

Beach walks

The northern region of North Island offers a wide range of beach walks, from placid and sheltered bays to wild and windswept

No	Name	Km	Summary
11	Marsden Point	2.0	A long all-year round beach, running between the site of an old power station and a working refinery - but don't be put off by that!
13	Ruakaka	2.0	A long sandy beach, giving views of Whangarei Heads and Sail Rock; summer restrictions apply
14	Bayley's Beach	5.0	A long, wild, windy beach, often littered with storm debris; summer restrictions apply
15	Uretiti	2.0	A long, sandy beach; partly designated as a naturist reserve (but don't rush there on that account, for there's nothing that you won't find better examples of at home!)
16	Waipu	0.5	A short beach section (limited by a nature reserve to the north); rocks to climb on in the south; gives access to Waipu Cove Walkway
17	Lang's Beach	1.5	A lovely pair of beaches, separated by a rocky headland which can be skirted only at very low tide. The small beach to the north contains fascinating rock formations and caves. The main beach contains dotterel habitats, so keep an eye on the dog!
17	Mangawhai Heads	3.0	A long and beautiful beach, backed by huge fossil sand dunes. Interesting rock formations and access to several other walks.
21	Pahi	2.0	An easy stroll along a quiet shingle beach, with the option of a loop walk via a track over the hill
22	Whakapirau	2.0	A quiet shingle beach, populated by herons, stilts and oyster catchers.
23	Batley	2.0	Two choices of walk from one of the most fascinating historical sites on the Kaipara; interesting rock formations.
25	Pouto Point	7.5	A tough but rewarding hike along a wild beach to a historic lighthouse, perched on an 85 metre high sand dune

Most of the beaches in the North are accessible with dogs for most of the year. Summer restrictions apply on many beaches, however, including a number of remote and quiet ones which are more-or-less deserted in the absence of dog-walkers! Limitations vary, but typically cover the period from (about) 20th December to the end of February, and ban access between the hours of 09.00 and 17.00. It's important to check locally to find out the rules on specific beaches.

The beaches in this area are often excellent for dog-walking because they are long and not too intensively used. The main hazards to look out for are vehicles, which are not always driven carefully or responsibly, and the inevitable scatter of broken glass and abandoned fishing tackle. Fortunately, the problem of toxic sea-slugs, which has caused a number of dog deaths in the Hauraki Gulf, has generally not extended into this area.

The beaches themselves vary, and each has its own character. On the west coast they are typically long, relatively straight and rather wild. Large breakers and surf-swept sand are the norm. Throughout much of the year, these beaches carry piles of storm debris, which may look unsightly at times but often gives interesting insights to what goes on out there on the sea, and where the tides come from. Beach configuration also changes rapidly. On the west coast, therefore, beach walks can be long tramps.

On the east, in contrast, the coastline is more indented, while onshore winds are less fierce, so we often discover ourselves in a quiet and sheltered sandy bay. Walks on these beaches tend to be varied but relatively short.

Beaches in Kaipara Harbour, and similar localities such as the Hokianga, are different again. Almost enclosed and protected from the open sea, these provide placid beaches, usually of shingle and shells, interspersed with muddy saltmarsh and mangrove. Because these beaches are rarely used for swimming, summer restrictions are often less severe.

Subject to these restrictions, therefore, most beaches offer opportunity for interesting dog-walks. Opposite is a list of some of the longer ones, but there are many more to discover....