

Middle Bush

At a glance

TRC Reference: BD/9744	LENZ:	F1.1d Not threatened
Ecological District: Matemateaonga	National:	Priority 1 - Threatened Land Environment
Land Tenure: Private		Priority 4 - Threatened Species
Area(ha): 19.6	Regional:	Close proximity to a representative ecosystem site
GPS: 1732547X & 5643746Y		Key Native Ecosystem
Habitat: Forest Remnant	Regional Ecosystem Loss:	Less reduced >50% left
Bioclimatic Zone: Lowland		At risk 20-30% left
Ecosystem Type: MF7.2: Rata, tawa, kamahi, podocarp forest	Catchment:	Patea (343)
MF7.3: Tawa, pukatea, podocarp forest		

General Description

Middle Bush is located on privately owned land near Tututawa in eastern Taranaki. The site lies in the Patea River catchment and is located in the Matemateaonga Ecological District. Covering 19.5 ha, the remnant contains a mix of original and cutover lowland forest, with fringes of regenerating native forest. The site is surrounded by pasture/drystock farmland, some of which is proposed to be planted in manuka and left to regenerate. Other nearby protected areas include the Waitiri Conservation Area, the Eight Hundred Trust KNE and Glanafon Wetlands.

Ecological Features

Flora

The forest canopy is dominated by tawa, with occasional pigeonwood, rimu, rewarewa and kahikatea. The understory and groundcover is fairly sparse, mainly due to goat browse, but epiphytes and climbers are diverse and common. Notably, four 'Threatened' species of climbing rata and manuka the 'Regionally Distinctive' Tawhirikaro (*Pittosporum cornifolium*) and 'Threatened' Kirk's daisy (*Brachyglottis kirkii*) were observed during the initial visit.

Fauna

Birdlife at the site is diverse and includes whitehead, tomtit, tui, kereru, silvereye, fantail, grey warbler, shining cuckoo and morepork. Notably, the 'Threatened' New Zealand falcon visits the site and native bats are also likely to be in the general area. Good in stream habitat exists for koura and potentially other native freshwater fish species. Notable native reptiles and invertebrates also may occupy this site.

Ecological Values

Ecological Context - Medium	Provides stepping stone connectivity to other forest remnants and KNEs including Waitiri Conservation Area, the Eight Hundred Trust KNE and Glanafon Wetlands. Also provides core habitat for 'Threatened' and 'Regionally Distinctive' flora species.
Rarity and Distinctiveness - High	Contains four species of 'Threatened' rata, the 'Threatened' Kirk's Daisy and 'Regionally Distinctive' Tawhirikaro. Notable bird species includes the 'Threatened' karearea/falcon, which occasionally visit the site. Provides good habitat and likely to contain other notable species including reptiles and invertebrates.
Representativeness - Medium	Contains indigenous vegetation on F1.1d (Less reduced, better protected) LENZ environment and is a remnant of ecosystem types

(MF7.3 Tawa, Pukatea, podocarp forest and MF7.2 Rata, kamahi, podocarp forest) classified regionally as 'At Risk' and 'Less reduced or intact', respectively. Is nearby and similar in composition to an area identified as a priority representative site for management.

Sustainability - Positive

In good vegetative condition. Key ecological processes still influence the site. Under appropriate management, it can remain resilient to existing or potential threats. Current and planned efforts by the landowners will enhance the site.

Other Management Issues

Habitat Modification - Medium

The original forest has been cutover and cleared in places but is regenerating. Ongoing modification is occurring due to grazing/browsing from stock, feral goats and occasional deer and pigs.

Herbivore Control

The contour of the site makes it near impossible and cost prohibitive to fence to fully exclude sheep. Some natural barriers are in place which restricts sheep mostly to the outer edges of the site. The landowners undertake frequent goat mustering. Pigs are hunted when detected seasonally farm wide. Deer moving through from neighbouring farms are monitored for, and hunted as necessary.

Predators - Medium

Predators including rodents, mustelids, possums, feral cats and hedgehogs will be having an impact on native species at the site. Occasional possum control is undertaken using acute toxins.

Weeds - Low

Weeds are not an issue within the site.

