

1080 & TROUT - FAQs

WHAT IS 1080?

Sodium monofluoroacetate or fluoroacetate, which commonly known in pesticide form as 1080. This tasteless, odourless and very water-soluble poison is a very potent metabolic poison.

1080 has been used in New Zealand for pest control since the mid-1950s, the only poison registered for aerial application, usually from a helicopter.

1080 was first registered as a pesticide for control of vertebrate pests in 1964 under the now repealed Pesticides Act. Its toxicity was well recognised at that time and it was classified as a “controlled pesticide,” which means that 1080 can only be used by licensed operators.

More information on 1080 can be found at:-

http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/eisler/CHR_30_Sodium_monofluoroacetate.pdf

http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/threats-and-impacts/animal-pests/methods-of-control/1080-poison-for-pest-control/the-use-of-1080-for-pest-control/4-information-about-1080/4_1-key-facts/

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/restoration-projects/battle-for-our-birds-beech-mast-2014/1080-facts-and-figures/>

HOW DOES 1080 GET INTO TROUT FLESH?

1080 doesn't contaminate trout flesh through bait dropped into waterways, but through secondary poisoning.

In the current situation we're talking about trout which have consumed one or a number of mice, which have fed on 1080 bait as a result of the Department of Conservation's (DOC) and TB-free New Zealand's aerial 1080 programme.

WHAT DOES THIS CAMPAIGN INVOLVE?

DOC is carrying out these aerial 1080 drops as part of their 'Battle for the Birds' campaign, to counter the elevated levels of rodents and stoats during the anticipated 'mast' event this year.

This once in ten year mast seed event involves high levels of seed production in our beech forests that, because of ready food supply, is likely to trigger a rodent and stoat explosion.

What this means for anglers is there will be some 'XOS' size trout around as they feed readily on mice – large, protein-packed prey items for fish – enabling them to put on weight very quickly.

But some mice may be contaminated by 1080.

TB-free New Zealand also carries out a number of aerial 1080 operations to control possums to limit the spread of bovine tuberculosis (TB).

More information on can be found at:-

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/restoration-projects/battle-for-our-birds-beech-mast-2014/>

<http://www.tbfree.org.nz/>

More information on beech mast can be found at:-

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/restoration-projects/battle-for-our-birds-beech-mast-2014/beechnast/>

WHERE ARE THE 1080 DROPS HAPPENING?

As part of DOC's 'Battle for the Birds' initiative, the department is conducting targeted aerial 1080 drops across up to 43 sites, 38 in the South Island and only five in the North Island.

These sites have been identified as high priority ecosystems, which potentially hold vulnerable species.

More information on the areas proposed for 1080 drops can be found at:-

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/restoration-projects/battle-for-our-birds-beech-mast-2014/maps/>

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/threats-and-impacts/animal-pests/pesticide-summaries/>

WHAT SORT OF TIME FRAME IS INVOLVED?

Depending on weather conditions these drops are proposed to take place between August and the end of November 2014.

More information on the status of 1080 operations can be found at:-

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/restoration-projects/battle-for-our-birds-beech-mast-2014/pest-control-operations/>

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/threats-and-impacts/animal-pests/pesticide-summaries/>

SO WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

DOC commissioned research by the independent Cawthron Research Institute on the risks of mice (which are routinely eaten by trout) carrying sub-lethal levels of 1080, to potentially become a food safety risk for humans.

Preliminary interpretation of these results shows that a trout eating a small number of mice with 1080 will have traces of 1080 that potentially exceed New Zealand Food Safety Authority limits for 1080 in food – until it breaks down over several weeks.

The potential risk to human health is likely to be low but erring on the side of caution, Fish & Game advises that if you have concerns, you should not to eat trout flesh from trout caught in 1080-poisoned catchments, until advised otherwise.

More information on the 1080 research can be found at:-

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/threats-and-impacts/animal-pests/methods-of-control/1080-poison-for-pest-control/trout-and-1080-research/>

HOW MUCH TROUT WOULD I NEED TO EAT?

We are still waiting for scientists and medical experts to report back on this, so in the meantime, as we've noted, Fish & Game advises that if an angler has concerns, then to avoid any risk – simply do not eat trout caught in 1080- poisoned catchments, until advised otherwise. This does not mean you cannot fish in these areas - Catch and Release is still an option.

Once more testing and research has been undertaken we will publish it here.

How long do anglers have to wait after a drop before I can eat trout in?

This is one of the questions we are still waiting for an answer to, so we are reluctant to try and provide any guidelines at this stage. You can fish in 1080-poisoned catchments but practice catch and release until we have more information. Again, be assured that more testing and research has been undertaken we will publish it here.

WHERE CAN I FISH IN COMPLETE SAFETY?

You can safely fish anywhere in New Zealand, the only potential risk comes if you are angling in an area where there's been a recent 1080 drop, and you consume a large quantity of trout flesh.

Naturally you can still catch and release in the affected areas, and the vast majority of our fresh water fisheries remain completely safe to take a trout home for the table.

More information on the areas proposed for 1080 drops can be found at:-

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/conservation/threats-and-impacts/battle-for-our-birds/battle-birds-pest-control-south-island-map.pdf>

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/conservation/threats-and-impacts/battle-for-our-birds/battle-birds-pest-control-north-island-map.pdf>

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/threats-and-impacts/animal-pests/pesticide-summaries/>

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

We suggest for those interested, look up the links we've provided and be aware that 1080 has been a hotly debated issue.

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/threats-and-impacts/animal-pests/methods-of-control/1080-poison-for-pest-control/trout-and-1080-research/>

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/restoration-projects/battle-for-our-birds-beech-mast-2014/>