



Discover Kōwhai Park self-guided walk

Nau mai, haere mai



The native bush at Kōwhai Park is an example of the diverse vegetation that once covered this region.

On your walk today you'll learn about the history of the area, discover the importance of forest and stream ecosystems and find out about the special plants and animals that live here.

You can help look after this special place by remembering to use the kauri dieback spray stations as you enter and leave.

Local history and lime kilns

Use the signs at the entrance to the park and above the lime kilns to discover how the land here has been used in different ways and changed over time.

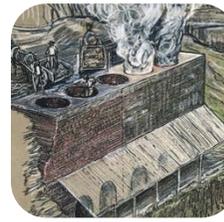
Can you discover...

- What type of rock is common in this area?
- Which two industries were set up in Warkworth because of this rock?
- Where were the first lime works built?
- Has the park been known by any other names?
- What else has the land been used for?
- Which flowering native tree was once commonly found here?



Follow the track into the park and and up the steps to your right to reach the top of the lime kilns where you can discover more about this heritage site...

- What type of business was set up in the 1860s just below the bridge?
- How did the landscape change with European settlement?
- When was limestone quarried here?



Did you know?

Lime is made by heating limestone and is used for building. Limestone was dug out using a pick and shovel and then crushed by hand into lumps. The lumps of limestone were heated in the five shaft kilns you can see in front of you. What do you think it would have been like to work at the lime kilns?

Get to know your native trees

As you walk along the track you'll find lots of signs to help you identify native trees. Can you spot the following species and find out more about them?

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Kahikatea | Why do birds like to visit our tallest native tree? |
| Tī kōuka | Which part of this tree can be eaten? |
| Tawa | Which native bird eats the large purple fruit? |
| Māhoe | When would you see this tree in flower? |
| Kauri | What did Māori value the timber for? |
| Kānuka | What was the wood used to traditionally make? |
| Kohekohe | Which pest animal likes to eat the leaves? |
| Rimu | Can you find a fallen rimu branchlet to feel? |
| Nīkau | What did Māori use the leaves to make? |
| Rewarewa | What is the English name for this tree? |
| Mataī | What colour are the fruits of this tree? |
| Kawakawa | Why do birds visit this plant? |
| Tōtara | What did Māori value the timber for? |



Did you know?

The mataī in this reserve are believed to be the biggest in the area. Large mataī and tōtara were both used for building Māori waka taua (war canoes) up to 40m long and capable of carrying 100 warriors. Can you see any trees that tall on your walk today?



Look out for epiphytes

Plants that grow on the branches and trunks of trees are called epiphytes. Look up into the canopy for kahakaha (perching lily) growing on the large branches of trees. Be careful not to stand directly underneath one though - they've been known to fall down when they grow too big!



Investigating invertebrates

Stop to investigate a fallen tree trunk to discover what's living in the ground nearby. Decomposers including millipedes, slaters, worms and beetles break down plant material, turning it into rich soil that can be used to help forest plants grow. Can you find any of these creatures in the leaf litter?

waimano (millipede) 

wakapihau (centipede) 

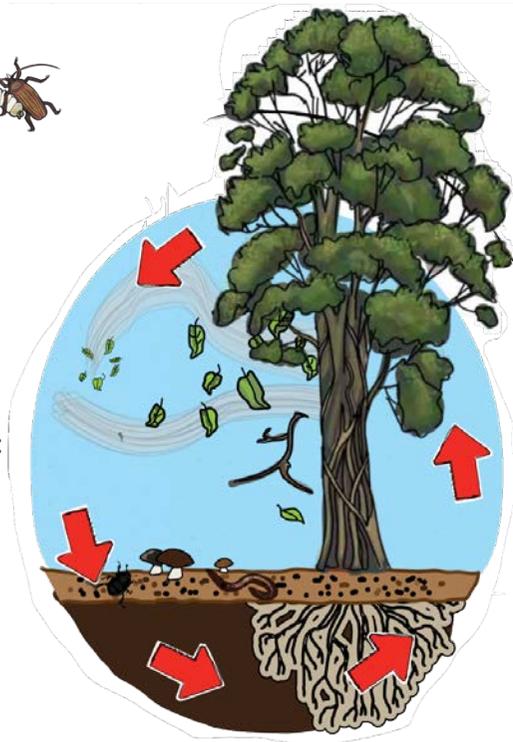
tunga rere (huhu beetle and grub) 

papapa (slater) 

noke (worm) 

hātaretare (snail or slug) 

pōpokorua (ant) 



Play a game of I-Spy

Use these words to play the game as you walk:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| aka (vine) | hua (berry) |
| kākano (seed) | kiri rākau (bark) |
| manga (branch) | manu (bird) |
| ngahere (forest) | pakiaka (roots) |
| putiputi (flower) | rākau (tree) |
| rau (leaf) | tinana (trunk) |

You could make a collection of forest treasures by picking up interesting fallen leaves, flowers, feathers and seeds as you walk. Please do not pick living parts of the plants.

Bird spotting

Take a seat on one of the benches along the track and spend a few minutes looking and listening for manu (birds). Close your eyes and each time you hear a new bird call hold up a finger. How many different species can you identify?

kererū (wood pigeon)

pīwakawaka (fantail)

tauhou (silvereeye)

tūī



Did you know?

Friendly pīwakawaka are often seen following people in the bush. They come close to in the hope of catching insects that are disturbed as people walk. It's thought they fan their tail and flick their wings to frighten insects into moving so they can catch them. Fantails feed their young about 100 times a day!

What's living in the stream?



The stream in the park runs into the Mahurangi River.

There are a couple of bridges and a spot on the lower loop of the track from which you can investigate what's living in the stream. You might spot tuna (eels), īnagna (whitebait/juvenile fish), common and red-finned bully, banded kōkapu and kōura (freshwater crayfish). These animals need the water to be clean, clear and cool to survive. How do you think the surrounding forest helps to keep the stream clear and cool? What could you do to help keep our waterways clean?

Become a pest detective

Look out for coloured tags on trees that help park rangers and volunteers identify where they've placed tracking tunnels and traps to identify and catch pests including rats, possums, and ferrets. Why do you think it's important that pests are controlled? You can become a pest detective by visiting pestdetective.org.nz where there are lots of fun activities and resources to download.

Did you know?

Kauri are one of the largest and longest-living trees in the world. They can grow more than 60m high and live for 2000 years! Sadly, kauri are at serious risk of a disease called kauri dieback. What can you do to help stop the disease spreading?

