



0 1KM

— Outstanding Natural Character Area  
 — High Natural Character Area



NATURAL CHARACTER EVALUATION TABLE

Biophysical Characteristics

**Landforms** | expansive ocean beach & holocene dune (Opoutere Beach) with distal spit and rocky island feature (Hikunui Island) flanking the narrow entrance to Wharekawa Harbour. Includes a prominent headland (Ruahiwiwi Point) to the south characterised by highly weathered cliffs and rocky shoreline.

**Vegetation type, Cover & Patterns** | spinifex and pingao dune grasses cover the vast majority of the foredune while some exotic dune species are apparent. Indigenous wetland occupies the inner margins of Wharekawa harbour near the entrance to Wahitapu Stream. Remnant pohutukawa line the margins of Ruahiwiwi Point.

**Sea / Estuarine Water Bodies** | the Ohui Stream breaches the dune cover towards the northern end of the Beach while the tidal flow of the Wharekawa Harbour bounds the southern end of the Beach.

**Land Uses / Activities / Structure** | devoid of buildings and structures.

**Habitat Value** | highly valued avifauna habitat on distal spit and inner margins of Wharekawa Harbour.

**Natural Processes** | strongly expressed coastal processes are evident in the dramatic interface between the beach and dune corridor, distal spit, craggy headland flanking the entrance to Wharekawa Harbour and the tidal flow of the Harbour itself.

Rating of Biophysical Characteristics



Perceptual Characteristics

**Wildness / Wilderness / Remoteness** | extensive beach, elevated foredune and separation from rural hinterland and housing by tall pine forest impart a sense of remoteness and wildness.

**Experiential Attributes** | despite the presence of the forestry backing the length of the beach, a high level of naturalness is derived from a combination of its natural elements, the dynamic natural process along the beach and its relative remoteness and wildness, further accentuated by extensive length of the Beach.

**Context / Setting** | nearly all of the coastal hinterland behind the beach has been cleared and is in pasture and pine forestry. A number of residential properties and associated roads, buildings are setback behind an extensive line of pine trees which abuts the beaches foredune - this modification negatively impact of the naturalness of the coastal environments margins.

**Transient / Dynamic Attributes** | coastal erosion, tidal processes, seasonal change, atmospheric conditions, and windswept vegetation combine to create a dynamic interplay between this landform and the Pacific Ocean.

**Night-time Values** | a high degree of naturalness is derived from limited exposure to lights within the unit given the absence of dwellings and structures within.

Rating of Perceptual Characteristics



Overall Natural Character Evaluation

(Biophysical and Perceptual Values)

**HIGH**