

## Welcome to the Whanganui Journey, one of ten unforgettable journeys.

Paddle through a landscape of towering cliffs and deep valleys on the magical Whanganui Journey. You'll travel through calm waters and foaming rapids, on an unforgettable trip into the heart of the Whanganui National Park.

Choose a 5-day journey from Taumarunui to Pipiriki (145 km), or a shorter, 3-day journey starting at Whakahoro (88 km), featuring the most spectacular stretches of the Whanganui River.



# Whanganui JOURNEY GUIDE



Duration: **3 or 5 days**

Distance: **88 km or 145 km (one way)**



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

### For in-depth local knowledge, visit:

Ruapehu i-SITE Visitor Information Centre  
54 Clyde Street, Ohakune 4625

Phone: +64 6 385 8427

Email: [Ohakune-VC@doc.govt.nz](mailto:Ohakune-VC@doc.govt.nz)

[www.doc.govt.nz/great-walks](http://www.doc.govt.nz/great-walks)

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Published by: Department of Conservation, Customer and Brand Team  
PO Box 10420, Wellington 6143, New Zealand | December 2021 | R214045

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## Care for Whanganui Journey



### Protect nature

Keep your distance and don't feed wildlife. Feeding wildlife is harmful to them. Follow any rules restricting fires, vehicles or boats. No dogs or unpermitted drones allowed.



### Show respect

Respect others, respect culture. Follow the protocol at Tīeke Kāinga. Do not enter Tamatea's Cave, it is wāhi tapu (a sacred place). Minimise noise when others are sleeping.



### Be prepared

Stay safe in the outdoors by planning and preparing for your trip. Share your plans and take a distress beacon.



### Keep New Zealand clean

Take all rubbish with you. Use toilets where provided. You can find them at all huts, campsites and shelters.

## Plants and wildlife

**Short-tailed and long-tailed bats/pekapeka** may be fluttering overhead around John Coull Hut and Campsite at dusk. They are New Zealand's only native mammal. Long-tailed bats are smaller than the short-tailed bat, are chestnut brown in colour, have small ears and weigh 8–11 g.



Photo: DOC

**Eels/tuna** migrate up streams to find a suitable adult habitat in the river. They are secretive, mainly nocturnal, and prefer habitat with plenty of cover. Tuna (the Māori word for eels) are not only historically important to Māori, they are considered a taonga (treasure) species.



Photo: David Kelly

**Wood pigeon/kererū** are large birds with iridescent green and bronze feathers on their heads and a smart white vest. The noisy beat of their wings is a distinctive sound. They are the only remaining native bird capable of distributing large fruits such as karaka and taraire.



Photo: DOC

**Blue duck/whio** live only in clean, fast-flowing streams in the forested upper river catchments. Nesting along the riverbanks, they are at high risk of attack from stoats and rats. You might see them on the main stem of Manganuioteao River on the last day of your journey.



Photo: Sabine Bernert

Broadleaf-podocarp forest has grown over this land, composed of **rātā**, rewarewa, rimu, tawa and kāmahī, with beech dominant on the ridge tops. Podocarp forest can be lush with a dense undergrowth of shrubs, ferns and tree ferns. Tree ferns and plants that cling to the steep riverbanks are very distinctive.



Photo: DOC

**Land surrounding the river** is only about one million years old. Formed of soft sandstone and mudstone (papa) from the ocean-bed, it has been eroded by water to form striking sharp ridges, deep gorges, sheer papa cliffs and waterfalls.



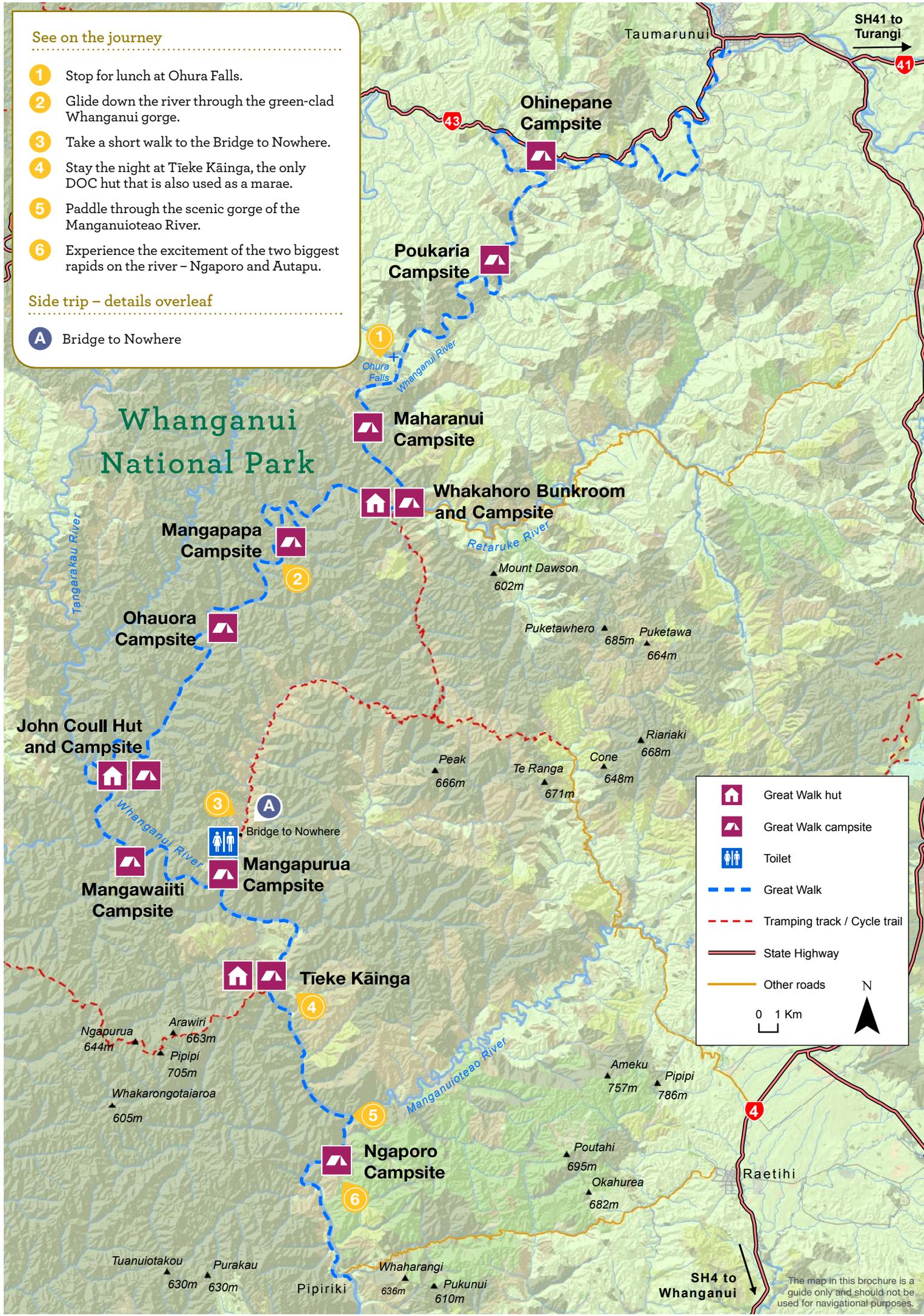
Photo: DOC

See on the journey

- 1 Stop for lunch at Ohura Falls.
- 2 Glide down the river through the green-clad Whanganui gorge.
- 3 Take a short walk to the Bridge to Nowhere.
- 4 Stay the night at Tīeke Kāinga, the only DOC hut that is also used as a marae.
- 5 Paddle through the scenic gorge of the Manganuioteao River.
- 6 Experience the excitement of the two biggest rapids on the river – Ngaporo and Autapu.

Side trip – details overleaf

- A Bridge to Nowhere



	Great Walk hut
	Great Walk campsite
	Toilet
	Great Walk
	Tramping track / Cycle trail
	State Highway
	Other roads

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The map in this brochure is a guide only and should not be used for navigational purposes.

## PADDLING GUIDE

The 145-km river journey from Taumarunui to Pipiriki usually takes 5 days to complete by canoe. A shorter 3-day journey from Whakahoro to Pipiriki is also possible.

The times are approximate and will vary according to your fitness and the weather.

### Taumarunui to Whakahoro

2 days, 57 km

Access points are at Ngahuinga (Cherry Grove) in Taumarunui or further downstream at Ohinepane (accessed from River Road SH43).

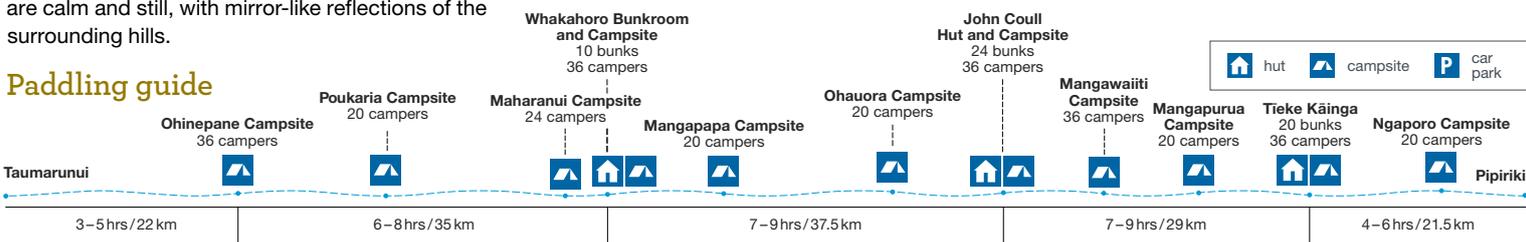
Travelling the upper reaches of Whanganui River you'll pass through a mix of farmland and native bush. You'll be in for excitement as you shoot down rapids on this section of the river. Camp beside the river at Ohinepane, Poukaria or Maharaniu campsites. From here, you get the feeling of venturing into the heart of a rich and rugged landscape.

### Whakahoro to John Coull Hut

1 day, 37.5 km

Many begin their river journey here, at the most scenic middle section of the river. You'll travel through towering gorges, the sides dripping with moss and ferns. After heavy rain, there are numerous waterfalls. Long stretches of the river are calm and still, with mirror-like reflections of the surrounding hills.

### Paddling guide



Past Mangapapa Campsite, you'll take a long loop around the Kirikiriroa peninsula, pass the Tarepokiore (whirlpool) rapid and then the large overhang known as Tamatea's Cave. Please do not enter the cave as it is wāhi tapu (a sacred place). Otaihangā Reach leads to your overnight stop at John Coull Hut and Campsite.

### John Coull Hut to Tīeke Kāinga

1 day, 29 km

On this section, you'll continue your journey through deep gorges and past stunning native forest. The Tangarakau and Whangamomona rivers join the Whanganui on this stretch. Perched high above the river, Mangawaiti is an attractive spot to camp or stop for lunch.

Continue your trip downstream past the Mangapurua Landing, where you can stop and walk to the iconic Bridge to Nowhere. Afterwards, you'll continue on to Tīeke Kāinga, one of many old marae on the Whanganui River.

### Tīeke Kāinga to Pipiriki

1 day, 21.5 km

You'll pass the scenic narrow gorge of the Manganuioteao River where it enters the Whanganui River after its journey all the way from the slopes of Mount Ruapehu. The Ngaporo and Autapu rapids can provide plenty of excitement and perhaps a cool dip on a hot day. Exotic trees and farmland indicate you are getting close to Pipiriki and the end of your journey. Shoot the Paparoa rapids and you will see the boat ramp below Pipiriki village up ahead.

## Side trip – Bridge to Nowhere

40 min one way

At Mangapurua Landing, where the old riverboats used to tie up, hop out of your canoe and take a walk to the Bridge to Nowhere. It's a poignant reminder of the Mangapurua Valley farm settlement, carved out of the bush and then abandoned between the two world wars. Look out for cyclists as the track is also part of the Mountains to Sea Cycle Trail. Please keep the downstream end of the Mangapurua Landing clear, except when getting in or out of canoes.



Photo: Herb Christophers

## Visiting Tīeke Kāinga

Tīeke Kāinga is the only former pā site that also doubles as a Great Walks Hut. Facilities are jointly managed by Te Whānau o Tīeke and DOC. Visitors may be welcomed onto the marae if Tīeke people are available on that day. Visitors are welcome to use the marae facilities and camping area while observing the general tikanga rules.



Photo: 90 Seconds

## General tikanga (protocol) at Tīeke Kāinga

- Visitors may be expected to participate in a pōwhiri if whānau are present at the marae. The process will be explained if necessary.
- The marae ātea (grassy area in front of the marae) must be kept clear when visitors are going through the pōwhiri.
- It is customary to leave a koha (donation) during pōwhiri (for example, money or food).
- The whareniui (meeting house on the marae ātea) is for local people only; access into the whareniui is by invitation only.
- All rubbish must be carried out.
- Absolutely **no alcohol** is permitted at Tīeke Kāinga or while on the river.
- Smoking is permitted outside only. Please keep the buildings smokefree.
- Shoes are not to be worn in the buildings; they should be left neatly on the deck.
- Clothes and washing should be hung on the designated clothes lines near the campground, not on the decks or marae area. Please ask the local people if in doubt.
- Do not sit on tables, kitchen worktops or chilly bins. Do not sit on any surface that would come in contact with food.
- Kitchen facilities are not to be used for personal hygiene, eg brushing teeth. Please use the washbasins outside for these purposes.
- Please do not put tents up in the marae ātea, use the designated campsites.
- It is polite to ask for permission from the local people before taking photos at Tīeke Kāinga.
- If in doubt, feel free to approach your local hosts.

## Track history

Māori cultivated the sheltered terraces, and built elaborate eel weirs along river channels to trap eels and lamprey on their migration up river. Every river bend had a kaitiaki (guardian) which controlled the mauri (life force) of that place. The mana (prestige) of a settlement depended upon the way food supplies and living areas were looked after for the benefit of the hapū (sub-tribe) and visitors.

Te Ātihaunui, a Pāpārangi people, settled the valley from early times. Eventually the river became linked by a series of hapū which were called 'the plaited braids of Hinengakau'.

European missionaries arrived in the 1840s. In 1891 a regular riverboat service began carrying passengers, mail and freight to other European settlers on the river between Whanganui and Taumarunui.

Photo: Herb Christophers



## Staying safe on the Whanganui Journey

### STAYING SAFE ON THE WHANGANUI JOURNEY

- ▶ On the river – always give way to jet boats.
- ▶ Remember: craft travelling up river give way to craft travelling down river.
- ▶ When a jet boat approaches, canoeists should move to the right. If close to the left, stay there rather than paddle across the path of an approaching boat. To minimise the effect of the wake, turn at right angles to it.
- ▶ Canoeists should stop and even back-paddle to allow jet boats to overtake and get clear as quickly as possible.
- ▶ Jet boats passing canoes travelling in the opposite direction should either wait or move slowly forward until clear of the canoes. Canoeists in this situation should keep paddling forward. Jet boats moving slowly are much less manoeuvrable and canoeists should not expect them to be able to get out of the way quickly.
- ▶ Jet boats in rapids are unable to slow down or stop.

### BE PREPARED FOR ALL CONDITIONS

#### Hypothermia (too cold)

Hypothermia (a drop in core body temperature) can become a serious problem.

- ▶ **Prevention:** wear warm and weatherproof clothing. Eat and drink regularly during your walk.
- ▶ **Watch for symptoms:** people may shiver, be clumsy, confused, have slurred speech, and deny they have a problem.
- ▶ **Treatment:** immediately make or find shelter; get the person into warm, dry clothing; put them into a sleeping bag; give them warm, sweet drinks; monitor them and seek immediate medical help.

#### Heat exhaustion

This can be serious and is usually caused by physical activity in a hot environment and not drinking enough water.

- ▶ **Prevention:** wear warm and weatherproof gear. Eat and drink regularly during your walk.
- ▶ **Watch for symptoms:** headaches, thirst, weakness, dizziness, nausea or vomiting.
- ▶ **Treatment:** move the person to a cool shaded area to rest, remove excess clothing and give water to drink.

#### Heavy rain and flooding

- ▶ Weather can change quickly at any time of year on the Whanganui River. Be prepared for rain, cold and windy conditions by taking appropriate gear with you.
- ▶ Canoeing into the wind can be demanding – allow extra travelling time between stopovers in windy conditions.
- ▶ Don't canoe the river when water levels are predicted to rise or the river is in flood – you won't be charged for staying an extra night at a campsite or hut due to high river levels. If you capsize, you may not be able to get back into your canoe or swim to the river's edge.
- ▶ Always pull your canoe up high on the bank and tie it to something secure. It may not be raining on the river, but rain elsewhere in the large catchment can cause the river to rise several metres overnight.
- ▶ Check the local weather forecast at [weather.niwa.co.nz/parks](http://weather.niwa.co.nz/parks).

#### Take sufficient supplies

- ▶ You must be self-sufficient: be sure you have enough food, clothing, equipment and emergency food for the worst-case scenario.

### REMEMBER

- Emergency communication is available (by DOC radio) only at John Coull Hut and Tieke Kāinga. The only road access to the river is at Ohinepane, Whakahoro and Pipiriki.
- There is no cellphone coverage at Ohinepane, Whakahoro, Pipiriki or while on the river journey.
- Many sites are of high cultural significance – please respect them.
- Once you are on the river below Whakahoro there is no turning back, and nowhere to buy anything you may have forgotten.
- Wear your lifejacket at all times when on the water.
- Put all items into barrels or dry bags and have these securely tied to the canoe at all times when on the water. This will keep your possessions safe if you capsize.

- Camping is permitted only at designated campsites.
- No dogs or other animals are permitted.
- No hunting.
- Wasps are a known hazard so carry antihistamine if you need to.
- Ensure your booking ticket is available for inspection at all times.
- No open fires.
- All rubbish must be carried out of the park.
- Boil, filter or treat water if you doubt its purity.
- Use the toilets provided.
- Keep soap and detergents out of waterways.

For detailed safety information and a comprehensive gear list, see [www.doc.govt.nz/whanganuijourney](http://www.doc.govt.nz/whanganuijourney).