

Quail Island Recreational Reserve

1 Quail Island Jetty

Drop-off and pick-up are from this jetty. Please report to the jetty 5 minutes before your scheduled pick-up time. A shelter is situated near the jetty.

2 Walkway

The Quail Island Walkway starting at the new wharf offers a circumference walk (two-hours round trip), and a shorter one-hour option. The easy walk takes in a view of the shipwrecks, leprosy graves and the kennels used for Scott's quarantined dogs.

3 Visitors Centre

Here you will find information and displays featuring the island's fascinating past.

4 Volcanic Cliffs

There are excellent examples of volcanic cliffs, which show how the island was formed 11–15 million years ago.

5 The Wards Settlement

The Ward brothers bought part of Quail Island in 1851 and erected a small cottage. They farmed the island for just 2 months before tragedy struck; the 2 brothers were drowned when taking firewood to the island.

6 Ballast Quarries

Early sailing ships arriving into Lyttelton often had to load up on return journeys with ballast rocks to keep their ships stable. Two sites on the island can be seen where tonnes of rock were taken from 1850–1874.

7 Shipwrecks

Investigate 8 shipwrecks, which can be seen on the western side of the island.

8 Walkers Beach

9 Leprosy grave site

10 Leprosy colony

In 1907 the island was home to the first and only leprosy colony in New Zealand. One lonely soul died here and his grave can be viewed on the island. Up to 9 patients were housed here at its peak.

11 Antarctic links

Robert Falcon Scott used Quail Island for quarantining and training dogs, ponies and mules for his Antarctic expeditions in 1901 and again prior to his ill-fated expedition to the South Pole in 1910. A replica kennel can be seen. Ernst Shackleton also used the island for this purpose in 1907.

12 Human and Animal Quarantines

In 1874 a quarantine station was built to isolate those immigrants who had spent 3 months at sea in cramped conditions with lack of fresh food and exercise. These conditions increased chances of disease and sickness. All imported stock from England had to be quarantined before arriving in Lyttelton. Quail Island was perfect for this purpose.



General Information

Toilets

Emergency phone
Located on pole. Dial 1 for outside line. No camping except with express permission from the Department of Conservation.

No fires, gas cooking only.
No bikes or dogs (except guide dogs with permission from DOC).
Please take your rubbish with you.
The water on the island is drinkable.
Please do not walk on or near the new tree plantings.
Please clean your shoes prior to boarding the vessel.

We also recommend a trip with Christchurch Wildlife Cruises on Lyttelton Harbour. You'll see the rare native dolphin—the Hector's Dolphin, and hear all about the region's fascinating history. The two-hour cruises depart daily from Lyttelton bound for the harbour entrance.

13 Skiers' Beach

Used during the summer for water skiing.

14 Swimmers' Beach

Used during the summer for swimming.

15 Old Jetty

Other Information

Maori use

The island was used for the collection of food—seabird eggs and fishing mostly by Maori children. The Maori name for the island is O Tamahua, which means 'place to gather sea-bird eggs'.

The Quails

In 1842, the first European to set foot on the island, Captain Mein Smith, flushed a number of now-extinct native quail from the bush and named the island after the birds.

Other walks

The Mt Herbert Walkway starts from Diamond Harbour, climbing steeply almost to reach the summit of Mt Herbert (919 m) before descending through fragments of forest to Charteris Bay via Orton Bradley Park. Allow 6–8 hrs (Nov to July). Ferries depart from Lyttelton to Diamond Harbour daily. Ph 328 9078.

