

Messenger's Bush

At a glance

TRC Reference: BD/9701	LENZ:	H4.1a Not threatened
Ecological District: Egmont		H1.3b Under protected
Land Tenure: Private	Local:	Significant Natural Area
Area(ha): 63.75	National:	Priority 1 - Threatened Land Environment
GPS: 1701619X & 5653742Y		Priority 2 - Sand Dunes and Wetlands
Habitat: Forest Remnant		Priority 4 - Threatened Species
Bioclimatic Zone: Lowland	Regional:	Key Native Ecosystem
Ecosystem Type: MF8.3: Kahikatea, rimu, kamahi forest		Representative ecosystem type
	Regional Ecosystem Loss:	Reduced 30-50% left
	Protection Status:	Local Government NZNFR Trust Deed
	Catchment:	Waitara (395)

General Description

The Messenger's Bush forest remnants are located at the end of Norfolk Road near Egmont National Park. The site consists of approx. 63ha of cut over or well regenerated native bush remnants which are occasionally separated by clearings or fingers of pasture. The site has been identified as a priority for management as a good example of MF8-3: Kahikatea, rimu, kamahi forest. This forest type is considered Reduced with less than 50% of this type of forest remaining in Taranaki. Notable vegetation includes a number of 'Threatened' species such as swamp maire, and three species of threatened rata. The Waitepuke stream and tributaries also provides habitat for notable fauna such as whio, shortjaw kokopu, koaro, redfin bully and longfin eel. The site provides very good connectivity between Egmont National Park and Vujcich Kamahi Swamp Maire KNE.

Ecological Features

Flora

The dominant canopy of the forest remnants is typical of damp/swamp forest vegetation in this area with a mix of kamahi, swamp maire and kahikatea. Other species also include tawa, rimu, miro and toro. Lower stature vegetation includes wineberry, marbleleaf, raukawa, hangehange, NZ fuchsia and kanono. Climbers and orchids are common with three species of threatened rata noted. Good ground cover is present including a variety of ferns, seedlings and saplings.

Fauna

Birds found at the site include bellbird, grey warbler, tomtit, fantail, tui and kereru. Whio have also been recorded using the Waitepuke stream in this area, and are a notable species. There is adequate habitat for terrestrial and arboreal reptile species, ranging from deep leaf litter, logs on the forest floor, epiphytes in the canopy, and abundant foliage. No reptiles have been recorded for the site although will be present and may include threatened or regionally distinctive species. Notable native fish are likely to be present at the site including shortjaw kokopu, koaro and longfin eels. Aquatic and terrestrial invertebrate life will be diverse and may include notable species such as peripatus.

Ecological Values

Ecological context - High	The site provides very good connectivity between Egmont National Park and Vujcich Kamahi Swamp Maire KNE. The site also provides core habitat for a variety of threatened species.
Rarity and Distinctiveness - High	The site provides habitat for a variety of notable threatened species including whio (blue duck), shortjawed kokopu, koaro, swamp maire and three species of threatened rata.
Representativeness - High	The remnant is a good example of MF8-3: Kahikatea, rimu, kamahi forest. Over 50% of this type of forest has been lost in Taranaki due to clearance for other land uses. This site has been identified as a priority representative site for management.
Sustainability - Positive	In good vegetative condition. Key ecological processes still influence the site, and under appropriate management, it can remain resilient to existing or potential threats.

Other Management Issues

Habitat Modification - Low	Low risk of continued modification in the unfenced remnants although there are areas of historic clearance at the site.
Herbivores - Medium	Grazing by stock is currently an issue where fencing is incomplete for some of the remnants. Possums are in low numbers and impacts are currently low. Goats in the nearby National Park, have almost been eradicated and are not a threat to this site.
Possum Self-help	Within the self-help possum control area and receives possum control in conjunction with the National Park possum control program. Possums are currently present at low densities.
Predator Free signed up: Yes	Currently has seven A24 traps at the site which will be expanded on in the near future.
Predators - Medium	Mustelids, rats, cats, hedgehogs and possums are present at the site. The site is within the TPFT landscape mustelid control program and is in close proximity to the National Park mustelid trapping program which will be lessening the impact of some of these species on the native ecosystem.
Weeds - Low	Weed threats are currently low at the site (mainly blackberry) and generally contained to the bush margins.



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.

