



Chatham Island Walks

J. M. Barker (Hapupu) National Historic Reserve,
Henga Scenic Reserve, Nikau Scenic Reserve

Three reserves on the main Chatham Island have tracks that visitors may use.

The Chatham Islands, "*the first to see the sun*", lie 800 km east of the New Zealand mainland. The Chatham Islands group consists of two main inhabited islands, – Chatham and Pitt – and many smaller outlying islands within a radius of 40 km. Pitt Island lies 17 km southeast of Chatham Island.

Chatham Island was formed by volcanic upthrust and is predominantly flat, with several small peaks in the northwest. The most predominant geographical feature is Te Whanga Lagoon, which covers about 20,000 hectares – about one-fifth of the island.

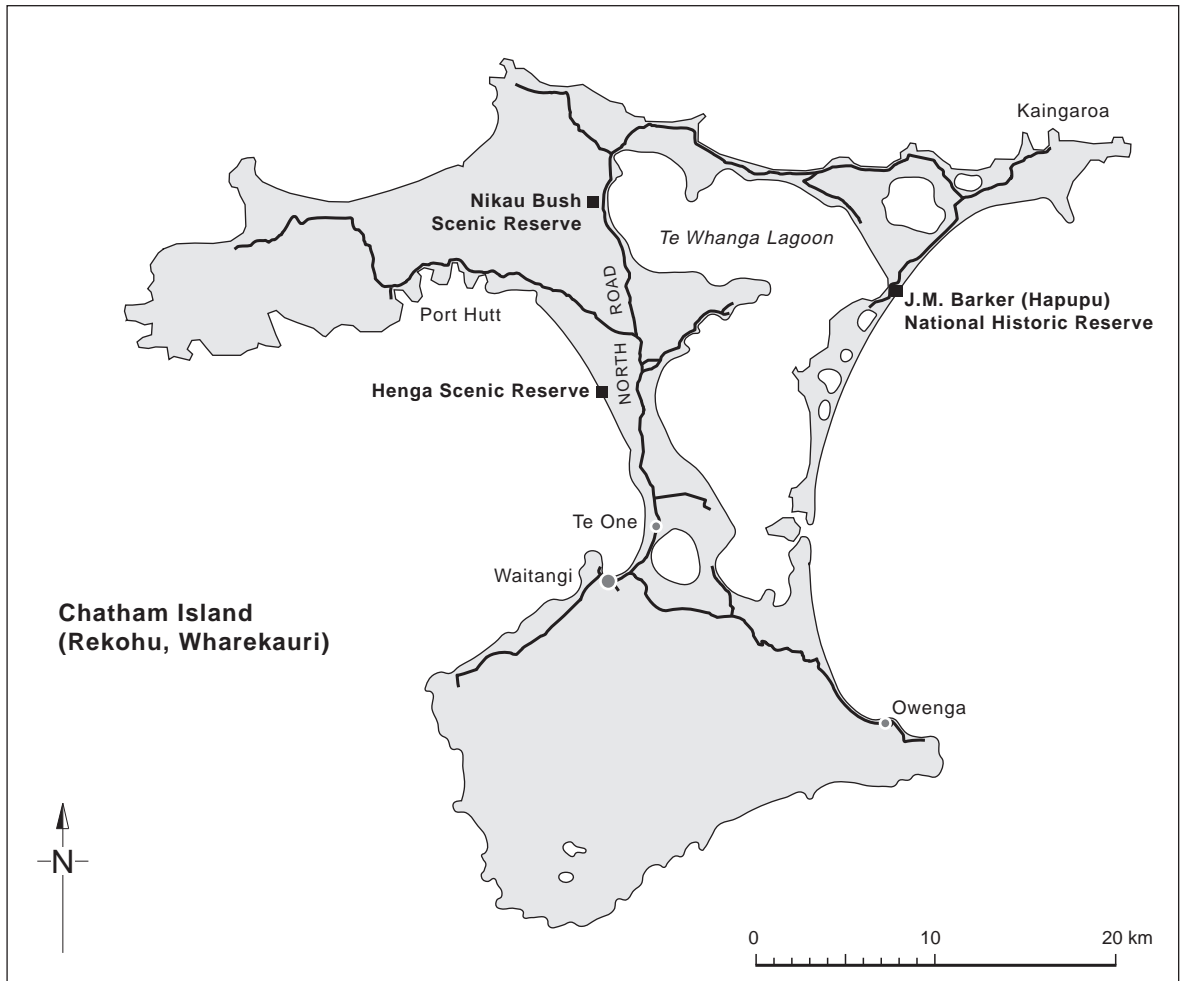
The original inhabitants of the Chatham Islands were the Moriori who are estimated to have arrived about 1000 years ago. They named the islands "Rekohu" (Misty Skies) and have adapted their culture and lifestyle to the harsh climatic conditions that can sometimes prevail.

The Chatham Islands are very important to conservation because of the rich biodiversity of plant and bird life that exists there. Twenty percent of New Zealand's threatened bird species, along with fourteen percent of threatened plants are found on the Chatham Islands.

More information

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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

Toitu te whenua

Leave the land undisturbed

Henga Scenic Reserve

This 170 hectare kopi forest was gifted by Denise and John Sutherland of Henga. The reserve was fenced in 1982 and features spectacular regeneration by kopi (karaka) and mahoe under a canopy of kopi. It is an excellent example of how rapidly this forest type can regenerate in the absence of stock. Other features are limestone outcrops, endemic plants on the dunes and views over Petre Bay.

In pre European times most of the surrounding area was forested. The long beach dunelands were covered in a mosaic of herbfields, mingimangi shrublands, kopi and akeake forest. The inland dunes were almost entirely forested, and merged with the kopi and tarahinau forests that covered the limestone between Longbeach and Te Whanga Lagoon.

This area was occupied by the Moriori, and shell midden heaps can be seen in the dune lands. Their settlement areas were inland, where the forest provided shelter from the weather.

How to get there

Henga Reserve is located on the Chatham Island's west coast. Proceed north from Waitangi township and take the North Road until opposite the airport turn-off. Legal public access to the reserve is provided through the Sutherland's property behind the Henga Reserve sign on the roadside. However, the Sutherland's are happy for the public to use the easier access immediately behind Chatham Lodge.

Walking Track

From the entrance into the reserve behind Chatham Lodge, enter the bush and head west. A walk of approximately 45 minutes will take you out on to the coastal dunes, along the dunes towards the South and then back through the bush in a wide loop to return to the starting point behind the Lodge.

Nikau Bush Scenic Reserve

Nikau Bush Scenic Reserve contains 19 hectares of lowland broadleaved forest on the north-western shore of Te Whanga Lagoon. Lowland broadleaf forest was once common throughout the Chatham Islands, and this area contains the largest stand of nikaus remaining on the main Chatham Island. The reserve was purchased by the Crown and fenced in 1981, and since then regeneration has been prolific. The nikaus are spectacular when in flower during December and January.

How to get there

A sign on the North Road, one and a half kilometres past Blind Jim's Creek marks a carpark and the start of the access to the reserve. To reach the entrance, walk one kilometre along the fenceline to the west following the red markers.

Walking Track

A short track takes a figure eight loop through the forest and takes in some peaceful forest glades in amongst lush regeneration beneath stately palms. The round trip on the marked route takes about one hour.

J.M. Barker (Hapupu) National Historic Reserve

Located at the north-eastern end of Chatham Island, Hapupu is 33 hectares of kopi forest which was gifted to the Crown in 1979 by Barker Brothers Ltd.

The reserve was established to protect Moriori dendroglyphs (tree carvings). It is one of only two national historic reserves in New Zealand. This designation reflects the particular importance of Hapupu both culturally and spiritually for the Moriori of Rekohu (Chatham Islands).

The dendroglyphs (tree carvings) here are among the few visible remaining signs of pre-contact Moriori culture. The carvings depict Moriori karapuna (ancestors) and symbols of the natural world, such as patiki (flounder).

The reserve was fenced in 1980 to provide protection for the tree carvings from grazing stock.

How to get there

Head north from Waitangi on the North Road, turn right at the signposted turnoff 6 km from Kaingaroa. The reserve is at the end of the road adjacent to the old Hapupu Airstrip.

Walking Track

There is a ten minute bush walk through part of the reserve. An excellent example of mature kopi forest with a dense understorey of mahoe and kopi seedlings can be seen. Moriori dendroglyphs have been carved on the trunks of many kopi trees, some of which can be seen on the bush walk.

