

Anglers Notice Review

Introduction

Otago Fish and Game Council is seeking information and view from anglers as part of a comprehensive review of the freshwater sports fishing Regulations (Anglers' Notice) for the Otago Fish and Game Region. The Regulations govern angling for sports fish (brown and rainbow trout, salmon and perch) in the Taieri and Clutha catchments and coastal catchments from Shag point to the Catlins.

The Council has identified issues that need addressing and is considering a range of options for addressing them. The aim is to improve the management of the fishery in the Otago Region.

Key issues are set out below, including some of the options that might be considered for changes to the Regulations. To obtain input from anglers, Council has arranged a number of public meetings at the venues listed below. Anglers can also make written submissions.

There may be other issues and options that anglers identify and stakeholders are encouraged to have a say by attending the public meetings and/or making a written submission.

Public meetings

Wanaka	Wednesday 7 February 7:30 pm	Lake Wanaka Centre, Armstrong Room
Balclutha	Tuesday 13 February, 7:30 pm	Rosebank Lodge, Molyneux Room
Alexandra	Wednesday February 14, 7.30pm	Alexandra Districts Club
Dunedin	Wednesday February 14, 7.30pm	Otago Anglers Association Clubrooms, Tomahawk

Written submissions

The deadline for written submissions is **5pm Monday March 5, 2018**

[Click here to make your submission](#) or you can post to:

Otago Fish and Game Council, PO Box 153 Cromwell Central Otago, 9310

You can refer to your Sports Fishing Regulation Guide for the current season which is available on this website by clicking [here](#)

Any changes that Council makes to the Anglers Notice will come into force for the 2018/19 fishing season starting on 1 October 2018.

KEY ISSUES AND OPTIONS

1. Southern Lakes (Lakes Wakatipu, Wanaka, Hawea) and Lake Dunstan

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Options</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid population growth with more anglers – this growth is predicted to continue. • Presence of ‘lake snow’ with unknown effects on fish populations. • Many anglers report a decline in the trout fisheries in Lakes Wakatipu and Wanaka. The Lakes Hawea and Dunstan trout fisheries appears to be stable. • There is no information on the status of the resource – for example we do not know whether trout populations have remained stable as fishing pressure has increased over the past two decades. Salmon numbers in the lakes fluctuate and in some years their abundance is high. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Do nothing. ii. Adopt a precautionary approach by reducing the daily bag limit. Options include reducing the overall bag limit for trout and salmon from 6 to 4, or retaining the current limit of 6 sport fish overall, but splitting this with no more than 2 or 4 being trout.

Discussion

The Lakes have a daily bag limit of 6 sports fish and are open all year to all legal methods. These limits are historical. When originally set more than 20 years ago bag limits were based on very limited information. Since then there has been substantial growth in angler numbers. Few lake anglers now achieve the daily bag limit except for salmon when its abundance is high. There are unknown consequences to fish populations from the exotic species *Lindavia intermedia*, or ‘lake snow’.

While there is no evidence of a collapse in any of the lake fisheries, there is considerable uncertainty about their ability to sustain increasing pressure from angling and environmental changes. Overall, the Otago Fish and Game Council does not have sufficient information to ensure sustainability of the trout populations under the current management regime. The Otago Sports Fish and Game Management Plan requires Council to take a precautionary approach to managing the fishery in the face of uncertain information. Regulations need to take a precautionary approach to avoid over harvest and maximise opportunities for future generations.

2. Lowland Rivers

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Options</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degraded trout habitat in many of Otago’s lowland rivers due to poor water quality and siltation caused by intensification of agriculture and poor agricultural practices. • Declining lowland trout fisheries. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Do nothing. ii. Reduce the daily bag limit in the most affected rivers. iii. Reduce the daily bag limit in all lowland rivers that would also ensure consistency in the Regulations.

Discussion

Many lowland rivers in the Otago Region have been adversely affected by intensive agricultural development and poor agricultural practices in recent years. As the quality of fish habitat has deteriorated, the trout fishery has progressively declined. National Angling Survey results show a substantial reduction in fishing effort in these lowland rivers.

Clearly the best long-term solution would be for farmers to adopt more environmentally appropriate agricultural practices. However, until this happens, a reduction in bag limits may be appropriate to ensure the sustainability of the affected trout populations. In considering any bag limit reduction, it may be desirable to make the daily bag limits the same or similar in all lowland rivers so that they are easier for anglers to follow.

3. Lake Mahinerangi

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Options</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Angling Surveys have shown a significant decline in angling pressure since 2001. • Local anglers have questioned the need to have the reservoir open for winter fishing commenting that the fishery isn’t very productive and a winter season places further pressure on the fishery. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Do nothing. ii. Close the reservoir during the winter with an open season from 1 Oct – Apr 30. iii. And/or Reduce the daily bag limit either for the current season from 1 Oct – 30 Sep, or with a shorter season of 1 Oct to 30 Apr.

Discussion

The current open season for Lake Mahinerangi is 1 October – 30 September (i.e. all year) with permitted methods fly, spin, bait and a bag limit of 6 fish per day.

Lake Mahinerangi is a large lake holding stocks of brown and rainbow trout, and perch. There is limited biological and fisheries information, so a precautionary approach may be appropriate

4. Pomahaka River

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Options</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Angling Surveys have shown a significant decline in angling pressure since 2001. Anglers have become increasingly concerned about the decline of the fishery in the upper Pomahaka. Little is known about the current state of the fishery. A survey has recently been undertaken to interview experienced anglers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do nothing. Season length, method or daily bag regulations could be amended for all or parts of the River. Reduce the daily bag limit in the upper River only. Back country fishery designation for the upper River and/or other measures as necessary.

Discussion

The Upper Pomahaka is renowned for its large resident fish and sea run brown trout that spawn in the upper reaches and tributary streams. Sea run Chinook salmon migrate and spawn upstream as well. Currently there are three different Regulations applying to the Pomahaka:

- Pomahaka River 1 Oct – 30 Apr Fly, Spin, Bait Daily Bag 6
- Pomahaka downstream of Swan’s Bridge (Clydevale Road) 1 Oct – 30 Sept Fly, Spin, Bait Daily Bag 6
- Pomahaka upstream of Park Hill Bridge (Switzers Road) 1 Oct – 30 Apr Fly, Spin, Bait Daily Bag 3

There is limited biological and fisheries information, so a precautionary approach may be appropriate. This could include changes to season length, methods or daily bag limits. Given the special nature of the fishery in the upper Pomahaka River, a backcountry fishery designation may also be an appropriate management tool to help sustain its values.

5. Simplifying Clutha River Regulations

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Options</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different Regulations for season length and method in different sections of the upper Clutha River creates difficulties for some anglers in interpreting the rules. Didymo or rock snot has significantly degraded the fishery compared to its 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do nothing. Relax the fly only area at Deans Bank to include spinning but retain the season length of 1 Oct to 31 May which would protect valuable spawning areas. Extend the Deans Bank boundary to the Albert Town Bridge.

<p>historical state although in the past two seasons there are angler reports of an improvement in the fishery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant population growth in the catchment means there is increasing pressure on the fishery. 	<p>iv. Downstream of the Albert Town Bridge have an open season from 1 October to 30 Sept with permitted methods Fly, Spin, Bait</p> <p>v. Reduce daily bag limits for the Clutha River taking into account the impacts of Didymo and population growth.</p>
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Discussion

Currently there are three different Regulations that apply to the upper Clutha River:

- Upstream of Luggate Bridge (except for Deans Bank section)

1 Oct – 30 Sep	Fly, Spin	Daily Bag 6
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- Deans Bank Section

1 Oct – 31 May	Fly only	Daily Bag 6
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- Downstream of Luggate Bridge

1 Oct – 30 Sep	Fly, Spin, Bait	Daily Bag 6
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The difference in season length and methods has created difficulties for some anglers in interpreting the Regulations. Simplification of the season, method and bag limits, and where they apply in the Clutha River may address this.

The adverse impact of Didymo and increasing fishing pressure from a growing population in the district indicates that the daily bag limit on the upper Clutha River may need to be reduced to ensure sustainability. It would be desirable if daily bag limits were consistent throughout the entire River.

Otago Fish and Game Council's decision in this area will take account of feedback and may look at alternatives to the above options.

6. Standardising Upper Clutha Catchment Regulations

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Options</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an inconsistency in the current Regulations between the season length and permitted methods in un-named waters in Clause 2.1 and named waters in Clause 2.3 in the Clutha catchment upstream of Clyde. 	<p>i. Do nothing.</p> <p>ii. Amend the season length and permitted methods for waters not listed in Clause 2.3 to 1 Nov – 31 May, and restrict the permitted methods to fly and spin only.</p>

Discussion

The present Regulation is unsatisfactory. The option of amending the Regulation as outlined above would standardise the regulations for all waters draining into lake tributaries upstream of Clyde and provides the most consistency with other waters in this part of the catchment.

7. Use of Boats

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Options</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current regulations on the use of boats need to be refined for clarity and simplicity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. Do nothing.ii. Include boating regulations for specific waters in clause 2.3 of the regulations for clarity.iii. Consider revising boating regulations based on angler feedback.

Discussion

Including boating rules with the waterway they correspond to would provide a better description of the regulations in one place.

For clarification on points raised above you can email c.halford@fish-game.org.nz