

Takehe Stream v5a3IV**

Wilberforce Valley, Canterbury

Map: BW19 Taylors Camp

Highest Waterfall: 61m

Minimum Rope: 2x 50m (hanging re-belays)

Anchors: Bolts and simple natural anchors

Length: 1.2km

Drop: 300m

Rock type: Greywacke

Catchment: 4km²

Flood Danger: high-extreme

Recommended season: Late summer

Approach: 1.5 – 2hours

Descent: 3 – 5hours

Return: 0.5 – 1hour

Total: 5 – 8 hours

Draft CanyonTopo by Tom Johns

Important! Although Hut Stream is on DOC land the access is across working stations, unless permission is given then you cannot access this canyon. Before you head up the valley call Algidus Station on (03) 318 5846 and ask, they are happy for people to walk across their land but they like to know who's up there.

Approach by car:

Approaching from Christchurch drive towards Windwhistle. Once at Windwhistle follow signs to Olympus Ski field taking Coleridge Road. At Dog Box corner turn onto Homestead Road and follow this and signs to Glenthorne Station. Turn left onto Harper Road and keep going until you reach the group of houses and the canal (past the Olympus turnoff).

Permission to use the Glenthorne Station track can be granted and a key hired by calling the Station Manager (03 3185822) If you have been granted access to use the Glenthorne Station track then you'll have directions, if not then turn right after the first canal bridge and follow the road around the river bed until you get to the Wilberforce Canal, following the track past the intake gets you out and into the riverbed. From here it's all wheel marks and rough tracks up the Wilberforce until your destination is reached.

Because there are working stations on either bank of the river it is important to stay in the Riverbed unless you have received permission to use the station tracks.

At the time of writing (Feb 2017) the best place to park is at the west end of the Fanghill Flat around 66'2, 22'8.

If you have a vehicle capable then crossing the river is an option, but be wary, as it is a long walk out if you get swamped or stuck.

Approach on Foot:

Crossing the Wilberforce. Pick a spot where the river is braided and be careful, it is worth walking to where the river is in multiple channels. Crossing should not be attempted by people inexperienced in river crossing and river crossing techniques are advised.

Crossing the river above 280 cumecs (fighting hill readings) would be very hazardous even for experienced river crossers. It is worth noting that the Wilberforce has a long history of drowning people and vehicles and demands respect and care at all flows.

The best walking access is up the true right bank of the Takahe Stream. Starting at the shingle beside the stream there are a series of deer trails and clearings through the scrub that take you up to the clearing before the Beech Forest begins at around 1000m. Staying close to the Ridge/Canyon edge keeps you away from the worst of the scrub but can lead to some exposed sections of track.

From the right hand side of the clearing (looking up) sidle through the forest at around the 1000m contour following deer trails and some orange markers, after around 500m these will lead you around some bluffs and into a small gully which is descended to reach the stream. (63'6, 20'7).

Route Description:

After a couple of hundred meters of stream (depending on where you join the stream) the canyon begins suddenly at R1. Once the rope is pulled on R1 you're along for the ride. R1 is short but the flow pushes against the wall so stay to the TR.

R2 has a good tree. There is a single bolt at J4 to check the pool before jumping. The 6m downclimb may require a belay. R3 has one bolt and can be jumped. R6 (50m) has a sling which allows access to a hanging anchor station on the TR, there is a ledge 5m above the pool that can be downclimbed. The downclimbs above R7 require some care. Another/ better bolt is required at the pitch head of R7 and a 10 downclimb/rappel to the TR past the small tree leads to the anchor (hanging). For larger/less experienced groups a fixed line and a rappel line would make this easier. The final downclimbs also requires some care.

Water Level:

The Wilberforce River provides the best gauge of water levels. If you can't cross the river then the canyon probably won't go (you'll be on the wrong bank). The first decent was done when the Rakaia was reading 280 cumecs

(<https://www.ecan.govt.nz/data/riverflow/sitedetails/168526>) and dropping

Escapes:

The high walls of the canyon will make escape very challenging under the best circumstances. There is a gully on the TL after R3 that may lead to the canyon rim. During the second decent deer were seen between R6 and R7 so there is either a path somewhere between R6 and R7 or there is a very isolated deer population.

Any escape to the TL will lead to a lot of bush and scrub and a long walk back to the valley floor. Because the stream carries a lot of gravel most of the pools are not very deep so jumping or slides require checking first.

First descent: Tom Johns, Kieran Chandler 15-2-2017



