

# Molesworth Station



SOUTH MARLBOROUGH



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## Preface

Welcome to Molesworth, the biggest farm in New Zealand, where conservation, farming and recreation go hand in hand.

The 180,476-hectare Molesworth Station unites original stations; Tarndale, Molesworth and St Helens. Molesworth reverted to the Crown in 1938 when the runholders walked off; St Helens, including the Dillon Run, was added in 1949. The combined stations once ran around 95,000 sheep but, when the Crown took over, the land was suffering from loss of vegetation and severe erosion caused by overgrazing by sheep and rabbits and repeated burning of tussocklands. The land was gradually restored to good health under careful management that included rabbit control, revegetation and the replacement of sheep with cattle.

Today, Molesworth is managed by the Department of Conservation with Landcorp Farming Limited responsible for farming operations under a lease agreement that respects the property's outstanding conservation and recreation values as well as the working farm.

To ensure a safe and enjoyable Molesworth experience, travel only on roads that are open to the public. As well as being potentially dangerous, off-road driving can damage fragile plants, spread weeds and start fires.

Check any signs along the route; these may warn of road closures, which can occur at any time. Roads may be closed due to slips, washouts or snow; to allow stock movement; or (on Rainbow Station) for Defence Force exercises. Fill your fuel tank before setting out and carry a good quality spare tyre.

Travel through Molesworth is at your own risk. Be aware that there is no cellphone coverage. Automobile Association breakdown services are not available and some vehicle insurance policies do not apply.

Driving through Molesworth is a unique high country experience. We wish you an enjoyable trip.



Isolated Flat. Photo: Markus Baumann

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## The land

To the traveller, the rounded mountains and broad valleys of Molesworth Station appear vast and timeless. Yet this is a place of constant change wrought by geological movement, an extreme climate and, more recently, by human endeavour to farm this most challenging environment.

What we find today is a land of shifting screes, wide grasslands and steep hillsides, supporting hardy plant communities adapted to survive in one of New Zealand's harshest environments.

### Landforms

Molesworth's history of glaciation can be read in the landscape. Terminal and lateral moraines, glacial outwash plains, hanging valleys and waterfalls, cirque basins, tarns and arêtes are all reminders of the region's past ice ages.

The headwaters of the Clarence, Wairau and Acheron Rivers were all formerly glaciated.

Several major, active fault lines transect the property, causing mountain uplift and more recent horizontal jolts, which trigger landslides and rockfalls.

The under-lying rocks are mostly greywacke and argillite mudstone, dating back 135–235 million years to the Triassic and Jurassic eras. Valley floors and major basins are filled with glacial and outwash gravels, in places covered with river-borne gravel and silt. Soils are generally greywacke-derived, with relatively infertile, older soils

Below: Lake Tennyson. Photo: Neil Deans



generally found in the higher rainfall, western areas and more fertile, younger soils on terraces and flood plains in the lower rainfall, eastern areas.

### Climate

Molesworth endures a continental climate of extremes.

Hot and generally dry summers are followed by harsh winters. Snow may fall at any time of the year, some years covering the entire property for up to eight weeks in winter. At the homestead, frosts are recorded as often as two days in three. Average annual rainfall ranges from 670mm in the east to 3000mm in the west, the marked gradient reflected in the varied soils and vegetation.



Snow-covered hills. Photo: Shannel Courtney

### Vegetation

Molesworth is an area of national ecological significance. Over 70 threatened plant species grow here, a quarter of which are acutely threatened. These are mostly herbs and include two native mistletoes, five daisies, a hairy mountain cress, a buttercup, a gentian, a plantain and a hebe.

More than 60 endemic plant species are found in South Marlborough (the area south of the Richmond Ranges to the Conway River); close to half of these grow on Molesworth. A Protected Natural Areas (PNA) survey of the station in 1987/88 identified 25 recommended areas for protection (RAPs), totalling nearly 30% of the Station's total area. Progress is being made on fencing and protecting ecological values at these sites.

Vegetation reflects the east–west rainfall gradient from 670 mm in the east to 3000 mm in the west. At the dry end of the scale, you will see gravelfield and scree communities as well as shrublands, where native species include matagouri, hebe, tauhinu and mountain flax. On lower altitude riverbeds, basins, terraces and mountain footslopes, exotic grasslands are common. Introduced sweet brier and the invasive flatweed hieracium are evident. Short tussock grasses grow on valley floors and lower mountain side-slopes; tall tussocks grow in upper catchments and on mountain slopes.



Penwiper—*Notothlaspi rosulatum*.  
Photo: Cathy Jones

In wetter country, patches of red tussocks can be found on lower altitude river terraces, fans, old flood plains and moraines. Shaded gullies and valley floors that have escaped burning host remnants of mountain beech. Manuka and kanuka shrubland communities have in some areas risen from the ashes of burned beech and are nursing regenerating forests.

Lakes, wetlands and kettlehole bogs provide a treasure trove of moisture-loving plants, especially around Lakes Tennyson and Sedgemere on the Hanmer–Rainbow route.

### Wildlife

Molesworth supports one of New Zealand’s most diverse lizard faunas. The nationally threatened scree skink and spotted skink are found here, as well as more common species.

The New Zealand falcon, banded dotterel and black-fronted tern are among threatened bird species found.

Land-locked native fish species, including members of the bully and galaxiid families, occur in lakes and tarns, some

Below: Scree skink. Photo: Garry Holz



unique to Marlborough. Rivers and streams are populated by native fish species and trout.

There is still much to learn about New Zealand native insects, but several species of spectacularly large giant weta occur within Molesworth, as do speargrass weevils.

## The people

Despite its isolation, Molesworth Station has a long human history.

### Early explorers

Maori are likely to have explored this area and unlocked its routes over 600 years ago. Established trails were used by Ngai Tahu for food gathering and access between the west coast, an important source of pounamu or jade, and the east coast.



Molesworth Cob Cottage. Photo: Martin Heine

In 1830, a splinter group from a northern war party travelled south via the Upper Wairau, Tarndale and Hanmer to attack the Ngai Tahu pa at Kaiapoi, while the main party travelled the east coast by canoe.

Maori described interior routes to early European settlers and guided explorers, including Thomas Brunner and William Travers.

In 1850, explorers Mitchell and Dashwood found a derelict Maori whare in the lower Acheron. Travers recorded finds of Maori artefacts on his run at remote Lake Guyon.

In the late 1850s and 1860s, Nelson and Marlborough pastoralists were supplying newly established Canterbury

runs with stock more cheaply and efficiently via Molesworth than by importing animals from Australia. During the 1857–58 season, some 24,000 sheep were driven south from Nelson; drovers and travellers followed stock routes through Molesworth well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The most popular route from the Awatere to Canterbury crossed Barefell Pass, following the Guide River into the Acheron Valley, over Jollies Pass to Hanmer and beyond. Nelson and Wairau stock were taken via Tophouse and the Upper Wairau, over Island Pass, down the Clarence Valley and across Jacks Pass to Hanmer. An alternative route was to cross from the Waihopai into the Acheron via Canterbury Spur.

The accommodation houses at Tophouse, Rainbow, Tardale and Acheron were part of a chain of dwellings placed to service travellers using 'the Canterbury Track'.



Acheron Accommodation House. Photo: Markus Baumann

These were built from cob, a mixture of wet clay reinforced with dung and tussock, which sets hard when dry. The Acheron Accommodation House and the cob cottage at the eastern entrance to the Station are registered with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

Both the Molesworth roads were built to enable the construction and maintenance of power lines. The Hanmer–Rainbow Road was built in the 1950s to supply the Nelson and Buller regions; the Acheron Road was built in the late 1960s to enable installation of the high-voltage cable that connects the North and South Islands.



Stockman. Photo: Veronique Cornille

## Farming

Molesworth brings together the best traditions of New Zealand high country farming and modern agriculture.

The farm calendar follows the cycle of the seasons, with cattle grazed on warm valley floors in the cold winter months then ranging free on the higher altitude back-country during summer. Teams of musters are employed, camping out with their dogs and horses for days at a time in remote huts.

Up to 10,000 cattle are run, including 3500 breeding cows and heifers, traditional British Herefords and Angus, crossed to breed a resilient and early maturing hybrid. Despite the harsh climate and the fact that stock are largely left to fend for themselves, the station uses modern genetic selection and rigorous culling to achieve a calving rate of around 92% in October/November, which is quite outstanding for the conditions.

Calves stay on their mothers through their first winter, then are weaned in spring, just before the cows drop their



Photo: Colin Davis

next season's calf. All yearling cattle are carried through, with surplus heifers sold as two-year-olds and steers as three-year-olds.

About 10,000 hectares of the property, particularly lower slopes and valley floors, have been aerially oversown with pasture species, including clover, cocksfoot and lotus, and topdressed with superphosphate plus sulphur, applied to blocks one year in three. Burning has not been used as a management tool since the 1940s.

Weed control requires a significant investment, with briar, broom and wilding pines the main targets. The invasive flatweed hieracium is a farming and ecological headache, spreading slowly but surely, especially in the mid-altitude country.

Possoms, ferrets and pigs are a significant threat to animal health because of their ability to transmit bovine tuberculosis, which is present on the station.

Five permanent farm staff, including the station manager, are employed, plus five stockmen and a general hand (mostly involved with weed control) for all but the winter months. For all stock work, staff use horses, bred and broken in on the station. About 80 horses and up to 45 working dogs may be on the station during the season.

An aircraft is hired for spotting cattle prior to mustering and to locate stragglers afterwards, saving days of riding.



Angus and Hereford cattle east of Wards Pass. Photo: Markus Baumann

## Travelling through Molesworth

### The Acheron Road

*Distances in brackets are provided firstly from Blenheim and secondly from Hanmer.*

The Acheron Road is open 7 am–7 pm from December 28 to April 1, but may be closed without warning due to weather conditions or fire danger. The road is suitable for two-wheel drive cars (without trailers) but not for caravans, buses or vehicles over seven metres long.

The 207-kilometre journey from Blenheim to Hanmer Springs follows the Awatere River, then crosses Wards Pass to follow the Acheron to its confluence with the Clarence River. After 100 kilometres of travel up the Awatere Valley, you reach the Molesworth Cob Cottage, near the station boundary. The section through Molesworth is 59 kilometres, taking a minimum of two hours of driving.

#### **Awatere turn-off (22 km/185 km)**

From Blenheim, follow State Highway One south, then turn right at the Awatere Valley intersection just north of Seddon and the Awatere Valley Bridge. A sign here will indicate whether the Molesworth Road is open.

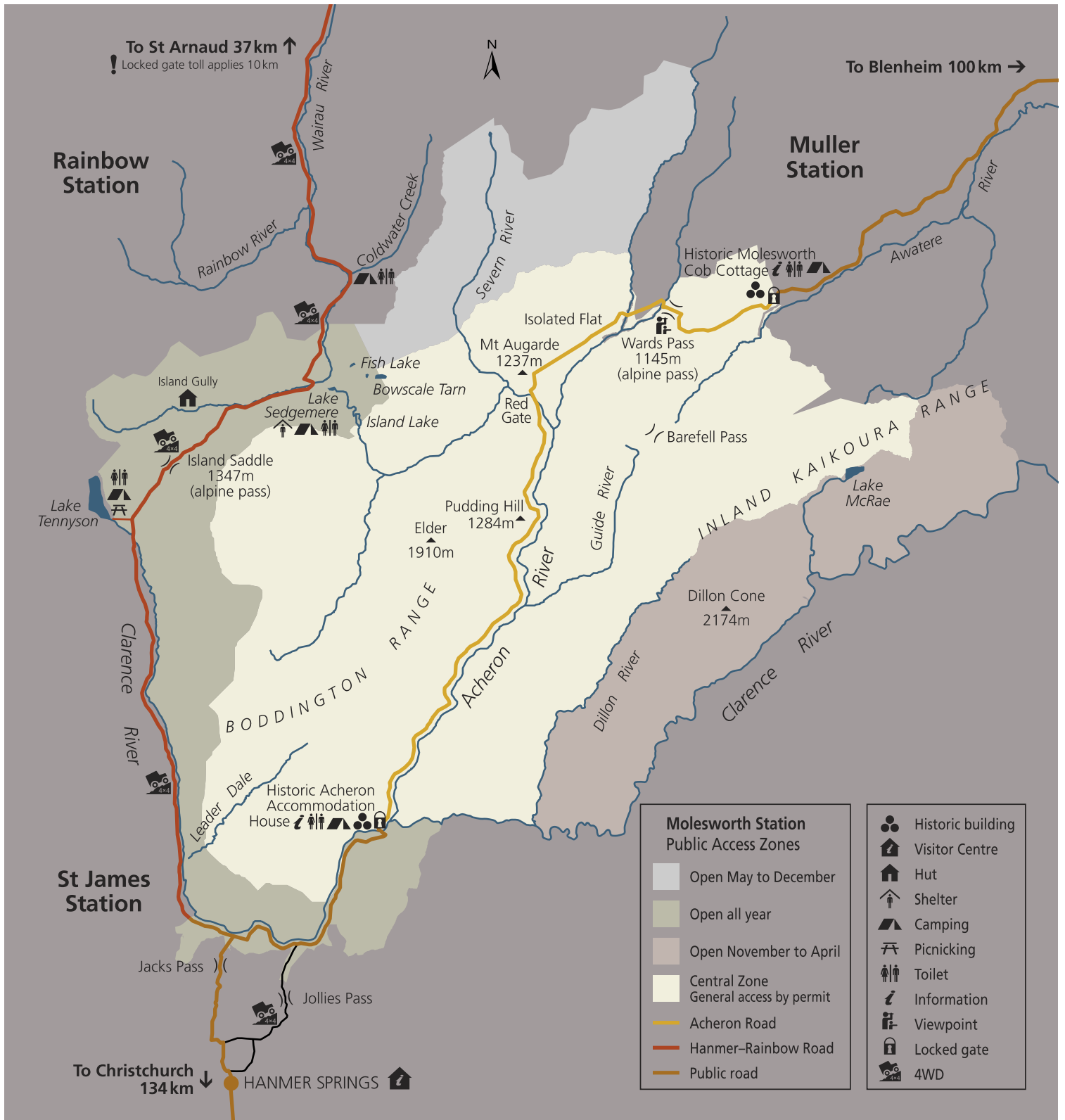
Along the public Awatere Valley Road, picnic and toilet facilities are offered at the Marlborough District Council's Blairich Recreation Reserve (37 km/161 km) and the Hodder Bridge Picnic Area (76 km/132 km). The latter is where trampers set out to climb Mount Tapuae-o-Uenuku (2885 m), New Zealand's tallest mountain outside the southern divide.

The Awatere Valley is known for fine-woolled Merino sheep and distinctive wines.

#### **Molesworth Cob Cottage (122 km/85 km)**

For visitors who have travelled up the Awatere Valley, the original cob homestead built by John Murphy in 1866 is the gateway to Molesworth where the Acheron Road begins. If the road is closed, please go no further.

When the road is open, camping is available near the cottage at a cost of \$6.00 per night per adult (age 18+) and \$1.50 per night per child (age 5–17). Toilets, water and information panels are provided.





Molesworth Station. Photo: Markus Baumann

The existing Molesworth homestead (closed to the public) replaced the cob cottage in 1885 and still houses the farm manager and his family. The homestead, historic woolshed, staff accommodation and various outbuildings, including a blacksmith shop for shoeing the 80-odd horses on the station, can be viewed from a low hill behind the cottage.

Please respect residents' privacy by staying away from this area. For a view over the settlement, climb the stile and follow the poles for a short distance.

### Wards Pass (131 km/76 km)

Crossing the flats from the cob cottage, look south towards the triangular-shaped Dillon Cone (2174m) and straight ahead to Barefell Pass, recorded by Frederick Weld in 1850 and still used for moving stock from the Awatere to the Acheron catchment. The road then climbs to Wards Pass (1145m), closed by snowfalls for long periods.

As you drop from Wards Pass, you cross a section of Muller Station, courtesy of the runholders.

### Isolated Flat (132 km/75 km)

The 250-hectare expanse of Isolated Flat is an outwash plain, bounded by the Awatere Fault.

From January until April, masses of tall, white gentian flowers can be seen growing amongst clumps of short tussock and pasture grass. Introduced blue borage (*Echium vulgare*) also grows profusely, the blue flowers attracting bees, which produce delicately flavoured honey for sale throughout New Zealand and are important pollinators for pasture plants, including clover.

The flood-prone, braided bed of the Acheron River is a habitat for numerous bird species, including the nationally

threatened banded dotterel and black-fronted tern that breed in the area, as well as native fish species and trout.

In 1850, explorers Mitchell and Dashwood wrote of Isolated Flat: "The soil and the grass here were much improved and good cattle stations might be farmed but I fear the immense quantity of speargrass and other prickles would prove an obstacle for sheep."

Leaving the flat, the road climbs up and over Isolated Saddle down to the junction with the Tardale track.

### Red Gate (145 km/62 km)

Here, the Severn River—which has a significant catchment starting on the Molesworth boundary—meets the Acheron River.

On your right (travelling west) is a stand of pines and willows marking the grave of Ivanhoe Augarde, who shot himself here on 29 January 1868. Augarde, a worker at St Helens Station, was courting Miss Kate Gee, who lived in the Upper Wairau. He had written her a letter and given it to 'German Charlie', who worked at Tardale, to deliver. Charlie, however, opened the letter en route and entertained various groups of men along the way with its contents. Learning of this, Augarde rode to Tardale and shot Charlie (who died shortly afterwards) then carried on to Red Gate where he shot himself. Mount Augarde, to the right of Alma Valley, was named in his memory.

From here, looking down the Alma Valley you can see the routes to the upper Wairau and Tardale, where cattle spend summer after calving. The Tardale turn-off (no public access up this track) leads to the historic Tardale Homestead, built from cob in 1874 and still used by stockworkers.

This building replaced an older cob accommodation house built in the early 1860s near Sedgemere which



Gentian—*Gentianella* species.  
Photo: Cathy Jones

was described by traveller J. C. Richmond in 1863 as "the very minimum of an accommodation house. The bedroom to which I was consigned with my two travelling companions was about as weathertight as a four-rail fence. The best thing about the house was the excellent boiled beef. The nobblers of rum are liberal."

### **Guide River (161 km/46 km)**

On the opposite side of the Acheron is the confluence with the Guide River, important for stock movement between the Awatere and Acheron Valleys leading up to Barefell Pass.

Hieracium—the flatweed that is invading much of New Zealand's hill and high country—is evident here, smothering grass species and reducing grazing areas. Since first recorded on Molesworth in the 1950s, hieracium has spread rapidly to cover 60–65% of the grazeable part of the property. Also a weed is the sweet briar you see here, introduced as an ornamental around homesteads. Briar fruit was reportedly made into rosehip jam, used to mask the flavour of poison when controlling rabbits.

### **Acheron Accommodation House (181 km/26 km)**

At the confluence of the Acheron and Clarence Rivers, the Acheron Accommodation House is the oldest building on Molesworth. Constructed in 1862 by cob builder Ned James, it features a tussock-thatched roof with beech rafters tied with flax, still visible from inside the building.

This was an overnight stop for travellers and stockmen moving though the inland route between Nelson and Canterbury until 1932. Two shillings and sixpence (25c) bought a bed, meal and stabling for horses.

When the road is open, camping is available here, at a cost of \$6.00 per night per adult (age 18+) and \$1.50 per night per child (age 5–17), with toilets and water provided. Accommodation is not permitted now in the house.

### **Jollies Pass junction (193 km/14 km)**

This original road to Hanmer is now suitable only for 4WD vehicles. Cattle leaving Molesworth from the southern end are driven over Jollies Pass from the Clarence Valley and trucked from Landcorp's bull farm at Hanmer.

Jollies Pass was once the social centre of the district, boasting a store, unofficial Post Office and hotel.

Vegetation, including mountain beech forest remnants on the west side of the Acheron River between the Accommodation House and Jollies Pass reflects a slightly higher rainfall than on the rest of the route. Unfortunately, pines and exotic broom are abundant.

### **Jacks Pass/Rainbow junction (199 km/8 km)**

Here, the main route to Hanmer turns left, heading over Jacks Pass and into town. The Hanmer–Rainbow Road turns off to the right.

## **The Hanmer–Rainbow Road**

*Distances in brackets are provided firstly from Hanmer and secondly from St Arnaud.*

The 112-kilometre Hanmer–Rainbow Road is accessible by 4WD vehicles. Combined with the Acheron Road, this makes a good—albeit long—round trip.

The route is remarkable for the landscape's transition from wide tussocklands and screes along the Clarence River to craggy, beech-covered mountains in the Wairau catchment.

Allow at least three hours to drive from Hanmer to State Highway 63, on a road which crosses St James and Rainbow Stations courtesy of the runholders. This is a wilderness driving experience and travellers must be self-sufficient and prepared for sudden weather changes.

From Hanmer, the route follows the Clarence River along Molesworth's boundary with St James Station to its origin at Lake Tennyson. After crossing the alpine Island Saddle (1347 m), it follows the Wairau River through Molesworth and Rainbow Station to State Highway 63 near St Arnaud (85 km from Nelson/131 km from Picton via Blenheim).

From the beginning of December until the first weekend in March, a toll is collected at the Rainbow cob homestead and a gate here is opened for travellers. Outside this season, two gates are locked; at Hell's Gate (76 km/36 km, near the Molesworth boundary) and at Six Mile. Access permission to 4WD, tramp, hunt, fish or mountain bike must be obtained from Star Holdings Limited.

As gates may be locked to allow stock movement on St James Station, it is imperative that motorists check the road status at DOC or i-SITE visitor centres.

### **Jacks Pass/Rainbow junction (8 km/104 km)**

Jacks Pass opens the main route to the Hanmer–Rainbow Road, with Jollies Pass accessible only to 4WD vehicles (see previous page).

### **Lake Tennyson (32 km/80 km)**

On the boundary between Molesworth Station and St James Station, Lake Tennyson's combination of water, forest, high mountains, tussock and scree creates a scenic highlight. The 239-hectare lake is dammed behind glacial moraines. The vegetation is a mosaic of moraine communities including open red tussockland and low shrubland with patches of tall tussockland. A large area of mountain beech forest grows on surrounding slopes.

To the west is Mt Una (2301 m), the highest point in the Spenser Range, where many peaks are named after characters in Edmund Spenser's classic 17<sup>th</sup> century poem, "The Faerie Queene".

This is a popular area for camping, with toilets available.

#### **Island Saddle (44 km/68 km)**

At 1347 metres, this alpine pass straddles the boundary between Marlborough and Canterbury. This is the highest point on the Hanmer–Rainbow Road and also the watershed between the Wairau and Clarence Rivers.

Short and tall tussocklands occur on mountain slopes, with a mosaic of carpetgrass turflands and alpine plants on mountain crests.

#### **Sedgemere Lakes (55 km/57 km)**

Turk Ridge, Mt Balaclava, and the Crimea Range are among the names that date exploration of this area to the Crimean War in the 1850s.

The Sedgemere Lakes can be viewed from a short track off the road (walking/bicycle access only). Here you may enjoy an incredible summer display of the native gentian *Gentianella corymbifera* in flower.

In the Sedgemere Protected Area, a range of landforms over a relatively small area has resulted in diverse vegetation types, with the wetlands including over 100 indigenous species of flowering plants. Bog pine and mountain toatoa stands are remnants of once larger shrub communities.

The lakes are regularly frequented by waders and waterfowl: pied stilt, pied oystercatcher, black-fronted tern, banded dotterel and grey duck. This is an important moulting area for paradise shelduck.

#### **Coldwater Creek camping area (66 km/46 km)**

After crossing the bridge over Coldwater Creek (where a toilet is provided), the road enters Hell's Gate, a narrow gorge.

#### **Rainbow Ski Area turn-off (86 km/26 km)**

Outside the ski season, the 8 km skifield road is closed for vehicle access but open for walking. Alpine flowers, tarns and views are the summer attractions.

#### **St Arnaud (112 km/0 km)**

This is the front door of Nelson Lakes National Park. Food, petrol and a range of accommodation are available.

## Recreation options

### **Open periods**

The open periods for public access vary across Molesworth with restrictions in place to protect the working farm. The Upper Clarence/Wairau rivers area in the western part of the station is open throughout the year. The Acheron Road through the station is open from 28 December to 1 April. Two large areas—in the north-west and east—are open for seasonal access.

A permit is required for access to the central part of the station, essential to the farming operation.

Those seeking access permits should contact the DOC South Marlborough Area Office.

See the Molesworth map on pages 14 and 15 for more details on areas open for public access. Open areas may be temporarily closed due to weather-related conditions and for short periods when necessary to prevent disturbance to stock or when stock is being moved.

### **Guided tours**

DOC grants concessions for a number of reputable tour operators, who offer visitors to Molesworth the option of being driven through the property by a knowledgeable guide. Special interest tours include cycling, rafting, kayaking and horse-trekking.

Guided tours may be available outside the dates the Acheron Road is open to the public, depending on conditions. For more information, contact the i-SITE in Blenheim or Hanmer.

### **Mountain biking**

Keep to roads and marked walking routes only, as cross-country cycling is not permitted. These are high-altitude routes where weather conditions can change rapidly. Always carry wind- and water-proof clothing.

The distance from Blenheim to Hanmer via the Acheron Road is 207 km. Open dates are the same as for motorists, although DOC may provide permission outside this season.

Along the Awatere Road, toilet facilities are provided at the Marlborough District Council's Blairich Recreation Reserve (37 km/161 km) and Hodder Bridge Picnic Area (76 km/132 km).

Allow a full day to cycle the 59km section through Molesworth, camping a night at the Molesworth Cob Cottage before setting out the next morning or—if you are beginning your journey in Hanmer—by the Acheron Accommodation House, 27km from the township (\$6.00 per night per adult (age 18+) and \$1.50 per night per child (age 5–17)). These are the only sites along the Acheron Road where camping is permitted.

Allow two days to ride from St Arnaud to Hanmer Springs on the Hanmer–Rainbow Road. Check the dates you have in mind with Star Holdings Limited.



Photo: Martin Heine

### Tramping/walking

There is a well-travelled network of tramping tracks accessible from the Hanmer–Rainbow Road. Outside the summer season (from the beginning of December until the first weekend in March), permission must be obtained from Star Holdings Limited for access through Rainbow Station.

In the rest of the station, tramping options are currently being planned. For the latest information, contact DOC South Marlborough.

### Horse trekking

At all times of the year, permission is required to horse trek through Molesworth. Routes and logistics need to be carefully planned. Contact DOC South Marlborough for advice on necessary permits and appropriate routes, including overnight stops.

### Rafting

Rafting the Clarence River is a multi-day wilderness experience offered by a number of adventure tourism companies employing qualified guides. Trips are generally four days and five nights.

Rafts are launched where the Acheron River meets the Clarence River and the journey ends 214 kilometres later where the Clarence meets the sea. Rapids are a moderate grade two and three. October to December is the main rafting season, when water levels are sufficiently high.

For information about guided rafting trips, contact the i-SITE in Hanmer or Blenheim. Anyone thinking of an independent trip should contact DOC South Marlborough to obtain the required overnight camping permit.



Photo: Neil Deans

### Fishing

Good trout fishing is available in rivers and streams close to the Acheron and Hanmer–Rainbow Roads, especially in the Clarence and upper Wairau River areas. Please park your vehicle and walk, as off-road driving is prohibited. Walking access is possible on the margins of rivers and major streams.

Salmon can be caught by walking downstream from where the Acheron River meets the Clarence. Brown trout are abundant in Lake Tennyson and common in the Sedgemere Lakes, Island Lake, Fish Lake and Bowscale Tarn. Small boats can be launched from the beach at Tennyson but the other lakes and tarns are accessible only by walking.

Fishing is only permitted during the open season (October 1 to April 30) and requires a licence from Fish & Game New Zealand.

Anyone wanting access when the road is closed must apply for a special permit from DOC South Marlborough.

Photo: Neil Deans



## Hunting

Among hunters, Molesworth is best known for its Canada geese hunts organised by Fish & Game Nelson–Marlborough. Three organised shoots are held a year, with as many as 250 hunters spending up to four days on the property. Usually between 400 and 1500 birds are bagged, depending on the time of year.

The hunting of game birds on Molesworth is the responsibility of Fish & Game Nelson–Marlborough, controlled under licensing.

Goats, chamois, pigs and deer are also hunted at Molesworth. Hunting on public conservation land requires a permit from DOC South Marlborough. This will cover specified dates and areas. If intending to hunt on Rainbow Station, please seek permission from Star Holdings Limited.

Further information on hunting is available from South Marlborough Area Office.

## Camping and huts

The Molesworth Cob Cottage and Acheron Accommodation House are the only camping sites along the Acheron Road, located at either end of the route through Molesworth Station. Costs per night are \$6.00 per adult and \$1.50 per child.

On the Hanmer–Rainbow Road, the four-bunk Island Gully hut is available to the public. While a woodburning stove is provided for heating, hut users should bring their own firewood and it is recommended that gas stoves be carried in for cooking. A DOC hut pass is required for each person overnighing here. Camping is allowed at Lake Tennyson, Coldwater Creek and Sedgemere, adjacent to the access way to the tarns. An emergency shelter is also provided at Sedgemere.

Photo: Colin Davis



Photo: Neil Deans

## Molesworth fact file

- At 180,476 hectares, Molesworth is New Zealand's biggest farm, supporting the country's biggest herd of beef cattle numbering up to 10,000 over winter.
- The property ranges in altitude from 549 metres to over 2100 metres.
- Ground frosts occur at the Molesworth homestead roughly two days in three.
- At approximately 1000 metres above sea level, the Tarndale Homestead (which houses stockworkers) is thought to be the highest occupied 'homestead' in New Zealand.
- The 1347-metre Island Saddle is the highest point on a publicly accessed road in New Zealand.
- Over 60 endemic plant species are found in South Marlborough with almost half of these growing on Molesworth.



Scree harebell—  
*Wahlenbergia cartilaginea*.  
Photo: Cathy Jones

## Molesworth Care Code

### Fires are prohibited

Fires damage protected natural areas in Molesworth, destroying vegetation and exposing soil to erosion. Fire can also threaten critical winter feed for cattle. Open fires are not allowed, even in cottage fireplaces. Use portable stoves for cooking.

### Leave gates as you find them

Molesworth is a working farm. Please leave gates as you find them, ensuring they are properly latched. Failing to shut a gate can mean days of extra work in re-mustering blocks and separating mixed mobs of cattle.

If you need to cross a fence and there is no gate, climb carefully through or over the fence at a post or stile.

### Keep vehicles to the formed roads provided for public access

This is a vast property where weather and road conditions can change rapidly; it is important that you can be found quickly if isolated. Off-road driving can damage fragile plants, spread weeds and risk starting a fire.

### Dogs are prohibited without a permit

Dogs endanger native wildlife and can upset and transfer diseases to livestock. Hunters may apply for written consent to bring a dog into some areas.

### Protect native plants and animals

Molesworth supports plant and animal species that are unique and often rare. Damaging or removing native plants and animals destroys part of this special environment.

### Help reduce the spread of weeds

Care must be taken not to carry any plant material onto Molesworth; check for seeds and for aquatic weed plants on water craft and vehicles.

### Remove rubbish

Rubbish is unattractive, harmful to farmed animals as well as wildlife and can increase vermin and disease. Carry out any rubbish that you carry in.

### Bury toilet waste

Use the toilets provided. Otherwise, bury your toilet waste in a hole well away from waterways, tracks, campsites and huts. Campervans are not permitted to discharge waste on Molesworth.

### Keep streams and lakes clean

When cleaning and washing, take the water in a bucket and wash well away from the water source. Soaps and detergents are harmful to water life, so tip used water into the soil, where it will be filtered. Water may be contaminated; boil it for at least three minutes before drinking, filter, or chemically treat.

### Respect our cultural heritage

The historic buildings on Molesworth are a reminder of our past. Treat these places with consideration and respect.

### Enjoy your visit

Take a last look before leaving an area; will the next visitor know that you have been there? Protect the environment for your own sake, for the sake of those who come after you and for the environment itself.

### *Toitu te whenua*—Leave the land undisturbed.

**DOC HOTline**  
**0800 362 468**  
Report any safety hazards or  
conservation emergencies  
For fire and search and rescue call 111

## Contacts

### Department of Conservation

South Marlborough Area Office  
Ph: (03) 572 9100  
Email: southmarlboroughao@doc.govt.nz

Nelson Lakes Visitor Centre  
Ph: (03) 521 1806  
Email: starnaudao@doc.govt.nz



### Fish & Game New Zealand

Marlborough office  
Ph: (03) 578 8421

Nelson office  
Ph: (03) 544 6382

### i-SITE visitor information centres

Hurunui i-SITE, Hanmer  
Ph: (03) 315 7128/0800 442 663  
Email: info@hurunui.com

Blenheim i-SITE  
Ph: (03) 577 8080  
Email: mvic@destinationmarlborough.com

### Molesworth Station

The Manager  
Ph: (03) 575 7043

### Rainbow Station

Star Holdings Limited  
Ph: (03) 545 7600 Fax: (03) 545 7601

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