

MAW_25 – Grey River/Māwheranui (562.0519 ha)

Protected Area(s)	Area (ha)	NaPALIS #	# of Primary Parcels
Conservation Area – Grey River/Māwheranui	44.3617	2806796	1
Conservation Area – Grey River/Māwheranui	8.7203	2806797	1
Conservation Area – Grey River/Māwheranui Riverbed	404.8333	2806839	3
Conservation Area – Grey River/Māwheranui Riverbed	29.6822	2806841	2
Conservation Area – Grey River/Māwheranui Riverbed	74.4544	2806842	1

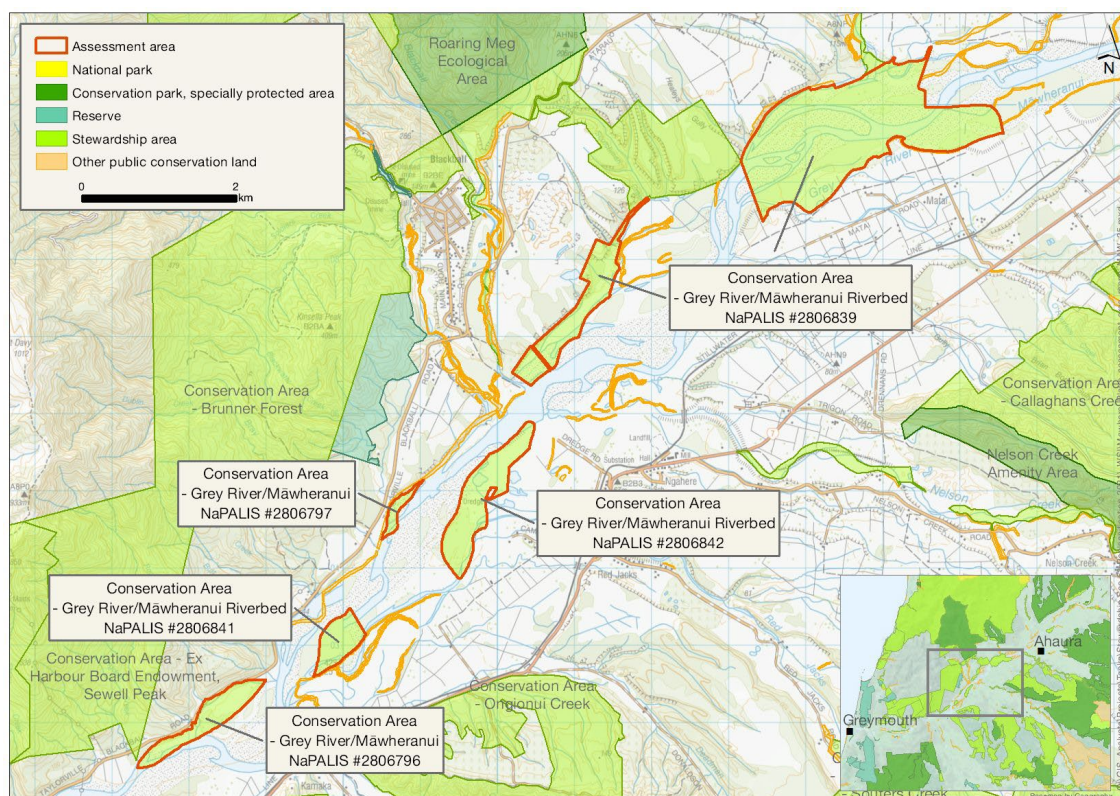
Location

In the lower reaches of Grey River/Māwheranui between Matai in the northeast and Stillwater in the southwest.

Brief Description

Six disjunct sections in five conservation areas in and adjacent to the riverbed. There is a variety of vegetation associations, many reflecting disturbance and land use regimes. The braided river is a dynamic ecosystem with flooding and current land use practice dictating the vegetation cover. Much of the assessment area has been dredged in the past. There are many threatened and at-risk freshwater fish present, and the series of smaller backwaters and side channels could offer refuge to galaxias from larger piscivorous trout. Concessions include three grazing licenses, an access arrangement for a gold suction dredge, and a telecommunications easement. There are Māori Reserve lands in the vicinity of these areas. Fishing and hunting for game birds occurs.

Map



Ngāi Tahu Values and Interests

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

There is a deep connection between Ngāi Tahu and all of the whenua in the Ngāi Tahu takiwā. A section 4 Conservation Act and Te Tiriti principles perspective is required, 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.

There are Māori Reserve lands in the vicinity of these conservation areas. These sites provide a significant connection for Ngāi Tahu to these places, and this must be recognised, considered and provided for.

Ecological Values

Representativeness

This assessment area covers active riverbed and low river terrace. The braided river is a dynamic ecosystem with flooding and current land use practice dictating the vegetation cover. It supports a variety of vegetation associations from barely vegetated riverbed likely with native and weedy herbs and forbes such as *Epilobium* spp, mat daisy (tutahuna, *Raoulia tenuicaulis*) and weedy pasture grasses, to actively managed pasture, shrublands with gorse, broom and other common weed species, but also seral native species such as koromiko (*Hebe salicifolia*), the shrub *Coriaria arboreus*, small leaved *Coprosma* species, and tree ferns *Dicksonia squarrosa* and *Cyathea smithii*. There are tall native trees scattered through the shrublands and part of the southwestern conservation area has a remnant patch of mature indigenous forest likely with red beech (*Fuscospora fusca*), kahikatea (*Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*) and putaputāwētā (*Carpodetus serratus*).

The most southwestern section maybe utilised by the neighbouring farm but likely has an unmodified soil profile and rough pasture. There may be gravel extraction occurring. Disturbed surfaces include the area around the dredge at Ngahere. The islands and terraces are generally (except the areas of industrial use) representative of these ecosystems in relatively natural state. Exotic plant species are present in most places but dominant in a few; native species will be present in most disturbed sites. These ecosystems provide habitat for native gull species, small passerines and larger native avifauna in the taller vegetation including weka (*Gallirallus australis*), tūī (*Prothemadera novaeseelandiae*), fantail (pīwakawaka, *Rhipidura fuliginosa*), grey warbler (riroriro, *Gerygone igata*) and kererū (New Zealand pigeon, *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*).

The most downstream block of this assessment area covers >2 km of the true right riparian margin of the Grey River/Māwheranui. The streams that run through this parcel (Wooley Creek) and immediately adjacent to it (Langdon and Rocky creeks) have a high predicted water quality, but the land has been significantly modified and is pastoral land. The streams that flow within the parcel have a diverse fish fauna, with multiple threatened species. Water quality is predicted to be high, but riparian vegetation is variable across the assessment area. There appears to be a considerable variety of habitat offered to freshwater species within the upstream-most block of the assessment area across the floodplain: a range of channel sizes and flow, backwaters, and confluence with both Moonlight Creek and Callaghans Creek on the true left. It is largely riverbed near where Moonlight Creek comes into Grey River/Māwheranui. Being braided riverbed, it is important for Black-billed gull (tarāpuka, *Larus bulleri*) (Nationally Critical) and terns. Land on the south bank has been eroding.

Diversity and pattern

There is a variety of vegetation associations from barely vegetated to more stable and lightly vegetated river bed, shrubs and small trees, and tall indigenous forest present on some islands and river terrace. There are numerous freshwater survey records from Wooley Creek, as well as Langdon and Rocky creeks, and collectively records of shortjaw kōkopu (*Galaxias postvectis*) (Nationally Vulnerable), giant kōkopu (*Galaxias argenteus*), īnanga

(*Galaxias maculatus*), bluegill bully (*Gobiomorphus hubbsi*), longfin eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*), torrentfish (piripiripōhatu, *Cheimarrichthys fosteri*) and kōaro (*Galaxias brevipinnis*) (all At Risk: Declining), kōura (freshwater crayfish, *Paranephrops planifrons*), redfin bully (*Gobiomorphus huttoni*), Common bully (*Gobiomorphus cotidianus*) and trout. The two smallest conservation areas are located opposite the dredge site and just downstream of dredge site.

There are no records from the immediate vicinity of these parcels, but numerous species could be present. There is only one freshwater survey record for this parcel, and it revealed the following species: dwarf galaxias (*Galaxias divergens*) (At Risk: Declining), common and upland bully (West Coast) (*Gobiomorphus breviceps*). Surveys near the mouth of Blackball Creek (immediately downstream of parcel) show records of longfin eel, kōaro, bluegill bully, torrentfish, redfin bully and trout. The dwarf galaxias record is notable, due to the pressure that trout exert on non-migratory galaxias. This series of smaller backwaters and side channels could offer refuge to this species from larger piscivorous trout. Records within Moonlight Creek, which feeds into this assessment area, include a diverse range of species including dwarf galaxias, upland and common bullies, which are likely to reside here. Callaghans Creek provides habitat for both giant and shortjaw kōkōpu.

Rarity and distinctiveness

Most of the assessment area on the river terraces is classified as M2.1a land environment (Leathwick et al. 2002); there are 858 ha of M2.1a lands in the Blackball Ecological District and only 83 ha are in native vegetation in public conservation land, with a further 94 ha in public conservation land with non-native species. It is a very poorly represented land environment. Braided rivers are a threatened ecosystem (Holdaway et al. 2012).

Both the diversity of native fish species, and the number of threatened species in the river in and immediately adjacent to this parcel indicate high freshwater conservation value within the three streams. The reaches of these streams within the actual assessment area have degraded habitat for fish, as the land is highly modified. However, survey results show that a diverse array of threatened species have been found within these reaches.

There are no records from the immediate vicinity of the conservation areas, but numerous species could be present in Mawheraiti (Little Grey) River: the diadromous Galaxias (whitebait) will use the channel to reach suitable habitat. Records from Blackwater Creek provide a clue as to what species pass through the active channel of this parcel. Records include: lamprey (kanakana, *Geotria australis*) (Nationally Vulnerable), longfin eel, bluegill bully, redfin bully, kōura, freshwater shrimp and trout. There is very high freshwater fish diversity within Red Jacks Creek, many of which are threatened with extinction: dwarf galaxias, lamprey, longfin eel, shortfin eel, kōaro, bluegill bully, torrentfish, redfin, common and upland bully, kōura and trout. Although there are no records from within this stream as it flows through this assessment area, the migratory species will certainly be travelling through at the very least, and possibly using these reaches for habitat.

It is likely there is a high diversity of native freshwater fish in these smaller side channels and backwaters. The dwarf galaxias record is notable, due to the pressure that trout exert on non-migratory galaxias. This series of smaller backwaters and side channels could offer refuge to this species from larger piscivorous trout. The channels that feed into this assessment area are protected (on paper) by Marginal Strip.

Ecological context

The area (562 ha) is part of Grey River/Māwheranui and includes channels, islands and part of the terraces on either side of the river, and covers approximately 14 km of the lower reaches. Indigenous forest is fragmented, with remnant remaining on river islands and on the terraces in places. Exotic grassland is present on most of the river terraces. It provides important landscape connectivity for freshwater and avifauna species.

Recreation Values

Setting

These areas are in a Backcountry-remote zone. They have no tracks or facilities managed by the Department. The areas have been dredged in the past and are now developed into pasture.

Visitor type and activities typically undertaken

Fishing and hunting for game birds.

Access

Some areas can be accessed from Taylorville Road. Others are in the bed of the river and difficult to access. There is angler access from Matai Road. Official Fish and Game access (to the south).

Heritage Values

Historical overview and Sites recorded

None recorded, although this is a findspot for artefacts, including an anchor stone, is recorded just to the south of the conservation area on private land at Brays Creek. Additionally, early survey plans suggest that gold mining occurred along Grey River/Māwheranui and features such as tail races and water races may be present. The southern end of the conservation area is bisected by the Blackball aerial tramway.

Heritage values

No value statement possible.

Permissions summary

- A grazing permit of land adjacent to Grey River at Taylorville
- A grazing licence for grazing on Moonlight Creek
- Grazing licence for grazing of c.83 ha land adjacent to Grey River
- An access arrangement (38267-AA-V1) for a gold suction dredge from Grey River at Blackball
- Telecommunications easement for a fibre optic cable at Ngahere

Map (aerial photo)

