

Freshwater Angling

Freshwater angling is a popular recreational activity in Canterbury rivers with brown trout, rainbow trout and Chinook salmon a sought-after catch. The Rakaia River is one of the best salmon fisheries in New Zealand and the upper reaches are set amidst spectacular scenery. Lake Coleridge is a large, exposed high country lake that is heavily fished for its landlocked Chinook salmon. Both the Waiau River and the Hurunui River have some of the most productive reaches of trout fishing in New Zealand and are popular for their seasonal sea run salmon. The Waimakariri River is an excellent trout and salmon fishery in close proximity to Christchurch. Canterbury high country lakes provide fishing in a remote and uniquely scenic environment. Smaller, localised fisheries also exist for other introduced salmonids.

Targets

By 2015:

A positive trend in the availability and/or quality of freshwater angling opportunities.

An increase in freshwater angler numbers (or catch rates) assessed over a five year average.

By 2040:

Restored fishing opportunities in most lowland streams in each water management zone.

Progress to 2020

Not started

Started

Progress

Good progress

Achieving

- Information on angler usage of lake and river fisheries is conducted by NIWA on behalf of Fish & Game NZ and the Department of Conservation (DOC). The 2014/15 National Angling Survey was the fourth to have been completed since 1994/95.
- The survey measures angling through a questionnaire focussing on location and duration (days spent on each water body) resulting in estimates of “angler-days” across New Zealand.
- Total angling effort for the 2014/15 season showed a trend in all regions (New Zealand wide) of a steady decline in effort on lowland river fisheries of about 50% from 1994/95 to 2014/15.
- Two Fish & Game NZ regions are contained within the Canterbury region - North Canterbury and Central South Island. Although the survey tends to focus on large-scale national trends rather than regional trends the survey showed;

North Canterbury

- Total effort for the North Canterbury region was dominated by the Waimakariri and Rakaia catchments, which accounted for 78% of the regional total. The Hurunui and Waiau catchments made up 13% and the Selwyn catchment 3%.
- River fisheries attracted 84% of the regional total while Lake Coleridge was the most heavily fished lake. North Canterbury is heavily dependent on

sea-run salmon angling on the four main salmon-producing rivers (Waiau, Hurunui, Waimakariri, and Rakaia) accounting for 49% of total effort in 2014/15

Central South Island

- Total effort for the Central South Island region in 2014/15 was spread across river (29%), canal (30%) and lake fisheries (29%). Angler effort was focused mainly around the Waitaki catchment, which accounted for around 80% of the regional total, followed by the Rangitata catchment (10%).
- Following the regular NIWA survey, Central South Island Fish & Game surveyed the canal fishery in 2015/16 to improve understanding of the increase in demand on the hydro canals. The survey showed that there has been a 16-fold increase in effort on the upper Waitaki hydroelectric canals with over half the effort from outside of the region.
- Effort on rivers has been variable, and shows some evidence of a decline over the period. Excluding canal fisheries, trends show that lake fishing has increased in popularity, and is linked to the large hydroelectric lakes on the Waitaki River - lakes Benmore, Aviemore, and Waitaki.
- For more information see: Unwin, M.J. (2016) Angler usage of New Zealand lake and river fisheries: results from the 2014/15 National Angling Survey. NIWA Client Report.