Welcome

Nelson/Marlborough is one of the best regions in New Zealand for a holiday in the great outdoors. The Department of Conservation (DOC) looks after the region’s main natural areas and provides many services to help you enjoy them. We wish you a safe and happy visit but ask that you pay for those facilities for which there are charges and follow the few rules.

This fact sheet is designed to help you understand what there is to do in the region and how to go about doing it.

Services for visitors

The Department of Conservation is the leading provider of outdoor recreation in the top of the South Island. The following services are provided by the department or available commercially.

Tracks

The road end is where most conservation experiences begin. Many have picnic facilities, toilets, information, tracks and perhaps a campsite. Some tracks are best accessed by boat; the department provides numerous jetties in The Sounds and around lakes Rotoiti and Rotoroa.

Tracks are what DOC is perhaps best known for. They are as varied as the places they explore, so to help you choose a suitable track, we use the national track classification system (see chart on page 3). This system describes the facilities (such as bridges and a benched surface) provided on different tracks and the fitness and footwear required to walk them.

Look for the green and yellow colour scheme of our signs. At major road ends, take time to read the orientation sign with its map; list of things to do, safety information and points to remember. Safety signs mark hazards—always obey them. To help you, we use international standard symbols on our signs.

Accommodation

Serviced campgrounds are at Totaranui*, St Arnaud, Momorangi Bay, and Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve. Bookings are required in the peak season. More than 40 self registration Conservation Campsites, each with a toilet and water supply, are also offered, mostly in the Marlborough Sounds.

Our huts range from slab-construction relics, the standard ‘six-bunker’ from the Forest Service era, to large huts with gas heating and space for 20 or more. All huts have bunks, a toilet and a nearby water supply.

There is a four-tiered charging system for huts in the ‘Backcountry Huts’ system. Please purchase your tickets before your trip.

Separate tickets are required for the Great Walks huts (on the Heaphy and Abel Tasman Coast tracks) and Angelus Hut and Angelus Hut campsite which have their own prices. Bookings are required.

DOC manages lodge-style accommodation at Nydia Bay (Pelorus Sound) and Totaranui. These lodges are all self-contained with individual prices and details.

Information

i-SITE Visitor Centres are key tools for you to use when planning your holiday. Call in to the one nearest your destination (see list on page 4) to check out the weather and get the latest information. A weekly track update is provided between October and April and DOC visitor centre staff also know about floods, road and track closures, snow conditions, etc.

Most towns in the region have at least one centre operating seven days a week where maps, information and our publications are available. Visitor Centres outside the region have less knowledge and information about Nelson/Marlborough, although some stock our publications and display our track updates.

We offer a modern publication about most conservation areas in the top of the south, using the track classification system and international standard symbols to help you. Most titles include a bit of history as well as accurate, unbiased information you can rely on.

* separate publication available

Published by: Department of Conservation, Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy, Private Bag 5, Nelson 7042 | August 2011

Department of Conservation

Te Papa Atawhai

New Zealand Government
Use our publications at home to plan your trip and take them with you too. Remember, the maps provided are only a guide—more detailed maps should be purchased for back country trips. Also check on our website www.doc.govt.nz

At your service ...

The Department licences many businesses to provide services to you on conservation land or on the water. Among the notable ones are Rainbow Ski Area; the Farewell Spit safari tours; the Abel Tasman guided walk and sea-kayak trips, and marine mammal watching at Marahau, in The Sounds and at Kaikoura. A number of businesses offer regular and on-demand bus and boat services to our tracks. All of these operators welcome your visit—please support them.

Places to go

A brief introduction to the recreation opportunities in Nelson/Marlborough follows. A publication is available for those places marked with an asterisk *

Abel Tasman National Park *

New Zealand’s smallest national park is best known for its sheltered coastline and forest-fringed beaches. Networks of short walks at Wainui *, Totaranui * and Canaan * explore seal colonies, historic pā, waterfalls and the awesome Harwoods Hole *. The three to five day, 51 km Coast Track * is one of the Great Walks—camp and hut bookings are required.

The Buller

New Zealand’s largest, relatively intact river catchment is the Buller, with its history of short-lived gold mining ventures and devastating earthquakes. The Buller is New Zealand’s premier white-water kayaking river, while gold-fossicking and hunting are also popular. The Kawatiri and Six Mile walkways are the best known walks.

Golden Bay *

Golden Bay has a variety of natural and historically interesting places to visit. The individual highlight is New Zealand’s largest freshwater springs at Waikoropupū *. A network of walks explores the farmland and windswept beaches of Puponga Farm Park *, at the base of the internationally important wading bird habitat that is Farewell Spit *. For mountain bikers, Canaan Downs mountain bike trails.

Kahurangi National Park *

A huge and diverse park offering a number of short walks in areas of historic, geological and botanical interest, particularly on Mount Arthur *, in the Cobb * and lower Wangapeka valleys. The Heaphy * and Wangapeka tracks * are well known 3–6-day trips. The Heaphy is one of the Great Walks—campsites and huts need to be booked. Mountain biking is being trialled on the Heaphy Track from 1 May to 30 September, until September 2013. The trial will be fully assessed in December 2013 and a decision made whether seasonal mountain biking continues.

Kaikoura

Kaikoura is world-renowned for its marine mammals. The premier walking attraction is the Kaikoura Peninsula Walkway *, where seals, myriad birdlife, views and history all combine into one experience. Inland, good views can be had from Mt Fyffe *, while Ka Whata Tū o Rakihouia Conservation Park (Seaward Kaikoura Range * including the Clarence *) awaits the adventurous.
The Marlborough Sounds *

This network of waterways offers many activities on both land and water. There are numerous picnic and camping areas *, and many short walks *, particularly at French Pass, Whites Bay *, Tennyson Inlet and Mistletoe Bay. The Queen Charlotte Track * is the best known track, a 67 km, 1–5-day journey with good boat access and accommodation. The track is open for mountain-biking (conditions apply).

Nelson Lakes National Park *

Nelson Lakes is the northernmost part of the Southern Alps. St Arnaud is the gateway to the park, where a range of short and long walks * explores the forests, lake shore and ranges. The 4–6-day, 80 km Travers–Sabine circuit * is the main track, crossing Travers Saddle (1780 m, care required). Angelus Hut * is a popular destination; bookings are required for the hut and campsite in the peak season. Elsewhere in the park is opportunity for hunting, fishing, climbing and skitouring.

The Richmond Ranges

These rugged ranges separate Nelson from Marlborough. The Top Valley *, Onamalutu * and Hacket areas are well known for their short walks, while Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve *, on State Highway 6, attracts many with its camping, swimming, easy walks and café. The Pelorus Track * is a rugged 3–4-day trip for the keen tramper. A section of Pelorus Track is part of Te Araroa Trail—The Long Pathway—runs the length of New Zealand from Cape Reinga to Bluff.

South Marlborough

This is the region of dry hills and wild coastal features between the Wairau and Clarence river mouths. The highest mountain in Nelson/Marlborough, Mt Tapuae-o-Uenuku (2885 m), is found here, as is New Zealand’s biggest farm, Molesworth Station *. Every summer the road through this historic station is open to visitors for a short period. Whites Bay *, the Wairau lagoons * and the spectacular Sawcut Gorge * are also worth a visit.

The Waimea Basin *

Framed by Kahurangi National Park, the Richmond Ranges and the shore of Tasman Bay, this is the most populated part of the region. A number of small reserves exist, ideal for picnics and short walks. The Cable Bay Walkway * combines history and nature conservation in one walk, with wonderful views of distant ranges, the sea and the renowned Nelson Boulder Bank.

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Track categories

Tracks are developed to different standards, catering for a variety of experiences. Choose the type of track that most suits the skills and abilities of your party.

**Easy access short walk**
- Easy walking for up to an hour.
- Track is well formed, with an even surface. Few or no steps or slopes.
- Suitable for people of all abilities and fitness.
- Stream and river crossings are bridged.
- Walking shoes required.

**Short walk**
- Easy walking for up to an hour.
- Track is well formed, with an even surface. There may be steps or slopes.
- Suitable for people of most abilities and fitness.
- Streams and river crossings are bridged.
- 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.
- Suitable for people with low-to-moderate fitness and abilities.
- Clearly signposted. Stream and river crossings are bridged.
- Walking shoes or light tramping/hiking boots required.

**Great Walk/Easier tramping track**
- Moderate day or multi-day tramping/hiking.
- Track is generally well formed, may be steep, rough or muddy.
- Suitable for people with moderate fitness. Limited backcountry (remote areas) experience required.
- Track has signs, poles or markers. Major stream and river crossings are bridged.
- Light tramping/hiking boots required.

**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.

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Visit information, Nelson and Marlborough | 3

* separate publication available

www.doc.govt.nz
Please remember

Private land, dogs, wasps, fire, safety and weather, rubbish, drinking water etc. These are all things you need to know about, whether you are hunting, mountain biking, boating or just walking. Look out for the ‘please remember’ information on our signs, publications and website—read it carefully, it’s important.

Safety

To stay safe in the outdoors, always ensure you have adequate fitness, experience and equipment for your trip. Seek up-to-date information and let someone reliable know your plans. Know the hazards of the area you are visiting and allow for sudden changes, and delays on even the shortest of trips. Remember your safety is your responsibility.

DOC Visitor Centres

Nelson Regional Visitor Centre
Millers Acre/Taha o te Awa
79 Trafalgar Street, Nelson 7010
PO Box 375, Nelson 7040
Ph: (03) 546 9339
Email: nelsonvc@doc.govt.nz

Nelson Lakes Visitor Centre
PO Box 55, St Arnaud 7053
Ph: (03) 521 1806
Email: nelsonlakesvc@doc.govt.nz

i-SITEs, Tasman Region and Marlborough

Golden Bay i-SITE Visitor Centre
Willow Street
Takaka 7110
Ph: (03) 525 9136
Email: gbvin@nelsonnz.com

Motueka i-SITE
Wallace Street
Motueka 7120
Ph: (03) 528 6543
Email: info@motuekaisite.co.nz

Murchison i-SITE Visitor Centre
Waller Street
Murchison
Ph: (03) 523 9352
Email: Murchison@nelson.com.nz

Picton i-SITE Visitor Centre
The Foreshore
Picton
Ph: (03) 520 3113
Email: picton@i-site.org

Blenheim i-SITE Visitor Centre
Railway Station, Sinclair Street
Blenheim 7201
Ph: (03) 577 8080
Email: Blenheim@i-site.org

Kaikoura i-SITE Visitor Centre
West End
Kaikoura 7300
Ph: (03) 319 5641
Email: info@kaikoura.co.nz

To find out more

For further information, phone or write to one of the addresses shown below, or pick up a publication at a visitor centre. If you have any feedback about the services we provide we’d be glad to hear from you.