

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.

October's Walk of the Month – **Peach Cove (Whangarei Heads)**

Spring has arrived, the days are longer and more people are out enjoying Northlands walks. Spring makes for a good time of year to head out and explore some of those longer and more challenging walks. The weather is still mild, however the days are long enough to get a full day of exploring and walking in, so make sure you head out and make the most of the season before it gets too hot!

The Peach Cove track is part of the Bream Head Scenic Reserve located at Whangarei Heads. Bream Head Scenic Reserve is one of New Zealand's premier coastal forest reserves and is the best example of its type in Northland so there is a lot to enjoy and see on this scenic walk.

To get there, take the Whangarei Heads road following it past Urquharts Bay onto Ocean Beach Road - almost all the way to Ocean Beach. The start of the track is signposted on Ocean Beach Road. Please park your car just inside the entranceway as the access is a private driveway. Dogs are not permitted in this area as the Department of Conservation, local Iwi, the Whangarei Heads Restoration Trust and the community are committed to restoring Bream Head, which includes a re-vegetation programme, weed and pest control.

You may see predator traps beside the track. For your safety, they ask that you please do not interfere with them.

The track only goes one way – up and over so you will have to walk the same track out if you wish to return to your car. There are alternative routes you can take for a longer walk as it meets up with the main Te Whara track connecting to Ocean Beach and Smugglers Bay. Contact the Department of Conservation for information or visit their website www.doc.govt.nz.

The track is in very good condition, gravelled the



Pictured above - View of Ocean Beach looking north to the Tutukaka coast



Pictured above - Peach Cove

whole way, widened and relatively even despite the gradient. There are quite a number of stairs that have been installed recently making the walk up and over the hill easier than in the past. Practically the whole back side of the track down from the ridge to Peach Cove uses the stairs, making the descent (and climb back up) steady and gradual.

Despite the recent upgrades, the track is still steep in places so it requires a reasonable level of fitness to walk it. The initial section of the track climbs a series of stairs and then takes you straight up until you near the ridge. There are seats placed along the way for you to rest and take in the stunning views of Ocean Beach, north to the Tutukaka Coast and west back towards Mt Manaia. Once the track nears the ridge, the gradient flattens out and becomes more of a meander along the ridge until you reach the point, where the track starts to descend down to Peach Cove.



Pictured above - View south east towards the Hen & Chicken Islands

The backside of the track down to Peach Cove provides a good amount of shade as it winds through the forest. During our trip we encountered quite a few Kereru and heard various other bird calls which are credit to the various groups involved in restoring vegetation and conducting predator control in the area.

Once at the bottom, you will encounter the Peach Cove hut (which needs to be booked with DOC if you wish to stay the night) and eventually pop out of the bush at Peach Cove. The cove is beautiful and feels very secluded with Pohutukawa trees hanging over the beach and rocks lining the points - a nice spot to take a break and have a bite to eat before heading back over.

The total distance of the walk (there and back) is approximately 7,200 steps or 5.7km. It will take approximately 2 hours depending on your fitness and how many times you stop to snap photos of the stunning views.

You can join us and the Department of Conservation on a free led walk of the Peach Cove track (or the Busby Head/Smugglers Bay track) on Saturday 24 October as part of the official opening of the upgraded Bream Head Scenic Reserve tracks. For more information visit www.10000stepsnorthland.co.nz (click on the Walk Whangarei symbol) or phone 0800 ACTIVE (22 84 83).

Enjoy another Northland gem!

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