



Sponges and suspended sediment on the South Coast

Human activities, such as mining and fishing, can generate suspended sediment that affect the health and survival of sea-floor species. This research investigated the impact of suspended sediments on two types of animals: dog cockles and a common sponge.

We collected dog cockles from Taranaki and common sponge from Wellington's South Coast and took them to a laboratory at NIWA, Wellington. Here, we trialled innovative laboratory experiments to understand how resilient these species are, and how quickly they can recover from suspended sediment levels that could arise from human activities.

We found:

- Both survived in the experimentally elevated suspended sediments.
- Sponges accumulated the sediments internally, but they began to clear these under normal seawater conditions.

We achieved:

- An effective system for maintaining sediment in suspension – not an easy task!
- Useful insights that have informed other research projects on ecological effects of suspended sediments.

Watch the webinar www.sustainableseaschallenge.co.nz/suspended-sediments-webinar



About Sustainable Seas Challenge: Our vision is for Aotearoa New Zealand to have healthy marine ecosystems that provide value for all New Zealanders. We have 60+ research projects that bring together around 250 scientists, social scientists, economists, and experts in mātauranga Māori and policy from across New Zealand. We are one of 11 National Science Challenges, funded by Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment.

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