

## Flora and fauna

There is a vast array of native birds in the reserve including robins, kererū, grey warblers, whiteheads, tomtits, kingfishers and both shining and long-tailed cuckoos. Threatened bush falcon and North Island brown kiwi have also been reported in this forest.

The striking topography of the Ātene Skyline area allows the track to traverse a wide range of forest communities. The track starts in damp gully floor tawa forest which includes pukatea and kahikatea, specialist trees that develop distinctive buttressed roots to support themselves in boggy soil. Under the canopy is the large leaved herb parataniwha, and various liverworts and mosses.

The track then climbs through mixed broadleaf forest, a mosaic of native trees including tall rātā and rimu, miro, tōtara, rewarewa and hīnau. Higher up, kamahi and black beech dominate the ridges. The open, bluffy patches support light-loving species such as wharariki, bush snowberry, tōtorowhiti (*Dracophyllum strictum*) and the papa kowhai (*Sophora godleyii*). The papa kowhai is endemic to the soft limestone, mudstone and sandstone substrates of the western North Island. Its golden flowers and soft new leaves are important food for kererū in springtime.



## Getting there

From Whanganui, drive north on State Highway 4 for 14 km before turning left onto the Whanganui River Road. Continue along this road for 22 km until just past Ātene. Parking is on the side of the road by the upriver track entrance. The down-river entrance is approximately 2 km back towards Whanganui.

### Further information:

**Department of Conservation**  
34-36 Taupo Quay, Whanganui

PHONE: +64 6 349 2100

EMAIL: [whanganui@doc.govt.nz](mailto:whanganui@doc.govt.nz)

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

**DOC HOTline**  
**0800 362 468**

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

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Looking out from Ātene Track.

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New Zealand Government

# Ātene Skyline walk and track

| Whanganui National Park



- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable ground
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimise the effects of fire  
*Check before you light a fire - a ban may be in place*
- Respect wildlife and farm animals
- Be considerate of others

# Whanganui National Park

The Ātene skyline ridge is a southern outlier of Whanganui National Park. It is the first link in a chain of small reserves along the Whanganui River that comprises the Park downstream of Pipiriki, where the core of the park begins.

The Park protects one of the largest tracts of lowland forest remaining in the North Island, and provides habitat for a wide variety of native wildlife.

## Ātene Viewpoint Walk 2 hr return, 2 km

Beginning at the up-river end, this walk to a lookout point offers great views of the cut-off meander of the old Whanganui River bed. Return is back down the same way.

## Ātene Skyline Track 6–8 hr round trip, 12.7 km

Beginning at the upriver end, the track climbs steeply from the Whanganui River Road to a height of 260 m through fine lowland forest. Following an old, gently graded road line for about 3 km (built in 1959 by the Ministry of Works) the track follows the ridgeline to a clearing that marks the track's halfway point. A campsite with drinking water, shelter and toilet is available at this point. There are no others on this entire walk.





Atene Track.

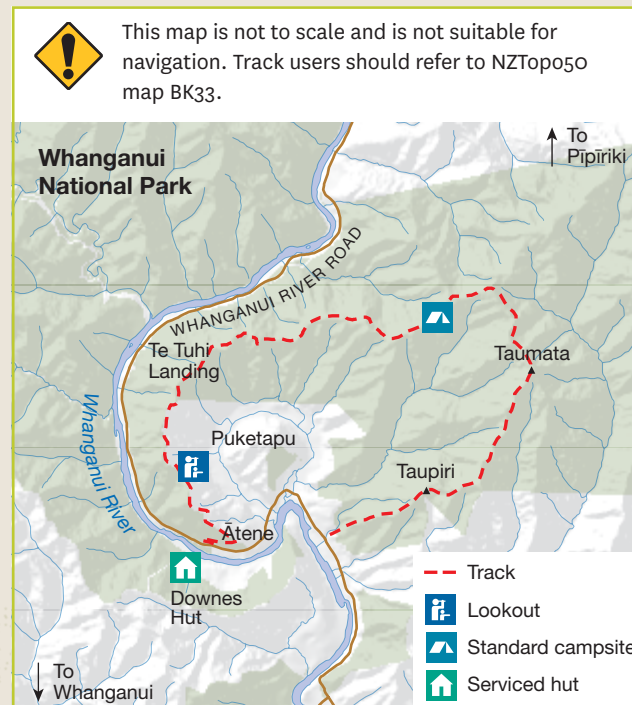
Shortly after is Taumata Trig, the highest point of the track (572 m). The track winds around the edge of impressive sandstone bluffs to reach Taupiri Trig. It then descends steeply back to the Whanganui River Road. Continue along the road back to the start.

The focus throughout the walk is a large hill, Puketapu. Many hundreds of years ago the hill stood at the end of a long, narrow-necked peninsula enriched by the river. However, with years of erosion, the river broke through the neck, forcing a more direct route to the sea and cutting off the meander.


## Track grades


 **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. Walking shoes required


 **Tramping track** – mostly unformed surface but has directional markers, poles or cairns. Suitable for backcountry visitors with moderate to high-level backcountry skills and experience.





# Know before you go


 **Hunting** – is permitted in most places throughout the year, check the DOC website for exclusion dates and zones and special conditions required for hunting dogs. A hunting permit can be obtained at [doc.govt.nz](http://doc.govt.nz), and you must carry a printed copy of your permit with you at all times.


 **Fires** – fires are not permitted in Whanganui National Park.


 **Weather conditions** – observe the weather conditions and seek advice as conditions may be wet and slippery, particularly during winter and early spring. Dress to the conditions.

 **Communications** – this area is remote with no mobile phone coverage. You should carry an emergency alert device (eg PLB/Spot tracker).

 **Dropoffs** – there are multiple dropoffs on this track. Take care passing these.

 **Windfalls** – there may be windfalls on the track after weather events. Take care going around the fallen trees.

 **Water** – during dry periods, carry extra water as the shelter water may be dry or stagnant. Treat or boil all water before drinking.

 **Wasps** – wasps are a known hazard and are particularly common from January until May. Carry antihistamine if you are allergic to their stings.

## Trip intentions

Tell someone responsible where you are going and your estimated time of arrival back. Use the online intention system: [www.adventuresmart.org.nz/outdoors-intentions](http://www.adventuresmart.org.nz/outdoors-intentions)