

other side of the Bealey valley and highway from Avalanche Peak.)

Orange poles mark the ridge into the tussock where a foot-worn (and water-eroded) track should be picked up and followed. Take care, as there are steep drops into McGrath Creek.

The ridge leads into a tongue of bush, and then into the bush proper (1300 m).

### Scotts Track

From the bushline to SH73, follow the orange markers.

**Time: 1 hour – 1 hour 30 minutes**

The track on the ridge between McGrath and Wardens creeks takes you almost parallel to the road for a while, before turning southwards crossing a few streams and bog patches. This track is considerably less steep than Avalanche Peak Track. The track meets the road about 700 m west of the Arthur's Pass Visitor Centre. You'll need to walk back along the road verge to the village.

### OPTION 2: FOR A ONE-WAY TRIP

For those intending to go up and down the same way, we recommend Scotts Track/Route. It is not as steep as the Avalanche Peak Track/Route. Scotts Track is signposted on the main road, about 700 m west of the Arthur's Pass Visitor Centre.

### Scotts Track

From the road to the bushline (1300 m).

**Time: 1 hour 30 minutes**

The track start (elevation 780 m) is signposted on the main road opposite Devils Punchbowl Falls. Follow the track which zigzags through forest to the bushline. There are great views, looking north to Arthur's Pass and Kelly Range, east to Mounts Cassidy and O'Malley, and south to Black Range. It is relatively sheltered here and is an ideal place for lunch.

### Scotts Route

From the bushline to Avalanche Peak summit.

**Time: 1 hour 30 min – 2 hours**

From the bushline, orange poles mark the route towards the summit. Go as far as your time and the conditions allow. Take note of the route up, to enable you to return the same way. Make sure you pick up Scotts Track through the bush, as off the track it is steep and dangerous.

### ARE YOU LOST?

If you are unable to find the route back to the main road, we suggest:

- Don't panic! Use your common sense.
- There is cellphone reception in most places on the tracks/routes. Phone 111.
- Do not attempt to enter the bush to go down unless you have found either Avalanche Peak or Scotts tracks. The bush-covered country is very steep with impassable bluffs and cliffs.
- Do not travel in the dark. Stay put until daybreak.
- Keep to the track – if you get lost then find shelter, stay calm and try to assist searchers.

If you have followed the Outdoor Safety Code and told someone where you are going, Search and Rescue procedures will be started once you are noted as overdue.

**Remember – your safety is your responsibility.**

### Further information

For information, maps, weather forecasts and track condition updates:

Arthur's Pass National Park Visitor Centre

SH 73, Arthur's Pass

Phone 03 318 9211

8.00 am – 5.00 pm (summer), 8.30 am – 4.30 pm (winter)

[arthurspassvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:arthurspassvc@doc.govt.nz)

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

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

Cover: Kea. Photo: Timothy Ensom

*Published by:*  
Department of Conservation  
Rangiora Office  
32 River Road  
PO Box 349, Rangiora 7440  
New Zealand  
March 2015

*Editing and design:*  
Publishing Team, DOC National Office

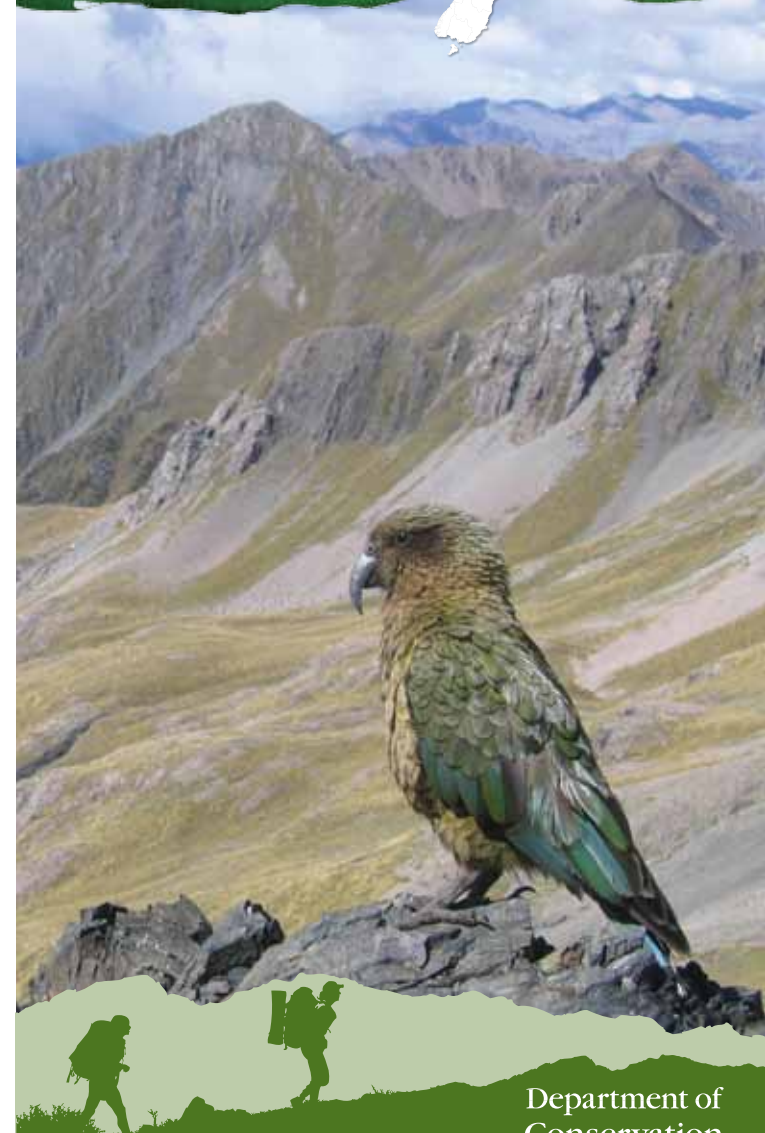
**New Zealand Government**

**DOC HOTline**  
**0800 362 468**  
Report any safety hazards  
or conservation emergencies  
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

## ROUTE GUIDE

# Avalanche Peak

Arthur's Pass National Park



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## Summary

**Time:** 6–8 hours

**Grade:** Tramping track and route

**Experience:** Suitable for well-equipped people with previous backcountry tramping experience

**Best season:** Summer, autumn

**Required map(s):** NZTopo50: Otira BV20

**Hazards:** Avalanche, ice/snow, rock fall, steep drop-offs, navigation problems in poor visibility, rapid weather change

**Safety:** This route guide must be read in conjunction with *Tramping in Arthur's Pass National Park*, a free brochure with important safety information, and New Zealand's *Outdoor Safety Code*. Tell someone your plans and leave a time to raise the alarm if you haven't returned. Before setting out, check the latest track conditions and avalanche advisory with the Arthur's Pass Visitor Centre.

Your safety is your responsibility. Before you go, know the **Outdoor Safety Code** – 5 simple rules to help you stay safe:

- 1. Plan your trip properly** – Ensure that you have a capable leader
- 2. Tell someone** – Leave your trip details with a trusted contact and at [www.adventuresmart.org.nz](http://www.adventuresmart.org.nz)
- 3. Check the weather** – Including [www.avalanche.net.nz](http://www.avalanche.net.nz) and the latest information on hazards and facilities before you start
- 4. Know your limits** – Physical fitness and good equipment will make all the difference
- 5. Take sufficient supplies** – Carry sufficient food, raincoat, overtrousers, gloves, hat and several layers of warm clothes

## Dying to see the view?

Many people have enjoyed this mountain-top trip with panoramic views of the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana. However, some people have died on this extremely steep and rocky journey to the top of an 1833 m peak. Plan and prepare well so that you enjoy your trip and return safely. The tramping track/route is steep and exposed to the weather, with sheer drops in some places. It should not be attempted in poor visibility or high winds. The route to the peak is prone to avalanches in winter and spring. During heavy snow conditions we advise visitors not to travel this

route unless sufficiently equipped and experienced enough to assess the conditions and choose a safe path through avalanche terrain.

## Ascending Avalanche Peak

There are two tracks/routes up Avalanche Peak. Both start from SH73 at Arthur's Pass village, approximately 700 m apart. You have the option of tramping both track/routes for a round trip or going up and down the same track/route. Both Avalanche Peak and Scotts tracks are classified as tracks as far as the bushline. Beyond the bushline they become routes, marked with cairns and colour-coded snow poles; yellow for the Avalanche Peak Route and orange for Scotts Route.

**Tramping tracks** are suitable for people with good fitness and moderate backcountry experience. Tracks have signs, poles or markers and on this track major river crossings are bridged.

**Routes** are suitable for people with above average fitness with a high level of backcountry skills and experience, including navigation and survival skills. Tracks are unformed and may be rough and very steep, with markers, poles or rock cairns, and stream and river crossings are not bridged.

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### OPTION 1: FOR A ROUND TRIP

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If doing the round trip, we recommend you start with the Avalanche Peak Track, which begins just behind the visitor centre.

#### Avalanche Peak Track

From behind the visitor centre to the bushline (1200 m), follow the orange markers.

**Time: 1 hour 30 minutes**

From Arthur's Pass Visitor Centre follow the bush edge northwards to pick up the start of the track, signposted before the Glasgow Bridge over Avalanche Creek (elevation 737 m).

The track, rocky and steep in parts, climbs through mountain beech/tawhairauriki on the south side of Avalanche Creek. The creek drops over steep bluffs, creating spectacular waterfalls which you can see from the highway and occasionally from the track. The track moves away from the creek and emerges at the bushline to give good views down the Bealey valley to Cora Lynn Station, Black Range and Mount Bealey.

## Avalanche Peak Route

From the bushline to Avalanche Peak summit (1833 m), follow the yellow poles.

**Time: 1 hour 30 minutes – 2 hours**

**Note:** *If visibility is poor or if you have found the track difficult so far, you should enjoy the views and turn back here, as the going becomes more exposed.*

Follow the ridge that runs between Rough Creek and Avalanche Creek catchments. From the bushline a worn trail leads through tussock and subalpine vegetation. Beware of steep drop-offs as you travel along this narrow ridge. Yellow markers on stakes mark the route all the way to the summit.

As you climb, the tussock-covered ridge that leads down to Scotts Track can be seen on your right and should be noted for finding the descent route. Do not leave the marked route or attempt to cross over to the other route as a hidden canyon blocks the way. Mt Rolleston (Kaimatau), with Crow Glacier on its southern side, rises majestically from behind this ridge.

The final part of this ridge is mainly rock. It narrows considerably and gains height in large steps. The prominent ridge suddenly flattens out (1680 m), 20–30 minutes short of the summit.

To reach the summit, follow the markers down into a basin, then climb up the scree directly to the left of the bluffs in front of you. The route winds through bluffs, climbing steeply at times. For the last 10 minutes along to the summit, the yellow and orange-coloured markers join together. This is to show that you return the same way along this section to meet Scotts Route. If it is windy or there is ice/snow on this section of ridge we recommend not going further and descending the way you came, as there are sheer bluffs either side of this razor-blade ridge.

## Scotts Route

From Avalanche Peak Summit to the bushline, follow the orange poles.

**Time: 1 hour 30 minutes**

From the summit of Avalanche Peak, follow the orange and yellow poles back the way you came for a short distance. Scotts Route (orange poles) then leads off to the north-east, heading towards Mount Cassidy on the eastern side of the Bealey valley. It is important that you travel along the correct ridge. Do not go towards Mount Rolleston. You should be heading in the direction of Mount Cassidy, the mountain to the north (left) of Devils Punchbowl Falls. (This is on the