

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 Kohangotera
- ✓ 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

THE PUFFER

GRID REF
N 161: 755, 494 - 755, 470

LOCATION At eastern end of Kaitoke basin on slopes adjacent to Tararua State Forest Park boundary.

AIR PHOTO
5497 L/1

AREA DESCRIPTION

These moderately steep slopes begin from the flat pasture in the basin (270m. alt.) and extend up to the main dividing ridge at about 480m. alt. As with most of the bush sites in the survey this area has been extensively modified by fire. The vegetation is mostly scrub of mixed broadleaved type or manuka-kanuka. Small strips of forest - mostly beech with kamahi - are confined to the wetter gullies where fires have not penetrated. This large expanse of low scrub provides an ideal environment for native orchids and about 30 species have been recorded from this area. On northern, eastern and southern boundaries the scrub merges with an extensive area of forest, much of which is within the Tararua Forest Park. The high public use of the area is mainly due to its proximity to the park. The puffer is one of the busiest access points for the park.

SIZE
Approx. 300 hectares

OWNERS
State and private

STATUS/CURRENT PROTECTION
No protection.

ACCESS From State Highway No. 2 take Marchant Road at the Pakuratahi Bridge. Signs will show the way to the car park part-way up the slope. From here a track heads on up to the ridge. The tracks are well signposted.

JUSTIFICATION FOR RESERVE STATUS

1. Has high scientific value due to the high number of orchid species present.
2. The area would be a logical and worthwhile extension to the Tararua Forest Park.
3. The area is popular with sightseers and people wishing to go for short walks. The walks allow excellent opportunities for viewing native plants and from the ridge excellent views can be gained of the Hutt Valley. These aspects give the area high scenic and recreational value.

RATING 0-10

SCENIC 8...
SCIENTIFIC 6...
RECREATION 6(?)

BIOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

COMMUNITY TYPES

1. Exotic forest, mostly pine for commercial uses.
 2. New pasture on recently cleared land, some now grazed by sheep.
 3. Recently burned vegetation.
 4. Beech forest with kamahi, rewarewa and other broadleaved species in canopy. Confined mainly to gullies.
 5. Manuka - kanuka scrub.
 6. Kamahi dominated scrub.
- 5 + 6 Mosaic of 5 and 6.

%	RES WGTM	RARE/UNCOMMON PLANTS	NCC STATUS	RES WGTM	
6	yes	<i>Caladenia lyallii</i>) only location in <i>Pterostylis plumosa</i>) Wgton Region	-	no	
7	yes		-	no	
5.5	yes				
15	yes				
14.5	yes				
14	yes				
8	yes				
		RARE/UNCOMMON ANIMALS			
		None known from this area.			

MODIFICATIONS AND TRENDS

This area was predominantly cleared for conversion to pasture before being allowed to revert to scrub and forest. Since the first clearance frequent fires have kept the vegetation in early successional stages, creating an environment ideally suited to orchids. Tracks were cut on spurs and the main ridge, probably as fire breaks. The puffer was one of these and became well used as a major access route into the park. This well known track marks the beginning (or end) of the most popular main ridge crossing in the park - the Southern Crossing. It also gives access to the popular Tauherenikau Valley. Recently new tracks have bypassed the old puffer track. These are better graded for walking. Some land development has occurred in recent years on the north side of the puffer. Large areas have been cleared and either planted in pines or converted to pasture.

THREATS

1. Continued clearance for conversion to pasture or production forest. This will reduce the orchid habitat.
2. Fire poses a threat to the vegetation although the orchids depend on the maintenance of low scrub for survival.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

1. More adequate fencing to exclude stock in some places.

COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS

A count of 30 species of native orchid makes this area one of the richest orchid habitats in New Zealand. As regeneration continues a reduction in orchid species is likely but the forests which develop will improve the scenic value of the area. At present the area acts as a reservoir for populations of regionally uncommon orchids which will colonise new habitats as they develop. Protection of the area is vital to ensure that the region retains its diversity of orchid species. Although not part of the Tararua Forest Park, the area is used for similar purposes as the park and deserves the same protection. The siting of a youth recreation centre at the base of these slopes reflects the importance of this area as a recreational resource.

The forest park boundary should be extended to take in these slopes and bring the area under the protection that the park land enjoys. All clearance of land within the area should be prevented. Existing cleared land should be adequately fenced to ensure that stock do not gain entry into the native vegetation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BY

DC

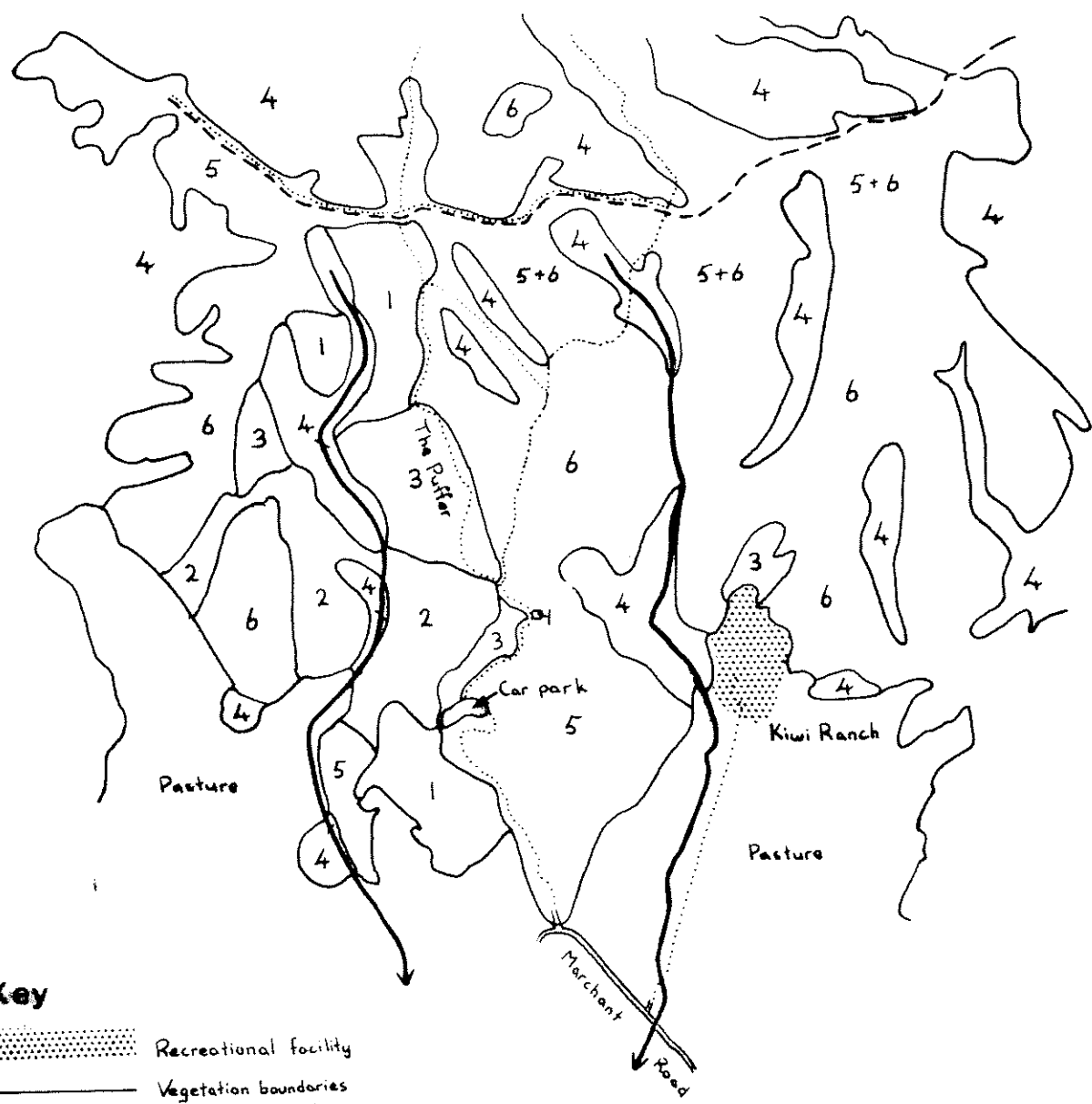
MONTH February

1984.

1 km



Tararua Forest Park
 (boundary of ridge)



Key

- Recreational facility
- Vegetation boundaries
- Unsealed road / Track
- Ridge
- Sealed road
- Waterways
- For key to vegetation types refer to biological description.

Map 9 The Puffer

Tararua Ecol. District.