

Fishing

There is good access for trout fishing, deer hunting, climbing and exploration of areas surrounding the Hollyford Track.

Anglers should hold a current fishing licence. Please ensure that your fishing gear is free of didymo and clean it between river catchments.

Hunting permits are required and can be obtained online at www.doc.govt.nz



CHECK, CLEAN, DRY

Stop the spread of didymo and other freshwater pests. Remember to Check, Clean, Dry all items before entering, and when moving between, waterways.



Fur seal

DOC



Lake McKerrow

Christine Officer

Safety

Your safety is your responsibility.

Plan properly for your trip and ensure your group has a capable, experienced leader. Fiordland's weather changes rapidly and it can become wet and cold suddenly and at any time of the year. Before departing, please check out current track and weather conditions at the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre in Te Anau.

It is strongly recommended that you carry a Personal Locator Beacon and/or Mountain Radio.

Topographical maps covering the Hollyford Track are recommended for navigation. Topo50 Maps CB09 - Hollyford Track, CA09 - Alabaster Pass and CA08 - Milford Sound/Piopiotahi are available for purchase from the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre in Te Anau.

Further information

For more information about the Hollyford Track please contact:

Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre
Department of Conservation
PO Box 29, Te Anau, New Zealand.
Tel (03) 249 7924, Fax (03) 249 0257
Email: fiordlandvc@doc.govt.nz

www.doc.govt.nz

Cover - Martins Bay (Christine Officer)

Published by
Department of Conservation
Southland Conservancy
PO Box 743
Invercargill, New Zealand
March 2011

New Zealand Government

Hollyford Track



A guide to walking the Hollyford Track -
Fiordland National Park



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Introduction

The Hollyford Track is the only major low altitude track in Fiordland National Park that can be walked all year round – it also connects to the Fiordland coastline. This 56-km, four-day (one-way) tramping track starts at the Lower Hollyford Road and leads to the old port of Martins Bay. Situated among the sheer rock walls of the Darren Mountains, the track follows the Hollyford River/Whakatipu Ka Tuka on its journey to the sea.

Features are the two lakes; Lake Alabaster/Wāwāhi Waka and Lake McKerrow/Whakatipu Waitai. The site of the now abandoned Jamestown, which was established in the 1870s, can be found on the shore of Lake McKerrow.

Human history

Martins Bay, known to Ngāi Tahu as Kotuku, was an important Māori settlement between 1650 and 1800, allowing easy access to food resources in the nearby lakes, sea and forests—as well as pounamu (New Zealand jade), used to make tools, ornaments and weapons. Large trees on the river banks were felled to make canoes, and ancient Māori middens (ovens) have been found on the sea side of the estuary.

One of the many three-wire swing bridges on the Hollyford Track.



Christine Officer

The first explorers to view the Hollyford Valley were David McKellar and George Gunn in 1861, after traversing the Greenstone Valley to Key Summit, where they looked down on the long valley far below. Patrick Caples followed in 1863 who, while prospecting for gold at the head of Lake Wakatipu, continued up the Routeburn Valley, crossing over the Harris Saddle to the Hollyford Valley. He followed the valley all the way to the sea at Martins Bay, becoming the first European to do so.

Dr James Hector, the first provincial geologist of Otago, visited that same year and travelled from Martins Bay up the Hollyford Valley, crossing to the Greenstone Valley, Mavora Lakes and then on to Queenstown. He reported favourably on timber and indications of gold, iron, copper and zinc in the area. He also suggested that a road could be built to provide better access. For financial reasons the road never came to fruition and it continues to be a controversial issue today.

Jamestown was surveyed in 1870, with the hope of enticing pioneers to the West Coast of Otago. Several families initially settled but, by and large the settlement was doomed due to its isolation and only a few settlers stayed on in the area. Today, the Jamestown site is marked by ancient rose bushes and apple trees planted by the early pioneers.

Among the early farmers of the region were Hugh and Malcolm McKenzie, who raised cattle at Martins Bay and drove them to saleyards at Mossburn, over 250 km away. In 1926, the McKenzie brothers sold out to David Gunn. He continued running cattle and also started guiding tourists from the Hollyford camp, further up the valley, (known today as Gunns Camp on the Lower Hollyford Road). After David's death in 1955, his son Murray continued to manage Gunns Camp until 2005. The camp is now managed by the Hollyford Museum Charitable Trust.



Fiordland-crested penguins/tawaki. DOC

Natural history

The U-shaped Hollyford Valley was carved by a huge glacier about 20,000 years ago. It left behind the Donne Glacier on the eastern face of Mt Tutoko. Lake McKerrow/Whakatipu Waitai was originally a fiord, which was cut off from the sea by sedimentary deposits at Martins Bay.

The lowland forests, rivers, lakes, estuary and coast of the valley provide habitats for birds and other animals. The majority of the forest is silver beech, mixed with kamahi, kahikatea, matai and rimu. The forested areas have a rich understorey of coprosma, wineberry, fuchsia and pepperwood, with abundant ferns, mosses and lichens.

Small birds such as tomtit, robin, brown creeper, bellbird, grey warbler, fantail, rifleman and silver eye are still common in many areas, despite the presence of introduced predators. Kākā – large forest parrots, frequent the valley and often call at dusk. Fiordland-crested penguins/tawaki and seals can also be found around the Martins Bay coastline.

Each spring, the juveniles of the native fish from the galaxid family begin their annual migration up the Hollyford River. Commonly known as whitebait, they were an important traditional Māori food and today are still a sought-after recreation fishery.

Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area



South West New Zealand is one of the great wilderness areas of the Southern Hemisphere. Known to Māori as Te Wāhipounamu (the place of greenstone), the South West New Zealand World Heritage Area incorporates Aoraki/Mt. Cook, Westland /Tai Poutini, Fiordland and Mount Aspiring National Parks, covering 2.6 million hectares.

World Heritage is a global concept that identifies natural and cultural sites of world significance, places so special that protecting them is of concern for all people.

Some of the best examples of animals and plants, once found on the ancient supercontinent Gondwana, live in the World Heritage Area.

Hollyford Track access

The Hollyford Track starts at the end of Lower Hollyford Road, off SH 94 – Milford Road. Allow two hours to drive from Te Anau. A number of companies offer an on-demand service from Te Anau to the Lower Hollyford Road end or Gunns Camp.

Hollyford Track Guided Walks (HTGW) operates a jetboat service on Lake McKerrow in the summer months. Flight and bus transport packages are also available. For more information contact the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre, ph 03 249 7924.

Huts

The Department of Conservation provides and maintains huts on the Hollyford Track. Each hut has heating, mattresses and a pit toilet.

Fees are charged per person per night. All huts require three Backcountry Hut Tickets per night, apart from McKerrow Island Hut (one Backcountry Hut Ticket per night). Alternatively, a Backcountry Pass (valid for 6 or 12 months) may be also used. Tickets should be purchased in advance from a DOC office.

Camping is permitted next to the huts and requires one Backcountry Hut Ticket per person per night.

Portable stoves for cooking must be carried as there are no cooking facilities supplied in any of the huts. Users are expected to leave the huts clean and tidy.

Hut	Bunks	Heating	Water	Toilet	Fees
Hidden Falls Hut	12	Yes	Tank, from roof	Yes	Serviced
Alabaster Hut	26	Yes	Piped from stream	Yes	Serviced
McKerrow Island Hut	12	Yes	Tank, from roof	Yes	Standard
Demon Trail Hut	12	Yes	Tank, from roof	Yes	Serviced
Hokuri Hut	12	Yes	Tank, from roof	Yes	Serviced
Martins Bay Hut	24	Yes	Tank, from roof	Yes	Serviced

Other accommodation

Cabins, tent and campervan sites are available at Gunns Camp, Lower Hollyford Valley Road. There is no telephone so please email gunnscamp@ruralinzone.net

Track guide

The Hollyford Track is a multi-day tramping track (four - eight days), suitable for people with good fitness. Some sections of the track are rough and muddy and not well defined – orange markers will guide the way. There may be unbridged stream and river crossings.

Lower Hollyford Road to Hidden Falls Hut

9 km, 2–3 hr

Cross the swing bridge over Humboldt Creek and follow the old road to the start of the track, which initially sidles along bluffs, with swampland to the left. Sections of raised boardwalk cross areas prone to flooding. Where Swamp Creek joins the Hollyford River/Whakatipu Ka Tuka, the track follows the river bank, with occasional views of the Darren Mountains. At Hidden Falls Creek the track passes Sunshine Hut, managed by Hollyford Track Guided Walks (HTGW), then continues upstream to a swing bridge. Hidden Falls Hut (12 bunks) is about 15 minutes on from here.



Demon Trail hut

Hidden Falls Hut to Lake Alabaster Hut

10.5 km, 3–4 hr

The track passes through a section of lowland ribbonwood/podocarp forest draped with colourful mosses and ferns. It then enters tall beech forest before the climb to Little Homer Saddle, with views of Mt Madeline and Fiordland's highest mountain, Mt Tutoko (2723 m). The track descends to Little Homer Falls (60 m) and continues to the Hollyford/Pyke Rivers confluence. Beyond this is Pyke River Lodge (HTGW) and 15 minutes further on is Lake Alabaster Hut.

Lake Alabaster Hut to McKerrow Island Hut

10.5 km, 3–4 hr

This section of the track is maintained to a much lower standard than the Lower Hollyford Road end to Lake Alabaster section.

Use the orange markers on the trees to guide you. It can be muddy, rocky and wet underfoot. Tree falls may obscure the track. Be aware that after heavy rain the river can flood and you may be stranded in the hut until river levels are lower and it is safe to cross.

Back track from the hut for 15 minutes and cross the Pyke River swing bridge. After two hours of relatively level track, the track meets the Hollyford River/Whakatipu Ka Tuka again. Some long sections of mud will be encountered. A further hour's walk leads to McKerrow Island. For access to the hut, cross the flood channel above its entry to Lake McKerrow/Whakatipu Waitia.

Demon Trail

McKerrow Island Hut to Demon Trail Hut

4.2 km, 1.5 hr

Demon Trail Hut to Hokuri Hut

9.6 km, 5–6 hr

Demon Trail is a historical cattle track. This section is both rocky and undulating but there are long sections of formed, flat track inbetween. It can be difficult underfoot in wet weather, with the track becoming slippery and with loose rocks. Some of the creek crossings can be



Christine Officer

The Demon Trail is rocky and undulating – care is required.

dangerous, so extreme care is required – using the three-wire bridges is recommended. After heavy rain some creeks may be impassable.

Hokuri Hut to Martins Bay Hut

13 km, 4–5 hr

Thirty minutes walk from Hokuri Hut is Hokuri Creek. In low river conditions cross near the creek mouth, otherwise use the three-wire crossing 20 minutes upstream. Follow the lake shore past the bay where the settlement of Jamestown once stood.

After a further 1.5–2 hour's walk, the track leaves the lake and continues for another hour to the Hollyford Airstrip and Martins Bay Lodge, managed by HTGW.

Martins Bay Hut, situated at the mouth of the Hollyford River/Whakatipu Ka Tuka, is a further 1.5–2 hours from Martins Bay Lodge. Take care when crossing Jerusalem Creek as it is prone to flooding after rain. There is also another airstrip and private batches in this area.

The track continues on to Long Reef through wind-shorn forest and provides views of the river mouth and sand spit. From July to November, seals and Fiordland crested penguins/tawaki can be seen around the coast close by.

Beyond Long Reef, the track becomes the Pyke – Big Bay Route. This route is not as well defined and suitable only for well-equipped and experienced walkers. More information can be found in the *Pyke – Big Bay Route* brochure available from the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre or the DOC website – www.doc.govt.nz

Hollyford Track Elevation Profile



