



# RAVEN CANYON

canyon v5a2IV ★★

## Location

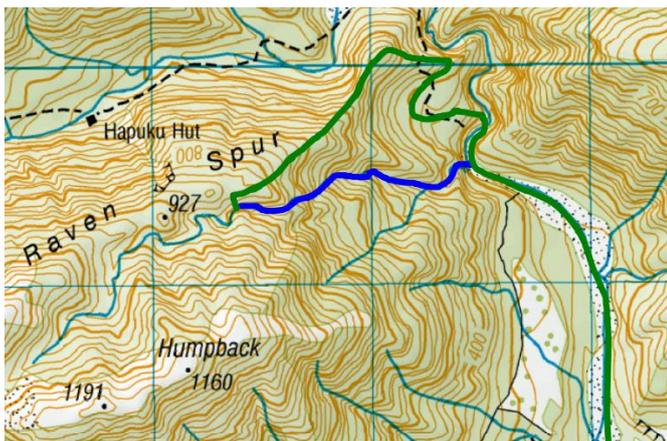
Kaikoura; on the North East slopes of Mt Fyffe overlooking the Hapuku River.

## Character

An adventure canyon; multiple rappels, handlines and downclimbs often back to back.

## Map

BT27 Kaikoura.



## Approach by Car

From Kaikoura town center drive North towards Blenheim on SH1 for 9km. Turn left onto Parsons Road following it to a T junction turning right. The dirt road soon parallels the Hapuku River. Stay right at a fork, cross a ford and park on the Hapuku River bank just before the gravel road fords the Hapuku River itself. Kaikoura to road end - 15 minutes.

## Approach on Foot

Head up the Hapuku River valley until you arrive below the exit waterfall of Raven Canyon. The walk will involve about half a dozen crossings of the main channel – if you can cross the Hapuku River on foot the canyon will likely be in normal flow. 1 hour.

300m further up the Hapuku River starts a DOC trail on the TR which avoids the Hapuku Gorge (the start location of this track is upstream to that shown on the topo map). Follow the DOC track to its high point of 550m on Raven Spur (the high point of this track is higher to that shown on the topo map). 45 min.

At its high point turn off the DOC track and follow Raven Spur uphill in a SW direction, soon a hunters (and canyoners) trail appears which generally stays close to

the spurs crest and offers fast travel uphill. At approximately the 850m contour, a manuka tree on the left is scored marking the turn off. 50 min.

Raven Canyon is 50m lower to the South, follow a steep and rough route marked by blue tape to avoid bluffs and join the canyon at the 800m contour. 10 min.

## Rock

Greywacke, generally good quality with a few exceptions.

## Water

Low flow in normal conditions.

## Catchment

2.5 km<sup>2</sup>

## Anchors

Double Bolt Anchors and slings with rings from trees.

## Gear

Longest drop 60m (minimum 3no 60m ropes recommended)

## Route Description

A generally open canyon surrounded by dense bush where escape out of the stream is easy, however getting back to the track would be difficult. 15 rappels which tend to be clustered in groups, separated by sections of walking and down climbing. Currently 7 rappels have double bolt anchors and 8 have tape and ring anchors slung around trees. Additionally, there are numerous downclimbs and exposed accesses to rappels – some having single bolt or tape & ring fixings around trees to assist.

The exit series of 3 back to back rappels is both stunning and committing giving the canyon its grade of v5. It is suggested that the ropes from the first 2 of these rappels is not pulled until a rope is set from the final precarious anchor (all 3 DBA's TL). For this reason and for the Cascade series of rappels (110m in 2 rappels) – it is recommended a minimum 3 x 60m ropes are taken. 4 hours 45 minutes.

## Time

|                                 |             |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Vehicle park to start of canyon | 2h45min     |
| Canyon descent                  | 4h45m       |
| Return to vehicle               | 1h          |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>8.5h</b> |

## Flash Flood Danger

Low

## Escapes

Except for the final 3 rappels (which is committing), escape out of the stream bed is easy however back to the track difficult.

## Notes

First descent: 22 February 2019 (Justin Hall, Jonathan Carr, Hamish Castle, Ant Alford, Gabriella Scheufele)

Fun to effort ratio: A big day with many rappels and downclimbs in an adventure canyon with stunning views and a stunning finish.

Access issues: Public land.

Further notes: Raven Canyon has been descended from the 900m contour which adds another half dozen short rappels and a couple of short but technical jumps which must be checked first. To access the canyon at the 900m contour – continue up Raven Spur beyond the 850m contour turn off and over the point marked 927m on the topo map - to a col. From here contour SW into the canyon. This would add another 2.5 hours to the approach and descent; being worthwhile to the keenest of canyoneers.

For a video of the first descent which was made prior to an access track being in place, click:

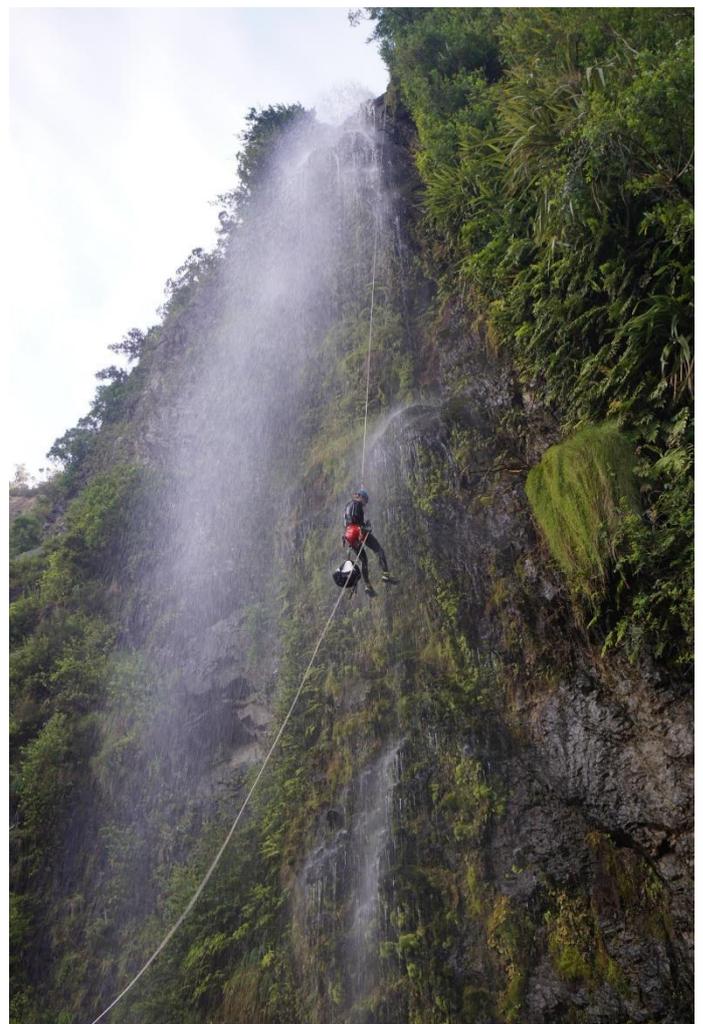
<https://drive.google.com/drive/mobile/folders/18erejZbjl25H7TUO83qH81FWiywZ548?usp=sharing>



Approach up the Hapuku river valley



R5 Amphitheater rappel (40m)



R15 Hapuku rappel (45m)