



# SWAN CREEK

## Canyon v4a2III

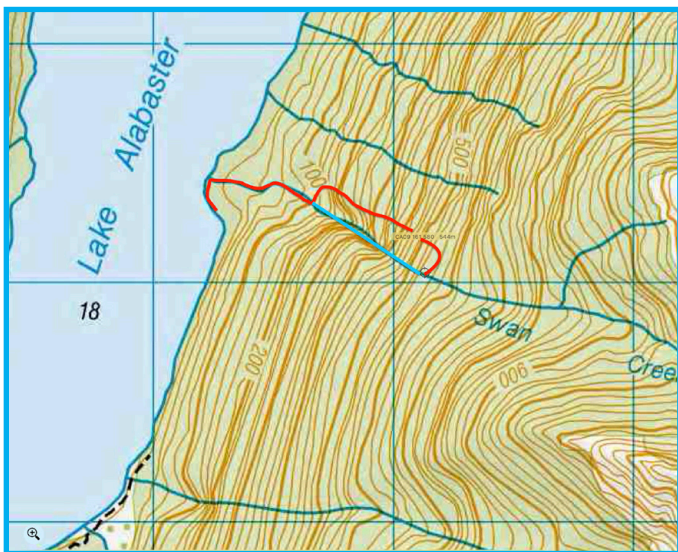


### Location

Lake Alabaster, Fiordland, New Zealand

### Character

Swan creek has an open and sunny character. You might even catch a tan while waiting on some of the belays! It is one of the easier descents in the Pyke valley with some beautiful big descents. It might be good as a warming up first descent of your trip and to assess local conditions.



### Map

CA09 - Alabaster Pass

[Car park Hollyford road end](#)

[Lake alabaster hut](#)

Start of the canyon: CA09 161 580

WGS84: S 44.52893 E 168.16943

### Approach

Leave your car at the start of the Hollyford track.

Hike or [packraft](#) for approximately 20 km to the south of Lake Alabaster. Here you can stay at the Lake Alabaster Hut (hut or campground) or at the more fancy Pyke Lodge (reservation necessary).

### Approach on Foot

Walk along the beach until you reach Swan Creek. Follow the creek upstream until it starts to get more vertical.

Move over into the forest on the true right and continue upwards until the 530m contour. Here you can traverse into the canyon.

### Rock

Schist, pretty crumbly and loose in some places.

### Water

The canyon was descended in autumn after a dry spell. No issues were encountered with water levels and it will probably still be safe with some more flow.

### Catchment

2.3 km<sup>2</sup>

### Anchors

Exploratory rigging!

Most rappels are equipped with (single) 10 mm stainless steel 306 expansion bolts and [Tebylon](#) Hangers. Trees are rigged with 5 mm Dyneema (HMPE) or webbing and a [Tebylon half ring](#). Some 10 mm holes were drilled for temporary bolts.

### Gear

2 x 90 m ropes. (Re)bolting kit.

### Route Description

Swan Creek is a pretty straightforward descent with some nice verticals. After the last descent a short walking section will bring you back to Lake Alabaster beach.



## Time

Vehicle park to Lake Alabaster Hut	1 day
Walk in from Lake Alabaster Hut	3h30min
Canyon descent	4h
Return to Lake Alabaster Hut	45min
Total (from Lake Alabaster Hut)	8h15min

## Notes

First descent: 06-03-2025

[Dutch Canyoning Expedition](#) - Erik Birkhoff, Erwan Coq, Pepijn Hoeksema, Bas Hetterscheid, Britt Joosten, Jaap Sikkema, Bram de Vries, Loys van Asten

## Flash Flood Danger

Swan Creek has a relatively small drainage area and will probably be able to take some more flow before it becomes dangerous. The flood characteristics are however largely unknown so better only do a descent with a stable weather forecast and after checking the flow on the approach walk.

A relatively easy and fun introduction to the canyons of the Pyke river valley!

## Escapes

Escape is probably be possible on most places on the true right side of the canyon. Some scrambling will be





Entrance @530m



Tree true left

① 15 m

X true left

② 7 m

X true left

③ 40 m

X true left



④ 9 m

Tree true left

⑤ 11 m

A

A

X true left

⑥ 70 m

X true right

⑦ 55 m

B

B

X true right

⑧ 70 m

HL X true left

X true right

⑨ 40 m

Walk

Exit



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Topo by E. Birkhoff  
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# EXPEDITION NZ 2025



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