

Whataroa, Butler and Perth valleys

| Whataroa area



Butler Junction Hut – Whympers Hut

Time: 4 hours

The track follows Butler River on the true right bank before crossing Butler Junction swing bridge. Turn right at the sign-posted intersection and travel in the bush until reaching an unnamed creek. The track descends across a slip and side creek, and enters the bush again close to the Whataroa River. The track alternates between bush and riverbed travel up to Rocky Creek and then crosses the Whataroa River over Rocky Creek swing bridge. The track continues up the true left bank along shingle river flats, with markers at the bush edges, crossing four main creeks that also become avalanche chutes during winter and spring. Avalanche debris may still cross the track into summer. The track then emerges onto an obvious open area towards the headwaters before climbing steeply up an old moraine wall on the true left to reach Whympers Hut (6 bunks).



This track crosses several known avalanche paths. During heavy snow conditions, do not travel in this area unless sufficiently equipped and experienced to assess the conditions.

Butler River valley



Butler Junction Hut – Top Butler Hut

Time: 2 hours

From the hut the track follows the Butler River up the true right bank before crossing the swing bridge. Once on the true left, turn left at the signposted intersection. From here the track climbs and sidles across steep hillsides and creeks originating from King Peak, before reaching Top Butler Hut (6 bunks).



Top Butler to Ice Lake

Time: 2 hours

A flood destroyed the bridge across the Butler River South Branch. Crossing on foot may be possible in low flow conditions. Do not attempt to cross if you are inexperienced, or when the river is high.

The track then heads upstream on the true left of the Butler River. The track alternates between forest and increasingly open subalpine country, until the open headwaters are reached. Boulder-hop from here up to Ice Lake, where there are great views and small campsites.



Dogs

Dogs are prohibited except where authorisation has been granted by DOC. People wishing to take a dog into this area must obtain a dog permit from the Franz Josef office at least 1 week prior to their trip.



Hunting

Tahr and chamois are the main species hunted in the area and fine trophies of either may be taken at any time of the year. There are low numbers of red deer, particularly in the Perth River valley. All hunters must have a hunting permit, available on the DOC website.

Hut fees

Please purchase hut tickets before using the huts.

Butler Junction Hut	8 bunks	Standard
Whympers Hut	6 bunks	Standard
Top Butler Hut	6 bunks	Standard
Nolans Hut	4 bunks	Basic
Scone Hut	6 bunks	Standard

Standard – 1 ticket per person/night. **Basic** – free

Further information

Westland Tai Poutini National Park Visitor Centre

69 Cron Street
Franz Josef Glacier
Open 7 days

PHONE: 03 752 0360

EMAIL: westlandnpvc@doc.govt.nz

www.doc.govt.nz



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NEW ZEALAND

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable ground
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimise the effects of fire
Check before you light a fire - a ban may be in place
- Respect wildlife and farm animals
- Be considerate of others

Cover: Whataroa valley looking towards Butler Range. Photo: K Henderson

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General information



Duration: 3 days +

Grade: Tramping track and route

Experience: Suitable for well-equipped and experienced backcountry trampers and climbers only; navigation and survival skills required.

Best time to go: Summer and autumn.

Maps: NZTopo50: BW16 Whataroa; BW17 Harihari; BX16 Mount Elie De Beaumont

Hazards: Flooded rivers, rock fall and avalanche.



These valleys are subject to flooding at any time of year. Do not attempt this trip in bad weather or when rain is forecast. If rivers and side streams are in flood, do not attempt to cross.

Times given are guides only and will vary greatly with fitness and weather conditions. Tramping in this area is very demanding and you should allow plenty of time to reach planned destinations.

The tramping tracks are well marked with orange plastic markers – windfalls are cleared annually and the tracks are scrub cut every 3 years. The routes are also well marked and windfalls are cleared every 2 years.

Note: true left and true right refer to the side of the valley or river when facing and looking downstream.

Your safety is your responsibility

Before heading into the area, check the latest conditions at DOC's Awarua/Haast Visitor Centre or Westland Tai Poutini National Park Visitor Centre in Franz Josef – conditions can change rapidly.

Know the *Outdoor Safety Code* – 5 simple rules to help you stay safe:

1. Plan your trip
2. Tell someone
3. Be aware of the weather
4. Know your limits
5. Take sufficient supplies

Keep to the track – if you get lost, find shelter, stay calm and try to assist searchers.

Leave your trip details with a trusted contact, in the hut Intentions Book, and at www.adventuresmart.co.nz Carry a personal locator beacon, and at the end of your trip don't forget to let your contact know you are safe. More information at www.adventuresmart.org.nz

Getting there

Access is off State Highway 6, 5 kilometres north of Whataroa. The car park is well signposted off the highway as a tourist site. A number of helicopter operators provide access to the more remote areas of the valleys.

The land around the car park and along the first kilometre of track is privately owned by David and Bernadette Friend of Whataroa (phone 03 753 4091). Get permission from the Friends before starting your trip. Care should be taken not to disturb their stock.

Route/track description



Road end – Whataroa–Perth Track junction

Time: 2 hours

From the car park the track initially follows the 4WD track and markers up the true left bank of the Whataroa River. Just beyond the derelict bulldozer it is quicker to follow the old riverbed before rejoining the 4WD track further on. The river edge is loosely followed to Big Creek where the 4WD track finishes. If this creek poses any difficulty and further rain is imminent, do not enter the valley as other creeks will be impassable. From Big Creek, boulder-hop around 'Big Bend', cross a short gravel beach, then from here look for the marker on the large grassy flat on the right. Another marker indicates the track entrance further on at the bush edge and the track then continues upstream on bush terraces. A couple of boulder-hopping sections will see you passing opposite the Perth River confluence before reaching the Whataroa–Perth swing bridge. This section of track is an excellent day trip. Around 100 m beyond the bridge the junction of the Perth River and Whataroa River tracks is signposted.

Perth River valley



Whataroa–Perth Track junction – Scone Hut

Time: 6 hours

The track climbs steeply to a large forested terrace, which is crossed in about an hour, before dropping down to the top of the gorge. Rock-hop up the true left of the river to Hughes Creek. This creek quickly becomes impassable after rain so take care. After a further short boulder-hop, you'll reach Nolans Hut (4 bunks).

Beyond Nolans Hut, the track crosses Nolans Flat, before re-entering the bush. If the river is running high there is a high-level route marked and signposted at the top of Nolans Flat. A couple of short steep bluffs follow before more beach travel. The track then alternates between bush terraces and boulder hopping to Scone Hut (6 bunks), with several notable side creeks needing to be crossed. The entire track is on the true left of the Perth River.



Bettison Route

Time: 2 hours to bush edge

To access the Bettison Route, follow the track upstream over Lower Scone swing bridge to the signposted junction. The route then climbs through the forest to approximately 1,200 m, giving access to the upper Bettison Stream and Dennistoun Pass areas.



The marked route ends at the two yellow and blue deer posts. Travel beyond this point is suitable only for those experienced in alpine travel.



Perth headwaters/Adams Wilderness Area access

Time: 30 minutes to end of track

To access the Perth headwaters and Adams Wilderness Area from Scone Hut, follow the track across Lower Scone swing bridge, then to Redfield swing bridge. The marked track ends approximately 200 m above the Redfield swing bridge.



Scone Creek Track

Time: 1 hour to track end

Follow the track from the hut past Lower Scone swing bridge (remaining on the true left of Scone Creek) upstream. The marked track ends at the small clearing approximately 300 m downstream of the former Upper Scone swing bridge. Crossing Scone Creek on foot may be possible in low flow conditions. Do not attempt to cross if you are inexperienced or when the river is high.

Whataroa River valley



Whataroa–Perth Track junction – Butler Junction Hut

Time: 5 hours

The track to Butler Junction continues up the Whataroa valley with several short climbs before dropping steeply down to the beach downstream of The Twister. After walking along the beach and crossing The Twister, the track climbs steeply over a terrace before dropping back down to Harry Creek. The track continues, mostly on the beach, until Barrowman Flat, where the track traverses along an easy bush terrace. Above Barrowman Flat, the track sidles for some time, alternating from bush to riverbed travel. Travel through this particular section is quite demanding with several small creeks, climbs and boulder sections. Butler Junction Hut (8 bunks) is reached about 10 minutes past McCormicks swing bridge.