

Scamper Torrent Hut, West Coast

Nestled in a beautiful basin on the lower slopes of the Smyth Range, Scamper Torrent is a four bunk Forest Service hut. Although infrequently visited, it can be reached in a (hard) day from the road end and has a wonderfully isolated feel.

Access up the Waitaha Valley is along the north bank and because there's no public easement over the private land, you must keep between the fenced farmland and the river. You'll often be walking along the fenceline, or in the riverbed, but for a decent distance there is an excellent farm track.

The Permolat group has marked a track over a low bush knoll, thick with kiekie and supplejack, which avoids bluffs where the river cuts in tight. At Macgregor Creek, the marked DOC route starts and travel is mainly in the riverbed before climbing through the forest on a rough track around Morgan Gorge.

A swingbridge at the upper entrance to Morgan Gorge provides a good viewpoint of the deeply incised gorge and the blue water flowing far below.

Kiwi Flat Hut is 20 minutes up river, but the trip to Scamper Torrent requires forging on up a steep ridge climb. The route starts a short way up Labyrinth Creek and is marked with a mixture of white permolat and cruise tape. There are some unrelenting steep sections, where it feels like you're climbing a ladder, but rata roots provide good foot and handholds. The travel eases at the bushline, and the roughly marked route down to the basin where the hut is heads to the left of the tarn on the ridge. It's a steep but short drop though the scrub; this time the trunks of the subalpine dracophyllum provide good handholds. On reaching the stream, the Scamper Torrent disappears into a gorge and the hut is a 10 minute walk upstream, perched on a terrace above the river.

It's an attractive basin with outstanding views and worth every effort to get there. Varied subalpine scrub, tussock grasslands, impressive bluffs at the valley head, and the Smyth Range rising high above provide an impressive setting.

Mt Durward is a perfect day trip from the hut if you have the time, experience and energy to climb another 1000m. It takes some route finding to weave your way in, out and around the many fissures and gorges that characterise this area. From its summit, there are expansive views of the Southern Alps and across the lowlands to the Tasman Sea. Ice axes and crampons may be needed well into the summer months for this 1929m peak.

Wild File

Access North bank, Waitaha Valley

Grade Hard, good route finding skills essential

Time Road end to Morgan Gorge Swing Bridge 4hr; Swingbridge to Scamper Torrent Hut 4hr

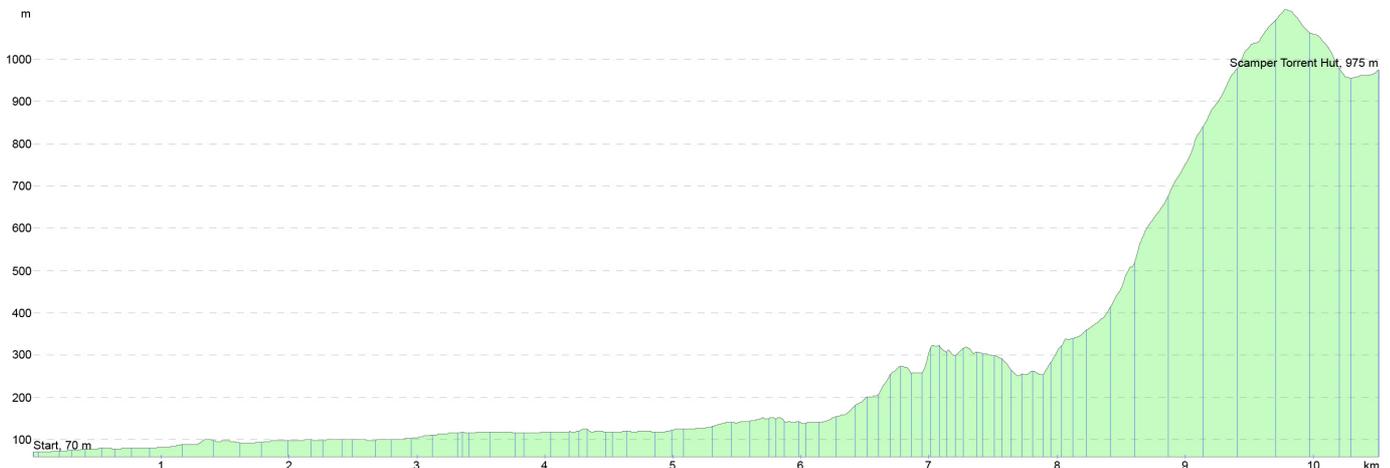
Distance 11.1km

Total ascent 1220m

Accommodation Scamper Torrent Hut (free, four bunks)

Map BW17

Elevation Profile



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