

Go for a walk.

Many of Nelson Tasman's stunning natural landscapes are best explored on foot, and we have a diverse range of well-maintained trails and tracks to suit every fitness level. Whether you're looking for a multi-day challenge or a short family stroll our region is paradise for anyone who enjoys the great outdoors.

Easy walks are spread across the region including the very popular 20-minute walk to the Centre of New Zealand lookout where you'll see panoramic views over Tasman Bay, the buzzing centre of Nelson City, and the striking mountain ranges along the horizon. Enjoy a short stroll back down toward Nelson City along the banks of the Maitai River and up to the Branford Park picnic area where there are a selection of waterholes to cool off in.

Nelson Tasman's national parks are home to two of New Zealand's greatest walks.

The Abel Tasman Track

<https://www.nelsontasman.nz/visit-nelson-tasman/destinations/abel-tasman-national-park/>

The Heaphy Track

<https://www.nelsontasman.nz/visit-nelson-tasman/plan-your-trip/activities/3401-heaphy-track> .

Kahurangi National Park and the Heaphy Track will tempt more experienced hikers looking for a challenge, with untracked wilderness, and rocky ridges set amongst a vast landscape of stunning native bush. Meanwhile, the Abel Tasman Coast Track is a beautiful and relaxing coastal walk, easily accessed and well serviced by transport operators and suitable for half day, single day or multi-day adventures.

With its golden sands, lush native forest, clear azure waters and trees alive with birdsong, you'll see first-hand the result of the many projects that are currently restoring this magical part of the world to its former glory.

There are DOC huts, campsites and lodges dotted along the trail, giving you plenty of accommodation options to choose from.

Alternatively, a short one hour and twenty-minute drive from Nelson City will land you at Lake Rotoiti in the Nelson Lakes National Park. From here, you can take a leisurely stroll around Lake Rotoiti amongst forests alive with birdsong, or delve deeper into the park to access Lake Rotoroa and a variety of other longer hikes and tracks, ranging in length from a couple of hours to several days.

A detour from the Travers Sabine Circuit through stunning alpine landscapes and rushing river valleys is suitable for experienced hikers only, who will be treated to the beauty of Lake Rotomairewhenua (Blue Lake), the clearest lake in the world.

The region is also home to plenty of spectacular waterfalls such as Whiskey Falls, Whispering Falls and Wainui Falls, most within a reasonably short walking distance and perfect for day trips. Labyrinth Rocks in Takaka is an extraordinary place for kids to visit, with its limestone outcrops and weaving pathways, and special surprises dotted around the rocks for children to discover.

From short riverside strolls to challenging hikes over tussocked mountain ranges, beautiful coastal walks to day treks around spectacular glacial lakes, Nelson Tasman is abundant with opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy our extraordinary outdoor environment.

More walks

<https://www.nelsontasman.nz/visit-nelson-tasman/things-to-do/walking-and-hiking/short-walks/>

Walk the water race.

Cross Te Waikoropupū River, zig-zag up the penstock and follow the path of the old goldmining water race at The Pupu Hydro Walkway. There are fantastic views over the Kahurangi National Park from the weir at the top, so make sure you take some time to stop and enjoy the scenery.

Brook sanctuary.

The South Island's largest fully-fenced Sanctuary for vulnerable native flora and fauna, there are some 15km of beautiful tracks open for the public to enjoy, suitable for a range of fitness levels with the main Loop Track also fully accessible for wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

Center of Aotearoa New Zealand.

A twenty-minute uphill trek under the canopy of poplar and kauri trees and you will arrive at the Centre of New Zealand viewing platform, where you'll be treated to stunning views over the buzzing central city, Tasman Bay and the picturesque mountain ranges.

Boulder Bank.

The internationally-renowned Boulder Bank is a natural spit of boulders, formed by oceanic drift over 10,000 years. A walk along the rocky bank is an opportunity not to be missed, as is a climb up into the iconic lighthouse.

Te Waikoropupu springs.

Te Waikoropupū Springs contain some of the clearest water ever measured, coming second only to Lake Rotomairewhenua (Blue Lake) in the Nelson Lakes National Park.

As the largest freshwater springs in New Zealand, and the largest coldwater springs in the Southern Hemisphere, it's easy to see why people travel from near and far to witness the unrivalled beauty of Te Waikoropupū.

The visual clarity of the springs is estimated at approximately 76m, statistically close to that of optically pure water. An easy, flat 20-minute walk under the canopy of mānuka and kanuka takes you across boardwalks and over bridges to a viewing platform overlooking the crystal clear waters of Te Waikoropupū. Looping back around through the forest and ferns, you can take the longer route to return via Fish Creek or head straight back to the carpark.

How to get there: Te Waikoropupū Springs is located just a short distance from the Takaka township, at the end of Pupu Springs Road.

Farewell spit and Puponga farm park tracks.

Choose from shorter walks good for children or longer walks across farmland - discover a lighthouse and a spectacular rugged coastline.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/nelson-tasman/places/farewell-spit-and-puponga-farm-park/things-to-do/tracks/farewell-spit-and-puponga-farm-park-tracks/>

National Parks

Wildlife abounds in Nelson Tasman's three national parks. Take a scenic tour to see the seals at Adele and Tonga Islands in the Abel Tasman National Park, see if you can spot the illusive South Island takahē at Goulard Downs in the Kahurangi

National Park or listen for the chorus of birdsong as you stroll around Lake Rotoiti in the Nelson Lakes National Park. Remember to keep a safe distance from all wildlife and do not disturb their natural habitat.

Abel Tasman National Park.

Camp under the stars and feel the sand between your toes as you walk along spectacular golden sand beaches at any time of year.

The Abel Tasman Coastal Track follows a pristine coastline of extraordinary beauty. Clear, turquoise bays, abundant bird and sea life, and fresh, clean air surround you as you walk under the shady canopy of lush native forest. Birdsong rings through the treetops above, only interrupted by the call of the occasional small waterfall nestled in the midst of the park.

You can walk into the Park from the seaside village of Marahau, Canaan Downs (at the top of Takaka Hill) or from the picturesque Wainui Bay. Or, you can be dropped off at various points along the track by sea, paddle by, or be flown in to the airstrip in Awaroa Bay by plane or helicopter. Several water transport operators are based in Kaiteriteri and Marahau at the southern end of the Park, and many offer combo options so you can cruise, walk or kayak sections of the park at your own pace.

<https://www.nelsontasman.nz/visit-nelson-tasman/plan-your-trip/activities/Search?AttractionCategoryID=24>

Several sustainability volunteer initiatives embrace and support the guardianship of this Park including Project Janszoon, Abel Tasman

Birdsong Trust, Tasman Bay Guardians and Abel Tasman Tree Collective. These organisations work to restore and revive the native plants, birds and wildlife in the park. You can donate and support these charities, join in directly on one of our community planting days, or learn more about conservation with an eco tour in the park.

Coastal Track.

One of New Zealand's most popular great walks is the 53km Abel Tasman Coast Track, which starts from the coastal settlement of Marahau, taking a journey through lush native forest and along golden sandy beaches. Your senses will be awakened to birdsong. Truly extraordinary all year round, the walk is best experienced on a multi-day adventure that will see you staying overnight at one of the beachfront lodges, camp sites or DOC huts, before continuing on the next day. There are plenty of half and full day walk/kayak or walk/cruise options available. Tip: If you have time, take a short detour to Cleopatras Pools, where you can slide down a moss-lined chute into the pristine natural rock pools below.

The Park enjoys some unique spots including Anchorage, Torrent Bay, Frenchmen's Bay, Tonga Island, Bark Bay, Awaroa, Totaranui, Separation Point and Whariwharangi Hut to name a few.

Tips: Dig your toes into the sand at Awaroa Beach, enjoy lunch at the lodge, stay overnight in the midst of the Abel Tasman National Park or roll up your trousers and hike across the

tidal estuary. Awaroa Beach was purchased by the public in a crowdfunding campaign and is now referred to as 'the peoples beach'.

Spend a night amongst nature in the Abel Tasman National Park to enjoy glowworms at Anchorage and Awaroa, phosphorescence (if you're lucky) and a dawn chorus.

Let the waves lull you to sleep aboard a private boat charter, pitch a tent at one of the beachfront campsites, settle in for the night at a DOC hut or enjoy a peaceful night's sleep at one of the spectacular lodges located along the Abel Tasman Coast Track.

Take a walk across a 40m long swingbridge in the Abel Tasman National Park to admire the views of Falls River. As you cross the bridge that is nestled between Torrent Bay and Bark Bay, you'll often see kayakers or water taxis 20m below, experiencing the breath-taking beauty of the river on a scenic tour – make sure to give them a wave!

Go canyoning - feel the adrenaline as you explore dry canyons in the Kahurangi National Park or slide, jump, abseil or zipline down pristine waterfalls in the Abel Tasman National Park. See the beauty nestled behind the golden beaches as you explore the crystal pools, amazing waterfalls and lush rainforest, ending the day's adventures by sliding down a natural waterslide into Cleopatras Pools.

Nelson Lakes National Park

Winter? then this is the perfect base to access the nearby Rainbow Ski Field, which offers a diverse selection of slopes and snow-based activities for all ages and skill levels. By car its about 50 minutes drive from River Road Retreat.

But St Arnaud has plenty to offer all year round. During the summer months, the Ski Area opens for hiking and mountain biking, so that you can still enjoy those stunning views out over the Nelson Lakes National Park even once t he snow has melted away.

The Nelson Lakes National Park is undoubtedly the calling card for a visit to the village of St Arnaud, and many a visitor has been spotted capturing that iconic jetty shot at Lake Rotoiti.

Day walkers can enjoy lakeside walks, whilst more serious hikers can head off on a journey through alpine landscapes, glacial lakes, tarns, beech forests, and undulating valleys. Meanwhile, boating, water-skiing, fishing, swimming and kayaking are all popular activities for those who want to get amongst the water-based surroundings, although you'd have to be a hardy soul to jump off the wharf into Lake Rotoiti in winter!

<https://www.nelsontasman.nz/visit-nelson-tasman/things-to-do/walking-and-hiking/>

Mount Robert

See the glacial carved lakes of the Nelson Lakes National Park from above with a day hike along the Mount Robert Circuit. You'll ascend the side of the mountain and get to enjoy picturesque 360 degree views from the top over the pristine waters of Lake Rotoiti. Loop back around or continue your hike deeper into the national park towards Lake Angelus. Stop for lunch at Bushline Hutt and enjoy the views down to Lake Rotoiti.

Enjoy the world's clearest lake, the eighth natural wonder of the world. Visit Lake Rotomairewhenua, also known as Blue Lake. The world's clearest lake is nestled in the depths of the Nelson Lakes National Park and can be accessed via a side trip from the Travers-Sabine Circuit or seen from the sky on a scenic helicopter trip. If hiking for 4-7 days isn't your thing, take a water taxi across to Sabine Hut in order to reduce the length of the trip.

Take a walk around Lake Rotoiti or Lake Rotoroa, explore the lakes by water taxi or hire a canoe, kayak or rowboat to paddle around the water's edge. The 40m Whisky Falls at Lake Rotoiti are well worth a visit and can be accessed by foot or water. Or head off on a day walk to Parachute Rocks near the ridge line of the St Arnaud Range.

Kahurangi National Park.

The second-largest national park, spanning 450,000 hectares from Golden Bay in the North, to Murchison in the South, right across to the spectacular and wild West Coast.

The area traverses a variety of altitudes and landforms and has a notably unique range of habitats for the abundance of flora and fauna that call the national park home. It's far enough north and at a low enough altitude to have escaped most recent ice ages and now has more than 80 percent of all alpine species in New Zealand, making it the most diverse of all our national parks. This Park has the largest population of great spotted kiwi, giant wetas, carnivorous snails, and one of the world's largest cave spiders.

The Kahurangi National Park has 570km of tramping tracks. The 82km Heaphy Track traverses a variety of ruggedly beautiful landscapes, ascending craggy ranges and descending into valleys of native palms, trekking through alpine meadows, and along the length of a spectacular coastline.

Connecting the Aorere Valley in Golden Bay with Karamea on the West Coast of the South Island, the Heaphy Track is the longest of New Zealand's Great Walks, and is suitable for moderately fit people of all ages, usually taking about 5-6 days to complete. Although challenging, there are also plenty of short walk options for people making day trips from the nearby towns of Motueka, Takaka, Karamea and Murchison.

Or, if walking isn't your first choice, the track is also open for enthusiastic mountain-bikers between the months of May and November. The multi-day ride is not to be underestimated – it is a tough and demanding ride, best suited to those with advanced skills.

<https://www.nelsontasman.nz/visit-nelson-tasman/things-to-do/cycling-and-mountainbiking/mountainbiking/>

Alternatively, a scenic helicopter flight is another great way to see Kahurangi's stunning natural landscapes, including those used as film sites for The Lord of the Rings movies. As you land on Mount Owen, you'll be treated to spectacular views of the geological landforms that make up Kahurangi, which is home to the longest cave system in New Zealand.

<https://www.helicoptersnelson.co.nz/>

Tips: Reach the top of Mount Arthur and challenge yourself to a day hike to reach the highest peak in the Kahurangi National Park. At 1795m, the journey to the top of Mount Arthur crosses vast tablelands, tussocky ridges and rocky outcrops and offers breathtaking views from the summit.