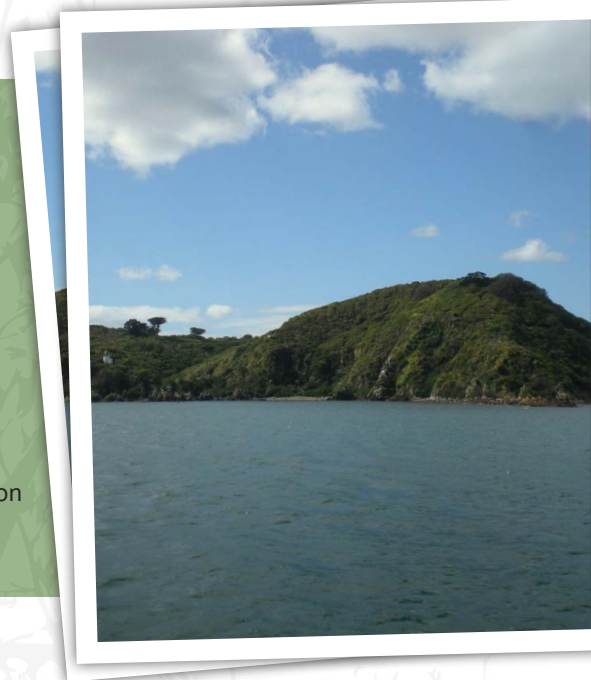


# Matiu Somes Island



## Facilities

 Ferry	 Walking tracks	 Picnic table
 Toilets	 Swimming	 Water fountain
 Information	 Boating	 Cooker
 Wheelchair accessible	 Kayaking	 Camping
 Pram accessible	 Lookout	 Hut accommodation
Cost: Return ferry	 Bird watching	



## Highlight

Enjoy the short ferry trip and see Wellington from a different view point. Spot Tuatara and flocks of Kakariki in one of Wellington's ecological treasures and restoration success stories. From the top of the island you can experience spectacular 360 degree views of Wellington Harbour and the surrounding area.

## Description, values & significance

Now predator free, Matiu/Somes Island is a sanctuary for native plants, birds and animals. Steeped in history, the island was a Māori Pa site and then a lighthouse station, and in the late 19th and early 20th centuries it became a human (the graves are still there) and animal quarantine station then a Prisoner of War Camp and gun emplacement. Matiu and Mākaro (Ward Island) are said to be named after the fabled explorer Kupe's daughters.

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

You can access Matiu/Somes Island all year. The most common way to get to Matiu/Somes Island is by the Wellington Harbour Ferry. You will easily spot the ferry at Queen's Wharf thanks to its big advertising sign of the Dominion Post. The ferry stops several times a day at the island on the way to Days Bay, where you can also catch the ferry to Matiu/Somes Island.

The island is also accessible to recreational boats, be it motor boats or kayaks. If you plan to visit this way, please make sure your boats and bags are pest and rodent free. You are allowed to pull dinghies and kayaks ashore near the two wharves.

The Visitor Centre on Matiu/Somes Island is open from 8.30am to 5pm daily. There is also a Field Centre nearby, as staff of the Department of Conservation monitor flora and fauna closely.

## Threatened species/species of interest

Reintroductions began in 1996 and continue to this day. Species that have been reintroduced to Matiu/Somes include Cook Strait giant weta (*Deinacrida rugosa*), Wellington tree weta (*Hemideina crassidens*), Brothers Island tuatara, spotted skinks, kakariki (red-crowned parakeet), north island robins, Wellington green geckos, forest geckos and ornate skinks. Matiu/Somes is an important part of major conservation and breeding programmes by DoC and Forest & Bird and is an important promotional tool for conservation in Wellington.

## Key threats

There was little human impact until the 19th Century. Māori population pressure, European settlement, the introduction of exotic flora and fauna such as rabbits, cats, rats, pine and macrocarpa, clearance for farming and quarantine, and the removal of the top 17 metres of the island to level it in the 1940's all took their toll.

## Walks (length)

The circuit of the island might take you about 45 minutes, as the circuit track is between 1.6 to 2km long. From the wharf to the visitor centre is about 10 minutes, and from the visitor centre to the gun emplacements another 10 minutes.

## Walks (grade)

The track around the island is easy, with a small uphill climb from the sea to the top of the island. .

## Manager

Department of Conservation

## Protection status

Scientific and Historic Reserve

## Community Involvement

Forest and Bird work to restore the island to its native ecology.

## How to get there

