



## Birchwood to Merrivale

(Map 134, 135)

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Northern Start</b>    | Struan Flat Rd, Birchwood                                  |
| <b>Southern End</b>      | Junction of Otautau-Tuatapere and Merrivale Rds, Merrivale |
| <b>Distance</b>          | 27.5km   |
| <b>Time</b>              | 1 day  |
| <b>Tramping Standard</b> | Tramping track   |

### Route

The track starts on Struan Flat Rd. Walk 250m to the Ohai Clifden Highway. Turn right here and walk 650m to the intersection with Birchwood Wairio Rd. Turn left onto this road and walk 2.4km to the edge of the eucalyptus forest fringe.

### Woodlaw Track - 14.2km / 7-8hr

This track crosses private property and ongoing access is dependent upon the goodwill of land owners: Matariki Forests, DT King & Co Limited, Birchwood Station and Stephen Blair-Edie. The track is across farmland and through exotic forest, save for a small indigenous forest section within the Woodlaw Forest Conservation Area.

**Access** - A number of conditions apply to enable walking access to co-exist with farm and forestry operations. These conditions including an **annual track closure for lambing from 9 September to 9 November inclusive**. The remaining conditions are set out below and compliance is important, both out of respect for the land owners and to help ensure Te Araroa walkers continue to be able to use this critical link:

- Access is only for tramping parties of 8 or fewer members and during daylight hours.
- Give way to stock and farm/forestry operations;
- No camping, fires, vehicles (including bicycles), horses, dogs, or firearms;
- Carry all rubbish out;
- No commercial activity, including guiding or organized events.

In order to comply with the daylight hours condition trampers should start out early in the morning and make steady progress towards their final destination.

If you encounter farm staff moving stock en route please step well aside and wait quietly until all animals have passed by. Take direction from farm staff as necessary.

Don't rely on drinking water being available en route.

The track leaves the road on the right here and travels up the forest fringe beside a fenceline.

Beyond the eucalyptus section the track crosses a stock lane and continues up a fenceline to the base of the Twinlaw Range. The track line turns left here and sidles east to join with a grassed farm track. This track climbs steeply up the hill face to the right. As the track nears the main ridge it veers south and becomes less distinct on the ground. Marker poles continue to show the way.

Once on the main ridge travel is along the ridgeline to the left (southeast). This is on a light but distinct farm track that leads up to the Birchwood Station/Twinlaw Forest boundary gate. Beyond the gate Te Araroa enters exotic forest on a 4WD track then traverses the Twinlaw tops on privately owned forest roads, which make for pleasant and easy walking. You're unlikely to encounter vehicles, unless there is some forestry operation underway.

There are a number of forestry road junctions but marker poles are in place to show the way through. For the sake of completeness, turn left onto Trig Rd then right onto Twinlaw Rd. Keep left at the Feldwick Rd junction and continue along Twinlaw Rd. This is towards and through the junction with Chandler Rd. Te Araroa leaves Twinlaw Rd on a 4WD track on the right hand side of the road. There is a turning bay at the end of this track, right on the Twinlaw/Woodlaw Forest boundary.

Te Araroa enters the beech forest from the turning bay. This is on a tramping track, within the Woodlaw Forest Conservation Area. The track traverses uneven ground towards Woodlaw Peak then descends towards a narrow strip of exotic forest. Here it joins with a 4WD track that leads to a junction. Turn right at this junction onto the forestry road and soon the road emerges from the forest. It then continues down a long fenced straight, which leads out through farm land towards Scotts Gap-Feldwick Rd. (It is 13km to the right via Lower Scotts Gap Rd and Otautau-Tuatapere Rd to Otautau.)

From the Woodlaw Track trailhead turn left onto Scotts Gap-Feldwick Rd and walk the road shoulder through Scotts Gap junction and onto Upper Scotts Gap Rd. Continue down Upper Scotts Gap Rd then turn right and walk up Hewitt Rd. The Island Bush Track starts up the road at the gate on the exotic forest fringe. This is a 3.5km connection.

### **Island Bush Track - 4km / 1.5hr**

This track is through exotic forest and then across farm land. It is entirely on private property with access being provided by 2 land owners - Matariki Forests and Mike Whale.

**Access** - A number of conditions apply to enable walking access to co-exist with farm and forestry operations.

The conditions are set out below and it's important to comply, both out of respect for the land owners and to help ensure Te Araroa walkers are able to continue to use this critical link:

- Access is only for tramping parties of 8 or fewer members and during daylight hours.
- Stick to the marked track and use stiles where provided.
- Give way to stock and farm/forestry operations.
- No camping, fires, vehicles (including bicycles), horses, dogs, or firearms.
- Carry all rubbish out.
- No commercial activity, including guiding or organized events.

If you encounter staff moving stock en route then step well aside and wait quietly until all animals have passed by. Please take direction from farm staff as necessary.

The track starts at the forest entry gate near the top of Hewitt Rd. If arriving by car it's best to park near the bottom of the road and walk up. Continue up Hewitt Rd beyond the gate and through the forest. This to a junction with Loop Rd. Turn left onto Loop Rd, the first of 4 junctions. Stay left again at the second junction, right at the third, and left at the fourth junction.

From the forestry road end a foot track leads down between the pine tree rows to the farm boundary. It's from here that you need prior permission to continue.

Once across the boundary fence, turn left onto the farm track and descend. Markers show the way down the track and across a paddock to a pine shelter-belt. The track then turns right and follows this line of trees to a gate. Through the gate the track crosses a bridge and then heads diagonally to the right towards a gap in another shelter-belt. Once through the gap the roadside stile is visible ahead to the right. (It is left for 13km to Otautau and Tuatapere is 28km to the right.)

There is parking opposite the trailhead.

From the Island Bush Track trailhead turn right (west) onto Otautau-Tuatapere Rd and walk 2.5km, past Gill Rd to the Merrivale Rd junction.

### **Other Information**

#### **Accommodation at start of route (near start of route)**

Birchwood Station have a cabin available to Te Araroa walkers near the beginning of this route.

For safety reasons, you'll need to call ahead - same day ok but at least a few hours notice - and be met and taken into the hut. \$20pp for the night and \$15pp more for a home-cooked meal. Gas cooking facilities, microwave, hot shower, fire, toilet. Call or text Sarah 027 6995234 or Dean 021 655852.

#### **Accommodation en route (between Woodlaw Forest and Island Bush)**

Warm, cosy, family hut, 5 beds. Drinking water, gas cooking facility, long drop toilet, no electric.

640 Scotts Gap-Feldwick Rd (4km from Scotts Gap end of Woodlaw) - P: 027 7394924 (Justine) -

E: [just.broughtons@gmail.com](mailto:just.broughtons@gmail.com)

\$20pp/night - a hot shower and home-cooked meal available for extra \$15pp.

Pickup from track can be arranged, prior booking/communication essential.

#### **Accommodation at end of route (Merrivale)**

[Merrivale Hut](#) - 2 Merrivale Rd, Otautau - P: 021 567105

Hut (\$10pp) or camping (\$8pp) available, fresh eggs (\$1 each) and rubbish disposal.

Great little spot right on the Te Araroa route.

### **Otautau**

#### **Accommodation**

Otautau Hotel - 167 Main St, Otautau - P: 03 225 8166 - E: [otatauhotel@vodafone.co.nz](mailto:otatauhotel@vodafone.co.nz) - W: [www.otatauhotelpub.co.nz/contact](http://www.otatauhotelpub.co.nz/contact) - rooms, bars & restaurant

Otautau Railway Hotel and Backpackers - 76-78 King St, Otautau - P: 03 225 8577 - backpackers, bar & restaurant

## Resupply

Supervalu Supermarket - 157 Main St, Otautau - P: 03 225 8029 - W: [www.supervalu.co.nz/](http://www.supervalu.co.nz/) Open daily 8am-7pm.

## Island Bush - Tuatapere

### General / Visitor Information

Tuatapere Hump Ridge track Trust & Tuatapere Visitor Information Centre - PH 0800 486 774 or P: 03 226 6739 - 31 Orawia Rd, Tuatapere - E: [info@visitorcentre.co.nz](mailto:info@visitorcentre.co.nz) - Open hours 7:30am - 6:30pm

### Accommodation

[Tuatapere Motel, Shooters Backpackers & Holiday Park Complex](#) - 4 McFeely Street, Tuatapere - P: 0800 009 993 or M: 027 2222 612 E: [info@tuatapereaccommodation.co.nz](mailto:info@tuatapereaccommodation.co.nz)

[Waiiau Hotel](#) - 47 Main St, Tuatapere - P: 03 226 6409 - E: [info@waiiauhotel.co.nz](mailto:info@waiiauhotel.co.nz) - rooms, bar & restaurant

[Last Light Lodge](#) - 2 Clifden Highway, Tuatapere - P: 03 2266667 - camping sites, campervan sites, backpacker type facilities and a restaurant/café.

## Resupply

Four 4 Square supermarket - 73 Main St, Tuatapere - P: 03 226 6898 - W: [www.foursquare.co.nz/](http://www.foursquare.co.nz/) - Open daily 7:30am-9pm

## Potential Hazards

- Vehicles on road or track Take care on roads
- Farming operations
- Forestry operations
- Few water sources

## Requirements

- Keep to the track
- Respect private land
- Open daylight hours only where noted
- Leave gates as you find them
- No litter
- No dogs
- No horses
- No firearms
- No vehicles
- No bikes
- No camping where noted
- No fires
- Wear hi-viz clothing/pack cover and don't use headphones

## Amenities (Start)

- No amenities
- Roadside parking only

## Amenities (On Route)

- No amenities