






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

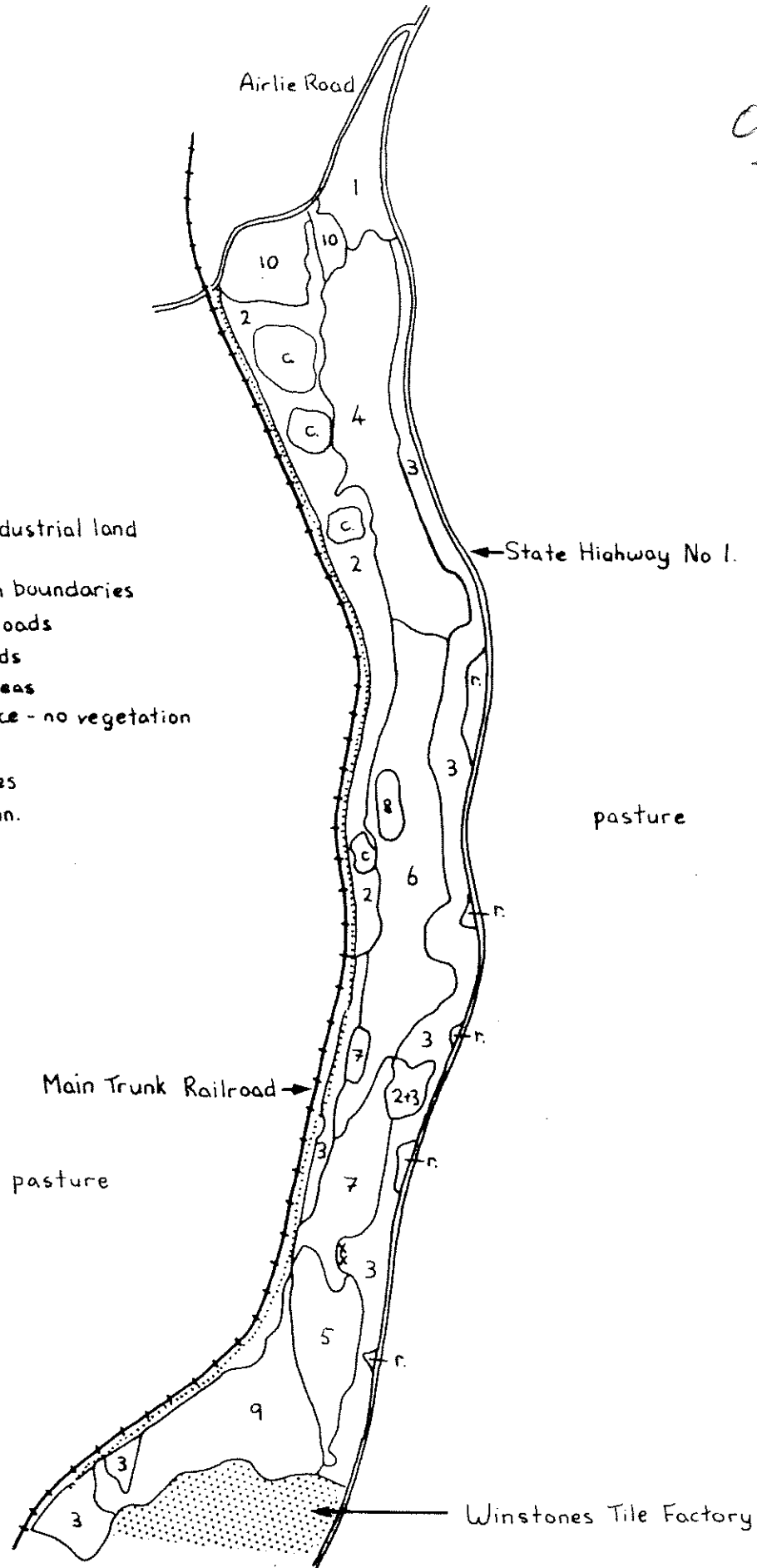
A survey of eleven areas of biological significance
 Unpubl report prepared for the Wellington District Office, Dept L & S

500 metres

↑
 N
 On bibliography

Key

-  Urban/Industrial land
-  Railroad
-  Vegetation boundaries
-  Unsealed roads
-  Sealed roads
- c. Cleared areas
- r. Road terrace - no vegetation
- x. Pines
- For key to vegetation types refer to biological description.



Map 1 Plimmerton Swamp

PLIMMERTON [TAUPO] SWAMP		GRID REF N 160 : 422, 475 - 426, 498
LOCATION Taupo Valley between Plimmerton and Pukerua Bay.		AIR PHOTO 5497 E/3
<p>AREA DESCRIPTION The area known as Plimmerton Swamp occupies a narrow (approx 2.5 km) strip of land between State Highway No. 1 and the Main Trunk Railway. The southern end, which is 1.5 km north of Plimmerton, is defined by Winstones tile factory, and the northern end by Airlie Road. Formerly part of a large marine inlet, the swamp became tectonically uplifted and alluviated to form the present topogenous mire. The swamp is fed by water which drains the Taupo Valley. Most of the valley is pastureland on a loess soil and has been this way since late in the nineteenth century. To date, erosion has not been a serious problem within the catchment. Between the swamp and the pastureland, there is a buffer zone of scrub of varying type and a road or railway. Stock have had access to the swamp in the past but a rising water table forced their removal. Within the area, other swamp remnants exist which are not cut off from the main valley by road or rail. Plimmerton swamp is, however, by far the largest and most visible to the passing motorist, to whom it appears as an expanse of flax. Closer inspection reveals a high diversity of vegetation types, some of which are uncommon in the Wellington Region.</p>		<p>SIZE Approx 40 hectares.</p> <p>OWNERS 1. Mr Scaife - Tawa Tapu Farm (northern end) 2. Mr Bengel - Plimmerton Farm (southern end)</p> <p>STATUS/CURRENT PROTECTION Proposed scientific reserve under Porirua City District Scheme, 1982. Presently zoned RC, 3 for recreational uses. No adequate protection.</p>
<p>ACCESS Vehicle access can be gained from all sides, although access to the western and southern margins is over private land. Movement within most of the swamp is extremely difficult.</p>		

<p>JUSTIFICATION FOR RESERVE STATUS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bagnall and Ogle described it as, "one of only a few lowland topogenous mires in the Wellington region that have retained a largely indigenous vegetation cover." Contains species of plant which are uncommon or absent elsewhere in the Wellington Region. Contains vegetation types not represented in existing Wellington Region reserves. The swamp has considerable scientific and educational value and continues to be used for these purposes. The swamp provides a unique and attractive break in the monotony of farmland for the passing motorist and is therefore of considerable scenic value. 	<p>RATING 0-10</p> <p>SCENIC 6...</p> <p>SCIENTIFIC 7...</p> <p>RECREATION 1 (3)</p>
---	--

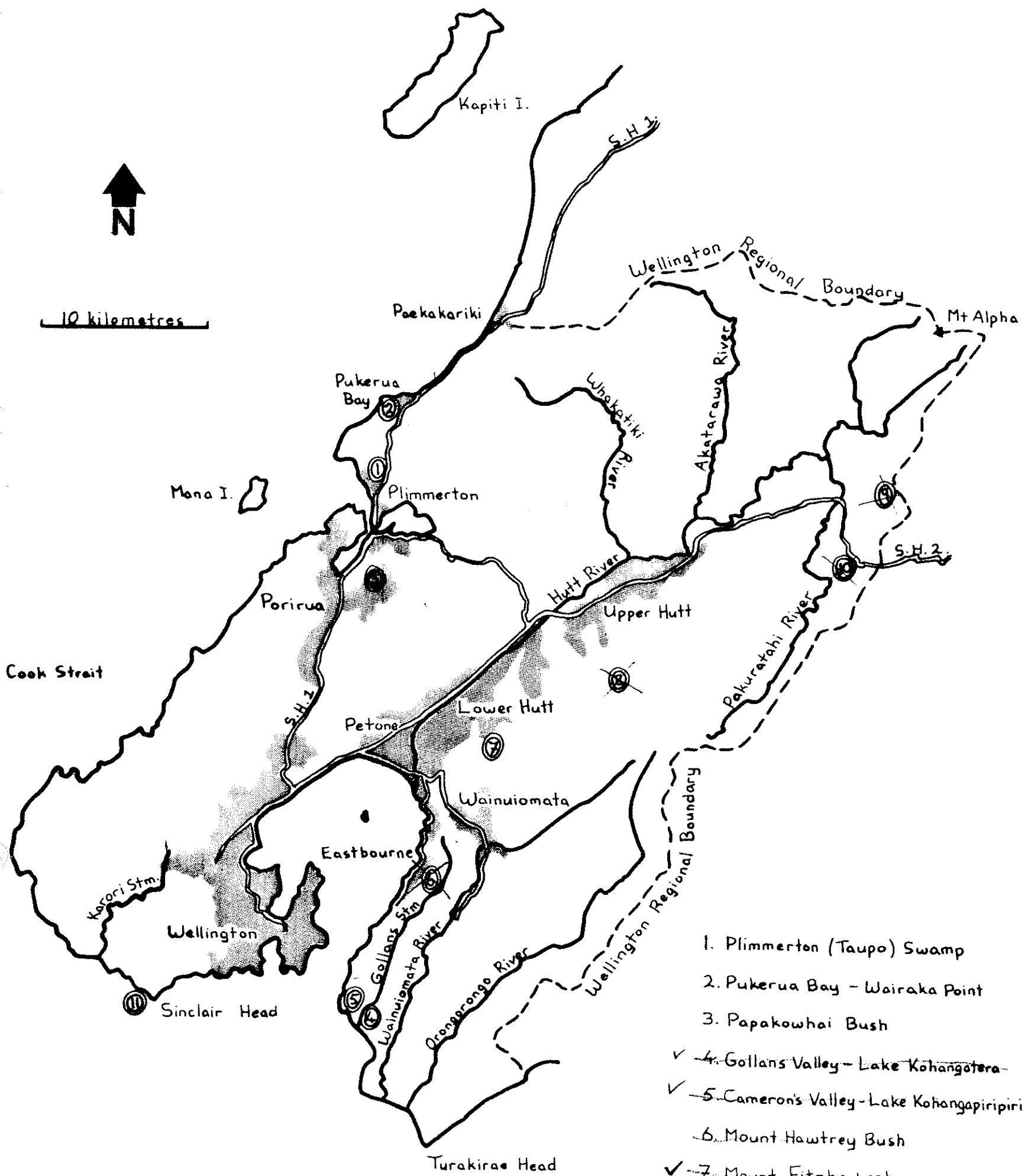
BIOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION	RES	WGTN	RARE/UNCOMMON PLANTS	NCC STATUS	RES
COMMUNITY TYPES	%	WGTN			WGTN
1. Willow forest.	5	yes	<u>Urtica linearifolia</u> - only location in Wellington region	-	no
2. Manuka-kanuka scrub with broadleaved shrubs occupying slopes above western swamp margin. Some recently cut.	14	yes	<u>Epilobium pallidiflorum</u>	-	no
3. Mixture of scrub types on margins of swamp and slopes immediately adjacent. Incl: lupin-fennel, blackberry, <u>Muehlenbeckia</u> -bindweed-cleavers, introduced broom, broad-leaved scrub.	28	yes	<u>Galium trilobum</u> - both found nearby in small cut off swamp pockets.	-	no
4. Flax tussockland with occasional broadleaved species and willows.	13	no	<u>Gonocarpus incanus</u> - also Days Bay and Eastbourne.	-	no
5. Flax tussockland with <u>Carex</u> sedges.	5	no	<u>Ranunculus macropus</u> - also Pencarrow Lakes and Butterfly Creek.	-	no
6. Flax tussockland with toetoe, broken by areas of bracken and/or <u>Carex</u> sedges. <u>Muehlenbeckia</u> , bindweed and cleavers common throughout.	14	no	<u>Polygonum sp (P. decipiens auct. N.Z.)</u>	-	no
7. <u>Carex</u> sedgeland with occasional clumps of flax.	7	no			no
8. Flax and toetoe with raupo.	1	no	RARE/UNCOMMON ANIMALS		
9. Mosaic of <u>Carex</u> sedgelands, pasturelands with occasional sedges and rushes. Flax clumps occasional throughout.	11	no	Spotless crane	-	no
10. Pasture and in-filled area.	1		Australian bittern - both reported from swamp but no evidence of breeding.	-	no
2+3 Mosaic of 2 and 3. See Bagnall and Ogle for a fuller description and species list.			Pukeko - present but on decline.	-	no
			Swamp may also harbour native brown mudfish and giant kokapu but further investigations needed.		

MODIFICATIONS AND TRENDS The swamp has remained relatively intact despite many potential disruptions to its biology. The clearing of the land surrounding the swamp and the formation of major roads and railways has changed the area considerably. The introduction of stock followed the establishment of farms and this has done some damage, particularly at the southern end. Drainage channels have been dug and at times flax has been removed for industry. The greatest change probably results from the influx of numerous exotic plant species which now comprise fifty percent of species recorded from the swamp and its margins. Bagnall and Ogle suggest that a seral reversal is taking place which should prevent exotics from becoming dominant in the main body of swamp. Since 1972 progressive infilling has occurred at the northern end and more recently some clearing of the scrub of type 2 has occurred, apparently in preparation for conversion to pasture.

<p>THREATS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Infilling of swamp and cutting of scrub in preparation for conversion to pasture. Eutrophication due to fertilisation of the surrounding land. Advancement of exotics such as willow and blackberry. Additional roadworks of large scale along the margins. Re-introduction of stock, in particular cattle, to the swamp. 	<p>IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fencing of perimeter to exclude stock. Removal of willows - needs investigation.
--	--

COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS
Plimmerton or Taupo swamp is well known to residents of the Porirua area, to scientists and to environment groups. The value of the swamp as a plant and animal refuge and as a place of scenic beauty has been well understood by these people for many years. Repeated attempts to negotiate some form of satisfactory protection for the swamp have not thus far been successful although recent meetings chaired by the Q.E. II National Trust have set the stage for more concrete settlements in the near future. Resistance by the owners to either enter into conservation covenant agreements or let the land go, and difficulty in obtaining enough money to purchase the land by the National Trust are the major stumbling blocks. The zoning of the swamp for recreation uses, and its status as proposed scientific reserve in the Porirua City District Scheme of 1982 have not prevented scrub along the margins from being cut and continued dumping of spill in the swamp at the northern end. The swamp needs protection urgently and should be purchased in its entirety, along with the scrub at the margins, in order to save one of the few remaining large areas of freshwater wetland vegetation in the Wellington Region and the only one which is visible to the motorist. Further justification for preservation can be seen in the potential of the swamp as a bird corridor to other pieces of bush in the area and as a refuge from extremes of climate for local wildlife. The buffering effect of the swamp environment also renders potential floods harmless by soaking up the surplus water and releasing it over an extended period.

<p>BIBLIOGRAPHY</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bagnall, R.G. : Ogle, C.C., 1981. <u>N.Z. J. Bot.</u> 19: 371-383 	<p>BY DJC, DC, MCW.</p> <p>MONTH December 1983</p>
---	--



Locality Map

- Wellington Region showing location of surveyed sites.

- 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