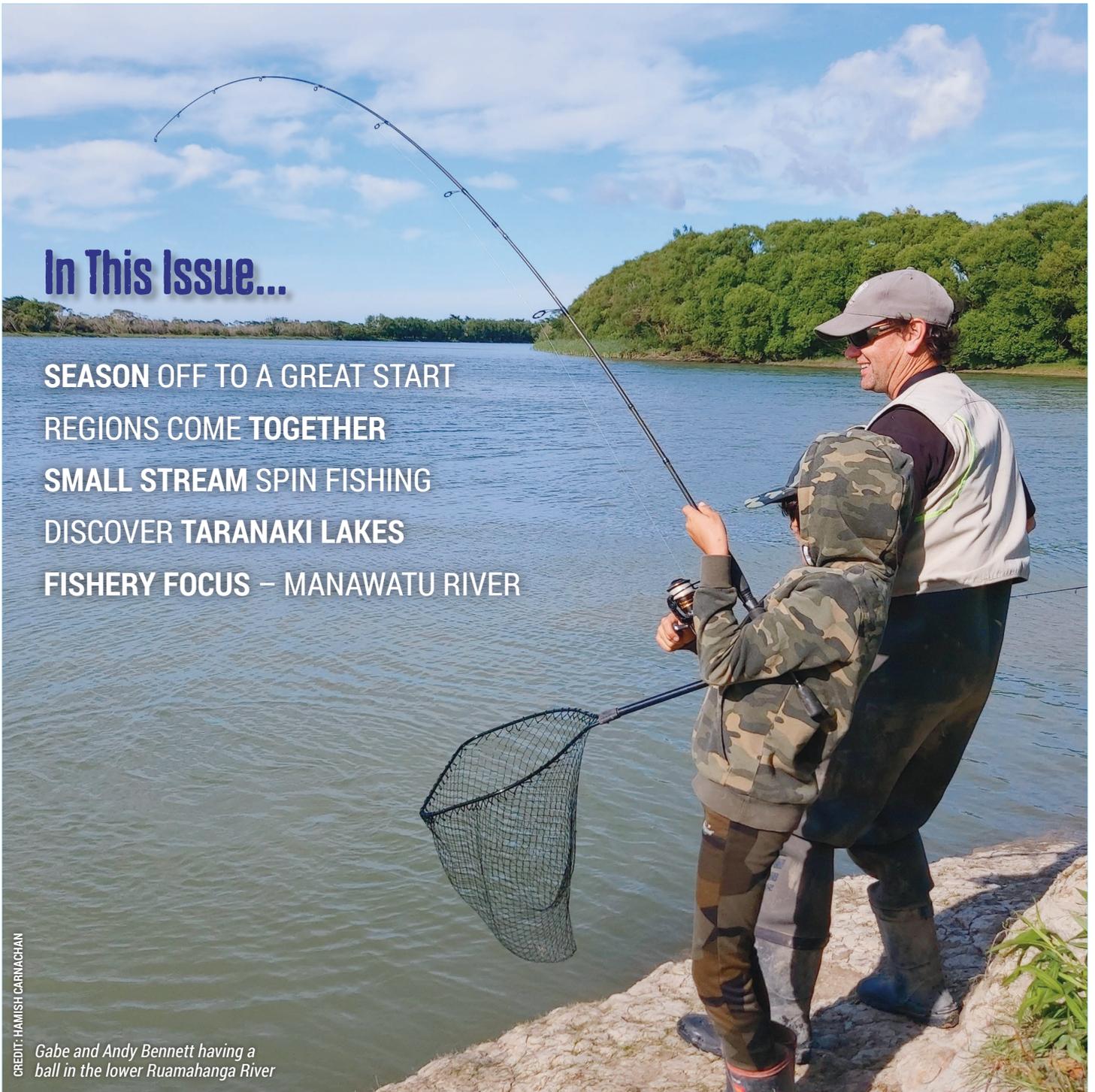


ANGLING NEWS



In This Issue...

- SEASON OFF TO A GREAT START
- REGIONS COME TOGETHER
- SMALL STREAM SPIN FISHING
- DISCOVER TARANAKI LAKES
- FISHERY FOCUS – MANAWATU RIVER



CREDIT: HAMISH CARNACHAN

Gabe and Andy Bennett having a ball in the lower Ruamahanga River

CREDIT: DAVE LITTLE

A large healthy lower North Island rainbow trout - the fishery has benefitted from a relatively benign winter.



Season Starting To Fire!

In welcome news for lower North Island anglers, the El Niño climate cycle we've moved into will see a return to 'normal' conditions – a dry hot summer with westerlies replacing the northerlies that created havoc last season.

While it's been a fairly wet and windy start to the season so far across the Wellington Fish & Game region, those anglers who haven't been hampered by the at-times trying spring conditions have found quality fishing.

The smaller streams have fished very well – the high river flows meaning many trout are still holding happily in their spawning waters. This should continue until the water tables and mainstem rivers start dropping, and that could be some time off yet with the way flows are currently holding.

Good whitebait runs are being reported, and as a result trout fishing in many lower river reaches has been firing for spin and streamer anglers when conditions are clear. The lower reaches of the Ruamahanga, Otaki and Waikanae have seen good catches of kahawai and very fat estuarine trout being taken on fly and spinner.

Over in the Taranaki Fish & Game region the start of the season has also seen typical spring weather, with a series of fronts moving through. Fortunately, these have been fast moving, producing only minor freshes, and streams and rivers have been clearing and falling quickly back towards their base flows.

A bonus has been the regular freshes keeping streambeds largely clear of accumulated algal growth, and this has helped maintain high quality aquatic insect communities, with plenty of mayflies present.

No significant flood events over winter for both regions has meant the trout have had ample opportunity to feed up large since the end of spawning; anglers are reporting that early season fish are in exceptional condition. The lack of large winter and spring floods has also been favourable for trout spawning and fry survival, with early indications that 2023 will be a year of good recruitment across most lower North Island fisheries.

Current conditions in small and medium sized streams, and in the upper reaches of the larger ones, will definitely suit the fly angler aiming to sight fish to large trout. It's just a matter of keeping an eye on the weather and stream flows, but as we get closer to summer the weather will increasingly settle.

Spin fishing with small veltic or mepps lures will also take fish, particularly in the middle and lower river reaches where whitebait are also present. And softbaits in these sections of river – where permitted – is also a very productive technique.

So, from the headwaters to the lowlands, right through the lower North Island, it looks like the sun is going to shine on the season ahead.

Grab Your Licence Online



If you haven't had a chance to get out on the water this season, and are yet to grab your licence, now's the time – scan the QR code, and after a few simple steps you'll be licenced to thrill!

Adventure or relaxation, your licence is a passport to escape the stresses of everyday life, immerse yourself in nature, and catch some healthy free-range food for the family.

Benefits of the Whole Season and Family Licence:

- Cheap thrills – fish all the way through to September 30 next year which, over the entire season, costs around 40c/day!
- Let your angling adventures take you anywhere... Fish anywhere in the country (except Taupo).

Season Checklist ✓

- Whole Season Licence - 2023-24
- Designated Waters Licence/s if planning to fish these waters (see page 3 for more information)
- Clean fly-line and check for cracks (replace if required)
- Check spinning monofilament or braid for wear/strength
- Replace lost flies and lures from last season
- Sharpen hooks
- Test waders for leaks
- Practice your casting - get out on the lawn and throw some loops
- Plan your next angling adventure





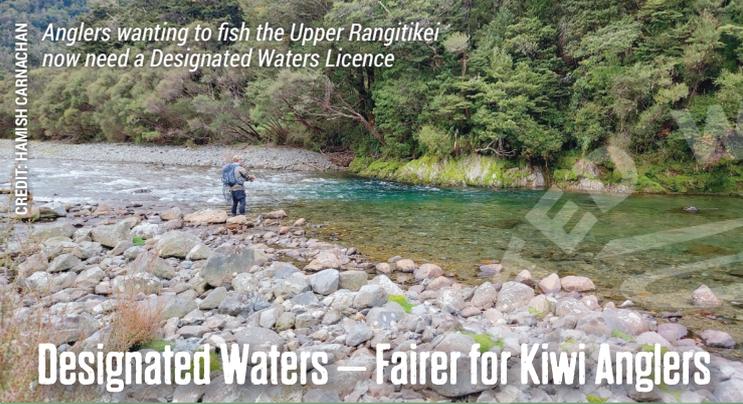
CREDIT: ALLEN STANCLIFF

Many Wellington region anglers will be unaware of the quality fishing just across the 'border'.

Regions Join Forces

Following the recommendations from the governance review of Fish & Game in 2021, the Wellington and Taranaki Fish & Game councils are working together towards a formal amalgamation. With staff from the two regions now working more closely than ever before, with improved coordination and

sharing of resources and information, we hope anglers from both regions will benefit. We aim to share insights on fisheries in Taranaki which Wellington anglers may never have ventured to or considered, and same goes for Taranaki anglers. Neighbouring regions have some exceptional (and very underutilised) fisheries, and in some cases these are quite unique. Our goal is to expand the horizons of anglers from both regions by opening up whole new world of opportunities. You may have noticed the 'Lower North Lowdown' weekly fishing report now has weather, river flow info and commentary on Taranaki's fantastic Ringplain and Waimarino fisheries – hopefully this encourages some curious cross-border angling sorties! Meanwhile, staff are already aligning monitoring and field work programmes which is creating efficiencies. And we're providing advocacy support to the team at Taranaki to ensure anglers views and values are incorporated in planning processes.



CREDIT: HAMISH CARNACHAN

Anglers wanting to fish the Upper Rangitikei now need a Designated Waters Licence

Designated Waters — Fairer for Kiwi Anglers

This season marks the introduction of a new management tool to better protect New Zealand's more fragile fisheries, which are often located in the backcountry. The new Designated Waters Licence will see Kiwi anglers get a fairer share on some of the waterways that Fish & Game's research has shown are subject to too much pressure – around two per cent of the country's rivers. The Upper Rangitikei River, in the Wellington Fish & Game region, is the only Designated Water in the North Island. Anglers planning on fishing this world-

class river, or other Designated Waters further afield in the South Island, need to be aware of the new requirements. There is detailed information on our website, or you can scan the QR code attached. Essentially, to fish one of these rivers you need a Designated Water Licence - \$5 for the region in which you plan to fish these waterways. Non-resident anglers are charged a higher rate.



The new licence category will help us manage angling pressure by spreading non-resident angling effort around so that it isn't concentrated in certain areas or regions, which detracts from the angling experience and also has the potential to negatively impact the fisheries. Over the past 10 years, Fish & Game has received increasing complaints from anglers regarding overcrowding in a small number of fisheries now managed through the Designated Waters Licence. Our research and monitoring shows resident anglers are being displaced from some of our fisheries to a greater degree than non-resident anglers. We've implemented this new fisheries management tool to help address that imbalance.

The 2023 'Women on The Fly' workshop was fully subscribed. The exciting weekend of learning and friendship was held at TALTAC in Turangi in early November. Beginner and experienced women anglers learnt from New Zealand women fly fishers who shared their passion for fly fishing and know the benefits of this recreational pursuit for mental, physical and social well-being. Women on The Fly thank the major sponsor Hunting & Fishing NZ along with the many other industry players providing enthusiastic support and financial assistance including Wellington Fish & Game. Women on The Fly was started by the Kapiti Fly Fishing Club with the goal to get more women into fly fishing by providing an online network and women-led activities. Its growth is testament to the demand from women across New Zealand for meeting and learning from other women.



CREDIT: HAMISH CARNACHAN

Women on The Fly Going Strong

Leigh Johnson is encouraging more women to take up fly fishing

For more information visit www.womenonthefly.nz or follow the Women on The Fly Facebook page.



Jack Ogden with a lovely Taranaki small stream brown taken spin fishing



Threadline Fishing For All

Threadlining the Taranaki ringplain and Wellington streams is a great way to enjoy trout fishing whether you're a beginner, intermediate or skilled angler. From bait fishing with worms to casting softbaits, there's an option for anglers of all skill levels, preferences, and budgets.

Gear

A light spinning rod between 5–9ft is perfect for fishing both regions' streams. If you plan to fish smaller, tighter waterways, a shorter 5–6ft rod is ideal. If you're looking to fish more open areas, then a longer rod enables a longer cast. As far as reels go, anything between a 1000–4000 sized reel spooled with either monofilament or braid from 6–10lb will do. Remember, the thinner the line, the further you can cast and the less chance the trout will see your line.

Reading the river

Reading the river is a skill that all good trout anglers learn to do over time. As a beginner I was amazed at some of the sections of river that large fish will often hold. As you spend more time on the water, you'll begin to get a feel for where fish are likely to hold, whether it's in the heads or tails of pools, in pocket water upstream or downstream of large boulders, or on the sides of swift flowing runs between pools. Fish & Game has an excellent brochure on reading water and finding fish. Scan the 'QR code' to download a copy.



Techniques

There are several spinning techniques that will all catch trout on their day. The key is to experiment with them all, put in the hours and find out (sometimes by accident) what works and what doesn't. After a few seasons of experimenting and learning, I've found four techniques that work best for me, and two are my preferred. These are soft baiting, using spinning (bladed) lures, bait fishing and the fly and float technique.

Soft baiting

This is a great technique for trout fishing beginners and experts alike. It is simple to learn and can produce great results with little difficulty. Fish & Game has produced a great short video on how to get the best out of your soft baits – scan the QR code to learn more.



Spinning

Spinning lures such as veltics or mepps in all colours from size 1–3 are great for Taranaki streams and smaller Wellington waterways. Use them the same way you would a softbait, casting upstream and retrieving fast enough that you can feel the blade spinning.

Fly and Float

Like fly fishing, tie a small fly about 1–2ft from a small fishing float attached to your line. Cast upstream of a sighted fish, or where you'd expect a fish to be sitting, and watch the float closely. If it dips or deviates strike as a fish has likely taking the fly. This is an excellent method for wary fish that won't take a large lure. Fish & Game's 'Advanced Spin Fishing' brochure has more info on how to rig up and use this method – scan the QR code.



Bait fishing

The last technique I regularly use is bait fishing with worms or other insects. Tie a plain size 8–12 worm hook or fly hook to the end of your line and an appropriately sized split shot about a foot above your hook. The right split shot should allow you to feel the bottom of the river without getting snagged or stuck too often. Cast into the deeper, slower flowing areas of a stream and let your bait slowly drift to awaiting trout. When you feel tapping on the end of your line set the hook and begin the battle. This method is great for beginners and those who want to fish during the winter or after rain when the water is murkier or higher than usual.



Corrin and Adam Jansma inspect their catch from the scout den pool

CREDIT: BART JANSMA

- STRATFORD KIDS' TROUT FISHING DAY

The 26th annual Stratford Kids' Trout Fishing Day is being held this year on Saturday, December 2, 2023. Around 300 large rainbow trout will be released into the scout den pool in the Patea River within King Edward Park. Parents and caregivers can book a 15-minute time slot for their kids by visiting the Stratford i-Site in Miranda Street or calling them on 0800-765-6708.

- OTAKI TAKE A KID FISHING DAY

This popular event hosted by the Kapiti Fly Fishing Club

will be held on Saturday, November 18, at the Winstone Lakes. Fishing will be allocated into time slots – call Otaki Hunting and Fishing on 06-364-8969 to book a session.

Manawatu River - So Much to Offer Anglers



A lovely meandering section of the river in the upper reaches

CREDIT: BEN ELLISON

The Manawatu has become my go-to winter fishery. Depending on prevailing weather conditions, almost always one part of the river has fishable water.

It has a good mixture of well-conditioned browns and rainbows – both resident and migratory. Winter sight fishing can be super if conditions allow, and if running with colour and more flow, then swinging a large lure on a sinking line can be both rewarding and exciting with aggressive takes and searing downstream runs.

Catch rates are around 4:1 rainbows to browns and the average size of the fish in the mainstem river is around 4lb. The fish population is sufficiently high enough for blind fishing to be productive, especially in summer when fish are rising freely.

If I had to choose only one river to fish for the rest of my time, it would have to be the Manawatu. It just has so much to offer in the way of angling opportunities for both experienced and novice anglers with water to suit all methods.

It starts as a trickle in the Ruahine Range and changes character quickly over its course of 170km to the sea at Foxton Beach. There are also many important tributaries that feed it and add to its size and flow.

In the upper reaches it is tiny, having a small chalk stream type nature with good water quality that supports a very stable biomass of aquatic plants and invertebrates. Although the upper reaches are not your typical backcountry river that some enthusiasts expect, it is still remote and the scenery stunning.

In normal flows during summer, the river is quite manageable and easily waded, however, do take care as the rocks get slippery.

Early morning excursions during the settled summer months are best if you wish to target browns. They can be found hunting the edges and margins of shallow water, sometimes very close. They will return to these beats again in the evening during a reliable hatch where they may sip from the surface or just under.

Rainbows will occupy almost any lie throughout the day, hanging a little deeper when the sun is brightest and high overhead.

On most days, a dry/dropper rig is the best way to target actively feeding fish. If it's quiet or a bit slow, switch tactics and fish the beat back downstream

swinging a lure on a sinking line.

When it comes to fly choice, look what's in the air, on the water or under the rocks and try to match it by size and colour. A good presentation is key, and ensure you get a good drift.

I constantly find myself drawn back to the Manawatu – I encourage you to discover its beauty and hidden treasures this season.

Ben Ellison runs Trout Frontier Guiding. Contact him on 0278671554.



The author with a typical middle reaches Manawatu River rainbow

CREDIT: BEN ELLISON

It is no wonder Lake Mangamahoe is Taranaki's most popular lake fishery

CREDIT: ALLEN STANCLIFF

Taranaki Still Water Opportunities

Lake Rotokare

Located within the Rotokare Sanctuary 12km east of Eltham, Lake Rotokare is open all year for perch fishing. Good spots include near the boat ramp and from the jetty along the round-the-lake track. Lake Rotokare is used for water skiing from December to April, but canoes and kayaks can be used all year round, making it a great place for winter and spring perch fishing. However, please check, clean and dry all gear to prevent the spread of invasive species such as hornwort and the gold clam. As Lake Rotokare is located inside a predator-proof fence, please check your boats and vehicles for rodents before entering and help keep the reserve pest free.

Lake Ratapiko

This shallow 21ha hydro reservoir is located 9km down Tariki Road, which turns off SH3 midway between Inglewood and Stratford. Lake Ratapiko supports wild populations of brown trout and perch and up to 300 hatchery rainbows are also released annually. The lake is a good place to take youngsters bait fishing for perch, but fly and spin fishing are also effective. The water ski and power boat club areas off Tariki Road provide good

access to the lake margin. The lake is closed to fishing for the month of May each year for duck hunting.

Lake Mangamahoe

This 24ha hydro lake is located midway between New Plymouth and Inglewood on SH3 and is Taranaki's most popular lake fishery. It is also Taranaki's only fly fishing-only water. Wild brown trout up to 2kg cruise the lake margin and can be targeted with snail, midge or damsel/dragon fly imitations, or a wet fly fished over the weed beds. The lake is also stocked annually with up to 300 hatchery rainbows that can reach 2kg or more. A casting platform located along the main access road is a good place to cast a fly.

Lake Rotomanu

Located in Fitzroy, New Plymouth, near the Waiwhakaiho River mouth, Lake Rotomanu was stocked with 500 two-year-old rainbow trout for a family trout fishing event on Saturday October 28 this year. With plenty of rainbows still present, along with a good population of perch, the lake is a great place to take the kids fishing. Spin fishing with velvics, Tobies and paddle-tail soft baits will take fish, as will bait fishing with a worm under a bubble float or using a ledger rig with a light sinker.



Lake Rotorangi

This scenic hydro lake east of Eltham is 46km long and was created by damming the Patea River in 1984. The lake contains plenty of perch that grow to 1kg or more. Few trout are present in the middle and lower reaches, but the upper reaches from Glen Nui up to the first river rapid can produce well-conditioned browns and rainbows up to 2.25kg. Public access to the upper reaches is via Anderson/Rawhitiroa Road at Eltham, which leads 24km to a good boat ramp at Glen Nui. The middle reaches are accessed via Tawhiti, Ararata and Tangahoe Valley Roads, which lead to the Pukekino Landing water ski area. The lower reaches can be accessed via Ball Road off SH3 south of Hawera, which also provides access to the river below Patea dam.

Manganuioteao - Get It On Your Bucket List



The Manganuioteao River is a stunning waterway with great angling and scenery

CREDIT: ALLEN STANCLIFF

Granted a National Water Conservation Order (WCO) in 1989, the Manganuioteao River near Raetihi in the Central North Island supports a nationally significant fishery for brown and rainbow trout.

As well as great angling, the river is also notable for its outstanding scenic values and whio (blue duck) population.

Angling use is low by national standards, many anglers visiting this part of the world instead flock to the upper Whanganui, the Whakapapa or Tongariro rivers, yet overlook the Manganuioteao which provides a similar though much less utilised experience.

As a result, there are always easy to access and undisturbed fishing spots to be found. The defined sequence of deep pools, runs and rapids creates a diversity of fishing water which caters

for all angling methods and levels of skill.

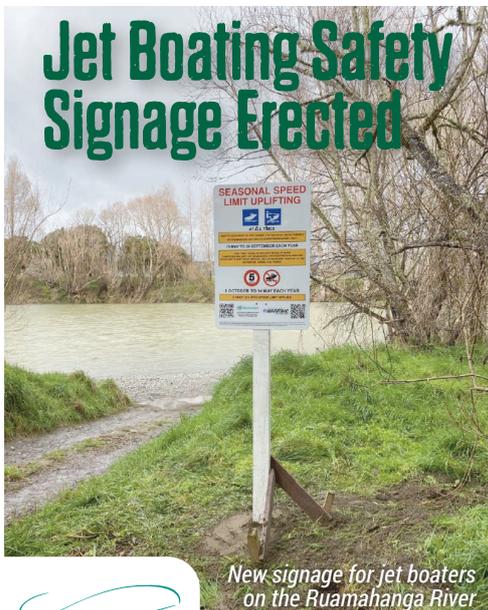
A feature of the river is the evening rise which occurs on calm, mild evenings throughout spring and summer; similar dry flies to those used in the upper Whanganui and Whakapapa rivers work, notably Twilight Beauty and Kakahi Queen.

Fish average around 3.5lb, though some may reach 8-9lb.

In the middle reaches, the river can be accessed from a delightful campsite at Ruatiti Domain. The camp is pretty busy over the Christmas holiday period, but at other times there are plenty of sites available.

Access to much of the rest of the river requires landowner permission – contact details are in the Ruapehu Fisheries section on the Fish & Game website. Remember to phone before you drop into the valley as there is no coverage close to the river.

Jet Boating Safety Signage Erected



New signage for jet boaters on the Ruamahanga River

As a result of incidents on the Ruamahanga River between jet boats and other water users, including anglers, signage has been installed and online reference material developed to better communicate expected safe operating requirements for vessels.

Signage has gone in at key boat launching sites along the Ruamahanga, including at Masterton, the Cliffs, Gladstone, and Martinborough Bridge.

This project was led by Maritime NZ and with support from, Wellington Fish & Game, Jet Boating NZ and Greater Wellington Regional Council.

If anglers notice signs that are missing or have been defaced, please get in touch with us 06-359-0409.

Get The Latest Angling Intel

Every week we produce the Lower North Lowdown – our angling newsletter for the Wellington and Taranaki Fish & Game regions.

Emailed out each Thursday, it contains the latest fishing reports from the main catchments and fisheries, weather forecasts for the weekend ahead, and links to live river flows and webcams so you can check up-to-the-minute conditions before you hit the water.

We also cover top fishing tips and new videos, an angling noticeboard, and even the occasional competition.

If you aren't yet receiving the Lower North Lowdown, you're missing the best angling intel on offer – email us to sign up: wellington@fishandgame.org.nz

Favourable Fishing Prospects This Weekend

It's a case of 'take two' this weekend for many anglers who were charmed by some wild spring weather conditions for the start of the season last Sunday.

Better angling prospects are on the cards, certainly for Saturday, before rain returns to some parts on Sunday.

All the rivers in the lower North Island have had three or four days of no rain though, so they should have dropped from last weekend.

That said, Clearing Day had its highlights with many parts of the Hutt region and Taranaki Fish & Game regions basking in sunshine and sunny conditions.

Anglers who got into the headwaters in Taranaki found clearer water and some excellent fishing, with anglers encountering one fishy chub which weighed a 2.3kg trout!

Not a bad way to start the season.

Further south the Ruamahanga river, along with some of the smaller streams in the Hutt catchment, were the pick for Wellington region anglers.

Despite the recent rain on Saturday, it appears most fell as snow in the Taranaki because the rivers were actually in pretty good shape on Sunday.

One common theme from right across both regions is the local wet conditions of the fish. Clearly they've benefited from a relatively stable winter with few major floods.

In all, looks well for the season ahead, starting with this coming Saturday.

If you haven't already done so, [get your fishing gear](#) now and get into it.

Here's the outlook for the weekend:

Hutt River and Tributaries				
Today	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
5 OCT	6 OCT	7 OCT	8 OCT	9 OCT
22°	18°	18°	11°	15°
9°	12°	6°	3°	6°

Hutt River Update

The Hutt River is, as always, producing excellent fish

CREDIT: ANDREW HARDING

Many anglers have noticed Greater Wellington Regional Council contractors carrying out extensive works in and alongside the Hutt River.

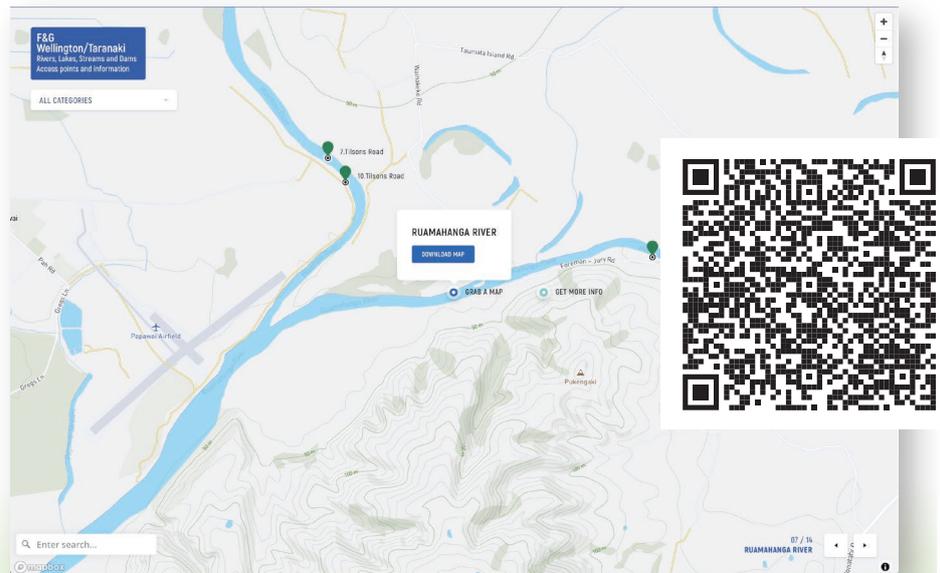
This is in response to the erosion in some sections of river caused during Cyclone Gabrielle, so that infrastructure such as stopbanks that safeguard the urban community can be protected.

Further works are shortly to begin in the lower section of the river around the Melling interchange – this is part of the \$1b Riverlink project to upgrade transport connections in and around Lower Hutt City.

Wellington Fish & Game is monitoring the works closely, and we have a contract with the project team to ensure that the trout fishery is not undermined in this section of river, and if it is then mitigation measures must be enacted.

Staff have carried out assessments using drift diving, spawning surveys and electric fishing techniques ahead of the project starting so we can ascertain the baseline trout population. Surveys will be undertaken during the works and again after Riverlink is completed.

While it is being built there will be a section of several kilometres around the site that is unfishable. We understand this is a nuisance for anglers, but we advise casting further afield – some of the best angling and highest fish numbers are in the middle and upper reaches of the Hutt anyway.



Helping You Catch More Fish and Expand Your Angling Horizons

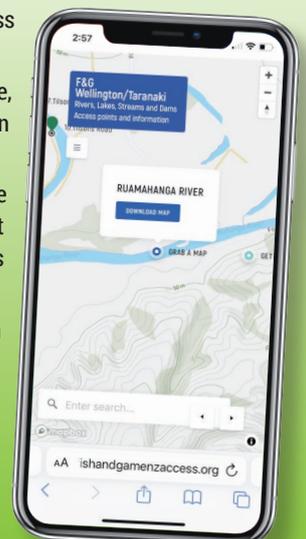
There are new interactive maps available showing public access points within the Wellington and Taranaki Fish & Game regions.

The information includes the fishing regulations at each site, downloadable access brochures that you can print off or store on your phone, and the mapping site is fully mobile friendly.

There is a drop-box labelled 'Access Points' at the top of the page which will allow you to see access points in Fish & Game regions that have added them so far. The Wellington and Taranaki access points are linked and are visible on the same map.

We've also got a heap of handy resources to help you catch more fish and get the best out of your investment in a licence. From awesome instructional videos on our Youtube channel, to 'How-to' brochures on Spin Fishing Basics, Advanced Spin Fishing, Reading Water and more, we've got you covered.

If you're interested in any of this information, please give us a call (06)-359-0409.



Wellington-Taranaki Fish & Game Club Directory

Joining a fishing club is a great way to meet other anglers, share adventures, learn new skills and find fishing spots. Below is a directory of clubs in our two regions.

- Kapiti Flyfishing Club

Greg du Bern - kffcsecretary@gmail.com
Gordon Baker - kiwiflyfisher@gmail.com
Ruth McKenzie - ruthmcktravel@gmail.com

- Horowhenua Freshwater Fishing Club

John Davenport - olport@windowslive.com

- Hut Valley Club

Al Markham - almarkham01@gmail.com

- Wellington Flyfishers Club

Strato Cotsilinis - strato.cotsilinis@gmail.com

- Hutt Coarse Anglers

Richard Moore - linrich@xtra.co.nz
Andy Deamer - theboy@xtra.co.nz

- Manawatu Freshwater Anglers

manawatufreshwateranglersclub@gmail.com

- Inglewood Rod, Gun & Recreation Club

Scott Hale - 0274607042
Chris (Skippy) Donald - 0274777518



YOUR LICENCE - AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE OF FISHING



Fish & Game NZ manages, maintains and enhances sports fish and game birds and their habitats in the best long-term interests of present and future generations of anglers and hunters.

16%

Access & Participation

10%

Public Awareness

5%

Compliance

9%

Licensing

6%

Council

21%

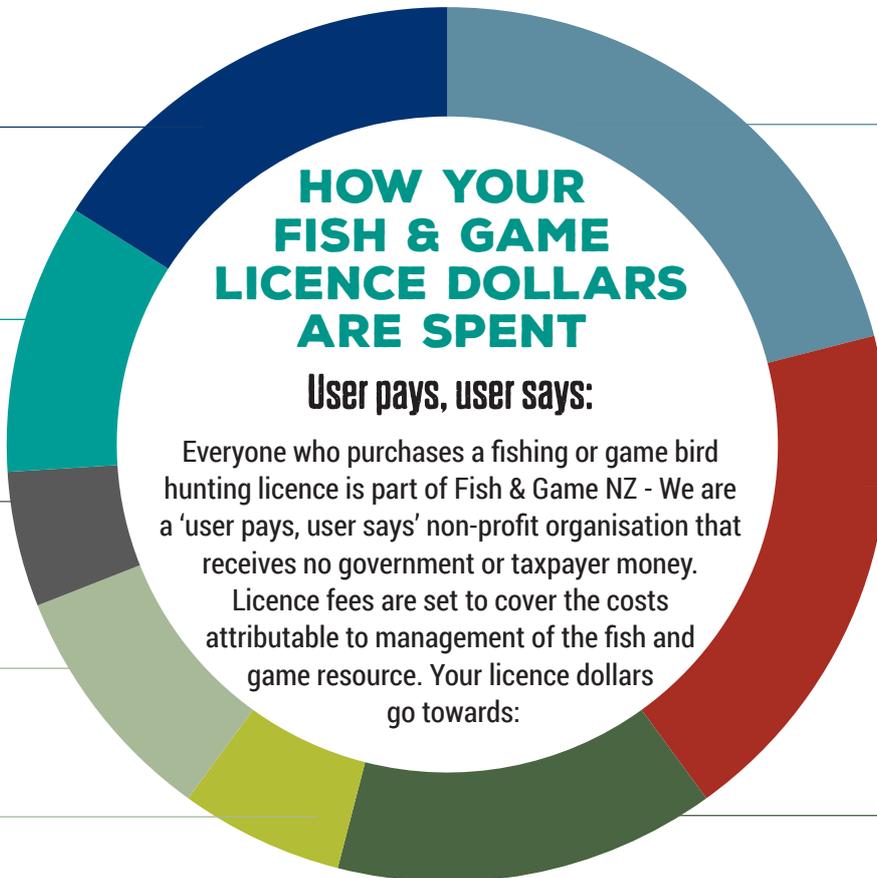
Habitat Protection

19%

Species Management

14%

Coordination and Planning



Compliance: 5%

Recruiting, training, equipping, and coordinating voluntary rangers, and enforcing regulations to ensure the fish and game resource is sustained.

Licensing: 9%

Providing a nationwide licensing system with a range of licence categories and sales channels that makes it easy to buy a licence and provides the core revenue for Fish & Game NZ.

Council: 6%

Holding regular public meetings of elected councillors to approve regulations and budgets, set policies and provide governance for the Fish & Game system run by licence holders.

Coordination and Planning: 14%

Providing research, planning, reporting and accountability requirements; financial management and general coordination across Fish & Game NZ.

Species Management: 19%

Monitoring and surveying species populations; setting season regulations; managing pressure on the resource.

Habitat Protection: 21%

Protecting and enhancing lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands; RMA issues and advocating against policy and consents which impact on valued habitats and providing 'national park' status to our important rivers through Water Conservation Orders.

Access and Participation: 16%

Negotiating and advocating access for licence holders; maintaining a network of access signage, information and brochures; organising special fishing and hunting days.

Public Awareness: 10%

Maintaining public advocacy; schools programme; website and newsletters; community liaison; promoting the right of licenced anglers and game bird hunters to pursue their chosen pastime.

