

Visitor information

Matiu/Somes Island is a great place to spend the day. A gentle track circumnavigates the 24.8-hectare historic and scientific reserve. Māori have occupied the island for generations. In more recent times, Matiu/Somes Island has served as a human and animal quarantine station, an internment camp, and military defence position.

Thanks to the dedication of numerous individuals, groups and organisations, such as the Lower Hutt branch of Forest and Bird, Matiu/Somes Island Charitable Trust, Friends of Matiu/Somes and Eastbourne Forest Rangers, Matiu/Somes Island once again represents a refuge, this time for wildlife and our cultural heritage.

Toilets are situated near the main wharf and behind the visitor centre. There are no catering facilities—bring your own food and water.

Everything on the island is protected, nothing may be removed.



A yacht moored off Matiu/Somes Island. Photo: Matt Sidaway.

Take care visiting Matiu/Somes



Pets are not permitted on the islands.



Smoking and fires are not permitted. Matiu/Somes is highly vulnerable to fire because of the limited water supply.

The island may be closed to visitors at times of extreme fire danger.

If you discover a fire, dial 111 and go immediately to the main wharf.

If you think there is a safety hazard in a conservation area, call DOC HOTline or the nearest DOC office.

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

Scientific reserve and historic reserve

Matiu/Somes Island is protected under the Reserves Act 1977 and the Conservation Act 1987. Any failure to comply with the relevant provisions of these Acts, which includes the rules outlined in this brochure, may result in prosecution.

Further information

DOC Wellington Visitor Centre
Conservation House,
18–32 Manners St,
P.O. Box 10-420, Wellington 6143
Telephone: (04) 384 7770
Fax: (04) 384 7773
E-mail: wellingtonvc@doc.govt.nz

For further information about recreation activities and conservation visit: www.doc.govt.nz

Cover photo: Kayakers approach Matiu/Somes Island.
Photo: Matt Sidaway.

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Matiu/Somes Island by boat

Information for boat skippers, kayakers

WELLINGTON HARBOUR



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Matiu/Somes Island is free of rats, mice and other mammalian pests, making it a sanctuary for some very special New Zealand wildlife. Therefore, precautions need to be taken to minimise the risk of re-invasion and protect the rare and endangered species living there.

The island is open daily between 8.30 a.m. and 5.00 p.m (except Christmas Day). *The island may be closed to visitors at times of extreme fire danger.*



Kayakers' landing area. Photo: Matt Sidaway.

Recreation around Matiu/Somes

- You may anchor, swim, fish, snorkel and dive anywhere around Matiu/Somes Island without coming ashore on the island or surrounding rocks.
- Please anchor well off shore to reduce the risk of rodents swimming ashore.
- Please abide by quota and catch size rules. Contact the Ministry of Fisheries—0800 4 RULES (0800 478 537) or www.fish.govt.nz for more information.
- No landing is permitted except at the wharf area on the northeast point of the Island.



Boats moored off Matiu/Somes Island. Photo: Matt Sidaway.

Landing on Wellington harbour islands

Makaro/Ward Island Scientific Reserve

Landing is permitted here.



Mokopuna Island Scientific Reserve

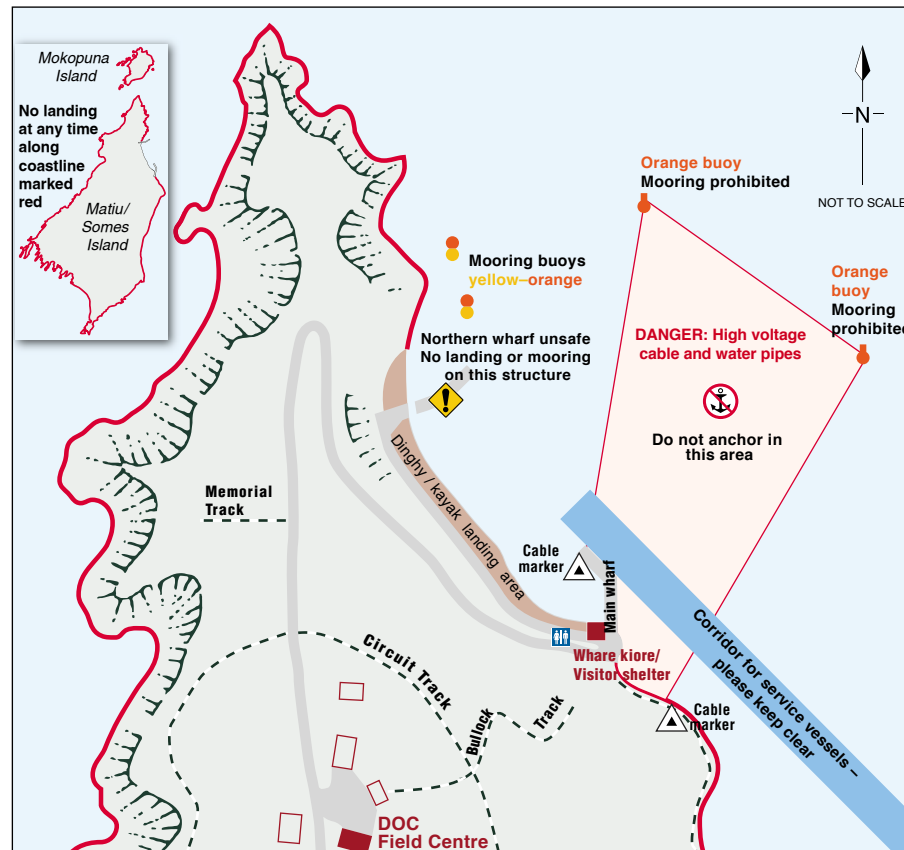
NO LANDING is permitted at any time on this sensitive sea bird breeding area.

Matiu/Somes Island Scientific Reserve

You may land ONLY at the main wharf and nearby beach on the northeast point of the Island.

NO LANDING is permitted at any time along other parts of the shoreline (shown in red on the inset map, below).

The northern wharf on Matiu/Somes Island is closed—it is unsafe and no landing or mooring is permitted on it.



Coming ashore on Matiu/Somes Island

- Please check for rodents on your vessel before leaving for Matiu/Somes Island.
- You may come ashore ONLY at the main wharf and nearby beach on the northeast point of the Island.
- Dinghies or kayaks can be pulled ashore *from just north of the closed northern wharf to the main wharf, as shown on the map.*
- All other boats may briefly unload at the main wharf, ensuring that they stay clear of ferries and other service vessels.
- Boats must then immediately move off the wharf and either pick up one of the mooring buoys located off the closed Northern wharf, or drop anchor, avoiding the no anchoring area and taking care not to block the access lanes for service vessels (see map).

- To ensure that weeds, insects and mice are not introduced to the island, all visitors must first go into the whare kiore/visitor shelter to inspect their bags. The shelter is located next to the main wharf and contains instructions on inspecting bags.



- Animals, including pets, may not be brought ashore.
- Fishing is not permitted from the Island.
- If you have a large group and wish to be met by the ranger, please call 04 568 6555 before your trip.