

MANAWATU RIVER ESTUARY

RAMSAR MANAGEMENT PLAN

2013-2023

As at 23 July 2013

Prepared for the Manawatu Estuary Management Team to fulfil the requirements of
the Ramsar Convention

SUMMARY

In July 2005 the Manawatu Estuary was declared a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention Treaty of 1971. The nomination of the Manawatu Estuary acknowledges the ecological importance of the area and was compiled by the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society with the support of the Manawatu Estuary Trust. The Manawatu Estuary is the largest estuary in the lower North Island of New Zealand and has been recognized as an important area for wading birds, its vegetation and landform values.

Management of the Manawatu Estuary will be guided by five main objectives:

- 1 Protect and enhance the ecological character of the estuary;
- 2 Protect and enhance the values of the estuary;
- 3 Promote wise use of the estuary;
- 4 Encourage learning; the estuary will be a place for learning about the natural environment and estuarine processes; and
- 5 Provide for cultural heritage values.

To support work and management at the Ramsar Site a Literature Review will be developed on the Estuary, as well as Annual Action Plans to direct resources and time. The first Annual Action Plan will be developed for the 2013-14 year.

This is a non-statutory document, in that it does not have the legal status or ability to regulate or modify current activities in the estuary. Any changes to the use of the Estuary recommended through monitoring undertaken as part of this plan can only be achieved through changes to Acts of Parliament, regional/district plans, district management strategies, or via the resource consent process, all of which involve the component of public consultation.

DURATION OF THIS PLAN

The second Ramsar Management Plan goes until 2023. A ten year term has been chosen to enable long term projects to be developed and implemented.

The Management Team will develop Annual Action Plans that are underpinned by the Objectives set out in this Plan (refer to page xxx). This approach enables the Governing agencies more flexibility in being able to react to new information and results from monitoring and research. The Annual Action Plans will have tasks allocated to different agencies and stakeholder groups and will outline any monitoring that is completed. It is expected that Annual Action Plans will also simplify the progress and monitoring reports the Department of Conservation provides to the Ramsar Secretariat.

Description

Manawatu Estuary – Physical Description

The Manawatu River flows almost due west into the Tasman Sea just to the south of Foxton Beach township, on the west coast of the North Island of New Zealand. The estuary it forms goes inland from this point for a distance of up to four kilometres. The centre of the estuary is located at a latitude of approximately 40° 28' 30" South and a longitude of 175° 14' 30" East. The area of estuary which has been included for listing as a Ramsar site is around 250 hectares.

Comment: Include the format for the coordinates

The Manawatu Estuary is in the Foxton Ecological District, which is the western and coastal part of the Manawatu Ecological Region.

Figure XXX: Topographical map showing location of the Ramsar Site within the Manawatu Estuary.

Legal Description of the Manawatu Estuary

No one organisation has sole actual or vested ownership of the proposed management area. Cadastral information is not totally reliable, due to the fluctuating position of the river.

The bulk of the Manawatu Estuary Ramsar Site is unallocated riverbed or foreshore. The largest blocks of allocated land are as follows:

- Spit area -Pt. Sec. 3, Block II, Moutere Survey District, SO 26064 Sec. J, Moutere Survey District, SO 26064
- Mudflats -Sec. 1, Block II, Moutere Survey District, SO 12963 Lot 3, DP 11478, MoutereSurvey District, SO 10773, 23692

Smaller blocks adjoining the estuary may or may not be within the proposed management area but this cannot be accurately established without survey.

Manawatu Estuary – Ecological Description

The Manawatu Estuary is a dynamic part of the coastal environment. The geology, vegetation and birds have all been studied at the Estuary. The following is a summary of these ecological features at the Estuary. For more information you can refer to the Literature Review that has been completed to support this edition of the Management Plan.

The geology of the estuary has been categorised into distinct types “estuarine muds, silts and clays” Ravine (1992). The vegetation has also been described in Ravine (1992) as being divided into four main groups. Mudflats; herb fields dominated by halfstar; saltmarshes and rushes. *Spartina* is an invasive exotic cordgrass that had impacted on the estuary reducing available habitat for birds until it’s control and plan for eradication was put into place.

The Manawatu Estuary is a significant location for many species of wading birds that use the estuary and migrate here. There are 12 endemic shorebird species and 26 migratory species that have been recorded. The estuary is particularly important for indigenous shorebirds as an overwintering area.

Manawatu Estuary - Cultural Heritage Values

Water and water bodies such as rivers, lakes and wetlands, have their own mauri¹, which it is important for the Tangata Whenua to protect from pollution, degradation and damage. Rivers, lakes and wetlands are also key elements in the identity, whakapapa and mana² of the hapu (Keepa)³.

The name Manawatū is attributed to the tohunga Haunui-ā-Nanaia on the occasion of his famous journey down the west coasts of Manawatū Kāpiti Wellington region in pursuit of his wife. It has been described as a moment in which the tohunga stood upon the bank of the great river, assessing the ‘sweeping tide flowing in front of him, he felt at last he had come upon an insuperable barrier to his course, and his heart sank within him he called it Manawatū-the depressed spirit’ (Buick 1903, p. 10), described literally in Māori as ‘heart standing still’.

Maori view the Manawatū Estuary as a part of the coast and of the river and that the river connects the coastal lands and sea with the land and the people further inland. In the case of the Manawatū River, this land includes the Manawatū, Oroua, Pohangina, Mangahao and Mangatainoka catchments. These catchments extend over a hundred kilometres inland and include land on both sides of the Ruahine and Taranaki Ranges.

The Manawatū River and estuary are of considerable significance to a number of iwi, including Muaūpoko, Rangitāne and Ngāti Raukawa. The river is seen as a physical connection to the spirit world (Ravine 2007) and is therefore tapu. The estuarine area itself provided the traditional taonga of the river’s fisheries (particularly tuna (eels)),

¹ Mauri, life principle (Ryan’s 1994 Dictionary of Modern Māori)

² Whakapapa = to make connection to the land/ genealogy , Mana = integrity, prestige, sphere of influence - (Ryan’s 1994 Dictionary of Modern Māori)

³ An indigenous perspective on wastewater alternatives for urban development, Keepa Morgan, (20)

shellfish, and wetland plants (flax and raupō). This is reflected in a number of midden sites located around the shores of the estuary (Adkin 1948).

In pre-Pākehā times the waterway was used alot by Māori for access to the interior of the North Island, especially its eastern portion, but also to numerous kāinga and pā along the banks (Adkin 1948, p. 209).

The Ramsar Convention

In 1971 New Zealand became a contracting party to the International Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention). The Ramsar Convention was signed at Ramsar, Iran, on the 2nd of February 1971. The Ramsar Convention has been amended in 1982, 1987 and 1994.

The mission of the Ramsar Convention is

“The conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world” (Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2004).

On 30 May 2013, 167 Contracting Parties had designated 2123 sites for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, with a total surface area of 205,380,051 hectares (Ramsar Website⁴)

Article 1 of this Convention defines wetlands as:

“areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres.”

The Manawatu Estuary meets this definition of wetland.

Under the Convention, each contracting party (of which New Zealand is one)

“shall designate suitable wetlands within its territory for inclusion in a List of Wetlands of International Importance” (Article 2).

The Convention sets several criteria which a wetland needs to meet before it is included in this list. The Manawatu Estuary meets criteria 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8 (R.F.B.P.S., 2004; see below) and was listed under the Ramsar Convention in 2006.

⁴ Ramsar Website 30/5/2013 http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-home/main/ramsar/1_4000_0_

Ramsar Criteria met by the Manawatu Estuary

(Taken from R.F.B.P.S., 2004)

Criteria	Assessment of Manawatu Estuary
1. A wetland should be considered internationally important if it contains a representative, rare or unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type found within the appropriate biogeographical region.	The Manawatu Estuary is a representative example of a natural coastal estuary within the ecological region of Foxton. It is the largest estuary and wading bird feeding grounds in the lower half of the North Island of New Zealand, and retains a high degree of naturalness and biodiversity. It has been recognized by the Department of Conservation as a wetland of national importance, recommended for protection (Ravine, 1992).
2. A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species, or threatened ecological communities.	The ecological communities of the Manawatu Estuary include salt marsh and mudflat feeding grounds for migratory and local water birds and breeding grounds for native fish. There are 13 species of birds, 6 species of fish and 4 species of plants listed in the Threatened Species List, which rely on the Manawatu Estuary ecological area.
3. A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports populations of plant and/or animal species important for maintaining the biological diversity of this biogeographical region.	<p>The upper reaches of the Manawatu Estuary are comprised of the river channel and large areas of saltmarsh with some open ponds and channels.</p> <p>As access to this area is difficult, it supports a large colony of Fernbird, as well as Royal Spoonbill, Australasian Bittern and Marsh Crake. As the largest saltmarsh in the biogeographical region, these species are important for maintaining the biological plant and animal diversity.</p> <p>Ninety-three bird species have been identified by the Ornithological Society. A current list of bird species is attached as appendix xxx Appendix I).</p>
4. A wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports plants and/or animals at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.	<p>Flocks of 200-300 New Zealand Shoveller and New Zealand Grey Teal have been seen sheltering in the estuary in the duck-shooting season (May-June).</p> <p>The estuary is also a shelter for wading birds in times of storms when the prevailing westerly winds hammer the coast – on one occasion 800 Wrybill used the Estuary for this purpose (>20% of the world population).</p>
5. A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of a species of water bird.	The Manawatu Estuary regularly supports at least 1% of the world population of Wrybill over the winter months. Reports during the winter of 2006 have stated as many as 70 birds have been seen feeding on the shallows of the estuary, and the total world population is only c.4200.
6. A wetland should be considered internationally important if it is an important source of food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery and/or migration path on which fish stocks, either within the wetland or elsewhere, depend.	<p>The Manawatu River supports a wide range of indigenous fish (Appendix III). The Estuary is both a spawning ground, and a migration path for the native fish in the river.</p> <p>Many species of freshwater fish spend part of their life histories in the sea. There are five different species in the whitebait fishery (inanga, koaro, banded kokopu, giant kokopu and shortjaw kokopu) and all move to and from the sea. No less than 17 endemic species spend a significant part of their life in the sea. They return in spring travelling on the incoming tides to breed in the reeds and marshes of small side streams and the estuary.</p> <p>It is part New Zealand's cultural heritage for people to go 'whitebaiting' for inanga, and the estuary is popular for this activity. There is a season in the early spring within</p>

	<p>which whitebaiters are allowed to net for these fish in daylight hours only. Also, local fishermen recall how, in some places in the upper estuary, they have seen the water teeming with thousands of tiny black flounders about 2-3 cm long.</p>

Goals

The following are a series of Goals that underpin achievements of the Management Plan Objectives:

Table xxx Objectives and Goals for the Management Plan	
Objectives	Goals
Protect and enhance the ecological character of the estuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Manawatu Estuary Ramsar Site is recognised for it's contribution to the wider ecosystem • Populations of indigenous species are stable or increasing • Habitat is optimised to ensure migratory species can thrive • Pest plants are either contained or eradicated from the Ramsar Site • Available habitat is increased in the Manawatu Estuary through the removal of weed species or dominant native species that extend beyond their natural extent • Water quality improves to, a level to maintain recognised values of the Manawatu Estuary including contact recreation.
Promote wise use of the estuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ramsar site is a protected area • The estuary and its wise use are actively promoted
Encourage learning and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research is encouraged • Educational activities are encouraged.
Promote socio-economic benefits of the estuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public have access to the estuary without compromising the natural features of the estuary. • Fishing and white baiting continue in a sustainable fashion. • Gamebird shooting is permitted in suitable locations. • Use of recreational, land-based vehicles is safe and non-destructive
Provide for cultural heritage values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural values are recognised • Historical values are identified and protected.

Annual Action Plan
Developed Each Year starting 2013/14

APPENDIX 1

Constitutional Foundations

The Treaty is generally regarded as New Zealand's founding document and influences the relationship between the Crown and Māori. It is regarded as a constitutional document and underpins legislation for Crown and local government.

The Treaty of Waitangi is an agreement made between the British Crown and Māori chiefs in 1840. It enabled the British to establish a government in New Zealand and confirmed to Māori the right to continue to exercise rangatiratanga (chieftainship).

The Treaty is one of the factors that need to be taken into account in law-making and public decision-making.

References to the Treaty in legislation require public decision-makers to take the Treaty into account in the specific context of the legislation.

Generally legislation refers to principles of the Treaty rather than the Treaty itself.

Treaty principles have developed because of the difference between the English and Māori texts, and the need to apply the Treaty to circumstances as they arise. The Waitangi Tribunal and Courts have played key roles in defining the Treaty, using principles to express the mutual responsibilities of the Crown and Māori.

Treaty settlements

Treaty settlements have helped remedy breaches of the Treaty by the Crown. Settlements typically consist of cultural and commercial redress, an account of the breach and an apology. The terms of each settlement are negotiated by the Government and the claimant group. The settlement terms must be agreed to by Parliament in legislation. The Manawatu Estuary will be subject to iwi identifying cultural associations to those sites.

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) is noted by Senior Law specialist (Jacinta Ruru (2013) as Aotearoa New Zealand's pre-eminent natural resources statute.ⁱⁱ It puts forward an all-encompassing regime for the sustainable management of land, air and water.ⁱⁱⁱ Central government retains some responsibility to influence this regime, primarily through setting national environmental standards, national policy standards and New Zealand coastal policy statements.

The RMA directs local authorities to recognise the Maori relationship with water, in formulating district and regional plan rules, and issuing resource consents. Section 6(e) mandates that all persons exercising functions and powers in relation to

managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources must recognise and provide for matters of national importance, including the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with water.

Section 6 of the RMA relates to Maori as follows:

6 Matters of national importance

In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall

recognise and provide for the following matters of national importance:

- (e) The relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga.
- (f) the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.
- (g) the protection of recognised customary activities.

Additionally, section 7(a) of the RMA directs that all persons exercising functions and powers in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall have particular regard to kaitiakitanga (the exercise of guardianship by Maori). E.g 7 Other matters

In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall have particular regard to—

(a) Kaitiakitanga:

(aa) The ethic of stewardship:

Moreover, section 8 states:

8 Treaty of Waitangi

In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi).

Sections 6(e), 7(a) and 8 provide a strong base for Maori to voice their concerns relating to the use of freshwater. In addition, several other sections in the RMA create mandatory requirements on local authorities to listen to Maori. For example, in 2003, the RMA was amended to direct that a regional council, when preparing or changing a regional policy statement, must:^{xxix}
take into account any relevant planning document recognised by an iwi authority, and lodged with the council, to the extent that its content has a bearing on resource management issues of the region.

Section 62(1)(b) directs that a regional policy statement must state the resource management issues of significance to iwi authorities in the region. Moreover, since 2005, all local authorities must keep and maintain, for each iwi and hapu within its region or district, a record of:^{xxx}

(a) the contact details of each iwi authority within the region or district and any groups within the region or district that represent hapu for the purposes of this Act; and

- (b) the planning documents that are recognised by each iwi authority and lodged with the local authority; and
- (c) any area of the region or district over which 1 or more iwi or hapu exercise kaitiakitanga.

The RMA also provides for some substantial possibilities for Maori to be more actively involved in the governance of natural resources, including water. For example, the RMA empowers a local authority to transfer any one or more of its functions, powers, or duties to any iwi authority.^{xxxix} The RMA also enables a local authority to make a joint management agreement with an iwi authority and group that represents hapu for the purposes of the RMA.^{xxxix}

National Policy Statement: Freshwater Management 2011 – Tāngata whenua roles and interests.

Objective D1

- To provide for the involvement of iwi and hapū, and to ensure that tāngata whenua values and interest are identified and reflected in the management of freshwater including associated ecosystems, and decision-making regarding freshwater planning, including how all other objectives of this national policy statement are given effect to.

Policy D1 – Local authorities shall take reasonable steps to:

- A) Involve iwi and hapū in the management of freshwater and freshwater ecosystems in the region,
- B) Work with iwi and hapū to identify tāngata whenua values and interests in the management of, and decision-making regarding, freshwater and freshwater ecosystems in the region.
- C) Reflect tāngata whenua values and interest in the management of, and decision-making regarding, freshwater and freshwater ecosystems in the region.

National Policy Statement: Freshwater Management 2011 – Tāngata whenua roles and interests.

Objective 3

- To take account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, recognise the role of tangata whenua as kaitiaki and provide for tangata whenua involvement in management of the coastal environments by:
 - Recognising the ongoing and enduring relationship of tangata whenua over lands, rohe and resources;
 - Promoting meaningful relationships and interactions between tangata whenua and persons exercising functions and powers under the Act;
 - Incorporating mātauranga Māori into sustainable management practices; and

- o Recognising and protecting characteristics of the coastal environment that are of special value to tangata whenua.

WWF.

MET apply through . for funding
project co-ordinator -
management of good based project .

- Raise funds project area .
- Raise profile MET - increase membership .
- planning -