

Abel Tasman Coast TRACK GUIDE



Duration: 3–5 days
Distance: 60 km (one way)



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

For in-depth local knowledge, visit:

Nelson Visitor Centre
79 Trafalgar Street, Nelson 7010
Phone: +64 3 546 8210
Email: nmbookings@doc.govt.nz
www.doc.govt.nz/great-walks

Share your experience – facebook.com/docgovtnz

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Care for the Abel Tasman Coast Track



Protect nature

Don't feed weka – even if they ask. Feeding wildlife is harmful to them. Follow any rules restricting fires, vehicles or boats. No dogs or unpermitted drones allowed.



Keep New Zealand clean

Take all rubbish with you. Use toilets where provided. You can find them at all huts, campsites and shelters.



Be prepared

Stay safe in the outdoors by planning and preparing for your trip. Share your plans and take a distress beacon.



Show respect

Respect others, respect culture. Keep common areas clean and tidy. Minimise noise while others are sleeping.

Welcome to the Abel Tasman Coast Track, one of ten unforgettable journeys.

Blessed with a mild climate, golden beaches and lush coastal native bush, the Abel Tasman Coast Track has it all. Choose to hike the whole track, water taxi between different locations or kayak from Mārahau to campsites in the southern section of the track at any time of the year.

Te Puketea Bay, Photo: Darryl Wilson



Plants and wildlife

Bellbird/korimako are easily recognised by their melodious song, described as sounding 'like small bells exquisitely tuned'. Well camouflaged, they are usually heard before they are seen. Females are dull olive-brown with a pale yellow cheek stripe. Males are olive green with black outer wing and tail feathers.



Photo: Shellee Evans

Fantail/pīwakawaka are known for their friendly 'cheet cheet' calls and energetic flying antics. Easily recognised by their long tail which opens to a fan, they have a small head and bill and two colour forms, pied or black. Their broad tail allows them to change direction quickly while hunting insects.



Photo: Manaaki Barnett

Wood pigeon/kererū are large birds with green and bronze feathers on their heads and a smart white vest. The noisy beat of their wings is a distinctive sound in our forests. Kererū are one of the few birds that disperse large fruit and their disappearance would be a disaster for our native forests.



Photo: DOC

Shags/kawau – spotted shags are medium-sized, grey-blue marine birds with a long, slender bill and yellow-orange feet. They are often seen on rocky headlands. Pied shags are black and white and can often be seen standing on beaches near the tide mark.



Photo: Shellee Evans

Fur seals/kekeno are found along the coast of the park, particularly on the more remote granite headlands and boulder beaches. Seals are quite confident mammals but *visitors must stay at least 20m away*. Human activities are the cause of most threats to kekeno today.

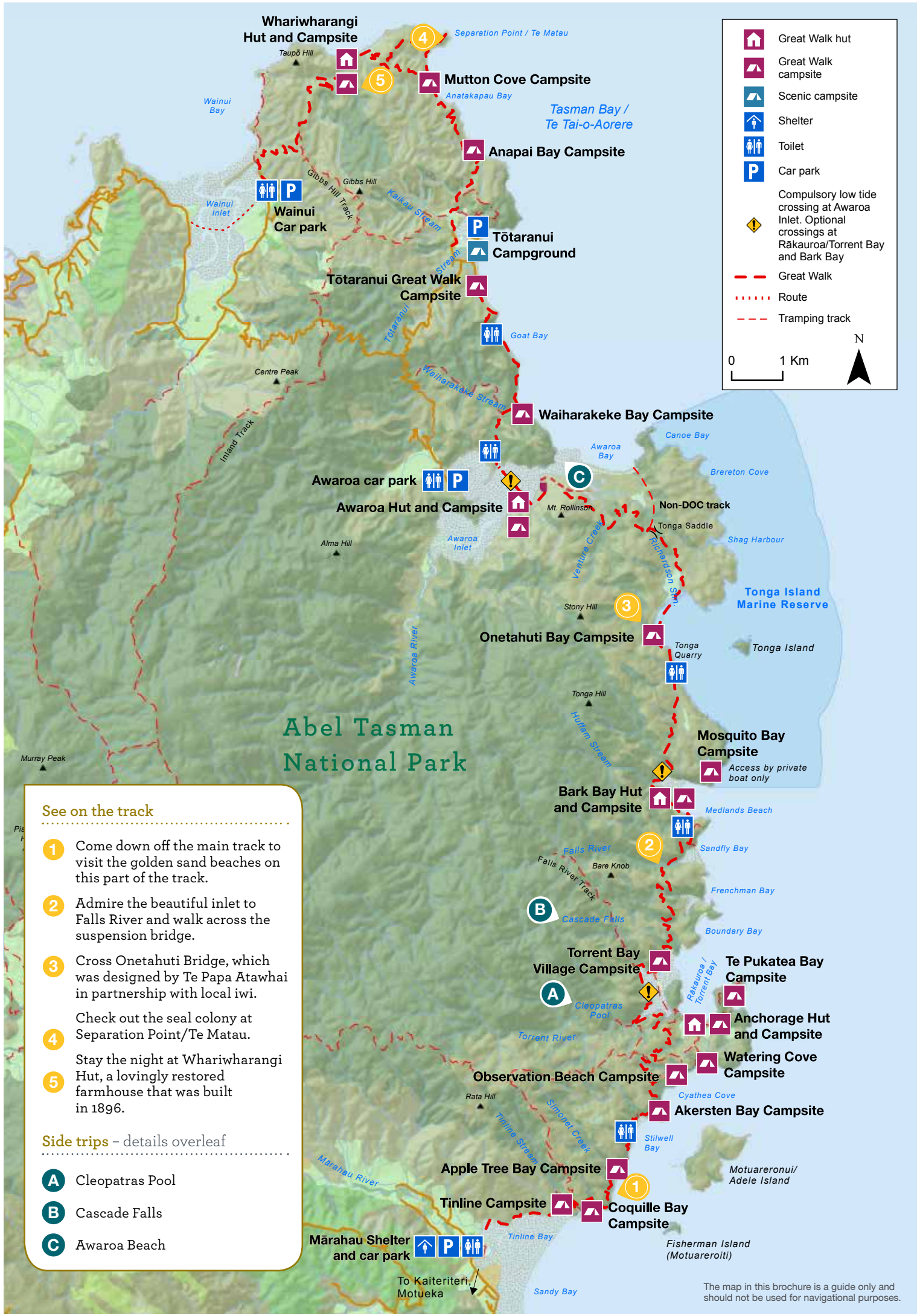


Photo: Tony Doy

Large numbers of **kākā** used to be present in the Abel Tasman National Park until introduced predators devastated these large forest-dwelling parrots. DOC and Project Janszoon released kākā back to the Abel Tasman coast in 2019. If you see one, please don't feed it – human food can harm or kill kākā.



Photo: Sabine Bernert



	Great Walk hut
	Great Walk campsite
	Scenic campsite
	Shelter
	Toilet
	Car park
	Compulsory low tide crossing at Awaroa Inlet. Optional crossings at Rākaurua/Torrent Bay and Bark Bay
	Great Walk
	Route
	Tramping track

0 1 Km

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See on the track

- 1 Come down off the main track to visit the golden sand beaches on this part of the track.
- 2 Admire the beautiful inlet to Falls River and walk across the suspension bridge.
- 3 Cross Onetahuti Bridge, which was designed by Te Papa Atawhai in partnership with local iwi. Check out the seal colony at Separation Point/Te Matau.
- 4 Stay the night at Whariwharangi Hut, a lovingly restored farmhouse that was built in 1896.

Side trips – details overleaf

- A** Cleopatras Pool
- B** Cascade Falls
- C** Awaroa Beach

The map in this brochure is a guide only and should not be used for navigational purposes.

TRACK GUIDE

The track can be hiked in either direction, depending on the tidal crossing at Awaroa. Below is the 5-day track description from south to north.

The times are approximate and will vary according to your fitness, direction of travel and the weather.

Mārahau to Anchorage

4 hr, 12.4 km

You'll begin your journey crossing Mārahau estuary using the causeway. On the far side of the estuary, pass through open country to Tinline Bay. The track rounds Guilbert Point to Apple Tree Bay, then passes through beech forest with large kāmuka trees. After Yellow Point it turns inland, winding in and out of several little gullies before emerging in open country overlooking Rākauroa/Torrent Bay and the coast and islands to the north. Descend to the beautiful Anchorage Bay where there is a hut and campsite.

A Side trip – Cleopatras Pool

40 min return to Rākauroa/Torrent Bay high-tide track junction

The cool clear water of this natural rock pool makes it a beautiful swimming hole.



Photo: Nick Thompson

Anchorage to Bark Bay (Wairima)

High tide track: 4 hr, 11.5 km

Low tide crossing, Torrent Bay estuary:

3 hr, 8.4 km

From Anchorage Bay, cross a low ridge to Torrent Bay estuary.

Rākauroa/Torrent Bay estuary can be crossed within 2 hr either side of low tide, or take the all-tide track leading around it to Rākauroa/Torrent Bay. There are some private houses in Rākauroa/Torrent Bay, so keep to the public track.

At the northern end of Rākauroa/Torrent Bay beach, the track climbs steadily then sidles around two valleys and above an inlet to Falls River,

which is crossed by a 47-metre suspension bridge. Beyond the river, the track meanders through lush coastal forest before dropping back to the coast. Follow the track to the hut and campsite beside Bark Bay estuary.

Bark Bay (Wairima) to Awaroa

4 hr 30 min, 13.5 km

Cross Bark Bay (Wairima) estuary two hours on either side of low tide (check tide timetable). Alternatively, you can take a ten minute all-tide track around the edge of the estuary.

You then climb steeply to a saddle, where stands of mānuka hide the sea. The track returns to the coast at Tonga Quarry, where Tonga Island is surrounded by marine reserve. A short distance on is Onetahuti Bay. Here, a boardwalk and bridge provide an all-tide crossing. The track then leads over the forested Tonga Saddle. At the junction just beyond the saddle, you have two options. You can stay on the main track to Venture Creek, following the path up the hill to a lookout point over Awaroa Bay, before dropping down to Awaroa Campsite and Hut. Alternatively, if you need to catch a water taxi, turn right at the junction and take the non-DOC track down to the beach. At low tide, it is possible to follow the beach below the high tide mark around the inlet and wade across to Awaroa Hut and Campsite. Take care to stay below the high tide mark away from nesting birds.

B Side trip – Cascade Falls

1 hr 30 min return from Rākauroa/Torrent Bay

A beautiful waterfall hidden in native bush that is a great spot to cool off. The track is quite steep in parts but is well worth the hike!



Photo: DOC

Awaroa to Tōtaranui

2 hr 20 min, 7.1 km (tidal)

Cross Awaroa Inlet within 1 hr 30 min before and 2 hr after low tide. The estuary may be impassable following very heavy rain. It is only safe to cross the inlet in daylight and you should allow 25 min to cross. There is no alternative track around the inlet.

C Side trip – Awaroa Beach

40 min one way

Awaroa Beach is famous in New Zealand. It was bought in 2016 through a crowd-funding campaign to enable it to become public national park land.



Awaroa Beach. Photo: Hugh Mytton

From the northern side of Awaroa Inlet, the track crosses a low saddle and drops to Waiharakeke Bay. It re-enters the forest then emerges at Goat Bay. Be prepared to wait for the tide to recede before walking across the beach.

The track takes you up around an old landslide at Goat Bay and then climbs steeply to a lookout above Skinner Point before descending to Tōtaranui. Follow the road through the main campsite to the camp office.

This is the water taxi pickup point and Coast Track walkers' campsite.

Tōtaranui to Whariwharangi

3 hr 15 min, 9.8 km

Head around Tōtaranui estuary, then climb over a low saddle and wind down through lush forest to Anapai Bay. From here to Mutton Cove, sandy beaches alternate with rocky headlands of regenerating kāmuka.

Leave the coast at Mutton Cove and climb to another saddle, then descend to Whariwharangi Bay. The hut (a restored farm homestead) and campsite are just behind the beach. Add 1 hr to go via Separation Point.

Whariwharangi to Wainui

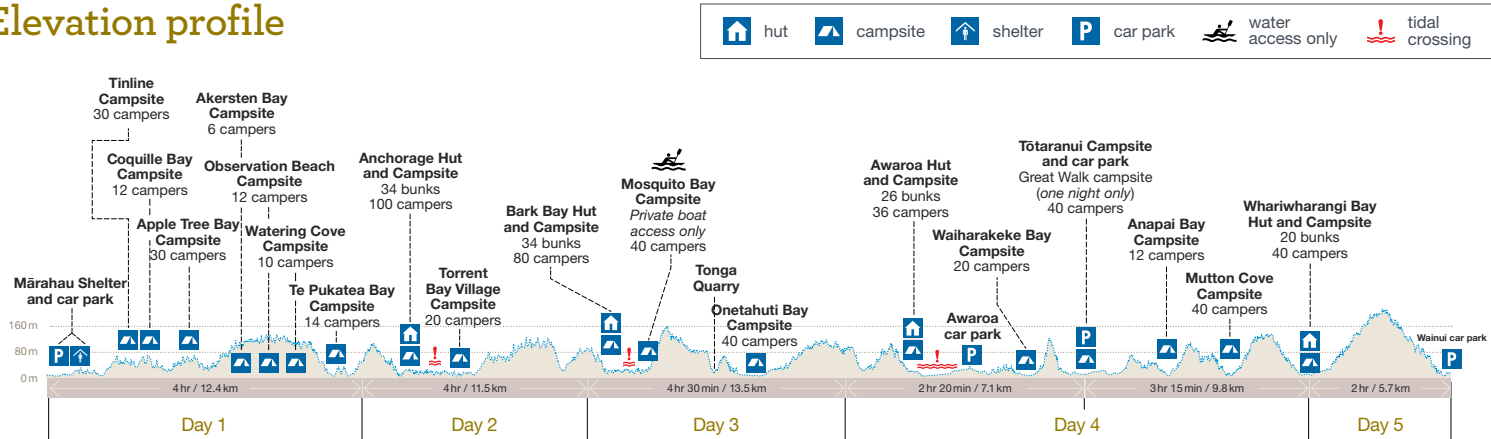
Alternative route: Whariwharangi to Tōtaranui via Gibbs Hill

Whariwharangi to Wainui: 2 hr, 5.7 km

Whariwharangi to Tōtaranui (via Gibbs Hill): 3 hr, 9 km

From Whariwharangi Hut follow a small stream, then climb out of the bay to a saddle overlooking Wainui Inlet. At this point you can either go down to the car park at Wainui or take a left turn onto the Gibbs Hill Track. This track will take you over the steep Gibbs Hill then back down to Tōtaranui. From Tōtaranui you can get a water taxi back to Mārahau.

Elevation profile





Waterfall Creek Bridge, Bark Bay. Photo: Cab Roe

Staying safe on the Abel Tasman Coast Track

TIDAL CROSSING

Awaroa Inlet is only passable at or near low tide. If you are early, wait at Pound Gully (north side) or Awaroa Hut (south side) until the water recedes. If your trip plans do not work with the tides, check out the water taxi options between Awaroa Bay and Tōtaranui before setting off. At Goat Bay, the track follows the top of the beach. A short section of the beach may be impassable at spring high tides.

BE PREPARED FOR ALL CONDITIONS

While the Abel Tasman coast is generally warm and dry in summer, it is an environment that can change quickly, so be prepared for rain, cold and windy conditions and additional tide crossings when there are coastal changes.

Heat exhaustion

This can be serious and is usually caused by physical activity in a hot environment and not drinking enough water.

- **Prevention:** carry and drink water regularly throughout your walk.
- **Watch for symptoms:** headaches, thirst, weakness, dizziness, nausea or vomiting.
- **Treatment:** move to a cool shaded area to rest, remove excess clothing and give water to drink.

Wasps and sandflies

If you are allergic to wasp stings take your medication, such as antihistamines, with you. Sandflies are tiny black insects that cause itchy bites. Bring and use insect repellent and sting cream.

In a case of an accident or a serious injury

Contact Police Search and Rescue via Department of Conservation staff or boat transport staff radios.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER HUT USERS

Be quiet when people are sleeping, don't shift others' belongings, remove all your rubbish and keep the hut clean and tidy. For more information, read the Hut Users Code or ask a ranger.

ABEL TASMAN VISITOR APP

Download the free Abel Tasman visitor app from the App or Google Play stores. This virtual visitor centre provides information for walking or kayaking in the park. It has a map with geo-location and works offline.



TIDAL INFORMATION

REMEMBER

- There are no cooking facilities.
- There is a risk of giardia (a food- and water-borne disease) if you drink untreated water. Be prepared to boil, treat or filter drinking water if the DOC water filter systems are not working correctly.
- There is a filtered water site at Tōtaranui campsite.
- Toilets are available at all huts, campsites and car parks, and at Goat Bay, Pound Gully, Tonga Quarry, Medlands and Stilwell Bay.
- Take all rubbish away with you.
- Mosquito Bay can only be accessed by private boats. There is no track nor water taxi to Mosquito Bay from the main Abel Tasman Coast Track. Do not book unless you have arranged boat access first. There is no water taxi service to this campsite and no kayaks for hire from other campsites.
- A water taxi service is provided by private companies. They do not go north of Totaranui. Refer to your water taxi provider for their pick up/drop off locations and timetable. Transfers to/from Nelson can be booked.