

Douglas Range (route guide)

Kahurangi National Park



Introduction

The Douglas Range route links Aorere Valley to Cobb Valley. This route guide describes the route from the Aorere Valley and is suitable for trampers with a high degree of off-track experience and fitness who should allow at least five days and, if possible, one or two extra days to complete this trip. Streams and rivers are not bridged and the route has many exposed sections.

How to get there

Turn off the road at the Bainham Store, 18km from Collingwood and follow AA signs along James Road to the Aorere River Bridge. Cross the bridge and follow the road to the end, at Graeme Pomeroy's Boulder River Farms cowshed. Turn left and continue a further 2km to the Intentions Shelter. Please respect this access by being considerate to the landowner and the stock. Drive slowly. If you plan on arriving after dark please contact the landowner Graeme Pomeroy (03) 524 8389.

Walking the route

Road end to Boulder Lake Hut (7–8 h)

The first 5 km of track is easy and takes one hour. From here the track passes over limestone-capped terrain with some challenging gaps to cross, then climbs steadily through beech and mānuka forest. The track sidles along the left of the Pulpit to eventually emerge at the open Cow Saddle.

From Cow Saddle the track is fully exposed to the weather conditions. Follow the poled route to the lake. The route sidles around to the right to a point beside a small rock outcrop on the skyline ridge. Continue to sidle under the bluffs of Brown Cow, crossing the top of a shingle scree and descend on a tussock spur down to the lake itself, emerging at the junction of Kiwi Creek and Boulder Lake where there is a campsite. To reach Boulder Lake Hut (standard hut, 8 bunks) continue around the eastern edge of the lake.

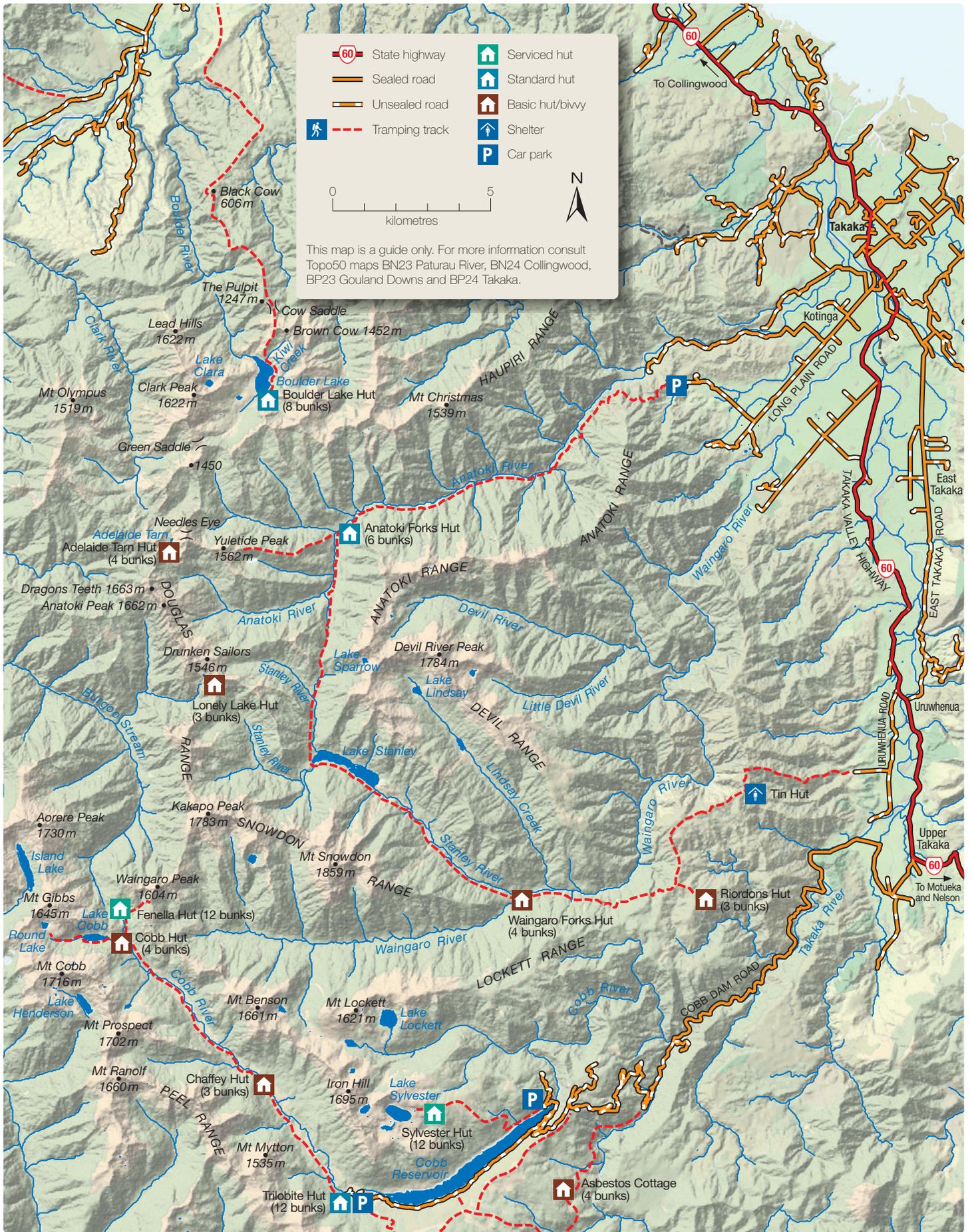
Side trip to dam wall

From Kiwi Creek a 30 minute (one way) side trip can be made to view the remains of the dam wall, built by gold miners across the lake outlet stream. The water from the lake was led by a long series of flumes and aqueducts to sluice gold claims on the Quartz Range goldfields, 6 km away. You can view the spectacular 65-metre waterfall, which marks the beginning of the Boulder River, by climbing to an obvious vantage point further to the west of the wall remains.

Boulder Lake Hut to Adelaide Tarn Hut (5–6 h)

This section is very exposed to harsh weather conditions. Carry gas or liquid fuel cookers as wood fuel is unavailable at Adelaide Tarn and Lonely Lake Huts, and a tent as these huts have limited sleeping space.

From Boulder Lake Hut continue up the valley to pick up rock cairns that lead up the only tussock spur to Green Saddle. There is an optional sidle to the left into Green Saddle starting above the bush edge in this spur. Continue to the next small saddle before and under point 1450 metres. Here two large rock cairns on a quartz outcrop mark the first two sidles on the Anatoki side of this main ridge to the Needles Eye. The first sidle is on a cairned animal track passing under point 1450 metres, then it gains and follows the stunted bush ridge to the second sidle under points 1411 metres and 1488 metres. Descend and sidle through bush on a marked animal track to pick up cairns across a tussock face under the obvious rock ribs. This then leads to the top of the first finger of bush in a narrow gut under the Needles Eye. Climb this flax-filled gut to the Needles Eye (saddle). From the Eye descend directly onto a short tussock spur to an obvious track and terrace that leads towards Adelaide Tarn and hut (basic hut, 4 bunks). Do not attempt to sidle from the Eye around the Needle to the hut—it is steep and bluffed.



Adelaide Tarn to Anatoki Forks Hut (5–6 h)

If going from Boulder Lake to Anatoki Forks Hut (standard hut, 6 bunks) directly, follow the cairned route from the Needles Eye sidling down towards the saddle leading to Yuletide. This route passes under bluff and rocky sections on the northern slopes of the Needle, reaching the saddle and then climbs up and over Yuletide Peak.

From Adelaide Tarn retrace the route back to the Needles Eye and sidle around the north side of the Needle. The route over Yuletide Peak is cairned. The route goes over Yuletide Peak then follows the long, rather broken ridge towards the Forks. A marked track is reached and descends steeply through silver and mountain beech forest to the south branch of the Anatoki River. This river crossing can be extremely difficult and it may be necessary to go up river to cross or wait it out. Once across the river the track meets the Anatoki Track. Turn left and follow the track to the Anatoki Forks Hut.

Lonely Lake Hut to Adelaide Tarn (8–10 h)

All Grid References refer to map BP23 Goulard Downs.

From the hut head north up a small gully to a saddle north-west of the Drunken Sailors. From here sidle eastwards on the northern side of the Drunken Sailors to an open spur. Follow this spur north-eastwards to Grid Reference 636 642. From here follow the long ridge that drops to the north-east into the Anatoki River, arriving at Grid Reference 640 652.

From here, head up the Anatoki River to the forks at Grid Reference 626 665. Take the west branch of the river and follow it upstream until below the bluffs north-east of the Dragons Teeth. From here, climb northwards up a steep gut to emerge on the saddle east of Mt Douglas, Grid Reference 614 672. Proceed north-east down into the basin to Adelaide Tarn and hut.

Adelaide Tarn to Lonely Lake Hut (8–10 h)

All Grid References refer to map BP23 Goulard Downs.

From Adelaide Tarn climb up behind the hut to the saddle directly east of Mt Douglas, Grid Reference 614 672. A steep gut marked with a rock cairn gives access to the headwaters of the Anatoki River. Once in the bush at the base of this gut, head further southward until below the bluffs under the Dragons Teeth. From here veer eastwards following the course of the stream which becomes the Anatoki River. Follow the Anatoki River downstream to Grid Reference 640 652. From this point climb the ridge to the south-west and emerge on an open ridge east of the Drunken Sailors. From here sidle on the north side of the Drunken Sailors to pick

Tramping track

- Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking.
- Track is mostly unformed with steep, rough or muddy sections.
- Suitable for people with good fitness. Moderate to high-level backcountry skills and experience (including navigation and survival skills) required.
- Track has markers, poles or rock cairns. Expect unbridged stream and river crossings.
- Tramping/hiking boots required.

Route

- Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking.
- Track unformed and natural, rough, muddy or very steep.
- Suitable for people with above average fitness. High-level backcountry skills and experience (including navigation and survival skills) required.
- Complete self-sufficiency required.
- Track has markers, poles or rock cairns. Expect unbridged stream and river crossings.
- Sturdy tramping/hiking boots required.

up the cairns leading into a saddle and down to Lonely Lake Hut.

Lonely Lake Hut to Fenella Hut (6–8 h)

From Lonely Lake Hut follow the non-maintained track that sidles up through bush onto the Douglas Range and the open ridge line. Follow the ridge, with the occasional optional sidle on animal tracks. Sidle across the scree under Kakapo Peak and regain the ridge, and then follow the cairned route that sidles below point 1550 metres and Waingarō Peak to reach a bushed spur. Continue down a well-marked track to Fenella Hut (serviced hut, 12 bunks).

Note: The route from Lonely Lake to Waingarō Peak is cairned.

Fenella Hut to Trilobite Hut (4–5 h)

Fenella Hut was built as a memorial to Fenella Druce who was killed in 1977 when the Three John's Hut was blown over a bluff in Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park.

From Fenella Hut the track drops down a series of glacier-worn rocky steps and after about 20 minutes you reach Cobb Hut (basic hut, 4 bunks). A short side walk will take you to Lake Cobb and Round Lake above it. These lakes provided water for the earlier hydroelectric development. From Cobb Hut continue down the valley, passing Chaffey Hut (basic hut, 3 bunks) and finishing at Trilobite Hut (standard hut, 12 bunks) and the road end.

For your safety

The Douglas Range Route is classified suitable for Backcountry Adventurers, i.e. suitable only for experienced backcountry trampers. You will need to carry and know how to use a topographic map. BP24 Takaka and BP23 Goulard Downs are the maps that cover this area. Trampers should be well equipped, fit and self-sufficient. Poor visibility due to mist on the tops can make route finding and orientation difficult. The terrain is often rough. Rain and flooded streams can alter your plans and freezing conditions can occur at any time of year. It is recommended that you leave your intentions with a friend or relative prior to the start of your trip. Remember to notify them when you have completed your trip. Consider carrying a GPS and an emergency beacon.

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468

Report any safety hazards
or conservation emergencies
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

Remember your safety is your responsibility. To report any safety hazards in the outdoors call **DOC HOTline 0800 362 468**.

Please remember

 **To stay in the huts:** Backcountry Hut Tickets or a Backcountry Pass entitles you to stay in the huts. They can be purchased at a DOC office and most i-SITEs. Get your tickets or pass before you start the tramp.

The huts described in this publication are:

- Serviced: 3 Backcountry Hut Tickets per night.
- Standard: 1 Backcountry Hut Ticket per night.
- Basic: free.

 **Serviced huts** have mattresses, water supply, toilets, hand washing facilities and heating with fuel available. They may have cooking facilities with fuel and a warden. The Backcountry Hut Pass or Hut Tickets are required.

 **Standard huts** have mattresses, water supply and toilet. Wood heaters are provided at huts below the bushline. The Backcountry Hut Pass or Backcountry Hut Tickets are required.

 **Basic huts** provide very basic shelter with limited facilities. No charge.

 **Water:** It is recommended you boil, filter, or treat drinking water.

 **Wasps** are a known hazard and are particularly common from December until April. Carry antihistamine if you are allergic to their stings.

 **Avalanches** occur in winter.

 **Hunting and fishing:** Each hunter must carry a permit; each angler must carry a fishing licence.

- 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



Environmental care: Minimise impact on the environment by using a portable cooker. Use only dead wood in fireplaces at huts. There are no rubbish facilities in the backcountry. Carry your own rubbish.

For further information

For more information about the Douglas Range Route contact:

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