

## Kaweka J, Kaweka Forest Park

At nearly 1000m, the Makahu Saddle Road end is over halfway to the Kaweka tops – a welcome leg-up to anyone tackling the summit ridge. From here, it's a stone's throw to the Kaweka Flats track junction. Keep left – unless you want to call in at Makahu Saddle Hut (four bunks).

A few metres further, the track splits with routes up Makahu and Trials spurs. Both lead to Dominie Bivouac and the summits beyond. Trials Spur (unmarked on the map, but a sub-spur of Makahu), is the usual route while the northern (right branching) Makahu is perhaps more adventurous and fun. Heading up Makahu, requires careful effort up a scree slope before reaching zig-zags and clambering over a few exciting, but not intimidating, rock outcrops. It's less than 30-minutes from the scree to the junction with Trials Spur.

A poled route then leads to the two-bunk Dominie Bivouac (1480m), about 20-minutes away. This is the route's most strenuous section and includes fabulous views.

It's now less than an hour to the summit of Kaweka J. The route traces the ridge, skirting scree slopes and a tiny tarn before emerging at the track junction with North Kaweka, on flat, open tops. Keep left and follow the trail south to the summit of Kaweka J, walking past the sign to Dons Spur.

The summit – a mere knoll on an isolated plateau – offers views to motivate any would-be trumper. Tauhara lies to the north. To the west, the volcanoes of Tongariro National Park stand behind layers of ranges. To the south, the Ruahine Range extends the North Island's axial spine towards Cook Strait. To the east, a maze of canyons and crumpled ranges.

A memorial of gathered stones to 11 members of the Heretaunga Tramping Club who died in the First World War, stands atop Kaweka J.

Return as you came. Beyond Dominie, the route down Trials Spur adds interest to the round trip. Overall, this is an easier route than Makahu – but not plain sailing. There is no scree but rather a series of switchbacks to assist the descent.

There is no water except for the tank at Dominie and the tarn.

### Wild file

**Access** Drive to Makahu Saddle road end from Whittle Road

**Grade** Easy-moderate

**Time** 4-6hr return

**Distance** 7.43km return

**Total ascent** 781m

**Topo50 map** BJ37

### Elevation



