

Fish & Game New Zealand's Nelson/Marlborough region offers some of the best, most easily accessible brown trout fishing in the country. In fact, many of New Zealand's fishing guides who specialise in sighted brown trout fishing, work in this region. There is wonderful diversity reflected in the waters of Nelson/Marlborough. Rivers in the Golden Bay area are crystal clear in normal flows and dark brown in freshes from tannic acid leaching out of the native bush catchments. Waimea basin catchments rise in the steep beech clad Richmond and Arthur ranges before flowing through intensely farmed lands growing pine trees, apples, kiwifruit and hops. The Murchison district offers everything from small feeder streams to the impressive Buller River. The Buller is New Zealand's fifth largest river, originating from the alps in the Nelson Lakes National Park. The run off and snow melt from these mountains flow into Lakes Rotoiti and Rotoroa. The two Lake outlets, although currently affected by invasive Didymo algae, form the upper Buller River until it is joined by the Matakītaki, Mangles, Matiri and Maruia at the 'four rivers plain' near Murchison. Marlborough rivers are a total contrast to the western Nelson rivers, often being blue coloured from glacial silt and wide, braided and undergoing extremes of flow. Molesworth Station is New Zealand's largest farm. This huge trackless area features many small alpine tarns and lakes and its western and southern boundary is the Clarence River-one of New Zealand's longest and more remote catchments that drain the Inland and Seaward Kaikouras. The lower Clarence and the Awatere Rivers flowing northeast from Molesworth are heavily silt laden for much of the year. Completing the circle of the region we finish in the Marlborough Sounds main catchment, the Pelorus Valley. Beginning in the Richmond ranges between Nelson and Marlborough, this river gouges its way through steep native bush covered mountains to slow down to a gentle pace in lush dairy farm land before entering the sea at Havelock.

ACCESS PAMPHLETS

Access pamphlets providing detailed maps with access points and fishing information for Golden Bay and the Buller, Motueka, Pelorus and Wairau catchments are available from most licence agents, or online at www.fishandgame.org.nz

PUT AND TAKE FISHERIES

The region has 2 put and take fisheries, Argyle Pond (Lake Argyle) and the Waimea River Park Fishing Ponds, more information can be found by visiting our website www.fishandgame.org.nz or www.youthfishing.org.nz for the Waimea River Junior Fishing Ponds.

TAGGED & FIN-CLIPPED FISH

Anglers are asked to report any tagged trout, and adipose fin-clipped trout and salmon to Nelson Marlborough Fish & Game.

DESIGNATED WATERS

For more information on Nelson Marlborough Designated Waters or to obtain a Designated Waters licence go to www.fishandgame.org.nz

National Regulations

The Sports Fishing Regulations

These regulations are set to ensure that:

- Fish populations are maintained and that the number of fish caught does not threaten the sustainability of the fishery.
- The quality of the fishing experience is maintained.
- Spawning areas are protected.
- Angling opportunities are not unnecessarily restricted.
- Incompatible methods of fishing are kept separate.
- Anglers use sporting methods.

The main angling rules and catch limits are shown in this booklet, but there are other rules in the Conservation Act, Freshwater Fisheries Regulations and other legislation which affect sports fishing. For example, a current fishing licence is required to fish for the species listed in the First Schedule, and it must be carried with anglers at all times when fishing. The licence is to be produced upon demand by a Fish & Game Ranger.

If you are in any doubt about sports fishing regulations, please contact your local Fish & Game office.

These regulations are approved by the Minister for Hunting and Fishing on the advice of the 12 regional Fish & Game Councils. The Fish & Game licence allows an angler to fish New Zealand wide (except Taupō).

Anglers Notice

Fish & Game Regions 2025

Conservation Act 1987

Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983

Pursuant to section 26R(3) of the Conservation Act 1987, the Minister for Hunting and Fishing approves the following Anglers Notice, subject to the First and Second Schedules of this notice, for the following Fish & Game Regions:

Northland	Taranaki	North Canterbury
Auckland/Waikato	Wellington	Central South Island
Eastern	Nelson/Marlborough	Otago
Hawke's Bay	West Coast	Southland

Notice

This notice revokes all previous Anglers Notices and shall come into force on 1 October 2025.

1. Application of this Notice

- 1.1** This Anglers Notice sets out the conditions under which a current sports fish licence holder or a person named on a family whole-season licence may fish for sports fish in the area to which the notice relates, being conditions relating to:

- (a) The size and limit bag for any species of sports fish;
 - (b) Any open or closed season in any specified waters in the area, and the sports fish in respect of which they are open or closed;
 - (c) Any requirements, restrictions, or prohibitions on fishing tackle, methods, or the use of any gear, equipment, or device;
 - (d) The hours of fishing; and
 - (e) The handling, treatment, or disposal of any sports fish.
- 1.2** This Anglers Notice applies to sports fish which include species of Trout, Salmon, Perch and Tench (and Rudd in Auckland/Waikato Region only).
- 1.3** Perch and Tench (and Rudd in Auckland/Waikato Region only) are also classed as coarse fish in this notice.
- 1.4** Within coarse fishing waters (as defined in this notice), special provisions enable the use of coarse fishing methods that would otherwise be prohibited.
- 1.5** Outside of coarse fishing waters an angler may fish for coarse fish wherever sports fishing is permitted, subject to the general provisions in this notice that apply for that region.

First Schedule:

Fishing conditions generally common to all Fish & Game Regions.

Second Schedule:

Regional specific fishing conditions, bag limits, closed and open waters, and the like.

First Schedule

1. Interpretation

Words and expressions in this notice, which are defined in the Conservation Act 1987, the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983, or the Sports Fish Licences, Fees, and Forms Notice 2025, shall be so defined.

“assembled rod” means a rod that is assembled from butt to tip, together with a line and lure attached.

“all methods” means any artificial fly, or spinner or bait.

“artificial fly” means any lure of feather, fur, wool or other material of any kind customarily used in the making of artificial flies.

“bait” means:

- Natural insect.
- Natural spider.
- Natural worm or worms.
- Natural crustacean.
- Natural fish, excluding fish ova, or any portion of a fish, or shellfish (mollusc), except where stated otherwise in the Second Schedule of this notice.
- Uncoloured bread dough.
- Any scented lure, soft bait and other synthetic imitations with chemical attractant properties, except where stated otherwise in the Second Schedule of this notice.

"*bait assembly*" means either a hook rigged with a number of baits or a single bait rigged with a number of hooks.

"*bait fishing*" means to fish for sports fish with bait.

"*boat*" means any manned flotation device.

"*closed*" means no fishing is permitted.

"*coarse fish*" means Perch, Tench (all New Zealand) and Rudd (Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Region only).

"*coarse fishing waters*" means named locations where anglers can fish for coarse fish with:

- (a) A rod which has either a fixed or running line.
- (b) No restriction on the type or number of baits in use.
- (c) No restriction on the use of preparations to attract fish.

"*controlled fishery*" means a controlled fishery described in the Sports Fish Licences, Fees, and Forms Notice 2025 and for which a controlled-period licence is required when fishing during a controlled period.

"*daily bag limit*" means the total number of sports fish that may be taken or killed by any one person during any one day.

"*designated waters*" means a designated waters fishery described in the Sports Fish Licences, Fees, and Forms Notice 2025 and for which a designated waters licence is required when fishing.

"*fishing*" and "*fish*" in this notice means:

the catching, taking or harvesting of sports fish; and includes any:

- (a) Other activity that may reasonably be expected to result in the catching, taking or harvesting of sports fish.
- (b) Attempt to catch, take or harvest sports fish.
- (c) Operation in support of, or in preparation for, any activity described in this definition.

"*freshwater*" means

- (a) All waters of rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, lagoons, wetlands, impoundments, canals, channels, watercourses, or other bodies of water whether naturally occurring or artificially made.
- (b) All waters of estuaries or coastal lagoons.
- (c) All other fresh or estuarine waters where freshwater fish indigenous to or introduced into New Zealand are found.
- (d) All waters in the mouth of every river or stream, and the mouth of every river and stream shall be deemed to include every outlet thereof and the seashore between those outlets and the waters of the sea or lying within a distance of 500 metres from any place where at low tide the waters of a river or stream meet the waters of the sea.

"*fly fishing*" means to fish for sports fish with fly rod and fly reel and fly line and artificial fly.

"*foul hook*" means to hook a sports fish other than from within the mouth.

"*junior fishery*" means a named location where only a child or junior angler may fish.

"*landmark*" means a black, yellow and white ringed post or buoy.

"*length*" is the measurement from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail.

"legal lure" means any authorised artificial fly or spinner or bait.

"sea-run Salmon waters" means sea-run Salmon waters described in the Sports Fish Licences, Fees, and Forms Notice 2025 in the North Canterbury and Central South Island Fish & Game regions and for which a sea-run Salmon licence is required when fishing for Salmon and to which the Sea-run Salmon Season Bag Limit Notes apply.

"season bag limit" means the total number of sports fish that may be taken or killed by any one person between the 1 October and 30 September.

"season bag limit card" means a card upon which anglers taking or killing sports fish in Fish & Game regions that have a season bag limit must legibly record the date, name of water, sex (as can best be determined by the angler), weight in kilograms and length in centimetres of the fish, and whether it was fin clipped.

"spin fishing" means to fish for sports fish with a spinner.

"spinner" means any artificial lure other than an artificial fly.

"sports fish" means those freshwater fish described in the First Schedule of the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983, namely:

- Brown Trout.
- Rainbow Trout.
- American Brook Trout or Char.
- Lake Trout or Char.
- Atlantic Salmon.
- Quinnet or Chinook Salmon.
- Sockeye Salmon.
- Perch.
- Tench.
- Rudd (Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Region only).
- Any hybrid of the above species.

"zero bag limit" means fishing is permitted but no fish may be kept.

2. Authorised Tackle

2.1 No angler shall fish for Trout or Salmon except by using a rod and running line and authorised method (as defined in clause 8 of this First Schedule).

2.2 Nets and gaffs:

2.2.1 When playing a sports fish, a landing net may be used to secure or land that fish.

2.2.2 For keeping coarse fish alive, a keep net may be used in the water from which the fish was caught.

2.2.3 No angler shall use a gaff to secure or land a sports fish except where provided for in the Second Schedule of this notice.

2.3 No angler when fishing for sports fish shall:

2.3.1 Use more than 1 assembled rod and running line.

2.3.2 Use more than 3 artificial flies or spinners.

2.3.3 Use more than 1 bait assembly.

2.3.4 Be more than 15m from the rod being used, except where stated otherwise in the Second Schedule of this notice.

2.3.5 Use in waters other than those where bait fishing is permitted any lure treated with any chemical preparation other than that used solely to control the buoyancy of an artificial fly, except where stated otherwise in the Second Schedule of this notice.

2.3.6 Use any preparation not attached to a lure to attract fish except when fishing for coarse fish in coarse fishing waters.

2.4 No person shall fish for sports fish by using felt-soled waders or footwear incorporating or having attached a sole of felted, matted or woven fibrous material when sports fishing.

3. Foul Hooking of Fish

3.1 No angler shall attempt to foul hook any sports fish.

3.2 Any angler who foul hooks a sports fish shall return it immediately to the water with as little injury as possible.

4. Fish Length

4.1 Every angler who catches a sports fish which does not exceed the specified minimum length, or exceeds the specified maximum length, shall immediately return it with as little injury as possible into the water from which it was taken.

5. Open Season

5.1 No angler shall fish for any sports fish except during an open season.

6. Daily Bag Limit

6.1 No angler shall continue to fish for a particular species of sports fish on any day in which the angler has already killed the limit bag for that species except where provided for in the Second Schedule.

6.2 It shall be permissible to make up the difference between a lesser limit bag prescribed in one place and a higher limit bag prescribed in another if the extra fish are taken in the area with the higher bag limit.

7. Season Bag Limit

7.1 No angler shall continue to fish for sports fish in any season in which the angler has already killed the season bag limit for that species, except where provided for in the Second Schedule.

8. Authorised Methods

8.1 Authorised methods (subject to any regional restrictions specified in the Second Schedule) are:

- Artificial fly (**F**).
- Bait (**B**).
- Spinner (**S**).

Second Schedule

Nelson/Marlborough Fish & Game Region

The Nelson/Marlborough region is defined here: *New Zealand Gazette*, 24 May 1990, No. 83, page 1861.

1. Definitions

For interpretation of terms, refer to the First Schedule of this notice.

2. Additional Requirements

Note 1	1.1	The daily bag limit permits the taking of two fish, although only one fish may exceed 500mm in length.
	1.2	Fishing for coarse fish is prohibited in all waters of the Nelson/Marlborough Region.
	1.3	There is no minimum size limit for Trout or Salmon.
	1.4	All lakes, rivers and streams not mentioned in the table below (and those where Note 1 applies) are fly/spin only and the daily bag limit permits the taking of two sports fish, although only one fish may exceed 500mm in length. Season 1 October - 30 April
Note 2		Down riggers are permitted when lake fishing.
Note 3		No angler shall fish for sports fish from any boat under motorised power in those parts of Lake Rotoiti within 100 metres from the centre of the meeting line with the lake and the Travers River, Coldwater Stream, Black Valley Stream and Buller River.
Note 4		No angler shall fish for sports fish from any boat under motorised power in those parts of Lake Rotoroa within 100 metres from the centre of the meeting line with the lake and the Sabine, D'Urville and Gowan rivers.
Note 5		Only Child anglers may bait fish.
Note 6	6.1	No angler shall fish for sports fish in a designated Junior Fishery unless they are a Child or Junior.
	6.2	No angler shall fish for sports fish in the designated Taylor River Family Fishery unless they are a Child or a Junior angler or an adult angler (or spouse or partner of a family whole-season angler) accompanying and supervising the Child or Junior angler(s).
Note 7		Waimea River Park Fishing ponds may on occasions be temporarily closed to facilitate the running of organised events or for maintenance. Closures will be made public in advance and advertised on the Nelson/Marlborough Fish & Game website and sign posted at the ponds.
Note 8		Designated Waters: No angler may fish in a Designated Water unless they are the holder of an appropriate designated waters licence or are named on such a licence.

3. Open Season, Permitted Methods, Daily Bag Limits

Water	Section of water	Open Season	Authorised Fishing Methods	Daily bag limit by species			Refer Clause 2 For Additional Requirements
				Trout	Salmon	Other	
All lakes, rivers and streams not specified below		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2			Note 1
Aorere River	upstream of Salisbury Road Bridge	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2			Note 1

	downstream of Salisbury Road Bridge	All year	FSB	2			Note 1,2, 1,3
Anatoki River		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2			Notes 1,5
Argyle Pond and lower hydro canals	from where powerlines cross at head of lake and downstream to Wairau River confluence	All year	FSB	2 sports fish			Note 1,2, 1,3
Argyle Pond Headrace	From Branch River hydro intake to powerlines at head of Lake Argyle	1 Oct - 31 May	FSB	2 sports fish			Note 1,2, 1,3
Awatere River		All year	FSB	2			Note 1,2, 1,3
Branch River		1 Oct - 31 May	FS	2			Note 1,1,1,2, 1,3
Buller River	upstream of Gowan Bridge	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2			Note 1
	downstream of Gowan Bridge	All year	FSB	2			Note 1,2, 1,3
Clarence River	upstream of Acheron confluence	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2			Note 1
	downstream of Acheron confluence	All year	FSB	2	1		Note 1,2, 1,3
Cobb Reservoir		All year	FSB	4			Note 1,2, 1,3
Conway River	upstream of SH1 Bridge	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2			Note 1
	downstream of SH1 Bridge	All year	FSB	2			Note 1,2, 1,3
Goulter River	upstream of its confluence with the Wairau River	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	1			Note 1,2, 1,3
Lake Daniell		1 Oct - 31 May	FS	2			Note 1,1,1,2, 1,3
Lake Rotoiti (Nelson Lakes)		All year	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,1,3, 2,3
Lake Rotoroa		All year	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,1,3, 2,4
Lake Tennyson		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	4			Note 1,2, 1,3
Leatham River		1 Oct - 31 May	FS	2			Note 1,1,1,2, 1,3
Lyell Creek (Kaikoura)	upstream of State Highway 1	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2			Note 1
	downstream of State Highway 1	All year	FSB	2	1		Note 1,2, 1,3

Maitai River	upstream of Lower Nile Street Bridge	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Note 1
	downstream of Lower Nile Street Bridge	All year	FS	2		Notes 1,2, 1,3,5
Maruia River	upstream of Maruia Falls	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Note 1
	downstream of Maruia Falls	All year	FSB	2		Note 1,2, 1,3
Matakitaki River	downstream of State Highway 6 Bridge	All year	FSB	2		Note 1,2, 1,3
	between State Highway 6 Bridge and the Horse Terrace Bridge	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Note 1
	Designated Water The Matakitaki River and its tributaries upstream from the Horse Terrace bridge	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Notes 1,8
Middle Creek (Kaikoura)	upstream of State Highway 1	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Note 1
	downstream of State Highway 1	All year	FSB	2		Note 1,2, 1,3
Motueka River	upstream of Baton Bridge at Woodstock	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Note 1
	downstream of Baton Bridge at Woodstock	All year	FSB	2		Note 1,2, 1,3
Oaro River		All year	FSB	2		Note 1,2, 1,3
Ōpaoa River	upstream of State Highway 1 Bridge (including Roses Overflow) but excluding the section covered by the Taylor River Family Fishery	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Note 1
	downstream of State Highway 1 Bridge (including Roses Overflow) but excluding the section covered by the Taylor River Family Fishery	All year	FSB	2		Note 1,2, 1,3
Pelorus River	upstream of Rai River confluence	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Note 1
	downstream of Rai River confluence	All year	FSB	2		Note 1,2, 1,3
Rai River	upstream of Carluke Bridge	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Note 1
	downstream of Carluke Bridge	All year	FSB	2		Note 1,2, 1,3

Takaka River	upstream of confluence with the Waingaro River	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Note 1
	downstream of confluence with the Waingaro River	All year	FSB	2		Note 1,2,1,3
Taylor Dam		All year	FS	2		Notes 1,2,1,3,5
Taylor River	upstream of New Renwick Road Bridge (excluding Hutchinson St Bridge - Ōpaoa Loop confluence)	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Note 1
	downstream of New Renwick Road Bridge (excluding Hutchinson St Bridge - Ōpaoa Loop confluence)	All year	FSB	2		Note 1,2,1,3
Taylor River Family Fishery	from Hutchinson St Bridge to Ōpaoa Loop confluence (including Ōpaoa River upstream to Snowden Crescent footbridge)	All year	FSB	1		Notes 1,2,1,3,6,2
Travers River	Designated Water Travers River and its tributaries upstream of Lake Rotoiti	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Notes 1,8
Waikoropupu River		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Note 1
Waimea River Park Junior Fishing Ponds	Junior Fishery Waimea River Park designated fishing ponds	All year (except when closed for organised events or maintenance)	FSB	1 Sports fish		Notes 1,2,1,3,6,1,7
Waimea River Park Family/Adult Fishing Pond	Waimea River Park fishing ponds	All year (except when closed for organised events or maintenance)	FSB	1 Sports fish		Notes 1,2,1,3,7
Wairau River	upstream of Wash Bridge	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2		Note 1
	downstream of Wash Bridge including the Diversion and Southern Valleys Irrigation Intake Pond	All year	FSB	2	1	Note 1,2,1,3

	Designated Water The upper Wairau River and its tributaries (but excluding Fish Lake) upstream from Six Mile Creek (upstream of Rainbow Ski field bottom carpark)	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2			Notes 1, 8
Wairoa/ Waimea River (Nelson)	upstream of Lee River confluence	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	2			Note 1
	downstream of Lee River confluence	All year	FSB	2			Note 1.2, 1.3