

Onoke Spit/Ocean Beach



Facilities



Parking



Surfing



Camping
(Corner Creek)



Walking tracks



Fishing



Swimming



Boating



Mountain biking



Bird watching



Highlight

Onoke Spit is a bird watchers paradise. The 3km long spit blocks the sea out of the otherwise tidal Lake Onoke. Sometimes dolphins and seals are visible from shore.

Description, values & significance

Onoke Spit is a sandbar between the sea and the foot of Lake Onoke, where the Ruamahanga River enters Palliser Bay. It is a popular recreational area for off road drivers, motor bikers and recreational fishers, as well as walkers, botanists and bird watchers. There are also remains of the US ship Addenda that ran aground there in 1904. The wreck is legally protected by virtue of its position within a protected area.

Accessibility/How to get there/particular time of year to visit

Access to Onoke Spit

Follow Western Lake Road to the end (sealed), then turn left into Beach Road (3 km of gravel) to a small parking area. Access to Onoke Spit is by crossing the stream, following a track to the beach and heading east along main tracks. The level of the stream varies throughout the year, depending on rainfall and the levels of Lake Onoke (affected by whether the mouth to the sea is open or closed and tides).

Note – access is by walking or 4-wheel drive only.

Access to Corner Creek, Ocean Beach

Access is by following Western Lake Rd, then Wharekauhua Rd (mostly gravel) then Western Bay Road (all gravel). It is about 7km from the start of Wharekauhua Rd to Corner Creek camping ground. Note that there are several stream crossings and access by four-wheel drive is recommended. In summer the road is graded and the stream crossings may be more accessible to the average car or campervan.

Time of year to visit

Note that the Caspian terns and black-backed gulls are nesting during spring and summer so it is recommended to keep some distance if walking past to avoid disturbing them.

Threatened species/species of interest

The Spit forms an uncommon, nationally valuable, coastal ecosystem of exposed sand and gravel beach. It hosts a number of rare and threatened native species including the black-fronted tern, nesting caspian terns and banded dotterel, the rare katipo spider, threatened Notoreas moth, two species of lizard, sand tussock, pinatoro (sand daphne), and pingao (golden sedge). The dune ecosystem is fragile so it is best to keep to the lakeshore or seashore.

Key threats

A major problem is off-road vehicles causing damage to many Raoulia mats and Pimelea plants and disturbing nesting birds. The usual suspect pest animals (feral cats, mustelids, rabbits and uncontrolled dogs) and pest plants (marram grass, gorse, horned poppy, lupin, haretail, allseed) continue to threaten the sustainability of the environment.

Walks

Walk along the beach beside Lake Onoke to the river mouth opposite Lake Ferry = Easy.
Mukamuka track to Mt Matthews = Challenging day or Multi-day tramping (4 hours one way)

Manager

Department of Conservation

Protection status

Beach Reserve

Community Involvement

Friends of Onoke Spit, local landowners, schools and local businesses are working to restore Onoke Spit

How to get there

