

MAORI HISTORY

**AUCKLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL
TAWHARANUI REGIONAL PARK
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

1992

**(Please note that this plan has been superseded by the
Auckland Regional Parks Management Plan 2002)**

MAORI HISTORY

TAWHARANUI REGIONAL PARK

Tawharanui literally means the 'abundant edible bracts' of the Kiekie vine *Freycinetia baueriana*. However here it is used in a symbolic sense to refer to the abundant resources of the once heavily forested peninsula. The Tawharanui Peninsula area was also known by the general name of 'Tokatu', misspelt 'Takatu'. This name came from the distinctive 'upstanding rock' formation located on the eastern end of the peninsula at Tokatu Point. 'Tokatu' was a landmark known throughout the wider region as it provided an important navigational aid to the numerous canoe travellers voyaging up and down the coastline.

The Western area of the Park was known as 'Mangatawhiri' or literally 'the stream by which the tawhiri *Pittosporum tenuifolium* grows in profusion'. This name applied specifically to the stream valley running inland behind the present Park headquarters, and to the large pa site above the valley.

At the time of first European contacts in the 1830's the Park area was permanently occupied by a small 'hapu' or subtribal group of Te Kawerau known as Ngati Raupo. Led by Ruka Taiaho, the Ngati Raupo occupied the Mangatawhiri or Jones Bay area as well as Waikauri Bay immediately to the east. The Park area was also occupied seasonally by Ngati Manuhiri and by their Ngati Rongo relatives from Mahurangi. The origin of the name Ngati Raupo is unknown although it may well have related to a major feature of the landscape in the Mangatawhiri area. This is the extensive tract of raupo *Typha orientalis* swampland that covered almost all of the flat land in Mangatawhiri Stream catchment.

Archaeological and traditional evidence indicates that Maori settlement was concentrated around the lower reaches of the Mangatawhiri Stream catchment. Associated outlying seasonal occupation sites, used for both cultivation and fishing activities, are found on the northern coastline between the Waimaru Stream and Waikokowai (Anchor Bay). In addition similar small sites are found along the high ridgeline above the southern coast of the Tawharanui Peninsula.

In the lower Mangatawhiri Stream catchment there are at least seven clusters of pits and terraces indicating intensive settlement and the storage of significant amounts of kumara. The most impressive occupation sites are found on the highest points above each end of Jones Bay. Immediately above the outlet of the Mangatawhiri Stream is an extensive defended settlement site known as 'Pahi' or the 'lofty fortified settlement'. This site extends for nearly half a kilometre along the ridge, includes a minimum of 24 terraces and 15 pits and is defended as its eastern extremity by two transverse ditches 60 metres in length. Above the western end of the bay is another major defended settlement site which contains at least 25 terraces and 31 pits and is defended by a double ditch as its western extremity.

Kumara from the adjoining warm north facing slopes and other outlying gardens were taken back to the main settlements for storage while seed tubers and crops surpluses were stored in the small pit clusters adjoining the major cultivation area. The two main settlement and kumara storage sites; the Mangatawhiri kainga, and Pahi, were both protected by defensive ditches and palisading. However neither provided an ideal defensive position, so that in times of crisis refuge would have been sought in the headland pa located at nearby Waikauri Bay, or on Pukenihi to the north west.

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MAORI HISTORY - KAI

TAWHARANUI REGIONAL PARK

The Tawharanui area provided an ideal living environment for the Ngati Raupo. Aruhe or bracken fern *Pteridium esculentum* was a staple food source that was harvested from clearings associated with all of the cultivation areas. The stream margins were used for cultivating taro *Colocasia antiquorum* and the swamp was harvested for building and weaving materials, e.g. raupo *Typha orientalis*, kuta *Scirpus lacustris* and harakeke or flax *Phormium tenax*. The swamp, which covered much of the lowland area of the park until drained for farming, would also have provided a special mud used to dye textiles, foods like raupo pollen, wildfowl such as the pukeko, and numerous tuna or eels.

Kokowai or red ochre was used both by Ngati Raupo and their Ngati Manuhiri relatives from Pakiri for many decorative purposes and for sacred ritual. The kokowai outcrop on the cliffs at the eastern end of Anchor Bay gave that locality its Maori name of 'Waikokowai' or 'the bay of the red ochre source'. Ngati Manuhiri visited Waikokowai on a seasonal basis, living in the small occupation sites on the surrounding consolidated dune country and also the small headland pa at Anchor Bay. This pa was known as 'Pa-pahi' or the 'fortified seasonal occupation site'. (Ibid).

Associated with some of the main settlement sites in the Park are Karaka *Corynocarpus laevigatus* groves. Fruit was gathered from these groves in autumn and processed to provide a supplementary food source during winter. Berries from numerous locally found trees such as Kahikatea *Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*, Puriri *Vitex lucens*, Taraire *Beilschmiedia tarairi*, Titoki *Alectryon excelsus* and Totara *Podocarpus totara* would have been harvested for food. This would also have applied to the tawhara or edible bracts of the Kiekie vine *Freycinetia baueriana* as well as the fleshy stems of the Ti or cabbage tree *Cordyline australis* and the Mamaku or black tree fern *Cyathea medullaris*.

Most plants in the coastal forest provided material that could be used for medical purposes, and many found in the Park had specialised uses. For example the Whau *Entelea arborescens* was used to manufacture flats for fishing nets, the leaves of the Ngaio *Myoporum laetum* which is still found at Ngaio Bay were used as an insect repellent and the leaves of the Nikau *Rhopalostylis sapida* were used as a thatching material.

The berry producing and flowering trees found in the local coastal forest especially Puriri, Kowhai *Sophora microphylla*, Rewarewa *Knightia excelsa*, Pohutukawa *Metrosideros excelsa* and Mahoe *Melicactus ramiflorus* would have attracted birds like the tui and Kereru (NZ pigeon), thus providing another valuable food source. Timber trees such as Totara and Kauri *Agathis australis* were also worked in the Park area, as indicated by a number of stone adzes found on the land.

Oral tradition suggests that Kawerau hapu related to Ngati Raupo came to the area to fish until the twentieth century (M.B.3 N.L.C. Kaipara 1873:39) and fish bones, in particular those of the tamure or snapper, are found in almost every midden. Middens found at Jones Bay and on the coastal dunes on the northern side of the peninsula, contain thirteen varieties of shellfish. These include not only rocky shore species such as paua *Haliotis iris*, and soft shore species like the Tuatua *Paphies subtriangulatum* but also estuarine species like the pipi *Paphies australe* and the scallop *Pecten novaezelandiae*. The latter two species were almost certainly gathered from the Whangateau Harbour to the north of the peninsula.

MAORI HISTORY - LAND CLAIMS

TAWHARANUI REGIONAL PARK

By the late 1830's European had begun to seek land in the Hauraki Gulf area and unbeknown to the people of Ngati Raupo their land was purchased by William Webster in 1839. Webster, an American trader and land speculator operating out of Coromandel Harbour, had purchased the 'Point Rodney' block from the Hauraki tribes. This block included the entire coastal area between Point Rodney and Tawharanui (Turton 1882:276). This purchase was examined by the Land Claims Commission in 1844. The Commissioners found that Webster's Claim was excessive and he was given title to 1944 acres (786ha) on the northern side of the Whangateau Harbour.

The Kawerau hapu of the area were still not secure on their land and were unaware of the offer to sell from the Hauraki Tribes of Ngati Maru, Ngati Paoa, Ngati Tamatera and Ngati Whanaunga who claimed ownership of the land through their conquests of the Ngati Raupo and other tribes in the late 19th century. The proposal made on 12 April 1841 was immediately accepted by the Crown Land Purchase Department and the 'Omaha and Mahurangi Purchase' was concluded the following day. The 'Mahurangi Purchase' was extremely complex and was not to be finalised by the Crown for a further thirteen years, during which time the Crown made no attempt to remove the Kawerau tribal groups from the land.

The Crown finally moved to settle the Mahurangi Purchase in January 1852 when John Johnson, Interpreter for the Native Secretary Auckland was asked to "ascertain the nature and extent of the Native claims to the Mahurangi and Matakana District, (and) the limits into which their reserves could be confined". Reserves were set aside for Ngati Rongo at Puhoi, Ngati Raupo at Tawharanui, and Ngati Manuhiri at Pakiri and Omaha (Leigh).

In the 1850's Ngati Raupo made their home in the small bay just west of Matatuahu Point. They now had access to European material goods via the newly established village of Matakana and came into regular contact with European families who had settled in the bays west of Te Ngaere. The hapu had adopted Christianity having been visited by the Reverend James Buller and other missionaries from the Kaipara Wesleyan Mission Circuit since the late 1840's. After his baptism their leader Taiaho Porotaka took the name 'Ruka' or Luke and his eldest son adopted the baptismal name of 'Wiremu Patene' or William Barton after one of the organisers of the Wesleyan Mission Circuit since the late 1840's.

By the 1860's Matakana had become a thriving community based around timber milling, farming and boatbuilding and over forty European families had settled in the area. The quiet atmosphere of the area was disturbed in December 1864, however, when a large group of young Waikato men arrived on the Tawharanui Peninsula. They were members of the Waikato tribes who had been captured by British troops at the Battle of Rangiriri (1863) and imprisoned on Kawau Island. They had been assisted in their escape by Tauwhitu of Te Parawhau who had been living 'Dacre's Claim' at Whangateau. Their landing place near Bluebell Point became known locally as 'Maori Beach'. After staying briefly at Tawharanui the Tainui escapees travelled overland to Whangateau and built a fortified position on Tamahunga the large hill to the north. After creating great concern among local European settlers they soon left for Kaipara and were ultimately given free passage by the Government to return to the Waikato.