

# Fiordland Day Walks



FIORDLAND/SOUTHLAND



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



## Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area



South West New Zealand is one of the great wilderness areas of the Southern Hemisphere. Known to Māori as Te Wāhipounamu (the place of greenstone), the *South West New Zealand World Heritage Area* incorporates Aoraki/Mount Cook, Westland *Tai Poutini*, Fiordland and Mount Aspiring national parks, covering 2.6 million hectares.

World Heritage is a global concept that identifies natural and cultural sites of world significance, places so special that protecting them is of concern for all people.

Some of the best examples of animals and plants once found on the ancient supercontinent Gondwana live in the World Heritage Area.

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**Left:** Mitre Peak overlooking Milford Sound/  
Piopiotahi. *Photo: Stewart Genery*

**Cover:** Key Summit. *Photo: Rebecca Hiscock*



# Fiordland National Park

Fiordland National Park, established in 1952, is a vast, remote wilderness and the heart of Te Wāhipounamu – *South West New Zealand* World Heritage Area. It is the largest national park in New Zealand with over 1.2 million hectares of conservation area.

People are drawn to Fiordland for the untouched landscapes, extreme wilderness and natural history of the area. It is a place where mountains, rock, ice, lakes, forests and grasslands collide with stunning beauty. Some of the best examples of animals and plants that were once found on the ancient super-continent of Gondwana still exist here.

Fiordland is also the home of the Takahē Recovery Programme. This unique bird, the largest living member of the rail family, was once thought to be extinct. After rediscovery of the takahē in the Murchison Mountains in 1948, a special area of 500 km<sup>2</sup> was set aside in Fiordland National Park for its conservation.

The lakeside township of Te Anau is considered the gateway to Fiordland National Park and offers visitors a fantastic choice of walks, activities, accommodation, and restaurants. An overnight stay here is not to be missed!



Kepler Track in snow. Photo: Richard Kinsey

## Weather

Fiordland weather is often dramatic and extremely unpredictable. Westerly airflows hitting and rising over the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana often create heavy rain and snow throughout the region. Rain falls in Fiordland on more than 200 days a year, with around 1,200 mm falling in Te Anau and 8,000 mm in Milford Sound/Piopiotahi, creating thousands of spectacular waterfalls which cascade from sheer-sided mountains. Fine weather will reward you with amazing views, but the true Fiordland visit wouldn't be complete without experiencing it in the rain!



Spectacular waterfalls appear after heavy rain. *Photo: Stewart Genery*



1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimise the effects of fire
6. Respect wildlife and farm animals
7. Be considerate of others



A boiler from the sawmilling era in Fiordland. Photo: DOC

## History

Fiordland was well known to the Māori, and many legends recount its formation and naming. Demigod Tuterakiwhanoa is said to have carved the rugged landscape from formless rock. Few Māori were permanent residents of the region but seasonal food-gathering camps were linked by well worn trails. Takiwai, a translucent greenstone, was sought from Anita Bay and elsewhere near the mouth of Milford Sound/Piopiotahi.

Captain Cook and his crew were the first Europeans to visit Fiordland, and in 1773 spent five weeks in Dusky Sound. Cook's maps and descriptions soon attracted sealers and whalers who formed the first European settlements of New Zealand. From the middle of the 19th century surveyors, explorers and prospectors began to penetrate the unexplored interior of Fiordland. Preservation Inlet boomed briefly in the 1890s after gold was found, but efforts to establish mines, timber mills and farms in Fiordland have generally been short-lived.

Quintin McKinnon and Donald Sutherland opened up the Milford Track in 1889 and began guiding tourists through the now world-famous route. Richard Henry, one of the pioneers of threatened species work transferred kākāpō and kiwi to islands in Dusky Sound in the late 1890s and early 1900s.

Fiordland National Park was officially constituted in 1952. Today it covers over 1.2 million hectares and was declared a World Heritage Area in 1986.



Fuchsia flowers. Photo: C Rance

## Natural history

Much of Fiordland's forest clings to steep faces of hard rock that is covered by a thin layer of rich, peaty humus and moss. Beech forest is dominant, with red and mountain beech growing around the eastern lakes and in the Eglinton valley. Silver beech is the most widespread of the beech species, sometimes growing in association with podocarp species such as tōtara, rimu and miro. On the western areas, the forest type has a luxuriant understorey of lancewood, tree ferns, coprosma, broadleaf, fungi, mosses and lichens.

In the lush wet forests the tree fuchsia is one of New Zealand's few deciduous trees, also being the largest fuchsia in the world. It has orange, papery bark and pendulous, purple flowers. Wood pigeons/kererū feed on the purple fleshy berry known as kōnini. Ferns throughout the forest are lush and varied.

Above the 1000 metre bushline, snow tussocks dominate with alpine daisies, buttercups and herbs.





Rock formations, Mt Titiroa. Photo: S Chesterfield

## Formation

Fiordland contains some of the oldest rocks in New Zealand, predominantly hard crystalline metamorphic rocks like gneiss and schist, and volcanic rocks like granite. Lying close to the alpine fault where two plates of the Earth's crust meet, the area has been folded, faulted, uplifted and submerged many times. Periods of submersion under the sea-bed have created areas of sandstone, mudstone, and limestone seen today at Te Ana-au Caves and on the Hump Ridge. Over the last 2 million years glaciers have at times covered the area, gouging into the rock and creating U-shaped valleys, many of which are now lakes or fiords.

Today hundreds of lakes dot the landscape, among them Lake Hauroko, the deepest in New Zealand at 462 metres. Fourteen fiords, some stretching up to 40 kilometres inland, extend from Milford Sound/Piopiotahi in the north to Preservation Inlet in the south.



Left: Mt Cook buttercup. Photo: C Rance



Takahē. Photo: DOC

## Fiordland's special birds

### Takahē

The flightless takahē (*Porphyrio hochstetteri*) is a colourful green and blue bird with an impressive red beak and stout legs. Thought to be extinct up until their rediscovery by Doctor Geoffrey Orbell in 1948, the recovery of the species now falls under DOC's Takahē Recovery Programme. The programme focuses on establishing self-sustaining populations in Fiordland and predator-free islands around New Zealand. The Department of Conservation also manages a captive breeding and rearing programme for takahē at Burwood Bush.

### Kākāpō

Fiordland was also once considered to be a stronghold for kākāpō. The kākāpō (or night parrot (*Strigops habroptila*)) is one of New Zealand's unique 'treasures' and with just over 120 known surviving birds it is listed internationally as a critically endangered species.

All birds are now resident on predator-free offshore islands. Large, flightless and nocturnal, the kākāpō is an eccentric parrot which can live for decades. With mottled, moss-green feathers, camouflage is the bird's main form of defence.



Kākāpō. Photo: Christine Officer



## Other bird species

Visitors are likely to see forest birds like tomtit, brown creeper, grey warbler, fantail, tūī, bellbird and native wood pigeons on day walks in the area. The Eglinton valley is also a stronghold for kākāriki, robin and kākā. The cheeky mountain parrot, the kea, is a regular entertainer at higher altitudes and can often be seen around the Homer Tunnel.



**Clockwise from top:** Kea: Colin Bishop; Tūī: Tui de Roy;  
Wood pigeon/kererū: Eamonn Ganley; Kākā: Brent Beaven;  
South Island robin: DOC; Tomtit/miromiro: Brent Beaven.



Bottlenose dolphins. Photo: Lou Hunt



Fur seal. Photo: DOC

## Marine life

The marine environment of Fiordland is unique. Heavy rainfall creates a permanent freshwater layer above the sea water within the fiords.

Stained by tannins washed out of the vegetation, this layer reduces light, restricting the majority of marine life to the top 40 metres of water depth. This 40 metre band is calm, very clear and relatively warm – home to sponges, corals and fish of subtropical, cool water and deep water varieties.

The fiords support the world's biggest population of black coral trees – about seven million colonies, some of them up to 200 years old. They are home also to brachiopods: primitive clam-like animals which have been bypassed by evolution, remaining unchanged in over 300 million years.

Bottlenose dolphins, fur seals, Fiordland crested penguins and little blue penguins are resident in the fiords. Ten marine reserves have been established in Fiordland, protecting all life within them.

Around the southern coast, New Zealand's endangered Hector's dolphin can often be seen, as can New Zealand fur seals, little blue and Fiordland crested penguins.

For some very lucky visitors, there can be rare opportunities to see whales around the coast.



Black coral. Photo: Steve Wing



Fiordland National Park  
Visitor Centre in Te Anau. Photo: DOC

## Te Rua-o-te-moko/Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre

Situated on the shores of Lake Te Anau on Lakefront Drive, Te Rua-o-te-moko/Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre is open daily, including public holidays. Opening hours vary according to the season.

The centre offers:

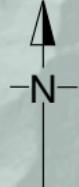
- Park and conservation information
- Up-to-date weather and track information
- Great Walks Booking Office
- Brochures, maps and books
- Hut tickets, hunting permits and fishing licences
- Conservation shop
- Short film *Stepping into Fiordland National Park*.

## Snow and avalanches

During the winter and spring the alpine areas of Fiordland are often covered in snow or ice. This may mean tracks are hazardous and/or impassable. Avalanches can and do occur at any time of the year. Always check for up-to-date weather and track conditions before starting your trip. Pick up a copy of '*Be avalanche alert*' in Fiordland from the Visitor Centre or visit the website: [doc.govt.nz/avalanche-fiordland](http://doc.govt.nz/avalanche-fiordland)

## Dogs and other pets

It is an offence under the National Parks Act 1980 to bring dogs or any other introduced animals into Fiordland National Park. Please help protect native wildlife by leaving your pets at home.



# Fiordland National Park

Walking tracks



Hut



Campsites



Picnic site



Toilet



Shuttle bus



Information Centre



Shelter

## Lake Te Anau



# Walking tracks around Te Anau

*Te Anau township, nestled on the shores of Lake Te Anau, is the gateway to Fiordland National Park. An ideal place to spend a few days, it offers a wide variety of accommodation, restaurants and services, as well as many commercial operators that can help you explore the park.*

**All track times are one way unless stated otherwise.**

Track categories	Other symbols
 <b>Easy access short walk</b> – wheelchair accessible	 Birds nesting
 <b>Short walk</b> – easy walking for up to an hour	 Visitor shelter
 <b>Walking track</b> – gentle walking from a few minutes to a day	 Hut
 <b>Great Walk/Easy tramping track</b> – well formed track for comfortable overnight tramping/hiking	 Interp walk
 <b>Tramping track</b> – mostly unformed but with track directional markers, poles or cairns; backcountry experience required	 Look out
 <b>Route</b> – navigation and high level backcountry skills and experience required	 Motor boat
	 Picnic site
	 Rowboat
	 Toilets

## Visitor Centre to Te Anau Wildlife Centre

10 minutes



From the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre follow the path around the shore of the lake, past the yacht club to the Te Anau Wildlife Centre. The park is open from dawn until dusk and entry is by a gold coin donation. The aviaries and pens that house the birds are set in beautiful grounds with views of the lake. Be sure to visit the takahē enclosure as this is one of the only places where you can see this unique Fiordland bird. Free-flying birds enjoy the trees planted there and the ducks like the water's edge below the boardwalk next to the lake.

## Visitor Centre to Ivon Wilson Recreation Reserve

15 minutes



From Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre walk about 1 kilometre around the lake edge then cross the road to Ivon Wilson Recreation Reserve. This is a 35 hectare reserve, planted with native and exotic trees. There are several paths leading to picturesque Lake Henry, which is stocked with rainbow and brown trout as a children's fishery. Fishing licences are available from the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre. There is also a mountain bike track located in the reserve – enquire at the visitor centre for more information. Toilets are available near the entrance.



Luxmore Hut on the Kepler Track. Photo: DOC

## Visitor Centre to Control Gates

50 minutes



Follow the path from the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre around the edge of the lake, passing through the Wildlife Centre. Excellent lake and mountain views are enjoyed as the track crosses open land below the golf course. The Control Gates regulate water flows between lakes Te Anau and Manapouri for the West Arm hydroelectric power station. They mark the start of the Kepler Track, a 3-4 day walk. A toilet is available at the car park and there is another toilet 5 minutes from the Control Gates on the track to Dock Bay.

### Control Gates to:



**Dock Bay (Kepler Track)**

1 hour return



**Brod Bay (Kepler Track)**

3 hours return



**Luxmore Hut (Kepler Track)**

8–10 hours return



From the Control Gates the Kepler Track (a Great Walks track) follows the lake edge through mountain and red beech forest. In spring the yellow-flowering kōwhai and scented orchids are attractive. Dock Bay is suitable for swimming and has toilet facilities. *Continued >>*





Swing bridge over the Waiau River at Rainbow Reach.

*Photo: Pania Dalley*

The track continues around the lake for another hour to Brod Bay. From here it ascends steeply through mountain and silver beech forest, passes under towering limestone bluffs, and climbs above the bushline to Luxmore Hut. This strenuous, full-day walk provides impressive views of Lakes Te Anau and Manapouri, and the Te Anau basin.

### Brod Bay to Te Anau (Kepler Track)

3–4 hours



A local water taxi will take you from Te Anau across the lake to Brod Bay. From Brod Bay a pleasant walk on the Kepler Track beside the lake will lead you back to Te Anau via the Wildlife Park. The Visitor Centre has departure times and rates of the water taxi.

### Luxmore Hut to Te Anau (Kepler Track)

4–5 hours



A helicopter can drop you off at Luxmore Hut so you can walk back down the mountain into Te Anau. There are beautiful views over the Te Anau basin on a nice day. Contact the Visitor Centre for details on helicopter availability and rates. This trip is weather dependent.



### **Control Gates to Rainbow Reach (Kepler Track)**

**2 hours 30 minutes**



Follow the terraces of the Waiau River along the Kepler Track through red and mountain beech forest. An area of mānuka shrubland marks the home of early runholder Jack Beer who during summer drove his sheep onto Mt Luxmore to graze. There is a swing bridge to cross over the Waiau River to get to Rainbow Reach. A shuttle bus service back to Te Anau operates during the summer months.

### **Rainbow Reach to Shallow Bay or Moturau Hut (Kepler Track)**

**3–3 hours 30 minutes return**



Rainbow Reach is 12 km from Te Anau on the Manapouri/Te Anau Highway. To access this part of the Kepler Track, cross the swing bridge beside the car park, then turn left. The track is gently undulating and wanders through mountain beech forest with some great river views. Some scenes in the *Lord of the Rings* movies were filmed near this part of the river. Further along cross a kettle bog then continue to the shores of Lake Manapouri. The Moturau and Shallow Bay Huts are near the lakeshore and offer shelter and toilet facilities.

## Visitor Centre to Upukerora River

3 hours return



Follow the Te Anau lakeshore toward the main shopping centre; continue along the footpath to the boat harbour at Bluegum Point (30 min). For a longer trip (3 hr return) continue round the lake front, past the rodeo grounds to the mouth of the Upukerora River. Return either the same way, or follow the gravel road alongside the river to the Te Anau - Milford Highway and back into town. Please be careful as cars travel quickly on this road. Although not in Fiordland National Park, both these walks provide pleasant views of the Murchison Mountains and Lake Te Anau.

## The Wilderness Lookout

5 minutes



The Wilderness is situated on SH94, 15–20 minutes drive from Te Anau towards Mossburn. The track is wheelchair accessible, and leads to a viewing platform over ancient, low and slow-growing *Halocarpus bidwilli* bog pine forest. Although not in Fiordland National Park, the 360° views of the Takitimu Mountains and foothills, Fiordland National Park and farmland, are spectacular.



The Wilderness Scientific Reserve.

Photo: Andy Wards



Bellbird/koromiko. Photo: Brent Beaven



## Te Anau Wildlife Centre

The Te Anau Wildlife Centre is set on the shores of Lake Te Anau, and is a 10 minute walk from the Te Rua-o-te-Moko/Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre. The centre is open from dawn to dusk and can cater for guided tours if booked in advance through the Visitor Centre. Entry is free, but a gold coin donation is appreciated.

The rare flightless takahē are the stars of the Wildlife Centre and meeting these prehistoric-looking characters are a ‘must do’ for Fiordland visitors. For a special opportunity to observe these unique birds, join a DOC ranger as they feed them each morning. Confirm feeding times at the Visitor Centre.

The birds held in aviaries here have either been injured and cannot survive in the wild or they have been involved in captive rearing programmes. The injured birds are rehabilitated and, if possible, released back into the wild when they are strong enough.

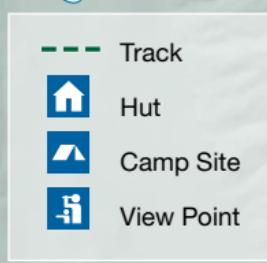
An added bonus for visitors is the variety of free-flying birds seen around the centre. Many are attracted by the food available from the native trees and shrubs that have been planted around the park. Native pigeons, tūī, silvereyes, grey warblers, starlings, tomtits, bellbirds and pied and black fantails appear from time to time, often feeding in the bush at the lake’s edge. Small groups of greenfinches and chaffinches also visit at intervals, while both harriers and, less commonly, falcons make occasional appearances, attracted by other birds. As well as brown teal, mallard, grey and paradise ducks, you may see black-backed gulls, black-billed gulls, little shags and, occasionally, the rare crested grebe or the brilliant blue of the kingfisher.



## Lake Manapouri



**Fiordland National Park**



# Walks around Manapouri

*These tracks are accessed from Pearl Harbour in Manapouri via a 5 minute boat journey across the Waiau River.*

## Access

To access these walking tracks in Fiordland National Park, cross the Waiau River at Pearl Harbour to the jetty on the opposite shore. There are water taxis available, or row boats can be hired. Please contact the Manapouri Store for more information on these options.

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### Circle Track

3–3 hours 30 minutes



From the jetty follow the riverside track for 15 minutes to a track junction. Turn left and head up the hill to the viewpoint overlooking the lake. This part of the track is rather steep and slippery so you will need to take care. The track then descends down the ridgeline to the Hope Arm Track. Turn right to return to Pearl Harbour which takes about 1 hour. Turn left for Hope Arm or Back Valley Hut options.



Views of the lake from Circle Track. Photo: DOC

## Pearl Harbour to Hope Arm

4–6 hours return



From the jetty follow the track by the Waiau River for 15 minutes. A signposted junction indicating the Circle Track is to the left – carry on straight ahead. There are good views of the Manapouri boat harbour from the terraces above the river. The track follows close to the lake edge in several places and there are some unofficial tracks that lead to the lake itself. From here the track climbs gently to the spur where the Circle Track rejoins the main track. Continue straight ahead again through the diverse understorey of plants until reaching the Back Valley/Hope Arm Hut junction. Turn right for Hope Arm and proceed through a narrow neck of forest on boardwalk over swampland. Cross the bridge over the Garnock Burn and shortly you will descend on to Hope Arm Beach. The hut is sited at the far end of the beach.

## Pearl Harbour to Back Valley Hut

4–5 hours return



Take the left branch at the Hope Arm/Back Valley turnoff as described above. The track passes through beech and podocarp forest and a stand of ribbonwood before emerging into some small clearings, where the hut is situated. After heavy rain this part of the track can be quite muddy. From the hut it is possible to do a side trip up to Lake Rakatu. The trip takes an extra 2 hours return and the track is very muddy as it follows the creek to the lake.



Back Valley Hut. Photo: DOC

## Pearl Harbour return via Hope Arm & Back Valley Huts

6–7 hours



This is a loop walk visiting both huts. See above for track description to Hope Arm Hut, then take the track located behind the hut to Back Valley Hut. It is an easy grade to the Garnock Burn which is spanned by a three wire bridge. See above for details on the track from Back Valley Hut to Pearl Harbour.

## The Monument Track

1 hour 30 minutes–2 hours return



A water taxi or private boat is required to reach the start of the track, 2 km north of the Hope Arm Hut. From here it is a short, but challenging, 290 metre climb to The Monument summit. From the beach, the track climbs steeply through forest onto the ridge before reaching the bushline. Extreme caution is advised as there are exposed sections with crumbling rock and narrow ledges. At one point there is a chain anchored into the rock to help you. From the top there are spectacular views of Lake Manapouri and the surrounding mountains.

## Stockyard Cove Track

45 minutes–1 hour return



Travel by water taxi or private boat to Stockyard Cove at the western entrance to Hope Arm.

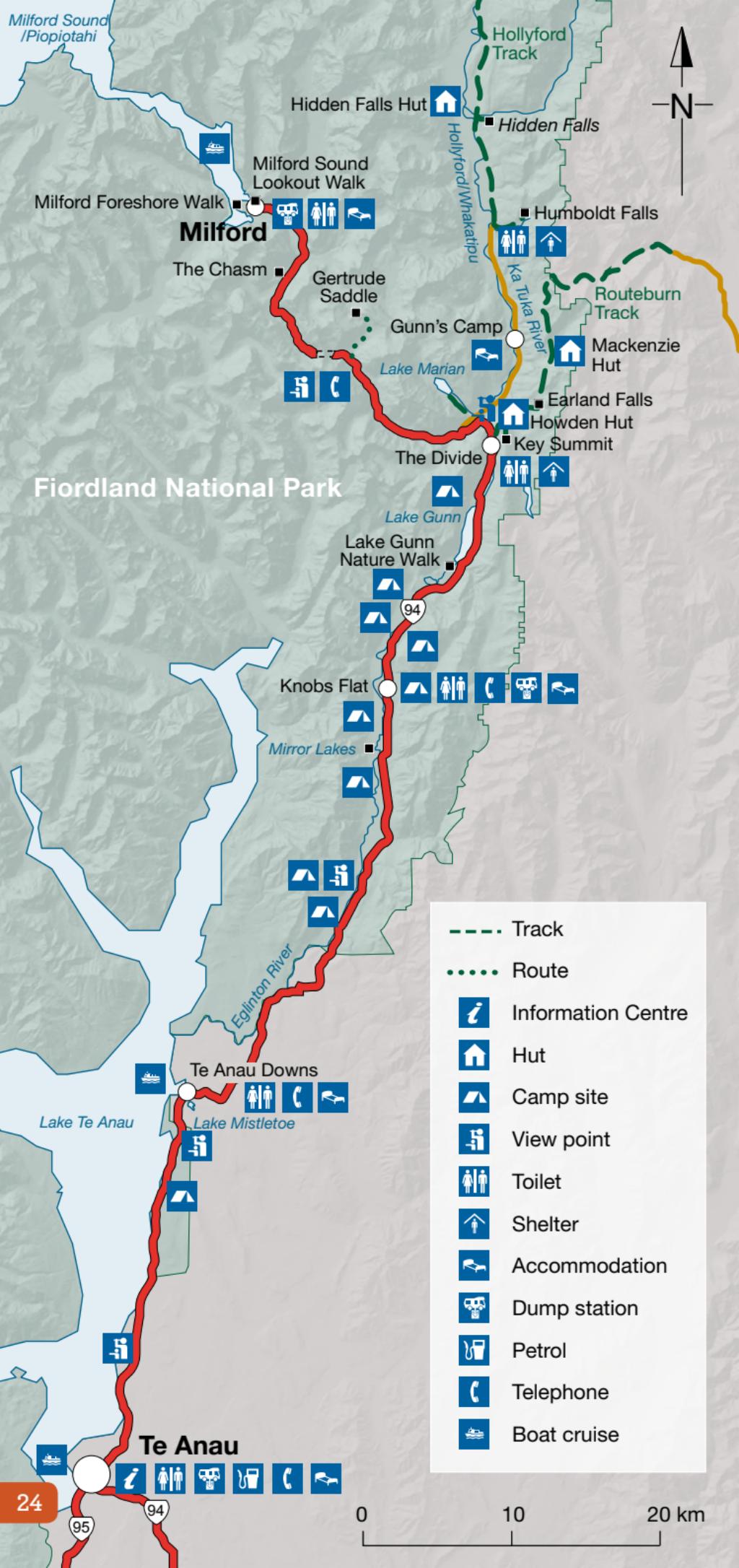
Two tracks lead from this point. The first heads west to West Beach where there are nice views of Lake Manapouri. The second passes through ancient podocarp forest, climbing briefly until reaching the high bluff waterfalls and then descending through mountain beech forest to the lake edge. This track is also known as the Waterfall Track. It is advisable to return to Stockyard Cove following the same track as the foreshore is rocky, slippery and parts of it can be underwater if the lake level is high.

## Frazers Beach

30 minutes



The views from the beach of the national park are awe-inspiring, especially at sunset. Walk along the beach, or the track parallel to the beach. The track starts and finishes from Pearl Harbour or at the road entrance just north of Manapouri township.



# Walks from the Milford Road Highway

*Tracks from the Milford Road will introduce you to some of the most spectacular alpine and forest scenery in New Zealand. The drive itself is magnificent. Take the opportunity to delve deeper into the wilderness other than simply seeing it from your car.*

## Tips for travellers on the Milford Road

- There are no petrol stations en route to Milford Sound.
- Allow a minimum of 2–2 hr 30 min to drive from Te Anau to Milford.
- Please check road conditions during winter and spring. Snow chains may need to be carried.
- There is no cellphone coverage outside of Te Anau.
- It is a steep and windy, mountainous road. Please drive to the conditions.
- There are 10 DOC campsites between Te Anau and The Divide.
- Please do not feed the kea.

## Lake Mistletoe

45 minutes return



Lake Mistletoe is reached by an attractive forest walk at Te Anau Downs. The entrance is signposted opposite the Fiordland National Park Lodge complex.

## Mirror Lakes

10 minutes



A good place to stretch your legs during the drive to Milford Sound. Small lakes seen from the wheelchair-accessible boardwalk provide outstanding reflective views of the Earl Mountains. Waterfowl and wetland plants can be seen against a backdrop of beech forest. Interpretation panels provide information on local wildlife.

## Lake Gunn Nature Walk

45 minutes return



(Access from Cascade Creek car park.) This easy 45 minute loop walk is suited to all ages. It is wheelchair accessible and passes through red beech forest and birdlife typical of the Eglinton valley. Side trips can be made to several lake beaches and sheltered fishing spots.

## Key Summit

3 hours return



From The Divide car park follow the Routeburn Track (a Great Walks track) for about an hour to the track to Key Summit. From here it is a 20 minute climb to Key Summit, with panoramic views over the Humboldt and Darran Mountains. A selfguided alpine nature walk passes a range of native vegetation: beech forest, subalpine shrublands, alpine tarns and bogs. Birdlife is prolific and tomtits, robins, wood pigeons and bellbirds are commonly seen. If you only have time for one walk on your drive to Milford Sound, and the weather is fine, this track is well worth the effort!

## Lake Howden

3 hours return



From The Divide car park follow the Routeburn Track through silver beech forest to the Key Summit turn off (see above). From here it is a short descent to Lake Howden and the Howden Hut.

## **Earland Falls**

**6 hours return**



From The Divide car park follow the Routeburn Track to Howden Hut (1 hr 30 min). From here take the track to Mackenzie Hut – the falls are halfway between Howden and Mackenzie Huts. Clearings give excellent views of the Hollyford valley. Earland Falls are 174 metres high and originate from Lake Roberts.

Please check track conditions at the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre during the snow/avalanche season (winter and spring). These walks are in avalanche risk areas – check conditions with the Visitor Centre before your trip.



## Lake Marian Falls

20 minutes return



## Lake Marian

3 hours return



The car park is 1 kilometre down the unsealed Hollyford Road. From here cross the swing bridge and continue to the spectacular series of waterfalls which are viewed from the gantry hugging the side of the steep bank.

From the gantry the track becomes steep and sometimes muddy during the ascent to Lake Marian. This beautiful alpine lake is situated in a hanging valley, surrounded by mountains with magnificent reflections if the weather is calm. Do not walk around the lake edge during the snow/ avalanche season (winter and spring).

## Humboldt Falls

30 minutes return



This walk starts from the end of the unsealed Hollyford Road. A well-graded track takes you on a short climb through rainforest to the lookout of the impressive Humboldt Falls.

## Hidden Falls

4–6 hours return



Leave your car at the Hollyford Road end and cross the swing bridge over Humboldt Creek onto the Hollyford Track. The track follows the Hollyford River/Whakatipu Kā Tuka and offers occasional views of the Darran Mountains. At Hidden Falls Creek the track passes Sunshine Hut, run by



View of Milford Sound/Piopiotahi from the Gertrude Saddle.

Photo: Sally Chesterfield

Hollyford Valley Guided Walks, and continues upstream to the swing bridge. Take the rough track to the right of the bridge to view Hidden Falls. Hidden Falls Hut (12 bunks) is a further 20 minutes along the track over the bridge.

## Gertrude Saddle Route

4–6 hours return



The car park is signposted shortly before the eastern portal of the Homer Tunnel. From the car park the marked route meanders up the valley through spectacular alpine vegetation. After rain there are some creek crossings so expect to get wet feet.

There are no markers above the bushline, so alpine navigational skills are essential. Unfortunately trampers create misplaced rock cairns – be sure to follow your own judgement and use a topographical map (NZ Topo50 sheet CBo9 Hollyford). From the head of the valley the route leads up to the saddle. Cross the base of the waterfall and sidle across the slopes towards Black Lake. From here parts of the track are very steep and not suitable for those with limited tramping experience, or a dislike for heights. The track goes up steep rock slabs and is treacherous when wet or frosty – there are steel cables to assist you. From the head of the valley continue up through the boulders to the saddle. Breathtaking views of the valley and part of Milford Sound/Piopiotahi can be seen.

This is an alpine route and is subject to avalanches after snow. Please check with the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre for track conditions before starting, whatever the season.





Chasm Falls. Photo: Pat Wall, Destination Fiordland

### The Chasm

20 minutes return



This walk on the Milford side of the Homer Tunnel is well signposted and very popular. Two footbridges over the Cleddau River offer dramatic views of a series of powerful waterfalls. Thousands of years of swirling water have sculpted shapes and basins in the rock. The sheer velocity of water gives an appreciation of how much rainfall the Milford Sound area receives per annum.

### Tutuko Valley

5 hours return



This route is accessed from the Tutuko bridge on the Milford Road and is lightly marked for approximately 2 hr 30 min. Return to the car park at this stage, or if you have experience with river crossings and have good navigation skills continue further up the river bed. You may see blue ducks/whio. The views seen from above the bushline are spectacular.

### Milford Foreshore Walk

30 minutes



At the entry to the main visitor car park at Milford Sound you will find the start of this interpretive walk. Relax and enjoy the sea air while watching the boats taking visitors out on cruises on Milford Sound. Some of the best views of Mitre Peak are from this walk. Take sandfly repellent with you!



## Milford Sound Lookout Walk

10 minutes



Access to this track is from the car parking area at the rear of the cafe. Pass in front of the two brown buildings to the south of the car park and towards Donald Sutherland's grave. Continue on the path around this to the edge of the bush. Follow the track from this point. There are a number of steps up to the lookout which gives impressive views of spectacular Milford Sound/Piopiotahi. Return the same way.



Milford Sound Foreshore. Photo: Graham Dainty

# What else can I do in Fiordland National Park?

## Hunting and fishing

In the early 1900s red deer, wapiti, possums and moose were liberated into Fiordland. No moose are thought to have survived but deer and possums have adapted well to the Fiordland environment. The annual wapiti bugle brings hunters from around the world each autumn. A ballot is held annually to hunt wapiti during the ‘roar’ in March and April. Permits to hunt red deer, wapiti and possums are available from the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre.

The lakes and rivers of Fiordland offer excellent fishing for brown and rainbow trout. You do need to purchase a fishing licence and adhere to the regulations. The invasive algae didymo is present in some areas of the park and requires a clean gear certificate.

## Kayaking

Guided sea-kayaking trips are available on Doubtful Sound/Patea. Please help keep invasive weeds such as oxygen weed (*lagarosiphon*) and didymo out of the lakes and rivers.

## Boating

There are a number of boat launching ramps at the lakes in Fiordland National Park. Please note that conditions can change very rapidly with the onset of bad weather. Please help keep invasive weeds such as oxygen weed (*lagarosiphon*) and didymo out of the lakes and rivers.



**CHECK, CLEAN, DRY**  
Stop the spread of didymo and other freshwater pests. Remember to Check, Clean, Dry all items before entering, and when moving between, waterways.

## Mountain biking

Mountain biking is not allowed on any walking tracks in Fiordland National Park, but you can ride bikes on formed roads. Enquire at the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre for more information.

## Scenic trips

Commercial operators offer boat trips, flights and guided walks within Fiordland National Park. For more information enquire at the Te Rua-o-te-moko/Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre or visit the website: [www.fiordland.org.nz](http://www.fiordland.org.nz)

## Camping

The Department of Conservation administers numerous campsites within Fiordland National Park. There is a small charge and facilities are basic. Information on location, prices and facilities is available from any Department of Conservation office. Also visit [doc.govt.nz/camping](http://doc.govt.nz/camping)

## Longer walks

This brochure only covers the day walks in the area. Overnight walks are many and varied and usually have their own brochure. Enquire at the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre or visit the DOC website: [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)



Milford Sound/Piopiotahi. Photo: Kendall DeLyser

# DOC HOTline 0800 362 468

Report any safety hazards  
or conservation emergencies  
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

Share your Fiordland day  
walk experience:

 [docfiordland](#)

## Contact us

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