

A bit of History of 'Te Repo o Kaituna' Reserve

The reserve has had a long and complex history both ecologically, and administratively. From very early years flax milling was undertaken within 'Te Repo o Kaituna'... this large chunk of wetland was a seething mass of high quality flax as far as the eye could see, however it developed an uncontrollable disease.... Sometime during 1946 the whole area succumbed to a vast fire, believed to have started close to where the present day car-park is

Periodically floods' chased wild goats halfway up the trees and in later years, particularly from the 1960s, much of the area was invaded by willows with water beneath. These communities provided habitat for vast numbers of waterfowl and other wetland bird species in addition to eels and freshwater fishes.

Saving the soggy remnants

On the 1st April 1971 the Tauranga Acclimatisation society, (John Prior) signed a cheque for 127 acres of the McFarlane's Block purchased @ \$40:00 per acre... Later on and using the local Societies license holders hunting & fishing funds; interest in other parcels of wetland within the area (being Hicksons and the Whitehead Bros.) were finally paid for in early 1978. The underlying principle of these acquisitions was they would ensure these low wet areas were protected from the drainage proposals associated with the Lower Kaituna Catchment Control Scheme. In 1978 the Tauranga Acclimatisation Society, formally advised the Minister of Internal Affairs it would gift its 486 acres (*John Prior*) of wetland to the Crown for the purpose of establishing a wildlife management reserve.

Ray Bushell
Coastal Wild Fowlers
- Kaitiaki o te Repo o Kaituna