

## TUPAPAKURUA FALLS and RETARUKE

**260 Series Map:** Raurimu, S19

**Topo50 Map:** BH33 Retaruke & BH34 Raurimu

### How to get to START:

- Exit Taupo southwards on **SH1** to Turangi
- In Turangi take **SH41** towards Tokaanu and turn left to **SH47**
- Pass the turn off to Whakapapa in 1:10min
- Turn right on to **SH4** at National Park in 1:17min
- Turn Left off **SH4** into Carroll Street, proceed to near the end
- Turn left into Station Road
- Park at NATIONAL PARK station (**TF01** 814masl) in 1:20 – 1:30 min and 100km from Taupo – this offers fairly safe parking if required.

**Rough description.** This tramp offers alternatives:

- The Tupapakuria Falls and return to National Park in 4 – 5 hours
- Walk the length of Fisher Road down to Retaruke in about 4 – 5 hours
- Tupapakuria Falls then down the road to Retaruke in about 6 hours

**Alternative 1** is a moderate out-and-back tramp of 13km to view a wonderful waterfall. With this target the walk is best done when it is or has been raining but this means the track will be slippery and tricky after the halfway point to the end since only the first section of track has been upgraded. A few sections are a bit of a grunt with an overall altitude variation of 185 metres. Good footwear is required as several of the slopes on the latter part are steep and slippery when wet. The track is being refurbished by volunteers of the National Park Progressive Association supported by Department of Conservation (DOC) and about half of the track has been upgraded whilst the remainder presents some challenge to the hardened trampers though ladders are now being installed on the lower slopes.

**Alternative 2** is a much easier, if slightly longer, walk and is all on the paper road which starts as gravel near National Park as Fishers Road and becomes slippery and muddy in the middle sections and ends up as a superb “green” road on the approaches to Retaruke

**Alternative 3** is for the hardened trampers as it includes the descent and slightly grumpy re-ascent from the falls before continuing down the road to Retaruke. Distance wise this involves 18km plus about another 2km allowance for altitude gain and loss and requires around 6 hours.

For alternatives 2 and 3 someone has to move transport round to Retaruke to pick up the trampers – the tramp routes are shown in red and the road 37km to and from Retaruke, via Raurimu, in blue opposite.

**Detail:** As described above it takes a bit over an hour to cover the 100km from Taupo to the Station in National Park where there is safe parking plus the possibility of a hot meal or coffee and cakes if the out-and-back Alternative 1 is done. If desired the walk parallel to the railway can be avoided by getting dropped at the top of Fishers Road.

From the Railway Station car park head off North on the road which parallels the railway line for ten minutes then turn left to cross the railway, left again then right into Fishers Road where a signboard for Waimariri Scientific Reserve will be seen on the left. Fishers Road is gravel, quite rough in places with a loose surface, not maintained by Ruapehu Council and does get closed in wet weather.

A short distance down Fishers Road there is a small track off to the right (**TF04** 818masl) which leads to a wetland area and just after this there is a sign for Erua Forest (**TF05** 831masl) on the right. In about 40 minutes from the station there is a small track off left (**TF06** 851masl) uphill on an upgraded track sign-posted Tupapakuria Falls.

### Start of upgraded track to Tupapakuria



The track offers easy walking, albeit slightly uphill, through lush forest basically heading S to SSW over undulating terrain. There is a change in direction to WNW just past the start of an old log skid (**TF07** 884masl) on the left. One of the high points of the day, the Taranaki Lookout (**TF08** 881masl), is reached in about 1 hour 10 minutes and can make a good morning tea / coffee stop whilst enjoying the views from the seats.

From here the track is not quite so good and a certain amount of care has to be exercised, especially in wet conditions, as the slopes can be slippery in this area of more mature forest with several impressive trees. Another relatively high point (**TF09** 810masl) is reached in under 2 hours where the sound of running water can be heard and a steep zig zagging descent starts. Fifteen minutes down into the valley there is a stream to cross (**TF10** 714masl) and a small information notice before heading off to left and uphill; the aim now is to head round and get a view of the canyon with the waterfall.

**NZ Grid GPS:** Geodetic Datum 1949

**NZTM GPS:** NZTM on WGS84

### Taupo to National Park



### National Park to falls, Retaruke & back

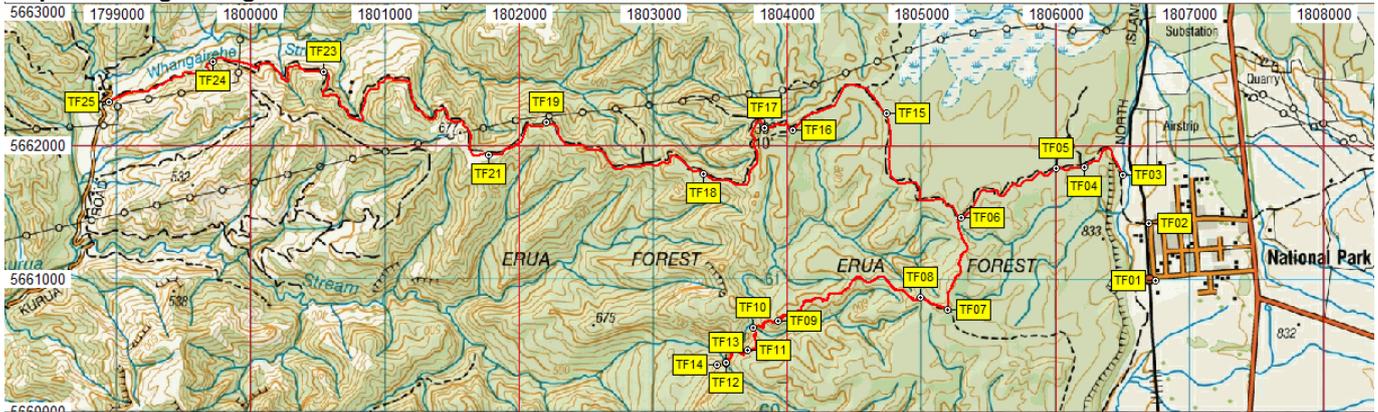


Red line = tramp route.  
Blue line = motorable roads

### National Park Station



### Map and Google Image with GPS data



#### Waypoints – NZ Grid

Name	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)	Description
TF01	2716840	6222856	814	Car Park at National Park
TF02	2716789	6223281	810	10 min; Due N of station, turn left over railway line
TF03	2716591	6223647	796	Drop-off point on Fishers Road - road deteriorates after this
TF04	2716308	6223702	818	25 min; track off right to wetland area
TF05	2716098	6223701	831	30 min walk; Renovated sign for Erua Forest
TF06	2715384	6223326	851	40 min walk; Off left uphill on upgraded track to Tupapakurua Falls
TF07	2715286	6222637	884	One hour walk; change to WNW with old log skid off left
TF08	2715079	6222724	881	1:10min walk; Taranaki Lookout with seat
TF09	2714029	6222556	810	1:50 min; High point above steep zigzag descent plus sound of running water
TF10	2713842	6222506	714	2 hours; Stream line crossing then work uphill round head of canyon
TF11	2713801	6222326	761	2:15 min walk; Very thick forest in undulating area, hear waterfall then steep zig zag down
TF12	2713642	6222233	702	2:30min walk; Steep descent and re-ascent with tricky crossing of small gurgling stream
TF13	2713632	6222241	704	2:32 min; View platform for Tupapakurua Falls and the canyon
TF14	2713572	6222221	712	End of narrow ridge 5 mins beyond viewpoint with good all-round views
TF15	2714827	6224110	824	20min beyond Falls Track on Fishers Road; Y-fork with older road on RHS
TF16	2714133	6223982	829	4 hours; Clear footpath off left
TF17	2713920	6224003	809	4:05min; Open area with junction and road heading off steeply uphill to right. Head downhill
TF18	2713471	6223657	731	4:20min; Old danger-sign tape at steep drop-off road on RHS
TF19	2712295	6224040	671	4:45min; Gate with security cameras warning! Very close to power lines
TF20	2711991	6223843	649	4:55min; Farm track
TF21	2711866	6223803	646	5 hours; Y-fork with Private land straight ahead and signed Public Road off right
TF22	2710922	6224088	559	5:25min; Small access road off right, then Punga lined road
TF23	2710641	6224429	516	5:35min; Deer fence with gate below telephone line!
TF24	2709811	6224500	455	5:50min; First view of Retaruke Lodge after endless, winding "green road"
TF25	2709037	6224194	389	6:05min; Gravel road at gate to Retaruke Lodge

#### NZTM

Easting	Northing
1806736	5660722
1806685	5661147
1806487	5661513
1806204	5661568
1805993	5661567
1805280	5661191
1805182	5660502
1804975	5660588
1803925	5660419
1803738	5660370
1803697	5660190
1803539	5660096
1803528	5660104
1803468	5660085
1804722	5661974
1804028	5661846
1803815	5661867
1803366	5661521
1802189	5661903
1801886	5661706
1801760	5661666
1800817	5661950
1800535	5662290
1799705	5662362
1798931	5662055



Total Distance : 18.133 Km

Minimum Altitude : 387 Meters  
Maximum Altitude : 888 Meters

Fifteen minutes further on there is very thick, dense forest on quite strongly sloping (rolling) terrain (TF11 761masl) and the waterfall can be heard; then there is a tricky, steep zig zagging descent. The less sure-footed find the next stream crossing (TF12 702masl) slightly daunting; this is over a small, rocky gurgling stream but there are ample footholds though caution still has to be exercised. A short ascent from this stream-crossing brings you to a viewing platform (TF13 704masl). After this it is well worth while spending 5 minutes continuing to the SW past an old bivouac site along to the snout (T14 712masl) of a narrow ridge where an even better view of the canyon and falls can be obtained as well as views to the west and south. From here it is about 1:15 minutes back to Fishers Road where the choice is right for National Park or left for Retaruke

**Tupapakuraa Falls**

**The paper road – gravel / mud and grass**



Basically it is a downhill walk from here all the way down into the Whangairehe Stream valley at the top end of Kurua Road where there is a lodge with impressive fencing and gates. From where Fishers Road is rejoined the surface is still gravel but slowly it becomes hard packed earth, exposed sedimentary rock and eventually the surface is very pleasant to walk on as it is grass. After 15 minutes on the road a series of branch or sides roads are found (TF15 824masl) whilst at around 4 hours a track is clearly seen going off to the left (TF16 829masl) – the map appears to show that this rejoins the road further down. Soon after this there is a major junction (TF17 809masl) with the right branch heading off steeply uphill – this is not the route so take the left branch. Gradually the scenery improves and there are some impressive drop-offs on the right hand side of the road (TF18 731masl). Soon after the grass-road starts winding about, a gate (TF19 671masl) is encountered with a warning about Security Cameras Operating; this is at a point where the road and the power lines converge. Once on the farm land there are many vermin traps to be seen and in springtime there are great shows of Clematis and Bush Lawyer blossom.

**Bush Lawyer blossom**



The whole area is now most attractive and the green road can be seen winding down the hill for miles ahead; there is a clear junction (TF21 646masl) at around 5 hours walking with a yellow sign indicating the public road goes to the right. There are now Punga edging the road then a clear view of the settled area is obtained. Note that there are still telephone poles with wires attached – a good example can be seen at the next gate (TF23 516masl) with attached deer fence.

There is now a feeling that this winding grass road never ends but just short of 6 hours there is a first glimpse (TF24 455masl) of a large, modern house further down the valley and soon after the house – assumed to be Retaruke Lodge – is reached at the top end of Kurua Road (TF25 389masl) where, if all has worked out to plan, transport should be waiting to whisk the weary legs back to National Park via Raurimu.

**Winding green road**

**Retaruke Lodge**



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|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Notes</b> | • GPS Garmin GPSmap 60CSx            |
|              | • WP = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit |
|              | • masl = metres above sea level      |