



**CENTRAL SOUTH ISLAND REGION**  
**Investigating Angler Displacement and Support for Management**  
**Intervention at the Upper Ahuriri River**

**Blake Harper**  
**July 2025**



*Prepared for the Central South Island Fish and Game Council*  
*Report number: CSI2025-028*

*For any information regarding this report please contact Central South Island Fish and Game Council - phone: (03)615-8400, email: [csi@fishandgame.org.nz](mailto:csi@fishandgame.org.nz)*

## Table of contents

1. Executive summary .....	4
2. Background .....	4
2.1 Upper Ahuriri River and PSF Overview .....	4
2.2 Angler displacement.....	6
2.3 Rationale .....	7
3. Method .....	8
3.1 Survey design .....	8
3.2 Data collection .....	8
4. Results .....	9
4.1 Upper Ahuriri past fishing.....	10
4.2 Fishing activity.....	11
4.2.1 A breakdown of resident and non-residents fishing activity. ....	12
4.2.2 Why do some anglers fish more, fish less and no longer fish it? .....	12
4.2.3 Total displacement.....	13
4.3 Period of season fished .....	13
4.3.1 Do some anglers avoid a specific part of the season? .....	14
4.3.2 Period of season avoided .....	15
4.3.3 Why do anglers avoid a specific part of season?.....	15
4.3.4 Temporal displacement.....	16
4.3.5 Spatial displacement.....	17
4.4 Perceptions of implementing Management mechanisms.....	18
4.4.1 Would the fishery benefit from voluntary beat system? .....	18
4.4.2 Does the river need restrictive management mechanisms to control angler crowding? .....	19
4.4.3 If management mechanisms were introduced, would anglers be prepared to pay increased administrative charge? .....	21
4.4.4 How would anglers respond to the introduction of a voluntary beat system? .....	22
4.4.5 How would anglers respond to the introduction of restricted management mechanisms? .....	24
4.5 Upper Ahuriri perceived displacement.....	25
4.6 Summary of results – displacement caused by fishery crowding .....	26
5. Discussion .....	29
5.1 Angler use and perceptions of crowding .....	29
5.2 Temporal, spatial and total displacement due to crowding .....	29
5.3 Angling support for management mechanisms .....	30
5.4 Future directions .....	30
6. Goal options.....	31

<b>7. Management options</b> .....	31
<b>8. Recommendation</b> .....	32
<b>References</b> .....	32
<b>Appendices</b> .....	33
<b>Appendix 1</b> .....	33
<b>Appendix 2:</b> .....	49

# 1. Executive summary

An angler survey investigating displacement and support for management intervention on the upper Ahuriri River was distributed near the end of the 2024/25 fishing season to all adult Sports Fishing Licence holders in North Canterbury, Central South Island, Otago, and Southland who held a licence for that season. The survey focused on understanding the extent and nature of angler displacement, temporal (avoiding the river at certain times), spatial (fishing elsewhere), and total (no longer fishing the river), and gauging support for potential Pressure Sensitive Fishery (PSF) management tools. Findings indicate that while crowding is a concern for some anglers, its overall impact on the wider angler population that fish the upper Ahuriri is currently limited. However, the most common behavioural change among respondents was fishing the upper Ahuriri less frequently than in the past, with crowding identified as the primary reason.

Overall, 22% of anglers reported displacement due to crowding, either by fishing less often or stopping fishing the river altogether. Furthermore, 18% of anglers who avoid certain times of the season cited crowding as the main reason, indicating a form of temporal displacement. Resident anglers were more likely than non-residents to report displacement due to crowding, reflecting lower tolerance for angler encounters. Support for PSF management tools was mixed. A voluntary beat system received moderate support, whereas more restrictive tools (e.g., allocation of days or limits to use) faced stronger opposition, particularly from non-resident anglers. Some tools could cause greater displacement than currently exists, highlighting the need to carefully align any intervention with clearly defined objectives. Future management decisions will depend on the specific goals set by the Central South Island Fish & Game Council (CSIFGC).

Without clearly defined goals, the appropriate path forward remains uncertain, and management responses are likely to vary considerably. Furthermore, while this survey provides valuable insight into angler perceptions and displacement, it does not include quantitative data on actual angler encounter rates or establish a baseline for angler use and satisfaction. Without such baseline data, assessing the effectiveness of any future management intervention will be challenging. This emphasises the need for additional on-river research focused on angler use patterns, encounter rates, and satisfaction levels. Such monitoring would enable the CSIFGC to evaluate management impacts and support adaptive decision-making. Therefore, it is essential that the CSIFGC first clearly define its goals for the upper Ahuriri fishery, which will then guide the selection and implementation of appropriate management tools to achieve those objectives.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Upper Ahuriri River and PSF Overview

The upper Ahuriri River (above Longslip Creek confluence, also known as the Birchwood Road section), situated in high-country and headwater landscapes, offers a unique fishing experience that attracts local region anglers, anglers from throughout New Zealand and international anglers (Harper, 2024). Its distinct characteristics make it a sought-after destination for those seeking a semi-remote fishing experience with minimal angler encounters

(Harper, 2024). Thus, making it a destination fishery for non-resident fly anglers seeking the quintessential New Zealand backcountry trout fishing experience. These fishery characteristics closely align with the criteria outlined in the National Policy for Pressure Sensitive Fisheries (NPPS), which defines Pressure Sensitive Fisheries (PSFs) as fisheries where angling pressure is negatively affecting either the fishery itself or the quality of the angling experience. Common characteristics of PSFs include clear water, excellent sight fishing, large fish, high scenic value, and a wilderness or backcountry setting, all of which apply to the upper Ahuriri River.

The concept of PSFs highlights the need for targeted management to balance fishing pressure to preserve the angling experience. In particular, the NPPS states that one of the management thresholds for PSFs is triggered when there is a disproportionate level of use by non-resident anglers on a waterway (e.g., when non-residents exceed 50% of total angler use). The history of PSFs in New Zealand began when a noticeable increase in angling pressure on certain rivers prompted the implementation of various management tools and monitoring systems to assess and address this pressure, including a Back Country Fisheries Licence, Voluntary Beat System, Designated Waters Licence and a Controlled Fishery Licence. These management tools aimed:

- A.** To monitor angler perceptions and use at fisheries believe to be pressure sensitive.
- B.** To spatially redistribute angling pressure from fisheries subject to unsustainable angling pressure towards fisheries that can sustain increased angling pressure.
- C.** To temporally redistribute angling pressure from fisheries subject to periods of peak unsustainable angling pressure towards periods where angling pressure is lower.
- D.** To control angler use to levels deemed to preserve the angling experience.

In the case of the upper Ahuriri River, anecdotal complaints received prior to the 2016/17 season prompted Central South Island Fish & Game (CSIFG) to undertake a field and online survey to assess angler satisfaction and use. The results indicated low dissatisfaction and minimal negative encounters, suggesting angling pressure was not significantly impacting the experience at that time. As a result, no immediate management actions were taken. A part-season Pressure Sensitive Fishery Survey (PSFS) conducted in December and early January 2023/24 supported these earlier findings, reporting similarly low dissatisfaction and no strong non-resident bias. However, a broader PSFS conducted across Otago and Southland in the same season revealed that the upper Ahuriri was the fourth most commonly avoided river by Otago Designated Waters licence holders due to perceived overcrowding. Whereas fewer than 2% of Southland anglers reported avoiding the river, which may reflect differences in proximity and accessibility to the river. Importantly, these regional surveys were not focused on the upper Ahuriri specifically, and many respondents may never have fished there, making it difficult to determine the true extent of displacement from those anglers. Between 2015 and 2020, CSIFG received one to two complaints per season regarding angling pressure or negative angler interactions on the upper Ahuriri. In contrast, six complaints were received in just the past two seasons (2023–2024) regarding angling overcrowding and pressure, some citing personal experiences and others raising concerns based on reports from fellow anglers. Members of the New Zealand Professional Fly-Fishing Guides Association (NZPFGA) have also voiced support for greater management on the river, including Designated Waters status. Two experienced guides, each with decades of guiding and fishing experience on the Ahuriri, reported a dramatic increase in angler use, emphasised the river’s ecological fragility, and advocated for beat systems to protect both the fishery and the angling experience. Additional feedback from anglers noted perceived displacement, often due to poor etiquette from non-resident anglers.

In response to the increasing number of complaints and references to angler overcrowding and pressure on the upper Ahuriri, a formal PSF investigation was initiated in 2024 to assess whether the upper Ahuriri meet the criteria for a PSF and whether a subsequent management pathway was required (Harper, 2024). The investigation concluded that although there was no immediate evidence of an overcrowding crisis or dissatisfaction among anglers, limitations in recent data, such as small sample sizes, incomplete seasonal coverage and the absence of recent comprehensive research, suggest that potential issues may not be understood and could be under-represented. Notably, the 2016/17 survey, still the most extensive angler research on the upper Ahuriri to date, showed that 63% of anglers were non-residents, exceeding the NPPS's 50% threshold for triggering management intervention.

Based on these conclusions, a multi-phase PSF management pathway was developed as part of the 2024 upper Ahuriri investigation (Harper, 2024). The first phase of this pathway firstly involved conducting a targeted angler displacement survey to determine the extent and nature of any displacement, and to gauge support for potential management tools such as beat systems or Designated Waters. This approach reflects the objectives of the Fish & Game New Zealand Strategy 2023–2027, which promotes evidence-based, adaptive management to enhance angling experiences and retain licence holders. Accordingly, a displacement survey was carried out, and therefore the focus of this report is to present and discuss its findings.

## **2.2 Angler displacement**

Angler pressure, encountering anglers and perceptions of excessive angler's use can result in the displacement of anglers from fisheries where anglers seek a sense of remoteness, low angler encounters and where anglers believe trout become harder to catch due to excessive angling pressure. The term angler displacement refers to anglers reducing frequency or ceasing to fish a waterway spatially, temporally or absolutely. Displacement occurs because the angling experience (encompassing both angling success as well as less tangible qualities) is diminished because of angling pressure or perceived angling pressure. Resident anglers have a lower degree of encounter tolerance than non-resident anglers, therefore they are typically the first to be displaced when PSFs become oversubscribed or are perceived to be oversubscribed (Fish & Game New Zealand, 2022). The reduction in resident angling effort in PSFs caused by displacement feeds back into the disproportionate non-resident angling effort. Displacement further occurs where there is a belief, even if not borne out by actual use or encounter rates, that the angling experience would be diminished by the perceived angling pressure. This has been labelled perception-displacement. As anglers are displaced through actual crowding this experience is communicated to other anglers, who are then displaced because of the reputation of crowding.

More broadly, this process reflects the concept of recreational displacement, which describes how, and to what extent, recreational users adjust their behaviour in response to perceived social or environmental pressures, such as crowding (Hayes and Lovelock, 2019). In the context of angling, this may involve a shift in where or when individuals choose to fish. Spatial displacement occurs when anglers move away from a fishing spot they perceive as overcrowded to one they believe offers a less congested experience (Hayes and Lovelock, 2019). This may involve relocating to a nearby area within the same fishery (intra-site displacement) or moving to a completely different location (inter-site displacement) (Hayes and Lovelock, 2019). Anglers may also adjust the timing of their fishing activities in what is known as temporal displacement, fishing at different times of the day, season, or year to avoid

peak use periods (Hayes and Lovelock, 2019). Lastly, anglers may become totally displaced, this being where they stop fishing a particular waterway altogether due to perceived overcrowding.

Angler displacement is a key consideration in the management of PSFs because it reflects when a fishery no longer meets the expectations of anglers, particularly those seeking a remote, low-encounter experience. Displacement occurs when anglers reduce their use of a fishery due to real or perceived crowding, whether by fishing less often, changing locations, or stopping altogether. In the context of PSFs, displacement is used as a warning sign that the quality of the angling experience is deteriorating. This is important because PSF management tools, such as a beat system, or designated waters, are designed not simply to reduce angler numbers, but to maintain a high-quality experience. Furthermore, some PSF management tools, such as Designated Waters, have been used to create a more balanced 50/50 ratio of resident to non-resident angler use. This is because unmanaged PSFs often exhibit disproportionate use by non-resident anglers, which can increase pressure on the fishery and contribute to the displacement of local resident anglers.

Displacement needs to be considered on the upper Ahuriri River because there is anecdote that the fishery may no longer be meeting the expectations of anglers who have fished there in the past, particularly resident anglers who value a remote, low-encounter experience. Reports of crowding have increased in recent seasons, and these complaints indicate that some anglers are already reducing their use of the fishery due to perceived angling pressure. This suggests that the overall angling experience may be declining. If displacement is left unaddressed, the fishery risks becoming dominated by non-resident use and experiencing further deterioration in angling quality. As fisheries managers, failing to acknowledge and address these issues would represent a failure in our responsibility to adaptively manage the fishery, enhance angling experiences and retaining licence holders. Therefore, understanding the extent and drivers of displacement is therefore essential for determining whether management intervention is needed, and for identifying the most appropriate tools, if any, to protect the upper Ahuriri angling experience.

## **2.3 Rationale**

To date, there has been minimal PSF focused research on the upper Ahuriri River, and none targeting the potential issue of angler displacement. As a result, there is limited insight into whether displacement is occurring, how it may be expressed spatially or temporally, and what implications it may have for patterns of angler effort on the upper Ahuriri fishery. The introduction of formal access controls, such as designated beats or booking systems on public waterways like the upper Ahuriri is also a socially and politically sensitive issue (Hayes and Lovelock, 2019). Concerns persist that such measures, while aimed at managing pressure, could unintentionally contribute to further displacement, alter the profile of river users, or simply shift angling pressure to nearby rivers facing similar challenges (Hayes and Lovelock, 2019).

Therefore, the aim of this research is to:

1. Assess the nature, scope and characteristics of angler behaviour and perceptions on the upper Ahuriri River

2. To evaluate the potential effects of implementing PSF management mechanisms on angler displacement.

## **3. Method**

### **3.1 Survey design**

The research was conducted using an electronic survey distributed via email. Distribution was made possible through access to the FGNZ database, where all adults who purchased a licence in either North Canterbury (NC), Central South Island (CSI), Otago and Southland during the 2024/2025 fishing season were included. The survey design was based on a previous displacement study conducted on Otago and Southland PSF by Hayes and Lovelock (2019) and was tailored to the upper Ahuriri Fishery. Furthermore, survey questions were continually modified and refined after consultation with University of Otago and Fish & Game staff. The final survey can be viewed in Appendix 2. The main focus of the survey was on respondents who had previously fished the upper Ahuriri and therefore had first-hand experience of the fishery. The final survey comprised of five main sections:

- 1. Upper Ahuriri River specific questions**
  - Questions focused on identifying patterns of angler behaviour over time and how it related, if at all, to temporal and/or spatial displacement.
- 2. Management mechanisms**
  - In this section anglers were asked questions on whether they thought the fishery needed management mechanisms and if they were prepared to pay an increased administrative charge if so. Participants were asked to rate the level at which they agree/disagree with each statement. Furthermore, anglers were asked how they would respond (there fishing behaviour) if management mechanisms were introduced.
- 3. Perceived displacement**
  - This section included a targeted question for anglers who had not previously fished the upper Ahuriri River but had considered or intended to do so, in order to assess whether any form of perceived displacement was present.
- 4. Angling experience**
  - The questions in this section related to angler skill level and their typical angling experiences.
- 5. Demographic information**
  - Questions in this section related to residency status, age and gender.

### **3.2 Data collection**

Overall, a total of 52,887 adult licences were issued for NC, CSI, Otago and Southland, of these there were 47,669 with details in the email field of which 34,362 ticked to receive info. Those 34,362 adult anglers were sent the survey link via email.

Table 1: Total number of surveys sent to licence holder regions.

Licence region	Surveys sent
North Canterbury	7,838
Central South Island	9,824
Otago	11,308
Southland	5,392
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,362</b>

An email containing a link to the questionnaire on google forms was distributed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2025 to coincide with the end of the peak fishing season and scheduled ahead of the Opening Weekend of duck shooting season to ensure the fishing season was still fresh in anglers minds. The survey also had an incentive where if completed respondents would go into the draw to win one of two \$200 vouchers for an outdoor retailer. The survey remained open for one month and was closed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2025. The results from the survey were downloaded on to an excel file and analysed.

## 4.Results

Overall, the survey received 468 angler responses equating to a 1.36% return on surveys distributed. The main survey group included Otago, CSI, North Canterbury and non-residents. Southland anglers made up a small portion of the survey responses, which may be partly due to fewer surveys being distributed in that region, as well as lower familiarity or interest in the fishery given its relative distance and accessibility.

Table 2: Regional origin of survey respondents, including both resident and non-resident anglers, and excluded responses.

Origin of angler	Survey respondents (#)	Survey respondents %
North Canterbury	91	19%
Central South Island	106	23%
Otago	125	27%
Southland	33	7%
Residents that live outside of regions	16	3%
Non-resident	80	17%
Excluded responses	17	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>100%</b>

Respondents provided information about their past angling experience and demographic background. In summary, the majority were advanced, experienced male anglers aged between 55 and 75 years or older. A breakdown of angling experience and demographic background can be found in the Appendix 1.

Respondents also had the opportunity to provide additional comments or suggestions about fishing the upper Ahuriri. A total of 250 additional comments were recorded, with the main comments summarised below. A full list of comments can be found in Appendix 1.

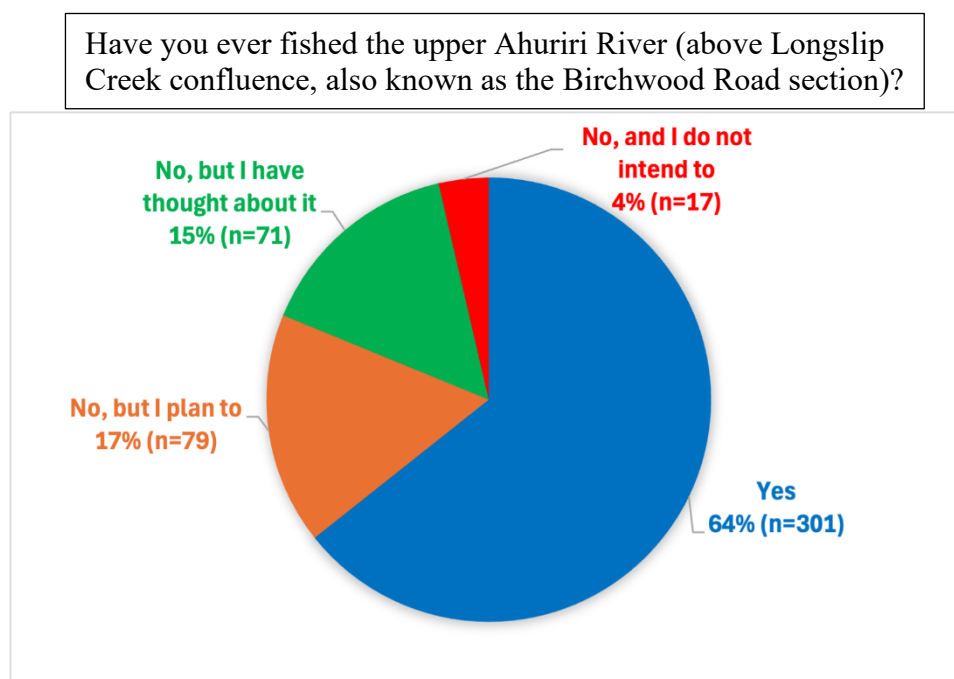
- Support for the introduction of a beat system
- Access issues is a key constraint to fishing there

- Too many guides fishing there
- Increasing angling pressure over the years, particularly from non-residents
- A special fishery that needs protection
- Make the fishery fly fishing only
- Leave the fishery alone
- Charge non-residents more

## 4.1 Upper Ahuriri past fishing

All 468 respondents were asked about their past fishing experience on the upper Ahuriri, nearly two-thirds of respondents said they had fished it, while the remainder were split between those planning to fish there, those who had considered it, and a small proportion with no intention to do so (Figure 1). Anglers who indicated that they had not fished the upper Ahuriri and had no intention of doing so were removed from the survey at that point and did not complete any further questions.

**64% (n = 301)** stated they had fished it, **17% (n = 79)** had not but planned to, **15% (n = 71)** had not but had thought about it and **4% (n = 17)** had not and did not intend to fish there.



**Figure 1:** Breakdown of angler responses regarding their experience or intent to fish the upper Ahuriri River.

Table 3: A summary of the origins of anglers who stated they have fished the upper Ahuriri before.

Origin of angler	Survey respondents (#)	Survey respondents %
North Canterbury	51	17%
Central South Island	68	23%
Otago	92	20%
Southland	19	6%
Resident that lives outside of those regions	8	3%
Non-resident	63	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 4.2 Fishing activity

The following sections will focus on the 301 anglers who stated they have previously fished the upper Ahuriri.

Among the 301 anglers who had fished the upper Ahuriri in the past were asked about their fishing activity there, with most reporting either fishing it less often or about the same as before, while smaller proportions had only fished it once, had stopped altogether, or were now fishing it more frequently (Figure 2).

**31% (n = 93)** fish the river less often than they used to, **27% (n = 80)** fish it as often as they did in the past, **19% (n = 58)** have only ever fished it once, **16% (n = 48)** have stopped fishing it and **7% (n = 22)** fish it more often than they did in the past.

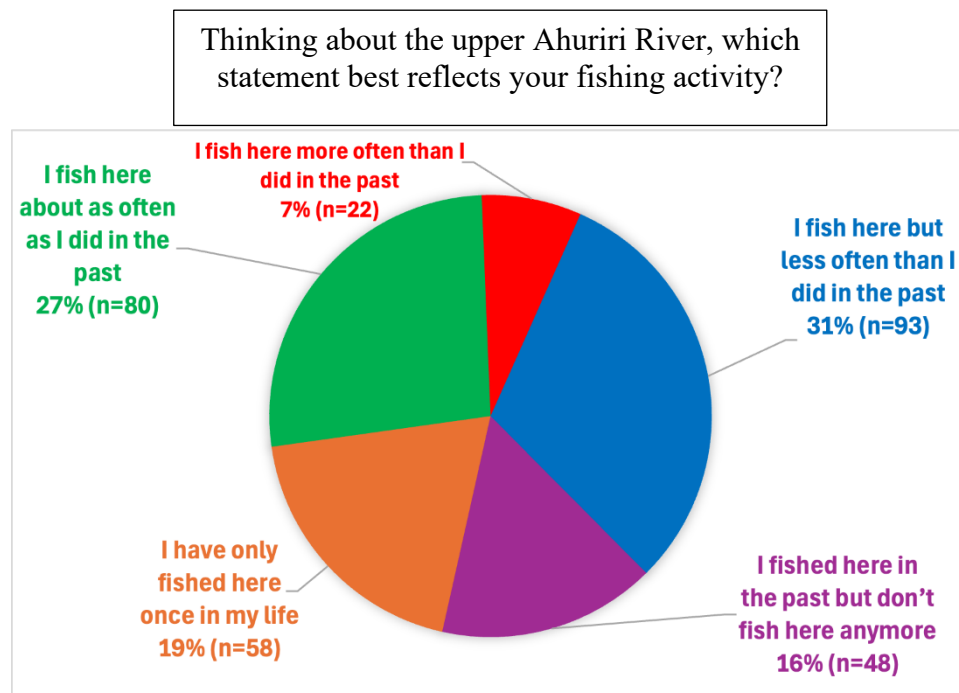


Figure 2: Breakdown of angler responses regarding their current fishing activity relative to their past experience of fishing the upper Ahuriri River.

### 4.2.1 A breakdown of resident and non-residents fishing activity.

A higher proportion of resident anglers now fish the upper Ahuriri less often than they did in the past, compared to non-residents. In contrast, a larger proportion of non-resident anglers have only fished the river once in their lifetime. This may be due to non-residents typically visiting for shorter periods and choosing to fish a range of well-known rivers across multiple regions, such as Otago and Southland.

Table 4: Resident vs. non-resident fishing activity.

	Resident		Non-resident	
	%	Count	%	Count
Fish less	34%	80	21%	13
Fish the same amount	26%	61	31%	19
Only fished once	16%	38	32%	20
Stopped fishing	17%	39	15%	9
Fish more	9%	20	4%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>63</b>

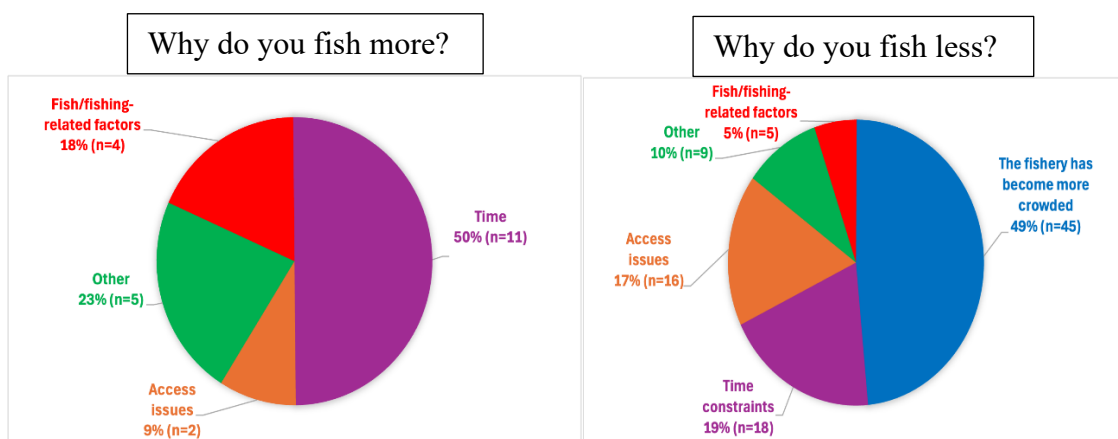
### 4.2.2 Why do some anglers fish more, fish less and no longer fish it?

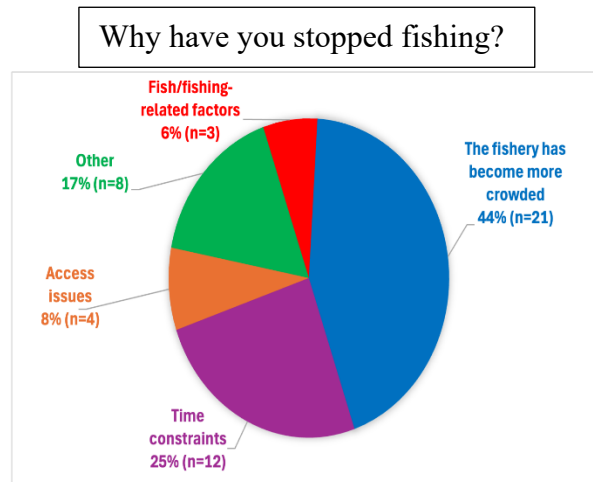
Anglers who reported changes in how often they fish the upper Ahuriri cited a range of reasons, with increased crowding being the most common reason for fishing less or stopping altogether, while having more time was the main reason for those fishing the river more often (Figure 3).

For those who now fish the upper Ahuriri more often, having more time was the main reason **50% (n = 11)**.

Increased crowding was the main reason given by anglers who now fish the upper Ahuriri less frequently **49% (n = 46)** and by those who have stopped fishing there entirely **44% (n = 21)**.

Time constraints were also frequently chosen by **19% (n = 18)** of those fishing less, and **25% (n = 12)** anglers of those who have stopped fishing the river.





**Figure 3:** Factors contributing to anglers fishing more, less and no longer.

### 4.2.3 Total displacement

Among both resident and non-resident anglers who had stopped fishing the upper Ahuriri, fishery overcrowding was the most commonly cited reason. However, only resident anglers reported time constraints, while non-residents were more likely to mention access issues and fishing-related factors compared to residents.

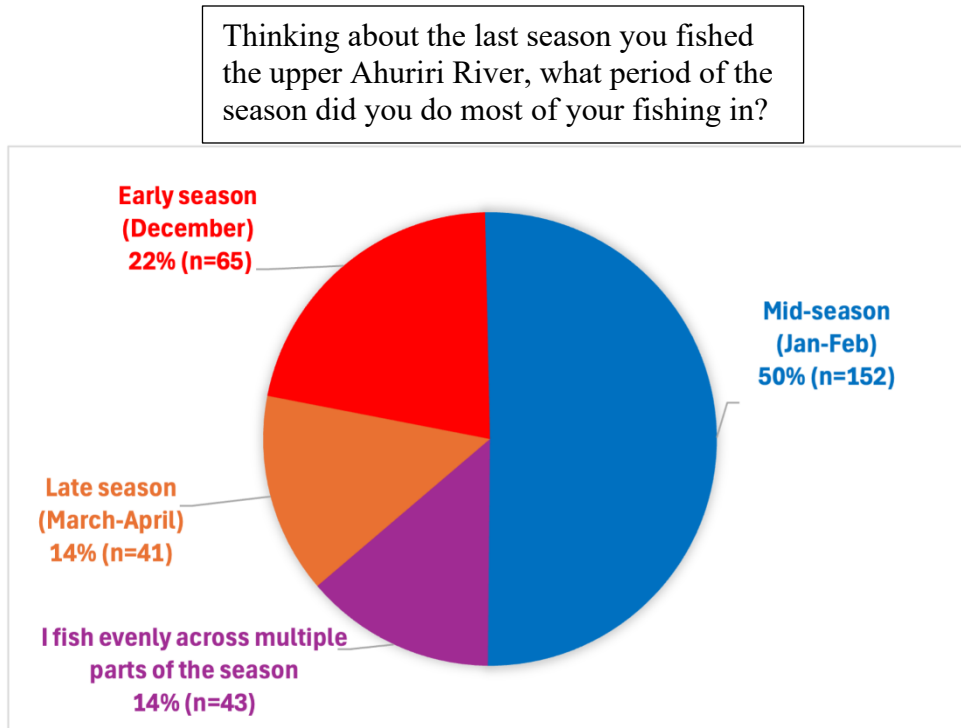
Table 5: Total displacement: Breakdown of factors why resident and non-resident anglers no longer fish the upper Ahuriri.

	Resident		Non-resident	
	%	Count	%	Count
Fishery overcrowding	44%	17	44%	4
Time constraints	31%	12	0%	0
Access issues	8%	3	11%	1
Fish/fishing related factors	5%	2	11%	1
Other	12%	5	22%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9</b>

### 4.3 Period of season fished

Half of the 301 anglers who had previously fished the upper Ahuriri did most of their fishing during the mid-season, with a smaller number fishing in the early or late season, or evenly throughout the season (Figure 4).

**50% (n = 152)** fished primarily mid-season (January–February), **22% (n = 65)** during the early season (December), **14% (n = 41)** in the late season (March–April), and **14% (n = 43)** reported fishing evenly across multiple parts of the season.

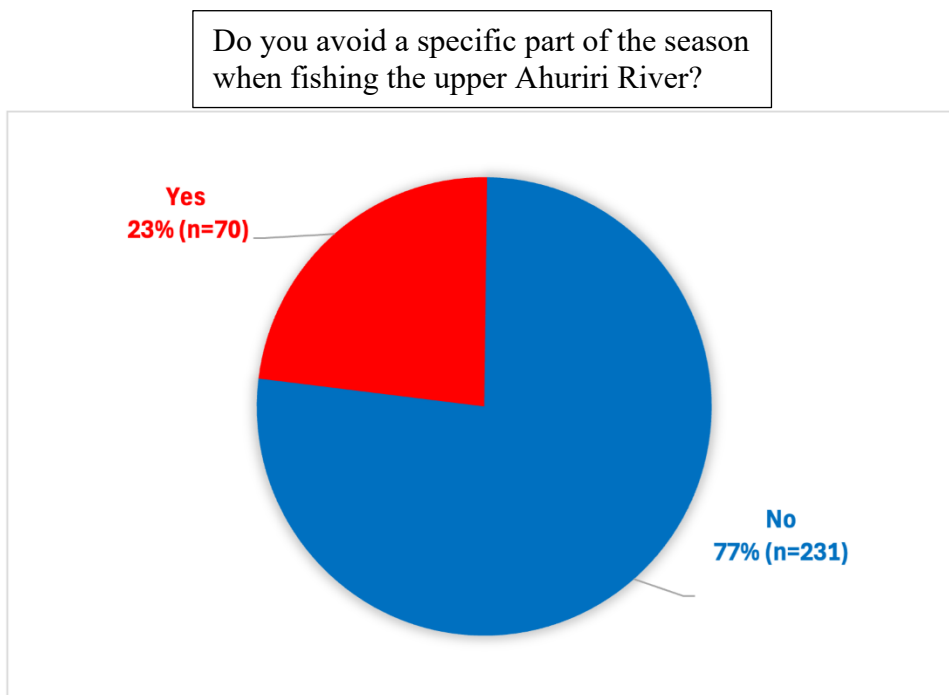


**Figure 4:** Period of season anglers fish the upper Ahuriri.

#### 4.3.1 Do some anglers avoid a specific part of the season?

Most anglers who had previously fished the upper Ahuriri do not avoid any specific part of the fishing season, while just under a quarter said they do (Figure 5).

77% (n = 231) said they do not avoid any particular period, while 23% (n = 70) said they do.

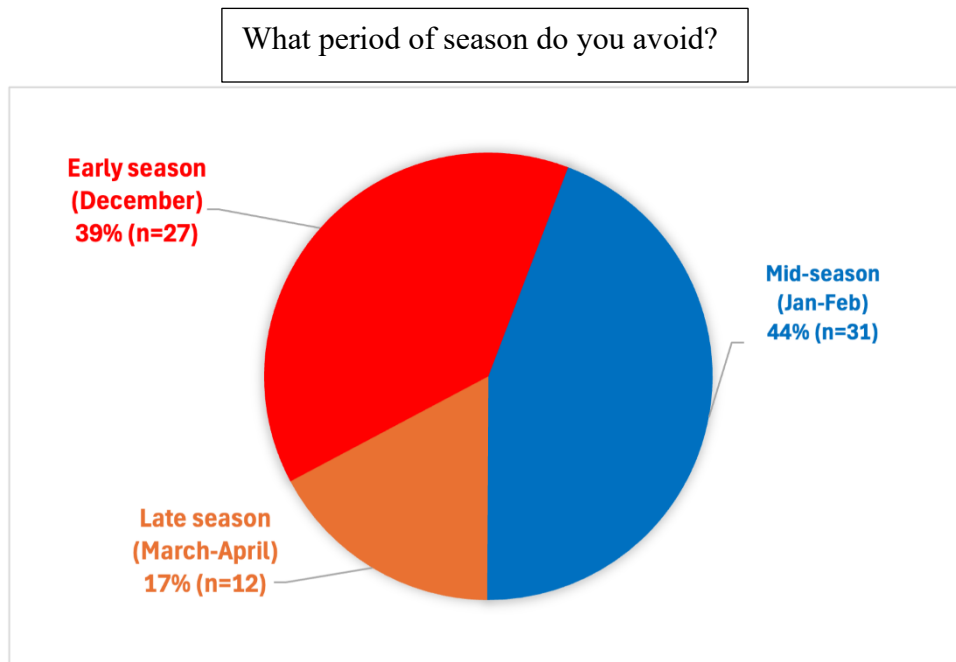


**Figure 5:** Avoidance of a specific part of season.

### 4.3.2 Period of season avoided

Of the 70 anglers who reported avoiding a specific part of the fishing season, most said they tend to avoid fishing during the mid-season, with the early season also commonly avoided (Figure 6).

**44% (n = 31)** reported avoiding the mid-season (January–February), **39% (n = 27)** avoided the early season (December), and **17% (n = 12)** avoided the late season (March–April).



**Figure 6:** Period of season avoided.

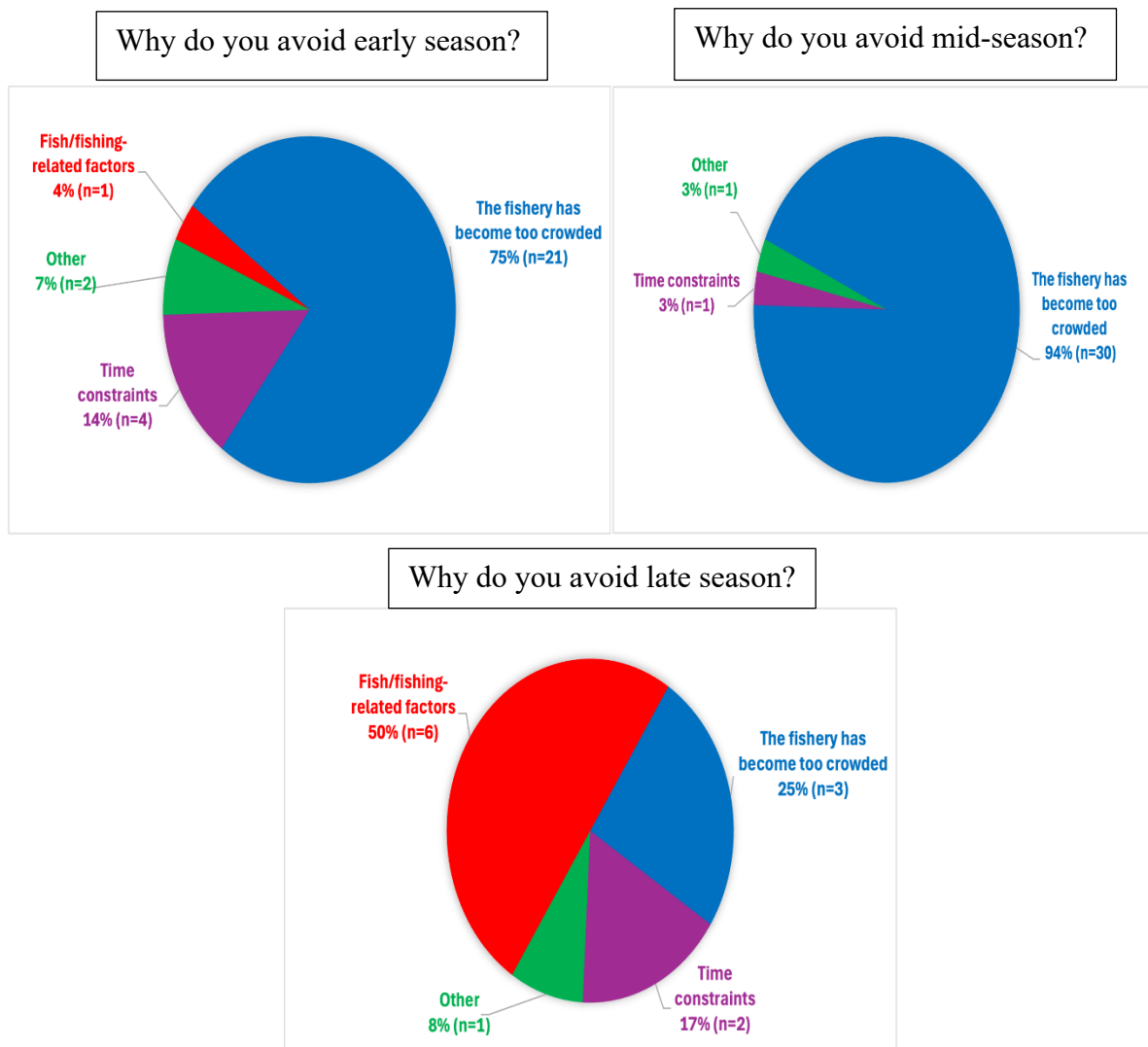
### 4.3.3 Why do anglers avoid a specific part of season?

Angler crowding has a significant impact on anglers avoiding fishing during the early and mid-season, while fishing related factors is the main reason why anglers avoid fishing the late season (Figure 7).

Among the 27 anglers who avoid the early season, **75% (n = 21)** said it was because the fishery has become too crowded.

Of the 31 anglers who avoid the mid-season, **94% (n = 30)** also cited crowding as the main reason.

Among the 12 anglers who avoid the late season, **50% (n = 6)** stated it was due to fish/fishing-related factors.



**Figure 7:** Factors contributing to why anglers avoid early, mid and late season.

### 4.3.4 Temporal displacement

Of the 301 anglers who have fished the upper Ahuriri, the majority (77%, n = 231) did not avoid a specific part of the fishing season. However, temporal displacement was still evident, with 23% (n = 70) of anglers avoiding part of the season due to perceived crowding. Among these, 61 were resident anglers and 9 were non-residents, equating to 26% of resident anglers and 14% of non-resident anglers being temporally displaced.

Most temporally displaced anglers chose to avoid the mid-season period (44%, n = 31). Of the 31 anglers who avoided the mid-season 27 were resident and 4 were non-resident (Table 2). Resident and non-resident anglers both cited crowding (94%, n = 30) as the main reason they avoid fishing mid-season (Figure 7).

**Table 6:** Do resident and non-resident anglers avoid a specific part of the season.

	Resident		Non-resident	
	%	Count	%	Count
Yes	26%	61	14%	9
No	74%	177	86%	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>63</b>

Table 7: A breakdown of which parts of season resident and non-resident anglers avoid.

	<b>Resident</b>		<b>Non-resident</b>	
	%	Count	%	Count
Avoid fishing early season (December)	38%	23	40%	4
Avoid fishing mid-season (January-February)	45%	27	40%	4
Avoid fishing late season (March-April)	17%	10	20%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 8: A breakdown of which parts of the season anglers avoid due to crowding.

<b>Avoid due to crowding</b>	<b>Resident</b>	
	%	Count
Early season (December)	39%	21
Mid-season (January-February)	56%	30
Late season (March-April)	6%	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>54</b>

#### 4.3.5 Spatial displacement

Of the 70 anglers temporally displaced, **90% (n = 63)** have substituted an alternative waterway for the upper Ahuriri during the period of displacement. Stated alternative waterways include (popular waterways are bolded and numbers in brackets = no. of mentions):

Table 9: Alternative waterways anglers' fish when displaced from upper Ahuriri River.

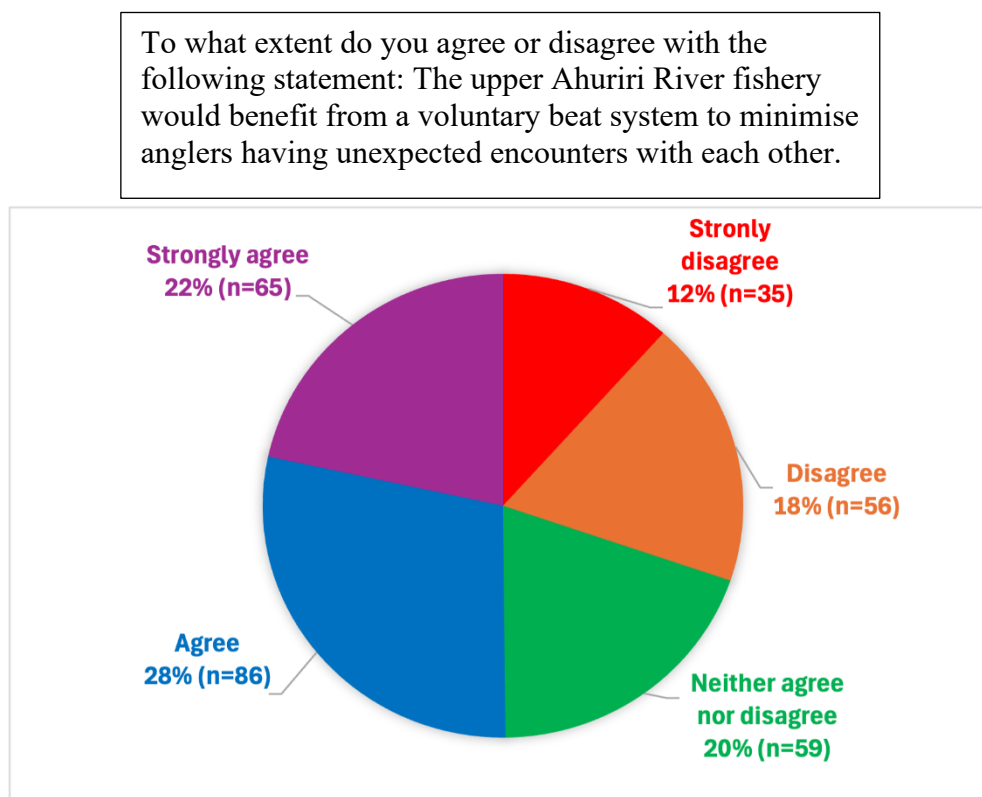
<b>Lower Ahuriri (5)</b>	Canterbury waterways (2)	Wanaka waterways (1)
<b>Waitaki River/Lake (5)</b>	Hydro lakes (2)	Australia waterways (1)
<b>Lake Benmore (4)</b>	Temple stream (1)	Rakaia River (1)
<b>Tekapo River (4)</b>	Mary Burn (1)	Maerewhenua River (1)
<b>Southland waterways (4)</b>	Fairlie area (1)	Hope River (1)
West coast waterways (3)	Hakataramea (1)	
Hydro canals (2)	Glen Tanner (1)	
Omarama Stream (2)	Matukituki (1)	
Twizel River (2)	Cameron River (1)	

## 4.4 Perceptions of implementing Management mechanisms

### 4.4.1 Would the fishery benefit from voluntary beat system?

When asked about the potential benefits of a voluntary beat system, overall angler opinion was slightly in favour, though a notable proportion remained opposed or neutral (Figure 8).

**50% (n = 151)** either agreed or strongly agreed, **30% (n = 91)** disagreed or strongly disagreed, and **20% (n = 59)** neither agreed nor disagreed. If neutral responses are disregarded, then **62% (n = 151)** agreed the system would be beneficial, compared to **38% (n = 91)** who disagreed.



**Figure 8:** The need for a voluntary beat system.

#### 4.4.1.1 Resident vs. Non resident

Resident anglers were generally more supportive of a voluntary beat system for the upper Ahuriri River, while non-resident anglers also showed some support, though their views were more evenly divided (Figure 9).

Of the 238 resident anglers who had fished the upper Ahuriri, **51% (n = 122)** agreed or strongly agreed that a voluntary beat system would benefit the fishery, **27% (n = 64)** disagreed or strongly disagreed, and **22% (n = 52)** were neutral.

Among the 63 non-resident anglers, 46% (n = 29) agreed or strongly agreed, 43% (n = 27) disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 11% (n = 7) were neutral.

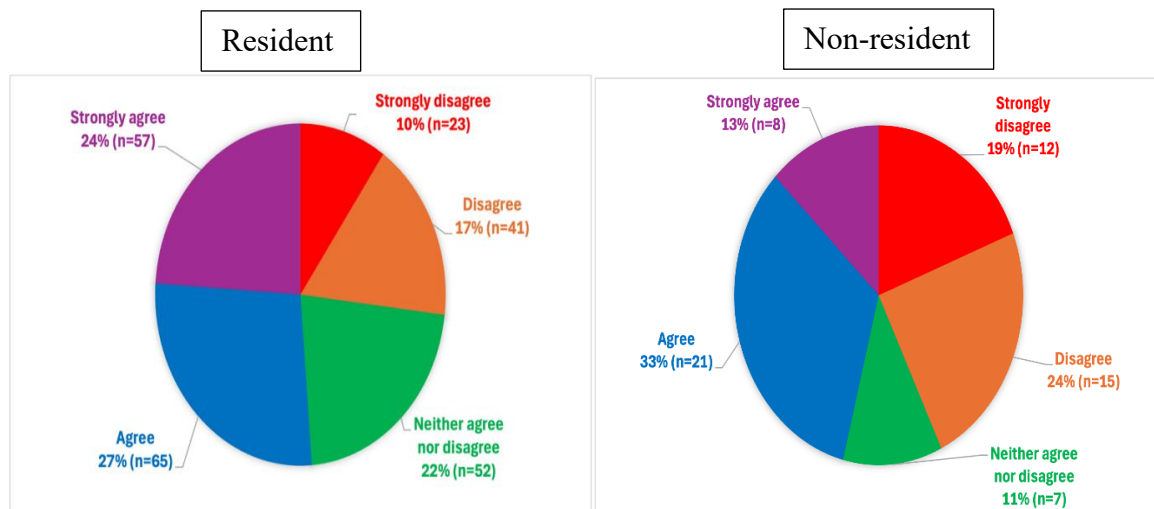


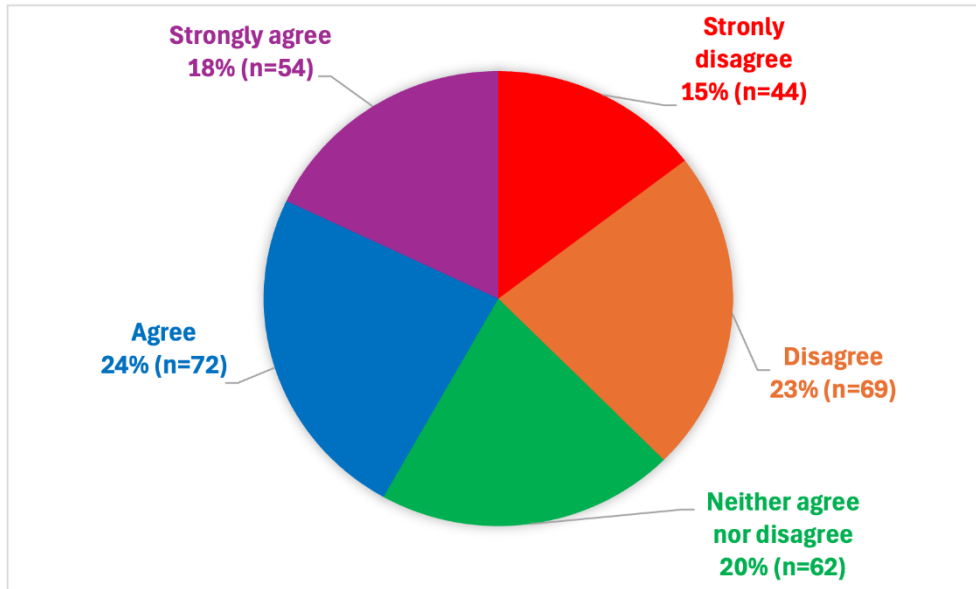
Figure 9: The need for a voluntary beat system, resident vs. non-resident.

#### 4.4.2 Does the river need restrictive management mechanisms to control angler crowding?

Among the 301 anglers who have fished the upper Ahuriri, opinions were divided on whether management mechanisms are needed to control crowding, with just over two-fifths in agreement, a similar proportion in disagreement, and the remainder neutral (Figure 10).

42% (n = 126) agreed or strongly agreed, 38% (n = 113) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 20% (n = 62) neither agreed nor disagreed (Figure 10). If neutral responses are to be disregarded, then there were slightly more anglers who agree (agree + strongly agree) (53%, n = 126) that the river need management mechanisms to control angler crowding versus disagree (disagree + strongly disagree) (47%, n = 113 anglers).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: This river needs management mechanisms to control angler crowding (examples could include allocation of days, limits to use etc.).



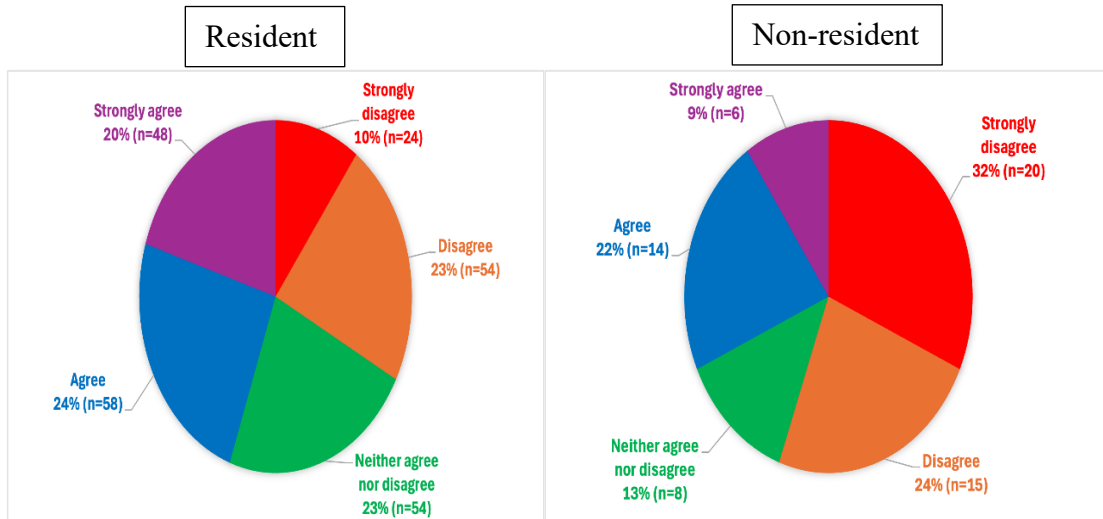
**Figure 10:** The need for restrictive management mechanisms (e.g., allocation of days, limits to use).

#### 4.4.2.1 Resident vs. Non-resident

When asked whether management mechanisms (e.g., allocation of days or limits to use) are needed to control angler crowding on the upper Ahuriri, resident anglers were generally more supportive than non-residents, though views were mixed across both groups (Figure 11).

Among the 238 resident anglers who had previously fished the river, **44% (n = 106)** agreed or strongly agreed with the need for such mechanisms, **33% (n = 78)** disagreed or strongly disagreed, and **23% (n = 54)** were neutral.

In contrast, among the 63 non-resident anglers, **56% (n = 35)** disagreed or strongly disagreed, **31% (n = 20)** agreed or strongly agreed, and **13% (n = 8)** were neutral.

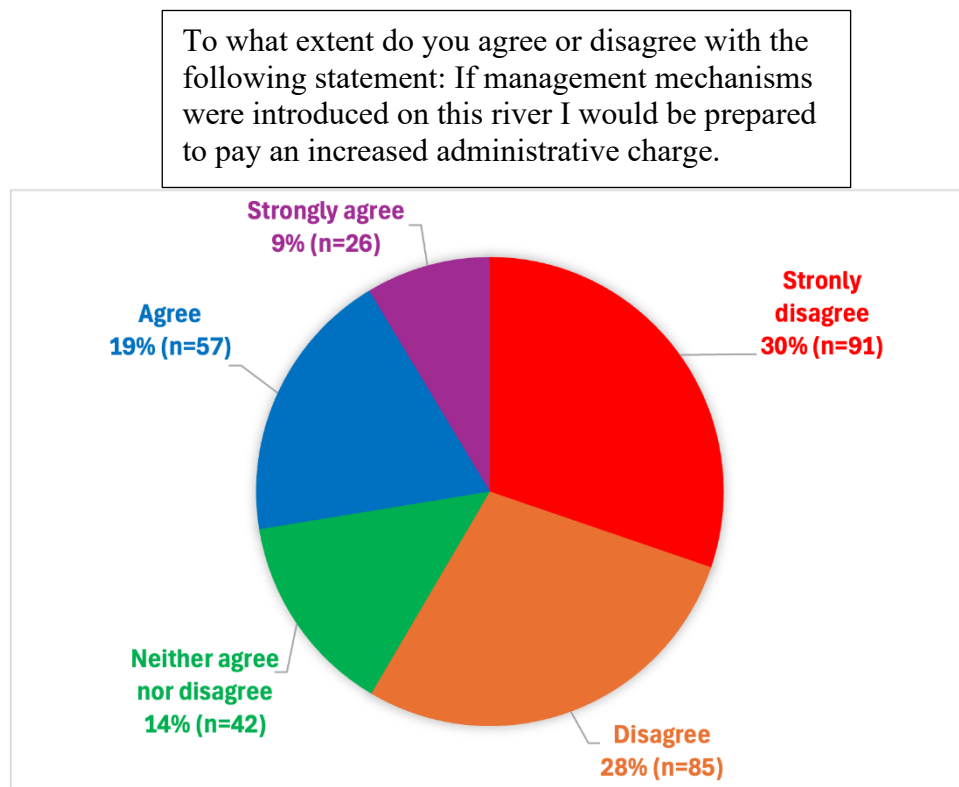


**Figure 11:** The need for restrictive management mechanisms (e.g., allocation of days, limits to use), resident vs. non-resident.

#### 4.4.3 If management mechanisms were introduced, would anglers be prepared to pay increased administrative charge?

Among the 301 anglers who had previously fished the upper Ahuriri, most disagreed with paying an increased administrative charge to support the introduction of management mechanisms, although just over a quarter expressed support (Figure 12).

**58% (n = 176)** disagreed or strongly disagreed, **28% (n = 83)** agreed or strongly agreed, and **14% (n = 42)** neither agreed nor disagreed. If neutral responses are to be disregarded, then there are more anglers who disagree (disagree + strongly disagree) (**68%, n = 176 anglers**) that they would be prepared to pay an increased administrative charge versus agree (**agree + strongly agree**) (**32%, n = 83**).



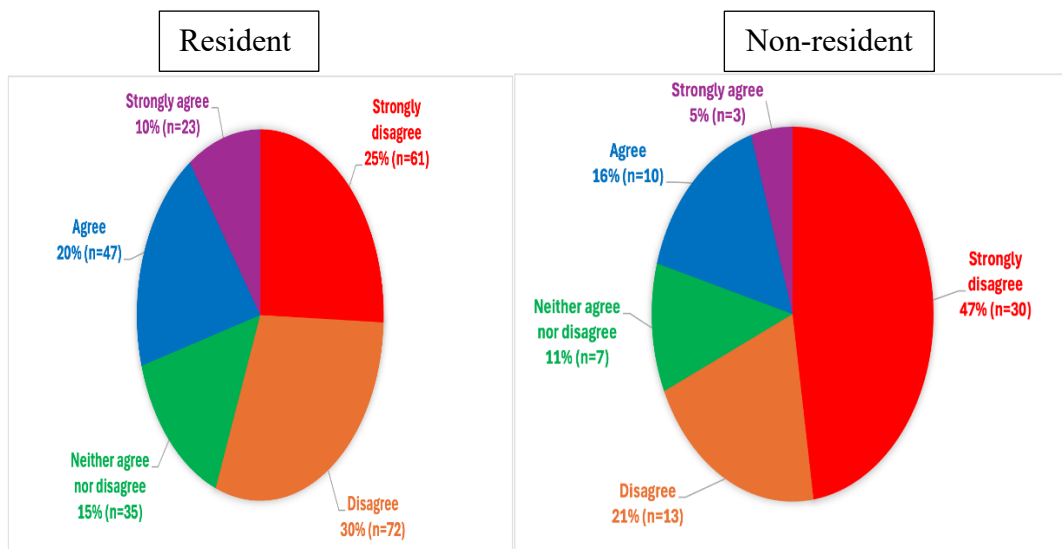
**Figure 12:** Increased administrative charge.

#### 4.4.3.1 Resident vs. Non-resident

When asked whether they would be willing to pay an increased administrative charge to support potential management measures, most anglers, both residents and non-residents expressed opposition, although a minority in each group were supportive (Figure 13).

Among the 238 resident anglers who had previously fished the upper Ahuriri, **55% (n = 133)** disagreed or strongly disagreed, **30% (n = 70)** agreed or strongly agreed, and **15% (n = 35)** were neutral.

Of the 63 non-resident anglers, **68% (n = 43)** disagreed or strongly disagreed, **21% (n = 13)** agreed or strongly agreed and **11% (n = 7)** neither agreed nor disagreed.



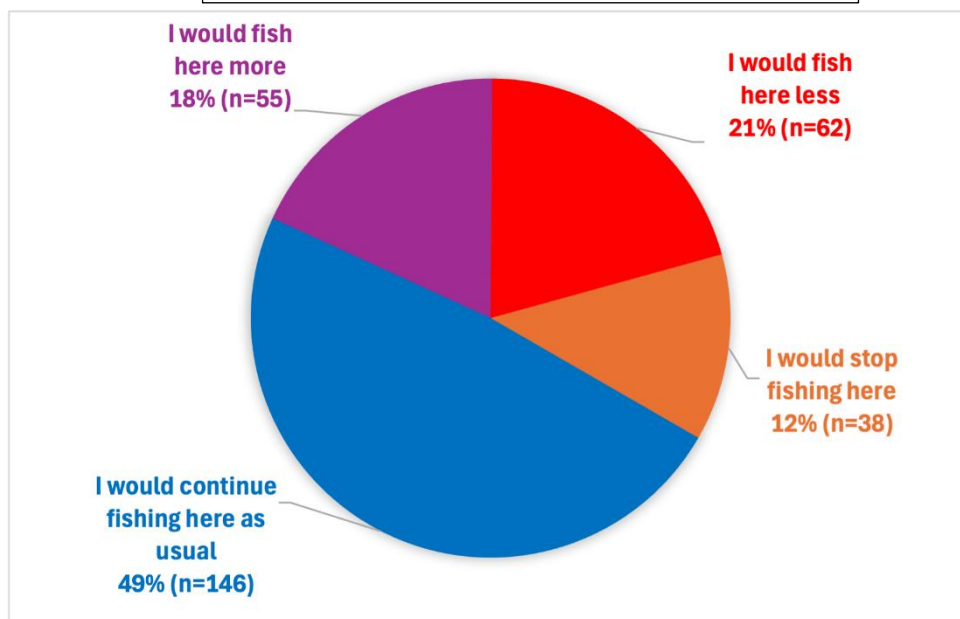
**Figure 13:** Increased administrative charge, resident vs. non-resident.

#### 4.4.4 How would anglers respond to the introduction of a voluntary beat system?

The majority anglers indicated that the introduction of a voluntary beat system would have either no impact or a positive impact on their fishing activity, although a notable proportion reported they would be displaced (Figure 14).

Of the 301 anglers who had previously fished the upper Ahuriri, **49% (n = 146)** stated they would continue to fish there as usual, **18% (n = 55)** would fish there more often, **21% (n = 62)** would fish there less, and **12% (n = 38)** said they would stop fishing the river altogether.

If a voluntary beat system was introduced on the upper Ahuriri River, which of the following best describes how you would respond?



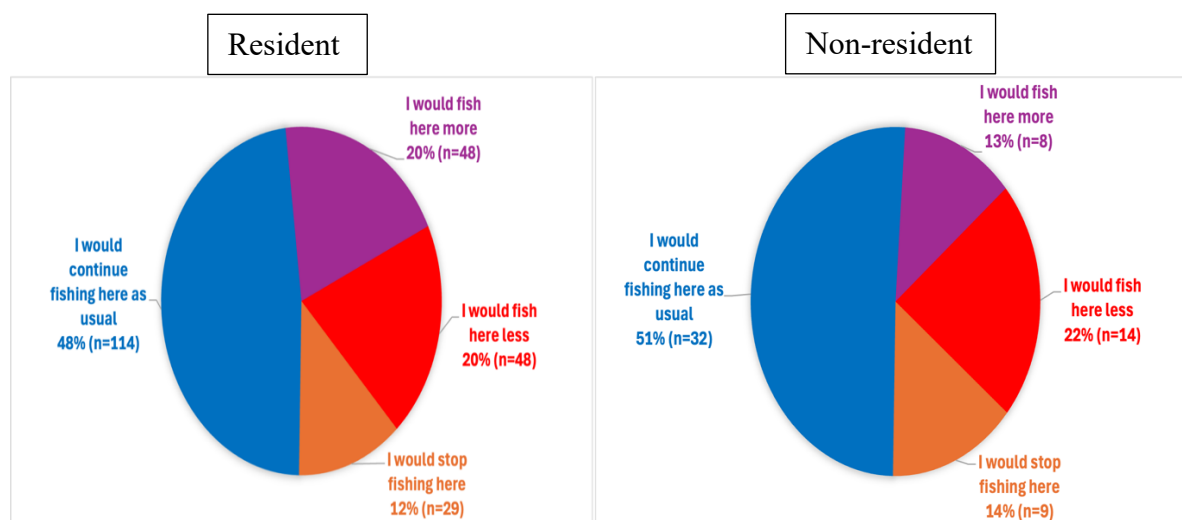
**Figure 14:** Voluntary beat system impact on fishing behaviour.

#### 4.4.4.1 Resident vs. Non-resident

When asked how they would respond if a voluntary beat system were introduced, most resident and non-resident anglers indicated they would continue to fish the upper Ahuriri as usual. However, a notable proportion of anglers reported they would be displaced (Figure 15).

Of the 238 resident anglers who had previously fished the river, **48% (n = 114)** said they would continue to fish there as usual, **20% (n = 48)** would fish there less, **20% (n = 48)** would fish there more, and **12% (n = 29)** would stop fishing there altogether.

Among the 63 non-resident anglers, **51% (n = 32)** said they would continue fishing as usual, **22% (n = 14)** would fish there less, **13% (n = 8)** would fish there more, and **14% (n = 9)** would stop fishing there.

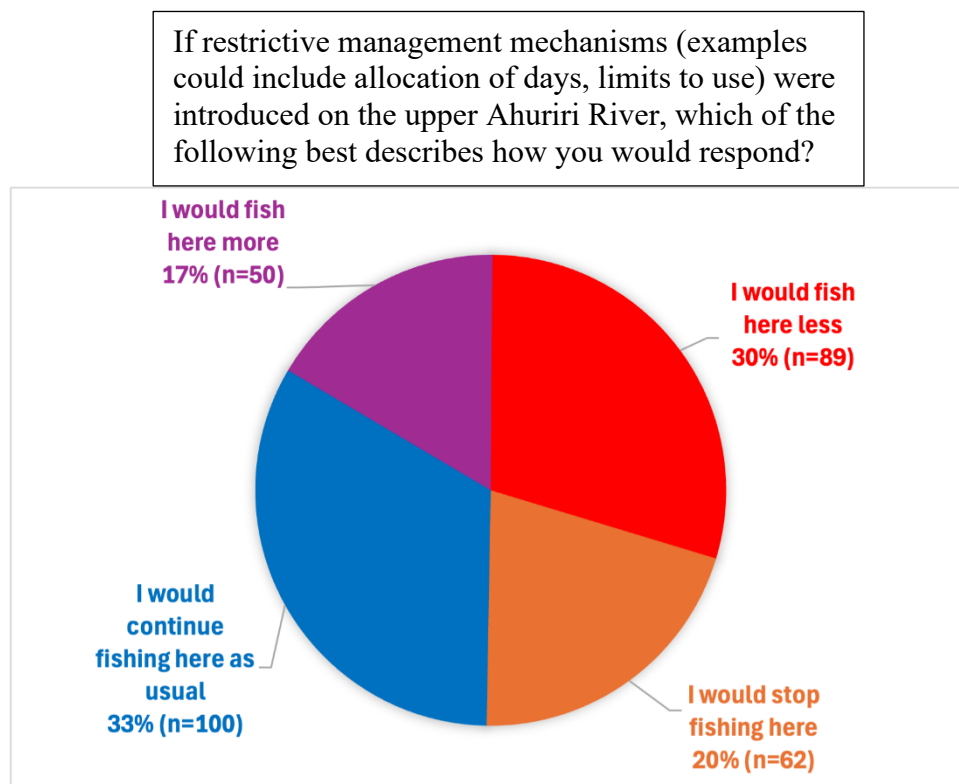


**Figure 15:** Voluntary beat system impact on fishing behaviour, resident vs. non-resident.

#### 4.4.5 How would anglers respond to the introduction of restricted management mechanisms?

The introduction of restrictive management mechanisms would lead to considerable displacement; with many anglers indicating they would reduce or cease their fishing activity (Figure 16).

Of the 301 anglers who have fished the upper Ahuriri in the past and were asked how they would respond if restrictive management mechanisms were introduced, **33% (n = 100)** stated they would continue to fish there as usual, **30% (n = 89)** would fish there less, **20% (n = 62)** would stop fishing there and **17% (n = 50)** would fish there more.



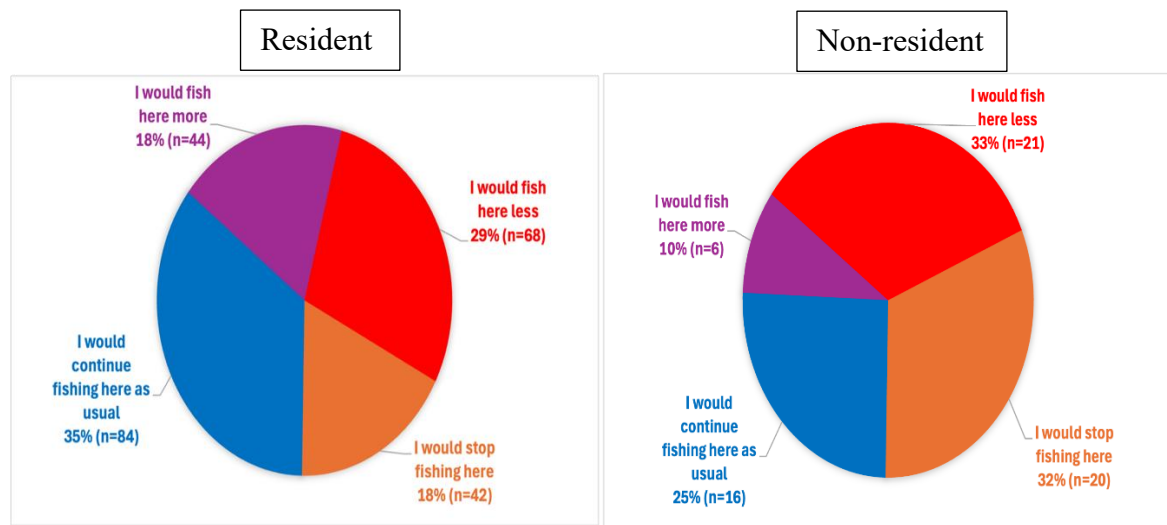
**Figure 16:** Restrictive management mechanisms (e.g., allocation of days, limits to use) impact on fishing behaviour.

##### 4.4.5.1 Resident vs Non-resident

When asked how they would respond to the introduction of restrictive management mechanisms, resident anglers showed a range of reactions, with over a third indicating they would continue fishing as usual. In contrast, non-resident anglers were more likely to be displaced on the upper Ahuriri (Figure 17).

Of the 238 resident anglers who stated they had fished the upper Ahuriri and were asked how they would respond if restrictive management mechanisms were introduced, **35% (n = 84)** would continue to fish there as usual, **29% (n = 68)** would fish there less, **18% (n = 44)** would fish there more and **18% (n = 42)** would stop fishing there.

Among the 63 non-resident anglers who had fished the upper Ahuriri, **33% (n= 21)** would fish there less, **32% (n = 20)** would stop fishing there **25% (n = 16)** would continue to fish there as usual, **10% (n= 6)** would fish there more.



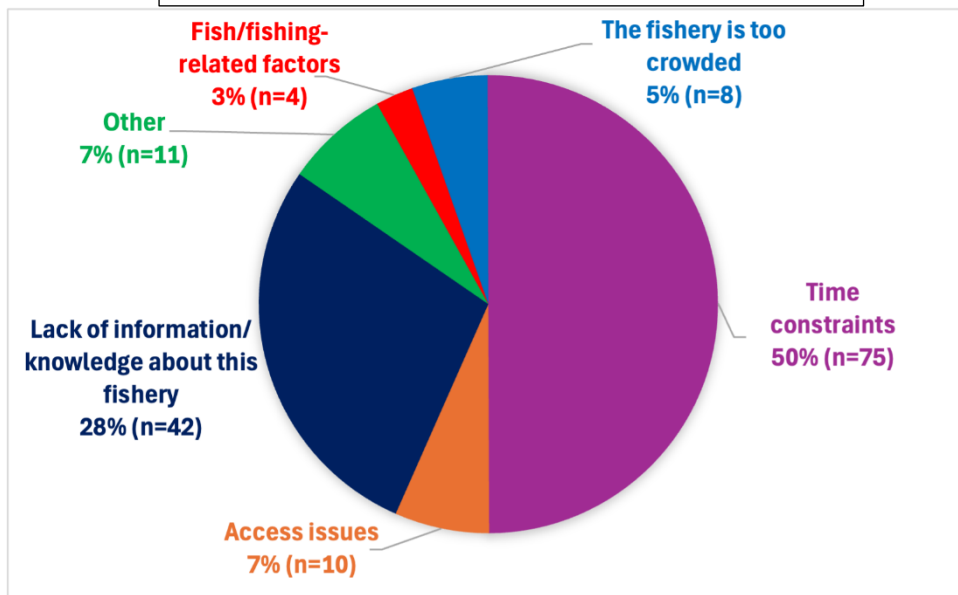
**Figure 17:** Restrictive management mechanisms (e.g., allocation of days, limits to use) impact on fishing behaviour, resident vs. non-resident.

## 4.5 Upper Ahuriri perceived displacement

Fishery crowding appears to be a minor factor in the displacement of anglers who have not yet fished the upper Ahuriri River (Figure 18).

Of the 150 anglers who stated they planned to or had thought about fishing the upper Ahuriri were asked which of the following was the main factor as to why they have not fished the upper Ahuriri, **50% (n = 75)** stated time constraints, **28% (n = 42)** due to a lack of information/knowledge about the fishery, **7% (n = 10)** other, **5% (n = 8)** the fishery is too crowded and **3% (n = 4)** fish/fishing related factors.

If you have never fished the upper Ahuriri, but plan to or have thought about it, which of the following is the main factor as to why you have not?



**Figure 18:** Factors influencing anglers who have not fished the upper Ahuriri River but plan to or have considered doing so.

#### 4.6 Summary of results – displacement caused by fishery crowding

Survey results suggest that crowding or the perception of crowding has caused a change in fishing activity on the upper Ahuriri. Anglers have reduced and stopped fishing the Ahuriri, therefore have been displaced. The primary reason anglers have reduced their fishing activity or stopped fishing there altogether is due to crowding.

The primary finding of the survey was that approximately 22% of anglers with previous experience on the river have been displaced due to crowding or the perception crowding. Anglers who were totally displaced from the fishery, meaning they no longer fish the upper Ahuriri River due to crowding, made up 7% of respondents, while a further 15% reported fishing it less often for the same reason. Furthermore, 18% of anglers who avoid certain times of the season cited crowding as the main reason, indicating a form of temporal displacement, particularly during the mid-season period.

90% reported fishing an alternative waterway when temporarily displaced, indicating a high level of spatial displacement. However, the relatively low number of temporally displaced anglers, combined with the spread of effort across a variety of rivers, suggests minimal increased pressure on any single alternative waterway.

Of the anglers who had previously fished the upper Ahuriri (n = 301), 22% (n = 66) reported being displaced due to crowding, highlighting appreciable levels of displacement. However, this figure is projected to rise to 34% with the introduction of a voluntary beat system, and to 51% with the implementation of restrictive management mechanisms (Table 10). Notably, the main change predicted is a significant proportionate increase in total displacement caused by introducing management mechanisms.

Table 10: A breakdown of overall displacement due to crowding under current no-mechanism management and anglers’ responses to the introduction of management mechanisms.

	<b>Fish less because of crowding</b>	<b>Stop fishing because of crowding</b>	<b>Overall displacement</b>
<b>Reported impact of crowding on levels of fishing activity based on 2024/25 season - no PSF mechanisms in place</b>	15% (n=45)	7% (n=21)	22% (n=66)
	<b>Fish less because of introducing management mechanism</b>	<b>Stop fishing because of introducing management mechanism</b>	<b>Overall displacement</b>
<b>Perceptions of activity if Beat System introduced</b>	21% (n=62)	13% (n=38)	34% (n=100)
<b>Perceptions of activity if Restrictive management mechanism introduced</b>	30% (n=89)	21% (n=62)	51% (n=151)

Of the resident (n = 238) and non-resident (n = 63) anglers who have previously fished the upper Ahuriri, resident anglers were more likely to report being displaced due to crowding (25%) compared to non-resident anglers (11%) (Table 11). If a voluntary beat system were introduced, it would displace 32% of resident anglers and 36% of non-resident anglers. The introduction of restrictive management mechanisms would displace 47% of resident anglers and 65% of non-resident anglers.

Table 11: A breakdown of temporal and total displacement due to crowding and introduction of management mechanisms, resident vs. non-resident.

	Resident		Non-resident	
	Fish less because of crowding	Stop fishing because of crowding	Fish less because of crowding	Stop fishing because of crowding
<b>Reported impact of crowding on levels of fishing activity based on 2024/25 season - no PSF mechanisms in place</b>	18% (n=42)	7% (n=17)	5% (n=3)	6% (n=4)
	Fish less because of introducing management mechanism	Stop fishing because of introducing management mechanism	Fish less because of introducing management mechanism	Stop fishing because of introducing management mechanism
<b>Perceptions of activity if Beat System introduced</b>	20% (n=48)	12% (n=29)	22% (n=14)	14% (n=9)
<b>Perceptions of activity if Restrictive management mechanism introduced</b>	29% (n=68)	18% (n=42)	33% (n=21)	32% (n=20)

Overall, among all anglers who had previously fished the upper Ahuriri, there was a moderate level of support of a voluntary beat system (5 for: 3 against), whilst support for restrictive management mechanisms (e.g., allocation of days, limits to use) was less supported (5 for: 4 against) (Table 12). Further, even if restrictive management mechanisms were to be introduced, anglers would largely be unwilling to pay an increased administrative charge for this (ratio 1 for : 2 against). Support for a voluntary beat system is moderate, with 33% of anglers likely to be displaced by its introduction, though lower than the high displacement expected under more restrictive management measures (50%). Generally, resident and non-resident anglers showed similar levels of support and behavioural responses to the introduction of management mechanisms. However, non-resident anglers were more opposed to these mechanisms and the associated administrative costs more than residents. Additionally, a higher percentage of non-residents indicated they would be displaced by the implementation of such measures.

Table 12: Summary of key findings: Management mechanisms.

	<b>Proportion of anglers supporting voluntary beat system</b>	<b>Proportion of anglers supporting restrictive man. mechs.</b>	<b>Proportion of anglers willing to pay more for man. mechs.</b>	<b>Proportion of anglers who may be displaced by intro of beat system</b>	<b>Proportion of anglers who may be displaced by intro of restrictive man. Mechs.</b>
<b>Upper Ahuriri</b>	<b>5 for: 3 against</b>	<b>5 for: 4 against</b>	<b>1 for: 2 against</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>50%</b>

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Angler use and perceptions of crowding

Survey results indicate that nearly one-third of anglers who have previously fished the upper Ahuriri River now do so less frequently than in the past. The most commonly cited reason for this decline was increased angler crowding. This trend reflects a notable level of temporal displacement within this group. Resident anglers appear to experience higher levels of temporal displacement than non-residents, likely due to their lower tolerance for angler encounters (Fish & Game New Zealand, 2022). As a result, resident anglers are often the first to reduce or cease fishing when PSFs become oversubscribed (Fish & Game New Zealand, 2022), an outcome that aligns with the findings of this survey. Importantly, because crowding is the primary driver of displacement, the issue directly relates to the purpose of PSF tools, which are designed to reduce angling pressure and protect the quality of the fishing experience.

### 5.2 Temporal, spatial and total displacement due to crowding

**Temporal displacement** appears limited, as the majority of anglers who have fished the upper Ahuriri River reported no avoidance of specific parts of the season. However, close to one-fifth of anglers indicated they do avoid certain times due to crowding, primarily mid-season. This aligns with overall fishing patterns, where mid-season is the most popular period anglers opt to fish, which may be due to more stable flow conditions, terrestrial life increase and the associated fly-fishing opportunities offered.

**Spatial displacement** was evident, with 90% of temporally displaced anglers reporting they fish alternative waterways during peak periods. While the substitute fisheries are diverse and therefore unlikely to experience concentrated pressure, this trend indicates that crowding on the upper Ahuriri is causing a shift of some fishing effort across to other waterways. However, this represents only a small overall subset of anglers switching to other rivers, so any appreciable increase in fishing pressure on alternative waterways is unlikely and expected to be limited.

**Total displacement** was appreciable but relatively minimal, with only 7% of anglers reporting that they no longer fish the upper Ahuriri due to crowding.

### 5.3 Angling support for management mechanisms

Overall, there was moderate support for a **voluntary beat system**, with a 5:3 ratio of anglers in favour versus against when neutral responses were excluded. Residents showed slightly stronger support than non-residents, though the differences were minimal. This moderate support is notable despite a relatively high potential for displacement, with 34% of anglers indicating they would fish less or stop altogether under a voluntary beat system.

In contrast, **restrictive management mechanisms** (e.g., allocation of days, access limits) generated more negative views, with a 5:4 ratio of anglers in favour versus against when neutral responses were excluded. Resident anglers tended to support restrictive management mechanisms more than non-residents, although this was not a significant amount. Furthermore, half of all respondents that had previously fished the upper Ahuriri, stated they would fish less or stop fishing if such mechanisms were implemented. Notably, non-resident anglers were more likely to oppose these mechanisms, with 65% stating they would fish less or stop fishing the river if restrictions were introduced, compared to 47% of residents who would fish less or stop fishing.

Anglers were also generally unwilling to **pay additional administrative charges** to support the introduction of management mechanisms. Only 28% of all respondents supported this, with non-residents less willing than residents. This suggests that while there is moderate support for low-cost, low-barrier mechanisms like a voluntary beat system, there is limited appetite for more formal or costly management regimes.

Anglers who had not previously fished the upper Ahuriri cited time constraints and a lack of information or knowledge about the fishery as the main reasons, suggesting that **perceived overcrowding** is not currently influencing their decision to fish there.

### 5.4 Future directions

The future direction for the management of the upper Ahuriri River fishery depends largely on what outcomes the CSIFGC aims to achieve. PSF management is inherently river-specific, and past decisions by regional Fish & Game councils have varied depending on their own objectives. While the NPPS provides a framework to guide such decisions, not all management tools are suitable for every fishery. The appropriateness of each tool depends on the specific management goals, such as reducing displacement of resident anglers, minimising overall angler crowding, or preserving a high-quality, remote angling experience. In some cases, a combination of these objectives may be relevant.

For example, if the goal is to minimise displacement among resident anglers, then restrictive tools such as Designated Waters status could be the most effective if going off this survey alone. This survey suggests that restrictive management mechanisms could displace 65% of non-resident anglers and 47% of resident anglers. In this case, a voluntary beat system may be less appropriate, as it would result in similar displacement rates across both resident and non-resident anglers, failing to prioritise residents. Alternatively, if the objective is to reduce angler encounters, regardless of residency, then a voluntary beat system could be an appropriate starting point, with the understanding that both resident and non-resident anglers would be displaced at similar levels. This may be acceptable if the overarching goal is to protect the solitude and quality of the angling experience of all anglers, rather than prioritising residents.

Finally, the survey results suggest that in some situations, it may be preferable to accept current levels of displacement and avoid introducing PSF management tools, particularly if such tools would increase or maintain displacement levels. For instance, 22% of anglers are currently displaced due to crowding, whereas introducing a beat system could increase this to 33%. Therefore, any management intervention should be carefully tailored to the specific fishery and the objectives of the managing Fish & Game region.

While this survey has provided valuable insight into the extent of angler displacement and support for different management tools, it does not provide quantitative data on actual angler encounter rates. Nor does it establish a baseline for angler use or satisfaction against which to measure the impact of any future management intervention. Introducing a management tool without such baseline data would make it difficult to assess whether the tool is having the intended impact. This highlights the need for additional on river research, specifically focused on angler use patterns, encounter rates and satisfaction levels. Such monitoring would allow the CSIFGC to evaluate the impact of any management intervention and support adaptive management decisions based on measurable outcomes. Therefore, before any management decisions are made, the CSIFGC must first define its goals for the upper Ahuriri fishery. Once the goals have been determined, the management pathway will be dictated by that goal where appropriate management tools will be introduced if necessary to achieve such goal.

## 6. Goal options

- A. Retain a remote angling experience for resident anglers by maintaining a balanced 50/50 ratio of resident to non-resident use and minimising angler encounters per day.
- B. Retain a remote angling experience for all anglers by minimising angler encounters per day, regardless of angler origin.
- C. Maintain a semi-remote angling experience for all anglers by limiting encounters to moderate levels per day, recognising a moderate level of shared use while still preserving the perception of solitude.
- D. Maximise access and opportunity for all anglers, accepting higher levels of use and angler encounters in favour of maintaining open access and minimal restrictions.
- E. Defer goal setting until reviewing results of 2025/26 fishing season field survey of angler use, angler encounters and satisfaction on the upper Ahuriri River.

## 7. Management options

**Option 1:** Undertake a field-based angler use and satisfaction survey during the 2025/26 sports fishing season as part of a programmed compliance and monitoring effort. This option would provide essential on-river data to evaluate actual angler pressure, encounters, and perceptions, addressing current information gaps before progressing further in the PSF management pathway.

**Option 2:** Proceed to the next stage in the three-year PSF management pathway by implementing a voluntary beat system prior to the 2025/26 sports fishing season. This would be accompanied by an on-river field survey to monitor angler use, satisfaction, and the effectiveness of the beat system in reducing encounters and supporting the angling experience.

**Option 3:** Discontinue the current three-year PSF management pathway and take no further action at this time (status quo). Continue to maintain the complaint register and re-evaluate the situation after a three-year interval or in response to future evidence of degradation in angling experience or increased displacement.

## 8. Recommendation

### Goal A

**Retain a remote angling experience for resident anglers by maintaining a balanced 50/50 ratio of resident to non-resident use and minimising angler encounters per day. GOAL SETTING WAS DEFERRED TO A LATER DATE BY CSIFGC 24 JULY 2025.**

### Management Option 1

**Undertake a field-based angler use and satisfaction survey during the 2025/26 sports fishing season as part of a programmed compliance and monitoring effort. This option would provide essential on-river data to evaluate actual angler pressure, encounters, and perceptions, addressing current information gaps before progressing further in the PSF management pathway. ADOPTED BY CSIFGC 24 JULY 2025.**

### **Acknowledgments**

A big thank you to Stu Hayes from the University of Otago for meeting to discuss his displacement study on Otago and Southland rivers, and for providing helpful feedback on my survey. Thanks also to Cohen Stewart from Southland Fish & Game for revising survey questions and offering valuable input.

### **References**

1. Fish & Game New Zealand. *National Policy on Pressure Sensitive Fisheries Management*. 2022.
2. Harper, B. *Upper Ahuriri River PSF Investigation*. Central South Island Fish & Game. Internal Report, 2024.
3. Hayes, S., & Lovelock, B. *Angler Displacement on and from Pressure-Sensitive Rivers in Otago and Southland*. University of Otago, 2022.

## Appendices

**Appendix 1:** Summary of additional survey questions regarding respondents their past angling experience, demographic information, and any additional comments or suggestions.

Angling skill level	Percentage %	Count
Casual/beginner	5%	22
Intermediate	45%	202
Advanced	50%	227
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>451</b>

Sports fishing participation	Percentage %	Count
<1 year	1%	6
1-2 years	1%	4
2-5 years	2%	9
5-20 years	12%	52
>20 years	84%	380
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>451</b>

Sports fishing habits	Percentage %	Count
Every year	90%	407
Most years	5%	22
Some in the last 5 years	4%	19
Once or twice in last 10 years	1%	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>451</b>

Fishing behaviour	Percentage %	Count
Fish in a group	35%	159
Fish alone	65%	292
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>451</b>

Are you guided?	Percentage %	Count
No	97%	436
Yes	3%	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>451</b>

Age	Percentage %	Count
18-24 years old	1%	5
25-34 years old	2%	11
35-44 years old	10%	45
45-54 years old	11%	49
55-64 years old	24%	107
65-74 years old	35%	159
75 years or older	16%	73
Would rather not say	0%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>451</b>

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>	<b>Count</b>
Male	97%	433
Female	3%	13
<b>Would rather not say</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5</b>

<b>Additional comments</b>
A ballot system in January/February?
A beat system would be fantastic for this river. Making it a designated water where you have to pay for nothing and don't get a guaranteed beat would mean I would avoid it like the other DW rivers, it's a terrible idea. You pay money for nothing, it's just another tourist tax
A beat system would be very helpful. I would also be happy to discuss my views on the river and management of it in person or over the phone.
A great fishery with too easy access thus has been over fished particularly by visitors to the area who either don't understand angling etiquette or disregard it making some days challenging
A lot of YouTube content showing how great it is. Also often made by young itinerant tourists with the time to invest in striking this fishery at its best....
A magnificent fishery that needs protection
A special place that needs protection
A voluntary beat system in places on the Ahuriri could result in quite long beats, which would be okay compared to say, some of the short beats on for example the Mataura. If sections between access are broken into several beats, it would be good if each beat was say 3-4km.
Access can be difficult
Access is also an issue
Access is difficult
Access Limitations and any introduced fees should only apply to Professional guides or at least at a higher level.
Access to the river at Linda's lodge section would be good for older mobility impaired anglers
Aiming to fish early season only as too crowded from Christmas onwards
An ability to regulate angler numbers on a beat similar to that on the upper Matura River would work well. However, I expect (from conversations with anglers on the river this summer) that a higher level of restriction would be required to allow fairer access to a wider range of anglers
An outstanding area to visit and fish. I think guided fishing should be the first to face restrictions, maybe start with them.
An outstanding fishery. Amazing backdrop with good stock of fish - not necessarily easy to catch. I was with a guide and colleague. We encountered a few of other fishers - one of whom jumped ahead of us, however we still had a very successful day - capped off by staying the evening in the DOC hut at end of road track.

Anglers need to learn to share the river with other anglers. It worked well in the past.  
More access points through farmers property.

Anglers using non access points to jump in front.  
Guides attitudes. Dropped in front of me with 2 old American clients. He yelled obscenities at me and told me to find my own river. Disgusting

Angling pressure has steadily increased in the 35 years I have fished this part of the river. As a guide the maximum number of days I've done in one season has never exceeded 10 days. As a recreational angler I would not fish it more than 5 days a season. It appears from my observations that the number of large fish [ over 8lb] has dramatically decreased. Small to medium fish numbers seemed to have increased 2 seasons ago but the past two seasons they too seem to have declined.

Due to a slip at Canyon Creek[?] the river over the past few seasons was often coloured. That may have improved in the past couple of seasons? It was notable this year that the river experienced major flooding.

There is a common perception, rightly or wrongly, the further upstream you go the more pressure there becomes. This is no doubt, having accommodation at Birchwood [ DoC leased?] adds to that pressure. Camping by the river should not be permitted. By permitting it there is a the potential to "dominate" usage which is the very issue that Fish and Game councils strive to avoid.

The establishment of a voluntary beats system should be the first step of any intention to "manage" usage. In my experience MOST anglers have respected the system. Fish and Game surveys indicating that "angling experience" is often sighted as paramount to any angling enjoyment.

The Upper Ahuriri river represents the very pinnacle of angling experiences - it is most worthy of greater management by Fish and Game CSI

Any changes to the management of this river should in no way be to the advantage of guides.

Any restrictions applied should be in the first instance always applied to non resident anglers.  
Resident anglers should always have priority to go fishing without having to put up with guides and their clients

Any system in which individuals attempt to build and maintain a profitable business based on use of a shared public amenity is highly likely to create conflict with others who use that same public amenity for their pleasure and relaxation. Guiding as a business works in situations where the guide has access to private waters (as gillies do on some private river beats when fishing for salmon in Scotland), and where the guide offers services from their boat (as guides do on lakes and lochs where boats allow drifting down-wind onto feeding fish and in saltwater where a boat gives access to flats and other features). F&G sell licences to fish on rivers such as the upper Ahuriri River. Some guides attempt to corner these public resources for their private businesses. I support F&G's work to introduce control structures that prevent coercive control behaviours by guides and ask that the proposed changes are designed to give maximise time allocated to licensed individual anglers.

\*\*\* NOTE \*\*\* Earlier in the survey I responded that I fish more than 100 days in a season. Most of these days are outside of New Zealand. I fish in Australia, Scotland, Ireland and England.

Any tramper/hunter with a fishing license and rod passing a nice bit of water with a fish in it should be entitled to attempt to catch that fish for tea using legal means

As I've only fished the Ahuriri as far up as the Clay Cliffs area available access information to the upper river would be helpful especially for us older veterans.

Back country licence control.

Limit guided days and charge more for them.

Or have guided days, say, Monday to Wednesday and other Friday to Sunday with Thursday a rest day.  
!?

Backcountry

Beautiful area which is getting more publicity and which will only get busier.
Beautiful river. Do what we need to do to preserve it
Beautiful water with too many camper vans parked alongside the oxbows
Been hijacked by Ben Avon fishing lodges
By introducing a beat system our fishery will become more like the English system. People need to understand that more people fish today than before and you will encounter more people on the river. Grow up and accept this and move forward.
Catch and release only. Make it fly fishing only.
Caught my biggest ever fish here earlier this year.
Charge overseas anglers a high fee and limit days, make the fee small for NZ citizens and limit days.
Charge tourists more. They think our licence costs peanuts
Charge tourists ten times what we pay, it's our water not theirs, they will still come to NZ to fish
Close it off
Control of access by landowners is the most significant issue for me. Any restrictions put in place should not allow waters to be reserved for private fishing companies or guides
Crowd control as fishing is difficult and now moved to NSW will live in GY for a couple of months and fish 1-2 times a season
Definitely fewer numbers should be allowed!! And fly fishing only! Flyfishers generally practice c&r.
Didymo !!!!
Do not allow overseas visitors to fish the Ahuriri I have similar problems on other rivers and it is always guides with overseas customers
Do Not increase fees
Do what you think best. Keep looking after the river, in the best interest to all.
Do you have any additional comments or suggestions about fishing on the upper Ahuriri River?
Don't deprive Anglers their Freedom to roam
Don't ever allow farmers to suck it dry !
Drove by mid day was windy and did not have the time to fish it our first trip to NZ in Feb. Do plan to return some year. More parking/access points on all the rivers would be welcome to Senior anglers.
Fished the upper river once this season with a guide during mid-week. Every access point from the highway up to the upper reaches had anglers present. Fish were very few and far between and particularly shy. Suspect ongoing angling pressure. Support the introduction of a beat system if the beats were long enough and the fish population could support it. Thanks for the opportunity to participate. CM
Fishing Guides should be restricted to 3 to 5 days max per season and pay F & G for administration
For such a popular river there is usually somewhere you can fish and the canals im picking take a lot of pressure off the river
Get rid of the guides or charge them at least \$500 a day and the same for foreigners and cull the black shags.
Give us more access information and where actually allowed to go without upsetting farmers
Given the changeable weather patterns that the river is known for, introducing an additional fee will make it unattractive to visiting anglers who spend money and time in local towns.
Great river - wonderful environment and fishery
Great survey. That river needs a beat system at the very least. Maybe even DW status.

Have a booking or ballot system like the hunting system does
Haven't really had a chance to fish the upper section this year, when I tried to go in late March the road was closed.
Having to travel from Northland, our next expedition to the Ahuriri will be Feb-March 2026. Are the survey panel members able to organise decent weather?
I am a guide but I don't guide on the Ahuriri so have answered the questions as a recreational angler.
I am still to explore this region so are unable to make a suggestion based on experience.
I believe we should restrict some waters to NZ citizens only.....most people I run into on the more high profile rivers are tourists who can spend weeks fishing at a time.
I did much observing and in the upper reaches beyond drivable saw very little, fishing and fish were very hard to see.
I don't think there should be restrictions on any river. If you go in a ballot you might not get picked for years. I think people that come here from overseas and fish should be charged more.
I don't know the access point.
I feel like a stranger in my own country when in these special places and quite often overwhelmed by the amount of tourist fishing our rivers. Which is a bit heart breaking when us the Nzers have been contributing to this resource for a very long time and yet we allow tourist and guides to fully benefit from our life time contributions. Maybe fish and game should charge a hefty price for overseas visitors license say? 5 times the seasons price?
I fish here less as I always get jumped or walked down on. I find that unfortunate, as this is a beautiful location.
I fish regularly on Lake Benmore across the Ahuriri River mouth, so am interested in this fishery. Thanks
I fish that area in Late November so cannot access the upper section. I don't know why that restriction remains as I think it has a lot to do with how busy the upper gets when it eventually opens. If it opened earlier (like all the other rivers) I don't think it would get "flogged" like it currently does!? It is not only the fishing that attracts me to that upper section. I believe it is a visually stunning up there and that is one of the main reasons I love fly fishing in NZ for about 10 -15 days each year (I have been doing it every season for about 20 years). I have never killed a NZ fish either so all catch and release!
I fish the Ahuriri then go to the Dingleburn.
I fish the entire river and have every year since 1972/73 with my father and in more recent decades with my wife and children. While it's still a beautiful area to experience, the fishing has declined considerably (numbers and size) particularly in the last 8-10 years. Most recently a four day trip with 3 fishing buddies netted a total of 5 quite small browns, after collectively spending over 80 hrs at the river, using spin and fly. Most would agree that this isn't a good result. In comparison on opening morning for the lower Ahuriri in 2015 I returned 34 trout before lunch time, a good number of which were between 4 and 6 lb. Something has changed.
I fish the tarns rather than the river so my answers don't apply to the river itself. I have never encountered other anglers at these places.
I fished it this year for a few days. Pressure seemed normal. Worked out plans with other fishermen. I leave a note where I park regarding where I am going. Guides tend to jump me and are aggressive. Fishing still good, fish are healthy, I hope you leave it alone.

<p>I fished The Ahuriri just above the Longslip Creek in the last month. The entire day I saw no other anglers. Caught and released a couple of Rainbow trout. I normally fish the Ahuriri, Omarama and Grey River also limited fishing on the Lindis.</p> <p>I am a very keen newbie to fly-fishing and represent a very limited threat to the fish (all of which are released).</p> <p>I'd like to know if this agenda is being driven by professional guides and tourism operators, as opposed to grass roots recreational anglers?</p>
<p>I fished the part of the River up to 3kms from the Birchwood Road turnoff and only talked to one other Angler. Perhaps the angling pressure in further up towards Birchwood station and beyond. Just my observation</p>
<p>I generally have no desire to pick and choose days in advance to fish. The weather has a bigger determination and when it is right to go, I go. If a designated day has to be submitted and it cannot be used due to weather or other related issues it makes it less likely to fish there in the future. I see a pattern in these questionnaires and I suggest that guiding tours are complaining about access and giving their clients value. Well! The people here, deserve value also and O/Seas tourists should not be given more rights.</p>
<p>I have fished this area all my adult life, and in the past five years I have experienced a SIGNIFICANT increase in overseas anglers to the extent the fishing experience I have enjoyed in past years has been seriously degraded. In my view its high time overseas anglers paid a significant premium and had time limits imposed on their activities. Those that come here for months at a time, and many do, fish every day they are here. By contrast, I, and many of my angling friends are the same, fish upwards of twenty days a season. Guiding is another issue seriously effecting our waterways and one which deserves a separate survey in itself. Sadly this pressure is not just impacting on the fishing experience but on the fishery itself. In some areas fish are under so much pressure they lose condition as the season progresses. Its time to protect our fisheries for our grand children .</p>
<p>I have fished in Southland where the beat system is fantastic. Fishing is much less stressful</p>
<p>I have fished the Oreti river for 30 years but now that the new licencing system has come in I do not fish it anymore having paid for a day i could not fish because of inclement weather</p>
<p>I have fished the Upper Ahuriri River in the past as much for its scenic/solitude value as for its fishing. This state, however, has altered -especially over the past 10 years. As I live (retired) in the Mackenzie Basin area, I am able to find scenic solitude in other places such as the Tekapo River - in the mid-week days. Communication trends amongst fishing folks using Facebook/Youtube/Websites and the like have glorified/advertised many fishing locations so that their popularity is now extensive. I tend to avoid such places these days and look for the lesser visited locations.</p>
<p>I have fished the upper Ahuriri since the 1970's and you never had to worry about running into other anglers 30 years ago it started to get very busy with guides and their clients in the past I have seen up to 6 cars parked at or near the lagoons to many guides are killing it like other areas in CSI district</p>
<p>I have found the beat system in Otago and Southland very good and it seems to be working well. I have been a professional guide for 42 years thank you. No problem with other anglers cutting us off any more or confronting anglers on the river.</p>
<p>i have heard a lot of people fish it and the fishing guides have the monopoly</p>
<p>I have not fishing further up than 10 kilometer from Longslip creek.</p>
<p>I haven't experienced high pressure, but have run into what seem like highly pressured trout. Can be hard to find where the access are.</p>

I last fished the Ahuriri over 20 years ago so perhaps my opinion will not count.  
I never saw another angler on the river either. I thought that as the water was heavy and deep, most did not know how to tackle the fish that were there. I fished the stickles and pocket water with moderate success.  
If as I suspect, the water is under pressure I would Favor a beat system managed from the hotels at Otematata or Omarama on a first come, first served basis. There is plenty of alternative fishing of better quality in this area both river and lake.

I look forward to a beat system and a Designated River status to improve the river and fishing.  
I am a Southland Fish and Game councillor

I recently fished the Ahuriri just below Longslip Creek and would very much like to fish further upriver. If F&G believe that this is highly pressured river, I would support any efforts to protect the river, including limiting access.

I seldom see anyone else on the river apart from around the opening week. Certainly not crowded.

i think guided fishing in NZ is having a detrimental effect and I just wonder how much is done to mitigate this. last December I fished the upper reaches of the Uhuriri a stretch of only 400 meters and during the time there I encountered 2x professional guides . To me this just highlights the issue as I see . License checking -in all the years I have fished I have only had my license checked once.

I think the ballot system would be fair as on Greenstone, Caples. Would like to see rangers in there early season in particular prior to opening on the upper section ?, look for camper vans ?

I think the crowding is more weather or conditions driven. I visit every year and last December was as crowded as I have ever seen it on opening day, usually there's far less people there. I can't comment on post Christmas pressure as I do all of my NZ trips now in late November and early December.

I used to fish it most years when heading into the Dingle Valley for a fish. Lovely river with nice fish and scenery. But like many places, additional pressure and fishing guides have made it less attractive. Much like the Karamea and Mokihinui rivers in Buller where guides in helicopters jump in front of tramper anglers on the ground. As an angler since a young kid, I fish much less now because of this additional pressure and the anxiety connected to travelling and walking long distances, only to have guides or other anglers sneak or brazenly drop in front of you. Just a sign of the times. Once in the Crow River in the Karamea catchment a guide dropped two American anglers in about a 10 minute walk above Crow Hut where we were. No checking to see if anyone else was on the river (we were) or smoke coming out of the hut chimney (there was) and no apology from the guide when confronted. He didn't give a toss and just said, walk a couple of kms upstream to give his client's some room. Incredible arrogance. Back Country fishing was my passion but now I don't bother due to the lack of respect and the pursuit of overseas big bucks by guides. Rant over.

I want access this river by jet boat

I was unaware that there were problems on the upper Ahuriri River  
The existence of this survey suggests that there are problems,  
I presume these problems involve guides and helicopters, they usually do, though I don't know that.  
I am aware of such problems at various locations on similar rivers in the past.

I will get there one day.

I would be keen to ensure that access is maximized for resident fishers and a very high tariff is place on overseas fishers or commercial operations.

I would like to fish the upper Ahuriri river. So far I have only used the lower Ahuriri river.

I would like to fish there one day

I would like to keep arrangements as they are. Sometimes the upper Ahuriri gets quite busy in holiday times, but one can always find a quiet spot. It is part of the attraction to be able to wander freely and try different spots

I would like to see it opened in October

I would prefer a beat system like on the Oreti River where you park in front of a marker pole. The Upper Hurunui booking system has not worked as well as we all hoped it wouldn't. Not sure why but it was almost impossible to get on to it. Also beats should be resident anglers only on weekends and public holidays to give working kiwis a fair crack at the fishery.

I'm a keen trout fisher from Australia. I've travelled to NZ on seventeen occasions to fish the lakes and streams . I pay a higher licence fee because apparently us international anglers are making it difficult for local anglers to find good fishing locations and catch fish due to overcrowding . What a friggin joke ! I've just arrived home from my last visit to Southland . Our group complied with the beat system on the waikaia river, mataura river and fished the aparima river and mararoa river. In 11 days we didn't see another angler on the rivers we fished . Overcrowding ! What a load of crap. Our group spent \$20000 on our holiday . Keep putting up our licence fees and we'll go to Tasmania and spent our money there. Seems a shame that oz supports the kiwis in so many ways and you shaft us fishermen in return with higher licence fees and extra charges for fishing designated waters . So why not introduce the best system on the ahuriri river. In fact it's a very good idea . And then ban spin fishing as well so that purists can enjoy the benefits of fishing another great river with no fish in it . Regards Bk

I've never found it congested with too many anglers, but have only been fishing it the last two seasons.

I am amazed that this fishery isn't part of a designated waters system already

If a beat system is introduced it needs to be managed well as I have experienced issues with the system on the Matura

If numbers are limited, is it possible to allow vehicle access? (key pickup from Ahuriri or similar) Just a thought of how the river could be fully utilized to provide the back country experience easily.

If you are introducing management in this river you might want to consider only weekends in December and for 2-3 weeks over Xmas - outside of this time the river is not congested

If you introduce a beat system it will need a ranger or warrant office on the river from opening through to mid season. The moment you introduce a beat system its a green light to foreign anglers the river is special. Look at the Oreti, its now flagged as a special river. There is never an officer there, fishermen walk down mid beat, cars are left over night at the beat pegs. You need more presence on the rivers with beat systems, the upper Matarua for example is a joke with anglers jumping in. Bring in beat and bring more warranted officers

Increase the cost of licence for overseas anglers and limit their days.

Increased bureaucracy and cost ruin the angling experience. Installation of signs takes away the wild outdoor feeling and makes the experience more suburban. This stretch of river gets plenty of relief from any so called pressure by nature in the form of the frequent strong Norwester which makes fishing challenging in the extreme. Fishing in NZ is getting ever more subject to unnecessary regulation.

It can be a great fishery, can be some great trophy calibre fish in there but it also can get fished quite heavily over summer by guides and their clients. A beat system may potentially help eliminate the issue of guides cutting in on locals stretch of river they are fishing.

It concerns me that if in the area on a nice day you may not be able to fish the Ahuriri.

It has become oppressive due to the fishing pressure. The foreign anglers are ruining the fishing experience, and even the foreign anglers are saying this. I met multiple anglers from Europe this season that told me they were here for more than a month and trying to fish every day. Some had been coming for up to 30 years, every year except during Covid. Can we not introduce a limit on the days a non-resident can fish? Say, limit it to five days per year.
It is a beautiful area but the fishing experience will be harmed if there are too many anglers around.
It is a beautiful natural environment
It is a fine fishery, somewhat technical and unlikely to withstand too much fishing pressure. It's a risk going there because if other anglers are there it is not possible to manage with proper etiquette. A beat system with a fee would be OK provided it is not too expensive, but more for the purpose of controlling angling pressure and making for a better experience
It is a spectacular piece of water but it is very accessible to almost anyone, which is a bit of an issue. As Nth Canterbury F&G have found out with the upper Hurunui this season, a booking system can also have its problems for example creating a false demand.
it is one of my favourite parts of the world and breathtakingly beautiful.
It looks inviting!
It looks like a beautiful river. Only thing that would spoil it for me is guided anglers and their helicopters.
It sounds great, but high pressure and a lodge up there now.
Its a great river. I can count on one hand the times I have come across other anglers in the river over the last 20 years. I fish it every year as my in laws live up the road in otematata. Based on my experience I donate believe there is a need to introduce beat limits
It's a very beautiful place
Its a beautiful river
Its a great river. I feel an oreti style beat system would suit it well
Just need to say back when I was in my mid teens Dad and I camped at Birchwood lagoons regularly and fished the upper river extensively. It was rare to ever see another angler, magical! Revisited it in February this year and was disgusted by what has happened up there, struck multiple anglers including fishing guides and a bloody fishing lodge and most of our old access points now prohibited. Its a sad thing but I will never go back. My Dad, was the driving force behind the establishment of the Conservation Order on the river up there, he would roll in his grave if he knew what has become of the place. Good luck trying to sort the issue, but yes, crowding is an an issue in the upper Ahuriri
Keep it open as much as possible for every one enjoy. We are losing too much open access now But the new Minister for Hunting and Fishing is trying hopefully to address this issue
Lagoon fish smaller and in bigger numbers
leave it alone
leave it alone stop introducing exorbitant backcountry fees to foreign fishers who in the vast majority release all their fish and perhaps concentrate more on the locals who in the vast majority keep most fish to ( as they say ) feed the family friends and anyone else I also feel the questions were loaded because if i say i totally disagree with any restrictions i should not have to answer the question about what if restrictions were on how much would i fish It makes it sound like its a fait accompli to me .
Leave it alone, we need less bureaucracy
Leave things alone!
Liarse with the local authority to repair the washed out road before the season opens
Licence fees are too cheap for international visitors. I recently fly fished in Mongolia and the licence was close to \$1,000 for the period I was there.. Please re look at the number of international visitors
Like all nz rivers too many people rules. Ruining the beauty of fly fishing.

Like most wilderness rivers the Ahuriri is overfished due to excessive publicity by Fish and Game
Limit the access of guided parties or those who make a living from it. Moneyed parties or those who pay to fish (not meaning licence holders) feel that that gives them a right of passage over locals and they need to get their moneys worth. Trout fishing is or should be a restful recreational sport.
Limit the access of overseas fishers as has the Upper Oreti. Multiple episodes of guides cutting us off as they have "paying overseas clients".
Looking forward to checking it out next season.
Looking forward to going there this Season A friend l8cal to that area has invited me to go with him to fish the Ahuriri
Looking forward to it
Looking forward to the day.
Love the wild scenic values of the valley, and the opportunity to fish there - often catch and release.
Lovely river, usually fished at short notice. People/anglers need to be less greedy about how much river they want to hog for themselves. share it with others, fish less water and fish it properly. I've to often seen anglers charge through half arse fishing seeing how far they can go then bitch about someone else being there. MY SUGGESTION; A directive in the regulations to; Remind anglers they do not have any more right to a stretch than any other angler and to share the water with good grace.
Lovely river. I fished with 2 others. We encountered very few other anglers during the 3 days out of 10 that we fished the area. Applying the proposed changes would make it very difficult for overseas groups to visit and make daily fishing decisions based on the conditions. We would select other areas to fish, to the detriment of the Omarama and Twizel communities where we rented accommodation, bought groceries/alcohol/fuel and patronised restaurants. Charging extra to cover additional administration associated with the proposals would be unreasonable given the high cost of a season licence for non-NZ residents.
Make it a designated water - less days for non-NZ citizens, require full season license to fish, no short-duration licenses allowed.
Make it fly fish only, the spin fishing is killing fish Reduce the catch and keep I have seen fish stocks drop over the last few years
management is probably needed. If this is done it must be enforced fairly
More ranger controllers and fly only
More rangers on the ground
Mostly I do not travel outside the North Canterbury area to fish.
My experience Early Feb this year was quite surprising. was at the tarns for 5.30am, every access point above was already taken (mainly fisherman camping overnight)
My father would fish the Ahuriri frequently some 60 to 70 years ago. It was one of his favorite rivers. Each year as we pass on the way to the ski fields I promise myself to wet a fly. Unfortunately time is running out, but...
My response may be slightly biased by my age of 82 and consequent slowing down:)
Needs some restrictions to properly manage a less crowded fishery
Needs to be managed
New Zealand is to full and still asking more people to come
No guides allowed
No need for restrictions, encourage angling etiquette, plenty of space and fish for all.

No resident angling needs to be curtailed a lot. NR angling should be managed at a level that does not compromise the quality of the experience for kiwis. If a non resident was allowed to fish a beat say one day once a month would be about right
No, but I recently fished the lower Ahuriri and had a fantastic day. One of the best fisheries I have ever experienced
No, just want to get there.
No. This a special place and always fish when I have time.
None, but I welcome being asked in matters of this kind - well done
Not at this stage. Need to learn fly fishing correct technique
Not having fished the upper region of the river but certainly the lower i believe it is similar to the upper reaches of southland rivers largely dominated by foreign fishermen and guides destroying the wonderful wilderness experience of my younger days i feel an alien in my own land many of them are aggressive Australians who think because they have paid a parasitic guide who pays nothing but ruin our heritage for money its extremely bitter and for most part avoid fishing the places i loved.Its easy to see why with modern communications and individual fishermen posing on line with what would be trophy fish by overseas standards and guides advertising for gain and reputation itâ€™s no wonder overseas fishermen want to come and unwittingly swamp our sensitive fisheries. Southland has come up with a system that goes some way to controlling it but for me guides are still thrashing those places far too often for me its ruined and what ever is done sadly it can never return to the great days i have had the privilege to experience by fishing those places freely on any day or time without fishing by permit or any other controls or limitations
Not really but just know it is beautiful fishing river
Not specifically - for what it is worth I believe the \$37 per day license for a non residence is a rip off. I have no problem at all knowing my funds go toward the fisheries which is great - however given the total spend of flights and accommodation and all fishing related spending whilst in NZ I think this is unfair. - given a resident pays a fair price for an entire season - I think \$20 is fairer (but who cares what Aussies think right!) I have fished the Ahuriri approx half a dozen times over about 30 years - it was always a challenge compared to other rivers - I certainly caught a few very nice fish but more of a quality rather than quantity river from my experience - for example compared to the Mataura river. I hope this helps.
on the one time I fished here I had the whole river to myself
only drove up to the upper this summer to investigate access, access points and see how many vehicles were there. The quality of the water was exciting. However fishing from the lake upstream to the bridge one day was also slightly crowded with both guides and non guides encountered 4 times.
Only fished once early in the season and had problems finding a reasonably clear stretch of river as I prefer to sight fish with fly.
Only just recently have I felt confident enough to venture up the Ahuriri alone, but I have put it off whole waiting for top weather and river conditions. (I've fished the lower reaches instead.) I've also been looking for more information. And I need to buy a PLB!
Open up more access to river to spread people out. The Lindis lodge and the two other hunting fishing lodges /accommodation have taken over the river and forced anglers to bunch up. The recent designated waters edict has the affect on any and all quality waters that are left to be over utilized. Making one more river to be over regulated will only have the same effect on some other sections of the same river as well as other area quality rivers Limit the number of guide days if you feel the need to regulate something.
Overseas anglers are prolific and tend t fish in groups. Some restrictions on number of days they can fish would be helpful
Overseas anglers should pay a fee for fishing the Ahuriri.

perhaps no professional guiding allowed on this river
Please no designated water on the upper Ahuriri river. Thanks a lot
Pressure from Guides with paying customers in upper river catchments is placing too much pressure on waterways. Limits to foreigners time on waters and charging a fee to them to cover costs (and not charging locals) should be considered.
Probably by the time i have time to fish here i will be too old to manage the walk!!
Protecting the fishery is important and as we have not fished it in our last few trips due to high flows, I have not experienced too much angling pressure. I would hope that correct angler etiquette would resolve most issues and if its crowded there is always good water elsewhere to fish! one of the reason we love fishing CSI region and we always have success. Cheers
Provide more information re what makes the Ahuriri such a precious taonga (treasure) and what can be done or is needed to preserve hits splendour - suggestion - prevent over-fishing per limiting the eligibility of those who may fish there.
Remembering that we need to be looking after our waterways for New Zealanders. Guides and international guests shouldn't be given more rights/easier access to the waterways. I'm not saying they are but something to be mindful of.
Remove the private only fishing area. Rivers should all have public access.
Restrict livestock grazing if not already capped. Move the animals to pastures farther away from the river.
Return to fly fishing only,Make it catch and release above longslip creek.Guides to pay a fee if management system changed,ie beat system.
<p>Several things if I may please</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The river has had some big rainfall events down through it and often pushes the fish to the lake</li> <li>2. There are too many easily accessible access point (especially past the Lindis hotel)</li> <li>3. Until recently I would fish there 5-6 times a season as used to live in Dunedin and it was fine but guides and large numbers of overseas anglers have made this a very busy and congested river with many bad behaviours on display in terms of etiquette, in particular "jumping" in front of others or ignorantly walking down on others (even when notes are displayed in vehicles).</li> <li>4. The Lindis hotel treat this like their river and all the private property signs have lessened access points in the middle of the Birchwood Road section.</li> <li>5. I have fished this river for &gt;5 years and never seen a fish and game ranger.</li> <li>6. There are not the numbers of fish in the last few years that there have been in the past.</li> <li>7. Camping is not policed and folks do this to be first on the water. To this point I have never seen a DOC ranger in my time either.</li> </ol> <p>Thank you for recognising there are challenges on this river. Happy to be contacted if further clarification is needed.</p> <p>Many thanks</p>
Sign postings regarding angler etiquette
Since a beat system was introduced on the Matarua I have stopped fishing at Nokomai Road and upstream. Bring in a beat system and you will have one less person fishing the Ahuriri which I suppose that is what you are aiming for.(i.e. Cutting the number of independent NZ fisherman and looking after guides and their customers}.
since covid the have been more backpacker or influencer anglers with youtube channels and drones, who camp by the river and start early, fishing with drones and cameras to get their videos. it spoils the backcountry experience

Since the Lindner Group has bought some significant station areas access to a major part of the upper river has been severely impacted.
Social media has "advertised" the river to the world - benefits only those making these videos. Access restricted because of Lindis Resort - needs to be opened up. No management of area by DOC - vehicles driving on river bed destroying nesting areas and camping anywhere. ironic given that protecting the riverbed was the main reason Birchwood farm was purchased and closed down by Govt.
some beats would be good, signs for an anglers car to say fishing upstream beat or downstream and then common courtesy should prevail, this season some anglers were getting a bit toey
Some fishing guides take over a stretch of river for their clients, they do not tend to reach any compromise so everybody can have a share and enjoy their days fishing. The restrictions and costs should be placed on the guides.
Some form of allocation is required and catch and release might help the problem
Stop bloody tourists. They are a curse.
Stop overnight camping, leave regulations the same
stop professional guides on this river
stop the dairy pollution on alluvial soils causing degradation of our rivers and lakes
Stop the Nitrate levels rising that have exceeded their current consent on the farms and then going into River from the Dairy Farms. The consent expires this year. Benmore and the Lower river will end up being a mess.
Strictly monitor and enforce ALL fishers to hold current licences Enforce guides to hold special licences
suggest the road be better maintained
Thank you Fish and Game for looking into the management of the Upper Ahuriri River fishery. It has been a favourite place of mine to fish with friends in the past but the number of anglers in recent years has made it not worthwhile to go up there, especially in the popular months of January and February where the fishing can be awesome. The road along the river has allowed for people to access the river all over the place, making it difficult to secure a decent stretch of water. I believe a beat system could work well here. Once again, thanks for looking into it. I look forward to seeing what management practices may be put into place.
Kind regards
The access road is very rough. Didimo is always there.
The Ahuriri is a great candidate for the voluntary beat system. Thank you for taking the time to cavas the license holders! Cheers Anton
The beat systems in the back country locations seem to work quite well and the guide I have used was very much in favour....as long as all have their opportunities for access. As an Australian angler I can see that it must cater for New Zealand anglers so that the beat system rivers can be fairly accessed by local anglers and not outbid by mostly foreign anglers (like myself) with guides .
The fluctuating flows and colouring of the water makes it difficult to book a day far in advance. I always adjust my fishing depending on the conditions and pressure.
The lagoons should perhaps be left as open beats.
The new designated waters system is severely flawed. For a visiting angler to pay 270 dollars and only get 5 designated days is a crime. What a shame .10 or 15 would be WAY FAIRER.

The no access signs up the valley are very intimidating and upsetting. Why should a landowner restrict access to the river so their rich, fee paying clients get special privilege and access.
The only "issue" I have encountered here is anglers parking at an access point then walking downstream and fishing back to their access point which means we came upon them early in our fishing upstream. They knew we were there but still chose to drop in on us. A beat system would hopefully "educate" others on how to fish a stream
The pressure is ridiculous. The day I was there, I managed to fish 150 metres before encountering 2 other anglers. My wife was cycling and saw a guide with 8 guests slightly further up. The fancy lodges there put undue pressure on a national resource. There is now a well beaten track in the grass along both sides of the river for about 10 kilometres. It's a disgrace - ban guides, and use a permit system.
The pressure on all rivers is increasing and I agree that more management is required. Any system needs to ensure that it is not dominated by guides keeping locals out.
The quality of my angling experience in the region has definitely been impacted by increasing angler pressure. I have become very aware of a significant increase in highly skilled Australian anglers on all our high country waters. Some are extremely 'pushy' and go to great lengths to 'claim' a favoured beat. Guides do a good job of managing potential conflict but by far the majority are fishing independently. I always seem to find a couple of quiet stretches on the Tekapo. Whilst the fish are smaller than those of the Ahuriri it is normally a more satisfying experience for me.
The restriction to regular overseas anglers with the 5 days limit on some rivers have made me less likely to visit NZ in the future
The river is getting used by other tourists for tramping and kayaking down which affects the fishing. They pay nothing for this however I need to pay for a license to fish. Maybe these people should pay to use the river also.
the river is often discoloured
The river suffered badly with work clearing foliage around lower ahuriri some years ago
The road is very rough which makes access more difficult.This is probably a good thing .
The Street to the upper ahuriri is extremely bad...a lot of potholes. To bad for a campervan. So it's difficult or not possible to drive further in the upper part.
The upper Ahuriri has more spring creek tributaries than any other river I know. These need to be protected strongly. If I were younger and fitter I would fish this river more.
The upper Ahuriri remains one of the most spectacular trout fishing rivers
The upper Ahuriri river should be freely accessible by New Zealand anglers but have some restrictions on use by overseas anglers. Important to preserve what can be a great experience. Pressure on the lower Ahuriri should be monitored if changes are made to access arrangements for the upper river. Access to the river below Longslip Creek should be improved. Repeated poisoning of Lagarosiphon in the Ahuriri delta in Lake Benmore has been highly detrimental to the fishing experience in this area in my opinion. It was until recent times one of my favourite fishing venues but not so much now: I did not visit it this season.
Then Lindis lodge should not get preferential treatment. It should be mandatory for all foreigners to use a guide. All brown trout should be released
This is a wonderful river and should be carefully looked after.
This pristine valley and river must be protected at all cost.
This river is known as a mid-Summer cicada and terrestrials fishery. That is when the best fishing may be, and the most pressure. I have never fished it then because I don't like combat angling. I fished it in April, as less anglers, but the Sockeye salmon were in the upper river by then, and detracted from the angling experience, so I have not returned. It is high on my list of rivers to fish one day, ideally in January or February, and I would strongly support a voluntary beat system to distribute anglers better over the river. Keep up the great work.

<p>To safeguard the fishery there has to be control. I think there should be no camping or overnight stays. The top reaches seem to be controlled by DOC who lease the huts so you don't know if there is someone fishing!</p> <p>Fish numbers have reduced, especially size so I gather this is from pressure.</p> <p>A survey should be conducted on the busiest periods by staff on the river as this will help Fish and Game understand the situation. Not just a single visit but continuous over weeks.</p>
Too crowded these days
Too many fishermen
Too many overseas fishermen. Too much of the river dominated by The Lindis luxury lodge
Too many tourist anglers and guides
<p>Unfortunately this river is the same as any other rivers in NZ, more guides and their clients visit more often, put pressure to the fish and that gives unpleasant fishing experience to us.</p> <p>I have stopped buying the whole season licence a few years ago and just buy a day licence when I feel like to go fishing now.</p> <p>If I found a river with full of healthy fat fish and I could fish like in the past relaxed, I would buy the whole season pass again. Till then I would rather stop putting more pressure to the poor skinny fish by me catching them.</p> <p>Sad,,,</p>
very fragile crowding ruins the mystery of the experience
Very frustrating when people jump in front of you on this river
Voluntary beat season great. Charge more for foreginer tourists, a lot more..
Want to fish to it
<p>When flying my Hang Glider in the area I have wondered about the access for people fishing the area. Also haven't noticed that many fish in the river around the Hang Glider Lauching/Landing zone. I do tend to take my fishing gear when flying and have been known to flog the water to a foam in the a Tekapo Basin ...LOL</p>
When traveling south I generally stop and fish the Auriri.
<p>While I am a permanent resident in Otago I have a house in Omarama and regularly spend time there. My normal fishing area is the Upper branch of the Ahuriri River. While I have found crowding there on occasion, it only happens a couple times a year. I would not like to see access become more restricted. If it does become restricted then I hope anyone how ahs a house in the area is not excluded in favor of guides and those who can afford them. I have also found the behavior of all who are fishing the area (including guides) to be respectful and considerate to others fishing there.</p>
<p>While I would like to fish the Upper Ahuriri, there are plenty of other options in the MacKenzie basin available that have much less pressure and are accessible if you know how. From what I have heard of 'beat systems', they seem to be problematic particularly with some guides who seem to think they have a priority over other anglers because they have paying customers. I might add that our guide with whom we have been fishing with for 25 years has total respect for other anglers and will take us miles away from anyone if they have found his desired location first.</p>
Why can't you just make it a designated water ?
Wild camping in the upper valley should be strictly controlled.
<p>Wonderful destination. I live in Australia, and every trip, twice a year I find time for a few days fishing the upper Ahuriri. Never had trouble with too many fishermen, in fact often never see another. Catch a reasonable amount of fish and return nearly all. Keep the odd one if I think it will not survive the release.</p>
Wonderful experience fishing this river
Would love to fish this river but the guiding and overseas pressure makes this an unattractive option.

Yes get rid of guides
-----------------------

yes would be nice.
--------------------

## Appendix 2: Final version of all survey questions

### Ahuriri River Pressure Sensitive Fishery Management Survey Questions

---

#### Section 1: Fishing Experience on the upper Ahuriri

**Q1: Have you ever fished the upper Ahuriri River (above Longslip Creek confluence, also known as the Birchwood Road section)?**

- Yes
- No, but I plan to
- No, but I have thought about it
- No, and I do not intend to

**Logic:**

- **If Yes, proceed to Section 2 (Fishing Experience on the upper Ahuriri).**
- **If No, but I plan to; or; No, but I have thought about it, skip to Section 14 (Perceptions of the upper Ahuriri).**
- **If No, and I do not intend to, boots out of survey/submit form.**

---

#### Section 2: Fishing Experience on the upper Ahuriri

**Q2: Which of the following best describes your typical angling day on the upper Ahuriri River?**

- I have always fished with a guide
- I sometimes fish with a guide, but my fishing is mainly self-directed
- I do not fish with a guide

**Q3: Thinking about the upper Ahuriri River, which statement best reflects your fishing activity?**

- I fish here, and about as often as I did in the past
- I fish here, and more often than I did in the past
- I fish here, but less often than I did in the past
- I fished here in the past but don't fish here anymore
- I have only fished here once in my life

**Logic:**

- **If “I fish here, and about as often as I did in the past”, proceed to Section 6**
- **If “I fish here, more often than I did in the past”, proceed to Section 3**
- **If “I fish here, but less often than I did in the past”, proceed to Section 4**
- **If “I fished here in the past but don't fish here anymore”, proceed to Section 5**
- **If “I have only fished here once in my life”, proceed to Section 6**

---

**Section 3: Fishing more****Q4: What is the main reason why you fish the upper Ahuriri River more often than before?**

- Fish/fishing-related factors (e.g., more fish, increasing quality of fishing)
- The fishery has become less crowded
- Time (e.g., more time)
- Access (e.g., easier getting to the river)
- Other reason(s) (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Logic: All answers proceed to Section 6**

---

**Section 4: Fishing less****Q5: What is the main reason why you fish the upper Ahuriri River less often than before?**

- Fish/fishing-related factors (e.g., fewer fish, declining quality of fishing)
- The fishery has become too crowded
- Time constraints
- Access issues (e.g., difficulty getting to the river)
- Other reason(s) (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Logic: All answers proceed to Section 6**

---

**Section 5: Stopped fishing****Q6: What is the main reason why you stopped fishing the upper Ahuriri River?**

- Fish/fishing-related factors
- The fishery has become too crowded
- Time constraints
- Access issues
- Other reason(s) (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Logic: All answers proceed to Section 6**

---

**Section 6: Period of season****Q7: When was the last year you fished the upper Ahuriri River?**

- 2015-2025
- 2000-2014
- Prior to 2000

**Q8: Thinking about the last season you fished the upper Ahuriri River, what period of the season did you do most of your fishing in?**

- Early season (Dec)
- Mid-season (Jan-Feb)
- Late season (March–April)
- I fished evenly across multiple parts of the season

**Q9: Do you avoid a specific part of the season when fishing the upper Ahuriri River?**

- Yes
- No

**If Yes, proceed to Section 7.**

**If No, proceed to Section 13.**

---

**Section 7: Period of season**

**Q10: What period of season do you avoid?**

- Early season (Dec)
- Mid-season (Jan-Feb)
- Late season (March-April)

**If “Early season (Dec)”, proceed to Section 8**

**If “Mid-season (Jan-Feb)”, proceed to Section 9**

**If “Late season (March-April)”, proceed to Section 10**

---

**Section 8: Avoid early season**

**Q11: What is the main reason why you avoid fishing early season?**

- Fish/fishing-related factors (e.g., fewer fish, quality of fishing)
- The fishery has become too crowded
- Time constraints
- Other

**Logic:**

**All answers proceed to Section 11**

---

**Section 9: Avoid mid-season**

**Q12: What is the main reason why you avoid fishing mid-season?**

- Fish/fishing-related factors (e.g., fewer fish, quality of fishing)
- The fishery has become too crowded
- Time constraints
- Other

**Logic:**

**All answers proceed to Section 11**

---

**Section 10: Avoid late season**

**Q13: What is the main reason why you avoid fishing late season?**

- Fish/fishing-related factors (e.g., fewer fish, quality of fishing)
- The fishery has become too crowded
- Time constraints

- Other

**Logic:**

All answers proceed to Section 11

---

**Section 11: When change occurred**

**Q14: Approximately what year (season) did this change happen?**

- \_\_\_\_\_

**Q15: While avoiding the upper Ahuriri River during a specific season, did you/do you regularly fish and waterway?**

- Yes
- No

If “Yes” proceed to Section 12

If “No” proceed to Section 13

---

**Section 12: Alternative fishery**

**Q16: What is the name of this alternative waterway?**

- \_\_\_\_\_

All answers proceed to Section 13

---

**Section 13: Support for Management Mechanisms**

**Q17: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The upper Ahuriri River fishery would benefit from a voluntary beat system to minimise anglers having unexpected encounters with each other.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Q18: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The upper Ahuriri River fishery would benefit from restrictive management mechanisms to control crowding/angler conflict (examples could include allocation of days, limits to use etc).**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Q19: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: If restrictive management mechanisms were introduced on this river I would be prepared to pay an increased administrative charge.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Q20: If a voluntary beat system was introduced on the upper Ahuriri River, which of the following best describes how you would respond?**

- I would continue fishing here as usual.
- I would fish here more.
- I would fish here less.
- I would stop fishing here.

**Q21: If restrictive management mechanisms (allocation of days, limit on use) were introduced on the upper Ahuriri River, which of the following best describes how you would respond?**

- I would continue fishing here as usual.
- I would fish here more.
- I would fish here less.
- I would stop fishing here.

**All answers proceed to Section 17**

---

#### **Section 14: Perceptions of the upper Ahuriri**

**Q22: If you have never fished the upper Ahuriri, but plan to or have thought about it, which of the following is the main factor as to why you have not?**

- Fish/fishing-related factors
- The fishery is too crowded
- Time constraints
- Access issues
- Lack of information/knowledge about this fishery
- Other reason(s) (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Logic:**

**All participants who completed Section 16 will proceed to Section 17**

#### **Section 15: Angling Experience**

**Q23: How would you rate your angling skill level?**

- Advanced
- Intermediate
- Casual/Beginner

**Q24: How long have you been participating in freshwater sport fishing?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1–2 years
- 2–5 years
- 5–20 years
- More than 20 years

**Q25: Which of the following best describes your freshwater sport fishing habits?**

- I go freshwater sport fishing every year
- I go freshwater sport fishing most years
- I have gone freshwater sport fishing several times in the last 5 years
- I have only gone freshwater sport fishing once or twice in the last 10 years

**Q26: This season 2024/25, approximately how many days did you go trout fishing? (Please state the number of days, e.g., 1, 5, 10)**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- 

## **Section 16: Demographics**

**Q27: Which of the following best describes you?**

- I am a New Zealand citizen/permanent resident and live in Central South Island
- I am a New Zealand citizen/permanent resident and live in North Canterbury
- I am a New Zealand citizen/permanent resident and live in Otago
- I am a New Zealand citizen/permanent resident and live in Southland
- I am a New Zealand citizen/permanent resident and live outside of Central South Island/North Canterbury/Otago/Southland
- I am not a New Zealand Citizen/ permanent resident

**Q28: In general, when fishing in New Zealand, do you usually fish alone or as part of a group?**

- I usually fish alone
- I usually fish as part of a group

**Q29: Are you a fishing guide?**

- Yes
- No

**Q30: What is your age?**

- 18–24 years old
- 25–34 years old
- 35–44 years old
- 45–54 years old
- 55–64 years old
- 65–74 years old
- 75 years or older
- Would rather not say

**Q31: What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- Would rather not say

**Q32: Do you have any additional comments or suggestions about fishing on the upper Ahuriri River?**

(Open text box)