

Matemateāonga Track

Whanganui National Park



Matemateāonga Range

Tū ana a Tūroa ki runga i Matemateāonga ka whakamau tana titiro iho ki ngā taha e rua, ki te Awa o Waitōtara, ki te Awa o Whanganui ka puta i a ia te kōrero "He rua au, he Awa au, he Rauru au. Aue!"

This kōrero relates to the kinship ties evident between the tribes of Ngā Rauru Kiihahi and Te Iwi o Whanganui. Matemateāonga Range is about our connection. Welcome to the area of Ngā Rauru Kiihahi and the majesty of the Waitōtara estate.

Matemateāonga Track

Tramping track - 3 to 5 days one way

The Matemateāonga Track is one of two major tramping opportunities available in Whanganui National Park.

Using an old Māori trail and settlers' dray road, you are able to penetrate deep into the remote interior of the park. Following an old road line, the track has a relatively even gradient, no river crossings and passes through native forest for most of its length, providing shelter from the worst of the weather. It is therefore suitable for novice trampers and is often used by school and family groups. After heavy rain and strong winds however, the track will be muddy and slips and windfalls may make the going more difficult (please check the weather forecast and track conditions before your trip).

The track traverses an expanse of thick bush clad hill country between Taranaki and the Whanganui River. The track follows the original Whakaihawaka Road built in 1911 to create a more direct link between Stratford and Raetihi and the Main Trunk Railway. A pilot track was first cut along the range. This track was to be widened to a more substantial road, but with the outbreak of World War I, the work was abandoned. The original Whakaihawaka Road was hewn from papa and remains reasonably intact. The 43 km track is usually tramped in three to five days. Transport by jetboat or canoe must be pre-arranged for the river end of the track.



Tramper walking the Matemateāonga Track.

Before you go

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.

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Track Guide



This brochure describes the most popular way of walking the track, eastward from Kohi Saddle to the Whanganui River.

Track entrance Upper Mangaehu Road (Kohi Saddle)

The track is reached from SH 43 at Strathmore, east of Stratford, where the signpost indicates the road connecting to Upper Mangaehu Road. The track entrance at Kohi Saddle is 20 minutes drive away. There are kilometre posts along the track from Kohi Saddle to Puketōtara Hut. They do not continue down to the Whanganui River.

Kohi Saddle to Ōmaru Hut (8 bunks) – 5.6 km / 1.5 hr

The track begins at Kohi Saddle in regenerating bush but reaches thick bush as the track ascends a spur to the crest of the Matemateāonga Range. On the way you will pass the junction with the Puniwhakaū Link Track (see Warning).

Ōmaru Hut to Pōuri Hut (12 bunks) – 13.3 km / 5 hr

The track continues along the top of the Matemateāonga Range, initially through dense bush on the south western side of the range and then crossing to the northern flank. On a clear day there are occasional glimpses of the volcanoes of Tongariro National Park.

About 8.6 km / 3 hr 30 min from Ōmaru Hut, a signposted track branches off the main track to the summit of Mt Humphries (732 m). It is known by Māori as Whakaihūwaka – “made like the prow of a canoe”. The name refers to the skyline shape of Mt Humphries and the Matemateāonga Range. This side trip of 1 hr 30 min return offers a sweeping view of three national parks - Whanganui, Egmont and Tongariro.

Back on the main track, Humphries Clearing is a further 30 minute walk. Pōuri Hut is 3 km / 1 hr further along the track.

Pōuri Hut to Ngāpurua Hut (10 bunks) – 10.4 km / 3 hr 15 min

The track continues to stay on the gentle crest of the range. Built in 2010, Ngāpurua Hut is located near the old Ngāpurua Shelter.

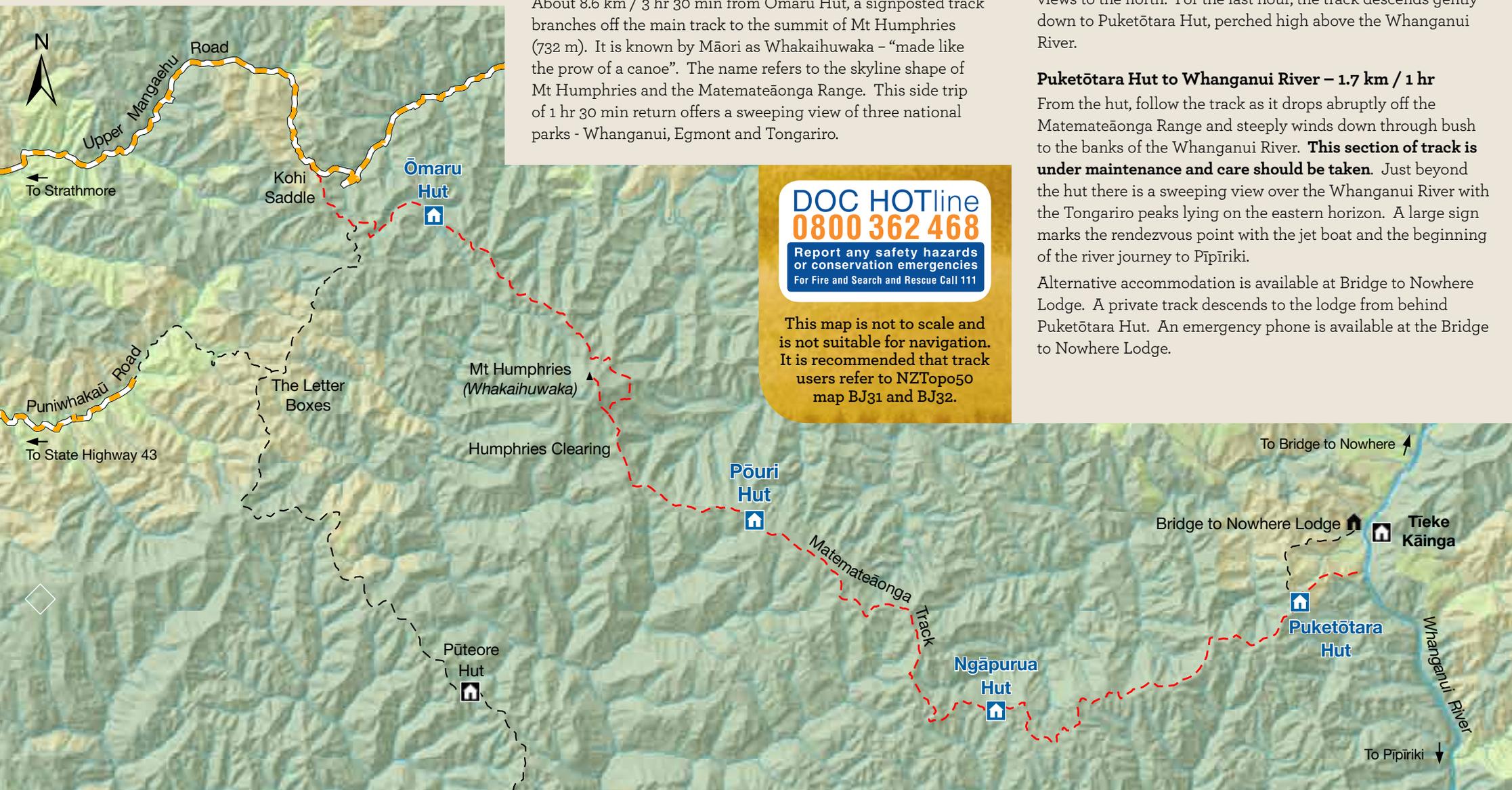
Ngāpurua Hut to Puketōtara Hut (8 bunks) – 11.7 km / 3 hr 30 min

The track continues on a gentle gradient with intermittent views to the north. For the last hour, the track descends gently down to Puketōtara Hut, perched high above the Whanganui River.

Puketōtara Hut to Whanganui River – 1.7 km / 1 hr

From the hut, follow the track as it drops abruptly off the Matemateāonga Range and steeply winds down through bush to the banks of the Whanganui River. **This section of track is under maintenance and care should be taken.** Just beyond the hut there is a sweeping view over the Whanganui River with the Tongariro peaks lying on the eastern horizon. A large sign marks the rendezvous point with the jet boat and the beginning of the river journey to Pīpīriki.

Alternative accommodation is available at Bridge to Nowhere Lodge. A private track descends to the lodge from behind Puketōtara Hut. An emergency phone is available at the Bridge to Nowhere Lodge.



DOC HOTline
0800 362 468

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

This map is not to scale and
is not suitable for navigation.
It is recommended that track
users refer to NZTopo50
map BJ31 and BJ32.

Overnight Opportunities



Kohi Saddle - Mt Humphries - Ōmaru Hut - Kohi Saddle

It is a relatively easy six and a half hour tramp from Kohi Saddle road end to the top of Mt Humphries (732 m). Although not very tall, this peak rises well above the surrounding hill country. Spectacular views of Mt Taranaki/Egmont in the west, the Central Plateau volcanoes in the east and the flat topped Mt Hikurangi to the north make this walk worthwhile. The trip back to Ōmaru Hut could take 4 hours. Stay overnight at the hut before a leisurely walk back to the road end the next day.

Pipiriki - Bridge to Nowhere - Puketōtara Hut - Pipiriki

Take a jet boat trip from Pipiriki up the Whanganui River to Mangapurua Landing and walk into the historic "Bridge to Nowhere". Afterwards jet boat down river to the end of the Matemateāonga Track, walk up the ridge 1 hr 30 min to Puketōtara Hut, to spend the night in podocarp splendour with expansive views of the Whanganui River, the bush clad hills of Whanganui National Park and the volcanoes of the Central Plateau. The following day return to the river before jet boating back to Pipiriki.

Day Walk Opportunities



Kohi Saddle to Ōmaru Hut – 11.2 km / 3 hr return

This tramp through podocarp forest provides an excellent opportunity for botanising. Native clematis start to flower from October onwards, followed closely by rata and rewarewa. The track gently sidles across the hillside with astounding views of surrounding forest even in wet weather. Ōmaru Hut provides a pleasant lunch stop before returning to the road end.

Puniwhakaū Road to "The Letter Boxes" (via Puniwhakaū-Pūteore Route) and Kohi Saddle (via Puniwhakaū Link Track) – 8 hr

This is a full day's journey for the more experienced trumper (part of the trip is on a route) through podocarp forest and regenerating manuka. This tramp provides views over the Mt Taranaki / Egmont ring plain. A topographical map is required for this route which is lightly marked with standard orange triangles.



Tramping Track: mostly unformed but have track directional markers, poles or cairns.



Route: unformed, suitable only for people with high level backcountry skills and experience.



Tramper crossing a bridge on the Matemateāonga Track.



Check, Clean, Dry

Stop the spread of didymo and other freshwater pests.

Remember to Check, Clean, Dry all items before entering, and when moving between, waterways.

Huts

The four huts on the Matemateāonga Track are categorised as serviced huts and require hut tickets or a Backcountry Hut Pass for overnight stays. All huts have mattresses but no cooking facilities. There are wood burning stoves at the huts, intended for heating. All wood must be flown in to the huts so should be used sparingly and may not be available through the winter months. Water at these huts comes from the roof. Boil, filter or treat water if you doubt its purity.



Ngāpurua Hut, Matemateāonga Track.

Hunting

Hunting is permitted in most places throughout the year however you should check the website for exclusion dates and zones and special conditions required for hunting with dogs. A hunting permit can be obtained either online or from the Whanganui Area Office. You must carry a printed permit with you at all times.

Mountain Biking

The Matemateāonga Track does not currently lend itself well to mountain biking activities therefore would suit only experienced riders who know the track well.

Further information

For additional information, please contact:

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