

UPPER REACH

WASH BRIDGE TO MOLESWORTH



Wilderness water and crafty browns, the Upper Wairau is a scenic and challenging part of the river. To do well here you need to bring your A game, but the rewards can be great, for there are some great specimens that dwell here. The Upper Wairau also provides access to Molesworth Station and the famed Sedgemere Tarns - a series of beautiful high country lakes with great fishing - check the access conditions before you go.

IMPORTANT INFO

- Open for fishing 1 Oct-30 April only
- Salmon fishing not permitted
- Backcountry endorsement required
- Rainbow Road (to fish from Six Mile upstream) is open to public from Boxing Day to Easter - see Rainbow Station website if access required outside of these times: www.rainbowstation.co.nz



WAIRAU RIVER FISHING ACCESS GUIDE



A guide to fishing the Wairau River: access points to the lower, middle and upper reaches.



44. Wash Bridge SH63

Parking on both sides of bridge. Upstream limit for salmon and winter fishing.

45. Stoney Creek

1.4km from Wash Bridge (44).

46. Groyne Corner

5.7km from Stoney Creek (45). Park in riverbed

47. Rainbow Station Hay Shed SH63

No vehicle access. Park away from gate, follow signs across paddock to stile and track to river. 4.1km from Groyne Corner (46).

48. Rainbow Valley Ski Area Turnoff

Public road to Six Mile Creek and Ski Area turnoff. Good access via the many creeks flowing into the Wairau River. Seasonal access above Six Mile to Molesworth.



LOWER REACH

RENWICK BRIDGE TO SEA

There are access points galore on both sides of the lower Wairau River, and the population of trout here is generally decent. The lower Wairau offers anglers a bit of everything, from

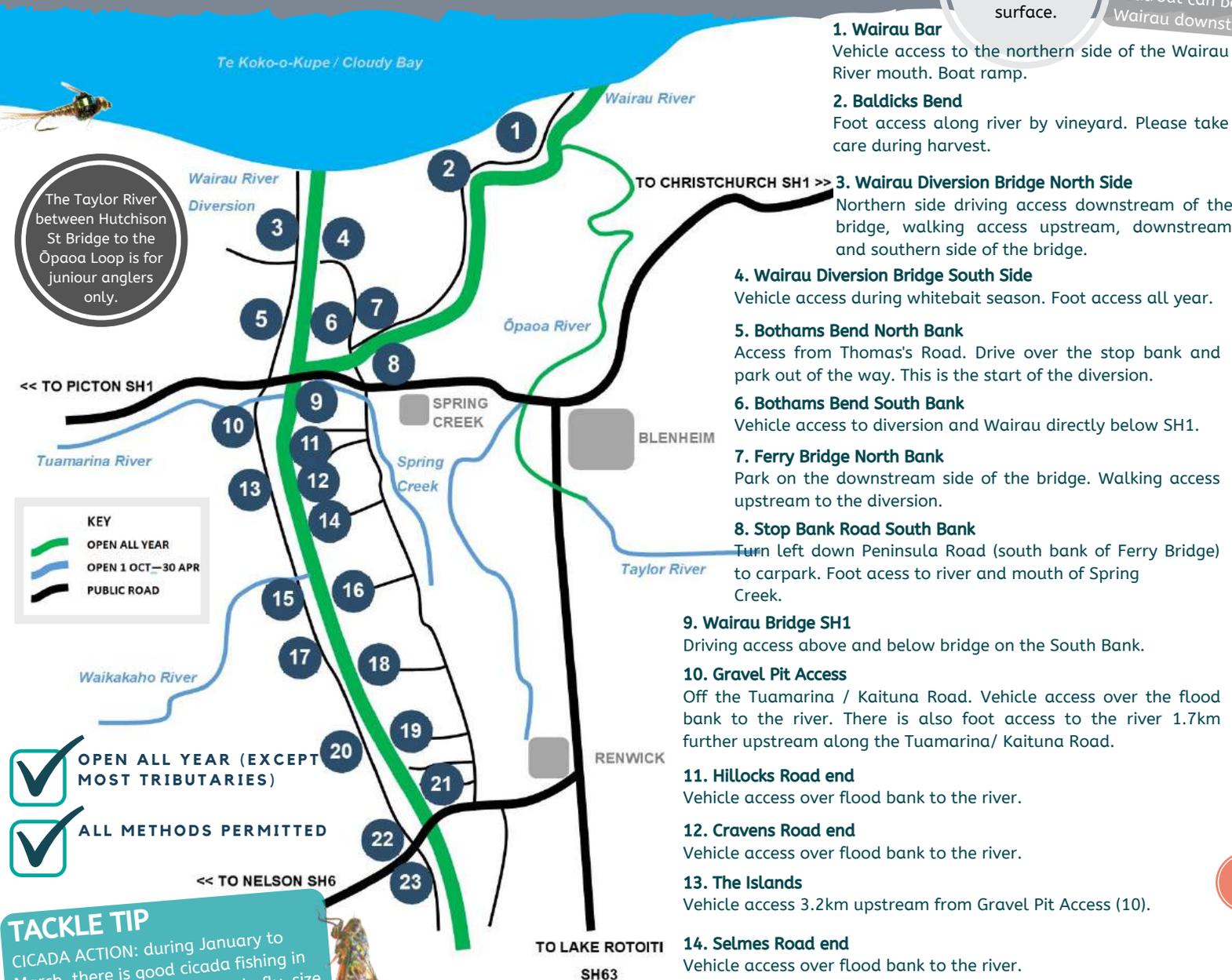
from popular mouth fishing where you'll get a chance at an array of species, to willow lined pools with some great runs and riffles thrown in. Being close to town, this part of the Wairau is popular with local anglers, and with so many access points between the bridges, there is plenty of space for everyone.

There are a number of tributaries in this part of the catchment that hold fish, but check the regulation book as some are open all year and others are closed from 1 May - 30 September.

RIVER MOUTH FISHING

Fishing the mouths of the Wairau and Diversion can provide sea trout, salmon and kahawai. For salmon, fish during the incoming tide, or the first hour of the ebbing tide. Allow the lure to sink to the bottom, then very slowly retrieve, keeping as close to the riverbed as possible. Sea trout: soft baits or small silver lures imitating smelt or Inanga are effective from August through until February. Seatrout can be in good numbers in both the diversion and Wairau downstream from SH1 bridge.

For kahawai fishing, use a fast retrieve near the surface.



1. Wairau Bar

Vehicle access to the northern side of the Wairau River mouth. Boat ramp.

2. Baldicks Bend

Foot access along river by vineyard. Please take care during harvest.

3. Wairau Diversion Bridge North Side

Northern side driving access downstream of the bridge, walking access upstream, downstream and southern side of the bridge.

4. Wairau Diversion Bridge South Side

Vehicle access during whitebait season. Foot access all year.

5. Bothams Bend North Bank

Access from Thomas's Road. Drive over the stop bank and park out of the way. This is the start of the diversion.

6. Bothams Bend South Bank

Vehicle access to diversion and Wairau directly below SH1.

7. Ferry Bridge North Bank

Park on the downstream side of the bridge. Walking access upstream to the diversion.

8. Stop Bank Road South Bank

Turn left down Peninsula Road (south bank of Ferry Bridge) to carpark. Foot access to river and mouth of Spring Creek.

9. Wairau Bridge SH1

Driving access above and below bridge on the South Bank.

10. Gravel Pit Access

Off the Tuamarina / Kaituna Road. Vehicle access over the flood bank to the river. There is also foot access to the river 1.7km further upstream along the Tuamarina/ Kaituna Road.

11. Hillocks Road end

Vehicle access over flood bank to the river.

12. Cravens Road end

Vehicle access over flood bank to the river.

13. The Islands

Vehicle access 3.2km upstream from Gravel Pit Access (10).

14. Selmes Road end

Vehicle access over flood bank to the river.

15. Suttons Corner

Park away from gateway. Walking access through small wooden gate to river 2.5km from The Islands (13).

16. Wratts Road end

Park before the farm house driveway. Walking access over stile and along fence line to the river.

17. Steadmans

Walking access through a small gate to the river 1.5km from Suttons Corner (15).

18. Giffords Road end

Vehicle access over flood bank to river.

19. Jefferies Road end

Vehicle access over flood bank past gravel processing area to river.

20. Gravel Pit Road

Opposite Gibsons Road. Follow vehicle track past shingle storage area to river 3.1km from Steadmans (17) and 3.9km from SH6 Bridge.

21. Renwick Bridge SH6 South Bank

Vehicle access off SH6 upstream and downstream of bridge. Also vehicle access upstream along stop bank past access point 24 and Fareham Lane up to SVIS intake. Vehicle access also available at Pauls and Boyces Road ends.

22. Renwick Bridge SH6 North Bank

Access on upstream and downstream side of bridge.

23. Salmon Farm

Go over first bridge 200m along Northbank Road. Vehicle access through gate and along track beside stop bank. Park at end of vineyard. Short walk fording small stream to river.

1 WHERE TO FISH

Trout are typically in the more permanent pools, or around areas with more permanent structure. Places with sunken trees, or where the river cuts in against a bank are best. The permanent structure from willows and rock embankments provides an unchanging habitat for the fish.

TACKLE TIP

CICADA ACTION: during January to March, there is good cicada fishing in the lower river. A green cicada fly, size 8, is a good imitation of the local insects.

MIDDLE REACH

RENWICK BRIDGE TO SEA

The 'middle Wairau' offers anglers a huge length of fishing water, and the great things is that the main-stem is open all year up to Wash Bridge.

There are lots of access points here, though this part of the river may appeal to anglers that enjoy covering a bit of water while 'on foot', in order to find the best fishing areas. Salmon anglers frequently fish in this reach, searching out deep pools where salmon may be holding up.

Some great tributaries offer excellent fishing, including the famed Goulter River and the popular Branch/Leatham fishery (more information on these fisheries over page).

It pays to get up early during Spring and Summer to beat the 'Nor Wester' which you can set your watch by and can make fly fishing tough going!

2 WHERE TO FISH



Feeding areas for browns are concentrated. The shingle drop offs at the heads of pools or where side braids enter tend to hold the highest concentrations, both above and below the 'lip' of the drop off. Other areas to look for trout are right on the edge of runs, typically within three meters from the bank. Fishing the depths of pools for trout is largely a waste of time.



SALMON TACKLE TIP

For catching salmon, nearly any lure will be effective. In clearer water conditions, try something slightly smaller or less 'flashy'. Zed spinners are the classic salmon lure, with sizes 12-22gm being most effective on the Wairau. Colours such as silver, gold, copper or white do well under most conditions, however fluoro green, yellow, or chartreuse can provide better results in lower light or dirty conditions.

WHEN TO FISH?

Sunrise/sunset and cloudy days tend to provide better fishing for salmon.



KEY

- OPEN ALL YEAR
- OPEN 1 OCT - 30 APR
- OPEN 1 OCT - 31 MAY
- 4WD REQUIRED
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- 24. Condors Bend Road End**
Drive straight ahead along gravel road for 1km then turn right. Vehicle access to flood bank. Walk over bank to the river.
- 25. Rock Ferry**
1.3km past rock ferry. Park in cut in and walk down steep track to the river.
- 26. Waihopai River Bridge**
Walking access on east bank of Waihopai River via Condors Forest Road. Park near gate. 20 minutes walk to Wairau River on Waihopai West bank.
- 27. Narrows**
Vehicle access to river.
- 28. North Bank Road**
- 29. Fareham Lane**
1.3km downstream from Waihopai Bridge. Vehicle access to river at SVIS intake and along stop bank to SH6 Bridge.
- 30. March Burn Creek**
Vehicle access to road end. Foot access only along stopbank to river.
- 31. North Bank Road**
Foot access to river. 3.3km from Bartletts Creek Bridge.
- 32. Loddon Lane**
Vehicle access straight ahead to river after fording a stream.
- 33. Pine Valley #2**
Foot access along stream bed to river.
- 34. North Bank Road**
1.7km from Pine Valley #2 (33). Foot access to river.
- 35. Church Lane**
Vehicle access to river from Church Lane (turn right at river bank).
- 36. Mill Road**
Vehicle access to river. Park away from gateways.
- 37. Tapps Road**
Vehicle access to river. Tapps Road not signposted. Park away from gateways. 2.4km from Mill Road (36).
- 38. Tapps Road**
Walking access to Wairau River down streambed. Access to Wairau River from Top Valley Stream to the Goulter Confluence is easily obtained at various locations off the West Bank Road.
- 39. Larking Road (Springfield Terraces)**
Vehicle access to river. Road not signposted. Follow access signs and park away from gates. 7.7km from Tapps Road (37) and 3.8km from Fowlers (40).
- 40. Fowlers Access Way**
Dry weather vehicle access only. Follow vineyard edge to the river. 2km downstream from Wye River Bridge.
- 41. Branch Hydro Channel Road**
Vehicle access to the Wairau River, hydro channels and Goulter Confluence if Wairau low.
- 42. Branch River Bridge SH63**
Vehicle access to riverbed downstream end.
- 43. Kowhai Point**
Camping and picnic area.

SPECIES LIST



SALMON FISHING IN THE WAIRAU

The Wairau River has an annual salmon run which is reasonably consistent and somewhat flies 'under the radar' compared with the famed East Coast rivers further south.

Salmon start running up the Wairau in mid-December, with the main run occurring during February and March.

Salmon will hold in the deepest of pools. Much like the trout, they will prefer pools with structure, in the form of bedrock, sunken logs, or the boulders used in erosion control. They also prefer deeper water. The bluish pools are the best.

They will also hold in the slowest, deepest water of these pools, resting hard on the bottom. On occasions, salmon will be seen higher in the water column, and even swimming upstream. These fish can be difficult to incite a take from, but are always worth having a cast towards.

More importantly than what is used, is WHERE it's used. Salmon are on the bottom, and the spinner MUST be on the bottom. Occasional snags means you're fishing the right spots. Systematically cover the pool with each cast (rather than thrashing the same spot) until the pool is completely fished. Sometimes it pays to wait five/ten minutes then fish through again.

If no takes are felt/fish hooked in the first couple of times through a pool, chances are there're no fish in the pool, and it's time to

3 WHERE TO FISH

Feeding fish are typically in shallow water, often less than knee deep, so fish accordingly. For fly anglers, long leaders (18 foot) when fly fishing help in the calmer sections where fish may be wary. If using a suspended weighted nymph, an indicator only 30-60cm above the fly will reduce snagging.

Words and design by Jacob Lucas, with assistance from Ben Sowry

OTHER FISHERIES

There are plenty of fishing options apart from the main-stem Wairau, but make sure you check the regulations first before fishing. Here are a few of them:



Most years Fish & Game carry out releases by helicopter into the Branch & Leatham Rivers - these are funded by Trustpower as part as mitigation for the Branch hydro scheme

SPRING CREEK | A delightful fishery which meanders through vineyards and enters into the Wairau just below SH1. Mostly browns, with a few rainbows too. Open 1 Oct-30 April.



TAYLOR RIVER | A trout fishery running through town, holding some browns and a few rainbows. Has a junior only beat from Hutchinson St Bridge to the Ōpaoa Loop. 1 Oct-30 April.



GOULTER RIVER | A fantastic wilderness fishery for the adventurer angler (and most suited with 4WD access). Tricky fish mean this river is most suited to expert anglers. A Backcountry Endorsement is required to fish here. Open 1 Oct-30 April.



FISH LAKE | Technically part of the Wairau system, and one of three high country Molesworth Tarns known collectively as the Sedgemere Tarns. 4WD access via Rainbow when road open. Nearby Bowscale Tarn great fishing. Open 1 Oct-30 April.



BRANCH & LEATHAM RIVERS | A top class fishing destination for beginners as well as seasoned campaigners alike. If you want to catch a mix of wild and released rainbow trout as well as some great browns - this is your place. See map >>>



GO ONLINE TO GET YOUR BACKCOUNTRY ENDORSEMENT

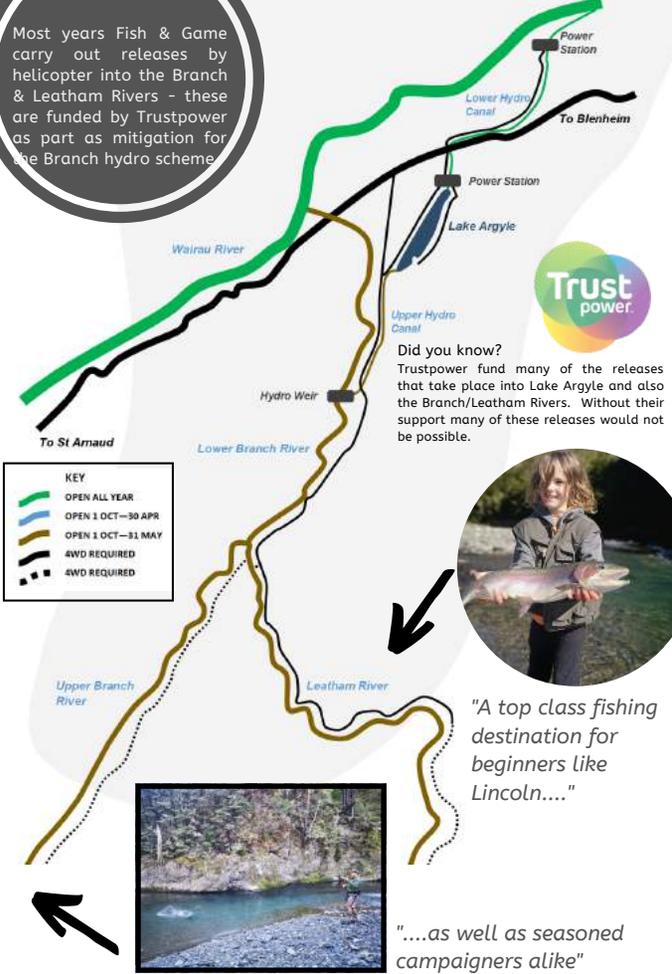


SCAN ME!



FLY FISHING TIP

During warm and windless periods, some excellent mayfly hatches occur. These are typically Deleatidium, and can be best imitated with flies like Dads Favourite, or tan coloured CDC spinners, in sizes 14-18. If the fish seem to be rising, but are not taking dries, they may likely be taking the emerging nymphs. Using an unweighted nymph such as a Flashback or Pheasant tail (14-16) suspended only 10-20cm under an indicator can be extremely effective at imitating the rising natural nymphs.



Did you know? Trustpower fund many of the releases that take place into Lake Argyle and also the Branch/Leatham Rivers. Without their support many of these releases would not be possible.



"A top class fishing destination for beginners like Lincoln...."



"...as well as seasoned campaigners alike"

BRANCH/LEATHAM

FROM 'PARK & CAST' ANGLERS TO BACKPACK ANGLING, THE BRANCH/LEATHAM IS A DESTINATION FOR EVERYONE. FISH & GAME CONSIDER THIS A PERFECT 'STEPPING STONE' FISHERY, WHERE BEGINNER ANGLERS CAN SUCCEED IN CATCHING GREAT FISH IN A BACKCOUNTRY SETTING, A PLACE WHERE WILLING RAINBOWS WILL SNATCH YOUR LURE OR FLY. EVEN THE GURU'S LOVE IT. WITH AROUND 60KM OF WATER TO FISH, OF WHICH ABOUT 45KM HAS A ROAD OR 4WD TRACK ALONGSIDE IT, THERE IS PLENTY OF SPACE FOR EVERYONE.

CONTACT US

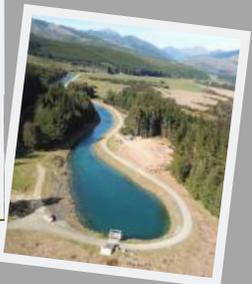
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LAKE ARGYLE & THE LOWER CANAL

Lake Argyle is popular fishing location for both shore and boat anglers. It is a small man made hydro storage reservoir about 220m wide, 1300m long and 3.5m deep.

Access is excellent with a gravel road following most of the shoreline. Self contained camping and boat launching facilities are available at the south eastern end of the pond.

Lake Argyle is a focus fishery - regular releases of rainbow trout take place at the lake. Many of these are in the 1-2 kg range, however Fish & Game frequently release monster trophy trout in the 10+ pound class - a fish of a lifetime!



Lake Argyle and the lower canal

SPIN FISHING

Spinning is a popular and productive method. The trout will take any type of spinner, with a black and gold toby or pink enticer being a good first choice. Using a slow retrieve with the lure close to the bottom works best.



SOFT PLASTICS: simply deadly at the lake. Check out our video on using soft plastics that the region's best anglers use to catch their trout. Scan the QR code or visit our website to watch the videos.

