

## Cassel Flat to Horace Walker Hut via Regina Creek

Time: 13 hr

From Cassel Flat Hut cross the flats and use the cableway to cross the Karangarua River to the true right.

*Ensure that you follow the operating instructions on the cableway as improper use could cause injury.*

After about 5 minutes the route goes out onto a slip then traverses up a steep bank into the bush. Follow the markers. The route is reasonably well defined. There is a campsite just across the 3-wire bridge over Regina Creek.

From Regina Creek follow the route markers across to the bottom of the climb to Conical Hill Saddle. From here to the scrubline the route is well defined and marked. There are two sections of exposed bedrock where the route regains the scrub after a few minutes. From the scrubline to the tussock line the route is well defined and it is marked across the saddle with metal poles.

From Conical Hill saddle, sections of the route are unmarked. Head north east up the ridge. There is a section of tight bluffs just up from the saddle – if you stick to the true right of the ridge you should pick up a goat track and a narrow scrubby ledge that is passable. Once through these bluffs, change to the true left of the ridge and traverse up until about the 1,400 m contour. Traverse up the valley, staying high to avoid the bluffs on this contour. When the Horace Walker moraine can be sighted straight down below, descend to reach a tussock terrace west of the moraine wall and then drop down to the terrace beside the Douglas River. Traverse east to the 4-bunk Horace Walker Hut. You will need to cross the Horace Walker River to reach the hut.

For more information on routes in the area, see Moir's Guide North *The Otago Southern Alps: From the Hollyford to Lake Ohau* (New Zealand Alpine Club, by Geoff Spearpoint and Danilo Hegg, 2013).

Tahr can be encountered anywhere and are common at higher altitude, especially around steep bluff areas that can be difficult to hunt. Popular areas include the steep faces behind Cassel Flat, Lame Duck Flat, Christmas Flat and Horace Walker. Coleridge Creek gives good access to the tops. All hunters must have a hunting permit, available on the DOC website.

### Hut fees

Please purchase hut tickets before using the huts.

Cassel Flat Hut	6 bunks	Standard
Lame Duck Hut	4 bunks	Standard
Christmas Flat Hut	4 bunks	Standard
Horace Walker Hut	4 bunks	Standard

Standard – 1 ticket per person/night

### Further information

#### Awarua/Haast Visitor Centre

Main Road, Haast

PHONE: 03 750 0809

EMAIL: [haastvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:haastvc@doc.govt.nz)

#### Westland Tai Poutini National Park Visitor Centre

69 Cron Street

Franz Josef Glacier

Open 7 days

PHONE: 03 752 0360

EMAIL: [westlandnpvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:westlandnpvc@doc.govt.nz)

[www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)



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- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimise the effects of fire  
*Check before you light a fire - a ban may be in place*
- Respect wildlife and farm animals
- Be considerate of others

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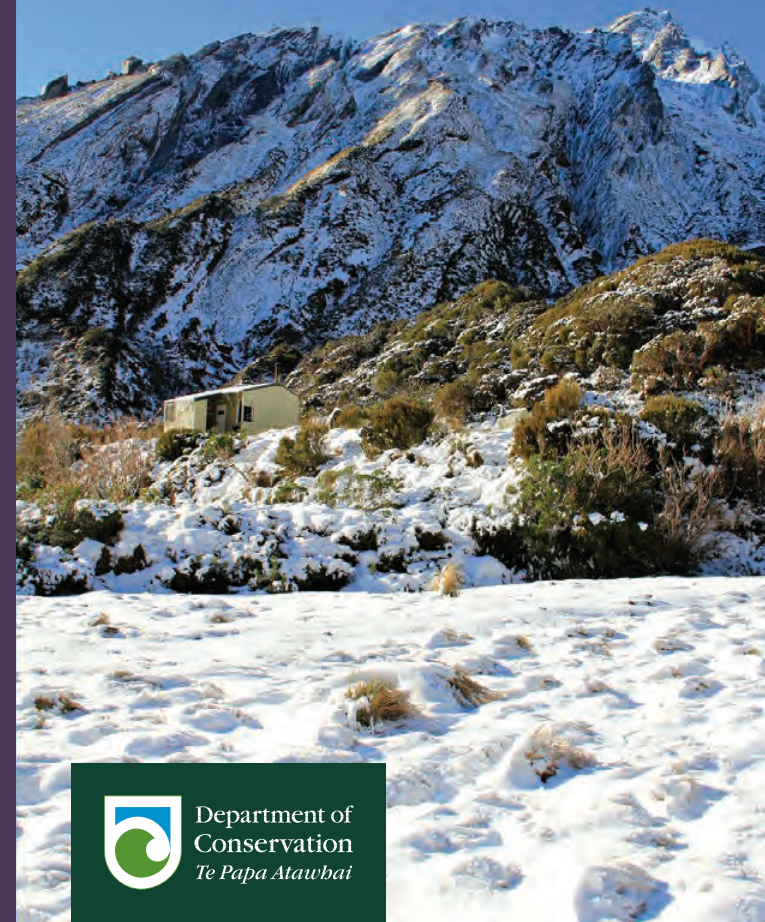
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WEST COAST

# Karangarua and Douglas valleys



Westland Tai Poutini  
National Park



Department of  
Conservation  
Te Papa Atawhai

Dogs are not allowed.

### Hunting

Red deer can be found throughout the area at any time of the year; however spring hunting on the grass flats and the Roar are the most popular hunting times. The area around Cassel Flat is particularly popular, but deer can be found in most places.

Chamois are found throughout the area. Open stream beds and slips on the lower slopes are a good place to locate chamois.

## Introduction

The Karangarua and Douglas valleys offer hunters, trampers and mountaineers many challenging opportunities and rewards within the rugged backcountry environment of Westland Tai Poutini National Park.

The forests in these catchments are varied. Rimu, kāmahi and tree ferns are the most common species in the lower altitude forest, giving way to southern rātā, kāmahi and Hall's tōtara dominating the montane forest above about 500 m. Of particular interest are the patches of silver beech/tawhai forest on the south bank of the Karangarua, downstream of the Troyte confluence. These are the northern-most limits of beech at the southern end of the Westland beech gap.

At around 900 to 1,000 m altitude, forest changes into a subalpine scrub. Snow tussocks occupy the low-alpine belt with a range of alpine herbs such as spaniards, mountain daisies and the Mount Cook buttercup. Short grasses and herbs grade into bare rock, and permanent snow and ice at higher altitudes.

The pattern of canopy dieback on the upper north bank of the Karangarua provides a good example of the impact of invading possum populations. A survey in 1978 found no possums in this area. In the mid-1980s the forest canopy in this area remained in good condition. There has been no possum control in this area and today there are extensive areas of dieback of southern rātā and Hall's tōtara.

The Karangarua River valley route to Christmas Flat is well marked with orange plastic markers, and windfalls are cleared annually. The route into the Douglas River valley is only for those with suitable experience as there are unmarked sections. Windfalls here are cleared every 2 years.



*These valleys are subject to flooding at any time of year. Do not attempt this trip in bad weather or when rain is forecast. If rivers and side streams are in flood, do not attempt to cross.*

## Getting there

Access is off State Highway 6 approximately 26 kilometres south of Fox Glacier (Weheka) township. There is a small parking area next to the Karangarua River bridge on the southern side of the river, and the route begins directly across the road.



*Times given are guides only and will vary greatly with fitness and weather conditions. Tramping in this area is very demanding and you should allow plenty of time to reach your planned destination – the area is unsuitable for inexperienced parties.*

## General information



**Duration:** 2 days +

**Grade:** Route

**Experience:** Suitable only for well-equipped people with high-level backcountry skills and experience; navigation and survival skills required.

**Best time to go:** Summer and autumn.

**Maps:** NZTopo50: BX14 Gillespies Beach; BX15 Fox Glacier

**Hazards:** Flooded rivers, rock fall, steep and exposed terrain, and avalanche.

*Note: true left and true right refer to the side of the valley or river when facing and looking downstream.*

### Your safety is your responsibility

Before heading into the area, check the latest conditions at DOC's Awarua/Haast Visitor Centre or Westland Tai Poutini National Park Visitor Centre in Franz Josef – conditions can change rapidly.

**Know the *Outdoor Safety Code* – 5 simple rules to help you stay safe:**

1. **Plan your trip**
2. **Tell someone**
3. **Be aware of the weather**
4. **Know your limits**
5. **Take sufficient supplies**

Keep to the track – if you get lost, find shelter, stay calm and try to assist searchers.

Leave your trip details with a trusted contact, in the hut Intentions Book, and at [www.adventuresmart.co.nz](http://www.adventuresmart.co.nz)

Carry a personal locator beacon, and at the end of your trip don't forget to let your contact know you are safe.

More information at [www.adventuresmart.org.nz](http://www.adventuresmart.org.nz)

## Route description

### Karangarua River valley

#### Karangarua River bridge to Cassel Flat Hut

Time: 6 hr

From the road bridge head up the true left bank of the Karangarua River, keeping mainly to the riverbed until you reach a large grassy flat just before the Karangarua-Copland junction. At the top of this flat, the route enters the bush at a point indicated by markers. It is about 1 hour's walk from the

road to this point. The track from here to the 6-bunk Cassel Flat Hut is marked and easy to follow – alternating between flood channels, bush, boulders and grass flats.

#### Cassel Flat Hut to Lame Duck Hut

Time: 7 hr

From Cassel Flat to Lame Duck Flat, follow along the river to the junction with Tui Creek where the marked route commences. Follow the river to the base of a scrubby face, before climbing steeply to the top of a prominent ridge. The route travels along this ridge above the bluffs and then sidles, gaining height through more bluffs at a higher level. The route is less defined here but is easily followed using the markers. Care should be taken on exposed, slippery stream crossings and especially when crossing a washout about two-thirds of the way along the sidle section.

After the gorge section the route traverses high above the river on poorly drained terraces before rejoining the river just below Lame Duck Flat. The 4-bunk Lame Duck Hut was replaced in 2008 by the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association (West Coast branch) and the Safari Club International.

#### Lame Duck Hut to Christmas Flat Hut

Time: 3 hr

From Lame Duck Flat follow markers through a stand of beech next to the river for about 20 minutes. The route then climbs about 100 m and follows roughly at this level to an old open slip face before coming out onto the face beside a prominent rātā tree 50 m above the river. Descend down across the face to the river. Cross the Karangarua River to avoid the bluff, recross and then cross the Troyte River. Christmas Flat is about 45 minutes away.

The route starts close to the river 30 m above the Troyte and travels along a terrace for 15 minutes, before climbing steeply for about 50 m – generally following at this level to a grassy slip. Cross the slip and travel down it, almost to the riverbed, where the route re-enters the bush and continues to the 4-bunk Christmas Flat Hut.

## Douglas River valley



*The route described below is suitable only for parties who are highly skilled and experienced, and well-equipped. The majority of this route is unmarked and parties require a very high level of navigational skills. The route requires good weather for safe travel – there is high avalanche danger.*