



Arthur's Pass to Rakaia River



Walking

Length

72.3 km

Journey Time

3-4 days

Region

[Canterbury](#)

Sub-Region

[Selwyn District](#)

Part of Collections

[Te Araroa - New Zealand's Trail](#) , [Te Araroa - South Island](#)

Track maintained by

[Te Araroa Trail Trust](#)

Te Araroa section: One of the highlights of this section of Te Araroa is passing the alpine Lake Coleridge (Whakamataau) situated in a glacier-formed valley. When you reach the Rakaia River, you'll see one of the largest braided rivers in New Zealand.


Klondyke Track - 9km / 2-3hr

The Klondyke Track is a Te Araroa-specific link. It reduces the road connection between the Deception-Mingha and Harper River Tracks.

The track starts at the Mingha and Bealey River junction. It heads south on the flood control bank, initially following orange marker poles (these turn off to the Greyney Shelter carpark that is no longer a campsite, despite the old label on maps). Continue following the flood control bank, and carefully cross the railway line into the gravel quarry; a poled and marked route starts at the Bealey River / Greyney's Creek junction following a terrace beside the river towards the Klondyke Corner Campsite, this is also a predator control line (yellow markers). At Klondyke there is a basic campsite with a pavilion, carpark and toilets.

The track beyond Klondyke Corner remains on the true right bank of the Bealey River. There are occasional marker poles which lead to the Waimakariri River confluence. Cross the river as water levels allow and climb up to SH73 before the Bealey Spur settlement. If the Waimakariri is up, trampers are able to cross on the road bridge, about 1km to the west.

The Bealey Hotel, which is 12km east of Arthur's Pass and 150km west of Christchurch, is a good point where trampers can organize transport, with most operators passing on their way to Arthur's Pass or Christchurch.

From Bealey Spur, continue east on SH73 and follow the road's shoulder to Cora Lynn Rd. Turn right here and walk past the Arthur's Pass Wilderness Lodge and through the gate marked 'Cass-Lagoon Track'. The track ends at the car park a short distance further along. [Bealey Hut \(6-bunks\)](#)  is a five-minute walk beyond the car park, up the track and on the right-hand side.

Harper River Track

The initial section to Hamilton Hut is on DOC's Cass Saddle–Lagoon Saddle Track and through Craigieburn Forest Park. The final portion of the track is adjacent to Glenthorne Station and finishes at Harper Rd. Here trampers are able to walk a route based on an unformed legal road, which runs along the Harper River fringe.

Cora Lynn Carpark to Hamilton Hut - 15.5km / 7-8 hours

The track climbs a short distance from the carpark to Bealey Hut, a basic 6 bunk hut off on a short side trail to the right. Beyond the hut, the track continues to climb through beech and exotic forest. It then traverses the broad north face of Mt Bruce, initially through the forest but then through open tussock country. This is up towards Lagoon Saddle.

From the Saddle, follow board-walked sections down to the bushline. Lagoon Saddle A-Frame Shelter (2 people) is a short distance lower down. The track then descends to the Harper River. The next section down to West Harper Hut has numerous river crossings, but these are straightforward in normal conditions.

West Harper Hut, with its dirt floor and canvas bunks, provides historical interest and welcome shelter in poor weather. Beyond the hut, the route is an all-weather one. The Harper River is crossed on a swing bridge. There is also a swingbridge across Hamilton Creek near Hamilton Hut.

Hamilton Hut to Harper Rd - 18km / 5-6 hours

Return to the sign at the true left side of Hamilton Creek. From here Te Araroa heads down to the Harper River confluence, beyond which the track follows the Harper River downstream. For much of the way, an old 4WD track can be used but this leads to numerous river crossings.

If the river is high, it is possible to remain on the true left all the way down to the Pinnacles without too much additional effort or time, except for a spot where a ravine has formed. This means a river crossing cannot be avoided. The river can pool adjacent to this point, so if the water is high, waiting it out or retreating to Hamilton Hut could be the wisest course of action.

The track remains within Craigieburn Forest Park until about a 1/3 of the way down to the Pinnacles. It then enters Glenthorne Station (we ask that respect is given when on this station and please stick to the route — no shortcuts. If you do, you will be charged with trespassing by the landowners) on a route based on an unformed legal road. This is along the fringe of the Harper River on the true left side. The Pinnacles become visible lower down across the river on the true right side.

Below the Pinnacles, the track continues down the Harper River, which trampers need to ford to make further progress. The best place to do this is above the Avoca River confluence. The Avoca, in turn, is crossed separately. Continue down the farm track to Harper Road and cross Harper River on the road bridge.

Harper Road reaches a junction near Harper Village where the Harper River Track ends. If you need somewhere to stay, then there is a free overnight campsite on Trustpower-owned land about 300m distant. This is down the road marked with the “2km to Lake Coleridge” sign. The campsite is signposted on the left-hand side of this road. Water is available from a tap in the campsite, and there is a modern long-drop toilet. A shelter built by Te Araroa benefactor Stephen Yeats in 2022 provides a welcome refuge from rain, wind or sun on the otherwise unprotected site.

For One (previously Vodafone) subscribers only, cellphone connection is possible at the end of the Harper River Track but not at the Harper Campsite, also referred to as the Trustpower Campsite. Cell signal starts where the trail leaves the floodbanks and crosses a wooden fence (SOBO), and continues past the Trustpower work site as far as the plywood signboard. For NOBO, you will pass through the tiny Harper Village to a T intersection. The campsite is to the left, cell signal and Te Araroa northbound is to the right

- Note - it is 48km from Hamilton Hut to Lake Coleridge - only the fastest walkers should attempt to do this in a day. There are NO places to camp between Harper Village and Lake Coleridge, so the recommended approach is to camp at the Harper Village campsite and then go from there to Lake Coleridge in a day — plan to reach Lake Coleridge before 5pm to maximise your chances of hitching a lift out to Rākaia Gorge/Methven. There is now excellent camping or dormitory accommodation on Te Araroa at km 2275.4, just before Lake Coleridge Village. Details below. Otherwise you'll need to walk to Lake Coleridge Village and hitch out that day, or pick up a hitch along Harper Road if you don't plan to use the local accommodation.

From Harper Village, travel 24km along Harper Road past Lake Selfe, and Lake Evelyn and over the Ryton River Road Bridge to the Homestead Road junction.

- Note: Take extreme care, this road has a 100km/h speed limit, and drivers are often not expecting walkers. Wear hi-viz clothing/pack cover, and do not use headphones. Stick to the extreme edge of the road. A person who drives this road daily and often picks up walkers has asked specifically for Te Araroa hikers to be reminded that it is safer for hikers in pairs or groups to all move to the same side of the road when a vehicle approaches. If you occupy both shoulders, he has to choose which one to avoid.

Turn right here, and Te Araroa's next section, the Lake Hill Track, starts at the stile about 900m down on the right-hand side of the road.

Lake Hill Track - 3.5km / 1¼ hours

The Lake Hill Track provides access to a section of the Lake Coleridge foreshore and joins Homestead Road with Coleridge Intake Road. In the process, it follows a narrow strip of public land which adjoins the private property.

- Note: Walkers are asked to keep strictly to the marked route and to respect the property rights of the adjoining landowners. This includes giving way to stock and farm operations and adhering to the 'no dogs, camping or fires' conditions of access.

The track starts on Homestead Road at a stile, which is 900m from the junction with Harper and Lyndon Roads. Travel is in the direction of Lake Coleridge and is initially easy and through farmland where stock are likely to be grazing.

After about 700m, the marked route passes through a tussock section as it crosses a wetland fringe. Conditions may be damp underfoot here.

Beyond the wetland, the route joins the edge of a farm track and then veers to the left on a foot track as it approaches the lakeshore. There is a short climb and descent to avoid a bluff, and then about half a kilometre of level lakeside walking before the foot track crosses another farm track.

From the far side of the farm track, the marked route ascends away from the lake. After a short climb, the gradient eases, and the track continues to follow poles towards Coleridge-Intake Road. On its way to the road, the track joins and then departs from a farm track. Trampers need to be vigilant in following the markers to ensure they stay on the legal route.

The track ends on Coleridge-Intake Road at the stile next to the farm gate. This is about 1.3km below the intersection with Algidus Road.

Walk south up Coleridge Intake Road (away from the lake) from the Lake Hill Track trailhead towards the Algidus Road intersection. Continue through the intersection on Coleridge Intake Road. Beyond the cattle stop, the road and surrounding land are owned by Trust Power. Coleridge Intake Road enters a pine forest and veers to the right.

The track leaves Coleridge Intake Road on the right as the road makes a hairpin turn to the left. Look out for markers here and a track that has been cut through the broom. This formed track quickly opens up and, for a few metres, follows the pipes down towards the power station before turning left to enter a pine forest.

Lower down the track leaves the forest, turns right, and descends directly through open country. It enters the Arboretum at a gate on the left and follows a well-formed path passing a number of signposted specimen trees along the way. The track end is through the memorial gate marking the exit from the Arboretum to Hummocks Road.

The Arboretum comprises a site of approximately 2 hectares and was established in 1933 by Harry Hart, who served as superintendent of the Lake Coleridge Power Station for 30 years until 1954. It now contains one of New Zealand's best mature conifer collections, including examples of at least two-thirds of the world's pine species.

[Information poster](#)  about the Lake Coleridge area.

[Lake Coleridge Camping](#) 114 Hummocks Road, Lake Coleridge. P: 022 081 0882. Open Mid November 2023 to 28 March 2024. Cash only, per person per night rates: tent \$25, shared bunkroom (byo bedding) \$35. Own meals and transport. Laundry, bathroom facilities are available. Prior notice of arrival would be appreciated but not essential. Register on arrival for camp info and instructions. Arrange your own meals or transport. WiFi is available. We look forward to seeing you

To get around the Rākaia River, turn left on Coleridge Road, then right on ZigZag Road or continue on Coleridge Road. Turn right at SH77 to cross Rākaia Gorge (24km from Lake Coleridge).

Across the second bridge is Rākaia Gorge Campground. To follow the Rakaia bypass route continue west on SH77, then turn right onto Blackford Road, which becomes Double Hill Run Road to the Te Araroa trailhead at Glenrock. Most hikers will go past Blackford Road and take the first left turn (also SH77) to Methven for rest and resupply (40.5km from Lake Coleridge). Methven has two good supermarkets, two pubs, many great cafés and an excellent campground

Conditions

Potential hazards

- Vehicles on road or track take care along SH73 and Harper Rd
- Farming operations adjacent to Harper River
- River crossings - Never cross flooded rivers
- Track exposed to sun, wind or cold
- Weather extremes

How to get here

Transport

Getting there/away

- [Methven Shuttle](#) are a local service who can take hikers to and from the trailheads around the Rakaia and Rangitata Rivers. P: 027 405 2217, Text preferred as cell coverage is limited. E: bookings@methvenshuttle.com. See website for details
- [Methven Travel](#) - 93 Main St , Methven- P: 0800 684 888 for shuttles to/from Christchurch. More details in Rākaia River to Rangitata River section

Accommodation

Accommodation En route

- [The Bealey Hotel](#) - SH 73 12858 West Coast Rd, Arthur's Pass - P: 03 318 9277 - which is 12km southeast of Arthur's Pass and 150km west of Christchurch, offers backpacker and motel type accommodation, a restaurant and bar. Trampers can organize transport from here with most operators passing on their way to Arthur's Pass or Christchurch. ~~The team are also willing to receive bounce boxes for \$10. They also offer a pick-up service for \$10 you can email Matty on stay@thebealeyhotel.com~~
- [Arthurs Pass Eco Lodge](#) - Host Helen Nugteren - P: 027 675 1511 - E: helen@arthurspassecolodge.co.nz - Located on the end of Bealey Spur - run by Helen Nugteren who is also a keen trumper and often joins walkers out on Te Araroa. The Lodge offers bed and breakfast, delicious dinners and packed lunches on request. Bookings essential
- [DOC Bealey Hut](#) - 6 bunks - is a five minute walk beyond the car park at Cora Lynn Rd, up the track and on the right hand side
- [DOC Hamilton Hut](#) - (20 bunks) - a modern 20 bunk hut complete with wood stove and radio link through to the Arthur's Pass Visitors Centre.
- [Harper River Campsite](#) - P: Tel: 03 318 5700 - E: helen.stanger@trustpower.co.nz - campsite close to the shore of Lake Coleridge is available near the tiny settlement of Harper Village at the inland head of the lake. To find it, drive through Harper Village and over the bridge across the Harper Canal, then turn left down towards the lake. You'll find the campsite down this road on the left. The sheltered campsite includes tap water (untreated well water) and an environmental toilet, but with no other services in Harper Village users need to be self-sufficient.
- [The Powerhouse Lodge](#) in Lake Coleridge Village (TA 2275.4km) is open Mid November to March 2024 for Te Araroa Trail walkers. Budget tent sites \$25pp, bunkrooms \$35pp and Lodge options \$50pp. Wi-Fi, outdoor kitchen, hot showers, washing facilities and snacks available. Kiwi hospitality at its best. Bounce Boxes can be received and held here. No bookings necessary, more info on Facebook or call 022 081 0882. The Lodge is also the pickup and drop off point for the [Methven Shuttle](#).
- [Rākaia Gorge Society Camping Ground](#) - 6686 Arundel Rākaia Gorge Rd - P: 03 302 9353 - The campground has tent sites, a sheltered cooking area, showers, toilets and water.

Note: There is no free camping near Lake Coleridge Village. The official campgrounds in the Lake Coleridge area are at Harper Village (free) and Rākaia Gorge (small charge). There are no areas where Freedom Camping is legally permitted between these two campgrounds and with increasing numbers of walkers enjoying Te Araroa, landowners are becoming more likely to move people on who are camping illegally. If you are solely camping you need to plan your journey to use the official campgrounds.

Methven

- [Methven Camping Ground](#) - 72 Barkers Road, Methven (next to the A & P show grounds, just a three minute walk to the centre of the township), P: 03 302 8005, M: 021 0818 5546. Daren and Rhonda Saunders. Campsite with use of toilets, shower, kitchen, lounge \$15. Cabins for single or double - special rate for TA walkers. Transport to trailheads sometimes available. No charge for accepting supply boxes E: methvennz@hotmail.com
- [Mt Hutt Bunkhouse and Cottage BBH](#) - 8 Lambard St, Methven - P: 03 302 9122 or 0273 464 968

- [Alpenhorn Chalet](#), 44 Allen St, Methven - P: 03 3028779 - E: info@alpenhorn.co.nz
- [Methven Lodge and B&B](#), 182 Main St, Methven - P: 03 3029047 - E: info@methvenlodge.co.nz
- [Snow Denn Lodge](#), 6 Bank street, Methven - P: 03 3028999 – E: snowdenn@xtra.co.nz or find us on Facebook – special Te Araroa rate \$37 in dorm rooms 10% discount off private rooms. www.snowdennlodge.co.nz. We can hold resupply boxes \$5.00 per box. Call or email us to arrange.
- Big Tree Lodge 25 South Belt, Methven. Phone Peter Wilson 02902012762, email jiaxingyuki@gmail.com 10% discount for TA walkers for phone bookings, No charge for accepting supply boxes. Transport to or from trailheads can be arranged

Christchurch

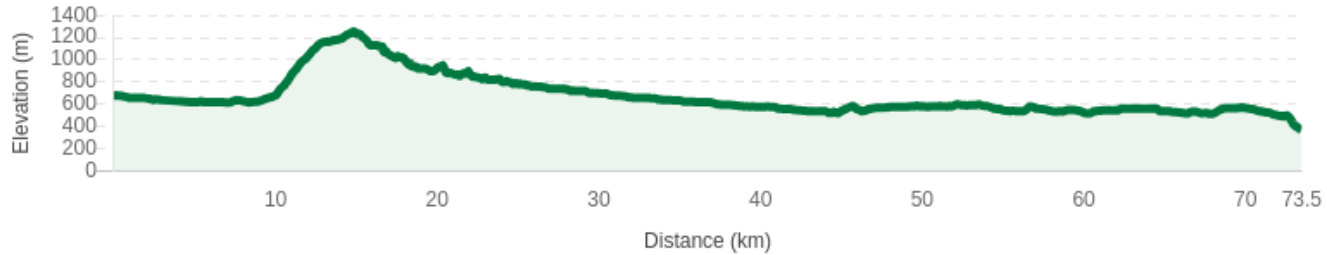
- St Albans, Christchurch very close to the city centre. Te Araroa alumni from 2019-20 and would someday like to finish the SI part as well. "We have a converted and carpeted garage with sliding door, kitchen and laundry which we can offer to anyone who is in need. Might even have a trundle bed shortly." Also, happy to pickup and drop off any hikers if I'm free as long as they can offer to pay for the cost of the petrol. 022 309 9637 harun.shaikh@gmail.com

Food And Supply

Resupply

- [Topnotch Four Square Supermarket](#) - 33/37 McMillian St, Methven - P: 03 302 8114
- [Supervalue Supermarket](#) - The Mall, Methven P: 03 302 8050

Track Elevation and Map



More information

[Te Araroa Canterbury trail notes, including information about accommodation, transport and resupplying](#) [↗](#)

- [Map 112](#) [↗](#)
- [Map 113](#) [↗](#)
- [Map 114](#) [↗](#)
- [Map 115](#) [↗](#)

General information

- [Methven i-SITE Visitors Centre](#) [↗](#) - 160 Main St, Methven - P: 03 302 8955 - E: methven@i-site.org

Before starting Te Araroa either as a through-walker of the whole country or a section walker, [please register on Te Araroa website](#) [↗](#). Please also [visit the website](#) [↗](#) or [download the app](#) [↗](#) for detailed maps, trail alerts and other relevant information.

This track is part of the Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa track database. Herenga ā Nuku has [maps and advice about public access to the outdoors](#) [↗](#).

We encourage you to continue gaining the skills and knowledge required for a safe trip. The NZ Mountain Safety Council has lots of free resources and information you can use. These can be accessed via www.mountainsafety.org.nz [↗](#).

We recommend trying these online learning tools:

- [Trip Planning](#) [↗](#)
- [Tramping/field Skills](#) [↗](#)
- [Basic Navigation](#) [↗](#)
- [River Safety](#) [↗](#)

Additionally, check out the range of helpful videos available from the NZ Mountain Safety Council [YouTube channel](#) [↗](#).

