

# Taupo Swamp

## Ara Harekeke



### Facilities

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|---|--|
|  Public transport<br>(Part only)                |  Mountain biking  |
|  Parking  |  Dog walking<br>(On leash)  |
|  Toilets (Whenua Tapu<br>Cemetery, Airlie Road) |  Look out   |
|  Wheelchair accessible                          |  Bird watching  |
|  Pram accessible                                |  Water fountain<br>(Entrance to Whenua Tapu<br>Cemetery, Airlie Road) |
|  Walking tracks                                 |  |



### Highlight

Formerly the inlet of Porirua Harbour until earthquakes uplifted the whole area, Taupo Swamp is now one of the largest and most important remaining flax swamps in the Wellington region and a popular walking and cycleway.

### Description, values & significance

Taupo Swamp (Ara Harakeke) is a nationally significant flax wetland located between the seaside villages of Plimmerton and Pukerua Bay north of Wellington. The 30 hectare wetland dominated by indigenous species is valued as a recreational asset and for its ecological importance as a habitat for sedges, flax, ferns, shrubs, and grasses. After attempts to drain the wetland for farmland failed, it was planted with commercial varieties of flax in the 1880's, which aided natural spread.

### Accessibility/How to get there/particular time of year to visit

Taupo Swamp is located 3km north of Plimmerton and 26km north of Wellington along State Highway 1. Parking is available.

### Threatened species/species of interest

The swamp is home to a number of threatened plant species, a habitat to bittern and a sizable population of fish such as brown mudfish, longfin eel, redfin bully and banded and giant kokopu. In the lowest places, flax and raupo keep their feet permanently wet, while toetoe, bracken fern, manuka and a pocket of kahikatea all prefer the drier conditions around the edges. Rare plants found deep in the swamp include swamp nettle and swamp buttercup.

### Key threats

Surrounding development, hydrological changes, weeds (particularly willows), increased runoff and sedimentation all affect the water table. Fire and chemical pollution from the adjacent road, truck stop and railway is a threat. Exotic weeds threaten to invade the swamp's special native plant communities and blackberry, willow, gorse, broom, Japanese honeysuckle and Darwin's barberry are the worst invaders.

## Walks (length)

Ara Harakeke (The Flax Pathway) is an award winning cycleway and walkway linking Paremata and Pukerua Bay. Ara Harakeke runs adjacent to State Highway 1 and the North Island Main Trunk Railway. Pedestrians and cyclists can access Taupo Swamp from Ulric Street or via the Plimmerton Station underpass and then walk/cycle along the gently undulating and landscaped pathway. The Taupo Swamp reserve land is beside the pathway between the Weigh Station and Airlie Road. There is a viewing and interpretation area for Taupo Swamp near the middle of this section of pathway.

## Walks (grade)

Easy

## Manager

Greater Wellington Regional Council and Porirua City Council

## Protection status

The swamp area was purchased in 1986 by the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust, and protected by a covenant.

## How to get there

