

WEST COAST

Walks in the Karamea area

| Kahurangi National Park



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

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Look after yourself

Choose a walk that matches the weather and your own experience — and interests you. Know what the weather is doing; it can change dramatically in a short time. Call at Department of Conservation (DOC) offices or Visitor Centres to check current weather and track conditions.

Remember times given are a guide only, and will vary depending on fitness, weather and track conditions. For walks longer than an hour, pack a small first aid kit and take extra food and drink. Insect repellent is recommended to ward off sandflies and mosquitoes.

Safety is your responsibility. Tell someone your plans — it may save your life.

Visit www.mountainsafety.org.nz to learn more and to log your outdoor intentions with your trusted contact.



Introduction

Karamea, surrounded by Kahurangi National Park on three sides, is the entry point for the northern part of the South Island's West Coast. Created in 1996, the park is New Zealand's second largest national park covering 452,000 hectares, and has the greatest range of landforms, habitats and communities of plants and animals of any national park in New Zealand. It includes the oldest known cave systems in the country.

The Karamea district is important historically, with archaeological sites near the mouth of the Heaphy River indicating the area was settled as early as 1250 AD – just 5% of archaeological sites in New Zealand relate to this early period of human settlement. It was once the domain of giant moa, eagles and other now extinct species, whose bones remained in some of the local caves. European gold seekers came this way in the 1860s. In 1874 the Nelson Provincial Government organised a 'special settlement' that was a success for the hardy few who could cope with the difficult country and isolation.

A variety of day walks and short walks, ranging from 5 minutes to 5 hours, make Karamea an ideal place for walkers of all ages and capabilities to explore. Walks are well signposted and graded, with bridges across most streams and rivers.

Getting there

Karamea is 1 hour 30 minutes by road (96 km) from Westport. There is a regular shuttle service between Karamea and Westport. For further information on public transport, check out the Westport i-SITE and Karamea Information and Resource Centre.





MAP 1

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| ① Scotts Beach | --- Walking track | 🚻 Toilet |
| ② Nikau Walk | 🏠 Shelter | 👁️ Lookout |
| ③ Kohāihai Lookout Track | 🏕️ Camping | P Parking |

Walks in the Kōhāihai area

(Refer to map 1)

Easy walks beginning from the Kohāihai Campsite, located at the start of the Heaphy Great Walk, will take you through beautiful nīkau forest.

Scotts Beach 1

1 hr, 3.5 km one way



For a good taste of the Heaphy track's coastal section take this walk, crossing the suspension bridge over the Kōhāihai River and continuing over the Kōhāihai Bluff to the first palm-fringed beach. A short side track at the top of the bluff leads to a spectacular viewpoint. Return the same way.

Nikau Walk 2

35 min, 1.3 km return



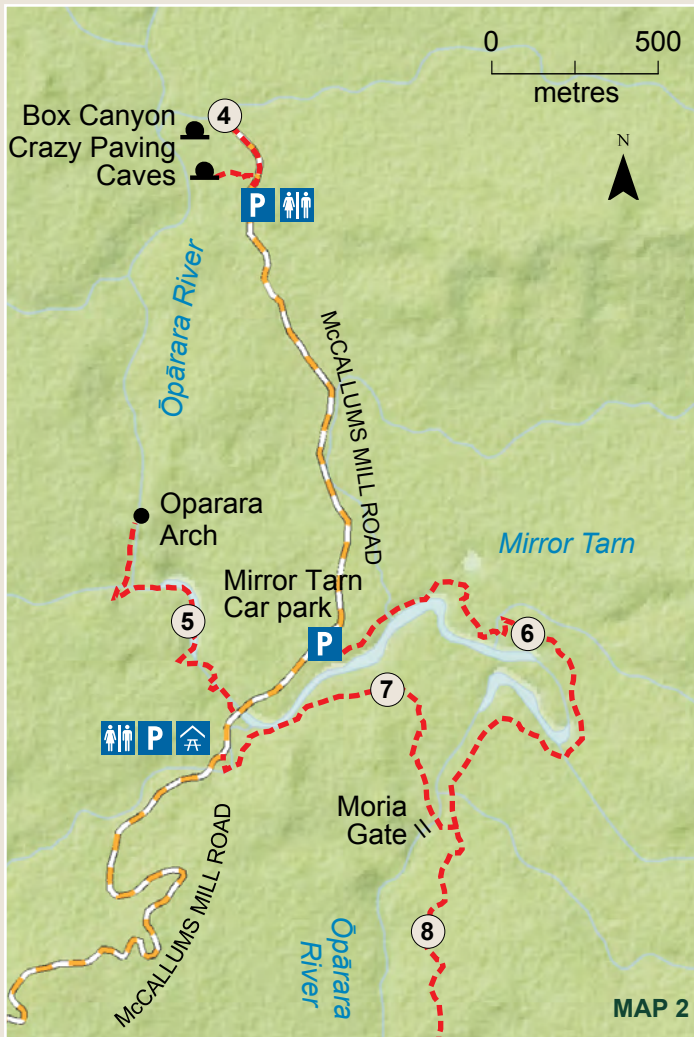
Take a leisurely stroll through forest featuring nīkau palms, creeping kiekie and graceful kātote/tree ferns. After crossing the Kōhāihai suspension bridge, take the right branch of the track that leads through groves of nīkau palms before emerging on to the main part of the track. Turn left here to complete the loop back to Kōhāihai via the suspension bridge, or return the same way, through the nīkau palms.

Kohāihai Lookout Track 3

20 min, 600 m one way



The track climbs a hill behind the shelter at the picnic area to a lookout point, providing a coastal panorama.



- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--|----------------|
| ④ | Box Canyon & Crazy Paving Caves | | Toilets |
| ⑤ | Oparara Arch Track | | Cave |
| ⑥ | Mirror Tarn Track | | Parking |
| ⑦ | Moria Gate Track | | Shelter |
| ⑧ | Oparara Valley Track | | Metalled roads |

Short walks and day walks in the Ōpārara valley

(Refer to map 2)

Signposted approximately 11 km north of Karamea, McCallums Mill Road leads inland to the Ōpārara valley, providing access to some spectacular walks. The 15-km gravel road is narrow and steep, and not suitable for large vehicles or campervans. Please keep your speed down and look out for other road users.

Box Canyon and Crazy Paving Caves ④



5 min, 100 m one way

The caves are a 5-minute walk from the upper Ōpārara car park. Remember to take a torch. It is essential for exploring the small but fascinating caves. In Crazy Paving Cave the unusual floor pattern was created over a long period of time from deposits of dried out mud that have formed paving patterns on the cave floor. At the entrance to Box Canyon, the neighbouring cave, a stairway leads down into a large open chamber. Cave dwellers such as wētā, spiders, and beetles live in the darkness. Look for these interesting insects but be careful not to disturb them.



Box Canyon and Crazy Paving Caves. Photo: R Rossiter

Oparara Arch ⑤



25 min, 1 km one way

From the Ōpārara car park, stroll through beech and podocarp forest and past limestone outcrops along a well-formed track beside the Ōpārara River. You will reach a magnificent limestone arch, reputed to be the largest one in Australasia.

◀ Oparara Arch. Photo: R Rossiter



Moria Gate. Photo: R Rossiter

Moria Gate Loop and Mirror Tarn 7 6

1 hr 30 min, 4 km round trip



From the main Ōpārara car park, walk through original old-growth rain forest, featuring kahikatea, rimu and moss-covered trees. Follow the track to beautiful Moria Gate Arch, named in 1984 after the gate in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. It is worthwhile going underneath the arch via a short side track to view the naturally sculptured limestone and maybe spot a native blue duck/whio feeding in the whisky-coloured waters of the Ōpārara River. The track continues over the arch, highlighted by the paving stones embossed with the footprint of the extinct moa who once walked here. Continue past the turn-off to the Oparara Valley Track, after a final glimpse of the Moria Gate Arch. Along the track look out for bush robins/kakaruai, weka and, if you are lucky, kākā. Take care to avoid the giant land snails (powelliphanta) that sometimes cross the track. At Mirror Tarn you'll find spectacular reflections of the surrounding rainforest. Further along, the track meets the Mirror Tarn car park and it is a short walk along the road back to the Ōpārara car park.



Moria Gate. Photo: DOC

Oparara Valley Track 8

5 hr, 14 km one way



This track links the Ōpārara basin with the historic Fenian Track. Starting at the Ōpārara car park and branching off the Moria Gate/Mirror Tarn Loop, the track goes through heavily forested ancient terrace country. Listen and look out for kākā, kea, tomtit/miromiro, robin/kakaruai, and the chatter of parakeet/kākāriki in the crowns of the rimu and kahikatea trees. Native moss gardens carpet the forest floor, punctuated by massive trees being strangled by mighty rātā vines (look for some of these at the turn-off to Sunshine Flat). Sunshine Flat, approximately halfway to the Fenian Track junction, has a toilet, a shelter and interpretation panels on the surrounding forest and the story of the track construction. Walk the 'Avenue of the Giants', a locally named section of track, south from Sunshine Flat, as you continue along and through the terraces and bridged gullies before crossing the suspension bridge at Postal River.

Only a short walk from Postal River, the junction with the Fenian Track offers the choice of further exploration of the gold fields or continuing along the track to the Fenian car park.



Family checking out ferns at Moria Gate. Photo: R Rossiter

Walks in the Fenian

(Refer to map 3)

The car park providing access to these walks is off the Oparara Road, 7 km from Karamea. Turn off at the lime works. The Fenian is rich in gold-mining history dating back to the early 1900s. Today, apart from a few overgrown piles of stones, and the occasional piece of rusting pipe and corrugated iron, little evidence remains of the alluvial gold-mining operations that once took place here.

Note: The walking times and distances are from the Fenian car park.

Fenian Track and Fenian Caves Loop Track

9 10



3 hr, 5 km return

From the car park, a gentle 40-minute walk along an old bridle track brings you to the Fenian Caves Loop Track. At this point the track changes from 'walking track' standard to 'tramping track' standard, so sturdy footwear and a reasonable level of fitness is required. There are three open-access caves on the 1.5-km loop track. Miners Cave and Cavern Creek Cave are beside the track. Tunnel Cave is an 80-m tunnel that the track passes through. You'll need a torch or headlamp for exploring the caves.

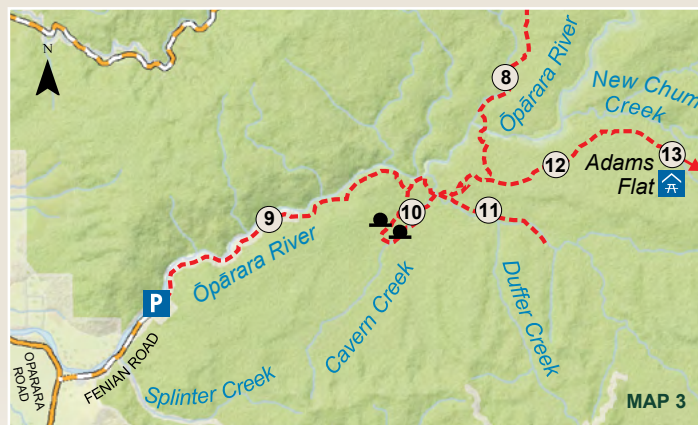
Fenian Workings Track

11



1 hr 35 min, 5 km return

Approximately 45 minutes' from the car park along the Fenian Track, a signpost indicates the way to the Fenian Workings. At this point the track standard changes from a 'walking track' to a 'tramping track' and you will require sturdy footwear and a reasonable level of fitness and experience.



- 8 Oparara Valley Track
- 9 Fenian Track
- 10 Fenian Caves Loop Track
- 11 Fenian Workings Track
- 12 Adams Flat Track
- 13 Adam Creek Workings / Water Race

- P Parking
 - Shelter
 - Cave
- 0 1
kilometre

Adams Flat

12



2 hr, 7 km one way

From the car park, walk on the old bridle track to a clearing known as Adams Flat, named after John Adams, an Irish gold miner who died in his hut on March 2, 1882 aged 49. A replica of a goldminer's hut stands in the clearing. The grassy area surrounding the hut is a pleasant resting place.

Adam Creek Workings and Water Race

13



2 hr 40 min, 8 km one way



Adams Flat. Photo: DOC

From Adams Flat, the track to the Adam Creek Workings site is a further 40 minutes. It is from this point that the track standard changes from a 'walking track' to a 'tramping track' and you will require sturdy footwear as well as a reasonable level of fitness and experience.

Other walks around Karamea

Close to the Karamea township you can spend from 30 minutes to an hour walking to some highlights.

Karamea Estuary Walk 14

20 min, 800 m one way

(Refer to map 4)



From the car park at the end of Ray Street, a short track follows the banks of the estuary. In the late 1800s this estuary was a busy harbour exporting flax fibre, timber and butter, and importing livestock and general goods. Now it is an important wildlife habitat with migratory birds such as the white heron/kōtuku, godwit/kuaka, and Australasian bittern/matuku seen here each season. The Karamea community provides and maintains this track.

Big Rimu Walk 15

30 min, 1.1 km one way

(refer to overview map on p 3)



Signposted 8 km from Karamea on Umere Road, the track leads through regenerated forest dotted with nīkau palms, ending at a spectacular rimu tree, 36 m high and 2 m in diameter. The tree, which is perhaps 1000 years old, escaped being felled by loggers in the 1940s.



Big rimu. Photo: D Guppy

Lake Hanlon. Photo: DOC



14 Karamea Estuary Walking Track

P Parking

Lake Hanlon 16

15 min, 750 m one way

(Refer to overview map on p 3)

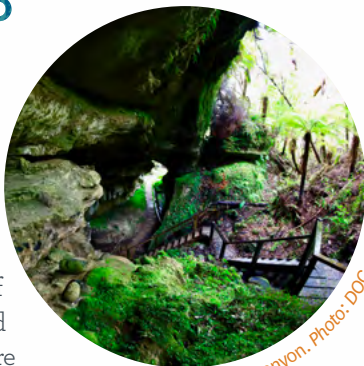


The track to this scenic gem starts on the west side of State Highway 67, south of Little Wanganui and a 20-minute drive from Karamea. It climbs over a forested ridge to a lakeside viewing area, with kahikatea at the water's edge, backed by beech forest, with occasional podocarp species and southern rātā.



Other things to see and do

The West Coast has many recreational opportunities. For visitors interested in something more than short walks there are a number of backcountry huts and tracks suitable for more experienced hikers and hunters.



Entrance to Box Canyon. Photo: DOC

For further information go to the Department of Conservation website www.doc.govt.nz.

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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
Check before you light a fire - a ban may be in place
- Respect wildlife and farm animals
- Be considerate of others

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