

Lake Manuwai



Photo: David Ludgate with a rainbow trout from the Whau Valley Reservoir

Lake Manuwai is a constructed water reservoir only a few kilometres north of Kerikeri off State Highway 10 at the end of Sandys Road. The dam was constructed in the 1980's to supply irrigated water to the district's citrus and kiwi fruit orchards which are a major horticultural industry.

The dam has been built across the upper Waipapa stream providing a reservoir that is slightly larger in area and volume to that of the Whau Valley Dam. The catchment in which the reservoir is located is not bush clad but the reservoirs margins is native shrub and exotic trees species acting as a riparian strip from neighbouring farmland.

The primary reason for the construction of the reservoir is for irrigation, therefore depending on the time of year and how much seasonal rains have contributed to the area, the lakes' water levels maybe low or very high. A foot track access provides access to the left hand area of the reservoir from the Sandys Road entrance for those wanting to explore the margins. Vegetation around the lake edge can hinder angling in a few places, but the fishing can be good when water levels and track conditions permit.

A further entrance for public access comes off Onekura Road which is a walking track of approximately 80 metres and leads down to the lake edge.

This fishery is stocked annually with 400 - 500 Rainbow Trout fingerlings. Once the trout attain legal size (300mm), they average between 0.75 and 1 kilogram in weight.

Fishing techniques of choice are usually wet fly and bait fishing however fish are caught when nymphing or dry fly fishing in the summer months.

Tackle choices used should represent snail, small bully and freshwater crayfish imitations as well as the usual summer insect varieties and small nymphs to match the summer hatches.

Non-motorised boat fishing is permitted, i.e. rowboats, kayaks, and yachts which will allow anglers to gain access to some of the dam's inaccessible bays. Fishing from a boat also allows for jigging as the boat drifts across the lake. Anglers who prefer shore fishing can enjoy offshore angling simply by rowing or paddling to the man made islands

located around the lake, which adds another dimension to this angling location.

Anglers are advised and asked to be extremely vigilant when launching their boats that no aquatic plants are introduced into Lake Manuwai from other water bodies.

The lake is set in a very picturesque valley and is a great place for the whole family, whether fishing, going for a picnic, or just visiting for a summer swim.



Should you require any further information this can be obtained by contacting the

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Reservoir Fishing in Northland Whau Valley Dam

The Whau Valley Dam is the nearest place in the City of Whangarei where anglers are able to fish for trout. The water in the dam originates from two small tributary streams flowing out of the native bush catchments of the Pukenui Forest.

The dam was constructed in the early 1950's by the Whangarei District Council as the main source of public water supply for the City of Whangarei. Water flowing from the native bush tributaries ensures that the reservoir provides suitable trout habitat and water temperatures throughout the year.

The Whangarei Acclimatisation Society first released trout into the reservoir in the 1960's, with the early liberations consisting of both Brown and Rainbow Trout.

Today the Northland Fish and Game Council continue an annual stocking programme but this is limited to Rainbow Trout which are supplied from the trout hatchery at Ngongotaha near Rotorua.

Brown Trout are still present in the reservoir and continue as a self-sustaining population, although the spawning habitat is very limited. The annual stocking programme undertaken by the Northland Fish and Game Council ensures that 300 Rainbow fingerlings are liberated into the reservoir during May. This managed result contributes to a fishery that produces trout weights, condition factors and acceptable catch rate for licence holders.

The Rainbow Trout found in the reservoir tend to average 1 kg in size while the Brown Trout have been recorded as being very large but extremely crafty to catch.

Angling methods at the reservoir are restricted to the shoreline fishing only with all boating activity on the water being prohibited. This includes float tubes, kayaks and rowboats. This is the policy of the Whangarei District Council as the prime usage of the reservoir is to supply drinking water.

Fishing access tends to be restricted to the car parking area however during the summer and autumn months the lower water levels in the reservoir allow anglers to walk and fish around the edges of the dam.

A rough track on the immediate left hand side of the dam leads adventurous anglers up into the upper left-hand corner of the reservoir and to one of the tributary streams.

Angling opportunities are varied along this track as the vegetation

can restrict effective angling for those fishing with a fly line. While perhaps difficult to fish, the effort can produce some splendid specimens, which cruise the edges looking for fallen insects.

The picturesque bush views, good parking at the dam wall and within five minutes drive from the Whangarei City Centre, this destination is great value and fun for the whole family.

Regulations

Each angler is required to be the holder of a licence to fish and catch trout.

Only one rod per angler.

Daily Limit 3 trout per day

Minimum length 300mm

Methods permitted Fly Fishing, Spin Fishing and Bait Fishing

Fishing Equipment permitted at either Whau Valley Dam or Lake Manuwai

Spin Fishing

Spin fishing has proven to be the most versatile method of fishing in Northland's reservoirs due to the ease of casting. The typical rod used is 1.8 to 2.0m long, with a light spinning reel and 2.5 to 4kg nylon.

Spinning lures are very effective at most times of the day and especially in the golden light just before sunset. Popular choices are the black Toby (10g), copper Zed (7g), red Veltic, and rainbow Rapala lures. In the summer months when the surface water temperatures are higher, use a larger lure such as a 12g Toby or Zed as the added weight gets down to the trout and the bigger size stands out in the coloured water.

After dark, spin fishing with a fly is far more effective than using a spinning lure. When spin fishing the terminal tackle consists of your chosen fly and a couple of split shot (small and medium) placed on the main line at about 50 and 70cm above the fly. Place the smaller shot nearest to the fly, it aids casting and presentation.

Fly Fishing

Fly fishing at the reservoirs is generally more successful if using a wet-fly rather than nymph or dry-fly fishing. When wet-fly fishing, an intermediate or sinking line is used during the day and a floating line after dark. The choice of fly is anything that will resemble the largish baitfish that provides the main food source for trout. It is very hard to go past the simple but deadly rabbit fly, it seems to supply just the



right action. Popular colours are olive-green and black. If you tie your own flies use chemically sharpened hooks in a heavy gauge, around sizes 4-6. Use a good long rabbit strip to accentuate the action, and you can add flashabou and red hackles or tails to your daylight/dusk creations. A plain, big black rabbit is probably the best for night or coloured water use. Red Setters, Woolly buggers, Hairy Dog and Scotch Poacher can also be successful flies.

Nymph fishing can be effective on rainbows. Effective patterns are large caddis imitations such as hair and copper, halfback or similar.

Bait Fishing

Bait fishing using worms is a popular method at either reservoir especially with young anglers. The same rod and reel is used as for spin fishing with the terminal tackle consisting of a small ball sinker placed above a swivel, then about 30cm of line to a size 6 hook. Smelt are a small native fish that can be easily caught using a bait catcher and bread.

Bait fishing is also allowed to encourage novice and younger anglers. Baits allowed include: Natural fly. Natural insect. Natural spider. Natural worm or worms. Natural crustacean. Natural fish (excluding fish ova, or any portion of a fish, or shellfish (mollusc). Uncoloured bread dough.

