

Hunting

Moderate numbers of red deer can be found in the area. As well as the formed routes, the bush-clad ridges and spurs offer good travel and access to tussock tops. Rivers and creeks, however, can be deeply cut, with steep sides and slips. This area is part of the Haast Roar ballot. All hunters must have valid hunting permits.

Dogs

This is a great place to go for a walk with your dog. Be sure to get a permit first – these are available from Awarua/ Haast or the Westland Tai Poutini National Park Visitor Centres, free of charge.

Mataketake Hut

Mataketake Hut opened in February 2021. It was built by the Andy Dennis Trust and is owned and maintained by the Backcountry Trust. This site was chosen for its stunning surroundings, link with the historic cattle track and plentiful birdlife.

Andy Dennis was a renowned New Zealand conservationist, author and member of Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC) and Forest & Bird. He left a bequest to build a new hut in the mountains of the South Island. As Andy said, "We owe it to other living things and to future generations to leave some parts of our common heritage wild and unspoiled, and there appears to be no logical reason for separating the sea from the land in fulfilment of these aims."

Hut fees

Mataketake Hut must be booked – hut tickets and backcountry hut passes are not valid for this hut. The hut can be booked online at www.doc.govt.nz/online-bookings or by post, email, phone or in person at a DOC Visitor Centre, i-SITE or DOC agent. Booking fees may apply.

There are no gas cookers or cooking equipment in the hut, you must bring your own. The access code for the wood shed will be emailed to you as part of your booking confirmation.

Hut	Bunks	Category
Blowfly Hut	8	Standard
Maori Saddle Hut	10	Standard
Mataketake Hut	8	Serviced – must be booked

Further information

Westland Tai Poutini National Park Visitor Centre

69 Cron Street, Franz Josef Glacier
Open 7 days (except Christmas Day)

PHONE: 03 752 0360

EMAIL: westlandnpvc@doc.govt.nz

Awarua / Haast Visitor Centre

Haast Junction, Corner SH6 and
Jackson Bay Road, Haast
Open 7 days (except Christmas Day)

PHONE: 03 750 0809

EMAIL: haastvc@doc.govt.nz

www.doc.govt.nz

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468
Report any safety hazards
or conservation emergencies
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

Cover: Mataketake Hut.
Photo: Rob Brown Photography

This information was accurate
at the time of printing.
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visit www.doc.govt.nz.

Published by:
Department of Conservation
PO Box 14
Franz Josef Glacier 7856
New Zealand

July 2022

Editing and design:
Te Rōpū Ratonga Auaha,
Te Papa Atawhai
Creative Services,
Department of Conservation

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sourced from well-managed, renewable and
legally logged forests.

Care for Aotearoa

-  **Protect nature**
-  **Be prepared**
-  **Keep NZ clean**
-  **Show respect**

Mataketake Tops Routes

Haast, Paringa and
Moeraki rivers area

Introduction

The Mataketake Tops Loop offers experienced trampers challenging opportunities within the rugged backcountry environment of South Westland. Over the past 12 million years, geological movements along the Alpine Fault have caused the uplift of the Mataketake Range, creating a fascinating landscape both above and below the bushline.

The track is well formed in the bush, so there are no markers on the wide, historic Haast to Paringa Cattle Track or Mica Mine Tops Route up to around 960 m. However, the route up to the tops from Maori Saddle is marked through the bush, and along the tops, the route is poled. Streams and slips are also marked.

The Moeraki/Mataketake area has abundant wildlife and intact ecosystems thanks to an ongoing programme of landscape-scale 1080 operations to control introduced pests, such as possums, rats and stoats. This is one of the few places on the West Coast where kākā are abundant, and there have been reports of kiwi calling and mohua/yellowhead sightings – please let us know if you see or hear kiwi or other less common native species.



Tramping times given are guides only and will vary greatly depending on your fitness and the weather conditions. Tramping in this area is demanding, and you should allow plenty of time to reach your destination.

General information



Duration: 2 days +

Grade: Tramping track and route

Experience: Suitable only for people who are well-equipped, with high-level backcountry skills and experience. The open Mataketake tops require route-finding and navigation skills.

Best seasons: Summer and autumn, though there can also be good weather windows in winter.

Maps: NZTopo50: BY12 Haast; BY13 Lake Paringa

Hazards: Flooding in rivers and streams; windfall; rockfall; steep terrain; poor visibility and exposure in bad weather above the bushline; fast-changing weather; snow in winter. Ensure you have plenty of water for travel across the tops.

Safety: Check the latest conditions at the Department of Conservation Awarua/Haast Visitor Centre or Westland Tai Poutini National Park Visitor Centre before heading into this area – the conditions can change rapidly.

Safety is your responsibility. Tell someone your plans – it may save your life. Visit www.adventuresmart.org.nz to log your trip intentions, along with the details about your trusted contact person. Note your intentions in the hut books, carry a personal locator beacon (PLB) and let your contact person know when you have returned safely.

Getting there

The northern end of the Haast to Paringa Cattle Track is the starting point for this loop. It is signposted approximately 40 km north of Haast and 78 km south of Fox Glacier township along SH6 at the Windbag Saddle. There is a small parking area on the side of the road. Lock any vehicle you intend to leave at the road end and don't leave valuables in it.

Track description



This track crosses numerous small streams that can rise quickly during heavy rainfall. Wait until water levels have dropped to a safe level before proceeding.



SH6 to Blowfly Hut

1 hr 30 min, 4 km

The initial section of the track to Blowfly Hut detours from the original route to avoid a lowland swampy area around Windbag Creek. Once past the swampy area, it soon picks up the original line. The flat well-benched track then follows the Moeraki River to a junction about 1 hour's walk away. Blowfly Hut lies a further 15-minutes' walk from this junction, across the swing bridge and just past the track to the Mataketake Tops Routes.

Mataketake Hut can be reached via the two routes described below, but to have the best opportunity to judge the weather conditions on the tops and enable easy retreat if needed, it is recommended to go up to the hut via the Maori Saddle Route.



Blowfly Hut to Mataketake Hut

via Maori Saddle Route

7 hr 30 min

The track to Maori Saddle winds its way steadily uphill through mixed beech, rimu and kāmahī forest, typical of southern Westland. Along the way, you will pass some good examples of stone culverts built by the mica miners. There is also a historic miner's campsite near the helipad, 5 min before the Mica Mine Tops Route junction.

Continuing towards Maori Saddle, sections of the track are quite rough, and in heavy rain, access becomes more difficult due to the numerous stream crossings. Crossings are marked, but the rocks are very slippery. Diversions where slips have destroyed the original track are well marked. There are some very large specimens of beech trees along this section and some relics of the historic 'telegraph line' that ran beside the track.

The turn-off to Mataketake Hut via the Maori Saddle Route is signposted about 2 min after Maori Saddle Hut (approximately 4 hr 30 min from Blowfly Hut). The route up to the tops from here is well marked, but there are some steep sections to negotiate. When you reach the pole markers at the edge of the open tops (after a climb of about 2 hr 30 min), you will have a great view of Lake Dime. From the bush edge markers, follow the poled route for about 20 min to Mataketake Hut. Take extra care in poor visibility (or wait for the weather to clear before heading onto the tops).

Return to the Haast to Paringa Cattle Track via the Maori Saddle Route or Mica Mine Tops Route, depending on the weather conditions.



Blowfly Hut to Mataketake Hut

via Mica Mine Tops Route

6 hr 30 min



Travel along the Mica Mine Tops Route should only be attempted in clear weather – above the bushline, low cloud can make navigation extremely difficult. If you are unsure about the conditions, wait for better weather. **Only those with backcountry route-finding/navigation skills, safety equipment (including a personal locator beacon) and warm, weatherproof clothing should attempt this route.**

The track to the Mica Mine Tops Route junction will take approximately 1 hr 30 min – 2 hr from Blowfly Hut. Before leaving the main track ensure you have plenty of water with you. The route leaves the Cattle Track and climbs up through the forest via 23 zigzags to a height of 960 m. Follow a marked route the rest of the way up a scrubby, rocky spur to the bushline.

Once you are on the open tops, the route is poled and meanders southwest along the Mataketake Range, passing between tarns and rock fields.

Return to the Cattle Track via the Maori Saddle Route or Mica Mine Tops Route depending on the weather conditions.