

Study site information

3: Round the Mountain

Notes for schools and educators



Round the Mountain study site. Photo: Benjamin Moorhouse

Key information

Unmodified (by human activity) site in an alpine environment

This 20 x 20 m plot is an unmodified location within a mid/high altitude alpine environment.

For an overview of study sites see [Section 4](#), page 7.

More information on the Round the Mountain Track

[Round the Mountain Track](#)

[Topographic map of New Zealand](#)

Getting to site

Take SH47 towards Whakapapa Village. Continue through the village and along Bruce Road towards Whakapapa ski field. Travel upwards for c. 5 km (5-10 min). On the right-hand side of the road you will see a car park and a DOC sign for the Round the Mountain Track.

On foot, face the mountain and turn right. Start the Round the Mountain Track next to the DOC sign. The path is not well-defined, but poles and orange flags will guide you. You will head down a small hill into a dry riverbed; cross over the riverbed and up the other side where you will follow a path to the left. The study site is 10 m in front of you.

The red dot on the map indicates the location of the study site.



Visitor facilities and parking

The car park is large enough for multiple coaches and minibuses. There are no toilets at this site. The closest toilets are in Whakapapa Village or at Whakapapa ski field, which also has a café.



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Recommended activities

- ▶ For pre- and post-field-trip learning activities see [Section 2](#).
- ▶ For information on NCEA assessment resources that could be linked to fieldwork at this site see [Section 3: Year 11–13 NCEA assessment resources](#).
- ▶ For ideas on practical learning activities across Tongariro National Park, see [Section 4](#).
 - Observation activity – page 9
 - Ideas for using study sites – page 10
 - Geology activity ideas – page 11
 - Human impact activities – pages 12 and 13
- ▶ Using a measured transect or quadrat (1 x 1 m) you can investigate:
 - vegetation (eg tussock, vegetable sheep)
 - invertebrates (eg alpine grasshopper)
 - geology (eg rock types, erosion and origin).
- ▶ 5-minute bird count (eg pipit/pīhoihoi) – see [Experiencing Birds in your green space](#), page 10.
- ▶ Geology activity information in [Section 2](#), page 10. Geology activity sheets in [Section 7](#), pages 9–14.

Comparison sites

For an overview of study sites see [Section 4](#), page 7.

- ▶ *Mangatepopo Hut site* for comparison with a low-altitude environment.
- ▶ *Whakapapanui Walk* for comparison with a non-alpine forested environment.
- ▶ *Ohakune Mountain Road site* for comparison with a similar altitude on the southern side of mountain.

Health and safety

For general health and safety considerations see [Section 4](#), pages 8–9.

- ▶ Uneven rocky surface, off track. Be careful of trip hazards.
- ▶ Dry riverbed – if water appears, move out of valley quickly.
- ▶ Weather – this site is exposed, and weather can change quickly. Make sure students are prepared.
- ▶ Volcanically active area – make sure your group knows emergency warning and evacuation procedures. See www.doc.govt.nz/volcanicrisk

Education providers working here

Hillary Outdoors:

www.hillaryoutdoors.co.nz/portfolio/opc-tongariro-2

Other education experiences in the area

For further information on activities in this area, see:

[Whakapapa Village Area information](#)

[Tongariro National Park information](#)

[Central North Island information](#)

