

Description

Lashed by winds, pounded by surf and sand or soothed by the calm of sunlit days, the whole area of this northern tip of New Zealand has a wild and unpredictable nature. Around its shores sweep the currents of the Tasman Sea and the Pacific Ocean which meet in a foaming swell of broken water over the Columbia Bank just west of Cape Reinga.

The Lighthouse

Cape Reinga lighthouse is one of the most vital landmarks of Te Pahi. Its light once shone from Motuopao Island where it had been installed in 1879 but its beam was not visible from the waters of North Cape and in 1941 a lighthouse was built at Cape Reinga using the original lens from Motuopao. The remains of the original tower can still be seen on the northern end of the offshore island. An automatic battery-operated unit now stands on Cape Maria van Diemen and the Cape Reinga light is now electric. It was automated in 1987 and is now managed by computer from Wellington. The 1000 watt light bulb, magnified by the lens systems, throws a signal of warning 49 kilometres out to sea and is often the first light in New Zealand that sailors see.

Archaeological Sites

Within the boundaries of the park there are close to 1,000 recorded archaeological sites in the form of agriculture sites, fortified pa, storage sites and shell middens. These sites assist in telling the story of a long and complex pattern of land use in the Far North.

Care is taken to keep the sites intact and to preserve and respect the spiritual and cultural heritage of Maori.

If you come upon these sites, please help to protect and preserve them by not disturbing them.

Please note that all archaeological sites are protected by the Historic Places Act 1993 and it is an offence to damage or interfere with them in any way.

Safety Watch

The Department of Conservation operates an 0800 number for members of the public to report any safety hazards. Telephone 0800 999 005.

Emergency phone number for conservation related law enforcement, eg illegal whitebaiting, vandalism of huts, tracks, signs etc, removal of plants on DOC land, killing or catching of native wildlife, fishing in Marine Reserves, disturbing marine mammals, strandings, sick or injured wildlife. 0800 362 468.

For fire and search & rescue emergencies dial 111.

For further information, please contact

Kaitiaki Area Office
127 North Road
KAITIAKI
Phone (09) 408 6014
Fax (09) 408 6019

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Cape Reinga and Te Pahi Walks

Cape Reinga Lighthouse



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Introduction

The whole of the northern tip of the North Island is steeped in Maori tradition and in the heritage of their past. It is the most spiritually significant area in the country for it is here that after death, all Maori spirits travel to the pohutukawa tree on the headland of Cape Reinga (Te Rerenga Wairua) and descent into the underworld (reinga) by sliding down a root to fall into the sea below. They climb out again on to Ohaua, the highest point of the Three Kings Islands to bid their last farewell before returning to the land of their ancestors, Hawaiiki-A-Nui.

Reserves

Te Paki Recreation Reserve

This includes most of the accessible recreational beaches, the dunelands, Cape Reinga, Te Paki Stream and hinterland of scrub covered hills as well as the 2,900 ha for pastoral farmland. The unique natural values of this area include the endangered plant Bartlett's rata, which was not discovered until 1975 and an extraordinary

high number of native land snails including the nationally threatened flax snail colonies.

North Cape Scientific Reserves

This area is classified as a Scientific Reserve because of its unique biological value. It contains a high number of plants and animals found nowhere else in the world.

On the serpentine soils of the North Cape a range of plant species exhibit dwarfism and other variations which are unique.

Motuopao Island Nature Reserve

This island, lying offshore from Cape Maria Van Diemen is valued for its breeding colonies of fairy prion, white-faced storm petrel and black-winged petrel. Following successful rodent control, Robust skink and Matapia gecko were released onto the island in 1997. Both species appear to be doing well.

The Island was also the site of the first lighthouse in the area, first shown in March 1879. The light was extinguished in 1941 and the lens installed in the new tower at Cape Reinga.

Mokaikai Scenic Reserve

Together with the adjoining Ohao Blocks this area has an outstanding natural landscape and high concentration of historic and archaeological sites. Although some access is possible, to get to Mokaikai or North Cape, permission is necessary to cross Te Hapua land. The main entrance is at Waitiki Landing where at present there is a visitor information display, motel accommodation and a casual cafeteria. A permit is required to cross Maori land, contact Te Hapua (09) 409 7579.

History

Maori had occupied Northland hundreds of years before Abel Tasman, sailed in for water to the Three Kings Islands on the eve of Epiphany 1643. He named the Islands after the biblical three wise men. He was the first European to

sight North Cape and was also responsible for naming Cape Maria van Diemen in honour of the Governor of Batavia's wife.

Captain Cook and the French captain, Jean de Surveille sighted the north coast within a few days of each other in 1769. In 1772 Marion du Fresne anchored his sailing ship in Spirits Bay and landed in a vain quest for fresh water but it was not until the arrival of trading and whaling vessels in the late 18th century that European contact with the area really began to have an impact. Close behind the whalers and traders in the 1830s came the missionaries who sought to convert Maori to Christianity.

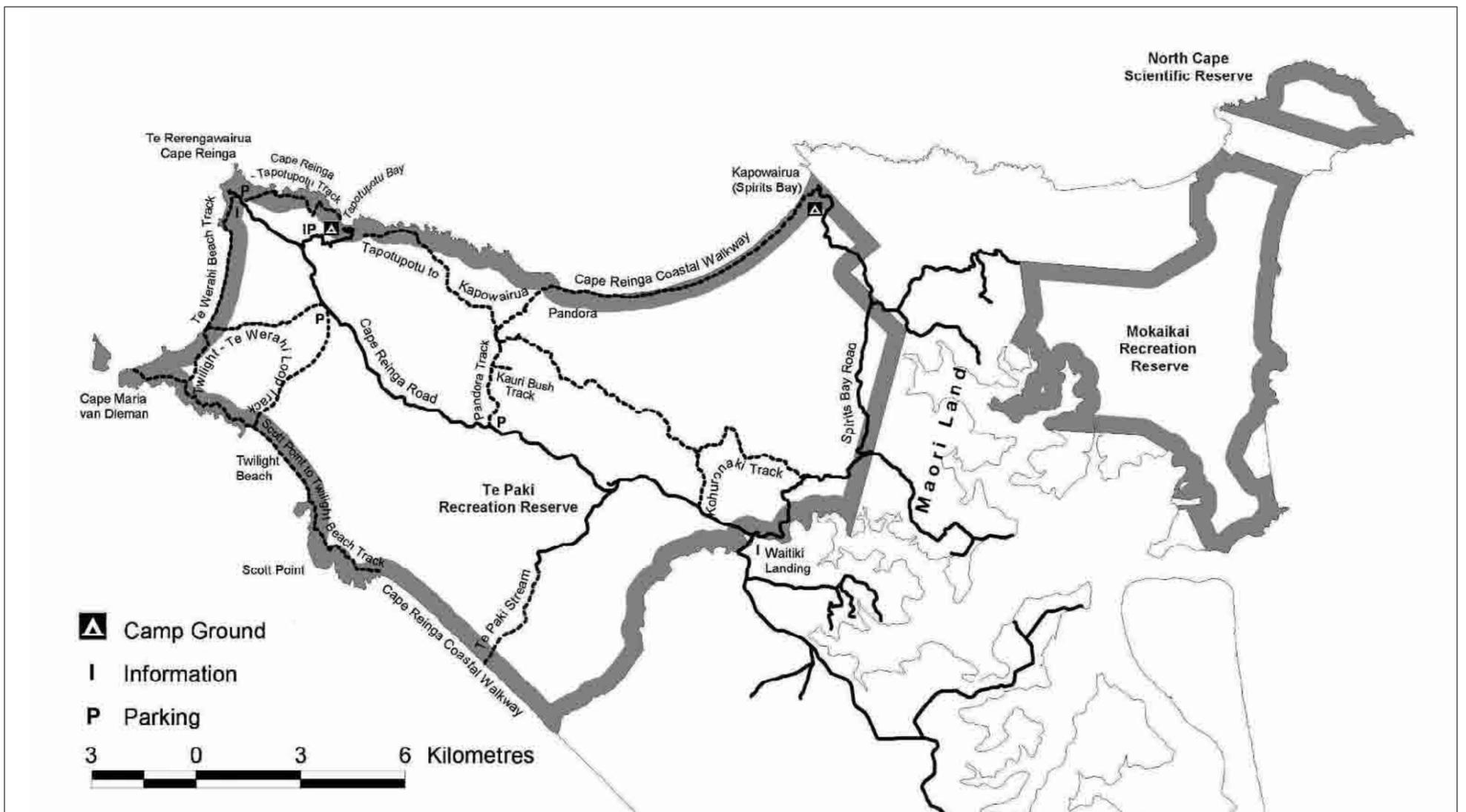
The first European landowners in the region were Stannus Jones and a young English lawyer, Samuel Yates, who acquired ownership of a large tract of land in 1873. Yates married a local Maori princess and became farmer, storekeeper and gum trader. He became known as "King of the North" and his homestead as "Paki" from which the name Te Paki derives.

In the late part of the last century, it was the gumdiggers who made their presence felt in the Far North. Armies of fortune seekers settled just south of the area and hunted over Te Paki for its bounty of kauri gum, fossilised resin from the kauri tree which had become highly desirable as the backbone of varnish manufacturing.

The First World War, followed by the economic slump of the 1930s brought about the collapse of the industry although some activity in gum fields lingered until the 1950s.

In 1930, the Keene family bought up half of the northern headland (16,000 hectares) and they grazed the hilltops and broke in large tracts of land for farming. In 1966 the entire area of farm was bought by the Crown and today only 2,900 hectares has been kept as farmland. The remaining area has been encouraged to return to its natural state.





Walking and Tramping



ENVIRONMENTAL CARE CODE

Protect plants and animals

Remove rubbish

Bury toilet waste

Keep streams and lakes clean

Do not light fires

Camp carefully

Keep to the track

Consider others

Respect our cultural heritage

Enjoy your visit

Toitu te whenua
(Leave the land undisturbed)

East Coast

The East Coast is generally more sheltered with sandy bays suitable for water sports and rocky headlands where fishing, snorkelling and scuba diving are popular.

Cape Reinga – Tapotupotu Bay



Time: 2 hrs 30 mins.

Length: 4.5 km

A fairly steep climb via Sandy Bay provides great coastal views. The track begins at the Cape Reinga carpark or the western end of Tapotupotu Bay following orange marker posts.

Cape Reinga Road to Pandora via Kauri Bush



Time: 40 mins walk to Kauri Bush Walk turnoff;

2 hrs to Pandora; Length: 2kms; 6 kms.

Pandora is a beautiful sandy bay accessible only by foot via the coastal walkway (described below) or from the Cape Reinga Road.

The 4WD standard road to Pandora is suitable for walking or mountain biking.

A side track leads to a remnant of Kauri forest that once covered the Far North – it takes about 1 hr 30 mins return. Another side track 1 km up the road to the right, leads up to Te Paki trig – the highest point in the area.

Cape Reinga Coastal Walkway – (Kapowairua – Pandora – Cape Reinga)



Time: Kapowairua to Pandora – 3 hrs. Length: 8.5 kms.

Time: Pandora to Tapotupotu Bay – 5 hrs 30 mins Length: 9 kms.

Time: Tapotupotu Bay to Cape Reinga – 2 hrs 30mins. Length: 4.5 kms.

This spectacular coastal walkway passes a dramatic coastline, with sand dunes and headlands between Kapowairua on the east coast and Te Paki Stream on the west coast.

Trampers need to be fit and self-sufficient. It pays to carry water as small streams along the way can dry up over summer. There are no huts, but there are several areas for camping and the weather is mild compared to other parts of New Zealand.

Make sure your tent is mosquito proof over the summer months!

From Kapowairua the walkway follows the beach to Pandora. If the tide prevents, you can walk behind the dunes and over the headland at the eastern side of Pandora.

Fruit trees around the site mark a former tourist camp. There is an open grassy area suitable for self sufficient overnight camping. The next section of walkway between Pandora and Tapotupotu Bay mainly follows old farm tracks – reminders of the past use of this area..

The track departs uphill behind the grassy flat, to the Darkies Ridge junction. The ridge is undulating offering spectacular views until it drops steeply to the Tapotupotu campsite and estuary which is best crossed at low tide.

The walkway continues to Cape Reinga at the western end of Tapotupotu Bay – 2 hrs 30 mins. From Cape Reinga the walkway continues on down the West Coast.

West Coast

The West Coast is more wild and exposed than the East, with spectacular golden sand dunes.

Te Werahi Gate



Time: 30 minutes to Te Werahi Beach

Length: 2.5 kms.

Time: 1 hr 15 mins to Twilight Beach.

Length: 4 kms.

From the gate there are two well-graded walks to the coast which connect with the coastal walkway. A dry weather road across the farm leads to the signpost marking the beginning of the two tracks.

A day's round trip (4.5 - 5 hrs) can also be made through fabulous scenery – take care to follow the orange topped marker posts over the dune lands.

Te Paki Stream



Spectacular dune walking from the road end.

Cape Reinga Coast Walk



Time: Cape Reinga to Te Paki Stream – 8 hrs.

Time: Cape Reinga to Te Werahi Beach – 30 minutes. Length: 1.25 km.

Time: Cape Reinga to Cape Maria van Diemen turnoff – 1 hr 45 mins Length: 6 kms.

Time: Cape Reinga to Twilight beach – 3 hrs 30 mins Length: 8.5 kms.

Time: Twilight Beach to Te Paki Stream road end – 3 hrs 45 mins.

The walkway starts from Cape Reinga and leads down past steep cliffs to the long sweeping Te Werahi Beach. This section makes a nice “short walk” or half day excursion.

The beach walk takes nearly one hour and Te Werahi Stream is crossed at the far end of the beach – preferably at low tide.

From the stream at low tide the beach and rocks can be followed around the point toward Cape Maria van Diemen. If the tide does not allow, follow the orange marker posts over Herangi Hill and to the sign indicating the side track to Cape Maria van Diemen (1hr 30 mins return).

The main walkway continues along cliff tops through flax and manuka scrublands then drops down to Twilight Beach. A sign indicates an alternative route back to Te Werahi gate. Travel along Twilight Beach – about 40 mins.

There are two suitable sites for self sufficient camping at the northern and southern ends of the beach and another at the southern side of Scott Point.

The walkway climbs up and over Scotts Point following marker posts then drops down to the beach crossing a swamp via a boardwalk and down a steep set of steps.

From here, Te Paki Stream mouth is about 1 hours beach walk and a further 1 hour up stream to the road and toilet.

The coast can be followed further south from Te Paki stream, distances are – The Bluff 19 km; Hukatere 51 km; Waipapakauri 69 km and Ahipara 83 km.

Mokaikai Scenic Reserve and North Cape Scientific Reserve



Permission to cross Maori land to get to Mokaikai must be obtained from Te Hapua Trustees, phone (09) 409 7578.

Key to Symbols



Walking Track

Easy and well formed. Suitable for people of most ages and fitness levels. Constructed to “shoe” standard.



Tramping Track

May require skill and experience. Suitable for people of average physical fitness. Constructed to “boot” standard.



Mountain Biking

Times shown are for a one way journey only, unless otherwise shown. If the return journey is more than 1 hour, food, drink, warm clothes and wet weather gear should be carried. On extended bush walks a compass and topographical map are recommended. Streams can be uncrossable after heavy rain and should not be attempted.