

This 63-hectare reserve, is owned by the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society and cared for by the Hastings – Havelock North Branch of the society.

### *A little history*

Just a few million years ago this area lay under a shallow sea. Marine sediments were compressed into layers of limestone. These were then uplifted, buckled and broken. Later pumice and ash from central North Island eruptions settled on the landscape and, over time, created the distinctive red-brown soil seen in the reserve.

In places where the limestone is exposed, you can see eroded, open passageways (some of which have been incorporated into the track system) and several caves. One of these, Patiki's Cave, was home to a Māori family for many years in the 1800s.

The Blowhard name originates from the early coaching days in Hawke's Bay when horses struggled to cross the inland ranges of the province.

### *Forest and feathers*

Despite being burned several times in the 1800s and logged for timber, several forest giants still exist in Blowhard Bush, including one matai that is 25 metres tall and is thought to be 7-800 years old. At the opposite end of the size spectrum, there are some small delicate orchids in the reserve, including *Thelymitra comet*, found only in and around the Kaweka Ranges.

A possum control programme began in 2003 and later mustelid and rodent controls were introduced. The bird life in the bush has benefited immensely and you can expect to see or hear tomtits (miromiro), North Island robin (toutouwai), bellbird (korimako), tui, whitehead (pōpōkatea), grey warbler (riroriro), silvereye (tauhou) and kererū, among others.

Management of wilding pines is also an on-going task. Four hectares of retired farmland at the northern end of the carpark was more recently added to the reserve and is being replanted using seed collected from plants in the surrounding bush.



### *Working together and making a difference*

The Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society created this reserve after the land was donated to them by the Lowry and Masters families in 1962.

Members work on a voluntary basis to reduce pests such as possums and stoats by regularly

servicing trap lines and bait stations. They also maintain the walking tracks, carry out restoration planting, and remove exotic plants such as wilding pines.

### *Interested in becoming a volunteer?*

If you want to know more or would like to help here or at one of our other projects please visit:  
[www.forestandbird.org.nz/branches/hastings-havelock-north](http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/branches/hastings-havelock-north)  
or find us on Facebook  
or phone: 0800 200 064



Cover photo: Whitehead / pōpōkatea Photo: Nathan Hill, NZ Birds Online

# Blowhard Bush Reserve



## Take a walk

Experience beautiful forest, sculptural limestone formations and windy ridges with expansive views ...

### Tui Track: 2 - 2½ hours

The Tui Track is the main track in the reserve. On a fine day you can get excellent views of the Kaweka Range from the lookout at the top end of the bush. The track passes Lowry Lodge, a good place to have your lunch if the weather is cold and wet. The track also passes Patiki's Cave which was a family home in the 1800s. You can access the Rewi and Rakaunui Tracks off the Tui Track.

### Troglodyte Track: ½ - ¾ hour

The Troglodyte Track starts behind the shelter and follows the line of Lawrence Road. Good for families who want to explore the limestone formations, however be aware of deep holes and steep drops beside the track and supervise children. After visiting the large cave at the end of this track you can retrace your steps to the carpark, continue to the Tui Track or explore along Otakereru Stream.

### Rakaunui Track: ½ hour

The Rakaunui Track can be started at either the northern or southern end of the Tui Track. If you leave from the northern end, the track is mostly downhill. It features some of the largest trees in the reserve and passes many sculptured limestone (karst) formations complete with cave wētā. Take a torch if you want to look for them.

### Rewi Loop Track: ½ hour

Starting and ending at the northern end of the Tui Track, the Rewi Loop Track is known for its large trees and dense regenerating forest - quite different from other parts of the reserve. Flocks of whiteheads (pōpōkatea) and silvereyes (tauhou) are common on this track.



*Thelymitra comet*



Bellbird / korimako



NI robin / toutouwai



Kaweka Lookout Photo: Linda Johnson

All tracks in this reserve are maintained to walking track standards: well-defined and suitable for relatively inexperienced people with little backcountry skill.