



PARK KAIMANAWA FOREST PARK KAIMANAWA FOREST
 OREST PARK KAIMANAWA FOREST PARK KAIMANAWA
 PARK KAIMANAWA FOREST PARK KAIMANAWA FOREST
 OREST PARK KAIMANAWA FOREST PARK KAIMANAWA
 PARK KAIMANAWA FOREST PARK KAIMANAWA FOREST
 OREST PARK KAIMANAWA FOREST PARK KAIMANAWA
 PARK KAIMANAWA FOREST PARK KAIMANAWA FOREST

The beautiful Waipakihi Valley, with its broad river flats flanked by beech forest and open tops, has attracted trampers and hunters for many decades.

One of the five huts within Kaimanawa Forest Park provided and maintained by the Forest Service for public use.



Above 1220m the mountain beech forest becomes stunted and usually gives way to tussock and heath-like vegetation with occasional fringes of mountain toa toa and bog pine (*Halocarpus bidwillii*), and rare pink pine (*H. biformis*).

The wide expanse of alpine grasslands to the south is dominated by snowgrass and tussock (*Chionochloa* and *Festuca* spp.) with a variety of subalpine and alpine plant associations.

Expanses of colourful red tussocks (*Chionochloa rubra*) occur on the open country to the east where the original cover was destroyed by earlier fires. In the absence of recent fires, areas of red tussock, particularly on valley slopes, are progressively being replaced by manuka scrub (*Leptospermum scoparium*).

History

There is little physical evidence of the use of the area by the Maori in early times other than the numerous Maori place names on old maps and in Maori land court records. However archaeological sites have been found close to the forest park.

Areas such as the Oamaru Valley are associated with Maori settlement and warfare in the mid 17th century involving

the Ngati Whiti, Ngati Maruahine, Ngati Tuwharetoa, and Ngati Kurapoto tribes.

The first recorded visits of Europeans were those of the botanists Bidwill in 1839 and Colenso in 1847. Surveyors Smith and Cussen traversed the country in the 1870s and 1880s.

European settlers arrived in the late 1800s attracted by the large expanses of tussock country for grazing sheep. Fire was used extensively to clear land and stimulate new growth. Many names of landscape features, such as Mt Dowding and Boyd Rocks, recall these pioneer graziers. The sites and remains of early sheep farming huts can still be seen.

The search for gold also attracted people and signs of early prospecting include the mine shaft of the Pioneer goldmining claim at Motumatai. The gold search extended to the headwaters of the Rangitikei, Taruarau, and Ngaruroro Rivers and up the main rivers and streams draining into Lake Taupo from the Kaimanawa Ranges.

Wildlife

A wide variety of native birds is found in the forest park. In forested areas the most common are the tui, fantail, bellbird, pigeon, rifleman, kaka, robin, tomtit, grey

warbler, whitehead, parakeet, white eye, and morepork. During the summer shining and longtail cuckoos inhabit the park, and though rarely seen or heard the kiwi is also present.

In more open places paradise, grey, and blue ducks, fernbird, black shag, pipit, harrier hawk, and bush falcon are found. Many introduced birds also make their home within the park. As in all forest parks the birds are strictly protected.

The native land snail *Powelliphanta*, commonly referred to as paryphanta, was discovered only recently in the Otamateanui Stream catchment to the south of the park. These snails, which grow up to 5cm in diameter, are one of the many species and sub-species of *Powelliphanta* found throughout the North Island of which the larger kauri snails are perhaps best known.

It is recognised that paryphanta must once have been more widespread along the axial ranges of the North Island but climatic or vegetation changes wiped out colonies in most areas. Hence only scattered colonies remain. A significant feature of the Kaimanawa discovery is that the colony is situated within the area covered by the comparatively recent