

WANGANUI MANAWATU & KAPITI

Rangiwahia Tops
Totara Reserve
Ototoka Beach & Snapper Rock



Kapiti Island
Waikanae River Walkway



Palmerston North Turitea Walkway
Field Hut



Rangiwahia Tops

Tramp to alpine tussock tops

Mountain cedar forest

Great views of the three volcanoes

Sunny hut verandah

3-4 hours return

Graded track

5 kilometres return

From Highway 1 at Mangaweka township turn off to Rangiwahia, 15 km to Te Para Para Road, 4 km to Renfrew Road, 4 km to DOC sign then an unsealed road for 1 km up to carpark. Info boards and toilet.

Rangiwahia is a stunning escape from the urban rat-race where you can see the triptych of North Island volcanoes — Mount Egmont/ Taranaki, Mount Ruapehu and Mount Ngauruhoe.

The carpark is at a surprising altitude of 810 m, and the graded pack-track easily wanders up through some attractive red beech forest. This track was put in by early runholders to take sheep up onto the tussock tops, and the first Rangiwahia Hut was a shepherd's hut. Later Rangiwahia became the second skifield in New Zealand.

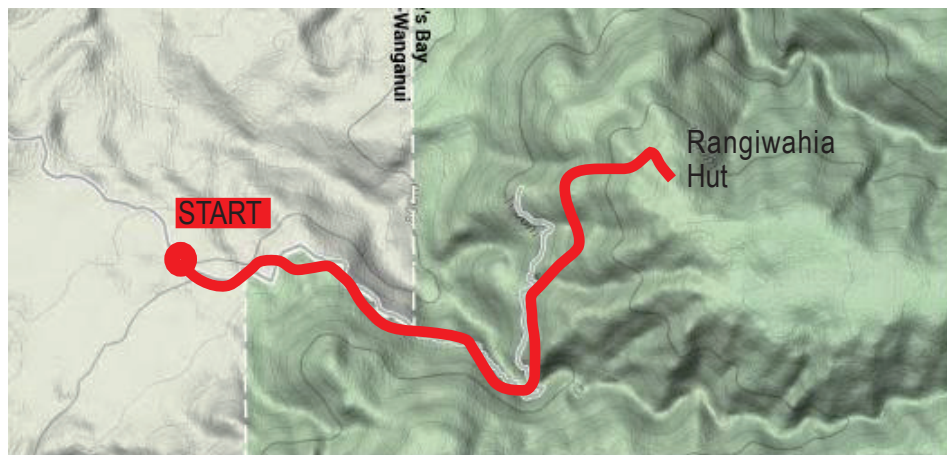
An active slip has caused the track to be re-routed higher, and there is still a short 20 metres across the top of the slip, with a taped detour marked for the nervous. After that hassle there are beautiful mt cedar and an elegant footbridge over a gorge.





The track keeps its even grade (past a seat lookout) through the subalpine leatherwood (tupare) forest to the tussock grasslands. The 12-bunk hut has a verandah on which to eat lunch and take in the views, and beside it on the small hilltop there's an even better seat lookout. They've repainted the hut beige.

There is a worn tussock track a short way above the hut, but it is more than 3 km to Mangahuia, the 1583-metre-high summit. If you have the time, go there, and allow another 2 hours return.



Totara Reserve

Splendid totara forest reserve
Gorgeous picnic and camping
Many short walks
River setting

1 hour return

Bush tracks

2 kilometres return

From Ashhurst take the Pohangina Road almost 20 km to the reserve, which is well signposted, and is now called the Totara Regional Park Reserve.

The Totara Reserve has some of the best lowland totara trees left in the district, so enjoy this ancient forest. There's a scenic picnicking and camping area beside the Pohangina River and it is a good place for a weekend family camp.

The nature walk starts at the picnic area, and wanders through a stunning assemblage of totara trees, and reaches the road beside the largest totara tree of all. Then it crosses the road and continues through forest, past a wetland area, and around the back of Camp Rangī Woods. Here, you can follow the main camping access road back to the picnic area. Also 5 minute chapel walk to totara grove.

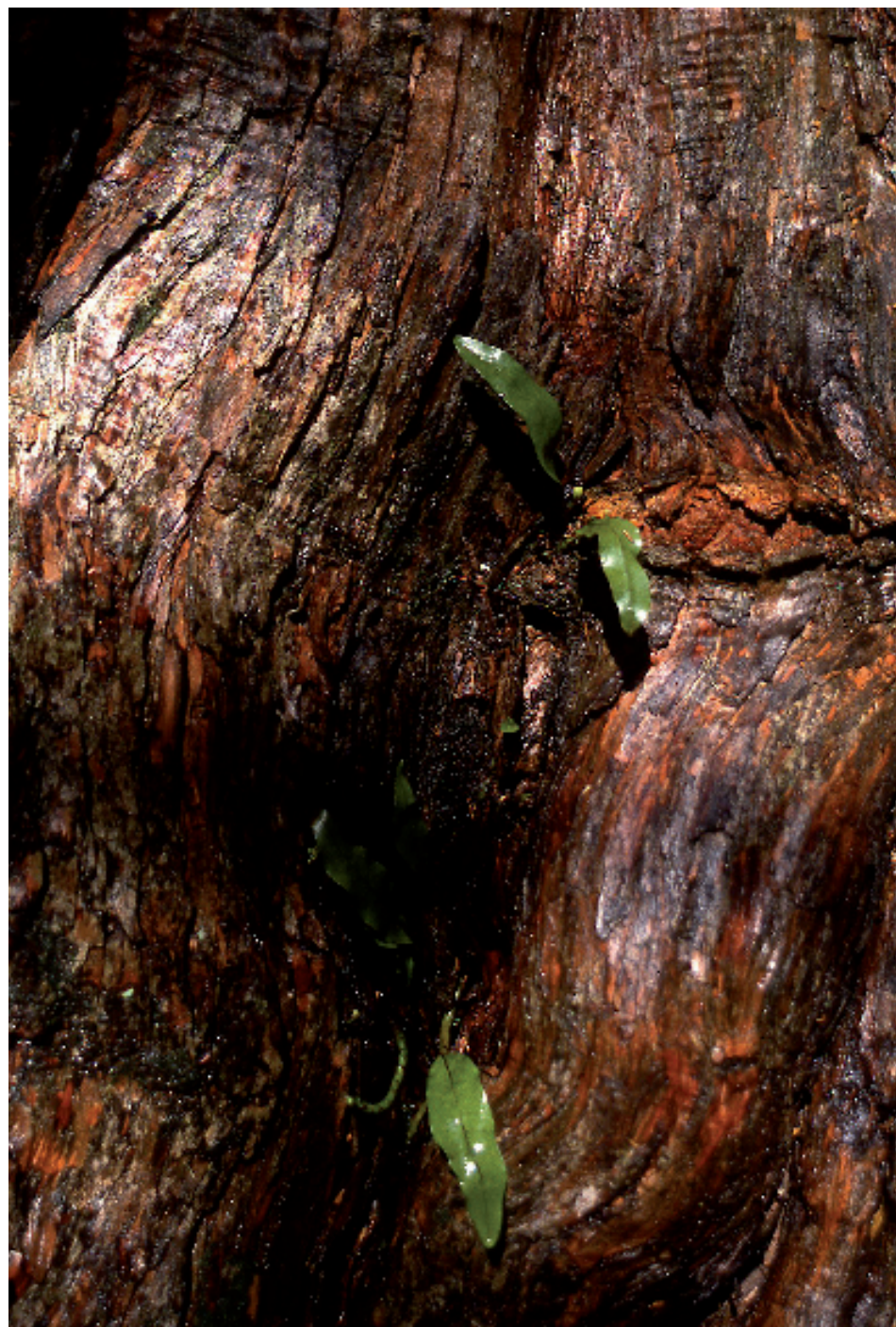
Other Walks: Kahikatea Walk (30 minutes return) is up the Pohangina Valley East Road, just past the pretty St Bartholomews church. Pettifar and Gilchrist Loop tracks are 1 km south of the Totara Reserve and include parts of the old Coach Road, 1-2 hours each.



Cafe: Fusion, at Ashurst.

Campsites: On the north side of the reserve is the picnic area, and power points for campervans.

On the south, there is are spacious camping areas, new ablutions block.



Ototoka Beach & Snapper Rock

Tidal platforms and coastal sand-cliffs

Strange ventifacts

Interesting rocks and sand dunes

Ototoka Beach to Waiinu Beach
is 2-3 hours one way

Beach, but need low tide

8 kilometre one way

From Wanganui drive on Highway 3 about 15 km to Kai Iwi and 5 km to Kai Iwi Beach settlement. Take the signposted Maxwell Road about 4 km to the Ototoka Beach Road (Maxwells Beach), then 4 km to carpark. Toilet.

From Wanganui to New Plymouth there is a narrow margin of wilderness between the turbulent Tasman and the prim quilted farmland. It's a bracing and stormy shore of sand cliffs and reef platforms, and it's a wonderful place to explore. For this walk it is best to arrange transport at the other end. It's easy beach walking, but you need a low tide at Snapper Rock if you intend to go right through.

The carpark at Ototoka sits on top of a cliff with fine views up and down the coast, and you can see Wanganui city in the distance. A walking track crosses a smart bridge over a waterfall, and drops down to the wide open beach sands. Scattered here are numerous boulders that seem entirely made of sea-shells. You can almost break off chunks in your hand.

Walking north you quickly reach a headland where boulders have made a jumble of interesting shapes. Flax and marram grass secure the dune cliffs behind. Ahead of you is the long sweep of Ototoka Beach, some 4 km of open beach plain.

Snapper Rock itself (Nukumaru Rock) is a jumble of large, flat rocks, but at low tide there are sand-channels that enable you to walk around and underneath the





rocks. If the tide is wrong you may have to bash through the sand dunes. Its 2 km around subtle headlands to Waiinu Beach, which has a large carpark, picnic area and camping area.

A sign states that the gathering of ventifacts is illegal. They are wind-sculptured stones, variously described as 'triangles', 'brazil nuts' and 'chinese hats'. Ventifact is a latin word meaning 'wind-made', and on this coast they have resulted from the stones of older beaches becoming exposed as the top layers of geologically young sand are blown away and 'sand-blasted' against the resisting pebbles. If you find one, please leave it for others to enjoy.



Palmerston North Turitea Walk

Quirky urban walkway

Bush, streams, views, ponds

Full circuit walk

Shorter walk options

2-3 hours circuit

Gravel paths, grass paths, footpaths, bush tracks

7 kilometres return

From Palmerston North turn off Tennent Drive, just before Massey University, into the carpark. Easy to miss. Otherwise there are access points off the campus itself, or Springdale Grove, Old West Road, and so on.

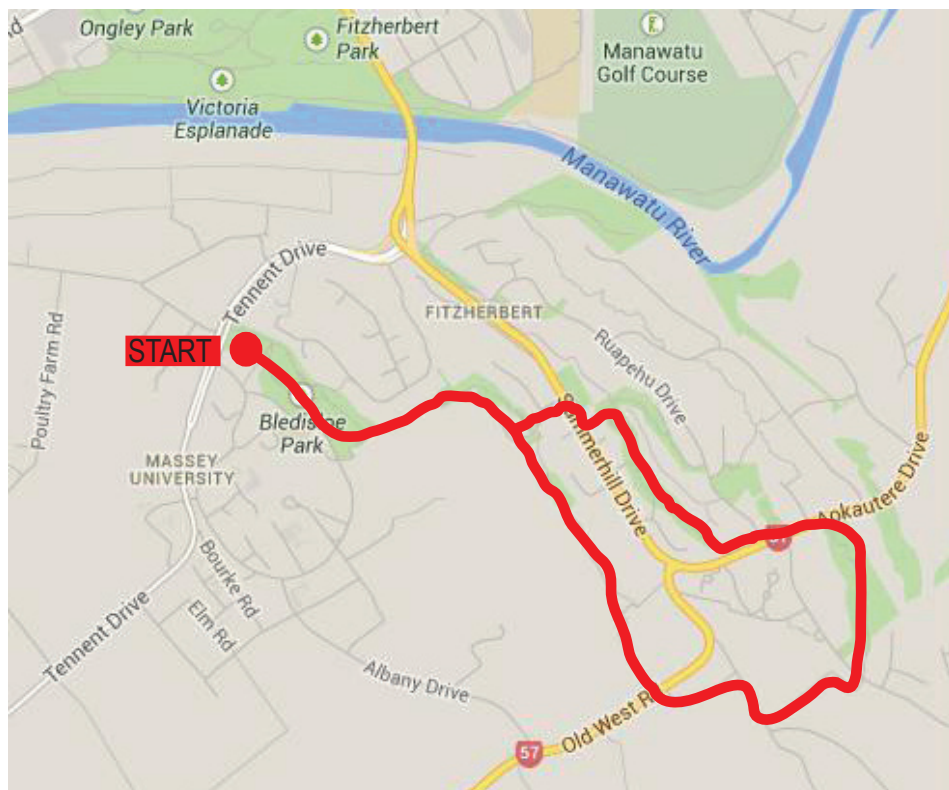
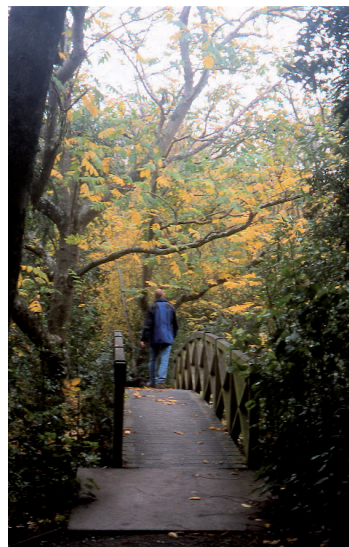
A real hidden gem of a walkway, craftily designed to follow the tinkling Turitea Stream around the university and through the new southern suburbs. The track negotiates parks and gardens, urban streets, streamsides, pockets of bush, farmland and ponds — a little bit of everything.

From the carpark turn into **Bledisloe Park**, an attractive area of native trees, flowering shrubs and footbridges beside the **Turitea Stream**. The track is sheltered and private here as it crosses the stream a couple of times then turns uphill to **Atawhai Park** and a narrow gully to Springdale Grove.



Across the road the track nips through a pleasant pocket of bush known as **Barbers Bush**, then climbs through pine trees and farm paddocks to the **Old West Road**. There is a short stretch along this road and Turitea Road, then across more farmland to Pacific Drive; excellent views here.

The walkway crosses the road to a lovely stretch of track in **Addershore Reserve** beside a small lake and around to Aokautere Drive. Walk down busy Aokautere Drive to the **Poutoa Walkway** (just beyond the shopping mall) which follows through pleasant reserves to come out on Summerhill Drive, almost opposite Springdale Grove. Return to Bledisloe Park.



Field Hut

700 m hill climb on good bush track

Historic hut

Alpine views

5-6 hours return

Bush track

8 kilometres return

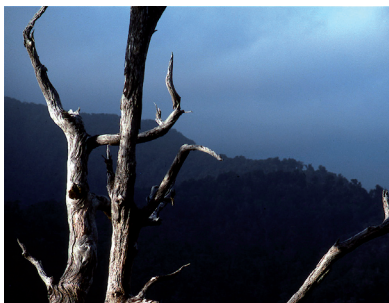
From Highway 1 drive down the Otaki Gorge Road about 15 km to Otaki Forks, large carpark and foot-bridge.

Field Hut was built in 1924 by the Tararua Tramping Club and named after W. H. Field, a great enthusiast for tramping and 'the southern crossing'. The track is very well made now and the mud has long gone. Good views, especially from 30 minutes above the hut on Table Top.

Cross the footbridge and settle in for a long hill climb, initially across farmland and open scrub for 300 m, then into the forest. The track is well graded and zig-zags up Judd Ridge easily, sliding over Tiro-tiro Knob to Field Hut.

History has seeped into the walls, and there are many good information signs. If it's fine weather it's worth another 30 minutes or so walk to go onto Table Top at 1047 m. All round views.





Campsite: DOC at Otaki Forks, toilets. Parawai Hut 10 mins across footbridge

Kapiti Island

Outstanding wildlife refuge
Maori and European historic sites
Sea crossing and great views
Rare and friendly birds

To Trig Lookout and back 2-3 hours (3 km) return. Okupe Lagoon 2-3 hours (6 km) return.

Bush tracks

You can only visit the island via a licenced operator, contact DOC in Wellington or check the web. Kapiti Island is getting popular and the number of visitors is restricted, so you may have to book some months ahead.

Kapiti looms large on the coastline north of Wellington. Steep-sided, dark-faced, it hardly looks welcoming. Yet the island has been a refuge for Maori, and latterly a wildlife reserve of outstanding importance for New Zealand. The Little Spotted Kiwi is extinct on the mainland, and Kapiti houses rare populations of tieke (saddleback), kokako, takahe, brown kiwi and stitchbirds. The kaka are memorable.

Kapiti has been occupied sporadically and peacefully from 1200 by the Muaupoko and the later Ngai Kahungunu, till the Ngati Toa lead by the warrior chief Te Rauparaha invaded in 1822. Te Rauparaha then made Kapiti his base and swapped the shrunken heads of his rivals for European guns.

The whalers knew Kapiti as Entry Island (after Captain Cook's chart) and had shore-based whaling stations there. Three-quarters of Kapiti's virgin forest was destroyed, and goats, possums, pigs, cats, rats and dogs were introduced. In 1897 a reserve act was passed, and one of the first caretakers was Richard Henry, the famous custodian of Resolution Island. Henry's house on Kapiti is the historic whare, where he lived for 20 years. It has become a sort of memorial to this pioneering conservationist.





Geting to Kapiti is romantic. You are in a boat hauled by tractor across the beach and out into the rolling surf, and the short channel crossing can be stormy. The boats land at Rangitira Point, where the DOC ranger will do an introductory talk on Kapiti and conservation projects. After the talk you are left to wander around, and the birds are the main attraction.

Weka and takahe will be mooching about and the North Island kaka will make a dramatic appearance. Although wild, these birds have become friendly to humans, though feeding them is no longer permitted. Saddlebacks may also visit. These striking orange and black birds have a harsh 'machine gun' rattle, and dance around the branches in an agitated display.

Most people look around Rangitira Point first, visit the historic whare, then take the Trig Track up the steep hillside and onto the Trig Lookout. Then return via the



Wilkinson Track to Rangitira Point. The lookout tower at Tuteremoana peak at 521 metres. The spectacular west coast is a fortress of cliffs and you are perched on its top battlement.

On the bumpy boat trip back the formidable bulk of Kapiti will look less sinister, more like a refuge than a prison.

Waikanae River Walkway

Gentle riverside path

Dune lagoons and estuary

Footbridges and bush reserves

Ideal for all ages

2–3 hours (8 km) from river mouth to Highway 1 and return

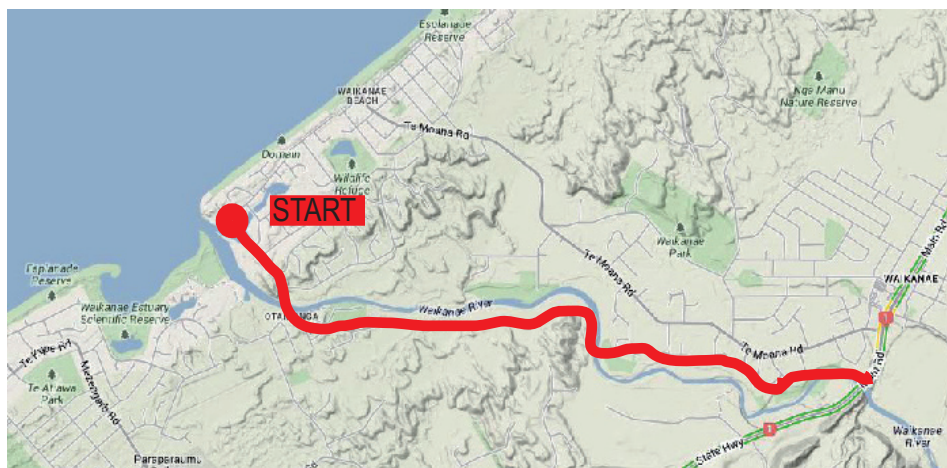
Grass paths, stopbanks and foot-paths

From Highway 1 turn onto the road to Waikanae Beach, and to the carpark beside the river bank. There are many other entrances and exits onto the river walkway.

This is a pretty little pathway through willows and native sedges beside the Waikanae River, as it makes its unhurried progress to the sea. Quite private, and Waikanae residents have had the pleasure of this footpath all to themselves for too long.

The **Waikanae River mouth** is a good starting point, and you can follow the track north along the river past the **Waimanu Lagoons**. After a kilometre you reach an impressive footbridge that leads to the **Otaihanga Reserve** area. This has a carpark and toilets. Staying on the north bank the good track leads upriver, and links various reserves along the riverbank for the next 3 kilometres, including the, **Edgewater Park**, Jim Cooke and Memorial Park.

There's another impressive footbridge at **Te Arawai** leading to the **Karu Reserve**. Then you can wander in peace and quiet all the way until you reach the fairly frantic Highway 1.





Cafe: The Front Room at Waikanae beach