

Going on a visit to Matakohe-Limestone Island?

The island is a public place, so personal safety, and that of children in your care, is primarily your responsibility. The following may help your preparation for a visit to the island.

General hazards

Suitable foot-wear is advisable; tracks can be slippery and there are sharp oyster shells on the beach. Keeping to the walking tracks will avoid many areas where risks exist. Take care when climbing over fences (barbed wire) or using stiles (can be slippery if wet). Supervision of children is advisable at all times on the island. To prevent slips and falls, climbing on bricks, walls and other ruins structures is not recommended. Please keep off the derelict wharf beside the island pontoon. Take care or avoid steep areas, particularly quarry edges and faces where the lime rock can be quite crumbly. Do not chew or place vegetation in your mouth, some plants such as ngaio and oleander on the island are very poisonous. There are numerous spots of blackberry around the island, but keeping to the walking tracks will avoid these. Prepare for the weather, be it raincoat, warm clothes, or sunscreen and water.

Society boat - Petrel Tua Toru

If you are travelling (usually a group or school class) in the Society's boat then you must take precautions, such as staying seated while the boat is moving and remaining seated until the skipper says it is okay to disembark. Changing seats while underway can also make the boat unstable and hard to manoeuvre. When coming alongside the landing pontoon there is a real danger of getting fingers crushed, so make sure hands remain inside the boat. Life jackets are available under the seats, and you may be required to wear them if the skipper considers sea conditions warrant it.

Swimming and wading

Take care when swimming and supervise children accordingly. Fairly strong currents exist around parts of the island with tidal movement, particularly at the island pontoon. Oysters encrust rocks at most beaches and can give a nasty cut to unwary swimmers. There are also several dams on the island, some of which have slippery and steep sides.

Allergies

At certain times of the year, the grass on the island produces a lot of pollen. There are also bees, wasps and the like present. If you suffer allergic reactions to these or other environmental factors, bringing appropriate medication along with you is advisable.

Traps and poison

There are numerous wooden box traps set around the island, many along walking tracks. They contain fenn-traps, set for stoats and rats. They can break fingers. Please do not disturb them and be particularly mindful of curious children.

The entire island has a grid of bait stations at 25m by 25m intervals, each contains a small waxy poison block designed to kill rats and mice. These stations appear as short sections of 100mm diameter 'Nova-flow' tubing, pegged to the ground with a piece of wire, and may be black, green or yellow. The up-harbour facing main paddock has mown strips down it to help service these bait stations. Please do not disturb these bait stations, and be mindful of children.

We hope this has been helpful and allows you to safely enjoy what the island has to offer.

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