

# Rakitu Island Scenic Reserve



*Rakitu Island (Arid Island) is 2.5 km off the east coast of Great Barrier Island (Aotea Island), known locally as Aotea, in the Hauraki Gulf. Covering 329 hectares, Rakitu's sheer cliffs rise 180 meters from the sea in places, giving it an imposing fortress-like appearance. Rakitu Island became a Scenic Reserve in 1994 after being purchased by the Department of Conservation, with Natural Heritage Fund assistance, from the Rope family.*

The island's native flora and fauna are great attractions for day trips.

## ***Impressive wildlife and a rich cultural history***

Rakitu Island is naturally free of many predators and enjoys a great diversity of plant and bird life. The planned pest eradication programme aims to eliminate remaining predators from the island.

The vegetation of Rakitu comprises retired farmland, and forest of mānuka, kānuka and coastal pōhutukawa. The flora of Rakitu features large-leaved forms of rangiora and kawakawa. Plentiful native birds occupy the island's forest and coastal areas.

## **Treasured tribal ground**

Rakitu is a cultural landscape to the Ngāti Rehua Ngātiwai ki Aotea, the mana whenua (people with inherent birthright) of Great Barrier Island, as it was home to one of their founding ancestors, Rehua.

The Ngāti Rehua people cleared and cultivated the central valley. Historic sites include three pā (earthwork fortifications) and several kāinga (settlement) and whare (dwelling) sites.

Ngāti Rehua affiliates to Ngāti Wai which has a spiritual, cultural and historical relationship with its taonga (property) on Rakitu.

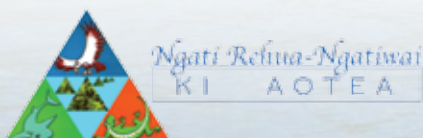
He kaitiaki koe  
Hei tiaki te whenua  
Hei tiaki te whānau  
Hei tiaki i nga mokopuna  
Tihei wa mauri ora!

*You are a guardian  
Protecting and looking after  
our land, our family and our  
future generations.  
Behold the breath of life!*

## **European whaling and farming**

European settlers grazed cattle on Rakitu for more than a century. The Ropes family were the final lessees to graze cattle here.

Rakitu was used by Aotea-based whalers as a lookout during the 1950s and 1960s.



## Visiting Rakitu – things to do

A visit to Rakitu Island offers many rewarding activities. These include:

- **Bird and wildlife watching:** many native birds can be spied in forest areas, such as the kererū/wood pigeon, tūī, pāteke/brown teal, and North Island weka. Sea birds like kororā/little blue penguins, kāruhiruhi/pied shag, and terns roost and breed around the island's coast.
- **Water-based activities:** including boating, snorkelling and diving, and fishing. The water has excellent visibility and you can fish from the rocks or beach anywhere around the coastline.

Visit [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) for more information.



Ornate skink. Photo: G R Parrish



Pāteke/brown teal. Photo: D Veitch

## For more information

### Aotea/Great Barrier Island Base

Phone: 09 429 0044

Hours: 8.00 am – 4.30 pm

Website: [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

### Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland Visitor Centre

Phone: 09 379 6476

Hours: 8.00 am – 4.30 pm

Email: [aucklandvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:aucklandvc@doc.govt.nz)

## Emergencies

Fire: **111**

## Know before you go

Please be aware that the island is 'unspoilt', with no visitor facilities. Visitors need their own boat transport to Rakitu. The only safe landing spot is the sandy shore of Arid Cove on the north-western side of the island.

We encourage you to explore on foot.

## TAKE CARE OF RAKITU

Please respect Rakitu's treasured native wildlife and historical importance by following these simple rules:

- Do not bring dogs, cats or other animals onto the island; these threaten the island's protected wildlife.
- Do not light fires – there is a fire ban on all islands surrounding Great Barrier Island. Remember it is illegal to fire flares except in emergencies.
- Do not camp on the island – there are no camping facilities.
- Do not remove or disturb any artefacts or other historic remains.
- Please take your rubbish with you when you leave, there are no rubbish disposal facilities on Rakitu.

*You may be prosecuted if you do not comply with these conditions.*



**DOC HOTline**  
**0800 362 468**

Report any safety hazards  
or conservation emergencies  
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111