

Sutton Salt Lake: Otago; New Zealand

Just one of the many New Zealand adventure walks available from takeahike.net.nz

Where is it?

Sutton salt lake is located near Middlemarch in Otago.

What are the main attractions?

The main attraction is the salt lake but there are also spectacular views of the Rock and Pillar range

How difficult is the walk?

Path Walking track ✓ Tramping track Marked route

Visit www.takeahike.net.nz for an explanation of the grading system used.



take a hike
E-mail:
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Website
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How to get there.

The Sutton Salt Lake walkway is located off Kidds Road near Middlemarch. If you are not familiar with the area go to www.maps.google.nz.co/ and type in Kidds Road, Middlemarch, Otago 9597 This will give you a map reference for your destination, and now zoom out to include your current location, and you will have your trip map.

What do I need to take?

The weather in New Zealand can change very rapidly. If your going on a walk you need to be prepared for a range of conditions. It is advisable to carry drinking water, a hat, sun block (in the summer months), a raincoat, and some warm clothing. Light snack food and fruit are also a good idea although the dairy in Middlemarch has a selection of hot and cold food.

Light footwear such as running shoes is suitable for most walks and a walking pole if you have one, would greatly assist traversing steep terrain.



The car park for the walk is located in a paddock off Kidds Road



This small bridge leads to the start of the track



This sign at the start of the walk reminds visitors not to remove rocks



Rocky tors are a feature of this country and provide some shelter from the winds

What is the timeline to do the walk?

The walk takes about an hour to complete but you should allow longer so that you can explore around the lake

Are there any restrictions I need to know about?

The walk is through a reserve and the following restrictions apply:

- No dogs allowed
- Plants cannot be removed
- Light no fires
- No hunting or fishing without a permit or license
- Do not remove rocks

A little about the walk

Lake Sutton is the only saline lake in New Zealand. It is a cool temperature lake whereas most other lakes in the world, for example the Dead Sea, are found in dry arid conditions.

The lake does not always have water in it because the area is exposed to a considerable amount of wind which causes the lake to evaporate.



The schist tors that surround Sutton lake



The Rock and Pillar range viewed across the lake



In places the lake is so shallow you appear to be walking on water



Creak beds are crossed by small bridges

We have visited it twice, once with water and once without. When the lake is full of water it is about a metre deep and covers about 2 hectares. While the lake is not so picturesque without water it is still an interesting place to visit.

The lake is formed entirely from rain water with about 500mm per year falling. The lakes salinity is derived from marine aerosols in rainwater which travel from the coast about 50 kilometres away.

The aerosols are forced into the air from the actions of waves on the coast and travel across country to the lake.

Because the lake has repeatedly filled, evaporated and refilled, the aerosols have concentrated in the actual lake depression itself, giving the lake a salinity that is about a quarter to a third of the salinity of seawater.

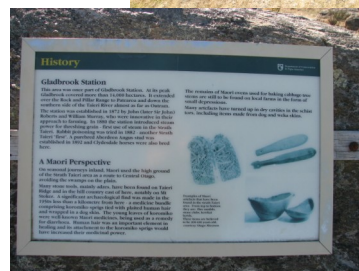
A paper by D Crow and S Beckett from Otago University puts the number of evaporations and refilling cycles at 20,000.



Above: in places on the track you appear to be on the top of the world. Below: the Rock and Pillar range viewed from the lake.

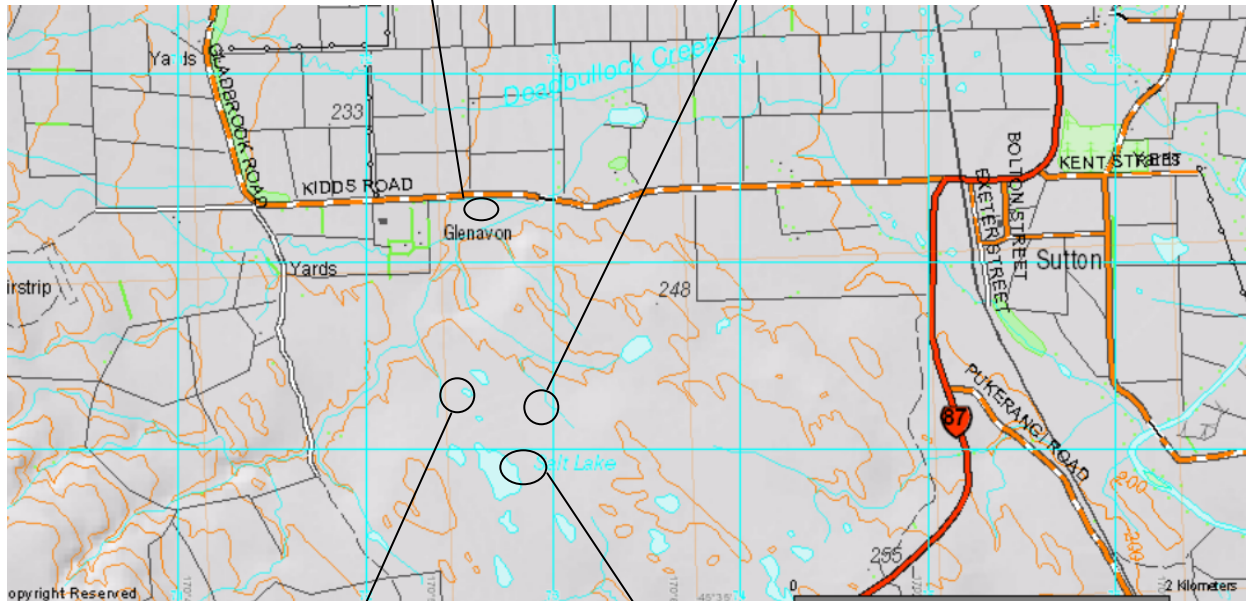


Right: typical of the walk the track cuts its way through the grass



A plaque on the track details the history of the area.

A map for the journey



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