



Four-wheel driving in conservation areas



NORTH ISLAND

Introduction

New Zealand has some great places for four-wheel driving. Whether you use your vehicle to get to your favourite camping or fishing spot or just to view the scenery and enjoy, there are many different places in Department of Conservation (DOC) managed areas to choose from.

Enjoy but take care. If not driven carefully it's easy to damage fragile landscapes. It's essential that everyone using four-wheel drives, trail bikes, beach buggies and other types of vehicle knows how to drive with care for the environment and other recreationists. This list identifies places to go. Detailed information about driving with care is available in the brochure *'Four-wheel driving in conservation areas'*.

Plan and prepare for the outdoors

Safety

Safety is your responsibility. Make sure you always have warm and waterproof clothing and are prepared for all weather and conditions. Take plenty of water, food, fuel, break-down tools, spare parts and emergency communication equipment on trips. Carry maps and a compass or GPS and know how to use them. In remote areas travel with another vehicle, 4WD club or go with a licensed tour operator.

Weather

Changes in weather can have major effects on a road; rain can turn a road into a bog, a slope into a slide and create impassable streams very quickly. Get a weather report before you set out from MetService Ph 0900 999 + your area code or go to www.metservice.co.nz

Facilities and services change

Roads may be closed by natural hazards or maintenance work and huts are replaced or removed. Always check the latest information at the nearest DOC visitor centre. A list of DOC visitor centres is available from www.doc.govt.nz.



Pick up a copy of *Planning a trip in the backcountry?* from any DOC visitor centre

Motorised vehicle care code

- Avoid driving in sensitive areas. Alpine landscapes, swamps, waterways, sand dunes, river beds and beaches are easily damaged by vehicles
- Abide by the laws and regulations covering all vehicles and drivers
- Stay on roads. Avoid widening them
- Keep the environment clean. Take all your rubbish with you
- Respect wildlife, look but don't disturb. Keep your distance
- Find out if a permit is required for access. If your trip crosses private land obtain permission
- Leave gates as you find them
- Always thoroughly clean your vehicle before and after trips to minimise spreading weeds and diseases
- Respect the right of others for quiet enjoyment. Avoid noisy driving. Give way to walkers, cyclists, horse riders and others
- Be prepared for the unexpected. Drive at a speed which will allow you to stop if a hazard arises
- If winching is necessary, use another vehicle. If you must use a tree, use webbing or padding to damage to the tree
- Cross waterways with care. Use designated crossings where possible

Learn more about minimal impact practice by joining a 4WD club or going with a licensed tour operator.



Drive with care, have fun and follow the care code. Photo: Malcolm Langley, nzadventures.co.nz

Published by the Department of Conservation, Wellington, last updated 31 August 2009 DM-62352



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Where can I drive?

Brief details about 4WD roads on conservation managed land are provided here. It's important to remember that you will be sharing the road with mountain bikers, trail bikers, walkers and in some places 2WD vehicles. Most of these roads are described in detail in other publications. Note that the Department of Conservation takes no responsibility for the accuracy of information in these publications.

Reference 1. *4WD North Island, 102 Off Road Adventures, Volume One* by Andy Cockroft (2002)

Reference 2. *4WD North Island, 93 New Off Road Adventures, Volume Two* by Andy Cockroft (2000)

Road conditions

Road conditions vary. Some may have overgrown sections, rough and uneven surfaces and be periodically affected by flooding, slips or other natural events. Always check local conditions before you set out and take an appropriate map.

LOCATION	KM	ROAD	ACCESS
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NORTHLAND

There are no 4WD roads in Northland DOC managed areas, however there are plenty of scenic driving opportunities in public roads

AUCKLAND

There are no 4WD roads in Auckland DOC managed areas, however there are plenty of opportunities for four-wheel driving in other places such as Woodhill forest. Further information: references 1. and 2.

WAIKATO

HAURAKI AREA

Maratoto and the Wentworth Valley

The Wires area was designated as a special use area off road vehicles in 1978. Individuals and clubs intending to use the 4WD tracks should phone 027 524 2132 to check whether the track is open.

All users **must** contact Kauaeranga Visitor Centre to register intentions and obtain the latest road information Ph 07 867 9080, email kauaerangavc@doc.govt.nz

Whangamata Track	5.2	4WD, MTB, 2WD horse riding.	End of Wires Road, off Maratoto Road
Loop track	5	4WD, MTB	Off Whangamata Track at north eastern part of Wires Plateau. Crosses Tairua River twice. Gated access, one way direction, extreme, 4WD vehicles only
Waipaheke Track	7	2WD, MTB	Entrance up Whangamata Track
MANIAPOTO AREA			
Pureora Forest Park	4.6	4WD	There are plenty of scenic driving opportunities for 4WD vehicles on old logging roads through Pureora Forest Park. Further information: Maniapoto Area Office Ph 07 878 1050 email maniapotoao@doc.govt.nz
Ngaroma Recreation Area, Pureora Forest Park.	10	4WD, 2WD, MTB	Access from SH 30 via Waitaramoa and Ngaroma Mill Roads
Whirinaki Forest Park	3.9	4WD and MTB	4WD road through harvested exotic forest. Please stay on formed roads and look out for other recreationists. Further information: Maniapoto Area Office Ph 07 878 1050, email
Okahu Valley Rd	10	2WD	East of Te Whaiti, Whirinaki Forest Park
Picnic spots and native bush. Further information: reference 1. p 128			
Whirinaki Forest Park	2.1	4WD.	Mangawiri Access 4WD Rd Rough and overgrown parts

A 4WD road to Whirinaki Forest Park. Further information for all Whirinaki Forest roads contact Rangitaiki Visitor Centre Ph 07 366 108, email rangitaikivc@doc.govt.nz



EAST COAST / HAWKE'S BAY

HAWKE'S BAY AREA

No Mans Rd	15.1	4WD	East of Hastings off SH 50
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Open from Nov - Jul. Access along the summit of the Ruahine Range. Spectacular views. Please stay on the road as



A 4WD group getting involved in track maintenance. Photo: DOC



Plenty of clearance is required for rough roads and steep stream crossings. Photo: No Name Road, Malcolm Langley, nzadventures.co.nz



the landscape is very fragile. A booking is necessary and a permit and key are required, contact the Hawke's Bay Area Office Ph 06 834 3111, email napier-ao@doc.govt.nz Further information: reference 1. p. 182

Mangatutu Hot Springs	8.1	2WD, gravel and narrow sections	Kaweka Forest Park east of Napier. Drive past Puketitiri and follow signs to Balls Clearing. Turn left to Makahu Rd
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A drive through native forest to the start of a short walk to hot springs and a basic campsite. There is good fishing in the Makahu River

TONGARIRO / TAUPO

RUAPEHU AREA

42nd Traverse	35.4	4WD, plenty of MTB, horse riders, trail/ quad bikes	Off SH 47 south of Turangi. Slab Rd to Dominion Rd
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The 42nd Traverse is open to 4WD vehicles between 1 December and 30 April. The area is a kiwi sanctuary and also a multiple use site. Drive slowly and very carefully so that you can stop easily. Please stay on the road. Contact Whakapapa Visitor Centre for the latest track and conditions information before you go Ph 07 892 3729, email whakapapavc@doc.govt.nz Further information: reference 1. p 136



Ohakune Lakes	1.9	2WD gravel	South of Ohakune to Ohakune Lakes Reserve
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There are good scenic picnic spots beside the lake. Further information: reference 1. p 145

Mangatepopo Rd	6.3	2WD gravel	East off SH 47 near Whakapapa
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This road offer good views of Mt Ngauruhoe. Please stay on the road. Further information: reference 1. p 130

TURANGI / TAUPO AREA

Tukino Rd – SH1 to Tukino Ski Field	5.6	4WD	Follow signs on SH 1 to Tukino Ski Field, north of Waiouru, or south of Turangi
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Great views of Mt Ruapehu. Travel with other drivers as terrain can be difficult particularly in winter. Please stay on the road. An access key is required for the Tukino Skifield. Contact Turangi Reception (07) 386 8607 email ttcinfo@doc.govt.nz Further information: reference 1. p 143



WHANGANUI

PALMERSTON NORTH AREA

Takapari Rd	14.8	4WD. Steep grade at the start. Best driven when dry	Ruahine Forest Park boundary to the summit of the southern Ruahine Range
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An attractive drive to the tops of the Ruahine Ranges, with views of the South Is, Tararua Ranges, Mt Taranaki and Mt Ruapehu when it's clear. The sub-alpine vegetation and soils are easily damaged so please stay on the road. Look out other users and check conditions before you go as snow or heavy rain damage often close this road. Further information: DOC Palmerston North Area Office Ph 06 350 9700, email wanganuiconservancy@doc.govt.nz or reference 1. p 176

WELLINGTON

KAPITI AREA

Waiotauru Rd - Akatarawa Rd to Renata car park	8.4	4WD, MTB. Do not drive Past 8.4 km, there are dangerous drop-offs	Tararua Forest Park. East of Waikanae
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A scenic drive down Akatarawa Rd (2WD) to Waiotauru Rd to a saddle. There are good views of Kapiti Coast. Further information: reference 1. p 200

LOCATION	KM	ROAD	ACCESS
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WAIRARAPA AREA

Washpool Rd – Aorangi Crossing Rd to end of 4WD section Te Kopi to Mangatoetoe Roads	4.8	4WD and MTB	Ruakokoputuna, Aorangi Forest Park, south of Martinborough
Te Kopi to Waiokuku Tack 4WD Rd	24.6	4WD and MTB	Ruakokoputuna, Aorangi Forest Park, south of Martinborough

There is a locked gate at Te Kopi. 4WD access is managed by Akatarawa Recreation Access Committee (ARAC). Further information: Wairarapa Area Office, Ph 06 377 0700, email wairapapao@doc.govt.nz and reference 1. p 207



Enjoying a trip on the 42nd Traverse. Photo: DOC



Wash it off – Check. Clean. Dry.



Avoid driving on beaches. They are home to nesting birds, some critically endangered, like this NZ dotterel. Can you spot her egg? Photo: D Wills, DOC



When you drive between waterways you could be transferring aquatic pests and diseases from one waterway to another. To limit their spread, ensure that you check, clean, dry when driving between waterways.



Didymo forms large carpets that reduce water clarity. Photo: DOC

Check: Remove all obvious clumps of debris from your vehicle

Clean: Clean all parts of your vehicle that has been in the water for at least one minute in either, hot (60°C) water, a two percent solution of household bleach or a five percent solution of salt, nappy cleaner, antiseptic hand cleaner or dishwashing detergent. A two percent solution is 200 ml, a five percent solution is 500 ml (two large cups), with water added to make 10 litres.

Dry: If cleaning is not practical, allow your vehicle to dry for 48 hours before crossing another waterway.

For further information about aquatic pests and how to check, clean, dry visit www.biosecurity.govt.nz



Further information



If you must cross a waterway always use an existing ford. Cross carefully at a right angle to the water. Photo: DOC

DOC visitor centres nationwide sell maps, brochures and have a wealth of information about other recreation opportunities and conservation activities. Most are open daily from 9am to 5 pm.

The DOC website: www.doc.govt.nz also has extensive information about recreation and conservation.

Licensed tour operators can take you to great places in conservation areas and have great local knowledge. Learn about responsible four-wheel driving so that you are well briefed when you go it alone. Information about tour operators is available from DOC and other visitor centres nationwide.

The **New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association (NZFWDA)** is the national four wheel drive body in New Zealand. It represents members, their clubs and 4WD supporters. Their purpose is to further and improve 4WD activities in New Zealand. More information:

www.nzfwda.org.nz



DOC HOTline
0800 362 468
Report any safety hazards or
conservation emergencies
For fire and search and rescue call 111



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