

ANGLING NEWS



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WELLINGTON AND TARANAKI FISH & GAME REGIONS

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Dave Arnst with a lovely Rangitikei River rainbow caught three weeks into the season.
Photo: Rufus Hancock



Matthew Gordon caught this stunning 6lb South Taranaki brown

SEASON KICKS OFF IN STYLE

The 2024-25 freshwater fishing season is under way and it's off to solid start.

Spring can often be trying for anglers in the Wellington and Taranaki Fish & Game regions but this season it has been an absolute cracker. Winds that can be the blight of fly anglers haven't really presented problems and any rain has tended to fall mid-week and pushed quickly through by the time the weekend rolls around.

In fact, some of the weekend angling in October has been reminiscent of summer - blue skies, warm temperatures and happily feeding trout have made for perfect fishing conditions. We couldn't have asked for a better start, and it's been great to see so many people out on the water enjoying it and reporting catches.

Last season was an absolute stunner, and we were hoping that if we had a mild winter with no major flood events it would continue into 2024-25. Well, that seems to have been the case! The condition of the trout being caught is excellent for so early on - this suggests they've had an easy ride over winter and been able to recover well after spawning, feeding well and putting on plenty of weight.

Fly fishing with weighted/tungsten bead head nymphs should be the go in most lower North Island smaller streams, as well as the middle and upper reaches of the larger rivers. Spin fishing will also be productive, with 7-10 gram Tobies, Mepps/Veltic bladed lures and Rapalas all likely to take fish. T-tail and paddle-tail soft baits are also working a treat in the winter season waters, so give them a try on a 5.2 gram or 3/16 oz jighead.

As river flows decrease towards their summer lows, the Manawatu should start to be more consistent and productive, along with the lower and mid reaches of the Rangitikei. The Manganuioteao River, near Raetihi, will come into its own, with afternoon and evening fishing likely to produce good results and hopefully an evening rise.

Already we're hearing good reports from some of the Taranaki Ringplain rivers, and in the Wellington region the Ruamahanga River, and upper Rangitikei reaches around Mangaohane and upstream, have fished really well. These will only improve as the weather warms and the invertebrate activity increases.

Don't forget our online access maps have heaps of information to help you plan your angling adventures this season. Scan the QR code and start getting excited for the amazing season to come!



REGS CHANGES FOR THE SEASON

- Scented artificial lures may be used in Wellington Fish & Game region fly fishing and spin fishing waters, when actively fished so as to imitate a bait fish.
- The restriction on the use of treble hooks has been removed from the 2024-25 fishing regulations for the Wellington Fish & Game region to allow greater angling opportunity for all licence holders.
- No changes to Taranaki Fish & Game region regulations for the 2024-25 season.

PHOTO COMP -

WIN A \$300 VOUCHER



Send in your favourite fishing photos from this season and you could be in to win a \$300 voucher to spend in store at Wairarapa Hunting & Fishing. We won't blow your secret spot, just include the name of the angler(s), photographer's details, and general location in the Wellington and Taranaki Fish & Game regions.

You can send us as many fishing photos as you like. By submitting images to enter the competition you acknowledge that Wellington Fish & Game can publish and use the photos for publicity material. Entries must be in by 5pm Tuesday, April 2, 2025. The winner will be announced in our Lower North Lowdown fishing report on Thursday, April 4, 2025.

Fishing a new river or catching a trout of a certain size are achievable and rewarding goals to aim for. Photo: Kerry Hibbard



SET SOME GOALS FOR THE SEASON

Beyond the usual preparations for the start of the season, have you ever considered setting any specific fishing goals for the months ahead? Goal setting is not just for work or competitive sports - it can make your fishing season more exciting, rewarding and fun too.

Having clear objectives gives you something to aim for, and adds purpose and direction to your fishing trips. Instead of just going out and seeing what happens, you will have specific targets in mind. Whether it is landing a personal best, exploring a new fishing spot or mastering a new technique, these goals can bring a fresh sense of engagement and satisfaction to your time on the water.

One key benefit of setting fishing goals is the motivation they provide throughout the season. It is easy to fall into a routine such as visiting the same spots repeatedly which can potentially result in you losing some enthusiasm as the season progresses.

But with goals – whether it's catching a trout of a certain size or fishing in a specific location – you are more likely to stay motivated and keep getting out there. This not only means more time on the water but also more opportunities to enjoy nature and spend time with others.

Goals can also be a great way to learn and improve your fishing skills. If you set a goal to catch trout using a new method, you will likely spend time researching and practising, which can lead to new skills and knowledge. Over time, these small improvements can significantly enhance your overall fishing experience and success. Plus, the goals you set can lead to some of your most memorable fishing moments, like the thrill of catching a fish of a certain size or species, or helping a loved one catch their first fish.

When setting your fishing goals, keep these tips in mind:

- Make it fun - Your goals should enhance your fishing experience, not make it feel like work. Choose goals that excite you and that you will enjoy working towards.
- Be realistic - Set goals that challenge you but are still within reach. This will keep you motivated and will help prevent frustration.
- Celebrate successes - Do not forget to celebrate your achievements. Each goal met is a step towards becoming a better angler.
- You could help a family member catch their first trout.
- Catch your first trout on a fly you tied yourself.
- Fish in five new rivers.
- Catch a trout bigger than 60cm.
- Catch at least one trout every month of the season.

YOUR FISHING & HUNTING REPRESENTATIVES

The Fish & Game council elections were held last month. In Taranaki, seven candidates stood for eight positions meaning an election was not required. The new council comprises five returning councillors and two new councillors – Chris Mattock and Rawenata Saunders.

An election was held for the Wellington Fish & Game region. The results saw eight councillors reelected and four new councillors – Kieran Bell, Ben Hancock, Terry Inglis, Damon Taylor. Taranaki and Wellington each have six meetings a year. Members of the public are welcome to attend and contribute if they wish. Contact us for details of meeting dates and agendas – (06)359-0409.

Taranaki Fish & Game Council	
Chris Donald	Waitara
John Nancarrow	New Plymouth
Alan Flynn	New Plymouth
Chris Mattock	Stratford
Rawenata Saunders	Manaia
Gerard Karalus	Hawera
Romon Sargeson	Waiouru

Wellington Fish & Game Council	
Andrew McGregor	Northern
Paul Dewar	Southern
Kieran Bell	Northern
Jennifer Yanko	Northern
Richard McIntyre	Southern
Aaron Passey	Eastern
Ben Hancock	Southern
Steve Brown	Northern
Jim Cook	Northern
Terry Inglis	Eastern
Steve Haslett	Northern
Damon Taylor	Eastern



GRAB YOUR LICENCE ONLINE

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





Wellington and Taranaki Fish & Game staff electric fishing in Ohakune.

NEW FIELD OFFICER FOR TARANAKI

Jack Harland has recently joined the Fish & Game team as a field officer for the Taranaki region.

Originally from Dunedin, Jack studied at the University of Otago where he focused on environmental management. During this time he also gained valuable experience working with Fish & Game Otago, focusing on resource management advocacy and field work.

A conservationist at heart, Jack has a deep appreciation for New Zealand's unique environment and its enhancement, which has been strengthened by his lifelong recreational pursuits of hunting and fishing. With some of his most cherished memories originating from the outdoors, he is keen to create more opportunities for others to connect with their environments to make great memories of their own.

Having recently relocated to New Plymouth, Jack is excited to join the Taranaki Fish & Game team and get to know the wider community. So, if you see him out and about be sure to stop for a chat!



New Taranaki field officer Jack Harland at Manawa Energy's Motukawa hydro diversion weir and fish pass on the Manganui River.

WELLINGTON-TARANAKI FISH & GAME SHARED RESOURCES - UPDATE

Wellington and Taranaki Fish & Game regions are collaborating to enhance the service delivery to licence holders in the lower North Island, aiming for long-term effectiveness and efficiencies. Wellington Fish & Game Council has implemented a shared resources arrangement with Taranaki Fish & Game Council, aiming for full integration of operational and governance functions. This transition is working towards formal amalgamation to enhance core services and representation for a region of larger size.

The two regions are currently operating as two separate business units but have shared operational services arrangements reflected in staff resourcing configurations. This approach is our response to the recommendations listed in the Ministerial review of Fish & Game governance released in April 2021, to principally rationalise governance within the organisation but also reduce duplication, provide consistency, and reiterate focus on providing service to licence holders. We consider that this joint and cooperative response will provide improved effectiveness of outcome services for licence holders by sharing internal staff experience and skills – and additionally lead to some (modest) administrative efficiencies.

There has already been some benefit in this approach in service delivery across functional areas such as: communications with and engagement of licence holders, critique of species monitoring programmes, rationalising consistent governance and operational policies, and sharing of engagement styles with mana whenua.

FISHERY FOCUS - HIDDEN GEM RIGHT IN THE HUTT

The Korokoro Stream begins in the hills to the west of Lower Hutt and enters Wellington Harbour at the western end of Petone Beach.

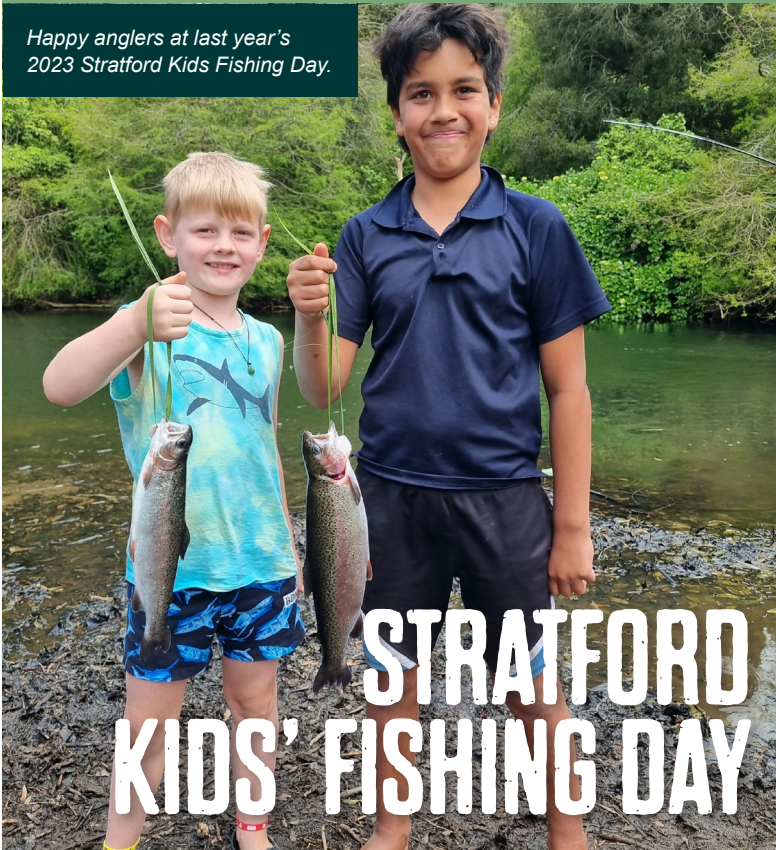


For around 250m from the mouth, most of the stream runs beneath roads and a commercial estate beside SH2 but it then opens up into a delightful waterway surrounded by native bush running through Belmont Regional Park. Grassy margins mean unimpeded casting.

Recent State of the Environment monitoring reveals excellent numbers of brown trout resident in the lower reaches, with a very large specimen over 600mm caught during the monitoring. While the Korokoro Stream track follows alongside the waterway for 8km, a substantial weir exists around 1.5km upstream and we're yet to ascertain whether there is a trout population above this structure.

Access from Pito-One Rd, turn right when you reach Cornish Street and there's a gravel parking area. A footbridge across the stream marks the start of the trail. Because it comes from a different catchment to the Hutt, this is an option when the main river is affected by rainfall and high flows. If you go for an explore up the Korokoro this season we'd love to hear how you get on.

Happy anglers at last year's 2023 Stratford Kids Fishing Day.



STRATFORD KIDS' FISHING DAY

The 27th annual Stratford Kids' Trout Fishing Day is being held on Saturday, December 14, 2024. The event involves the release of 300 large rainbow trout into the Scout Den Pool in the Patea River within King Edward Park, in the heart of Stratford. Children will be able to fish from 8am until 1pm with help from Stratford Fishing Club members and volunteers.

From mid-November parents and caregivers can book a 15-minute time slot for their kids by visiting the Stratford i-Site in Miranda Street, Stratford, or phoning them on 0800 765 6708.

The beauty of this release is that the trout remain in the vicinity for several months, complementing the Patea River's resident brown trout population and providing great fishing for novice and expert anglers alike.

If you would like to volunteer to help kids fish on the day, please get in touch with Taranaki Fish & Game on (06)757-9676.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS



A large fish barrier on Mangatarere Stream (before) and after removal.

Fish & Game staff have been working closely with Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) to identify and remove fish barriers in the Wairarapa region. Prior to the winter spawning runs, a large structure in the Mangatarere Stream blocking movements of migratory fish was dismantled.

The Mangatarere is one of the key trout spawning tributaries in the Ruamahanga River catchment, so reinstating fish passage after several years will benefit the trout fishery as well as native fish species. Work is underway to remove other structures in the Mangatarere and Waipoua rivers. Fish & Game thanks GWRC staff and landowners for their assistance.



MOBILITY IMPAIRED ANGLER AND HUNTER ACCESS



Fish & Game is working towards providing fishing opportunities for Kiwis who have mobility impairments and limitations – including those in wheelchairs, the elderly, and people who have suffered from medical issues such as strokes, for example.

The initiative came about from Eastern Fish & Game where they've already installed several fishing platforms for people with mobility limitations, and staff there also completed a wheelchair-accessible maimai for the last duck hunting season.

"Part of our statutory mandate is to increase angling and hunting opportunities," says Fish & Game chief executive Corina Jordan. "We want to help New Zealanders who are mobility impaired enjoy and experience freshwater fishing and game bird hunting which are quintessential Kiwi pastimes."

"We've undertaken a nationwide review of possible access points and resources we have around New Zealand that could be used by people with mobility limitations who want to fish and hunt.

"So far we've gathered information on about 30 sites that may fit the bill – they'll likely be more to come as this project takes shape – and we've set up dedicated webpages to promote these opportunities [scan QR code]."

Fish & Game has received interest from the Outdoor Accessibility Working Group which wants to promote the design of the fishing and hunting platforms. "We're hoping there are opportunities for our two organisations to work more closely and hopefully get more of these built around the country," says Jordan. These are just the first steps in an ongoing commitment to make the pursuits more accessible to all Kiwis.

REGION	SITE	LOCATION	WHEELCHAIR ACCESS	MOBILITY IMPAIRED ACCESS
WELLINGTON	Hokowhitu Lagoon	Palmerston North	Yes	Yes
	Henley Lake	Masterton	Yes	Yes
	Whitby Lake	Porirua	Yes	Yes
	Marton Reservoir	Manawatu	TBA	Yes
	Lake Wairarapa	Lake Domain	Yes*	Yes
	Ruamahanga boat ramp	Lower Ruamahanga River	Yes*	Yes
TARANAKI	Lake Mangamahoe	Between New Plymouth and Inglewood	Yes	Yes

* assistance may be required.

MISSION OF DISCOVERY -BROOK TROUT



TOP TIP - BEATING THE WIND

Don't let the wind beat you, fight back. Photo: Andrew Harding

So far we've been pretty fortunate this season but if NIWA's latest outlook is anything to go by we could be in for some windy fishing conditions as we head into summer.

If this eventuates, you don't need to hide inside or make lengthy treks across the island. Keep the following tips in mind whenever you're faced with blustery conditions, and it'll ensure you spend more time on the water this season rather than time at home doing odds jobs or sitting in a car travelling to calmer fishing spots:

- Go up in line weight - Even if you're fishing small water, your big lake rod or Taupo gear can often punch through the wind. It won't be pretty, but it'll get a fly on or in the water and often the ruffled surface will disguise a less-than-delicate presentation.
- Consider the spin option - Short rods and heavy spinning lures are infinitely better when it's blowing, no question. You can even rig up a bubbler float and flies to use with your spin-fishing outfit!
- Seek shelter - Some stretches of river will be more sheltered than others, making it much easier to cast a fly. Target sections that have high banks or high trees lining the river's edge as these will break up the wind and reduce its velocity.
- Go heavy - If your heart is set on the so-called purist pursuit (fly fishing), think about using heavy nymphs. These will unfurl the leader much better than a lighter pattern or a large wind-catching terrestrial dry fly.
- Don't cast - Rather than trying to cast into a headwind, put on a streamer fly and roll cast or strip line out downstream i.e. let the current do the work. Streamers work well at this time of year in certain lowland reaches too as there are an abundance of migratory bait fish around.

Think outside the square, mix things up, and you'll always get a shot at a fish no matter what the conditions throw at you.



Wellington Fish & Game's Dr Matt Kavermann with a brook trout from the Central Plateau. Photo: Hamish Carnachan

Staff from Wellington Fish & Game braved the single-digit temperatures and set off on expedition into the Central North Island high country to chase brook trout over winter.

Historic and anecdotal records suggested there was a population in small tributary of the Rangitikei River on a remote sheep and beef station northeast of Taihape. However, it had been decades since any attempt had been made to verify their existence.

The team, guided by some enthusiastic local anglers, sampled the mainstem and five smaller feeder streams on the expansive property with electric fishing machine. Brookies (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) were recorded in most of the waters sampled.

Only juvenile brookies were found – no adults – and aside from common bullies no indigenous fish were caught. Some very large longfin tuna were present at several of the sampling sites where brook trout were found.

Senior officer Dr Matt Kavermann says it's important to know as much as we can about all freshwater fisheries in the region, and confirming the presence of a novel species in the Wellington Fish & Game region means it can be used as a 'gene bank' or 'reservoir' if populations collapse elsewhere in the country.

WORKING WITH WAC

Fish & Game is in regular contact with Herenga a Nuku Aotearoa, the Outdoor Access Commission, to improve access to freshwater fisheries across the lower North Island. We have assisted WAC with several investigations into closed or obstructed public access via unformed legal roads (paper roads) to fisheries, including western access to the Ruahine Range.

More recently we've been working closely with WAC staff who, through a recent sale of land to an overseas landowner, are working to establish access to an otherwise landlocked fishery in South Wairarapa. We'll keep you informed of developments as this progresses.

TOP TIP - FISHING HIGH FLOWS

This lower North Island spring creek was clear when neighbouring rivers were in flood. Photo: Hamish Carnachan

Just because rivers are carrying colour doesn't mean you can't catch fish. In fact, in all but the most heavily flooded waters there is always a chance to catch trout if you adapt to the conditions.

Here are some top tips to help:

1. Use large flies - By this I mean really big flies... even double-hook, articulated streamers! The larger the fly the easier it is for trout to see in brown water or high flows which are holding a lot more suspended sediment. Trout will regularly smash a large streamer in flooded water, dialling in on a moving silhouette. Darker colours work best.
2. Bring out the spinning gear - For the same reasons as above, spin fishing can be more productive because the lures are larger and the shiny flash can make it easy for the trout to see when chasing it in discoloured water.
3. Fish the edge - Ever noticed that even when a river is in raging flood, the water on the edge out to a couple of feet is remains quite clear? Trout know this and move into the shallow margins to both avoid the high water velocity in the main current and also to feed (often on worms). Believe it or not, fish can often be spotted by searching the clear edge of a river in spate.
4. Target confluence areas - Smaller streams can carry clearer water during a flood or high flow event; because they are sourced in smaller catchment areas, they sometimes aren't as adversely affected as larger waterways. Where this clear water meets and mingles with the high flow of a larger river, you'll invariably find trout seeking refuge or moving in to feed.
5. Head high up - The higher you get in a catchment, the less it will be affected by rainfall. Also, spring creeks will often remain crystal clear after heavy rain; and rain can often turn lake trout onto the bite so stillwater fisheries are also good places to target.

A feisty little rainbow caught in a side-stream when the mainstem was running brown - Note the tea-coloured water. Photo: Hamish Carnachan



A healthy Hutt River brown observed while staff were drift diving in the lower reaches early this season. Photo: Hamish Carnachan

HUTT RIVER UPDATE

From the outset of the project, Wellington Fish & Game has pushed to have input into the Riverlink Project which involves a major infrastructure development around the lower reaches of the river. We've participated and submitted on the resource consent, and worked with engineers, to outline habitat requirements for trout and ensure any impacts are minimal and if there is adverse effects then the population is reinstated after the works.

We also have secured funding from the project team to monitor the trout population above, below and at the works site. This will be carried out to ensure no adverse impact of the works on the trout fishery in the wider Hutt River catchment.

Our monitoring involves:

- Undertaking drift dives at the site, and carrying out extensive electric fishing throughout the catchment before project commencement to set a baseline.
- Follow up field work after the project to assess net effect on fishery and trout population.

The resource consent for the project stipulates that any discernable adverse impact on the Hutt fishery needs to be remedied. It should be noted that the affected works area is confined to a small stretch of the lower reaches; there is ample fishing upstream, all the way into Kaitoke Regional Park, and this is generally where the best angling is.

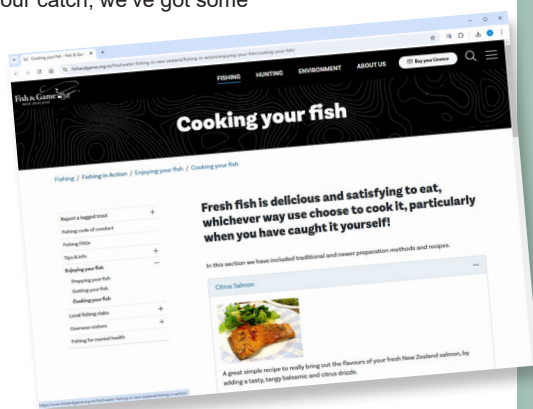
The Hutt has fished well already this season and our monitoring drift dive last month recorded excellent numbers of both large and medium browns in the lower reaches around Melling and Kennedy-Good bridges.

CATCH IT, COOK IT!



There's nothing wrong with taking trout home for the table so as long as you're adhering to the bag limits set out in the regulations. It makes sense to supplement your meals from the outdoor supermarket too when the cost of the living is biting.

To make the most of your catch, we've got some great recipes from top chefs – super easy but super tasty so you'll impress the whole family. Scan the QR code to check out some mouth watering recipes including Thai Steam Trout, Trout Tian and, kids' favourite, Trout Tacos.



WHERE DOES YOUR F&G LICENCE MONEY GO?

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

21%

Habitat Protection

10%

Public Awareness

19%

Species Management

5%

Compliance

9%

Licensing

6%

Council

14%

Coordination and Planning:

HOW YOUR FISH & GAME LICENCE DOLLARS ARE SPENT

USER PAYS, USER SAYS

Fish and Game NZ is everyone who buys a fishing or hunting licence – we are a ‘user pays, user says’ non-profit organisation that receives no government or taxpayer money. Licence fees are set to cover the costs attributable to management of the fish and game resource. Your licence dollars go towards:

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 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.