



## Scott Duncan Hut

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Scott Duncan Hut by Trent Marshall

## Booking, Payment and Cancellation Policy

View the Booking, Payment and Cancellation Policies at [www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/reservations.html](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/reservations.html)

### Rates

Visit [www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/rates.html](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/rates.html) for current hut and wilderness pass prices.

## Getting There

The Scott Duncan Hut is located on a bench just above a rock bluff on the northwest ridge of Mt. Daly on the south end of the Wapta Icefields. It is approximately 19 kilometres northwest of Lake Louise, in Banff National Park.

The following information should be used in conjunction with the correct topographic map (maps are listed below).

### Approach from the North (from Balfour Hut)

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Trailhead location:</b> | Balfour Hut (also refer to Peyto & Bow Huts for trailhead) |
| <b>Hiking distance:</b>    | 10 kilometres  |
| <b>Elevation gain:</b>     | 520 metres (1,700 feet) gain, 250 metres (800 feet) loss   |
| <b>Approximate time:</b>   | 6-8 hours  |

### Approach from the South

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Trailhead location:</b> | West Louise Lodge, 14 km W of Lake Louise on Hwy 1 |
| <b>Hiking distance:</b>    | 11 kilometres                                      |
| <b>Elevation gain:</b>     | 1,190 metres (3,900 feet)                          |
| <b>Approximate time:</b>   | 6-7 hours  |

### Portering Services

Need help carrying your load? Check out our portering services!

### Trailhead location

The most common approach to the Scott Duncan Hut is from the Balfour Hut, which is farther north along the Wapta. For more information on the trailhead locations from which to access the North end of the Wapta, refer to either the Bow Hut or Peyto Hut webpages. For more information on the hut-to-hut traverse, please also refer to the Balfour Hut webpage for its location, as well as detailed route descriptions in Chic Scott's guidebooks; Summits and Icefields in the Canadian Rockies and Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies.

If you are approaching the Scott Duncan Hut from the south, the trailhead is at West Louise Lodge, 14 km west of Lake Louise and just west of the Alberta-BC border on Highway 1. Begin at a picnic area about 400 metres west of West Louise Lodge.

### Approach from the North (from Balfour Hut)

This is the most common way to access the Scott Duncan Hut in both winter and summer. The terrain between these two huts is some of the most demanding and unforgiving on the icefields and it is recommended that this trip (or the reverse trip) only be undertaken in favorable conditions with stable snow and good visibility.

# Scott Duncan Hut

From the Balfour Hut, ascend the Waputik Icefield in the general direction of the Balfour High Col, staying to the right of a large cliff band on the glacier. Approach the cliff band from its left side, before turning right and ascending a ramp along its base; turn left again at its crest and head toward the Balfour High Col. The High Col can be hazardous in both summer and winter. There are crevasses on the slope heading toward the col, and danger of icefall on the right from Mt. Balfour; don't stop for lunch in this area. The route then crosses Balfour High Col, and descends in a southeasterly direction directly toward Mt. Daly and the Scott Duncan Hut on its northwest shoulder. Refer to Chic Scott's guidebooks, as mentioned above, for a more detailed description of this route in the winter.

From the Balfour Hut, the route ascends about 520 metres (1,700 feet), and then loses about 250 metres (800 feet) in 10 kilometres travel to the Scott Duncan Hut. Six to eight hours should be sufficient for this trip in the winter. In the summer expect to add a couple of hours onto the trip.

## Approach from the South

From West Louise Lodge, the route follows the trail to Sherbrooke Lake and around its east shore before following the west fork of the creek on its north side. At about grid reference 407038 the trail dies out and the route takes to the open alpine meadows, following game trails where possible, toward the southeast ridge of Mt. Niles. Follow the ridge itself until it is convenient to drop down to the snow of the Niles Glacier under the east face of Mt. Niles. It is also possible to drop down to the east immediately upon arriving at the southeast ridge of Niles, to a bench approximately 200 feet lower. You can follow this bench to the slopes below the Niles Glacier if the conditions do not permit walking on the ridge. Follow the Niles Glacier northeast to the hut.

This route is also used to descend from the hut in the summer, following it in reverse. Do not attempt to descend to the north fork of Niles Creek directly (the traditional Sherbrooke Lake winter route) in the summer; once below treeline, the route becomes an overgrown tangle of avalanche debris where progress is extremely arduous.

The route ascends 1,190 metres (3,900 feet) from the lodge to the hut. Six or seven hours will likely be necessary for this route. There is a lot of elevation gain, and about 11km of traveling distance.

## Descents from the Wapta (from the Scott Duncan Hut)

### Traditional Sherbrooke Lake Descent and Schiesser/Lomas Descent

Both of these routes are used as descents from the hut and exits from the icefields in the winter. The Schiesser/Lomas route is the safer and more recommended route. Please refer to Chic Scott's guidebooks *Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies* or *Summits and Icefields in the Canadian Rockies* for a more detailed description of these descent routes in the winter. In the summer months, only the Schiesser/Lomas route is recommended as a descent.

### Bath Glacier Descent

In the winter, this is a good alternative to the Sherbrooke Lake exits. From the Scott Duncan Hut, this route ascends to a pass on the northeast side of Mt. Daly and traverses to the Bath Glacier in its entirety, before dropping down to treeline on the east side of Paget Peak. This route should only be considered in the best conditions. Refer to Chic Scott's guidebooks, as mentioned above, for a more detailed description of this route.

## Maps and Guidebooks

All of the following books and maps can be purchased through the ACC office or online through the ACC online store at: [www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/store/index.html](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/store/index.html)

# Scott Duncan Hut

## Map and GPS references

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Map reference:</b>   | 82N/9 Hector Lake                               |
| <b>Grid reference:</b>  | 417084  |
| <b>GPS coordinates:</b> | 51°31' 42"-116°24' 06" NAD83 11U 541506 5708750 |
| <b>Hut elevation:</b>   | 2,773 metres (9,100 feet)                       |

## Maps

- "Bow Lake and Saskatchewan Crossing" 1:70, 000 topographic map by Gem Trek Publishing. This excellent map shows trails and highlights in detail.
- "Touring the Wapta Icefields" 1:50, 000 topographic map by Murray Toft. This is an excellent map that highlights the popular ski traverse routes used in the wintertime. A great close-up view of the entire Wapta Icefields area.
- "82N/9 Hector Lake" 1:50,000 Canadian Government issued standard topographic map.
- "82N/10 Blaeberry River" 1:50, 000 Canadian Government issued standard topographic map. This map is useful to view the remainder of the Wapta Icefields if you choose to travel north to the Bow and Peyto Huts.

## Guidebooks and general interest books

- *Backcountry Huts and Lodges of the Rockies and Columbias*, by Jim Scott
- *Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies*, by Chic Scott
- *Summits & Icefields Canadian Rockies, Alpine Ski Tours*, by Chic Scott
- *Backcountry Banff - Walking, Hiking, Backpacking, and off-trail Scrambling in Banff National Park*, by Mike Potter
- *Canadian Rockies Trail Guide*, by Brian Patton & Bart Robinson
- *Don't Waste Your Time in the Canadian Rockies*, by Kathy & Craig Copeland
- *The 11,000ers of the Canadian Rockies*, by Bill Corbett
- *Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies*, by Sean Dougherty
- *Artists of the Rockies*, by Jane Lytton Gooch
- *Handbook of the Canadian Rockies*, by Ben Gadd

## Website Links

### Current conditions

**Weather:** Go to [www.weather.gc.ca](http://www.weather.gc.ca) click on <Alberta>, then scroll down to <Banff>. The weather forecasts are updated 3 times daily.

**Avalanche Hazard:** Go to [www.avalanche.ca](http://www.avalanche.ca) click on the <Public Avalanche Bulletins> and review the section for <Banff/Yoho/Kootenay National Parks>. The avalanche forecast for this region is kept currently updated.

### Area information

**Avalanche Terrain Rating System (ATES):** Parks Canada has developed a classification system for avalanche terrain, and has applied ratings to approximately 250 trips in the Mountain National Parks. For more information, visit [www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/banff/visit/visit7a1\\_E.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/banff/visit/visit7a1_E.asp)

**Google Earth Reference:** Mount Daly and the surrounding area is covered in medium resolution on Google Earth. Go to <http://earth.google.com/>. You will find the reference for the Scott Duncan Hut at 51 35.30' N -116 27.18' W.

**1:50,000 Topographic Map:** The Canadian Government offers free downloads of their regular 1:50,000 topo maps. The map files are large (25 MB) and take a few minutes to download. You will find this service at: <http://www.geogratis.gc.ca/geogratis/en/product/search.do?id=10119>. Perform your search by selecting "NTS Mapsheet", and enter 082N09. Next, press "Search" under "Search Options" (without changing any of the information in "Search Options"). Select 082N09 from the options and download it.

## Parks Canada Info

### Wilderness Passes in National Parks

Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, Yoho, and Glacier National Parks collect a fee for backcountry overnight use in the Parks. The fees collected from the wilderness passes go towards maintaining trails, supplying the voluntary registration service, avalanche forecasting, backcountry bridge-building, etc. Overnight users of the ACC huts (ages 16 and over) are required to pay this fee. A copy of the wilderness passes should be carried in the backcountry at all times as a Parks Canada representative may ask to see proof of purchase.

We encourage you to buy these passes from the ACC, as 40% of the monies collected goes to a special huts account for our heritage huts and environmental improvements. You will be offered the option to purchase the pass when you make a reservation, or you can buy an annual pass from our online store at: <http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/store/index.html>. For current rates, visit: <http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/facility/rates.html>.

### Vehicle Permits

All vehicles stopping in a National Park must have a Park Motor Vehicle Permit. Annual or single day permits can be purchased at most Park entrance gates and Park visitor centres and soon through the Alpine Club of Canada's national office.

### Maximum Group Size

The maximum group size for hiking is 10 persons. If your group is larger, you will need to split into smaller groups.

### Voluntary Hazardous Activities Registration

It is recommended that anyone participating in hazardous activities in the backcountry register with the Park Wardens. This registration is free and is the best method of ensuring that someone comes looking for you should an emergency happen. You can register at any Parks Canada Visitor Centre.

## What Is At the Hut

### Summary

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Heating:</b>        | None  |
| <b>Lighting:</b>       | Propane   |
| <b>Cooking:</b>        | Propane stove, cookware, dishes & utensils provided |
| <b>Sleeping:</b>       | Two rows of bunks on thick foam mattresses          |
| <b>Capacity:</b>       | 12 in the summer and in the winter                  |
| <b>Drinking water:</b> | Snowmelt  |
| <b>Human Waste:</b>    | Outhouse  |
| <b>Dishwater:</b>      | Ground sump pipe next to the hut                    |
| <b>Garbage:</b>        | Pack it out!  |

### The buildings

The Scott Duncan Hut is a single-room building in the same style as the Balfour and Whyte (Peyto) huts, further north on the Wapta. There is a long two-tiered bunk along one side of the hut, a long cooking counter on the other, and several tables with benches along the middle. The greatest concern when there are large groups staying in

# Scott Duncan Hut

the hut is the organization of everyone's gear, since storage space is limited.

## Capacity

The hut sleeps a total of 12 people in the summer and in the wintertime. The sleeping arrangements are two long rows of platform bunk beds in one large room, which is not heated.

## Kitchen

The kitchen is well supplied with dishes, cutlery, utensils, pots and pans. There are several sinks and two-burner propane stoves for cooking. Please do not leave any unused food in the hut, even if it is non-perishable as it attracts rodents and other visitors generally won't use it as they don't know how old it is.

## Lighting

The hut is lit by several propane lights. Propane is supplied by the ACC via a large outdoor tank.

## Heat

The hut is not heated with a wood-burning stove, but is well insulated and warms up to a comfortable temperature quickly with body heat and heat from the stoves and lanterns, even in the winter.

## Tools

The hut has a good supply of tools including water buckets, axes, saws, shovels, etc. for proper maintenance of the hut.

## Drinking Water

The water source is primarily made from snowmelt, although in the summer small run-offs may be available. It is recommended that all water be boiled or filtered before drinking.

## Grey Water

There is a ground sump 5 metres west of the hut. In the winter it may be necessary to excavate the site

## Human Waste

The outhouses are located 15 metres behind the hut. The outhouse is a barrel fly-out system, please do not leave any unnecessary garbage in the outhouse.

## Garbage

All paper garbage and food scraps should be carried out with you as well as all other garbage, bottles, and unused food should be packed back out of the hut. Do not leave anything behind!

## What you need to bring

- Reservation form from the ACC stating how many beds you have booked and the length of your stay
- Parks Canada overnight or annual wilderness pass (the former will be on your reservation form if you purchase it through the ACC).
- sleeping bag
- food for the length of your stay
- toilet paper
- newspaper for lighting the fire
- matches
- first aid kit
- 9V battery for the smoke detector

## Hut Rules

Here is a list of simple rules we ask that you follow in order to maximize everyone's enjoyment of the "hut experience".

### While at the hut:

- No smoking.
- Dogs are not permitted in any ACC facility (with the exception of seeing eye dogs).
- Some Parks also outlaw dogs entirely; leashed or not. Check before you go!
- If you arrive at the hut before 2:00pm, put your belongings where they will not disturb the previous nights' occupants.
- Please be considerate of others; the hut should be quiet by 10 pm.
- Carry out all of your garbage.
- Do not do personal washing in cooking pots or nearby streams - use wash basins and slop pits.
- Fill stoves and lanterns outside the hut and leave extra fuel outside.
- Clean the stoves after using them.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Follow posted instructions for care and maintenance of toilet systems so that they function properly with minimum odor and environmental impact.

### When leaving a hut:

- If your belongings will be in the hut after 2:00pm, and you are not staying that night, be sure to pack everything up and leave it out of the way in a corner so the new guests can move in.
- Leave all tools inside the hut when not being used.
- Empty all water containers and slop buckets before leaving the hut.
- Take out all leftover food as food left in the hut encourages rodents. (Other people generally won't use it as they don't know how old it is.)
- Bring out damaged axes, lanterns or stoves and discharged fire extinguishers - advise the national office.
- Close & latch the outhouse door when leaving to keep out rodents & snow.
- Close/lock hut, replace shutters (if applicable), before leaving the hut.
- A nearly full outhouse, damage to hut & similar matters should be reported to the national office (you may call collect)

**Please leave the hut in better condition than you found it.** Thank you for your consideration in following these rules, and have a great time!

## Things To Do Around the Hut

### Mountaineering

Mt. Balfour, the "King of the Wapta", is a worthy objective in both the summer and winter. The standard route on the Southeast Ridge is best accessed from the Scott Duncan Hut. Mt. Daly is also an objective from the hut, the ascent being an easy snow climb in the winter. Refer to guidebooks for more information.

### Alpine Rock Climbing

This area is not exactly renowned for rock climbing, but one route worthy of mention is the East Face of Mt. Niles. The route goes at III, 5.8 R, and is reported to be of good quality, particularly in the upper pitches.



Scott Duncan Hut by Jackie Clark

# Scott Duncan Hut

There is potential for further development of the east face, as well as the north face of this peak, with similar rock routes. There is a detailed route description of the East Face Route in the 1992 edition of the Canadian Alpine Journal, (pages 73-74).

## History

The Scott Duncan Hut was the final hut established on the Wapta Icefields. Although the Balfour and Bow Huts were upgraded with much needed new buildings in 1989, it was the Scott Duncan Hut, built in 1988, which completed the Wapta System, and firmly established the traverse of the Wapta/Waputik Icefields as Canada's Haute Route.

The hut was funded largely by the Duncan family of Calgary as a memorial to their son Scott, a gifted ski mountaineer and alpinist who died in 1985. The hut was constructed by the Rocky Mountain section of the ACC and has been operated by the Club since it was built.

The hut greatly increases the safety of ski touring on the Wapta Icefield. From here, ski tourers are able to descend conveniently from the icefields to the highway in the safer hours early in the day.