

Access Rules

Remember these simple rules and ensure ongoing access for all.

- Park vehicles away from tracks and gates.
- Do not litter.
- Leave gates as you find them.
- Cross fences without damaging them.
- Stay within river margins.
- Do not stray into paddocks with stock.
- Avoid disturbing stock or trampling crops. Walk along fence lines where possible.
- Respect private land.
- Report any missing or damaged signs to Fish & Game.
- Refer to your refer to your South Island regulation booklet for angling regulations and bag limits.

Fishing Etiquette

- Respect other anglers already on the water.
 - Do not fish ahead of them.
 - A polite approach enquiring about fishing plans should avoid problems.
- This will result in more productive angling, sharing of information and has begun many angling friendships.

The Wairau Fishery

The Wairau River has over 140km of fishable water offering water types to suit all angling methods. The lower and middle reaches are mainly braided on a shingle bed. The upper reaches above Rainbow Station are more confined on a more stable rock and boulder bed. Flow is relatively swift throughout the river's length until reaching the tidal influence below the State Highway One Bridge at Tuamarina. The Wairau catchment is large and can experience heavy rainfalls which leave the Wairau river discoloured for relatively long periods. Early in the season melting snow contributes significantly to the high flows and discoloured water.

The fish population is very mobile and is a mix of river resident and sea-run brown trout. There is also a small run of salmon in the summer months. Wairau trout average 3.5lb overall, with 4–6 lb fish common in the middle and upper reaches. Larger fish are found mainly in the upper reaches and the estuarine area, but can be found throughout the river system, particularly when sea-run trout are migrating upstream. All the major tributaries are worth exploring as they all hold fish in varying numbers. They are better fished early in the season, before low summer flows and elevated water temperatures force the remaining fish to seek cooler habitat.

Wairau salmon ascend the river February to April with good catches made by local anglers who mainly fish below Renwick using heavy trout gear rather than the big salmon gear used in southern rivers. The river is small and clear enough to enable effective fly fishing for salmon. Salmon fishing above the Wash Bridge SH63 is not permitted, to protect spawning salmon.

Fish & Game in Nelson/Marlborough are the
Regional Managers of Sports Fish & Gamebirds on behalf of Anglers and Hunters

Champion Road, Richmond, Nelson

PO Box 2173, Stoke, Nelson

Phone: 03-544 6382

Fax: 03-544 4058



Brochure Number 3 sponsored by The Rod & Gun One Fly Competition

Brochure and map design by Signz n' Graphix, Richmond, Nelson

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WAIRAU RIVER



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