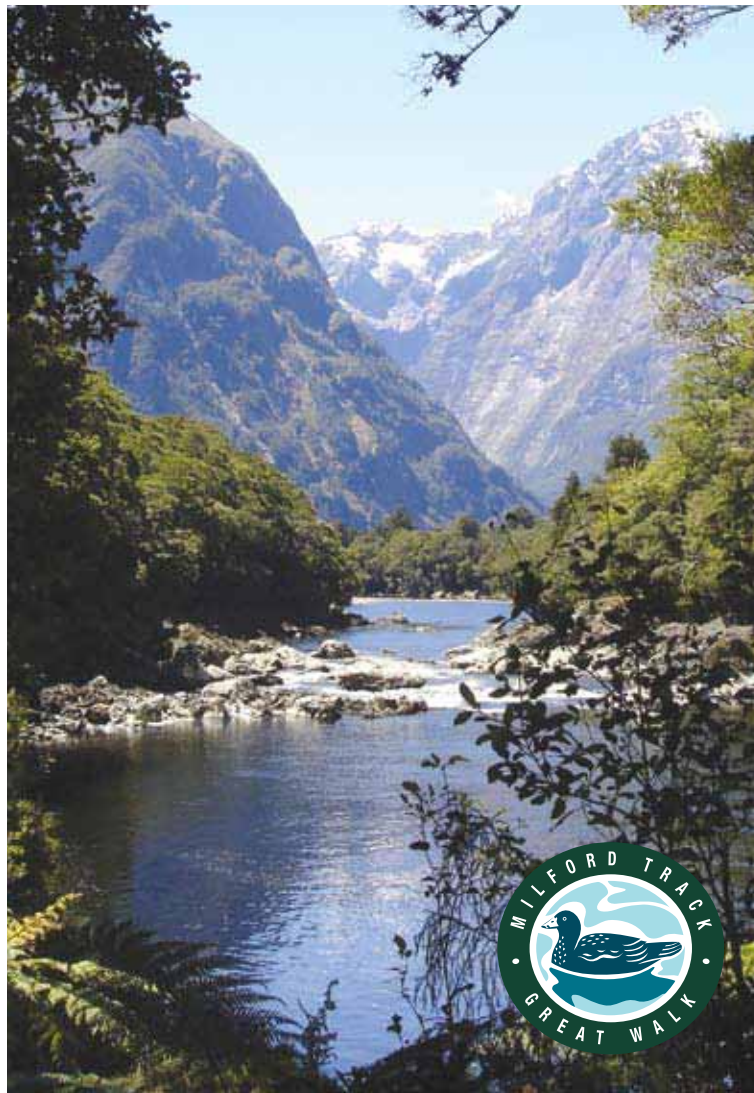


Milford Track

Independent Tramping

SOUTHLAND – 2008/2009 SEASON



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

CONTENTS

The Milford Track	3
Walking Options	4
Other Activities	5
What to Take	7
Accommodation	9
Transport	10
Weather Information	11
Safety Information	12
Winter Tramping	14
Track Notes - Day by Day	18
Milford Track Map	20
History	25
Natural History	27
Conservation Projects	30
How to Book	32
Term and Conditions	34
Transport, Equipment and Accommodation	36
Contact Details	39

Cover – Clinton River. Photo: Olivia Dovey

The Milford Track

The Milford Track (53.5 kilometres) is in the heart of spectacular Fiordland National Park, part of Te Wāhipounamu - South West New Zealand World Heritage Area and is administered by the Department of Conservation on behalf of the New Zealand public.

Location

The Milford track is located in the southwest of the South Island. The track starts at the head of Lake Te Anau and finishes at Milford Sound. Te Anau, the nearest township has a full range of accommodation, shopping and hire services.

Getting There



The Milford Track requires boat transport at both ends of the track. Bus or private transport is required to Te Anau Downs and also from Milford Sound.

During the summer there are regular transport services to and from the track. These are listed on the Booking Form. Alternative options are listed in the back of this booklet.



Road Distances and Times

- Te Anau to Te Anau Downs – 27 km, 30 mins
- Milford Sound to Te Anau – 120 km, 2 hours
- Milford Sound to Divide – 35 km, 30 mins
- Queenstown to Te Anau – 197 km, 2 hours
- Invercargill to Te Anau – 2 hours
- Dunedin to Te Anau – 3½ hours
- Christchurch to Te Anau – 8 hours

Walking Options

Day Walks

There is no charge for those wishing to day walk on the Milford Track and no bookings are required. However boat transport schedules to and from the track limit day walking options. It is not possible to walk to the best scenic areas in such a short time.

Milford Track

Great Walks Peak Season (late October to late April)

During the peak season the Milford Track can only be walked as a four day/three night package, starting at the head of Lake Te Anau and finishing at Sandfly Point, Milford Sound. Bookings are essential and can be made via the online booking link on the DOC homepage – www.doc.govt.nz, or by post, fax, email or phone. Bookings open 9am on Tuesday 15 July 2008 for the 2008/09 season. A maximum of 40 people may start the track each day.

Off Peak/Winter Season (May to late October)

No bookings are required for the offpeak/winter season. The track can be walked in either direction during this time.

High snow loadings and avalanche danger can occur and may well make the track impassable. Some facilities are removed from the huts and track. See Winter Tramping Notes on page 14 for more detailed information.

Can I Do It?

Physical fitness and good equipment will make the difference to your enjoyment of your trip regardless of the weather. It is suggested that walkers start a fitness programme at least two months before departure, including carrying a full pack up and down stairs or hills. Walkers can expect:

- to carry a pack weighing up to 15 kgs for up to 20 km each day
- a steep climb and descent over Mackinnon Pass
- parts of the track to have rough, rocky and/or uneven surfaces
- **at least one day of rain** while on the track
- to walk through water up to a metre deep during or after heavy rain
- to cross unbridged streams
- to get wet, muddy boots
- the good company of your fellow walkers, friends, family and, during the Great Walks peak season, Department of Conservation staff who are located at each hut.

The Milford Track is not recommended for children under ten years of age, due to the mountainous environment and often adverse weather conditions.

Other Activities

For more details on the activities listed below, contact the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre for current operators and options.

Guided Walks

Overnight Trips

Tourism Milford Ltd hold the only DOC approved concession for overnight guided walks on the Milford Track during the peak season. Their website is www.ultimatehikes.co.nz

Day-walks

There are a number of guided day-walk opportunities, starting from the Lake Te Anau end of the track and guided kayak-walk options from the Milford Sound end of the track.



Fishing

The invasive alga Didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*) is present in Lakes Te Anau and Manapouri and in many of the waterways surrounding Fiordland National Park. To combat its spread, all waterway users must **check, clean and dry** all equipment before moving from one waterway to another.

Standard and special licences are required to fish in Fiordland National Park. Please check for the latest requirements one week prior to your trip.

Hunting

Hunting is not permitted on the Milford Track. Hunters can use the track for access to the side valleys, where limited hunting opportunities are available. Rifles must be carried with the bolt removed whenever on the track or associated transport services.

Crossing the Clinton and Arthur Rivers to access the side valleys can be hazardous at times. A hunting permit is required, available from the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre in Te Anau.

Kayaking

There are excellent kayaking opportunities on Lake Te Anau and in Milford Sound. Please check with the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre for the latest didymo restrictions and cleaning requirements at least a week prior to your trip.

Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is **not permitted** on the Milford Track.

Dogs and Other Pets

It is an offence under the National Parks Act 1980 to bring dogs and other introduced animals into Fiordland National Park. Please leave your animals at home.

What to Take

The following gear is essential, no matter how warm it is on the day of departure. Most equipment is available for hire or purchase in Te Anau. A full range of food can be found in supermarkets in Te Anau and basic stores are available at Milford Sound.

Clothing

You will need at least one set of clothes to walk in and another dry set to change into at night. It is not always possible to dry clothes in the huts. It is essential that this clothing is carried as your safety and the safety of others could well depend on it.

NB: cotton clothing such as jeans, T-shirts and sweatshirts is **not** suitable. Polypropylene, which is quick drying (but can be flammable), is recommended.

Boots:	should be comfortable and well broken in
Socks:	2 pairs (wool/polypropylene)
Shorts:	(nylon)
Shirt:	(wool/polypropylene)
Longjohns/trousers:	(wool/polypropylene)
Jersey/Jacket:	(wool/polar fleece)
Undershirts/T shirt:	(wool/polypropylene)
Mittens/Gloves:	(wool/polypropylene)
Raincoat:	(waterproof, windproof with hood)
Over trousers:	(wind and water proof)

Woollen hat/balaclava, sunhat and sunglasses. Extra socks, underwear, shirt or lightweight jersey.



Appropriate clothing for walking the Milford Track.
Photo: Mountain Safety Council

Personal Equipment

Pack:	with large waterproof/plastic liner
Sleeping bag:	good quality down or hollofil
Matches/ lighter:	in waterproof container
Torch:	spare batteries
Eating utensils:	knife, fork, spoon, plate, cup
Cooking utensils:	pot/pan/billy and cleaning utensils
Toilet gear:	soap, toothpaste, toilet paper, small towel (do not wash or use soap in lakes or streams)
First aid kit:	insect repellent, sunscreen, blister kits, pain relief, assorted bandages
Survival Kit:	survival blanket, whistle, paper, pencil, high energy snack food
Drink bottle:	1 - 2 litre capacity (you need to drink regularly during the day)
Optional extras:	camera, lightweight shoes for in hut, ear plugs for communal bunkrooms (you will be sharing huts with up to 40 trampers)

Food

Food is not available for purchase on the track

Food should be lightweight, fast cooking and high in energy value e.g.:

Breakfast: cereal, firm bread, honey or other spreads.

Lunch: cracker biscuits, cheese, salami, margarine, jam/ jelly, fruit.

Dinner: instant soup, pasta/rice, dried vegetables/fruit, cheese or dehydrated (freeze dry) meals.

You will also need snacks, biscuits, muesli bars, tea/coffee, powdered fruit drink and emergency food in case of any delays on the track.

Mintaro Hut. Photo: Chris Rance



Accommodation

Camping and staying overnight in the shelters is not permitted on the track. Facilities for guided walkers are not available to independent walkers.

Huts

There are three Department of Conservation huts on the track – Clinton, Mintaro and Dumping.

Walkers are expected to leave the accommodation clean and tidy and take their rubbish out with them. Smoking is not permitted in the huts or shelters on the track.

Department of Conservation track staff are stationed at each hut. They are equipped with radios for use in emergencies and for weather forecasts. For your own safety please sign the hut books on your arrival.

Camping

There are no camping opportunities on the Milford Track.

HUT FACILITIES AND SERVICES	PEAK SUMMER SEASON	OFF- PEAK WINTER SEASON
Living Area		
Gas cookers and gas	Yes	No
Lighting	Yes	No
Heating/fireplace	Yes	Yes
Fuel for heating	Yes	No
Cold running water	Yes	No
Nearby water supply	No	Yes
Communal Bunkrooms		
Individual bunks with mattresses	Yes	Yes
Platform bunks with mattresses	Yes	Yes
Washrooms		
Hand basins/cold water only	Yes	No
Flush toilets	Yes	No
Pit toilets	No	Yes
Showers	No	No
General		
Food available for purchase	No	No
Electric power	No	No
Hut staff	Yes	Sometimes

Toilets

Please use toilets at the huts and shelters. If this is not possible, bury toilet waste well away from waterways. Remember, drinking water at the huts and shelters comes from rivers and lakes.

Water

To avoid dehydration you will need to drink regularly while walking, even on cooler days. You may not be able to find water on the track so should carry some with you.

Drinking water at the huts and shelters comes from nearby rivers, lakes or roof catchments. Giardia may be present in some areas and regular testing is not carried out. If you wish to treat water boil it for five minutes, use a filter or treat it chemically.

Transport

Due to limited space on some transport services walkers should arrange their transport at least one week before departure. During the Great Walks Peak Season bus and boat companies depart daily, servicing both ends of the track.

The transport operators listed on the booking form are guaranteed to depart daily. Alternative transport options listed near the back page of this booklet should be booked directly with the operator.

Those wishing to return to Queenstown on the day they come off the track need to book 2.30 pm or 3 pm buses from Milford Sound.

There are several companies offering Milford Sound cruises departing between 2.45pm and 3.15pm daily. To take one of these cruises walkers need to catch the 2pm boat from the end of the track. All Milford Sound cruises return in time to connect with the 5pm bus to Te Anau.

Alternatively overnight accommodation is available at the Milford Sound Backpackers Lodge (limited campsites also) or on one of the overnight cruise boats on Milford Sound. Operators offer cruises on Milford Sound throughout the day from 9.00am.

There are no regular scheduled transport services outside the Great Walks Peak Season.

Warning - vehicles left at roads ends have sometimes been broken into or vandalised.

Weather Information

Centred at latitude 45° south, Fiordland National Park lies in an area of predominately westerly airstreams, known as the Roaring 40s, delivering high rainfall and changeable weather patterns to the area. Cold temperatures, snow, strong winds and heavy rain can occur at any time of the year.

Westerly winds pick up moisture as they cross the Tasman Sea. As winds rise to cross the Southern Alps the moisture condenses and falls as heavy rain in the west, with snow at higher levels. Rain decreases in intensity towards the east.

Be prepared for at least one wet day on your trip.

During cold, wet and windy conditions, exposure and hypothermia can affect anyone and can kill. From initial signs to unconsciousness can take as little as 30 minutes. Correct clothing is essential.

During warm weather dehydration can lead to heat exhaustion so water should always be carried.

Please check for current conditions and weather warnings before departing on your trip.



NEW ZEALAND ENVIRONMENTAL CARE CODE

- Protect and respect natural and cultural heritage
- Show care for plants and animals
- Keep waterways clean
- Take all your rubbish with you
- Use toilets provided
- Carry a fuel stove
- Stay on tracks and camp carefully
- Share the outdoors - be considerate of others
- Toitu te whenua - leave the land undisturbed

Weather Information at Mintaro Hut

	Highest temp°C	Average daily high°C	Lowest temp°C	Days with rain
October	25	15	-1	18
November	29	18	1	14
December	30	19	1	18
January	30	20	2	15
February	33	20	2	17
March	30	19	-1	12
April	19	13	-2	16

Safety Information

Safety and Track Closure

Your safety is your responsibility. If any injury or illness occurs, during the Great Walks Peak Season the Department of Conservation staff should be contacted. They will be able to arrange an emergency evacuation from the track if required. There is no cellphone coverage on the track.

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468

Report any safety hazards or conservation emergencies
For fire and search and rescue call 111

At times avalanche danger (especially in October and early November), flooding and high winds (which can occur at any time) may cause certain parts of the track to become impassable. **Walkers due to start** the track **may** be given the option of flying by helicopter over the hazard area, depending on safety and the ability to fly in the weather conditions. The cost of this flight will be passed onto walkers, who will only be able to proceed onto the track if they are prepared to use the helicopter. If walkers are unable to proceed onto the track a full refund will be given.

Walkers already on the track will be notified of hazards or weather conditions as soon as possible by DOC staff, located at each hut. If the track has to be closed walkers will be informed of their options. These could include having to spend an extra night on the track, returning via the direction already walked or being helicoptered over a hazard area. Please refer to the cancellation policy on page 34.

Outside the Great Walks Peak Season walkers have to be totally self-sufficient. They should carry mountain radios and/or personal locator beacons (PLBs) and leave intentions of their trip, including transport arrangements to and from the track, at the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre.



Crossing a river in flood. Photo: DOC



Milford Track after heavy rain. Photo: DOC

Flood Areas

After heavy rain flooding is common in several areas on the track, particularly between Hirere and Bus Stop in the Clinton Valley and between Boat Shed and Poseidon Creek in the Arthur Valley. Stream and river levels will drop rapidly once rain stops. If you are caught between flooded streams seek higher ground and wait for water levels to drop.

Avalanches

Fifty six avalanche paths cross the Milford Track between 6 Mile in the Clinton Valley and Quintin Hut, in the Arthur Valley.

- Avalanches can occur at any time but are most common during or directly after snow and rain, especially during the September to early November period.
- Avalanche and snow hazard can change rapidly from low to high within a 24 hour period.
- Start zones of avalanche paths cannot be seen from track due to steep sides of valleys.

Fires

Fire is a major threat within Fiordland National Park and open fires are not permitted.

Lost

The Milford Track is well marked but if you become lost stop, find shelter and stay calm - you will survive. Put on extra clothing and assist rescuers should you hear them searching for you. Please record your name in the hut book at each hut.

Winter Tramping

General

During the Off Peak/Winter Season (May to mid October) the Milford Track remains open, weather and track conditions permitting. There are fewer people walking the track and **you cannot make a booking** for the huts, but must buy hut tickets before you start. The track conditions and hut facilities during winter are different to conditions in summer.

After reading the notes below you must be absolutely confident you have the skills, fitness and equipment necessary to walk the track.

Safety

A winter crossing of the Milford Track should only be attempted by experienced, well equipped parties. The Fiordland environment can be very inhospitable and unforgiving during winter and spring seasons.

- Many bridges are removed to avoid damage from avalanches. You must be competent with crossing large swift icy rivers.
- The track over MacKinnon Pass is not marked and is often blanketed in thick snow. Navigation and alpine skills and equipment are essential for your survival.
- Avalanches occur daily during some conditions – you must enquire at the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre before starting the track and follow the information given.
- You must carry a mountain radio or a personal locator beacon (preferably both) for communication and safety backup.
- It is essential to let someone responsible know your intentions. You can leave your intentions at the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre in Te Anau.
- You must be totally self-sufficient.
- **Your safety and the decisions you make whilst on the track are fully your responsibility.**



The Mackinnon Pass in snow. Photo: Hamish Angus

Weather and Avalanches

During the winter months Fiordland can be very wet and cold, the days are short, the mountains are high and therefore let little sunlight into the valleys, and track conditions change as the weather changes. Rain falls as snow in the alpine areas. On clear days the snow turns to ice.

Avalanches are a frequent activity – there are 56 paths which bring avalanches to the valley floor. Avalanche start zones (and therefore avalanche predictions) cannot be seen from the track. Risk is higher during or directly after snow and rain. The hazard can change over a 24 hour period. The Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre staff will advise if a through trip is possible taking into account the forecasted weather at the time of your enquiry.

However if conditions change while you are on the track, you will need to make your own decision whether to continue, stay at the hut or turn back.

Always check current weather and avalanche conditions before departing on your trip.

Walking Options

- Day 1: Boat from Te Anau Downs to Glade Wharf and walk to Clinton Hut.
- Day 2: Clinton Hut to Mintaro Hut.
- Day 3: Mintaro Hut to Dumpling Hut.
- Day 4: Dumpling Hut to Sandfly Point, boat to Milford Sound or
- Day 4: Dumpling Hut to Sutherland Falls return.
- Day 5: Dumpling Hut to Sandfly Point, boat to Milford Sound.

Some people choose to walk to Mintaro Hut on Day 1. This is not advisable as trampers find they run out of daylight hours before reaching Mintaro Hut. The hardest part of this days tramp is the last hour where a river needs to be crossed (possibly without a bridge), there is a hill to climb and perhaps fresh snow to wade through. This is not safe in fading light conditions.

If a through trip is not advisable, and weather and track conditions permit, then the following is also an option:

- Day 1: Drive to Milford Sound and stay overnight at Milford Sound Lodge. (This is necessary because of short daylight hours and possible icy conditions on the Milford Road).
- Day 2: Boat Milford Sound to Sandfly Point and walk to Dumpling Hut.
- Day 3: Dumpling Hut to Sutherland Falls return.
- Day 4: Dumpling Hut to Sandfly Point, boat to Milford Sound.

Hut Fees and Facilities

Fees

Bookings are not required during the Off Peak/Winter Season (May to mid October), but you must have backcountry hut tickets or a Backcountry Hut Pass, available for purchase at any Department of Conservation Office or Visitor Centre. Please record your Backcountry Hut Pass number beside your name in the hut book or deposit your hut tickets in the green hut ticket box.

Facilities

Radios, gas for cooking, fuel for heating and lighting are removed from the huts. Running water is not provided at the huts. Only a winter pit toilet is provided. There are no staff at the huts.

Compliance

Random compliance checks will be carried out on the track during the winter season by roving track rangers.

Camping is not permitted anywhere on the Milford Track at any time of the year.

Hut Use

Trampers are expected to leave the huts clean and tidy and to stand mattresses upright to air. Please do not put food scraps in the sink or toilets. **You must carry out all your rubbish.**

Fire

Remember to replace all wood used and please put all ashes into the metal ash drums provided.

Two huts were nearly burned to the ground over recent years. There was fire damage to floors and walls caused by hot ashes left inside in a plastic bucket and a cardboard container.

Water

Water is available from streams or rivers as hut supplies are turned off during the winter. If you doubt the quality of the water use a water filter, iodine drops or boil it.

Toilets

There are pit toilets available at the huts. You must use these so water is not polluted. **Take your own toilet paper.**

Transport

All transport must be arranged before going onto the track. Transport may be affected by weather conditions therefore it is recommended that you make arrangements in **Te Anau just prior to departure. Minimum numbers will apply.**

Further Information

For further information about walking the Milford Track during the **Off Peak/Winter Season** please contact:

Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre (open 7 days)
Department of Conservation
P.O. Box 29, Te Anau.

Tel. (03) 249 7924, Fax: (03) 249 7613

Email: fiordlandvc@doc.govt.nz

Track Notes – Day by Day

Please refer to the track profile on pages 4 - 5 and the trackmap on pages 20 - 21.

The track is marked with "Mile Posts" and there are very good guide books giving detailed information on a mile by mile basis, available from the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre. Times are approximate and will vary according to fitness, pace of the group and weather conditions. Each evening DOC staff at the huts will give a safety briefing talk.

Day One, Glade Wharf - Clinton Hut

5 km, 1 - 1.5 hours

After a launch cruise from Te Anau Downs (1¼ hours approx) there is a one kilometre walk to Glade House, the first overnight stop for guided walkers. Just past Glade House is the largest and the first of the nine suspension bridges you will encounter. On a fine day this is a pleasant lunch stop.

Independent walkers continue through attractive beech forest along the banks of the Clinton River, for about one hour, to the Clinton Hut, just before the 3-mile marker. There are good swimming holes near the hut.

Side trip – *Wetland Walkway, 15 min return. This track is signposted 10 minutes prior to the Clinton hut. Guided interpretation trips may be available during the late afternoon, depending on the track staff's commitments.*

During the booked walking season the first night must be spent at Clinton Hut, as the previous day's walkers will be at the next hut at Mintaro.



Swingbridge over the Clinton River.
Photo: Chris Rance

Day Two, Clinton Hut - Mintaro Hut

16.5 km, 6 hours

It is a gradual climb from Clinton Hut as the track follows the Clinton River to its source, Lake Mintaro, at the base of Mackinnon Pass. It passes through sections of forest and crosses many streams, which may need to be forded during or after heavy rain.

The track passes through many avalanche paths. There are 56 such paths along the track which can cause delays or make the track impassable at any time, especially during the September to early November period. These are sign posted during the danger season. Use caution at other times as dictated by the weather.

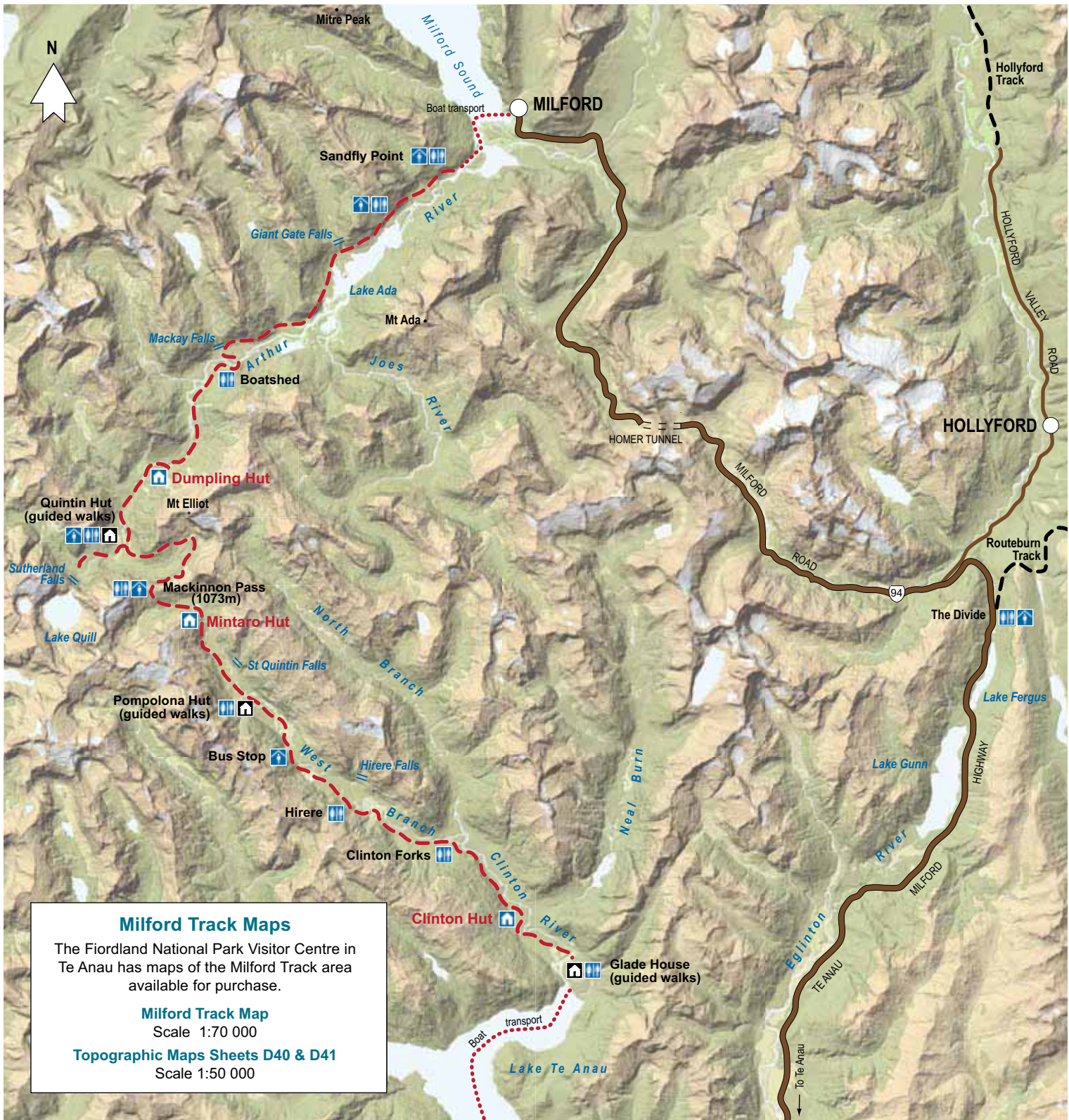
An hour from Clinton Hut, near the 5-mile marker, is Clinton Forks. The toilet is all that remains of what was once the first night's stop for independent walkers. The changing course of the river eroded the site.

About 40 minutes further on is a large slip, which occurred in 1982, forming a lake behind it. From here to Hirere Falls (about 20 minutes), near the 7-mile marker, the track is prone to flooding during heavy rain. There is a toilet at the Hirere Falls Guided-Walk Shelter. Not far from this point you will get your first view of the Mackinnon Pass and the Pampolona ice field.

It is about a one hour walk from Hirere Falls to Marlenes Creek, just past the 10-mile, which can cause problems during heavy rain. The Bus Stop Shelter is located just before the creek and a toilet is located just past the creek.



Day two on the Milford Track. Photo: Kerry Wray



Milford Track Maps

The Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre in Te Anau has maps of the Milford Track area available for purchase.

Milford Track Map

Scale 1:70 000

Topographic Maps Sheets D40 & D41

Scale 1:50 000

After passing the turnoff to the guided walks Pampolona Hut, there is a short climb before descending to cross a swingbridge. It is approximately 1½ hours from here to the Mintaro Hut. The vegetation starts to change, reflecting the higher altitude and rainfall. There is approximately a 40 minute climb to Mintaro Hut, which is just past the 13-mile marker. This is the second night's stay during the Great Walks Peak Season.

Sutherland Falls. Photo: Kerry Wray



Day Three, Mintaro Hut - Dumpling Hut

14 km, 6 - 7 hours

The track passes above Lake Mintaro, then crosses a swingbridge to the base of the Mackinnon Pass. From the 14-mile marker the track is a well-graded, steady, zigzag climb of about two hours to the Mackinnon Memorial. On the way there are excellent views of Lake Mintaro and the Clinton Canyon. It is worth stopping for a few minutes at the memorial to take in the view from the 12 second drop, before commencing the final climb to the highest point of the track and the Pass Day Shelter (1069m). It is a twenty minute walk from the memorial to the shelter. The toilet with the best view in Fiordland is located near the shelter. The shelter is supplied with a gas-cooking ring during the summer season. The 8km walk from the pass to the Dumpling Hut drops 970m steadily over rocky, uneven terrain and provides spectacular views. For many walkers this is the most difficult part of the track. Take regular five minute rests on the down hill section – your knees and ankles will be very grateful!

From the pass the track continues under the Jervious Glacier to the Moraine Creek Bridge. In October-November (or at other times of extreme weather conditions), walkers may be redirected down an emergency track by barriers placed across the track, detouring away from high avalanche areas.

The Moraine Creek Bridge is the first bridge crossed on the descent. Shortly after, the track passes the 18-mile marker and on to a wooden boardwalk and staircase section, beside the Roaring Burn and its numerous waterfalls. It then continues to follow the river, with the Dudleigh Falls located about two thirds of the way down, near the 19-mile marker. A set of rocky and uneven zigzags leads to the bottom of the hill and the 20-mile marker.

From here turn left and cross the bridge to the public shelter, toilet and Sutherland Falls or turn right to Dumpling Hut.

Side trip – *Sutherland Falls, 1½ return. Leave your pack at the Quintin Public Shelter and take the track on the left to the Sutherland Falls. The falls drop 580m (1904 feet) from Lake Quill in three stages. The track to the base of the falls climbs steadily but is well worth the effort. For the adventurous, try walking behind the falls.*

From the shelter it is about a one hour walk to Dumpling Hut. There is an excellent view behind of the Sutherland Falls, about 20 minutes along the track to the Dumpling Hut, at the 22-mile marker. Just before reaching Dumpling Hut there is a raised boardwalk. After dark this is a good place to spot glow worms. A good swimming hole can be found just opposite the turnoff to the huts. In the main hut there is an excellent track time/place guide that is well worth noting.

Day Four, Dumpling Hut - Sandfly Point

18 km, 5.5 - 6 hours

The track gently descends for about 1½ hours, following the Arthur River to the historic Boatshed. A toilet is located here. After crossing the swingbridge, the second largest on the track and a good place to spot trout and eels, it is 20 minutes to MacKay Falls and Bell Rock, passing the 22-mile marker. Bell Rock is an intriguing rock, which has been worn by water and grinding stones and then tipped over in a rock fall. An hour further on the track crosses two suspension bridges at Poseidon Creek, near the 28-mile marker.

The rock cuttings alongside the Arthur River and around Lake Ada were blasted out by prison gangs and contracted work parties in the late 19th century. An hour later, near the 30-mile marker, are the Giant Gate Falls. There is a shelter and toilet located beside the river and falls, making it an ideal lunch stop.

From here it is about 1½ hours to Sandfly Point, passing the 33-mile marker. Flooding can cause delays through this section of track. If the track is closed Department of Conservation Staff will notify walkers during the peak season.

During the Great Walks Peak Season you will need to leave Dumpling Hut at 8-9am, to meet with the boats departing from Sandfly Point to Milford Sound. The boat crossing takes approximately 20 minutes.



Arthur River. Photo: Olivia Dovey

History

A wide selection of books on this subject are available from the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre. There is also extensive reading in each of the huts on the track.

What today is known as the Milford Track was once one of the two principal trails, used by Maori, linking Fiordland with the rest of Te Wai Pounamu (South Island) for the gathering of pounamu (greenstone). The translucent koko-takiwai, (bowenite form of pounamu), found mainly near the entrance of Piopiotahi (Milford Sound) was favoured as it was softer and easier to shape into a finer quality product, such as hei-tiki. Koko-takiwai was transported by backpack over Omanui (Mackinnon Pass) down the Waitawai (Clinton River) to the head of Te Ana-au (Lake Te Anau) and by canoe to the head of the Waiau River and beyond.

Legend tells of the visit to Piopiotahi by the waka (canoe) Tairea. Koko-takiwai and her children, known as Matakirikiri, were left behind by the Tairea and were turned into the various forms of pounamu.

Donald Sutherland and John Mackay found Mackay and Sutherland Falls in 1880 and possibly also crossed Mackinnon Pass before pioneer explorer and surveyor Quintin Mackinnon.



Members of the Gifford party outside a hut. Date: circa 1890. Reference No. G-60523-1/2. Photographer: Algenon Gifford. Photo courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ.

In 1888 Sutherland and others were commissioned to cut a track up the Arthur Valley as far as Sutherland Falls, while Mackinnon was employed to cut a track up the Clinton Valley from the head of Lake Te Anau. On 17 October 1888 Mackinnon and his companion Ernest Mitchell reached the head of the Clinton Valley, crossed the pass and



Track to Sutherland Falls, Milford Sound. Date: circa 1900. Reference No. F-66563-1/2. Photo: Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ.

continued down the Arthur Valley on the track cut by Sutherland.

Mackinnon was the first Milford Track guide and was long remembered for his good nature and ability at cooking pompolonas, a type of scone from which one of the guided trip huts takes its name. He ferried parties in his sailing boat Juliet to the head of Lake Te Anau, then up over the pass to Lake Ada, where another boat ferried them to Sutherland's accommodation house at Milford Sound. Trampers then had to walk back along the track from Milford Sound until 1954, when the Te Anau-Milford Sound highway opened.

In the early days pack horses were used to carry stores to the huts. Beyond Pompolona Hut is a cleared area which was the old horse paddock and stables site. Old number eight wire and insulators visible along parts of the track are the remains of a telephone system, which linked the huts before radio communication was adopted.

The title "the finest walk in the world" first accompanied an article by poet Blanche Baughan, which was published in The London Spectator in 1908.

Today the Milford Track is New Zealand's best known walking track, with over 14,000 independent and guided trampers completing the track each year.

Natural History

A wide selection of books about the following topics is available from the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre.

Geology

The South Island of New Zealand is split from Milford Sound in the south to the Nelson Lakes area in the north, by the Alpine Fault, approximately 500 km in length. The fault represents the onshore meeting of two tectonic plates, the Australian Plate to the west and the Pacific Plate to the east. Rocks on the south-east side of this fault closely match those on the north-west side of the fault.

Deep earthquakes, seldom felt, occur along this fault as the Australian Plate sinks below the Pacific Plate to the south of Milford Sound. Compressional and lateral movement of Milford Sound continues to build the Southern Alps. To the east of the North Island the Australian Plate overrides the Pacific Plate.

Fiordland National Park has some of the oldest rocks in New Zealand. Most are extremely hard crystalline rocks with slow erosion rates. Beginning about 500 million years ago, intense heat and pressure deep in the earth's crust formed gneiss and schist. They have been thrust

upwards by folding of the crust and fragmented by faulting. Igneous rocks have intruded into these rocks and in eastern parts of Fiordland a chain of volcanoes added a mixture of molten rock. Parts of Fiordland have also submerged under the sea at times, before again being uplifted. Layers of sandstone, mudstone and limestone seen in the mountains of Fiordland are a result of these periods of submersion. Over the last two million years periods of glaciation have occurred, forming the steep sided U-shaped valleys and lake beds, which dominate the Fiordland landscape.

**Te Wāhipounamu –
South West New Zealand
World Heritage Area**




South West New Zealand is one of the great wilderness areas of the Southern Hemisphere. Known to Māori as Te Wāhipounamu (the place of greenstone), the South West New Zealand World Heritage Area incorporates Aoraki/Mt. Cook, Westland /Tai Poutini, Fiordland and Mount Aspiring National Parks, covering 2.6 million hectares.

World Heritage is a global concept that identifies natural and cultural sites of world significance, places so special that protecting them is of concern for all people.

Some of the best examples of animals and plants, once found on the ancient supercontinent Gondwana, live in the World Heritage Area.

Flora

Silver, red and mountain beech forest dominate the lower Clinton Valley. Around the slips and avalanche paths of the central Clinton Valley, colonising species such



Ranunculus lyallii - mountain buttercup. Photo: DOC

as fuchsia, wineberry, broadleaf and mountain ribbon-wood are common. Beyond Mintaro Hut the track climbs through sub-alpine scrub and into the tussocks and alpine herb communities of the Mackinnon Pass. In early summer the white flowers of the mountain buttercup, mountain daisies and snow marguerites can be seen. From the pass the track drops through a shrub land zone, including mountain three finger, the tree daisy (with yellow flowers), and a native broom (which has sweetly scented mauve flowers).

The lower Arthur Valley contains a more diverse forest due to higher rainfall and milder temperatures. Species present include silver beech, kamahi, miro, totara, fuchsia, mahoe and pate. Ferns, mosses and lichens are abundant through this section of track.



The track passing through forest in the Arthur Valley. Photo: DOC

Common Fauna

Open areas

Redpolls, silvereyes



Silvereye. Photo: R. Morris

Fast-flowing river

Whio (blue duck)



Blue ducks. Photo: R. Morris

Beech forest

Robins



Robin. Photo: R. Morris

Subalpine scrub

Rock wrens



Rock wren. Photo: R. Morris

Bushline

Brown creepers



Brown creeper. Photo: M.F. Soper

Alpine

Kea



Kea. Photo: J. Edwards

Bush

Bellbirds, tomtits, grey warblers, rifleman, mohua (yellowheads)



Bellbird. Photo: P. Schilov

At night

Brown kiwi, weka and ruru (morepork)



Morepork. Photo: Dick Veitch

Conservation Projects

Department of Conservation biodiversity staff are carrying out an intensive stoat trapping programme on the Milford track and side valleys.



Stoat. Photo: DOC

Stoats were introduced to

New Zealand in the 1880s to control the explosion of rabbits, another introduced animal. Prior to this time New Zealand's native birds had enjoyed an environment free of predatory mammals. The introduction of stoats has seen a steady decline of bird species in the New Zealand bush and today the stoat is considered the greatest threat to many species.

The stoat control programme began in the Clinton Valley in 1999 and in the Arthur Valley in 2003 to investigate the effects stoats were having on the populations of whio (blue ducks) in the Milford Track area.

Stoat traps are placed at approximately 200 metre intervals along the length of the track and up some side valleys. During the three years of study when no stoat control was carried out in the Arthur Valley approximately 25% of the adult females were killed by stoats and no ducklings fledged. Over the same period trapping in the Clinton Valley caught 576 stoats.



Clinton River in the Clinton Valley. Photo: Kerry Wray

Since the stoat control programme began in the Arthur Valley in 2003, 28 ducklings have been produced.

The stoat control programme is now ongoing in both valleys. Nest monitoring is carried out and the ducklings are banded and radio tracked to monitor juvenile dispersal. Results show that the whio population is recovering quickly.

Trapping has also benefited other bird life in both valleys with increases in the numbers of whio (blue duck), kaka, kiwi and weka (woodhen) to name a few.

Whio

The whio (blue duck) is a unique and endangered species. It is endemic to New Zealand and has no close relatives anywhere in the world.

It is blue-grey in colour with a reddish-brown spotted breast, a pale pink bill and yellow eyes and weighs about 800-1100 grams.

Living in fast flowing streams and rivers whio are often seen standing on rocks or feeding on fresh water invertebrates. Whio remain in territorial pairs all year. The female call is a low rattling growl, while the males call of "fee-o" gives the duck its Maori name.

On the Milford Track whio can often be seen at Clinton Forks, near Mintaro Hut, at the lower end of the airstrip near Quintin Hut and near Dumpling Hut.



Whio (blue duck). Photo: DOC

The Department of Conservation gratefully acknowledges the support of local tourism company Real Journeys, for the Whio/Blue Duck Recovery Programme.

Milford Track walkers can also assist the recovery programme. By adding a Real Journeys cruise on Milford Sound to your Milford Track booking, Real Journeys will donate \$10 from every adult cruise ticket sold to the recovery programme.

How to Book

Bookings are required for the peak season between 28 October 2008 and 29 April 2009 and will open at 9 am (New Zealand time) on Tuesday 15 July 2008.

For those wishing to walk the Milford Track outside the peak summer season please refer to the Winter Tramping Notes section.

Before Booking

It is strongly recommended that you read the following track information sections before making a booking:

- Track Location and Travel Times
- What to Take
- Accommodation
- Safety and Track Guide
- Terms and Conditions

To Make a Booking Online

You can make a booking online through our website www.doc.govt.nz. You will have 25 minutes to complete your booking.

You will require the following information:

- The date you wish to start the Milford Track (all three nights will be automatically booked)
- Names and ages of all walkers.
- Credit card (Visa and Mastercard) to which payment will be charged via the ANZ Bank online secure payment system.

The Department of Conservation will not hold your credit card details.

Personal information held about walkers will be used for booking purposes only and will not be handed out to any third parties.

To Make a Manual Booking

You can book by completing a Milford Track Booking Form and sending it to the Great Walks Booking Office in Te Anau by either fax, mail, email or phone. Contact details are listed on the back of this booklet. Full payment in New Zealand dollars must accompany your booking.

Commercial Groups

A concession (an official authorisation) is required to operate any commercial activity in an area managed by the Department of Conservation. Concessions are required for, but not restricted to: guiding operations (including tramping, walking, fishing, hunting, climbing, ski tours, kayaking, canoeing); transport services; commercial education or instruction activities.

The Department of Conservation managed huts on the Milford Track cannot be booked by commercial operators. More information regarding concessions can be found on our website www.doc.govt.nz About DOC > Concessions and Permits > Concessions

Discounts

Members of Federated Mountain Club, NZ Deer Stalkers Association and Mountain Safety Council staff and instructors who hold a current Backcountry Hut Pass are entitled to a 10% discount on hut fees. The Backcountry Pass and associate membership numbers must be quoted to DOC staff when making a booking. Please contact the Great Walks Bookings Office in Te Anau for details. No other discounts are available.

Hut Prices

Details listed below are correct at time of printing. Prices charged will be those valid at the time of travel.

N.B. Age categories and associated costs for transport options differ from those below. See the Milford Track Booking Form for details.

Unbooked Walkers

Walkers who do not have valid hut tickets will be charged a premium rate of up to 100% of the adult rate, regardless of age.

GREAT WALKS PEAK SEASON

	Adult 18 years+	Child/Youth 0 - 17 years
Huts	\$135 (3 nights)	Free

OFF PEAK/WINTER SEASON

	Adult 18 years+	Child/Youth 0 - 17 years
Huts	\$15 per night	Free

Terms and Conditions

- For safety reasons accommodation passes are not transferable to another person.
- The cost will automatically be charged to your credit card at the time of booking. No booking will be accepted without payment. All prices are in New Zealand dollars and include GST (goods and services tax). Current prices can be found on our website www.doc.govt.nz or on the booking form.
- Confirmation will be sent by email or post. Accommodation passes and transport tickets can only be collected from the Great Walks Bookings Office in Te Anau.
- The Milford Track is not recommended for children under 10 years. Children 14 years and under must be accompanied by an adult.
- For booking purposes the following age classifications for hut passes apply:

	Hut	Transport
Adult	18 years plus	15 years plus
Child/Youth	0 - 17 years	5 - 14 years
Infant		0 - 4 years

Alterations, Transfers and Cancellations Policy

- Bookings are only valid for the dates confirmed. Penalty fees of 100% of the accommodation fee will apply to those who do not have a valid accommodation pass for the night.
- Alterations may be made to any existing reservation via the internet or at selected DOC offices. Alterations made at a DOC office may incur a service fee of \$10. Service fees, including booking and/or alteration fees are not refundable.
- Track Closure – If the DOC closes the track due to severe weather or track conditions, a full refund will be given on the unused accommodation tickets. Those walkers already on the track may be required to exit the track. Cancelled groups will be able to set out on the track only if there are vacancies available once the track reopens.

- Cancellations – If walkers cancel their bookings the following fees apply. Fee charged are calculated from the original start date of the booking. If the booking has been transferred to an earlier date, fees will be calculated from the earlier date.

More than 10 days before the start date and **within 48 hours** of making the booking – **full refund**.

More than 10 days before the start date and **more than 48 hours** after making the booking – **25% cancellation fee**.

Between 3 - 10 days before the start date – **50% cancellation fee**.

1 - 2 days before start date and on or after start date – **no refund**.

- Medical Refunds – An 80% refund will be given if medical circumstances prevent a customer walking the track. A medical certificate must accompany the cancellation request.
- Transport up to the day before start date – full refund. On or after start date – **no refund**.
- Bookings can only be transferred within the current Great Walks season. Transfer fees of up to \$10 may apply.
- Refunds can only be made to the person who paid the original booking.

No cash refunds will be given. All other refunds will be made to the payment method of the original booking.

If a credit card refund is required, credit card details will need to be supplied again as this information is not retained after original payment has been made.
- Latest alteration and cancellation fees can be found on our website www.doc.govt.nz

Travel Insurance

We recommend you arrange travel insurance to guard against loss of costs associated with cancellation or delay of your trip. The Department of Conservation will not be liable for injury, damage or any costs incurred by intending walkers and is unable to rearrange forward transport and accommodation bookings.

Transport, Equipment and Accommodation

Please book with the relevant operator. Times and prices may not be applicable outside the Great Walks season.

Transport

Kiwi Discovery

All transport requirements for the Milford Track. Also **independent track packages** including accommodation, track transport, DOC hut fees, track briefing, and equipment hire. Great pre/post track adventure option - Landsborough Wilderness Experience. Kiwi Discovery, 37 Camp St, Queenstown. Tel: 03 442 5109/0800 505 504 Internet: www.kiwidiscovery.com/tracks. Email: tracks@kiwidiscovery.com

Real Journeys

Finish your Milford Track experience with a cruise in Milford Sound. \$10 from the ticket price of each Milford Sound cruise booked through www.doc.govt.nz is donated to who (blue duck) protection. To book Milford Sound cruises, Te Anau Glowworm Caves or Lake Te Anau transport (to start of the Milford Track) Tel 03 249 7416, freephone 0800 65 65 01 (NZ only), www.realjourneys.co.nz

Safer Parking Te Anau

Te Anau police encourage you NOT to leave your car in public car parks. Good rates, very secure. Ph 03 249 7198. www.saferparking.co.nz Email: saferparkingteanau@msn.com

TRACKNET

Fiordland's Track Transport Specialists. Passenger service operates during Fiordland's Great Walks season. 3 times daily service between Queenstown, Te Anau, Milford Sound, Kepler, Routeburn and Milford Tracks. Also to/from Invercargill, Dunedin, Bluff, Manapouri, Hollyford & Mavora Tracks daily. Ph 03 249 7777 or 0800 483 262 (push 2). www.greatwalksnz.com, e-mail res@tracknet.net

Topline Tours - Fiordland

Specialising in group and individual charter services to all Fiordland tracks. Kepler Track daily shuttle service also available. Contact Topline Tours, 13 Worsley St, Te Anau, NZ. Tel 03 249 8059, Fax 03 249 9159. Email: topline@teanau.co.nz Web: www.toplinetours.co.nz

Trips 'n' Tramps Te Anau

Complete your Milford Track experience with a scenic drive to Te Anau with photographic stops. Small group charters in Fiordland and beyond. Ph 03 249 7081, www.tripsntramps.co.nz

Equipment

Outside Sports Te Anau

Quality outdoor clothing and equipment for hire or purchase. Packs, sleeping bags, boots, rainwear, cookers and billy/plate/cup sets. Open 7 days, 9am - 9pm, Town Centre, Te Anau. Ph 03 249 8195, info@teanausports.co.nz www.teanausports.co.nz

Bev's Tramping Gear

Great Walks Special \$120pp. Open daily 9am -12pm and 6.30pm - 8pm, closed Sunday am. Email: bev.hire@xtra.co.nz Website: www.bevs-hire.co.nz ph/fax (03) 249-7389.

Alpine Sports

Trekking, tramping, hiking! Absolutely everything you need. Packs, sleeping bags, rainwear, boots, cookers etc – buy or rent. Queenstown's trekking specialists. Open 7 days – 4 Brecon St, Queenstown. www.alpinesports.co.nz Email: alpinesports@brownsnz.com Phone: 03 442 4003

Accommodation

Steamers Beach Lodge / West Arm Lodge

Affordable quality opposite DOC Te Anau. Private or shared accommodation options (singles, twin, doubles, quad etc). Sky Movies, Internet, pay phones, modern laundries & kitchens, drying room, OSP & car storage, lockers, games room with pool table. BBH cards accepted. Ph 03 249 7737 or 0800 483 262 (push 3). 1 Te Anau-Manapouri Road. www.teanau.info e-mail res@teanau.info

Te Anau Lakeview Holiday Park

Spacious park opposite DOC on Lakefront featuring new amenities (2006), Motels, Tourist flats, Cabins, Lodges and sheltered tent sites. Laundries, Internet, Sky, Luggage Lockers, car storage, Tracknet information centre on-site. Guided Great Walks depart here daily. Ph.03 249 7457 or 0800 483 262 (push 1). 1 Te Anau-Manapouri Road, Te Anau. www.teanau.info e-mail res@teanau.info

Te Anau Lakefront Backpackers

Central lakefront location. Full range of accommodation in five lodges. BBH member hostel. Internet, spa pool. Secure gear storage, off-street parking. Tracknet coaches call daily. 48-50 Lakefront Drive, Te Anau. Ph. +64 (3) 249 7713, Fax +64 (3) 249 8319. Email: res@teanaubackpackers.co.nz Website: www.teanaubackpackers.co.nz

Fiordland National Park Lodge

Beside the lake at Te Anau Downs, 30 km north of Te Anau, 600m to boat departure point for the Milford Track. 3 types of accommodation: hotel rooms, motel units or backpacker rooms with ensuites. Restaurant (bookings essential), bar, free guest car storage while on the track, internet. Ph 64-3-249 7811, Email: info@fiordlandnatparklodge.co.nz www.teanau-milfordsound.co.nz

Real Journeys

Our Milford Sound Overnight Cruises offer a very special experience – keep a look-out for wildlife as you cruise amidst the wilderness, explore by kayak or tender craft and enjoy delicious meals. Choice of private cabins or quad-share compartments. To book overnight cruises or Te Anau Glowworm Caves Tel 03 249 7416, freephone 0800 65 65 01 (NZ only), www.realjourneys.co.nz

Milford Sound Lodge

Located right in Milford Sound at the end of the Milford Track, our Lodge is the perfect base to rest, relax and explore Milford Sound. A range of accommodation options available, cosy dorms, private twin/double rooms and new en-suited riverside chalets complete with a bath to soak those sore muscles. Bookings essential phone 03 2498071 email bookings@milfordlodge.com or book online www.milfordlodge.com

YHA Te Anau Hostel

4+ Star Qualmark rated backpacker hostel, Enviro Silver, multi-share, single, twin, double, family and en suite rooms. Internet with Skype, luggage storage, free movie hire, laundry with indoor and outdoor drying areas. Car parking. Edible garden and great BBQ area. 29 Mokonui Street. Ph. 03 249 7847 email yha.teanau@yha.co.nz Book online: www.yha.co.nz

Contact Details

Great Walks Peak Season

To make a booking or for further information about the Milford Track during the **Great Walks Peak Season** contact:

Great Walks Bookings Office

Department of Conservation

Lakefront Drive, P.O. Box 29

Te Anau, NEW ZEALAND.

Tel. (03) 249 8514 International ++64 3 249 8514

Fax. (03) 249 8515 International ++64 3 249 8515

Email: greatwalksbooking@doc.govt.nz

Website: www.doc.govt.nz

Office hours: 8.30am - 6pm (7 days, Nov - April)
8.30am - 12 noon. 1pm - 4.30pm
(Mon - Fri, May - Oct)

Off Peak/Winter Season

For further information about walking the Milford Track during the **Off Peak/Winter Season** please contact:

Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre

Department of Conservation

P.O. Box 29, Te Anau.

Tel. (03) 249 7924, Fax: (03) 249 7613

Email: fiordlandvc@doc.govt.nz

Website: www.doc.govt.nz

Office hours: 8.30am - 4.30pm, 7 days.

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