

Arawai Kākāriki – an overview

Arawai Kākāriki (Green Waterway) is a national wetland restoration programme coordinated by the Department of Conservation. It is aimed at understanding and restoring three of New Zealand's most significant wetland/freshwater sites, with the participation of the community. A key focus of the programme is research to develop best-practice management and monitoring tools to share with others.

The three sites are Whangamarino (Waikato), Ō Tū Wharekai (mid-Canterbury) and Awarua Wetlands (Southland). Priority work at these sites aims to find out more about how the wetlands work, what the major threats are and what species they contain. This has involved hydrological surveys, vegetation mapping, fish surveys and bird monitoring.

Since July 2007, restoration activities have stepped up to improve wetland values. This includes weed control, fencing, and re-instating water levels. Community programmes such as riparian planting have been expanded and recreation opportunities enhanced to promote enjoyment of wetlands by visitors.



What are our aims?

Biodiversity

- Maintain or enhance the extent of wetland habitat.
- Maintain and enhance water levels and water quality to support wetland values.
- Protect intact wetland habitat and rehabilitate degraded wetland habitat.
- Maintain and enhance species diversity, including threatened species.

Community

- Conserve and interpret historic and cultural sites.
- Promote sustainable land use.
- Improve facilities and opportunities for the public to visit each site.
- Maximise community wetland awareness and involvement in the projects.

Learning

- Undertake research that increases understanding of wetland management.
- Develop best-practice wetland restoration tools.





Whangamarino wetland



Ō Tū Wharekai

Community involvement

In managing the three wetland sites, the department is working with others (including local iwi, regional and district councils, Fish & Game, NIWA and Landcare Research) on research projects, restoration initiatives and raising public awareness of the importance of wetlands. At all three sites, the community is involved in some way, whether at an individual level with local landowners fencing and planting areas on their land, or as part of a group developing understanding and taking action at the site, or in other wetlands.

Whangamarino wetland (Waikato)

Whangamarino is a Ramsar site (internationally recognised) and the second largest bog and swamp complex (7,290 ha) in the North Island. It supports threatened wetland ecosystems and recreation and is part of a substantial flood-control scheme on the lower Waikato River. Programme highlights are: repair of the outlet weir (to be completed in 2010), exclusion of livestock through fencing, Australasian bittern/matuku monitoring, deer control, and improved boat ramps and signage.

Ō Tū Wharekai (Canterbury)

Ō Tū Wharekai is a mosaic of diverse wetland habitats nestled amongst high-country tussock-lands and one of the best examples of an intact, inter-montane wetland system remaining in New Zealand. The project includes the braided upper reaches of the Rangitata River, and the twelve Ashburton lakes, along with ephemeral turfs, streams, swamps and bogs. Programme highlights are expanded willow and broom control, wrybill/ngutu pare monitoring, improved management of public access and a Ngāi Tahu cultural values inventory and monitoring programme.

Awarua Wetland (Southland)

Awarua Wetland is a Ramsar site of 19,500 ha and one of the largest remaining wetlands in New Zealand. The wetland includes extensive peat bog, swamp, coastal lagoon, estuarine and stream habitats. Intensification of land use and the conversion of wetlands to pasture are considered the primary threats to the water quality entering the wetlands and coastal lagoons. Programme highlights are: community protection of water quality, macrophyte and fish surveys, education opportunities, Spanish heath control, restoration participation and improved public access.

For further information visit:

www.doc.govt.nz and search for Arawai Kakariki

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