

# Rotorua Lakes Fishery



**EASTERN REGION**

## ROTORUA LAKES REGION

Whatever your level of angling experience and skill, the Rotorua Lakes region offers a wide range of trout fishing opportunities. There are always fish biting somewhere in the district.

A number of the 13 lakes are world renowned for the quality and size of their trout, while others provide a high catch rate or peaceful and highly scenic locations. In addition to the lakes, nearby streams provide the chance to catch once-in-a-lifetime trophy trout.

Rainbow trout are the most common fish in the lakes, but brown and tiger trout are also found in certain lakes. The Rotorua lakes provide all this excellent fishing for both first timers and experienced anglers, all within 40 minutes' drive of Rotorua city.

**Lake Rotorua** (Detailed pamphlet available)

Lake Rotorua is the largest lake in the district, only five minutes' walk from the city centre, with extensive public shore access including seven boat ramps. It is open year round and one of the easiest lakes in New Zealand to catch trout from. Both rainbow and brown trout live in the lake, with the latter moving into spawning streams from early summer.

The average rainbow trout in Lake Rotorua is around 1.5kg while browns average about 2.5kg. Trolling and spinning are permitted in all areas on the lake except for a few marked stream mouths. Trolling is good all year round and following the drop-off gives angler their best chances.

Lake Rotorua is shallow and water temperatures rise high during summer, which encourages trout to congregate at cooler in-flowing stream mouths. All stream mouths are safe for wading, and fishing from an anchored boat is productive. Floating or slow sinking fly lines are the best to use with smelt patterns effective during the day and lumo patterns at night. Small dark-coloured nymphs or bully patterns also work well along with spinning where it is permitted.

The Waiteti and Ngongotaha Stream mouths fish consistently well through the season, while the Awahou and Hamurana Stream mouths excel during the hottest summer months. The Utuhina and Ngongotaha streams also provide year round stream fishing opportunities. There is excellent public access to these streams either via district council reserves, or in the case of the Ngongotaha, through access kindly provided by the local Ngati Whakaue. The tribe allows angler access to the Ngongotaha across its private land at sign-posted points off Paradise Valley Road.

## Ohau Channel

This links lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti and is open for fly fishing from October until the end of June. In spring and early summer smelt run through the channel followed by large numbers of hungry trout. Numbers of trout move into the channel again during autumn to spawn, or travel through to the spawning streams that flow into Lake Rotorua. The most popular fishing areas are at each end of the channel. Takinga Street at Mourea provides access to the upstream end and true right bank, and the public access way off Hamurana Road entry to the true left hand bank. This area is very popular at the opening and closing of the season. Access to the Lake Rotoiti end is off SH 33 at the Ohau Delta boat ramp. Fly fishing at the delta either by wading or from an anchored boat is productive. Care is required wading the Ohau delta lip due to soft shifting sand.



## Lake Rotoiti

One of the gems of the Eastern Region fishery, Lake Rotoiti produces quality trout of a large average size. The whole lake is open annually to all methods from October 1 to June 30. Shallow trolling or harling over the weed beds and around the drop-off early and late in the day is productive during spring and autumn, or when water temperatures are below 17 degrees. In the warmer months use methods that go deeper such as trolling with wire, lead line, and downriggers, or jigging. Fly fishing at cooler stream mouths like Wai-iti or Hauparu early after the change of light is another good summer fishing option. Shoreline fishing from Tapuaekura Bay stream mouth through to the Hinehopu landmark remains open after June 30 when the rest of the lakes closes to boat fishing. The best times are at the change of light morning and evening, early in the morning or at night up to midnight when fishing closes. Stalking cruising trout, or casting over the weed beds during the day, is also popular. Lake Rotoiti has five boat ramps that provide access to all points of the lake.

### Lake Rotoehu

A very scenic lake featuring eight secluded, sheltered arms surrounded by native trees and wetland vegetation. Fishing in small boats and canoes is safe on Lake Rotoehu. Boat ramps are located in Kennedys Bay (Ngamimiro Bay) off the Pongakawa Rd and in Otautu Bay off Tombleson Rd.

Lake Rotoehu is best fished in the autumn, winter and spring. During summer, warm temperatures promote algal blooms that make fishing difficult. Excellent fly fishing can be found anywhere along the lake margins and casting towards the shore and vegetation will entice hungry trout averaging 1.5 kg. Stalking trout as they chase smelt in the spring, or spawning in the winter, is exciting fishing. Shallow trolling or harling off the weed beds also gives good results.

### Lake Rotoma

Lake Rotoma's high water clarity and beautiful white beaches provide recreation for all the family. Deep and shallow trolling or harling are popular fishing methods all year round.

Jigging works well and fly fishing is popular due to the clear water and extensive shoreline access. Stalking trout when they're chasing smelt during spring, or spawning in winter, is exciting fishing, especially when Lake Rotoma rainbows are often in excellent condition with an average weight of 2kg. Rotoma is the only lake in the Eastern region where Tiger trout are released. Harling or shoreline fishing along the weed beds with goldfish or bully type patterns is a proven method of catching one of these large brown-brook trout crosses. Lake Rotoma's two boat ramps are behind Merge Lodge in the township and at Matahi Lagoon off SH 30.



### **Lake Okataina**

The pristine beauty of Lake Okataina offers a scenic wilderness experience for anglers. An abundance of food and good water temperatures result in the lake producing good quality rainbow trout. Some of the biggest fish are caught in deep water using methods like jigging or deep trolling. Shallow trolling or harling over the weed beds early in spring is also productive.

Fly-fishing from anchored boats or from the shore at small stream mouths, like the Log Pool, Rayners One and Rayners Two is popular. During the winter months when the main lake is closed, fishing for trophy-sized trout off the main beach at the road end is very popular, especially at night or during heavy rain which attracts many trout close to the beach. Lake Okataina's boat ramp can be challenging for larger boats when fluctuating water levels can make access difficult.

### **Lake Tarawera**

Tarawera is deep and clear, surrounded by native forest with Mount Tarawera creating a startling backdrop. It is world renowned for the quality of its rainbow trout. Trout average 2kg with the largest caught in autumn as mature fish ready for spawning. Access to Tarawera via Spencer Rd in the west is excellent with public toilets and three boats ramps, and a cafe. Deep trolling, down rigging and jigging can produce fish throughout the season, especially in summer when fish move into the deeper waters. Fly-fishing by wading and from anchored boats is successful during spring, autumn and winter. The Te Wairoa and Wairua Stream mouths are productive fly fishing spots and at the lake's Outlet, the Tarawera River has challenging fishing in very clear water.

Wild Tarawera trout are prized by Fish & Game for their big fish breeding programme.(Check regulation guide for maximum size limit on wild trout).

### **Lake Okareka**

Only 10 minutes' drive from the centre of Rotorua, Lake Okareka is in a very attractive setting. The lake is popular and productive producing plenty of rainbow trout averaging 1.5kg. Boat fishing is safe on this sheltered lake and highly recommended for a family outing. Fly fishing at Boyes Beach in spring, autumn and winter gives good results. Lake Okareka is open all year round and has a boat ramp at Acacia Bay.

### Lake Tikitapu (Blue Lake)

Tikitapu is sheltered and can be fished in most weather. During summer this lake is popular for swimming and water skiing but fishing early morning, evening and during winter is peaceful and productive. There is a boat ramp and ample parking at the main beach, and it's an easy walk around the lake with several beaches and small bays to fish from the shore. Harling and jigging catch rainbow trout that average 1.5kg and shoreline fishing is productive particularly when trout are spawning.

### Lake Rotokakahi (Green Lake)

This lake and the land surrounding it are privately owned. There is no public access and the lake is not available for public angling.

### Lake Rotomahana

An extremely scenic lake, on the old site of the famous pink and white terraces. Access is via sign-posted gravel roads through pine forests off the Waimangu Road. At the end of the forest roads is a sheltered bay with a firm lake bed that permits light boats up to 5m to be launched. Rotomahana is definitely worth the extra effort to get there for the scenery, solitude and catches of solid hard-fighting rainbows averaging 1.5kg. Shallow and deep trolling, jigging and downriggers all work well. Fly fishing down the drop-off or over the weed beds is productive, and a very popular boat-fly fishing location can be found where the Waingongona Stream (spawning stream) enters the bay. Here a slow sinking line with either smelt, bully or damsel fly patterns fished over the weeds or in the small channels catches trout. A forest access permit is required; view the Eastern Fish & Game web site for up to date forest access and permit information.

**See inside for lakes Rerewhakaaitu, Okaro, Ngahewa and Ngapouri.**



#### Eastern Region

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Go to the Eastern  
Fish & Game web page



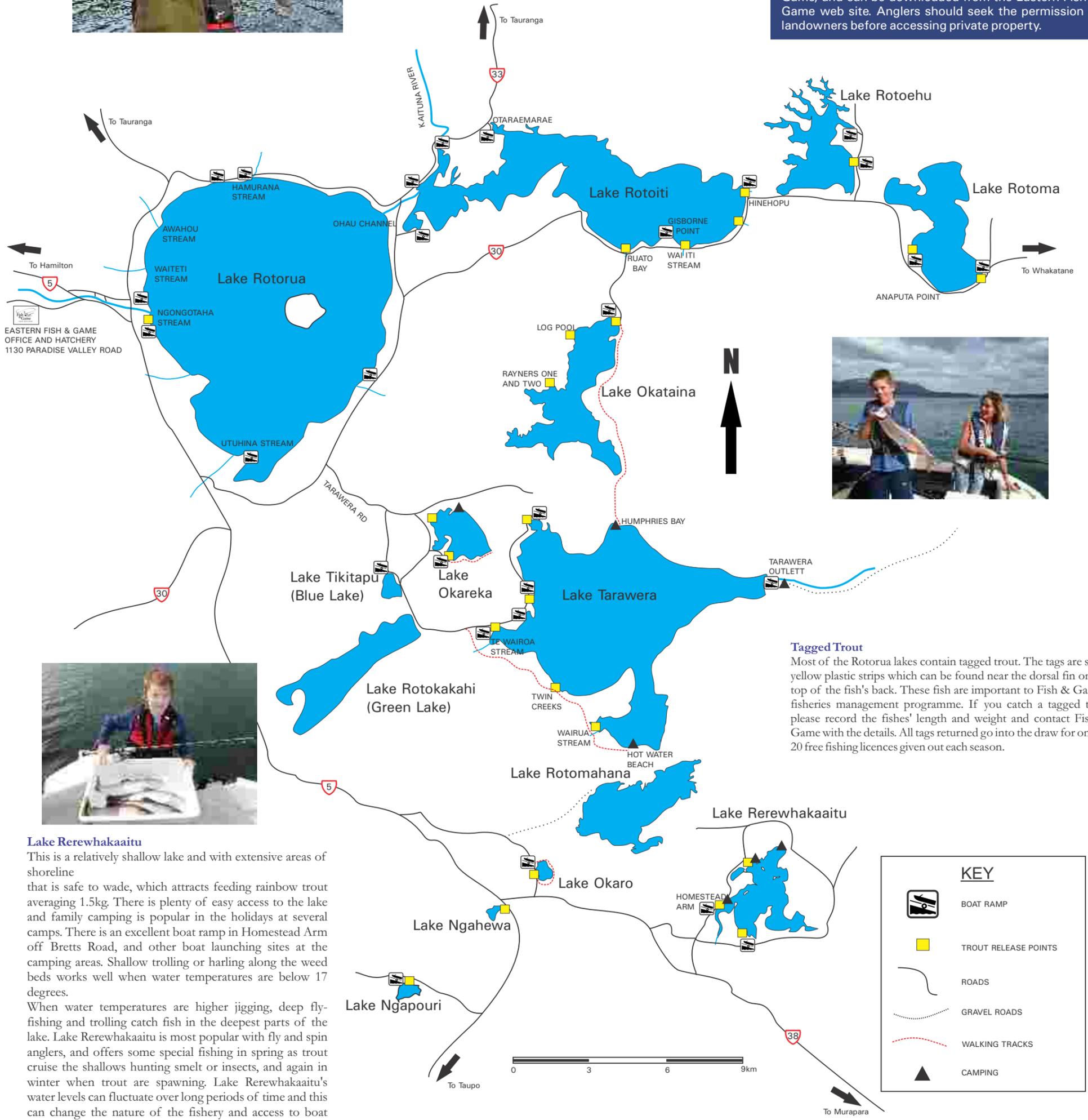
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**Protect our waters**

Unwanted aquatic weeds, algae and pest fish threaten freshwater environments for the trout fishery, native species, and all recreational users. Be a responsible user...

**Check, Clean, Dry**

Anglers should refer to the latest North Island Sport Fishing Regulations for season duration, bag limits and regulations applying to the Rotorua Lakes trout fishery. It is available through licence agents or from Fish & Game, and can be downloaded from the Eastern Fish & Game web site. Anglers should seek the permission of landowners before accessing private property.



EASTERN FISH & GAME OFFICE AND HATCHERY  
 1130 PARADISE VALLEY ROAD



**Tagged Trout**

Most of the Rotorua lakes contain tagged trout. The tags are small yellow plastic strips which can be found near the dorsal fin on the top of the fish's back. These fish are important to Fish & Game's fisheries management programme. If you catch a tagged trout please record the fishes' length and weight and contact Fish & Game with the details. All tags returned go into the draw for one of 20 free fishing licences given out each season.

**Lake Rerewhakaaitu**

This is a relatively shallow lake and with extensive areas of shoreline that is safe to wade, which attracts feeding rainbow trout averaging 1.5kg. There is plenty of easy access to the lake and family camping is popular in the holidays at several camps. There is an excellent boat ramp in Homestead Arm off Bretts Road, and other boat launching sites at the camping areas. Shallow trolling or harling along the weed beds works well when water temperatures are below 17 degrees. When water temperatures are higher jigging, deep fly-fishing and trolling catch fish in the deepest parts of the lake. Lake Rerewhakaaitu is most popular with fly and spin anglers, and offers some special fishing in spring as trout cruise the shallows hunting smelt or insects, and again in winter when trout are spawning. Lake Rerewhakaaitu's water levels can fluctuate over long periods of time and this can change the nature of the fishery and access to boat ramps and some shoreline.

**Lake Okaro**

Okaro is a small picturesque lake that is ideal for small boats and other watercraft, which offers good shoreline fishing using both fly and spinner. Rainbow trout are in good numbers and average 1kg. There is a boat ramp suitable for small vessels with a picnic area and toilets at a reserve off Okaro Road (off SH 38). Lake Okaro is best fished in winter when algal blooms are less likely.

**Lake Ngahewa**

A small lake easily accessed off SH5 with rainbow trout of about half a kilo. It is suitable for small dinghies, kayaks or float tubes only. The lake fishes well all year except for the hottest months when water temperatures force fish deeper.

**Lake Ngapouri (Opouri)**

This little hidden treasure is a largely undiscovered fishery that boasts fat rainbow trout of about 0.75kg. The lake is surrounded by native bush and is accessed down a gravel track off Waikite Valley Road. A basic boat ramp permits the launching of small boats up to 4m. The lake is also suitable for kayaks or float tubes. Fishing is good all year round with high catch rates possible. Lake Ngapouri is suitable for all methods of fishing including trolling, spinning and fly fishing. Note: As Lake Ngapouri is a popular spot for game bird hunting, the first weekend in May each year should be avoided.



KEY	
	BOAT RAMP
	TROUT RELEASE POINTS
	ROADS
	GRAVEL ROADS
	WALKING TRACKS
	CAMPING