

# Trout waters recreational fishing guide (Northern)

October 2014 Primefact 988 Second edition  
Recreational and Indigenous Fisheries Unit

## Introduction

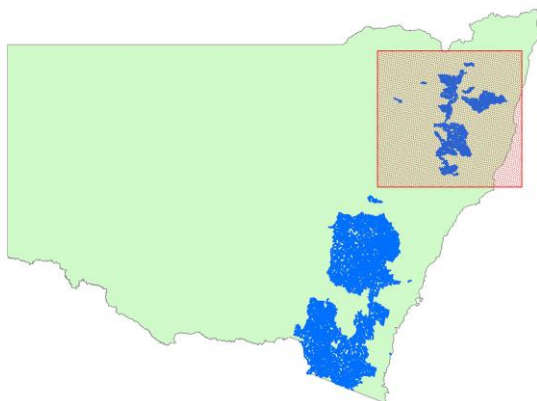
Our State's fisheries are a community-owned resource. We all have a responsibility to protect and safeguard this natural asset for present and future generations.

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

New England waterways provide many fishing opportunities for fishing enthusiasts. This guide will give you an idea of the fishing on offer and the closures and restrictions that apply along the New England Region from Narrabri to Tenterfield.

The New England region offers excellent lake, river and boat fishing opportunities and anglers have the chance of catching a wide variety of fish including Murray Cod, Golden Perch, Rainbow Trout and Brown trout.

Figure 1. The New England region



NSW DPI Fisheries Officers regularly patrol waterways and impoundments ensuring compliance with NSW fishing regulations and

distributing freshwater fishing guides and sticky fish measuring rulers.

Fishcare Volunteers can also be found at boat ramps and on the water in dedicated Fishcare vessels, advising anglers about responsible fishing practices and distributing fisheries advisory information.

Information on bag and size limits, fishing closures and legal fishing gear can also be obtained free of charge from the NSW DPI website [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries), or by visiting your local NSW DPI fisheries office.

To report illegal fishing activity, call your local fisheries office or the Fishers Watch Phonenumber 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 line fishing, trapping, netting or when undertaking bait or invertebrate collection 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 Mahi Mahi (Dolphinfish) or even Tuna and Marlin;
- Creation of recreational fishing havens;
- Angler education and advisory programs such as the Fishcare Volunteer program, fishing workshops, Get Hooked..It's Fun to Fish and fishing guides;
- Building artificial reefs in offshore areas such as Sydney Reef and Shoalhaven River and in inshore areas such as Lake Macquarie, Botany Bay, St Georges Basin, Lake Conjola and Merimbula Lake

You can pay the NSW Recreational Fishing Fee from 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, service stations, many Kmart stores, online at [www.licence.nsw.gov.au](http://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. For all other payment methods you will receive a paper receipt.

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 call 1300 550 474.

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.

## Trout and salmon fishing rules

### 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.

**Apsley River.** *Peel District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Apsley River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, the Tia River.

**Barnard River.** *Peel District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Barnard River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, Gulf Creek.

**Barrington River.** *Peel District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Barrington River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, the Moppy River.

**Beardy Waters.** *New England District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of Beardy Waters, its creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, Furracabad Creek.

**Blicks River.** *Coffs District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Blicks River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from the road bridge at Dundarrabin.

**Carters Brook.** *Peel District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of Carters Brook, its creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, Stewarts Brook.

**Chandler River.** *New England District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Chandler River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, the Wollomombi River.

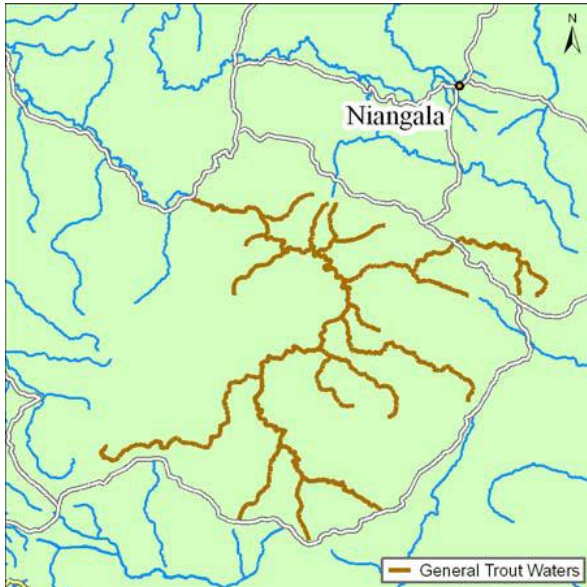
**Cobark River.** *Peel District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Cobark River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, the Dilgry River.

**Cooplacurripa River.** *Peel District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Cooplacurripa River, its creeks and

tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, the Mummel River.

**Dungowan Creek** (Figure 2). *Peel District*. The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of Dungowan Creek and its tributaries upstream from the road crossing near Ogunbil Station.

Figure 2 Dungowan Creek



**Deepwater River**. *New England District*. The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Deepwater River, its creeks and tributaries upstream of the New England Highway road bridge near Deepwater.

**Georges Creek**. *New England District*. The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of Georges Creek and its tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, Louisa Creek.

**Gloucester River**. *Peel District*. The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Gloucester River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, Sharpes Creek.

**Gwydir River** (Figure 3). *New England District*. The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Gwydir River, its creeks and tributaries upstream of the road bridge at Torryburn.

**Gwydir River** (Figure 4). *New England District*. The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Gwydir River, its creeks and tributaries downstream of Copeton Dam and upstream of its junction with, but not including, Dingo Creek.

**Guy Fawkes River**. *New England District*. The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Guy Fawkes River, its

creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, but not including, the Aberfoyle River.

**Horton River**. *New England District*. The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Horton River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, Cut Road Creek.

**Hunter River**. *Peel District*. The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Hunter River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, but not including, Pages Creek.

Figure 3. Gwydir River trout waters, Torryburn

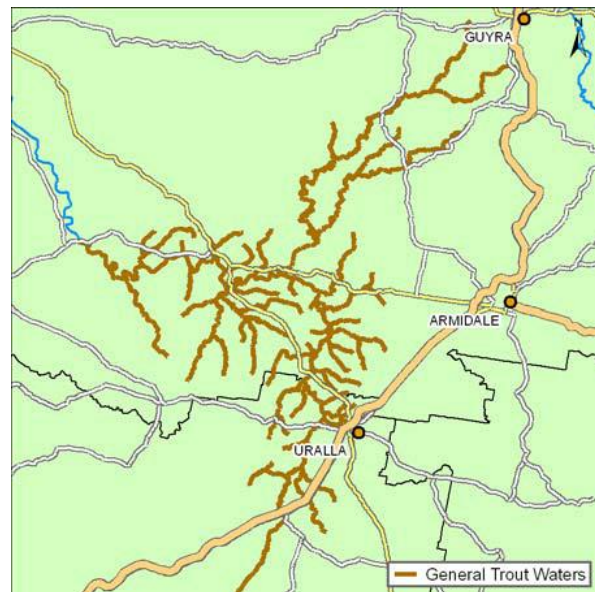
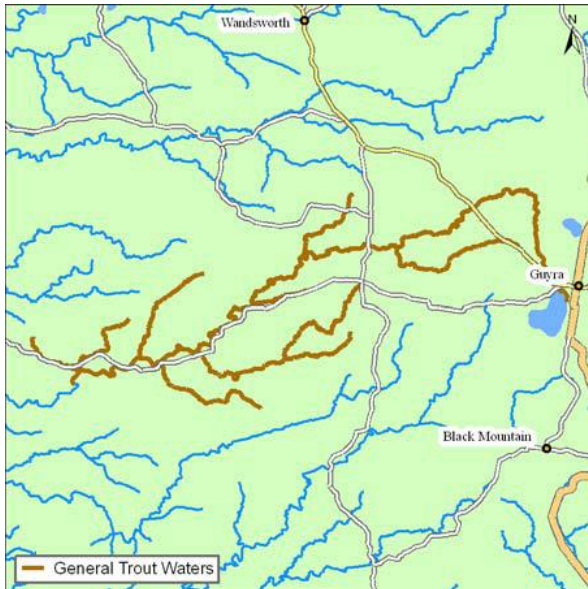


Figure 4. Gwydir River trout waters, Copeton Dam



**Laura Creek** (Figure 5). *New England District*. The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of Laura Creek and its tributaries of the ford at Baldeslie Station.

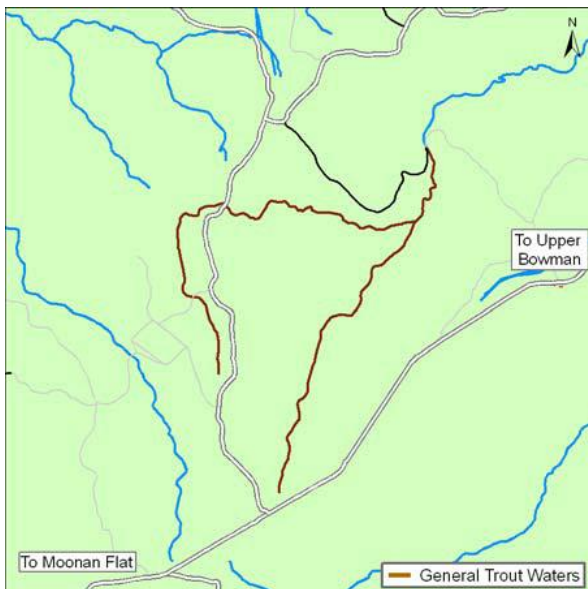
Figure 5. Laura Creek trout waters



**Macdonald River.** *Peel District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Macdonald River, its creeks and tributaries upstream of the New England Highway road bridge at Bendemeer.

**Manning River** (Figure 6). *Peel District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Manning River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from the Gummi Trail crossing.

Figure 6. Manning River trout waters



**McIntyre River.** *New England District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the McIntyre River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from the road bridge at Elsmore.

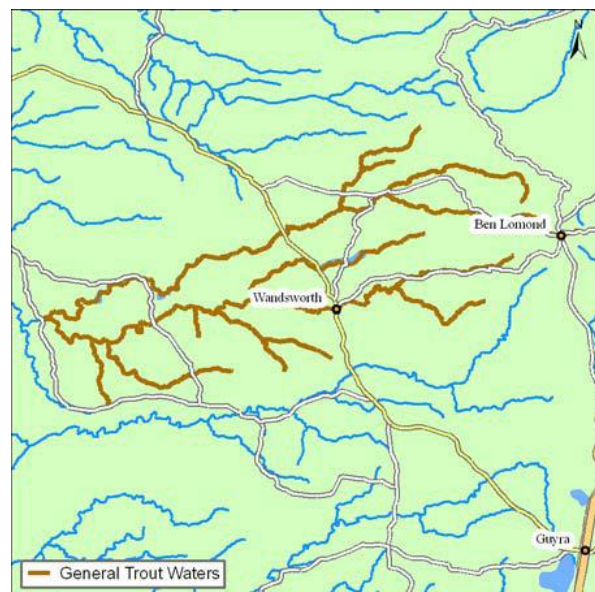
**Moonan Brook.** *Peel District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the

waters of Moonan Brook and its tributaries upstream from its junction with, but not including, the Hunter River.

**Moredun Creek** (Figure 7). *New England District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of Moredun Creek and its tributaries upstream of the ford immediately below its junction with Limestone Creek.

**Mulla Mulla Creek.** *Peel District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of Mulla Mulla Creek and its tributaries upstream from its junction with, but not including, the Cockburn River.

Figure 7. Moredun Creek trout waters



**Myall Creek.** *Peel District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of Myall Creek and its tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, Tuggolo Creek.

**Nowendoc River.** *Peel District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Nowendoc River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from Nowendoc Falls.

**Nymboida River.** *Coffs District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Nymboida River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, Wild Cattle Creek.

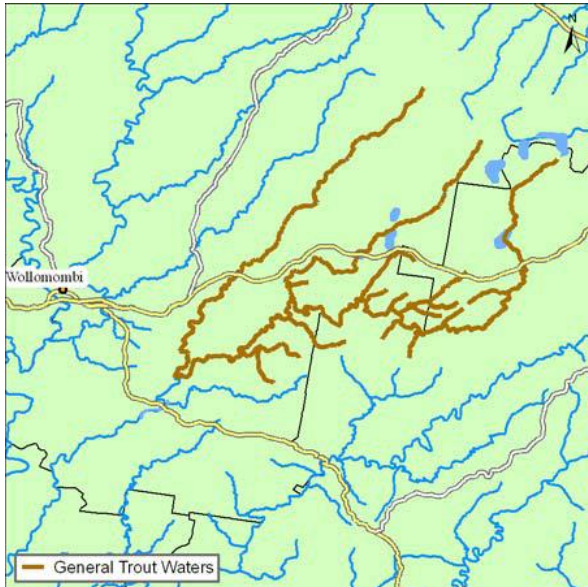
**Oaky River** (Figure 8). *New England District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Oaky River, its creeks and tributaries upstream from where it enters the backed-up waters of Oaky River Dam.

**Oban River.** *New England District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Oban River (or Ann River), its

creeks and tributaries upstream from its junction with, but not including, the Sara River.

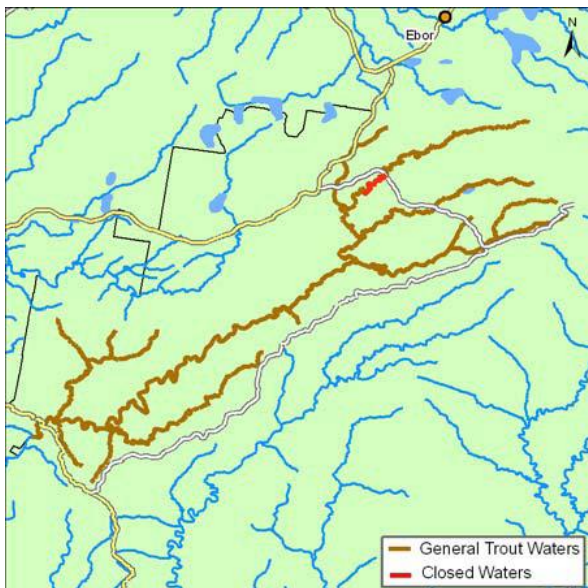
**Omadale Brook.** *Peel District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of Omadale Brook and its tributaries upstream from its junction with, and including, Polblue Creek.

Figure 8. Oaky River trout waters



**Styx River** (Figure 9). *Coffs District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of the Styx River, its creeks and tributaries upstream of the road crossing on the Armidale–Bell Brook road, but not including that portion of the Serpentine River upstream from Serpentine Falls to the Point Lookout road crossing (being those waters immediately adjacent to the Dutton Trout Hatchery).

Figure 9. Styx River



**Swanbrook.** *New England District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of Swanbrook and its tributaries upstream of the Kings Plains road crossing near Inverell.

**Wellingrove Creek.** *New England District.* The following waters are general trout waters: the whole of the waters of Wellingrove Creek and its tributaries upstream from the Gwydir Highway road bridge near Glen Innes.

## General trout dams

The following waters are general trout dams. These waters are open to fishing all year round. When fishing in general trout dams, up to two attended rods each with a line may be used with not more than 2 hooks attached per line or up to 3 hooks attached per line, where those hooks are artificial flies or lures. An artificial fly or lure is considered to be a single hook. Bait fishing is permitted. A landing net may be used as an ancillary for retrieval of fish lawfully taken. **Note.** The bag and size limits for general trout dams are the same as the bag and size limits for general trout streams

Dam	Town
Beardy Waters Dam	Beardy Waters
Dumaresq Dam	Armidale
Malpas Dam	Guyra
Sheba Dams 1 & 2	Nundle

## 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 50 m, in your sight, and have no more than 2 hooks per line or 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 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 (except farm dams), 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](http://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 and eastern dams. 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. 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 and Blowering dams).

**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 Berembend 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, spearguns, spears, poison or explosives or firearms to take fish, to use a gaff to take fish, to jag 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 at a boat ramp. It is also illegal to keep crayfish with eggs or to remove those eggs.
- Trout and Salmon. It is illegal to use a setline, hand held lines, traps, nets, a light, your hand or a gaff to take trout or salmon in trout waters, unless otherwise stated. The use of salmon roe or products containing them is also prohibited.
- Chemical or explosive devices. You cannot use any chemical or explosive devices to take or assist to take fish.
- Fish filleting. 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. You cannot remove the head or tail. This rule does not apply if the fish are being prepared for immediate consumption, are being prepared for immediate use as bait, if the fish are being cleaned at a fish cleaning facility or a fish cleaning table at a boat ramp, or for 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. Remember these 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 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 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. NSW Maritime Authority recommends that waders should not be used in boats in case of capsiz 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.
- Take home any left over bait or fish discards and ensure you clean away any residue.
- 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 artificial lures or non-offset circle hooks when using bait to reduce deep hooking of 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.

## Penalties

Penalties apply to persons who take or possess fish (including invertebrates, shells, etc.) taken in contravention of fishing closures.

## Further information

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

Hastings District (02) 5524 0600  
New England District (02) 6722 1388  
Peel District (02) 6763 1132  
Coffs District (02) 6652 3977

For further information visit the NSW DPI website [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries) or call 1300 550 474.

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (August 2018). 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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