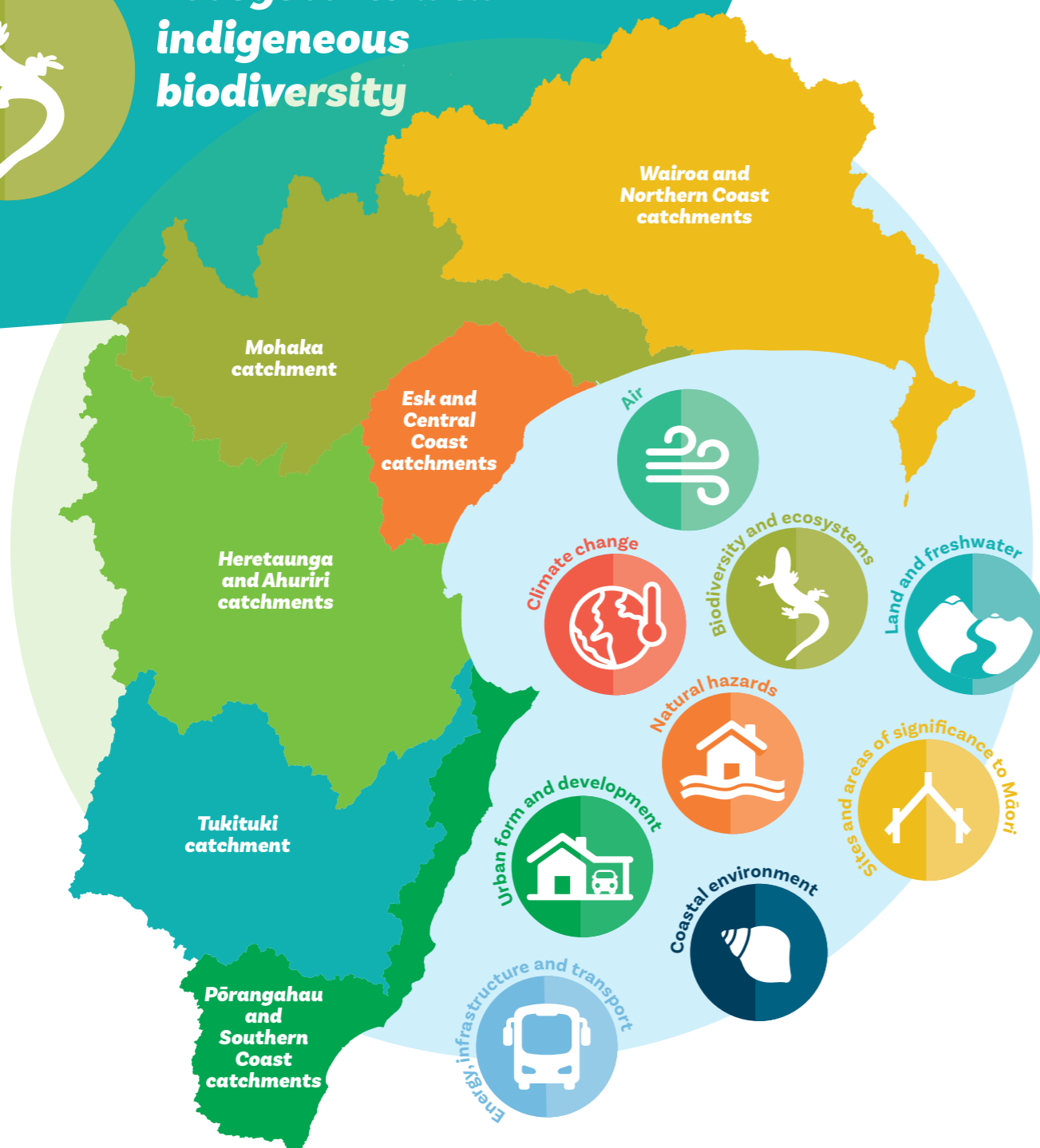




Ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity



KOTAHI

TŌ TĀTAU PAPA, TŌ TĀTAU ANAMATA
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HAWKES BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O TE MATAU-A-MĀUI



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What do we know?

Hawke's Bay is home to some special biodiversity – rare and threatened species like the kākā, kiwi, kōkako, long-tailed bat, tree weta and kākābeak; indigenous beech and podocarp forests in the mountains and coastal swamps and estuaries.

'Biological diversity' is the variety of all life and the interactions between. It is vital for humans because it is how ecosystems function and provides the natural systems essential to life on earth. Pollination, shelter, carbon storage, filtration of water, nutrient cycling and soil formation are just some of these. Biodiversity includes both indigenous and introduced species. The Regional Council has a particular interest in indigenous biodiversity. The Regional Council's role in biodiversity includes:

- Support for developing Hawke's Bay's Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan which is being community-led by the Biodiversity Hawke's Bay group
- Signatory to the regional Biodiversity Accord as an Accountable Partner
- Identifying and mapping the 61 ecosystem types found in the region, developing a priority classification system for these diverse ecosystems to guide restoration and improvement projects
- Support for a range of ecosystem projects

- Providing a range of regional parks at Pekapeka, Waitangi, Pākōwhai and Tūtira, and the proposed regional park for Ahuriri
- Leading plant and pest management, planning and service delivery
- Establishing new rules to manage river flows, that recognise water-based ecosystem values when allocating, taking and using water resources
- Identifying outstanding ecosystem values as part of the Outstanding Water Bodies work.

In the past, rules for managing terrestrial biodiversity mainly sat with city and district councils through district plans and managing reserves. Most district plans identify Significant Natural Areas and control vegetation clearance.

More recently, the Environment Court confirmed that regional councils have the responsibility to protect the habitat of marine fish species, but not harvesting.

The new National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB) is earmarked for release by the Government in 2022. This comes after widespread consultation on a draft NPS-IB in 2020. Broader regional council involvement in biodiversity is envisaged, but details won't be clear until the NPS-IB is finalised.



Known issues

Loss of native vegetation as forests are cleared for pasture or plantation forestry, wetland drainage, uncontrolled grazing, engineering of waterways, urban development, and reclamation of coastal margins – these have all adversely affected indigenous biodiversity – even in a modified state, many areas still provide important habitat values.

Damage, alteration and destruction of species and ecosystems from invasive, introduced plants and animals – effects can be made worse if other threats are present, such as a drought.

Estuaries have been heavily modified, reduced in size, and adversely affected by coastal development, introduced species, sediment and runoff from farms, and urban and industrial discharges near to estuaries.

Increasing vulnerability to disease and climate change as biodiversity is lost – this reduces resilience and challenges the sustainability of life in all forms into the future.

The risk of loss of critical natural systems, such as pollination for food production, carbon storage for climate change and wetland filtering for contaminant management.

The risk of loss of taonga species.

The reduction of native species which are important sources of material for cultural purposes such as whakairo (carving), te raranga (weaving) and rongoā (medicine).

Tangata whenua ability to retain rangatiratanga over resources and taonga, exercise customary uses, fulfill kaitiaki roles and use Mātauranga Māori to guide biodiversity management.

Limited financial resources to support biodiversity initiatives across the region.

Knowledge gaps exist, including of marine habitats and species.



How we are doing?

Hawke's Bay continues to see a net loss of biodiversity and native vegetation cover. Since pre-European settlement times, 75% of native vegetation has been cleared and only 2% of wetlands remain in Hawke's Bay. The largest areas of native vegetation are found in the mountain ranges. Most of the fertile and accessible land has been converted to agriculture or horticulture.

Restoration and pest management projects involving the Regional Council are at hbrc.govt.nz, search: #biodiversity. These include more fencing at Little Bush (Puketitiri), improving habitat for spawning inanga at Tukituki River mouth, marine biosecurity at Ahuriri Estuary, and fencing and tree planting to enhance the Te Mangatupae Stream at Whangawehi.

Due to active dune restoration, the dunes at Ocean Beach are in much better shape than a decade ago. Many native species are returning, such as the NZ dotterel and little blue penguins Kororā.

Over \$1 million was recently secured from HBRC, Jobs for Nature and QEII National Trust funding to protect and enhance critically endangered native forest. Funding is being used for deer fencing and pest control at seven forest sites.

As part of the Kotahi Plan, each catchment page has more information, a brief summary of the current state of biodiversity and activities being carried out locally.

Where to from here?

Through Kotahi we will need to meet any requirements introduced when the NPS-IB is finalised. An Exposure Draft was released from the Ministry for the Environment in June 2022.

