

Introduction

Punakaiki is best known for its pancake rocks and blowholes. It is also the centre for Paparoa National Park, 38,000 ha of varied landscapes from mountain tops to sea level. This brochure outlines walks which range from around 15 minutes to a couple of days. Many tracks pass through densely forested karst limestone areas, which are the essence of the park. As these places contain many hidden dangers it is important to stay on the tracks. Further details on all tracks are available from the Department of Conservation Visitor Centre at Punakaiki.

Times given in this brochure are for walking only - allow time for resting and enjoying the view. The enclosed maps are intended just to indicate locations and access - the 1:50,000 scale map of Paparoa National Park, available from the Visitor Centre is a more reliable guide. In relation to rivers, the terms "true left" and "true right" refer to the banks when travelling downstream.

Look after yourself

Although the walks described in this brochure are recommended to day visitors, the nature of the West Coast means weather and track conditions can be very changeable. Visitors are advised to call at the Paparoa National Park Visitor Centre to check on current track conditions. Strong shoes or boots are recommended for anyone planning more than a few minutes walk. Be prepared for rain at any time of the year. For longer walks pack a small first aid kit and take extra food and drink. Insect repellent is recommended to ward off sandflies and mosquitoes. Leave your tramping intentions and expected time of return with a reliable contact.

River crossings and flood conditions

Walks associated with the Inland Pack Track involve river crossings and some creek bed travel. Choose fording spots with care, take your time and look for the shallowest place to cross. Fords shift and change in wet weather, rivers and creeks can rise suddenly and become impassable. Wait until water levels fall before moving on again or turn back. If you are caught out in the rain and the rivers and creeks are too high to ford, seek shelter on safe high ground. This may mean an unexpected night out.

Other things to see and do

Nature tourism

A variety of activities are available in the area including kayaking, birdwatching, and caving. For more information contact the Paparoa National Park i-SITE Visitor Centre.

Camping

A fully serviced campground is located in Punakaiki and an informal campsite is located in Paparoa National Park at the Ballroom Overhang.

Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai

The National Park, scenic reserves, and other protected lands in Paparoa - Punakaiki region are administered by the Department of Conservation as part of the Department's West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservancy. The Conservancy is managed from Hokitika.

Brochures, maps, hunting permits, hut tickets and general information are available from the Paparoa National Park Visitor Centre.

Please remember

Dogs - To protect ground dwelling birds, no dogs or domestic animals are permitted in the National Park

Mountain Biking - is prohibited in the National Park.

Look after the environment

All native plants, wildlife, natural features and historic sites are strictly protected. Please take your rubbish away and do not light any fires. (See also environmental care code printed elsewhere in this brochure).

As dogs are not permitted in National Parks they must not be taken on any of these walks.

Pancake Rocks and Blowholes Walk



Distance: 1.1 km, loop
Time: 20 mins

This is an all-weather walk around the pancake rocks and blowholes. With the exception of an optional short section with steps, the walk is suitable for wheelchairs (with assistance). As the rocks are both fragile and dangerous, it is important to stay on the path. The blowholes are at their best around high tide when there is a westerly swell.

Access: From the main road, opposite the Visitor Centre.

Truman Track



Distance: 700 m, one way
Time: 15 mins

Truman Track is a walk through unspoiled sub-tropical forest where podocarp and rata trees tower above thickets of vines and nikau palms. The track emerges on a spectacular coastline with cliffs, caverns, a blowhole and a waterfall which plummets straight onto a rock-strewn beach. A stairway provides access to the beach, which may be safely explored when the tide is out.

Access: From the main road 3 km north of the Visitor Centre.

Punakaiki Cavern



Time: Take as long as you like

A wooden stairway gives access to 130m of safe passages with a few stalactites and the odd glow worm. Plenty of fun for all ages, so long as a good torch (and preferably a

spare) is carried. Access: Signposted beside the main road 500m north of the Visitor Centre.

Pororari River Track



Distance: 3.5 km, one way
Time: 1 hr

The track follows a spectacular limestone gorge with two main features - a river with huge rocks in deep pools, and beautiful forest featuring subtle changes from sub-tropical to temperate.

A 15 minute gentle stroll from the car park brings you to a seat and a lookout, with spectacular views of the river gorge with its magnificent limestone cliffs. From this point on, the track narrows and the gradients become a little steeper as the track continues for another 2.5 km until it meets the Inland Pack Track. Five minutes beyond this junction the track leads to the riverbed, an ideal place for a rest before retracing your steps back to the car park.

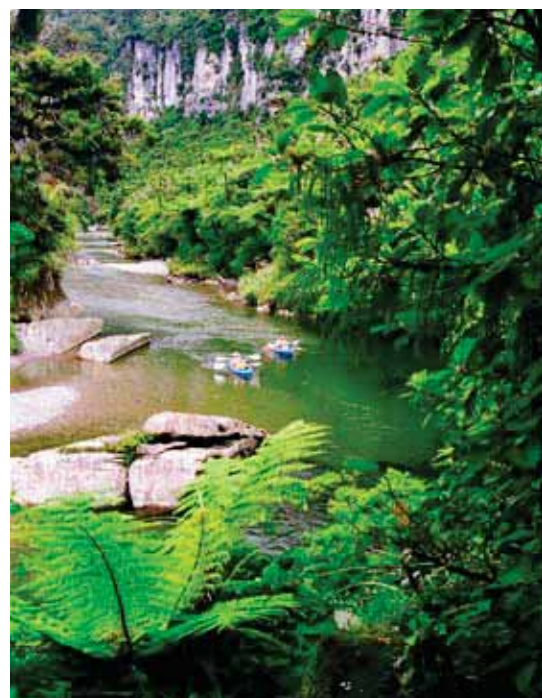
Access: From the carpark by the Pororari River bridge, one kilometre north of the Visitor Centre on SH6.



Paparoa National Park

Walks in the Punakaiki Area

WEST COAST *TAI POUTINI*



Safety

Any problems or comments on the tracks please pass onto any of the offices listed. If it is a safety issue you may contact:



More information



Department of Conservation

Paparoa National Park i-SITE Visitor Centre

CMB 1
Punakaiki
RD1 Runanga 7873
Ph 03 7311 895
Fax 03 7311 896
Email paparoavc@doc.govt.nz

West Coast *Tai Poutini* Conservancy Office

Private Bag 701
Sewell Street
Hokitika 7810
Ph 03 756 9100
Fax 03 756 9195
Email: westcoast@doc.govt.nz

www.doc.govt.nz



Protect plants and animals

- Remove rubbish
- Bury toilet waste
- Keep streams and lakes clean
- Take care with fires
- Camp carefully
- Keep to the track
- Consider others
- Respect our cultural heritage
- Enjoy your visit
- Toitu te whenua (Leave the land undisturbed)

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Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Punakaiki - Pororari Loop



Distance: 11 km, loop
Time: 3 hrs

A popular walking track combining the southern section of the Inland Pack Track with the Pororari River Track. It crosses the Punakaiki River via a footbridge, and then follows an easily graded climb through mature rain forest over the ridge dividing the two rivers. When the Pororari River Track junction is reached, it is worth carrying on along the Inland Pack Track for a short distance to the Pororari River, a perfect place for a rest and something to eat. Return to the junction and then follow the Pororari River Track down river to the car park on SH 6. From there it is a 1km walk south along SH 6 to the Visitor Centre.

Access: From the Visitor Centre follow SH 6 south to Waikori Road, 200m on the left after the Punakaiki River. (Note: The vehicle bridge on SH6 over the Punakaiki River has pedestrian access on the upstream side). Follow Waikori Road for 1 km to the car park. The track starts 50m further down the road on the left at the footbridge. Please leave the farm gate at the start of Waikori Road closed at all times.

Fox River Cave Walk



Distance: 3.7 km, one way
Time: 1 hr 15 mins

CAUTION: Sections of this track require river bed travel, and depending on weather conditions, may involve river crossings (refer to section 'River crossings and flood conditions' in this brochure). Parts of this track are steep and rocky, and may be muddy and slippery.

The area's oldest tourist attraction, this safe cave has a 200m passage, beautifully decorated with calcite formations which have developed over thousands of years. Take plenty of light and respect the cave - no souveniring or writing on the wall please. There is another lower cave, but this is dangerous to enter due to falling rocks and sheer drops in the floor.

Access: Signposted from the main road just over the Fox River bridge, 12 km north of Punakaiki. When the main pack track meets a river ford, the Fox River Cave access track carries on up the north bank.

Cave Creek Kotihotihō Walk



Distance: 2 km, one way
Time: 1 hr

From the gate at the end of Bullock Creek Road, follow the farm track to a 'T-junction'. The road branching right from the junction leads beyond the Inland Pack Track turn-off, to a signpost indicating the Cave Creek Kotihotihō track. Across a couple of ridges, the track descends into a deeply incised gorge. The creekbed where the track ends is normally bouldery and dry. In normal conditions the stream emerges from underneath rocks in several places. However, during and after heavy rain, a torrent rages past the foot of the track, barring further progress. Please take care to avoid trampling the mosses and liverworts growing on rocks and banks. Do not enter the creekbed if it is raining, as water levels can rise dramatically with very little warning.

Access: Begins at the end of Bullock Creek Road (a 6 km gravel road), which leaves the main road 2 km north of the Visitors Centre.

Caution: This road is prone to flooding during heavy rain.

Ballroom Overhang Track



Distance: 6 km, one way
Time: 2 hrs

Several river crossings - dangerous in flood

Some of the park's finest limestone features can be seen in this area. The track follows the Fox River and continues up the gorge to a point where the river branches. The large limestone overhang, known as the Ballroom Overhang is about half an hour up the left or main branch of the river.

Access: The Inland Pack Track, signposted by the main road bridge at Fox River, 12 km north of Punakaiki.

Tiropahi - Four Mile Track



Distance: 13.8 km, return
Time: 4 hrs

One river crossing - dangerous in flood

A well-formed track leads up through the scenic Tiropahi Gorge to an open pakihī, with fine views of the Paparoa tops in clear weather. Along the way are several access points to the riverbed with numerous deep swimming holes amidst massive water-worn limestone rocks. Near the top end are some traces of an old sawmill once served by a horse tramway which ran along the formation of today's walking track. Take care on slippery mudstone.

Access: The track is signposted from the main road, 20 km north of Punakaiki, a short distance before the Tiropahi bridge.

Pororari River - Bullock Creek Road



Distance: 15 km, loop
Time: 5 - 6 hrs

A section of the Inland Pack Track through part of the Paparoa limestone syncline, which links the Pororari River Track with the scenic Bullock Creek Road. Care must be taken when the track crosses deep rifts, and no off-track exploration should be made, as there are hidden potholes up to 40m deep. The mature forest supports many birds, including the rare species such as kaka and kiwi. Towards the end of the walk, Bullock Creek Road emerges onto SH6. From here, it is another 1 km south along the highway to reach the car park.

Access: From the Pororari River car park 1 km north of the Visitor Centre on SH6.

Bullock Creek - Fox River Carpark



Distance: 15.5 km, one way
Time: 5 hrs

Numerous river and creek crossings - dangerous in flood

Beyond the gate at the head of the Bullock Creek Road, a farm road branches left and crosses the creek just above its main submergence point. The road soon meets the Inland Pack Track which passes through wonderful limestone country before ending at Fossil Creek. Stream-bed travel leads to Dilemma Creek, which is crossed and re-crossed until it joins Fox River. Here the track may be picked up again and followed out to the carpark at the mouth of the Fox River, 12 km north of Punakaiki.

Access: Begins at the top of Bullock Creek Road, which leaves the main road 2 km north of the Visitors Centre. An extra hour and a half is needed to walk up the 6 km road to the start of the track, if a ride can not be arranged.

Inland Pack Track



Distance: 25 km, one way
Time: 2 - 3 days

Numerous river and creek crossings - dangerous in flood

Built in 1867 during the gold-rush to avoid dangerous coastal travel, the track gives access to some of the finest features of Paparoa National Park. There are no huts along the way, but there is sheltered camping under the Ballroom Overhang, where there is a toilet. The track is best walked from the southern or Punakaiki end, as this makes creekbed navigation at the northern (or Fox River) end much simpler.

Access: Via Waikori Road, 800m south of the Visitor Centre. An alternative start is via the Pororari River track car park, 1km north of the Paparoa National Park I-SITE Visitor Centre.

Track standards



Easy access short walk - wheelchair accessible



Short walk - easy walking for up to an hour



Walking track - well-formed easy walks from a few minutes to a day



Tramping track - backcountry skills and experience needed

