

WHATUMA LAKE AND TUKITUKI CATCHMENT

We want healthier water in the Tukituki catchment

The Tukituki catchment extends from the ranges through Central Hawke's Bay and Hastings districts to the sea. Hawke's Bay Regional Council has been working with landowners in the catchment since 2008 to improve environmental, cultural, social and economic outcomes, and a storage dam has been proposed as a solution. Lake Whatuma near Waipukarau is an important habitat for birds and tuna (eels).



WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?

The Tukituki catchment is a large one and there are numerous concerns HBRC is involved in - ecology and habitat enhancement, summer low flows, water nutrient levels, stock exclusion from waterways, algal growth in summer (some of it toxic), water takes for irrigation, soil erosion and sediment flows, gravel management and flood protection.

Lake Whatuma is an important habitat for wildlife, but has poor water quality at times because of sediment and bird life. It can have low water levels in dry periods, and plant and animal pests impact on habitat health.



WHAT DO WE WANT TO FIX?



ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT

We want to develop an environmental enhancement plan for river and stream edges, lake and wetlands.



IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

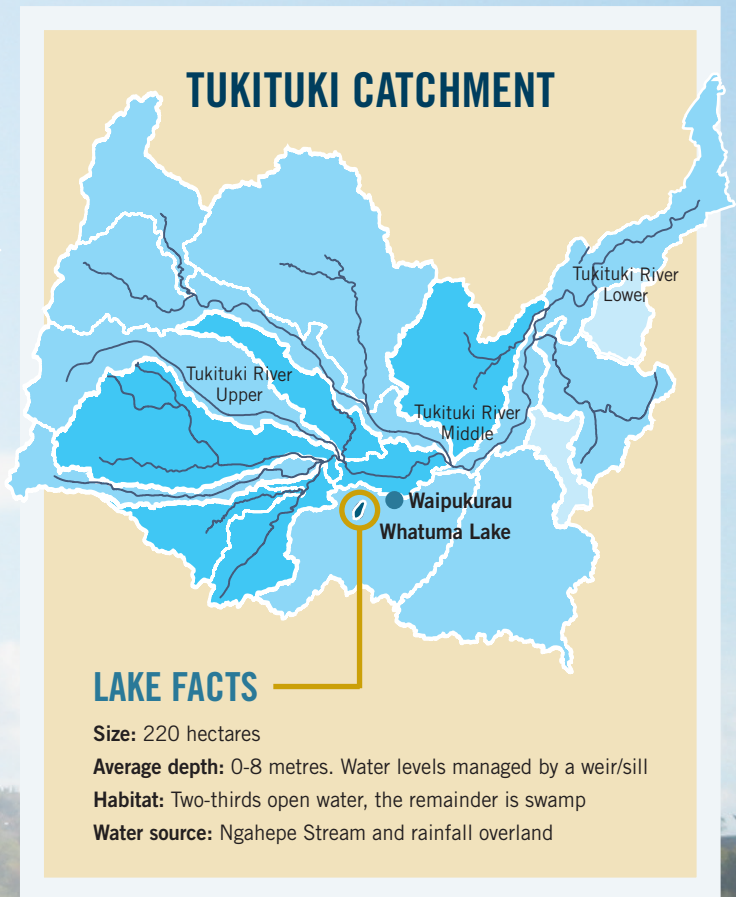
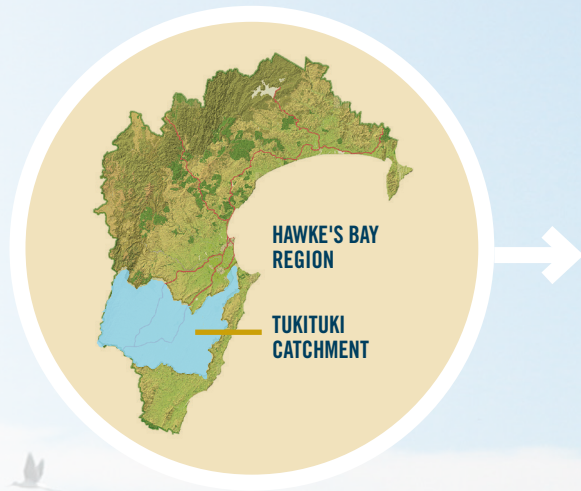
We want to continue to work to improve the water quality in the Tukituki catchment. We want to improve water quality through an environmental enhancement plan of action to protect Lake Whatuma.



IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY

We want to control pests. Controlling willow along the margins of the lake will continue to protect the swamp habitats. Essential predator control by landowners and water fowl hunters will continue to be supported by HBRC.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?



HBRC has been working with landowners in the Tukituki catchment since 2008 to improve environmental and economic outcomes.

A significant amount of work has gone into a wide range of investigations assessing the potential for large scale water storage in the Ruataniwha basin. This includes research on water quality, sediment/soil erosion and habitats.

Riparian planting by streams and rivers improves the habitat for tuna (eels) and kokopu, reduces algal growth and maintains oxygen levels to sustain life in the stream. It also benefits biodiversity and food chains.

Bans on river water takes for irrigation come into place when summer river levels drop. However, in a very dry or drought summer, river flows still drop and the warm, nutrient-rich water provides perfect conditions for algal weed to grow. Green algae is merely a nuisance for swimmers, black phormidium (blue green algae) can be toxic for humans and dogs.



Highly endangered native Bittern.

WHATUMA LAKE

Valued as a wildlife habitat, the lake is managed by the Department of Conservation and landowners, with pest and willow control coordinated by HBRC.

This is an important lake for water fowl, and is home to the largest New Zealand population of the endangered native Bittern.

The lake has a healthy community of native and exotic submerged water plants. It has traditional values for Maori, particularly as a tuna (short-finned eel) fishery.

Control of silver and crack willow is ongoing to prevent these weeds invading.