



Department of
Primary Industries

The Snowy Lakes Trout Strategy



2018-23

A strategy to promote recreational angling, regional economic development and eco-tourism opportunities

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Introduction

The Snowy Mountains are one of the State's premier tourist attractions and fishing in the region's lakes and streams has a world-renowned reputation of excellence among keen anglers. Tourism and recreational fishing are vitally important to this spectacular area of the State. The Snowy Lakes trout fishery is the most significant trout fishery in NSW and is of great economic importance to the region.

As such, it is important that the recreational trout fishery is managed sustainably to ensure fishers can continue to enjoy fishing in the Snowy region and that the fishery also continues to generate employment opportunities to the fishing and tourism industries.

A Snowy Lakes Trout Strategy Working Group has been established to assist the Government in the development of this strategy. The group comprises representatives from the Monaro Acclimatisation Society, tackle and tourism industries, fishing media, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Snowy Hydro, the Southern Rivers Local Land Services and the Jindabyne Chamber of Commerce. The group also comprises fisheries managers, researchers and Gaden trout hatchery staff. The group is chaired by the Executive Director, Fisheries NSW.

This strategy sets out a range of management objectives, designed to support high quality trout fisheries and positive angling experiences for all anglers. The strategy has been developed to ensure that the Snowy Mountains region continues as the State's premier trout fishery for generations to come.

Snowy Lakes Management Objectives

a. Supply of salmonids

In order to maintain the disease and genetic integrity of the Snowy catchment trout fishery it is desirable that all trout released into the Snowy catchment (including Lakes Eucumbene and Jindabyne) are produced at the Gaden Trout Hatchery from local wild broodstock.

Management Response

NSW DPI will collect ova from fish taken from the Snowy catchment. Disease testing and genetic protocols will continue to maintain the disease free status and genetic integrity of the fishery. Stock from the Gaden Trout Hatchery will be transferred to the Dutton Trout Hatchery from time to time to ensure appropriate genetics.

b. Compliance requirements

The recreational trout fishery is considered generally to be a low risk compliance environment. The area is regularly patrolled by Fisheries Officers to detect and deter any potential illegal fishing activity. Awareness of the regulations is good, and compliance rates are generally high.

Management Response

Compliance activity will continue to be undertaken as required to inform anglers of recreational fishing rules and to control illegal fishing. Any reports of illegal fishing can be reported to 1800 043 536.

c. Water Quality

The Snowy Lakes were established for the purpose of providing water for irrigation and power generation as part of the Snowy Mountains Hydro Scheme. Trout fisheries rely heavily upon good

water quality. The catchment area supports a number of activities that may have adverse impacts upon water quality and subsequently may affect the fishery.

Management Response

The South East LLS is a key stakeholder in catchment management. The working group can liaise with the South East LLS, Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and local council on how best to address any broader catchment effluent or pollution problems that could affect the Snowy Lakes fishery. NSW DPI will liaise with Snowy Hydro to discuss strategies to benefit anglers where possible.

d. Fishing competitions

Additional recreational fishing effort applied during fishing competitions can cause conflict with non-competition anglers. It has been suggested that competitors can deplete the number of inshore feeding fish over a short period of time.

Management Response

NSW DPI has developed a voluntary code of practice for fishing events and guidelines to help event organisers abide by the code of practice. A staff member is available to promote responsible fishing practices for future fishing events. Promotional catch and release material such as responsible fishing advisory information, catch and release measuring mats, circle hooks and catch and release kits are also made available to fishing event organisers to help support responsible fishing practices.

e. Bag,size and gear limits

The Snowy Lakes are classified as general trout dams, which are open to trout fishing all year round.

Management Response

A bag limit of 5 fish per person per day and a possession limit of 10 fish per person are in place for the Snowy Lakes. Gear restrictions are 2 attended rods with line and no more than 2 hooks attached when using bait or no more than 3 hooks attached when using artificial flies or lures. Tributaries of the Snowy Lakes are managed either as general trout streams which have a bag limit of 5 and possession limit of 10 with 1 attended rod with line permitted or artificial fly and lure only streams which have a bag limit of 2 and possession limit of 4 with 1 attended rod with line permitted.

f. Fishing Closures

An annual trout spawning closure applies to all trout streams between the end of the June long weekend and the start of the October long weekend. The annual fishing closure is in place to protect trout as they aggregate and enter spawning streams and to enable brown and rainbow trout to breed uninterrupted during their annual spawning run. A recreational fishing closure is located in, on and adjacent to the Gaden Trout Hatchery to prevent recreational fishing within hatchery ponds or around hatchery grounds.

Management Response

All trout streams are closed to fishing from the end of the June long weekend to the start of the October long weekend. This allows trout fishers to fish in streams during both the June and October long weekends. The Snowy Lakes remain open to fishing throughout the year and anglers can continue fishing in these lakes for trout during the annual closure. The sign posted 2.4km reach of Thredbo River is closed to fishing all year round.

g. Trout Spawning Season

It is important to provide increased protection for brown and rainbow trout during their annual spawning runs. The targeting of spawning brown trout in the Thredbo and Eucumbene Rivers is contentious for some members of the angling community. However, the brown trout spawning run fishery provides for significant economic and recreational fishing activities between peak tourism seasons. Restrictions are in place from 1st May to provide protection for early spawning trout while also providing fishers with the opportunity to catch a trophy sized trout before the start of the trout spawning closure in all streams at the end of the June long weekend.

Management Response

Annual trout spawning season fishing rules apply to the Thredbo River and its tributaries (except for a sign posted 2.4km reach at Gaden Trout Hatchery) and the Eucumbene River and its tributaries (upstream of the Lake Eucumbene dam wall and including Providence Portal). These waters are managed as a fly and lure only trophy fisheries during this period with anglers permitted to keep 1 fish over 50cm in length from 1 May to the end of the Queen's Birthday June Long weekend. Anglers are permitted to use 1 attended rod and line with up to 2 hooks with artificial flies or lures and up to 3 treble hooks attached to any lure is permitted. Fishing gear rigged for bait fishing is prohibited. Both the Eucumbene and Thredbo Rivers are classified as artificial fly and lure waters between Saturday of the October long weekend to 30 April each year inclusive.

h. Recreational fisheries research

Ongoing research is undertaken to ensure the status of trout stocks is monitored in the Lakes and to provide feedback on strategy success.

Management Response

Monitoring of rainbow and brown trout spawning activity in the Thredbo and Eucumbene Rivers is ongoing. Fin-clipped and tag identification rainbow trout returns generally show that stocked fish make up a generally small but varying contribution to the rainbow trout spawning runs. Condition of fish is generally good with some variation. There is a lack of data on angler catch and effort and on overall fishing mortality and recruitment into the lakes.

i. Stocking program

The Gaden Trout Hatchery will produce trout and salmon species for stocking into the Snowy Lakes trout fisheries. The stocking program recognises the needs of stakeholders and the different characteristics of each lake.

Management Response

No brown trout are stocked into any of the relevant Snowy Lakes. 150,000 rainbow trout fingerlings are stocked into Lake Eucumbene. 75,000 rainbow trout fingerlings are stocked into Lake Jindabyne, 10,000 of which are on grown. A further 10,000 fingerlings which are heat-treated and on-grown are also stocked into Lake Jindabyne. 10,000 Atlantic salmon fry, 10,000 brook trout fry and excess broodstock are stocked into Lake Jindabyne when available. Tantangara Reservoir is not stocked. 2,000 brook trout are stocked into Dry Dam and 5,000 brook trout are stocked into Three Mile Dam.

Table of issues and management responses

Fish stocking

Lake Eucumbene

Objectives	Annual stocking
1. To be managed as the premier enhanced wild trout fishery in NSW and to remain a wild brown trout and stock enhanced rainbow trout fishery	Rainbow trout: 150,000 fingerlings
2. To maximise catches of fish in the range of length from 40 to 50 cm and weights from 1 to 2 kg	

Lake Jindabyne

Objectives	Annual stocking
1. To be managed as a high stocking and high catch rate mixed species salmonid fishery aimed at the tourist	Rainbow trout: 75,000 fingerlings, 10,000 of which are on-grown
2. To achieve predominant catches in the range from legal size (25 cm) to 40 cm and weight up to 1 kg	A further 10,000 fingerlings which are heat-treated and on-grown Atlantic salmon: 10,000 fry Brook trout: 10,000 fry (if available) Excess brood stock of all species (if available)

Tantangara Reservoir

Objectives	Annual stocking
1. To remain a predominantly wild brown trout fishery aimed at the angler seeking greater isolation and solitude	No stocking, reliant on natural recruitment
2. To allow average sizes to fluctuate according to natural recruitment levels and lake productivity	

Three Mile Dam and Dry Dam

Objectives	Annual stocking
1. To be managed as boutique brook trout fisheries	Brook trout: 2,000 fry (Dry Dam)
2. To achieve catches in legal size (25 cm) and weight from 0.5 kg	Brook trout: 5,000 fingerlings (Three Mile Dam) Rainbow trout: 2,000 fingerlings (Three Mile Dam)

Trout spawning closures

Thredbo

Description	Closure period
The whole of the Thredbo River except for a signposted 2.4 km reach at Gaden Trout Hatchery to be managed as a fly and lure only trophy fish fishery with anglers permitted to keep 1 fish over 50 cm in length during the 1 May to end of June long weekend spawning period	1 May until end of June long weekend

The signposted 2.4 km reach of the Thredbo River to remain closed to All year round fishing

Eucumbene

Description	Closure period
The Eucumbene River to be managed as a fly and lure only trophy fish fishery with anglers permitted to keep 1 fish over 50 cm in length during the 1 May to end of June long weekend spawning period. The arrangements to apply to the Eucumbene River and its tributaries upstream of the Lake Eucumbene dam wall and including Providence Portal (excluding the backed up waters of Lake Eucumbene).	1 May until end of June long weekend

Bag, size and gear limits

Waters	Bag, size and gear
General trout dams	Bag limit of 5 fish over 25 cm per person per day and a possession limit of 10 fish per person. 2 attended rods with line and no more than 2 hooks attached when using bait or no more than 3 hooks attached per line when using artificial flies or lures.
General trout streams	Bag limit of 5 fish over 25 cm per person per day and a possession limit of 10 fish per person. 1 attended rod with line and no more than 2 hooks attached per line.
Artificial fly and lure streams	Bag limit of 2 fish over 25 cm per person per day and a possession limit of 4 fish per person. 1 attended rod with line with artificial fly or lure only and no more than 2 hooks attached per line.
Trout spawning streams	Bag limit of 1 fish over 50cm per person per day and a possession limit of 2 fish per person. 1 attended rod with line with fly and lure only and no more than two single hooks attached per line. Treble hooks prohibited.
General inland waters	Bag limit of 10 fish over 25 cm per person per day and a possession limit of 20 fish per person. 2 attended rods with line or hand lines and no more than 2 hooks attached per line.

Research

MONITORING			
Programme	Description	Funding	Comments
Age & Growth	Monitoring condition and age of fin-clipped /tagged trout in the spawning runs of the Thredbo and Eucumbene rivers	Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust 1 JUL 2015 - 2018	
Spawning run	Monitoring rainbow and brown trout spawning run in Thredbo (trap) and Eucumbene (electrofishing) rivers	Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust 1 JUL 2015 - 2018	Suitability of current methods as indicator for spawning run strength needs to be evaluated
Recreational fishery	Monitoring catches to determine trends in species composition, length, weight, catch rates, effort & motivation in Lakes Eucumbene, Lake Jindabyne, Lake Tantangara and rivers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creel survey (Eucumbene), • tournament & angling club surveys (all lakes and spawning rivers) • citizen science [app] (all lakes and spawning rivers) 	Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust 1 JUL 2015 - 2018	Development tournament surveys and citizen science are planned activities for 2018-2021 and are not part of the current 2015-2018 Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust project
Angler visitation	Monitoring the number of visiting anglers to the Snowy Lakes region.	To be sourced	Collaborate with tourism bodies to develop useful indicators to monitor visitation numbers (e.g., number of overnight stays for angling purposes).

RESEARCH

Programme	Description	Funding	Comments
Limnology	Development of indicators (and model) to predict trout populations/carrying capacity using temperature, lake level fluctuations, food	Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust 1 JUL 2015 - 2018	If useful indicators can be developed, they may be added to monitoring in the future.
Habitat and Recruitment	Development of indicators of recruitment (habitat, eggs, larvae, juveniles).	To be sourced	If useful indicators can be developed, they may be added to Monitoring in the future.
Habitat and Recruitment	Determining the timing and length of the spawning season in streams with extended closures.	To be sourced	Linked to the extension of the closures in the selected small ancillary spawning streams.
Habitat and Recruitment	Spawning habitat survey to determine key spawning streams and possible sites for habitat restoration.	To be sourced	Linked to the extension of the closures in the selected small ancillary spawning streams.
Stocking protocol	Does stocking fewer larger fish give a better return?	To be sourced	Partly linked to Age & Growth in pending Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust proposal
Stocking protocol	Do juveniles originating/stocked from rivers perform better than juveniles stocked in a lake?	To be sourced	Partly linked to Age & Growth in pending Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust proposal

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More information

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