

WAIRARAPA:

TU TANGATA WHENUA

That the Lake Wairarapa wetlands and its surrounds are clean, healthy, shining and alive.

Lake Wairarapa is the largest lake and surrounding wetland area in the lower North Island. It is located beside the Remutakas on the south eastern side of the Wairarapa valley plain. From its northern most tip, just south of Featherston, the shallow lake extends southwest towards Lake Onoke and the coast. It is around eighteen kilometres long and six kilometres wide.

A taonga, Wairarapa Moana has been of great customary and spiritual importance as a place for gathering tuna (eels), waterfowl, raupo and flax for centuries. The seasonal blocking of the Lake Onoke outlet by the sandbar made it even more abundant as large numbers of fish congregated in its waters as a result.

The area has been recognised as a diverse, internationally significant habitat for native flora and fauna. It is a breeding, feeding and nesting ground for numerous bird species. It also supports rare and endangered native fish, including the longfin eel, as well as a number of threatened and regionally rare plants.