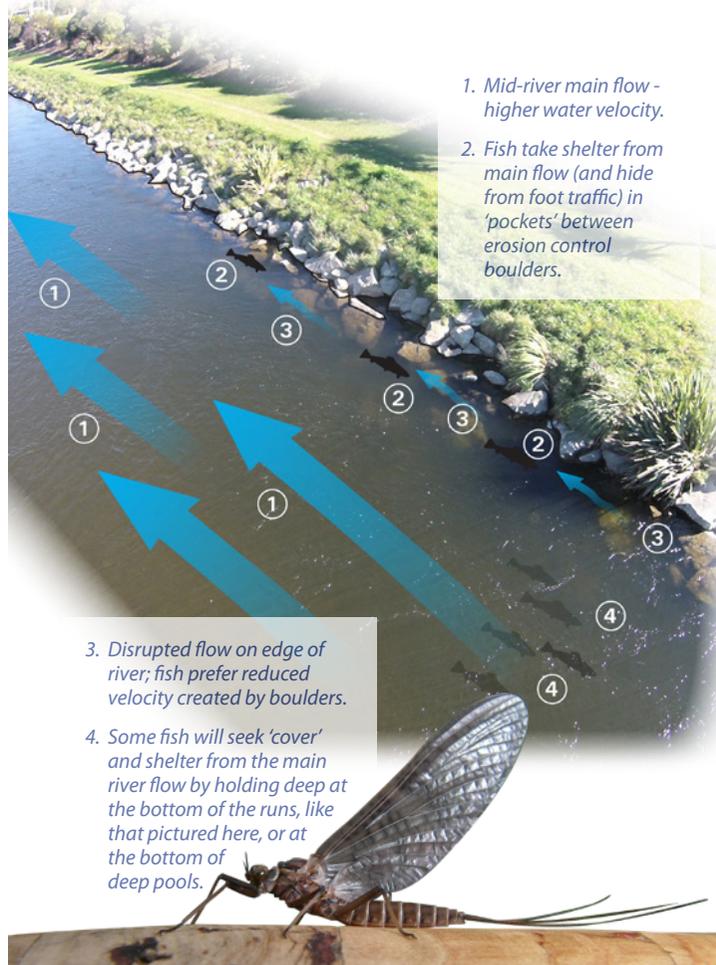


1. The groynes disrupt the flow, creating eddies/currents which move in a circular motion back upstream.
2. Fish swimming a 'beat' in slow flow created by groyne; can often be facing downstream into eddies created by groynes.
3. Fish sitting in a section of river where water flow has scoured a deeper channel adjacent to the rock groyne,
4. Main current - fish will seek 'shelter' out of the main flow, unless the bottom is strewn with large boulders creating shelter to intercept passing nymphs.



1. Mid-river main flow - higher water velocity.
2. Fish take shelter from main flow (and hide from foot traffic) in 'pockets' between erosion control boulders.

3. Disrupted flow on edge of river; fish prefer reduced velocity created by boulders.
4. Some fish will seek 'cover' and shelter from the main river flow by holding deep at the bottom of the runs, like that pictured here, or at the bottom of deep pools.



More Prime Lies

Another hot-spot to target and spend some time patiently watching is the erosion control groynes (rock boulders placed to deflect water flow). The gaps between the boulders offer ideal trout lies and holes to hide in. Find a good elevated position and watch closely – often the trout will move out into the current to intercept food and then dart back into cover.

Where there are numerous groynes, sluggish backwaters are created. Browns, being lazy by nature, love slowly cruising these sections and often swim a repetitive circuit if they haven't been disturbed. Despite flowing through major urban centres the water clarity is still good, so light gear and a delicate presentation is needed to fool fish that have plenty of time to look at your offering.

Remember that trout are shy creatures and if forced to share their environment with multiple users it's only natural that they are going to hide a good part of the time. A key area for concealment is in the root-balls of willows planted for bank stabilisation – when drift diving we regularly observe numbers of fish holding in such lies. Often it isn't possible to run a nymph or dry fly through these lies but a large, heavy streamer can be cast upstream and stripped back quickly as it drifts under the branches.

Finally, during the warmer months don't waste time trying to catch fish from the large congregations that build up in some of the slower pools. These trout are generally stressed, lethargic and won't be feeding (at least during the heat of the day). Instead target sections where the river is moving, flowing over rocks and aerating the water.

More info

We have plenty more resources available to help you fish the Hutt River.

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to view some YouTube clips filmed on the Hutt River.



Get a copy of our **Hutt River Access Guide** from our regional office (06-3590409) or outdoor sporting supplies retailer.

Check out our web pages at wellington.fishandgame.org.nz

The Hutt River is like no other fishery. It takes time to get to know it, the fish movements and their habits. But with a bit of perseverance and know-how you'll crack the code and quickly come to appreciate what an outstanding fishery this is – right on the Capital's doorstep.

wellington.fishandgame.org.nz

A how-to guide

HOW TO FISH THE HUTT RIVER



Where to cast, what to use and other handy tips for success on one of the country's great trout fisheries!



PHOTO: Andrew Harding

Brought to you by Wellington Fish & Game

Introduction

Teeming with large brown trout and being so easily accessible to Wellington and the bordering Hutt cities, the Hutt River is a local treasure and an outstanding fishery nationally.

Fish & Game NZ's annual drift dives consistently reveal very high numbers of large trout – the average size caught is between 3-5lb, with fish around 6lb not uncommon and trophy trout regularly observed.

Despite this, the river does not give up its secrets – or its fish – easily. Indeed, many anglers find the fishery an absolute enigma because the normal rules that apply to other waterways often don't apply to the Hutt River.

Here we hope to help you crack the code and consistently catch the legendary Hutt River browns

When to fish



The ease of access to the Hutt River makes it a great family fishery.
Photo: Andrew Harding

Anyone visiting the Hutt River and surrounding public space soon discovers that it is very well utilised, not just by anglers, but by all members of the public – joggers, swimmers, dog walkers, cyclists, kayakers, and so on.

The ready access along both banks provides a veritable pedestrian highway for tens of thousands of people annually. Trout tend to get a bit shy around all this activity and will hide, at least during the height of the day, or inhabit the least 'busy' stretches of the river.

Target reaches of the river closest to the walkway outside of peak public use. This could be early, at sun-up, or late afternoon and into the evening. The added advantage of fishing these times is that you're likely to encounter the infamous 'Hutt Rise' which is as prolific as it is frustrating because of the selective nature of the fish feeding from the surface.

If you plan to fish during the height of the day, concentrate your effort in the upper, more isolated 'backcountry' section or where the walkway deviates well away from the river. Our Hutt River Access Guide will help you identify these locations.

Another peculiarity of the Hutt River is the fish have a habit of coming on to the 'bite' after midday – a time when trout in most other rivers might fall off feeding. So, having done your homework and located a suitably secluded section, the good news is there's no urgent need to be up with the sparrows to hit that particular stretch.



Where to Fish

The Hutt River can be broken into three main sections:

- 1. Upper** – isolated 'backcountry' type fishing in the wilderness surrounds of Kaitoke Regional Park.
- 2. Mid** – the section of intermediate gradient between Te Marua (Upper Hutt) and Melling Bridge (Lower Hutt) where the river flows through typical run-riffle-pool form.
- 3. Lower** – the low gradient, slow moving pool section with an estuarine element where the river mixes with Wellington harbour.

These river section locations are covered in more detail in our Hutt River Access Guide.

There are four major tributaries of the Hutt River. These hold fish at certain times of the year but the trout are generally few and far between – and they are closed for fishing from the end of April until 1 October each year to protect spawning fish. By far the greatest numbers are seen and caught in the mainstem – and this is open all year round.

The prevailing wind for the bottom of the North Island is nor-west, downstream for the Hutt River. Don't despair though. The surrounding hills create wind distortions and there is generally somewhere on the river where the disturbance means the breeze will be on your back.

Try the Harcourt Park area when you are next faced with blustery conditions and you'll notice the surrounding landscape actually funnels the wind into an upstream breeze! A good tip to know when the wind has forced most anglers off the water.

Top Flies

Best daytime flies:

- Dries:* Parachute Adams, size 12-16.
Royal Wulff, size 12-16.
Nymphs: Prince nymph, size 12-16.
Horn-Cased Caddis, size 12-16.
Pheasant Tail, size 12-16.

Hutt River browns respond very well to cicada imitations when these large terrestrials are on the wing. They can even be used for 'blind' prospect fishing and will pull trout from heavy cover under willows or rock groynes.

For the evening rise:

- Dries:* Parachute Adams, size 12-18.
Twilight Beauty, size 12-16. Elk Hair Caddis, size 12-16.

A solid Hutt River brown!
Photo: Andrew Harding



Tackle Tips

A dry fly used as an indicator with an unweighted, emerger nymph tied 20cm off the hook shank can work on finicky fish. Look for any swirl or rise dimples immediately around your dry fly and gently tighten up.

Always fish with a tapered leader no shorter than 9ft.

The average size of Hutt River browns is larger than most other rivers in New Zealand so the weight of your leader is always going to be a balance between too heavy and not deceiving the fish or too light and breaking them off. As a general rule, a leader terminating in 5X (4.8lb/2.1kg) should be sufficient providing you play the fish carefully.

Prime Lies

The Hutt is certainly a sight fishing river. But one of the defining traits of the trout is where they hold and knowing where to look, which can be quite different to other rivers in New Zealand. Understanding this, along with the behavioural differences caused by the unique pressures on the waterway, is the key to consistently catching trout in this great river.

A principal distinction is that Hutt River trout love to lie in shallow water. It is not uncommon for seasoned Hutt anglers to observe good numbers of big fish stacked into the riffles at the heads of pools or runs. In this fast moving water trout are often very difficult to spot and many anglers walk straight past these sections thinking they don't hold fish.

Take your time and watch carefully any trout-like shape – often you will see it deviate to take a food item, or catch a white flash as it opens its mouth to feed. On occasions you can even see dorsal fins entirely out of the water.

Note that you have to be quick on the strike in these fast sections of water as the trout will spit the fly promptly if you're not on your game.



1. Classic Hutt River stretch with fish holding in a shallow riffle - you can see this as a darker patch on the water. Look carefully and closely at these areas (a good idea is to use polaroid sunglasses as this cuts the glare from the surface of the water).

2. Fish holding hard against the far bank where they get good cover from willows. 'Blind' fish these areas even if you don't spot trout.