



THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB (INC)

PO Box 685, Hamilton 3240 • www.wtc.org.nz

May 2024



Exploring Tongariro Nat. Park photo by Jean Wilson

Member of: Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc
Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association

WAIKATO HUT

Your lodge on Mt Ruapehu
Tongariro National Park



www.wtc.org.nz



Entoloma hochstetteri photo
by John McArthur

PLEASE SUPPORT ALL OUR CLUB SPONSORS

FOR ALL YOUR OUTDOOR NEEDS

Travel Packs • Sleeping Bags • Tramping Clothes • Tents
Boots - Tramping & Trekking • Tramping Accessories • Drink Systems

Stockists of:

- Earth Sea Sky
- Aarn Packs
- Camelbak
- Deuter
- One Planet
- Smartwool Socks
- Leki Poles

BOOTS:

- Merrell
- Meindl
- Vasque
- Keen

221a Victoria Street, Hamilton

Phone 07-839 5681

Fax 07-839 5846

shop@trekntravel.co.nz





Official Bulletin of
WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB

P. O. Box 685, Hamilton 3240 • www.wtc.org.nz

Free to members

Member of: Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc
Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association

BULLETIN No 861

May 2024

General Committee

(Contact details listed below)

President:	Rupert Craggs	027 6811926
Secretary:	Dorothy Cawdron	027 7424222
Treasurer:	Guy Domett	027 2483008
Members:	John McArthur (VP Tramp)	
	Stephen Phillips Allan Wickens David Totman Selwyn June	

Tramping Subcommittee

Tramping email: waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com

Chairperson:	John McArthur mcarthur@outlook.co.nz	021 2889641
Club Captain:	Les Warren	027 8644937
Membership:	Jocelyn Widmer	027 8664795
Member:	Selwyn June	027 4978151
Transport:	Allan Wickens	027 9509546
Social convenor:	David Totman	021 868720
Facebook:	Jacqui Dick	021 1375201

Ski Subcommittee

Ski email: waikatoski@gmail.com

Chairperson:		
Ski VP:	Stephen Phillips	021 1031436
Bookings:	Ashley Hoskin	027 4909545
Finance officer:	Michael Barker	021 2463500
Members:	Ashley Hoskin	027 4909545

Bulletin:	Lesley Kuggeleijn	027 4942414
Editor & Club Librarian:	Dianne June djune@xtra.co.nz	07 8433066

Waikato Tramping Club account: 03 1555 0091625 02 (include the trip no.)

Club Night: Wednesday 5th June

The Drakensberg - there be dragons' David Totman's romance with mountains.
He will talk about where his hiking all started in Africa in our local
Drakensberg mountains. Might rekindle interest in a trip back.
We meet at St. Peters' Cathedral in Victoria St, at 7.30pm.

Social: Come along to the Haines' at 11 Alison St, on Friday 17th May from 6.30pm onwards, and relax in the comfort of their warm home, while watching a **movie**. The evening will begin with a BBQ so BYO your meat and refreshments, as well as a dish to share. At half-time we'll have dessert & coffee. Cost: \$20
If you have any questions, contact Graham & Andrea 0274 822 830.
This is a fundraising evening for Waikato hut.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2024

3122 A & B	10-12 May	E or E/M	Leitches clearing & track clearing	Theresa O'Leary & Judith Bogle
	17 May		FILM NIGHT	Graham & Andrea Haines
3123	18 May	n/a	Outdoor 1 st aid	Les Warren
3124	19 May	E/M	Fungi search – Otanewainuku	Theresa O'Leary
3125	26 May	E/M	Kakepuku	Lynette Morris
3126	1-3 June	M	Bridge to Nowhere	Sarah McLeay
	5 June		CLUB NIGHT	
3127	9 Jun	E/M	Karangahake	Lynette Morris
3128	15/16 Jun	E/M	Bushcraft	Les Warren
3129	21-23 Jun	E-M	Waitakere 1	Allan Wickens
3130	28-30 Jun	tbc	Matariki	Les Warren & Judith Bogle
	3 July		CLUB NIGHT	
3131	7 Jul	E	Meremere -Rangiriri	John McArthur
3132	13/14 Jul	M	Te Rereatukahia hut	Theresa O'Leary
3133	21 Jul	E/M	Butlers' incline	Cathy Dickson
3134	27/28 Jul	M	Snowcraft I	Mike Peck
3135	4 Aug	M	Sthn Hakarimatas	John Wilson

Don't let a lack of equipment deter you from coming on a trip. Talk to the trip leader
- who may be able to assist with lending or sharing gear.

TIME and FITNESS GUIDELINES

E = Easy.	Up to 4 hours per day, pace slower than E/M.
E/M = Easy/Medium.	Up to 5-6 hours/day, pace slower than M.
M = Medium.	Up to 6-7 hours/day, at standard walking pace.

M/F = Medium/Fit.

Up to 7-8 hours/day, pace faster than M.

F = Fit.

Over 8 hours/day, pace faster than M/F.

Note that factors such as party size, fitness, weather, terrain and leadership will influence actual times, so the above are estimates only.

Bookings and Cancellations: no later than the **TUESDAY** before the trip. Any person withdrawing after this day without good reason will be charged the full cost of the trip.

Departure Point: **Weekend** trips depart from the Gate 1 at Waikato University. Park closer to other vehicles as this area is security monitored. Leave on Friday nights at 7pm sharp unless otherwise stated. **Day** trips depart from London St at the river end- park on the roadside. Leave Sunday mornings at 8am sharp.

If someone is concerned because a trip is **late back**, contact:

1) Club Captain; 2) President; 3) a committee member.

Minimum equipment required:

Day Trips: A thermal layer (polypropylene, polyester etc or wool), an insulating layer of fleece (polartec etc) or wool and a water & wind-proof parka outer shell. Shorts or long-johns/over-trousers in cool or wet weather. Torch and sunscreen. Boots or strong shoes. Lunch, snacks and water bottle. First aid kit.

Weekend Trips: The above, plus pack with plastic liner bag, sleeping bag, tent, sleeping mat, cooker, billy, plate or bowl, spoon, food, spare dry clothes for evening, towel, toilet gear, light camp shoes. A water purifier can be useful. Plus, in extreme weather or country: additional warm top, over-trousers or woollen/ fleece trousers, warm outdoor mittens or gloves, over-mitts, warm hat or balaclava, sunglasses. Ice axe and crampons for snow.

Trip Descriptions

Trip 3122 A&B

Leitch's Clearing

10-12 May

Where is Leitch's Clearing?: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/waikato/places/whareorino-conservation-area/things-to-do/leitchs-track/>

Option A: Track clearing

I am going to take a group that wants to do track clearing with me on the Friday and stay at Leitch's hut for 2 nights. On Saturday we are going to head to Waikawau track and do track clearing, then come out Sunday.

I will be in contact with participants prior to organise what equipment we will need.

Leader: Judith Bogle

Ph: 027 381 0283

Grade: E/M

Email: judith.bogle@outlook.com

Accommodation: standard hut tickets.

Transport: tba

Option B: Tramping

Prep night: Wed 24 April – St. Peters' cathedral Hall. The 'Prep' learning will give you a list of what you will require, and enough prep time, for you to either

obtain the items yourself or (via the leader) ask other WTC members if they have the right items/size for you to use/borrow ... and check they are right for you beforehand at the following the club night. You will learn/discuss what is required for a safe, comfortable overnight trip to a DoC hut or campsite.

The trip: Meet 8am Saturday, travel there, west of Pio Pio, for the 8 km/3 hour walk in – it's an easy tramping track along an old former road. Enjoy a relaxed afternoon/night in the hut, then a 'no hurry' packing up before our walk out the next morning.

If you are interested and/or have questions, please get in touch.

Leader: Theresa O'Leary

Ph: 0274162633

Grade: E

Email: *theresa.oleary.eme@gmail.com*

Accommodation: BYO Standard Hut ticket - \$10 adult, \$5 for 5-17yrs

Transport: tbc – private vehicles or a van

Trip 3123

Outdoor 1st aid

Saturday, 18 May

Venue: Tamahere Model Country School

Facilitator: Peak Outdoor Safety & Emergency Management

The Course will cover:

- Accident Site Management
- Patient Assessment
- Fractures & Dislocations
- Spine Injuries
- Head Injuries
- Bleeding, wounds and shock including crush injuries and amputations.
- Resuscitation including CPR and defibrillation.
- Medical conditions – heart, stroke and diabetes etc
- Burns, Poisoning
- Environmental emergencies – hypo/hyperthermia

Course participants will be challenged to problem-solve different emergencies and a lot of hands-on sessions. Classroom presentations will follow with extensive outdoor scenarios. All participants will get a Certificate which will be valid for 2 years.

Course Fee: \$200/ person. There is a discount for the first 10 members who register.

Registration: All participants are asked to register thru the Waikato Tramping Club Website or the club captain. Email registrations will not be accepted.

Further Course details will be sent to participants closer to the time and when / how to pay the Course fee.

Trip 3124

Fungi search in Otanewainuku forest

19 May

This trip is for fungi fans – and people who want to spend a quiet time in native bush. A good trip to bring along younger children. We will leave 8am Sunday, travel over the Kaimais with private carpooling or van/bus depending on the numbers. Arriving there by 9.30. Pack layers of warmth, a lunch and snacks. Be

prepared to have lots of time, to sit and just enjoy being in the bush, stopping for photos often and listening to native birdsong. We can break into smaller groups for separate walks and mix and mingle as we meet over the day.

We won't leave again until 3pm, getting us back to Hamilton at 4.30ish.

This will be a fine winter weather trip only – any storms, high winds or heavy rain – it will be cancelled.

Ōtanewainuku is covered in virgin unlogged forest and is home to a variety of native birds and animals. Large emergent rimu trees are common. Tawa, kamahi and rewarewa form a high canopy and bird species such as robin and bell bird are readily seen and heard. Since 2002 a volunteer trust, Ōtanewainuku Kiwi Trust, has helped conserve the precious wildlife of Ōtanewainuku. Kiwi, whiteheads and forest gecko are all found here. Recent releases of kiwi and kōkako have proved successful.

Rimu Loop Walk: 45 minutes return, 1.8km Last time I visited in fungi season this track alone took us 4 hours! Starts from the opposite side of the road near the carpark. This gently graded walk with some impressively large rimu trees is suitable for walking children. It's not suitable for strollers or wheelchairs.

Summit Track: 90 minutes return, 2.3km. The loop track to the summit starts behind the shelter and is reasonably steep in parts, but the view from the top is worth the climb. A tower constructed on the summit (640 m) offers panoramic views from East Cape to Mount Tarawera and Rotorua, and across the Mamaku Plateau to Mount Ruapehu.

Whataroa Falls: 1 hour each way. For the slightly more agile, a well-marked route branches off the Rimu Loop Track after 15 minutes and undulates through the forest to the Whataroa Falls. The waterfall is a popular swimming hole and picnic spot. Explore this lovely stream with cascades and pools before returning the same way. So, there are 5 hours of possible tracks to walk and 5½ that we will be there – something suitable for everyone! Starting point details next month.

Leader: Theresa O'Leary

Ph: 027 416 2633

Grade: M

Email: theresa.oleary.eme@gmail.com

Transport: Senior member \$20-25

Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

or private vehicles.

Trip 3125

Takepuku

26 May

Takepuku is a volcano situated 10 minutes from Te Awamutu, where we will walk on a shared mountain bike trail that gently climbs up through regenerating bush to the summit which has magnificent views of the surrounding Waipa and Waikato landscape. The first 3/4 of the track gently sidles around and up the mountain after which the track continues along the ridge through native forest in the ancient crater. There are a few steps to be climbed at the end to get to the lookout tower, which has information boards detailing the historical and cultural significance of the reserve. This is an easy walk but is pleasant with tui & kereru often seen and heard

in the reserve. I would suggest bringing a thermos for morning tea at the summit. Expect to walk 3 hours in total and we can stop for a social lunch afterwards.

Leader: Lynette Morriss

Ph: 027 073 4519

Grade: E

Judith Bogle

Ph: 027 3810283

Transport: Senior member \$20-25

Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3126

Bridge to Nowhere

1-3 June

This is a 42 km one way track in Whanganui National Park. It commences on the west side of the Park at Kohi Saddle north of Stratford and crosses the Park eastward to the Whanganui River. Following an old road line, the track has a relatively even gradient, no river crossings and passes through native forest for most of its length, providing shelter from the worst of the weather. This is a lightly maintained track and may have windfalls, slips or be overgrown.

The plan is to drive by shared private car/s (let me know if you can take a car to Te Wera Lodge on Friday evening leaving Hamilton about 4pm and staying the night at Te Wera Lodge, 50 minutes from the start of the track. The first day will end at Pouri Hut after an 8-hour walk including a return side trip to the summit of Mount Humphries. The second day involves 7 hours walking to Puketotara Hut. The last day is 1.5 hours out to the Whanganui River and a 1.5-hour return walk to the Bridge to Nowhere. A jet boat will provide transport to the short Bridge to Nowhere track and then back to Pipiriki where the car or cars will have been relocated.

Huts are all backcountry and require passes or tickets. First come, first served. Tents must be carried as a back-up. Those who have a two-person tent might want to share to lighten the load given that hopefully they won't be needed. Trip cost is likely to be between \$339 and \$538 depending on numbers. This includes travel contribution, vehicle relocation and jet boat. It excludes the hut pass or ticket cost and any other costs such as food.

Leader: Sarah McLeay

Ph: 020 408 96364

Grade: M

Transport: Senior member \$339-538

Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Hut fees: Please sort these out yourself.

Trip 3127

Karangahake Mountain

9 June

A network of tracks up the mountain provides various ways to access the summit. We plan to take the Karangahake Mountain Track to the summit which takes about two hours. It's a well-formed track through native bush and there are stunning 360° views at the top towards Coromandel, across the plains and out to the Pacific Ocean. We will stop there for lunch and then descend via the Country Road Track which is an easy downhill walk on a wide graded path that winds gently around the back of the mountain with more vistas to enjoy of the gorge. Keep a lookout for the occasional mining tunnel. Expect to walk around 5 to 6 hours and cover approximately 9 km.

Leader: Lynette Morriss

Ph: 027 073 4519

Grade: E/M

Transport: Senior member \$20-25

Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3128**Bushcraft course****15/16 June**

This Course is being held at the Pirongia Forest Lodge, which the Club has used numerous times in the past. The Lodge also provides bunk style accommodation. The 2-Day Course will cover a wide range of topics to arm you with a variety of skills to enjoy tramping in a safe environment. Topics being covered are – Environmental Care, Managing Risk, Clothing & Equipment, Weather, Navigation, Hazards to consider and deal with, Emergency procedures. Each participant will receive a full detailed programme at the start of the Course (hopefully will be sent prior to the Course).

The various topics will be presented by experienced Club members.

Accommodation: When you register for this Course, please state whether you would like to stay at the Lodge on Friday 14th and/or Saturday 15th June 2024.

Accommodation is bunks with you needing to supply all your bedding.

Catering: Further information will be sent out closer to the Course but, morning tea and afternoon tea will be provided.

Course Cost: There will be a cost per person to cover the hire of the Lodge, any accommodation you may choose, and Course catering.

Any questions please contact the Club Captain.

Leader: Les Warren

Ph: 027 8644937

Grade: n/a

Email: warrenlb2017@outlook.com

Transport: private vehicles – carpooling may be available.

Trip 3129**Waitakeres I****21-23 June**

This weekend trip is the first of two planned where we will explore as many of the tracks as possible, within the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park. Although several tracks have been closed (some indefinitely) due to kauri dieback, there are still many possibilities for walks that range from easy to medium level. For each weekend, we will be based at the Auckland Tramping Club backcountry hut. This hut sleeps 21 people and we have booked the whole hut. There is a 5- minute walk from the carpark to the hut. Amenities at the hut include platform bunks with mattresses (byo sleeping bag), gas hobs, cooking pots, a wood burning stove and sun-drenched deck. The cost to stay at the hut depends on the numbers in our group but as the whole hut costs \$180 per night it means it will be an inexpensive weekend's accommodation. We have booked the hut for Friday and Saturday nights. This will enable an early start doing walks on Saturday morning. It is anticipated that we will have at least one van going Friday night and possibly two. As we will need to drop off and pick up walkers from various parts of the park, we would prefer to use vans rather than private vehicles in order to maximise vehicle loadings. As WTC has not run such an event for a number of years, interest in going on both weekends is bound to be quite high so register early please. NOTE: Waitakeres Two is being held over the weekend of 21-22 September, again with Friday and Saturday night stays at the ATC hut. We do not have a trip number yet so if you want to go on both trips (as a "combo") please indicate this to the leader

when you register for Waitakeres One. Note: the walks will vary in length from quite short and easy to several hours and E/M

Leader: Allan Wickens

Ph; 0279509546

Grades : E-M

Email : allanwickens@hotmail.com (preferred)

Accommodation at ATC hut around \$30-40 for the weekend.

Transport: Senior member: \$50-60 Senior N/M: \$60-70

(leaves HN between 4.30 – 5.30 pm Friday night). There will not be an earlier van as this would mean incurring a 3-day van hire.

Trip 3130

Matariki weekend

28-30 June

The Club is organising another Matariki Weekend at the Club Lodge at Ruapehu.

The weekend program is:

Friday 28th June – Travel to the Lodge in the morning. Walk up to the Lodge and settle in. After some lunch some walk options will be offered.

Saturday 29th June – A selection of walks of various fitness levels will be on offer. After pre-dinner nibbles, we will have a special Matariki dinner for the group. We are working on inviting someone to come along and talk about Matariki after dinner (may be on Friday night).

Sunday 30th June – To be decided. We could clean-up and leave mid-morning and do a short walk or two on our way home.

Accommodation: PLEASE NOTE that we have only been allocated 16 bunks at this stage. When you register for this weekend, please indicate whether you require a single bunk or a double bunk. This will help with the planning. If more than 16 people register, we will keep a Waiting List in case we are given more bunks or people pull out.

Catering: As mentioned above, we will have a special dinner for Saturday night for the group. Jacqui has kindly offered to organise the special dinner. I am sure she would like a few helpers (mention in your registration whether you are able to help). All other meals - breakfasts, lunches, Friday night dinner, and drinks etc, is BYO. Also, if each person can bring some pre-dinner nibbles to share, that would be great. Tea/Coffee/etc, milk and sugar will be provided.

Walks: Various walks between easy and fit will be offered during the weekend. Details of walks are yet to be sorted out with more details provided closer to the weekend. Obviously, the weather will decide what we do.

More details on the weekend will be sent out closer to the weekend including recommended clothing / equipment to bring and, costs. If anyone has suggestions on walks etc we can consider, please feel free to contact me.

Leaders: Les Warren

Ph: 027 8644937

Grade: E-F

Jacqui Dick

Ph: 021 260 8149

Email: warrenlb2017@outlook.com or jacquimd@me.com

Transport: tba

Accommodation: tba

One day your life will flash before your eyes. Make sure it's worth watching

Mid-week Walks & Tramps

We have a walk or tramp on the 2nd Tuesday and 4th Wednesday of the month. The activities have proven to be as varied as the group is and the communication is via the Mid-week W & Ts Group page on WhatsApp. If you would like to be part of this communication, please download WhatsApp on your phone and text your request to Isla on 021 209 6539.

Kayakers unite

Who is interested in kayak trips? Perhaps a bit similar to the ‘Tramping on Bikes’ trips. Some for a single day trip, some with overnight camping. Some where you might hire a kayak when we get there, many where we will each need to have one and bring it.

If you are interested and would like to join in, please email me your permission theresa.oleary.eme@gmail.com to add you and your mobile phone number into a WhatsApp ‘WTC on water’ group and that will get us off to a beginning. And do send suggestions for trips, and how you personally might help get this group off to a great start.

Theresa O’Leary

Editorial

Does the small turnout at an AGM signify that everyone is comfortable with the way the club is being managed or is it the cold weather that determines numbers in attendance. Which ever it was, the mostly tramper-oriented attendees took part in lots of discussions about Waikato Hut. This implies that although they are trampers, they still consider the Hut to be an integral part of our club. In the difficult environment that is skifield management at present it is comforting to know that all club members value our asset on Mt. Ruapehu enough to be concerned for its’ welfare. I’m hopeful that we will see more people getting involved in the ski club both from a workparty point of view, and for activities. The trip planning meeting has been held and there is a wonderful trip programme planned. Les & Allan are doing a great job keeping things running smoothly, and Judith is mentoring some new trip leaders. This does not mean you should wait to be asked to lead a trip or express an interest in doing so. Make yourself known to any of these 3 and you will be welcomed with open arms. Sharing the load makes any task easier, as we all know.

If you are a newcomer to our club and not sure what to bring (or what is the best option) for the winter trips, check out the list suggested on page 3 of this bulletin. You could also come along to the monthly meeting and pick the brains of the experienced trampers, or check with the trip leader when you book in.

With respect to participation ,I would say a big thankyou to those members who have been assisting the Pirongia Restoration Societys’ fundraising efforts planting Carex at the Whangamarino swamp recently. There is a final push taking place on May 18th – see the Snippets section for more info. This is how volunteers can have a huge effect on the environment they enjoy being in. And when there is a funding

application to be made, it looks pretty darned good to be able to state how much community effort has gone into a project! You help make the Societys' efforts look marvellous.

Dianne June

Presidential Blog

This will be my last Presidential Blogg, the last 3 years has gone quickly and eventfully. (*Editor's note: She's only been in the rôle for 2 years*). During my term I have had Covid hit, Gabrielle with all the damage and the loss of tracks and now the uncertain future of Mt Ruapehu. Through these times I have had great support from both the Tramping and Ski committees to keep the tramping trips going and the lodge open. I will still be continuing work in the background to support the tramping section so you will still see my name still popping up. We have a great crew and I hope that everyone keeps supporting them. Rupert will be taking my place so I wish him all the best. I believe he will provide a calm and effective direction for the club. Don't worry Rupert both past presidents Selwyn and I still there to help and support. I also believe the club has some great attributes and hope to see the community-based and new member support systems continue to grow.

Judith Bogle

"It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves." Sir Edmund Hillary"

Ski club

The government has stumped up with some more money to keep the skifield going for another season but what will happen after the end of it this year? In the meantime, season passes are available for purchase.

As for our Hut, the hut maintenance necessary to keep it running has been undertaken but not completed. Watch this space for the starting date for winter hut fee rates, and what they will be.

We're looking for a **Custodian**. This year we'll be resuming an onsite custodian. You get to stay all winter at the Lodge, have your own room, and the club makes a moderate contribution to your expenses. You get to be the on-mountain point of contact for members and guests and ensure that Waikato Hut runs smoothly. Flexi start and end dates in the July to October window and of course the best view on the mountain every night. Interested? Let us know on waikatoski@gmail.com. This rôle is generally popular so don't delay.

Membership is open! We're one of the most affordable clubs on the mountain with our \$115 Annual membership, and nightly members' rates of \$35 / \$20 (adult / child) . Staying on the mountain is a pretty epic experience and a great way to get on the lifts early. Members get priority access to the Lodge for themselves and guests at weekends. During our peak months there are a small number of non member beds available, as a result. If you are interested in membership then get in touch. Or just apply now !

July Dates & Events

- 28 - 30 June Matariki weekend.
- 6 - 21 School Holidays. Stay for a few days or a week.

- 27 / 28 Beginner's Snowcraft. Run by our Tramping section. For those who want to learn how to travel safely in an Alpine environment. Get in quick. The Hut is booked out for this event. There's normally plenty of midweek space during July although mountain facilities are opened progressively as staffing and snow cover permits.

Trip Reports

Trip 3110

McArthur Craggs

10-15 Mar

Well, sometimes the trip doesn't work out as planned, so it was with this one.

Dale and I were dropped off at the Arahura River bridge at about 8.30 and we set off up river in pleasant weather, crossing the dramatic Cesspool bridge and then up the easy track on the true left of the river to the Lower Arahura hut for lunch.

Those who know the Arahura will know that the track is an old, benched, cattle track that is severely eroded in many places. There were two possum trappers in the hut, with a catch of 60 to 80 possums in a freezer ready for TB study. Their chopped in equipment and supplies included BEER. In the afternoon we continued up the track and down to a bridge that should give access to the Olderog creek which we needed to get up to the Biv by nightfall. Easier said than don as the trip up the bank on the true right proved a difficult clamber over large rocks beside the torrent and very slow going. We didn't think we would get to the Biv in time and retreated to the hut (best decision as it turns out - weather was poor for the rest of the week and tops would have been bad position to be in).

So, plan change, next day we continued up the true left of the Arahura and crossed to the Newton Creek track at the Third Gorge bridge. The track was fine, if a little overgrown and the Newton Creek Hut was a very clean and tidy 4 berth. Notes in Remote Huts website (Permolat) suggested the following day would be quite comfortable up and over the Newton Saddle to Dunns Creek hut, about 2 hours up, and 2 hours down. Not sure how young and fit those people were, but we made it about 4 hours up, and 4 hours down and that was a climb of only 600m. The trouble was that the track was the creek, and the creek was the track, so the day was spent clambering up boulder waterfalls, or clambering down boulder waterfalls. Newton saddle was interesting, with steep weetbix on one side and steep (no footholds) vegetation on the other. Very nice to get to another clean and tidy hut. Day 4 was a 3 hour downhill into the Taipo river valley to the Mid Taipo hut, again, using a bouldery creek-bed as the track. Banging down boulder creeks didn't do my knees any good, and the weather was poor so we spent day 5 in the hut, meeting an interesting Glaswegian at lunch time as he passed through.

Day 6 was an uneventful walk down the true left of the Taipo river, main highlight being blue mushrooms (*Entoloma hochstetteri*). The weather was still rubbish and the final half day walk to the car was in rain. One tip if you are in the Taipo river - stay at the Dillon Homestead hut (very interesting historic hut with wetback

fireplace and shower (Unknown whether this works)). The modern Dillon Hut 400m up river is the normal sterile DoC hut.

Thanks Dale, and my apologies for what turned out to be a claggy, wet and uninteresting tramp - just another line on the map. *See picture on inside back cover.*

Trip 3114

Waikato Hut day walks

23/24 Mar

The weather forecast for Tongariro National Park was mixed for the weekend but we set off on Friday afternoon accepting that plans might have to change.

The journey to Ruapehu was broken at Taumarunui for dinner and a stretch of the legs. We arrived at the “Top of the Bruce” in daylight and walked up to the Waikato Hut, finding the door code to get in, swiftly followed by Allan and Peter and found everyone else upstairs already enjoying the views and a cup of tea. A reasonable start for Saturday was agreed and I crashed into bed. I slept so well that I did not hear my repeated alarm – apologies to my dormitory! The rest of the group were good enough to wait for me to dress and eat a quick breakfast. We set out with every intention of a good walk, but the rain set in as we reached the abandoned Downhill Ski Club hut.

Margaret put some spouting back into position to stop rain degrading the building anymore and we walked back to the Waikato Hut. A quick lunch and I headed back to bed for some sleep. I can’t tell you what the rest of the group did but they were in good spirits at dinner time.

Note: While I slept on Saturday afternoon Beatrix, Margaret, Jean and John walked over to Meads Wall, up to Hutt Flat and back to the hut.

Sunday weather looked OK and with both vehicles registered with DoC to park at Mangetepopo Hut and followed a stream bed in an Easterly direction at the foot of Pukekaikiore. We aimed to walk around Pukekaikiore, up on to the ridge, followed by Pukeonake. We turned South off the Alpine Crossing path before Mangetepopo. Admiring the vertical rocky outcrops, we wondered how that type of climbing had fallen out of fashion, and then saw a pair of climbers belaying up a craggy cliff.

The streambed was quite a scramble and as our streambed turned Southwest we saw a potential path on the lava ridge that might be a better route out. The slopes that John had previously climbed no longer looked viable due to erosion, so we continued to skirt around the foot of Pukekaikiore. Sunday weather looked OK and with both vehicles registered with DoC to park at Mangetepopo Hut and followed a stream bed in an Easterly direction at the foot of Pukekaikiore. We aimed to walk around Pukekaikiore, up on to the ridge, followed by Pukeonake. We turned South off the Alpine Crossing path before Mangetepopo. Admiring the vertical rocky outcrops, we wondered how that type of climbing had fallen out of fashion, and then saw a pair of climbers belaying up a craggy cliff. The streambed was quite a scramble and as our streambed turned Southwest we saw a potential path on the lava ridge that might be a better route out. The slopes that John had previously climbed no longer looked viable due to erosion, so we continued to skirt around the foot of Pukekaikiore.



Rocky outcrops

Photo by Amanda Collins

The contrast between the solid, black lava flow of the 1954 eruption and the craggy, fissured cliffs of Pukekaikiore was fascinating. There is not much vegetation, and you have to admire any plant life that survives in such an environment. The contrast between the solid, black lava flow of the 1954 eruption and the craggy, fissured cliffs of Pukekaikiore was fascinating. There is not much vegetation, and you have to admire any plant life that survives in such an environment. Reaching the Southwest point

of the ridge we had lunch and then clambered up to the ridge where the views of the park towards Tama Lakes and Ruapehu were stunning, all the while Ngauruhoe was cloud-topped.

Navigating the path on the way in had taken much more time than anticipated so we were not able to walk Pukeonake, that will be for another time. We picked up the alternative route along the lava ridge on the way back towards Mangetepopo hut, which was much quicker and less of a clamber. Looking at the point where we had tumbled out of the bush, we were not sure how you would find the entry coming the other way.

Safely back to the carpark we drove up to the hut to clean and collect our belongings. Peter and Allan had done a grand job before they had left separately on Sunday morning. The traditional stop at Taumarunui for hot chips and a leg stretch but not so long that I was driving the challenging bends in the dark.

A great trip, there are so many areas to explore in the Tongariro National Park, it doesn't have to be just the Crossing.

Thank you to John for leading. Those on the trip were: Amanda, Allan, Peter, Sharon, Ying, Beatrix, Prativa, Margaret, Jean and John.

From the committee table:

New members: Sharon Roil, Anna Sutton, Dave Green. We welcome you all to the club

Resignations: Jane Muir, Alona Parfonova, Alex Rees, Natasha Macartney, Chris & Sue Kay.

Membership: The club has 181 tramping members.

Snippets

Hygiene alerts

When going tramping in our forests these days there are many hygiene requirements placed upon us to prevent the spread of diseases lethal to our biodiversity. We have known for some years now about the kauri dieback disease, and now we know about the presence of the lethal chytrid fungus that kills frogs.

1. On a recent visit to the Okahukura valley Dianne & Selwyn collected a water sample for eDNA testing (we're helping develop a method to detect kokako that will eventually be used for seeking out the south island kokako). The results came back recently and had a rather scary component to it – the chytrid fungus was detected when it has not been detected in samples taken over the past 2 years. Not far from the valley is a protected site for Archey's frogs so this finding is of major concern for everyone who travels in the north Pureora forest. The amphibian chytrid fungus invades and damages a frog's skin and kills frogs by affecting the balance of electrolytes causing heart failure and frogs are more susceptible when their immune system is weakened by other factors – e.g. pollution or increased UV. The fungus has been confirmed in introduced frog populations all over New Zealand and in native frog populations on the Coromandel Peninsula and in the northern Whareorino Forest in the King Country. The fungus relies on damp conditions to survive and to spread. It can be spread from frog to frog contact or through contact with infected soil and water. People, animals (e.g. pigs & deer),¹ or vehicles can spread the amphibian chytrid fungus by moving soil and water around on their boots, gaiters or equipment. Strict hygiene protocols apply to people entering and leaving native frog habitat. A 2% trigen/sterigene solution or 1% bleach should be used to clean equipment, footwear, gaiters, dogs' feet and any other items used in the field.

2. At a recent meeting with DoC Te Kuiti staff, Dianne & Selwyn were advised that **totara blight** has been detected in the Pureora area also.



It is caused by a fungus-like organism *phytophthora podocarpi*. (note the kauri dieback organism is *phytophthora agathidicida*). It was first reported in Gisborne in 2011 and has since been found around much of the north island but not yet in the south island. Its' symptoms are most obvious in winter and spring, starting with needles turning a khaki colour, often becoming black and then falling off. Shoot tips may also die but retain dead, browned needles, giving the tree a fire-scorched appearance. Any symptomatic material should be sent to Scion's Forest Health Reference Laboratory. Tōtara blight can also be reported via the Find-A-Pest app. It can be downloaded free from the Apple or Android app stores. Open the app, join the forestry sector from the settings Please ensure your footwear, gaiters, packs, and raincoats in particular are as clean as possible before you leave home. If you have access to some Sterigene use it to clean your boots when leaving a bush area, or better still, take along a pair of clean shoes to wear in your vehicle and have a bag to put your dirty footwear in to take them home carefully and clean them properly,

> This time there should be a 'tick' for this snippet as it is to demonstrate a positive effort and a thankyou to you all. On May 18th, the Pirongia Restoration Society is aiming to plant 2500 Carex plants at the Whangamarino swamp as a fundraising project. We meet at a farm gate in Island Block road, Meremere – you'll walk past here on John McA's trip on July 7th - at 9am, move across the farmland to the planting site, and get going. Home baking, tea and coffee-making stuff, spades, handwashing gear, and a gazebo are supplied. You would need to bring your lunch & water bottle, some gloves (the plants have sharp edges), raincoat/sunhat, sturdy footwear such as tramping boots or gumboots, a cup for hot drinks, something to sit on as the grass gets a bit damp, Finish time is expected to be between 2.30 and 3.30 but the more people we have on site, the sooner it will be finished. You are welcome to bring children over the age of 8years, friends and family. The terrain is flat and level, albeit a bit muddy, but you won't be 'in the swamp'! This site is just 7 minutes drive from the Whangamarino redoubt so worth

a visit afterwards. For more information contact Dianne & Selwyn, 8433066 or 0274978151.

➤ Napier Tramping Club's 50th celebration will be held on Saturday 12th October/ A tramp up to Kaweka J in the morning will be followed by a celebration dinner in the evening. Ex and current members and friends are welcome. To register or for more information email Di or Su at napietramping@gmail.com

➤ The recent Pureora Hunting Competition has been a success with more than 200 pest animals tallied for the prizegiving. The annual competition, run by the DoC since 1988, is a pest control event in the Pureora Forest Park, near Lake Taupō, that targets pigs, deer, and smaller species like rats. This year's competition ran from March 16 to April 28 and at the prizegiving last week, DoC tallied more than 70 deer, 14 pigs, 77 goat tails, six mustelids and 39 rats. "We couldn't be more stoked with the turnout ... This brings competition numbers back up to pre-Covid levels," DoC said in a social media post. "It was awesome to see the junior competitors focus on priority pests, raising awareness among rangatahi of the damage these critters can do. In the end, the top three spots in the deer category were taken out by women. The heaviest boar or barrow weighed a whopping 64.4kg, followed by a 53kg entry and a 50.9kg entry. Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society did an amazing job chatting to the hunters about the protection of kōkako in Pureora Forest.

(Ed comment: there was even at least one club member present on the day and we had the pleasure of catching up with another trumper whom we had tramped with – along with Waveney- in the Waitotara forest in 1999. You never know what our members get up to and when their heads pop up do you?)

➤ The Little Red Backpack by John Wilson / David Cumming.
For many years Club trips departed from Victoria Street outside Valentines on the corner of Bryce Street. Valentines sold armed forces surplus gear, a bit of outdoor gear and whiteware. Under a glass panel on the counter, amongst many other items, was a model red backpack.



Valentines had a disastrous fire and relocated to premises in Seddon Road, negotiated by Club member and real estate agent Colin Jones. The store later closed when John Valentine retired. The little pack somehow survived and found its way to a second-hand store, where Lynne Bjarnesen (Wood) spotted it and thought it was so cute she bought it and created a trophy for social activities, to be awarded informally when someone did something of note on the club social

social scene. This was late 1980s. The trophy doesn't have a date on it but the plaque reads 'Waikato Tramping Club, Social Activities Trophy, Presented by Lynne Wood'. Who has it now?

~~~~~  
*...from the DoC website....*

➤ Changes to Great Walk prices and DoC discount policies. "It has been more than four years since prices were reviewed and upkeep costs have risen significantly since then," says DoC's Director of Heritage and Visitors, Cat Wilson. "From 1 July, Great Walk hut and campsite prices will increase by 18% except for Paparoa which will increase by 6%.' There will be no price increase for visitors using DoC facilities on the Lake Waikaremoana Track. The track is part of Te Urewera, which is spoken for and governed by the Te Urewera Board. Decisions about price increases relating to Waikaremoana would be taken by Te Uru Taumatua – Ngāi Tūhoe's operational entity, and DoC together. Check out the DoC website for more details.

➤ Two rats have been caught just days after DOC set out freshly baited traps on Te Haupa/ Saddle Island north of Auckland. In early April, a member of the public reported mammalian footprints on the sand of the 4.5 ha pest-free island, which is situated less than 1 km from Mahurangi East Peninsula. DoC sent rodent detection dogs and their handlers to the island to check for the presence of the predator. While on the island a dog-handler spotted a Norway rat, and the specially trained conservation dogs led the handlers to a burrow. This prompted a DoC incursion response, setting traps and tracking tunnels on Friday 19 April to gather information about the rat or rats, and eradicate the pest. One rat was caught on Monday followed by another on the 24th. Although two rats have been caught, the regular re-setting and checking of traps will continue until DoC is satisfied there are no further rodents. Kat Lane, Operations Manager for Inner Hauraki Gulf Islands says it is important to keep Te Haupa free of mammalian pests. "Keeping Te Haupa pest-free supports all wildlife and especially protects nesting sites for tūturiwhatu/New Zealand dotterel, Ōi/grey faced petrel and kororā/little blue penguin. Thankfully, eggs are laid around June and July for these species, so there is a lower risk to predation currently. However, we're working hard to make sure the island is cleared of any further pests as soon as possible." Sha also says the public is key to keeping these special conservation spaces safe for wildlife. "We're thankful for the person who reported to DoC the signs of mammal pests on the island. Rats can have a major impact on a range of wildlife because they eat birds, seeds, snails, lizards, fruit, wētā, eggs, chicks, larvae and flowers. The varied diet of rats also makes them competitors with native wildlife for food sources. If you spot a rat, mouse, stoat or cat on a pest-free island, contact DoC immediately on 0800 DOC HOT (0800 362 468).

- A population of a rare native freshwater fish, sometimes known as 'jaws', was saved in the nick of time after the swift removal of predator trout.

Unique to the Waitaki catchment, nationally endangered lowland longjaw galaxias (Waitaki River) are short – growing up to 80 mm – and skinny, with a long lower jaw and underbite. Lowland longjaw galaxiids are only found in five tributaries in the Waitaki catchment in a handful of side channels and small springs, DoC Senior Biodiversity Ranger Dean Nelson says.

“They’re holding on thanks to the placement of exclusion barriers, in consultation with local rūnanga and Fish and Game, that prevent predators like trout and kōaro moving upstream to eat them. Management of invasive weeds is also helping.”

Imagine the dismay when a research team of DoC staff and a PhD student found only a handful of longjaws in a small tributary of Corbies Creek, which is normally a population stronghold.

“In January 2023, we found just under a 100 longjaws in a 25m<sup>2</sup> area of this small stream, but earlier in April, only 12 were found in the same area. This small but important longjaw population was on the brink of a local extinction,” Dean says.

“Fortunately, on the same day we observed the steep decline in this population, we also found the cause – two brown trout upstream of a trout exclusion barrier. It was the first time in several years of monitoring that a breach had occurred.

“We know trout live downstream, but it’s likely a large overland flood in July 2022 carried trout into the stream upstream of the barrier.”

Dean says the near miss highlights the value of frequently monitoring the small, fragmented populations of these rare fish, even when exclusion barriers are in place, and that we can’t walk away from these sites.

“Extreme weather events increase the risk of exclusion barrier breaches. Removing the two trout saved the Corbies Creek lowland longjaw population from a likely extinction within the next few months.”

Local DoC staff will do further checks soon to ensure the absence of trout in the Corbies Creek lowland longjaw habitat. Regular monitoring will continue long term, along with other management such as aquatic weed control to sustain crucial habitats for these little fish.

- Emerald Lakes freed from weeds. Tongariro Alpine Crossing’s distinctive Emerald Lakes are weed free again thanks to years of work by DoC staff.

Known for their jewel-like colours caused by dissolved minerals, the Emerald Lake-shores and shallows have been smothered by the invasive *Juncus bulbosus* for some years.

*Juncus bulbosus*, or bulbous rush, is native to Eurasia and North Africa and showed up in New Zealand more than a century ago. It is commonly found in swampy places, especially in areas with high rainfall like Tongariro.

DoC Supervisor Danial Van der Lubbe says the lakes are an iconic part of the landscape. “We know they are important to so many people – hapū, local



communities, and those who complete the Tongariro Alpine Crossing - so it's for more than just biodiversity that we've tackled these weeds."

Twice a year since 2019, rangers conducted weed control around the edges of the lakes, and in the lakes themselves. This year, for the first time, *Juncus* density is down to undetectable levels in the lakes - a positive milestone for the health of a site considered internationally significant. "We still have some work to go around the edges, and will keep checking to make sure it doesn't pop up again in the lakes themselves," says Danial. "The next big step for us is eDNA testing of the larger Blue Lakes for *Juncus* - we haven't detected anything visually, but the eDNA check will tell us for sure." eDNA testing of Blue Lakes is being conducted as part of the larger Tongariro Alpine Crossing sustainability project, which includes a range of changes to better manage environmental and cultural outcomes. DoC and Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro want to ensure the experience of walking the Tongariro Alpine Crossing is safe, protects the fragile environment, and respects the cultural significance of the area. Tongariro water-bodies are considered tapu, or sacred, and walkers are asked to avoid swimming in them. By staying clear of the water people can be assured they are upholding cultural values and preventing further weed incursions into the lakes.

- One of our rarest, seldom-seen skinks is even more threatened than we had thought, with fewer than 1000 mature individuals.



An urgent assessment by an independent expert panel has seen Canterbury spotted skink reclassified from Nationally Vulnerable to Nationally Critical – the last step before extinction.

DoC technical advisor Lynn Adams says there's a perfect storm of issues contributing to the skink's decline. "We thought there were secure populations of Canterbury spotted skinks in the Ō Tū Wharekai Ashburton Lakes basin and surrounding ranges, but recent DNA sequencing has proven these populations were misidentified and are in fact another type of related lizard. This discovery means the Canterbury spotted skink's overall population is considerably smaller than our previous estimates. To make things worse, research on our monitored populations predict a 70% decline over the next 30 years in Christchurch, Banks Peninsula and Kaitorete Spit. In fact, many of these populations are already functionally extinct. This decline is likely to also be occurring in other populations that we're not

monitoring in the Canterbury foothills. An exception to this worrying trend is the small but thriving population contained within a small predator-proof fence on Banks Peninsula, although the fence is subject to damage caused by earth movement.” Canterbury spotted skink’s main predators are mice, hedgehogs, weasels, rats, stoats, and cats. “Small populations on the tiny islands off Banks Peninsula aren’t secure because they’re too small to sustain large lizard populations as well as being within swimming range of stoats and rats from the mainland. We need to better understand populations in the Canterbury foothills, which are largely unknown but likely facing the same threats as other skink populations.” Predator proof fences are considered the best medium-term way to protect the remaining Canterbury spotted skink populations while long-term solutions are found. Mouse-proof fences in particular are key to creating skink strongholds, so they don’t disappear forever,” Lynn Adams says.

➤ One of New Zealand’s rarest birds has suffered another blow due to ongoing predation by feral cats. DoC has recently completed an annual flock count for the critically endangered southern New Zealand dotterel/tūturiwhatu and found an estimated 101 birds remain – a 19 per cent decline from last year’s 126. Southern dotterels, which only breed on Stewart Island/Rakiura, have spent the past few decades on the brink of extinction and sadly this year looks to be a similar story. “Without our control efforts, it’s frightening to think just how low the numbers would be.” Says a DoC ranger. Dotterels face a range of threats, but the number one cause of decline is predation by feral cats. During the recent breeding season, 32 feral cats were killed by the team across the breeding sites. “We believe at least 41 adult birds died over the 2023 breeding season. This was partially offset by this year’s surviving chicks, meaning an estimated population reduction of 25 birds.” Following this year’s flock counts, the team will review predator control strategies as part of an adaptive management programme. The challenge is feral cats roam large distances and can be wary of the traditional methods to control them – trapping, hunting and bait stations. There are limited tools to control feral cats across large areas.



Predator control is only undertaken on a portion of dotterel breeding habitat which is patchy and extends across the full length of Rakiura. To save more dotterels, more habitat needs to be protected.

“Southern dotterels were once widespread throughout the South Island and Rakiura is their last refuge. It is an uphill battle but it’s one worth pursuing.”



On the McArthur Craggs trip    photo by John McArthur

**bivouac/outdoor**

COMMITTED TO ADVENTURE

we ARE tramping



**311 Barton St  
Hamilton  
07 839 4206**

[www.bivouac.co.nz](http://www.bivouac.co.nz) 

\* Not to be used in conjunction with any other discount, special or offer.  
Excludes electronics, hut tickets & gift cards.