

APPENDIX VI

ESTIMATED POPULATIONS

District	1840	1891	1936
Auckland	16,317	9542	22,426
Hauraki	2920	1971	2056
Bay of Plenty	8249	3515	7671
Urewera	1250	1171	2105
Gisborne–East Coast	9690	3526	8449
Waikato	10,326	2998	6242
Volcanic plateau	4718	2209	4576
King Country	2500	3141	5744
Whanganui	5111	1051	2312
Taranaki	4243	3114	3828
Hawke’s Bay–Wairarapa	6325	5332	8604
Wellington	5391	1965	4924
Northern South Island	1596	440	690
Southern South Island	1942	1579	2221
Chatham Islands	—	148	303
Total	80,578	41,702	82,151

Estimates of the Maori populations in the Rangahaua Whanui districts at 1840, 1891, and 1936

Demography is highly relevant to the objectives of the *National Overview* report in helping to gauge the Crown’s responsibility in terms of ensuring that Maori retained sufficient land for their future needs. Therefore, an attempt has been made to provide demographic statistics for the Rangahaua Whanui districts at different points in time. The methodology used to collect these statistics, as well as the nature of the figures themselves, requires some discussion.

National Overview

There is little doubt that new epidemic and endemic diseases were the main causes of the overall decline in the Maori population during the nineteenth century, although there is much debate over when the decline reached its lowest point, what the population was at that point, and when it began to increase. By the 1880s, many local observers (not least Native Minister John Bryce in 1882) had concluded from local observations that the Maori population was stable or even increasing. There was some initial concern among statisticians that the population increase officially recorded in the 1896 census might not have marked the beginning of sustained growth. Or that it might even have been an improvement in the quality and thoroughness of the census-taking, and that in reality the population had only stabilised by this time. But it was certainly evident by the mid-1920s that a genuine and sustained increase in Maori population was occurring.

In addition to sickness and disease, other factors impacted on the population of different districts at different times. The search for employment or other opportunities created movements of the population within and between tribal districts of both a temporary and a permanent nature. Maori were often drawn away from their traditional lands to areas where work was available, such as to the gum fields to the north and south of Auckland, and to the Coromandel. Alternatively, Maori were forced out by conflict after British invasions of Waikato and Taranaki.

Aside from the factors influencing the real population of Maori in various localities, attempts to collect population statistics also encountered resistance from Maori, which distorted the census results and made them an unreliable representation of the actual population. In particular, Maori resistance to being included in any kind of census conducted by Pakeha meant that results obtained in Waikato, Taranaki, and the King Country, for example, were notoriously unreliable. Remote areas, such as Urewera, were not sufficiently accessible for reliable figures to be obtained.

For the purposes of this report, population estimates for the districts have been supplied for 1840, 1891, and 1936. Since there was no national census in 1840, the figures provided here were attained using Fenton's 1857 and 1858 census figures. These were redistributed according to Rangahaua Whanui district, adjusted to allow for underestimation, and projected back to 1840 on the basis of standard and uniform rates of decline from 1840 to 1857. The limitations of Fenton's census, with its bias towards accessible, mainly coastal, communities, are acknowledged and have been allowed for where alternative information is available. No allowance has been made for regional differences in the rates of decline or levels of underestimation. Where possible, however, attempts have been made to correct figures in terms of known internal migration, such as occurred in the 1840s when about 580 Maori from Waikanae moved to Waitara in Taranaki. With respect to the 1891 and 1936 figures, it is important to emphasise that, although information for the latter two dates is from census data, these figures are also estimates, because the counties used by the census takers do not align precisely with the Rangahaua Whanui district boundaries, and some distribution of the county statistics across boundaries was required.