



# Te Waikoropupū Springs



## Nelson/Marlborough

Waikoropupū, Waikoropupū  
Pupū ake te whenua  
Pupū ake ko ngā waiora  
Waikoropupū  
Ngā puna wai o Tākaka  
Ngā puna roimata wairua  
Waikoropupū, Waikoropupū

*Bubbling waters from the throat of the spring*  
*Bubbling waters from the throat of the spring*  
*Forever bubbling from the land*  
*Forever bubbling for the health of the people and the spring waters*  
*The spring waters of Tākaka*  
*The tears of the spirit ancestors*  
*Waters bubbling from the throat of the spring*  
*Waters bubbling from the throat of the spring*

Te Waikoropupū Springs and Pupū Springs Scenic Reserve are located in the Tākaka Valley about six kilometres west of Tākaka Township. They are the largest freshwater springs in New Zealand, the largest cold water springs in the Southern Hemisphere and contain some of the clearest water ever measured.

To local Māori, Te Waikoropupū Springs are a taonga (treasure) and wāhi tapu, a place held in high cultural and spiritual regard.



## Almost perfect clarity

The qualities of the water from Te Waikoropupū Springs are of considerable scientific interest. In 1993, The National Institute for Water and Atmosphere (NIWA) carried out optical measurements under water and found that the visibility was 63 metres. This is very close to optically pure water, with clearer water found only beneath Antarctica's near-frozen Weddell Sea. The water clarity is a result of natural filtering prior to the water's emergence at Te Waikoropupū Springs.

## Tidal flux

The springs exhibit remarkable twice-daily fluctuations in flow. These correspond to local marine tides, despite the fact that the springs are 50 metres above sea level and there is no known connection to the sea. Scientists at NIWA have shown that the tidal effect is caused by both ocean-loading tides (the movement of the Earth's crust in response to ocean tides) and Earth tides (the movement of the Earth's crust as a direct result of gravitational attraction to the Sun and Moon). The possibility of a subterranean connection to the sea is suggested by chemical measurements showing that sea water is present in the discharge.

## History

Māori probably first visited this area over 700 years ago as part of a gradual expansion from Nelson through Tasman Bay and Mohua (Golden Bay) to the West Coast.

When Colonel William Wakefield arrived in 1839 to buy land for the New Zealand Company, he estimated that there were 250 people living in Mohua, representing the Ngāti Tama, Te Ātiawa and Ngāti Rarua tribes. Many of their descendants still live in Mohua and as mana whenua of Mohua, have traditional rights at Te Waikoropupū.

Early European settlers arrived in the Golden Bay area in the 1830s, mainly to build ships and mine for gold, coal and lime. Originally the area around Te Waikoropupū Springs was covered in lowland forest. Gold miners cleared the forest to build water races for sluicing alluvial gold and a mining company worked the area until about 1910.

## Forest in recovery

Most of the Te Waikoropupū Springs Scenic Reserve is covered in mānuka and kānuka; indigenous plant 'pioneers' that re-colonise cleared forest areas and eventually make way for other species. This vegetation type reflects a history of disturbance by fire, gold mining, farming and road building. The reserve now has areas of regenerating beech-podocarp forest and a small remnant of tall podocarp forest to the south of Te Waikoropupū Springs. Besides tawhai (black beech), this area features rimu, kahikatea, tōtara, mataī and miro. Te Waikoropupū Springs is also a habitat for submerged mosses and liverworts, including at least one moss that is found nowhere else.

## Bugs, bullies and birds

The springs contain many indigenous macro-invertebrates, some rare or with very restricted ranges. These are prey to long-finned and short-finned eel, upland bully, red-finned bully, kōaro and a healthy population of giant kōkopu, one of New Zealand's most threatened native fish.

Within the forest areas korimako (bellbird), pīwakawaka (fantail), tūi, kererū (wood pigeon), riroriro (grey warbler) and silvereye are common, with fernbird observed occasionally in the pākihi (infertile wetlands). Kōtare (kingfisher), pūkeko, pūtakitaki (paradise shelduck), pārerā (grey duck), kōtuku (white heron) and kōau (black shag) are regular visitors to the water.

## Further information

For more information about Te Waikoropupū Springs and the scenic reserve, contact the DOC Golden Bay Area office

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Koaro



Kingfisher D. Veitch

