Native vegetation of the Blockhouse Bay to White Bluff coast

Native vegetation in a fairly modified condition stretches more than 5 km along this coast of the Manukau Harbour. It lies on Waitemata sandstone, a deposit of sand and silt laid down under the sea. The ridge tops and easy slopes have soil of low natural fertility further impoverished by kauri forest. The steeper land is more fertile because movement of the soil has enabled the subsoil to yield more nutrients. Much less topsoil has developed on the very steep eroding slopes undercut by the sea.

As a result of these geological differences three well defined habitats have their own kind of vegetation.

(a) gumland vegetation (mainly manuka) on the easy slopes

(b) regenerating forest (mapou and mahoe developing to puriri-kohekohe forest) on the intermediate slopes

(c) pohutukawa forest on the coastal scarps

It seems that all parts have been affected by fire in the last 100 years but there has been progression back to the characteristic vegetation in each habitat with the inclusion of some exotic species either planted (pines, wattles, gums) or by migration (gorse).

Special features of the vegetation

1. There are more than 213 native plant species* (compare with North Shore reserves Kauri Park 155, Kauri Glen 141).

2. The most natural piece of pohutukawa forest close to Auckland grows near Wattle Bay. It is favoured by the southerly aspect and absence of interference from farm animals and humans.

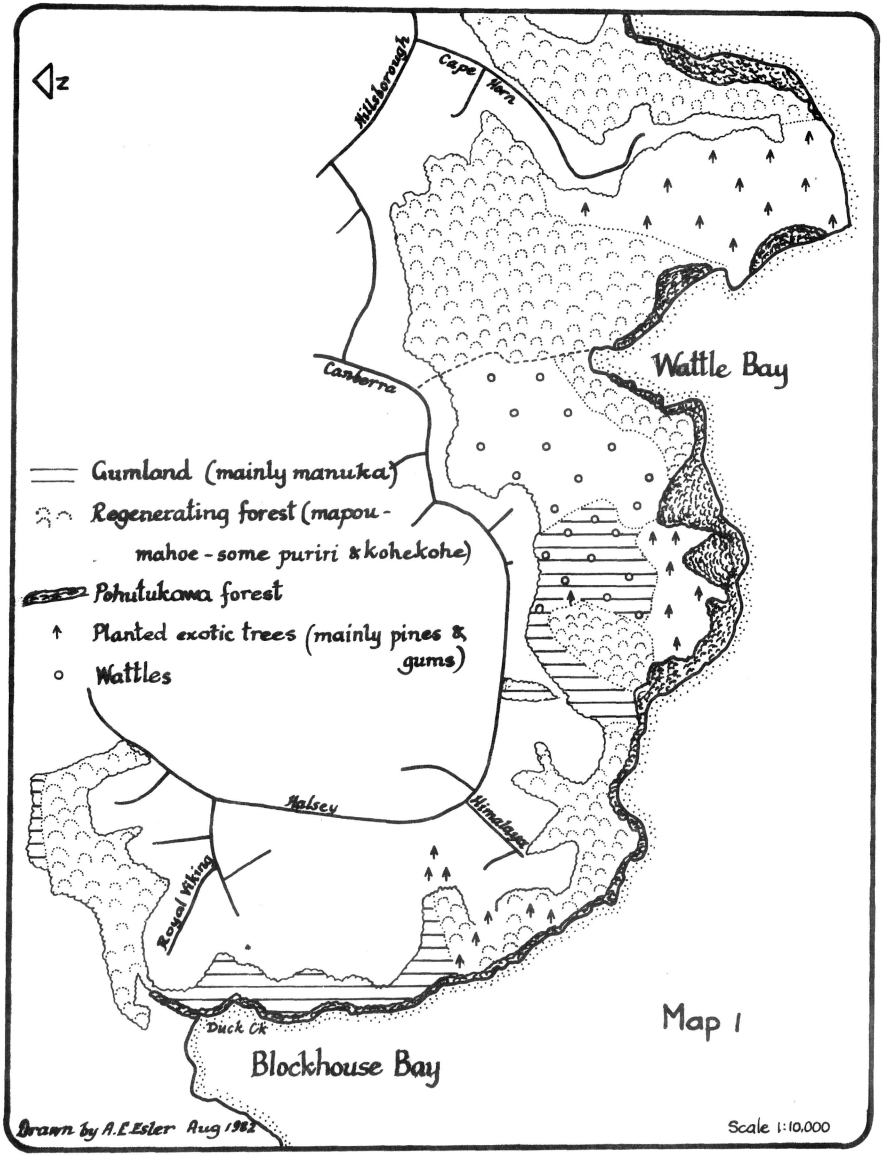
3. Vigorous re-establishment of pohutukawa.

4. Gumland is a reminder of the kind of vegetation which covered much of the North Shore and western suburbs of Auckland in the middle of last century.

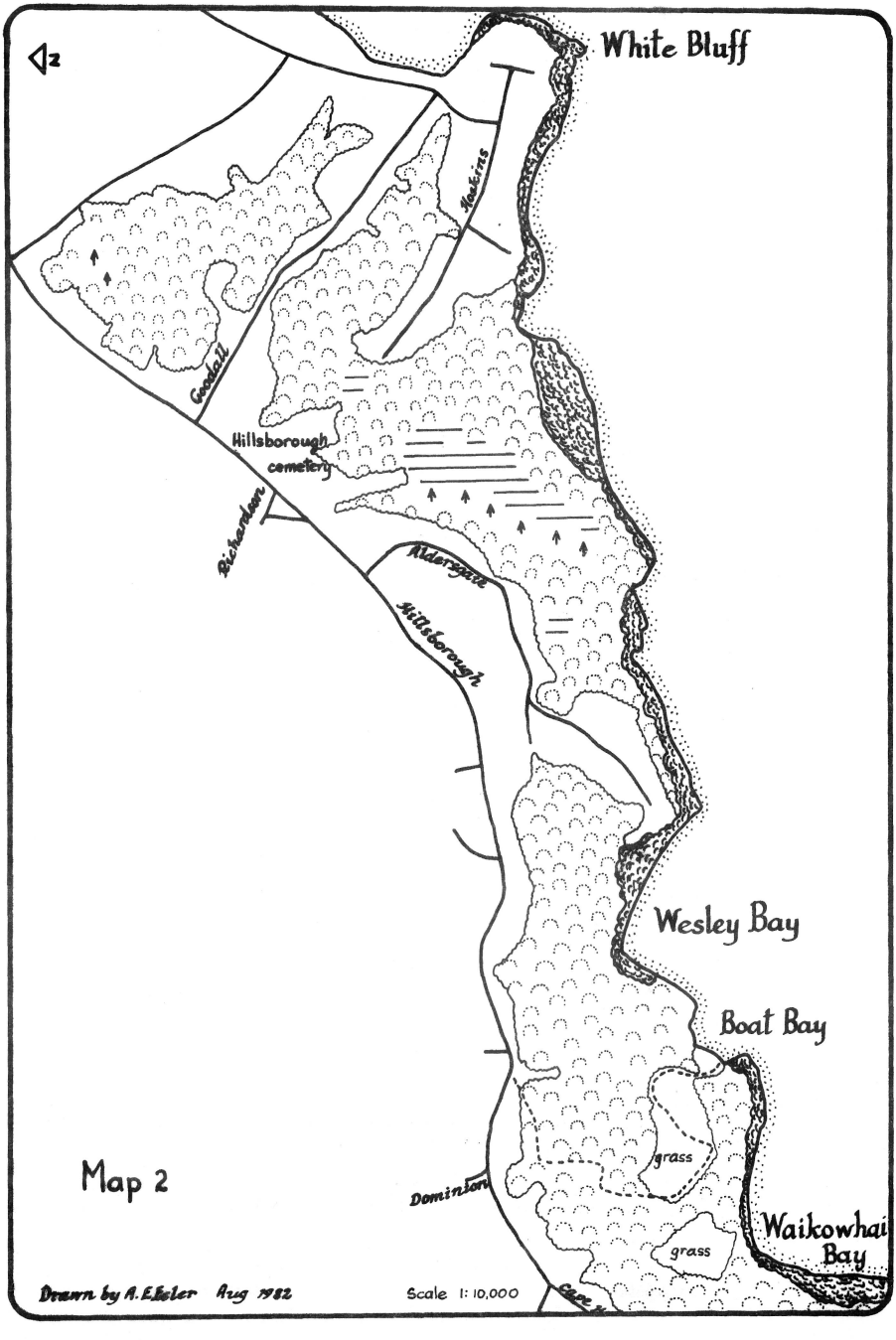
5. A native shrub (Alseuosmia) grows at Duck Creek just as William Colenso described it when he stepped out of a Maori canoe there 140 years ago.

A.E. Esler
August 1982

*Including shore plants



Native vegetation of the Blockhouse Bay to White Bluff coast


White Bluff
Hoskins
Goodall
Hillsborough cemetery
Richardson
Aldersgate
Hillsborough
Wesley Bay
Boat Bay
grass
grass
Dominion
Waikowhai Bay
Map 2
Drawn by A.E.Keler Aug 1982
Scale 1:10,000