

# Walks in the Punakaiki area

Paparoa  
National Park



## Look after yourself

Know what the weather is doing. Be aware it can change dramatically in a short period of time and choose a walk that matches the weather conditions and your level of experience. Sturdy footwear is recommended on all but the shortest of walks. For walks longer than an hour, pack a small first aid kit and take extra food and drink. Insect repellent is recommended to ward off sandflies and mosquitoes.



### River crossings and flood conditions

Some of the walks described in this brochure require river crossings and some creek-bed travel. Choose fording spots with care; take your time and look for the shallowest place to cross. Fords can shift and change in wet weather. Rivers and creeks can rise suddenly and become impassable. Wait until water levels fall before moving on again or else turn back. If you are caught out in the rain and the rivers and creeks are too high to cross, seek shelter on safe high ground. This may mean an unexpected night out.



### Your safety is your responsibility

**Tell someone your plans; it may save your life.**

Visit [www.mountainsafety.org.nz](http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz) to learn more.

Leave your intentions with a trusted contact.



leave no trace  
NEW ZEALAND

- 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



Department of  
Conservation  
Te Papa Atawhai

# Nau mai, haere mai, tauti mai

## Welcome to the Paparoa National Park

Punakaiki sits on the edge of Paparoa National Park and serves as its centre. Established in 1987, the park has over 38,000 ha of varied landscapes ranging from mountain tops to sea level. Its best known feature is the Pancake Rocks and blowholes, found close to Punakaiki village.

The rugged outline of the Paparoa Range, formed from ancient granite slowly shaped by ice, provides an impressive backdrop to the park.

Limestone underlies most of the park and is responsible for the area's amazing landforms - high coastal cliffs, impressive river canyons, delicate cave formations and the well known, bizarre 'pancake stack' coastal formations.

Forest birds such as tūī, korimako/bellbird and kererū/New Zealand pigeon migrate seasonally between coastal and upland forests.

A tūī/Westland petrel colony south of the Punakaiki River is the only known place in the world where these burrowing seabirds breed. They live mostly out at sea but during the breeding season you can see them flying to and from the colony at dusk and dawn.

You will be lucky to see the nocturnal and secretive roroa/great spotted kiwi, but if you stop at night to listen and hear a loud snuffing or a harsh whistling cry, you'll know one is close by.

### What you need to know

This brochure outlines walks that range from around 15 minutes to a full day. Many tracks pass through densely forested karst limestone areas that are the very essence of the park.

Times given here are a guide only and will vary depending on fitness, weather and track conditions. The maps are intended as a guide to indicate locations and access. In relation to rivers, the terms 'true left' and 'true right' refer to the left or right side of the river when travelling downstream.



### Paparoa Track and Pike29 Memorial Track 9

Great  
Walks  
—

2–3 days walking one way

1–2 days mountain biking one way

55 km one way

Providing a challenging and exciting hike or ride through the spectacular natural wilderness of the Paparoa National Park, this new Great Walk begins on the Croesus track, via the Smoko-ho car park near Blackball and crosses over the Paparoa Range to end at the Pororari River car park in Punakaiki.

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







Fox River/Dilemma Creek Junction

## Inland Pack Track

 **Inland Pack Track ①**  
2–3 days, 27 km one way

Built in 1867 during the gold rush to avoid dangerous coastal travel, the track gives access to some of the finest features of Paparoa National Park. There are no huts along the way, but there is sheltered camping under the Ballroom Overhang, where there is a toilet.

 This track is recommended for experienced trampers only. Numerous river and creek crossings are dangerous in flood.


 Many of the structures between Bullock Creek farm and Fossil Creek are damaged and slippery – take extra care walking this section. Walkers will also have to negotiate fallen trees along Fossil Creek – allow

extra time. Check at your local DOC Visitor Centre to gauge the skills and experience needed for this tramp.

*Access: Via Waikori Road, 800 m south of the Visitor Centre. An alternative start is via the Pororari River track car park, 1 km north of the Paparoa National Park Visitor Centre.*





Fox River/Dilemma Creek Junction

  **Ballroom Overhang route ②**  
2 hr, 6 km one way

Some of the park's finest limestone features are in this area. The Ballroom Overhang, about 500 m upstream from the Fox River/Dilemma Creek confluence, is a large limestone outcrop providing a safe place to shelter or camp overnight. It's also a good option to visit as a half-day hike.

The Ballroom is reached via the Inland Pack Track, starting from the car park at the mouth of the Fox River. The first part of the track follows along the true right of the river through bush and over braided river-bed sections. After about 30 minutes a river crossing is required to rejoin the track on the true left of the river, where it continues for 2 km through the gorge, frequently climbing and dropping to negotiate bluffs.

 Several river crossings along the route will rise rapidly and become impassable during heavy rain. Check weather forecasts before you go.

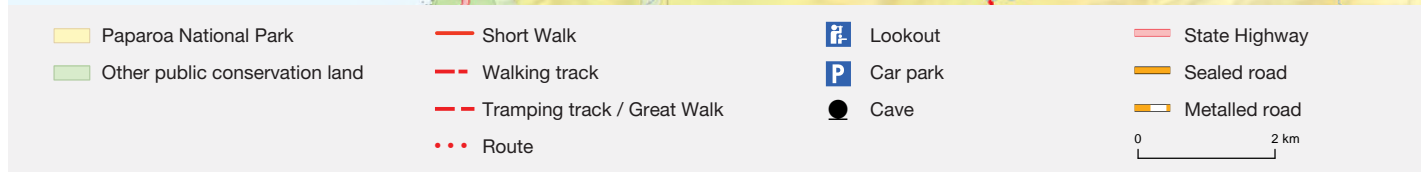
 The formed section of track ends at the confluence of Fox River and Dilemma Creek, where the track becomes a route. From here, there is a further 500 m of river-bed travel and river crossings to reach the Ballroom, located on the true left of the Fox River.

*Access: Via the Inland Pack Track, signposted by the main road bridge at Fox River, 12 km north of Punakaiki.*

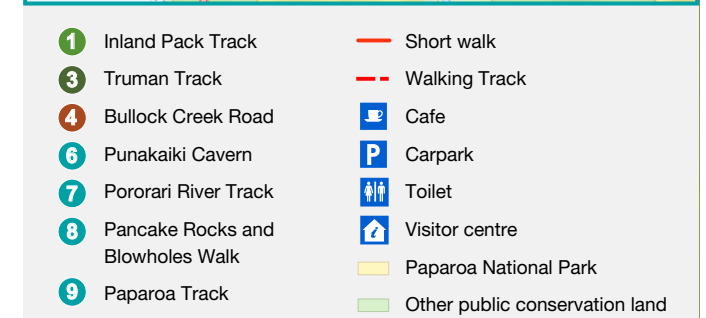
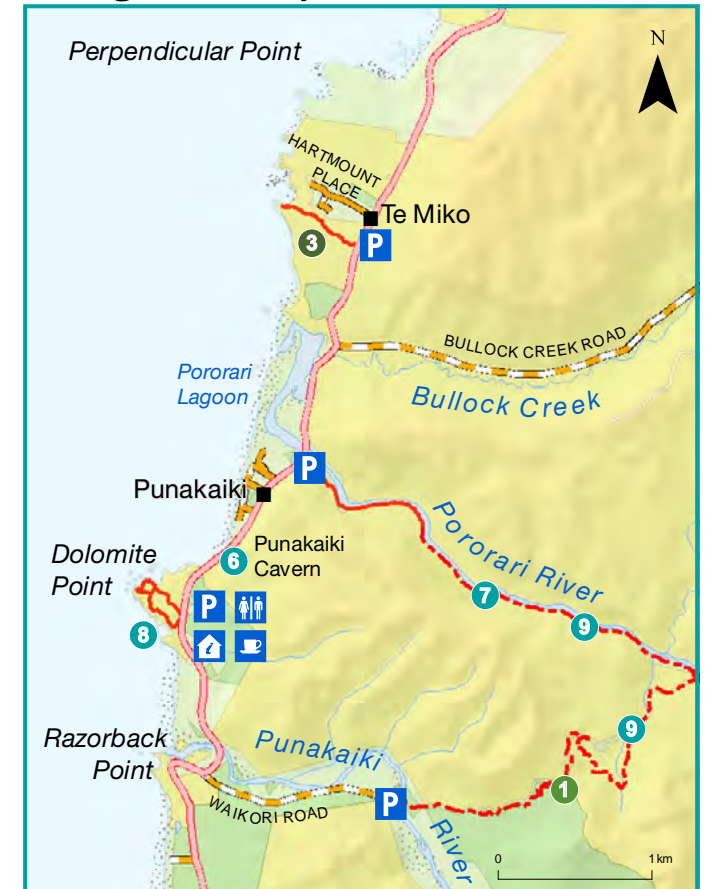


Ballroom Overhang

# Overview map



# Enlargement map



## Track grades



**Easy access short walk** – Suitable for people of all abilities, and wheelchairs and pushchairs. Walking shoes required.



**Short walk** – Well-formed track with easy walking for up to an hour. There may be steps or slopes. Suitable for most abilities and fitness levels. Walking shoes required.



**Walking track** – Easy-to-moderate walking from a few minutes to a day. Track is mostly well formed; some sections may be steep, rough or muddy. Walking shoes required.



**Tramping track** – Challenging tramping/hiking. May have steep grades. Suitable for fit, experienced and adequately equipped people. Tramping boots required.



**Route** – Challenging tramping/hiking. Track is unformed and suitable only for people with high-level backcountry skills and experience.



Photo: Baptiste Maryns

Truman Track



Photo: R Rossiter, DOC

Pancake Rocks Coastal Walkway



### Truman Track 3

15 min, 700 m one way

Truman Track is a walk through unspoiled subtropical forest where podocarp and rātā trees tower above thickets of vine and nīkau palms. The track emerges on a spectacular coastline with cliffs, caverns, a blowhole and a waterfall that plummets straight onto a rock-strewn beach. A stairway provides access to the beach. It is safe to explore here when the tide is out.

*Access: From the main road, 3 km north of the Papanui National Park Visitor Centre.*



### Pancake Rocks and Blowholes Walk 8

20 min, 1.1 km round trip

This is an all-weather walk around the curious limestone formations of pancake rocks and blowholes. With the exception of an optional short section with steps, the walk is suitable for wheelchairs (with assistance). Blowholes form from a mixture of compressed water and air escaping through the caverns below and being forced upwards, creating a huge wall of spray. They are at their best around high tide when there is a south-westerly swell. Spectacular views, geological oddities, coastal forest, rich birdlife and marine mammals are highlights along this walk.

*Access: From the main road, opposite the Visitor Centre.*



### Punakaiki Cavern 6

Time: Take as long as you like

This is a short walk from the village and very close to the main road. A wooden stairway gives access to 130 m of safe passages within the cavern. It can be fun for all ages. Look out for stalactites and glow worms. Remember to carry a good torch (and preferably a spare) and be aware it can be damp underfoot.

*Access: Signposted beside the main road, 500 m north of the Visitor Centre.*



Photo: Baptiste Maryns

Pororari River Track



Photos unless stated otherwise - R. Rossiter, DOC

Pororari Track

 **Punakaiki – Pororari Loop** 7 1  
3 hr, 11 km round trip

This popular walking track combines the southern section of the Inland Pack Track and the Paparoa Great Walk with the Pororari River Track. It follows the mountain bike entry/exit for the Paparoa Track and crosses the Punakaiki River via a footbridge, then follows an easy graded climb through mature rain forest over the ridge dividing the two river valleys. When you reach the Pororari River Track junction it is worth continuing along the Inland Pack Track for a short distance to the swing bridge, a perfect place for a rest and something to eat. Return to the junction and then follow the Pororari River Track down river to the car park on State Highway 6. The Pororari River Track is the pedestrian entry/exit for the Paparoa Track. From there it is a 1 km walk south along the highway to the Visitor Centre.

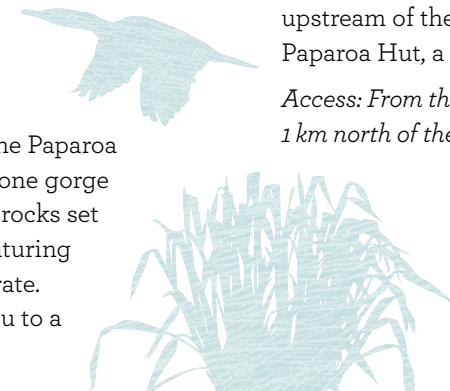
*Access: From the Visitor Centre follow State Highway 6 south to Waikori Road, 200 m on the left after the Punakaiki River. (Note: The vehicle bridge on State Highway 6 over the Punakaiki River has pedestrian access on the upstream side). Follow Waikori Road for 1 km to the car park. The track starts 50 m further down the road on the left, at the footbridge. Ensure you leave the farm gate at the start of Waikori Road closed at all times.*

 **Pororari River Track** 7  
45 min, 3.5 km one way

The track is the pedestrian entry/exit for the Paparoa Great Walk. It follows a spectacular limestone gorge with two main features – a river with huge rocks set among deep pools, and beautiful forest featuring subtle changes from subtropical to temperate. A 15-min stroll from the car park brings you to a

seat and a lookout, with spectacular views of the river gorge and its magnificent limestone cliffs. From this point, the track narrows and the gradients become a bit steeper as the track continues for another 2.5 km until it meets the Inland Pack Track. Five minutes beyond this junction, following beside the river, the track leads to a suspension bridge – an ideal place for a rest and a photo before retracing your steps back to the car park. For the more adventurous, the Paparoa Great Walk continues upstream of the Pororari suspension bridge to the Paparoa Hut, a further 3–4 hr up the track.

*Access: From the car park by the Pororari River bridge, 1 km north of the Visitor Centre on State Highway 6.*





Cave Creek

Photo: Shellie Evans



Pancake Rocks



Punakaiki Cavern



Pororari swing bridge



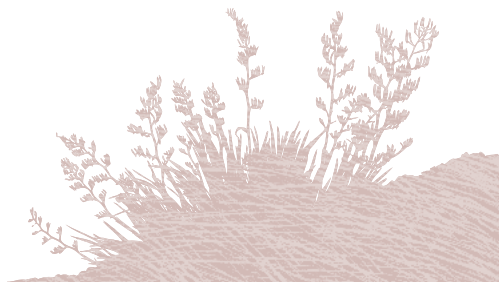
## Cave Creek/Kotihotiho Track 5

40 min, 2 km one way

From the car park at the end of Bullock Creek Road, follow the track markers to the T-intersection. Turn right as indicated by the track sign and continue for 300 m until the stone memorial is reached. Turn left and continue to a signpost indicating the track to Cave Creek/Kotihotiho. After crossing a ridge, the track descends into a deeply incised gorge. The creek-bed where the track ends is usually bouldery and dry. In normal conditions, the stream emerges from underneath rocks in several places near here. During and after heavy rain a torrent rages past the foot of the track, barring further progress. Ensure you take care to

avoid trampling the mosses and liverworts growing on rocks and banks. Do not enter the creek bed if it is raining, as water levels can rise dramatically with very little warning.

*Access: Begin at the car park on Bullock Creek Road (a 6 km gravel road), which leaves the main road 2 km north of the Visitor Centre. Caution: This road is prone to flooding during heavy rain.*



Pancake Rocks

Photo: Shellie Evans

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New Zealand Government

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## Pororari River – Bullock Creek Road 7 4 5–6 hr, 15 km round trip

This track links the Pororari River Track with the scenic Bullock Creek Road and follows a section of the Inland Pack Track, passing through part of the Paparoa limestone syncline (a fold of stratified rock). The mature forest here supports many birds, including rare species such as kākā and kiwi. Cyclone Ita (April 2014) caused the extensive treefalls you can see here. Once the Bullock Creek flats are reached, continue to the

T-intersection, and turn left to follow the track markers to the car park. Complete the loop by walking down Bullock Creek Road (6 km) and out to State Highway 6. From here, it is another 1 km south along the highway to return to the Pororari car park.

*Access: From the Pororari River car park, 1 km north of the Visitor Centre on State Highway 6.*



Pororari River