**Summer visitors to Taranaki Mounga urged to be prepared**

Visitors to Taranaki Mounga and Egmont National Park are being urged to prepare properly as a busy summer season looms for the popular North Island destination.



Taranaki Mounga.

With international travel thwarted by Covid-19 and related border restrictions, the Department of Conservation (DOC) expects many New Zealanders will be venturing into public conservation land during the summer holiday season.

DOC Taranaki senior ranger Dave Rogers urged people to plan carefully ahead of any visits to the park.

"Taranaki Mounga is a fabulous environment for recreation and we're looking forward to hosting visitors - but we need people to be properly prepared, equipped with the right gear, and be realistic about what they can achieve during their visit."

Rogers, who has worked on and around Egmont National Park and Taranaki Mounga for more than four decades, said visitors needed to ensure they chose the right trip, walk or tramp for their fitness and experience.

"Most search and rescue operations on the mounga are a result of people being either poorly equipped, poorly informed, or poorly prepared.

"A search and rescue operation puts more people at risk."

Visitors should check the DOC website and pop into one of our visitor centres for up to date weather and track conditions before setting off, and be prepared to turn back if conditions changed or they were unsure, Rogers said.

"We want all visitors to the mounga to get home safe so they can share the stories of their adventures with others."

Rogers' key advice for people visiting Egmont National Park and Taranaki Mounga is:

* Choose the right trip for you. Learn about the route and make sure you have the skills for it
* Understand the weather. It can change fast. Check the forecast and change your plans if needed
* Pack warm clothes and extra food. Prepare for bad weather and an unexpected night out
* Share your plans and take ways to get help. Telling a trusted person your trip details and taking a distress beacon can save your life
* Take care of yourself and each other. Eat, drink and rest, stick with your group and make decisions together

People planning to stay in Egmont National Park were also reminded to check the availability of huts and bookable accommodation.

DOC is asking all visitors to all its sites and visitor centres to use the Covid Tracer App QR codes when they are displayed.