

Significance

This site provides some riparian protection for streams in the Kaira Creek catchment, however it does not warrant a higher significance level due to its poor condition. There are better examples of totara forest elsewhere in Otamatea ED Northland.

OTAIRI CREEK FOREST AND WETLAND

Survey no.	Q08/191
Survey date	13 December 2005
Grid reference	Q08 316 511 (4 remnants)
Area	3.8 ha (3.0 ha forest, 0.8 ha wetland)
Altitude	0–48 m asl

Ecological units

- (a) Kowhai-ti kouka forest on moderate hillslope (59%)
- (b) Raupo reedland in small depression (21%)
- (c) Totara-kowhai-karaka forest on gentle coastal margin (20%)

Landform/geology

Hillslope and gully underlain by Oligocene micritic limestone (Mahurangi Limestone, Motatau Complex), and valley flat on Holocene alluvium.

Vegetation

Otairi Creek is a small, convoluted inlet on the eastern side of the Otamatea River (Q08/062) which is filled with tall mangrove forest and saltmarsh rushes and sedges. This site comprises two wetlands at the very upper end of the inlet in the freshwater zone, and forest remnants on the coastal fringe next to the inlet.

- (a) The largest forest remnant comprises sparse kowhai-ti kouka forest with occasional puriri, karaka, titoki and woolly nightshade.
- (b) The wetlands are dominated by raupo, with occasional emergent ti kouka.
- (c) The smaller forest remnant has equal proportions of totara, kowhai and karaka with occasional titoki and ti kouka.

Fauna

Australasian harrier. A spotless crane and fernbird call tape was played in fine, calm weather but no response was elicited.

Significance

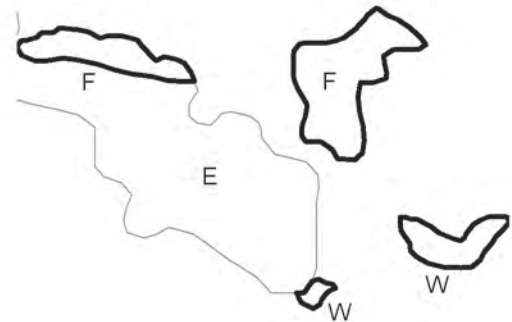
These remnants are very small and represent the last vestiges of what would once have been a continuous ecological sequence from forest to freshwater wetland to saltmarsh to mangrove. The current freshwater wetlands identified are probably on land reclaimed from tidal mudflats, whether through natural infilling and succession, or through human intervention (this is not clear). They may provide habitat for wetland birds such as rails and Australasian bittern. At present these remnants do not provide much of a buffer to the inlet due to their small size and degraded state.



Q08/191 Otairi Creek Forest and Wetland

S = Shrubland
 F = Forest
 W = Wetland
 E = Estuarine

0 250 500 1,000 Metres

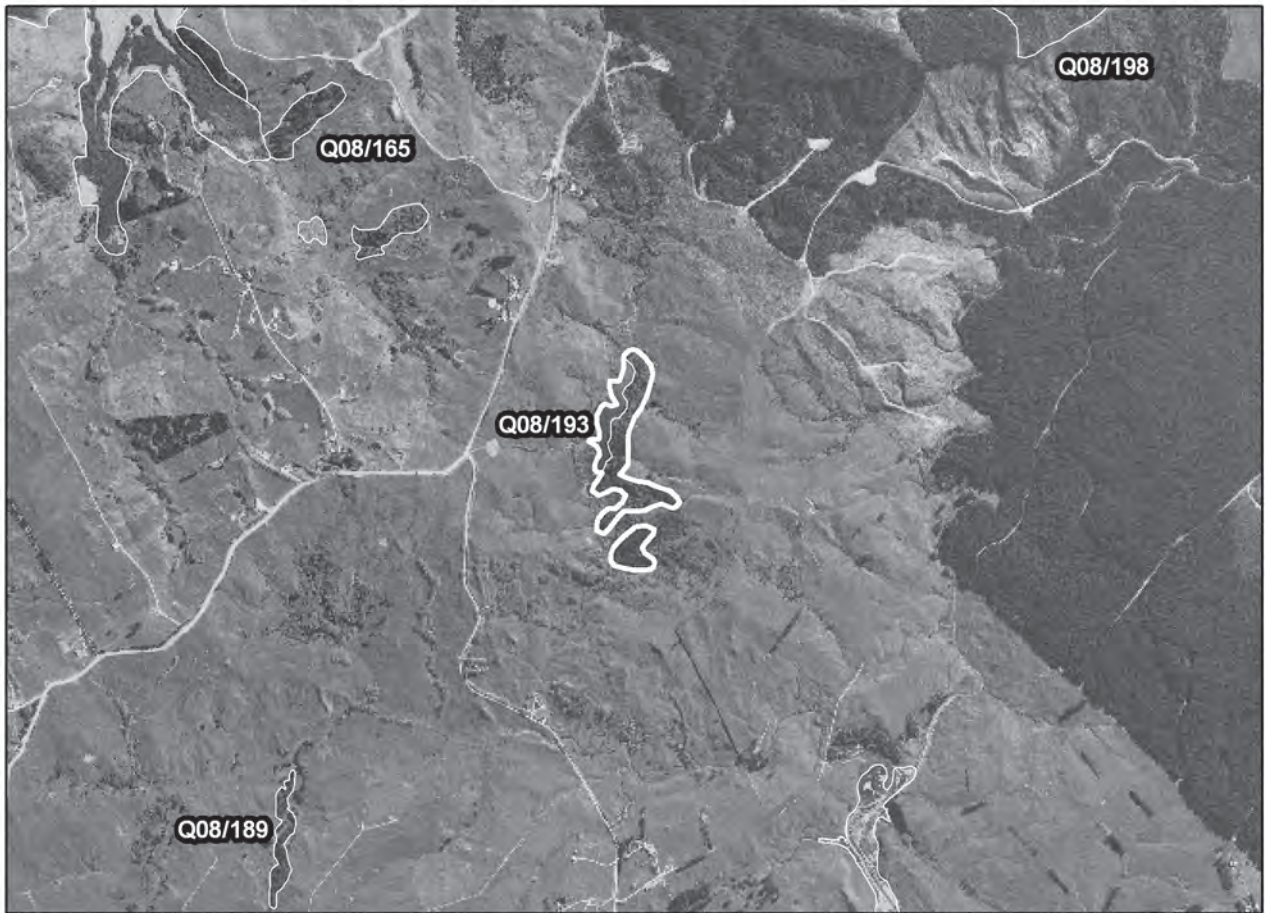


KAIRA CREEK POND 1

Survey no.	Q08/193
Survey date	13 December 2005
Grid reference	Q08 359 528 (2 remnants)
Area	7.8 ha (6.4 ha forest, 1.4 ha wetland)
Altitude	20-58 m asl

Ecological units

(a) Kanuka-totara forest on moderate hillslope (82%)



Q08/193 Kaira Creek Pond 1

S = Shrubland
 F = Forest
 W = Wetland
 E = Estuarine

0 250 500 1,000 Metres



(b) Open water (constructed freshwater farm pond) (18%)

Landform/geology

Hillslopes and gullies underlain by melange (undifferentiated Mangakahia & Motatau Complex lithologies).

Vegetation

This site encompasses indigenous forest and aquatic habitat associated with a constructed pond on the upper Kaira Creek. The pond follows the natural

contours of the stream valley for approximately 400 m and is approximately 40 m wide in most places. Forest extends up the eastern slopes above the river, interspersed by serious infestations of woolly nightshade and gorse.

(a) The forest is composed of equal amounts of kanuka and totara with frequent kahikatea, manuka, ti kouka, gorse and woolly nightshade, and occasional kohekohe, karaka, nikau, ponga, mamaku and puriri.

(b) The pond was not easily visible from the road, but recent aerial photography (flown in 2002) suggests that there is no emergent vegetation, such as raupo or other reed-like species. Some floating *Azolla pinnata*, an invasive water fern, was seen.

Fauna

Spur-winged plover.

Significance

Sheep and cattle graze down to the water's edge, as well as through forest areas. These are also heavily impacted by weed invasion. However, despite the apparent poor condition, this wetland is one of the largest in Otamatea ED Northland, and may provide valuable habitat to indigenous waterbirds.

TANA ROAD FOREST REMNANTS

Survey no.	Q08/195
Survey date	19 December 2005
Grid reference	Q08 116 635
Area	3.6 ha
Altitude	69-80 m asl

Ecological unit

(a) Kahikatea-kanuka forest on gentle hillslope (100%)

Landform/geology

Gentle hillslope underlain by melange (undifferentiated Mangakahia & Motatau Complexes).

Vegetation

This site comprises one small remnant of forest on a gently undulating paddock north of State Highway 12. The remnant appears entirely fenced, but cattle can still gain access. Some parts have a dense shrubby understorey, and some seem bare. The main canopy is formed of very tall, conical kahikatea with associated kanuka. Totara, ti kouka and kauri occur frequently, with occasional nikau, ti kouka, rimu, mapou and manuka.

Fauna

Not surveyed.

Significance

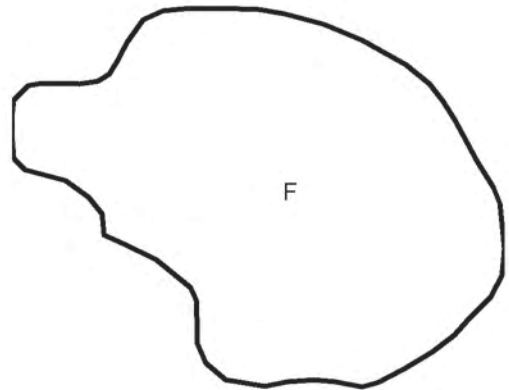
Due to its small size, this site is not considered to be a representative example of its type in the Northland Conservancy part of Otamatea ED. Despite this, it is still a valuable habitat patch for mobile wildlife use a number of small forest remnants to meet their habitat needs, in a landscape where extensive forest no longer exists.



Q08/195 Tana Road Forest Remnant

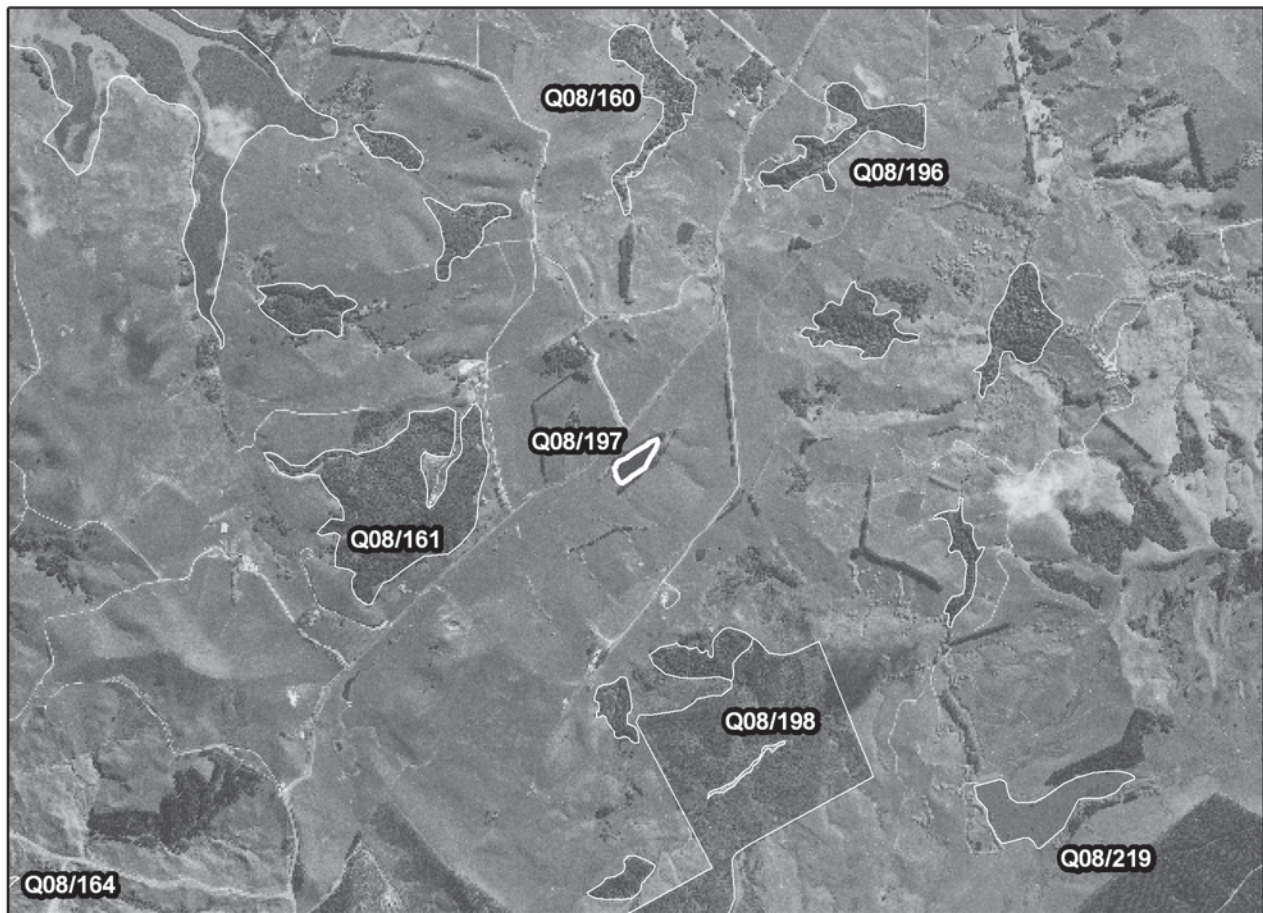
S = Shrubland
 F = Forest
 W = Wetland
 E = Estuarine

0 250 500 1,000 Metres



KAIRA CREEK POND 2

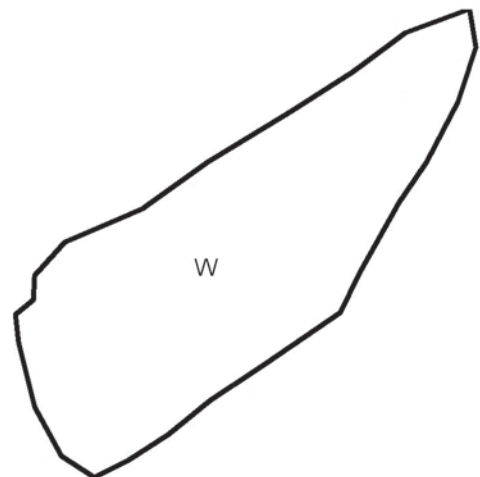
Survey no.	Q08/197
Survey date	15 December 2005
Grid reference	Q08 373 559
Area	0.9 ha
Altitude	73-80 m asl



Q08/197 Kaira Creek Pond 2

S = Shrubland
 F = Forest
 W = Wetland
 E = Estuarine

0 250 500 1,000 Metres



Ecological units

- (a) Open water (constructed freshwater farm pond) (80%)
- (b) Raupo-willow weed reedland on constructed pond margin (20%)

Landform/geology

Man-made pond/lake.

Vegetation

This site comprises a small constructed pond with a margin of emergent raupo reedland at the very upper extreme of one of the Kaira Creek tributaries. Willow

weed is common amongst the raupo, but it could not be determined whether this was the indigenous species (*Persicaria decipiens*) or one of the introduced willow weeds. Harakeke occurs frequently and ti kouka is occasional. The pond is surrounded by a 2-3 rows of young radiata pine with occasional crack willow and Tasmanian blackwood, but otherwise the main surrounding land use is pastoral farming.

Fauna

Pukeko. A spotless crane tape was played by the road (50 m from the wetland), but no response was heard.

Significance

This site is relatively small, but it serves as a habitat for common indigenous waterbirds in the absence of any natural wetlands in the area.

MAUNGATUROTO TOWN FOREST

Survey no.	Q08/199
Survey date	16 December 2005
Grid reference	Q08 320 649
Area	2.2 ha
Altitude	69-91 m asl

Ecological unit

(a) Kahikatea-totara forest in gully (100%)

Landform/geology

Gully underlain by melange (undifferentiated Mangakahia & Motatau Complex lithologies).

Vegetation

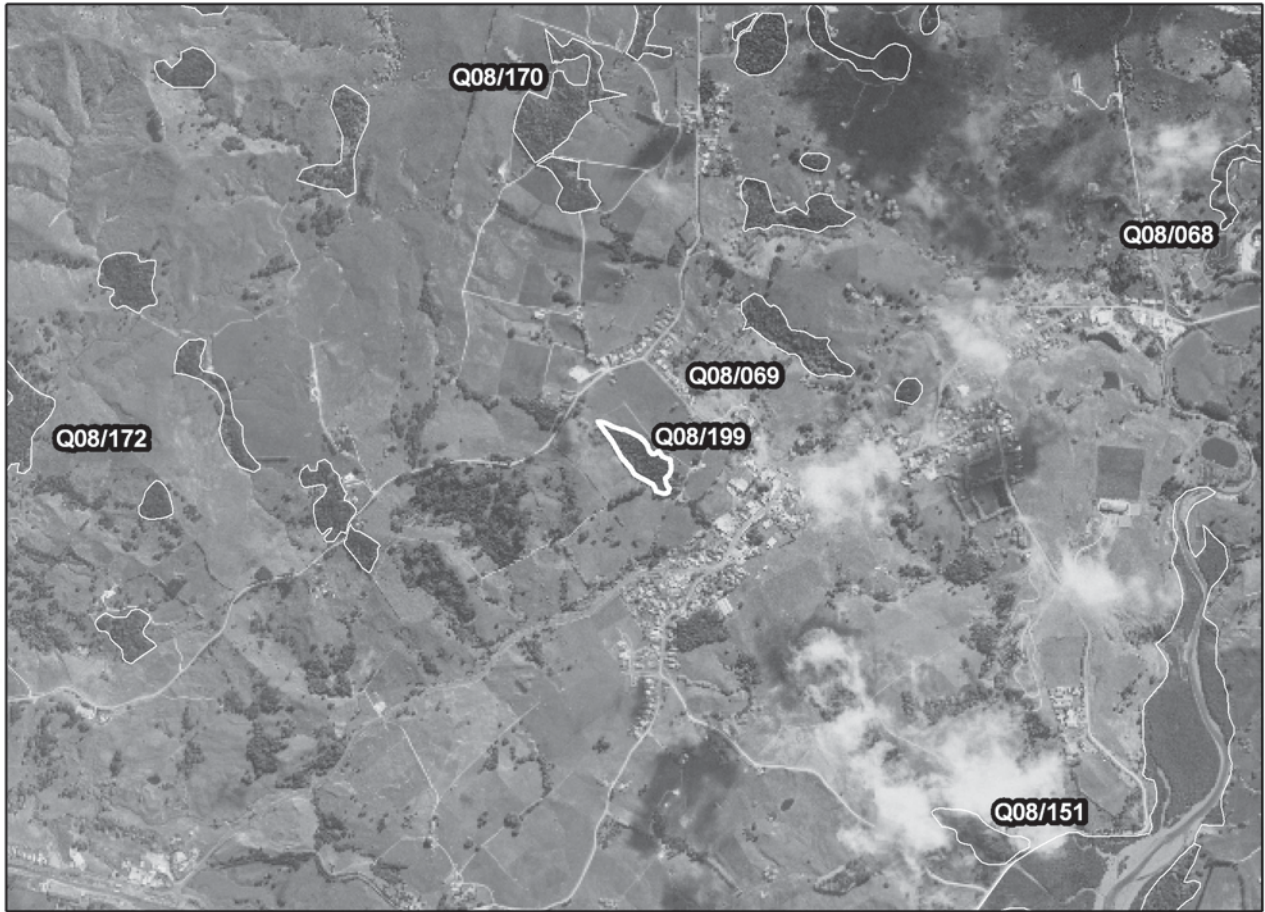
Behind the town of Maungaturoto, only 250 m north of the main street, there is a small remnant of indigenous forest surrounded by pasture. The forest comprises very dense secondary kahikatea spars mixed with totara of a similar age (probably no older than 120 years). Pukatea occurs frequently, and small amounts of ti kouka, kauri and rimu are scattered throughout. The forest protects the beginnings of a stream gully, which becomes a tributary of the Pahi River. Elaeagnus is a serious weed problem, both within the site, and in the surrounding landscape.

Fauna

Not surveyed.

Significance

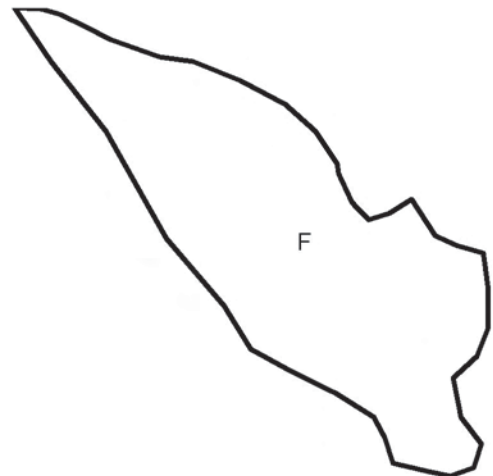
This site's small size and its elaeagnus infestation affect its natural character and function. Therefore, it is not considered to be a representative example of kahikatea-totara forest in Otamatea ED Northland. However, it is still an important area of habitat for mobile wildlife, such as forest birds, which often use one or more of such remnants to meet their habitat needs. The site also has a limited riparian protection function, as the forest shelters part of a small stream.



Q08/199 Maungaturoto Town Forest

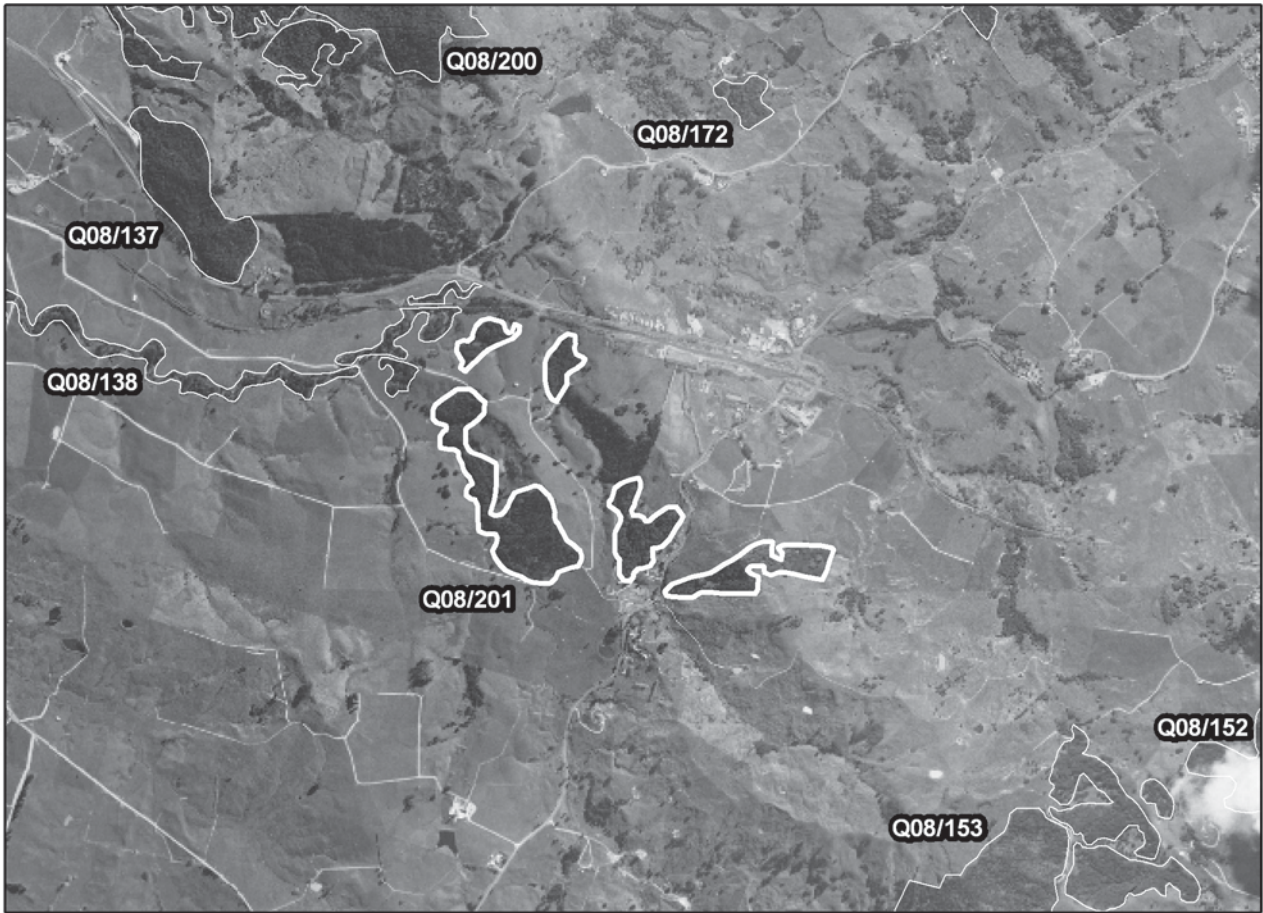
S = Shrubland
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 W = Wetland
 E = Estuarine

0 250 500 1,000 Metres



MAROHOMO ROAD FOREST REMNANTS

Survey no.	Q08/201
Survey date	20 December 2005
Grid reference	Q08 298 647 (5 remnants)
Area	20.4 ha
Altitude	40-93 m asl



Q08/201 Marohemo Road Forest Remnants 1

S = Shrubland
 F = Forest
 W = Wetland
 E = Estuarine

0 250 500 1,000 Metres



Ecological units

- (a) Totara forest on moderate hillslope (50%)
- (b) Kahikatea forest in gully (40%)
- (c) Totara-puriri forest on moderate hillslope (10%)

Landform/geology

Hillslopes underlain by melange (undifferentiated Mangakahia & Motatau Complex lithologies), and valley floors of Holocene alluvium.

Vegetation

This site encompasses five indigenous forest remnants on hillslopes at the top of Marohemo Road, near the turnoff from State Highway 12. Some of the

remnants have small radiata pine plantations on their edges or connecting them. Most of the remnants appear to be grazed. Tree privet and silver birch are common in surrounding pastoral land.

(a) The most common forest type is dominated by totara with frequent puriri, kahikatea, taraire and kanuka, and occasional ti kouka, karaka and kohekohe.

(b) Kahikatea dominant forest is present in gullies. Nikau and totara are frequent, with occasional mamangi, puriri, pukatea, titoki, matai, kanuka and tanekaha.

(c) The very eastern edge of the remnants is not visible from Marohemo Road, therefore the forest type was interpreted from recent aerial photography (flown in 2002). This area appears to comprise totara-puriri forest, judging by the broad-crowned even canopy, quite similar to a forest type in nearby Bickerstaffe Forest and Shrubland (Q08/153).

Fauna

Not surveyed.

Significance

The forest types present in this site are better represented elsewhere in the Northland part of Otamatea ED Northland, where they are in larger remnants which are less disturbed by grazing. Despite this, these remnants still serve as habitat patches for forest birds and other mobile fauna in a landscape with few large tracts of indigenous vegetation.

MAROHOMO ROAD FOREST REMNANTS 2

Survey no.	Q08/202
Survey date	20 December 2005
Grid reference	Q08 302 607 (4 remnants)
Area	28.9 ha
Altitude	40–120 m asl

Ecological units

(a) Totara-kanuka forest on moderate hillslope (50%)

(b) Taraire-totara forest on moderate hillslope (50%)

Landform/geology

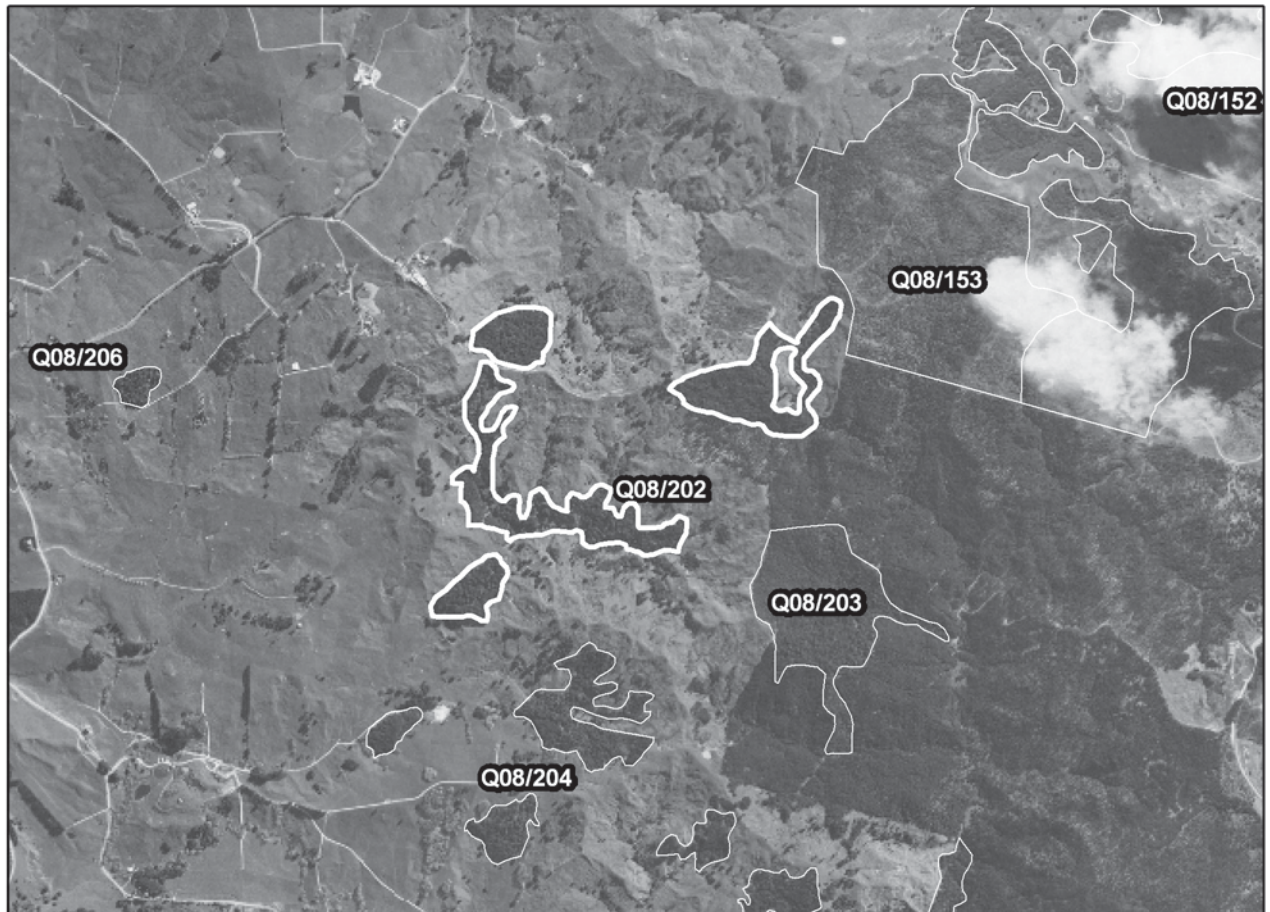
Hillslopes and gullies underlain by Cretaceous sandstone and mudstone (Mangakahia Complex).

Vegetation

This site comprises four indigenous forest remnants scattered across pastoral farmland to the east of Marohemo Road. The composition of the remnants appears to be divided into two clear types with totara being the common component. Not all of the areas were visible from the public road, therefore aerial photography (flown in 2002) has been used to assist in describing the remnants.

(a) Half of the remnants contain totara-kanuka forest with occasional kahikatea and ti kouka.

(b) The other half is composed of totara and taraire with frequent karaka and kohekohe, and occasional kahikatea and kanuka.



Q08/202 Marohemo Road Forest Remnants 2

S = Shrubland
 F = Forest
 W = Wetland
 E = Estuarine

0 250 500 1,000 Metres



Fauna

Not surveyed.

Significance

Insufficient information exists to fully assess the significance of the forest in this site. Three of the forest remnants at this site, including examples of both ecological units, are within a QEII Open Space Covenant covering 11.9 ha or 41 % of the site.