

Kāpiti Island



Facilities



Ferry



Parking



Toilets



Information



Walking tracks



Swimming



Scuba diving



Fishing (Only at northern end as the rest of the Island is part of a marine reserve)



Boating (But private boats are not permitted to land or anchor at the Nature Reserve)



Kayaking



Look out



Bird watching



Picnic table



Accommodation*

Cost: Return ferry trip & DOC permit

*Overnight stays are not permitted within the nature reserve on the island. However, some of the northern island is in private ownership. On this land Kāpiti Island Nature Tours offers a homestay option for visitors which must be prebooked.



Highlight

Kāpiti Island is one of New Zealand's most valuable nature reserves and an internationally renowned conservation icon. It is the only large island sanctuary between the Hauraki Gulf and New Zealand's southern Sub-Antarctic Islands. The island is the site of Kāpiti Island Nature Reserve and adjoins the Kāpiti Marine Reserve. Most of it is in public ownership.

Description, values & significance

Known as "motu rongonui" or "famous island" to pre-European Māori, Kāpiti Island is a sanctuary for kiwi, kaka, takahe, and saddleback and is the focus of a programme to save a threatened colony of short-tailed bats from possible extinction. The island was once dominated by ancient rata and podocarps such as matai and miro, some of which have survived in the deep gullies missing the fires and felling of the 1800's.

Accessibility/How to get there/particular time of year to visit

Kapiti Island lies about 5km off the west coast of the southern North Island. It is 10km long and roughly 2km wide. Visitors can choose from two destinations, Rangatira or the north end, both of which require a visitor access permit from DOC. The island is particularly popular over summer so you need to book well in advance of your trip, but Kapiti Island is also a great place to visit during winter when there is not so much visitor demand.

North End of Kāpiti Island information: The north end of Kāpiti Island is very different from the Kāpiti Island Nature Reserve, (for which a separate visitor permit is required to visit) and offers a new perspective on Kāpiti Island. Access is not permitted between the nature reserve and the public land at the north end, to better control the risks associated with public access to this special place and to continue the uncrowded experience that visitors enjoy.

Threatened species/species of interest

Kāpiti Island is alive with birds including takahe, kokako, hihi (stitchbird), little spotted kiwi (now extinct on the mainland), red-crowned parakeet (kakariki), brown teal (pateke), weka, kaka, tieke (saddleback), robin, tomtit, whitehead, tui, kereru, royal spoonbill, as well as more common forest, shore and sea birds. The majority of forest on the island today is kohekohe, tawa, kanuka, fivefinger, and mahoe. Some plants, such as karo, have been introduced as a food source for birds.

Key threats

A fire at the ranger station in 2007 highlighted the risk fire poses. The island was declared pest free in 1996

after an intensive eradication programme, and ongoing monitoring has ensured it remains pest free. But the reinvasion of rats and mustelids could derail conservation efforts. In 2011 three stoats (including a pregnant female) found their way to the island (possibly by swimming) and were detected by monitoring but eluded staff and tracker dogs for months. Work is continuing to ensure there are no more stoats on the island. DOC needs to go two years without finding any predators before the island can be considered predator free.

Protection status

Nature Reserve - Nature Reserves are areas set aside for the protection of native plants and animals, where human influence is kept to a minimum. Every effort is made to minimise the adverse effects of any introduced plants or animals that have managed to establish on the island. Most people never get an opportunity to visit nature reserves because access to them is so difficult.

Walks (length)

You can walk a 4km loop track, via the Wilkinson and Trig Tracks, to the summit of the island, Tuteremoana (520 metres), where there is a lookout offering spectacular views. The tracks are steep in parts so you need to be moderately fit and wear sturdy footwear. It is recommended you take food and water with you but be sure to keep it out of reach of kaka which may land on your shoulder and steal the food from your hand.

Manager

Walks (grade)

Moderate

Department of Conservation

How to get there

