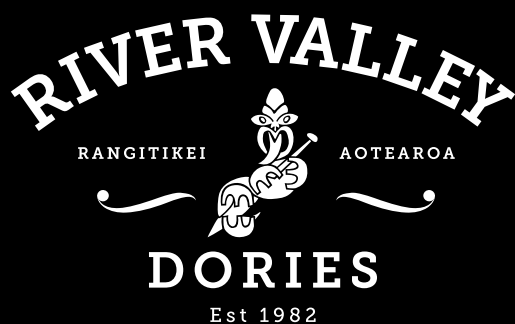


TRIP PLANNING ITINERARY

THE WHANGANUI JOURNEY



) Day Journey with Whanganui River Dories



Whanganui River Dories
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Thanks for Choosing Whanganui River Dories!

About Whanganui River Dories

Whanganui River Dories is a part of River Valley Ventures Ltd. Since 1982, family owned and Taihape based adventure company, River Valley, has been offering trips on the rivers of the central North Island of New Zealand. Based from River Valley Lodge, the company offers raft and inflatable kayak adventures on the Rangitikei and Ngaruroro Rivers, and through Whanganui River Dories, dory trips on the Whanganui River through the Whanganui National Park. We offer river trips that vary in duration from 1/2 day to 6 days.

Part of the experiences River Valley also offers are horse treks with River Valley Stables. These treks, from a half day out to 7 days, explore central North Island high country. A point of difference for River Valley Stables is the emphasis on a learning experience using Natural Horse Training as well as the ride itself.

River Valley is a company that is also heavily involved in "giving back." We do this through our Stoat trapping program that is centred around the Rangitikei River at Pukeokahu near Taihape. The aim of this program is to protect and grow the threatened native bird population.

Thanks for choosing River Valley for your trip. We look forward to being on the river with you.

Guides

The men and women who work at River Valley and Whanganui River Dories are fun loving, and professional, individuals. Many of them have worked for River Valley for years, and either stay and guide right through the winter, or return for each summer season. Over this time through a mixture of personal experience and formal education they gain a huge amount of knowledge about guiding and the area.

All guides carry New Zealand river guide qualifications, which are some of the most stringent in the world. These qualifications include First Aid as well the technical details of guiding boats on rivers.

Many of our guides also have a good knowledge of both the area's natural and human history, along with current environmental issues. They are also great cooks! These are the kind of people you enjoy being around—happy, helpful, thoughtful, intelligent and responsible and they love what they do!

What is in the Trip Planning Itinerary

This Trip Planning Itinerary has been composed to help you plan and prepare for your multi day trip and to give you an overview of the area. You will receive more detailed information from orientation talks and discussions given by your guides both prior to departure and while on your trip.

Please review the following information carefully. If you have any questions or need additional assistance with your arrangements, don't hesitate to give us a call. You may also contact us by e-mail at dories@rivalley.co.nz or by phoning 0800 248666.



Mission and Values

Your goals and Our Expectations

A river trip on the beautiful rivers of the North Island of New Zealand can be a life-changing experience. We will do our best to provide you with the opportunity to have a wonderful outdoor adventure as well as a fun and relaxing holiday. Our customers are expected to exhibit appropriate behaviour while on the river trip, with regard to conservation, preservation and protection protocols. Having said that, we expect you will have a great adventure and a lot of fun!

Wilderness Environment

We feel strongly in preserving the character of natural wilderness. Please consciously make efforts to promote the outdoor experience for everyone on the river trip. Many people retreat to the wilderness for solitude and to get away from the noise of the city. We think you will enjoy taking time to stop, listen, and appreciate the natural sound scape. Please be respectful of other members in your party, so that they too can enjoy the natural wonders of this river trip.

Environmental Ethics

We want to do our best for the environment. On the river we try to reduce our production of rubbish. Prior to leaving for the river trip, please remove and recycle the packaging from any items such as batteries, sunscreen, soap, etc. On the river trip, we will ask you to help us recycle waste by separating paper, plastic, aluminium, and organic materials.

As part of our commitment for "responsible recreation," we make an effort to travel with minimal impact on the environment.

Seven Principles of Ethical Outdoor Recreation:

1. Plan ahead and prepare

Plan ahead by considering your goals and those of your group. Know before you go- get local information, skills and gear you need to make your trip a success.

2. Travel and camp on durable ground

Some areas are more fragile than others. Choose to camp and travel on the most durable surface you can, the best ones are tracks, gravel, snow and most grasses. Impacts on fragile natural features caused by travel and camping can take many years to heal.

3. Dispose of waste properly

Pack it in, pack it out. As users of the outdoors we all have a responsibility to clean up after ourselves. Rubbish and toilet waste are unsightly and can introduce unwanted organisms into the environment. Lead by example, if you see rubbish, pick it up.

4. Leave what you find

People visit natural areas for many reasons; such as exploring nature's mysteries and surprises. When we leave natural objects and artifacts as we found them, we pass the gift of discovery on to those who follow. Many sites of spiritual and cultural significance to Māori are interwoven with the natural environment.

5. Minimise the effects of fire

Local regulations and conditions change depending on time of year and location. Lightweight stoves, fire pans and mounds mean campfires are no longer essential for cooking or comfort. Wildfires are often caused by carelessness and the natural appearance of many recreation sites has been damaged by campfires, visual scarring and stripping vegetation for firewood.

6. Respect wildlife and farm animals

Know when animals are particularly vulnerable, such as breeding times, and change your behaviour with them by observing from a distance. Avoid feeding animals either deliberately or accidentally by leaving food or rubbish lying around. Farming is a big part of New Zealand's culture and economy, know how to move through farms without disturbing farm animals.

7. Be considerate of others

We all go into the outdoors for different reasons, so we must share. Think about others, respect their activities and what they might be trying to get out of their recreational experience.

The Whanganui Journey - (Day

Trip Summary

This trip is a 6 Day Tour from Taumarunui to Pipiriki.

The trip takes us through Whanganui National Park.

We travel to Taumarunui on the morning of our first day with the aim of being on the river by late morning. This will be a big day with travel and on river time. Do not expect to get into camp (generally Ohinepani) before about 5 pm. The following 5 days will likely all be shorter and more relaxing. When the river is low, we will Put On at Ohinepani, cutting out a section of the river that is too rocky to safely boat with our wooden dories.

Be prepared for relaxing days on the river, enjoying great scenery, great food, and great stories.

This trip departs with a minimum of 2 clients. The maximum number of clients per trip is 8. There will be a minimum of one guide up to 4 clients, and two guides for 4 to 8 clients.

Special Features

- Isolation that does not involve days of walking or helicopters
- Spectacular rugged scenery through Whanganui National Park
- Remnants of old Maori Pa and Kainga
- Bridge to Nowhere
- The opportunity to see and hear native birds and wildlife.

Trip Itinerary

A (Day Trip on the Whanganui Journey involves ' nights camping and (days on the river.

Possible Itinerary

(Note: Plans are written in the Sand and the Wind Usually Blows!)

The day Before Departure on the River:

Night Before:

If you are staying at River Valley Lodge there will be an early breakfast (7.30am).

Day 1

You will need to have all your gear packed before breakfast as we will leave straight after having eaten. It takes us about 2 1/2 hours to drive to the Put On at Taumarunui.

We can meet you this morning either along the way at Ohakune or Raetihi, or you can start from River Valley Lodge with us. If you require to be dropped back to your car, then we only do drop offs in Ohakune or Raetihi. We have an arrangement where you can safely leave your vehicle at the Raetihi Holiday Park, 10 Parapara Rd, Raetihi, or with Canoe Safaris, 6 Tay Street, Ohakune.

Upon arrival at Taumarunui we will unload the dories, pack them and do a safety briefing. Expect to spend about 5 - 6 hours on the water this day. The river in this section is characterised by numerous smaller fun rapids. We will camp this night at Ohinepani.

Note: If we deem river conditions are too low to safely operate the dories from Taumarunui, then we will Put On at Ohinepani on Day 1.

Day 2

There will be a coffee call at about 7.00am, followed shortly by breakfast. We aim to be on the water by no later than 9.00am. We like our days on the water to be relaxed and unhurried.

We will have a lunch stop as well as stopping at Marae Kowhai.

This was once a centre of Hau Hau resistance to white settlement and later the mooring for the Houseboat, a floating hotel in the late 1800s.

We will camp this night at Whakahoro, having dinner at Blue Duck Lodge.

Day 3

There will be a coffee call at about 7.00am, followed shortly by breakfast. By now you will be getting into the routine. The aim will be to reach camp at Ohauora between 3 and 4 pm.



Blue Duck Lodge

Day 4

Each day starts with a coffee call - though tea will be available.

Today we will push on to Mangapurua and camp there this night.

Mangapurua is the location of the ill-fated farming settlement and the famous Bridge to Nowhere. You will get a chance to walk into the Bridge in the afternoon.

Day 5

Coffee Call! Breakfast, Pack gear and carry down to the boats. By this stage you are starting to know the routine! Again, the aim is to be on the river by 9.00am at the latest.

The river varies in character on this day with more open sections closing into cliff sided canyons. We will pass Tieke Marae (where we will briefly stop) and the confluence with the Manganui-O-Te-Ao River.

Today our aim is to make Ngaporo Campsite.

The Ngaporo rapid, just above camp, is the site where the steamer, Ohura, capsized with loss of life.

Day 6

This is our last day on the water. We will float through some big pools, travel through cliff lined reaches and run several of the most fun rapids on the whole trip.

We aim to get to our take out at Pipiriki about 12.00 am. Here we will unload the gear, put the dories onto a trailer and start heading home. Expect to drive through Raetihi about 1.30pm and Ohakune about 1.45pm, arriving back at River Valley Lodge by 3 pm.



Price of the Trip Includes

- Delicious meals
- Assorted alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages
- Plates, cups, utensils
- Waterproof bags for clothing and personal items
- Ammo cans for photo equipment and incidentals
- Extra thick self inflating mattress
- Tents
- Nice camp chairs
- Approved lifejackets
- Neoprene boots and paddle pants for cooler conditions

What is **NOT** Included

- Lodging before and after the river trip
- Extra alcoholic beverages, customer preferred soft drinks or juices
- The cost of emergency evacuation and medical care beyond first-aid - in an emergency, evacuation and emergency care will generally be covered by New Zealand ACC
- Guide Gratuities

We Provide

Lifejackets

Life jackets must be worn at all times while riding on the dories. Passengers are required to wear company provided MNZ approved jackets and are not allowed to bring a personal life jacket of their own. At the pre-trip briefing guides will demonstrate how to fit your life jacket securely.

Tents

A two-person dome tent with rain fly will be provided.

Sleep Kits

We will provide an extra thick self inflating foam pad for each participant and a sleeping bag (if required).

Chairs

Collapsible chairs are available at camp if required - many campsites have wooden picnic tables.

NOTE: Please notify our office in advance if you prefer to bring your own camping gear.

Waterproof Dry Bags

Each participant will receive a large waterproof bag ("dry bag") for clothing and personal items. The bags are big and roomy and will have plenty of space for all of the clothing and gear we recommend. An identical bag contains the self inflating foam sleeping pad and tent, provided for your use during the river trip.

Ammo Cans

You will also receive a 50-calibre ammo can. The ammo cans are accessible during the day, and so they are the best place to keep cameras, sun screen, reference materials, pens, notebooks, etc. (The dry bags are accessible, but take a little more effort to open and close.) The ammo cans are 145mm wide x 175mm high x 300mm long.

Although we make every effort to ensure the waterproof qualities of our dry bags and ammo cans, we must caution you that they are not guaranteed to be water tight under all potential conditions, especially if they are not closed properly or if they are immersed.

The Library

Whanganui River Dories trips also carry a small library. These books are available for you to read at either camp or on the boat. They deal with the history, flora and fauna of the river and National Park.

Packing List

Just a reminder that essential on river equipment will be supplied by Whanganui River Dories. This will include a Life jacket. In cooler conditions we will supply a range of warm gear that may include splash pants and neoprene boots.

Other on-river extras you should bring include:

- A pair of River shorts or swimming costume
- A hat to keep the sun off.
- Sunglasses and strap so you don't lose them. (a piece of string also works fine).
- Waterproof sunscreen and lip balm SPF15 minimum.
- Top and bottom Thermals to wear under your raincoat and spray pants (cooler conditions) or just on their own.
- On river footwear

For evenings and around camp you should also bring:

- Lightweight long trousers.
- Quick dry shorts.
- Lightweight Long Sleeved shirt and a t-shirt.
- Fleece jacket.
- Thermal Top for cooler weather. Medium weight – Heavyweight- Capilene, merino or polypropylene is the best.
- Rain jacket - suitable for both on and off the boat
- Underwear.
- Sunhat for around camp.
- Glasses or Contact lenses. Disposable lenses are ideal.
- Toiletries. Toothbrush, toothpaste, biodegradable soap and shampoo.
- Forget the cosmetics and hair dryer! But we do suggest moisturizer.
- A 3-4 season sleeping bag (let us know if you require one from us)
- Travel Pillow.
- Small pack towel.
- Headlamp or head torch and spare batteries.
- Sandals/jandals or shoes/boots for wearing around camp and on hikes.
- Insect Repellent - essential for New Zealand sandflies
- Any medication you may be taking.

Optional items

- A journal for recording your river memories.
- Sketchpad.
- Photographic or video equipment. On most trips we provide a waterproof pelicase for these items. We recommend a cleaning kit as sand gets everywhere. Bring a spare memory card. Also bring spare batteries for your camera.
- Swiss Army Knife or Leatherman.
- An iPod or other music preferences
- A good book to read or a Kindle



Packing List Notes

Health Aids and Medication

If you require daily medication for such things as diabetes or hypertension, you should pack 2-3 separate containers of the medication and keep them in separate places during the river trip. Please advise the Trip Leader if you require cold storage or other special storage facilities for your medication. If you use eyeglasses, contact lenses, hearing aids, or other health aids, it's a smart idea to bring "extras" on the trip with you. You should secure glasses with a chain or strap. Bring extra batteries for hearing aids if possible. Bring extra solution and cleaning agents for contact lenses. The sun, wind, sand and water may irritate contact lens wearers. If you have a pair of regular eyeglasses or prescription sunglasses, you may want to bring them with you, just in case.

Photography Equipment

Most people want to document their river trip with photos. Although your camera will suffer some wear and tear and need a good cleaning when you get home, it should be relatively safe throughout the trip. There is room for your camera and other photo accessories in your ammo can. This container is accessible at all times. Bring enough memory cards and batteries to last your entire trip. There is no way to recharge batteries during the river trip.

Binoculars

Binoculars are nice to have if you enjoy close up views of birds, or natural features. We recommend small, lightweight models that will fit comfortably in your daypack and/or ammo can.

Footwear – Sandals, Athletic Shoes, Hiking Boots:

Good quality, comfortable, appropriate footwear is essential on the river. We recommend one pair of river sandals (similar to those made by Chaco or Teva). They can be worn on the boat and also on off-river hiking excursions. We also recommend one pair of athletic shoes as a backup, or as an alternative hiking shoe. Hiking boots are optional, but recommended if you need the foot/ankle support they provide if long or rugged hikes are included in your trip. You should consider a style of boot that is light weight, with good ventilation and constructed of synthetic material.

Money & Gratuities

Gratuities are not expected in New Zealand, therefore gratuities for the guides are at your discretion as a gesture of thanks for their professionalism and service. An appropriate tip might range between 7% to 12% of the trip cost, per guest.

Miscellaneous

You may wish to bring a pad and pencil to keep notes about your trip. On hot days some sort of sarong can be good to wear in camp. Other items that might come in handy include a few carabineers to fasten items such as day packs and water bottles to each other and/or to the boat or your dry bag.

General Information

Health & Fitness

People of all ages have enjoyed river trips with us. Our major concern is that participants be in basic good health and good physical condition. We do not recommend this style of trip for those with chronic heart trouble, back pain, arthritis, or for anyone recuperating from surgery. Pregnant women should check with their physicians. Please tell us if you have any health conditions of which we should be aware.

Youth/Children

On all our multi day river trips there is a minimum age of 8 years.

Allergies

Please let us know if you have any allergies that we should be aware of. This would include food allergies, plant allergies, potential reactions to insect bites or stings and allergies to certain elements such as iodine. We need to know the severity of your reaction to these allergies, as well as the correct emergency first-aid procedures.

Meals

Our meals consist of a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, and dairy products. They are nutritious and delicious. Although we do not serve a "vegetarian" menu, we do provide enough fresh produce and non-meat items that most vegetarian dieters get along fine. We are willing to try and accommodate special diet requests if we are advised well in advance of the trip. Please give us a call to discuss your particular diet needs. If your diet needs are unusually unique, we may suggest that you bring some of your own food items to supplement our menu.

Beverages

Cold water is available at all times on the boat and in camp. Coffee and assorted teas are available with breakfast and dinner. We also offer a small choice of fruit juice, soft drinks, and alcoholic beverages, including wine and beer. You may bring your own additional supply of wine, liquor and/or beer for the trip. Beverages must be in non-breakable cartons, plastic bottles, or cans.

Hand Washing

We emphasize sanitation and cleanliness on the river. It is important to keep everyone healthy while travelling in a group. Portable hand-washing devices are set up in every camp and during lunch breaks.

Sanitary Facilities

There are permanent toilet facilities at campsites on the Whanganui River. Feminine hygiene products can be disposed of in the toilet or with the regular trash.

Bathing & Solar Showers

You may bathe in any of the rivers we operate on utilizing biodegradable soaps and shampoos (free of detergents). On cooler days the best method for bathing is to follow the general rule of jump in and get wet, jump out and soap down, jump in and rinse off, and jump out and air dry! You should bathe only in calm water, shallow areas near the banks of the river. Be sure and have a least one companion nearby when you bathe. You may bring solar showers, but they often do not heat up enough during the day to deliver a hot shower.

Emergencies

Our guides are capable of handling emergencies as they arise (although they are generally few and far between). Trip leaders and guides are certified in First Aid and CPR. Our emergency equipment includes wilderness oriented first-aid-kits, and satellite communications systems. We are able to call for medical assistance or evacuation if necessary. If an evacuation is necessary, you will be helicoptered out to a nearby hospital for treatment or hospitalization.

In the event of an emergency at home, please have your family call our office at +64 6 3881444.

We will advise them of the best way to handle the situation. Because this is a trip of short duration, we will probably suggest that we wait until you complete the river trip before giving you the message, depending upon the nature of the emergency. If it is imperative that you be notified immediately, we will do our best to get word to you and to evacuate you from the river if necessary. The cost is your responsibility. Therefore, make sure you tell your family/friends that you wish to be notified only under certain specific conditions. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office for further advice or information.

Trip Insurance

We strongly recommend that you obtain travel insurance that will cover any emergency contingencies. While New Zealand ACC will cover emergency evacuation and medical costs in the event of accident, disruptions to your travel plans, or voluntary evacuation are not covered.

Fishing

Fishing is a popular activity on some stretches of rivers on which we operate. Please let us know that you intend to fish and that you arrive with a current fishing licence for that area.

Reference and Reading Materials

It is always fun to know more about the area in which your trip is taking place. We suggest you study about the area prior to your river trip and bring along some maps and/or field guides to enhance your travel.

Special Needs

We will be happy to do our best to accommodate passengers with special needs if we are advised well in advance. Contact our office to discuss any specific requests.

Feedback

There are now many avenues to provide feedback about your experiences with us. You can communicate directly with us, or use a public forum such as Facebook or TripAdvisor. All feedback is appreciated.

Questions

Feel free to contact us and discuss any questions or concerns you might have in regard to your trip or this information packet. Our e-mail is:

dories@rivervalley.co.nz

Or call us toll-free at 0800 248666. For those calling from outside N.Z., our local number is +64 6 3881444. We enjoy the opportunity to chat with our customers.

The Journey



What To Expect On Your Trip

Camp Routine

Our guides will wake you early in the morning with a call for “coffee.” When you hear the “breakfast” call, it means time to come to the kitchen area. After eating your breakfast, you will have a chance to pack your personal camping gear. The guides will breakdown the kitchen and start to load the boats. You may carry your gear to the beach area in front of the boats and when the guides are ready, they will ask for your help loading personal dry bags. We ask passengers not to board the boats until all gear is stored securely. We stop during the day for lunch, usually on a sandy beach along the bank of the river. After a full day on the river, we will arrive at camp. We ask everyone who is able to help unload the boats. Guides will set up the kitchen and community camping gear while individuals set up their personal area. If you have physical limitations, our guides are happy to assist you. Soon after making camp, the guides will begin to cook dinner. This is often a good time to write in your journal, read a book, or take a refreshing swim.

Protection of Historical Sites

We may see, visit, or possibly camp within close proximity to protected cultural resources such as historical sites. Any disturbance to these resources is prohibited. We want to emphasize the importance of preserving, conserving, and protecting them so that future generations may experience their educational, aesthetic, and inspirational benefits. Our company, together with our river guides, has an ethical responsibility to protect cultural and historical sites. We wish to work for the long-term conservation and protection of these sites.

Off River Hiking

On some of our river trips there is the opportunity to do some off river walking. Before each walk, the Trip Leader will describe the expected length of time for the stop, the distance to the destination, the trail conditions, and any other relevant information. All walks are optional and often there is a choice to walk just part of the way.



History and Education

Māori Settlement

The river is the home of the Whanganui iwi (tribes), also known as Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi, a confederation of three ancestral groups: Hinengākau of the upper river, Tama Ūpoko of the middle reaches and Tūpoho of the lower Whanganui.

The river is of huge importance to the iwi: it is their ancestral river, their arterial highway, and a source of physical and spiritual sustenance. For centuries their people have travelled the Whanganui River by canoe, caught eels in it, built villages on its banks, and fought over it. At one time there may have been as many as 80 pa and villages scattered along its reaches.

Although few Whanganui Māori now live on the river, it remains a focal point.

The Whanganui Iwi have a saying:

E rere kau mai te awa nui nei
Mai i te kāhui maunga ki Tangaroa
Ko au te awa
Ko te awa ko au.

The river flows
From the mountains to the sea
I am the river
The river is me.

A saying that strikes a chord with all who journey and feel the enchantment of the river.

Since the 1860s there has been discord between the government and river Iwi over the river. This led to the signing in 2014 of Ruruku Whakatupua – Whanganui River Deed of Settlement in which the river is recognised as a separate person under the law. This is a first in the world where a natural feature has been recognised in such a way. Financial compensation has also been agreed upon which will be used to enhance the river.

European Settlement

The Whanganui tribes' early contact with Europeans was sporadic, and mainly with whalers and traders, some of whom married into the tribes of the river. Following the signing at Whanganui of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, the land for the town of Whanganui was sold to the New Zealand Company in a questionable purchase.

The settlers who followed slowly swelled the town, but their presence and demands for more land caused tensions between the lower river Māori and their upriver cousins. This resulted in an attack in 1847 on the now garrisoned town, but there was little bloodshed.

The New Zealand wars of the 1860s split tribal unity, with upriver Maori resisting European colonisation and land purchases, while down river Maori supported it. This led to the tragedy of the battle of Moutoa where family members fought and died on both sides.

The 1890s brought tourism to the river with the start of the riverboat era which lasted until the 1950s. A time when the Whanganui became known as the Rhine of the South Pacific.

Farming of the steep hill country along the river which is now within the National Park, was attempted up until the 1930s. However the isolation and the ruggedness of the terrain doomed these efforts. The Bridge to Nowhere at Mangapurua is a reminder of these efforts.

Information About Whanganui National Park

Whanganui National Park was gazetted in 1986. The park protects one of the largest remaining tracts of lowland forest remaining in the North Island, and it provides habitat for a wide variety of native wildlife.

Of all of New Zealand's national parks, Whanganui is most closely associated with human settlement. It is dissected by the Whanganui River, at 290km in length, the longest continually navigable river in the country. Although the bed and waters of the river are not included in the park, the river is an integral part of the area and provides an important access way into and through the area.

Western tributaries of the Whanganui have eroded through mudstone (papa) which has created spectacular gorges, bluffs and a maze of intricate ridges and V-shaped valleys.

Vegetation

Whanganui National Park contains extensive stands of podocarp-hardwood lowland forest, an ecosystem that is significantly under-represented in the New Zealand conservation estate. This extensive forest comprises many different communities reflecting changes from north to south, riverside to high ridges.

Kāmahi and tawa are a common canopy species and the understorey is rich in ferns, from 10 m tall mamaku to delicate filmy ferns. Large podocarps include rimu, mīro, tōtara on ridges and faces. Kahikatea and mataī are more prominent in the lower river terrace and alluvial flats as is the nīkau palm. Large northern rata occur throughout the park forming a spectacular display in mid summer.

Dry ridges are a distinct habitat with black beech over twiggy shrubs. Autumn orchids are also commonly seen on these ridges. Silver and hard beech can also be found in the park. The steep riverbanks are another distinctive feature and are a haven for some of the park's more vulnerable plants, like hutu, fuchsia and the rare daisy *brachiglottis turneri*.

Outside the core area of forest, fragmented patches remain, with areas of grassland, regenerating bush and some exotic vegetation. The Mangapurua Valley, where patches were farmed but abandoned prior to 1942, shows the greatest degree of modification within the park. Some of the valley is still in rank pasture and a few fruit trees and roses are reminders of past gardens, while the edges are regenerating kānuka/mānuka and silver fern forest.

Wildlife

The isolated reaches of the Whanganui River valley support a range of birds. The greatest concentration of birdlife in the park is in the area most intensively managed to reduce the effects of introduced predators and pests. Common species that can be seen include fantails, grey warblers, silvereyes, tomtits, robins, bellbirds, kererū, tūī and whitehead. Migratory cuckoos are heard in spring and early summer. Kākāriki and kākā are present in very low numbers. Rifleman, yellow-crowned kākāriki and New Zealand falcon are seen regularly.

The park is home to the largest population of North Island brown kiwi in New Zealand with several thousand birds present. The blue duck/whio inhabits the clean fast-flowing river habitats in the park with the most significant populations on rivers bordering the park.

Eighteen species of native fish inhabit the Whanganui River, which is also rich in eels, lamprey, koura (freshwater crayfish) and black flounder. Long-tailed bats are in more open habitats of the park such as river trenches and forest edges. Although less commonly spotted, larger populations of short-tailed bats occur in the dense bush. There are likely to be a number of rare invertebrate species in the park, although they have not yet been extensively studied.

Likely Weather

Whanganui lays claim to having the most temperate climate in New Zealand. That is a climate with the smallest average difference between high and low temperatures.

Rainfall can however be substantial and especially during periods of heavy rain can lead to flooding of the river (by the way, dories handle lots of water just fine).

What you should expect over the summer season then is warm to hot days, with brief fronts containing rain crossing at regular intervals. However, you should prepare for anything and include all the suggested clothes in your bag.

