

# Hāwea Conservation Park



## Your safety is your responsibility

Make sure you choose a track that suits your level of fitness and experience. Read the DOC publication *Planning a trip in the backcountry* before you start: [www.doc.govt.nz/planning-a-backcountry-trip](http://www.doc.govt.nz/planning-a-backcountry-trip)

You should carry the NZTopo50 maps CA13, CA14, BZ13 and BZ14. This pamphlet is a guide only and should not be used for navigation purposes.

Treat all river crossings with great care. Always be prepared to wait if the river is too high for a safe crossing. The terms 'true left' and 'true right' are defined by looking down the river or water flow.

## Follow the Outdoor Safety Code

- ▶ Plan your trip
- ▶ Tell someone your plans
- ▶ Be aware of the weather
- ▶ Know your limits
- ▶ Take sufficient supplies

Visit [www.adventuresmart.org.nz](http://www.adventuresmart.org.nz) for more information.

## Further information

**Tititea/Mount Aspiring National Park Visitor Centre**

1 Ballantyne Road  
Wanaka 9305

**PHONE: 03 443 7660**

**EMAIL: [mtaspiringvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:mtaspiringvc@doc.govt.nz)**

**[www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)**

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable ground
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimise the effects of fire
- Respect wildlife and farm animals
- Be considerate of others



leave no trace  
NEW ZEALAND



**No unauthorised drones within Hāwea Conservation Park**

### Drones can:

- interfere with helicopters for search and rescue, fire and operational needs
- cause noise – disturbing native birds and visitors.



BETWEEN WATERWAYS

Stop the spread of didymo and other freshwater pests. Remember to Check, Clean, Dry all items before entering, and when moving between, waterways.

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Top Timaru Hut. Photo: Chris Sydney

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Te Papa Atawhai

## Kidds Bush

### Kidds Bush Nature Walk

30 min, 1 km loop

An easy, enjoyable track through mountain beech forest around the Kidds Bush Campsite.

### Sawyer Burn Track

5 hr, 8 km return

The Sawyer Burn Track veers off the Kidds Bush Nature Walk and zigzags up through beech forest to the bushline, where you will get good views of Lake Hāwea. The track then leaves the lake behind to sidle inland to the old Sawyer Burn Hut, tucked into bush on the side of the hill.

## Track grades



### Walking track

Short, easy walk for people of most ages and fitness levels. Track is well formed, with an even, well drained surface. There may be steps. Stream and rivers crossings are bridged.



### Tramping track

Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking, suitable for people with moderate to high-level backcountry (remote areas) skills and experience. Navigation and survival skills required. Track is mostly unformed with steep, rough or muddy sections. Expect unbridged stream and river crossings. Tramping/hiking boots required.



### Mountain biking: advanced (Grade 4)

A mixture of long, steep climbs, narrow track, poor traction and obstacles that are difficult to avoid or jump over. Generally exposed at the track's outside edge. Most riders will find some sections easier to walk.

## Hunting and fishing

You must have a DOC hunting permit to carry a firearm in the park. Hunters must abide by the New Zealand Police Arms Code and the Arms Act 1983. Visit [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) for a permit.

Brown and rainbow trout are found in the rivers. A current fishing licence is required, available from [fishandgame.org.nz](http://fishandgame.org.nz)

## Nau mai, haere mai

### WELCOME

Hāwea Conservation Park covers over 105,000 hectares of rugged mountain country, interspersed with tussock, tawhai/beech forest and sparkling clear rivers. The park borders Mount Aspiring National Park to the west and Ahuriri Conservation Park in the east.

According to Māori legend, Lake Hāwea was dug by the Waitaha explorer Rākaihautū with his kō (Polynesian digging stick). After Waitaha arrived at Whakatū (Nelson) in the Uruao waka, Rākaihautū divided his people into two groups and led his group down the middle of the island, digging the freshwater lakes of Te Waipounamu (the South Island). Lake Hāwea was named after Kāti Hāwea, one of the first iwi to occupy Te Waipounamu before the southern migrations of Kāti Māmoe and Kāti Tahu. The lake was an important component of the seasonal Kāti Tahu food gathering patterns, with many kāinga mahinga kai (food gathering places) and kāinga nohoanga (settlements) around it.

## Huts and campsites

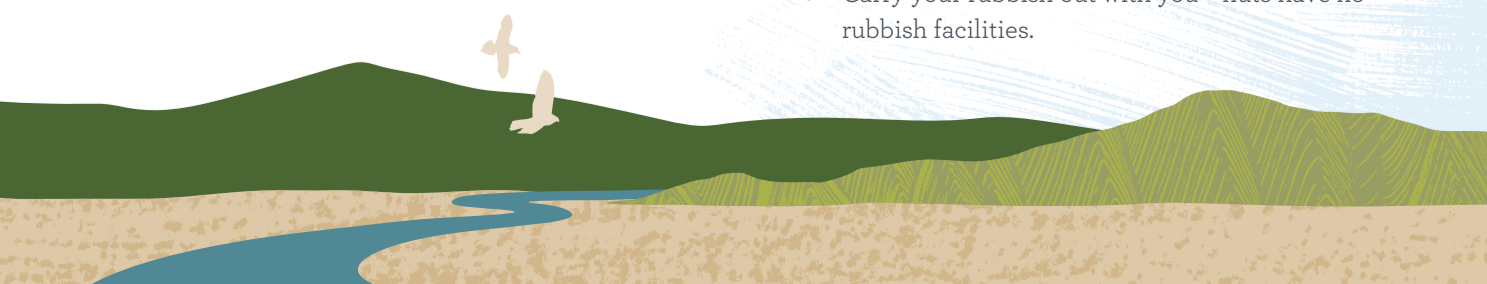
- ▶ All huts in the park have mattresses and a log burner or open fireplace for heating (except for Top Timaru and Pakituhi huts, which have mattresses but no heating). You should carry cooking equipment.
- ▶ All huts in the park work on a first-come basis. You must buy Backcountry Hut Tickets or passes before your trip, from DOC Visitor Centres or approved outlets – see [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)
- ▶ Camping beside huts is free and gives you access to toilets and water.
- ▶ Camping elsewhere within the conservation park is permitted, but you must choose your site carefully and follow the Leave No Trace principles. Make sure you bury toilet waste well away from any water sources, or bring it out with you.

## Remember

- ▶ Leave huts clean and tidy. Replace the firewood and kindling, extinguish the fire and close all windows and doors securely.
- ▶ Carry your rubbish out with you – huts have no rubbish facilities.



Hunter River. Photo: DOC




## Timaru River Valley

### Timaru River Track

2 days, 44 km one way

- ▶ Timaru River car park to Top Timaru Hut: 10–11 hr, 23 km
- ▶ Top Timaru Hut to Birchwood Road: 5–6 hr, 21 km

The marked track starts on the true left of the river and crosses it several times during the first hour. The track then crosses open flats near Junction Hut (private). After that the track becomes more difficult (although clearly marked), passing through heavily gorged sections around side streams and along scree slopes. Take care crossing a slip 50 m downstream from the Timaru River/Breast Hill Track junction. From the treeline, an hour's open travel leads to the 6-bunk Top Timaru Hut. From there, use the farm track above the hut. This track runs to the head of the valley and climbs to Mount Martha Saddle (1,680 m a.s.l.) before descending into the Avon Burn catchment past Tin Hut (private), leading to the car park on Birchwood Road.



**Te Araroa Trail**  
Te Araroa Trail crosses Hāwea Conservation Park via the Timaru River Valley Track. For information on connecting sections of Te Araroa, please see the *Ahuriri Conservation Park* (Birchwood Rd – Lake Ohau) and *Wanaka Outdoor Pursuits* (Stodys Hut – Fern Burn Hut) brochures.

## Dingle Burn valley

### Dingle Burn Track

3–4 days, 49 km one way

- ▶ Dingle Burn car park to Bush Hut: 7–9 hr, 22 km
- ▶ Bush Hut to Cotters Hut: 7–9 hr, 10 km
- ▶ Cotters Hut to Top Dingle Hut: 3–4 hr, 12 km
- ▶ Top Dingle Hut to Birchwood Road: 3–4 hr, 5 km

Follow the Dingle Burn Peninsula Track to the Turihuka Conservation Area. The Dingle Burn Track then follows the Dingle Burn's true left for 6 km before climbing to a terrace 120 m above the river, where a cut track starts at the edge of the bush. A 20 m section above a 10 m bluff is steep and exposed with loose shingle and no handholds, and is followed by a descent through a steep shingle fan – so only use this section of track when the river is high. In low to normal river flows you can follow the burn all the way to Bush Hut (6 bunks) – this involves numerous river crossings.

Beyond Bush Hut, the track continues up the valley through beech forest before climbing up a narrow ridge for 200 m to bypass a large, unstable slip. After descending, the track crosses several gullies before reaching Cotters Hut (2 bunks).

After Cotters Hut, travel is much easier along grassy flats and terraces for much of the way to the historic Ben Avon Hut (day use only) and then to Top Dingle Hut (6 bunks). A marked track then rises steeply 600 m to the ridgeline, before descending into the Ahuriri valley to Birchwood Road.

**Dogs:** Dogs are only allowed from Birchwood Rd to Bush Hut. There is no dog access on the Lake Hāwea side.

For other tracks accessible from Birchwood Road, see DOC's *Ahuriri Conservation Park* brochure.

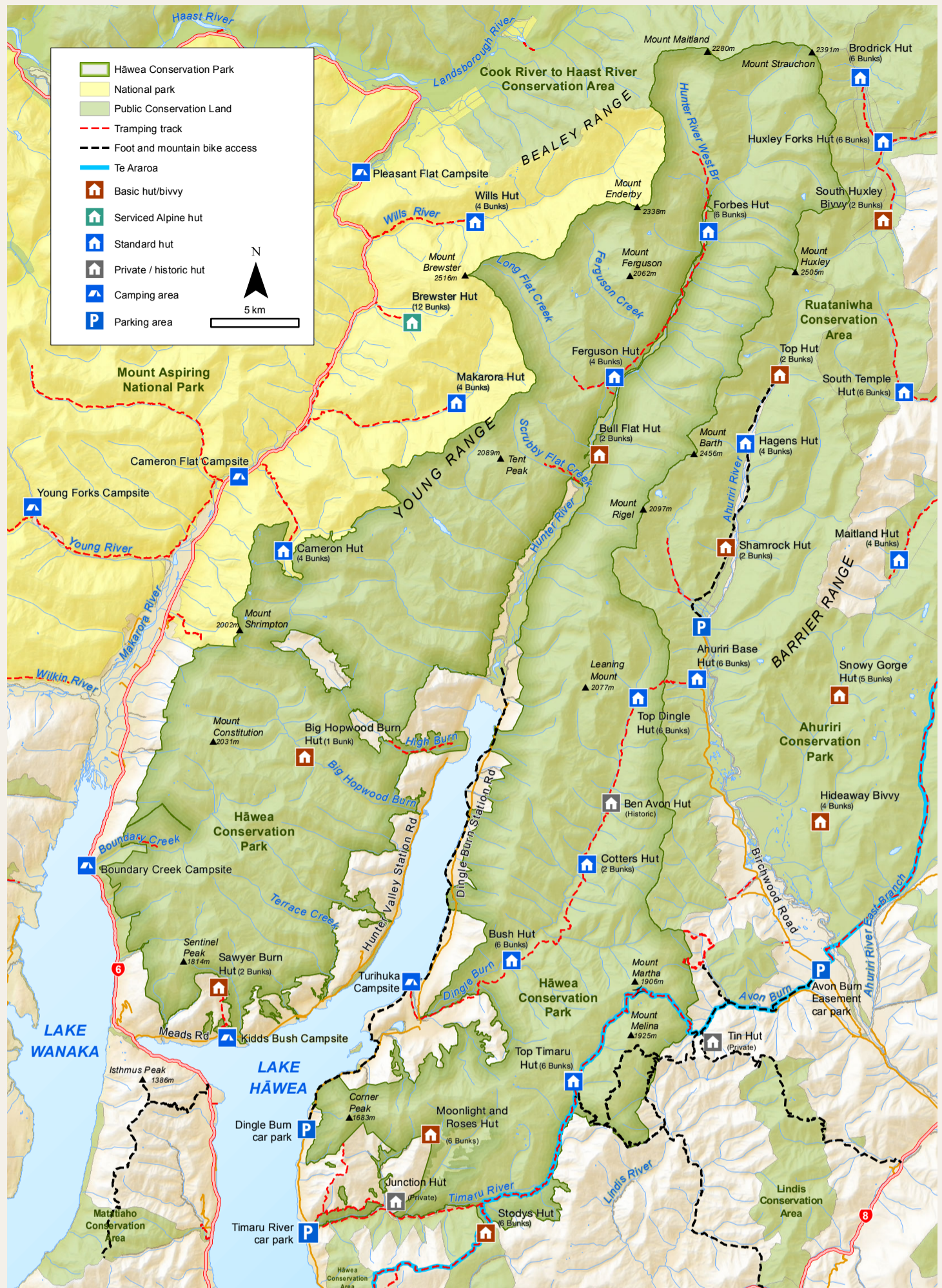
## Hunter valley

### Eastern access

2–3 days, 46.5 km one way

- ▶ Dingle Burn car park to Turihuka campsite: 3–4 hr, 12 km
- ▶ Turihuka campsite to Hunter River mouth: 10–12 hr, 20 km
- ▶ Hunter River mouth to Scrubby Flat Creek: 3–4 hr, 14.5 km

From the Dingle Burn car park, follow the 4WD road (private) above the lake to Silver Island Bay. Here the public track leaves the road, crosses the Silver Burn and climbs around the peninsula's western side to the Turihuka Conservation Area. There is a basic campsite here with a picnic table and toilet, at the mouth of the Dingle Burn. From there, the undulating Lake Hāwea Track fords the Dingle Burn and weaves in and out of pockets of kānuka and beech forest to the Hunter River mouth. The track up to Scrubby Flat Creek follows extensive valley flats, weaving through open grasslands and pockets of forest, and crosses the braided river several times.



### Western access

Kidds Bush to Scrubby Flat Creek: 12 hr, 45 km one way

*Closed for lambing 1 October – 1 December*

The 4WD farm road from the Kidds Bush Campsite to Scrubby Flat Creek crosses through Hunter Valley Station. Access to the Hāwea Conservation Park boundary at Scrubby Flat takes at least 4 hours by vehicle and 12 hours on foot. **You must have permission from the landowner to cross Hunter Valley Station** – apply on [www.huntervalleystation.co.nz](http://www.huntervalleystation.co.nz) at least 2 days before your trip. There are 22 gates along the farm road – leave these as you find them.

From Terrace Creek the 4WD farm road follows the Hunter River valley floor for about 30 km, climbing 300 m in places with regular steep drop offs from the farm road to the lake. Take care – the farm road is generally only 3–5 m wide, and there are many blind corners and places where passing is impossible. The bridge at Little Hopwood Burn is unsafe and has been closed – follow signs for the detour.

Over the first 25 km there are six river crossings to ford. There are another four crossings after this, on the river valley floor up to Scrubby Flat Creek.

**Dogs:** Permission is required from Hunter Valley Station. If access is granted, dogs must be on a leash or confined in a vehicle at all times when travelling through station land.

### Hunter Valley Track

1 day, 23 km one way

- ▶ Scrubby Flat Creek to Ferguson Hut: 1 hr 30 min – 2 hr, 7 km
- ▶ Ferguson Hut to Forbes Hut: 2–3 hr, 10 km
- ▶ Forbes Hut to West Branch bushline: 3 hr, 6 km

This track starts at Scrubby Flat Creek. From the creek to Ferguson Hut there is no marked track; **navigation skills are required**, and the Hunter River must be crossed at least four times.

From Ferguson Hut, follow the 4WD track to cross Ferguson Creek and continue to the end of the grassy flat. From here there is no marked track. Follow and cross the Hunter River. The track then leads through a narrow neck of forest to Joes Flat. After the flat it re-enters the forest and emerges on a terrace at the bottom of Forbes Flat. Forbes Hut is halfway up the flat.

Beyond Forbes Hut, follow the flat up and cross the Hunter River below the forks – take care as it can be dangerous after heavy rain. Cross the West Branch to the start of the track, on a ridge between the East and West branches. About an hour from the forks, the track crosses the river and continues on its true right to the bushline.