

## Track guide

# PAPAROA TRACK

**Duration:** 3–4 days hiking  
2 days mountain biking  
**Distance:** 55.1 km hiking (one way)  
56.2 km mountain biking (one way)

**Great Walks season:**  
All year

# PIKE29 MEMORIAL TRACK

**Duration:** Uphill: 5–6 hr hiking  
3 hr 30 min – 4 hr mountain biking  
Downhill: 3 hr 30 min – 4 hr 30 min hiking  
1–2 hr mountain biking  
**Distance:** 11.6 km (one way)



Department of Conservation  
Te Papa Atawhai

### For in-depth local knowledge, visit:

Paparoa National Park Visitor Centre  
4294 Coast Road, Punakaiki, RD 1, Runanga 7873  
Phone: +64 3 731 1895  
Email: paparoave@doc.govt.nz  
[doc.govt.nz/great-walks](https://doc.govt.nz/great-walks)

Share your experience – [facebook.com/docgovtnz](https://facebook.com/docgovtnz)

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## Care for Aotearoa



### Protect nature

Keep your distance and don't feed kea. 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. Walkers and mountain bikers share the track. Bikers must give way to walkers.



Te Kāwanatanga  
o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Government

## Great Walks

Photo: Jason Blair

## Welcome to the Paparoa Track, one of our unforgettable journeys.

Experience New Zealand's tenth Great Walk – a shared-use hiking and mountain biking track on the West Coast of the South Island. The track crosses the Paparoa Range, taking you on a breathtaking journey through alpine tops, limestone landscapes and thriving rainforests.

### Plants and wildlife

**Roroa/great spotted kiwi** is the largest of our kiwi species. It lives only in the higher parts of the northern South Island. You may hear kiwi calling at night around all three huts on the Paparoa Track.



Photo: Tui De Roy

**Whio/blue ducks** inhabit the forested upper catchments of clean, fast-flowing streams, including Blackball Creek. Nesting along the riverbanks, they are very vulnerable to attack by stoats and rats and are at risk of extinction.



Photo: Sabine Bernert

Enjoy the rich diversity of **alpine plants** along the tops. You'll see plenty of snow tussock – hardy alpine grasses that are extremely long-lived. Keep an eye out for the curiously shaped vegetable sheep (*Raoulia eximia*), a type of cushion plant. Its unusual shape helps it store water.



Photo: Memopob

**Powelliphanta** are not your average garden snail. These native snails are carnivorous and are some of the largest in the world. Because of predation and habitat loss they are now very rare – please help care for them by not riding the track at night.



Photo: Aeterno

The **kererū/New Zealand pigeon** can be easily identified by its white front, iridescent green/purple feathers and its noisy wingbeats. It is one of the few remaining bird species that can eat large native fruit and disperse their seeds. This makes kererū a very important bird for forest health.



Photo: Sabine Bernert

Just before Te Whare Atarau/Moonlight Tops Hut, you'll pass through a stand of **mountain neinei** (*Dracophyllum traversii*). These spectacular plants grow up to 13 metres tall and have distinctive tufts of long leaves at the end of each branch. *Dracophyllum* means dragon leaf.



Photo: Ian Dench

Listen at night for the haunting 'more pork' call of our small native owl, the **ruru/morepork**.



Photo: Sabine Bernert

Punakaiki



Visitor centre



INLAND PACK TRACK  
PAPAROA TRACK

Cave Creek Resurgence

MT BOVIS ROUTE

Mt Bovis 1252m

PAPAROA NATIONAL PARK

Waikori 659m

Lone Hand 947m

Mt Pecksniff 1306m

White Knight 1224m

Te Whare Pororari / Pororari Hut

Emergency shelter

Hawera 1190m

Ventilation shaft

Mine portal



PIKE29 MEMORIAL TRACK

Twin bridges

See on the track

- 1 Keep an eye out for the historic stonework along this section of the track.
- 2 Enjoy stunning views of Grey River / Māwheranui and the Tasman Sea.
- 3 Walk through spectacular dracophyllum forest.
- 4 Watch the sunset from Te Whare Atarau / Moonlight Tops Hut.
- 5 Enjoy the views from the top of the escarpment.
- 6 From Te Whare Pororari / Pororari Hut, see Lone Hand, a gnarled outcrop of rock near the Pororari River.
- 7 Marvel at the beautiful cliffs and rainforest of the Pororari River.

Side trips - details overleaf

- A Croesus Knob
- B Vent shaft viewpoint

Te Whare Atarau / Moonlight Tops Hut

Barrytown

CROESUS TRACK

PAPAROA TRACK

MOONLIGHT TRACK

Mt Anderson 1069m

Mt Ryall 1220m

Marconi Hill 1178m

Croesus Knob 1204m

Mt St Patrick 1082m

Ces Clark Hut



Croesus Top Hut (historic)

Stamper battery

Garden Gully Hut (historic)

Mt Leitch 1153m

Mt Watson 1102m

Blackball



Car park



Toilet



Great Walk hut



Emergency shelter



Bridge



Viewpoint



Historic place



Visitor centre



Great Walk: tramping



Great Walk: tramping, mountain biking



Easy access short walk



Short walk



Walking track



Tramping track



Route

0 1 2 3 km



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

## TRACK GUIDE

*This track guide describes a 3–4 day hike or a 2-day mountain bike ride. It is best to hike or mountain bike the Paparoa Track from south to north, starting at Smoke-ho car park near Blackball and finishing at Punakaiki.*

The track is well marked and signposted, but it is very exposed in places. The Paparoa mountain tops are an alpine environment – the weather changes very rapidly and extreme cold and heavy rain are common at any time of year. Winter conditions (May to October) make the track more challenging.

It is important to make sure you have the necessary skills, experience, fitness and equipment required before starting the track.

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

### Smoke-ho car park to Ces Clark Hut

**Hiking:** 4–5 hr, 10.3 km  
**Biking:** 2–3 hr, 10.3 km

This first section of the Paparoa Track is the historic Croesus Track. This track still retains some of its original stonework and is steep and rough in places.

The track begins at Smoke-ho car park and follows Blackball Creek. It winds through mixed podocarp and beech forest, with occasional views of the creek. Keep an eye out for the rare who/blue duck. The track then zigzags up the dividing ridge between the Blackball Creek and Roaring Meg Creek catchments.

The track then climbs more steeply into subalpine forest. On a fine day you will be rewarded with views of Lake Brunner and the Main Divide (the mountains that separate the eastern and western South Island) down to Aoraki/Mount Cook. Ces Clark Hut is on the edge of the bushline, set among low alpine scrub. It has spectacular views.

### Ces Clark Hut to Te Whare Atarau / Moonlight Tops Hut

**Hiking:** 3 hr, 9.7 km  
**Biking:** 1 hr 30 min – 2 hr 30 min, 9.7 km

Beyond Ces Clark Hut the track passes through alpine scrub and tussock. You will be rewarded with expansive views of the Grey River/Māwheranui to the east and the Tasman Sea to the west. About 30 minutes'

walk from the hut, you have the option to take a side trip to the top of Croesus Knob (see Side Trip A).

The track follows the ridge of the main Paparoa Range through open alpine vegetation above the Roaring Meg and Moonlight Creek catchments, with views of Aoraki/Mt Cook to the south on a clear day. Te Whare Atarau/Moonlight Tops Hut provides panoramic scenery, looking out across the Punakaiki River headwaters around to the escarpment, Pike Stream and north across Paparoa National Park.

### Te Whare Atarau / Moonlight Tops Hut to Te Whare Pororari / Pororari Hut

**Hiking:** 5–7 hr, 19.1 km  
**Biking:** 4–5 hr, 19.1 km

Beyond Te Whare Atarau/Moonlight Tops Hut, the open tops give way to low alpine forest. The track continues along the ridgeline of the Paparoa Range. It climbs gently around the side of Mt Anderson (1069m), then descends and leads along the top of the escarpment above Pike Stream.

After approximately 10km, the track descends from the escarpment into an area of ancient podocarp forest. It follows the ridge above Tindale Creek through stunning rainforest to Te Whare Pororari/Pororari Hut. Keep an eye out for Lone Hand, a gnarled outcrop of rock on the north side of Pororari River.

### Te Whare Pororari / Pororari Hut to Punakaiki

**Hiking:** 4–5 hr, 16 km to Pororari River car park  
**Biking:** 2 hr 30 min – 3 hr 30 min, 17.1 km to Waikori Road car park

The track descends into the upper Pororari River valley and follows the river. In some places it follows an old track which was built in 1912–1914 to establish a settlement in the valley. The track sidles along a spectacular gorge.

At the junction of the Inland Pack Track and the Paparoa Track, hikers and mountain bikers diverge. Mountain bikers follow the Inland Pack Track over a low saddle into the Punakaiki River valley to Waikori Road car park. Walkers take the Pororari River Track through the Pororari River Gorge.

#### B Side trip – Vent shaft viewpoint

**Walking:** 1 hr 30 min, 4 km return

Walk from the Paparoa Track junction to the Pike River vent shaft viewpoint, located 2km downhill on the Pike29 Memorial Track. From here there are views over the mine ventilation shaft and an interpretation panel tells the story of the Pike River mine disaster.

#### Pike29 Memorial Track

The Pike29 Memorial Track is a challenging ride that climbs 880m from the valley floor to the ridgeline where it connects with the Paparoa Track.

#### Pike29 Memorial Track car park to Paparoa Track junction

**Hiking uphill:** 5–6 hr, 11.6 km  
**Biking uphill:** 3 hr 30 min – 4 hr, 11.6 km  
**Hiking downhill:** 3 hr 30 min – 4 hr 30 min, 11.6 km  
**Biking downhill:** 1–2 hr, 11.6 km

#### Pike29 Memorial Track to Twin Bridges

**10–15 min hiking (return)**  
**Pike29 Memorial Track to Vent Shaft viewpoint**  
**Hiking:** 3 hr 30 min – 4 hr, 9.7 km  
**Biking:** 2–3 hr, 9.7 km

#### Other options include

**Smoke-ho car park to Pike29 Memorial Track car park: Full day or overnight ride**  
**Biking:** 6 hr 30 min – 9 hr 30 min, 37 km

**Te Whare Atarau / Moonlight Tops Hut to Pike29 Memorial Track car park**  
**Biking:** 3–4 hr, 17 km

#### A Side trip – Croesus Knob

**Walking:** 1 hr 10 min return

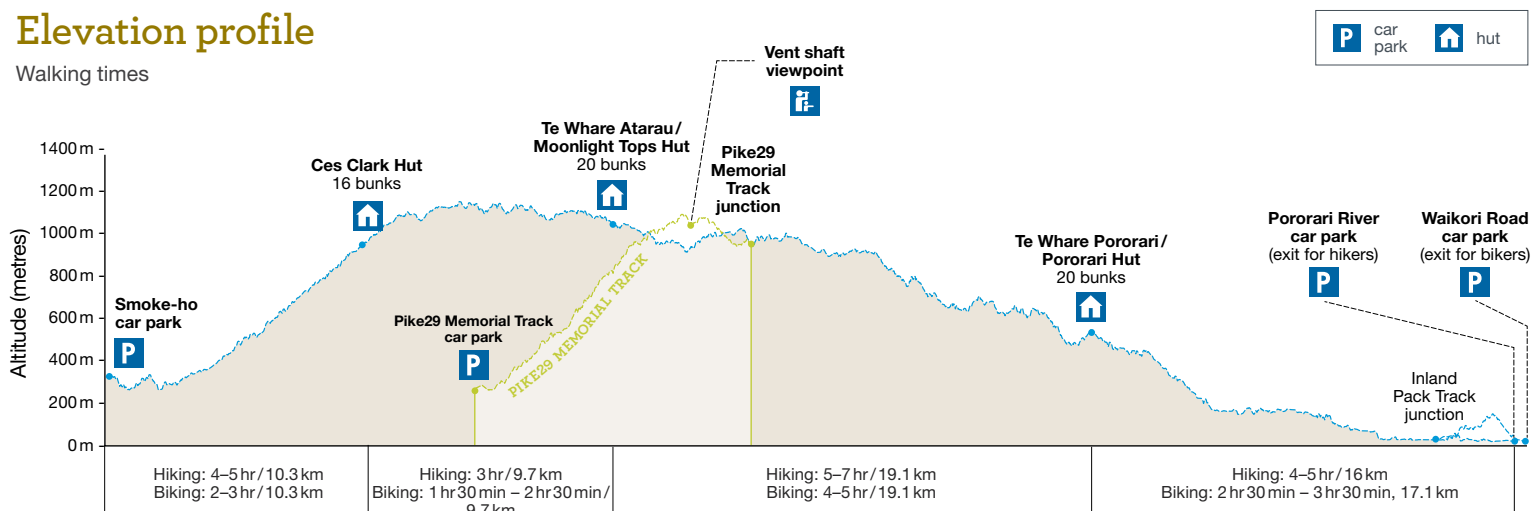
The turn-off to Croesus Knob is a 30-minute walk beyond Ces Clark Hut. From the main Paparoa Track, a rough route climbs to the top of Croesus Knob (1204m), where you will be rewarded with spectacular views down to Aoraki Mount Cook and out to the Tasman Sea. This route is not suitable for mountain bikes and is not maintained to the same standard as the main Paparoa Track.



Photo: Neil Silverwood, neilsilverwood.com

## Elevation profile

Walking times



## Track history

The Ngāti Waewae hapū or sub-tribe of Ngāi Tahu are the kaitiaki of Paparoa National Park, guardians of the area's native species and ecosystems. This kaitiaki responsibility is passed down the generations and draws on mātauranga/traditional knowledge to care for the land, rivers and species.

In the 1860s, the discovery of gold on the West Coast sparked a gold rush and a sudden influx of European settlement. Between 1881 and 1899, the Croesus Track was constructed to allow better access to mines in upper Blackball Creek. The first part of the Paparoa Track follows this route.

The section of track between Te Whare Pororari/Pororari Hut and Punakaiki also follows historical routes. The stretch between Waikori Road car park and the Pororari River follows the 1867 Inland Pack Track, once one of the main access

routes between Greymouth and Westport. The track up the Pororari River was originally built to open up the area for farming. Few farms were formed and the route languished, but it was revitalised in the 1950s for a short-lived uranium-mining venture.

On 19 November 2010, 29 men perished in an underground explosion at the Pike River Mine. The Paparoa Track Great Walk and the Pike29 Memorial Track were originally proposed by the Pike River families as a way of establishing an enduring memory to the men who perished in the mine disaster and to provide a sustainable economic alternative for the communities that had supported the families through the aftermath of the disaster. The tracks were subsequently created in partnership with the families of those 29 men, the Department of Conservation and Ngāti Waewae.

Photo: Stewart Nimmo

## Staying safe on the Paparoa Track

### STAY ON THE MARKED TRACKS

The Paparoa Track is well-marked, but if you become lost you should stop, find shelter and stay calm. Put on extra clothing to keep warm and assist rescuers should you hear them searching for you. Do not rely on your cellphone for communication as there is no coverage on most of the track.

### BE PREPARED FOR ALL CONDITIONS

Weather on the Paparoa Track is changeable. Rain, snow, ice, fog and strong winds are possible at all times of the year, especially on the exposed sections of the track. Heavy rain is common. You must be well equipped and prepared for all weather conditions and carry warm and waterproof clothing. If the weather becomes severe, stay put in a hut or turn back until conditions improve.

If you are hiking or biking the track in winter, check for snow and ice conditions before you leave and allow extra time. If in doubt, consider changing your trip to another day.

#### Hypothermia (too cold)

In cold, wet and windy conditions, hypothermia (a drop in core body temperature) can become a serious problem. From initial stages to unconsciousness can take as little as 30 minutes.

- **Prevention:** wear warm and weatherproof gear. Eat and drink regularly during your walk/ride.
- **Watch for symptoms:** people may shiver and be clumsy and confused, have slurred speech, and deny they have a problem.
- **Treatment:** immediately make or find shelter. Get the person into warm, dry clothing and put them into a sleeping bag. Give them warm, sweet drinks, watch them and seek immediate medical help.

#### Heat exhaustion

This can be serious. It happens when your body overheats and can't cool itself down.

- **Prevention:** carry and drink water regularly during your walk/ride.
- **Watch for warning signs:** headache, thirst, weakness, dizziness, nausea or vomiting.
- **Treatment:** move to a cool shaded area to rest, remove excess clothing and give water to drink.

#### Flooding and slips on the track

Heavy rain can occur with little warning and even small streams are dangerous in flood.

Some sections of track in the Pororari valley may become impassable during times of very heavy rainfall and there is danger from treefall in extreme wind events. There is also a risk of landslides. Do not attempt to travel between Te Whare Pororari/Pororari Hut and the car parks in Punakaiki if these conditions occur. Take shelter in the hut and wait until conditions improve.

#### ONGAONGA (TREE NETTLE)

Ongaonga, the giant tree nettle, may be seen along the Paparoa Track in the Pororari valley. Do not touch its leaves, as its sting is painful.

#### MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mountain biking is permitted on the track year-round during daylight hours only (from half an hour before sunrise to half an hour after sunset). Night riding is strictly prohibited, to protect nocturnal species found on the track. E-bikes are not permitted on the track. Walkers and bikers share this track – be considerate of other users.

The track is an Advanced: Grade 4 mountain bike ride. The section of track to Ces Clark Hut is a tough ride and is steep, rough and narrow in places. Make sure you have the mountain biking skills, physical ability and fitness to tackle this track. Read more at [doc.govt.nz/mtb-grades](http://doc.govt.nz/mtb-grades).

### REMEMBER

The Paparoa National Park is a taonga or treasure. Help protect this unique environment by following some simple rules.

- No drones allowed in Paparoa National Park
- No fires, except in fireplaces inside huts
- No dogs
- No camping within 500m of the track
- No e-bikes
- No hunting within 500m of the track
- Book huts before you go
- Don't feed wildlife (especially kea) – human food can kill them
- Night riding is prohibited to protect nocturnal wildlife
- Carry out all your rubbish and use the toilets provided