

NORTH CRATER CROSSING

260 Series Map: Tongariro T19

Topo50 Map: BH35 Turangi & BH34 Raurimu

How to get to START: Exit Taupo on SH1 down the lake for 47km in 45 minutes to Turangi then:

- Follow the Desert Highway (**SH1**), turn off right to **SH46** for Rangipo
- Continue on **SH46** to the T-junction with **SH47** and turn left
- At 90km (1:15 min) turn left on to gravel road for Mangatepopo & Tongariro Alpine Crossing – speed limit 30kph
- Park at car park with toilets at 96km and about 1 hour 30 minutes driving from Taupo.

Rough Description: A moderate plus to fit outing which is a combination of part of the Smugglers Route (up Hardman's Ridge), off-track navigation over North Crater then some steep downhill to meet the Tongariro Alpine Crossing Track above Ketetahi Shelter. The crossing track is then followed down past the shelter and out to the car park just off Lake Rotoira Road (SH46). Be well aware that Hardman's Ridge is aptly named and getting up on to it is a grunt. The terrain to the north of Mt Tongariro is quite taxing to traverse through and there are some unmapped bluffs once on the rim of North Crater and getting out-bluffed can happen. This outing can be done in summer or winter but in summer it can be very hot and severe weather can exist in the winter months. As described the trip was undertaken at the start of winter with snow on the ground and eight hours were required for completion.

Detail: From the car park (**WP01**^{1122masl}) follow the Alpine Crossing track past the Mangatepopo Hut. At about 35 minutes, just when the valley narrows and rough rocky outcrops start to occur, look for a small unmarked track on the left which (**WP02**^{1220masl}) slips off into the valley, crosses the stream and heads due north steeply uphill. It is a bit of a grunt upslope on the old, much degraded track to gain the crest (**WP03**^{1376masl}) of the ridge near some rock outcrops. Head up the ridge to the NE on the vestiges of a track with the odd cairn to pass a flattish top (**WP04**^{1442masl}) in about 1:40mins then in 2hours go uphill for around 700m to a rocky top (**WP05**^{1536masl}) then descend to cross the mapped upper reaches of the Whanganui River (**WP06**^{1577masl}) to the NNE. Continue to the NNE to reach a high point (**WP07**^{1628masl}) and swing round to the NE to eventually be heading ESE to cross a NW flowing stream (**WP08**^{1680masl}) line at around 1700metres. Follow the stream line upslope a few hundred metres (**WP09**^{1690masl}) then side upwards aiming to get to the 1800m contour. Near the crest, which is part of the North Crater rim, the slope eases and a good place for lunch can found with several convenient seat sized rocks (**WP10**^{1838masl}) in about 3 hours.

Lunch spot WP10



From here the quickest route would continue up the ridge (as seen in the photo on the left) which is the crater rim. A planned shortcut to get into the middle of North Crater, as followed on the day and shown on the map, heads basically to the SE, then NE to end up on a narrow ridge, which is mapped, but what is not shown on the map is that there are bluffs on the NE facing side. This ridge was followed but the attempt aborted and a turn-around made (**WP11**^{1885masl}). In summer with no snow a route down the bluffs might be possible.

The back-tracking along the ridge to the NW was fairly easy going and eventually the slopes eased and it was possible to swing round to the east passing the actual mapped North Crater caldera to find almost level walking heading NE towards the northern rim of the crater above Ketetahi (**WP12**^{1800masl}). From WP12 the Blue Lake could clearly be seen to the SE but the terrain appeared very steep and likely to have bluffs so the route followed was steeply downwards heading NE to fairly quickly hit the Tongariro Alpine Crossing track just above the zig-zags (**WP13**^{1520masl}).

Out-bluffed WP11



Back-tracking from WP11



Blue Lake to the SE WP12



The Ketetahi Shelter (**WP14**^{1449masl}) was reached in just under 6:30minutes – perfect for afternoon tea. The walk down from Ketetahi is not described in any detail here as this is a well benched heavily used track but a few places are noted and coordinates plus times given. At just short of 7 hours the junction (**WP15**^{1280masl}) of the old track that passes close to the Ketetahi Springs was reached – Ketetahi Springs are on private land. The bush line (**WP16**^{1047masl}) seems to take a long time to reach but appeared at 7:17min and ten minutes later the very welcome seat at a bend in the track (**WP17**^{927masl}) can be useful to divest of extra clothing. The next five features of note are all bridges with two of them being new, light-weight temporary structures being located within the area designated as high risk from lahar flows from the active Te Maari vents – the second of these newer bridges being at **WP19**^{848masl} and only a few metres downslope from the other new one. The car park (**WP23**^{755masl}) does eventually present itself after around 8 hours tramping – less if the wander along the bluffed ridge in North Crater is missed out.

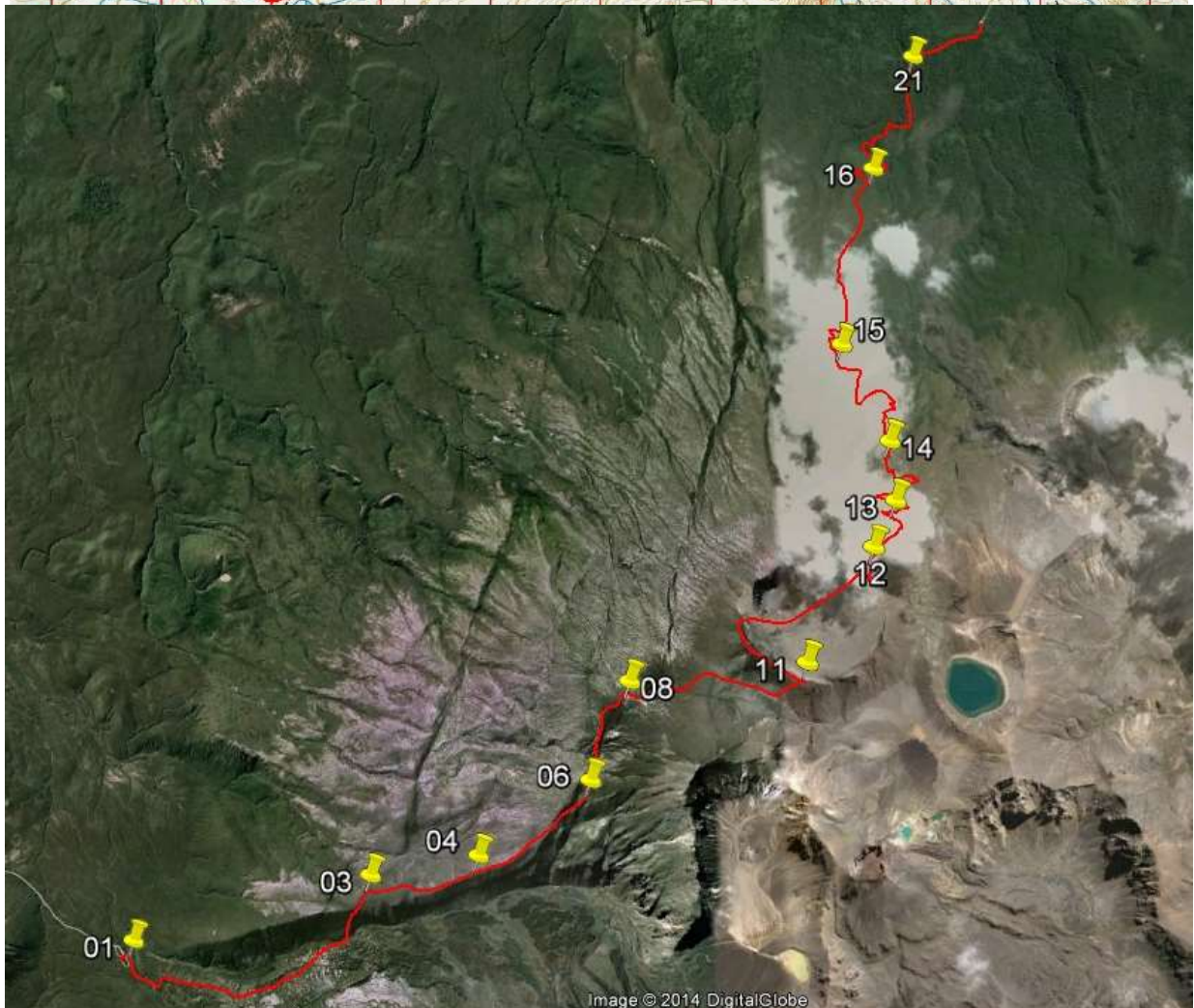
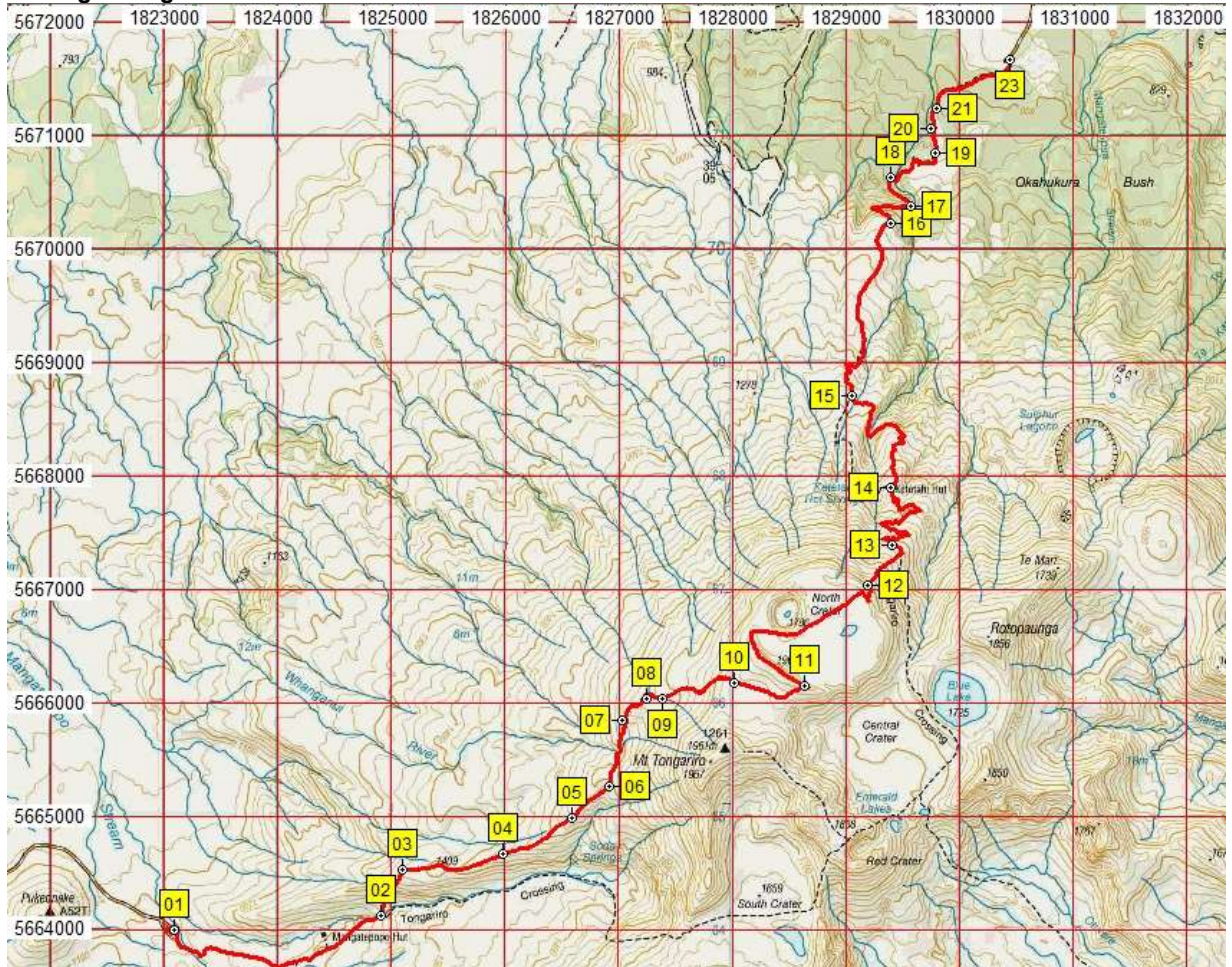
Access



Distances and times are taken from the Police Station in Taupo.

The tramp route is the red line.

Map and Google image with GPS data



Waypoints – NZ Grid

No...	Waypoints – NZ Grid			Description	NZTM	
	Easting	Northing	Alt(m)		Easting	Northing
01	2733177	6225851	1121	Mangatepopo carpark	1823088	5664000
02	2734996	6225975	1220	30-40min (2.2km); off left to start climb on to Hardman's Ridge	1824907	5664125
03	2735191	6226371	1376	1:13min (2.8km); 500m uphill in 30min to be on ridge just below rocky tops	1825103	5664522
04	2736078	6226515	1442	1:40min (3.8km); 25min easy ascent of 1km to flattish top adfter ascent of ridge with mini terraces	1825990	5664666
05	2736674	6226833	1536	2hrs (4.5km); 20min upslope for 700m to rocky top then a few cairns on improving track	1826585	5664985
06	2737003	6227107	1577	2:17min (5km); Ascend then drop down to cross the mapped Whanganui River to NNE	1826915	5665259
07	2737119	6227691	1628	2:30-2:40min (5.6km); Ascend 60-80m to the NE to high point above NW flowing stream line	1827031	5665843
08	2737340	6227882	1680	2:53min (5.9km); Change from NE to ESE and ascend to 1700m to cross NW flowing stream line	1827252	5666035
09	2737473	6227882	1690	From stream line start ascent to 1800m contour	1827384	5666035
10	2738106	6228026	1838	2:57min (6.1km); Low dip or coll on crater rim with good rocks for lunch	1828017	5666180
11	2738732	6227997	1885	4:19min (7.6km); SE end of ridge and out-bluffed, head back to NW	1828644	5666151
12	2739285	6228875	1800	5:24min (9.8km) ;1800m contour then steep down on ridge crest to NE to hit Alpine crossing track	1829197	5667030
13	2739494	6229243	1520	5:53min (10.5km); Very steep 400m descent to meet track above zig-zags to Ketetahi	1829405	5667398
14	2739487	6229734	1449	6:23min (12km); Ketetahi shelter	1829398	5667889
15	2739140	6230554	1280	6:52min (13.7km); Junction with old track to Ketetahi Springs	1829050	5668709
16	2739487	6232080	1047	7:17min (15.6km); Bush line	1829396	5670237
17	2739654	6232234	927	7:27min (16.2km); Large seat at big bend then more steps down	1829563	5670391
18	2739490	6232477	860	7:35min (16.5km); Bridge over normally dry stream line	1829398	5670633
19	2739872	6232694	848	7:44min (17.1km); Second new (temporary) bridge in high flood-risk zone	1829780	5670851
20	2739830	6232905	831	7:48min (17.4km); Old bridge over flowing stream	1829738	5671062
21	2739880	6233080	810	7:50min (17.6km); Bridge over generally dry gully	1829788	5671237
23	2740533	6233511	755	8:01min (18.5km); Car-park with 1:37min down from Ketetahi Hut	1830441	5671669



Ngauruhoe from Hardman's Ridge



Long range view of walkers coming off Red Crater



Notes:

- GPS = Garmin GPSmap 62sc
- WP = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
- masl = metres above sea level

Total Walk Time: 8 hours 01 minutes
 Total walk length: 18.5 + 1.5km for altitude
 Overall altitude gain: 913metres

GPS Data

From : 30-Apr-14 08:57:55
 To : 30-Apr-14 16:59:25

Time taken : 8:01:30
 Total Distance : 18.470 Km
GPS distance: 19.88km
 Minimum Speed : 0.002 KPH
 Maximum Speed : 7.476 KPH
 Average Speed : 2.302 KPH

Minimum Altitude : 753 Meters
 Maximum Altitude : 1905 Meters
Total ascent: 913metres