

Watsons Hill Bush

At a glance

TRC Reference: BD/9703	LENZ:	F5.2a Acutely threatened
Ecological District: North Taranaki	National:	Priority 1 - Threatened Land Environment
Land Tenure: Private		Priority 4 - Threatened Species
Area(ha): 2.9	Regional:	Key Native Ecosystem
GPS: 1716946X & 5668891Y	Regional Ecosystem Loss:	Chronically threatened 10-20% left
Habitat: Forest Remnant	Catchment:	Waitara (395)
Bioclimatic Zone: Lowland		
Ecosystem Type: WF13: Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest		

General Description

Watsons Hill Bush is located on privately owned land on Toe Toe Road, 3.5Km north-west of Tarata. The site is a 2.9 ha remnant of lowland tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest, on short steep slopes descending to the Waitara River. The forest provides good connectivity to nearby wetlands and forest, including the Taramoukou, Tarata and Junction Road Conservation Areas and Fairy Forest KNE.

Ecological Features

Flora

The canopy of the bush remnant is dominated by tawa, rewarewa, pukatea, kahikatea, rimu and miro. A variety of native vines and epiphytes are present. The understory is in recovering condition following fencing and contains hangehange, nikau, pate, parataniwha and numerous ground and tree ferns, grasses and herbs. Riparian species can be found on reefs, cliffs and alluvial terraces along the river.

Fauna

Good forest bird life is present, including kereru, tui, grey warbler, silver-eye, bellbird, fantail and harrier. Also provides good habitat for riverine fauna; kotare, grey duck, paradise shelduck, white faced heron, shag, lamprey, freshwater mussel, longfin eel and Galaxid fish species. Longtailed bats may be present in the Taramokou CA and may use the Waitara River corridor as part of their feeding territories. There is adequate habitat for terrestrial and arboreal reptiles, although no confirmed records to date.

Ecological Values

Ecological context - High	Provides good forested habitat on the banks of the Waitara River. Within 500 meters of extensive forest habitat in Taramokou Conservation Area, and near to various other KNEs.
Representativeness - High	Classified at a regional level as ecosystem type WF13, Tawa, kohekohe, rewarewa, hinau, podocarp forest - 16% remaining. Classified at a national level as being an 'Acutely Threatened' (F5.2a) land environment.
Rarity and Distinctiveness - Medium	Site provides habitat for the 'Threatened, Nationally Critical' grey duck, three species of 'Threatened, Nationally Vulnerable' rata, and the 'At Risk, Uncommon' pygmy tree orchid and black shag.
Sustainability - Positive	Key ecological processes still influence the site. Under appropriate management it can remain resilient to existing or potential threats.

Other Management Issues

Habitat Modification - Low

The landowners are working with the QEII National Trust to protect the site the site with a conservation covenant.

Herbivores - Medium

Vegetation condition at the site would benefit from possum control. Goats are in low numbers and are controlled by the landowners. Livestock are excluded by basic fencing.

Predators - High

Control of rodents, mustelids, feral cats, possums and hedgehogs would benefit indigenous birdlife, insects and reptiles at the site.

Weeds - Medium

Pest plants are patchy and localised, and could be controlled with modest effort.

