

Tonga Island follows Cable Bay snorkel tour

The opportunity to put on a mask and snorkel and find out what's under the water near one of Tasman Bay's marine reserves is happening again at Cable Bay on Sunday 17th January.

There are two marine reserves in Tasman Bay: Horoirangi Marine Reserve between Glenduan and Cable Bay, and Tonga Island Marine Reserve in the Abel Tasman National Park.

Experiencing Marine Reserves, Nelson Underwater Club and Whenua Iiti Outdoors have come together to provide free 30 minute snorkelling tours at Cable Bay, near Horoirangi Marine Reserve, between 9am and 12pm on Sunday 17th January.

This event is supported by Port Nelson and although it doesn't fall on Sea Week (Saturday 27th February to Sunday 6th March) suitably reinforces this year's theme "Toiora te Moana – Toiora te Tangata – Healthy Seas, Healthy People". Megan Wilson,

Co-ordinator of Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) said this is a wonderful opportunity for people to experience our local marine environment up close.

"Participating in a guided snorkel enables people to actually see what lives beneath the surface of the sea and find out more about the wonderful diverse creatures that inhabit there, which they may not do by themselves."

"An up close marine experience will help people to develop connection with their local marine environment and encourage them to become kaitaki (guardians). They will better understand and action the value of healthy seas for healthy people".

People may bring their own gear to the free event if they have it, or bring a gold coin donation to have all equipment provided (wetsuit, mask, snorkel and fins). "You don't even need to have snorkelled before. Nelson Underwater Club is providing experienced snorkelling



Bodelle Rowling and Experiencing Marine Reserves Coordinator Megan Wilson appear to be largely impressed with the underwater sights of their snorkel excursion to Cable Bay- another one is planned for this Sunday with another one again set down for March 5, closer to home at the Tonga Island Marine Reserve. Photo supplied.

guides who will instruct you on how to snorkel, brief you about safety and inform you about marine life."

Participants must be 7 years and over. Under 15 years need to be accompanied by an adult. The adult doesn't have to be in the water with them,

but must be observing from the beach. Just turn up any time from 9am to 12pm to register for a guided snorkel. If sea conditions aren't suitable on the 17th the event will be postponed to Sunday the 31st of January. Interested people can check for weath-

er updates on the Experiencing Marine Reserves Facebook page and find more information at itson.co.nz

A second Community Guided Snorkel Day will be held on Saturday the 5th of March at Tonga Island Marine Reserve. There

are limited places and it costs \$20 per person for the water taxi fare. This is generously subsidised by Abel Tasman Sea Shuttle. To register email nelson@emr.org.nz

Marine reserves are protected areas of sea and foreshore, established under

the Marine Reserves Act 1971 to preserve a variety of marine habitats in their natural state. The Department of Conservation manages marine reserves.

The public is encouraged to visit and enjoy marine reserves, whether by diving, boating or simply exploring rock pools.

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