

WAIHEKE REPORTING AREA

Waiheke Local Board

STATE OF AUCKLAND TERRESTRIAL REPORT CARD

JULY 2014

AREA
GRADE

C

QUICK FACTS

OVERALL GRADE



LAND COVER



NATIVE PLANTS



BIRDS



PESTS



WEEDS



THE REPORTING AREA
IS APPROXIMATELY

15,500
HECTARES IN SIZE

PONU I ISLAND IS HOME
TO AN ESTIMATED

6%

OF NEW ZEALAND'S ENTIRE
POPULATION OF NORTH
ISLAND BROWN KIWI

RANGITOTO IS AUCKLAND'S YOUNGEST VOLCANO

AND IS OF INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR ITS GEOLOGICAL
VALUES AND UNIQUE COVER OF POHUTUKAWA RATA FOREST

WHAT MAKES UP THIS GRADE?

The overall grade is made up of five indicators:

Land cover: Based on different ecosystems mapped in NZ Land Cover Database 3 (2008).

Native plants: Average of four sub-indicators which reflect the diversity and biomass of native plants, and the regeneration of native saplings and seedlings.

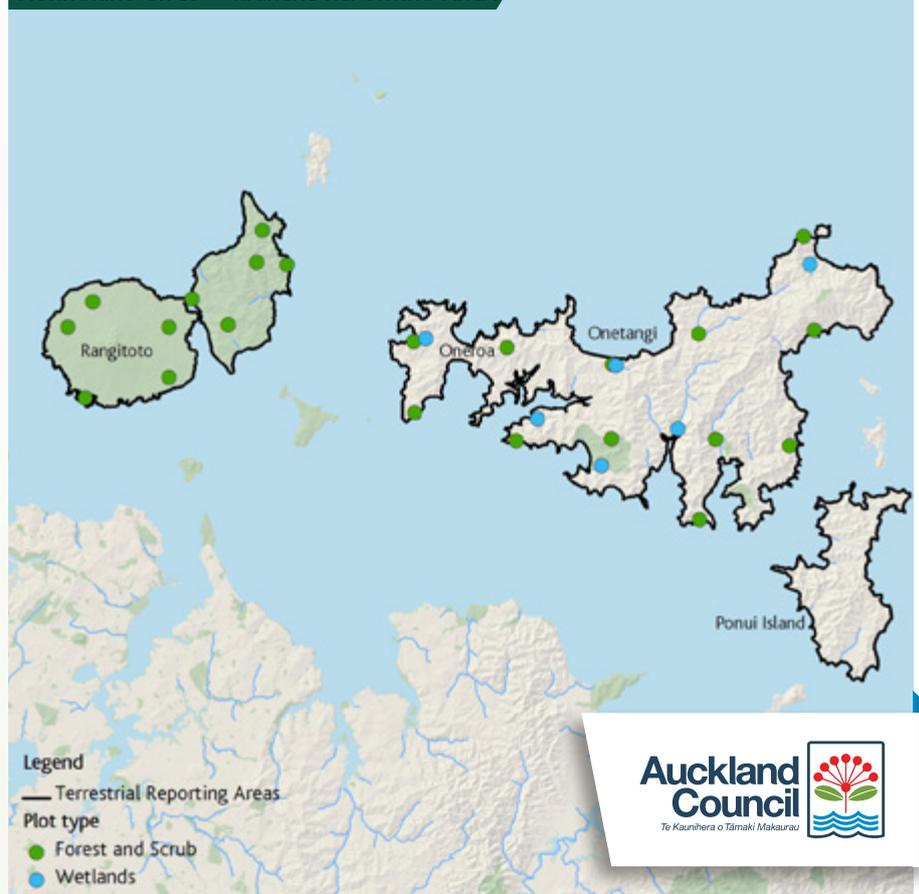
Birds: Average of three sub-indicators which reflect the average diversity and conspicuousness of native birds, and the total number of bird species found within the reporting area.

Weeds: Average of three sub-indicators which reflect the abundance and relative dominance of weedy and exotic trees, saplings and seedlings.

Pests: Average of four sub-indicators which indicate the number of pest-free sites, and presence of rats, mice and possums in the landscape.

Note: Includes forest data only. From 2015 wetland data will also be reported.

MONITORING SITES – WAIHEKE REPORTING AREA



CURRENT ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The Waiheke reporting area includes most of the Inner Gulf Islands, including Waiheke, Ponui, Rangitoto, Motutapu, and Browns islands. With the exception of Rangitoto, all the islands within this area have been highly modified by human occupation and farming activities, many having been almost cleared of native vegetation.

Introduced vegetation covers almost half of the area, which is dominated by productive pasture and lesser amounts of vineyards. Estuarine systems are naturally uncommon while freshwater wetlands greater than about 0.1 ha in size are

restricted to Waiheke and Motutapu islands. Only a relatively small proportion of the area (less than 5%) is covered in dense urban growth and parkland.

The reporting area makes a significant contribution to conservation in the Auckland region with its collection of pest-free islands, and islands without a full complement of pests (e.g. possums are absent from Waiheke Island). Ponui Island, while not yet pest-free, supports an estimated 1,500 North Island brown kiwi. Given brown kiwi are endangered and in decline, this makes the Ponui kiwi population one of national importance.

KEY BIODIVERSITY SITE

RANGITOTO ISLAND

Rangitoto is the most recent and the largest (c. 2,300 ha) of the volcanoes in the Auckland Volcanic field. Its geology, ecology and biodiversity are so unusual that it has been recognized as a separate ecological district. The island's geological features, comprising a gently sloping basaltic lava and ash base with a steeper central cinder cone, are of international significance. Vegetation cover on Rangitoto is dominated by the largest area of *Metrosideros* forest in the world, comprising a 'hybrid swarm' of pohutukawa and northern rata (individual trees having an intermixture of genes from both these species). In total, more than 200 species of native flowering plant are found on the island, including several species of orchid, and more than 40 native fern species. The island provides high-quality habitat for a number of native birds, including threatened species such as saddleback, kaka and kakariki.

Wallabies and possums were removed from Rangitoto (together with Motutapu) in the 1990's and both islands were officially declared free of all mammalian pests (including rats and mice) after a further eradication program in August 2011. The two islands now collectively comprise the largest area of mammalian pest-free habitat in the Hauraki Gulf.



Rangitoto Island

FIND OUT MORE

This report card is part of a series prepared by the Auckland Council's Research, Investigations and Monitoring Unit, which undertakes monitoring and research to provide information and evidence to inform the council's activities and reporting. Auckland's environment must be healthy and resilient in order

to support life and lifestyle. More report cards can be found at: aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/stateofauckland. The report card series includes reporting on freshwater, terrestrial, marine, air, soil, capacity for growth, demographics and quality of life.

GET INVOLVED

Auckland Council provides more than 20 environmental programmes across the region for you to get involved with and improve your local environment.

► For more information: e-mail monitoring@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or call us on 09 301 0101.