



Help protect our wetlands

- Use existing tracks and boardwalks and observe from the edges.
- Don't disturb wildlife, take binoculars and use bird hides.
- Take your rubbish home.
- Clean your footwear.
- Clean fishing and boating equipment to stop the spread of didymo.
- Dogs are not allowed in wetland areas and many parks and reserves.

Further information

For more information on wetlands, ecological restoration and community groups working on wetlands contact Auckland Council Biodiversity Group biodiversity@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or 09 301 0101.

Auckland wetland agencies

Auckland Council
www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 09 301 0101

Department of Conservation
www.doc.govt.nz

Fish and Game New Zealand
www.fishandgame.org.nz

National Wetland Trust of New Zealand
www.wetlandtrust.org.nz

Acknowledgements

Auckland Council gratefully acknowledges the New Zealand Wetland Trust for information.



Guide to Auckland's wetlands



Discover Auckland's wetlands

Discover a world of wonderful wet places, where you can enjoy the natural beauty of our region's wetlands. Wetlands provide opportunities for recreation such as walks, boating, canoeing, bird watching and fishing. Many people simply enjoy the special character of wetland areas. For Māori, they are taonga or valued treasures, places from which plants can be collected for food, medicines and weaving.

Auckland's diverse wetlands include:

- harbours and estuaries
- dune lakes and swamps
- volcanic springs, swamps and crater lakes
- flax or raupō-dominated gully wetlands
- remnant swamp forest
- gumland bogs
- water supply reservoirs and water treatment ponds.



History of Auckland wetlands

Auckland's low-lying western suburbs were once full of cabbage trees and flax swamps, and inhabited by weka, banded rail, bittern and pūkeko. Wetlands formed here when lava flows blocked streams, or in volcanic craters and ponds on lava flow depressions.

In the Kaipara, Franklin and Rodney lowlands, swamp forests with kahikatea, pukatea, swamp maire, raupō, cabbage trees and harakeke (flax) covered large expanses of poorly drained land. At the coast they graded into saltmarshes with oioi and sea rush.

Dune lakes formed on the peninsulas of Ōwhitu and Kaipara built by sand deposited by the Waikato River and transported northwards by strong currents.

Wetlands today

Today Auckland has an estimated 3,700ha of freshwater wetlands and 14,000ha of estuarine wetland, along with over 30 lakes and 10,000km of rivers and streams. As with the rest of New Zealand, wetlands here have been seriously depleted and degraded, with most freshwater wetland now less than 10 hectares in size.



Why are wetlands so important?

Globally, wetlands have a vital role in maintaining healthy ecosystems. They improve water quality, control floods, regulate global carbon levels and provide habitat for plants and animals uniquely adapted to living in wet conditions. Many of New Zealand's wetland plants and animals are endemic, they are found nowhere else in the world. Our wetlands continue to support a range of native species including:

- Australasian bittern, fernbird, pateke (brown teal), grey duck, banded rail, New Zealand dabchick, spotless crane, and marsh crane
- eight native fish species including inanga, kōkopu, and black mudfish
- around one third of the nationally threatened plants found in Auckland.



Easy walks, child-friendly places

Wetlands are for everyone. If you want to visit a wetland, start easy and local and explore wetlands near your home or work. Even in central Auckland there are wetlands to explore. Little Shoal Bay (Birkenhead), Western Springs, Manawa wetland (New Lynn) and Waiatarua (Remuera) are all child-friendly easy walks, where everyone can get up close to wetland plants and animals.

Restored and created wetlands

Some of Auckland's wetlands have been substantially restored or created. Many of these wetlands contribute to our region's stormwater system.

- Waiatarua at Remuera near central Auckland – New Zealand's biggest urban wetland restoration project.
- Manawa wetland in New Lynn – created in an abandoned clay quarry.
- Ōwhitu and Tawharanui regional parks where previously drained wetlands have been restored.
- Manukau Foreshore – extensive restoration of intertidal areas in former oxidation ponds accessible via Ambury Regional Park.
- Matiatia wetland at the ferry gateway to Waiheke Island – former wetland and surrounding coastal hills deforested, grazed and eroded, now transformed by a joint council and Forest & Bird replanting project.

Rob Suisted

Alastair Jamieson

Ōwhitu Regional Park

Te Henga wetland, Bethells Beach - Alastair Jamieson

White-faced heron - Rob Suisted

Wetlands to visit in the Auckland region



- Key**
- Walks
 - Birdlife
 - Boating
 - Fishing
 - Highly scenic
 - No dogs
 - Info centre
 - Interpretative panels
 - Lookout/bird hide
 - Picnic area
 - Accommodation
- ★★★★★ Must see ★★ Plan to visit if passing
 ★★★★★ Worth a special visit ★ Short stop if passing
 ★★★ Worth a short detour

1 Whatipu Scientific Reserve ★★★★★

Dune flats



A spectacular area of coastal dunes and wetlands on Auckland's rugged west coast. Whatipu is a Department of Conservation scientific reserve, managed by Auckland Council. Visitors can walk the coastline or bush tracks, taking in the freshwater wetlands and salt marsh vegetation along the way. Threatened species including New Zealand dotterel breed here. Take the opportunity to stay a while and explore, accommodation is available at the lodge and campground.

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Whatipu
 ☎ 09 301 0101

Swimming not recommended!

2 Ambury Regional Park ★★★★★

Intertidal mudflats, Manukau Harbour



Ambury Regional Park is a gateway to the Manukau Harbour foreshore, where wading birds gather in their thousands to breed and roost before winter migration. Constructed shell banks are important roosting sites for waders at high tide including the threatened endemic wrybill and New Zealand dotterel. A popular spot with birdwatchers; godwits, pied stilts and oystercatchers are easily viewed. Visitors can walk along the foreshore and surrounding farmland with good access to the coastal wetland areas. Dog restrictions apply.

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Ambury
 ☎ 09 301 0101

3 Tāhuna Tōrea ★★★★★

Saltmarsh and freshwater complex

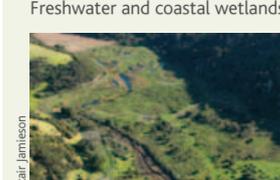


This coastal reserve on the Tāmaki Estuary has a great range of wetland flora over 25ha. Coastal forest surrounds freshwater wetlands, with saltmarsh and mangroves along the coastal edges. A sand bank extends out into the Tāmaki Estuary which visitors can walk at low tide. The area is renowned for bird watching opportunities; you'll find mallards, pūkeko, white faced heron and black swans in the wetland year round. You'll also see oystercatchers, godwits and other migratory wader birds between November and March in the estuary. The area has great wetland and coastal walks ideal for all abilities and the wetland has roost boxes and bird hides for viewing.

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Tāhuna Tōrea
 ☎ 09 301 0101

4 Mangatawhiri Wetlands, Tawharanui ★★★★★

Freshwater and coastal wetlands



Tawharanui Regional Park is on the Takatū Peninsula within a predator proof fence. The park has restored freshwater wetlands, saline wetlands and lagoon. Rare brown teal (pāteke) were translocated to the wetlands in 2010 and are now successfully breeding. Visitors can stay in the park (camping and bach) or visit for the day. There are many coastal and wetland walks to enjoy, suitable for all abilities.

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Tawharanui
 ☎ Contact 09 301 0101 for opening hours and camping

5 Poukaraka Wetland ★★★★★

Freshwater swamp, coastal wetlands



Poukaraka wetland is part of Whakanewha Regional Park and can be accessed via the parks track network. A large freshwater raupō wetland is surrounded by native forest and grades into saline wetland towards the beach. The wetland is home to four threatened wetland bird species; banded rail, North Island fernbird, spotless crane and Australasian bittern. Godwits, white faced heron, pied stilts, oystercatchers, Caspian terns, pūkeko and New Zealand dotterel have all been recorded in the area. The freshwater wetland is one of the best quality on Waiheke Island and the saline wetlands have a high diversity of saline wetland plants, the naturally uncommon plant *Pomaderris rugosa* is currently found in saline wetland. Dog restrictions apply.

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Whakanewha
 ☎ 09 301 0101

6 Kauritutahi Wetland ★★★★★

Freshwater and intertidal wetlands



Āwhitu Regional Park has beaches, farmland and regenerating freshwater and intertidal coastal wetlands. This is one of the few publically accessible wetlands on the Āwhitu peninsula. Fernbird, grey duck, grey teal, banded rail and pūkeko can be found in the wetlands year round. The main wetland has a signposted walk with interpretation boards to guide visitors. Make sure you stop and feed the friendly eels. Camping and bach accommodation is available for visitors to stay at the park.

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Awhitu
 ☎ 09 301 0101

7 Lake Wainamu and Te Henga and Matuku Reserve ★★★★★

Dune lake (14 ha), associated dunes and freshwater swamp



Lake Wainamu is a deep lake in native forest. The lake and wetlands are home to shag species, bittern, spotless crane, and fernbird as well as native fish. Visitors can access the lake along the stream walkway from Bethells Road or over the tall sand dunes. Visitors can be rewarded with a swim in the lake at the end of their walk.

Not far from Lake Wainamu is Te Henga wetland, one of Auckland's largest freshwater wetlands (140ha). The wetland is home to 300 species of plants and 45 bird species (including fernbird and bittern) and 6 native fish. The best way to access the wetland is via Matuku Reserve, a Forest & Bird reserve where visitors can access the wetland on boardwalks.

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz | www.forestandbird.org.nz
 Search: Te Henga Bethells Search: Te Henga
 ☎ 09 301 0101

8 Te Wai Orea (Western Springs) ★★★★★

Volcanic springs



This popular urban park has a natural spring-fed lake and restored wetlands. The springs emerge from lava flow aquifers, making this wetland quite unique. The site is a refuge in the city for the native eel, pūkeko, teal, Australian coot and shovelers, ducks, swans and geese. A flat buggy and child friendly walkway surrounds the lake, with plenty of opportunities to get up close to the wildlife. Surrounding the lake are lawns, gardens and a playground.

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Western Springs Park
 ☎ 09 301 0101

9 Waiatarua Reserve ★★★★★

Restored wetland



Waiatarua reserve is the largest urban constructed wetland in New Zealand. Situated in the city suburb of Remuera the reserve is a popular walking destination. The restored freshwater wetlands are a significant feature of this urban park (40ha). The wetlands are surrounded by a network of paved walkways, suitable for all abilities. There are viewing points along the walk ways for birdwatching, many species make their home in the wetlands including harriers, scaup, Caspian terns, little black shag, shoveler duck, kōtuku (white heron) and pūkeko. Dog restrictions apply.

www.waiatarua.com | www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Waiatarua Reserve
 ☎ 09 301 0101

10 Tomarata Lakes ★★★★★

Dune lakes



In the north of the region are the Tomarata dune lakes and their associated wetland areas, there are three main dune lakes – Tomarata, Slipper and Spectacle. Lake Tomarata is the largest and most accessible with road access and a public picnic area. Lake Tomarata is a popular swimming and boating location. These wetland areas are best explored by kayak. The wetlands support many threatened bird and plant species such as fernbird, bittern and banded rail. Dog restrictions apply.

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Lake Tomarata reserve
 ☎ 09 301 0101

11 Auckland Botanic Gardens ★★★★★

Visit the Threatened Native Plant Garden. Dog restrictions apply.

www.aucklandbotanicgardens.co.nz
 ☎ 09 267 1457

12 Kaitoke Swamp ★★★★★

Freshwater swamp and fen

www.doc.govt.nz
 Search: Kaitoke Swamp

13 Little Shoal Bay and Le Roys Bush ★★★★★

Coastal and freshwater wetland

www.leroysbush.org.nz

14 Harbourview – Orangihina Reserve ★★★★★

Restored freshwater wetland and coastal saltmarsh

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Harbourview Reserve

15 Atawhai Whenua Reserve ★★★★★

Restored wetland

www.forestandbird.org.nz
 Search: Atawhai Whenua

16 Chelsea Estate Heritage Park ★★★★★

Estuary, freshwater reservoir

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Chelsea Estate

17 Duder Regional Park ★★★★★

Estuary and farmpark

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz - Search: Duder
 ☎ 09 301 0101

18 Barry Curtis Park ★★★★★

Wetland playground

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Barry Curtis Park
 ☎ 09 301 0101

19 Lake Ototoa Scenic Reserve and Lake Ototoa ★★★★★

Dune lake (110 ha)

www.doc.govt.nz
 Search: Lake Ototoa

20 Lake Pupuke ★★★★★

Volcanic explosion crater. Access from Sylvan Park Ave, Milford, North Shore

21 Mangemangeroa Reserve ★★★★★

Estuary

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Mangemangeroa Reserve
 ☎ 09 301 0101

22 Marie Neverman Reserve ★★★★★

Lake and wetland

www.nznfrt.org.nz

23 Onepoto and Tuff Crater ★★★★★

Crater wetland and saltmarsh

www.forestandbird.org.nz

24 Puhinui Reserve ★★★★★

Estuary reserve

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Puhinui Reserve

25 Sandspit ★★★★★

Estuary. Boardwalk access from Sandspit Rd, Warkworth

26 Manawa Wetland Reserve ★★★★★

Created wetland, Margan Ave, New Lynn

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: find a park

27 Te Ārai Regional Parkland ★★★★★

Dune lakes and kahikatea forest

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
 Search: Te Ārai

Fishing for freshwater fish and gamebird hunting in New Zealand requires a licence. For more information visit www.fishandgame.org.nz