

Cape Brett Hut, Northland

WILD FILE

Access Drive to the Rawhiti Road end; the track begins at Oke Bay

Grade Moderate-difficult

Time 6-8hr

Distance 16.3km

Total ascent 1213m

Accommodation Cape Brett Hut (\$15, 23 bunks)

Map AV30

Further information Kaingahoa Marae is located at 243 Rawhiti Road; call Margaret (027 348 6792) to book a spot in the old school house or campground. The Bay of Islands Water Taxi (0800 387 892) offers one-way or round-trip options from Rawhiti to Cape Brett Hut and Deep Water Cove.

DESCRIPTION

With its dramatic vistas, wind-swept cliffs, and rugged tracks, Cape Brett Peninsula is an escapist's dream-tramp. Or, for a group of nine-to-fivers from Auckland, it's the perfect getaway for the weekend warrior. The launching point for this Northland track is Te Rawhiti, just 30km from Russell. Many do the tramp in one of two ways; either walk in and get a water taxi back, or the opposite – which is more popular – taxi in and walk back with lighter packs. We opted for the former. The hardest of trampers will walk both ways, a notion that few in our group felt was necessary.

The cape is steeped in history. In 1908, a lighthouse and three homes were built at the end of the cape, where a succession of lighthouse keepers' families had isolated but fascinating lives. In addition to manning the lighthouse, their daily duties included sending weather reports to the Meteorological Office. The settlement was staffed for 70 years until, in 1978, an automated light was installed. More than 100 keepers looked after the station before it was decommissioned. DOC took over the management of the lighthouse in 2005.

The peninsula is now co-managed by the Te Rawhiti 3B2 Trust, DOC, and Cape Brett Walkways. The track from Te Rawhiti to Deep Water Cove is leased from the trust by Cape Brett Walkways and there is a \$30 fee (\$15 for children) to walk it to Deep Water Cove. In addition to kilometre markers, there are several small shelters along the route, including a fully enclosed lunch spot around the 8km mark.

DOC manages the final section of track, from Deep Water Cove to the hut. There are ongoing predator control programmes on the peninsula; an electric fence helps keep the outer reaches of the peninsula virtually pest-free.

Once the track enters the more rugged, cliff-laden section of the peninsula, sweeping views out to sea offer moments of solace from the demanding uphill climbs and slippery descents.

DOC deems this track 'advanced', and its elevation profile reveals why: while it's well-formed, there are few stretches of level ground. The scramble to the last summit is particularly steep, but the first views of the lighthouse provide just enough motivation to tumble down the final steps to the picturesque Cape Brett Hut.

The hut is nestled on a bed of grass just metres from the jagged cliffs of the cape's final reaches. A former lighthouse keeper's abode, the hut is full of character. Hardwood floors fill the interior and broad windows peer out to sea.

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.

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