

Introduction

Christchurch City and its surrounds are blessed with a wealth of places to fish for trout and salmon. While these may not always have the same catch rates as high country waters, they offer a quick and convenient break from the stress of city life. These waters are also popular with visitors to Christchurch who do not have the time to fish further afield.

Getting There

All of the places described in this brochure lie within a forty five minute drive of Christchurch City. The lower Rakaia, Lake Ellesmere and its south western tributaries are accessed by driving to the township of Lincoln and heading south towards Leeston from there. Lake Forsyth and the north eastern tributaries of Lake Ellesmere are accessed off the Akaroa Highway. The rivers north of Christchurch can all be accessed off SH1 on the road to Amberley and Kaikoura.

Places to Fish

1. Ashley River

The Ashley River is typical of many small to medium sized Canterbury rivers in that it gets very low during summer months. The fishing is best between October and December in the lower reaches although the fishing upstream of Rangiora should remain good all season. The best access points are through the Waikuku Beach township, the SH1 Bridge or the bridge immediately north of Rangiora.

2. Cust River

This river offers good brown trout fishing in spring when flows are good. It is accessed off the Rangiora-Cust Road and off the Ohoka-Rangiora Road (Skew Bridge is a popular access point). Most of the Cust lies on private land so please check with the landowner before you start fishing.

3. Cam River

The Cam supports reasonable populations of brown trout in the one to four pound size range. Access is available at the Tuahiwi end of Bramleys Road, from Youngs Road which leads off Lineside Road between Kaiapoi and Rangiora and from the Lower Camside Road bridge on the north-western side of Kaiapoi.

4. Styx River

Another small stream which fishes best in spring and autumn, especially at dusk. The best access sites are off Spencerville Road, Lower Styx Road and Kainga Road.

5. Kaiapoi River

The Kaiapoi River experiences good runs of salmon and is one of the only places in New Zealand where Chinook salmon are regularly caught on bait; -freshwater shrimps and pilchards being most popular. The best fishing is between SH1 and the confluence with the Waimakariri. Access is available at the Hall Street boat ramp and from Smith Street, both within the township of Kaiapoi. The upper Kaiapoi (or Silverstream) offers good spring creek fishing for trout. Check with local landowners before fishing this part of the river because much of it lies on private land.

6. Waimakariri River; -see separate brochure.

7. Otukaikino River/South Branch

This delightful spring creek contains good populations of smaller trout and is a very popular "after work" fishery. It also hosts good runs of larger spawning trout in autumn. The most popular access points are the Dickies Road Bridge (turn left off SH1 just before leaving Belfast and travel a short distance down Dickies Road) and through the Groynes Park. (Off Johns Road between the Airport and Belfast).

8 & 9. Avon and Heathcote Rivers

Despite these rivers flowing through a major city, they are both good junior fisheries. . Access is very good along both rivers. Please check the current regulations for closed areas and dates.

10. Okana River (Little River)

The Okana River contains populations of brown trout and can provide good fishing, especially in spring. Public access is available to the lower reaches of the Okana through the gate on the right hand side of the road opposite the Little River Hotel.

11. Lake Forsyth

Lake Forsyth fishes best in spring, especially if the lake has recently been opened to the sea. One of the best places is where the Akaroa Highway first comes close to the lake just after the Birdlings Flat turn-off.

12. Kaituna River

The area just above the confluence with Lake Ellesmere offers the best fishing, particularly during spring. Access is directly off the Akaroa Highway.

13. Halswell River

The Halswell River meanders from near the Halswell township down to Lake Ellesmere. It crosses many public and private properties and flows beneath several bridges. Access to the mouth can be had from where the river intersects with Seabridge Road down either bank just south of Motukarara.

14. Lake Ellesmere

The tributaries of Ellesmere fish better than the lake itself, however good fishing for sea run trout can occur at Taumutu when the lake is open to the sea. Take the access track which leads off Gullivers Road and out into the beach.

15. LII River

The LII fishes best during spring and early summer, particularly in the reach just above the lake on a dark night. Access can be had at Wolfes Road (follow the road to the end) or off the main Selwyn Huts Road.

Regulations

A current sports fishing licence is required for trout and salmon fishing in all freshwaters and within 500 metres of where any river flows into the sea. Please consult a current South Island Sports fishing Regulation Guide before you commence fishing.

Further Information

The rivers close to Christchurch tend to be stable and are clear and fishable much of the time. However the larger rivers such as the Ashley, Waimakariri and Rakaia do flood frequently and anglers are advised to check conditions before leaving home. The Canterbury climate is highly changeable and anglers should check the weather before leaving home. The following information sources should be of help:

ECAN River Flow Service

This website service is very useful for showing the river flow at the gorge. The Ashley generally becomes fishable once it drops below 10 cumecs, the Waimakariri when it drops below 80 cumecs and the Rakaia when it drops below 180 cumecs.

MetService

www.metService.co.nz

This site is great for weather forecasts. The Christchurch forecast will be useful for predicting local conditions. Avoid fishing in strong north west or south west winds, especially in exposed locations. Christchurch is also known for strong easterly winds which often increase in strength in the afternoon and evening. Anglers who wish to fish the big rivers should consult the high country forecast to predict when the river is likely to come down in flood (heavy north west rain in the Alps is likely to cause a flood the following day).

Email Fishing Reports

Free weekly email fishing reports are available throughout the summer season which advise on recent catches and make predictions of likely fishing conditions in coming days. Contact the F&G office to register for this service.

F&G Telephone River Reports

Reports on river fishing conditions are available on 03 366 2986. These are recorded each day the office is open between October 1 and April 30.

16. Selwyn River

This river contains good numbers of brown trout in the lower reaches but is often dry in the middle reaches. Access is good from the Upper Selwyn Huts to the mouth. Above the Upper Huts the Selwyn changes to a delightful meandering stream of pools and riffles. Coes Ford is the most popular access point to this part of the river.

17. Iwell River

This river can provide good fishing but, again, is subject to low flows. Cross Coes Ford and follow Lake Road until it crosses the river, just after the Lake Road/ Lake Road South intersection. Take the first road on the left after the bridge (heading south - Hammer Road), cross a wooden bridge and turn left into Aitkens Rd. This road leads out to the river.

18. Harts Creek

Harts Creek is a good fly fishing stream, especially towards the mouth. To get to Harts Creek follow Lake Road to its intersection with Timber Yard Road (heading south). Turn left down the latter and turn left again onto a small bridge not far from the corner. Fishing at the mouth is good after dark but the river between the car park and the mouth can offer good fly fishing during daylight hours.

19. Rakaia River; -see separate brochure.

Methods

Bait, spinning and fly fishing are legal for trout fishing in most low country streams but check the regulation guide for details. Anglers fishing the small spring fed streams during daylight hours are advised to use light weight fly fishing tackle in order to catch the tussy fish which live there. After dark fishing with streamer flies on floating or slow sinking lines is the favoured technique, particularly in the lower reaches of the Lake Ellesmere tributaries. Spin fishing works well in following a fresh. Lures which cast and sink well such as the Toby, Tasmanian Devil or small ticer are recommended. Bait fishing works well in small sluggish streams such as the lower Selwyn. Worms, freshwater shrimp or live cockabulles (a small native fish) work well when fished on the bottom with a small weight.

North Canterbury Region



NEW ZEALAND

(03) 366 9191

northcanterbury@fishandgame.org.nz

www.fishandgame.org.nz



CLOSE to CHRISTCHURCH

