

Section E

High Amenity Landscapes & Features



INTRODUCTION TO LANDSCAPES & FEATURES WITH HIGH AMENITY

As outlined within Section A of this study, landscapes and features that do not reach the threshold of being determined an ONF or ONL but that hold high amenity and environmental characteristics and values are determined as Landscapes and Features with High Amenity within this report. Within the 2009 Landscape Study, such landscapes and features were called Visual Amenity Landscapes or VALs.

Under the RMA 1991, amenity is captured within Section 7 (Other matters), and notably within:

- (c) the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values; and
- (f) the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment.

The RMA 1991 defines amenity as:

'those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes'.

The quality of the environment is not defined by the RMA 1991. The amenity and environmental quality focus of these investigations has been visual amenity. The study team has addressed the important visual amenity features or characteristics that occur outside the areas identified as outstanding.

Within the 2009 Landscape Study, a number of landscapes and features were identified as holding high amenity values. These areas are listed A-F in the table to the right and extend from the top of Marlborough to the bottom and encompass a range of landscapes and features. Generally, these areas tend to be areas that hold strong visual or scenic characteristics and be more modified (culturally) than ONFLs. From the list of areas included in the 2009 Landscape Study, MDC determined that only two areas, the Marlborough Sounds and The Southern Hills would likely require planning mechanisms to ensure that the identified high amenity values would be maintained.

Extensive landowner consultation occurred from 2011 to 2015, with particular community emphasis taking place around the Southern Hills, especially in terms of identifying the 'extent' of the land originally identified. From this, a range of mapping considerations were adopted to ensure that only the highest-rated areas were captured. These mapping considerations included using topographical contours, land parcel boundaries and land use activity.

Below: Nikau Bay, Pelorus Sound.



For the Marlborough Sounds, it was confirmed through the consultation period that the entire area should be a 'significant landscape' under Section 7 of the RMA, and that within this landscape, there are numerous Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Features that 'nest' within it.

The following pages outline the six identified Landscapes and Features with High Amenity. A table accompanies the maps outlining the necessary characteristics and values that support that area being identified. The extent of the mapped Southern Hills area and accompanying tables reflect the outcomes from the consultation exercise.

HIGH AMENITY LANDSCAPES AND FEATURES		
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LANDSCAPES AND FEATURES WITH HIGH AMENITY

A: MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS COASTAL LANDSCAPE

Marlborough Sounds.

MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS COASTAL LANDSCAPE	
Mapping Description	The entire Marlborough Sounds Coastal Environment, up to and including the coastal environment line.
Landscape Characteristics and Values Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distinctive, fractured pattern of the Marlborough Sounds coastline.• Slender peninsulas and range of islands provide distinctive landscape containing very high aesthetic values.• Combination of rocky coastlines, vegetated and grassy ridges and small coves, bays and inlets portrays an overwhelming sense of naturalness.• The area is imbued with cultural and historic values. It is extremely memorable.• Outer Sounds are more rugged and exposed to the varying climatic conditions in the Cook Strait.• Inner Sounds more sheltered and visually defined by forest-clad ridges and mountain tops which promote the intimacy experienced from within the waters.• Many of the smaller bays in Inner Sounds show little evidence of human intervention, and the level of visual intactness remains high.• Small settlements, generally nestled closely at the head of a bay, retain a high level of aesthetic coherence, contained by the steep, often vegetated sides of the enclosing ridge.• High levels of naturalness, recreational values and visual coherence.	
Rating:	HIGH AMENITY LANDSCAPE & FEATURE
The network of headlands, bays, inlets and islands of this distinctive coastline contain very high aesthetic and associative values. The rich cultural history of the Marlborough Sounds, including its high levels of naturalness and recreational values combine to create a highly memorable coastal landscape. Within this Coastal landscape there are ONLs and ONFs - refer to previous chapter of this study.	

Below: Waitata Reach.



MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS
COASTAL LANDSCAPE

B: THE SOUTHERN HILLS, INCLUDING WITHER HILLS AND DASHWOOD PASS AREA

Iconic hills to the south of the Wairau Plain.

THE SOUTHERN HILLS, INCLUDING WITHER HILLS AND DASHWOOD PASS AREA

Mapping Description

Mapped using 100, 120 and 140m contour lines (and where appropriate land use) to include the ridges and spurs of the hills that extend into the plains and their immediate backdrop. Refer to page 21.

Landscape Characteristics and Values Summary

- Soft, undulating hills act as an important backdrop to Blenheim and contrast with the varied land use practices across the Wairau Plains.
- Southern Hills provide topographical relief to the flat plains.
- The Hills provide a high level of visual coherence due to their prominent and mostly unencumbered nature from buildings and noticeably ‘unmodified’ ridges and spurs.
- Dry hills around Dashwood Pass and Redwood Pass are particularly scenic.
- Golden, homogenous undulating form is an iconic feature of Marlborough.
- The openness of the hills provides recreational and transient values, offering panoramic views of the Wairau Valley.
- Wither Hills Farm Park is a popular recreation area and Redwood Pass is popular for mountain biking.

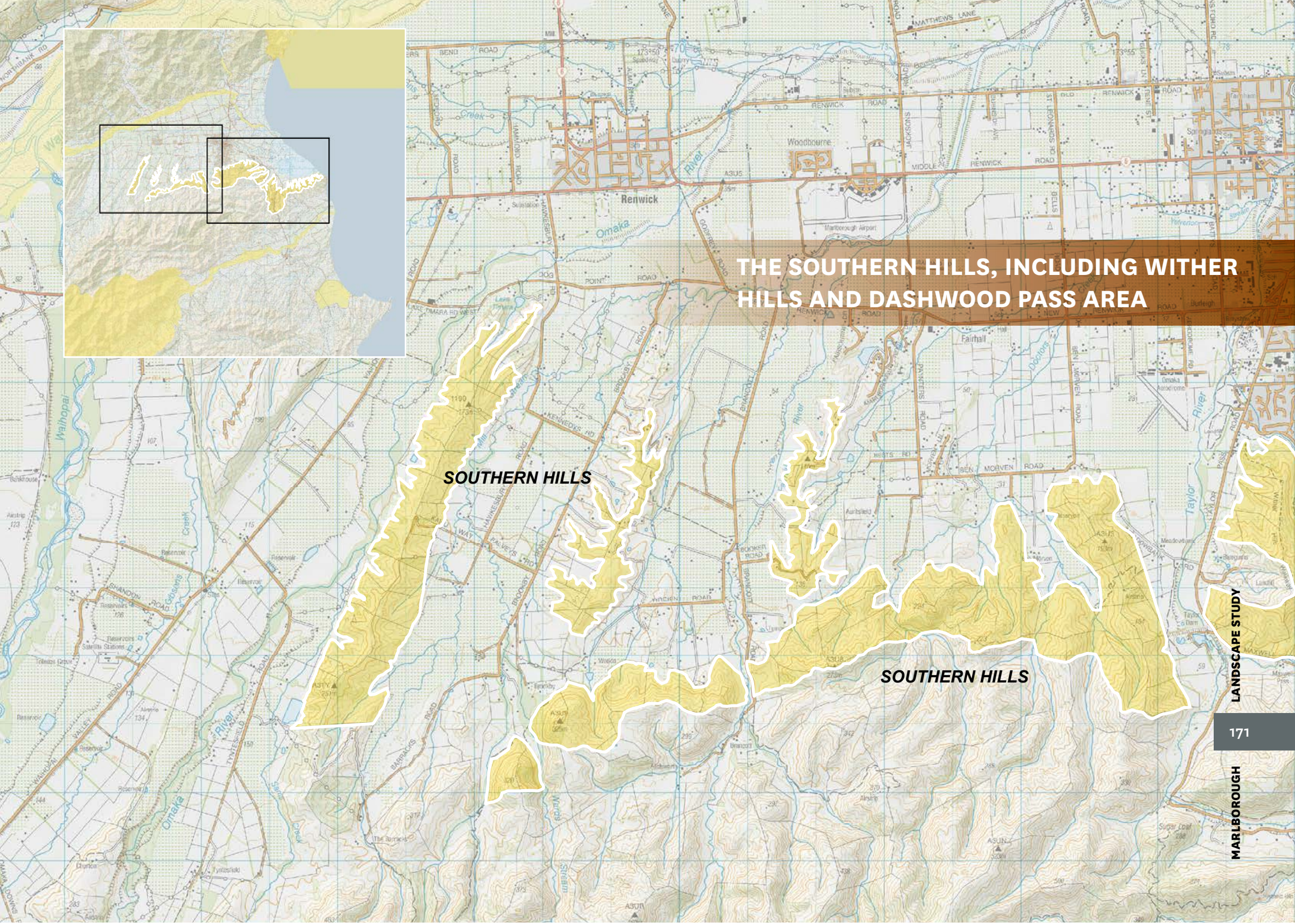
Rating:

HIGH AMENITY LANDSCAPE & FEATURE

The key values of this area are sensory values related to the visual coherence of the hills in terms of their homogenous undulating form and colour, and the way in which they provide a visual contrast to the rows of vines that stretch across the plains

They have become so evocative of south Marlborough. This is due in part to their presence as the visual backdrop to the population centre of Blenheim and because so many people pass through these hills on State Highway 1.

Below: Bleached grasslands of the Southern Hills during summer



C: WAIRAU RIVER AND ITS MARGINS INCLUDING SPRING CREEK

Marlborough's longest River traverses a variety of landscapes and holds high scenic values below the Main Divide.

WAIRAU RIVER AND ITS MARGINS INCLUDING SPRING CREEK

Mapping Description

Mapped using landscape feature (i.e. river and its immediate margins). Refer to page 21.

Landscape Characteristics and Values Summary

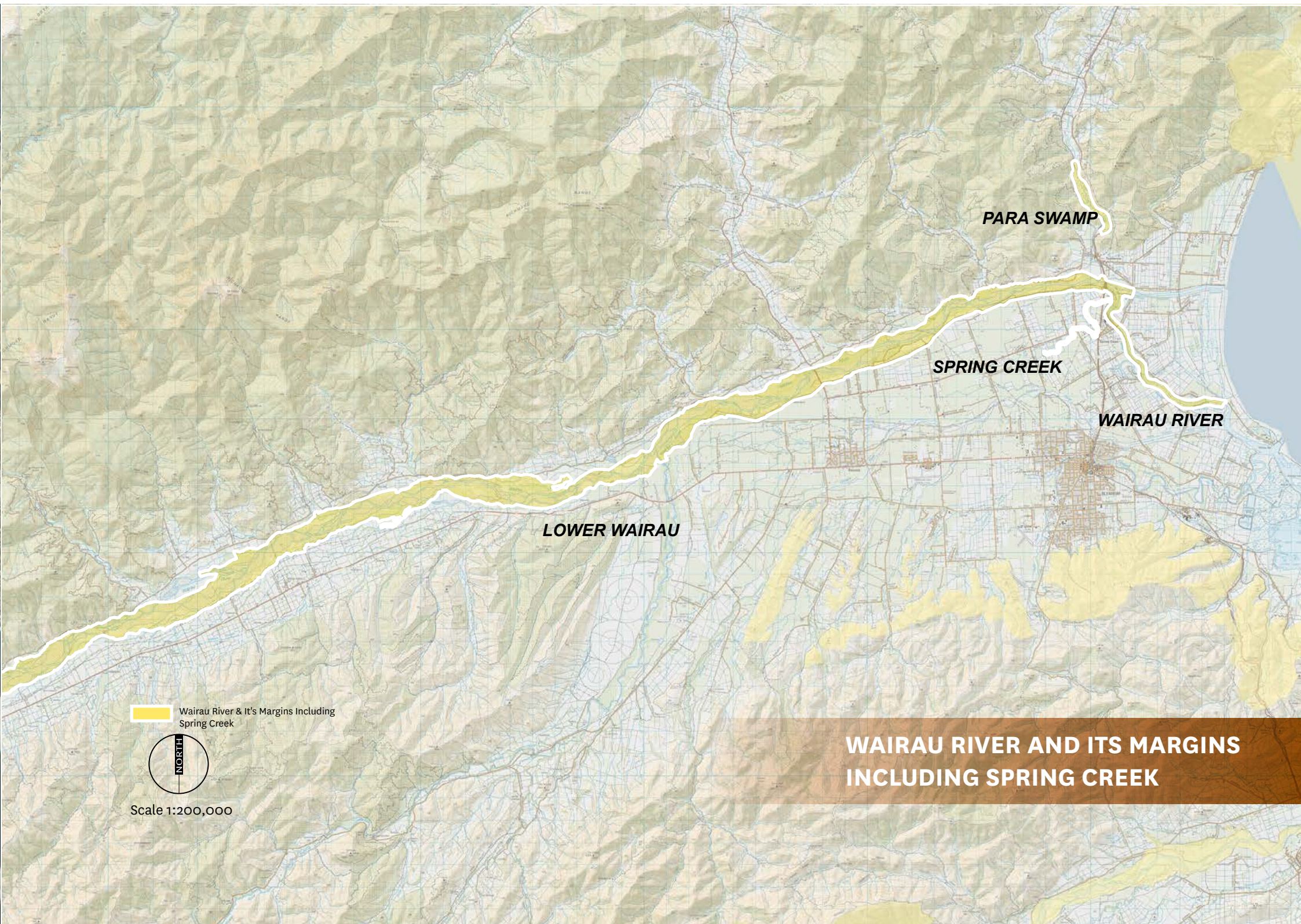
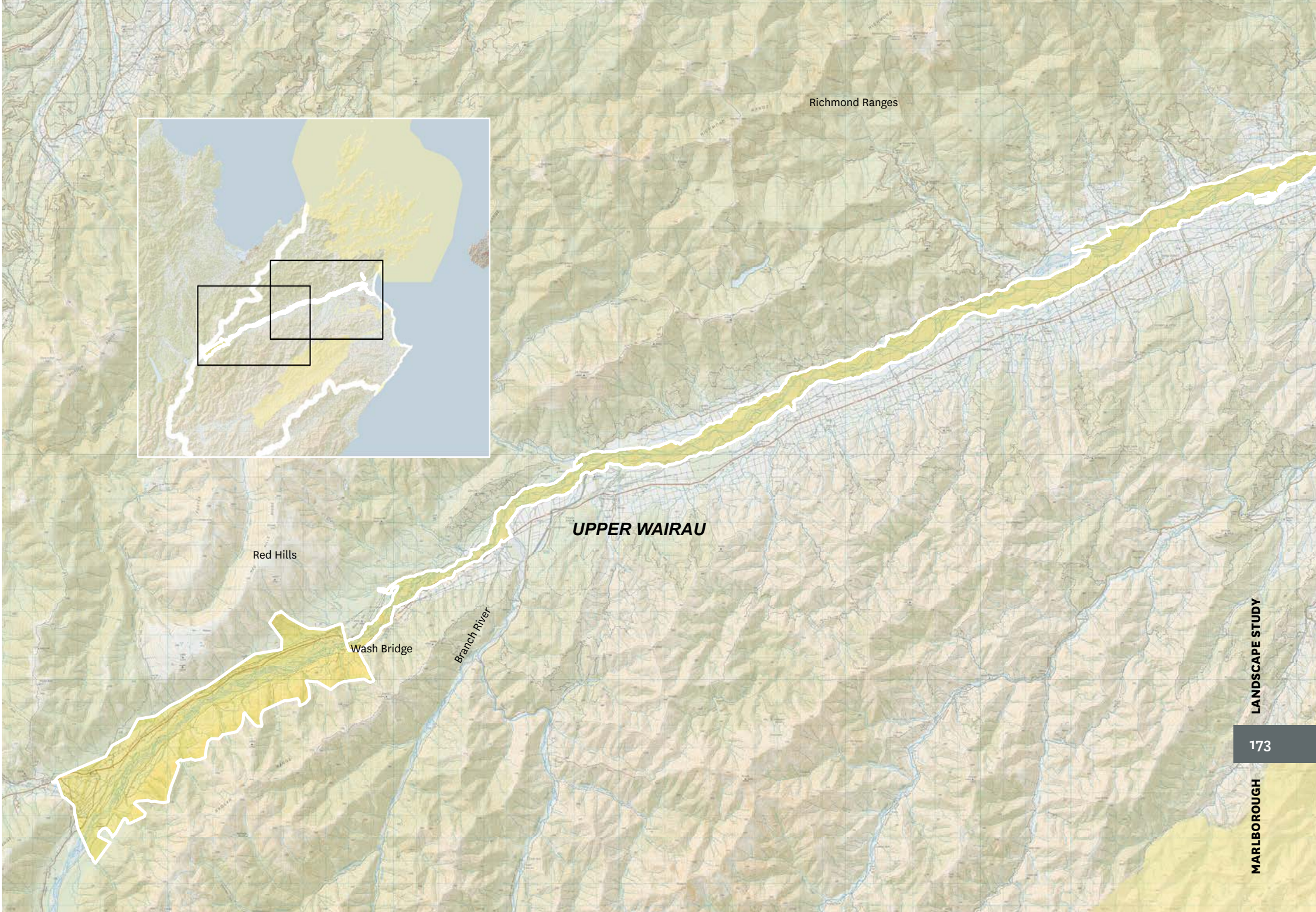
- Wairau River and tributaries provide distinctive braided riverbed habitats, particularly important for several native birds.
- Dominance of the large braided river as the focus of the valley landscape, particularly from Wash Bridge eastwards.
- Higher level of naturalness supported by enclosing mountains from Wash Bridge upstream.
- Attractive, meandering river channels and streams, including Spring Creek.
- Para swamp is an extensive area in the Tuamarina valley that has been identified as a wetland on international importance, and is very notable when travelling on State Highway 1 between Blenheim and Picton.

Rating:

HIGH AMENITY LANDSCAPE & FEATURE

Below Wash Bridge, the Wairau River and its margins have experienced modifications as a result of flood control works and colonisation of exotic marginal species, such as willow and gorse, which downplays the rivers degree of naturalness. Within this area and more particularly below the confluence of the Branch River, dramatic and extensive changes to the land use character of the landscape of the valley and the river margins over recent times have influenced the degree of the rivers naturalness. From the Wash Bridge downstream, the key features of the valley are the vistas that travellers are drawn to, of the fingers of the Dry Hills extending into the plains, the peaks and ridges of the Richmond Range and the Red Hills, and the exposed aggregate of the river bed and its braids. Consequently, the Wairau River from Wash Bridge to the sea is identified as a High Amenity Landscape & Feature.

Below: Braids of the Wairau River



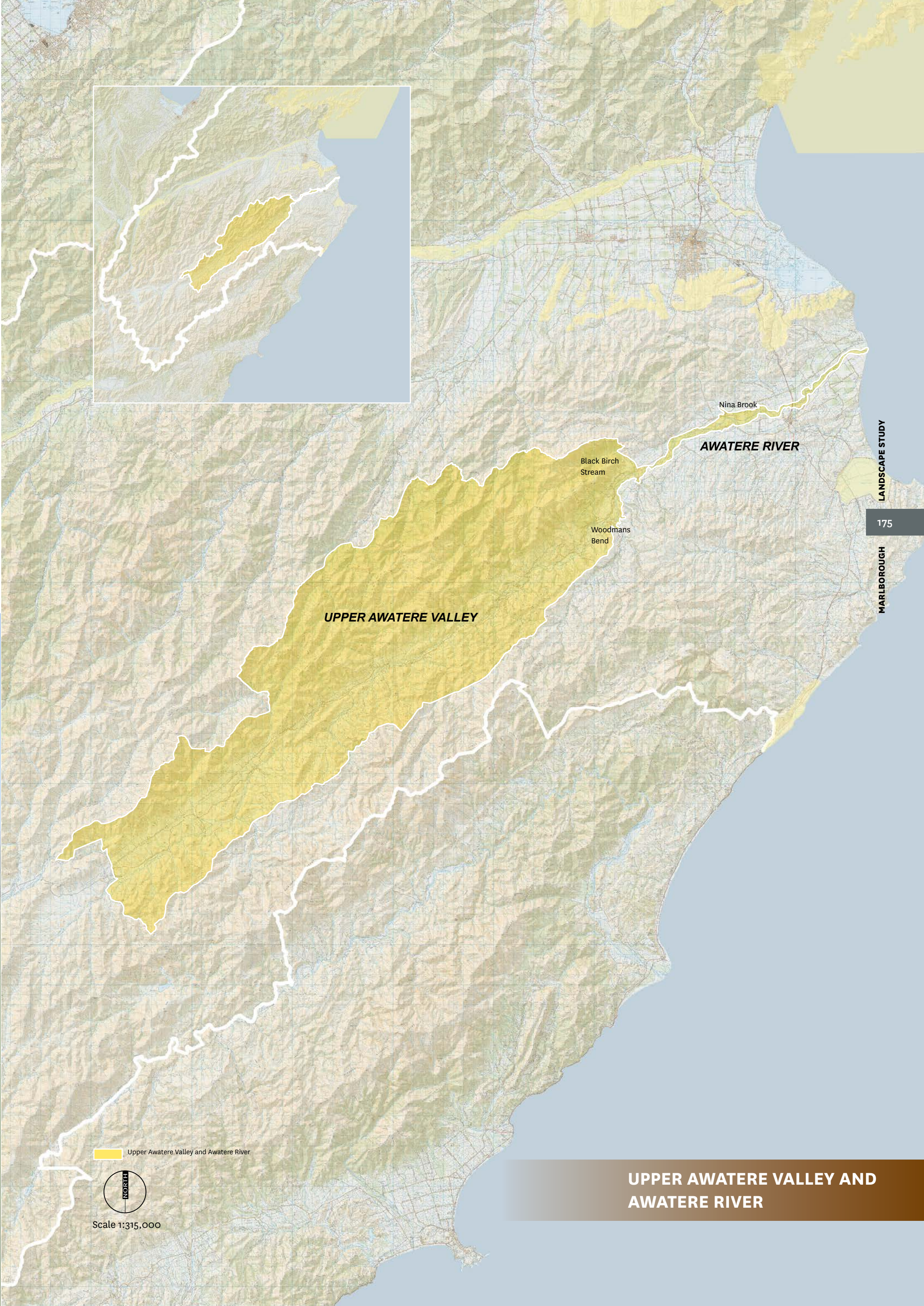
WAIRAU RIVER AND ITS MARGINS INCLUDING SPRING CREEK

D: UPPER AWATERE VALLEY AND AWATERE RIVER

Rural, undulating river valley with spectacular river forms and viewpoints.

UPPER AWATERE VALLEY & AWATERE RIVER	
Mapping Description	Mapped using landscape feature (i.e. river and its immediate margins) for the lower river and by visual catchment for the upper valley. Refer to page 21.
Landscape Characteristics and Values Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The upper Awatere Valley displays very high scenic values, where views towards the Inland Kaikouras, the mountainous terrain beyond and the eroding river terraces of the Awatere River are extremely impressive.High legibility of the river terraces.Distinctive gorge landform at Nina Brook provides a refuge for native species, including populations of rare broom species.The river is considered to provide important fish and bird habitat.Impressive long distance views of a settled valley landscape from the majority of the Molesworth Road.The striking vertical cliffs that support the flat river terraces along parts of the Awatere River.	
Rating:	HIGH AMENITY LANDSCAPE & FEATURE
<p>This landscape areas principal value is associated with sensory attributes, predominantly along the river corridor and within the upper Awatere Valley. The striking river terraces add visual drama to the lower valley, while the valley begins to gradually constrict at Black Birch Stream when travelling southwards. Beyond Woodmans Bend, as the road steepens, the high peaks of the upland mountainous landscape provide become visible and provide a spectacular backdrop to the upper valley.</p>	

Below: Viewpoint from a location on the road to Molesworth in the upper Awatere valley



E: LAKE GRASSMERE

Visually alluring, open flat landform that provides a stark contrast to the surrounding undulating, brown hills.

LAKE GRASSMERE

Mapping Description

Mapped by land typing. Refer to page 21.

Landscape Characteristics and Values Summary

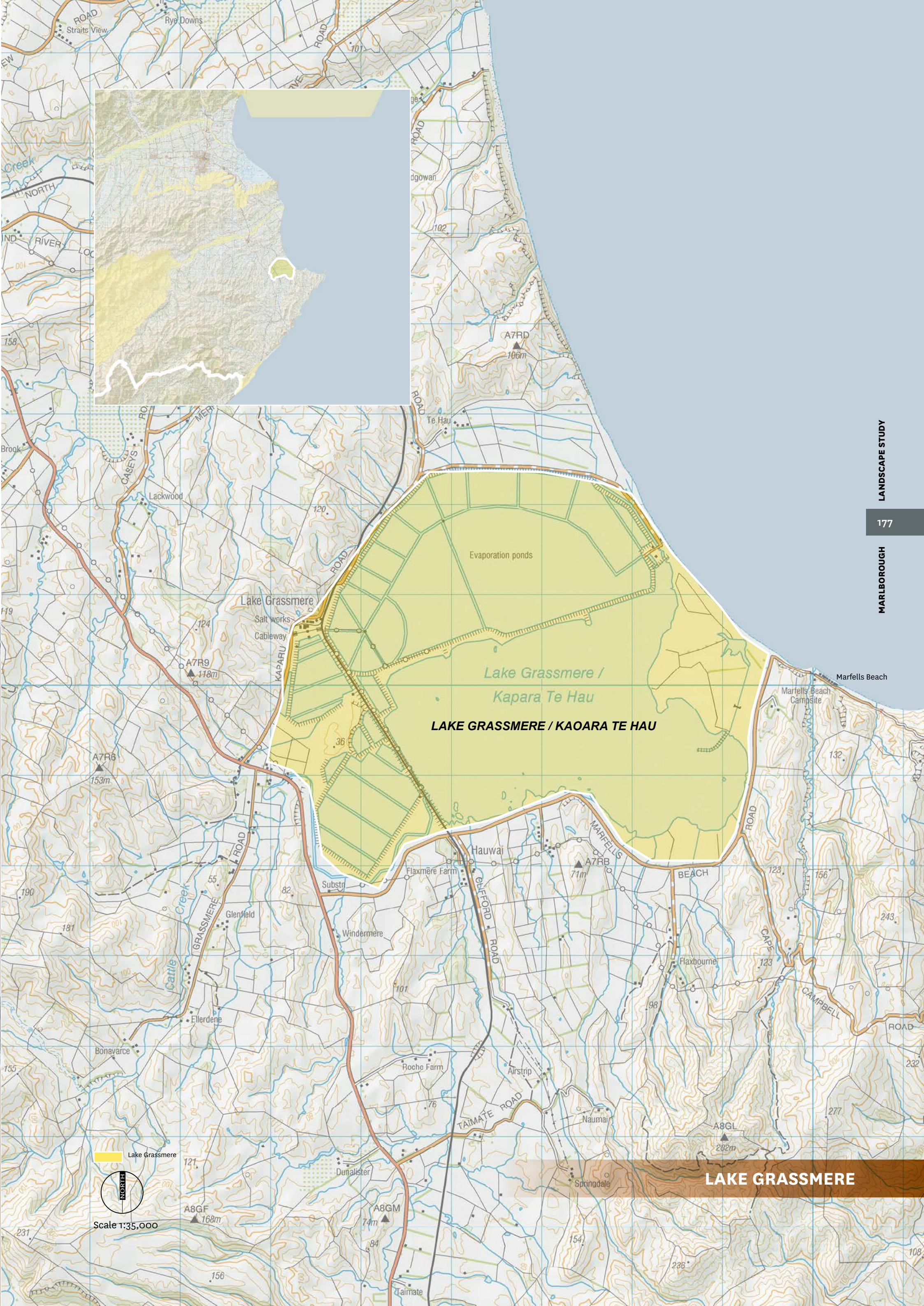
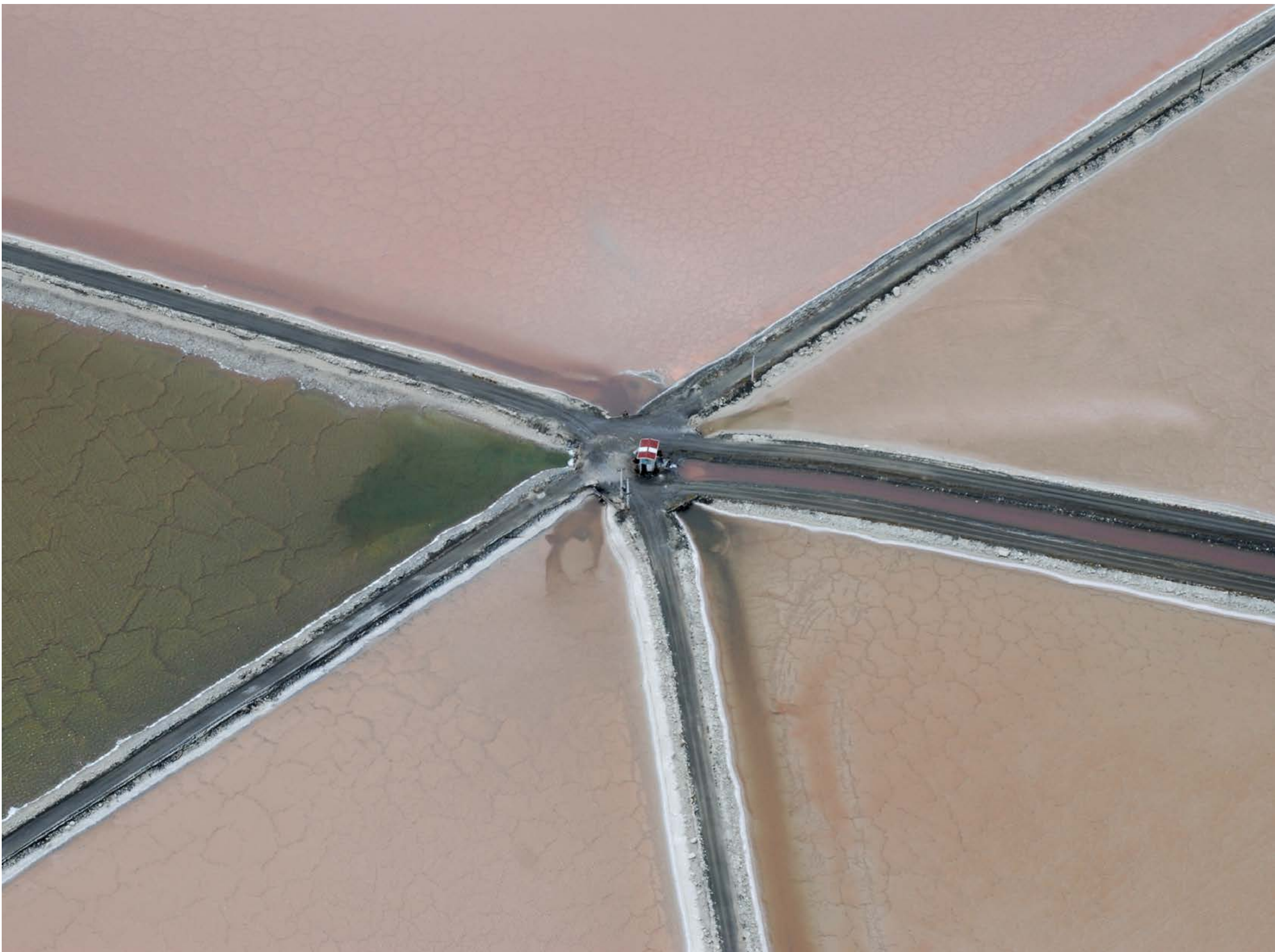
- Major feeding and roosting site for large numbers of waders such as the bar-tailed godwit, pied stilt and South Island pied oystercatcher and knot. Many species of migrants and vagrant waders have also been noted.
- Large numbers of waterfowl are also present seasonally, including grey teal, grey duck and introduced black swan.
- Saltmarsh turfs exist along the eastern margins of Lake Grassmere.
- Flat, open lake contained by surrounding hills.
- Spectrums of colours are evident in the series of salt drying ponds. Furthermore, drying salt piles evident at the end of summer are particularly noticeable due to the contrast between the white salt and the brown hills.
- The seasonal piling of salt acts as a temporary landmark to locals and visitors travelling on State Highway One and travelling on the train.
- The lake offers good bird-watching opportunities.
- A popular walk from Marfell's Beach to Cape Campbell commences close to Lake Grassmere.

Rating:

HIGH AMENITY LANDSCAPE & FEATURE

Although part of Lake Grassmere is in industrial use for salt extraction, the lake as a whole and it's immediate 'basin' is strongly memorable and retains a high level of visual coherence. The lake acts as a feature adjacent to State Highway One and displays high levels of seasonal interest at different stages of the salt-drying process. The site has an interesting history and is also popular for migratory birds due to its location next to the coast

Below: Varying colours of the salt drying process at Lake Grassmere



F: WHARANUI COASTLINE

Dramatic coastline where State Highway One and the railway are closely aligned affording close-up views of this rugged landscape.

WHARANUI COASTLINE

Mapping Description

Visual catchment approach. Refer to page 21.

Landscape Characteristics and Values Summary

- The relative complexity of the geology creates spectacular landforms and features, that are highly scenic, particularly along the coastline;
- The velvety dry brown hills contrast with the verdant valleys;
- Public roads are limited, so both State Highway 1 and the railway attract the majority of use, wending their way through the undulating dry hills, marking the division between the Kaikoura coast and the northern Marlborough river valleys.
- Open coast views, mainly unobstructed from State Highway 1 and the railway.

Rating:

HIGH AMENITY LANDSCAPE & FEATURE

This High Amenity Landscape and Feature includes the southern-most part of Marlborough from the Waima River to Willawa Point. The relatively complex geology of this area creates spectacular landforms and features that are particularly scenic when travelling through this area either via road or by train. The close relationship with the rugged coastline adds a further dynamic to this constantly changing landscape.

Below: Coastal landscape of Wharanui

LANDSCAPE STUDY
MARLBOROUGH

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LANDSCAPE STUDY
MARLBOROUGH

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WHARANUI COASTLINE