

# Nydia Track

## Marlborough Sounds



### Introduction

This track crosses the Kaiuma and Nydia Saddles and follows the sheltered shoreline of historic Nydia Bay. Formed by linking old bridle paths, it meanders through a variety of forests, some scrubland and farmland.

The 27-kilometre Nydia Track is classified as a tramping track and is also open for mountain biking. It is well defined, though rough, narrow and uneven in places. It is a track suitable for those who are reasonably fit; boots are recommended. Some of the streams are not bridged and will require care after rain.

### About the Sounds

#### Landform and seascape

The Marlborough Sounds have formed over millions of years as rising seas and a constantly sinking landmass combined to flood ancient river valleys. This is the only part of New Zealand where the land mass, weakened by several long faults, is sinking. There are few big rivers or valley flats in the Sounds; all that remains above the sea is the mountain peaks. If the sinking continues, today's headlands, linked by narrow necks to the mainland, will be islands tomorrow.

#### History

The Māori story of the Sounds' formation is similar. The South Island (Te Waipounamu) is the stricken canoe of Aoraki, with its crew on one side forming the mountains, and its shattered, sunken prow in the north forming the sounds: Te Hoiere (Pelorus Sound) and Totaranui (Queen Charlotte Sound).

The sheltered waterways of the Sounds and its rich forests provided many living places and food resources for Māori. There was a pā on the northern side of Nydia Bay called Opouri—"place of sadness". A bloody battle occurred there between members of the same hapū (sub-tribe).

In 1876 William Brownlee began milling in Nydia Bay, mainly taking rimu, but also kahikatea, mataī and miro. Within four years, three million metres of timber had been taken from 1000 acres of the valley floor. Brownlee moved to Kaiuma Bay in 1880.

When John Craig and his partners, the Reese brothers, gained milling rights to the upper Opouri Valley in 1907, they were faced with the problem of getting the timber out of the forest and down the Opouri, Rai and Pelorus Valleys to Havelock. Their ingenious solution was a steep incline from Nydia Bay, right over a saddle and into the Opouri where they built their mill.

Steam-powered haulers dragged the logs to the mill, and the timber over the saddle and down to Nydia Bay where a 300-metre-long wharf was built. A settlement sprung up and local farmer William Gould opened a supply store. His woolshed was used as a hall and a grass tennis court was made. It is thought the mill closed in 1919. Little remains of the logging era today.

#### In the forest

You will see a variety of native forest types and tree and plant species on this walk. On the drive into Tennyson Inlet, the magnificent mixed forest of podocarps and beech demonstrates how the Sounds looked before the logging era.

Along the track itself, the ridges and higher hills are mainly covered in beech forest (hard, red and silver beech), with a lot of kāmahi. In the wetter gullies and on undisturbed lower slopes, pukatea and the podocarps rimu, mataī and miro form the canopy. Māhoe, kawakawa, nīkau and tree ferns occur in the understorey layer, and there are many mosses, small ferns and climbing plants such as supplejack and kiekie.

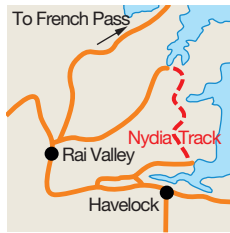
In Nydia Bay the forest is regenerating. It is dominated by tall mānuka and kānuka, with a variety of future forest giants on the forest floor. In summer, native orchids decorate banks beside the track.

The songs of bellbirds and tuī and the sudden "swoosh-swoosh" of a flying pigeon (kererū) will be heard in the dense, mature forests. Smaller birds such as the kererū, fantail, robin, and tomtit flit among the mānuka and kānuka trees looking for insects, while weka roam the forest edge and shoreline. Sea birds such as shags and gannets fish the deep waters of the bays, while waders like the reef and white-faced heron stalk the shores, looking for a feed in the shallows.

## How to get there

### Tennyson Inlet end

Turn off State Highway 6 just north of Rai Valley, then right onto Opouri Road and follow to the end. It is 27 kilometres to Tennyson Inlet; the last section is windy, with beautiful bush and wonderful views from Opouri Saddle. The track starts at the road end and car park in Duncan Bay.



### Kaiuma Bay (Havelock) end

From Havelock it is 2 kilometres (along SH6) to Te Hoiere Road. Turn right at the end of this onto Kaiuma Bay Road and travel 15 kilometres to the track start on the side of the road. Kaiuma Bay Road is narrow, winding and unsealed. Another option is to take a boat to Shag Point, and walk or ride the 4 kilometres along the road to the track start.

### Public transport

Charter launches and the mail boat are available to take passengers from Havelock to Shag Point, Nydia Bay or Duncan Bay.

## Accommodation

### Camping

There are self-registration campsites in the northwestern corner of Nydia Bay and near Harvey Bay, Tennyson Inlet.

**Standard campsites** have a limited range of facilities and services including toilets (usually composting or pit variety), water supply (tap, stream, or lake) and vehicle or boat access. Wood barbecues and fireplaces, showers (cold), picnic tables, a cooking shelter and rubbish bins may be provided.

**Backcountry campsites** have toilets and a water supply that may be from a stream. They may have picnic tables, cooking shelters or fire places.

### Nydia Lodge

Nydia Lodge sleeps up to 50 people in 9 bunkrooms and is situated in a large grassy clearing on the edge of the bush in Nydia Bay. It has a fully equipped kitchen, toilets and showers. Bookings are essential. To book and to obtain keys, contact:

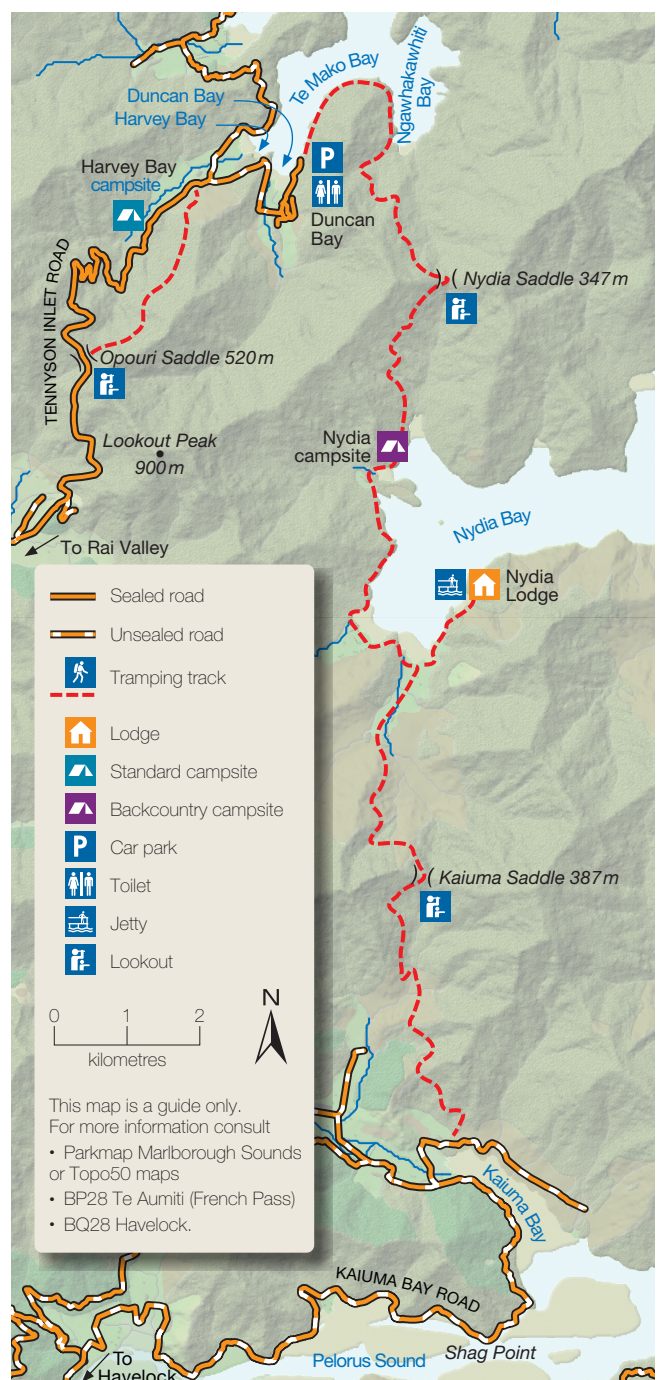
- Department of Conservation, Port Marlborough Building, 14 Auckland Street, Picton, ph (03) 520 3002.
- For stays between 1 October and 30 April, book online at [www.booking.doc.govt.nz](http://www.booking.doc.govt.nz). A warden will be in residence between these dates.

## Walking the track

### Duncan Bay to Nydia Bay campsite, 4 hr

The first hour follows the shoreline with glimpses of the sea through lush coastal forest. This is one of the most beautiful parts of the track with giant rimu, nikau, beech trees and tree ferns. Pipi Beach, just 15 minutes from the beginning of the track, is a pleasant place for a picnic.

After an hour you will come to Ngawhakawhiti Bay where the track starts climbing to Nydia Saddle (347 metres). From the saddle, with its views of Tennyson Inlet below, the track drops down to the campsite in Nydia Bay. On this shady, southern side of the saddle, the track is likely to be damp, making mountain biking a little treacherous.





## Nydia campsite to Nydia Lodge turn-off, 1 hr 30 min


From the campsite the track wanders through regenerating native forest, in places crossing private land. Near the lodge turn-off, there is a wide stream to be forded. From the turn-off, an easy 30 minutes around the shore leads to Nydia Lodge.

## Nydia Lodge turn-off to Kaiuma Bay, 4 hr


At the turn-off, the track leads across open farmland beside the stream, eventually crossing it twice and beginning the climb to Kaiuma Saddle (387 metres) through beech forest and regenerating scrub. From the saddle are superb views, including one to Marlborough's highest mountain, Tapuae-o-Uenuku (2885 metres), in the distant Inland Kaikoura mountains.

From the saddle, the track drops quickly to a stream, which it crosses. The track then climbs a little into the forest and sidles around to a point above Kaiuma Bay, before dropping to the roadside.

## Mountain biking

 This is a bike ride for those who like a challenge. The track is quite technical and rough, with many rocks and roots to negotiate. In wet weather it is very slippery and best not attempted. In places it is very narrow with steep drop offs. The track is best ridden north to south. Allow 5-8 hours; longer if you don't have transport to both road ends.

## Please remember


 **Safety:** Always carry warm and waterproof clothes. Be careful when the track is wet and treat cattle with caution.


Remember your safety is your responsibility. Always leave your intentions with your family or a friend on the Adventure Smart website:


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

[www.adventuresmart.org.nz](http://www.adventuresmart.org.nz)  
To report any safety hazards in the outdoors call  
**DOC HOTline 0800 362 468.**

**Private land:** The track passes through private land from Kaiuma to Nydia Bay. Please respect the owners' rights and property.

 **Domestic animals:** Horses are not permitted on any part of the track. Dogs are permitted with a permit from DOC, but must be kept on a lead where the track passes through private land.

 **Mountain bikers:** Bikers must stay in control of their bikes at all times and give way to walkers.

 **Water:** Drinking water should be boiled, treated or filtered.

## Tramping track


- Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking.
- Track is mostly unformed with steep, rough or muddy sections.
- Suitable for people with good fitness. Moderate to high-level backcountry skills and experience (including navigation and survival skills) required.
- Track has markers, poles or rock cairns. Expect unbridged stream and river crossings.
- Tramping/hiking boots required.

## Mountain biking grade 4 (advanced)


A mixture of long, steep climbs, narrow track, poor traction and obstacles that are difficult to avoid or jump over. Generally exposed at the track's outside edge. Most riders will find some sections easier to walk.



- Protect plants and animals
- Remove rubbish
- Bury toilet waste
- Keep waterways clean
- Take care with fires
- Camp carefully
- Keep to the track
- Consider others
- Respect our cultural heritage
- Enjoy your visit
- *Toitū te whenua* (leave the land undisturbed)

 **Hunting** is allowed except between mid-December and early February. A permit is required and is available online at [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz). Hunters must gain permission for hunting on private land. Hunting in the vicinity of Nydia Lodge is not permitted when it is occupied.

 **Fires** are not permitted along the track, at campsites or at Nydia Lodge.

 **Rubbish:** There are no rubbish facilities on the track. Please take all rubbish away with you.

## To find out more

We hope you enjoy your visit. For further information contact:

### Picton i-SITE

The Foreshore  
Picton  
Ph: (03) 520 3113  
Email: [picton@i-site.org.nz](mailto:picton@i-site.org.nz)

### Department of Conservation Nelson Regional Visitor Centre

Millers Acre/Taha o te Awa  
79 Trafalgar Street, Nelson 7010  
PO Box 375, Nelson 7040  
Ph: (03) 546 9339  
Email: [nelsonvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:nelsonvc@doc.govt.nz)