

HEAPHY TRACK

Topo50 Map: BP22 Heaphy Beach & BP23 Goulard Downs

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

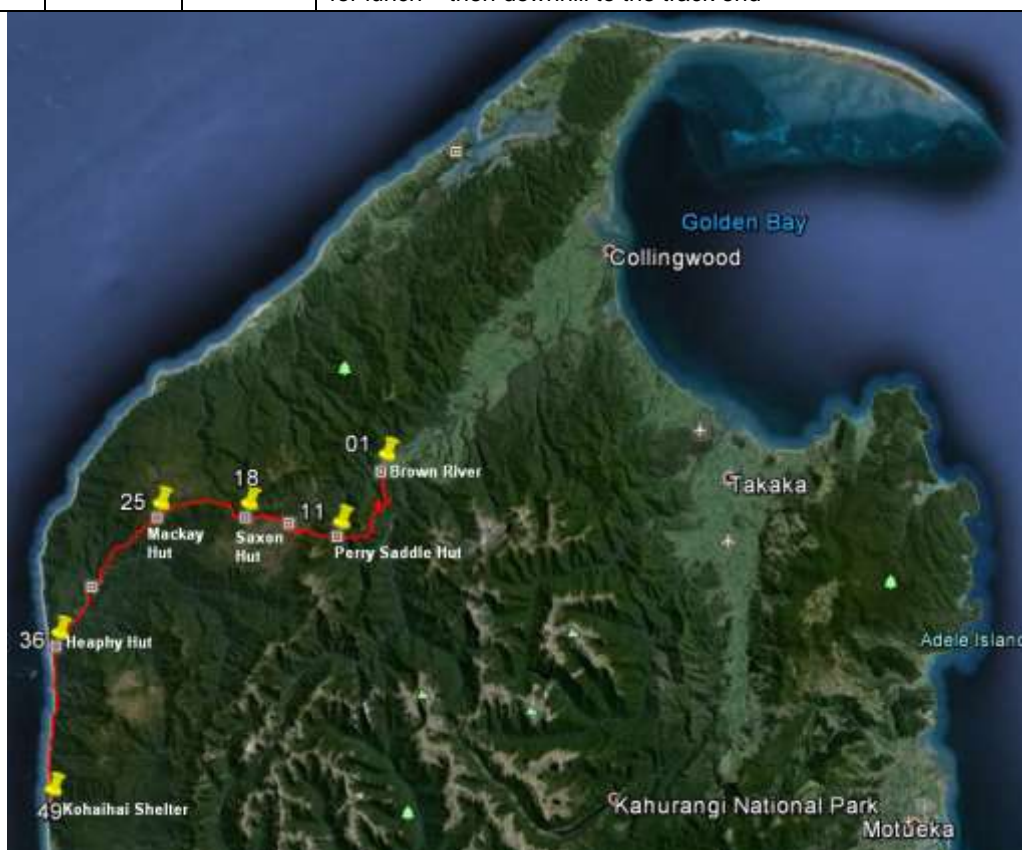
How we did it:

- Organised through Bush & Beyond (www.bushandbeyond.co.nz)
- Flew Auckland to Nelson, met by Bush & Beyond transport and taken to Motueka
- Overnighed in Motueka at backpackers Hat Trick Lodge
- Driven to track start at Brown River by Bush & Beyond Guides
- Spent 5 days and 4 nights on the track
- Driven from the end at Kohaihai to the Last Resort Motel in Karamea for free night
- Ticki tour from Karamea back to Nelson and stayed in The Bug backpackers
- Flew back to Auckland from Nelson

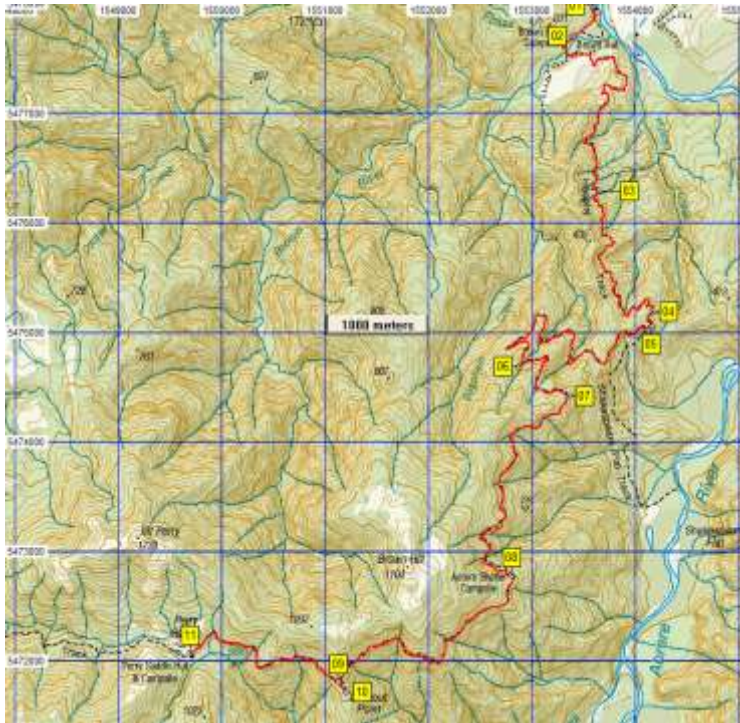


Rough description: A long but very manageable Great Walk which links Golden Bay in the north of the South Island to Karamea on the West Coast. To begin with the route follows an old stock route from the Brown River, up and over Perry Saddle to reach Goulard Downs – this part of the track is hard on the feet due to being built up with stone and gravel to accommodate MTBs which have access over the winter months. The further one goes the easier the track gets on the feet. The various days are:

Day	Km (Map / GPS)	Total Ascent (GPS)	Time (Total) Hr:Min	Description
1	17 / 19.3	818	7:14	A long, fairly moderate ascent in forest from Brown River Hut, passing Aorere Shelter to reach Flannigan's Corner with nearby lookout to overnight at Perry Saddle Hut
2	12 / 13.1	189	5:12	More or less downhill from Perry Saddle to pass Goulard Hut, 2 swing bridges as flood diversions in wet weather with many birds for company to reach Saxon Hut
3	11 / 12.1	250	4:51	An undulating walk but overall downhill with the odd seat, a couple of swing bridges and an old 14mile from Perry Saddle marker post to overnight in the new Mackay Hut
4	19 / 21.2	87	7:22	A long downhill walk in forest with many birds again and an exposed coal seam to reach Lewis Hut for lunch – many sand flies! More downhill to eventually reach more level walking with improving scenery, several bridges to reach Heaphy Hut on the coast – with hungry sand flies!
5	15 / 17.1	389	6:18	A longish coastal walk varying from level to uphill grunts. Pretty level to halfway at Katipo Creek Shelter for smoko if sand flies are accepted. The latter part presents some grunty slopes with the last getting to the picnic table on top of Kohaihai Bluff for lunch – then downhill to the track end



Day 1 Brown River to Perry Saddle Hut



A long, fairly moderate ascent in lowland then podocarp beech forest from Brown River carpark (**WP01**_{135masl}) to pass Brown River Hut (**WP02**_{136masl}) in minutes before starting the ascent. Not too many features apart from a couple of seats (**WP03**_{308masl}) with the second (**WP04**_{419masl}) being a good place to snack and take in the views. After a couple of hours the track to Shakespeare Flats (**WP05**_{425masl}) slips off left then in 3 hours or so a small stream gives good access to water- all streams contain potable water and another seat (**WP07**_{662masl}) with a view presents itself for the weary.

N...	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
01	1553580	5477981	135	Car park at start of Heaphy Track on Brown River
02	1553407	5477709	136	400m (12 minutes); Brown River Hut
03	1553645	5476299	308	3.2km (1:12min); First seat for the weary
04	1554165	5475197	419	5.3km (1:53min); Second seat with fair views
05	1554151	5475050	425	5.4km (2:18min); Track off left to Shakespeare Flats
06	1552877	5474694	600	8.6km (3:25min); Lunch spot with water supply stream
07	1553347	5474420	662	9.7km (4:13min); Seat with open view
08	1552805	5472787	799	12.4km (5:29min); Aorere Shelter
09	1551127	5471814	915	15km (6:22min); Flannagans Corner high point at lookout junction
10	1551203	5471717	931	130m (4min); Short diversion to magnificent look out point
11	1549697	5472077	877	17.2km map / 19.3km GPS (7:15min); Perry Saddle Hut

From : 15-Mar-16 10:51:09
To : 15-Mar-16 18:06:48

Time taken : 7:15:38
Total Distance : 17.158 Km
GPS Distance 19.3km
Minimum Speed : 0.024 KPH
Maximum Speed : 7.413 KPH
Average Speed : 2.363 KPH

Minimum Altitude : 131 Meters
Maximum Altitude : 932 Meters
Total ascents 818metres

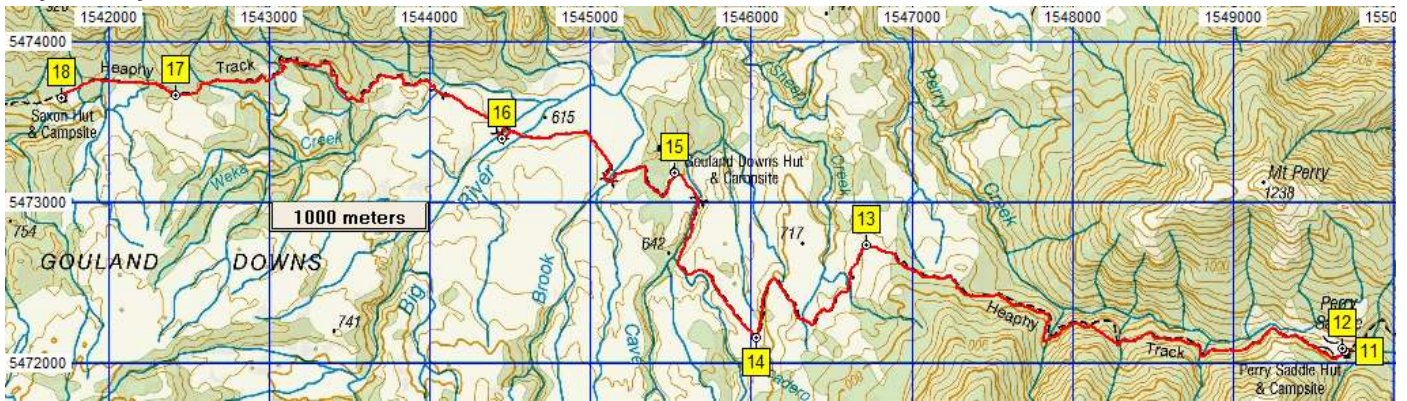
At 800m the Aorere Shelter (**WP08**_{799masl}) is the next feature and, if an early lunch has not been taken then this is a good place to eat. The ascent now seems never-ending but the forest is very pleasant and offers shade on hot days and shelter on wet days. Flannagans Corner (**WP09**_{915masl}) is reached in 5 – 6:30min and offers a bit of respite in that this is the high point of the day, it is really well worth the effort to drop the pack and wander the 130 metres up the rough track to the look out (**WP10**_{931masl}). There is a picnic table here and many have to stand on it to get full views of the ridge with the Drunken Sailor and the Dragons Teeth off to the SE.

From Flannagans Corner it is then all downhill to get to the Perry Saddle Hut (**WP11**_{877masl}) a couple of kilometres away, this is a large new hut and offers good accommodation.

View from lookout WP10



Day 2 Perry Saddle Hut to Saxon Hut



An easy walk through kamahi-beech-quintinia forest then the tussock grass area of Gouland Downs to lunch at Gouland Downs hut with its huge open fire – great on a wet day for drying off. After lunch pass through the enchanted forest – beech on a limestone remnant to then continue in tussock to Saxon Hut. There is good bird-life in this area with weka, robin, rifleman and fantails seen.

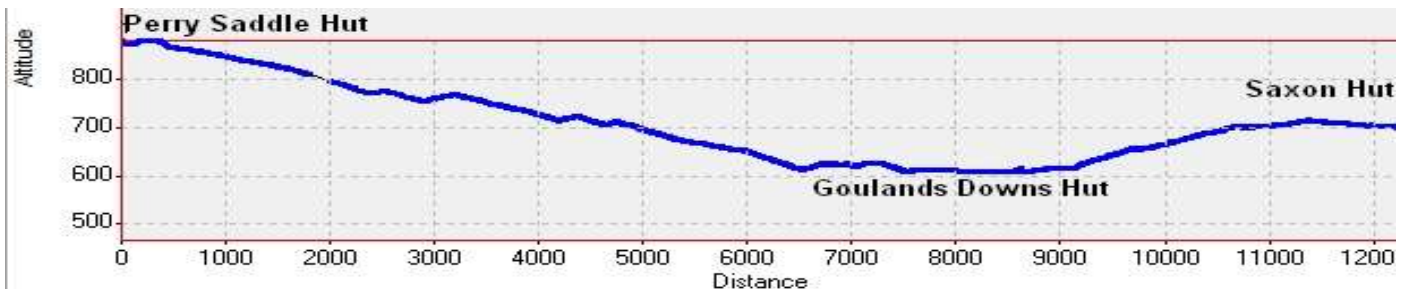
N...	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
12	1549675	5472093	853	Rejoin main track from Perry Saddle Hut
13	1546713	5472731	736	3.9km (2:47min); Picnic table on RHS
14	1546030	5472165	674	5.3km (3:13min); Boot tree
15	1545524	5473186	625	6.7km (3:33min); Goulands Hut with massive open wood fire
16	1544443	5473401	613	8.6km (5:17min); Second flood diversion swing bridge
17	1542417	5473671	714	11.5km (6:21min); Old marker pole with 7 miles from Perry Saddle
18	1541710	5473646	702	6.2km map/ 13.1km GPS (6:40min); Saxon Hut

From : 16-Mar-16 07:40:20
To : 16-Mar-16 14:21:51

Time taken : 6:41:30
Total Distance : 12.247 Km
GPS distance : 13.1km
Minimum Speed : 0.018 KPH
Maximum Speed : 9.050 KPH
Average Speed : 1.830 KPH

Minimum Altitude : 608 Meters
Maximum Altitude : 881 Meters
Total ascent : 189 metres

From Perry Saddle hut the track basically heads downhill to the WNW passing through forest for the first 3 kilometres then the tussock area is entered with a picnic table (**WP13**^{736masl}) off to the right after about a couple of hours. If you want to cast your boots away then make use of the boot tree (**WP14**^{674masl}) which is a tall pole covered in old and past their sell by date boots and shoes. About half an hour later the historic Gouland Downs Hut (**WP15**^{625masl}) offers good shelter on a wet day to have lunch. The Gouland Downs are flat and therefore wet with numerous stream lines two of which have small diversions to use the swing bridges (**WP16**^{613masl}) if the streams are up – be warned the access to and off these bridges is a bit steep and can be a challenge for some.



Boot tree corner

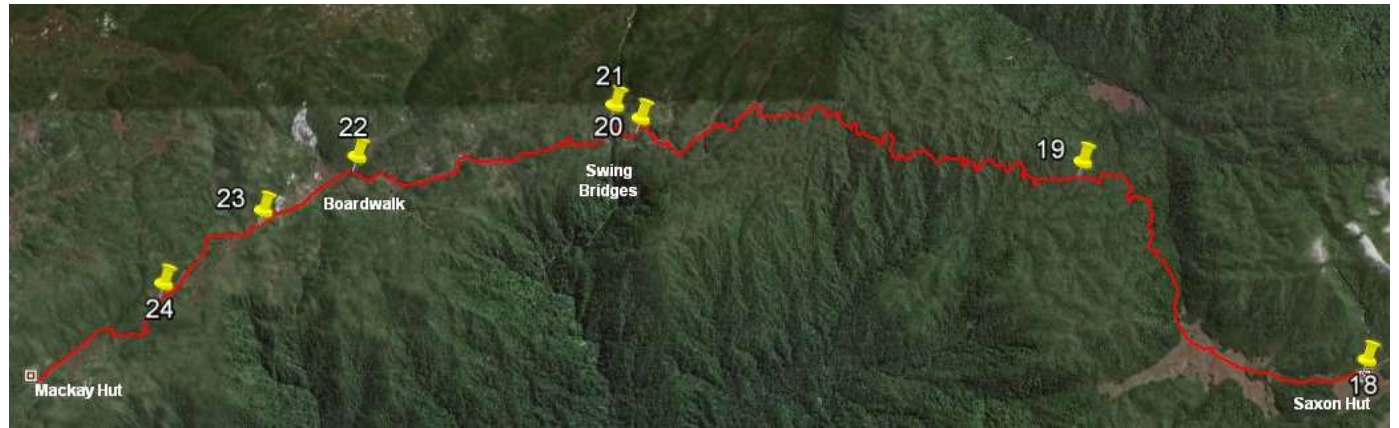
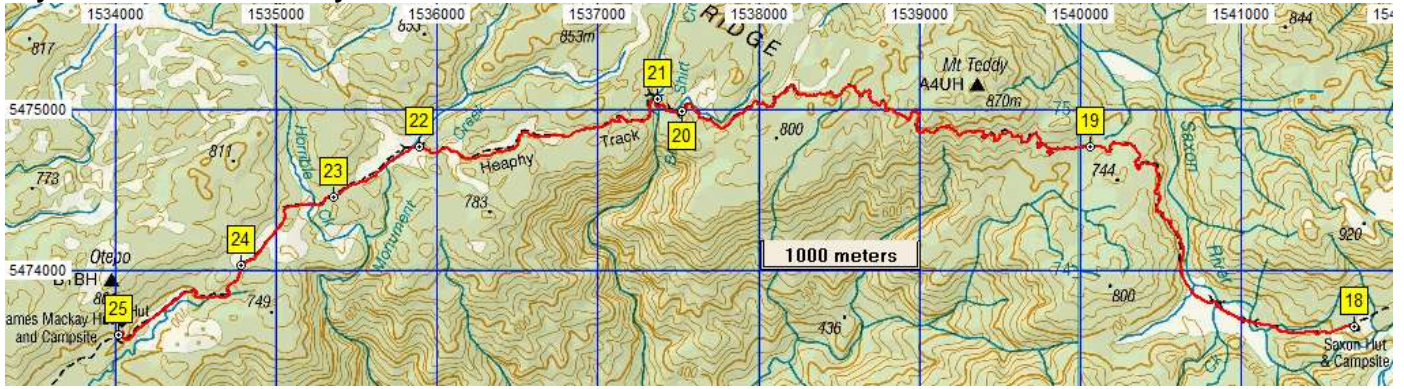


By keeping a sharp look out an old marker pole (**WP17**^{714masl}) can be spotted on the LHS of the track after about 6 hours – this is the “mile post” indicating 7 miles from Perry Saddle. It will have been noticed since leaving the tussock area altitude is being regained but there are no steep ascents. The Saxon Hut (**WP18**^{702masl}) is reached in about 6 hours even allowing for nature study on the way.

Saxon Hut



Day 3 Saxon Hut to Mackay Hut



An easy undulating walk of about 10km but overall downhill with the odd seat, a couple of swing bridges and an old 14mile from Perry Saddle marker post to overnight in the new Mackay Hut which is very new, spacious, has LED lighting and flushing toilets

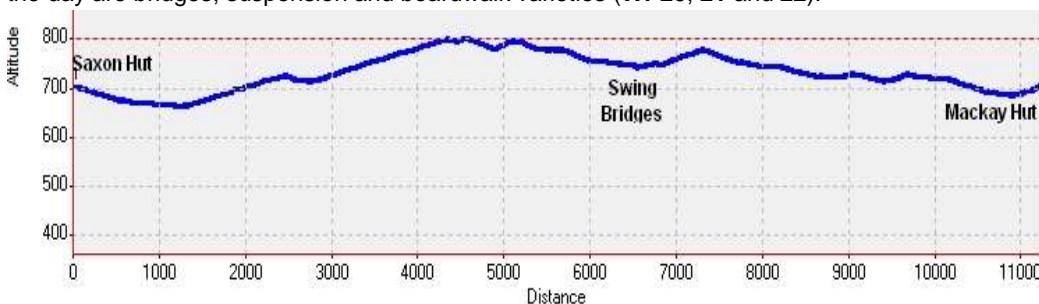
N...	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
18	1541710	5473646	702	6.2km map/ 13.1km GPS (6:40min); Saxon Hut
19	1540061	5474766	713	2.8km (1:16min); Seat
20	1537524	5474988	746	6.6km (2:34min); Suspension bridge and lunch stop
21	1537371	5475067	746	6.8km (3:23min); Blue Shirt Creek suspension bridge
22	1535889	5474768	724	8.7km (4:01min); Bridge at end of long boardwalk section
23	1535352	5474454	719	9.3km (4:12min); Two km to hut post
24	1534782	5474033	720	10.1km (4:28min); One km to hut post 200m after 14mile marker

From : 17-Mar-16 08:46:25
To : 17-Mar-16 13:37:14

Time taken : 4:50:48
Total Distance : 11.235 Km
GPS Distance 12.1km
Minimum Speed : 0.009 KPH
Maximum Speed : 5.332 KPH
Average Speed : 2.318 KPH

Minimum Altitude : 663 Meters
Maximum Altitude : 802 Meters
Total ascent 250metres

The day starts with some downhill but only for a kilometre or so then it is up again to reach a seat (**WP19**713masl) on the border between the Golden Bay DoC area and Kahurangi for a regroup and rest. The track is particularly pleasant in places due to the lack of stones and the presence of some coarse grained (separation) granites which break down easily to gravel. The main features of the day are bridges; suspension and boardwalk varieties (**WP20**, **21** and **22**).



The 2 kilometres to hut marker post is arrived at in about 4 hours and this is a signal to keep the eyes open for yet another historic mile post which is located just before the newer 1km to hut marker.

Coarse grained separation granite



14 miles from Perry Saddle Mile Post



Good solid non-swing bridge



Day 4 Mackay Hut to Heaphy Hut



A long downhill walk of over 20km in forest with many birds again and an exposed coal seam to reach Lewis Hut for lunch – many sand flies! Then more downhill to eventually reach more level walking with improving scenery, several bridges to reach Heaphy Hut on the coast – with hungry sand flies!

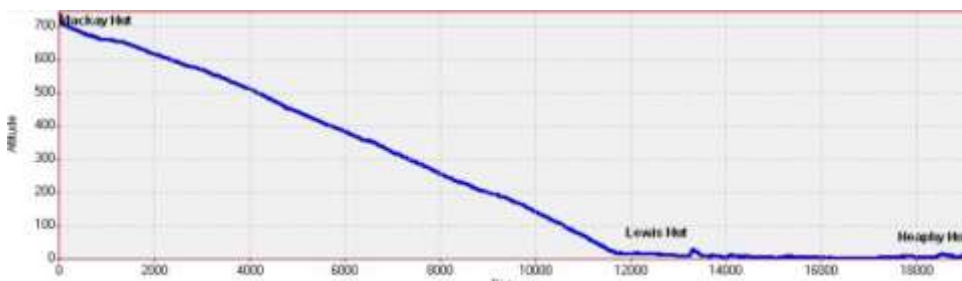
N...	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
25	1534016	5473596	710	Mackay Hut
26	1532943	5472790	625	1.85km (37min); Hut 2km marker post going downhill
27	1530088	5470240	316	7.1km (2:38min); View point for Heaphy target area
28	1529808	5469979	278	7.7km (2:50min); Coal seam exposure
29	1528637	5468077	79.0	10.9km (3:51min); Hut 1km marker post
30	1528279	5467549	17.0	11.7km (4:05min); Lewis Hut
31	1528336	5467419	18.0	12.1km (5:10min); Heaphy River swing bridge after lunch at Lewis
32	1528089	5466604	29.0	13.3km (5:33min); Top of up-and-over past slip
33	1527386	5465520	6.0	14.8km (5:59min); Gunner River bridge
34	1526800	5464469	4.0	16.1km (6:29min); Murray Creek swing bridge
35	1525661	5463010	5.0	18.3km (7:08); Hut 1km post
36	1525202	5462342	13.0	19.2km map / 21.2km GPS (7:24min); Heaphy Hut

From : 18-Mar-16 07:31:58
To : 18-Mar-16 14:56:12

Time taken : 7:24:14
Total Distance : 19.158 Km
GPS Distance 21.16km
Minimum Speed : 0.011 KPH
Maximum Speed : 6.396 KPH
Average Speed : 2.587 KPH

Minimum Altitude : 3 Meters
Maximum Altitude : 744 Meters
Total ascent 87 metres

It is a long downhill walk to get to the Lewis Hut and it is a relief to eventually get off the slopes and walk on more or less level terrain with quite different vegetation. Whilst descending there are quite a few features and points of interest to note; like the continued presence of granites, a view (**WP27**^{316masl}) of the Heaphy Hut area on the coast, an exposed coal seam (**WP28**^{278masl}) and eventually the 1km marker post (**WP29**^{79masl}) for the Lewis Hut. It takes about 4 hours to reach the Lewis Hut (**WP30**^{17masl}) which is fairly old but makes a great lunch spot – but keep the doors closed as the sand flies are voracious.



Lewis Hut



Almost immediately on leaving the Lewis Hut it is over the Heaphy River swing bridge (**WP31**) to start encountering Nikau Palms and Giant Rata before having a small grunt up and over a previous landslip (**WP32**^{29masl}) then paralleling the river to the mouth.

Exposed coal seam



There are again a few river bridges to cross including the Gunner (**WP33**) and Murray Creek (**WP34**) before meeting the 1km marker post (**WP35**^{5masl}) to arrive at the Heaphy Hut (**WP36**^{13masl}) which is very close to the beach and river. There is a recognised swimming spot but heavy sand fly presence can spoil the fun.

Great sunsets can be seen from the hut deck, if you like feeding sand flies!

Setting sun from the deck of Heaphy



Day 5 Heaphy Hut to Kohaihai Shelter



This is the last day and it offers spectacular ocean and beach views but it does come with a sting in the tail, this is given away by studying the profile below. The walking is not flat but nothing serious, unless one has a dislike of the odd metre or two in sand.

The beaches are all named with 20minute beach (**WP38_{5masl}**) being spot on – OK we took 21minutes. The Katipo Shelter (**WP41_{10masl}**) is a good marker as it is basically half way and makes a good smoko stop – apart from the millions of hungry sand flies.

It is well worthwhile stopping now and then to see the debris driftwood (trees) piled up on the shore edge above the rocks and gravel which can be heard rumbling with each wave that comes in / out.

Slopes increase as Scotts Beach is approached, the campsite (**WP44_{13masl}**) traversed and the grunt starts.

The grunt entails getting up to the top of Kohaihai Bluff with a climb of around 100metres requiring around thirty minutes. If tiredness hits there is a seat halfway up (**WP45_{56masl}**) and ten minutes or so later the junction (**WP46_{90masl}**) to the lookout is reached. The lookout is literally 5minutes further and there is large picnic table (**WP47_{93masl}**) with seat for a lunch spot.

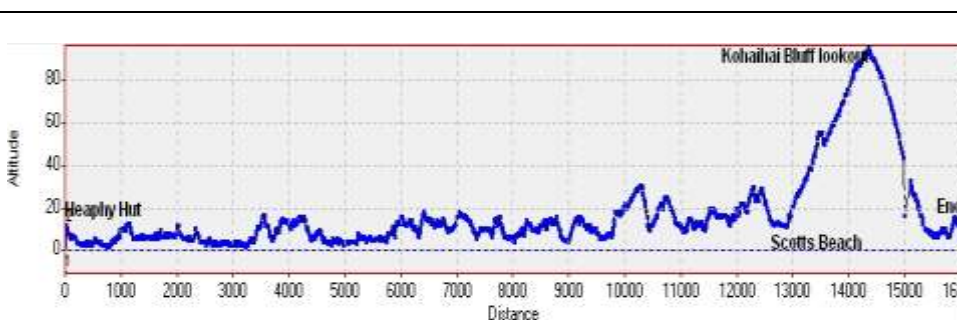
Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
36	1525202	5462342	13.1	19.2km map / 21.2km GPS (7:24min); Heaphy Hut
37	1525220	5459239	17.1	3.6km (1:07min); Wekakura Creek bridge
38	1525165	5458606	4.9	4.4km (1:31min); Start of 20 min Beach
39	1525282	5457244	9.1	5.8km (1:56min); Nettle Beach
40	1524909	5456154	17.1	7.1km (2:21min); Katipo Creek bridge
41	1524943	5455945	10.1	7.3km (2:34min); Katipo Creek Shelter
42	1524673	5454159	10.1	9.3km (3:20min); Storm crossing for Crayfish Creek
43	1524734	5452905	25.0	10.7km (3:51min); Swan Burn bridge
44	1524794	5451075	13.1	12.7km (4:35min); Scotts Beach campsite
45	1524953	5450427	56.1	13.5km (4:50min); Seat on bend of fairly big uphill grunt
46	1524720	5449752	89.9	14.3km (5:05min); Lookout junction
47	1524685	5449796	93.0	14.35km (5:10min); Kohaihai Bluff lookout - lunch
48	1524928	5448733	11.0	15.6km (6:22min); After lunch Kohaihai Bridge
49	1524692	5448747	8.0	16km map / 17.1km GPS (6:35min); Kohaihai Shelter at end of track

From : 19-Mar-16 07:28:26
To : 19-Mar-16 14:03:28

Time taken : 6:35:02
Total Distance : 16.024 Km
GPS Distance 17.1km
Minimum Speed : 0.008 KPH
Maximum Speed : 6.042 KPH
Average Speed : 2,434 KPH

Minimum Altitude : -10 Meters
Maximum Altitude : 96 Meters
Total ascent 389 metres

After lunch it is a pleasant 30minute downhill stroll offering views of the car park area where your transport should await you – if transport has been organised. Once down the track winds about a little to then cross Kohaihai Bridge (**WP48_{11masl}**) with good views of the river then enter the car park right beside the Kohaihai Shelter (**WP49_{8masl}**) at the end of the track.



Kohaihai Shelter



Notes: • **GPS** Garmin GPSmap 62sc **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit **masl** = metres above sea level