

# TWP\_18 – Whataroa River, Saltwater Forest (504.9028 ha)

Protected Area(s)	Area (ha)	NaPALIS #	# of Primary Parcels
Conservation Area - Whataroa River	148.4074	2805645	1
Conservation Area - Saltwater Forest	177.1886	2805650	1
Conservation Area - Whataroa River	72.2126	2805653	1
Conservation Area - Whataroa River	79.9161	2805658	1
Conservation Area - Whataroa River	27.1781	2809664	1

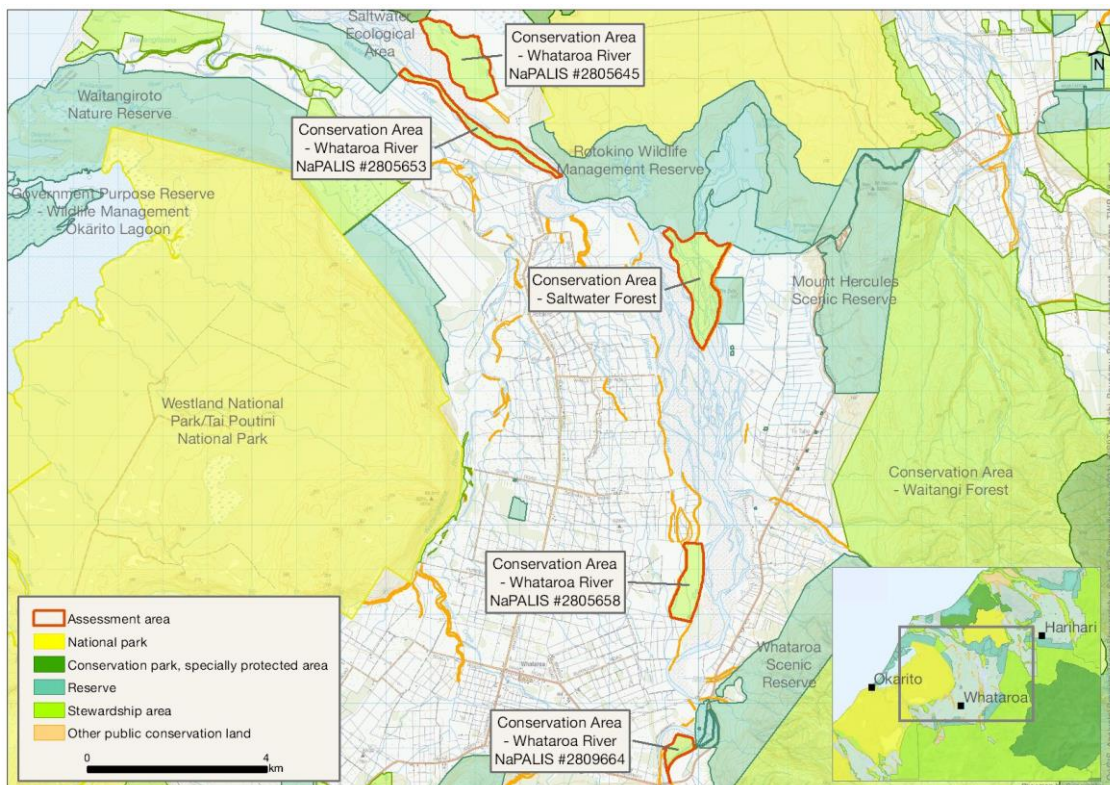
## Location

Along river flats and adjacent flat land on old floodplains of the Whataroa River north of the township.

## Brief Description

Five separate conservation areas spread along Whataroa River with different vegetation, including river gravels, small sections of forest, willow and grazed or cultivated paddocks. Most retain some indigenous shrubland and wetlands. Access is relatively limited as the areas are adjacent to riverbed and surrounded by farmland. There are no tracks, facilities or recreational use. Grazing and gravel extraction permissions are in place.

## Map



# Ngāi Tahu Values and Interests

*Mo tātou, a, mo ka uri, a muri ake nei – for us and our children after us*

From the preliminary desk top assessments, there do not appear to be any site specific Ngāi Tahu values identified. However, there is a deep connection between Ngāi Tahu and all of the whenua in the Ngāi Tahu takiwā, and the absence of site specific values in the preliminary analysis does not detract from that connection, nor does it confirm that site specific values are not present. Further, a section 4 Conservation Act and Te Tiriti principles perspective is required as well, and it may be that areas of land are significant to Ngāi Tahu from that broader perspective. To avoid doubt, nothing in the proposed classification affects, limits or derogates from the rangatiratanga of Ngāi Tahu over its takiwā, including in relation to freshwater; and/or any other rights or interests Ngāi Tahu may have.

## Ecological Values

### Representativeness

The assessment area lies in the bed and on the adjacent terraces of Whataroa River. It is representative of Harihari Ecological District. The naturalness is variable, with the different conservation areas supporting different vegetation and levels of naturalness. Most retain river water sections and river gravels, with indigenous shrubland and wetlands and likely support a typical suite of common native terrestrial avifauna. The most westerly area contains both forest and developed pasture used by the adjacent farm.

The assessment area covers small sections of braided riverbed. Satellite imagery indicates limited vegetation growth inhibiting natural mobility of islands and the natural flow pattern of freshwater. The river banks are mainly pastoral with little native vegetation but a few stretches of swamp wetland persist. High Macroinvertebrate Community Index score indicates a high predicted water quality.

### Diversity and pattern

Various indigenous ecosystems are present; wetlands, current and old river channels some with ponding, and more stable indigenous forest vegetation. The flooding frequency and dynamic nature of these alluvial/river areas influences the vegetation. Local terrestrial species diversity is likely to be moderate, reflecting the diversity of habitat types including forested areas, wetland and river habitat.

Although there are no records within these conservation areas, there is evidence that the greater catchment supports a high diversity of freshwater fisheries values. There are nearby records of longfin eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*), common bully (*Gobiomorphus cotidianus*), kōaro (*Galaxias brevipinnis*), torrentfish (piripiripōhatu, *Cheimarrichthys fosteri*), giant kokopu (*Galaxias argenteus*), shortfin eel (*Anguilla australis*) and banded kokopu (*Galaxias fasciatus*). Many of these fish are migratory, showing the importance of these areas to freshwater fisheries values.

### Rarity and distinctiveness

Much of the assessment area is classified as an Acutely Threatened Environment (Holdaway et al. 2012). The grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* (At Risk: Declining) is likely within the wetland parts of the assessment area. Some forest gecko (*Mokopirirakau granulatus*) (At Risk: Declining) are possibly present within the forested areas, probably at low densities. Skinks are possible in the more open, vegetated areas and may include the Newman's Speckled Skink (*Oligosoma newmani*) (At Risk: Declining) or a rarer taxon.

Wetland birds such as fernbird (*mātātā*, *Bowdleria punctata*) (At Risk: Declining) and Australasian bittern (*matuku hūrepo*, *Botaurus poiciloptilus*) (Nationally Critical) are highly likely to use the wetland area (bittern have been recorded in adjacent wetland areas). The assessment area is within mapped kea (*Nestor notabilis*) (Nationally Endangered) habitat. A range of avian species is likely to use the river habitat, including banded dotterel (*tūturiwhatu*, *Charadrius bicinctus*) (Nationally Vulnerable), pied, little black and black shags (*Phalacrocorax varius*), (*kawaupaka*, *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*) and (*kōau*, *Phalacrocorax carbo*) (all At Risk), pied and variable oystercatchers (*Haematopus finschi*) (*tōrea*, *Haematopus unicolor*) (both At Risk: Declining), white-fronted tern (*tara*, *Sterna striata*) (At Risk: Declining), pied stilt (*poaka*, *Himantopus Himantopus*) (Not Threatened) and gull species including Black-billed gull (*tarāpuka*, *Larus bulleri*) (Nationally Critical).

There is no evidence of rarity and distinctiveness from a freshwater perspective but the area is likely to support rare species. Many of the recorded species in this catchment are classified as At Risk: Declining.

## Ecological context

A large assessment area (504 ha) of four irregular polygons and a linear strip of Whataroa River. The disjunct conservation areas are within a landscape of public conservation and agricultural land; two of them are adjacent to important scenic reserves and an ecological area. Ecological functioning of the alluvial and riverbed sites is maintained in terms of flow and flooding regime. The flooding frequency and dynamic nature of these alluvial/river areas influences the vegetation. One of the five areas is included within Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area, and all provide important connectivity through the landscape.

Lake Rotokino Scenic Reserve, an area of wetland of high value as assessed by the Waters of National Importance project, connects with the assessment area and lays to the south of TWP\_18 (79.9161), while TWP18 (27.5614) lays adjacent to the large TWP\_05 Waitangi Forest. No other areas of conservation land are within close proximity to these areas.

## Recreation Values

### Setting

These areas are in a Backcountry-remote zone on the bed of Whataroa River. The areas are fragmented, and some are grazed. There are no tracks or facilities on these areas.

### Visitor type and activities typically undertaken

Likely to receive little recreation use.

### Access

These areas are relatively difficult to access as they are in or adjacent to Whataroa River and surrounded by farmland.

## Heritage Values

### Sites recorded

None recorded.

### Heritage values

No value statement possible.

## Modifying factors

None recorded.

## Permissions summary

Three grazing concessions held over the Saltwater Forest conservation area part of the bed of Whataroa River. One concession permit held for gravel extraction.

## Map (aerial photo)

