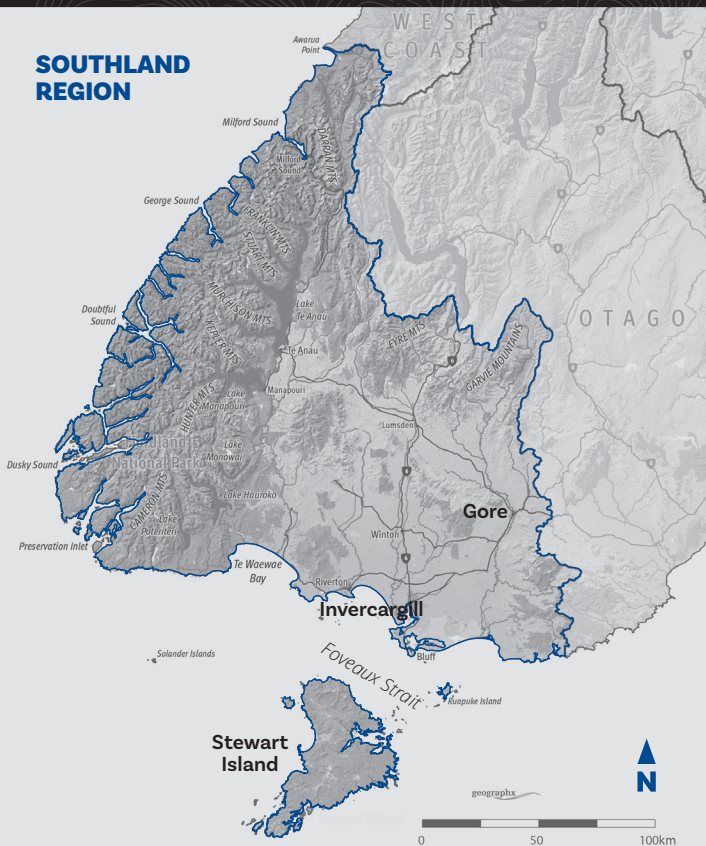


SOUTHLAND

Sports Fishing Regulations 2025/2026



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SCAN FOR
ALL REGIONS
REGULATIONS

Southland offers a wide variety of trout fishing opportunities and is home to some of the best freshwater angling in New Zealand. The region is one of the country's strongholds for brown trout, which are widely distributed throughout the main stems of our major rivers including the Aparima, Oreti, Mataura, and Waiau, as well as their many tributaries.

Several of these rivers are internationally recognised trout fishing destinations. The Mataura River, for example, flows through the town of Gore which is proudly known as "The Brown Trout Capital of the World". The upper Oreti, Aparima and Waikaia Rivers are also renowned for their fishing quality and scenic surroundings, attracting anglers from around the globe.

Some of Southland's popular fisheries have voluntary beat systems in place to help manage angling pressure and improve the angling experience. We ask that all anglers respect these systems so everyone can enjoy their time on the water. In addition, the upper Oreti has a Designated Waters Licence requirement to help further protect the angling experience on this exceptional fishery.

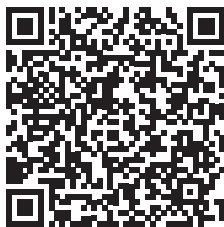
While Southland's headwater fisheries receive a lot of attention, anglers should also explore the mid and lower reaches of our major rivers as well as their lowland tributaries. These sections are often overlooked, particularly by visiting anglers, yet they hold excellent trout populations, offer easy access, and the fish are often less challenging to catch. In these lower, slower-flowing reaches, redfin perch are also present and provide great angling, particularly for beginner anglers or family groups.

If you're looking to target rainbow trout, you will need to head west to the Fiordland lakes and their connected rivers, the likes of Lakes Te Anau, Manapouri, and Monowai, along with the Waiau and Mararoa rivers. These western waters provide a very pleasant angling experience set against exceptional scenery.

Anglers should be aware that some rivers in Southland are unfortunately affected by the invasive alga didymo. As didymo and other aquatic pests can spread easily, it is essential to check, clean and dry all fishing gear when moving between waterways. This is especially important in Fiordland, where many rivers remain didymo-free, and our aim is to keep them that way. Please note that some areas in Fiordland require a Clean Gear Certificate before fishing. Contact our office for details and ensure you obtain your certificate before you head out.

For more information about fishing in Southland, including access maps, scan this QR code:

<https://www.fishandgame.org.nz/freshwater-fishing-in-new-zealand/where-to-fish/regional-info/southland/>



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

Southland Fish & Game Region

The Southland 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	Fishing for coarse fish in all waters of Southland region is prohibited.
	1.2	With the exception of Perch for which there is no limit, no angler shall on any one day take, kill or be in possession of -
	1.2.1	more than 1 Salmon from any waters of the region.
	1.2.2	more than 4 sports fish.
	1.3	There are no minimum or maximum lengths for sports fish in Southland region.

Note 2	2.1	No angler may take, or attempt to take, Salmon from any river during the months of April and May.
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Note 3	3.1	Scented artificial lures may be used in Fly and Spin waters, when actively fished so as to imitate a bait fish.
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Note 4	4.1	Molluscs or parts of molluscs may be used in bait fishing waters.
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Note 5	5.1	No angler shall fish from any motorised boat (including electric motors) in Lake Thomas and South Lake Mavora
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Note 6	6.1	No angler shall fish from any boat or any form of flotation device.
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Note 7	7.1	No angler shall fish for sports fish in a designated Junior Fishery unless they are a child or junior.
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Note 8	8.1	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.
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Note 9	9.1	Controlled Fishery. No angler may fish in a controlled fishery during a controlled period unless they are the holder of an appropriate controlled-period licence or are named on such a licence.
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3. Open season, Permitted Methods, Daily Bag Limits

Water	Section of water	Open Season	Authorised Fishing Methods	Daily bag limit see Note 1.2 for Salmon and other bag limits			Refer Clause 2 For Additional Requirements
				Trout	Salmon	Other	
All waters except where otherwise specified below		1 Oct - 30 April	FSB	2			Notes 1, 2, 4
All rivers and lakes draining to the Tasman Sea and Foveaux Strait west of Waiau River except where otherwise specified below		All year	FSB	2			Notes 1, 2, 4
Acton Stream		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2			Notes 1, 2, 4

Aparima River	Upstream of the Thornbury Bridge	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
	Thornbury Bridge to sea	All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Borland Burn		1 Oct - 30 April	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Brightwater Spring		1 Nov - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Clinton River	Controlled Fishery Clinton River Catchment from Lake Te Anau to "The Prairie" Flat (NZTOPO50-CB08 9045 2047) and entire North Branch and tributaries.	1 Nov - 31 May	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4, 9
	Clinton River Catchment upstream of "The Prairie" Flat (NZTOPO50-CB08 9045 2047).	1 Nov - 31 May	FSB	2		1, 2, 4
Cromel Stream		1 Oct - 30 April	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Eglinton River	and tributaries	1 Nov - 31 May	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4, 6
Ettrick Burn	Controlled Fishery Ettrick Burn from Lake Te Anau to the upstream limit of Log Cabin Slip at NZTOPO 50-CC07 796753	1 Nov - 31 May	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4, 9
Hamilton Burn	and tributaries	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Irthing Stream		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Lake Fergus		All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4
Lake Gunn		All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4
Lake Hankinson		All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4
Lake Hauroko		All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4
Lake Hauroko	tributaries	1 Nov - 31 May	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4
Lake Henry	Junior Fishery	All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4, 7
Lake Manapouri	including Waiau Arm	All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4
	tributaries excluding Mararoa and upper Waiau rivers	1 Nov - 31 May	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4
Lake Mavora	North	All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4
	South	All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4, 5
Lake Monowai		All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4
	tributaries	1 Nov - 31 May	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4

Lake Poteriteri		All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4
Lake Te Anau	tributaries	All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4
		1 Nov - 31 May	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4
Lake Thomas		All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4, 5
Lake Waituna	and tributaries	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 4
Lill Burn		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Makarewa River	upstream of Riverton - Invercargill Highway and all tributaries	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
	downstream of Riverton - Invercargill Highway	All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Mararoa River		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Mataura River	upstream of the Gore Bridge and all tributaries except Brightwater Spring	1 Oct - 30 April	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4, 6
	downstream of the Gore bridge and upstream of the Mataura Island Bridge	1 Oct - 31 May excluding 2 and 3 May 2026	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4, 6
	the Mataura Island Bridge to the sea	All year excluding 2 and 3 May 2026	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
McGregor Pond (Whitestone River Berm)	Junior Fishery	All year, excluding 20 Oct - 24 Oct inclusive.	FSB	Daily catch limit of 2 fish applies, regardless of whether fish are kept or released.		Notes 1, 4, 7
Mimihau Stream		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Mokoreta River		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Monowai River		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Orauea Stream	and tributaries	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Ourawera Stream		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Oreti River	Designated Water Oreti River and tributaries upstream of State Highway 97 Bridge near Mossburn	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FS	1		Notes 1, 2, 3, 6, 8
	State Highway 97 Bridge to State Highway 94 Bridge just north of Lumsden	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4, 6

	State Highway 94 Bridge just north of Lumsden to Riverton-Invercargill Highway	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
	Riverton-Invercargill Highway to sea	All year	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
Otamita Stream		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
Pourakino River	and tributaries upstream of Waipango Bridge	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
	downstream of Waipango Bridge	All year	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
Rakatu/Redcliff wetland complex		All year	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
Taunamau Stream		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
Titiroa Stream	and tributaries upstream of The Locks	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
	downstream of The Locks	All year	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
Tokanui River		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
Upukerora River		1 Nov - 31 May	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
Waiau River	between Lakes Manapouri and Te Anau	1 Oct - 31 May	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
	From the downstream extent of the Manapouri Lake Control structure, also known as the Mararoa Weir, to Tuatapere	1 Oct - 31 May	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
	Tuatapere to the sea, including the Waiau Lagoon	All year	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
	The area enclosed by the side-walls of the Manapouri Lake Control structure/Mararoa Weir downstream of the main control gates	Closed					
Waiau River tributaries	Mararoa Weir to the sea	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
Waihopai River	upstream of Queens Drive	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
	downstream of Queens Drive	All year	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
Waikaia River	and tributaries	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4,6
Waikaka Stream		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
Waikawa River	and tributaries, upstream of Niagara Bridge	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4
	downstream of Niagara Bridge	All year	FSB	2			Notes 1,2,4

Waikiwi Stream	upstream of North Road Bridge	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
	downstream of North Road Bridge	All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Waimatuku Stream	and tributaries, upstream of the bridge on Rance Road	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
	downstream of the bridge on Rance Road	All year	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Waimea Stream		1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Wairaki River	and tributaries	1 Oct - 30 Apr	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2
Whitestone River	upstream of Prospect Bridge	1 Nov - 31 May	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
	between the Prospect Bridge and the Mararoa confluence	1 Oct - 30 April	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4
Worsley River	Controlled Fishery The Worsley River and tributaries	1 Nov - 31 May	FSB	2		Notes 1, 2, 4, 9