



THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB (INC)

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

August 2026



When the snow really falls... photo by Stephen Prendergast

WAIKATO HUT

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Tongariro National Park



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Pureora robin
Photo by Cullen Choi

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Free to members

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

BULLETIN No 888

August 2026

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Treasurer:	Guy Domett	027 2483008
Members:	Judith Bogle (VP Tramp) Ashley Hoskin (VP Ski)	
Members: Tramp:	Allan Wickens Selwyn June Peter Ayson Mike Peck	
Members: Ski:	Ashley Hoskin	

Tramping Subcommittee

Tramping email: waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com

Chairperson:	Judith Bogle	027 3810283
Secretary:	Dorothy Cawdron	027 7424222
Club Captain:	Mike Peck	021 369256
Membership:	Jocelyn Widmer	027 8664795
Member:	Selwyn June	027 4978151
	Allan Wickens	027 9509546
Transport:	Peter Ayson	027 497077
Social convenor:	David Totman	021 868720

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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 2nd September

We meet at St. Peter's Cathedral in Victoria St.

Door opens at 7.00pm, and the meeting starts at 7.30pm.

This is the night we find out who has a good eye for a fabulous picture or was in the right place at the right time to capture a great moment.

Come along and hear how our 2 club member judges have looked at your entries and formed an opinion as to which deserve a trophy to recognise your talent.

There is always something to learn about how to improve your eye and (not just with contact lenses).

Trip planning meeting: Wednesday 23rd September, at 7pm. Venue of the Hawk clubrooms in Grantham Street is to be confirmed by the club captain. Come along with your suggestions of where we should go for the first half of 2027. All ideas and club members are welcome.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

3254	16 Aug	E/M	Killarney lakes	Mike Peck
3255	22 Aug	E/M	Waiorongomai to Te Aroha trig	Jocelyn Widmer
	20 & 22 nd Aug		Navigation course	Outdoor training
3256	28-30 Aug	M/F	Tongariro full moon & snowcraft	Mike Peck
	2 Sept		CLUB NIGHT- Photo competition results	Nicola Lye/ Kat Rowe
3257	6 Sept	E/M	Neavesville	Judith Bogle
3258	11-13 Sept	E/M-M/F	Okahukura baiting	Selwyn & Dianne June
3259A	18-20 Sept	M/F	Ruapehu Summit	Mike Harris
3259B	19/20 Sept	E/M	Miranda birds & bikes	Maddie Fiddes
	23 Sept		Trip Planning	Mike Peck
3260	28 Sept	E/M	Taupiri Scientific reserve	Selwyn June
3261	3 / 4 Oct	M	Te Rereatukahia Hut	John McArthur
3262	9-11 Oct	E/M-M/F	Okahukura baiting	Selwyn & Dianne June
	7 October		CLUB NIGHT	David Totman
3263	18 Oct		Where shall we go?	Club captain
3264	23-26 Oct	M/F	Te Tatau Pounamu wilderness	Les Warren
3265	30 Oct- 1 Nov	M/F	Kaimanawa ranges	Miles Rowe
	4 Nov		CLUB NIGHT	David Totman

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. PLB is recommended but the club does have some for members' use

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 conditions. PLB is recommended but the club does have some for members' use that you can pick up from Bivouac outdoor store.

Trip Descriptions

Trip 3254

Killarney lakes loop

16 Aug

Starting on the Tuahu track off Wairakau Rd south of Te Aroha, we follow the track up through the pine forest and as it merges with the native forest, we head up an un-marked trail that follows a spur all the way up to just south of Te Rereatukahia Hut. After a break there we follow the North-South track and head to Motutapere Hut. From here we'll follow another trail that heads down to the

Killarney Lakes and back to our departure point. There will be at least 6 hours walking.

Leader: Mike Peck

Ph: 021 369256

Grade: M/F

Email: *mikeypeck@yahoo.com*

Transport: Senior Member \$30-35

Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3255

Waiorongomai to Te Aroha

23 Aug

The trip will be from Waiorongomai along the rail track trail where you will be able to see old relics from the mining days. Then up the High level track and onto the Te Aroha link track across a waterfall and through a tunnel. You can get some good views along this track. Then on to the Waipapa track where you will go through some interesting bush on a bit rougher track, and next a left on to Dog Kennel Flat track where you will have great views across the valley and old steps to go along. Great place to sit and have lunch. This will take you to the Te Aroha trig. This is an intertwining of tracks making it interesting to see the differences as you go along. Once you reach the trig, it will be quick downhill to the main Te Aroha carpark. This trip will be 6-7 hrs.

Leader: Jocelyn Widmer

Ph: 027 8664795

Grade: M/F

Email: *jocelyn.widmer@googlemail.*

Transport: Senior Member \$30-35

Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3256

Tongariro by full moon

29/30 Aug

This trip has been a much sought-after event but has yet to be achieved in its' entirety. Weather has invariably been the limiting factor and will be the same for this trip. Previous descriptions have started with an arrival on the Saturday at Mangatepopo Hut and a short snooze, but we may decide to go down on Friday afternoon. As the day comes to an end an evening meal is eaten and tramping gear donned for the walk up to the saddle between Tongariro and Ngaruahoe. Another option would be to sidle up from the Hut to Mt. Tongariro by moonlight and thence down to the Tongariro Crossing track back to the Hut. You would need to have a good head torch (and spare batteries), and warm clothing, along with all the other usual gear. If you're up for this adventure, contact the club captain.

Leader: Mike Peck

Ph: 021 369256

Grade: M/F

Email: *mikeypeck@yahoo.com*

Transport: tba

Accommodation: DoC hut fees & perhaps Waikato Hut fees

Trip 3257

Neavesville

6 Sept

The Neavesville track, located near Tairua in the Coromandel Forest Park, is an historic 4WD and tramping route known for its gold mining history, including the Kirikiri Mine and battery. The trail involves a steady, 2-hour climb up a bush-lined forestry road before transitioning into a rougher, steep track to the old stampers, often taking around 5-6 hours total. Historic: The area features remnants of the old

Neavesville town, stamper batteries, and kauri logging sites. The track offers glimpses of the Tairua River estuary and remnants of native forest.

Leader: Judith Bogle

Ph: 027 3810283

Grade: E/M

Email: *judith.bogle@outlook.com*

Transport: Senior Member \$30-35

Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3258

Okahukura baiting

11-13 Sept

Come walk with us in the most beautiful native forest of our region and help look after it at the same time. The Pirongia Restoration Society manages a pest control operation in the Okahukura Valley of North Pureora forest, primarily to protect a growing kokako population – but with great side effects for the other flora and fauna. Kiwi have been snapped on camera in the general area too so a night-time walk around the Waipapa loop track should be on your agenda also. The Society covers the cost of the accommodation which has 5 bunkrooms, oodles of space for campervans, caravans and tents, a large dining room, well-appointed kitchen, shared shower facilities with hot & cold water, a drying room, and proper toilets. For the lodge you need to bring a sleeping bag & pillow, toilet gear, torch for that night-time walk, water bottle, all the food you wish to eat but tea, coffee, milk and sugar will be supplied. For the field work you will need a weekend pack, parka, sturdy boots, and optional gardening gloves. A small pair of pliers can be useful when working at the bait stations. Pack liners, Hi-vis vests, first aid kits, maps, and a PLB/team will also be supplied, along with the bait you will be carrying. We meet on Friday evening at the Pureora Lions Lodge in time for the safety briefing at 7.45pm when you will be advised which lines you are to visit, and who your teammate will be. Newcomers are matched up with someone who has done this work before so no need to be scared. A bag of bait is placed in each bait station along your designated lines. Most teams get 2 lines to do on Saturday and if you finish these early you may be asked to do more if you think you could manage this. Finish time is set at 3.30-4pm by which time you should either be back at the base (which is 40 minutes' drive away from the accommodation) or at least on the roads leading to the base. The 'carrot' to get you there will be fruit juice, fruit, sweets, and home baking on offer - if you can contribute to this feast, please do. Whatever lines we don't get to on Saturday will be visited on Sunday morning. The more people we have present on Saturday means the less likely we are to need to return to the field on Sunday. The weekends' activity is weather dependent of course but to date we have not had to cancel or postpone it. Please be good so the weather gods are kind to us too. The same process will take place over the weekend of October 9-11th but your pack will be much lighter

Leader: Dianne & Selwyn June

Ph: 0274978151

Grade: E/M – M

Email: *djune@xtra.co.nz*

Ph: 07 8433066

Transport: Senior member: \$65-75

Senior non-member Senior rate+\$10.

Trip 3259A**Ruapehu Summit****18-20 Sept**

We will depart by 5:30pm Friday evening from the usual Waikato University departure point. When registering for the trip please indicate in the comments part your experience with Alpine Tramping - Have you been on a Snowcraft Course? Need to have completed snowcraft training (WTC or equivalent) and be confident using crampons and ice axe. Depending on numbers, experience and conditions, we may split into two groups near the Summit Plateau. Those with suitable stiff boots may have the opportunity to climb one or two Ruapehu peaks. This trip going ahead is highly weather-dependent.

Leader: Mike Harris**Ph:** 022 0500499**Grade:** M/F**Email:** mike@bvisual.co.nz**Costs:** tba, but will include transport & hut fees. Saturday dinner yet to be decided, but probably self-catered.

Trip 3259B**Miranda bird watching & bikes****19/20 Sept**

This weekend is focussing on getting to know more about wetlands and shorebirds especially the very interesting migration of the Godwits! We are planning to leave early Saturday morning and, depending on tides, visit the bird sanctuary either Saturday or Sunday. You will have an opportunity to bike to Kaiaua for fish and chips or Thames for a visit to the historical town! If time allows, we may be able to do a walk or visit Ngatea Water gardens. Situated within a Ramsar Wetland of International Significance, an area that supports thousands of SHOREBIRDS, and the best place to see them in Aotearoa. Watch from our bird hides as shorebirds swirl in flocks over the beautiful coast and visit the Centre to learn more about their fascinating world. This is a hidden and peaceful gem for birders, locals and international guests. The best bird-watching is 2 hours either side of high tide and you can find this information and more about the guided tours, accommodation, book shop on the website. Discover more about the incredible Arctic migrants like kuaka bar-tailed godwits and red knots, and our endemic Wrybill. Guided tours up to 10 people for 90min – \$50/person

Highlights

- Use a telescope to see thousands of shorebirds in their natural habitat
- Explore an internationally significant wetland
- Learn about the incredible migration of the kuaka (Godwits)
- Support an organisation committed to conservation

Accommodation – available at the shorebird centre 2 self-contained units – 4max and 6max persons. Bunk rooms – 6 bunks

Possible options for walks

Moanataiari stream track

Moanataiari Link Track - start of the track begins at the end of the Moanataiari Creek road, Thames. 1 km to the lookout or 1.5 km to Waiotahi Track. The track leads to an

awesome lookout with views of Thames

Rocky's Walk is a well-marked 5.5km loop track - starts from Dickson Holiday Park in Tararu. Prepare for steep parts, stream crossings, muddy sections, and challenging technical points. It can be a loop walk, plus there are some good swimming holes located next to the road, making it worthwhile. It is really important to let me now as soon as possible regarding accommodation – to enable a group booking at shore bird centre. Another option is to stay at Miranda Hot Pools Holiday Park and enjoy a soak!

Leader: Maddie Fiddes

Ph: 021 2512772

Grade: E/M

Email: madeleine@actrix.co.nz

Transport: tba

Accommodation: Miranda bunks: \$35/person; Holiday Park: tba

Guided tour: Guided tours up to 10 people for 90min – \$50/person

Trip 3260

Taupiri Scientific reserve

27 Sept

This reserve is located beside the SH 1 Huntly Bypass as it heads through the hills north of Taupiri. It extends from the stop-off parking area to the east of the highway. Once owned by Auckland University for research purposes, it is now public conservation land. Its scientific values are unknown but there are patches of kauri and tanekaha. DoC have eliminated all the goats so the bush should be in a regeneration phase.

We will enter the reserve from the end of Old Road and make our way, using modern and old navigation aids, through the forest along ridges to the high point (231m a.s.l.) and then back again in a loop towards the highway and across a valley to the start point. An off-track experience with a few steep sections.

Leader: Selwyn June

Ph: 027 4978151

Grade: M

Email: selwynjune@xtra.co.nz

Transport: Senior Member \$30-35

Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3261

Te Rereatukahia Hut

3 / 4 Oct

The plan is to climb up to the hut from the Wairakau road car park on Saturday morning, claim our bunks then explore the track heading north. We should get past Baldy and may get past Tangitu before turning back to the hut. We will judge turnaround time on our progress and daylight hours available.

Sunday we will head south along the North - South track and may get as far as the Motutapere hut before turning back and down the Tuahu track to our vehicle.

This can be considered an overnighter training event if you haven't done an overnight in a hut before. The hut needs to be booked so I will close bookings as I see the hut booking system fill up. Please book early if you are interested.

Leader: John McArthur

Ph: 021 2889641

Grade: M

Email: mcarthur@outlook.co.nz

Transport: Senior Member \$ \$30-35

Senior non-member: Senior rate +\$10

Trip 3262**Okahukura baiting****9-11 Oct**

Having given the rats in the Okahukura valley of North Pureora forest a meal or 2 in September, it is time to give them some more tasty treats in case their buffet has run out of stock. We really would love to absolutely eliminate all the rats in the valley. We will follow the same procedure as the September visit but this time your pack will be much lighter. Newcomers, experienced hands, and young adults are most welcome for a great walk in a beautiful forest and a chance to hear the glorious haunting call of the kokako, along with the karearea, tomtit, kakariki and whiteheads.

Leader: Dianne & Selwyn June**Ph:** 0274978151**Grade:** E/M - M**Email:** djune@xtra.co.nz**Ph:** 07 8433066**Transport:** Senior member: \$65-75

Senior non-member Senior rate+\$10

Trip 3263**Where shall we go?****11 Oct**

At present this is a weekend with no planned destination. Do you have a good suggestion that others might like to know about and join in with. Get in contact with the club captain and put your idea to him.

Club Captain: Mike Peck**Ph:** 021 369256**Email:** mikeypeck@yahoo.com**Trip 3264****Te Tatau Pounamu wilderness****23-25 Oct**

This trip is mainly off-track in the Te Tatau-Pounamu Wilderness Area of the Tongariro National Park. We most likely will depart Hamilton late-afternoon on the Friday.

Not many people venture into this area but I have read several trip reports and seen some videos. Hence I have several options on a route which probably will be a loop to make transport logistics easy.

The majority of the area is exposed to the elements. Once in the Wilderness Area, there are no facilities and we will be camping.

Once I have finalised my route and relevant details, I will update the website and bulletin.

Leader: les Warren**Ph:** 027 8644937**Grade:** M/F**Email:** warrenlb20172025@outlook.com**Transport:** tba

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 Marion on 021 442 452.

Enjoy life – It has an expiration date

Editorial

Now that the Conservation Amendment bill and the National Conservation Policy statement submissions have been closed off I hope you have time to think about what we want for our playground in future. One of the volunteers I have been working with in Pureora Forest lately said she would like to see the day when there are no more bait stations, traps, and pest animals in our forest. Now, although they are a pest animal too, I think those pigs might be flying for quite a while yet and the volunteer's life expectancy won't be that long but I certainly agree that it would be so nice to walk through a forest that is not eaten out by pests, any number of bird species could be seen anywhere, and the odour of sweet-flowering plants is evident all year round. I'm really looking forward to having many of you join us in Pureora forest next month helping to get to that flying pig day! Your assistance in years gone by is helping to make a huge difference to the vegetation and the native wildlife – 10 years ago when the Pirongia Restoration Society began the pest control operation in the Okahukura valley we were fortunate to hear, let alone see, a kokako. Now it is usually possible for everyone to at least hear the birds, and often see them too. – That's progress and you are part of the restoration. Be proud of what you are helping to achieve and being able to do some leisurely tramping at the same time. That is, if you don't want to get back to the base in time to help scoff the treats waiting for those who have completed their assigned tasks.

And well done to those stepping up to fill in the gaps on the trip programme. There are many reasons why gaps develop but there are many more opportunities to fill them with trips to seldom-visited places. Be a leader and take others to a special place or somewhere you would like to see too.

Dianne

Presidential blog

Just a timely reminder to stay safe when out on your tramps, especially with the shorter days and cooler (freezing for some!) temperatures.

Also stay Cyber safe and be on the lookout for SPAM emails, especially from me. Over the last month several of you have received an email from me asking for help in some way, often leading to you buying something for me. These emails do not come from my email account but a made-up email including "president" in the name. Please ignore and report as SPAM.

Unfortunately, this seems to be a continuation from when our website was hacked a while ago.

Rupert

Waikato Hut

The 2026 winter season is underway at Whakapapa, with the last storm cycle delivering snow down to Whakapapa village. The Gondola opened to skiers on 27th July. The mountain looks great, looking forward to a great week up here.

Waikato Ski Club members are well positioned to take advantage of on-mountain accommodation, offering convenient ski-in/ski-out access, a relaxed lodge environment, and excellent value for families and groups. Members are encouraged to book early, particularly for school holidays and key event weekends.

A full calendar of activity is planned across the maunga, including early-season Snowland experiences, mid-winter competitions such as the Rail Jam and regional



You cant beat a view up the mountain like this one from our balcony!

photo Ashley Hoskin

champs, and spring highlights like the Adaptive Festival and Pond Skim. These events provide good opportunities to plan lodge stays, whether for participation or simply enjoying the atmosphere. Whakapapa continues to offer a well-rounded ski experience, with extensive terrain, strong beginner facilities, and increasing focus on family-friendly and first-time snow experiences.

The seasonal forecast indicates a transition toward El Niño conditions, with a higher likelihood of colder south-westerly weather patterns through August. This suggests improving snow conditions in the core winter period, making mid-season the best opportunity for consistent skiing.

Overall, the combination of a full events programme, improving seasonal outlook, and the unique on-mountain lodge experience positions 2026 as an excellent year.

Hut bookings can be made using the sirvoy booking system: <https://b9c5011ab7bb99eb.sirvoy.me/>

All Club members can use the club code, SBENDS26, which is valid for the Winter 2026. The **winter hut rates** 1st July to 30th October are as follows: Adult \$40 and Child \$25. Non-members Adult \$60 Child \$35.

Trip Reports

Trip 3245

Trip leader training

13/14 Jun

The course went over 2 days, with the theory at the Kaueranga Valley DoC AV room and the practical at the carpark to the Pinnacles with some off track exploring. We had a mix of old and new speakers with Les starting off the practical set up, to lead a group into the bush. My old leadership slides.



Mike explaining about clothing used in a variety of climates and what he takes on a tramp. Brenda really got them going with well-prepared slides on how to use NZ Topo and the windy app.



Leadership group and fun times photos by Allan Wickens

Allan set up some very good practical exercises to help with decision making on a tramp and what to do. We received very good feedback and the participants were wanting our material to revise.

The next day Brenda went through with us on how to use NZ Topo and navigate in the carpark. Power pole to power pole. Then we went up the track towards the Pinnacles to go off track, and find an old track to a dam. After a couple of investigations into the bush Allan managed to find the old track. Overgrown but discernible. We managed to get to one of the large power transformers but not to the dam. We had 10 participants and 5 leaders helping with the course. Scribe Judith Bogle.

Trip 3248

Karangahake Summit walk

5 July



All stand to attention at the top please

Photo by Cathy Dickson

Our day club trip to Karangahake Summit was a rewarding day out, with a steady climb up the Scotsman's valley through regenerating native forest. The track was muddy in places, but not nearly as bad as we had expected. The cloudy weather and mist meant most of the views from the summit were hidden, although we did get occasional glimpses of the countryside below as the cloud lifted. We enjoyed lunch at the summit before heading back down. The peaceful bush and cool conditions made for pleasant walking, and it was great to meet and get to know some new walkers joining the day club. A rewarding tramp despite the weather.

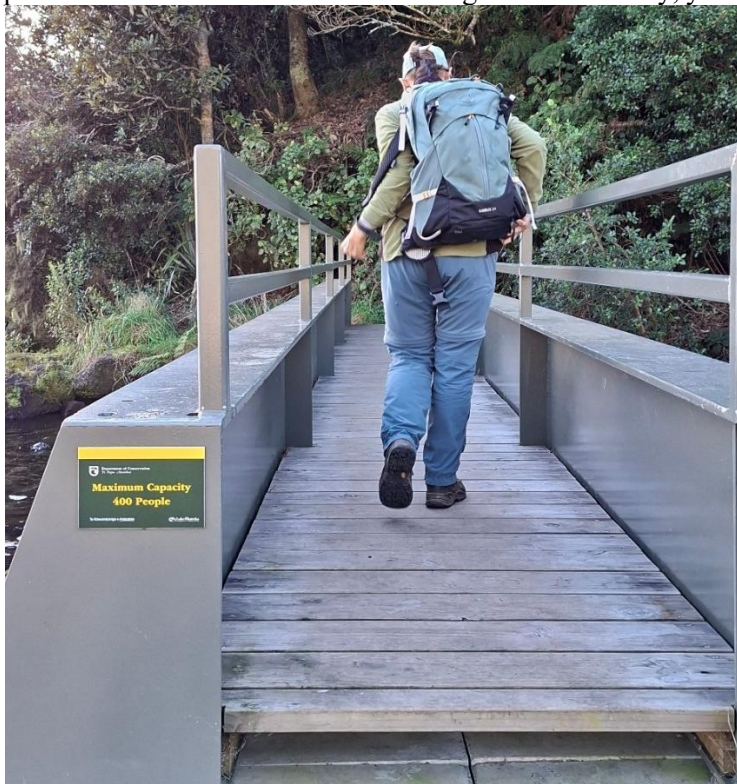
Trip 3250

Lake Okareka circuit

19 July

A group of 12 keen members ventured to Rotorua to explore a new walk by the Club around Lake Okareka. We had another wonderful day for walking with the weather

gods on our side, yet again. There are a number of places to start the walk but we started and finished at Boyes Beach Carpark. The first 40min was along streets and a road to the start of Okareka Walkway. This section of our walk was on a well-graded path for the next 3km. Soon after starting on the Walkway, you come to a wetland



area and a viewing building. We continued on to a shelter where we stopped for an early lunch. Afterwards we continued towards the bush section. At the foot of the hill and bush section, we crossed a very sturdy bridge with a sign saying, "400 people only"!

. Where will all these people stand?

Photo by Jean Wilson

After the bush section we came out at the Lake Okareka Camping area and continued on another well-graded path back to the carpark. We did take a short side-track to a lookout point over the Lake.

The group was: Les (Leader and scribe), Penny, Jim, Julia, Marcia, Peter, Jean, John, Sandra, Beck, Christine and Bea.

Trip

Matariki on Ruapehu

10-12 July

We set off along the well-formed boardwalk, winding our way through golden tussock grasses beneath the towering presence of Mt Ngāuruhoe. The mountain seemed to dominate the landscape, standing proudly above us in all its volcanic splendour. Although a cool breeze kept the temperature down, the magnificent scenery more than made up for it, and spirits remained high.

One of the day's memorable moments came as we crossed the frozen Waihothonu

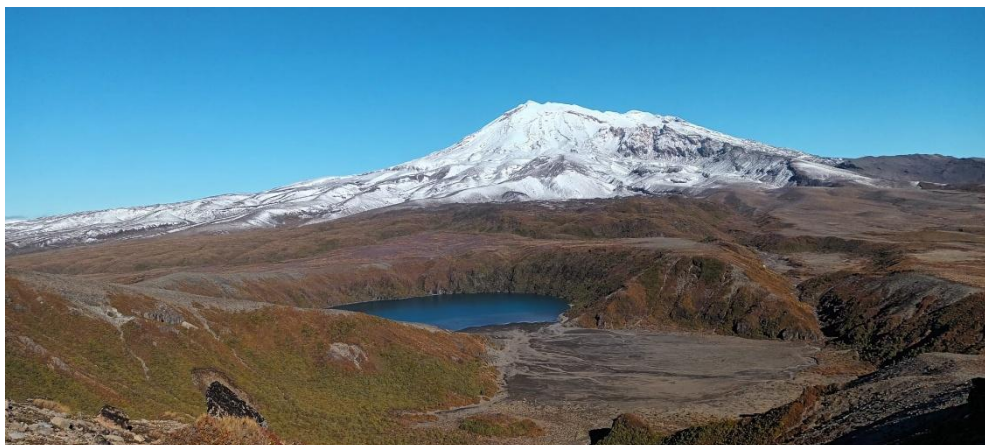
Stream. There was something deeply satisfying about hearing our boots crunch through the ice while carefully planting our poles, feeling for the flowing water beneath before committing each step. It was a simple moment, yet one that reminded us we were truly in an alpine environment.

With Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngaruahoe beyond to one side and the snow-covered slopes of Mt Ruapehu gleaming in the distance, every direction offered another breathtaking view. Eventually we arrived at Lower Tama Lake.



Upper Tama Lake trampers

Photo by Mana Angane



Tama Lake

Photo by Mana Angane

Nothing quite prepares you for that first glimpse. The water was an extraordinary shade of blue, almost unreal, resting peacefully within the ancient volcanic crater. Standing there, it was easy to appreciate the immense forces that created this remarkable landscape thousands of years ago.

Our group, naturally spread out along the track by this stage, gathered together beneath a small earth bank where we found shelter from the wind and warmth from the afternoon sun. Lunch was enjoyed quickly—there was still another destination calling.

The climb to Upper Tama Lake certainly made us earn the view! The steep ascent tested both lungs and legs, and I couldn't help wishing I'd shown a little more restraint with my lunch. But every step through the loose gravel was rewarded many times over.

As we climbed higher, Mt Ngāuruhoe seemed almost close enough to touch. It stood before us with incredible presence and quiet power—a mountain that commands both admiration and respect. It is impossible not to stop and simply stare.

Then came the part of the day that made this trip truly special.

Under David's guidance we left the formed track and ventured into the backcountry, crossing the saddle to circumnavigate the Tama Lakes from the eastern side. It is a route few visitors ever experience.

Looking down, Lower Tama Lake stretched out beneath us while hidden behind Upper Tama Lake lay another frozen tarn, tucked quietly under the watchful slopes of Mt Ngāuruhoe. Beyond, the Kaimanawa Range shimmered beneath a blanket of fresh snow. It was one of those rare moments where everything simply felt right. There we stood, surrounded by tussock, volcanic rock and towering peaks, in a valley encircled by active volcanoes. The sun shone from a cloudless sky, snow sparkled across the mountains, and there wasn't a place any of us would rather have been.

Our hearts were full.

Eventually we rejoined the main track and made our way back, arriving at the hut just as daylight was fading. What a welcome sight.

The warmth of the fire, the comforting smell of the hut and the cheerful conversations that filled the room were the perfect ending to an unforgettable day. Everywhere you looked there were smiling faces, everyone reliving favourite moments from our adventure.

Allan was waiting for us all and expecting the hut to be buzzing with everybody sharing their days adventures! And he could not be more correct!!!

Days like this remind me why I love tramping.

It's not just about reaching the destination. It's about sharing the journey with great people, discovering places that take your breath away, and returning home with memories that will stay with you long after your boots have dried.

Thank you, Brenda

From the committee table:

New Members: Welcome to Inigo Alemany and welcome back to David Hintz.

Resignations: Nil

Membership: The club has 198 tramping members.

From the club captain: If you are **picking up a club PLB** from Bivouac please ensure the staff are aware that you are a club member as they get the device from a different box to those the business hires out to the general public – who have to pay.

From the committee: Trailer storage handy to Hamilton has been found. If you would like to use the trailer, please contact Allan Wickens (school caretaker) for details. AllanWickens@hotmail.com or phone/text 027 9509546 .

From the bulletin distributor: FMC Concession cards will be available at club nights, along with the latest issue of Backcountry magazine. Alternatively, if you receive a Bulletin by mail, you should get a card in the next issue; or contact us via waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com to arrange a pickup.

Snippets



The club trailer is available for hire to club members for a reasonable rate. It is kept at a location very handy to Hamilton city.

Please contact Allan Wickens for more details.
Ph; 027 9509546 or email:
allanwickens@hotmail.com

➤ The **recent tramping gear auction** hosted by the Hamilton Tramping Club in aid of the POET (Perry Outdoor Education Trust) raised \$1800 (up from \$1200 raised 3 years ago). Organiser Lorna Gribble says: “ Thank you, thank you, thank you to the donors. A lot of gear was dropped off but names of donors were not noted. I know quite a few were Waikato Tramping Club members. I think with such a good clean out we will have to wait 5 years for another cohort of trampers to realise that they have been hoarding gear they aren't using. I hope the donors are now enjoying an excuse to replace or just enjoying a bit more room in the tramping storage area.”

➤ For those people who would like to indulge in a little further discovery, Stephen Prendergasts’ **adventures in Africa** the full trip write up on a day-by-day

basis is accessible on the findpenguins travel blog site.

<https://findpenguins.com/10otte7maep02/trip/joburg-to-nairobi>. If you want a video experience then the Wheels to Wander YouTube videos will provide that.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4keFS-rnJiM>

➤ Club member Les Warren has created a **YouTube channel** - Wilderness Hiking. Currently, the best way to view the videos is by the following search: Google search "Wilderness Hiking" and the channel address will show near the top of the page. Click on YouTube site, In the top "search box" type in "Back Valley Hut and Out", then look for this video with a "W in a purple circle, then click on this "W in a circle" which will take you to my Channel and showing five videos. Any nice feedback is welcome. Thanks, Les Warren.

....from DoC.....

➤ DoC is working with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), the Ministry of Health and Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora as part of a One Health approach to prepare for **H5N1** in New Zealand. Vaccination will begin with these five birds – kākāpō, takahē, tchūriwat'/tūturuatu/shore plover, kakī/black stilt and kākārīki karaka/orange-fronted parakeet. Please report groups of three or more sick or dead birds, marine mammals or other wildlife to the MPI exotic pest and disease hotline: 0800 80 99 66. But don't let your pets or yourself come in contact with the birds as the disease may be able to cross those barriers from birds to animals. Don't take sick birds to DoC offices or wildlife rehabilitation centres, and keep dogs away from dead wildlife.

➤ DoC's systems for **counting visitors and activities** at 700 sites on public conservation land are old and plagued by delays and data loss. These counters are mostly installed underground and have to be checked manually by staff to download the data. Now the department is asking companies what type of automated system it could replace it with using AI and cameras. DoC wants a new system to help it analyse visitors' activities, be easy to install and reliable in tough environments, and not be too visually obtrusive. Better information on visitor numbers and patterns would help decide where facilities, funding and staff were most needed. The International Visitor Levy will be used to fund the new technology. Source: RadioNZ 8 Aug 2026

➤ **Wairere Falls Track section remains closed.** DoC website notice: "The gorge section of the Wairere Falls Track is closed due to safety concerns. A large, unstable boulder is threatening a key structure on the track and there is ongoing land movement in the area. Remedial work is expected to commence in the coming months. Last reviewed on 3 July 2026".

Stuff report 1 May 2026: The track will need at least \$150,000 in repairs, DoC

estimates. The track has been closed since last June following the discovery of a 3m-wide boulder which was unstable and a threat to users. The Waikato Times previously reported that people are still using the track. The estimate, according to DoC, includes costs to date and work to come, adding that the complex nature of the project paired with the difficult location makes it a "very rough estimate". Currently DoC's main objective is stabilising the boulder and ensuring a "safer and significantly improved experience for visitors," according to senior ranger heritage and visitors Matiu McQueen. Designs are progressing through to standard engineering review processes, he added, with extra technical detail to be worked through before a final decision. "While an exact reopening date has not yet been confirmed we expect the track will remain closed for a further six months or more. We recognise how popular this track is, and that's why we are taking the time to get the work right," he said. Some believe the chain is being dragged, especially for a hotspot which attracts 40,000 visitors a year. Matamata-Piako District Council Mayor Ash Tanner said it's a major asset loss for both the tourism sector as well as the local community, pointing to how the district council invested "a lot of money" into the track's infrastructure, including the carpark and toilets.

➤ A sighting of a **young kiwi** at Nga Rooto-o-Rangataua is being recognised as an exciting breakthrough – the first kiwi herd of at Rangatauanui. The 7-9 month old kiwi ran across the track at Lakes Reserve in **Ohakune**. DoC Save the Kiwi(StK) and Ngati Rangi have been leading kiwi restoration at Karioi Rahu and this milestone reflects the efforts since 1995 of local volunteer trappers, PF Ohakune, and the community of Puketawa and Slip tracks. Recently an adult male kiwi was also heard on Te Ara Mangawhero just off Mountain road. As the birds are very susceptible to harm, dog owners are encouraged to have their animals kiwi-avoidance trained before taking them into kiwi areas. This is available from StK and DoC.

➤ Two of New Zealand's **most threatened bird species** have been recognised in a global effort to bring 100 of the world's endangered species back from the brink of extinction. The kākāpō and the Chatham Island tāiko were named in the newly-launched Phoenix Species Project, the single largest philanthropic initiative dedicated to recovering critically endangered species across the world. DoC Deputy Director General Public Affairs Sia Aston says the recognition of these species is an investment in New Zealand's nature. "Support from the Phoenix Species Project will help make tangible gains for not just the kākāpō and tāiko, but the wider ecosystems they inhabit. Support for the individual species is an investment in nature; a species like kākāpō can only survive when the land, the forests and the wider ecosystem are thriving. Work to restore kākāpō lifts the health of every native species they live alongside." The project is a joint initiative from Re:wild and the Bezos Earth Fund, with

support from Leonardo DiCaprio, Age of Union, and the Todd Graves Family Foundation. It's pledged \$200 million towards supporting local organisations, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, scientists, and conservationists around the world do the work to restore threatened species. Ngāi Tahu Kākāpō Recovery Group representative Tāne Davis welcomes the additional support. "We know that the kākāpō has endeared itself to many people across the world so it is heartening to have this international initiative contributing to our efforts to restore and preserve the habitat, and strengthen the mauri (life force) of this taonga (treasured) species."

➤ Two native species found nowhere else on Earth are getting help to survive, Conservation Minister Tama Potaka says. **Hamilton's frog** and the **white-bellied skink** are both at serious risk of extinction. These species are part of what makes New Zealand special. Once they are gone, they are gone for good," Mr Potaka says. The funding will help create safe backup populations for both species. 200 Hamilton's frogs will be moved into new breeding facilities at Auckland Zoo and Orana Wildlife Park. The frog's main wild population has fallen by about 80 per cent. "This work will help breed more froglets and support the recovery of Hamilton's frogs in the wild." The white-bellied skink may have fewer than 100 left in the wild. Funding will establish a protected population at Orana Wildlife Park.

Hamilton's Frog:



- Hamilton's frog is classified as Threatened – Nationally Critical.
- It is the largest native frog, growing up to 5cm, and is nocturnal. It inhabits native forest (rather than ponds like your 'typical' frog).
- It does not croak, and breeds on land. Eggs are laid under cover. Male

frogs guard eggs and young froglets during their development. They can live for up to 45 years.

- The only remaining natural wild populations are found on two islands in the Marlborough Sounds: Te Pākeka/Maud Island and Takapourewa (Stephen's Island).
- The species has been successfully translocated to Motuara Island, Zealandia sanctuary and Nukuwaiata (Chetwode Islands).
- There are currently a small number of frogs in captivity at Orana Wildlife Park.

White-bellied skink



- The white-bellied skink is one of New Zealand's rarest lizards.
- It is classified as Threatened – Nationally Critical.
- The species is found in Ō Tū Wharekai/Ashburton Lakes Basin, Canterbury.
- They live in the steep screes that are common in the Canterbury high country and can be up to 9cm long.
- Despite decades of surveys, only three tiny wild populations of the species have been located.
- Predator control is carried out to protect the species' main remaining population and improve its chances of survival.
- The long-term goal of the white-bellied skink recovery work is to return captive-bred skinks to protected habitat within their natural range.

➤ A smoother Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono Great Ride experience is coming for visitors, with 15 new structures – bridges and boardwalks – on the way for the **Mangapurua and Kaiwhakauka** sections along the Whanganui river. More news on this next month or have a read of the story on the DoC website.

The real secret of happiness is not what you have or what you receive, it's what you share.



A glorious day in the offing Photo by Mana Angane

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Official Bulletin of

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