

Tukino to Desert Rd via Mangatoetoenui Stream

Topo50 Map: BJ35 Waiouru

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START:

- Leaving Taupo go down the lake through Turangi on to the **Desert Highway** passing the turn offs to Waihohonu etc
- Exit the Desert Highway on the right hand side on to the **Tukino Access Road** – taking note of the signs at the start about 2 wheel drive vehicles.
- Follow the gravel road and avoid going left at any point as this leads into Army territory
- The **2 wheel-drive car park** is reached in 15 minutes and another 20 minutes is needed to get up the **4 wheel-drive** track to the repeater station with masts but stop a short distance before the communication masts. Driving time from Taupo is 1:45 minutes.

The vehicle should then be moved by someone else to the pick-up point In the Waihohonu Track carpark (WP12).

*The route to the start can be traced in opposite with the access road off **SH1** being shown as the blue line running up to Mount Ruapehu on sheets BJ34 & 35, the tramp route is in red.*

Rough description: A walk of 5 hours including coffee / tea stops and lunch break. The route starts off from near the masts on Tukino Access Rd cross-country northwest-wards heading towards Ngauruhoe then goes north on the Round-the-Mountain track to cross the bridge over the Mangatoetoenui stream. The rest of the walk is off-track traversing parallel to the stream then following a 4-wheel drive track heading NE to meet the Waihohonu Track.

Detail: The drive from the middle of Taupo to just below the communications masts on the Tukino Access Road takes about 1:30 to 1:45 minutes. The place to park is shown on the map (**WP01**^{1284masl}) and, despite being beyond the 2-wheel drive car park, is normally easily accessible by most cars and vans so 4-wheel drive is **NOT** an essential requirement.

The highest point on this walk is where the transport drops you and turns back; the whole walk is basically a gentle downhill stroll with an overall loss of 340 metres with only minor up-hills en-route and from the GPS data the distance is 12 kilometres

From the parking spot head cross-country NW, basically towards Ngauruhoe, for fifteen minutes when the poled "Round-the-Mountain" track (RMT) is met (**WP02**^{1299masl}). This section of off-track walking is easy with soft footing and not too many rocks and is far easier than the actual RMT from the top..

Follow this track (NNE) for just on 2km to arrive at the bridge over the Mangatoetoenui Stream (**WP04**^{1217masl}) taking 1:25minutes from the start. The track is not manicured but presents no problems.

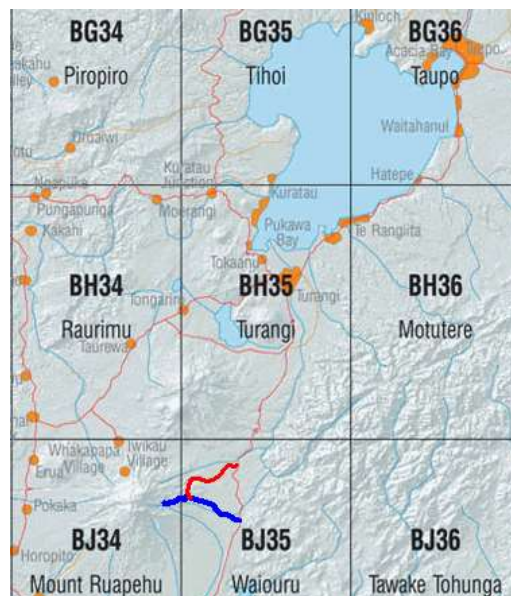
The view of the mountain from the bridge is good with Te Heuheu peak (2732masl) being very clear. Cross the bridge, which offers a good refreshment stop, ascend the minor slope then immediately branch right off the track (**WP05**^{1231masl}) and follow the ridge that runs parallel to the stream heading NNE then ESE. There is no track but the walking is easy with good footing through tussock with the occasional sand bar near the stream line.



Just short of 2 hours total time (**WP06**^{1173masl}) some small effort and scramble has to be made by going upslope where it is a bit steep, rough and narrow near the stream. However within 15 minutes the edge of the stream is once again approached (**WP07**^{1166masl}). From here it is necessary to again head slightly upslope into and through an eroded area. A relatively new gully (*it is not indicated on the map at all*) has to be crossed (**WP08**^{1162masl}) at about 2:15 min walking time.

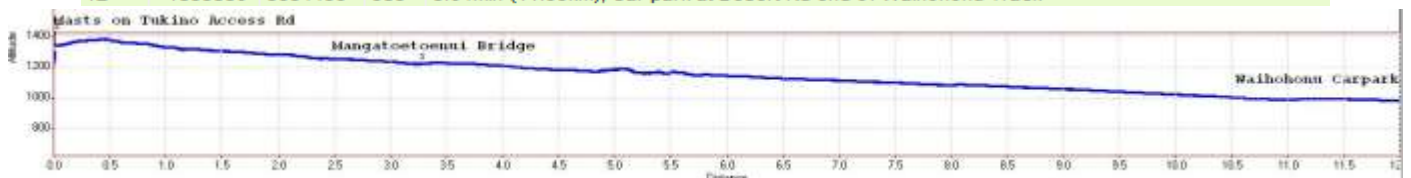
On ascending the far bank of this gully some bush bashing is required and thick scrub vegetation has to be entered to work back down to the stream line. Close to the river the walking is again quite good with river boulders, stones and gravel on a low terrace. This area is quite sheltered and good lunch spots can be found (**WP09**^{1110masl}) after about 2:30 minutes total walk time.

From here on it might be necessary to put the mind in neutral and adopt a numb-mind approach since the rest of the tramp is through scrubby endless tussock area and takes from 2 to 2:30min for the 5km or so. There is an old 4-wheel drive track to be followed but it is easy to lose this though by staying on the GPS track it should be picked up again. On meeting the Waihohonu Track (**WP11**^{992masl}) it is only about a kilometre to the end point in the car park just off the Desert Road (**WP12**^{983masl}).





N...	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1829443	5649854	1284	Park at bottom of last steep section below masts on Tukino Access Rd
02	1828845	5650561	1299	27min (1.09km); meet Round the Mountain Track after tracking NW
03	1829085	5651715	1249	58min (2.29km); NNE on Round the Mountain Track, easy but rough walking close to river edge
04	1829341	5652477	1217	1:25min (3.2km); mid-bridge over Mangatoetoenui Stream
05	1829318	5652547	1231	1:27min (3.22km); a minute beyond bridge, turn right off track and go E on ridge parallel to stream
06	1830650	5652520	1173	1:58min (4.83km); head upslope on true left bank as slope too rough / narrow near stream
07	1830729	5652522	1182	2:04min (4.92km); obvious cairn at top of slope
08	1830846	5652449	1166	2:15min (5.16km); on slope then back down to stream line, head NE up through eroded area
09	1831059	5652399	1162	2:21min (5.45km); cross large gully then head into thick & in 1km start to swing NE
10	1834767	5654502	996	4:41min (10.67km); just short of Waihohonu track after a long walk to NE in wilderness bush
11	1834855	5654534	992	4:52min (10.84km); go right on meeting the Waihohonu Track heading for Desert RD
12	1835880	5654436	983	5:04min (11.99km); Car park at Desert Rd end of Waihohonu Track



Notes:

- **GPS** Garmin Summit
- **WP** = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
- **masl** = metres above sea level)