

Wetlands open to the public in the Waikato Region of New Zealand

The Waikato Region is a New Zealand stronghold for wetlands.

It has:

- around 30 percent of the country's remaining wetlands,
- three of NZ's six internationally recognised (Ramsar) wetlands,
- most of NZ's rare peat lakes
- the two largest freshwater wetlands in the North Island,
- the nation's biggest lake,
- the longest river, and
- the largest river delta.

It also contains an extraordinary diversity of wetland types including geothermal springs, alpine tarns, lowland swamps, estuaries, peat lakes, and peat bogs.

An estimated 32,000 ha (25 percent of the pre-human extent) of freshwater wetlands remain in the Region, with most located in the lowland areas in the Waikato, Matamata-Piako, Hauraki and Franklin Districts.

Eleven threatened birds and 13 threatened plant species live in Waikato wetlands; that's almost a quarter of the Region's threatened species in less than five percent of its land area.

www.wetlandtrust.org.nz

The swards of rush-like plants found in the Region's peat bogs are unique to the Southern Hemisphere. Two plants found only in the Waikato are the giant cane rush (*Sporadanthus ferrugineus*) and the threatened swamp helmet orchid, *Anzybas carsei* (also found in Australia). Other threatened plants include a clubmoss, a hooded orchid and an insectivorous bladderwort.

Around 25% of NZ's Australasian bittern population and one of the largest populations of North Island fernbird live in the internationally significant Whangamarino Wetland.

Waikato wetlands are important habitats for native fish including:

- threatened black mudfish that burrow deep into mud or under logs to survive dry spells for months at a time.
- threatened banded and giant kokopu
- more common inanga, whose juveniles make up the bulk of the whitebait catch and are present in large numbers in wetlands connected to rivers.



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Waikato Wetland Management Agencies

Department of Conservation
www.doc.govt.nz
07 858 1000

Environment Waikato
www.ew.govt.nz
0800 800 401

Auckland/Waikato
Fish and Game
www.fishandgame.org.nz
07 849-1666













Waikato peat bog vegetation,
Monica Peters











Wetlands to visit in the Waikato Region











Name / type ¹	Description/ special features	Activities ²					Facilities					Access, further information
		Walks	Birdlife	Boating	Fishing / shooting	Highly scenic	Info centre	Interp. panels	Lookout/ bird hide	Picnic area	Accom.	
Miranda, Firth of Thames Intertidal mudflats ★★★★★	RAMSAR wetland Thousands of migratory wader birds over summer Information, lodge and education centre	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	www.miranda-shorebird.org.nz/ <i>One hour from Auckland. From State Highway 1 south of Bombay take SH 2 heading east towards Thames, turn left at Mangatangi Road, take Miranda Road, then left into East Coast Road. Information centre is about 3 km up East Coast Road</i>	
Waiotapu Geothermal Geothermal lake and springs ★★★★★	Dramatic geothermal landscape with world-famous champagne pool, geysers, bubbling mud, steaming ground, expansive vistas, huge volcanic craters and sinter terrace formations. Formed walkways, interpretation boards. Operated as a commercial tourist attraction.	✓				✓	✓	✓			Entrance fee applies www.geyserland.co.nz/index.htm <i>27 kilometres (20 minutes drive) south of Rotorua on SH5</i>	











¹ ★★★★★ Must see ★★★★ Worth a special visit ★★★ Worth a short detour ★★ Plan to visit if passing ★ Short stop if passing











² Fishing for freshwater fish and gamebird hunting in New Zealand requires a licence: see <http://www.fishandgame.org.nz/>

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Blue Springs Freshwater springs and headwaters of Waihou River ★★★★★	Crystal clear springs and stream with extensive submerged aquatic plants in a farmland setting. Emergence of water percolated through the Mamaku Plateau for 100 years. 10 min walk to springs, longer walk along river	✓				✓		✓	✓		www.swktodc.govt.nz/district/district_info/tewaihou.asp <i>Leslie Road, Putaruru. From SH 1 north of Putaruru turn right into Whites Rd then right into Leslie Rd. Parking area about 4 km from Whites Road.</i>	
Lake Ngahewa & Rainbow Mt Geothermal lake ★★★★★	Volcanic area with colourful cliffs, steaming ground, and crater lakes. Lake Ngahewa has a range of birds and rare native mistletoe. Walking track (30 mins return) past crater lakes and geothermal vegetation. Longer track (2 - 2.5 hours return) to summit for views over the steaming geothermal field and Lake Ngahewa across the highway.	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		www.newzealand.com/travel/sights-activities/scenic-highlights/walks-trails/scenic-highlight-details.cfm/businessid/68763.html <i>26 km south of Rotorua. From Rotorua, take SH 5 towards Taupo. The entrance is on the left off SH 5, just past the turn-off to SH 38. Lake Ngahewa is on the right, walkways on Rainbow Mt (views over Lake Ngahewa) on left.</i>	

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Lake Taupo Explosion crater lake ★★★★	NZ's largest lake Commerical boat/ kayak/ fishing tours Various tourist attractions (Huka Falls, Aratiatia rapids, South Taupo wetlands kayaking and boating trips)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		Visit Taupo Information Centre for information on attractions
Tautari Wetland Farm pond ★★★★	Pest free sanctuary Adjacent to Maungatautari Ecological Island (pest-free sanctuary). Existing ponds have been enhanced by planting and release of threatened species including takahe and native fish. Further releases are planned, including tuatara and pateke (brown teal).	✓	✓						✓			www.maungatrust.org/newsarchive/default.asp?article=1026 <i>Permission required to access, via locked gate. Access from the end of Tautari Road, Pukeatua, 20 mins west of Te Awamutu. Contact Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust +64 7 823 7455</i>
Waihora Lagoon Swamp forest and glade ★★★★	Stunning setting, seasonal lagoon surrounded by tall mature kahikatea forest. The water is stained dark from tannins in leaves, giving the site a mysterious and serene quality. In dry spells the lagoon dries to a damp meadow in a forest glade. Short, easy walk and boardwalk. Good forest birdlife.	✓	✓			✓						www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/tracks-and-walks/waikato/maniapoto/pureora-walking-tracks/ <i>Technically, this wetland is in the Manawatu Region, but access is from SH32 in the Waikato Region, south of Mangakino. Turn onto Waihora Rd and travel some 3 km on a gravel road before turning left into the Waihora Lagoon carpark. The lagoon is a 10 minute walk from the carpark. Note access road may be in rough condition.</i>

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Whangamarino Peat bog, mineralised swamp ★★★★	Ramsar wetland Walkways and information centre planned. Wetland driving trail (copy on NWT website or local information centres)		✓		✓							50 km driving trail beings at Te Kauwhata, driving anti-clockwise around wetland. See local visitor centre for Whangamarino and LakeWaikare Wetland Trail or print from National Wetland Trust website: www.wetlandtrust.org.nz/Visiting_wetlands.html
Howarth Memorial Reserve Freshwater swamp, flood plain ★★★	Pond with extensive exotic (deciduous for fall colour) and native plantings. Habitat for wild game birds. Perimeter walk (about 1 hour) easy family stroll. Hot pools nearby for after walk soak.	✓	✓					✓				Te Aroha. Turn off Waihou Rd into Stanley Ave and then into Spur St for the main entrance.
Lakes Kainui, Kaituna & Komakorau Peat lakes ★★★	Small peat lakes connected by short drain. Community restoration project largely driven by landowners. Mown walkways Teacher resource kit, school visits by arrangement	✓		✓								www.ew.govt.nz/ Follow the rivers, lakes and wetland link under Environmental Information to 'peat lakes.' Contact Department of Conservation for the Teacher Resource kit: 07 858 1000 and for directions. Access via private land.
Lake Ngaroto Peat lake ★★★	Largest of the Waipa peat lakes. Community restoration project and extensive re-planting. Perimeter walkway (2 hrs)	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓		www.ew.govt.nz/ Follow the rivers, lakes and wetland link under Environmental Information Access via Bank Road, off Paterangi Rd, north of Te Awamutu

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L. Serpentine Peat lakes, kahikatea swamp forest ★★★	Peat lake complex. Peat bog restoration trials. Proposal to fence and exclude all mammalian pests. Site of proposed National Wetland Centre – walkways, interp panels and information centre planned.	✓	✓	✓	✓ Shooting in season				✓			www.ew.govt.nz/ Follow the rivers, lakes and wetland link under Environmental Information to 'peat lakes.' <i>Access off State Highway 2 south of Ohaupo, 20 mins from Hamilton, left turn into gates</i>
Waiwhakareke Horseshoe Lake Peat lake ★★★	Peat lake undergoing extensive restoration including replanting native forest and wetland species. Plans for predator fence and native species re-introductions. Community restoration project. Informal (unformed) walkways.	✓										www.waiwhakareke.co.nz/ <i>Baverstock Road, Hamilton. Heading south on State Highway 1, take the Hamilton Bypass (Avalon Drive), turn right at Rotokauri Rd, which continues into Baverstock. Park entrance on the right, opposite Farnborough Drive.</i>
Yarndleys Bush Swamp forest (kahikatea/white pine) ★★★	This 14 ha remnant is one of the largest remaining stands of kahikatea forest in the North Island. A former swamp forest, drainage has caused the peat to shrink leaving many trees perched. Short walks and viewing tower	✓						✓				www.kiwanis.org.nz/taweyard.htm <i>Drive North from Te Awamutu (toward Hamilton) for approximately 3 km. Turn left at Ngaroto Road. Drive approximately 1 1/2 km, and look for the signpost indicating the entrance to the bushwalk. Limited carparking is available off the road</i>

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Lake Cameron Peat lake ★★	Small peat lake with community restoration project. Perimeter walkway.	✓		✓					✓		<p>www.ew.govt.nz/ Follow the rivers, lakes and wetland link under Environmental Information to 'peat lakes.'</p> <p><i>Bewteen Hamilton and Te Awamutu. Turn into Rukuhia Rd from SH3. Signposted entry is almost opposite Rukuhia School</i></p>	
Pehitawa Kahikatea Forest Reserve Swamp forest (kahikatea/white pine) ★★	Kahikatea swamp forest (18 ha) with fine specimens of rare swamp maire, matai, titoki and pukatea. It represents a forest type that once covered 41,000 ha in the Waipa Ecological District now reduced through clearance to only 158 ha. On the route of the Great NZ walkway, Te Araroa.	✓									<p><i>Managed by the Native Forest Restoration Trust</i></p> <p>www.nznfrt.org.nz/index.php?page_id=93</p> <p><i>Access is through the Brandon farm property on the west side of SH3 6 km south of Waitomo Caves Rd, 1 km north of Te Kuiti airfield. Please contact the Trust if you wish to visit, so the farmers can be notified. The block is visible from Oपुरere Rd and Waitomo Caves Rd.</i></p>	

Location of wetlands mentioned in this brochure.

To locate individual wetlands in the Waikato Region go to Google Maps via http://www.wetlandtrust.org.nz/directory_waik.html

