

ISTHMUS REPORTING AREA

Includes Albert-Eden, Maungakiekie-Tāmaki, Ōrākei, Puketāpapa and Waitemata local boards

STATE OF AUCKLAND TERRESTRIAL REPORT CARD

2018



QUICK FACTS

THE REPORTING AREA IS APPROXIMATELY

14,500
HECTARES IN SIZE

LESS THAN 0.5% OF NATURAL FRESHWATER WETLANDS THAT WERE PRESENT ON THE AUCKLAND ISTHMUS IN 1850 REMAIN TODAY.

FOREST - LANDCOVER



FOREST - NATIVE PLANTS



FOREST - NATIVE BIRDS



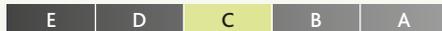
FOREST - PEST ANIMALS



FOREST - WEEDS



WETLANDS - CONDITION



WETLANDS - NATIVE PLANTS



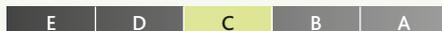
WETLANDS - NATIVE BIRDS



WETLANDS - PEST ANIMALS



WETLANDS - WEEDS

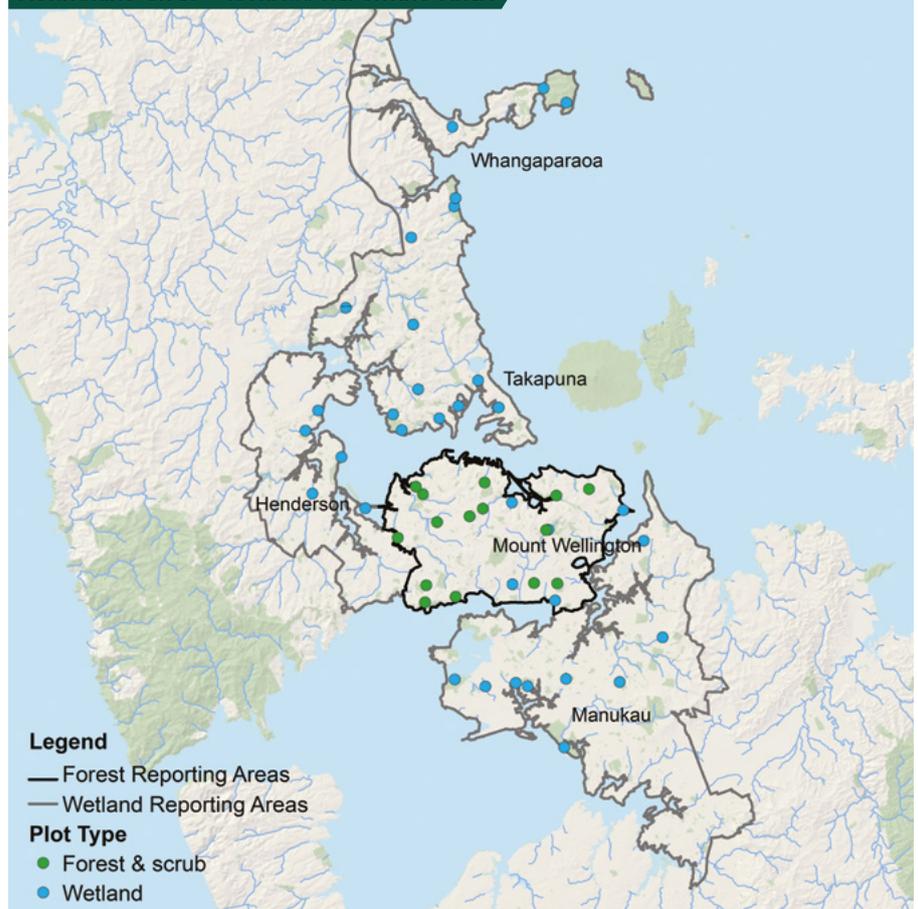


WHAT MAKES UP THIS GRADE?

Indicator grades were calculated using data collected from forest and wetland terrestrial biodiversity monitoring plots. As the full set of remeasures were only available for the wetland indicators, only the wetland grades have been updated and thus the forest grades are the same as the last 2016 report card.

THE ISTHMUS REPORTING AREA HAD AN URBAN TREE COVER OF AROUND 17% IN 2013. JUST OVER HALF OF THIS TREE COVER IS ON PRIVATELY-OWNED LAND.

MONITORING SITES - ISTHMUS REPORTING AREA



CURRENT ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The Isthmus reporting area is the relatively low lying area of land between the Waitematā and Manukau Harbours. The isthmus is highly diverse geologically, being formed from a patchwork of volcanic scoria cones, lava flows, explosion craters and older sedimentary rocks. It has been heavily urbanised over the last 150 years with approximately 75 per cent of land cover being converted to urban and industrial use. Consequently, there is very little remaining cover of native forest, scrub and wetland ecosystems (approx 3 per cent in total).

Despite the history of urban development, a number of remnants of native forest (Kepa Bush, Dingle Dell, Wattle Bay, Domain Forest) and wetlands (Western Springs, Waiatarua,

Tahuna-Torea) remain. The reporting area has an extensive and diverse coastal fringe that retains dozens of small saltwater to freshwater wetland systems and some of the best remaining examples of coastal forest in Auckland. Extensive intertidal mudflats are also a dominant feature of the coastline.

The forest remnants include tiny fragments of lava forest (e.g. Gribblehirst Park and Mt Eden) which is a significant and highly threatened ecosystem type both regionally and nationally. Auckland's lava forests have a species composition unlike anywhere else in New Zealand and consist of plant species adapted to the harsh, dry substrate on which the forest grows.

HIGHLIGHTS

Waiatarua wetland, which is located in the Meadowbank - Remuera area near central Auckland is New Zealand's biggest urban wetland restoration project. At around 16 hectares in size, the Waiatarua wetland more than quadrupled the area of freshwater wetland habitat on the Auckland Isthmus when it was re-planted in the early 2000s. There had been freshwater wetlands and lakes at Waiatarua for many thousands of years, and elements of these indigenous ecosystems persisted into the early 20th century; however, several episodes of draining and clearance meant that by the early 1950s the site had been completely drained, and was grazed and covered in exotic pasture and rushes until 2004. Lucy Cranwell, an eminent Auckland ecologist, lamented at the time that "If Auckland grows ever larger, as it is bound to do, it will someday remember that wetlands are beautiful, and will remake them at great expense".

More than ten years on from its resurrection, Waiatarua wetland provides habitat for a wide range of indigenous plants and animals, and opportunities for city residents to recharge their batteries and interact with nature in an everyday setting. There are a range of walkways for birdwatching, with many bird species making their home in the wetlands, including kāhu/harrier, pāpango/scaup, taranui/Caspian tern, kawau tūi/little black shag, kuruwhengi/Australasian shoveler, kōtuku/white heron and pūkeko. The reserve is supported by the local community who are working towards making the Waiatarua a unique ecological jewel for residents and for future generations by continuing restoration planting and pest control. In addition to the many biodiversity and social benefits mentioned above, the wetland also provides other essential 'ecosystem services' for Ōrākei Basin, the surrounding suburbs and Waitematā Harbour by trapping and purifying sediment and water-borne pollutants.



FIND OUT MORE

This report card is part of a series prepared by the Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit, which undertakes monitoring and research to provide information and evidence to inform the council's activities and reporting. More report cards can be found at: aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/environment. The report card series includes reporting on freshwater, terrestrial, marine, air, soil, capacity for growth, demographics and quality of life.

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

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