



## 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 on email at [10000steps@sportnorth.co.nz](mailto:10000steps@sportnorth.co.nz).

### November's Walk of the Month – **WHANANAKI COASTAL TRACK**

This month's 'walk of the month' has taken us to the Whananaki Coastal Track on the East Coast of the Tutukaka Coast Highway. The Sandy Bay – Whananaki Track is a walkway created by the Department of Conservation and local land owners.

You can start the walk from either Sandy Bay or Whananaki and endeavour to walk there and back which will have you stepping out approximately **15,250 steps** (12 kilometres). Alternatively, plan to have someone meet you at the opposite end of the walkway for a well deserved picnic and/or swim and this will still have you accumulating a very respectable **7,625 steps**.

Starting from the Sandy Bay (South) end of the track, there is limited parking available at the end of McAuslin Road. If there are a few of you, leave your cars at Sandy Bay and walk from there.

For the first 4,000 steps (3.5 kilometres) of the track you will walk along a well maintained gravel road through private land. Please use the beach access points that are clearly sign posted only. At approximately 4 kilometres you will see a sign posting two directions - one, to take you out to the Captain Bougainville Memorial monument and the other directing you towards Whananaki South.

The Captain Bougainville monument and site is well worth the walk. The sign says it will take you 45 minutes to return to that fork in the walkway but it only took me 10 minutes each way. You will get another **800 steps each way** by visiting this spot but more importantly you will get to visit a significant spot in our maritime history. It is also a breathtaking spot to look out along the coast and potentially watch some marine life go by.



A monument placed on top of the cliffs of Oruaea Bay and overlooking Whananaki South was placed there in memory of 16 people that lost their lives in Northland's worst maritime tragedy. In 1975, a 12 metre swell rose in an easterly storm and forced a Noumea registered freighter into trouble. A fire broke out on board the boat and the crew were forced to abandon the ship in treacherous conditions. Out of 29 crew and 8 passengers only 21 survived the towering swell and landed their life boats safely on shore. A 12 meter swell is hard to imagine while sitting peacefully on top of the cliffs edge.

The walkway quickly changes from being a road to narrowing down to a single track once you reach the point of the Captain Bougainville turn-off. Take your time and follow the orange markers that will take you north towards the Whananaki Recreation reserve. The track then goes in two directions and either takes you along the estuary or the road depending on the height of the tide. Either way, you will end up by the houses and see the Whananaki footbridge - the longest footbridge in the Southern Hemisphere.

Both beaches at either end of the walkway are worth taking a break at and having a swim. Get out there everyone, walking some of our beautiful tracks is the best way to enjoy the outdoors and get you steps up!



*Whananaki South*