

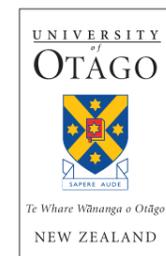
HAKATERE
CONSERVATION PARK
VISITOR STUDY 2007–2008



CENTRE FOR RECREATION RESEARCH
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

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Centre for Recreation Research
School of Business
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin 9054
New Zealand



School of Business
Unlimited Future, Unlimited Possibilities
Te Kura Pakihi

CENTRE FOR RECREATION RESEARCH

**HAKATERE CONSERVATION PARK
VISITOR STUDY 2007-2008**

Anna Thompson

Brent Lovelock

Arianne Reis

Carla Jellum

Centre for Recreation Research
School of Business
University of Otago
Dunedin
New Zealand

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Additional copies of this publication may be obtained from:

Centre for Recreation Research
C/- Department of Tourism
School of Business
University of Otago
P O Box 56
Dunedin
New Zealand

Telephone +64 3 479 8520
Facsimile +64 3 479 9034
Email: crr@business.otago.ac.nz
Website: <http://www.crr.otago.ac.nz>

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Authors: Thompson, A., Lovelock, B., Reis, A. and Jellum, C.
Research Team: Sides G., Kjeldsberg, M., Carruthers, L., Mura, P.
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THE AUTHORS

This study was carried out by staff from the Department of Tourism, University of Otago. The research team was managed by Dr Anna Thompson and Dr Brent Lovelock who are both employed as senior lecturers within the Department. Arianne Reis, PhD student and Assistant Research Fellow (CRR) in the Department of Tourism, assisted with report writing, and the analysis and report writing of qualitative interview findings. Gerald Sides, Layla Carruthers and Carla Jellum (PhD student and Assistant Research Fellow) assisted with SPSS data inputting and analysis, and the creation of tables and charts. Magnus Kjeldsberg, a Masters student at the Department of Tourism, was employed by Department of Conservation to assist with survey questionnaire distribution and conducting the interviews over the 2007/2008 summer months. Carla and Paolo Mura were also of great assistance seeking literature, reports and articles about the ecology, history (particularly the high country stations) and recreational opportunities of the Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes area.

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Contact Details:

Centre for Recreation Research
Department of Tourism
School of Business
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin, New Zealand

Telephone +64 3 479 8520
Facsimile +64 3 479 9034
Email crr@business.otago.ac.nz
Website: <http://www.crr.otago.ac.nz>

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from a visitor survey and interviews with local users of the Hakatere Conservation Park (HCP). Firstly the report presents the findings of the survey conducted at the HCP from late December 2007 to late May 2008. Self-completion questionnaires were distributed to visitors in the area through strategically located collection and drop-off points. A total of 509 usable questionnaires were returned, by post, to the researchers. The final section of the report presents the interview findings.

The typical visitor to the HCP, responding to the survey, was a 35-54 year old New Zealander, working in a professional or managerial position. The majority of respondents were South Islanders, with 78% originating from the Canterbury and North Otago regions. International respondents comprised 18% of the sample, and were predominantly European in origin, however many of these international visitors resided in New Zealand. Visitors are most likely to be in family groups or parties of more than three people (54%), however 38% of respondents travelled in pairs or as couples. In terms of actual visitor numbers, small groups were the largest contributors.

Most respondents regarded themselves as regular users of the New Zealand outdoors, with 72% of visitors reporting over 20 years of such experience, and many (57%) belonging to some form of recreational or outdoor club. The typical visitor may have already visited the HCP before, with regular or occasional users comprising 71.5% of the sample; 28.5% of visitors being first time visitors to the area.

Respondents' main motivations for coming to the HCP, in descending order of importance, were: for the scenery/sightseeing, to experience the solitude of the area, to go tramping, to obtain easy access to nature, or to take children or family into the outdoors. Whilst tramping is clearly one of the main activities undertaken in the HCP, other activities taking place included fishing, picnicking, boating, mountain biking, bird watching, climbing, hunting, 4WDing, motor biking and horse riding. The landscape of the area is valued by visitors as it offers opportunities to experience such activities in a remote setting where the wide open spaces are valued.

The typical visitor accessed the HCP either by 2WD (43%) or 4WD (40.9%) but once within the park the main mode of moving around is by foot (61.4%). However, because of the distances that could be travelled on existing roads some visitors (31%) used 2WD and 4WD to access areas within the park. Visitors generally stayed in the park for two to three days (at least one night) and were likely to stay in a crib/bach (35.4%) within the park. Other visitors reported staying in tents and huts. Smaller numbers of visitors used campervans or caravans. Day trips were also common (31% of visitors). Visitor use was concentrated around the lakes areas with Lake Clearwater being visited by over 52% of respondents. Lake Camp (44%); Lake Heron (40%) and Mt Somers Track (32.8%) were the next most frequently visited areas.

Overall visitor satisfaction with their experiences of the area was very high, with 95% of visitors indicating that they were "very satisfied" or "satisfied". A high level of satisfaction was expressed for huts, tracks and recreational opportunities generally. Toilets and road conditions received lower levels of satisfaction (note that some of the roads concerned are managed by the Ashburton District Council). Visitors also reported lower levels of satisfaction with the information available on the DOC HCP website and in the brochure, which lacked sufficient details about the variety of huts and recreational opportunities.

Most respondents were satisfied with the current numbers of visitors in the HCP, with 75% of visitors reporting feeling not crowded at all. Eighteen percent reported feeling slightly crowded and seven percent reported feeling moderately or extremely crowded, the majority of whom were based in the vicinity of the lakes. Despite this, 97% of visitors said that they would return to the HCP. The main motivations to return were the range of recreational opportunities within the park, the environment/natural beauty of the park and its accessibility.

The main recommendations to arise from this study were made with respect to ongoing maintenance of facilities in the area, especially improving toilet facilities at the lakes. The need for detailed information about the recreational and associated features of the HCP, including a more specific map of the area was also noted. Other recommendations address opportunities to involve the public in conservation activities; the potential to develop new track systems; and the need for an on-site presence by DOC during high use periods. Finally, the study recommends DOC address the possible future growth in a diversity of visitors which will require management responses to the provision of access and possible conflict between diverse recreation groups. High use areas around the lakes and wetlands will require ongoing visitor monitoring. Both the survey and interview findings identified issues arising from the presence of vehicles (particularly 4WDs and motorbikes) in the HCP.

Background to the Study Area

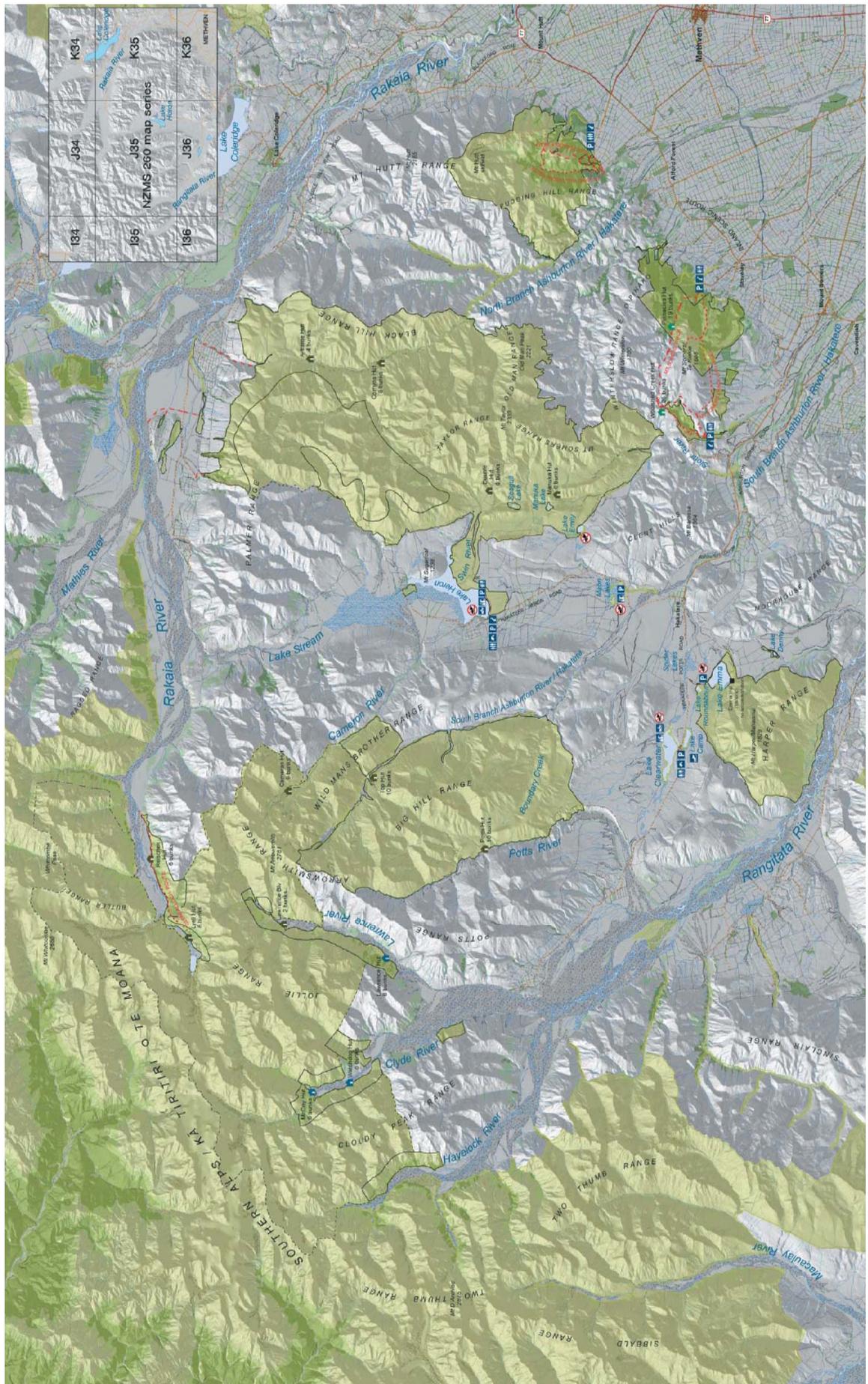
The Hakatere Conservation Park (HCP) was established in October 2007 and contains more than 68,000 hectares of land area (Map 1). The newly formed HCP brought together 19 individual areas of conservation land including 10,000 hectares of the former Clent Hills pastoral lease and the historic Hakatere Station land purchased by the Nature Heritage Fund; two areas transferred to the Department of Conservation by Land Tenure Review; and several previous pastoral leases declared conservation areas as well as various other land parcels (DOC 2007). In April 2008 it was announced that the HCP would increase by an additional 17,000 hectares with the addition of land from Redcliffe Station and Mt Potts Station as a result of tenure review (DOC 2008b). The HCP is managed by the Department of Conservation Raukapuka Area Office, Geraldine.

HCP is located in mid-Canterbury, approximately two hours south of Christchurch. The HCP's general area boundaries are the Rangitata River to the west, the Rakaia River north and northeast, and the Southern Alps to the northwest. The Park contains kettlehole wetlands, tussock land, braided rivers and streams, lakes, sub-alpine and alpine ecosystems. The lacustrine system includes Lake Heron, Lake Emma, Lake Clearwater, Maori Lakes, Lake Camp, and Spider Lakes; Havelock, Clyde, Lawrence, Rangitata, Potts, Cameron, and Rakaia rivers as well as the north and south branches of the Ashburton river/Hakatere.

The wetlands are significant wildlife habitat and contain sensitive plant species including pygmy clubrush (*Isolepis basilaris*), dwarf woodrush (*Luzula celata*), and the nationally endangered water brome (*Amphibromus fluitans*) (Szabo 2008). In 2007 the Ashburton Lakes wetlands attracted Green Party funding for the restoration of these unique ecosystems. Several wetlands and bogs associated with the lakes system exist north of Lake Heron. The predominant vegetation for the HCP is tussock land and to a lesser extent, beech forest (in the upper catchments of Dry Creek and Pudding Hill Stream and Mt Somers). High altitude vegetation includes snow tussock (*Chionochoa macra*), cotton plant (*Celmisia spectabilis*), fescue (*Festuca novae-zelandiae*) and blue tussock (*Poa colensoi*). Along river channels, terraces and fan surfaces, cushionfield communities and matagouri shrublands occur.

Numerous bird species are found within the HCP including the endangered southern crested grebe, threatened Australasian bittern, falcons, and blue duck, as well as typical birds such as rifleman, tomtit, grey warbler, and large numbers of common waterfowl. The HCP habitat also supports native and introduced fish, invertebrates, native lizards, and introduced wild mammals including hares, rabbits, hedgehogs, and possums (Harrington *et al.* 1986).

The HCP has significant heritage and cultural values associated with human history in the area. The area has traditional cultural and ecological values for Ngai Tahu, who consider *mahinga kai* and other resources in the HCP as *taonga*. As a result of the Ngai Tahu Treaty Settlement Act 1998 the Hakatere Ashburton Lakes are incorporated into the Settlement with the 'Deed of Recognition for O Tu Wharekai (Ashburton Lakes), Canterbury'. European heritage associated with the area includes the heritage of high country farming, in particular the pioneering activities of Samuel Butler who wrote the book 'Erewhon'. Several historic sites such as the historic hut at Lake Emma could become a focus of visitor interest in the future. Recent events in popular culture have also affected the area - Mt Sunday has been the focus of visitors interested in its use as a location in the filming of the Lord of the Rings trilogy.



Map 1: Hakaterere Conservation Park

The main access route to the HCP is Highway 77 via the townships of Methven, Staveley, and Mt. Somers. Vehicle access to HCP is primarily by 2WD and 4WD via Ashburton Gorge and Double Hill Run roads. Road access to the upper Rakaia River is by Double Hill Run Road. Mt. Hutt Skifield is located within the Park's boundaries and accessed via State Highway 77. The Mt. Somers track may be accessed by either Ashburton Gorge Road or Flynn's Road, northwest of Staveley. Maori Lakes, Lake Heron, south branch Ashburton/Hakatere and Cameron rivers are accessed via Ashburton Gorge Road, then north along Hakatere Heron Road. Lake Emma, Lake Camp, Lake Clearwater, Potts River and Upper Rangitata River are accessed via Ashburton Gorge Road, which becomes Hakatere Potts Road (DOC 2007).

Annual visitation figures to the Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes region are difficult to estimate, owing to a lack of previous monitoring. However, recreation activities within the HCP include tramping, camping, 4WD, mountain biking, windsurfing, horseback riding, motorized and non-motorized boating, climbing, skiing, fishing, and hunting. Several concessionaires offer guided walking, fishing, hunting and mountain-biking experiences of the HCP. Many formal and informal camping and picnic areas, commonly used by local patrons and family groups, are located near popular lakes. Private residences are located in the HCP; Lake Clearwater village exists in close proximity to Lakes Clearwater/Camp and homesteads associated with the high country stations are present. The Ashburton District Council (ADC) has an interest in the management of the land upon which the privately owned, leasehold properties are situated at Lake Clearwater. Consequently visitors to the HCP may be confused as to which facilities or areas are the responsibility of DOC or ADC. The main roads into and through the HCP are maintained by the Ashburton District Council. However, DOC is responsible for the management of side roads such as the roads to Lakes Emma and Heron. Other amenities maintained by DOC are the hut system, public toilets, picnic and camping areas, car parks and signage.

Several tracks and walkways of varying difficulties, including the popular two to three day Mt. Somers Track, are located within the Park. Approximately fifteen huts/bivouacs are available for use, ranging from basic to serviced, most of which are managed by DOC or owned by private clubs. Some huts and tracks are accessed via unmarked routes or require river crossings which can be hazardous during high river flow events. Huts in the Upper Rakaia are accessed via privately owned land and permission must be obtained by landowners.

Information about recreational opportunities in the HCP is available from the Department of Conservation website; Raukapuka Area Office in Geraldine; information centres at Methven and Ashburton, Mt. Somers and Staveley stores; and several information/ interpretive signs at Woolshed Creek and Sharplin Falls car parks, Lake Heron camp ground, and Mt. Hutt ski area. Potential visitors are made aware of the HCP's recreational resources through increasing numbers of articles appearing in magazines and through other media (e.g. Szabo 2008; Davison 2008).

The newly established HCP will potentially experience an increase in visitor numbers, with a variety of visitor expectations, as the reputation of the area's attributes become well known. This visitor survey and the interview findings are intended to provide information for the future management of such visitation.

PART A - VISITOR SURVEY

1. Survey Method, Distribution and Analysis

The aim of this survey was to gain insights (from open-ended responses) and statistical data about recreational users' and visitors' experiences of the Hakatere Conservation Park. Respondents were asked about the recreational activities they pursued and their satisfaction with services and facilities. Demographic and motivational information was also sought to provide baseline data which could assist with ongoing management of the area. The survey focussed on the Mt Somers and Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes areas. It must be noted that for management reasons it was decided not to survey visitors to Mt Hutt Ski Area because of its unique characteristics and separate management situation.

The questionnaire comprised of an information sheet describing the purpose of the visitor study, and 29 questions located within four sections: Your Visit, Motivations, Facilities and About Yourself. The majority of items were closed questions however open-ended questions were utilised to elicit respondents' views on recreational opportunities, the Hakatere wetlands and management of the area.

The survey questionnaire (Appendix 1) was distributed between late December 2007 and May 2008. The questionnaires were available for collection from accessible survey boxes located at Woolshed Creek Hut and Pinnacles Hut; Lake Emma, Lake Clearwater, Maori Lakes, Lake Camp, Lake Heron Campground and road ends or car parks. Questionnaires were also available to users at Staveley and Mt Somers stores. A poster advertised the survey at these areas and all completed surveys were entered into a prize draw for gift vouchers. Postage-paid envelopes were provided so respondents could return the completed form to the researchers by mail. The survey boxes were regularly monitored by DOC staff for resupplying and collecting completed questionnaires.

The intent of the wide distribution of survey questionnaires was to enable as many users of the Hakatere Conservation Park as possible to participate in the survey. The availability of surveys resulted in a convenience sampling method to be adopted that encouraged as many people over the age of 15 to complete a questionnaire. This reflects the fact that the Hakatere Conservation Park is sparsely populated and visitation tends to be at peak periods during weekends and summer holiday periods. The self selection process, where visitors could voluntarily take a form and postal return envelope for completion, could be a source of bias as those people with strong feelings about certain issues could be more likely to fill in a survey (Booth 1991). However, the nature of visitation to the area meant this survey distribution was the most practical and financially feasible method of surveying the intended participants. Thus the approach aimed for a broad representation of visitors to the HCP. The surveying period enabled the participation of respondents who were in the area during the main summer school holiday periods; Easter; weekend and week days.

A total of 1029 questionnaires were distributed and a total of 509 usable surveys were returned, giving a response rate of 49%. Five surveys were not usable owing to incomplete sections or the fact that respondents were under the age of fifteen.

The data entry and analysis was undertaken at the Centre for Recreation Research, University of Otago, using SPSS Version 15 and Microsoft Excel. Answers to open-ended questions that required a comment or reason were summarised and grouped into like categories. The results are presented in this report using graphs and tables. All graphs and tables are based on the total number of responses to each question; not-applicable or non-responses are not included unless specified.

2. Survey Findings

2.1 Visitor Demographics

The median age of respondents was 45-54 years old. Respondents in the 35-44 (19.5%); 45-54 (19.5%) and 55-64 (24.9%) years of age were the most significant age groups (Figure 1). The 15-24 age group comprised 47 of the respondents (9.3%), with 59 respondents (11.6%) aged 65 years or more. 244 respondents (47.9%) were female and 249 (48.9%) were male. Sixteen respondents did not indicate their gender.

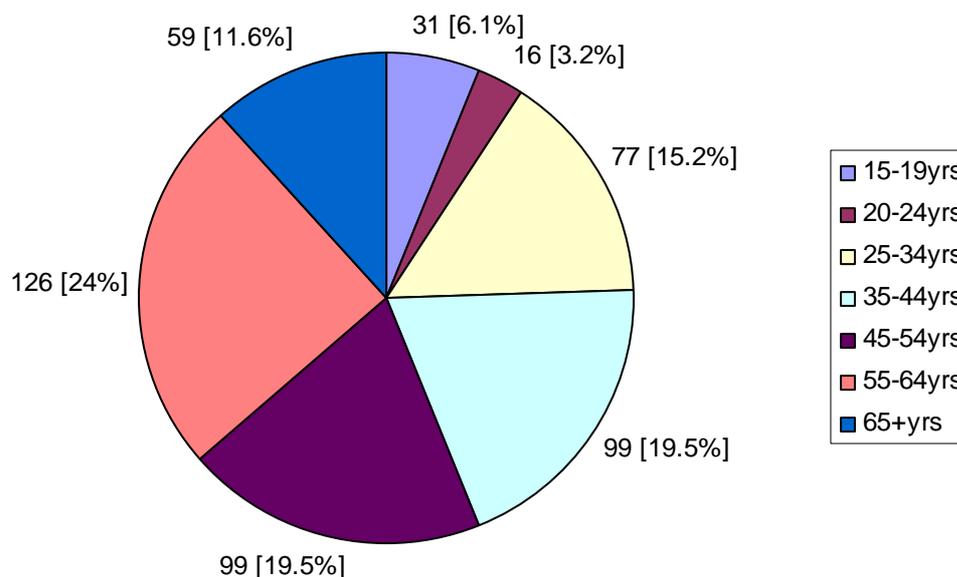


Figure 1: Age of Respondents (n=507)

The majority (41.1%) of the respondents stated they were in full-time employment. Those who were employed part-time (15.7%) or in self-employment (15.7%) were the next largest groups followed by those visitors who described themselves as retired (14.5%) and students (8.3%). Only seven (1.4%) respondents indicated they were unemployed. Over half the respondents were employed in professional or managerial occupations (57%).

New Zealanders were the majority (82.6%) of respondents at the Hakatere Conservation Park. The next largest group were those from the UK and Ireland (7.5%) (Figure 2). Likewise, the greatest number of visitors normally resided in New Zealand (93%) (Figure 3). Of those respondents who reside in New Zealand, 371 (78.4%) resided within the South Canterbury/North Otago area. 45 visitors (9.5%) resided in other regions of the South Island with 56 residents (11.8%) from the North Island making up the remainder (Figure 4). One respondent was of no fixed abode.

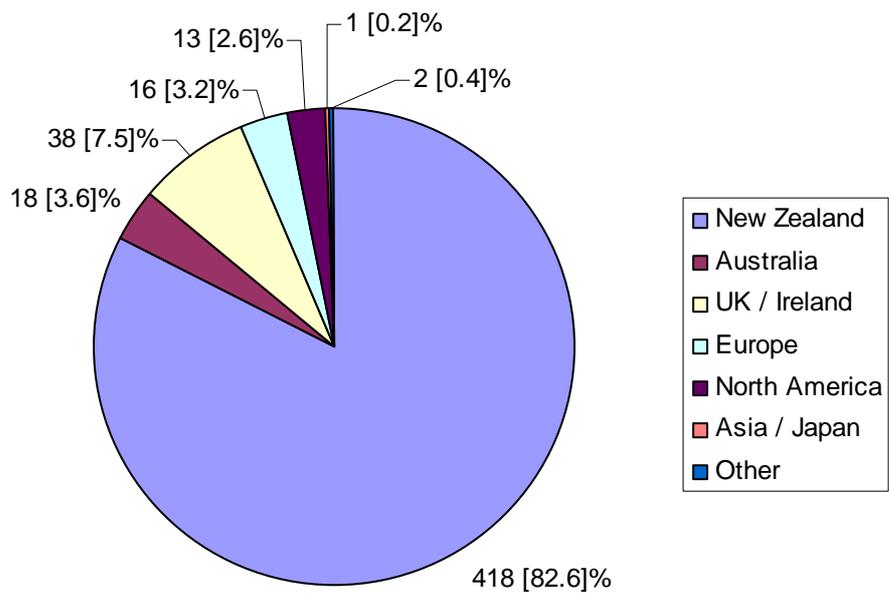


Figure 2: Nationality (n=506)

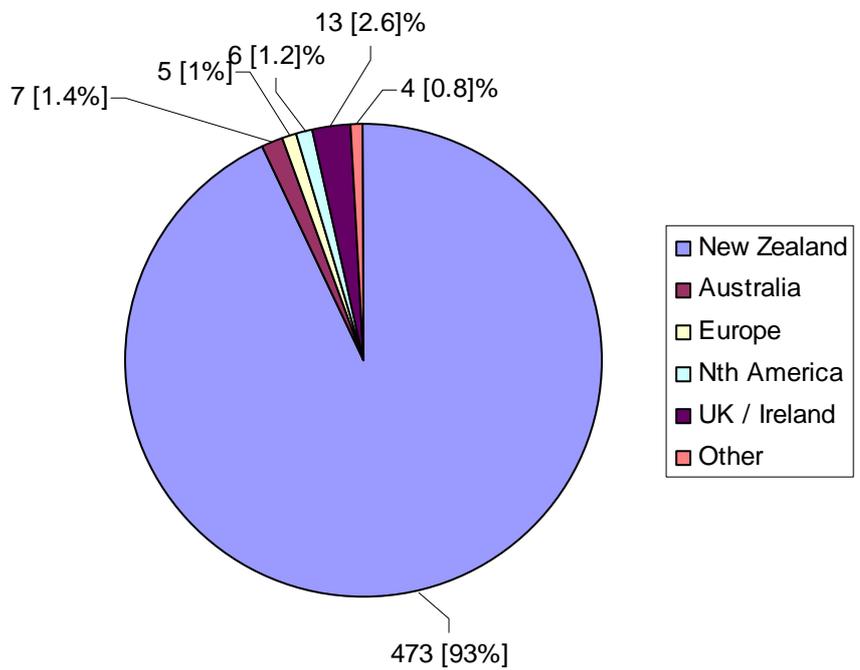


Figure 3: Place of Residence (n=508)

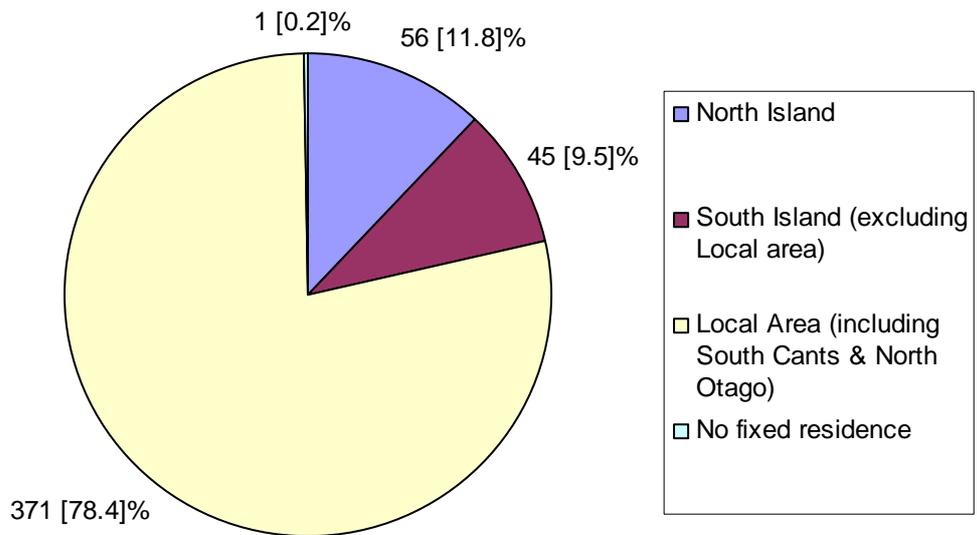


Figure 4: Where New Zealand Residents were from (n=473)

2.2 Outdoor Experience and Club Membership

2.2.1 Outdoor Use

Four hundred and fifteen respondents (82.2%) indicated they were regular users of areas of the New Zealand outdoors, with 81 respondents (15.9%) regarding themselves as being occasional users. Only nine respondents (1.8%) were first time users of the New Zealand outdoors (Figure 5).

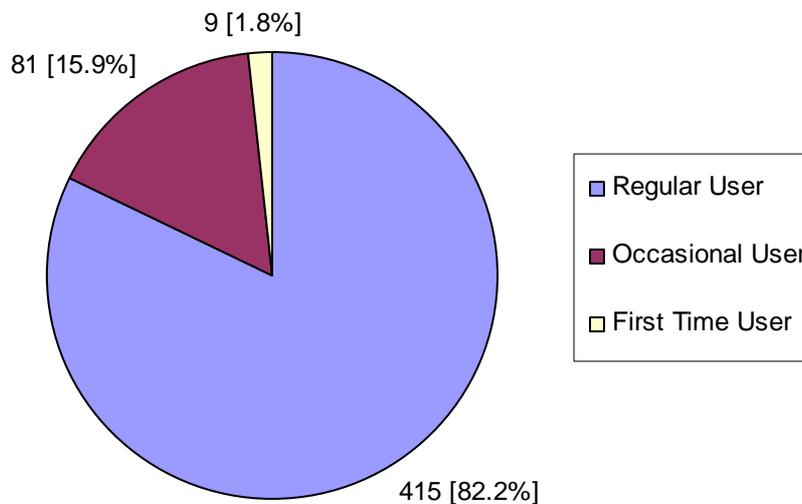


Figure 5: Use Levels of the New Zealand Outdoors (n=505)

The extent of use of areas of New Zealand's outdoors ranged from less than 10 years (15.5%) to over 60 years (7.6%) with a mean/median range of years spent in the New Zealand outdoors of 30-39 years (Figure 6).

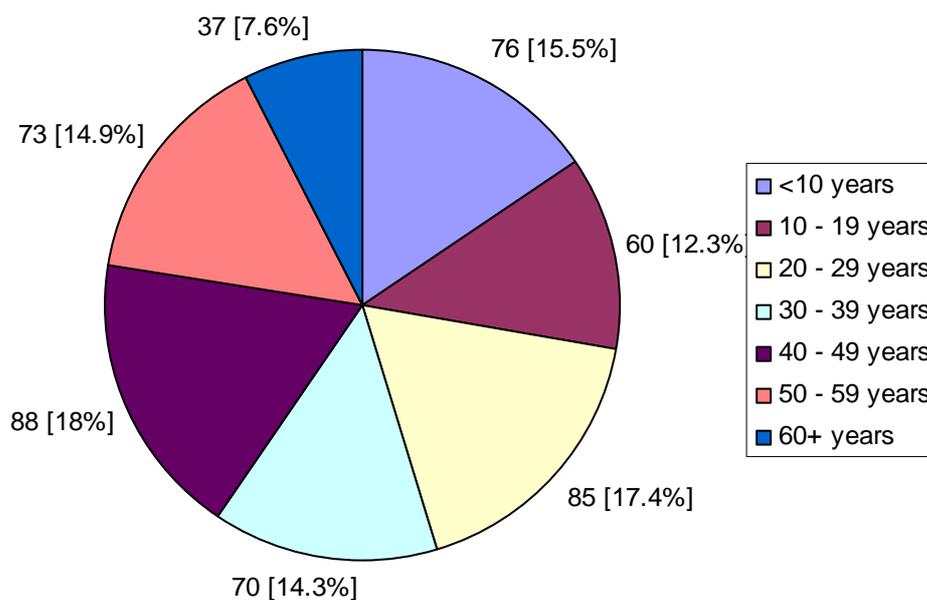


Figure 6: Years of Using New Zealand Outdoors (n=489)

2.2.2 Recreational Organisations or Clubs

The majority of respondents (n=287, 56.4%) did not belong to any recreational organisation or club. However 213 (41.8%) belonged to one or more organisations or clubs.

		Responses	
		N	Percent of respondents
Recreation Clubs	NZ Alpine Club	31	14.5%
	Federated Mountain Clubs NZ (FMC)	9	4.2%
	Regional Tramping / Mountaineering Club	71	33.3%
	Overseas Tramping / Mountaineering Club	3	1.4%
	NZ Deerstalkers' Association	8	3.7%
	NZ Fish & Game Council	6	2.8%
	Other Regional Fishing/Hunting Clubs	27	12.7%
	Regional Sports Club (except Fishing/Hunting)	87	40.8%
	Other Clubs	49	23%

Table 1: Recreation Club/Organisation Membership

* Percentages refer to the number of respondents to this question. As respondents were able to indicate more than one club membership, the total presented in the table will exceed 100%.

Membership of regional sporting clubs (n=87, 40.8%) dominated as a popular, and foreseeable, choice of club or organisation membership. Memberships were also reported for regional tramping/mountaineering clubs (n=71, 33.3%); the New Zealand Alpine Club (31, 14.5%) and FMC (9, 4.2%). Thirty one (43.7%) of the regional tramping/ mountaineering club members regarded themselves to be regular users of the area. Low numbers of membership in the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association (8) and NZ Fish and Game (6) were reported. However, 27 participants were members of other regional fishing and/or hunting club, giving a better indication of involvement of respondents with these sport activities. Table 1 illustrates the range of club membership amongst the respondents. A list of all clubs and organisations identified is shown in Appendix 2.

2.2.3 Environmental Organisations or Clubs

Only 103 (20.6%) of respondents belonged to one or more environmental organisation or club. Forest and Bird (n=49) and Greenpeace (12) membership were the organisations with the most affiliation. Twenty three (46.9%) of the Forest and Bird members regarded themselves to be regular users of the area. Other reported environmental groups/organisations membership included Little Barrier [Hauturu] Supporters Trust (n=4), and two responses for each of the Mt Somers Walkway Group, Summit Road Society, Mid Canterbury Save the Rivers, QEII Trust, Motuoaara Restoration Society and the NZ Historic Places Trust. A list of all environmental clubs and organisations identified can be viewed in Appendix 3.

2.3 Gaining Information about the Park

Respondents were able to complete a multiple response question as to how they knew about the area. As a result, visitors could provide more than one answer and a total of 644 responses were submitted. Friends and family (n=296, 59%) was the main means through which respondents gained information about the Hakatere Conservation Park (Table 2).

		Multiple Responses		Total Percent of respondents
		N	Percentage of responses	
How did you hear about the HCP?	DOC	33	5.1%	6.6%
	Friends / Family	296	46.0%	59.0%
	I-Site	13	2.0%	2.6%
	DOC Internet Site	37	5.7%	7.4%
	Television	9	1.4%	1.8%
	Newspaper / Magazine Article	31	4.8%	6.2%
	Brochure	30	4.7%	6.0%
	People Met During Travel	25	3.9%	5.0%
	Other	170	26.4%	33.9 %
Total		644	100.0%	

Table 2: Where Respondents Heard about the HCP

The second most indicated option was ‘Other’ (n=170, 33.3%) which referred to sources such as previous visits (50), local knowledge or familiarity with the area as a result of being local residents (34) or books and guide books (Table 3).

		Frequency	Percent of Cases
Other Sources	Life-time visitor/Past Use	50	27.3%
	Local resident/Local Knowledge	34	18.6%
	Map	11	6.0%
	Books and Guide Books	34	18.6%
	Tramping/Mountaineering Club	10	5.5%
	Word of Mouth	4	2.2%
	Other	40	21.8%
Total		183	100%

Table 3: Other Sources of Information

Information obtained from the Department of Conservation website (37, 7.4%) was complemented by respondents directly seeking information from DOC staff (33, 6.6%). Thirty respondents (6%) had consulted the HCP brochure. Other sources of information about the park were rarely used and there appears to be potential to increase the availability of information about the area through other DOC visitor centres or I-Sites.

2.4 Prior Use of the Hakatere Conservation Park

When asked to reflect on their usage of the Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes over the past three years, 36.1% of respondents regarded themselves to be regular visitors (Figure 7). One hundred and forty five (28.5%) respondents were first time visitors to the park during the term of the survey, 25 of whom were visitors from overseas.

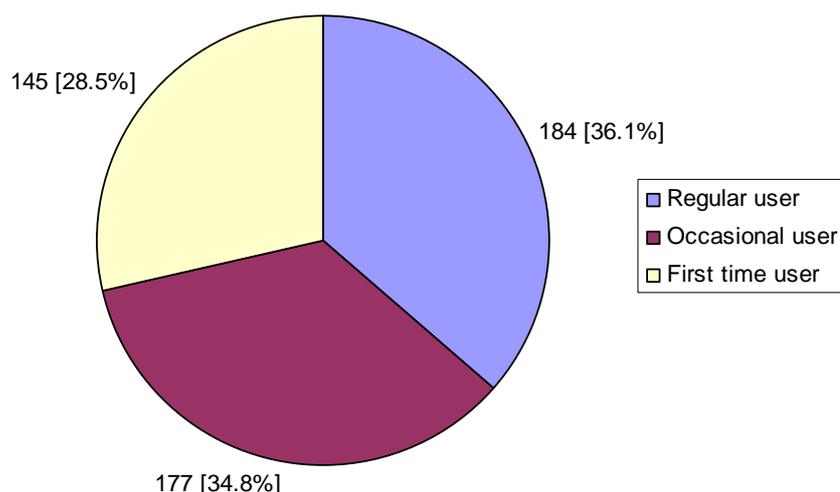


Figure 7: Extent of Usage of the HCP

Respondents who were regular or occasional visitors to the area were asked to estimate the average number of annual day or overnight visits to the area (Table 4). Many visitors made multiple visits to the area with the majority making three or more day or overnight visits a year. This question was not relevant to the first time visitors.

	Frequency overnight visits	Frequency of day visits
1 visit	79	72
2 - 3 visits	93	54
4 - 5 visits	36	45
6 - 7 visits	11	20
More than 7 visits	86	56
Total	305	247

Table 4: Previous Visits to the HCP by Regular/Occasional Users

2.5 Places Visited in the Hakatere Conservation Park

Respondents were asked to indicate the areas they had visited in the park. The majority of recreational activities and park visits were located around the lakes or the Mt Somers track. The most popular area was Lake Clearwater visited by 269 (52.8%) respondents. The next most popular area to be visited was Lake Camp with 224 (44%) respondents. Lake Heron 205 (40%) and the Mt Somers Track 167 (32.8%) were the next most popular areas (Table 5).

		Responses		Percent of respondents
		N	Percent	
Where Went on This Visit to HCP	Lake Clearwater	269	21.6%	52.8%
	Lake Camp	224	18.0%	44%
	Lake Heron	205	16.5%	40%
	Mt Somers Track	167	13.4%	32.8%
	Lake Emma	113	9.1%	22.2%
	Maori Lakes	96	7.7%	18.8%
	Potts River	33	2.7%	6.5%
	Rangitata River	33	2.7%	6.5%
	Cameron River	29	2.3%	5.8%
	Ashburton River - Sth Branch	27	2.2%	5.3%
	Mt Harper	14	1.1%	2.8%
	Taylor Range	14	1.1%	2.8%
	Clyde River	11	0.9%	2.2%
	Lawrence River	3	0.2%	0.6%
	Other	6	0.5%	1.2%
Total		1,244	100 %	

Table 5: Locations Visited in the HCP

'Other' areas of the park that could be named by respondents were Sharplin Falls (n=8), Lake Roundabout (7), Balmacaan Saddle (5), Woolshed Creek (5), Lake Stream Valley (4). There were three reported visits to Mt Sunday, Miners Hut, Double Hut and the Swin River. Lake Emily, Spider Lakes, Mt Guy and Erewhon Station were reported twice.

One hundred and nineteen respondents (23.3%) indicated that they spent most of their time at Lake Clearwater whilst visiting the Hakatere, 66 of whom regarded themselves as regular users of the area. This was followed by 104 (20.4%) respondents on the Mt Somers Track, where 19 respondents regarded themselves to be regular users; 89 (17.4%) at Lake Heron (33 regular users) and 51 (11.9%) at Lake Camp (with 29 regular users) (refer to Table 6). Thus the majority of respondents congregate in and use popular, accessible areas of the HCP with few venturing 'off the beaten track'.

		Responses		Percent of Respondents
		N	Percent	
Where Most Time was Spent	Lake Clearwater	119	27.7%	23.3%
	Mt Somers Track	104	24.2%	20.4%
	Lake Heron	89	20.7%	17.4%
	Lake Camp	51	11.9%	10%
	Lake Emma	19	4.4%	3.7%
	Cameron River	14	3.3%	2.7%
	Other	33	7.7%	6.8%
Total		429	100.0%	

Table 6: Sites Where Most Time was spent in the HCP

2.6 Group Size and Type

The survey disclosed that 263 respondents (52%) in small groups of between three and six members (adults & children) were the main group composition visiting the park (52%) followed by parties of two persons, either two adults or an adult and a child (38%) (Figure 8).

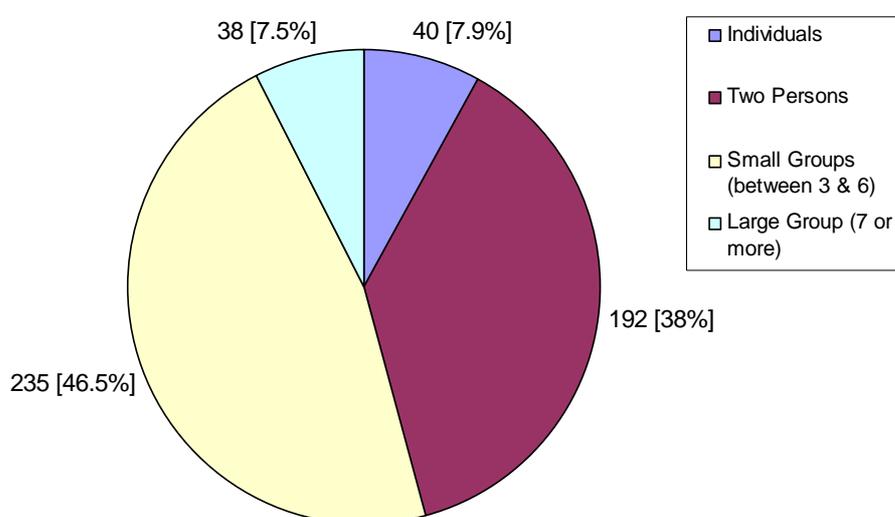


Figure 8: Group Compositions in the HCP

Ten respondents indicated that they were in groups of 11 or more people visiting the park during the period of the survey (Table 7). The largest group reported by a respondent was 16 people.

		Frequency	Percent
Total Number of Members per Party	1	40	7.9%
	2	192	38.0%
	3	80	15.8%
	4	85	16.8%
	5	46	9.1%
	6	24	4.8%
	7 -10	28	5.6%
	11 or more	10	20.0%
Total		509	

Table 7: Total Number of Members per Party

Three hundred and sixty four respondents (72.4%) indicated that there were no children in their parties. One hundred and two respondents (20.2%) were travelling with one or two children. Twenty respondents (4%) had three children in their party. Tables 8 and 9 show the numbers of adults and children present within the different parties.

Number of Children in Party	Frequency	Percent %
0	364	72.4
1	53	10.5
2	49	9.7
3	20	4.0
4 or more	17	3.4
Total	503	100

Table 8: Children Members per Party

Number of Adults in Party	Frequency	Percent %
1	52	10.3
2	269	53.5
3	59	11.7
4	58	11.5
5	25	5.0
6	15	3.0
7 - 10	21	4.2
11 or more	4	0.8
Total	503	100

Table 9: Adult Members per Party

2.7 Length of Stay, Accommodation and Transport

2.7.1 Length of Stay and Accommodation

The questionnaire asked the respondents to indicate separately the number of days and nights spent in the park. The majority of visitors spend more than one day in the area. One hundred and thirty six respondents (31%) indicated they were day trippers. The greatest number of visitors spent two to three days in the park (n=189, 43.1%) (Figure 9). Fifty eight respondents (13.3%) reported staying four or five nights in the HCP.

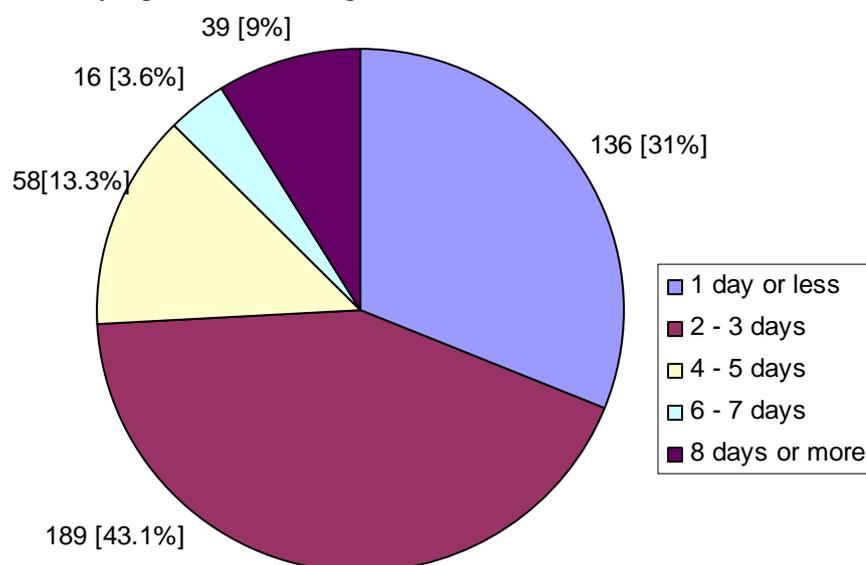


Figure 9: Length of Days in the HCP (n=438)

Of the 362 respondents who stayed overnight in the HCP, holiday cribs or baches were the most popular form of accommodation (n=128, 35.4%). One hundred and five respondents (58 of whom were only in the area to walk the Mt Somers Track) stayed in a park hut (29%) and 100 (27.6%) used a tent. Fifty seven respondents (15.7%) indicated using a campervan and eighteen (5%) used a caravan. Information was not sought as to whether respondents using campervans were overnight in designated camping areas or freedom camping. Regular users of the area reported staying in a crib or bach (n=76); hut (21); tent (23) or campervan (19).

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Accommodation Use	Tent	100	24.4%	27.6%
	Hut	105	25.7%	29.0%
	Crib / Bach	128	31.3%	35.4%
	Campervan	57	13.9%	15.7%
	Caravan	18	4.4%	5.0%
	Other	1	0.2%	0.2%
Total		409	100.0%	113%

Table 10: Type of Accommodation Used

2.7.2 Transport Mode to the Hakatere Conservation Park

Some respondents indicated more than one mode of transport when travelling to the HCP on the current visit (565 responses). The predominant modes of transport were cars (43%) and four wheel drive (4WD) vehicles (41%), with both vehicle types recording similar usage. The use of

campervans (6%) and travelling on foot (5%) were other notable forms of travel to the park. Only three respondents (1.2%) reported entering the area by horseback and eight (1.4%) used bicycles. Regular users reported that they were most likely to access the area by 4WD (n=111) and car (68). Only seven respondents indicated using motorcycles/ATVs to enter the area (Figure 10).

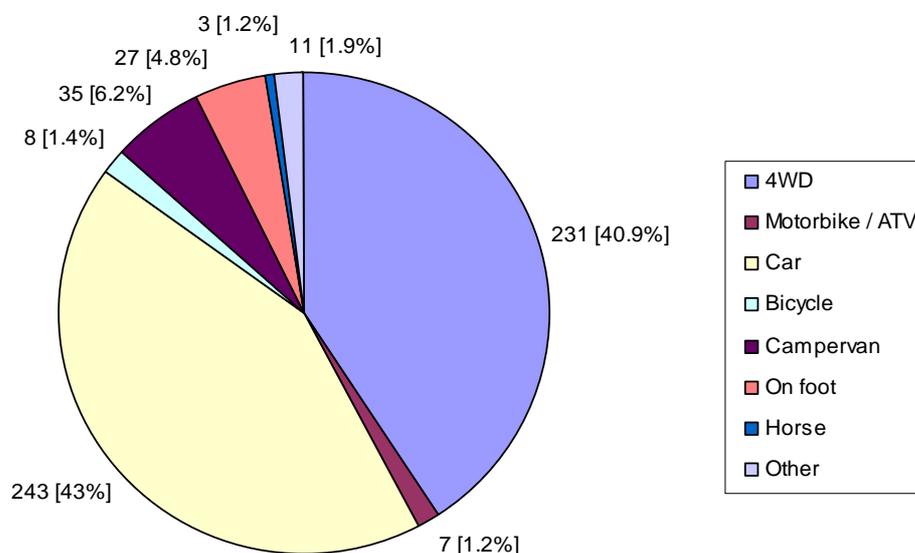


Figure 10: Mode of Transport to the Hakatere Conservation Park

2.7.3 Transport Mode within the Hakatere Conservation Park

Once within the park some visitors reported using several transport modes (multiple responses = 594).

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Mode of Travel within HCP	On foot	305	51.3%	61.4%
	4WD	97	16.3%	19.5%
	Car	92	15.5%	18.5%
	Bicycle	28	4.7%	5.6%
	Mountain bike	27	4.5%	5.4%
	Campervan / motorhome	11	1.9%	2.2%
	Motorbike	10	1.7%	2.0%
	Horse	5	0.8%	1.0%
	kayak	5	0.8%	1.0%
	van	5	0.8%	1.0%
	boat	4	0.7%	0.8%
	windsurfer	2	0.3%	0.4%
	push bikes	1	0.2%	0.2%
	helicopter	1	0.2%	0.2%
	truck	1	0.2%	0.2%
Total	594	100.0%	119.5%	

Table 11: Mode of Transport within the HCP

Travelling within the park by 4WD (19.5%) or car (18.5%) were the next most popular means of transport. Only 55 (11%) of respondents used mountain bikes or other forms of bicycle within the park, 41 of whom regarded themselves to be regular visitors to the area. Regular users also reported that they were most likely to travel on foot (n=105), by 4WD (37) and car (24). 4WD driving was only slightly more important as an activity within the park for first time users (n=25) than other users (23). Only four respondents were members of 4WD clubs.

2.8 Motivations for Visiting the Hakatere Conservation Park

As part of the survey, respondents were asked to comment on the level of importance of a variety of activities in the area using a five point Likert scale ranging from '1' 'Extremely Unimportant' to '5' 'Extremely Important'. Figure 11 depicts the combined percentage totals of actual responses indicating each motivational category as important or very important. The top five motivating factors (in descending order of importance) for visiting the Hakatere Conservation Park were:

- the scenery and / or sightseeing
- experiencing the solitude of the area
- tramping
- the ease of access to nature
- to take children or family into the outdoors

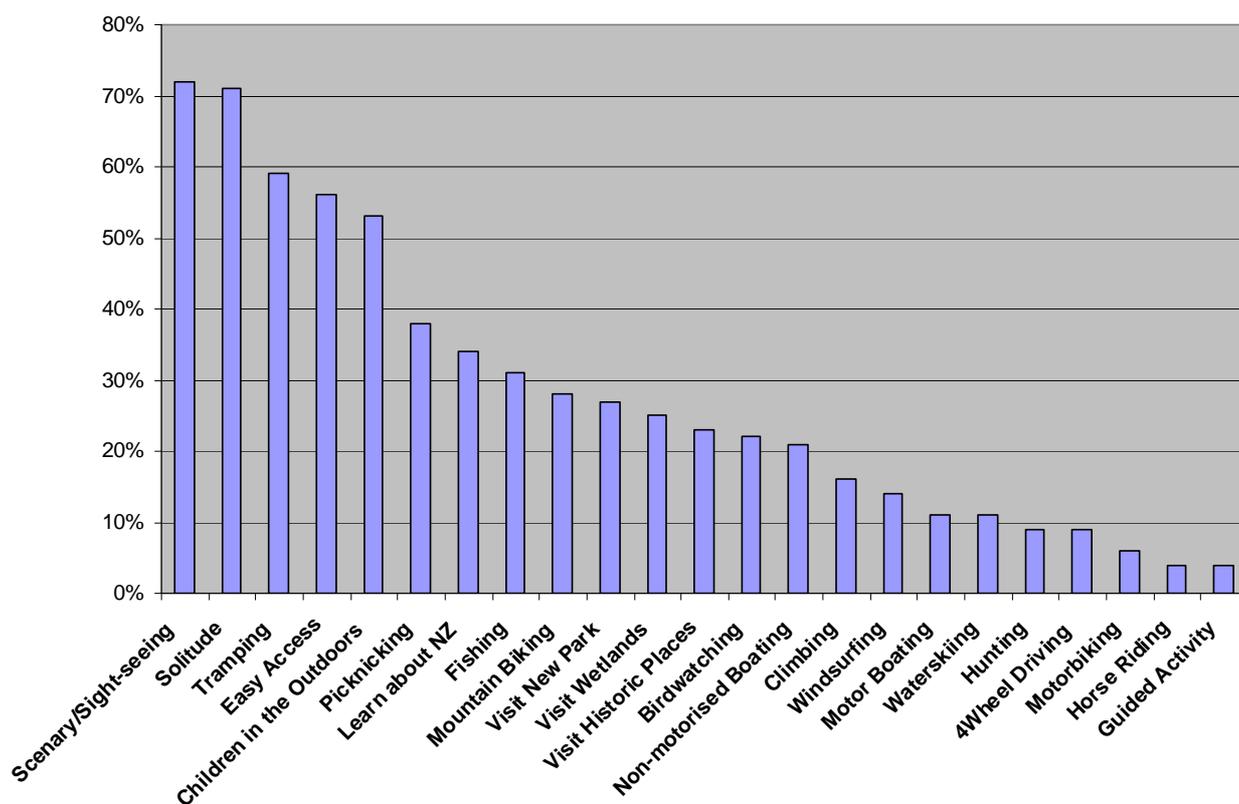


Figure 11: Most Important Motivations for Visiting the HCP

Regular visitors placed higher importance on 'taking children or family into the outdoors' than 'tramping'. Other important reasons for all respondents visiting the area were 'picnicking', 'learning about New Zealand plants, history and wildlife' and 'fishing'.

'Other' reasons that some respondents had for visiting the park, other than the pre-defined ones, were for the availability of cheap accommodation or free camping (n=9), photography (6), canoeing or kayaking (5), participating in multisport/cross country running (5), experiencing high country station environments (2) and astronomy (1).

It is interesting to note that when asked about water sports 281 respondents regarded motor boating as 'Not at all important'. However, non-motorised boating had slightly higher levels of importance, perhaps reflecting respondents' reasons for visiting the area, such as peace, solitude and remoteness (Figure 12).

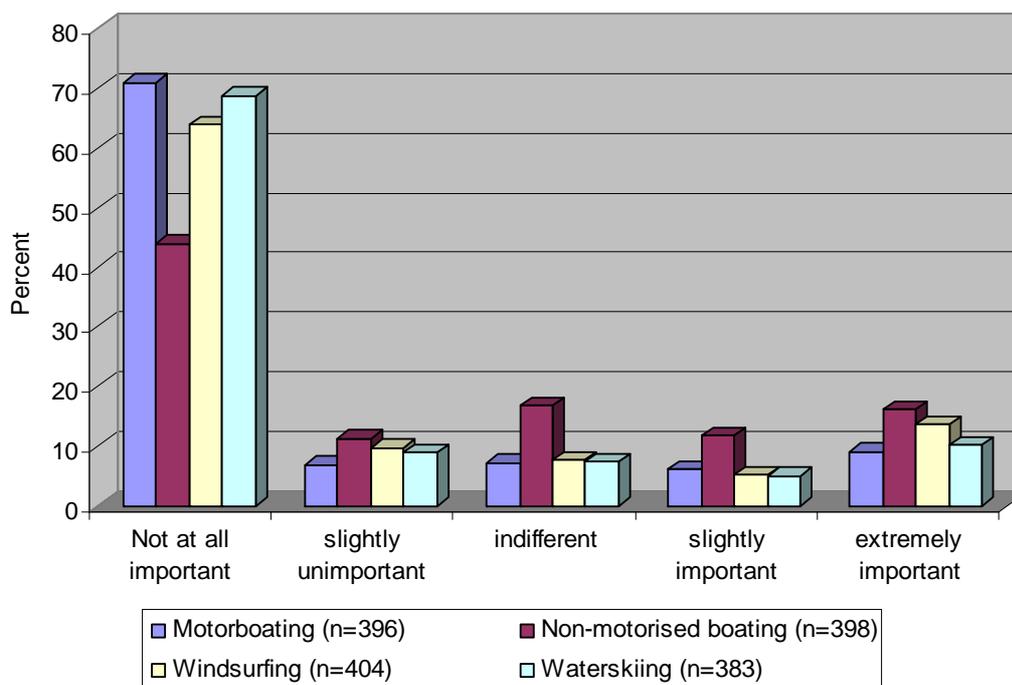


Figure 12: Level of Importance of Water Sport Activities

Surprisingly, bird watching, fishing and hunting were not ranked as important activities for most of the respondents. Moreover, despite the controversy presented by the qualitative data (refer to Part B), 4WD driving and motorcycling were not highly ranked as preferred recreation pursuits by survey respondents (Figure 13).

Visits to the wetlands and to historic places around the park tended to attract neutral responses in their levels of importance to respondents (Figure 14). In that respect, some comments made by survey and interview participants indicate that there is a lack of awareness of these features of the park, suggesting that some improvement could be considered to educational information currently available.

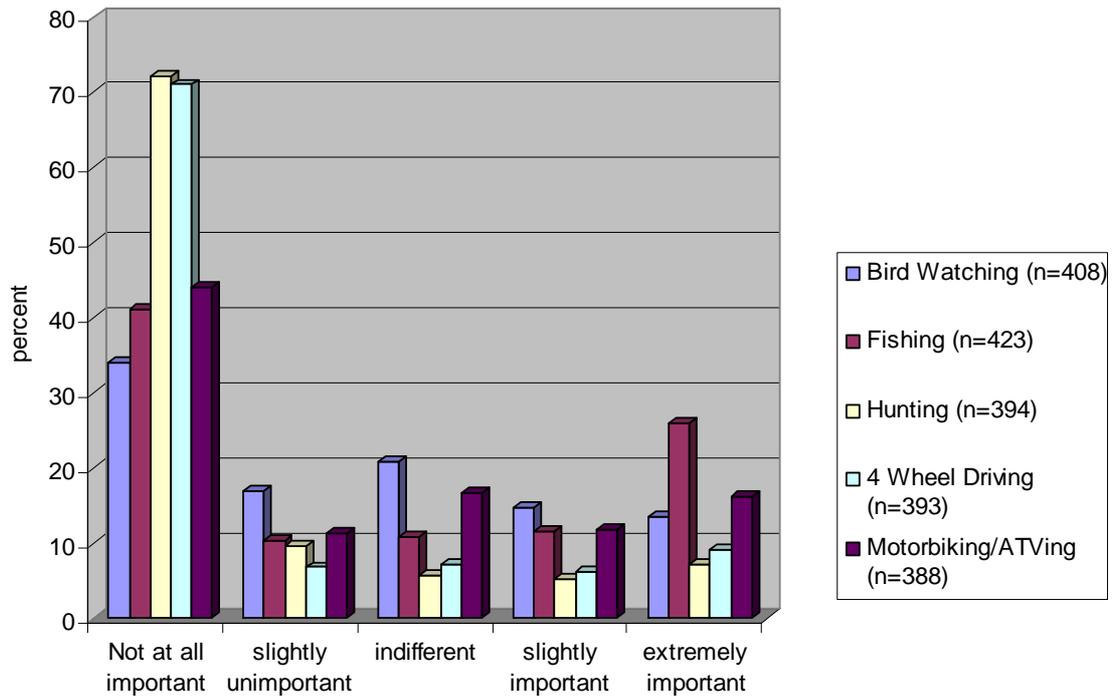


Figure 13: Level of Importance of Selected Activities

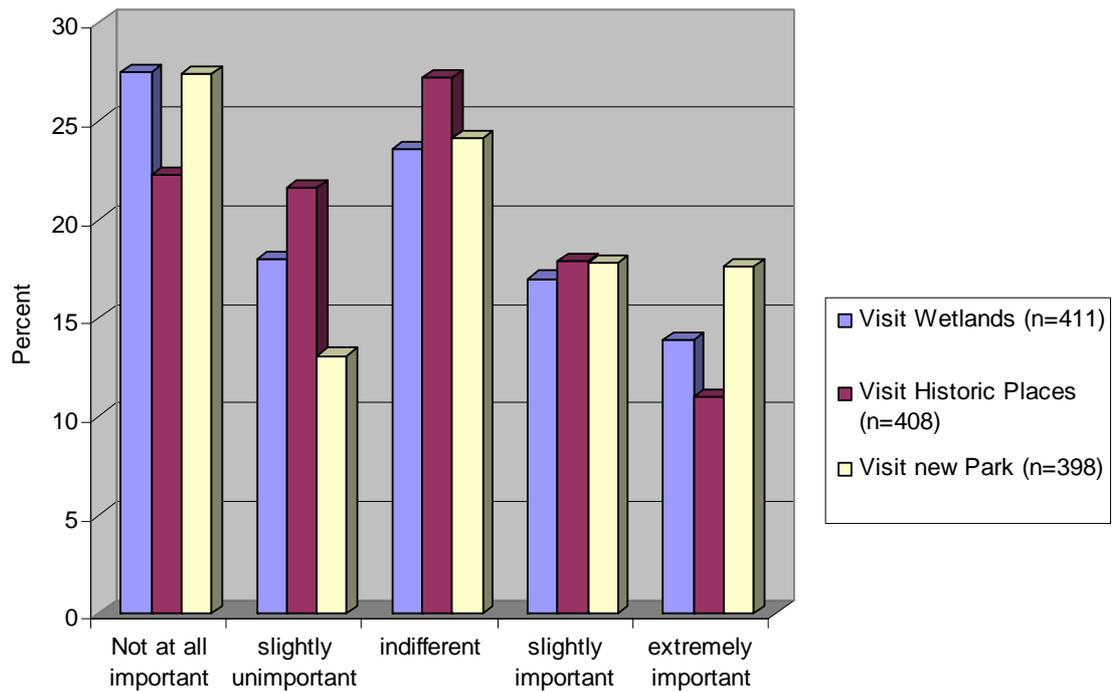


Figure 14: Level of Importance of Visits to General and Selected Areas

2.9 Participation in Activities Related to Wetlands Conservation

A substantial number of respondents indicated an interest in participating in future programmes that could benefit the wetlands or conservation of the area. Such programmes could be offered by DOC or relevant groups (Table 12).

	Interested in wetlands restoration work	Interested in joining a 'Friends of the Wetlands' group	Interested in joining summer programmes
Yes	105	89	101
No	321	325	311
Unsure	8	8	9
No response	75	87	88

Table 12: Interest in Conservation Projects/Programmes (n= frequency)

Visitors made numerous suggestions about the future management of the wetlands areas (Appendix 4). The most frequent suggestion was limiting access by 4WDs and motorbikes to the wetlands (n = 77), though five respondents supported access for such vehicles. 25 respondents favoured the control of pests or predators in the wetlands areas, mentioning the need to control gorse, broom and willow. Twenty seven respondents suggested improving interpretation and signage, and nineteen indicated the need to ensure sensitive areas were fenced from cattle and pollutant run-off from grazed areas be monitored. Respondents' opinions about access to the wetlands were mixed; for instance ten respondents opposed access to the wetlands whilst another ten suggested a boardwalk be provided. Thirteen suggested volunteer or educational programmes about the wetlands for children and other users. Notably, 101 respondents were interested in participating in summer holiday programmes.

2.10 Levels of Satisfaction with Services or Facility Used

As part of the survey respondents were asked to comment on their experiences of a variety of facilities or services in the area using a five point Likert scale ranging from '1' 'Very Dissatisfied' to '5' 'Very Satisfied'. Respondents could indicate if the particular service/facility was 'Not applicable' when not used or experienced. The following data only presents the actual responses and does not include missing or 'Not Applicable' responses, unless stated. Because the geographical area of the HCP is so vast there were a high number of 'Not Applicable' responses, depending on visitor movements.

2.10.1 Huts

Respondents who had used the various huts within the Hakatere Conservation Park were asked to indicate the levels of satisfaction they experienced with Pinnacles, Woolshed and other huts (Figure 15). Not all respondents had availed themselves of the park huts so this question was not applicable to the majority of respondents (65.4%). Generally, the majority of survey participants who had used a park hut were very or moderately satisfied with their experience of huts. Only three respondents recorded being dissatisfied with huts, one respondent (a first-time user) referring to Woolshed Hut and two respondents (also first time users) mentioning Lake Emma Hut (included in 'Other'). This reported dissatisfaction by first time users of the area could be partially alleviated through improving availability of information about the huts thus ensuring visitors' expectations are more realistic. Issues regarding some of the huts were raised by respondents' open ended questions responses (see Appendices).

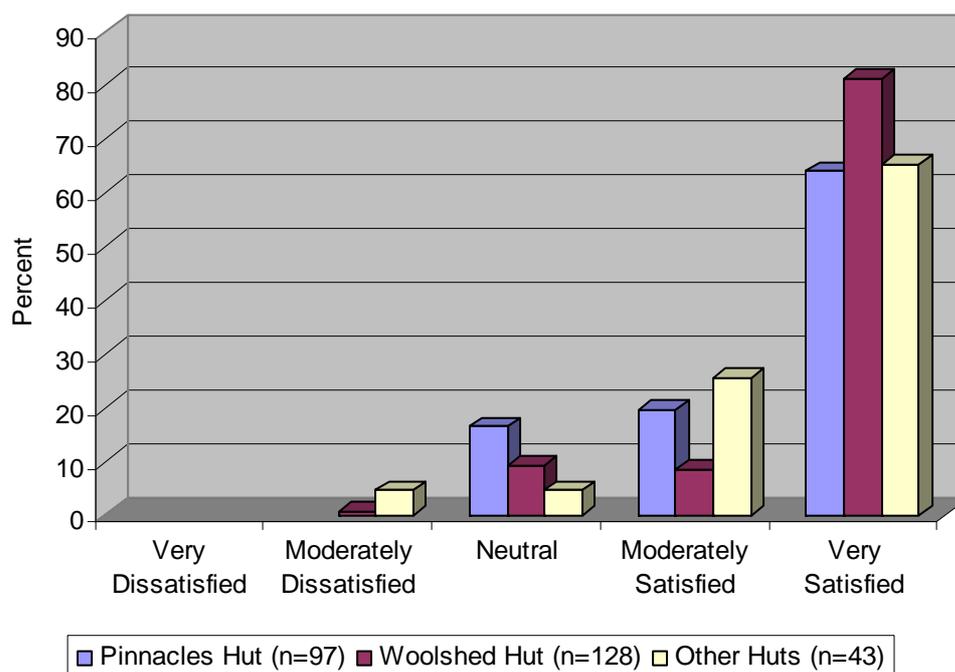


Figure 15: Huts Use Satisfaction Levels

2.10.2 Camping, Picnic Areas and Toilets

Figure 16 depicts responses to satisfaction levels with toilets, camping and picnic areas. Respondents could specify the location of the facilities. Visitors were generally satisfied (n=120) with camping areas with a few respondents reporting some dissatisfaction with the camping at Lake Clearwater (7), Lake Heron (6) and Lake Camp (5). Only 11 respondents expressed dissatisfaction with picnic areas with Lake Clearwater picnic area being of concern for five people. Generally respondents reported they were satisfied with picnic facilities (n=120).

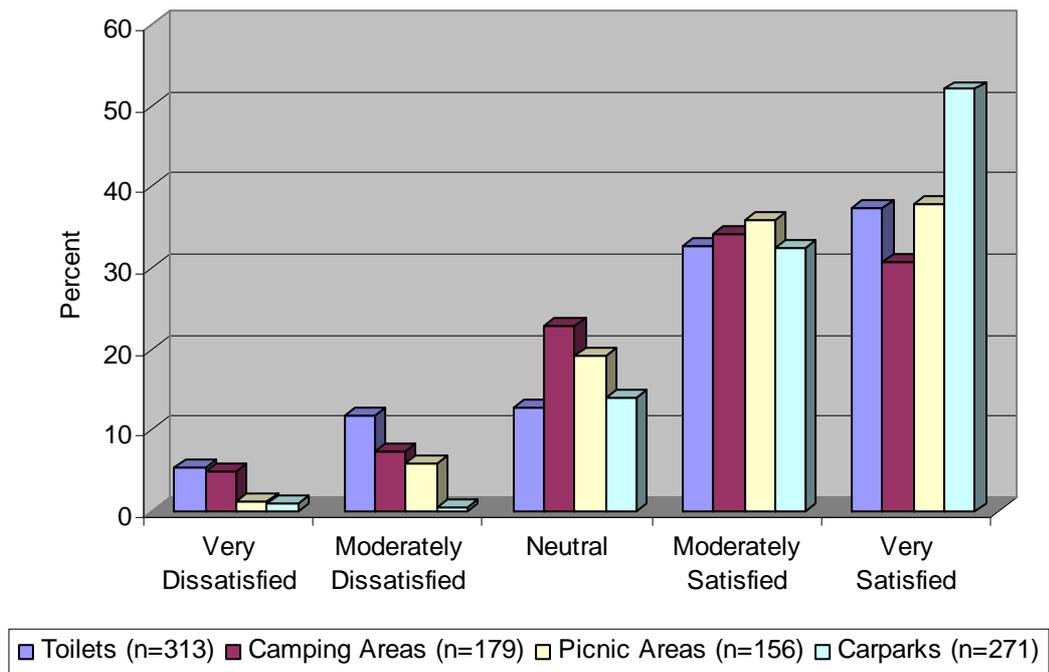


Figure 16: Satisfaction with General Facilities

Twenty four respondents were extremely dissatisfied with the toilet facilities at Lake Heron, whilst 48 respondents were satisfied with the Lake Heron facilities. 43 respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the Woolshed Creek toilets with three reporting dissatisfaction, two of whom were visiting the area for the first time. 141 respondents reported satisfaction with toilets generally in the area, with 28 respondents reporting dissatisfaction, primarily due to lack of cleanliness. A number of comments were made by respondents regarding these facilities and these can be viewed in the Appendices.

2.10.3 General Track & Trail Maintenance

In further ascertaining satisfaction levels of park users, the questionnaire asked respondents to reveal the extent of their satisfaction with the maintenance of the tracks and trails within the park.

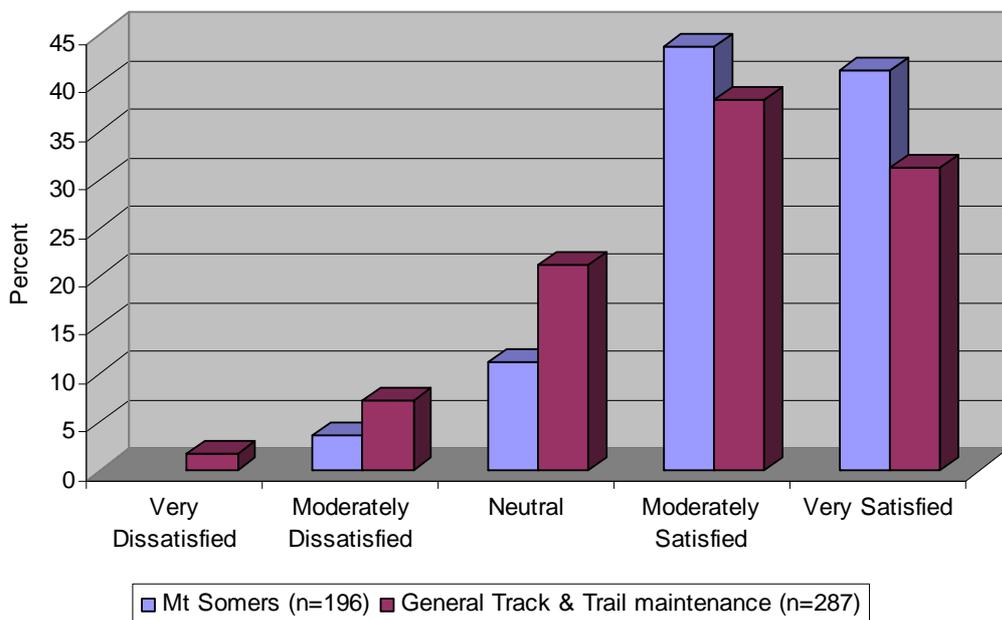


Figure 17: Track & Trail Satisfaction Levels

Of the 196 respondents who reported on their satisfaction with the Mt Somers Track, only seven (4%) reported dissatisfaction, five of whom were first-time visitors to the area. Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated moderate to high levels of satisfaction with the state of the track (Figure 17). The general maintenance of tracks and trails elsewhere in the HCP were reported on by 287 respondents to the survey with 200 respondents (69.7%) being satisfied or very satisfied; 61 (21.3%) indicating a neutral response and 26 reporting being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (9%).

2.10.4 Roads and Car Parks

Only four respondents reported dissatisfaction, in contrast to 229 respondents being satisfied, with car parks. The only car park/road end to be identified as causing dissatisfaction was at Lake Heron (Figure 18).

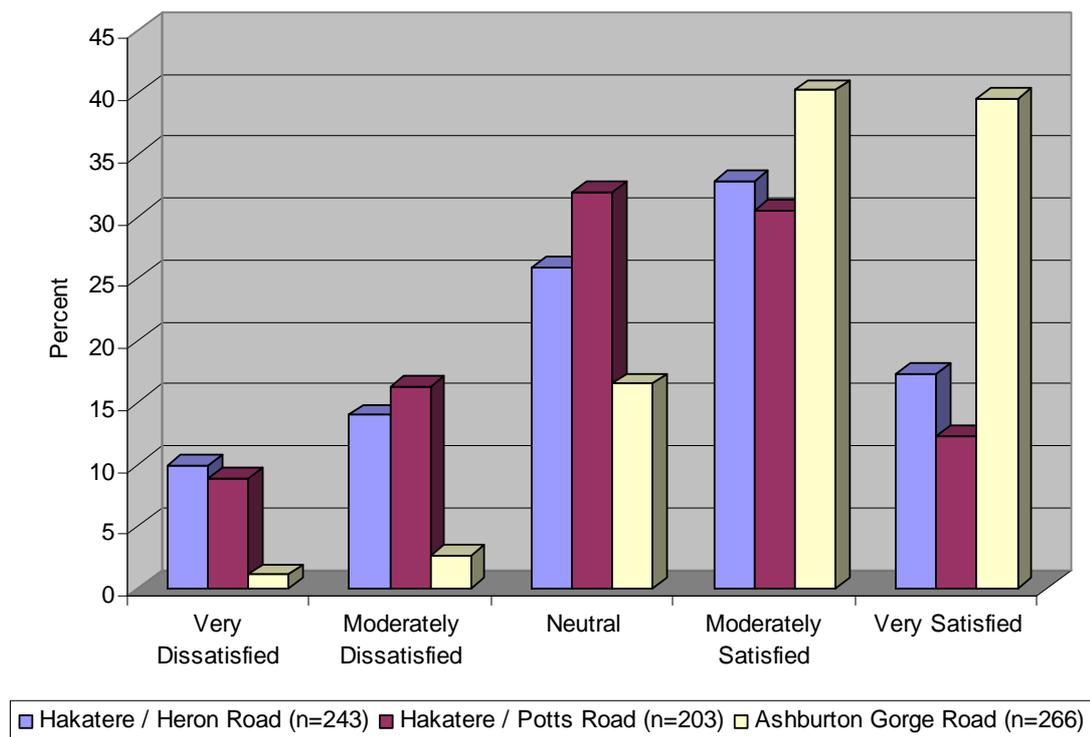


Figure 18: Road and Car Park Satisfaction Levels

Road conditions were an aspect of the Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes that caused higher levels of dissatisfaction amongst respondents. Fifty eight respondents were dissatisfied with the Hakatere/Heron Road, 23 of them being regular visitors to the area. Fifty one respondents were dissatisfied with the Hakatere/Potts Road, 26 of them being regular visitors to the area. Only 10 respondents reported dissatisfaction with the Ashburton Gorge Road conditions, (four of whom were regular visitors) with 212 respondents being moderately or very satisfied with the road.

2.10.5 Satisfaction with Information

Respondents could indicate their level of satisfaction with information available about the area (Figure 19). The survey concentrated on information or interpretation provided by the Department of Conservation, whilst recognising that some respondents could read about the area in a range of material including books about the history of the area; climbing or tramping guide books or magazine articles. See the references at the end of the report for examples of such information.

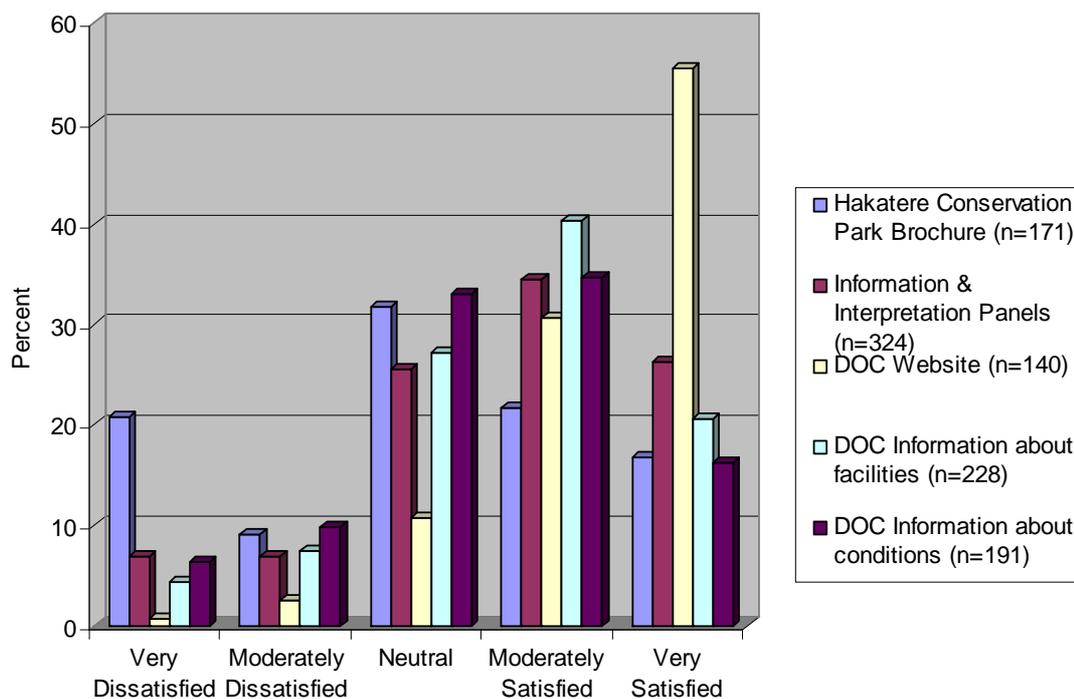


Figure 19: Satisfaction Levels with Information about the HCP

The HCP brochure produced by DOC was the information source that was mentioned most often as lacking specific track and hut information, indicating a need for improvement. The brochure was the information source identified as least satisfying to respondents, whilst the DOC website information was regarded as more informative.

2.10.6 Satisfaction with Recreational Opportunities

Respondents were generally satisfied with recreational opportunities, the main reports of dissatisfaction arising from visitors who felt there was a lack of opportunities for 4WD/ATV or motor biking in the park (Figure 20).

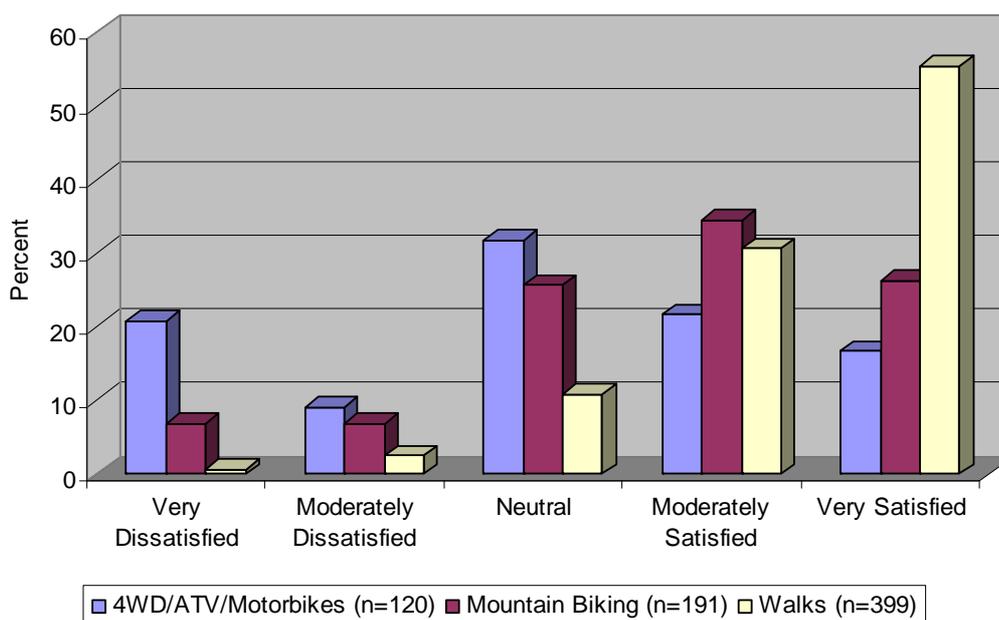


Figure 20: Satisfaction Levels with Recreational Opportunities in the HCP

29.9% of the respondents to this question (total responses = 120) reported being dissatisfied as opposed to 38.4% who were satisfied with existing opportunities. Numerous suggestions were made for improving 4WD/ATV and motor biking in the park but it must also be noted that a reasonable number of respondents were opposed to such activities. Restrictions on 4WD access to areas of the park were aspects 'least liked about the area' in Open Ended Question 15, whereas seven respondents mentioned the lack of 4WD tracks or motor biking activities. Furthermore, 67 responses to Question 12 (suggestions to enable the use, preservation and protection of the wetlands) suggested banning such vehicles around these areas. Thirty nine respondents reported the presence of motorbikes, and 16 reported 4WD/trucks the aspect they least liked about the area (Question 15).

Regarding walking opportunities, 89% of the respondents were satisfied with the HCP opportunities with 10.8% indicating they were neutral and 3.2% being dissatisfied with walking opportunities.

Mountain Biking opportunities in the HCP were considered satisfactory for 60.7% of the respondents; 25.6% indicating they were neutral and only 13.7% being dissatisfied with mountain biking opportunities.

2.11 What Visitors Liked Most about the Area?

Visitors were asked what they liked most about the area in an open ended question. All responses were transcribed and assigned categories. A table of grouped responses can be viewed in Appendix 5.

Environmental features were the most liked aspect of the HCP (n=448). Visitors were especially happy with visual aspects of the landscape and scenery, mentioning the wide open vistas and spectacular skies. Isolation, tranquillity, remoteness and opportunities for solitude and to "get away from it all" were also significant.

Recreational activities and opportunities (n=225) were also mentioned by visitors with fishing (39) and the general accessibility of the area for a variety of activities being important.

"Unique sense of space, vastness, sublime panorama – beauty. Excellent tramping."

"Fantastic intermontane basin. A rare example in semi-pristine condition – compare with MacKenzie basin, which is fast becoming a dairy farm."

Social factors such as the lack of people/uncrowded nature of the HCP but also opportunities to socialise with friends and family were the third most popular aspect of the area, followed by wildlife, accessibility of the area, and the development of facilities.

2.12 What Visitors Liked Least about the Area?

Visitors were also asked what they liked least about the area and responses were again collated and assigned categories (Appendix 6). The least liked aspect of the park related to the presence of vehicles (including motorbikes, 4WDs and jet skis) and access issues (n=134). The presence of motorbikes with associated noise and damage to the environment were the least liked (n=39),

followed by poor gravel road conditions (36) and the presence of 4WD vehicles or trucks (16). Access issues were identified by 14 respondents. It seems that the diversity of positive and negative attitudes and reported experiences surrounding access and the use of vehicles in the area could be a challenge for future management.

“Finding out from DOC Ranger we weren’t supposed to ride [our motorbikes] on the motorbike track that’s well worn in, but on 4WD track.”

Environmental issues were the second largest group of factors mentioned by respondents (n=75). A diversity of issues was highlighted; for example, 26 people did not enjoy the weather conditions and 23 complained about noise pollution (caused by vehicles or raised voices).

“We would have liked to stay longer but weather closed in. We will return.”

Toilet facilities were a feature of the third category of least liked aspects of the HCP, with toilets at Lakes Clearwater, Camp and Heron being mentioned. It must be noted that some of these facilities at lakes Camp and Clearwater may be the responsibility of the Ashburton District Council.

2.13 Was Hakatere Conservation Park Crowded?

The respondents were asked to indicate their feelings as to whether or not they felt the park was crowded or not during their visit. 75% of the respondents indicated the park was not at all crowded. 2% indicated the park was extremely crowded (Figure 21). Slight crowding (18%) and moderate crowding (5%) were also experienced and may reflect the tendency for visitors to spend most of their time in the popular lakeside areas or on the Mt Somers Track. The localised areas that more than one of the 35 respondents indicated were “moderately crowded” or “extremely crowded” were Lake Heron (3) Lake Camp (6), Mt Somers Track (6) and Lake Clearwater (15). Fifteen regular users reported being moderately crowded and six regular users felt extremely crowded.

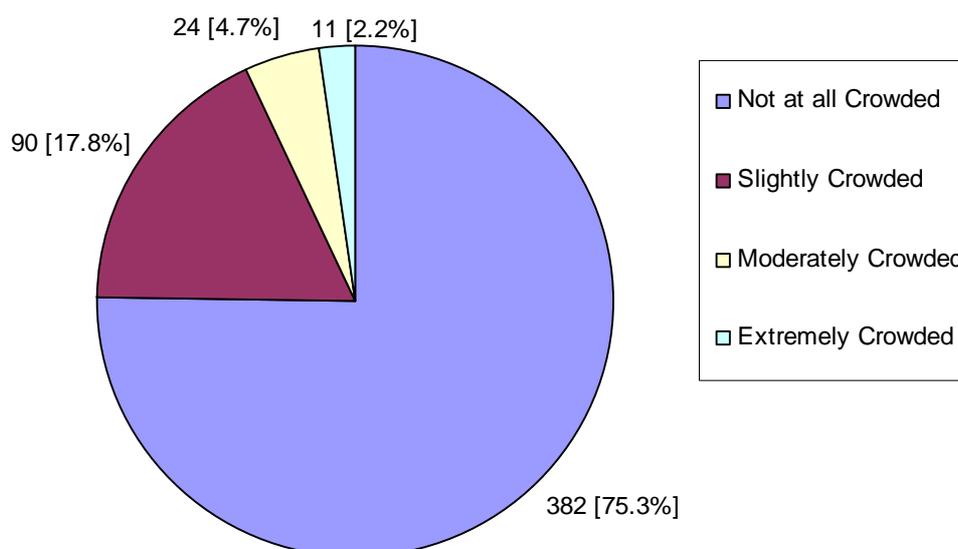


Figure 21: Crowding

2.14 Overall Satisfaction

The majority of respondents (n=475) indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their current experiences of the Hakatere Conservation Park (Figure 22). Only seven respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the overall visit.

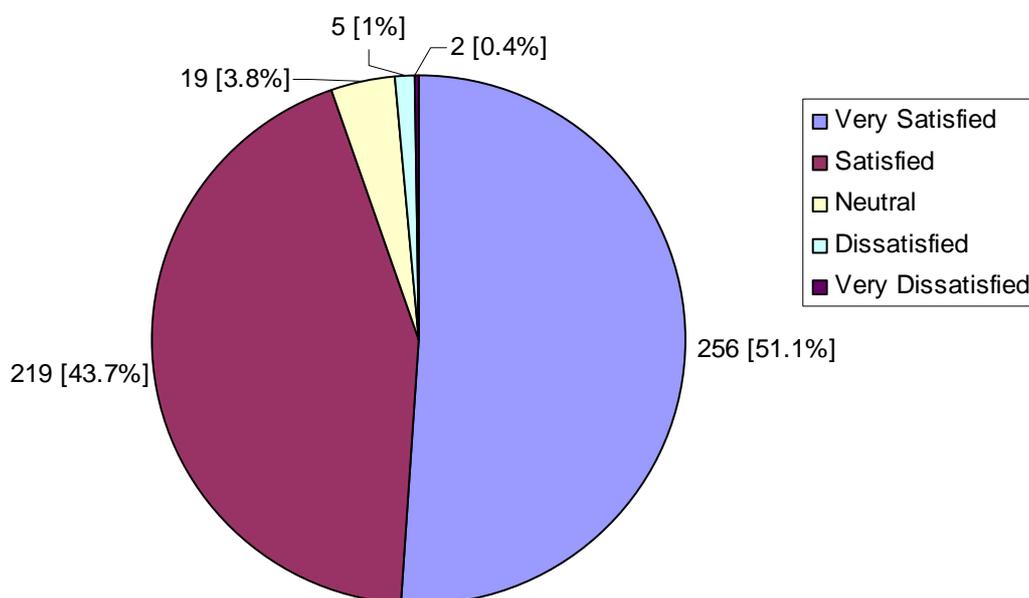


Figure 22: Overall Satisfaction with the HCP

2.15 Future Use / Visitation

An overwhelming majority of respondents (496, 97%) indicated they intended to return to the Hakatere Conservation Park. Five first-time users indicated they would not return to the area, three of whom resided overseas. 241 respondents mentioned environmental aspects of the park being influential on their intention to return. Within this group over 90 respondents made positive comments related to the beauty of the area, scenery and landscapes as reasons to return. The next most common reason was the range of recreational opportunities that exist within the park (n=147).

Accessibility of the area was noted by 76 respondents who commented about the ease of access to the area, however rough roads that could potentially damage vehicles was a reason not to return for three respondents.

Appendix 7 contains a list of the reason why respondents would return to the HCP.

2.16 Visitor Comments

2.16.1 Recreational Opportunities and Improvements for the Park

As part of the survey respondents were asked to comment on any recreational opportunities or improvements they could suggest for the park. Although a high level of satisfaction with their experience was indicated by the respondents they also made some strong comments in relation to the park. While not all survey participants responded, those that did made over 367 comments or suggestions. This section summarises those suggestions and comments received from more than ten respondents and a full list of categories is provided as Appendix 8.

Track repairs and maintenance were important to respondents, with suggestions that the area would also benefit from the development of round-trip return or loop tracks. Thirty seven respondents suggested improvements in relation to the provision of mountain biking facilities and opportunities, with one respondent mentioning the Ruataniwha Conservation Park's multiuse tracks that caters for mountain bikers and other users.

Access, both vehicular and pedestrian, within the park was a popular theme for comment or suggestion. Some of the comments concerned 4WD's in the park. Twenty three respondents suggested restricting access by 4WDs while 11 respondents supported such access. Similarly, 17 respondents opposed motorbike access whilst ten respondents supported such access with suggestions for designated areas for motor biking.

With respect to facilities or services, improved visitor information, including detailed on-site information (signage), better maps and brochures were suggested by 51 respondents. Improved toilet facilities, particularly at Lakes Camp, Clearwater and Heron were also commented upon. Another area of strong comment was in relation to stock, animal control and poison use in the park. The wilding trees were also a concern to some respondents.

2.16.2 General Management Improvements for the Park

Respondents could also comment on general management improvements for the park. Fewer respondents contributed to this section, possibly as they had already given suggestions in Question 19 regarding recreational improvements/opportunities.

1. Provision of Visitor Information

Thirty eight respondents were interested in ways of improving visitor information. Signage that suggested activities, provided directions, up to date information about road conditions, and open/closed off areas were suggested. Interpretation panels about wildlife and the history of the area was also requested. The current quality of available maps was seen as poor and requiring improvement, especially for first-time visitors who lacked local knowledge.

2. Access

Access issues, particularly with respect to 4WDs and motorbikes, featured in this section. Twenty respondents suggested limiting access by 4WDs and eleven suggested limiting motorbikes. Five respondents made comments about the presence of permanent caravans. Confusion existed as to where users had access rights and where permission was needed from landowners and respondents suggested clarification about these sites on maps and in brochures.

3. Community involvement

Twenty eight respondents suggested opportunities to involve people in the management of the HCP through activities such as organised pest control or consultation meetings with locals, interest groups or stakeholders (e.g. for improved access).

4. Facilities

A number of suggestions were made regarding the provision and cleanliness of toilet facilities in the HCP. High use areas around the lakes were the main area of concern of the respondents. The need for better provision and cleaning of toilets, ongoing rubbish collection, road, hut and track maintenance were also mentioned in the responses.

5. DOC presence

Twenty one responses were about the need for a greater DOC presence in the area. The presence of DOC staff or an on-site visitor centre were seen as important for visitor management, especially if DOC presence could prevent negative behaviours that could impact on other users or sensitive aspects of the park (e.g. wildlife or wetlands).

A full list of suggestions and comments that are thought necessary to improve the Hakatere Conservation Park are provided in Appendix 9.

3. Survey Recommendations

The Hakatere Conservation Park is a significant area to the local community, in particular the high country farming families who remain in the area, and families with holiday baches located within the park boundary. The park is already a popular recreational area used predominantly by New Zealanders who are residents of the Canterbury region. With its newly designated status, and as word of its recreational opportunities grow, it can be envisaged that there will be increased demand for the wide range of recreational uses owing to the reasonably easy access to the area. This may especially be the case for domestic visitors as the park becomes well known.

Being a relatively new addition to the conservation parks of New Zealand, respondents were reasonably content with most facilities. However, it was noted by many that current visitor facilities will need to be maintained (e.g. the Mt Somers Track huts) and toilets and rubbish services around the lakes areas could be improved. Respondents noted that opportunities exist to develop new marked trails or tracks in the area, particularly tracks suitable for families; short or multi-day loop tracks that linked existing huts through neighbouring alpine and valley systems. It must also be noted that the historical features of the area could become a focus of visitor attention, such as the complex of heritage buildings at the Hakatere/Lake Heron turn-off or the literary significance surrounding Samuel Butler and Erewhon station, through the improved maintenance of the former site and the introduction of interpretation about the area's human history.

The findings of this study suggest that any envisaged improvements to the HCP should focus on the on-going cleaning and maintenance of toilet, picnic and campground areas under DOC's management especially during high use periods. It should be noted that for first time users in particular there is considerable confusion as to which land areas DOC has management responsibilities for. There was also a continual theme of concern surrounding access issues for vehicles with respondents having both negative and positive perspectives of the usage of motorbikes and 4WDs. Some respondents indicated being unsure of whether they have access rights or need to seek permission from land owners, a situation which will no doubt be alleviated as the tenure reviews are consolidated and management of the HCP settles into a regular pattern. In relation to both the clarification of access and the behaviour of motorists, respondents regularly suggested the provision of more detailed information to clarify access and about what activities could be undertaken and where. Concerns were also expressed about possible 'over management' of the area. A strong DOC staff presence within the Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes Basin itself was recommended by numerous respondents, with respect to the management of visitor behaviour and provision of information.

In light of the data obtained from this visitor survey, the following recommendations are made in the areas of access, facility management and development, conservation management, information, and further research.

3.1 Provision of Visitor Information

Most information about the HCP was sought from friends and family ('word of mouth') with fewer than 10% of respondents seeking information from DOC or local I-sites. This reflects the fact that the majority of visitors were previous visitors to the area (71%). However with the newly designated status as a conservation park there is potential to generate up to date information about the area. Satisfaction with existing information sources was reasonably high,

though a number of respondents commented on the difficulty of reading the HCP brochure and felt it lacked information on possible activities in the park. There was also confusion regarding land access. The lack of DOC staff or a visitor centre within the Hakatere/Ahsburton Lakes basin was also a concern, but is possibly only an issue at high user periods (e.g. the summer holidays and weekends).

Recommendation: Consider revising the HCP brochure, in order to provide more detailed activity/track/hut information.

Recommendation: Consider the development of a map of the HCP similar to the National Park Map series

Recommendation: Assess the current DOC website material and brochure by reviewing the existing access, hut and track information. Current tramping information focuses on the Mt Somers Track and requires revision to include information on other tramping areas and huts.

Recommendation: Liaise with other DOC and I-site Information Centres in the Canterbury region in order to provide and distribute quality public information about the HCP.

Recommendation: Assess the feasibility of having DOC field staff located within the HCP (possibly in a designated seasonal visitor centre) over peak summer months to provide information services alongside other general duties.

Recommendation: Develop information brochures or booklets on the human history and ecological significance (particularly the wetland habitats and tussock lands) of the area.

Recommendation: Develop an 'on-line' educational guide or field trip information about the history and ecological values of the area (similar to existing DOC website field trip guides for Students and Teachers).

3.2 Access

Generally, the accessibility of the HCP (a 2 hour drive from Christchurch) was viewed as positive by respondents, despite some having concerns about vehicle noise and the rough roads. Visitors did express concerns that motorbikes and 4WD use impact negatively on other users (e.g. noise pollution) and the environment (damaging lake shores/wetlands).

Recommendation: Ensure a DOC staff member has, within his/her job description, the role of a designated liaison person with local 4WD and off road motorcycle/ATC clubs and the NZ Four Wheel Drive Association (www.nzfwda.org.nz). This person would be responsible for developing information for drivers, a code of conduct and monitoring relating to off road vehicles in the area.

Recommendation: Codes of Conduct for motorcyclists and 4WD users in the HCP could be developed in conjunction with representatives from local 4WD or motorcycle clubs. Such clubs could then assist with the distribution of the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct would serve the purpose of raising driver awareness of wetland habitats and suggesting positive behaviours and practices in populated areas, around wetlands and lakes. The Code would also offer advice on preventing accidental fires by vehicles in high risk fire periods.

Recommendation: Monitoring of the impact of 4WDs on conservation values of the sensitive Hakatere wetlands. 4WD and motorbike usage resulting in multiple vehicle tracks damaging areas adjacent to wetlands and lakes could require fencing or temporary removal of access to sensitive areas. This again could be conducted in collaboration with respected spokespeople who are regular 4WD or motorcycle users of the area. DOC could investigate the potential and cost-effectiveness of working alongside scientists to photo monitor specific sites or undertake clustered transects on an annual basis.

Recommendation: To investigate the zoning of areas suitable for vehicle access.

Recommendation: Liaise with, and work alongside, Ashburton District Council about road maintenance, safety issues and the provision of road conditions.

3.3 Community Involvement

The potential for local communities to have a role in the management of the HCP can be achieved through the implementation of the study recommendations in other categories. However, it is recommended DOC provide opportunities for public comment or submissions on management of HCP through information accessible via public notice boards/newspapers or public meetings in Mt Somers, Geraldine, Ashburton and Lake Clearwater Village. There may also be a need for the Ashburton District Council to be involved should issues relating to Lake Clearwater Village be the focus.

3.4 Facilities: Huts, Amenities and Tracks

Visitor satisfaction with huts was generally high. Most dissatisfaction from visitors centred on toilets and accumulation of rubbish during the high use periods.

Recommendation: To undertake regular cleaning of toilets and rubbish collection at road ends/picnic sites.

Recommendation: To review Lake Heron toilet facilities with respect to frequency of cleaning during high peak periods and possible need for future upgrade.

Recommendation: To review HCP information (maps, brochures and website) with respect to hut facilities, locations and walking times (as provided for the Mt Somers Track).

Satisfaction levels with tracks and trails were high. Whilst Mt Somers Track huts were heavily used, the current hut ticketing system seems adequate. There may be a need to provide more in-depth information to educate visitors about other hut facilities as HCP gains popularity over the years. Several respondents mentioned the need for better signage and track marking in the area. A reasonable number of respondents felt that there is opportunity to develop more mountain biking and walking trails.

Recommendation: Work in conjunction with walking and mountain bike user groups to investigate opportunities for development of further mountain biking and walking trail/tramping tracks in the HCP.

Recommendation: Consider developing shorter, family-friendly walking and mountain biking tracks.

Recommendation: As a long term strategy, investigate the development of one or more alternative multi-day tracks for use by recreationists within the Hakatere basin. Such a track will provide an alternative to the Mt Somers Track.

3.5 Lakes and Wetlands

Existing uses of the lakes of the area include swimming, wind surfing, water skiing, sailing, canoeing, fishing and bird watching. Whilst no conflict seems to exist on the lakes respondents indicated they felt moderately or extremely crowded at Lakes Clearwater (15) and Camp (6). Concern was also expressed that children could be at risk with the increase in vehicle numbers around the Lake Clearwater village over the peak summer period. Whilst aspects of this area are the management responsibility of the Ashburton District Council (e.g. boating regulations on the lakes) there may be confusion amongst users about the respective roles of DOC and the council.

A number of respondents (105) expressed an interest in participating in wetlands restoration work or joining a Wetlands 'Friends' group (89). The wetlands are a significant environmental feature of the area with significant conservation values that could be positively or negatively impacted by visitation. As such the wetland habitats require active management to ensure the conservation values continue or are enhanced by DOCs management.

Recommendation: To actively liaise with Ashburton District Council regarding the provision of information and regulation of visitor activities on Lakes Camp and Clearwater.

Recommendation: Investigate the feasibility of volunteer programmes or summer holiday/education programmes focussing on wetland restoration.

Recommendation: Consult with the local community and Ngai Tahu about the possibility of a Wetlands 'friends' group.

Recommendation: Endeavour to minimise damaging vehicle and pedestrian presence in sensitive wetland areas. As mentioned under the 'access' section, DOC could investigate the recovery of existing damaged areas that may require fencing during restoration through photo monitoring specific sites or undertake clustered transects on an annual basis.¹

Recommendation: Ensure continued liaison with local Ngai Tahu runanga members about the traditional ecological value for the area and the potential to develop associated recreational opportunities or other appropriate roles for the iwi.

¹ Refer Dixon, G., Hawes, M. and McPherson G. (2004) Monitoring and modelling walking track impacts in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, Australia.

3.6 Conservation Management

Concerns were expressed about the ability of DOC to provide the necessary predator, pest and weed control required to protect high conservation values of the HCP. Some respondents commented upon the spread of gorse, broom, wildling pine and willow in the HCP and had concerns for the impact upon landscape, recreation and conservation values.

Recommendation: Strategically control introduced, invasive plant species where they pose a threat to HCP values and consider providing park users with the opportunity to participate in invasive plant pest control programmes as part of volunteer programmes.

3.7 Ongoing Visitor Monitoring

This was the first comprehensive recreation study undertaken within the Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes area. The report findings provide insights into current visitor use. However, it must be noted that visitor patterns in the area are likely to change over time. It is foreseen that non-local usage will increase as the reputation of the Hakatere Conservation Park spreads and more first time users visit the area. The recreational and environmental assets of the HCP are already receiving nationwide attention in media articles through widespread magazines such as *Forest & Bird* and *Wilderness*. Ongoing monitoring of changing patterns of visitor use and satisfaction is recommended.

Recommendation: Consider the introduction of a triennial visitor survey to monitor and assess on-going visitor satisfaction, user conflict, crowding and displacement issues as the area gains in popularity. Such a survey would provide rich longitudinal data for visitor management of the area.

Recommendation: To undertake specific research into the experiences and needs of the ATV/4WD user segment and the positive and negative impacts of 4WD activities on visitor experience in the HCP.

PART B - INTERVIEWS

1. Methods

This section presents results of the qualitative data gathered through interviews with key stakeholders of the newly established Hakatere Conservation Park. Eighteen interviews with a total of twenty four participants were conducted during the summer of 2007/2008, from late January through to early March. Interviews were semi-structured and participants were recruited through a snowball sampling procedure. Participants were representatives of one or more of the following interest groups:

- Alpine Clubs (e.g. Mountaineering, Climbing, Skiing)
- Bach Owners/Local Recreationists
- Commercial Operators
- Deerstalkers' Associations
- Department of Conservation
- District Council
- Forest and Bird
- Local Farmers
- Motorcycling Clubs
- Mountain Biking Clubs
- Mt. Somers Walkway Society
- Tramping Clubs

Interviews were conducted individually or in small groups with representatives of the same interest group. All interview participants were informed of the nature of the research and each signed a consent form as per University of Otago ethics requirements. The interviews were professionally transcribed and responses analysed thematically. Length of interviews varied from 22 minutes through to 1h and 39 minutes. Ten different themes were discussed in the following order and form the basis of the interview questions and discussion material (Appendix 10):

- Current Use
- Satisfaction Levels
- Crowding and Conflict Issues
- Envisaged Use
- Facilities/Services Desired
- Information Issues
- Access Issues
- Wetland
- Wildlife
- General Management Issues

2. Analysis

Different issues emerged from the interviews and to facilitate the analysis of the material they will be grouped into the abovementioned themes. From the ten different themes proposed, four were identified as central for the future administration of recreation in the Hakatere Conservation Park: *Facilities/Services Desired; Information Issues; Access Issues and Conflicts with 4 Wheel Drives²; and General Management Issues*. Other topics will be briefly discussed and, where appropriate, they will be combined in order to provide a concise but, at the same time, complete summary of results. Furthermore, practical suggestions proposed by participants will be incorporated into the relevant sections as a means to make public the ideas of key stakeholders of the area.

2.1 Facilities/Services Desired

The central question on the 'Facilities/Services Desired' section of the interviews asked participants what they thought about current facilities and services provided and what they would suggest in terms of improvements. The main issue raised by interviewees concerned current huts available to the public and how they will be operated and managed in the future by the Department of Conservation. The first and major argument is that huts should not be pulled down or left, unmaintained, to rot, as they are part of the history of the area – especially the old musterers' huts like Boundary Creek, Potts and Top Huts.

“Oh I'd hope to think they'd leave the huts pretty much as they are, just tidy them up. It's good to leave a bit of character of them. Like the Potts Hut especially, there's quite a bit of history there, and all the writing on the wall, that's from the musterers.”

“I don't think anyone ever likes to see a hut pulled down or taken away from a spot.”

Moreover, if they are removed, maps and information brochures will have to be reprinted as old information about huts would be misleading and could lead to accidents. The reprinting of maps and brochures would imply more expenditure. In addition, according to participant's responses, these are basic huts that should not need much investment because users are happy with such rustic facilities. More importantly, upgrading them to a standard much higher than the current one would diminish the users' wilderness experience.

“And as an aside, I hope the Double Hut stays that way. I hope it's not converted into a luxurious hut. It's perfectly OK as it is at the moment.”

“I think ordinary Joe Bloggs Kiwi public just want very basic facilities. That's all they want. It's maybe the tourists that are used to more comfortable facilities, I think, that want the other sort. But the general Kiwi trumper and hunter, they're more than happy, I think, just with a roof and four walls and maybe a bit of a fireplace or something like that.”

“And in fact, if there were more services, I'd almost be negative towards it in a way, you know.”

² Although 'Conflict Issues' was initially dealt with separately from 'Access Issues', as we became more aware of the great relevance, and the conflicts surrounding the use, of 4wheel drives, the topic became almost a theme *per se*. Here, we chose to combine it with Access Issues instead as we felt that they are intrinsically linked and other general conflicting issues will be treated separately in the appropriate section.

Although there was overall agreement that the huts should not be improved to much higher standards, most participants also expressed satisfaction with the investments that already have been made in the restoration of Double Hut, Woolshed Creek and Boundary Creek Huts. Most significantly, participants were concerned that DOC will refrain from managing the huts that are now being sufficiently well maintained by the local community (i.e. farmers, local clubs) as by doing so it will be preventing local groups the opportunity to actively co-operate in the management of a public asset. This feeling seems to reflect community pride and participation in local issues, and should be valued by the managing organisation in its future management plan for the area.

Practical Suggestions:

Two practical suggestions related to hut use were presented by participants. The first one relates to the administration of the huts. According to one of the interviewees, a booking system could be integrated to the management of huts that have particularly high use in order to avoid crowding issues. The participant informed us that the huts around Mesopotamia Station use this system and that it works effectively. The second suggestion had the intention to draw DOC's attention to some historically valuable huts, such as Boundary Creek, Potts and Top Huts. The idea was to incorporate those facilities into a walking track to encourage their maintenance and integrity.

New walking and mountain biking tracks were also often mentioned as one aspect of facilities/services desired. Although most participants were satisfied with the current state of present tracks, most interviewees suggested the installation of new walking and/or mountain biking tracks, as outlined below. In fact, the provision of mountain biking opportunities gained constant mention throughout the interviews. There was a general feeling that these should be separate from walking tracks to avoid conflict issues. Taking into account the feasibility of such a project, codes of behaviour and educational information about the different track users could be a cost effective alternative for conflict management.

Practical Suggestions:

A recurrent walking track development suggestion was the link between Mt. Somers Track and Manuka and Double Huts tracks passing through the Stour River area and finishing at Lake Heron. A more 'off the beaten track' proposition included a walkway starting at Lake Clearwater, going up to Boundary Creek, over to Sardines Saddle to Top Hut, and back down to Boundary Creek and Lake Clearwater. For mountain biking, suggestions included short and easy tracks that families can enjoy, and long loop or circuit tracks where one can have more adventurous rides. For the first user group, one proposal includes a loop track around Mt Guy. For the second user group a long mountain biking track linking the Rangitata, Clent Hills, Arrowsmith and Barossa in a fashion similar to the Otago Central Rail Trail, where farmers would also make profit out of it, is proposed. A circuit linking Lake Camp, to a loop around Mt. Guy and back across the outlet of Lake Clearwater was also suggested.

Other suggestions:

- The construction of a toilet for the shelter on the south face of Mt. Somers
- Creation of more camping grounds around the lakes area to cater for high summer use (e.g. assessment of an extension of Lake Heron's camping area)
- Construction of, at each vehicle road head, a parking area, a toilet, a water supply and a good map of the surrounding area with routes or tracks dotted in. In addition, some information panels about the activities available in that particular area.
- Provision of intentions books in more exposed areas such as the Cameron Valley car park
- Provision of cleaning stations for cars (for weed control)

2.2 Information Issues

The interview section that dealt with issues of information asked participants mainly about their level of satisfaction with current information about the park and its facilities. Interviewees were also encouraged to provide ideas concerning future information schemes.

The main problem raised by participants was the lack of signage and information provided about access to, and accessibility of, different areas of the park, especially for first-time visitors³. Commercial operators and other stakeholders were concerned that visitors would not find information readily available on the internet and visitor centres and that poor signage schemes would not help during their visit to the area. Some interviewees were highly dissatisfied with the brochure of the Conservation Park, affirming that the information provided was confusing and most times not helpful. Furthermore, according to the interviews, there is a lack of information about the park boundaries and farmlands, making it difficult to make proper use of the park's entire area. The researchers recognize that this difficulty is probably a consequence of the ongoing tenure review process. Nonetheless we understand that this is an important issue to be raised as it was mentioned by several respondents and therefore should be carefully administered.

There is also the position taken, by a smaller group, that too much signage would spoil the environment and the experience, and that there would be a greater chance of accidents as people could feel safer than they actually should. For that matter, the common response was that signage should concentrate on areas of higher use (or potential use) therefore maintaining a more remote experience for others in low use areas. The general agreement was that there should be a democratic access to different opportunities: places where visitors would need a map and compass to find their way and places where you would have comprehensive signage.

“I think, probably with... maybe with a lot more of this area coming back into DOC's stewardship, there is potential I suppose for more signage in some places. But again my view is that, I mean, we don't want boardwalks and four lane highways everywhere. There needs to be places for people to get that wilderness-type experience. Where there are no tracks, and no signs and they can just wander at will and do their own navigation. So yeah, there needs to be a range of things, but some areas need to be left alone.”

“Yeah, so you know, to me as long as there are some areas that are less developed, much less tracked, much less signed, there will be areas for everybody. There'll be areas for those who don't mind being with a crowd, for those who prefer a bit of solitude or only want their party of 3 or 4, or whatever they've got around them. You've got to cater for all interests.”

Under the same issue, an important remark was made by one of the respondents:

“Um... no I don't think there's any information for motorcyclists' use at all. It's all... there's never been... I mean all the local people in town know they're not supposed to be in that block of land between Clearwater and Mystery Lake, but they still use it. There's no real signs that say you're not supposed to be there. As far as I'm aware there's no signs saying where you can and can't go. I mean if there was good signage up saying where the established tracks were and what direction you needed to head on, I'm sure that most people would adhere to it.”

³ This specific issue of information overlaps with the section on 'Access Issues', and will therefore be discussed in more detail in the latter section.

In summary, motorcyclists are not satisfied with the current information provided about tracks and limitations on motorcycle use, which leads to more irresponsible use of the area. A possible solution for the management of this activity and 4 wheel drives would be the appointment of a Department of Conservation staff member to liaise with the two groups therefore improving communication and managerial efforts in the area.

Lastly, some participants showed concern about the increased use of the area after the official establishment of the Park and suggested that educational signs should be added to the efforts put into information issues.

2.3 Access Issues

Access was by far the most commonly raised issue, with 4 wheel drive access featuring as the most controversial one. There is strong opposition to unrestricted access but also an intense feeling of historical right regarding access to the Hakatere backcountry. Nonetheless, all participants agreed that there are problems involved with unrestricted access, as there are several visitors who behave improperly causing considerable environmental damage, including noise pollution. In fact, the main arguments against 4 wheel drive and motorcycle access are environmental issues and, equally, disturbance of the remote experience for non-motorised recreationists.

“I think because they diminish the remote experience quite a lot. Not so much by the noise, although that can be a bit intrusive. It’s just the fact that they’re there, and that a party of people who have stretched their legs and put their packs on their backs and walked into a... what to them is a remote place.”

“But if we want to keep the New Zealand mountains as New Zealand mountains, and not like Switzerland or Austria or Disneyland, then people should do it on their own two feet. Because the previous generations of people have shown that it can be done, and with modern equipment and modern tents and modern footwear it’ll be a whole lot easier than the previous generations around it.”

“So there’s something there for everybody. That’s what I like about the place. And that’s why I would like it to remain as near as possible to its present situation as regards motor vehicle access. I think providing too much motor vehicle access takes away the feeling that the visitors have from going in to what to them seems like a remote place. It may not be terribly remote to me or you, but to somebody who’s just venturing off the road for the first time, it’s quite an experience.”

In addition, motorcycles and quads were often referred to as problematic in the area, again causing some controversy. In general, the feeling is that a few recreationists spoil it for the larger groups and that some control should be implemented to regulate access and avoid any environmental issues.

“There are a lot of hoons in 4 wheel drive vehicles that are spoiling it for others and it’s hard to define them.”

“I think there’s a greater percentage of the thoughtless people who... and a greater ability for 4 wheel drives of all sorts, or off road vehicles of all sorts, to actually create

damage. But again I say, rather than lock it up, a good management plan should minimise that problem.”

“When you’ve got people going off all over the place and destroying stuff, then that’s when it starts to become a problem, and that’s why if that does become an issue then there’s possibly ways you could look at putting steps in place to try and stop that happening, rather than just blocking off access completely, you know. And sometimes I think it’s a shame when one or two people can ruin it for everybody when probably the easiest way is to lock the gate on the place, but then you know, you’re locking everyone out for only the few people that have ruined it for everyone.”

“What’s the purpose of the park? Is it to protect the conservation values? And if it is, then you’ve got to restrict the activities [e.g. 4 wheel drive, motorbikes] that are going to be invasive on those values.”

The general comments would indicate that 4wheel driving and motorcycling should not be catered for as a recreation activity in a Conservation Park, but only as a form of access.

“...but the one interest that I find that’s going to be very, very hard to cater for is the 4 wheel drive enthusiast who uses 4 wheel driving as a form of recreation, and not as a means to get him somewhere to go and do something.”

In that respect, access should be regulated and managed, finding a balance between new conservation regulations and old historical use of the area. All agree that there should be 4 wheel drive access to starting points, but how far these access points should go is a management decision that is still unclear. A controversial issue on that matter refers to areas such as Double Hut, where 4 wheel drive access has been historically provided, but has been limited after the creation of the park.

“Well, the likes of Clent Hills, I’m not going to walk all the way up there. I could, but I don’t like walking on vehicle tracks when you could drive, you know what I mean?”

Suggestions on the topic proposed a compromise between the groups but one that prioritizes the conservation values of the park, because, as one of the interviewees highlighted, the Park is called Hakatere Conservation Park and not Hakatere Recreation Park.

“But at the end of the day you know, people are into what they’re into. You know, I’m into biking. People are into 4 wheel drives. It’s not for me. And I can’t see it ever being for me [...] So maybe there is an issue with there needing to be specific areas for these guys or something [...]. For that reason I tend to steer well away from where people go with their 4 wheel drives to have fun and get muddy and stuff you know.”

“There certainly is an impact on the environment with 4 wheel drives. But I think you have to find a happy medium between preserving the environment, but at the same time, letting people enjoy the environment. Also, I kind of think if you’ve got a massive big area with potentially one 4 wheel drive track going through it, and if people stick to that 4 wheel drive track, I know that 4 wheel drive track is a bit of a scar on the landscape, but if it’s only that one spot in a big area, personally then I think that it’s quite a fair medium. [...] So yeah, there’s definitely, 4 wheel driving does have an impact. I think if 4 wheel driving and biking is done in a responsible manner, then I think it’s quite a small impact on the environment, from what I can see anyway.”

“The land belongs to everyone so we’ve all got to be able to use it, but responsibly, without getting in other people’s space, or destroying the land... that we aren’t destroying the flora and fauna that’s there.”

Another important factor relating to access refers to farmland boundaries and access. In addition, the unfinished or not yet initiated tenure review process of some farmlands poses some difficulties in terms of understanding the politics of access with farmers and different farmlands. One example often raised is the access to Mystery Lake, which is now in DOC land but areas surrounding it are privately owned. In general, participants complain about access through Mt Possession and Barossa Stations, and access to and around Mesopotamia Station. In addition, overlapping with the previous section on ‘Information Issues’, users are not aware of farmland boundaries and which areas require permission from landowners and which are publicly available. As mentioned above, if information about access is not readily available then it is likely that users will trespass. Furthermore, movement of stock during different times of the year represents changing access provision, and that should be in some way communicated to visitors to avoid conflict with landowners.

“But the thing is, as ownerships change, things are different. And therefore DOC has got to have in place something that’s concrete. We don’t mind having to ask permission and tell people that that’s really the way it should be, and tell people where you are all the time. That is not a problem. But the change of ownership is a problem if the organisation has not been put in place to make sure access is available to conservation country.”

Lastly, access charges were mentioned by a few as a topic of concern. According to some participants, there should not be any fees related to access to the backcountry because that would ruin the New Zealand traditional backcountry experience.

Practical Suggestions:

Several interviewees recommended that educational programmes should be implemented to deal with negative behaviour, especially from 4 wheel drivers and motorcyclists. This could include signage and other forms of education communication that shows visitors how their activity or behaviour can negatively impact on the environment and the significance of the values that are there and how sensitive they are. This proposal also embraces the development of more educational information for the Department of Conservation’s website.

In order to avoid trespassing and farmland access issues, it was suggested that DOC create a list of High Country Stations in the area, with contact information so visitors have a contact person/number when planning trips to the high country.

Still concerning information about farmland access, signage to inform where to keep off private property be established as a good management tool to avoid conflict.

Access to huts where, historically, users have been granted access could be granted for a couple of weekends a year, being managed by DOC and some other organisation, such as the Lions Club, for instance. In that respect, some participants suggested that a communication forum should be created to install leadership and stakeholders’ representation in the park management decision-making processes.

Combination locks and poled tracks for 4 wheel drive and motorcycle access issues were also proposed by some participants.

Winter season was considered the most problematic one for 4 wheel drive and motorcycle recreation use, therefore participants recommend that access should be limited during this time

of the year for those two activities as they present greater chance of contributing to environmental degradation.

Some participants consider that some areas should be set aside for 4 wheel drive and motorcycle recreation, if this activity is to be included in the park's recreation policy. In this case, tracks should be established or maintained taking into consideration birds breeding seasons. In addition, these areas should be distant from high conservation value areas and 4 wheel drive and motorcycle groups could be involved in the management and stewardship of the area (without full responsibility). Including in this management, rules should be established to control the impacts of the activities on the environment and other recreationists (e.g. use of silencers, spark arrestors, safety gear, banned procedures, etc.).

2.4 General Management Issues

Three main issues were raised under the 'General Management' section of the interview. The first and most commonly mentioned one was the need for permanent field staff in the park to deal with all different issues that come up on a day-to-day basis. With the increased use of the area after the opening of the park, participants fear that office-based staff will not be sufficiently prepared to deal with issues as they emerge. The permanent field staff should ideally be based in an office inside the Conservation Park boundary.

Practical Suggestions:

One of the participants suggested that DOC could use the old shearers' quarters to host permanent staff during the week and avoid delays in dealing with management issues in the large area of the park. As a cheaper option one interviewee proposed that the DOC office be housed at the Mount Somers shop where it could be run by somebody in the store, if not staffed.

The second major issue raised by participants in this section was the urgent need of liaison between the Department of Conservation, the local community and stakeholders' organisations. Cooperation between community groups and DOC is considered a prime management action by all interview participants. Better communication between authorities and local knowledge should result in a collaborative effort to solve major management issues.

"Well there'll always be a certain amount of conflict between farmers and conservation, and/or recreational use. There'll have to be an integrated approach, and it certainly wouldn't want to start off with conflict, or it'd be pretty much doomed. Co-operation would be the very best way to start it and let it evolve I suppose as to what's going to be satisfactory for different user groups. I can see there's going to be an on-going conflict there in getting it right and how they're going to manage it and police it and... yeah. Yeah I can see that as probably the main conflict. I mean well you will have witnessed as a mountain biker, but not necessarily a motorbiker, you will have witnessed and see the evidence that the conflicts that have happened around Lake Clearwater."

Practical Suggestions:

Several participants proposed public meetings to discuss park management issues.

Initiation of a programme to establish a community advisory group was suggested.

Appointment of a 4 wheel drive and motorbike clubs liaison person in the Department of Conservation.

Weed and pest control was the last major issue raised by participants in the general management section of the interview. Several interviewees showed concern about weed control and how the Department of Conservation will be able to deal with it without the major efforts and collaboration of local farmers after tenure review. In that respect, participants highlight the need to not only perform the work effectively but also to keep the public aware of it. Nonetheless, most participants were satisfied with willow control programs run by DOC. Animal pests that were most commonly mentioned as real threats to the park's wildlife were wild pigs and rabbits. The Potts River area is considered threatened with weed whereas the Upper South Branch Ashburton was considered to be relatively clean.

Practical Suggestions:

Trapping lines for predator control.

Effective and constant weed and pest control programs and advertisement of DOC's action in this respect.

Other management issues raised and suggestions will be briefly mentioned. Some participants mentioned the need for a pro-active management and development plan. Included in the development plan should be a greater interest in preserving the heritage values of the park, where human history is incorporated into management plans.

"It's a world of nature, but it's also a world of human beings, so we may as well know a bit about them as well."

One participant showed concern about road improvements/creation, as this leads to more unregulated visitation, diminishing the value of the experience. Fire risk was mentioned by two participants as something that there should be more information about, especially in terms of prevention and education. Also with respect to education programmes, participants pointed out that the geology of the area should receive a bigger focus. According to one participant, there are several visible fault lines in the area and many visitors would be amazed by them. Another topic for educational programmes would be signs compelling visitors not to litter and to make proper use of the conservation park.

Viewing hides for birds were mentioned as unnecessary, as visitors who are in fact interested in bird life will not need viewing hides to spot animals.

"If they've got that interest [in birds] they wouldn't be in a hide. Hides are only good for people who've got a very small passing interest in birds."

Other suggestions:

Infringement fees for people caught releasing animals in the wild

Ideas for themes to incorporate human history into management plans: how the land was settled by both Europeans and pre-European settlers; mountaineering and surveyors achievements; calling attention to old names, stories, photographs; maintenance of farm houses' heritage

Construction of a kid's play area – especially around Lake Camp/Lake Clearwater area

Improved horse-riding opportunities

Upgrading of the Old Stone Hut and the old stable into a horse paddock

Removal of rubbish bins from camping grounds to encourage pack in – pack out policy

Provide incentives for low impact activities such as rock climbing on Mt Somers, tramping, mountain biking, mountaineering and bird watching

Develop a handbook with information about the area

2.5 Other Topics

In this last section of our analysis of the interview material we will combine the other topics raised but sparsely mentioned during the interviews, though nonetheless presenting relevant information for park managers.

Crowding and other conflict issues that were not discussed previously do not seem to be major causes of concern for users, although some respondents fear that increased use due to park publicity will inevitably bring crowding and other conflicts into the area.

“As long as there’s somewhere for those who prefer not to be where the crowds are, as long as there’s somewhere for them to go... and that really means leaving some areas as semi-wilderness area, that’ll always be there.”

Also, some participants mentioned that with the limitations on access, crowding can become more apparent in areas kept accessible. Major areas of concern for crowding are:

- Pinnacles Hut due to large numbers of rock climbers staying for long periods in the hut
- Lake Heron and Lake Clearwater, especially during summer season
- Lake Emma is probably one of the ‘hot spots’ for conflict between motorcyclists and other recreationists

Wetlands, wildlife and general environmental concerns were brought into the discussion by a few passionate conservationists. Some common issues raised were:

- Grazing from Castle Hill Station and Barossa Station seems to be endangering the wetlands around Maori Lakes
- Grazing from Mt Possession Station seems to be endangering the wetlands around Lake Clearwater
- Over-development is jeopardizing conservation values
- Farming, cattle and irrigation schemes in the area have severe impacts upon the environment (e.g. Lake Heron, Lake Clearwater and Potts River wetlands)
- Wetlands are not advertised to the general public and most visitors are unaware of their value and importance to the area and to the general wildlife of the park. In addition, wetlands are not an attractive biome for the general public, which makes its conservation a bigger and harder task to be accomplished. Therefore, more attention should be paid to these areas and more money spent on their conservation
- Big game species available in the area can cause environmental damage, although they are an asset to sport hunters
- Hunting, instead of culling, should be promoted and encouraged
- 4 wheel drive and motorbikes use is considered the greatest wetlands impacting factor

“If it is Hakatere Conservation Park, you know, I need to see as a tax payer, and as a conservationist, a bit more effort being put in to conservation of birds.”

“... this stream where these grease skinks are, a sizeable population of them, it’s very accessible and it’s on the lowland area. So there’s potential there for damage. It’s quite easy to drive a 4 wheel drive up that riverbed. It hasn’t happened really very much at this stage, but the potential is there. So I think it’s... rather than just target the high country areas, they’ve got to identify the key valuable areas on the lowlands as well, because those are the areas that we’re losing. I mean, what does the high country need to be protected from? What’s going to damage that? Nothing, really. And it’s those lowland areas where you get the disturbance from vehicles and people and stock and the rest of it. Those are the ones that we’re losing and those are the ones that maybe need more focus on protection. You don’t need to touch the high points, and the tops of the ranges and things, because there’s nothing there actually threatening them anyway, other than maybe weed invasion.”

Practical Suggestions:

Education projects with schools to teach about wetlands, wildlife and conservation.

Construction of a bridge at the outlet of Lake Clearwater to protect the wetlands and to get pushbikes, mountain bikes and walkers over the wetlands.

Some comments about the envisaged use of the park highlight the development of mountain biking and fishing as the major activities in the area. Two respondents also emphasized that the Hakaterere Conservation Park, and its immediate surroundings, is probably one of the few places in Canterbury where you can ride motorbikes. Some respondents also predict an increased interest in the use of the park for winter activities such as cross-country skiing, heli-skiing and skidooring and stress that the management plan should take those activities into consideration as well as their possible commercial developments.

Overall, results from the interviews confirm survey data and, in general, the suggestions proposed by interviewees align and therefore emphasize the recommendations drawn from the survey study.

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Appendix 1: Survey



Hello,

We would appreciate 10 minutes of your time to answer some questions about your visit to the Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes area. This study is being undertaken by staff from the Department of Tourism, University of Otago. The aim of this research is to learn about holiday residents' and visitors' use of (and satisfaction with) the Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes area. The information will be used in a visitor report that will help with ongoing management of the area.

The information gathered is anonymous and results will only be produced in aggregate form - together with the views of all other participants. Please only complete one form each - your answers will not be valid if you fill in more than one questionnaire.

Return the completed questionnaire by post (remember there is a mail box at Staveley and Mt Somers stores). The addressed post-paid envelope is enclosed with each survey form.

PRIZE DRAW

All respondents can enter into a **PRIZE DRAW** for gift vouchers from the Kathmandu store (1st prize \$200, 2nd prize \$100, 3rd prize \$100).

Don't forget to write your name and address on the entry slip at the back of the questionnaire, if you want to go into the draw for the Kathmandu gift vouchers.

Your help in completing the questionnaire will be much appreciated. If you have any queries about this survey, please contact the researchers.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Anna Carr & Dr Brent Lovelock

Tel: (03) 4798057 or (03) 4798069.

Email: acarr@business.otago.ac.nz or blovelock@business.otago.ac.nz

HAKATERE/ASHBURTON LAKES

VISITOR SURVEY

Section One: Your visit

1) Please indicate where you went on this visit to the Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes (tick as many sites as are applicable):

Lake Heron	1	Lake Emma	2	Lake Clearwater	3	Lake Camp	4
Maori Lakes	5	Mt Somers track	6	Mt Harper	7	Taylor Range	8
Potts River	9	Clyde River	10	Lawrence River	11	Cameron River	12
Rangitata River	13	Sth Branch Ashburton River	14				

Other (please specify) _____

1a) Please circle the answer above where you spent **most of your time on this visit**.

2) How would you describe your use of the Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes in the past three years?

Regular user 1 Occasional user 2 First time user 3

2a) Estimate the average number of annual visits in relevant boxes:

Day trip(s) Overnight visit(s)

3) Please indicate the number of people in your party including yourself:

Adults _____ Children (15 years of age or younger) _____

4) Indicate the duration of **this visit** to the Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes? Day(s) ____Night(s) ____

5) If staying overnight did you use:

a tent?	Yes	1	No	2
a hut?	Yes	1	No	2
a crib or bach?	Yes	1	No	2
a campervan?	Yes	1	No	2

6) Please indicate the mode of transport you used to **travel to** the Hakatere/Ashburton Lakes:

4 Wheel Drive (4WD)	1	Car	4	On foot	7
Motorbike/ATV	2	Bicycle	5	Other _____	8
Horse	3	Campervan	6		

7) What was your main mode of **travel within** the area? _____

8) How did you hear about the area? (Please tick as many options as are applicable).

DoC visitor centre	1	Television	5
Friends/Family	2	Newspaper/magazine article	6
I-Site	3	Brochure	7
DoC internet site	4	People I met while travelling	8
Other (please specify _____)			9

9) Did you feel crowded on this visit to the area? (Please circle one number)

Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely
Crowded	Crowded	Crowded	Crowded
1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....

Section Two: Motivations

This list gives common reasons for visiting and undertaking recreation in New Zealand's outdoors. Please rate your reasons for visiting the **Hakaterere/Ashburton Lakes** based on the level of importance to you (please circle one number per line only).

(Please circle one number per line)	Not at all Important	Extremely Important
(a) Tramping	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(b) Fishing	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(c) Hunting	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(d) Picnicking	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(e) Scenery/sightseeing	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(f) Mountain biking	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(g) Climbing	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(h) Horse riding	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(i) Motorised boating	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(j) Non-motorised boating	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(k) Windsurfing	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(l) Waterskiing	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(m) Bird watching	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(n) 4 wheel driving	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(o) Motorbiking/ATV	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(p) To visit the wetlands areas	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(q) To visit historic places or sites	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(r) To take my children/family into the outdoors	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(s) To visit the newly designated Conservation Park	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(t) To learn about New Zealand plants/wildlife/history	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(u) To experience the solitude of the area	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(v) Because of the easy access to nature	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(w) To participating in a guided activity	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
<i>Are there any reasons that you feel are important that have not been mentioned? If so could you please name and rate them below.</i>		
(x) _____	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	
(y) _____	1.....2.....3.....4.....5	

11) **Funding has been allocated for the preservation and protection of the Hakaterere/Ashburton Lakes wetlands.** Would you be interested in participating in any of the following activities associated with the wetlands?

Volunteer wetlands restoration work	Yes	1	No	2
Joining a 'Friends of the Wetlands'	Yes	1	No	2
Summer nature programme activities	Yes	1	No	2

12) What else would you suggest to enable the use, preservation and protection of the wetlands?

Section Three: Facilities

13) From the list below please indicate your level of satisfaction with the services/facilities **on this trip**.

(Please circle one number per line)		Very Dissatisfied	Neutral	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable		
		1	2	3	4	5	NA
a)	Pinnacles Hut	1	2	3	4	5	NA
b)	Woolshed Creek Hut	1	2	3	4	5	NA
c)	Other hut (specify which : _____)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
d)	Other hut (specify which : _____)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
e)	Mt Somers track conditions	1	2	3	4	5	NA
f)	General track and trail maintenance	1	2	3	4	5	NA
g)	Toilets (specify where _____)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
h)	Camping area (specify where _____)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
i)	Picnic area (specify where _____)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
j)	Car park area (specify where _____)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
k)	Opportunities for use of 4WD/ATV/motorbikes	1	2	3	4	5	NA
l)	Opportunities for mountain biking	1	2	3	4	5	NA
m)	Opportunities for walks	1	2	3	4	5	NA
n)	Hakaterere Conservation Park brochure	1	2	3	4	5	NA
o)	Information and interpretation panels	1	2	3	4	5	NA
p)	DoC website	1	2	3	4	5	NA
q)	DoC information about facilities	1	2	3	4	5	NA
r)	DoC information about conditions	1	2	3	4	5	NA
s)	Hakaterere Heron road conditions	1	2	3	4	5	NA
t)	Hakaterere Potts road conditions	1	2	3	4	5	NA
u)	Ashburton Gorge road conditions	1	2	3	4	5	NA

14) What have you **liked most** about your visit to the Hakaterere/Ashburton lakes area?

15) What have you **liked least** about your visit to the Hakaterere/Ashburton lakes area?

16) OVERALL, how satisfied are you with your current experience at the Hakaterere/Ashburton Lakes?

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

Would you return to this area? Yes 1 No 2

Why or why not?

18) Please suggest any **recreational opportunities/improvements** you think would benefit the Hakaterere/Ashburton Lakes area:

19) Please suggest ways to improve the **management** of the Hakaterere/Ashburton Lakes area:

Appendix 2: Recreation Clubs & Organisations Membership

	N	
Recreational Clubs & Organisations	NZ Alpine Club	31
	Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ	9
	NZMCA	9
	NZDA	7
	Ashburton Strollers Club	7
	Canterbury Anglers Club	6
	Clearwater Aquatic Club	6
	Canterbury Windsports Assoc	6
	Christchurch Tramping Club	6
	Canterbury Windsurfing Club	6
	NZ Salmon Anglers Assoc	5
	Geraldine & Temuka Tramping Club	5
	Peninsula Tramping Club	5
	Fish and Game	5
	Methven Tramping Club	5
	Canterbury Mountaineering Club	5
	Clearwater yacht club	4
	Mount Somers Walkways	4
NZ Mountain Safety	4	

Three each from: Aoraki Polytech 3rd Age Adventurers; Uni of Canterbury Tramping Club; Tararua Tramping Club; NZ Equestrian Federation; MidCanterbury Fishing Club

Two each from: Otago Uni Tramping Club; Over 40s tramping club; Girl Guides NZ; NZOIA; Methven SAR; Botanical Society; Broken River Ski Club; Canterbury Fly Fishing Club; CPIT Recreation Course

One each from: Massey Uni Alpine Club; Sumner Running Club; Sumner Life Saving; Redcliffs Tennis; Timaru Yatch Club; Timaru Tae Kwon Do Club; Hampstead Rugby; Whakatare Harrier Club; New Brighton Athletics; Canterbury Masters Track & Field; Sierra Club; Canterbury MTB Club; Elite Thai Kickboxing; Canterbury 4wd; Bishopdale Tramping Club; Backcountry Skiers Alliance; Public Access NZ; St Martins Croquet Club; Fish and Game Ranger; Nelson trout fishing club; Mid Canterbury 4WD Club; S.C. Deerstalkers; Australian Plants Society; Hastings Golf Club; Otago Tramping Mountaineering Club; Marlborough Tramping Club; Rotary; Club Alpine Francais; Bangor Pony Club; NZ Search and Rescue; South Canterbury Tramping Club; Porter Heights Ski Club; Ashburton MSA Fishing & Hunting Section; British Mountaineering Council; Christchurch Off-road Motorcycle club; Whangamata Ramblers; University of 3rd Age; Lions; Rural Women NZ; Northwest Hiking Club; Peninsula Orienteering Group; Arawa Canoe Club; Canterbury Underwater Club; South Canterbury Anglers Club; Waimari Outdoor Group; Auckland Sports Club; Otago Mountain Bike Club; Lowry Bay Yacht Club; Wellington Orienteering; Cross-country Vehicle Club; Rangiora Tramping Club; Victoria National Park Assn [Australia]; Auckland Natural History Club; Backpackers Club - UK; SINDA 4WD Club; Canterbury Sea Kayak Network; Raglan Ramblers; NZ Hang Gliding and Paragliding Assn; Christchurch Over 40's Tramping Club; Tinwald Cycling Club; Quail Island Volunteer group; Step Ahead; New Zealand Bow Hunters.

Appendix 3: Environmental Clubs & Organisations Membership

		N
Environmental Clubs & Organisations	Forest and Bird	49
	Green Peace	12
	Fish and Game	4
	Little Barrier [Hauturu] Supporters Trust	4
	Mt Somers Walkways	2
	Summit Road Soc.	2
	MidCanterbury Save the Rivers	2
	Ecological Society	2
	Motuora Restoration Society	2
	Queen Elisabeth II Trust	2
	Travis Wetland Trust	2
	Historic Places Trust	2
	Single memberships*	46

One each from: Whinray Ecological Community Trust; NZFG; Dunedin Gardening Development Project; Soil and Health Assoc.; Korokoro Environmental Group; Orari River Protection Group; Green Party; Environmental Group Geraldine; Foothills Landcare group; Canterbury Anglers Club; Orokonui Ecosanctuary; Motutapu Trust; Back Country Skiers Association; PANZ; Tongariro Natural History Society; NZ Ecological Society; Society for Research on Amphibians & Reptiles in NZ; Kiwi Conservation Club; English Nature; British Ecological Society; World Wildlife Fund; Scottish Rights of Way Society; Karori Wildlife Sanctuary; Trees for Survival; Manakau Harbour Protection Society; NZ Farm Forestry Assn; Styx Living Laboratory Trust; Water Rights Trust; Ornithological Society of NZ; National Wetlands Trust; NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers; Gloucester Vale Conservation Volunteers [UK]; Ihutai Trust; Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust; Environment Research Office; Canterbury Fly Fishing Club; Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society; Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust; Environment Bay of Plenty; Sierra Club - USA; 6 illegible.

Appendix 4: Q12 - Respondents' suggestions to enable the use, preservation and protection of the wetlands

Response	Total Tally	Mt. Somers Track Users Only (n=110)
Access/Vehicles/Regulations	106	
4WD access (Against)	36	5
Motorbike access (Against)	31	4
Boardwalk/track	10	
Access – general (Against/limit)	10	
Track markers	6	
4WD access (For)	4	
Motorbike access (For)	1	
Access – general (For)	1	
Keep vehicles on tracks	1	
Maintain DOC's 4WD strategy (obey rules or lose privileges)	1	
Mountain bike access (Against)	1	
Improve access for disabled/elderly	1	
Guides (to limit visitor numbers)	1	
Limit (large) tour groups	1	1
Improve road access	1	
Visitor Information	43	
Signage, visitor information (brochures about facilities, dos and don'ts, maps)	27	4
Volunteer/education programmes (e.g. on sustainability), family activities, DOC 'kids club'	13	3
Encourage positive visitor behaviour	2	
Enforcement of rules	1	
Wildlife (Native & Introduced)	43	
Predator/pest control, e.g. no dogs etc	14	2
Control (exotic) plants/weeds (broom, gorse, willow etc)	11	2
Leave willow trees alone	5	
Native planting (trees) e.g. around some lake areas, especially for shade	5	
Protected areas for endangered wildlife	2	
Control bird population	2	
Check plant survival	1	
Reintroduced lost species (flora/fauna)	1	
Water the plants	1	
No weed spraying	1	
Stock Management/Access	19	
Fence off areas (e.g. waterways from cattle, sheep) & monitor run-off from adjoining properties	19	2
Facilities/Development/Services	12	
Limit development (e.g. farming, road construction, tourism, tracks etc), keep facilities as they are	7	1
Establish a bird hide	4	1
Improve toilet facilities	1	

Other	7	
Consultation with bach owners, community, volunteers	3	1
Less noise	1	
Media attention (newspaper articles, educating public)	1	
Fire ban	1	
Windbreak	1	
Funding	4	
'Fun family hiking day' to fundraise for conservation	1	
Develop a souvenir/gift shop to fund conservation	1	
Fee/Donation box	1	1
More funding	1	
Wetlands	2	
Expansion of wetlands (internationally threatened habitat)	1	1
Protect more land surrounding wetlands/rivers flowing into them	1	
Nothing	1	
Don't Know	1	

Appendix 5: Q14 - What respondents liked the most about their visit to the area

Response	Total Tally	Mt. Somers Track Users Only
Environment	447	
Views, scenery, landscape, beauty, vastness of area, sky	237	47
Peace & quiet, tranquillity, relaxing, solitude, isolation, remoteness, getting away from it all	163	21
Weather/climate	24	5
Lakes (e.g. Lake Heron)	6	
Safe environment (esp. for children)	5	
Hakaterere Conservation Area	3	
Like the outdoors	2	
Lack of sand flies	1	1
Wetlands	1	
Good agriculture	1	
No light pollution	1	
Range in track difficulty levels	1	
Sleeping outside	1	
Challenge	1	1
Recreational Activities (any) ⁴	205*	
Fishing	39	
General recreation (not specified)	32**	3
Tramping	25	12
Walking	23	10
Camping	17	1
Mountain biking	11	
Climbing	10	7
Windsurfing	10	
Sport and Recreation with family	9	
Swimming	6	1
Kayaking	5	
Picnics	5	2
Outdoor activities for children/whole family	5	1
Water sports/activities	4	
Waterskiing	3	
Hunting	3	
Exploring	3	
Exercise	2	

⁴ * 'Recreation (any)' includes those respondents included in the 'General recreation' category as well as those respondents who specified a recreation type (e.g. fishing, hunting, swimming etc).

** 'General recreation' includes those respondents who stated 'recreation' (or similar) but were not specific about type of recreation.

Where respondents stated more than one type of recreation (such as camping *and* fishing) this was only counted once to avoid double counting.

Horse riding	2	
Motor biking	2	
Boating	1	
People	73	
Lack of people/uncrowded	41	4
Spending time with family/friends	21	7
Friendly people	11	2
Wildlife (Native & Introduced)	60	
Wildlife, flora and fauna, nature	59	6
Lack of major weeds	1	1
Access/Vehicles/Regulations	49	
Accessibility (close to home, family friendly etc, ability to reach sites of interest)	37	11
4WD access (to remote areas)	3	
Free access (can enjoy area/facilities for free)	3	1
Lack of motorbikes	2	
Lack of/no 4WDs	2	
New bridges (on track)	1	1
Easy to find way around area	1	
Facilities/Development/Services	38	
Facilities/commercial development	16	3
Hut maintenance	3	3
No cell phone coverage/lack of telephones	3	
Lack of new buildings (Clearwater)/commercial development	2	
Non-paved roads	2	
Hut stays	2	2
Restored mine	1	1
Opening recreation area	1	
Location of Double Hut	1	
Caravan parker for summer	1	
Lack of large scale tourism	1	
No electricity	1	
Non-commercial	1	
Lack of signs	1	
Firewood at hut	1	1
Lack of woodshed	1	1
Visitor Information	8	
Historical information/sites	7	3
Good information	1	
Other	4	
Freedom	1	
Health benefits (psychological and physical)	1	
Warm water	1	
White foam on Lake Clearwater???	1	
Nothing	0	
Don't Know	0	

Appendix 6: Q15: What respondents liked least about their visit to the area

Response	Total Tally	Mt. Somers Track Users Only
Access/Vehicles/Regulations	134	
Presence of motorbikes (noise/access/damage)	39	
Poor road conditions (rough/dusty/unsealed/ungraded/recently graded roads)	36	2
4WDs/Large trucks (noise/access/damage)	16	
Boats (noise/access)	13	
Restriction of 4WD access (e.g. to Double Hut, Harrison Bight)	10	
High speeds of vehicles	7	
Jetskis	6	
Restrictions placed on access to areas owned by others/private property (e.g. Mt Possession Station)	4	
Motorbikes in restricted access areas	2	
Limited access for elderly/disabled	1	
Environment/Pollution	75	
Weather/climate	26	9
Noise (e.g. of motorbikes, nearby baches, people, music)	23	
Rubbish	15	4
Poor water quality (e.g. due to cattle/sheep contaminants)	3	
Mud	1	
Hiking uphill	1	1
Dead geese (from cull)	1	
Landscape	1	
Low lake levels (e.g. Lake Camp)	1	
Poor rock quality (for climbing/mountaineering)	1	
Road and fences degrade natural areas (visual pollution)	1	
Steepness of the walk in	1	1
Facilities/Development/Services	67	
Toilet facilities (e.g. Lake Heron, Lake Camp, Lake Clearwater) – poor maintenance etc	32	5
Lack of/poor facilities (e.g. around/near lakes/huts)	8	2
Car parking (need more, design of it (e.g. at Sharplin Falls)), needs to cater for launching of non-motorised boats/canoes)	5	1
Lack of shade/shelter	4	
Lack of space for camping (e.g. at Lake Heron)	3	
Fences	2	
Bridges and huts are too excessive (should be more basic)	2	2
Design of kiosks	1	
Clearwater settlement	1	
No backpacker hostel/facilities in area	1	1
Lack of freedom camping (too many camping grounds)	1	
No nearby pub	1	

View of campsites (e.g. Lake Heron)	1	
Lack of rubbish skips/bins	1	
Bridge before Pinnacles Hut	1	1
Closed facilities/services (e.g. second-hand shop in Mayfield)	1	1
Too many baches/fishing huts	1	
Woolshed creek hut	1	
Wildlife (Native & Introduced)	63	
Sandflies/blowflies, bugs, mosquitoes	12	8
Too many exotic/invasive species/plants/weeds (e.g. willow trees, broom, gorse); in waterways and on land	11	1
Low fish stocks/small size of fish (e.g. Lake Clearwater)	10	
Spraying/cutting trees (against)	7	
Pests (e.g. rabbits, hares)	5	1
Prohibition of dogs	4	1
The wasps (esp. upsetting Beech forest)	4	4
Lack of (native) trees	4	1
Presence of cats/dogs	3	
Lack of (native) birds	2	1
Wilding pines	1	
People	34	
Overcrowding/too many people/large tourist crowds	17	2
Negative visitor behaviour (e.g. drunkenness at New Year, bad language)	7	1
Noisy/destructive campers/tour groups	3	1
Young motorbike riders (with no helmets, no licence, in camping grounds)	2	
Poor communication of information/interaction by DOC representative	1	1
Hunters cutting off pig ears	1	
Negative farmers in area	1	1
Snoring	1	1
People not paying hut fees	1	1
Visitor Information	29	
Poor signage/info (e.g. remove old signage, improve signage)	17	2
Lack of visitor information (e.g. hut availability, brochures at Mount Somers store)	6	
Too much signage	3	1
Interpretation panels at mining area (maintenance required)	1	
Restricted access signs	1	
Unclear information about access to open/closed areas	1	
Nothing	28	9
Tracks	25	
Poor maintenance of tracks, unmarked/broken tracks/muddy tracks	17	7
Proposed closing of tracks/limiting of lake access	3	
Overdeveloped tracks	1	
Closed tracks	1	1
Tracks too steep	1	1
Lack of 4WD tracks	1	
Unmarked tracks (markers required)	1	1

Recreation	21	
Unused permanent tents/caravans taking up good tent sites & crowding the area	10	
Not enough motorbike activities	6	1
Illegal spotlighting	2	
Short fishing season	1	
Not enough mountain biking	1	
Lack of short/children's walks	1	
Other	8	
Having to leave/going home	3	
Isolation/loneliness	2	
Blisters/sore feet	2	1
Relaxation???	1	
Stock Access/Management	4	
Stock access to waterways (e.g. cattle access to Lake Clearwater); contamination/erosion	4	
Don't Know	0	

Appendix 7: Q17a: Why respondents would return to the area

Response	Total Tally	Mt. Somers Track Users Only
Environment	241	
Beauty of area/scenery/landscapes	90	19
Like the area	48	10
Still more to see/do/explore	44	8
Relaxation/isolation/solitude/quiet/peaceful/unique	42	1
Weather/climate	6	3
Enjoy outdoors	5	4
Lack of pollution (e.g. noise, rubbish)	2	
Safe area	1	
Geological features	1	1
Challenging terrain	1	
Sheltered area	1	
Recreational Activities (any)⁵	147*	
Tramping	29	8
Fishing	26	1
General recreation (not specified)	20**	1
Climbing	17	13
Camping	16	1
Mountain biking	11	
Walking	11	4
Swimming	0	
Windsurfing	10	
Hunting/shooting	6	
Kayaking	4	
Waterskiing	3	
Skiing/boarding	3	
Boating	2	
Campervan	2	
Sailing	2	
Picnics	1	1
Birdwatching/counting	1	
Horse riding	1	
Kite surfing	1	
Photography	1	

⁵ * 'Recreation (any)' includes those respondents included in the 'General recreation' category as well as those respondents who specified a recreation type (e.g. fishing, hunting, swimming etc).

** 'General recreation' includes those respondents who stated 'recreation' (or similar) but were not specific about type of recreation.

Where respondents stated more than one type of recreation (such as camping *and* fishing) this was only counted once to avoid double counting.

Lake activities	1	
Weeding	1	
Swimming	0	
Access/Vehicles/Regulations	76	
Accessibility/convenience (live nearby)	73	30
Tracks/access to backcountry/mountains	3	1
Facilities/Development/Services	47	
Own a bach/accommodation (e.g. caravan Labour weekend – Easter)	36	
Facilities/tracks (e.g. huts, bridges, etc)	6	6
Lack of facilities/commercialisation of some areas	4	
No electricity	1	
Other	24	
Tradition (been going there for years)	16	1
Greater awareness of area now	2	
Work there	1	
A wonderful haven	1	
Quaint and unusual	1	
But would be good to have more access without constantly having to get permission (from farmers)	1	
Cheap place to visit	1	
Suits my lifestyle	1	
People	16	
To spend time with family/friends	15	1
Lack of people/uncrowded	1	1
Experience	11	
Outdoor activities (for children/whole family)	5	2
Overall experience	2	
Different from home	2	
Learn more about wildlife/natural area	1	
Wonderful memories	1	
Visitor Information	7	
Historical information/sites	7	
Wildlife (Native & Introduced)	5	
Nothing	0	
Don't Know	0	

Appendix 8: Q18: Recreational Opportunities/Improvements

Response	Total Tally	Mt. Somers Track Users Only
Tracks	99	
Track repairs, maintenance, development (e.g. marked tracks for day walkers, trampers), linkage/loop	44	20
Formal mountain bike tracks/routes/facilities	35	6
Construction of boardwalks/platforms in wetlands area	5	
Develop/improve 4WD tracks	4	
Formal motorbike track	3	
Keep tracks basic	2	1
Marked tracks for 4WDs	2	
Improve track to climbing walls	1	
More short walks	1	
Mountain bike track closer to Lake Camp	1	
Kids short course mountain bike loop tracks	1	
Access/Vehicles/Regulations	87	
Restrict 4WD access/speed (For)	20	3
Restrict use of motorbikes (For)	14	3
Restrict 4WD access/speed (Against)	11	
Restrict use of motorbikes (Against)	9	1
Restrict motorboat use (For)	7	
Improve access (for elderly/disabled)	4	
Limit/restrict caravans to an areas, leave grassy areas for campers (e.g. Lake Clearwater), no permanent campervans/caravans, overnight parking for self-contained caravans	4	
Windsurf access (e.g. at Lake Heron)	2	
More access to parts of the park	2	
Jetski access (Against)	2	
Improve access to swimming areas/lakes	2	
Open access	2	
Access to Maori Lakes wetlands	1	
Keep tracks open (Trifol & Canyon)	1	1
Dog access tracks	1	
Ban campervan access	1	
Keep bikes on tracks	1	
Access for picnics (e.g. bottom end of Lake Heron)	1	
Ban motorbikes north of Hakatere/Potts Road	1	
Restrict recreation	1	1
Facilities/Development/Services	75	
Improve toilet facilities (e.g. Lake Camp, Lake Heron)	13	
Improve the roads (e.g. to Lake Heron, Lake Clearwater)	11	1
More huts (south side of Mt. Somers; public/club hut like Unwin at Aoraki, NZAC 'may' be interested)	8	6
Camping/picnic tables/facilities (more/improve them)	8	1

Provide showers (in campgrounds)	4	
Wharf/access to lakes (e.g. boat ramp at Lake Camp)	4	
Upgrade camping ground at Lake Heron	2	
Rubbish (personal responsibility)	2	
Improve playground facilities	1	
BBQ area	1	
Maintain holiday homes (tidy, clean, paint)	1	
Provide power points	1	
Water & irrigation storage	1	
Larger camping area at Lake Clearwater	1	
Recycling facilities	1	1
More windbreaks	1	
Playground for toddlers	1	
Make area larger (e.g. all foothills area back to Lake Stream and Rakaia River included)	1	1
A large storage dam	1	
Remove fences	1	
Provide Potable water	1	
Extend Lake Heron car park (for better canoe access)	1	
DOC HQ (e.g. with camp store, bar, fuel, supplies)	1	
Restore historic Hakatere store hut & facilities as area base	1	
Clear Lake Heron campsite	1	
Leave in windbreaks	1	
Don't upgrade amenities	1	
More rubbish bins	1	
More cheap/basic facility camping areas	1	
No facilities	1	
Cell phone coverage for emergencies	1	
Visitor Information	64	
On-site info: Signage (history of area, directions, flora and fauna, map of area, walks available (times and grades), boating info), provision of maps (showing public access/Mt bike/fishing areas, walks available etc)/brochures (explaining history of area, early inhabitants etc)/fishing licenses	46	5
More info about recreational activities/access	4	
Signs at walkways	4	
More media coverage (DOC website, TV, etc.)	2	2
Promote environmentally-friendly use of area	1	
Better outdoor education programmes in schools (to prevent rubbish dumping etc)	1	
Visitor centre in Mount Somers town	1	1
Concise info about access rights (to valleys, e.g. South Ashburton/Potts etc)	1	
Printed list of wilderness camp areas	1	
Warning signs for roads (e.g. '4WD only')	1	
Limit tourism development	1	
Remove sources of human noise	1	
Nothing	24	
Recreation	19	
Guided trips (For) i.e. mountain guiding	4	
Establish a bird hide, birdwatching	3	1

Encourage human-powered recreation (not motorised power)	1	1
Ban shooting	1	
More availability of short-term (overnight/weekend) camping on DOC land	1	
Wildlife (Native & Introduced)	13	
Remove exotic plants/weeds etc (e.g. broom, willows at Salmon Bay/Lake Heron)	4	2
Enforce 'no dogs' rule	2	
Pest control	1	1
More wildlife to shoot	1	
Implement a plan to increase fish stocks	1	
More trees at Lakes Camp, Clearwater & Emma	1	
Plant native trees	1	1
Leave willow trees alone	1	
More Fish management/stocking	1	
Experience	7	
Maintain 'wilderness' of area (no more huts, tracks, development etc)	6	
Keep it 'real', peaceful	1	
Land	4	
Secluded areas for wildlife	1	
Make more reserves (to keep out noisy vehicles)	1	
Restoration of wetlands (planting native trees etc)	1	
More 'flat' land to tramp/camp on (car-based; for families)	1	
Other	5	
Provision of insect repellent	1	1
Consultation with locals, stakeholders etc	1	1
Implement a 'user pays' system (e.g. for camping)	1	
Sauna at hut	1	1
Kayak rental	1	1
Stock Management/Access	1	
Remove stock (cattle, sheep, etc)	1	

Appendix 9: Q19: Management Suggestions/Improvements

Response	Total Tally	Mt. Somers Track Users Only
Access/Vehicles/Regulations	44	
Limit 4WD access (For)	17	3
Regulate (less) motorbike access (For)	11	1
Limit/restrict caravans to an area, leaving grassy areas for (tent) campers, or ban permanent campervans	5	
Limit 4WD access (Against)	3	
Regulate (same/more) motorbike access (Against)	3	
More access areas	1	
Jetski access (Against)	1	
Limit number of boats on lakes (e.g. Lake Camp in peak season)	1	1
Ban power boats	1	
Better access to roads	1	
People/ Management/Organisations	42	
Consultation with locals, interest groups (e.g. for improved access), and stakeholders; esp. prior to implementing major changes; community involvement in weeding and pest control	24	4
Hire Park Rangers. Patrolling/policing of area (e.g. over Christmas to ensure visitors are forming “proper” toilets when camping)	6	3
Don't take so much notice of environmental organisations ('greenies')	3	
Long term management plan	1	
Encourage environmentally-friendly/sustainable practices (e.g. solar heating)	1	
Help farmers protect streams	1	
Support DOC in the effort to gather ecological info about area	1	
Ensure DOC have public & leaseholder sympathy	1	
Don't let desk people make the decisions	1	
Spend time in the field (not doing these surveys)	1	
Recruit volunteers	1	1
Encourage responsible 4WD/motor bike use (e.g. issue permits)	1	
DOC open on holidays (to obtain hut passes, etc – Dec. 31 st)	1	1
Visitor Information	38	
More/better signage (e.g. suggest activities, directions, conditions, open/closed off areas, wildlife, info about area, kiosks) and maps (esp. for first-time visitors)	21	4
Better provision of visitor info (e.g. more info about property rights/ownership etc)	10	
More education/community programmes for visitors (e.g. about value of conservation/wetlands etc)	3	
Provide contact numbers at phone box (e.g. Lake Clearwater)	2	
Improve DOC website (e.g. include <u>all</u> huts)	1	
Better Publicity	1	

Facilities/Development/Services	31	
Toilets (cleaned regularly, more of them)	8	
Improve roads (e.g. into Emma Hut)	4	1
Manage rubbish (e.g. more rubbish bins)	4	1
Better/more facilities (e.g. boat launching/access)	2	
Don't seal roads	2	
Provide toilet paper	1	
Provide showers	1	
Provide recycling facilities	1	
Lakeside camp at Lake Heron	1	
Maintain existing huts	1	
No gravel roads – only 4WD roads	1	
Develop boat launching areas	1	
Remove unused fences (visual pollution and dangerous if left to rust)	1	
Remove old fire areas from lakeside (e.g. Lake Camp) to deter copycats	1	
No facilities	1	
More shops	1	
Wildlife (Native & Introduced)	30	
Removal/management of exotic plants/weeds (weed control)	16	
Remove/control wilding pines	3	
Leave trees etc alone	2	
Appropriate re-planting of (native) trees	2	
Manage fish (trout) numbers (catch/bag limits; catch & release programme)	2	
Keep dogs/cats out (better enforcement/monitoring of this)	2	
Pest control (e.g. wasps, possums)	1	1
Manage bird numbers	1	
Stock lakes with fish	1	
Nothing	29	1
Rules/Regulations	16	
Have a DoC info centre/staff on-site (e.g. monitor/manage visitor behaviour)	9	3
Random checks that rules/regulations are being adhered to by visitors (e.g. 'no dogs' rule)	3	
Regulate camping areas/facilities	2	
Avoid too many regulations/restrictions	1	
Enforce regulations	1	
Don't Know	12	
Experience	10	
Don't make it more popular	5	
Don't modernise the area (e.g. no sealed roads/electricity etc)	4	
Manage noise/pollution better at Lake Camp	1	
Tracks	9	
Improve track maintenance/mark tracks clearly/access	7	3
Separate tracks (e.g. for walkers & for 4WDs & for motorbikes)	2	
Fees	5	
More funding/money (to fund improvements/upgrades such as weed/pest control, toilets etc)	3	1

Ensure camp fees are paid	1	
Put honesty box in a more prominent place	1	
Other	4	
Don't over manage	2	2
Limit length of stay (e.g. 1 week maximum at Lake Heron)	1	
Use unemployed people for maintenance work	1	
Land	2	
DOC acquire more land	1	
Extend pastoral leases on DOC estate	1	
Stock Management/Access	1	
Restrict cattle/sheep access to waterways	1	

Appendix 10: Interview Questions

1. Current use
 - Type of use
 - Which areas/habitats are being used?
 - What times does use occur (24h)?
 - Seasonality
 - Frequency (how often and for how long)
 - Conditions required
 - Profile of users (if organisation)
2. Satisfaction levels
 - With current use of area
 - With facilities
 - With services
3. Crowding and conflict issues
 - Description
 - Solution
 - Motorized vs. un-motorized?
4. Envisaged use
 - How does the participant see future use?
 - What potential does the area have?
 - Any constraints to future use?
5. Facilities/services desired
 - (To enable future vision of use to be put into practice?)
 - What changes to management of the area may this involve?
 - Any special information and interpretation needs for individual/group?
6. Information issues
 - Satisfaction with current information about the park and facilities?
 - Ideas concerning future information schemes?
7. Access issues
 - Any current problems related to access?
 - Transport used or mode of travel
 - Future access needs (and which activities these needs concern)
8. Wetlands
 - Current use?
 - Relationship to?
 - Envisaged use?
9. Wildlife
 - Interest in wildlife viewing as recreation
 - Attitudes towards viewing hides
10. General management issues
 - How do you see being involved in future management of the area?