

Kakahi (*Hyridella menziesi*) in the Te Arawa lakes

The Te Arawa lakes are an integral part of the Te Arawa people. Traditionally, these lakes provided a bountiful array of mahinga kai (food). Kakahi (freshwater mussels) were an important component of the harvest: their flesh was used as a food and their shells as a tool. Kakahi have a complicated life cycle, which includes parasitizing a host fish. Availability of a fish host, food supply, and water and habitat quality are all factors that influence the distribution and abundance of kakahi in the Te Arawa lakes. Freshwater mussels are in decline worldwide. The figure below describes our current understanding of how these factors can affect kakahi. At least some of these factors can be managed through catchment and/or in-lake management that maintains good water quality.

