



Butterfly Creek picnic area

East Harbour Regional Park is a contrast of native forest, waterways, beaches and headlands. To the north, the hills between Eastbourne and Wainuiomata are clothed in some of the best lowland beech/rata forest in the Wellington area. In contrast, the damp valley floors contain lush forest, including rimu, kahikatea, pukatea and nikau palms. The many northern rata trees and a wide range of native orchids are all features of the Northern Forest. You may see the North Island robin, a species which the Mainland Island Restoration Organisation (MIRRO) has released back into the forest. Other more common bush birds, such as tui, kereru and piwakawaka (fantail), are plentiful. Numerous entrances, many of which are close to bus stops, allow for easy access. The popular Butterfly Creek picnic area is a focus for many visitors.

## Tranquil forest, wind-swept headlands, mountains and sea

In the south lie Baring Head and the Parangarahu Lakes Area. There are sweeping views from marine terraces and coastal ridges. The hillsides of the Parangarahu Lakes Area are slowly regenerating, with manuka and kanuka overtaking the gorse. The raised gravel beach supports several threatened plant species, such as leafless muhlenbeckia and sea holly. Variable oystercatcher and banded dotterel also breed and live on the coast. The ecologically important Lake Kohangapiriri and Lake Kohangatera were once tidal inlets but over time wave action and earthquakes have raised the foreshore and created barriers to the sea. Draining slowly through the gravel, the lakes now support a rich succession of wetland vegetation, including oioi (jointed wire rush) and glasswort closer to the sea, with raupo, toetoe, flax and giant umbrella sedge further inland. The lakes and surrounding habitat also shelter breeding colonies of nationally threatened species, such as the black shag, Australasian bittern, New Zealand dabchick, spotless crane and grey duck.



Lake Kohangatera

**Public transport**  
**Northern forest and Parangarahu Lakes Area:**  
Get the Route 81, 83 or 85 bus service to the eastern bays, Eastbourne village and the terminus just north of Burduns Gate.  
Get the Route 170 bus service to Main Road, Wainuiomata. The harbour ferry runs daily between Queens Wharf and Days Bay.



Walking at Baring Head

Outstanding landscapes and a rich array of native plants and animals are found at Baring Head. The landforms record part of our geological history, with the escarpments and terraces showing the effects of earthquakes over time. The contrast of bone-dry and wetland areas has meant that plants ranging from hardy shrubs to lush wetland plants can all flourish here. Native birds, such as the banded dotterel and variable oystercatcher, plus skinks and geckos and a range of invertebrates (eg, wetas, spiders and moths), are all found in the coastal and inland areas of the block. The Friends of Baring Head are very active in this area, organising restoration activities and improving facilities.

**Parangarahu Lakes Area**  
**Burduns Gate:** Via Pencarrow Coast Road, end of Muritai Road, Eastbourne\*  
**Baring Head**  
**Coast Road:** 20 minutes south of Wainuiomata  
\*Close to bus stops or the harbour ferry terminal

## How to get there



Pencarrow Head, 1848, showing the Pencarrow Beacon. Drawn by SC Brees and engraved by Henry Melville

## History

The land now part of East Harbour Regional Park has long been a place of Māori occupation, with Parangarahu Pa on Orua-Pouanui (Baring Head) established in the northwestern part of the block many centuries ago. Evidence remains throughout the coastal area of more recent village sites, terraced areas for cultivation, pits, ovens, shell middens and burials. Several groves of karaka trees lie near the lakes and a few of these trees feature dendroglyphs or bark carvings.

By the time the New Zealand Company arrived in Wellington 1839, a broad grouping of Te Atiawa based at Pito-one (Petone) used the Parangarahu village near Orua-Pouanui to fish and collect berries; by the mid-1840s they were growing wheat. By the 1850s, land around Parangarahu was let to Europeans for sheep and cattle runs.

Pencarrow Head itself featured almost immediately in New Zealand Company plans to protect shipping and as early as 1842 a white beacon was erected there. The shipwrecks continued and eventually New Zealand's first permanent lighthouse opened on 1 January 1859. The keeper of the new lighthouse was Mary Jane Bennett, New Zealand's first woman lighthouse keeper, who held the position for six years.

In 1906, a light was also built on the shoreline at Pencarrow and another lighthouse built at Baring Head in 1935. Despite all these precautions, the eastern harbour coast remains dangerous to shipping, especially in fog and rain. Up to 21 wrecks have been recorded on the Pencarrow coast, the most recent being in 1981.

Remnants of a fortress observation post built in the 1930s as part of a move to upgrade Wellington's coastal defences lie

close to the Para trig and directly inland from the Baring Head lighthouse. Initially including an observation post and small barracks, the facility was upgraded in 1940 to include a larger barracks and an engine room. Water was pumped from the Wainuiomata River to a concrete tank on the hill, and piped to both these structures.

Baring Head's unique site overlooking the unpopulated southern ocean means that air arrives relatively free of pollutants. Government agencies have measured air quality here since 1974, and data from the site has contributed to global information on the human impact on the earth's atmosphere.

Inside the harbour and back from the shoreline, the northern forest has long been a place for recreation for Wellingtonians. From the 1890s, Days Bay became the main centre for picnics and walking. The Butterfly Creek picnic area gained popularity during the 1930s when unemployed workmen cut access tracks from Kowhai Street and Muritai Park during the Depression.

The long history of Mana Whenua ownership of the Parangarahu Lakes Area is recognised in the co-management arrangement. The Treaty of Waitangi settlement for Taranaki Whānui Ki Te Upoko O te Ika in September 2009 transferred title to the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust for the lake beds, their immediate surrounds and dendroglyph sites.

In 2010, the 284 hectare Baring Head property adjoining the lighthouse reserve was added to the northern forest and Parangarahu Lakes Area to form the three distinct areas that make up East Harbour Regional Park.

## Please take care of your park

- Take your rubbish home and recycle it where possible
- Do not remove, disturb or damage native plants, animals or rocks
- Light no fires. Portable gas stoves are permitted
- No quad or trail bikes



# East Harbour Regional Park



East Harbour  
REGIONAL PARK

[www.gw.govt.nz/parks](http://www.gw.govt.nz/parks)

Greater  
Wellington  
Te Pane Matua Taiao

For more information, contact the Wellington Regional Council's Parks department

**Park Ranger**  
04 830 4444  
027 467 3076  
[eastharbour.ranger@gw.govt.nz](mailto:eastharbour.ranger@gw.govt.nz)

**Upper Hutt office**  
1056 Fergusson Drive  
PO Box 40847  
Upper Hutt 5140  
04 526 4133  
[parks@gw.govt.nz](mailto:parks@gw.govt.nz)

**Metlink**  
(for public transport timetables and fares)  
0800 801 700  
[www.metlink.org.nz](http://www.metlink.org.nz)

**Walking or cycling to the park?**  
Check out  
[www.journeyplanner.org.nz](http://www.journeyplanner.org.nz)  
for the most direct route

Follow the Wellington  
Regional Council



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GW/NC-G-1/1/125





## Walking

**Kowhai Street – Butterfly Creek picnic area**  
(2 hours return)

**Muritai Park – Butterfly Creek picnic area**  
(3 hours return)

**Kāneāea – Butterfly Creek picnic area**  
(3 hours return)

**Bus Barn – Butterfly Creek picnic area**  
(2.3 hours return)

**MacKenzie Road – Butterfly Creek picnic area**  
(3.5 hours return)

## Hawtrey Route between the McKenzie and Kereru Tracks

The Hawtrey Route is unformed and marked with orange discs.  
Allow plenty of time to finish in daylight.

**Ferry Road – Wainuiomata Hill Road**  
(2.5 hours one-way)

**Lees Grove – Lowry trig lookout**  
(1.5 hours return)

The well-formed and sheltered Lees Grove track climbs through native bush and is the most popular of the five tracks leading into the park from Wainuiomata.

**Fern Gully – Lowry trig lookout**  
(2 hours return)

### Walking/mountain biking

**Wainuiomata Hill Road – Lowry trig lookout**  
(2 hours return)

**Rata Ridge – Lowry trig lookout**  
(2.5 hours return)

Most mountain bikers start at Wainuiomata Hill Road and ride up Lowry trig before descending to the Zigzag or Rata Ridge entrances.

## Walking/mountain biking

**Burdans Gate – Pencarrow Lighthouse**  
(4 hours return)

**Lake Kohangapiripiri loop**  
(2 hours)

## Fishing/diving

Surfcasting and diving are popular on the Pencarrow Coast but watch for changes in the weather as the area is very exposed.

## Mountain biking

The tracks and grassy terraces at Baring Head provide challenging terrain and generally rough surfaces, but the views are great.

## Horseriding

Horseriding in Baring Head is by permit only. Keep to the designated tracks.

## Swimming

There is good access to swimming holes in the Wainuiomata River.

## Fishing/diving






The Wainuiomata River is a well-known brown trout fishery. You must have a fishing licence. Diving along the Fitzroy Bay area is a popular activity for those prepared to hike in.

## KEY

























## Natural features

- Mixed forest
- Broadleaf forest & regrowth
- Scrub
- Wetlands
- Grassland

## Tracks

-  Walking track
-  Walking/tramping/mountain biking
-  Tramping track
-  Route
-  Gravel road

## Other features

	Entrance
	High point (height in metres)
	Lighthouse
	Building
	World War II lookout
	Bridge or boardwalk
	Locked gate
	Bus stop
	Parking
	Toilets
	Mapboard
	Swimming
	Picnic
	Fishing
	Walking
	Tramping
	Route
	Mountain biking easy
	Mountain biking intermediate
	Mountain biking advanced
	Horseriding
	Rock climbing
	Wildlife
	Viewing point

## Stay safe

The weather can be changeable and extreme on the southern coast, so please:

- Check the weather forecast before your trip
- Carry warm and waterproof clothing, and enough food and drink
- Don't forget to take sun protection.
- Plan your route and tell someone your intentions
- Watch for vehicles on Pencarrow Coast Road and in Baring Head

### Note

- Many parts of the park do not have cell phone coverage
- Avoid streams during heavy rain
- NZTopo50 BQ32 map offers more detail of the area

## Northern Forest

