

# Heaphy Track mountain bike trial

## Kahurangi National Park

This fact sheet is specifically for mountain bikers and should be read in conjunction with the Heaphy Track brochure, which provides detailed information on the Heaphy Track, including how to get there, what to expect and what to take. The brochure is available at DOC Visitor Centres and on the Department's website.



**INTERMEDIATE**

Steep slopes and/or avoidable obstacles, possibly on narrow track and/or with poor traction. There may be exposure at the tracks outside edge.



**ADVANCED**

A mixture of long, steep climbs, narrow track, poor traction and difficult obstacles to avoid or jump over. Generally exposed at the track outside edge. Most riders will find some sections easier to walk.

### Mountain bike trial

Mountain biking is being trialled for three seasons (1 May - 30 September), until 30 September 2013, on the Heaphy Track.

### Track grade

The Heaphy Track is suited to riders with intermediate skills (Grade 3+), as there are some steep slopes and avoidable obstacles. However, in wet and/or cold weather, this can increase to advanced (Grade 4), when factoring in distance and remoteness. The majority of the track is well formed and hard surfaced, and is maintained to the "Great Walk" standard. Some sections on the West Coast side are less robust and more vulnerable to damage, such as rutting and erosion. These sections are scheduled to be upgraded over the next few years.

### The ride

The Heaphy Track is a 2 or 3 day ride, requiring a good level of fitness, self reliance and an intermediate level of skills, to ride in a backcountry environment across a variety of landscapes. The Heaphy Track is also a multi-day tramping track and is managed as a Great Walk.

### Length

78.4 km one way. It is a further 28 km by road from Brown Hut to Collingwood and 15 km by road from the track end at Kohaihai to Karamea.

### Times

Fit, experienced riders should plan for two full days, staying overnight in a hut or designated campsite. Less experienced riders should anticipate a 3 day, two night trip. While day trips from both track ends are possible the full Heaphy Track experience requires at least one overnight stay to appreciate the natural beauty of the area.

## Plan and prepare

### Fitness and experience

As a multi day ride the Heaphy Track is much more demanding than other popular New Zealand multi day rides, such as the Central Otago Rail Trail and the Queen Charlotte Track. Bikers need to have a good standard of fitness, a reliable bike, and carry all their food, clothes, overnight and personal gear, bike tools and equipment. This is a backcountry environment where you need to be self reliant and at least one member of your party should know how to fix your bike. Before going you should practice riding your bike whilst carrying your gear in a backpack or carriers and dry bags.

### What you should take

The Heaphy Track brochure lists the clothes, food, and personal gear walkers should take. This list is also generally applicable to bikers. Expect changeable weather conditions including cold temperatures, rain, wind and possibly snow. Bikers should also take bike gloves, two pairs of bike shorts, and a helmet. Bike gear should include a recently serviced mountain bike with knobbly off-road tyres, a bell or hooter, and new brake pads. It is also recommended that you take 1 or 2 spare tubes per rider, puncture repair kit, folding tyre, pump, allen keys, chain breaker, tyre levers, duct tape, zip ties, chain lube and a groundsheet or fly to put down when working on your bike and if you wish to cover it at night. If you have rim brakes then carry a spare set of brake pads. Be sure to book your huts or campsites (see over) and take your hut or campsite ticket.

### Logistics

Two parties riding in opposite directions can use each other's car at the conclusion of the trip. Alternatively commercial operators can shuttle you and your bike, or your car to the end of the track.

## The rules

The Heaphy Track is shared with walkers and other bikers who may be coming the other way. Their experiences of sharing the track, and the effect of mountain biking on the track surface and on kiwi and *Powelliphanta* snails living alongside the track, will be important considerations in determining whether





#### For further information

Further information can be found on the Department of Conservation's website [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) or contact:

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**Department of Conservation  
Nelson Regional Visitor  
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the mountain bike trial is a success or not. There are several areas on the track where the giant land snail *Powelliphanta* may be on the track during the day, particularly after rain. Ride carefully and slowly through these areas, which are marked by signs - these snails are rare and unique to this part of New Zealand.

Please obey the Mountain Bikers Code.

You can ride mountain bikes on the Heaphy Track:

- between 1 May and 30 September during the trial period (to 30 September 2013);
- in both directions;
- in a group, provided there is no more than six riders in the group;
- during the day only (from ½ an hour before sunrise to ½ an hour after sunset), to protect two threatened nocturnal species found on parts of the track: the *Powelliphanta* snail and roa (great spotted kiwi).

You are not permitted to take a mountain bike:

- into or out of the national park by helicopter;
- into any huts or shelters or onto hut verandas or porches;
- off the formed and designated route. Signs and other markers clearly identify where mountain bikes can be ridden and where they are not allowed.

You are responsible for removing your bike from the national park should it break down.

If you wish to stay overnight in any of the huts or campsites on the Heaphy Track you will need to book your accommodation using the Department of Conservation's booking system. This can be accessed through the Department's website, an authorised booking agent or at one of the Department's visitor information centres.

The track may be closed to mountain bike use after storms, heavy rain or snow or high tide events which may affect the integrity of the track particularly on the West Coast side.

Mountain bike use will be monitored and recorded.

## Comments

If you have any comments to make about this mountain biking trial you can email [mbtrialsnm@doc.govt.nz](mailto:mbtrialsnm@doc.govt.nz). Or you can contact the Department of Conservation directly.

## Mountain Bikers Code

### Respect others

- Stay in control. So you can safely avoid others and keep yourself intact. Make sure you can stop within the visible distance.
- Give way to walkers, runners, uphill riders and horses. If the track is narrow, stop and move off the track.
- Signal your approach and pass with care. Walkers don't like being surprised by bikers. Use a bell or a friendly greeting.
- Ride shared-use tracks in small groups. Large groups of a dozen or so riders displace other users. 6-8, or less, is a better number.

### Respect the rules

- Ride only where permitted — including those trails that are seasonally closed to protect the surface or minimise conflict with other users. Land managers are generally pretty reasonable so talk with them about issues or ideas you may have.
- Obtain permission from private land owners before you set out.
- Leave gates as you find them.
- Be prepared — take food, water, tools, First Aid and warm clothes. Plan for the unexpected — a change in the weather, an accident or getting lost and being late.

### Respect the track

- Don't skid, cut corners or make new lines. Skidding creates water channels that cause erosion. Use both brakes to slow down without skidding as you approach a corner. Cutting corners widens the trail and cuts up the terrain.
- Avoid riding in the mud and rain. Both bikes and walkers damage soft, wet tracks.
- Take rubbish home — like banana skins, old tubes and snack wrappers. Rubbish in the outdoors detracts from everyone's experience.
- Clean your bike to prevent spreading weeds — like gorse and didymo.

How to cross a swing bridge with a mountain bike.

