

Te Araroa Trail – Northbound Guide

Auckland

Mercer to Auckland CBD waterfront: 95 km

3D view west: Mercer to Auckland CBD

39. Mercer to Ramarama: 7 hrs 45 mins, 27 km (maps 34, 33)

In general, the route from Mercer to central Auckland is difficult to break up into useful stretches due to lack of reasonably priced accommodation. I did it by staying at the Ramarama motor camp, but that is now closed. Your options around here are now staying at Heavens Rest about 7km before, or Applaud, near Drury, about 6 km further on. Or you could take a train into the Auckland CBD from Pakuranga or closer in, and stay in town and leave your gear there to train back and keep walking. Nevertheless, I have chunked the section from Mercer to Auckland for convenience as follows:

Mercer to Ramarama: 27 km

Ramarama to Manurewa: 20 km

Manurewa to Ambury campground, Mangere: 28 km

Ambury to Auckland ferry terminal: 20.5 km

Mercer to SH2 near Mangatawhiri Rd: 2.5 hrs, 9 km (map 34)

From the Mercer Service Centre walk the marked route 1.5 km that follows the motorway north. It runs down below and at the side of the motorway. Turn right to go under the motorway and the railway line. Get onto McIntyre Rd, a little used gravel road serving only a few houses. There is a school bus shelter a little way along. As you gain elevation there are views across the Fish and Game swampland, and a relaxing shady section after its start at Kellyville Rd. After heavy rain and when the river is running high, this route may be under water. If the water is high, use the Koheroa Bypass as an alternative. The natural swampland here is how much of the land in the region looked before it was drained and modified for farming. Where the road ends is a pump station with an Archimedes Screw for drainage. Continue following a drainage ditch along the side of the swamp and then take a sharp right hand turn to follow the stopbank, another ditch, and the Mangatawhiri River. From the stopbank you can overlook a little-seen corner of NZ with Dutch Polder-style agriculture (where land is surrounded by banks and constantly drained by pumping, since it lies below the level of surrounding waterways). The stopbanks can be dense with thick grass, making

progress slow. In autumn Paspalum grass seed heads will layer their horrible sticky secretion all over your legs and poles. It does wash off in water though. Eventually you reach SH2, just west of where Mangatawhiri Rd joins it.

Due to storm damage and kauri die-back disease the former Hunua Ranges section is closed until further notice. See the [regional parks website](#) (scroll down to Hunua). Key track closures are the one through the Mangatawhiri Forest at the beginning, and the Cossey-Wairoa Track at the end of the TA Hunua Ranges section. So the current route is along busy roads all the way to Manurewa. A previous official option was to take some back roads via Clevedon. This preserved the section out of the Hunua Ranges through Clevedon. This was then abandoned, apparently because the roads were considered too dangerous (most have little roadside margin and are probably fairly well used by traffic) but possibly also because part of Klimpton's Track after Clevedon was closed due to kauri die-back. This is now open but a key part may be significantly overgrown. Given that there is no cheap accommodation at Clevedon, the slightly greater distance (Mercer to Manurewa is about 52 km this way, vs 46.5 km on the current official route), the possibility of dense gorse on Klimptons, and the road safety issue, I'm now concurring with the TA Trust and support the route that goes straight through built-up areas from Bombay to Manurewa.

Having said that, the official SoBo notes include a description of the route via the Hunua Ranges while at the same time saying they are closed and the route is as per the maps (and my description below). I suppose that is in the hope that the route will re-open. You can check the regional parks website above and compare that to the TA route as it was in 2016 via these old maps that I downloaded at the time to see what the current status is, but the route has been closed since about 2017, so I wouldn't hold out much hope: [map 29](#), [map 30](#), [map 31](#).

But just a word about [kauri die-back disease](#) before we go further, as it affects several parts of the trail northwards and it is a serious business. The disease has recently been spreading amongst kauri trees in the Auckland and Northland regions. It is a soil-borne 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. 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 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.

SH2 near Mangatawhiri Rd to Ramarama: 5 hrs 15, 18km (map 34, 33)

This route is now entirely road walking. Start by turning left at SH2 and walk alongside the very busy SH2 for 6km. This is a pretty unpleasant stretch and you do need to take care with traffic. Then turn right into Irish Rd and left at its end into McMillan Rd. A short distance around a corner is the start of the Mount William Walkway. This runs for 4.5km and traverses, naturally, Mt William (373m). It comes out on Puketutu Rd (which runs exactly on the boundary of the Auckland and Waikato regions at this point). Continue on, then right into Razorback Rd. This becomes Bombay Rd, and as it takes a slight left, turn into Paparata Rd at right. Turn left into Barber Rd after Bombay School.

If you couldn't face walking the 6km on SH2, you could take the earlier TA route of turning up Pinnacle Hill Rd from SH2 at a corner with a school and bus shelter. It is a moderately trafficked road, but there are a lot of manicured lawn frontages in front of life-style properties to walk on. This joins the busier Parapara Rd and you end up at the corner with Barber Rd, as above.

Barber Rd is a fairly quiet stretch. Continue on it as it becomes Hill View Rd and crossing over Portsmouth Rd. Hillview eventually runs alongside SH1 and meets Ararimu Rd.

- [Heavens Rest B&B](#) – 180A Mill Rd, Bombay, about 1.2 km south-west from the trail intersection of Paparata and Barber roads. Rooms and tiny houses. TA walkers discount and pick-ups, drop-offs. See website for TA package (not especially cheap though). 022 231 21462 (Robert) info@heavensrest.co.nz

40. Ramarama to Tōtara Park, Manurewa: 5 hrs, 20km (maps 33, 32)

There has been a massive construction project here through to Drury and it was all blocked off when I came through in early 2021. I am following the 2022-23 official notes here and hope they are up to date: Turn left into Ararimu Rd then right at the motorway to follow a pedestrian path for 2km. You go over a wide bridge, then past Bill Stevenson Rd (under construction) on the right and finally turn left into Quarry Rd. Follow that to cross over the motorway and turn right into Great South Rd. Turn right when it meets a motorway and cross over with great care before the on and off-ramps and the overbridge to Victoria St on the other side. At its end turn right to Bremner Rd, and after you have crossed over the motorway again, right into Creek St, then left into Norrie Rd. You end up at the Drury roundabout, a pretty unpleasant, truck stop kind of conglomeration of shops and petrol stations, but the way north out of it via the continuation of Great South Road is reasonably pleasant walking.

The official route has you detouring around the shopping centre of Papakura after 3.7 km by turning onto Settlement Rd on the right at a major intersection with traffic lights. You cross over the railway lines and turn left into at a roundabout into the quieter Marne St. Then at a major roundabout turn left for a short distance into Clevedon Rd and quickly right into Pricor St, then left into Ingram St and right into Porchester Rd. I'm not sure what the point of this is, as it is a shorter distance through the shopping area and you might want to take a break at a café or visit the Countdown supermarket on your right. Or even take a train into central Auckland. If you decide to go through the shopping centre then to get onto Porchester Rd turn right into Subway Rd after McDonalds and between the Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet and the (second) Countdown on the right. It is then a left turn here into Porchester.

It is 5km along this straight stretch until you turn right at its end into Alfriston Rd and after 150m left into Stratford Rd and a steepish climb uphill. At the top, go right into Hill Rd up along the ridge and then take the first left of Wairere Rd downhill. You pass through a roundabout with Charles Prevost Rd and go right to the end of Wairere Rd at Tōtara Park. Head straight into the park. There are toilets a little way in at left. No drinking fountains seem evident, but the water in the toilet basins should be fine to drink.

Your only accommodation in this area will be motels (The Rayland Motel or Manukau City Lodge are not far off the trail a little further on) or B&Bs (including ones on Airbnb). The Manukau Holiday Park

would have been right on the trail but is permanently closed as of April 2018. Maybe someone will re-open it? The Gardens Bed and Breakfast is at 85 Wairere Rd (021 616 989), so right on the trail just before Tōtara Park and not too expensive. North-west across the gardens is the somewhat more expensive Homeleigh Bed and Breakfast (8 Corokia Pl, Tōtara Heights, 021 708 431).

- Applaud B&B – 46 Flanagan Rd, about 300m off-trail at left as you approach the railway crossing into Drury while on Waihoehoe Rd. Usual B&B prices (see Booking.com) but also has tent space. Txt 0274 928 965 Robert. (Confirmed correct Oct 2022)
- Binn Inn – Takanini Shopping Centre, Walters Rd (crosses Prochester Rd, between Papakura and Manurewa) roughly 1.5 km north of Papakura shopping area, about 300m off-trail, with a Countdown a bit further here also.
- You could always take a train at several points along the above or following route into the CBD for backpacker accommodation. This would also be an opportunity to drop off gear you don't need and hike the following sections with less weight. There are stations at Papakura, Takanini, Manurewa, Manukau and Onehunga. It takes about 50 mins from Manurewa to Britomart Station in the CBD and as at Oct 2022 costs \$3 with an AT Hop card (no cash fares, and this is a temporary, government-subsidised half price fare. An AT card costs \$10). Check out the [Auckland Transport](#) website for more information.

41. Tōtara Park, Manurewa to Ambury campground, Māngere: 7 hrs, 28 km (maps 32, 31)

Walk west across Tōtara Park and the Auckland Botanical Gardens along a path beside the stream. It doesn't matter if you go on the north or south bank. You can divert 1 km south to the gardens' visitor centre and Miko Café if you like. Otherwise go under the Southern Motorway and along the true right-hand bank (north side) of the Puhinui Stream through an underpass beneath Great South Rd. Follow this road 400m north and turn left into Kerrs Rd for 500m or so before picking up the stream track through parkland again at right. This exits at a major intersection on Wiri Station Rd. If you wish, you can go right into Wiri Station Rd over the motorway for about 350m to Manukau Railway Station, from where you can catch a train into central Auckland, and a further 300m to Westfield mall, where there is a full range of shops, including a Countdown supermarket.

Otherwise, head left on Wiri Station Rd for 2.5 km, over the railway lines to the second set of traffic lights, then right into Roscommon Rd, then left into Vogler Dr, right into McLaughlan Rd and left into Aerovista Pl. Don't follow the road all the way to the end but keep straight ahead down a gravel drive between buildings to the graveled track that follows Puhinui Stream. Cross the bridge at its end and follow the fence line at left over a paddock to end up at left of the house at the top of the hill. There is a pleasant small park here and toilets at the road end. Head down the road (Price Rd).

At the north end of Price Rd turn left into Puhinui Rd and west walk for 3 km. Footpaths have been constructed along this stretch. When it reaches Tom Pearce Drive go north and then east to walk parallel to the airport. (The airport is 15 km from Tōtara Park in Manurewa and 19 km to Onehunga, should you be landing at Auckland and wanting to knock off a bit straight away). Pass the McDonalds restaurant and turn right and north into George Bolt Memorial Drive. Footpaths are currently being constructed here too. This is the main route into Auckland Airport, and it is pretty busy, so find a good place to cross to the other (west) side as soon as you can, unless you want to visit the Airport Shopping Centre, with its large supermarket and many fast food outlets about 500m along the road. You could certainly consider stocking up at the supermarket as the ones in the centre

of Auckland where you will be headed are small metro-style ones. Though Takapuna, just after the central city, could be another option with a large supermarket.

If you are a frequent visitor to Auckland Airport and have wondered who Tom Pearce was, he was president of the NZ Rugby Football Union in the 1970s and a strong supporter of racially selected South African teams. George Bolt was a pioneering NZ aviator, flying the country's first airmail in 1919 amongst other achievements.

You may decide you want to stop at the airport and get into the centre of Auckland to stay in a backpackers' hostel. There are two options besides taxis and shuttles. The Skydrive runs every 30 mins and takes about 45 mins to Queen St for \$17 (as of Oct 2022). Note that the AT Hop card can't be used on it, senior citizen Gold Card holders do get a discount. A little known and cheaper alternative (\$4.85 with an AT Hop card) is to take the orange Air Bus, which departs every 15 mins, to Papatoetoe and get a train from there to Britomart Station, at the bottom of Queen St. This takes about an hour and you can use a gold AT Hop card on it if you are over 65. And I believe that a shuttle to any of the accommodations in Mangere is a relatively cheap further option.

Anyway, assuming you are instead going to keep ploughing on to Ambury, turn left after 1 km on George Bolt Memorial Drive into Ihumātao Rd and walk for 3 km to leave behind airport hell. It is a surprisingly busy for a rural road, and that's because there are two large factories near its end. Turn right into Oruarangi Rd after the big Services Foods plant and then left into Ihumātao Quarry Road. A track through the Otutāua Stonefields begins at the end of the road. Māori trapped the sun's warmth by piling up these stones to expand their kūmara-growing season. The Māori garden mounds, the storage pits, and the drystone walls of later Pākehā farmers are still prominent in this area.

You now more or less follow the water's edge towards Onehunga. You pass some bird hides and cross the Oruarangi Creek on a pedestrian bridge along the Māngere Foreshore Track (aka Watercare Track) that takes you past restored wetlands and sewage treatment ponds and sees you cross a bridge over the outflow from the Māngere Lagoon, a former volcanic crater with remains of its cone in the centre. Behind that is another, much higher volcanic cone, the site of Māngere Domain. These volcanoes are part of the Auckland volcanic field that consists of about 48 mini-volcanoes. The field is dormant but not extinct and a new volcano could pop up any time, with the last eruption occurring only 600 years ago to create Rangitoto Island.

You then enter the Ambury Regional Park. At the end of the track, where you turn north into Kiwi Esplanade, is a rangers house and a basic campground with drinking water, toilets and barbecues. Alternative places to stay are Airport Skyway Lodge, a somewhat rundown 2 star motel), and the Auckland Airport Kiwi. These are both approximately on the corner of Kirkbride and McKenzie Rd, and involve a bit of a detour to get to. Note that Island Rd is probably locked and there is no shortcut now across the block between Greenwood Rd and Kirkbride Rd. If the Ambury Park Campground is closed or full you could always consider stealth camping at the Mangere Lawn Cemetery, also on the corner of Kirkbride and McKenzie roads!

- [Ambury Regional Park Campground](#) – 43 Ambury Road Māngere Bridge, 09 366 2000, info@arc.govt.nz Forward bookings essential.

- [Airport Skyway Lodge](#) – 30 Kirkbride Rd, an older style of motel located between the Māngere Coastal Track and the Māngere town centre, 0800 726 880 freephone or 09 275 4443 (backpackers/motel/airport transfers). Prices on the website as of Oct 2022 are \$79 for a backpacker bed and \$269 for a one bedroom motel unit! I think there is a mistake here.
- [Auckland Airport Kiwi Motel](#) – 144 Mackenzie Rd, Māngere, located near the Skyway Lodge and more upmarket. Includes restaurant, continental breakfast, free 24 hour shuttle to/from airport. They used to have a backpacker block called Kiwi Airport Backpackers, but that has gone now. I had a bad experience here with an officious receptionist who insisted on a photo ID and who would not accept any substitute. It was after dark and the campground and Skyway were closed. I have imposed a personal lifetime boycott of the place. 09 254 4488, or 0800 991 885.
- Māngere Bridge Homestay – 1 Boyd Ave, Māngere Bridge, not far south of Kiwi Esplanade, 09 636 6346, mangerebridgehomestay@xtra.co.nz
- [Airport Harbour View Motel](#) – 6 Onehunga Harbour Rd, Onehunga, 09 634 5300.

42. Ambury campground, Māngere to Ferry Terminal, Auckland CBD via Coast to Coast Walkway: 5.5 hrs, 20 km (maps 31, 30)

The route from Onehunga is across the Auckland Isthmus that divides the Pacific Ocean from the Tasman Sea. The region is also known as Tāmaki Makaurau ('the spouse desired by a hundred lovers') for its fertile volcanic slopes, sheltered fishing sites, strategic command of land routes, access to sea routes on either coast as well as to the greatest waterway in New Zealand, the Waikato River. At its narrower points Māori used to drag canoes over from the Hauraki Gulf to the Manukau Harbour.

As with the section that follows, from Devonport to Long Bay, the TA maps are not detailed enough to show exactly which streets to take. You can do without them by following these notes. There are also large blue signs along the route to mark the Coast to Coast Walkway but these are not quite frequent enough to guide you without a supplementary aid such as notes or a map.

Keep going around the estuary. You soon follow Kiwi Esplanade across the peninsula and then around the waterfront on its north side to Coronation Rd and across the inlet on the new pedestrian bridge at the site of the old Māngere Bridge. If you need to stock up on food, turn south on Coronation Rd before going over the bridge and a few hundred meters along are takeaways and small supermarkets, though Onehunga a few km ahead might offer more options. On the other side of the bridge stay on the coast at left, past Airport Harbour View Motel on Onehunga Harbour Rd, then Orpheus Drive to cross a footbridge just past the Manukau Cruising Club over the four-lane motorway to Onehunga Bay Reserve and the start of the Coast to Coast route. The Onehunga Shopping Centre (including a Bin Inn at 132 Onehunga Mall) and train station are about 500m east of here. From the footbridge you can spot your next objective – the obelisk marking the top of Maungakiekie/One Tree Hill.

From the north side of Onehunga Park on Beachcroft Rd go north up Horns Reserve by Normans Hill Rd, then turn right into Arthur St and left into Quadrant Rd. You come to Jellicoe Park. You first see some historic buildings on the corner, including the brick military blockhouse built in 1860. It was very strategically sited, giving a commanding view over possible Māori invasion routes to the south and east. Walk east along the park's margin on Grey St to the stone arch entrance and then

diagonally cross the park on the sealed pathway to the other stone arch, built to commemorate the dead of WWI. Return to Quadrant Rd, which soon becomes busy Manukau Rd. Stay north along this, through the Royal Oak roundabout and a shopping area, including a Pak'nSave supermarket at left after the roundabout. (The TA route departs a little from the Coast to Coast route by going straight along Manukau Rd from Quadrant Rd, so ignore the blue sign that suggests you go left on Trafalgar St.)

At [Cornwall Park/Maungakiekie One Tree Hill Domain](#) take the road into the domain and pass the Stardome Observatory on your left. Keep left on Olive Grove when Bollard Ave branches off at right. You may wish to go up to the top of the volcano at the next turn-off at right and you can take a track down the other side so you don't have to retrace your steps. There are tracks all over the mountain so it pays to spot your next volcano, Mt Eden, from the top of One Tree Hill so you know which direction to go down. It's the more westerly flat-topped mountain. (If you were wondering about the name of [Maungakiekie/One Tree Hill](#), the original 'one tree' was chopped down in 1852, and in recent times the single pine on the summit was attacked by a Māori activist in 1994 before being later removed due to damage. And the Māori name means the mountain of kiekie, a forest vine. The mountain was once the site of a pa (fortified village), holding several thousand people. Māori terracing and kūmara storage pits are still visible. If you are sticking to the lower road, keep going to a very large roundabout, passing the information centre and toilets on your way, and exit onto Pōhutukawa Drive going north. After it crosses Greenlane West Rd it becomes Puriri Dr, lined with puriri trees.

Eventually Puriri Dr meets Manukau Rd again. Head diagonally right across the crescent-shaped piece of land between the two arms of road that run from Puriri Dr to Manukau Rd in order to enter Kimberly Rd and across Melville Park. On the other side, turn right into St Andrews Rd. This almost immediately becomes a driveway through the University of Auckland Faculty of Education and then a path through some buildings before becoming a drive again, past tennis courts. Keep Mt Eden ahead as your goal and you won't get lost. Turn left into Epsom Drive. If you keep going west a few hundred metres you come to Mt Eden Village, with many cafés and the like. There is also a [Commonsense Organics](#) store on Dominion Rd, which is good for stocking up on stuff you can't find in supermarkets. But to stay on the route, turn right into Cecil Rd and left into Owens Rd. A path leads off this at right into Mt Eden Domain. Here is another volcano you may wish to climb, [Maungawhau /Mt Eden](#), Auckland's highest at 196m. Not only does it have a great view but the crater on the summit is almost perfectly formed. Whau trees, whose wood is as light as balsa and was once used by Māori for net floats, still grow on Maungawhau ('the hill of the whau tree').

The trail passes a small forest of tōtara and rimu on the volcano's southern slopes. There are a confusing number of tracks and roads on the mountain and it is easy to get disoriented. The official route goes north on the road from where the initial track meets it. Then back south up a track to the road around the summit and down the road on the east side and then north. If you don't wish to go to the top, keep going north on the road when the track first meets it. Your aim is to get to the north end of the domain where Puhī Huia Rd exits it onto Clive Rd. Take Clive Rd north-east away from the domain (not north-west, where it skirts it). This gets you to Mountain Rd, which goes north, crossing the motorway. On the left just before the motorway you will see the unusual and massive Californian/Spanish mission style building (complete with Moorish turrets) of Auckland Grammar, the city's prestigious boys school. At busy Khyber Pass Rd, Mountain Rd meets Park Rd on the other

side. You can turn right down Khyber Pass Rd to the major shopping area of Newmarket. Otherwise keep going on Park Rd to Auckland Domain.

From the corner with Carlton Gore Rd, take the path down behind the cricket grandstand and onto the driveway going left. Keep on the left-most drive to go to the left of the duck pond and Wintergarden Café. (On the right beyond the café is the Wintergarden (hot-house) itself and Auckland War Memorial Museum dominates the skyline on the rim of the volcano Pukekawa further uphill.) The first path you come to going downhill at left is the paved Centennial Walkway. This takes you to Grafton Gully. At the bottom cross over onto Grafton Rd, which heads up to Symonds St and its surrounding University of Auckland precinct. Continue into the narrow, tree-lined Alfred St through university buildings and turn right into Princes St alongside the popular Albert Park. (You can duck down through here to the Auckland Art Gallery and the main city-centre thoroughfare of Queen St.) At the end of Princes St go down through the pocket sized Emily Place Reserve to Emily St. This takes you down to Customs St. At Queen St, turn right and walk to Quay St. The ferry terminal is the large sandstone and brick Edwardian building right opposite, on the waterfront (naturally enough).

- Auckland DOC Visitor Centre – Shed 19, Princes Wharf, adjacent to The Crab Shack and overlooking the ferry terminal. Hut passes, booking advice and plenty of information and advice available.
- [Auckland Transport](#) for bus, train or ferry information, 0800 10 30 80 freephone or 09 366 6400. If you are over 65 you can get free travel after 9am all day on weekdays, which is better deal than some cities. And, of course, free travel in the weekends. This includes the ferries too. But you have to get a gold AT Hop card at a cost of \$10. You can't just flash your regular Gold Card. The process is a bit complicated, so check it out in advance.

There were over 30 hostels in Auckland, but many have closed down due to Covid, either temporarily or permanently, and it's hard to keep up with the current situation. Suffice to say that the ones in the centre of town tend to be party places in multi-story buildings and those further out located in homely surrounds of large old houses. Inner city hostels near the ferry terminal are Fort St Accommodation and Queen St Backpackers. A little further away is the well rated Attic Backpackers on Wellesley St (though I didn't see anything too special about it when I stayed there, aside from a good kitchen and nice balcony area). Choice, Frienz and Surf 'n' Snow are all in this area. South of here is [Haka Lodge](#) on Karangahape Rd, is also well rated, but is several a km off-trail. Other hostels in this area include [City Lodge](#) and Newton Lodge. There is plenty to do in and around Auckland of course (consider Waiheke Is, Rangitoto Is or Piha), but if you just want to keep going you could easily skip the city and head over to the North Shore and stay at the motor camp in Takapuna and resupply there (see below).

- [Attic Backpackers](#) – 31 Wellesley St, Auckland Central, 09 973 5887.
- [Queen Street Backpackers](#) – 4 Fort St, Auckland, 0800 899 772, 09 373 3471.
- [Fort Street Accommodation](#) – (Formerly Nomads) 16-14 Fort St, Auckland, 021 867 329. Book on Hostelworld.com.
- [Surf 'N' Snow](#) – 102 Albert St, Auckland. 09 363 8889.
- [Metro Adventurer](#) – 51 Hobson St (near the Sky Tower), 0800 112 128.
- [Frienz Backpackers](#) – 27/31 Victoria St East, 09 307 6437.
- [Columbia Apartments](#) – 15 Whitaker Place, Grafton, Auckland, 09 973 8600. Might be taken up with long stayers?

- Former Auckland hostels now closed due to the impact of Covid on tourism include two YHAs, Fat Camel, Base, Brown Kiwi, and Nomads is renamed.

3D view west: Auckland CBD to Mangawhai Heads

43. Devonport to Stillwater via Okura River: 8 hrs, 32.5 km; or via land detour: 9.5 hrs, 38.5 km (maps 30, 29)

The all-tide route follows the coast north on cliff-top tracks, pedestrian shortcuts, steps and footpaths. The route was the first fully marked-up urban TA section and there are frequent TA signs. Parts of the signed route are very steep. There are steps and narrow grassy tracks which may become slippery in wet weather.

It is also possible to walk almost all the way on the shoreline, but Auckland Council does not recommend this route. Rocks may be very slippery and unstable underfoot. Because high sandstone cliffs are subject to sudden rockfalls, please keep at least 10 metres out from the cliffs. You will need to take careful note of the time of low tide, as there are several points where you can be cut off by the rising water. Check tide times on the [NIWA website](#). Enter Murrays Bay as a representative location in the drop-down list of locations. You will see low tide times indicated by the negative height numbers. If you want to walk the whole way during one low tide you will need to make sure low tide is at the mid-point of your walk and don't take the walk too slowly (by sitting around in cafés or going to a supermarket, say). There is no foreshore route between Milford Beach and Castor Bay, and Wairau Creek cannot be safely forded at any stage of the tide. If you are unsure of the state of the tide, play safe and follow the signed all-tide route. Also, after heavy weather events, some parts can be affected, so follow marked alternatives or self-navigate the streets.

There are toilets at almost every beach, and sometimes drinking fountains as well.

Devonport to Long Bay Regional Park via North Shore Coastal Walk: 6 hrs, 23.5 km

Take the ferry from Quay St over to Devonport. They go every 15 mins during the commuter period and every 30 mins in the middle of the day. On weekends it is every 30 mins. You can go inland a bit to Devonport's cafés and shops. The suburb is known for its well preserved heritage buildings dating from the 1880s and is a popular tourist destination, but expect high priced boutiques and restaurants as a result. Devonport is also the home of NZ's navy and you can visit the Torpedo Bay Navy Museum on King Edward Parade. As for the TA trail, head east along the coast on King Edward Parade. Then turn left into Cheltenham Rd. You can choose to skip North Head by following this to Cheltenham Beach. Or you can take the long way round the coast of the head by turning right into Jubilee Ave. Another option is to climb up to the top. North Head is a popular visitor site for its gun emplacements, built in the 1880s when a Russian invasion was feared. There is a network of tunnels (you will need a torch) associated with the guns that has been subject to much urban legend, including beliefs that the tunnels are still stacked full of live explosives, inhabited by ghosts, or store some dismantled vintage aircraft.

You can walk around North Head without getting your feet wet so long as the tide is no more than about 2/3 high. The only point where the tide is an issue is near the beginning of the track for a few metres, and for the rest the route is on a well-constructed concrete path above the high tide. You pass searchlight emplacements, and one tunnel complex on this path. Start the coastal route around the head by walking through the Navy Museum grounds. Once on Cheltenham Beach, walk its

length and exit at Bath St Reserve into Bath St and turn right into Vauxhall Rd to go up and over into Narrow Neck Beach. Exit onto Old Lake Rd and turn right into Hamana St. This becomes Seacliffe Ave. Turn left into Winscombe St, walk past Takapuna Grammar School and Belmont Intermediate School to turn right into the busy Lake Rd. Keep right when it turns westwards to branch off into Clifton Rd and go to the end to enter Takapuna Beach. This route involves quite a lot of road walking but the coastal alternative is hard going over jagged rocks. Along Takapuna Beach and other parts of the North Shore Coastal Walk you can fantasise about which of the multi-million dollar homes you would have and be amazed at how many prime sites are ruined with atrocious architecture (clear evidence that money can't buy good taste). At Takapuna Beach there is a small motorcamp at the north end (8.5 km on your walk from Devonport) and a large shopping area inland. This includes [Goodfor Refillery](#), a great place to stock up on the sort of bulk-bin (often organic) foods you can't buy at supermarkets, at 360 Lake Rd. Take Hauraki Rd left off the trail for about 300m just as you enter Takapuna Beach and then turn north on Lake Rd. There is a medium-size Countdown on this road too. Turn right into Park Ave, say, to get back onto the beach.

Takapuna to Milford: You can walk all the way along the beach and rocks from Takapuna to Milford Beach in anything but very high tides. Between the beaches the route follows the North Shore City heritage trail Takapuna–Milford Walk and crosses private property thanks to the owners' goodwill. Please respect the environment and the privacy of local residents, and do not trespass on private property. The pathway in this area is not properly constructed all the way, so take care.

Milford to Castor Bay: You can't get between these two beaches on the water's edge at any state of the tide. Nor can Wairau Creek be safely forded say the official notes, though a spring low tide and some wet legs may well get you through. From Milford Reserve at the north end of the beach cross the Wairau Creek footbridge onto Inga Rd, which becomes Beach Rd as you go north. A 'Walkway' sign and TA signage marks a path between houses off at right at the letterbox for no. 61A. This takes you to the Esplanade which goes to Castor Bay Beach Reserve. (If you miss the path, turn right into the Esplanade when it meets Beach Rd.) Then go up what looks like a private driveway (signposted Rahopara Pā), follow the John F Kennedy Memorial Walkway through Kennedy Park to Beach Rd and turn off at Huntly Rd to get to the sands of Campbells Bay. Kennedy Park is worth visiting to see the gun emplacements and observation building that were disguised as holiday homes to foil aerial observation by the Japanese during WWII.

Campbells Bay to Murrays Bay: Along the beach find the Possum Ladder Track up to View Rd. It is heavily festooned with TA signage so you won't miss it. Sea Dog Alley at right just before the road joins Beach Rd will take you to Whitby Cres. Forde Way, opposite the intersection with Kowhai Rd, will take you to Mairangi Bay. From the north end of the bay take the Crows Nest Rise Walk along the cliff tops to Murray's Bay. However, there is also a popular concreted coastal walk on top of a pipeline from Mairangi to Murray's Bay that is easy walking if the tide is not too high.

Murrays Bay to Browns Bay: Again a cliff-top path (the Cliff Top Walkway) will take you between the two bays. You come out at Churchill Rd. Go straight ahead, inland, then turn right into Rothesay Bay Rd to arrive at Rothesay Bay beach. And again a walkway from the north end of the bay follows the cliffs and comes out at Beechwood Rd. Head down this past two or three houses then turn into a path between houses at right. There is a shopping area one street back from the beach at Browns Bay, with a large Countdown supermarket at the southern end and a Bin Inn at 12 Inverness Rd in the centre.

Browns Bay to Long Bay: Running off Manly Esplanade at the northern end of the beach is the Lotus Walk. This takes you to Sharon Rd, which joins Beach Rd. This goes to Waiake Bay, with the suburb of Torbay behind it. At the north end of the bay turn right into Waiake St off Beach Rd, then left into Rock Isle Rd, and right into Rewi St. This turns sharply left to become Cliff Rd. At its end Cliff Rd turns into Gilbert Pl and then Oneroa Track to the [Long Bay Regional Park](#).

There are many motels and B&Bs along the whole North Shore section, as well as supermarkets and cafés. Takapuna has the largest range of shops. Other centres are Devonport, Milford, Mairangi Bay and Browns Bay. There are only two camp grounds, with the small Takapuna ground being right on the route and handy to a major shopping area and the North Shore Motel and Holiday Park being 1.5 to 2 km off-trail. There is NO camping at Long Bay Regional Park, but you could always bus south from there to find somewhere to stay (see link below).

- [Devonport Motel](#) – 11 Buchanan St, Devonport, 09 445 1010. Fairly expensive but with character.
- [Karin's Villa](#) – 27 Clarence St, Devonport, 09 445 8689. Minimum 2 nights stay. German spoken.
- [North Shore Motels & Holiday Park](#) – 52 Northcote Rd, Northcote, 09 418 2000 or 0508 90 90 90 freephone. Camping, cabins and motels.
- [Takapuna Beach Holiday Park](#) – 22 The Promenade (north end of Takapuna Beach), 09 489 7909, 0800 872 3224. Campsites, caravans, motel & cabins. Note that the camp is quite small and popular, and has seen better days. It is well sited on a great beach though.
- [Browns Bay Olive Tree Motel](#) – 24 Glencoe Rd, Browns Bay, 09 929 4616.
- Consider Airbnbs all the way up the coast, as there some on the clifftops with million dollar views. Not too expensive if you are a couple.
- [Auckland Transport](#) for bus or train information to/from Long Bay Regional Park, 0800 10 30 80 freephone or 09 366 6400.
- North Shore Taxis, 09 488 8000.

[Long Bay to Stillwater via Okura River: 3 hrs, 9 km; or via road detour: 4 hrs, 15 km \(map 29\)](#)

If the tide will be dead low when you get there you can walk across the Okura River estuary if you are game. Check the [NIWA tide service](#) and also consider the amount of recent rain and wave height from wind or swell. To make this crossing, walk the length of the Long Bay Regional Park, passing the male nude beach at Pōhukukawa Bay just before Piripiri Point. At the very north end of the park go down to the waters edge and walk across the mud to Dacre Point. At its deepest the water should be up to your hip for an average low tide (but chest high for a neap low). Starting from the northernmost point of the Long Bay reserve and taking an arc left to Dacre Point should point you up on the river bar, so avoiding a deeper channel further into the inlet. There are oyster beds and sharp rocks in some places, which can be hard on bare feet. As the tide was too high when I came through to cross, I quote the official TA notes for northbounders here:

“Come off the cliff track into the beach, turn right towards the river mouth 100m then cross to the fourth pole from the mouth [i.e. fourth from the open sea]. You are looking for thin metal posts, not big white ones which are further upstream. The fourth pole should have an orange marker attached. Although this has been dislodged after storms on occasion. Once at the fourth pole turn slightly left and head due west to the tip of Dacre point.”

An 11 km alternative, which still involves getting wet, but not as much as at the point, is to walk via Vaughans Rd to Okura River Road and cross the river/inlet to a spit opposite. The section of the Okura Bush Walkway down to Dacre College is open even if other parts are closed (see next paragraph). According to the official notes you begin by walking past the ranger station at the Long Bay Regional Park and taking the first gravel driveway on the left and somehow get onto Ridgelea Rd in a new subdivision that is not fully shown on Google Maps (Oct 2022) yet.

To stay out of the water completely, the quickest route is 15 km. Start at Beach Rd from the Long Bay Regional Park road entrance (so before you enter the park at all), then turning left into Glenvar Rd. You stay on this until you turn into East Coast Bays Rd. Or if you are further into the park, you can walk on Glenvar Ridge Rd to the East Coast Bays Rd. This is a busy and dangerous road. Then turn into Haigh Access Rd. When this takes a sharp turn left the Okura River Walkway branches off and takes you through the Okura Bush Scenic Reserve down the river to Dacre Point. However, as at Sept 2022 the section from Haigh Access Rd to Karepiro Bay is closed due to kauri die-back disease and track maintenance, so it would pay to check the [DoC web page on the Okura Reserve](#).

Finally, if the Okura Bush Walkway is closed, get onto the East Coast Bays Rd as above, and walk further to Ara Weiti Rd and go down this. It is 18 km by this route from the beginning of Long Bay Regional Park to Stillwater. This is not a particularly pleasant route, nor safe on some of the roads.

Walk north along the beach past historic Dacre Cottage (which has a long-drop toilet) and along the Okura Bush Walkway to Duck Creek Rd. Don't be tempted to walk out on a white sand spit with pine and macrocarpa trees on it, as this route just leads you into mangroves. Stay closer to the land. Where the track joins the road is the Stillwater Motor Camp. Further on is the Stillwater Boating Club (which may have toilets for public use and has in the past served meals Wed–Sun from 5pm).

- Stillwater Motor Camp – 2 Duck Creek Rd, Stillwater, 09 424 7518. TA walkers can stay for free on mattresses in the hall (or if all taken, on your own mattress presumably). As at August 2022 plans to develop the site into housing have not yet happened fortunately. The site is fantastic, so you can see why it is worth more for housing. Meantime, make the best of what there is before it's gone.
- [Kererū Cottage](#) – Stillwater Cres, 021 832 358 (Lisa) is also bookable on Airbnb but two night minimum and booked through to March 2023. \$96/night plus fees.

44. Stillwater to Puhoi: 9+ hrs, 33 km incl kayak; road alternative: 8 hrs, 28.5 km (maps 29, 28)

Stillwater to Orewa Estuary: 3 hrs, 13 km

Keep going north from the boating club on Duck Creek Rd. It turns south-west and winds around a bit, over hills while generally going west, becoming Spur Rd, and eventually joining the East Coast Rd some 5.4 km from the boating club. Turn right and north into this road and proceed for 2 km. Turn right into Forge Rd, and then quickly left into Tavern Rd at the Placemakers depot. At the bottom of Tavern Rd on the left an inconspicuous path goes under the Hibiscus Coast Highway bridge. You continue on the other side on Silverdale St, past a NZ Post shop on the left and a Binn Inn on the right to a roundabout at the Silverdale Centre, with various large stores, ATMs, food outlets, and a Countdown supermarket on your right. There is a Macpac outdoors store in here and a Kathmandu store further north on your right. At the next intersection turn left into Millwater Parkway. Follow this 1

km to Longmore Lane on the right. A path leads from the end over a bridge and then you take the first left onto Te Ara Tāhuna – the Orewa Estuary shared cycle/walkway.

Go under the bridge at the end of the walkway and you can come up on its seaward side to walk over to Orewa Beach (and the large motorcamp). But you may wish to cross on the inlet side of the Orewa River, as there are high-tech toilets just over the bridge. But there are more toilets further along the beach, roughly opposite the shopping area. This is one block inland (on Moenui Ave and Moana Ave) about a third of the way along the beach. Expensive cafés line the Hibiscus Coast Highway behind the beach, but there are cheaper places a street or so back in the shopping area.

A shorter (8 km) and more pleasant alternative to walking through the mega-store world of Silverdale might be to get a ride on a boat across the Weiti River from the Stillwater boat club to more or less opposite the Stillwater campground on the Whangaparaoa Peninsula. From there get onto Riverhaven Dr and then Scott Rd. Get over to Vipend Rd, and after some distance it joins with Whangaparaoa Rd. Glenelg Rd soon turns off this at right. Go down here to a green area that leads to the sea front. Walk north-west along the shore to Walton St. Take this to Rosario Cres, keeping left when the crescent loops around to itself, to find the path down to the shore labelled Amorino Park. Follow the path here to the bridge over the Orewa River. This was the official TA route for a brief moment in 2018 until someone probably decided the chances of getting a boat ride outside of weekends and holidays were slim. You do miss out on resupply options in Silverdale, but there are decent size supermarkets in Orewa.

Orewa Estuary to Wenderholm: 3 hrs, 11.5 km

Walk to the end of the beach. You can walk round the beach to Hatfields Beach at low tide. But there is a great view on the inland route. To take this, walk along the Hibiscus Coast Highway (HCH) up the hill to Oceanview Rd. This doesn't exactly meet the HCH but you get to it by a path leading off at left from a concrete driveway to two houses just after the bus stop on the crest of the hill. A public walkway leads off Oceanview Rd and down steps to Hatfields Beach / Otanerua.

You can walk around the coast to Waiwera Beach at very low tide (if the tide is not dead low maybe you can short-cut over the first section of hill and find the remaining coastal route more manageable). The mid-to-high tide alternative means walking on the Hibiscus Coast Highway as there are no cliff-top tracks. If you are doing the beach/rocks route, as soon as you get to Waiwera Beach get onto Waiwera Pl, which leads diagonally away from the beach at the southern end. This joins Waiwera Rd, which has a couple of thermal resorts on it, one at the intersection and one closer to the beach. Then turn right by the mini-mart to cross the Waiwera River on the Hibiscus Coast Highway. On the other side, turn off at right to the Perimeter Track around the peninsula of [Wenderholm Regional Park](#). Pass through the grounds of the historic Couldrey House to the carpark where there is an information board and map of the park, as well as toilets.

- Silverdale Garden Stay – 41 Whangaparaoa Rd, Silverdale (600m off the TA route). Apartment, studio, caravan. Seaside_BnB@xtra.co.nz , 0274 742 299. (Confirmed correct Oct 2022)
- [Orewa Beach Holiday Park](#) – 265 Hibiscus Coast Highway. Cabins \$80, glamping twice or more this price. 09 426 5832.
- [Red Beach Top 10](#) (aka Pinewoods Motor Park) is another camp in the area, a bit over 1 km east of the south side of the Orewa River Bridge, near Red Beach, at 23 Marie Ave. 09 426

4526.

- [Pillows Lodge](#) (aka Orewa Beach Backpackers) – 412 Hibiscus Coast Highway, Orewa, 09 426 6338.
- [Schischka campground](#) – Wenderholm Regional Park, about 1 km west of the jetty. This is a regional park campground where you are supposed to book in advance and no cash payments can be made on arrival. 09 366 2000, option 1 for booking 8am to 8pm (but you will still have to pay online or at a service centre). Easiest to book and pay online I think.

[Wenderholm to Puhoi: by kayak, 2 hrs, 7 km; on foot 1.5 hrs, 6 km \(map 28\)](#)

At the present time, the walking route from Wenderholm Regional Park to Puhoi is incomplete, but you can hire a kayak to paddle to Puhoi, provided the tide is right. The cost is about \$50. The operators are in Puhoi and they will bring the kayak to you by road and can take your pack back with them. You will need to pre-book the kayak. Probably the best state of tide is mid-tide to just after high tide, so the current is going in your direction and there is enough water to make the trip interesting. [Check tides with NIWA](#). If you use the drop-down list of locations on this site then Matakana River is pretty close to Puhoi River.

The alternative is a 6 km road walk, beginning by going to the end of Schischka Rd, past the camping ground, and turning right onto the Hibiscus Coast Highway (aka Twin Coast Discovery Highway). This branches, with the left lane joining up into a new section of SH1 that emerges from two tunnels, and the right becoming a one-way road with traffic coming towards you. This whole area has a lot of motorway construction work going on (2021-2023) and is a busy and dangerous 2.6 km stretch of road. I'm not seeing that there is any plan for a cycling/walking road alongside the motorway, so we are looking at more car madness from the powers that be. It seems the best option is to stay on the east side of SH1 along the right-hand section of road mentioned above. Then you go under a motorway bridge and turn left to Puhoi Rd to reach the village.

Puhoi was settled by Europeans in 1863 from Bohemia, now part of the Czech Republic. There is a general store (109 Puhoi Rd, open 7am–7pm), tearooms (50 Ahuroa Rd, open Fri–Sun 10–4), an historic pub and two or three cheap Airbnbs in the area. The official TA notes say you may be able to camp somewhere in Puhoi if you ask around nicely (e.g. at Puhoi Pub).

- [Puhoi Kayaks](#) – 84 Puhoi Rd, Puhoi (Opposite the Historic Puhoi Church), 027 2841672. Operating daily 1 Sept–30 June (closed Christmas Day).
- [Hibiscus Kayak Hire](#) – 021 133 6938, based in Waiwera.
- [Auckland Sea Kayaks](#) – 0800 999 0899 (freephone), 09 213 4545, operating throughout the summer months. They cover the Auckland region so may be less geared up for you to kayak the Puhoi River economically.
- Puhoi Accommodation – 10min walk from start of the track. Caravan and tent sites. 09 422 0009 or 021 722 266 (Pip), pipbeagley@gmail.com. (Confirmed correct Oct 2022)
- [Puhoi Pub](#) – Cnr Saleyards & Puhoi Rd, Puhoi (limited accom with single room \$80, double \$140), 09 422 0812.

45. Puhoi To Waiwhiu and Sheep World Caravan Park: 30 km (maps 28, 27)

[Puhoi to junction of Remiger and Ahuroa Rds via Puhoi Track: 2 hrs, 5 km \(map 25\)](#)

Please remain on the track at all times for personal safety and to protect the kauri trees on the route

from kauri die-back disease (spread by walkers' shoes). Begin by crossing the river opposite the general store into the Puhoi Domain. A track leads here to the graveled Cook Rd. There are two routes up. The one via the Arthur Dunn memorial lookout is more direct but steeper and can be slippery when wet. Turn off left from the road through native bush and kauri to pine forest. Near the end there are spectacular young kauri on the left and you cross a swing bridge over the Puhoi River to Remiger Rd. Walk along this road and continue when it becomes a track.

There is a DoC campsite by Remiger Rd but it is not listed on DoC's website nor appears on any maps I am aware of. Camping is free and there is a small shelter, picnic tables, a water supply (needs treating ideally) and a toilet. Camp on the grass by the shelter to avoid squashing plantings of young trees and shrubs.

Dunns Ridge Track: 1 hr, 2.5 km

Cross some stiles onto the track up the ridge and along a fence line. Keep strictly to the route over farmland and do not freedom camp in this area. You pass the 'Sugarloaf' rock formation. A stile is in place if you want to climb up to this very peaceful & picturesque spot with beautiful views across the valley and out to the coast. You may get cellphone reception here and along some of the other ridge lines that follow. You then pass through Dunns Bush (a QEII reserve), following orange markers, then down a fence line on a ridge to a gate and a carpark. Go down the road (Tolhopf Rd) through a rural subdivision to its intersection with Ahuroa Rd.

Moirs Hill to Waiwhiu: 4-5 hrs, 16 km

Much of this is along operational forestry roads, so watch for trucks and don't wear headphones. Go straight on along a 4WD track (Barkers Rd) to Moir Hill. Stay on this grass/clay track and don't be tempted by the gravel forestry road nearby. There are few markers. Pass the transmission tower at the top and head west along a forestry road on the ridge 4.5 km to the end of Matthew Rd (there may be a 'private property' sign on the road but TA walkers are allowed). After 1 km turn right into Woodcocks Rd and then left into Edgerly Rd 500m further on. At the end, cross the stile and follow the marked fence line down the ridge. Stick with markers so you don't end up at someone's house when you exit onto a driveway for no. 121 on Old Kaipara Rd. Go right into this road, then keep left when it takes a sharp turn to become Streamlands Swamp Rd. (Warkworth is about 4 km east of this point over a small bridge, and has a supermarket if you wish to resupply.) After a short dog-leg east at Kaipara Flats Rd, go up a ridge on Smyth Rd. Turn off at right just before the top to go across to Kraack Rd and on to Kraack Hill. Keep left when the road branches, but go straight through the next intersection and then right (still on Kraack Rd) to Waiwhiu and across SH1. If want to get to Warkworth, 6.5 km south-east (there is a Binn Inn and Countdown supermarket here), this is probably a good point to catch a lift, though traffic may be going fast past the intersection (and it may be worth noting that this stretch of roads is considered one of the deadliest in the North Island in terms of crashes!). A taxi might be an alternative option – see below. Sheepworld Caravan Park is 2 km down the road. Though the road to the camp ground is busy, for much of the stretch you can walk behind road barriers.

The Auckland Transport network goes as far as Warkworth and a bit beyond, so if you need to head back to Auckland it is pretty easy. You take a 995 bus to the Hibiscus Coast Station and transfer here to a NX1 bus. Travel time 80 minutes. And a 997 bus from Warkworth will take you to Matakana and the end of the line at Omaha.

- Roma and Graham, Totara Bend – Woodcocks Rd, between Edgerley and Matthews roads, on the trail. Campsites and shower, plus cabin and self contained unit. Water available too. 021 75 9991. About map grid ref 5967 N, about 15.5 km from Puhoi. (Confirmed correct Oct 2022)
- [Sheepworld Caravan Park](#) – 12 L.Phillips Rd, just off SH1, about 2 km south of Waiwhiu (and 4 km north of Warkworth). Cabins, camping, on-site caravanning. 09 425 9962.
- Dome Cafe – 496, State Highway 1. Café may be closed now but camping for TA walkers could be available. Go up to the house to ask. The camping spot is the grassy area behind the yellow fence.
- Warkworth i-Site Visitor Information centre – 1 Baxter St, Warkworth, 09 425 9081.
- DoC – Unit 12, 30 Hudson Rd, Warkworth, 09 425 7812
- Warkworth Taxis – 54 Burtram St, Warkworth, 09 425 0000
- Long distance [InterCity](#) busses pass through Warkworth.
- [Walton Park Motor Lodge](#) – 2 Walton Ave, Warkworth, 09 425 8149, 0800 425 022, info@waltonpark.co.nz

46. Waiwhiu to Pākiri: 10 hrs, 26 km (maps 27, 26)

Waiwhiu to Matakana Rd: 6 hrs, 15 km

Over SH1 are some tearooms, the Dome Cafe, but as at Oct 2022 the café may no longer be open. There is DoC signage for the Dome Forest Walkway here. The track ascends about 1 km to the lookout, where there are views across the Mahurangi Peninsula to the Hauraki Gulf. Then it is a scramble around large rocks and some up and downs along the ridge to the Dome trig (336m). The narrow bush track now follows along the ridgeline through attractive podocarp and broadleaf forest with glimpses of the surrounding countryside and coast.

The track eventually joins Waiwhiu Valley Rd (a private forestry road). This forestry area is open daylight hours only and no camping or fires are permitted. Turn right into the road and after 300m branch off at left to cross the Waiwhiu Stream and follow it upstream for about 1.3 km before climbing steeply. Turn right when the track meets another at a high point to turn north-east past Conical Peak and down to Govan Wilson Rd past a rusty old bus, a private home, and down some steps. It is 3 km along Govan Wilson Rd to the intersection with Matakana Valley Rd. The small settlement of Matakana, with a Four Square, café and accommodation options, is 6 km south on this road. As a country get-away from Auckland, the village and surrounds is well populated with expensive B&Bs and boutique attractions. Only one or two of the Airbnbs are priced below \$100.

- [Matakana Information Centre](#) – Matakana Cinemas Foyer, 2 Matakana Valley Road, Matakana, 0274 204 990, Matakanainfo@xtra.co.nz
- [Matakabs](#) – Matakana taxis, 09 422 2244, 0800 522 743, bookings@matakabs.co.nz
- Matakana Outback – 844 Matakana Valley Rd (just beyond where the trail north leaves the road), 021 831 938 (Kurt). Cottage, camping also available at \$25 with outdoors shower. Meals/snacks on request. (Not responding to phone calls Oct 2022, so may no longer be operating).

Matakana Rd to Pākiri via Mt Tamahunga (Te Hikoi o Te Kiri) Track: 11 km, 4 hrs (map 26)

Go north on Matakana Valley Rd for 450m to a narrow, steep, and slippery track that leads to 8 km of ridge walking to the highest point of Tamahunga (437m) through the Omaha Forest and down to Pākiri village. The track begins by climbing uphill to a short boardwalk over a swamp, across a

bridge and a further climb to a well formed track to a grassy knoll with views (between gorse). There is a toilet at about gridline 5981N. The track takes you below a weather satellite tracking station before descending and then climbing steeply again over rough and sometimes slippery ground. It turns east through a pine plantation and up and down a steep and muddy saddle onto farmland. Then you come to a trail junction. Take the turn left down the ridge. (There is a DoC toilet about 120m from the turn, off the trail down the spur to Rodney Rd on the right. And 250m off the trail at 505 Rodney Rd there is a campsite with water (\$10). For toilet use the above-mentioned DoC one.) Go down the left turn through farm pasture to the southern end of Bathgate Rd. Pass the school and cross over Pākiri Rd to continue in the same direction north on Pākiri River Rd to Pākiri Beach Holiday Park and the beach itself.

- **Pakiri Beach Holiday Park** – 261 Pākiri River Rd, 09 422 6199. Camping, cabins & motel units as well as bunk beds in shared room (\$30 to \$40 depending in time of year). Discounts to TA walkers. Camp store stocks a variety of food, drinks, toiletries, fresh milk and bread (8.30am to 7pm summer, closes 5.30pm winter).
- **Pākiri Paradise on the Ridge** – 505 Rodney Rd, Pākiri, 021 066 2108 rosiewilk@xtra.co.nz. On Airbnb. \$187 + fees. About 5 km on the trail before Pākiri, map grid ref approx 1755.6 E, 5983.3 N.

47. Pākiri to Mangawhai Heads: 7–8 hrs, 26 km, (maps 26, 25)

Its now 11 km walking along the beach north. There are two issues to be aware of. First is that the area is the nesting ground for the critically threatened [NZ fairy tern](#), the country's most endangered bird, with a population of only about 40 birds. Their nests are simply scoops in the sand above the highest high tide mark, usually in areas with shell fragments so as to disguise the eggs. Many eggs, and indeed chicks, are crushed because people walk on them. However, in this situation the parents are usually above you, screeching and dive bombing, so pay attention when you experience this. The birds usually nest about 1 km apart to avoid competition, so each nest is very isolated. Many of the nests are fenced off to try and ensure breeding success. Another bird that nests on the beach is the [NZ dotterel](#), a small, long-legged bird with a brown specked back. Populations are declining where there are no active protection efforts. They commonly nest around river mouths. Which leads to the next issue:

The streams and rivers you need to cross as you walk the beach can sometimes be deep after heavy rain and/or with high tides. If you need to go inland to find a safer place to cross watch out for bird nests. In general it is preferable to avoid sand dune areas altogether for this reason. And, in the unlikely event you have a dog with you, note that they commonly destroy nests and kill chicks, so really need to be under strict control. On one stretch they are prohibited altogether.

So, head to the beach from the road end near the camping ground and cross the Pākiri River on your way north on the beach. Take plenty of water. Halfway along, the Mangawhai Forest fronts onto the beach. There is a road end and then a track to take you over Te Ārai Point, where there are toilets at a carpark. No tent camping allowed. Then you resume beach walking for 3km. A little over half way along there is a stream crossing that can be up to thigh height (as can others on this section, so best do it at low tide). Then you turn inland through another section of the Mangawhai Forest at a road end (Pacific Road), and turn right when it joins Black Swamp Rd.

After passing the Riverside Holiday Camp (one of 2 camping grounds in and around Mangawhai) cross the estuary on the Insley St Bridge. Then turn right into Moir St, past a Four Square, then left into Molesworth Drive through Mangawhai village. As you pass an information centre (09 431 5090) and the golf course on your left, turn right uphill into Findlay St to find a walkway around the estuary. Just past the Mangawhai Heads Holiday Park you get onto Wintle St, which takes you to the end of this section at the Mangawhai Heads carpark. For resupply in the area there are two smallish Four Squares – the one already mentioned and one at the heads (3 Wood St), plus the Mangawhai Deli at 3/7 Wood St (open Wed to Sun 9 to 3).

An alternative to walking through Mangawhai is suggested in the official notes of continuing along the beach north of Te Ārai Point onto the spit and organising a boat ride across the estuary to the heads. But you do need to take care to avoid sand-nesting birds.

- [Local Transport](#) – Leabourn Shuttles, 09 423 7416, 0800 994 404, info@leabourn.co.nz
- Carters Mangawhai Information Centre – 219 Molesworth Drive, Mangawhai Heads, entrance at Mangawhai Golf Club, 09 431 5090, mangawaiinfo@xtra.co.nz
- Following accommodations approximately in south to north order:
- [Riverside Holiday Park](#) – 41 Black Swamp Rd, 09 431 4825. Tent sites, caravans, units, kitchen, laundry, wifi and TV/games room. (Black Swamp is a road name I'm sure the holiday park camp would like to change!)
- [Mangawhai Travellers Rest](#) – 4 Insley St, Mangawhai Village (opp 4 Square and just over the bridge as you come into Mangawhai), 09 431 5389, 021 023 77242 (Alan/Lisa). Various cheap accommodation options including camping. Free wifi, recharging, shower and toilet.
- [Mangawhai Village Motel](#) – (Formerly Tudor Oaks Motel) 47 Moir St, Mangawhai, 021 658 265. Close to trail. Has 'backpacker unit', slightly cheaper than other units, but well above a hostel price.
- [Tara Retreat](#) – 247 Tara Rd, Mangawhai, about 3 km off trail from Insley St bridge. Cottage/caravan and glamping accommodation and a free vegetarian meal for Te Araroa walkers. 021 027 97970, 021 359 062. Wi-fi, massage therapy and yoga available.
- Mangawhai Camping – Basic cottage or camping in the orchard with water, electricity and toilet. 11 Longview street, just off Molesworth Drive, near shops at Mangawhai village. Koha of \$10 pp appreciated. 021 796 496. Please keep the gate shut to stop the pet rabbit and chickens escaping. Hosts Mark and Kerry live at 9 Longview Street. (Checked correct Oct 2022)
- [Mangawhai Lodge](#) – 4 Heather St, Mangawhai Heads, 09 431 5311. Upmarket and just before the golf course.
- [Fairways B&B](#) – 240 Molesworth Drive, opposite the golf course, Mangawhai Heads, 09 431 4042 or 021 619 311.
- [Mangawhai Backpackers: Coastal Cow](#) – 299 Molesworth Drive, Mangawhai Heads, 021 0253 4500.
- [Mangawhai Heads Holiday Park](#) – 2 Mangawhai Heads Rd, Mangawhai Heads, 09 431 4675. Motel style units, cabins, tent sites, some right on the beach front.
- *Always check the Trail Status pages of the official Te Araroa website for recent changes or alerts on the trail.*

Header photo: Auckland central city looking north on a rainy day from Mt Eden crater