

CHAPTER 9. MAORI PARTICIPATION IN AND OPPOSITION TO HABITAT CHANGE

9.1 Introduction

In the approximately seventy years from 1840 to 1912, the New Zealand landscape was radically transformed. By 1910, for instance, roughly sixty percent of New Zealand's forest cover had been destroyed for timber and farming, large areas of native grassland had been replaced by introduced pasture, and wetlands were rapidly disappearing.¹ Along with this, many native species of fish and birds had disappeared or were on the brink of extinction and introduced flora and fauna had replaced large areas of indigenous habitat.² Issues have been raised as to what extent, and how willingly, Maori participated in this process, and the ways in which Crown policies impacted on Maori attempts to retain authority over and protect indigenous flora and fauna during this period of change. More detailed research and claimant evidence is required before these issues can be answered with any precision. However, there is some preliminary evidence indicating that even when they were most successful in engaging with the settler economy, it is not at all clear that by doing so, Maori necessarily intended to willingly abandon traditional authority over indigenous flora and fauna.

In the first phase of participation in the settler economy, from 1840 to about the mid-1850s, Maori communities were generally very competitive and economically successful. They appeared to be enthusiastic and willing participants in many new developments and opportunities. This led many contemporary European observers to assume that Maori were willing and anxious to entirely abandon old systems and replace them with western concepts and values. However, more recent research suggests instead, that even at their most economically successful, Maori communities were selective about adopting elements of the western economy and culture, intending them to be additions, not a replacement for traditional systems. In fact, it seems traditional systems of management and use of flora and fauna may well have been crucial to this early economic success.

In the next phase of Maori participation in the settler economy, which for the purposes of this chapter stretches from the mid-1850s to 1912,

1. Alan Grey, *Aotearoa and New Zealand: A Historical Geography*, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 1994, p 22

2. See for example, R M McDowall, *Gamekeepers for the Nation: The Story of New Zealand's Acclimatisation Societies, 1861-1990*, Christchurch, Canterbury University Press, 1994

changes based on more intensive land and resource use brought the Maori and settler economies into more open conflict. Studies of this period indicate that during this time Maori competitiveness was undermined and by 1912 Maori had lost much of their land and become effectively economically marginalised.³ At the same time Maori were effectively excluded from forms of management and participation in decision making as to how these conflicts might have been resolved. As Maori economic success declined, communities again relied on traditional resources but this time to subsidise a mainly rural living based on a mix of subsistence agriculture and contract or wage labouring. Harvesting traditional resources also continued to remain important to maintaining cultural and social relationships within and between hapu. Moreover, as a result of economic and political marginalisation, Maori communities often had much less choice and control about those parts of the environment that would be modified, the extent to which this would occur, and their participation in this.

9.2 Trading success and habitat change 1840-1855

It seems that by 1840 Maori believed that continued European contact would offer benefits that far outweighed any possible negative consequences. Maori communities had already experienced some seventy years of trade and contact with Europeans before this and had generally participated in such contact with considerable enthusiasm. The benefits of contact involved not only trade goods, but new ideas, skills, technologies and literacy. Historians now generally accept that while contact inevitably produced some changes and modifications in Maori society, some conscious, some less so, Maori nevertheless remained largely in charge of what they accepted or rejected and generally absorbed such change within traditional cultural structures. For example, in the Bay of Islands in 1815 Maori communities had already adopted potatoes as a staple crop. They were also cultivating many types of fruit, vegetables, ran a variety of livestock, and were using western materials, tools and equipment. Many were literate, they had coped with exposure to various epidemic diseases and they had adopted many new skills in areas such as carpentry and seafaring. However, all these experiences were absorbed

3. For example, A Ward, *An Unsettled History: Treaty Claims in New Zealand Today*, Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 1999, p 169

and adapted within traditional Maori society.⁴ Even Maori communities with little direct contact with Europeans still obtained trade goods and new ideas and knowledge, often through the medium of other Maori, and in many cases using old trade routes. For example, early European travellers noted the rapid spread of new vegetable crops throughout New Zealand.⁵ A number of Maori communities also adapted traditional systems of cultivation and resource gathering in order to provision ships, supply sealers and whalers and later their stations, and to supply trade goods such as timber and flax.⁶ Some communities also adopted new technologies, such as whaleboats in order to compete in commercial ventures such as fisheries. Grey gives the example of Maori owning and working a fleet of forty whaleboats based in Foveaux Strait in 1838.⁷

The introduction of planned European settlements from 1840 were initially welcomed and encouraged by Maori on the apparent assumption that they would largely continue the kind of experience brought by European contact in previous decades. Having obtained Treaty guarantees that relations would be better controlled, small European settlements were welcomed in the expectation they would provide more evenly spread and permanent centres of trade and economic opportunity, thus allowing more hapu access to such opportunities. In the case of Auckland, the new town was conceived as a joint enterprise with local Maori and European traders.⁸ Other new settlements, largely those of the New Zealand Company, also relied heavily on Maori goodwill for their early existence. For a time the new settlements also appeared to fulfil Maori expectations and many Maori communities participated very successfully in the emerging market economy that developed. This period of relative success varied from region to region but lasted roughly from 1840 until the mid-1850s. For example, what Russell Stone has described as a period of economic 'co-existence' between the Maori and settler communities in the case of the Auckland district, lasted until the mid 1850s.⁹

Stone argues that in this period the cohabitation of what he describes as two unlike, even antagonistic economies was mutually advantageous.¹⁰ Maori communities were keen to obtain trade goods, many of which they rapidly began to consider as necessities. They were willing and able to organise production of crops and foodstuffs and the supply of various raw materials and labour, in order to acquire such goods. Maori participation in this commerce appears to have been very successful. Many

4. For example, Anne Salmond, *Between Two Worlds: Early exchanges between Maori and Europeans 1773–1815*, Auckland, Viking, 1997

5. Grey, p 139

6. *Ibid*, pp 122–139

7. *Ibid*, p 125

8. R C J Stone, *The Economic Impoverishment of Hauraki Maori Through Colonisation, 1830-1930*, Paeroa, Hauraki Maori Trust Board, 1997, p 12

9. *Ibid*, p 2

10. *Ibid*, p 2

newspapers of the time and European observers recorded the very large quantities of goods supplied by Maori to the new settlements. In the case of Auckland, it was widely admitted that it could not have remained a viable settlement in the early years without the considerable Maori support it received. Stone cites a newspaper article of 1853 that 'As landowners, farmers, graziers, shipowners, and artisans, Maori had shown themselves to be the main prop of New Zealand'.¹¹ As Auckland grew, so did trade with surrounding Maori communities, eventually involving iwi and hapu from Hauraki, Waikato, the Bay of Plenty and Poverty Bay. Stone notes the success of this trade with the variety of produce Maori supplied to Auckland in a sample year, 1853, including pigs, potatoes, wheat, maize, melons, grapes, pumpkins, onions, flax, turkeys, geese, ducks, fowls, firewood, kumara, cabbages, stock feed, wood, fish, flour and kauri gum.¹² The quality was also apparently high. At the third official agricultural show held in Auckland, Maori won the classes for pigs, grains and vegetables.¹³ Maori were also impressive consumers as a result of this trade. Official records for 1856 show Maori paid £51,000 or nearly sixty percent of the North Island's annual custom duties. James Belich has calculated that this indicates a true Maori consumption rate of nearer £500,000 worth of imported goods per year – about £10 per capita.¹⁴ Belich and other historians have also noted that Maori invested heavily in capital goods at this time, including flour mills, threshing machines and schooners. For instance, when discussing the early growth of Auckland, Belich notes that as many as 111 Maori-owned ships were registered in 1867 and the numbers may well have been greater in the more economically successful 1850s. These ships voyaged to the South Island and Australia as well as along the North Island coasts.¹⁵

A similar situation occurred with the early Nelson settlement, although the phase seems to have peaked a little earlier. In the Nelson/Marlborough district, even by 1840, various hapu already had considerable experience in provisioning the whaling stations of the Sounds. The new European settlement at Nelson and the small satellite settlements at Motueka and Golden Bay appear to have been largely welcomed by Maori communities as they provided increased opportunities for trade. Even when disputes over claimed land sales became bitter, local Maori still generally appeared to prefer that matters were resolved rather than lose the settlements entirely. There are numerous documented references to

11. *Ibid.*, p 12

12. *Ibid.*, p 12

13. *Ibid.*, p 13

14. James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders: From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, Auckland, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1996, p 214

15. *Ibid.*, p 215

early Maori trading success in the district. This involved new crops and extended cultivations as well as the supply of traditional resources such as fish, birds and flax. As early as 1840 when the first settlers arrived, Maori of the district were ready to provide them with pork, potatoes, melons, pumpkins, cabbages and plentiful fish.¹⁶ Iwi and hapu of present day Golden and Tasman Bays, Whakapuaka and the Marlborough sounds were all involved in trading with the new settlement. As well as vegetable crops, they grew fruit trees and explicitly claimed the wild pigs of the district. Maori communities also supplied the new settlement with raw materials and labour. For instance, they supplied large quantities of flax to the new flax mills, and firewood and building timber to the new settlement. Maori also provided labour for early house building and assisted with early swamp drainage and clearing bush for new houses.¹⁷ By the mid 1840s Maori were responsible for most of the agriculture in the Nelson district. For example, in 1845 Maori were sending 15,000 bushels of wheat to the mill at Riwaka and by 1850 Maori at Motueka had 1000 acres in wheat and 600 acres in other crops. Maori agriculture was largely responsible for the success of Nelson arable cropping, which by the late 1840s was producing nearly one third of all New Zealand's arable crops.¹⁸ Maori were also involved in boat building and owned ships and whaleboats in the Nelson area, as well as continuing to use traditional canoes.

Various other Maori communities also appear to have had periods of similar early success in trading with the new settlements. For instance, the Waitangi Tribunal's Ngai Tahu report documents evidence of the early importance of trade and barter with the new settlements for Ngai Tahu.¹⁹ There is also considerable evidence that in horticulture as well as in other areas Maori adopted some new introductions because they liked them, or for traditional reasons of enhancing mana, rather than for strict economic purposes. In Nelson, as in other districts, Maori grew fruit trees for domestic and commercial uses and established large ornamental gardens. There are many examples in official correspondence and early settler diaries of such Maori preferences. Hoani Hipango wrote to Crown official Donald McLean in 1845, for instance, 'please bring me some trees – pears, apples and good peach trees...Mine is a large and fine garden'.²⁰

It is apparent that Maori communities were prepared to engage in habitat modification, and even destruction, in return for economic ad-

16. Cathy Marr, 'Crown-Maori relations in Te Tau Ihu: Foreshores, Inland Waterways and Associated Mahinga Kai', Treaty of Waitangi Research Unit, 1999, p 51

17. For example, Maori provided a gang for swamp drainage work in the Whakapuaka swamp in Nelson in 1847. P V and N L Wastney, *Early Tide to Wakapuaka*, Nelson, Nelson Historical Society in association with P V & N L Wastney, 1977, p 46

18. Marr, 'Crown-Maori relations in Te Tau Ihu', p 52

19. Waitangi Tribunal, *Ngai Tahu Report 1991*, vol 3, Brooker and Friend Ltd, Wellington, 1991, p 878

20. Hoani Hipango to Donald McLean, 26 January 1845, translation and transcription of correspondence, (Wai 201 record of documents, doc M2), p 11

vantage. Maori were involved in the timber and flax industries from well before 1840 for instance. In Northland, British naval vessels began trading for timber spars from 1794 onwards and a more extensive kauri timber trade was developed from the 1820s.²¹ Initially, individual trees were selected and felled and then timber cutting moved to small enclaves in certain areas. As noted in the separate chapter on forestry, Maori also pioneered the use of waterways to transport some logs to landing places. It seems likely that in localised areas the timber trade began to impact on the local landscape and ecology. However in this early phase of the industry and until the 1850s, these activities were still relatively small-scale.²² This was partly due to the limits of population and technology, but also seems to have fitted with Maori expectations of small, localised activities that left large areas of the indigenous ecology intact. While chiefs controlled the trade in raw materials such as timber, they also controlled the level of exploitation often within traditional frameworks. It seems that chiefs did attempt to manage forest areas rather than allow wholesale destruction. The forestry chapter of this report notes that chiefs placed areas of forest under tapu for future use. That chapter cites evidence from Michael Roche's *History of Forestry*, for instance, of a chief Titore placing a forest area under tapu for two years for future use in 1834.²³

It seems that even in the early phase to the 1850s, Maori participation in the market economy and enthusiastic adoption of new flora and fauna would inevitably have caused some disruption or modification of traditional lifestyles and economic practices. Many Maori communities did move to new sites where raw material was more available, and tended to congregate in larger groups for longer periods than was customary in order to produce trade goods. Some Maori communities moved closer to new Pakeha settlements to be nearer to markets, and in some cases apparently created their own more settled communities based on cash crops.²⁴ Maori also participated in destroying or modifying some traditional resources in order to take advantage of new more valuable opportunities. For example, Maori burned some bush areas to make way for larger cultivations and they assisted new settlers to drain swamps near settlements, and clear timber for settlement purposes. There is also evidence that new materials and new crops began to be valued for traditional cultural purposes such as for tangi and feasting.²⁵

These kinds of changes are likely to have had some corrosive effects on tribal organisation but it appears not to the extent that many contempo-

21. Grey, pp 121-122

22. For example regarding the early timber industry in the Hauraki district, see Stone p 31

23. Michael Roche, *History of Forestry*, Wellington, New Zealand Forestry Corporation Ltd with GP Books, 1990, p 20

24. For example, Ann Parsonson, 'The Expansion of a Competitive Society: A Study in Nineteenth-century Maori Social History', *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol 14, no 1, April 1980, p 57

25. Paul Monin, 'The Maori Economy of Hauraki 1840-1880', *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol 29, no 2, 1995, pp 200-201

rary Pakeha observers liked to believe. These interpretations were often based on assumptions of racial and cultural superiority that presumed Maori could only progress or become fully civilised by abandoning old ways altogether and assimilating as far as possible into a western lifestyle and economy. This wishful thinking may have led to the belief amongst some Pakeha that early Maori trading success was evidence of a willing abandonment of authority over and use of indigenous flora and fauna. However, while more research is required, there is evidence from the time that suggests that this kind of interpretation needs to be treated with considerable caution. While many Maori communities were enthusiastic about new types of flora and fauna and new economic opportunities, the corollary of this was not necessarily a willing abandonment of traditional management and use of indigenous flora and fauna. Research indicates it was more likely that in this period Maori communities were able to largely absorb many of the changes and to be selective and adaptive about introductions, according to perceived needs and anticipated benefits. The result was a selective modification and grafting on to largely traditional systems of authority and organisation.

A range of studies appear to support this. Belich has described, for example, how the flax trade initially declined from 1831 not just because of declining prices, but also because Maori had acquired the guns they needed and stopped production.²⁶ Much of the crop cultivation, harvest of raw materials and contract labouring for trade also continued to be organised along hapu lines, with profits put to tribal as well as individual purposes.²⁷ Belich argues that this early economic period reflected a Maori pattern of production and consumption, as much as a western capitalist one. This is supported by Stone's recent submission concerning Hauraki Maori. Stone found that in the early phase of Maori economic participation in the Auckland markets, where the traditional Maori economy was modified by Pakeha contact, this was largely in ways Maori had chosen it should be. In the same period, Maori social order remained largely intact, as tribes earned the means to satisfy demand by using traditional cooperative methods of work to produce foodstuffs and raw materials.²⁸

A number of historians have also noted how the process of change was not all one way, with Maori co-opting the market economy for traditional purposes such as hapu competitiveness and the enhancement of mana. For instance, Parsonson has described how the ownership of ploughs,

26. Belich, p 216

27. For example, Belich, p 215

28. Stone, pp 2–5

mills and schooners and other chiefly and hapu shows of wealth in the 1850s replaced earlier rivalries involving missionaries and literacy. This explains the investment in such items beyond at times what was commercially necessary or even viable.²⁹ Belich and Monin have described similar hapu competitiveness during this time, apparently concerned more with enhancing mana than with strictly commercial requirements.³⁰ This suggests that rather than abandoning old systems; Maori were using new introductions to meet traditionally important objectives. The new introductions undoubtedly resulted in change and modifications to traditional systems, but this does not necessarily indicate they were being willingly abandoned or replaced.

There is also some evidence indicating that Maori initial economic success may well have relied significantly on the use of traditional systems of management and use of flora and fauna, rather than the abandonment of them. For instance, it seems that although contemporary European observers were rightly impressed with Maori versatility and innovation in participating very successfully in the settler markets, much of the organisation and knowledge required for this initial success was based on traditional systems, knowledge and methods of organisation. Maori were already skilled cultivators, they were simply adding new crops to a system that had largely already been developed. They had a long history of cultivating trees such as ti kouka and karaka, so new skills such as pruning fruit trees were readily adopted. Maori communities also had detailed knowledge of the best soils and locations for growing crops, and for some time retained control of these areas giving them an initial competitive advantage with settlers. The traditional hapu-based system of organising labour to cultivate, harvest and supply markets added to this early advantage. Some historians have also warned against placing too much emphasis on the early economic success of Maori communities. Maori were undoubtedly innovative and competitive within areas that were complementary to their traditional economic and social systems. They also participated in and encouraged economic activities that seemed most compatible with their vision of the future direction of Pakeha settlement. However, historians such as Paul Monin have warned that the apparent success of Maori participation at this time should not be exaggerated or romanticised. Instead, many Maori communities achieved economic success through hard manual labour, often without much in the way of new technologies.³¹

29. Parsonson, p 59

30. Belich, p 216; Monin, p 200–201

31. Monin, p 201

The evidence suggests that even at their most successful, Maori were still selective about those economic opportunities they became involved with. They did not adopt new introductions and opportunities wholesale, or entirely abandon old economic systems. Instead, they appear to have attempted to judiciously blend old and new, basing their selections on knowledge gained from previous experience and on what they could reasonably anticipate might develop in future. While Maori communities enthusiastically and successfully participated in trading for example, they showed much less enthusiasm for becoming significantly involved in pastoralism in its early stage.

Only certain regions were suitable for the early development of pastoralism, such as the existing native grasslands in the Wellington/Wairarapa district. Some Pakeha entrepreneurs with knowledge of the Australian sheep industry began experimenting with pastoralism from the early 1840s. With hindsight this would seem to have been an ideal industry for Maori entrepreneurial skills, particularly in the 1840s. In this stage of what has been termed 'robber' pastoralism, it was relatively easy for those with capital to buy flocks of sheep and without much knowledge still gain a considerable profit from the industry. It did not require much labour as most profits came from producing more sheep, natural features were sufficient for boundaries and Maori still owned large areas of suitable land. The early form of pastoralism also seemed to fit in well with a seasonal lifestyle and traditional resource gathering. In the 1840s Maori were investing in other capital goods such as schooners and flourmills. Some Maori communities did own limited quantities of sheep and cattle, and supplied provisions such as wheat, potatoes and pork to the new stations.³² However in general Maori did not become involved as pastoralists in the 1840s themselves. It is not entirely clear why, but a number of factors may have been important.

It seems even the early stages of pastoralism may have been considered too dissimilar to traditional cultivating, harvesting and hunting. Even though sheep farming in the new colonies was far less intensive than Europe, it did still require some level of expertise. Flocks had to be inspected every two or three days to prevent loss of stock through wandering outside boundaries or into danger such as swamps.³³ Shearing was a seasonal task, but periodic measures also had to be taken throughout the year to combat scab, footrot and wild dogs. Success came more quickly and easily to those who could adapt existing knowledge and familiarity

32. R D Hill, 'Pastoralism in the Wairarapa, 1844–1853' in F F Watters (ed), *Land and Society in New Zealand*, Wellington, A H & A W Reed, 1965, p 40

33. *Ibid*, p 41

with sheep farming to the new environment. Even many of the early runholders who required far less knowledge than those entering the industry ten years later, found that success was more likely if they hired shepherds whose background knowledge enabled them to adapt quickly and successfully to New Zealand conditions. For example, Clifford and Weld, early runholders in the Wairarapa quickly hired a Scots shepherd named Caverhill when problems with sheep sickness and poor condition threatened their venture.³⁴

The early extensive nature of pastoralism may also not have sufficiently matched the Maori vision of small pockets of permanent Pakeha settlements providing centres for trade opportunities. Maori weren't alone in their initial scepticism. Many of the Pakeha they dealt with – missionaries, New Zealand Company settlers and Government officials – were also antagonistic to the idea of a pastoral 'squattocracy' in the 1840s. For example, Company theorist Gibbon Wakefield likened pastoralists to the nomadic tribes of Central Asia.³⁵ This was precisely the type of lifestyle Maori had been urged to abandon. Governor Grey also had a long-standing dislike of what he regarded as the monopolistic land tendencies of the pastoralists. Grey continued to encourage Maori to continue with trade based on crop growing, providing flourmills and similar assistance to many Maori communities. Perhaps most importantly, the period of early opportunity was very brief and coincided with the time when Maori were still successful in supplying settler and Australian markets. They may have been reluctant to divert capital from successful markets to what was in many ways an unfamiliar and risky venture. By the mid-1850s when markets failed, it was already too late. Pastoralism had begun to boom. In the Wairarapa for instance, pastoralists had struggled at first but by 1847 the industry was taking off. By 1848 there were at least twenty-one extensive pastoral runs in the district ranging from 600 to 15,600 acres and paying annual rentals to the Maori owners ranging from £12 to £76.³⁶ By 1853 the Wairarapa pastoral industry was well established and flourishing. However, Maori had lost much suitable land and the days of relatively easy entry and quick profits were virtually over.

While Maori initially showed little inclination to be pastoralists themselves they did welcome the early pastoralists. In the early years the industry was very similar to many of the older extractive industries, such as whaling, and offered the same types of opportunity. The sheep stations

34. Hill, pp 33–35

35. Brad Patterson, 'Laagers in the Wilderness; the origins of pastoralism in the southern North Island districts, 1840–1855', *Stout Centre Review*, vol 1, no 3, April 1991, p 5

36. Patterson, 'Laagers in the Wilderness', p 7

quickly became mini-trade centres in themselves, providing Maori with seasonal employment and acting as markets for foodstuffs and other provisions. It was not surprising that Governor Grey received letters requesting 'some white people to feed sheep'.³⁷ More research is required on the early relationship between the pastoralists and Maori landlords such as Ngati Kahungunu. In relation to profits, the grass rentals paid were probably low, but for Maori this still may have represented a significant income. Patterson has estimated that by 1852, Maori customary owners in the Wairarapa were receiving some £1200 in annual rental payments.³⁸ At least as important, seems to have been Maori anticipation of establishing a profitable, ongoing relationship with pastoralists, in which Maori still had considerable authority, including over the use of flora and fauna. Patterson describes the early process of securing a lease as largely 'ritual based on Maori custom, lightly wrapped in the trappings of English Common Law'.³⁹ A pastoralist would contact the customary owners, negotiate the amount to be paid in rental and then walk the boundaries noting and agreeing on natural features. Only after such undertakings were the terms drawn up in a European styled document. Maori also retained significant control of continuing use of flora and fauna on the stations. They expected to and exercised traditional harvesting in coexistence with pastoralism. There were some changes. The methods of early pastoralists, in particular burning off native grass to encourage new growth, undoubtedly affected some native species and in the long term contributed to land degeneration such as erosion. However even with this, pastoralism at this time was still not intensive and there were relatively few sheep per acre. Maori could still largely co-exist on the land, harvesting both traditional and relatively newer resources such as pigs and wild cattle, and they did. Many pastoralists may have resented continuing Maori use of 'their' stations, but for years they had little choice but to tolerate it. As Belich has noted, on the large stations, Maori often continued seasonal harvesting until well into the late nineteenth century, although by then increasingly limited by more intensive farming methods.⁴⁰

While Maori were selective about the new introductions they adopted, it also seems that neither did they fully abandon traditional systems of management and use of resources. Many new types of flora and fauna were enthusiastically adopted, but there is considerable evidence that

37. Hill, p 40

38. Patterson, 'Laagers in the Wilderness', p 11

39. *Ibid*, p 8

40. Belich, pp 226-7

many old types were retained and remained important, especially for traditional cultural and social reasons. In the documented lists of provisions to the early markets, for example, there is always mention of what were considered to be traditional types of provisions in various regions, including eels, fin-fish, shellfish, kumara, native birds, pork and flax. Where these declined it may well have had more to do with lack of Pakeha demand for 'Maori food', rather than lack of Maori interest in the resource. In contrast, as hapu wealth increased as a result of trading, the size and frequency of traditional cultural events supported by such hapu also increased. Contemporary accounts describe the provisions supplied for such occasions and reveal not only Pakeha astonishment at such extravagance, but while many newer crops such as potatoes had become commonplace, traditional resources and delicacies such as dried shark also remained important.⁴¹ More research is required on this but it may have been possible that traditional resources also became important in identifying 'Maoriness' or hapu identity as a point of difference with Pakeha, when various Maori communities became concerned at the more damaging effects of contact with settler communities. Belich has identified a trend for Maori communities to use a variety of means to identify themselves as different from Pakeha from the early 1840s, for example, by adopting dissenting religions.⁴² Traditional uses of flora and fauna may also have been an important means of maintaining identity.

It seems likely that even in the most successful phase of Maori participation in the settler economy, supplying settler markets was additional to the traditional economy, not a replacement. Trading was a means of earning a surplus, in order to obtain those western goods increasingly seen as necessities. For example, Stone argues tree felling or growing cash crops were activities deliberately undertaken to provide an income that would allow valued western goods to be acquired.⁴³ In the meantime, communities still sustained themselves by traditional means in order to save such surpluses for the markets. Traditional resources were therefore important in subsidising market success. For example, New Zealand Company Surveyor Frederick Tuckett noted in 1843 when local Maori were very successfully trading with the Nelson settlement, that although Golden Bay Maori liked pork they rarely ate it, keeping it instead for trading at the Nelson market.⁴⁴ Similarly, Parsonson cites T S Grace as noting in the 1850s that while Maori grew wheat they would not consume it, saving it

41. See for example the variety of foods provided for feasts described in, Parsonson, p 59; and Monin

42. Belich, p 219

43. Stone, p 5

44. Frederick Tuckett papers, ATL, ms 0246-2, letter 13 November 1843

for trade instead.⁴⁵ This evidence suggests that the traditional economy, including the management and use of flora and fauna, may have been a critical factor in underpinning Maori success in the production of market goods.

Evidence such as relative wage rates appears to support this. There are many documented reports of Maori being paid rates around half that paid to Pakeha labourers. For example, it was reported to England that in 1840 English labourers in the colony were paid four to five shillings per day while Maori were paid about 2/6 per day.⁴⁶ To some extent Maori were able to undercut Pakeha rates through the efficiencies of hapu organisation but this does not account for all the difference. The payments to English labourers were never particularly generous at this time and even with the effectiveness of communal efforts it seems unlikely Maori could live off half that amount without relying on traditional resources to subsidise the rates paid. Again, it seems that Maori success may have relied substantially on the subsidy provided by traditional resources such as flora and fauna.

There is also evidence that Maori believed they retained authority over flora and fauna even while engaging in new market systems. In some cases and particularly to encourage new settlements, this authority might be flexibly applied, but there are many documented examples of settler annoyance with the rapidity with which Maori grasped the commercial possibilities of charging for many resources based on their continuing authority over them. This included, 'grass money' for land rentals, ferry tolls, guiding, permission to hunt pigs, and the taking of birds for sport and personal use. As noted above in chapter 6, Tuckett noted in Nelson in 1843 that to encourage the new settlements in Golden Bay, Maori told him they provided Pakeha with supplies they favoured such as potatoes and fish and 'allowed them to hunt pigs in the forest'.⁴⁷

It seems clear that Crown officials were also aware of the continued importance of traditional flora and fauna to Maori communities, even though they often interpreted such continued importance as a lack of progress towards civilisation. It is clear from the early purchases that Maori were anxious to retain reserves that would enable traditional usages as well as engage in newer style mixed farming. The fact that officials tended to prefer allowing reserves for traditional purposes because they often involved poor quality land does not alter the fact that Maori still

45. Parsonson, p.59

46. Evidence to Select Committee on New Zealand, 1844, *BPP* (IUP), vol 2, p.4299

47. Frederick Tuckett papers, letter 13 November 1843, ATL ms 0246-2

considered such reserves valuable and did not object to the purposes for which they were selected. Most Maori complaints regarding the sale reserves were about their inadequacy, for either participation in new economic opportunities or to protect traditional resources, not that some were being set aside specifically for traditional purposes. There are many documented examples that officials understood traditional resource management remained important to Maori even during the successful early economic phase. Many of these have already been referred to in other chapters of this report. For example, in 1846 in considering the New Zealand Company reserves made for Maori, Governor Grey acknowledged that they were 'in some respects insufficient for their present wants, and ill adapted for their existing notions'.⁴⁸ In 1847, in making the large but short-lived Wairau reserve, Grey explained to the Colonial office that Maori still needed large areas for mahinga kai over and above the areas they used for crop cultivation. Such areas included habitats for fernroot, fishing, eeling and birding and 'extensive runs' for wild pigs. Although he anticipated Maori eventually being able to live off cropping and abandoning their old ways, he acknowledged that this was still some way off.⁴⁹ Similarly, in trying to conclude a land purchase in 1849 Donald McLean reported that there was considerable concern among Ngati Apa that the proposed sale might prevent them from continuing to use the area for bird snaring, even though he had assured them of 'ample' reserves for their needs.⁵⁰

The Native Land Court did not begin operating fully until 1865 but documented vast quantities of evidence pertaining to previous years. Although the Court was concerned only with establishing customary land ownership, evidence of continuing resource use was commonly used as a basis for establishing customary rights to land. The Court evidence does reveal upheavals and many of the changes resulting from contact with Europeans. However much of the evidence also reveals the continuing importance given to traditional resource use as a means of establishing and maintaining customary rights and traditions and also as an important continuing basis of various hapu economies. While such rights and interests may have waxed or waned as a result of contact, this still tended to occur largely within traditional cultural understandings.⁵¹

It might have been expected that this initial successful phase of Maori economic participation in the settler economy would reveal most clearly any evidence of Maori willingness to decisively abandon old ways for new

48. Grey, memo with despatch to W E Gladstone, 14 September 1846, *Mackay Compendium*, vol 1, p 71

49. Grey to Earl Grey, 7 April 1847, *BPP* (IUP) 1847-48, p 16

50. Donald McLean to Colonial Secretary April 1849, ATL micro 535-002 folder 3

51. For example, Doig Suzanne, 'Customary Maori Freshwater Fishing Rights: An exploration of Maori evidence and Pakeha Interpretations', PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 1996

and voluntarily relinquish any continuing authority over traditional resources. Maori were competitive and successful and were receiving very real benefits from the new market system. There is no doubt that Maori were involved, often to a significant extent, in the exploitation of raw materials for the new markets such as timber and flax. They also enthusiastically adopted new forms of flora and fauna and assisted or initiated habitat change in order to both facilitate trading and encourage the new Pakeha settlements. These new introductions sometimes displaced or became as valued as traditional crops. For instance, potatoes soon became commonplace, replacing fern root as a major source of carbohydrates, although they did not entirely displace kumara. In some cases Maori allowed destruction or modification of habitats in order to encourage Pakeha, for example assisting with swamp drainage. However these changes need to be seen within Maori expectations for future Pakeha settlement in New Zealand. While neither Maori nor Pakeha might have fully understood the impact of some introductions, it seems that Maori expectations were based on the idea of small, scattered, settlements of Pakeha that left large areas of ecology relatively intact. They also anticipated significant input into decision making as to what resources might be exploited or protected, and what traditional management systems might be continued and incorporated into new systems. The initial phase of settlement seemed to be largely following these expectations. Pakeha settlements were relatively small and scattered with limited hinterlands, and resource use was correspondingly small scale. In addition, in spite of the early economic successes, it seems that many traditional resources remained important to Maori, both for traditional cultural reasons but also as a critical factor in subsidising Maori competitiveness in the new markets. Under these circumstances, while it seems Maori did adapt and innovate it was largely within traditional constructs and continued authority over and use of traditional flora and fauna remained an important part of this.

9.3 Marginalisation and habitat change 1855-1912

Many studies have described the decline of Maori economic participation in the settler economy in the period from the mid-1850s to at least 1912. This phase has been described as a time of Maori economic disen-

gement and marginalisation.⁵² The reasons for this change appear complex and have yet to be entirely satisfactorily explained. The immediate reasons were a collapse in many of the traditional trading markets. However, underlying this it seems that significant factors were a change in the economic direction of the settler economy from the exploitation of raw materials to new forms of more intensive land and resource use, the loss of increasingly extensive areas of land from Maori ownership, warfare and political marginalisation of Maori. More recently, it has been suggested that some Maori may also have begun a process of disengagement themselves. In his study of Hauraki, for example, Stone has found that by the late 1850s, although there were mixed political attitudes even within iwi, a new mood of economic disengagement was clearly discernible based on concern about the Pakeha appetite for land and the mixed benefits of contact. In many cases this took the form of considerable sympathy and active support for the Kingitanga.⁵³

One important factor was the replacement of the early phase of economic co-habitation with new economic developments that brought Maori and settler interests into more open conflict. The early economic relationship between Maori communities and settlers based on trade ended roughly in the mid-1850s, although this varied from region to region. Trade markets were beginning to fail as early as the turn of the decade but the demand for provisions from the Australian gold fields offered a few years' respite. The Australian market collapsed suddenly in about 1855, however, as locally produced Australian provisions became readily available. Maori trade markets collapsed and never fully recovered after this. In the Auckland area Stone notes that Maori trade reached a peak in about 1855 and afterwards fell away sharply.⁵⁴ In Nelson and other New Zealand Company settlements the successful participation of Maori in trade markets began to collapse by the mid to late 1850s. In the Nelson district, for example, there is evidence that Maori were being squeezed out of ship owning by the mid-1850s.⁵⁵

The trading and provisioning relationship between Maori and settler communities began to falter as the settler economy began moving in a direction that brought Maori interests into much more direct conflict with settlers. The economic survival of large-scale, long-term European settlement in the colony required some form of land-based activity that would generate profits by exporting to world markets.⁵⁶ The abundance

52. For example, Ward, *An Unsettled History*, p 123

53. Stone, p 14

54. Stone, p 13

55. cited in Marr, 'Te Tau Ihu', p 59

56. Brad Patterson, 'The White Man's Right: alienation of Maori lands in the southern North Island Districts 1840–1876', in J McConchie, D Winchester, and R Willis (eds), *Dynamic Wellington: A Contemporary Synthesis and Explanation*, Institute of Geography, Victoria University of Wellington, 2000, p 155

of readily available and relatively cheap land was the prime attraction for intending immigrants as long as a land-based export staple or staples could be found to supply international demand. Land was also attractive to prospective settlers because it offered other opportunities for private wealth apart from farming income, including rents from tenants, profits from speculative subdivision, capital gains from rising land values and interest from mortgage lending.⁵⁷ The small, scattered, Pakeha settlements that struggled in the 1840s, reliant on Maori provisioning and small-scale extraction of raw materials were not sufficient to attract or retain large numbers of European settlers – even if they did suit Maori aspirations. The flight of disillusioned Pakeha settlers from the colony in the 1840s was reported on at length in contemporary newspapers. Stone cites the *Southern Cross* newspaper as reporting in 1852 that a large proportion of the Auckland population was leaving for the Californian and Australian gold fields, and the town of Auckland was rapidly becoming depopulated.⁵⁸ Belich has also noted the widespread disillusionment among settlers in the 1840s.⁵⁹

The New Zealand Company theorists had acknowledged the need for a land-based export staple in advocating grain production for export. This was intended to be part of a system of mixed farming based largely on the agricultural counties of southern England. However, this vision failed for a number of reasons, not least because settlers did not find themselves possessed of the promised abundance of easily ploughable, endlessly fertile land of New Zealand Company advertisements.⁶⁰ Instead, the early economic history of the New Zealand Company settlements turned out largely as Maori had anticipated with quite small communities still largely dependent on Maori provisioning and the exploitation of raw materials. For instance, in its first six years, the Wellington settlement could not even produce enough grain to feed its settlers. Instead, until 1848, whale bone and oil consistently accounted for sixty to seventy percent of all exports by value.⁶¹ In the north, the Auckland settlement continued to rely on the extraction of raw materials such as flax, timber and kauri gum. Markets were supplied by shipping and land-based commerce remained relatively unimportant. However the profits to be made by resource extraction were fickle, and as Patterson has noted, this kind of resource exploitation did not require large and systematic European settlement.⁶²

57. Patterson, 'The White Man's Right', p 156

58. Stone, p 23

59. Belich, pp 338-340

60. Patterson, 'Laagers in the Wilderness', p 5

61. Ibid

62. Ibid



A group of Maori gum diggers in the Kaitaia area, 1914. Photographer A J Northwood. From the Northwood collection, photograph courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library (1/1-009777)

While some settlers left, others looked around for land-based exports that would attract increasing numbers of settlers and ensure the continuing viability of colonisation. The Crown and later provincial governments, accepted that large scale European colonisation should be encouraged and developed policies to support this, as described in more detail in a separate chapter on Crown land policies. For example, the Crown became involved in large 'blanket' purchases of Maori land well ahead of the immediate needs of settlement. The Crown, and provincial governments from 1852, also actively encouraged new immigrants to take up land-based activities and offered rewards for any new activity, such as gold mining, that might sustain the economy in the meantime. The emphasis on the acquisition of land, and the linking of economic interactions between the Maori and settler with land sales led to considerable Maori concern by the late 1850s. As Belich has noted some iwi, for example those of the Waikato, managed to separate the two and for some time avoided selling land to generate economic contact.⁶³ However, Maori concern about the impact of continuing land sales was a major factor in the development of pan-iwi movements to restrict sales and as-

63. Belich, p 216

sert meaningful Maori inclusion in the political system. In turn this led to a long and bitter period of warfare from 1860.

As Belich has noted, the eventual Pakeha victory was effectively limited for some time by the effectiveness of Maori resistance.⁶⁴ In turn, the period from 1870 to 1912 saw a full scale Pakeha assault, not only on the ability of Maori to effectively participate in political decision making, but also on the environment itself in a fundamental transformation of indigenous habitats in the pursuit of developing profitable land use. Belich has shown that in trying to prevent total subordination and marginalisation, the response of Maori communities varied from substantial disengagement with the Pakeha state, such as in the King Country and the Urewera, to some form of embracing the new economy while trying to soften its impact.⁶⁵

For some time the old exploitative industries such as pastoralism, timber and gold remained important to the economy, but from the 1860s these industries changed substantially in ways that sidelined Maori participation, while proving much more destructive to indigenous habitats. Gold mining became much more reliant on heavy machinery such as stamper batteries, requiring substantial capital and the development of shareholding companies. The timber industry also became more capital and technology intensive. Steam technology was adopted from the 1860s, introducing an entirely new capacity to milling where it was now possible for relatively small groups of workers to destroy whole forests. New investment companies also became important in attracting the capital required for the timber industry. Pastoralism also became more intensive from the 1860s, with requirements for fencing, replacing native grasses with introduced pasture and the necessity for combating weeds and rabbits. Farms became smaller and more labour intensive, while running more stock to the acre. As these industries became more intensive and destructive to the indigenous environment, they posed much greater threats to continued traditional resource use by Maori. In the case of pastoralism, for example, more intensive land use began to conflict more sharply with traditional, seasonal resource use. Belich gives the example of seasonal weka hunting in the Mackenzie Country, co-existing for many years with pastoralism and finally ceasing in 1895 when rabbit poison destroyed the weka population.⁶⁶ From the 1890s, the development of export dairy farming intensified the growing incompatibility of Maori

64. *Ibid*, p 248

65. *Ibid*, p 248

66. *Ibid*, p 227

and Pakeha land use eventually ending complementary uses of the land.

As industries became more capital and technology intensive, old economic relationships between Maori and settler based on trade and provisioning were replaced, and Maori were increasingly relegated to wage work. By the 1860s Maori also tended to lack the capital necessary to enter the changing industries on a commercial basis. Some Maori communities had already fallen into poverty or debt following the sudden collapse of the Australian markets and then the disruptions of war. Continuing land purchases at relatively low prices also appear to have been crucial.⁶⁷ These left Maori without either sufficient good land to participate in industries such as farming or sufficient assets for strategic land selling to raise venture capital. The sale of large areas of land also resulted in the loss of legally recognised control over and the ability to protect resources and habitats associated with land sold such as swamps and bush areas, as these were legally deemed to have changed ownership with the land.

There is no doubt that there were instances where Maori willingly sold land, although all of the reasons for this require more research. In some cases, for example, Maori appear to have intended a sale to begin an ongoing economic relationship with the settler community that would provide continuing benefits, and they were encouraged in this belief by officials. It seems likely that Maori appear to have believed that with many of the larger blocks they would still be able to continue traditional resource use. Sometimes land sales were also the only option for raising sufficient capital to either develop a farm or invest in a timber mill. There is evidence that many land sales were actually strategic attempts by Maori owners to sacrifice some land to clear debts and gain investment capital to develop other lands.⁶⁸ Where Maori did attempt to retain lands however, they still found it very difficult to withstand Crown and settler pressure to continue with alienations. As historians such as Ward have shown, the Maori land title system created by the Native Land Court from the mid-1860s actually created an easily sold individual share in Maori land. It worked against Maori being able to develop economic family farms and also substantially undermined attempts at corporate group enterprise. As such, the system the Crown allowed the Native Land Court to create turned out to be significantly more destructive to Maori land ownership than even the confiscations following the wars.⁶⁹ Even when Maori communities did manage to retain land, the same system of fragmented,

67. See for example, Ward, *An Unsettled History*, part II

68. For example, see Marr, 'The Alienation of Maori Land in the Rohe Potae (Aotea block) 1840–1920', 1996.

69. For example, see Ward, *An Unsettled History*, chapter 8

multiple ownership of shares in land prevented them from obtaining credit on it when venture capital was required.⁷⁰ As shown in more detail in the separate chapter on Crown land policies, even Crown agencies established to provide cheap access to credit for Pakeha settlers generally refused to recognise land under Maori title as creditworthy.

In some regions Maori did manage to retain lands and begin farming ventures or gain income from timber and mining licences, and this necessarily implied involvement in habitat change. More research is required on these activities and to what extent those Maori who were involved wanted, or were able to balance these new activities with traditional resource use. However, even where land ownership was retained for some time, Maori still found it difficult to control the industries and reduce their impact on the environment. Stone has found this to be the case in Hauraki where Maori negotiated timber and gold fields licences. He suggests that the Crown had significant responsibility for this, tending to favour and encourage settler interests at the expense of Maori interests. The Crown became involved in the Hauraki gold fields negotiations and administration for instance, in an effort to encourage the industry and provide new economic opportunity for Auckland settlers. However the new system of individualised Maori land title disrupted hapu and chiefly control in favour of individual rights, and exacerbated confusion and conflicts over the distribution of licence monies. The Crown also failed to properly administer the rental and licensing system resulting in far less returns for Maori than they had been led to expect. According to Stone, Crown officials were also allowed to negotiate the opening of gold fields with less than honourable methods. The Crown also did not always feel bound to keep promises such officials might have made in negotiations. There was also little effort to properly control miners who strayed into areas that Maori wanted excluded from mining. In addition the new intensive quartz mining from the 1860s did not offer the opportunities through rents and the provision of supplies that Maori had been promised.⁷¹

Not all of the impact of the changing industries on the environment could have been foreseen or prevented. It seems unlikely that either the Crown or Maori chiefs realised, for instance, when they engaged in negotiations over mining or even milling concessions, how extensive such industries would become or how much they would impact on the environment. The Crown did have some responsibility however, in the

70. See Stone for examples concerning Hauraki Maori. Stone, p 3

71. *Ibid*, pp 49-63

sense that many of the extractive industries such as gold mining and, in particular timber milling, prospered and significantly expanded as a result of government-encouraged immigration and public works schemes, most especially those of the Vogel period from the 1870s. The dual policy of encouraging massive European immigration while creating a supporting infrastructure through public works programmes was not new, but was taken to much greater lengths from the 1870s and was the driving force of what Belich terms the 'progress industry'. This in turn relied substantially on fundamentally transforming the indigenous landscape to make it suitable and profitable for the growing European population. Nor were the aims entirely economic. The same policies were also deliberately intended to swamp the Maori population and consequently the remaining enclaves of Maori political power in the North Island.⁷² By 1860 the Crown claimed to have purchased most of New Zealand. However, most of the Maori population lived in the North Island, where by then just one quarter of the land had been sold and Maori still retained significant power in negotiating relations with settlers.⁷³ Crown and settler policies adopted from the 1870s were intended to change this, and therefore supported a much larger 'swamping' settler population and a thorough transformation of habitat even beyond what was immediately useful to meet these ends.

As a result of these developments, the conflicting interests of the settler and Maori communities became much more sharply drawn. Most Pakeha settlers had few cultural or economic attachments to indigenous habitats. Instead, there was an underlying economic logic and even desirability in wholesale habitat destruction, because it enabled the creation of a quite new, largely introduced habitat that was in demand for farm settlement. For settlers, habitat destruction and population growth was easily equated with progress and prosperity. The timber industry, for instance, did not need to be concerned about sustainability, because there were always further profits to be made in meeting the demand for farmland once all the trees were cleared away. The general settler community also benefited from widespread forest clearance, gaining relatively cheap timber for housing and industry needs, employment opportunities in the mills and cleared land for farming afterwards.

Stone provides the example of the total destruction of the Turoa forest, one of the many previously great forests of the Hauraki region. This forest of mainly kahikatea extended roughly from Turoa to Paeroa. Previous to

72. Belich, pp 349-352

73. *Ibid.*, p 228

1868 it was milled on a small scale. Milling became more intensive in the 1860s with the adoption of new technology and the developing markets of the gold fields provided a demand for timber for use in mine construction and the provision of settler houses. Continued commercial felling was sustained by subsequent economic developments such as the growth in the domestic housing market as the result of the Vogelite boom as well as the development of an export trade. When concerns about the durability of the timber became evident, the development of refrigerated exports provided a ready new market for products such as butter boxes. There was very little company concern about sustaining the forest as the land boom resulting from Vogelite policies, also ensured a profitable and ready market in cleared land for farming. The timber resource was regarded as expendable and the forest habitat as an impediment to farming development, resulting in the total destruction of the forest and the permanent loss of the resource to Maori.⁷⁴

The example of Turoa forest shows how the total destruction of indigenous resources and habitats by the settler community became possible and indeed economically logical. While previously it had not made economic sense for Maori to destroy a whole resource or habitat and sustainable management was required for future survival, the new economic changes undermined this. The destruction of a whole resource in return for income did make sense in the colonial economy in the short term, because as Grey has also noted, the aim was to make profits, not to manage the resource sustainably.⁷⁵ Even the new intensive farms were really like small factories. They were not geared to be self-contained or linked into small local markets. They were geared to produce as much as possible from available land for the export markets and this had enormous consequences for the pace and extent of habitat change.

The new economic policies did succeed in achieving many of the intended results. The landscape was radically transformed in the years between 1870 and 1912. The Pakeha population also grew substantially, effectively 'swamping' Maori, as Belich has noted.⁷⁶ The Pakeha population in New Zealand doubled in the 1870s and continued to grow rapidly through to the mid-1880s. Growth was slower after this but still remained substantial.⁷⁷ At the same time, by 1881 Maori made up only 8.6 percent of the total New Zealand population and this had dropped to 5.5 percent by 1901. In the North Island Maori still made up 17.5 percent of the North Island population in 1881, dropping to 10 percent in 1901.⁷⁸ Be-

74. Stone, pp 27-29

75. Grey, pp 22-23

76. Belich, p 249

77. *Ibid*, pp 249-50

78. *Ibid*, p 250

tween 1861 and 1891 Maori land in the North Island also halved from about 22 million to 11 million acres or from 80 to 40 percent.⁷⁹ The population swamping was accompanied by increasing political marginalisation for Maori as has been noted in more detail in other chapters. Local authority settler agencies in particular were allowed to develop in ways that excluded Maori from effective participation in decision making, while these bodies were given increasing powers and responsibility for the scale and direction of habitat change. These changes had important implications for Maori communities and their continued use of traditional flora and fauna.

As Maori became increasingly politically and economically marginalised, new issues become apparent relevant to their continued participation in habitat change. One of these was the exclusion of Maori from effective participation in managing and resolving possible conflicts of interests in the use and management of indigenous flora and fauna. Maori communities may well have supported some, or even considerable, changes in indigenous habitats. However, Maori were increasingly excluded from participation in decision making over changes to habitats or over possible protection and management of habitats they wanted protected. Another issue is to what extent, given their increasing economic marginalisation, Maori communities continued to have effective choice about their involvement in the modification or destruction of habitats. There were extreme pressures for example, for Maori to 'properly utilise' their land (that is farm it) or lose it, as described in some detail by historians such as Tom Brooking.⁸⁰ The pressures to survive economically also left many communities with little option but to engage in labouring or contract work that often involved considerable destruction of traditional resources. Finally there is the issue of the continued importance of indigenous habitats, and the flora and fauna they sustained, in a time of marginalisation and relative poverty. Up to 1912, the Maori population remained overwhelmingly rural and indigenous habitats and resources appear to have been crucial in enabling rural Maori communities to subsidise their earnings from wage labour and seasonal contract work.⁸¹ Surviving indigenous habitats and resources remained important not only for crucial economic sustenance, but also for cultural and social purposes such as maintaining identity and mana. As large areas of indigenous habitat were destroyed or substantially modified from the 1870s, the areas

79. Ibid, p 259

80. For example, Tom Brooking, 'Use it or Lose it: Unravelling the Land Debate in Late Nineteenth Century New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol 30, 1996

81. During the depression of the 1930s the Government's policy was to pay Maori relief workers at a lower rate than their Pakeha counterparts 'on the argument (for which Ngata was responsible) that many were normally unemployed in any case and could "live off the land": Michael King, 'Between Two Worlds', in Geoffrey W Rice (ed), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd edition, Auckland, Oxford University Press, 1992, p 293

remaining and the exercise of traditional management and use of them may have even become correspondingly more important to Maori communities.⁸²

The response of Maori communities to the change in economic direction varied over time and between various hapu and iwi, and more detailed research is still required. It does seem that reactions varied from considerable enthusiasm for significant habitat change in return for possible economic benefits, to apparent resignation that change was unstoppable and inevitable and had to be engaged with, to downright hostility and disengagement and attempts to continue old ways as far as possible. All these reactions were possible at various times and in various communities. In 1907 the establishment of the Stout Ngata commission was one of a number of means employed by settler governments to identify 'unutilised' Maori land for development and farming purposes. One notable innovation of that commission was to inquire of Maori in the various districts investigated, what land they considered they needed for various purposes and what might be considered 'surplus' for sale or lease. The published reports of the commission reveal a variety of Maori views, as well as describing many of the impediments they faced. In the King Country district, for instance, the commission identified what it termed as 'progressives' who wished to take part in farming but were hampered by problems with land title and lack of expertise. In contrast, the report noted that others in the district, notably the Ngati Raukawa owners of the Wharepuhunga block, objected to the whole purpose of the commission and wanted to be left alone to live in the old style.⁸³ In identifying blocks for Maori use however, the commission noted in virtually every case that Maori required areas important for mahinga kai and cultivations as well as land required for commercial purposes such as farming or timber felling.⁸⁴

As their trading relationship declined, many Maori communities did try to engage with new economic developments, even though seriously hampered in participating and becoming competitive by the difficulties already mentioned. For example, there is more detail in the separate chapter on forestry on Maori ownership of timber mills, Ngati Tuwharetoa involvement in timber companies and Maori involvement in selling timber cutting licences in many areas. Maori did also try to overcome title problems and become involved in farming and pastoralism.

82. See for example, Waitangi Tribunal, *Whanganui River Report*, Wellington, GP Publications, 1999

83. 'Native Lands in Rohe-Potae (King Country) District' (Stout Ngata Commission report), AJHR, 1907, G-1b, pp 5-6

84. See interim reports of Native Land Commission, AJHR, 1907, G-1e - G1u; AJHR, 1908, G-i - G1u

For instance, early consolidation schemes were pioneered by Ngati Porou from the 1880s, where owners pooled their land to form economic farming units.⁸⁵ It becomes clear, however, that most Maori communities had significantly different interests to Pakeha when the progress industry and the development of more intensive farming began threatening their ability to balance traditional resource use with new forms of economic activity. Maori did have considerable cultural, spiritual and economic attachments to many indigenous habitats and the resources they sustained. The complete destruction and replacement of such habitats in many cases threatened cultural identity, traditional social and economic structures and what was still an important part of the Maori economy. It did not by any means represent inevitable progress and prosperity, as was generally the case for the settler community.

In addition, the difficulties faced by Maori communities often appear to have severely limited Maori choice about participation in habitat change. As Maori were economically marginalised, communities took up work that was essentially destructive to many environments. Maori communities were heavily involved in road and railway building from the 1870s as part of a Government programme of 'civilisation' and 'pacification'.⁸⁶ Maori laboured on swamp drainage and timber clearance and they worked as seasonal agricultural labourers. All of these activities assisted habitat change. However, while engaging in these activities in order to make a living, Maori still expressed their concerns about the extent of destruction and in many cases resisted activities that threatened their most important resources. An example of this is the contest for the control of the Wairarapa lakes in the late nineteenth century. With the autumn rains each year the lake levels would rise and flood adjacent farmland. For Wairarapa Maori the build up of water in the lakes was an integral part of a hugely valuable eel fishery – literally thousands of eels would congregate behind the lake outlet waiting for it to burst so as they could escape to the sea. Once eel numbers had peaked Maori would release the waters in a controlled fashion and capture the eels.⁸⁷ Maori resistance to interference with the channel of the Whanganui River efforts is another example of Maori opposition to habitat change. This is discussed in detail, along with the Wairarapa lakes saga, in chapter 13 of this report on inland waterways. Possibly the most important issue is not so much Maori involvement in habitat change, but the increasing lack of power in decision making as to the extent and pace of that change.

85. Belich, p 269

86. Cathy Marr, *Public Works Takings of Maori Land 1840-1981*, Report commissioned by the Treaty of Waitangi Policy Unit, 1997, p 85

87. See Ben White, *Inland Waterways: Lakes*, Waitangi Tribunal Rangahaua Whanui Series (working paper: first release), March 1998, chapter 2

Maori concerns about increasing threats to the survival of any kind of balance between traditional resource use and the new forms of economic activity becomes much more apparent from the 1860s and especially the 1870s. These are documented, for instance, in the many Maori representations to Government and the large numbers of petitions evident from that time. For example, the Waitangi Tribunal Ngai Tahu report notes that the Ngai Tahu protests about the loss of access to traditional mahinga kai began from the mid-1860s as more intensive pastoralism resulted in the destruction of native flora and fauna through poisoning, drainage and other developments.⁸⁸ The forestry chapter in this report also notes that from the 1870s, Maori in Northland especially, began to complain about the instances of illegal tree cutting on their land. Maori had been involved in log floating in earlier times when relatively small areas of forest were cut. However by the 1870s, Maori had begun complaining about the damage to fisheries, eel weirs and other resources caused by the extent of log-rushing down creeks. When a Maori owner was successful in stopping log floating through his land based on common law rights, the Government quickly responded to pressure to bring in legislation that enabled the activity to continue in the 'national' interest. The subsequent legislation and its amendments provided for compensation for damage from the logs to neighbouring landowners but as always this compensation was based on English legal notions of property damage. There was no redress for Maori who still claimed an interest in the waterways as a resource for fisheries but who no longer owned adjoining land, or for Maori-owned equipment such as eel weirs.

Although overall, Maori economic success never again matched the earlier period and indigenous habitats were drastically reduced and modified, it seems that in many areas traditional resource use still remained an important part of Maori economy and culture. This requires more research but there is evidence, for example, of Maori involvement in new industries based on authority over traditional resources and habitats. Perhaps the best known is Te Arawa involvement in the tourist industry from the 1880s. The Waitangi Tribunal *Muriwhenua Fishing Report* also records a long history of a mix of traditional resource use and newer economic activities in Muriwhenua communities. For instance it was common to use fishing to subsidise income from seasonal work such as shearing and agricultural contract work. Fishing was also essential in allowing many families to remain on otherwise small, uneconomic farms

88. For example, Waitangi Tribunal, *Ngai Tahu Report*, vol 3, pp 868-890

in the region. As a result, a long tradition developed of tribal members fishing, at times on a part-time commercial basis while also having seasonal land-based work. As well, fishing remained important for maintaining cultural events for local marae and to provide hospitality.⁸⁹ Belich has also noted that although swamped and marginalised, Ngai Tahu still continued to assert traditional customary rights where they could. For instance, well into the twentieth century Ngai Tahu children left schools to join their families on annual visits to the Titi Islands and harvesting titi remained an important industry in the 1940s.⁹⁰ Possibly at least as important was the maintenance of a sense of identity through the exercise of such resource use. In many rural areas where most of the Maori population still lived, seasonally based activities enabled a continuing balance with traditional resource use and the continuation of hapu based organisation of work. As resources became relatively scarce they may well have also become increasingly valued for traditional purposes such as defining and maintaining iwi and hapu identity and enhancing mana. They are also likely to have continued to support an increasing sense of 'Maori' identity as the swamping process continued.

In a more negative sense, many Maori communities had little choice other than to rely substantially on traditional resources as the result of marginalisation and, in many instances, Government policies. As has been shown in more detail in the chapter on land policy, for example, the sale reserves from land purchases most commonly allowed by officials were those intended for traditional purposes, because they were less likely to conflict with the better land that settlers wanted. Officials also commonly justified meagre reserves by assuming Maori were better able to live off such land than Europeans. Where Maori did retain land for farming it was also often of poorer quality and uneconomic unless subsidised by traditional forms of food gathering such as eeling or fishing. These kinds of policies assumed a continuing reliance on traditional resource use that appear to have in turn placed obligations on the Crown to either protect such resources or to provide suitable alternatives.

89. Waitangi Tribunal, *Report of the Waitangi Tribunal on the Muriwhenua Fishing Claim*, Wellington, Department of Justice, 1988, p 26

90. Belich, p 255

9.4 Conclusion

By 1840 many Maori communities appeared willing to welcome increased European settlement, based on previous experience of European

contact and the benefits new economic opportunities seemed to offer. Many of these new opportunities involved the significant modification of localised indigenous habitats, some in ways that could not have been foreseen. However Maori do appear to have anticipated some degree of change, and support for the Treaty of Waitangi can be seen as a means of placing some controls on this. It seems Maori did accept the modification of some habitats for what were perceived as greater advantages but this acceptance did not necessarily equate with a willingness to entirely abandon traditional systems of management and use of indigenous flora and fauna. In contrast, even at times when Maori appeared most successful in participating in the settler economy, there is evidence indicating that traditional resource use and management remained important for a variety of reasons and may even have been critical in underpinning initial economic success. Rather than abandoning traditional systems of authority over and use of indigenous habitats, Maori appear to have attempted to selectively incorporate new introductions and new economic activities largely within traditional systems.

For some years after 1840 the kind of balance Maori anticipated between the traditional and new economies appeared possible, and at least for Maori, successful. When the direction of the settler economy changed to more intensive land and resource use to sustain a growing and permanent settler population, Maori and Pakeha economic interests came into more overt conflict. With the assistance of Crown policies, Pakeha interests began to dominate and the possibility of Maori retaining a balance between traditional and new forms of resource use began to recede. From the 1860s, Maori became increasingly economically and politically marginalised and lost much effective decision making power over the extent, direction and pace of habitat change. Even during this time however, although severely limited and depleted in many cases, remaining indigenous habitats and the resources they sustained remained important to many Maori communities. This importance was not only economic, in subsidising the largely wage working rural existence of Maori communities during this time, but also cultural and social, as a means of preserving mana and identity for example.

More research is required concerning Maori participation in habitat change during this time. A recurring theme however, is that whatever the extent and enthusiasm for engaging in new activities there was also a continuing reluctance, for a variety of cultural, economic and spiritual

reasons, to entirely abandon all traditional resource use and management and the habitats that sustained such resources. Instead, in many cases, there is a clear preference to be able to participate effectively in decision making over possible habitat change or protection and to have certain traditional forms of management and use accommodated within new management systems. This indicates that traditional systems of authority over and use of flora and fauna have remained important to Maori right through the period under review and while open to modification have never been voluntarily abandoned.