

Makara Coast and Estuary



Facilities

Parking	Swimming	Four wheel driving
Toilets	Scuba diving	Bird watching
Pram accessible (in parts)	Fishing	Cafe
Dog walking (on leash*)	Boating	
Walking tracks	Kayaking	

*On leash around estuary and off leash on beach. No dogs are allowed on the private farmland section of the walk during lambing season August - November.



Highlight

Follow the winding road, past the forest of wind turbines on an adventure to the sea. Walk the foreshore or explore one of the many tracks on the beautiful Makara coast.

Description, values & significance

Wild, windswept Makara on Wellington's rugged west coast is an iconic site for people around the region. This estuary at the mouth of Makara Stream is one of the few remaining salt marsh areas in the region and provides important habitat for a range of native birds, fish and plant species that live in and visit the estuary. Take the Makara walkway to the historic gun emplacements along the top of the coastal escarpment (steep hillside).

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

Makara Coast is located 25km from central Wellington, and is accessible by car or bike via Karori.

Threatened species/species of interest

The estuary hosts a range of shore birds including a large shag colony, the occasional royal spoonbill, white heron and the nationally vulnerable reef heron. The foreshore reserve contains some unique coastal plant community from specialised salt marsh vegetation to coastal scrub. The estuary is an important feeding and spawning ground, and nursery for fish such as mullet. An active care group is working to revegetate this important habitat, restoring some of its ecological functions.

Key threats

Key threats to the estuary are pollution from upstream, particularly sedimentation and runoff from the extensively modified (farmed and developed) surrounding land. Estuaries like Makara are the foundation of marine food chains supporting fisheries and their predators. Goats, rats and stoats reduce the value of the site for both aquatic and terrestrial life.

Walks (length)

There is a short walk along one side of the estuary which is easy. There is also a walk which starts at Makara Beach, takes you along the coast and then on a steep climb to the cliff top. On the ridgeline above the coast, panoramic views are obtained of Cook Strait and the Marlborough Sounds.

The walk passes near an old Maori pa site and remains of World War II gun emplacements. Down the hill, via the road, you meet the coast at Opua Bay which is a good spot for a picnic. Scramble back along the water's edge. Footwear with ankle support is helpful here. Distance: 8km. Allow 2.5 to three hours.

Walks (grade)

The short walk is easy while the longer walk is more moderate level.

How to get there

Manager

Wellington City Council

Protection status

A mix of Recreation Reserve, Scenic Reserve and Esplanade Reserve with private land on the far side of the estuary.

Community Involvement

The Makaracarpas

