

# Marlborough Region

The Marlborough Sounds – a convoluted labyrinth of bays, islands, coves and waterways – was once the poor cousin of the popular Nelson region to the west. No more. The beautiful shoreline, abundance of sunshine and many possible adventures of the Marlborough Sounds area have now been discovered by overseas travellers, and trampers in particular, thanks to the number of good tracks that have been developed or extensively upgraded.

Two of the tracks covered here, the Queen Charlotte and Nydia Tracks, give trampers an opportunity to see different parts of the picturesque Sounds while spending the nights in something other than a DOC hut. Along the Queen Charlotte Track you can end each day by descending the ridge to a wide variety of resorts and hotels. Opportunities here include everything from sampling fine restaurants and friendly pubs to renting kayaks for a sunset paddle. Some places are even staffed with a masseur. On the Nydia Track you can bunk up at a farm-stay, helping to feed the chickens, or a small backpacker lodge overlooking picturesque Nydia Bay.

The third track, the Pelorus Track, links the Pelorus Scenic Reserve with Nelson via a series of tracks through Mt Richmond Forest Park. No hotels with hot tubs along this tramp, just DOC huts overlooking a beautiful river that swirls through a series of deep pools, which are often home to large trout. End the day with a soak in one of these pools – it's as nice as any hotel spa along the Queen Charlotte Track, but is enjoyed at a fraction of the price.

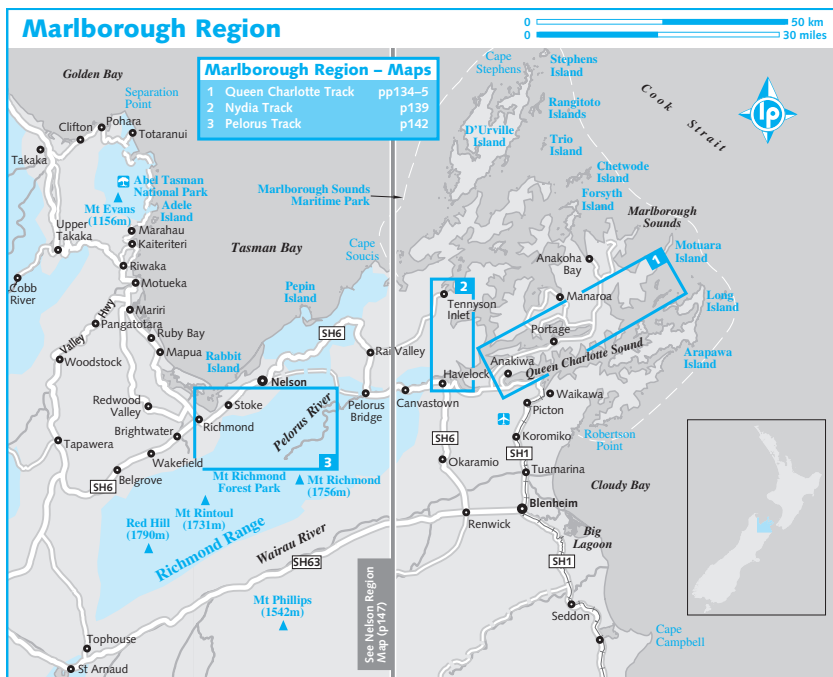
## HIGHLIGHTS

- Sipping beer at **Furneaux Lodge** (p135) on the Queen Charlotte Track, a pub accessible only on foot or by boat
- Viewing the **Bay of Many Coves** (p136) along the Queen Charlotte Track
- Tramping through the beautiful broad-leaved coastal forest of miro, nikau palms and rimu on the **Nydia Track** (p137)
- Taking a long, cool dip in **Emerald Pool** (p140) on the Pelorus River on a hot sticky day

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## HISTORY

The argillite quarries of D'Urville Island are just some of the many archaeological sites in the Sounds that yield information about the long Maori occupation of the area. It appears that the *pa* (fortified villages) and the sites surrounding them were not permanently occupied, and that the Maori were highly mobile, moving with the seasons to harness different resources.

The first European to visit the Marlborough region was Abel Tasman, who spent five days sheltering off the east coast of D'Urville Island in 1642, but never landed. It was to be more than a century before the next European, James Cook, turned up, in January 1770. Cook stayed 23 days and made four more visits over the next seven years to Ship Cove and the stretch of water he named Queen Charlotte Sound. In 1827 the French navigator Jules Dumont d'Urville discovered the narrow strait now known as French Pass, and his officers named the island to the north in his honour.

In June 1840, Governor Hobson's envoy, Major Bunbury, arrived in the Marlborough

Sounds on the HMS *Herald* to gather Maori signatures to the Treaty of Waitangi. On 17 June, on the Sounds' Horahora Kakahu Island, Bunbury proclaimed British sovereignty over the South Island.

In spite of this, the Marlborough area was not the site of an organised settlement; it was more of an overflow from the Nelson colony. When Wairau settlers realised that revenue from land sales in their area was being used to develop the Nelson district, they petitioned for independence. The appeal was successful and the colonial government called the new region Marlborough – approving one of the two settlements, Waitohi (now Picton), as the capital. After a period of intense rivalry between Picton and Blenheim, the capital was transferred peacefully to the latter in 1865. As early as the 1870s, the Marlborough Sounds were becoming a popular recreational area.

## ENVIRONMENT

The Sounds' habitat varies from grassy farmland to gorse-covered regenerating

forest and, most importantly, undisturbed natural forest. The Queen Charlotte and Nydia Tracks offer chances to experience this great diversity, and are representative of much of the Sounds.

Of particular interest to fans of fabulous flora, is the remnant podocarp broad-leaved coastal forest, such as that seen on the Nydia Track. Ngawhakawhiti Bay (p140) is a good example of this kind of forest, with pukatea, tawa, matai, rimu, miro, beech, nikau palm and a colourful blanket of riotous kiekie. Meanwhile, the Queen Charlotte Track is distinctly divided into three recognisable forest types, with coastal broad-leaved forest at Ship Cove, regenerating forest from Kenepuru to Torea Saddles, and mature beech forest between Mistletoe Bay and Anakiwa.

Bird life is prolific. The birds of the forest include tui, bellbird, tomtit and silver-eye. In summer you will hear long-tailed and shining cuckoos, and at night moreporks and wekas. Waders are prominent in tidal estuaries.

## CLIMATE

The Marlborough Sounds area has a temperate climate. High rainfall is experienced in a number of places, as the lush rainforest attests. In the central Sounds the bad weather is mitigated by the surrounding hills. Summer days are particularly pleasant, with the water often still and the only evidence of moisture in the air being the clouds that hug the ridges.

## INFORMATION

### Maps

A good map for the Sounds area is the 1:100,000 Parkmap 336-07 (*Marlborough Sounds*). The map covers both the Queen Charlotte and Nydia Tracks, but only a small portion of the Pelorus Track. The best place to purchase maps is the Picton visitor information centre (right).

### Information Sources

If passing through Blenheim, information and bookings can be arranged at **Blenheim visitor information centre** (☎ 577 8080; www.destinationmarlborough.com; Railway Station, Sinclair St). The **Marlborough Web Directory** (www.marlborough.co.nz) is also very useful, with details on accommodation, dining and tramping tracks.

## GATEWAY Picton

☎ 03 / pop 3600

At the head of Queen Charlotte Sound is Picton, a scenic little port that is a beehive of activity during summer. Picton is the transport hub for the Marlborough Sounds, with the ferry from Wellington landing here, and water taxis and buses transporting visitors to almost every corner of the region.

## INFORMATION

**DOC Sounds Area Office** (☎ 520 3002; soundsao@doc.govt.nz; 14 Auckland St)

**Picton visitor information centre** (☎ 520 3113; www.destinationmarlborough.com; Foreshore) Located 200m from the ferry terminal, this is the main source of information for both the town and the region. In summer, DOC maintains a counter here. Between the two you will be able to obtain tramping information, buy maps and hut tickets, and book accommodation and transport.

## SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT

For tramping equipment or stove fuel there is **Picton Sports & Outdoors** (☎ 573 6963; 8 High St; ☎ 8.30am–5.30pm Mon–Fri, to 2pm Sat, 9.30am–2pm Sun). Just up the street is **Picton Four Square** (☎ 573 6443; 49 High St) for trail food.

## SLEEPING & EATING

**Picton Top 10 Holiday Park** (☎ 0800-277 444, 573 7212; www.blueanchor.co.nz; 78 Waikawa Rd; sites for 2 \$28, cabin \$48-65; ☎ ☎) is only 500m from the town centre and is a well-kept camping ground with communal kitchen, laundry and spa.

At last count there were almost a dozen backpacker hostels in Picton, including the popular **Villa** (☎ 573 6598; www.thevilla.co.nz; 34 Auckland St; dm \$20-23, d \$51; ☎ ☎), which is housed in a renovated villa, and **Sequoia Lodge Backpackers** (☎ 0800-222 257, 573 8399; www.sequoialodge.co.nz; 3a Nelson Sq; dm/d \$20/60; ☎ ☎), where free storage of surplus baggage is available while you're off tramping.

For a step up in style, there's **Broadway Motel** (☎ 0800-101 919, 573 6563; www.broadwaymotel.co.nz; 113 High St; r \$110-175), conveniently located, modern and always clean.

High St, right in the heart of Picton, is loaded with restaurants. The **Dog & Frog Cafe** (☎ 573 5650; 22 High St; ☎ 8am–8.30pm) serves up good breakfasts and sandwiches, and it offers outdoor seating.

**GETTING THERE & AWAY**

**Soundsair** (☎ 0800-505 005, 520 3080; www.soundsair.co.nz) has regular air service across Cook Strait to and from Wellington (adult/child \$79/67). A free shuttle bus is provided between Picton and the airstrip in Koromiko, 8km south of town.

Numerous buses go south from Picton to Blenheim and Christchurch, and west to Nelson. **Atomic Shuttles** (☎ 0800-248 885, 573 7477; www.atomictravel.co.nz) is the cheapest, with buses to Christchurch (\$35, five hours), Greymouth (\$60, nine hours) and Nelson (\$20, two hours).

Other bus lines are **InterCity** (☎ 573 7025; www.intercitycoach.co.nz) and **K Bus** (☎ 578 4075; www.kahurangi.co.nz) to Nelson, the Heaphy Track and Abel Tasman National Park.

Departing from the Picton ferry terminal are the **Interislander** (☎ 0800-802 802, 04-498 3302; www.interislander.co.nz) ferries, which shuttle up to six times daily across Cook Strait to Wellington (adult/child \$60/40). Its *Lynx* ferry is a high-speed catamaran that cuts the three-hour trip to little more than two hours.

**QUEEN CHARLOTTE TRACK**

<b>Duration</b>	4 days
<b>Distance</b>	71km
<b>Track Standard</b>	easy tramping track
<b>Difficulty</b>	moderate
<b>Start</b>	Ship Cove
<b>Finish</b>	Anakiwa
<b>Nearest Town</b>	Picton (p131)
<b>Transport</b>	boat, bus
<b>Summary</b>	Tramp around bays and along ridges between Queen Charlotte and Kenepuru Sounds, combining beautiful coastal scenery with accommodation in interesting lodges, hostels and resorts.

Those put off by the number of people encountered on the Abel Tasman Coast Track may wish to consider the Queen Charlotte Track. It connects historic Ship Cove with Anakiwa (Cave of Kiwa), passing through privately owned land and DOC reserves. The coastal forest is lush, and from the ridges you can look into either Queen Charlotte or Kenepuru Sounds.

In recent years, sections of the track have been rerouted, making it a less rugged walk

along the ridge. There are still some long climbs and descents, but the track is now well-defined and suitable for people of all ages and average fitness.

Keep in mind that mountain bikers are permitted here, and they will be encountered often on the Queen Charlotte Track (see opposite). The exception is on the section from Ship Cove to Kenepuru Saddle, where they are banned from December through February.

Scattered along the Queen Charlotte Track is a wide range of accommodation – some offering fine restaurants, waterfront pubs and even spas. It's one aspect of the tramp many people like; you spend the day tramping, but at night you can enjoy a hot shower and a cold beer.

The tramp can be done in segments or as a single three- to five-day journey. A good two-day tramp is from Ship Cove to Punga Cove (27km), while a recommended day walk is from Torea Bay (a short boat ride from Picton) to Mistletoe Bay (9km).

**PLANNING**  
**When to Tramp**

The track can be tramped year-round, with summer being a pleasant and popular time to be in the Marlborough Sounds.

**What to Bring**

The sun can be intense along the Queen Charlotte Track, and at times there is little or no shade for protection. Bring a wide-brimmed hat and good sunscreen. Also pack an extra water bottle; along the crest of the ridge you can go long stretches between water sources.

**Maps & Books**

The 1:100,000 Parkmap 336-07 (*Marlborough Sounds*) covers the entire track in sufficient detail. For better coverage you would need to purchase four maps in the 1:50,000 Topomap 260 series: P26 (*French Pass*), Q26 (*Cape Jackson*), P27 (*Picton*) and Q27 (*Cook Strait*). With the exception of the first day, most of the track is on P27 (*Picton*).

The book *Marlborough Sounds Maritime Park* is an excellent introduction to the area. The small DOC *Queen Charlotte Track* pamphlet has a brief account of the stages, and is useful for planning.

**MOUNTAIN BIKING ON QUEEN CHARLOTTE TRACK**

The biggest change on the Queen Charlotte Track in recent years is the increasing number of mountain bikers. The track became more bike-friendly when major segments of it were rerouted in the late 1990s, after which the number of off-road cyclists exploded.

The result was a conflict between trampers and bikers, which the New Zealand Mountain Bike Association, Destination Marlborough and DOC stepped in to resolve. What they came up with is a list of rules to encourage goodwill among users on the track.

- Mountain bikers are allowed on the Kenepuru Saddle to Anakiwa section any time of the year, but only from Ship Cove to Kenepuru Saddle during March to November.
- Bikers should give way to walkers; trampers have the right of way at all times.
- Bikers need to avoid excessive braking as it can damage the track surface, especially after rain.
- Bikers need to control their speed and not surprise trampers from behind; use a bell or give a yell.
- Trampers need to respect the bikers' right to be there, and share the track with them.

You can rent bikes in Picton, and most water taxis will carry them to the track for you. If you're interested in biking and walking the Queen Charlotte Track, the **Marlborough Sounds Adventure Company** (☎ 0800-283 283, 573 6078; www.marlboroughsounds.com) has a three-day Ultimate Sounds Adventure (dorm accommodation \$495, in double rooms \$695). The trip includes bicycle and kayak rental, plus all transport and accommodation. You walk from Ship Cove to Endeavour Inlet the first day, kayak the second day to Portage Resort Hotel, and mountain bike the third day.

**Lodges & Camp Sites**

There are no DOC huts along the Queen Charlotte Track, but there are six **camping grounds** (adult/child \$6/1.50), many of them in spectacular settings.

The lodges and resorts along the track are covered in the tramp description, along with contact information. It's best to book beds or rooms to ensure you have a place to stay each night. In the Christmas and Easter holidays many places will be booked a month, or longer, in advance.

An alternative is a Freedom Walk package (\$480) offered by the **Marlborough Sounds Adventure Company** (☎ 0800-283 283, 573 6078; www.marlboroughsounds.com). The package includes three nights accommodation on the track at Furneaux Lodge, Punga Cove Resort and Portage Resort Hotel, along with a packed lunch each day, water transport to the track and luggage transfer, so all you carry is a day-pack.

**Guided Tramps**

The **Marlborough Sounds Adventure Company** (☎ 0800-283 283, 573 6078; www.marlboroughsounds.com) in Picton offers a range of guided tramps along the Queen Charlotte Track, including some that combine tramping with kayaking or mountain biking. Trip

prices cover all transport, lodging and food, and options include a five-day walk (\$1390) and a four-day paddle-and-walk (\$1120).

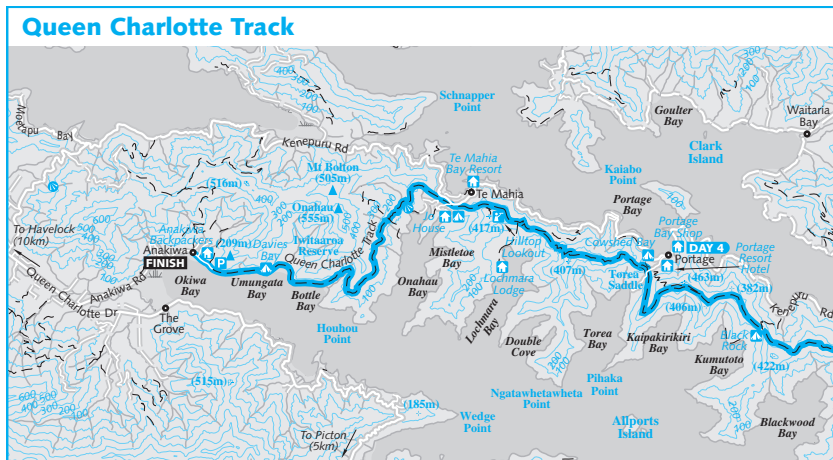
**GETTING TO/FROM THE TRAMP**

The only way to reach the start of the track at Ship Cove is by boat, a 45-minute trip from Picton. There are several water taxis that can take you to the start or drop you off at spots along the track. Some will also forward your luggage to any hotel or resort they service.

**Endeavour Express** (☎ 573 5456; www.boatrides.co.nz) departs the Picton town wharf daily at 9am, 10.30am and 1.15pm during summer for Ship Cove (adult/child \$45/30). It also has a package that includes pack transfers and boat pick-up at Anakiwa (adult/child \$70/50). The fare from Anakiwa to Picton is \$25 per adult and \$20 per child.

Slightly more expensive is **Cougar Line** (☎ 0800-504 090, 573 7925; www.cougarlinecruises.co.nz), which departs Picton at 8am, 10am and 1.30pm daily from October through April. From May to September it departs at 9am and 1.30pm. It charges \$75 for transport to Ship Cove, a pick-up from Anakiwa, and pack transfer during your tramp.

**West Bay Water Transport** (☎ 573 5597; www.westbay.co.nz) and **Beachcomber Fun Cruises**



☎ 573 6175; www.beachcombercruises.co.nz) also offer several one-day options, allowing you to walk short sections of the track.

From the Anakiwa car park you can also catch the **Rural Mail** (☎ 574 2433, 027-255 8882) van, which can pick you up between 10am and noon Monday to Saturday for the trip to Picton (\$10). You must book and prepay for this service at the Picton visitor information centre.

## THE TRAMP

### Day 1: Ship Cove to Furneaux Lodge 4–5 hours, 15km

It is fitting that the drop-off point and the start of the track is Ship Cove. Cook anchored here five times between 1770 and 1777 (once in the *Endeavour* and four times in the *Resolution*), and there is a prominent memorial on the grassed area beyond the jetty. It's not hard to imagine why Cook returned four times to this poignantly beautiful spot. Today, Ship Cove is a picnic area with tables, toilets and a beach, all centred around the Cook Memorial.

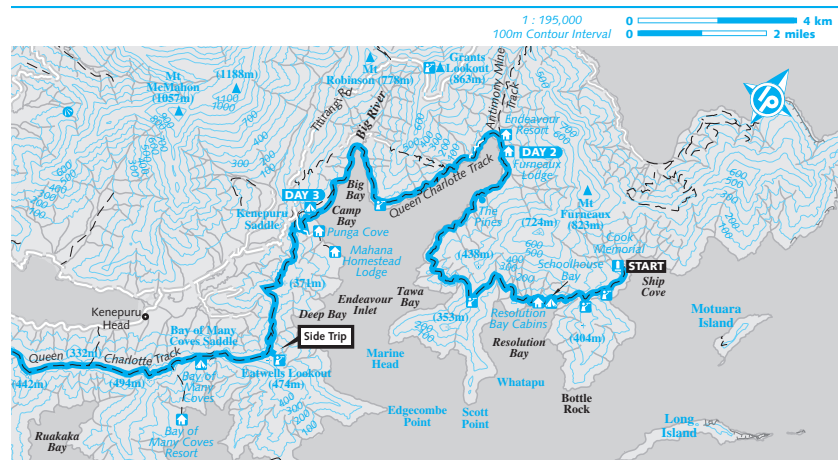
The track climbs quite steeply, at first through podocarp and broad-leaved forest of kahikatea, rimu and kohekohe with an understorey of ferns and pigeonwood, and then into beech forest. About 45 minutes up there is a **lookout** over Motuara Island and outer Queen Charlotte Sound. Cook declared sovereignty over the South Island from Motuara, now a bird sanctuary.

It is about 10 minutes from the lookout to a saddle at the top of the ridge, where there is an **observation platform** and sweeping views down to Resolution Bay. The track drops steeply to the bay and then sidles the hill until it comes to a signposted junction. The track to Schoolhouse Bay camp site is down the left fork, which heads back in the direction of the saddle. No fires are permitted at the camp site. Continue southwest (right fork), reaching **Resolution Bay** two hours from Ship Cove.

In Resolution Bay you cross private land with sheep, so you need to respect the owner's wishes regarding access and gates. The track passes **Resolution Bay Cabins** (☎ 579 9411; reso@xtra.co.nz; camp sites for 2 \$30, dm \$30, cabins & cottages per person \$30), a delightfully rustic place. Even if you don't plan to spend the night, a sign invites you to stop in for hot drinks and muffins, which is hard for many trampers to pass up on a rainy day.

The track climbs out of Resolution Bay – initially along a bulldozed path, then an old bridle path – and in 1½ hours reaches a **saddle** between the bay and Endeavour Inlet. There are benches here, so you can plop down after the long climb and enjoy the stunning views of Endeavour Inlet. Stay long enough and most likely a weka will pop out looking for a hand-out.

The descent provides additional views of the inlet along the way. You bottom out and then pass through a cluster of holiday homes and boat sheds known as the



**Pines.** From here the track stays in the forest until it arrives at a signposted spur track to Furneaux Lodge, reached 25 minutes from the Pines, or 1½ hours from the saddle.

**Furneaux Lodge** (☎ 579 8259; www.furneaux.co.nz; dm \$30-35, chalets/studios \$195/225) is ensconced in turn-of-the-century Britishness, with manicured lawns, gardens, tennis courts and a fountain, as well as a restaurant and possible the only pub in New Zealand accessible by foot or boat only. You can stay in its backpacker lodge, an old stone cottage called the Croft, or in more comfortable self-contained chalets or studios.

### Day 2: Furneaux Lodge to Camp Bay 4 hours, 12km

The track wanders through a regenerating forest and then, in 1km, emerges into an open area and passes **Endeavour Resort** (☎ 579 8381; www.endeavourresort.co.nz; dm \$30-35, cabins \$75), which has a backpacker lodge and eight cabins along with showers, laundry and kayaks.

About 10 minutes past the resort you use a swing bridge to cross the stream that empties into the inlet. On the other side of the bridge is a signposted junction. To the north (right) is the Antimony Mine Track, a two-hour return walk to the narrow and dark remains of abandoned antimony mines. The Queen Charlotte Track continues south (left fork) as a grassy corridor that hugs the western side of the inlet, passing through private land where

one of the owners occasionally sets up a fruit stand.

Just before a boat shed, where a sign indicates 'Big Bay 2 Hrs', the Queen Charlotte Track climbs away from the shoreline. For the next 8km the track passes through regenerating bush as it skirts the western side of Endeavour Inlet above the shoreline. The walking is easy, with only gentle climbs and descents, and along the way you're treated to views back to Furneaux Lodge across the inlet.

Within 1½ hours of passing Endeavour Resort, the track rounds the ridge separating Endeavour Inlet from Big Bay and you arrive at a **view point** into Big Bay. A sign here announces you're halfway to Camp Bay from Furneaux Lodge. The track swings northwest and in 30 minutes you cross Big River on a swing bridge. Camp Bay is an hour away, and is reached after a bit of climbing. This section of the trail can be muddy after a hard rain. Eventually you pass a signposted junction to Kenepuru Saddle. Turn left and follow a lower track, which breaks out of the bush at Camp Bay camp site.

From the grassed camp sites it takes about five minutes to reach **Punga Cove Resort** (☎ 0800-806 697, 579 8561; www.pungacove.co.nz; cabins \$70-175, d \$110-145, chalets \$165-210; ☎ ☎). The resort has hillside chalets overlooking beautiful Punga Cove, plus lodge rooms and budget cabins with shared bathrooms and a deck overlooking Endeavour Inlet.

Down at the jetty is a delightful little pub, while above it is the **Punga Fern Restaurant** (☺ breakfast & dinner daily, lunch Fri-Sun), one of the finest along the track.

Further along the bay, about 10 minutes from Punga Cove Resort, is **Mahana Homestead Lodge** (☎ 579 8373, www.mahanahomestead.com; dm/d \$30/65), where every room has a view of the sea, and kayaks and a dingy are available for an evening on the water.

### Day 3: Camp Bay to Portage

8 hours, 23km

This is a tough day's walk. From Camp Bay camp site, the track climbs steeply south to emerge at Akerbloms Rd. Signs direct you to continue climbing along the road. Twenty minutes from Camp Bay you reach Kenepuru Saddle, located at the intersection of Akerbloms and Titirangi Rds. A large signpost indicates the way to the Bay of Many Coves shelter to the south.

The track sidles the ridge, and at first you are treated to views of Deep Bay to the east, but most of the time you are gazing down at the head of Kenepuru Sound to the west. This section of the Queen Charlotte Track has been recently rerouted, and is now a well-benched trail that no longer skirts the crest of the ridge. You're still constantly climbing and descending, but your effort is rewarded with regular panoramas of the inlets and sounds on both sides.

Within two hours of leaving the saddle you arrive at the longest and steepest climb of the day. The track tops off at a signposted spur track to Eatwells Lookout (see opposite). From the junction you begin a long descent that bottoms out at **Bay of Many Coves Saddle**, where a sign announces that the DOC camp site is only 15 minutes away. That 15 minutes involves one final climb before you arrive at the Bay of Many Coves camp site, three hours from Camp Bay. A shelter is perched on the edge of the ridge and has great views of the beautiful Bay of Many Coves. There is also water and toilets, making this a nice spot for morning tea or lunch. If staying, keep in mind that high winds can make pitching a tent a challenge.

From the shelter there is a gentle 40-minute climb to a high point and signposts indicating a spur track to **Bay of Many Coves Resort** (☎ 0800-579 9771, 579 9771; www.bayofmany

covesresort.co.nz; s/d \$95/130, ste from \$360), a very stylish seaside resort with a restaurant, private balconies and a spa where you can get a hot-stone massage after a day on the track. You just might need that massage, because the spur track is a 1½- to two-hour descent along a very steep route that you definitely don't want to be walking in the rain.

For the next hour the Queen Charlotte Track is relatively level, and passes views on both sides of the ridge, before more climbing is encountered. Roughly halfway to Black Rock camp site, or 1½ hours from Bay of Many Coves camp site, the track skirts the south side of the ridge, and for almost 1km you enjoy a continuous view of Blackwood Bay. The track then dips into the bush and emerges to more great views on the north side. Less than 30 minutes from Black Rock you make a long descent, and then an equally long climb, until you top off at the camp site.

Black Rock camp site is a six-hour walk from Camp Bay and two hours from Portage. Its shelter is positioned on the south side of the ridge and has panoramic views, including a vista of Picton across Queen Charlotte Sound. Black Rock also has toilets and drinking water.

From Black Rock the track begins with a gentle climb and then levels out, providing great views for the next 30 minutes. You leave the crest of the ridge and descend into beech forest along the south side for the next hour. This section of the track is relatively new, and in places you can see where DOC workers had to blast out the track along the side of a cliff. Every once in a while you get a glimpse of Queen Charlotte Sound to the south. For the most part, this last stretch is a gentle and easy descent at the end of what is a long day.

Almost two hours from Black Rock you pop out at a war memorial on Torea Rd. The road that crosses the Torea Saddle goes along the same route used by the Maori to haul their *waka* (canoes) from one sound to another, thus saving themselves a considerable sea journey. To the south, Torea Rd leads to a jetty on Torea Bay, where it is possible to catch a water taxi to Picton.

To the north, on Torea Rd, you head downhill to Portage (15 minutes) and Cowshed Bay camp site (20 minutes). In summer Cowshed Bay may have numerous

car campers because of its proximity to the road. In Portage there is **Portage Resort Hotel** (☎ 573 4309; www.portage.co.nz; dm \$25-30, d \$170-295; ☺), which was recently renovated into a more upscale resort, featuring 35 hotel rooms and a backpacker dorm with its own lounge and kitchen. The hotel's Te Weka Restaurant is outstanding – both for its food and the views from your table – while also on site are two bars and a spa. Next to the resort is **Portage Bay Shop** (☎ 573 4445; www.portagecharters.co.nz; dm/d \$30/85), which operates a small store and a backpacker lodge. You can also rent a single kayak from the shop (per hour \$20) to paddle around the quiet waters of Portage Bay.

### SIDE TRIP: EATWELLS LOOKOUT

20 minutes, 74m ascent

The short spur track to the left (east) makes a steady climb to **Eatwells Lookout** (474m), one of the highest points along the Queen Charlotte Track. The climb is worth it. From the lookout you can see both Queen Charlotte and Kenepuru Sounds, and 1203m Mt Stokes, the highest mountain in the Marlborough Sounds, is to the north.

### Day 4: Portage to Anakiwa

7–8 hours, 21km

Return to Torea Saddle and head west on the track. This section follows the ridge proper, and involves the ascent of two features that are each more than 400m high. You begin with the steepest ascent of the trip, a 45-minute climb in which you gain more than 200m before the gradient eases. Within 1½ hours of leaving Torea Saddle you reach the fine **viewpoint** at the top of a 407m knoll. A long descent follows before the track bottoms out in a pasture on private land. You continue on an old bridle trail that gently climbs to a view of Lochmara Bay, and then passes a side trail to **Lochmara Lodge** (☎ 573 4554; www.lochmaralodge.co.nz; Lochmara Bay; dm \$24, d \$70-135, chalets \$145). The wonderful Lochmara bills itself as an 'eco-retreat', and features a spa, kayaks, comfortable accommodation and a deck to enjoy the watery views.

You now begin the steady climb towards the 417m knoll, the highest point of the day. The track skirts its northern flank, begins descending and then comes to the Hilltop Lookout track junction (see right). The descent now steepens until you arrive

at a signposted junction with James Vogel Walkway. The walkway is a 20-minute descent to Mistletoe Bay. This serene little bay was formerly a DOC conservation area, but is now administered by **Mistletoe Bay Trust** (☎ 573 4048; www.mistletoebaytrust.org.nz) and features a small store, picnic area, water, **camp sites** (adult/child \$8/6) and lodge accommodation at the newly renovated **Jo House** (dm/cottage \$30/120). Bookings can be made through the trust. It's a 9km, four-hour walk from Torea Saddle to Mistletoe Bay, making the bay ideal for an extended lunch break, or even a place to spend the night.

Just beyond the junction with James Vogel Walkway, the Queen Charlotte Track crosses Onahau Rd, which heads south to provide vehicle access to Mistletoe Bay, and north to reach **Te Mahia Bay Resort** (☎ 573 4089; www.temahia.co.nz; d \$115-155, ste \$210). Te Mahia has 11 spacious motel rooms, two apartments and a small store, but no dorm beds.

Past the road you follow old bridle paths above Onahau Bay, passing through regenerating forest and skirting grazing land for about 1½ hours before a long, gentle descent through beech forest to Bottle Bay. There are wonderful vistas on this section, with Queen Charlotte Sound visible to the Grove Arm.

From Bottle Bay the track stays near to the water, which sparkles through an understorey of ferns, pittosporums, five-finger, broad-leaved rangiora and tawa. About 2½ to three hours from Mistletoe Bay, you reach the spacious camping area at Davies Bay (Umungata) camp site, which has toilets, drinking water and a picnic area.

The last hour of this long journey is one of its best parts. The track passes through Iwitaarua Reserve and its splendid stands of beech, before emerging at a dirt road with two houses. The Anakiwa car park is another 200m away and features a shelter and toilets. Another 800m west, along Anakiwa Rd, is a public jetty where most of the water taxis pick up passengers for Picton.

If you arrive late and need a place to stay, **Anakiwa Backpackers** (☎ 574 1388; www.anakiwabackpackers.co.nz; 401Anakiwa Rd; dm/d \$25/50) is near the end of the track.

### SIDE TRIP: HILLTOP LOOKOUT

1 hour, 150m ascent

Hilltop Lookout Track is reached three hours from Torea Saddle. Follow the left

fork as it climbs to the **lookout**, located between Lochmara and Onahau Bays. This is the best viewpoint of the entire trip and a rewarding moment as you look back at the ridge you have traversed all the way from Camp Bay.

## NYDIA TRACK

<b>Duration</b>	2 days
<b>Distance</b>	27km
<b>Track Standard</b>	tramping track
<b>Difficulty</b>	easy
<b>Start</b>	Shag Point
<b>Finish</b>	Duncan Bay
<b>Nearest Town</b>	Havelock (right)
<b>Transport</b>	boat, shuttle service

**Summary** Cross the Kaiuma and Nydia Saddles and walk along the sheltered shoreline of historic Nydia Bay; a perfect complement to the Queen Charlotte Track.

The Nydia Track was completed in 1979, and most of it follows old bridle paths through pastures, virgin forest and scrubland. At one point in the early 1900s, steam-powered haulers dragged logs over a saddle into Nydia Bay, the site of a large mill and a 300m wharf. Today the track offers two short and easy days of tramping, which will allow you to appreciate the full beauty of the Marlborough Sounds area. If you've just arrived in New Zealand, this is a good walk to earn your tramping legs.

## PLANNING

For information on when to tramp and what to bring, see p132.

## Maps

Practically the entire track is covered on the 1:50,000 Topomap 260-P27 (*Picton*). A small stretch at the northern end is on 260-O26 (*D'Urville*).

## Huts & Lodges

On Nydia Bay, **Nydia Lodge** (per person \$15, minimum charge \$60) is a complex of DOC huts, 30 minutes' walk from the main track, that sleeps 50 people. It's a deluxe facility, and has a bathroom with showers and a dining room with a kitchen. It is designed for use by schools and commercial groups, but individual trampers can also bunk there. Bookings

should be made through the **DOC Sounds Area Office** (☎ 520 3002; 14 Auckland St, Picton).

There is also accommodation at **Driftwood** (☎ 579 8454; [driftwood@nydiabay.co.nz](mailto:driftwood@nydiabay.co.nz); per person incl meals \$90), a farm-stay near Nydia Bay. Nearby is **Te Mahoerangi Backpackers** (☎ 579 8411; [te.mahoerangi@nydiatrack.org.nz](mailto:te.mahoerangi@nydiatrack.org.nz); dm \$25), an eco-friendly place right on the water.

## NEAREST TOWN

### Havelock

☎ 03 / pop 500

The attractive little town of Havelock is situated at the confluence of the Pelorus and Kaiuma Rivers, 35km from Blenheim and 73km from Nelson. Havelock is the only place where a main road touches Pelorus Sound.

## INFORMATION

There is no longer a DOC office in Havelock. The best place for information is **Rutherford YHA & Travel** (☎ 574 2114; [www.rutherfordtravel.co.nz](http://www.rutherfordtravel.co.nz); 46 Main Rd), which can also book transport to Picton or Nelson, and water taxis to the track.

## SLEEPING & EATING

**Havelock Motor Camp** (☎ 574 2339; 24 Inglis St; sites for 2 \$20, cabins for 2 \$34) is conveniently located near the marina, and has tent sites and very basic cabins.

The friendly **Rutherford YHA Hostel** (☎ 574 2114; 46 Main Rd; camp sites for 2 \$11, dm/d \$22/\$52) has dorm beds in an 1881 schoolhouse, or you can pitch a tent outside.

Havelock is the mussel capital of New Zealand, so naturally the most interesting place to eat in town is **Mussel Boys Restaurant** (☎ 574 2824; 73 Main Rd; ☎ 10.30am-9.30pm). It's unbelievable how many different ways it serves green-lipped mussels.

For food on the trail there's **Havelock Four Square** (☎ 574 2166; cnr Main Rd & Neil St).

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

**K Bus** (☎ 578 4075; [www.kahurangi.co.nz](http://www.kahurangi.co.nz)) runs between Havelock and Picton (\$15, one hour) and Nelson (\$15, one hour). **Atomic Shuttles** (☎ 0800-248 885, 573 7477; [www.atomictravel.co.nz](http://www.atomictravel.co.nz)) also stops at Havelock on its Picton-Nelson route.

## GETTING TO/FROM THE TRAMP

The official start of the track is at the end of Kaiuma Bay Rd, 32km north of Havelock

by road, and the end is at Duncan Bay, 27km northeast of Rai Valley. Both points can be reached by road, but you can also arrange to be dropped off and picked up by boat operators in Havelock. Most trampers arrange a water taxi to Shag Point, and then walk the 3km to the southern end of the track. At Duncan Bay they book van transport back to either Havelock or Picton.

**Rutherford YHA & Travel** (☎ 574 2114; [www.rutherfordtravel.co.nz](http://www.rutherfordtravel.co.nz)) organises transport packages to the track (\$55) that include the water taxi to Shag Point, and van transport back to Havelock from Duncan Bay. You can also add another night staying at either Nydia Lodge (\$70) or Te Mahoerangi Backpackers (\$80).

## THE TRAMP

### Day 1: Shag Point to Nydia Bay

4-5½ hours, 15km

This tramp starts at Shag Point, a rocky promontory that juts into Kaiuma Bay in Pelorus Sound. From here it is 3km to the Nydia Track car park, where you're immediately faced with fording the Kaiuma Stream. During normal weather it is a very shallow crossing. For the next 1km the track winds through a grassy paddock and then swings north and begins to climb towards a 490m point above Kaiuma Bay. You move into beech forest and sidle around the point's western flank, and in one hour descend to cross two branches of the Omahakie Stream.

On the other side, the track re-enters beech forest and climbs steadily to **Kaiuma Saddle**. This is not a high saddle – only 387m – but it is a steady climb, and most trampers need one to 1½ hours to reach it from the stream. Halfway up you pass a waterfall that cascades down a rock slide into a small pool. Views from the saddle are limited to Nydia Bay. Still, it's a pleasant spot to take an extended break or even lunch after the long climb.

From the saddle the track is well-defined and benched, and within minutes you're enjoying grand views of Nydia Bay. The track remains in beech forest until you bottom out in farmland and ford a stream. You cross another paddock (follow the track signs and watch out for the cows) and quickly ford a second stream.



Within four hours of leaving the car park you arrive at Nydia Bay and a sign-posted junction. To the east (right fork) is the track to **Nydia Lodge** (opposite); it's a 30-minute walk to the DOC facility. To the west (left fork) the track skirts the bay briefly and then swings into the beech forest. You climb above the shoreline

and descend to **Driftwood** (p138), reaching it 15 minutes from the junction. From Driftwood the track continues to skirt the shoreline of Nydia Bay, weaving in and out of the bush and passing a handful of private homes and **Te Mahoerangi Backpackers** (p138). Within 15 minutes you pass the Nydia Bay wharf, and within an hour of the wharf you cross a stream and pass an incredible **pool** that is perfect for a soak on a hot day. The signposted junction for the Nydia Bay camp site is just down the track. The camp site has toilets and several sites overlooking the bay.

### Day 2: Nydia Bay to Duncan Bay

4–4½ hours, 12km

From the signposted junction to the camp site, the main track heads left (north) and begins climbing. It's a 1½- to two-hour ascent along the west side of the valley to **Nydia Saddle** (347m). Like Kaiuma Saddle the climb is a constant march but never steep. At the Nydia Saddle trees block most of the views.

The track down to Ngawahakawhiti Bay also passes through thick bush, and it is adequately benched and signposted. Once again, the bush is worth more than just a cursory upward glance. The forest greenery is predominantly made up of beech, kamahi and ferns, with the odd kahikatea and rimu also on show. A sign near the bay describes the bird life that can be observed along the tramp. The broad-leaved coastal forest here is beautiful, featuring a collection of miro, nikau palm, beech, matai and rimu.

There is a toilet located at the point where the track reaches Ngawahakawhiti Bay. From here the tramp on to Duncan Bay remains level and easy almost the entire way, passing along a track that has been cut into the bluff above the water. It will take you an hour from the saddle to reach Ngawahakawhiti Bay, and another hour to get to Duncan Bay car park, where trampers are picked up by van transport. The DOC camp site that used to be located at Duncan Bay is now gone, as the ground was used to expand the car park. The nearest facility is now **Harvey Bay camp site** (adult/child \$6/1.50), a five- to 10-minute drive – or about an hour's walk – further up the road.

## PELORUS TRACK

<b>Duration</b>	3 days
<b>Distance</b>	36km
<b>Track Standard</b>	tramping track
<b>Difficulty</b>	moderate
<b>Start</b>	Maungatapu Rd
<b>Finish</b>	Hacket picnic area
<b>Nearest Towns</b>	Nelson (p147), Havelock (p138)
<b>Transport</b>	shuttle service
<b>Summary</b>	This track offers a remote forest experience up the Pelorus valley at the edge of bustling Nelson. The Pelorus River is noted for its deep green pools, which are the delight of both trout and sore-footed trampers.

Often overlooked by trampers rushing off to Abel Tasman, Mt Richmond Forest Park is right on the doorstep of Havelock, Picton, Blenheim and Nelson. The Richmond Range forms the backbone of the 1771-sq-km park, which covers most of the steep, bush-clad mountains between Blenheim and Nelson, reaching north to the Tasman Sea near Whangamoa Head.

There are more than 250km of cut and marked tracks in the park, with about 30 huts scattered along them. The tracks range from challenging alpine routes, to easy overnight walks suitable for families.

One of the more popular trampers, especially with anglers, is the Pelorus Track. The Pelorus is renowned for its large trout, which often use the river's deep, green pools as their hideaways. But the track doesn't always offer easy access to these pools, so trampers carrying a rod would do well to take an afternoon off – or even an entire day – and be willing to get their boots wet scurrying off-track through the gorges. Trampers without a rod and reel will find the pools delightful after a hot day on the trail.

Officially, the western end of the Pelorus Track is the Hacket picnic area, but it is difficult – although not impossible – to arrange transport from there to Nelson. For this reason, an alternative route into Nelson, the Dun Mountain Track, has been included. This track conveniently lands trampers on Brook St, on the edge of Nelson, and is the more popular finish. Trampers following this route hike directly from Middy Hut to

Nelson, a long seven- to eight-hour day. A better alternative, especially if you get a late start on day one, is to stay the first night at Captain Creek Hut, and hike to Rocks Hut the second night. Rocks Hut, with its mountain views, offers much nicer accommodation than Middy Hut.

## HISTORY

Maori had a number of argillite quarries in the Mt Richmond area, where they mined hard mudstone for weapons and tools. The first European visitors were also attracted by minerals – initially copper and chromium. There was a mining company on Dun Mountain as early as 1852, and Hacket Creek chromite was being removed from open shallow-cuts by the 1860s. There are still parts of an old, benched bullock track – the Old Chrome Rd – near Hacket Creek, on the western side of the forest park.

Gold was discovered in the Wakamarina River in 1861, and within three years thousands of canvas tents had sprung up as miners flocked to the prosperous goldfield, which was one of the richest in the country. The township of Pinedale, in the Wakamarina valley, 8km west of Havelock, earned the nickname Canvastown. However, the boom lasted only until 1865.

When most of the accessible alluvial gold had been mined, quartz reefs were developed. Companies operated in the Wakamarina valley from 1874 until the 1920s.

## ENVIRONMENT

The whole park is covered by forest, with the exception of small patches of alpine tussock around the summits of taller peaks. The bush includes all five species of beech, as well as the podocarp species of rimu, miro, totara, matai and kahikatea. Uncommon birds found in the park include the blue duck (*whio*), the yellow-crowned parakeet, kaka and, occasionally, weka.

## CLIMATE

Mt Richmond Forest Park's climate is similar to that of nearby Kahurangi National Park (see p165). The Pelorus and Aniseed valleys receive some of the highest rainfall in the park. When there are extremely heavy falls, streams might become impassable – although if you wait for a day, or sometimes for just a few hours, water levels

will drop enough for you to safely ford. Flooding should not be a problem on the Pelorus River because the track runs high above it.

## PLANNING When to Tramp

The track is best tramped from October to April.

## Maps

Two maps in the 1:50,000 Topomap 260 series, O27 (*Nelson*) and O28 (*Wairau*), are needed for this route. If you are exiting the route via Dun Mountain Track all you need is O27 (*Nelson*).

## Huts

All huts in Mt Richmond Forest Park, including **Rocks Hut** (\$5), **Captain Creek Hut** (\$5), **Middy Hut** (\$5), **Roebuck Hut** (\$5), **Browning Hut** (\$5) and **Hacket Hut** (\$5), are Standard.

## NEAREST TOWNS & FACILITIES

See Nelson (p147) and Havelock (p138).

## Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve

The most popular area of Mt Richmond Forest Park is **Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve** (☎ 571 6019; sites for 2 \$20, cabins \$35), 18km west of Havelock, where SH6 crosses the Pelorus River. The reserve features nature walks, great swimming holes and a tearoom. The fully serviced DOC camping ground overlooks several swimming holes, and has showers, toilets and gas cookers in a kitchen area.

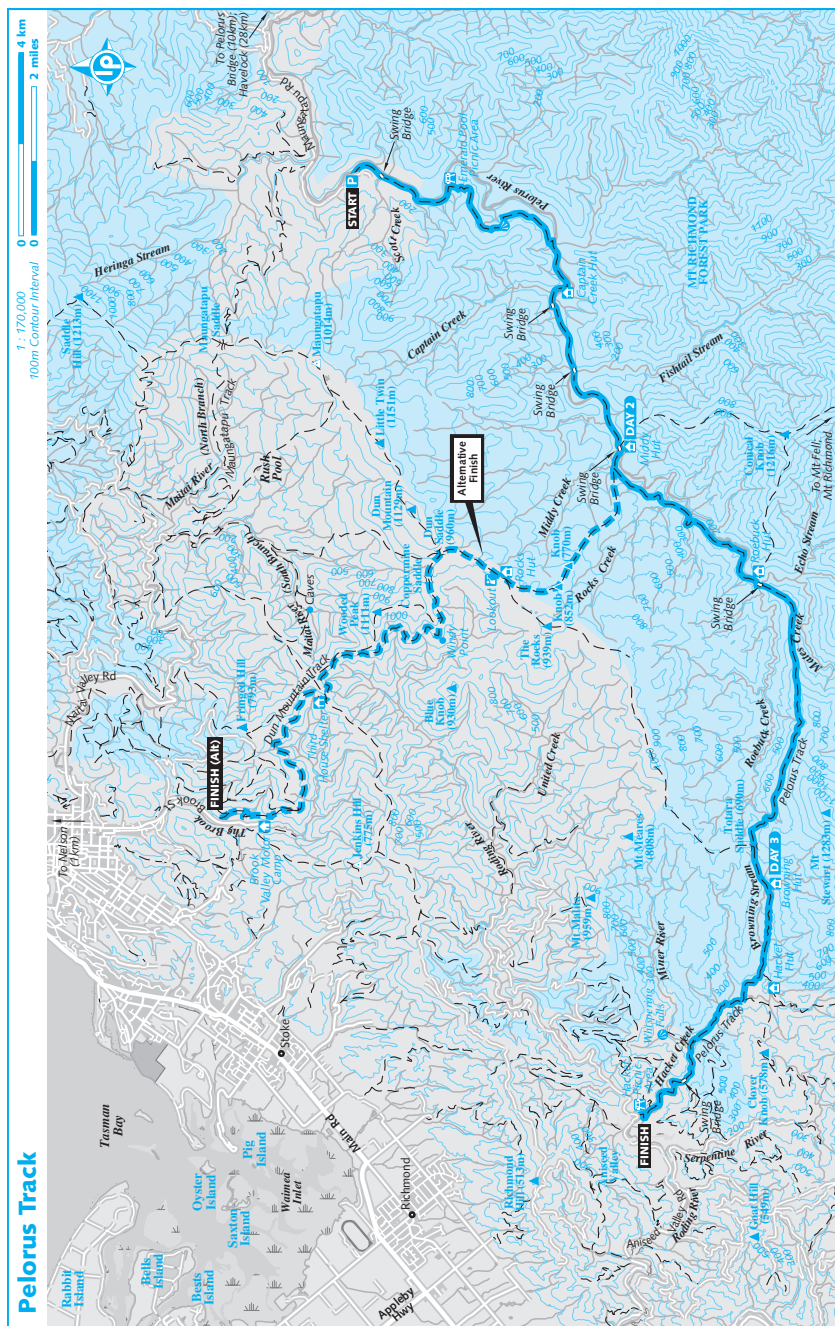
## The Brook

Conveniently near the trailhead for the Dun Mountain Track is **Brook Valley Motor Camp** (☎ 548 0399; 584 Brook St; sites for 2 \$22, cabins \$30-50), with a camp store, laundry and a recreation room. The closest backpacker lodge to this end of the track is the **Gingerbread House** (☎ 548 4854; 42 Westbrook Tce; dm \$23; ☒), which has luggage storage for those beginning and ending in Nelson.

## GETTING TO/FROM THE TRAMP

The start of the track is 13km up the Pelorus River valley from the Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve, along Maungatapu Rd.

The western end of the Pelorus Track is at the Hacket picnic area, at the confluence



of Hacket Creek and Roding River, in the Aniseed valley. This picnic area is 29km from Nelson and is reached by driving 1.5km south of Hope on SH6 and turning east onto Aniseed Valley Rd.

From Nelson, **Trek Express** (☎ 0800-128 735, 540 2289; www.trekexpress.co.nz) supplies an on-demand van transport service to Pelorus River valley trailhead (\$30). It will also pick you up at the Hacket picnic area, transporting you back to Nelson (\$20).

Otherwise, numerous bus companies will drop you off at Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve, which is on the Picton–Nelson route. **K Bus** (☎ 578 4075; www.kahurangi.co.nz) departs Nelson four times daily during the summer, and passes the bridge (\$13) within 45 minutes. Once at Pelorus Bridge, stop in at the tearoom and ask about a lift to the trailhead. Often there is somebody who will provide transport for a small fee.

If you take the alternative finish to the Brook, which is by far the most popular option, you arrive 4km from the Nelson city centre, so transport will not be a problem.

## THE TRAMP

### Day 1: Maungatapu Road to Middy Hut

5–6 hours, 14km

The start of the track is just down the road from the car park at the end of Maungatapu Rd, and begins by descending towards the river. In 10 to 15 minutes you arrive at the first of many swing bridges, this one over Scott Creek, near where it empties into a deep pool of the **Pelorus River**. You continue following the edge of the river on the true left (west) side to enter the forest park, and one hour (3km) from the start arrive at **Emerald Pool**. A picnic table tips you off that you have arrived at the popular day-walk destination. The pool is well named, and if the sandflies are not too thick, or you're not in a hurry, you can take a dip and then lay out in the sun on a gravel bend of the river. The pool also marks the start of the good trout waters up the Pelorus.

At this point the track leaves the river and makes a steep 100m climb through a thick forest of rimu, tawa (quite rare in this park), matai and beech. Within 30 minutes you're sidling the river bluff and the walking is easier. You sidle the river for one hour (3km), descending sharply twice via

switchbacks, the second time right back to the edge of the Pelorus.

The track now swings to the west and in 30 minutes reaches the short side track to **Captain Creek Hut** – located in a clearing just above the river. The hut is a three- to four-hour walk from the car park; it has six bunks but no rainwater supply. Right in front of the hut is a nice pool for swimming, while anglers will be able to access other pools and runs with rod in hand.

From here, the main track continues to follow the river and within 10 minutes crosses **Captain Creek**, a good-sized stream rushing out of the mountains. In another five minutes the track arrives at a swing bridge that spans a tight, rocky gorge high above the Pelorus. If swing bridges make you uneasy, this one will have you gripping its cables all the way across. Once on the true right side (south) of the Pelorus, you climb steeply out of the gorge and then sidle the bluffs until the track descends to a swing bridge across Fishtail Stream, reached one hour (3km) from Captain Creek Hut.

From the creek you climb again, and cross a bush-clad terrace where the Pelorus forms a wide loop. It's another 1km before you pop out at **Middy Hut**, a two-hour (6km) walk from Captain Creek. Nearby is a signposted junction with a track that heads south to Conical Knob (1216m) and Mt Fell (1606m). Middy Hut is a six-bunk hut opposite the confluence of Middy Creek and Pelorus River. The river is close at hand and there is a very deep pool under the nearby swing bridge. Be forewarned, this place gets more than its share of sandflies.

### Day 2: Middy Hut to Browning Hut

7–8 hours, 16km

About 150m west of Middy Hut, a swing bridge crosses the Pelorus River to its true left side. From here you climb sharply to a junction with a track that continues up the spur to Rocks Hut (see Alternative Finish, p144). The Pelorus Track heads southwest (left fork), working its way to a saddle above Rocks Creek and then dropping steeply to the creek some distance upstream from the Pelorus River.

After crossing the creek the tramp becomes more difficult; for the next 4km, the track goes through thick forest and you frequently need to step over protruding tree



roots. The forest is lush here, a mixture of beech and rimu, along with tree ferns, pepper trees and an understorey of ferns.

Eventually the track descends to Roebuck Creek and a pair of swing bridges. The first one crosses the creek; the second extends over the Pelorus River, 200m up-river. Six-bunk **Roebuck Hut** is three to four hours from Middy Hut, and is on an open terrace directly across from the junction of the creek and the Pelorus, which at normal water levels can be forded here.

Return to the swing bridge over the Pelorus River, where on the true left side the track immediately climbs the ridge that separates Roebuck and Mates Creeks. It's a steep 30-minute climb for the first 150m of ascent, and then the track begins to climb at a more gradual rate to **Totara Saddle** (690m). Before reaching the saddle the track works its way across the slopes of the Roebuck catchment, and has good views of Mt Fell and Mt Richmond.

At the saddle there is a junction with a track heading northwards to Rocks Hut (four hours). The main track (left fork) heads west, dropping 180m in 1km. It traverses an open slip and goes through beech forest on the way to **Browning Hut**. This hut is in a large open area on the edge of Browning Stream, and can sleep eight, with mattresses placed on a communal shelf.

#### ALTERNATIVE FINISH: THE BROOK VIA DUN MOUNTAIN TRACK

7–8 hours, 21km, 800m ascent, 880m descent  
Water is scarce along this section, so carry at least 1L with you and refill at Rocks Hut. This is a long day that begins immediately with its longest climb. An early morning start is wise.

At the track junction, 20 minutes out from Middy Hut, take the right fork and continue climbing. For the next 4km it's a steady 600m trudge uphill. At one point you descend from a **770m high point** and then, within 500m, descend again from a **852m high point** with the most noticeable drop of what is basically a three-hour climb with no views. From here you resume climbing, quickly passing moss-covered rock pinnacles, and within 30 minutes arrive at a signposted junction. The left fork is a ridge track that heads southwest to Totara Saddle and then Browning Hut.

The right fork quickly emerges from the bush into subalpine scrub and arrives at **Rocks Hut**, reached 6km or 2½ to three hours from Middy Hut. This is a very appealing 16-bunk hut, with a dining area and outside benches overlooking Mt Richmond and Mt Fell. There are few sandflies (if any) and a rainwater supply. If staying at the hut, follow the Browning Hut track for 30 minutes to check out a series of pinnacles known as the **Rocks**.

From the hut the track heads northeast towards Dun Saddle and quickly passes a side track to the **lookout**, a 10-minute spur track to an open perch with a view to the west. Within 45 minutes you break out of the trees and stunted scrub for good, and then reach **Dun Saddle** (960m). The open saddle is one hour (2km) from Rocks Hut, and is usually too windy to hang around on. The saddle is marked with a large signpost, indicating that Dun Mountain is 45 minutes away (1.5km) via a poled route that heads right. If the winds are light, consider a side trip to climb **Dun Mountain** (1129m) for the excellent views of Nelson and the surrounding region.

You then head left along a barren route, which is not marked nearly as well as the previous section of track (keep an eye out for metal poles), but the views are great. You briefly re-enter the bush, but within 30 minutes of Dun Mountain Saddle you reach **Coppermine Saddle**. This is the start of the old Dun Mountain Railway, New Zealand's first railway, which was constructed to enable horse-drawn carts to haul chromite ore from the mountain to Nelson. The railway is not particularly distinct here, but will be in less than an hour's walk.

The track now begins sidling a ridge off of Wooded Peak, and in 30 minutes (two hours from Rocks Hut) arrives at **Windy Point**. This exposed tip of the ridge is signposted because the winds here are legendary – so much so that at times it can be hard to stand. Hang onto your hat... with both hands. Just as amazing, walk 15 minutes down the track and the roaring winds are often just steady breezes. Departing from Windy Point is the poled Wella Ridge Route to Wooded Peak (1111m), 1½ hours away.

The Dun Mountain Track continues to skirt Wooded Peak, and with every step

looks more like the railroad bed that it is. The walking is easy, a pleasant end to a long day for many. You quickly re-enter the beech forest and 1½ hours from Windy Point you reach **Third House Shelter**. This is strictly a place for a break, as camping is not allowed and there is no water. At this point Brook St is two hours away along a well-signposted trail that still looks like a 4WD track. The final 30 minutes is a rapid descent, ending just north of the Brook Valley Motor Camp (p141). It's 4km from here to Nelson's city centre.

#### Day 3: Browning Hut to Hacket Picnic Area

2 hours, 6km

The track immediately crosses to the true right (north) side of a tributary of Browning Stream. For the next hour it's easy walking through forest and across several eroded stream beds. During high water you can follow a steep, alternative track around these streams and slips. Shortly before crossing Browning Stream for the last time, you pass a side track that leads south (left fork) over a low saddle to six-bunk Hacket Hut. The main track crosses the stream after five minutes, near the confluence with Hacket Creek, which is forded immediately.

The other side of Hacket Creek is private farmland, but you don't need permission to walk through it. An easy, benched track follows the creek on its true left (west) side for an hour, almost to the Hacket picnic area. About 1km before the picnic area the track crosses a swing bridge over Hacket Creek, and then joins a 4WD track to a wooden footbridge over the Roding River.

## MORE TRAMPS

### Cape Campbell Walkway

New Zealand's newest private track is the **Cape Campbell Walkway** (☎ 575 6876; www.capecampbellwalkway.co.nz), a four-day tramp across two coastal and hill-country stations that is rated easy. Set up in 2006, the 54km walkway follows general farm and stock tracks,

and the highlight of the trip is spending the third night in a cosy bach next to Cape Campbell Lighthouse. The track begins at Thorpelee Homestead, located on SH1 south of Blenheim. The cost is \$240 per person, which includes accommodation in farm cottages with kitchens, hot showers and linen. Pack transport and a two-day option (\$160) are also available.

### MT RICHMOND FOREST PARK Wakamarina Track

This easy two-day 18km walk in Mt Richmond Forest Park begins at the end of Wakamarina Rd, 19km from Canvastown, and crosses the Richmond Range to a car park off Kiwi Rd, in Onamalutu valley. Most people undertake it as a weekend trip, with a two-hour tramp to Devils Creek Hut (six bunks) on the first day, and a five-hour tramp to the Onamalutu valley on the second day.

Use two maps in the 1:50,000 Topomap 260 series: O27 (*Nelson*) and O28 (*Wairau*). The track can be accessed through **Trek Express** (☎ 0800-128 735, 540 2289; www.trekexpress.co.nz) which will run trampers anywhere on demand.

### Mt Richmond Alpine Route

This three- to four-day circuit along the exposed alpine ridges and peaks of Mt Richmond Forest Park is rated demanding. The trip generally involves leaving from Mt Starveall Hut (accessible from Hacket picnic area) and crossing Slaty Peak, Pelorus Tops, Ada Flat and Old Man, to reach Mt Rintoul. A relatively new track, marked from Bishops Cap to the Lee River, allows trampers to complete the loop of the Alpine Route. It is essential to carry adequate water on this tramp because it can get extremely hot.

Use three maps in the 1:50,000 Topomap 260 series: O27 (*Nelson*), O28 (*Wairau*) and N28 (*Golden Downs*). The track can be accessed through **Trek Express** (☎ 0800-128 735, 540 2289; www.trekexpress.co.nz) which will run trampers anywhere on demand. The best information source is the **DOC Regional Visitor Centre** (☎ 546 9339; Nelson visitor information centre).

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