

Study site information

4: Happy Valley

Notes for schools and educators



Happy Valley study site. Photo: Benjamin Moorhouse

Key information

Modified (by human activity) site in an alpine environment

This 20 x 20 m plot is a modified 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

www.mtruapehu.com/winter/whakapapa
Topographic map of New Zealand

Getting to site

Take SH47 towards Whakapapa Village. Continue through the village and along Bruce Road toward Whakapapa ski field. Drive to the top of the road and park before the barriers into the ski field.

The walk to the site takes about 10 min. Head through the barriers and follow the road through the ski village. Continue past the chairlift on your right (Rangatira Express) and follow the track in front of you towards Meads Wall. Before reaching Meads Wall you will see Aorangi Hut on the right. The Happy Valley site is on the left-hand side of the track (the Meads Wall site is on the right).

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



Visitor facilities and parking

The car park is large enough for coaches and minibuses. There are toilets and a café in the Whakapapa ski field village.



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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.

- ▶ *Meads Wall site* for comparison with an unmodified site in the same area.

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](#)

