

Understanding annual visitor activity for year-end June 2024

Making sense of where people went and
what they did in the outdoors

October 2024



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

New Zealand Government



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This document is produced to inform DOC staff on how visitor activity is tracking around Aotearoa New Zealand. It provides insights gleaned for year-end June 2024 using most up-to-date information.

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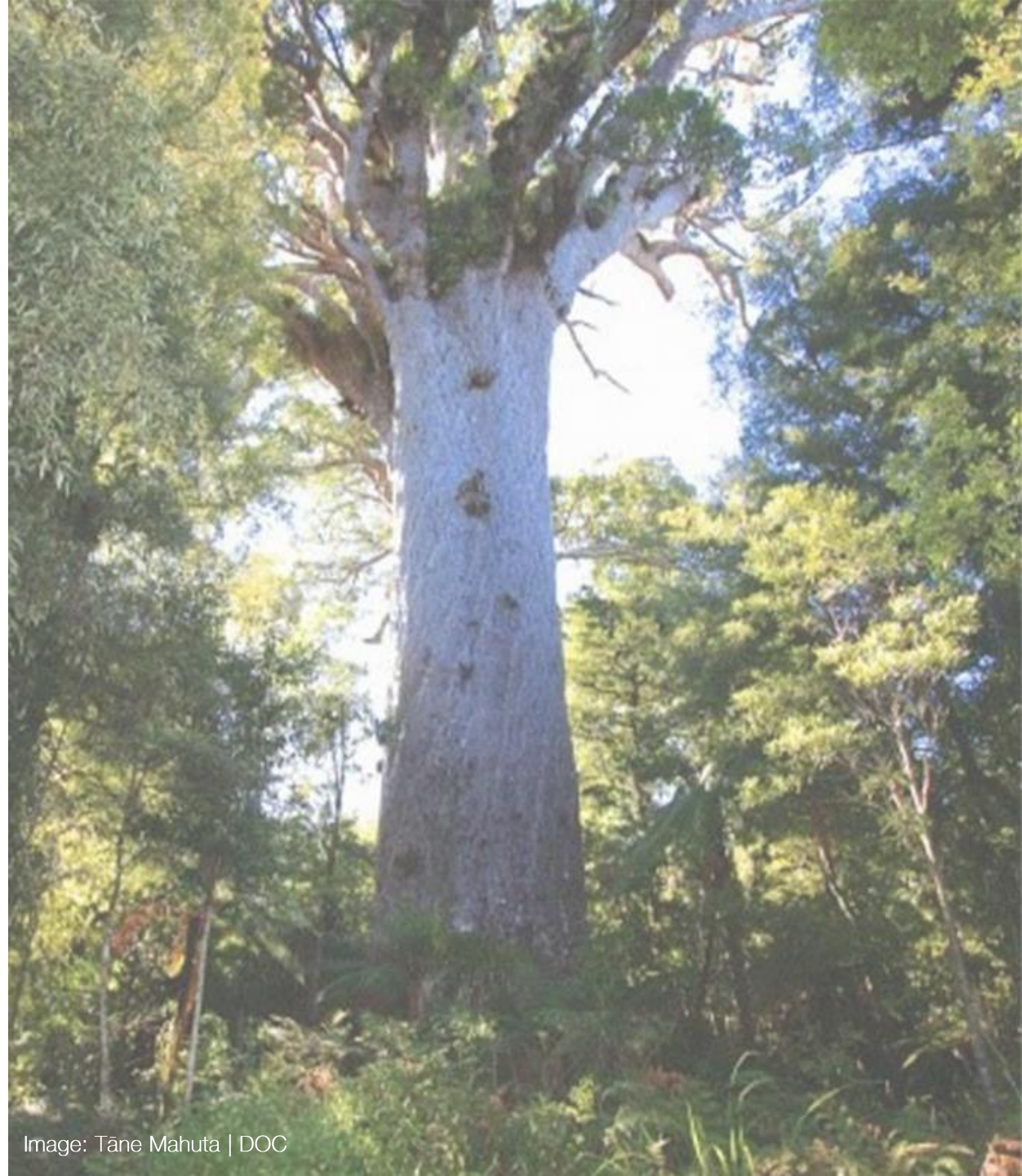


Image: Tāne Mahuta | DOC

Executive Summary

UNDERSTANDING ANNUAL VISITOR ACTIVITY for year-end June 2024

DOC is responsible for around one-third of Aotearoa New Zealand. That equates to more than 8 million hectares and includes native forests, rivers, mountains, wetlands, and other landscapes.

Short walks (less than 3 hours) remain the most popular activity for both international visitors and New Zealanders.

Some popular sites impacted by severe weather events and closures during 2023 have now reopened. More recent storms in Otago during 2024 have led to track closures for repairs.

Most of the top 10 places visited by New Zealanders are in the North Island, near coastal areas and population centres. Some are less than 2 hours from where New Zealanders live and travel.

International visitors who listed holiday/vacation as the purpose of their visit were more likely to visit a national park than those visiting friends and family or visiting for other reasons. International visitors rated our natural scenery and wilderness as very good.

Tourism continues to recover from the impact of the pandemic. As tourism volumes increase, congestion becomes an issue at popular places.

Tourism is an important source of economic growth globally. The World Travel and Tourism Council point out that tourism is deeply dependent on nature with more than 80% of the value of its goods and services relying on nature's resources and ecosystems.

The World Travel and Tourism Council also say nature-based tourism is growing in popularity and is predicted to generate USD 665 billion annually by 2030.

“ We want manuhiri to form an emotional connection with destination New Zealand and develop an understanding of Māori customs. This means they will go beyond just visiting and connect with people and place while they are here.”

Tourism New Zealand Chief Executive René de Monchy (June 2024)

“ ...when nature suffers, so does tourism..”

World Travel and Tourism Council (April 2024)

Reopening popular sites and protecting and restoring nature

DOC, in collaboration with others, has been working to reopen popular tracks impacted by severe weather events in 2023. DOC continues to focus its work on protecting and restoring vulnerable species.



Repairing and reopening popular sites following cyclone damage

DOC has gradually reopened popular visitor sites significantly damaged by cyclone events in 2023.

Hawke's Bay's Opouahi Scenic Reserve and White Pine Bush Track have reopened. DOC worked with Maungaharuru-Tangitū Trust and Environment, Conservation and Outdoor Education Trust to recover and protect kiwi and rongoā (medicinal plants) while undertaking repair work.

In Northland, Mangawhai Cliffs Walkway and Mount Manaia Track have also reopened with a focus on mitigating kauri dieback disease. Repair work for these tracks includes replacing bridges and resurfacing and rerouting tracks.



Image: Lake Opouahi | DOC

“Maungaharuru-Tangitū Trust representatives are pleased the tracks at White Pine Bush and the Opouahi Scenic Reserve are reopening... Opouahi Scenic Reserve is home to many of our indigenous plant and animal species, including rongoā and Kiwi.”

Adele Small, Maungaharuru-Tangitū Trust CEO. (August 2024)

Designing a safe and durable solution for Mautohe Cathedral Cove Track

The popular Mautohe Cathedral Cove Track has been closed to the public since February 2023, when it was extensively damaged by extreme weather events.

DOC has two work programmes underway. One programme will reinstate temporary walking access to the cove for this summer, and the other programme will determine long-term visitor access and management at the site.

Mautohe Cathedral Cove is important to the regional economy and is a significant site for Ngāti Hei with a historic pa and fortification ditches.



Image: DOC. Landslide and staircase slip at Cathedral Cove Track.



Image: DOC. DOC staff and contract arborists complete a safety brief ahead of felling hazardous trees in the reserve.

“ Finding a way to traverse the worst landslide on the (Mautohe Cathedral Cove) track has been a challenge. Undamaged sections of the track will be reconnected via a new boardwalk and steps across a section of land that is more stable than other potential reroutes. Steps at the bottom of the track, where it reaches the beach, will also be rebuilt.”

Tinaka Mearns, DOC Regional Director, Hauraki Waikato and Taranaki (July 2024)

Protecting vulnerable species and wildlife in recreational areas

There is a need to educate visitors to behave responsibly around protected species and wildlife. Tidal, wetland and forest areas are important environments for wildlife to nest, roost, breed and feed. In recent months DOC has recorded instances of dogs negatively impacting or attacking protected wildlife.

- A dabchick/weweia (threatened species) was killed by a dog at Lake Ōkāreka near Rotorua (August).
- Three kororā/little blue penguins died from suspected dog attacks at Evans Bay Marina (July).
- Two blue penguins/kororā were killed by dogs (separate incidents) in Tasman (June).



A threatened weweia/dabchick. Image: P Jansen | DOC



Two kororā sharing a burrow on Motunau island. Image: Andy Thompson | DOC

There are also instances of people behaving inappropriately around protected wildlife.

- 21 protected red-billed gulls were killed by a driver who allegedly drove their vehicle through a colony of birds on Pukehina Beach, Bay of Plenty (July).
- Five kea were hit and killed by vehicles at popular waypoints on the Milford Road (April to June).
- A man leapt from a boat near two orca in the Hauraki Gulf and attempted to touch them (May).

Connecting international visitors to nature

The June 2024 number of overseas visitor arrivals is 87% of pre-COVID-19 levels. This section contains [International Visitor Survey](#) (IVS) information covering year-end June 2024.



International visitor arrivals to NZ are 87% of pre-COVID levels

International visitor arrivals were 87% percent of pre-COVID-19 (185,300 in June 2024, compared to 213,500 in June 2019).

This translates to 3.21 million international visitor arrivals for year-end 2024, increasing by 676,000 compared to year-end 2023.

The biggest changes in arrivals were:

- China (up from 171,000 to 231,000)
- United States (up 111,000 to 378,000)
- Australia (up 65,000 to 1.30 million)
- Korea (up from 32,000 to 70,000).

International tourism is returning to Aotearoa New Zealand

International visitor arrivals to New Zealand (year-end June 2024).

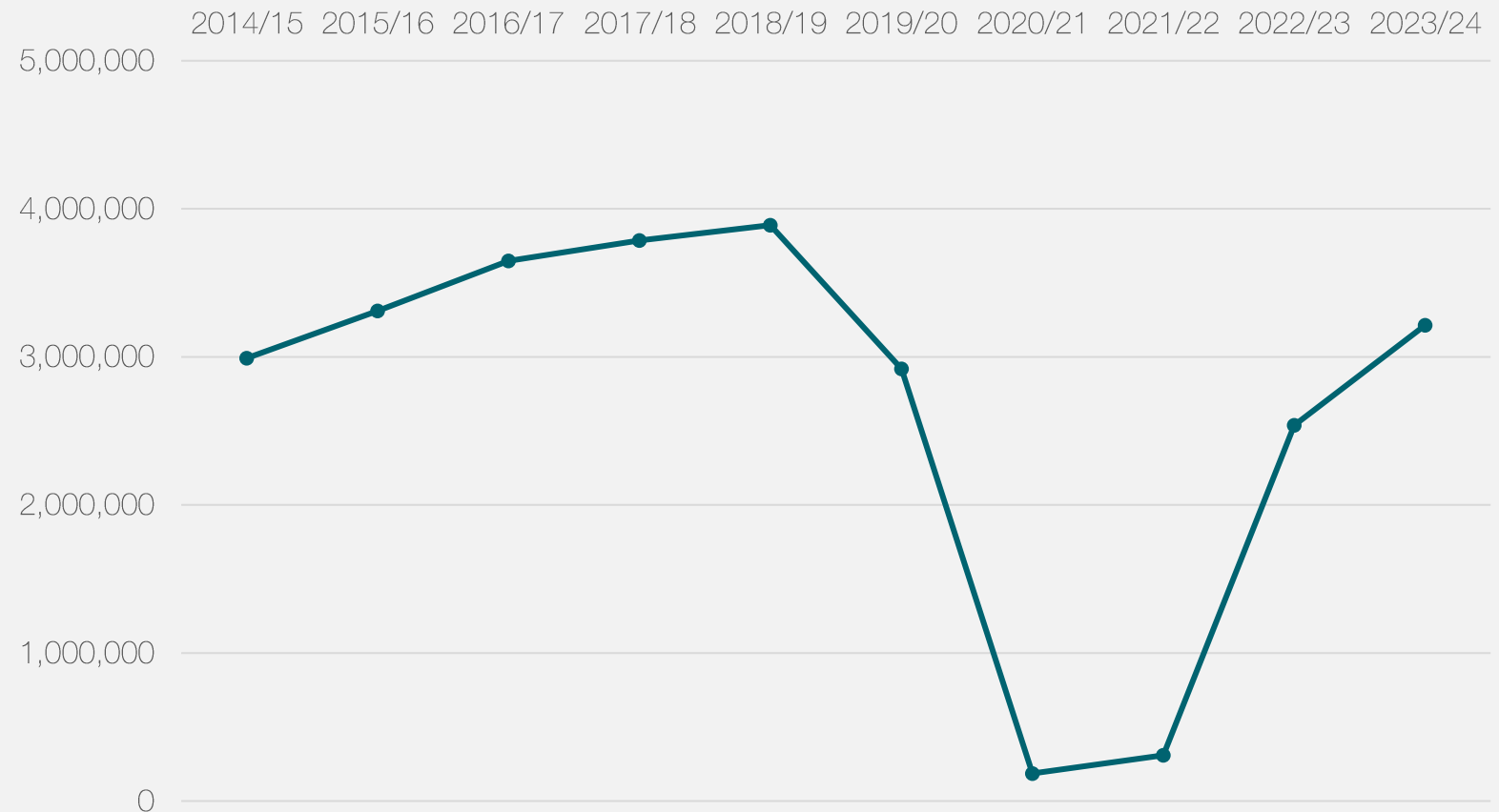


Figure 1: The number of overseas visitors entering New Zealand. Source: Statistics NZ year-end 2024 (July to June).

[International travel: June 2024 | Stats NZ](#)

Many internationals visiting New Zealand headed out into nature

International visitors who listed holiday/vacation as the purpose of their visit were more likely to visit a national park than those visiting friends and family, or visiting for other reasons (62%, 29% and 22% respectively).

Likelihood of visiting a national park also increased with duration of stay for all international visitors, especially for holiday/vacationers. Nearly 90% of holiday/vacationers staying longer than 20 days, visited a national park.

Note on IVS data: This and following graphs and percentages are based on weighted data from those who answered the activities section of the International Visitors Survey and represent an estimate of percentages of international visitors. This differs from IVS data presented last year which was calculated from unweighted data and showed percentages of IVS respondents (not of international visitors). Although total international visitors to national parks percentages were likely to be overestimated using unweighted data last year, this, and other differences between weighted and unweighted data, were not large.

Beaches and national parks were popular with internationals

Proportion of international visitors who went to places and experiences (relevant to DOC, year-end June 2024)

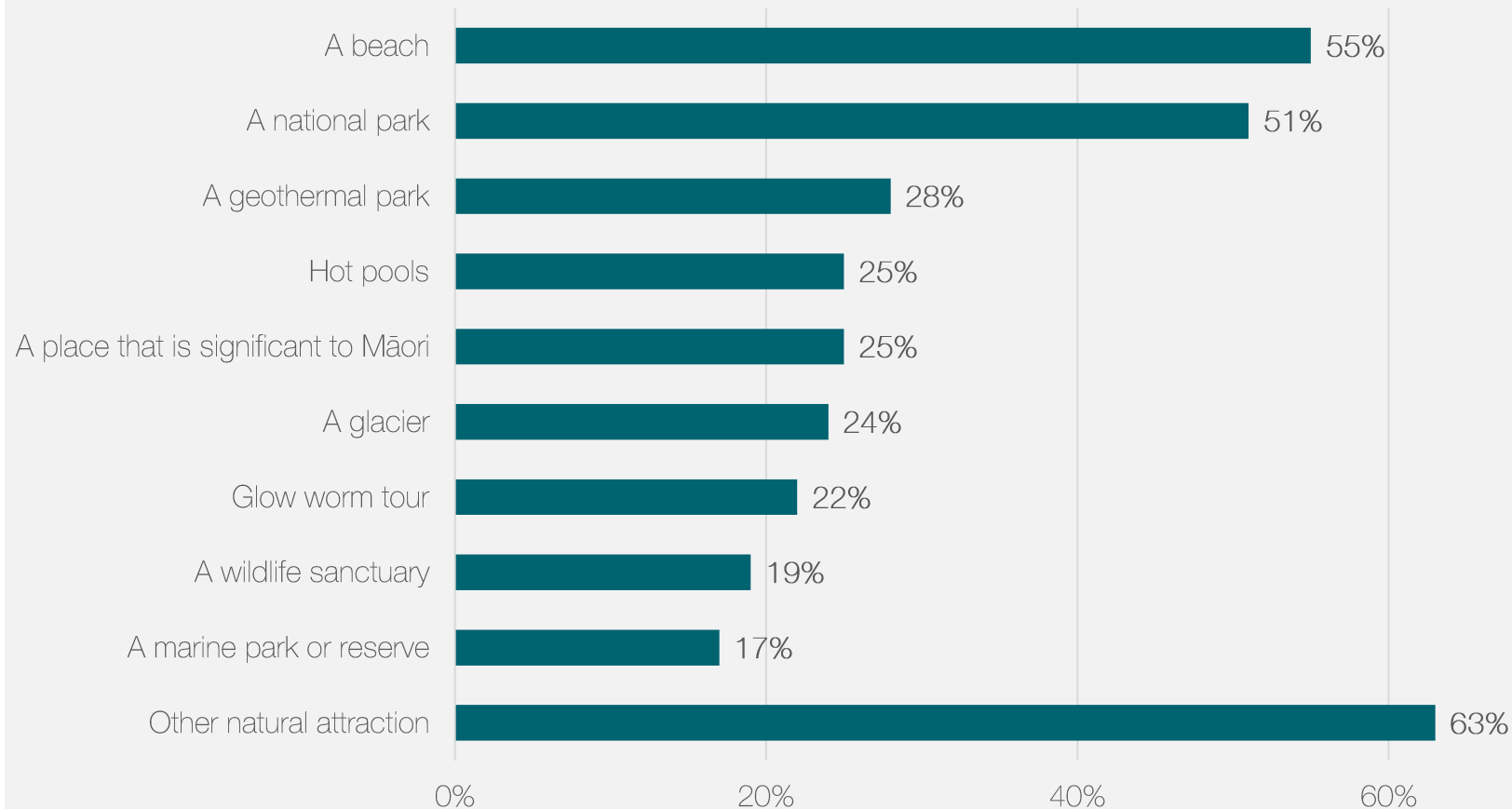


Figure 2: IVS activities data. Source: International Visitor Survey year-end 2024 (July to June).

Te Wahipounamu – South West New Zealand was most popular

Fiordland and Aoraki Mount Cook National Parks had the highest levels of self-reported international visitor activity. Other popular South Island National Parks were:

- Westland Tai Poutini: 11%
- Abel Tasman 11%
- Arthur's Pass: 10%.

Of the three North Island national parks, Tongariro National Park attracted the most (11%) international visitors.

15% of international visitors reported visiting other national parks or were unsure which national park they visited.

Fiordland and Aoraki Mount Cook national parks were popular

International visits to national parks between (year-end June 2024)

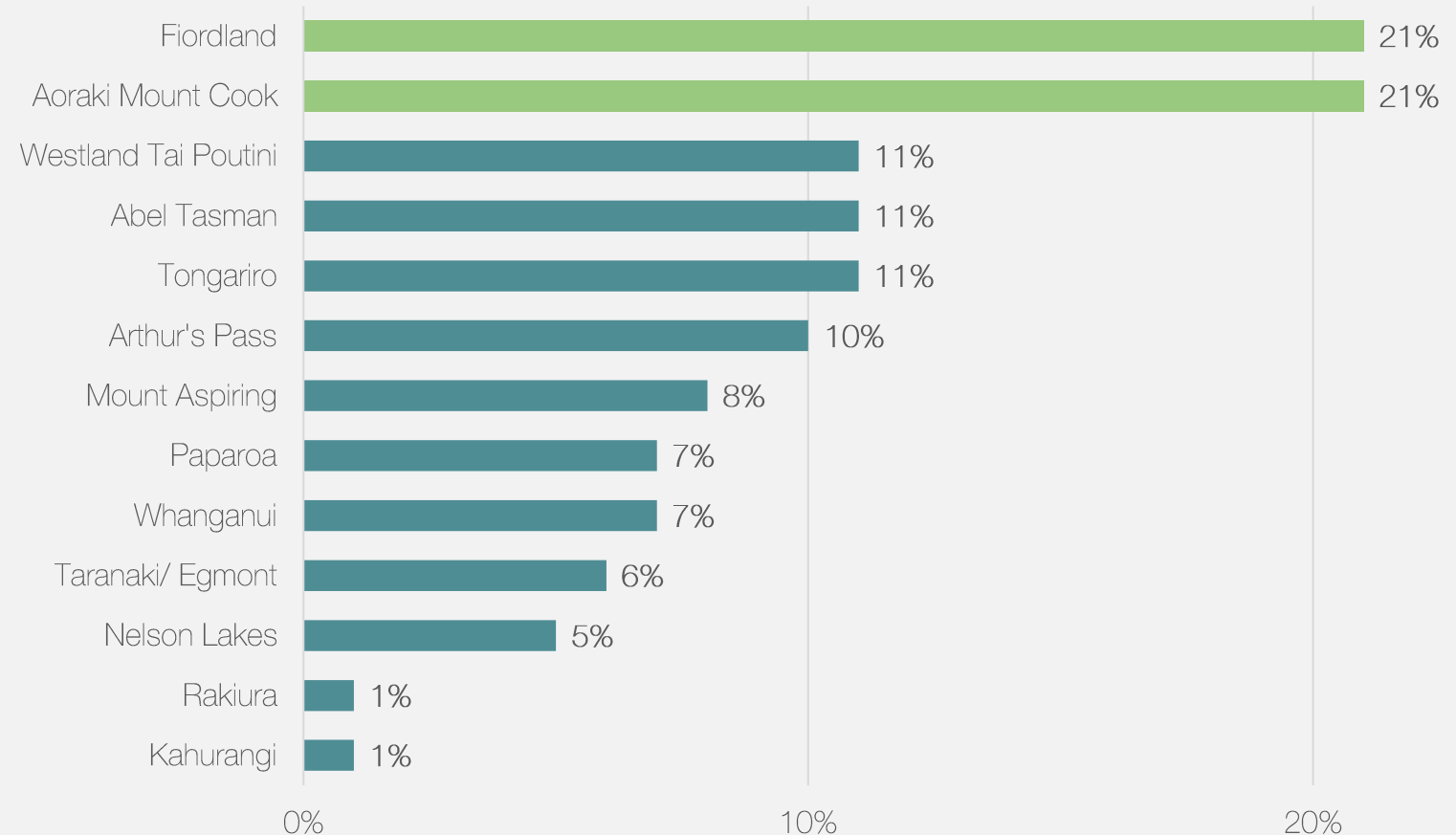


Figure 3: IVS_ACT2: While you were in New Zealand, which of these National Parks did you go to? Note: The survey tool included prominent places (e.g. Milford Sound) in addition to national park names, respondents could select multiple parks. Source: International Visitor Survey year-end 2024 (July to June).

Walking was the most popular outdoors activity for internationals

This graph shows the top outdoor activities undertaken by international visitors for year-end 2024 (July to June).

Nearly three quarters (72%) of international visitors did a walk/tramp. Walks between 30 minutes and 3 hours were most popular – see next slide for more on this.

A range of water- and equipment-based activities were undertaken by 9-19% of international visitors.

72%

Of international visitors did a walk/tramp

Many internationals undertook walks in the outdoors

Proportion of international visitors who undertook outdoor activities (year-end June 2024)

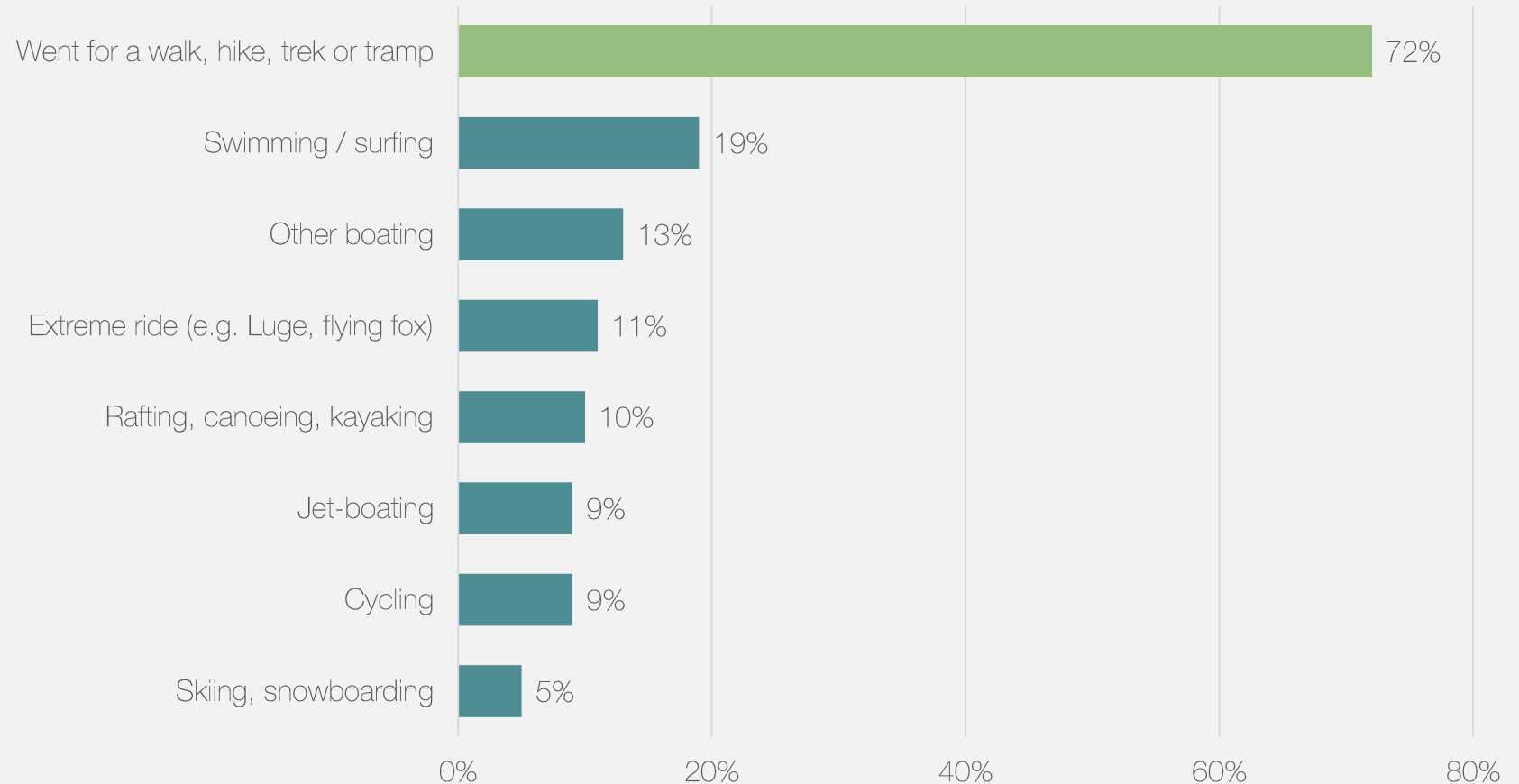


Figure 4: Top outdoor activities relevant to DOC. Source: International Visitor Survey year-end 2024 (July to June).

Short walks were the most popular walks for internationals

International visitors who reported walking, hiking, trekking or tramping were most likely to do walks of less than 3 hours.

Overnight walks were less popular among international visitors in the past year.

Smaller numbers reported doing overnight walks and other walks such as a Great Walk or the Te Araroa trail.

Most internationals undertook a walk, hike, trek or tramp for less than 3 hours

Proportion of all international visitors who went for a walk, hike, trek or tramp (year-end June 2024)

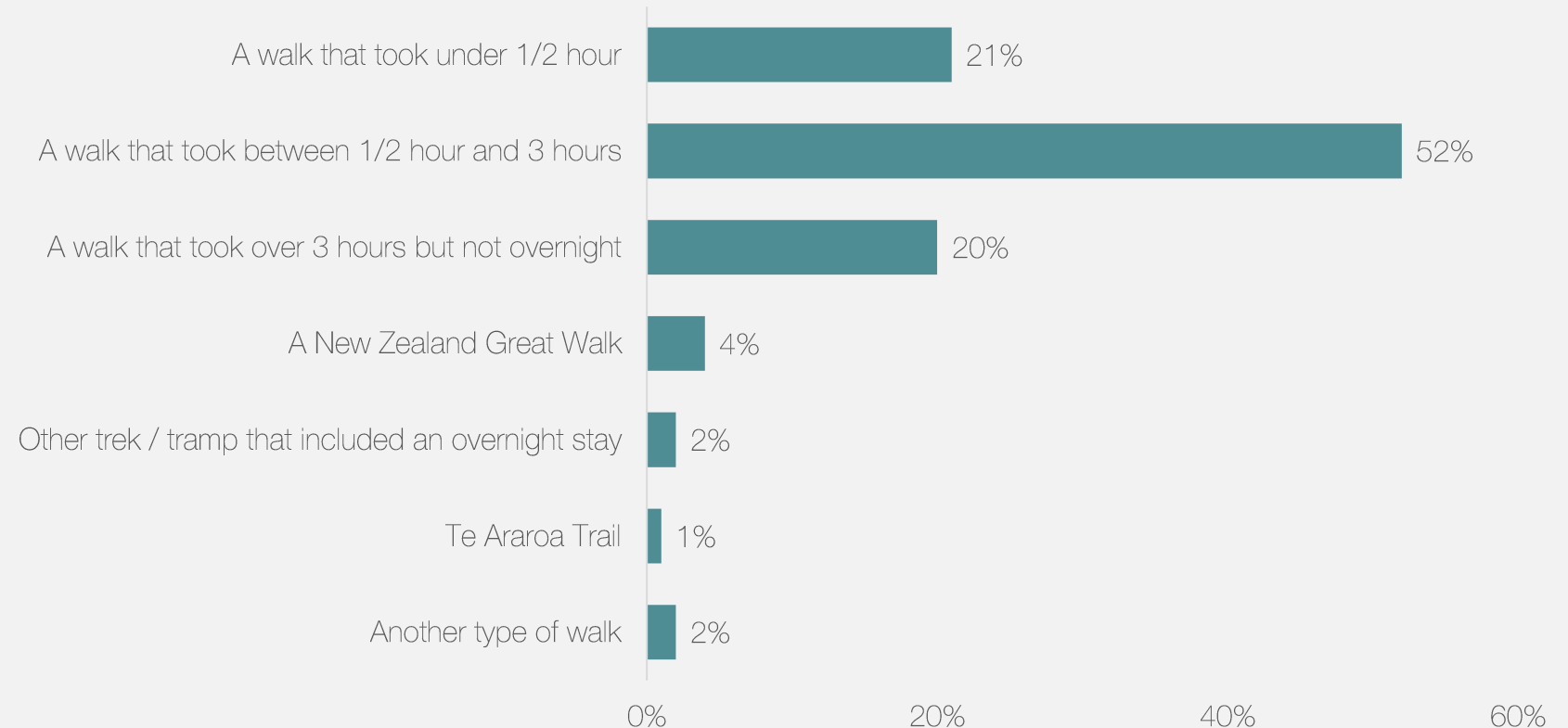


Figure 5: IVS: types of walks, hikes, treks and tramps undertaken by all international visitors who listed walk, hike, trek and tramp as an activity. Source: International Visitor Survey year-end 2024 (July to June).

Most internationals rated natural scenery and wilderness as very good

Nearly 9 out of 10 (86%) international visitors rated natural scenery and wilderness as very good. This was the highest rated attribute, with almost all visitors (99%) rating it as good to some degree.

While not as highly rated, other environmental attributes were also well perceived – around 9 out of 10 rated each attribute as good to some degree. The availability of public facilities was rated lowest.

Visitors felt welcome and safe (94% and 93% respectively rated these as good or very good).

Natural scenery/wilderness were rated high by internationals

Proportion of international visitors who rated attributes of visit (year-end June 2024)

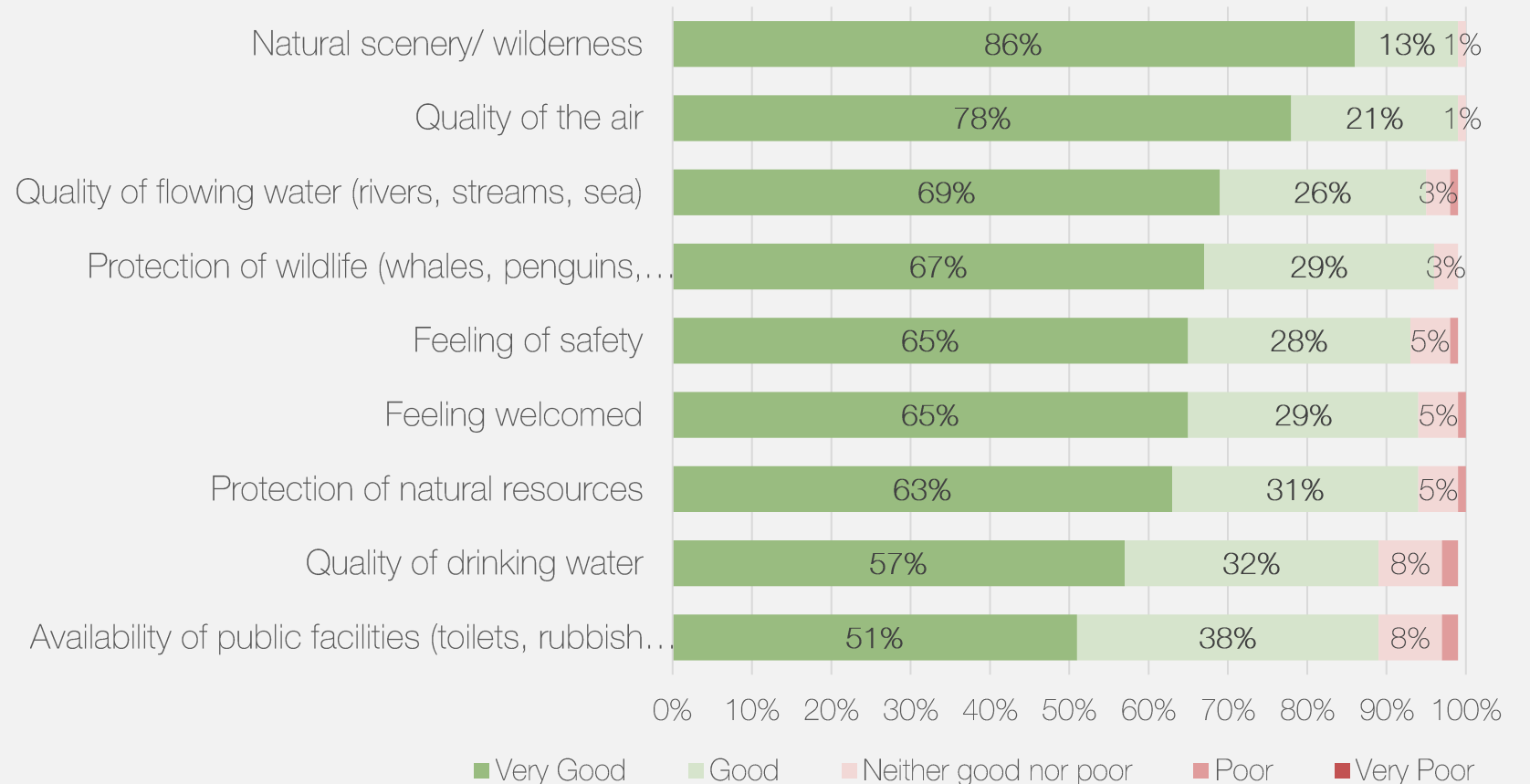


Figure 6: Based on your experiences during your trip to New Zealand, how would you rate the following? Note: this survey covers all experiences wider than those on public conservation lands and waters. Don't know and not applicable responses not included on graph above. Source: International Visitor Survey year-end 2024 (July to June).

Most international visitors were satisfied with their visit

Nine out of ten (90%) international visitors were either satisfied or very satisfied with their visit to New Zealand. Two in three (66%) international visitors were very satisfied.

Of those international visitors who went to Māori cultural experiences,¹ over nine out of ten (92%²) agreed they enjoyed their experience.

92%

Agreed they enjoyed their experience of Māori culture¹

¹Experiences were not limited to public conservation land and waters.

²Data from International Visitor Survey Q2 (April – June) 2024

Nine out of ten internationals were satisfied with New Zealand

Proportion of internationals who were satisfied with their most recent visit to New Zealand (year-end June 2024)

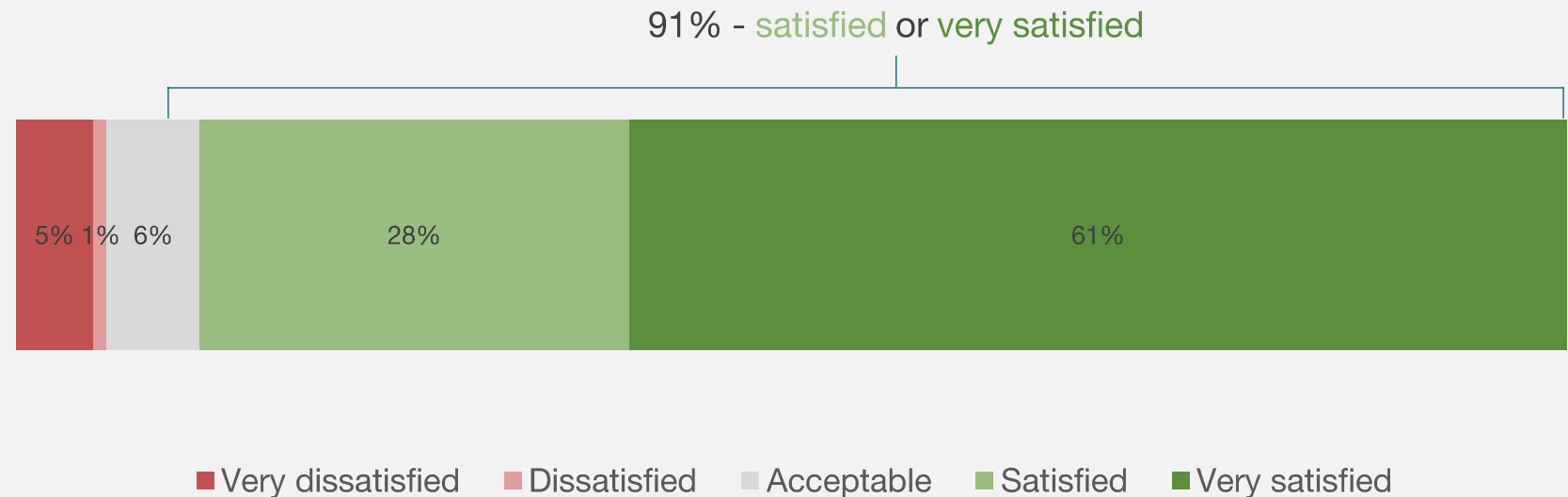


Figure 7: And thinking about all the aspects of your trip, how satisfied were you with your New Zealand visit overall? Source: International Visitor Survey year-end 2024 (July to June).

Pre-pandemic tourism challenges re-emerging as a pressing issue

News articles have been emerging of popular European destinations implementing limits to manage the negative impacts of overtourism. Valencia and Barcelona are limiting short-term rentals, Amsterdam is curbing cruise, Venice is introducing a daily tourism fee, and Iceland is experiencing a boom that is locking locals out of housing.

It is well-known that Queenstown faces similar visitor pressures and struggles to provide affordable housing and ease transport congestion for locals. Total visitor arrivals (domestic and international) into Queenstown Airport YE June 2024 is up 14.4% compared to last year (Stats NZ).



Carparking congestion at Bob's Cove, Queenstown 2024. Note, actual car numbers were around double shown here. Image: Owen Hale | DOC

“ Queenstown’s strategic road network is heavily congested which is eroding a well-functioning urban environment. This negatively impacts the visitor experience, liveability for residents, and the outdoor lifestyle which Queenstown is known around the world for.

Otago Regional Council, Queenstown Public Transport Business Case, 3 April 2024 p32

Could slow tourism provide a better way forward?

Amy Errmann from Auckland University of Technology points out, “Travellers often pack their itineraries with as many sights as possible, racing from one place to another in a frenzy to capture the perfect photo. This hurried approach not only creates congestion but also limits meaningful engagement with the destination.”*

Research shows immersion leads to more meaningful experiences. There is an opportunity to encourage immersive nature experiences. It may slow down travellers pace and support visitors to stay longer and do more sustainable activities.

* [Crowds, water guns and protests: could ‘slow tourism’ be the answer to an overtourism backlash? \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/crowds-water-guns-and-protests-could-slow-tourism-be-the-answer-to-an-overtourism-backlash-125484)



Mount Titiroa Track. Image: Kendall DeLyser | DOC

Connecting New Zealanders to nature

Understanding where New Zealanders went and what they did outdoors helps build a picture of visitor activity. This next section draws on DOC's Public Pulse of Conservation survey data.

Protected Natural Areas include national parks, conservation areas and marine reserves. Protected Heritage Places include historic reserves, historic buildings, places important to Māori and places of national significance.



Many New Zealanders continue to head into nature

For year-end June 2024, the proportion of New Zealanders who reported visiting Protected Natural Areas and Protected Heritage Places at least once each month has remained stable with on average 48% visiting Protected Natural Areas and 30% visiting Protected Heritage Places.

Weather impacts from cyclone events in early 2023 closed many facilities and destinations, reducing visitor numbers at affected sites. Many of those sites have since gradually reopened during 2024.

Around one in two New Zealanders visited a protected area

Proportion of respondents reported visiting at least once in the past month (year-end June 2024)



Figure 8: Percentage of respondents who answered > 0 to questions 6a: How many times, if any, have you visited any of New Zealand's protected areas within the last month? and 18a: How many times, if any, have you visited any of New Zealand's heritage places within the last month?
Source: Pulse of Conservation year-end 2024 (July to June).

New Zealanders went to easily accessible places near urban areas

DOC is Aotearoa New Zealand's largest provider of visitor activities managing over 21,800 visitor assets and 15,000 km of tracks.

Of 200 Protected Natural Areas surveyed, the map to the right shows the top 10 places reported as the most recently visited Protected Natural Areas by New Zealanders.

Most of these top 10 places are in the North Island, near coastal areas and population centres.

Locations near Auckland were most often reported. Long Bay-Okura Marine Reserve (north of Auckland) and Rangitoto Island (Auckland) were most popular with New Zealanders. This reflects where New Zealanders live and travel.

Some of the other popular destinations are less than 2 hours from population centres, including Remutaka (Wellington), Arthur's Pass and Hanmer (Christchurch).

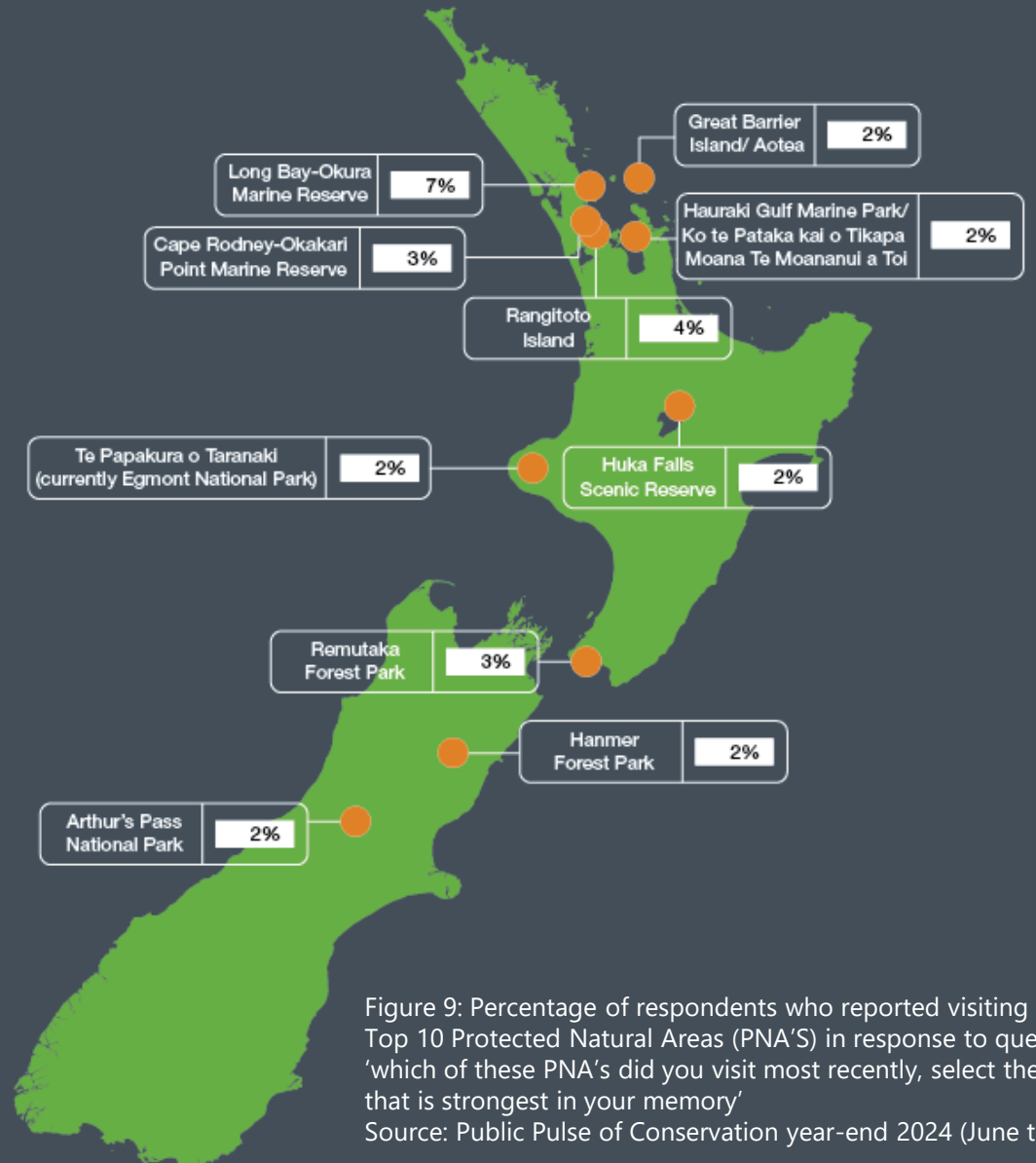


Figure 9: Percentage of respondents who reported visiting one of the Top 10 Protected Natural Areas (PNA'S) in response to question 8: 'which of these PNA's did you visit most recently, select the location that is strongest in your memory'
Source: Public Pulse of Conservation year-end 2024 (June to July).

Similarly, New Zealanders went to heritage sites near urban areas

DOC manages the largest heritage portfolio in the country, about 600 archaeological and/or historic sites. DOC cares for places that have shaped our history and helps people to learn about the important stories at those places.

The map to the right shows the top 10 places reported as most recently visited Protected Heritage Places by New Zealand adults.

Most of these top 10 places are in the North Island, near coastal areas and population centres.

Locations near Auckland were often reported, specifically; Fort Takapuna Historic Reserve, Hauraki Gulf defences and Karangahake Gorge.

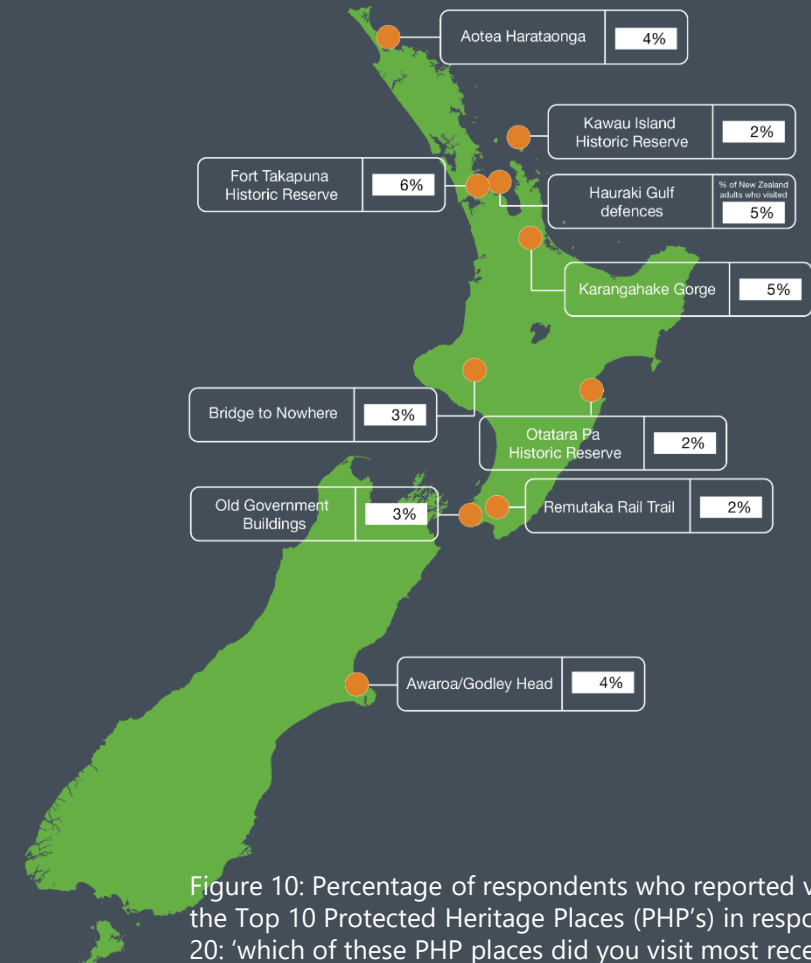


Figure 10: Percentage of respondents who reported visiting one of the Top 10 Protected Heritage Places (PHP's) in response to question 20: 'which of these PHP places did you visit most recently, select the location that is strongest in your memory'
Source: Public Pulse of Conservation year-end 2024 (June to July).

Leisurely activities were most popular with New Zealanders

Short walks remain the most popular activity reported by 42% of New Zealanders, undertaken on their most recent visit to a Protected Natural Area. This was the same as last year.

Some activities decreased compared to last year (sightseeing, photography, picnic/BBQ, connecting with culture and camping), however these changes were small.

Severe weather events and closures to popular sites may have impacted some activities.

Small numbers also reported fishing in a river or lakes (4%), hunting (2%) mountain biking (2%) and overnight/multi-day tramps/hikes (2%).

Short walks remain the most popular activity for NZers

Proportion of respondents who engaged in the top 10 most reported activities during their most recent visit (year-end June 2024)

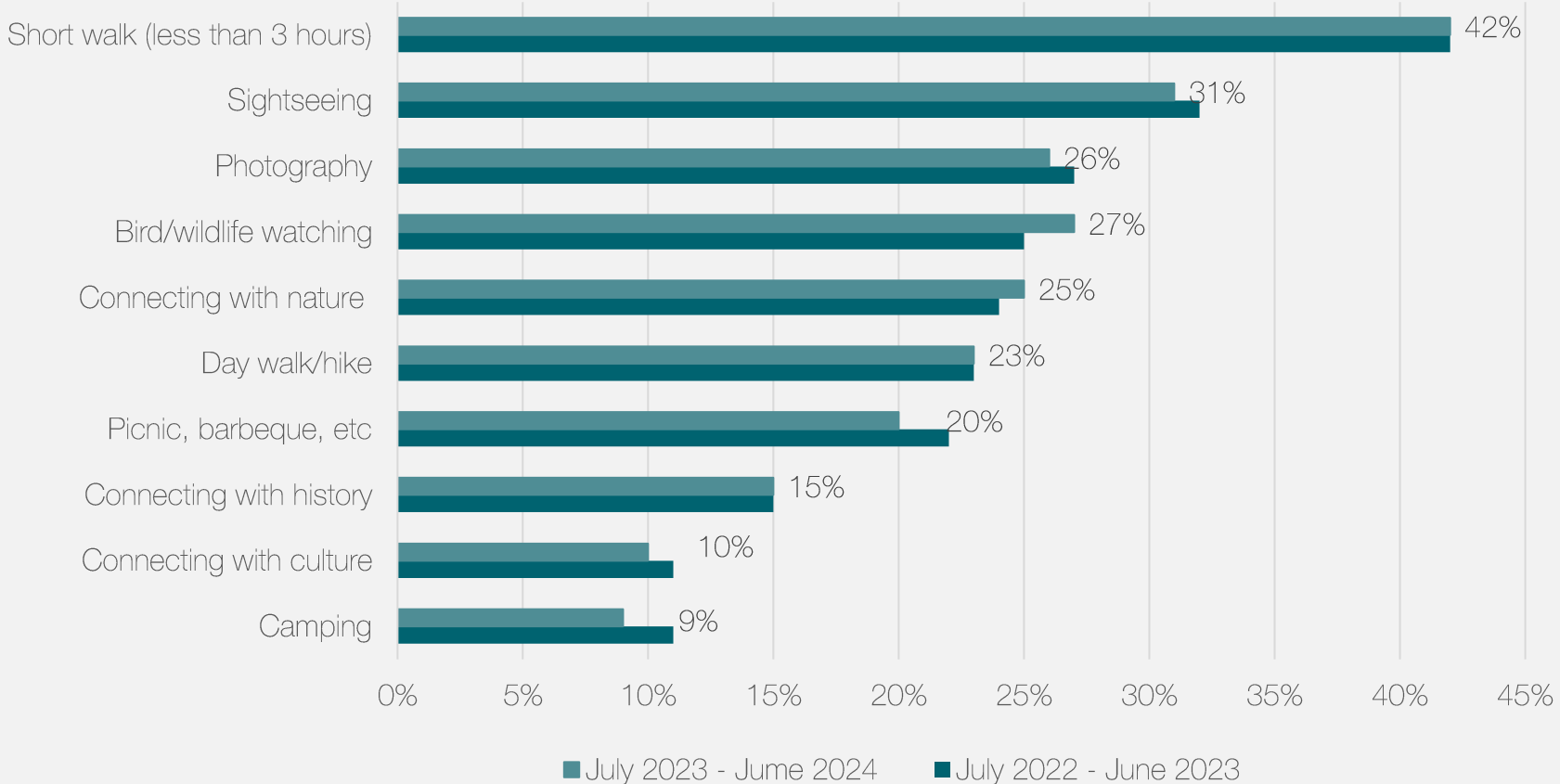


Figure 11: Top 10 activities selected as responses to Q12: Thinking about your most recent visit to "location selected in q8" which of the following activities did you engage in? These proportions are weighted averages. Source: Pulse of Conservation year-end 2024 (July to June).

Visitor impacts noticed by New Zealanders is similar to last year

For year-end June 2024 around a third (33% at Protected Natural Areas and 32% at Protected Heritage Places) of New Zealanders reported that they had noticed damage from visitors. This was roughly the same as the previous year.

At both Protected Natural Areas and Protected Heritage Places, damage to natural landscapes was observed the most (14% and 11% respectively), followed by damage to visitor facilities/infrastructure and poor/inappropriate behaviour.

NZ visitors reported damage to natural landscapes caused by other visitors

Proportion of New Zealand visitors who noticed damage by visitors (year-end June 2024)

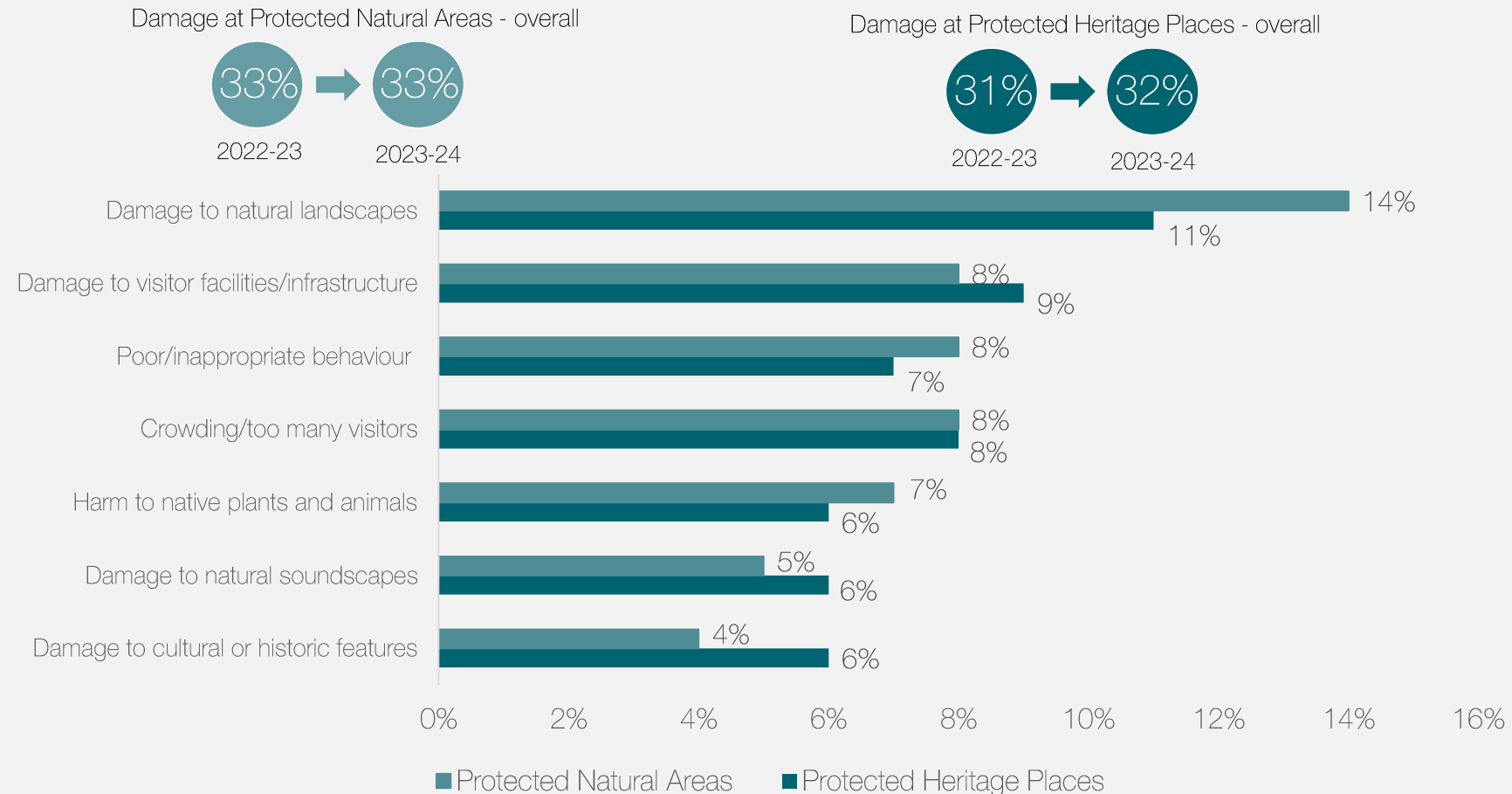


Figure 12: Proportion of New Zealand visitors who reported damage in Qs 13 (Thinking about your most recent visit to “Question 8 PNA last visited”, did you notice any of the following types of damage from other visitors?) and 25 (Thinking about your most recent visit to “Question 20 PHP last visited”, did you notice any of the following types of damage from other visitors?) Source: Pulse of Conservation year-end 2024 (July to June).

Four in five New Zealanders had a good visit outdoors

Visitors generally had positive responses to their most recent experience at Protected Natural Areas and Protected Heritage Places.

Visitors' most recent experience of Protected Natural Areas were higher than those of Protected Heritage Places.

Satisfaction with the experience at Protected Natural Areas and Protected Heritage Places was similar when compared to the previous year.

Most New Zealanders visiting protected areas had a good time

Proportion of New Zealand visitors who rated their most recent visit outdoors (year-end June 2024)

Protected Natural Areas

2022-23

84% - good or exceptionally good visit



2023-24

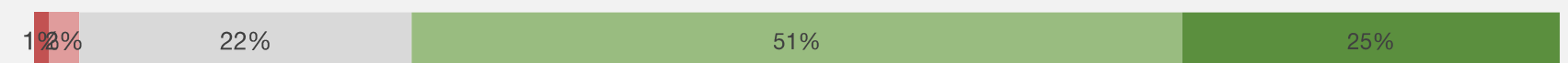
83% - good or exceptionally good visit



Protected heritage Places

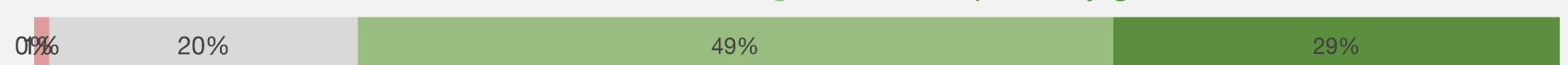
2022-23

76% - good or exceptionally good visit



2023-24

78% - good or exceptionally good visit



■ Extremely poor ■ Poor ■ Acceptable / OK ■ Good ■ Exceptionally good

Figure 13: Respondents overall rating of their most recent experience at Protected Natural Areas and Protected Heritage Places. Source: Pulse of Conservation year-end 2024 (July to June).

Understanding where people stayed in the outdoors

Overnight accommodation is important to understand where people stayed outdoors. This section contains data and information from DOC's huts, campsites and Great Walks booking system for year-end June 2024. Note, this section relates to visitors staying on public conservation land only, not all accommodation across Aotearoa New Zealand.



International visitors continue to undertake Great Walks

There are 11 Great Walks across the country (10 for year end June 2024 with Tuatapere Hump Ridge Track added in October 2024). DOC manages 9 of these, excluding Lake Waikaremoana and Tuatapere Hump Ridge.

Around 249,277 people booked bed nights at Great Walk huts and campsites in the 2023-24 season, up 10% compared to this time last year.¹ This equates to \$8.9 million (ex-GST) for year end June 2024 – an 11% increase on the previous year.

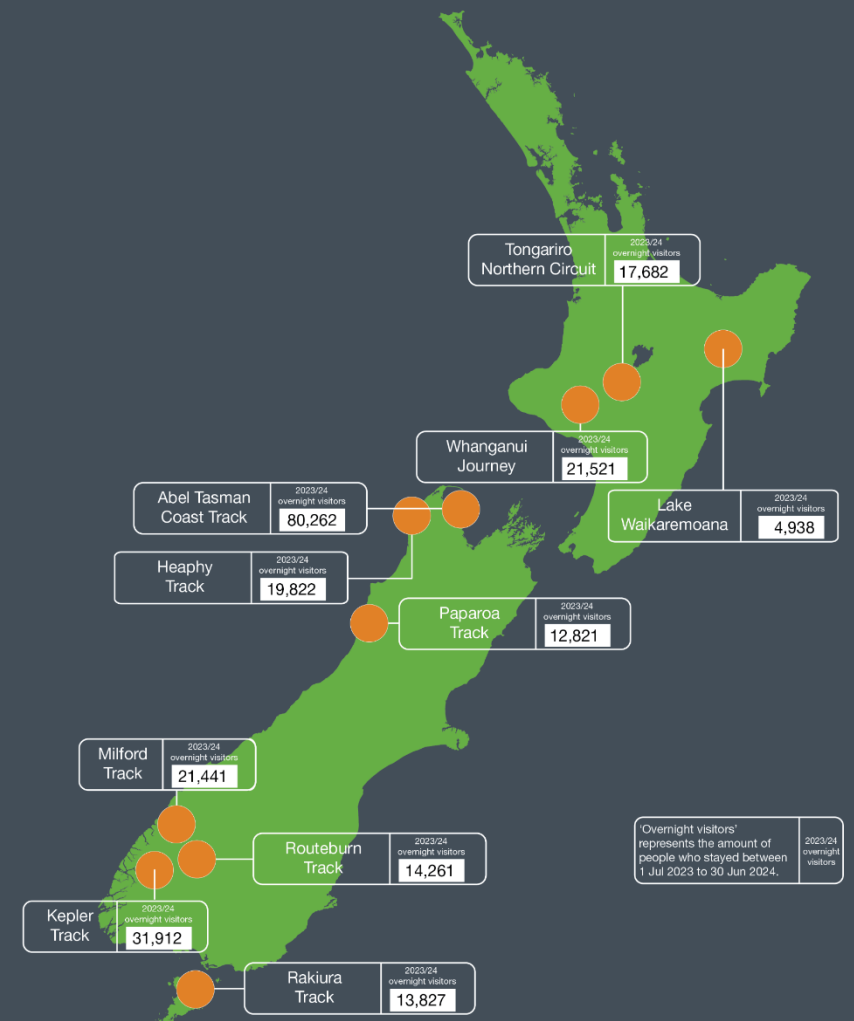
Compared with the previous year, international visitor bed night bookings increased by around 27%, New Zealanders bookings increased by 2%.

The Abel Tasman Coast Track continues to be the busiest Great Walk, attracting one-third of all Great Walk bed night bookings.

Aside from the Heaphy Track, all South Island Great Walks were at, or near capacity, through the Great Walks season.

¹ Lake Waikaremoana was closed for part of the 23/24 season and a section of the Heaphy Track was closed for the 22/23 season due to storm/cyclone damage

Figure 14: Great Walk bed nights 2023-24 (July to June) Source: DOC booking data.



Bed nights at popular bookable campsites increased 32%

DOC manages close to 300 campsites – around 137 of these are bookable. Around 326,422 people booked bed nights at the campsites displayed in Figure 14 between July 2023 and June 2024, up 32% compared to last year.

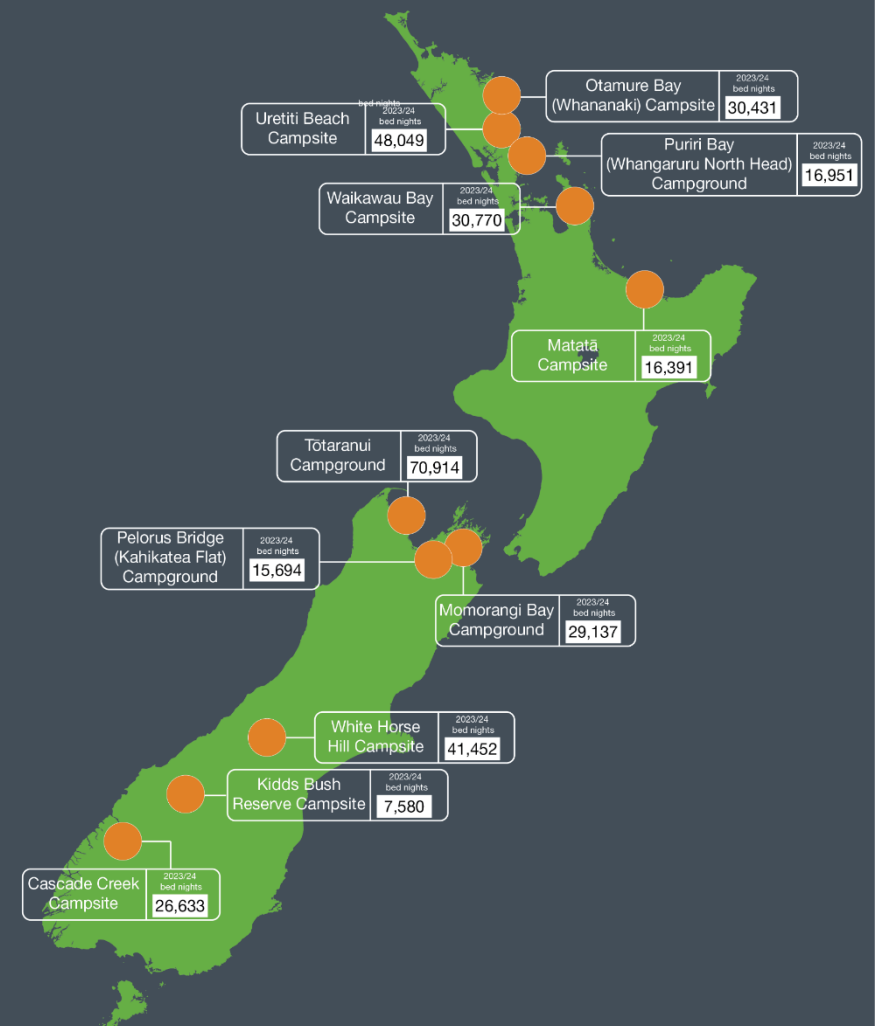
Tōtaranui Campground (in the Northern South Island) had the most bed nights booked for all non-Great Walk DOC campsites in New Zealand over the last year.

Bed nights booked at Cascade Creek campsites more than doubled from the previous year. Bed nights booked at Waikawau Bay campsite increased by 66%, and by 44% at White Horse Hill campground.

Notes:

1. Great Walk campsites are excluded.
2. Waikawau Bay 2023/24 increase is due to more sites being opened.
3. Cascade Creek 2023/24 increase is due to other Milford Rd campsites being booked out.

Figure 15: Bed nights for popular bookable campsites 2023-24 (July to June) Source: DOC booking data.



Bed nights at popular bookable huts increased by 33%

DOC manages over 950 huts across the country. Aside from Great Walk huts, 71 huts and lodges are bookable.

58,099 people booked bed nights at the huts and lodges displayed in Figure 15 between July 2023 and June 2024, up 33% from the previous year.¹

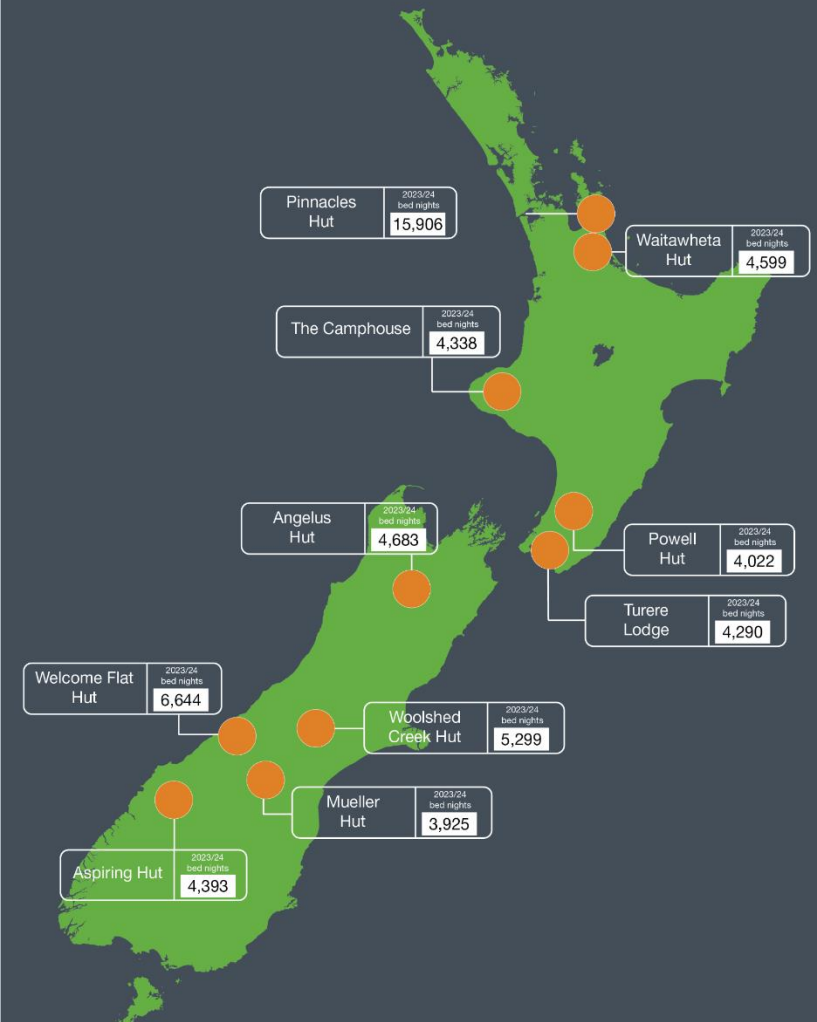
The Pinnacles Hut (Coromandel) recorded the most bed nights (15,906) between July 2023 and June 2024.

Other huts with booked bed nights of over 5,000 people include:

- Welcome Flat hut (West Coast) – 6,644
- Woolshed Creek hut (Canterbury) – 5,299

¹Aspiring hut was closed for a rebuild between July 2023 and March 2024

Figure 16: Bed nights for popular bookable huts and lodges 2023-24 (July to June) Source: DOC booking data. NOTE: Welcome Flat Hut includes bookings for the Sierra Room.



Early bookings indicate a busy 2024/25 Great Walks season ahead

Indications are Great Walks will continue to be busy over 2024/25, with strong bookings.

Overall, bednights on Great Walks have increased from 159,234 last season to 186,873. This growth may be in part driven by the reopening of both the Lake Waikaremoana Track and Heaphy Track.

The split of bookings between international visitors and New Zealanders is roughly the same as last year with 75% of bookings being made by New Zealanders.

Great Walks	Bednights	% change
Abel Tasman Coast Track	41,885	+3%
Heaphy Track	21,430	N/A due to closure last year
Kepler Track	27,308	+10%
Lake Waikaremoana Track	9,850	N/A due to closure last year
Milford Track	21,726	+9%
Paparoa Track	11,893	+5%
Rakiura Track	8,319	-9%
Routeburn Track	21,583	2%
Tongariro Northern Circuit	12,536	+7%
Whanganui Journey	10,343	-1%
Great Walks – overall	186,873	+17%

Table 1: Great Walk bednights booked for the 2024/25 season and percentage change from previous season as of 1 September 2024. Source: DOC booking data.

Connecting visitors with our nature and cultural heritage

This next section provides a snapshot of the interconnection between nature and tourism. It highlights the importance of providing greater opportunities for visitors to connect with and give back to our natural, cultural and historic heritage.



‘Nature Positive’ tourism – investing in protecting and restoring nature

Tourism is an important source of economic growth globally. The World Travel and Tourism Council* point out that tourism is deeply dependent on nature with more than 80% of the value of its goods and services relying on nature’s resources and ecosystems, “...when nature suffers, so does tourism.”

‘Nature Positive’ tourism is about minimising environmental harm and actively investing in nature restoration in tourist destinations. “Nature-based tourism is growing in popularity and predicted to generate USD 665 billion annually by 2030.”*

* <https://www.unwto.org/news/a-united-vision-for-nature-nature-positive-report-marks-new-collaborative-era-in-travel-tourism>



In Aotearoa New Zealand, the shift is evident in Tourism Industry Aotearoa’s (TIA) He Pae Tukutuku Tourism 2050 Blueprint** which aims to minimise visitors impact and footprint. This includes taking action on carbon emissions and biodiversity; and building tourism operators capability around sustainability.

DOC’s Heritage and Visitor Strategy emphasises sustainably managing visitors and engaging and involving them in conservation. This will be vital to protecting and enhancing our natural and cultural heritage so ecosystems and species can thrive.

** <https://www.tia.org.nz/tourism-2050/>

New Zealand's migrant population is growing and changing

Stats NZ 2024 data shows the ethnic diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand's population continues to grow and change due to migration. Yet we know very little about these *new* New Zealanders:

- How do *new* New Zealanders connect with nature?
- How might this alter visitor experiences offered?
- How might we support new New Zealanders to protect and restore our nature?

For migrant arrivals in the June 2024 year, India was the largest migrant group (43,200) followed by Philippines (26,500) and China (22,400). Note, the diagram shows net migration (arrivals less departures).

Estimated net migration, by selected citizenship, year ended June 2019, 2023, and 2024

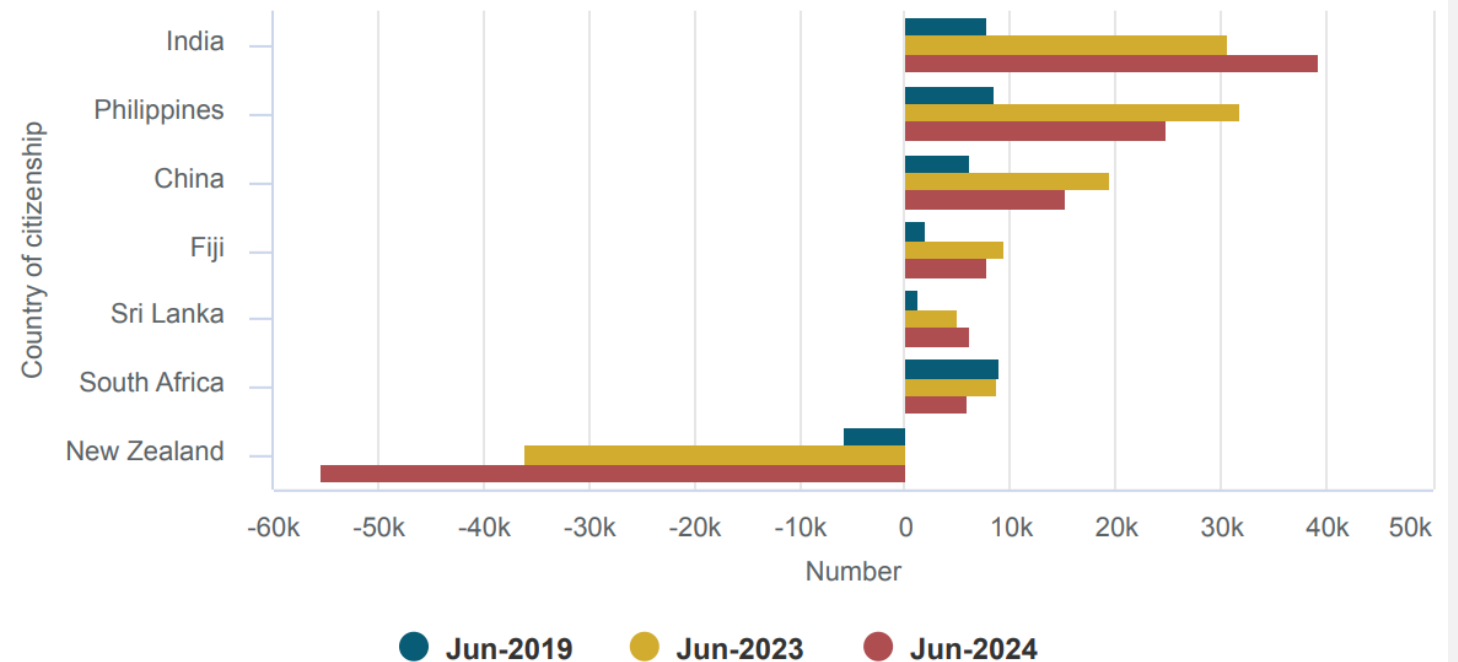


Figure 17: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/international-migration-june-2024/#annual-citizenship>
Source: Stats NZ

Potential of Matariki for Māori tourism experiences

Matariki, now celebrated annually, is increasing in popularity. It is a time for reflection, renewal and reconnection. TNZ say Matariki has become an important part of marketing Aotearoa New Zealand with unique and authentic stories.

Website matariki.co.nz points out there is potential for Māori tourism in “...providing an opportunity for visitors to learn about and experience Māori culture first-hand, and for Māori businesses and communities to showcase their products, services, and stories.”*

*<https://matariki.co.nz/matariki-and-the-future-of-maori-tourism-in-new-zealand/>



Mānawatia a Matariki tohu. Image: Te Arawhiti

“ Matariki provides a special opportunity for manuhiri to embrace Māori culture during our winter. We want manuhiri to form an emotional connection with destination New Zealand and develop an understanding of Māori customs. This means they will go beyond just visiting and connect with people and place while they are here.”

Tourism New Zealand Chief Executive René de Monchy (June 2024)

New Zealanders and internationals head to easily accessible places

Short walks (less than 3 hours) remain the most popular activity for both New Zealanders and international visitors. Most of the top 10 places visited by New Zealanders are in the North Island, near coastal areas and population centres.

International visitors continue to return following the pandemic

Tourism continues to recover from the pandemic. International visitor arrivals reached 87% percent of pre-COVID-19 levels at year-end June 2024. Nine out of ten (90%) internationals were either satisfied or very satisfied with their visit.

Tourism is deeply dependent on nature's resources and ecosystems

The World Travel and Tourism Council points out that more than 80% of the value of tourism's goods and services relies on nature's resources and ecosystems. Sustainably managing visitors is important to restore nature.

Summary



Data and information sources

This document is similar but different from pre-pandemic visitor insight reports. This is because DOC does not currently have activity counter data reporting available.

- ▶ **Stats NZ International Travel** – International travel covers the number and characteristics of overseas visitors and New Zealand resident travellers (short-term movements) entering or leaving New Zealand.
- ▶ **DOC Public Pulse of Conservation** –. This online survey is conducted by IPSOS New Zealand under contract with 1000 respondents recruited each month from panels comprising New Zealand adult residents. The sample is pre-weighted to address representation. Field work is undertaken in the first week of each month to report on activity in the previous month.
- ▶ **MBIE International Visitor Survey:** The International Visitor Survey (IVS) measures the expenditure, characteristics and behaviours of international visitors to New Zealand. Data used is from July 2023 to June 2024.
- ▶ **DOC Bookable Accommodation** – DOC’s booking system currently collects accommodation booking data for huts, campsites and lodges across Aotearoa New Zealand. Estimated visitor numbers and occupancy rates are for non-Great Walk campsites and huts from August 2024; and Great Walk bookings from 1 September 2024.
- ▶ For more detailed references see: [DOCCM7776094](#)

Appendix: Places New Zealanders visit

Understanding where New Zealanders undertake recreation and travel helps DOC understand the important places that contribute to the wellbeing of New Zealanders. The following page looks at popular places across DOC's 10 regions. Please note: this Appendix does not include places most visited by international visitors.



Whangārei area most popular with New Zealanders in Northland

Te Tai Tokerau Northland is steeped in rich cultural history and a place of spiritual significance, with many popular campgrounds and marine recreation. The map to the right shows places most reported as recently visited in Northern North Island.

Places most reported as recently visited in the Northern North Island in the Whangārei area. Other places visited by New Zealanders include: Tāne Mahuta in Waipoua Forest and Te Rerenga Wairua in the Far North.

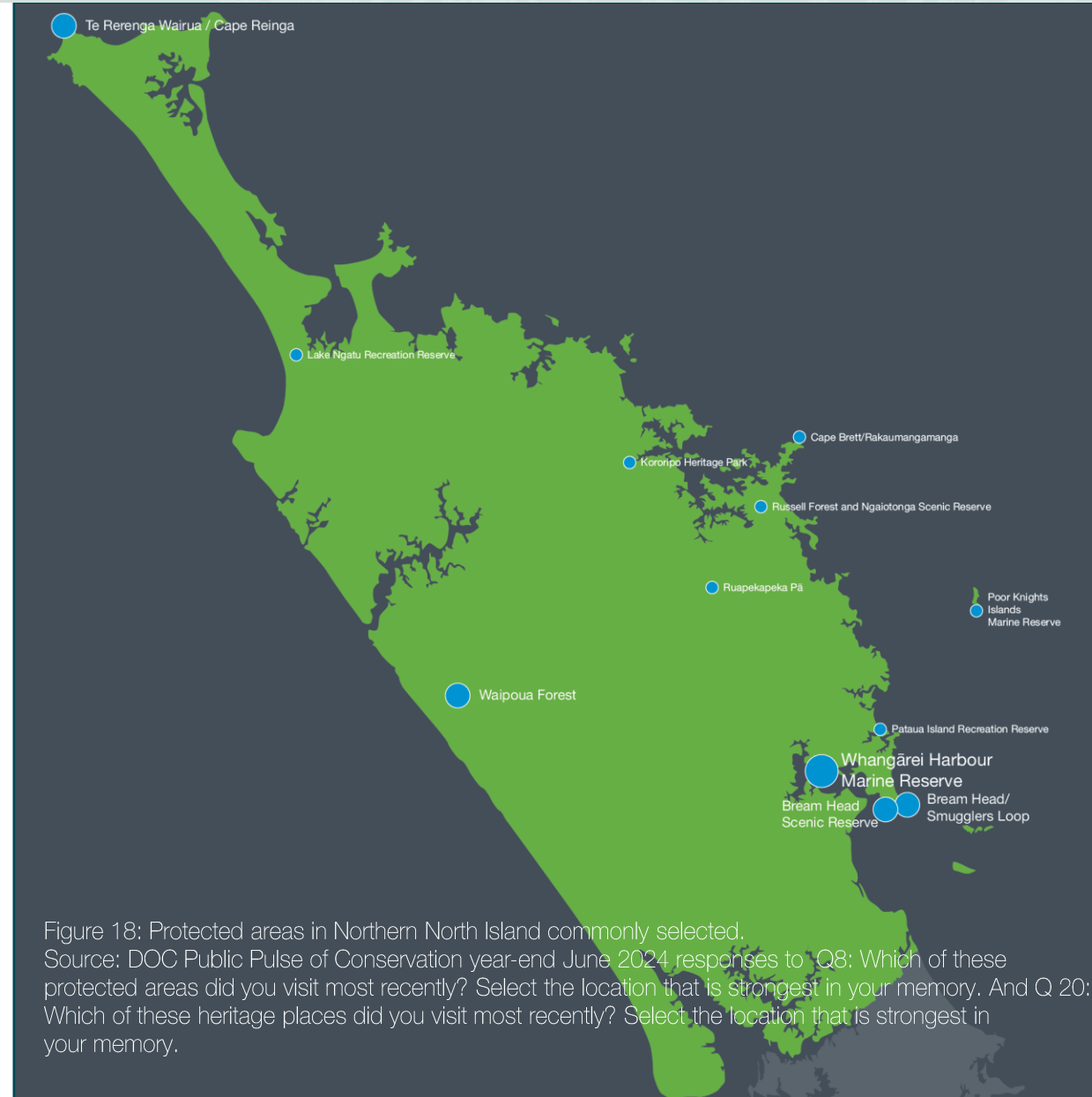


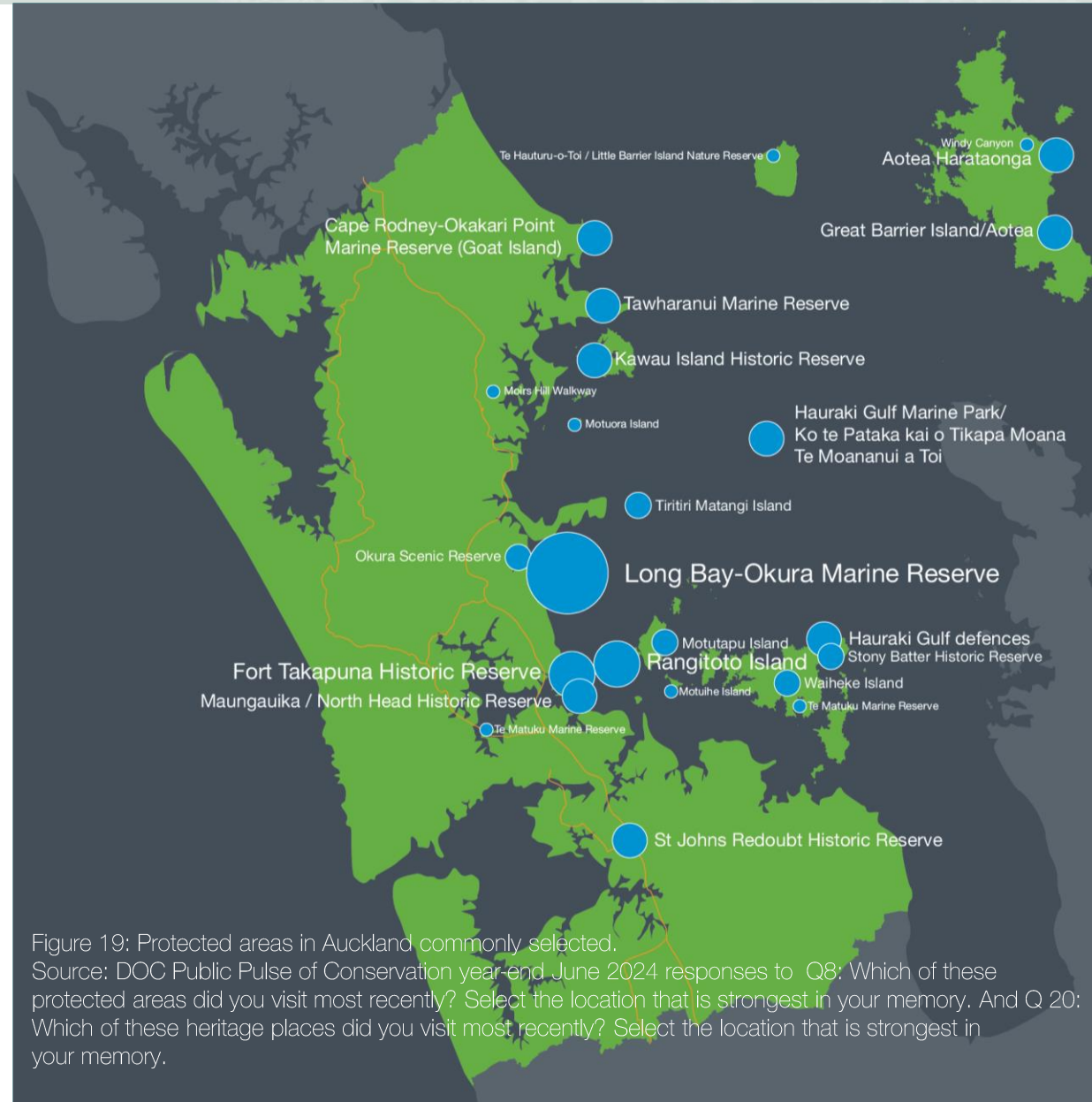
Figure 18: Protected areas in Northern North Island commonly selected.
Source: DOC Public Pulse of Conservation year-end June 2024 responses to Q8: Which of these protected areas did you visit most recently? Select the location that is strongest in your memory. And Q 20: Which of these heritage places did you visit most recently? Select the location that is strongest in your memory.

Hauraki Gulf is popular with New Zealanders in Auckland

Auckland is home to more than one-third of our population, with many popular island experiences. The map to the right shows places most reported as recently visited in the Auckland region.

Destinations located in the Hauraki Gulf were often selected by New Zealanders. Long Bay-Okura Marine Reserve was often selected as were Rangitoto Island and Fort Takapuna Historic Reserve.

Other popular selections include Great Barrier Island/Aotea, the Hauraki Gulf Marine Reserve and Kawau Island Historic Reserve.



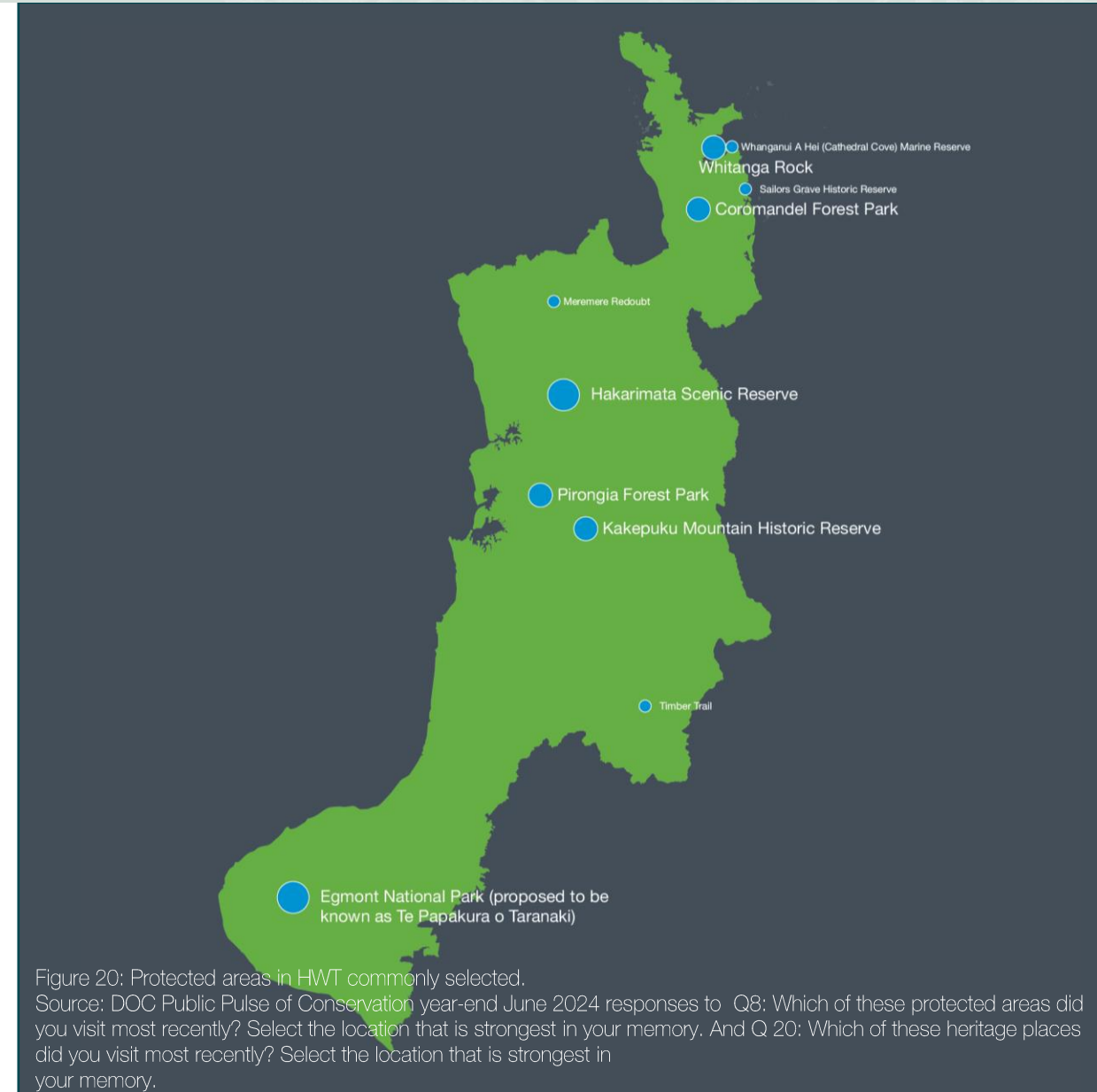
Taranaki Maunga, Hakarimata and Coromandel busiest in HWT

DOC's Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki region includes the Waikato awa, the longest river in New Zealand; Egmont National Park (proposed to be known as Te Papakura o Taranaki); and the Coromandel Peninsula. The map to the right shows places most reported as recently visited in Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki.

Taranaki Maunga was the most reported, followed by Hakarimata Forest Park in Waikato. Other clusters of domestic visitors include:

- Waikato – Pirongia Forest Park and Kakepuku Historic Reserve.
- Coromandel – Coromandel Forest Park, Whitianga Rock.

NOTE: Mautohe Cathedral Cove was closed from February 2023 due to cyclone damage

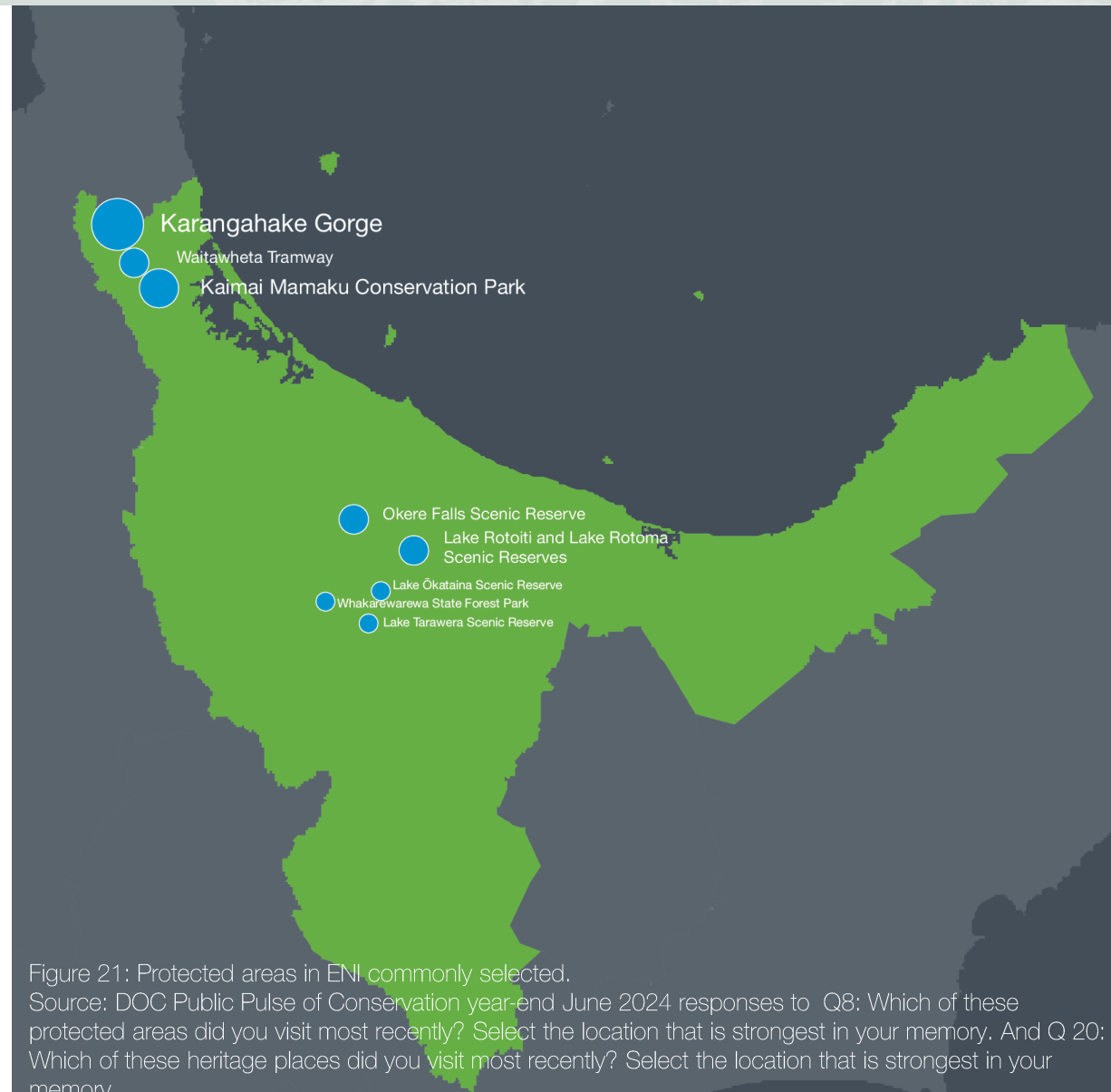


Visitor hubs are near the Kaimai ranges and Rotorua areas in ENI

DOC's Eastern North Island region is rich in history. The region has a range of unique and scenic landscapes, including coastal areas, forests, lakes and renowned geothermal areas. The map to the right shows places most reported as recently visited in Eastern North Island.

The Eastern North Island region has two clusters of frequently reported recent domestic visits:

- Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park – Karangahake Gorge and Waitawheta Tramway.
- Rotorua area – Okere Falls, Lake Rotoiti and Lake Rotoma scenic reserves.



NOTE: Tairāwhiti locations are included in the LNI map

Taupō, Tongariro and Whanganui are busiest in CNI

DOC's Central North Island region is known for its outstanding natural environment, including the Tongariro and Whanganui National Parks. The map to the right shows places most reported as recently visited in Central North Island.

Locations often reported as visited recently include:

- Huka Falls and the Taupō Trout Fishery near Taupō
- Whanganui National Park (including the bridge to Nowhere)
- Tongariro National Park



Figure 22: Protected areas in CNI commonly selected.
Source: DOC Public Pulse of Conservation year-end June 2024 responses to Q8: Which of these protected areas did you visit most recently? Select the location that is strongest in your memory. And Q 20: Which of these heritage places did you visit most recently? Select the location that is strongest in your memory.

Experiences close to Wellington are popular in LNI

DOC's Lower North Island region includes Tairāwhiti, the first place to see the sun, and the North Island's backbone – the Remutaka, Tararua, Ruahine, and Kaweka ranges. The map to the right shows places most reported as recently visited in Lower North Island.

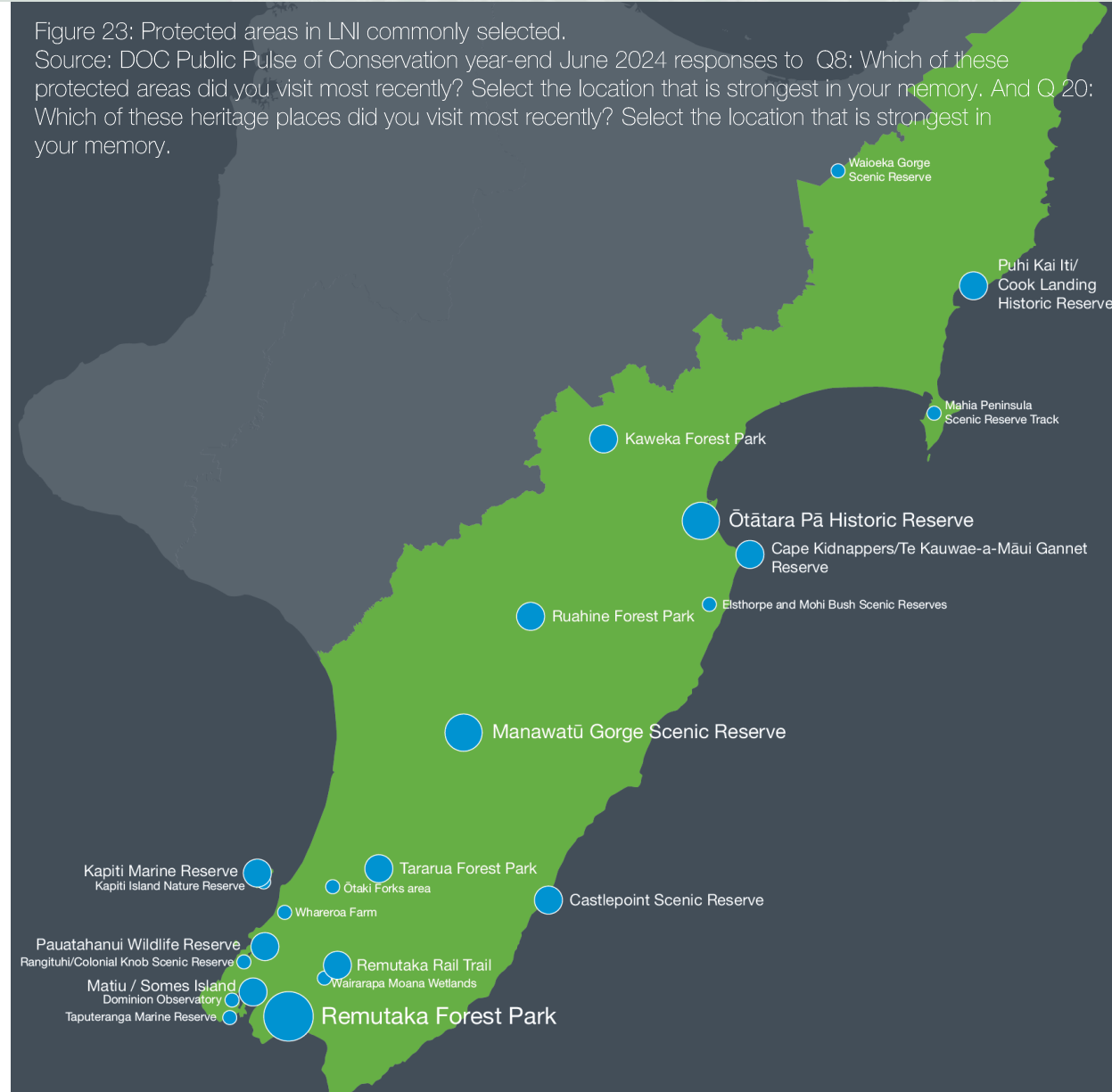
Locations most often reported as recently visited are near Wellington where most people of the region live. Remutaka Forest Park is the closest forest park to Wellington.

Other frequently reported recent visits are in:

- Kapiti Coast (Kapiti Marine Reserve)
- Wairarapa (Tararua Forest Park and Castlepoint Scenic Reserve) are also popular
- Manawatu (Te Āpiti – Manawatū Gorge)
- Hawkes Bay (Ōtātara Pā)
- Te Tairāwhiti (Puhi Kai Iti/Cooks Landing)

Figure 23: Protected areas in LNI commonly selected.

Source: DOC Public Pulse of Conservation year-end June 2024 responses to Q8: Which of these protected areas did you visit most recently? Select the location that is strongest in your memory. And Q 20: Which of these heritage places did you visit most recently? Select the location that is strongest in your memory.

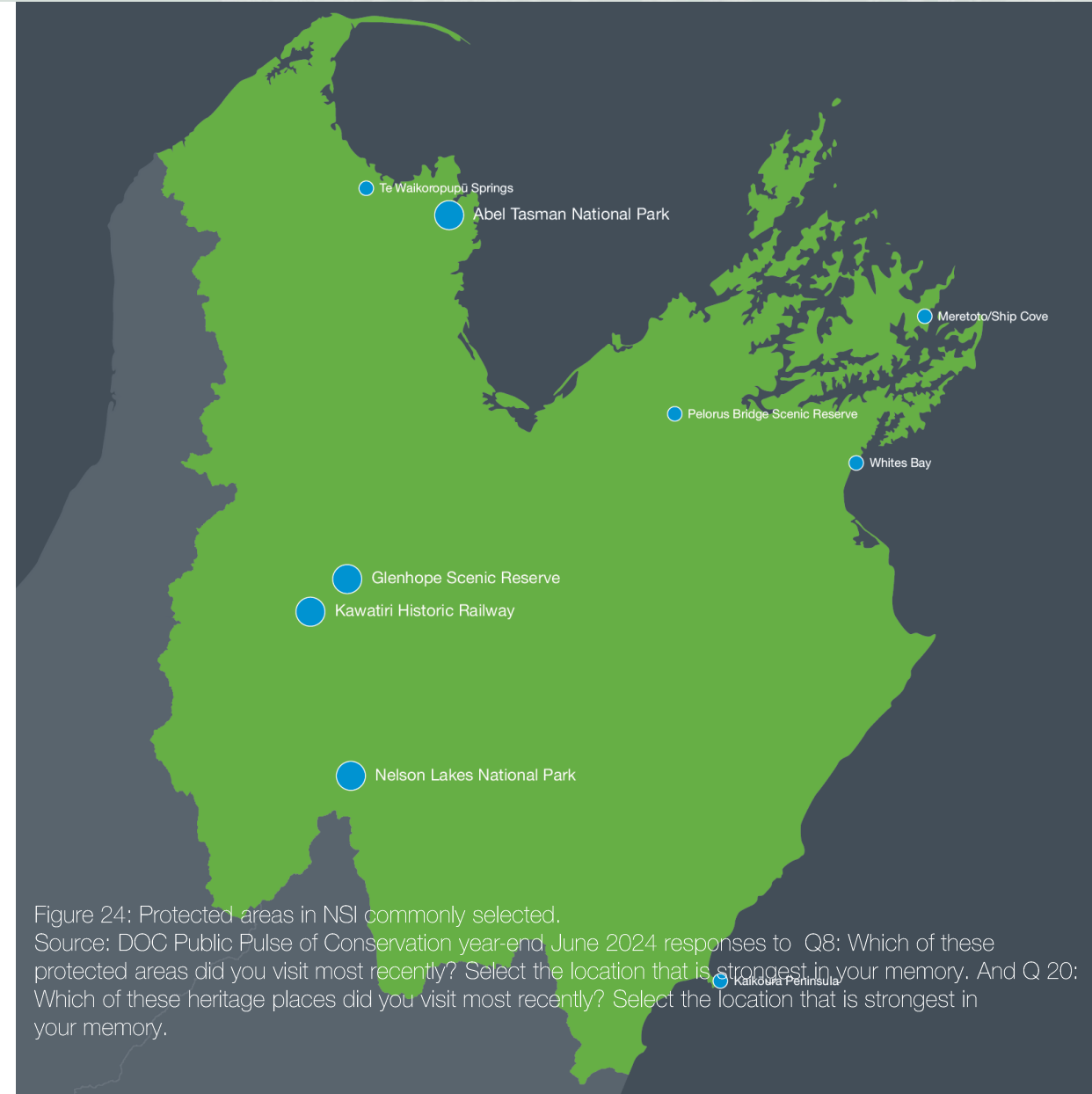


Abel Tasman, Glenhope Scenic Reserve and Nelson Lakes popular in NSI

Northern South Island is known for stunning Abel Tasman and Nelson Lakes National Parks and the Marlborough Sounds. The map to the right shows places most reported as recently visited in Northern South Island.

Abel Tasman and Nelson Lakes National Parks and Glenhope Scenic Reserve near St Arnaud were often reported as recently visited places in the region.

Other often reported locations include Whites Bay and Pelorus Bridge in Marlborough.



Fewer New Zealanders selected locations on the West Coast

The West Coast, Te Tai Poutini, is synonymous with being one of the most beautiful and natural regions of New Zealand. The map to the right shows places most reported as recently visited in the Western South Island.

Places most reported as recently visited on the West Coast were: Lewis Pass Scenic Reserve, Brunner Mine, Denniston area, Franz Josef Glacier/Ka Roimata o Hine Hukatere and Hokitika Gorge.



Figure 25: Protected areas in WSI commonly selected.

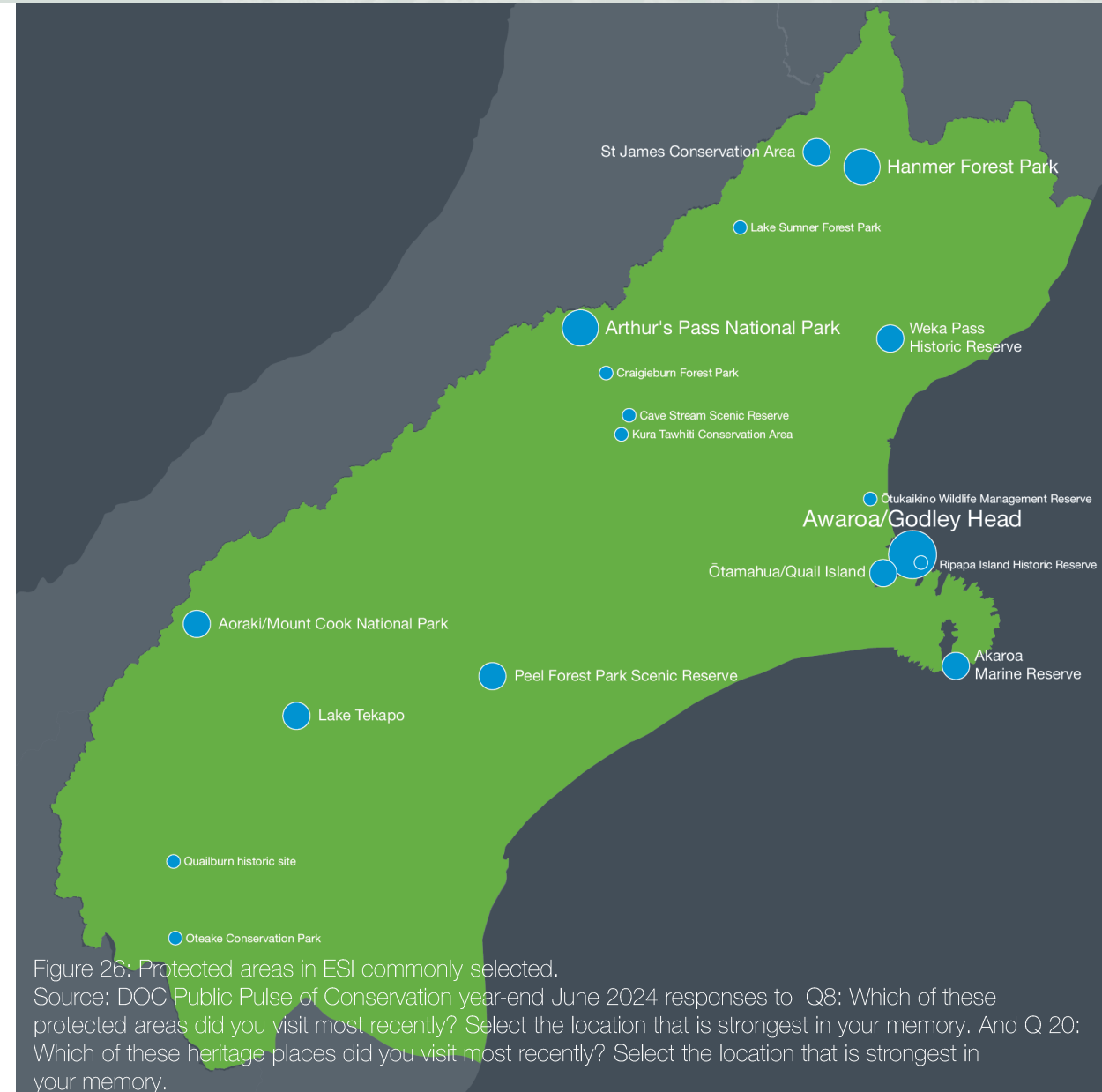
¹Source: DOC Public Pulse of Conservation year-end June 2024 responses to Q8: Which of these protected areas did you visit most recently? Select the location that is strongest in your memory. And Q 20: Which of these heritage places did you visit most recently? Select the location that is strongest in your memory.

Experiences close to Christchurch are popular in ESI

The Eastern South Island is a popular gateway to the South Island and home to spectacular natural experiences. These include Aoraki and Arthurs Pass National Parks. The map to the right shows places most reported as recently visited in Eastern South Island.

Places often reported as recently visited in Eastern South Island are within two hours of Christchurch, including:

- 30 min from Christchurch: Awaroa/Godley Head
- 2 hours from Christchurch: Hanmer Forest Park; Arthurs Pass National Park; Akaroa Marine Reserve



Southern South Island is popular with New Zealanders

The Southern South Island is one of the great natural areas of the world. The region includes Mount Aspiring and Fiordland National Parks. The map to the right shows places most reported as recently visited in Southern South Island.

Lake Hāwea near Wānaka, Silver Peaks and Bushy Beach scenic reserves were often reported as recently visited in SSI. Other places often reported include:

- Dunedin area – Tunnel Beach
- Queenstown area – Arrowtown
- Fiordland – Lake Te Anau

