

Far West Recreational Fishing Guide

January 2024

Fishing is a fun, outdoor activity for the whole family. Fishing rules help ensure healthy and sustainable fisheries for future generations.

The Far West district lies in the far western part of New South Wales and is bordered by Victoria, South Australia and Queensland. It is predominately made up of slow flowing lowland rivers and their tributaries, as well as lake systems that may be ephemeral in nature.

The most renowned waterways in the Far West district are the Murray and Darling Rivers, along with the Menindee Lakes system. The Murray and Darling rivers provide fishers with excellent angling opportunities for Golden Perch and Murray Cod. The Menindee Lakes system is the destination for fishers chasing a feed of yabbies. In addition to yabbies, the numerous regulators moving water into and out of the Menindee lakes system produce some great fishing for golden perch.

DPI fisheries officers routinely patrol waterways, boat ramps and foreshores to advise anglers about responsible fishing practices and to ensure compliance with NSW fishing regulations.

Information on bag and size limits and legal fishing gear can be obtained at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries or by visiting your local DPI fisheries office.

To report suspected illegal fishing activity, call the Fishers Watch phone line on **1800 043 536** (free call) or report on-line at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/compliance/report-illegal-activity. 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, using bowfishing equipment (to take carp), 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. Projects include:

- angler facilities such as fishing platforms;
- stocking of freshwater fish in dams and rivers;
- essential research on popular recreational fish species;
- building artificial reefs to create new fishing locations;
- fish aggregating devices (FADs) to enhance fishing for dolphinfish and even tuna and marlin;
- creation of recreational fishing havens;
- restoring important fish habitat;
- marine stocking of prawns in estuaries;
- angler education and advisory programs such as the Fishcare Volunteer program, fishing workshops, Get Hooked...it's fun to fish primary schools education and fishing guides.

Much more information is available at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries.

You can pay the NSW recreational fishing fee at www.onegov.nsw.gov.au or by calling 1300 369 365 or at many outlets throughout NSW, such as most fishing tackle stores, caravan parks, local shops, service stations and many Kmart stores.

Some exemptions apply to paying the fishing fee, including people under the age of 18, holders of pensioner concession cards and Aboriginal people. For further information on exemptions go to www.dpi.nsw.gov.au or call (02) 4424 7499.

You may not need to pay the NSW recreational fishing fee if you are fishing on a charter boat, hire boat or under the supervision of a fishing guide. Please check with the charter/hire boat 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

A number of fishing closures exist in the Far West area. These exist for a variety of reasons, from public health and safety to preserving unique aquatic environments. The majority of these closures are signposted and penalties apply for not complying with fisheries rules and regulations.

Total fishing closures

All methods of fishing are prohibited in the following waters.

Frenchmans Creek (Figure 1) at Lake Victoria inlet regulator within 100 metres upstream from the centre of the regulator wall and from a point on the northern bank 120 metres downstream from where the centre of the regulator wall adjoins the northern bank of Frenchman's Creek to a point on the southern bank, 100 metres downstream from where the centre of the regulator wall adjoins the southern bank of Frenchman's Creek.

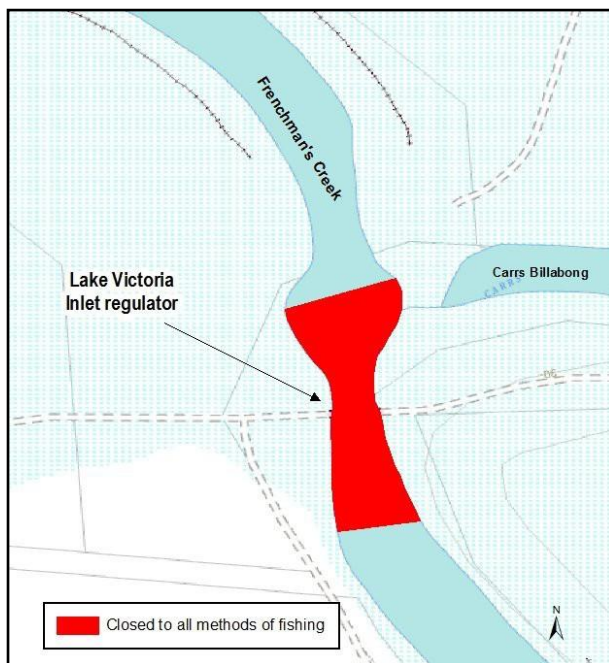


Figure 1. Frenchmans Creek (Lake Victoria)

Rufus River (Figure 2) at Lake Victoria outlet regulator within 100 metres upstream and 100 metres downstream from the centre of the regulator wall.



Figure 2. Rufus River (Lake Victoria)

Weir closures - Murray River

All methods of fishing are prohibited in the following waters.

Rufus River - Weir and Lock No 7 (Figure 3). That part of Murray River at Weir 7 at Rufus River within 50 metres upstream from the centre of the weir wall and from the downstream end of the inner wall of the lock chamber in a straight line across the river to a point on the NSW bank, 125 metres downstream from where the weir wall adjoins the NSW bank.

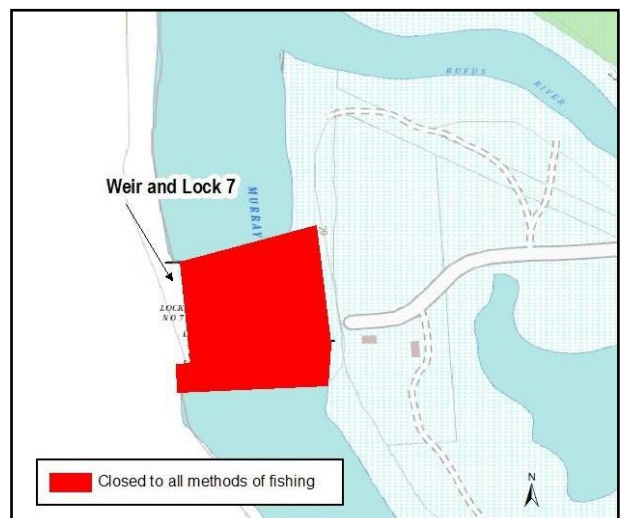


Figure 3. Rufus River - Weir and Lock No 7

Wangumma - Weir and Lock No 8 (Figure 4). That part of Murray River at Weir 8 at Wangumma within 50 metres upstream from the centre of the weir wall and from the downstream end of the inner wall of the lock chamber in a straight line across the river to a point on the Victorian bank, 150 metres downstream from where the weir wall adjoins the Victorian bank.

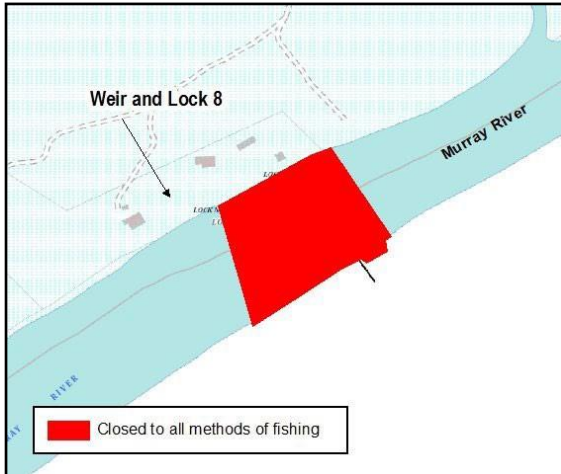


Figure 4. Wangumma - Weir and Lock No 8

Kulnine - Weir and Lock No 9 (Figure 5). That part of Murray River at Weir 9 at Kulnine within 50 metres upstream from the centre of the weir wall and from the downstream end of the inner wall of the lock chamber in a straight line across the river to a point on the NSW bank, 150 metres downstream from where the weir wall adjoins the NSW bank.

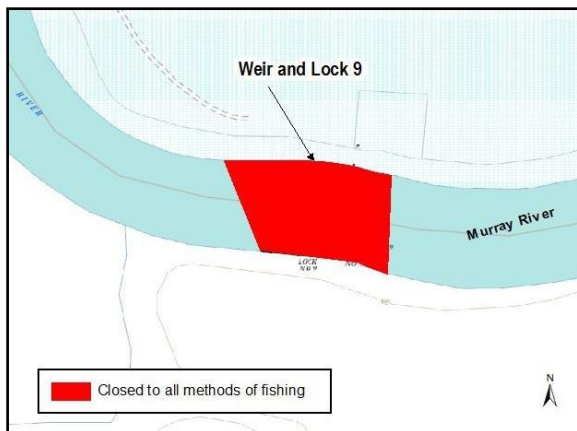


Figure 5. Kulnine - Weir and Lock No 9

Wentworth - Weir and Lock No 10 (Figure 6). That part of Murray River at Weir 10 at Wentworth within 50 metres upstream from the centre of the weir wall and from the downstream end of the lock training wall in a straight line across the river to a point on the Victorian bank, 65 metres downstream from where the weir wall adjoins the Victorian bank.

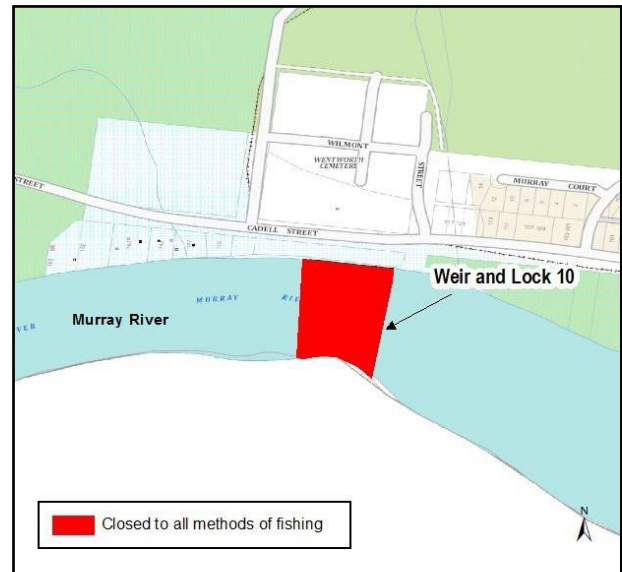


Figure 6. Wentworth - Weir and Lock No 10

Mildura - Weir and Lock No 11 (Figure 7). That part of Murray River at Weir 11 at Mildura within 50 metres upstream from the centre of the weir wall and from a point on the NSW bank 142 metres downstream from where the weir wall adjoins the NSW bank in a straight line across the river to a point on the Victorian bank, 120 metres downstream from where the weir wall adjoins the Victorian bank.

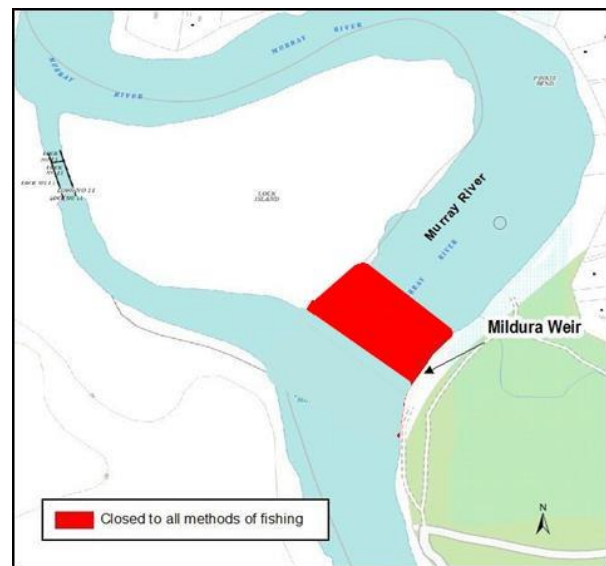


Figure 7. Mildura- Weir and Lock No 11

Robinvale - Weir and Lock No 15 (Figure 8). That part of Murray River at Weir 15 at Robinvale within 50 metres upstream from the centre of the weir wall and from the downstream end of the inner wall of the lock chamber in a straight line across the river to a point on the NSW bank, 65 metres downstream from where the weir wall adjoins the NSW bank.

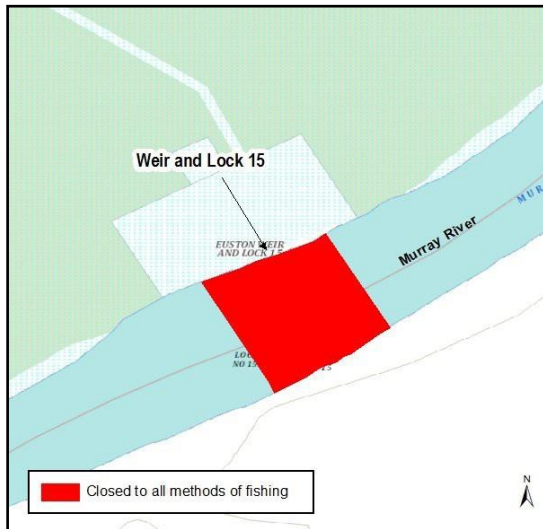


Figure 8. Robinvale - Weir and Lock No 15

Species Restrictions

Freshwater Catfish cannot be taken by any method in all western flowing waters including the backed up waters of western impoundments, except the backed up waters of the following impoundments; Ben Chifley Dam, Burrendong Dam, Chaffey Dam, Copeton Dam, Keepit Dam, Pindari Dam, Split Rock Dam, Windamere Dam and Wyangala Dam.

River Blackfish and Two-Spined Blackfish cannot be taken by any method in any NSW waters.

Australian Bass and Estuary Perch. During the period May to August (inclusive) each year Australian Bass and Estuary Perch can only be taken by catch and release fishing in any NSW waters except impoundments and the waters of rivers above impoundments.

Silver Perch cannot be taken by any method in any NSW waters except the backed up waters of the following impoundments: Ben Chifley Dam, Burrendong Dam, Chaffey Dam, Copeton Dam, Glenbawn Dam, Glennies Creek Dam, Googong Dam, Hume Weir, Jounama Pondage, Keepit Dam, Lake Albert, Lake Wyangan, Pindari Dam, Split Rock Dam, Windamere Dam, Wyangala Dam and Yass Weir.

Spiny Crayfish. There are several species of Spiny Freshwater Crayfish in NSW. Whilst they may be targeted by fishers, size and bag limits apply. It is prohibited to take Spiny Freshwater Crayfish from designated trout waters. The Fitzroy Falls Spiny Crayfish is totally protected and cannot be taken from any waters.

Murray Cod cannot be taken during the period 1 September to 31 November, except Copeton and Blowering dams.

Murray Crayfish. Murray Crayfish are found in the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers and their tributaries. Fishing for Murray Crayfish is a popular pastime in the winter months. Murray Crayfish cannot be taken in any waters at any time other than between June and August (inclusive) in the following specified waters; (a) that part of Murrumbidgee River and tributaries (excluding Old Man Creek) between the Hume Highway road bridge at Gundagai downstream to a line 100 metres upstream of the weir face at Berembed Weir near Ganmain, and (b) that part of Murray River and tributaries between a line 130 metres below the weir face at Hume Weir near Albury downstream to the Newell Highway road bridge at Tocumwal.

GENERAL FRESHWATER FISHING RULES

- **Lines.** A fisher may use two attended lines and possess four lines with lures attached in all non-tidal waters (with only 2 in use at any time), other than in some trout waters. Attended lines must be within 50m, in your line of 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 sometrout waters. A lure is considered a single hook.
- **Traps and nets.** You may use up to 5 hoop / open pyramid lift nets (**Figure 9**) and 1 shrimp trap to take Yabbies and freshwater Shrimp, other than in trout waters where the use of traps and nets is prohibited (except when using up to 5 hoop / open pyramid lift nets in Googong Dam or Lakes Lyell, Wallace, Eucumbene or Jindabyne to take yabbies).

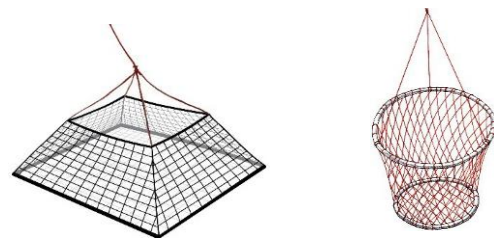


Figure 9. Open pyramid lift net and hoop net

- 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.

- **Bowfishing.** Bowfishers may take carp from selected inland waters under the following circumstances: (a) not bowfish outside of 30 minutes before sunrise and 30 minutes after sunset (b) not use any bowfishing equipment aided by lights (c) not bowfish within 100 metres of a person or vessel that is not part of your bowfishing party (d) not bowfish within 100 metres of a place or residence or where someone lives, picnic area, boat ramp or campsite (e) not bowfish within 500m of a caravan park. Bowfishing equipment means an upright bow and arrow with the arrow attached to the bow by means of line and a reel of no more than 30 metres of line attached to the bowfishing reel and a flightless (un-fletched) bowfishing arrow with barbs attached (fishing head).

Other Freshwater Fishing Rules

- Leave all commercial fishing gear in place and do not disturb commercial fishers going about their lawful business.
- You must not alter the length of a fish which is subject to a minimum or maximum size limit whilst you are in, on or adjacent to any waters in any manner other than by gutting, gilling and scaling. This rule does not apply at areas normally used for cleaning fish, such as boat ramp cleaning tables, if the fish are for immediate consumption or immediate use as bait, or for fish that do not have a legal length. You cannot use any chemical or explosive devices to take or assist to take fish.
- You cannot use setlines, spearguns, spears or other similar devices (except if using bowfishing equipment to take carp). Bowfishing equipment cannot be used in trout waters.
- It is illegal to use or possess a gaff hook in, on or adjacent to inland waters. It is illegal to jag/ foul hook fish, to use frogs, live finfish, live birds or live animals as bait, or to sell your catch. You cannot use any nets or traps which are not permitted for use. The use of salmon roe or products containing them is also prohibited.

Fishing safely

- Remember to take care and exercise caution. Follow these basic safety tips: Observe first, fish later. Always check weather and water conditions before you start fishing Never fish alone and always inform others of your fishing plans. 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
- Wear appropriate non-slip footwear and light clothing. If someone is washed in or falls into the water, DO NOT jump in but look for a life

buoy or something that floats and throw it to the person in the water. Alert emergency services by dialing 112 from a mobile phone or 000 from a landline - wait for assistance.

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. Don't panic, do not try to swim but either tread water or float. If swept into a fast flowing stream always go with the current feet first while working to a safe shore position.

Responsible fishing

- Observe all bag and size limits as well as any other restrictions for the area you are fishing. Reduce wildlife injuries by attending your lines and use environmentally friendly tackle.
- Carefully release all undersize or unwanted fish and take only what is sufficient for your immediate needs. Dispose of all litter and fish waste responsibly. Be considerate of others and keep noise to a minimum.

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. Barbless hooks can be used to make hook removal easier and minimise injuries to the fish. Use fish-friendly landing nets with soft, knotless mesh. Minimise the length of time the fish is out of the water. Use wet hands or gloves to handle fish before release.

Further information

For more information about fishing restrictions that apply to the Far West waterways please contact the: Far West Fisheries Office. Silver City Highway (PO Box 62) Dareton NSW 2717 Phone: (03) 5019 8408

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