

Sport Fish Regulations Survey 2019

Results of Sport Fish Regulations Survey, December 2018 - January 2019

Baylee Kersten, Fish & Game Officer, January 2019

Summary

With the Karamea and Mokihinui fisheries identified as being in decline from recent reports, it was recommended and adopted that Fish and Game was to survey West Coast Licence holders if they supported the introduction of a controlled fishery on the Mokihinui catchment. It was found that 84% of licence holders support the idea. Anglers were also asked if there were any other regulations they wish to be considered for change, and they are now listed in the appendix three for the Fish and Game Council to review.

Introduction

It has been indicated over the last 10 years from both the backcountry fishery surveys and consultation with anglers that the Karamea and Mokihinui rivers are under increasing fishing pressure. This has resulted in the two catchments become backcountry fisheries to allow better management of these sensitive fisheries. Back country reports started in 2010 but had limited feedback until the introduction of the backcountry fishery in 2016, which allowed Fish and Game to survey every angler that fished the Karamea and Mokihinui rivers. These in-depth surveys, supported by drift dives being carried out, have concluded that further intervention by Fish and Game is required as angler satisfaction continues decrease. The *Backcountry Survey Report 2018* recommendations included “*Survey anglers to determine if they approve of restricted access as a form of fishery management.*” Following the report being presented at the Fish and Game August 2018 Council Meeting, the following Motion was proposed and carried, “*That the West Coast Fish and Game Council receive the Backcountry Survey Report and the recommendation be adopted.*” This resulted in this survey being carried out. Secondly following the December 2015 West Coast Fish and Game Council Meeting, it is now West Coast Fish and Game policy “*That the West Coast Fish and Game Council conduct a consultation process with license holders regarding key regulation proposals being considered for implementation in sufficient time to enable the feedback to be considered for regulation setting in 2016 and use this as a basis for a 3 yearly regulation set to be reviewed 3 yearly.*”

Method

The survey was carried out using Survey Monkey which is an online survey provider. West Coast Adult and Family Licence holders were sent an email that included a link to the survey, as well as stating that they have a chance to have their say on Freshwater Sports Fish Regulations. The email was sent on Wednesday the 19th of December 2018, and the survey closed on Friday the 4th of January 2019. Giving West Coast licence holders 16 days to complete the survey if they wished to

have a say on the proposed regulation changes or suggest any other potential changes. Of the 1,070 invited to participate, 171 completed the survey, that being 16% of invited licence holders.

For the purpose of this report all graphs will be given as percentages to allow ease of comparison. Given that every West Coast licence holder with a valid email address was encouraged to participate, all was done to ensure the survey is representative of the West Coast Licence holder population. The survey asked if they were a full season or a short term licence holder. This was to see if it biased the data but with only four respondents being short term licence holders and their survey results being similar to full season results, there was no need to represent them in graphs. Secondly licence numbers were requested but not compulsory, this was done in case there was any signs of manipulation of the survey. With 78% of respondents providing their licence number and with licence providers survey results not differing from those who didn't provide their licence number, we can now rule out that an individual completed the survey numerous times in an attempt to achieve a desired outcome. For the survey questions please refer to appendix one.

Results

An estimated 84% of licence holders support the introduction of a controlled fishery on the Mokihinui catchment with 144 of the 171 participants in the survey supporting the idea.

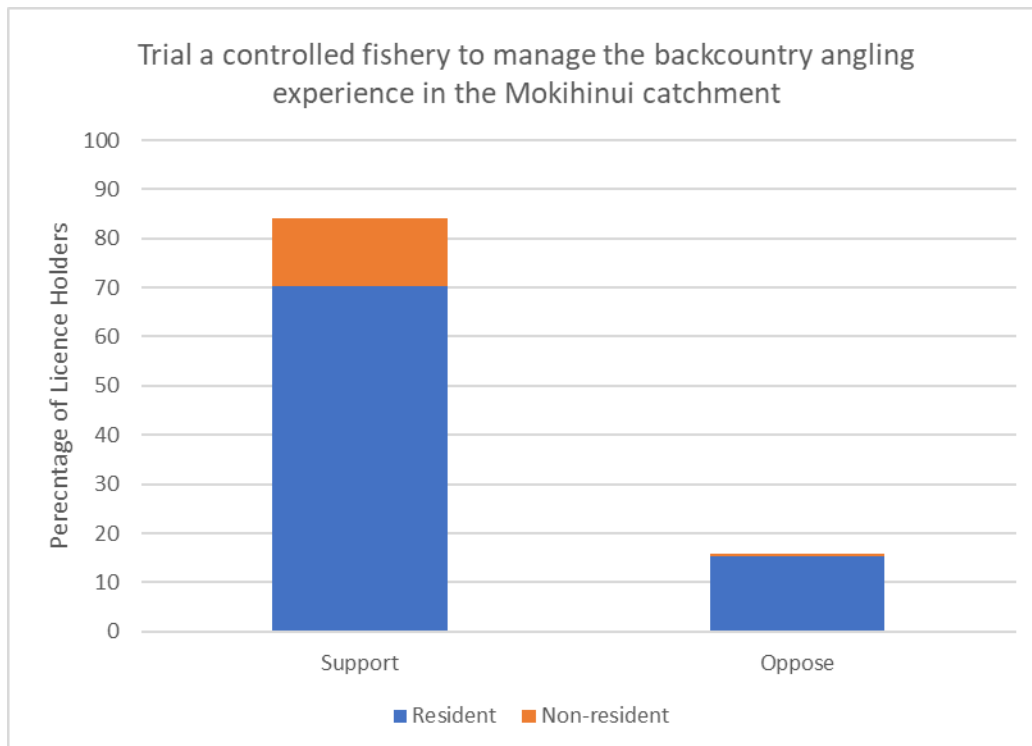


Figure 1: West Coast licence holders' stance on trialling a controlled fishery on the Mokihinui Catchment.

Interestingly 96% of non-resident anglers who hold a West Coast licence support the trialling a controlled fishery on the Mokihinui Catchment compared to just 82% of resident anglers.

	Support	Oppose	Total
Resident	120	26	146
Non-resident	24	1	25
Total	144	27	171

Table 1: Summary of West Coast licences holders' stance on trialing a controlled fishery on the Mokihinui Catchment survey data.

Staff Recommendations

- That the council receives this report.
- That the Controlled Fishery is trialled on the Mokihinui catchment.
- That the council reviews suggested changes to regulations.

Appendices

Appendix One: West Coast Fish and Game - Sport Fish Regulations Survey Questions

Q1: Do you currently hold a resident licence or non-resident licence?

Q2: Is your licence for the full season or was it a short term licence?

Q3: Can you please provide your West Coast sports fishing licence number?

Q4: Trial a controlled fishery to manage the backcountry angling experience in the Mokihinui catchment

Q5: Other regulations you wish to be considered

Appendix Two: Feedback on Question Four: Trial a controlled fishery to manage the backcountry angling experience in the Mokihinui catchment

- Resident licence holder to have priority into this fishery. Overseas visitor last choice, if any. The world is getting smaller and it will destroy our fishery if nothing is done.
- Its' the west coast the less rules the better.
- Limit Aliens and change them more. They are destroying our fisheries while New Zealanders are at work paying taxes to provide and maintain facilities.
- Why only the Mok. There's plenty of other waters...top of Waitahu...top of the Ahaura...for a start that need the same protection.
- More so only fly fishing and catch and release only. Foreigners access only if guided by professional fishing guides
- Yes good idea but not just to guides locals must get fair access over tourists

- Should only apply to upper reaches of the river.
- How would the licences be allocated? Would the already rude, pushy and anti-social fishing guides be given preference or an unfair allocation advantage over private fishermen? I would hope not.
- Excellent idea to improve the fishing experience
- No overseas anglers allowed - residents only - ban guides
- More info is need on who and what amount different users are having on the catchments.
- Support on the basis only full season RESIDENT licence holders have access to the trial licences. If the area is under pressure, then NZ'rs should have first priority.
- Resident angler to be able to fish all open area at any time. Non-resident anglers to give way to resident anglers
- Concept sounds good but most of the pressure is carried out by guides and how are you going to manage the river when they will fly in and out. You will never know they are in the catchment.
- Check the guy's taking helicopters in to catch fish it maybe catch & release but how often are they catching the same fish? the stress kills the fish & the multiple handling doesn't do them any favours
- West Coast residents should have no restrictions on where they can fish and shouldn't be subject to these kinds of restrictions. Especially since its probably foreign cashed up guided anglers.
- A great idea! :-)
- this might discriminate against Kiwi's for the sake of letting more "Tourists" take the fishing over us this would be a monetary venture which as a kiwi I already have the right to fish whenever I want to & not when I am told I can just, so tourism gets a better hold on my fishing
- Stop helicopter landings in the entire catchment.
- Yes, this is just the sort of active management intervention required to manage high use.
- This fishery will self-regulate, they will never catch them all. If concerned, how about spending some of our license money in stocking some local rivers and lakes.
- Been fishing here since about 1970 but tend not to go these days because of decreasing number of fish and increased number of anglers.
- That's fair enough, it allows the recreational fisherman ample opportunity to enjoy the area.
- Perhaps somehow include/factor in non-angling users too such as kayakers as these factions greatly impinge on the angling experience.
- Sadly - I support the idea - there is increased pressure not only on the Mokihinui - but other rivers / streams as well. I hate the idea but on a recent trip we encountered fishermen in places we had never before and their respect for 'first in the stream' was ignored - just jumped in anyway!!! Rather than confrontation we just pulled out and hoped it was an anomaly because of recent weather and we would would find clear (from fishermen) water somewhere else - unfortunately it happened twice this year - last week Nov and first week Dec - Lake Brunner area. Maybe just getting too old - after 25 years of trips!! Social media is

definitely adding to the increase of fishermen- just look at the conversations and pictures being circulated.

- My guess is that most fishermen fishing these back country rivers/streams would be visitors to NZ, but how you would be able to monitor new proposals would be a whole new ball game
- Seems logic saves fishing for all over substantial time
- Good idea and has my support.
- Also need to control the commercial guiding and give priority to recreational anglers.
- Alternatively, or additionally limit the amount of days allowed to stay in the huts there.
- It would only put pressure on other rivers
- See if it is overseas users, if it is chuck them out.
- I support the controlled fishery in principal. Successfully balancing the differing expectations of overseas/local anglers and fishing guides will be a challenge.

Appendix three: Question Five: Other regulations you wish to be considered

- Increase licence fees for non-residents. Guides to be regulated to get a feel for what's going on.
- A no fee licence for resident subsistence fishermen and women.
- Charge all non residents five times as much for a fishing license. \$500 for a season license etc. Also with reduced limit bags.
- Community licences. ie I can pay extra on top of my license xxxx amount of dollars to take the likes of nieces and nephews out for a day.. ie. Full season for me and say 12 day trips for family.
- Reducing the bag limits at the estuaries and the lower sections of the rivers/streams (for example, rivers below SH6 bridges) at Westland to protect sea-run brown trout population.
- Ban fishing competitions as they deplete the lakes of excess quantities of fish. 100 anglers dragging out in excess of 300 fish
- Compulsory regulation on numbers of helicopters landing. Huts a lot more available as Old ghost cyclists are taking over forks hut.
- all ok
- Charge overseas anglers a lot more
- Start taking Info from guides public and overseas anglers and start to understand who is using the waterways for better management. No point putting regulations in if you don't have the information for an informed decision process.
- Allowing catch and release of multiple fish a limit must be applied in this circumstance. Lake Brunner Open Season to change to not clash with the opening weekend of duck shooting season
- For Saltwater creek downstream of State High 6 to be open year-round so the new river lagoon can be fished year round even when the river goes straight out.
- No winter in lake harpari

- A new regulation for fish and game to keep the fish stock at lake Kaniere at a high level for brown trout, rainbow trout and salmon . The current levels at the moment are dismal. the price we pay for our licence doesn't reflect the fishing enjoyment we expect. Keeping a record over the years reflect a constant decline in fish stock to the point that it is not worth going to lake Kaniere for an enjoyable day's fishing.
- Being able to keep more Trout form Lake Brunner
- Controlled stay on Karamea drainage too
- Better education is necessary on how to carefully handle trout if being released, and the reasons why this is necessary to educate anglers should be sent to all licence holders with an acknowledgement of them having read the bullet points needing to be made at the time of purchasing a licence. Currently there is limited information available in the booklet that they can obtain from sports shops etc but it appears that this isn't being read by many anglers! Anglers utilising careful catch and release tactics will further help to protect our fish stocks which are under increasing pressure from anglers and environmental extreme weather events / flooding. I continue to see fish being held with dry hands and gloves, held out of the water for extended periods, placed on dry / hot surfaces out of the water and them being released prematurely into heavy water, as there is little way to make anglers / licence holders read, remember and practice these techniques! A way to do this would be to make them read some summarised careful fish handling techniques as part of purchasing a licence. This can't be guaranteed but it can help and only be a positive move to help protect our fisheries! :-)

Thanks

- fly only above the Mokihinui forks
- Definitions around river mouth boundaries seem wanting - extends to far into marine environment and interferes with kahawai fishing.
- Review bag limit, set too low.
- Stronger control of fishing by visitors without guides
- Barbless hooks. A fish limit even if catch and releasing. This will force less pressure on the relaxed nature of the fish from those who are on the river. This will force anglers to pick and choose each fish rather than pressuring as much as they can while they can in a greedy manner.
- Pre-booking up to a year in the Ugly/Beautiful/rivers
- None I am OK with how it is now
- Limiting the number of days non-residents can spend in the backcountry fisheries.
- Limit chopper access
- Much more cost to apply to fishing guides and those that make a living from public resource