

Scott Creek to Caples Valley, Greenstone and Caples Conservation Area

WILD FILE

Access Signposted beside Scott Creek Bridge on Routeburn Road

Grade Moderate

Time Car park to Scott Creek forks, 3-4hr; Forks to head of Death Valley, 5-6hr; Death Valley to Caples Hut 8.5hr; Caples Hut to Greenstone Track car park, 3hr

Distance 32km

Total ascent 1994m

Accommodation: camping at Scott Creek forks and Death Valley Tarn, Kay Creek Hut (4 bunks), Mid Caples Hut (24 bunks)

Map CB09, CB10

DESCRIPTION

To test your navigation skills beyond marked tracks and routes, head out on the Scott Creek to Kay Creek crossing between the Routeburn and Caples valleys.

Even though the Scott Creek Track is described by DOC as a possible day walk, you might have to weave your way through dense bracken at the start, keeping an eye out for markers hidden in the growth. Negotiate patches of windfall further upstream, with the biggest detour adding about 30 minutes. Camp can be made at the delightful Scott Creek forks, fringed by mountains and forest.

Climb steadily beside an ever-diminishing Scott Creek to the pass linking with Kay Creek. The odd cairn marks the way, with an abundant variety of flora and changing colour of the rocks underfoot – greens, reds and purples. Rest stops reveal impressive views of Mt Earnslaw to the north, and the Ailsa and Darran mountains to the south.

Instead of aiming straight for Kay Creek, veer north-west to an unnamed pass between Pt1960 and Pt1710. This leads to Death Valley.

The entrance to the valley drops steeply away and a magical lake with a vertical moss-covered rock garden slowly dripping into it lies beneath the pass.

With no more cairns for guidance, pick a solid route over the pass to the tarn.

Keep your eyes on the map to stay on a safe decent, which with any luck will lead to a perfect campsite beside a the tarn.

Carry on down the open sweep of Death Valley; cairns begin to appear just before the bushline, above the rather decrepit Kay Creek Hut.

From there it is back to a well-marked track down the forested Kay Creek, crossing the creek a few times, then on to the comparative highway of the Caples Track.

Elevation Profile



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Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, *Wilderness* does not accept responsibility for any errors. Users should plan their routes and gather as much information as possible before departing. The GPX file associated with this route has been drawn using Memory-Map software, version 6. Use discretion when following the route, especially when no track is marked on the map. The GPX file in these cases are a 'best guess' of the route only. Users should use a combination of GPS, visual observations, maps and compass to find the best possible route. Memory Map shows purple tracks and hut icons as verified routes and huts. Red or blue routes are those drawn by Wilderness.

Scott Creek to Caples Valley, Greenstone and Caples Conservation Area, map 1



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Scott Creek to Caples Valley, Greenstone and Caples Conservation Area, map 2

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