



New Zealand falcon/
kārearea Photo: K Lange



The wheels behind the deal

The Nature Heritage Fund is a government fund, established in 1990 to help in the voluntary protection of indigenous ecosystems that represent the full range of natural diversity originally present in the New Zealand landscape. The Nature Heritage Fund is administered by an independent committee, which has to date protected over 257,770 ha in perpetuity.



Nature
Heritage
Fund

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Photo: Gilbert van Reenen www.cleangreen.co.nz

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Ohau Moraines Wetland Complex



SOUTH CANTERBURY



Photo: Gilbert van Reenen www.cleangreen.co.nz

 Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Intact wetland landscape protected

Nestled under the Ohau Range, south-west of Lake Ohau is the Ohau Moraines Wetland Complex. This vast area of red tussocklands, wetlands, rolling moraines and outwash flats is one of the largest wetland areas to be protected in recent years anywhere in New Zealand.

This high country wetland complex, located inland from the North Otago town of Omarama, was formerly Tarnbrae Station. The Nature Heritage Fund has purchased this intact wetland and tussock landscape from the Lory family to ensure protection of over 700 ha of wetland ecosystems. The purchase of Tarnbrae Station safeguards this outstanding natural landscape for the general public.

Wetlands are considered to be the most threatened and least protected ecosystems in New Zealand, with less than 10% remaining nationally. They are a high priority to protect, which makes this purchase so significant.

A conservation asset

The purchase of 2043-ha Tarnbrae Station freehold land has led to the protection of a mix of plant and animal habitats on lower altitude slopes of the Ohau Range and rolling moraines and outwash flats at the foot of the range.

The hill slopes are mostly covered in tussock grasslands with small patches of mountain beech/tawhai, extensive snow tōtara shrublands and grey shrublands of matagouri/tūmatakuru, mānuka and small leaved *Coprosma*.

The moraines contain fescue tussock, red tussock/haumata and a wide variety of native shrubs on dry ridges. Between the dry ridges are wetland hollows of extensive red tussock, sedges, rushes and cushion bogs of comb sedge, low growing heaths and sundews.

Several rare and threatened plants occur within the Ohau Moraines Wetland Complex including those in gradual decline—the small summer green lily *Iphigenia novae-zelandiae*, coral broom *Carmichaelia crassicaule*, and the buttercups *Ranunculus maculatus* and *R. brevis* as well as the sedge *Carex lachenalii*.

The moraine complex and adjoining hill slopes provide habitat for a number of native birds. New Zealand falcon/kārearea can be found within rock outcrops and shrublands on the Ohau Range and kaki/black stilt, South Island pied oyster-catchers/torea, banded dotterels/tūturiwhatu and Australasian pied stilts/poaka use a number of ponds that seasonally contain water.

If you are fortunate you may be able to spot some tiny native fish in the springs and streams at the base of the Ohau Range including big nose galaxias (*Galaxias macronasus*), which is found only in the Mackenzie Basin.

A vital link

Located on the borders of Ahuriri Conservation Park, the Ohau Moraines Wetland Complex makes a very important addition and link to the park. It adds in basin floor wetlands and moraines which are not represented in any other parts of the park. Expansive views of Lake Ohau and the surrounding mountains, including the very picturesque Ben Ohau/Ruataniwha Peak, are all obtainable from the area. These vistas, coupled with the rich array of native plant species and the striking landscape features, make the Ohau Moraines Wetland Complex a very desirable destination.

Recreational opportunities include easy walking and horse riding throughout the area. However this is a sensitive environment so please ensure weeds are not spread.



Comb sedge and red tussock Photo: J Comrie



Protect plants and animals

Keep streams and lakes clean

Respect our cultural heritage

Toitu te whenua (leave the land undisturbed)

Remove rubbish

Take care with fires

Enjoy your visit