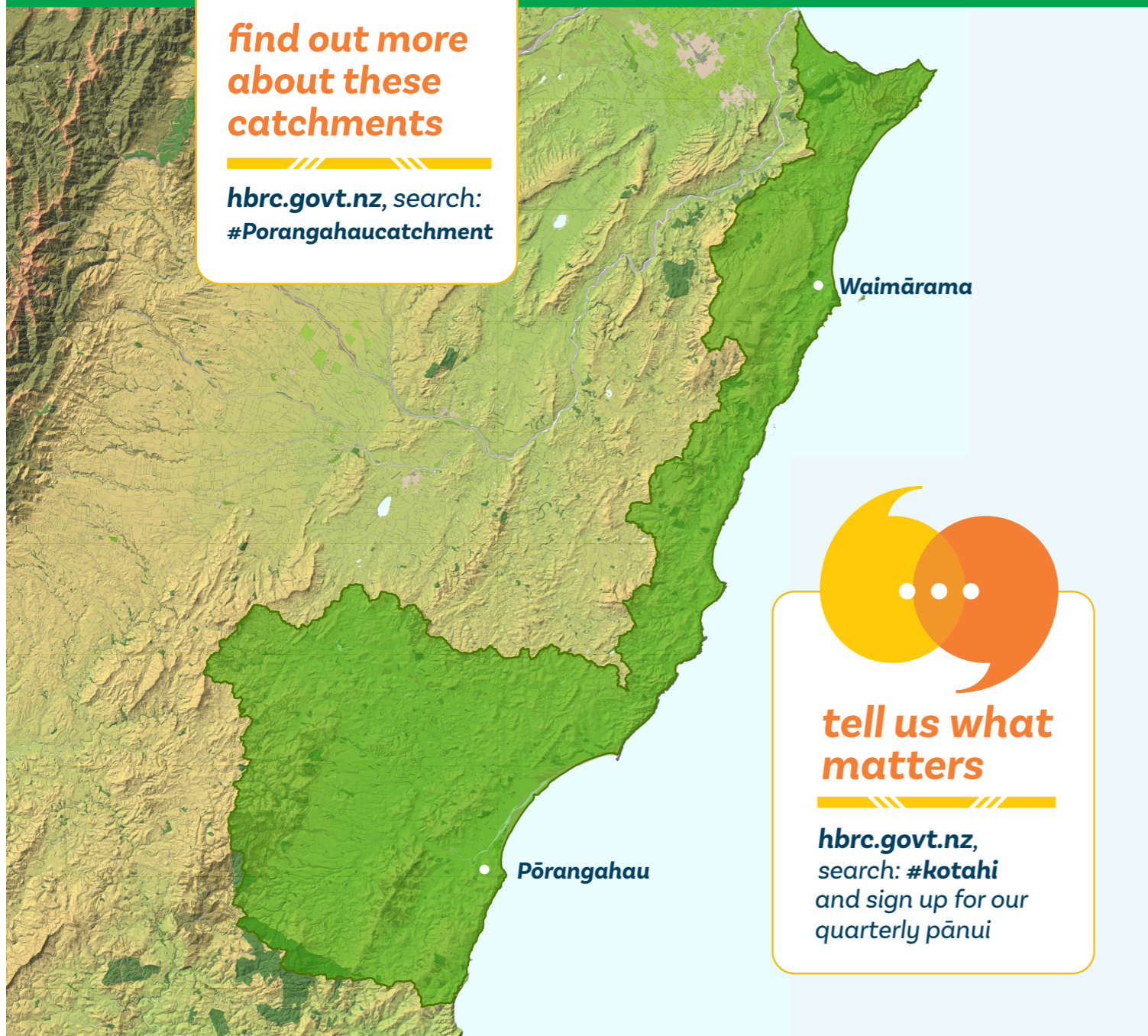




## Pōrangahau and Southern Coast catchments

find out more about these catchments

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## Pōrangahau and Southern Coast catchments

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

### What do we know?

This area is made up of two parts, the Pōrangahau catchment and the Southern Coast catchment making 1,359 km<sup>2</sup> in total.

The Pōrangahau catchment is made up of moderate hill country and flat land where generally fertile soils are prone to erosion.

The main land uses are sheep and beef farming with some forestry, deer, and cropping. Areas of versatile land are restricted by a dry climate and limited available surface water. This catchment sees regular droughts and floods and these will increase with climate change. It is also home to the worlds longest place name:

**Taumatawhakatangihangakoauauotamateaturipuka-kapikimaungahoronuku pokaiahenuakitanatahu.**

The Southern Coast has erodible hill country and is home to extensive sheep and beef farming. The high-quality coastline has some of Hawke's Bays most popular beaches including the coastal landmarks of Cape Kidnappers, Te Motu-o-Kura Bare Island. The southern coast is subjected to intense rain events that strip soil from steep areas. This impacts the water quality of coastal waterways.

Native natural areas are sparse and scattered. Coastal ecology includes Ocean Beach dunes and Cape Kidnappers Gannet Reserve. Important marine areas include Te Angiangi Marine Reserve (446 ha) between Blackhead and Aramoana beaches.

This catchment is home to the Pōrangahau Estuary, a long narrow estuary formed behind a low sandy longshore bar that runs for 14 kilometres. It is the largest estuary in Hawke's Bay at 750 ha and one of the least modified estuaries on the east coast of Aotearoa. The estuary is classified as an outstanding fishery, due to a unique assembly of fish species. It is a nationally important habitat for whitebait, flounder, mullet and kahawai.

In March 2018, Hawke's Bay Regional Council identified several patches of seagrass (*Zostera muelleri*) in the estuary. The last record of estuary seagrass in the region is from the Ahuriri Estuary in 1978 with no prior records of it in Pōrangahau Estuary.

The catchment includes the Pōrangahau River and smaller streams including the Huatokitoki, Mangawhero, Mangaorapa and Mangamaire.





## Known issues

The Pōrangahau Estuary has the highest suspended sediment concentration of all monitored estuaries in Hawke's Bay. Part of the problem is that over 25% of the deposited sediments are classified as mud, contributing to a loss of invertebrates and shellfish. Nitrate, ammonia and water clarity are at healthy levels at all environmental monitoring sites in the catchment.

Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) and Dissolved Reactive Phosphorus (DRP) are at healthy levels at many sites, but this varies and some sites have elevated levels. All river monitoring sites have poor scores for bug and insect counts (macroinvertebrates) due to sediment and temperature stresses. *E. Coli* concentrations are relatively high, so swimming is unsuitable at all sites, except for Maraetotara River at Waimarama Road. Summer water quality sampling shows poor swimmability at many lagoon and estuary sites.

Pest plant species in the catchment are Chilean Needle Grass, Saffron Thistle and wild conifers. The Regional Council is responsible for possum control over 84,687 ha and control of active rookeries.



## How we are doing?

HBRC's Erosion Control Scheme across 50 farms has resulted in 28 kms of riparian fencing, 667 ha of retired land and 41,000 ha of planting.

The Pōrangahau Flood Control Scheme covers 90 kms of waterways including the Pōrangahau River and some of its tributaries in Central Hawke's Bay. It was established in 1959-60 to reduce flooding and bank erosion. Community access via Pōrangahau Road is only rarely closed due to flooding. The Pōrangahau scheme uses only natural assets (streams and rivers) and no hard engineering structures. Routine maintenance involves vegetation control - mainly willow, with minor bank stabilising and removing debris build-up after flood events.

The catchment has 93 priority ecology sites over 5,235 ha. These were identified as significant due to their ability to protect native biodiversity.

## 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. The 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 a more accurate understanding of the current regional pattern of water takes and use. It will 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 the Kotahi process.

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

There are two established and active catchment groups. The Maraetotara Tree Trust and the Pōrangahau Catchment Group - Taurekaitai ki te Paerahi Incorporated. The Maraetotara Tree Trust has retired and planted river margins since 2002 to establish a lush riparian corridor the full length of the Maraetotara River. The Pōrangahau Catchment Group, formed in 2019, was successful in attaining a \$2.1 million Freshwater Improvement grant. Both groups now carry out water quality sampling to complement HBRC's environmental monitoring.

The Waipuka Whenua restoration project also began in 2019. Three properties have retired 180 ha of highly erodible land near Ocean beach and planted 200,000 native trees.

