

Wetlands to visit in the South Island and Stewart Island/Rakiura



22. Farewell Spit (Onetahua), Golden Bay



New Zealand's longest sandspit system, extending eastward into the Tasman Sea for approximately 30 km, shelters tidal mudflats exposed at low tide for up to 6 km seaward. These mudflats and the dunes provide a haven for over 90 bird species including black swan, Australasian gannet, Caspian tern/tarānui, southern black-backed gull/karoro, bar-tailed godwit/kuaka, red knot and variable oystercatcher/tōrea. Many of these birds migrate thousands of kilometres each year from the northern hemisphere.

The spit forms a Ramsar wetland of international importance and it is also an East Asian-Australasian Flyway Network site for migratory birds. The area has been a flora and fauna reserve and wildlife sanctuary since 1938.

Places to explore



Public entry to Farewell Spit is controlled to protect wildlife, but you can walk along the inner beach from the car park and cross over to the ocean beach via two signposted tracks. For a great view of the spit and intertidal zone, consider climbing up to one of the viewing points on the adjoining Puponga Farm Park. There are a number of tracks to choose from. Taking an eco-tour to the lighthouse is also an option (fee applies).

Highlights: Shorebirds, stunning views, many estuarine wetlands along the drive to the spit.

Getting there

From Takaka, follow State Highway 60 north to Farewell Spit.

Further information

Farewell Spit and Puponga Farm Park brochure available from www.doc.govt.nz.



Farewell Spit.
Photo: Karen Denyer.

Information sign,
Farewell Spit.
Photo: Annette Hamblett.

23. Mangarakau Swamp, Westhaven (Whanganui Inlet)

A large, relatively pristine freshwater swamp at the southern end of the Whanganui Inlet, south of Farewell Spit, on the west coast. This is a magical location—to the west are tidal bays and inlets and towering limestone bluffs, and to the east the forested ranges of Kahurangi National Park. Westhaven (Whanganui Inlet) is one of the largest and least modified estuaries in New Zealand and was formally protected in 1994 with the creation of the Westhaven (Te Tai Tapu) Marine Reserve and the Westhaven (Whanganui Inlet) Wildlife Management Reserve.

Places to explore



It is worth starting your visit at the Friends of Mangarakau Visitor Centre and doing the short walks to the lookouts and the hidden jewel that is Lake Mangarakau. If you are really energetic, the 1 hr 30 min tramp up Knuckle Hill (15 min drive from the visitor centre) is worth the effort for the breathtaking views over the inlet and swamp. Kayak up Muddy Creek or the Wairoa River at high tide for an enchanting experience.

Highlights: Limestone bluffs, mudflats with eel grass, special plants, chance to hear and see Australasian bitterns/matuku and fernbirds/mātā.

Getting there

Take the road from Collingwood towards Farewell Spit. Turn left at Pakawau Inlet across to the Whanganui Inlet and then follow the road south around the eastern shoreline.

Further information

Westhaven Inlet Marine Reserve and Wildlife Management Reserve brochure available at www.doc.govt.nz.

Other places to visit

Lake Otuhie—a 30 min walk across farmland to a small lake backed by towering limestone bluffs.

Kaihoka Lakes—a 10 min walk around two small lakes.



Mangarakau. Photo: Karen Denyer.

24. Te Waikoropupū Springs, Takaka

With stunning clear water and unique flora and fauna, Te Waikoropupū (or Pupū) Springs are the largest cold water springs in the Southern Hemisphere, discharging 14,000 litres of water per second. To local Māori, the springs are a taonga (treasure) and wāhi tapu, a place held in high cultural and spiritual regard.

The waters of Te Waikoropupū Springs, including Fish Creek and Springs River, are closed to all forms of contact (including fishing, swimming, diving, wading, boating and drinking the water) to safeguard water quality and to respect cultural values.

Places to explore



A short 30 min loop walk from the Te Waikoropupū Springs car park leads to a platform that sits partly over the water, with a viewing chamber for underwater views of the springs. Signs tell the full story of this fascinating and beautiful place. Return via the longer (15 min extra) Fish Creek track for an amazing waterscape of mosses, ferns and liverworts beneath a native forest canopy.

Highlights: Bubbling springs, clear blue waters.

Getting there

Te Waikoropupū Springs is located 7 km west of Takaka. Follow State Highway 60 north from Takaka and take the signposted turn off on the left over the Takaka River.

Te Waikoropupū Springs.
Photo: Annette Hamblett.

25. Lake Mahināpua, West Coast

Lake Mahināpua is one of the best spots around Hokitika to spend a day by the water and is a popular place for picnics and water sports. Once a coastal lagoon, the build up of sand has turned it into a shallow inland lake surrounded by forest.

Flax/harakeke and rushes on the lake edge provide sheltered sites for swans and ducks. The shy fernbird/mātā can be heard (and sometimes seen) flitting amongst these swampy areas, with Australasian bitterns/matuku and seasonal white herons/kōtuku also present.



Places to explore

There are a number of short walks close to the lake—a bush walk from the end of the access road passes through typical wetland forest dominated by kahikatea, while the Bellbird Walk at the southern end of the lake takes 10 min to loop around a pond. The Mahināpua Walkway is considerably longer (2 – 2 hr 30 min one way) but incorporates a variety of scenery and terrain and includes access to a pebbly beach at the edge of the lake as well as boardwalks across swampy areas. Cycling is permitted on the walkway. Water-based activities include swimming, yachting and kayaking (kayaks available for hire). A paddle cruiser operates on the Mahināpua Creek leading down to the lake.

Highlights: Variety of recreational activities.

Getting there

10 km south of Hokitika on State Highway 6, turn left onto the Lake Mahināpua access road opposite the Lake Mahināpua Hotel. The lake is 300 m along this road.

Further information

Central West Coast-Hokitika, Kumara to Ross brochure available from www.doc.govt.nz.

Other places to visit

Lake Kaniere—another beautiful lake with a variety of walks and water-based activities.

Lake Brunner—the largest lake on the West Coast popular for swimming, boating and fishing, and featuring a number of walks.



Lake Mahināpua. Photo: Darin Sutherland.

26. Harihari, West Coast

This area has one of the most scenic walkways on the West Coast, taking in spectacular views of forest, rivers, mountains and coastline while walking through estuaries, bogs and also a swamp forest. Both the Wanganui and Poerua Rivers have gravel bars with lagoons, and the river mouths are roosts for waders and seabirds. The Wanganui River mouth is popular for whitebaiting, angling and eeling and is bordered by lowland coastal forest and flax swamp.



Places to explore

Harihari Coastal Walkway (2 hr 45 min) follows in part an historic pack track route and an old logging tramway, crossing through a variety of vegetation. From the car park, walk out to the Wanganui Heads where the top of Mt Oneone provides a panoramic view. (It is also a sooty shearwater/tītī breeding site).

Note: *The section of track around the estuary and down the beach to the Poerua River mouth should not be attempted within 2 hr either side of high tide. From the Poerua River, return on the inland track.*

Highlights: *Great views and wilderness experience.*

Getting there

Turn off State Highway 6 at Harihari and follow Wanganui Flat Road before turning left into La Fontaine Road to the road end car park (20 min drive).

Further information

Glacier Region Walks booklet available at www.doc.govt.nz.

Other places to visit

Shearers Swamp—large coastal swampland including a fen, swamp, bog, pakihi, and coastal lagoon, home to many wetland birds. Good place to kayak.

Harihari.
Photo: Darin Sutherland.

27. Ōkārīto Lagoon, West Coast

Stunning and diverse scenery dominates the small coastal settlement of Ōkārīto—windswept coastline, tidal estuary, lagoon, sea cliffs, lush rainforest and unsurpassed views of the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana. Shallow open water covers over 3000 ha to form the Ōkārīto lagoon—a bird watcher's paradise. Thousands of native birds (more than 76 different species) visit the Ōkārīto Lagoon and many make their home in the vicinity, including the famous white heron/kōtuku and royal spoonbill/kōtuku-ngutupapa.



Places to explore

The Ōkārīto Wetland Walk (25 min, 1 km return) winds through bush before crossing the estuary on a curving boardwalk to a gentle climb to a viewpoint overlooking the estuary. Return to the car park or continue along the Three Mile Pack Track for a longer walk of 3 hr/9 km. The track passes through coastal forest before climbing over the Kohuamarua Bluff and meandering through wind-shorn rimu, rātā and silver pine forest and then dropping down to Three Mile Lagoon—a sheltered estuary fringed with rimu forest. Return the same way or, if the tide allows, follow the coastline back along the beach. There is also an option of taking a wildlife tour to view nesting white herons/kōtuku from late October until February (fee applies).

Highlights: *Variety of wetland types, stunning views, wildlife tours of white herons/kōtuku.*

Further information

Glacier Region Walks booklet available at www.doc.govt.nz.

Getting there

Drive 15 km north from Franz Josef Township on State Highway 6 to the Ōkārīto Forks turn off signposted on the left. It is 13 km along a sealed road to Ōkārīto.

Other places to visit

Whataroa Wetland—large wetland with a boardwalk.

White herons/kōtuku.
Photo: J. H. Johns.



28. Lake Matheson, West Coast

Famous for mirror views of Aoraki/Mt Cook and the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana, Lake Matheson is nestled in ancient forest, 5 km west of Fox Glacier township in the Westland Tai Poutini National Park and the Te Wāhipounamu South West New Zealand World Heritage Area. The dark waters are the result of organic matter leached from the humus of the forest floor and are a favourite habitat of the longfin eel/tuna.



Places to explore

The walk circuit around the lakes takes 1 hr 30 min, or take a shorter section (40 min return) to the jetty viewpoint (suitable for assisted wheelchairs). The jetty provides a superb mountain view reflected in the dark waters.

At the top end of the lake, and again at Reflection Island, you will find similarly magnificent mountain reflections. Dawn and dusk are often the best viewing times as the lake is generally calm.

Highlights: Reflections, reflections, reflections.

Getting there

Take Cook Flat Road in the middle of Fox Glacier township signposted to Lake Matheson.

Other places to visit

Peters Pool—easy walk to a small kettle lake.

Lake Wombat—fern-lined walk through rimu forest to the lake.

Lake Matheson.
Photo: Darin Sutherland.

29. Ship Creek, Haast, West Coast

This ancient kahikatea swamp forest provides a glimpse back in time to what much of the West Coast may have looked like prior to human settlement. It is one of the best examples of swamp forest that you will come across and well worth stopping for on your journey along the West Coast.



Places to explore

The Swamp Forest walk (20 min) follows the slow-flowing Tauparikaka Creek, the dark inky colour caused by tannin in the water. There is a boardwalk through the kahikatea swamp forest allowing easy observation of the forest plants.

A second walk to a dune lake (30 min) winds through dense wind-shorn coastal forest stunted by wind. It opens out to provide magnificent photo opportunities from platforms overlooking Lake Mataketake to the sweep of coastline southwest to Jackson Head.

Highlights: Scenic views, ancient forest of tall kahikatea.

Getting there

These walks are signposted off State Highway 6 as you head south between Lake Paringa and Haast.

Other places to visit

Hapuka Estuary—a walk through coastal forest to an estuary and boardwalk.



Ship Creek.
Photo: Darin Sutherland.

30. Amoeboid Mire, Te Anau, Southland

Worth visiting just for its name, this multi-lobed mire (bog), is easily accessed from the spectacular Kepler Track within Fiordland National Park near Te Anau. Located on a terrace that formed as the Manapouri glacier melted, the vegetation is dominated by sphagnum moss, other mosses and wire rush with a range of herbs, shrubs and other plants. A feature is the large tarn in the central part of the mire system. The wetter south-east portion along the Kepler Track is dominated by sedges. Plants of interest are the yellow-silver pine and pygmy pine—both uncommon at low altitudes.

Places to explore

The Amoeboid Mire is accessed along the high-quality gravelled Kepler Track from the Rainbow Reach car park. It is a 45–60 min walk one way following the Waiau River terrace and through beech forest to this fragile peatland mire. Here, a 200 m boardwalk has information panels and a lookout over the tarn and mire. You can continue on for another hour to Moturau Hut with access to a beach on Lake Manapouri. Return by the same track to the car park.

Highlights: Tarn and surrounding bog communities, interesting plants including insect-eating sundew, views over Waiau River to a location from Lord of the Rings.

Getting there

Rainbow Reach car park is a 15 min (12 km) drive south of Te Anau township off State Highway 95 between Lakes Te Anau and Manapouri. Signposted to Kepler Track.

Further information

Fiordland National Park Day Walks publication available at www.doc.govt.nz.

Other places to visit

Kepler Mire—this is largest peat bog in Te Anau area and can be viewed from Mt York Road.

Lake Mistletoe—can be viewed from a loop track at Te Anau Downs.



31. Rakatu Wetlands, Southland

Spring-fed remnant wetlands in old channels of the Waiau River have been complemented with 50 ha of open water, created for the benefit of fish (both native and introduced trout) and waterfowl as well as protected birds species, to mitigate and remedy the adverse effects of the Manapouri Hydroelectric Power Scheme. The Takatimu Mountains and Fiordland National Park provide an impressive backdrop to the high terraces of the Waiau Valley with its wetlands nestled on the valley floor.

Places to explore

From the car park, 10 km of walking track offer four different walk options. For a good overview of the wetland, take the 10 min uphill track to a lookout. An alternative 10 min track leads to the Waiau River. There are two loop tracks to choose from—the Speight Wetland Loop of 1 hr or the Rakatu Wetland Loop of 2–3 hr. Along the way you should see a great variety of waterfowl such as scaups/pāpango, grey teals/tētē and paradise shelducks/pūtangitangi. Stiles, bridges, shelters and information panels are provided.

Highlights: Abundance of waterfowl.

Getting there

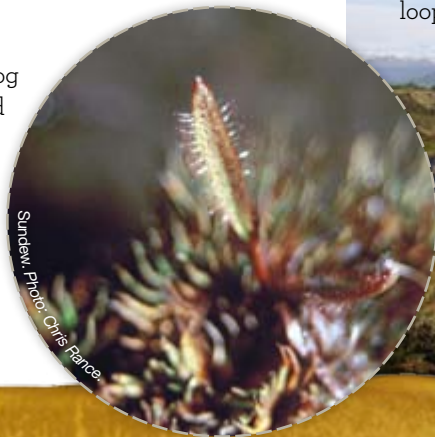
Located on the Blackmount-Redcliff Road (Southern Scenic Route) 15 min south of Manapouri.

Further information

The wetland is managed by the Waiau Fisheries and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Trust—see www.waiautrust.org.nz.

Other places to visit

Home Creek Wetland—meandering creek and wetlands with loop walk.



Rakatu.
Photo: Mark Sutton.

32. Freshwater River, Stewart Island/ Rakiura

This is the most remote of the wetland sites featured in this publication and is one for the more adventurous traveller with a reasonable level of fitness. It is also one of the most intact and pristine wetlands you'll come across, with a mosaic of acid bog, pools, mānuka/wire rush peatlands, mānuka shrubland, red tussock areas and patches of podocarp forest that extend for some 23 km along the Freshwater Valley to the inter-tidal mudflats at the river mouth. The valley contains a diversity of plant communities and wildlife species. Of particular note is the absence of any introduced fish species. Birdlife includes Stewart Island robins/toutouwai and Stewart Island fernbirds/mātā, and there is a good possibility of even seeing kiwi in daylight.



Places to explore



To really experience the wetlands of Freshwater River, a 4 hr tramp is required from Mason Bay to Freshwater Landing. After flying in to Masons Bay (tide dependent), it is mostly all flat going through tussock and mānuka, with boardwalks over extensive wetlands. You will need to pre-arrange a water taxi from Freshwater Landing back to Oban. Tramping huts are located at both Masons Bay and Freshwater Landing (hut fee applies).

Highlights: *Remote experience, chance of seeing or hearing kiwi.*

Getting there

Stewart Island/Rakiura is a 20 min flight from Invercargill or an hour by ferry from Bluff to Oban.

Further information

See www.stewartisland.co.nz for information on tours and activities.



33. Awarua Wetlands, Invercargill



'Big is beautiful' when it comes to the Awarua Wetlands, New Zealand's largest wetland complex protected under the Ramsar Convention. The 20,000 ha include four major wetland types—extensive peatlands, coastal lagoons, freshwater swamps, and estuaries. The zonation between these major wetland types is a significant feature.

It is a bird lover's paradise with more than 80 different species. The estuarine mudflats, teeming with food, are a draw card for thousands of wading birds including international migrants like the Eastern bar-tailed godwit/kuaka and rare locals—the southern NZ dotterel/tūturiwhatu, marsh crake/koitareke, fernbird/mātā and Australasian bittern/matuku.

There is a great diversity of vegetation, although much of the area is dominated by mānuka shrublands and wire rush. Native orchids and insect-eating sundews and bladderworts are locally common. The wetlands are well used for whitebaiting, fishing, gamebird hunting and kayaking.

Places to explore



There are many great places to explore in the Awarua Wetlands but a good starting point is the Boardwalk Track at the end of Waghorn Road. This winds through low-growing mānuka and shrubs to a viewing shelter overlooking Waituna Lagoon (10 min return). Information panels provide a wealth of information about the wetland. From the shelter, a 2 hr loop takes you out into the peat bog community with a chance of seeing or hearing fernbirds/mātā. You can explore the eastern end of the wetland from Tiwai Road or continue to explore from Awarua Bay Road.

Highlights: *Unique moor-like vegetation featuring herbs, shrubs and insects normally found in subalpine areas.*

Getting there

Access to Waituna Lagoon is from Kapuka or Gorge Road on the Invercargill to Fortrose Road (Southern Scenic Highway).

Other places to visit

New River Estuary—a walkway along the shoreline of the estuary and around Sutton lagoon.



Awarua Kākāriki
wetland restoration programme
Awarua Wetland

34. Pounaweia Estuary, Otago

It is not often that you get virgin podocarp forest rich in birdlife (including bellbirds/korimako, kererū and fantails/pīwakawaka), meeting saltmarsh and estuary and home to wading birds such as royal spoonbills/kōtuku-ngutupapa and bar-tailed godwits/kauka who return to the sandspit near the mouth of the estuary each year. Pounaweia is a special place in this regard.

The Estuary is fed by the Owaka and Catlins Rivers and is popular for fishing, boating, kayaking and swimming.

Places to explore



Park your vehicle outside the camping ground and take the walk of 45 min (there is also a shorter bush walk of 15 min) through native bush and out to the saltmarsh and estuary. There is a good chance of seeing wading birds. Please note that the saltmarsh section of the track is only accessible at low tide.

Highlights: *Vegetation sequence from saltmarsh to forest, chance to see NZ sea lions.*

Getting there

Turn on to Pounaweia Road at Owaka from State Highway 92, the Southern Scenic Route.

Further information

Southern Scenic Route—a traveller's guide available at www.doc.govt.nz.

Other places to visit

Tautuku—estuary boardwalk with abundant fernbirds/mātā.

Lake Wilkie—bush walk with lake views.

Royal Spoonbill/
kōtuku-ngutupapa.
Photo: Kim
Alexander-Turua.



35. Waihola/Waipori Wetlands, Otago

Thanks to significant community effort, this 2000 ha wetland complex has become an important wildlife haven with 80 species recorded—21 of these dependent on the habitat for their survival. The area regularly hosts more than 10,000 waterfowl and supports regionally significant whitebait and commercial eel fisheries as well as recreational fishing for introduced brown trout and perch. In addition to Lakes Waihola and Waipori, there are vegetated islands, lagoons, shallow pools, meandering channels and backswamps. The Sinclair wetlands between the two lakes is used for educational study with a visitor centre, displays and resources available to schools and visitors. Although water quality has been compromised by drainage and flood control from the lower Taieri Plain, a major willow control programme led by the Lake Waihola Waipori Wetlands Society is helping to restore habitat values.

Places to explore

There is a 30 min loop walk from the Education Centre or a 2 hr walk to Lonely and Ram Islands. Alternatively, take a 10 min walk from the car park on Titri Rd, over Titri Creek into the Titri wetlands to see hundreds of wading birds including marsh crakes/koitareke, fernbirds/mātā, scaups/pāpango, and grey teals/tētē. The track is surrounded by native vegetation, including the threatened wetland nettle. An observation platform offers a good view of one of the largest sections of open water in the wetlands.

Highlights: *Abundant wildlife, educational resources.*

Getting there

Signposted turn off 33 km south of Dunedin on State Highway 1.

Further information

See www.qe2.org.nz or www.southernscenicroute.co.nz or waihola-waipori-wetlands.org.nz.

Other places to visit

Lake Tuakitoto wetlands—there is a 3 hr loop track around this lake, 40 min drive from Waihola/Waipori.

Waipori Wetland.
Photo: DOC.



36. Sutton Salt Lake, Otago

It is most unusual for a salt lake to form in a cool to temperate climate, but New Zealand's only inland salt lake occupies an enclosed shallow basin in the schist rock landscape inland from Dunedin. With no outlet, Sutton Salt Lake has concentrated salts from surrounding soils as it has repeatedly filled, evaporated and refilled, giving the lake a salinity of about half that of seawater.

A few salt-tolerant herbs and grasses occupy the lake margins with other plants like the golden Spaniard typifying the rocky environment. A range of waterbirds and waders use the lake, feeding on the tiny salt-adapted aquatic animals.

Places to explore

A self-guided loop walk of 40 min to 1 hr to the lake and back is an easy way to enjoy the tranquillity and natural history of this stunning landscape. But be aware that in a hot dry summer, the water can disappear, only to refill again during the winter.

Highlights: Salt lake, backdrop of the Rock and Pillar Range.

Getting there

Sutton Salt Lake is approximately a 1 hr drive inland from Dunedin. Drive south of Dunedin to Outram and take State Highway 87, heading towards Middlemarch. Turn left onto Kidds Road before you cross the railway line at Sutton. The reserve entrance is about 2.5 km along Kidds Road.



Sutton Salt Lake.
Photo: Bev Clarkson.

37. Ahuriri Valley, North Otago

This valley has some diverse wetlands, with large shallow pools, oxbow ponds and river backwaters to fertile swamps and infertile bogs. Oxbow ponds were formed from horseshoe bends left behind when the Ahuriri River changed course. The variety and number of habitats make the Ahuriri valley wetlands extremely valuable to wildlife for feeding and breeding—both native fish and birds.

Places to explore

The easiest wetland to visit is Ben Avon, which is right beside Birchwood Road. You can get a good overview of the wetland and wildlife just from your car. A further 4 km up the road are information panels and seating with a stunning view of the river valley and mountains beyond.

Highlights: Possibility of seeing kakī/black stilts, fabulous scenery, ideal for people with limited mobility.

Getting there

Ahuriri Valley is signposted off State Highway 8 approximately 20 km south of Omarama township. Travel 18 km up the no-exit Birchwood Road to the Ben Avon wetland.

Further information

See *Ahuriri Conservation Park* brochure available from www.doc.govt.nz.

Other places to visit

Ohau Moraines wetland complex—vast area of red tussocklands, wetlands, rolling moraines and an outwash flat with views of surrounding mountains.

Spring Creek—tussockland and carex wetland.



Ben Avon wetland.
Photo: Chris Woolmore.

38. Wairepo kettleholes, North Otago

Gently rolling hummocks of glacial moraine and a series of depressions known as kettleholes provide an enthralling landscape extending over approximately 400 ha. The kettleholes (ponds) gradually dry out over summer, to reveal a rich plant life of ground-hugging herbs in a dense, intertwined carpet.

When the kettleholes have water in them, birds such as black stilts/kakī, black-fronted terns/tarapirohe, NZ shovelers/kuruwhengi and a host of other wading and wetland birds may visit.



Places to explore

The track into the Wairepo Kettleholes Conservation Area can be walked or mountain biked for around 3 km until you reach a stile. Over the stile, it is a short walk to the kettleholes. Within the conservation area are fragmented patches of red tussock, sedges and rushes along the margins of Wairepo Creek, which contains a number of freshwater fish and invertebrates.

Highlights: Rare habitat type of ephemeral turfs, the possibility of seeing black stilts/kakī.

Getting there

Entry to the Wairepo kettleholes is 14 km along Quailburn Road, (4 km north of Omarama township off State Highway 8) and is well signposted.

Further information

Day walks in Mackenzie/Waitaki brochure available from www.doc.govt.nz.

Other places to visit

Black stilt/kakī Visitor Hide, Twizel—guided tours from late October to April. www.doc.govt.nz.



Wairepo kettleholes.
Photo: Joy Corrie.



Ō Tū Wharekai.
Photo: DOC.

39. Ō Tū Wharekai, Ashburton Lakes

Ō Tū Wharekai, nestled amongst high-country tussocklands and set against the towering Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o Te Moana, is one of the best examples of an inter-montane wetland system in New Zealand. It is a mosaic of diverse wetland habitats including the braided upper Rangitata River and the 12 Ashburton lakes. It is nationally important for wildlife and is home to wrybills/ngutu pare, Australasian crested grebes/kāmana and black-fronted terns/tarapirohe. There are a number of threatened plants, as well as some of the best examples of red tussock and *Carex secta* wetlands in Canterbury.

The lakes and surrounding area provide opportunities for wind surfing, sailing, bird watching, kayaking, fishing and swimming as well as hunting, mountain biking and walking.

Places to explore



For amazing vistas of the braided upper Rangitata River and headwaters, it's worth the climb up Mt Sunday (which featured as the fortress of Edoras in the *Lord of the Rings* film). It is a short but steep walk (45 min one way) taking you across Deep Creek, an important site for the threatened upland longjaw galaxiid (native fish) and spawning site for introduced salmon.

Continued on next page



Arawai Kākāriki
wetland restoration programme
Ō Tū Wharekai

Lake Emma is a paradise for bird watchers, duck shooters and fishing enthusiasts. From the car park, head around the lake, drop into the historic homestead on the way, and then head past raupō and *Carex secta* wetlands to Lake Camp (9 km, 2 hr 30 min).

Highlights: *Landscape vistas, high country experience, abundant waterfowl and a regionally significant sports fishery.*

Getting there

At Mt Somers village, turn off the Arundel-Rakaia Gorge Road (Scenic Highway 72) and follow Ashburton Gorge Road towards Hakatere Corner. Here you can head towards lakes Clearwater and Emma or turn right to lakes Emily and Heron. Signs indicate public access to the marked tracks.

Further information

Check out www.doc.govt.nz/otuwharekai, or pick up Hakatere Conservation Park and Ō Tū Wharekai brochures from DOC offices/visitor centres.

Other places to visit

There are numerous other wetlands in Ō Tū Wharekai. Check out Lakes Heron and Clearwater from your vehicle or tramp to the secluded Mystery Lake (9.2 km/5 hr 45 min).



Black-fronted tern. Photo: Andrew Walmsley.



Ō Tū Wharekai restoration project. Photo: George Iles.

40. Travis Wetland, Canterbury

With only 2% of wetlands remaining in the Christchurch area, the Travis Wetland Nature Heritage Park is a special place to view wildlife, with over 50 species of birds, indigenous skinks, native shortfin eels/tuna and the Canterbury mudfish/kowaro. White herons/kōtuku, Australasian bitterns/matuku and black stilts/kakī have been seen in this lowland freshwater wetland, and there is a large population of the quizzical pūkeko.

Places to explore



The main loop track of 3.5 km is wheelchair and pushchair accessible and takes 1 hr 25 min. There is an information kiosk and education centre (used for school programmes), and along the way, a bird hide to watch the activity on the water, a viewing tower and seating. A combined walkway/cycleway goes along the edge of the wetland.

Highlights: *Wildlife identification panels in bird hide.*

Further information

This site is managed by the Christchurch City Council with support from the Travis Wetland Trust. See www.ccc.govt.nz.

Getting there

The main car park and access is at the end of Beach Road, between Burwood and North New Brighton. There is also a car park on Mairehau Road.

Other places to visit

Ōtukaikino—a track/boardwalk through a small wetland being restored as a ‘living memorial’ with the planting of trees to commemorate the passing of a loved one; Mau Mahara—remembering you.



Travis Visitor Centre. Photo: Sarah Mankelov.



The community at work
in Awarua Wetland.
Photo: DOC.

Wetland restoration and community conservation

Every wetland—no matter how pristine—requires management in some form to maintain and enhance wetland values and their hydrological and biological functioning. This is because wetlands are vulnerable to changes in the environment, reflected in both the quality and quantity of the water entering and leaving a wetland. Many of the wetlands listed in this publication would not be as appealing without active steps to restore, reconstruct and improve the site, and to create opportunities and facilities for public use and enjoyment.

So often it is the community that has been the driving force behind restoration, contributing numerous volunteer hours to achieving a vision. Having seen what's possible, perhaps you may be inspired to do something about protecting and restoring a wetland near you.

Further information

Descriptions given in this publication are, of necessity, brief. To find out more, go to the websites identified for specific wetlands; the DOC website www.doc.govt.nz for contact details of local DOC offices for each site; or the National Wetland Trust website www.wetlandtrust.org.nz.

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