

## Wildlife

The reserve also provides a nesting, resting and feeding habitat for native and introduced bird species, including bellbird, fantail, goldfinch, harrier hawk, kingfisher, magpie, pheasant, pipit, redpoll, silver eye, skylark, sparrow, thrush, tūī, grey warbler, shining cuckoo and blackbird.

There are also some kererū (native wood pigeon), and the rare North Island kākā is a seasonal visitor too.

## Managing the environment

Gray's Bush Scenic Reserve is one of the most popular and accessible of the Department of Conservation (DOC) reserves in the region. An estimated 10,000–12,000 people visit each year.

The reserve's ecology is fragile, because it is such a small remnant and the surrounding environment has been highly modified. Possums are a significant threat; many plant pests have also established themselves there. To sustain the forest's health, pest control and monitoring programmes are carried out when needed. There is currently tracked access only at the southern end of the reserve, to allow the rest of the forest to grow undisturbed.

## History

The recreational and botanical significance of Gray's Bush was recognised as early as 1914, when the Commissioner of Crown Lands proposed a land exchange for the bush to its owner at the time, Mr Charles Gray. The bush was then part of Gray's Farm, Waiohika, which he had bought in 1877.



Don McLean (DOC Senior Ranger Biodiversity) talking to a group on a guided walk. Photo: Trudi Ngawhare

The proposal was eventually dropped and it was not until 1926, 8 years after Gray's death, that the trustees of Gray's estate offered the bush to the Crown as a reserve. The bush was formally reserved that year as Gray's Bush Domain.

The reserve was managed by various domain boards until 1979, when it was vested in the Department of Lands and Survey and reclassified as a scenic reserve. It is currently managed by DOC.

## Enjoy the reserve safely



Easiest Short Walk—easy walking for up to an hour.

Track is well formed, with an even, well-drained surface.

Suitable for all age groups and fitness levels. Comfortable footwear to be worn (boots not needed).



Wheelchair access.



No dogs allowed.

## Care for the reserve



Enjoy the reserve, but look after its ecology. Don't litter or take anything from the reserve.



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

## For further information visit [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) or contact:

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

Cover photo: View through the trees at Gray's Bush Scenic Reserve.  
Photo: Trudi Ngawhare

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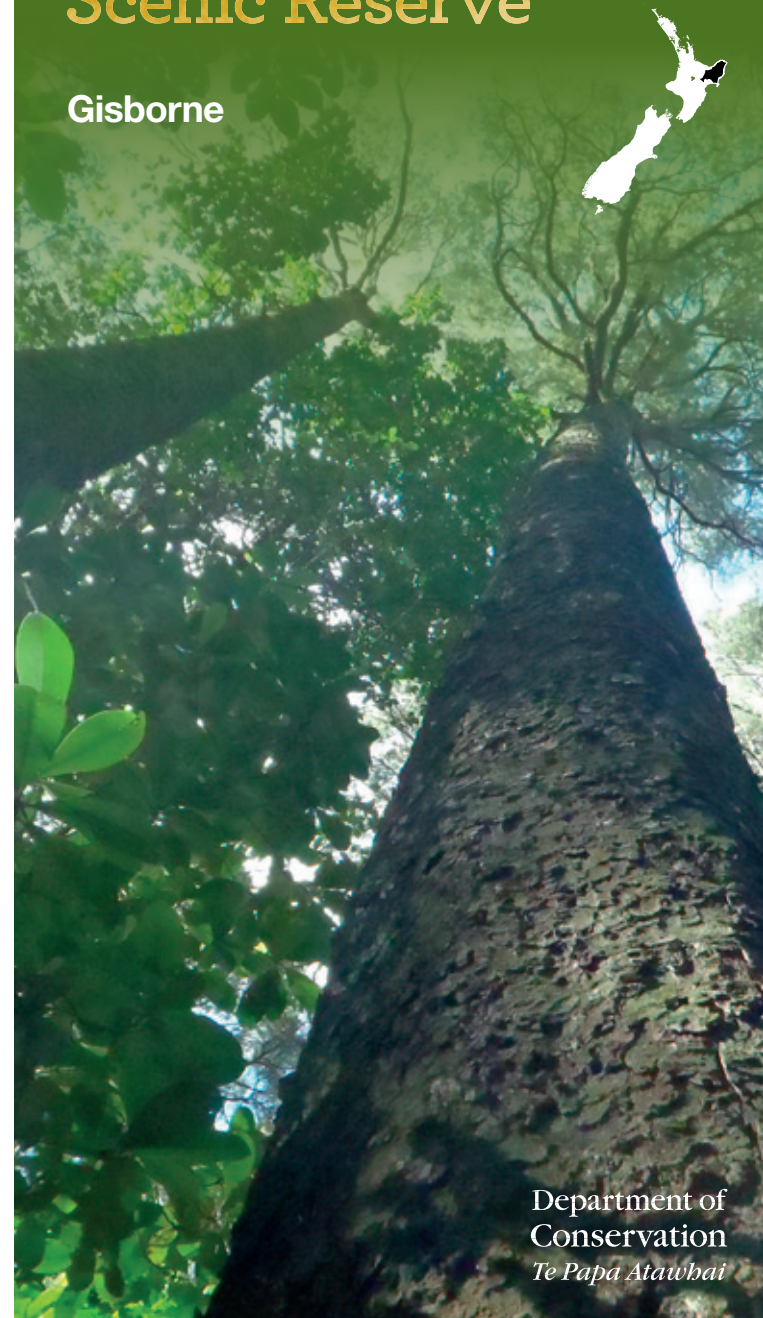
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[New Zealand Government](http://www.doc.govt.nz)



# Gray's Bush Scenic Reserve

Gisborne



Department of Conservation  
Te Papa Atawhai



## Introduction

Gray's Bush Scenic Reserve is one of Gisborne's most popular short-walk destinations. Gray's Bush is a small, flat forest track featuring a spacious car park and a specific wheelchair track. The reserve is one of the few forested areas remaining in the Gisborne plains, a precious and unique surviving piece of native bush. Accessible to all and suitable for all ages and fitness levels, it is perfect for those interested in birdlife and/or vegetation.

## Highlights

- Close to Gisborne city (10 km).
- Easy, flat ground—no hills or steps.
- Access for wheelchairs and buggies.
- Spacious car park.
- Walks from 15 min to 1 hr at a leisurely pace.
- Informative, engaging interpretation signs within the reserve.
- A Toyota Kiwi Guardians adventure site.

## Toyota Kiwi Guardians: helping kids connect to nature

The reserve is a Kiwi Guardians adventure site, helping kids connect with nature by encouraging them to take guided adventures and earn rewards. For more, visit [www.kiwiguardians.co.nz](http://www.kiwiguardians.co.nz).



## Location

Gray's Bush Scenic Reserve runs alongside the Back Ormond Road, about 10 km northeast of Gisborne.

The car park and entrance is located on Back Ormond Road, at the turn-off to Harper Road. The reserve is signposted from Back Ormond Road.



Gray's Bush Scenic Reserve entrance. Photo: Trudi Ngawhare



## Tracks

There are two main tracks that loop and link within the reserve. Both are reached from the car park.

The 15–20 min wheelchair-accessible loop track is clearly marked, allowing wheelchair users to immerse themselves in native bush and view interpretation signs along the way.

The reserve is on flat land, and is small enough to roam and explore freely. A full circuit of the tracks takes 40–60 min at an easy pace.



Photo: D Lynn

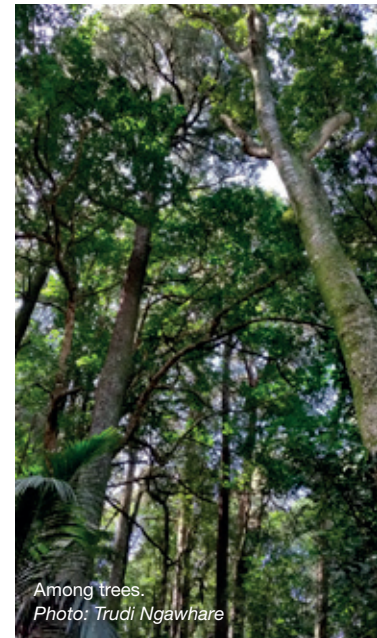
## Unique vegetation

Gray's Bush Scenic Reserve is a small but significant remnant of the tall kahikatea (podocarp) forest that once covered much of the Gisborne plains, until cleared and drained for farming and agriculture.

The reserve is semi-coastal in character and has a dominant canopy of kahikatea, with a significant presence of pūriri. This kahikatea/pūriri forest type is nationally rare, and is the only surviving example on the Gisborne plains. There are also broadleaved trees such as pukatea, māhoe and tawa, with occasional kohekohe and rare mataī. Most of the taller kahikatea here are between 400 and 500 years old. The forest is well-preserved, with some individual trees reaching heights of up to 40 m.

The bush grows at the base of an alluvial fan descending from the hills to the northeast, on the edge of the flood plain of the Waipaoa River. The trees are supported by a slow-draining, clay loam soil typical of the plains; the area is less than 30 m above sea level.

The undergrowth is quite dense; predominant species include kawakawa, nikau and occasional small broadleaved shrubs, ferns and herbs. There are some areas with native grass (*Oplismenus imbecillus*), and kiekie in the damper parts of the reserve.



Among trees.  
Photo: Trudi Ngawhare



Fantail. Photo: Janice McKenna