



# Taupo trout fishery



## Tongariro/Taupo

Taupo trout provide a wild fishery, which sets them apart from many other freshwater fisheries around the world. As a carefully managed wild fishery it is self-sustaining and does not require the release of hatchery-reared fish to provide enough trout for anglers to catch. The natural environment of Lake Taupo and its rivers and streams has all the necessary elements which wild trout need to thrive – cool, clear water, plenty of food and an abundance of breeding and rearing habitat. This environment selects for the fittest and most outstanding specimens of rainbow and brown trout. The opportunity to catch a wild, perfectly-formed Taupo rainbow is valued highly by anglers and establishes its reputation as New Zealand's and one of the world's premiere trout fisheries.

### Economic benefits

Excellent winter fishing on the rivers, combined with superb 12-month fishing on the country's largest lake, provides a year-round recreational choice for visitors to the area. This also means that the fishery contributes economically to the region all through the

year. While trout are legally classed as sports fish and can't be bought or sold, it is conservatively estimated that \$70 million dollars is generated into the national economy annually through fishing-related expenditure on items such as travel, boat running, accommodation, charters and guides, food and fishing equipment. This does not include capital expenditure such as boat or holiday home purchases that are related directly to the fishing enjoyed at Taupo. With tourism the largest contributor to the Taupo district economy, providing \$220 million annually, it is obvious that the fishery contributes a large proportion of this. Trout fishing also provides business opportunities and employment in

Fishing on Lake Taupo,  
Whakaipo Bay  
R. Kirkwood



## A visitor attraction

The fishery provides a huge contribution to tourism in the Taupo district. Over 80% of Taupo anglers are visitors, with the majority from around NZ and a smaller percentage coming from overseas. The Tongariro National Trout Centre on State Highway 1 near Turangi is becoming a major attraction with 70,000 visitors a year. The centre showcases Taupo trout, the history of fishing in the district, the freshwater environment and angling. A new education programme at the centre, *Taupo for Tomorrow*, provides visiting schools with an opportunity to learn from a professional teacher all about freshwater ecology, water quality, looking after the environment, the trout fishery and renewable resource use. Children enjoy both indoor and outdoor learning, utilising the classroom on site and the natural features of the centre including the Waihukahuka Stream and the Tongariro River.

## Value to tangata whenua

Although introduced to Lake Taupo in the late 19th century, rainbow trout have become interwoven with the culture of local Māori. A large trout features prominently on the crest of the Tuwharetoa Māori Trust Board, along with other icons of the region including the lake and mountains. Local iwi regard trout as a taonga or treasure because of the basic value it provides to their communities as a food source. The importance of the fishery is also borne out through the 1926 Māori Land Amendment and Māori Land Claims Adjustment Act. This historic agreement provides for access for all New Zealanders to the waters of Lake Taupo. It also provides for the Crown to make payment equivalent to half of the annual proceeds from boating and fishing licences to Ngāti Tuwharetoa in recognition of this public access. This is why a separate special licence is required to fish at Taupo.



## Why DOC manages

### the Taupo fishery

The Taupo fishery is managed under the Conservation Act. This Act incorporates government functions for not only the protection and preservation of historical and indigenous natural resources, but also for the management of valued introduced recreational species such as sports fish and game birds. The Conservation Act charges the Department of Conservation with the management of the Taupo fishery. This is unique in New Zealand, where all other freshwater fisheries are managed by elected Fish and Game Councils. Today the Taupo Fishery Area team of the department undertakes this role guided by special regulations and a statutory management plan. Although there are broad public benefits, fishery management is funded solely by anglers' licence fees, just as in Fish and Game regions. This ensures there is revenue for essential research, monitoring of trout, their food and habitat and anglers' catches and satisfaction. Fishery laws are enforced, fishing advice and information provided and high- standard access tracks, roads and carparks are maintained. A wide network of fishing licence agents is established and above all, the interests of anglers, trout and their habitats are advocated in various planning and statutory processes.

## Commitment to the community

The Taupo Fishery Area team of DOC are committed to ensuring that the world-renowned Taupo trout are available for all anglers to enjoy. That commitment includes providing the national angling community with outstanding recreational opportunities, balanced by the on-going sustainability of the wild trout population. Brochures on specific topics to assist anglers are produced as well as a regular magazine, *Target Taupo*, to communicate information about the fishery to the public.

## Further information

Visit the Tongariro National Trout Centre on State Highway 1 near Turangi.  
[www.troutcentre.org.nz](http://www.troutcentre.org.nz)

Contact the Taupo Fishery Area in Turangi (phone 07 386 8607) or email [fishinfo@doc.govt.nz](mailto:fishinfo@doc.govt.nz)

Fishing the Waimarino River