



Title: Sutton Salt Lake

Description: Sutton Lake, Aotearoa's only inland saltwater lake and a biodiversity hotspot

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Where and when: Sutton Salt Lake, 21 May, 2023

The Story: With no outlet, Sutton Salt Lake concentrates salts from surrounding soils as it repeatedly fills, evaporates and refills. The lake occupies a shallow basin amongst schist rock tor ridges, framed by the Rock and Pillar Range. Salt tolerant herbs and grasses grow along the lake margins. A range of water birds and waders frequent the lake, feeding on tiny salt-adapted aquatic animals, including copepods, rotifers and water beetles.

Most of the world's saline lakes form in arid continental settings. Sutton Salt Lake is an exception, forming annually in a shallow 5 m bedrock-floored depression. The site receives about 500 mm/year rainfall compared with coastal rainfall of near 1,000 mm/year. Surface evaporation is high (about 700 mm/year) due to frequent strong winds. The lake's alkaline water is entirely derived from rain, rather than groundwater, and the lake waters have minimal chemical interaction with the underlying bedrock. When full, the salinity of Sutton Lake ranges from one quarter to one third that of sea-water.

Sources: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00288330.2004.9517240>
https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/site/assets/files/0/71/672/trilepidea_september_2022_final.pdf

Sutton lake is unique, beautiful and mysterious. I visited while in Central Otago on a solitary, silent meditation retreat contemplating my inner world and the landscape around me.

Camera: Olympus OM-D E-M1 M3

Lens: Olympus MZuiko 12-40 mm f/2.8 Pro

Exposure: 40 mm f/11 1/200s ISO 200

Digital specs: 5184 x 2916 pixels

Key words: New Zealand, Aotearoa, Sutton Salt Lake, Central Otago, Rock and Pillar Range, contemplative, visual storytelling, Ann Wheatley, Ecosystems Photography

Price: \$250 (incl. GST) for use of the digital image. Visit www.ecosystemsphotography/sales for details & to order, or to get a quote if you would like a high-quality print.

Donation: The price includes a \$100 donation to the [Nelson Tasman Climate Forum](#) or to a sustainability organisation or project of your choice.

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Ann Wheatley 5 Jul 2023