

Recreational Water Flows

Different recreational activities, interests, and users require different water flows at different times. Some require a wilderness experience; others need white-water conditions or safer flows and tranquil places. Most rivers and streams in Canterbury are at, or near, full allocation for reliable 'run-of-river' takes.

Targets

By 2015: Identified where environmental flows are not met or require change to meet recreational outcomes and implemented actions to rectify.

By 2020: Made progress towards achieving environmental flows.

By 2040: Achieved all environmental flows.

Progress to 2020

Not started

Started

Progress

Good progress

Achieving

- The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014 (NPS-FM 2014) requires regional councils to set freshwater objectives and limits by identifying values and applying limits for freshwater quality and freshwater quantity, and to ensure each has a monitoring plan with at least one representative site to monitor progress.
- Specific environmental flow and allocation limits have been set for Canterbury rivers with flow sensitive catchments and catchments where water bodies have been assessed for high natural attributes. A range of the latest monitoring and technical information covering recreational, cultural and biodiversity thresholds is referenced when flows are set during the planning process.
- The Canterbury LWRP outlines minimum flows for a range of rivers across Canterbury. National guidelines recommend setting minimum flows as a percentage of 7dMALF – the seven day mean annual low flow – which in simple terms is the average over a number of years, of the annual lowest daily flows.
- Environment Canterbury records water levels at 145 river and lake sites in Canterbury, from the Clarence River/Waiau Toa in the north to the Waitaki River in the south. River flow is measured at 131 of these sites and this information is combined with water level data to produce continuous flow records. This is reported alongside data from 18 other sites recorded by partner agencies such as the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research and Christchurch City Council.
- The minimum flows provide trigger levels for determining when consents must cease abstraction and they are specific to each river. They protect a range of values within waterways (e.g. ecological, cultural and recreational) and protect the reliability of supply for existing water users. Restrictions are applied to consents when recordings at minimum flow sites are breached. Partial restrictions can be applied above the minimum flow to allow some abstraction while preventing the minimum flow from being breached. The management of flow regimes is complex and is simplified in the 60 day snapshot of a flow regime in fig 13.
- Environment Canterbury provides real-time information on irrigation restrictions for over 320 sites across most rivers in Canterbury. www.ecan.govt.nz/data/irrigation-restrictions. It is the consent holder's responsibility to understand the minimum flow conditions on water consents.

Fig 13: Example of Water Take Restrictions (January/February 2016)

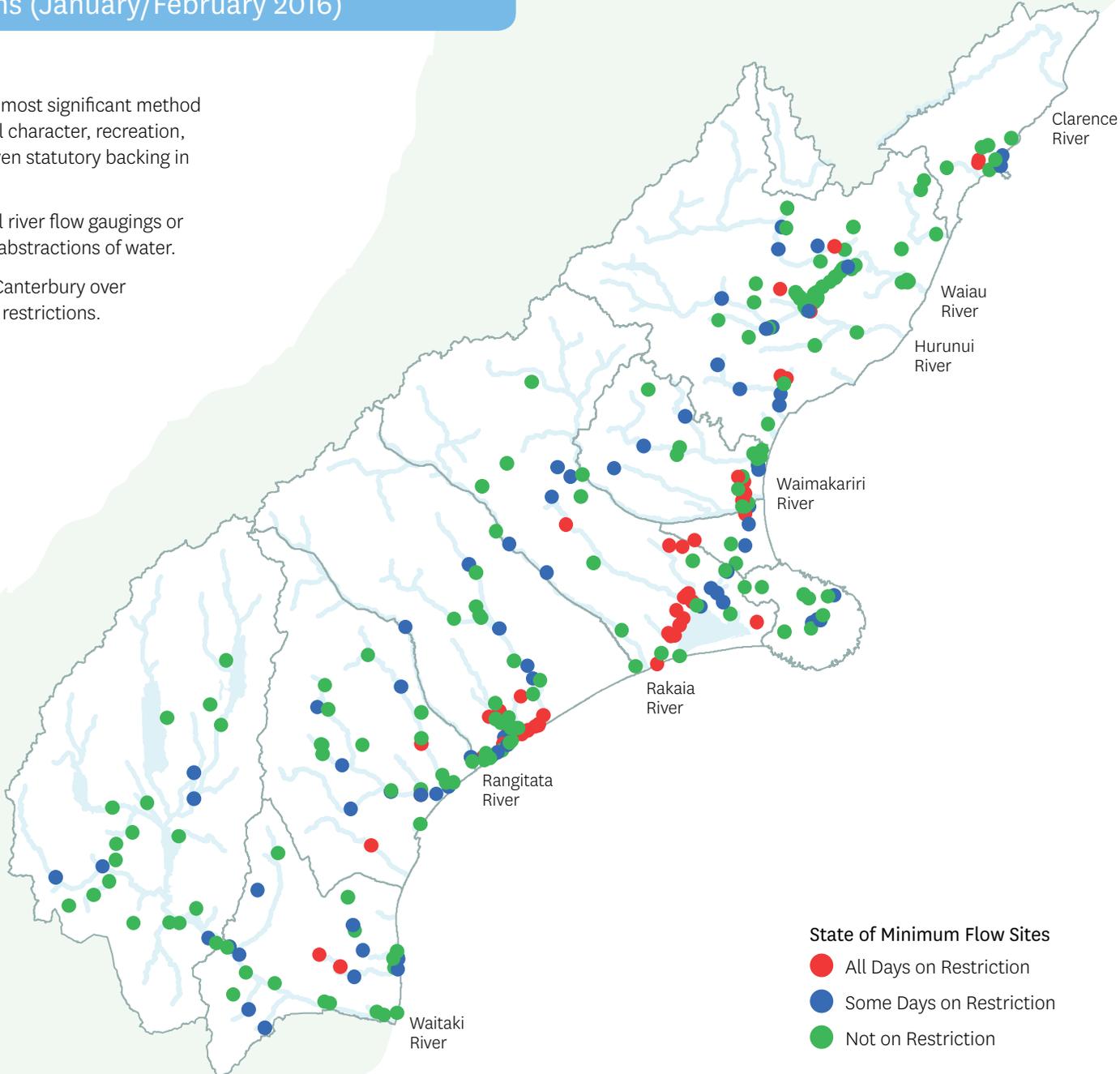
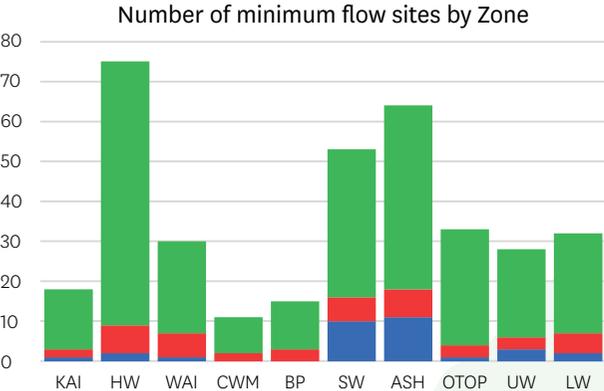
Minimum Flow Sites

Restrictions on the volume that can be taken from rivers is the most significant method for maintaining instream environmental values such as, natural character, recreation, cultural values and aquatic ecology. These components are given statutory backing in regional plans and consents.

Information obtained from telemetered river flow sites, manual river flow gaugings or calculated flows is used to set and manage restrictions on the abstractions of water.

As an example, the map shows a snapshot of the flow sites in Canterbury over the January/February (summer) period when low flows trigger restrictions.

For more information visit www.ecan.govt.nz.



State of Minimum Flow Sites

- All Days on Restriction
- Some Days on Restriction
- Not on Restriction