

Discover MANGEMANGEROA

SELF-GUIDED WALK

NAU MAI HARAE MAI

This self-guided walk starts from the car park at Somerville Road before continuing along the track to the sandspit at Shelly Park Beach.

The numbered points on the map are associated with suggested activities and the following notes.

Please remember to
'Take nothing but memories, leave nothing but footprints'
'Haria ko ngā maharatanga anake, waiho ko ngā tapuae anake'.

1 and 2. Looking out over the Mangemangeroa Valley

Ngāi Tai and Ngāti Paoa (iwi of Tainui decent) built several pā (fortified settlements) and kīanga (villages) along the valley. Fertile soil supported prosperous māra kai (gardens), and the coast provided a rich source of kaimoana (sea food). Māori left their traditional homes along the valley and relocated to Waiheke Island under increasing pressure from European settlers in 1870. Since then areas of land around the valley have been used for growing crops, grazing livestock, forestry and housing. The reserve was established in 1992.

To read more about the history of the area visit mangemangeroa.org.nz/history.

3. Walking down the hill through restoration land

Community groups including the Friends of Mangemangeroa Society, Forest & Bird, Rotary and local schools play an important role in restoring native vegetation within the reserve. Volunteers have planted thousands of trees, formed tracks, controlled pests, eradicated weeds and created signage in partnership with the Auckland Council. Relatively fast-growing native species such as mānuka, help to reduce erosion and provide shelter for the seedlings of forest species to establish themselves. For more information on the stages of forest regeneration visit teara.govt.nz/en/forest-succession-and-regeneration.

Rabbits need to be controlled as they damage young saplings. Other pests including rats and possums are also monitored and trapped because they eat the seeds, fruit and leaves of native plants and threaten native bird populations.

Before and after you walk through the gate to the forested walkway

Noticing the differences between standing in the more open environment and when under the forest canopy is a great sensory activity. The forest may feel cooler or more humid depending on the wind; you may notice the noises made by birds and rustling leaves; there will be a difference in light as it's filtered through tree layers and the air may have a fresh smell about it.

4. Following the walkway to the left

Along the track you'll find lots of signage describing the features of native plants. At each sign you could find a leaf that has fallen to the floor and create your own identification guide, perhaps including what each plant was traditionally used for.

Take a breather at the lookout after coming up the steps.

You could walk back across the field to the car park via the information point at Archie's Lookout if you wanted a shorter, looping visit to the reserve.

5. On the boardwalk that weaves through the mangroves

Mangroves trap sediments and nutrients, providing a habitat for small animals, forming the base of a complex food web. At high tide if the water is clear you may be able to spot pātiki, (flounder), toitoi (bullies), kāraraha (whitebait) and (tuna) eels. There is much debate about the spread and control of mangroves in estuaries. On one hand the increased rates of sedimentation and spread of mangrove habitat could be considered detrimental to waterflow and coastal access; on the other hand, mangroves provide habitat for wildlife and can help prevent storm surges.

To read more about mangrove habitat visit teara.govt.nz/en/estuaries.

6. There are a number of spots along the way to stop and look for birds

The reserve is an ecologically significant area for a number of native and migrating bird species. Forest birds are important in the ecosystem as they pollinate a number of native flowers and disperse the seeds of large native trees including taraire, karaka and pūriri. Visit doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/birds to listen to birdcalls. nzbirdsonline.org.nz is a great online tool for helping identify what you see.

In addition to native birds, you may hear the noisy chattering of eastern rosella. Originally from Australia, they are a threat to native birds, competing with them for food and nest sites.

7. Look out for pest plants by the large slip on the left of the track

The management of invasive weeds is an ongoing task within the reserve. Areas that have been colonized by weeds after having been disturbed by storms and flooding are targeted for restoration. To download a booklet about which native species can be planted in place of pest plants visit weedbusters.org.nz/resources/plant-me-instead-booklets.

8. In the nīkau grove

A number of native plants are useful as weaving materials for making clothing, building shelter and catching and carrying food, these include nīkau, harakeke, tī kōuka, kiekie, pīngao, toetoe and toi. In addition to providing useful weaving material, nīkau leaves could also provide an emergency source of food. The immature leaves at the heart of the palm could be eaten raw or cooked; they were also used medicinally to ease childbirth. Although birds such as kererū, kākā and kākāriki feed on the red fruit, it's mostly made up of hard seed and so not tasty for us to eat. For more information about the traditional art of weaving visit teara.govt.nz/en/te-raranga-me-te-whatu.

9. Looking for pūriri moth holes

Look out for a sign labelling a putaputaweta tree that is riddled with holes that have been created by mokoroa (pūriri moth caterpillars). You might find circular patches on the trunk or a branch that have caterpillars inside that have yet to emerge. The silky coverings of their tunnels are very fragile so be careful not to disturb them. Adult moths have a wingspan of up to 15cm and most commonly emerge between October and December. Find out more about the pūriri moth by visiting nzacfactsheets.landcareresearch.co.nz.

Continue to follow the track towards Shelly Park Beach.

You will walk through reserve land with houses on the left towards the boats and sandspit.

10. On the beach near the sandspit

The intertidal zone near the sandspit provides wading birds with a bountiful supply of food. Around 60 species of waders have been recorded in New Zealand, 13 of which live and breed here all year round. Species you may spot include tōrea (pied oystercatcher) and tōrea pango (variable oystercatcher). In summer, kuaka (bar-tailed godwit) and huahou (lesser knot) feed on worms, bivalves and other small animals before migrating back to the Arctic.

The foreshore would have once been the perfect site from which to search for tuangi (cockles), tio (oysters), pipi, takarepo (mud snails) and kairau (mud crabs) at low tide and fish for small sharks, whai repo (stingray) and pātiki (flounder) in deeper water.

Before leaving, you might like to reflect on the things you've discovered on your walk today, including how people can help to protect the biodiversity of forest and coastal ecosystems. Visit tiakitamakimakaurau.nz to find out how you could help protect and restore our environment.

TOP TIPS FOR VISITING

- This self-guided walk has been designed to take 2 hours at a moderate pace. You could always start at the Shelly Park Beach entrance and complete a shorter part of the walk if you have less time to spend exploring.
- There is a lot to see and experience in the reserve all year round. The best time to view wading birds is from November to March and between full-tide and half-tide. For tide times visit metSERVICE.com/marine-surf/tides/auckland.
- Bring a pair of binoculars and a wildlife guide to help you identify what you see.
- Useful books available from your local library include:
 - Which Native Tree? by Andrew Crowe
 - Which Native Forest Plant? by Andrew Crowe
 - Life-Size Guide to Native Trees by Andrew Crowe
 - New Zealand' Native Birds of Bush and Countryside: Penguin Pocket Guide
 - Native Birds of Shore and Wetland: Penguin Pocket Guide
- To find out how to get involved with projects within the park please email: mylocalpark@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
- To report a problem please visit aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/report-it or call 09 301 0101.