Enjoying the outdoors safely

Safety - Be safe and tell a friend or relative of your intentions. Choose the type of walk that suits the skills, fitness and abilities of your group. Check the weather forecast before you head out. See www.adventuresmart.org.nz for further information.

Track markers - tracks are marked by orange triangles. Other coloured markers or tags are for land management purposes and should not be followed.

Track times - times given are based on an average family group. They are a guide only and may vary depending on weather and track conditions. Track times are one way unless otherwise indicated.

Essential gear - be well prepared for all types of weather and conditions. Have strong comfortable shoes (or boots if tramping) and suitable clothing and equipment. Carry a first aid kit, food and drink and know what to do if things go wrong.

Hunting
Permits are required to hunt for pigs and goats in the Hakarimata Scenic Reserve and must be carried at all times when hunting. Permits can be obtained online at www.doc.govt.nz/hunting or from Department of Conservation offices in Hamilton.

Further information
The track information in this brochure was correct at date of printing, but facilities and services can change. For more information, visit the DOC websites: www.doc.govt.nz or contact:

Walkato Conservation Office
Level 4, 73 Rosewater St
Hamilton
Tel: +64 7 858 1000
Fax: +64 7 858 1007
Email: walkato@doc.govt.nz
Open: Mon to Fri 8am-4.30 pm

Walkato Area Office
5 Nancyway St
Te Rapa
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Open: Mon to Fri 8am-4.30 pm

Contact Walkato Area Office for information about community restoration initiatives.

NEW ZEALAND environmental CARE CODE

Toitu te whenua Leave the land undisturbed

Introduction
The Hakarimata Range is located 10 km north-west of Hamilton, near Ngaruwahia. It includes 1850 ha of native forest which is protected as a scenic reserve. It has a great place to see kauri and to enjoy a walk or tramp through native forest far from Hamilton. There are three access points to the reserve, off Waingaro Road to the south, from Brownlee Avenue at Ngaruwahia; and from Parker Road at the northern end. From each entry there is a walking track of 1-2 hours return as well as access to a more extensive tramping track, the Hakarimata Walkway.

From the many viewpoints on the Hakarimata Range you can look out to the Waikato River and the lands around Ngaruwahia. Imagine what life was like before European settlement and the importance of the land and the river for early Maori!

Walkato te Awa
Ka Walkato te Awa
Ka Tauiri te Maunga
Ka Te Wharewheroa o tangata
Waikato tanionihaua
He piko he taniwha
He piko he taniwha

This papaka (tribal saying) of the Waikato people, denotes the significance and the spiritual connection that tangata whenua have with the river and the land. The Waikato River was the primary source of food, transport, ritual and tradition for Maori - it was their life blood. Tauiri maunga (mountain) is the sacred mountain of Waikato-Tainui. It was the historical Paa site of the first Maori King who led the Kingitanga movement from 1858-1860. It is the home of the Maori dynasty and the current Maori King, Tuheitia Paki.

Hakarimata history
Six hundred years ago the Tainui tohunga Rakataura sent out Rotu Haakari-kai-mata which means the mountain of ‘uncooked food’, uncooked delicacies and the hills were subsequently named Hakarimata māta which means the mountain of ‘uncooked food’, now shortened to Hakarimata.

Landforms
The Hakarimata Range is one of a succession of ranges running roughly north to south and forming the western boundary of the Waikato Basin. Sandstone, siltstone and greywacke, which have been strongly folded, faulted and overprinted by other sedimentary rocks, form the Hakarimata Range and adjacent land. To the north and west of the range is one of New Zealand’s major coal producing areas.

Biodiversity - the diversity of life
Hakarimata is a special place in the Waikato. It is dominated by lowland forest types (broadleaf podocarp species) and also lies in a transition zone between northern kauri forest and southern beech forest. It has plants and animals of all three forest types making it highly diverse. It is also the largest remaining example of lowland forest that once dominated the Waikato Basin. Most lowland forest was converted to pasture for agriculture and now only exists in small fragments.

Large rats and rimu can occasionally be seen along the crest and ridges of the Hakarimata Range, towering over the canopy of tawa, koekehoe, hinu, rewarewa, manuka, and pukatea. There are also pockets of Rimu, Hali’s totara and tanekaha. The large kaori seen on the Kauri Loop Track is of special interest as kaori of this size (7 metre girl) are rare in the Waikato area. The reserve also contains a number of threatened plants including the strongly scented daphne Alseuosmia hakarimata or tupaia.

The Waikato River is our tupuna and looks out over us throughout our lives. The river feeds us, nurtures us and takes care of us, healing our hurts and protecting us from harm. The river is our livelihood from which we take our name, our identity and our mana."

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Hakarimata Tracks
WAIKATO

As well as the more common forest birds such as tui, larae (also known as kuku or NZ wood pigeon), fantail and shining curlew, there are nationally threatened kareae (native falcon), ppekapa (Long-tailed bat), skinks and geckos found on Hakarimata. The reserve also contains over 122 different species of native land snail and the ancient peripatus.

Many streams flow off the ranges and provide important habitat for at least 16 species of native fish including short and longfinned eels (unu and the whitebait) . These fish all complete their life cycle by migrating to sea 100 km downstream at Port Waikato. "Whitebait" (the given name for their juvenile stage) includes threatened bandi koki, short-tail koki, whitebait and giant koki.

Environmental threats
Since the land was reserved (from 1905 onwards), the fringes areas and lower slopes have slowly regenerated after a history of light logging and fires. Introduced pigs, goats, possums, rats, bedbugs, bats, mice and mustelids (stouts, weasels and ferrets) can cause significant damage to the reserve’s plant and animal life. There have been sightings of deer and wallaby in the area. It is estimated 70% of New Zealand’s forest birds (and bats) do not reach fledging age due to predation by introduced animals.

Community restoration
Community restoration efforts have resulted in reduced goat numbers in the reserve. There have also been local possum and rat control initiatives. About 200 ha of privately owned forest adjoining the reserve, some of which is protected by covenant and being managed to control plant and animal pests.

Kauri dieback disease is a fungus-like disease that is specific to kauri and is killing NZ kauri of all ages. The tiny Phytophthora aurea gets into the soil, infects and stays away in the roots. One of the main vectors for this disease is dirty footwear. Please ensure your footwear is clean and do not walk off track onto kaori roots.
1. Hakarimata Rail Trail (1.5 km, 30 min)
Access the car park off Waingaro Road next to Perry’s Quarry. Turn right just before the Firewood Creek road bridge. This easy walk follows the course of the former Ngaruawahia/Glen Massey railway. The railway was closed in the 1950s coinciding with the closure of the Glen Massey coal mine. The track is suitable for buggies, wheelchairs assisted and bicycles. Walking from the car park to the first bridge you pass a wetland restoration site which is part of the Perry Quarry complex. The track follows Firewood Creek through an area being replaced to a picnic site with toilets. From here, a short walk leads to an attractive stream cascades. This is also the start of the southern section of the Hakarimata Walkway. Firewood Creek is a long-term native fish monitoring site and is vulnerable to disturbance. Please remain on the walkway and do not access the upper creek.

2. Hakarimata Walkway (12 km, 7 hr 30 min)
The Hakarimata Walkway traverses the ridge of the Hakarimata Range and can be walked either north/south or in the opposite direction. There are excellent views towards the coast and across the Waikato Basin. Use track descriptions for Hakarimata Walkway: Southern section and Hakarimata Walkway: Northern Section to plan your journey.

3. Hakarimata Walkway: Southern section - Hakarimata Rail Trail to Hakarimata summit view tower (3.5 km, 2 hr)
This section of the Walkway is in the process of being upgraded and is currently at tramming track standard. The Walkway starts at the Hakarimata Rail Trail after crossing a small burn on a long wooden bridge, the track follows a stream up through attractive forest. Shortly after crossing a second bridge and leaving the stream, the track climbs steeply through mature forest with excellent examples of rimu, miro, matai, totara, rata, rewarewa, hangehange and tawa, with occasional views out to the west.

4. Waterworks Walk (1 km, 1 hr return)
This walk leaves from Brookes Ave off Hakarimata Road and passes through attractive native bush alongside the Mangarata Stream on the way to an old dam. The 750,000 litre reservoir, built in 1932, was once the water supply for Ngaruawahia. The track to the dam is an easy gradient with an all-weather surfaced path.

5. Hakarimata Summit Track (2 km, 3 hr return)
Access from Brookes Ave. Follow the Waterworks track to just before the dam where the track branches off to the right and climbs steeply up a well constructed set of steps and stairs. It is a 1255 metre climb from Brookes Ave to the summit with 1349 steps! The track meets the Hakarimata Walkway and the summit tower at 374 metres above sea level. In spring you can smell the scented daphne, Alseuosmia hakarimata or topaca growing inside the track. The track provides good views out towards the coast and across the Waikato Basin and down to Ruapehu on a clear day.

6. Kauri Loop Track (3 km, 2 hr return for full loop; 40 min to kauri grove)
The track from Parker Road car park starts with a long flight of steps to the track junction of the loop walk. Turning right, you walk past an old pa site (hidden by vegetation) through regenerating native bush to a large kauri tree. This is one of the largest kauri trees in the Waikato and estimated to be over a thousand years old. A few minutes further on the track passes through a grove of young kauri known as ‘rickers’. Just past the rickers you reach a view point that looks out across the forest. From the viewpoint, the track climbs steeply up many steps to a track junction. The track to the right leads to an excellent view point of Huntly and northwards; beyond it you come to a small viewing platform which is part of the Perry Quarry complex. The track to the left follows steps inside a grove of nikau palms to a lower lookout. This track then returns to the first junction and the start of the loop walk. Return down the steps to the car park.

7. Southern Lookout (700 m, 20 min)
From the top viewpoint on the Kauri Loop Track a tramming track leads south to the Southern Lookout. Views extend across Hamilton and south to Tongariro National Park on a clear day.

8. Hakarimata Walkway: Northern section from Parker Road to summit view tower (6 km, 4 hr 15 min)
From the northern end at Parker Road, follow the Kauri Loop Track as far as the southern lookout where there are excellent views south across to Hamilton City. The track is undulating with exposed tree roots in places and rough underfoot. It passes through mature native forest of rimu, miro, matai, totara, rata, rewarewa, hanglehange and tawa, with occasional views out to the west. At the summit, it is possible to exit the walkway down to Brookes Avenue (1 hr) or continue the full length to Waingaro Road via the Rail Trail (another 0.5 hr). Transport needs to be arranged for the end of the walkway.