

**7** One kilometre past the power station at the lake edge is a sheltered camping area, boat harbour, ramp and jetty.

**8** The Falstone Camping Ground and boat launching ramp is reached by following the gravel road from Ohau "C" along the southern shore about 7 kilometres to Falstone Creek. 6 kilometres from Falstone Creek the public road ends at closed gate near Shepherds Creek.

**9** From Ohau "C" 4WD owners can travel north fording the Ohau River following the Tekapo River, crossing the Pukaki Riverbed to a bridge crossing over the Tekapo River.

**10** The Tekapo River is crossed by way of the Steel Bridge. Turning right and travelling back down the Tekapo River for about 5 km until the Haldon Boat Harbour and camping ground is reached.

**11** Five kilometres from the Haldon Boat Harbour and camping ground the Haldon Arm Road joins Haldon Road which provides access to the northern shore of the lake. Turning left at the corner will take you 38 km to SH 8. From this junction it is 3 km north to Burkes Pass or turning left 12 kilometres south to Lake Tekapo.

**12** From SH 8, 1 km north of the Ruataniwha Spillway a rough gravel 4WD track begins and continues past DOC's black stilt aviaries and travels down the true left bank of the residual lower Ohau River. After fording the Twizel River the Tekapo River is reached and the track leads north to the Steel Bridge to access the lake's northern shore. Turning south a track leads across the Lower Ohau Riverbed to Ohau "C" power station.



**13** Ten kilometres north of Twizel SH 8 reaches Lake Pukaki. Cross the Pukaki High Dam and proceed with caution along a formed track which follows the true left bank of the dry Pukaki Riverbed until you reach the Steel Bridge, a rough journey of about 16 km.

## ANGLER INFORMATION

Lake Benmore accommodates a large number of boat anglers where trolling, harling and drift fishing are popular fishing methods. Boat anglers can access all corners of the lake and find secluded areas to themselves. Shoreline anglers have good access to the lake from SH8 on the Ahuriri Arm and around the head of the Haldon Arm. The willow lined banks can make fly casting a challenge in places so a pair of waders or a spin rod can provide an advantage.

At the head of both the Haldon and Ahuriri Arms the river delta areas are expansive and provide excellent shallow water stalking for wading anglers or anglers fishing from small boats or kayaks. Sight-fishing with polaroid glasses while fly fishing is the favoured method of anglers in the shallows. Mayfly hatches from tributary currents are observed well out into the lake and midge fishing is successful with huge "hatches" of this small but important food source occurring in shallows at the head of both arms.

Spin fishers and trollers have a vast range of lure options available to them and most will provide success if used properly. Arguably the most popular trolling lure is still the "Tasmanian Devil" but rapala and toby style lures are commonly used too. Local anglers often have favourite lure patterns for different times of the year and during different light conditions. For trollers the depth at which they fish their lure is important. Most lures will only fish at about 1-2 metres with some deep diving models down to 5 metres. The depth can be increased by adding extra weight to the line. As most lake trout are cruising along the lake bed, using a lure which will operate at that depth will ensure you are fishing in the trout's feeding zone. Many boats are fitted with "fish finders" which continually indicate water depth enabling the angler to troll in depths where the lure used is fishing close to the lake bed. A rule of thumb is: if you are not catching the bottom from time to time you're not fishing deep enough.



**Fish & Game Central South Island Region**  
32 Richard Pearse Drive, PO Box 150, Temuka, New Zealand  
Telephone (03) 615 8400 Email [csi@fishandgame.org.nz](mailto:csi@fishandgame.org.nz)  
Web [www.fishandgame.org.nz](http://www.fishandgame.org.nz)

# Lake Benmore



**Fish & Game**  
NEW ZEALAND  
**Central South Island Region**

## LAKE BENMORE

Lake Benmore, the largest of the Waitaki Valley hydro lakes is the most fished lake of any Fish & Game Region, second only to Lake Taupo. In NIWA's 2008 acoustic survey of 6 South Island lakes, Lakes Coleridge, Benmore (Ahuriri and Haldon Arms) Hawea, Wanaka, Wakatipu and Te Anau, Lake Benmore had the highest salmonid population estimated at around 16 fish per hectare.

Lake Benmore is divided by the Benmore Range into two arms; the Haldon Arm which is close to Twizel and the smaller Ahuriri Arm which is situated close to Omarama. The Tekapo and Lower Ohau Rivers and their tributaries provide clear inflows at the head of the Haldon Arm however glacial flows from the hydro canal which enter the lake through Ohau "C" tailrace provides the blue grey water for which it is well known. The Ahuriri River flows into the head of the Ahuriri Arm and unless there is a major Norwest rain storm along the main divide the lake remains clear.

Lake Benmore is regarded highly by anglers for the size and condition factors of brown and rainbow trout it produces.

Salmon farms are located on the canal which flows into the Haldon Arm. Releases of chinook salmon which are excess to requirements and the occasional escapees provide the lake angler with a sporadic supply of this sought after species.

Sockeye salmon are also found in Lake Benmore. Sockeye salmon are smaller than chinook salmon and being plankton feeders seldom appear in the anglers' bag. In late February and early March however, around tributary mouths in the



Haldon Arm and in the tailrace of Ohau "C", sockeye salmon congregate just prior to their spawning migrations and at this time they will strike at lures and spinners being cast or trolled for trout.

## ANGLER ACCESS

Anglers generally have access around the margins of Lake Benmore on Crown land, managed by LINZ and the Department of Conservation (DOC). One exception to this is in close proximity to Meridian's hydro-electricity generation assets, which sit on land owned by Meridian, with access being controlled for safety reasons. Meridian manages the lake levels of Benmore for hydro-generation purposes, so these can change relatively quickly.

The access points described in this pamphlet generally offer the angler unrestricted access. There are several additional access points to the lake that have no public road access. Where private land must be crossed, anglers are advised to seek permission beforehand and ensure they don't trespass or put their health and safety at risk.

### AHURIRI ARM OF LAKE BENMORE

**This popular arm of the lake is accessed from State Highway 83. From SH 1 at Pukeuri (just north of Oamaru) SH 83 travels west through Duntroon, Kurow and Otematata connecting to the inland north south tourist route, SH 8 at Omarama. Midway between Otematata and Omarama on SH 83 the road follows the southern shoreline of the Ahuriri Arm of the lake. The Alps to Ocean cycle trail lies parallel to the road here and can be utilised to assist access.**

**1** Benmore Dam boat launching ramp is located on the top side of the Benmore Dam. Turn of SH 83 at Otematata and travel 5 km to Benmore Dam. The ramp is on the west side of the dam where the shoreline access is steep and rocky providing limited fishing opportunities. From the Benmore Dam boaters can access the Haldon Arm or the Ahuriri Arm. The convoluted course, rocky points and islands through "the narrows" can be confusing to the inexperienced boater or during times of poor visibility and caution should be exercised here.

**2** Continue on SH 83 through Otematata climbing the Otematata Saddle where an elevated view of the Ahuriri Arm



*The delta of the Ahuriri River*

of the lake can be seen. On your right, 300 metres before crossing the Otamatapao River Bridge a DOC sign is located which gives access to the lake edge along a 1.3km gravel track suitable for 4WD vehicles.

**3** 2km west is Sailors Cutting camping ground and boat launching ramp. The Alps to Ocean Cycle way can be accessed from here.

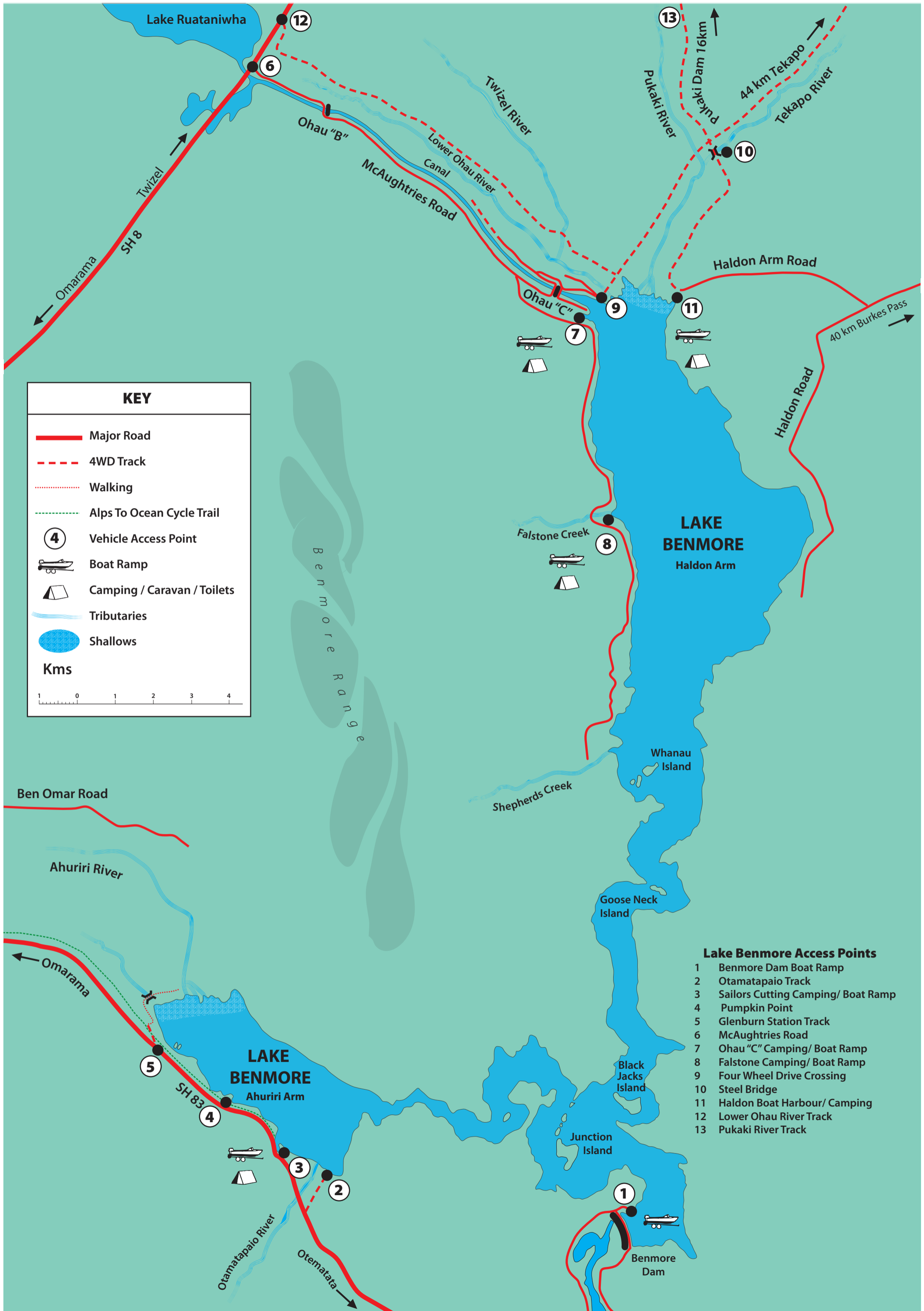
**4** From Sailors Cutting continue on SH 83 for 2.3km to reach a car parking area which accesses a small peninsula known by locals as Pumpkin Point. 1.8 km west of Pumpkin Point is Lake Benmore Holiday Park at Glenburn.

**5** 600 metres west of the Holiday Park a road side gate marked with a F&G access sign provides track access to the lake edge and the top of the lake. From the end of the track and car parking area, cross the fence then a short walk alongside a small tributary takes the angler to a concrete foot bridge. From this crossing the route follows a fence line across to the delta area of the Ahuriri River, a distance of about 1 kilometre. Swamp has reclaimed some of the original track work and as a result the going is soft and caution is advised.

### HALDON ARM OF LAKE BENMORE

30 kilometres north of Omarama on SH8 is the township of Twizel.

**6** Three kilometres south of Twizel at the Ruataniwha Spillway turn-off onto McAughtries road and follow the Ohau hydro canal to Lake Benmore at Ohau "C" power house a distance of some 11 kilometres.



**KEY**

- Major Road
- - - 4WD Track
- ⋯ Walking
- - - Alps To Ocean Cycle Trail
- ④ Vehicle Access Point
- Boat Ramp
- Camping / Caravan / Toilets
- Tributaries
- Shallows

**Kms**

1 0 1 2 3 4

- Lake Benmore Access Points**
- 1 Benmore Dam Boat Ramp
  - 2 Otamatapaio Track
  - 3 Sailors Cutting Camping/ Boat Ramp
  - 4 Pumpkin Point
  - 5 Glenburn Station Track
  - 6 McAughtries Road
  - 7 Ohau "C" Camping/ Boat Ramp
  - 8 Falstone Camping/ Boat Ramp
  - 9 Four Wheel Drive Crossing
  - 10 Steel Bridge
  - 11 Haldon Boat Harbour/ Camping
  - 12 Lower Ohau River Track
  - 13 Pukaki River Track