

NGAI TAHU CLAIM - WAI-27

MAHINGA KAI
(Waihora)

EVIDENCE OF REWI BROWN

REWI BROWN states:

I am of Waitaha, Ngati Mamoe and Ngai Tahu descent. I whakapapa to Te Te Ruahikikiki and Tuahuriri. I am a farmer, my farm is at Lakeside, I fished the lake until prevented by the Review of fishing licence regulations requiring 80% of income to be derived from fishing and have always lived near to it.

I am speaking on behalf of the Taumutu Runanga in asking you to return our lake to us. We understood the Treaty of Waitangi would ensure our food supply from the Lake but this has not been true. We are all concerned about the way the lake has been allowed to deteriorate and the way it has been over fished without any regard for a continual supply for the future. Some varieties of fish haven't been seen around for at least twenty-five years (eg. Inaka).

Although it has been called Ellesmere that is not its original name. It was called Te Kete Ika O Rakaihautu or at the end of the lake where the old kaika Waikakahi was found it was 'Te Kete Ika O Tutekawa'. Waihora was a description of the lake rather than its name although people have later used it as such.

It was formerly of much greater size. Mantell's map has it right up into the foot of Gebbies Pass, as does Captain Thomas. Its name indicates its great importance as a food source for the people of Taumutu as well as others.

There were many varieties of tuna, patiki, aua (herring) pipis, and large cockle beds. The streams that fed into the lake provided kanakana, inaka, fresh water koura, whitebait.

There is also isolated evidence (writings by Tini Taiaroa) of an incidence of sea koura being found and eagerly fished. Paradise ducks were also caught on the lake and were important for food. They were gathered when they were moulting and herded by canoe into different areas around the lake so the different kaika could get their share so we were told.

Originally the lake was much higher and covered great acreage. It was estimated to be about twice as big as it is today. It remained at a high level and used to be opened when tides were at the highest point of the tide cycle. Later when mechanical equipment was used the level became lower still. Once the artificially low level was established it created the lake flats by drainage and the land reclaimed then became Crown LIP Leases.

The lower level of the lake seriously affected the shellfish beds which have now all disappeared. Although evidence of them still exists. The quality of the water has been affected by a variety of circumstances and the streams which feed the lake denuded of their fish too.

The greatest problem we see is in the over fishing of the lake. At an early state our people fished so that we would have not only food for survival but a commercial quantity to maintain a seasonal livelihood - eg kai hou kai.

The late Mr Riki Ellison stated - apart from the fishing information - that WAIHORA was a descriptive term for the lake rather than the actual name for it although it was commonly used as a name. The oldest name is the Waitaha one TE KETE IKA O RAKAIHAUTU. The Waikakahi end of the Lake and the part around the old Waikakahi kaika of our people was known as TE KETE IKA O TUTEKAWA.

Species: Tuna/kokopili/Aua - yelloweyed (herring/mullett)
Piharau (kanakana/Ute) in streams around lake away
from lagoons and towards Rakaia

See: notes by Taua Tini Taiaroa in "Pipiwharau" re on both Koura and koura-tai.

Koura around Kumukumuwhero between Taumutu and Muriwai

Cockles - the old high lake was alive with them.

Patiki - white-clean white under, light grey on top. "three cornered".

Patiki totara - Yellow belly - grey on top more elliptical in shape - sells well on market.

Patiki mohoao - Big black - thick/coarser flesh - a lake fish? (No: also Rakiura/Awarua etc.) However richer food, very much to the Maori taste.

Sole (SOR:Patiki rori) - Sea fish, bigger but similar to patiki - sandpaper finish to its skin.

Brill - Patikinui

White flounder (Maori name???) white on top. Special delicacy.

Tuna: His fish eye divided them into "migratory" and "homers".

The tunaheke was a "homer" (contradiction in name??)

Tunahou - similar to kanakana (in size or characteristics?) about 1/3 lb. but boned.

Horehorowai - black - jelly-like texture - spoil to catch.

Koreoma - long tapered thin eel - ideal for smoking

Matemoe - stays within weed. Dark/broader tail/long nose/seldom more than 4lb. Ideal for drying/pawhera

Kuaha - larger, 'senile' older eel - 'locked in' can go to 40lb plus!!

Mairehe - Dark heavy skinned tapered tail and nose 33-40lb. averages 15-22 lb. fatty/not a good keeper. Fleshy, plenty of oil. Smokes very well. last of all eels to 'run' (4th. Hinepouriri)

Hohepara - Similar to Mairehe but grey slaty black. Thinner skin/blunter both ends. Wide spaced eyes. Similar keeping to Mairehe. Texture firm/milder flesh.

All above short finned eels - describes as "gentle"

Long fins:

(Ngoingoi the name for sea conger / cf. Nth. Is. Ngoiro)

Ngoingoiwaha/Koikoiwaha: edible but not favoured because he's a cannibal. Doesn't keep well but OK fresh. Vicious, broadmouthed scavenger - like all long fins. Eat each other - never struck a "clean one" yet. Skins very well - thin skin which peels off easily inverted tooth system - powerful coarse teeth.

Short fin:

Tunahinahina - silvery, relatively small.

Straight from sea very good eating max
2-4 lb. Usually near sea.

Ahua patiki no Taumutu:

Patiki totara - yellow
belly long elliptical
shape.

Patiki mohoao - black,
sometimes up to 2lb.s

Patiki - "three cornered"
white belly

- white belly
and off-white back with
eyes and mouth yellowish
and red / 'mullet' ring
round eyes. He kai reka.

At other times the men worked on seasonal farm activities around the lake.

The lake has always contained a large quantity of patiki (flounders).

There were three main varieties caught.

(copy of Mr R. Ellison's paper)

Eels were caught in large quantities from February until April. The varieties are listed in Riki's paper.

As a result of commercial fishing now it almost fished out of eels. Lake Ellesmere has a T.A.C. of 36.5 tons. A total of 36.5 tons is divided between eleven fishermen - no local Maori is involved in the fishing industry on the lake. Because Maori traditionally fished seasonally he didn't fit with the regulations which requires that 80% of income comes from fishing.

It should be noted that Lake Waihora Fishing regulations allow the taking of eels under 150 gms.

This regulation is applicable only This will lead to the complete elimination of the eels.

The lake was a source of pleasure and recreation for many people. Pakeha as well as Maori.

There was a wharf which was used as a diving board for Sunday swimming. A deep channel expended parallel with the Landing Reserve and right to the Koru.

At present there are a total of 20 licences issued for the lake. From this total 11 have eel quotas.

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MAHINGA KAI

(Waihora

EVIDENCE OF DONALD ROBERT BROWN

DONALD ROBERT BROWN states:

My tribes are - Waitaha
 Ngati Mamoe
 Ngai Tahu

Leslie Heaton Brown - Father
Teone Wiwi Brown - Grandfather

I am a descendant of Te Ruahikihiki.

My father lived here at Taumutu and fished the Lake as did his father. I also fished the Lake from 1960 when I took over my father's fishing licence. But I lost my licence due to the 80% of income regulations.

As a child school holidays were spent here at Taumutu with my grandparents and uncles and aunts.

Some of the changes which have taken place since then are the draining of the lake and surrounding wet lands by use of pumps and stop banks. The silting up of the outlet to the sea where the adjacent fishing grounds were fished by our Fathers. The commercial fishing of eels which were used to provide food for our families and exchange for food from other people.

The draining of the lake has meant that pukeko and ducks are not as plentiful because of the breeding places. High lakes with stop banks means that ducks and pukeko go away from the lake because they can't feed around the edges.

Grandmother told me when she was young her and her sisters used to go and gather cockles on the banks at Greenpark Sands. These are now dead and only the shells are left.

When dad was alive we used to go eeling together around the lake mainly at the mouth of the Halswell river. We would half full a sugar bag in a few minutes. We only took good eels 2'6" - 3' long. Now you could go out all night and probably only get a couple of eels.

When the lake used to reach high levels years ago this created huge swamps and marshes breeding places for the fish and birds. These swamps I was told by my grandparents went back to Taitapu and Greenpark. At a place called Englishes swamp a man and horse disappeared because he lost his way, drowned in the swamp.

The higher levels of the lake probably had a self cleansing-flushing effect on the lake and kept the lake and deeper at the Outlet which has since silted up.

Aunty Wai's funeral.

I was asked by her children of which she had 16 to get some flounders for them as they were gathered for their mother's funeral. I couldn't do this because my fishing licence had been taken away. I had to ask my sister to ask another pakeha fisherman to give us a couple of boxes. This made me feel very sad.

Fishing from the beach

When we used to come to Taumutu around Xmas time we used to fish off the bench with lines and rafts to try to catch groper. Uncle Roy caught 8 one day. My father told me he also caught 8 on a hand line one day.

My father left the district as did many other people because the small reserves weren't sufficient to provide for him or his family. This must of hurt the old people.