



RUAPAE

Falls v4a2V ★

Location

North east of Herepai Hut, Tararua Ranges.

Character

Waterfall tramping. Many short drops, then a final enclosed drop over Ruapae Falls.

Map

BN34 Shannon



Approach by Car

From Eketahuna, leave SH2 heading west on Bridge St. Turn left into Stanly St, then right into Septimus St. Leave town on Nireaha St, then turn sharp left to stay on Nireaha St. Drive about 6km, then turn left at a T junction and follow Putara Rd to the DOC car park.

Approach on Foot

Follow the DOC track to Herepai Hut, noting the flow in the Ruapae stream. After spending a night at the Hut, continue above the bushline to Ruapae. The ridge tops are very exposed to extreme weather. Bring appropriate clothing.

Rock

Greywacke, Sometimes loose

Water

Upper stream has low flow with some waist deep pools. Ruapae falls is much more powerful.

Catchment

2.5km²

Anchors

Mostly Leatherwood bushes. Easily arranged.

Gear

Minimum of 2x 50m ropes. Shortie wetsuit, or wetsuit long johns. Appropriate clothing for the exposed tops.

Route Description*

From the summit of Ruapae, head north east down an obvious gully. Leatherwood is passed through, and scrambled under until reaching the first fall.

R1 to R5 are in the first technical section, which involves scrambling, some short rappels and the occasional small jump. There is very little water in this section. After the first tributary, there is about 2hrs of stream walking.

The second much more technical section has 3 closely spaced drops, with considerably more water. Just before Ruapae Falls (R8), the stream narrows to a gorge, forcing all the water into a narrow jet over the falls. The anchor position and canyon shape forces you to descend directly through the waterfall. This rappel is partly free hanging and in the full force of the waterfall, which less experienced canyoneers may find frightening. It is important to use a releasable anchor system. A deviation, or guided rappel is worth considering.

Below the falls, wade, boulder hop and scramble down the rough stream to the track.

*Route description and Topo sketch are for an overview only. They have been produced from incomplete notes, so they will not be accurate. However, 2 x 50m ropes will be sufficient.

Time

Car Park to Herepai Hut	1h30m-2hr
Herepai Hut to Ruapae	1h30m
Ruapae to end of 1 st technical section	2h30m
Stream walking	2hr
2 nd technical section	1h30m
Ruapae Falls to bridge	2hr
Bridge to car park	30m
Total	12-13hr

Flash Flood Danger

Low. Small drainage, plenty of escapes.

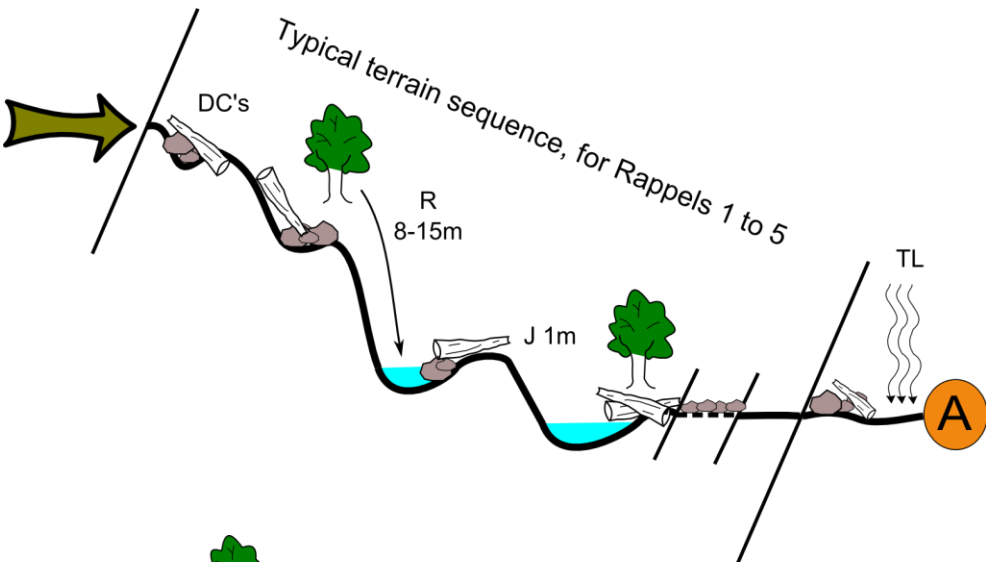
Escapes

Other than the 2nd technical section, you can usually get out of the stream bed without much difficulty. However, the area is remote and it would require tedious and lengthy bush bashing to get to the nearest track.

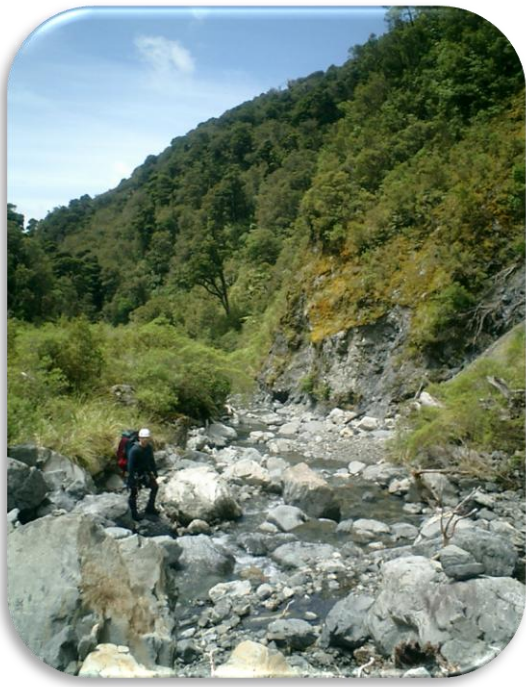
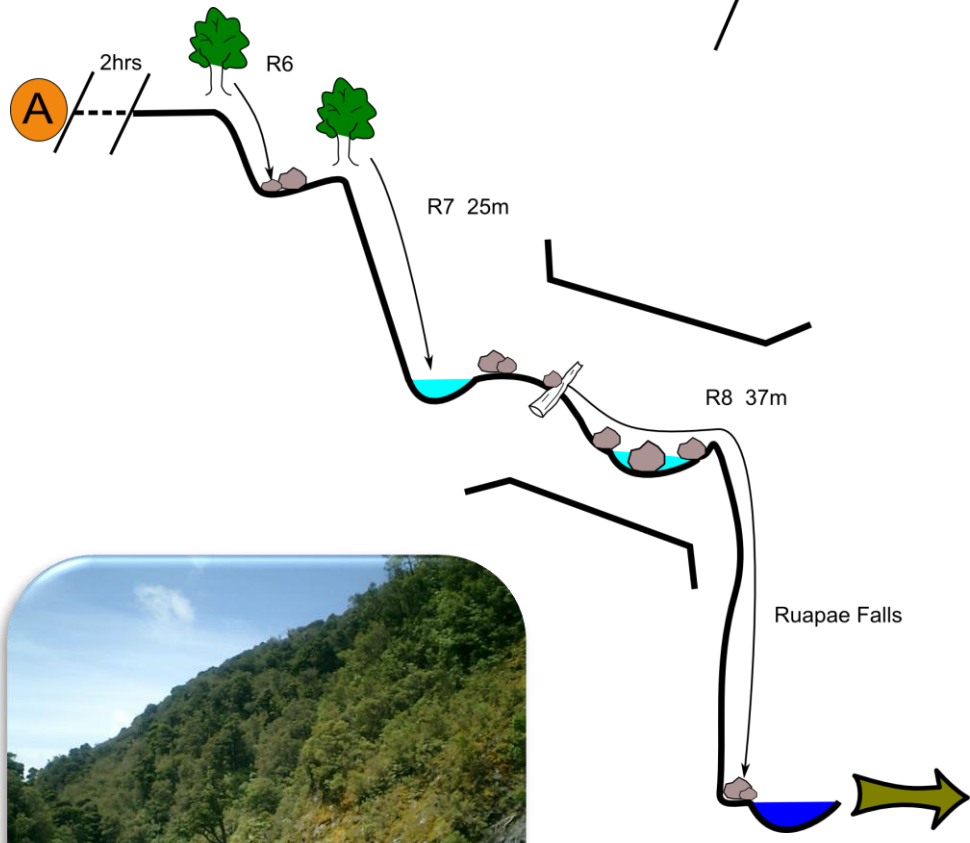
Notes

First descent:

Daniel Clearwater and Andy Kingdon Nov 04



1st Technical section



Between the technical sections



Ruapae Falls