

- **Points supporting the Nelson Marlborough Conservation Boards position**
- Marlborough's east coast environment was already highly modified through human activity, particularly wide scale vegetation clearance and the introduction of invasive plant and animal pests, well before the 2016 earthquake (MDC, 2005) The sudden changes brought about by the earthquake, including the increased accessibility for vehicles, have added to the pressures on this area.
- This environment is in a transitional phase post-earthquake. The uplift has caused the existing dunes to move higher and a new lower dune zone is developing, along with a new driftwood and debris area, which will, over time, create new habitat areas for some species (for instance the taonga katipō spider). It is important that this newly developing dune system is left undisturbed as the rearrangement process occurs over the coming years.
- The MDC technical report provides an overview of both the physical environment and the remaining special plants and animals found at various locations along this coastal area. The report highlights the high conservation values of the area and the vulnerability of these values due to a range of impacts. A number of the plant and animal species found in this area are endemic and/or included on the New Zealand Threat Classification System.
- This includes a group of very vulnerable plants that grow on low dunes and beach gravels (*Pimelea prostrata*, *Raoulia aff.hookeri*, sand tussock spinifex and pingao etc), a number of which are classified as threatened and all of which are very vulnerable to disturbance by vehicles. This damage is clearly evident at various locations along the coast.
- Many birds use the coastal environment including for nesting, feeding, and migratory travel and resting. Again, vehicle activity is highly incompatible with all of these. Obviously activity above the high tideline is likely to be directly destructive for nesting birds such as banded dotterel and oyster catchers, and activity at lower tides below the high tideline disrupts feeding and creates general noise and disturbance.
- Other species that use the coast are also at risk from vehicle disturbance including the threatened katipo spider, geckos and invertebrates which are in the process of re-establishing in shifting driftwood zones, and populations of the NZ fur seal which are building and re-establishing at various locations along this coast. In the intertidal area numerous seaweeds and animals are vulnerable to crushing by vehicles. For example, shellfish can be found on reefs or sandy beaches. While some shellfish are valued for human consumption, many more provide food for birds and other foragers.
- The physical environment of the east coast includes several ecosystem types that have been identified as being "naturally uncommon" and severely degraded due to impacts from humans and introduced plants and animals. (Williams et al:2007). These include limestone coastal cliffs, both active and stable dune systems as well as deflated dunes and shingle beaches. Again vehicle activity in and around and over these ecosystems is highly incompatible with the process of protection and recovery.
- The landscape and wilderness values of the east coast area have been identified as "Outstanding" in the Marlborough Environment Plan and provides a sense of remoteness and beauty for human visitors. Public access is freely available from a number of access points by vehicle, and walking provides the opportunity to explore further. Vehicles are not needed to enjoy these values and the noise and speed of travel by vehicles can degrade the experience for others.in addition to creating potential safety issues in some cases.

- The area is also well known for its archaeological and paleontological values with a number of important sites of geological, cultural and historical interest present.