from the shore (S28/168), Tora, Wairarapa

in 1882 (Figure 11). The original elements of these structures include copper sheathed timber piles, some of which have been incised with assembly numbers. All of the wharves assessed during the project had fallen timbers on the seabed, the result of discarded material over time, and in some cases cut off piles outside of the present day footprint were able to demonstrate changes in the shape of the wharf over time.

As well as having original fabric included in the structure, many of the older wharves have archaeological remains beneath them in the form of truncated piles and artefact debris fields. Often the artefact deposits are affected by dredging, propeller wash and fossicking, but in some cases, particularly under early extensions, archaeological deposits are likely to remain intact. Wharves assessed for heritage significance were predominantly clustered in Wellington Harbour, and with a few exceptions most dated to the late 19th and early 20th century. One of the earliest wharves for which underwater archaeological remains are visible above the seabed is the Mahanga Bay Wharf, which was constructed in 1886 and demolished by the army in 1962 (Figure 12). Mahanga Bay Wharf played an important role in the transport of materials for the construction of Fort Ballance, but also as the location of the tide gauge which was a necessary part of Wellington Harbour's submarine mining defences. The remains of landings at Matiu/Somes and Castlepoint, while not substantial, were important components of the lighthouse complexes at those locations.

Shipbuilding and repair

Shipbuilding and repair is another industry which can leave substantial remains in the CMA. Wellington had a rather modest shipbuilding industry compared to Auckland, and like many of its early wharves, the remains of Wellington's 19th century shipbuilding and repair sites were located on the old waterfront under what is now reclaimed land. The exception was the Union Company Patent Slip located in Evans Bay (Figure 13). Sites located in the Hutt Valley have likely succumbed to erosion caused by the shifting course of the Hutt River. Towards the turn of the century shipbuilding was being forced away from the central city waterfront by reclamations and commercial development. At this time the shipbuilding industry was mostly relocated to Balaena Bay and Evans Bay. These areas are comparatively less modified so there is greater potential for remains of these activities to survive in the CMA.

Coastal defence

Harbour and coastal defences in Wellington include submarine and foreshore elements dating back to the 1890s (Cooke 2000). Many of these sites were deliberately destroyed or removed after the end of World War Two, but

a small number have survived on the Wellington foreshore. Machine gun posts at Plimmerton and Pukerua Bay and a concrete-lined home guard trench at Makara are exposed at the boundary between land and the CMA, and other coastal defence remains included tank obstacles at Worsler Bay (Figure 14), and submarine cabling believed to be associated with the minefield loops at Point Gordon.

Shore whaling

Six shore whaling stations were assessed for remains in the CMA. The onshore remains of these sites were described in a Department of Conservation national thematic study of shore whaling sites (Prickett 2002). With the exception of one site which is still occupied, no archaeological remains were visible above the seabed underwater. These sites were occupied prior to the earthquakes of the 1840s and 1850s which resulted in uplift around the region, so in some cases the foreshore and seabed in front has been lifted, but the sea has always been a convenient dumping ground so there is still potential for smaller artefacts to be buried in the cobbles and seabed sediments.

Discussion

Listing in the Coastal Plan has a number of advantages in terms of site protection. One of these is that sites that post-date 1900 can be readily protected. A significant number of the shipwrecks researched during the course of this project were of nineteenth century construction, but because they wrecked after 1900 they would otherwise not be protected. Another advantage of using the coastal plan to identify underwater heritage is that it can sometimes be better integrated into project planning, as information on site location is readily accessible through planning documents. It is sometimes suggested that disclosing the location of sites could invite fossicking, but many of these sites have been fossicked already, and in many cases by people who are confident that they will not be held accountable. Conservation ethics amongst divers are slowly improving, and the more people that know about a shipwreck and consider it to be an attractive and interesting dive site the more people there are who will discourage others from damaging it, or perhaps report illegal activity.

The revised coastal plan is in the drafting stage, and a proposed coastal plan is still several months from being released. Additional work is being commissioned to identify sites of significance to Māori in the coastal marine area and the rules for the coastal plan have not been drafted. It is likely that there will be a variety of rules focused on preserving aspects of built heritage shipwrecks and associated archaeological deposits. There may also be general



Figure 11: Waterloo Quay wharf [1882]. Assembly marks on original piles

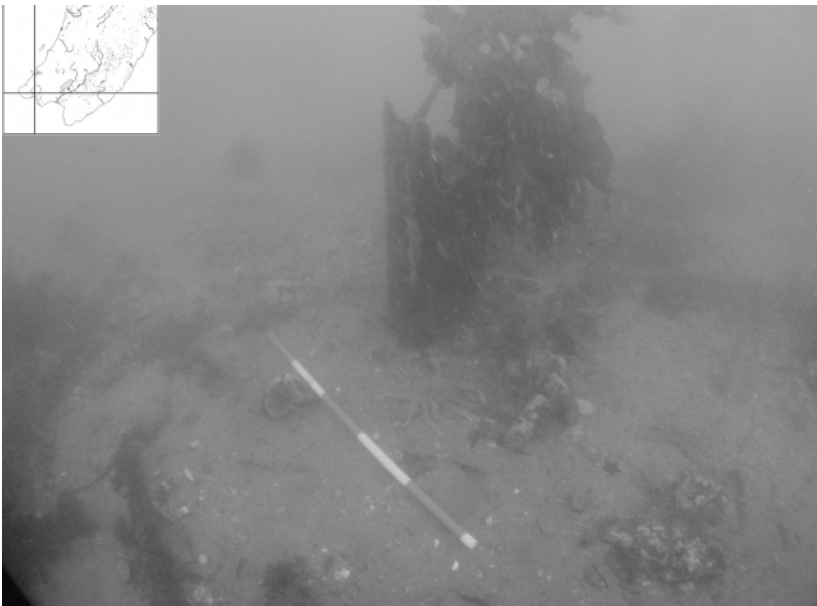


Figure 12: Mahanga Bay wharf [1886] surviving wharf pile (R27/269)

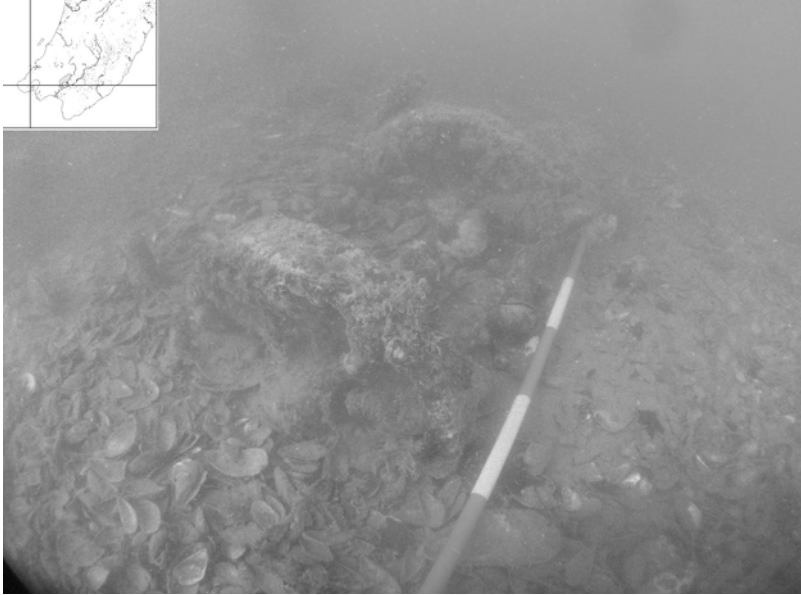


Figure 13: Evans Bay Patent slip [1873, 1922] bogey wheels from a wharf trolley (R27/140)



Figure 14: Worser Bay tank obstacles [1942] (R27/256)

rules concerning seabed disturbance which may also offer some ability to cope with unrecorded sites.

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