



Waiau Pass Track

(Map 087, 088, 089, 090, 091, 092)

Northern Start	Start of Black Valley Walk (on SH3), St Arnaud
Southern End	Junction of Magdalen Valley Rd and SH7, Boyle Village
Distance	115.5km
Time	5-8 days
Tramping Standard	Tramping track

Route

St Arnaud is a pleasant tourist village on the shore of Lake Rotoiti and the gateway to the Nelson Lakes National Park. This popular park is serviced by a network of spacious but heavily used huts.

This long tramp connects Travers/Sabine Circuit with the St James Walkway. It provides an extraordinary summer tramping experience at the northern end of the Southern Alps. In winter and spring some sections are snowbound and avalanche prone.

At 1870m, Waiau Pass is Te Araroa's second-highest point. It's the most likely portion of the route to be blocked by snow and has some avalanche risk on its southern face. Before embarking, trampers should contact DOC at the Nelson Lakes Visitors Centre in St Arnaud (03 5211806) to enquire about the route's current condition.

The track ends at a car park and bus shelter on SH7 next to the Boyle River Outdoor Education Centre.

St Arnaud to Lakehead Hut - 9.5km / 2-3hr

The track starts opposite St Arnaud's alpine store. This is on the Black Valley Walk, which heads through beech forest to DOC's Kerr Bay Campground on the shore of Lake Rotoiti.

Te Araroa then joins with the Travers/Sabine Circuit at the eastern end of Kerr Bay. From here the track follows the shoreline through the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project area to Lakehead Hut, which is about 15min beyond the jetty near the lakehead. The recovery project was established in 1997 and is one of 6 maintained by DOC. Its goal is to restore native biodiversity to the beech forest. This is pursued through a trapping and poisoning programme designed to rid a 5000ha block of introduced pests including cats, possums, stoats, wasps, rats and mice. Kaka and reintroduced great spotted kiwi are 2 native species that have benefitted from the project.

Lakehead Hut to John Tait Hut - 12km / 5hrs

The well graded track continues from Lakehead Hut up the river flats through open and forested sections to John Tait Hut. Mt Travers comes into view around Hopeless Creek.

John Tait (1901-1982), a former president of the Nelson Tramping Club, led a volunteer effort to raise funds and to construct the original hut, which opened in 1951. This was 5yr before Nelson Lakes National Park was gazetted to become New Zealand's 8th national park. The original hut survived only 27yr before being decommissioned. A new hut was built on the current site, which is in a clearing with views of Mt Travers and Mt Cupola.

John Tait Hut to Upper Travers Hut - 6km / 3hr

Beyond John Tait Hut the track continues up the Travers Valley and has some steeper sections. The track passes marked

turn-offs to Cupola Hut and Travers Falls, which is a short and worthwhile side trip. Upper Travers Hut is situated on the edge of a large flat immediately below Mt Travers.

Upper Travers Hut to West Sabine Hut - 8km / 6-8hr

The track continues as a defined ground trail that follows snow poles up to Travers Saddle (1787m). This is a steady 450m climb.

From the Saddle the snow poles continue down the western face to the tree line. The track then takes walkers down to the East Branch Sabine River in the valley floor below. This is a long and in places steep descent and crosses a substantial avalanche risk zone. The alternative marked track should be taken during times of avalanche risk.

From the East Branch Sabine River the track climbs, sidles and then descends to the West Branch Sabine River. West Sabine Hut is a short distance upstream.

West Sabine Hut to Blue Lake Hut - 7km / 3hr

Te Araroa leaves the Travers/Sabine Circuit from West Sabine Hut and continues up towards Blue Lake and Waiau Pass. Trampers wishing to return to St Arnard can continue on the circuit.

From the hut follow the Blue Lake Track up the West Branch Sabine River to its source. The route is predominately forested and climbs steeply in places, in particularly during the short final climb to the hut and lake. Several short avalanche risk zones are crossed.

Blue Lake Hut is a popular side trip to the Travers/Sabine Circuit but trumper numbers do start to thin by this point.

Blue Lake Hut to Upper Waiau Forks - 7km / 6-8hr

The next section, over Waiau Pass, is the most demanding on this track. It is a fair weather route, suitable for experienced individuals or parties with experienced leadership. Good fitness and reasonable agility is a prerequisite for all. These criteria aside, Waiau Pass is a Te Araroa highlight. Allow a full day for the journey.

The track leaves Blue Lake Hut through forest and climbs onto Lake Constance's moraine dam. The lake itself is attractive and set within a dramatic alpine landscape. From the dam a rough and rocky track, marked by snow poles, leads up above bluffs on the west side of the lake and then descends very steeply in places to the lakehead. The track continues across the open upper valley floor and then climbs a steep scree slope in direct fashion to a high terrace. From here it is a 500m sidle and climb up to Waiau Pass.

The route from the pass continues through rocky and exposed country. Care should be taken where turning off the main ridge to follow the poled track route. It then drops steeply in places through bluffs to a terrace and then continues west before descending to the West Branch Waiau River in the valley floor. This area is an avalanche hazard zone when conditions are right.

From the Valley floor the track follows the river through thick sub-alpine scrub to the Upper Waiau Forks. There is an attractive informal campsite here within a stand of beech trees.

Upper Waiau Forks to Waiau Hut - 8km / 4hr

The track follows the Waiau River down and stays mostly on the true right. The valley opens up as you near Waiau Hut (6 bunks), new in 2017 thanks to a generous donor.

Waiau Hut to Anne Hut - 22km / 7-8hr

Travel down the valley is easy, through grassy flats, and on the Waiau River's true right. Two bush-clad terminal moraines add interest and provide good camping opportunities.

In time the Ada homestead comes into view. The homestead area remains in private hands. Trampers should avoid this area and continue to the Ada River. This is a straightforward crossing in low to normal flows. Beyond the river trampers link to the St James Walkway and continue down in a south west direction towards Anne Hut – a new 20 bunk hut.

Anne Hut to Boyle Flat Hut – 15km / 6hr

The track continues up the Anne River through a series of grassy clearings towards Anne Saddle and then descends into the Boyle River Valley.

The small 3 bunk Rokeby Hut is lower down the valley. Built in 1965 it is in fairly original condition. Beyond Rokeby Hut the track continues downstream on the true left to a swingbridge. Boyle Flat Hut is a short distance beyond down the true right side of the river.

Boyle Flat Hut to Boyle Village – 14.5km / 4hr

Re-cross the swingbridge and continue southwest on the walkway. The track sidles through a gorge and descends to a junction. Cross the river on a swingbridge here and continue on the track within the forest margin. In time the track crosses the

river on another swingbridge and continues down towards Boyle Village. The track emerges at a carpark next to the Boyle River Outdoor Education Centre.

Other Information

St Arnaud

[Private Driver Hire](#) - P: 03 3910500 (Paul) - can transport to/from all locations Picton-Anakiwa-Pelorus Bridge-Nelson-St Arnaud, priced on enquiry.

Accommodation

[The Alpine Lodge](#) - Alpine Lodge St, Arnaud, Lake Rotoiti - P: 03 5211869) has accommodation a dorm, private room, and hotel rooms available. There is internet, laundry facilities, spa pool for hire, a restaurant/bar/café (with the famous Sunday BBQ \$31pp) and they are happy to store food parcels (\$5 if staying at the Lodge or \$10 if not) - send those to Alpine Lodge, 75 Main Rd, St Arnaud, RD2, Nelson 7072. (Clearly mark the parcel with "<your name>, Te Araroa Walker".

Accommodation at end of route

[Boyle River Outdoor Education Centre](#) - P: 03 315 7082 - E: info@boyle.org.nz

We are a not-for-profit providing opportunities for youth to experience the outdoors. To support walkers complete their Te Araroa Journey, we have an information desk for the latest weather and track hazards. We provide the following services: Wifi, Parcel Storage, Backpacker Accommodation, Small Shop with some re-supplies (pre-order to ensure availability), Pre-order of hot, cold or fresh food (i.e. pizza, pies, drinks, fruit), showers, clothes wash, DOC hut tickets. Parcel Storage: You must contact the Centre before posting anything and they will give instructions for postage. Label with your name and expected arrival date. Allow plenty of time for the parcel to be delivered as we are rural delivery. Backpacker Accommodation: You should enquire well in advance as to availability; it is otherwise on a 'first come, first served' basis. Re-supply: the Boyle is able to re-supply you for your trip with food, gas, batteries etc. Pre-order food: email through your request at either St Arnaud (SOBO) or Bealey / Arthurs Pass (NOBO). Contact the Boyle for a list of items & food for sale and prices. For Wifi / Internet – ask on arrival. Charges apply for the above - all payments must be in cash as there are no eftpos or credit card facilities.

Cell Phone Reception – there is now a mini cell tower for Spark and Vodafone users. This is at the DOC carpark at the end of this section.

Transport

[East West Shuttles](#) - P: 03 789 6251

Shuttles run between Westport and Christchurch - daily except Saturday.

Must book for Shuttle to stop at the Boyle.

Cost from Boyle to Hanmer - \$35 to \$47 (call to book and confirm cost).

Times – Must Book First:

From the Boyle:

to Hanmer / Christchurch - stops at the Boyle about 10am;

to Westport - stops at the Boyle about 4-4:30pm;

To the Boyle:

Christchurch to Boyle – leaves from Canterbury Museum at 2pm

Hanmer to Boyle – leaves from the Hanmer i-Site at 3:45pm

Westport to Boyle – leaves the Westport Caltex at 8am

[Hanmer Tours & Shuttles](#) – P: 03 315 7418, E: info@hanmertours.co.nz

Will Shuttle from / to the Boyle or from/to Windy Point for a minimum \$150 one way for up to 5 people. Call for availability.

[Nelson Lake Shuttles](#) - P: 03 547 6896 or 0275 476896

Can run a shuttle/charter from Boyle Village to St Arnaud; call for cost and availability.

InterCity Bus – only operates through the Lewis Pass when State Highway 1 – via Kaikoura – has a road closure (this is the Christchurch to Picton route); and then it is an "on request stop only" it needs to be pre-booked.

Hanmer Springs

General Information

[Hanmer Springs i-Site Visitor Centre](#) - 40 Amuri Ave - P: 0800 442 663 - W: www.i-site.org

Accommodation

[YHA Hanmer Springs](#) - 14 Amuri Avenue, Hanmer Springs P: 03 315 7472 E: hanmersprings@yha.co.nz

[Hanmer Backpackers](#) - 41 Conical Hill Rd, Hamner Springs - P: 03 315 7196 - E: info@hanmerbackpackers.co.nz -

(Note: Hanmer Backpackers is closed from 20th of July - 1st of September for a winter break)

[Jack in the Green \(BBH\)](#) - 3 Devon St, Hamner Springs - P: 03 315 5111 - E: stay@jackinthegreen.co.nz

Other accommodation providers at most levels.

Resupply

[Hamner Springs Four Square Supermarket](#) - Conical Hill Rd, Hamner Springs - P: 03 315 7190

[Hamner Springs Foodway](#) - 45 Amuri Ave, Hamner Springs - P: 03 315 777

Reefton

General Information

[Reefton i-Site Visitor Centre](#) - 67-69 Broadway, Reefton - P: 03 732 8391 - E: reefton@i-site.org - W: www.i-site.org

Accommodation www.reeftonaccommodation.co.nz

[Reefton Old Bread Shop Backpacker](#) - 157 Buller Rd, Reefton - P: 03 732 8420 - E: breadshopbackpackers@gmail.com

[The Old Nurses Home Accommodation](#) - 104 Shiel St, Reefton - P: 03 732 8881 - E: reeftonretreat@hotmail.com

Numerous other options available.

Resupply

[SuperValue Supermarket](#) - 65 Broadway, Reefton - P: 03 732 8313

[4 Four Square Supermarket](#) - 47 Broadway, Reefton - P: 03 732 8888

Potential Hazards

- River crossings - Never cross flooded rivers Take care with Wairoa, Motueka, Waiau and Ada Rivers, these rivers are unbridged
- Weather extremes - snow or heavy rain can occur at any time of the year
- Avalanche zone - Travers Saddle, track to Blue Lake, Waiau Pass

Requirements

- Keep to the track
- No litter
- No dogs
- No horses
- No firearms
- No bikes

Amenities (Start)

- Full range of amenities (limited) in St Arnaud
- Car park
- Picnic area
- Toilets
- Shop
- Phone
- Accommodation

Amenities (On Route)

- No amenities
- Accommodation Huts