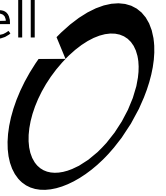


Boffa Miskell








# Ecological survey

Douglas Links Golf Course  
Prepared for Grenadier Ltd.

1 July 2021



## Document Quality Assurance

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The lower Ōhau River from the seaward edge of the salt marsh looking toward the active duneland © Boffa Miskell, 2021

# CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Freshwater	1
2.1	Methods	1
2.2	Results	2
2.3	Field observations	4
2.4	Schedule B - Significance	5
3.0	Vegetation	5
3.1	Methods	5
3.2	Results	6
3.3	Plants of Interest	24
4.0	Avifauna	26
4.1	Methods	26
4.2	Results	28
5.0	Herpetofauna	32
5.1	Methods	32
5.2	Results	33
6.0	Schedule F - Significance	35
7.0	Outcomes	37
8.0	References	40

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Maps

## Figures

Figure 1 - The lower Ōhau River .....	2
Figure 2 - Grazed pasture community at 765 Muhunua Road West .....	7
Figure 3 - Rank grass community at the north western edge of the surveyed area.....	8

Figure 4 - Wattle amongst the farmland at 765 Muhunoa Road West, Ōhau.....	9
Figure 5 - Pine plantation on the back slopes of the farmland at 765 Muhunoa Road West, Ōhau .....	10
Figure 6 - White poplar over rank grass and ferns .....	11
Figure 7 - White poplar canopy over exotic scrub .....	12
Figure 8 - Understorey of the macrocarpa community .....	13
Figure 9 - Heather, pampas grass, gorse, and lupin with emergent pine to the north of the salt marsh .....	14
Figure 10 - Pine canopy over exotic scrub .....	15
Figure 11 - Silver poplar and totara emergent above exotic and native regenerating species.....	16
Figure 12 - <i>Myrsine australis</i> and knobby clubrush growing among pampas and pine.....	16
Figure 13 - Totara trees in the centre of the vegetation community .....	16
Figure 14 - The understorey of pure kānuka treeland at 765 Muhunoa Road West.....	17
Figure 15 - Exposed kānuka treeland poles.....	18
Figure 16 - Knobby clubrush dominated stable dune with lupin on the right, edged by macrocarpas .....	19
Figure 17 - Knobby clubrush, flax, and lupin in the stable duneland .....	20
Figure 18 - Lupin and gorse dominating the coastal edge of the stable dune .....	20
Figure 19 - Pingao and spinifex on the active duneland.....	20
Figure 20 - Sand daphne and trifolium arvensis growing among pingao.....	21
Figure 21 - Tauhinu present among spinifex on the duneland .....	21
Figure 22 - Raupō surrounded by isolepis in the centre of the exotic scrub community .....	22
Figure 23 - <i>Bolboschoenus caldwellii</i> and <i>Typha orientalis</i> growing in the salt marsh near the Ōhau River.....	23
Figure 24 - A large kānuka tree growing at the edge of the macrocarpa community .....	24
Figure 25- Sand daphne ( <i>Pimelea villosa</i> ) growing over pingao at the margin of the active and stable sand dune .....	25
Figure 26 - The Ohau river mouth beach and sandspit.....	27
Figure 27 - The coastline adjacent to the property .....	27
Figure 28 - Grazed grassland, rank grassland, and weedy margins .....	28

Figure 29: Locations of CritterPic units deployed throughout the study site  
(Google Earth, 2021). .....32

Figure 30 - Pest tracks in the dunes near the river mouth.....34

Figure 31 - Animal tracks in the sand.....34

Figure 32 - A mouse recorded in a CritterPic unit .....34

Figure 33 - A hedgehog recorded in a CritterPic unit .....34

Figure 34. Draft ecological restoration plan and areas considered a focus for  
offsetting. ....39



# 1.0 Introduction

A golf course is proposed to be built at 765 Muhunoa Road West, Ōhau. Boffa Miskell Ltd. has been engaged by Grenadier Ltd. to undertake an ecological assessment of freshwater, vegetation, avifauna, and herpetofauna on site, particularly in those locations which golf course design will interact with ecological components on site. The results of these findings are outlined in the following report and compared to the relevant significance schedules in the Horizons Regional Council One Plan (Horizons Regional Council, 2014).

The site is located directly north and adjacent to the Ohau River, and covers approximately 120 ha of low, rolling and flat land. At the time of survey, the majority of the site was an active farm, with areas of vegetation toward the coast fenced from stock. The site is in direct proximity to the Ohau River mouth, Ohau River, and the western coastline.

## 2.0 Freshwater

### 2.1 Methods

#### 2.1.1 Desktop survey

Published literature and databases were searched, including the NIWA administered Freshwater Fish Database.

#### 2.1.2 Field survey

The site was visited on 12 April 2021 to understand and describe the aquatic physical habitat condition of the Ōhau River. Descriptions were made from the river edge as depths precluded access into the river at the time of survey. Descriptions included a Rapid Physical Habitat Assessment (RPHA) (Clapcott, 2015) which is comprised of 10 habitat parameters of which each is given a score out of 10 based on its condition. The habitat parameters are as follows:

- i. Deposited sediment
- ii. Invertebrate habitat diversity
- iii. Invertebrate habitat abundance
- iv. Fish cover diversity
- v. Fish cover abundance
- vi. Hydraulic heterogeneity
- vii. Bank erosion
- viii. Bank vegetation
- ix. Riparian width

- x. Riparian shade

## 2.2 Results

### 2.2.1 Desktop

The Ōhau River (Map 1 and Figure 1 - The lower Ōhau River Figure 1), alongside the proposed golf course, is a 5<sup>th</sup> order river. The lower, tidally influenced reach extends approximately 3 km upstream (Todd et al., 2016) and can be considered modified due to the surrounding land use (agriculture) and corresponding land clearance, as well as flood mitigation measures resulting in a new straight reach being creating to effectively isolate an approximately 3.5 km meandering stretch (Smith et al., 2011).



Figure 1 - The lower Ōhau River

A range of fish have been recorded from the lower Ōhau River, including within the main stem and the Ōhau Loop. The NIWA administered New Zealand Freshwater Fish Database (NZFFD; accessed 15/06/2021) only contains records for an unnamed wetland near the Ōhau estuary with no records in the main river channel itself. The species recorded in this unnamed wetland near the estuary includes migratory *Galaxiidae* (including inanga and unidentified galaxias spp.) and eels (only noted as unidentified) suggesting there is a source population in the river and that inanga likely spawn in the lower, tidally influenced reaches. In total, the NZFFD identifies 16 species of freshwater fish within the catchment, including 13 that are, or may be, migratory, and seven which may reside within the lower estuarine habitats as adults (Table 1). The NZFFD also includes records of the Not Threatened<sup>1</sup> kōura (freshwater crayfish; *Paranephrops planifrons*).

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<sup>1</sup> (Grainger et al., 2018)



Table 1: Fish species recorded in the Ōhau River catchment on the New Zealand Freshwater Fish Database (NZFFD), including their conservation status, if they may be migratory, number of NZFFD records, and whether they may be resident within the estuarine area (and therefore near the site).

Common name	Scientific name	Conservation status <sup>2</sup>	Migratory	No of NZFFD records	Potential resident near site?
Shortfin eel	<i>Anguilla australis</i>	Not Threatened	Yes	4	Yes
Longfin eel	<i>Anguilla dieffenbachii</i>	At risk - declining	Yes	37	No
Torrentfish	<i>Cheimarrichthys fosteri</i>	At risk - declining	Yes	16	No
Koaro	<i>Galaxias brevipinnis</i>	At risk - declining	Yes	14	No
Banded kōkopu	<i>Galaxias fasciatus</i>	Not Threatened	Yes	6	Yes
Inanga	<i>Galaxias maculatus</i>	At risk - declining	Yes	9	Yes
Shortjaw kōkopu	<i>Galaxias postvetis</i>	Threatened - nationally vulnerable	Yes	19	No
Lamprey	<i>Geotria australis</i>	Threatened - nationally vulnerable	Yes	3	Yes
Crans bully	<i>Gobiomorphus basalis</i>	Not threatened	No	1	No
Upland bully	<i>Gobiomorphus breviceps</i>	Not threatened	No	16	No
Common bully	<i>Gobiomorphus cotidianus</i>	Not threatened	Yes	5	Yes
Bluegill bully	<i>Gobiomorphus hubbsi</i>	At risk - declining	Yes	1	No
Redfin bully	<i>Gobiomorphus huttoni</i>	Not threatened	Yes	30	No
Common smelt	<i>Retropinna retropinna</i>	Not threatened	Yes	1	Yes
Rainbow trout	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	Introduced and naturalised	No	7	No
Brown trout	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	Introduced and naturalised	Yes	81	Yes

Existing literature also provides details on the fish populations that are likely present in the lower reaches of the Ōhau River and the Ōhau Loop (which now has fish friendly flood gates installed (Todd et al., 2016)). These results are presented in Table 2 below. The literature includes records of marine wanderers, giant bully (*Gobiomorphus gobioides*), rudd (*Scardinius erythrophthalmus*), common shrimp (freshwater shrimp; *Paratya curvirostris*), and kākahi (freshwater mussels; *Echyridella menziesi*) which are not found on the NZFFD (noting common shrimp and kākahi are macroinvertebrates).

Table 2: Species observed in the lower Ōhau River from key literature sources.

Reference	(Lucas Associates, 1998)	Kaumātua knowledge (from Lucas Associates, 1998)	(Todd et al., 2016)	(Allen et al., 2011)
Species	Inside Ōhau Loop: Common bully,	Tuna (eel), kokopu (adult inanga, whitebait), lamprey,	List species also found in NZFFD	Common smelt, mullet, brown trout, inanga,

<sup>2</sup> (Dunn et al., 2018)

	common shrimp, common smelt; Downriver of Ōhau Loop: Common bully, common shrimp, common smelt, black flounder, inanga, grey mullet.	patiki (black flounder), kanae (grey mullet), aua (yellow eyed mullet), kakahi (freshwater mussels), koura (freshwater crayfish).	records, with the addition of: Black flounder, kahawai, rough skate.	longfin eel, shortfin eel, black flounder, common bully, giant bully, rudd, freshwater shrimp.
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## 2.3 Field observations

The Ōhau River, adjacent to the proposed golf course is a wide, tidally influenced, soft-bottomed river with limited riparian cover and instream flow and habitat variability. It is expected, based on observed topography and vegetation, that the width of the river increases to approximately 150-160 m at high tide, an approximately 60 m wide base channel. The rapid habitat assessment indicates condition of the section of river alongside the proposed golf course to be suboptimal (35/100; Table 3); however, this score is limited by features which are typical of estuarine/tidally influenced, wide rivers where sand is prominent and shade capabilities are limited. The lowland, wide nature of tidally influenced rivers also limits the score of the invertebrate and fish components of the RPHA due to the homogenous flow and habitat conditions; however, these are to be expected in these environments.

Table 3: Rapid physical habitat assessment results for the section of Ōhau River alongside the proposed golf course.

Habitat parameter	Description	Score
Deposited sediment	Deposited fine sediment (predominantly sand) covered the entire riverbed.	1
Invertebrate habitat diversity	Two notable substrate types considered invertebrate habitat, including sand and wood (noting woody debris was rare).	2
Invertebrate habitat abundance	Less than 5% of the visible substrate was favourable for EPT colonisation, including an absence of cobbles/gravels, macrophytes, and filamentous algae.	1
Fish cover diversity	Substrate types which may be utilised as fish cover is limited to woody debris and some overhanging vegetation (noting the overhanging vegetation was limited to small shrubs, rushes, and sedges).	2
Fish cover abundance	Fish cover was less than 5% of the stream channel, limited to isolated pieces of woody debris.	2
Hydraulic heterogeneity	Slow run conditions are the only notable hydraulic component.	1
Bank erosion	There are no signs of recent or active erosion, scouring, or slumping that aren't in response to tidal influences.	10
Bank vegetation	Bankside vegetation is a mixture of grazed pasture, sparse tree cover, and tidal flax/sedge/salt marsh.	6
Riparian width	The width of the riparian buffer constrained by vegetation, fencing, or other structures is typically approximately 10 m on the true left and at least approximately 20 m on the true right.	9
Riparian shade	Less than 5% of the river channel is expected to be shaded throughout the day.	1
<b>Total score</b>		<b>35/100</b>

## 2.4 Schedule B - Significance

The Ōhau River, at the section alongside the proposed golf course, is considered significant in Schedule B of the Horizons Regional Council One Plan for the following reasons:

- Trout fishery
- Site of significance - riparian
- Inanga spawning
- Whitebait migration
- Life supporting capacity

## 3.0 Vegetation

### 3.1 Methods

#### 3.1.1 Desktop review

A Horizons report containing ecological survey information from within the site was read to inform the methods of carrying out the site visit and to become familiar with site history and expected vegetation (*Site Visit Report – 765 Muhunua West Road, Ōhau., Horizons Regional Council, 2020*). Personal vegetation lists of the foredune area were provided by accompanying botanist Pat Enright from previous surveys along the beach dune reserve area. The Plant Conservation Networks published plant lists were also interrogated.

#### 3.1.2 Site survey

A vegetation survey was undertaken over the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2021 by a Boffa Miskell ecologist, assisted by local botanist Pat Enright. Over the course of the survey, walking transects were undertaken throughout the site, during which all plant species were recorded, and photographs taken. GPS locations of any notable plants were collected. Distinct vegetation communities within the wider site context were recognised over the site and the species compositions of these communities were noted, with prioritisation of areas closer to the coastline (as opposed to the working farm). Vegetation community descriptions are outlined in Section 3.2.1.

#### 3.1.3 Mapping

A map of all vegetation communities was created following the survey on ArcGIS software. The mapping was done by the same person that undertook the vegetation surveys. The process involved using a combination of walking GPS tracks, vegetation community notes, and recent high quality drone aerial imagery of the site. Mapping was done at a scale of 1:1,500 throughout the process. The contrasts in colour and texture provided by the drone imagery provided enough clarity to outline vegetation communities, and in any areas of uncertainty the images and descriptions from the site survey were used to aid delineation.

## 3.2 Results

### 3.2.1 Vegetation communities

The vegetation communities determined on site and their total areas as calculated by ArcGIS software are outlined in Table 4 below. Refer to Map 2 for vegetation community outlines.

*Table 4 - Vegetation communities and their area identified on site at 765 Muhunua Road West, Ōhau*

<b>Number</b>	<b>Vegetation community</b>	<b>Total area (ha)</b>
1	Grazed grassland	59.57
2	Rank grassland	1.17
3a	Mixed wattle treeland	1.77
3b	Mixed pine treeland	14.17
4a	Poplar treeland	0.55
4b	Poplar treeland over exotic scrub	0.10
5	Macrocarpa	9.52
6a	Exotic scrub	10.45
6b	Exotic scrub under pine	2.12
7	Exotic native mix	0.34
8a	Kānuka treeland	0.70
8b	Thin kānuka treeland	0.24
9	Knobby clubrush stable duneland	7.31
10	Spinifex active duneland	6.53
11	Wetland	0.03
12	Saltmarsh	1.98

### 3.2.2 Community 1 - Grazed grassland



Figure 2 - Grazed pasture community at 765 Muhunoa Road West

This community is dominated by pasture grasses which are frequently grazed by stock. The community is typical of dry, coastal pasture in New Zealand and among common grass species such as cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), sweet vernal (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), and tall fescue (*Lolium arundinaceum*), the community contains occasional pasture and pasture associated species including tarweed (*Parentucellia viscosa*), dandelion (*Taraxicum officinale*), clover (*Trifolium* sp.), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), and fleabane (*Erigeron sumatrensis*). Some of the grassland areas appeared to have been recently modified, and as such there were higher densities of tree lupin growing in these areas. Overall, this community type covered the largest area on site, and was dominated by exotic species.

### 3.2.3 Community 2 - Rank grassland



Figure 3 - Rank grass community at the north western edge of the surveyed area

This community is characterised by its pasture grasses, dominated by cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*) with occasional tall fescue (*Lolium arundinaceum*) Creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) interspersed to about 45cm in height. Occasional knobby clubbrush, heather, pampas, gorse, and *Pinus radiata* were scattered throughout. One cabbage tree (*Cordyline australis*) at approximately 2.5m height and two jointed rush plants (*Apodasmia similis*) were noted near the mānuka tree (*Leptospermum scoparia*) (~3m height) in the centre of the area. This community is dominated by exotic species, mostly pasture grasses.

### 3.2.4 Community 3a - Mixed wattle treeland



Figure 4 - Wattle amongst the farmland at 765 Muhunoa Road West, Ōhau

Fenced areas of acacia wattle (*Acacia sorophorae*, *A. decurrens*) were present within the grazed grassland. A variety of exotic trees and grasses, ranging between 1-4m in height were identified. Wattle dominated the community with occasional pine (*Pinus sp.*), some regenerating at the edges of the area, alongside pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*, *C. jubata*). Tree lucerne (*Chamaecytisus palmensis*) was present in few condensed patches throughout, and gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and lupin (*Lupinus arboreus*) to about 1m in height were present in gaps between the wattle and pine. No indigenous species were identified in the community.

### 3.2.5 Community 3b - Mixed pine treeland



*Figure 5 - Pine plantation on the back slopes of the farmland at 765 Muhunua Road West, Ōhau*

This community is dominated by young pine (*Pinus sp.*) (approximately 4m in height) over pasture grasses. In areas devoid of pine, tree lucerne becomes prominent, with small pockets of gorse in bare pasture areas. The edges of the community contain some wattle trees approximately 4m in height. No indigenous species were identified in the community.



### 3.2.6 Community 4a - Poplar treeland



Figure 6 - White poplar over rank grass and ferns

This community is characterised by its white poplar (*Populus alba*) canopy and occurs in pockets throughout site. Groundcover is leaf litter from the recently fallen poplar leaves, with rank cocksfoot grass, occasional lupin, and gorse in clear canopy gaps. Occasionally, native ferns were noted at the base of the poplar trees, such as *Polystichum vestitum*, *Hypolepis ambigua*, *Asplenium oblongifolium*, *Microsorium pustulatum*, and a lone mahoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*) sapling. Scattered pampas grass was present, as across most of the site. This community is dominated by the poplar canopy and pasture grass understorey.

### 3.2.7 Community 4b - Poplar over exotic scrub



Figure 7 - White poplar canopy over exotic scrub

This community differs from the 4a poplar treeland by its understorey which is a mix of exotic and scrub and occasional native knobby clubrush (*Ficinia nodosa*) and *Cyperus ustulatus*. Native species include totara (*Podocarpus totara*), Glen Murray tussock (*Carex flagellifera*), mahoe, *Myrsine australis*, tree fern (*Dicksonia squarossa*), *Cyperus ustulatus*, knobby clubrush, kānuka (*Kunzea robusta*), and *Asplenium oblongifolium*. These native species are growing among frequent exotic species gorse, lupin, scotch thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), fleabane (*Erigeron sumatrensis*), wattle, and pampas grass, which overtop the native species present.

### 3.2.8 Community 5 - Macrocarpa



Figure 8 - Understorey of the macrocarpa community

Macrocarpa (*Cypressus macrocarpa*) across site reached to approximately between 7- 10m in height, with overlapping canopy and scattered *Pinus radiata* acting as canopy species. Under the canopy very little vegetation was present, with no subcanopy species and varying degrees of cover from New Zealand spinach, more prominent toward the dunes, occasional diversity of *Asplenium* sp. (*A. appendiculatum*, *A. flabellifolium*, *A. flaccidum*, *A. oblongifolium*, and *A. polyodon*), low *Coprosma repens*, houndstongue (*Microsorium pustulatum*), *Paesia scaberula*, Glen Murray tussock, and shaking brake (*Pteris tremula*) were present, rarely scattered throughout, more condensed toward light edges. The groundcover was largely bare, open ground with dropped branches and leaf litter from the macrocarpas, otherwise very sparse. Where macrocarpa met the margins of grassland, there were pockets of silver poplar over rank grass and gorse, with occasional kānuka seedlings, lucerne, tree lupin, and pampas grass. Where macrocarpa met stable duneland communities, native spinach, knobby clubrush, lupin, *Gazania* sp. and *Arctosis stoechadifolia* were present. The community is growing on duneland sands but is almost entirely exotic.

### 3.2.9 Community 6a - Exotic scrub



Figure 9 - Heather, pampas grass, gorse, and lupin with emergent pine to the north of the salt marsh

The exotic scrub community on site contains a mixture of gorse, lupin, heather (*Erica lusitania*), and pampas primarily. These four species are common throughout all exotic scrub areas on site in different proportions, but all exist on disturbed ground. Among these four main species, other less common ones include pine and wattle. Some native species are interspersed throughout these areas, such as knobby clubrush, which has a presence throughout most ungrazed areas on site, and occasional *Juncus* species or *Cyperus ustulatus*. Blackberry (*Rubus ulmifolius*), fleabane, and scotch thistle also persist in some areas, and boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*) is present only on the southern edge of site in one location. Pasture grasses persist in otherwise bare locations, and are generally common throughout (mostly tall fescue, sweet vernal, and cocksfoot). Overall, even though these areas have few native plants dispersed throughout, they are dominated by exotic species.

### 3.2.10 Community 6b- Pine over exotic scrub



Figure 10 - Pine canopy over exotic scrub

This community contains pine (8m+) over a scrub community dominated by exotic species, similar to that described in Section 3.2.9 but slightly less dense, with higher proportions of gorse and incidental native species (*Myrsine australis*, young mahoe and kānuka, and occasional *Asplenium* sp.) interspersed among the other exotic scrub species common across site such as pampas and lupin.

### 3.2.11 Community 7 - Exotic native mix



Figure 11 - Silver poplar and totara emergent above exotic and native regenerating species



Figure 12 - *Myrsine australis* and knobby clubrush growing among pampas and pine.



Figure 13 - Totara trees in the centre of the vegetation community

This community contains an almost equal mix of both native and indigenous species, with emergent silver poplar and totara (*Podocarpus totara*). Silver poplar is spread commonly throughout the community, slightly more condensed at the northern end where it meets the poplar treeland, over 5m in height. The totara is contained largely to the centre of the community, where a cluster of approximately seven very narrow-trunked trees have grown alongside each other and are in varying states of health with heights between 2m and 8m. Rarely, tall (4m+) wattles (*A. sorophorae* and *A. decurrens*) are present at the southern edge.

Groundcover contains pasture grasses (clover, cocksfoot, tall fescue), gorse, lupin, boxthorn, lucerne, wilding pine, and pampas, intertwined with blackberry encroaching from the neighbouring community at common densities. Among these are a mix of young native species, similar in height to the exotic species at 1-2m in height. Mahoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*), *Myrsine australis*, and knobby clubrush were common in comparison to totara, pōhuehue, hangehange (*Geniostomia ligustrifolium*), cabbage tree (*Cordyline australis*), pseudopanax, and coprosma hybrid species which were infrequent. One titoki (*Alectryon excelsus*) of 1m height was identified in amongst a further group of silver poplar of similar height to the native scrub.

### 3.2.12 Community 8a - Kānuka treeland



Figure 14 - The understory of pure kānuka treeland at 765 Muhunua Road West

The kānuka (*Kunzea robusta*) treeland areas at the northern end of the site varied between 3 and 6 m in height, forming a dense canopy. The westernmost stand contained mānuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*) which also comprised part of the canopy. Cabbage trees (*Cordyline australis*) were encountered rarely as an element of the canopy. Subcanopy species were infrequent tree fern (*Dicksonia squarossa*) and *Coprosma propinqua* at edges, though the interior of fragments was largely devoid of any groundcover or subcanopy. The groundcover at the edges of fragments included dense levels of fern species *Histiopteris incisa* and *Polystichum vestitum*, with encroaching veldt grass and cocksfoot among other grasses.

### 3.2.13 Community 8b - Thin kānuka treeland



Figure 15 - Exposed kānuka treeland poles

This area of kānuka (*K. robusta*) differs from the other kānuka stands identified on site. The kānuka trees are thinner with reduced health and smaller crowns which do not overlap. Many were standing with no live foliage visible. One pine tree and one cabbage tree were also present in the canopy. The stand is located in a grazing paddock with full stock access, and no regeneration of native species was seen in the understorey. Groundcover was entirely pasture species, as well as creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), two *Juncus pallidus*, and occasional pasture weeds. Some recent felling of the stand was apparent.



### 3.2.14 Community 9 - Stable duneland



Figure 16 - Knobby clubrush dominated stable dune with lupin on the right, edged by macrocarpas

Knobby clubrush (*Ficinia nodosa*) dominates large areas of stable duneland along the western edge of site, growing densely at approximately 60 – 70 cm in height, and sometimes over 1m. *Muehlenbeckia complexa* made up a small, rare component of the community. This landscape is commonly interspersed with oioi (*Apodasmia similis*), and tree lupin which forms large clumps on its own up to 1.5m in height. The lupin is particularly dominating toward the coast, more so than the club rush, where it forms a dense boundary between the active and stable duneland. Gorse is infrequent, though becomes common toward the active and stable duneland boundary in the same way as lupin. Gravel groundsel (*Senecio skirrhodon*), *Olearia solandri*, and tauhinu (*Ozothamnus leptophyllus*) are present in low numbers as a gradient between the active and stable duneland, while pampas is occasional throughout the community, sometimes forming competitive clusters. Rarely, coastal wattle (*Acacia sophorae*) and flax (*Phormium cookanum* subsp. *hookerii*, *P. tenax*) were present, and one *Coprosma acerosa* individual was noted.



Figure 17 - Knobby clubbrush, flax, and lupin in the stable duneland



Figure 18 - Lupin and gorse dominating the coastal edge of the stable dune

### 3.2.15 Community 10 - Spinifex active duneland



Figure 19 - Pingao and spinifex on the active duneland



Figure 20 - Sand daphne and trifolium arvensis growing among pingao



Figure 21 - Tauhinu present among spinifex on the duneland

The foredune bounds the entire western side of the site and is dominated by duneland grasses adapted to the shifting sands, namely spinifex (*Spinifex sericeus*), commonly with areas of pingao (*Finicia spiralis*). Marram grass (*Ammophila arenaria*) was successfully competing with the native grasses in several areas along the dune. Small numbers of sand wind grass (*Lachnagrostis billardierei*), *Carex pumila*, *Acaena novae-zealandiae*, shore bindweed (*Convolvulus soldanella*) and *Oxalis rubens* are spread throughout the dune landscape. Scattered occasionally through the grasses and generally further inland where sands are slightly more contained are tauhinu (*Ozothamnus leptophyllus*), knobby clubrush, *Plantago coronopus*, and common *Trifolium arvensis* and gravel groundsel growing among the larger vegetation species. Sand daphne (*Pimelea villosa*) was infrequently present, at the inland edge of the active sand dune and concentrated at the northern end of site. *Carex testacea* was present in very low numbers in the dune strip in an unusual coastal form with fine red leaves and small seed heads. Pampas is rare, scattered throughout the length of the dunes. Individual specimens of yucca, evening primrose, and banksia were noted. Wheel tracks from motor vehicles have caused erosion of the dunes but these are present only toward the southern end. Some large patches of gorse and tree lupin are establishing at the northern end, encroaching from the neighbouring stable dune.

### 3.2.16 Community 11 - Wetland



Figure 22 - Raupō surrounded by isolepis in the centre of the exotic scrub community

There was one wetland located on site during the survey which is perfectly circular (perhaps because it was once a stock pond). It is surrounded entirely by pampas grass, lucerne, gorse, and coastal wattle. The interior is raupō (*Typha orientalis*) dominated, approximately 6 m x 6 m, with isolepis (*Isolepis prolifera*) surrounding the raupō in a ~2m wide radius. One 2 x 2 m area of deep mud, which appears to be open water during wet times, is entirely covered by *Lemna disperma*.

### 3.2.17 Community 12 - Saltmarsh



Figure 23 - *Bolboschoenus caldwellii* and *Typha orientalis* growing in the salt marsh near the Ōhau River

The saltmarsh follows a gradient from the eastern upper edge with exotic scrub and rank pasture with flax, lupin, pampas, and gorse, and rare cabbage trees, which graduates into rushland containing large swathes of raupō, *Bolboschoenus caldwellii*, threesquare, sea rush (*Juncus kraussii*) with lower proportions of oioi, marsh ribbonwood (*Plagianthus divaricatus*), *Schoenoplectus pungens*, all around 1m in height, making up a significant proportion of the saltmarsh area. This then transitions into a smaller area of herbfield and mudflats, which at the transition zone contained shore celery (*Apium prostratum*), *Triglochin striata*, bachelors' button (*Cotula coronopifolia*), and pink bindweed (*Calystegia roseacea*) among the previous rush species. The mudflat habitat had large bare areas, though a diverse array of typically small species were scattered over the fine mud and sands including *Selliara radicans*, *Isolepis ceruna* var. *ceruna*, shore cotula (*Leptinella dioca*), and mudwort (*Limosella lineata*). Large areas of woody debris were washed up at the river edge of the mudflats.

### 3.3 Plants of Interest

#### Large Kānuka



*Figure 24 - A large kānuka tree growing at the edge of the macrocarpa community*

Though it does not form its own community, one kānuka (*Kunzea robusta*) tree at the edge of the macrocarpa community was identified which is particularly large (6m+), multi-stemmed, and expected to be quite old. While its ecological function is not likely to be very high, it is a tree which should be retained. The threat status of kānuka moved from Not Threatened in 2013 to Threatened - Nationally Vulnerable in 2018 following the recent arrival and spread of myrtle rust in New Zealand (de Lange et al., 2018).

## Sand Daphne



Figure 25- Sand daphne (*Pimelea villosa*) growing over pingao at the margin of the active and stable sand dune

The active duneland parallel to the beach contained several individual sand daphne (*Pimelea villosa*) plants, ranging from smaller than 10 x 10 cm to over 4 x 2 m. These were widespread throughout the active foredune, most commonly at one cluster at the northern end of the property. Sand daphne was searched for throughout the entire active dune area and at the edges of the stable dune and are marked on Map 2, though it is possible that the specimens found are only a subset of those present. In total, 44 individual sand daphne plants were noted. Sand daphne has a national threat status of At Risk – Declining, with a predicted population decline between 10-50% due to Partial Decline and Recruitment Failure (de Lange et al., 2018).

## 4.0 Avifauna

### 4.1 Methods

#### 4.1.1 Desktop review

Data from the Ornithological Society of New Zealand's (OSNZ) atlas (Robertson et al., 2017) were collated from the two 10 x 10 km grid squares (269, 605 and 269, 606), which encompass the project site and surrounds.

Further literature and website searches were undertaken to obtain additional information regarding bird species known to occur within the surrounding habitats. This included the eBird citizen science database; species lists were derived from hotspot survey locations near the project site as well as from specific searches for some rarer and less detectable species (cryptic bird species) to determine local distributions and their likely presence on site.

The species list obtained from the desktop review was filtered to exclude species that do not have primary habitat on site and/or have only been recorded historically at the site or surrounds<sup>3</sup>; this served as a base list of avifauna species present, or potentially present, at or near, the project site. The threat status of each species was obtained from the current New Zealand Threat Classification for avifauna (Robertson et al., 2017).

#### 4.1.2 Field investigation

On 12 April 2021 an avifauna field investigation was conducted on site and in the adjacent surrounding areas by two Boffa Miskell ecologists. This involved:

- Observing and traversing through the middle of the saltmarsh wetland habitat (Figure 23). Four playbacks for Australasian bittern were opportunistically undertaken while traversing the wetland, however it is noted that the survey was not conducted during the optimal survey period for cryptic bird species (i.e. spring). The playback surveys involved playing a bittern call through speakers to illicit a potential response from any birds possibly present in the area. These observations and the description from the vegetation surveys (Section 3.2.17), together with the desktop review, were used as a proxy to determine the suitability of the wetland as potential habitat for cryptic bird species.
- A count of all bird species, and their abundances, in/along Ōhau River, at the rivermouth and the adjacent sandspit (Map 1, Figure 26).
- A walking transect along the beach from directly north of the Ōhau rivermouth to the northern extent of the project site (Figure 27). During the survey all bird species observed along the beach and the adjacent duneland were recorded, as well as their abundances.
- Walking through the duneland vegetation and areas of kānuka treeland on site (Figure 17, Figure 14) with the purpose of using habitat as a proxy, together with the desktop review, to determine what species these habitats provide potential habitat for.

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<sup>3</sup> The primary and secondary habitats<sup>3</sup> for each bird species was obtained from Heather and Robertson (2015).



- Recording incidental observations of other bird species observed in non-Schedule F areas while walking or driving through site (i.e. grazed pasture, areas dominated by pest plant species; Figure 28).



*Figure 26 - The Ohau river mouth beach and sandspit.*



*Figure 27 - The coastline adjacent to the property*



Figure 28 - Grazed grassland, rank grassland, and weedy margins

## 4.2 Results

Avifauna habitats on site, and or within close proximity of the project site, that meet the requirements of Schedule F of the Horizons One Plan include: saltmarsh wetland, duneland (active and stable), and kānuka forest/treeland.

In total the desktop review listed 63 species that use, or potentially use these habitats at, or in close proximity, to the project site. This includes six Threatened species, 14 At Risk species, 22 Not Threatened species, one non-resident native species and 20 introduced species (*Table 5*). Two of these species, eastern bar-tailed godwit and red knot, are international migrant birds. During the site visit, 27 of these species were observed, including five At Risk species (black shag, pied shag, royal spoonbill, variable oystercatcher and white-fronted tern), 11 Not Threatened species and 11 introduced species (*Table 5*).

The primary habitats for Threatened and At Risk species on site and in the immediate surrounds include freshwater/wetlands (the Ōhau River and potentially the saltmarsh wetland) as well as coastal/estuarine areas (the Ōhau River mouth, beach and dunelands) (Figure 26, Figure 21)

- The Ōhau River, Ōhau River mouth/estuary, the beach and dunelands provide foraging and roosting habitat for waders, gulls, terns and shorebirds. There are also two recent records on eBird (2016 and 2021) of Australasian bittern sightings (one and two birds respectively) at the Ōhau estuary. The beach and dunelands at the estuary also provide nesting habitat for variable oystercatcher (Todd et al., 2016) and potentially New Zealand pipit. The Ōhau estuary is recognised as an 'important area for birds' (B. M. Robertson & Stevens, 2016).

- The saltmarsh wetland is relatively small (1.98 ha) but is in reasonably good condition, with a dense swathes of native saltmarsh vegetation (refer to Section 3.2.17 for a vegetation description). It is part of a network of wetlands in the wider area in which one to two bittern and banded rail have occasionally been recorded (e.g. Te Hakari dune wetland, Lake Horowhenua)<sup>4</sup>. Given the small size of the wetland, it is unlikely to provide permanent habitat for these species, however it may on occasion provide temporary foraging habitat for these mobile species, together with the Ōhau estuary.

The kānuka treeland habitat (refer to Map 2) provides habitat for common, Not Threatened native species and introduced species.

The freshwater wetland (refer to Figure 22) is small (0.03 ha) and isolated and provides habitat for common, Not Threatened native species and introduced species.

The grassland habitat on site, in addition to the coastal habitat, may provide foraging, roosting and possibly nesting habitat (areas of rank grassland) for New Zealand pipit.

The macrocarpa trees along the dune edge may provide roosting and/or nesting habitat for shags.

The remaining vegetation communities on site (exotic scrub, exotic scrub under pine, poplar treeland types, brush wattle treeland, mixed pine treeland exotic native mix; refer to Section 3.2.1 for vegetation community descriptions) provide habitat for native, Not Threatened species and introduced species.

Table 5. Avifauna species that use, or potentially use, habitat at, or in close vicinity to the project site as determined from the field investigation and desktop review (Robertson et al., 2007; Todd et al., 2016)<sup>5</sup>. The conservation status of each species is indicated as well as their primary and secondary habitats.

SPECIES (Robertson et al. 2012)		CONSERVATION STATUS (Robertson et al. 2017)	Native forest	Exotic Forest	Scrub / shrubland	Farmland / open country	Freshwater / wetlands	Coastal / Estuary	Oceanic	Urban/Residential	Desktop Review	Observed at, or near, Site
Bellbird	<i>Anthornis m. melanura</i>	Not Threatened	■	■	■					■	✓	
Kereru	<i>Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae</i>	Not Threatened	■		■						✓	
Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus sanctus vagans</i>	Not Threatened	■		■	■	■				✓	✓
Morepork	<i>Ninox n. novaeseelandiae</i>	Not Threatened	■	■	■						✓	
North Island fantail	<i>Rhipidura fuliginosa placabilis</i>	Not Threatened	■	■	■					■	✓	✓
Shining cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx l. lucidus</i>	Not Threatened	■		■						✓	

<sup>4</sup> eBird Citizen Science Database Australasian bittern species map:

[https://ebird.org/newzealand/map/ausbit1?neg=true&env\\_minX=&env\\_minY=&env\\_maxX=&env\\_maxY=&zh=false&gp=false&ev=Z&mr=1-12&bmo=1&emo=12&yr=all&byr=1900&eyr=2021](https://ebird.org/newzealand/map/ausbit1?neg=true&env_minX=&env_minY=&env_maxX=&env_maxY=&zh=false&gp=false&ev=Z&mr=1-12&bmo=1&emo=12&yr=all&byr=1900&eyr=2021)

<sup>5</sup> eBird Citizen Science Database: <https://ebird.org/newzealand/explore>

Tui	<i>Prothemadera n. novaeseelandiae</i>	Not Threatened	■		■														✓	
Grey warbler	<i>Gerygone igata</i>	Not Threatened	■	■	■														✓	✓
Silveryeye	<i>Zosterops lateralis lateralis</i>	Not Threatened	■	■	■														✓	✓
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Introduced	■	■	■	■													✓	✓
California quail	<i>Callipepla californica</i>	Introduced			■	■													✓	
Eastern rosella	<i>Platycercus eximius</i>	Introduced	■	■	■														✓	
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Introduced			■														✓	✓
<b>NZ pipit</b>	<b><i>Anthus n. novaeseelandiae</i></b>	<b>At Risk - Declining</b>				■	■	■											✓	
Spur-winged plover	<i>Vanellus miles novaehollandiae</i>	Not Threatened				■	■												✓	✓
Swamp harrier	<i>Circus approximans</i>	Not Threatened				■													✓	✓
Welcome swallow	<i>Hirundo n. neoxena</i>	Not Threatened				■		■											✓	✓
Magpie	<i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>	Introduced		■		■													✓	✓
Canada goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Introduced				■	■	■											✓	✓
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Introduced	■	■	■														✓	✓
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Introduced	■	■	■														✓	
Wild turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>	Introduced				■													✓	
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Introduced				■													✓	✓
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Introduced		■	■	■													✓	✓
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Introduced				■													✓	
Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammea</i>	Introduced				■													✓	
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Introduced				■													✓	✓
Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Introduced	■	■	■														✓	✓
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Introduced				■													✓	✓
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Introduced			■	■													✓	
Australasian bittern	<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>	Threatened – Nationally Critical					■	■											✓	
Black-billed gull	<i>Larus bulleri</i>	Threatened – Nationally Critical				■	■	■											✓	
Pied shag	<i>Phalacrocorax varius varius</i>	At Risk – Recovering					■	■											✓	✓
South Island pied oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus finschi</i>	At Risk – Declining				■	■	■											✓	
Spotless crane	<i>Porzana t. tabuensis</i>	At Risk – Declining					■	■											✓	
Black shag	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae</i>	At Risk – Naturally Uncommon					■	■											✓	✓
Black-fronted dotterel	<i>Charadrius melanops</i>	At Risk – Naturally Uncommon					■	■											✓	
Little black shag	<i>Phalacrocorax sulcirostris</i>	At Risk – Naturally Uncommon					■	■											✓	
Paradise shelduck	<i>Tadorna variegata</i>	Not Threatened				■	■												✓	
Pied stilt	<i>Himantopus h. leucocephalus</i>	Not Threatened				■	■	■											✓	✓



## 5.0 Herpetofauna

### 5.1 Methods

#### 5.1.1 Desktop survey

Relevant data was retrieved from the DOC-administered BioWeb database, which provides known records of lizard species across the country. Published and unpublished reports on lizard surveys or presence within the area were also reviewed.

#### 5.1.2 Site visit

Site visits were carried out on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of April. During these visits, potential lizard habitats present within the site were mapped. In addition to habitat mapping, five CritterPic units were deployed across the site, focusing in the established and higher value duneland habitats (and in one location, rank grass habitat: Figure 29). CritterPic units are a variation on trail cameras that have proven very effective in monitoring for lizards (as well as a number of other small animal species). The camera is triggered by an animal entering the unit, which is typically baited (in this case with canned pear). The CritterPic units were left in place for 8 nights.



Figure 29: Locations of CritterPic units deployed throughout the study site (Google Earth, 2021).

## 5.2 Results

### 5.2.1 Desktop survey

The DOC administered BioWeb herpetofauna database has only 10 lizard records <30 years old<sup>6</sup> within 15 km of the study area. The species recorded are summarised below in Table 6. There are no records at all (including older records) of lizards within 9 km of the site, and there are several records of surveys that returned a nil result (i.e. no lizards found).

Table 6: Native lizard species recorded within 15 km of the study site (DOC BioWeb Database). Conservation status and nomenclature follows Hitchmough et al., 2016

Common Name	Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Habitat Preferences	Number of records
Northern grass skink	<i>Oligosoma polychroma</i>	Not Threatened	Dry open areas with low vegetation or debris such as logs or stones for cover.	1
Copper skink	<i>O. aeneum</i>	Not Threatened	Open and shaded areas where sufficient cover is available (e.g., rock piles, logs, dense vegetation).	1
Ornate skink	<i>O. ornatum</i>	At Risk – Declining	Open and shaded areas where sufficient cover is available (e.g., rock piles, logs, dense vegetation).	5
Unidentified gecko	N/A	N/A	N/A	3

### 5.2.2 Habitat Assessment

The habitat most likely to contain lizard populations are the active and stable dunelands present at the site (Communities 9 and 10). Vegetated dunelands provide high quality habitat to a number of indigenous lizard species, including northern grass skink (which have been recorded in the wider area). However, there was evidence of high pest numbers across the site; considerable densities of pest tracks were observed in the dunes (Figure 30 and Figure 31 below), and a feral cat was observed onsite. High pest numbers considerably reduce the quality of lizard habitat, and the ability for populations to persist in an area.

Also potentially providing terrestrial lizard habitat are the areas of rank grass and scrublands which provide sufficient ground cover (Communities 2, 4a, 6a, 6b, 7). As with the dunelands, the most likely species to occupy these communities would be the northern grass skink, which are able to persist in modified and exotic habitats such as these. As above, the quality of the habitat is greatly reduced by the presence of a number of pest species within the site.

There are areas of kānuka treeland on the site. Kānuka is a preferred habitat type for a number of arboreal gecko species (barking gecko, ngahere gecko). However, these patches of kānuka are small and isolated from potential source populations, which makes it very unlikely that there are arboreal lizards present. The very high pest numbers present on the site further reduces the likelihood.

<sup>6</sup> Older records are considered to be out of date.

The areas of grazed pasture and exotic tree lands (with grazed or sparse ground cover) are considered to be unsuitable habitat to indigenous lizards, due to a lack of refugia and appropriate food source.



Figure 30 - Pest tracks in the dunes near the river mouth



Figure 31 - Animal tracks in the sand

### 5.2.3 Survey results

No lizard observations were captured by the CritterPic units during the 8 nights they were onsite. There were, however, 97 visits from mice across the five units (Figure 32), as well as two visits from hedgehogs (Figure 33). Both of these species are predators of lizards, and their presence in addition to the mustelid and cat signs observed during the walkover (as well as the lack of observations from the CritterPics) make it unlikely that a healthy population of lizards can persist within the site. If there is a population present, it is likely the common and robust northern grass skink and would likely be in low densities.



Figure 32 - A mouse recorded in a CritterPic unit



Figure 33 - A hedgehog recorded in a CritterPic unit



## 6.0 Schedule F - Significance

In the Horizons One Plan (Horizons Regional Council, 2014) the identification and protection of significant vegetation and habitats is covered by Policy 13-4. Under this policy, At- Risk, Threatened, or Rare habitat types are defined in Schedule F (Indigenous Biological Diversity). To be deemed significant, a community must meet at least one criterion in Table F.2a which identifies Rare, Threatened and At-Risk plant communities and habitats, and must not be excluded by Table F.2b which identifies a range of community types that are not considered to be Rare, Threatened, or At-Risk.

Schedule F only considers those habitats which are indigenous, defined in the plan as *'vegetation comprised predominantly of indigenous species, but which may include scattered exotic species'*. To further inform use of this definition, the One Plan definition of 'scattered' is also required: *'species that contribute less than species which are occasional, common, abundant, or dominant and can be expected to be encountered infrequently, and with a sparse distribution within the area of interest. This is a measure of the contribution to an area of interest (e.g., the same habitat type or forest tier) of a species in relation to other species in the same area, and is not simply a frequency count as both biomass and density of a given species are considered'*.

Note that significance is based purely on habitat type at the time of survey and does not consider future health (e.g. predator impacts, regeneration outlook), or the wider context in which the community exists.

Table 7 below summarises the significance outcomes of the vegetation community types identified on site when assessed against Schedule F of the One Plan. The significant vegetation communities are shown on Map 3.

Table 7 - Community types and their outcome when compared to Schedule F of the Horizons One Plan

Number	Vegetation community	Significance
1	Grazed grassland	These communities are not found significant under Schedule F as the vegetation does not meet the One Plan definition for Indigenous. <b>Not Significant.</b>
2	Rank grassland	
3a	Mixed wattle treeland	
3b	Mixed pine treeland	
4a	Poplar treeland	
4b	Poplar treeland over exotic scrub	
5	Macrocarpa	
6a	Exotic scrub	
6b	Exotic scrub under pine	
7	Exotic native mix	
8a	Kānuka treeland	One out of seven areas of kānuka treeland is larger than 0.25ha and is considered Threatened and <b>Significant. The remainder are excluded</b> on the

		basis of size (<0.25ha) and/or height (>4.5m)
8b	Thin kānuka treeland	This area is less than 0.25ha and is not well-developed kānuka. <b>Not significant.</b>
9	Knobby clubrush stable duneland	Classified as Stable Duneland – Rare. <b>Significant.</b>
10	Spinifex active duneland	Classified as Active Duneland – Rare. <b>Significant</b>
11	Wetland	Excluded on the basis of size (less than 0.05ha). <b>Not significant.</b>
12	Saltmarsh	Classified as Saltmarsh wetland – Threatened. <b>Significant.</b>

Those areas identified as Significant according to Schedule F fit the following definitions:

- Kānuka Forest or Treeland - *Kānuka forest or treeland is dominated by almost pure stands of well-developed kānuka. This habitat type is differentiated from kānuka scrub by size (greater than 4.5m tall or 20cm diameter measured at 1.4m above the ground. Seven areas of kānuka treeland on site were identified (community 8a), though only one of these fits the height and size specifications outlined in Table F.1 which defines the required height (at least 4.5m) and size in Table F.2a, (must be at least 0.25ha). The one area of thin kānuka treeland is also excluded on the basis of size and is not considered well-developed as per the definition.*
- Saltmarsh wetland – *Saltmarsh wetlands support low growing indigenous herbfield, rushland, and scrub, form within areas of tidal intertidal zones, and are fed from groundwater and estuary waters. Saltmarsh wetlands occur in association with mudflats. The saltmarsh wetland is an estimated 1.98ha in size and fits the description of salt marsh wetland as according to Schedule F.*
- Active duneland – *Indigenous grassland or sedgeland occurring on active duneland formed on raw coastal sand. The active duneland on site fits this description and is not excluded by any F2.b factors*
- Stable duneland – *Indigenous grassland, tussock land, herbfield (including *Pimela actea* and *P arenaria*), or shrubland occurring on stable duneland formed on recent coastal sand. The stable duneland on site fits this description and is not excluded by any F.2b factors*

The wetland on site is 0.03ha and so is excluded in the factors listed in Schedule F.2a, which states threatened wetland habitat must be at least 0.05ha in size to be considered significant. However, we also note that under the new NPS-FM the wetland will classify as a natural wetland, but again there is no clear direction as to a minimum size that should be considered. It is noted that the NPS-FM directs Councils to consider 0.05 ha wetlands, or smaller if appropriate. We do not consider a raupō-isolepis wetland as a typically small wetland type (less than 0.05ha) and consider a wetland of this type should be at least 0.05 ha to be functional and representative.

All other areas of vegetation not listed above do not meet the One Plan definition of 'indigenous' due to level of exotic species present (more than 'scattered') and so are not considered against Schedule F for Indigenous Biological Diversity.

It is worth noting that Table F.2a also states that any woody vegetation, exotic or indigenous, is Significant if it lies within 20 m of the riverbank of a 'Site of Significance – Aquatic' (mapped in Schedule B of the One Plan). The stretch of the Ōhau River adjacent to site is not a 'Site of Significance – Aquatic' and so this 20 m margin extending into the property is not considered Significant, unless already outlined as significant habitat type above.

## 7.0 Outcomes

The Schedule F areas on site total approximately 16.12 ha. Of these areas, 2.12 ha is proposed to be converted to fairways permanently. Two Schedule F habitat types are encompassed by the current design, with 1.67 ha stable duneland and 0.34ha active duneland (both rare habitat types). The salt marsh (1.98 ha, threatened) is not proposed to be negatively impacted by the course, though management through enrichment planting is proposed. The Schedule F area of kanuka (0.29 ha, Map 3) will be avoided. Accessways between fairways and services have not been quantified, but these would be additional to the current areas calculated.

It is proposed that alongside the permanent conversion of Schedule F habitat to fairways, the surrounding habitat – including that which does not meet Schedule F – would be enhanced ecologically through actions such as pest (predator and weed) control, exotic species clearance, and vegetation rehabilitation/planting. Adding to this, the surrounding macrocarpa, grassland, and exotic habitats (not significant), where not converted to fairways or course related areas, would be revegetated to become representative, diverse, indigenous stable duneland or coastal dune shrubland. These actions would enhance the current ecological values of the site, even when permanent clearance of some Schedule F habitat (through golf course creation) occurs, as community types will be enhanced and restored as a result of the project.

It is noted that large tracts of stable duneland (Schedule F area), although meeting regulatory requirements for protection, do not hold a particularly high ecological value due to the presence of exotic species and lack of native diversity (those areas which are native dominated are almost pure knobby clubrush). Considering this predominantly native community is interspersed with exotic species throughout its range, sometimes forming dominant clumps of lupin and gorse, it is recognised that this community is not typically representative of the historic expected community, and that conversion of some of this area to fairway would be no more than minor in effect. The revegetation of the remaining (between golf infrastructure) habitat to include a more diverse range of native species (those proposed in preliminary plans of Dr. Boffa) include tauhinu, knobby clubrush, pōhuehue and sand coprosma, in addition to pest control and the removal of exotic species and these actions and restoration would outweigh any minor effects on the habitat lost from fairway conversion.

A small area of active duneland proposed for a fairway is located in one area near the Ōhau river mouth (~70m from the river edge). This duneland is a Schedule F area and the proposed fairway contains large amount of bare sand, with scattered spinifex and marram grass, and dense lupin encroaching from the landward side. The conversion of this habitat to fairway would be a loss of Schedule F area. However, considering the small area that would be impacted

(0.34 ha), the level of encroaching exotic species present (mostly lupin) in the fairway area, and the surrounding large areas of active dune that cover site, this loss would be of minimal ecological concern. As above, the remaining active dune on site (6.19 ha) would be subject to predator control and the protection/enhancement of the sand daphne population (we recommend) and also native planting as part of active foredune management. Although effects would be no more than minor on the active duneland habitat at the site scale, and therefore no mitigation required under 13-4 (b), the proposed management actions in the surrounding habitat will enhance the ecological value of the active dunes and result in a net gain ecologically.

Many small areas of kanuka treeland are present on site which do not qualify as Schedule F areas due a combination of size, height, and fullness requirements. While these do not qualify as Schedule F habitats, they may be a valuable addition to any areas converted to coastal scrubland and retaining these areas to enhance future restoration would be beneficial to the project. This is also recognised by the project course designer, and as such any reduction in these non-Schedule F areas of kanuka will be minimised, and carried out thoughtfully and selectively as their value in future restoration and habitat creation is acknowledged. The 0.29 ha area of Schedule F kanuka (rare-significant) will be entirely avoided.

The small raupō wetland discovered, although smaller than a typical assemblage of its type, can be conservatively considered a Natural Wetland. Following the recent (2020) National Policy Statement on freshwater management the Council are directed to avoid any loss of extent of natural wetlands. The current course design avoids this feature, and no earthworks downslope of this are proposed We recommend ensuring that any water takes do not draw down near this wetland.

A draft ecological restoration plan has been developed by the project landscape architect and Dr Boffa. We assume and expect that the existing natives such as the titoki and totara will form part of that restoration effort. An indication of the species to be used and the areas to be revegetated and provided is shown in Figure 34. While additional native plant species could be added, the backbone of the assemblages in the plan are appropriate, and the areas and sizes will result in a net indigenous biodiversity and functional gain. We indicate on this figure by way of the yellow circles the areas for ecological offset focus, either to enhance the existing (back dunes) or recreate new native assemblages. The communities outlined by the yellow circles include: active duneland (and sand daphne), stable duneland knobby clubbrush, kanuka treeland, exotic native mix, saltwater marsh and freshwater wetland.

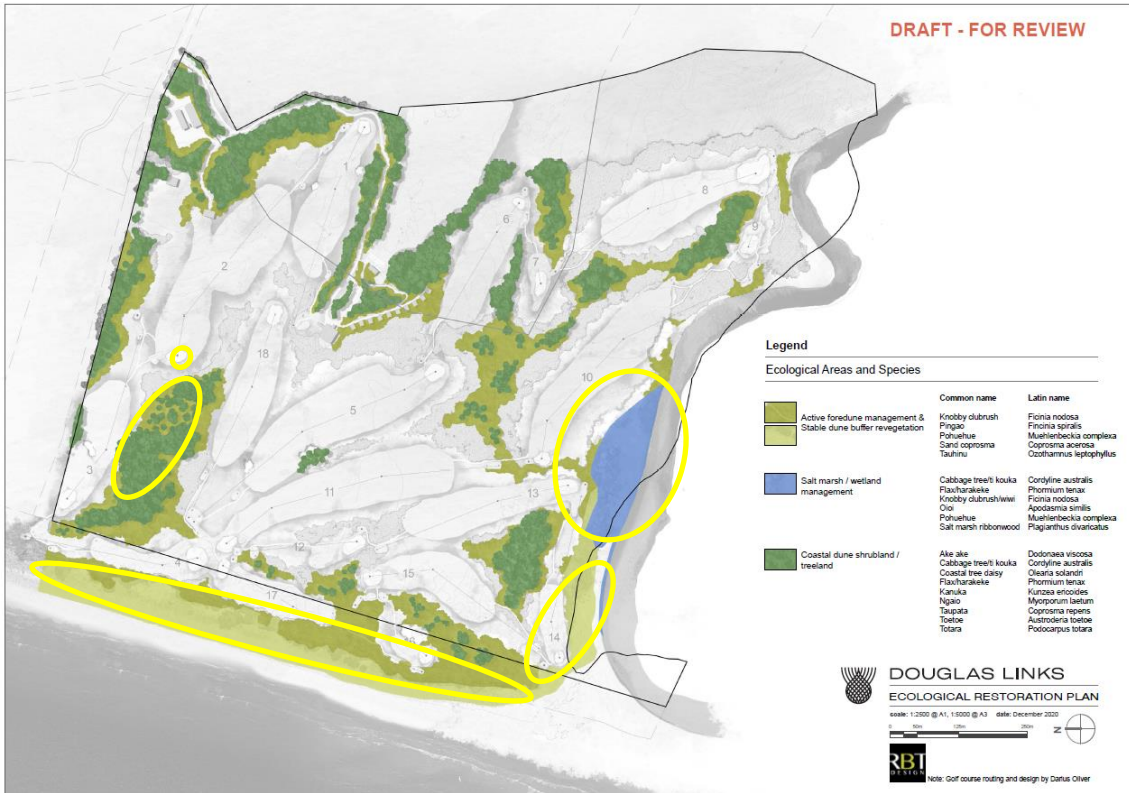


Figure 34. Draft ecological restoration plan and areas considered a focus for offsetting.

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## Appendix 1: Maps

### **About Boffa Miskell**

Boffa Miskell is a leading New Zealand professional services consultancy with offices in Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Queenstown. We work with a wide range of local and international private and public sector clients in the areas of planning, urban design, landscape architecture, landscape planning, ecology, biosecurity, cultural heritage, graphics and mapping. Over the past four decades we have built a reputation for professionalism, innovation and excellence. During this time we have been associated with a significant number of projects that have shaped New Zealand's environment.

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