

Pyke - Big Bay Route

Introduction

The Pyke - Big Bay Route is a low altitude, strenuous 60 km route, suitable for experienced and well equipped parties. Although the route can be tramped all year round, sections of it can become impassable in wet weather.

The route traverses parts of Fiordland and Mount Aspiring National Parks and Pyke Forest, which are included in the Te Wāhipounamu - South West New Zealand World Heritage Area.

Access is via the Hollyford Track or by light aircraft. Contact Air Fiordland in Te Anau for air transport or Hollyford Track Guided Walks in Queenstown for jetboat and air transport.

The Hollyford Track starts at the end of the Lower Hollyford Road, 100 km from Te Anau. Turn off State Highway 94 (Milford Road) at Marian Corner. During the summer months limited bus services may be available to the start of the track.

Cabins are available at Gunns Camp, nine kilometres from the road end.

Huts and Hut Tickets

There are six huts on the Hollyford Track. Each hut has platform bunks, sleeping a maximum of 12 people. Huts on this track (excluding McKerrow Island Hut) are service grade huts, requiring two back country hut tickets per night or an Annual Back Country Hut Pass. McKerrow Island, Olivine and Big Bay Huts (on the Pyke - Big Bay Route) are standard grade huts, requiring one back country hut ticket per night or an Annual Back Country Hut Pass.

Tramping Information

The Pyke - Big Bay Route is not well defined in places. Trampers need to be self-sufficient with tents and cooking equipment. Sections of the route flood regularly, making travel impossible for days at a time. Even in good conditions there are several unbridged rivers to cross. Route times are highly variable depending on fitness, weather conditions and route-finding ability.

Trampers can combine the Pyke - Big Bay Route with the Hollyford Track to create a round trip of about 10 days **but groups must be well equipped and experienced. Fill out an intention form at the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre in Te Anau, and use the hut books provided.**

Hunters require a permit from the Department of Conservation.

Pyke - Big Bay Route Guide

Hollyford Road end to Lake Alabaster hut (platform bunks sleeping a maximum of 12 people) via the Hollyford Track, 5 hr - 7 hr

Lake Alabaster to Olivine Hut, 7 hr - 10 hr

From Lake Alabaster Hut follow the lake shore to Alabaster Creek at the head of the lake (2 - 4 hours). Note that you will encounter knee deep water towards the Alabaster Creek end of the lake during **normal** lake levels. After rain this becomes very difficult and slow travel. Alabaster Creek is normally crossed via a gravel bar at its mouth. However, after rain this becomes a deep and dangerous crossing. From the head of the lake follow the poled, orange, triangular markers through the open areas of flax and tussock until a marked route enters the forest. The route goes through aptly named 'Black Swamp', then follows an overgrown track up the true left of the Pyke River, through beech forest, flax wetlands and riverflats to the Olivine Hut (6 bunks and wood-burning stove).

Olivine Hut to Pyke Crossing, 6 hr - 9 hr

Use the cage to cross the Olivine River. The route follows the old stock route which, though marked, can be difficult to follow due to overgrown vegetation. Open areas of flax and tussock wetlands are encountered between the Diorite and Barrier Rivers. Both rivers are unbridged and can be impassable after rain.

The route continues through tall beech forest until Lake Wilmot. Travel round the lake is difficult, especially if the water level is high. From here a series of beech forest, flax flats and river edge travel takes you to the Pyke Airstrip and the Pyke Crossing. Markers in the area can get damaged through flooding, making the route difficult to follow. There is good camping here.

Pyke Crossing to Big Bay, 3 hr - 5 hr

A crossing of the Pyke River can normally be made just downstream from Paulin Creek. However, after rain it becomes impassable.

The route follows Paulin Creek and through the forest to the dry Awarua River, where an old prospecting road leads to the mouth of the river at Big Bay. In normal conditions this can be crossed at low tide, otherwise follow a track 15 minutes up stream to a swing bridge. Big Bay Hut (9 bunks and wood-burning stove) is at the southern end of the village area. Please respect private dwellings.

Big Bay to Martins Bay, 4 hr - 5 hr

This section initially follows the four kilometre sandy beach of Big Bay to McKenzie Creek, at the southern end of the bay. After crossing the creek (take care as McKenzie Creek can often be impassable and extremely dangerous after rain) a short track leads to the coast. Follow the coastline to Long Reef, before joining the track to Martins Bay Hut (12 bunks). The track then follows the true right of the Hollyford River/Whakatipu Kā Tuka, and after about an hour's walk reaches private dwellings and two airstrips.

Martins Bay to Hollyford Road End

The Lower Hollyford Road is reached via the Hollyford Track, taking four days to complete. Please refer to the Hollyford Track brochure for further details.

- Martins Bay to Hokuri Hut, 4 - 5 hours.
- Hokuri Hut to Demon Trail Hut, 5 - 6 hours.
- Demon Trail Hut to McKerrow Island Hut 1½ hours.
- Lake McKerrow Hut to Lake Alabaster Hut, 4 hours.
- Lake Alabaster Hut to Hidden Falls Hut, 3 - 4 hours.
- Hidden Falls Hut to Hollyford Road end, 2 - 3 hours.

Te Wāhipounamu - South West New Zealand World Heritage Area



South West New Zealand is one of the great wilderness areas of the Southern Hemisphere. Known to Māori as Te Wāhipounamu (the place of greenstone), the South West New Zealand World Heritage Area incorporates Aoraki/Mt. Cook, Westland/Tai Poutini, Fiordland and Mount Aspiring National Parks, covering 2.6 million hectares. World Heritage is a global concept that identifies natural and cultural sites of world significance, places so special that protecting them is of concern for all people. Some of the best examples of animals and plants, once found on the ancient supercontinent Gondwana, live in the World Heritage Area.

Published by:
Department of Conservation
PO Box 743
Invercargill
October 2004

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Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



- 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)

SafetyWatch
0800 999 005
Report any safety hazards

