



East Ahuriri Track

(Map 116, 117)

Northern Start	Glen Mary Ski Club, Lake Ohau Rd
Southern End	Birchwood Rd carpark, Ahuriri Valley
Distance	26.5km
Time	1-2 days
Tramping Standard	Tramping track

Route

The track climbs 800 m from Lake Ohau over the Ohau Range to the Ahuriri River. This is through the Ruataniwha and Ahuriri Conservation Parks. The track has no obvious ground trail for long stretches and the markers are often distant. That said, the East Ahuriri Track is a gem and provides a good transitional tramp for moderately experienced trampers looking to go the next step, off the heavily used and well-groomed tracks where they've learned their craft and onto Te Araroa's more remote and demanding sections.

The track starts on the 4 wheel drive track next to Glen Mary Ski Club and climbs to join with the marked A2O cycleway, which traverses across to Sawyers Creek and beyond to Freehold Creek.

Once at Freehold Creek follow DOC markers up through the beech forest. It's a well marked and clearly formed track to this point – a good day walk for anyone wanting a return trip from the Ski Club.

Beyond the treeline the track initially follows the poles and light ground trail towards Dumb-bell Lake. This is on the true right of Freehold Creek. The East Ahuriri Track peels off this track in a southwest direction and from here there are regular poles (though they are not always visible from one to the next) along the east side of the swamp. The poles continue on this line until the beginning of the descent into the East Ahuriri. Descend with care to the East Ahuriri River.

From here travel is downstream by the most practical route. There are a few river crossings but these are straightforward in normal flows.

The track climbs and sidles above the true right bank when it needs to avoid two gorged sections. Along the way a two-bed hut becomes visible in the distance on the true left side of the river. The going becomes easier as the river opens up lower down. The track reaches the first line of pine trees as it emerges into the wider Ahuriri Valley. There are more pine trees further along as you continue straight ahead towards the Ahuriri River which, in normal flows, is the largest unbridged river on Te Araroa in the South Island.

Follow the fence down to the Ahuriri's Bank and look across for the track markers on the other side. They continue about 50m downstream from the 4WD track that cuts down far bank. Once you've identified this spot it's time to look for a safe place to cross the river.

Note

If the Ahuriri cannot be forded safely continue downstream for about 5km to the Ireland Road Bridge. This provides the bailout option. It is then about the same distance back up Birchwood Rd to the trailhead.

From the far side of the river the track follows marker poles straight up the steep bank. The track then turns left and follows the top of the river bank to the next fence line, which marks a right hand turn and the final walk out to the carpark on Birchwood Rd.

Other Information

To exit to Omarama, go left 11.2km to SH8, then left again for a further 17.4km.

Potential Hazards

- River crossings - Never cross flooded rivers
- Small stream crossings
- Track exposed to sun, wind or cold

Requirements

- Keep to the track
- Respect private land
- No dogs
- No horses
- No firearms

Amenities (Start)

- Car park
- Accommodation nearby at Lake Ohau Lodge

Amenities (On Route)

- No amenities