

WAITĀKERE REPORTING AREA

Waitākere Ranges Local Board

JULY 2014

AREA
GRADE

B

STATE OF AUCKLAND TERRESTRIAL REPORT CARD

QUICK FACTS

OVERALL GRADE



LAND COVER



NATIVE PLANTS



BIRDS



PESTS



WEEDS



THE REPORTING AREA
IS APPROXIMATELY

31,000
HECTARES IN SIZE

IT INCLUDES ALMOST 40% OF ALL
NATIVE VEGETATION IN THE REGION

THE WAITĀKERE RANGES
CONTAIN EXAMPLES OF 20%
OF NEW ZEALAND'S FLOWERING
PLANT SPECIES AND

60%

OF ALL NATIVE FERN

THE WHATIPU WETLAND COMPLEX IS THE REGION'S
LARGEST FRESHWATER WETLAND
IN THE REGION

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.

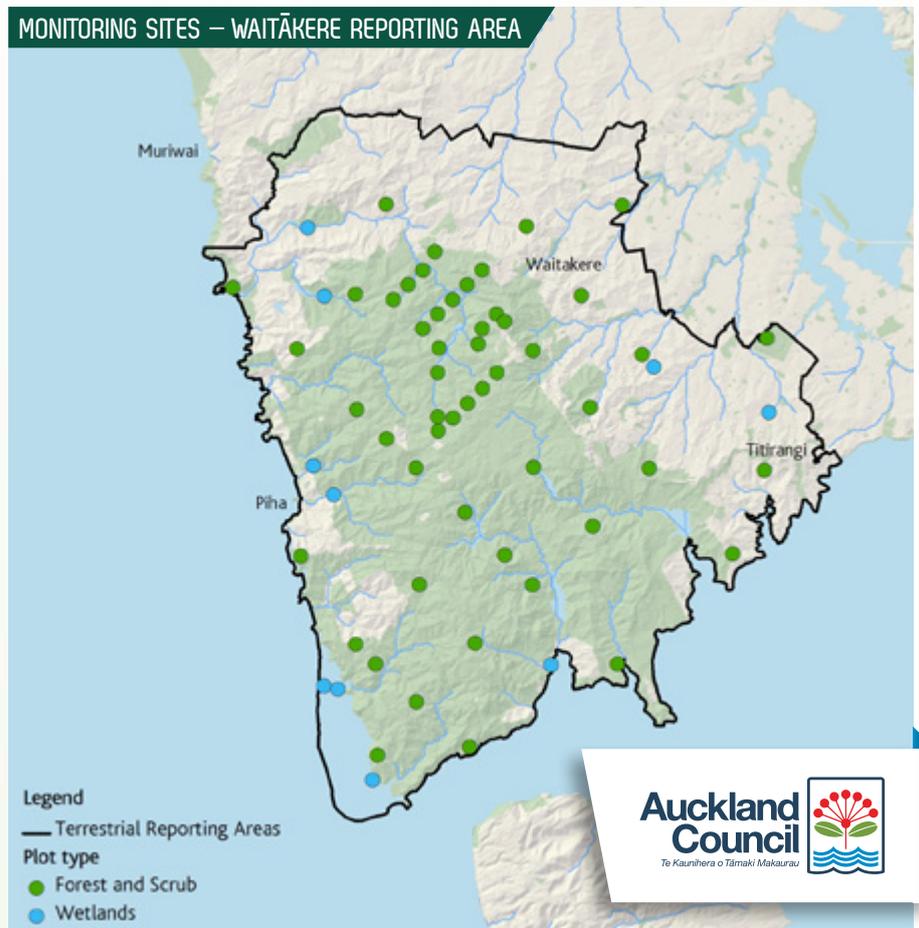
Birds: Average of three sub-indicators which reflect the average diversity and conspicuousness of native birds, and the total number of bird species found within the reporting area.

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 – WAITĀKERE REPORTING AREA



CURRENT ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The Waitākere reporting area ranges in altitude from sea level to 474m, and is dominated by the rugged topography of the Waitākere Ranges. These forested ranges are the eroded remains of a 20 million year old volcano that was centred around 20km offshore from the present west coast.

The area also includes more recently deposited sand and silt sediments in the larger valleys (e.g. Te Henga) and along the coastline (e.g. Whatipu). Very large and diverse wetland systems are present on some of these more recent sediments, which are also internationally important as wading bird habitats.

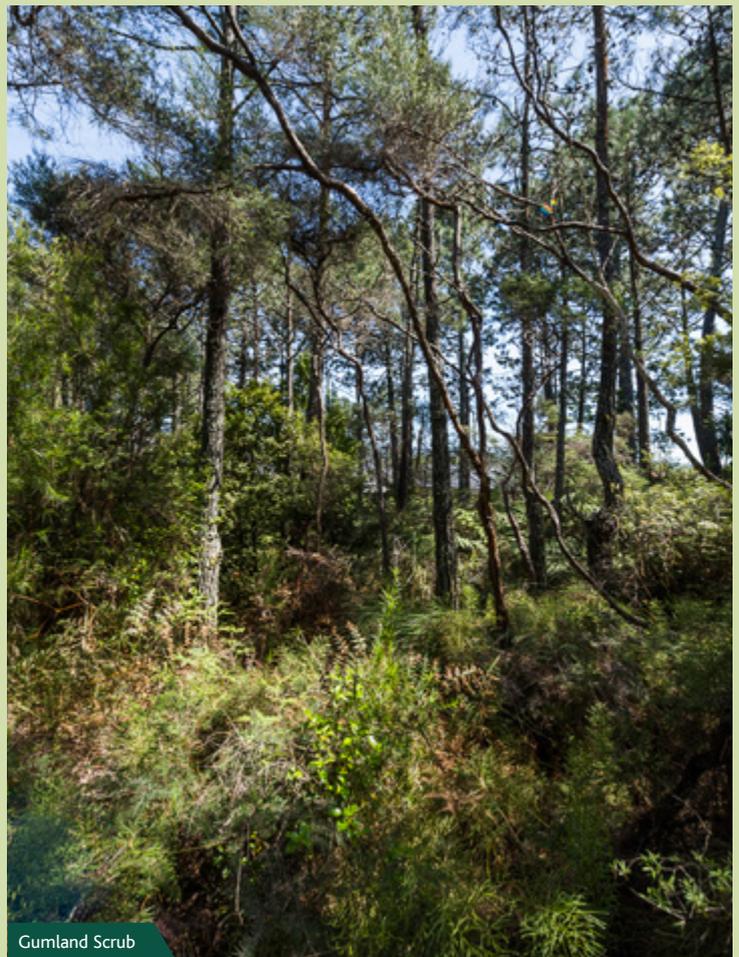
The Waitākere Ranges is the second largest block of continuous vegetation on the mainland in Auckland (after the Hunua Ranges). Most of the area is still covered in a diverse mix of different native ecosystems (approx 50% forest, 28% scrub and 2% wetland). These ecosystems provide excellent habitat for a wide range of native birds, reptiles, bats and insects. Some of the diverse habitat types found in the reporting area includes kauri forest, conifer-broadleaved forest, coastal forest, sand dune vegetation, and freshwater wetlands. Approximately 75 per cent of the remaining native vegetation is protected; most of this is within the Auckland Council managed Waitākere Ranges Regional Park.

KEY BIODIVERSITY SITE

WAIKUMETE CEMETERY

Waikumete Cemetery covers 107 ha and has been used as a burial ground since 1886. The cemetery is well known for its diverse range of introduced plants, and the area of gumland scrub in the northern part of the cemetery is a highly significant remnant of indigenous biodiversity. Gumland vegetation occurs on poorly drained, nutrient-poor soils and has been recognized as a naturally uncommon ecosystem type. Naturally uncommon ecosystems include ecosystems that, even in pre-human times, would have covered <0.5% of New Zealand and they are specifically gazetted as high priorities for protection.

The gumland areas at Waikumete are the only 'true' example of this ecosystem type in the Auckland region, although there are other examples of induced gumland. Periodic burning has resulted in a mosaic of vegetation, from mature manuka scrubland with emergent pine and black wattle, through to recently burned sites undergoing the first stages of regeneration. Other specialist native plants include kumarahou, umbrella fern, orchids, and various native sedges. The vegetation within the cemetery, though invaded in parts by exotic trees, is highly representative of the vegetation that covered much of the impoverished soils of the Waitākere Lowlands circa 1840.



Gumland Scrub

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.