

Walk of the Month

Welcome to 10,000 Steps Northland's 'Walk of the Month'. Each month a stunning walk somewhere in Northland will be highlighted. If you have a favourite track or walk in your community contact us by email at 10000steps@sportnorth.co.nz.

August Walk of the Month – **PATAUA ESTUARY & BEACH (Whangarei)**

Mid winter, many tracks can be a bit muddy and slippery to explore if the area has had a couple of day's rain, but despite this, there are still plenty of options for getting out for a stroll or a day with the family. One of these options is Pataua, which offers a scenic easy walk and plenty of space for the kids to run around and play.

To get there, take Whangarei Heads Road past Parua Bay to Pataua South Road. Keep following Pataua South Road until you get to Pataua. Once there, keep going straight to the estuary where you will come to a Council maintained carpark with toilets by the estuary bridge. The estuary is a beautiful spot with old Pohutukawa trees stretched out over the water making it an ideal spot for a picnic with tables on the edge of the estuary.

This is an easy flat walk most of the way and could also be done with strollers (only a single) up until the beach. Start by heading across the foot only access bridge to the north side of Pataua and follow the concrete and gravel track until you come to the road. Follow the road to the right towards the beach. There is no footpath along the road but a wide grass verge or at low tide you can walk the estuary foreshore. When the road starts to hook around to the left, go straight ahead down the grass walkway following the toilet/changing room sign. At the end of the grass track, follow the road to the right which will lead you to the main beach access. To this point, you would have accumulated approximately 1,125 steps (900m).

Once you reach the beach, you will have sweeping views of the Tutukaka coast to the north, offshore islands and Pataua Island at the mouth of the estuary. Here you have the option to let the kids run free on the beach, have a picnic on the picnic table perched on the dunes or continue walking north along the beach to the next rocky outcrop which is approximately another 2,500 steps (2km).

To get back to the carpark, you can take the way you came or at low tide walk the beach following the estuary foreshore. There are several access points from the estuary to get back up onto the road.



Pictured above - Pataua foot bridge



Pictured above - Looking North to the Tutukaka Coast