

# TARANAKI REGION



ANGLING NEWSLETTER 2021



*Tarn Mack-McEwen releases an awesome ringplain brown. Photo Kyle Adams*



# Season Prospects

Winter was not without its challenges for some of our Taranaki ringplain trout fisheries, as a major mid-July flood affected rivers on the south-western ringplain, from the Waingongoro near Hawera round to the Stony (Hangatahua) River at Okato. However, the resilience of these fisheries has been well demonstrated in the new season, with anglers pleasantly surprised by the number and quality of brown and rainbow trout seen and caught since opening day. Only the Waiaua River at Opunake remains in recovery mode, owing to sand inundation from headwater erosion on Taranaki Maunga.

Other waters in the region came through the winter in good condition with no damaging floods and rivers like the Manganuioteao will come into their own now that flows are gradually decreasing towards their summer lows. The upper Retaruke River will also be worth a visit this season, as a late December 2020 survey of juvenile trout showed rainbow and brown trout populations are rebounding strongly now that sedimentation from a headwater erosion event has reduced. Angling regulations for the Retaruke River have therefore returned to “all legal methods and a two trout daily bag limit”.

This season, there have been releases of good-sized rainbow trout from our Hawera hatchery into Lakes Rotomanu and Mangamahoe near New Plymouth, into the Patea River below Patea dam, the scout den pool in the Patea River at Stratford in lieu of the usual kids fishing event, and into the Stony River. There will also be an autumn release of rainbow trout from DOC’s Tongariro Trout Centre into Sattler’s Dam near Raetihi for the first time since 2019. If you fish any of these waters, Fish & Game would appreciate hearing how you got on so we can assess the effectiveness of these releases. You can email us at [taranaki@fishandgame.org.nz](mailto:taranaki@fishandgame.org.nz) and we’ll send you a spreadsheet or hard-copy diary to record your results.

With our country’s borders still effectively shut, and some regional restrictions in place, there will once again be fewer overseas anglers on our rivers and lakes this season. While overseas visitors don’t make up a significant component of Taranaki’s angling effort, they certainly do on many of New Zealand’s high-profile fisheries. So, if you are thinking of a trip away to experience some of these other fisheries, then there’s still time to beat the crowds.

All the best for your summer angling.

The team at Taranaki Fish & Game



*Summer angling success.  
Photo Michael Bakker.*



# Lake Rotomanu Family Trout Fishing Day

Following its success in 2020, the second annual Lake Rotomanu family fishing day was held on October 30 this year. The event involved the release of 500 good sized rainbow trout and three 'trophy' fish into Lake Rotomanu, all sourced from Eastern Fish & Game's Ngongotaha hatchery. After a spell of wet weather, New Plymouth put on a sunny spring day that resulted in families coming from far and wide with their fishing gear, picnics and itching to catch a fish. The event was another huge success with 70 families pre-registering and an additional 25 turning up on the day. Once permits were collected, families distributed themselves at suitable fishing sites around the lake and volunteers circulated to provide advice and assistance when needed. It was great to see families complying with social distancing in accordance with level 2 Covid restrictions.

that had bright, flashy colours also pulled in trout and perch. While the catch rate wasn't as good as last year, the beauty of the release is that the trout remain in the lake to provide a great opportunity for budding anglers to come back and hone their fishing skills.

BBQ sausages and chocolate fish at the Inglewood Rod, Gun & Recreation Club's tent meant no-one went away empty handed and Tarn Mack-McEwen from Taranaki Hunting & Fishing was on-hand to provide valuable advice and help with gear set-up. Many thanks to the Inglewood Rod, Gun & Recreation Club, Taranaki Hunting & Fishing, Hynds New Plymouth and the Taranaki Daily News for their excellent support.

Lake Rotomanu is a popular spot for watercraft in summer, but the western end of the lake is reserved for fishing and model boat use only, providing an undisturbed area that is always available. There are two wooden platforms and a set of steps constructed over the water that make great fishing sites. Fishing in the morning and evening offers the best chance of success and provides a peaceful start to your day or time to wind down and relax at the end of a long one.



*William Dannefaerd with a Lake Rotomanu rainbow trout. Photo Brad Dannefaerd.*

Over the day a variety of species were caught, with trout shown off by smiling kids, plenty of perch to keep the excitement going, a couple of large grass carp and even an eel. Black and yellow veltic lures worked well catching two of the three trophy trout, and spinners

*Aibel Paul with his father Alex show off the trophy trout that Aibel caught on his first cast.*



*Anglers try their luck at the recent Lake Rotomanu family fishing day. Photo Curly McEwen*



# Stratford Fishing Day down – but not out

Taranaki Fish & Game and the Stratford Club Fishing Section have reluctantly decided to cancel this year’s Stratford kids trout fishing day, owing to Covid-19 restrictions and the uncertainty surrounding recent cases in Stratford. Managing social distancing at an event where adult volunteers help kids to fish for rainbow trout is difficult in the current environment and we wanted to keep the kids, our volunteers, and staff safe.

But all is not lost and to provide an ongoing angling opportunity, Fish & Game is making periodic releases of rainbow trout from its Hawera hatchery into the scout den pool in King Edward Park where the fishing day is normally held. Families can then come and fish for them in their own time and keep within their bubbles. The first release occurred on November 11 and several more will be made in the coming weeks. These fish are big, with some already over 2kg that are ready for the dinner plate.



*Fish & Game Ranger, Max Barnard releases Hawera hatchery rainbow trout into the Scout Den pool in Stratford.*

## Angler Satisfaction Survey Results

In mid-May 2021 an electronic survey was sent to all 2020/21 Taranaki adult fishing licence holders for whom we had a valid email address. The survey contained many of the same questions used in the 2019/20 survey so we could compare between seasons.

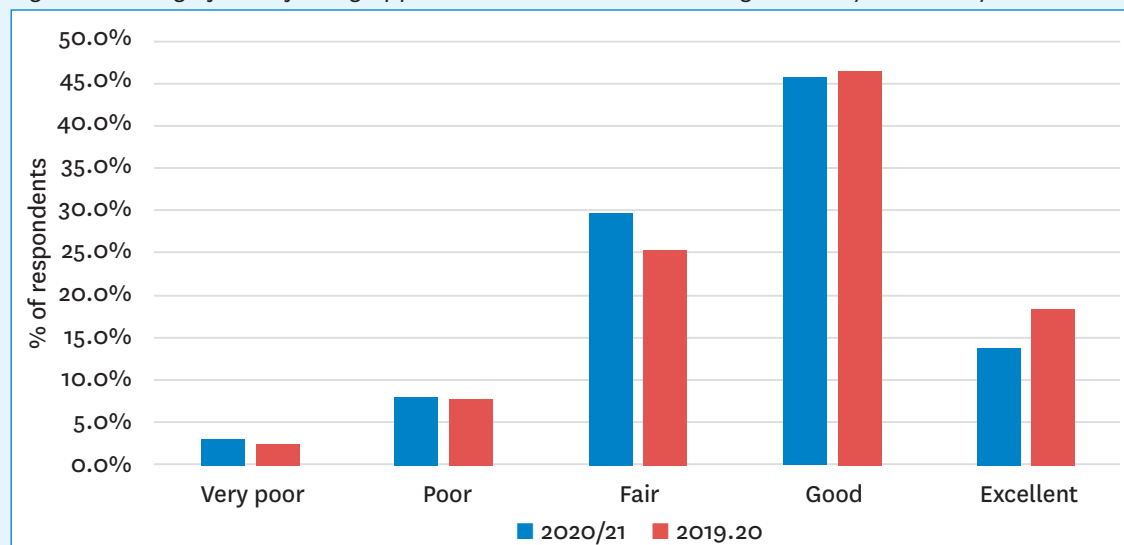
Perhaps as a result of the April 2020 Covid-19 lockdown, anglers put in more effort and travelled more widely outside the region in the 2020/21 season than in 2019/20.

However, catch rates and the size and condition of fish were rated as slightly poorer. A modest decrease in catch rate was also reported by participants in Fish & Game’s angler diary scheme, who spent less time on lakes and more time on rivers

during the season.

Overall, the survey found that anglers rated the 2020/21 season as less productive than 2019/20, but still reasonable. The vast proportion of the region’s fisheries comprise wild trout populations which inherently fluctuate in response to climatic and environmental conditions and the results of the survey were consistent with this.

*Figure 1. Rating of trout fishing opportunities in the Taranaki Region 2020/21 vs 2019/20 seasons*





# Lower Patea River Releases

This year marked the fifth and final year of the Trustpower-funded release of 1,000 brown trout and 500 rainbow trout yearlings into the river below Patea Dam. The release, which occurred on 3rd November 2021, is part of a project arising from the resource consenting process to assess whether restocking can mitigate the effects of the Patea Dam and hydro scheme on the lower river trout fishery.

The fish are marked with a plastic floy tag below the dorsal fin (yellow for brown trout and blue for rainbow trout) which has the year of release written on it (i.e. 21 for 2021) and a left pelvic fin clip. The 2017 and 2019 releases also have a left pelvic fin clip, while the 2018 release has the right pelvic fin removed.

To check whether releasing larger fish is more successful in terms of returns to the angler, 77 rainbow trout of up to 1.5kg were also released into the lower river at McColl's quarry on 3rd of November. These fish were raised at Fish & Game's Hawera hatchery and have an adipose fin-clip, but no tag.

To date, there hasn't been a lot of feedback about the success of the releases and we encourage anglers to take photos and record what they see and catch. Collecting data on the size and catch rate of stocked fish and taking stomach samples to determine what they are feeding on is an important part of the trial.

Following a health and safety audit, Trustpower has locked the walking accessway to the tailrace fishing site. This is an understandable closure, but an unfortunate and disappointing blow for anglers, as Trustpower has stated they're unlikely to change this policy in the foreseeable future. However, there is still plenty of good access to the 14km of river between McColl's Bridge and the dam. The landowner is happy for anglers to park on the road verge and walk across to fish the river, but please don't park in front of gates or entranceways and strictly NO DOGS.

Spring and autumn are typically the best times to fish the lower Patea River, and if you catch any released fish please record the colour of the tag, the year written on it, or whether it was fin-clipped and report this to Fish & Game. If you've kept the trout then a length and weight measurement would be invaluable and if possible, retain the stomach of any stocked or wild fish caught. The easiest way is to put the stomach and all the internal organs in a plastic bag in the freezer and we can arrange to collect this. If you fish the area regularly, we can also send you an angling diary to record data over the season. Check out the Taranaki Regional Council website for flows at the McColl's Bridge site – the river tends to fish best when flows are below 30 cumecs. <https://trc.govt.nz/environment/maps-and-data/regional-overview/?measureID=9>



*Hawera hatchery volunteer, Dennis Bourke, releases tagged fingering brown trout into the lower Patea River.*



*Hatchery team leader, Malcolm Hurley, releases some fine Hawera rainbows into the lower Patea River.*



# Staff Changes

## Glenn Maclean leaves Taranaki Fish & Game

After seven years providing contract management services to Taranaki Fish & Game, Glenn Maclean has moved on to a new venture running the Retaruke Country Estate with his partner Carolyn.

Council Chairman, Chris (Skippy) Donald, comments that “Glenn has been an exceptional Manager, who will be sorely missed by Councillors and staff. Glenn has that rare combination of technical skill and management expertise, along with the ability to relate well to licence holders, landholders and the general public”.

Drawing on his previous experience as Programme Manager for the DOC Taupo Fishery, Glenn has updated the Council’s health & safety policies, refined and implemented the Council’s annual work plan and produced a comprehensive 5-year strategic plan.

Glenn has also made a significant contribution to developing relationships with iwi and has been Fish & Game’s representative on the Te Kōpuka nā Te Awa



*Glenn Maclean has left Taranaki Fish & Game after seven years providing contract management services.*

Tupua (“Te Kōpuka”) strategy group with interests in the Whanganui River (Te Awa Tupua).

Other notable highlights of Glenn’s time with Fish & Game include the provision of expert advice and financial support for wetland creation and protection projects in the Waimarino and Whanganui areas and working towards completion of riparian fencing and planting in the Manganuioteao River catchment.

## Welcome to Jacob Morison

Kia ora, my name is Jacob Morison and I am the new Taranaki Fish & Game Officer, based in New Plymouth. Growing up in rural Wairarapa it was inevitable that I was going to be obsessed with everything to do with the outdoors, whether it was casting a line into the Ruamahunga River, catching a few crays at Cape Palliser, or sitting in the maimai next to Lake Wairarapa on opening morning waiting for the bacon and egg pie to warm up. I was hooked from day one and couldn’t get enough of it.

This really kickstarted my passion for gamebird hunting and sport fishing as well as respect for the environment. It eventually led me to migrate south to the University of Otago in Dunedin where I studied a Bachelor of Applied Science, double majoring in Zoology and Aquaculture/Fisheries. Throughout my studies I was fortunate enough to be involved with field and lab work that allowed me to obtain skills and knowledge I could use to help monitor and manage wildlife populations to ensure future generations are able to enjoy them as we have. In-between the studying I enjoyed playing a bit of rugby for University Club, getting into those cold southern waters for a dive every so often, and travelling to some of the central lakes and canals to try my luck at getting one of those big South Island trout that everyone talks about.

But after four years of study, I was ready to move out into the world and use my degree for some good.

When I saw the Taranaki Fish & Game Officer role advertised, I jumped at the chance to apply so I could continue doing what I loved,

apply the skills I had spent those years at university learning into the real world and get paid for it, a bit of a win-win situation. So, I made the trip back up from Dunedin to New Plymouth to start my new career.

I look forward to getting out and about to see more of the beautiful countryside in Taranaki, so if you see me around the area don’t hesitate to come over and have a chat, I might even be able to give you some tips and tricks, or better yet you could give me some.



*New Taranaki Fish & Game Officer, Jacob Morison, ready to release trout into Lake Rotomanu. Photo courtesy of the Taranaki Daily News.*

# Fish & Game Review

A Ministerial review of the governance of Fish & Game NZ and the regional Fish & Game Councils produced a report with 36 recommendations for change. Many of the recommendations are straightforward and make good sense, such as the Fish & Game electoral role automatically including licence holders from the previous year, rather than the current opt-in requirement. Others are more complicated and an Implementation Group was formed to collate and provide feedback from the regions to the Minister of Conservation and implement the recommendations.

While the Ministerial Governance Review confirmed the appropriateness of the regional based system, it recommended that the number of Fish & Game Regions be reduced from 12 to six, with Taranaki merging with the Wellington Region.

The advice from Fish & Game in its submission on the Review to the Minister was that any changes to Fish & Game's regional structure required further study and as a result, a project team is currently undertaking an in-depth study of the issues (efficiencies, costs, benefits, risks) around regional mergers. The project team will develop a list of options by December 2021, identify preferred options by February 2022, and their final report is due in March 2022, after which formal Fish & Game and public consultation will take place.

For its part, Taranaki Fish & Game is committed to change, including regional amalgamation, and is working constructively with the Implementation Team and the Structure Review Project Team to deliver on the intent of the Ministerial Review.

# Council Election Results

In line with recommendations from the Ministerial Governance Review, the Taranaki Fish & Game Council resolved to reduce the number of Councillors from 12 to 8 for the October 2021 election. At the close of nominations there were 10 candidates for the 8 available positions and an election was held. The successful candidates are:

Chris (Skippy) Donald (Chairman)	27 Bayley Street, Rd 3, New Plymouth 4373	027 477 7518	skippy@Tccl.co.nz
Alan Flynn (Vice-Chairman)	63 Barrett Street, Westown, New Plymouth 4310	06 758 9635 027 324 6216	alan.flynn@Xtra.co.nz
Gerard Karalus (National Council Appointee)	259 Turuturu Road, Rd 14, Hawera 4674	06 278 7900 027 590 2277	karalus@Xtra.co.nz
Paul Blewman	7a Chatswood Place, Rototuna, Hamilton 3210	07 854 3342 021 775 617	blewman88@Gmail.com
John Nancarrow	30 Humphries Street, Inglewood 4330	027 224 4432	john.nancarrow@Hynds.co.nz
David Potroz	159 Tate Road, Rd 42, Waitara 4382	027 625 5800	dj.pottynz@Gmail.com
Craig (Curly) McEwen	999 Junction Road, Rd 1, New Plymouth 4371	06 752 2582 027 318 0549	curly.don@Xtra.co.nz
Romon Sargeson	10 Queree Drive, Waiouru Military Camp, Waiouru 4826	06 387 6540 027 665 9990	mony_man10@Hotmail.com



Steve Fleming gets to work breaking up the Kaupokonui Glenn Road weir. Photo courtesy of Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust.



# Removing barriers to fish passage

Many of NZ's native freshwater fish, such as eels, whitebait (5 species), bullies, lamprey and torrentfish spend part of their lifecycle in the sea and require unrestricted access to freshwater in order to thrive. Valued introduced species, such as salmon and brown trout also spend time in the sea in parts of the South Island where they support sea-run fisheries and most freshwater fish, including brown and rainbow trout, need to move within waterways to access food and spawning grounds.

However, instream structures across NZ are blocking or impeding the passage of native fish and trout. These can include tide and flood gates, road crossings, culverts, weirs, fords and dams, which can slow or stop fish from migrating to upstream and downstream habitats if they're not designed, installed and maintained correctly. Structures in the lower reaches of streams can be the worst offenders, blocking access to large areas of habitat for a wide range of species.

The Taranaki Regional Council's (TRC) work to identify the location of all farm culverts in Taranaki provides an example of the size of the issue. The adjacent map shows that there are thousands of farm access culverts and while not all will be impacting on fish passage, the TRC is formulating an assessment programme to identify and remediate the ones that are.

Taranaki Fish & Game has also been working with iwi partners, consent holders, DOC and the TRC to remove or provide fish passage past major obstacles in Taranaki ringplain streams, with some examples highlighted below.



*Disclaimer: This image represents the location of selected instream structures found on farms within the Taranaki region as identified by the Taranaki Regional Council. The information presented is only that of the location of structures, used for inventory purposes, and does not contain any indicative information on the extent of any barriers to fish passage or compliance of activities against the Regional Fresh Water Plan for Taranaki.*



## Kaupokonui Stream weir finally demolished

Originally built in 1900 and reconstructed in 1941, the Glenn Road weir diverted water into the Kaupokonui dairy factory to provide for the generation of electricity and was used up until 1975 when the factory closed. While there was a stepped fish pass built into the weir, it didn't function effectively and the weir was a significant barrier to the upstream passage of native fish and trout.

Following 20 years of debate, Bart Jansma, the Environmental Policy Advisor for Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust led the charge by obtaining a consent from the TRC to allow the weir's removal. Demolition was completed on 3rd March 2021 about 15 minutes before a minor fresh came through to start the bed regrading process.

As the weir was located just 5km from the sea, its removal allows native fish and trout from the lower river unrestricted access to 85% of the Kaupokonui Stream catchment that had been denied to them for 120 years.

As well as Ngaruahine Iwi, co-funders of the weir demolition included the South Taranaki District Council, Fonterra Kapuni (Lactose Company) and Taranaki Fish & Game, with the Regional Council waiving consenting fees, paying for monitoring and shouldering the substantial cost of shifting their water level recorder from the weir crest to further upstream. All in all, a great collaborative effort with real environmental benefits!

The TRC's time-lapse video of the demolition can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPgGuCSKU7U>

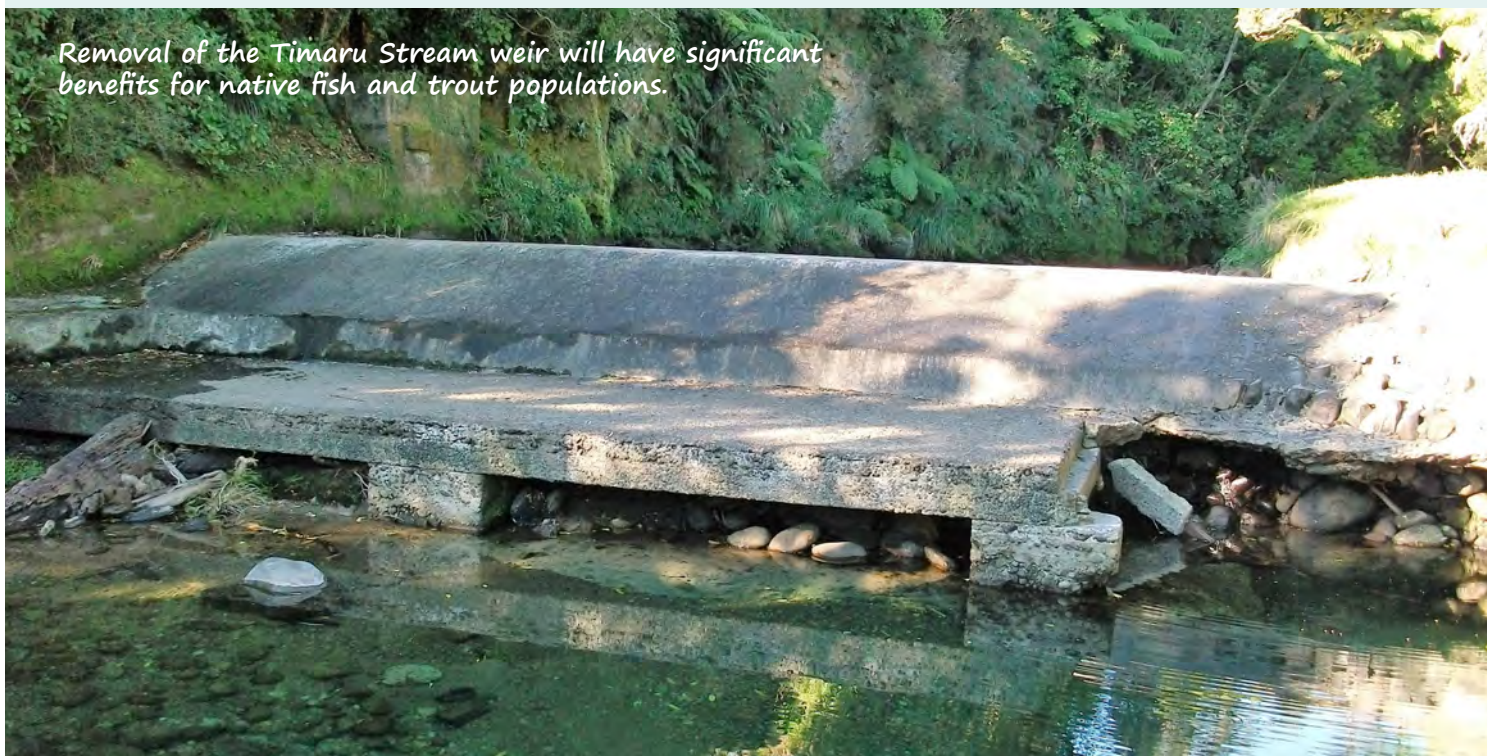


*A free-flowing river restored. Photo courtesy of Te Korowai o Ngāruahine Trust.*

## Timaru Stream weir

This disused dairy factory weir is located just upstream of SH45 at Tataraimaka, 6.5km from the sea and 7km north of Okato. It has a "fish pass" of sorts, but it's a swift flume that carries all the Timaru Stream's low flow and is not great for fish passage. Climbing native fish, such as eel elvers and juvenile koaro can get upstream past the weir but other species, such as inanga, smelt and trout, cannot. Resource consent for the weir expired in 2019 and the weir's owner has agreed it can be removed. This is expected to occur in autumn 2022 and Taranaki Fish & Game will carry out before and after electric fishing surveys to help document the effects of weir removal on fish populations in Timaru Stream.

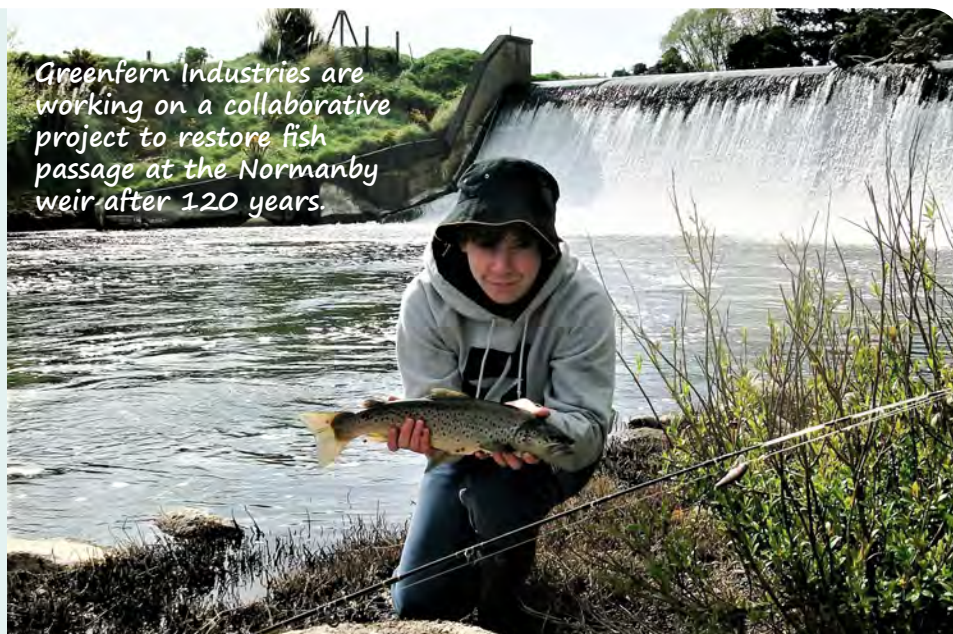
*Removal of the Timaru Stream weir will have significant benefits for native fish and trout populations.*





## Riverlands Eltham weir

Located on the Waingongoro River downstream of Eltham Road, this 3m weir was built in 1908 to generate power for the former Eltham Butter Factory but it's now an orphan structure with no owner. There is no fish pass and retrofitting one would be a costly proposition, so removal is the preferred option. In re-consenting its water take from the Waingongoro River for Eltham supply, the South Taranaki District Council recently agreed to make a financial contribution of \$49,000 (\$7,000 pa for 7 years) towards demolishing the weir to restore fish passage. A complicating factor is that a substantial amount of river bedload has accumulated behind the weir and this will need to be extracted prior to demolition occurring. So definitely a work in progress, but something that all parties are keen to work towards achieving.



*Greenfern Industries are working on a collaborative project to restore fish passage at the Normanby weir after 120 years.*

## Waingongoro Normanby weir

This 6m weir was built on a loop in the Waingongoro River in 1902 to divert water for the Normanby power scheme, which operated until 1967 when it was abandoned after a series of major flood events. The weir has an old concrete stepped fish pass that's never really worked. The power scheme was re-consented in 2009 and more recently purchased by Greenfern Industries Ltd. who have engaged Riley Consultants to design a fish pass that works. Initial designs using a vertical-slot fish pass look promising and while it will not be a cheap fix, it would be a wonderful achievement to restore fish passage along the river after a break of 120 years.



*Chris Bright in his element. Chris has given 30 years of voluntary service to licence holders and has been a superb advocate for Fish & Game in the Waimarino.*

# Fish & Game Councillor Retirements

Prior to the October 2021 Fish & Game election, four Taranaki Councillors signalled they would not stand for re-election. These were Chris Bright (Raetihi), Daniel Gordon and Steve Hugo (Whanganui) and Cory Potroz (Inglewood).

Chris Bright in particular is to be commended for 30 years of voluntary service to licence holders and the Council, having been introduced to Fish & Game by the late Harry Brown in the early 1990's. Steve Hugo has held a number of positions on Council, including Chairman and its National Council appointee. Daniel Gordon, with his passion for gamebird hunting and wetland protection has provided a fresh perspective from the farming community and Cory Potroz as had valued input as an active member of the Inglewood Rod, Gun & Recreation Club. Chris Bright remains an Honorary Fish & Game Ranger and our eyes and ears in the Waimarino district, while Daniel Gordon has kindly offered to lend his expertise to the Whanganui duck banding programme. We thank them all for their years of voluntary service and acknowledge that they will now have more time for their families and to follow their passion for freshwater sports fishing and gamebird hunting.



# Report pollution or unauthorised activity in rivers and streams

Anglers out and about on the region's streams and rivers sometimes come across pollution events, such as discharges of effluent or sediment, the dumping of waste on riverbanks, or channelising or diverting of streams, all of which can be damaging to the environment.

A key thing to remember is to report the event to the relevant regional council as soon as you find it, rather than waiting until the next day, or several days later. Regional Council inspectorate staff say they can only take a successful prosecution if one of their warranted officers can get on-site to take samples and photos as events are unfolding. Photos or video by a third party are useful but are unlikely to be presented as evidence in court.

The Taranaki and Horizons Regional Councils both have a 24-hour 7-day-a-week pollution hotline to make reporting easier. Add these numbers to your phone contact list to make reporting easier.

They are:

**TARANAKI REGIONAL COUNCIL: 0800 736 222**

**HORIZONS REGIONAL COUNCIL: 0508 800 800**



*Regional councils want you to report pollution events as soon as you see them.*

Don't be surprised if you get a call about your angling activity this season, it's just Fish & Game conducting the National Angler Survey. The survey includes all of NZ except the Taupo fishery and it has been carried out roughly every seven years since 1994. At 2-monthly intervals during the season running through to 30th September 2022, a random selection of anglers will be contacted to see which waters they've fished in the previous two months and how many trips they've made. The survey allows Fish & Game to track angling effort across time and adjust its management actions to meet the needs of anglers. It also provides us with a strong advocacy angle by being able to demonstrate in resource consent or plan change hearings that a particular water is an important recreational resource. A new random selection is generated for every two monthly survey, so the chances of you being contacted multiple times during the season are relatively slim.

## National Angler Survey 2021-22



# Where to go and what to do

In recent years Taranaki Fish & Game has moved away from producing angling information pamphlets to instead putting this information on our website. This reflects that most anglers now use the internet to search for information. This also allows us to update material as soon as we are aware of changes, so that it is always current.

The information regarding access and techniques for the region's trout and perch fisheries is arranged in three general groupings being the Taranaki Ringplain, Whanganui and Ruapehu fisheries.



For detailed and up to date angling & access information for local fisheries go to [www.fishandgame.org.nz](http://www.fishandgame.org.nz)

**Select** Taranaki Region

**Open** Taranaki Fishing Locations & Access

**Select** Taranaki Ringplain  
Whanganui  
Ruapehu

WWW



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### *Whanganui Office:*

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