



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND
POUHERE TAONGA

Pencarrow Lighthouse



Pencarrow Head

8 km from
Eastbourne

Opening Hours

Daily during daylight
hours

*Visit New Zealand's first
permanent lighthouse*



Journey through stunning coastal landscapes to New Zealand's first permanent lighthouse



This lonely white landmark at the entrance to Wellington Harbour watches over a rough and rocky coastline where ships have been wrecked and lives lost as recently as 1968. Although the lighthouse no longer warns of dangerous waters, it makes for a delightful day trip from Wellington.

Lace up your walking shoes or hop on your bike and visit New Zealand's first permanent lighthouse. A ferry ride from Wellington will take you to Days Bay; from there, hire a bike in nearby Eastbourne and make the 25 minute/8 km ride to the lighthouse. By car, drive to Burden's Gate and walk the gravel road. Allow about four hours for the return walk.

Take time to stop and read the information panels along the way that explain the significance of the lighthouse in New Zealand's maritime history as well as stories about the lighthouse keepers and their families that once lived here.

The iron lighthouse structure was cast in sections at Woodside Iron Works in the West Midlands. The 480 pieces were transported to New Zealand and assembled onsite. The lamp was lit for the first time on New Year's Day 1859 – making the record books as the first permanent lighthouse



to be built in New Zealand. It beamed its cautionary message for 76 years until it was replaced by an automated light at Baring Head to the east.

Pencarrow's first keeper was Englishwoman Mary Jane Bennett, to this day New Zealand's only woman lighthouse keeper. A widow, whose husband had drowned in the surf below, she and her children lived on this wild and isolated clifftop, tending the light until 1865. The little daughter of a later keeper is buried here, her grave surrounded by a picket fence.





Travel tips

It's sure to be windy so wear something warm and take your own supplies as there are no amenities at Pencarrow (and that includes toilets). It's not usually possible to go inside the lighthouse but bring a camera for the spectacular views looking over the harbour and Cook Strait to the South Island.

Pencarrow Lighthouse is in the East Harbour Regional Park where walking tracks lead to the Pencarrow lakes, Kohangapiripiri and Kohangatera. Home to several rare and threatened species of wildlife, the lakes are New Zealand's last relatively unmodified wetlands.



visitheritage.org.nz

Pencarrow Head 8 km from Eastbourne, Wellington

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Photos: Grant Sheehan (top left),
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