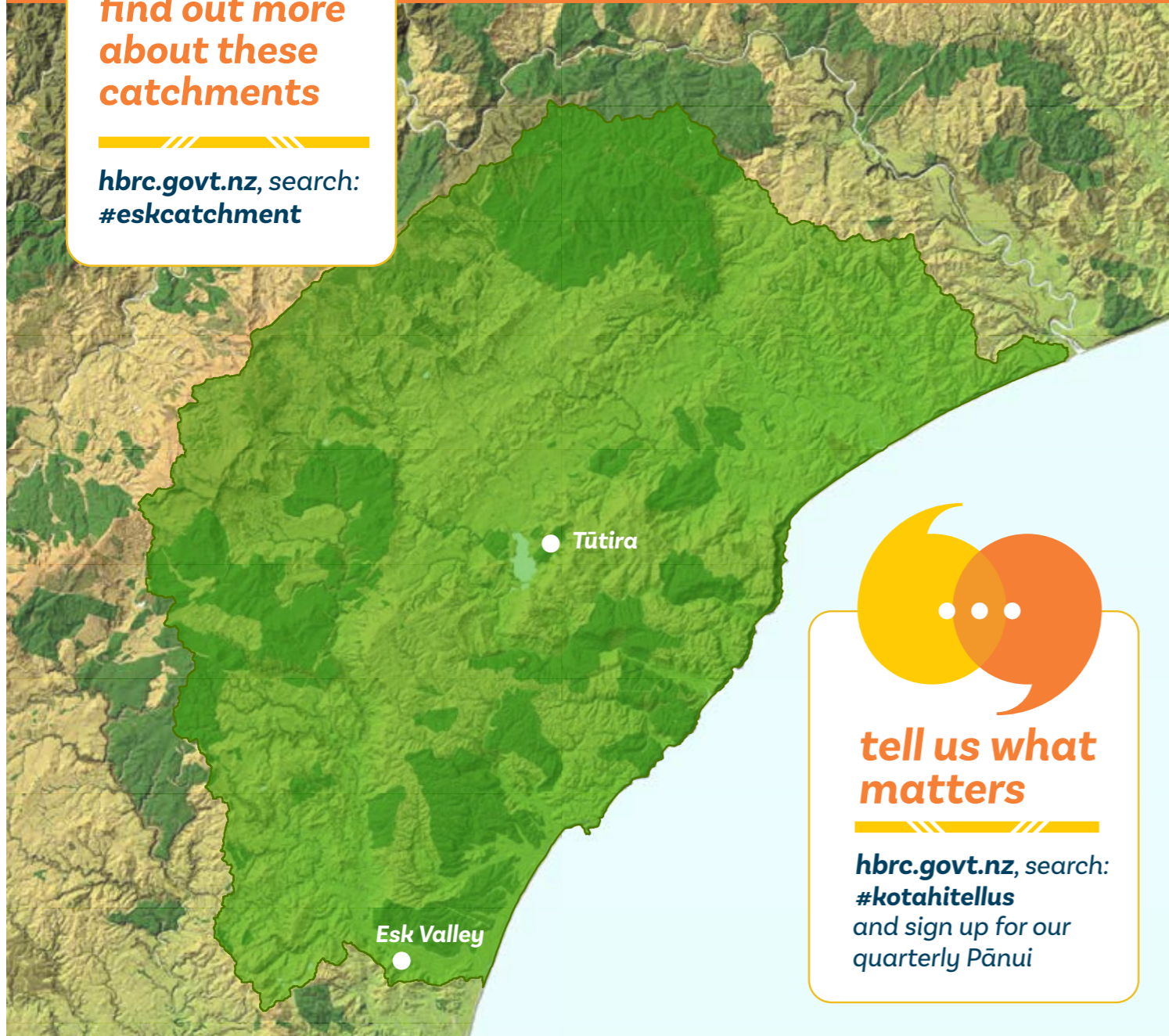




## Esk and Central Coast catchments

find out more about these catchments

[hbrc.govt.nz](https://hbrc.govt.nz), search: #eskcachment



● Tūtira

Esk Valley



tell us what matters

[hbrc.govt.nz](https://hbrc.govt.nz), search: #kotahitellus and sign up for our quarterly Pānui

# KOTAHI

TŌ TĀTAU PAPA, TŌ TĀTAU ANAMATA  
OUR PEOPLE, OUR FUTURE

## HAWKES BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O TE MATAU-A-MĀUI

## HAWKES BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O TE MATAU-A-MĀUI



## Esk and Central Coast catchments

### What do we know?

The Esk and Central Coast catchments is the smallest of six catchments in Hawke's Bay. Its two parts are the Esk Valley a gateway to the region, and Lake Tūtira and surrounds with established conservation features like Guthrie-Smith Outdoor Education Centre, Pan Pac Kiwi Crèche at Lake Opouahi, DOC's Boundary Creek reserve, and Tūtira Regional Park.

The major waterways in the region drain from the Maungaharuru Range, the Waikare, Aropoanui/ Arapawanui, Te Ngarue and Esk Rivers, as well as a few smaller coastal streams.

There are many lakes: Tūtira, Waikopiro, Opouahi and Orakai. Lake Tūtira, Lake Waikopiro and Aropoanui/ Arapawanui River were granted outstanding water body status in 2021.

Sheep and beef, and production forestry are the main land use types in the catchment, with a small amount

of dairy and deer farming near Tūtira. Orchards and vineyards line the lower parts of the Esk Valley.

The Geothermal Highway (SH5) and Coastal Highway (SH2) transport links provide the area with access to both Hawke's Bay airport and Napier Port. Whirinaki includes a power plant and the Pan Pac timber processing works.

Two small power stations, Rimu and Toronui, are sited on the Esk River. They have an output of 15Gwh per year.

Regional Council maintains a flood control scheme, established in 1996, in the Esk Valley and Whirinaki coastal area. The scheme is also designed to protect Whirinaki Mill and the associated power plant.

The Moremore Mātaitai reserve along the coast just north of the Esk River mouth covers traditional fishing grounds.



## Known issues

The catchments are prone to flash flooding. The last significant flood was in 2018. Flooding will increase over time due to climate change.

Erosion rates are high due to steep topography and soft sedimentary geology. Sediment, with phosphorus from topdressing, gets into waterways and lakes, and impacts ecosystem health. *E.coli* concentrations at monitoring sites are elevated at times.

Lake health is a mixed bag in the four lakes monitored by HBRC, but all score poor or very poor in the trophic level index. Algal blooms, fuelled by a legacy of nutrients that have made their way into the systems, are the main driver of these poor scores.

Old Man's Beard, Japanese Honeysuckle and Apple of Sodom are the key pest plants in the catchments. HBRC is responsible for the control of Old Man's Beard and for monitoring Japanese Honeysuckle. HBRC is also responsible for possum and rook control and monitoring rabbit populations in the area.



## How we are doing?

Draining out of the steep topography, the rivers and streams in the catchments have a moderate gradient with large substrates, high natural character and aesthetic values, and generally good water clear. Monitoring results show phosphorus and *E.coli* concentrations are elevated at many sites, and that deposited sediment may be impacting in-stream bug communities.

There are two river flow monitoring sites with long term records in the catchments. The upper and lower Esk River. Following successive dry seasons between 2019 and 2021, average yearly low flows at both flow sites were below the long-term average.

The four Tūtira Lakes are subject to algal blooms that continue to cause concern. The first documented water quality concerns for Lake Tūtira date from 1959. Over the years, there have been many actions to improve Lake Tūtira, such as tree planting and creating more wetland areas. The Regional Council purchased lakeside land to manage as a soil conservation area and has since established a Regional Park. HBRC has carried out a lot of science investigations in recent years to record how this complex lake works and to find long term solutions.

The Regional Council is partnering with Maungaharuru Tangitū Trust, landowners and the local community to improve the health of the lake. Significant work has been undertaken at Tūtira as part of Te Waiū o Tūtira partnership between HBRC and iwi, with the goal to restore the mauri of Lakes Waikopiro and Tūtira. This particular project has recently finished but it is anticipated that further work will continue.

## Where to from here?

The Regional Plan is due for review and will need to give effect to the Government's directions set out in the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020. Regional Council needs to describe Te Mana o Te Wai for the catchment and develop practical, catchment-based action plans.

HBRC's Regional Water Security programme is underway and will inform more accurate understanding of the current regional pattern of water takes and use. This will also look to future water demands in the context of a changing climate, and identify future water management options. This information will help to set rules for water allocation, limits and targets through this Kotahi process.

The area has small pockets of remnant native bush. Forty nine ecological priority sites have been identified by the Regional Council with a focus on protecting indigenous biodiversity. Boundary Stream is one of these sites and a 'mainland island' set up to protect and restore habitats through intensive management of introduced pests. Many interesting invertebrates including ghost moth (pūriri moth), peripatus, huhu beetles, and five of New Zealand's 70 wētā species are found at Boundary Stream. Birds have flourished since the project began with the successful reintroduction of North Island robin, kiwi, kokako, kākā, kākārīki and Cooks petrel.

Native vegetation on the riparian margins of the river and its tributaries is limited due to the often-steep nature of the land. This is having negative impacts on native fish habitat and recreation. There are indications of water quality issues related to land use. You can find more in the Ecosystems and Indigenous Biodiversity factsheet.

One formal catchment group is active in the catchments. The Central Coast-Waikare Catchment group was established in 2021 with Regional Council support. Te Huka Waiohinganga (Esk) River Care group formed in 2018 with the focus of improving biodiversity and water quality in the Esk catchment. Partnering with Petane Marae and Pan Pac, they developed a planting plan, established a native plant nursery that produces up to 5,000 plants a year, and hold community planting days.

It is anticipated that the protection and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity and the ecological prioritisation sites will be a key focus in this area, supported by the introduction of the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.

The Regional Council will work with tangata whenua, local authorities, stakeholder and interest groups and the wider community to agree on a catchments vision, check the issues and then set up working groups to help tackle the issues in each area. Online channels will be one of the tools used with the community to discuss various matters and agree the best way forward.