Introduction

Our State’s fisheries are a community-owned resource. We all have a responsibility to protect and safeguard this natural asset for present and future generations.

Fishing regulations are in place to protect and conserve our fish stocks and aquatic habitats to ensure that fishing activities remain sustainable.

The Macquarie district offers a variety of fishing opportunities for the enthusiastic angler or weekend camper. Native inland fish species including the iconic Murray cod and golden perch are regularly caught in waterways within the district.

Some of the major waterways located within the Macquarie district include the Macquarie (including Burrendong Dam), Cudgegong, Darling, Warrego, Bogan and Lachlan rivers.

Also located within the district are a small number of trout streams, including sections of the Cudgegong and Bell Rivers and their tributaries.

Fisheries Officers from NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) routinely patrol waterways, boat ramps and impoundments advising anglers about responsible fishing practices and ensuring compliance with NSW fishing regulations.

Information on bag and size limits, fishing closures and legal fishing gear can be obtained free of charge from the NSW DPI website www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries, by calling 1300 550474, or by visiting your local NSW DPI fisheries office.

To report illegal fishing activity, call your local fisheries office or the Fishers Watch Phoneline on 1800 043 536. All calls will be treated as confidential and you can remain anonymous.

Recreational Fishing Fee

When fishing in NSW waters, both freshwater and saltwater, you are required by law to pay the NSW recreational fishing fee and carry a receipt showing the payment of the fee. This applies when spear fishing, hand lining, hand gathering, trapping, bait collecting and prawn netting or when in possession of fishing gear in, on or adjacent to waters.

All money raised by the NSW recreational fishing fee is spent on improving recreational fishing in NSW. Some projects include:

- Angler facilities such as fish cleaning tables and fishing platforms.
- Stocking of freshwater fish in dams and rivers.
- Essential research on popular recreational fish species.
- Enhancing compliance with fishing rules.
- Restoring important fish habitat.
- Research stocking of mulloway and prawns in estuaries.
- The installation of fish aggregating devices (FADs) to enhance fishing opportunities for dolphin fish or even tuna and marlin.
- Creation of Recreational Fishing Havens.
- Angler education and advisory programs such as the Fishcare Volunteer Program, fishing workshops and fishing guides.
- Building artificial reefs in Lake Macquarie, Botany Bay, St Georges Basin and Lake Conjola. More reefs in other estuaries are planned.
- Investigating the building of artificial reefs in offshore areas.
You can pay the NSW recreational fishing fee at hundreds of agents throughout NSW, such as over the counter at most fishing tackle shops. You can also pay the fee at some caravan parks, local shops and service stations, many Kmart stores, online at www.licence.nsw.gov.au or by calling 1300 369 365.

If you pay for a one year or three year period online, over the phone or at a Touch agent, or if you renew your licence using your renewal letter, you will receive a plastic receipt in the post. Evidence of payment is your receipt number which you must be able to produce if requested by an authorised officer (until you receive your receipt in the post).

Note: If you pay for a 3 day or 1 month period, no additional receipt will be posted.

Some exemptions apply to paying the fishing fee, including people under the age of 18 and holders of pensioner concession cards. For further information on exemptions visit the NSW DPI website or your local fisheries office.

You may not need to pay the NSW recreational fishing fee if you are fishing on a charter boat under the supervision of a fishing guide. Please check with the charter operator, or guide, before you go fishing. If they do not hold a Recreational Fishing Fee Exemption Certificate you will need to pay the NSW recreational fishing fee.

Recreational Fishing Closures

Weir closures
The following waters are closed to the taking of all species of fish by all methods of fishing:

**Lachlan River – Brewster Weir.** That part of the Lachlan River within 100 metres downstream of the weir face at Brewster Weir (main weir).

**Lachlan River – Brewster Weir (Outlet Regulator).** That part of the Lachlan River within 100 downstream of the outer wall of the outlet regulator at Brewster Weir.

**Lachlan River – Lake Brewster (Ballyrogan Channel).** That part of the Ballyrogan Channel within 100 metres downstream of the outer wall of the outlet regulator at Lake Brewster.

**Willandra Weir.** That part of the Lachlan River within 100 metres downstream of the weir face at Willandra Weir.

**Macquarie River – South Dubbo Weir.** That part of the Macquarie River within 75m downstream of the weir face at South Dubbo Weir.

**Burrendong Dam.** That part of Macquarie River within 185 metres upstream from the weir face at Burrendong Dam, 185 metres downstream from the wall of Burrendong Dam outlet regulator and within the spillway channel at Burrendong Dam.

Seasonal closures – trout waters

**General trout streams**
The following waters are general trout streams and are closed to the taking of all species of fish by any method, from the Tuesday after the June (Queen’s Birthday) long weekend until midnight on the last Friday before the start of the October (Labour Day) long weekend (inclusive) in each year.

The following methods are permitted during the fishing season: a) one attended rod and line with not more than 2 hooks attached and with not more than 3 treble hooks, or 3 double hooks, attached to any lure; and b) a landing net used as an ancillary for retrieval of fish lawfully taken. Bait fishing is permitted.

When taking Atlantic salmon, brook trout, brown trout and rainbow trout in general trout streams the maximum quantity that a person may take on any one day is 5 and the maximum quantity that a person may have in their possession is 10, consisting of any single species or a combination of species.

**Bell River** (Figure 1). The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Bell River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, Molong Creek.

![Figure 1. Bell River](image-url)
Cudgegong River. The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Cudgegong River, its creeks and tributaries downstream of the wall of Windermere Dam and upstream from the Lawson Park Weir at Mudgee.

Artificial fly and lure trout streams
The following waters are artificial fly and lure trout streams and are closed to the taking of all species of fish by any method, from the Tuesday after the June (Queen’s Birthday) long weekend until midnight on the last Friday before the start of the October (Labour Day) long weekend (inclusive) in each year.

The following methods are permitted during the fishing season: a) one attended rod and line with not more than 2 hooks attached, artificial flies and lures only and with not more than 3 treble hooks, or 3 double hooks, attached to any lure; and b) a landing net used as an ancillary for retrieval of fish lawfully taken. Bait fishing is not permitted.

Note: ‘artificial flies or lures’ does not include the use of ‘powerbait’ or any other similar artificial or manufactured bait product.

When taking Atlantic salmon, brook trout, brown trout and rainbow trout in fly and lure trout streams the maximum quantity that a person may take on any one day is 2 and the maximum quantity that a person may have in their possession is 4, consisting of any single species or a combination of species.

Bell River (Figure 1). The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Bell River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from the Belgravia Road crossing.

Molong Creek (Figure 1). The following waters are artificial fly and lure waters: the whole of the waters of the Molong Creek and its tributaries upstream from its junction with, but not including, Borenore Creek.

General freshwater fishing rules
Permitted fishing gear and methods
Lines. Two attended lines are permitted in all non-tidal waters other than in some trout waters. Attended lines must be within 50m, in your sight, and have no more than 2 hooks per line with up to 3 treble hooks attached to any lure per line other than in some trout waters. A lure is considered a single hook. Setlines are not permitted.

Traps and nets. You may use up to 5 yabby traps, 1 shrimp trap and 5 hoop (lift) nets, other than in trout waters where the use of traps and nets is prohibited (except when using up to 5 hoop nets in Googong Dam or Lakes Lyell, Wallace, Eucumbene or Jindabyne to take yabbies).

Persons must not set traps or nets for longer than 24 hours without lifting those traps or nets. Fishers are encouraged to regularly check set fishing gear, to ensure that any unwanted catch is returned to the water safely, unharmed.

The use of yabby traps are not permitted in any waters east of the Newell Highway, the Murray River from the Newell Highway at Tocumwal downstream to the Echuca road bridge, the Edward River from the Murray River at Picnic Point downstream to Stevens Weir and the Murrumbidgee River from Narrandera to the Darlington Point road bridge.

See the Freshwater Recreational Fishing Guide for information on how to correctly identify nets and traps and their specifications and dimensions

Bowfishing. A pilot program permitting bowfishing in some specific areas will be implemented in 2015 (see www.dpi.nsw.gov.au for more information).

Species restrictions
Freshwater catfish – eel tailed (Tandanus tandanus). May not be taken by any fishing method in western flowing rivers. May be taken from the backed up waters of listed western impoundments, eastern rivers & eastern dams. Listed waters in the Central Tablelands district are: Ben Chifley Dam, Windamere Dam and Wyangala Dam. See the Freshwater recreational fishing guide for further details.

Silver perch (Bidyanus bidyanus). May not be taken by any fishing method in any rivers. May be taken from the backed up waters of listed impoundments. Listed waters in the Central Tablelands district are: Ben Chifley Dam, Windamere Dam and Wyangala Dam. See the Freshwater recreational fishing guide for further details.

Murray cod (Maccullochella peeli). May not be taken from the whole of the inland waters of NSW from 1 September to 30 November (inclusive) in each year, except Copeton Dam.

Murray crayfish (Euastacus armatus). May not be taken in any waters at any time other than between June and August (inclusive) in the following specified waters:

(a) Murrumbidgee River between the Hume Highway road bridge, Gundagai and 100 m
upstream of the weir face at Berembe Weir near Ganmain and

(b) Murray River from 130 m below Hume Weir near Albury to the Newell Highway road bridge, Tocumwal

Note: The specified waters include all tributaries, lakes, lagoons, dams, reservoirs, ponds, canals, channels or waterways of the main channels of the above rivers, except Old Man Creek, which is a tributary of the Murrumbidgee River.

**Australian bass and estuary perch.** May not be taken in rivers except rivers above impoundments from 1 May to 31 August (inclusive) in each year other than by catch and release fishing, where any fish caught must be returned to the water safely, unharmed.

**Prohibited fishing methods**

- It is illegal to use setlines, spear guns, spears, poison or explosives or firearms to take fish, to use a gaff to take fish, to jog or foul hook fish, to use frogs, live finfish (including carp), live birds or live animals as bait, or any traps or nets not permitted for recreational use, or to sell your catch. It is illegal to keep prohibited size fish – they should be returned to the water immediately with as little harm as possible.

- Crayfish: It is illegal to remove heads, tails and claws from crayfish or possess tails and or claws when you are in, on or adjacent to the water. This rule does not apply if the crayfish are being prepared for immediate consumption, are being prepared for immediate use as bait, if the crayfish are being cleaned at a fish cleaning facility or a fish cleaning table at a boat ramp, or fish that do not have a legal length.

**Other freshwater fishing rules**

- Lakes Hume and Mulwala: NSW fishing regulations apply to all of Lake Mulwala and Victorian regulations apply to all of Lake Hume.

- Commercial fishing gear: Leave all commercial fishing gear in place and do not disturb commercial fishers going about their lawful business. Penalties up to $5,500 can apply.

**Fishing safely**

Fishing is fun, but remember to take care and exercise caution. These are basic safety tips.

- Observe first, fish later. Always check weather and water conditions before you start fishing. Make sure you are aware of local weather. Listen to weather forecasts or call the weather information line on 1900 937 107. Be aware that conditions may change dramatically in a short period of time.

- Never fish alone and always inform others of your fishing plans. Let friends or family know where you are going and when you will be back.

- Care for your own safety and never take undue risks when fishing, even when fighting fish. Never enter the water to retrieve lost tackle or snagged fish. If the location looks dangerous, don’t fish there.

- Wear a lifejacket or buoyancy vest when boat fishing or when fishing in hazardous locations such as those located near areas of fast moving water. Always wear appropriate non-slip shoes. Cleats, sandals and sandshoes with non slip soles suit different surfaces. Carry ropes and torches as an additional precaution.

- If someone falls into the water, look for an angel ring, life buoy or something that floats and throw it to the person in the water. Alert emergency services by dialling 112 from a mobile phone or 000 from a landline.

- When boat fishing, wear light clothing. Light clothing such as shorts and a spray jacket will let you swim more easily if you fall overboard. Jumpers may be heavy and difficult to take off.
• Ask for advice from locals who know the area – they can advise you of good fishing locations and areas to be cautious around.

**Wader safety**

Take extra care when wearing waders. Roads and Maritime Services recommends that waders should not be used in boats in case of capsize or swamping.

Basic wader safety tips include the following.

• To restrict the amount of water that can enter waders, fasten a belt around your waist. This must be as firm as possible but always comfortable. The belt will also trap air inside and provide some buoyancy but caution is needed as you could end upside down if you fall into the water.

• If you fall into the water immediately assume a tuck position, then roll on to your back while keeping the knees tucked. Use your arms to balance.

• Do not try to swim but either tread water or float.

• If swept into a fast flowing stream always face downstream and go with the current feet first while working to a safe shore position.

• Always remember not to panic.

**Responsible fishing**

• Observe all bag and size limits as well as any other restrictions for the area you are fishing.

• Carefully release all undersize or unwanted fish and take only what is sufficient for your immediate needs.

• Take home any rubbish from the fishing spot, especially plastic bags, old line and fishing hooks.

• Use environmentally friendly tackle where possible.

**Catch and release**

Catch and release fishing has increased in popularity in recent years. Research has shown that most fish survive using current catch and release fishing techniques. The following improved fishing practices are suggested to maximise fish survival

• If a fish is deeply hooked, do not try to remove the hook, cut the line as close to the mouth as possible and release the fish. It is likely to survive if handled carefully.

• Use methods and rigs such as artificial lures or non-offset circle hooks (when using bait) that increase the frequency of mouth-hooked fish.

• Barbless hooks can be used to make hook removal easier and minimise hook damage.

• Minimise the length of time the fish is out of the water. Ideally, unhook the fish while it is still in the water. Needle-nosed pliers or unhooking devices can greatly reduce the time spent unhooking a fish.

• Use fish-friendly landing nets with soft, knotless mesh.

• Avoid dropping the fish on hard or hot surfaces and do not hold the fish by the gills or eyes.

• Use wet hands or gloves to handle fish before release.

• If you are going to take photos of your fish before release, support your fish properly.

**Further Information**

If you would like more information about fishing restrictions that apply to Macquarie district waterways and impoundments, please contact the Macquarie fisheries office.

Contact

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (January 2015). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Primary Industries or the user’s independent adviser.

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