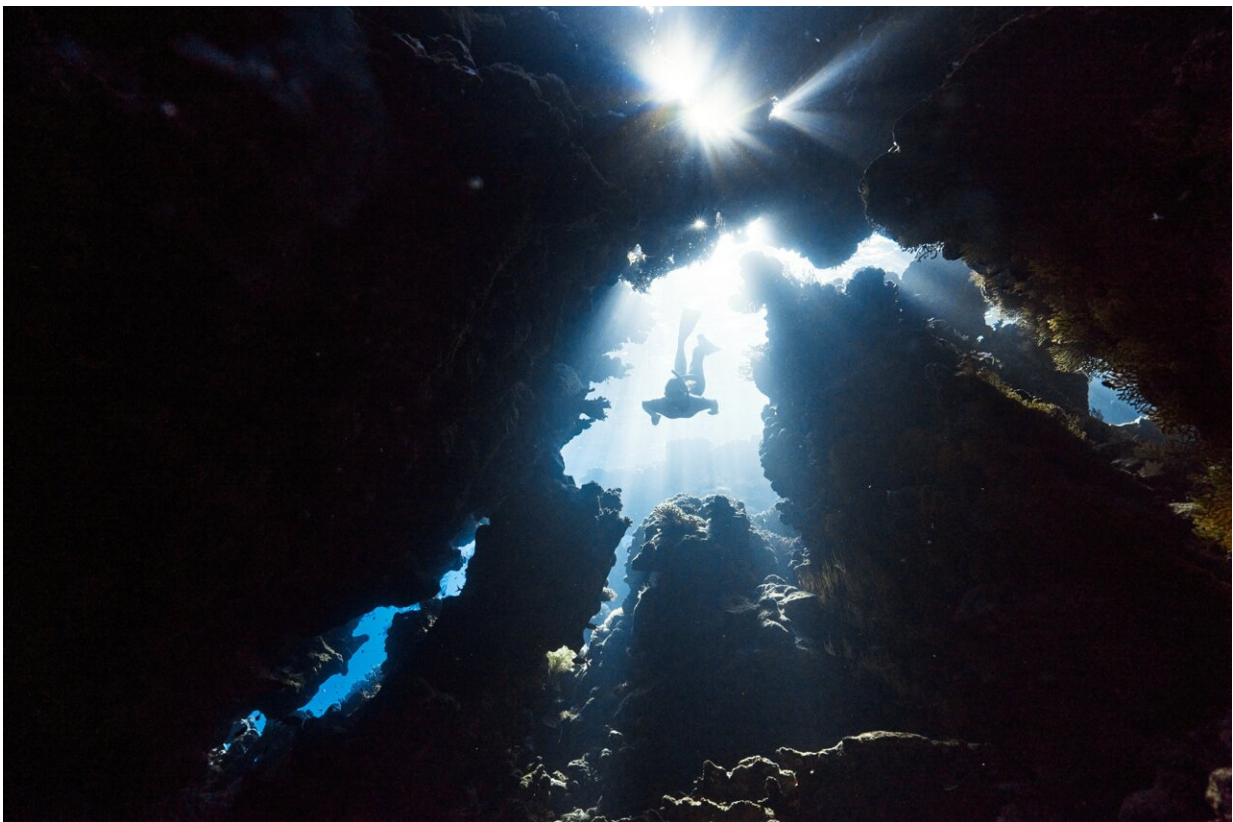


Policy leadership needed for the future of Aotearoa's marine environment, say researchers

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Credit: NEOM on Unsplash

If Aotearoa's marine laws are to effectively manage marine environments and resources, they must manage the ecosystem in a

holistic and inclusive way that stops the degradation of our oceans and restores the health of the moana and the Māori people.

New research published in *Ocean Development & International Law* from Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge reveals critical, time-sensitive opportunities in four [policy](#) areas across [marine conservation](#), coastal planning and environmental effects assessment, fisheries regulation, and Māori rights and interests.

With significant changes to law and policy already underway in these areas, there is an opportunity for Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) principles to be adopted to better coordinate implementation of various policy impacting the marine [environment](#) in Aotearoa. EBM is a holistic and inclusive way to manage competing uses, and demands on, [marine environments](#) in a way that maintains or improves ecosystem health.

To achieve this, the research highlights the need for fundamental marine principles to be developed in partnership with Māori and for Aotearoa to create a Ministry for the Ocean to drive this transition.

"We join the call for a Ministry for the Ocean to match the Ministerial portfolio for the [ocean](#), reflecting the complexity of marine management and departing from the terrestrial bias of our existing laws and institutions. A dedicated Ministry would ensure a coherent, whole-of-government approach to leadership, oversight, coordination, and alignment of marine policy consistent with the Tiriti partnership."

Aligning law and policy across sectors and scales will be especially important as the New Zealand government moves toward releasing its long-awaited climate adaptation legislation.

More information: Elizabeth Macpherson et al, *Designing Law and Policy for the Health and Resilience of Marine and Coastal*

Ecosystems—Lessons From (and for) Aotearoa New Zealand, *Ocean Development & International Law* (2023). [DOI: 10.1080/00908320.2023.2224116](https://doi.org/10.1080/00908320.2023.2224116)

Provided by Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge

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