



NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

BOARD PACK

for

NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, 20 May 2026

6:30 pm (NZST)

Held at:

NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL
595 JOHNS ROAD, HAREWOOD, CHRISTCHURCH

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AGENDA

NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL MEETING



Name:	NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL
Date:	Wednesday, 20 May 2026
Time:	6:30 pm to 9:30 pm (NZST)
Location:	NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL, 595 JOHNS ROAD, HAREWOOD, CHRISTCHURCH
Board Members:	ALAN STRONG (Chair), ANDY TANNOCK, CHRIS BRANKIN, DAVE BARRON, Dave Coll, NIALL COSTER, NICK MOODY, PHILLIP MUSSON
Attendees:	DEBBIE AMBLER, Lyndon Slater

1. Opening Meeting

1.1 Welcome by Chairman

6:30 pm (5 min)

ALAN STRONG

.

1.2 Karakia

6:35 pm (5 min)

CHRIS BRANKIN

Whakataka te hau ki te uru
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga
Kia mākinakina ki uta
Kia mātaratara ki tai
E hī ake ana te atakura
He tio, he huka, he hau hū
Tīhei mauri ora!

Translation:

Cease the winds from the west
Cease the winds from the south
Let the breeze blow over the land
Let the breeze blow over the ocean
Let the red-tipped dawn come with a sharpened air.
A touch of frost, a promise of a glorious day.

1.3 Apologies

6:40 pm (5 min)

ALAN STRONG

Appologies

1.4 Interests Register

6:45 pm (5 min)

ALAN STRONG

Supporting Documents:

1.4.a	Interests Register	8
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1.5 Council Time

6:50 pm (20 min)

ALAN STRONG

For Discussion

Council discussion about future risks and issues.

2. FOR DECISION

2.1 Confirm Minutes

7:10 pm (5 min)

ALAN STRONG

For Decision

Supporting Documents:

2.1.a	Minutes : North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting - 18 Feb 2026	9
2.1.b	Minutes : OWP & 2026/27 BUDGET MEETING - 18 Mar 2026	15

2.2 UPPER HURUNUI RIVER CONTROLLED FISHERY TRIAL

7:15 pm (15 min)

ALAN STRONG

For Decision

Upper Hurunui River Trial Controlled Fishery

Supporting Documents:

2.2.a	FOR DECISION - UPPER HURUNUI RIVER TRIAL CONTROLLED FISHERY.pdf	18
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2.3 SEA-RUN SALMON SEVERE BAND MANAGEMENT

7:30 pm (15 min)

ALAN STRONG

For Decision

Supporting Documents:

2.3.a	FOR DECISION - SEA-RUN SALMON SEVERE BAND MANAGEMENT .pdf	25
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2.4 2026-27 SEASON SEA-RUN SALMON SEASON BAG RECOMMENDATIONS

7:45 pm (20 min)

ALAN STRONG

For Decision

Staff recommendations for 2026-27 SEA-RUN SALMON SEASON BAG LIMITS

Supporting Documents:

2.4.a	FOR DECISION- 26 27 SEASON SEA-RUN SALMON SEASON BAG RECOMMENDATIONS.pdf	33
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3. FOR DISCUSSION

3.1 DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2026-28

8:05 pm (10 min)

ALAN STRONG

For Discussion

Supporting Documents:

3.1.a	Communications Strategy 2026-2028 DRAFT for Council.pdf	37
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3.2 FEEDBACK ON DRAFT NZC PRIVACY POLICY

8:15 pm (10 min)

ALAN STRONG

For Discussion

Feedback requested from NZC on proposed draft privacy policy

Supporting Documents:

3.2.a	DRAFT Privacy Policy_ for consultation_April 26.pdf	74
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4. GENERAL BUSINESS

4.1 General Business

8:25 pm (10 min)

ALAN STRONG

For Discussion

General business from Council.

5. STANDARD REPORTS

5.1 Standard Reports

8:35 pm (15 min)

ALAN STRONG

For Noting

1. Chairmans' Report (verbal)
2. Operational Report
3. Finance Report
4. NZC Report (Verbal)
5. RMA Report
6. Health and Safety Report
7. Communications Report
8. Compliance Report
9. Updates from Sub-Committees of Council (verbal)

Supporting Documents:

5.1.a	OPERATIONAL PROGRESS REPORT MAY 2026.pdf	82
5.1.b	FINANCE REPORT TO 17 MAY 2026.pdf	91
5.1.c	RMA REPORT MAY 2026.pdf	97
5.1.d	HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT MAY 2026.pdf	99

Supporting Documents:

5.1.e	COMMUNICATIONS REPORT - MAY 2026.pdf	102
5.1.f	COMPLIANCE REPORT MAY 2026 (1).pdf	109

5.2 Action List

8:50 pm (10 min)

ALAN STRONG

Supporting Documents:

5.2.a	Action List	112
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6. PUBLIC SESSION

6.1 Public Session

9:00 pm (10 min)

ALAN STRONG

7. FOR INFORMATION PAPERS

7.1 Game Bird Reference Group Meeting Notes

9:10 pm (5 min)

ALAN STRONG

[For Information](#)

Minutes from the Game Bird Reference Group meeting held on 14-4-26

Supporting Documents:

7.1.a	FOR INFORMATION - 14-4-26 GB REFERENCE GROUP MEETING NOTES.pdf	115
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7.2 2025-26 High Country Lakes Creel Survey Report

9:15 pm (15 min)

ALAN STRONG

[For Information](#)

Report summarising outcomes of 2025-26 High Country Lakes Creel Surveys

Supporting Documents:

7.2.a	FOR INFORMATION-HighCountryLakesCreelSurvey_2025-26.pdf	117
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7.3 Controlled Fishery

[For Information](#)

Supporting Documents:

7.3.a	FOR INFORMATION-2026 CONTROLLED FISHERY CONSULTATION SUMMARY.pdf	143
7.3.b	FOR INFORMATION- CONTROLLED FISHERY TRIAL USAGE SURVEY.pdf	185

7.4 Sea-Run Salmon Bag Limit Recommendation from Cawthron - Appendix Agenda 2.4

[For Information](#)

8. Close Meeting

8.1 Close the meeting

Next meeting: No date for the next meeting has been set.

Interests Register

NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL



As of: 20 May 2026

Person	Organisation	Active Interests	Notice Date
ANDY TANNOCK	Gamebird Habitat Trust	Chair	13 Nov 2024
CHRIS BRANKIN	Ministry for the Environment	Staff member	13 Nov 2024
DAVE BARRON	Tallarook Dairies, Nectar Group	Owner of Nectar Group and Nectar Auckland. Not involved in Fish and Game service or support decisions. Nectar now offers its services free of charge to Fish & Game for service.	18 Feb 2026
DAVE COLL	N/A	No interest recorded	13 Nov 2024
NIAL COSTER	N/A	No interest recorded	13 Nov 2024
NICK MOODY	Environment Canterbury	Councillor for Environment Canterbury	26 Nov 2025
PHILLIP MUSSON	Fonterra	Shareholder Fonterra and ECAN Selwyn River Liaison Committee	13 Nov 2024
	L2 Drainage Committee	Committee Member	26 Nov 2025

Person	Organisation	Recently Closed Interests	Closing Date
ALAN STRONG	Amuri Irrigation Scheme	Contract Work	17 May 2026

MINUTES (in Review)

NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL MEETING



Name:	NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL
Date:	Wednesday, 18 February 2026
Time:	6:39 pm to 10:15 pm (NZDT)
Location:	NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL, 595 JOHNS ROAD, HAREWOOD, CHRISTCHURCH
Board Members:	ALAN STRONG (Chair), CHRIS BRANKIN, DAVE BARRON, Dave Coll, NIAL COSTER
Attendees:	DEBBIE AMBLER, Lyndon Slater
Apologies:	ANDY TANNOCK, PHILLIP MUSSON, NICK MOODY
Guests/Notes:	L Burke, K Belcher, M Bate, M Garrick (staff until 7.17pm), R Kerr (Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board)

1. Opening Meeting

1.1 Welcome by Chairman

Cr Strong welcomed Councillors, staff and public to the meeting.

1.2 Karakia

1.3 Apologies

As noted.

1.4 Interests Register

Additions added -

1. Cr Strong - contract work on the Amuri Irrigation Scheme
2. Cr Barron - addition of Nectar Auckland to his 'Active Interests'.

1.5 Council Time

1. **Sea-run salmon** - poor returns. Work requires to be done to fix it.
2. **Changes to Fish and Game Legislation** - It was suggested to hold a separate Council meeting to discuss further NZC Intent of Legislation Policy to ensure NCFG Council has clarity on the collective view of Fish and Game.
3. That a conservation of building relationships with CSIF&G be deferred.



Changes to Fish and Game Legislation

That Cr Strong send the NZC Intent Policy regarding changes to Fish and Game Legislation.

L Slater to add to discussion.

Due Date: 18 Mar 2026

Owners: ALAN STRONG, Lyndon Slater

2. FOR DECISION

2.1 Te Waihora Access Projects

A request to improve hunter access around Te Waihora / Lake Ellesmere was discussed including quotes supplied and the use of unbudgeted income.



Te Waihora Access Projects

The approval to spend the following be based on there being no impact to the end of year budget and that an additional two quotes be obtained and that NZC be notified of use of unbudgeted income; That -

1. \$11,100 for improving parking at Kaituna;
2. \$13,700 for improving car parking area and boat ramp at Lake Road South;
3. \$8,700 for improving boat ramp at Drain Road; and
4. \$19,900 for improving Irwell River access road and boat ramp.

Decision Date: 18 Feb 2026

Mover: CHRIS BRANKIN

Seconder: DAVE BARRON

Outcome: Approved

2.2 Confirm Minutes

NCFG Council Meeting 26 Nov 2025, the minutes were confirmed as presented.

2.3 Succession Planning - Election of Deputy Positions



Succession Planning - Election of Deputy Positions

That Cr Barron be elected as Deputy Chair - Nominated Cr Brankin - Seconded Cr Coll - Appointed

Nominees for NCFG NZC Representative Understudy -

1. Cr Musson - Nominated by Cr Brankin - Seconded Cr Barron
2. Cr Moody - Nominated by Cr Coll - Seconded Cr Tannock

The vote went to a blind ballot where Cr Musson was appointed.

NOTE: NZC meeting February 2026 - Cr Musson to attend in Cr Coll's absence. Cr Coll will resume at the following NZC meeting until Feb 2027.

NOTE: Both positions will be taken over in February 2027.

Decision Date: 18 Feb 2026

Mover: CHRIS BRANKIN

Seconder: Dave Coll

Outcome: Approved

2.4 Confirm Purpose and Priorities Document for 2026-2027

Discussion around staff outputs areas in the Operational Work Plan required to be measured by key performance indicators and Operations reports to Council. Council required staff to demonstrate all factors and justifications, using best technology available, in their decision making.



Purpose and Priorities 2026-2027

Council will focus on achieving or making measurable progress over the 2026 / 2027 financial year on;

1. Establishing a population base line for our high-country lakes and stepping stone fisheries. Information gathered, will be used to development an enhancement plan (having completed a Salmon and Game Bird Plan) giving the increasing relative importance of the trout fishery in the region, Council intend to work on developing a wide range of initiatives to protect and enhance the trout fishery and licence holders' enjoyment if it.
2. To develop further stepping stone fisheries close to Christchurch.
3. Maintaining a high level of compliance with applicable fishing and hunting regulations.
4. Review and overcrowding issues (other than those already addressed) in our fishery and consider options for the management of pressure, conflict and ensuring future sustainability.
5. To investigate other statutory land manager, land and plans for parcels of land that could be managed by or on behalf of NCFG for our licence holder's values. Of particular interest would be the land adjacent to Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere.
6. Investigate habitat enhancement or restoration project opportunities.
7. To review opportunities to increase our Region's licence holder base.

Decision Date: 18 Feb 2026
Mover: CHRIS BRANKIN
Seconder: NIALL COSTER
Outcome: Approved

After discussion, another opportunity was added to the Purpose & Priorities document.



Addition to Purpose and Priorities 2026-2027

The following be added as Priority 8;
 Investigate opportunities to access external funding.

Decision Date: 18 Feb 2026
Mover: Dave Coll
Seconder: NIALL COSTER
Outcome: Approved



Purpose and Priorities 2026-2027

As part of the Operational Work Plan, key performance indicators be set for staff to achieve and measure Council's aspirations.

Due Date: 18 Mar 2026
Owner: Lyndon Slater

3. FOR DISCUSSION

3.1 Controlled Fishery Trial Consultation

For information as the consultation paper goes out at the end of the Controlled Fishery trial.

Authors were commended on the paper.

3.2 Draft Communications Strategy 2026 - 2028

Draft Communications & Engagement Strategy 2026-2028 seen as a live document with the ability to be updated over time. J Meecham was commended on the presentation and would be invited to attend the next Council meeting.

Councillors discussed how they should interact with licence holders on social media.



Draft Communications & Engagement Strategy 2026-2028

Request feedback from Councillors via email prior to 18 March 2026 and that J Meecham be invited to attend the next Council meeting to further discuss this paper.

Due Date: 18 Mar 2026
Owner: ALAN STRONG

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

4.1 General Business

There was no General Business.

5. STANDARD REPORTS

5.1 Standard Reports

Format and content of staff Reports was discussed with changes being made to the templates of each Report.

1. **Chair's Report** - Chair's meeting to be held on last weekend of month and would be interested in regions views regarding the proposed Reforms by the Fish and Game Minister. Cr Strong was happy with the recently held Council workshop and the direction that NCFG was taking. Good to see progress on the Operational Work Plan and Budget, with KPI's set for staff to measure performance against outcomes.
2. **Groynes Project** - L Slater to provide a timeline to Council to access feasibility of this Project.



Standard Reports

That all Standard Reports be accepted.

Decision Date: 18 Feb 2026
Mover: CHRIS BRANKIN
Second: Dave Coll
Outcome: Approved

5.2 Action List

Due Date	Action Title	Owner(s)
22 Jul 2025	Regulation Review of Lake Heron Status: Completed on 26 Feb 2026	ALAN STRONG
22 Jul 2025	Climate Change Status: On Hold	CHRIS BRANKIN
17 Sept 2025	HABITAT PROJECT - SELWYN BLACKWATER Status: On Hold	Lyndon Slater
26 Nov 2025	MOU with NZC Status: In Progress	CHRIS BRANKIN, DAVE BARRON
26 Nov 2025	NZSAA Concept Proposal Status: Completed on 13 Feb 2026	ALAN STRONG
12 Dec 2025	Regulations Review - Use of Single Hooks Status: In Progress	Lyndon Slater
31 Jan 2026	Changing Policy on Regulation Setting Status: In Progress	ALAN STRONG
18 Feb 2026	Selwyn Huts Status: In Progress	ALAN STRONG

6. PUBLIC SESSION

6.1 Public Session

1. K Belcher - Fish Screens

In reply to his question regarding ECan's compliance of fish screens and the need for the New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association and NCFG to work together on this issue. L Slater stated NCFG had already approached ECan asking what their strategy was to bring effectiveness to fish screens and that both parties meet regularly to discuss such issues. It was noted that NCFG is not the regulator of fish screens and can only bring to ECan's attention any issues as they arise.

2. L Burke to discuss with L Slater ring-fencing special funding that should stay in the NCFG region.



Dave Orr Paper on Fish Screens

To send the D Bejakovichs' paper on fish screens to K Belcher.

Due Date: 18 Mar 2026

Owner: Lyndon Slater

7. FOR INFORMATION PAPERS

7.1 For Information Papers

7.2 MOVE INTO PUBLIC EXCLUDED MEETING



MOVE INTO PUBLIC EXCLUDED MEETING

To move into Public Excluded meeting at 9.23pm 18 February 2026.

Decision Date: 18 Feb 2026

Mover: Dave Coll

Seconder: NIALL COSTER

Outcome: Approved

8. Close Meeting

8.1 Close the meeting

Next meeting: No date for the next meeting has been set.

Approved decisions made between meetings



REPUBLISH OF MEETING MINUTES DATED 19 FEBRUARY 2025

That the minutes from the Council meeting dated 19 February 2025 be approved.

5 Supported: ANDY TANNOCK , CHRIS BRANKIN , DAVE COLL , NIALL COSTER , PHILLIP MUSSON

0 Opposed:

0 Abstained:

Decision Date: 8 Jun 2025

Outcome: Approved

Signature: _____

Date: _____

MINUTES (in Review)

OWP & 2026/27 BUDGET MEETING



Name:	NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL
Date:	Wednesday, 18 March 2026
Time:	7:00 pm to 8:54 pm (NZDT)
Location:	NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL, 595 JOHNS ROAD, HAREWOOD, CHRISTCHURCH
Board Members:	ALAN STRONG (Chair), ANDY TANNOCK, CHRIS BRANKIN, DAVE BARRON, Dave Coll, PHILLIP MUSSON
Attendees:	DEBBIE AMBLER, Lyndon Slater
Apologies:	NIAL COSTER
Guests:	Barry Barnes (Chair NZC), Corina Jordan (CEO NZC)
Notes:	Cr Tannock attended via video

1. Opening Meeting

1.1 Welcome by Chairman

Cr Strong welcomed B Barnes and C Jordan to the meeting.

1.2 Karakia

1.3 Apologies

No apologies.

Noted that the minutes from the previous meetings should have been included in this Board Pack.

2. FOR DISCUSSION

2.1 Draft 2026/2027 Budget and Operational Work Plan

L Slater explained the 2026-2027 Zero-based budget reflects the Councils purpose and priorities and is based on actual costings from the previous financial year. He explained the Operational Work Plan (OWP) is in sync with budget codes and has a project link (and currently under development), a policy/process/standard operating procedure alongside each code. Hours were yet to be allocated for staff beside each code.

L Salter raised concern of the timing of submitting the 2026/27 budget to NZC.

Council ensured all of their current priorities had been 'covered off' in the OWP. Noted that Priority 8 - opportunities to access external funding was required to be added to the front page of the OWP.

Discussion followed on defining how funding and regional levies are apportioned and the need to have all zero-based budgets standardised and transparent across all regions.

**2026/2027 Operational Work Plan**

That the 2026/27 Operational Work Plan be approved on the basis that further additions were required as stated, and to include Priority 8 - funding opportunities be added to the Priority list.

Decision Date: 18 Mar 2026
Mover: PHILLIP MUSSON
Seconders: Dave Coll
Outcome: Approved

**2026/2027 Operational Work Plan**

Continue to develop the OWP and add Priority 8 to the list of Priorities.

Due Date: 20 May 2026
Owner: Lyndon Slater

**2026/2027 Budget**

That the 2026/27 Budget be accepted.

Decision Date: 18 Mar 2026
Mover: ALAN STRONG
Seconders: PHILLIP MUSSON
Outcome: Approved

3. FOR DECISION

3.1 Acoustic Lake Monitoring

Already approved through budget process.

3.2 Repurpose Income Received from Diversion Payments

Undertaking prosecutions is seen as a cost of 'doing business' and is a statutory function of Fish and Game. Diversion is reparation which could be in the form of a donation to charity, an apology and in NCFG's case is used as a contribution towards habitat and enhancement. It cannot be used as cost recovery.

NZC has undertaken to investigate the centralisation of a legal resource to be used by regions.

3.3 Asset Replacement

**Asset Replacement Schedule 2026 - 2029**

That Council approve the sale and replacement of assets as per the Asset Replacement Schedule 2026 - 2029. That the approval process be on an annual basis.

Decision Date: 18 Mar 2026
Mover: Dave Coll
Seconders: CHRIS BRANKIN
Outcome: Approved

3.4 Finance Report to 13 March 2026

Discussion on finding the proportion of salmon v trout licences sold.

Question raised on using a drone to complete salmon surveys - possible trial of?

3.5 NZC Health and Safety Policy

A framework for a national Health and Safety Policy was due for feedback to NZC by 26 March 2026. Policies mentioned in the paper required to be developed before NCFG Council could agree to the paper.



NZC Health and Safety Policy

Write feedback to NZC prior to 26 March 2026.

Due Date: 20 May 2026

Owner: Lyndon Slater

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

4.1 General Business

5. PUBLIC SESSION

5.1 Public Session

6. FOR INFORMATION PAPERS

6.1 For Information Papers

7. Close Meeting

7.1 Close the meeting

Next meeting: No date for the next meeting has been set.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Upper Hurunui River Trial Controlled Fishery

North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting

20 May 2026

Prepared By: Emily Craig

1. Kōrero taunaki - Summary of Considerations

a) Kaupapa - Purpose:

To recommend to Council future management options following the trial of Controlled Fisheries on the North Branch Hurunui River and South Branch Hurunui River.

b) Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations:

- i) That the South Branch Hurunui River return to standard Designated Waters regulations and the Controlled Fishery removed.
- ii) That the Controlled Fishery trial on the North Branch Hurunui River be extended for the 2025/27 season to allow for additional data collection; BUT the Controlled Fishery boundary be moved upstream to the swing bridge, and allow the section of the North Branch Hurunui River below the swing bridge to return to standard Designated Waters regulations (removal of the Controlled Fishery below the swing bridge).

2. Whakarāpopoto - Executive Summary

Following the implementation of the Designated Waters licence, feedback from the angling community indicated that angling pressure on the Upper Hurunui Fisheries had continued. In the years leading up to and following the implementation of the Designated Waters licence, high levels of use had resulted in conflicts between anglers, guides, and landowners, leading some anglers to feel dissatisfied with their angling experience.

The Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery was introduced as a 2-year trial to manage angling pressure on the Upper North and South Branch sections to maintain a high-quality angling and wilderness experience. The trial period allowed Fish & Game to collect data to help determine whether these rivers need to continue as Controlled Fisheries and, if so, how to implement a Controlled Fishery in a way that most benefits anglers.

Both a consultation and usage survey were carried out by staff. The consultation showed similar preference on the North Branch for removing the

Controlled Fishery, and moving the Controlled Fishery boundary to the swingbridge. The main preference for the South Branch was to remove the Controlled Fishery. Angler usage data showed no significant difference in angler days on both waterways when comparing pre-trial and the first season of the trial. Percentage of booked days utilised increased between the first and second years of the trial.

3. Takenga mai – Background

Following the implementation of the Designated Waters licence, feedback from the angling community indicated continued angling pressure on the Upper Hurunui Fisheries, resulting in conflicts between anglers, guides, and landowners.

At the May 2024 Council meeting, Council voted to introduce trial Controlled Fisheries on the North Branch and South Branch Hurunui River Designated Waters. The Controlled Fisheries were intended as a two-year trial to manage angling pressure, in order to maintain a high-quality angling and wilderness experience and reduce angler conflict in the area.

The Controlled Fisheries were managed through a booking system on the Fish & Game licencing website which already existed to manage the existing Greenstone and Ettrick Burn Controlled Fisheries. Bookings were on a first-come first-served basis and could be made up to five days in advance. Each booking was restricted to up to a maximum of three consecutive days, and no more than 4 anglers (consistent with the other regions' Controlled Fisheries).

Feedback on the first season of the trial Controlled Fisheries was sought in early 2025 and presented to Council at the May 2025 Council meeting (see Appendix A). Information on angler usage on the North and South Branch Hurunui rivers was collected during the 2024-25 Designated Waters survey, and presented to Council at the July 2025 Council meeting.

Staff conducted two different surveys on the trial Controlled Fisheries during the 2025-26 season: a broad consultation, and a usage survey of anglers who managed to secure bookings.

4. Kōrerorero – Discussion

i) Broad consultation

Overall, anglers expressed similar levels of support for maintaining the controlled fishery and for returning the area to standard Designated Waters regulations on both the North and South branches. On the North Branch, anglers also expressed similar levels of support for shifting the boundary of the Controlled Fishery from its current location upstream to the swing bridge.

The majority of anglers were opposed to conversion of the existing booking system to a ballot system and to changing the rules of the Controlled Fishery to only require a booking during peak angling months.

For more information on the broad consultation, read the Consultation Section below and attached consultation summary.

ii) Usage survey

Staff individually surveyed booking holders throughout the season to assess usage of their bookings.

5. Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga - Considerations For Decision-Making

a) North Branch Hurunui River

The 2024-25 Designated Waters survey indicated that estimated angler days on the North Branch Hurunui River was not statistically significant between the 2023-24 (pre-trial) and 2024-25 (first season of trial). That is, implementation of the trial Controlled Fisheries did not significantly reduce angler usage in its first season. The percentage of booked days available did not differ between seasons (91% in 2024-25 and 92% in 2025-26), however actual usage increased from 68% to 83%, meaning angler usage in the North Branch in the 2025-26 season may actually have been higher than before the Controlled Fishery trial was introduced.

The broad consultation indicated similar angler preference for removing the Controlled Fishery and returning to standard Designated Waters regulations. Both of these options had more support than not.

Maintaining the Controlled Fishery as it is had similar levels of support, albeit slightly less than the above two options. However, more anglers did not support this option than did support by a small margin. While the booking system provides surety that anglers know they are the only ones on the river, many find this option too restrictive as there is no flexibility. Many also find the booking system difficult and feel that those that know how to use it well have an advantage and get more bookings. This may have been true for the second season of the trial, with the reduction in the number of individual anglers successfully obtaining bookings (compared to the previous season). With the current booking system in place there is no option for restricting anglers to a maximum number of bookings per season, something that was frequently commented on. Anglers are also not able to cancel their bookings

themselves, often resulting in days being booked but not used, or not being rebooked in time by other anglers.

Removing the Controlled Fishery and returning to standard Designated Waters regulations will remove the restrictions and allow anglers much more flexibility in when they access these fisheries, especially when the weather is a limiting factor. However, this removes the opportunity for anglers to have the river for themselves and would return the risk of angler conflict.

Shifting the boundary of the Controlled Fishery to the swing bridge. Shifting the boundary would essentially create two “beats” on the river for anglers; a bookable section above the swing bridge, and an “open” section below the swing bridge to the lower Designated Waters boundary where anglers may fish without a booking. This option would allow a balance of the two options: maintaining an upper section of river for those anglers who would prefer a solitary fishing experience and have invested more time accessing the area; and an lower section for those who value flexibility, especially when considering weather conditions, which is more easily accessed. The section above the swing bridge that would remain a Controlled Fishery would still utilise the existing booking system however, so some of the same booking issues would still be prevalent, though would likely impact much fewer anglers.

This option would also allow for additional data collection to compare usage and satisfaction between the two “beats” and allow for further analysis.

b) South Branch Hurunui River

The 2024-25 Designated Waters survey indicated that estimated angler days on the South Branch Hurunui River was not statistically significant between the 2023-24 (pre-trial) and 2024-25 (first season of trial). That is, implementation of the trial Controlled Fisheries did not significantly reduce angler usage in its first season. The percentage of booked days available did not differ much between seasons (78% in 2024-25 and 76% in 2025-26), however actual usage increased from 44% to 86%, meaning angler usage in the South Branch in the 2025-26 season may actually have been much higher than before the Controlled Fishery trial was introduced.

The broad consultation indicated anglers supported returning to standard Designated Waters regulations more than any other regulatory option.

Maintaining the Controlled Fishery presents the same issues as for the North Branch above.

Removing the Controlled Fishery and returning to standard Designated Waters regulations will remove the restrictions and allow anglers much more flexibility in when they access these fisheries, especially when the weather is a limiting factor. However, this removes the opportunity for anglers to have the river for themselves and would return the risk of angler conflict.

6. Financial Considerations

☐ Nil ☒ Budgetary provision ☐ Unbudgeted

If the boundary of the controlled fishery is moved, additional signage will be required, which will come from the signage budget.

7. Risk

☒ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐ Extreme

8. Legislative Implications

Changes to Controlled Fisheries will need to be made in both the 2026 Anglers Notice and the 2026 Licence, Forms and Fees Notice, as Controlled Fishery bookings are issued as a Controlled Period Licence.

9. Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities

There are no Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities for consideration.

10. Policy Implications

There are no policy implications

11. Risks and Mitigations**i) Removal of Controlled Fisheries**

Removal of the Controlled Fisheries and returning to standard Designated Waters may result in the return of angler conflict on parts of both rivers that was previously reported. However, it was not clear how prevalent this issue was prior to the introduction of the Controlled Fishery trial. If the Controlled Fisheries are removed, staff will need to communicate heavily with licence holders, guides, and landowners to ensure respect amongst all parties, and potentially spend more time on compliance in these areas.

ii) Retention of Controlled Fisheries

Similarly, while the existing booking system is in place, anglers are likely to continue to be frustrated with the booking system itself as it is unlikely there will be any improvements to the system for the 2026-27 season. A shift to a new booking system may alleviate some of these issues but any changes such as these will need to come from the New Zealand Council level and will not be available for the coming season. Providing more areas within these fisheries that do not require a booking would provide more opportunities for anglers who are unable to secure bookings or value

flexibility around the weather, and that do not mind if there are other anglers on the water.

12. Consultation

Between 23 March – 19 April 2026, staff conducted a consultation asking Designated Waters anglers for feedback on a variety of potential changes to the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery.

Anglers were asked to rank their support for 5 possible regulatory futures for the North Branch and 4 regulatory futures for the South Branch.

On average, anglers expressed similar levels of support for maintaining the controlled fishery and for returning the area to standard Designated Waters regulations on both the North and South Branch. On the North Branch, anglers also expressed similar levels of support for shifting the boundary of the Controlled Fishery from its current location upstream to the swing bridge.

On average, anglers were opposed to conversion of the existing booking system to a ballot system and to changing the rules of the Controlled Fishery to only require a booking during peak angling months.

The full consultation summary, including more detailed information on the consultation, all submitted comments, and statements from the Guides Association and neighbouring landowners is attached.

Staff also conducted a usage survey of all booking holders throughout the season. Booking holders were contacted individually in the weeks following their booking and asked how many of their booked days they utilised and asked to provide a reason if they did not fish all of their booked days (e.g., weather).

A full usage survey summary, including more detailed information on Controlled Fishery usage and additional comments is attached.

13. Ngā mahinga e whai ake nei - Next Actions

Any changes made will need to be well communicated with licence holders, landowners, and guides. This should include targeted emails to Designated Waters licence holders, newsletters, social media, and the Fish & Game magazine, outlining the consultation and survey results, and justifications for the decision making.

14. Appendix

- a) Summary of Trial Controlled Fishery feedback presented to Council at May 2025 Council meeting**

Twenty-one submissions included feedback on the Hurunui River North and South branch Controlled Fishery. **Fourteen** submissions shared negative feedback, and **seven** shared neutral feedback.

Negative feedback was mostly centred around the system being too restrictive on anglers and reducing their opportunity to fish these waterways. Many also noted issues with the online booking system itself not being user-friendly and unfair on anglers who cannot race to get a booking at 12pm. Other negative feedback included that the Controlled Fishery favours guides; the system was unneeded as there was no issue previously; the waterways are busier now as controlled fisheries are 'advertised' more, the controlled fishery area is too large for one party, and that the system needs more compliance effort.

Neutral feedback included understanding the benefits of the system but there was need for improvements. Submitters shared some sentiments in line with negative feedback relating to issues with the booking system, enforcement, concerns about guides, and the area being too large.

Sea-Run Salmon Adaptive Management Strategy: Severe Band Management

North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting

20 May 2026

Prepared By: Emily Craig & Heather Sanders Garrick

1. Kōrero taunaki - Summary of Considerations

- a) **Kaupapa - Purpose:** To recommend to Council additional regulatory options to be implemented within the 'severe' population band of the Sea-run Salmon Adaptive Management Strategy.
- b) **Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations:**
 - i) That Council adopt the recommendation that additional regulations be incorporated into the Adaptive Management Strategy to be referred to when the combined population estimates for the three-indicator rivers are within the "severe" band (less than 1,200 fish), based on Option A presented below, including:
 - **Temporary Season Closure** of all North Canterbury sea-run salmon fisheries when the combined spawning population estimates in the Rakaia and Waimakairi rivers are below 200 fish total, which would remain in place for three consecutive seasons, after which:

If the combined estimates sit within a higher severe band tier for three consecutive seasons, that regulations follow whichever higher tier the population sits in (either Tier 1 or Tier 2) OR;

If the combined estimates sit within a higher management band (e.g., low, moderate) for three consecutive seasons (sustained population estimates in a higher management band would trigger moving to a higher season bag limit).
 - Recommendations for **additional season length regulations** on Tier 2 additional regulations be *deferred* for two seasons to allow for additional harvest data to be collected at a one fish bag limit and revisited for the 2028-29 season.

Option A:

Severe Band Management Tier	2-River Spawning Estimate	Proposed Regulations
Tier 1	400 – 800	One Fish Bag Limit
Tier 2	200 – 400	One Fish Bag Limit + Season Length Reduction: 1 February – 31 March
Tier 3	0 – 200	Temporary Season Closure

2. Whakarāpopoto - Executive Summary

During the 2024/25 sea-run salmon season, the sea-run salmon population estimates from the three indicator rivers (Rakaia, Rangitata, Waimakariri) dropped into the “severe” band of the Adaptive Management Strategy (below 1,200 salmon). This was the first time the population estimates had dropped into the severe band since the adaptive Management strategy was in place. The “+ possible season and area restrictions” provisions within the severe band had not previously been defined within the strategy.

North Canterbury (NCFG) and Central South Island (CSIFG) staff conducted a consultation with sea-run salmon licence holders and the general angling public on their preference for additional regulatory options within the severe management band.

On average, anglers expressed preference for a temporary closure of the fishery or reduced season length over other potential regulatory changes. Keeping regulations the same was least preferred option.

Due to the variations between spawning population estimates in the NCFG and CSIFG regions, consideration was also given to how the additional regulations within the severe band may be implemented. Therefore, within the severe band, regulations are proposed to be at a regional level to account for these differences.

3. Takena mai – Background

The Adaptive Management Strategy for setting Sea-run Salmon bag limit regulations¹ originally outlined how season bag limits were set based on combined escapement (spawning population) estimates from the three indicator rivers (Rakaia, Rangitata and Waimakariri rivers).

¹ Webb, M, and S. Terry. 2020. Adaptive management strategy for setting North Canterbury and Central South Island sea-run salmon fishing regulations. New Zealand Fish & Game.

Season bag limits are set based on where combined escapement sits within four different management “bands” (healthy, moderate, low and severe). The ‘severe’ management band corresponded to a season bag limit of “1 + possible season and area restrictions”. These “+ possible season and area restrictions” had not previously been defined within the strategy.

Many anglers over the past seasons had also expressed their concern for the fishery and that a closure should be implemented to allow time for the fishery to recover.

North Canterbury and Central South Island staff therefore jointly carried out a consultation exploring additional options for management within the severe band to define these additional regulations.

4. Kōrerorero – Discussion

More information on the consultation is below in section 7(f), and the consultation summary is provided as a separate document. On average, anglers expressed preference for a temporary closure of the fishery or reduced season length over other potential regulatory changes. Keeping regulations the same was least preferred option.

When considering further regulations within the severe band to further increase escapement to increase spawning numbers, inconsistencies/differences between the individual indicator rivers means that additional regulations for the individual regions may be necessary on top of the one-salmon season bag limit when individual river spawning populations are critically low.

Although the three indicator rivers generally follow the same annual trends in population change, notable annual variations are evident for the lowest count years on record and when spawning populations have dropped into their river-specific severe management band populations (see Appendix A).

If North Canterbury were to manage its rivers based on the combined escapement in the Rakaia and Waimakariri rivers (excluding the Rangitata River), the management thresholds in the Adaptive Management Strategy would need to be adjusted proportionally. The adaptive management strategy was developed based on the 1994-2020 spawning counts. Over this time period, the Rakaia and Waimakariri rivers accounted for, on average, 67.5% of the total 3-river escapement. By adjusting proportionally, we can identify region specific management thresholds (Table 1).

Table 1. Adaptive Management Strategy management bands and their corresponding spawning estimate and season bag limits

Management Band	3-River Spawning Estimate	2-River Spawning Estimate	Season Bag
Severe	Less than 1,200	Less than 800	1 (+ possible season and area restrictions)
Low	1,200 – 5,100	800 – 3,400	2
Moderate	5,100 – 7,800	3,400 – 5,300	4
Healthy	7,800 +	5,300 +	10

Using this method, the Severe Band represents approximately 20% of the long-term average of estimated spawning escapement from 1994-2020. The Adaptive Management Strategy includes provisions to implement further regulations when the spawning estimate is below the threshold of the Severe Band. As such, staff are proposing additional regulations to be introduced based on spawning estimates at approximately 10% and 5% of the long-term average.

The two following options for further regulations to be implemented within the severe band at different population “tiers” have been considered by staff:

- a) **Option A:** Includes potential to close season if combined North Canterbury salmon escapement dips below 5% of historic average

Severe Band Management Tier	2-River Spawning Estimate	Proposed Regulations
Tier 1	400 – 800	One Fish Bag Limit
Tier 2	200 – 400	One Fish Bag Limit + Season Length Reduction: 1 February – 31 March
Tier 3	0 – 200	Temporary Season Closure

Based on previous years of harvest data, reducing season length to 1 February – 31 March is estimated to reduce harvest by an average of 50%. Additionally, these season dates include the two months most commonly selected by Canterbury salmon anglers as the most important to their personal experience (Sanders Garrick 2026).

b) **Option B:** Only includes options to reduce season lengths.

Severe Band Management Tier	2-River Spawning Estimate	Proposed Regulations
Tier 1	400 – 800	One Fish Bag Limit
Tier 2	200 – 400	One Fish Bag Limit + Season Length Reduction: 1 January – 31 March
Tier 3	0 – 200	One Fish Bag Limit + Season Length Reduction: 1 February – 31 March

Based on previous years of harvest data, reducing season length to 1 January – 31 March is estimated to reduce harvest by an average of 31%, while a season of 1 February – 31 March is estimated to reduce harvest by an average of 50%. Additionally, these season dates include the three (and subsequently two) months most commonly selected by Canterbury salmon anglers as the most important to their personal experience (Sanders Garrick 2026).

5. Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga - Considerations For Decision-Making

It is imperative to remember that these recommended changes would only be applicable when the combined population estimates from the three indicator rivers sit within the severe band (less than 1,200 fish), and ontop of that, when the NCFG indicator rivers are below a certain threshold. While the population is currently within the severe management band, when considering the regions' rivers separately, only the Rangitata was within its individual severe band; the Rakaia River and Waimakariri River combined were technically in the "low band". The total for the Waimakariri and Rakaia rivers for the 2024/25 season (821 fish) was well above the threshold for potentially imposing additional Tier 2 or Tier 3 regulations (400 fish or less).

It appears that the introduction of the Adaptive Management strategy and season bag limit has been more effective in reducing the harvest proportions on the Rakaia and Waimakariri rivers, compared to the Rangitata River², therefore managing these rivers regionally at critically low levels may be more appropriate.

Also, as these regulation changes sit within the Adaptive Management Strategy, Council is still required to make recommendations to the Minister each season on whether or not to continue following the plan; henceforth these decisions will still be reviewed on a season-by-season basis.

6. Financial Considerations

² Craig, E., N. Dellaway, & H. Sanders Garrick. 2025. 2024-25 Sea-run Salmon Management: Central South Island and North Canterbury regions. North Canterbury Fish & Game.

☐ Nil ☐ Budgetary provision ☒ Unbudgeted

7. **Risk**

☐ Low ☒ Medium ☐ High ☐ Extreme

8. **Legislative Implications**

If implemented, changes to the Anglers Notice will only be required if the population estimates reach the thresholds outlined in the severe band matrix for the two North Canterbury indicator rivers (Waimakariri and Rakaia). However, these changes are part of the Adaptive Management strategy, therefore Council has the ability to decide at each regulation setting meeting whether or not this plan will be followed.

9. **Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities**

There are no Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities for consideration.

10. **Policy Implications**

There are no policy implication considerations.

11. **Risks and Mitigations**

Further regulatory options, which include reducing season length, reducing area available, 0 bag limit (catch and release) etc, all have the potential to dramatically impact the ability for salmon anglers to participate in salmon fishing and to harvest salmon. Additionally, a temporary season closure would remove access to the salmon fishery. Council must weigh up the potential, but uncertain, benefits of further regulation restrictions for sustaining spawning populations against the impacts on angler participation, satisfaction and traditions.

12. **Consultation**

Between 2 December 2025 and 31 January 2026, North Canterbury and Central South Island staff conducted a consultation asking sea-run salmon anglers and the wider angling community for feedback on a variety of potential future changes to the regulations of the sea-run salmon fishery including:

- Reducing season length

- Limiting fishing areas
- Implementing a catch-and-release fishery (0 bag limit)
- Implementing a temporary season closure
- Keeping the regulations the same

The consultation was specific to proposed regulatory changes that could be implemented within the current adaptive management strategy framework at population estimates within the “severe” management band.

Anglers were asked to rank their preference between these possible regulatory changes and indicate the most important month to their personal fishing experience (for considering season length reductions).

On average, anglers expressed preference for a temporary closure of the fishery or reduced season length over other potential regulatory changes. Keeping regulations the same was least preferred option.

Anglers ranked February as the most important month to their personal sea-run salmon fishing experience, and April was the month least frequently ranked as important.

The full consultation summary, including more detailed information on the consultation and all submitted comments is attached as a separate document.

13. Ngā mahinga e whai ake nei - Next Actions

If Council decides to implement any of these options within the severe band, these changes will need to be reflected in an updated Adaptive Management Strategy, which will be completed jointly with Central South Island region staff.

14. Appendix

- a) Table of spawning population estimates 1993-2025 across the three indicator rivers used in the Adaptive Management Strategy for setting sea-run salmon bag limits. The *denotes the lowest count on record and counts highlighted in red denote populations within the severe spawning band for each individual river, being 250 for the Waimakariri, 550 for Rakaia and 400 for the Rangitata.

Season	Wild Spawners			
	Waimakariri	Rakaia	Rangitata	Total
93/94	1,418	13,586	6,077	21,081
94/95	3,637	9,810	3,941	17,388
95/96	5,845	15,262	8,352	29,459
96/97	3,651	11,833	7,467	22,951
97/98	2,308	4,196	2,870	9,374
98/99	1,718	4,401	3,236	9,355
99/00	555	2,204	1,686	4,445
00/01	252	855	497	1,604
01/02	1,511	2,280	597	4,388
02/03	1,007	1,472	659	3,138
03/04	1,417	3,204	1,876	6,497
04/05	2,488	2,152	1,135	5,775
05/06	489	1,123	512	2,214
06/07	2,384	2,673	2,062	7,119
07/08	3,105	4,313	3,690	11,108
08/09	1,117	3,945	2,714	7,776
09/10	1,408	1,817	901	4,126
10/11	1,610	1,538	905	4,053
11/12	1,107	2,813	1,610	5,530
12/13	1,457	1,430	3,042	5,929
13/14	858	1,366	1,283	3,507
14/15	859	2,140	1,666	4,665
15/16	743	1,015	1,055	2,813
16/17	741	837	545	2,123
17/18	344	537*	573	1,454
18/19	312	619	403	1,334
19/20	456	734	437	1,627
20/21	316	711	397	1,424
21/22	548	3,217	1,823	5,588
22/23	671	1,332	552	2,555
23/24	327	878	247	1,452
24/25	213*	608	80*	901*

Sea-Run Salmon Bag Limit Recommendation for 2026/2027 Anglers Notice Review

North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting - 20th May 2026

Prepared By: Staff

1. Kōrero taunaki - Summary of Considerations

a) Kaupapa - Purpose

Inform Council on the North Canterbury (NCFG) and Central South Island (CSIFG) regions joint sea-run salmon season bag limit recommendation for the annual 2026/27 Anglers Notice review.

b) Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations

1. That the sea-run salmon season bag limit for 2026/27 for the CSIFG and NCFG Regions complies with the Threshold Management Strategy and be based on the final estimates of the combined Waimakariri, Rakaia and Rangitata rivers sea-run salmon spawning population size available no later than 23 June 2026, as follows:
 - I. Combined spawning population size of less than 1,200 fish – retain 1 fish season bag limit.
 - II. Combined spawning population size between 1,200 and 5,100 fish – retain 1 fish season bag limit. The management strategy requires the spawning population to remain in a higher band for a minimum of three years before the season bag is changed to allow for increased harvest.

2. Takenga mai – Background

- I. The current condition for 2025/26 is –
Sea-run salmon season bag limit of 1 fish across CSIFG and NCFG regions subject to “severe” spawning populations management threshold.
- II. At their respective May 2021 Council meetings, the CSIFG and NCFG Councils received a joint staff report recommending introduction of a season bag limit for sea-run salmon (see Appendix 1 & 2). The report recommended the season bag limit be set at two fish for the 2021/22 season and provided the justification for this through application of a Threshold Management Strategy to a salmon population model developed from the previous 25 years of spawning population size estimates.

- III. In May 2021 the CSIFG and NCFG Councils resolved –
 - a. That CSIFG Council and NCFG Council adopt the sea-run salmon population model that combines salmon populations for the Waimakariri, Rakaia and Rangitata rivers as one harvest management unit and applies the harvest management scenario that has 5%, 20% and 40% harvest reduction targets and season bag limits for healthy, moderate and low spawning population management bands, respectively.
- IV. The spawning population estimates are calculated using Area Under the Curve (AUC) methodology, which requires up to five aerial surveys of live spawners in key spawning streams for each river. It also identifies both the duration and peak of spawning from a chart of the individual live fish counts over time.

3. Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga - Considerations For Decision-Making

- I. As of 13 May 2026, two aerial surveys have been completed in the Rangitata River, three in the Rakaia River, and two in the Waimakariri River.
- II. Two aerial counts of Mellish Stream/Lake Heron have been completed by CSIFG staff in conjunction with Rangitata River surveys. However, this data contributes towards the total Rakaia River estimate.
- III. From these surveys, an estimated provisional total of **1,655** sea-run salmon will have had spawned in the Waimakariri, Rakaia and Rangitata rivers (Table 1).
- IV. This estimate would correspond to the low spawning population management band of less than 5,100 fish.
- V. However, at this stage, a change to the season bag limit would not be justified. The sea-run salmon season bag limit would remain at one fish across the CSIFG and NCFG regions.
- VI. On 13 May 2026, all rivers have counts yet to be carried out, therefore salmon spawning population counts are provisional at this stage.
- VII. On the completion of aerial surveys, final population estimates will be made using AUC. We expect these estimates to be within the low management band.
- VIII. Recommendations have been provided to Councils covering multiple possible final spawning population estimates. These recommendations enable staff to make recommendations to NZFG within deadlines and with respective Regional Council approval.

4. Financial Considerations

☒ Nil ☐ Budgetary provision ☐ Unbudgeted

5. Risk

☒ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐ Extreme

6. Consultation

Table 1. Estimated annual wild sea-run salmon spawning population sizes for the Waimakariri, Rakaia and Rangitata rivers and total spawning, harvest and run size for the rivers combined, 1993/94 to 2025/26. Total confirmed spawning estimates for 2025/26 are not currently available with figures provided predicted from incomplete surveys (*).

Season	Wild Spawners			
	Waimakariri	Rakaia	Rangitata	Total
93/94	1,418	13,586	6,077	21,081
94/95	3,637	9,810	3,941	17,388
95/96	5,845	15,262	8,352	29,459
96/97	3,651	11,833	7,467	22,951
97/98	2,308	4,196	2,870	9,374
98/99	1,718	4,401	3,236	9,355
99/00	555	2,204	1,686	4,445
00/01	252	855	497	1,604
01/02	1,511	2,280	597	4,388
02/03	1,007	1,472	659	3,138
03/04	1,417	3,204	1,876	6,497
04/05	2,488	2,152	1,135	5,775
05/06	489	1,123	512	2,214
06/07	2,384	2,673	2,062	7,119
07/08	3,105	4,313	3,690	11,108
08/09	1,117	3,945	2,714	7,776
09/10	1,408	1,817	901	4,126
10/11	1,610	1,538	905	4,053
11/12	1,107	2,813	1,610	5,530
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16/17	741	837	545	2,123
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21/22	548	3,217	1,823	5,588
22/23	671	1,332	552	2,555
23/24	327	878	247	1,452

24/25	213	608	79	900
25/26	*114	*416	*215	*1655

Refer to *Sea Run Salmon Bag Recommendation from Cawthron Appendix to Paper* for supporting letter.



Planning Report

Communications & Engagement Strategy

2026-2028

North Canterbury Fish & Game

Jackson Meecham Field Officer & Communications Specialist

DRAFT



Background

North Canterbury Fish & Game (NCF&G) manages, maintains and enhances sports fish and game birds and their habitats in the best long-term interests of present and future generations of anglers and hunters within the North Canterbury region.

We are a not-for-profit organisation with formal statutory powers and are funded by any New Zealander who buys a fishing or hunting licence, as well as non-residents who do the same. It is run by a council elected by licence holders. Licence fees cover the management of the fish and game resource in the following areas:

- Species Management
- Habitat Protection
- Access and Participation
- Public Awareness
- Compliance
- Licensing
- Council
- Coordination and planning

Fish & Game currently operates under the Conservation Act. It has a regional presence through 12 regional councils and a national office.

New Zealand Fish & Game Communication & Engagement Strategy Extract

The following section is extracted directly from the Communication & Engagement Strategy from the New Zealand Fish & Game Council.

Challenges

As New Zealand society evolves and changes, Fish & Game must evolve to keep in step and maintain its public endorsement, also known as ‘social licence to operate’.

Societal trends include:

1. The increasing focus on protecting New Zealand’s indigenous species is changing views on some managed species, such as trout, and increasing concerns about introduced species’ perceived impact on indigenous species.



2. Increasing attention to the sentience of animals, reflected in trends across animal welfare and dietary choices, which is impacting support among some New Zealanders for hunting and fishing.
3. Increasing expectations that organisations will move towards bi-culturalism, working in genuine partnership between Māori and non-Māori and incorporating Māori culture and language.
4. Fish & Game New Zealand maintains a complex relationship with the rural sector. Conflicts often arise due to differing interests in land and water use. Farmers and landowners may control access to rivers and lakes, leading to disputes over access restrictions. Additionally, in some cases, the rural sector's agricultural practices can impact water quality and habitats, causing conflicts over environmental conservation goals.
5. Access challenges: many rivers and lakes are bordered by private land and ensuring public access through private property can be a significant challenge. As New Zealand's population grows, there's also increased pressure on water bodies due to urbanization and development. Fish & Game must navigate these challenges with a combination of advocacy, education, conservation efforts, and collaboration with government agencies, private landowners, and the public to achieve their mission of preserving and enhancing access to rivers and lakes for recreational purposes while protecting these natural resources.

As it evolves, Fish & Game faces a challenge to retain, recruit and reactivate licence holders (or members), particularly those who participate in their formative years and then exit.

The organisation is also facing significant and far-reaching changes to the legislative framework it operates within, including to the Conservation Act which currently provides Fish & Game's statutory mandate, as well as the Wildlife Act and the Resource Management Act.

A review commissioned by the Minister of Conservation in 2021 found Fish & Game plays an important role in environmental advocacy and stewardship. It also identified opportunities to strengthen governance and management good practices.

As an organization, Fish & Game must also work hard to ensure it is effectively connected internally, both between regional councils, and with the national council.



National Strategy 2023-2028

New Zealand Fish & Game has developed a strategy for 2023-2028 (refer Organisational Strategy).

The vision is:

A New Zealand where freshwater habitats and species flourish, where hunting and fishing traditions thrive and all Kiwis enjoy access to sustainable wild fish and game.

The strategy is intended to provide a strengthened, fit-for-purpose organisation, more connected with stakeholders and mana whenua, to protect and enhance freshwater fish and game, their habitats and the values precious to all New Zealanders.

It sets out five strategic priorities, or objectives, where the organisation will focus its efforts.

1. Unified and enduring organisation

A national and regionally cohesive organisation built on a culture of shared values, trust and engagement. Delivering on vision and purpose for stakeholders and mana whenua. Maintaining the statutory mandates that enable effective service delivery.

2. Attract and retain licence holders

Deliver well valued and cost-effective experience for licence holders by understanding their needs, providing simple and effective communication, making fishing and game bird hunting more attractive to a wider group of future participants

3. Mana whenua connected

Māori values are understood and reflected within Fish & Game with aligned advocacy and a positive collaborative approach that builds upon Te Tiriti obligations defined in the Conservation Act

4. Public perception and legitimacy



Understanding and reshaping public perception of Fish & Game New Zealand, angling and game bird hunting through positive messaging of natural environment protection, wild food harvesting and wellbeing through outdoor recreation.

5. Healthy habitats and ecosystems

Sport fish and game bird habitats are healthy. Species are monitored and maintained, and sustainable wild harvest opportunities are secured for future generations.

Extract from the Communication & Engagement Strategy from the New Zealand Fish & Game Council ends.

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North Canterbury's Strategy 2026-2028

The communications and engagement goal for North Canterbury to support the National Strategy and strategic priorities set out by the North Canterbury Fish and Game Council is:

Build strong support for Fish & Game across North Canterbury and beyond by clearly showcasing our vital role in protecting, restoring, and rewilding freshwater habitats and species. This will be driven by transparent staff work, credible research, and engaging, audience-focused storytelling that inspires understanding and action.

Communicating and engaging with Cantabrians and New Zealanders is central to the strategic priorities set out by the North Canterbury Fish and Game Council for the 2025-26 financial year specifically priority six which states *'Staff are tasked to develop a written regional communication plan. While this is a continuing challenge the Council considers that the organisation could and should be more active in communicating with licence holders (particularly via social media) to ensure they have an accurate understanding of NCFGC's activities and the research and policies on which its activities are based.'*

~Key Areas~

Environmental Guardian

Approximately 40% of the North Canterbury annual budget is allocated to species and habitat protection.

Recent research shows that the aspects of F&G's work that relate to protecting and enhancing the environment appeal to New Zealanders the most.¹

There is a long record of regional and national achievements in protecting and enhancing the environment over the past decade, in particular:

- The creation, restoration and protection of wetlands, specifically in North Canterbury, the McIntyre/Glenariffe Wetland.
- The establishment of Water Conservation Orders recognising and protecting outstanding values.
- RMA cases won and challenged, including the establishment of strong environmental bottom lines.



- Vegetation planted, including riparian and wetlands.
- Research underpinning species management and protection.
- Flow-on benefits to native species, including species Fish & Game is not directly responsible for.

Our North Canterbury strategy draws on the research findings that a useful way to position Fish & Game positively among the wider New Zealand public is to promote the environmental roles of the organisation, particularly around protecting and enhancing the environment and improving water quality and species health.

Current Public Perceptions

New Zealanders value the environment and outdoor recreation.

For example, research for the Department of Conservation showed that the majority of survey respondents (84%) felt that access to the outdoors was a major advantage of living in New Zealand.²

In line with these values, research for Fish & Game by Primary Purpose found the Fish & Game New Zealand functions that appeal most to New Zealanders relate to protecting and enhancing the environment.

Less than half (42%) of New Zealanders knew of Fish & Game (either ‘a lot’ or ‘a little bit’).¹

The researchers found that New Zealanders thought these two ‘functions’ were most important:

- ‘Protecting riverbanks and waterways’ (79% important)¹
- ‘Monitoring and researching the natural environment to help improve freshwater health and species health’. (78% important)¹

Participation rates in fishing and game bird hunting are low for the general population in New Zealand; however, they are relatively higher among Māori and younger.

- Freshwater fishing at least once a year - Overall 16 %; Māori 27%; Under 30-year-olds 25 %.¹
- Game bird hunting at least once a year - Overall 7 %; Māori 12%; Under 30-year-olds 14 %.¹

New Zealanders are much more likely to consider that freshwater fishing is an important activity to promote and protect in New Zealand than they are for game-bird hunting.¹



Half of New Zealanders (51 %) believe it is important to protect and promote freshwater fishing, while a third (34 %) believe the same for gamebird hunting.¹

Given the greater warmth New Zealanders expressed towards freshwater fishing compared to game-bird hunting, communications will focus more on fishing. When talking about freshwater fishing, there are benefits to using the messages that fishing is:

- A great way to help some families put food on their tables
- An activity for all kinds of people
- A good activity to do together with family and friends
- Good for improving mental and physical health.

Fishing – licence usage and attitude

- A small majority of anglers (51%) indicated their fishing frequency as once a month or more.¹
- The majority (89%) of respondents indicated that they purchase full-season licences.¹
- The majority (65%) consider the licence cost to be reasonable or low.¹
- Many anglers (52%) indicate they intend to fish more in the coming years.¹
- Fishing licence holder attitude towards licence pricing is fairly evenly split 54% about right, 34% too expensive and 11% willing to pay a bit more.¹

Overall, there is no indication from current or previous licence holders that support for and participation in fishing is likely to decrease.

Game bird hunting – motivations, values and frequency

Game bird hunting licence holders were asked to identify their response to key motivations, and values for hunting.

The top three were:

1. 'An important part of New Zealand's outdoor heritage' (71%)¹
2. 'A good activity to do with family and friends' (68%)¹
3. 'Good for improving, mental and physical health' (63%)¹

The bottom three were:



1. 'Making a positive impact on local communities and economies' (50%)¹
2. 'An activity for all kinds of people' (50%)¹
3. 'An accessible and relatively inexpensive sport' (32%)¹

There is less positive agreement for hunting values and motivations than observed by fishing licence holders. Men were more likely to agree with suggested values and motivations for hunting than women. Those hunting licence holders living in rural areas were more likely to agree with the motivations and values than those in metropolitan areas.

- Men under 35 years were more likely to have purchased a hunting licence in the last two years (53%).¹
- Hunting licence holder attitude towards licence pricing is fairly evenly split with 45% feeling pricing is about right, 47% feeling it is too expensive and 6% willing to pay a bit more.¹
- 58% of respondents overall indicated they hunted once a month or more during the season.¹
- The great majority of hunters anticipate that they will do the same or more game bird hunting over the next few years (93%).¹

Our Audiences

Understanding our audiences is important as recognising that messages and channels will be different for each group.

- F&G councillors, volunteers and staff nationwide
- Existing Licence Holders
- Future Licence Holders
- Lapsed Licence Holders
- The 'Un-engaged' - urban Kiwis who may be indifferent to hunting and fishing
- The "Lightly-engaged" - Kiwis who value 'the great outdoors', from existing participants in hunting and fishing to those who enjoy outdoor activities a few times a year
- Māori
- Rural and regional New Zealanders
- Overseas Tourists
- Conservationists



- Wild food harvesters
- Women - recent research by Fish & Game demonstrates an increasing trend in the number of female anglers³
- Hunting & Angling Influencers
- Journalists and media – Māori, regional, rural, outdoors
- Relevant social media influencers
- Fishing guides
- Soldiers, Sailors Aviators Association of NZ
- Casting for Recovery
- Woman on the Fly
- Reel for Recovery
- Māori organisations at a national and regional level
- Environmental Defence Society (EDS)
- Forest and Bird
- Greenpeace
- Save Animals from Exploitation (SAFE)
- Game Animal Council
- NZ Deerstalkers Association
- Mountain Safety Council
- Federated Mountain Clubs
- Retailers including Hunting & Fishing and Gun City
- DairyNZ
- Beef + Lamb NZ
- Federated Farmers
- NZ Landcare Trust
- Rural support trust
- Catchment groups
- Local communities
- Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research
- Earth Science New Zealand (previously NIWA)
- Regional Councils (Environment Canterbury), LGNZ and Taituara
- Department of Conservation
- Ministry for the Environment
- LINZ
- Outdoors Access Commission
- Ministry for Primary Industries
- Ministers for Conservation, Environment, Agriculture



- Environment Select Committee
- NZ Hunter
- Rod and Rifle
- Trout Fisher
- Aussie Fly Life
- Hunting Aotearoa

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Audience Analysis

Audience	What we want them to think	What we want them to feel	What we want them to do
Internal	I can help tell NCF&G's story	Enthusiastic to talk about NCF&G	Contribute story ideas for the campaign. Share campaign materials and articles. Keep talking to people about NCF&G.
Unengaged public	I understand and respect NCF&G and people involved in hunting and fishing	Neutral to supportive - hunting and fishing are acceptable and a positive way to obtain food and connect with nature	Take up hunting or fishing when an opportunity arises Speak up positively when confronted with negative opinions
Lightly engaged public	It's important to stick up for the things that matter to me NCF&G does a good job on speaking up and acting on the things that matter to me	Supportive Willing to get actively involved	Take part in NCF&G activities Go hunting and fishing (and take their children) Get a licence (or renew) Speak up positively when confronted with negative opinions
Licence holders	NCF&G does a good job on things that matter	Supportive Willing to get actively involved	Renew licences Encourage others to go hunting and fishing/get a licence/support NCF&G Speak up positively when confronted with negative opinions
Lapsed licence holders	NCF&G does a good job and deserves my support	Supportive Willing to get actively involved	Get a new licence Encourage others to go hunting and fishing/get a licence/support NCF&G
Influencers	I can work with NCF&G because they do a good job on things that matter	NCF&G deserves my support and endorsement Willing to get actively involved	Share stories, campaign materials Proactively endorse NCF&G Speak up positively when confronted with negative opinions



Audience	What we want them to think	What we want them to feel	What we want them to do
Māori organisations	NCF&G is working to be a good partner, it demonstrates it understands and reflects Māori values	We can work with NCF&G	Collaborate in identifying story ideas and telling stories that resonate with Māori Share campaign materials Speak up positively when confronted with negative opinions
Outdoors organisations	NCF&G does a good job on things that matter to the people we work for/represent	We can work with NCF&G because we want the same things	Share campaign materials Collaborate on important policy issues
Regional and rural organisations	NCF&G does a good job on things that matter to the people we work for/represent	We can work with NCF&G in areas where we agree	Share campaign materials Support NCF&G's position on important policy issues where relevant
Environmental research sector	NCF&G is a credible science-based organisation that's doing a good job	We can rely on NCF&G information and data We can work together	Endorse NCF&G where relevant
Regional councils, LGNZ and Te Uru Kahika	NCF&G is a credible science-based organisation that's doing a good job	We can rely on NCF&G information and data We can work together	Share campaign materials via their channels where appropriate Take on board NCF&G submissions, comments etc (consider respectfully and fully)
Central Government agencies (Conservation, Environment, MPI)	NCF&G is a credible science-based organisation that's doing a good job It fills an important niche in the environmental management system	There's a role for NCF&G We can work together	Take on board NCF&G submissions, comments etc (consider respectfully and fully)
Elected representatives	NCF&G is a credible science-based organisation that's doing a good job	NCF&G has a lot of public support so I should take it seriously	Take on board NCF&G submissions, comments etc (consider respectfully and fully)



Communication Programs

Choosing the best program to reach target audiences for each phase of the integrated communication will be important to achieve maximum impact.

Channel	Description	Target Audience	Delivery	Frequency	Responsibility	Notes
NC Region specific	Weekly fishing reports	Licence holders, subscribers, potential licence holders	Electronic email and Facebook	Weekly/Bi-Weekly	Regional staff	Work to have a cohesive report (see weekly report document)
NC Region specific	Bi-Weekly hunting report	Licence holders, Subscribers, potential licence holders	Electronic email and Facebook	Bi-Weekly (each two weeks)	Regional Staff	
F&G Magazine	Hardcopy magazine. Feature articles from regional staff (apply to have these each year) Regional section (normally three pages)	Previous season licence holders (AWS); libraries, schools, strategic allies and Parliament.	Mailed to individual licence holders. Formatted as 100-page A4 perfect-bound document.	Fish issue in August. Hunt issue in March.	Regional staff supply material for supplements.	



Channel	Description	Target Audience	Delivery	Frequency	Responsibility	Notes
Fish & Game Website	Website that is all of FGNZ. Outlines what FGNZ is and what it does. Content centres regional access to the resources and news from NZC office.	Members, non-members, strategic allies and media. Governors and staff. Public	Web-based.	Updated as and when required by NZC and regional staff.	NZC comms staff and regional staff.	Continue to adapt and improve NC sections
Reel Life and Both Barrels	Electronic e-zines with links to national news and regional content and columns, hosted on FGNZ website.	All Licence holders, some people opt-out	Via email. Displayed in preview-pane with abridged text and clickable links to full content hosted on respective webpages.	Monthly	NZC comms staff and regionals staff.	Make sure NC section is well done each month and interesting
Facebook	Main social media channel for NCFG. News, sharing info to and from related organisations or strategic allies that is of interest to licence holders.	Licence holders and non-followers interested in NCFG activity.	Facebook feed, summaries with clickable links to external websites. Videos	Post where needed and required (follow socials calendar)	Admins for regional pages, Jackson primarily but also Emily, Matt, Richie.	Provide valuable updates and content for followers



Channel	Description	Target Audience	Delivery	Frequency	Responsibility	Notes
Instagram	Social media channel for posting images and videos specifically	Licence holders, regional staff and governors. Lapsed.	Instagram posts, summaries of work, great photos, interesting videos	Post where needed and required (follow socials calendar)	Jackson	This is overlooked and a great way to reach younger audience (basically a chance to sell the beauty of our work)
Public interface	Attending club meetings, competitions, fishing clinics, compliance.	Affiliated clubs, licence holders, public.	Attend events in person and talk about NCF&G work. Run events and talk to angler on the ground	As requested/invited by clubs, seasonally scheduled competitions (develop them further), surveys, fishing clinics, and ranging.	Staff, councillors and volunteers.	
External media	NCFG content in fishing and hunting media.	Affiliated clubs. Fishing and hunting media including TV and print. Lapsed.	NZ and local news papers. TV And more...	Varied	Regional staff.	
Internal rangers' newsletter	Direct internal email correspondence.	Volunteers	Email	Monthly	Regional staff.	
Regional Info brochures and documents	Information pamphlets on access or available resources etc. Sometimes use position statements.	Licence holders, current and lapsed. public	Hardcopy? Online	In stores is hard copy, NCFG office	Regional staff.	



Channel	Description	Target Audience	Delivery	Frequency	Responsibility	Notes
Meeting Agendas and Minutes	Agendas and detailed minutes updated and made public in a timely manner to encourage engagement	Governors and staff, licence holders and members of the public.	Online published.	In advance of each meeting. Once minutes have been approved	Managers, regional staff and council	
Surveys	Online, in person and direct-call surveys,	Licence holders	SurveyMon key, direct calling, face-to-face	When needed	Regional staff , contracted staff	

Overall approach

The C&E strategy is to get more Cantabrians and New Zealanders talking about North Canterbury Fish & Game's role in protecting and enhancing the healthy natural environment they value and access for outdoor recreation including wild food harvesting.

The intent of connecting more New Zealanders to this story is to drive awareness, understanding and action in support of North Canterbury Fish & Game.

Driving this shift requires:

- communicating compelling and coherent messages to target audiences multiple times through multiple channels (repetition is key)
- communicating in a positive and proactive way

This strategy, especially surrounding social media, provides a framework to align our communications. Collaborating with third-party influencers will help amplify messages about the value to the community of the environmental contribution of hunters and anglers.

There is an overview of the campaign and more detailed supporting information on the following pages.



COMMUNICATION PILLARS (2026–2028)

Environmental Advocacy & Education

- Highlight work such as planting, species management as well as works in the region which relate to our objectives.
- Promote McIntyre/Glenariffe Wetlands and any subsequent wetlands/planning areas.
- Provide anglers with valuable tools to enhance and educate them when looking to hunt or fish in North Canterbury.

Wild Kai & Outdoor Traditions

- Showcase intergenerational hunting/fishing, wild kai recipes, youth-first stories.
- Monthly social media themes (season dependent)
- Integrate Te Reo Māori into our posting, staff emails, newsletters where possible.

Access & Participation

- Campaigns around regional projects, public access to locations, and increased with updated signage.
- Have clear regional maps for key locations which highlight access. Have tip/guides for these areas also to enable greater success with novice anglers.
- Local fishing spot guides and access maps online (developed better via a national project).
- Provide waypoint data to popular website and app providers.

Restoration, Prevention & Risk Communication

- Youth-focused explainer videos.
- Pamphlets and signage campaigns integrated with events.
- Proactive resharing and/or notification of information from other entities with things that could affect hunters and anglers in our region.



SMART OBJECTIVES (2026–2027)

Goal Area	SMART Objective
Engagement	Increase average monthly social media engagement (likes, shares, comments, and clicks) by 20% across Facebook and Instagram compared to the 2024 baseline, by August 31st, 2026 .
Licence Retention	Maintain at least 85% retention of North Canterbury fishing licence holders from the 2024/25 to the 2025/26 season, as measured by Fish & Game licencing data by August 31st, 2026 .
Youth Involvement	Increase the number of under-25 fishing licence sales in North Canterbury by 10% compared to 2024/25 figures, by August 31st, 2026 .
Stakeholder Activation	Identify, brief, and collaborate with at least 5 regional influencers (e.g., anglers, hunters, or outdoor content creators) to promote North Canterbury Fish & Game work or activity in the region by August 31st, 2026 .
Volunteer Engagement	Recruit and onboard 20 new volunteers (nursery and honorary rangers combined) to assist with events, ranger activity, or habitat projects across North Canterbury by August 31st, 2026 , and retain at least 50% for follow-up opportunities.

Smart objectives should be reviewed and reworked annually based upon the success of the previous season.



MONTHLY COMMUNICATION THEMES

Each month will have a different focus that is aligned with seasonal opportunities and license-holder interests. These themes guide Facebook content, email topics, event alignment, and media outreach.

Month	Theme	Focus Examples
September	Late winter fishing and preparations for next season	Gear prep for new season, licence renewal, cold-weather fishing tips
October	Opening Month for fishing season	Opening day/weekend get out there, trout season stories, public figure spotlight early season, live updates, fishing reports begin.
November	Fishing season early stages typically high flows in rivers, High Country Lakes Opening	Understanding flows and how weather can impact your fishing, high country opening promotion.
December	Summer Angling, Holiday season begins, family fishing	Safety tips (lake and river safety), wild kai content (maybe run a comp throughout the summer with a prize), holiday fishing, Christmas/new year themed content.
January	Holiday and Summer Fishing Continues, Salmon begin turning up	Recipes, food gathering, family food traditions, salmon content, family fishing options, sunprotection/looking after yourself
February	Summer Game Bird season Kicks off, Salmon fishing fullswing, summer angling opportunities continue, first public holidays of the year	Mallard Weekends and Paridice Shelduck period for game bird hunters, salmon content, Rakaia Fishing Comp weekend happens, historically lower flows during this time of year.
March	Some water ways begin to close, summer angling begins to end as days get shorter and temps begin to drop	Last chance to fish some locations, Change up gear as seasons change, introduce a friend to fishing opportunity's, landowner respect to enable future benefits, many peoples last time fishing as have other prioritys during winter.
April	Duck Culture as season is not far away. Final month of fishing for most rivers and some lakes.	Ethics, family, heritage around game bird season, getting prepared for game bird opening. Final chance to fish most waterways that don't remain open in winter. Fishing Report end EOM
May	Season Opens for game birds and spawning monitoring in full swing	Live updates opening weekend if possible, daily photos near beginning of season, hunting community stories, Hunting Report Begins
June	Game bird hunting begins to get good, Winter opportunities fishing	Great game bird opportunities still, winter fishing begins to kick off
July	Trying something new game bird hunters or anglers	Upland game hunting, lake jigging or night fishing



August	Begin to reset final stages of 25/26 season, final month of game bird season	Preparation for next season, some birds still huntable, high-country lakes fishable. Fitness preparation for next season for those that have had time off fishing, Annual reporting/AGM
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SOCIAL MEDIA FORMAT GUIDE

Facebook remains our primary communications platform at this point in time. With Instagram and YouTube being our regional secondary sources. With YouTube content we post on the Fish & Game NZ page, this is to keep all Fish & Game content streamlined. Generally, there should be some form of content posted between 1–4 times per week, depending on seasonal activity. Posted content can range from informational videos, facts, data posts, survey notifications, nice/inspiring photos, discussion points for our community and more.

Format	Frequency	Purpose	Content Examples
Photos	Weekly	Showcase real people and places. Reinforce authenticity and community pride. Show what staff have been doing.	Youth anglers, staff in action, wetlands, regions beauty, good catches, etc.
Educational posts/discussion point posts	As Needed	Promote responsible behaviour and habitat awareness. Information provided to hunters/anglers	Habitat tips, regulation reminders, best practices, salmon updates, compliance updates, etc.
Bi-Weekly Hunting/Fishing Reports	Bi-Weekly	Provide timely, trusted field updates to support licence holder engagement	Written reports, Video Reports
Video/reel/mini movies	When available	Drive engagement and reach through dynamic, shareable content.	Soft bait tutorials, wild kai prep, fishing or hunting tips/how-tos, wader safety, staff works, personal spotlights of people, etc.
Partner tags/reposts	As needed	Amplify shared messages, keep anglers informed and build goodwill with allies.	Local tackle shops, influencers, clubs, landowners, conservation groups, minister, regional council posts, etc.
Story/highlight series	Seasonally/when needed/drive additional engagement	Drive interest around events, milestones, or themed campaigns.	Opening day hype, TAKF wrap-ups, habitat work, licence reminders, further method to share



			important info on multiple channels.
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Posting Style Guide

- Voice: Friendly, informative, regional, outdoorsy. Avoid jargon unless it is explained or well known to our audience.
- Tone: Community-focused, positive, practical, science/statistic driven.
- Font: Poppins (follow National style guide)
- Hashtags: Use relevant tags (mainly Instagram) such as #NZFishing, #NorthCanterbury, #WildKai, #TAKF, and seasonal tags.
- Photo/Video Quality: Aim for natural light, recognisable locations (where possible), and non-staged action when possible. Horizontal/landscape preferred unless creating reels.



INFLUENCER & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT 2026-2028

Purpose

Strengthen relationships with key public-facing individuals, organisations, and media to:

- Promote positive hunting and fishing narratives
- Drive licence uptake and retention
- Increase public awareness of North Canterbury Fish & Game's role
- Leverage shared audiences and trust

Target Stakeholder Groups

Local Retailers & Suppliers

- Gun City, Hunting & Fishing, local tackle shops, local or international sports shops

Role: Retail amplification, in-store signage, social media cross-promotion, collaboration

Niche Community Groups

- Women on the Fly, Fly Ferns, Reel Recovery, local fishing clubs, NZ Salmon Anglers Association, fishing guides

Role: Inclusive storytelling, mentorship content, peer-to-peer visibility

Media Partners

- Rod & Rifle, NZ Hunter, The Press, Stuff, Radio NZ, rural papers, NZH

Role: Reach broad and specialised audiences through media

Public Sector & Youth Engagement

- Environment Canterbury, Christchurch City Council, Scouts, schools, youth organisations

Role: Partnership on access, education days, conservation awareness



Engagement Tactics

Tactic	Description	Timing
Co-hosted Events	Invite stakeholders to attend or co-host events like High-Country Opening Day, TAKF, or planting efforts.	As available
Community Corner Series	Guest-written or recorded stories from stakeholders sharing their personal outdoor journey.	Quarterly/ as available
Partner Toolkits	Provide posters, infographics, sample captions, images, and FAQs to make it easy for partners to promote NC F&G.	When trust is built with stakeholders
Content Co-reporting	Collaborate on bi-weekly reports and end of season wrap-ups reports featuring stakeholder voices or data (e.g. TAKF, Opening Day)	All year/ as available
Influencer Ride-along Days	Staff have content creators or journos accompany on fishing/hunting trips, ranging trips, or other field work for in-field storytelling. E.g. fish surveys	As available
Stakeholder Shoutouts	Feature key partners on social media and in newsletters to strengthen recognition and alignment.	Ongoing/ as available
Seasonal “Amplify Packs”	Resource bundle for partners with pre-made content to share (e.g., licence launch, reminders, submissions on regs).	Before licence sales drop, or other important times

Success Measures (by August 31st, 2027)

1. Minimum 5 influencers or organisations actively engaged/involved
2. At least 2 co-hosted or partner-involved events or campaigns
3. 5+ pieces of third-party content generated (blogs, videos, features)
4. Stakeholders share NC F&G materials at least 10 times on their channels



EMERGENCY COMMS PLAN

This plan enables rapid, coordinated responses to reputational risks. This plan depends on staff availability to work outside of normal business hours.

A.A.R.R Step-by-Step Framework

Step 1: Acknowledge (within 1–4 hrs)

- Acknowledge any high-profile issue publicly, if required, typically via Facebook or to the media if approached.
- Notify relevant internal staff immediately.

Step 2: Assess (within 4–8 hrs)

- Collect facts: what happened, where, and who is affected?
- Decide if a public statement is necessary.
- Draft holding response.

Step 3: Respond (within 12–24 hrs)

- Publish a factual, calm response aligned with F&G values.
- Use Facebook as the primary channel, website as support.
- Determine which staff member will serve as Comms Lead based on the needs of the specific situation and notify relevant internal staff immediately.

Step 4: Reinforce (post-incident)

- Share follow-up or positive updates if appropriate.
- Debrief internally and update relevant internal documents or prepare/organise training where needed.

Common Scenarios & Default Responses

Issue Type	Action
Staff/council/regional misstep	"We are reviewing '...' and will provide an update shortly."
Social Media post/commenting backlash	"Thanks for your feedback, ..."
Environmental concern	"We take this seriously and are working with partners..."
Access dispute	"We support responsible access and are in touch with the parties involved..."



Fishing & Hunting Report Guides

The Fishing and Hunting Reports are a cornerstone of our communications, delivering timely, high-value information to anglers and hunters across the region. Distributed via targeted email mailing lists, these reports are designed to keep licence holders informed, engaged, and connected both to Fish & Game's work and to opportunities in the field.

Reports are now issued on a bi-weekly basis, rather than weekly as in previous years. This change allows us to deliver content that is more detailed, relevant, and informative, while avoiding repetition. In the alternate weeks where no written report is released, we provide a video update. These videos may include gear tips, work programme updates, or practical fishing and hunting advice, ensuring regular and varied engagement with our audience.

Our current mailing lists include approximately 34,000 fishing subscribers and 2,600 hunting subscribers, with the Hunting Report first introduced in 2025.

Each Fishing and Hunting Report is structured to consistently include:

- A main feature article
- A recap of the previous fortnight and outlook for the weeks ahead
- Regulations, survey results, and compliance updates
- Community Corner contributions from anglers, hunters, or Fish & Game staff, sharing recent experiences, tips, or advice
- A Notice Board section covering general updates, upcoming events, and notifications of works by Fish & Game or partner organisations and councils
- Weather and river flow updates
- Relevant national news

Delivering these reports directly to the inboxes of anglers and hunters remains a vital communication tool. They represent our most direct and consistent connection with licence holders and play a key role in building trust, credibility, and ongoing engagement. The information provided is intended to be practical, positive, and genuinely useful. Recent improvements in the quality and depth of content have generated strong positive feedback, reinforcing that licence holders are finding real value in these reports.



Community Guidelines and Post Sharing Options

North Canterbury Fish & Game maintains clear expectations for conduct on all its social media platforms. These expectations are outlined in the Social Media Community Guidelines, first established in 2024 and reviewed annually each September.

The guidelines are publicly available on the Fish & Game New Zealand website and can be accessed here: <https://www.fishandgame.org.nz/assets/DMS/About-us/FG-Regional-Councils/North-Canterbury/Council-Downloads/2024/Community-Guidelines-for-Our-Social-Media.pdf>

North Canterbury Fish & Game uses social media as an official communication channel and is committed to open, transparent, and respectful engagement with its stakeholders. To support this, **comments remain enabled on our posts to allow for discussion and the exchange of views.**

While open discussion is encouraged, North Canterbury Fish & Game does not tolerate behaviour that breaches the Community Guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, abusive, defamatory, threatening, misleading, or inappropriate content. All social media channels are actively monitored and moderated to ensure discussions remain appropriate and aligned with organisational standards.

Where individuals breach, or repeatedly breach, the Community Guidelines, North Canterbury Fish & Game will take action to protect staff, councillors, stakeholders, and the organisation's reputation. Such action may include the removal of comments and/or a temporary or permanent ban from engaging with our social media channels. As these platforms are owned and administered by North Canterbury Fish & Game, the organisation reserves the right to determine who may engage with or access its content.

In instances where posts generate significant controversy or debate, North Canterbury Fish & Game will review and assess engagement to inform future communications. This may include analysing comment activity, engagement trends, and the status of contributors (such as current or former licence holders). This process ensures staff time and organisational resources are directed appropriately and in accordance with stakeholder priorities.



PROPOSAL: EDUCATION PACK OPPORTUNITIES PLAN (NATIONAL INISITIVE)

Purpose:

Develop lightweight, digital education resources that support youth engagement, community education, and promote awareness of responsible fishing and habitat conservation in North Canterbury.

Format

- Short PDF education packs (3–4 pages each)
- Easy to print, email, or share via social media or QR codes
- Includes: facts, local examples, activity suggestions, and photos
- Hosted on Fish & Game’s website under a new “Youth & Schools” tab

Core Topics

Pack Title	Focus
Aquatic Life & River Ecosystems	Local rivers, macroinvertebrates, food webs
Responsible Fishing & Gear Choices	What gear to use, ethics, compliance, catch & release tips
Wetlands & Wildlife	Wetland function, duck habitat, biodiversity
Bonus (optional, by demand)	Wild kai and outdoor cooking

3-Year Rollout Plan

Staff workshop to select 2 priority topics

- Draft and release 2 packs
- Soft launch to 5–10 local schools, tackle stores or clubs/scout groups
- Collect feedback on the packs
- Refresh or update the original two based on feedback
- Distribute to 15 local schools, tackle stores or clubs/scout groups in total
- Create 2 more packs if capacity allows
- Package all 4 into a downloadable “Youth Resource Hub” on the North Canterbury section of the Fish & Game website.
- Engage 1–2 schools, clubs or scout groups for field day, planting, learn to fish...



- Evaluate usage and adjust the approach if needed

Goals

Metric	Target
Total packs produced	4 packs created
Partner schools/clubs reached	15–20 total over 3 year period
Feedback from educators or parents	Formal, at least 5 positive responses
Event use	Packs used at 4–6 events (TAKF, expos)

Distribution Channels

- Direct email to local schools and youth clubs
- Printed versions available at youth events (TAKF, school visits, tackle stores)
- Social media promotion (Facebook posts + story swipe-ups)
- North Canterbury Fish & Game webpage



MEASUREMENT ANNUAL ON COMMUNICATIONS

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Goal	Tracking Tool
Facebook engagement	+20% compared to past year	Meta Insights
North Canterbury licence retention	85% of past year licence holders are retained	F&G licence database
North Canterbury youth/junior licence sales	+10% compared to past year	F&G Licence database
North Canterbury website section engagement	2,000+ views on regional section across all pages (no current baseline)	Website analytics
Stakeholder events/involvement	5 individual involvements	Tracking sheet



Risk Mitigation

This risk register considers risks to achieving the C&E goal, not wider organisational risks. Active evaluation and media monitoring will be a key part of the risk assessment and mitigation process. It will also be used to ensure communications is achieving its goals.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Plan
Work and reporting is criticised by a vocal license holder as a waste of their fees	High	Low to medium (depending on credibility of critic)	Ensure license holders are well-informed about the purpose and intent of the NC F&G work and encouraged to take part to promote the lifestyle they enjoy.
Work and reporting is criticised by an environmental non-governmental organization on the basis that F&G is promoting introduced species that are damaging to NZ	Low	Medium (depending on credibility of critic)	Potentially more of an overall organizational issue however nationally we should: Engage with ENGOs to inform them about the purpose and intent of the campaign, focussing on shared goals and common ground
Campaign is criticised by SAFE as promoting harm to fish and game birds	Medium	Medium (depending on credibility of critic)	A issue mainly with game birds at this point. Develop plan case by case. Develop messages to counter criticism of hunting. Focus on F&G environmental contribution first with broad audience.



Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Plan
F&G councillor or staff member makes controversial comment (eg on post or a page via social media)	Low	High	Ensure councillors and staff are well informed about purpose and intent of F&G work, and their role. Following staff and council code of conduct. Own it, fix it, learn from it. Follow emergency comms plan
Elected regional council and staff bringing organisation into disrepute	Low	High	Follow emergency comms plan



References

- 1 Fish & Game New Zealand. 2023. General public survey: Fish & Game New Zealand. Fish & Game New Zealand. <https://www.fishandgame.org.nz/assets/DMS/FG-National-Council/Council-download/Council-downloads/Council-Downloads/Fish-and-Game-NZ-General-Public-Survey-April-2023.pdf>
- 2 Department of Conservation. 2021. New Zealanders and the environment Domestic customer segmentation research: New Zealanders engaging with the environment, biodiversity and conservation. Department of Conservation. <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/about-doc/role/visitor-research/nzers-and-the-environment.pdf>
- 3 Sanders Garrick, H. 2024. Licence Holder Insights: New Zealand Fish & Game 2005/06-2022/23. New Zealand Fish & Game. Wellington, NZ.



NOT FOR PUBLIC DOCUMENT STAFF USE ONLY

Appendix: Hunting and Anglers Influencers Forum

Contact List

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Tony Entwistle	Fly Fishing Expeditions NZ	tony@tonyentwistlesflyfishing.co.nz	
Garry Ottmann	Executive Director Game & Forest Foundation/GAC member	g.ottmann@gameandforest.co.nz	
Gwyn Thurlow	NZDA	Gwyn.thurlow@deerstalkers.org.nz	
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Dave Shaw	Red Stag Hunters Club TV	admin@thehuntersclub.co.nz	
Peter Ryan	NZ Hunting Author	peter@faraway.co	
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Robbie Hewson	CCC Head Ranger Coastal & Plains Regional Parks	Robbie.Hewson@ccc.govt.nz	
Kieran Lee	Fly Angler & Fisherman's Loft	epyc Trout@gmail.com	0272010210
Jack Colley	Young angler in Canterbury	jack.colley.nz@gmail.com	
James Kean	NZ Casual Hunter page	Jameskean09@gmail.com	
Callum McKenzie	Braided Creative page	braidedcreative@yahoo.com	
Matt Shuker	Fisherman's Loft	matthew_shuker@icloud.com	



Matt Jones	Social Media Profile		0275778643
Peter Meecham	The Press and angler	Peter.meecham@gmail.com	021701990
Barry Clarke	Star Media	barry@starmedia.kiwi	
James Kean	NZ Casual Hunter	Look up in licence database	
John Kent	Author	Silverdoctor12@gmail.com	

DRAFT

DRAFT Privacy Policy

Please find attached a DRAFT Privacy Policy for Fish and Game NZ. NZC is seeking your input and collaboration in the development of this policy for the organisation. While there are statutory obligations under the Privacy Act 2020, Fish and Game NZ does not have a guiding policy outlining how it will implement its statutory functions while being mindful of its obligations under the Privacy Act.

It is intended that this policy will contribute to improved governance through a unified organisation that provides effective service delivery. We value your feedback in the development of an overarching guiding policy.

Please provide any feedback to lgould@fishandgame.org.nz by 30 June to be considered in a revised draft for the NZC to consider at their meeting in August.



Privacy Policy

Section	Operational
Contact/Owner	NZC Principal Governance and Policy Analyst
Last Review	New Policy
Next Review	
Approval	NZC
Effective Date	

PURPOSE

This policy sets out Fish and Game New Zealand's approach to implementing its obligations under the Privacy Act 2020, including the collection, storage, use and sharing of personal information.

This Policy applies to all Fish and Game NZ staff and Councillors and supports our values:

- Trust
- Inclusion
- Connection
- Service

DEFINITIONS

Personal information as defined in the Privacy Act 2020:

- (a) means information about an identifiable individual; and*
(b) includes information relating to a death that is maintained by the Registrar-General under the [Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationships Registration Act 2021](#) or any former Act (as defined in [Schedule 1](#) of that Act)

POLICY

Fish & Game NZ has statutory obligations under the Privacy Act 2020 regarding personal information it collects, stores, uses and discloses. The 13 Privacy Principles, specified in legislation (Part 3, Privacy Act 2020) govern how agencies (organizations and businesses) collect, store, use, and share personal information. These principles ensure that all New Zealanders have privacy rights, including access to their information. See Appendix for the list of Privacy Principles.

To implement the Privacy Principles, Fish and Game NZ:

- a) Will collect personal information only if it is necessary for the lawful purposes to carry out its function. It will take all reasonable steps to make individuals aware that the information is being collected, if the collection of information is authorised or required under law and the purpose for which it is being collected.
- b) May collect personal information from an individual, or from other people or agency, and may general personal information about an individual when carrying out its functions.
- c) May collect personal information only by lawful means, and in a manner that is fair and does not intrude unreasonably upon the personal affairs of the individual concerned.
- d) Will store and protect personal information with all reasonable technical and process controls.
- e) Will enable individuals to access their personal information and request correction of information.
- f) Will only use the information in connection with the purpose it was obtained, unless there are reasonable grounds for any other purpose
- g) Will only disclose the information where necessary to carry out its functions, or if required by law.

DISCUSSION

Fish and Game identify three primary areas in which it collects personal information (see below). There are linkages to systems and processes, such as health and safety in the workplace and employment, specified under other Fish and Game policies. The Privacy Policy is to be applied in the collection, storage, use and sharing of personal information through those systems and processes and read in conjunction with those policies.

I. EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE SURVEILLANCE AND MONITORING

As an employer, Fish and Game must adhere to the 13 Privacy Principles when handling employee related information. This includes information about job applicants. Employees must have access to their personal information, and it must be handled securely. The Privacy Act 2020 provides protections for employees who report serious wrongdoing in their workplace (whistleblowing, or protected disclosure).

Any workplace surveillance or monitoring of staff by Fish & Game needs to comply with the Privacy Act 2020. Workplace surveillance, such as GPS tracking of vehicles and field

teams, must be communicated to those staff under surveillance along with the purpose, such as Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) requirements. Information will only be used if Fish and Game is allowed to (e.g. a person has agreed to let us use it), in delivering statutory functions and if the law requires it.

The use of workplace cameras, such as security cameras, must also be identified to staff, placed in appropriate locations (not in private areas such as toilets or changing rooms), and recordings handled securely and only when there is a need, e.g. if a security camera captures images of an alleged intruder that recording will be handled securely.

II. FISH AND GAME FUNCTION

Fish and Game has a regulatory function, specifically in relation issuing of licences for game bird hunting and freshwater sports fishing. Licence applications require the provision of personal information of individuals, such as full name, date of birth, residential address and signature. Fish and Game NZ engages third party service providers to collect and manage personal information in relation to some of its statutory responsibilities, including licencing. Agreements with third party providers include clauses that establish expectations for secure handling of personal information and provide a basis for ongoing oversight. All reasonable technical and process controls are in place regarding this information and are regularly audited.

Fish and Game employees may also be appointed as fish and game rangers for the purposes of the Conservation Act 1987. That will at times require fish and game rangers to collect personal information to fulfil the functions of their role and the purpose of the Act. The collection, storage, use and disclosure of such information will comply with the Privacy Act 2020.

III. VOLUNTARY DISCLOSURE

Users of the Fish & Game website may be asked to voluntarily provide personal information, e.g. in the feedback form or when subscribing to news and updates. If an individual has provided personal information to subscribe to alerts or newsletters, that information will be deleted from the database when an individual unsubscribes.

Licensed hunters and fishers are also asked to provide anecdotal information and data in Licence Holder Perception surveys. Information at an individual level will be treated in compliance with the Privacy Act 2020, however, the purpose of the survey is to provide a snapshot of indicators and trends for the region, and the information is consolidated for this purpose.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

The Fish & Game NZ Principal Governance and Policy Advisor is determined to be the Privacy Officer for NZC for the purpose of this policy. Any queries about the policy, including access to personal information or any other privacy matters, should be directed to the "Privacy Officer". The [OPC Complaint Guidance](#) will be followed regarding the handling of privacy complaints. Each Regional Fish and Game Office / Council must

appoint a Privacy Officer to their organisation. The Privacy Officer does not need to be an employee (i.e. they can be external), provided they are familiar with the organisation.

OUR EXPECTATIONS OF YOU

Breaches

This policy implements statutory requirements; therefore, any potential non-compliance with the policy by Fish & Game staff or Councillors will be examined. If a breach of policy is found to have occurred, depending on the seriousness of that breach, we will:

- talk with you to make sure you know the terms of the policy you have breached, including what appropriate support we can offer
- make sure you know the technical and process controls required
- take disciplinary action if necessary
- notify the breach to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner if there has been a serious breach.

See our **Code Of Conduct** and the 'Serious misconduct' clause of your employment agreement for more information about what behaviour is expected and what action may be taken for misconduct.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT CONTROL

Prepared by: HR Advisor & Privacy Officer
Owned by: NZC/NZC CEO
Authorised by: Fish and Game New Zealand National Council
Date Issued (for Consultation):
Next Review

APPENDIX 1: PRIVACY PRINCIPLES

1. Purpose of collection of personal information:

Organisations must only collect personal information that is necessary for a lawful purpose connected with what the organisation does.

2. Source of personal information:

Usually, organisations must collect information from the individual concerned, meaning the individual is aware the information is being collected and ensures it is accurate and up to date.

3. Collection of personal information from individuals concerned:

Take steps to ensure the person knows details such as why the information is being collected, who will have access, whether provision of information is voluntary, and what will happen if the information is not provided.

3A Collection of personal information other than from individual concerned:¹

An agency is required to tell the person if that agency collects an individual's personal information from someone other than the person themselves (i.e. indirectly), unless an exception applies.

4. Manner of collection of personal information:

Collection is undertaken in a lawful, fair, and reasonable manner, taking particular care when collecting information from children and young people.

5. Storage and security of personal information:

Personal information must be kept secure to guard against unauthorised access, use, disclosure or other misuse.

6. Access to personal information:

Generally, an individual has a right to know if an organisation holds information about them and accesses that information. However, requests can sometimes be refused if giving access would endanger someone's safety or involve an unwarranted breach of someone else's privacy.

7. Correction of personal information:

An individual is entitled to ask for a correction of the information held if it is inaccurate. If the organisation disagrees, it must attach a statement of correction to information it holds.

8. Accuracy, etc. of personal information to be checked before use or disclosure:

Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure personal information is accurate before it is used or disclosed.

9. Agency not to keep personal information for longer than necessary:

Information is kept only for as long as it is needed to achieve the purpose for which it was collected, or for a period specified in statute, e.g. Public Records Act

10. Limits on use of personal information:

Information obtained for one purpose cannot generally be used for another purpose. Exceptions include authorisation provided by the individual, law enforcement, or information that won't identify the individual.

¹ Note, that IPP3A comes into force on 1 May 2026, however it is being proactively included into the Fish and Game Privacy Policy at this time.

11. Limits on disclosure of personal information:

Organisations can only disclose personal information when one of the exceptions to the principle applies. Consent to share should be obtained wherever possible.

12. Disclosure of personal information outside New Zealand:

Ensure the country the information will go to has comparable privacy protections.

13. Unique identifiers:

Do not assign unique identifiers unless needed to carry out the functions of the organisation efficiently.

OPERATIONAL PROGRESS REPORT

North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting - 20 May 2026

Prepared By: NCFG Staff

1. Kōrero taunaki - Summary of Considerations

a) Kaupapa – Purpose

To provide an update to the North Canterbury Fish & Game Council (NCFG) on work completed by staff from November 2025 to February 2026.

b) Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations

That Council receives this report.

2. Whakarāpopoto - Executive Summary

This Report is a summary of how staff are tracking with the Operational work plan projects and activities and provides a high-level overview.

3. Takenga mai – Background

This report is provided to the council each meeting to provide insight on recent staff activity.

4. Kōrerorero – Discussion

OUTPUT AREA 1: SPORT FISH AND GAME BIRD SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Population Monitoring

Dabbling duck

The Canterbury Plains dabbling duck survey was completed in mid-March with Central South Island F&G staff. The results signal that dabbling duck populations are in line with long-term averages.

Designated Waters & Controlled Fishery Trial

Trial has concluded with recommendations provided from staff. See separate papers “Controlled Fishery Consultation Summary” and “Upper Hurunui River Trial Controlled Fishery”

Harvest Assessment

Game Bird Harvest Surveys

Staff have completed the opening weekend game bird surveys, and will conduct bi-weekly surveys throughout the game bird season.

Species Rescue

In April 2026, staff conducted a fish salvage operation at an irrigation pond connected to the Waimakariri River. The pond was being dewatered to allow for the installation of a new lining aimed at reducing silt accumulation.

The landowner contacted Fish & Game to request assistance with salvaging fish from the large pond. A suitable date was arranged, and the landowner prepared the site by creating a trench to concentrate fish into an accessible area as water levels decreased.

A total of 30 rainbow trout and 120 brown trout were salvaged, along with over 1,000 native fish. No salmon were present. All retrieved fish were successfully returned to the Waimakariri River following the operation.

Staff have also begun discussions with a Rakaia farmer to explore a similar fish salvage opportunity when another irrigation pond is next dewatered for maintenance.

Staff have also completed planning and organisation for the annual Amuri Salvage Operation which is planned to occur in the final week of May.

Regulations

See separate papers “2026 Sea-Run Salmon Severe Band Consultation Summary” and 26 27 Season Sea-Run Salmon Season Bag Recommendation”

Species Management and Control

Staff have responded to queries, evaluated, and processed applications for game bird control permits and sports fish licensing permits.

Game bird Control

During the 2025-2026 financial Year 61 control/disturbance permits have been issued (19 for pukeko, 17 for black swans, 23 for paradise ducks, and 4 for mallards). An additional three permits have been issued for cultural harvest of paradise shelduck and black swan (birds and/or eggs).

Sports fish Control

Financial year-to-date, 8 sports fishing permits/special licences have been issued (one event licence [Take a Kid Fishing], one display permit [Willowbank Wildlife Reserve], two out-of-season permits [coarse angling at Lake Roto Kohatu]), two special licences for netting/trapping [ecological contractors], and two electric fishing permits [ecological contractors]).

OUTPUT AREA 2: HABITAT PROTECTION, MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

Statutory Planning Process

For a more detailed overview of the RMA advocacy and planning work done to represent the interests and aspirations of anglers and hunters in the statutory planning process see the separate RMA Report.

Research

Staff have been sending band reports to hunters that have harvested banded mallards. So far six bands have been reported, with a recovery from as far north as Culverden to south to Ashburton.

OUTPUT AREA 3: PARTICIPATION

Increase Participation

Take a Kid Fishing

Staff continue to engage with the Take a Kid Fishing Trust in preparation for the 2026 event. A total of 800 rainbow trout have been confirmed for supply from the Nelson/Marlborough region.

To ensure continuity and effective coordination during upcoming staff annual leave periods, an additional staff member has been included in communications with the Trust.

Social Media

Social media has continued to serve as a primary communication channel between staff and licence holders throughout the year. Engagement metrics have remained strong. For further information and detailed statistics, please refer to the “FOR INFORMATION – COMMUNICATIONS REPORT.”

Angler & Hunter Education

Staff have commenced planning for two women’s “Learn to Fly Fish” courses to be held in the North Canterbury region at the 595 Johns Road office.

One course will be delivered by Women on the Fly, an organisation that runs introductory fly-fishing courses for women across New Zealand. Fish & Game’s role will be to provide the venue and support promotion of the course.

The second course is being more directly organised by staff and is expected to involve a well-known female fishing guide from New Zealand, who currently deliver a similar programme in Queenstown. While details are yet to be finalised, this course will provide a valuable opportunity for women in the region to learn and further engage with the sport.

Staff have also been actively promoting the new Hunting Knowledge Hub on the Fish & Game website. Developed collaboratively by staff nationwide, this resource offers valuable information for both new hunters and more experienced participants seeking to expand their knowledge.

In addition, North Canterbury staff will contribute to the development of new national Fish & Game “how-to” videos for social media and YouTube. It is anticipated that local rivers and lakes will feature in this content, with regional staff involved in presenting practical guidance for anglers. This represents an exciting opportunity to showcase the region.

Staff have produced a new “How to” bait fishing brochure for use nationwide which covers techniques to help anglers use this popular and effective fishing method.

Satisfaction Surveys

Stepping Stone Fisheries

Staff expanded the 2025 winter season survey of Roto Kohatu to other fisheries around the Christchurch area. The objective of these surveys is to determine what factors make a fishing spot a successful stepping stone fishery and ultimately identify ways staff might enhance existing and develop new fishing opportunities in the Christchurch area.

High Country Lakes

Staff have completed the High-Country Lake creel survey project, see separate paper for the full report.

Controlled Fishery Trial

Trial has concluded with recommendations provided from staff. See separate papers “Controlled Fishery Consultation Summary” and “Upper Hurunui River Trial Controlled Fishery”

Game Bird Hunter Satisfaction

Staff completed data collection on the third year of the Opening Weekend hunter satisfaction survey that is being conducted nationally and coordinated by the North Canterbury team.

Access

Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere

Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere access works have been completed. This included improvements to two boat ramps and parking areas (Drain Road, and Lake Road South), gravelling vehicle access at Embankment Road, and improvements to a parking area at Kaituna.

Signage

Staff completed updates/repairs to access signage across the region where necessary.

Newsletters

Ezines

The bi-weekly fishing reports, delivered in both written and video formats, have now concluded for the season. The region maintains the largest email distribution list for a regional fishing report in the country, with over 33,000 subscribers. This season's reports received positive feedback, particularly regarding the depth and quality of content provided by staff.

Bi-weekly hunting reports have now commenced for the new season, with over 2,000 subscribers to date. This audience has continued to grow early in the season. As this is only the second year of producing these reports, staff are looking forward to further refining the content and identifying what resonates most strongly with hunters.

For a more detailed breakdown, please refer to the separate "FOR INFORMATION – COMMUNICATIONS REPORT."

Website

Staff are currently satisfied with the condition of the North Canterbury sections of the Fish & Game website. Recent updates have been made to the Council downloads section to ensure all required documents are readily available for licence holders. A plan has also been developed to maintain these sections, ensuring they remain up to date both before and after Council meetings.

Following this Council meeting, staff are likely to begin work on a new 2025/26 Lake Creel Surveys page for the website. This page will be supported by promotion through social media channels. Long-term plans will include a comprehensive review on that information provided about our main rivers and lakes in the region, this could include producing replacement sections for any outdated information.

Magazine Supplements

Staff were pleased to see the release of the 2026 Game Bird Magazine. The team contributed content and photography across a range of sections, including the regional feature.

Attention is now turning to the upcoming fishing magazine, scheduled for release later this year. Staff will begin considering potential topics for inclusion and have also been offered the opportunity to write a feature article for the publication. While no staff have currently committed to this, interest may develop as planning progresses.

Client Relations

Club Relations

Staff presented to the Canterbury Anglers club at one of their club meetings in April. The results of the High-country lakes creel survey were presented as well as the future for the project. Feedback from attendees was very positive and staff look forward to continuing these talks in the future.

Staff presented at the Lincoln University Hunting Club meeting prior to opening weekend. The meeting was well attended, with staff providing information on licensing requirements, hunting opportunities in the region, and correct species identification. This continues to be a valuable relationship for staff to maintain.

During the same week, staff also attended and sponsored the Lincoln University Hunting Club's annual duck calling competition. Fish & Game cookbooks were provided as prizes, along with North Canterbury regulation booklets for each winner.

Staff believe this is a worthwhile event to be involved in each year, as it provides an excellent opportunity to promote the Fish & Game message and maintain a visible presence with young hunters in the region.

Media Relations

Staff continue to provide comment to media when requested. The opening of the McIntyre Wetland was a significant milestone for the region and a well-run event, generating substantial media coverage across multiple outlets. Notably, a feature story aired on One News, which included interviews with Steve Terry and Phillip Jellyman of Earth Sciences New Zealand (NIWA).

Following the game bird season opening, it has been encouraging to see positive media coverage highlighting hunters' enjoyment of the event. One negative article was published locally by Chris Lynch Media, referencing concerns that Fish & Game had already addressed directly with the individual involved. Staff also provided a comment to the outlet however it was not published by the outlet. Additionally, a response was provided to a local MP regarding the same matter, outlining Fish & Game's position and statutory responsibilities.

Looking ahead, staff have several upcoming projects that may present opportunities for further media engagement, including trout tagging initiatives, spawning surveys, and other field-based work.

OUTPUT AREA 4: PUBLIC INTERFACE

Liaison

Public & Media Liaison

Staff continue to respond to queries from licence holders, members of the public, and media. Staff also provided information to Councillors for Official Information Act requests.

Staff held a Game Bird Reference Group meeting prior to the opening of the duck season. Staff introduced proposed regulation changes and explained the process. There was also considerable conversation around banding, which the group was extremely supportive of, and would like to see continued within the region. For more information, see the meeting report paper.

Staff held the third Fisheries Reference Group meeting in May. Attendance was low with only three attendees. Reference group members provided positive feedback to improvements to communication with licence holders. Minutes still being prepared.

Statutory Liaison

Staff attended a field day with Coleridge Habitat Enhancement Trust at Lake Coleridge. There were productive conversations had regarding the consenting process coming for Contact Energy related to the Coleridge power scheme.

Staff met with members of the Water quality and Water ecology teams from Environment Canterbury (ECAN) to discuss ways of collaborating in the future and establish communication pathways for accessing and sharing water quality data.

OUTPUT AREA 5: COMPLIANCE

See separate Compliance report for an overview of compliance activities over the last reporting period.

OUTPUT AREA 6: LICENCING

Licence production/distribution

Staff continue to oversee the production and distribution of licences in the region, specifically around game bird ones which have been the most popular recently. We have also ensure that all address changes are worked into the system properly so that all hunters and anglers get their licences posted to their correct mailing address.

Agent Servicing

Staff have ensured that all licence agents are well prepared for the game bird season. This has included confirming agents are up to date with key regulations they may be asked about by hunters, and that they are adequately supplied with regulation booklets, upstream/downstream cards, and other relevant materials.

Staff attended the annual "Duck Night" at Christchurch Hunting & Fishing. The event was well attended, and staff engaged with a range of committed hunters from across the region who were enthusiastic about the upcoming season.

Staff from Hunting & Fishing noted that the event was particularly successful this year and indicated interest in expanding it in the future. Fish & Game will be involved in these discussions to help determine how we can best support the development of a larger-scale event for hunters in the region prior to opening weekend.

OUTPUT AREA 7: COUNCIL

Staff have prepared papers for Councils consideration for 20 May Meeting.

OUTPUT AREA 8: PLANNING AND REPORTING

Operational Work Plan

Preparation of a draft 2026-27 Operational work plan and zero-based budget is still ongoing pending confirmation of 2026-27 budgets. Indicative budgets including proposed reductions based on reduced income have been provided from NZC.

OUTPUT AREA 9: ADMINISTRATION

National Liaison

Staff are participating in a re-write of the National Game Bird Nuisance Policy. Staff have also helped NZC draft a response to the Pacific Black Duck Conservation Group (Australian group) who wrote to Ministry of Primary Industries (who redirected it to F&G) asking for eradication of mallards in New Zealand.

Staff training

One staff members completed their First Aid Refresher training in late April.

One staff member completed a health and Safety rep course which was organised by NZC and now that staff member represents the North Canterbury region for health and safety.

5. Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga - Considerations For Decision-Making

N/a

6. Financial Considerations

☒ Nil ☐ Budgetary provision ☐ Unbudgeted

7. Risk

☒ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐ Extreme

8. Legislative Implications

N/a

9. Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities

N/a

10. Policy Implications

N/a

11. Risks and Mitigations

N/a

12. Consultation

N/a

13. Ngā mahinga e whai ake nei - Next Actions

N/a

FINANCE REPORT

North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting - 20 May 2026

Prepared By: Debbie Ambler

1. Kōrero taunaki - Summary of Considerations

a) Kaupapa - Purpose

To inform Council of the financial performance and position, using an accounting cash basis. It documents income and expenditure against the current year's annual budget. This Report cover the period 1 April to 17 May 2026.

b) Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations

That the Finance Report be adopted.

2. Whakarāpopoto - Executive Summary

- c) The 25/26 Budget used in this Report is \$1,074,183. This is made up of baseline funding of \$1,035,183, with the addition of approved use from reserves of \$39,000. A depreciation budget (\$105,996), levy payments (\$545,060) and Eyede charges (\$65,183) that are outside the normal budgeting process have been added to the bottom line of the budget.

d) Table 1A – Performance Overview (new Report)

Summarises

Income and Expenses

Profit and Loss (year to date and month end)

Balance Sheet

Bank Accounts

Cash Balance

e) Table 1B – Summary of Licence Revenue

Licence sales are received by two methods – Public Online (paid to NCFG monthly) and Agency Online (paid to NCFG on a bi-monthly basis). This table breaks down and compares major category licence sales only.

f) Table 2 – Cash Position (new Report)

Summarises Cash In v Cash Out

Net Cash Flow

g) Table 3 – Manual Journal Report

A new Report required by the Auditors for Council approval showing all manual journals completed for the reporting period.

h) Table 4 – Asset Replacement Fund

Shows assets brought and sold during the financial year.
As of this Report there has been

3. Kōrerorero – Discussion

- i. Licence sales income for this reporting period is at 95% of budget, however we are currently 6% down on licence sales compared to the same period last year.
- ii. We are expecting on final burst of income from licence sales in the next month, however traditionally once the game bird opening day has been, licences sales overall start to decline, so cashflow starts to become tight.
- iii. Due to the fall of some invoices this month, NZC has approved a levy payment split to assist with cashflow issues we are currently experiencing.
- iv. Overall income is down by 7.5% YTD with overall spending down by 14% in comparison to the same reporting period last year due to tighter controls on staff spending.
- v. Currently NCFG's major expenses are through the annual salmon spawning count flights. There is also a one-off major expense for laying shingle around access points at Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere). However, this payment is coming out of approved spending from Reserves.
- vi. Overall spending currently sits at 71% of budget
- vii. A forecasted reporting deficit at yearend is approximately \$65,000.
- viii. Journal Report – this Report allows for custom accounting entries that are not generated by Xero through the normal process of bills, invoices and payments. These entries are essential to maintain accurate financial records especially for adjustments, corrections and year-end entries.
- ix. Asset Register – no assets were purchased over this period, however a new fleet vehicle has been ordered and is due for delivery June 2026.

Performance overview

to 17 May 2026

TABLE 1A

Monthly (FY YTD) ending on 17 May 2026

Income

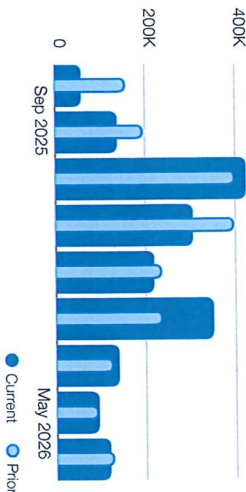
1.69M

Total Sep 2025 to May 2026

Down 7.54% ↓

1.82M

Total Sep 2024 to May 2025



Expenses

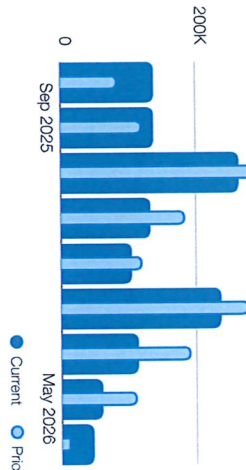
1.13M

Total Sep 2025 to May 2026

Down 14.89% ↓

1.33M

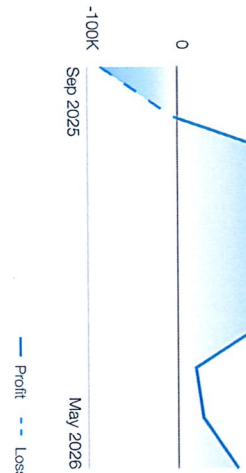
Total Sep 2024 to May 2025



Profit and loss

554,132

Profit/loss Sep 2025 to May 2026



Summarised Profit and Loss

Accounts

May 2026

Trading Income	100,220
Cost of Sales	0
Gross Profit	100,220
Other Income	840
Operating Expenses	35,384
Net Profit/Loss	65,676

Summarised Balance Sheet

Accounts

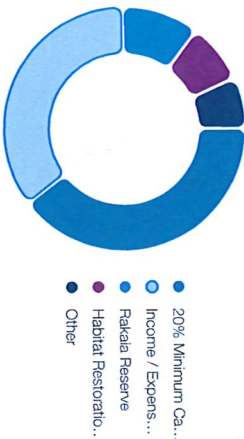
May 2026

Assets	
Bank Accounts	785,330
Current Assets (Excluding Cash)	2,821
Non-Current Assets	2,60M
Total Assets	3,39M
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	140,857
Long-Term Liabilities	0
Total Liabilities	140,857
Net Assets	3,24M
Total Equity	3,24M

Bank accounts

785,330

Accounts total May 2026



Cash balance

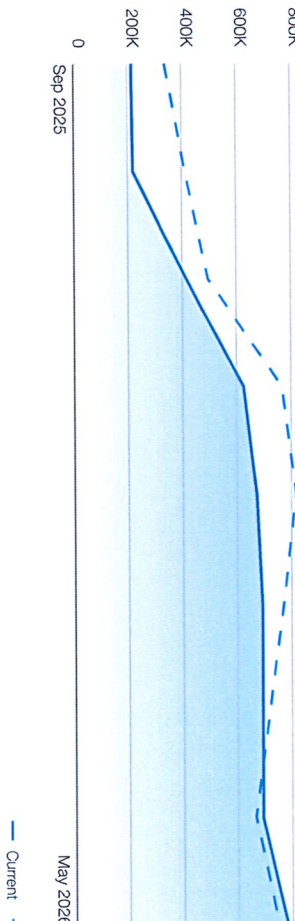
782,301

Balance at May 2026

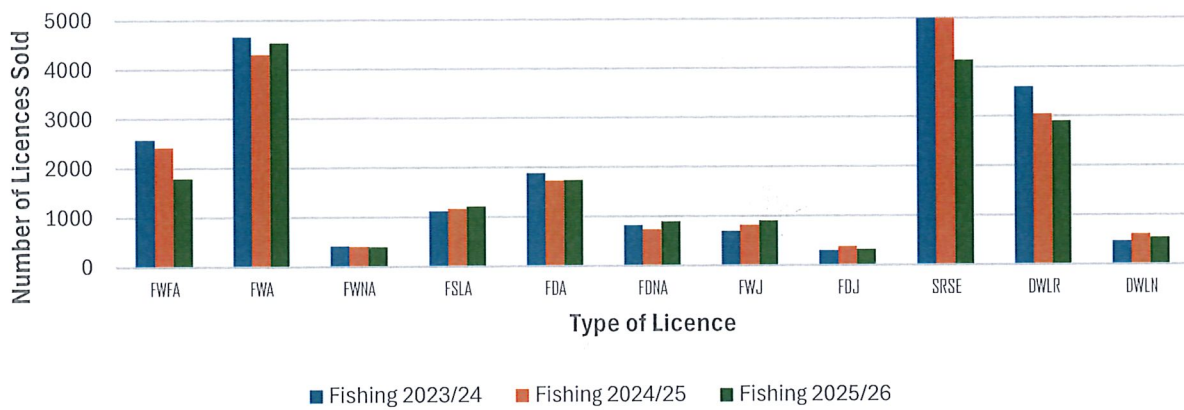
Up 4.37% ↑

749,569

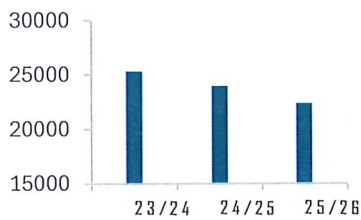
Balance at May 2025



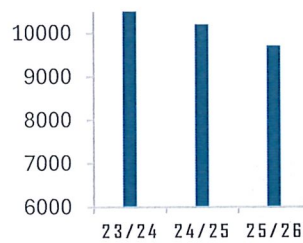
FISH LICENCE COMPARISONS YTD to 17 MAY 2026



FISHING LICENCES SOLD YTD



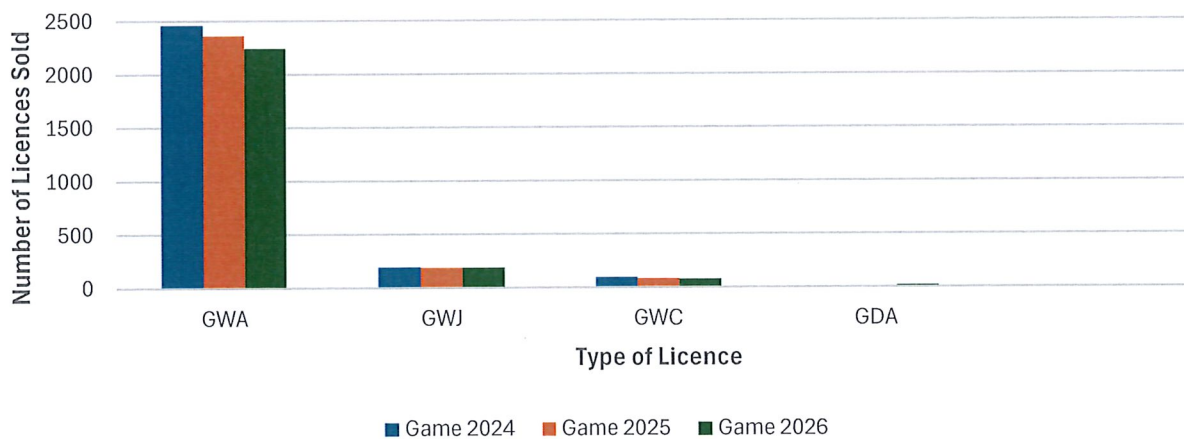
FISH LEQ'S YTD



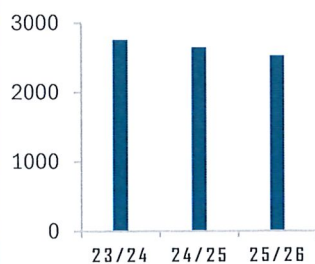
GROSS FISHING SALES YTD



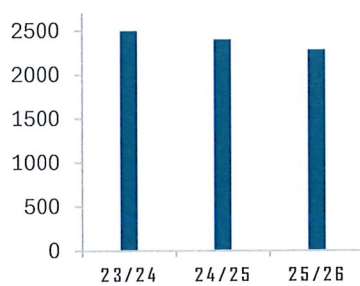
GAME LICENCE COMPARISONS YTD to 17 MAY 2026



GAME LICENCES SOLD YTD



GAME LEQ'S YTD



GROSS GAME SALES YTD

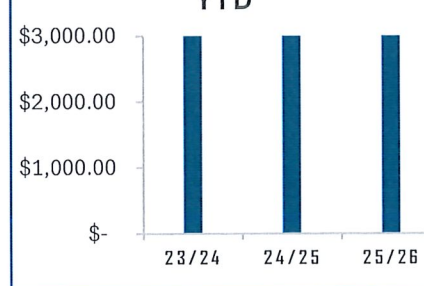


TABLE 1B- LICENCE REVENUE

Performance overview to 17 May 2026

Monthly (FY YTD) ending on 17 May 2026

TABLE 2

Cash in

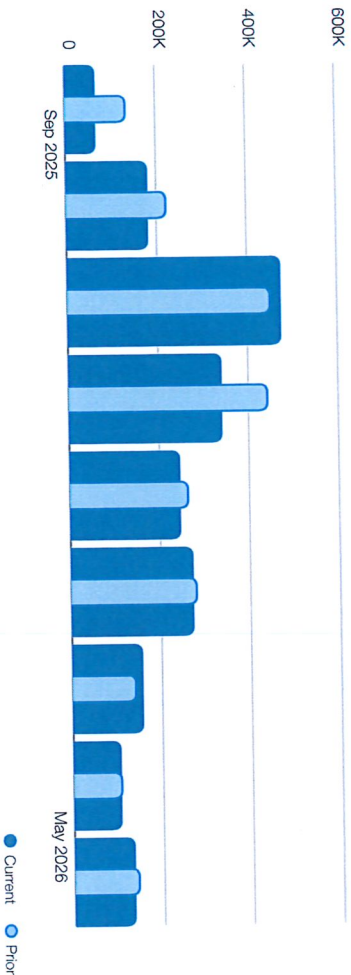
1.80M

Total Sep 2025 to May 2026

Down 10.79% ↓

2.02M

Total Sep 2024 to May 2025



Cash out

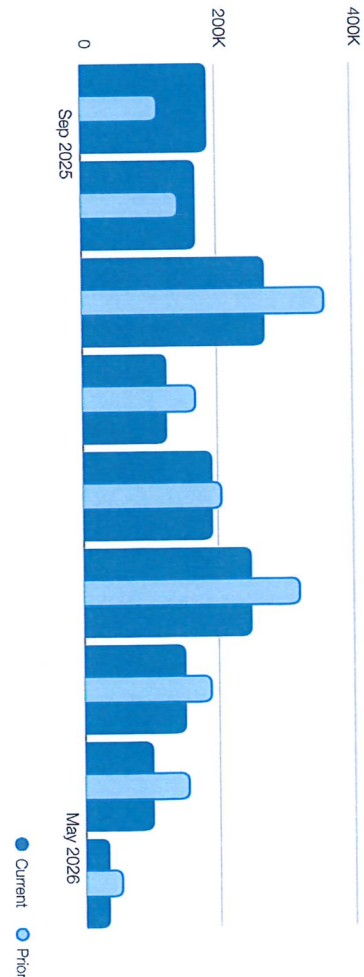
1.36M

Total Sep 2025 to May 2026

Down 14.70% ↓

1.59M

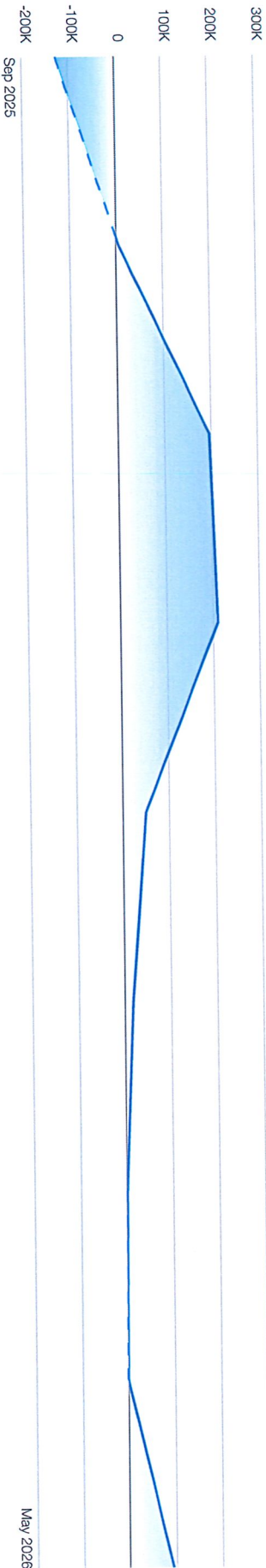
Total Sep 2024 to May 2025



Net cash flow

440,342

Net Cash Flow Sep 2025 to May 2026



Journal Report

North Canterbury Fish and Game Council

For the period 1 March 2026 to 30 April 2026

Date	Journal ID	Code	Account	Debit	Credit	Posted Date	Posted By
ID 62685 To Balance Reserves as at 30 APR 26 - Manual							
30 Apr 2026	62685	8000a	Transfer to and from Reserves	8,125.84	0.00	19 May 2026	Debbie Ambler
30 Apr 2026	62685	8001-13	20 Minimum Cash Reserve	0.00	396.45	19 May 2026	Debbie Ambler
30 Apr 2026	62685	8001-14	Habitat Protection Revenue	0.00	7,620.16	19 May 2026	Debbie Ambler
30 Apr 2026	62685	8001-1	Asset Replacement Funding	0.00	3.06	19 May 2026	Debbie Ambler
30 Apr 2026	62685	8001-11	Murawai (Coopers Lagoon) Mai Mai Res	0.00	3.30	19 May 2026	Debbie Ambler
30 Apr 2026	62685	8001-5	Rakaia Fund Reserve	0.00	102.87	19 May 2026	Debbie Ambler
Total				8,125.84	8,125.84		
ID 62684 Accrue Annual Leave to 30 APR 26 - Manual							
30 Apr 2026	62684	1911	Staff Salaries	42,104.07	0.00	19 May 2026	Debbie Ambler
30 Apr 2026	62684	7006	Employee Entitlements	0.00	42,104.07	19 May 2026	Debbie Ambler
Total				42,104.07	42,104.07		
ID 62441 To Balance Reserves as at 31 MAR 26 - Manual							
31 Mar 2026	62441	8000a	Transfer to and from Reserves	2,093.07	0.00	16 Apr 2026	Debbie Ambler
31 Mar 2026	62441	8001-13	20 Minimum Cash Reserve	0.00	409.14	16 Apr 2026	Debbie Ambler
31 Mar 2026	62441	8001-14	Habitat Protection Revenue	0.00	1,571.22	16 Apr 2026	Debbie Ambler
31 Mar 2026	62441	8001-1	Asset Replacement Funding	0.00	3.16	16 Apr 2026	Debbie Ambler
31 Mar 2026	62441	8001-11	Murawai (Coopers Lagoon) Mai Mai Res	0.00	3.41	16 Apr 2026	Debbie Ambler
31 Mar 2026	62441	8001-5	Rakaia Fund Reserve	0.00	106.14	16 Apr 2026	Debbie Ambler
Total				2,093.07	2,093.07		
ID 62438 Accrue Annual Leave to 31 MAR 26 - Manual							
31 Mar 2026	62438	1911	Staff Salaries	37,097.43	0.00	16 Apr 2026	Debbie Ambler
31 Mar 2026	62438	7006	Employee Entitlements	0.00	37,097.43	16 Apr 2026	Debbie Ambler
Total				37,097.43	37,097.43		
ID 62437 Reversal: Accrue Annual Leave to 31 MAR 26 - Manual							
01 Apr 2026	62437	1911	Staff Salaries	0.00	37,097.43	16 Apr 2026	Debbie Ambler
01 Apr 2026	62437	7006	Employee Entitlements	37,097.43	0.00	16 Apr 2026	Debbie Ambler
Total				37,097.43	37,097.43		
ID 60819 Reversal: Accrue Annual Leave to 28 FEB 26 - Manual							
01 Mar 2026	60819	1911	Staff Salaries	0.00	33,547.83	02 Mar 2026	Debbie Ambler
01 Mar 2026	60819	7006	Employee Entitlements	33,547.83	0.00	02 Mar 2026	Debbie Ambler
Total				33,547.83	33,547.83		
Total				160,065.67	160,065.67		

TABLE 3

RMA REPORT

North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting - 20 May 2026

Prepared By: Caleb Ryder

1. Kōrero taunaki - Summary of Considerations

a) Kaupapa - Purpose

This report has been prepared for Council to summarise key RMA activities undertaken by the North Canterbury Fish and Game (NCFG) team throughout the period February to mid-May 2026.

2. Takenga mai – Background

As the statutory management agency for sport fish and game birds we are required to consider the Legislation, the RMA, local plans, regional plans, and National Policy Statements applicable to our Region.

3. Kōrerorero – Discussion

All resource consent applications lodged with the regional council are presented weekly to affected parties to assess whether these are relevant to us. Where relevant we provide feedback to Regional Councils and where necessary propose these be publicly notified.

Through the period February - May we have received and assessed **242** resource consent applications, of which **166** (68%) were relevant to the North Canterbury region, with the remainder shared between Nelson/Marlborough and Central South Island regions.

Only applications that are relevant to the North Canterbury region are reported on below.

Financial year-to-date, a total of **432** North Canterbury region resource consent applications have been assessed.

The most common (>50%) theme/priority of applications for the February - May period was Discharge permits (s15); most of these discharge permits were either to air or land.

Staff also submitted comments for consideration on the Woodend bypass project which is going through the fast-track approvals process. This project involves works around one of the Gravel and Sands ponds which contains Tench and Perch and is utilised by local Coarse Anglers.

4. Financial Considerations

☒ Nil ☐ Budgetary provision ☐ Unbudgeted

5. Risk

☒ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐ Extreme

Health & Safety Report

North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting - 20 May 2026

Prepared By: Harry Graham-Samson

1. Kōrero taunaki - Summary of Considerations

a) Kaupapa – Purpose

This report has been prepared for the Council to provide a summary for health and safety across North Canterbury Fish and Game.

b) Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations

That Council receives this report.

2. Whakarāpopoto - Executive Summary

Health and safety performance for the reporting period remains satisfactory, with no serious harm incidents reported and controls operating as intended. Key risks relate to field activities, and public interaction and continue to be actively managed through established procedures.

The Council is asked to **note the report** and the continued adequacy of current health and safety controls

3. Takenga mai – Background

This report provides a summary of:

- a. Any significant health & safety incidents for the months reported and any recent updates on the past incidents.
- b. Any near-miss events and subsequent follow-up actions.
- c. Any new health & safety risks/hazards.
- d. Health & safety performance, inclusive of contract work and staff training.
- e. Any other health and safety related matters arising since the last council meeting.

4. **Kōrerorero – Discussion**

The table below summarises the reporting statistics for this period (February – May).

Further information regarding context and follow up process is captured in a register.

Lost time injuries this period	Lost time injuries this year	Incidents this period	Incidents this year	Near Miss Events this period	Near miss events this year	New Hazards reported this period	New Hazards reported this year
0	0	1	2	0	1	1	2

This dataset continues to build over time particularly as our work programme grows and the health and safety reporting culture is ingrained into our work ethos.

Near Miss and Incident Events

1: Staff encountered one instance of aggressive behaviour from a landowner while undertaking compliance from on gamebird opening weekend, staff appropriately identified the interaction as escalating and removed themselves from the interaction. The landowner has subsequently emailed the NC manager with an appropriate response provided in consultation with NZC media and comms staff outlining the rationale and statutory requirements for accessing land for the purposes of game bird ranging

New Hazard Identified

A staff member identified that when traffic turn into the office driveway there is a blind spot where makes it difficult for them to see if someone is driving out of the office to leave the property as some drivers approach our driveway too fast at times as they are coming off a motorway. Controls have been implemented including a review of vegetation obscuring visibility.

H&S improvements

Hazardous goods store has been reviewed to ensure compliance with regulations.

1 fire drill has been undertaken this reporting period

Mango Health and Safety Management system

Operations are transitioning from our current manual H&S management systems to dedicated software to centralise these processes. Mango is a cloud-based health and safety management system that centralises all health and safety information in one platform. The system is used to record and manage incidents, hazards, risks, corrective actions, audits, and inspections, and provides real-time visibility of health and safety performance through dashboards and reporting tools. Mango facilitates structured workflows, automated alerts, and escalation where actions are overdue, helping ensure issues are identified, tracked, and closed out.

Additionally the system functions as a document and register management system, maintaining live hazard registers, safety plans, procedures, and contractor records in

a single, controlled location. Reporting tools provide improved management and governance-level oversight, supporting assurance that health and safety risks are being actively monitored and managed.

5. Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga - Considerations For Decision-Making

There are no decisions required from this report.

6. Financial Considerations

☒ Nil ☐ Budgetary provision ☐ Unbudgeted

7. Risk

☒ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐ Extreme

8. Legislative Implications

This policy will enable us to do our work in a more consistent manner.

9. Policy Implications

There are no policy implications.

10. Risks and Mitigations

11. Consultation

12. Ngā mahinga e whai ake nei - Next Actions

Monthly dedicated health and safety meetings are being held as well as health and safety being the first agenda item discussed at Monday meetings.

An audit of compliance with our Maritime Transport Operating Plan will be undertaken by Maritime NZ on the 18th of May

Communications Report

North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting - 20 May 2026

Prepared By: Jackson Meecham

1. Kōrero taunaki - Summary of Considerations

a) Kaupapa - Purpose

To update and provide the North Canterbury Fish and Game Council (NCFGC) with data and information regarding our regional and joint national communication.

b) Ngā taunaki - Staff Recommendations

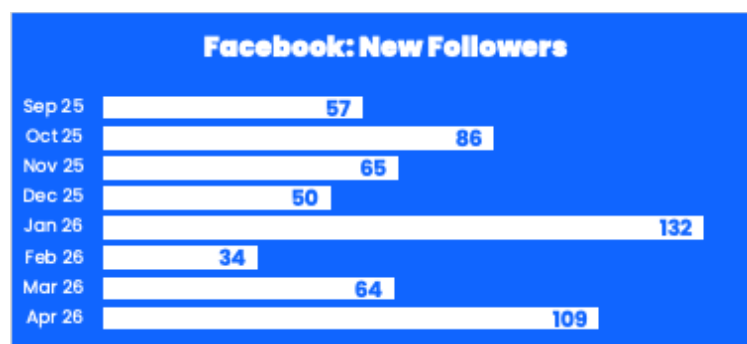
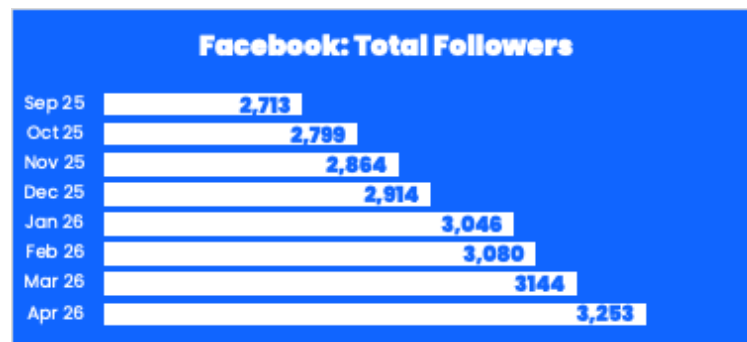
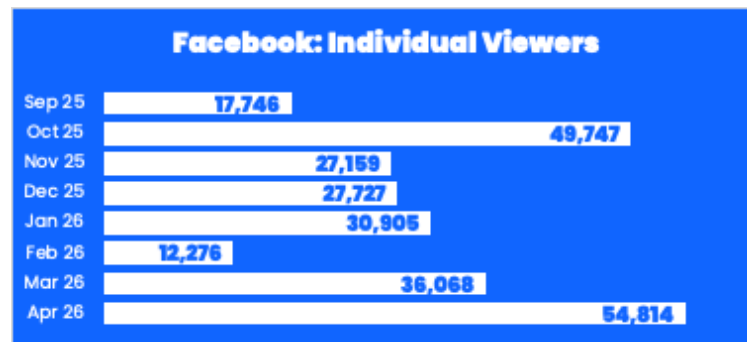
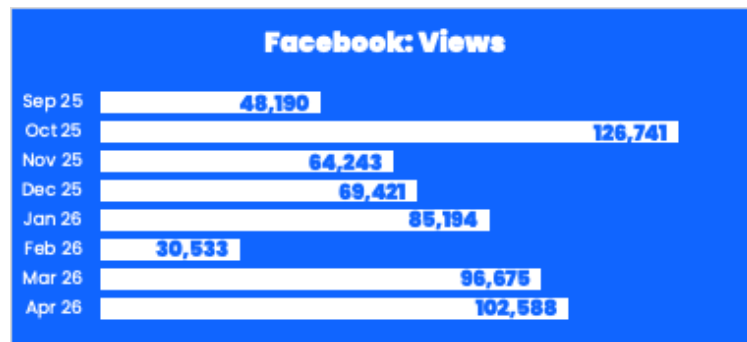
For Council to receive this report

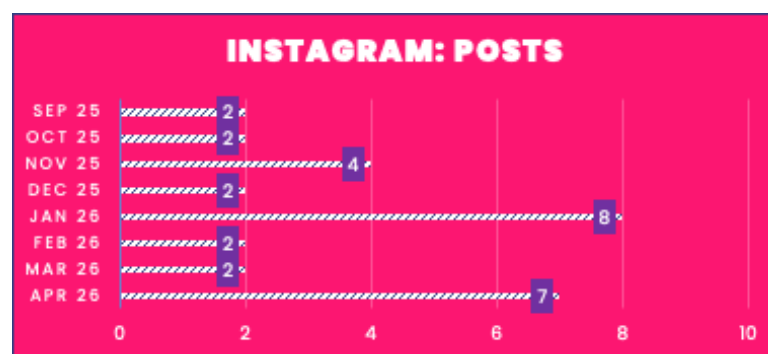
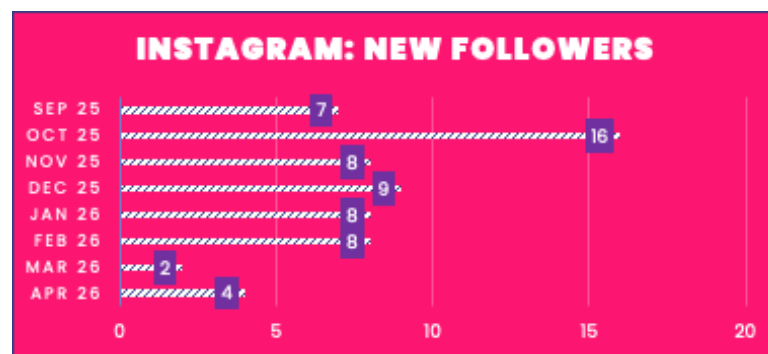
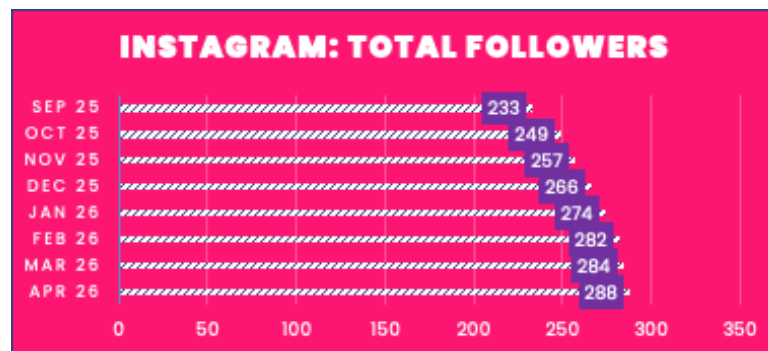
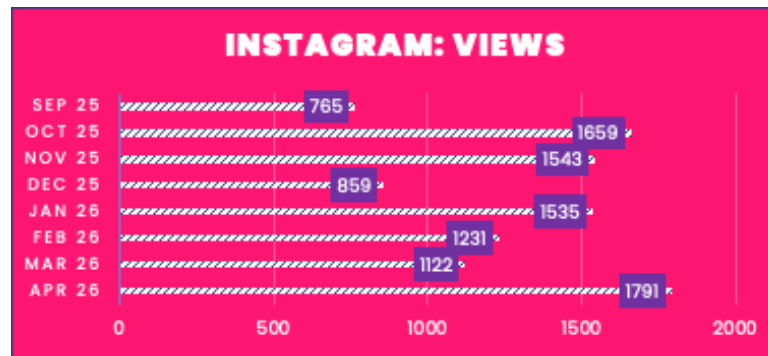
2. Whakarāpopoto - Executive Summary

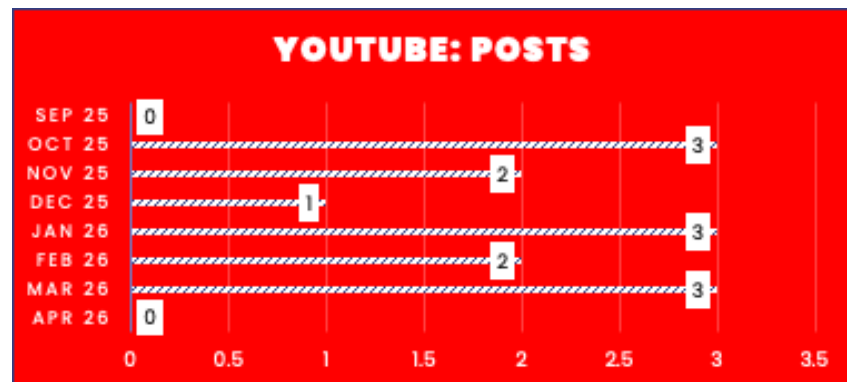
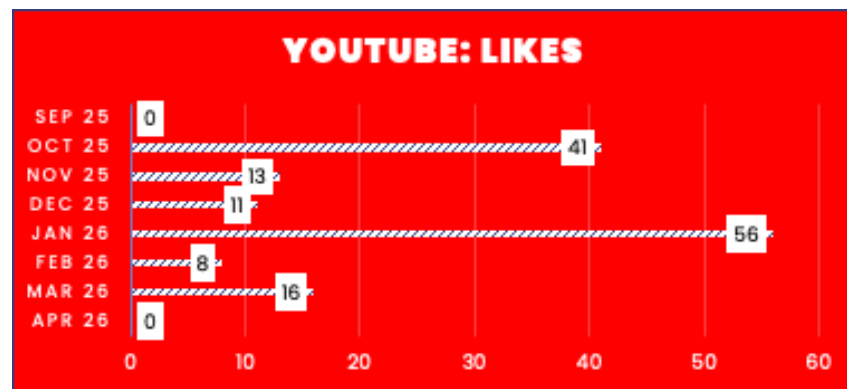
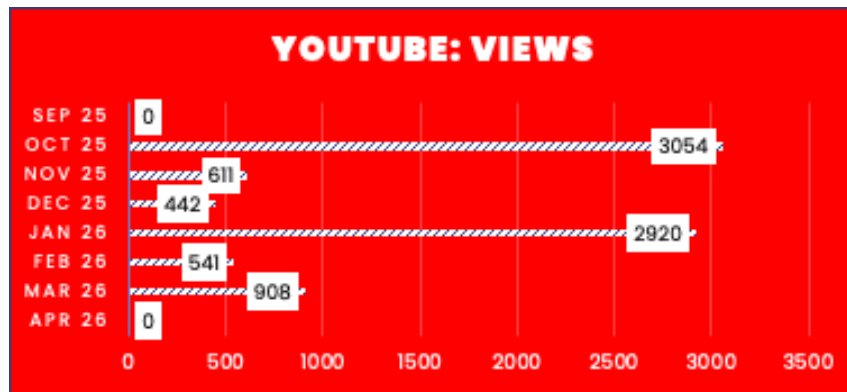
The NCFGC has continued to prioritise the development of a regional communication plan and recognises the ongoing need to strengthen engagement with licence holders, particularly through more active use of social media to ensure clarity around its activities, research, and policies. Council has previously received the draft Regional Communication and Engagement Plan and is now familiar with its direction, with staff already implementing key elements in practice. Building on this work, Council will continue to receive regular Communications Reports at each meeting, providing updates on progress, including current financial year performance metrics and recent communication activity since the previous report.

3. Takena mai – Background

All statistics and information contained in this report were collected on Monday, 11 May 2026. As these figures are subject to change, numbers may vary between the time of data collection and the Council meeting.

-Facebook-

-Instagram-

-YouTube-

-Fishing Reports-**-Hunting Reports-**

4. **Kōrerorero – Discussion**

With the main fishing season now complete and the transition into the game bird season underway, a seasonal decline in engagement might typically be expected. However, current trends do not yet indicate any such drop-off. Ongoing survey activity and increased efforts to keep licence holders informed about regional developments are contributing to steadily growing engagement levels, particularly on Facebook. April 2026 recorded the highest number of individual viewers to date, reflecting the effectiveness of content that fosters discussion and drives interaction.

The Council's directive to actively respond to misinformation in comments has already proven valuable, reinforcing to licence holders that both staff and Council are listening and engaging constructively. While no new YouTube content was published over the past month, there are plans to develop game bird-related video content during the season.

Fishing reports have now concluded for the season and were overall successful, despite a slight and expected decline in subscribers as angler participation fluctuates and as legacy mailing lists are refined. In contrast, hunting reports have launched strongly, achieving solid open rates, good interaction, and attracting new subscribers following the initial release. Instagram remains an area for improvement in terms of consistent engagement; however, increased posting frequency in recent weeks is expected to support the development of a more stable and active audience on that platform.

5. **Whai whakaaro ki ngā whakataunga - Considerations For Decision-Making**

n/a

6. **Financial Considerations**

☒ Nil ☐ Budgetary provision ☐ Unbudgeted

7. **Risk**

☒ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐ Extreme

8. **Legislative Implications**

n/a

9. Section 4 Treaty Responsibilities

n/a

10. Policy Implications

n/a

11. Risks and Mitigations

n/a

12. Consultation

n/a

13. Ngā mahinga e whai ake nei - Next Actions

Continue working to the C&E Strategy.

Compliance Report

North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting - 20 May 2026

Prepared By: Caleb Ryder

1. Kōrero taunaki - Summary of Considerations

a) Kaupapa - Purpose

Provide an update on compliance activities for the 2025/2026 fishing season and an overview of 2026 Gamebird opening weekend compliance.

2. Takenga mai – Background

As compliance is one of the Council's five priorities, compliance activities have been a key focus of staff from the beginning of the 2025/26 Fishing Season.

3. Kōrerorero – Discussion

Staff and volunteers have, to date, completed catchment-based targeted ranging, based on data from the 2021/22 National Angler Survey to gauge angler usage on our lakes and rivers in the North Canterbury Region.

1045 anglers have been checked across 23 locations (refer Table 1) as of the 11th of May. This was 45 more checks than the same time during the 2024/25 fishing season.

Note: that none of these checks include licence numbers gathered as part of competitions or event entries.

Eight offences and eight offenders have been detected due to this compliance activity. Most have been resolved through the offer of Diversion or formal warning letters. However, we are also awaiting outcomes from two court cases which are the result of offending during the 2024/2025 Gamebird and 2024/2025 Fishing seasons.

Overall, the non-compliance rate for North Canterbury was 0.8% of all anglers checked, and this aligns with New Zealand Fish and Game Councils maximum 5% non-compliance target.

The rate of non-compliance represents a marked improvement on the same time last season.

Table 1: Number of licence checks across various catchments in the North Canterbury region

Catchment	No of Licence Checks	No of Offenders
Rakaia	492	3
Waimakariri	486	3
Hurunui	10	0
Waiau	7	1
Ashley	20	0
Ellesmere	30	1
Total	1045	8

Ranger Training

Staff held a Ranger training on the 19th of April at a Maimai near Rakaia in preparation for gamebird opening weekend. This is the first time that scenario-based gamebird training has been held at a pond and all in attendance found the training valuable.

Gamebird opening weekend

Three teams of Staff and Honorary rangers engaged with 62 hunters across the weekend. Four offences and three offenders were encountered across the weekend with two of these relating to the possession of prohibited toxic lead shot ammunition, while the remaining one involved hunting without a gamebird licence.

A Firearms Safety Officer from the Firearms Safety Authority joined 1 of the teams in an educational capacity on Saturday and the team are hoping to continue and strengthen this relationship with the organisation in the future.

Overall, the non-compliance rate for North Canterbury was 3% of all Gamebird hunters checked over Gamebird opening weekend which is an improvement on the twelve offences and nine offenders encountered over Gamebird opening weekend in 2025 where there was a non-compliance rate of 11%.

4. Financial Considerations

☒ Nil ☐ Budgetary provision ☐ Unbudgeted

5. Risk

☒ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐ Extreme

6. Ngā mahinga e whai ake nei - Next Actions

Recruitment of new Honorary Rangers

Staff have recruited two new Honorary rangers who completed their CERT training at the end of April and are now warranted Fish and Game rangers. Another has expressed their interest and is going through the process of coming onboard. Honorary rangers are a key component of the compliance team at North Canterbury Fish and Game. Recruiting and training new rangers ensures capacity for various activities in the region is maintained.

Catchment-based Targeted Ranging

We are pleased with how this system has worked during the regular fishing season in 2025/2026, so staff would like to continue this method. This enables staff to have a better understanding of offending, and where adjustments to targets would be planned according to their usage.

Action List

NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL



As of: 20 May 2026

Regulation Review of Lake Heron

Done

That a Council-to-Council discussion be held with Central South Island F&G's on North Canterbury F&G's position on the management of Lake Heron.

Due Date: 22 Jul 2025

Owner: ALAN STRONG

Meeting: 26 Mar 2025 NCFG Operational Work Plan and Budget Meeting, 1.4 Council Time

Latest Update:

Cr Coster wanted to find out who were the better foragers out at sea, juveniles or smolt.

DEBBIE AMBLER | 24 Jul 2025

Climate Change

On Hold

Cr Brankin to organise and lead a workshop via Teams.

Due Date: 22 Jul 2025

Owner: CHRIS BRANKIN

Meeting: 21 May 2025 NCFG COUNCIL MEETING, 3.1 General Business

Latest Update:

Waiting for latest salmon research to come in before progressing.

DEBBIE AMBLER | 27 Nov 2025

HABITAT PROJECT - SELWYN BLACKWATER

On Hold

To revisit Selwyn Blackwater submission to investigate what protections would need to be in place for the level of funding being sought.

Due Date: 17 Sept 2025

Owner: Lyndon Slater

Meeting: 23 Jul 2025 Council Meeting, 2.3 Selwyn Blackwater Habitat Project

Latest Update:

Currently seeking funding of \$65,000 which is required to get the QEII Covenant.

DEBBIE AMBLER | 27 Nov 2025

MOU with NZC

In Progress

That a more specific document be furthered through legal channels on the restructure of NCFG as outlined in the MOU with NZC.

Due Date: 26 Nov 2025

Owners: CHRIS BRANKIN, DAVE BARRON

Meeting: 17 Sept 2025 North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting, 2.4 MOU with NZC

Regulations Review - Use of Single Hooks

In Progress

That when considering fishing methods during the 2026/27 fishing regulations review, consideration be given to the use of single hooks. Staff to provide a recommendation to Council at the appropriate timing,

Due Date: 12 Dec 2025
Owner: Lyndon Slater
Meeting: 17 Sept 2025 North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting, 1.3 Council Time

Changing Policy on Regulation Setting

In Progress

That the topic of 'Changing Policy' in relation to setting dates for regulations be put on agenda for the Strategic Planning Workshop being held in late January 2026.

Due Date: 31 Jan 2026
Owner: ALAN STRONG
Meeting: 26 Nov 2025 NCFG Council Meeting, 2.4 Game Bird Regulations - 2026 Game Bird Season Dates

Latest Update:

move to 2026 workshop

ALAN STRONG | 17 May 2026

Selwyn Huts

In Progress

That an independent person who lives close to Te Waihora be asked to talk to Council to give his perspective about the Selwyn Huts situation.

Due Date: 18 Feb 2026
Owner: ALAN STRONG
Meeting: 26 Nov 2025 NCFG Council Meeting, 1.5 Council Time

Changes to Fish and Game Legislation

In Progress

That Cr Strong send the NZC Intent Policy regarding changes to Fish and Game Legislation.

L Slater to add to discussion.

Due Date: 18 Mar 2026
Owners: ALAN STRONG, Lyndon Slater
Meeting: 18 Feb 2026 North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting, 1.5 Council Time

Purpose and Priorities 2026-2027

In Progress

As part of the Operational Work Plan, key performance indicators be set for staff to achieve and measure Council's aspirations.

Due Date: 18 Mar 2026
Owner: Lyndon Slater
Meeting: 18 Feb 2026 North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting, 2.4 Confirm Purpose and Priorities Document for 2026-2027

Draft Communications & Engagement Strategy 2026-2028

In Progress

Request feedback from Councillors via email prior to 18 March 2026 and that J Meecham be invited to attend the next Council meeting to further discuss this paper.

Due Date: 18 Mar 2026
Owner: ALAN STRONG

Meeting: 18 Feb 2026 North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting, 3.2 Draft Communications Strategy 2026 - 2028

Dave Orr Paper on Fish Screens

Done

To send the D Bejakovichs' paper on fish screens to K Belcher.

Due Date: 18 Mar 2026

Owner: Lyndon Slater

Meeting: 18 Feb 2026 North Canterbury Fish and Game Council Meeting, 6.1 Public Session

2026/2027 Operational Work Plan

Done

Continue to develop the OWP and add Priority 8 to the list of Priorities.

Due Date: 20 May 2026

Owner: Lyndon Slater

Meeting: 18 Mar 2026 OWP & 2026/27 BUDGET MEETING, 2.1 Draft 2026/2027 Budget and Operational Work Plan

NZC Health and Safety Policy

Done

Write feedback to NZC prior to 26 March 2026.

Due Date: 20 May 2026

Owner: Lyndon Slater

Meeting: 18 Mar 2026 OWP & 2026/27 BUDGET MEETING, 3.5 NZC Health and Safety Policy

April 14th 2026

Game Bird Reference Group

1. Introductions

- Members Present: Colin Hewson, James Kean, Malcolm Main, Craig Maylam
- Members Absent: Tom Power
- Councillors Present: Andy Tannock (Teams)
- Informal Member: Daniel Maxwell
- Staff Present: Matthew Garrick

2. Presentation

- MPI/HPAI sampling and banding
- Harvest Estimates 2025
- March Aerial Survey results
- Shoveler monitoring and regulations
- Proposed regulation changes/process

3. Open Discussion

- MPI/Banding
 - Keen interest in continuing a banding programme, particularly around Te Waihora
 - Significant interest within the group to use volunteers to prepare duck trapping sites to facilitate NCFG to continue banding during summer and allow F&G to do with limited resources
 - Action: MG to discuss interest of Council, pending outcome determining next steps
- Proposed regulation changes/process
 - Discussion around how the Reference Group will contribute to the process, particularly during the consultation period. **To be determined at next meeting.**
 - *Reduce Opening Weekend greylard limit from 20 to 15*
 - Majority of group did not support this change due to perceptions around the importance of hunter satisfaction.
 - Viewed this as “lowering the bar” and a disadvantage to the keen guys that put in the work to be successful on Opening weekend.
 - Expressed concerns about this change encouraging “sky-busting” and hunters staying longer to reach their limits
 - Some discussion around perceptions differing around the country (i.e., A/W hunters being happy with 8 ducks).
 - *Increase summer season paradise shelduck limit from 15 to 20 in Area A*
 - Majority of group generally supportive of liberalisations of summer season, although there were concerns expressed about a higher limit resulting in birds being put in offal holes.
 - *Extend summer paradise shelduck season until the end of March*

- Supportive of this change as providing more opportunity for a bird that is doing well in the Canterbury plains
- *Increase black swan regular season bag limit from 2 to 3 (liberal frameworks)*
 - Would like to see this back to 5, as 5 is at a level people will target them in paddocks during the regular season that may help reduce farmer conflict
- *Extend pheasant hunting opportunities*
 - General support amongst the group of providing more opportunities. Some expression of interest in maintaining the three weekends which are working well

4. Potential Next Meeting Discussions

- Game bird regulation setting

5. Ongoing regulation considerations (being considered as part of current regulation setting process)

- Regular season swan bag limit
- Liberalisation of paradise shelduck regulations (summer season)
- Pheasant season liberalisations



Technical Report

High Country Lakes Summer Survey 2025/26

North Canterbury Fish & Game

Harry Graham-Samson & H. Sanders Garrick

April 2026

Introduction

Creel surveys (also known as angler surveys) are a type of in-person survey designed to gain insight about angler efforts, angler success, harvest, and fishery perceptions. Creel surveys can be a valuable tool for both on-going and periodic fisheries monitoring (Nieman et al. 2021), and have long been used by fisheries managers to assess the status of recreational fisheries and inform management.

Lakes in the upper Rakaia and Waimakariri river catchments (hereafter ‘High Country Lakes’; Fig. 1), represent an important fishing area for anglers in North Canterbury. Data from the 2021/22 National Angler Survey indicates that fishing on all High Country Lakes accounts for nearly 20% of total angler effort in the region, with Lake Coleridge alone making up approximately 10% of the total angler effort and 40% of all lake fishing in the region (Stoffels & Unwin 2023).

The High Country Lakes summer survey was initiated in 2024 by North Canterbury Fish & Game staff to monitor angler success and perceptions on this important lake fishery. During the first year, only information from Lake Coleridge was released due to small sample size on other High Country Lakes. This is the first year data from all surveyed lakes has been published.

Methods

Beginning in December 2024, staff at North Canterbury Fish & Game included angler surveys as a part of their standard compliance efforts between 1 December and 31 March. When approached for routine licence checks, compliant anglers were asked about the fish they caught, the fishing methods they used, and how long they had been fishing that day. Anglers were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of the fish they caught, their angling success (catch rate), and their overall fishing experience. The survey was designed to be consistent with similar creel surveys from Lake Taupō (Department of Conservation 2025) and the Otago Fish & Game region (Sowry 2023).



Figure 1. The location of lakes included in the North Canterbury High Country Lakes Summer Survey during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 fishing seasons.

Catch rate was calculated according to the formula:

$$CR = \frac{\sum f}{\sum h}$$

In which *f* represents the number of fish an angler caught, and *h* represents the number of hours the angler reported fishing, and fish condition factor was calculated according to the formula (DOC 2025):

$$CF = \left(\frac{Weight}{Length^3} \right) \times 3612.8$$

During analysis, data for Lake Coleridge was segregated by season, while data between the two seasons was aggregated for the other lakes due to small sample size. Lakes Selfe and Pearson are excluded from the lake specific section of this year's report, as the number of surveys conducted between the two seasons was insufficient (Table 1).

Results

Since December 2024 staff have conducted a total of 382 creel surveys across 6 lakes in the Upper Rakaia and Upper Waimakariri catchments.

Table 1. The number of creel surveys conducted between the 2024/25 and 2025/26 fishing seasons on all lakes included in the North Canterbury High Country Lakes Summer Survey.

Lake	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Coleridge	134	128	262
Lyndon	30	49	79
Georgina	16	11	27
Grasmere	10	1	11
Pearson	2	0	2
Selfe	1	0	1

Of the lakes surveyed, Lake Coleridge had the highest average catch rate at 0.47 fish per hour (+/- 0.01), followed by Lake Lyndon at 0.21 fish per hour (+/- 0.03).

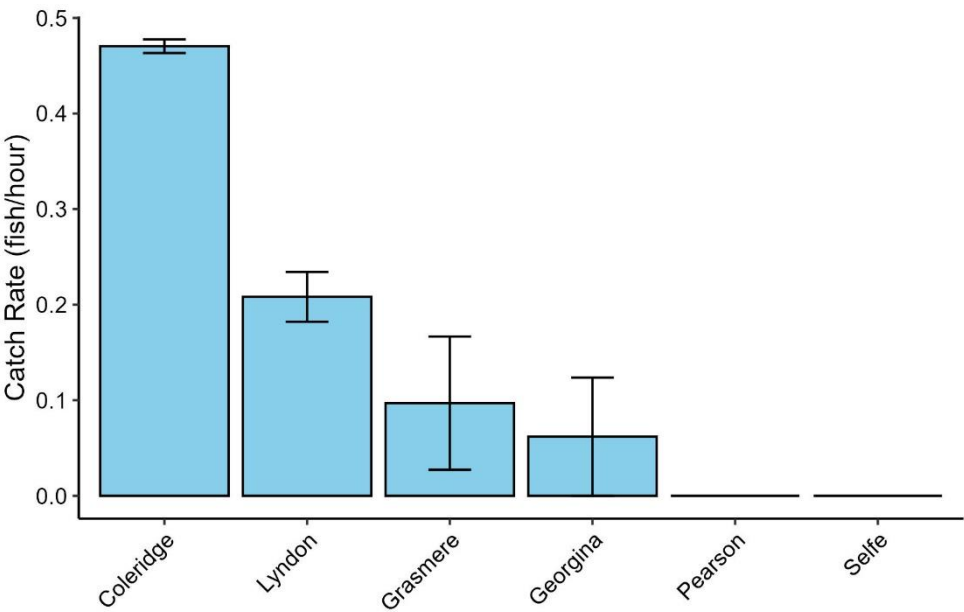


Figure 2. Average catch rate for salmonids on the North Canterbury High Country Lakes between summer 2024/25 and summer 2025/26, with error bars depicting standard error.

Angler satisfaction with the overall fishing experience was similar across all six surveyed lakes. Satisfaction with the angling experience was similar between Lakes Coleridge, Lyndon, Grasmere, and Georgina, but was lower for Lakes Pearson and Selfe where a total of 3 anglers reported catching no fish. Finally, satisfaction with fish condition appeared to vary by the average condition of fish harvested on the lake.

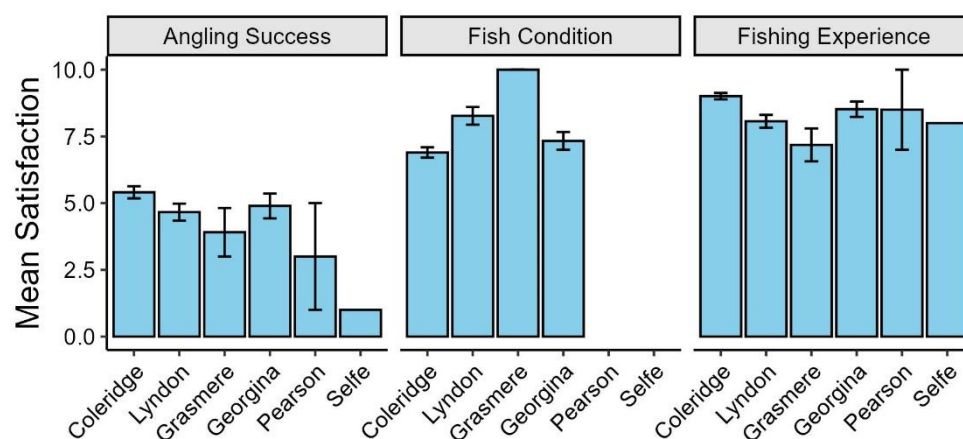


Figure 3. Mean angler satisfaction on the North Canterbury High Country Lakes with error bars depicting standard error. Angler satisfaction for Lake Coleridge consists of data from the 2025/26 summer period while, due to small sample size, all other lakes depict data from the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods.

Lake Coleridge

Estimated Catch Rate

The estimated catch rate for the 2025/26 summer period on Lake Coleridge was 0.46 fish per hour (one fish every 2 hours 10 minutes).

The estimated hit rate (including both fish that were landed and fish that were hooked but not landed) was 0.80 fish per hour (one fish every 1 hour 15 minutes).

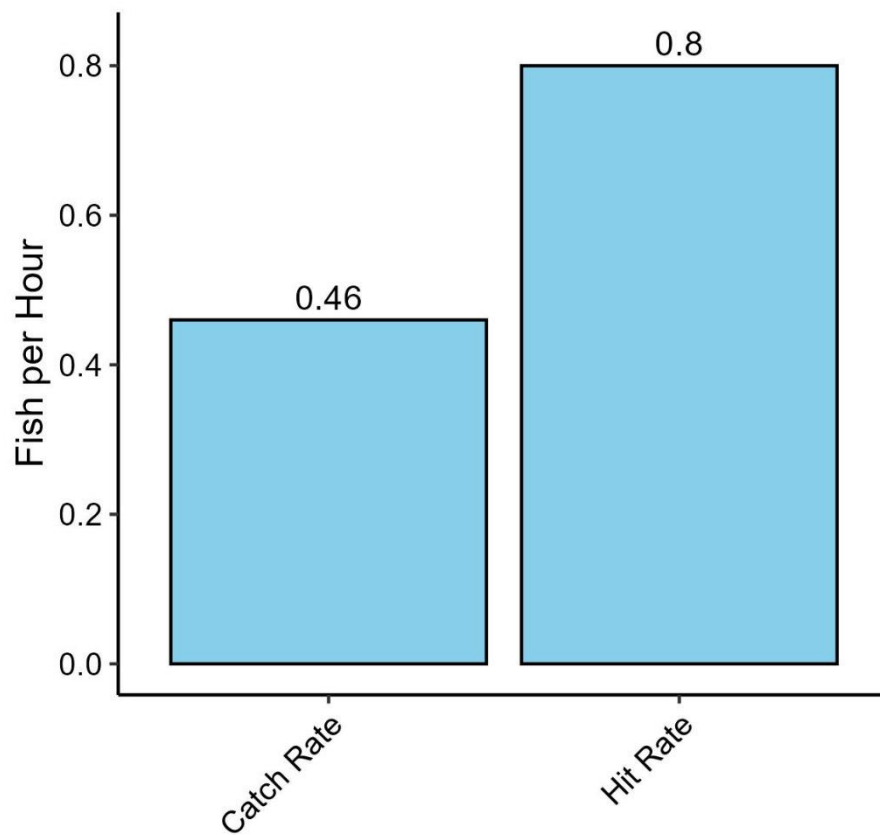


Figure 4. Average catch (fish hooked and landed) and hit rate (fish hooked, regardless of whether the fish was landed) for salmonids for the summer 2025/26 fishing period on Lake Coleridge.

Fishing Method

Similar to summer 2024/25, trolling was the most popular fishing method for anglers at Lake Coleridge, with 52% of anglers surveyed trolling the lake. Spin fishing is also popular, and was used by 38% of anglers surveyed. The proportion of anglers using jigging increased by 10% from the 2024/25 season.

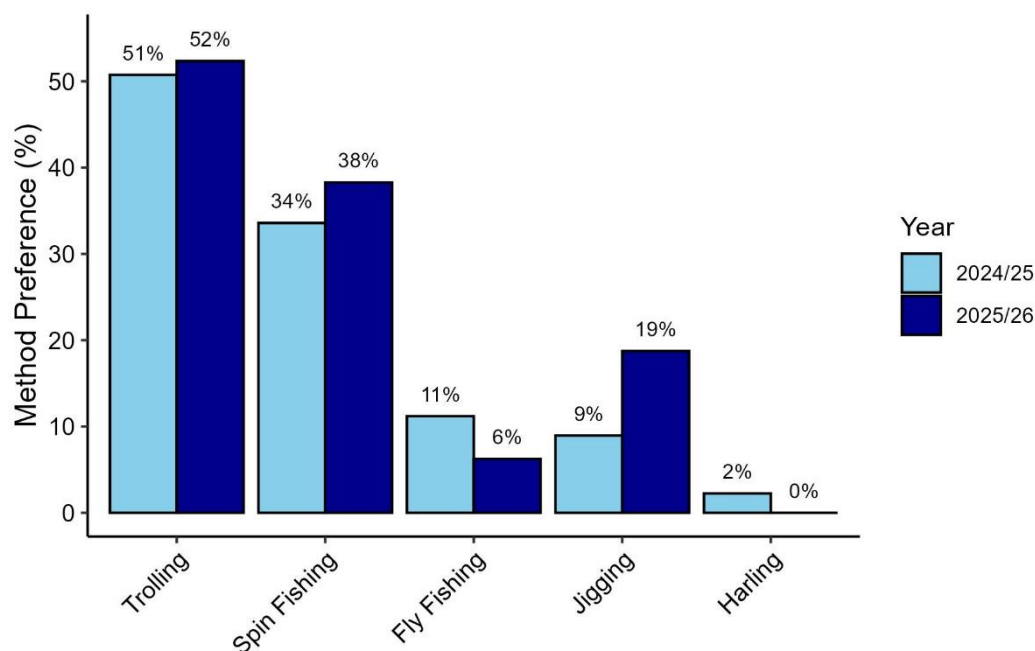


Figure 5. Preferred fishing method for anglers fishing Lake Coleridge during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods. Because some anglers reported using multiple fishing methods, percents add up to more than 100.

Catch and release percentages

Anglers provided details for 145 caught fish, 24 of which were released as undersized. Catch and release varied by species; 51% of caught salmon, 33% of rainbow trout, and 29% of brown trout were harvested. The proportion of all species that were released was substantially higher than during the 2024/25 summer period.

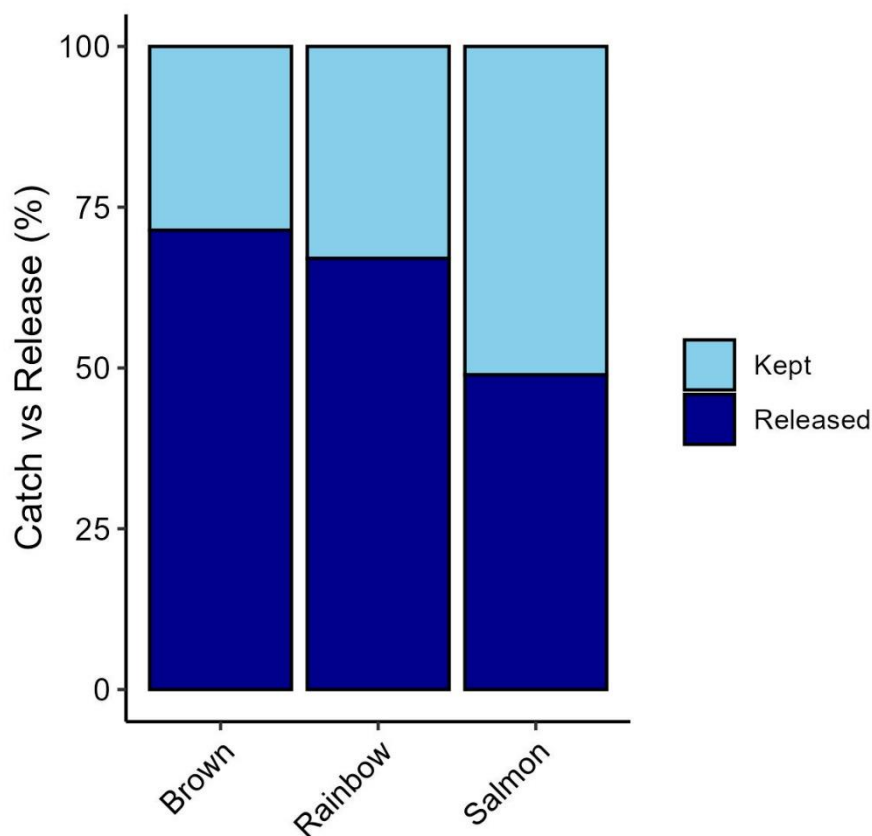


Figure 6. Proportion of fish caught that were kept vs released for each species on Lake Coleridge during the 2025/26 summer period.

Fish Size and Condition

Mean length of reported fish was 54 cm for brown trout, 47 cm for rainbow trout, and 41 cm for salmon. Both Salmon and Trout harvested from Lake Coleridge during the 2025/26 summer season had a lower average condition score than those harvested during the 2024/25 summer season.

A fish's condition factor is calculated using the length and weight of a salmon or trout to reflect its body condition. Typically, salmon or trout with a condition factor of 40+ are considered to have a high body condition, while fish with a condition factor of <30 are considered to be in poor condition.

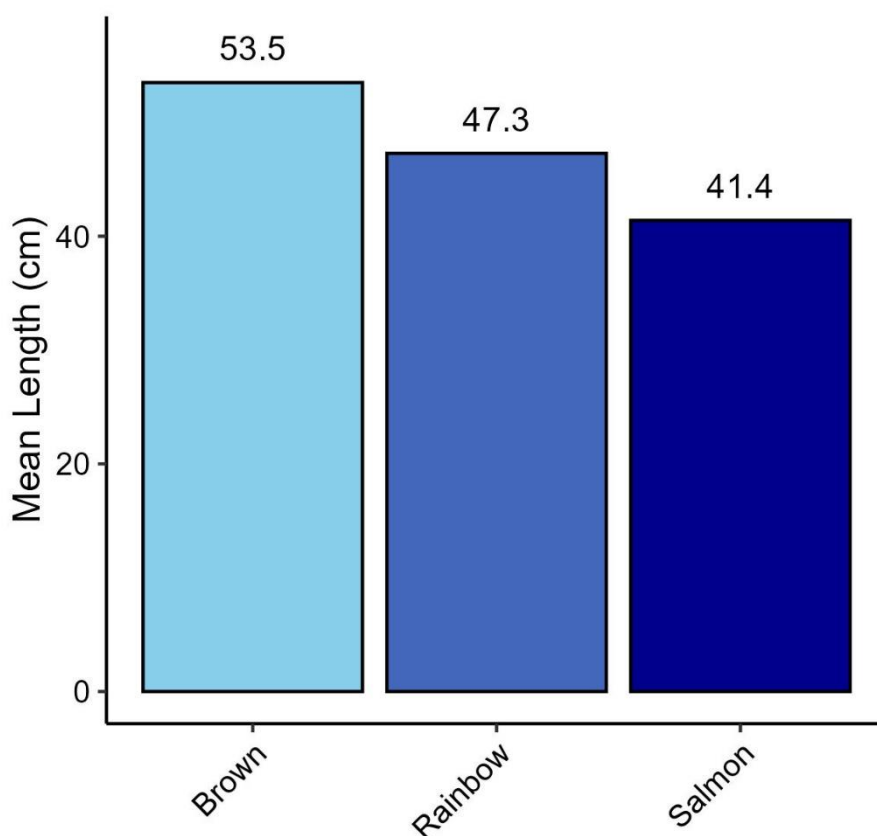


Figure 7. Average length of fish harvested for each species during the 2025/26 summer period on Lake Coleridge.

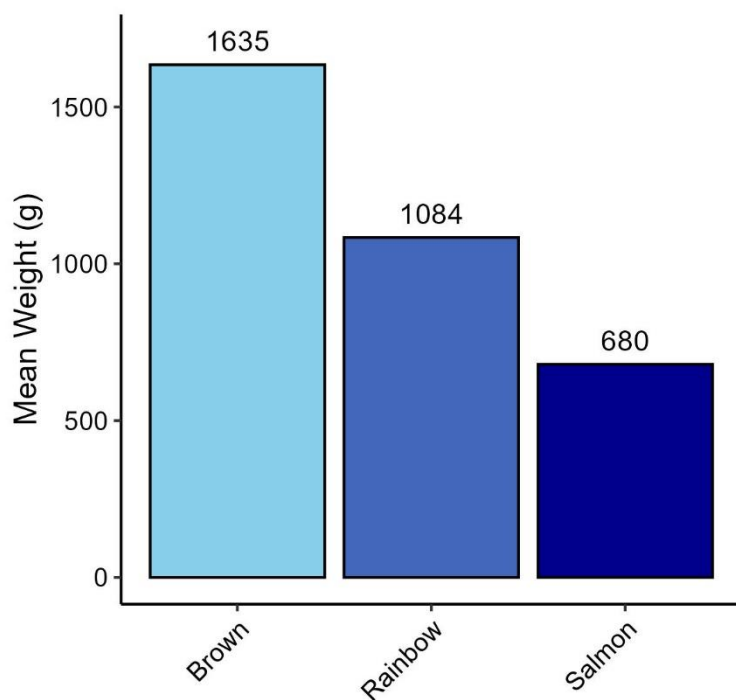


Figure 8. Average weight of fish harvested for each species during the 2025/26 summer period on Lake Coleridge.

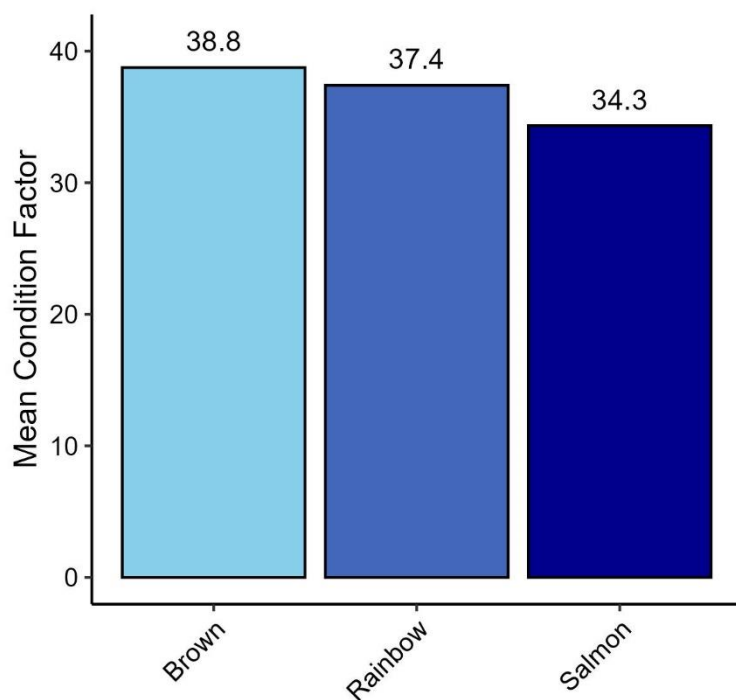


Figure 9. Average condition factor of fish harvested for each species during the 2025/26 summer period on Lake Coleridge.

Angler Satisfaction

When it came to angler satisfaction, 58% of anglers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the condition of fish they caught. Only 34% of anglers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their angling success; 10% reported they were dissatisfied and 17% reported they were very dissatisfied with their angling success. Finally, 93% of anglers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall fishing experience.

Anglers on average rated the condition of fish they caught at 6.7, their angling success at 5.4, and their overall fishing experience at 9.0.

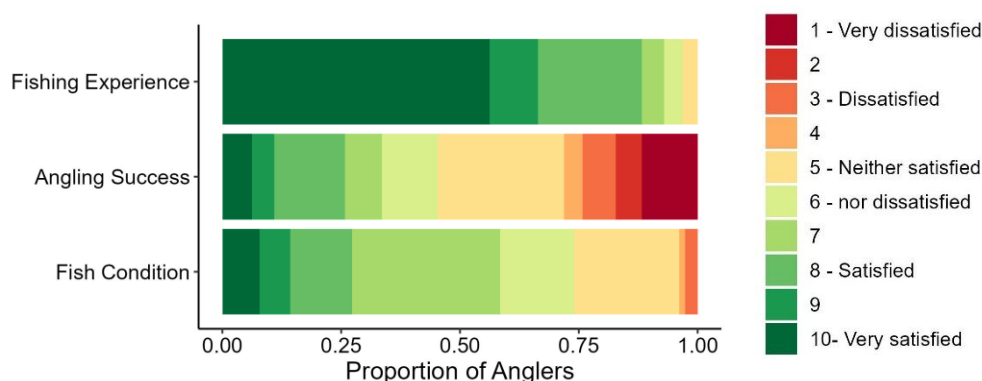


Figure 10. Angler satisfaction with the overall fishing experience, angling success, and condition of fish caught during the 2025/26 summer period on Lake Coleridge.

Angler satisfaction with fish condition and angling success was lower than the summer of 2024/25, but satisfaction with fishing experience was similar.

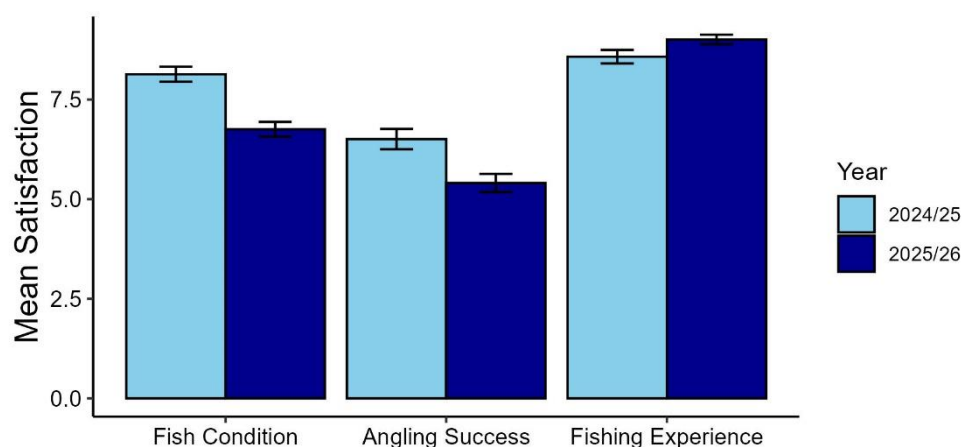


Figure 11. Mean angler satisfaction with the overall fishing experience, angling success, and condition of fish caught on Lake Coleridge during each year surveyed.

Lake Lyndon

Estimated Catch Rate

The estimated catch rate for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods on Lake Lyndon was 0.21 fish per hour (one fish every 4 hours 45 minutes).

The estimated hit rate (including both fish that were landed and fish that were hooked but not landed) was 0.43 fish per hour (one fish every 2 hours 20 minutes).

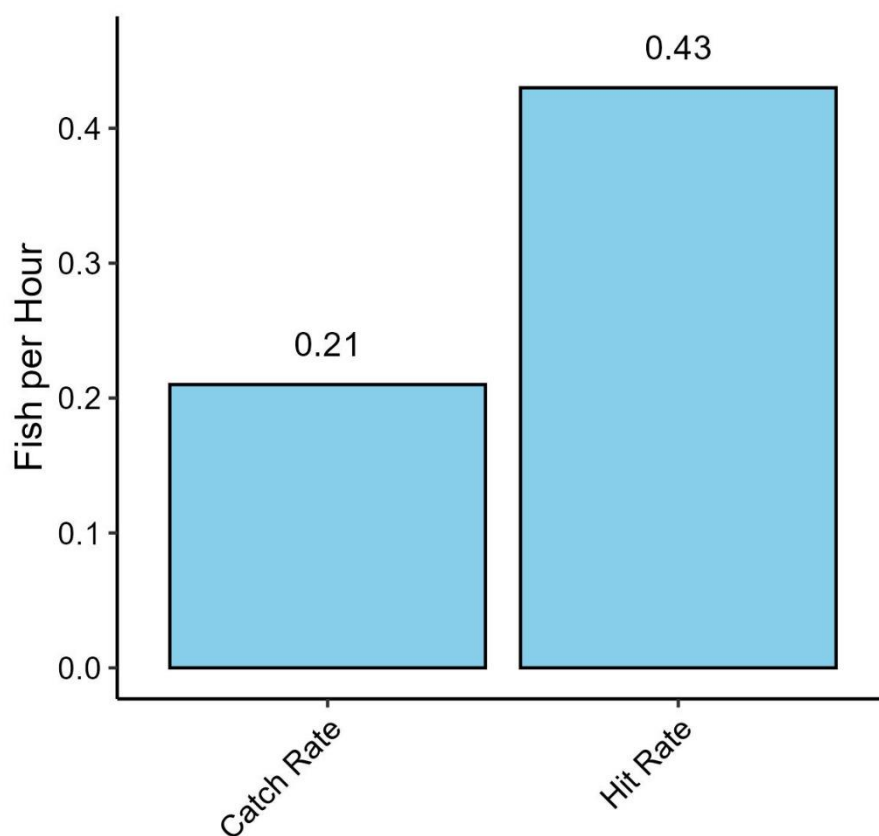


Figure 12. Average catch (fish hooked and landed) and hit rate (fish hooked, regardless of whether the fish was landed) for salmonids for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods on Lake Lyndon.

Fishing Method

Between the summers of 2024/25 and 2025/26, spin fishing was the most popular fishing method for anglers at Lake Lyndon, with 65% of anglers surveyed utilizing this method. Fly fishing was also popular, and was used by 27% of anglers surveyed. None of the surveyed anglers had used harling or jigging.

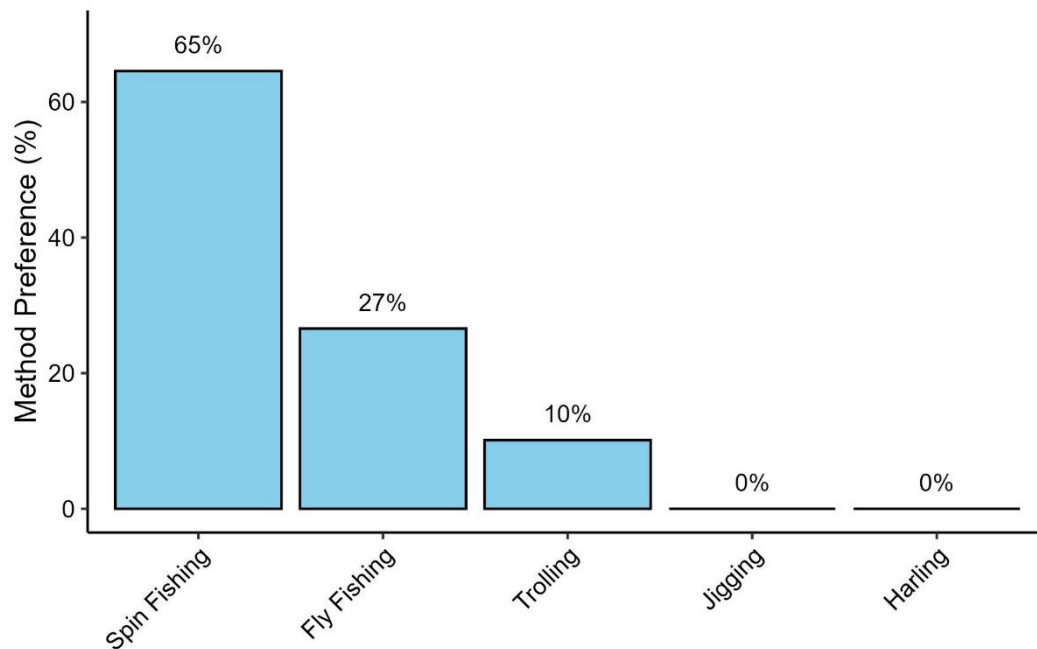


Figure 13. Preferred fishing method for anglers fishing Lake Lyndon during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods. Because some anglers reported using multiple fishing methods, percents add up to more than 100.

Catch and release percentages

Between the summers of 2024/25 and 2025/26, anglers on Lake Lyndon provided details for 41 caught fish. Catch and release varied by species; 33% of brown trout and 45% of rainbow trout were harvested.

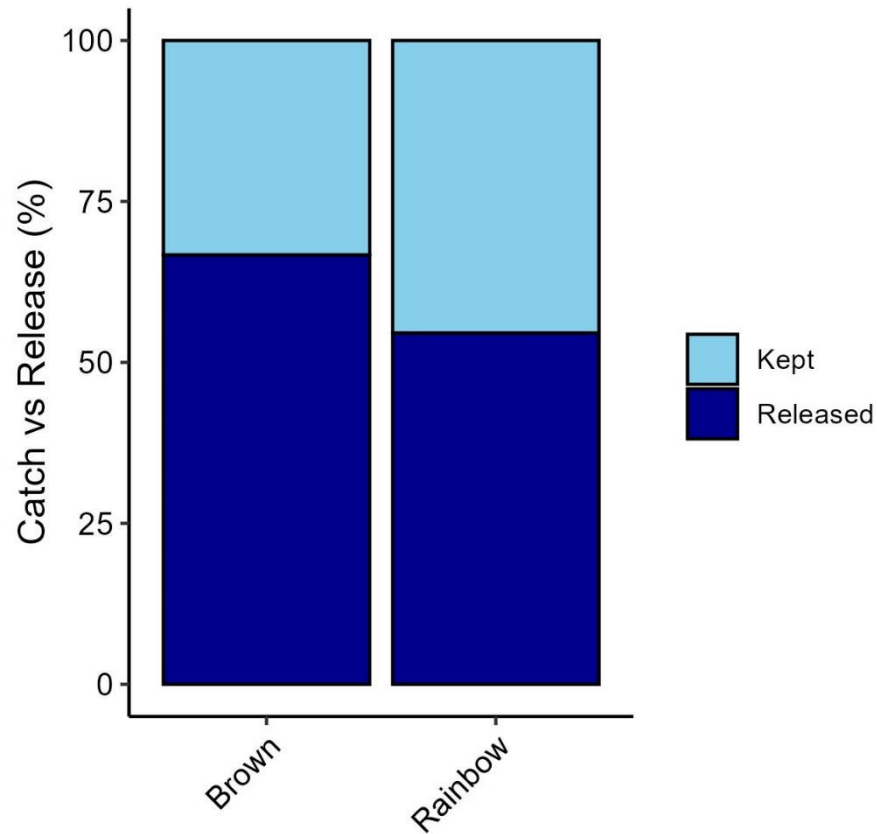


Figure 14. Proportion of fish caught that were kept vs released for each species on Lake Lyndon during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods.

Fish Size and Condition

Mean length of reported fish was 50 cm for brown trout and 41 cm for rainbow trout. Mean condition factor of brown trout harvested from Lake Lyndon was 39.3 while condition factor of rainbow trout was 56.

A fish's condition factor is calculated using the length and weight of a salmon or trout to reflect its body condition. Typically, salmon or trout with a condition factor of 40+ are considered to have a high body condition, while fish with a condition factor of <30 are considered to be in poor condition.

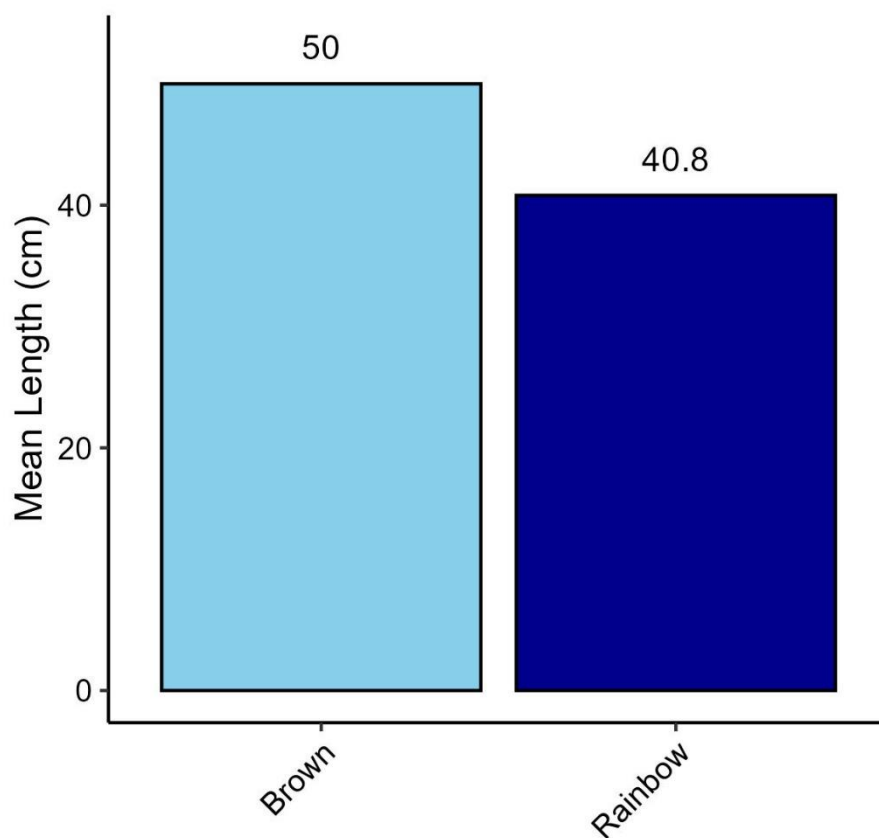


Figure 15. Average length of fish harvested for each species during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods on Lake Lyndon.

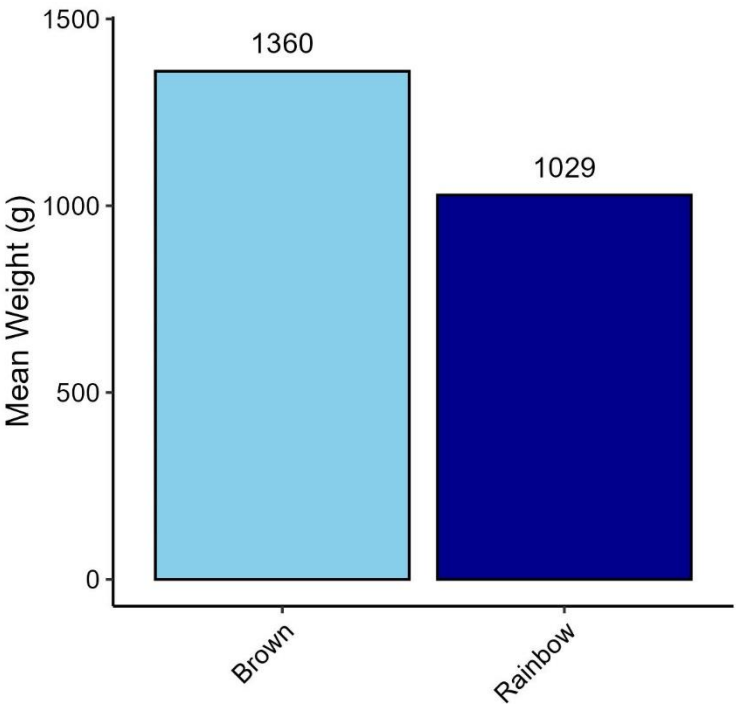


Figure 16. Average weight of fish harvested for each species during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods on Lake Lyndon.

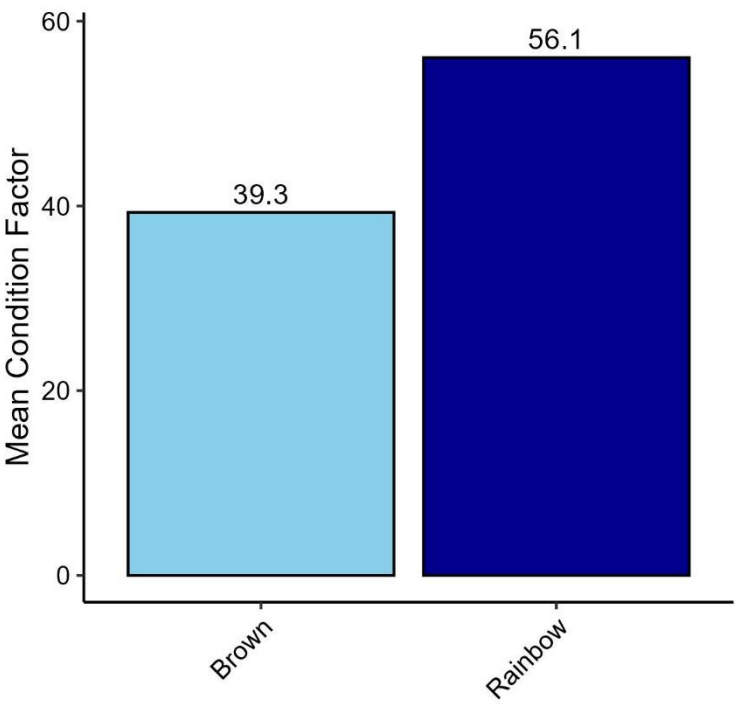


Figure 17. Average condition factor of fish harvested for each species during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods on Lake Lyndon.

Angler Satisfaction

When it came to angler satisfaction, 96% of anglers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the condition of fish they caught. Only 32% of anglers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their angling success; 22% reported they were dissatisfied and 25% reported they were very dissatisfied with their angling success. Finally, 80% of anglers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall fishing experience.

Anglers on average rated the condition of fish they caught at 8.3, their angling success at 4.7, and their overall fishing experience at 8.1.

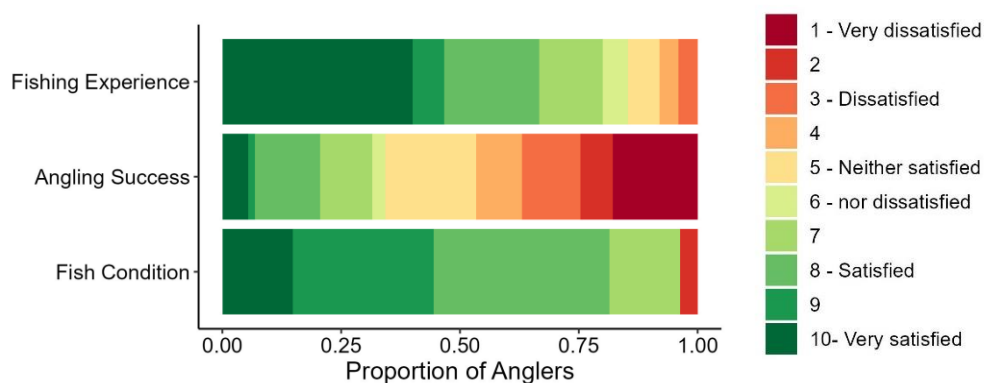


Figure 18. Angler satisfaction with the overall fishing experience, angling success, and condition of fish caught during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods on Lake Lyndon.

Lake Georgina

Between the summers of 2024/25 and 2025/26, anglers on Lake Georgina only reported catching 3 fish, all of which were released.

Estimated Catch Rate

The estimated catch rate for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods on Lake Georgina was 0.05 fish per hour (one fish every 20 hours 45 minutes).

The estimated hit rate (including both fish that were landed and fish that were hooked but not landed) was 0.43 fish per hour (one fish every 5 hours 12 minutes).

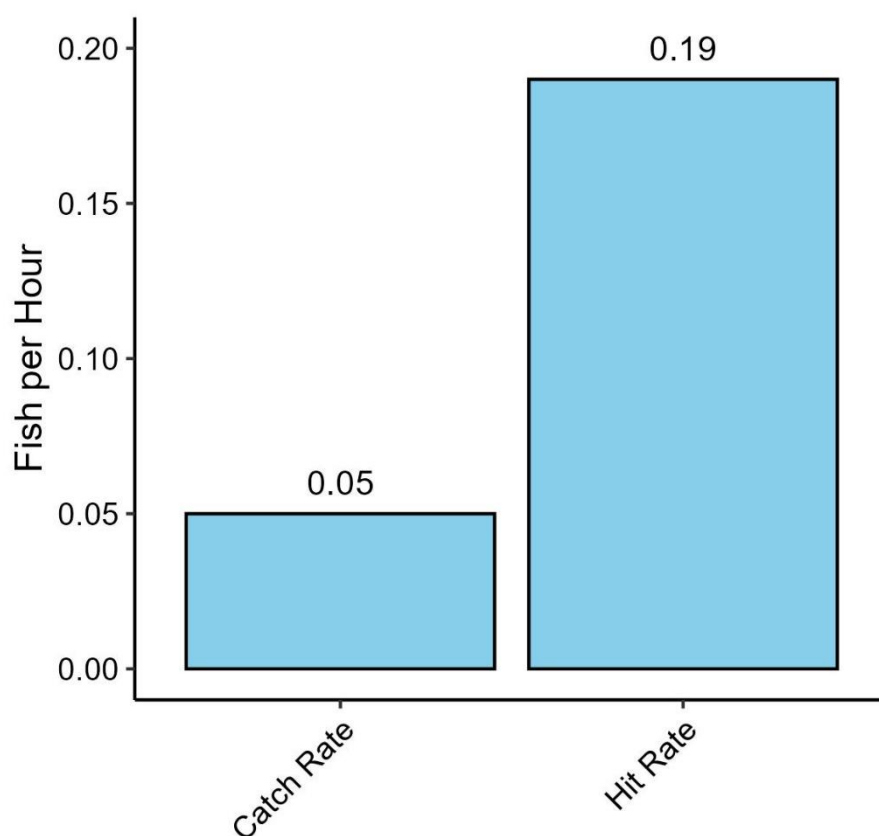


Figure 19. Average catch (fish hooked and landed) and hit rate (fish hooked, regardless of whether the fish was landed) for salmonids for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods on Lake Georgina.

Fishing Method

Between the summers of 2024/25 and 2025/26, fly fishing was the most popular fishing method for anglers at Lake Georgina, with nearly two thirds of anglers surveyed utilizing this method.

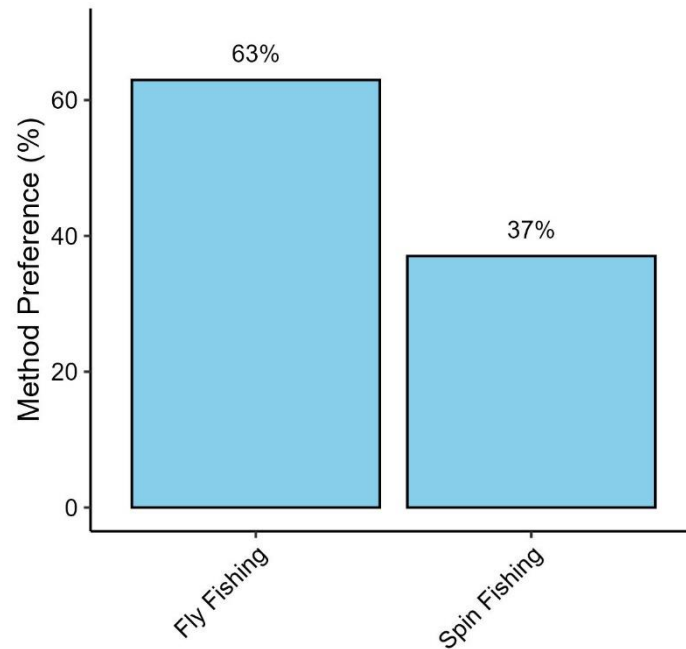


Figure 20. Preferred fishing method for anglers fishing Lake Georgina during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods. Because some anglers reported using multiple fishing methods, percents add up to more than 100.

Angler Satisfaction

When it came to angler satisfaction, all 3 anglers who reported catching fish also reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the condition of fish they caught. Only 25% of anglers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their angling success; 30% reported they were dissatisfied and 17% reported they were very dissatisfied with their angling success. Finally, 92% of anglers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall fishing experience.

Anglers on average rated the condition of fish they caught at 7.3, their angling success at 4.9, and their overall fishing experience at 8.5.

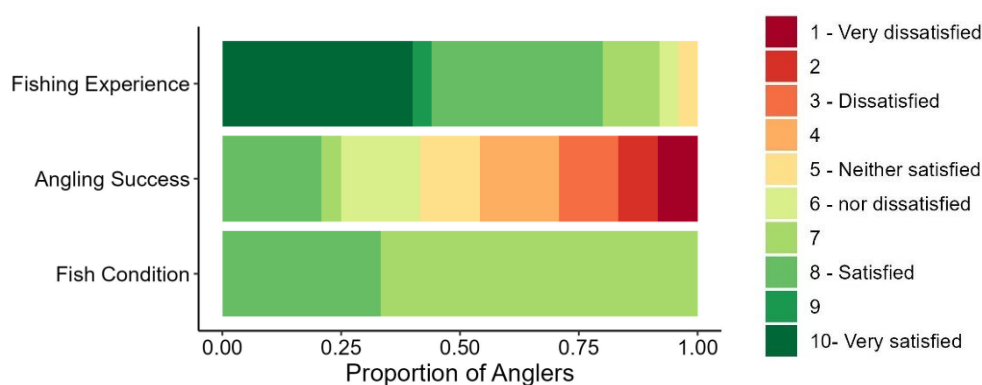


Figure 21. Angler satisfaction with the overall fishing experience, angling success, and condition of fish caught during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods on Lake Georgina.

Lake Grasmere

Between the summers of 2024/25 and 2025/26, anglers on Lake Grasmere only reported catching 2 fish, both of which were kept. Fish harvested from Lake Grasmere were large (55 and 53 cm) and had excellent reported body condition (> 40).

Estimated Catch Rate

The estimated catch rate for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods on Lake Grasmere was 0.05 fish per hour (one fish every 20 hours 45 minutes).

The estimated hit rate (including both fish that were landed and fish that were hooked but not landed) was 0.14 fish per hour (one fish every 7 hours 8 minutes).

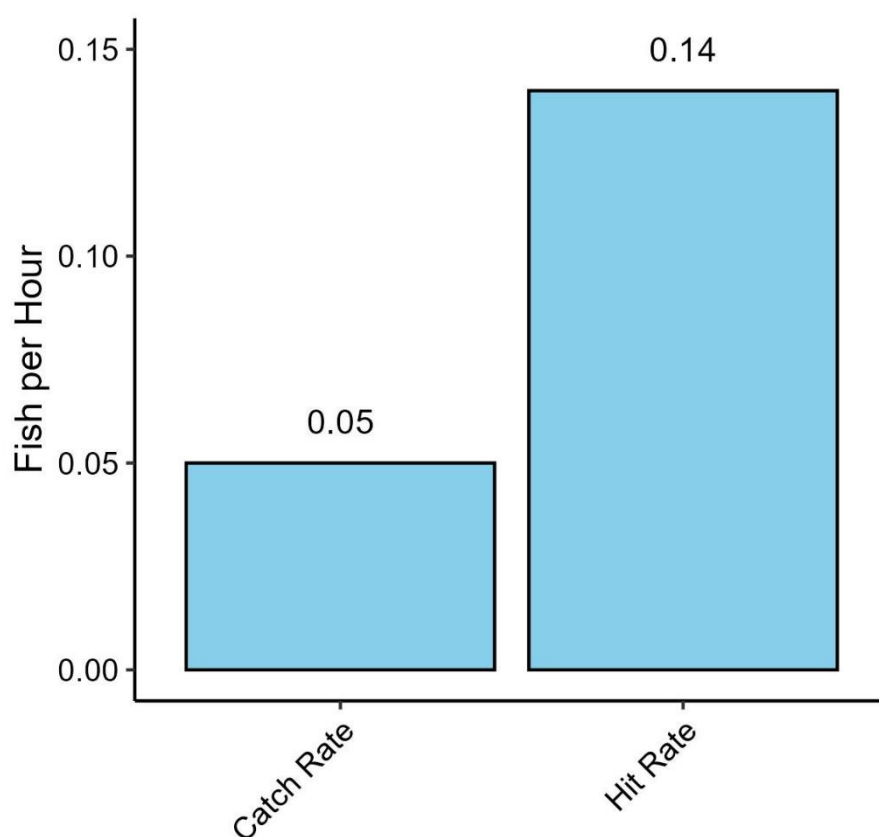


Figure 22. Average catch (fish hooked and landed) and hit rate (fish hooked, regardless of whether the fish was landed) for salmonids for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods on Lake Grasmere.

Fishing Method

Between the summers of 2024/25 and 2025/26, spin fishing was the most popular fishing method for anglers at Lake Grasmere, with 55% of anglers surveyed utilizing this method. Fly fishing was also popular, reported by 45% of anglers.

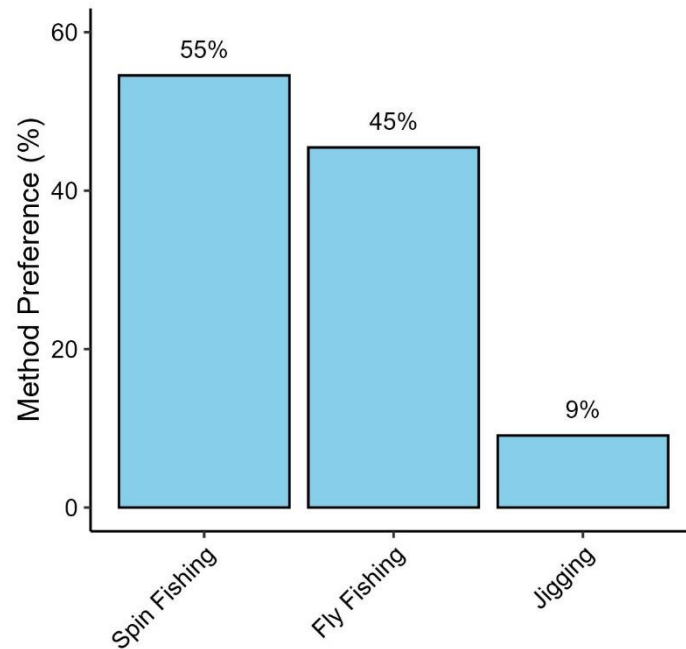


Figure 23. Preferred fishing method for anglers fishing Lake Grasmere during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods. Because some anglers reported using multiple fishing methods, percents add up to more than 100.

Angler Satisfaction

When it came to angler satisfaction, both anglers who reported catching fish also reported that they were very satisfied with the condition of fish they caught. Only 27% of anglers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their angling success; 18% reported they were dissatisfied and 55% reported they were very dissatisfied with their angling success. Finally, only 64% of anglers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall fishing experience.

Anglers on average rated the condition of fish they caught at 10.0, their angling success at 3.9, and their overall fishing experience at 7.2.

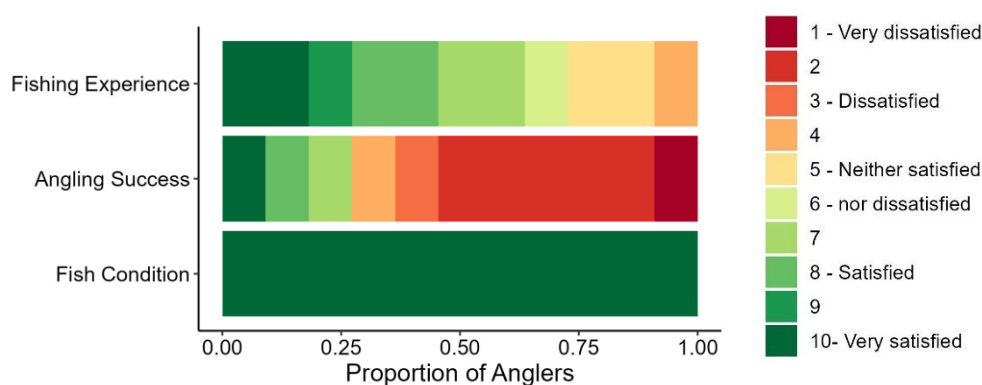


Figure 24. Angler satisfaction with the overall fishing experience, angling success, and condition of fish caught during the 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer periods on Lake Grasmere.

Discussion

During the 2025/26 fishing season, angler satisfaction was decreased on Lake Coleridge relative to the previous for both fish condition and angling success (Graham-Samson & Sanders Garrick 2025). It is not surprising that anglers were less satisfied with the condition of fish caught, as on average the fish caught were of reduced body condition relative to the previous season. We also observed a greater proportion of fish released due to being undersized this season, and a greater proportion of fish being released overall. However, anglers also reported feeling less satisfied with their angling success despite similar rates of angling success between the two years, both in the average rate of fish hooked as well as the rate of fish landed per hour. These results indicate that harvesting high condition fish contributes to the perception of angling success for anglers on Lake Coleridge.

Results of this survey demonstrate how the various High Country Lakes provide anglers with different angling experiences. Lake Coleridge is used primarily by boat anglers and is expected to produce good condition fish for harvest. While boats are permitted on Lake Lyndon, the lake is primarily fished by spin fisherman who experience a similar level of success to spin anglers on Lake Coleridge. Meanwhile, Lakes Grasmere and Georgina with their similarly low catch rates are better suited for anglers looking for a challenge. However, for those anglers who do manage to catch a fish on Lake Grasmere, they are likely to be very pleased with the size of the fish they land.

Continued creel surveys throughout the High Country Lakes will allow us to monitor change, including changes in fish condition, angler success, and angler satisfaction, and to identify opportunities to improve angler experience.

References

- Department of Conservation (DOC). 2025. Creel survey snapshot 2024/25. [Creel survey snapshot 2024-25: Taupō Trout Fishery](#)
- Graham-Samson, Harry, & H. Sanders Garrick. 2025. Lake Coleridge Summer Survey 2024/25. North Canterbury Fish & Game. [ColeridgeCreelSurvey_2425.pdf](#)
- Nieman, Chelsey L., Carolyn Iwicki , Abigail J. Lynch , Greg G. Sass , Christopher T. Solomon , Ashley Trudeau & Brett van Poorten. 2021. Creel Surveys for Social Ecological-Systems Focused Fisheries Management, Reviews in Fisheries Science & Aquaculture. doi.org/10.1080/23308249.2020.1869696
- Sowry, Ben. 2023. Project 1122 – Creel Surveys of Lake Hawea. Otago Fish & Game. [Hawea-Angler-Survey-Report-2023.pdf](#)
- Stoffels, Rick, & Martin Unwin. 2023. Angler usage of New Zealand lake and river fisheries: Results from the 2021/22 National Angler Survey. National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research Ltd. [NIWA Client report](#)

Appendix I: Survey Questionnaire

Name of Angler:

Fishing Licence Number:

Surveyor:

Date:

Time of Encounter:

Fishing method (circle one):

Fly Spin Trolling Other:

Location (circle one)

Lyndon	Georgina	Pearson
Coleridge	Selfe	Grasmere

What time did you start fishing?

How many hours have you been fishing for approximately (specific to each lake)?

How many fish have you hooked (and not landed; specific to each lake)?

How many fish have you landed (specific to each lake)?

	Species			Kept or Released	Legal Length		Length (cm)	Weight (grams)
Fish 1	R	B	S	Kept / Released	Y	N		
Fish 2	R	B	S	Kept / Released	Y	N		
Fish 3	R	B	S	Kept / Released	Y	N		
Fish 4	R	B	S	Kept / Released	Y	N		
Fish 5	R	B	S	Kept / Released	Y	N		
Fish 6	R	B	S	Kept / Released	Y	N		
Fish 7	R	B	S	Kept / Released	Y	N		
Fish 8	R	B	S	Kept / Released	Y	N		

How would you rate the size and condition of fish you were catching? (1 being extremely dissatisfied and 10 being extremely satisfied)

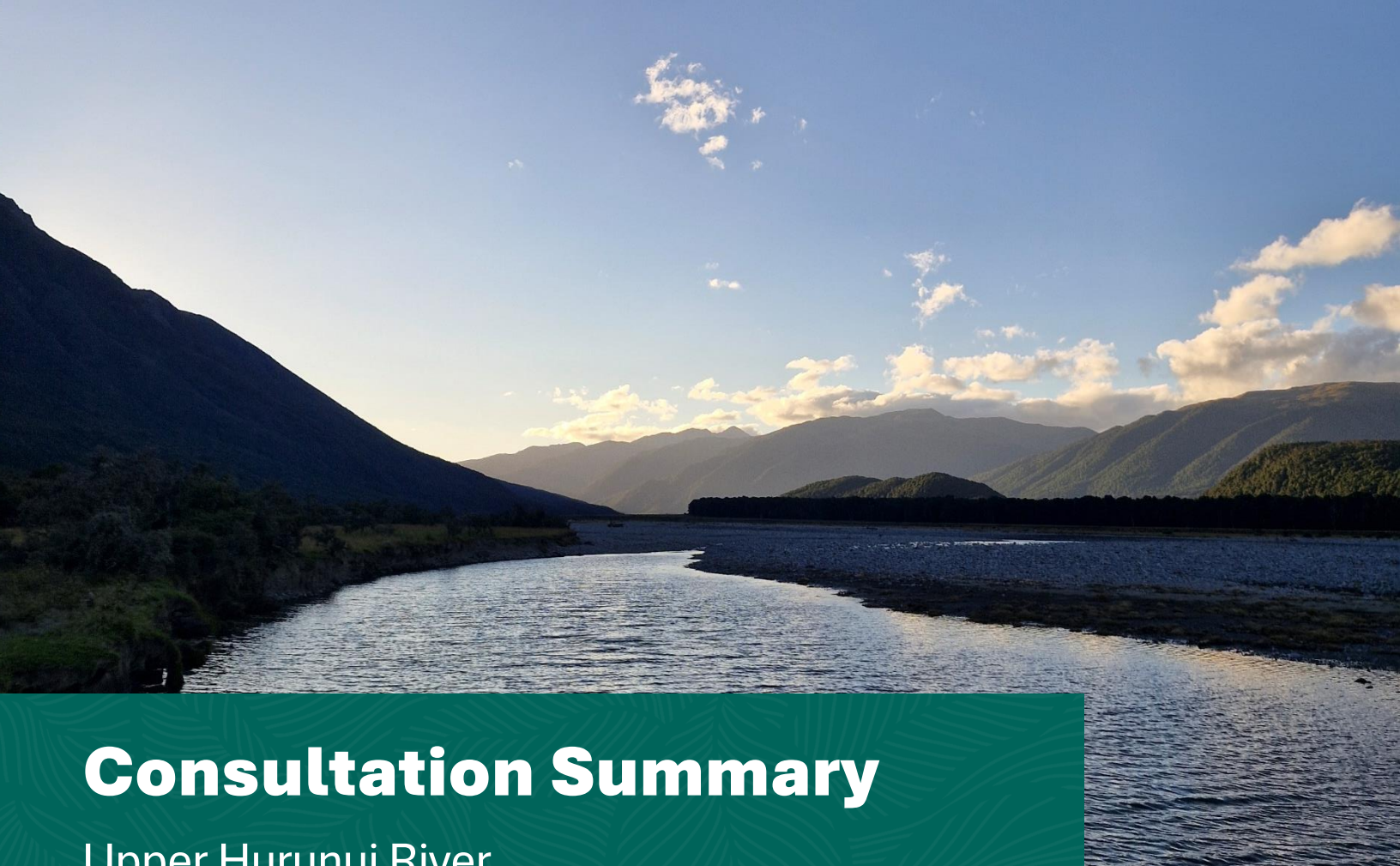
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 NA

How would you rate your angling success? (1 being extremely dissatisfied and 10 being extremely satisfied)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 NA

How would you rate your fishing experience? (1 being extremely dissatisfied and 10 being extremely satisfied)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 NA

A wide-angle photograph of the Upper Hurunui River. The river flows from the foreground towards the background, flanked by steep, forested mountains. The sky is a clear blue with scattered white clouds. The water reflects the light from the sky and the surrounding landscape.

Consultation Summary

Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery Trial

April 2026

Prepared by H. Sanders Garrick

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Consultation Summary

Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery Trial

April 2026

North Canterbury Fish & Game

Executive Summary

Between 23 March – 19 April 2026, staff conducted a consultation asking Designated Waters anglers for feedback on a variety of potential changes to the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery.

Anglers were asked to rank their support for 5 possible regulatory futures for the North Branch and 4 regulatory futures for the South Branch.

Anglers expressed similar levels of support for maintaining the controlled fishery and for returning the area to standard Designated Waters regulations on both the North and South Branch. On the North Branch, anglers also expressed similar levels of support for shifting the boundary of the Controlled Fishery from its current location upstream to the swing bridge.

The majority of anglers were opposed to conversion of the existing booking system to a ballot system and to changing the rules of the Controlled Fishery to only require a booking during peak angling months.

Introduction

Following the implementation of the Designated Waters licence, feedback from the angling community indicated that the intense angling pressure on the Upper Hurunui Fisheries had continued. In the years leading up to and following the implementation of the Designated Waters licence, high levels of use had resulted in conflicts between anglers, guides, and landowners, leading some anglers to feel dissatisfied with their angling experience.

The Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery was introduced as a 2-year trial to manage angling pressure on the Upper North and South Branch sections to maintain a high-quality

angling and wilderness experience. The trial period allows Fish & Game to collect data to help determine whether these rivers need to continue as Controlled Fisheries and, if so, how to implement a Controlled Fishery in a way that most benefits anglers.

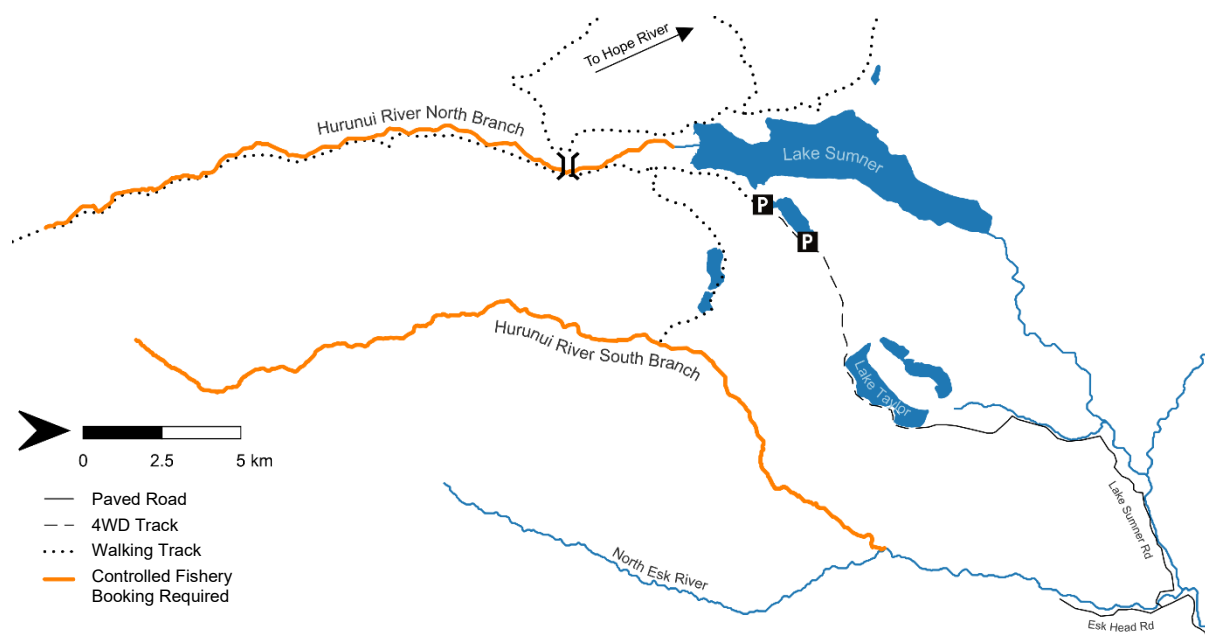


Figure 1. The location of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery, depicted in orange.

During March-April 2026, North Canterbury Fish & Game sought feedback on a variety of aspects of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery, including:

- Anglers' experience with the online booking system
- Potential regulatory changes to the Controlled Fishery

Feedback from this consultation will be provided to the North Canterbury Fish & Game Council and the Minister for Hunting & Fishing to support decision making regarding the continuation of and/or changes to the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery.

Objective

To gauge angler support for the continuation of or various potential changes to the Upper Hurunui Controlled Fishery and provide an opportunity for feedback from anglers and other stakeholder groups.

Survey Methods

A consultation survey was conducted between 23 March and 19 April 2026. This consultation consisted of an online survey (via Survey Monkey) in addition to the opportunity to provide comment. The link for the consultation survey was posted on the Fish & Game website, advertised via social media, and sent directly to anglers who had purchased a North Canterbury Designated Waters licence during the last three years. Email contacts were limited to anglers who had provided a valid email address at point of purchase and consented to receive information from Fish & Game. In total, we sent email invitations to 3,751 anglers.

The survey portion of the consultation consisted of a series of questions to identify subsegments of the angling population (e.g. resident anglers, non-resident anglers, guides), followed by a series of questions aimed at gauging angler support for various potential regulatory futures for the Upper Hurunui Controlled Fishery. Detailed information regarding the challenges that led to the implementation of a trial Controlled Fishery was provided to anglers in the form of an information packet, which was included in contact emails, linked in the body of the survey, and provided on the Fish & Game website. The information packet also included a brief discussion of the pros and cons of each potential regulatory change. The information document and full survey questionnaire are enclosed and can be located in Appendix III.

During this survey, anglers were asked to rank their support for five potential regulatory futures for the North Branch of the Hurunui and five potential regulatory futures for the South Branch of the Hurunui. Support was selected from one of three options for each potential regulatory future: support, neutral, or do not support.

Additionally, all participants were given the opportunity to provide comment. Comments were collected in response to the prompt: Please take this opportunity to provide any additional feedback on the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery Trial. Feedback from the comment portion of the consultation can be located in Appendix I. Additional feedback from neighbouring landowners and the guides association can be located in Appendices II and III.

Data Analysis

As of 15 March 2026, 7,261 anglers had purchased a North Canterbury Designated Waters licence between the 2023/24 and 2025/26 fishing seasons. We estimated margin of error according to the formula:

$$\text{Margin Of Error} = Z \times \frac{(\sqrt{p(1-p)})}{\sqrt{n \times (N-1)/(N-n)}}$$

In which N represents the number of Designated Waters anglers (7,261), n represents sample size, Z represents the z-statistic associated with the desired confidence interval (1.96 for 95% CI) and *p* represents the hypothesized standard deviation (typically 0.5).

According to this calculation, the margin of error for this sample is approximately 6%. In the context of this style of survey, the margin of error is interpreted as the 95% confidence interval around the proportion of anglers who selected a given response. For example, if 50% of respondents reported that they supported a given action, we can report with 95% confidence that the true proportion of North Canterbury Designated Waters anglers that support the given action is between 44-56%. We do not estimate margin of error for the smaller subgroups of anglers, as the true population size for several groups is unknown.

Prior to analysis, Fish & Game staff reviewed the list of submissions and compared submissions to licence purchase records to confirm that anglers were correctly attributed to either the resident or non-resident angling category. Additionally, staff reviewed the list and identified submissions from anglers who work as fishing guides or own huts in the Upper Hurunui area.

Angler support is interpreted as the proportion of anglers who responded 'Support' to each potential regulatory future, while the proportion of anglers who responded 'Do Not Support' is interpreted as angler opposition. Angler support and opposition for each option is broken down based on angling subgroup (i.e., resident, non-resident, guide, or hut owner), whether or not the angler held a North Canterbury Designated Waters licence since the implementation of the Controlled Fishery, whether or not the angler reported having fished either branch of the Upper Hurunui River during the past five years, and whether or not the angler reported having fished any North Canterbury Designated Waters since the implementation of the Controlled Fishery.

Results

In total, 222 anglers submitted responses to the consultation survey: 202 resident anglers, 5 non-residents, 12 fishing guides, and 3 hut owners. Nearly two thirds of respondents reported having fished the Upper Hurunui River during the past five fishing seasons, and 41% reported having fished the North Canterbury Designated Waters during the past two fishing seasons (i.e., since the implementation of the Controlled Fishery). Nearly 20% of respondents did not hold a North Canterbury Designated Waters Licence since the implementation of the Controlled Fishery, however all of these anglers had purchased a North Canterbury Designated Waters Licence the year prior.

Table 1. The proportion of respondents that fell into each angling use category by angler type.

Angling Use Category	Resident Anglers	Non-Resident Anglers	Guides
Fished the Upper Hurunui in the last 5 years and other North Canterbury Designated Waters in the last 2 years	26%	80%	75%
Fished the Upper Hurunui in the last 5 years and held a North Canterbury Designated Waters licence but did not fish any Designated Waters in the last 2 years	25%	-	-
Fished the Upper Hurunui in the last 5 years but has not held a North Canterbury Designated Waters licence in the last 2 years	6%	-	8%
Has not fished the Upper Hurunui in the last 5 years but has fished other North Canterbury Designated Waters	11%	-	17%
Has not fished the Upper Hurunui in the last 5 years or any North Canterbury Designated Waters in the last 2 years, but did hold a North Canterbury Designated Waters Licence	22%	-	-
Has not fished the Upper Hurunui in the last 5 years or held a North Canterbury Designated Waters Licence in the last 2 years	11%	20%	-

The Booking System

Only 39% of survey respondents reported trying to use the booking system at any point over the past two fishing seasons. Some of those who had not attempted to use the booking system commented they felt having to go online to book the fishery impeded their ability to fish spontaneously as the weather suited.

Of those anglers who had attempted to utilise the booking system, 78% reported having tried to secure a booking on more than one occasion. These anglers reported, more often than not, they were unable to successfully book the river for their preferred dates or suitable alternative dates. Only 11% of anglers who had attempted to use the booking system on multiple occasions reported they were able to book the dates they had wanted more often than not.

Similarly, 58% of anglers who had only attempted to utilise the booking system once reported that they were unable to book their preferred dates or a similar alternative. Meanwhile, 32% of anglers who only attempted to use the booking system once reported that they were able to book the dates they wanted and the remaining 10% were able to book suitable alternative dates.

Comments supplied during this survey as well as last year's Designated Water user survey indicated widespread frustration with the online booking system. Many anglers expressed frustration with the perception that bookings were monopolised by a handful of anglers – several citing last year's report which indicated one angler booked 32 angling days on the North Branch¹. Others expressed frustration with the system not holding their booking in cart while they entered all their information and losing the booking to a faster typer. Several expressed further frustration that there was no easy method to cancel a booking if weather conditions or other factors prevented an angler from fishing – preventing local anglers from taking advantage of days the river would be otherwise unoccupied.

¹ Sanders Garrick, H. 2025 North Canterbury Designated Waters angler survey. North Canterbury Fish & Game.

The North Branch

Overall, two regulatory futures were tied in their support for the North Branch.

Approximately 43.1% (95% CI: 36.7-49.6%) of anglers reported that they supported a return of the Controlled Fishery to standard Designated Waters regulations, and 42.6% (36.2-49.1%) reported that they supported shifting the boundary of the Controlled Fishery to the swing bridge. These two options also had similar levels of opposition: 35.3% (28.8-41.8%) reporting that they did not support the return to standard Designated Waters regulations and 34.8% (28.3-41.3%) reporting that they did not support shifting the downstream boundary to the swing bridge.

The next most supported regulatory future was to maintain the current booking system. The level of support received for maintaining the current system (34.3% support; 27.8-40.8%) was not significantly different from the two most supported options, or the fourth most supported option: requiring a booking only during peak months. Similarly, the level of opposition (41.2% do not support; 34.7-47.7%) was only significantly different to the most opposed option: conversion to a ballot system.

A conversion to a ballot system was the least supported (18.6% support; 12.2-25.1%) and most opposed (59.8% do not support; 53.3-66.3%) potential regulatory future. Requiring a booking only during peak months was not statistically different from conversion to a ballot system in support (27.0% support; 20.5-33.4%), but received less opposition (43.6% do not support; 37.2-50.1%).

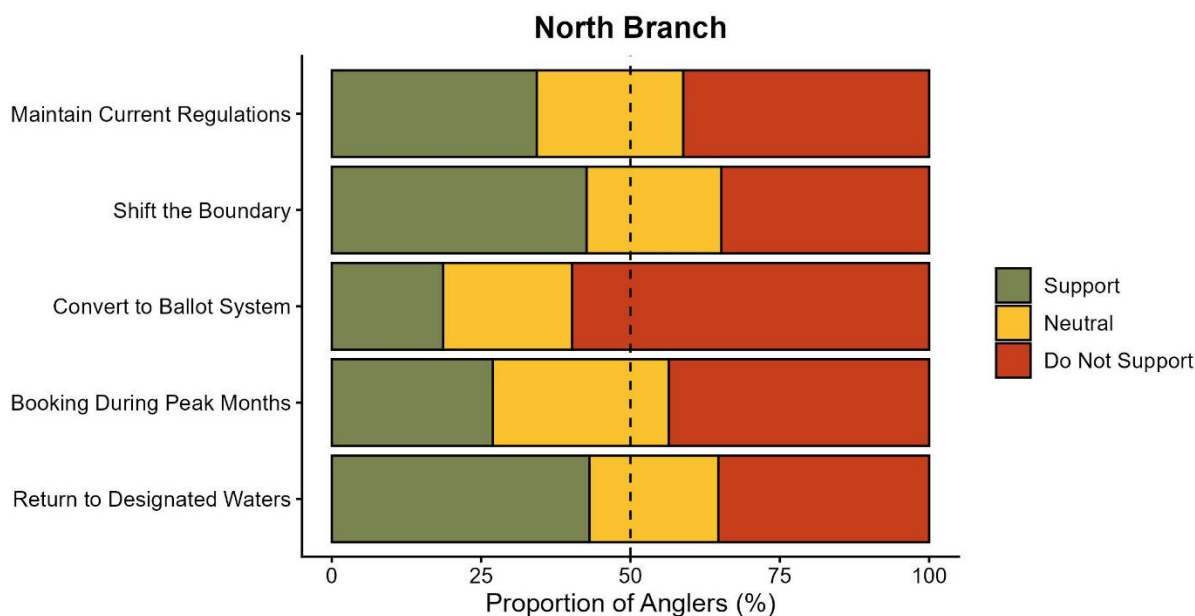


Figure 2. Angler support for each proposed regulatory future for the North Branch of the Upper Hurunui River.

Support for each proposed regulatory future differed between the different angler subgroups. Non-resident anglers had similar levels of preference for shifting the Controlled Fishery boundary (60.0% support) and converting the Controlled Fishery to a ballot system (60.0% support). However, not a single non-resident reported support for maintaining the current regulations. For fishing guides, a return to the standard Designated Waters regulations was the only regulatory future that received less than 50% opposition. Two of the three surveyed local hut owners supported shifting the Controlled Fishery boundary and returning the area to standard Designated Waters regulations. Finally, hut owners were split with equal support and opposition for maintaining the current regulations.

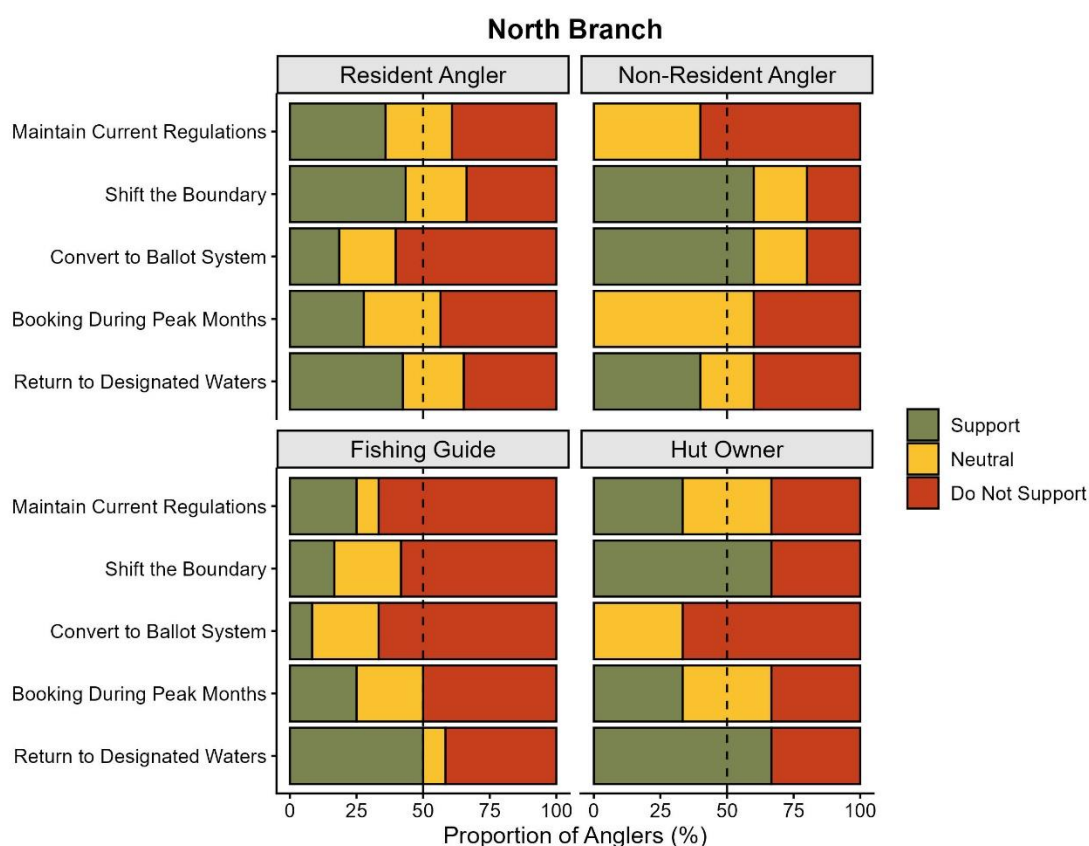


Figure 3. Angler support for each proposed regulatory future for the North Branch of the Upper Hurunui River, separated by angler subgroup.

Support for the potential regulatory futures also varied between anglers who did and did not hold a North Canterbury Designated Waters licence since the implementation of the Controlled Fishery. In particular, anglers who had not held a Designated Waters licence

during the past two seasons expressed greater opposition for maintaining the current regulations – 51.5% of non-licence holders do not support vs. 39.2% of licence holders.

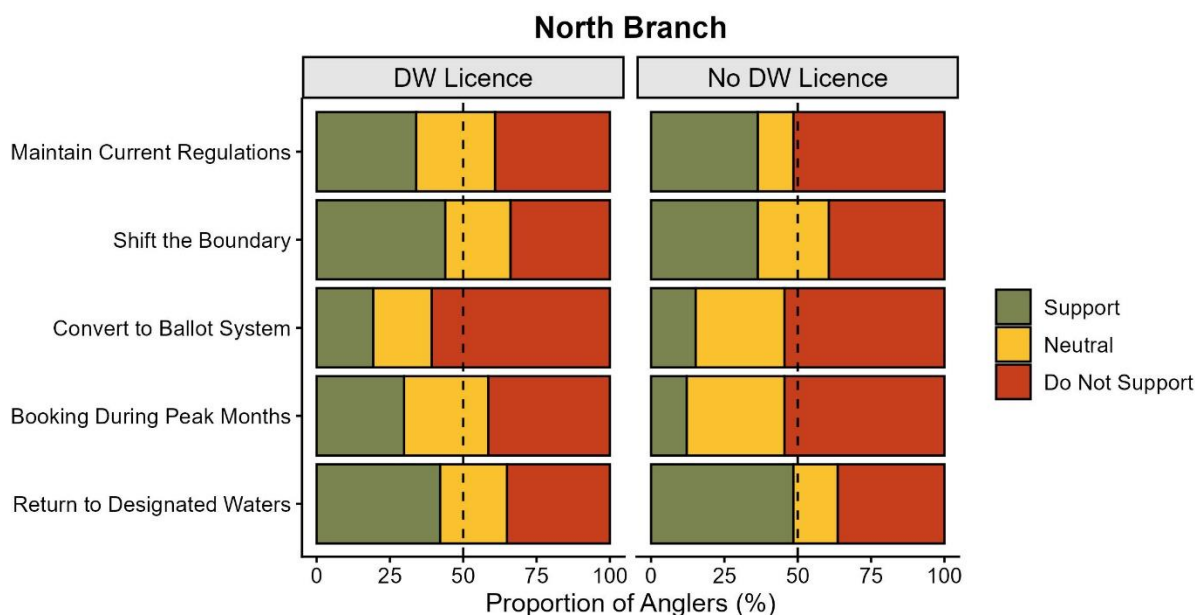


Figure 4. Angler support for each proposed regulatory future for the North Branch of the Upper Hurunui River, separated by whether or not that angler had held a North Canterbury Designated Waters licence since the implementation of the Upper Hurunui Controlled Fishery.

Additionally, support for the potential regulatory futures varied between anglers who had fished the Upper Hurunui River in the past 5 years and those who had not. Anglers who reported fishing the Upper Hurunui River were less supportive of maintaining current regulations (27.7% support vs. 43.5% of anglers who had not fished the Upper Hurunui), and were less supportive of shifting the boundary of the Controlled Fishery (37.8% support vs. 49.4% of anglers who had not fished the Upper Hurunui). Conversely, anglers who reported fishing the Upper Hurunui River were more supportive of a return to standard Designated Waters regulations (47.9% support) compared to anglers who had not (36.5% support).

Finally, support for the potential regulatory futures did not vary substantially by whether or not anglers reported having fished other North Canterbury Designated Waters since the implementation of the Controlled Fishery.

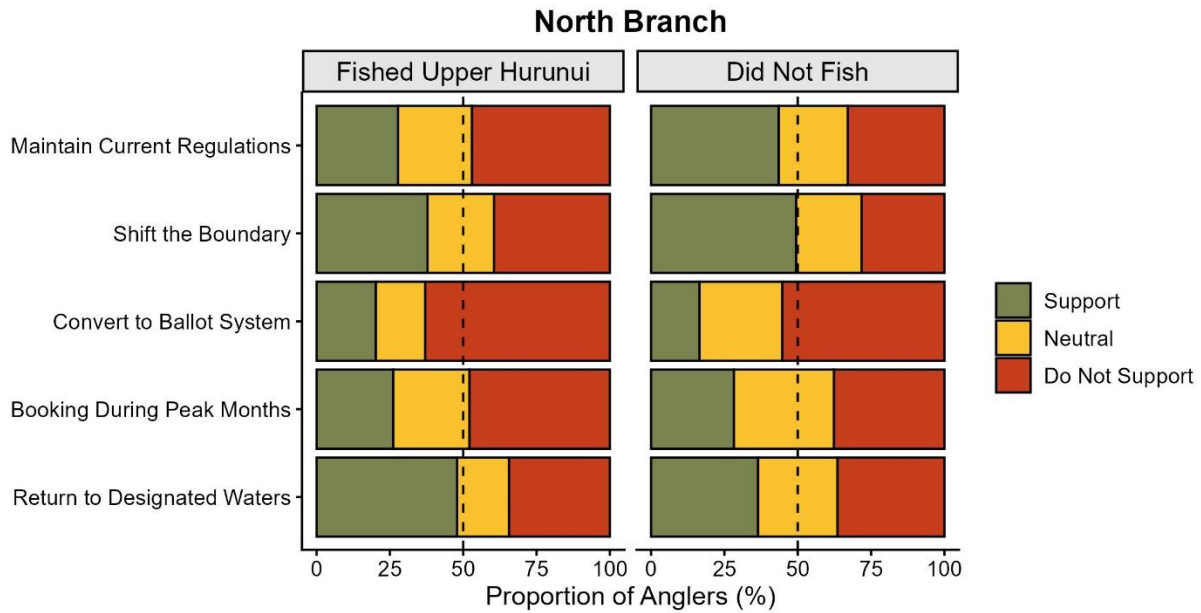


Figure 5. Angler support for each proposed regulatory future for the North Branch of the Upper Hurunui River, separated by whether or not that angler had reported fishing either branch of the Upper Hurunui River during the past five years.

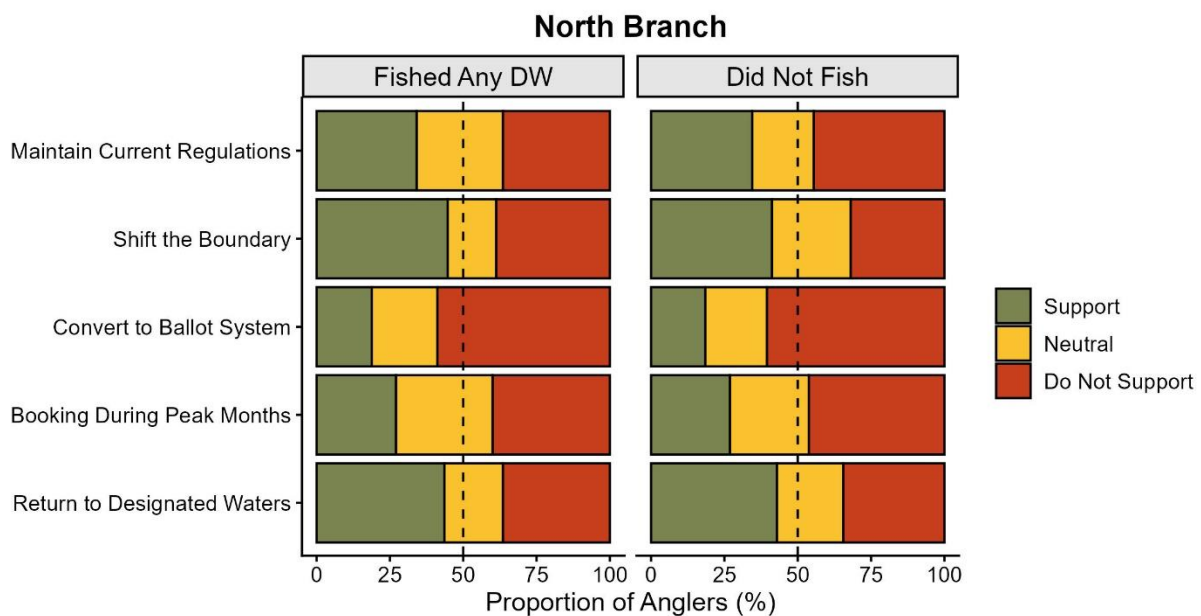


Figure 6. Angler support for each proposed regulatory future for the North Branch of the Upper Hurunui River, separated by whether or not that angler had reported fishing any North Canterbury Designated Water since the implementation of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery.

The South Branch

Overall, more anglers supported the South Branch of the Upper Hurunui River returning to standard Designated Waters Regulations than any other regulatory future (40.8% support; 34.3-47.3%). Returning to standard Designated Waters regulations was not significantly more supported than maintaining the current regulations (31.8% support; 25.4-38.3%), but was more supported than the other two options. The proportion of anglers who supported maintaining the current regulations was not significantly different from any of the other potential regulatory futures.

There was no significant difference between the amount of opposition received by any of the potential regulatory futures, except for conversion to a ballot system which was the most opposed option (58.7% do not support; 52.2-65.2%).

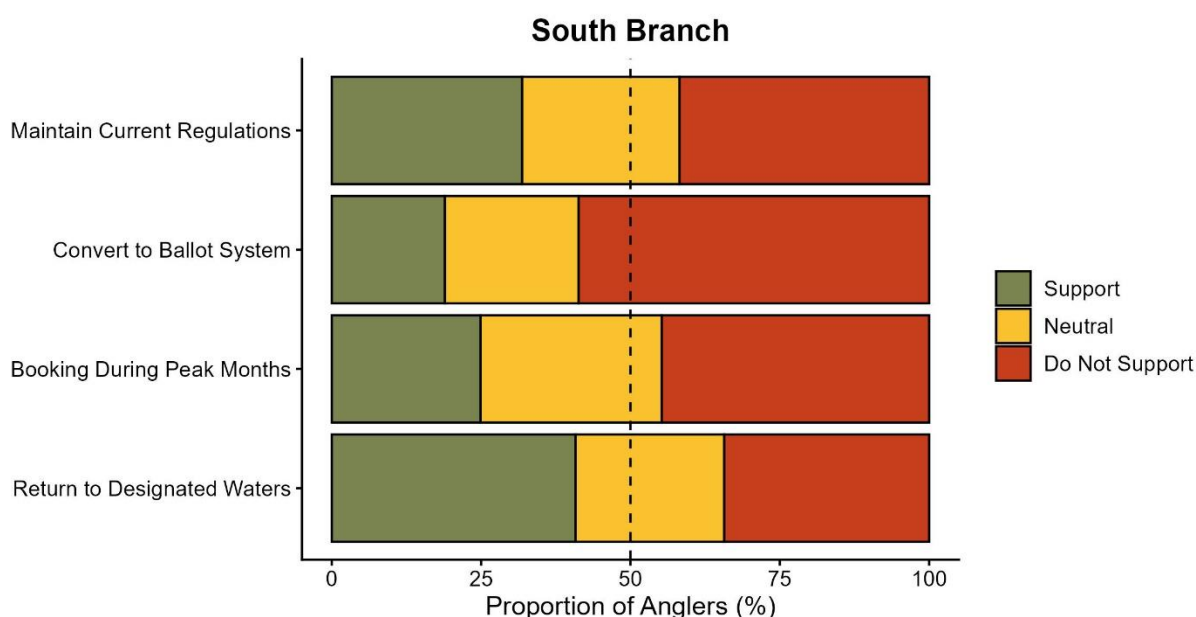


Figure 7. Angler support for each proposed regulatory future for the South Branch of the Upper Hurunui River.

Support for each proposed regulatory future differed between the different angler subgroups. Non-resident anglers had similar levels of preference for returning to standard Designated Waters regulations (60.0% support) and converting the Controlled Fishery to a ballot system (60.0% support). For fishing guides, a return to the standard Designated Waters regulations was the only regulatory future that received less than 50% opposition. Two of the three surveyed local hut owners supported maintaining the current regulations but were split with equal support and opposition for returning to standard Designated Waters regulations.

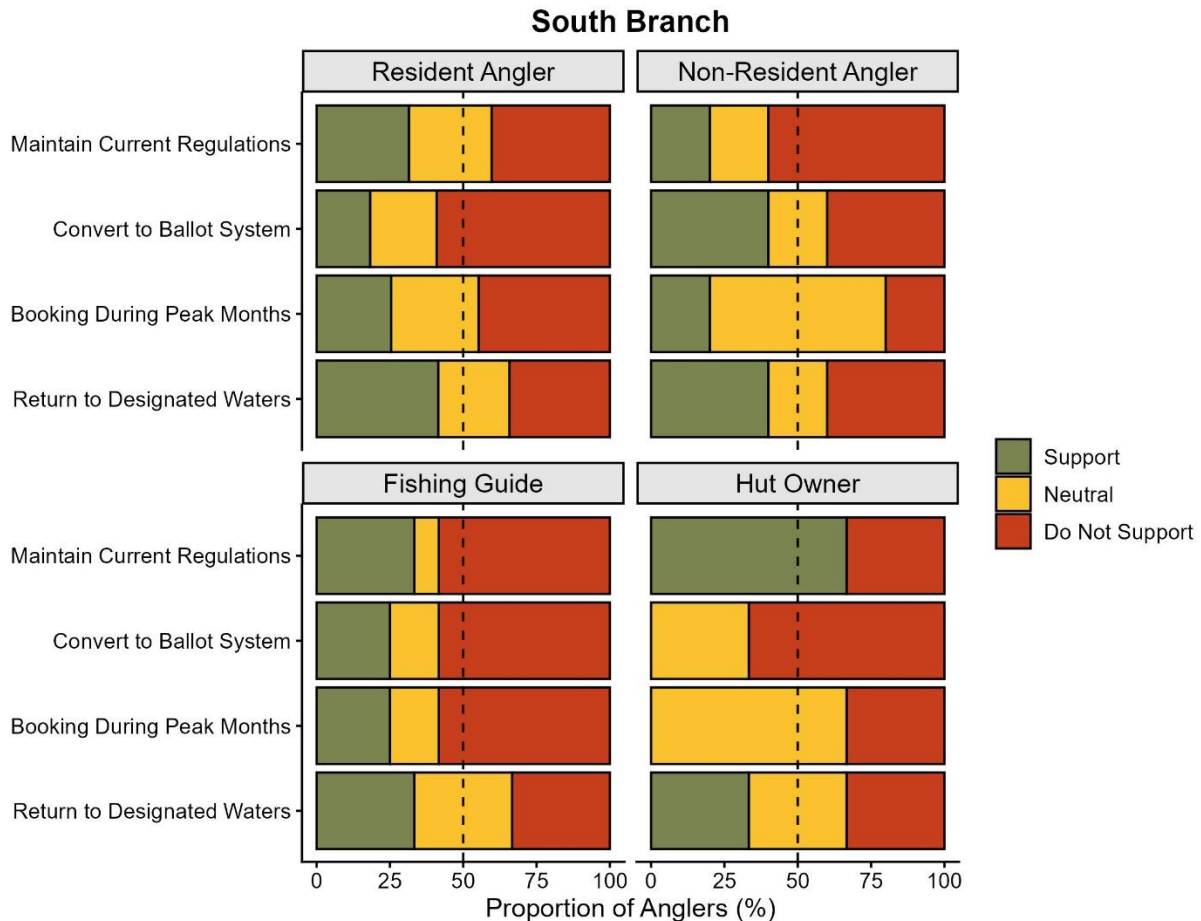


Figure 8. Angler support for each proposed regulatory future for the South Branch of the Upper Hurunui River, separated by angler subgroup.

Support for the potential regulatory futures also varied between anglers who did and did not hold a North Canterbury Designated Waters licence since the implementation of the Controlled Fishery. In particular, anglers who had not held a Designated Waters licence during the past two seasons expressed greater opposition for requiring bookings only during peak months – 62.5% of non-licence holders do not support vs. 41.1% of licence holders.

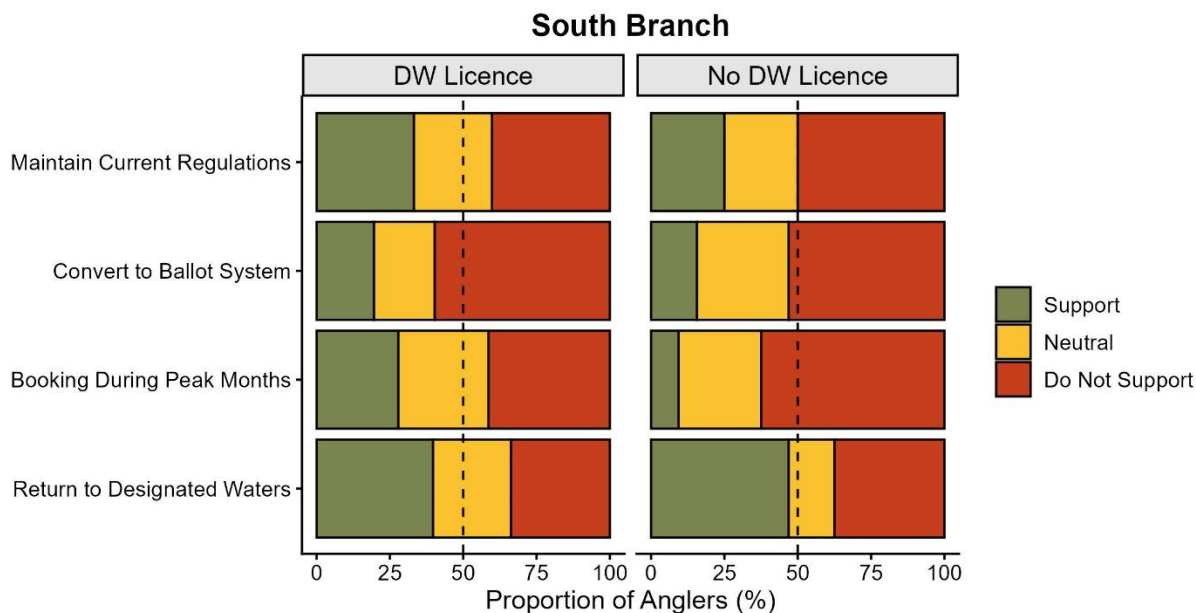


Figure 9. Angler support for each proposed regulatory future for the South Branch of the Upper Hurunui River, separated by whether or not that angler had held a North Canterbury Designated Waters licence since the implementation of the Upper Hurunui Controlled Fishery.

Additionally, support for the potential regulatory futures varied between anglers who had fished the Upper Hurunui River in the past five years and those who had not. Anglers who reported fishing the Upper Hurunui River were more opposed to maintaining current regulations (47.9% do not support vs. 32.9% of anglers who had not fished the Upper Hurunui), and were more opposed to converting the Controlled Fishery to a ballot system (65.5% do not support vs. 48.8% of anglers who had not fished the Upper Hurunui).

Finally, support for the potential regulatory futures did not vary substantially by whether or not anglers reported having fished other North Canterbury Designated Waters since the implementation of the Controlled Fishery.

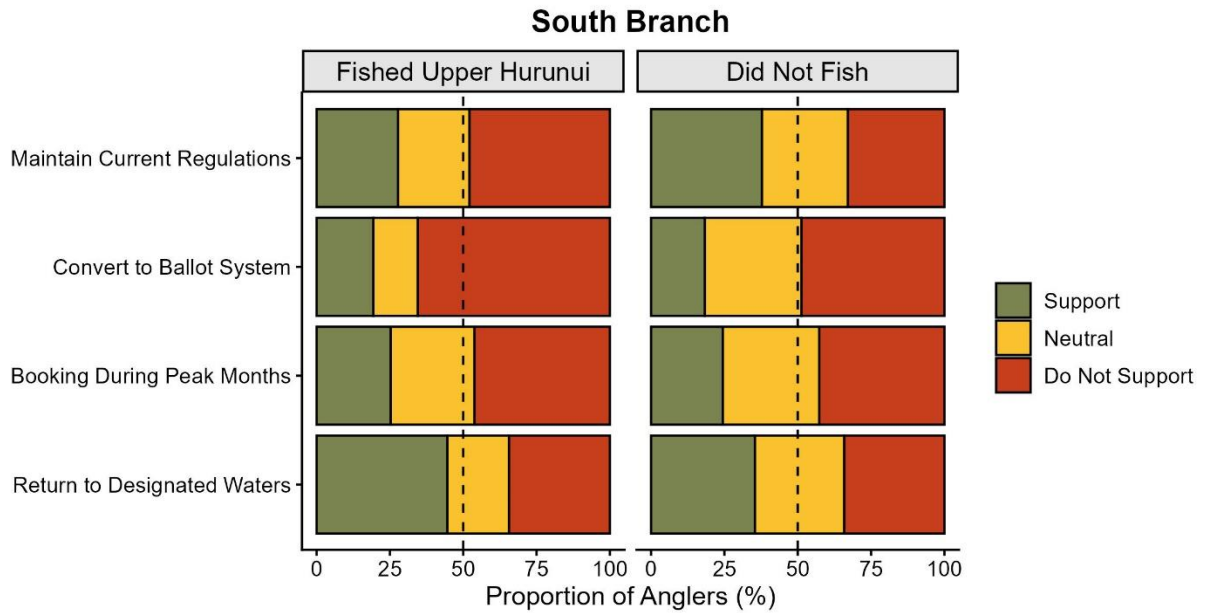


Figure 10. Angler support for each proposed regulatory future for the South Branch of the Upper Hurunui River, separated by whether or not that angler had reported fishing either branch of the Upper Hurunui River during the past five years.

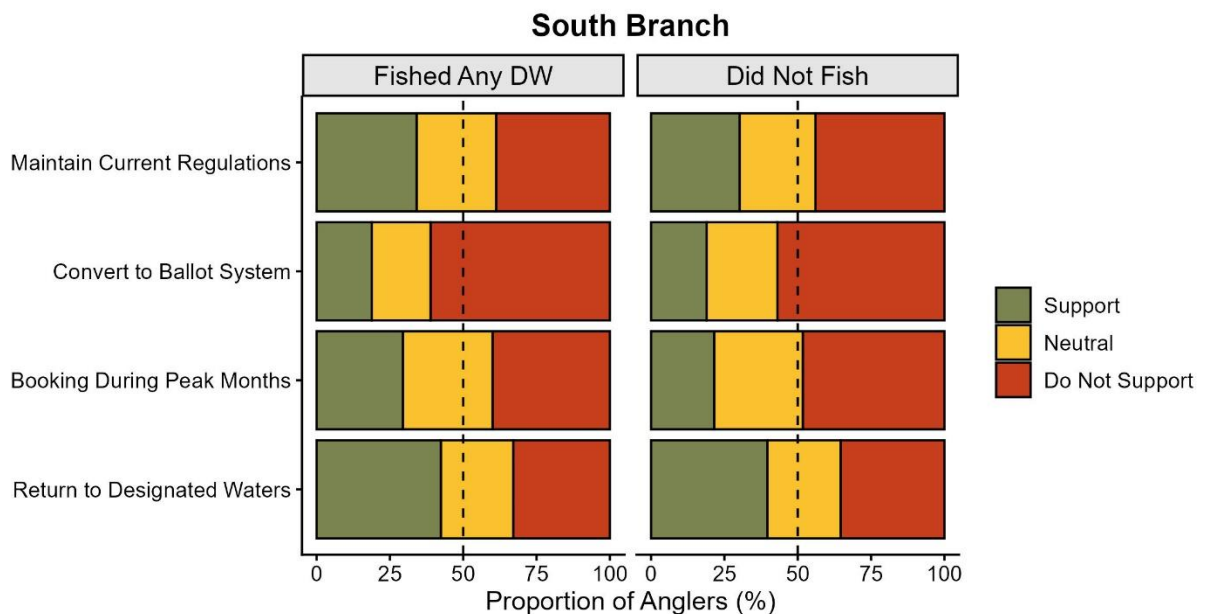


Figure 11. Angler support for each proposed regulatory future for the South Branch of the Upper Hurunui River, separated by whether or not that angler had reported fishing any North Canterbury Designated Water since the implementation of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery.

Discussion

The results of this survey will be considered by Council in combination with feedback from other key stakeholders, monitoring data, and expert advice to inform decisions on the regulatory future of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery.

The overall preference of anglers presented in this document is heavily influenced by resident anglers, as resident anglers were the overwhelming majority of survey respondents. While it is important to consider the needs of all anglers and stakeholder groups, it is important to note that resident anglers are also the majority users of the fishery resource².

Because this survey only had 222 respondents, the error margins are relatively wide. As such, it is difficult to differentiate between the levels of support for the most supported regulatory futures. However, we can say with confidence that anglers, on average, oppose the replacement of the existing booking system with a ballot system for both the North and South Branch. Additionally, anglers oppose retaining the booking system but only during peak months of angling activity.

Comments supplied by anglers during this survey, during the 2025 Designated Waters User Survey, and directly to staff indicate widespread frustration with how the online booking system functions. Should Council choose to maintain the booking system for either branch of the Upper Hurunui River, it will be imperative to work closely with the website provider to address these frustrations. Additionally, a handful of comments included misinformation about how the booking system works. As such, it would be prudent for staff to develop outreach tools that help anglers better understand the rules of the booking system and how to successfully secure a booking.

² Stoffels, R. & M. Unwin. 2023. Angler usage of New Zealand lake and river fisheries: Results from the 2021/22 National Angler Survey. National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research Ltd.

Appendix I: Comment Submissions

Angler	Comment
Darby Anderson	I don't fish the Hurunui often. I don't support balloting.
Paul Bates	I think drift dives if not already undertaken will be a big help towards helping make decisions on this area and making early season a designated waters day too Dec 31st. As I have found there seems to be less pressure on designated water systems that i fish since its introduction.
Chris Bell	I am in full support of making the booking system only run during the busiest peak times of December and January! I feel that if either the current bookings system or a ballot system was chosen to be continued/implemented in the future, that there should be some external control or monitoring of the number of days that any one angler or guide can book the water! For example, perhaps there could be a maximum of 3 days per month, or 10 days per season that any one person associated with a booking is allowed to make a booking, thus being fairer to all by sharing the fishery amongst a larger number of anglers! This would be much fairer to the large numbers of anglers who I understand never get to win a booking, as some common few use "auto fill" type computer systems to enter their associated angler information within an accelerated period, thus resulting in them usually beating others to win the desired time slot/booking. There is also currently a speed advantage of just one angler entering their details compared to someone trying to enter multiple anglers details, which I feel is often unfair as well! If the fishery reverted to the original designated waters system then like the current non-resident angler restriction to fish up to a maximum of 5 days per season in one region, perhaps there should even be a limit to the number of days a resident angler could fish selected (not all) designated waters! Although I understand this adds another level of complication, perhaps introducing a maximum of let's say 15 days on selected waters like the upper North Hurunui could be a good idea, as currently it appears that as expected some of the pressure taken off the North Hurunui by the introduction of the current booking system, has instead been transferred to other nearby Canterbury headwaters such as the upper Waiau etc! This has undoubtedly resulted in reduced quality angling experiences in these other locations! Thankyou for the consideration of the points listed above! ðŸ™,
Stefano Bonazza	I think the system booking work good .
Keith Bowness	I personally deplore the current system. one should look at closing the river during peek periods. even closing the fishing every other year. apparently some of the guides are so intermit with the fish they give them names.
Pete Brett	I think the online booking system is useless. Guiding of international anglers should be banned on the Upper Hurunui, with this resource reserved for local anglers. Once you have fished a river in this fishery you should not be able to fish that river again until everyone else who wants a slot has been allocated a slot.
Roger Brott	Guides should be banned and access opened.
Luke Brough	I tried to book the north branch around 4 times this season, each time I couldn't book as the dates were taken. (mainly weekends) I think the fishery should return to the system from the previous season (no booking required). I usually only fish this beat once or twice per year, while camping at lake sumner. I haven't fished the river at all this season. Mainly due to the booking system.
Gary Busch	The booking system wasn't user friendly. It has increased activity on the river. Booking in advance then weather or river conditions meant couldn't use a booking. Had to be on a computer at a particular time to get a booking. Often a "pending" option was on a chosen date and it didn't say booked.

Angler	Comment
Natjan Buxton	Part of free range access to the DOC Estate is the chances or likelihood of encountering other anglers. I would far rather have freedom to take a rod and look and assess conditions on any given day or hour, including assessing for the presence of other fishermen, than see booking systems crop up like they are. While “~booking’ may appeal to someone who has secured a booking, I have experienced of being on and passing through beats on rivers (without active tools due to respect for “~other bookings’) and seeing nobody there. This tells me, some wanker has “~booked’ themselves in and not turned up. How nice for them to have that “~option’. Fishing should be a free-for-all experience. It has been successfully navigated on such popular rivers as the Tongariro for years. If people want to make the graft happen for themselves to get into wild places, where seeing and fishing to fish are a bonus, then if they are first in at a particular pool or run and on the water in those places, good luck to them. Being told you can't fish your way out of a multi-day hiking experience because someone has “~booked’ a section of river for their exclusive use that they then have the “~option’ of turning up to, is bullshit. If you are there, you are there - and good luck, assessing the conditions includes seeing other anglers and acting accordingly.
Hannah Julie Clement	I've tried on multiple occasions to book the rivers”! to only be able to book once and the weather turn terrible! I would love to see data with bookings on who many days it actually got fished by anglers and how many times the same people booked it.. I also think there should be a limited amount of times any one angler can go in. For example if I want to go in every licence number is only allowed to get the controlled period for a maximum of 3 times. I think this would limit guides, local fisherman from abusing the rivers as I heard last year a guy spent 30+ days up there and that is unreal!
Micheal Demmocks	I go to a couple of the stations up there for work and would usually fish one of the branches while I'm there and have not been able to fish either branch due to the booking system. Scrap the stupid booking system altogether and put a concession system in place for the guides like doc has for the hunting guides if they are making money off a public resource they should be having to pay an added fee to do so
Julian Doesburh	I have hunted and fished in these areas for over 40 years and never had a problem competing wuth other anglers. A short, polite conversation with other anglers on the spot has always resulted in "fishing for all". Even with rivers booked, whilst hunting, I have never seen an angler. Having to book takes away the spontaneous "I might go for a fish up there tomorrow" scenario.
Pete Earl	The ballot system has merits in terms of flexibility and efficient usage of time slots derived oversight from Fish & Game staff, however to be successful it would need to provide timely feedback on the success or otherwise of your application so that a trip can conveniently organised.
Will Elliot	Stop locking resident anglers out of our fisheries, most of us work during the week and only have limited opportunities to fish these waterways when personal schedules, weather and river conditions align. The likelihood of securing a booking once all of these other factors fall into place is generally slim to none. Very disappointed with the booking system, it has kept me out of one of my favorite fisheries that I used to fish regularly prior to this new regime. Overcrowding was never an issue in my eyes. There are many kilometers of great water in the system and I never had an issue finding water to fish on the very rare occasion that I actually encountered other anglers. Give your license holders back their fishery and stop favoring the minority!

Angler	Comment
Tony Entwistle	Provided F&G guard against individuals, guides and helicopter companies speculating by block booking large periods of time, the current system has been effective in spreading angler opportunity. It has done little to reduce total cumulative pressure however. This needs to be addressed. The options provided in the survey do not address the issue of easing overall pressure. This problem exists in other DW waters too. There needs to be substantially more policing of who's really fishing these waters. There should be a strict limit on how many days any individual angler, guide or helicopter company can access the Hurunui fisheries, to better share the resource. Potentially, there needs to be closed periods each month to 'release' pressure on the fish population.
Mark Fairhall	You need to go back 20 years and stop catering to the commercial operators and give us resident anglers a fear go
Jeff Forsee	I've not been able to fish the river at all under the current system. The current system has displaced me as an angler.
Leonie Fraser	Please work towards simplifying the regulations not complicating them . It really puts people off just getting out there when there are so many instructions of ifs and buts .
John Gamblin	I purchased the extension (\$6 from memory) when buying my licence for 2024/25. I never received any information about what it exactly entailed or how to book. Now that I understand what is involved, it is something I would like to experience in the future, so I support restrictions meaning the fishery isn't over fished.
Quinton Gately	New Zealand citizens come first Non-citizens with a guide only- Guides go into a ballots for allocated days within the week.
Jonathan Gillespie	being able to go fishing in any place in north canterbury is the right of all new Zealanders at short notice or whenever they wish to. in the busy life's we lead now making a booking does not fit with life's we live as the fisher person might not no till the night before that they have a window to go to one of these places. this was the way of life for new Zealanders and you are destroying this what I don't understand is how you can tell use when we can fish a certain river as you do not own the river only the right to catch trout this system is taking fishing away from the average family and giving it to the rich very much like Europe remember it is the average new Zealander that buy the licenses that keep you all in a job not the oversea people. the guides should have to work as the same as all people take your chance I walk one of these rivers most weeks and really see a person on them all you see is the choppers flying the guides and the rich in next you will be telling us we have to book to have a swim in the river as it might upset the guides all these rivers are on D.O.C land and these are there for all New Zealander to enjoy weather tramping hunting fishing etc as long as they have the right permits etc next will I have to book a day to go duck hunting on lake Sumner or any other lake Fish and game are employees of the license holders remember that
David Godfrey	The current booking system favours those with speedy computer skills and those booking for just one person. I have never succeeded in making a booking. I strongly support returning the section of the North Branch below the swing bridge to just being designated waters.
Nico Gottschalk	In favour of the booking system. Aside from website crashes and double bookings it's been great. I strongly support it.
Jonathan Greensmith	The current system I believe is unfair and being abused by individuals to their advantage. North Canterbury Fish and Game with this system in place is enabling this behavior. Return this fishery to designated waters status only.
Stephen Harrison	This whole booking system is a waste of time and money Go back to open wters for everyone to come and go as they please
Stephen Haymes	It's not like the rivers are easy to get to so how much pressure would be on them?????

Angler	Comment
Andrew Hearne	Please maintain a system which ensures anglers who make the effort to get to these rivers will be able to fish the rivers without fear of other being there already. These rivers are unique and special, everyone who fishes there deserves a fair go at the river. I also believe the amount of bookings for each person per season needs to be limited.
Raymond Herber	Hi there. Thanks for the opportunity to have a bit of input. I would prefer it if the system just went back to the way it was. Booking is fine for those who are organised well in advance. People who might be camping in the area and just want to go for a fish if the weather is good are blocked out by bookings. The booking system can be booked out by multiple groups of friends over consecutive days, possibly weeks, making it hard for others to get a look in. Also, if people book a day and then decide not to go fishing, the river is not available for others to use, which leaves no one enjoying the river. Thank you.
Vaughan Ingram	Did not fish this area this season.
Mark Johnson	Get rid of all your stupid regulations and go back to your roots ie. release trout back into lower rivers , as there is bugger all left.the point is to catch fish. If there is no fish in the river why buy a license? I am 71 years old and have been trout fishing since I was 7 all those licenses I paid for over the years and others like me. Now in retirement and not as able as was ,the fishing lowland rivers and some lakes need to be stocked again !.If you are worried about fish in upper river close it down for a while but if you are worried about the anglers and the revenue? Well. We were never about being an elite sport or for the rich. That's why we had the queens chain and license for raising fish. To put in the rivers!! For the common man to catch . You lost the fight with didimo,and not so good with pollution and irrigation now the anglers pay the price again. I might just not buy a license and use my right as human to go fishing and to hell with you. M Johnson.
David Johnstone	While the last two seasons have been frustrating when missing out on the dates we wanted. The lack of helicopters dropping in has made it so worthwhile. We need more restrictions on Non-resident anglers.
Bob Jones	Terrible website, unable to book on the ballot system. I've fished theses rivers for over 30 years without any issues at all. Ban helicopters Seems as that the ballot system does not achieve it goals of reducing angler pressure I've been unsuccesfull to achieve any bookings over the last 2 years. I've given up!! Thanks Bob Jones
Patrick Jones	Realistically would like to see commercial guiding using helicopters banned altogether, or at least across all designated waters. Have had issues in numerous places in and outside of N Canterbury. No problem with DIY trips but guides with clients flying in and making money off a public resource while screwing other anglers opportunities pisses me off
David Kirkness	The booking system can be challenging, and occasionally didn't work at all, but North Canterbury staff have been very helpful with issues. Even with the booking system in place the North Branch has seen sustained pressure, with fishing declining through the season. I have seen footprints beside pools on most visits. While I was not particularly happy with the introduction of the booking system, since Covid there is definitely more pressure on the fishery, so there needs to be some mechanism to manage it and help to reduce conflict, and the booking system seems to have done that. A recent cause for conflict on the river has seen multiple occasions of small jetboats hooning up and down the north branch. At least one individual spoken to found it amusing that anglers were pissed off. NCF&G should support efforts to remove the ECAN speed uplift on the river.
Andrew Knowles	I tried a few times to book some consecutive days fishing but failed. I think that it should be a ballot system with 3 day slots or something similar.
Pieter Koekemoer	I have always had these two rivers on my bucket list but ever since we need to book, I could not get a booking and also, I believe that there is now even more pressure in these rivers.

Angler	Comment
Kieran Lee	There needs to be something set in place in terms of the amount of times either a recreational angler or guide can book these waters, maybe once every fortnight or month?? More education needed to educate T.A walkers about fishing in designated areas
Luke Macleod	System largely works well however can be abused by some. I like the idea of knowing you will be the only angler especially on the north branch given the effort to get in there however I believe there should be limits on how many times you can book per year/per month. Other issue have been due to its remoteness there have been many instances of people fishing during others bookings, perhaps more signage or harsher penalties for those caught doing so. The south branch however is more difficult access wise, perhaps something could be worked out between FnG and Lake Taylor station to open that private track over the hill from lake taylor to allow for easier day access as opposed to the entry via lake mason or the \$300 from esk head, this could be strictly foot access to limit wear on the track and if it means increasing the designated water cost for north canterbury for a couple of seasons i'm sure many would be ok with this trade off for long term benefit. Realise this would be at the discretion of lake taylor station but worth the question. Also I believe there is a paper road running through esk head? and crosses the river further up, I realise this does not exactly follow the marked tracks on the property but is this something worth exploring to limit the cost for access?
Peter Massee	Controlled water system is a exclusion process to deny fishing licence holders the access to pristine waters. Since catch and release is the norm in this river catchment, it is unwarranted to restrict fee paying anglers to fish this area. Your system only supports fishing guides that choose to make a living from our resource paid for fishermen like me for over 50 years.
Mark Maw	My preference is splitting the booking allocations to 80% resident & 20% non resident.
Alistair Mcdowell	It would be nice to actually get a booking! Ballot is better, you know where you stand.
Jamie Mcfadden	The booking system disadvantages many families that holiday in upper Hurunui and Waiau/Hanmer areas that partake in many activities including fishing. At short notice we may like to go fishing but can't because the river is booked. Other families also complain that this system is unfair and unworkable
Kevin Mcfadden	I am mostly supportive of the controlled fishery for these two rivers. Having the opportunity to fish a section of river knowing that you should not be jumped is highly attractive. My main points that I think should be considered are. 1.If a balloting system is rejected, limiting the total amount of days that a resident angler can book out the river. It was reported that one license holder booked out over 40 days for the north Hurunui in one season. That seems excessive and logistically difficult given that the booking only becomes available at midday, presumably when he/she is out fishing). Maybe a small booking fee for each booking, (say 10 dollars), or a cap on the days allowed for a season would reduce this excessive booking. 2.Given that the upper north Hurunui is the most desired location, consider changing it to a balloted fishery. This will give all anglers an equal chance of fishing this incredible fishery. It seems that south Hurunui is far more likely to be discoloured during weather events and this self regulates how often it can be fished during the season.
Patrick Mcfadden	I like the idea of ballot, with some input from staff. The auto booking system is open to bulk booking by individuals. Also having the ballot close nearer the fishing dates so to allow for weather and river conditions.
Hamish Mckenzie	Difficult to combine local angler access with the needs of commercial guides
Dayne Mcknight	I had my best day in 15 years on north branch this season. I believe the booking is working Only down side is when I take my kids camping we can't fish any river.

Angler	Comment
Dale Mcleish	I tried to book online in many occasions and was never successful. Just shows the pressure on this fishery. Seems that it always booked and with the youtube videos I guess the visiting anglers with guides get a fair share. In the end I just gave in and I haven't fished any designated waters this season. I decided to try and explore different systems and regions but very difficult to get a day on the water without seeing other anglers especially in the January February time. Probably had my worst season. Especially when driving hours to upper Rakaia and Rangitata areas to meet guides with clients. Most of my interactions were respected but unfortunately not all.
Jan Mensik	First of all in my own opinion the guides should not guide all the rivers there should be some certain rivers and lakes for them as they make money on it. Seems to me that they behave like all the waters are just for them. Second of all these restriction are made only because there are more and more fisherman tourist who are literally fighting to fish all the best rivers and local citizens can't even reach to get to fish those waters! All it's made to make you and the government fortune but you don't care about your own people. Shame on you and that's just my own opinion which I want you to know!
Zane Mirfin	I take great pleasure in recording that the F&G booking system is a complete waste of time and a total dog's breakfast. The Hurunui booking system is the half-baked output of third-rate minds. What a total waste of everybody's time. We have never got it to work - ever! The system should revert to other designated waters where you turn up and take your chance. F&G has destroyed the right to roam and removed fly fishing freedom & choice. If F&G must have a booking system then the last name of the licenceholder should be recorded against booked dates so other anglers can see who is there and that the system is actually real and not some frustrating joke.
Nicholas Moody	I support a ballot system, rather than a booking system, and having the rivers open to all outside of the peak angling pressure months. These two rivers are so popular with guides and non-resident anglers that as a resident angler, limited to the weekends, I virtually gave up fishing them, especially due to the guided heli-anglers. I am really pleased that this pressure is now being managed. Thank you. A ballot is better than a booking system as it gives everyone an equal chance. If you win, then hooray! If you lose, then better luck next time. Missing out repeatedly to secure a booking, (as I have - securing zero bookings) in comparison, feels unfair as some anglers may secure more than their fair share of bookings. If the rivers reverted to being standard designated waters fisheries, then I would revert to not fishing them, as I have had repeated instances of angler conflict ruining my trip, and it is a full day of travel for me to drive from CHCH, and then walk in from Lake Taylor. I am aware some resident anglers preferred that system, however they are often in that fortunate minority of anglers who can fish mid-week - in my observation. Thank you for this opportunity to comment, I think this survey is very well thought out.
Graeme Moore	As a new resident to the district, I have not had the opportunity to explore this area and have not taken out a licence this year to date due to mobility problems.
Rowan Morgan	The booking system is not user friendly. There should be a mechanism to easily cancel bookings rather than having to contact F&G. People miss out on days in river because people can't cancel bookings easily. Ballot system would be better give people a fairer chance as you don't have to try and be available for when the booking day opens.
Gregory Moss-Smith	If the problem is the intensity of non-resident fishers why not just increase their fees to a point that reduces their presence to an acceptable level. Many of these will be guided (good) and flying in - so they are already paying a lot for access. Make them pay comparably for the resource.

Angler	Comment
Dale Muller	South and Nth branch could be 2 beats if booking was retained. Current system reduces opportunities for many. 3 days booking is ridiculous, 2 days max!
Scott Murray	There seems to be 1-2 guides taking advantage of the booking system ,for their own advantage ,one in particular ,hogged 70 days!
Graeme Olds	It too complicated to think about trying to beak this. I just want to have one licence that allows me to fish everywhere that's legally open. If your Turing to stop people fishing the Upper Hurunui it's working. I just won't go it's to hard.
David Pike	No Changes to existing program, still too early to change things.
Jeremy Poulter	Hi team. Booking is great, BUT it needs changes and fixing. You need to change this to a maximum number of days per angler to give everyone a chance. 3 times a season (ie upto 9 days) seems reasonable. It is NOT acceptable for someone to be able to book it 40+ times a season like you have mentioned in your report. Alt solution, but not preferred is a ballot system. There is no reason at all to move the boundary - that just creates all sorts of access issues for older people and those that don't want to walk in. Just allows guides to chopper clients in as they need.
Gray Prebble	Did not get any dates during 24/25 season for North Branch. Did not try this season. Angling pressure stats were very revealing. Would avoid high pressure times.
Daniel Preston	If the greatest conflict and frustration is from guided and or Helicopter pressure. Ban Helicopter access to the waterways!
Richard Purdon	I'd like to see a ballot system installed during the key months of Dec and Jan, as per the upper Greenstone R is in Feb- March. I'd also like the boundary shifted to the edge of Lake Sumner. It makes no sense to have it up from the delta. It is also a unique system with the upper catchment, then lake, then more 'backcountry' below the lake to fish. Making it above the lake makes it easier to understand. I also think having th3 ballot system during the key months ensures it remains a prestigious Fishery with everyone having the same chance to experience it.
Alan Rawlings	If I have to book online to go fishing then forget it,this is becoming a police state
Nigel Reid	For the last 2 seasons I have purchased the extra \$5 licence and every single time I have attempted to get on during the weekends it's been fully booked up. This is an absolute sham and scam. I attempted at least 10 times and quite frankly believe I should be refunded by F&G. Very utterly dissatisfied .
Andrew Riddle	This "controlled fishery" is not needed in NZ
John Roche	Initially I thought the trial was a good thing. However in practice some were able to rort the system which has made it very unfair for the majority of anglers. I have used the ballot system on the Greenstone and it seemed to work well. I believe once you have won a ballot you should have a stand down period of at least 2 weeks before you are eligible to be in the ballot again. I am a member of the Canterbury Fly Fishing club and our 150 members discuss this system often and the consensus of members is that a ballot system if administered well should make it fair for all anglers. The maximum of 5 consecutive days for international anglers in each region should absolutely continue.
Jake Ruwitch	Would be great to see the system updated to allow for adding additional anglers once booking has been made. The current system incentivizes anglers to book for themselves only, rather than taking the time to add additional anglers, in over to avoid missing out on the booking. Also fully support moving to the north branch boundary to the swing bridge. Thank you F&G for everything you do!!

Angler	Comment
Andrew Scott	I think each angler should only be able to book each section once per season for a maximum of three successive days. I spoke with guides who book these rivers regularly yet many others I have spoken with have been unable to book at all. Clearly the system is not equitable to all. A ballot system would even out access and people could plan further in advance for their adventure.
Christopher Shuker	i have had a bach at loch katrine forover 55years and fished the waters surrounding it for all that time i have watched the fishery decline over that period being open all year puts alot of pressure on the lakeswhen it was shut down it gave a break to it this needs to be reinstated
Charles Smith	To allow for more than 4 members to fish, For example of with guides or groups of friends. Each branch could facilitate 5 or 6 fishermen. The beats are well and truly long enough to cater for a solid group. 4 fishermen accompanying with them 2 guides. As foreign family groups that come to nz with guides miss out on the opportunity to fish the Hurinui system with the current 4 person allocation
Andrew Sturman	It would have been useful to have had some statistics about how the booking system worked - How well you think it was used, whether the same people managed to get access repeatedly, or whether a wide range of users was able to make bookings. Presumably, you can record the number of accesses ('clicks') on the web site to get an idea of pressure.
Damian Sugrue	There are fish in the rivers but some of the lakes like lake Sheppard have too much fish and are in poor condition, some need to be moved
Raymond Taffs	Sick to death of extra costs by you to occasionally fish these rivers, same applies to the salmon fishery which you in your silence have let NZ First ruin it. It's just money for grabbing. Why?
James Teen	Getting rid of helicopter fishing will solve half of the issues with guides hogging the area.
Isaac Thompson	More policing needs to be present on both river systems. I've had people in front of me or fish up to me claiming they were none the wiser, but there's no chance they end up in a place like that with all the correct gear and are unaware of the conditions to get onto the river. It just ruins a trip when that happens. It's all well and good having rangers out on the lake, but they need to go upstream as well, as that's where most of the non baalloters are. Just below the swinbridge on the North Branch and upwards is where some real fine or penalty needs to be put in place, something that will properly ditur people from even thinking about going up without the ballot. Because the policing on it has been totally shit. And most weekends that it's booked and the weather is good, there's no reason for the ballot holders not to go up, they book it for a reason, so anyone else up there needs to be checked and more often too. Other than that, I feel there could still be more or equal pressure on the river. Yes, without the ballot it's a gamble whether anyone goes up or not "giving the fish a break", but with the ballot, in my mind, it's allocating a period for the whole season where most of the slots are full, and the fish are being pressured day after day as most people would use their period if they get one.
Tania Thompson	We can only camp for a certain period of time in the nearby area, if we want to go to the river for a day to walk and fish for a day, we should be able to without getting abused by anyone. we are respectful and chat with anyone we come across to check where they are heading etc. we have noticed its the guides with people getting dropped in by helicopters that are the most angry and horrible people to deal with. the river is for all, not just those who choose to pay to get dropped it.
Shane Timbrell	The controlled fishery trial made it near on impossible for myself to fish either of these two waterways. Before these areas were controlled i would fish them at least once a season and would rarely encounter other anglers, never on the South branch above lake Mason. Just trying to get the weather and time off work to align were hard enough but now having to TRY get a booking to align also is impossible.

Angler	Comment
Simon Trotter	The challenges associated with tourism and guiding pressures is being felt across the country. I'm Fiordland based now days and the pressure is only increasing so I'm support of Fish and Game putting a considered and structured approach into action to preserve the fishery and access for Kiwis. It is a tough challenge to reach a balance in the eyes of fishers, guides and those internationals that travel to fish our incredible back country.
Andy Trowbridge	Whether is stays as a booking system or ballot system need to know a month before successful dates to organise leave and other stuff.
Andrew Turnbull	I do not support the designation fishing license. It is way too complicated now, your making the process way more complex than it should be and turning new anglers away from fishing these areas. Such a shame FandG have over complicated this once awesome system. One license for all water with different open times would be much simpler.
Paul Van De Loo	I found the North Branch impossible to bookfor the last two seasons for me or my clients. The South Branch was not too bad, I managed to get some sort off booking when needed.
Tom Van Der Burg	I have fished the hurunui since 1995, and always enjoyed the experience, the fishing pressure might have increased but a lot off people don't know how to fish a river there is alway fish in the river and if you happen to see someone else you just move on there are always Taylor Mason Sheppard and summer if you keen enough you walk over into the taramakau. I walked and still do from the old bridge (gone now) cat hill to state highway 1 and to balmoral if 17cumeecs or below . Keep the regulations simple ,when pressure gets to high people will wince and move away from a river for a few years. You guys are doing a great job , but to many regulations are harder to deal with then simply saying 1 fish only or closed season. I like to be able to fish dictated by weather or riverflow
Rod Whearty	The consultation document covers angler pressure being one of the significant factors in affecting angler success and experience. It also says that this pressure is split 80/20 between resident and non-resident anglers, with the larger figure coming from non-resident anglers. I would like to suggest that there be a delineation between resident and non-resident anglers as operates in many other countries around the world. My proposal is that the waters remain designated waters for resident anglers only (to fish anytime, providing you hold a designated waters licence). Non-resident anglers should be managed through the ballot system. That way F&G have control over the number and frequency non-resident anglers are targeting these waters, and it would return the balance back in favour of managing the fishery both in terms of pressure and angler experience. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this feedback.
Aaron White	I am a loch Katrine hut lease holder and have been unable to secure a booking to fish the north branch of the hurunui river and have purchased the required additional designated water licence. As a consequence my preference is to return to the standard designated water regulations
Chris Williams	I believe the booking system should be for one day at a time only, not blocks of 2 or 3 days. This would allow more people to have a chance to fish these rivers. Also there should be a limit of a certain number of days per season that any individual can book - maybe 10-15 days per season. This would stop guides having an unfair number of days - in the 24/25 season one person booked 41 days. This is clearly not a recreational angler, even though he was not a member of the guides association. Although frustrating not being able to access these rivers anytime, it is great to know that you will be the only angler on a specific day. Having said that I gave up trying to book very early on in the season because it proved impossible to secure a booking. A ballot system would make it even more of a lottery.
Tim Wilson	If a NZ resident has never fished / booked / won a ballot etc for these areas before - ideally put them at the front of the line

Angler	Comment
Andrew Young	I can not state strongly enough what an absolute fuck up the booking system is. I tried on multiple occasions to make bookings in both branches and was NEVER able to make a booking. You have basically handed the river to guides and foreign anglers. The key problem is bookings open at midnight. Who is best placed to make bookings at this time? Fucking no brainer!!! What time is that in Australia? Do I sound angry? Good! I fished there every season prior to the booking system and not once since. Using data from 2021-2022 is another stupidity. Surely you have the actual data from 2024-2025 FROM THE BOOKINGSYSTEM? I don't buy it for a second that there was less pressure in Oct/Nov or April. I COULD NOT GET A BOOKING. Next problem is you cant take days off work mid-week with 5days notice. These bookings are way too "short-notice". A ballot system would give residents an opportunity to plan weeks in advance- foreign anglers also. Win/win. I have since giving up on north Canterbury and moved to Southland. So, I would need even more lead-in time now to come north again. Again, a ballot system is the only way I could plan for such a system. If I know at least 4 weeks ahead, it's possible. Otherwise, not. If it reverted to the old system I would surely fish it again, but I've had terrible experiences there with guides and I'm not in a hurry to go back to that. Thanks for the opportunity to give feedback. It's great the F&G are being proactive in sorting this shit out.

Comments Received Outside of Survey	
John Kent	I have taken out a special licence for the past 3 years but more in hope and a memory of anything else. I am 90 so rough riverbeds are now just a dream. I have had some trophy trout 10 -15 years ago from these 2 headwaters and watched two anglers early one season carry out two trophy fish each. We challenged them and asked why have you taken out part of the genetic pool? I have strong feelings that both Hurunui Branches should be designated catch and release only! The upper Hope and possibly the Nina should also carry the same designation.

Appendix II: Neighbouring Landowner Survey

During April 2026, staff at North Canterbury Fish & Game spoke with the landowners of properties that border the North and South Branch of the Upper Hurunui River to ask their perspective. The following are notes recorded by staff during these conversations.

Lake Taylor Station

- Mostly positive
- Booking system was difficult to use
- People happy with less people on river
- Very little helicopter use seen

Eskhead Station

- Anglers not seeing many fish
- Helicopter use hasn't changed lower down
- The upper section has received less helicopter use
- River been in a flood a lot

Lakes Station

- Haven't heard anything negative from anglers
- Fewer anglers about
- Less helicopter use

Appendix III: Submission from Guides Association

On behalf of the New Zealand Professional Fishing Guides Association, I would like to submit the following regarding the Hurunui Controlled Fishery trial period.

Feedback from NZPFGA guides in the area is:

- The trial has not improved the stated aims of reducing conflict and increasing the angling experience.
- It appears that the booking system can be manipulated by some anglers to give themselves essentially “exclusive access” and therefore dominate the fishery.
- The system allows for only a select few to fish it.
- For the last 2 seasons they have been unable to guide on the river with their clients because of the system in place.
- Reclassifying the river as a designated water would do more to achieve the aims.

The above has been sent to me as unsolicited feedback. There does appear to be a problem with the system in place, which disproportionately limits access to a public fishery (note that guided clients are recreational license holders).

The NZPFGA would be available to engage with F&G and discuss changes to the management of this fishery.

Kind regards,

Craig Smith
NZPFGA Executive
0276469419



Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery Trial

Consultation Document

March 2026 | North Canterbury Fish & Game

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Purpose of this Document

As the 2-year trial period comes to a close, North Canterbury Fish & Game is seeking feedback on the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery. The diagram below summarises the different parts of this document.

Purpose

Sets out the intention of this document and the consulting process

Background

Provides context on the Designated Waters and trial Controlled Fishery regulations

Potential Changes

Identifies regulatory opportunities to improve angler experience with the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery

What Fish & Game is Seeking Feedback On

Fish & Game is seeking your feedback on a variety of aspects of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery, including:

- Your success with the online booking system
- Potential regulatory changes to the Controlled Fishery

Feedback from this consultation will be provided to the North Canterbury Fish & Game Council and the Minister for Hunting & Fishing to support decision making regarding the continuation of and/or changes to the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery.





Background

Designated Waters

Beginning in the early 2010s, Fish & Game received increasing reports of historically prime backcountry fisheries exhibiting overcrowding and a reduction in angler success. Fish & Game traced these reports to unsustainable angling pressure, which detrimentally affects both the angling experience (sense of wilderness feeling/solitude) and trout behaviour (visibility and catchability). Fish & Game have termed fisheries which are vulnerable to unsustainable angling pressure 'pressure sensitive fisheries'.

In most cases, pressure-sensitive fisheries share these common features:

- Clear rivers which provide excellent sight fishing
- Large average fish size
- High scenic value, often in a wilderness or backcountry setting
- High levels of non-resident angler use

Pressure sensitive fisheries are highly regarded by both resident and non-resident anglers for the unique angling opportunities they provide. However, research and monitoring of these fisheries have shown that both resident and non-resident anglers were being displaced from these fisheries because of overcrowding.

Resident anglers are being displaced from these fisheries to a greater degree than non-resident anglers, and for some fisheries, angler use has gone from a roughly 50/50 resident-to-non-resident split (in the early 2000s) to an 80/20 usage split favouring non-resident anglers.

To manage the angling pressure and experience in these pressure sensitive fisheries, it became necessary to implement fisheries management mechanisms to control crowding and disperse angling pressure. In 2023 Fish & Game introduced the Designated Waters Licence to reduce crowding on a select few pressure sensitive fisheries.

In North Canterbury, four river systems were selected as Designated Waters Fisheries: the Upper Waiau Uwha, the Lewis Pass, the Upper Hurunui North Branch, and the Upper Hurunui South Branch. These rivers were selected as they provide a high-quality angling and wilderness experience, but are sensitive to unsustainable angling pressure.



The Controlled Fishery Trial

Following the implementation of the Designated Waters licence, feedback from the angling community indicated that the intense angling pressure on the Upper Hurunui Fisheries had continued. In the years leading up to and following the implementation of the Designated Waters licence, high levels of use had resulted in conflicts between anglers, guides, and landowners, leading some anglers to feel dissatisfied with their angling experience.

The Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery was introduced as a 2-year trial to manage angling pressure on the Upper North and South Branch sections to maintain a high-quality angling and wilderness experience. The trial period allows Fish & Game to collect data to help determine whether these rivers need to continue as Controlled Fisheries and, if so, how to implement a Controlled Fishery in a way that most benefits anglers.

Scope of Regulations

The Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery includes the North Branch of the Hurunui River, upstream of Lake Sumner, and the South Branch of the Hurunui River, upstream of the confluence with the North Esk River (Figure 1). The lower 500 m of the North Branch bordering Lake Sumner, Lake Mason, and the North Esk River are not included in the Controlled Fishery or Designated Waters, and remain open to all licenced anglers.

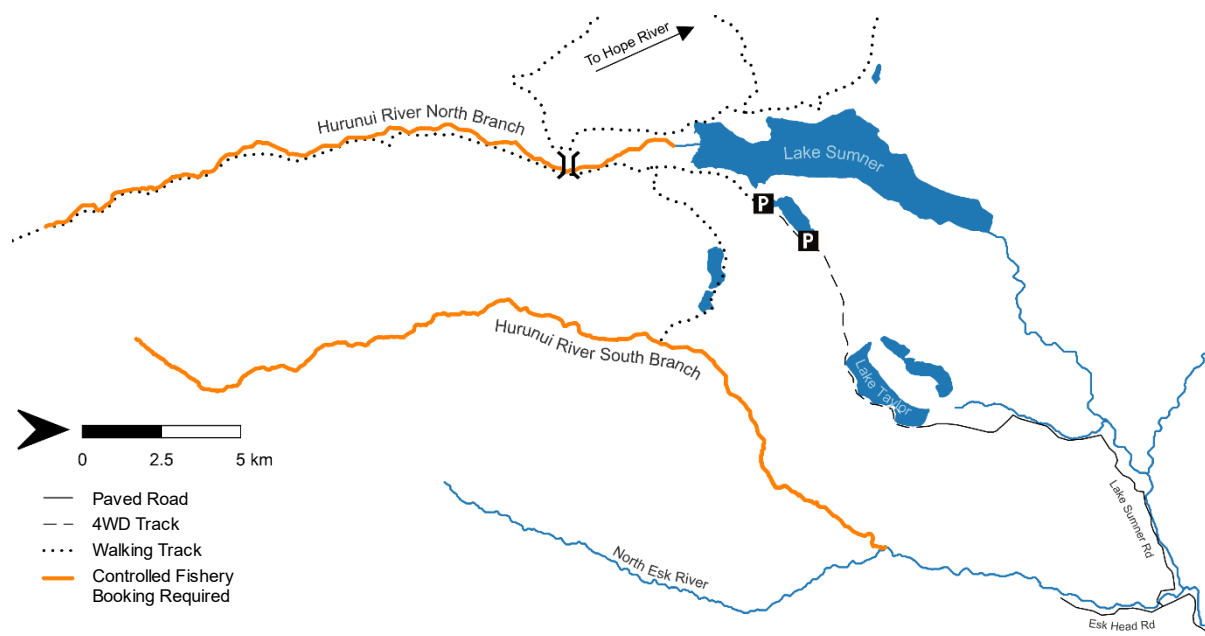


Figure 1. The location of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery, depicted in orange.

The Booking System

The Upper Hurunui Controlled Fishery is split into two sections: the North Branch and the South Branch. Each section is available on a first-come first-served basis.

Bookings are made via an online booking system, available through the Fish & Game licencing service provider. Bookings can be made up to five days before the start of the intended fishing trip. Depending on availability, anglers may select up to three consecutive days per booking.

A booking may include up to four anglers, and all anglers must hold a valid Whole Season Fishing Licence and a North Canterbury Designated Waters Licence. All anglers partaking in the booking, including fishing guides, must be included in the registered booking party.

Consultation Questions

1. Which angling category best describes you?
 - a. Resident Angler
 - b. Non Resident Angler
 - c. Guide

2. Have you fished either section of the Upper Hurunui River during the past 5 years?

3. Did you hold a North Canterbury Designated Waters Licence during the 2024/25 or 2025/26 fishing season?

4. Did you fish any of the North Canterbury Designated Waters during the 2024/25 or 2025/26 fishing season?

5. During the 2024/25 or 2025/26 fishing season, did you attempt to make a booking using the online booking system?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Yes, on multiple occasions
 - c. No

6. If yes, were you able to successfully book the dates you wanted?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No, but I was able to book a suitable alternative

7. If yes, on multiple occasions, were you typically able to book the dates you wanted?
 - a. More often than not, I was able to book the dates I wanted or a suitable alternative
 - b. I was able to book the dates I wanted or a suitable alternative about half the time
 - c. More often than not, I was not able to book the dates I wanted



Potential Changes

As we approach the end of the 2-year trial period, North Canterbury Fish & Game is considering potential changes to the Upper Hurunui Controlled Fishery. This section outlines the potential changes being considered for the Controlled Fishery.

Please note: some of these options are not mutually exclusive. Depending on what best suits the needs of North Canterbury anglers and the fishery, a combination of changes may be implemented.

Bookings Only Required During Peak Months

One option for regulatory change is to reduce the portion of the year during which bookings are required. Under this proposed change, bookings would only be required during months with peak angler pressure. During other months, the Upper Hurunui would operate under the same regulations as all other Designated Waters.

Based on estimates from the National Angler Survey, peak angler pressure on the Upper Hurunui River occurs during December and January¹. During this period, anglers reported more than 3 times the angler pressure of October and November and nearly 5 times the angler pressure of February and March (Figure 2).

¹ Stoffels, R. & M. Unwin. 2023. Angler usage of New Zealand lake and river fisheries: Results from the 2021/22 National Angler Survey. National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research Ltd. Christchurch, New Zealand.

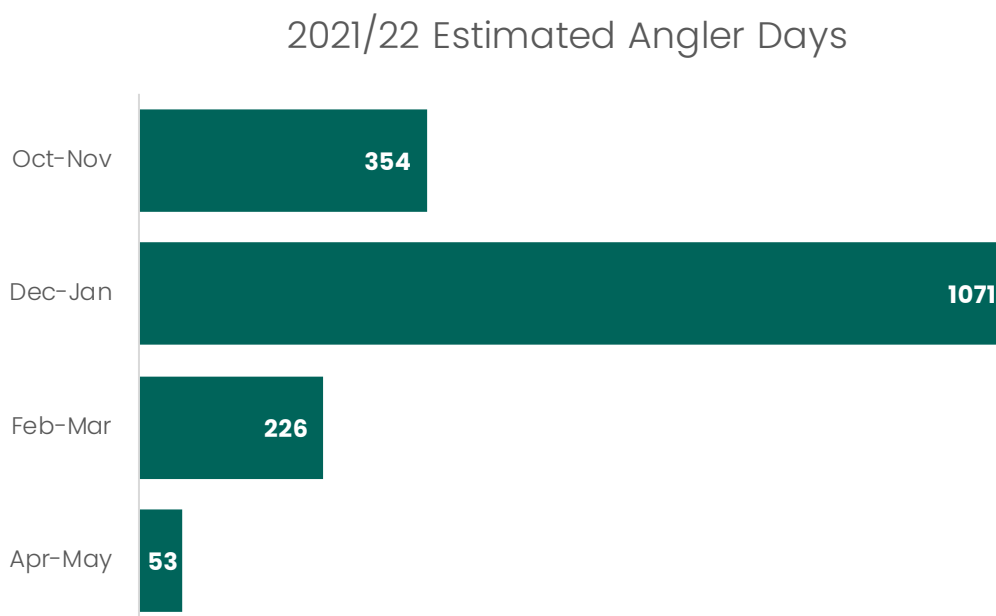


Figure 2. The estimated number of angler days that occurred on the Hurunui River upstream of the South and North Branch confluence during the 2021/22 fishing season¹.

Move Controlled Fishery Boundary

At present, the Controlled Fishery on the North Branch of the Upper Hurunui River begins 500m upstream of Lake Sumner. A number of local anglers have proposed moving the boundary to the swing bridge, which would allow anglers to fish the lower 4km of the North Branch without a booking. Anglers would still require a North Canterbury Designated Waters licence to fish the river up to the swing bridge. Moving the boundary of the Controlled Fishery would maintain opportunity for some anglers to book a stretch of the river with the assurance they will have that stretch to themselves, while simultaneously providing increased opportunity for anglers to fish near the lake.



Figure 3. The locations of the current and proposed boundaries for the Controlled Fishery on the Hurunui River North Branch.

Replace with a Ballot System

Another option is to replace the existing booking system with a ballot system. Under a ballot system, any angler with a valid whole season licence can submit applications to fish the Controlled Fishery on their preferred dates. Applications are then selected at random, and ballot winners are issued a controlled period licence valid for their balloted dates.

One benefit of a ballot system is that the system is operated by staff, rather than through the online licensing system. For this reason, a ballot system is more customisable. Some examples of flexibility provided by a ballot system include the opportunity to break bookings into weekday, weekend, and holiday slots, the possibility of weighting ballots to spread angling opportunity more evenly between anglers, and the possibility of designating certain dates for resident anglers only.

Removal of the Controlled Fishery

The final option is to remove the Controlled Fishery regulations from the Upper Hurunui River. Under this option, the Upper Hurunui River would revert to the standard Designated Waters regulations – all anglers fishing the Upper Hurunui River would be required to possess a North Canterbury Designated Waters licence but no booking would be required.

Prior to the implementation of a Controlled Fishery, North Canterbury Fish & Game received a number of complaints of angler conflict in the Upper Hurunui River Designated Waters. In particular, anglers who invested the time to hike in to fish the river reported frustration as helicopters dropped in anglers upstream of them, effectively stunting the stretch of river they would be able to successfully fish. The Controlled Fishery was implemented to provide anglers with the opportunity to fish a backcountry fishery with confidence they would have the river to themselves. Removal of the Controlled Fishery regulations would remove these protections.

Consultation Questions

8. Please select the statement that best describes your level of support for each of the following options for the **North Branch** of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery:

Potential Change to Controlled Fishery	Support	Neutral	Do Not Support
The North Branch of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery continues with the current regulations – the booking system will continue.			
The North Branch of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery only requires a booking during months with peak angling activity.			
The boundary of the North Branch of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery is moved upstream to the swing bridge. The booking system will remain in place upstream of the swing bridge. The section of river downstream of the swing bridge returns to standard Designated Waters regulations.			
The North Branch of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery is converted to a ballot system.			
The North Branch of the Upper Hurunui River returns to standard Designated Waters regulations.			

9. Please select the statement that best describes your level of support for each of the following options for the **South Branch** of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery:

Potential Change to Controlled Fishery	Support	Neutral	Do Not Support
The South Branch of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery continues with the current regulations – the booking system will continue.			
The South Branch of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery only requires a booking during months with peak angling activity.			
The South Branch of the Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery is converted to a ballot system.			
The South Branch of the Upper Hurunui River returns to standard Designated Waters regulations.			



Technical Report

Controlled Fishery User Survey

May 2026

North Canterbury Fish & Game

H. Sanders Garrick

Following the implementation of the Designated Waters licence, feedback from the angling community indicated that the intense angling pressure on the Upper Hurunui Fisheries had continued. In the years leading up to and following the implementation of the Designated Waters licence, high levels of use had resulted in conflicts between anglers, guides, and landowners, leading some anglers to feel dissatisfied with their angling experience.

The Upper Hurunui River Controlled Fishery was introduced as a 2-year trial to manage angling pressure on the Upper North and South Branch sections to maintain a high-quality angling and wilderness experience. The trial period allows Fish & Game to collect data to help determine whether these rivers need to continue as Controlled Fisheries and, if so, how to implement a Controlled Fishery in a way that most benefits anglers. One crucial aspect of monitoring the effectiveness of the Controlled Fishery is surveying the anglers who use the fishery.

Methods

Throughout the fishing season, Fish & Game staff attempted to individually survey each angler (or angling party) who booked the Controlled Fisheries. For each booking, anglers were asked how many of the booked days were fished, and how many anglers were in their fishing party. Anglers were also given the opportunity to comment on any issues they encountered while using the booking system or fishing the Controlled Fishery.

Results

2024/25 Season

During the 2024/25 fishing season, anglers had booked 193 of the 212 available days (91%) on the North Branch and 165 (78%) on the South Branch. Seventy-four unique anglers were associated with an online booking for the North Branch and 59 anglers for the South

Branch. Thirty-two bookings were cancelled on the North Branch and 13 on the South Branch. Of dates that were cancelled, 75% were subsequently booked by another angler on the North Branch and 77% on the South Branch. The mean number of days booked per angler was 3.5 (+/- 0.5) on the North Branch and 3.7 (+/- 0.5) on the South Branch. Three anglers had booked more than 10 days on the North Branch; the angler with the most bookings had booked 32 days. On the South branch, four anglers booked more than 10 days; the angler with the most bookings had booked 22 days.

Staff were able to successfully interview 15 anglers who held bookings on the North Branch Controlled Fishery, accounting for 80 of the total 193 booked days. We were able to successfully interview 11 anglers who held bookings on the South Branch Controlled Fishery, accounting for 68 of the total 165 booked days. Anglers on the North Branch reported fishing, on average, 68% of the days they booked, while anglers on the South Branch reported fishing 44% of the days they booked. Median reported party size was 2 anglers on the North Branch and 1 angler on the South Branch.

For more information on the 2024/25 survey please see the 2024/25 North Canterbury Designated Waters Angler Survey ([Sanders Garrick, 2025](#)).

2025/26 Season

During the 2024/25 fishing season, anglers had booked 194 of the 212 available days (92%) on the North Branch and 161 (76%) on the South Branch. Forty-seven unique anglers were associated with an online booking for the North Branch and 50 anglers for the South Branch. Thirty-seven bookings were cancelled on the North Branch and 27 on the South Branch. Of dates that were cancelled, 70% were subsequently booked by another angler on the North Branch and 33% on the South Branch. The mean number of days booked per angler was 4.4 (+/- 0.7) on the North Branch and 4.1 (+/- 0.5) on the South Branch. Four anglers had booked more than 10 days on the North Branch; the angler with the most bookings had booked 24 days. On the South branch, three anglers booked more than 10 days; the angler with the most bookings had booked 22 days. Known guides held 15% of booked days on the North Branch, and 41% of booked days on the South Branch.

Staff were able to successfully interview 41 anglers who held bookings on the North Branch Controlled Fishery, accounting for 175 of the total 194 booked days. We were able to successfully interview 26 anglers who held bookings on the South Branch Controlled Fishery, accounting for 108 of the total 161 booked days. Anglers on the North Branch reported fishing, on average, 83% of the days they booked, while anglers on the South Branch reported fishing 86% of the days they booked. Median reported party size was 1 angler on both the North and South Branch.

Anglers were asked to provide a reason why they did not fish if they had reported they did not fish any of their booked dates. Weather conditions during or in the lead up to their fishing trip (i.e., previous rain having caused dirty water and poor fishing conditions) was the primary factor preventing anglers from using their booked dates, and was reported as the limiting factor by more than 80% of anglers who did not fish their full booking. A few anglers reported they had a difficult time accessing the Controlled Fishery which prevented them from using their full booking, while others reported last minute personal commitments had arisen.

Comments

The following comments were provided by anglers during the 2025/26 season Controlled Fisheries User Survey. Comments were collected in response to the question: Did you encounter any issues when booking or fishing the Hurunui Controlled Fishery?

Branch	Comment
North	All pretty smooth, biggest challenge has been just getting a booking.
	Another angler – [name redacted] - was fishing on the 3rd because of booking system error, but came over to chat with [name redacted] and sorted it. [Name redacted] was finished fishing his beat so not too much of an issue. Hopefully doesn't happen again.
	Booking system - originally tried to book 1st-3rd October but system gave him 30th September - 2nd October. Tried to book 3rd October but system said he had already booked it. Said he fished 3rd as well because he believed it had been booked as system told him he had booked it. Fishing - not as many fish seen or landed as usual/expected but put it down to recent flood events, river was still a bit high.
	Did booking system through mobile phone, website itself is a bit complicated to find the booking system page
	Didn't have anything positive to say about the system itself and thinks it is unnecessary to restrict anglers on this remote fishery given in 30 years he has not had issues with encountering others. His son also had an encounter with another angler on the North Branch and didn't know about the system.
	encountered an angler walking over to the South Branch without having a booking.
	Encountered one young male angler fishing above the swingbridge. When approached he said he didn't know about the booking system and left. Apparently is the son of one of the Loch Katrine hut owners.
	Enjoys midday and not midnight. Smooth sailing system.
	Found the booking system difficult to navigate and confusing. Overall didn't like the system

Branch	Comment
North	Good trip, nice fish caught
	Had an issue where he tried to get another booking date and the system wouldn't allow him to because he had a cancelled booking. Had to get someone else in his party to make the booking (after calling the Fish and Game office) as a workaround which is not a great user experience and many users won't know they need to do this and will consequently miss out.
	Had some issues with access getting in due to felled trees after weather etc.
	Having the section below the swingbridge open to all anglers. no issues with booking system
	It was high river flows, it was still fishable.
	Keep the booking system
	Liked having the river to himself, saw someone walking in with fishing rods on his pack but was unsure whether they had a booking or not. Booking went smoothly.
	No anglers were present, like the booking system. The weather made the fishing tough.
	No issues
	No issues but did provide feedback as follows: he said It might be helpful for others to update staff guidance publicly as he was a bit confused about how far he could take my vehicle, whether he would need to get a code from DOC as some info suggests, and what the condition of the track is like.
	No issues were detected
	No issues were found
	No issues when booking itself did provide feedback that additional signage (controlled fishery) would be beneficial i.e., at Lake Taylor and at the locked gate at Loch Katrine.
	No issues with booking
	No issues, does think that both branches should consist of two beats and people should be limited to booking 1 day because in the current situation opportunities are limited when people can book 3 days.
	No issues, however would like to be able to edit booking himself i.e., add people. Also, attempted to cancel booking on the South Branch of Hurunui but was unable to reach anyone (holiday period to enact this).
	No issues, thinks the area has received a large amount of pressure based on footprints and fish behaviour.
	No issues. Great fishing. Mentioned one person came with him on last day (7th) that has DW licence. Wasn't sure how system worked to get people added on. EC gave education approach and told him how to add on next time.

Branch	Comment
North	No issues. Surprised he got the booking at 12:39 pm and no one else had got it.
	no works well
	No. Awesome fishing.
	Not an intuitive system, needs a user guide on how to book.
	Not impressed with the system.
	Noticed in the hut book someone else had fished the river and seemed to not have a booking going off the dates in the book, fish were spooky and wary.
	Only booked one day pressed the 3 days but only gave him one day, tried to get booking for other 2 days but wasn't fast enough. thinks system is rubbish but understands why it's there.
	Pack left in the Hurunui Hut with a fishing rod sitting with it.
	Pain to get the booking, but nice to know that when you have booking you should have the river to yourself. Tried booking subsequent days after three day booking - did not let as said "already had a bookings for these dates." Even though he didn't have those days.
	Pleased to get a booking, however he believes that there should be a \$10 booking fee as a way of discouraging anglers from just (reserving the river)
	Provided feedback that he thinks the system favours guides and does not provide equal opportunity.
	Really likes that there is a booking system to control numbers and wants to keep the booking system. This season is much easier to get a booking compared to last season.
	River conditions did not allow fishing. Struggling to book days. Getting frustrated.
	Struggle with the booking system. Weather turned bad so only was able to fish one day. Stressful in that trying to plan fishing around booking that they may or may not get (brother came from Wellington). Bitter/sweet.
	TA walkers are busy on the river, so hut was full.
	The booking system is great. He's annoyed about how fast some people can book it, when he thinks he's being very speedy himself.
	Though he booked for three days, he only booked for one. Called the office, Debbie told him he had booked for two days. The system shows he booked for one day. He was frustrated that he could not go back and alter the number of days booked.
	Would like to be able to have more anglers in a party, system has let him down a couple of times. likes to be able to have the river to himself, but does feel a little selfish.

Branch	Comment
South	"The booking system is so so and someone is monopolizing all the days on the North branch (possibly 1 guide) booking with client license #s."
	Booking process isn't clear and not a concise process.
	Booking system not easiest to use but glad there is something in place to protect the fisheries.
	Concerned about access through Esk head Station. Frustrated about booking system, difficult for old people to book.
	Did think he was able to swap the days, given other days were pending but then these must've been booked by others.
	Fished all three days of his booking. Overall, he said the booking system is working well and said this increases the fishing experience in a positive way. He did mention that the online booking system is not user friendly and needs some work.
	Guide - doesn't add clients unless he is going to use booking. Weather forecast meant he didn't bother. Reckons he only used ~10% of the ~40 days he booked last year. Thinks the controlled fishery sections are too long. First time fishing South Branch last year in mid - December, there were no boot marks on the top section of the South Branch. Reckons each of the bookings are ~3 days of fishing.
	Had bookings previously so understood. Like's the system
	Had issues booking subsequent days after getting the first day. Doesn't think the system is necessary after fishing the South branch 15/16 times and has only once encountered a guide flying in front of him.
	Had some issues booking, rang the office for help.
	Hates booking system. Thinks there room for three beats, but would like to see the booking system scrapped after this season.
	I'm not sure how I feel about the system. I like the fact there are less anglers and less pressure on the system, a big plus for me. As I work full time and my availability to get away is limited you do need to be organised (and lucky) whereas those with more flexibility are likely finding it more attractive. Either way I think it is a step in the right direction in what is becoming a more congested fishery in the south island.
	Issues with getting the full allotment of bookings (3 days). Unable to cancel booking (didn't realise he needed to contact the office to cancel)
	N/a - managed to run into the people who had the previous two days and found out where they fished so were able to give those sections a break
	No encounters with other anglers, difficult to make a booking at midday when your working away from the computer. needs a buffer so once you click book then you have time to upload everyone's details onto the booking.

Branch	Comment
South	No issues but did mention concern about one angler last season booking a vast majority of days and comments that he personally limits how much he fishes these rivers and would prefer if there was a limit on how many times the same people can get a booking on the controlled fishery sections.
	No issues, did comment that it is a bit of a rigmarole adding anglers to the booking but also that Debbie has been good about sorting this quickly.
	No issues, likes the system and thinks NZ fishing provides great value for money.
	No issues, understands how it works. Thinks the system is fit for purpose.
	No issues. However, mentioned that he does think the South Branch could be split into two beats for the future. One below the Lake Mason outlet and one above the outlet.
	None. Weather didn't allow fishing.
	Originally tried to book North Branch but it gave him September dates in error. Managed to get booking for South Branch instead so happy in the end, had a brilliant time, thinks DW restricting NR is fantastic, and something definitely needed to be done on Hurunui so booking system or similar okay. Frustrating to get a booking but fantastic experience once you do. No worries about other anglers.
	Pleasant knowing you have the whole river, know a helicopter isn't coming in. Bit a stressful trying to get a booking. 12 noon can be difficult.
	Prior weather also caused access issues via Lake Taylor Station track
	River was high and too dirty due to weather - unfishable
	Sometimes you can't get it, needs a timer on the system so you have time to add other anglers. Likes having the river to yourself.
	Thought he had booked for 3 days but for some reason it only gave him 1 day, unsure whether it was his fault or a software issue
	Tried to contact Esk Head Station with no luck. Turned up anyway and was denied access due to lambing. Was told by Esk Head the other stations are also lambing and there wouldn't be any access through them either. Anglers didn't check with the other stations however and abandoned their booking.
	Went through the system smoothly this time round.
	Yes, I did fish the river those two days. It was my first time fishing this section given that it has been hard to get a booking, but it was fantastic. The fish were in great shape for the most part.