

# FISHERS TRACK



## HIGHLIGHTS

Epic views of the surrounding volcanoes to the east including Mount Hauhungatahi – Tongariro National Parks’ fourth and oldest volcano and on a clear day Mt Taranaki in the west.

Home to conservational ecological reserve.

Find the historic horse trough on the Okaa saddle – a clue to its former use.

Entry-level backcountry ride.

Glimpse at the luxury Retaruke estate – famous for trophy hunting and chilling.

Thrilling downhill through farmland on an official public road with no cars to be seen (Drop 500m over the 17kms) – ride for the adrenaline or slow down and soak up the views.

Awesome horseshoe monument at Kaitieke.

## HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Originally formed in 1896, Fishers Track provided access to the Retaruke and Kaitieke Valleys. It was likely used by early European settlers for horse-drawn coach traffic, which carried goods from the Whanganui River at Wade’s Landing. Before the railways arrived, meat and wool were transported up through the valleys, with produce backloaded down. Once the railway system was built, the transport network reversed, and Fishers Track ceased to be a major route.

In 2002, a local community group worked to reopen sections of the road, initially leading to the Tupapakuraa Falls and later extending further. Today, Fishers Track is a key part of the northern section of the Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono adventure trail and serves as a vital ecological corridor. The Rēua Forest, with its regenerating bush and wetland systems, supports rare native plants and endangered species, contributing to the ongoing conservation of New Zealand’s biodiversity.

## ROUTE NOTES

- The trail is 37% gravel, 18% single track (grass) and 44% quiet sealed country lane.
- The start point in the Waimarino Railway Station corner by the Waimarino Park and Ride.
- Shuttles from the finish at Kaitieke may be pre-arranged for pick up. (Not recommended to ride the route back via Raurimu on SH4 – 50kms.) See [mountainstosea.nz/organise](http://mountainstosea.nz/organise).

## CONNECTING MAPS:

- OIO ROAD
- MARTON SASH AND DOOR
- TE HANGĀRURU

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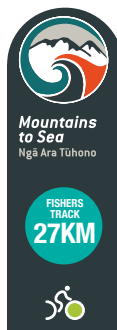


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## TRAIL ROUTE



### Fishers Track – A Journey Through Time, Nature, and Conservation

Fishers Track, as well as being part of this Great Ride, is also a significant section of the Te Araroa trail.

Beginning at the Waimarino/National Park Village Park and Ride. A carved pou marks the start of your journey. Follow the Fishers Track signs along Station Road, turning right, then left over the railway line. A short climb up Fisher Road (which becomes Kurua Road) leads you into the heart of a rugged landscape.

The first section of the trail winds through the Erua Forest, a region of immense ecological and geological significance. The forest sits atop a fault line, which shapes the surrounding ranges and wetlands, creating a landscape rich in biodiversity. This area is home to rare and unique native orchids, a regenerating bush, and an important population of the endangered kiwi. Native bird species such as tūī, kererū, and pīwakawaka (fantail) can also often be spotted. The forest, along with its wetlands, plays a vital role in maintaining the environmental health of the region, acting as a natural water filter and controlling flooding.



At the 3km mark, you'll have the option of a 1 hour return walk to the Taranaki lookout or a full tramp to the falls, which takes about 4-5 hours return. The falls offer stunning views and an immersive experience in the local flora and fauna.

### Take in the Views and History

As you reach the top of Fishers Track, take a moment to enjoy breathtaking views. On a clear day, you can see the entire line of North Island mountains, from Taranaki in the west to Ruapehu, Ngāuruhoe, and Tongariro in the east. The 6km descent offers an exhilarating ride down a grass single track through bush and rolling rural landscapes. Along the way, look for the old stone horse trough, carved from natural rock and fed by a stream, about 2km after you pass the "Public Road" sign.

The track eventually connects onto Kaitieke Road, emerging right next to Retaruke Lodge. Keep rolling until you see the signs to take a right turn onto Kaitieke Road and follow the gently descending route past rolling hills until you reach the War Memorial and Horse Sculpture. This is the pick-up point for day rider shuttles. For those continuing, turn left towards Oio Road, following the orange markers to Retaruke Domain and onwards to Blue Duck Station.

### Note:

The western end of the trail can become slippery after heavy rainfall and this area is exposed to snowfall occasionally during winter so check the forecast before you depart.

The track passes through sections of farmland, please do not deviate from the designated track. Please do not disturb stock and leave any gates as you find them.

 **No camping on this trail**



### THE STORY OF THE HORSE SCULPTURE

A highlight of the trail is the horse sculpture, an iconic tribute to the history of the Kaitieke rural area. In 2015, local farm owner and former councillor Elaine Wheeler envisioned a unique sculpture to celebrate 100 years of Returned Services. Horses played a vital role in the war effort and were an essential part of life in this rural region. The sculpture, based on a sturdy rural horse, is crafted from horseshoes sourced from throughout the valley. Designed by a local artist in Ruatiti, it arrived in a grand parade through Waiouru – a true reflection of the strong community spirit in the Ruapehu district.

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