

scrambling and boulder-hopping down the riverbed and through adjacent bush (sometimes on distinct bits of track which may be marked). Upper Deception Hut is reached in just over an hour, before Good Luck Creek on the true right bank. It is very easy to miss this hut on its scrub-covered river terrace.

Continue on or beside the riverbed for a further 2 hours 30 minutes until it opens out into a large flat on the true left, just below Gorge Creek. Below this flat the river passes a small, warm, sulphur-smelling spring then narrows to the gates of the lower gorge. Continue on down the lower gorge for 2 hours or more to the open flat where the Deception meets Otira River.

The footbridge across the Otira is just north of the confluence (on the true right bank of the Deception).

### Coast to Coast and blue duck/whio

The annual Coast to Coast event runs every second Friday and Saturday in February ([www.coasttocoast.co.nz](http://www.coasttocoast.co.nz)). It is not uncommon in spring and summer to come across people training for the event, running from west to east. The now retired race founder, Robin Judkins, sponsors the Blue Duck Recovery Programme to protect blue duck/whio in the Mingha and Deception valleys. Any blue duck sightings should be reported to DOC visitor centre staff in Arthur's Pass.



Blue duck/whio. Photo: Tyronne Smith

### Huts

**Mingha Bivvy:** Basic, 2 bunks, mattresses

**Goat Pass Hut:** Standard, 20 bunks, no heating or cooking facilities, radio

**Upper Deception Hut:** Basic, 6 bunks, mattresses

#### Hut fees:

Serviced huts: Adult \$15.00 per night, youth (11-17 years) \$7.50 per night, child (up to 10 years) free

Standard huts: Adult \$5.00 per night, youth (11-17 years) \$2.50 per night, child (up to 10 years) free

Basic huts: Free

*Purchase hut tickets or passes before you leave from any DOC office or selected i-SITEs.*

### Further information

For information, maps, weather forecasts and track condition updates:

**Arthur's Pass National Park Visitor Centre**

SH73, Arthur's Pass

Phone 03 318 9211

8.00 am - 5.00 pm (summer), 8.30 am - 4.30 pm (winter)

[arthurspassvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:arthurspassvc@doc.govt.nz)

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

[www.adventuresmart.org.nz](http://www.adventuresmart.org.nz)

Cover: The Deception River is home to our endangered blue duck/whio. The birds on this river are protected by the Coast to Coast's predator trapping programme.

*Background photo: marathon-photos.com.*

*Whio photo: Tyronne Smith*

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## ROUTE GUIDE

# Mingha – Deception (east to west)



Arthur's Pass National Park



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

**DOC HOTline**  
**0800 362 468**  
Report any safety hazards  
or conservation emergencies  
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

## Summary

**Time:** 2-3 days (shuttle required)

**Grade:** Route

**Experience:** Suitable for well-equipped people with previous backcountry tramping experience. River crossing skills essential.

**Best season:** Summer, autumn and early winter

**Required maps:** NZTopo50: Otira BV20

**Hazards:** Flooded rivers, avalanches, steep drop-offs and bluffs

**Note:** True left and true right refer to the side of the valley or river when facing and looking downstream.

**Safety:** This route guide must be read in conjunction with *Tramping in Arthur's Pass National Park*, a free brochure with important safety information, and New Zealand's *Outdoor Safety Code*.

Take appropriate clothing and equipment. Mountain weather can change quickly – before setting out, check the latest track conditions and avalanche advisory with the Arthur's Pass Visitor Centre.



Your safety is your responsibility. Before you go, know the **Outdoor Safety Code** – 5 simple rules to help you stay safe:

- 1. Plan your trip properly** – Ensure that you have a capable leader.
- 2. Tell someone** – Leave your trip details with a trusted contact and at [www.adventuresmart.org.nz](http://www.adventuresmart.org.nz).
- 3. Check the weather** – Including [www.avalanche.net.nz](http://www.avalanche.net.nz) and the latest information on hazards and facilities before you start.
- 4. Know your limits** – Physical fitness and good equipment will make all the difference.
- 5. Take sufficient supplies** – Carry a sleeping bag, cooking utensils, sufficient food, raincoat, overtrousers, gloves, hat, and several layers of warm clothes.

## Crossing the alps via two river valleys

The Mingha-Deception route forms the 30.5 km run leg of New Zealand's most iconic multi-sport race – the annual Coast to Coast event. The route can be walked from the east or west – this guide covers east to west (note that west to east is detailed in a separate guide). From the eastern side, it follows the Mingha River from Klondyke Corner off SH73, crosses the Main Divide at Goat Pass, and then follows the Deception River to come out at State Highway 73 (SH73) by Aickens corner.

### River crossing experience is essential

Both the Deception and Mingha rivers can be dangerous. Do not attempt this trip when these rivers are high or when bad weather is forecast. Travel up the Deception River will require up to 30 compulsory river crossings.

Rivers can flood at any time of year. If rivers and side streams are in flood, seek shelter and wait until water levels fall before crossing.

## Getting there

The east coast end of the trip leaves SH73, 5 km south of Arthur's Pass village, near Greyneys Shelter. The west-coast end of the trip is also accessed from SH73.

There is some parking available off SH73, but vehicles have been broken into. There are also two bus shuttle services between Christchurch and Hokitika. Atomic Shuttle runs from Christchurch to Hokitika and back each day, and the West Coast Shuttle runs a return journey from Hokitika to Christchurch every day.

## ROUTE FROM EAST TO WEST

### Bealey River – Mingha River – Goat Pass Hut

**Time:** 5 hours

5 km south of Arthur's Pass village, cross Bealey River after it meets the Mingha River. The rivers are constantly changing course so you will need to find the best place to cross. If Bealey River is too high to ford, postpone the trip. Do not use the Bealey rail bridge to get to the Mingha.

Once across Bealey River go up the Mingha riverbed, crossing the river as necessary for about 1 hour until the river narrows to a gorge. Just past a side creek on the true right, a marked track enters the bush on that (western) side. The track climbs well above the gorge on to Dudley Knob, and then makes its way back to the river close to the bush line.

Shortly after the track emerges from the bush there is small hut, Mingha Bivvy. From here follow the marked trail, crossing Mingha River where it bends west towards Temple Col and is met by the stream running down from Goat Pass.

The marked track resumes here through subalpine scrub on the true left of Goat Pass Stream, leading onto boardwalk across the boggy sections. The track continues across sections of boardwalk through to the obvious summit of Goat Pass. Goat Pass Hut is in a hollow just north of the pass. Goat Pass Hut has a radio linked to Arthur's Pass Visitor Centre. Calls can be made during office hours for weather forecasts and information.

### Lake Mavis – side trip

**Time:** 2 hours

For parties in the summer with time in hand at Goat Pass, the 500 m climb to Lake Mavis is worthwhile. Climb the steep tussock and scree on the spur running east from Goat Pass, then follow the cairned ridge route – perhaps the easiest access to a high-level lake in the park.

This area is subject to avalanche activity during the winter. During heavy snow conditions, we advise visitors not to travel this route unless sufficiently equipped, and experienced enough to assess the conditions and choose a safe path through avalanche terrain.

### Goat Pass Hut – Deception River – SH73

**Time:** 8-9 hours



*The western part of this route involves a lot of riverbed travel; route times are highly changeable depending on the state of the river crossings.*

Follow the marked route down a creek bed through scrub into the upper Deception River. The route now involves