

## Chapter 5 - Natural Environment

### Special Ecological Areas (Category 1)

#### Overview

There are large areas of vegetation within the City that are considered ecologically significant. Many of these border the Tauranga harbour and include wetlands and the edges of rivers and streams.

With many of these areas located on publicly owned land, some entirely within the harbour and others on privately owned land, the key question is how should these areas be protected into the future.

Council has undertaken an aerial analysis of vegetation patterns, and identified areas of the City that are important enough to be considered to require protection. These are broken into two categories, Category 1 being the rare and threatened species, and Category 2 being areas of the City that have important value.

#### Current Rules

- The existing provisions were developed based upon work undertaken over 15 years ago and do not recognise site specific differences in vegetation patterns;
- The existing provisions are very strict and place significant constraints on properties in and around areas identified with ecological value.

#### Key Changes Proposed

- To identify Ecological Areas throughout the City and provide protection through rule requirements, while allowing for, on publicly owned land, walkways and similar activities to occur.
- On Category 1 Ecological Areas, no longer rely on restrictive setbacks (currently at 20 metres from the edge of vegetation on some properties), rather use a 5 metre setback to manage development. This brings it in line with existing setbacks from properties adjoining conservation areas.
- It is noted that there are a number of new areas within the City that are now identified as Category 1 Special Ecological Areas that previously were not, this is because of a change in how ecological areas are assessed.

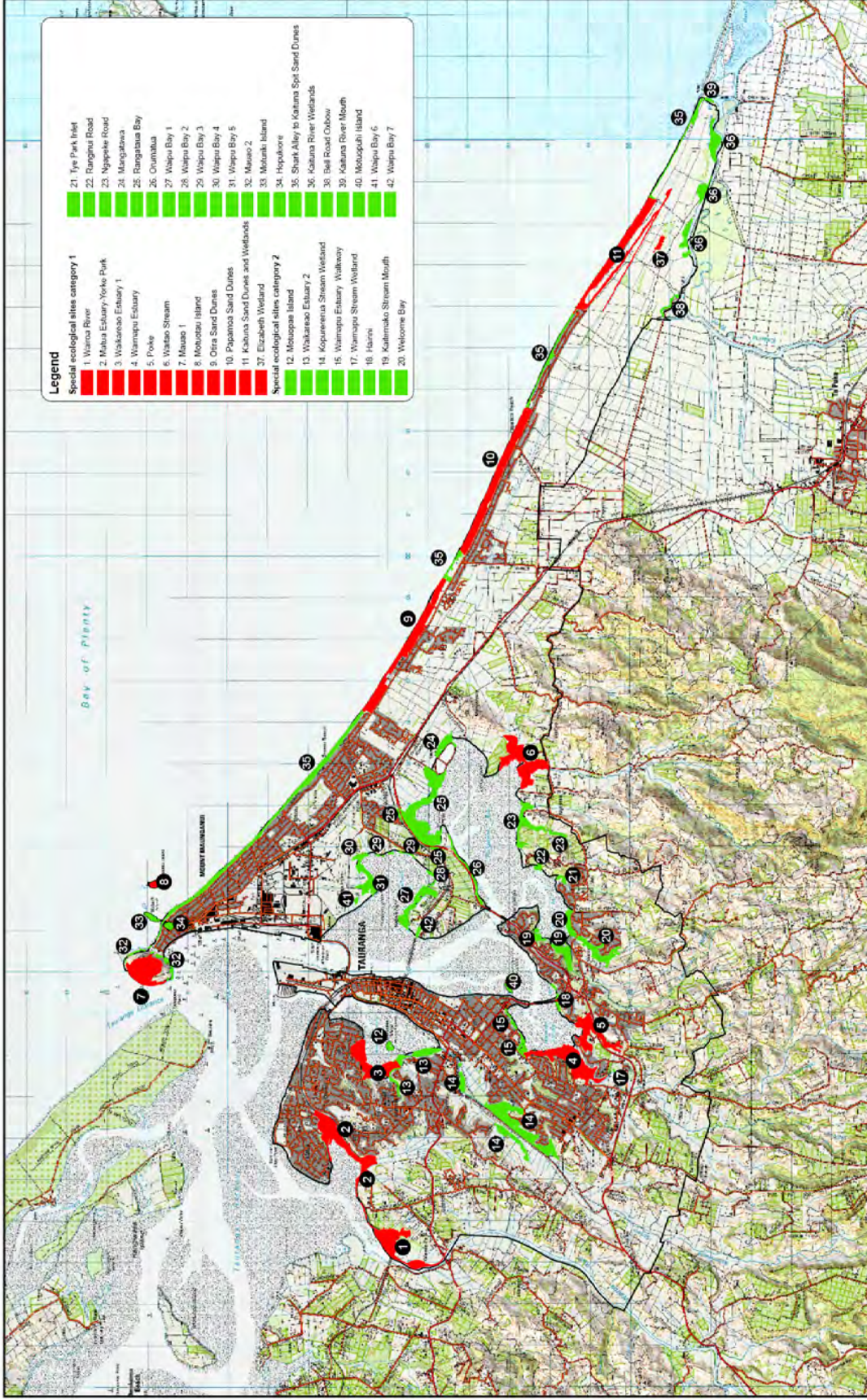
#### Reason for the Change

- To form objectives, policies and rules to protect our City's native vegetation and wildlife and keep these areas from further reducing in size.
- Council is required through the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), to preserve areas throughout the City that are considered to be of ecological significance.

**Note:** The provisions of the City Plan relating to Special Ecological Areas Category 1 shall have legal effect from the date of public notification of the Plan.

*(see detailed image over page)*





The map identifies the areas of the City (both within the Harbour and on land) where special ecological areas are located. Category 1 SEA's (areas of rare and threatened species) are shown in red, and the areas in green are Category 2 SEA's.

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