

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.

June's Walk of the Month – **WHANGAROA FORESHORE/ST PAUL'S ROCK (Whangaroa)**

June's Walk of the Month took us to the beautiful Whangaroa region on a sunny autumn day when many other parts of Northland seemed to be rained out. Northland seems to have many microclimates, so you never know what the weather maybe like an hour away when it may be miserable at your place. It is worth taking the gamble and doing some exploring in our region.

Our guide for the day was Hilary Sheard from Whangaroa Health Services Trust. Hilary has been a local in the area for most of her life and helps keep the local people active. Hilary regularly walks with some of her clients along the Whangaroa Harbour foreshore so recommended it as a good walk for all abilities.



Pictured above - view of Whangaroa Harbour entrance from the top of St Paul's rock.



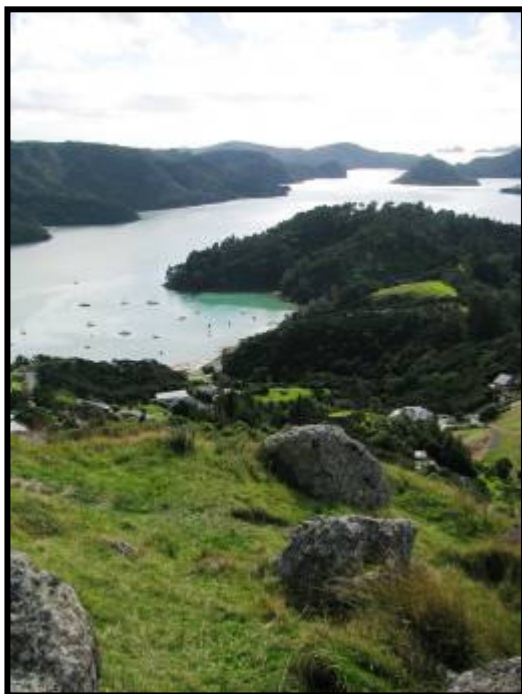
Pictured above - St Paul's Rock

To get there, head north from Kaeo on State Highway 10 and take the turn off to Whangaroa. It is well signposted. A drive through some well established mangroves will see you pop out on the south side of the Whangaroa Harbour. Whangaroa is a small community and is well known for its game fishing. There are only a couple shops in the area, the main ones being the Marina Café and the Boyd Gallery and store, which is where you can start your walk from. There is parking opposite the Gallery on a gravel parking lot.

This is a 'there and back' walk that follows the foreshore. It is flat the whole way, however you also have the option of adding a challenge and heading up to St Paul's rock and climbing to the top for some stunning 360 degree views.

There is no set track to follow for the foreshore walk, rather you just walk the foreshore side of the road where there is a footpath some of the way and a grass verge the rest. Take the footpath option where there is one which will take you past the Marina Café where you can also view the game fishing boats moored at the marina. You are able to walk around the front of the Marina Café along the deck to carry on the walk.

Past the marina, you will walk past the Clansman Wharf which is approximately the 1km mark and then continue on to the Ratcliffe boat ramp, which is where the walk ends and you will turn around and head back. Here you will find toilets and a picnic area.



Pictured above - view from the top of St Paul's Rock looking down on Whangaroa Harbour

On the way back you have the option of taking the turn off up to St Paul's rock at Old Hospital Rd. From the turn off, it is a steep 700m walk up the road to the reserve which is managed by the Department of Conservation. Alternatively you can walk back to the start and take the car to the reserve where there is parking for several cars. The total distance for just the 'there and back' foreshore walk is approximately 3,500 steps or 2.8 kilometres.

The walk up St Paul's rock is challenging. The track is a single dirt track, well marked by the green and yellow Department of Conservation markers all the way, and it is uneven and relatively steep the whole way up. However, it is a short walk to the summit, 600m or 750 steps one way, with many places to stop along the way to catch your breath and take in the stunning views of the harbour.

Near the top of the walk, you will come across some chains that have been bolted into the rock to help you up the steep section to the summit. The views, once at the top are very rewarding where you can gain 360 degree undisturbed vistas of the harbour and surrounding area. I would recommend if deciding to walk this track to wear good sturdy walking shoes with non-slip soles and to take a camera.

Once you have come back down or have finished the foreshore walk, you can enjoy a bite to eat or drink at the Marina Café and watch the boats come and go and if you are lucky maybe even see a few big fish being brought in. Enjoy another Northland gem!

Active Lifestyles – Janine Moy from Sport Northland, www.10000stepsnorthland.co.nz