

# OTUNAHE SCENIC RESERVE

## SELF-GUIDED WALK



Grade: Medium-High. Time: 2 ½ to 3 hours.

Ensure you have good footwear and drink.

Queries? Contact Experience Pūrangi: 06 756 8925

The Otunahe Scenic Reserve (approx 70 hectares) is a private QEII-covenanted reserve which lies on the farm property of Bob and Karen Schumacher. Both the farm and the reserve are within the much larger predator-controlled area cared for by the East Taranaki Environment Trust (ETET) trading as Experience Pūrangi. The reserve is a wonderful example of mature native forest.

The Schumacher's property is a mix of farmland (7%), exotic forestry (18%) and mature and regenerating native forest (75%), a similar ratio to that of the ETET project, giving visitors the opportunity to experience a snapshot of the project.

The farm part of the property is home to a Red Devon cattle stud.

The cattle are docile with an excellent temperament and originate from Devon in England.

They may be in the paddocks you pass through. It is perfectly safe to go into their paddock.

**Please leave gates as you find them.**

The area has a rich biodiversity and is home to many of our native species including fernbird, bellbird, tui, kereru, New Zealand robin, New Zealand falcon, whitehead and of course the kiwi. (You won't see or hear kiwi because they are nocturnal and shy and they are asleep in their burrows—but you might see footprints, droppings or probe holes in the soil.) The area is also home to long tailed bats.



The secret valley. As well as the rather nasty stinging nettle (beware!) native orchids may be seen beside this stream.



From left: the shy matata or fernbird inhabits wetland areas; uncommon yellow clematis in flower in Otunahe; the New Zealand pigeon or kereru is an important member the forest community.

## THE WALK: FOLLOW THE YELLOW MARKERS

- 1 The walk begins in flat paddocks where the stream has been fenced off. This is home to native fish including the banded kokopu.
- 2 In the last paddock aim for the far right-hand gate and follow the track up to the top paddocks.
- 3 As you catch your breath take time to admire the large manuka/ kanuka hill on your left. This is the territory of the kiwi named Titoko. Eggs were taken from his nest for three years starting in 2004 and were the start of the Operation Nest Egg project to increase kiwi in Egmont National Park.
- 4 Once you get to the top paddock head to the top and admire the view of the mountains in both directions. Turn and head to the top left hand corner. Here a sign on the other side of the pipe gate marks the start of the QE11 reserve. Go through and follow the track.
- 5 The first part of the walk will take you down a spur where at each corner more of the forest opens up to you. A number of signs are in place to identify some of the flora. From start to finish, the scenery, the flora and fauna and the bird life are abundant. The track is in excellent condition but is steep so watch your feet.
- 6 Once you are almost to the bottom you leave the main track and head onto a side track on the left. You then follow a small creek almost to its headwater, past many tiny native orchids. Beware of the stinging nettle that can be found in this area.
- 7 From here staircases will lead you up out of the creek bed to the mighty rimu trees. These magnificent specimens are thought to be about 800 to 1000 years old. Look up and admire what seems to be a forest in its own right, high in the canopy of the tree. As you zigzag up the track in the distance more rimu can be seen.
- 8 At the top you are back in a paddock where trees have been planted for a carbon forest. Far below is the Waitara River. You follow the track along and then down, until you reach the paddocks at the bottom and head back to the start of your walk.

Left: This rimu is so tall it's difficult to portray! You pass it as you come out from the stream and can look back on it again as you climb out of the valley.

