



Piako
Waihou
Catchment Trust

LOWLAND FOREST REMNANTS

Protecting Our Last Ancient Forests

What are they?

Lowland forest remnants are the surviving fragments of New Zealand's once-vast kahikatea-pukatea and totara-matai forest ecosystems.

These precious patches contain our tallest native trees and represent some of our rarest ecosystems.

Why are they special in Piako Waihou?

- Of the original 99,000 hectares of kahikatea-pukatea forest on the Hauraki Plains, only 1.5% survives today
- Of the 27,000 hectares of totara-matai forest, only 0.9% remains
- These fragments mainly survive in riparian zones along main rivers
- They provide critical habitat for threatened species like long-tailed bats
- Each remnant is irreplaceable - once lost, these ecosystems cannot be recreated in our lifetime

Key Species You Might Find:

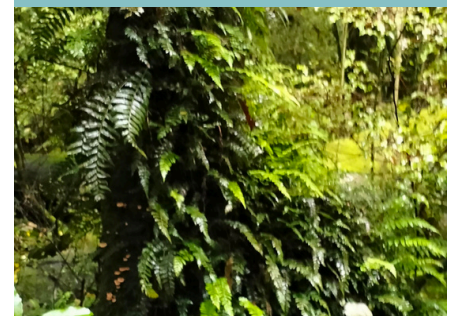
Healthy examples of Kahikatea forest can contain upwards of 100 native species. Icon species include:

- Kahikatea - NZ's tallest native tree
- Pukatea - Large buttressed swamp tree
- Tōtara - Distinctive thick, fibrous bark
- Matai - Black bark with distinctive "hammer marks"

Kahikatea external



Kahikatea internal



Tōtara external



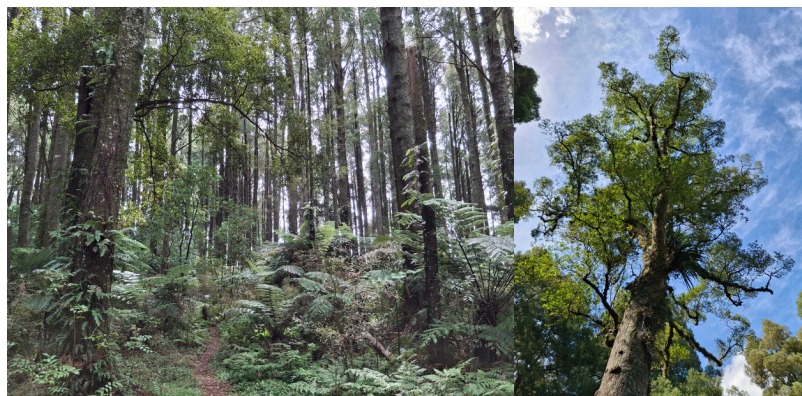
Tōtara internal



TAKING ACTION

First Steps

1. **Fence from stock** - Prevent trampling and browsing damage to vulnerable tree roots
2. **Map your remnants** - Know what you have and where
3. **Identify key species** - What natives are present and which ones are missing?



What to Include in Your Farm Plan

- Map locations and approximate sizes of remnants
- Current protection measures (fencing, pest control)
- Annual goals (e.g., "control weeds in 2ha of remnant annually")
- Plan enhancement activities with timelines
- Budget for ongoing maintenance and materials

Ongoing Management

- **Weed control** - Remove invasive plants like privet, moth plant, climbing asparagus
- **Pest control** - Target possums, rats, deer and goats that damage trees
- **Buffer plantings** - Establish native plantings around edges to protect microclimate

Enhancement Opportunities

- **Connect fragments** - Plant corridors between isolated patches
- **Understory restoration** - Replant native shrubs and ground covers
- **Edge management** - Gradually expand remnant size through native plantings

Home for long-tailed bats - pekapeka-tou-roa

0.9% of our lowland forests, respectively have survived - mainly in the riparian zones of the main rivers of the Hauraki Plains.

These sites also provide habitat for threatened and iconic species such as long-tailed bats.



Photo: DOC - Colin O'Donnell

RESOURCES + SUPPORT

- Department of Conservation
- Waikato Regional Council Biodiversity Team
- Local landcare groups



piakowaihourestoration.org.nz/resources

