

The Northland Forests



Walking

Difficulty

Hard

Length

99.4 km

Journey Time

4–5 days

Region

[Northland](#)

Sub-Region

[Far North](#)

Part of Collections

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

Te Araroa trail section: From Ahipara, you'll walk east to Kaitaia, then through Raetia Forest and over some of the highest peaks in Northland, then on through Ōmahuta Forest and Puketī Forest.

The Herekino Forest has now closed due to Kauri Dieback. From the boat ramp on Ninety Mile Beach please follow the Ahipara road to Kaitaia (18km). Please be careful on this road. From Kaitaia, walkers will need to catch a lift (the road walk is very dangerous as it is State Highway 1 to Ruaroa Road (5km). You can then walk up that road until you come to Takahue Road (6km) and then walk to Takahue (4km). Turn SE on Takahue Saddle Road for 2.5km alongside the Takahue River and keep right at the junction with Warner Rd.

No camping on Warner Road beside the river. There are no amenities at the Warner Road intersection. This is a swimming area for local children and people are understandably concerned about water pollution. There is a campsite with toilets and showers 1.5 km up the track, 1km before the saddle junction for Broadwood.

See the Food and Supply section below for a possible meal stop at 271 Takahue Saddle Rd, just before the climb to the free campsite

Raetea Forest Track - 18km / 9.5hr

This DOC time estimate is low. The Raetea Forest Track may take some walkers 12 to 15 hours.

From the junction with Warner Rd, go right and follow the old Takahue Saddle Road (just a track now) as it turns away from the River and climbs steeply through farmland for 2.5km. At the saddle, turn off left (east) following the orange markings up into the Raetea Forest.

It's a rough climb up to the ridge and onto a 580m peak, around km 139.4. There is a small tent space at the summit.

There is a small camping area approximately 1.5km up the hill (km 136.5) that may or may not have a good fresh water supply, **please note that the water supply after this point is limited or non-existent. The next water supply is at Makene Road (km 153.5), 17 slow kilometres away. Hard going in muddy conditions may required two days. You will need more water** than you might expect. We suggest taking 3 litres, especially if you will be cooking

UPDATE 17 September 2023. This camping area provides a place for a few tents, a picnic table and a rainwater tank. The toilets and shower provided by the landowner are no longer maintained and are unusable. Use a trowel and don't leave mess for others.

The Raetea Forest has some of the highest peaks in Northland, so expect cloud and rain. The bush track follows the ridgeline on a largely west-east basis past:

- the 744m Raetea summit
- an unnamed highpoint of 727m (past a junction with a track leading north on a route out to SH1)
- the 638m Kumetewhiwhia summit

- the 445m Umaumakaroro summit

There is space to camp beside the radio repeater, on a short spur track near Raetea summit (km 142.8).

The track then descends through bush and then private farmland to Mākene Rd, Mangamuka. The exit is into the yard of a house – they are used to walkers and happy to have you pass through – a hello and/or thank you always goes down well. There are a number of working dogs here whose bark is literally worse than their bite. Walk steadily down the driveway and you'll be fine.

Otherwise, and preferably, to avoid the dogs, SOBOs can follow the orange signs to the right and pass around the right side of the house. NoBo's can follow the signs to the left, and pass to the left of the house. Please leave any gates as you find them.

There is a small camping area approximately halfway down Makene Rd, with toilet, river water, picnic table and washing line (km 153.5). By Donation.

Walk northeast along Makene Rd to the junction with SH1. Then carefully follow SH1 south for 5.5km, being wary of fast traffic. This takes you through Mangamuka settlement and then south to Mangamuka Bridge.

From Mangamuka Bridge, continue south SH1 for almost a kilometre

Turn east onto Omahuta Road and walk 5km to the junction with Jacksons Road and Omahuta Forest Roads (this connection 13km/3hr).

Ōmahuta-Puketī Forest Track - 32km / 2 days

Warning: Some beehives en route, poison and trapping for possums, rats and mustelids occurs within this forest. Goat control operations using contract hunters also occur within this forest.

For forest hygiene and visitor safety reasons it is requested that in Ōmahuta and Puketī Forests camping is restricted to the sites recommended by DOC – those being Blackbridge Road and Puketī Forest HQ (eastern edge of Puketī Forest). These sites have been identified for camping as they are away from kauri, therefore reducing the risk of spreading kauri dieback disease and will be poison exclusion zones for possum control operations. Therefore please plan around using only these two sites.

From the Jacksons Road junction (km 166.3), head east on well-formed single-track forestry roads (vehicles are rare). 700m up Omahuta Forest Rd, take the left fork onto Kauri Sanctuary Rd. Keep travelling uphill for approximately another 6km past an airstrip on your left and occasional beehives tucked into the forest (just button up and walk gently past). The next major junction is where Kauri Pā Road runs off left. That's the one to follow until turning off it onto Blackbridge Road km 173.7.

Ōmahuta-Puketī Forest Track is a challenging, wet route using river canyons – subject to flash floods. You need good equipment and navigation skills. Only go in dry weather.

Apple Dam campsite, which may be mentioned in older track notes and maps, is now closed because of the potential spread of Kauri Dieback disease. Camping is available 4 km further along on Blackbridge Road

Continue along the well-formed Kauri Pā Road a further 1km, then fork right onto Blackbridge Road (more 4WD track) at km 173.7

Follow along to cross a concrete ford over a stream (NB: if water is flowing over the top of it, do not proceed as this means water levels in the Mangapukahukahu gorge will be too dangerous). Then climb a further 1.5km until, at the top of the climb, a 4WD track leads left along a soft ridge leading down to Mangapukahukahu Stream. The track is easy to follow down, past two old forestry skid sites. At the second/lower one, a track goes through the pampas grass on the right-hand side. It leads to a rough track (with orange markers) down through trees to the Mangapukahukahu Stream.

There is a new basic DOC campsite with shelter, water tank and toilet on Blackbridge Road at km 177, after the ford and just before the track down to Mangapukahukahu Stream. No fires allowed at Blackbridge Camp

The stream runs through a gorge and is subject to flash floods in heavy rain.

Do not try to go further if there is heavy rain in the region. Return back to the wet weather bypass around the north of the forest.

As long as the weather is clear, walk SE crisscrossing between shoal banks in the stream for 2.5km until meeting up with the Waipapa River. Immediately south (right) of the junction between Mangapukahukahu and the Waipapa, a track leads up the bank and descends to a shoal where there's a shallow crossing of the main river.

A short but very muddy climb up the bank meets up with the Lower Waipapa River Track. Recently upgraded, it was well marked but has suffered some damage in storm conditions in early 2023

Walk 2.5km northeast to the streamside junction with the Pukatea Ridge Track. (The alternative is to try wading between shoal banks in/out of the Waipapa River but there are some deep sections).

The Pukatea Ridge Track climbs steeply, (past a small freedom campsite 30m up the track) and then on up steps to the ridge through young kauri for 3.5km to meet the Takapau Track.

From the junction of Pukatea Ridge and Takapau Tracks, head northeast for 300m to the junction with Walnut Track and Pirau Ridge Road (a well-formed 4WD road). Follow Pirau Ridge Road east for 9 km to the Puketī Forest Headquarters, Waiare Rd. There's a campsite here. Take care on Pirau Ridge Road as vehicles and cyclists also use this road.

If recent heavy rain makes the Mangapukahukahu Stream section unsafe walk past the Blackbridge Road junction at km 173.6, stay on Kauri Pa Road and follow the Omahuta-Puketi Forest Bypass route marked on Map 11 for 25 km to teach Waiare Road, near to Puketī Forest HQ at km 198. There is a possible camping spot at Louie's Stream, 8.8 km along the bypass route

In extreme conditions, it is possible to bypass the **Ōmahuta-Puketi Forest Track** completely and walk along the public roads south of the forests. This alternative is rarely used. Continue south (from Omahuta Road turnoff) on SH1 for 22km, turn left into Puketī Road and walk for 9km and Puketotara Road for 2km, then turn left up Mangakaretu Road to rejoin Te Araroa at km 204.3.

Conditions

Track standard: tramping track

Potential hazards

- Vehicles on road or track. Take care walking on roads, particularly SH1
- Poisons and traps
- Forestry operations. Take care between Diggers Valley Road and Waiotehue Road.
- River canyons - flash floods. Use bypass in times of heavy rain.
- River crossings - Never cross flooded rivers.
- Small stream crossings
- Weather extremes
- Few water sources - carry plenty of water, refill whenever you can.
- Steep drop-offs. Bush track can get muddy and slippery so take care.

How to get here

Northern Start: Boat ramp, Kaka Street, Ahipara

Southern End: Puketī Recreation Centre, Waiare Road

Transport

- Some local accommodation places will provide transfers. Ask when you book.
- Peter Griffiths of Takahue - Can provide a drop-off and pick up service for a small fee and some backpacker accommodation is available. Contact him in advance on P: 09 408 3685.
- Local guide
- Roger Gale - P: 09 409 3807 - E: roger@treeskills.co.nz - is available for guiding through Herekino and Raetea Forests

Accommodation

Northland Forests

- Tramp'Inn (Alan and Hayley Tubbs) - 1479 Diggers Valley Rd (eastern exit of Herekino Forest.) - P: 09 4088851 - E: bullandchicken@xtra.co.nz. Rustic 13-bunk hut and tent sites (by koha - \$10/night), (cold) shower, drinking water and cooking facilities. Tramp'Inn is not on the recommended Te Araroa route for 2023/24. It is accessible from Diggers Valley Road via a path marked as Veza Road on some maps and may be convenient for hikers choosing to follow the road from Ahipara around the southern edge of Herekino Forest to rejoin the previous Te Araroa route after Herekino.
- Peter Griffiths of Takahue - P: 09 4083685 - Can provide limited backpacker accommodation.
- Makene Rd - Eastern exit of Raetia Forest. Camping now available - toilet, river, picnic table and washing line. By donation. Caravan stay available with own solar shower and toilet. Email to book for caravan stay - trishterran@gmail.com
- [DOC Puketi Recreation Centre \(Campsite and Hut\)](#) [↗](#) - Waiare Rd, Puketi Hut booked through DOC - Pewhairangi / Bay of Islands - E: bayofislandsbooking@doc.govt.nz
- Overnight Camping is available at the Old School Grounds (now Takahue Marae), on NW corner of Takahue crossroads. Tenting, Toilets and water refill available and \$10 koha appreciated. For any concerns call Karen Murray 021 0754 246.

Puketi Recreation Area

[DOC Puketi Recreation Area](#) [↗](#) - is located in Puketi Forest, near the [Puketi Forest Hut](#) [↗](#)

Turn off SH10 at Pungaere Rd, 600m north of Waipapa and follow signs to the camp. Access: 7km of gravel. Accessible to vehicles and you can park next to your campsite.

Location - NZTM2000 coordinates: E1672203, N6103217 / Latitude: -35.25809716, Longitude: 173.75371779

Campsite Fees - Bookings are now required for the campground. Adult (18+ years): \$8 per night, Child (5-17 years): \$4 per night, Infant (0-4 years). [Book online](#) [↗](#) or pay cash on arrival at the self-registration stand. A \$10 service fee applies to all phone, email and in-person bookings. The DOC Campsite Pass can be used at this campsite. Please ensure you have the correct funds to pay your camping fees, there is no change facility on site.

Campsite Facilities:

- Approximately 20 campsites
- Cold showers
- Long drop toilets (there is usually toilet paper available, however it pays to take your own)
- Cold water tap

- Fires are currently not allowed due to the increased fire risks during summer

Puketi Forest Hut

Puketi Forest Hut Fees - Adult (18+ years): \$18 per night, Youth (11-17 years): \$9 per night, Child/Infant: (0-10 years): free

[Bookings](#) [🔗](#) are essential.

Facilities:

- 18 beds (two-tier platform bunks)
- Cold tap water - The water is not treated, you may wish to boil it before drinking
- Electricity
- Gas hob with wok burner
- Underbench fridge (small)
- Indoor fireplace (wood is sometimes available – check the wood store, otherwise take your own)
- 1 cold shower
- 2 non-flush toilets
- Indoor tables
- Mattresses

Food And Supply

Water: It is recommended when crossing the Rangihēke Stream that you refill your water supplies if required.

Northland Forests

- **Abhay and Jaya's Homecooked Meal, Takahue:** Look for the sign 'Krishna sanctuary' at 271 Takahue Saddle road, Takahue which is km 135.2 on The Araroa. The start of the Raetia forest section.

The hosts Abhay and Jayanti are offering a home cooked vegan / vegetarian meal, available daily between 1-4pm, starting 2nd October. Recommended donation \$10 for the meal. Bookings essential at least one day in advance of your arrival if you want guarantee of a meal. Tell us if you are vegan or have any food allergies

Also available to use as campsite. See hosts at house first before setting up tents. Composting toilet; drinking water; charging devices; stream for taking a refreshing bath; friendly cows to give a hug. Camping etc by donation.

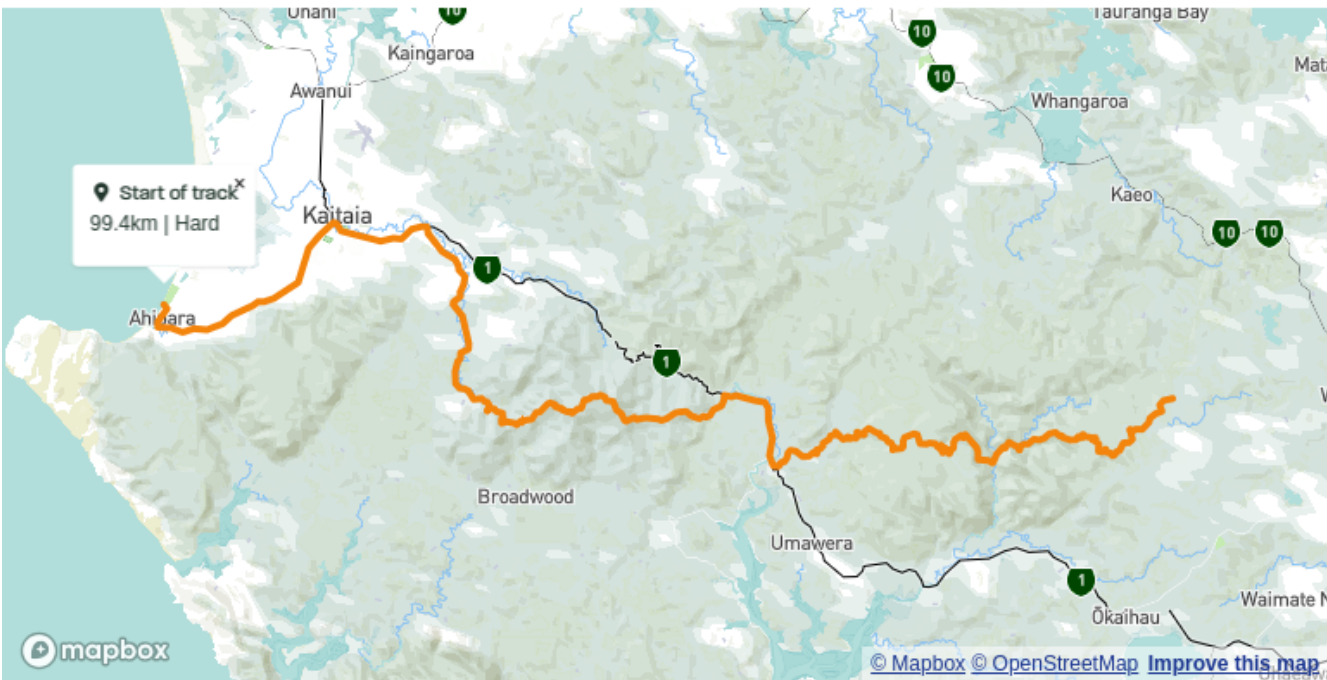
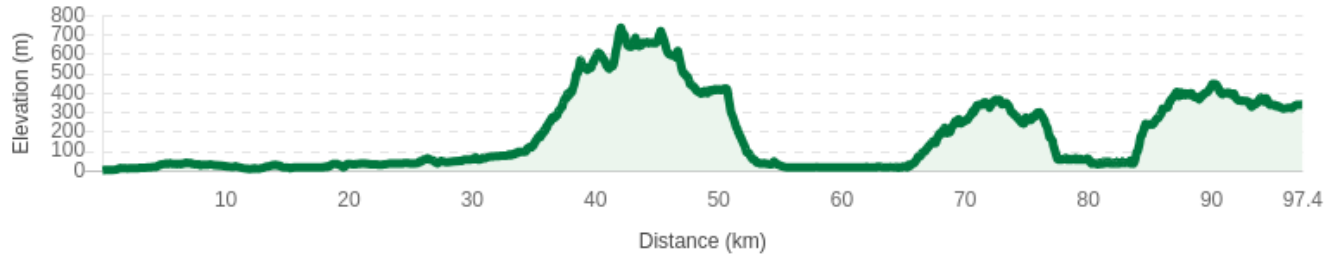
WhatsApp: +64220605862

Message: www.facebook.com/4realknowledge 

or email: krishnacef@gmail.com

- **Mangamuka Bridge Dairy** - SH 1 Mangamuka Bridge - P: 09 401 9184 - takeaways available. Opening hours: Mon-Fri: 7am - 6pm / Sat: 8.30am - 5pm / Sun: 9am - 3pm (these hours may shorten in winter). Hours may vary. In October 2019 Mangamuka Bridge Dairy advised that they will be closed on Saturdays until further notice.

Track Elevation and Map



More information

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

- [Map 7](#) [↗](#)
- [Map 8](#) [↗](#)
- [Map 9](#) [↗](#)
- [Map 10](#) [↗](#)
- [Map 11](#) [↗](#)
- [Map 12](#) [↗](#)
- [Map 13](#) [↗](#)

[Far North i-SITE Visitor Information Centre](#) [↗](#) - Te Ahu, Corner Matthews Avenue and South Road, Kaitaia - P: 09 408 9450 - E: kaitaia@visitnorthland.co.nz

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.

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](#) [↗](#).



