

Below this junction travel down a steep, open creek bed which narrows to a tight gorge where bluffs and bush hang close overhead. The creek continues its steep descent but the gorge is fairly easy to travel when the stream is low. When the stream is high it becomes impassable. Below the gorge the stream swings west, then north to join the Taramakau, descending more gently from the mouth of the gorge to an open 'L-shaped' stretch of streambed. (Parties travelling up Townsend Creek can verify that they are on the right route—the first fifteen minutes to the gorge is in a broad open bed, turning east at right angles a few minutes up from the Taramakau).

Travel in Townsend Creek can be difficult, particularly for less experienced trampers. Travel could take longer than 3 hours, and the trip should not be attempted after heavy rain.

### Townsend Creek – Otira River

Time: 4 – 5 hours

From where Townsend Creek enters Taramakau River, it is about 1 hour either upstream to Locke Stream Hut (true left bank) or downstream to Kiwi Hut (true right bank).

To reach Locke Stream Hut, travel on river flats on the true right of Taramakau River to Locke Stream. Fifty metres up Locke Stream on the true right, a short bush track leads to the hut (18 bunks). Refer to *Arthur's Pass National Park Route Guide No.11* for the trip over Harper Pass from here. To go to Kiwi Hut, travel down the Taramakau, picking the best route to take advantage of grassy flats by crossing and re-crossing the river where necessary. Kiwi Hut (8 bunks) is located on the true right of the Taramakau, about 1 hour below Townsend Creek. A sign-posted track leads from the riverbed into the bush for 100 metres and crosses a large clearing. The hut stands in bush on the terrace at the far side of the clearing.

From Kiwi Hut, continue following Taramakau River downstream, picking the best places to cross. (Note: If in flood or running high Oteha River can be difficult or dangerous to cross.) Below Pfeifer Creek on the true left of the Taramakau, markers lead the way across the grassy flats to pick up a track through gorse and shrubland. The track ends at a shelter beside Otira River. Select the best place to cross Otira River, aiming for the big orange triangle that indicates the track across farmland to SH 73. If the Otira is too high to cross, there is an alternative route, but be warned it can also be difficult to negotiate in flood conditions. A flood route travels up the true right of Otira River to the Morrison footbridge, about 2 hours from the

confluence. This route is slow going and is prone to slips and washouts.

### Hut fees

Please purchase tickets before using the huts.

	Bunks	
Casey Hut	16	Serviced
Trust/Poulter Hut	6	Standard
Poulter Hut	10	Standard
Worsley Biv	4	Basic
Minchin Biv	2	Basic
Locke Stream Hut	18	Standard
Kiwi Hut	8	Basic

Serviced – 3 tickets per person/night

Standard – 1 ticket per person/night

Basic – Free

### Further information

For information, hut tickets, intentions cards, maps, weather forecasts and track condition updates:

Arthur's Pass National Park Visitor Centre

Main Road, Arthur's Pass

Phone 03 318 9211

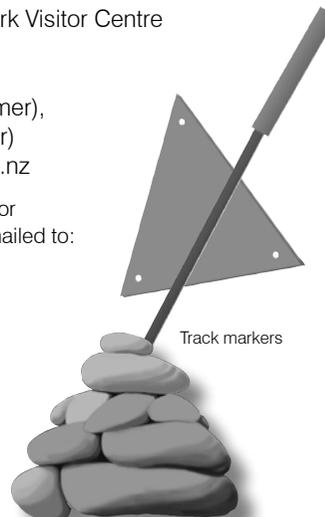
8.00 am – 5.00 pm (summer),

8.30 am – 4.30 pm (winter)

[arthurspassvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:arthurspassvc@doc.govt.nz)

Suggestions for corrections or improvements should be emailed to: [recreation@doc.govt.nz](mailto:recreation@doc.govt.nz)

**DOC HOTline**  
**0800 362 468**  
 Report any safety hazards or  
 conservation emergencies  
 For fire and search and rescue call 111



Track markers

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# Minchin Pass – Townsend Creek



Route guide 9

ARTHUR'S PASS NATIONAL PARK



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## General information

**Time:** 3–4 days (shuttle required)

**Grade:** Route and tramping track

**Experience:** Suitable for well-equipped and experienced back-country trampers only



**Best season:** Summer and autumn

**NZTopo50:** Moana BU20, Haupiri BU21, Cass BV21  
**(NZMS260:** Dampier L33 and Otira K33)

**Hazards:** Flooded rivers, avalanche, unmarked route

**Safety:** Safety is your responsibility. This route guide must be read in conjunction with *Tramping in Arthur's Pass National Park*, a free brochure with important safety information.

**Note:** true left and true right refer to the side of the valley or river when facing and looking downstream.

## Introduction

This route travels the eastern and northern flanks of the park. Travel to Casey Hut is possible without having to ford a major stream but after that there are a good number of crossings which may become impossible if rivers are up. The sections through upper Minchin Stream and Townsend Creek are significantly more difficult. In particular, the gorge of Townsend Creek is impassable when the creek is running high, as descent through the bush on either side is not possible.

## Getting there

The track starts at Andrews Shelter, on Mount White Road, which turns off SH 73, 24 km east of Arthur's Pass. The western end is at the Taramakau River valley, which meets Otira River at Aickens, beside SH 73, 25 km west of Arthur's Pass.

### Andrews Shelter – Casey Hut

**Time:** 7 – 8 hours

The flats on either side of Casey Saddle are linked to Andrews Shelter and Casey Hut by good, well-marked tramping tracks. Alternatively, the gorges of Andrews Stream and Surprise Stream–Casey Stream can be travelled if the streams are low. Both stream routes may contain extensive flood debris. Parties travelling out down the Andrews may find

the streambed a better descent than the undulations and meanderings of the bush track. This route guide describes the tracks only.

From just upstream of Andrews Shelter on the true left, a marked track climbs steeply through open scrub to the bush then gradually ascends. There is a lot of up and down to negotiate side creeks, while the track generally follows the contour. Descend to rejoin Andrews Stream and finally emerge onto Hallelujah Flat. Time: 2 hours 30 minutes. **(Note:** Parties travelling in the opposite direction should keep watch for the track sign a little above the stream on the true left).

From the bush, continue directly up the grassy flats to Casey Saddle. Continue over the tussock saddle (there is no real 'summit') keeping on the elevated grassy terrace on the true right of Surprise Stream until beyond the swampy patch in the stream. Drop into the stream and travel for about 15 minutes to the start of the track on the true right, just below Pampas Stream. The track is indicated by a large orange triangle on a narrow grassy flat, midway between the stream and the bush edge. The track climbs a little, sidles and descends down a ridge to emerge from the bush near Casey Stream on a large grass flat. Casey Hut (16 bunks) stands at the bush edge, midway down the flat. The hut has a radio which is monitored by the Arthur's Pass Visitor Centre during office hours. Times: About 1 hour 30 minutes to cross the upper grass flats and 1 hour 30 minutes for the bush track descent to Casey Hut.

### Casey Hut – Lake Minchin

**Time:** 3 hours 30 minutes

From the hut follow the old vehicle track west to the ford in Casey Stream, close to where the track to Casey Saddle enters the bush. Casey Stream is dangerous to ford when running high. The old vehicle track continues north over a low forested spur, emerging onto a scrub terrace then dropping six metres to the main flats of Poulter River, just up-river from a long, curving shingle cliff. From here continue over gentle grass flats to Trust/Poulter Hut (6 bunks)—at the edge of the bush on the true right, a few hundred metres before the Poulter bends westward. Time from Casey Hut 1 hour 30 minutes. Beyond here the vehicle track turns the corner and peters out. Continue on the true right of the Poulter for a few minutes, then head diagonally across the riverbed aiming for a point about half a kilometre below the outlet of Minchin Stream, the major tributary on the true left. Follow the marker poles through high matagouri to the start of

Lake Minchin track and Poulter Hut (10 bunks). The hut is on the bush edge on the true left bank of the Poulter River—about an hour's travel from Trust/Poulter Hut. A further hour of well-marked track leads to the old hut site at Lake Minchin—pleasant walking on easy gradients through beech forest. This is about 3 hours 30 minutes from Casey Hut. With light packs it makes a pleasant day excursion.

### Lake Minchin – Minchin Pass

**Time:** 3 hours

Follow the well-formed track around the eastern side of the lake and travel up the river flats for about half an hour. A few minutes before the river narrows to an impassable gorge, a track begins on the true right—just beyond the broad shingle fan of a side creek opposite. This track bypasses the gorge, climbing high to rocky outcrops above precipitous bluffs, then drops steeply through bush to rejoin Minchin Stream at its junction with Linwood Creek. Above the gorge the route follows Minchin Stream, constantly crossing and re-crossing, to the next significant junction, about 1.5 km upstream. Minchin Biv (2 bunks) stands a little above the river in the 'V' of this junction. Above the biv, travel on the true right through scrub and across a flat tussock terrace before climbing to the left to the obvious, low tussock saddle which is Minchin Pass.

This area is subject to avalanche activity during the winter. During heavy snow conditions, we advise visitors not to travel this route unless sufficiently equipped and experienced to assess the conditions and choose a safe path through avalanche terrain.



### Minchin Pass – Taramakau River

**Time:** 3 hours

Descend the Pass into Townsend Creek, following markers and a lightly-cut route through tussock and scrub to the stream bed. From here, providing the water level is low, the easiest travel is down the creek bed constantly crossing the stream as it descends over large boulders and low waterfalls. Just before the creek is joined by two tributaries coming from the true left and the true right (grid reference E:2412760, N:5825720) there are a series of more significant waterfalls. These are best avoided by a marked route through bush on the true left. Veer left on approaching the falls and look for track markers.

If travelling up Townsend Creek be wary of the major junction below Mt Wilkinson and ensure Minchin is followed, rather than the more obvious and open stream on the true right leading to Mt Wilkinson and Koeti Pass.