

# Summer 2021/22 visitor insights report

Department of Conservation | Te Papa Atawhai  
April 2022



New Zealand Government



This report looks at where people went and what impacts were observed over summer.

The report is compiled to inform DOC staff on how things are tracking around the country and where best to focus DOC's heritage and visitor work.

## Summer 2022 visitor insights report

- ▶ What is happening in outdoor areas across Aotearoa?
- ▶ Overview of visitor activity over summer nationally.
- ▶ Visitor activity across DOC's nine regions.

What is happening in outdoor  
areas across Aotearoa?



# Another kiwi summer with border restrictions – important takeaways

As expected, fewer New Zealanders headed outdoors this summer.

- While many New Zealanders headed outdoors, visitor activity levels across the country generally remain lower than in previous years. This reflects the COVID-19 outbreak, with some New Zealanders staying home. We expect visitor activity to increase once COVID-19 restrictions ease.
- Those who visited the outdoors took time out to enjoy peace and quiet, suggesting a greater focus on mental and emotional wellbeing.
- Around four out of ten visitors to protected areas noticed damage from other visitors. Visitors noticed damage to natural landscapes the most during their most recent visit.

New Zealanders enjoyed coastal and accessible destinations near urban areas.

- Short walks were popular. Many people visited short walks less than two hours from urban areas.
- Beaches, coastlines, or marine reserves were the most commonly visited outdoor environments.
- Over 100,000 New Zealanders camped across New Zealand, down 5% compared to last summer. Many of these people camped in Northland, Coromandel and the upper South Island.
- Great Walks had less demand (down 17%), but they were popular, with 40,000 New Zealanders on them.
- Demand for overnight huts near urban areas continue to be strong, especially on weekends.

International visitors will be important to support New Zealand's tourism recovery at iconic places.

- Decreasing visitor numbers were most evident in Fiordland, West Coast, Queenstown/Wānaka, Tongariro, Auckland, and Rotorua, reflecting impacts of the Omicron outbreak and the lack of international visitors due to border closures.
- Many New Zealanders who live near or regularly visit protected areas think visitors improve the local economy.
- However, they are also mindful of environmental damage and how visitors make it less attractive for locals to visit the outdoors.



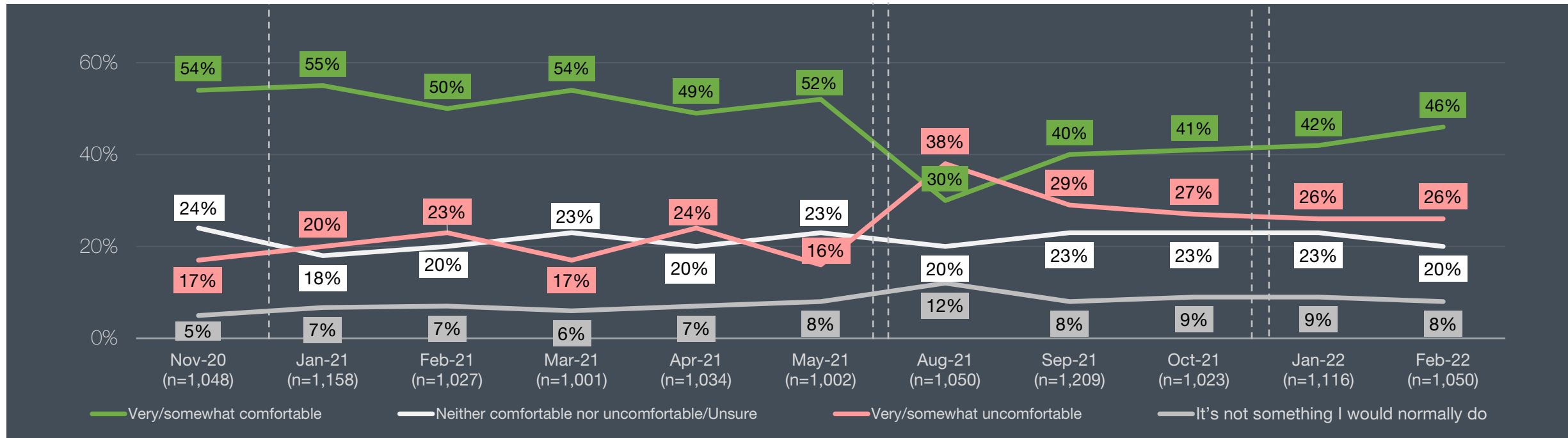
# Given the COVID-19 context, how comfortable were New Zealanders visiting the outdoors?

New Zealanders' level of comfort regarding visiting the outdoors has been somewhat variable. Since the arrival of the Delta variant of COVID-19 fewer New Zealanders have some level of comfort visiting the outdoors. The level of

comfort (now around two in five) has remained the same with the arrival of the Omicron variant.

Those most likely to be uncomfortable in recent months are of Asian and/or Pasifika ethnicity, those living rurally or in Auckland.<sup>1</sup>

AK Research Omnibus Survey – Given the current COVID-19 settings (eg, risk levels, border restrictions) which of the following best describes how you feel about visiting outdoor environments including cultural and heritage sites? NB: Dotted lines indicate a break in the data.



<sup>1</sup>This has changed somewhat, with Māori, those aged 18-24 years, and those with dependent children now seemingly as comfortable as the rest of the population.

# What COVID-19 concerns did New Zealanders have in relation to using DOC facilities?

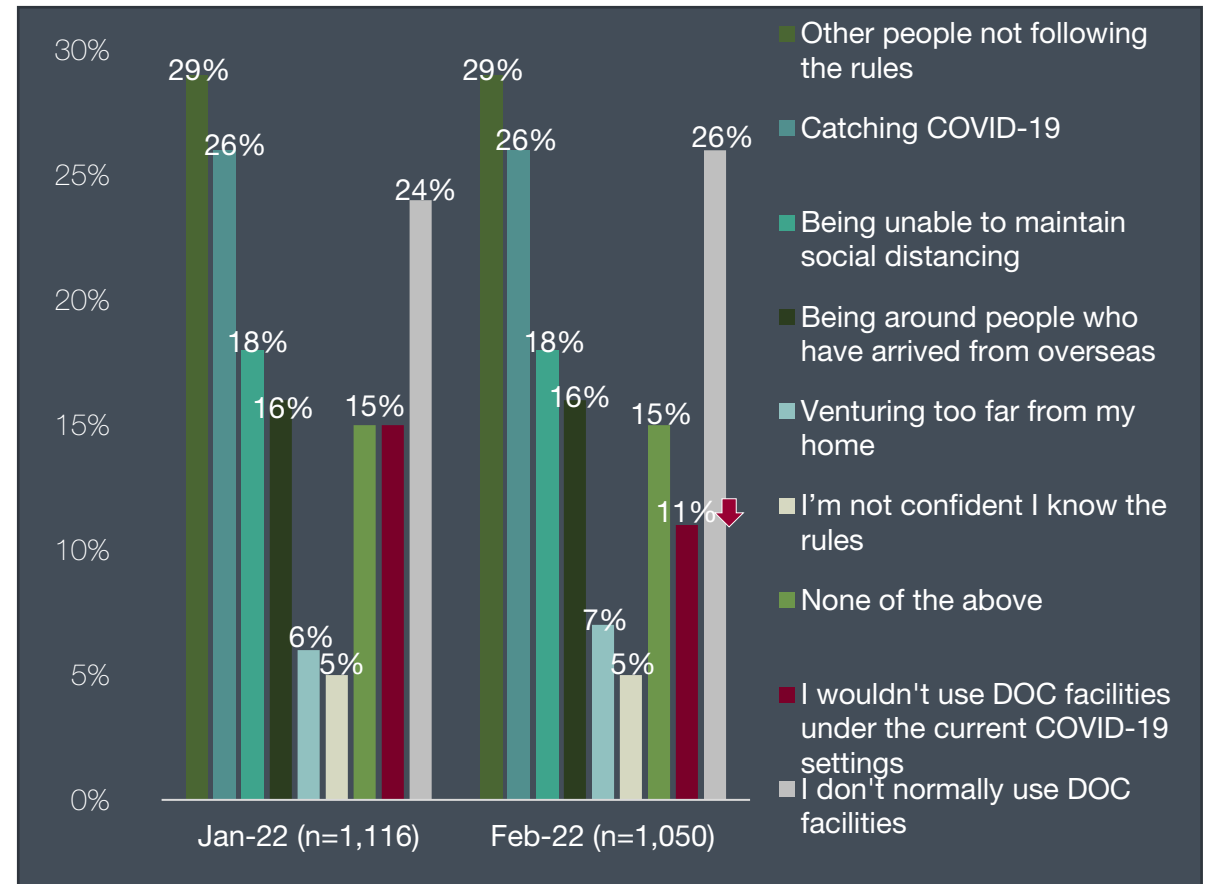
Despite increasing uncertainty over January and February, the level of individual concerns among New Zealand adults was stable. In February, DOC facilities may have become more appealing to adults.

Top concerns reported were ‘other people not following the rules’ and ‘catching COVID-19’. Some were also concerned about ‘being unable to maintain social distancing’ and ‘being around people who have arrived from overseas’.

With an average of around 13 percent of New Zealanders indicating that they ‘wouldn’t use DOC facilities under the current COVID-19 settings’, usual facility use will be down.

Those aged 60 plus were more likely to state they ‘wouldn’t use under current settings’; those aged 18-29 were less likely. This likely means facility users were younger than usual.

AK Research Omnibus Survey – If you were using the Department of Conservation’s (DOC’s) facilities under the current COVID-19 settings (ie, risk levels) which of these would be a concern for you? DOC’s facilities include its visitor centres, huts and campgrounds. Tick all that apply.



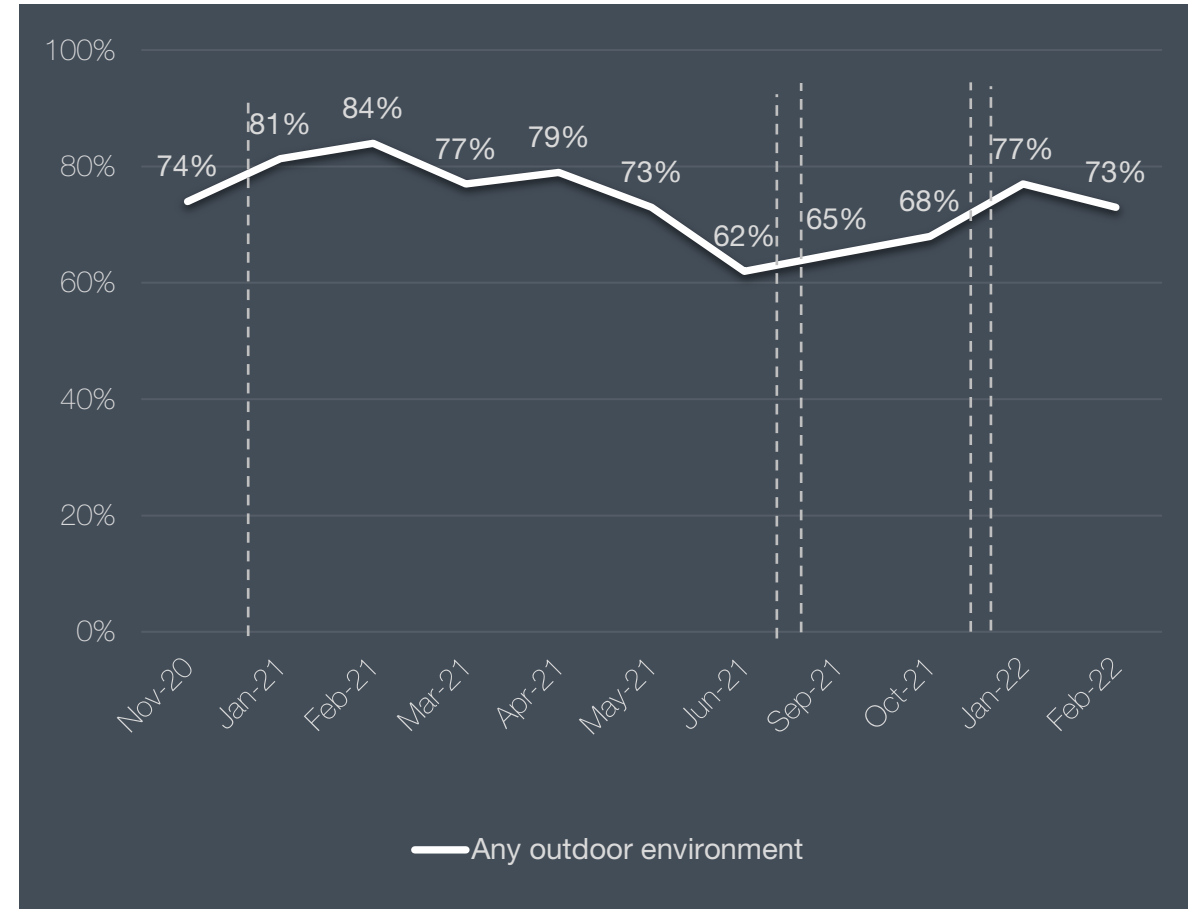
# Where in the outdoors did New Zealanders visit?

Since November 2020, the number of people visiting the outdoors<sup>1</sup> has varied. While the proportion of visitors in January reflected the same time last year, visits were lower in February 2022 than in February 2021.

The proportion of females visiting the outdoors was higher than that of males, a change when compared to last summer. Those living in lower North Island; with low household incomes; or aged over 60 also visited less also. The latter will be a flow-on effect given COVID-19 concerns about visiting the outdoors. Generally, people with lower incomes visit the outdoors less, the same as last summer. The increasing costs of living may have exacerbated lower visitor activity levels.

AK Research Omnibus Survey – Which of the following outdoor environments have you visited in the last four weeks?

Data was not collected in December due to Christmas. Dotted lines indicate a break in the data.



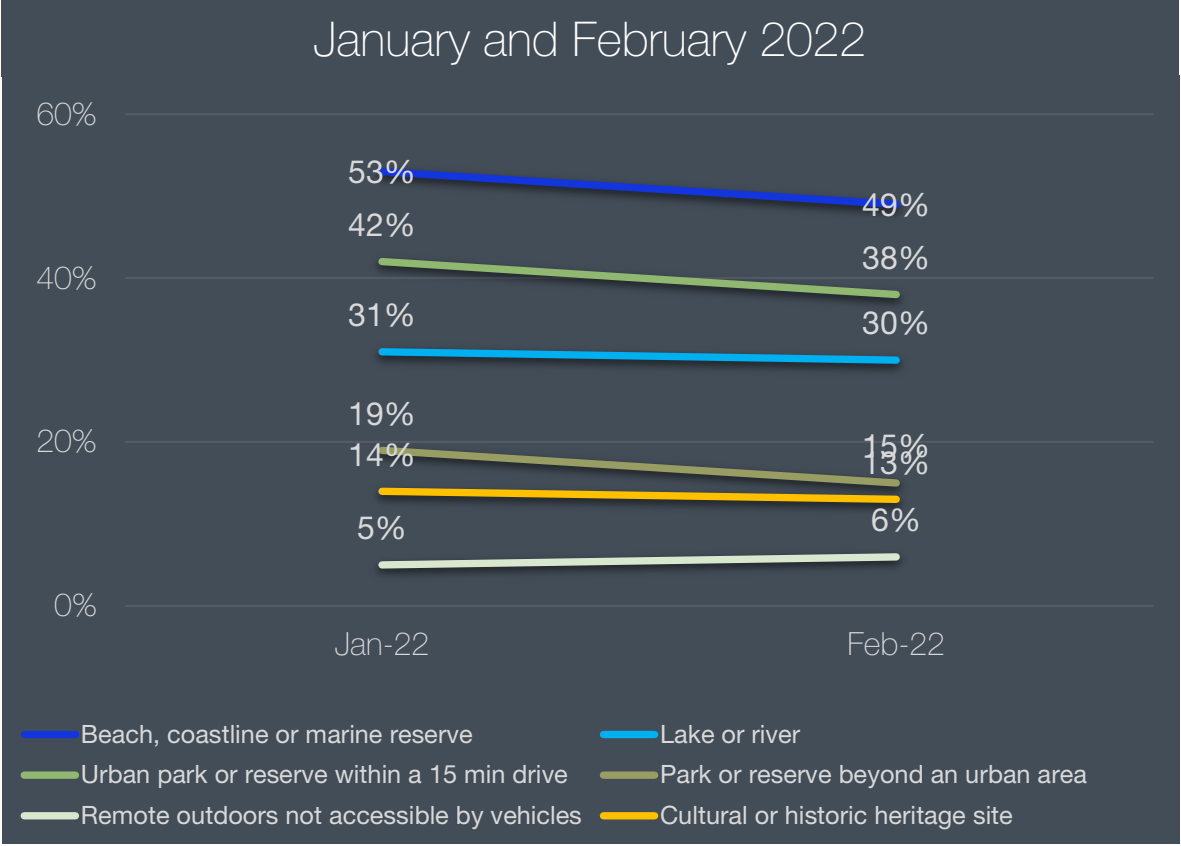
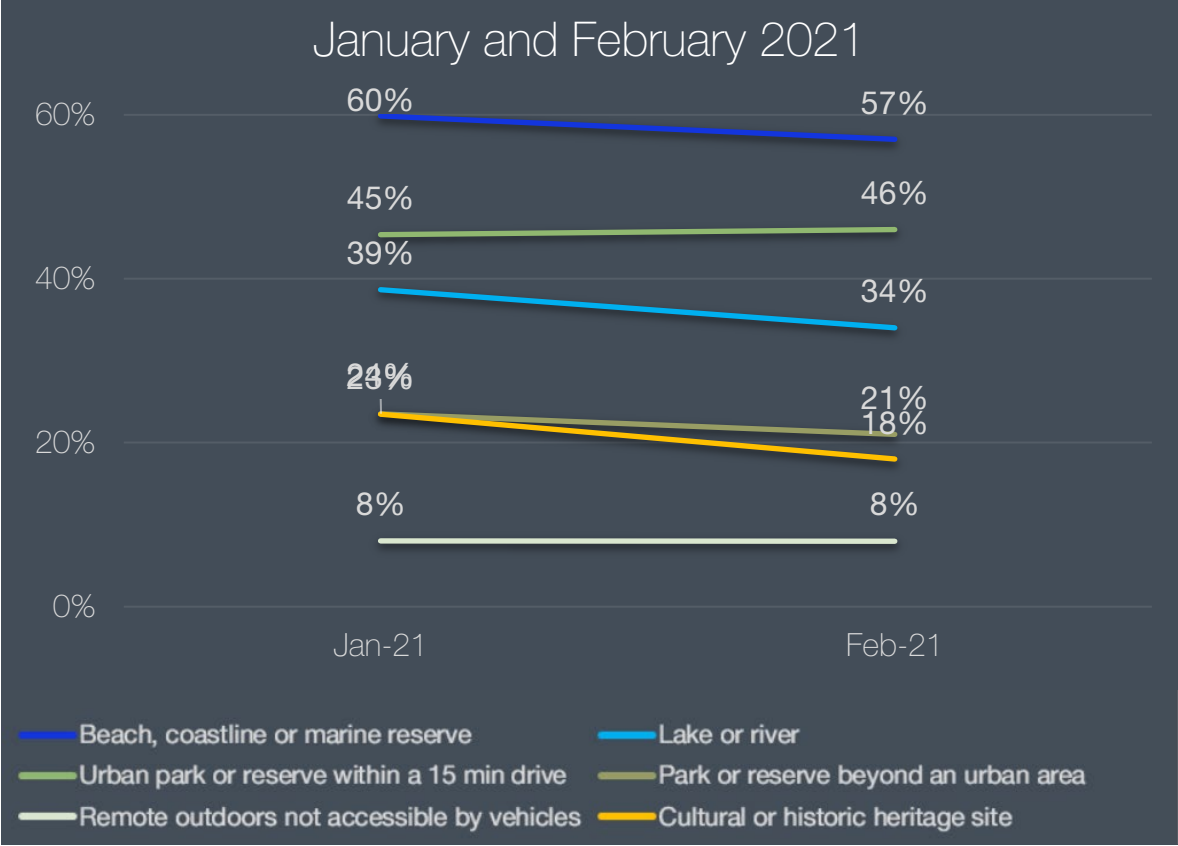
<sup>1</sup>These environments were not limited to public conservation land and waters.

# Where in the outdoors did New Zealanders visit?

Beaches, coastlines, or marine reserves were the most commonly visited outdoor environments, followed by parks or reserves in urban areas and lakes or rivers.

The proportion of people who visited the outdoors were down across all outdoor environments<sup>1</sup> by between 2-10% over January and February compared to the previous year.

AK Research Omnibus Survey – Which of the following outdoor environments have you visited in the last four weeks?



<sup>1</sup>These environments were not limited to public conservation land and waters.

# What activities did New Zealanders do over summer when visiting protected areas?

Many activities had a similar level of participation across summer months.

Short walks were the most popular summer activities when visiting protected areas across New Zealand. Sightseeing and photography were also popular activities. Swimming in the outdoors has been significantly more popular over the holiday period.

During February, Māori were more likely to connect with culture when visiting protected areas.

**Pulse of Conservation Survey – Thinking about your most recent visit to [protected area], which of the following activities did you engage in?** Analysis base – only visitors to a protected area (national parks, conservation areas and marine reserves). Green indicates significantly higher and red indicates significantly lower than previous month.

	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22
<i>Base (n=)</i>	401	478	477
Short walks (<3 hours)	33%	41%	33%
Sightseeing	24%	31%	27%
Photography	21%	24%	24%
Day walk/hike (>3 hours but not overnight)	26%	22%	21%
Bird/wildlife watching	24%	22%	20%
Connecting with nature	21%	21%	21%
Picnic, barbeque	19%	22%	21%
Swimming in a lake/river/sea	11%	18%	14%
Camping	12%	16%	14%
Connecting with culture	12%	10%	11%
Connecting with history	10%	12%	11%
Boating/sailing	8%	10%	10%

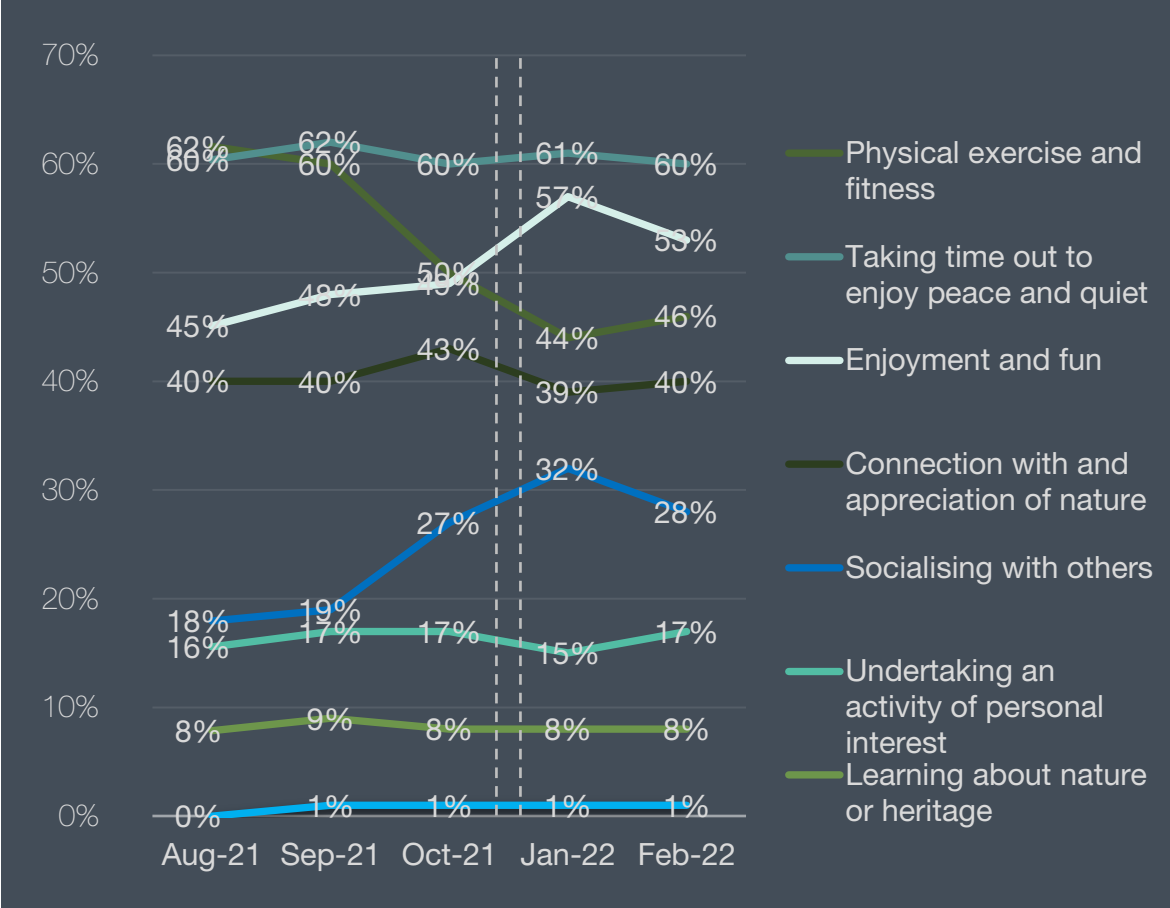
# What benefits were visitors seeking from the outdoors under higher COVID-19 alert settings?

Since August benefits sought from visiting the outdoors have varied, especially during January and February.

The top two main benefits sought were 'taking time out to enjoy the peace and quiet' and 'enjoyment and fun'. This reflects the holiday period and New Zealanders escaping these challenging times.

Since October there has been a decrease in the proportion of visitors who reported 'physical exercise and fitness' as a main benefit sought. This suggests mental and emotional wellbeing is a greater focus for New Zealanders now.

AK Research Omnibus Survey – 'Thinking about your most recent experience at [environment] what were the main benefits you hoped to gain from the visit?'  
Analysis base is visitors only. Dotted lines indicate a break in the data.



# What visitor impacts did New Zealanders observe?

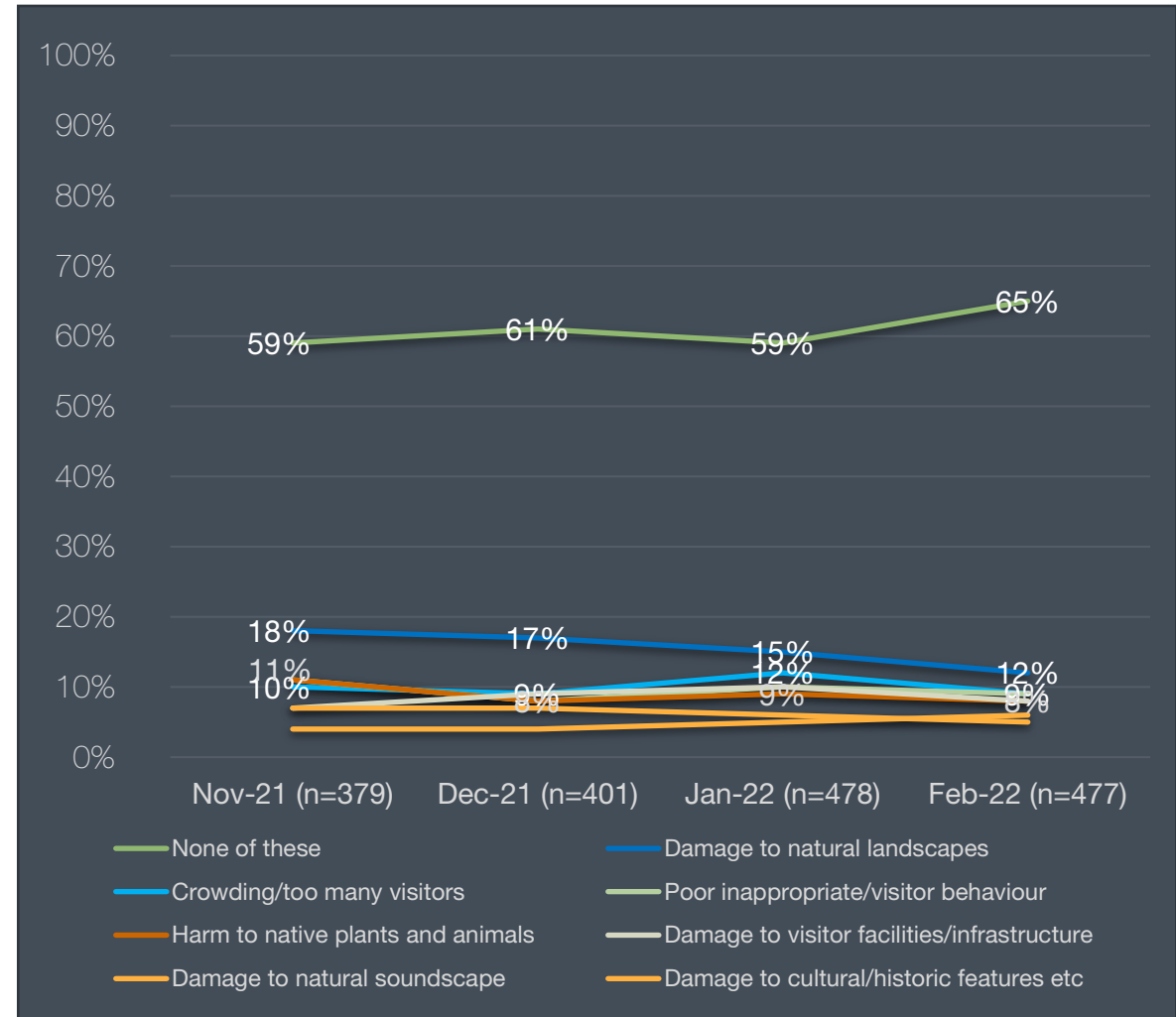
Over summer, around four out of ten visitors to protected areas reported that they had noticed damage from other visitors.

Visitors noticed damage to natural landscapes (including litter, graffiti, human waste, cooking fires) the most during their most recent visit. Damage to cultural and historic features the least.

All types of damage were reported at a similar level month to month, varying by no more than a few percentage points.

Results from the AK Research Omnibus Survey suggests that compared with January and February last year, there was less trampling of vegetation and less feeding of wild animals. This could be due to fewer visitors. In February there was less human waste and damage to facilities reported.

Pulse of Conservation Survey – Thinking about your most recent visit to [protected area], did you notice any of the following types of damage from other visitors? Analysis base – only visitors to a protected area (national parks, conservation areas and marine reserves).

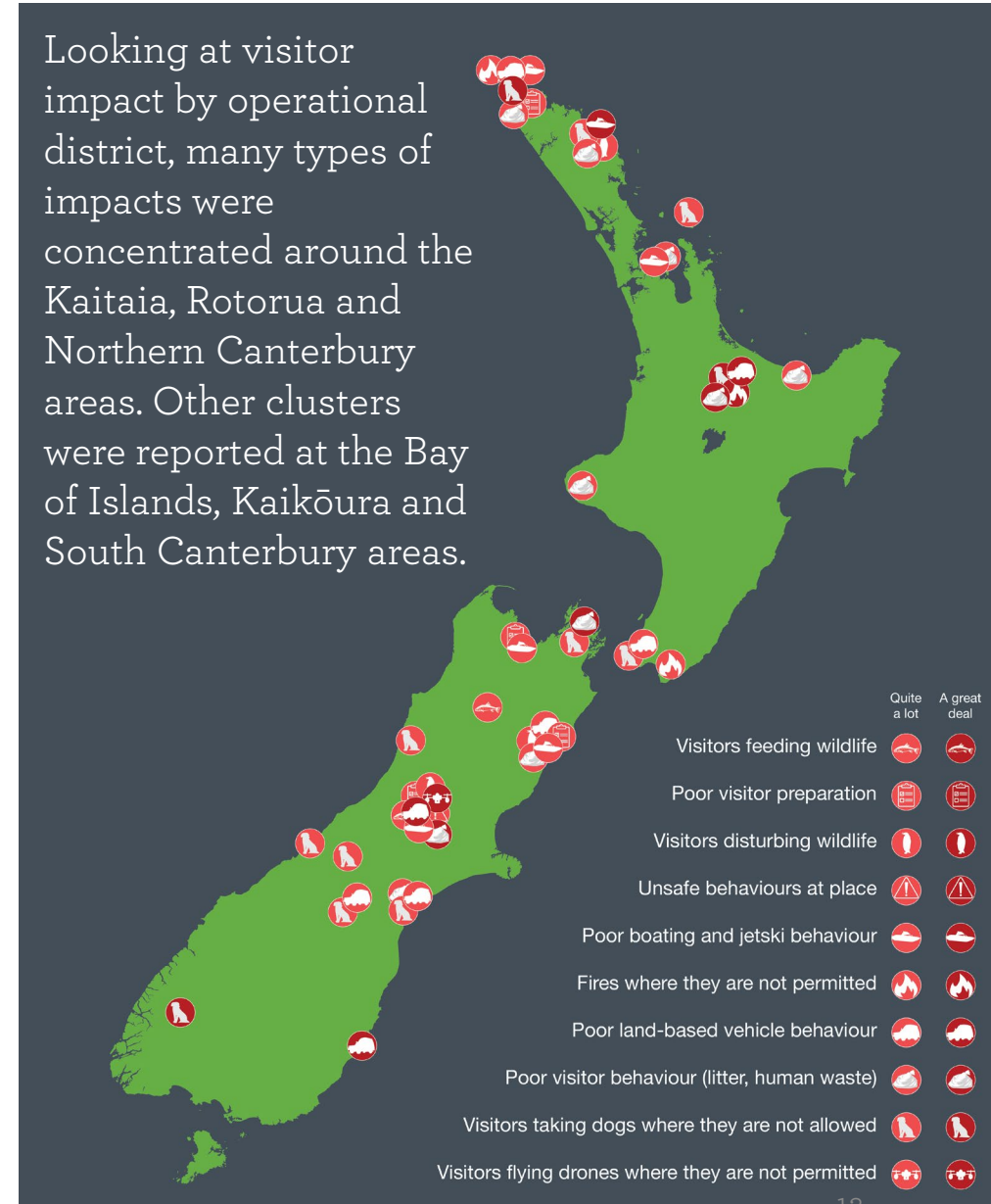
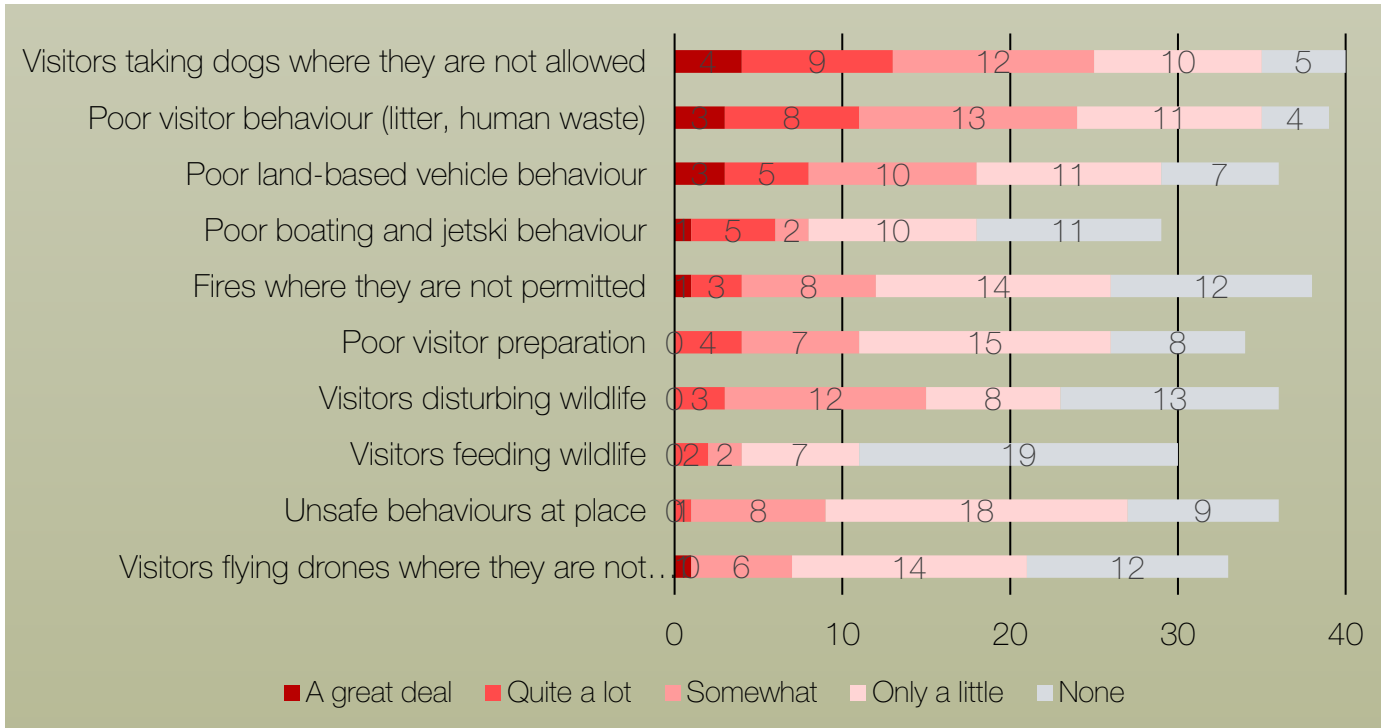




# What visitor impacts did heritage and visitor rangers see and hear?

DOC rangers reported visitor impacts across New Zealand. Visitor impacts most commonly observed by DOC rangers include visitors taking dogs where they are not allowed and poor visitor behaviour (35 of 45 staff reported both impacts). These were also reported as having the greatest impact (13 of 51 staff who reported 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot').

**⚠️ DOC Heritage/Visitor Ranger Survey – Thinking about your work managing visitors, how much of the following did you notice in your district? (n=40) skipped = 5, unsure = varies. Note: this ranger survey is not reflective of all DOC New Zealand ranger staff.**





# What do locals and visitors think about the effects of visitors?

In February, nearly two-thirds of New Zealanders (64%) who live near or regularly visit a protected area thought visitors had a positive effect on the local people who live nearby. Less than one in five New Zealanders (14%) believe the effect is negative.

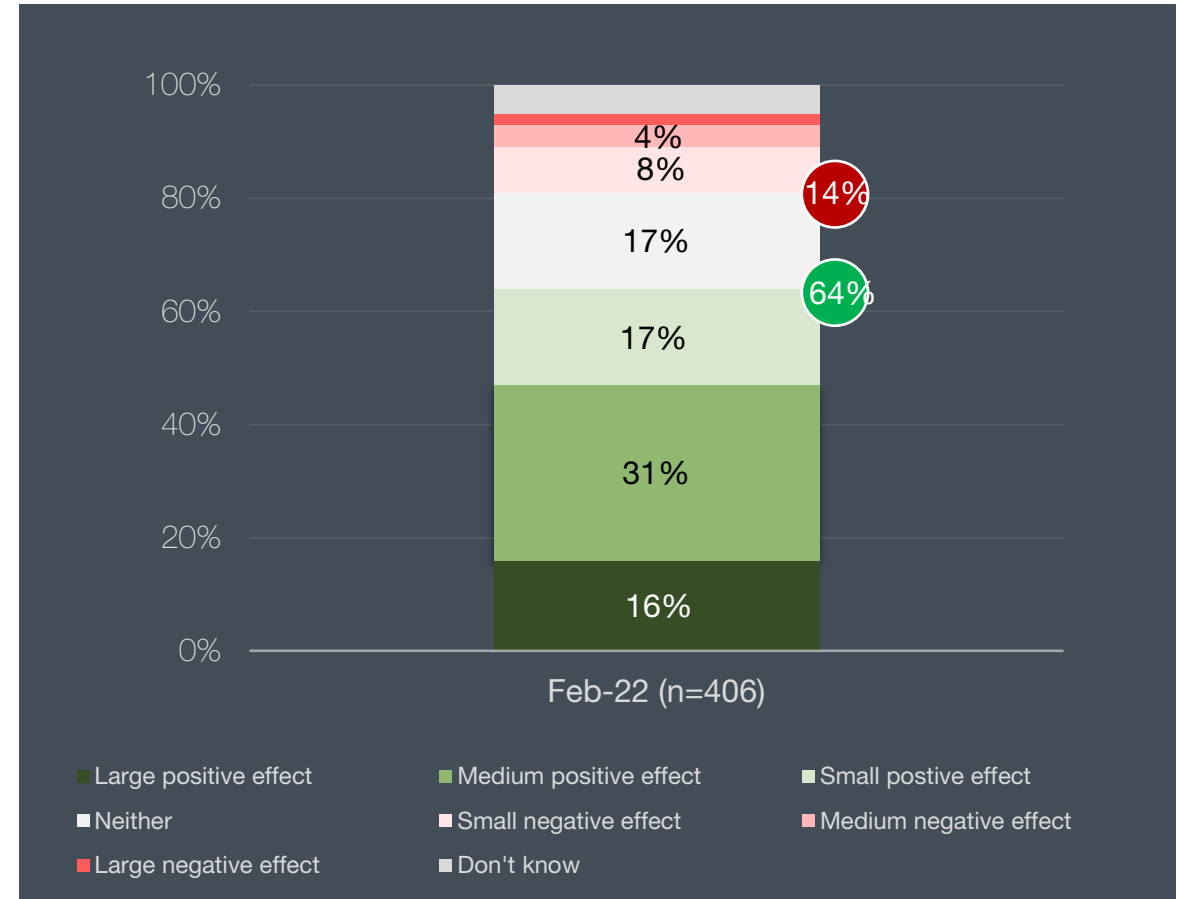
Prior to this question, respondents were asked about positive and negative effects across environmental, economic, social and cultural dimensions. The findings are presented on the following slides.

Of the eight effects tested, the consensus was greatest (67%) around visitors to protected areas improving local economies.

Of the four negative effects tested, two stand out – the damage done by visitor activities, and what equates to displacement of locals from visiting those protected areas.

Pulse of Conservation Survey – Overall, what effect do you think visitors to this protected area have on the local people who live at or near to it, at this time of year?

Analysis base – those who live near or regularly visit a protected area

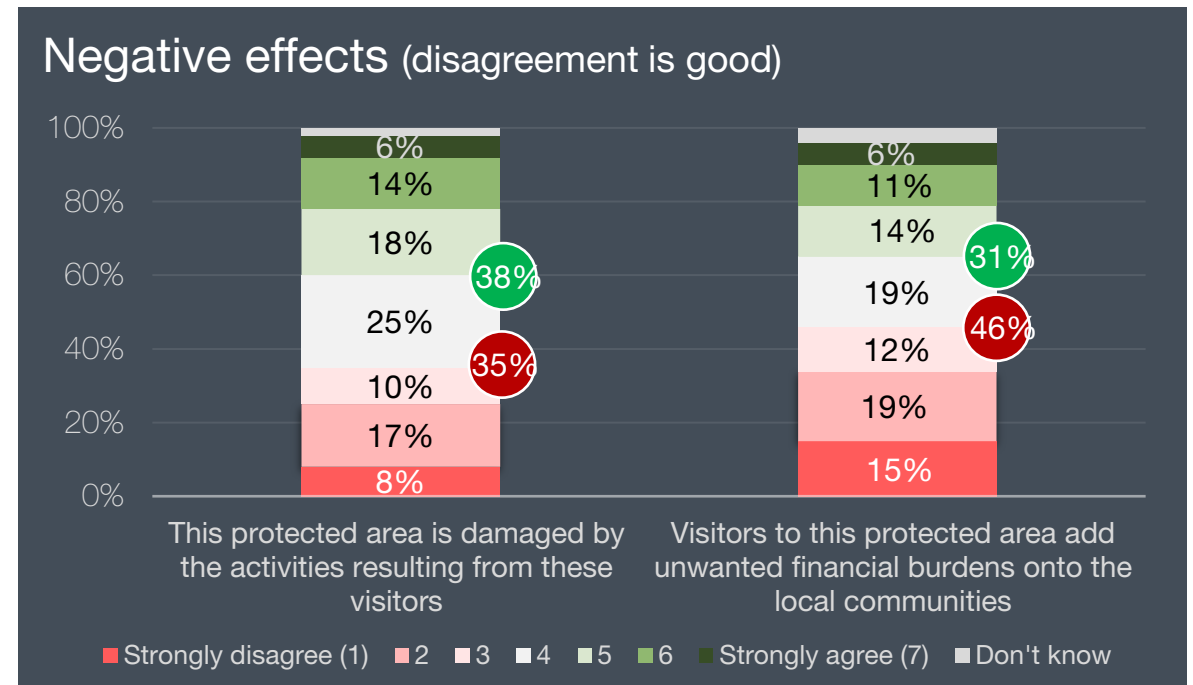
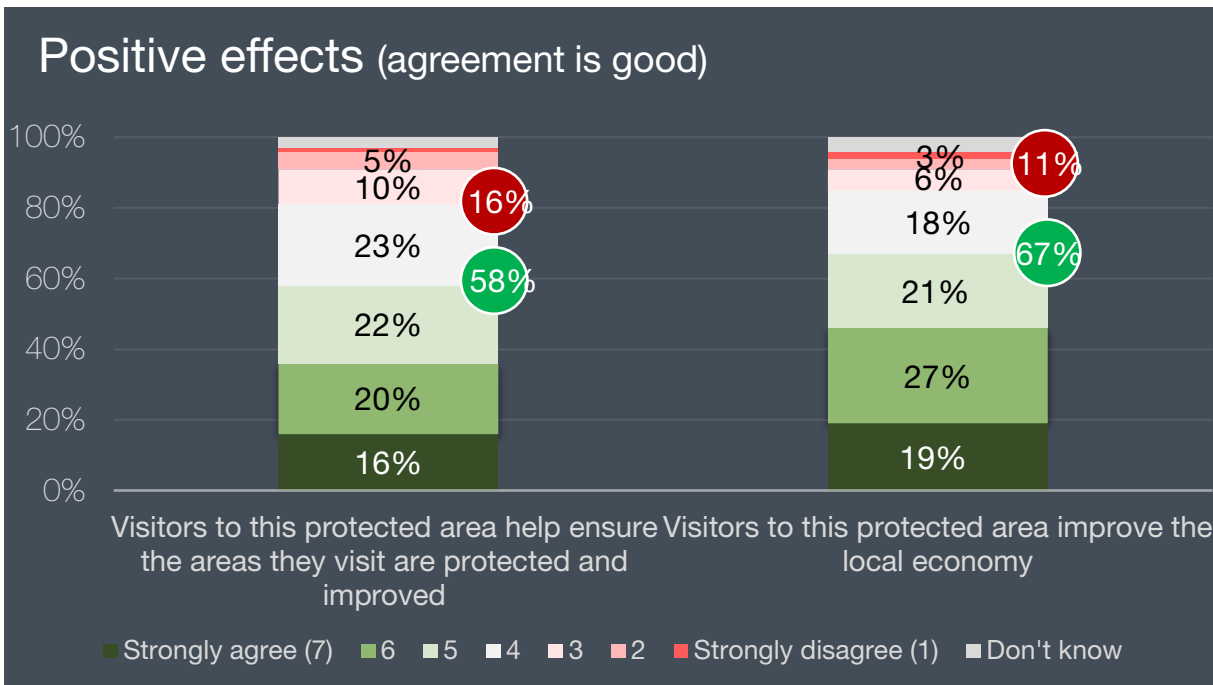


# What environmental and economic visitor effects are locals and regular visitors feeling?

In February, over half (58%) of New Zealanders who live near or regularly visit a protected area felt visitors to these areas provided a positive **environmental effect** in the form of enabling protection and improvement. Conversely, around two in five (38%) felt visitor activities damage protected areas.

In terms of economic effects, two-thirds (67%) felt visitors to protected areas provided a positive **economic effect** by improving the local economy. Around one in three (31%) felt they add unwanted financial burdens onto local communities.

Pulse of Conservation Survey – How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? At this time of year...  
Analysis base – those who live near or regularly visit a protected area



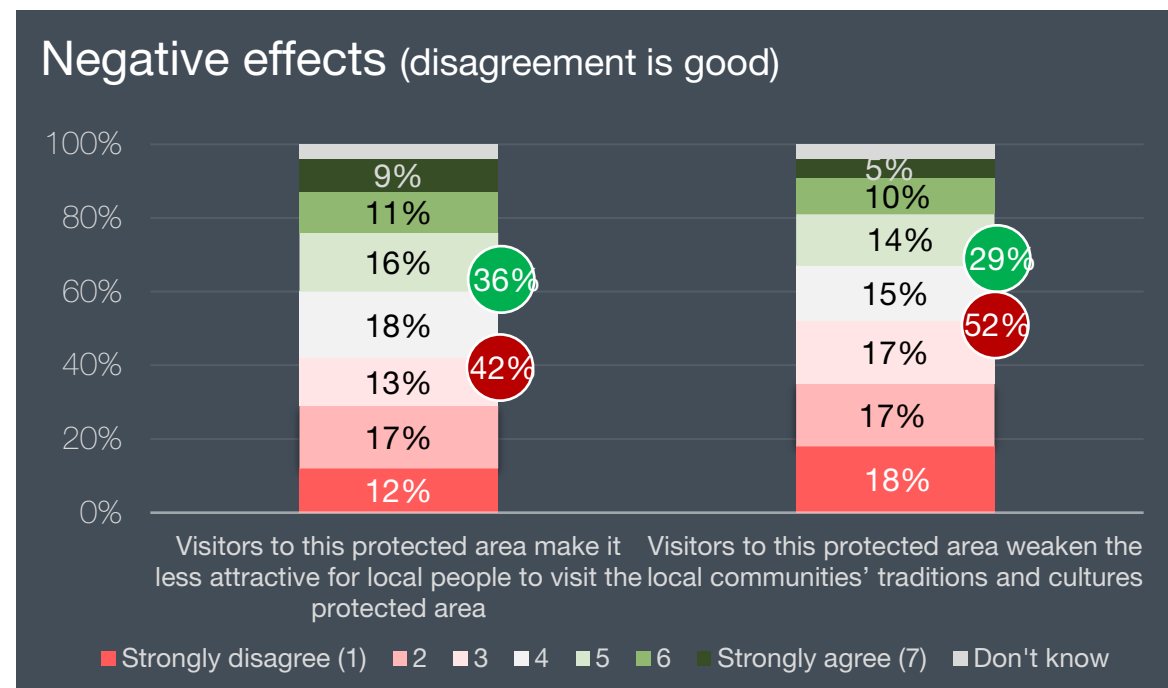
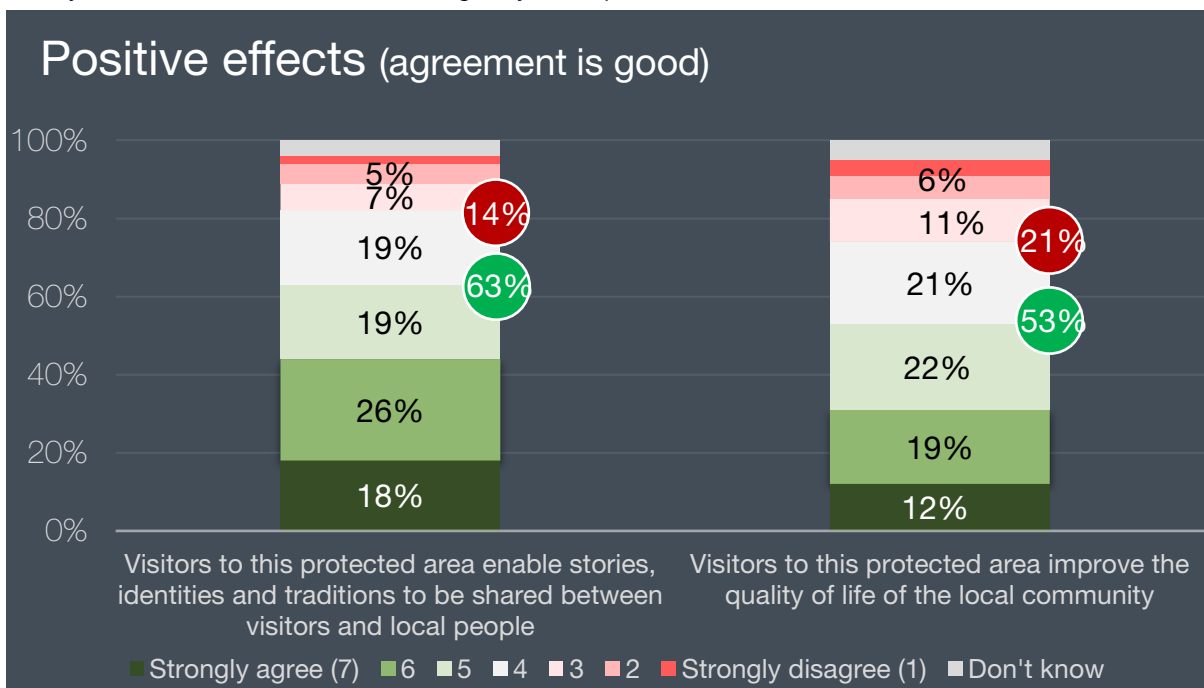
# What social and cultural visitor effects are locals and regular visitors feeling?

In February, over half of New Zealanders who live near or regularly visit a protected area felt visitors to these areas provided positive **cultural and social effects** in the form of the sharing of stories and traditions (63%), and improved the quality of life of the local community (53%). A similar proportion (52%) disagreed visitors weakened

local community traditions. Of the four negative perceptions tested, the effect of most concern was that visitors make it less attractive for locals to visit these areas. Over a third (36%) felt this was a negative effect of visitors to their protected area of importance.

Pulse of Conservation Survey – How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? At this time of year...

Analysis base – those who live near or regularly visit a protected area

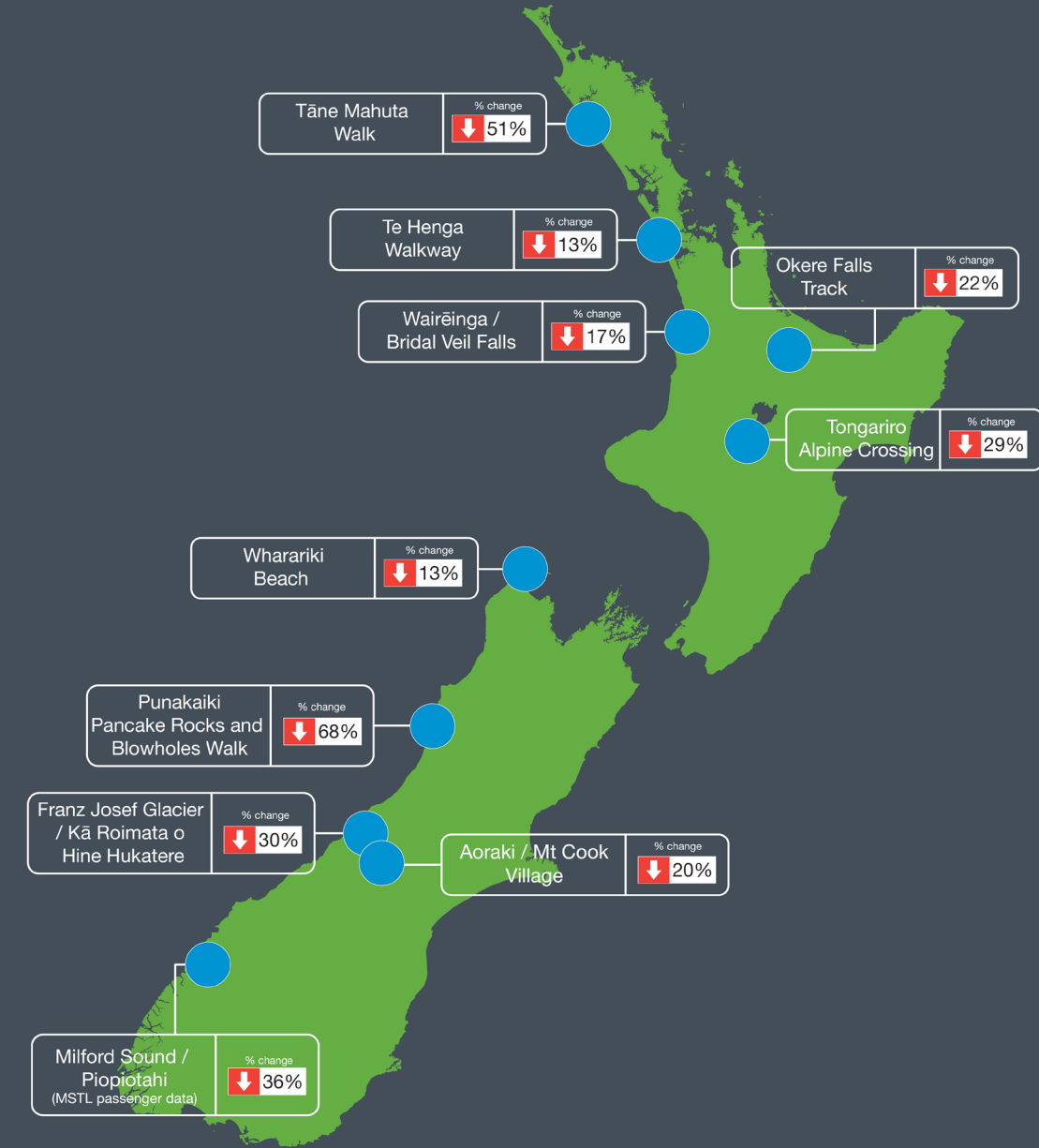


# Overview of visitor activity over summer nationally



# As expected, visitor activity decreased compared to last summer

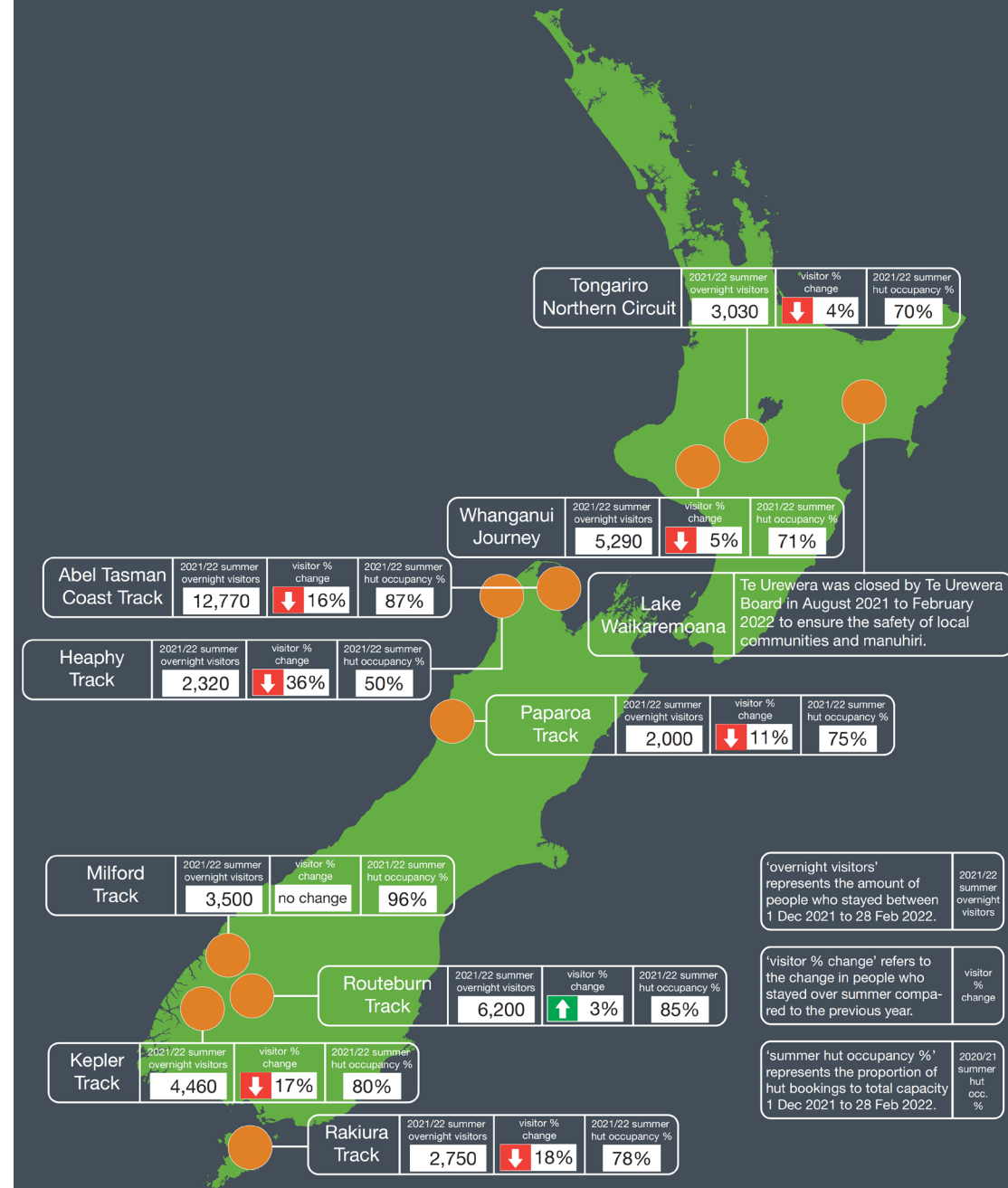
- High-volume iconic destinations in national parks continue to see a huge decline in visitor activity from November 2021 to January 2022 compared to the previous year.
- This decline is expected given the current Omicron outbreak impacting New Zealanders and the closure of international borders. Places that have been hit significantly include:
  - Punakaiki Pancake Rocks – down 68%
  - Milford Sound/Piopiotaahi – down 36%
  - Franz Josef Glacier – down 30%.
- Visitor activity over summer dropped at many DOC-managed tracks, but these decreases were less pronounced at Te Henga Walkway (Auckland) and Wharariki Beach (Nelson/Tasman).



Comparing visitor activity in Nov 2021 to Jan 2022 (1 November 2021 to 31 January 2022) to Nov 2020 to Jan 2021 (1 November 2020 to 31 January 2021) at selected sites on public conservation land.

# Less demand for Great Walks but still popular, despite no international visitors

- Around 40,000 people stayed at Great Walk huts and campsites, down -17% compared to this time last year. This reflects the impacts of COVID-19; the partial closure of Lake Waikaremoana; and track damage on the Heaphy.
- While there were fewer New Zealanders on Great Walks this summer, there has been a huge uptake of New Zealanders on Great Walks when compared to 2019/20, up 53%.
- Great Walk huts had an average summer occupancy of 66%. The Milford Track huts were at full capacity over summer, while the Abel Tasman and Routeburn huts were close to full capacity.
- The Abel Tasman Coast Track continues to be the busiest Great Walk over summer, with more than double the visitors of any other Great Walk.

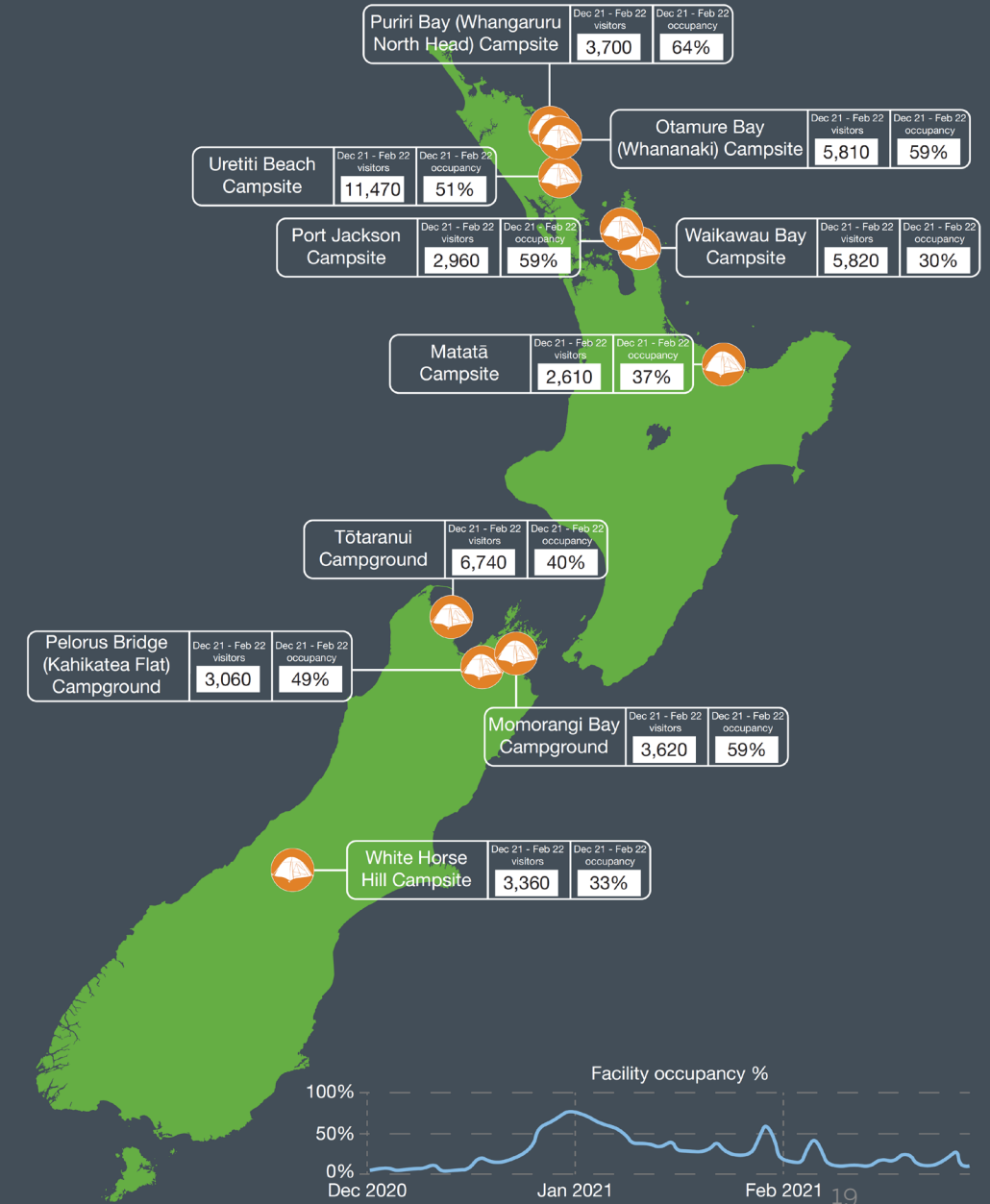


The number of people who stayed from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022 at Great Walk accommodation, compared to the same period last year.

# New Zealanders camped in Northland, Coromandel and the upper South Island

- Around 102,500 people camped at DOC-managed bookable campgrounds over summer. Many New Zealanders camped at campgrounds in Northland, Coromandel and the upper South Island, capturing 62% of summer bookings.
- Uretiti Beach Campsite remains the most visited DOC campground in New Zealand over summer. Tōtaranui (Tasman) and Waikawau Bay (Coromandel) were also popular.
- During the Christmas/New Year period, some Northland campsites (Uretiti and Urupukapuka campsites) were at full capacity.

The number of people who stayed from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022 at popular campsites (by visitors) on PCL across New Zealand (exc. Great Walks campsites).

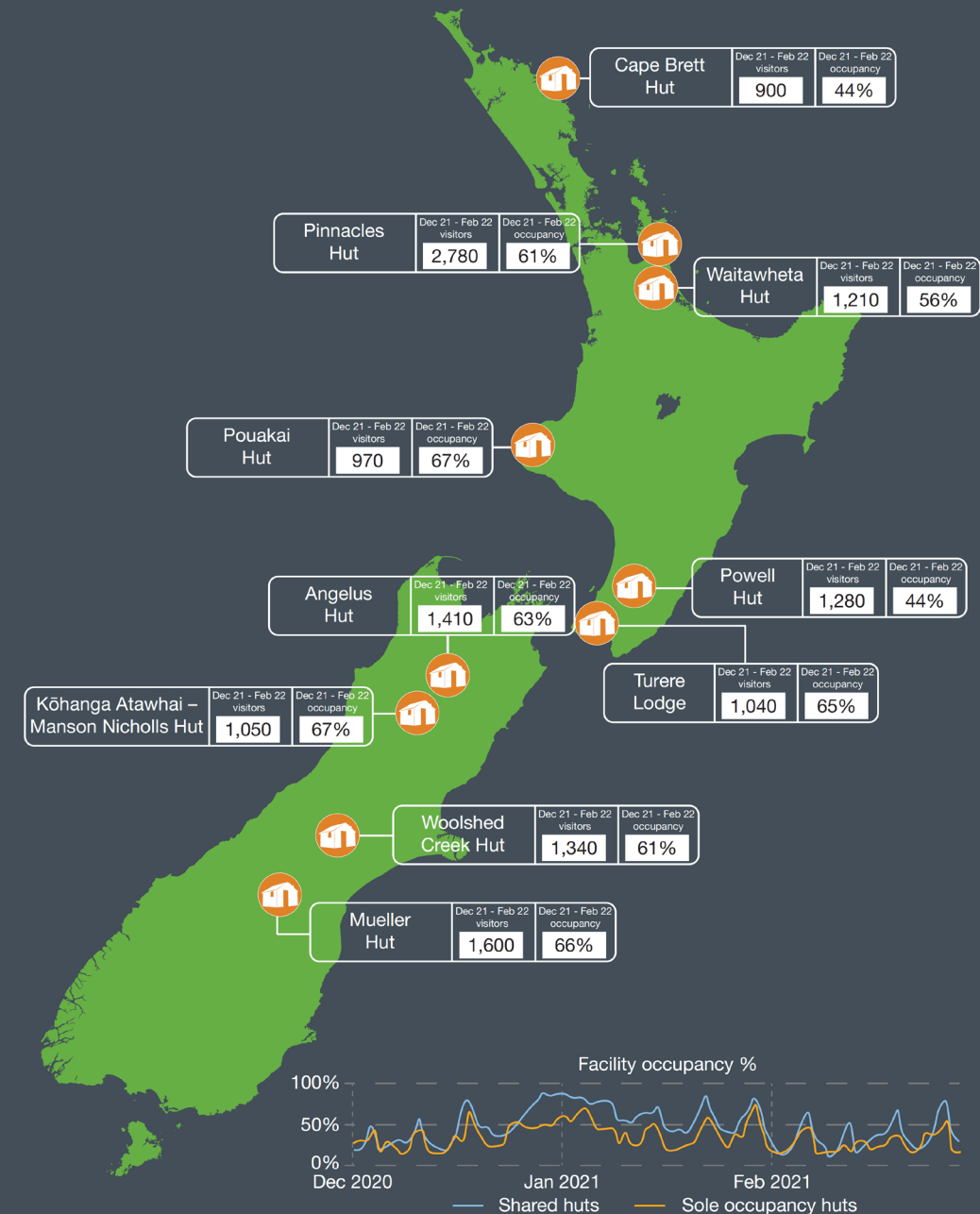




# Iconic huts and huts near urban areas were popular with New Zealanders

- While the Great Walks network was popular, many other bookable huts experienced high visitor demand. Around 27,800 people stayed overnight at other bookable huts over summer – with high weekend occupancy rates.
- The Pinnacles Hut (Coromandel) was the most visited non-GW hut in New Zealand this summer, with close to 2,800 people staying overnight and an occupancy rate of 61%.
- Iconic alpine huts located in national parks – including Mueller Hut (Aoraki) and Angelus Hut (Nelson Lakes) – were favoured by New Zealanders.
- Turere Lodge and Powell Hut welcomed many visitors in the Wellington region; while Woolshed Creek Hut attracted locals in Canterbury, including families.

The number of people who stayed from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022 at the most popular huts on PCL across New Zealand (exc. Great Walk huts).





# Demand for huts continues to be high on weekends and lower on weekdays

- While non-Great Walk bookable huts averaged at 47% occupancy over summer, Saturday night occupancy for these huts averaged at 67%. Many huts were at or near full capacity over summer weekends.
- Easily accessible huts in the Catchpool Valley and Ōrongorongo Valley (1-3 hours to huts), Peach Cove Hut (1 hour to hut) and Ōtamahua Hut (15 min ferry) were popular on weekends.
- Both Pinnacles Hut (Coromandel) and Pahautea Hut (Waikato) were popular on weekends, especially with Aucklanders.
- Huts on the Te Ara Pātaka Walkway (Canterbury) and Hooker Hut (Canterbury) were at full capacity every weekend during summer.

## Saturday hut occupancy (1 Dec 2021 to 28 Feb 2022)

Huts with an occupancy rate of 80% or over on Saturdays over summer are shown below.

North Island bookable huts, by occupancy		Occ (%)
Coromandel	Pinnacles Hut	94%
Wellington	Raukawa Hut	92%
Wellington	Jans Hut	92%
Waikato	Pahautea Hut	91%
Northland	Peach Cove Hut	90%
Wellington	Turere Lodge	88%
Hawkes Bay	Sunrise Hut	87%
Bay of Plenty	Waitawheta Hut	86%
Wellington	Haurangi Hut	85%
Wellington	Boar Inn	85%
Northland	Lane Cove Hut	82%
Taranaki	Pouakai Hut	80%
South Island bookable huts, by occupancy		Occ (%)
Canterbury	Ōtamahua Hut	94%
Canterbury	Hooker Hut	90%
Canterbury	Packhorse Hut	89%
Canterbury	Woolshed Creek Hut	86%
West Coast	Kōhanga Atawhai – Manson Nicholls Hut	83%
Otago	Brewster Hut	82%
Canterbury	Rod Donald Hut	82%
Otago	Liverpool Hut	81%

# Visitor activity across DOC's nine regions



# Summer 2021/22 – a regional overview

## Northern North Island

- Some sites had less visitors, but visitor impacts were still reported.
- Northland remains DOC's busiest camping region – visitor numbers and occupancy rates were high, especially around the Bay of Islands.

## Central North Island

- Decreases in activity at tourism hotspots including Tongariro NP, Rotorua and Taupō when compared to last summer – most likely due to the pandemic.
- The Whanganui Journey continues to be a popular Great Walk in the North Island.

## Western South Island

- Visitor activity remains low – reflecting the Omicron outbreak and lack of international visitors.
- The drop in visitors is most evident at well-known destinations (Punakaiki Pancake Rocks and Franz Josef Glacier).

## Auckland

- Auckland saw a big decrease in visitor activity likely due to tough impacts of the Omicron outbreak for the region.
- New Zealanders stayed overnight at Hauraki Gulf islands but at lower numbers relative to other areas of the country.

## Lower North Island

- Over summer, the impacts of Omicron on visitor destinations are less noticeable in the region.
- Demand for family-friendly overnight huts continues to be strong in LNI, especially on weekends and for huts near Wellington.

## Eastern South Island

- A growing number of people visited tracks near urban areas.
- Iconic destinations and family-friendly experiences continue to be popular in Canterbury, especially on weekends.

## Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki

- Coromandel campsites remain popular, especially Waikawau Bay, Port Jackson and Stony Bay campsites.
- There is high demand for overnight hut experiences including the Pinnacles, Pahautea and Pouākai huts on weekends.

## Northern South Island

- Decreased visitor activity in NSI over summer, noticed across the region.
- Places like Wharariki and Abel Tasman were busy but welcomed fewer visitors.
- Camping at Tōtaranui, Momorangi Bay and Pelorus Bridge remains popular.

## Southern South Island

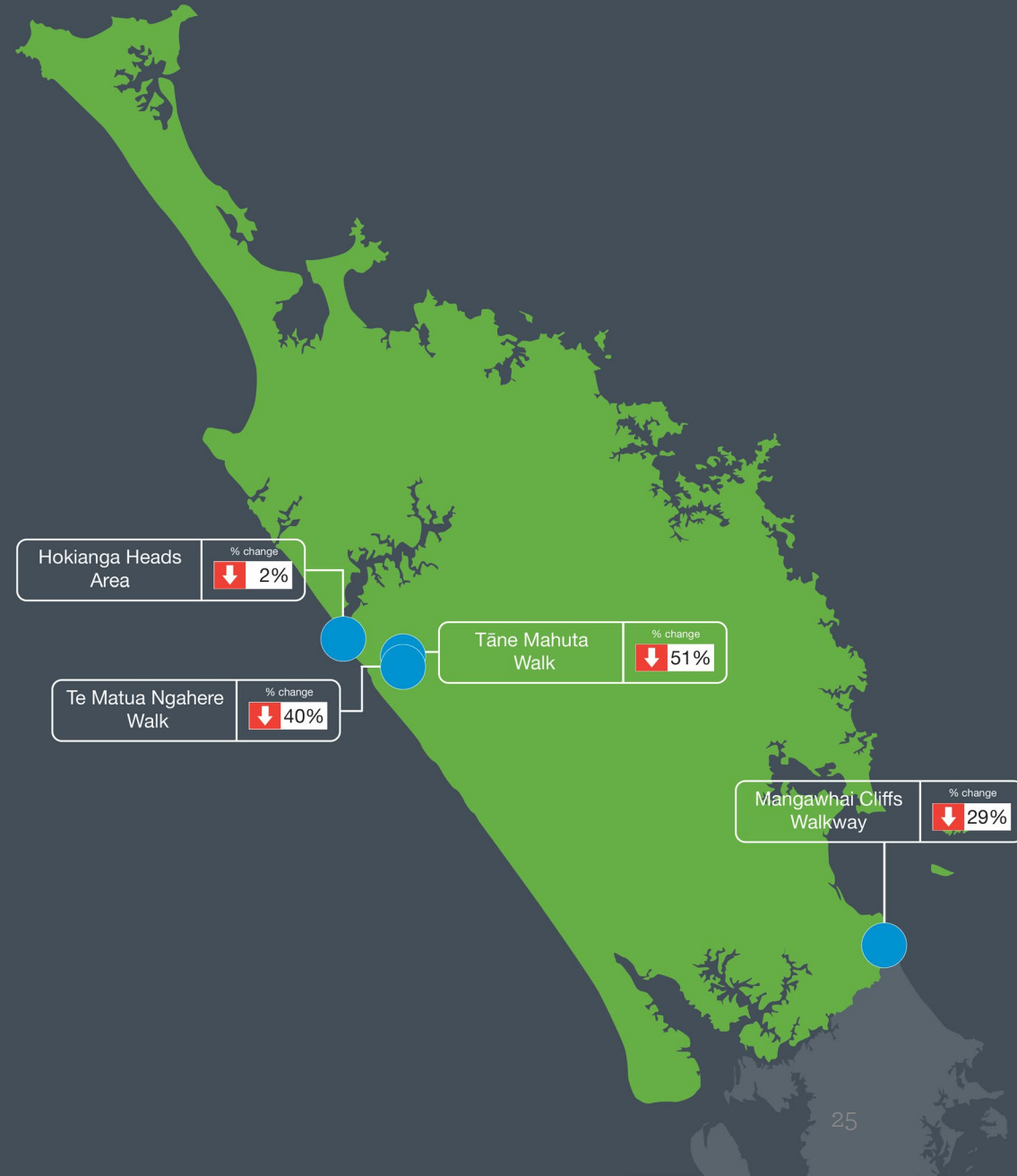
- Visitor activity in SSI has decreased even further than in 2020/21.
- The Great Walks remains a drawcard for SSI – with occupancy rates high on many of the region's Great Walks.

# Northern North Island (NNI)



# Some places had less visitors, but negative visitor impacts continue to be reported

- Based on available up-to-date counter data, some destinations in Northland saw a decrease in visitor activity compared to last year.
- After years of significant growth, visitor activity at Mangawhai Cliffs Walkway dropped by 29%.
- Destinations located in the Waipoua Forest, including Tāne Mahuta and Te Matua Ngahere, decreased in visitor activity (down 51% and 40% respectively).
- Local staff noted coastal areas in the Far North and Bay of Islands seemed busier than last year. There was a noticeable amount of poor boating behaviour in the Bay of Islands and visitors taking dogs where they are not allowed in the Far North.



# Northland remains DOC's busiest camping region

- DOC-managed campgrounds located in NNI have had the highest number of overnight campers when compared with other regions of New Zealand.
- Uretiti Beach and Otamure Bay (Whananaki) campsites were popular over summer, with Uretiti Beach welcoming just under 11,500 visitors – more visitors than any other DOC-managed campground in New Zealand.
- Peach Cove Hut had a high occupancy rate over summer, ranging between 86% and 90% from Fridays to Sundays.
- Urupukapuka Bay campsite is extremely popular with children, with families making up 73% of visitors.



The number of people who stayed from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022 at bookable accommodation (exc. Great Walk accommodation) on PCL in Northern North Island. Note: any bookable accommodation with less than 150 visitors listed on DOC's booking system are not included on this map.

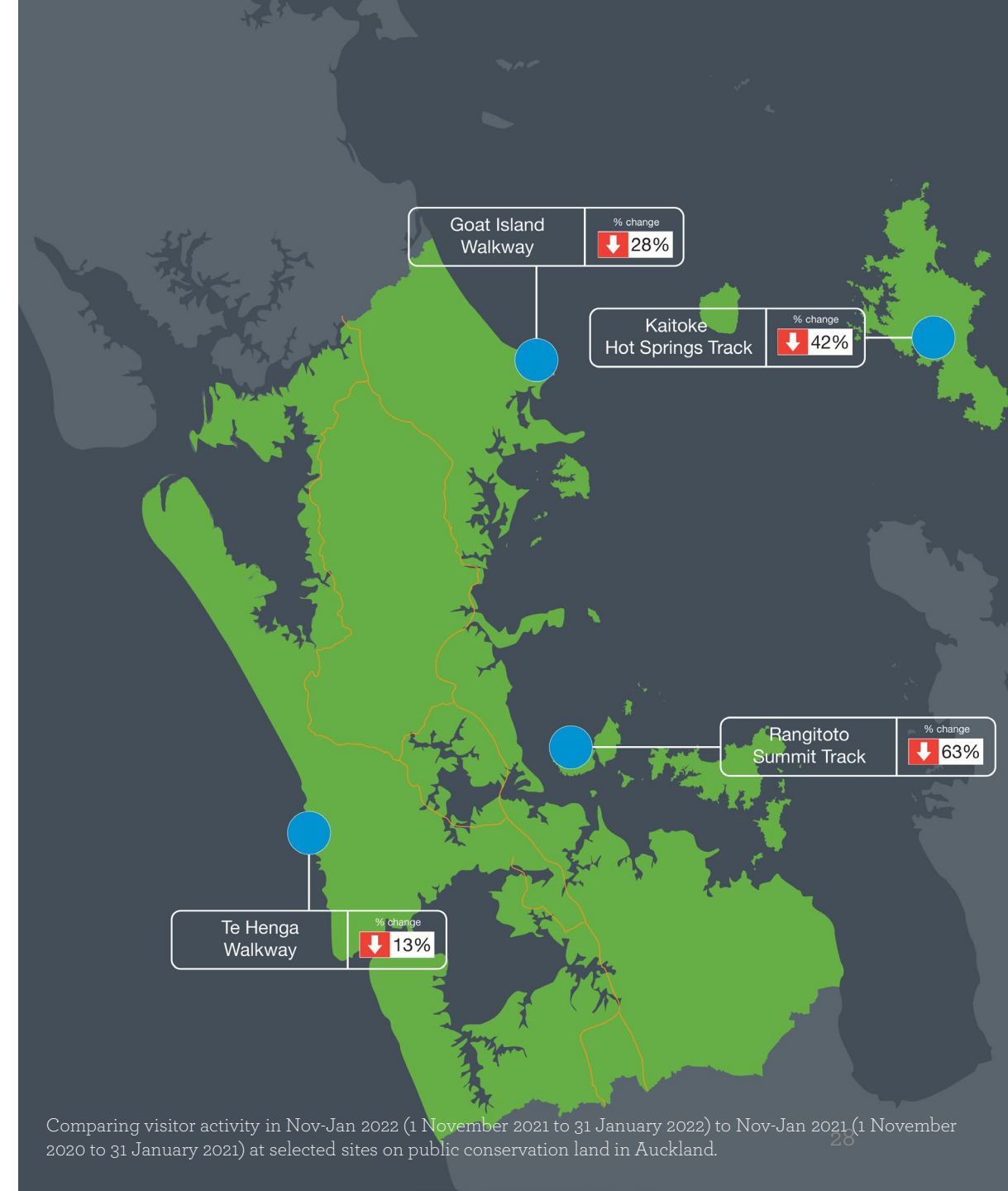
Auckland (AKL)





# Auckland saw a big decrease in visitor activity likely due to tough impacts of the Omicron outbreak for the region

- Destinations in Auckland saw a decrease in visitor activity compared to last year. The largest decrease was visitors undertaking the Rangitoto Summit Track – down 63% compared to last year.<sup>1</sup>
- Visits to Kaitoke Hot Springs, a popular attraction on Aotea/Great Barrier Island, were down 42% compared to last year.
- After significant year-on-year growth, Te Henga Walkway (near Bethells Beach) experienced a 13% decrease in visitor activity.



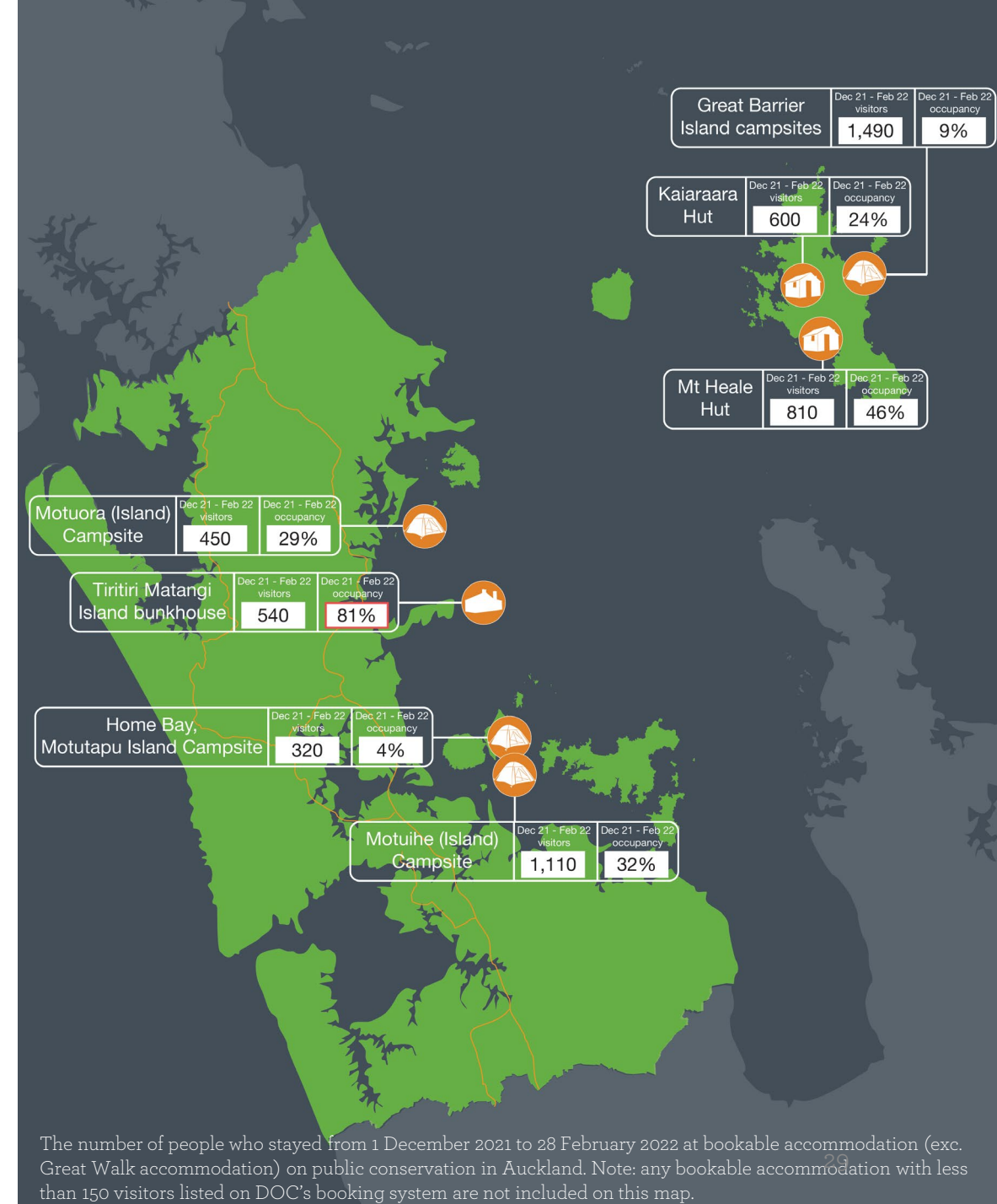
<sup>1</sup>The number of boat passengers to the island may differ from the number of visitors walking the track.

Comparing visitor activity in Nov-Jan 2022 (1 November 2021 to 31 January 2022) to Nov-Jan 2021 (1 November 2020 to 31 January 2021) at selected sites on public conservation land in Auckland.



# Some New Zealanders stayed overnight at Hauraki Gulf islands

- Overnight visitor demand in Auckland was lower relative to other regions of New Zealand.
- Mt Heale and Kaiaraara huts had high demand on weekends and holiday periods, such as Christmas/New Year and Waitangi weekend.
- Demand for campsites in the Hauraki Gulf islands (including Great Barrier/Aotea campsites) was high over Christmas/New Year.
- The Tiritiri Matangi Island bunkhouse had the highest occupancy rate in the region, being at an average of 81% capacity over summer.



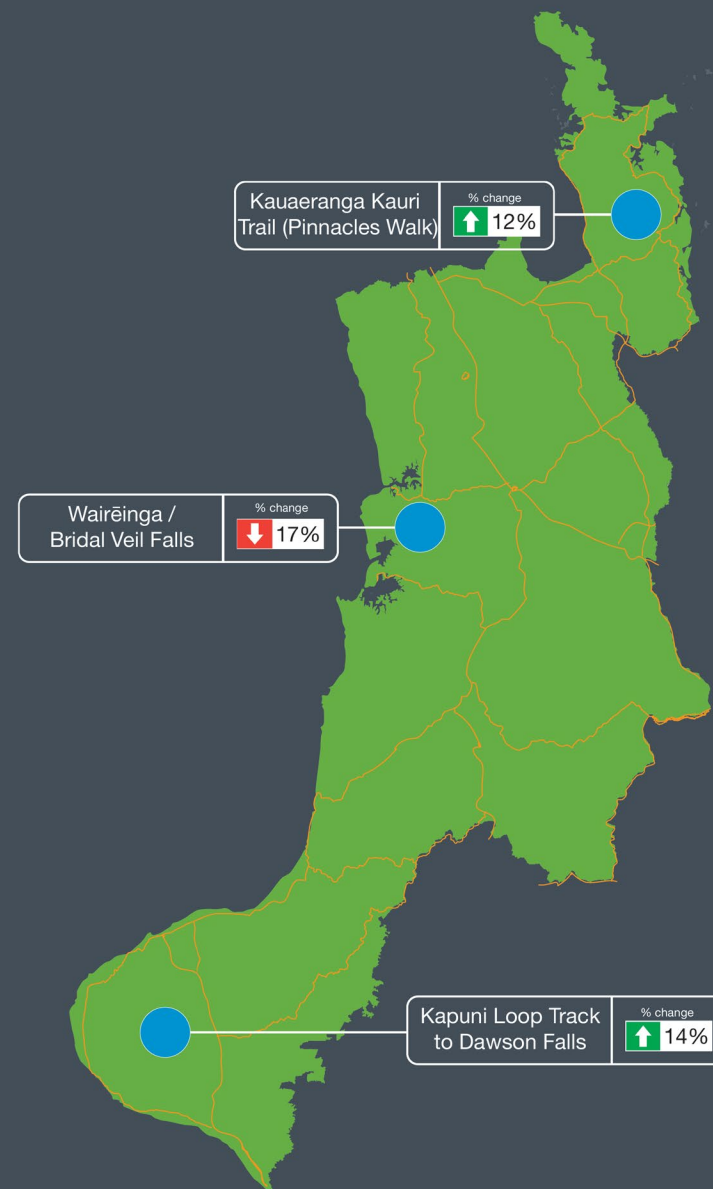
The number of people who stayed from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022 at bookable accommodation (exc. Great Walk accommodation) on public conservation in Auckland. Note: any bookable accommodation with less than 150 visitors listed on DOC's booking system are not included on this map.

# Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki (HWT)



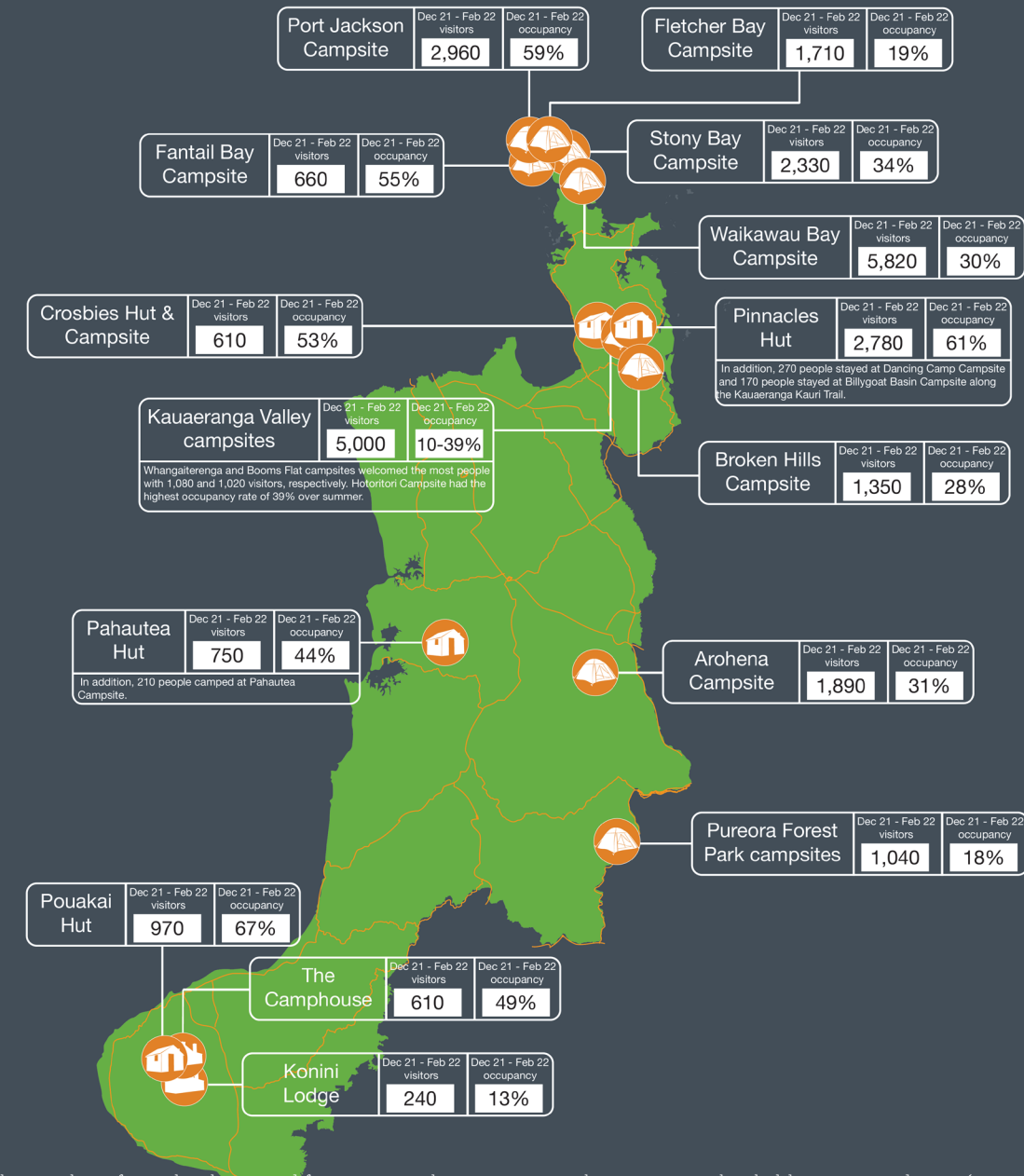
## Walks less than two hours from urban areas in HWT welcomed many visitors

- Based on available up-to-date counter data, walks near urban areas welcomed many people; some destinations increased in visitor activity, while others decreased compared to last year.
- The Kauaeranga Kauri Trail (Pinnacles Walk) – less than two hours from Auckland – had more visitors than last summer, but slightly less than summers before COVID-19
- Waikato and Taranaki staff reported an increase in New Zealanders visiting front-country and places near urban areas. Dawson Falls (less than 1hr from New Plymouth) was up 14%. Wairēinga/Bridal Veil Falls (less than 1hr from Hamilton) – welcomed many visitors but was down 17%.



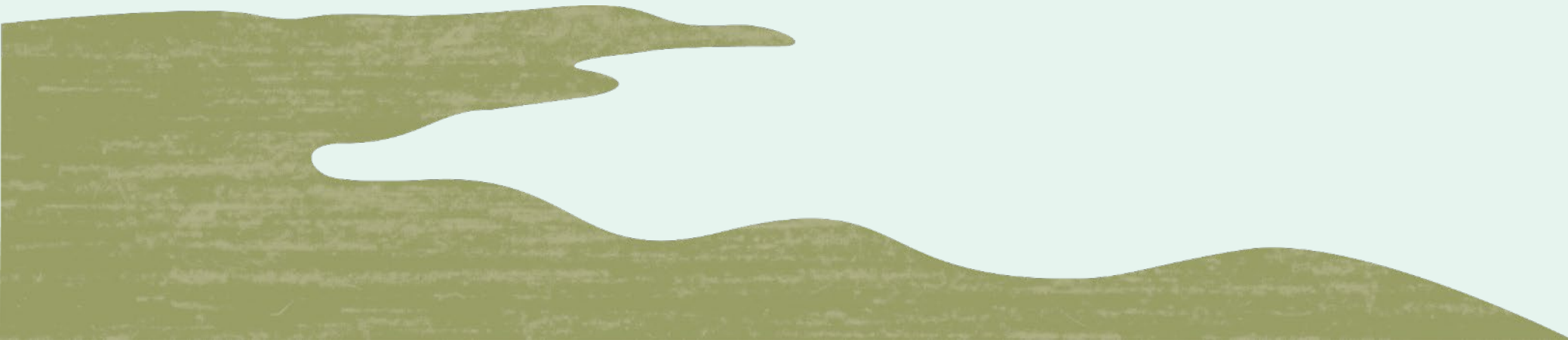
# Coromandel campsites remain popular: high demand for overnight huts

- New Zealanders stayed at campsites in Northern Coromandel (Waikawau Bay, Port Jackson and Stony Bay) – occupancy rates ranged between 19% to 59%, with high peaks (at or near full capacity) during Christmas/New Year.
- The Pinnacles Hut (Coromandel) was the most visited non-GW hut in New Zealand this summer, with 2,870 people staying the night. The serviced 80-bunk hut had an occupancy rate of 61% across summer and 94% on weekends.
- In other areas, Pouākai Hut (Taranaki) and Pahautea Hut (Waikato) had relatively high numbers of visitors over summer.



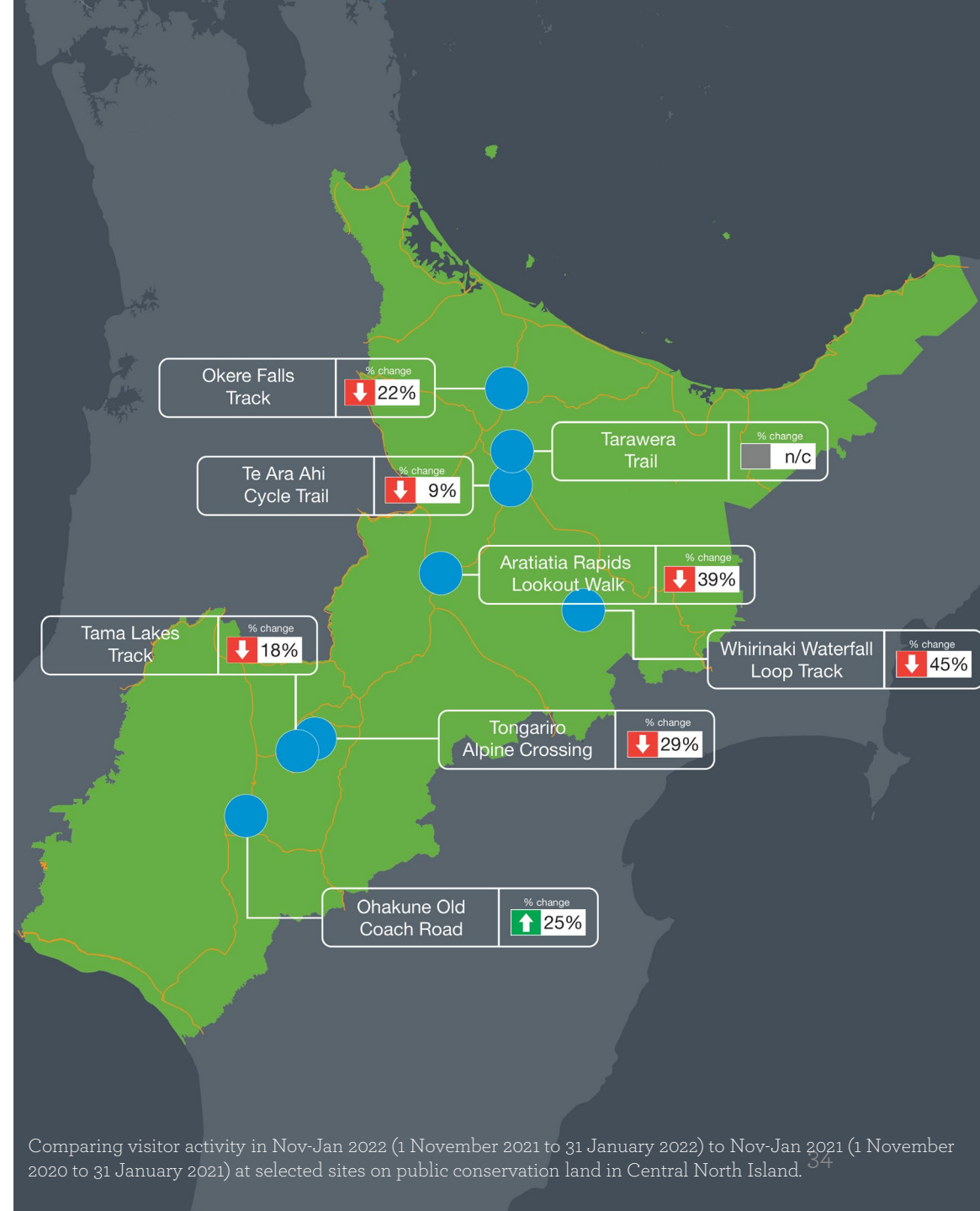
The number of people who stayed from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022 at bookable accommodation (exc. Great Walk accommodation) on public conservation land in Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki. Note: any bookable accommodation with less than 150 visitors listed on DOC's booking system are not included on this map.

# Central North Island (CNI)



# A decrease in activity at tourism hotspots over summer

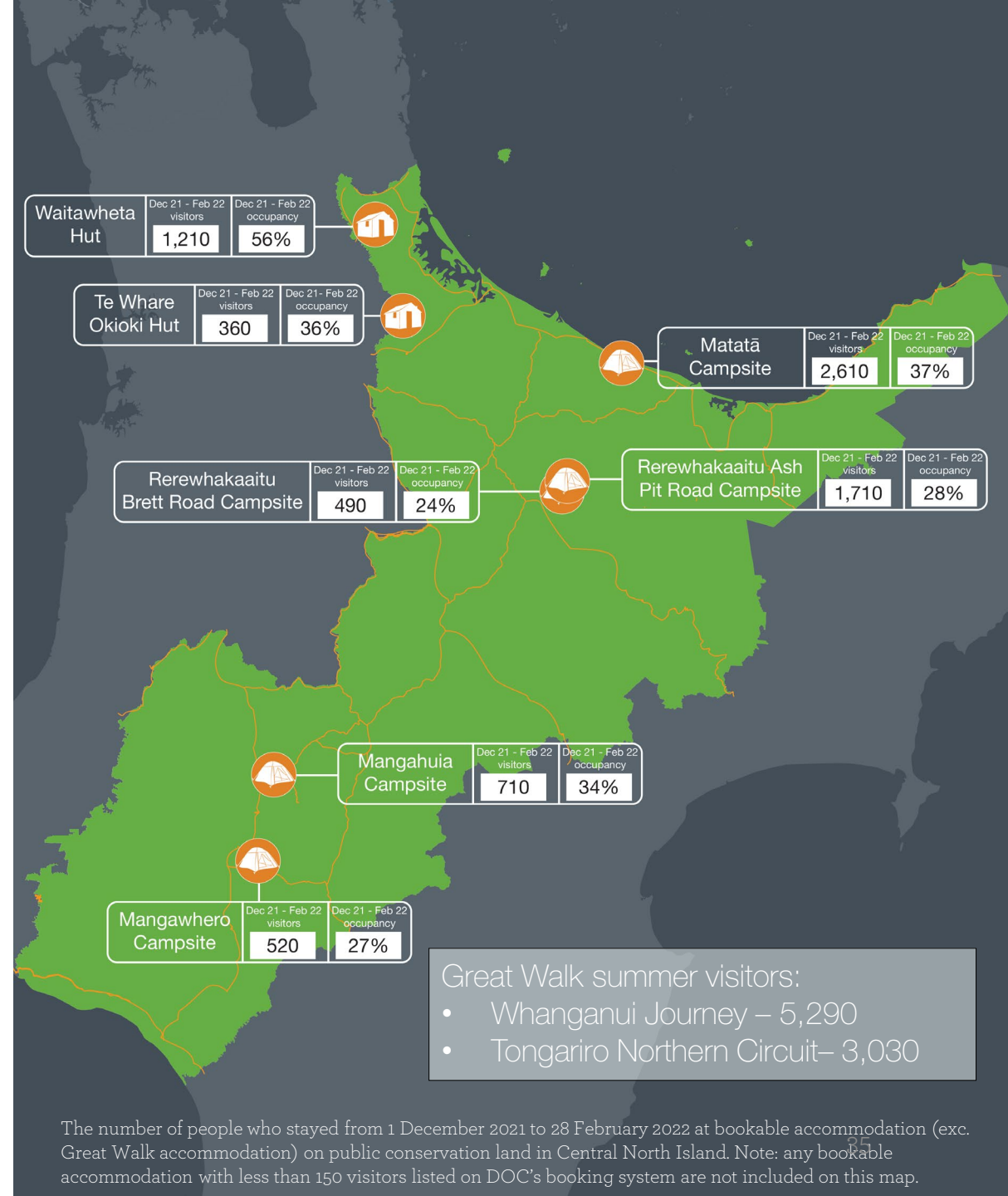
- Like many regions of New Zealand, visitor activity in CNI decreased – some places declined more than others compared to the same period last year.
- Tongariro Alpine Crossing visitor activity dropped 29% – reflecting the lack of international tourists. At Tama Lakes, visitor activity dropped by 18%.
- Places near Rotorua/Taupō saw decreases – Aratiatia Rapids Lookout Walk (down 39%) and Okere Falls Track (down 22%), had lower levels of activity, while the Tarawera Trail remained steady.
- The Ohakune Old Coach Road was popular over January, with visitor numbers up 25% compared to last summer.





# The Whanganui Journey remains a popular North Island Great Walk

- Slightly fewer New Zealanders canoed the Whanganui Journey (-5%) and walked Tongariro Northern Circuit (-4%) this summer compared to last year. Summer hut occupancy rates for these two Great Walks were 71%.
- Camping at Matatā Campsite or on the shores of Lake Rerewhakaaitu at the Ash Pit Road Campsite is a popular activity in the region, especially during holidays and long weekends. These campsites had the highest proportion of families staying, compared to other bookable accommodation in the region.
- Waitawheta Hut (located in the Kaimai ranges) had high visitor numbers relative to other overnight huts across New Zealand, being at capacity most weekends.



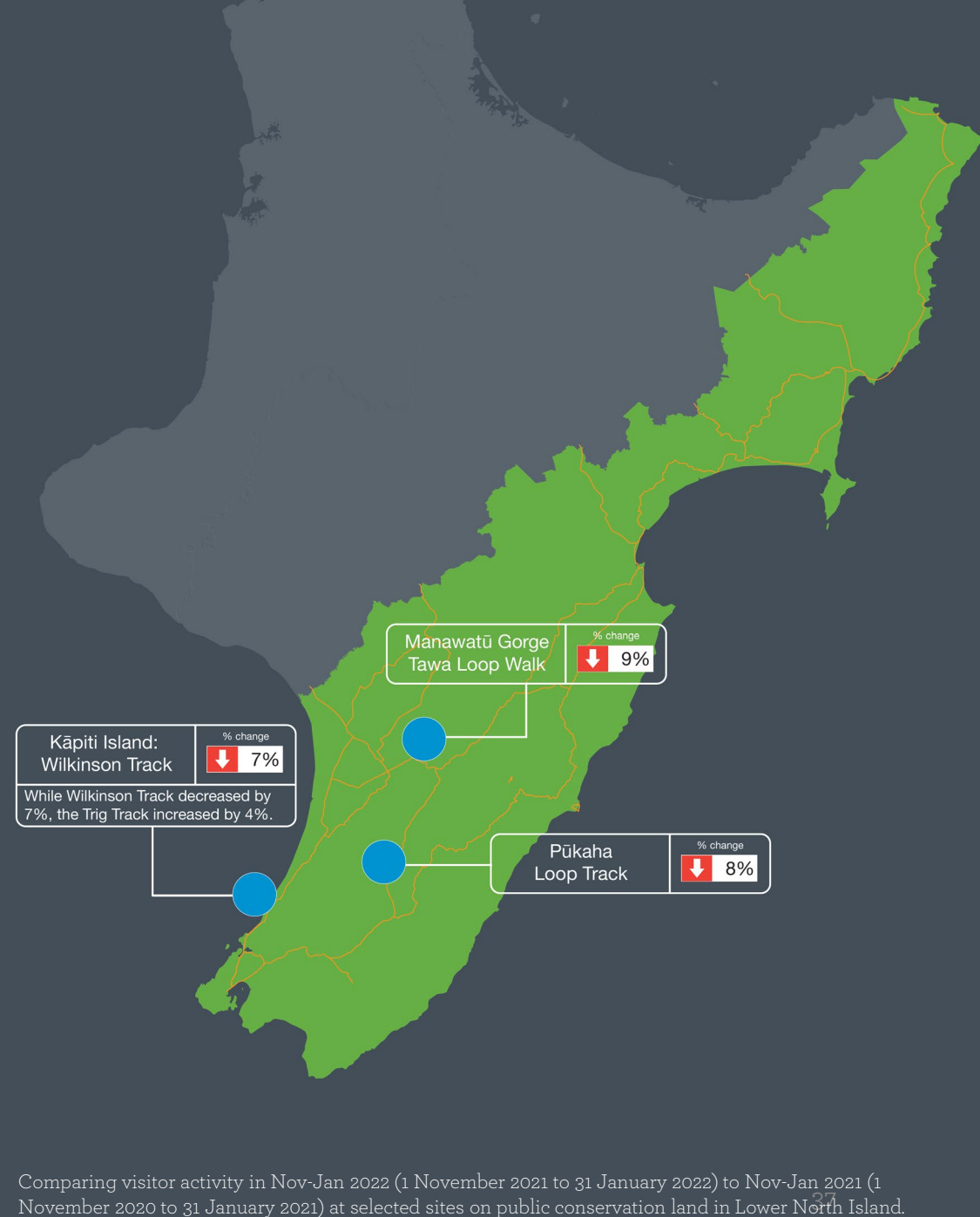
# Lower North Island (LNI)





# Impacts of Omicron on visitor destinations were less noticeable in the Lower North Island

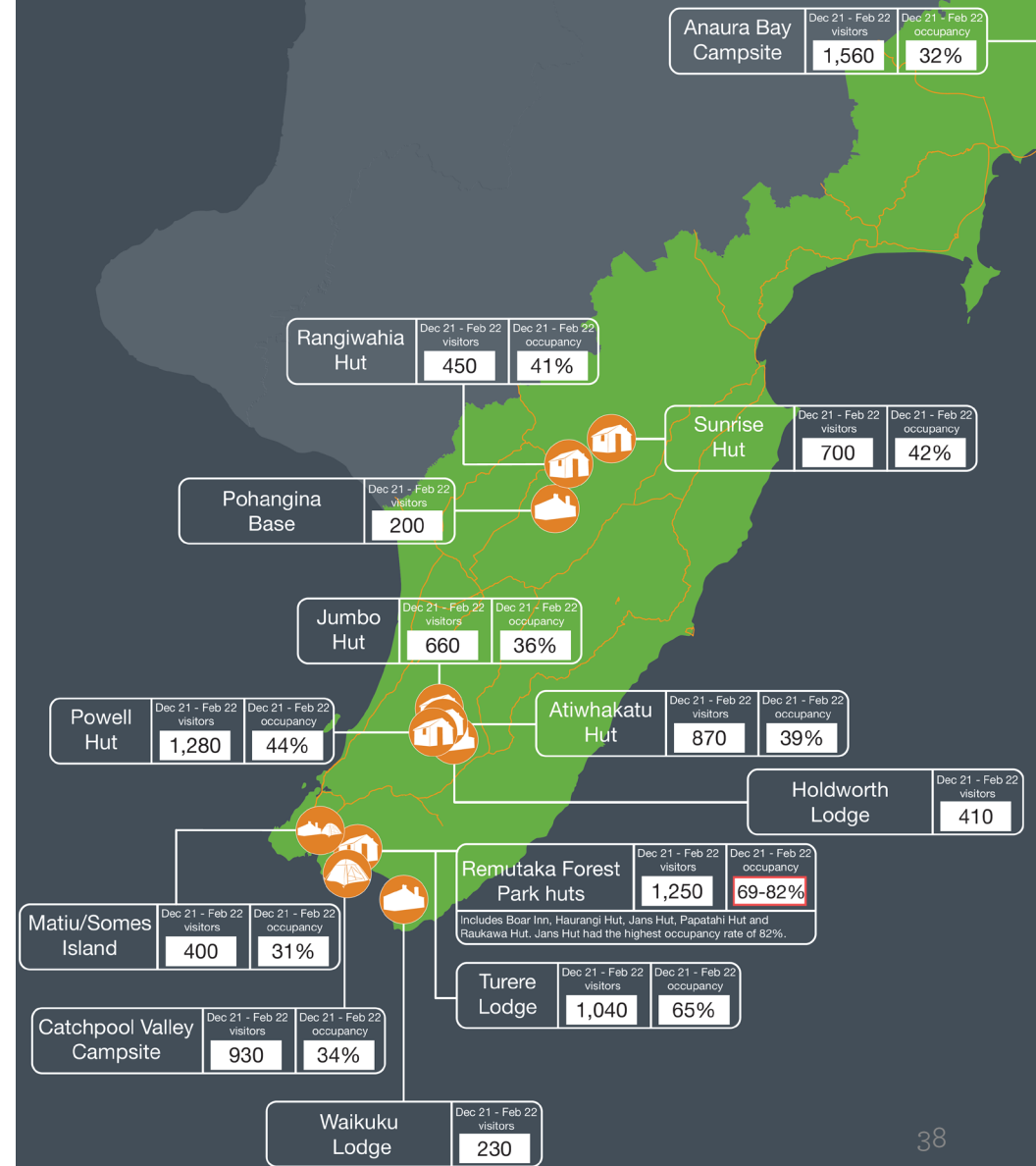
- Based on available up-to-date counter data, scenic day-trip opportunities from Wellington (visiting Kāpiti Island or Pūkaha) were slightly down compared to last year. Other destinations like the Manawatū Gorge Tawa Loop Track showed a similar decrease.
- Hawkes Bay, Wellington and Wairarapa staff reported an increase in New Zealanders visiting places near urban areas.



# Demand for family-friendly overnight huts continues to be strong

- There was strong demand from Wellingtonians for bookable huts in the Remutaka and Tararua forest parks. Two huts stand out, with over 1,000 visitors at each:
  - Turere Lodge (1 hr from Wellington, 2hr one-way); and
  - Powell Hut (1hr 30m from Wellington, 4hr one-way).
- Family-friendly huts in the Catchpool Valley and Ōrongorongo Valley were busy over summer, with constant demand on weekdays and reaching at or near full capacity on weekends.
- In Tairāwhiti, the Anaura Bay Campsite welcomed around 1,500 visitors over summer. Families accounted for over half of the visitors.

The number of people who stayed from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022 at bookable accommodation (exc. Great Walk accommodation) on public conservation land in Lower North Island. Note: any bookable accommodation with less than 150 visitors listed on DOC's booking system are not included on this map.

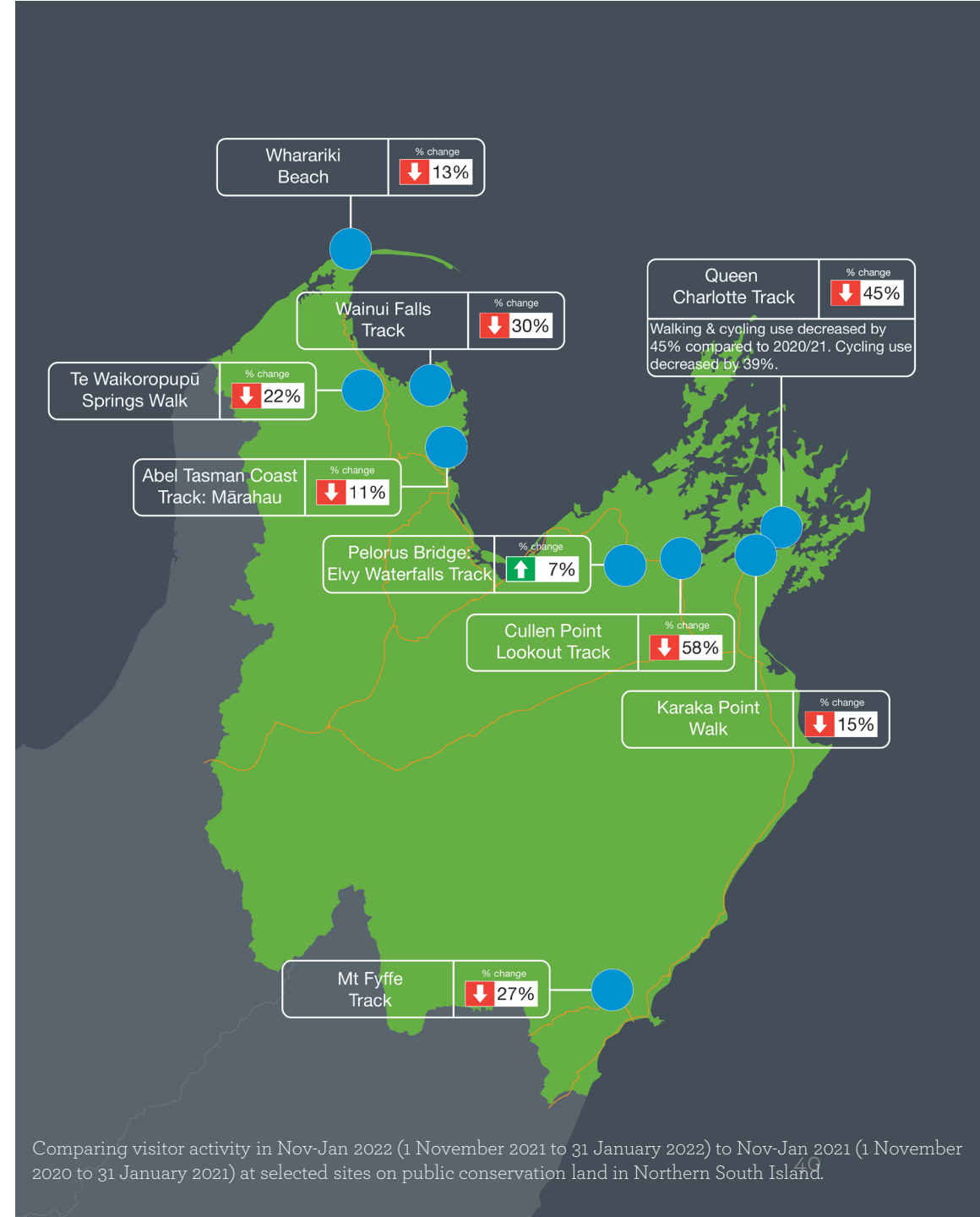


# Northern South Island (NSI)



# Wharariki and Abel Tasman were busy but welcomed fewer visitors

- Like other regions across New Zealand, walking tracks in Te Tau Ihu decreased in visitor activity over summer. The decreases were smaller relative to other parts of the country.
- Popular short walking opportunities saw a decline in visitor activity:
  - Wainui Falls – down 30% compared to the same period last year.
  - Te Waikoropupū Springs – down 22%.
  - Wharariki Beach – down 13%. Visitor numbers over the peak summer period were near 2016/17 levels.
- The dual-use Queen Charlotte Track<sup>1</sup> had the lowest number of recorded summer visitors (from 2008 to present).

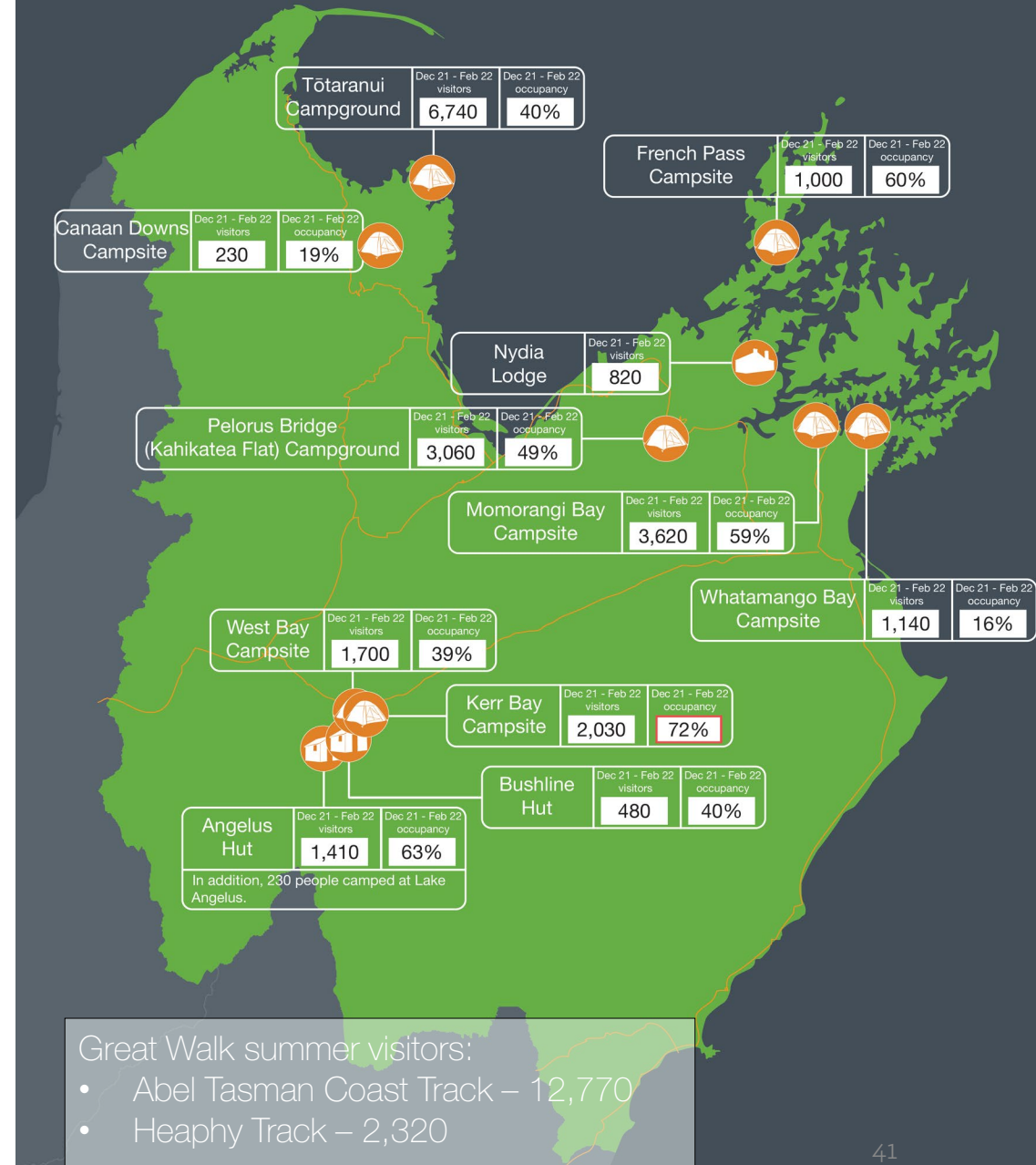


<sup>1</sup>There are many counters on the Queen Charlotte Track. The Torea counters were used for this document.

# Camping at Tōtaranui, Momorangi Bay and Pelorus Bridge were popular

- Less people walked the Abel Tasman Coast Track (down 16%) than last summer, but most huts along the Great Walk operated at full capacity (an average occupancy rate of 91%).
- Camping opportunities in Te Tau Ihu were popular, especially at Tōtaranui Campground, Momorangi Bay and Pelorus Bridge.
- Nelson Lakes National Park remains a drawcard for the region. Aside from Great Walks, Angelus Hut was the most popular hut in NSI, with 1,410 people staying in the hut over summer. Kerr Bay had the highest occupancy rate in NSI, with an average occupancy of 72%.

The number of people who stayed from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022 at bookable accommodation (exc. Great Walk accommodation) on PCL in Northern South Island. Note: any bookable accommodation with less than 150 visitors listed on DOC's booking system are not included on this map.



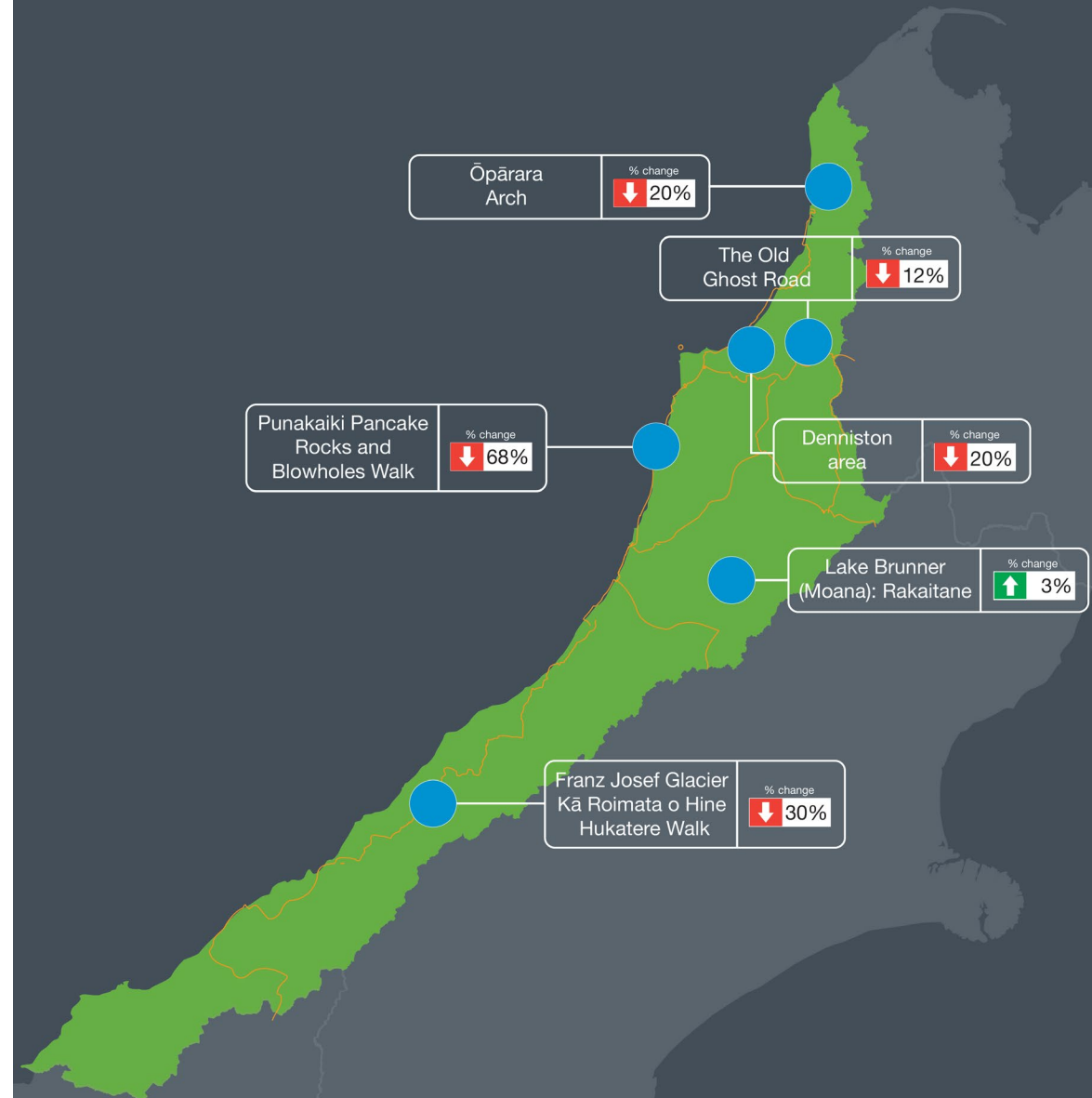
# Western South Island (WSI)





# Decreasing visitor numbers were most evident at iconic destinations

- There continues to be a significant decrease in visitors in WSI. The drop in visitor numbers was most evident at iconic destinations:
  - Punakaiki Pancake Rocks – down 68% compared to the same period of the previous year.
  - Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere – down 30%.
- There was a decline in visitor activity in the Buller area:
  - Denniston area – down 20%
  - Ōpārara Arch – down 20%.
- Lake Brunner (Moana) was popular over summer – slightly up (3%) in visitor activity compared to the same time last year.



Comparing visitor activity in Nov-Jan 2022 (1 November 2021 to 31 January 2022) to Nov-Jan 2021 (1 November 2020 to 31 January 2021) at selected sites on public conservation land in Western South Island.

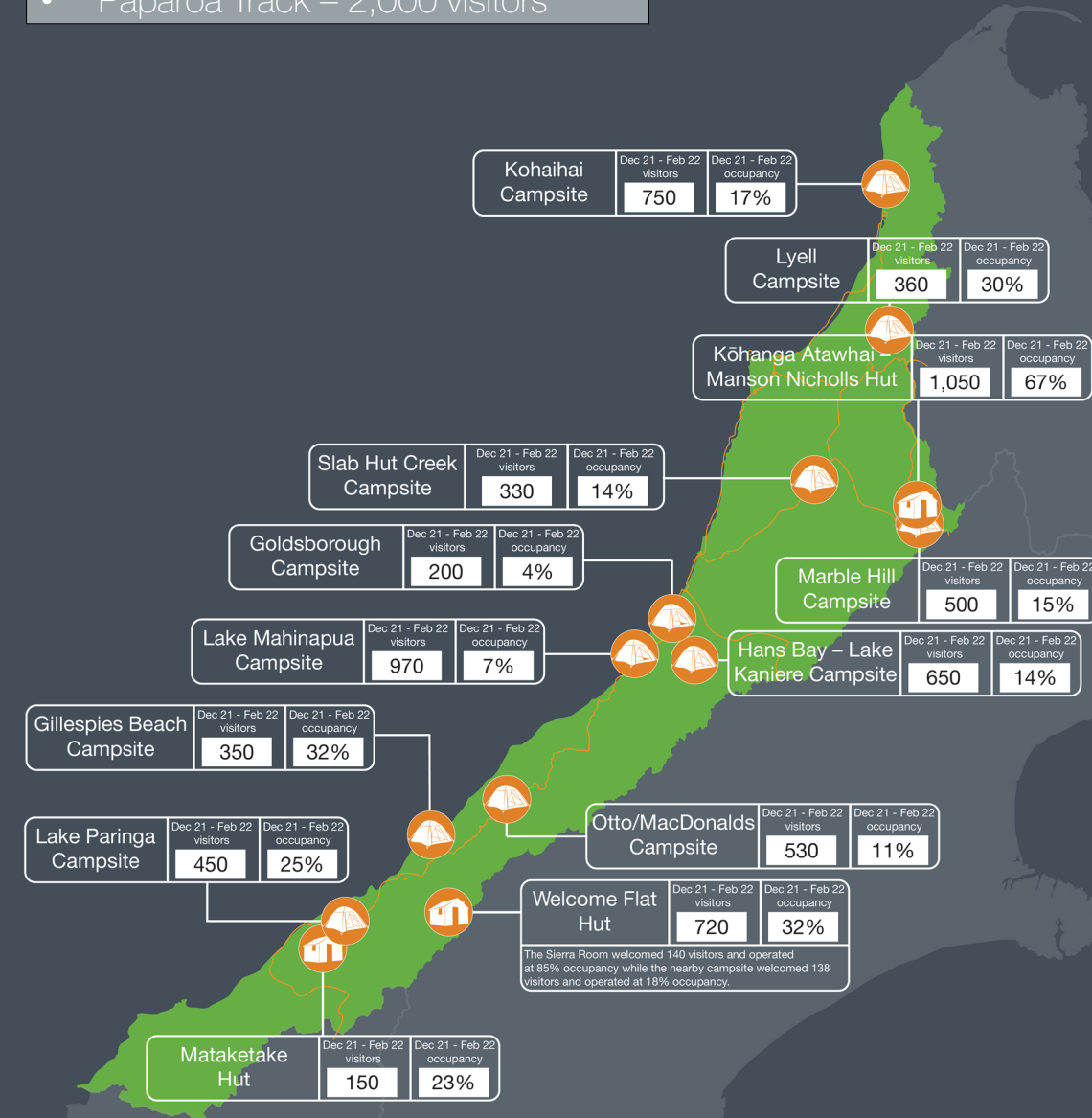


# Overnight visitor activity continues to be low on the West Coast

- Relative to other regions of New Zealand, the West Coast had a low number of people staying overnight at DOC-managed accommodation. This reflects the lack of international visitors, with camping occupancy rates of 12% and non-GW hut occupancy rates of 30%.
- The Paparoa Track as a network welcomed around 2,000 visitors over summer. Pororari and Moonlight Tops huts were near full capacity for most of the season.
- Aside from Great Walk huts, Kōhanga Atawhai – Manson Nicholls Hut attracted the most people with over 1,000 people visiting the hut. The family-friendly hut was the most occupied overnight experience in WSI.

Great Walk summer visitors:

- Heaphy Track – 2,320 visitors.
- Paparoa Track – 2,000 visitors



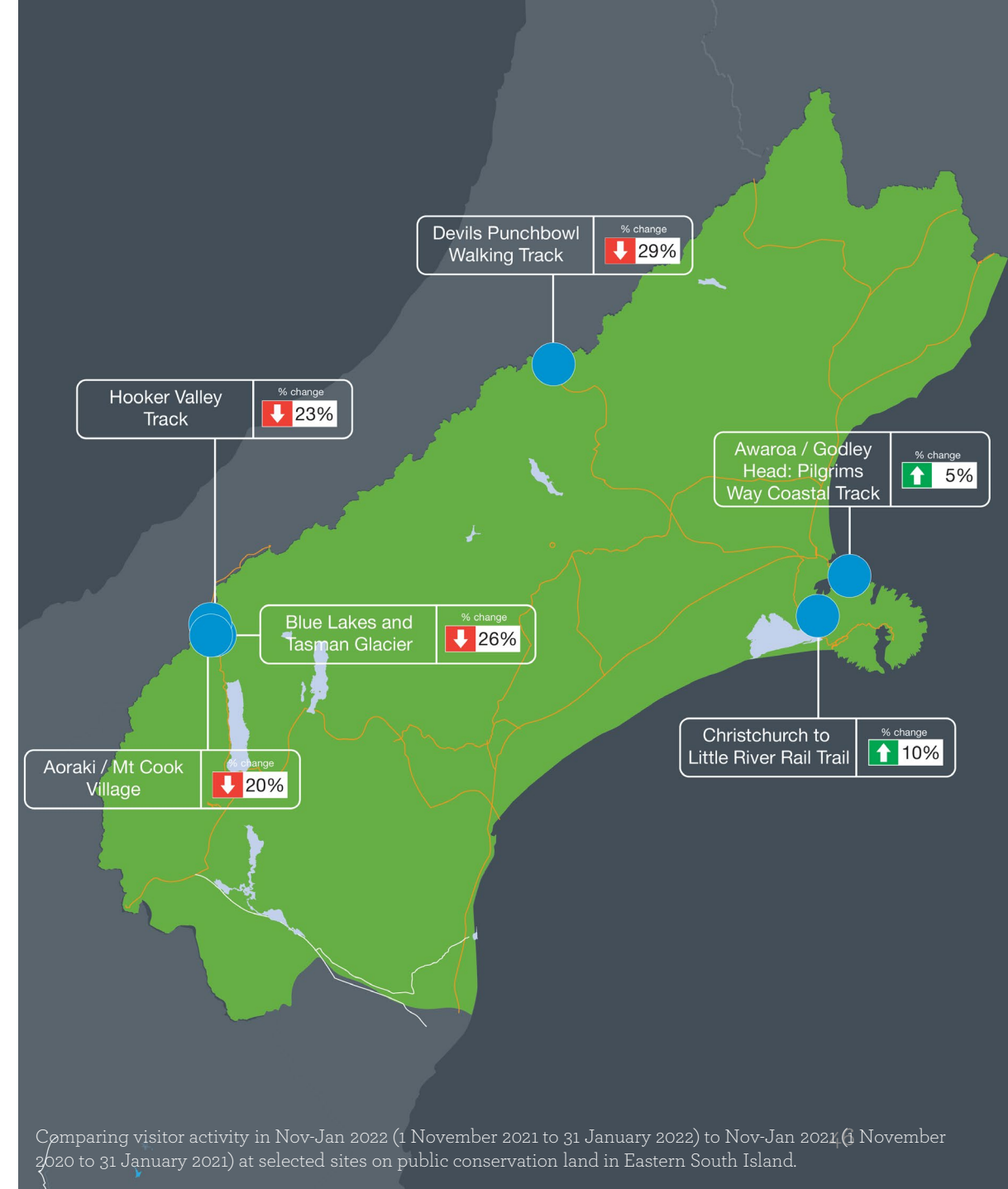
The number of people who stayed from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022 at bookable accommodation (exc. Great Walk accommodation) on PCL in Western South Island. Note: any bookable accommodation with less than 150 visitors listed on DOC's booking system are not included on this map.

# Eastern South Island (ESI)



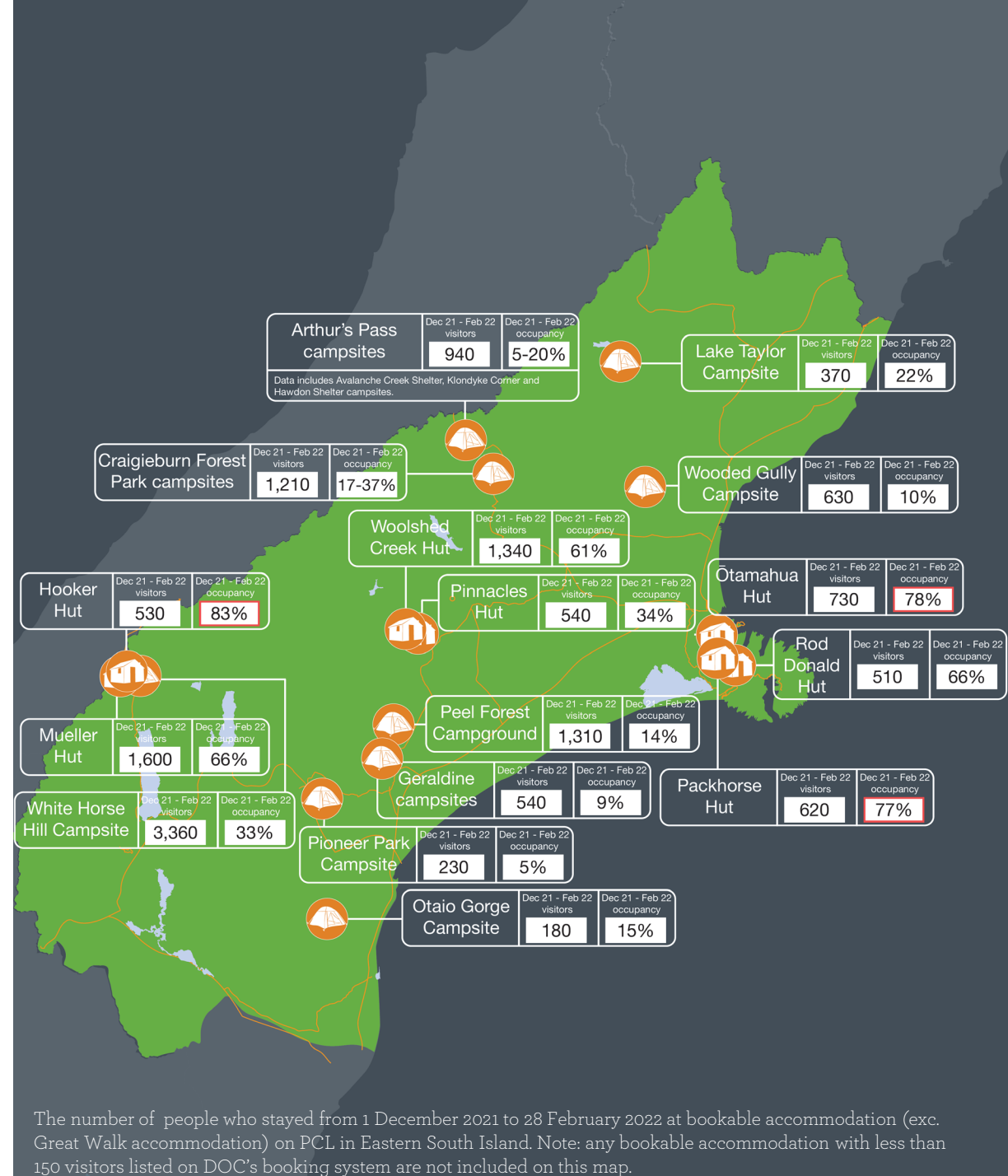
# A growing number of people visited tracks near urban areas

- Aoraki Mt Cook National Park welcomed many visitors but continued to see a decline in visitor activity:
  - Aoraki/Mt Cook Village – down 20% compared to the same period last year.
  - Hooker Valley Track – down 23%, with visitor numbers even much lower than 2010/11 levels.
- Tracks that are close to Christchurch experienced growth:
  - Christchurch to Little River Rail Trail – up 10% compared to the same period last year.
  - Awaroa/Godley Head (Pilgrims Way) – up 5%.
- Like other national parks in New Zealand, Devils Punchbowl, located in Arthur's Pass National Park, saw a significant decrease in visitor activity, down 29%.

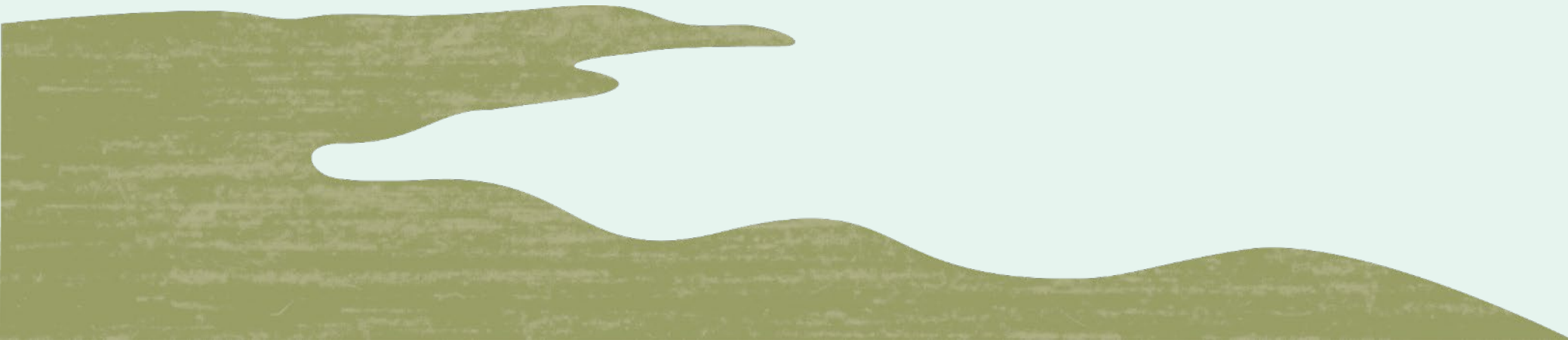


# Iconic destinations and family-friendly experiences continue to be popular in Canterbury

- Many people stayed at places in Canterbury over summer. Campgrounds were busy during the Christmas/ New Year period, while most huts were full on summer weekends.
- In Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park, Mueller Hut, White Horse Hill Campground and Hooker Hut attracted the most visitors compared to other huts and campsites.
- Family-friendly accommodation near Christchurch was popular with New Zealanders at:
  - Ōtamahua Hut, Quail Island – 15 min ferry from Lyttelton
  - Packhorse Hut – 45 min drive from Christchurch
  - Peel Forest Campground – 1hr 45 min drive from Christchurch.

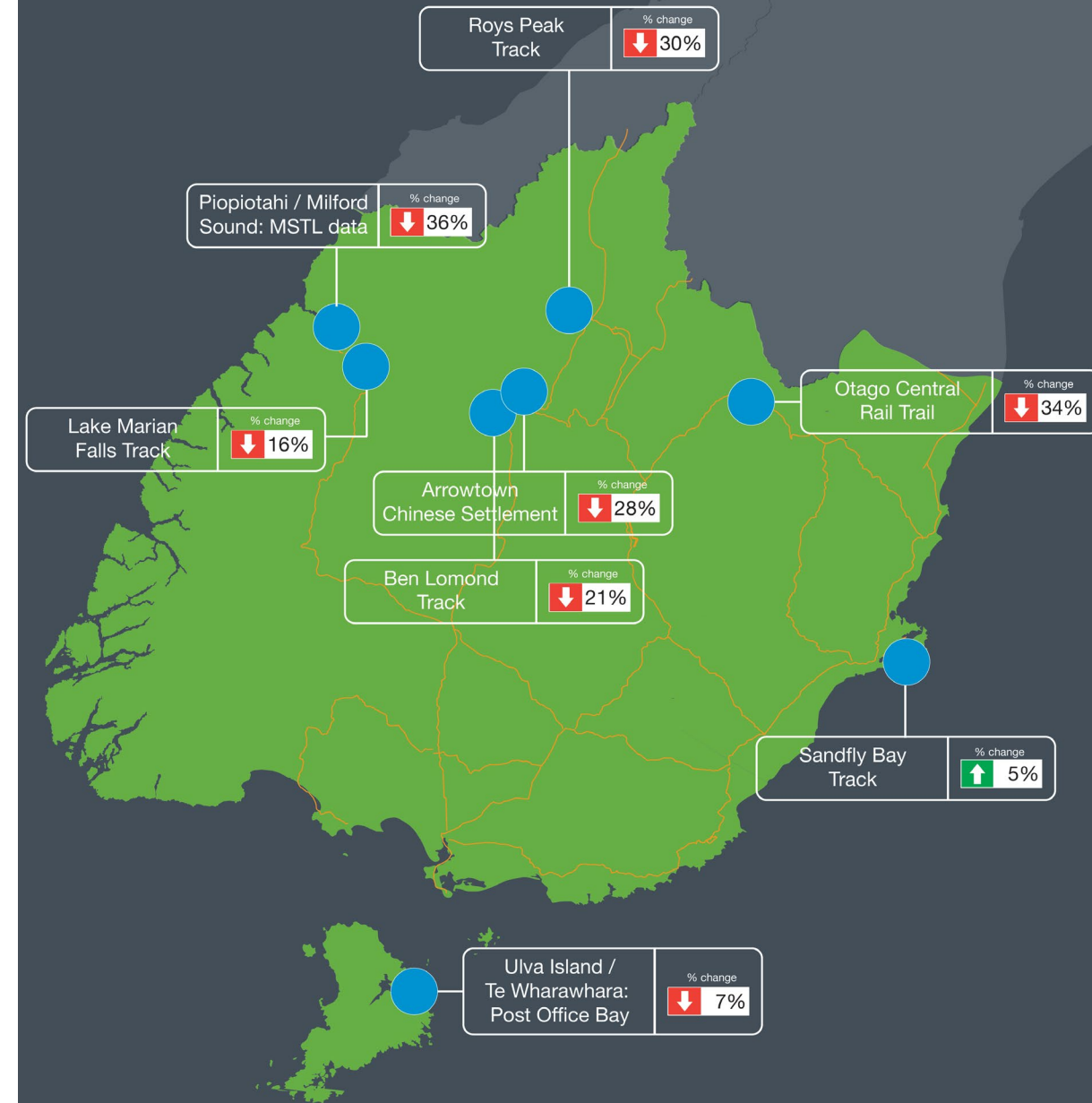


# Southern South Island (SSI)



# Visitor activity in SSI has decreased even further than 2020/21

- There continues to be a significant decrease in visitors in SSI, one of the hardest-hit tourism regions over the last two years.
- Milford Sound/Piopiotaahi welcomed New Zealanders over summer but has had a significant decrease in visitor activity, with boat passengers down 36% compared to the same period last year.
- Places in the Queenstown/Wānaka area, including Roys Peak and Arrowtown Chinese Settlement decreased in visitor activity (by 30% and 28%, respectively).
- While visitor numbers at Sandfly Bay Track (near Dunedin) were slightly higher, they were much lower than periods around 2018/19.
- The decrease in visitor activity was less pronounced at Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara (down 7%).



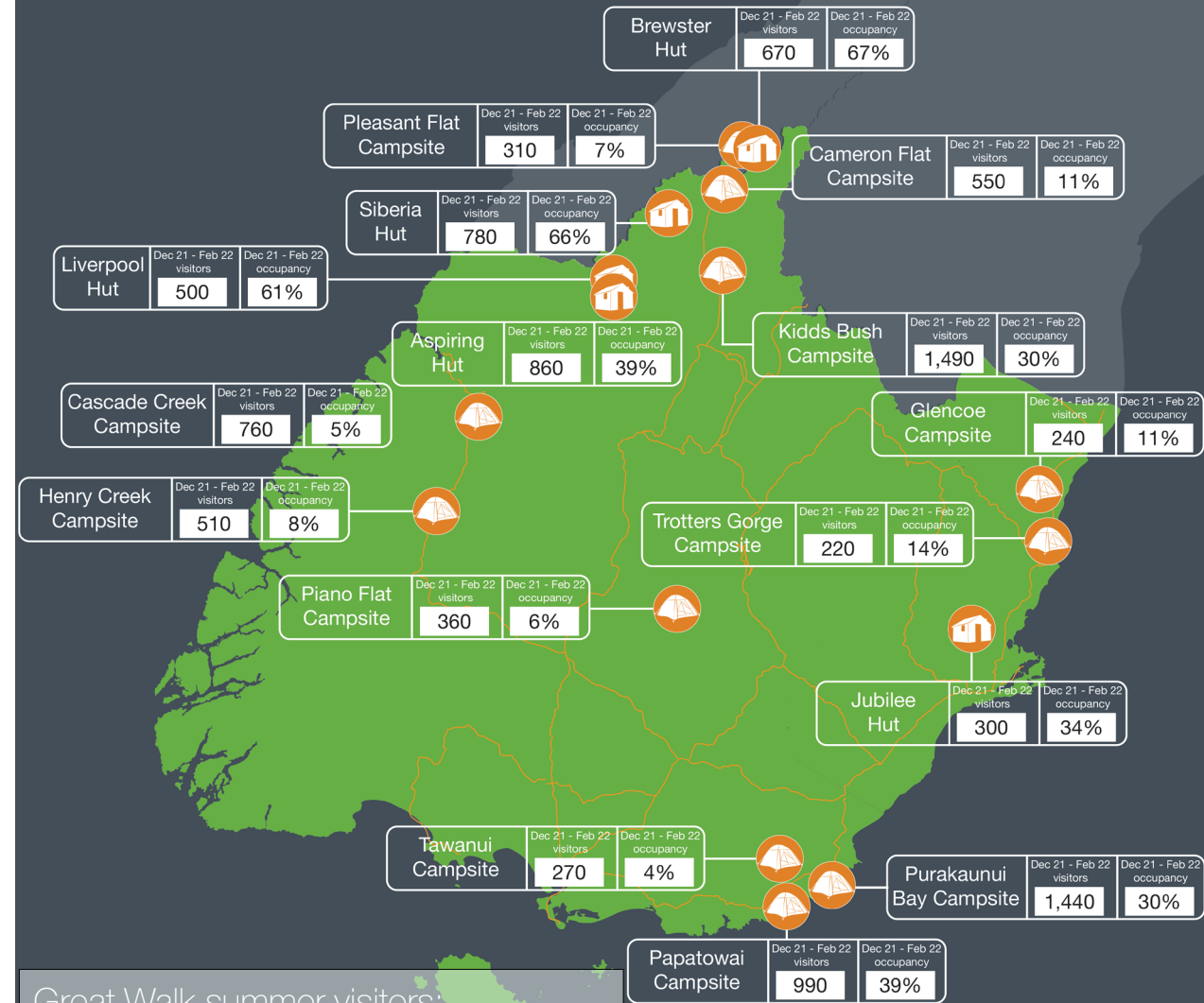
Comparing visitor activity in Nov-Jan 2022 (1 November 2021 to 31 January 2022) to Nov-Jan 2021 (1 November 2020 to 31 January 2021) at selected sites on public conservation land in Southern South Island.



# The Great Walks remain a drawcard for SSI

- SSI Great Walks remain popular, despite the lack of international visitors. The Milford Track was at full capacity, while Routeburn huts were near full capacity.
- Non-GW huts such as Brewster and Liverpool huts were popular in Mount Aspiring National Park, being at full capacity most weekends.
- Kidds Bush (located alongside Lake Hāwea) and Catlin coastal campsites were the most popular campsites in SSI this summer.
- Milford Road campsites felt the lack of international tourists most, with summer occupancy rates of 5% (the same as last summer).

The number of people who stayed from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022 at bookable accommodation (exc. Great Walk accommodation) on PCL in Southern South Island. Note: any bookable accommodation with less than 150 visitors listed on DOC's booking system are not included on this map.



Great Walk summer visitors:

- Routeburn Track – 6,200 visitors
- Kepler Track – 4,460
- Milford Track – 3,500
- Rakiura Track – 2,750.



Ngā mihi!



## Data and information sources

### Omnibus Survey (n=1,116, n=1,050)

- During January 2022 n=1,116 and February 2022 n=1,050 NZ adults (18+) participated in an online panel survey. The results are nationally representative of the New Zealand adult (18+) population.

### DOC Pulse of Conservation (n=1,000)

- From 3-9 December 2021 n=1,000, 6-15 January 2022 n=1,000 and 5-15 February 2022 n=1,000 NZ adults (18+) participated in an online panel survey. No weighting has been applied to the data. Instead, quotas were relied upon.

### DOC District Heritage/Visitor Staff Survey (n=45)

- DOC created a short online survey for Operational staff to complete.
- From 26 January to 4 February 2022 n=45 rangers participated. The results cover 33 of DOC's 45 districts.

### DOC Activity Counter System

- DOC prioritised 108 activity counters (from over 700 nationwide) for data to be downloaded over the summer of 2021/2022.
- Data included is from 1 November 2021 to 31 January 2022 compared to the same period last year.

### DOC Bookable Accommodation Data

- DOC's booking system currently collects accommodation booking data for huts, campsite and lodges across New Zealand.
- Estimated visitor numbers and occupancy rates are from 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022.