

HOK_o8 – Arahura River Mouth (22.185 ha)

Protected Area(s)	Area (ha)	NaPALIS #	# of Primary Parcels
Conservation Area - Arahura River Mouth	22.185	2809280	2

Location

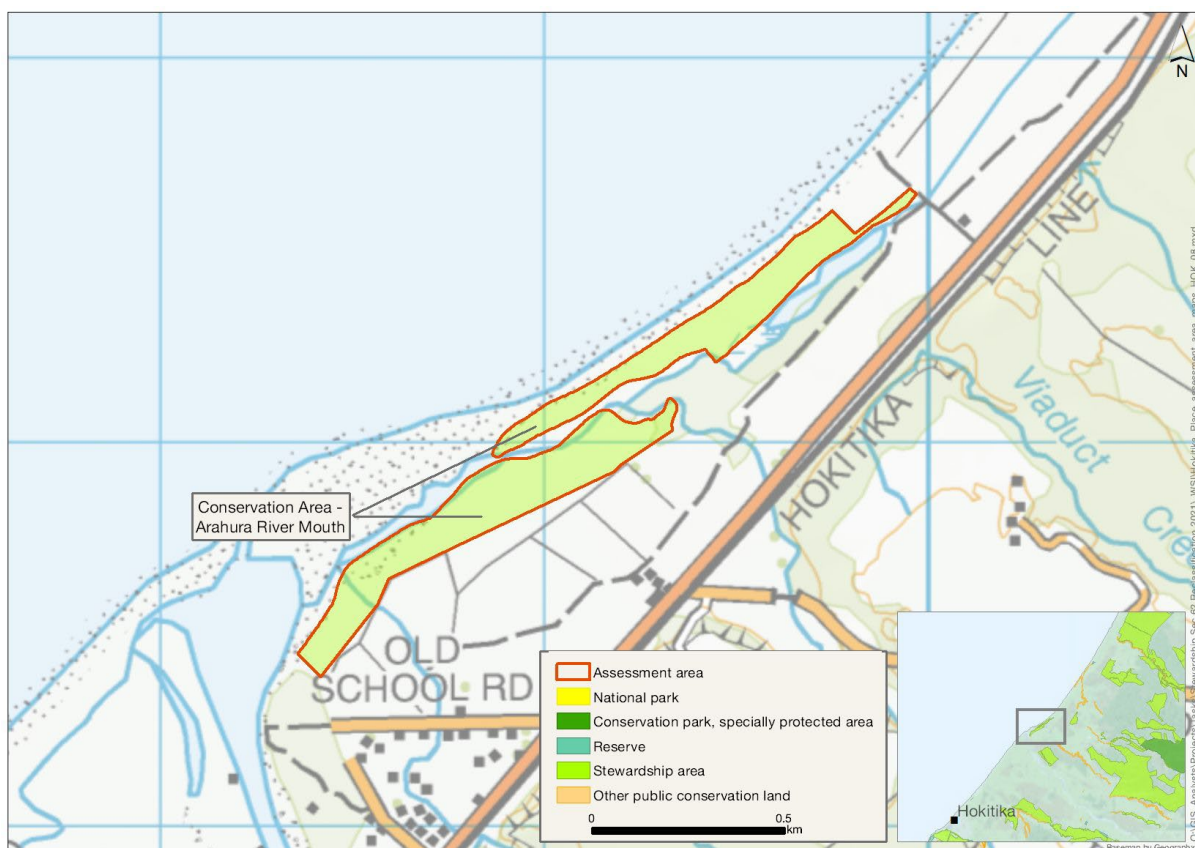
At the Arahura River mouth 10 km north of Hokitika.

Brief Description

Narrow strip of backdune vegetation which is a mix of pasture, wetland and dune vegetation at the mouth of Flowery Creek and Arahura River. It includes the coastal lowland part of the Arahura River Mouth Species Management Unit for Black-billed gull (*tarāpuka, Larus bulleri*) (Nationally Critical). People access and walk down the beach from an access road to the north. There are Māori Reserve lands in the vicinity.

The area is part of the estuary of the Arahura catchment, managed by the Department as a Ngā Awa site. This programme takes a whole catchment approach to restoration and works in partnership with others to restore the biodiversity of 14 rivers from the mountains to the sea. The Department’s Bio18 migratory fish programme has identified this catchment as significant to longfin eel. A grazing licence is 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

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.

The entire Arahura river catchment is a place of immense spiritual and cultural significance for Ngāi Tahu. The Arahura is central to the Poutini-Waitaiki tradition associated with pounamu. The river catchment has been a valued source of pounamu for centuries, and the associated trails and trade routes form part of its cultural significance to Poutini Ngāi Tahu.

The original Arahura settlement was at the river mouth and was forced to move to its current location due to regular flooding. The river mouth remains an important place for Poutini Ngāi Tahu, in recognition of both the old pā, and historical and contemporary mahinga kai practices. Maintaining access and restoration is a high priority. There are Māori Reserve lands in the vicinity of this conservation area. This conservation area is also an integral part of a wider vision that Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae have for Arahura, to improve the connectivity between the river, the pā, the urupā and Arahura marae and respond to impacts relating to climate change.

Ngāi Tahu has a significant connection to this place, and further assessment of the values and opportunities of this conservation area for Ngāi Tahu is required, as provided for by section 4 Conservation Act and Te Tiriti principles of informed decision making and active protection. Ngāi Tahu may have future aspirations for this land (such as access for mahinga kai) and so those aspirations must be recognised, considered and provided for, when determining a suitable classification for this land.

Ecological Values

Representativeness

Two discrete narrow strips of land at the lower extent of Flowery Creek, stretching for about 1.5 km northeast of Arahura River mouth. They include a small freshwater lagoon area, streamchannels and ribbon wetlands behind dunes. The assessment area is near the mouth of Arahura River, a catchment of significance to Ngāi Tahu and a Ngā Awa Catchment. Despite cleared areas and pasture, there exists an extensive wetland associated with the lagoon, and high predicted water quality. It also includes the coastal lowland part of the Arahura River Mouth Species Management Unit for Black-billed gull (tarāpuka, *Larus bulleri*) (Nationally Critical).

Diversity and pattern

Most of the site has been converted to pasture, but it does offer protection to the lagoon, and it contains a small section of coastal dunes. The area has records of īnanga (*Galaxias maculatus*), giant kōkopu (*Galaxias argenteus*), yellow-eyed mullet (aua, *Aldrichetta forsteri*), common bully (*Gobiomorphus cotidianus*), longfin eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*) and shortfin eel (*Anguilla australis*). Nearby records suggest that banded kōkopu (*Galaxias fasciatus*), redfin bully (*Gobiomorphus huttoni*), kōura (freshwater crayfish, *Paranephrops planifrons*), bluegill bully (*Gobiomorphus hubbsi*), freshwater shrimp (*Paratya*), lamprey (kanakana, *Geotria australis*) and giant bully (*Gobiomorphus gobioides*) are also likely present. The diversity of whitebait species present and likely to be present makes this an important site for whitebait diversity.

Rarity and distinctiveness

No terrestrial threatened species are known from the site, but the lowland coastal dune and lagoon are threatened habitats.

The site is part of the Arahura tidal river mouth enclosed by a barrier beach. Connectivity to the coast and Arahura River, a Ngā Awa catchment, are important as many native freshwater fish species that occupy this catchment require connectivity for migratory stages of their life history, including whitebait species which spawn at this site. The Department's Bio18 migratory fish programme has identified this catchment as significant to longfin eel. The freshwater fish present or likely to be present include lamprey (Nationally Vulnerable), longfin eel, kōaro and bluegill bully (all At Risk: Declining) and giant bully (At Risk: Naturally Uncommon).

Ecological context

There is no other public conservation land in close vicinity, but the area is still part of the estuary of the Arahura catchment, managed by the Department as a Ngā Awa site. This programme takes a whole catchment approach to restoration and works in partnership with others to restore the biodiversity of 14 rivers from the mountains to the sea around Aotearoa. The project works directly with Mawhera Incorporation, with support from Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, on a restoration project that will fence and plant most of the modified part of the catchment. There is, additionally, a QEII covenant that overlaps with this area (5-10-006).

Recreation Values

Setting

This area is in a Backcountry-remote zone. There are no tracks or facilities managed by the Department.

Visitor type and activities typically undertaken

People access and walk down the beach from an access road to the north. The pasture area gets no recreation use.

Access

Access road to beach to the north.

Heritage Values

Historical overview

There was a Māori village at the mouth of the Arahura described in several early historical accounts. This site is in this area and recorded as J32/4.

Sites recorded

J32/4 Arahura or Timu Ake village

Heritage values

If there are any remains of this village, these will be of high archaeological value.

Modifying factors

This is one of several Māori settlements located at the major river mouths described as being occupied in the 1850s and 1860s. It is unknown whether any physical evidence of the village remains.

Permissions summary

Re-issue of a non-notified grazing licence for grazing of land adjacent to the Arahura River Lagoon.

Map (aerial photo)

