



Aotea Track

Great Barrier Island / Aotea

Go wild for the weekend



Hauraki Gulf Marine Park
Ko te Pātaka kai
© Tīkapa Moana

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



- Protect plants and animals
- Bury toilet waste when tramping
- Keep vehicles off beaches
- Keep our coast, streams and lakes clean
- Leave gates as you find them and respect any access restrictions
- Camp carefully
- Keep to the track
- Respect cultural heritage
- Enjoy your visit and *Toitu te whenua*/ leave the land undisturbed

Further information

Great Barrier Island DOC Field Centre
Port FitzRoy Mail Centre, Fitzroy
Great Barrier Island
Ph: 09 429 0044

DOC Warkworth/Great Barrier Island Area Office
PO Box 474, Warkworth 0941
Email: warkworth@doc.govt.nz
Ph: 09 425 7812

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468
Report any safety hazards or conservation emergencies
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111



Kauri dieback disease

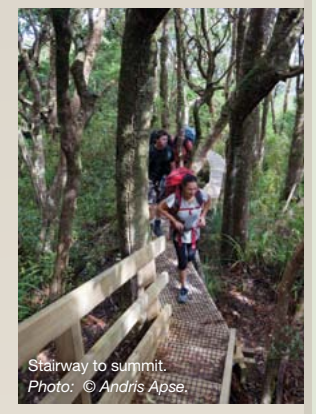
Kauri trees are under threat from kauri dieback disease (known as PTA). Please help protect kauri by always sticking to defined tracks, and keeping off kauri tree roots. Footwear, tyres and any equipment that comes into contact with soil before and after leaving areas of kauri forest needs to be cleaned.

See www.kauridieback.co.nz or call 0800 NZ KAURI for more information.

What to expect

Aotea Track requires a moderate degree of fitness and the ability to carry a pack containing a sleeping bag, cooking and food requirements, and warm clothing. The track is sometimes steep, and is scattered with several lengthy stairways. Tramping boots are recommended. Include sunscreen, raincoat/jacket, clothing for hot, wet and cold weather, sleeping bag, drink bottle, first aid kit, food, cooking and eating utensils, torch/batteries, matches and candles.

- You can expect:**
- to walk 25 to 30 km
 - to carry a pack
 - some steep climbs
 - many steps and stairways
 - hot sun and high UV
 - rain and colder temperatures
 - slippery portions of track
 - spectacular panoramas
 - stunning bush, mountain and stream views



Stairway to summit.
Photo: © Andris Apse.

New Zealand's backcountry is renowned for its changeable weather and rugged terrain. Be prepared for adverse conditions. Carry food and warm, waterproof clothing, even on short walks.

If you think there is a safety hazard in a conservation area, call the DOC HOTline or the nearest DOC office.

Tell someone before you go

Safety is your responsibility so remember to leave details of your trip (return date and time, planned route, party member names and vehicle license plates) with a trusted contact, and don't forget to let them know when you return. Information on the Outdoor Intentions System can be found at www.adventuresmart.co.nz.

Remember to fill in hut books during your trip, even if you do not stay in the hut. They can assist in search and rescue operations, and may help save your life.

Huts and campgrounds

Two well-positioned huts allow for manageable walks of 3 to 4 hours over the 3-day walk. **Mt Heale Hut**, opened in December 2010 and providing spectacular views over the Hauraki Gulf and Hauturu/Little Barrier Island, sits on the central ridge a half-hour walk from Hiramakima /Mount Hobson, the island's high point. This 20-bed hut has excellent sleeping and gas cooking facilities.

Kaiaraara Hut is near sea level on the western side of the island. This is a 28-bed hut and is serviced by a wood burner, not gas. It is 3 km from a general store, burger bar and Information Centre at Port Fitzroy.

Six Department of Conservation (DOC) campgrounds are spread throughout the island. 'Akapoua' and 'The Green' are the nearest campsites to the Aotea Track entrances, providing places to camp the night before or after walking the track. The other four campgrounds are further from the track and require transport, or a long road walk, to the track starting point. (View DOC's website www.doc.govt.nz for more campground details).

It is essential to book huts and campsites in advance, see **Booking information and fees**.



Mt Heale hut.
Photo: © Andris Apse.

Day 1: Hot Springs to Mt Heale Hut
Time: 3–3.5 hours

Starting from Whangaparapara Road, the Kaitoke Springs Track begins flat and easy, following an ancient shoreline. Follow the boardwalks across the unique Kaitoke Wetlands and listen out for the call of a fernbird or spotless crane, or maybe spot the orchids and sundews close to the track. Enjoy the hotpools but take care—they might be too hot in places. After a brief steep climb and descent, join Tramline Track North, which harbours reminders of the toil of loggers and journeys of 80 years ago. Peach Tree Track soon appears on the left and you climb steadily through the regenerating forest to reach Mt Heale Hut. Given a clear evening, the striking sunsets over Hauturu/Little Barrier Island make the journey all worthwhile.

Day 1 (alternative): Windy Canyon to Mt Heale Hut
Time: 3–3.5 hours

Alternative access to the Mt Heale Hut is possible from the east, via Windy Canyon and Palmers Track, accessed from Aotea Road at the top of Whangapoua Hill. This section is fully bridged and is the shortest and easiest option for the first day. Here a steady climb takes you through the sheer rock faces of Windy Canyon with superb views of Okiwi Basin and Whangapoua estuary to the north, and Kaitoke and Medlands Bay to the east. On the ridge still stands the 'wooden horse', a sturdy H-frame used for winching logs up and over the saddle, before sending them plummeting down the other side on their way to the sea. The track follows the ridge, offering constantly changing vistas in every direction, before an impressive set of steps and stairways leads you to the summit. From here take South Fork Track along and down to Mt Heale Hut.



Kaitoke wetland. Photo: © Andris Apse.



Chevron skink.
Photo: Keri Neilson.

View living treasures
Explore rich history

Many of the reptiles, amphibians and birds on Aotea are now rare or extinct on the mainland. They can be secretive and require patience to spot. Keep an eye out for the following on the walk:

Chevron skink –one of NZ's most endangered lizards, they can grow up to 30cm long. North Island kaka – Large brown noisy parrots are often seen flying high above the forest canopy, their raucous call is part of the island's atmosphere. Banded Rail – often mistaken for baby weka, banded rails are a common site. Black Petrel, North Island Robin and tomtit also inhabit the slopes of the highest point Hiramakima.

The native forest on Aotea is regenerating after a history of land clearance and kauri logging. Impressive Kauri trees can be seen just a short walk from the Forest Rd section of the track. Three plant species found only on the island are found along the track; the Great Barrier tree daisy, prostrate kākūka, and a subspecies of hebe.

Maori oral history speaks of early occupation, of Ngati Wai and its chief Rehua settling on Aotea (Great Barrier Island) and claiming mana whenua over the land in the late 1700's. Being ancestral land, the entire island is sacred to Maori. At its centre stands Hiramakima, Mt Hobson, the maunga tapu (sacred mountain) of Ngati Rehua.

The kauri forests of Aotea were logged with increasing intensity between the 1880's and early 1930's. Much of the Aotea track follows old kauri logging and milling tramway routes. A few areas of original kauri forest survived, one area being the summit and surrounds of Hiramakima. Much of the forest is now regenerating.



KTC Tramway.
Photo: Jim Peiro, NZ Herald.

Banded rail.
Photo: © Andris Apse.

Aotea Track description

Day 2: Mt Heale Hut to Kaiaraara Hut
Time: 3 hours

Begin from Mt Heale Hut with a steep 40-minute climb of track and stairways to a junction with Kaiaraara Track, which descends to Kaiaraara Hut. Before starting the descent, a 5 minute side track leads to the Hiramakima/Mount Hobson summit and a 360 degree panorama. Hiramakima is the site of several rare species. It is the favoured choice of the tomtit, black petrel and recently re-introduced North Island robin, and is also frequented by kākāriki and kākā. The beautiful endemic Great Barrier tree daisy and tiny sundews like it here as well. The descent is a mix of steep paths, stairways and bridges before levelling out as the Kaiaraara Hut is approached. Wooden steps closer to the summit protect the black petrel nesting grounds and sensitive ecosystems. Don't miss the 2 minute side track (40 minutes from the summit) to New Zealand's best preserved kauri driving dam, built in the 1920s along with six smaller dams up stream. Logs estimated to contain 7 million feet of timber were slid into the dams. Once loaded, the dams were tripped one after the other so a full blast hit this lower dam, propelling the logs into Kaiaraara Bay.



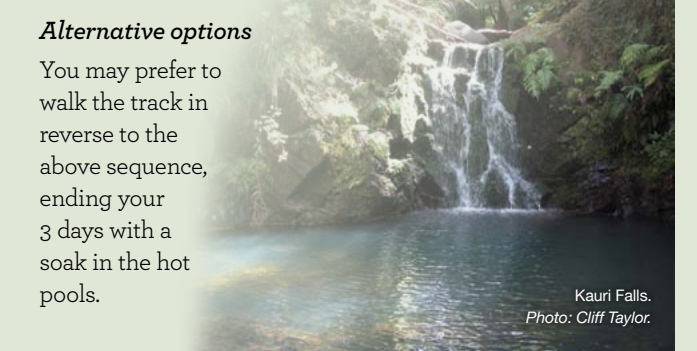
Soaking in the Kaitoke hot pools.
Photo: Cliff Taylor.

Mt Heale.
Photo: © Andris Apse.

Day 3: Kaiaraara Hut to Whangaparapara Rd
Time: 4 hours

The last day is an easy grade route with no major climbs following Forest Road. Enjoy the beautiful bush and mountain views on route including Maungapiko Lookout, Kauri Tree Route (a small stand of impressive large kauri trees) as well as extensive vistas of the bays to the west. From Forest Road follow the historic Tramline Track to 'The Green' campsite. On the way, a 5 minute detour to Kauri Falls is an excellent waterfall swimming opportunity.

You can camp at 'The Green' campsite at Whangaparapara or exit onto Whangaparapara Road.



Kauri Falls.
Photo: Cliff Taylor.

Keep an eye out for black petrel

Once widespread on the North Island, breeding colonies of these large, burrow-nesting seabirds are now confined to Aotea and Hauturu/Little Barrier Island. The main colony breeds here on the slopes of Mt Hobson (Hiramakima) between October and May each year. Mature birds spend months at sea flying as far as South America and only return to the island to breed. Watch out for them on the road at night.

Black petrel. Photo: Halima Jamieson.

Black petrel chick. Photo: K. L. Kāndrick.

Booking information and fees

Bookings in advance are essential for all huts and campgrounds. All prices include GST.

Book online www.doc.govt.nz

Huts

Adult \$15 per night; child (age 5-17) \$7.50 per night; child (under 5) free.

Bookings can also be made at the Visitors Centre, 137 Quay Street, Princess Wharf, Auckland. Phone: 09 379 6476.

Campgrounds

Adults \$10 per night; child (age 5-17) \$5 per night; child (under 5) free.

Bookings can also be made at the Visitors Centre, 137 Quay Street, Princess Wharf, Auckland. Phone: 09 379 6476.

Budget accommodation providers

Backpackers

Great Barrier Lodge	09 429 0488	Whangaparapara
Crossroads Backpackers	09 429 0889	Clariss
Lazy Cow (The)	09 429 0773	Clariss
Sunbeam Sanctuary	09 429 0349	Okupu
Medlands Beach Backpackers	09 429 0320	Medlands

For more accommodation options pick up a Great Barrier Island Visitor Information Guide or visit www.thebarrier.co.nz.



Banded rail.
Photo: © Andris Apse.

Transport operators

Getting there

Great Barrier Airlines
Phone: 0800 900 600 (call free); 09 275 9120 (Auckland); 09 429 0257 (Great Barrier Island).
www.greatbarrierairlines.co.nz

FlyMySky Airline
Phone: 0800 222 123 (call free); 09 256 7025 (Auckland).
www.flymysky.co.nz

Sealink
Phone: 09 300 5900 (Auckland).
www.sealink.co.nz

Fullers
Phone: 09 367 9111 (Auckland).
www.fullers.co.nz

Transport on the island

Aotea Car Rentals
09 4290 474 or 0800 426 832

Go Great Barrier Island
09 4290 222 or 0800 997222

GBI Shuttle & Transfer Service + GBI Rent-a-Car
09 4290 062 or 0274 923 641

Great Barrier Buses (shuttle/transfer service)
09 4290 474 or 0800 426 832

Medlands Rentals
09 4290 861

Mike Newman (based at Port FitzRoy)
021 876 296 or 09 4290 052

Tryphena Shuttles
027 282 2733

Sun orchid.
Photo: Halima Jamieson.

Aotea Track

Great Barrier Island (Aotea Island) is somewhere special—

rugged and remote, wild and isolated, yet just a 30 minute flight from Auckland. You'll be captivated by the stunning scenery of this beautiful island, which lies at the eastern edge of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

The 25 km Aotea Track loops the central mountainous area and is a manageable 3 day circuit for reasonably fit beginner or experienced trampers. The track is a network of easy walking tracks, steep climbs, stairways, and bridges. You will travel over a range of spectacular landscapes: streams that show off a constant spectacle of beautiful native bush, tranquil wetlands and the surviving forests of kauri, rimu and kahikatea with their special plants and wildlife. Enjoy too the superb views from much of the track as you follow the central ridge of the island. You'll also be able to explore the rich history of Great Barrier Island (Aotea Island) with sites such as the Kaiaraara driving dam and tramline remnants.



Great Barrier tree daisy.
Photo: Bec Stanley.

- Quick facts**
- Aotea Track is a 2 night, 3 day walk and has alternative entry points.
 - There are two huts on the walk, Mt Heale and Kaiaraara, both of which need to be booked online at www.doc.govt.nz.
 - The highest point on the island is Hiramakima/Mt Hobson at 627 m.

Getting there

Great Barrier Island (Aotea Island) can be reached by boat or plane. Two airlines, Great Barrier Airlines and FlyMySky, link Auckland's domestic airport and the island's two airfields at Claris (daily throughout the year) and Okiwi (weather dependent). Sealink offers a passenger and car ferry service three to four times a week according to season, and Fullers runs a seasonal service using a high speed catamaran over the peak summer period. Passenger bus and rental car services are available, and entrances to the Aotea Track can be accessed by road. (See *Transport operators* in the *Booking information and fees* section).



Kaiaraara swing bridge.
Photo: © Andris Apse.



Kauri Dam.
Photo: © Andris Apse.



Kaiaaraa Hut.
Photo: © Andris Apse.



The Green Campsite.
Photo: © Andris Apse.



Kauri tree off Forest Road.
Photo: © Andris Apse.



Maungapiko Lookout.
Photo: © Andris Apse.



Whangapoua view.
Photo: © Andris Apse.



Windy Canyon.
Photo: © Andris Apse.



Public Conservation land
Trails
DOC Campsites
DOC Huts
Information
Airfield
Legal and Formed Roads

0 1 2 4 Kilometres

This map is intended as a guide only. Those going tramping are advised to use the appropriate topographical map. Not to be used for navigation.
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Looking out to Little Barrier Island.
Photo: © Andris Apse.



Aotea Track

0 0.45 0.9 Km

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Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai
New Zealand Government

Legend



DOC Camp site



DOC Hut



DOC Office



Mountain bikes (caution)



Parking area



Picnic site

Aotea_Track

Other_Tracks

Road

Auckland Conservancy (ndingle), 12/06/2012



View of Whangapoua from Hiraikimata.
Photo: © Andris Apse.