

Sport Fish Regulations Survey 2021

Results of Sport Fish Regulations Survey, November 2021

Baylee Kersten, Fish & Game Officer, November 2021

Summary

West Coast sports fishing licence holders were surveyed regarding three regulation proposals as part of the West Coast Fish and Game Council's three yearly regulation review. The survey revealed that it is estimated; 88% of licence holders support the implementation of a season bag limit of six sea-run salmon on the West Coast, 77% of licence holders support the implementation of a single hook rule for South Westland lakes, and 84% of licence holders support the closure of Lake Haupiri over the winter season. Anglers were also asked if there were any other regulations they wish to be considered for change, and they are now listed in the appendix five for the Fish and Game Council to review. Staff Recommendations: That the council receives this report. That it be included under the West Coast angling ethics and widely publicized that - Fish & Game encourages a maximum take of six of sea-run salmon per season on the West Coast. That the use of single hook should be encouraged in South Westland lakes and the proposed regulation be revisited in 2024 regulation review in combination with a survey to assess the success of voluntary usage. That Lake Haupiri be closed over the winter season (1st May to 30th September). That the council reviews suggested changes to regulations listed in appendix five.

Introduction

Following the December 2015 West Coast Fish and Game Council Meeting, it is now West Coast Fish and Game policy “*That the West Coast Fish and Game Council conduct a consultation process with licence holders regarding key regulation proposals being considered for implementation in sufficient time to enable the feedback to be considered for regulation setting in 2016 and use this as a basis for a 3 yearly regulation set to be reviewed 3 yearly.*” West Coast licence holders were surveyed again in 2018 and now six years on from the policy being formed, another review and survey is due. During the last three years both the South Westland lake's salmon populations and the winter closure of smaller West Coast lakes have been very topical at both the council table and discussions with licence holders. This discussion formed the basis of the following three regulation proposals that were put out for consultation, approved by the West Coast Fish and Game Council at their October 2021 meeting.

Method

The survey was carried out using Survey Monkey which is an online survey provider. West Coast Adult and Family Licence holders were sent an email that included a link to the survey, as well as stating that they have a chance to have their say on Freshwater Sports Fish Regulations. The email was sent on the Wednesday the 3rd of November 2021, and the survey closed on Friday the 19th of November 2021. Giving West Coast licence holders 16 days to complete the survey if they wished to have say on the proposed regulation changes or suggest any other potential changes. Of the 2,206 invited to participate, 242 completed the survey, that being 11% of invited licence holders.

For the purpose of this report all graphs will be given as percentages to allow ease of comparison. Given that every West Coast licence holder with a valid email address was encouraged to participate,

all was done to ensure the survey is representative of the West Coast licence holder population. For the survey questions please refer to appendix one.

Results

The survey revealed that it is estimated 88% of licence holders support the implementation of a season bag limit of six sea-run salmon on the West Coast.

Q1 Do you support or oppose the implementation of a season bag limit?

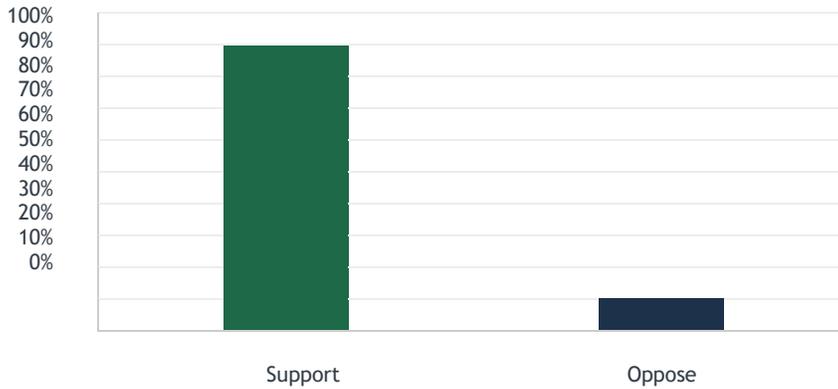


Figure 1: West Coast licence holders' stance on the implementation of a season bag limit of six sea-run salmon on the West Coast.

The survey revealed that it is estimated 77% of licence holders support the implementation of a single hook rule for South Westland lakes.

Q2 Do you support or oppose the implementation of a single hook rule for South Westland Lakes?

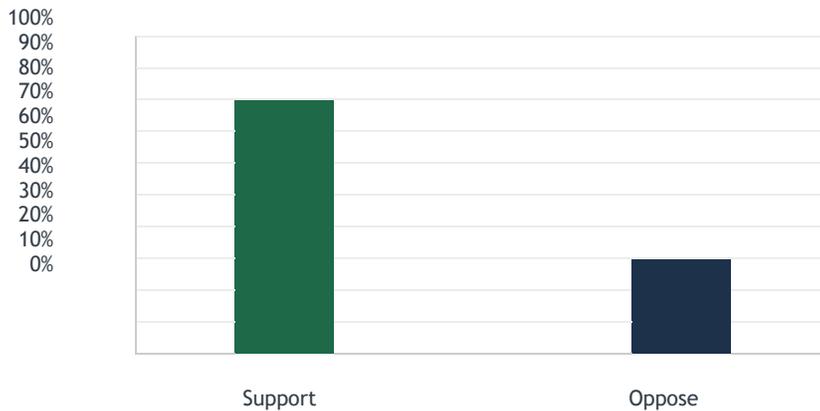


Figure 2: West Coast licence holders' stance on the implementation of a single hook rule for South Westland Lakes.

The survey revealed that it is estimated 84% of licence holders support the closure of Lake Haupiri over the winter season (1st May to 30th September)

Q3 Do you support or oppose the closing of Lake Haupiri over the winter season?

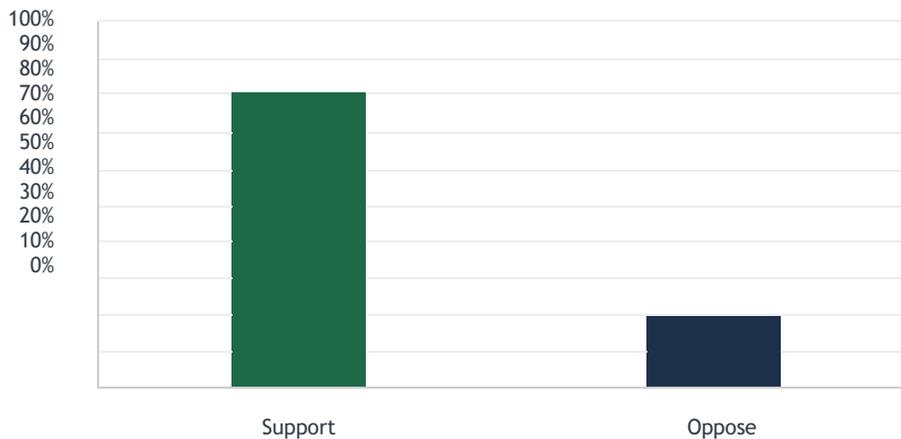


Figure 3: West Coast licence holders' stance on the implementation of the closure of Lake Haupiri over the winter season.

Discussion

The implementation of a season bag limit of six sea-run salmon on the West Coast

Despite 88% of survey responders supporting the implementation of the season bag limit, it comes with a significant financial and compliance burden to address a low occurring issue of individuals exceeding salmon numbers of which a majority of angler's view beyond what's acceptable. Regulations need to be based on protecting the fishery followed by maximizing opportunities for anglers. Without any evidence to support that the few anglers that harvest high numbers of salmon are having a detrimental effect on the population we can only encourage ethical angling behavior. Lastly the season bag limit creates another barrier to participation with additional regulations and the requirement to hold a season bag limit card, likely causing confusion and an imposition, resulting in reduced participation. Therefore, its recommended that it be included under the West Coast angling ethics and widely publicized that - Fish & Game encourages a maximum take of six of sea-run salmon per season on the West Coast.

The implementation of a single hook rule for the South Westland lakes

With 77% of survey responders supporting the implementation of a single hook rule for South Westland lakes it still leaves a significant portion of opposed anglers. With no scientific evidence to support the anecdotal reports and not wanting to force unnecessary restriction on anglers a

voluntary approach should be adopted. Therefore, it is recommended the use of single hook should be encouraged in South Westland lakes in hope of improving catch and release survival.

The proposed regulation should be revisited again during the 2024 regulation review in combination with a survey of anglers to assess adoption of the single hook and their experiences in doing so.

The closure of Lake Haupiri over the winter season (1st May to 30th September)

With 84% of survey responders supporting the closure, evidence of a seasonal influx of spawning trout, the findings of the recent survey of Lake Poerua being a similar fishery, and lastly it being an abnormality to current regulations there is good rationale to implement the closure. Therefore, its recommended that Lake Haupiri be closed over the winter season (1st May to 30th September).

Staff Recommendations

- That the council receives this report.
- That it be included under the West Coast angling ethics and widely publicized that - Fish & Game encourages a maximum take of six of sea-run salmon per season on the West Coast.
- That the use of single hooks should be encouraged in South Westland lakes and the proposed regulation be revisited in 2024 regulation review in combination with a survey to assess the success of voluntary usage.
- That Lake Haupiri be closed over the winter season (1st May to 30th September).
- That the council reviews suggested changes to regulations listed in appendix five.

Appendices

Appendix One: West Coast Fish and Game - Sport Fish Regulations Survey Questions

Q1: Do you support or oppose the implementation of a season bag limit?

Q2: Do you support or oppose the implementation of a single hook rule for South Westland Lakes?

Q3: Do you support or oppose the closing of Lake Haupiri over the winter season?

Q4 Do you have any suggestions or any regulations that you would like to see reviewed?

Appendix Two: Feedback on Question One: The implementation of a season bag limit of six sea-run salmon on the West Coast.

- one man got 15 salmon in lake maparika over the season over 8 wks ??? . one boat trawling whataroa river 4 yrs ago got 20 salmon for season ?? and had sometimes 2 or 3 others in boat to get more when salmon where there ?? some people flog it to death, you shouldnt be allowed to trawl from a boat on rivers ?? plus alot mor people fishing and fish not getting repaced , in rivers, ???put more fish in rivers and lakes ??
- How will compliance monitoring work?
- good
- A little bit of pain for hopefully generational gain

- Not sure how you would enforce it
- How will this be enforced? If it is to rely on honesty of anglers it will be a total failure.
- The resource is under quite a bit of pressure and doesn't need to be exploited by a few greedy people.
- Have'nt caught a salmon in the last 23 years and never fished those lakes
- Supported as not every one catches Salmon, plus two a season seems a little unjust
- This is an unusual fishery and needs to remain an amateurs dream
- It would be better if the daily bag limit was increased to say three so anglers can make good use of days when the salmon are taking and it's possible to get more than one .
- I note that the East Coast of the South Island has a season limit of two salmon. Maybe six is too high for Westland.
- not enforceable
- Nil.
- I Support this in the lakes but not in the rivers ,apart from okarito lagoon forks river paringa river hall river
- We are spoiled for choice in NZ, could be like 2 a day but no more than 6 week, but then you may need to introduce some sort of fill in diary that comes with your license plus get more funding somehow for more rangers be it seasonal. Our licences are cheap for the privilege we have
- I am not a salmon fisher so consider this a weak endorsement of the proposal. I have no idea how you would implement it in practice. Seems like a big ask of you average fisher to impose a season limit on themselves.
- I support the proposal but how are you going to implement it.It will come down to people's honesty
- Although difficult to enforce?
- More info would be suggested tho.
- Managing compliance with the season limits will not be easy. How will that apply to family and junior licences
- Makes sense, would probably have to rely on honesty.
- 6 per license holder
- Would likely be far to difficult to police, instead why not bost the fisheries with new releases
- Totally agree
- How would it be policed / monitored?
- The sea-run salmon populations seem fragile and the catch is not equitably shared. However Don't relish the paperwork around compliance and enforcement. So I'm a weak supporter.
- I can't see how this could be fairly enforced.
- Considering the price of a license and what it cost in travel and gear its bloody expensive.
- An alternative could be a maximum size limit. Put back the good breeding stock.
- Great
- Bag limits should not be based on what an average angler considers a "fair share". We are not children. If Fish & Game considers the current fishing practices unsustainable, they should determine a sustainable bag limit based on rigorous science. Catch limits for marine fishing are based on good science which has made the marine fishing industry in New Zealand by and large sustainable. I imagine that the science for freshwater fish is based on the same principles and the detail would be established in the North American scientific literature.
- How is it going to be enforced?
- Most anglers would be happy with 6 a year, especially to protect our lakes

- Its time we do it..
- This is necessary to stop rape and pillage by out of district anglers who have limits in their own areas, coming over here and "topping up" at our expense. It has already been happening. There should be a limit of two fish for non-area residents.
- i would support a seasonal bag limit of 4 fish rather than 6
- How would you ever police this regulation? What is the point in making a rule you can't regulate.
- Extended summer fishing holiday anglers should be able to take more than 6 sea-run salmon. As long as they are eating them and not wasting them there is no problem. It might be a main source of food on a pro-longed stay. All this regulation would cause is people to fish with the mindset of "we are only here for 2 days, let's try and catch the maximum limit before we leave" versus the prolonged camper who might catch 8 over the course over 2-4weeks with a more laid back approach. Regulations with more intensive bursts of fishing = more damage as opposed to laid back anglers fishing over time. OPPOSE
- consider 6 to high 4 better
- Bloody ridiculous.
- I've not yet seen salmon here
- How are you going to police this?
- In principle I agree, but how can this possibly be policed? I feel this type of limit doesn't actually make a difference, as it isn't easily enforceable.
- This answer is arbitrary. I have no knowledge of salmon fishery mechanics.
- MAKE IT 5
- Yes I think it would be a good thing as I see all of campers/ fishermen camping at Mapourika for long periods of time as I'd say thy are double dipping as well peer day.
- Helps to ensure a greater number of spawning salmon and therefore more sustainable recreational salmon fishery and fairer access for all to the available fish.
- I don't normally fish for salmon

Appendix Three: Question Two: The implementation of a single hook rule for South Westland lakes.

- needed
- For the reason around ease of and likely successful release. This could be reviewed again in the future if/when stocks and size are of little concern.
- Why not!
- not sure that the single hook and triple hook make a huge differance
- this is a good idea for saving small salmon I know I've accidentally killed a few trying to unhook them from trebles.
- No problems if fish are handled and released with care.
- Nil
- Large singles can cause more damage to small fish than small trebles some lures ie rapalas are more effective with trebles
- Definitely single hook. Should be everywhere, iv fished them in south Westland water, good strike rate, you lose no more and you can catch and release so much cleaner for the fish
- Absolutely support.
- For trout as well

- Makes sense for release of juvenile fish
 - I support but maybe give anglers a year notice with signs at the main Lakes warning of the change to come?
 - Better to recommend then have more issues to inforce
 - Single hooks has less harm on smaller release trout
 - It makes very little difference. I'd far prefer to see compulsory use of barbless hooks.
 - Decisions should be made based on science and good evidence not anecdotal reports. Anecdotal evidence is not good evidence at all.
 - If they are caught keep em.. dont stress em
 - I support the science and not anecdotal evidence. I have heard anecdotally that it is bad luck to bring a woman on board a boat but that does not mean Fish & Game should ban women from boats!
 - Common sense move.
 - Treble hooks tend to be more reliable hooking a fish. Implementing a ban on them is only going to hurt the average joe trying to catch a feed. People fishing just to release them shouldn't be doing that in the first place - any hook will do damage. Catch them to EAT.
- OPPOSE
- no evidence so no change
 - Without conclusive evidence it doesn't make sense. Education on fish handling, to return sublegal or any fish, to the water would have a better outcome.
 - If the scientific literature is inconclusive there isn't a valid factual basis to support the change.
 - While the concept is good for salmon fishing, my experience as a keen catch and release trout fisher on Lake Moeraki who tried single hooks for considerable time was that it is very difficult to catch fish with a single hook whereas a treble hook was much more successful. You have noted that the scientific review was inconclusive. Clearly this is an issue for salmon fishing however Lake Moeraki and other South Westland lakes are all-year-round fisheries. As such the approx 2 month Salmon fishing season is only 1/6th of the year. Is it possible to require single hooks to be used for salmon fishing but trebles to still be acceptable for trout fishing or acceptable in the April to December period?
 - Needed
 - Too easy to forget when fishin all over the place, Large single hooks penetrate deeper and can cause bad bleeding in jaws of trout compared to small triples.
 - Why not!
 - not sure that the single hook and triple hook make a huge difference
 - For the reason around ease of and likely successful release. This could be reviewed again in the future if/when stocks and size are of little concern.

Appendix Four: Question Three: The closure of Lake Haupiri over the winter season (1st May to 30th September).

- I have no idea how much winter angling occurs in L.Haupiri. Perhaps carry out a survey similar to L.Poerua?
- support
- Hard 50/50 call but I had to make a selection- as closing Haupiri will place additional pressure on Lake Brunner Given the relative close proximity between Poerua and Haupiri there could be merit in trialing a rotational 3yr closure cycle e.g close Poerua for 3 winter

seasons while Haupiri stays open and then swap the cycle. This would maintain a healthy choice of winter lake venues and help protect fishing pressure in all 3 lakes.

- Sure close it [REDACTED]
- Fished here a few times and always without success
- If this is going to ease the taking of fish and stop it being overfished fully support
- be consistent
- Nil.
- [REDACTED]
- Too technical for me.
- Both lakes have limited access and use. No need to limit season as propagation of trout is not a significant issue.
- These are after all an introduced species, people should be informed good practices but encouraged to fish
- I see no evidence to suggest that the trout population can't cope with winter fishing pressure.
- Please provide evidence Lake Haupiri is experiencing excessive fishing pressure during winter months prior to proposing rule change.
- I do not support closing any lake without conclusive evidence that it will improve sports fishing in the long term.
- Keep it open. Allow people to catch trout for food during winter when food becomes more scarce. OPPOSE
- no indication having it open damages the fishery so should leave open to increase opportunities for anglers
- Evidence of fish numbers would be required to make an informed decision. I also think the location being off the ChCh to Moana driving route and being quite isolated minimises the amount of people fishing this lake in winter now.
- Living nearby, I do not fish Lake Haupiri during the winter season for that very reason.
- Support
- To protect the spawning trout to enhance the trout fishery
- All spawning waters should be closed over the winter/spawning period

Appendix Five: Question Four: Do you have any suggestions or any regulations that you would like to see reviewed?

- no trawling for salmon in rivers ,TAKE TRAPS OUT OF ALL WAITBAIT NETS, so people have to fish there netts, Put more fish back in rivers creat a fishery,fix the lake waharpo fish ladder , [REDACTED]
- no were overregulated already
- No and thanks for the opportunity to have a say.
- No all good
- Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this survey.
- They are fine as they are, if it ain't broke, don't fix it!

- I think there should be a 4 trout limit in all south westland tidal zones to control the predation of white bait by sea run trout and dead trout in gill nets in tidal zones to be able to be legally taken only sterile salmon should be released so they dont weaken wild genetics
- Simplify the rules. Stop treating anglers like criminals.
- Increase licence costs for non resident anglers
- No I'm happy overall
- Fishing licenses should be affordable forAll. currently there not. Every kiwi should be able to access this resource without the cost hindering them. Not just the well off. The cost may not seam like much to you but there's a lot of people struggling out there, Fishing should be able to be enjoying by all
- Really happy with the license system ☺
- I think the limit of two trout per day is unnecessarily tight.
- No.
- In a general sense decisions should be made based on science to steer us towards the goals of our valued Councillors, rather than pandering to a minority of vocal anglers.
- The implementation of catch and release and fly fishing only in the more desirable fishing waters such as the Karamea system above the earthquake lakes.....tributaries of the Inaugahua etc where visiting anglers who spend \$\$\$ on travel meals accommodation etc etc can reasonably expect to have a wilderness experience.
- The family licence, as a lot of couples have to buy separate licences so can fish separate at times. Should do away with primary and secondary on family licence
- It's time that "live" bait was no longer acceptable for any freshwater species fishing.
- Raise sea run salmon limit back to two fish per day to make it worth your while even going out.
- I think a ban needs to be implemented on people just hooking fish for the heck of it and letting them go. Fishing at it's core is not a "sport" it is a method of obtaining food. If fish and game are concerned about fish being damaged by treble hooks for example, why not just blanket ban catch and release on certain water bodies? Why hurt the small guy just trying to catch a feed?
- take number for Lake Brunner - did the decrease in the bag limit deliver the anticipated change in the fishery
- A price drop for fishing licences would be great.
- I would like to see more policing of face book as people are openly selling on it, seems unfair to restrict honest fisher people yet seemingly turn a blind eye to unlicensed people who will continue no matter what.
- Single hooks for lake salmon is a great idea. But even with a single hook, when trawling and they catch a pan size salmon, people just winch them in and there bugged when they get to the boat, this is poor fishing practice. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] I'm appalled at all the very small fish they take because they are too lazy to stop the boat and play the fish properly. Steaming along at trawl speed plus a non fisherman winching in a salmon is a recipe for a dead fish. Not sure what the solution is but something I see alot out on the lake and thought it should be brought to attention.
- No
- Restrict west coast fisheries to overseas anglers, when they come again. It is not sustainable to open our fisheries to global pressure, nor is it fair to the owners of the resource, New Zealand anglers. They arrive in big numbers, live on the cheap and occupy the fisheries to the detriment of New Zealand anglers.

- make some fragile creeks catch and release
- i would like to propose a fishing licence to cover the privilege rather than the species. All fish taken from our rivers & lakes including whitebait & eel to require an annual licence. Whitebait is taken by fishermen from the same rivers & lakes as me & yet they take for free & greed 80% of the time profiting financially in most cases. Protecting our rivers from over fishing & greed for future generations & the health of the sport of all fish not some fish. This would inject substantial funds into fish & game to help protect our fisheries for the future generations.
- i would like to see more salmon raised and released to enhance the fishery
- Conservation on native fish species perspective on fishing trout and removing this pest species from the waterways
- I think that the 2 trout daily limit for Lake Moeraki is very sensible. Thank you for changing this some years ago from the much higher limit.
- no limit on sea run trout, in the white bait season .
- It's time salmon were released into the Buller river system. There is anecdotal evidence there have been salmon caught in the upper Inangahua river recently and I have personally caught 2 in the lower Buller river over the years. Enhance the fishery so more young people take up the sport. More fish = more happy fishermen / more funding for staff.
- Yes reinstate the 4 trout per day bag limit
- It would be nice to have half season passes as I went online and noticed you can only get full year pass now what is a same for people that love to go out but can't afford full year
- Reduce bag limits for people fishing out of there home region regardless of license. This incentivises people to fish local, reduces fishings carbon footprint and allows locals to feel like have they a special relationship with there surrounding area.
- A stronger definition of fishing with gear at river mouths that is easy to understand and enforce
- As a fisherman "protecting stock" from over fishing or abuse of greed is very important to me & the future of not only my children but all future fishermen & fisherwomen in this beautiful country "what an experience" "what a privilege" I would propose that any fish taken from a river or lake be deemed a game fish & that annual licence fees be applied. Whitebait is a fish in our rivers that are yearly abused by greed rather than enjoyed for a feed "money" is the driving motivation of the majority of whitebaiters. I pay yearly to fish the same rivers as whitebaiters & yet they take fish for free & actually cash in on their bag. Fish & game would add a substantial amount of funds that could be invested back into the health of all fresh water sport fish both tiny fish & larger fish including eel. Licenced fishing should cover the privilege not the species. Thank You for letting me have my say.
- Allow a well defined Japanese style Tenkara dry fly fishing (amend the running line regulation to allow Tenkara only).
- I think there should be a 4 trout limit in all south westland tidal zones to control the predation of white bait by sea run trout and dead trout in gill nets in tidal zones to be able to be legally taken only sterile salmon should be released so they dont weaken wild genetics