

# Wetlands you can visit in the Hawke's Bay Region

Hawke's Bay is an extensive region located on the east coast of New Zealand's North Island. The region has a varied landscape, including mountains, hill country, coast, and flat plains.

The most significant wetlands in the region include a range of palustrine, lacustrine, estuarine, and riverine wetlands. These wetlands have important cultural, ecological, recreational, and educational values.

Wetlands types in the region include:

1. **Lacustrine** wetlands – lakes, ponds, and their margins, with 70% of the area being open water.
2. **Riverine** wetlands – rivers and streams and their margins.
3. **Palustrine** – bogs and swamps which have a high water table.
4. **Estuaries** – partly enclosed coastal areas where seawater mixes with fresh water.
5. **Lagoons** – coastal lakes that receive both seawater and freshwater, but non-tidal, receiving salt water only when the sand or gravel bar that impounds them is breached.

Some of the better-known wetlands in the Region include:

- Pekapeka
- Lake Whatuma
- Lake Runanga
- Lake Oingo
- Whakaki Lagoon
- Ahuriri Estuary
- Tukituki and Waitangi Estuaries
- Whakamahi/ Whakamahia Lagoons.

A large part of the flat plains and valleys of Hawke's Bay were wetlands before extensive drainage to create farms, roads, and cities. Today less than 2% of the original amount of freshwater wetlands remains in the Hawke's Bay Region, with over 97% on private land.

Hundreds of volunteers support the council and community groups to reconstruct, plant out and manage animal pests and weeds in Hawke's Bay wetlands. These include land care groups that help to monitor changes in the wetlands projects.

*Made with generous support from*



Please visit our wetlands safely and responsibly.











- Please no-dogs, hunting or fires unless specifically permitted
- Prevent the spread of pests and diseases, wash and dry fishing, wading and boating equipment between waterways
- Fishing in freshwater bodies requires a permit (contact Fish and Game NZ)
- Do not release any fish, reptiles, or plants in a waterbody
- Keep to marked tracks
- Be aware of hunting seasons (usually May and June)

## Hawke's Bay Wetland Agencies

Hawke's Bay Regional Council  
[www.hbrc.govt.nz](http://www.hbrc.govt.nz)

Department of Conservation  
[www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)











Fish and Game New Zealand  
[www.fishandgame.org.nz](http://www.fishandgame.org.nz)

Wetlands to visit in the Hawke's Bay Region, New Zealand													
<sup>1</sup> Name / type	Description/ special features	Activities <sup>2</sup>					Facilities					Access, further information	
		 Walks	 Birdlife	 Boating	 Fishing	 Highly scenic	 Info centre	 Interp. panels	 Lookout/ bird hide	 Picnic area	 Accom.		
<b>Ahuriri Estuary</b>  ★★★★	<p>This 470 ha estuary has a wide range of fresh and salty habitats that support an extremely diverse range of birds, fish, invertebrates and plant life. Over 70 species and migratory waterbirds use the estuary as a feeding and resting area.</p> <p>The one-way 2.8 km walkway is an easy walk for up to an hour and it is suitable for people of all abilities, wheelchairs, buggies, and strollers.</p>	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	<p><a href="http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/hawkes-bay/places/napier-area/ahuriri-estuary/">www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/hawkes-bay/places/napier-area/ahuriri-estuary/</a></p> <p><i>Access is via Humber Street, off SH2 or from Pandora Road north of Napier</i></p>	
<b>Waitangi and Tukituki estuaries</b>  ★★★★	<p>These estuaries are of special significance to Maori and support a wide array of native and introduced species of waders and waterfowl, as well as being an important spawning ground for the native galaxid fish species.</p> <p>Follow the trail for a 30-minute circular walk route past the star compass, around the wetland area and back via the path adjacent to the bridge.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	<p><a href="http://www.hbrc.govt.nz/hawkes-bay/regional-parks/waitangi-regional-park/">www.hbrc.govt.nz/hawkes-bay/regional-parks/waitangi-regional-park/</a></p> <p><i>Follow SH2 south of Napier for 10 minutes and turn left at the sign "Waitangi" between the Tutaekuri and Ngaruroro Bridges to the carpark.</i></p>	
<b>Lake Tūtira</b>  Riverine wetlands  ★★★★	<p>Lake Tūtira (147 ha) is home to an abundance of wildlife and is a popular fishing spot annually filled with Tarawera sourced trout. The lake was declared a bird sanctuary in 1929 by William Herbert Guthrie-Smith. There is an enormous range of birdlife at the lake including scaup, grey ducks, black swans, black shags, white-face herons, fantails.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	<p><a href="http://www.hawkesbaynz.com/see-and-do/great-outdoors/recreation/river-s-lakes-and-waterfalls/lake-tutira/">www.hawkesbaynz.com/see-and-do/great-outdoors/recreation/river-s-lakes-and-waterfalls/lake-tutira/</a></p> <p><i>Off State Highway 2, 41km north of Napier and 77 km south of Wairoa. Turn in at the</i></p>











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

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











## Wetlands to visit in the Hawke's Bay Region, New Zealand

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	There are numerous walks in the Tūtira Reserve. The main Tūtira walkway follows either a shorter loop around the shores of the Lake (2 hours, 5kms) or a longer loop that passes through Tūtira Station and the adjoining Lake Tūtira Recreation Reserve.											<i>DOC campground on the southern end of the lake.</i>
<b>Lake Opouahi</b>  Lacustrine wetland  ★★★★	<p>Lake Opouahi and its associated waterways were traditionally significant sources of kai (food) for hapū (local people). The lake and waterways supplied uniquely tasting tuna, kākahi (freshwater mussels), kōura (freshwater crayfish) and kōkopu (freshwater fish), as well as the daily water supply, being a deep, spring-fed lake.</p> <p>A 3 km predator proof fence has been constructed around the 6 ha lake, and provides 40 hectares of safe habitat for North Island brown kiwi chicks while they gain size to defend themselves against the attack of stoats. A 30-minute loop walk takes you around the lake through regenerating bush full of birds. This is also a Kiwi Guardians site – find the code word and earn a medal.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		<p><a href="http://www.rankers.co.nz/experiences/10286-Lake_Loop_Lake_Opouahi">www.rankers.co.nz/experiences/10286-Lake_Loop_Lake_Opouahi</a></p> <p><a href="https://tangoio.maori.nz/opouahi/">https://tangoio.maori.nz/opouahi/</a> <a href="http://www.ecoed.org.nz/kiwi-creche">www.ecoed.org.nz/kiwi-creche</a></p> <p><i>3.6 from the junction of Pohokura Road and Matahaura Road. There is a raised parking area on the right.</i></p>
<b>Pekapeka Regional Park</b>  Swamp  ★★★★	<p>Pekapeka (98 ha) has been the site of a major restoration project since the 1990's aimed to improve wetland capacity to regulate flood waters and increase the natural biodiversity.</p> <p>You can explore short pathways, boardwalks across the wetland, and hike up to the lookout for a panoramic view of the valley.</p>	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		<p><a href="http://www.hawkesbaynz.com/see-and-do/great-outdoors/recreation/wetlands-and-wildlife/pekapeka-wetlands/">www.hawkesbaynz.com/see-and-do/great-outdoors/recreation/wetlands-and-wildlife/pekapeka-wetlands/</a></p> <p><i>State Highway 2, Hastings District, Hawkes Bay</i></p> <p><i>Access by vehicle on SH2 to the parking area.</i></p>











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<b>Opoutama Wetland</b>  Shallow water ★★★	This 50 ha wetland is significant because of the habitat it provides for indigenous plants and animals such as New Zealand pipit, Australasian bittern, welcome swallow, paradise shelduck, silveryeye and several duck species. The site was purchased by the National Forest Restoration Trust and is being enhanced with plants grown by local school children. Short walks, information board and bird hide. Entry is at your own risk.	✓	✓						✓			<a href="http://www.nftrt.org.nz/reserve/s/opoutama-wetland/">www.nftrt.org.nz/reserve/s/opoutama-wetland/</a>  <i>From Napier travel north along the coast past Wairoa. At Nuhaka turn off to the right and follow the signs towards Mahia. At Opoutama cross the railway line and turn into YMCA Road.</i>
<b>Maungawhio Lagoon</b>  Lagoon ★★★★	Maungawhio Lagoon is a saltwater lagoon that joins to Oraka Beach. This lagoon and its associated wetlands have a significant natural environment which has an important ecological, fauna, and flora values.		✓	✓	✓	✓						<a href="http://www.visitwairoa.co.nz/s/ee-and-do/fishing/oraka/">www.visitwairoa.co.nz/s/ee-and-do/fishing/oraka/</a>  <i>From Wairoa, take State Highway 2 towards Gisborne. At Nuhaka, continue straight ahead towards Māhia. At Māhia follow Ormond Drive and then continue straight onto Māhia East Coast Road. Turn left onto Oraka Road</i>
<b>Whakamahia Lagoon</b>  Coastal Lagoon ★★★	The lagoon supports a wide range of introduced and native waders and waterfowl and are ranked highly by both the Department of Conservation and the Hawkes Bay Regional Council for its biodiversity values.		✓		✓	✓				✓		<a href="http://www.visitwairoa.co.nz/s/ee-and-do/walking-and-cycling/wairoa-riverside-walk-and-cycleway/">www.visitwairoa.co.nz/s/ee-and-do/walking-and-cycling/wairoa-riverside-walk-and-cycleway/</a> <a href="https://whenuaviz.landcareresearch.co.nz/place/69179">https://whenuaviz.landcareresearch.co.nz/place/69179</a>  <i>North of the Wairoa township</i>

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<b>Whakakī Lagoon</b>  Coastal lake ★★★	It is separate from the sea by a narrow strip of sand dunes on its southern shore. The lake has a significant wildlife values and is the largest coastal lake on the North Island's east coast. The lake has an additional 200 hectares of adjacent wetland margin comprising sand dunes and swamp areas.		✓		✓	✓						<a href="http://www.visitwairoa.co.nz/welcome-to-wairoa/wairoas-areas/">www.visitwairoa.co.nz/welcome-to-wairoa/wairoas-areas/</a>  <i>Around 10 km Wairoa Township, adjacent to State Highway 2</i>
<b>Pourangahau Estuary</b>  Estuary ★★	At 750 hectares, this is one of the few large estuaries on the North Island's east coast, and it covers about 750 ha. It supports recreational fisheries for whitebait, flounder, mullet, and kahawai, and is the only known breeding site in the region for Caspian Tern.		✓		✓							<a href="https://admin.teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/23882/porangahau-estuary">https://admin.teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/23882/porangahau-estuary</a>  <i>From Napier travel via state highway 2 to Porangahau Road in Waipukurau.</i>
<b>Lake Whatumā</b>  Lake ★★	This lake is sits in a shallow basin amongst flat to undulating pasture. The lake has a surface area of about 150 hectares and adjacent wetland margins of an additional 76 hectares.		✓			✓						<a href="http://www.hbrc.govt.nz/assets/Document-Library/Outstanding-Water-Bodies/3.-Secondary-Assessments/Lake-Whatuma.pdf">www.hbrc.govt.nz/assets/Document-Library/Outstanding-Water-Bodies/3.-Secondary-Assessments/Lake-Whatuma.pdf</a>  <i>3 km south of Waipukurau</i>
<b>Horseshoe Lake</b>  Lake ★★★★	The 30 ha Horseshoe Lake on the Mangarara Farm has a lookout with panoramic views which includes the Ruahine Ranges, Mount Kahuranaki, Mount Erin, Te Mata Peak, and the Silver Range. Mangarara Station, which borders part of the lake, is home to the Air New Zealand Environmental Trust re-vegetation project. Mangarara -The Family Farm is open to the public.		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	<a href="http://www.hawkesbaynz.com/visit/us/greg-and-rachel-hart">www.hawkesbaynz.com/visit/us/greg-and-rachel-hart</a> 50 minutes drive from Napier Airport at 298 Mangarara Road, Otane

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<b>Lake Waikareiti</b>  Lake ★★★★	Lake Waikareiti, the smaller of the lakes in Te Urewera National Park, is a marvellous destination for walkers. Besides the famous Lake Waikaremoana Great Walk there are a multitude of interesting short and day walks. Clean sparkling lakes, dramatic rock-bluffs, magnificent forest and profuse birdlife are all highlights.  A 3 km (one-way) walking track leads to an overlook platform. Allow 2 hours.	✓	✓			✓		✓				<a href="http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/east-coast/places/te-urewera/things-to-do/tracks/lake-waikareiti-walk/">www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/east-coast/places/te-urewera/things-to-do/tracks/lake-waikareiti-walk/</a> 67kms north of Wairoa and 80 kilometres west-southwest of Gisborne.  Lake Waikareiti Walk begins 200 m from the visitor centre on the road to Rotorua.
<b>Motu wetlands</b>  Kahikatea swamp forest ★★	The 20 ha Motu Scenic Reserve is a kahikatea wetland forest located just past the Motu township. It is unique as it contains an oxbow wetland and an original swamp forest. It is habitat for aquatic bird species and provides valuable habitat for weka and common bush bird.	✓	✓					✓				<a href="http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/east-coast/places/whinray-and-motu-scenic-reserves/">www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/east-coast/places/whinray-and-motu-scenic-reserves/</a> Turn off SH2 onto Motu Rd, 70 km north west of Gisborne. Motu Scenic Reserve is 13 km along this road, near Motu.
<b>Te Wherowhero Lagoon</b>  Tidal Estuary ★★	This 160 ha estuary supports a wide diversity of wading birds, and other life specific to the highly tidal ecosystem. An annual planting program has been created since 2013. Volunteers plant almost 10,000 trees each year.		✓					✓				<a href="http://tairawhitienviro.nz/project/te-wherowhero-lagoon/">tairawhitienviro.nz/project/te-wherowhero-lagoon/</a> From Napier travel via state highway 2 heading to Gisborne. It is situated close to Muriwai Beach Road.