

RUAPEHU Te KOHATU

Topo50 Map: BJ34-Mnt Ruapehu

GPS: NZTM on WGS 84

How to get to START: Exit Taupo on SH1 down the lake to Turangi where there is a choice:

- Desert Highway (SH1) and turn off right on to SH46 for Rangipo
- Meet SH47 at a T-junction and then turn off SH47 on to SH48 signposted for Whakapapa and the Chateau, or
- In Turangi turn off SH1 on to SH41 on the right and then turn left off SH41 on to SH47 and proceed as above. (This is shorter)

Pass the Chateau on the left and continue up Bruce Road parking in the "Round the Mountain" car park on the right hand side at the Scoria Flats (**WP011463 masl**).

Rough description: In the past this tramp has been done as a day outing but, to make it easier, it is possible to overnight in the Whakapapaiti Hut then get a really early start on what is a "Fit" category tramp. From the hut it is back up to and out a bit on the Round the Mountain (RMT) track then heading off-track up to and on to the bluffs below Mt Ruapehu. Te Kohatu is the high point on these bluffs. In several places the route is "bluffed-out" and several work-arounds are required though there is no technical climbing involved – however it would not be suggested as suitable for the faint hearted.

Detail: From the car park (**WP011462masl**) head off to the SW on the RMT and in less than an hour take the right branch (**WP031384masl**) at the bottom of the zig zags and head for Whakapapaiti Hut. The track is rough and is quite deeply incised in places but 15min down it emerges from the bush (**WP041267masl**) and parallels the river to arrive at the Hut (**WP051250masl**) in less than 90 minutes.

Whakapapaiti Hut is really neat with red painted floor, normally very tidy and clean, 15 or 16 bunks fourteen of which are in the main area with kitchen worktops, table and a really good wood-burner on which it is possible to cook. There is an internal sink and water supply but the actual table is on the small side.

The wood-burner



In the morning set off back up to re-join the RMT, some distance can be saved by following a mini-track short-cut (**WP061340masl**) which meets the main track at a stream line (**WP071340masl**). Wet feet may ensue as a branch of the Whakapapaiti is crossed (**WP081287masl**) at about 1.5km from the Hut. As full kit is being carried it is well worthwhile dumping unnecessary gear in a secluded spot (such as **WP09**) for pick-up once the hard work of the day has been completed – but remember where the dump is! Continue on the RMT to the S/SSW for a few more hundred metres then branch off (**WP101330masl**) uphill to the left (SW) on a gently sloping ridge. In fact it would probably be better to stay on the RMT for another kilometre or so before heading off upslope (**WP10b**) to the south to re-join the route as mapped near the bluffs and just after WP13. If WP10 is used the going is pretty easy passing through a small stream line with high vegetation caps at the edge (**WP111367masl**) before looping right to cross a stream line then working along below the bluffs and again looping left to get on top of the bluffs.

Misty Start



Grassy Meadow



High Level Smoko

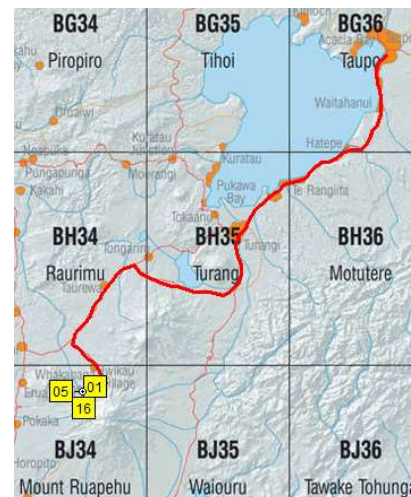


Rocky artwork

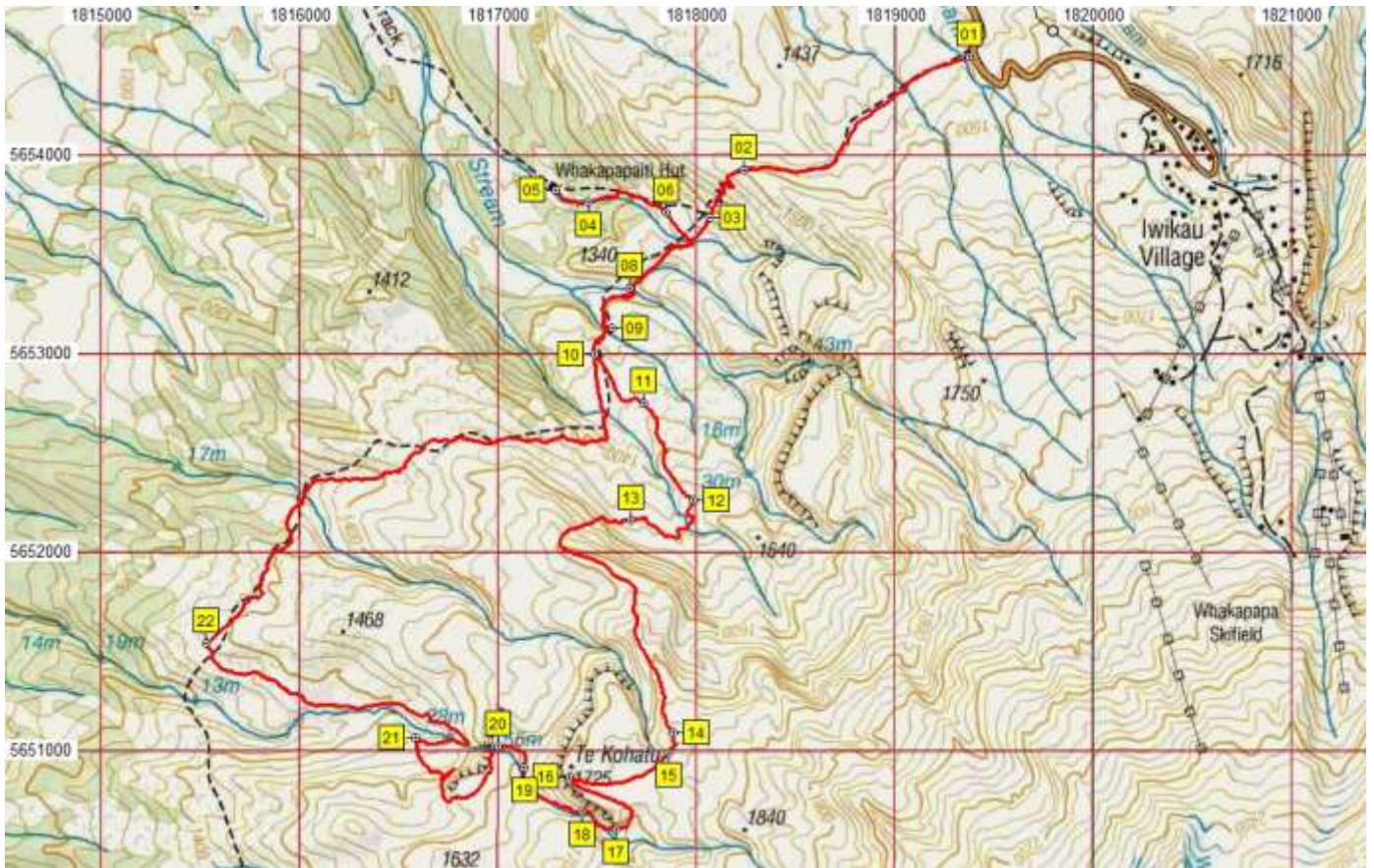


Once on the ridge and above the bluffs it is a long steady ascent for a kilometre or so to the SE then SSE till a very large boulder can be seen on the right. The route then turns right to descend past this boulder (**WP141748masl**) on a scree slope then through rocks and boulders to pass through yet another small grassy, alpine meadow (**WP151715masl**) before ascending a slope again. From here it is fairly level walking to the SW then more or less W to get to the crest of Te Kohatu (**WP16**). It has to be admitted that progress through a lot of this area is slow – there are so many scenes to look at, admire and photograph.

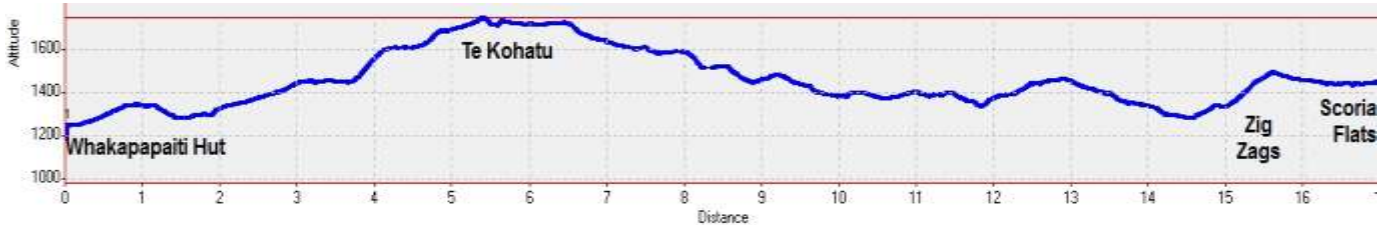
View down-valley



The access route can be seen as the red line above whilst waypoint 01 is the car park, 05 is Whakapapaiti Hut and 16 is Te Kohatu



N...	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
01	2729457	6216353	1462	Scoria Flats car park on Bruce Road
02	2728321	6215786	1499	30min (1.4km); Ridge top above the zig zags on the Round the Mountain Track
03	2728152	6215543	1384	45min (1.8km); Junction with right for Whakapapa Hut and straight for Round the Mountain
04	2727541	6215622	1267	60min (2.5km); Off incised track in bush on to river edge heading downhill NW to Whakapapa Hut
05	2727378	6215684	1250	1:20min (2.8km); Whakapapa Hut
06	2727931	6215566	1340	Day 2 30min (0.8km); Branch right off main track to mini-track short cut to join the RMT at stream
08	2727750	6215191	1287	44min (1.4km); Cross Whakapapa branch stream on the RMT
09	2727660	6214988	1304	53min (1.8km); Secluded "Gear Dump" 20 metres upslope off the RMT
10	2727573	6214854	1330	1:06min (2km); Branch left off the Round the Mountain Track uphill, off-track to the SE
11	2727818	6214606	1367	1:16min (2.4km); In small stream line with high vegetation caps on edge, then in to boggy area
12	2728070	6214118	1460	1:40min (3km); On wrong ridge, loop right down over stream aiming to pass under bluffs then uphill
13	2727755	6214017	1448	1:55min (3.6km); Small grassy alpine meadow in valley below bluffs
14	2727970	6212943	1748	3:08min (5.4km); Drop off ridge to the right by big boulder then descend on scree and boulders
15	2727941	6212844	1715	3:14min (5.5km); Small grassy meadow in valley
16	2727447	6212727	1713	3:29min (6.1km); On top of Te Kohatu heading ESE to descend
17	2727677	6212457	1668	3:50min (6.7km); Waterfall below high bluff
18	2727510	6212545	1642	4:01min (7km); Ice coated boulders in deep valley with bluffs. Few streams then tarns on left side
19	2727215	6212772	1606	4:16min (7.4km); Pinus Contorta growing wedged in rocks
20	2727087	6212874	1579	4:26min (7.6km); Out-bluffed at high -55m - waterfall. Head left (S) to work round bluff
21	2726666	6212923	1446	5:22min (8.9km); Out-bluffed on gentle slope, head E over slippery red stream to cross at waterfall
22	2725613	6213397	1380	6:16min (10.8km); Join the RMT going right to NE - more a route than a track



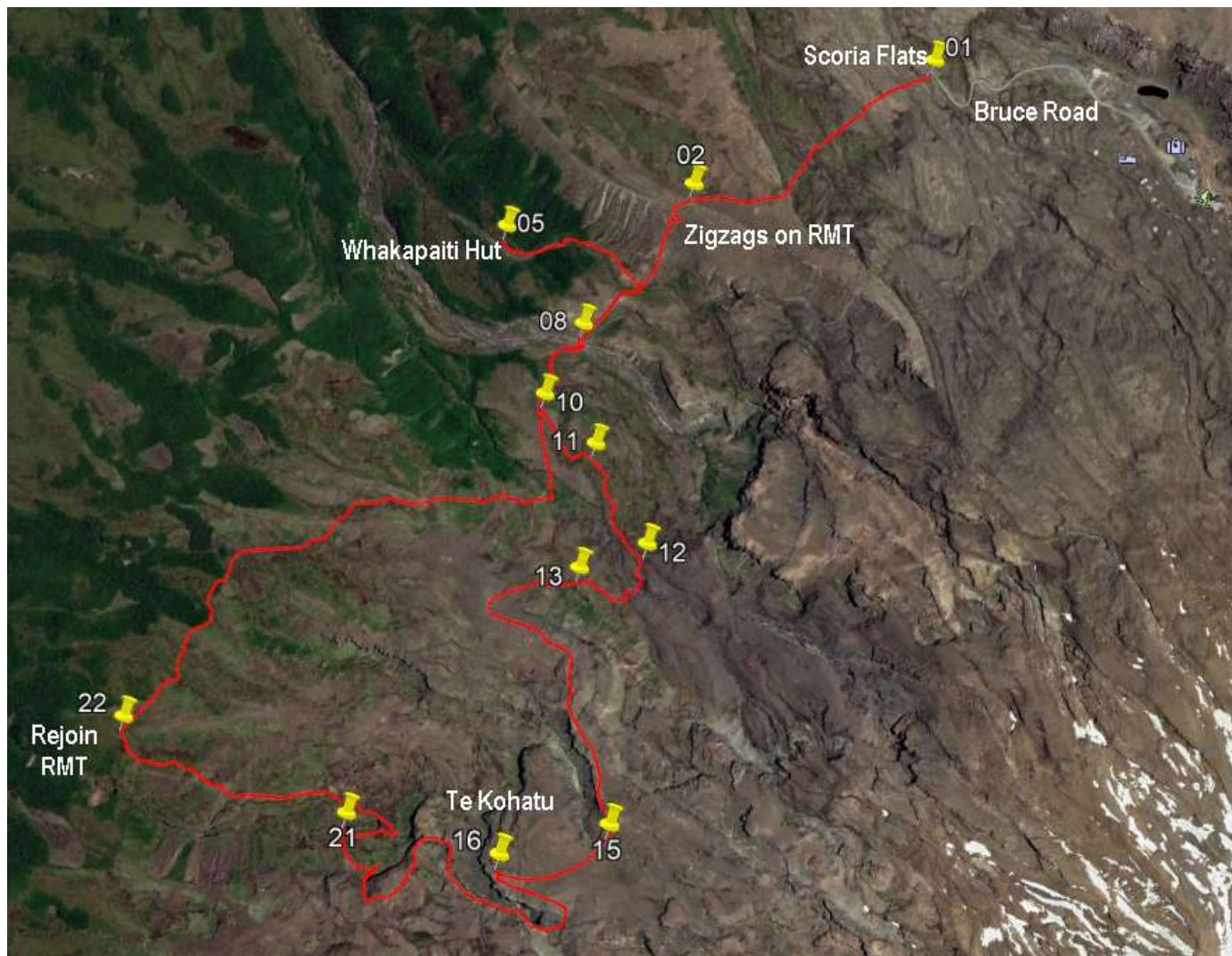
Hardy alpine species



From the top of Te Kohatu it is then necessary to walk to the SE for a few hundred metres until it is possible to commence getting down off the top and down below the bluff by swinging round to the SW ending up below an impressive waterfall (WP171668masl). From here the walk to the NW below the bluffs is very impressive as the rocks really tower very high overhead and, on the day, some of the rocks in the valley bottom were covered in ice which added to the excitement of the scenery. Near the end of this section (WP181642masl) there were a couple of picturesque tarns.

Tarns





The route then turns to the N for a short time and a lone, surviving *Pinus Contorta* was found growing in a crack in the rocks (**WP19**^{1606masl}), this small tree resisted all attempts at uprooting. After this the route loops round to the left following the bluffs until the way forward is blocked (**WP20**^{1579masl}) by a 55m high waterfall – when seen from below later it is easily seen why a detour is necessary. After getting below the bluffs lunch was taken allowing the magic of these falls and related landscape to be admired. From the lunch spot a cross-country route to the NW looked to be easy going but after a few hundred metres there was another out-bluffing (**WP21**^{1446masl}) and a loop back upstream required to get over the stream near yet another waterfall. On turning to the west at WP21 a very tricky little stream had to be crossed – this stream was running in red coloured rock which was very slippery indeed, a fall could easily have led to a slither downstream and over a ledge.

Pinus Contorta



Once past this last waterfall (28m high) the route was basically gently downhill without too many awkward or tricky ground problems heading NW till the Round the Mountain Track (**WP22**^{1380masl}) was met.

Slippery red stream



Calling this a track requires a fair amount of imagination as it is so rough and eroded that it really should be designated a route. From this point it is just over 3km (1:16min) back to the “Gear Dump” at WP10 then the hard work really starts as the full weight of all the gear is humped a kilometre or so – mainly uphill – to reach the start of the zig zags (WP3) then it is mind over matter up the zig zags and back the last couple of kilometres to the car park at Scoria Flats on Bruce Road. In all over 20kilometres are covered from start to end and a mere 1314metres of ascent tackled. Day one takes a bit over an hour but Day two required 9 hours.

This is the RMT

