

Precious Places:

Nature walks in and around Takapuna

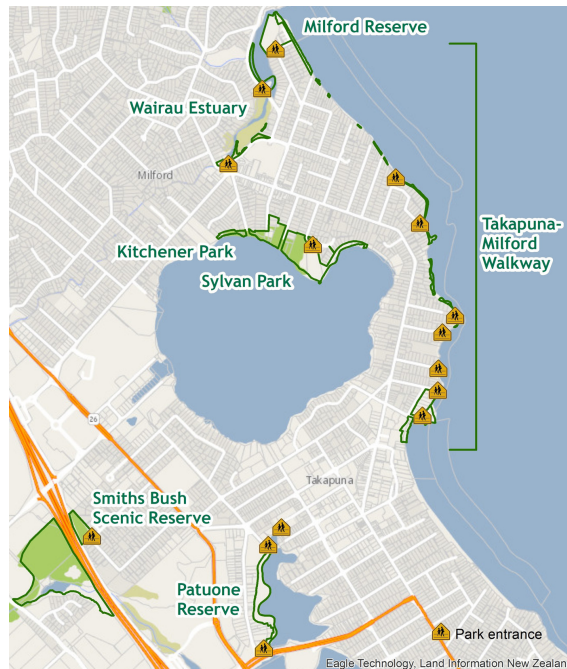
Takapuna is one of Auckland's most desirable residential and business areas. Despite its urban character, Takapuna and its surrounding suburbs contain a number of significant ecological sites — precious places which provide clues to the original flora and fauna of the North Shore. The short walks described here showcase both significant forest remnants and important seashore ecosystems, each of which is designated a significant ecological area (SEA) under the Auckland Council's Unitary Plan.



HELP PROTECT AND ENHANCE OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND PRECIOUS PLACES BY JOINING ONE OF OUR PARK CARE GROUPS OR MAKE YOUR BACKYARD PEST FREE. CONTACT US TO FIND OUT HOW TO GET INVOLVED.



TAKAPUNA NORTH
COMMUNITY TRUST



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*With special thanks to the Devonport-Takapuna
Local Board for their continued support*



NATURAL HERITAGE WALKS

TAKAPUNA AND MILFORD



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SYLVAN PARK, LAKE PUPUKE

Accessed from Sylvan Park Ave, Milford

Sylvan Park, on the northern side of Lake Pupuke, contains some impressive specimens of pūriri, karaka, kohekohe, and kōwhai. These trees are rare survivors of the pre-European forest of the North Shore, and a rare example of a critically endangered pūriri forest ecosystem, once widespread in the Auckland region but now restricted to a few remnants. Pūriri forest like this would once have supported a diverse range of reptiles, birds and bats, and pūriri berries still provides food today for kerurū and tūi. Other native bush-bird species in the park include fantail (pīwakawaka), morepork (ruru) and grey warbler (riroriro). Birdlife on the lake includes self-introduced Australian coots and Australian black swans. The Pupuke Birdsong Project is working to restore the ecosystem and is engaged in pest trapping and weed removal in the park.

MILFORD ESTUARY/WAIRAU CREEK

Accessed from Inga Rd, Milford and Milford Beach Reserve

The estuary where the Wairau Creek joins the sea at the northern end of Milford Beach has been greatly modified, with the reclamation of parts of the estuary and creation of a marina in the 1960s and 70s, but its inner reaches remain a significant mangrove habitat with oioi (native jointed wire rush) and saltmarsh ribbonwood. Despite contamination of the creek from the Wairau Valley, research has shown it to be home to up to nine native freshwater fish and crustacean species, and restoration groups are working on regular clean-ups and replanting of native

species. White-faced heron (matuku moana) and kingfisher (kotare) are regular visitors to the estuary, as well as shore birds such as variable oystercatcher (torea pango), gulls and white-fronted tern (tara). At the park at the estuary outlet at the northern end of the beach, there are a number of large pōhutukawa, planted in the early twentieth century.

TAKAPUNA-MILFORD WALKWAY

Accessed from Takapuna Beach carpark, and the many streets and avenues between Takapuna and Milford Beach

The coastal walkway between Takapuna and follows a shoreline largely created by volcanic activity. The eruption of the Pupuke volcano 190,000 years ago created not only the crater lake still present today, but also the basalt lava flows along the shoreline between Takapuna and Milford beaches. At the Takapuna end of the walkway is the Te Uru Tapu/ Sacred Grove, the last remnant pōhutukawa forest in the area. The walkway starts in the remains of a fossilised forest, captured in time when lava engulfed the large kauri and other, smaller trees growing on the foreshore. Some were preserved as solid trunk moulds, vertical and horizontal, and others as holes, where living trees were surrounded by lava, then the wood burned away as the lava cooled. Takapuna Reef Fossil Forest is one of the best examples in the world of a lava-preserved fossil forest, and although part of it was destroyed when the beach carpark was built in the 1970s, more than 200 tree stumps can be seen. One of the largest holes, situated near the end of Brett Ave, is 1.5 metres in diameter and is covered with a metal grille.

SMITH'S BUSH EAST/PURIRI RESERVE

Accessed from Karaka Street, Takapuna

Although this block of native bush was cut into two pieces by the construction of the Northern Motorway in the late 1950s, it remains home to an impressive collection of mature trees. Originally known as Mackay's Bush, the forest was partially milled in the 1900s but still contains large pūriri and totara, and is the last forest remnant of its type on the North Shore. There are also a number of younger kahikatea, 50–100 years old, which have thrived in the swampy soil but are now dying off due to the lower water. The reserve is home to a range of native bird species, including kererū, tūi, tauhou (silvereye), riroriro (grey warbler), kōtare (kingfisher) and pīwakawaka (fantail). A local conservation group is working on restoring the reserve.

PATUONE WALKWAY

Accessed from Barrys Point Rd, Greydene Place and Auburn Reserve, Takapuna

The newly redeveloped Patuone Walkway runs around the edge of a large mangrove swamp, in the far northern reaches of Shoal Bay. The bay was largely closed off with the construction of the Esmonde Rd onramp to the Northern Motorway in 1959. The enclosed bay now provides a rich, diverse mangrove environment, which is home to endangered banded rail (moho pererū), white-faced heron (matuku moana) and spotless crane (pūweto), as well as a range of marine invertebrates and crustaceans. At the head of the inlet is a small forest remnant containing karaka, kohekohe, pōhutukawa and other native trees. The reserve is named after Ngāpuhi chief Eruera Maihi Patuone, who lived at Shoal Bay in his later years, in the 1850s and 60s.