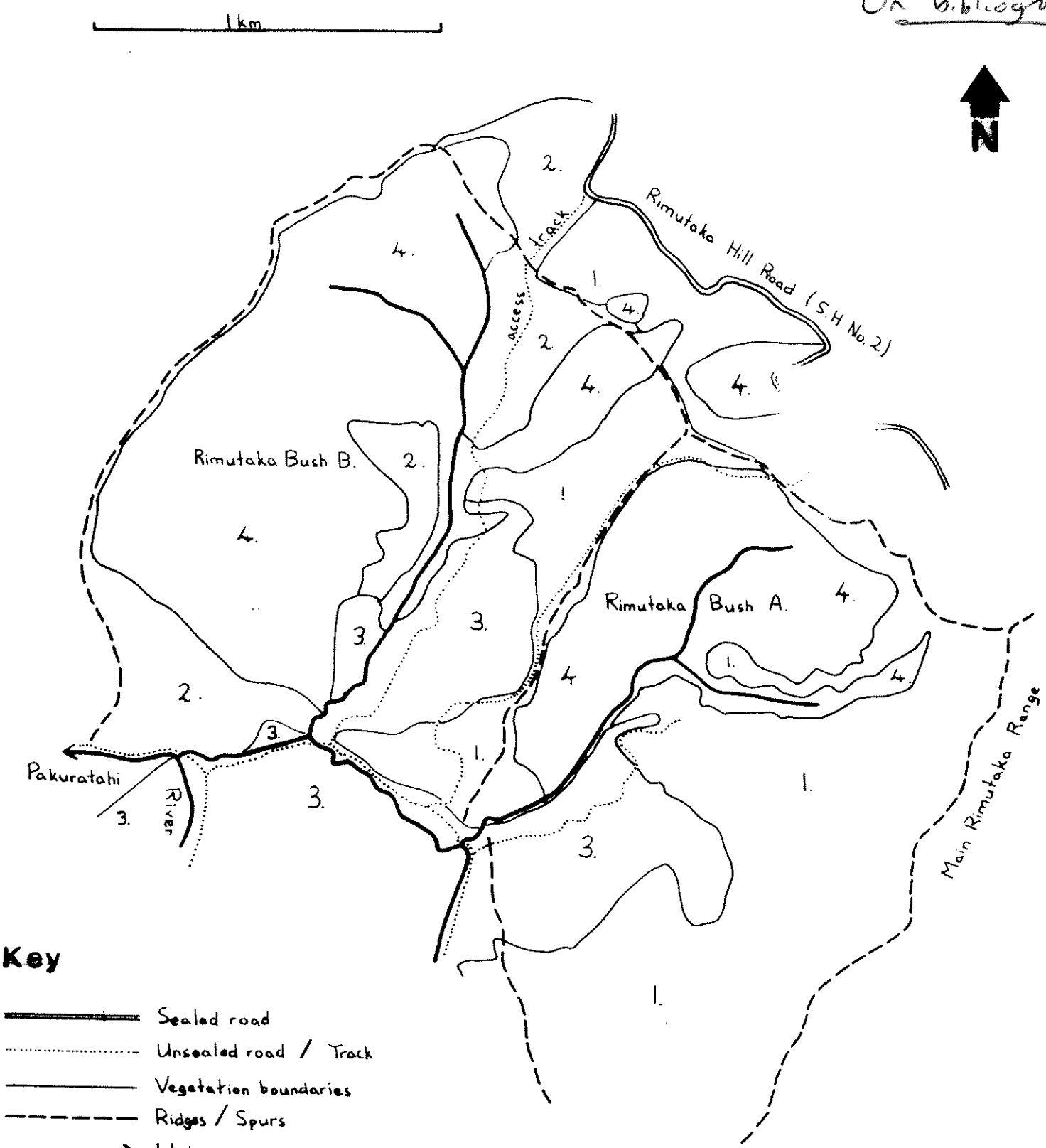
from: Clelland, D. (1984)
Unprotected natural areas of the Wellington Region.

On bibliography



Map 10 Rimutaka Bush A, B

RIMUTAKA BUSH A, B.

GRID REF N 161: 738, 425 (Bush A)
728, 432 (Bush B)

AIR PHOTO
5497 L/3

SIZE
Bush A, approx. 60 hectares
Bush B, approx. 110 hectares

OWNERS
Regional Water Board = Wellington Regional Council

STATUS/CURRENT PROTECTION
No protection

LOCATION Between the Rimutaka Hill Road and the middle reaches of the Pakuratahi River, directly east of Upper Hutt.

AREA DESCRIPTION

Rimutaka Bush A and B are two beech forest remnants occupying adjacent subcatchments of the Pakuratahi River. Situated immediately west of the main Rimutaka Range they have a climate typical of this range, characterised by high winds and high rainfall. The remnants contain excellent stands of red beech forest. These occur near the southern limit of red beech in the North Island. Red beech forest, probably due to relatively slow recolonisation following glacial recession, is not found further south than latitude 30 N, and is therefore uncommon within the region. It is completely absent from the Orongorongo catchment. Both forest remnants are separated from each other and from the Tararua and Rimutaka forest parks by extensive zones of scrub. The scrub is comprised mainly of kamahi, gorse and manuka although at higher altitudes subalpine genera such as *Dracophyllum* begin to dominate.

Rimutaka Bush A, B are more accessible than other red beech forests in the region, most of which are within the Hutt/Renata catchment to which access is prohibited. Large exotic forests, which extend into the subcatchments by several hundred metres detract somewhat from the beauty of the area.

ACCESS By foot, usually via the main access track marked on the map. This leads from the road, over a small saddle to the catchment of Rimutaka B and takes about 10 minutes. The track continues down the true left of the valley to a forestry road which gives access to Bush A.

JUSTIFICATION FOR RESERVE STATUS

1. Contains a number of vegetation types which are typical of the Wellington Region, including subalpine scrub and forest. Excellent stands of red beech forest are found in Rimutaka A.
2. Provides an important step in the bird corridor, linking the main forest areas of the Rimutaka and Tararua forest parks. All common bush birds of the region as well as some of the less common types are found within.

RATING 0-10

SCENIC	.5. . .
SCIENTIFIC	.4. . .
RECREATION	.4.(6).

BIOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

COMMUNITY TYPES

	%	RES WGTN
1. Mixed manuka - kanuka - broadleaved spp scrub with gorse abundant in some parts. Kamahi common throughout except near tops of ridges where *Dracophyllum* spp, ground astelias and small divaricating shrubs are common.	36	yes
2. Broadleaved scrub and forest dominated by kamahi ~ mahoe common in gullies and gorse in some parts. The vegetation is windshorn and stunted where it occurs on ridges.	11	yes
3. Exotic production forests.	18	yes
4. Beech forest, mainly red-silver. Hard beech widespread also but mainly in association with kamahi. Black beech occurs in low numbers. Emergent rimu are occasional throughout and some kahikatea occur in the alluvial soil in the gully bottom.	35	no

RARE/UNCOMMON PLANTS

	NCC STATUS	RES WGTN
None known from this area		

RARE/UNCOMMON ANIMALS

None known from this area

MODIFICATIONS AND TRENDS

Logging or burning of most of the vegetation has occurred resulting in large areas of scrub and young forest. The two forest remnants have probably had many of the larger trees removed leaving only a small number remaining. Large areas of exotic forest occur in the area and these are accompanied by logging roads. These forests extend into the subcatchments from the Pakuratahi for several hundred metres. Colonisation by exotic plants and animals has occurred subsequent to european settlement with gorse being the main exotic plant intruder. Gorse is most common near the highway where fires are more frequent, but it will eventually be displaced by regenerating forests. Deer, pigs and possums are present but numbers appear to be moderate to low. Possums are poisoned or trapped regularly.

THREATS

1. Further planting of exotic forests.
2. Accidental fire.
3. Damage by *Clematis vitalba* is a threat here, as is the case throughout the region.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

1. A sign at the base of the access track alerting the public to the existence of these forest remnants.
2. Proper maintenance of the tracks would encourage more visitors.

COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Rimutaka Bush A, B are relatively unknown to the public. This is more attributable to being hidden from view, than to the accessibility of the area. Visitors will be impressed by the quality of the forest and the diversity of birdlife which is evident from the range of bird songs one hears here. Ecologically the area has importance as a step in the bird corridor which follows the main range from Turakirae Head to the Tararuas. Bird species which have disappeared from isolated forest remnants within the region are more likely to re-establish populations if they have passage through such corridors. Exotic forests hinder this movement because they do not provide a suitable habitat for most native birds. The author recommends therefore that the two catchments which contain Rimutaka Bush A, B and the slopes which connect these areas to the highway, be acquired by the Lands and Survey Department for the purpose of creating a scenic reserve. Any further establishment of exotic forests within the Pakuratahi catchment will be to the detriment of the area as a whole and reduce its effectiveness as a bird corridor.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clark, D.J., 1980. Aspects of the relationship between red beech and silver beech in the northern Rimutaka Range with special reference to the southern limit of red beech in the area. Unpublished B.Sc. Honours thesis, Victoria University.

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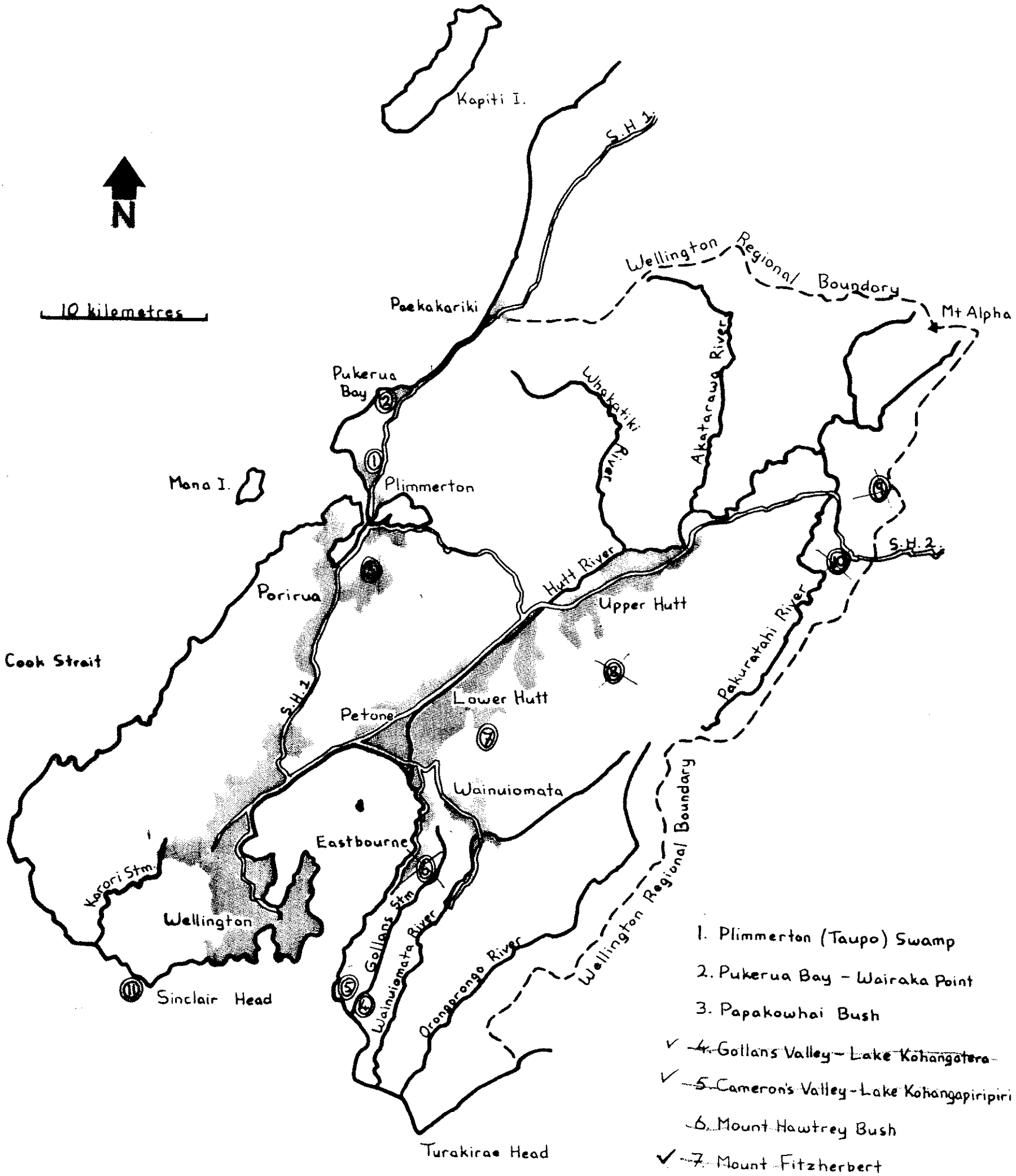

1. Plimmerton (Taupo) Swamp
2. Pukerua Bay – Wairaka Point
3. Papakowhai Bush
4. ~~Gollans Valley – Lake Kohangatera~~ ✓
5. ~~Cameron's Valley – Lake Kohangapiripiri~~ ✓
6. ~~Mount Hawtrey Bush~~
7. ~~Mount Fitzherbert~~ ✓
8. ~~Blue Mountains Bush~~
9. ~~The Puffer~~
10. ~~Rimutaka Bush A, B~~
11. ~~Red Rocks to Karori Stream~~

Locality Map

– Wellington Region showing location of surveyed sites.