



WALK CLOSE BY Te Ngahere Whenua Rāhui o Okitu Okitu Bush Scenic Reserve



Grade
Hilly



Distance
1.2km



Walking
20-30 mins



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for more
details



Okitu Bush Scenic Reserve is located 8km east of central Gisborne, on SH35 at the northern end of Wainui Beach. Parking is available at the entrance as is a grassy picnic area with several tables. A well-graded walking track through the bush crosses over three small footbridges to a lookout platform from where there is a good view of Wainui Beach and surrounding hills. An extension of the track connects to the end of Sirrah Street. The original vegetation in the reserve was a small remnant of modified coastal forest with broad-leaved species and puriri. Substantial plantings over the past 20 years have introduced or reintroduced many native plant species. A number of bush bird species have made their home in the reserve. Those most commonly seen (and heard) are kererū (native wood pigeon) and fantail (pīwakawaka), with occasional tūī, grey warbler and bellbirds.

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The Okitu Scenic Reserve was created in 1974 when Winifred Frances Lysnar donated 2.66ha to the Crown. Informally known as Lysnar's Bush, the land was reserved in memory of her parents, and long-term residents, William Douglas and Ada Lysnar. Gisborne branch members of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand were initially appointed managers and reserve guardians. Over many years, society members cleared bracken and weeds, and planted some 3,500 plants to vegetate the reserve. In 1988, at the society's request, Department of Conservation took over the reserve's management. Across the road from the reserve car park, a track leads to Makorori Headland/Te Kūrae o Makorori. For a longer, 1.5km walk, start at the Sperm Whale Grave at the eastern end of Okitu Beach. Walk from the grave site up Sirrah Street, join the bush track at the end of the road then walk through the Okitu Bush reserve. Cross the highway to join the track up Makorori Headland. From the top, walk down the path back to Okitu Beach to the grave site.



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