



Four-wheel driving in conservation areas



SOUTH 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 you don't drive 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 know how to drive with care for the environment and other people. 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. Always get a weather report before you set out from MetService, call 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 renewed. Always check the latest information at the nearest DOC visitor centre. A list of DOC visitor centres is available from www.doc.govt.nz.



Read *Planning a trip in the backcountry?* and learn how you can prepare for a safe adventure

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 and avoid widening them
- Keep the environment clean and tidy. 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 prevent damage to the tree
- Cross waterways with care. Use designated crossings where possible

Learn more about minimal impact driving 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

Where can I drive?

Brief details about 4WD roads are provided here. It's important to remember that you will be sharing the road with mountain bikers, trail bikers, walkers and other 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. Check local conditions before you set out and take an appropriate map.

Reference 1. *4WD South Island, 91 Backcountry Adventures, Volume One* by Ken Sibly and Mark Wilson (2004)

Reference 2. *4WD South Island, 97 NEW Off Road Adventures, Volume Two* by Ken Sibly and Mark Wilson (2004)

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. Check conditions at the nearest visitor centre before you go.

LOCATION	KM	ROAD	ACCESS
NELSON / MARLBOROUGH			
GOLDEN BAY			
Barons Flat Rd to Upper Takaka Rd	5	4WD	Off SH 60, Upper Takaka
The road passes through private land. Check access details with DOC Golden Bay Area Office Ph 03 525 8026, email goldenbayao@doc.govt.nz			
Goldfields Rd	11.4	4WD Experienced drivers only	Access via Devil Boots Rd, Aorere Valley. Open all year round
SOUTH MARLBOROUGH AREA			
Branch River Rd	14	4WD	Branch River Valley, Wairau Valley off SH 63 near St Arnaud
Access to Griegs Hut requires crossing Leatham River which is impassable after rain. Further information: South Marlborough Area Office 03 572 9100, email southmarlboroughao@doc.govt.nz and reference 1. p 114			
Goulter 4WD Rd	6.7	4WD	Goulter River, north bank Wairau
Further information: Reference 2. p 114			
Boulder 4WD Rd	5	4WD	Off Leatham 4WD Rd, year round access to Boulder Forks Hut
Leatham 4WD Rd	24	4WD	Leatham River Valley, Wairau Valley
Distances: Leatham Homestead to Boulder Stream 3 km, Leatham / Boulder confluence to Caves Hut 5 km, Caves Hut to Barbers Hut 7 km, Barbers Hut to Bottom Gordons Hut 9 km. Further information: Reference 2. p 119			
Pine Valley Rds 1. and 2.	3.2	Rd 1. 2WD, Rd 2. 4WD stream ford	Pine Valley Rd, Northbank, Wairau River
These roads provide access to Pine Valley Hut and Mill Flat picnic area			
Ragland Rd	14.8	4WD	The Branch Homestead, Leatham Conservation Area, SH 63
Road crosses private land, permission is required. Further information: South Marlborough Area Office Ph 03 527 9100, email southmarlboroughao@doc.govt.nz and reference 2. p 119			
Wairau Bar Picnic Area Rd 1. and Rd 2.	4	Rd 1. 2WD, Rd 2. 4WD	Wairau Lagoon Conservation Area, Wairau Bar, Blenheim
Open all year round. Great picnic spots. Avoid damaging sensitive coastal habitat by staying on the road			
St Arnaud Area			
Beeby's Rd	14.2	4WD	Beeby's Rd, Tophouse Rd, SH 65, Mount Richmond Forest Park
Glenroy Valley	15.3	4WD. Experienced drivers	Glenroy Rd, Upper Matakaitaki
There are very rough and difficult sections, drive with other vehicles and be equipped with extraction devices. Access permission is required from the leaseholder Ph 03 523 9426			
Rainbow-Hanmer Rd	116	4WD	Molesworth Station, SH 63
The route is remarkable for the transition in landscape from tussock lands and scree along Clarence River to craggy, beech-covered mountains in the Wairau catchment. Drivers must be self-sufficient and prepared for sudden weather changes. Combine with the Acheron Rd through Molesworth Station for a round trip.			
Molesworth Farm Park. Scenic highlights include Lake Tennyson surrounded by mountains, Forest Island Saddle, and the Sedgemere Lakes wetlands. There are several huts and camping areas. The road is open for a limited season in summer but may close at times of high fire risk. Fees are payable for accommodation. Further information: Nelson Regional Visitor Centre, Ph 03 546 9339, email nelsonvc@doc.govt.nz			
CANTERBURY			
TWIZEL AREA			
Ahuriri River Valley	11.1	2WD, 4WD	Te Manahuna. Ahuriri Conservation Park boundary to Canyon Creek



Getting involved in road maintenance. A 4WD club repairing a road. Photo: DOC



Enjoy the views and please stay on roads. Photo: Clarence Reserve, Molesworth, DOC

LOCATION	KM	ROAD	ACCESS
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In dry conditions there is 2WD access up to the Ahuriri Conservation Park boundary from there it becomes 4WD access to the car park just before Canyon Creek. There is no vehicle access beyond this point. The road is subject to closure during heavy rains or during freeze / thaw cycles, check before you go. Further information: Twizel Area Office 03 435 0802, email twizelao@doc.govt.nz and reference 1. p 186

WEST COAST

BULLER

Denniston Circuit	11	4WD	Drive through Denniston, north of Westport and turn onto Mt Rochfort Rd. After 1.5 km look for signs on the right to the start of the circuit
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Traversing the historically and naturally significant Denniston Plateau, this alpine environment is extremely fragile so please stay on the formed road. The main gate to the circuit is locked, contact the DOC Buller Area Office Ph 03 788 8008, or the Buller 4WD Club Ph 03 789 8608 for access details.

Denniston to Iron Bridge	15	4WD Maintained by Transpower	Denniston township, north of Westport
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The road follows power lines from Denniston township to Burnett's Face and traverses Mt William Saddle. Parts of the road are managed by Solid Energy and private owners but open to the public, however permission is required to access a short section at the Iron Bridge Ph 03 789 0098. Further information: Buller Area Office Ph 03 788 8008.

Franz Josef Area

Greens Beach Rd	2	4WD Rough and overgrown	Off SH 6 south of Ross. Turn off south of Pukekura
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Access to the remote Greens Beach via Timberlands West Coast logging roads and DOC access roads. Sections of the logging road are actively used by Timberlands West Coast – take care, slow down and drive with the headlights on. There are good fishing and picnic spots at Lake lanthe and Greens Beach. Further information: Reference 2. p 136

Okarito Forest Block	5.2	4WD Narrow and overgrown	North Okarito Forest Block, east of Okarito Lagoon
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Okutua Rd and Loop Rd run partly through logged rimu forest. Caution is required in narrow sections

Greymouth Area

Waitahu River Rd	12	4WD and walkers	Gannons Rd, north of Reefton
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This route leads to Montgomery Hut (6 bunks) and is part of the Kirwans Loop Rd. There is good fishing in Waitahu River. Further information: Reference 1. p 136

No Name Rd and Cockeye Creek Rd	15	4WD experienced drivers	Marsden, south of Greymouth
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Important notice: Ogilvies and Nemona Roads are forestry roads owned by Timberlands West Coast. These roads may be closed if there are forestry operations in the area. Drive with other vehicles and be equipped with extraction devices. The 4WD road ends after approx. 8 km at Nemona Rd (2WD). From here you can either return by going back down Cockeye Creek, turn left and return to Marsden via Nemona and then Ogilvies Rd, or turn right. After a short distance turn left into Boarding House Rd, then 7 km further you reach Kumara-Inchbonnie Rd. This is maintained by local council between Kumara and Mitchell's. Turn right and follow Nemona Rd and travel approximately 6 kilometres to the intersection of Nemona Rd and No Name 4WD Rd (Topo. map J32 659 445). Turn right and return to Marsden or left for the Kumara-Inchbonnie Rd after crossing the Greenstone River. Further information: Reference 2. p 130

Big River Rd	15	4WD. Rough and narrow. For drivers with experience	Soldiers Rd turn-off just south of Reefton, SH 7
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This route travels through one of the most intact mining areas on the West Coast to the Big River settlement. Several historic places are marked including the site of the Merrijigs Hotel which closed in 1945. A 20 bunk hut is within close walking distance from the road end. The Big River (just before the hut) cannot be crossed after heavy rain.

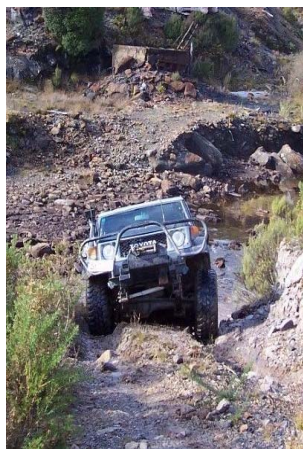
A number of historic relics can be reached by vehicle or short walk from Big River including a winding engine shed, mine poppet-head and the remains of Tin Town and a battery. Walk north for an hour to the remains of a steam powered sawmill. Walk an hour south east to the remains of the Big River Dam. Other options are day walks to the Historic township of Waiuta or the Inangahua River. Do not take detours off roads or tracks. Large parts of this area are highly contaminated from mining activity. Drive with other vehicles. Further information: Greymouth Area Office 03 768 0427, email greymouthao@doc.govt.nz

Napoleon Hill Rd	30.9	4WD, MTB Difficult and narrow road	Landowner permission required: Robin and Malcolm Smith Ph 03 7323 849 Ahaura, east of Greymouth, SH 7. Begin at turn-off on Orwell Creek Rd.
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Best driven starting from the south to north. The road is too narrow for passing and should not be driven when wet. It passes through farm land then follows Orwell Creek before climbing Napoleon Hill. The remains of the old township and cemetery are found here.

The road branches to the right on the top of Napoleon Hill and leads to the headwaters of Mosquito Creek. It is **not** advisable to proceed far this way. Recent gold mining has obliterated much of the old road and most is through private property. 500 m further on there is the remains of a road on the left leading back to Orwell Creek. This is **not** suitable for driving, but does make a very challenging downhill mountain-bike ride.

A step downhill section leads into Nobles Creek where (if your vehicle is not too wide) you can drive through historic



4WD roads can be challenging. Photo: Denniston Circuit, DOC



Remember that there are often other track users. Drive at a speed that will allow you to stop if a hazard arises. Photo: Napoleon Hill Rd, Malcolm Langly, nzadventures.co.nz

LOCATION	KM	ROAD	ACCESS
gold mining tunnels that were built to divert the creek. Following Nobles Creek downstream leads into Waipuna Creek which should be followed until the Waipuna-Clarke Rd is reached. Further information: Reference 2. p 128			

OTAGO

CENTRAL OTAGO AREA

Old Woman Hut Access Rd	0.7	4WD	Old Woman Conservation Area
Restricted access. Open in summer during dry conditions only			

Bendigo Conservation Area Top Access Rd	17.2	4WD	Bendigo Scenic Reserve, east of Lake Dunstan
Restricted access. Open in summer during dry conditions only			

Serpentine Scenic Reserve Rd	4.3	4WD	Rough Ridge, between Alexandra and Middlemarch
Restricted access. Open in summer during dry conditions only. Further information: Reference 2. p 243			

Coastal Otago Area

Kinvara Rd	7.8	4WD	Rock and Pillar Scenic Reserve
Restricted access. Open in summer during dry conditions only			

Te Papanui Conservation Area Access Rd	25.5	4WD	Te Papanui Conservation Park
This is Otago's first tussock grassland conservation park. Restricted access. Open in summer during dry conditions			

Wanaka Area

Kirtle Burn Rd	12	4WD	Roaring Meg Reserve, Kirtle Burn Rd, Pisa Range
Restricted access. Open in summer during dry conditions only. Further information: Wanaka Visitor Centre Ph 03 443 7660, email wanakavc@doc.govt.nz			



SOUTHLAND

MURIHIKU AREA

Eyre Mountains - Mt Bee 4WD track	4	4WD	Off the Mossburn – Five Rivers Rd via Irthing Rd. Take the left fork in the road for access to Mt Bee
Access is through private forestry roads and may be restricted for forestry harvesting purposes. Further information: Murihiku Area Office 03 214 4589			

Eyre Mountains – Shepherd Chreel Hut 4WD Track	10	4WD	Off SH 6 at Athol, along Eyre Creek Rd. Eyre Mountains/Taka Ra Haka Conservation Park
This road passes along a metal road through privately owned Glen Eyre and Eyre Creek Stations. Two river crossings are required. Further information: Murihiku Area Office 03 214 4589			

Borland Rd	15	4WD road owned by Transpower for maintenance purposes	Borland Fiordland
The road is often closed due to slips and washouts especially from the Grebe Lookout to Lake Manapouri South Arm. Users should always check road conditions before setting out. Further information: Fiordland visitor centre Ph 03 249 7921, email fiordlandvc@doc.govt.nz			



Wash it off – Check. Clean. Dry.



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.

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 details on aquatic pests and how to check, clean, dry visit www.biosecurity.govt.nz/didymo



'Rock snout' or Didymo forms massive carpets that reduce water clarity. It affects every animal that uses the river, including you!



Children replanting sand dune grasses in Otago. Sand dunes and beaches are easily damaged by vehicles. Please avoid driving on beaches. Photo: DOC



A NZ dotterel (critically endangered) near her nest. Her only defence is camouflage. Can you see her egg? Their nesting season is Sept – Feb, please avoid driving on beaches during this time. Photo: Dick Veitch, DOC

Further information



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

The DOC website: www.doc.govt.nz has a wealth of information about recreation and conservation.

Licensed tour operators can take you to great places in conservation areas and distil their 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 supporters. Their purpose is to further and improve 4WD activities in NZ.

More information: www.nzfwda.org.nz



Cross rivers with care, use an existing ford and cross at a right angle to limit damage to the stream bank. Photo: Kristen Mckinley, DOC

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468

**Report any safety hazards or
conservation emergencies**
For fire and search and rescue call 111



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai