



Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club

Newsletter October 2026

www.pntmc.org.nz / [pntmc on facebook](#)

c/- Society of Friends, 227 College St, PN



Photo by Emma Gregg - Below bushline with a human element winner - PNTMC Photo competition 2026.

In this newsletter:

[Club Nights](#)

[Upcoming Trips](#)

[Notices](#)

[2026 Photo Competition Results](#)

[Trip Reports](#)

- Alpine Skills Introduction
- Waitārerere Forest and Beach Walk
- Cow Creek Hut Revisited

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Club Nights

Club nights are held on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Quakers Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North. Doors open 7.15pm for meeting start at 7.30pm. All welcome.

Thu 8th October

Marvels of the Middle Kingdom

Anja Scholz

China / Zhonghua - If only I had a lifetime to explore... (and could get a visa for that long). While never off the beaten track, a month-long guided tour offered a mind-expanding if not-blowing experience of the Middle Kingdom. Ancient cultures, fantastic landscapes, dazzling cities, monumental infrastructure old and new, glorious food, people everywhere, but also puzzling questions and strange incongruities. Come and get some impressions, covering a couple of 'hikes' in the 'outdoors' (to stick with the tramping club theme) and plenty of other weird and wonderful experiences. See you there - Zai Jian!

Thu 29th October

Searching for Mountain Weta

Emma Greg

Upcoming Trips

Sun 4th October Kapakapanui Loop *Medium/Fit*

Sarah Bramwell

021 177 1556

Change of plan: Sarah will lead a day trip on the Sunday to do the Kapakapanui loop. Sarah will meet you at the carpark at 8am, ready to go at 8.30am. From Waikanae, follow Reikorangi Road and then turn into Ngatiawa Road and follow it for another 3 - 4 km to the carpark. So, if you are keen and good at navigation, get in touch with Sarah by Friday. Ph 021 177 1556 or email bramssjb@gmail.com

Sat 10th October Moonshine and Tutukiwi reserves *Easy*

Barry Scott

0210704848

Saturday or Sunday depending on the best weather. A bit of a magical/mystery tour starting at 9am from Barry's house at 95 Moonshine Valley Road (entrance is from Hokonui Heights first on left as you come up the valley) following a track around edge of valley stream then into Moonshine reserve and up to the top of the hill on the eastern side - from here you can see block of land PNCC has bought that will eventually connect Moonshine with Polson Hill. Then back down the hill, across the stream, along the edge of stream, across Moonshine Road to the western section of Moonshine reserve. Through this section of the reserve and up a ridge at the end which takes you through a clearing in the blackberry to emerge on the paddocks on the tops. From here you walk across the paddocks and take a short cut to the area above Tutukiwi reserve by dropping down and up a gully which has a steep ridge on the far side to emerge e back on the tops. Another cut clearing in the blackberry allows access to Monument gully and down to where you emerge by the ponds in Tutukiwi reserve. Then across the stream and around a loop in the upper untracked Tutukiwi reserve. This involves working your way through bush (just trimmed with secateurs) coming out on the Southern edge of the reserve that backs onto a farm, along the back fence then back down a second tributary on the western edge and back to ponds. We would finish by walking along the edge of the ponds, across the paddock and carpark and back down the road to Barry's for coffee and biscuits/cake. A lot of scrambling in and out of streams and over quite varied untracked terrain.

Sun 11th October Tongariro - Mangatepopo Loop *Medium*

Warren Wheeler

06 356 1998

Best Weather Day Trip. There should be some snow still around but our route up the track to Tongariro and back down the Mangatepopo Ridge will hopefully not be too technical, but crampons and ice axe advised. Depart 6.30am Milverton Park.

Sun 18th October No. 1 Line to the lookout and back *Medium/Fit*

Kirstie Priddle

027 779 0738

From the carpark at the end of No. 1 Line, the track heads into forest and takes us up a series of steepish climbs interspersed with a few level sections to get your breath back. As the track climbs higher up the ridge, lovely views out to the west are frequent. Just before the main track finishes there is a wonderful lookout giving views up to the main range and back out towards the coast. From here, our return involves re-tracing our steps back to the carpark.

Sun 25th October Hidden Lake *Medium*

Adam Matich

022 358 8062

A Labour Day weekend Best Weather Day trip to visit this tiny lake on the rimu terrace upstream of Roaring Stag Lodge on the Ruamahanga River, eastern Tararua behind Eketahuna. Might even be warm enough for a swim!

Trips beyond October can be viewed on the club website ‘[trip card](#).’

Trip Grading - Trip grades depend on many factors, including weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient tramper should expect to do the trips in the following times:

Easy (E):	3-4 hrs
Medium (M):	5-6 hrs
Fit (F):	about 8 hrs
Fitness Essential (FE):	over 8 hrs
BWD = Best weather day of a weekend	

Other Grades:
- Family (Fam)
- Technical skills (T)
- Inst (Instruction)

Gear for trips - Minimum gear for day trips is appropriate footwear, pack, lunch and snacks, waterproof jacket, over-trousers, gloves, warm hat, torch, toilet paper, matches or a lighter, sunblock, first aid kit, and a survival bag or space blanket. Each person needs to be equipped to survive overnight.

Overdue Trips - If a club trip is late returning, please do not worry, there is probably a good reason for the delay. If you are in any doubt, please phone Bruce van Brunt 06 328 4761 or Verity Elder 0212601885

Notices

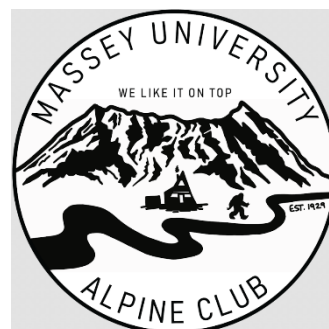
Interclub Events 2026

The Interclub Photo competition we will held on Wednesday the 30th of September in the Student Lounge on Massey Campus (opposite the big library building) at 5:30pm. **The link to the photo comp submission form:** <https://forms.gle/YFUwr6dnYo6ZnEPN6>



2027 Wild Ruahine” calendar is now available

This lovely locally produced limited edition calendar features photos taken in the Ruahines and is created by club member and supporter Anthony Behrens. All proceeds help support the trapping work volunteers (many of them club members) do to help protect our endangered Whio. The price is \$20.00 each. – see Janet at club nights or email her at jwilson@inspire.net.nz.



2026 PNTMC Photo Competition Results

Report by Chris Tuffley – event organiser

Our 2026 photo competition attracted 112 entries from thirteen photographers. Overseas was the most popular category, with 22 entries, some of them sent in by club members currently overseas depicting their ongoing adventures.

Our judge again this year was Racheal Young from the Manawatū Camera Club. As usual the top entries in each category were chosen by the judge, and then places were decided by a show of hands vote on the night.

The top three images in each category have been submitted to the interclub photo competition (Wednesday 30th September, hosted by MUAC), and the top two entries in the six FMC categories have been entered in the FMC photo competition.

PNTMC Newsletter October 2026



Colourful fungi Ōkārito Trig track
- Harley Betts - Native flora, fauna and fungi

The 2026 PNTMC winners are as follows:

Above bushline with no human element:

1. Taranaki twilight from Ruapehu - Harley Betts
2. Taranaki sunset from Ruapehu - Harley Betts
3. Alpine scenery Lockett Range Kahurangi NP - Harley Betts

Above bushline with a human element

1. Standing the test of time - Emma Gregg
2. Camping on Ruapehu - Harley Betts
2. Adelaide Tarn Kahurangi NP - Harley Betts
4. Heading home - Emma Gregg

Below bushline with no human element:

1. Cobweb, Ruahine Corner - Chris Tuffley
1. Morning Abel Tasman - Elly Arnst
3. Kōkopunui Lake Colenso - Chris Tuffley

Below bushline with a human element:

1. Home is where the hearth is - Emma Gregg
2. Last leg of the Dusky - Chris Tuffley
3. Nature's shower - Emma Gregg

Long exposure:

1. Crossing the Waiohine - Chris Tuffley
2. Aurora over Iron Gate - Chris Tuffley
3. Foxton Beach Manawatū Estuary - Chris Tuffley

Native flora, fauna and fungi:

1. Pīwauwau New Zealand rock wren - Chris Tuffley
2. Colourful fungi Ōkārito Trig track - Harley Betts
2. Alpine crane's bill - Elly Arnst

Overseas:

1. Long legs - Martin Lawrence
2. Honduran white bats under leaf - Martin Lawrence
3. High above Herefordshire - Warren Wheeler
4. This drought will be the death of me - Warren Wheeler

Judge's top three images across all categories:

1. Heading home - Emma Gregg
2. Long legs - Martin Lawrence
3. Nature's shower - Emma Gregg

Racheal's favourite:

1. Heading home - Emma Gregg



Heading home - Emma Gregg - Above bushline with a human element



Honduran white bats under leaf - Martin Lawrence
- Overseas

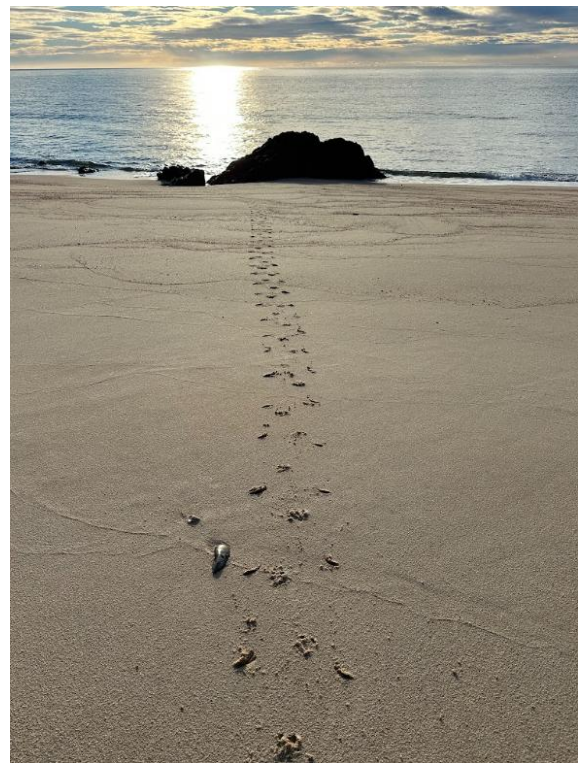


Adelaide Tarn Kahurangi NP - Harley Betts - Above bushline with a human element



Pīwauwau New Zealand rock wren - Chris Tuffley - Native flora, fauna and fungi

Overseas was the most popular category, with 22 entries, some of them sent in by club members currently overseas depicting their ongoing adventures.....



Morning Abel Tasman - Elly Arnst - Below bushline with no human element



This drought will be the death of me - Warren Wheeler – Overseas



Camping on Ruapehu - Harley Betts - Above bushline with a human element



Last leg of the Dusky - Chris Tuffley - Below bushline with a human element

Trip Reports

Alpine Skills Introduction – (25th – 26th July, 5th – 6th September).

Report and photos by Grant Christian and participants.

This year I held the introductory course over two weekends. Due to the bad forecast I gave people the option of postponing until September or attending in July as planned. On the first weekend I had five participants. We again stayed in Sue's cottage and did the practical session at Turoa. Due to Saturday's forecast, we didn't arrive at Sue's until Saturday morning. Saturday was very wet so we didn't venture on to the mountain. We introduced avalanche safety and other mountain hazards, demonstrated how to check and use avalanche transceivers and had a practice search and fitted crampons. We also talked about how to hold an ice and the methods of self-arresting.

Sunday's weather was much better, and we headed for the slopes. We demonstrated the principles of kicking steps, cutting steps, crampon use and self-arresting



followed by practice by the participants. The snow was generally soft but we found some hard snow in places. This was improved by scraping away the top layer of new snow. All the participants were enthusiastic and capable and left with an understanding of how to move safely on snow.

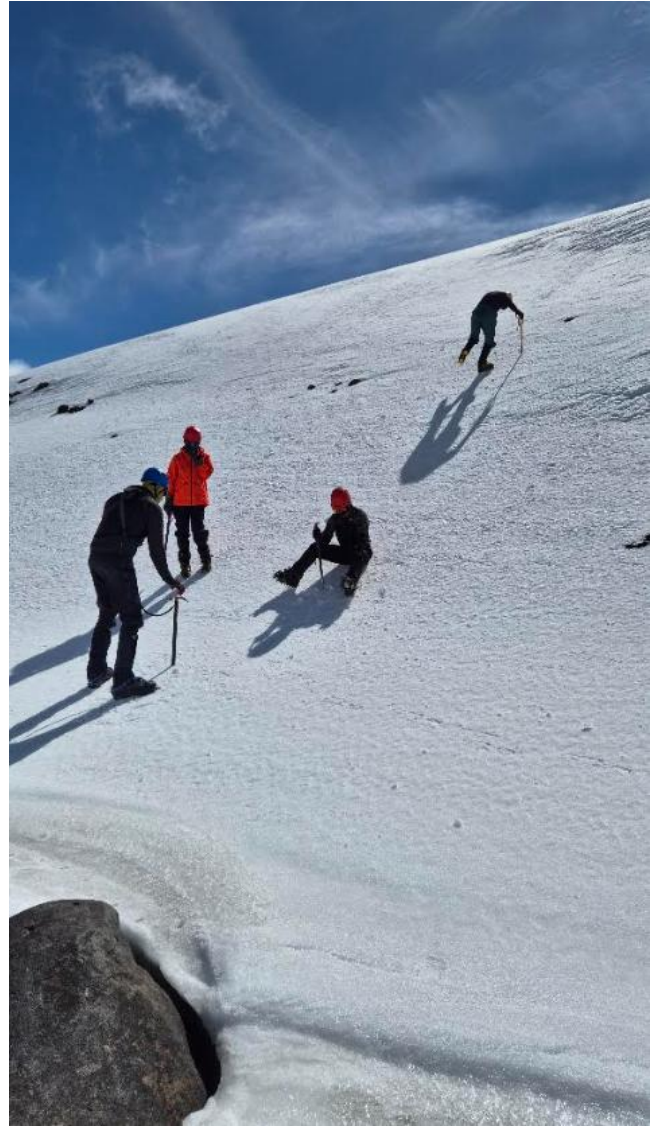
The forecast for the September weekend was again not favourable but I decided we could endure the conditions. I had four participants for this weekend, two of whom had attended last year and wanted to refresh their knowledge. We were ready to leave at 7.45am - which is about the norm for when I say I want to leave at 7.30am. People usually underestimate how long it is going to take to get organised and get out the door. The ski field report was much better than the forecast and we arrived on the slopes to light wind and a clear sky. A lot of the snow from the previous course had melted away but my usual places for teaching still had good snow and it was very hard, ideal for teaching. We went through the same programme, although the snow was really too hard for kicking steps. Later in the day the snow softened enough to practice self-arresting. Again, we had participants throwing themselves down some steep slopes and practicing the art of stopping a slide with great enthusiasm. We also had a go at snow shovel sliding for a bit of fun.

Sunday's weather was a bit windier and misty/wet. We headed back onto the mountain to get some more crampon experience. My plan was to head to the waterfall at 2,100 metres near to the chairlifts. As we got higher the weather got worse and skiers were appearing out of the mist going in the opposite direction. I was unsure if I was in the correct gully to get to the waterfall. Surprisingly, it is not shown on the topo map. I headed a bit further west because the gully seemed to be ending and I didn't think skiers would be in the gully with the waterfall, but I was not confident of finding it as we got higher and the weather was deteriorating so we continued on to 2,000 metres altitude and decided to head back to the car. I have now found where the waterfall is by using the satellite view of the mountain and marking the position on my topo map app.

We were back at the cottage for lunch and after lunch people were keen to head home so we had an early finish to the weekend.

Participant Contributions –

Henry - I really enjoyed the trip and meeting the boys. It's always good to meet up with likeminded people who want to get into a new hobby, as well as spend time with Grant and Cam and learn a little bit from their experience and knowledge. They were both great company and keen to share any tips and advice they had. I now feel more confident tramping across an alpine snowy environment. Look forward to the next one!



Antonia - Heading back to Mount Ruapehu for the Palmerston North Tramping & Mountaineering Club (PNTMC) Alpine Skills for Beginners trip with Grant was an absolute highlight after having such a blast on it last year. Based next to Turoa, the weekend was packed with practical, hands-on training tailored for moving safely on snow, covering everything from essential step-kicking and steep-slope movement to self-arrests and getting confident in crampons and using an ice axe. Beyond the practical sessions on the slopes, it was great to refresh key alpine theory like mountain weather, risk management, and avalanche awareness alongside a supportive and super fun crew. Returning for a second round provided the perfect opportunity to lock in muscle memory, sharpen technical skills, and go shovel sliding for the first time! Recommend this weekend for beginners.



Elaine - A epic weekend finally getting around to something I've wanted to try for ages - an introduction to alpine skills & mountaineering course. My first time doing anything like this, and I absolutely loved it. We spent the weekend learning to use ice axes and crampons, practising our stepping skills on snow and ice, and learning how to self-arrest when things inevitably get a little slippery! More than anything though, I loved being back in the snow. It brought back some happy childhood memories and that slightly ridiculous feeling of just wanting to play like you're a kid again. Add in a great bunch of people, lots of laughs, and a bit of shovel sliding down the hill, and I'd say it was a pretty great way to spend a weekend.

Satoru - I have been on snow, on skis, snowboards and mountain bike (which was a terrible mistake), but never on tramping boots let alone with crampons. So, I was very excited for this introductory mountaineering course. The weather was stunning on Saturday and Grant got us straight into the mahi. It was fun learning how to make steps on snow with ice axe and how we could walk around without crampons. Then we put crampons on and that made a huge difference, as expected. The only niggly thing was that we had to change the way we walked on side slopes with crampons which took a bit of getting used to. Self-arresting was so much fun, and I felt a lot safer throwing myself on to snowy slopes rather than off my mountain bike. The second day was halved unfortunately due to unfavourable weather but we had a solid morning reapplying what we learned the day before. Top notch course delivery by Grant, thanks everyone.

25 & 26 July - Instructors: Grant Christian and Cam Raupi. Students: Jacques du Plessis, Kalos Robinson-Frani, Henry Lockhart, Mike Thorogood, Shaun Betts

5 & 6 September - Instructor: Grant Christian. Students: Antonia Celliogi, Loretha du Plessis, Satoru Kuwabara, Elaine Clisham

Waitārere Forest and Beach Walk – (6th September).

Report Katherine Lauchland-Farquhar

Photo by Marty Lawrence

It was a leisurely start to the day, setting off from PN at 8:30am, but with zero view of the northern Tararua Range to our left, en route to the large new roundabout at the Waitārere Beach turn-off, as the day was heavily overcast.

We met (now) Foxton resident Chris at the Waitārere Surf-Club car park and donned jackets and other warm gear to keep the cold wind at bay.

Once into the forest, walking northward, we enjoyed the sheltering effect of the trees. Away from the roar of the ocean surf and steady wind, and on these wide, thinly gravelled road-tracks, it was easy to talk (lots) as we walked, and we made good progress. Mid-morning we stopped off in a nice, sheltered forest grove for morning tea.

In a few places, there are small labyrinths of road tracks, most of them numbered where they intersect. We confidently followed our trip leader who was '*tracking*' the track options, and after what seemed like a couple of hours all up, we arrived at the end of a track close to the Manawatu River, where taking a necessary left turn through stunted, yet profusely yellow-flowering (did someone say wattle?) vegetation, we scrambled up and over a small dune and then out onto the sandy beach and a low-tide view of the wide Manawatu River mouth and ocean beyond. In the far distance, several small boats one after the other zipped northward, bouncing (literally) along the surf beyond the river mouth. We found an okay lunch spot among the plentiful, well-bleached driftwood, not far from a lone white baiter... who at least while we were about, did not appear to catch any whitebait. (Apparently white-baiting season had commenced on the 1st Sept.) To the east, Foxton dwellings could be seen far across the river and at one point a small aircraft flew a loop around the area. The roar of the surf was constant. On the return journey, the low tide meant we had an easy, undiverted beach walk including along the narrower part of the shore which is just a bit south from the river. We had the wind at our backs – very helpful - and although to the south the cloud never lifted (no view of Kapiti Island this day), for a while, from the north, we did have the sun on our backs as well.

This day, there were very few people about on this stretch of the beach – but back in Waitārere at the village Dairy fetching ice-creams, we learnt it had been a busy day 'in town' due to a large orienteering event, and it being Fathers Day also. It was a good walk. Checking various electronic devices afterward, someone came up with 20km and someone else with 22km. Either way, I'm sure we were all glad to be home before the heavy rain of the next 24hrs or so arrived.



We were Anne (leader), Marty, Kat, Michale, Adele, Chris, Michelle, Julian, June and Katherine.

Cow Creek Hut Revisited – (29th – 30th August).

Report Ernie Cook

Photos by Janet Wilson

Four Club members expressed an interest in this over-night trip in the Tararuas. Janet and Graham rendezvoused with Blair in Ashurst and proceeded to pick Ernie up in Pahiatua. A car turned off into Kiriwhakapapa Road ahead of us which led to speculation about what their destination might be. After Blair interrogated them, it was established that they were under-taking a day walk. That left only a red car unaccounted for in the carpark.

We set off at about 9 o'clock and after a leisurely warm up amongst the towering red woods we began the climb of about 580 metres to the Blue Range. We were over-taken by a fit individual and his nice dog. He obviously got out a bit and passed us on his way back down having reached the turn-off in an hour and 9 minutes. We soon met a young woman also coming down, having been to Blue Range Hut on a day excursion. That accounted for the red car.

We turned off at the junction and began sidling in an up-wards direction towards Cow Creek Hut. The quite strong wind blowing felt rather cold and required some clothing adjustments. We lunched in a sheltered place and then began the tedious descent to the Waingawa River. After reaching the river it is only about 20 minutes to the hut which is reached after crossing a long swing bridge (3pm).

The hut is delightfully situated above the river. Clean, tidy and well stocked with fire-wood that afforded a cosy night. A standard Forest Service Hut with 6 bunks allowed us room to spread out and hope that no-one else turned up. The last visit had been in early August and the new Hut Book, started in May this year, was only on the second page. Blair got the fire going and after a while the hut, began to feel nice and warm.

We retired early and after some reading the hut was plunged into darkness. The wind blew a bit during the night. *Early to bed* translated to *early to rise* and we were under-way around 8 o'clock. A short walk along the river was followed by the previous downhill in reverse. Some tree fall along the track we eventually reached the top and continued along to the junction. For me anyway, it seemed to require more effort to reach the high point in this direction than it had the previous day. Blair and Janet forged ahead leaving their packs at the turn-off to go and visit Blue Range Hut. Graham and I did not have the inclination to do so. We began the descent and finding a sunny, relatively sheltered spot we stopped for lunch where Janet and Blair duly joined us. The down-hill was completed and we reached the car after slightly more than 6 hours graft. Thanks, Janet, for offering and leading this trip. It had been a while since Janet had visited Cow Creek Hut and considerably longer for Graham.



We were Janet (leader), Graham, Blair and Ernie.