

Parangarahu Lakes [Pencarrow]



Facilities



BUS (Bus to Korohiwa, southern end of Muritai Road)



Parking (At southern end of Muritai Road)



Toilets (Korohiwa, south end of Muritai Road)



Pram accessible (Mountain buggy)



Dog walking (On leash from Burdans Gate. No dogs south of sea level Pencarrow Lighthouse, in the lakes area or Baring Head)



Walking tracks



Mountain biking



Swimming (Sea)



Fishing (Sea)



Scuba diving (Sea - requires carrying gear)



Lookout



Bird watching



Highlight

Parangarahu Lakes provides sweeping views and diverse geological features and is one of the most biologically diverse wetlands in Wellington. The abundant birdlife, thriving wetlands, and windswept coast will blow you away.

Description, values & significance

Parangarahu Lakes is the location of two nationally significant freshwater lakes (Kohangapiripiri and Kohangatera) and associated wetlands. These lakes are very special and are the best lowland lakes in the Wellington Region because they are relatively weed free. The lakes have not been open to the sea for 5000-7000 years but are still under the influence of the sea. Salinity levels in the lakes can vary and each lake hosts a different floral community.

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

Public access is from the Burdan's Gate carpark, via Pencarrow Coast Road. Follow the coastal gravel road for about 2 hours (walking) to reach the walking track up to the historic lighthouse. Lake Kohangatera lookout is a further 1.5 hours from this point. This can also be accessed by mountain bike.

Threatened species/species of interest

These pristine sea level lakes and associated salt marsh vegetation provide a special habitat for some regionally threatened oceanic, dune and wetland birds. Blue penguin, banded dotterel, white fronted terns, oystercatchers, bittern, NZ dabchick, grey duck and spotless crane all live here along with one of only four breeding colonies of black shag in the region around seven species of fresh water fish, seven species of lizard and a moth only found in three other places regionally.

Key threats

The lakes are particularly susceptible to the impacts of invasive weeds and there are very few examples of dense, tall-growing, macrophytic native lake communities, like this one, left in New Zealand. Historical habitat clearing, the construction of the road and introduced pests, particularly goat and mustelids, have all altered the flora and fauna of the area.

Walks (length)

It takes about 2 hours to walk from Burdan's Gate to the base of the Lighthouse Track. From here there are various walks you can do from 15 minutes (to the Old Pencarrow Lighthouse) to 1 hour 30 minutes (to the Lake Kohangatera Lookout). The park has moderately steep hills and is exposed in places. There is no shelter in the Parangarahu Lakes Area.

Walks (grade)

Easy to moderate walking - easy cycling but a strong northerly makes the return trip challenging.

How to get there



Manager

Greater Wellington Regional Council

Protection status

Recreation Reserve
(Lakes are Scientific Reserve)

Community Involvement

Mainland Island Restoration Operation (MIRO)