

Te Araroa Trail – Northbound Guide

Northland

3D view westwards: Mangawhai to Ōpua

Mangawhai–Bream Tail Walkway: 7 km, 3.5 hrs (map 20)

From the carpark on the beach at Mangawhai Heads (end of Wintle St) get onto DoC's Mangawhai Walkway along the cliffs. The TA trail comes out on a tarmac driveway. Cross over and down and up a kauri bush gully on a well-benched zig-zaging track. Then you go over a hill and down a bush line to a marshy area and up a spur onto pasture land. The trail goes to a subdivision driveway and from a few metres along it takes off over pasture to Bream Tail Rd. After 1.8 km on this you are at its junction with Cove Rd.

Cullen–Brynderwyn Walkway, 14 km, 5-6 hrs (map 20)

Head south-east down Cove Rd, then exit right onto a short bush walk to Tarata Pl. This detour is part of the access agreement. Go south along this road. From the end of the road head west on the Langsview Track (aka Brynderwyn Walkway). At the high points of 297 and 276m there are great views in every direction.

Turn right into Cullen Rd, a 4WD track that eventually becomes a sealed road and walk 7.5 km on it to where it meets Cove Rd at Waipū Cove (the settlement, not the actual cove on the coast). Note that there can be forestry operations on Cullen Rd, on weekdays and sometimes Saturday. Wear a high-visibility jacket or pack cover if you have one and don't wear headphones. Observe signage and any instructions.

- DragonSpell Retreat – Cullen Rd, Waipū (look out for the signs at very end of Cullen Rd, 7.5km up from Cove Rd, about the intersection of grid lines 1737 and 6008, but you are asked to call ahead first). Fee is a koha/donation. 027 507 7750, cosmickali@gmail.com

Bream Bay Walk: 27 km, 7 hrs (maps 20, 19, 18)

Continue north on Cove Rd for 6.5 km to Waipū. There are a few takeaways, restaurants, cafés and a Four Square store in Waipū. At the settlement turn right into Nova Scotia Drive and then right again into Uretiti Rd and one final right turn into Tip Rd to take you to the beach. Then it is

5.5 km north along the beach to Ruakākā. You pass the DoC Uretiti Beach camping ground on the way (behind the dunes).

You can cross the Ruakākā River mouth at low tide from the rock/concrete wall (at the point at the northernmost end of the Ruakākā Beach Holiday Park ?) It is dangerous to do so at other times though. Check the [NIWA tide tables](#) for Marsden Point. You can try a kayak crossing by contacting Simon Ellison (Ruakākā Kayaking, ph 432 8668 or 021 233 6748), who can assist with kayaks. Please arrange a day in advance, and a koha (donation) is appreciated. Note that there is a wildlife sanctuary opposite, with many migrant and wading birds, so please do not walk inside the fenced-off nesting areas. The other option if the tide is not low is to cross the bridge at the southern end of the camp ground to walk north on Marsden Point Rd and then cross to the beach at Peter Snell Rd just before the Ruakākā shopping complex (where there are a couple of decent sized supermarkets).

Before you contemplate crossing the Ruakākā River mouth you may wish to contact Blair Jones (listed below) if you are planning to get a ride with him across the Whangārei Heads. The TA notes say he drops off SoBos at the Ruakākā jetty. It doesn't say whether that is at Ruakākā itself (you would think so, but maybe the jetty at Marsden Point is called the Ruakākā jetty). It would be worth checking.

Whatever the case, the trail heads north along the beach to Marsden Point. There is a track in the dunes just past the power station if wind on the beach is getting you down, and one further inland as well (Ruakākā Pipeline Rd Track) that starts from Sime Rd.

Go round Marsden Point to the wharf area. At least this is what the map shows, but it is designed for SoBos who have got a boat ride across the harbour. Unless you have something organised from here you are better to keep going to the Marsden Cove Marina where you may be able to get a boat to take you to the other side (see under the next section below). The marina has a café, telephone and toilets. Its a little complicated wending your way through this heavy industrial area and you might be better off giving the Marsden Point a miss altogether and cut across it via Rama Rd and then Marsden Bay Rd. There is a beach track into Rama Rd just before you get to Marsden Point Beach carpark.

Marsden Point is the site of NZ's only oil refinery. There is a visitor centre (09 432 8194) on Marsden Point Highway, which you can access from the above mentioned carpark and walking down Mair Rd to where it joins the highway and then going a few hundred metres north.

There don't seem to be any scheduled bus services between Marsden Point and Whangārei (36 km), nor between Whangārei and Whangārei Heads on the other side (27 km), which is a pity as Whangārei offers full-scale supermarkets for resupply. A2B Auckland Airport Direct Shuttle (to/from Whangārei, Marsden Point, Ruakaka, 09 459 5221 or 027 273 7307), might be of use, but would be best for a group. And Whangārei Coastal Commuter (0800 435 355) has a twice daily service to Tutukaka and Ngunguru, both settlements well north of Whangārei that are on the TA, but which is only really useful if you want to skip the section from Whangārei Heads or need to bail out when you are up there. Stans Van Passenger Service, Whangārei Heads (09 434 0024), charges about \$50 for a ride from Whangārei to Whangārei Heads, though Trail Drop Whangārei seems to be a cheaper option (see below). If you can get from

Marsden Pt to Whangārei you could resupply there and take one of these services to the Heads and avoid the whole business of trying to get a boat across.

- [Waipu hotel \(& backpackers\)](#) – 4 South Rd, Waipū, 09 432 0306. Cheap rooms and tent sites.
- [Camp Waipu Cove](#) – 869 Cove Rd, Waipū, about 1200m south of where Cullen Rd meets Cove Rd. Cottages, camping and backpacker accommodation. Mention you are walking Te Araroa for a 25% discount. 09 432 0410.
- [Zany Haven B&B](#) – 298/11 Cove Rd, Waipū. 09 432 1517; 027 658 5217 (Coralie Betts).
- [Uretiti Beach DOC Campsite](#) – located between beach and SH 1, 5km north of Waipū. Campsites, toilets, water, cold showers. Camp office on-site. Backcountry passes can't be used. 09 432 1051.
- [Ruakaka Reserve Motor Camp](#) – 21 Ruakākā Beach Rd, located on the beachfront/estuary. Tent sites and cabins. 09 432 7590.
- [Ruakaka Beach Front Motel](#) – 115 Ruakākā Beach Rd, 09 432 7166.
- Karawai Lodge – 24 Karawai St, Ruakākā. Single rooms with shared facilities and a 4-bed backpacker room. Ask for the 'Te Araroa rate'. 0275 700 600.
- Blair Jones – water taxi across the Whangārei Harbour from the Ruakākā jetty to Reotahi. Times are 11:00am and 3:00pm (north to south, so presumably similar the other way). The official TA guide says the charge is \$20pp, but I think that is for a group and that the minimum charge may be \$100. So it could be an idea to get a group together. He can take up to 10 people per trip. 021 114 7466.
- Peter – also does water taxi but would like 24 hrs notice, 0274 172 440.
- [Trail Drop Whangarei](#) – Departs Whangārei 9am, 12.45 and 4pm for Whangārei Heads, \$30pp, plus \$10 for each additional person. 021 885 045.

Whangārei Heads to Russell Forest: 137 km, 6 days (maps 18, 17, 16, 15, 14)

[Bream Head \(Te Whara\) Track: 7 km, 5–6 hrs \(map 18\)](#)

You need to cross the harbour entrance to Reotahi Bay. You can try Blair Jones (listed above) or try the marina already mentioned. If you do go over in a boat, make sure you are wearing a lifejacket (and for any other boat rides on the trail – too many people drown every year in NZ in boating accidents). If you get dropped off at McLeods Bay you can walk round to Reotahi Bay by taking Stuart Rd. This becomes a track which goes to the end of Darch Point Rd. Turn right off this on Matuku St and from here a track goes to a driveway on Norfolk Rd. Go to the end of this road to a playground and onto another track that takes you to Reotahi Beach Rd.

From Reotahi Bay a track goes around to Little Munro Bay. Once there head inland on Bay View Rd and then turn right into Whangārei Heads Rd. Stay on this around the bays. At the beginning of Taurikura Bay at 2311 Whangārei Heads Rd is the Taurikura General Store and public toilets. (Note that the store may not be open outside of summer peak visitor period, so call ahead if you are relying on it: 09 434 0151.) Take the right fork when you get to Ocean Beach Rd onto Urquharts Bay Rd and stay on it to the carpark at its end. A track then continues and it divides shortly into one that goes to a gun emplacement and the other, on the left, towards Smugglers Bay. Take the latter then walk up the steep track on steps to continue along the ridge to Mt Lion (Matariki) on Te Whara Track. The rock formations and views all along the ridge are spectacular. You pass a track down to Peach Cove Hut, a DoC hut, but the backcountry pass doesn't cover it and you need to book in order to get a code for the lock. It is

all conservation land along the trail but camping is prohibited except at Peach Cove. A track also goes off at left to Ocean Beach Rd (the one you would come up if you followed the November 2018 map), but keep straight ahead. After the Bream Head/Te Whara summit the track turns north on the Te Whara Track to Ocean Beach. The detour to the viewing platform at the summit is worth taking. You also pass a WWII naval radar station. At the end of Ocean Beach Rd is a small carpark and supposedly toilets. There is a bylaw prohibiting camping here.

- Camping by the toilets at Reotahi Reserve by TA walkers for one night seems to be permitted.
- [Thistle Do](#) – 25 Beach Rd, Reotahi, Whangārei Heads, 09 434 0006, 027 356 6526. Bach and tent sites.
- [WHY \(Whangarei Heads Yoga\) Retreat](#) – 16 Reotahi Rd, Mcleod Bay, Whangārei Heads. 022 160 8950.
- [Appin Cottage](#) – 2432 Whangārei Heads Rd, McKenzie Bay, 09 434 0819. Self contained cottage in its own garden, queen size bed, linen, shower, TV, fridge, microwave, washing machine, self-catering. Also available camping in the shelter of a bamboo grove. \$20 per tent includes water, microwave and garden long-drop toilet. Enquire with Dougie about crossing from Marsden Point.
- The Green Bus Stop – 2489 Whangārei Heads Rd, McKenzie Bay. Tent sites with washing facilities and outdoor kitchen. Cabin also, sleeps three, \$20pp. 027 600 2276 or 09 434 0544, the.green.bus.stop2489@gmail.com
- [Nook Paradise](#) – Parua Bay, considerable distance off trail but pickups available for about \$8pp. B&B accommodation in comfortable house with private native bush and beach setting. Reasonable pricing, free wifi, comfortable bed, shower, breakfast option \$10 extra. 021 613 569 (Brenda).
- [Peach Cove \(DOC\) hut](#) – 8 bunks, plus campsite. Pre-bookings are required as this hut is locked. You get a code number for the lock when your booking is confirmed. You don't seem to be able to book the campsite. 09 470 3300.
- [Bream Head Getaway](#) – 310 Ocean Beach Rd, Whangārei Heads, about 800m south-west of Ocean Beach carpark. Healthy and wholesome food packs for sale as you pass through. 09 434 0655; 021 550 249 (Melissa).
- Te Whara camp & cottage – 22 Ranui Rd, off Ocean Beach Rd, close to the the beach at the southern end of Ocean Beach. Cottage with own kitchen and bathroom and camping. Please txt 021 121 5362 to book cottage 2 days ahead. Camping \$15 pp, cottage \$80 per night (up to 4 people). Cash only. Hosts Rupert and Wendy Newbold.

Ocean Beach Walk: 9 km, 3 hr (map 18)

Walk north along to the other end of the beach. The dunes are a wildlife sanctuary. Avoid entering here. No dogs are allowed due to nesting birds. Near the end is a stream/occasional estuary that changes shape a lot – check it before attempting to cross. Sometimes if the tide is high you're best to wait for it to drop a little. Then find some clay steps up to the gravel Kauri Mountain Rd. Leave the gate at the edge of farmland as you find it. At the top by a carpark, turn right onto the Kauri Mountain Track.

Speaking of kauri, this might be a good place to repeat a paragraph from the Auckland pages in case you haven't read it, as you will be encountering kauri a number of times in this region:

[Kauri die-back disease](#) has been recently been spreading amongst kauri trees in the Auckland and Northland regions. It is a water fungus that attacks the roots and lower trunk of the trees

and eventually kills them. There is no known cure and it is spreading like wildfire, killing an iconic species of native New Zealand tree, possibly sending it to extinction. Many other types of vegetation are dependent on the kauri, so there is a risk that we won't just lose the trees but whole forests. The disease is mainly being spread by humans. It is crucial that you don't walk anywhere near the roots of these trees as you are likely to pick up the fungus on your footwear and spread it further. The roots can be very close to the surface and spread a very long way from the tree. So use boardwalks where provided and clean your footwear using wash stations (and don't forget to wash your poles). Just spraying anti-fungus solution on your shoes isn't enough. You have to get all the soil off them in the first instance, as that's where the spores will be. And then you have to be careful you are not just washing the soil to some place where it can infect further trees.

- Jagers camp – Camp for koha/donation. Look out for orange marker on Ocean Beach south of Kauri Mountain. Please call ahead to book. Water, toilets, showers (cold), camping, caravan, cabin. 09 434 0747 or 021 243 1347.

Kauri Mountain Track: 3 km, 1.5 hr (map 18)

From the Kauri Mountain trig descend down the other side to a long driveway that passes private homes. Use the stiles and leave gates open or closed as you find them.

Taiharuru Estuary Route: 7 km, 2 hr (map 18)

The drive exits at a point where Harambee Rd and Te Whara Way meet. Turn left into Harambee, then right into Taiharuru Rd. As you go uphill from the point where it meets the waters edge a driveway goes off at left. Stick to the route down here.

At the waters edge, providing the tide is low, you walk out on the estuary to the point at right and then around it. There is a white marker with an orange triangle showing the shallowest point more or less opposite where you begin. Then you walk parallel to the land going north-west, staying well out from the mangroves. The mud can be deep in places. To plan for the tide check the usual NIWA site, and enter Marsden Point as the location. Come ashore at a council reserve where you can see down the river and out to sea. Hop on the road (Pataua South Rd) and head north to cross the footbridge over the next estuary (Pataua River). An alternative to walking the Taiharuru Estuary is to ask to be ferried by the people at Tidesong B&B.

- [Tidesong B&B](#) – Beasley Rd, Taiharuru. B&B accommodation (discount to TA walkers), plus camp ground with tent sites, hot shower and a cabin (\$15 pp). They also can provide fresh fruit and vegetables, meals and dinghy rides across the estuary, as well as advice and transport. 09 436 1959.
- [Taiharuru Walkers Camp](#) – 54 Harambee Rd, Taiharuru. More trail angel than commercial operation, has a cabin with hot shower, beds and kitchen, plus ample tent space. Some food supplies, tea/coffee plus food and drink for sale. \$15pp/night. 021 0282 9102 (Louis), taiharuru10@gmail.com
- [Stonelee Cottage](#) – Beasley Road, Pataua South, Whangārei, near Tidesong B&B. 09 436 5200.
- [Treasure Island campground](#) – Mahanga Rd, Pataua South, about 500m east of the trail at Pataua. 09 436 2390. Not usually open in winter months, and the basic supply shop is only open for 6 weeks over the peak summer period.

Crossing the Horahora and Ngunguru rivers (map 17).

Walk 13 km along the Pataua North Rd. It is not really an option to walk north on the beach from Pataua because it is private land between the beach and the road. Just before the road meets Horahora River turn right and cross the river at low tide. The water is knee to waist deep at low tide and on a sandy base. Find the track that takes you to Ngunguru Ford Rd, turn left into it and then right down to Nikau Bay Camp and Cabins. You will have to pay a \$5 fee at the camp for using the Māori land access via the Horahora River crossing.

An alternative to fording the Horahora River is to follow the old TA route on the Mackerel Forest Track (4 km, 1.5 hrs on the track and a total of 18.5 km diverting around the Horahora River). This is recorded on the official map in purple, and the track between Pataua Rd North and Ngunguru Ford Rd is on the NZ Topo map as of Oct 2020. For this route continue on inland on the Patua North Rd. Exit at right off the road onto an old logging track through a gate. It is marked on the 2019-20 map as a dotted line, and on the NZ Topo map as noted. There is nothing much to mark this turn off. Watch for the road sloping uphill back in the direction you've been walking. This appears after a section with a bank on the right side of the road. The track goes up and around a pine-covered hill and then steeply down to follow the Tākehe River, crossing it at a shallower ford between deeper pools to take you onto the true left bank. You then join and cross the Waitangi River at a point where it is usually knee/thigh deep before climbing up on Mackerel Rd (a forest road) through pine forest to join Ngunguru Ford Rd. Turn right onto it. The above section between Pataua North Rd and Ngunguru Ford Rd passes through private forest and may be subject to occasional closures due to forestry operations. Open daylight hours only and no camping or fires. Then make your way down to Nikau Bay via Ngunguru Ford Rd by going east to where Nikau Bay Camp and Cabins is situated. Alternatively, if you want to avoid the Ngunguru River crossing as well, you can turn left after Mackerel Forest and then right to take the road around to Ngunguru settlement, probably adding about 10km to the route down to Nikau Bay.

Ngunguru

('Ngunguru' may look unpronounceable at first, but break it into Māori syllables – ngu (rhymes with new, but with the 'n' combined with a 'g', as in sing), followed by another ngu, then -ru (as in roo): ngu-ngu-ru.) At Nikau Bay Camp and Cabins you have the option of camping or staying in a cabin. From here you need a boat to get to Ngunguru. Phone or txt James Johnston at the camp 24 hrs prior to your boat ride on 021 0242 1632. James will do his best to take you across at a time that suits. You will come ashore at Papaka Rd, which goes up to Ngunguru Rd along the front of the settlement. There are a couple of cafés, takeaway shops and a Four Square grocery store on Ngunguru Rd. At the end of town turn left into Waitotoi Rd.

Note: If the sea conditions are good, an alternative is to sea kayak from Ngunguru to Pataua North with [Pacific Coast Kayaks](#). They offer a shuttle trip from Ngunguru to Pataua or Taiharuru, with a lunch stop at Goat Island (lunch provided). Pataua has a camping ground but Taiharuru is closer to the start of the track. This is a guided trip as there are a few hazards such as a bar crossing at Pataua. They do not hire kayaks out to solo paddlers. Pacific Coast Kayaks will carry hikers' packs to the take-out point where hikers can resume their journey. As there is additional mileage involved and a driver has to do a pickup, the cost is more than a usual day trip. It is therefore cheaper if you join up with other hikers so that the transport costs can be shared.

Another alternative to avoiding the fords of the Horahora and Ngunguru rivers is the road route and the Mackerel Forest Track (if this is still open). Turn left on Ngunguru Ford Rd when you leave the Mackerel Forest Track. And after 4 km or so turn right into Ngunguru Rd and continue to the settlement. If using the Mackerel Forest Track isn't an option then it is a very long road walk into Whangārei and then back out to Ngunguru, though you can catch a bus part way, as below.

And if you want to visit Whangārei after all, its not so far from the end of the Mackerel Forest Track end. Just keep going west on Ngunguru Rd and its about 16 km to the northern suburb of Tikipunga, with a campground and a Countdown supermarket. You could always take the Coastal Commuter bus one direction or the other perhaps.

- [Whangarei Coastal Commuter](#) – twice daily service from Whangārei to Tutukaka and Ngunguru, 0800 435 355. \$25 one way.
- [Nikau Bay Camp and Cabins](#) – 999 Ngunguru Ford Rd, Ngunguru. James Johnston is your host at this spot on the southern shore of the Ngunguru Estuary. The camp has tent sites, and showers/cooking facilities. 021 0242 1632 (texting preferred).
- [Goldstones](#) – 8 Papaka Rd, Ngunguru, right where you come ashore. Two holiday homes on the same site, sleeping up to 4 each. Also listed on Trivago. 09 434 3095, watersedge@goldstones.co.nz
- [The Riverbank Homestay and B&B](#) – 12 Old Mill Lane, off Ngunguru Rd about 1 km west of where you come ashore from the Nikau Bay crossing to Ngunguru at Pataua Rd. The owners Hilton and Melva Ward offer free evening meal to walkers who book the B&B and mention Te Araroa. Best to book ahead to ensure availability. Campsite also available for koha. Their website has a TA page of useful info. 09 946 0074.
- Mila's Backpackers' Ranch – 48 Kakariki Rd, Ngunguru, about 500m north-east of Pataua Rd, where you come ashore from Nikau Bay, off Ngunguru Rd at left. Campsites \$15pp/night. Caravan (\$70, sleeps 4), dinghy, horses, kayak available. 09 434 4113 or 021 0857 8821.
- [Tutukaka Coast Motor Lodge](#) – 2015 Ngunguru Rd, Ngunguru. Handy location at the north end of the settlement. 09 434 3840.
- Sam's Bush Retreat – Waipoka Rd, off Ngunguru Rd, Kiripaka. Handy if you are taking the road route, but some distance off-trail otherwise. Listed on Airbnb. Mention Te Araroa to get a discount if phone booking: 09 437 5375; 021 069 0937.
- [Coastal Holiday Homes](#) – Generic listing site for holiday homes and baches. 09 434 4146; 027 482 6408.

Ngunguru to Sandy Bay: 16.5 km (map 17)

Walk along Waiotoi Rd for about 2.8 km. Now when Pukenui Rd branches off at left you may have a choice. The route up until 2019-20 was to keep right and a few hundred metres further on the trail go off at right up a ridge (not the one that follows a stream). The trail is shown on the NZ Topo Map (including the official TA map which is now simply overlaid on this). It comes out at Clements Rd and you end up at Matapōuri, a very nice place by various accounts (especially Whale Bay). But there are kauri trees along here at some point and perhaps that is why the trail now goes left into Pukenui Rd and at the end of this follows a ridge to drop you onto Te Toiroa Rd. After you have headed west on this a bit you turn right into Kaiatea Rd, and then right again into Matapōuri Rd to reach the coast.

Whananaki Coastal Track: 7.5 km, 2.5 hrs (map 16)

You could walk the 3 km east to Matapōuri . There is a store and a camping ground here. Otherwise, turn left over a bridge onto McAuslin Rd. Stay on this until a 'T' intersection, where the Whananaki Walkway departs past a gate in more or less the direction you have been travelling. There is limited beach access along the McAuslin Rd/Whananaki Walkway (only at Sheltered Bay). You can divert to the Capitaine Bougainville Memorial on the north point of Oruaea Bay. There are great views from here along the coast.

The walkway becomes a well-graded farm track/driveway lined with pōhutukawa trees, going over a stile and behind private baches. You exit past Pitokuhu Point onto Pukekawa Rd back from the next beach. Continue on this to cross the spit to the southern shore of Whananaki Inlet and walk west along the water's edge to the footbridge and cross over what is claimed to be the longest footbridge in the Southern Hemisphere. If the tide is high on the above-mentioned shore you can detour beforehand by taking the road going west from Whananaki South. If you turn right and go a short way to Whananaki North Rd you will pass public toilets, and off the road going north is the Whananaki Holiday Camp and a store.

- A2B Auckland Airport Direct Shuttle (to/from Whangārei/Matapōuri/Tutukaka), 09 459 5221; 027 273 7307.
- [Tui Cabin](#) – 2km up Clements Rd, Matapōuri Bay (just past #152, 500m off the route). Two double bedrooms, gas cooker, fireplace, showers. 'More like a tramping hut than anything... Primarily catering for Te Araroa hikers.' 09 434 4977; 027 3783046; bobgilbert@xtra.co.nz
- [Whananaki Holiday Park](#) – Whananaki North Rd, Whananaki. Has cabins, tourist flats, tent sites and the Naki'd Inn hut specially for TA walkers (that's 'knackered inn', if you didn't get it.) 09 433 8896.

Onekainga – Morepork Track: 13 km, 4-5 hrs (maps 16, 15)

Walk around the edge of Whananaki Inlet left of the bridge. From a stopbank the track goes inland around the edge of a paddock to join Whananaki North Rd. 800m or so north-west along the road there is a stile that takes you onto farmland along a small creek. If there are bulls grazing walk slowly and quietly. You follow a fence line, then cross pasture with a lone tree to another fence line. Then there is a footwear cleaning station just as you enter bush on the Harman farm. Make sure to use it. Go up the ridge line in native bush for 1.5 km through the privately owned Waetford block (no camping, fires, dogs, etc, and daylight access only), then along a fence line past pine trees. You come to a boundary fence just west of Onekainga trig (227m) and then 200m through a small pine plantation with no markers and onto a farm track for 500m. Cross some stiles and descend steeply to some pretty little streams then up ridgelines on the other side.

At a cleared and grassy high point the DoC Kaiikanui Forest is on your left. The track mostly follows the fence line at the edge of the forest before turning south-west into the forest for Hansens Hill and turning sharply again there into the previous north-west direction. After about 4 km you reach Kaiikanui Rd (with a footwear washing station beforehand for you to use).

Parts of the track north of Onekainga trig are well used for DoC predator control and there are numerous coloured markers for bait stations and traps. Stick to the orange markers. The track

on the first km north of the trig is also less clear and gets worked over by wild pigs, so pay attention and use GPS guidance on whatever mapping you are using.

Helena Ridge Track: 9 km, 4 hrs (map 15)

Walk 1 km west from the end of the Morepork-Onekainga Track on Kaiikanui Rd to the start of the Helena Ridge Track. There is a footwear cleaning station a short way in. The track begins over a stile on the right as an easy gravel farm track and alternates between pasture, farm track and native bush. You pass through here with agreement from a number of landowners so please respect this and do not camp anywhere on this track. You may encounter some gates with electrified wires. Use the insulated grips to open and close the gates.

In an open area the track turns from westerly to north along a ridgeline through regenerating bush. The track ends at a cleaning station and stile beneath a 'High Chapparal' sign on Webb Rd at Ngawai Bay.

There is an alternative to the Helena Ridge Track that takes you to the [Waikahoa Bay DoC camp site](#) in the Mimiwhangata Coastal Park. When you exit the Morepork-Onekainga Track turn right on to Kaiikanui Rd, then right into Mimiwhangata Rd for 4.5 km and then a further 1 km over the hill to the campground. To rejoin the trail, retrace your steps to the road intersection and turn right into Webb Rd and stay on it to Ngawai Bay (a smaller bay within Helena Bay). The DoC Back Country Hut pass does not apply at the campground and bookings are essential in peak season.

Russell Forest Track: 18 km, 8 hrs (maps 15, 14)

Stay on Webb Rd heading north into Te Mimiha Bay and turn right into Russell Rd. Pass the small settlement of Mokau after 4km, and keep left on Russell Rd at the Oakura turn-off another 1.5 km further on. After 6 km turn off Russell Rd at left into Papakauri Rd at the Punaruku Estuary. At the end of this road the Papakauri Track continues.

Already some parts of the Russell Forest have been affected by kauri die-back disease and a Māori rahui (precautionary closure) has been applied to the original route, at the end of Punaruku Rd. Papakauri Rd is the current Te Araroa access to the forest, as per the TA map and the instructions above. Please help prevent spread of the disease by washing your footwear in and out of the forest.

Keep going west on the Papakauri Track for 4 km, past a turn-off at right at a shelter to the Punaruku Track, until you meet Papakauri Stream at a hut. Walk down this for 4km. There is no track and it will take you longer than you think to walk over boulders and river shoals. The route should also not be attempted after heavy rain. A Māori road then begins. Note that permission to use this has been specially granted to TA walkers, so please respect the privilege. No camping of course (through Russell Forest?).

About 1 km further on you will need to cross the Waikare River that joins the Papakauri. On a good day this is no more than ankle deep but after rain it can be dangerous. You can cross adjacent to the twisted remains of a concrete power pole laid on the river bed. It's a good opportunity to wash your boots and equipment on your way in and out of the forest to prevent

the spread of kauri die-back disease. You then join the Waikare Valley Rd, which takes you to a landing at the Waikare Inlet.

- [Whangaruru Beachfront Camp](#) – Ohawini Rd, Oakura Nth, between Ohawini Bay and Oakura Bay, about 2 km off trail. TA walkers discount of winter rates for summer, e.g. campsite \$17 pp, cabins \$60 to \$75. 09 433 6806.
- [Hopewell B&B](#) – 1349 Russell Rd, Helena Bay Hill, near the junction with Hay Rd, down from the Helena Ridge track, 4.5 km off trail but pick up and drop offs available. 09 433 9608.
- LXM Artist Studio 1807 Russell Rd, Helena Bay. Has a caravan that sleeps three and space for about 10 tents. Pay by koha. 022 045 4391 (Alex), 0274 339 016 (Dave), lxmartist73@gmail.com.
- Sheryl Wikaire information on Waikare amenities – also has tent sites (koha/donation) available for walkers at 228D Waikare Valley Rd, on the trail after the Russell Forest. Sheryl's place is 'off grid': composting toilet available on request and kauri die-back cleaning facilities for your use. Sheryl can occasionally supply transport from Waikare to Russell (outside work hours). Call or email Sheryl on 027 309 3476; peter1.sheryl@gmail.com.

Waikare Connection, Waikare to Ōpua Wharf: 13 km by water or 21.5 km road (maps 14, 13)

Two options exist to negotiate the Waikare Inlet from the Russell Forest Track – by water or by road. The water option is to hire a kayak to Ōpua, or better, Paihia, where the kayak hire company is based. The road options are to walk to Okiato and take a ferry to Ōpua, or to Russell and a ferry to Paihia (the Russell ferry goes every hour from 7am to 9pm). There is plenty of history at Russell, once known as Kororareka and as the 'hell-hole of the Pacific' for its drunken sailors and vice in the early 1800s. It couldn't be more genteel today.

Water route: Kayak down the inlet with [Bay Beach Hire](#), phone 0800 611 440 or 021 189 4204. It's better to travel in a group or two or three, which will reduce costs. The paddle from Waikare to Paihia takes 3-4hr depending on weather conditions, tide and fitness levels, and should only be done by persons with some experience and navigation ability. Going with an outgoing tide is presumably best. Two people \$100pp, three \$90pp, etc to \$70/pp for seven. Includes kayak hire, pack transport, kayak pickup, dry bags, maps, full safety equipment. There is another kayak hire place in Paihia that may be worth checking out: [Coastal Kayakers](#).

Road route: Walk north (right) on Waikare Rd for 7 km from where it joins Waikare Valley Rd, then turn left into the Russell-Whakapapa Rd for 10 km, and left again into Aucks Rd for 4.5 km to reach Okiato (total 21.5 km). Take the vehicle ferry over the Veronica Channel to Ōpua. Ferries go every 10 minutes from 6 am to 9.50 pm, and only cost \$1 for foot passengers. A more relaxing route for part of this road walk is to take the [Okiato to Russell Walkway](#) that goes around cliffs and through wetland and bush from Aucks Rd, just after its junction with the Russell-Whakapara Rd, and finishes at Pipiroa Rd near the ferry. It is longer than walking Aucks Rd, but more enjoyable. Oddly, only the last stage ('Stage One') of this is shown on the TA and NZ Topo maps, a short section off Aucks Rd as you near Okiato. Stage two and Three are on the north-west side of Aucks Rd.

- Derek Miller lives in Haruru Falls, near Waitangi, and is happy to provide assistance to TA walkers such as transport anywhere between Puketī Forest (west of Kerikeri) and Russell Forest. spikebowler@hotmail.com 0212 544 919 or 09 402 7717.
- [Ferry Landing Homestay](#) – Okiato, just a \$1 short ferry hop over from Opua. Bookable on Airbnb. I've stayed here and can recommend it. 027 733 32722, ferrylandingbackpackers@gmail.com

3D view westwards: Ōpua to Cape Reinga

Ōpua to Paihia: 6km, 1.5 hrs (map 13)

Walk along the signed track from Ōpua north to Haumai Bay. Then, after you cross the estuary on the roadway, you can follow the coast to Paihia Beach if the tide is low. Walking around the beaches and rocks is possible until about 2 to 3 hrs before high tide. Otherwise, continue on SH11 as it changes from Paihia Rd to Seaview Rd. As noted above, if you kayaked from Waikare Inlet then you are probably coming ashore at Paihia and can thus ignore the last two sentences. There are toilets at the southern end of Paihia Beach. The Russell, Paihia, Waitangi area is highly touristed and there are many accommodation options available, including about 13 backpacker hostels, several of which are clustered around King's Rd (although note that this road is some minutes walk away from the main shopping and restaurant area further north). Paihia is a bit like a very small version of Queenstown or Wanaka and consists mainly of places to stay and eat, but despite all the accommodations it can get booked right out in summer. There is a smallish Countdown and a Four Square supermarket at Paihia and 2 Four Squares in Russell.

- i-SITE Visitor Information Centres – The Wharf, Marsden Rd, Paihia, 09 402 7345 or 0800 363 463. For further information on Paihia and Russell go to <http://www.paihianz.co.nz> and <http://www.russellnz.co.nz>
- [Orongo Bay Holiday Park](#) – Wairoro Park, 5960 Russell Rd, before Russell, 09 403 7704.
- [Opua Seaview Motel](#) – 24 Franklin St. Prices are regular motel level but 10% discount for TA walkers. 09 402 7632.
- [Paihia Top Ten Holiday Park](#) – 1290 SH 11, Paihia, 09 402 7678; 0800 55 6660 freephone. You reach this before Haumai Bay and Paihia when coming from Ōpua. (Beachside Holiday Park is marked on the TA map nearby, but this is actually the same place – perhaps the old name?) Note that the online prices for small tent sites on the website are for two people. The price for a one-person tent is not listed but is considerably less. The same applies at the camp in Kerikeri.
- [YHA Bay of Islands](#) – Corner of Kings & MacMurray Rds, Paihia, 09 402 7487.
- [The Pickled Parrot](#) – Greys Lane, Paihia. Backpackers with \$15pp camping (TA walkers only), 10% discount on dorm/private rooms when you are a Te Araroa walker. Claims to have a non-party atmosphere. 09 402 6222; 0508 PARROT freephone.
- [Centabay Lodge](#) BBH – 27 Selwyn Rd, Paihia, 09 402 7466; 0800 402 746 freephone.
- Waitangi Holiday Park & Mayfair Lodge backpackers – 1 Tahuna Rd, Waitangi, 0800 55 6660 or 09 402 786, waitangiholidaypark@xtra.co.nz

Paihia to Kerikeri: 25 km, 6 hrs (maps 13, 12)

From Paihia follow Marsden Rd north to Waitangi Bridge. From the bridge continue on the road past the Waitangi Treaty Grounds. The grounds are open daily from 9am to 6pm in January and

February, and to 5pm for the rest of the year. Daily guided tours, hangi and Māori cultural performances are available. Surprisingly, for an estate that was gifted to the nation, the entire grounds are fenced off and you can only enter through the visitor centre for \$50 or about half that price if you are a NZ resident. You could perhaps hop over the fence in a secluded spot if you just want to visit the grounds and skip the buildings. Note, though, that a little further up the road is a monument that claims to be sited approximately where the treaty was signed (not actually in the Treaty Grounds!)

On 6 February 1840, New Zealand's founding document was signed at Waitangi between Lieutenant-Governor Hobson, representing of the British Crown and Māori chiefs. The manicured lawns and the solemn kaitiakitanga that surround the place indicate the importance now placed on the treaty. The Treaty Grounds (including the colonial Treaty House) and 1000 acres of land were gifted to the nation in 1932 by the former Governor General, Lord Charles Bledisloe. As a British aristocrat, he perhaps saw more clearly than Pākehā New Zealanders then did of what the Treaty of Waitangi meant to Māori, and the nation. Te Whare Runanga (the carved meeting house) was opened on 6 February 1940, one hundred years after the signing. It stands facing the Treaty House, the two buildings together symbolising the partnership agreed between Māori and the British Crown, on which today's Aotearoa New Zealand is founded. Whare Waka Café is located within the Treaty Grounds.

From the Treaty Grounds proceed on Tau Henare Drive past the golf course. The drive becomes the gravelled Haruru Falls Rd. Go west along this and turn right into Te Puke Rd. There is a track off here soon after the junction to the top of Mt Bledisloe (105m), which gives a good view of the area.

At the junction with Skyline Rd up Te Puke Rd a few metres is an inconspicuous marker of where the idea of the Te Araroa Trail first took off. There is a small plaque on a circle of boulders and a cairn now becoming enveloped by bushes made from local volcanic rock by Kerikeri sculptor Chris Booth. They mark the 7 February 1995 opening by the then prime minister Jim Bolger of the Kerikeri–Waitangi route, the very first Te Araroa track! There was a [brochure](#) produced for the track, which included a sketch of the proposed route for the whole North Island (and which has pretty much been realised as envisaged, except for a bit that detoured to the Waitakere Ranges near Auckland).

Waitangi Forest Track: 14.5 km, 3 hrs

Go left into Skyline Rd along ridges west, then north, before the road descends to Kerikeri Inlet Rd (that's after it branches into Bedford and Te Wairoa Rd – take the left, Te Wairoa Rd, down to Kerikeri Inlet Rd). The route from Haruru Falls Rd to Kerikeri Inlet Rd is all forestry road, and offers both shade and shelter from wind.

The Waitangi Forest is a commercial forest, and forestry operations, including logging and log truck transport, are present in the forest most months of the year. The Skyline Road avoids the areas currently scheduled for logging, so it is important to stick to this route. Heed all the signs and do not enter into areas that are marked as closed. If you encounter a road closed sign or banner across the road, it means you have left the designated walkway and are on the wrong route – retrace your steps until you are back on the Skyline road. The NZ Topo map shows a slightly different route, off Diesel Rd. This is probably an old route that hasn't been updated.

Cross the bridge over the Okura River (or tidal inlet really) and stay on Kerikeri Inlet Rd through the outskirts of Kerikeri. Turn right into Pā Rd. Near the end, just before Pagoda Lodge is a narrow track off at left. The TA app in 2019 was misleading here and took you to the end of Pā Rd and into the mud, so ignore it if it is still doing so. The track takes you down into a gully and over a bridge and onto the historic reserve that includes the site of Kororipo Pā. This pā served as a coastal village, a trading post and a fortified base for war parties. You then want to be on the Kororipo Pā Track (marked with TA signs), which takes you to Kerikeri Rd and at its end the historic Stone Store at the water's edge. You will probably want to continue down Kerikeri Rd to the centre of Kerikeri (with a large New World supermarket at 99 Kerikeri Rd as you enter town and Countdown at 1 Fairway Drive at the other end), but the route for the next section is across the large foot bridge near Kemp House and the Stone Store over the Kerikeri River to the reserve on the other side and the Kerikeri Walkway.

The Kerikeri Basin is where Māori welcomed missionaries in 1819 to establish a Church Mission Settlement. This established the framework for New Zealand's bi-cultural society. Kerikeri is both a beautiful place in the Bay of Islands, and one of New Zealand's most historic sites.

Accommodation in Kerikeri can be tight. There are three backpackers and one campground, but seasonal workers can be in the hostel beds.

- [Pagoda Lodge & Camping Ground](#) – 81 Pā Rd, Kerikeri. Various glamping options including a bus, vintage caravan, boat house and tents. Not terribly cheap but more romantic than a motel and in a lovely spot. 09 407 8617; 021 071 8688.
- [Kerikeri Top Ten Holiday Park and Aranga Backpackers](#) – 23 Aranga Rd, Kerikeri, 09 407 9326; 0800 272 642.
- [Hone Heke Lodge Flashpackers](#) – 65 Hone Heke Rd, Kerikeri, 09 407 8170; 0800 407 817 freephone.
- [KeriCentral Guesthouse and Backpackers](#) – 25 Cobham RD, 09 407 3542.
- Department of Conservation (DoC) – Bay of Islands area office, 34 Landing Rd, Kerikeri, across the reserve where the Kerikeri Walkway starts, 09 407 0300, bayofislandsbooking@doc.govt.nz
- [InterCity](#) – Buses depart several times a day for Auckland and once a day for Kaitaia. 09 583 5780.
- Northliner Express Coach Service – 09 307 5873.
- [Kerikeri Taxi Shuttles and Tours](#) – 09 407 9515; 021 407 951.
- Air New Zealand Link – from Auckland airport – P: 0800 737 000 or 09 357 3000 – <http://www.airnewzealand.co.nz>
- Salt Air – 0800 472 582 or 09 402 8338, info@saltair.co.nz Flys from KeriKeri or Paihia.

Kerikeri to Puketī Hut: 28 km, 7 hrs (maps 12, 11)

Kerikeri River Track: 7 km, 2 hrs

Follow the path inland along the northern bank of the Kerikeri River on the Kerikeri Walkway. You will pass the remains of a powerhouse built as part of a hydro-electric scheme that operated from 1930 to 1967, and past the 27m high Rainbow Falls that tumble over basalt lava fields which flowed into the river valley during long past volcanic eruptions. Continue following the orange markers through pleasant tōtara groves for 3 km to SH10 where there is a picnic

area and stile. There can be single-wire electric fences along this stretch. These are generally easy to get across or under, but take care to avoid getting a shock. There's an electrified gate which is easy to go through by using the plastic insulated handle. Leave the gate open or closed as you find it.

SH10 to Puketī Hut: 21 km, 5 hrs

The next bit is unclear in the official TA notes, perhaps due to changes in the trail since 2018-19, but I will give the route here as marked on the current map. You will see a dotted line on the underlying NZ Topo map marking the old trail across farmland between Mangakaretu Rd and Waiare Rd. I'm not sure why the route follows Mangakaretu Rd now when there is no authorised track off this road and why you just can't follow the much shorter Puketōtara Rd all the way to Wairare Rd. Looking at Google Street View, perhaps it has a bit less road margin and is slightly more hilly, but there is not a lot in it. Mangakaretu is sealed for the first km, Puketōtara for only a few hundred metres. I suspect another reason why Mangakaretu Rd is used is that the trail previously went across SH 10, following the Kerikeri River and over farmland past Mt Maungaparerua to join the top end of Mangakaretu Rd. So its a bit of left over that should now be re-routed. (This is what the Mangakaretu–Kerikeri detour in the Trail Alerts page as of Oct 2020 is all about, although there is no point to it when the detour IS the current route.)

Go under SH10 from the carpark and over a swing bridge across the Kerikeri River and walk south parallel to SH10 and then turn right onto Puketōtara Rd. After 4.5 km turn right into Mangakaretu Rd. When it ends at Puketōtara turn right and continue to the intesection with Wairere Rd. Go north on this 2 km, then turn left and walk about 1 km to Puketī Hut and campsite.

- DoC campsite and [Puketī Hut](#) – The 18 bunk hut has electricity, gas and cold showers. You have to book it in advance to get a combination code for the door lock. Book on 09 407-0300 or online. A back country hut pass probably can't be used. The campsite costs \$8 by using an honesty box. Remember to bring the right change.

The Northland Forests: 98 km, 4-5 days (maps 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6)

The Herekino Forest is closed indefinitely due to kauri die-back disease.

Omahuta-Puketī Forest Track: 30 km, 2 days (maps 11, 10, 9)

Omahuta-Puketī Forest Track is a challenging, wet route using river canyons that are subject to flash floods. You need good equipment and navigation skills. Only go in dry weather. Note that there are some beehives en route, and poison and trapping for possums, rats and mustelids occurs within this forest. Goat control operations using contract hunters also takes place.

For forest hygiene and visitor safety reasons it is requested that Puketī and Omahuta Forests camping is restricted to the sites recommended by DoC – those being Apple Dam and Puketī Forest HQ (eastern edge of Puketī Forest). These sites have been identified for camping as they are away from kauri, therefore reducing the risk of spreading kauri die-back disease, and will be poison exclusion zones for possum control operations. Plan using only these two sites.

Puketī Hut to Apple Dam campsite: 25 km Take the 4WD road Pukatea Ridge Track aka Pirau Ridge Road from the Puketī Forest Hut for 9 km. Watch out for vehicles and mountain bikers. Keep left when it then joins the Walnut Track, and 300m further on stay right when the Takapau Track meets it. You are now on the Pukatea Ridge. After 3 km this descends steeply to the Waipapa River. The track along the river is rough and very slippery after rain, but well marked, and you could instead wade along the river between shoals, but parts are deep. A short, muddy descent then takes you down to cross the river at the junction with the Lower Waipapa River Track. On the other side you walk up the Mangapukahukahu Stream, but don't cross over exactly where this stream and the Waipapa River meet. Go downstream a little where it is much shallower. A track leads up on the other side.

The route up the Mangapukahukahu Stream is through a gorge and is subject to flash floods after heavy rain. DO NOT attempt this route in heavy rain. A rough track through trees and pampas grass leads off at left and uphill, passing two old forestry skid sites. It becomes a 4WD track down the other side to the end of Blackbridge Rd (a 4WD road).

Blackbridge Rd joins Kauri Pā Rd (keep left at the junction). To detour to the Apple Dam campsite 1 km from the junction take the next left, down Kauri Sanctuary Rd for 500 m. A grassy 4WD track runs downhill on the left to a modest but pretty campsite with water tank/stream/dam and a long-drop toilet. The kauri sanctuary is further down the road. To avoid the spread of kauri die-back please do not camp around kauri.

To continue, keep on Kauri Sanctuary Rd headed west then north-west, past occasional beehives tucked into the forest (just button up your clothes and walk gently past) and an airstrip on your right. At a junction the road becomes Omahuta Forest Rd if you turn right and 700m further on is Omahuta. It is 31 km in total to here from Puketī Hut.

Wet weather by-pass option 1: Starting from Puketī Forest Hut area, head south on Waiare Rd, then turn right into Puketī Rd for 9 km. It joins SH1 at Waihou Valley. Stay on SH1 going west and north-west. When you get to the Omahuta Rd turn off at right after 22 km you can just keep going on SH1, as the trail comes down Omahuta Rd onto it.

Wet weather by-pass option 2: This is marked purple on the TA map, but not covered in the official SoBo notes, while the above one IS described, but not marked on the map!: Continue up Waiare Rd from the Puketī Forest Hut area. Go left on Pupuke Mangapa Rd. This goes a long way west. When it branches, take the left one. This crosses the Mangapa River after about 1.5 km and becomes Jacksons Rd. Take the next left, Kauri Pa Rd. After Blackbridge Rd joins it you pass the Apple Dam area and it becomes Kauri Sanctuary Rd. If you don't want to camp at Apple Dam and just get out of the forest you can skip turning into Kauri Pa Rd and stay on Jacksons until it becomes Omahuta Rd.

Raetea Forest Track: 18 km, 9.5 hrs (maps 9, 8, 7)

Walk 5km south-west down Omahuta Rd to the junction with SH1. Turn right and pass over Mangamuka Bridge before Mangamuka settlement (where there is a dairy with takeaways: see below). Then turn left at Makene Rd, 12km from Omahuta. From about here to the other side of the Raetea Forest there is little reliable water, so top up if you haven't already. The track leaves the road about 1.5 km up the road to the right, up a driveway and through the yard of a house.

Dogs will bark but won't hurt you. The owners are used to walkers passing through and a greeting and/or thank you will go down well.

The track goes up a ridge to the peak of Umaumakaroro (447m), then goes more or less west, first to Kumetewhiwhia (638m) and then to Raetea (744m). These are some of the highest peaks in Northland, so expect cloud and rain. Keep going straight when a track branches off at left after Umaumakaroro and take the left fork about 1.3 km after Kumetewhiwhia. And about 1.7 km after Raetea take the left branch in the track along the Mangamuka Gorge Walkway. After an un-named 580m peak the track descends steeply to a saddle, where a track branches off at left. Ignore this branch and keep descending through farmland for 2 km to the old Takahue Saddle Rd (just a track now). This takes you down to a junction with Warner Rd and leads you along the Takahue Saddle Rd, which follows the Takahue River and leads you to the tiny settlement of Takahue. There is NO CAMPING allowed at Warner Rd by the river, but there is a spot about 1.5 km before you get there with water (I guess this must be on the 1634 grid line).

- Makene Rd – at start of Raetea Forest, camping spot with toilet, river, picnic table. Stay by donation: trishterran@gmail.co.nz (or is that .com?).
- Tramp Inn – 1479 Diggers Valley Rd. A private hut at the start of the Herekino Forest Track, which is now a bit of a detour off the current trail. Pay \$10 in an honesty box. 14 bunks and tentsites. 09 408 8851, bullandchicken@xtra.co.nz (Alan and Hayley Tubbs).
- Peter Griffiths of Takahue – Can provide a drop-off and pick up service for a small fee and has some backpacker accommodation is available. Contact him in advance on 09 408 3685.
- Takahue Marae – (previously Old School Grounds) Takahue Rd, presumably at about grid ref 1631-3, 6104-7. Camping, with toilets and water, \$10 koha. Contact Karen Murray if any issues, 021 0754 246.
- Roger Gale is available for guiding through Herekino and Raetea Forests, 09 409 3807, roger@treeskills.co.nz
- Mangamuka Bridge Dairy – SH 1 Mangamuka Bridge, takeaways available. Mon–Fri 7am–6pm; Sat 8.30am–5pm; Sun 9am–3pm (these hours may shorten in winter and it may be closed Saturdays). 09 401 9184.

Herekino Forest Track: 15 km, 8 hrs

Closed due to kauri die-back disease.

Takahue to Kaitaia (17 km) and Ahipara (another 18km) (maps 7, 6)

Your best alternative at present is to walk north on Takehue Rd and just before the 4th bridge turn left into Ruaroa Rd and then hitch or arrange a lift the 6 km on SH1 to Kaitaia (the road is too dangerous for walking). This is useful for resupplying anyway, as you wouldn't have passed through Kaitaia if you had been walking through the Herekino Forest. From Kaitaia it is 18 km road walking or hitch hiking to Ahipara.

Kaitaia has two supermarkets: Pak'nSave at 111 North St and a Four Square at 65 Commerce St. There is a DoC office at 25 Matthews Ave and an information centre on the corner of Matthews Ave and South Rd. There isn't much to Ahipara. Only the very small superette for resupply, and a takeaway store nearby.

- Main Street Lodge – 235 Commerce St, Kaitaia, has private rooms, dorms, a kitchen and luggage storage. 09 408 1275.
- [Ahipara Holiday Park](#) – 168 Takahe St, Ahipara, 09 409 4864; 0800 888 988 freephone.
- [YHA Ahipara](#) – This is associated with the holiday park, so same address and phone numbers.
- [Endless Summer Lodge](#) – BBH hostel, 245 Foreshore Rd, Ahipara, about 1.5 km south of the superette, 09 409 4181.
- [Baylinks Motel](#) – 115 Takahe St, Ahipara, near the holiday park. Well priced for a couple. 09 409 4694.
- [Ahipara Bay Motel](#) – 22 Reef View Rd, Ahipara (about 1 km south of the superette), 09 409 4888; 0800 906 453.
- Superette Supermarket – 4 Takahe St, Ahipara, open 7am to 6pm daily, includes post office open 9am to 5pm Mon to Friday and Sat morning, 09 409 4828.
- More can be found at <http://www.ahipara.co.nz>

Ahipara to Cape Reinga: 100.5 km, 4 days (maps 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1)

The following plan from Ahipara to Cape Reinga is suggested on the official TA site (here reversed of course):

Day 1 – Ahipara to Hukatere Lodge/Utea Park (31 km) or just to Waipapakauri Holiday Park (14 km) and make a fifth day of it by walking the 17 km to Hukatere the next day.

Day 2 – Hukatere Lodge/Utea Park to Maunganui Bluff campsite (30 km)

Day 3 – Maunganui Bluff campsite to Twilight Beach campsite (28km)

Day 4 – Twilight Beach campsite to Cape Reinga (12km)

It is preferable to avoid high tide as the water can come all the way up to the dunes in parts and make for either wet feet or a need to walk in soft sand or the hilly dunes. Check the NIWA site for tides, using Ahipara Beach as your location. You should take plenty of water, as there are few sources, and the beach is of course very exposed, so sunscreen and a hat are essential. You are requested not to camp in the Aupōuri Forest of pines that runs alongside Ninety Mile beach.

From the campground go down Kaka St to the boat ramp and head off north along the Ninety Mile beach / Te Oneroa-a-Tohe (which is only 88 km, or 55 miles long). Landmarks you'll pass are Waipapakauri (14 km), where there is a holiday park, Hukatere (31 km from Ahipara), which also has a camping ground and lodge, The Bluff on Wakatehaua Island (61 km), again with a camping ground, and Te Paki Stream (aka Kauaeaparoa Stream and 81 km from Ahipara). Te Paki Stream mouth is a popular vehicle entrance/exit to the beach so be prepared for cars and tourist buses around here and further south, as people like to drive on the beach. (From the stream mouth it is 1 hour upstream to the road, should you wish to exit the beach here). Te Paki is well known as a sandboarding location as the sand dunes are very high here. You climb up a dune and slide down on a board, sheet of cardboard, or whatever, as though you are on snow. Boogie boards are hired out at the carpark for \$15. Note that there are reports of people targeting cars in the carpark for break-ins, so think about where you can stow your gear safely if you are going to do this. Maybe the board hire truck can hold your pack for you.

For the next leg take enough water to go all the way to Cape Reinga, as the tank at Twilight Beach can run out in very dry weather. Continue along the beach to climb up some steps and over a boardwalk to Tiriparepa / Scott Point. After you have passed the high point and turned south-west briefly the track branches. Make sure you change direction to take the main 4WD north-west track. Just above Paengarehia / Twilight beach on the other side is Twilight Camp, a small campsite with water, toilet and covered area. Please camp within the grassed area ONLY, not in the pine trees.

After you have traversed the beach you climb a little to walk along cliff tops of flax and mānuka scrublands. Keep left when the track branches above Pitokuku Point. The track branches again after about 2.5 km, with a track west to Cape Maria van Diemen. (Who was Maria van Diemen? She was the wife of the patron of Abel Tasman, the first European to visit New Zealand, and the cape is one of the only two place names Tasman imparted that has survived.) You could detour here, or go right over Herangi Hill over peach coloured dunes and past unusual dune grasses to Te Werahi Beach Track. At the end of Te Werahi Beach you scramble over rocks and up the hill to Cape Reinga / Te Rerenga Wairua. It is best to travel along here at lowish tide to make the rock scrambling and stream crossing easier and safer. When the track branches the left takes you to the lighthouse (where you can see the tidal turbulence as the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean meet), the right branch to the top of the hill and the road end car park, your FINAL DESTINATION!

The cape has special significance in Māori in mythology, for it is believed that the spirits of the dead travel to Cape Reinga / Te Rerenga Wairua on their journey to the afterlife. They leap off the headland to climb the roots of the 800-year-old pōhutukawa tree and descend to the underworld where they return to their traditional homeland of Hawaiki, via Te Ara Wairua, the 'Spirits' pathway'.

Now that you are here I may as well break the news to you that Cape Reinga is actually 3 km short of the northernmost point in New Zealand. That honour goes to the Hikura / de Surville Cliffs, about 30 km to the east. But the cliffs are not so easy to get to. Also, you need to know that there are no amenities at the cape, just a car park and toilets. So you will need to plan your exit. The nearest main town is Kaitaia, 100 km to the south. With 120,000 or more visitors a year to the cape you should be able to catch a lift south. Or arrange something with a transport provider (see below). Or if you want to stay in the area you can walk about 1.5 km south, then take the Tapotupoto Rd west for a similar distance to a basic campsite. And then walk along a ridge to another campsite (Pandora Camp) in Piwhane / Spirits Bay. Check out the [DoC site](#) for more details. You can also stay at Waitaki Landing, about 20 km south of Cape Reinga, but check out visitor feedback on Google or Tripadvisor first.

- [Ngapae Holiday Park](#) – 6 Matai St (off West Coast Rd), inland from the boat ramp and entry/exit to the beach, Waipapakauri. 09 406 7298.
- [Hukatere Lodge & Hukatere Camping Ground](#) – 809 Hukatere Rd, Houhora, 09 409 8705 or 021 884 145. Located right on Ninety Mile Beach.
- Utea Park – Hukatere Rd, Houhora, 021 804 002 (Paul), uteapark@gmail.com Camping, basic cabins, kitchen. Transport/advice also available. NOTE: this may be closing in (or at end of) January 2020.
- Maunganui Bluff campground – This is a private camp operated by a local Trust. They are supportive of Te Araroa and happy for walkers to stay here, but be sure to pay a \$10/night

fee (carry some cash) into the secure honesty box or this privilege will be at risk. Take care using the water and check all taps are off, as water gets very low in summer. At the stream on the right of the campground (when looking inland from the beach), there is a bathtub for water resupply. Probably this should be treated before drinking. Be sure to camp on the grassed area of the campsite and in the pine forest.

There is no public transport to or from Cape Reinga, however the following operators can assist. More information at the Kaitaia i-site also. You can readily hitch hike south but watch your possessions. Some hikers have reported 'drive-offs' – people driving away with your gear in the car. Make sure you are also in the car any time the driver is at the wheel and your possessions are in the vehicle; not just when you first get in but also at petrol or toilet stops. Having two of you makes this easier to achieve.

- [Harrisons Cape Runner](#) – Departs 9am daily from Kaitaia. 09 408 1033; 0800 227 373 freephone.
- [Sand Safaris](#) – Similar to above. Departs 9am daily from Kaitaia, \$60 per adult. 09 408 1778.
- Salt Air – Charter flights to Cape Reinga. 09 402 8338; 0800 472 582.
- Tuatua Rentals – 0274 858 453, info@tuatua rentals.co.nz Offers transfers from Paihia and Kerikeri (both \$75) or Kaitaia (\$50). Enquire about transfers to/from other parts of the Northland trail.
- Arthur Lancaster can provide drop-off service to Cape Reinga and/or long-term parking at Paua Bay. 09 409 7500.
- Tuatahi Airport Shuttle – Alex Nankivell, 021 087 53196.
- Real Far North Tours (Johanna Maaka) – 09 409 8152; 020 415 2878; farnorthtours@gmail.com Pickup from Kaitaia iSite, can include a shopping stop and/or guided tour on way to Cape Reinga. From \$80pp or \$60pp in groups of two or more.
- Peter Ellicott – from [Northland Taxis](#) offers a pick up from Mangonui and drop off at Cape Reinga for \$100pp, with minimum charge of \$200. Text 021 070 5783.

Always check the Trail Status pages of the official Te Araroa website for recent changes or alerts on the trail.

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Header photo: Ngunguru, 2010 (cropped) by Phillip Capper, Wellington, NZ, Wikimedia