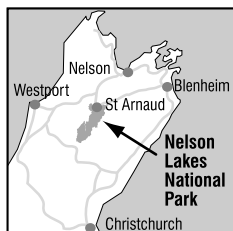


Nelson Lakes National Park



Visitor Information



Locality

Other publications about Nelson Lakes National Park

- Walks in Nelson Lakes National Park
- Approaches to Lake Angelus
- Travers–Sabine Circuit



NEW ZEALAND environmental CARE CODE

- 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)

Published by:
Department of Conservation
Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy
Private Bag 5, Nelson 7042
March 2010
Crown copyright

[New Zealand Government](http://www.nz.govt.nz)



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Welcome

Nelson Lakes National Park is situated in the northernmost ranges of the Southern Alps. Although best known for its lakes, both large and small, this 101,733-hectare park offers tranquil beech forest, craggy mountains, clear streams, open tussock lands and river-edge clearings.

The Department of Conservation looks after the park and provides tracks and walks, picnic areas, campsites and huts to help you enjoy and explore it. Nelson Lakes retains a semi-wilderness feeling with uncrowded tracks and huts, a place you can discover for yourself.

Conservation issues

While all the native flora and fauna of the park are highly protected, introduced pests constantly threaten the very existence of many. Rats and stoats have sadly depleted the bird life, while possums damage the forest by removing palatable species like rata and mistletoe. Wasps annoy people and compete with birds for food. Kaka, bellbirds and tui rely on honeydew, a high-energy 'nectar' produced by tiny insects inside the bark of beech trees, but wasps now remove this in large quantities.

However, an area of the park is one of several national sites where a fight-back against pests is occurring. The Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project aims to create a pest-free refuge—a 'mainland island'—in 5000 hectares of beech forest on the slopes of the St Arnaud Range, above Lake Rotoiti and north of State Highway 63 in the Teetotal Forest and Big Bush area.

How to get there

Private transport

The gateway to Nelson Lakes National Park is St Arnaud, 1 hour 30 minutes from Blenheim or Nelson, on sealed roads all the way. Allow a further 30 minutes if travelling from Picton. St Arnaud is about five hours from Christchurch or two hours from Westport.

To visit Lake Rotoroa, turn off State Highway 6 at Gowan Bridge. An 11 km sealed side road takes you up the Gowan Valley to the Lake.

Public transport

Daily services are available from Nelson to St Arnaud and return. Shuttle buses also link St Arnaud to Picton, Westport and Greymouth.

Services for visitors

Visitor Centre

The department's Visitor Centre at St Arnaud is open daily from 8 am until 4:30 pm for most of the year except in summer, when opening hours are extended. Services offered include an audio-visual presentation,

information, maps, hut tickets, fishing licences, hunting permits and current weather information.

The Murchison Visitor Centre is open from 10 am to 5 pm daily except Sunday when it closes at 4 pm.

Accommodation

At St Arnaud, the range of accommodation includes hostels, rental baches, motels and tourist lodges. There are three camping areas: Kerr Bay campground has powered and tent sites, showers, and toilets, cooking facilities, a shelter, BBQ, washing machine and dryer. West Bay has two camping areas, each with tent sites, flush toilets, cold showers and a cooking shelter. West Bay is only open December to March. All camps also have picnic areas for day visitors.

Rotoiti Lodge caters for groups of up to 76 people and is available during weekends and school holidays. Red Deer Lodge is suitable for smaller groups of up to 28 people.

At Lake Rotoroa campers are catered for by a self-registering camping area. Bed & breakfast and lodge accommodation is also available. Murchison is well-served by camping grounds, motels and hotels.

Transport

Water taxis operate on demand at Lake Rotoiti and Lake Rotoroa. Scenic cruises are available on Lake Rotoiti. Shuttle transport runs seasonally from St Arnaud to all entry points of the park (on demand).

Other services

A shop at St Arnaud (open 7 days a week) provides tramping supplies, groceries, postal facilities and petrol. Lake Rotoroa does not have a shop.

Fishing guides are available at St Arnaud, Rotoroa and Murchison.

What to do

St Arnaud walks

A variety of short and long walks extend into the park from the village. Your choice may be a gentle, lake-edge stroll on the Brunner Peninsula Nature Walk or a climb to view the spectacular panorama from the St Arnaud Range. All walks are sign-posted and well marked; firm footwear and warm, waterproof clothing is recommended.

Lake Rotoroa

Several walks at this picturesque lake explore the tall forests and the lake shore.

Travers–Sabine circuit

This 80 km circuit reaches deep into the national park among 2000-metre-high mountains, remote lakes and fields of tussock. A highlight of the journey is the alpine pass Travers Saddle (1780m).

The circuit requires 4–7 days to complete. It is classified as a tramping track, being well-marked, with bridges over most streams. There are seven huts

along the way. Sturdy boots and a good standard of fitness are recommended. Warm, waterproof clothing is essential.

Robert Ridge/Lake Angelus

This journey is an alpine experience; you should be equipped accordingly. Sharp ridges contrast with gentle alpine meadows, while in the Angelus Basin, the welcome refuge of Angelus Hut nestles beside mountain lakes. Allow 2–3 days for the return trip.

Hunting

Red deer and chamois are the main game animals; hunting them is encouraged. Each hunter requires a permit, available from the Visitor Centre or any DOC office in the Nelson/Marlborough region. Only high velocity, centre-fire rifles are permitted—no shotguns or .22 rifles.

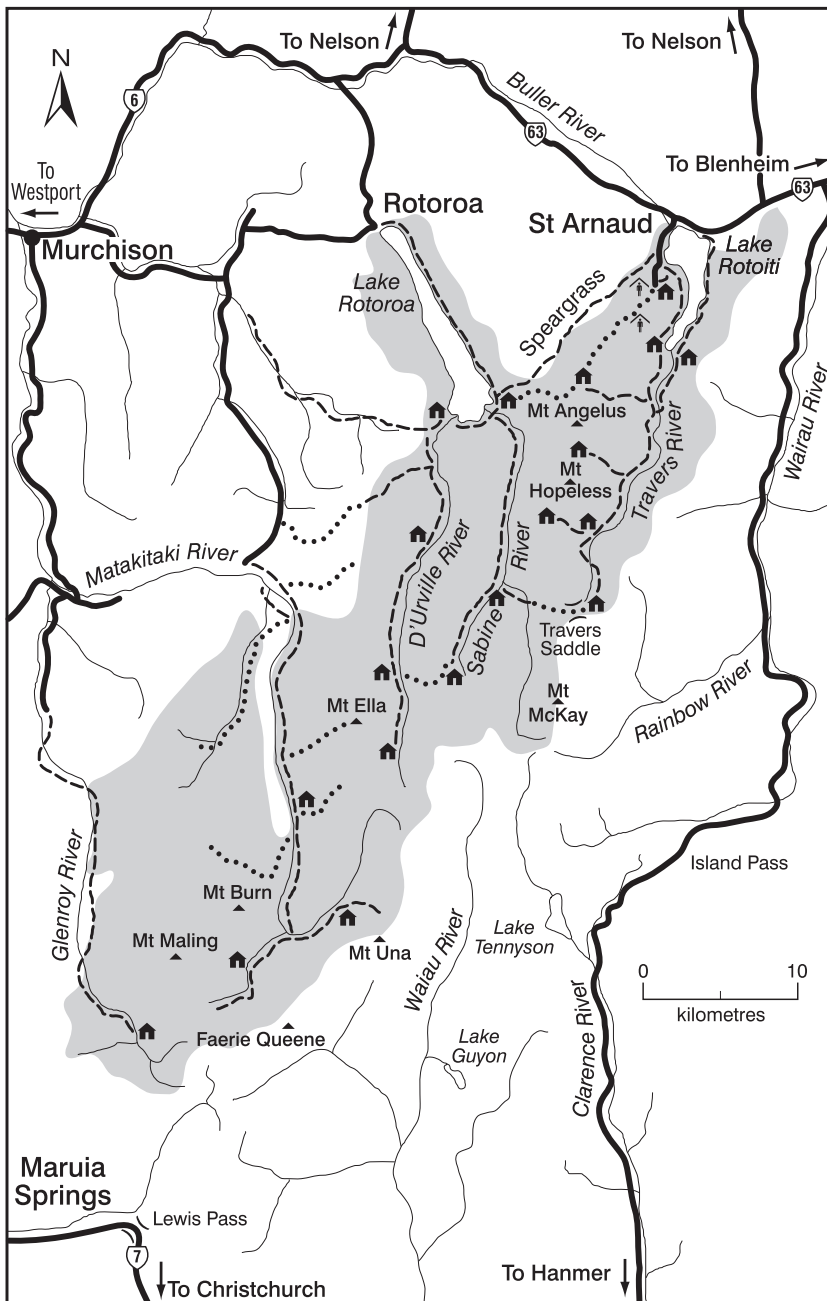
Skiing and climbing

In good snow years excellent ski touring opportunities are available along the Robert Ridge.

The many 2000-metre-plus peaks in the park, although not snow-covered year-round, offer a challenge to climbers.

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

Tramping Track	----
Route
Hut	▲
Shelter	↑
National Park	■



The high passes

There are many high passes in the park where snow may linger well into summer. The most popular trip is perhaps that from Blue Lake to the St James Walkway via Waiiau Pass.

On the water

Water sports are very popular on both lakes; jetties and launching ramps are provided. Power boating on the rivers in the park and water-skiing at Lake Rotoroa are not permitted. Water-skiing on Rotoiti is restricted to designated lanes.

Matakitaki and Glenroy valleys

If a more remote experience is what you are seeking, these valleys provide access to the far corners of the park.

Mountain-biking

Close to the park are some excellent mountain bike tracks: the Rainbow Road (112km to Hanmer Springs), Porika Track, Braeburn Track, Beebys Knob and Teetotal Flat.

Mountain bikes are not permitted in the national park itself.

Please remember

Weather

The park has an alpine climate. Winter conditions, poor visibility and heavy rain can occur in any season. Remember your safety is your responsibility. To report any safety hazards in the outdoors call **DOC HOTline 0800 362 468**.

Snow

Snow travel should only be attempted by those with experience and equipment. Be wary of avalanches.

Domestic animals

Please leave your pets at home when visiting the park—no domestic animals are allowed.

Rubbish

Rubbish facilities are only provided at the road ends and camping areas. There are none in the back country. Please pack out what you pack in.

Water

Please protect the park's clean waters. Use toilets where provided and keep soap out of rivers and lakes.

Huts

A Backcountry Hut Pass or Backcountry Hut Tickets are required to stay overnight in the park huts. The main huts are serviced (three tickets). They are equipped with mattresses and heating; take your own cooker and utensils. Most of the D'Urville and Matakaitaki Valley huts, and the high huts, are standard (one ticket).

To find out more

We hope you enjoy your trip to Nelson Lakes National Park. For more information visit the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz or contact:

Department of Conservation
Nelson Lakes Visitor Centre
PO Box 55, St Arnaud 7053
Ph: (03) 521 1806 Fax: (03) 521 1896
Email: nelsonlakesvc@doc.govt.nz