



WEST COAST PROPOSED DESIGNATED WATERS REPORT 2024

A summary of data and angler consultation for West Coast fisheries proposed as additional Designated Waters for the 2024-2025 Sports Fishing Season.

Baylee Kersten, Fish & Game Field Officer, May 2024.

Summary

The Waitahu, Upper Grey, Rough rivers, and Larry's Creek have for many years provided excellent angling opportunities for resident and visiting non-resident anglers. Following feedback of an apparent decline in the fishery status, West Coast Fish and Game have been collecting data and consulting with anglers on the proposal to add these four fisheries as Designated Waters. The Non-resident angling pressure complimented by sufficient support from consultation warrants the Waitahu, Upper Grey, and Rough rivers, and Larry's Creek becoming Designated Waters.

Background

At the West Coast Fish and Game Council June 2023 meeting the Council resolved *"That the West Coast Fish and Game Council recommends no change to the current sportfish regulations other than the West Coast region request that the Minister notify the following Designated Waters: Waitahu River, Larry's Creek, Rough River – upstream of Mirfins Creek, Upper Grey – upstream of Clarke Stream, Mokihinui – upstream of Rough & Tumble Creek, Karamea – upstream of Kakapo Creek."* However, advice from the Minister received in 2023 was that angler consultation was required on any proposed regulation changes before they would be implemented.

During the 2023/24 season the West Coast Fish and Game Council have undertaken additional compliance and angler monitoring in the Reefton Area to establish trends in activity on the proposed rivers to the Designated Waters list for the West Coast. At the April 2024 West Coast Fish and Game Council meeting, following the Council receiving the preliminary monitoring data on the proposed rivers, the Council resolved *" that the staff proceed to consultation with licence-holders for the proposed Designated Waters."*

Angler Monitoring and Field Surveys

Over the period of November to April, anglers were encountered at the four proposed additional designated waters during varying times of day and days of the week. Of these anglers, 38% were non-resident licence holders.

Summary of Angler feedback from surveys conducted:

- The most frequent responses to what most limited satisfaction when fishing in the Reefton area was angling pressure.
- Larry's Creek was mentioned the most of all the West Coast fisheries that anglers plan to avoid due to angling pressure.
- On average non-resident anglers planned to spend 9 days fishing the Reefton area this season.
- Average angler satisfaction out of ten for the Reefton rivers were: Larrys Creek 7, Rough River 8, Waitahu 7, Upper Grey 7.
- When Anglers were asked how often they encountered other anglers in the Reefton area, 24% of respondents had over a 20% encounter rate with other anglers.

Occupancy rates were recorded while checking access points on the proposed waterways. The most popular access points on the Waitahu River, Larry's Creek the upper Grey River exceed 50%, with some site's occupancy was as high as 81%. The Rough River proposed section, upstream of Mirfins Creek, is frequently accessed by helicopter and therefore roadside data does not capture angling pressure adequately. Please note that data was collected this season, in a period when we have not experienced a beech forest mast for several years. Following a beech mast, Fish and Game typically observes a further increase in angling activity in the Reefton area.

Consultation

Consultation was achieved by emailing all West Coast sports fishing licence holders, including those that held a designated waters licence for the region. To further increase engagement with anglers, the survey was shared on both social media via the West Coast Fish and Game Facebook page and in the Fish & Game online fishing newsletter *Reel Life*.

208 angler responses were received, and their stance is captured in three graphs below.

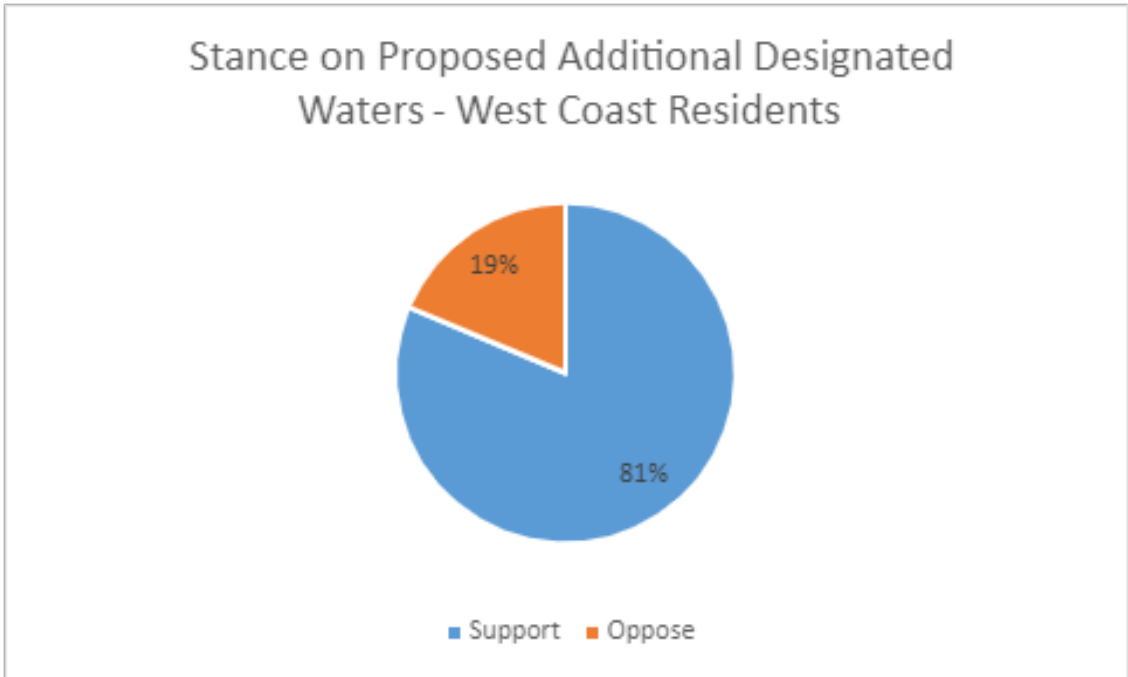


Figure 1: West Coast licence holders' stance on the implementation of the four proposed designated waters.

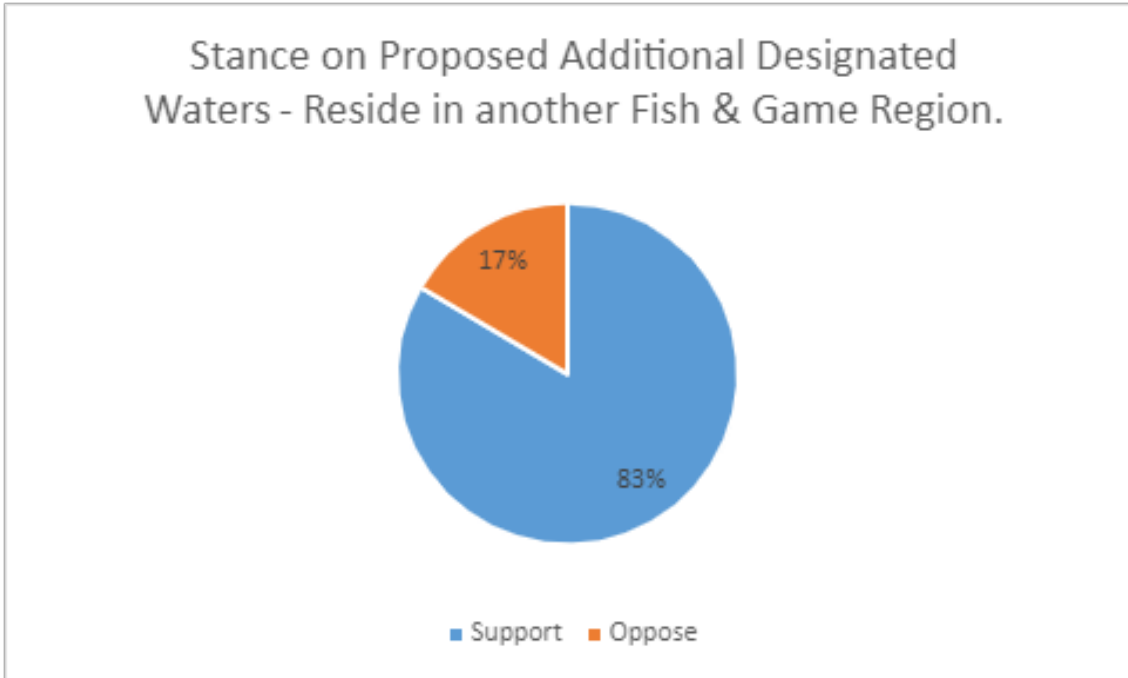


Figure 2: Resident licence holders from other region's stance on the implementation of the four proposed designated waters.

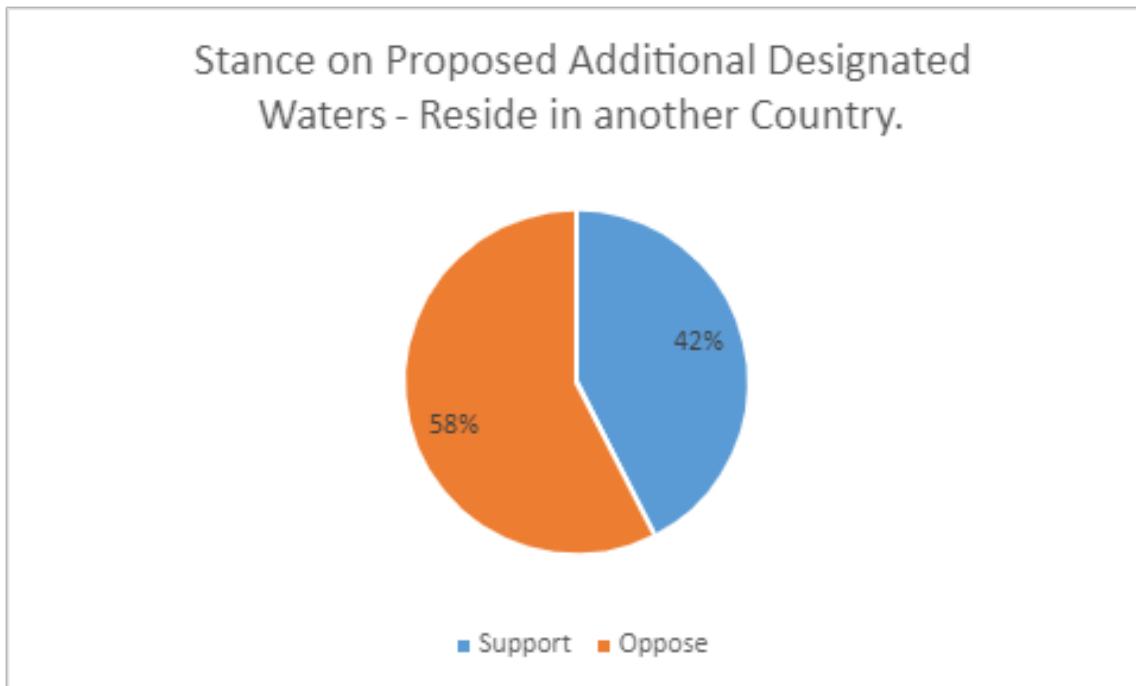


Figure 3: Non-resident licence holders' stance on the implementation of the four proposed designated waters.

Figure one and two confirm that there is strong support for addition of the proposed Designated Waters by resident anglers. Figure three displays that non-resident anglers were not as supportive of the proposed designated waters, but this was anticipated as this management system does encourage non-resident anglers to spread their angling pressure creating opportunities for residents to enjoy some of our pressure sensitive fisheries.

Staff Recommendation:

- That the West Coast Fish and Game Council recommends no change to the current sports fishing regulations other than request that the Minister notify the following Designated Waters:

Awarau (Larrys Creek) designated waters fishery meaning the Awarau River catchment upstream of the confluence with the Inangahua River.

Māwheranui (Grey) designated waters fishery meaning the Māwheranui catchment upstream of the confluence with the Clarke River.

Otututu (Rough) designated waters fishery meaning the Otututu River catchment upstream of the confluence with the Mirfin Creek.

Waitahu designated waters fishery meaning the Waitahu River catchment upstream of the confluence with the Inangahua River.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questions Asked During Designated Waters Angler Survey 2023/24.

Q1: What is your full name? (As is appears on your fishing licence)

Q2: Where do you reside?

Options were: I reside in the West Coast Region; I reside in another Fish & Game Region, and I reside in another Country.

Q3: The West Coast Fish & Game Council propose to add: Waitahu River, Larry's Creek, Upper Grey River upstream of the Clarke River confluence and the Rough River upstream of Mirfins Creek to the Designated Waters system on the West Coast.

Do you support or oppose this proposal?

Q4: Do you have any other feedback for us about this proposal/Designated Waters?

Appendix 2: All Angler Feedback/Comments from West Coast Angler Survey 2023/24 season:

The following feedback is from people identified as living in the West Coast region and support the proposal:

Limit soft bait to under 15 years of age. No bait fishing as overseas anglers as they are heavily using to catch and eat while staying in backcountry area on a budget allowing them to stay longer which is what you guys trying to slow. Would also protecting the trout stocks for stress and over catching would be a great extra step that needs to be seriously considered as I feel what is being implemented isn't going far enough and I think we're 5 to 10 years behind where we need to be What a special predicted for everyone.

I am not against the proposal.

No

No additional comments.

No As I did not fish any of those areas this past season

Fished them all in the last 25 years

But I also support the Waitha hydro project

Expand designated waters to include other fisheries in the future.

1. Yes, I would like to know if you had any confirmed salmon catches in the Hoki, Taramakau and Grey rivers this 2024 summer/autumn salmon season

2. When was the last time F/G released any new trout and salmon stocks into the West Coast Rivers

3. When do F/G anticipate releasing some new stock into West Coast Rivers" this is essential to improve quality of experience

Thanks to West Coast Fish and Game Council for the attention on these waters and subsequent management.

I think this is a very good proposal which I hope will help to lessen the pressure on the popular rivers in our region. At present to fish these one has arrive early or camp out overnight...not ideal! Fish tend to be spooky or under cover due to constant pressure. I think that a further improvement would be to allow residents to fish these DW rivers with their normal seasonal licence.

No

Why not increase the Licence fee to cover the extra cost of the river management, especially over seas visitors

Happy to provide my full support for this and other important initiatives.

I also support the need for signage at entry points to these designated waters. This is especially important while the changes are new and until anglers are familiar with any new rules. It will help reduce conflict on the river.

Like to see even more designated waters

Licence [REDACTED] I kept no Salmon.

The following feedback is from people identified as living in the West Coast region and oppose the proposal:

This is just for a few as you continue to layer costs to licence holders and anyone who wants to fish the areas that already exist. this type of proposal just adds cost to people who want to fish but now can't afford it, given your council keeps increasing costs to licence holders. Stop limiting peoples access to fishing and get a handle on your inhouse costs to manage the fishery first.

i think that the karamea and the mokihinui should be dropped as well

I support local fishermen being able to fish all of our waterways without restrictions. Restrictions should be aimed at non-resident license holders.

I Go fishing to get away from all the bureaucracy and crap I deal with running a business carrying extra cards keeping track of fish I catch keeping up with the regulation of where and when I can fish and all the additions on my license, surveys you guys are getting as bad as DoC. Bring back the days of one license fish anywhere with a few simple rules. Didn't fish much last season may not bother buying a license next year.

After fishing the area for 20 plus years and seeing what the events last year did. I belive the fishery will bounce back by its own self management. Essentially those who would fish area know it's nothingnlike the past and are likely to explore other opportunities

I have allways had a full season licence and for an example last week was traveling up the grey Valley on a nice day and decided to make a unplanned stop at the waitahu river for a quick cast I was successful at catching and releasing a nice fish, now if you make it a DW I simply would not have stopped there because I would have not had a dw licence because I can't be bothered getting on my phone and applying for one. In short that would have been 1 less day In a season I would not have fished. And with the licence price going up every year and then having to have a dw or back country licence to fish 4 times a year its getting to the point where I will stop getting a licence and fishing. I would like to see the rivers that you guys beleave get to much fishing pressure have capped international/guide days on that river

The following feedback is from people identified as living in another Fish and Game region and support the proposal:

No

More designations the better

Unsure about the inclusion of the Waitahu River, but fully support the inclusion of Larry's Creek, Upper Grey River upstream of the Clarke River confluence and the Rough River upstream of Mirfins Creek to the Designated Waters system

I presume all tributaries of those waters are included and this also has my strong support. great system

Ohikanui river should be included. Ahaura upstream of waiheke stream. (Trent/Titukaekuri) should also be included.

Any measure to maintain a fishery is welcome as far as I'm concerned.

I would also like resident only fishing on designated waters on weekends and public holidays to be introduced.

More protection of all the rivers as this will allow more water for kiwi anglers
Excellent idea, let's go fishing.

The more rivers that become designated the better as it might reduce pressure on those rivers. Unfortunately that pressure is transferred to un-designated streams.

Living in Canterbury I have seen this approach working, so have no reservations in thinking that will work on the West Coast.

We haven't had any feedback from f&G regarding the effectiveness of the current designated waters. This makes it hard to reach informed decisions on adding to the list.

Great idea!

Shame they weren't added last season

Too many guides having a major negative effect on the upper karamea fishery

Note: I have a house on the West Coast we use for about 1/2 the year. Our Home F&G Region is North Canterbury. Both Regions are very important to me and the angling and wilderness experience is paramount.

There is a risk of displacing NRL's to other premium rivers in West Coast so ideally, all of the following would also be included as DW's
Ohikanui.
Haupiri above Gloriavale.
Crooked.
Upper Ahaura.
McVicars Creek
Waitangi-Taona

No, but the more careful managed waters the better.

The system is working well. Hopefully this can be enforced well.

Fished the Waitahu River this season. Fishing was very tough but with success. Obviously a huge amount of fishing pressure on this river nowadays. Fish were spooky and relatively scarce. I compare this to previous times when I fished this river...including the Montgomerie River in the 1980s and 90s. There was a number of fishing parties present...including getting gazumped by a helicopter fishing party. Much more regulation and conditions need to be set on commercial fishing guides.

The objective of F&G needs to be supported for DW, as the number of overseas Anglers visiting our fisheries is growing rapidly.

About time!

Looking forward to data to see if the new designated waters is helping with pressure

No

A positive move, good stuff! 😊

As with other Designated Water designations, I do wonder where the deflected (international) angler effort will go, and how Fish & Game might monitor this.

Great idea

It would be helpful if you were to indicate potential drawbacks to such a designation. As a non-local fisherman, what hoops would I have to go through to be able to fish in one of these areas on any given day?

An issue to be considered will be that guides who are making a living by guiding on these rivers are not over dominating the fisheries. Given these guides and the associated lodges are effectively commercialising these public resources their use (or over use) of the waters should be a consideration and may need to be managed or addressed directly.

As a recreational angler I appreciate the effort and work Fish & Game staff, volunteers and elected councillors put in to help address overcrowding of pressure sensitive trout fisheries across the West Coast (and South Island).

I'm not entirely convinced the Designated Waters system will have any influence on the number of fishers on the water, but if the additional revenue helps maintain or improve the fish numbers then I'm in full support of it.

I believe with the sustained pressure that the Ahaura above the Haupiri confluence should be considered.

Please do more enforcement. The failure to enforce a regulation is to endorse the very thing you are trying to prohibit

As a visitor to West Port area over the past 9 years, I have mainly fished the Buller River with some success. For this reason I can not really offer knowledge on the proposed fisheries. (I need to check these out!!) Therefore I will have to leave it to your judgement but would be happy to support the proposal to safe guard the fishing in the identified streams.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

There is no detail as to how the designated water system is going to be used in the future. I know how it is being used currently, but do you plan on changing that to a booked beat system, as North Canterbury is proposing? I have supported the current system, but by itself these rules only really affect fisherman/women from overseas. Is the current system just a stepping stone to a beat system, and how does a beat system work when every fishing day is subject to weather and river flow conditions. What do the fishing guides do? I am fearful that they just book every location for every day of the season.

I have started fishing more on the west coast as the canterbury rivers are subject to N/W wind so often, I think more now than in the past. In doing this I have noticed that we can keep 2 fish on the coast and in canterbury have to release all fish (no one wants to keep a fish under 400mm) in all of the good rivers. I release 85-90% of fish I catch (my wife is more agreeable to my fishing trips if I provide an occasional fish) and don't mind releasing all of them, but I just don't see how two adjacent provenances can take such a differing approach.

Your feedback would be appreciated

Regards

[REDACTED]

Having obtained a whole of season licence, it is not clear how a DW licence is obtained and at what cost.

Make it happen it will do wonders for our fishery's.. Thankyou

I absolutely agree with adding the 4 extra rivers next season. In particular, Larry's Creek and the Upper Grey River are under enormous pressure from Non Resident Anglers. Also I met 2 European Anglers walking out of the Waitahu River this season who had spent 7 days at the Montgomery Hut fishing. This is unexceptable behavior and prevented from fishing this area. I hope that all tributaries of the proposed new rivers are included. I believe the Designated Waters Licence system has worked well this season, as it was designed to.

Maybe your software should have the individual Rivers stated so you have a better understanding with one has the most pressure.This could be helpful for future changes.

I fished the South Island rivers including the West Coast over three weeks in February 2024 and found all rivers I fished (which was many and some remote) were under intense pressure from overseas anglers and guides.

The more we can look after all our fisheries the better. Still seeing large numbers of tourist Anglers camping out on these rivers

Include tributaries of upper grey such as robinson, blue grey etc to the

Should decrease the overall pressure on the fishery

The Upper Grey is particularly in need of reduced fishing pressure - it is well known to the overseas, freedom camping, "fishing bums" with its easy access.

Charge overseas (international) fisherman a daily rate for our DW. No more than 2 days on each DW river.

Yes, I would like to see more restrictions placed on fishing guides and overseas anglers, on these designated waters.

Make the Karamea River System and other designated waters, no fly (and no guide) zones. Create more fisheries where anglers who are prepared to tramp in, can do so without having a helicopter dropping in above them on a river

What is it that we are trying to achieve? Is this a game of whack a mole chasing anglers that moved from the Kahurangi designated waters?

Where will they move to next, Ahaura, Ohikanui, South-westland? If Westcoast designates too many rivers will anglers just disconnect.

Designated waters has worked very well for Kahurangi but once there are essentially 11 rivers in designated waters, thats a lot and if the usage data does not differentiate between rivers utilised then the data becomes more diluted and much less valuable. Also how much ranging was done in Kahurangi designated waters this season as the active face of compliance.....? I suspect none?

Also Reefton is a guiding hotspot and until guides are included in designated waters management the effect will not be as beneficial. The Travers river received heavy attention in Nelson Marlborough region as a designated water (mainly guided) and I don't think the result was as great as the Kahurangi wilderness due to ease of access and determined guide effort. I am supportive of the principal but I think perhaps a cautious considered approach is wise. another season of Kahurangi and hopefully by then we will have a guides licence, allowing the guiding fraternity to be actively managed on designated waters also."

I'm an 80-year-old fly fisherwoman. I don't get out fishing much now, however. Each year I like to buy a fishing license to support the sport I've enjoyed so much. When I'm out in my wee camper I might still get the wish to catch a fish, these days though I enjoy just seeing fish

moving around the edges of lakes and rivers just watching them. I love the West Coast, so I am happy to support what is being proposed with these rivers, best of luck, and maybe I'll catch up with some others out on the riverbeds when I'm over next. Kindest regards Estelle

A good idea to preserve special areas

Thank you this is a great idea. Protect NZ's best fly fishing water at all costs!

Next one to look into would be the stoney, surely the additional pressure will fallback onto rivers like the stoney. As a fish an game ranger the pressure I saw on larrys this season was outrageous and something really needs to happen. Thanks fish an game for protecting our rivers.

The following feedback is from people identified as living in another Fish and Game region and oppose the proposal:

stop trying to increase the cost to fish

Before more rivers are made Designated Waters, I'd like to see evidence that it does actually achieve the desired outcomes.

Waitahu should be above Gannons rd Bridge + Grey should be a be above Alexander river Confluence

this designated water issue is kinda BS all round . why should it Classify another area being a separate licence when the licence is already being payed for . i know its not exactly a more of cost to the licence holder but seriously. why should the local born person who pays for a full season licence then be required to get an add on? really. the waters of NZ licence required obviously, should be a first in first served basis. there is no need for the other wise.

My recent experience is that having designated waters has had a significant detrimental impact on the fishing quality and experience of those waters. I have fished a number of rivers in the North Canterbury region over many years prior to them being declared designated waters where the quality of the fish was very high and relatively light angling pressure. When these rivers became highlighted through the designated waters classification I believe it attracted much higher and more intensive angling pressure from anglers who had never previously known or considered fishing these waters. The fact they are now highlighted, this has drawn attention to these waters and consequently the angling pressure has completely degraded both the fishery and the experience. On a mid season trip to one of those rivers that previously would yield at least 3-5 trout per kilometre of river in the 5 lb plus range we only encountered 2 ultra spooky fish in excess of 15 kilometres of 2 designated rivers (Hope & Doubtful Rivers) In my view, creating designated waters has the absolute opposite impact to the anticipated outcome.

Previous regulations of restricting bag limit and restrictions over taking fish over a certain length is more effective.

Thanks for the opportunity to share our experience and feedback.

Kind regards [REDACTED]

End Designated Waters immediately. It's not helpful... it only advertises places of significance to everyone which is completely unnecessary and counterproductive to it's intentions. The meager fee does nothing but add another layer of complexity for anglers to interpret, comply and work with other anglers and/or clients, fish n game, landowners and interested parties. This should end and all associated costs/resources/staff/etc. should take a completely opposite approach.

Please consider trying to open ALL WATERS! AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. This motto/initiative would be to open up as much water- angler access particularly on those significant rivers.

Many designated waters have excellent fishing below or on other parts of the river. However, many places are not accessible or it's too difficult of most to gain access. Simply put- create more beats on all places for all anglers and public to access safely. Expanding the areas commonly accessed and encouraging anglers to spread out to "new" waters. Working with all landowners, LTNZ, DOC, and any party that can help create more spots, knowledge of public road/access and thereby reducing pressure on areas of significance. New rules do no good and simply encourage anglers to look at places. Every spot has significance to some angler and landowner... the public.

Better education on ALL of our fisheries, better communication and guidelines on each individual river's regulations, access points, safety features or concerns is more important than focusing attention and requiring special "administrative" elements to the well known/popular spots. By providing more opportunities and spaces for residents and overseas anglers would in my opinion (and many of my angler friends agree on this,) be the position to take.

I fish all over the South Island 60-80 days a year. Over 500 days in my lifetime here.... and I go to 25-45 different rivers each year. I see anglers and know the entire length of many rivers (the tributaries in particular,) and truly understand the places which have DESIGNATED NEW ZEALAND Fly Fishing as the best in the world! No doubt. I could easily give you a list of a 100 beats- 2-4.5km lengths of river in the South Island which could be classified as designated spots... the best of the best.

We must not focus angling attention to any region, method, demographic or "kind" of angler. Not for the guides, lodges, industry associates or any of outside party of interest. It's about giving anglers the most NZ has to offer by providing that guidance, education and public information on it's fisheries. I respectfully encourage Fish n Game to work on providing anglers with more beats- sections where anglers can park vehicle or make known to other anglers there intentions and/or sections they are fishing. Voluntary and unregulated but with the best information and guidance to the public for better angling experience and opportunity for all players in the sport across these great waters.

Sincerely,

██████████

keen fly angler...

guide in NZ's South Island adventures for over 15 years

10 year resident of Motueka, Tasman district

The rivers in question are being hammered primarily by NZ fisherman. Charging foreign visitors high rates is unwelcoming and absolutely ineffective.

Hey there, I support the addition of the Waitahu River and Larry's Creek as part of the West Coast Designated Waters, however with the addition of the upper Grey River, and taking into consideration the nearby location of the Lewis pass designated waters, the only water accessible to fish in quite a wide area would be the Maruia and its tributaries. Ultimately this would be very limiting by giving relatively few options to fish outside Designated Waters in quite a wide area!

Also most of the Upper Rough River is fished via helicopters and very few New Zealand resident anglers fly into this river due to the large expense of a chopper flight, so adding this water would likely not proportionally increase the use by resident anglers, only reduce the accessibility to non resident anglers who just want to do a single day helicopter fishing trip as part of their holiday. Many of these non resident anglers have a positive effect on the area as they bring in a lot of money to the local Reefton community while staying in the area on holiday.

I would support including the upper Grey and Upper Rough rivers if it was possible to fish these two locations by purchasing a single day Designated Water license but not a full season license and a Designated Water license combined, as this would make it an unaffordable option for many tourist anglers just wanting to do a single days fishing in these beautiful locations! However, I understand this is an unlikely possibility due to how the Designated Waters system works! Thanks for your consideration of the above points! 😊

I oppose designated waters full stop. When you purchase a very expensive license you should be able to fish any water in New Zealand for any sport fish. There should only be a restriction on length of 350mm and number of fish taken per day

Exclude Larry's creek ;punch up at road end uselessly sort this out west coast style

Creating so many DW waters at once will have a very negative impact on tourism in Reefton.

I generally avoid these areas due to pressure; I don't think listing them as ""designated waters"" will reduce angling pressure as they are so well known and more accessible than the other more remote Westcoast designated waters.

I feel the added license cost, and restrictions on overseas anglers would have little effect on relieving pressure on these waters making them a more attractive option for the weekend kiwi fisherperson.

I cannot fathom out what you mean by "The overall feedback so far is that this system is working well and anglers are having an improved experience." I cannot recall seeing any data on the subject. I have lived in Nelson since 2002 and most of my fishing is done on the West Coast . I lived in Greymouth till 1967. I was born in 1947 and have purchased a Trout fishing Licence every year since I was 12 Years of age. I have lived in Wgtn for 9 months in 67, then Canterbury 67 to 75, Wgtn from 75 to 2002.

The following feedback is from people identified as living in another Country and support the proposal:

These are rivers that get too much angling pressure during summer when fishers camp on the Rivers and fish multiple days on the one River.

It is not a bad idea. Booking a river with an iphone is easy. But..... The whole fishing is getting more expensive as the nationallicense isn t getting any cheaper. I would suggest to pay 10nz dollar per river/day and do more water. The goal must be lowering the angler pressure and not making money!! Kind regards Peter Kortmann

No Lure fishing on designated waters

I think this is a great program. I particular commend the (optional) beat system in place on fisheries like the Oreti and Mataura down south. I fully appreciate, too, the challenges of operating such a beat system on more remote fisheries like those in the West Coast region. I am of sure, of course, that this has been given thought before.

I have visited NZ 10 times in the last 14 years. I support the Designated Waters system, as I have seen the negative impact of increased pressure on some of these streams. I think the 5 days per region limit makes sense and doesn't unfairly restrict visiting anglers. I will be interested to see whether we see the program have a measurable effect on the fishing.

My opinion is that F&G should increase the catch and release area before increasing the DW area.

Yes. This is really quite simple. If you really want to protect these fisheries and angler experience, why don't you make it mandatory for all non resident anglers to have to have a New Zealand Guide Association guide with them when accessing these waters? This ensures good paying work for New Zealanders while also managing and protecting the impact on these ecosystems. That you are not doing this is baffling to a non resident like me.

To protect more water and fish from fishing pressure can only be a good thing and hopefully having more designated waters will assist.

The following feedback is from people identified as living in another Country and oppose the proposal:

Going the wrong way about it.

Makes it extremely expensive for an international angler to fish. A full year non-resident license is expensive enough

As a fisherman we purchase our licences the day of fishing or at least when we arrive on site (if internet is available). If the river is not fish able and I go elsewhere then another licence has to be purchased and I have to find cell coverage to do so. Having a licence to fish a region is much better. Charge a fee to fish a specific river and maybe an additional charge to fish the region as licence options would be another idea. this gives me and our guide extra flexibility to go elsewhere if water conditions are poor.

I support the DW system in spirit. And I appreciate the management goals. I believe the DW system should be judiciously applied to those rivers with easy car access, as they are the ones that get hammered. Remote rivers accessible only through strenuous hiking or helicopters police themselves in terms of pressure. However, as an international visitor, if you make every river, regardless of access ease a DW, I will eventually seek another destination, as it is a long way to go to be limited by the DW system to only 5 DW waters per trip.

This will only put more pressure on other waters in the region.

According to F&G, designated waters was implemented because of "increasing complaints from anglers regarding overcrowding". For most waters, they did not wait to collect data to show there was actual overcrowding. F&G just released their most recent Angler Survey. It was done during boarder closure and provides no insight into usage by non-resident anglers, but answers the question "will locals fish more if additional restrictions are placed on visitors"? The answer is mostly no. During the season without visitors, locals typically did not fish the current or proposed designated waters at anywhere near historical levels. NZ resident angler usage of the Karamea (67% reduction), Waitahu (64% reduction), Larry's Creek/Awarau (68% reduction) and Rough (60.8% reduction) were all significantly lower than in previous surveys. When given the opportunity to fish without visitors, Kiwi anglers mostly didn't. The perception that overcrowded rivers displaced local anglers is incorrect. Based on these data, designated waters classification is not justified for any of the proposed waters and designated water classification can be removed from the Karamea. Resident Angler usage of the Upper Grey was the same as past surveys but included the area between Ikamatau and the Clarke confluence so more research on the specific stretch proposed is required before it is included as a designated water.

When F&G implemented DW we were promised that "designated waters comprise fewer than 2% of available fisheries, meaning that this new licencing system will only be applied to a very small proportion of fisheries. For anglers not fishing in these locations, there will be no impact". This proposal will exceed 2% of available water in the immediate Reefton area, will have an impact on anglers (and tourism revenue) in that area and is in breach of the initial commitment made by F&G. To honour the commitment made by F&G, expansion to DW in the immediate Reefton area should be limited to just one of the proposed fisheries (if any). Designated Waters has now been in place for just one season and the onus is now on Fish and Game to now demonstrate that DW is necessary and actually achieving its objectives (in reality rather than perception) on these existing waters before seeking to expand the program. Proposing to expand the system based on "positive feedback" is flawed. Comprehensive, transparent, site-specific research demonstrating DW classification is necessary on particular

waters is critical to the good resource management of those fisheries in the interests of all stakeholders (not just anglers).

Your system is not bad, but you should put a maximum of 5 day fishing per river. Not per region. This is too restrictive. For the west coast it doesn't work!

I just think it's rubbish if you add all those rivers and you only allow international fly fishers a total of five days per season on all of them combined. Which I guess is what NZ Fish and Game want. I am nearly done with fishing NZ.

I regularly visit NZ to fish - it's already an expensive exercise but these restrictions mean that I'm not sure I will continue to do so. I love your country and I doubt that I am the type of angler that these restrictions are trying to slow. But unfortunately that's the case. I do find it odd that we can use your hospital you can use ours. New Zealanders can get welfare here and we are considered close friends and allies - but you still need to charge us to use your rivers. It's just sad.

In principle I agree about those rivers to be added to the list Designated Waters. I have personally fished them all over the course of 6 fishing seasons, and they do get substantial angling pressure. However, if you add rivers I believe you should also remove some other waters. For example, I don't believe it's necessary for the Mokihinui and Karamea systems to be Designated Waters. They are so remote that people will have to either put in significant effort tramping in there or take a helicopter.

Speaking of helicopters: It's well known that guides will repeatedly fly in to the DW but with different clients, essentially meaning that they via their clients can obtain an unlimited number of DW licences. Therefore it's of my opinion that the DW does not work on remote rivers as well as on easily accessible rivers as the ones mentioned.

Imagine if you had tramped to Mokihinui South Branch upstream from Goat Creek Hut and bought your DW tickets in advance, but then you get jumped by another angling party arriving in a helicopter. You have essentially wasted a DW ticket for the day as the only viable option is to return to the Forks and fish from there. Had it not been a DW ticket wasted, then it wouldn't have been that big of a deal because you're not running out of time.

I would like to see some proof that these waters are under pressure to justify adding them to the list

I think it is early in the designated waters program to be able to tell the before and after effects. Overall, I support the concept and I fished both inside and outside of the designated waters on my NZ trip this year. I clicked oppose but I have more mixed feelings and concerns than I do a hard opposition. One thing I worry about is that there may be the unintended consequence of the designated waters program actually bringing more anglers to these rivers because of the program highlighting their status as quality fisheries. I also worry that anglers will end up spreading more pressure onto the few rivers that are left in the West Coast that don't receive the pressure these fisheries do. I had some great days on "lesser" West Coast rivers during my trip in 2024 and the solitude I experienced was a big part of my enjoyment. If the designated waters program continues to expand, I worry that these rivers will start to take on more pressure as folks are forced to fish outside of the designated waters.

I have fished NZ for several years in a row now and have absolutely fallen in love with the country, its people, and the amazing fishing opportunities that exist. It is quite an expensive endeavor for me to come to NZ as it is. While I can appreciate what NZ Game and Fish is trying to accomplish, these added fees are very significant and add to the already expensive cost involved in traveling to NZ. I would encourage NZ Game and Fish to look at other means to accomplish their design of overcrowded fisheries other than turning it into purely a rich man's sport. This system seems to further penalize and discourage working-class folks from being to enjoy all that NZ backcountry has to offer. People with means and wealth will of course be

unaffected by these policies. I hope this offers some insight from someone who is an avid outdoorsman and who hopes to be able to visit NZ for many more years to come.

No. I will not be fishing in NZ again. The outrageous cost (both of the licence for foreigners and all other aspects of travel) preclude my return. You appear to assume that all foreigners ooze with money and fly around in helicopters. That is incorrect. I am an Australian age pensioner. A \$250 fee for a 6 day fishing trip is well and truly over the top for me.

I'm quite use to fly fish new Zealand. Every year since 2011. Last season I've been a few time in designated waters. What did it change to my experience? Nothing at all. There was still the same crowd jumping over, this has not release pressure at all. Only sure thing, it has make my wallet lighter. If we want to have a positive impact, a lottery with limitation of number of fisher per day seems a better option, as for the Clinton in Fiordland. Knowing I'm an oversea, I'll be keen to be financially penalized for a lottery, what matters to me is a fair system that efficiently reduce pressure, and from what I've experienced, we are far from it
Best

Keep going and I won't fish NZ. Australia now has great fishing. I am uncertain how the Designated Waters does anything except irritate visiting anglers as it imposes almost no restriction on resident anglers. If it is a fund raiser I am sure it doesn't raise much. Personally it means one I am less likely to spend time (and money) on the West Coast.

On Orieti I think it is a problem that you have to pay for a licence before you know if any of the access points is taken or not. I guess the same also applies to other rivers. There are no internet connection on access points, so paying must happen before you enter the more remote places. The Waitahu is lightly fished in my experience.

I fished the upper Grey, Rough and Waitahu in February and never saw any other anglers. I'm concerned that by making these DW then it will increase pressure on other West Coast waters such as Ahaura, Haupiri and Crooked. The water that needs to be controlled is Bruce Creek. The day I fished it four other cars turned up while I was rigging my fly rod.

Reefton area has been my base the times I have travelled to New Zealand to fish. My favorite rivers are Waitahu, Larry's, Rough, Boyle and Lewis. Also had the desire to fish Hope. As you can see, all of these are or seem to become DW's. If they do, I'm not sure I'll prioritize to spend 12.000 NZD (and a week long travel) to get to New Zealand, which I hoped to do every coming years, until my body fail me.

In my experience Reefton has been teeming of fishermen earlier years. Waitahu probably the most crowded of the rivers I have seen. This year I almost didn't bump into a single fisherman in the town, and a friend reported not seeing a single fisherman in Waitahu, at a two day trip. Almost no names in the Montgomerie hut book. Are you absolutely sure that the DW implementation hasn't scared fishermen away already?

Has the sales of fishing licenses (to foreigners) gone up or down 23/24 season?

Over here (Norway/Europe) the use of credit card at internet is connected to our mobile phones, as a security measure. Paying DW license caused a major headache, as mobile phone coverage are extremely poor at NZ. My friend gave up, and had to contact home to get family pay. I periodically gave up, and had to drive back to Reefton to be able to make it work (luckily, because I have a dual SIM capable phone). A wasted day.

During my month long NZ fishing trip 2024 (fishing every day), I didn't bump into more than a couple of fishermen in the rivers. None of them in DW or proposed DW rivers. I can't say that I have had much trouble with that earlier either, in any rivers. That leads me to suspect that you are just trying to squeeze more money from tourists or fix a problem that doesn't exist. I'm sorry for that. I generally think you are doing a great job. I hope you make decisions on

evidence, not scattered feedback. If you have more questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED]

The following was provided via email response after receiving the email invitation to complete the survey.

Dear West Coast team

I have stayed in Reefton with my wife (who is an artist not a fisherwoman!) for the last decade plus for an average of 6 weeks at the start of the season each year.(generally not a crowded time of year with wildly varied weather) I note with some concern that the designated waters changes mean that if I chose to fish any those waters, I have only 5 days angling before I am forced to move on to other waters.

I note that the aim is to limit pressure on trophy streams by foreign anglers .I often fish with local friends in the area and try and ensure that I don't over fish some of these locations. And I don't fish places like Larry's or the Rough much anymore ... but the changes will further concentrate fishing to pressure other locations.

I noted that there was no indication in your survey of where the designated waters would restrict on the Waitahu Can you shed some light on this proposed river closure, is it all of the river ?

I also noted with concern that the changes also proposed the upper Grey down to the Clarke junction. I can understand that this appears reasonable given the heavy use of the area around the Blue Grey / Brown Grey / Upper Grey . It will be exceedingly difficult to find anywhere accessible for a non guided , non Heli born foot accessible fisherman to the large area of the Upper Grey if it includes down as far as the Clarke.

I would also observe that in a decade plus of fishing the area other than the junction of the Greys the downstream area below the Robinson is not as heavily fished as the other area and is on private access areas ? Is this proposed inclusion backed by usage figures ?

I can appreciate that the 5 day limit for the designated waters appears to work for the wealthy Heli born fishers or guided foreign anglers or trout bums in huts on blue ribbon streams in some locations .This will heavily impact others who don't fit the mould ... bit of a sledge hammer approach.

I have not observed any concession or ability to apply for an exemption from the 5 day rule It would be a bit fairer to say 5 days max on 1 stream max of say 10 days in a region when you include numerous streams in one region .

Look forward to some further information on your proposals Regards [REDACTED] Bundeena NSW