



# TOURISM & RECREATION DASHBOARD

## Peak Season 2017/18 - Top Sites

### LEGEND

40,000+ total annual visitor volume

↑ 6% peak season visitor trend

### How did the Great Walks perform?

131,000 ↑ 1%

Visitation to 8 of the 9 Great Walks grew peak season, for an overall growth of +1%. The Rakiura Track grew most, by +8%, the Heaphy and Kepler tracks the least with +0.4% each. Compared to previous years there was an overall slowing of growth. The Whanganui Journey lost -4% in visitation, possibly due to bad weather and flooding. Additional wardens were employed across the network to maintain toilets, huts, and carparks for the increasing number of visitors.

### How did DOC top visitor sites perform?

#### Te Rerenga Wairua / Cape Reinga

150,000+ ↑ ?

Local DOC staff reports visitor numbers to have increased. Total visitor volume is estimated at a minimum of 150,000 annually, attracting an even split of domestic and international visitors. Car parking facilities remain at capacity. The Department increased the number of hired carpark attendants over the peak season from 1 to 3, in response to tour bus operators requiring allocated parking spaces to be available.

#### Cathedral Cove

250,000+ ↓ 11%

Visitor numbers dropped by -11%, which is surprising compared to the large growth experienced in recent years. The reasons for this drop are not yet understood. Improvements were made during the 2017/18 summer season to carparks and toilet infrastructure to accommodate high use. The frequency of facility cleaning was also increased.

#### Tongariro Alpine Crossing

130,000+ ↑ 10%

Visitor growth is estimated to have been around +10%, continuing a 10-year trend. To address growing pressure, we continued to work with local iwi, councils, and communities on a 20-year vision. The Department employed additional rangers to service established and additional toilets, and to interact with visitors, with new traffic management and communication encouraging visitors to park in surrounding towns and use transport providers to access the track. Changes to DOC's management approach resulted in increased use of transport providers, a more even spread of visitors, reduced numbers of vehicles at road ends, and no search and rescue callouts from Ngaruhoe.

#### Punakaiki Walkway

450,000 ↓ -18%

Visitation dropped by -18% for the peak visitor season compared to last year. The drop in numbers may be related to the re-opening of the Kaikoura Highway in December 2017, resulting in more visitors taking the direct route to Christchurch, and accessing the West Coast via Arthur's Pass. Several significant storm events and a closure of State Highway 6 are likely to have added to this trend. The decline of visitor numbers is currently being investigated by local DOC staff. Pancake Rocks still attracted 2,300 visitors on peak days, which remains around the same as the previous year.

#### Mangorei Track (Pouakai Crossing)

15,000+ ↑ 37%

The track has seen a strong increase in visitor numbers (+37%), largely fuelled by international visitors (70-80%). DOC put additional effort into hut and toilet maintenance for the summer season. Facilities remain under pressure from increasing visitor numbers. A land slide occurred in February 2018, blocking off the most popular route. This section will remain closed for six months, with visitors using an alternative section.

#### Kura Tawhiti

47,000+ ↓ -4%

Visitor numbers decreased slightly (-4%), the reasons for which not fully understood yet. DOC put rangers in place to undertake guided walks, maintain facilities, and increase compliance, resulting in very positive customer feedback. An additional amenities ranger visited twice a day. The carpark and toilets continue to be at capacity at peak times.

#### Hooker Valley Track

100,000+ ↑ 35%

Visitor numbers increased by +35%. Most of this growth was driven by international visitors (64%), followed by domestic (28%) and local (9%) visitors. The track now receives more than 1,000 visitors per day, with carparks and toilets at capacity at peak times. Accommodation at Mt. Cook Village was completely booked out throughout the peak season. Extra rangers were employed for compliance, track and facilities maintenance, and interpretation work.

#### Franz Josef Glacier

750,000 ↑ 5%

Visitor numbers to Franz Josef Glacier continued to grow this year, up by +5.1%, or 44,600 visits, compared to last year's peak season. During peak season there are in excess of 6,000 visitors per day to the Franz Josef Glacier valley. Car parking facilities remain at capacity at peak times, but are planned to be extended for the 2018/19 summer season.

#### Blue Pools

95,000+ ↑ 18%

The site experienced an +18% growth in visitors compared to the previous year, putting pressure on the car park which is to be upgraded by NZTA. NZTA put a lower speed limit in place for this section of State Highway 6. DOC provided more rangers to undertake compliance, engagement, and facilities maintenance (through Budget '17 tourism funding) with good results.

#### Roys Peak

75,000+ ↑ 27%

Roys Peak's popularity has risen dramatically through visitor promotion on social media. Visitor numbers saw an increase of +27% this year. There is no real off-season anymore, making it necessary to manage information on avalanche risk, and people accessing the track when closed. People can queue for up to 40 minutes to have their photo opportunity. Toilet cleaning increased to 5 days a week and a new toilet was located near the peak. The car park was extended by an additional 100 parking slots, minimising the number of people parking alongside the road, and private operators provided popular drop-off/pick-up services.

#### Milford Sound

810,000 ↑ 9%

Milford Sound continued its trend of around +9% growth, experienced annually over the last 5 years. The majority (76%) of growth was in international visitors. DOC continued to work with Southland District Council to manage pressures, employing additional rangers for compliance and interpretation, and for servicing toilets and carparks. Management of travel flows to Milford, continues to be key issue.