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**Exploring how New Zealand surfers construct experiences of the coastal
environment**

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Ecological Engineering and Natural Resource Management

at
Lincoln University
by
Oakley Campbell

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Abstract of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
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As the importance of protecting surf breaks grows internationally, surfers are becoming increasingly relied upon to inform the resource management process. This is despite conflicting discourses of how surfers value the natural environment, as well as a lack of research which focuses upon how surfers construct value of these spaces. This research explores how New Zealand surfers construct connections to surfing, surf breaks and the coastal environment. Qualitative data in the form of oral history narratives was collected using a topic-based oral history interview approach. The interviews were designed to elicit 15 surfers' oral histories relating to their experiences of the coastal environment through the act of surfing. This data was then analysed through a combination of oral history and narrative theory which allowed the informants' responses to be categorised into 5 themes: *Individual surfing values*, *Awareness of changes in the coastal environment*, *Relationships to surfing and the coastal environment*, *Accessibility of surfing*, and *Cultural expectations*. The findings of this thesis show that these surfers developed a unique knowledge of surf breaks and reconceived elements of the coastal environment through surfing. Furthermore, surfers who were able to observe a surf break consistently, could make judgements upon the state of the surf break over time. However, this was limited to elements within the coastal environment which directly pertain to the act of surfing. Although surfers can express a broader sense of care for the environment it is not defined nor engendered specifically by surfing. Instead, the experience of surfing is constructed by several variables which contribute to shaping their individual experiences of surfing and values of the environment. Examples from this research include culture, technology, access, gender and colonisation. This thesis challenges the expectation that surfers develop a broad care for the environment based on their immersion in the coastal environment. However, it also tempers criticisms directed towards surfers for failing to live up to these expectations. Instead, it concludes that surfing, enabled by surf breaks, is an activity which can connect individuals more closely to specific elements within the coastal environment.

Keywords: surfing, surf break, surfboard, coastal environment, oral history, waves, ocean, advocacy, insider, outsider, New Zealand, Mangamaunu, resource management, NZCPS, Policy 16,

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In 2017, the New Zealand Transport Agency and Kiwi Rail were granted consent for a development which would spark outrage from the New Zealand surfing community (Rennie, 2018). The proposed development planned to build a cycleway and carpark in Mangamaunu Bay, Kaikoura. The bay contains the Mangamaunu surf break, known to some as “Malibu of New Zealand” (Bermingham, 2018, as cited in Kuprienko, 2018) and is world-renowned for its incredible, long right-hand rides and dramatic setting. To the dismay of surfers consent for the project was issued. This was secured through emergency legislation enacted following the 2016 Kaikoura earthquake which allowed remedial projects, road and rail reconstruction, and this development to bypass the standard consenting process and the Resource Management Act (1991) (Rennie, 2018). Surfers from around the world expressed their concern that the consented development would irrevocably damage the highly prized surf break (Neilson, 2018).

Of all New Zealand’s surfing areas, Mangamaunu is esteemed by surfers as being amongst the best and is specifically protected as such within the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) 2010 (Atkin, Bryan, Hume, Mead, & Waiti, 2019). However, neither the value of the surf break nor its protection appeared to be considered within the development plans for the area and it did not factor in the granting of consent. Local surfers, Iwi, and community groups would work closely with national planning and surf experts as well as surf break protection groups to challenge the proposed development. In 2018, this combined community movement succeeded and the development was cancelled following a High Court challenge (Rennie, 2018). Despite recognition as a nationally significant surf break and its level of protection, the Mangamaunu surf break had been seriously threatened and could well have become counted amongst the many surf breaks lost around the globe over the past several decades.

Surf breaks are vulnerable to a variety of impacts in coastal and marine areas including pollution, development, and access (Nelsen, Cummins, & Tagholm, 2013; Scarfe, Healy, & Rennie, 2009; Scarfe, Healy, Rennie, & Mead, 2009; Skellern, Peryman, Orchard, & Rennie, 2013). Due to their susceptibility to such threats, there is an extensive history of surf break damage, destruction, and loss around the world. High profile instances of surf break loss, such as Dana Point in California or damage to Mundaka in Spain, frequently appear within surfing discourse as exemplars of the worst that could happen from unfettered development (Peryman, 2011; Scarfe, Healy, Rennie, et al., 2009). Research has demonstrated the economic, cultural, and ecological benefits associated with surf breaks, and surfing as an increasingly global phenomenon has ensured that surf break management is topical and

important along coastlines throughout the world (Orchard, 2020; Scarfe, Healy, & Rennie, 2009; Scarfe, Healy, Rennie, et al., 2009). Despite this increased attention, surf break loss remains a contemporary New Zealand issue as demonstrated by the events in Mangamaunu in 2018. It is an extensive issue; in the last several decades, twenty-eight New Zealand surf breaks have been threatened for various reasons (Mead & Atkin, 2019).

In 2010 New Zealand finalised legislation within the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) 2010, which seeks to protect various New Zealand surf breaks (Skellern et al., 2013).

Rennie (2015) defines a surf break as:

A natural or artificial feature that is comprised of swell, currents, water levels, seabed morphology and wind. Hydrodynamic characteristics of the ocean (swell, currents and water levels) combine with seabed morphology (shape, slope) and winds give rise to a surfable wave. Breaks may be classified by the ability required to surf the waves (nursery, master) or by the geographic context (bar, point). (p. 629)

Currently seventeen New Zealand surf breaks are protected within Policy 16 of the NZCPS, selected on the basis upon their level of wave quality as indicated within the *Wavetrack New Zealand Surfing Guide*. The *Wavetrack* guide, which is produced by surfers, identifies surf breaks throughout the country and assesses their associated 'stoke' (Board of Inquiry, 2009; Orchard, Atkin, & Mead, 2019). 'Stoke', is a colloquial surfing term used in *Wavetrack* as a measure which "offers an accurate appraisal of each break's potential when optimum conditions are present" (Morse & Brunskill, 2004, p.7). As a result, the original seventeen surf breaks protected from adverse effects within Policy 16 of the NZCPS 2010 were primarily protected due to their high aspects of wave quality. This is not an all-encompassing protection; protecting surf breaks based on wave quality alone may prevent other surf breaks of differing value from being protected (Orchard et al., 2019).

Increasingly, new methods of protection seek to apply the values of surfers within the management process (Edwards & Stephenson, 2013; Orchard et al., 2019; Peryman & Orchard, 2013). New Zealand surfers value not only the quality of waves, but identify community, cultural, spiritual, historical, and indigenous values within these surf breaks (Orchard et al., 2019; Peryman & Orchard, 2013; Waiti & Awatere, 2019). As the primary users of surf breaks, surfers are the unique authority on what constitutes value within surf breaks and as a result are increasingly relied upon to demonstrate this within the natural resource management process (Orchard, 2020; Orchard et al., 2019; Peryman & Orchard, 2013; Reineman, 2016; Skellern et al., 2013). However, surfers' underlying conception of the value of the environment and natural resource management is a matter of contention within existing research. Surfers equate their physical connection to the environment with an increase in environmental care and the formation of a cultural identity associated with the environment (Fabia,

Pedro, & Patrícia, 2015; Hill & Abbott, 2009a). However, Hill and Abbot's (2009a;2009b) research, along with other works have begun to examine and challenge surfers' engagement with environmental issues (Laderman, 2014). A growing awareness of surfing culture and surfers failing to live up to an environmental expectation is also emerging from within surfing media and publications (Warshaw, 2010).

Despite questions concerning authenticity of surfers' inherent care for the environment or natural resources, New Zealand legislation concerning the management of surf breaks as natural resources relies fundamentally on the knowledge and judgement of surfers. Past research has focused primarily on the quantitative aspects of surf breaks such as their physical surf break characteristics, and the identification of values (Scarfe, Healy, & Rennie, 2009; Skellern et al., 2013). This thesis will address identified gaps in previous research by exploring how connections to surfing, surf breaks, and the coastal environment are experienced, understood, and constructed within the lives of New Zealand surfers. This research will contribute to better understanding of the formation and veracity of these values, and comment on the responsibility of surfers within surf break management.

1.1 Research overview

This research will use an oral history approach, informed by narrative theory, to explore how connections to surfing, surf breaks, and the coastal environment are experienced, understood, and constructed within the lives of New Zealand surfers. An open, semi-structured interview methodology will be used to elicit oral histories from fifteen research informants.

Chapter 2 of this thesis will review relevant literature pertaining to the aims of this thesis. First, an overview of surf break management policy in New Zealand is provided. This is followed by a review of literature concerning how surfers' value surf breaks and the environment, representations of surfers as connected to the environment, and the construction of surfing culture. *Chapter 3* describes the oral history method employed to gather data from informants, expectations on researching as a potential *insider*, the process of selecting informants, and the process of data analysis. *Chapter 4* presents the results from the processed and analysed data from the oral history interviews, separated into five themes: *Individual surfing values, Awareness of changes in the coastal environment, Relationships to surfing and the coastal environment, Accessibility of surfing, and Cultural expectations*. In *Chapter 5*, these findings are discussed in relation to the existing research and the aims of this study, exploring how the informants construct an understanding of surf breaks and their value of the coastal environment. This is concluded by limitations of this research, potential avenues for future research and reflections on the experience of engaging in this research as an *insider*.

Chapter 2

Background and Literature Review

The following literature review will begin with a background of surf break management policy in New Zealand. Following this a review of the technical literature which informs the understanding of surf breaks as natural resources is presented, as well as a review of threats to surf breaks and instances of damaged surf breaks. This leads to an exploration of how surfers value surf breaks and how these values have been accounted for within New Zealand's policy approach. Subsequently, the interactions of surfers within the natural resource management process are explored as well as their past efforts in protecting surf breaks around the world. Conflicting arguments critiquing the motivations for surfers to engage in such processes are then reviewed, which leads to an exploration of the relationship between surfers and the environment. Finally, the ways in which surfers construct culture through narrative is explored as a potential explanation for the engagement of surfers in protecting the environment.

2.1 Surf break management in New Zealand policy

As vulnerable and scarce resources surf breaks have become a globally significant area of natural resource management (Lazarow, 2007; Lazarow, Miller, & Blackwell, 2007; Scarfe, Healy, & Rennie, 2009; Scarfe, Healy, Rennie, et al., 2009). In 2010, seventeen New Zealand surf breaks would receive legislative designation as *Surf Breaks of National Significance* within the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS). The NZCPS was designed to fulfil the purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) in relation to New Zealand's coastal environment. This purpose of the RMA is "to promote sustainable management of natural and physical resources" (Resource Management Act 1991). Therefore, to become a resource of relevance to both the RMA 1991 and the NZCPS 2010, surf breaks need to be recognised as either a physical or natural resource. The NZCPS 2010 defines surf breaks as:

A natural feature that is comprised of swell, currents, water levels, seabed morphology, and wind. The hydrodynamic character of the ocean (swell, currents and water levels) combines with seabed morphology and winds to give rise to a 'surfable wave'. (New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010, p. 28):

Critically, this definition identifies the various natural and physical elements which comprise a surf break and ensures that surf breaks are relevant to the purpose of the NZCPS 2010. However, while this definition judges that a surf break is not simply a surfing wave, the determination of a surf break as a natural resource remains fundamentally dependent upon these elements giving rise to a *surfable wave*.

The NZCPS 2010 defines a surfable wave as:

A wave that can be caught and ridden by a surfer. Surfable waves have a wave breaking point that peels along the unbroken wave crest so that the surfer is propelled laterally along the wave crest. (New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010, p. 28)

As such waves fit for surfing, albeit comprised of various natural elements would receive specific legislative protection following inclusion in several policies in the NZCPS 2010. The most prominent of these policies within the NZCPS 2010 was and remains *Policy 16: Surf breaks of national significance*. This policy states:

Policy 16: Surf breaks of national significance:

*Protect the surf breaks of national significance for surfing listed in Schedule 1,
(a) ensuring that activities in the coastal environment do not adversely affect the surf breaks; and
(b) avoiding adverse effects of other activities on access to and use and enjoyment of the surf breaks. (New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010, p. 19)*

Policy 16 aims to ensure that activities and development in the coastal environment do not negatively impact surf breaks of national significance. The policy scope specifically includes activities not only in the coastal marine environment, but also the broader coastal environment, noting that various land-based activities have the potential to impact some of the various elements comprising a surf break (Department of Conservation, 2010). Surf breaks are also considered of relevance within the policies of the NZCPS 2010; *Policy 6: Activities in the coastal environment*, *Policy 13: Preservation of natural character* and *Policy 15: Natural features and natural landscapes* (Peryman, 2011). The Government considers that for a surf break to be properly protected, the integrity of every contributing element must be maintained (New Zealand Government, 2010, p.19). DOC provides several examples of activities which might threaten this integrity. These include:

- *Discharges causing poor water quality.*
 - *Sedimentation caused by some land uses, which can flatten out the seabed and potentially adversely affect wave quality.*
 - *Limitations on access to surfable areas.*
 - *Changes to natural character and features, which provide the context for the surfing experience.*
 - *Structures that impact on surf breaks and wave quality.*
 - *Coastal hazard engineering solutions, which may hinder access and adversely affect surf breaks.*
 - *Dredging and/or dredge spoil disposal which can potentially adversely affect wave quality.*
- (New Zealand Government, 2010, p.7):

Several of these activities such as sedimentation or coastal hazard engineering are closely linked to the physical and natural elements of a surf break. Other activities, such as limitations on access can instead influence the surfing experience of the surf break. Some local New Zealand council members wondered why surf breaks should be protected over specific recreational diving areas or subsistence fisheries (Peryman, 2011). To these council members the legislative provision of surf breaks over other natural features in the coastal environment was an inappropriate prioritisation of a particular activity over others (Peryman, 2011). Coastal planning expert Hamish Rennie defended the proposed *Policy 16* at the time, stating that the policy:

Specifically focuses on a component of the natural environment, as opposed to peoples' activities, and addresses the need to protect that component from the negative effects of other human activities on it... and therefore retains an effects-based approach. (Rennie, 2010 as cited in Peryman 2011, p.18)

The ability of the policy to retain its effects-based approach is also defended by Orchard *et al.* (2019) who stipulate that designation as a surfable wave is to enable the definition of the resource, not the prioritisation of the activity as suggested. Despite concerns the Government ultimately decided that it was necessary to have a surf break specific policy to ensure the effective management of surf breaks as a natural resource (Peryman, 2011). Surfing as an increasingly global phenomenon, ensures that surf break management is topical along coastlines throughout the world (Orchard, 2020; Scarfe, Healy, & Rennie, 2009; Scarfe, Healy, Rennie, et al., 2009). Various alternative management strategies have been developed and implemented, including surfing reserves, legislative actions, and recognition as heritage sites (Edwards & Stephenson, 2013; Nelsen et al., 2013; Scheske et al., 2019). In certain instances direct state intervention has been taken to prevent specific proposed developments capable of damaging of particular surf breaks, one example being a state government decision to prevent threats to the Kirra surf break on the Gold Coast (Hales, Ware, & Lazarow, 2017a). However not all management decisions stand to benefit or accurately represent the concerns of surfers, following the death of a surfer Queensland State Government's Department of Transport recommended that surfers be classified as maritime vessels rather than swimmers, a designation which would require surfers to negotiate with boats and ships in the coastal environment as a vessels rather than a swimmers (Hales, Ware, & Lazarow, 2017b). Hales, Ware and Lazarow (2017b) contend that although not adopted, this framing of surfers was a means of supporting the ability to manage the coastal environment rather than to provide for the safety of surfers. Regardless, New Zealand's legislative approach within the NZCPS 2010 is recognised as world leading, being one of only two instances of specific legal provision for surf breaks internationally (Orchard et al., 2019; Scheske et al., 2019). Eleven years since the implementation of *Policy 16* it remains the primary policy for the protection of New Zealand surf breaks.

2.2 Surf science

Despite the succinctness of the NZCPS 2010 definition surf breaks are complex physical resources. The study of physical features, surfing wave characteristics, and oceanographic considerations which contribute to the understanding of surf breaks has been labelled *surf science* by its proponents and practitioners (Atkin et al., 2019). *Surf science* is a specialised area of expertise differentiated from marine or coastal science by its specific focus upon surfing elements (Atkin et al., 2019). Such research builds on basic oceanographic concepts such as *wave theory* to create a new field of surfing understanding categorised by empirical and quantitative approaches (Atkin et al., 2019; Scarfe, Healy, & Rennie, 2009; Skellern et al., 2013). *Surf science's* first dedicated education programme began at Plymouth University, England in 1999, subsequently San Diego University, California has established a dedicated centre for surf research (Borne, 2015; Findlay, 2015). Skellern *et al.* (2013) note that many of the recent contributions to the wider body of surfing research have been related to *surf science*, making it one of the most well researched areas of surfing to date.

While an in-depth understanding of this research is not essential for this project, it is important to note its existence and its place in enabling the management of surf breaks. Through its classification of fundamental surf break components such as seabed morphology, substrate, waves, tides, and winds *surf science* has facilitated the definition of a surf break as it appears within the NZCPS 2010 (Atkin et al., 2019; Skellern et al., 2013; Skellern, Rennie, & Davis, 2009). It has also coined several new terms relating to the characteristics of surfing waves including *peel angle*, *breaking intensity*, and *ride length* each used to describe the way in which a surfing wave breaks and used to determine its suitability for surfing (Atkin et al., 2019). Additional research has focused upon the identification of different types of surf breaks associated with different geomorphological characteristics. Expanding on Mead's (2000) research into the types of surf breaks, Scarfe (2008) identifies and classifies five types of surf break: *Point Break*, *Beach Break*, *Delta Break*, *Reef Break*, and *Ledge Break*. Each of these types of surf break form differently and produce waves in a particular manner (Atkin et al., 2019). Certain surf breaks may produce quality waves relatively consistently and predictably, while other surf breaks may only produce good quality surfable waves in rare, specific scenarios (Atkin et al., 2019; Scarfe, 2008; Skellern et al., 2013). Furthermore, *Surf science* has shown that surf breaks are the convergence of numerous dynamic factors and as a result every wave is unique (Skellern et al., 2013). These requirements mean that ultimately surf breaks are a scarce resource, it is estimated that there is only one surf break for every forty kilometres of coastline in New Zealand (Scarfe, 2008).

Surf science has also been fundamental in contributing to the understanding of potential threats to surf breaks (Atkin et al., 2019). Mead and Borrero (2017) state that:

Understanding and quantifying the various features that combine to produce a surfing break at a particular location are implicit to the determination of the impacts of any potential alterations to a particular break. (p.290)

As noted earlier, surf breaks as defined in the NZCPS 2010 are vulnerable to a variety of threats in both the coastal and marine areas, including threats to water quality, access, and wave quality (Nelsen et al., 2013; Scarfe, Healy, & Rennie, 2009; Scarfe, Healy, Rennie, et al., 2009; Skellern et al., 2013). Hume, Mulcahy, and Mead (2019) have created an extensive summary of the potential threats to New Zealand surf breaks and have also categorised the types of threats based upon their proximity to the surf break: *offshore* and *swell corridor*, *area surfed* and *adjacent inlet* and *nearshore*, *landward* and *catchment*, and *global*. The effects which such threats have had upon New Zealand surf breaks have begun to be documented by Scarfe, Healy, Rennie, et al. (2009). Who explored how surf breaks and their features are vulnerable to coastal engineering and development projects (Scarfe, Healy, Rennie, et al., 2009). Several of the case studies which they examined demonstrated the negative effects which such construction activities can create, including the surf breaks of Manu Bay (Raglan), Aramoana Beach (Dunedin) and the Whangamata Bar (Whangamata, Coromandel), all of which are surf breaks currently protected within *Policy 16* of the NZCPS 2010 (Atkin et al., 2019). The research of Scarfe, Healey, Rennie, et al. (2009) largely focused upon the hydrodynamic and sedimentary morphological changes which were associated with new-built developments in the surf breaks' vicinities. However, it is important to note that many surf breaks have been improved and even created by these sorts of changes in the coastal environment (Scarfe, Healy, Rennie, et al., 2009). Nevertheless, how one threat may alter a particular surf break is not certain and while some threats could theoretically be mitigated, most may not be, meaning certain threats have the potential to cause lasting negative changes (Mead & Atkin, 2019; Scarfe, Healy, Rennie, et al., 2009; Skellern et al., 2013).

2.2.1 Damaged surf breaks

There is an extensive history of damage to surf breaks derived from both human driven and natural threats. These range from temporary changes to permanent loss and have happened around the world in places including New Zealand, Australia, the United States, Spain, Portugal, and the United Kingdom (Bicudo & Horta, 2009; Lazarow et al., 2007; Orchard, 2020; Peryman, 2011; Scarfe, Healy, Rennie, et al., 2009). Renowned, high-profile losses of surf breaks are consistently referenced within relevant literature, with two prominent instances used as exemplars: the losses of Dana Point (California) and Mundaka (Spain). The later occurred in 2005 when dredging destroyed the world-famous Spanish surf break. Mundaka as an exemplar case study is of particular relevance to New Zealand surf break management considering the similarities of Mundaka to the Whangamata Bar surf

break, where changes to sediment dynamics are already having adverse effects and have caused irreparable damage (Peryman, 2011; Scarfe, Healy, Rennie, et al., 2009).

Surf break degradation is not just historic; surf breaks are actively being degraded or threatened internationally (Bicudo & Horta, 2009; Mead & Atkin, 2019). Mead and Atkin (2019) note that at least twenty-eight New Zealand surf breaks have been threatened by developments in the last several decades, including six surf breaks intended to be protected by *Policy 16* of the NZCPS 2010. In 2018 the New Zealand Transport Agency pursued the development of a shared cycle way, which would extend into and traversed the Mangamaunu Bay on the Kaikoura coastline in New Zealand. This proposed development was linked to extensive road and infrastructure repair and re-development along the coastline following the impacts of the 2016 Kaikoura earthquake. Enabled by emergency legislation designed to fast track the restoration of local infrastructure in the post-disaster setting developers were permitted to bypass the typical consenting and consulting process required with in the New Zealand Resource Management Act (1991) (Rennie, 2018). The surf break at Mangamaunu is one of the original seventeen protected surf breaks within the NZCPS 2010 (Atkin et al., 2019). However, the prevention of further development was achieved not because of this significance of the surf break but due to improper legislative application (Rennie, 2018). Surfers as a collective community, the Surfbreak Protection Society (SPS), and local iwi raised issues with the proposed development considering that it threatened to irrevocably damage both surfing resources, and local taonga and wāhi tapu. These groups were fortunate to do so in the shortened time allocated for challenging the consent process.

2.3 The value of surf breaks

The protection of natural resources is largely determined by the value of the resource, not just from an understanding of their threats (Atkin et al., 2019; Peryman & Orchard, 2013). Orchard *et al.* (2019) have adapted Peryman and Orchard's (2013) earlier work and identified four facets of value associated with New Zealand surf breaks: *Economic, Environmental, Social, and Cultural*. Economic value is one of the more thoroughly researched values of surf breaks, however even this knowledge is considered to be limited (Nelsen et al., 2013). One study places the annual global economic contribution of surfing waves at USD \$50 Billion, with each surf break contributing an average USD \$18- 25 Million annually (McGregor & Wills, 2016). This assessment of the associated economic value of a surf break or surf break region is referred to as 'surfonomics' and typically captures the direct market value or spending which surfing contributes to a local economy (Nelsen, 2015; Scorse & Hodges, 2017). A significant portion of this economic contribution of surf breaks comes from tourism, which has been recognised within the development of the NZCPS 2010 (Atkin et al., 2019; Lazarow, 2007; Peryman & Orchard, 2013). New Zealand surfers themselves acknowledge both the economic

contribution and the strength of tourism within their own appraisals of surf break values (Peryman & Orchard, 2013). The spending of local surfers is another significant form of economic contribution. A specific analysis of two Australian surf breaks, South Stradbroke Island and Bastion Point found that individual surfers spent an average of AUD \$1775 and AUD \$3078 at each respective surf break annually (Lazarow, 2007). The demonstration of such economic value is considered to be a fundamental element when demonstrating the values and relevancies of surf breaks in relation to coastal management decisions (Nelsen, 2015; Scorse & Hodges, 2017). Despite this utility there is concern that such an approach typically fails to account for the non-market values associated with surf breaks as there is no direct cost required to be able to surf a surf break. Estimating non-market values is considerably more difficult as they don't leave measurable expenditure and are more abstract, they may include the cost which surfers may be willing to incur to be able to access and surf particular surf breaks or the influence of surfbreaks on surrounding real estate values (Scorse & Hodges, 2017). The inclusion of such non-market values is increasing within the demonstration of the economic value of surf breaks and is considered to strengthen the justification of their value (Nelsen, 2015; Scorse & Hodges, 2017).

Maintaining the integrity of surf break elements is expected to have a positive contribution upon dependent ecosystems and elements of biodiversity present at particular surf breaks (Scheske et al., 2019). Although common threats to surf breaks such as dredging can threaten biodiversity, not all surf breaks contain significant levels of biodiversity (Scheske et al., 2019). At the time of writing, no New Zealand or international surf break has been protected solely due to its biodiversity, however many surf breaks have become protected as a result of surrounding biodiversity. The creation of marine reserves including the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (California) and the Biosphere Reserve of the Islands of the Pacific (Chile) have indirectly benefited surf break resource management by regulating potentially threatening activities and developments within their boundaries (Scheske et al., 2019).

Recent research is aligning surf breaks with the *blue gym* concept, in which marine environments can contribute to the improvement of physical and mental health for their users (Caddick, Smith, & Phoenix, 2014; Olive & Wheaton, 2020; Wheaton, Roy, & Olive, 2017). It is considered that surf breaks support this through allowing an experience of immersion in natural environments while surfing (Caddick et al., 2014; Wheaton et al., 2017). In this sense, surf breaks as resources provide a service or access to a unique experience, one which can provide significant opportunity to healing or self-progression. Critically Wheaton *et al.* (2017), Wheaton *et al.* (2020) and Olive (2019) identify that this opportunity is not equal; surfing's cost, issues of access, issues of localism and colonial barriers all present limits to the possibility of experiencing such benefits. Surfing also allows a strengthened

connection to whakapapa and atua for Māori surfers who develop a particular sense of place as understood or experienced within a Māori worldview (Atkin et al., 2019; Waiti & Awatere, 2019). Surfing provides one method of strengthening or developing this experience enabled by surf breaks and particular features allowing this experience. Although many of the values of surf breaks have been categorised by Orchard *et al.* (2019), surfers are still required to articulate these values in order to determine the value of a specific surf break (Edwards & Stephenson, 2013; Peryman & Orchard, 2013; Reineman, 2016). Furthermore, certain surf breaks may be consistently associated with certain values by surfers who surf there, the values of surfers themselves and preferences in surf breaks can change through time (Peryman, 2011; Peryman & Orchard, 2013)

2.4 Determining and protecting national significance

The determination of the original seventeen New Zealand surf breaks as nationally significant within the NZCPS 2010 was achieved using the *Wavetrack New Zealand Surfing Guide* (Orchard, 2020; Orchard et al., 2019; Peryman & Orchard, 2013). The *Wavetrack* guide was produced by surfers and identifies surf breaks throughout the country and assesses their associated 'stoke' (Morse & Brunskill, 2004; Orchard, Atkin, & Mead, 2019). Stoke, a colloquial surfing term, is used as a measure which "offers an accurate appraisal of each break's potential when optimum conditions are present" (Morse & Brunskill, 2004, p.7). Surf breaks which received a ten out of ten stoke rating within the *Wavetrack* guide were recognised as nationally significant, along with two others (Atkin et al., 2019). As a result, national significance of New Zealand surf breaks was based primarily upon the performance aspects of wave quality. As noted, subsequent research has indicated that the value of New Zealand surf breaks extends beyond wave quality and can include community, cultural, spiritual, historical, and significance to Māori (Atkin et al., 2019; Orchard et al., 2019; Peryman, 2011; Peryman & Orchard, 2013). Orchard *et al.* (2019) consider that the use of *Wavetrack's* stoke rating as a qualifier was not the most comprehensive standard of assessment. Instead they suggest it was largely a pragmatic choice which supported the immediate protection of several surf breaks (Orchard et al., 2019). Furthermore, despite the recognition of a diverse range of values, the consequences of threats to surf break values, such as economic and environmental, are the most easily observable and understood. In comparison, consequences to New Zealand social and cultural factors remain under-researched and poorly understood (Scarfe, Healy, & Rennie, 2009; Skellern et al., 2013). Several assessment methodologies have been explored to appraise the values of surf breaks and to justify the legislative protection of individual surf breaks (Orchard et al., 2019). However, at the time of writing the NZCPS 2010 has still not defined a system for determining the significance of a surf break. Various surf guides such as *Wavetrack*, remain the primary consolidated source of data identifying New Zealand surf breaks and providing general appraisals of their characteristics (Mead & Atkin, 2019). Identifying *Surf Breaks of Regional Significance* (SBRS) has become the subsequent focus of

surf break management attempts in New Zealand (Orchard et al., 2019; Peryman & Orchard, 2013). SBRS's fall after *Surf Breaks of National Significance* within the policy hierarchy and the responsibility to identify, assess, and protect them, falls to local and regional councils (Orchard et al., 2019). While greater diversity of value may be represented in specific regional assessments of surf break significance, the prioritisation of wave quality in assessing national significance undermines the effectiveness of the New Zealand's legislative approach (Orchard et al., 2019; Peryman & Orchard, 2013). This is compounded by the fact that the assessment of locally and regionally significant surf breaks is not mandatory (Edwards & Stephenson, 2013).

2.5 Surfers within the natural resource management process

Regardless of the importance of legislators and authorities in enacting surf break protection, surfers remain the unique authority on what constitutes value within surf breaks and as a result are relied upon to demonstrate this within the legislative process (Edwards & Stephenson, 2013; Orchard, 2020; Orchard et al., 2019; Peryman, 2011; Peryman & Orchard, 2013; Skellern et al., 2013). As the primary users of surf breaks, surfers possess unique knowledge of coastal environmental processes, developed from their consistent engagement with coastal resources (Peryman & Orchard, 2013; Reineman, 2016). Despite a reliance upon surfers to ensure the effective management of surf breaks there are number of challenges when including surfers within the resource management process (Lazarow et al., 2007; Peryman, 2011). Peryman (2011) notes how the esoteric nature of surfers' values and knowledge can often require a form of translation to function within a legislative context. The widely used adage of *only a surfer knows the feeling* here means not only a surfer knows what is valued, but seemingly that only a surfer can understand or express these values. Furthermore, surfers as a result of critical cultural perceptions which portray surfers as delinquent or overtly hedonistic, have been frequently disadvantaged within resource management decisions (Lazarow, 2007). A reputation of surfers as shiftless, irresponsible or apolitical outcasts has also limited the ability of surfing considerations to be taken seriously in formal resource management decisions (Nelsen, Cummins, & Tagholm, 2013). Similarly, Lazarow (2007) notes how the perception of surfing as a recreational activity has limited its value in resource management in comparison to other coastal activities such as fishing or sailing, which are more commonly linked to a productive understanding.

2.5.1 Engaged surfers

Despite this disregard, several international surfing groups have had remarkable success in advocating for the protection of surf breaks (Nelsen et al., 2013; Skellern et al., 2013; Walter, 2012). The earliest group Save Our Surf (SOS), was created in 1964 in O'ahu, Hawaii (Walter, 2012). SOS's primary focus was protecting Hawaiian surf breaks and beaches from development by the U.S Army Corps of Engineers threatening to damage the coastal environment (Walter, 2012). The creator

of SOS, John Kelly, stated that the aim of SOS was to “advocate for surfers by preserving surfing sites, promoting surfer safety and creating a positive image of the sport” (John Kelly, n.d, as cited in Shapiro, 1999). SOS was quite successful and managed to protect 140 surfing sites in Hawaii from development (Shapiro, 1999). The group emerged as a grass roots youth organisation within a period of strong counterculture movements and Hawaiian Sovereignty land rights movements (Kelly, 1994; Walter, 2012). During this period they harnessed an identity of pro-environmentalism shared by the various cultural groups contributing towards its successes in protecting surf break resources (Kelly, 1994; Walter, 2012).

In 1984, Californian surfers would form the Surfrider Foundation following concern about water pollution at the world-renowned Surfrider Beach, in Malibu California (Warshaw, 2010). Surfrider would have success in several court actions, including a defeat of the proposed construction of a seawall at Imperial Beach, a surf break in San Diego (Warshaw, 2010). They were also effective in a high-profile case against two paper mills in California, each instance threatening surfing resources (Warshaw, 2010). Success in court, against the mills whose activities had been polluting ocean water, was the second largest suit within the United States Clean Water Act (Hill & Abbott, 2009a). Surfrider has since grown into an international organisation with chapters across Europe, Australia, and Central America. Their current mission statement is, “The Surfrider Foundation is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world’s ocean, waves and beaches” (Surfrider, n.d). In 1990, the group Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) was created in Cornwall, England (Wheaton, 2007). Much like Surfrider, the group was initially formed due to the collective concern about sewage discharge at a local surf break (“Surfers against Sewage,” 1996). However, numbers swelled as the group’s focus shifted to the national water quality issues impacting surf breaks and surfers throughout Britain. SAS would aim for the reform of water quality legislation beyond the United Kingdom’s bare minimum approach as directed by the European Bathing Water Directive (“Surfers against Sewage,” 1996). Despite these ambitious aims, Surfers Against Sewage’s significant achievements have been in garnering awareness of surf break resources as opposed to direct legislative change (Wheaton, 2007). However, considering the historical dismissal towards surfers and surfing resources the demonstration of the scale of recreational value associated with surf breaks is one of the key contributions for all of these groups (Hill & Abbott, 2009a, 2009b).

In contrast to New Zealand’s legislative approach the independent nature of these groups is recognised as a contributing factor to their success. SOS has been described as a form of guerrilla activism and its organisational structure or formality extended barely beyond a name (Walter, 2012). Surfrider Foundation, nearly bankrupt and set to close, was reinvigorated as it shifted to a similar decentralised style of operation (Hill & Abbott, 2009a). These concepts were also fundamental in SAS’s successes, who promoted an identity of anti-establishment, surfers against them rhetoric

(Wheaton, 2007). This unstructured approach seemed to appeal to surfers whose representations were understood to have prevented the ability for surfing to be taken seriously in the typical management context (Lazarow, 2007; Nelsen et al., 2013). Furthermore, each group is considered as an example of the influence which dedicated non-government organisations can play in protecting surf resources (Lazarow et al., 2007). What is perhaps surprising is that the development of New Zealand's statutory management approach has been linked to the influence of these deliberately independent groups (Orchard, 2020). Orchard (2020) notes how groups such as SAS and Surfrider inspired the creation of the New Zealand faction of Surfers Environmental Advocacy (SEA) as well as the creation of the New Zealand Surf break Protection Society (SPS) which remains committed to the management of New Zealand surf break resources today. Such groups were instrumental in rousing discourse surrounding the protection of surf breaks which preceded and supported the creation of Policy 16. It is also interesting to note that in 2018 during the Mangamaunu surf break protection events, local surfers aligned their interests with local iwi and hapū in opposition to the developments proposed, in a somewhat similar manner to the alignment of SOS with the Hawaiian Sovereignty movement (Ranford, 2018).

2.6 The connection of surfing to the environment

Despite a general distancing from the counterculture identity of the 1960s, surfing still attracts a popular reputation as an activity with a strong environmental association (Borne, Ponting, & Taylor, 2017; Fabia et al., 2015; Hill & Abbott, 2009a, 2009b). This is perpetuated by certain surfers such as Kelly Slater, currently the world's most famous and successful competitive surfer who states that, "if you're one, you're the other – you have to be" when describing surfers as environmentalists (Slater, n.d as quoted in Hill & Abbot, 2009b, p.1). Hill and Abbott's (2009a) research found that almost all surfers interviewed considered that connection to the environment was a fundamental aspect of surfing. These same surfers also considered that their connection to the environment increased their engagement with environmental care and stewardship (Hill & Abbott, 2009a). Surf advocacy groups such as Surfers Against Sewage and Save Our Surf have utilised this perception of surfers as environmentally conscious to drive the engagement of surfers within their organisations (Walter, 2012; Wheaton, 2007). The successes which such groups have had in protecting surfing resources and surf breaks are then seen as a further confirmation of the presence of an environmental ethic within surfing (Ford & Brown, 2006; Hill & Abbott, 2009b). Certain research also suggests that this time spent in the ocean makes surfers more likely to develop a care for the natural environment (Borne et al., 2017; Fabia et al., 2015; Scheske et al., 2019).

Relationships between surfing and the environment are not only explored to understand their interactions but in order to explore the act of surfing itself. A tension found throughout surfing

literature is that researchers struggle to define surfing as either a sport or as a lifestyle (Booth, 2013; Ford & Brown, 2006; Laderman, 2014). To reconcile this same tension Borne *et al.* (2017) define surfing as an activity with a unique connection to nature and use this understanding as the basis for their sustainability research. For Borne *et al.* (2017) the physical immersion of surfers in coastal environments as well as the connection to a wave during the act of surfing fostered a unique connection to the environment. Other researchers also highlight how these two factors can bring about a unique connection to the environment (Reineman, 2016; Scheske et al., 2019; Taylor, 2007).

As a result of the similar environmental connection noted by Borne *et al.* (2017) surfers are thought to be useful sentinels for changes in the natural coastal environment (Reineman, 2016; Usher, 2021). Reineman (2016) contends that surfers develop a unique knowledge of waves and surf breaks through their immersion in these environments and through the act of surfing, which he labels as *Wave Knowledge*. Reineman (2016) defines this as:

A body of understanding of the dynamic oceanographic and environmental conditions in the coastal ocean acquired through experience, which enables surfers to predict short-term and mid-term changes to those conditions and informs their surfing-related actions. (p.144)

Surfers themselves seemingly track changes to sediment dispersal, wave quality, and water quality in a kind of informal applied *surf science* (Reineman, 2016; Usher, 2021). It is thought that due to this knowledge and awareness any changes within these environments are keenly felt by surfers and they can act as form of measure for environmental change and quality (Reineman, 2016; Usher, 2021). Tucker (2014) confirms this idea, by describing how New Zealand surfers were amongst the earliest groups to raise concerns about impacts of poor water quality in the Taranaki Region in 1970. These surfers blamed their open sores on contaminated seawater at a New Plymouth (Taranaki) surf break (Tucker, 2014). Surfers have provided much of the impetus for protecting surf breaks in the past, and this newly recognised *Wave Knowledge* further consolidates their responsibility in the management of surf breaks as natural resources (Reineman, 2016; Usher, 2021).

However, it is noted by Hill & Abbott (2009b) that much of the literature which portrays surfing as an activity in line with nature stems from within surfing itself. Furthermore, there is a strong conflicting discourse which critiques surfing's popular association with the environment. Despite identifying the connection to the environment as a fundamental element of surfing Borne *et al.* (2017) recognise that these relationships are multi-faceted and can often be fraught. At a basic level, the overall surfing industry is criticised for the environmental impacts involved in the mass production of consumer products such as surfboards, wetsuits, and clothing (Hill & Abbott, 2009a, 2009b; Wheaton, 2020). As Gibson and Warren (2017) state making a surfboard involves use of "non-renewal materials, carbon emissions, toxicity of petrochemicals, environmental pollution, waste disposal problems and

health impacts from the production process itself". International surf tourism is also highly critiqued for its environmental effects and the carbon footprint required to access remote surfing destinations (Wheaton, 2020). These impacts are especially prominent in developing countries where surf tourism exploits communities and brings environmental and social challenges (Mach, 2017). Furthermore, the past engagement of surfers in protecting surf breaks has drawn criticism for a lack of actual environmental care (Hill & Abbott, 2009a, 2009b; Laderman, 2014; Warshaw, 2010). The efforts of surfers in protecting surf breaks are usually seen as a testament to their environmental connection, however, others contend that surfers are primarily motivated by a desire to protect their own ability to surf rather than to protect the environment for its own sake (Hill & Abbott, 2009a, 2009b; Laderman, 2014; Warshaw, 2010). Hill and Abbott's (2009a) research shows that despite considering themselves environmentally responsible, surfers demonstrated minimal engagement in other pro-environmental activities beyond surfing. Lazarow and Olive (2017) conclude that while surfing is fundamentally linked to the natural environment and that many surfers do in-fact note a sense of personal responsibility toward the environment, this largely stems from an individual consumptive point of view which demonstrates again that surfers generally prioritise their own ability to surf and access waves.

This individual interest is also demonstrated in recent research which has indicated that for many New Zealand surfers, the purpose of surf break management beyond their own surfing interests is largely misunderstood (Edwards & Stephenson, 2013). New Zealand surfers recognise the value in protecting their own ability to surf but do not necessarily consider the broader benefits of protecting a natural resource such as environmental integrity (Edwards & Stephenson, 2013). Shaw and Atkin (2019) and Hume, Mulcahy, and Mead (2019) note that almost all attempts to formally protect surf breaks in New Zealand have occurred as a response to threat rather than a pro-active concern for the state of the coastal environment. However as Lazarow and Olive (2017) and Wheaton (2020) conclude the relationships which surfers have toward the natural environment can vary widely between various surfing demographics, and that despite certain failings there are legitimate and concerted efforts to take surfing beyond its self-orientated consumptive view of surfing resources and to bring it closer to its popular representation. Despite the conflicting arguments concerning New Zealand surfers' motivations to protect surf breaks, Orchard (2020) notes that formalised protection of surf breaks in New Zealand did not occur through systematic collaboration with surfers and legislators. Instead, New Zealand's surf break protection was primarily motivated by concerned surfers and planning experts (Orchard, 2020). The tensions and contradictions within the relationships of surfers, the environment and resource management ensure the importance of further exploration.

2.6.1 Soul Surfers

While proponents of surfing's environmental connection attribute it to the act of surfing, it is thought to have largely arrived with the *soul surfer* subculture in the 1960s (Ford & Brown, 2006; Hill & Abbott, 2009a, 2009b; Laderman, 2014; Warshaw, 2010). The *soul surfer* identity emerged from within the United States countercultural movement and imbued surfing with new forms of eastern philosophy, spirituality, and a sense of environmentalism (Ford & Brown, 2006; Laderman, 2014; Warshaw, 2010). This period also saw the reintegration of values from ancient Hawaiian surfing culture, which also pertained to spirituality and the environment (Taylor, 2007). Although the *soul surfer* identity is no longer such a definitive element of surfing culture, it seems to be partially responsible for the engagement of surfers in protecting surf breaks and the promotion of surfers as advocates for natural environments (Hill & Abbott, 2009a, 2009b). How this may have influenced New Zealand surfers' engagement with protecting environmental resources and surf breaks is yet to be explored but international research has examined the integration of the *soul surfer* culture elsewhere.

Ormond's (2007) analysis of the rhetoric within American and British surfing magazines begins to explore the ways in which specific surfing communities interact with surfing culture at large and negotiate to construct their own distinct identities. She compares American and British *green room* writings, which are romantic and spiritual depictions of the experience of being *barrelled* or riding in the curled section of the wave (Ormond, 2007). *Green room* writings were based in the *soul surfer* philosophy and identity of the time, they described that to surf was to experience an expansion of consciousness akin to the psychedelic substances prominent within the counterculture movements of the time (Ormond, 2007). Ormond (2007) notes how British surfing sought to adopt this understanding of American surfing, but they were tempered by several factors, the most critical being the climate. The harsh realities of surfing in the United Kingdom transformed the experience of leisurely hedonistic spirituality to one of penance and an experience of the sublime facilitated by mortification and suffering (Ormond, 2007). Additionally, desire to surf in freezing conditions was a reiteration of British values of hardiness and grit, Ormond (2007) presents climate, place, and national identity as significant forces limiting the influence of the *soul surfer* culture within British surfing. Ormond (2007) does not comment on how this may have influenced an environmental ethic within British surfing but demonstrates how the *soul surfer* cultural influence interacted within a distinct surfing locale.

2.7 New Zealand surfing

New Zealand's geography can create a similar frigid experience to surfing in the United Kingdom as described by Ormond (2007) and is widely thought to have begun in the modern fashion in 1915

following demonstrations by Duke Kahanamoku an international surfing icon (Bayer, 2015; Williamson, 2000). The most extensive effort to examine New Zealand surfing culture and its development of values remains Kent Pearson's 1979 book, *Surfing Subcultures of Australia and New Zealand*. Within which Pearson (1979) largely examines the emergence and distancing of surfing as a pastime and culture from within surf lifesaving. Pearson's (1979) work traces the emergence of the irreverent surfer identity as apolitical outcast, as New Zealand surfers distanced themselves from the regimentation of surf lifesaving. This is the same identity as the one which has historically hindered the ability of surfers to be taken seriously in resource management decisions (Nelsen, Cummins, & Tagholm, 2013). While Pearson (1979) notes the *soul surfer* culture within New Zealand surfing, he does not identify any connection to the environment within his research. Pearson (1979) also fails to satisfactorily engage with Māori worldview or Māori surfers. Recent research has investigated the unique nature of this connection for Māori surfers in New Zealand with a strong emphasis upon how Te Ao Māori perspectives and practices can present unique and alternative expectations of interactions with coastal spaces to colonial perspectives (Atkin et al., 2019; Waiti & Awatere, 2019; Wheaton, Waiti, Cosgriff, & Burrows, 2020).

However, as Waiti and Awatere (2019) note, most surfing research has been Pākehā focused and New Zealand has yet to produce a satisfactory investigation further into Māori engagement, particularly in engaging with the surfing experience from a Mātauranga Māori worldview. References are frequently made to Māori surfing in New Zealand surfing texts and include descriptions of wave riding on waka and the use of kelp bags to ride waves, but these are typically reserved in their description (Atkin et al., 2019; Williamson, 2000). Best (1925) describes instances of Māori wave riding which indicate a highly adept approach to riding waves in a manner not dissimilar to how they are ridden today. Best (1925) writes:

These small craft were taken out seaward for some distance, and then, as a big wave approached, the men paddled strongly shoreward, the advancing wave lifting the canoe and carrying it swiftly to the beach. It is not allowed to mount the crest of the wave, or the small craft would probably capsize; it is kept in front of the crest, riding the breast of the wave, hence the stern is higher than the bow. (p.44)

There is an impression that other texts feel compelled to include the history of Māori surfing in pre-contact times but are hindered by the lack of research in this area to date and do not reflect this sort of adept wave riding approach.

Since Pearson (1979), the most significant efforts in researching New Zealand surfing culture and history come from coffee table books including: *NZ Surf The Collection. Vol .1* (Hawke, 2017), *Gone surfing : the golden years of surfing in New Zealand* (Williamson, 2000), and *An Empty Ocean Road*,

surfing history of the mainland (Surgenor, 2018). These present accounts of surfing in New Zealand and important moments in the progression of New Zealand surfing but offer little insight into the engagement of surfers with the environment or surf breaks.

2.7.1 Surfing narrative

The role of narrative both within surfing and the activity's history is repeatedly highlighted as a key force in shaping surfing culture (Booth & Thorpe, 2019; Ford & Brown, 2006; Warshaw, 2010). Critically not only do these cultural narratives outline how surfing is, but propose ways of understanding surfing and eventually enacting it (Ford & Brown, 2006). Ford & Brown (2006) have developed a broad meta-narrative of surfing's cultural development as told through numerous surf literature sources. This meta-narrative outlines the widely accepted history and development of surfing, in which pivotal moments, people, and places which contribute to the history of surfing are presented cohesively (Ford & Brown, 2006). Despite the apparent consensus of this meta-narrative, surfing narratives are contested, and through the construction of dominant narratives, alternative narratives are repurposed, forgotten, and obscured (Ford & Brown, 2006; Osmond, 2011; Osmond, Phillips, & O'Neill, 2006). This includes defining moments of surfing history, including New Zealand's own surfing origins (Ford & Brown, 2006; Nendel, 2004; Osmond, 2011).

From December 1914 to March 1915, Hawaiian Olympic Swimmer, Duke Kahanamoku would complete a tour across Australia and New Zealand, demonstrating his individual prowess as a swimmer and a surfer (Osmond, 2011). In New Zealand, Duke would visit eleven towns, swimming at each and surfing in three (Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland). These surfing demonstrations have become popularised as the moment modern surfing was introduced and took hold in New Zealand (Bayer, 2015; Williamson, 2000). In line with the global surfing narrative which dubs Duke as the father of modern surfing, New Zealand seems to look to Duke and his tour as the significant moment of New Zealand surfing history. Writing about the influence of Duke's visit, a Christchurch based journalist reports, "Hawaiian-born US Olympic gold medal swimmer Duke Kahanamoku stood on the long, wooden plank, gliding for hundreds of metres in front of the breaking waves" (Bayer, 2015). This description fails to include the details of the day reported in 1915; In Christchurch Duke did not stand and glide for hundreds of metres, although his visit may have been impressive he was observed holding on to the board widthways, and lying prone, flat on the board ("Swimming. Kahanamoku's visit. ," 1915). During one attempt at what we would understand as modern surfing, Duke rode in at "tremendous rapidity", attempted to stand but instead "overbalanced" (The visit of, 1915). Osmond and Phillips (2010) note that rather than discovering a fixed history, those writing history construct narratives, an idea surf historians such as Warshaw (2010) remain aware of. This is not only a passive process; surfing narratives and surfing culture are often deliberately, historically

constructed (Davis, 2015; Warshaw, 2010). Duke Kahanamoku's primary biographer indicates not only the construction of the Duke myth but the extent to which this construction is deliberately undertaken by individuals within surfing history and culture (Davis, 2015). Duke's supposed gift of surfing has been soundly exposed as myth, largely by Australian academics and historians emphasising the existence of well-documented surfing on Sydney beaches before Duke's arrival (Osmond, 2011). This discredits the idea that Duke was the first to surf in Australia despite Duke himself eventually believing it to be true (Osmond, 2011).

Critically, Ford and Brown (2006) suggest that surfing narratives are not confined to the texts and media in which they are presented. In writing surf history, surf historians create the past, in turn, creating ways of imagining, experiencing, and living surfing culture. Duke's visits are found in New Zealand surf history publications, New Zealand media, and academic research pertaining to surfing in New Zealand (Atkin et al., 2019; Bayer, 2015; Williamson, 2000). Beyond this, each year the *Duke Festival of Surfing* takes place in New Brighton, now labelled New Zealand's "home of surfing" due to being the first location for Duke's surfing demonstrations (Festival, n.d). In 2015 a statue was erected adjacent to the New Brighton (Christchurch) Pier, commissioned by local surfers celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Dukes visits and recognising his gift of surfing (Bayer, 2015).

Hill and Abbot (2009b) recognise how representations of surfers relate to the *soul surfer* identity and how a narrative of surfing as environmentally conscious has dominated academic surfing literature. However as expected, these narratives and identities are also contested (Laderman, 2014). Different narratives, defining different identities may be a possible influence upon the inconsistent nature of surfers and environmental engagement. It is known that more established elements of cultural understanding have been critiqued and their influence upon contemporary surfing demonstrated. *Soul surfer* developments are considered to be responsible for the environmental perception of surfers and their engagement with environmental protection. How this international identity has been infused within New Zealand surfing is unclear, it seems likely that there are a variety of factors which will have influenced this process.

2.8 Summary and research aim

It might be expected, considering surfers' relevance within natural resource management, that an extensive body of research exists which has explored the way in which surfers' value natural resources, or more broadly the environment. Instead, what exists is a prevalence of planning and management orientated research. In New Zealand this seems likely to be driven by the effects-based philosophy of natural resource management, a predominance consistent within global surfing scholarship (Borne et al., 2017). This process does not exclude the integration of more social focused

elements but has driven a particular type of research approach categorized by empirical analysis. There remains an identified lack of qualitative or ethnographic research pertaining to surfing communities and social values in New Zealand (Skellern et al., 2013).

As mentioned previously, for the sake of an improved legislative methodology New Zealand researchers have identified elements or categories of value which surfers attribute to surf breaks (Peryman & Orchard, 2013). However, it is yet to be asked what has driven the development of these values, their authenticity, and what might be being omitted. It is thought the connection of surfers to coastal environments naturally predisposes surfers to becoming engaged in the protection of surf breaks. However, the small amount of literature which examines the connection between international surfing culture or surfers and the environment draws inconsistent conclusions. Critical perspectives on how surfers value the natural environment are yet to be drawn into literature concerning the management of surf breaks. Contested and constructed surfing narratives may drive the inconsistencies within surfers' engagement with the environment. Constructed surfing culture and narrative may in part propose values of surf breaks which uphold the only legislative process created for the protection of New Zealand surf breaks. As surfing grows as a global phenomenon, surfers will play a key role in ensuring the effective management of surf breaks. An understanding of how surfers construct relationships and experiences of surfing, surf breaks, and the coastal environment is crucial to ensuring the future effectiveness of surf break management.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This research aimed to explore how New Zealand surfers constructed connections to surfing, surf breaks and the coastal environment. Qualitative data in the form of oral history narratives was collected using a topic-based oral history interview approach. The interviews employed a semi-structured approach to elicit the informants' oral histories relating to their experiences of the New Zealand coastal environment and surf breaks through the act of surfing. This data was then analysed through a combination of oral history and narrative theory which allowed their responses to be categorised into 5 themes which emerged during the process of analysis.

3.1 Oral history and narrative theory

Oral history is a method of qualitative interviewing which allows researchers to examine the experiential knowledge of research informants through the collection of "personal experiences, memories of events, attitudes, values and beliefs and opinions or perspectives" (Leavy, 2011, p. 9). Oral history interviews typically take two forms: *life history* or *topic-based* (Hutching, 1993). *Topic-based* interviews allow the analysis of events and moments and are not restricted to the complete biographies of the *life history* approach (Bryman, 2012). Narrative theory of oral history recognises that individual identity and culture can be understood as a discursive construct which is revealed in the narratives or oral histories individuals tell in specific settings and contexts (Clary-Lemon, 2010; Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, Rodger, & Liebhart, 2009). These personal accounts of the informants not only tell what happened, but how they experienced these events and how they understand or make sense of these histories (Clary-Lemon, 2010; Ritchie, 2014). For this thesis the content of these narratives, the meanings, and the motivations were the targeted aim of the analysis as opposed to an understanding of the narrative structure of these histories (Bryman, 2012).

Oral history is as an especially valuable approach for researching activities such as surfing which typically do not produce formal or official written records (Booth & Thorpe, 2019; Munslow, 1999). The applicability of using an oral history approach to uncover meaning within the lives of surfers has been demonstrated by Booth and Thorpe (2019). Despite this, oral history has yet to be applied to New Zealand surfing culture in any form. Narrative theory has been used to observe the development of surfing culture, which includes identity and value within surfing literature (Ford & Brown, 2006). However, this framework used by Ford and Brown (2006) is predominantly representative of the United States, Hawaiian, and Australian surfing cultures and can be advanced through this analysis of New Zealand surfing. By using the oral history interview method this research has compiled a

unique body of New Zealand surfing oral history narratives. Through analysing these narratives, this thesis demonstrates how connections to surfing, surf breaks and the coastal environment are experienced, understood, and constructed within the lives of New Zealand surfers.

3.2 Considerations of researching as an 'Insider'

Before continuing with the design of the oral history interviews, it is important to consider my position as an *insider*. Gair (2011) defines the position as an *insider* as “the degree to which a researcher is located either within or outside a group being researched, because of her or his common lived experience or status as a member of that group” (p.137). As an experienced and dedicated surfer, I identify as an *insider* when researching New Zealand surfing culture. I consider that my experience of surfing places me in a position of sharing the same cultural context as the research informants. Researching as an *insider* is considered to provide several strengths to the research process. Status as an *insider* can allow researchers quicker and deeper acceptance with their target research group, allowing for informants to be more open with the researcher (Chan, 2017; Chan & Spoonley, 2017; Cortazzi & Jin, 2006; Gair, 2011). This openness can allow more depth within the informants' responses which might be withheld from *outsiders* (Chan, 2017; Chan & Spoonley, 2017; Cortazzi & Jin, 2006; Gair, 2011). Researchers can be excluded by informants who do not consider them worthy of certain information based on their status as *outsiders* (Cortazzi & Jin, 2006). Considering the historical aversion of surfing culture towards formality or figures of authority, this is an important dynamic to consider when interviewing surfers (Ford & Brown, 2006; Laderman, 2014; Pearson, 1979)

The position as an *insider* also moves beyond lived experiences and can include shared knowledge, identities, and unique cultural languages. Surfing culture is well known for specific colloquialisms or jargon. Terms such as *stoke*, *floater*, *barrelled* and *glassy* make up the everyday surfing language which is often used to describe aspects of the surfing experience. As Chan (2017) and Cortazzi and Jin (2006) note, what is expressed or intended to be expressed by research informants is not always explicit and intended meanings can be lost within a cross-cultural researcher and informant relationship. Being an *outsider* to language and experience can become a barrier to researchers trying to develop understanding in a particular cultural group. The challenges in the cross-cultural understanding of knowledge and language between surfers and non-surfers has already been noted in the New Zealand management of surf breaks (Peryman, 2011).

However, status as an *insider* researcher is not without criticism. There is potential for informants to assume the knowledge of the researcher and omit details not fully explaining their experiences or responses. It is also possible that interviews and the analysis can be skewed by the researchers own

perceptions and expectations (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Dwyer and Buckle (2009) caution that often researchers may emphasise factors which are in common between the researcher and the informant, neglecting elements which are not. Fay (1996) supports this argument by considering that it may be easier to analyse the results as an *outsider* more clearly as they are more likely to gain a broader perspective. However, he suggests that both roles of an *insider* and an *outsider* pose the risk of bias to one's own perceptions. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) conclude that "being an outsider does not create immunity to the influence of personal perspective" (p.59).

It is also important to consider the existence of *insider* and *outsider* relationships as discussed in relation to specific surf breaks and surfing locales (Preston-Whyte, 2002). This might suggest that while I may be regarded as a true *insider* at surf breaks I frequent, I may be considered as an *outsider* when I attempt to research in other surfing locales. Different surf breaks may present different narratives, values and cultures. Aspects of these may be entirely foreign to me and I will not necessarily be in an enabled position as a researcher. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) note that researchers generally engage from a position somewhere between being an *insider* or an *outsider* as there will always be dimensions of cultural, social, and educational differences. While in some respects, such as language, and an awareness of the surfing experience I may act as an *insider* I am also distanced as an *outsider* in regards to the personal experiences and contexts of potential informants. For example, it was anticipated that I will not always share generational, ethnic or location specific cultural contexts with other surfers. Therefore, in the capacity of this research, I may consider myself an informed *outsider* to the common thread of surfing held by all informants, possessing sufficient cultural awareness to navigate this research in a more informed manner than a non-surfing researcher. I anticipate that my ability to understand surfing language will facilitate communication during the interview process and allow me to collate responses of greater depth. In this manner, my position as a surfer is expected to be a strength within this research.

3.3 Design of instrument

The interview design was informed by the oral history method using a topic-based oral history interview approach. This design employed a semi-structured approach for 15 individual interviews. This semi-structured approach has successfully been used in previous surfing research (Peryman, 2011). The interviews for this thesis were conducted between the researcher and the informant in person and took between 60-120 minutes. However, the interviews progressed at different paces and took varied paths. The informants were given the choice of where the interview took place, while some were in cafes, many chose to be interviewed in their own homes.

3.3.1 Human ethics committee approval

To complete this study informants had to be interviewed and questioned, as such approval was needed from the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee as. This was given on the 15 September 2020 (Application No: 2020-39). *Refer to Appendix A for HEC approval letter.*

3.4 Interview questions

Refer to Appendix B for the comprehensive interview question guide.

Questions for this research were designed in accordance with the recommendations of Hutching (1993) to ensure that the interviews promoted relevant and useful responses from the informants. This designed ensured questions were created in:

- a) A manner which promotes more descriptive responses.
- b) A manner which avoids closed responses (such as yes or no questions or single word answers).
- c) A manner which does not reveal the answer anticipated by the researcher.

While it was essential for the informants to have control of their own narratives, it was also important to direct the interviews towards the focus of this research. This was managed by beginning each interview with a situational question on the subject of surfing, which was, *can you please tell me about the first time you went surfing?* Asking this question helped to gauge how long the informants had been surfing for, while also allowing the narrative to naturally progress to where they learnt to surf and their experiences of this moment. Furthermore, this question allowed the informants to be categorised into three groups: *Pioneer surfers*, *Veteran surfers* and *Contemporary surfers*. This is outlined in the following table:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|--|
| <i>Pioneer surfers</i> | Pre 1970s | Surfers who began surfing before 1970. All apart from two still surf. |
| <i>Veteran surfers</i> | 1970-1990 | Surfers who began surfing after 1970, all still surf. |
| <i>Contemporary surfers</i> | Post 1990 | Surfers who began surfing after 1990, mixed age of starting including child-adult, all still surf. |

Table 1 Surfing eras.

Table 1 contains the categorisation of surfing eras which informants have begun surfing in. This does not indicate their age, as certain informants began surfing in adult life.

While informants were not selected based upon their age or how long they had been surfing, it was expected that the eras in which they have surfed would provide interesting and useful data alongside their oral history narratives, especially considering how surfing culture has changed through time and is expected to reflect its societal contexts (Ford & Brown, 2006; Laderman, 2014). Due to each oral history interview having a unique progression and direction, rather than producing a fixed set of questions, an interview guide of potential questions was used as a discussion prompt when required. These questions were created with consideration three a priori themes informed by previous surfing research and the aims of this thesis. These were *surf breaks*, *the environment* and *values of surfing*. Three examples of theme constructed questions are:

- a) *Could you tell me what does it mean to be a surfer in _____ (your location)?*
- b) *What sort of connection to the environment occurs with surfing, if any?*
- c) *Can you please describe a memorable surfing moment?*

Example b) prompted the informants to engage with the aims of this research while allowing them to respond in a variety of ways. The question does not assume that they experienced any connection at all to the environment. Although, if the informants did, it allowed them to describe the nature of this connection, in their own understandings, rather than one prefigured by the researcher. More specific or direct questions were asked during the interviews, when appropriate or necessary to clarify a statement or detail. For instance: *Can you please tell me when this was? Where did this happen? Who were you with at the time?*

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1 Sampling

This research aimed to recruit 15 informants to partake in an interview (of 60-120 minutes long). The number of informants was constrained by the time available for field research within the one-year master's thesis allocation. The relevancy of these informants was based upon their engagement with surfing, the environment, surfing culture, and surfing history. Surfing research shows this could include indigenous surfers, female surfers, surfing historians, surfboard shapers, surf competition and festival organisers, protest organisers, and surfing environmental practitioners (Ford & Brown, 2006; Reineman, 2016; Warshaw, 2010). Examples in Canterbury (New Zealand) included informants involved in organising the New Brighton Duke Surfing Festival, the Single Fin Mingle Festival, the Save Mangamaunu campaign, and local surfboard shapers. The only necessary inclusion criteria were that informants must have all been current or former surfers New Zealand surfers and that informants under the age of 16-years-old must be interviewed with a guardian present.

Potential informants who were identified as New Zealand surfers and involved in surfing cultural engagement were contacted by email or phone and were explained the general aims and method of

this research. Informants who indicated an initial willingness to participate in this research were sent an information sheet and a full description of the research. The snowball sampling method was also utilised, where informants would recommend other informants who may be valuable to this research. These informants were considered and interviewed if suitable to this research.

3.5.2 Collection and transcription process

Fifteen informants were interviewed from the 14 October 2020 to the 24 November 2020. All interviews were recorded using an H1 Handy Recorder audio recording device, which was turned on at the beginning of the interview if the informant consented (all 15 informants consented). When subject matter which was of particular relevance to this research arose, a note of the time was made to support the transcription process. Interviews were transcribed on the day of the interview in order to give each interview appropriate attention which may have diminished following other interviews and with time. Each informant was interviewed once and there were no follow up interviews. Every informant was given the opportunity to review their transcribed responses upon request and to rescind their responses and role in the research if they wished to up until 31 January 2021 (no informants took this opportunity).

The first interviews which were completed were those closest to Christchurch, and then those within the South Island. To interview informants from the North Island it was necessary to rent a vehicle and travel from Ruakaka (Northland) south to Wellington organising interview times within a two-week period.

3.5.3 Informants

Of the 15 informants, 4 of the informants were female and 11 were Male. In keeping with best oral history practice in order to ensure that context and personal identity remained present within the oral history narratives it was decided that informants would be named within this research unless otherwise requested by the informant (Oral History Association, 2009). 14 informants consented in writing to be named within this research, 1 informant wished to remain anonymous. Only 1 Māori surfer was interviewed; Nukuroa Tirikatene-Nash of the Waitaha Iwi, which took place in Kaikoura. 6 informants were *Pioneer surfers*, 3 were *Veteran surfers* and 6 were *Contemporary surfers*. The complete list of informants is shown in the following table:

| Name | Place | Surfing involvement | Surf Era* | Gender | Interview Date |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|--------|----------------|
| <i>Denis Quane</i> | Sumner, Christchurch | Prominent surfboard shaper | Pioneer | Male | 14/10/20 |

| | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|---|--------------|--------|----------|
| Warren Hawke | New Brighton, Christchurch | Surf photographer and author | Pioneer | Male | 20/10/20 |
| Annie Bermingham | Kaikoura | Coordinator of the Save Mangamaunu campaign | Contemporary | Female | 5/11/20 |
| Alan Washington | Timaru | Timaru surfing pioneer | Pioneer | Male | 6/11/20 |
| Simon Brown | Sumner, Christchurch | Sumner surfer | Veteran | Male | 09/11/20 |
| Nick Shadbolt | French Farm, Canterbury | Banks Peninsula surfer | Contemporary | Male | 10/11/20 |
| Stephanie Brookes | Muriwai, Auckland | Women's surf magazine co-creator | Contemporary | Female | 12/11/20 |
| Anonymous Informant #1 | Piha, Auckland | Auckland surfer | Veteran | Male | 13/11/20 |
| Roger Hall | Ruakaka | Prominent surfboard shaper | Pioneer | Male | 14/11/20 |
| Murray Bray | Piha, Auckland | Pioneer surfer and surf Lifesaver | Pioneer | Male | 16/11/20 |
| Zofia Seymour | Muriwai, Auckland | Women's surf magazine co-creator | Contemporary | Female | 17/11/20 |
| Ed Atkin | Raglan, Hamilton | Oceanographer/ Surf Scientist | Contemporary | Male | 18/11/20 |
| Paul Shanks | Whangamata | President of Surf break Protection Society | Pioneer | Male | 20/11/20 |
| Sabina Carmichael Allan | Lyall Bay, Wellington | Wellington surfer, surf retail | Contemporary | Female | 23/11/20 |
| Nukuroa Tirikatene-Nash | Kaikoura | Former competitive surfer, environmental activist | Veteran | Male | 24/11/20 |

Table 2 Informants of the research.

Table 2 contains the details of the informants who took part in the oral history interviews. This includes their name, location of the interview, description of surfing involvement, their surfing era, gender, and the date which the interview took place. Surf era is explained in Table 1.

3.6 Thematic analysis

After the interviews were transcribed, the data was examined, compared and contrasted. Data which aligned with the a priori themes was noted and through re-examination and re-reading of these excerpts 5 new recurring themes were identified and categorised. These themes were: *Individual surfing values, Awareness of changes in the coastal environment, Relationships to surfing and the coastal environment, Accessibility of surfing and Cultural expectations.*

| Themes Identified | Description |
|---|--|
| <i>Theme 1. Individual surfing values</i> | Specific values which informants attribute to surfing, waves, and surf breaks. |
| <i>Theme 2. Awareness of changes in the coastal environment</i> | Examples of an awareness to changes in the coastal environment. |
| <i>Theme 3. Relationships to surfing and the coastal environment</i> | Ways in which informants conceptualise surfing, surf breaks, and the ocean. |
| <i>Theme 4. Accessibility of surfing</i> | Factors which influence the ability of informants to surf. |
| <i>Theme 5. Cultural expectations</i> | Experiences of cultural expectations surrounding surfing and use of surf breaks. |

Table 3 Identified Themes.

Table 3 contains the themes were identified from the raw data of the oral history interviews displayed. The interviews were transcribed and individually analysed. Theme identification was formed through comparing and contrasting the interviews. The data corresponding to these themes is presented in Tables 4,5,6,7,8.

Chapter 4

Results

The following sections contains the processed data from the oral history interviews. It has been separated into five tables associated with each individual theme.

4.1 Individual surfing values

Theme 1 reflects the personal or individual values and enjoyment which certain informants derive from surfing. Responses varied in structure and in content, these included reflections on memorable surfs and surf breaks to the specific identification of values attributed to surfing. Responses demonstrated various values associated with individual surf breaks, ways of surfing a wave, and the derived benefits of surfing.

| Theme 1. Individual surfing values | |
|--|--|
| Informant | Data from oral history interview – Direct quotes |
| Annie Bermingham (Contemporary Surfer) | <i>You get in the water, get out back and you are just watching for waves, you're not thinking about anything else. It's always been something for me, replenishing myself in nature. Surfing provided an easy access to being in nature.</i> <i>My most fun surfing would be times at Mangamaunu when no one else is there, it was just the mountains with snow on them and the bush and it has a wildness up there. Mangaumanu feels wilder than the beaches here, (Christchurch) you have the Hikurangi trench and you know you have whales going by. It is a feeling which is beautiful, I love that. For me those are some of my most favourite times.</i> |
| Alan Washington (Pioneer Surfer) | <i>My favourite break would have had to have been The Hole. Because Benny always liked it, there's a reef and as it comes in, as you catch the wave, it has a bend in it, it's unusual. On a bigger day you can catch a wave and drop down on it and your mate can be on it around the bend. That was lots of fun down there.</i> |
| Simon Brown (Veteran Surfer) | <i>The enjoyment in surfing for me is that it is not so much the size of the wave, it's the quality of the experience, my general philosophy of surfing follows the Japanese concept of Jinba ittai which translates as the horse and rider is one, that sense of the perfect oneness of motion. It does not have to be a big wave, but when you are just in the right place you are conducting and the energy is flowing, that to me is the essence of any sport .</i> |
| Nick Shadbolt (Contemporary Surfer) | <i>It's a crazy way of life exploring, you can go anywhere and connect with people and connect with places. I guess that is one of things I enjoy most about it. It's not always the adrenaline, it's the whole easiness of just having a surf, say if we go to the West Coast, it's only a small part of the day and you feel like you have a bit of time to enjoy the place and something else and get to know people you wouldn't really know.</i> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p><i>It's your time to forget about everything, it is a full presentness, when you are doing these things. There's no mind activity apart from focus on where you are and what you are doing.</i></p> |
| <p>Roger Hall (Pioneer Surfer)</p> | <p><i>I've always been happy that there's not tonnes of surf here, it's also illusive when you get it you really appreciate it.</i></p> <p><i>We used to go down to Raglan on a south westerly just because we were desperate for waves, all the locals would look at us and be like you have to learn how to read the maps and turn up on the right days. We weren't trying to turn up on the right days, we were just desperate for waves and knew we could get a decent wave at Raglan, we weren't trying to score perfect waves. They couldn't relate to our motivation.</i></p> <p><i>What was happening to me was that I wasn't going out and surfing for fun, I wasn't going out and trying to surf a certain way, there was a certain hangover, but what was happening on an increasing basis is that I was learning how to really feel how the board felt in the wave, the more I've gotten into this finless realm the more I've let go of everything I learnt and did in my surfing, everything is about feeling what's happening, everything is what's going on here, I've let go of worrying about whether I look good or my personal performance.</i></p> |
| <p>Zofia Seymour (Contemporary Surfer)</p> | <p><i>That's one of the things I love about surfing it's such a reason or motivation to go out and see new places. Sure, you go to your same spots all the time, but maybe there's a little green bit on swell maps and I'll go and check that out. More often than not you'll get skunked. I drove six hours but didn't even get surf, but it was still great. I got myself out here to this place that I never would have got otherwise.</i></p> <p><i>Personally, I don't really like to go to all these group things and group meet up surfs, I like to go by myself and places with no people. Unless I'm going with my close personal friends. Unless I'm specially going with close friends and I'm going a trip, for me surfing is my alone time, and I don't want to talk to anyone.</i></p> |
| <p>Ed Atkin (Contemporary Surfer)</p> | <p><i>I went hunting for four days, disappeared into the mountains and missed surf. Surfing gives me a release that hunting doesn't, it's totally different. For me it's not about sitting there and going this is nice, the turns are everything. Barrels are fun, but for me its vertical big hits. it's a good surf if I get one, I go in real happy and I generally get at least one. It's really acute, the addiction is really acute, that's where it comes from, it's this big release.</i></p> |
| <p>Nukuroa Tirikatene-Nash (Veteran Surfer)</p> | <p><i>It was this thing that wasn't supposed to make much sense but if felt so cool it was hard to stop. I did not really have a place as such, but to feel it, it had a calling which was second to none. It was almost a healing you could feel a type of healing it that you didn't know if it was a healing because no one was telling you what it might be, I didn't even tell my friends, we didn't even speak about that sort of thing, but know on reflection that's what it was, it was a fun way to heal.</i></p> <p><i>I wasn't healing from anything I could see at the time, but on reflection, colonisation, the effects of being put nine o'clock in the morning to three in the</i></p> |

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|---|---|
| | <i>afternoon in square walls, every child under artificial light being taught to communicate.</i> |
| Anonymous Informant #1 (Veteran Surfer) | <i>The waves look sort of larger, I'll have to take my short board much to my chagrin.</i> |

Table 4 Theme 1: Individual surfing values

Table 4 contains the responses of research informants which have been identified as pertaining to Theme 1 individual surfing values. The data identified here demonstrates values which informants attribute to various aspects of surfing, including the experience of surfing and specific surf breaks and ways of surfing.

In Table 4 Zofia Seymour and Nick Shadbolt, both *Contemporary surfers*, reflect on the pleasures or values they experience from surfing because of exploring. For both, surfing or looking for new surf breaks provides an avenue to explore parts of New Zealand. For Zofia, this is an opportunity to discover places she may have not visited otherwise. For Nick, surfing acts as an opportunity to connect with new people and places. This is amplified by the fact that surfing for Nick takes only a portion of his time, and time spent not surfing in new locations supports these opportunities for connection. This reflects value derived from being able to access various surf breaks, but not held in any surf break itself.

Annie Bermingham and Zofia Seymour explicitly prioritised surfing alone over surfing with others or in crowds. While Zofia may surf with friends, she sees surfing as a means of finding alone time and prefers surf breaks where she can surf by herself. Annie describing her favourite times surfing as being moments surfing by herself at Mangamaunu (Kaikoura). Furthermore, for Annie these moments are enhanced by an experience of being immersed in nature. For her, the wildness, proximity to mountains, bush, and the Hikurangi trench all give value to her surfing experience.

Conversely, Alan Washington and Warren Hawke both *Pioneer surfers* shared reflections which demonstrated a value placed upon a social element of surfing. When reflecting on his favourite surf break, The Hole (Kakanui), Alan Washington describes how The Hole breaks in a particular way which allows Alan and a friend to share a singular wave, surfing two separate sections simultaneously. Additionally, Alan's fondness for The Hole is partially due to his friends' value of the same break. Warren recalled his most memorable surf, surfing at the Ashley River mouth (North Canterbury) in imperfect conditions, identifying a 'feel good' factor, while sharing waves with friends.

The anonymous informant describes how the wave size forces him to take a shortboard when he would prefer to ride a longboard. For Simon Brown, Ed Atkin and Roger Hall value is not dependent upon a particular wave or surf break but is instead linked to the physical act of the riding the wave. For these informants enjoyment comes from the physical experience of riding a wave in a particular

manner. Ed’s response offers several reflections on his personal experience of surfing; he places minimal value on the environmental or landscape setting of a surf break and does not prioritise surfing “barrels”. Ed values turns and “big hits” above all, referring to surfing and completing a turn with speed and power, and hitting the lip of the wave. Conversely, Simon enjoys surfing in a manner in which he feels an alignment with the energy within a wave; he does not prioritise the size of the wave. Roger’s response shows a focus upon how the board feels and interacts with the wave and like Simon, wave quality and frequency have not been his primary focus. While each of these responses share a focus of riding the wave, each approach or focus is unique to the individual.

Nick Shadbolt, Annie Bermingham and Nukuroa Tirikatene-Nash all demonstrated an appreciation of the value of a wellbeing component within surfing. Nick described how surfing allowed a reprieve from the stresses of life and work, explaining that surfing supports a mind state of full presentness. Similarly, for Annie, surfing allows what she describes as replenishment and she considers that this is achieved through an immersion in nature, a value which was heightened during her care of her terminally ill father. Surfing also provided a healing for Nukuroa. While this was not immediately obvious to Nukuroa, it was always sensed and now on reflection he considers it a healing from colonisation, and his experience of life as young Waitaha boy at the time.

4.2 Awareness of changes in the coastal environment

Theme 2 reflects the awareness which surfers have of changes in the coastal environment. These include short-term changes such as weather changes or tide cycles, to long-term changes including surf break degradation. Many responses include first-hand accounts of changes witnessed, they also include reflections on a particular type of awareness or perspective which surfers possess and perceive the coastal environment from. All except one are connected to surfing.

| Theme 2. Awareness of changes in the coastal environment | |
|--|--|
| Informant | Data from oral history interview – Direct quotes |
| Denis Quane (Pioneer Surfer) | <p><i>Down at Scarborough where the stone steps go down that used to go right along to Menzies Street and the sand hills started there and went down to cave rock.</i></p> <p><i>It was quite a change, the beach had disappeared, it took the sandhills away in about a week and a half, there were huge surfs. So, they took the sandhills away and dumped the rocks to hold it, and then they built the sea wall, the trouble was that the sand had gone off the beach and there was no beach only at low tide.</i></p> <p><i>I was out in the bay, paddling along it was just disgusting. There was a froth on top right out across the whole bay you could smell it and it was quite greasy. It</i></p> |

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| | <i>had gotten worse and was like this for probably three or four weeks there was something dramatically wrong. All the surfers were concerned.</i> |
| Warren Hawke (Pioneer Surfer) | <p><i>In the 1960s I wrote a letter to the paper, about the sewer outfall at Sumner because they were going to continue with that. There was a whole open drain that would fill up and they would let it go. That was the first time I became environmentally aware or became aware of the possibility of keeping a surf break surfable.</i></p> <p><i>From fifty years of going to different beaches, I've seen massive changes. The most notable is the change of where the Ashley River mouth is. It used to come out at the sand hills by Waikuku now it's right out down the beach. As I've got older it breaks so far away, I wouldn't even bother walking down to it now.</i></p> |
| Annie Bermingham (Contemporary Surfer) | <i>It wasn't just about surfing, for me it was a desecration issue. This is not how you look after the land this is not how you look after the sea. I did not know about the details, but I have seen what happens on the beach it changes radically I've seen big king tides. I knew there were special features there and I was scared they weren't being looked after.</i> |
| Alan Washington (Pioneer Surfer) | <p><i>If you got a big easterly wind which we don't seem to get like we used to in Timaru, you would know the next morning would be good in Waimataitai and we would go and surf before we went to work.</i></p> <p><i>In 1975 or 1976 there was huge storm which hit the east coast here, the guy on the radio said that every beach along the east coast the bottoms would be altered not just for a few months or a couple of years but for ever and I though ahhh what's he talking about, but he is dead right Campbells Bay has never come back.</i></p> <p><i>At Waimataitai beach in the 1960s the harbour hadn't been extended out and we got great swells in Waimataitai beach. The port was there, but it was more condensed, and the waves would come in. Then it wasn't as good., It was done progressively over the years and then we were finding places which were better, so it wasn't until after that we realised.</i></p> |
| Simon Brown (Veteran Surfer) | <i>The council were looking to extend the breakwater, they consulted all community groups except people who used it most which was surfers, they were going to get hydrologist and spend tens of thousands of dollars. I said listen boys I've been out here every day, if you put a break water here this will happen there, that will stop, this will build up and this and that, you are going to end up with more dredging because the rip which takes the sand out will fill up if the breakwater is extended, and you'll have more trouble with the lifeboat thing. You'll have a refraction wave which bounces out to sea creating backwash all the time, you'll create a lagoon on the inside on north swells which will totally wreck the surf break and you're going to spend another million dollars.</i> |
| Nick Shadbolt (Contemporary Surfer) | <i>There were a few guys but there wasn't a connection it was hard to network so I surfed by myself for 3 years, at Hickory most of the time. Three times a week if it was good, middle of winter whenever I could go. I was always pretty excited when I saw another car down there it was just someone to surf with. I guess, when I first started surfing there was no one that you could commonly see down there as opposed to today when I could count 5 guys where maybe 2 or 3 of</i> |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p><i>them including myself are keen every time you message them. It's definitely not hard to find someone to surf with anymore.</i></p> <p><i>Looking at swell maps and the numbers and not understanding the forecast that well and realising that a 3 on swell map didn't actually mean it was going to be a three. The Peninsula is interesting because the winds are so niche for each little bay that offshores are different and cross off shores are good at some places and even onshores are good at some places, you start chasing different conditions when you know what each beach does. I am still figuring it out, but I actually made a map of every bay that I thought was surfable and found out every angle and really used the ECAN swell buoy, that really helped.</i></p> |
| <p>Stephanie Brookes (Contemporary Surfer)</p> | <p><i>Do you know that there is a mistake in that? I saw it the other day when I was looking through it. Huapai, the swell and the wind are all wrong. It says north east, south west but that's completely the opposite, it's on the east coast.</i></p> |
| <p>Roger Hall (Pioneer Surfer)</p> | <p><i>This year there has been a lot of opportunity to surf the beach down here where I live and where I grew up. I do a lot of walking up and down the beach, watching and surfing up and down the beach, whereas before I might have got in my car and drove to another beach because the wind was different, I am paying more attention to my local beach. I'm blown away by how much sand there is on the beach and I watch it moving around, I watch what happens when all the sand is obviously up in the beach or it gets dragged out by a storm, and the contours of the beach are completely different, what does that mean to the sand banks and what tides are we surfing. And I didn't used to do that to the same degree.</i></p> |
| <p>Murray Bray (Pioneer Surfer)</p> | <p><i>Originally most of the surfing was down at South Piha, there used to be a fantastic break coming off the point of The Camel, it was a world class break off the point. Its' gone but it did come back for a time three or four years ago.</i></p> <p><i>Somebody in their infinite wisdom decided they wanted to make a nice picnic area there and they built a permanent channel for the stream and they dumped all these rocks on the beach building up the sand hill. We came down one weekend and it was there, there was big machinery building a groin right across, and then they planted the grasses. It ruined the whole flow of the beach.</i></p> |
| <p>Zofia Seymour (Contemporary Surfer)</p> | <p><i>I started surfing and I needed to know what the weather was doing, what's the moon cycles, the tides and it was tied into each other. If you aren't paying attention stuff happens to you and you have no awareness but if you are paying attention oh the swell period is decreasing that means the storm will be here in two days. But you can't predict the translation of a report unless you know the break, you have to have a relationship with the break to be able to predict or know what it is going to do.</i></p> <p><i>I started noticing that I literally could not surf when it's a full moon, because that coincided with when my period would start and I have zero balance and I can't do it, then I started paying attention, some days I had nothing in the tank and emotional cycles but knowing what the reason is you know oh it will be fine.</i></p> |
| <p>Ed Atkin (Contemporary Surfer)</p> | <p><i>Surfers are innately conscious of their natural surroundings, they have to be or you not going to be a successful surfer, you're not going anywhere, if you can't make a decent prediction on what the swell is doing, reading the chart, understand a little about sediment dynamics you're going to really suffer, that's</i></p> |

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| | <p><i>one element, the other is that there is no other sport where your so immersed in the natural environment. Your literally immersed in it going under it and over, your observing that environment first-hand, over really long periods of time and quite high frequency if your lucky. and then any changes to that environment are keenly felt, perhaps the easiest one to relate to is water, quality, literally surfing in shit.</i></p> |
| <p>Paul Shanks (Pioneer Surfer)</p> | <p><i>The surf is fucked, people ask me what I'm doing on the beach you don't surf the beach you surf the bar, prior to the marina and all this engineering I used to surf the beach heaps you used to get these wicked sunset type peaks out in front of the esplanade and just down towards to the middle of the curve of the beach. You would not go and surf the bar because you wanted to right, and they were long rides. Now you get ends offs.</i></p> <p><i>Length of ride of Whangamata Bar when at its peak is 60 plus seconds, that's from right out the back right to the beach, you know. I had movies of that. A good day is 40 seconds, but at the moment its 8 seconds its perfect, it comes over perfect but its only 8 seconds, you go fuck 8 into 60 bro how much of our ride have we lost. The bar used to be able handle like Indicators like 70 people, some people miss out obviously, but if you take off at outside indictors and right through the valley, by the time you paddle back out to outside indicators someone else has had the opportunity to get a ride, so the bar was like that.</i></p> <p><i>They've fucked my beach I'm from Piha and I won my New Zealand championships in the wave at the south end at Piha which now does not exist. They started doing beach care when I was a grommit and we told the old guy don't do it, don't do it, and they closed the entrance to the lagoon and the Piha stream, Auckland councillors stepped back and said there was too much water coming out of the hills and I said no the water cant get out, you've fucked the surf up, you've poisoned the lake, and now its backing up the river and people are having their properties damaged, and Tonkin and Taylor want to put a pipeline in and put it out past Lion Rock.</i></p> |
| <p>Sabina Carmichael Allan (Contemporary Surfer)</p> | <p><i>Every beach you go to, if you're there for a week compared to a day, there so much more you've learnt about the water, what it does, where the rips are how the waves form, its different everywhere. There could be a rock under the water or anything you just do not know about.</i></p> |
| <p>Anonymous Informant (Veteran Surfer)</p> | <p><i>You can see it there, see the ditch? That never used to be there. There was an amazing break off the rock, but they decided to do all this construction around here, which took it away. I've been surfing here forever, and it's only got worse.</i></p> |

Table 5 Theme 2. Awareness of changes in the coastal environment

Table 5 contains the responses of research informants which have been identified as pertaining to Theme 2 Awareness of changes in the coastal environment. The data identified here reflects the awareness which surfers have of changes in the coastal environment.

Of the fifteen total informants thirteen provided data which was of relevance to this theme. Five Pioneer surfers shared stories about instances of surf break degradation which they had witnessed around New Zealand. Murray Bray, who lives in Piha (Auckland), reflected on how the key surfing areas in Piha have changed over time, after losing what was described as a world class surf break at

the southern end of Piha. Paul Shanks also reflected on the loss of the same surf break, a wave where he had once won a New Zealand Championship competition. The anonymous informant describes similar changes to the same surf break. Murray, Paul and, the anonymous informant #1 all attribute the loss of this surf break to deliberate development in the nearby coastal area, including the containing of a stream which feeds into the bay and the subsequent increased deposition of sand on the beach.

Other surf breaks were impacted negatively over time, but not lost entirely. Alan Washington described how the progressive extension of a port impacted the quality of surfing waves at his local surf break at Waimataitai Beach (Timaru). Alan notes that the recognition of this was relatively slow, due to progressive development over several years, coinciding with his prioritisation of other surf breaks. Alan also recognised significant worsening to the Campbell's Bay surf break (Kakanui). In contrast, this was noted immediately following a severe storm, however much like many of the previous examples this is thought to be permanent. Warren Hawke notes how the surf break at the Ashley River Mouth (Canterbury) has moved significantly down the beach, far enough that he will now no longer consider walking down to it. Denis Quane recalls how Sumner Beach (Christchurch) changed significantly following the construction of a seawall. Denis explains how this prevented their utilisation of the sand hills as a play area and occurred before he was a surfer. *Veteran surfer* Simon Brown recalled when a development was proposed at his local surf break also in Sumner. Here, the local council was looking to extend a breakwater into the surfing area. In response to the proposal Simon described the ways in which he understood the environment surrounding the extension would change, ultimately ruining the surf break.

Ed Atkin considers that changes concerning water quality are the most obvious and immediate changes likely to be experienced by surfers. Denis and Warren, both *Pioneer surfers* from Christchurch recall experiences of paddling through sewage while surfing at Sumner. Denis noted that all local surfers were concerned with the problem and Warren even wrote a letter to the paper expressing his concern. Paul Shanks reflects on changes to surfing quality in Whangamata (Coromandel) at two local surf breaks, the Whangamata Bar and the Beach. Prior to the construction of a marina, Paul used to surf the Beach frequently, choosing to surf there because of the quality and size of the waves, as well as the direction it broke in. What were once long rides have been reduced to short less desirable sections. Paul recognises the same changes to surfing the Whangamata Bar. Despite the bar producing a wave of good quality, he describes how the length of this ride has been reduced from 60 seconds to 8 seconds.

For Paul, this change not only reflects a decrease in the quality of the ride but reduces the ability of the surf break to support a larger number of surfers. Previously with surfers spending more time on the wave and paddling back to the line-up, allowing opportunities for other surfers to catch waves. Nick Shadbolt also recognised changes in the popularity or utilisation of his local surf breaks on the Banks Peninsula (Canterbury) by the local surfing population. He notes that when he began surfing, he was often the only surfer at a beach, whereas now a consistent group of surfers will often be available to surf or present at local surf breaks.

Three of five *Contemporary surfers* describe a constant awareness of the state of the coastal environment. Ed notes that successful surfers must have an ability to predict swell, weather, and beach conditions to become a successful surfer. Nick describes a process of learning the unique ideal weather conditions for each bay he surfs on the Banks Peninsula. He explains that different conditions favour different surf breaks, importantly he notes that this knowledge is supported not simply by forecasting of weather and swell conditions but paired with an understanding of each bay and surf break. This is reinforced by Zofia Seymour who describes how she had to develop an understanding of factors such as weather and the tides, and how developing this understanding allows the prediction of surf. However, she states that this understanding is dependent upon having a relationship with a particular surf break and understanding how that surf break will react with the predicted conditions. A similar idea was demonstrated by Stephanie Brookes who commented on a copy of *Wavetrack*, noting that the evaluation of the Huapai (Auckland) surf break was incorrect and that the ideal swell and wind directions as listed in the book were in fact the opposite. Nick also commented on the possible inaccuracy of forecasting services not reflecting the actual conditions of certain surf breaks. This awareness of surf breaks, their environment, and their status is, according to the interview subjects, directly associated with actively surfing.

Three informants including both *Pioneer* and *Contemporary surfers* recognise that their high amount of time spent at various beaches contributes to their awareness to changes in these environments. Warren states that in 50 years of visiting various beaches he has seen many changes. Sabina Carmichael Allan notes that even spending a week at a particular beach rather than a day, provides a different understanding of the water at a particular beach. This included how the wave forms and where various elements such as rocks and rips might be, which one may not be aware of at face value. Roger Hall notes that in 2020, due to COVID-19, he has spent a significant amount of time surfing and walking on the beach near his home at Ruakaka, where previously he might have sought better quality surf elsewhere. In doing so he describes how he has begun to pay more attention to the beach itself, noting changes in the beach contours, sand banks, and what tides he is surfing.

4.3 Relationships to surfing and the coastal environment

Theme 3 identifies the relationships which surfers have to surfing and the coastal environment. This includes relationships prior to surfing and subsequent ways in which informants understand and relate to waves and surf breaks from a surfing perspective. Responses include descriptions of surfing which reveal the ways in which surfers might perceive and experience a wave, to responses which conceptualise surfing in relation to other elements of the coastal environment.

| Theme 3. Relationships to surfing and the coastal environment | |
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| Informant | Data from oral history interview – Direct quotes |
| Denis Quane (Pioneer surfer) | <i>I used to go down to the beach but only with my father.</i> <i>Kids in Sumner would go to the beach to play, we would go down and play in the hills slide down and mess around after school.</i> |
| Warren Hawke (Pioneer surfer) | <i>There's a different feeling when you race or travel to get wave and paddle out the back and everything falls away and your only focused on the environment around you and surfing. It's a feeling of being at one with nature I suppose.</i> <i>It becomes a natural reaction you become one with your surfboard and hopefully the wave as well</i> |
| Annie Bermingham (Contemporary surfer) | <i>It's never been physical, it's all about being in phenomenal places, sometimes you're out on your board you see a bird with a fish in its mouth, or a seal will come by or a dolphin, it rounds you into this feeling of how small you are in the big picture of things. It's the same with the mountains and you will just have your jaw drop.</i> <i>I think it's going back to what I think as humans we need, being connected into all of that. Surfing is a really fast connection back, for me it constantly does that.</i> <i>I think we shy away from calling it a spiritual connection, I think for most people I know they feel that way. Its good for the soul</i> |
| Alan Washington (Pioneer surfer) | <i>I grew up salmon and trout fishing, at the Opihi mouth and up the canals.</i> <i>They built the boards to go out paua diving at Jacks Point, they thought if they had the board, they could stick the paua on the board an go and get more.</i> |
| Simon Brown (Veteran surfer) | <i>Two years ago I got this wave, it was a grotty June or July and I was on the mal fish, it was only a about waist high, I caught this wave and I thought what a shit wave, I didn't even know why I was out. I just sort of leant on the back foot and stalled it up at the top of the pocket and then onto the front and thought yeah here we go and then off the top and wow, I just went wow! That was just the best wave, and it was the shittiest cold day, and so I felt so aligned with all this energy in the wave and in me and I'm thinking my body is 70 percent water molecules and there is all this energy rushing through the water it's come from out of space and its rippled through me, I'm just so I unison with it all.</i> |
| Stephanie Brookes (Contemporary surfer) | <i>It's inevitable really it connects you so much to the ocean you can feel when the wave is coming, you get that feeling of what is underneath you, the sharky feeling, you get to see these beautiful sunsets, beautiful sunrises, you get to see</i> |

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| | <p>dolphins, whales. You wouldn't get to see that if you weren't a surfer. It's just a part of me it is who I am, they say the salt ions in the salt water react with your body and make it calm, cool calm and connected let's say. Connected to the mother earth. It's kind of hippy but I think the hippies are right.</p> |
| <p>Roger Hall (Pioneer surfer)</p> | <p>I say to people the thing about surfing is that you've got waves, you've got the surfer and the surfboard, the reason the surfboard is such a special thing and what makes it so much different to the tennis racquet or a tool is that it's the interface between the surfer and the wave.</p> <p>I think people take surfing for granted, it's such an accidental thing, there's a weather event somewhere, it might be local it might be a gazillion miles away, a s a result of all these things, this swell comes along and it just bangs into a piece of coast line, and we have learnt to hop on it and ride that energy, that's what it is. And people think it's their right, but the wave doesn't care about us it's just peeling off. It's pretty special it shouldn't be taken for granted.</p> <p>My boards will go all around the country, if you make boards for here, you're a Northland surfer, it's got to go at Shippies its go to on the West Coast, maybe it will go at the Cove but it won't go at Splurge Rock and Mangawhai, so I've learnt all that. I've had radical lessons which I've had to learn, but if I had been based at Raglan, I would have learnt about Manu bay, the Ledge, Whale bay and the Valley, it would have been a completely different learning curve and the boards would have been in a much narrower vein. I've been really lucky to be in this backwater.</p> |
| <p>Murray Bray (Pioneer surfer)</p> | <p>People who came here liked swimming, or the desolate quiet, the bush walks and the scenery, they didn't come here to surf because there was no such thing. But they did like the rough water.</p> <p>If you are a surfer and you look at a wave you know what you can do with it, when you are life saver you know that you can dive under the wave or you can body shoot on it that's about the lot, you learn to do those skills so that you can get out through the surf and then back in again. There's a lot of difference really. The skill is to paddle the board out, get the patient on board, lie over top them and get their weight back so you don't nose dive and you catch the white water, you don't catch the green wave, you tell the patient to hang on to those straps and keep your head down. Why would you as a life saver go across the green wave? There was no reason. We didn't even go along on our hand. It wasn't until after board riding that we would put our hand out like an aqua plane across the green wave. It was fantastic, it was a new skill which you had to learn.</p> |
| <p>Zofia Seymour (Contemporary surfer)</p> | <p>I was 25 when I started surfing, I had always grown up at the beach, living at the beach. Hanging out at the beach, it was a place to go socially, lets go down to the beach, walk down to the beach just hanging out. It's not just about spending time in the water, I'm not in diving or fishing, I'm not an avid water person but I still love surfing, and I still love the ocean. What I really like about is that it gives you a conversation or interaction with the environment, even though I've always loved being at the beach you get there and you're like what do I do, I really like spending time that's really purposeful and meaningful in that environment.</p> |
| <p>Ed Atkin (Contemporary surfer)</p> | <p>I don't particularly get overwhelmed by the environmental setting of a wave too much, it's the wave itself which is the key point. But I will admit surfing Mangamaunu in the middle of winter is absolutely mind blowing.</p> |

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| | <p><i>There are advocacy groups with try to use the term surf ecosystem. From a scientific perspective that is illogical, and it doesn't really work, a surf break isn't an eco-system. There are ecosystems which contain or contribute to surf breaks, but the ecology is not there because of the surf, but the surf may be there because of the ecosystem. A lot of tropical reef breaks which you surf are all derived from stream cutting through the reef and making a pass, now that's a surf break that's directly attributed to an ecosystem, but surf breaks are not inclusive, you could have a surf break that's completely separate from an ecosystem.</i></p> |
| <p>Paul Shanks (Pioneer surfer)</p> | <p><i>It's simple if I take off on the bar and the first section is sucking and I'm going to grab rail and tuck, its shallow, and If I got out on the shoulder and do a big round house cut back and come off the white water, I can tell I'm on a hole. And he said you can tell that can you? All he knew was about barrier dunes, and he's the chief advisor for TDCD and WDRC on coastal management. He's a fucking idiot.</i></p> |
| <p>Sabina Carmichael Allan (Contemporary surfer)</p> | <p><i>When I was younger, I just used to walk into the ocean and think it was fine, but now I'm confident because I have more knowledge. Where earlier I was confident because I had no knowledge, and I never knew I had the confidence to be swimming in in the water. Instead, I would go out and be scared if I couldn't swim. I have a lot more respect for the ocean now, before I just saw it as water and it was there, now that I've been out in it I am a lot more grateful for the things you can do in it out there and just how beautiful, it's just a lot more respect for it.</i></p> <p><i>Breaker Bay is just around the coast, there is big rock face and there is this little beach and when the swell is right the rocks form this mean waves, it's a really lovely beach. I had no idea about all these places before I started surfing, people would tell me go to Breaker bay and I would say where's that I had never heard of it. One time I was driving past and I was like oh of course it's right there. Places like Eastbourne you have to get on a push bike or motor bike just to get to the surf. You can live somewhere for so long and not know about all these surf breaks. As soon as you start getting into it you find these spots that you didn't know where, and you start looking at it differently.</i></p> <p><i>When I was younger, I would go to the beach and I would see and waves and just think ok cool, but as you start getting to know surfing and the feeling of riding a wave and knowing what you want to ride and going somewhere again and going oh you could surf that cool you start looking at the wave so differently.</i></p> |
| <p>Nukuroa Tirikatene-Nash (Veteran surfer)</p> | <p><i>If you are in a big group of people in the water and a wave comes, everyone reacts differently to be Johnny on the spot to be there in position. It's interpreting a position between what you think and what you feel what you're about to do. There are a dozen different game plans between a dozen different surfers and sometimes a surfer is regularly Johnny on the spot and you think what is it, it's a sensitivity to reading yourself and not just the wave or others.</i></p> <p><i>We weren't fluent in our own culture in a lot of ways, but we were representing it at the indigenous titles, it was very unique, these people started to pray, and they started expressing their knowledge and understanding of what would currently call kaitaki of the ocean. Telling these stories about it, somewhere</i></p> |

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| | <p><i>tattooed one man had a huge whale tattoo on his back and he was telling how at home this was kaitiaki and it was how his family interacts with and it went around all the people knew their kaitiaki and how it work for them at their home and it go to me and Tony two Māori boys from the South Island without much cultural background he just looked at me and I looked at him we were dumbfounded, I had to basically admit we don't know what ours is. It felt empty, everybody was so fluent in what they were talking about form all around the world they all knew this kaupapa or this process and we had no idea and they seemed very confident that we needed to be. We had a bunch of prayer and after all the people talked what I have come to call totems, most people would call kaitiaki these days, It changed my life and my interaction with the ocean through being a surfer.</i></p> |
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Table 6 Theme 3: Relationships to surfing and the coastal environment

Table 6 contains the responses of research informants which have been identified as pertaining to Theme 3 Relationships to surfing and the coastal environment. The data identified here reflects the relationships which surfers have to surfing and the costal environment.

Informants, both *Pioneer* and *Contemporary surfers*, recalled ways in which they utilised the coastal environment before surfing. Prior to surfing Alan Washington and Nick Shadbolt were both fishermen and Nick notes how consistent fishing gave him an awareness of changes in the abundance of sea life. Alan recalled how paua diving motivated the acquisition of surfboards for his friends who would then later introduce him to surfing. Dennis Quane described that as a child before learning to surf, he would either visit Sumner Beach with his father, or visit with friends as a popular area to play in the Sandhills. Similarly, Zofia Seymour perceived the beach as social space where she would meet and spend time with friends.

Two *Contemporary surfers* describe the relationships that they see between surfing and the surrounding environmental setting. Stephanie Brookes considers that surfing exposes her to natural features such as sunsets and sea life, which she believes, people who do not surf are as less likely to experience. As a result of this exposure she experiences a connection to the ocean. For Annie Bermingham surfing is an opportunity to experience natural environments and prompts her to consider her place within the environment. Annie does not consider this a solely physical connection, instead it is a spiritual connection linking her to an earlier human experience of living.

Similarly, *Pioneer surfer* Warren Hawke notes that when surfing he becomes focused on only the surrounding environment and surfing, giving him the experience of being at one with nature. Conversely, *Contemporary surfer* Ed Atkin pays little attention to the natural setting of a wave and instead focuses upon the wave itself. He also views surf breaks or waves as independent features within the natural or ecological setting.

Two *Contemporary surfers* attribute a change in the way they experience or conceptualise the ocean directly because of learning to surf. Despite not participating in other water activities, Zofia Seymour describes having a love of the ocean which she attributes to surfing. She describes that surfing allows her to have a conversation or interaction with the ocean. Despite valuing the beach before learning to surf, she considers her new interaction purposeful and meaningful. Sabina Carmichael Allan experienced a similar transition, noting that before surfing, her awareness and knowledge of the ocean was limited. She explains that prior to surfing, the ocean was just water and through spending time in the water she developed a respect for the ocean and a gratitude for the things it allows her to do. Additionally, becoming a surfer has reframed her understanding of the place she lives in by becoming aware of coastal areas and surf breaks, which despite relative proximity she had previously been unaware of.

2 surfers described changes in how they understood or experienced waves because of surfing. *Contemporary surfer* Sabina Carmichael-Allan noted a specific change in how she perceived waves, shifting from a banal acknowledgment to a new perspective based upon an awareness of the physical and affective possibilities which the wave can provide. This relationship to waves emerges as a key element within this theme. *Pioneer Surfer* Murray Bray describes his experience of reconsidering waves. Noting that despite spending significant time in the ocean as surf lifesaver and body surfing waves, he could not conceive of riding a wave in a parallel direction to the beach. As surf lifesavers they utilised equipment which required particular skills and physical interactions with waves. Upon seeing surfing for the first time, he was able to consider interacting with the wave in a different manner. For Roger Hall experiencing waves had a profound influence upon how he designed and shaped surfboards. He describes how the waves he surfed influenced the possibilities of shapes and styles of surfboards he made, whereas if he lived in Raglan (Hamilton), he considers that the diversity of surfboards would be significantly less variable.

Roger Hall, Simon Brown and Warren Hawke each reflect on the experience of riding a surfboard and their conception of this experience. Roger describes the surfboard as an interface between the surfer and the wave, not simply an extension of the body. For Warren, during surfing he hopes to become one with the surfboard and the wave. Simon expresses a similar idea by describing a particular wave he surfed which provided him an experience of unity in less-than-ideal conditions. Paul Shanks describes how he is able to understand the state of the topography beneath the wave, through the shape of the wave, the way it is breaking, and ultimately the way in which he surfs the wave. Nukuroa Tirikatene-Nash experienced a change in relationship to the ocean not from a particular wave but from an experience which surfing provided. While at an indigenous surfing competition, exposure to

indigenous peoples more personally connected to their own cultures, prompted Nukuroa to connect more with his own culture. In doing, so it has changed his relationship with the ocean, including his perception of sharks.

4.4 Accessibility of surfing

Theme 4 concerns the ways in which various economic, social, physical, and cultural determinants influence the ability of individuals to access surfing. Responses include personal statements of life decisions, reflections on generational differences, and particular cultural contexts influencing the desirability of surfing.

| Theme 4. Accessibility of surfing | |
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| Informant | Data from oral history interview – Direct quotes |
| Warren Hawke (Pioneer surfer) | <i>All I wanted to do was surf all the time, I couldn't get it into my head that I would be working most of the day and have to surf after work or on the weekends. I got a job at State Coal on the coal trucks, which was a hell of a job. Covered, black, breathing coal dust. I'd surf on the weekends. I've never been on the dole, most surfers had to work, we weren't at a time where it was easy to get things, I only knew one family, in the district that had two cars .</i> |
| Annie Bermingham (Contemporary surfer) | <i>If you're in Christchurch it's a really short drive to the beach, you can do all of your responsibilities and then you could go out for an hour and a half or even shorter.</i> |
| Alan Washington (Pioneer surfer) | <i>When we started the club pretty early on, a lot of the guy from Boys High decided they wanted to become surfers. When we wanted to, I, Dale or Benny would bring a carload down to Kakanui. Kakanui then became the centre for Timaru surfers.</i> <i>Most in Timaru you did what you were doing, and surfing was a bonus, you've earned that to go surfing. When you had done your chores at home you did this.</i> |
| Simon Brown (Veteran surfer) | <i>Emptying the mind is hard when there are 200 people out there admittedly.</i> |
| Nick Shadbolt (Contemporary surfer) | <i>Here (Banks Peninsula) you have to drive so far, and your parents can only put so much time in. Like to go to the beach for us was like, once or twice a year. It was when I got my own car and that's when I really started surfing.</i> <i>It's the inaccessibility it's not an easy place to surf. You have to drive a lot further between spots, you have to walk to a lot of them. It keeps people away which can sometimes be what you are looking for but sometimes you're on holiday and you just want to surf, sometimes those easier spots are better. Hickory is the most common for sure, it's definitely the closest, that's the only one I can think of as well where you don't have to worry about access, you can walk down there without having to talk to a farmer, whereas if we go to Raupo or Goughs Bay, which is pretty hard to get into at the moment. Even if you know the farmer sometimes you can't contact them because it's a rural situation you can just rock up and try but they might not be there.</i> |

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| <p>Stephanie Brookes (Contemporary surfer)</p> | <p><i>Whangamata was a place we went on holiday, so I spent a bit of time honing my mini malibu skills. Until I was about 15-16 and then I got my car and I was off! I'm gone, that's how I started.</i></p> <p><i>It's hard, this is essentially why a lot of surfers work for themselves or contract because they want to be able to go surfing when they can or want to. If you plan ahead you can make it work but If you don't you will just be working.</i></p> |
| <p>Roger Hall (Pioneer surfer)</p> | <p><i>When I was 25 people in their 30s were pretty much almost not surfing anymore, people just didn't have the lifestyle that people have got now, people didn't have two cars. What I saw in the generation just a bit older than me is that most them were struggling to buy a new wetsuit, they couldn't buy a new board. There was no such thing as buying two wetsuits, their boards were just wrecked, their wetsuit were ripped, and they were getting fatter and their surfing was starting to get sort of pathetic.</i></p> |
| <p>Murray Bray (Pioneer surfer)</p> | <p><i>In the older days, the road was rough metal so there wasn't a lot of traffic, the real elite didn't want to get their cars dirty and some other dungers wouldn't make it. The road made it special, and now everybody is mobile people come out for a surf and bugger off they don't stay for the day. We took it in our stride it has always been 15k's it's never changed.</i></p> <p><i>Originally people would only come out here for the summer, it was too cold no one had wetsuits and when you came in you could hardly move your arms.</i></p> |
| <p>Zofia Seymour (Contemporary surfer)</p> | <p><i>I had set myself on a life trajectory go to uni get a job, but then I discovered surfing and thought I had to redesign my life. I spent two to three years designing my life to accommodate my ability to live at the beach and surf. I moved to Muriwai, being free-lance and contracting. Refusing all full-time job offers. It's also a process of experimentation. In the summer I can do a before work and an after works surf. There's definitely a big weekend warrior population up here, so I'm like fuck the weekends I'm not going, and they come from all around Auckland.</i></p> |
| <p>Nukuroa Tirikatene-Nash (Veteran surfer)</p> | <p><i>Māori periods of occupation and entry in into the South Island there was a lot of unease and a lot of tribal battles that dint really allow for the same ease of recreational use of things like surfing, to make a floating board to sit back at a beach for 10 years and just surf the waves, people were running into each other having encounters that weren't so friendly. Before that there was quite a period of non-warfare and interaction between people, there was a period that something like surfing could properly be practised without too much that concern that you might die going to the beach. By the first Europeans like 1840 most of the English were looking to break in land, a game of tennis wasn't really at the fore, whereas it is known, there was a game of tennis able to be played during Waitaha times but that games wasn't so able to be played during Ngāi Tahu times.</i></p> |

Table 7 Theme 4: Accessibility

Table 7 contains the responses of research informants which have been identified as pertaining to Theme 4 Accessibility. The data identified here concerns the ways in which various economic, social, physical, and cultural determinants influence the ability of individuals to access surfing.

Many informants described factors which influenced their ability to access surf breaks. These included physical access and economic access. *Contemporary surfer* Zofia Seymour describes a challenge of finding time to surf around work and employment requirements. In addition to consuming available time, work requirements may also conflict with moments when conditions were suitable for surfing. Stephanie Brookes also described making career choices to support time spent surfing and utilising surf breaks. Zofia describes how a need to surf disrupted the expectations she had held for her life prior to surfing, choosing to work in a freelance capacity, allows her to surf when she desires. Her freedom of access is also motivated by a desire to avoid the large crowds which surf on the weekends. Stephanie recognises similar challenges and has chosen to work for herself, this allows her to plan to surf when conditions are optimal, prioritising working on marginal days.

In contrast, Warren Hawke a *Pioneer surfer* experienced this same challenge but was not able to achieve the same outcomes as the *Contemporary surfers*. Despite wishing to surf all the time, Warren had to work full-time, only being able to surf either after work or during the weekends. Warren noted that the economic circumstances at the time meant most surfers were required to work. Another *Pioneer surfer* Alan Washington reflected that surfing was a bonus, something earned once responsibilities had been completed. Despite a strong desire, both *Pioneer surfers* and *Contemporary surfers* are challenged to allocate time to surfing and accessing surf breaks.

Roger Hall described the sorts of challenges which early surfers faced, including the inability to cover the economic costs of new equipment such as, new wetsuits or surfboards. Roger considers that this, combined with the responsibilities of employment and family, prohibited a generation of surfers from continuing to surf. Equipment was also an issue for Murray Bray who noted that prior to wetsuits, Piha (Auckland) surf break was utilised only in the summer.

Physical access was a common thread both for both *Pioneer surfers* and *Contemporary surfers*. Murray Bray notes how the road to Piha once deterred larger numbers of people and those who arrived would typically stay for the day. He considers that now a sealed road allows many surfers to come and leave immediately after, for Murray these changes in the ability of surfers to access Piha lessened the specialness of the surf break. Similarly, Nick Shadbolt notes that a more inaccessible surf break may keep other surfers away and make that surf break more desirable. However, he also considers that sometimes an easier place to surf is preferable.

Additionally, Nick notes that access to surf breaks on Banks Peninsula can be dictated by the allowing of access onto local farmers' properties. This is further complicated by the ability to contact the farmers, which is sometimes difficult in the remote rural setting of Banks Peninsula. Annie

Bermingham noted that the ease of access in Christchurch meant that the beach is typically a short drive, which supports having time to surf around other responsibilities.

The need of access to a vehicle was a common aspect shared by two *Contemporary surfers*. When learning to surf, Nick’s access to Banks Peninsula surf breaks was dictated by his parent’s ability to take him. Getting his own vehicle was a significant moment in his surfing life. The same transition was true for Stephanie Brookes, who had previously been restricted to surfing while on family holidays but describes getting access to a car as a fundamental moment in her surfing life. *Veteran surfer* Alan Washington owned a car, describing how he became a way of accessing surfing for younger surfers in the Timaru area. This also allowed them to drive to Kakanui, shifting the focus of surfing in Timaru south to Kakanui (approximately 75 minute drive).

Nukuroa Tirikatene-Nash notes how historical political relationships may have influenced the ability of Waitaha iwi to go surfing, describing first how interactions of iwi within the South Island and instances of warfare likely dictated when individuals were able to engage in surfing as a recreational pursuit. He also considers that attitudes of colonising Europeans prioritised other activities over recreation, and as such surfing was not a priority.

4.5 Cultural expectations

Theme 5 concerns the experiences of cultural expectations by the informants which influence their engagement with surfing and surfing resources. This includes cultural expectations of non-surfers and from other surfers.

| Theme 5. Cultural expectations | |
|--|---|
| Informant | Data from oral history interview – Direct quotes |
| <p>Alan Washington (Pioneer surfer)</p> | <p><i>Surfing had this reputation, it didn't have a good name, my parents hated it. They didn't like me going surfing. They probably had to come around, no way I was going to stop.</i></p> <p><i>We used to come down here (Kakanui) and people didn't like, we must have had complaints because next thing there's signs up in Campbells which said surf only between the signs, opposite to swim only between the signs. If there was no one swimming nobody took any notice of it. And then one day there was a serious incident where someone got into a big rip and big trouble and surfers went and got him and really did save his life. From that day on the articles in the paper said surfers saved this guy and oh we were wonderful now. Just like that one thing changed it.</i></p> |

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| <p>Simon Brown (Veteran surfer)</p> | <p><i>Surfers were the last people to be consulted, they're the people who use it the most, we turned up in suits and ties and they quite impressed that we weren't just in t shirts and jandals.</i></p> <p><i>We got to the mid-80s and there were 25 years of trifinism where if you weren't riding a short board with a pointy nose and three fins you were just a kook, it was complete ostracization. If you were riding a dunger people would not talk to you, you were just some sort of kook.</i></p> |
| <p>Stephanie Brookes (Contemporary surfer)</p> | <p><i>I don't know if you are on like New Zealand surfers or something a generic surfing group of New Zealand, it's like all these guys asking where is the surf? And another guy is like DON'T COME HERE, it is stupid you know, it brings everyone down its horrible. In the girls group its more about encouragement, we are a community as women surfers, we like to stick together a little bit, the girls often post pictures of where they are surfing so other girls can see what the surf is like and make their decisions of whether to go or not. Whereas on the NZ generic pages no one would post that, they would be reprimanded for that almost.</i></p> <p><i>I was like I've got the blonde hair I've got the blue eyes I can swim I might as well start surfing. I need to identify with some sort of culture whether it the punk culture, the skating culture, surfing culture. I was like surfers are cool, its healthy, I'll surf.</i></p> |
| <p>Zofia Seymour (Contemporary surfer)</p> | <p><i>I remember feeling really hesitant towards surfing, there was a kind of drop out druggy vibe around it which I remember at school, it was that kind of vibe which put me off it.</i></p> <p><i>When I first started, I got into longboarding and I thought this was so great and I love it so much, but I remember all these dudes were like you should longboard because that's for girls and I felt like I didn't want to do it. I didn't want to do it because it was for girls. There's definitely a bit of a distinction, people can say girls are better at longboarding because its more elegant and cruisy.</i></p> |
| <p>Ed Atkin (Contemporary surfer)</p> | <p><i>We provide objective viewpoints on how surf breaks can and should be managed, we provide guidance essentially, but we generally don't pass comment beyond a technical point of view. If there is another technical dialogue going on, like 'we' want to build a ridiculous land grab at Mangamaunu with a rock wall in it, then we will provide commentary on that, and assess it technically but beyond that we stay removed.</i></p> <p><i>We are utterly objective, objective to the point where we are not members of any of those groups, I'm not even a member of any board riders group, we dissociate deliberately so we can do the role that we are best at which is providing technical perspective.</i></p> |
| <p>Paul Shanks (Pioneer surfer)</p> | <p><i>The lawyers and three judges were questioning my expertise. They asked it says you've got down here that you are a surfer, and I said yip that's what is written down on my IRD, surfer. So you're a competitive surfer? I said I do, do competitive surfing, so you're a professional surfer? I said in a way, but not really. I make surfboards, I study the ocean, this is what a surfer is. A surfer is not just a surfing person who goes out and wins a contest.</i></p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p><i>I realised that the whole fucking system was racist, I feel sorry for Māori, these fat white guys from the Hauraki and the Waikato and some from Auckland are just fucking nasty. These guys need allies, there's no point in me being a Māori, in my mail I always start with an Aloha to establish a surfing culture, we are here to represent surfing culture and we are starting alongside the Hauraki iwi, as surfing culture. It's the same philosophy the understand the ocean and the relationships between Papatūānuku and Tangaroa. If we are doing anything on the shoreline Tangaroa is going to come up and have a look and usually he takes it away.</i></p> <p><i>Everything that I attain to in life is running right with these guys, Every regional councils approach is the same, the people we are dealing their whole idea of the coast is that you have to tame it. I can't relate to the staff of the Waikato regional council, but I can relate to members of Ngāti Pou and that's because of being a surfer, there are very similar culture, surfing is multicultural there's Chinese surfers, Japanese surfers, Brazilian surfers, it's a multi-cultural culture.</i></p> |
| <p>Sabina Carmichael Allan (Contemporary surfer)</p> | <p><i>It's a popular beach to learn, and they will try The Corner but that's usually for more confident surfers. The Corner is the place where you get all the bullies, there you might get yelled off a wave and they are all locals, they live here in Lyall Bay or going around to Breaker. Technically I'm not a local but if you're out there enough you get to know everyone.</i></p> |
| <p>Nukuroa Tirikatene-Nash (Veteran surfer)</p> | <p><i>One of my best friends and my brother's best friend went for a holiday to Australia and saw people surfing and bought a surfboard and came back to Cheviot. Which I guess to give context to it, is considered recently the whitest town in the whitest district. Deviating outside of breaking in land for farming there wasn't much people cared to acknowledge so to start surfing or to discover surfing was very left field and to apply it was even more left field, to flag rugby practice to go surfing was like losing one's mind almost, it was seen as so hippy it was impossible to have any conversations about how cool surfing they were too busy breaking in land and polishing rugby boots. So, when our friends came back with surfboards and we had a ride with them we didn't know anyone to talk to about it or what surfing should look like, so it was entirely our love for being in the water on a floating machine and expressing what surfing was to us with influence of others showing or saying that this is surf. We were able to bind with the love of what that felt like without influence.</i></p> |

Table 8 Theme 5: Cultural expectations

Table 8 contains the responses of research informants which have been identified as pertaining to Theme 5 Cultural expectations. The data identified here reflects experiences of cultural expectations by the informants which influence their engagement with surfing and surfing resources.

Pioneer surfer Alan Washington recalls an instance of a change in the cultural reputation of surfers in the Kakanui (Otago) area which influenced where he could surf. Alan noted a dislike for surfers in the local community, finding signs erected at Campbell's Bay (Kakanui), directing surfers to surf only between the signs. Alan explains that typically these were only obeyed by the surfers if there were swimmers present. He then proceeds to tell how following a rescue of a swimmer by surfers, the cultural discourse concerning surfers in the area changed and the signs were removed. The early

disdain for surfing was also expressed by Alan's parents. The expectation of non-surfers influencing the management of surf breaks was also expressed by *Pioneer surfer* Paul Shanks. After identifying himself to the court as a surfer, Paul notes that during the giving of evidence he was questioned about his status as a surfer. What eventuated was confusion as to what this meant, showing non-surfers' misunderstandings of what being a surfer means. Paul expresses how there was an expectation that to be a surfer he must compete as a professional surfing athlete and while Paul has done so, this is not what he bases his surfing identity upon, noting instead that this identity can be composed of many factors.

Likewise, *Veteran surfer* Simon Brown notes how in a proposed development at Sumner Beach surfers were the last group to be consulted, and those responsible seemed surprised that the surfers presented themselves professionally and did not arrive in t-shirts and jandals. Paul Shanks compares the challenges of being a surfer in this context, to that of Māori in similar situations. Paul draws his own comparisons between his understanding of a Māori worldview and that of a surfer's worldview. He distances surfing from the Waikato regional council and aligns it with local iwi.

Before they became surfers, *Contemporary surfers* Stephanie Brookes and Zofia Seymour described how their outside expectations influenced their initial engagement with surfing in contrasting ways. Before surfing, Zofia associated the activity with a degenerate vibe and the consumption of drugs, which would put her off surfing until later in life. However, Stephanie perceived surfing as a culture which she could identify with, seeing her own blonde hair, blue eyes and swimming ability as making her suited to being a surfer, prompting her to pursue it. *Veteran surfer* Nukuroa Tirikatene-Nash reflected on becoming a surfer in a rural North Canterbury town. Noting that to outsiders, surfing was perceived as a deviation from the status quo of rugby and rural life. He describes how to non-surfers the idea of not only surfing but to become a surfer was equal to losing one's mind.

Ed Atkin deliberately attempts to maintain a personal distinct perspective on surf breaks, from a technical and scientific perspective as required in his position of employment (Surf Break Researcher). In doing so he removes himself from surfing groups such as boardriders groups and provides a removed expression of a technical awareness as opposed to a surfing perspective. However, other informants describe how expectations of other surfers can influence their interactions with surfing and surf breaks. Roger Hall sees surfing as a largely performative sport for many surfers who surf in a predetermined way, informed significantly by surfing media and surfing movies. *Contemporary surfer* Sabina Carmichael Allan notes how at Lyall Bay there are expectations of surfers as far as surfing specific locations within the bay. She describes how experienced locals surf at what is known as *The Corner*, while beginning surfers and non-locals may be forced to surf further

down the beach. She describes that while being a local typically refers to those who live directly in the area of the surf break, those who frequently surf the break become known and can also surf The Corner.

Expectations of particular surfing equipment also occurred within surfing. *Veteran surfer* Simon Brown notes that during the mid-80s, a surfing cultural prioritisation of the tri-fin surfboard ensured that any surfers who surfed alternative surfboard styles were ostracised from other surfers and seen as lesser surfers. *Contemporary surfer* Zofia Seymour notes how cultural expectations of female surfers, held by other surfers, influenced her perspective on longboard surfing. Zofia explains how after beginning longboarding and enjoying it, she encountered an expectation from male surfers that she should be a longboarder. This expectation changed Zofia's experience of longboarding and reduced her desire to do so, not wishing to fulfil the expectations of others.

Stephanie Brookes also reflects on gender, describing how social media posts of men deter the sharing of waves and surfing conditions online. Stephanie identifies a negativity present in this discourse. Conversely, she describes how female surfing pages promote encouragement and that girls frequently share posts about surf quality or spots in various locations to inform other surfers of whether they should go out or not. Something she believes would be reprimanded elsewhere. Only Nukuroa Tirikatene-Nash explicitly outlined an experience of surfing as one free of cultural influence from surfing itself. For Nukuroa, not knowing what surfing should look like and being unable to share surfing with anyone made surfing an intensely personal experience. This allowed him to express surfing as something unique without influence.

4.6 Summary

These excerpts seem to indicate the informants of this possess some form of connection or awareness to elements in the coastal environment through their surfing experiences. They also indicate that the informants conceptualise their experiences of surfing differently and value surfing for a range of reasons which does not seem to be tied to their location or era. It is apparent that there are several factors which dictate how informants are able to access surf or physical engage in the act of surfing, as well as a number of cultural influences which seem to shape how they engage in this process and construct their own experiences of surfing. These ideas will be explored and discussed in detail in the subsequent discussion chapter.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The importance of protecting surf breaks as natural resources is growing internationally and surfers are becoming increasingly relied on to inform the resource management process (Edwards & Stephenson, 2013; Orchard et al., 2019). Despite this role in protecting natural resources, how surfers view and value the environment is a matter of contention. Some contend that surfers have an inherent connection to the environment and as such are naturally inclined to act as advocates for the natural environment (Borne et al., 2017; Fabia et al., 2015; Scheske et al., 2019; Taylor, 2007). Others consider that this is a misrepresentation, and that instead surfers primarily care about maintaining their own ability to surf (Hill & Abbott, 2009a, 2009b; Laderman, 2014; Warshaw, 2010). Considering these tensions this thesis has aimed to examine how surfers construct values and experiences of surf breaks and the coastal environment, and to explore what implications this may have for the resource management process. The following chapter will discuss these ideas, examining the data collected from the fifteen oral history interviews previously categorised in Chapter 4 into five themes: *Individual surfing values, Awareness of changes in the coastal environment, Relationships to surfing and the coastal environment, Accessibility of surfing, and Cultural expectations*. By examining this data and commenting on surrounding literature, this discussion will demonstrate how the informants of this research construct a unique surfing awareness of the coastal environment and a unique surfing conception of waves and surf breaks. It will also demonstrate that despite these elements, surfing itself does not lead to an inherent or even implicit care or desire to protect the broader environment. Instead, a variety of influences including personal and cultural contexts can prefigure how surfers, through surfing, construct values and experiences of surfing and the coastal environment. Finally, it will explore the implications which these findings have upon how surf breaks are managed and comment on the role of surfers within the resource management process.

5.1 Exploring connection to the environment

Those who support the idea that surfers possess a unique connection to the environment suggest that this connection is developed through the sustained immersion of surfers in coastal environments during the act of surfing (Borne et al., 2017; Reineman, 2016; Taylor, 2007; Usher, 2021). One of the most significant themes to emerge from the collected data of this thesis was *Theme 2: Awareness of changes in the coastal environment*, where excerpts demonstrate how the informants tracked changes to various elements in the coastal environment. These included tidal patterns, weather conditions, wave quality, sediment distribution, and degradation of New Zealand surf breaks. It was evident that the informants, regardless of age or era, developed this awareness or connection to

these factors through evaluating how such environmental elements might influence the state of surfing waves. This awareness shared between the informants did not seem to be coincidental, instead there was a sentiment amongst these informants who considered that an awareness of such factors was critical to becoming a *successful* surfer. The need to develop this awareness was most clearly described by Ed Atkin who stated:

Surfers are innately conscious of their natural surroundings, they have to be or you not going to be a successful surfer, you're not going anywhere, if you can't make a decent prediction on what the swell is doing, reading the chart, understand a little about sediment dynamics, you're going to really suffer.

Success in this sense does not refer solely to the skill level of the surfer, but the surfer's success in predicting changes in the coastal environment which create conditions suitable for surfing waves. As Atkin *et al* (2019) and Scarfe (2008) note, quality surfing waves occur through the convergence of numerous dynamic factors and as a result can be a scarce resource, therefore by tracking these elements informants increase their chances to surf quality waves. These responses appear to be clear examples of Reineman's (2016) concept of *wave knowledge*, defined as:

A body of understanding of the dynamic oceanographic and environmental conditions in the coastal ocean acquired through experience, which enables surfers to predict short-term and mid-term changes to those conditions and informs their surfing-related actions. (p.144)

Informants reinforced Reineman's (2016) assertions that surfers develop this through engagement with the act of surfing. This is demonstrated by Zofia Seymour who explains "I started surfing and I needed to know what the weather was doing, what's the moon cycles, the tides, and it was all tied into each other." Through these sorts of surfing experiences, the informants not only developed a close awareness to changes within the coastal environment but also a unique conception of the coastal environment and its features. The simplest example of this process was described by Sabina Carmichael Allan a surfer from Lyall Bay (Wellington) who did not surf until her late teenage years. She describes how becoming a surfer reorientated her perspective of the city as she began to include surfing resources within her understanding of Wellington. For Sabina, time spent surfing also changed the way in which she conceived waves. She describes how once "getting to know surfing and the feeling of riding a wave" she could revisit somewhere and "look at the wave differently". For Sabina, the act of surfing and her experiences of riding waves led her to develop a new understanding of waves, through the recognition of the physical and affective possibilities which they could offer.

It is important to consider that it is not simply a lack of exposure to waves, surf breaks, or the coastal environment before surfing which might allow this sort of change. Many of the informants, including Sabina, spent significant time in coastal environment prior to becoming surfers. For example, the informants described other coastal activities such as fishing, holidaying at the beach, becoming surf

lifesavers or simply visiting the beach to swim. While not always, often their transition into becoming surfers was connected to these prior activities. Alan Washington goes so far to tell how the surfboards which he and his friends learnt to surf on were originally made because they seemed to be useful tools for collecting paua. Prior to becoming a surfer at the age of 25, Zofia considered the beach a social space and described her experiences in this environment as somewhat vacuous. Since learning to surf Zofia describes her time in this environment as purposeful and meaningful, considering that surfing now allows her to have an interaction or conversation with the environment. Zofia's surfing experiences have shifted her expectations of both how she is able to engage with the coastal environment, and the value which she can derive from these experiences. Specifically, for Zofia, this transition reorientated her experiences of the coastal environment toward a more environmentally aware or engaged perspective. This is compounded by the fact that she prioritises surfing alone, placing more emphasis on the engagement with the ocean rather than other people during her surfing experiences. Such descriptions demonstrate that regardless of past connections and degrees of familiarity with the coastal environment, some informant's relationships and understandings of these same spaces have changed because of their surfing experiences. This idea in addition to the knowledge of the coastal environment which informants developed seems to support the thinking of Borne *et al* (2017) and Taylor (2007) who contend that there is something unique about the act of surfing enabling it to foster such experiences or apparent connections.

5.1.1 Connecting to nature through surfing

Some informants firmly expressed the sentiment that surfing fundamentally connected them to the environment or to nature. Warren Hawke when describing the experience of paddling out the back, meaning to paddle out past the point at which the waves break and to wait for a suitable wave to arrive, says "everything falls away and you're only focused on the environment around you and surfing. It's a feeling of being at one with nature I suppose." Similarly, Stephanie Brookes echoed the sentiment that the exposure to natural environments and marine life were experiences which bring her closer to nature. Annie Bermingham draws a similar conclusion describing:

It's all about being in phenomenal places, sometimes you're out on your board you see a bird with a fish in its mouth, or a seal will come by, or a dolphin, it rounds you into this feeling of how small you are in the big picture of things. It's the same with the mountains and you will just have your jaw drop.

These sorts of responses clearly echo the thoughts of Taylor (2007) who considers that surfing's unique exposure to these sorts of environments can support a connection to these non-human elements. However, it wasn't only exposure to these environments which supported this connection, again the act of surfing seemed to play a role. Zofia Seymour described how she experienced moments of an inability to surf and came to realise that these times coincided with the cycle of the

moon and her menstrual cycle. This realisation led Zofia to connect her body, her surfing experiences, and patterns in the environments, informing not only her surfing experiences but connecting her sense of self to a broader environmental setting. Similarly, Nukuroa described how when catching a wave, he applies a framework of sorts through which he assesses and interprets the positioning of the wave, other surfers, and himself. What Zofia and Nukuroa's responses demonstrate is that not only do they develop a knowledge of elements within the coastal environment when surfing, but they engage in an active process of evaluating the position of themselves within these spaces and interpreting these relationships. Like *wave knowledge* the development of this process was connected to the success of their individual surfing experiences. For these informants, their success in catching waves or lack thereof, acts as a gauge which allows them to evaluate and interpret their experience of these spaces.

Taylor (2007) and Scheske et al. (2019) would anticipate that these sorts of surfing experiences would naturally engender a care for the environment and several informants seem to express such a sentiment. Despite admittedly not being an avid water person, Zofia "loves the ocean through surfing". Similarly, Sabina noted that her early encounters of the ocean were experienced in an almost unconscious manner but has since developed a respect and gratefulness for the ocean through surfing. For Annie Bermingham, this exposure and connection to the natural environment is what she values most about surfing, describing her favourite surfing moments as those surfing beside the Hikurangi trench, beneath the mountains, and bush which surround the Mangamaunu (Kaikoura) surf break. However, despite the assuredness of these responses, the number of informants who articulated such care or connection was limited in comparison to the number who described a close awareness of changes in the coastal environment. Ed Atkin describes the experience of surfing Mangamaunu in the middle of winter as "absolutely mind blowing". However, despite this admission Ed places little priority on the natural setting or surrounding environment within his surfing experiences. In contrast to Annie, Ed's focus is the upon wave itself, "I don't get particularly overwhelmed by the environmental setting of a wave too much, it's the wave itself which is the key point." As Peryman (2011) notes, each surfer can hold different values of surfing and their own values can change through time, this may explain the differences between Annie and Ed's priorities when surfing. However, more importantly, their differences raise the idea that the values which surfers place on the environment are not determined solely by their status as a surfer. Returning to Annie's original statement about being immersed within natural environments we also see that she draws a comparison between an experience of the ocean and the mountains. During her interview Annie would describe how snowboarding and tramping offered her similar experiences and connections to nature as surfing, again challenging the idea that Annie's value of the environment was unique to her surfing experiences. Three surfers (Annie, Nukuroa and Nick) described how surfing provided a form

of healing or a positive sense of wellbeing. This seems to support existing research which has identified the ability of surfing, through immersion in a natural environment, to support mental health recovery (Caddick et al., 2014; Wheaton et al., 2017). However, only Annie Bermingham identified a link between this experience and the natural environment, describing how surfing allows a sense of replenishment through connection with nature. While the identification of a wellbeing component and connections to nature is consistent with research into both surf break values and the activity of surfing, responses here by New Zealand surfers do not present a consistent explanation for the reasons of this value, nor do they associate it consistently with surf breaks or the environment. Instead, their responses again demonstrate an individual or personal understanding of these values in relation to the construction of surfing experiences. This was made evident within the data as a result of the methodological approach. In which the oral histories not only demonstrate specific values but give these values context and present explanations which demonstrate the unique ways each informant constructs surfing experiences.

5.1.2 Surfers as sentinels for changes in the coastal environment

An awareness of the informants to certain changes in the environment has already been demonstrated, but surfers are also thought to be able to recognise environmental changes beyond these dynamic surfing predictors and articulate these in the coastal management process (Reineman, 2016; Tucker, 2014; Usher, 2021). However, critics of surfing's environmental reputation suggest that rather than surfers possessing a broad connection to the environment they instead fixate and care for surfing specific elements within the coastal environment (Hill & Abbott, 2009a, 2009b; Warshaw, 2010). By further examining how the informants tracked changes in the coastal environment we can recognise how their awareness and care for the environment is linked to their surfing experiences but is in fact often primarily focused upon surfing elements such as surf breaks.

Ed Atkin reiterated the concept of surfers as environmental sentinels during his interview, by stating that "perhaps the easiest one [environmental change] to relate to is water quality, literally surfing in shit". Substantiating this statement, *Pioneer surfers* Murray Hawke and Dennis Quane both recounted concerns with sewage contamination at the Sumner (Christchurch) surf break. Dennis considers that at the time this was an issue of concern for all surfers, and Warren even wrote a letter to the paper expressing his concern about the contamination of the surf break. Although water quality may be thought to be most immediately noted, the informants of this research largely demonstrated a sensitivity to longer-term changes in the coastal environment, such as the permanent degradation of certain surf breaks which they had personally witnessed. Paul Shanks, Murray Bray and the anonymous informant all described witnessing long-term degradation to the same Piha (Auckland) surf break. Murray explains that:

Originally most of the surfing was down at South Piha, there used to be a fantastic break coming off the point of The Camel. It was a world class break off the point, it's gone now but it did come back for a time three or four years ago.

All three informants identified the same development and construction in the adjacent beach environment as having destroyed the “world class” surf break at the end of the bay. Both Paul and Murray grew up surfing at the Piha surf break and Paul even won a national surfing championship at the break, as such, the surf break was one associated with early memories. Murray contends that while the surf break returned for a short time, it disappeared again and was essentially destroyed following the nearby activities. To be able to make such judgments, these informants have to have had past experience of the surf break and to have maintained their observations over a sustained period of time. An idea Warren Hawke is aware of, noting: “From fifty years of going to different beaches, I’ve seen massive changes..” These accounts reinforce the idea that surfers can act as indicators for long-term changes based on their histories or tenure of surfing a particular surf break (Reineman, 2016; Usher, 2021). The only informants to describe such long-term changes were *Veteran* and *Pioneer surfers*. Therefore, it could be assumed that those who have been surfing longer are more likely to have witnessed such changes in the coastal environment and are more capable of making judgements concerning the longevity of effects. While both may be true to an extent, further examination of the informants’ responses demonstrates that there are several other variables which influence how a surfer may become aware of these sorts of changes in the coastal environment.

Pioneer surfer Alan Washington was amongst the first to surf in the Timaru area and discovered several previously un-surfed surf breaks; during his interview he recounted two instances of surf break degradation which he had witnessed. The first and most immediately noticeable instance were the changes to the Campbell’s Bay (Kakanui) surf break following a severe storm in the mid-1970s. Alan’s second account described changes to the Waimataitai Beach (Timaru) surf break in the 1970s, which followed the progressive construction at the adjacent Timaru port which included the extension of a sea wall. Alan considers that these activities reduced the swell that the Waimataitai surf break received and ultimately reduced the quality and consistency of the surf break. In contrast to the changes noticed at Campbell’s Bay which Alan noticed immediately, it took several years to notice any changes resulting from the port’s extension. It is possible that Alan failed to notice these changes because the effects upon the surf break were cumulative and worsened over time. However, Alan contends that instead he failed to notice these changes because he had begun to prioritise surfing at other surf breaks and was as a result less aware to changes at the Waimataitai surf break. This suggests that the ability of surfers to notice changes in the coastal environment is not only linked to the extent and nature of the changes nor the tenure of the surfer but also to the sustained engagement of surfers and their utilisation of the surf break. This was reinforced by Roger Hall who

described how his restricted movement, due to the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, changed his awareness of his local surf break. Despite growing up and surfing at the same surf break, Roger only began to develop a closer awareness of the same surf break when he was forced to spend sustained and consistent time surfing in the one place.

While familiarity with a certain area can allow a judgement of long-term effects, a close awareness to changes really stems from persistent interaction with these spaces. Many surfers may be able to make a judgement on the state of the surfing quality and compare it to a previous date. However, the ability of recognising trends or instances of changes as beyond the normal dynamic conditions within a surf break environment requires surfers to accumulate an intimate knowledge of the states and characteristics of a particular surfbreak. This demonstrates that there are several variables which influence the ability of surfers to identify environmental changes in coastal environments, including the type of change, the rate of change, and the behavioural patterns of surfers in engaging with particular surf breaks. Although hearing reflections on the degradation to certain surf breaks was anticipated, the frequency with which informants demonstrated an awareness to long-term changes of New Zealand surf breaks was surprising. This consistency speaks to the depth of local information which certain surfers possess and their usefulness in assessing coastal change. However, as Warshaw (2010) and Hill and Abbott (2009a; 2009b) would expect, despite the propensity of informants to notice such changes any awareness was generally limited to elements which directly related to the act of surfing.

5.1.3 An awareness of surf breaks

It became apparent that the awareness which informants demonstrated to changes within surf break environments could not be fully explained by Reineman's (2016) concept of *wave knowledge*. Although Reineman (2016) acknowledges that *wave knowledge* can be tied to particular surf breaks, he defines *wave knowledge* more broadly as a general understanding of the ocean and coastal features which relate to a surfer's behaviour. In contrast, many of the examples described by informants of this thesis could not be separated from the surf breaks or surfing locales in which they had been developed. *Contemporary Surfer* Nick Shadbolt predominantly surfs on Banks Peninsula (Canterbury). Through repeated visits to surf the various surf breaks which surround the peninsula, Nick has come to develop an understanding of how changes in the coastal environment interact uniquely at each different surf break. He notes, "you start chasing different conditions when you know what each beach does". Nick also describes how onshore winds, which blow from the sea towards the land and are generally thought to produce poor surfing conditions, can produce quality surfing waves at particular surf breaks on Banks Peninsula. Rather than possessing a form of general surfing theory Nick's awareness of environmental conditions is embedded with the surf breaks of the

area. Nick has learnt this through experience and has gone as far to make a map of every bay which he thinks may be surfable on Banks Peninsula. To a lesser extent Sabina Carmichael Allan noted, that spending even a week at a beach compared to a day, offered the opportunity to learn more about a particular surf break and the processes which occurred there.

In addition to the surfers' own *wave knowledge*, they can access and utilise a range of data sources forecasting weather and surfing conditions which may help to inform their surf related behaviour. However, this too was mediated by a knowledge of surf breaks. Zofia Seymour contends that unless a surfer has a relationship with a surf break, they are unable to apply this sort of knowledge to accurately predict the state of the surf. Similarly, Nick described how conditions forecasted for the Banks Peninsula might not result in the expected quality, poor or promising, by someone not familiar with the surf breaks of Banks Peninsula. Like Zofia, Nick also describes that success in applying forecasting data relied on an experiential knowledge of local surf breaks. During Stephanie Brookes's interview she commented on the copy of the *Wavetrack New Zealand Surfing Guide* which was sitting on the table, noting how an entry for a local surf break was incorrect and that the conditions which it suggested were ideal, were in fact the opposite. Even though these surfers did develop an awareness of the coastal environment features beyond their surf break, such as wind or incoming swell patterns, they were fundamentally interpreted through their understanding of certain surf breaks. Like Reineman's (2016) concept of *wave knowledge* this surf break awareness is formed through the act of surfing, but it could instead be considered that *wave knowledge* "informs their surfing-related actions" specifically within a surf break environment (p.144).

Only two informants connected changes within surf break environments to additional elements beyond the surfing experience. When Paul Shanks described the changes to the Piha (Auckland) surf break which he had witnessed, he also described how the same construction activities had damaged the inland environment and were causing issues for property owners. In this instance, Paul's awareness extends beyond solely changes to the surfing resource to include the broader environmental changes impacting others. Similarly, Annie Bermingham who also demonstrated an awareness of changes toward the Mangamaunu (Kaikoura) surf break expressed concern that the issue was wider than surfing. Annie stated that the proposed construction in Mangamaunu Bay threatened to not only destroy the surf break but other special features including the wildlife and local taonga, which Annie considered of at least equal importance. Annie consistently references a value in the natural environment throughout her interview, but Paul does not. However, what both have in common is extensive experience in advocating for the protection of New Zealand surf breaks. As Lazarow (2007) and Nelsen *et al.* (2013) note previous past efforts to secure protection of surf breaks have struggled to justify the value of surf breaks in comparison to more traditional resources

and activities. It is worth considering that Annie and Paul may have become more inclined to include these broader connections to the environment due to their past experiences of justifying the value of surf breaks within the formal context of surf break protection. The lack of broader responses in comparison to the consistent surf break focus suggests that if surfing is capable of producing a connection to the environment it has clear limitations. However as demonstrated by Annie and Paul surfers are not limited to a restricted understanding.

5.2 The environment beyond surf breaks

What this research demonstrates is that surfers can develop a close connection and understanding of particular elements within the coastal environment through the act of surfing. However, rather than a broad environmental sensitivity, the informants demonstrated a prioritisation of surfing elements within their awareness of the environment. While the focus of certain surfers, specifically on surf-related elements, may contradict their holistic representation, a specific awareness and sense of care for a particular environmental feature is not on its own an issue.

When Warren Hawke reflects on his experience of surfing in sewage at the Sumner (Christchurch) surf break, he says “that was the first time I became environmentally aware or became aware of the possibility of keeping surf breaks surfable.” Here Warren acknowledges that his awareness of the environment is linked to his desire to keep surf breaks surfable and that the experience which prompted this was the activity of surfing. In comparison, Dennis Quane recalled how as a boy before he learnt to surf, he would visit the beach and play in the sand hills with friends. He also remembers how construction to the Sumner seawall destroyed this play area. However, even on reflection he has no understanding of how this may have affected the quality of the surf despite a familiarity with the coastal environment and having since surfed the area for over fifty years. The informants of this research demonstrated that surfers do offer significant insight into the processes and states of surf breaks. While they cannot act as general experts, their expertise is likely to be unique to surfers as it is developed specifically through the act of surfing. Surfers can be thought of developing a specific form of surfing environmental literacy, to which non-surfers may not understand or be able to articulate. Prioritising surfing elements should not be seen as a flaw unless it is inappropriately precluding other elements from being valued.

If surfers are to take an increasing responsibility in the protection of coastal resources, as part of a broader movement of sustainable management, then it is important to understand how that form of environmental value may be constructed beyond surf breaks. Although there was a consistent reference from the informants of this research to a connection between surfing and the environment, this was articulated and conceived differently. This variation supports recent surfing

research which indicates that relationships between surfers and the environment are highly variable and can change between genders, locations and nationalities as (Lazarow & Olive, 2017; Wheaton, 2020). As such, it becomes more important to ask how certain surfers can develop their own unique relationships to the environment through the common activity of surfing.

5.3 Surfing as a mode of interaction with the ocean

Reineman (2016) and Borne *et al.* (2017) contend that it is the immersion of surfers within the coastal environment and the act of riding the wave which differentiates the connection of surfers from others. We can see from the responses of several informants that their experiences of the coastal environment through surfing are differentiated from other activities, such as swimming, which might take place in similar spaces. By examining what it means to go surfing or to surf a wave we can explore how the informants of this research construct their experiences of surfing. Paul Shanks provides an account of riding a wave which allows an initial examination for how surfers interpret and experience waves during surfing:

It's simple, if I take off on the bar and the first section is sucking and I'm going to grab rail and tuck, its shallow, and If I go out on the shoulder and do a big round house cut back and come off the white water, I can tell I'm on a hole.

In this statement Paul describes how his surfing changes in relation to the shape of the wave. Paul describes manipulating his body and crouching low to surf the first section of the wave and then performing a turning manoeuvre on the second section, which takes him back closer to the breaking point of the wave. Critically, this description reveals how a surfer can experience a wave. Initially the way in which Paul surfs on the wave is governed by the wave itself, and then when the wave allows, Paul can impart his own will or way of surfing on the wave by performing a big round house cut back. What we see is that during the act of surfing Paul interprets the state of the wave and responds by modifying his behaviour. This interpretation or interaction with a wave was also experienced by Roger Hall, for whom waves not only inform how he surfs but also influence his behaviour out of the water. Roger, a renowned surfboard shaper who has been making surfboards in Ruakaka (Northland) for over fifty years, describes how the diversity of the surf breaks which surround him have prompted him to design an equally diverse range of surfboard styles.

What these example shows is that surfers do not only ride waves but that there is a dynamic between the wave and the surfer, and that the act of surfing can influence the surfer's behaviour and understanding. How individual surfers conceive this interaction can vary. Within Zofia Seymour's earlier description of how surfing changed her experience of the beach, she describes surfing as offering a conversation or interaction with the ocean. In this sense, Zofia portrays this interaction during the act of surfing as dialogue between herself and the ocean environment. For Simon Brown,

this interaction with the wave moves past mutual exchange to become one of integration. This can be seen in Simon's description of a memorable wave ridden at the Sumner (Christchurch) surf break:

Two years ago, I got this wave, it was a grotty June or July and I was on the Mal Fish, it was only about waist high, I caught this wave and I thought what a shit wave, I didn't even know why I was out. But I just sort of leant on the back foot and stalled it up at the top of the pocket and then onto the front and thought yeah here we go and then off the top and wow! I just went wow!

Here the Mal Fish refers to a particular style of surfboard and although surfers' accounts of waves are considered notoriously challenging for non-surfers to understand, Simon's following explanation of this experience is clear:

That was just the best wave, and it was the shittiest cold day, and so I felt so aligned with all this energy in the wave and in me and I'm thinking my body is seventy percent water molecules and there is all this energy rushing through the water it's come from out of space and its rippled through me, I'm just so I unison with it all.

Simon's description presents the experience of surfing as one of complete connection and strongly reflects the spiritual and metaphysical constructions of surfing associated with the *soul surfer* identity as discussed by Hill and Abbott (2009a) and Taylor (2007). This idea of the surfer merging with the wave was also expressed by Warren Hawke who describes that "it becomes a natural reaction, you become one with your surfboard and hopefully the wave as well." In comparison to Simon's description, Warren places emphasis upon first becoming one with the surfboard and then perhaps the wave. However even within Simon's more universal experience, Simon is compelled to specify which surfboard he rode during this moment. The importance of the surfboard in constructing surfing experiences was reiterated by Roger Hall. He states:

I say to people the thing about surfing is that you've got waves, you've got the surfer and the surfboard, the reason the surfboard is such a special thing and what makes it so much different to the tennis racquet or a tool is that it's the interface between the surfer and the wave.

For Roger, it is the surfboard which allows the surfer to interact with the wave and the ocean, adding a technological element to the way in which surfers construct the act of surfing. Although compelling, this relationship between the surfer, the surfboard, and the wave does not always have to equal the transcendent experience of Simon Brown. When describing his own experience of surfing, Ed Atkin noted "for me it's not about sitting there and going this is nice, the turns are everything. Barrels are fun, but for me its vertical big hits." A "vertical big hit" is an aggressive surfing manoeuvre and Ed's approach to riding waves speaks to a level of control and power over the wave, where if there is a relationship between Ed, his surfboard, and the wave it is one of subjugation. Although surfers may

develop similar knowledge of surf break environments and reinterpret these spaces, how each informant conceives their experiences of surfing in relation to the wave is different.

5.3.1 Constructing surfing in Aotearoa

Research suggests that surfing reflects elements of its wider societal situation, in which culture, technology, and behaviour do not exist independently but are intrinsically connected (Laderman, 2014; Taylor, 2007). Although Simon Brown and Warren Hawke's descriptions of connecting to the surfboard and the wave don't reference the *green room* experience examined by Ormond (2007) they are clear examples of the presence of the soul surfer conception of the surfing experience within New Zealand surfing. Conversely, Ed Atkin's wave orientated conception of surfing may be reinforced by his technical understanding of surfing resources as a contemporary *surf science* researcher.

Pioneer surfer Murray Bray's account of learning to surf in Piha (Auckland) allows an exploration of how surf breaks are spaces in which these variables converge and are expressed through the act of surfing. Murray describes how he was amongst the first New Zealand surfers to ride a modern surfboard made of foam and fibreglass, when two American surfers brought such boards to Piha in 1958. Before the arrival of the American surfers, Murray had spent almost every summer at the beach, first visiting at the age of six and joining the surf lifesaving club at fourteen. Murray describes spending a lot of time in the ocean, either body surfing waves or rescuing patients on a surf lifesaving board. Despite this immersion and familiarity, the arrival of the American surfers and the way in which they interacted with the waves of Piha had a profound influence upon how Murray experienced the coastal environment. Murray describes this moment saying:

If you are a surfer and you look at a wave you know what you can do with it, when you are lifesaver you know that you can dive under the wave or you can body shoot on, it that's about the lot, you learn to do those skills so that you can get out through the surf and then back in again. There's a lot of difference really... Why would you as a lifesaver go across the green wave? There was no reason. We didn't even go along it on our hand. It wasn't until after board riding that we would put our hand out like an aqua plane across the green wave. It was fantastic, it was a new skill which you had to learn.

The American surfers rode the Piha waves laterally, parallel to the shoreline, something which despite their experiences of riding waves Murray and his friends had never witnessed nor considered. Murray describes how the techniques of surf lifesaving led to a certain method of interacting with waves. In this case, using a surf lifesaving board required an individual to get ahead of the wave as it broke in order to catch the white water straight in to take a patient to shore. The form of the surf lifesaving boards, and their application seemed to give rise to a certain way of understanding and experiencing waves. While the new surfboards may have been more suited to riding a wave laterally,

Murray's previously consistent approach to riding waves while body surfing, shows that how Murray understood and interacted with waves was not only technologically determined but mediated by cultural and behavioural expectations. This account seems to suggest that seeing a wave as a lateral pathway is a unique surfing conception, which is reflected in the NZCPS 2010 definition of a *surfable wave* (New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010).

Piha itself bears its name from Te Piha, the Māori name for the large rock which juts out into the ocean dividing South Piha and North Piha. In te reo Māori, Te Piha refers to the pattern of waves which would form off the bow of a moving waka as it passes through water. As the ocean waves move past the rock, they break off each side in a similar manner. Although Waiti and Awatere (2019) have already identified how Māori surfers can experience surfing through their own cultural worldviews, the naming of Te Piha again shows how an understanding and experience of waves can be linked to technology, culture, and behaviour. The waves of Piha itself have been understood and experienced differently through time as these elements intersect and are expressed upon the surf itself. At this point it is useful to return to Elsdon Best's (1925) description of early Māori waka wave riding: "it is kept in front of the crest, riding the breast of the wave, hence the stern is higher than the bow." (p.44). In this description it is apparent that waves were being ridden laterally in New Zealand much earlier than the arrival of the American surfers and their modern surfboards in 1958. Although Murray Bray never claims to have been amongst the first to surf across a wave in New Zealand, the disconnection between his exposure to this way of riding waves and this earlier approach adds another layer to how the riding of waves has been constructed in New Zealand. When Nukuroa Tirikatene-Nash describes the surfing history of his Waitaha ancestors, he notes how their ability to surf or to engage in the ocean was likely mediated by political instability and colonial barriers. The impacts of colonialism upon Hawaiian indigenous surfing cultures are well documented but are less so for New Zealand Māori (Laderman, 2014; Warshaw, 2010). Nevertheless, historic cultural displacement and oppression may be a possible explanation for the disconnection between the wave riding Best (1925) described and Murray's experience in 1958.

Such expectations which can influence how surfing is experienced are not limited to those from outside of surfing. Simon Brown recalled how other surfers had expectations about which surfboard was appropriate to ride and how one might be ostracised for choosing poorly. Zofia reinforces this idea, describing how she experienced expectations about which board would be suitable or expected of her to ride as a female surfer. Other informants have noted the importance of the surfboard in engaging with the coastal environment, therefore it is worth considering how these technological expectations of surfboards may change the relationships between surfers and surf breaks. If certain surfboard designs are tied to certain surf breaks, as Roger Hall suggests, such surfboard expectations can also prioritise the use of certain surf breaks and areas of the coastal environment. This dynamic

is already apparent within how surfers influence the engagement of other surfers in relation to certain surf breaks or areas of the coastal environment based upon their skill levels or their statuses as *insiders*. Sabina Carmichael Allan describes how surfers in Lyall Bay (Wellington) will surf in different areas of the bay based upon these factors. As such, it is possible that certain awarenesses or knowledge of specific surf breaks can become privileged to those advantaged to surf there consistently, as other surfers are prevented from surfing the same surf breaks. In contrast to these pressured environments, Nukuroa recalled how learning to surf in a highly rural environment brought its own challenges but did in fact allow him to access surfing in manner insulated from these expectations of surfing. He states that learning to surf in such an environment meant “we were able to bind with the love of what it [surfing] felt like without influence.” Despite this initial isolation, Nukuroa’s earlier description of reconnecting with his Waitaha culture would eventually be imbued within his surfing experience. Such accounts demonstrate how different variables can accumulate throughout the lives of surfers and inform their experiences of surfing. The interaction of these variables is likely to be responsible for the diverse reasons for which the informants value surfing.

Seeing surfing as a complex assemblage of various factors also lessens the need to define surfers’ relationships to the environment as being either fundamental or inauthentic. Simon Brown’s description of surfing in Sumner (Christchurch) notably evoked the *soul surfer* experience, previously linked by Hill and Abbott (2009b) to surfing’s environmental representation. However, Nukuroa’s description of how surfing and his Waitaha culture would change his experience and understanding of the environment, shows yet another way in which surfing, and the environment can be brought together. For Nukuroa, it was not the act of surfing which would lead him to change his relationships to the coastal environment, but a cultural experience in this instance enabled by surfing. It is beyond the scope of this research to articulate the entire development of New Zealand surfing, but what is now clear, is that there are a variety of factors including technology, culture, and behaviour which can influence how an individual surfer might experience surfing and the coastal environment. Although, ways of understanding waves can be conceived and influenced by several external factors it seems that the act of riding the wave, and by extension the surf break, are essential components within this process. Seeing the act of surfing as a complex assemblage of these factors also prompts us to reconsider the nature of a surf break, not only as a space which produces a *surfable wave* but also as the necessary space in which these elements can converge and be experienced through surfing.

5.4 Implications for resource management

Seventeen New Zealand surf breaks are currently protected by *Policy 16: Surf breaks of national significance*. Which states (New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010):

Policy 16: Surf breaks of national significance:

*Protect the surf breaks of national significance for surfing listed in Schedule 1,
(a) ensuring that activities in the coastal environment do not adversely affect the surf breaks; and
(b) avoiding adverse effects of other activities on access to and use and enjoyment of the surf breaks. (p.19)*

URL: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/marine-and-coastal/coastal-management/guidance/policy-16.pdf>

Other New Zealand surf breaks must be protected as *Surf Breaks of Regional Significance*, in order to do so, local and regional New Zealand councils must first identify which surf breaks qualify as significant within their jurisdiction boundaries. Once these have been identified they must then be registered as regionally significant within the associated local or regional plans. To first identify which surf breaks are considered regionally significant, surfers are often relied upon to identify and articulate the values associated with certain surf breaks (Edwards & Stephenson, 2013; Orchard et al., 2019). This thesis demonstrates that while surfing does not ensure that an individual will develop a broad sense of environmental awareness or care, it does provide them with a unique understanding of surf breaks and elements of the coastal environment which pertain to surfing. It is my judgement as researcher that the experiential knowledge which surfers develop through surfing justifies their authority in regard to surf breaks within the management process. However, despite being capable of recognising certain environmental changes, their knowledge and/or focus should be recognised as limited to surf breaks and surfing, preventing surfers from becoming authorities on the entire coastal environment. Those trying to protect surf breaks should place more emphasis on the role of the surf break as a space which can facilitate a relationship between people and certain elements of the natural environment, irrespective of any potential limitations. Regardless of how they personally conceive the environment, informants demonstrated that because of their engagement with surfing and by extension surf breaks, they entered in a process of evaluating the place they occupy as part of the natural environment and developing a unique knowledge of surfing spaces.

As noted, the protection of surf breaks has involved a struggle to articulate the validity of the values associated with surf breaks in comparison to more widely accepted activities (Lazarow et al., 2007; Nelsen et al., 2013). Alan Washington described how his access to surfing resources was mediated by the judgement of non-surfers and how a positive perception of surfers became an enabling factor in his unrestricted access to the coastal environment. This was starkly apparent in the struggle to

save the Mangamaunu surf break in 2018, where the values which surfers and local iwi had in the surf break were never considered prior to developers and government pursuing the construction of a cycleway, which they wrongly suggested stood to benefit the entire local community. Although they may be limited, the surfing experiences and knowledge which informants develop within surf breaks can define their lives. It is not surprising therefore, that surfers become so invested in the protection of surf breaks and have been primarily responsible for the extensive protection efforts of these over the last century. Surfers should not be criticised for their prioritisation of protecting surfing resources. Instead, the way in which surfers develop connections to particular environmental elements should serve as an example for the importance of engaging with the environment, in a variety of ways through lived experience and local knowledge. Through developing this experience and local knowledge individuals can develop a wider understanding of the effects that behaviours and activities may have upon natural resources. This was clearly demonstrated in Mangamaunu, where not only surfers recognised threats, but in parallel with their concerns mana whenua witnessed the potential loss of urupa and wāhi tapu from the same destructive activities (Ranford, 2018). For mana whenua, their lived connections to whakapapa, the land, and environment engendered similar judgements toward the development as the surfers, increased by the heartbreak of knowing that the bodies of their ancestors could be irretrievably lost. If the integrity of an area is the aim of both mana whenua and surfers, their combined voices can be a strength in future protection efforts of natural resource management challenging other more dominant voices.

Surfers develop their alternative voices on coastal value through their interaction with surf breaks and the act of surfing. As surf breaks become increasingly threatened, the potential for surfers to develop and subsequently articulate these values is also threatened. Furthermore, it became apparent when examining the data relating to the themes of, *Theme 4 Accessibility of surfing* and *Theme 5 Cultural expectations*, that there are various factors which mediate surfers' access to surf breaks and ability to engage in the act of surfing. Many surfers described how economic restrictions and limitations of physical access can prevent them from surfing. This research argues that these barriers not only limit the ability of individuals to surf but to also develop an understanding and knowledge of surfing elements within the coastal environment. Such barriers in combination with a loss of surf breaks may lead to a lack of representation for surf breaks in comparison to other resources when appraising the future management of the coastal environment. Furthermore, considering that surfers knowledge stems not only from their surfing actions but their knowledge of specific surf breaks, it is important to consider that remote surfbreaks, or surf breaks which break relatively infrequently are likely to be more vulnerable to threatening activities, as surfers are less able to recognise and notify of changes occurring in these environments. The importance of maintaining and expressing alternative voices was made clear in the overturning of the Mangamaunu

decision. Particularly when the development process utilised legislation which removed the usual process of consultation and appeal, prevented alternative perspectives of value held by surfers and mana whenua from being expressed before the consent was secured. It is essential to preserve the right to express alternative voices and values in order to demonstrate alternative ways of valuing and managing natural resources.

5.4.1 Conclusion

Despite surfers occupying a position of authority within the management of surf breaks, there is little research which explores how surfers construct experiences and relationships within these spaces. Within the limited scope what research there is, there are conflicting perspectives on how surfers value the environment. To address these gaps and tensions, this thesis has explored how New Zealand surfers construct connections to surfing, surf breaks and the coastal environment. This thesis challenges the expectation that surfers develop a broad care for the environment based on their immersion in the coastal environment. However, it also tempers criticisms directed towards surfers for failing to live up to these expectations. Instead, it promotes surfing as an activity which can connect individuals more closely to specific elements within the coastal environment and allows them to develop a knowledge of these resources.

Through the examination of fifteen New Zealand surfers' oral histories, this thesis has shown that surfers can develop a unique relationship to elements of the coastal environment which pertain to surfing. As a result of their consistent surfing behaviours within surf break environments, these surfers developed a unique knowledge of surf breaks. Surfers apply this knowledge to inform their own surfing behaviours within the surf break environment when predicting conditions which will lead to quality surfing waves. Furthermore, surfers are able to notice changes to the environmental conditions within these surf breaks and those surfers who are able to observe a surf break consistently can make judgements upon the state of the surf break over time. It is important to note that for these surfers such knowledge is embedded within the surf break, as it is the relationship to the surf break and its specific characteristics which allows its development. In addition to this knowledge, surfers through the act of surfing, develop an experiential understanding of coastal features such as waves, beaches, and the ocean. These can become reconceived from a surfing point of view, giving surfers a unique perspective on surf breaks and the coastal environment. However, this awareness and understanding is generally fixed upon elements within the coastal environment which directly pertain to surf breaks or the act of surfing.

Despite this propensity to focus on surf related elements, surfers are not prevented from developing a broader sense of environmental care and awareness. This research shows that surfers are capable of expressing a broader sense of care for the environment, but it is not defined nor engendered

specifically by surfing. Instead, the experience of surfing is a complex assemblage which is constructed by several intersecting variables which can contribute to shaping their individual experiences of surfing and values of the environment. Examples from this research include culture, technology, access, gender, and colonisation. Surf breaks connect these diverse experiences of surfers by existing as the space in which the act of surfing is situated. In doing so, surfing can motivate a particular group of people to express a concern for the outcomes of coastal resource management processes. Surf breaks exist as resources which fundamentally enable this development of knowledge and understanding and should be protected as such to support the diversity of perspectives within the management of the coastal environment.

5.4.2 Reflections on researching as an 'insider'

The initial expectations I had regarding my status as potential *insider* as strengthening my ability to engage in this research were confirmed. There were several instances in which this was reflected. During a break in the midst of my data collection trip, I went surfing at the Piha (Auckland) surf break. After my surf, as I was watching the waves, a surfer approached me and asked where on the beach I had been surfing. I described where I had been surfing and he asked me how the waves were breaking. Unprompted, the surfer began to describe the changes he had noticed in the Piha surf break over several decades. My ability to describe where I had been surfing and the characteristics I had noticed in the waves, led to a shared discussion concerning the changes which he had noticed to the Piha surf break and his preferences. These would likely not have been shared with a non-surfer, considering their likely inability to relate to the surfing experience of Piha. During the same collection phase, I became aware of several issues concerning water quality impacting Wellington surf breaks, highlighted in an online surfing forum. These demonstrated the current nature of surf break management issues, and the connection which New Zealand surfers have to the state of surf breaks.

Despite expectations of being regarded as an *outsider* at certain surfing locales, informants did not indicate or express such a sentiment. While they mentioned certain surf breaks which I have not surfed, their description of these spaces was still clear and understandable as a non-local surfer. Furthermore, I consider that my understanding of surfing supported a higher quality of responses during the oral history interview process. Research informants were able to speak freely and elicited narratives naturally. Frequently, surfers described waves they rode, speaking in emotive language, gesturing and commonly using *surfing jargon*. To a non-surfer, these moments might have required explanation during the interview to ensure clarity, disrupting the flow and quality of the interviews. In general, the surfing community was extremely responsive. Many informants had suggestions of other surfers, whom they considered worthwhile. On one occasion, I was invited to a morning tea with several older Christchurch surfers, while this was not used in this research, the eagerness which

they demonstrated to contribute was notable. Many informants remarked that their availability was also determined by the state of the surf, leaving suitable times during the day relatively spontaneous. Attempting to organise a time and date in advance was more difficult than arriving in an area and organising a time in the next several days provided they were available.

5.4.3 Limitations of this research

Due to limited research which specifically focuses on how surfers construct experiences of surf breaks and the coastal environment, there was a lack of parallel studies to inform and guide the design of this study. As a result, the analysis of this study was limited to commenting primarily on the data collected in thesis without being able to validate or critique past research specifically focused on surfers' experiences of surf breaks or the coastal environment.

Due to the time frame, capacity and budget of this research, it was limited to a sample size of fifteen informants. Interviewing a larger number of surfers may have allowed more clearly defined and substantiated behaviours and conceptions to be identified within their experiences. The limited sample also created a narrow demographic of informants which limited the scope of analysis and did not allow demographic comparison beyond the surfers' eras. Although the responses were valuable, the requirement of the oral history approach to take a position of limited control over the interview meant that it was sometimes difficult to delve deeper into specific responses. This may have limited the nuance of analysis possible in this research in comparison to a methodological approach which supported a more targeted and controlled data collection process. Furthermore, applying a more theoretically informed approach may have allowed a typology or way of classifying how surfers engage within the coastal environment. Without this, this thesis was restricted to making judgements about phenomena within the data and unable to begin to classify these elements within a theoretical framework. However, it is important to consider how this may have shifted the research approach from one of an *'insider'* to an *'outsider'*. A heavily theoretical approach would likely mean that the integrity of the *insider* knowledge of surfers would be lost when attempting to classify their informal approach to expression and understanding.

It should be noted that on the 3 November 2020 a coffee table book, *Surf Dreams: New Zealand Surf Culture*, written by Derek Morrison was published. When this was recognised it was considered too late to incorporate this work to inform the background of New Zealand surfing culture for this thesis. An initial review suggests that although it would have presented value in assessing characteristics of specific surfing locales, its applicability to this research would have in fact been limited.

5.4.4 Avenues for future research

Throughout the research process it became apparent that there were a number of avenues for further research within surfing. Although it was not unexpected, the responses of several informants which described instances of surf break degradation which they had witnessed, demonstrated how these impacts are felt and how frequently. No studies have explored the impacts of instances of surf break degradation specifically on social and cultural factors. Further interviews with New Zealand surfers could explore these connections and develop a new record of the numerous instances of surf break degradation which have not been totally compiled by any researchers. It would be anticipated that there would be many examples which have not yet been discussed within research which currently informs the management of surf breaks as natural resources.

It also became apparent that there is a significant lack of research concerning Māori relationships to surfing and wave riding. During Nukuroa's interview, he challenged my assumptions of anticipating a singular Māori surfing history and instead offered his insights into a particular Waitaha surfing history. Māori surfing is generally reduced to a pretext in New Zealand surfing writing but clearly has a deeper and more nuanced reality. There are significant opportunities to further explore Māori wave riding, and relationships to waves and surf breaks and how this history contributes to the development of contemporary surfing in New Zealand. It would be valuable to explore the different constructions of waves associated with Māori pastimes such as waka (Te Piha).

It was apparent during the data collection phase, just how different the cultural, social, and economic contexts may be for particular surf breaks. There is space to reorientate the aims of this research to focus upon specific surf breaks and to compare how such factors influence the construction of the surfing experiences within these spaces. It would also be useful to compare or complete research focusing upon another activity such as rock climbing which is strongly linked to natural resources. Examining how other groups construct their own relationships to the environment through their activity would help to either further define the unique characteristics of surfing or to challenge this position.

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Appendix A

Human Ethics Committee Approval

Research Management Office

T 64 3 423 0817
PO Box 85084, Lincoln University
Lincoln 7647, Christchurch
New Zealand
www.lincoln.ac.nz

15 September 2020

Application No: 2020-39

Title: Surf Culture: Narratives and Value

Applicant: O Campbell

The Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee has reviewed the above noted application.

Thank you for your response to the questions which were forwarded to you on the Committee's behalf.

I am satisfied on the Committee's behalf that the issues of concern have been satisfactorily addressed. I am pleased to give final approval to your project.

Please note that this approval is valid for three years from today's date at which time you will need to reapply for renewal.

Once your field work has finished can you please advise the Human Ethics Secretary, Alison Hind, and confirm that you have complied with the terms of the ethical approval.

May I, on behalf of the Committee, wish you success in your research.

Yours sincerely



Grant Tavinor
Chair, Human Ethics Committee

PLEASE NOTE: The Human Ethics Committee has an audit process in place for applications. Please see 7.3 of the Human Ethics Committee Operating Procedures (ACHE) in the Lincoln University Policies and Procedures Manual for more information.

Appendix B

Interview Question Guide

Surf breaks

Can you tell me about the first time you went surfing if you remember it?

What did it mean to be a surfer in _____ (your location at the time)?

Can you tell me how you came to be a surfer in _____?

Could you tell me what does it mean to be a surfer in _____ (your location)?

Did anything make surfing in _____ unique compared to the rest of the country?

Where was your favourite break to surf and can you tell me about a memorable surfing moment?

Values of surfing

Can you tell me why you became a surfer?

How would you describe the appeal of surfing to someone who has not surfed?

Can you please describe to me how it feels when you surf?

If there was something that drew you too surfing what was it?

What was it like to be a surfer when you were first learning to surf?

Was there anything different surfing then vs now?

Can you tell me of any changes to surfing you have noticed in your lifetime?

What makes New Zealand surfing unique, if it is?

How do you think the way non-surfers perceive surfing differs from your understanding?

Environment

What sort of connection to the environment occurs when you surf, if any?

(and is this true for you?) If you believe this to be true, can you please describe why this is the case?

Has this always been true when you have surfed?

Can you tell me how other experiences in your life may have developed this value?

Why do you think that people may believe surfers are more connected to the environment?

Can you give me some stories of examples from your own life which demonstrate this?

Can you tell me about any changes to surf breaks you have noticed over the years?