

# Social Survey of New Zealand Whitebaiters



## Monitoring and Evaluation Report: Perceptions of the Aotearoa New Zealand whitebait fishery 2025

Prepared by the Monitoring Design and Services Team



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

New Zealand Government

Cover: Whitebaiting at Waimakariri Beach, Christchurch. Photo: *Herb Christophers*.

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# Context

The Social Science and Monitoring team received an Assyst request from the Freshwater Science team to report on the results of a survey distributed during the New Zealand whitebaiting season of 2022. The objective was to gather baseline data to describe the whitebait fishery in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2022. The same survey has been implemented during the 2025 whitebaiting season. The data will help identify the issues of most concern to whitebaiters and inform future whitebait fishing practices.

The survey instrument was designed by the Freshwater Science team. A paper copy was created by the Freshwater Science team, and an electronic copy was created by the Social Science and Monitoring team using an online survey tool, Survey Monkey. A pilot survey was undertaken by Canterbury University, for the Department of Conservation, in 2021.

This report presents measures related to the following indicators from the DOC's Outcome Monitoring Framework (OMF):

- 1.8.1 - Hunting and harvesting of indigenous resources,
- 1.5.2 - Species occupancy of natural range,
- 3.1.1 - Current demand for recreation on public conservation land and waters,
- 3.5.1 - Significant conservation values are protected from harm resulting from recreation.

## Methodology and sample

Surveying was undertaken between October and November 2025 by means of:

- An online advertising campaign, posted on the DOC Internet website, directing participants to the Survey Monkey instrument.
- Emails invitations were sent to all known whitebaiter associations, an ad was placed in the November Fish & Game eDM (Reel Life) and digital radio (e.g. Iheart Radio) ads played.

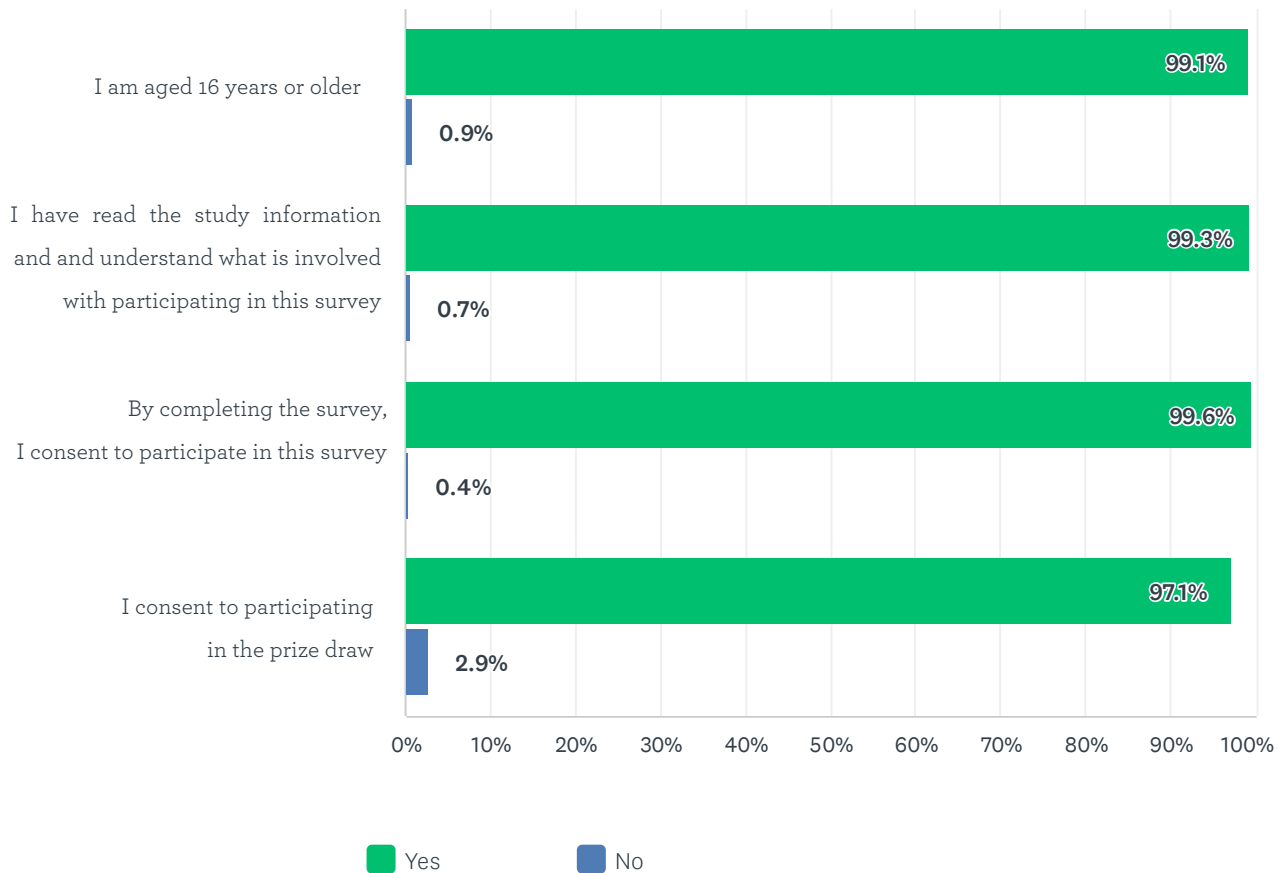
An incentive was offered to survey participants, for which they were entered into a prize draw to win a \$200 Hunting and Fishing store voucher.

The online advertising campaign yielded a total sample of 456 survey responses.

# Results

## Statement of consent

Answered: 456 Skipped: 0



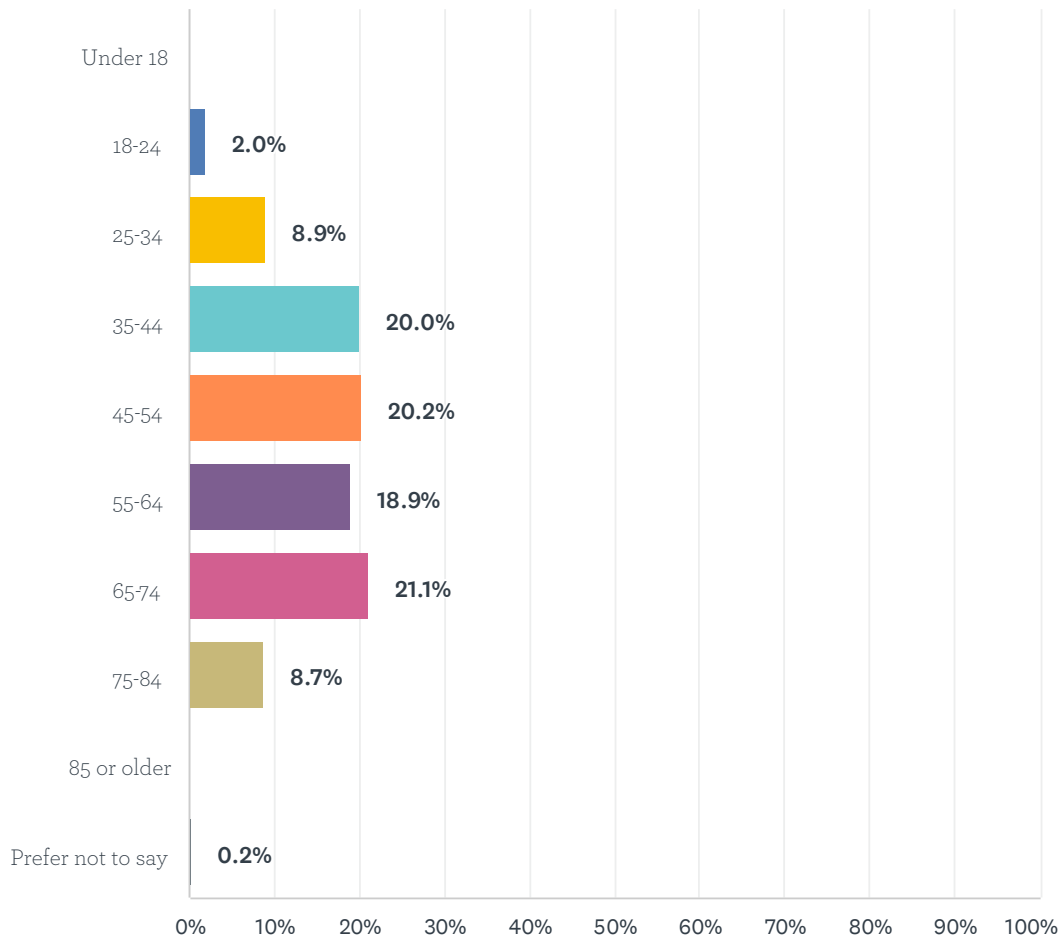
	YES	NO	TOTAL
I am aged 16 years or older	99.1% 452	0.9% 4	456
I have read the study information and understand what is involved with participating in this survey	99.3% 453	0.7% 3	456
By completing the survey, I consent to participate in this survey	99.6% 454	0.4% 2	456
I consent to participating in the prize draw	97.1% 443	2.9% 13	456

Due to the Department of Conservations Privacy Policy, the results presented in the the following top-line report includes participants who indicated they were over the age of 16, had read the study information and understood what was involved in participating, and consented to participating in the survey.

As a result, of the 456 participants that submitted a response, 450 were included in the analysis below.

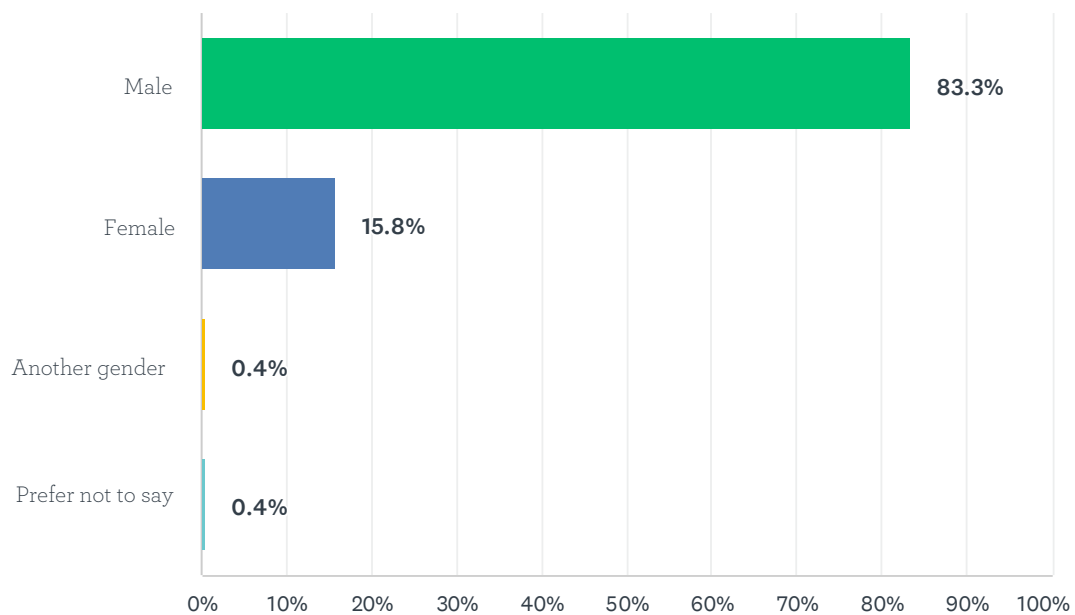
## Q1. What age group are you in?

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0



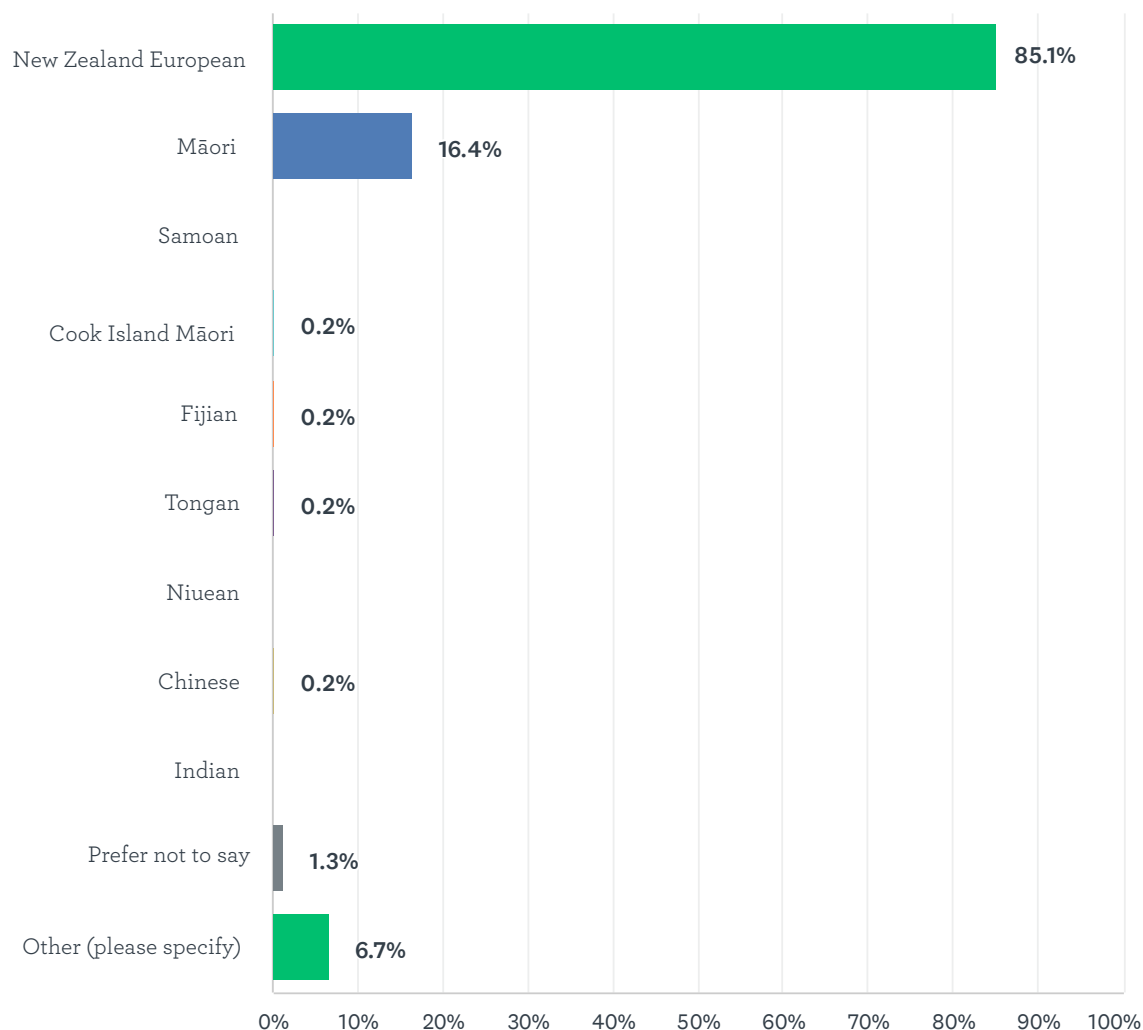
## Q2. What is your gender identity?

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0



### Q3. What ethnic group(s) do you belong to?

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0

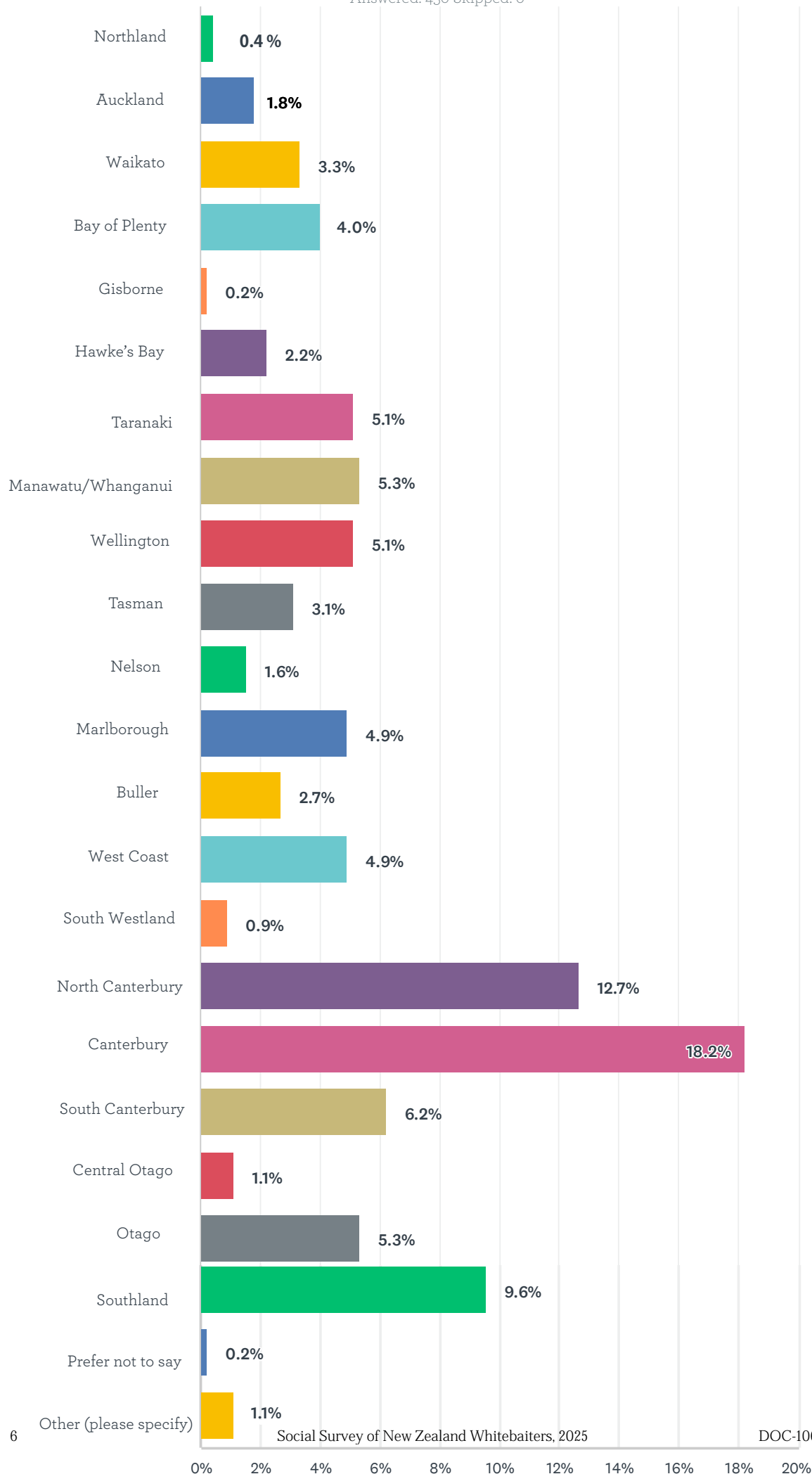


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
New Zealand European	85.1%	383
Māori	16.4%	74
Samoan	0.0%	0
Cook Island Māori	0.2%	1
Fijian	0.2%	1
Tongan	0.2%	1
Niuean	0.0%	0
Chinese	0.2%	1
Indian	0.0%	0
Prefer not to say	1.3%	6
Other (please specify)	6.7%	30
Total Respondents: 450		

Within the 'Other' category, the top three responses included; New Zealander (n=8 26%), Kiwi (n=8 26%), and European (n=2, 6%).

## Q4. Which region do you live in outside of the whitebait season?

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0

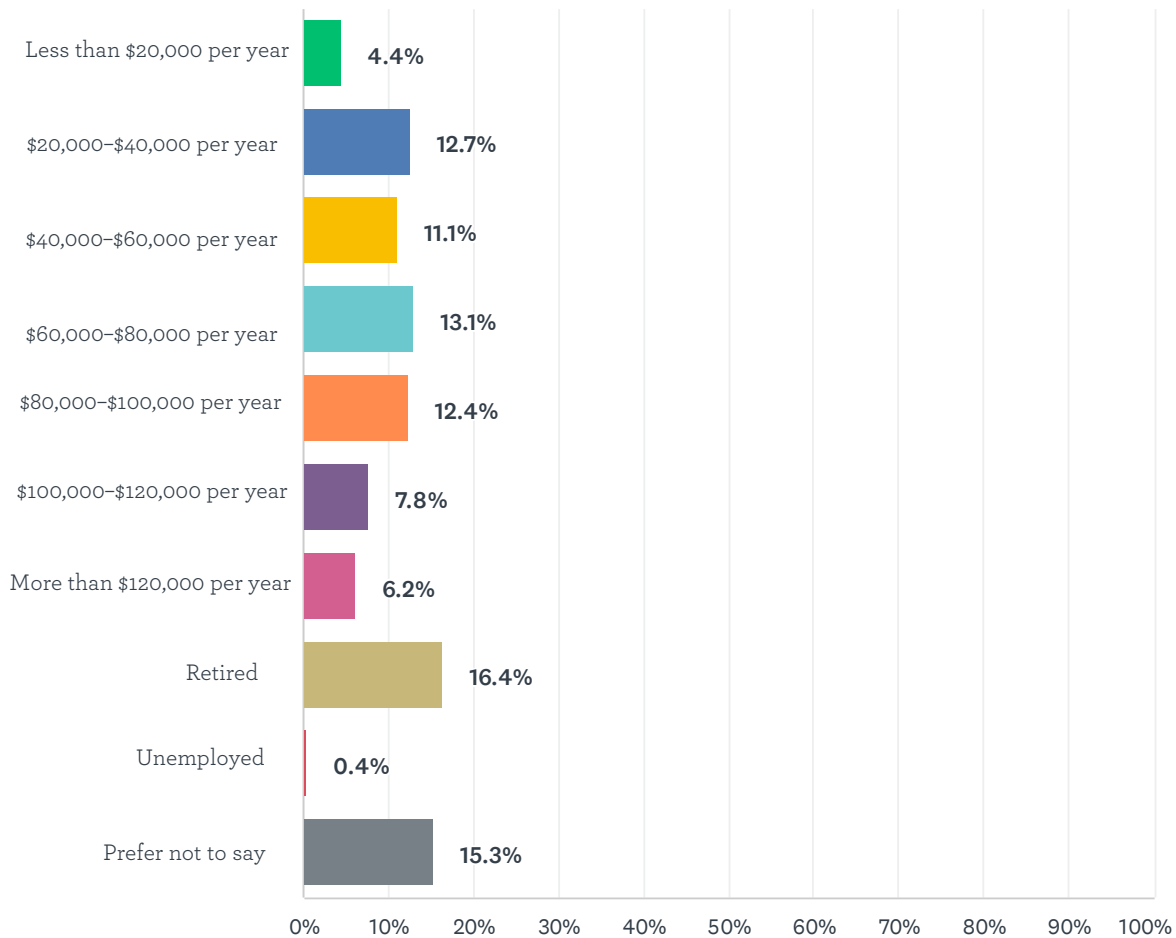


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Northland	0.4%	2
Auckland	1.8%	8
Waikato	3.3%	15
Bay of Plenty	4.0%	18
Gisborne	0.2%	1
Hawke's Bay	2.2%	10
Taranaki	5.1%	23
Manawatu/Whanganui	5.3%	24
Wellington	5.1%	23
Tasman	3.1%	14
Nelson	1.6%	7
Marlborough	4.9%	22
Buller	2.7%	12
West Coast	4.9%	22
South Westland	0.9%	4
North Canterbury	12.7%	57
Canterbury	18.2%	82
South Canterbury	6.2%	28
Central Otago	1.1%	5
Otago	5.3%	24
Southland	9.6%	43
Prefer not to say	0.2%	1
Other (please specify)	1.1%	5
TOTAL		450



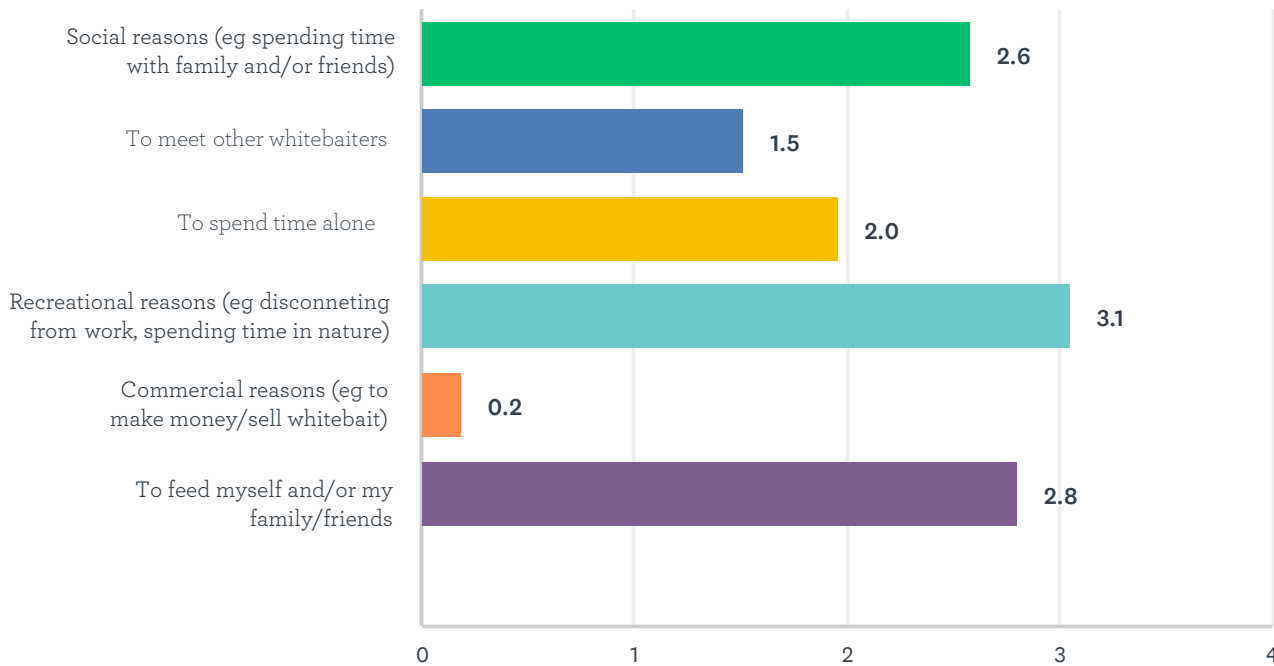
## Q5. What is your income?

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0



## Q6. How important are the following reasons for your whitebaiting?

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0



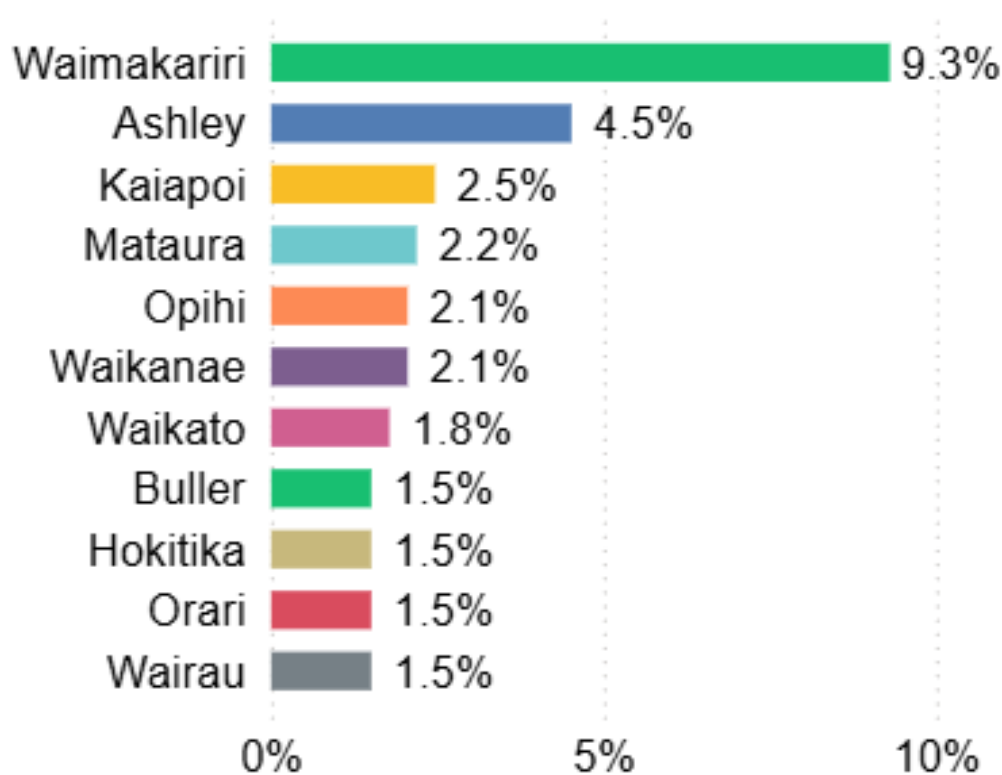
	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	EXTREMELY IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Social reasons (eg spending time with family and/or friends)	12.4% 56	8.9% 40	16.0% 72	33.6% 151	29.1% 131	450	2.58
To meet other whitebaiters	28.9% 130	20.0% 90	28.9% 130	14.2% 64	8.0% 36	450	1.52
To spend time alone	17.8% 80	16.4% 74	31.6% 142	20.0% 90	14.2% 64	450	1.96
Recreational reasons (eg disconnecting from work, spending time in nature)	4.2% 19	4.2% 19	12.4% 56	40.2% 181	38.9% 175	450	3.05
Commercial reasons (eg to make money/sell whitebait)	89.3% 402	5.8% 26	2.9% 13	0.7% 3	1.3% 6	450	0.19
To feed myself and/or my family/friends	4.9% 22	8.0% 36	22.4% 101	30.9% 139	33.8% 152	450	2.81

## Q7.A. In the 2025 season, where have you been whitebaiting? (Please record up to 3 rivers)

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0

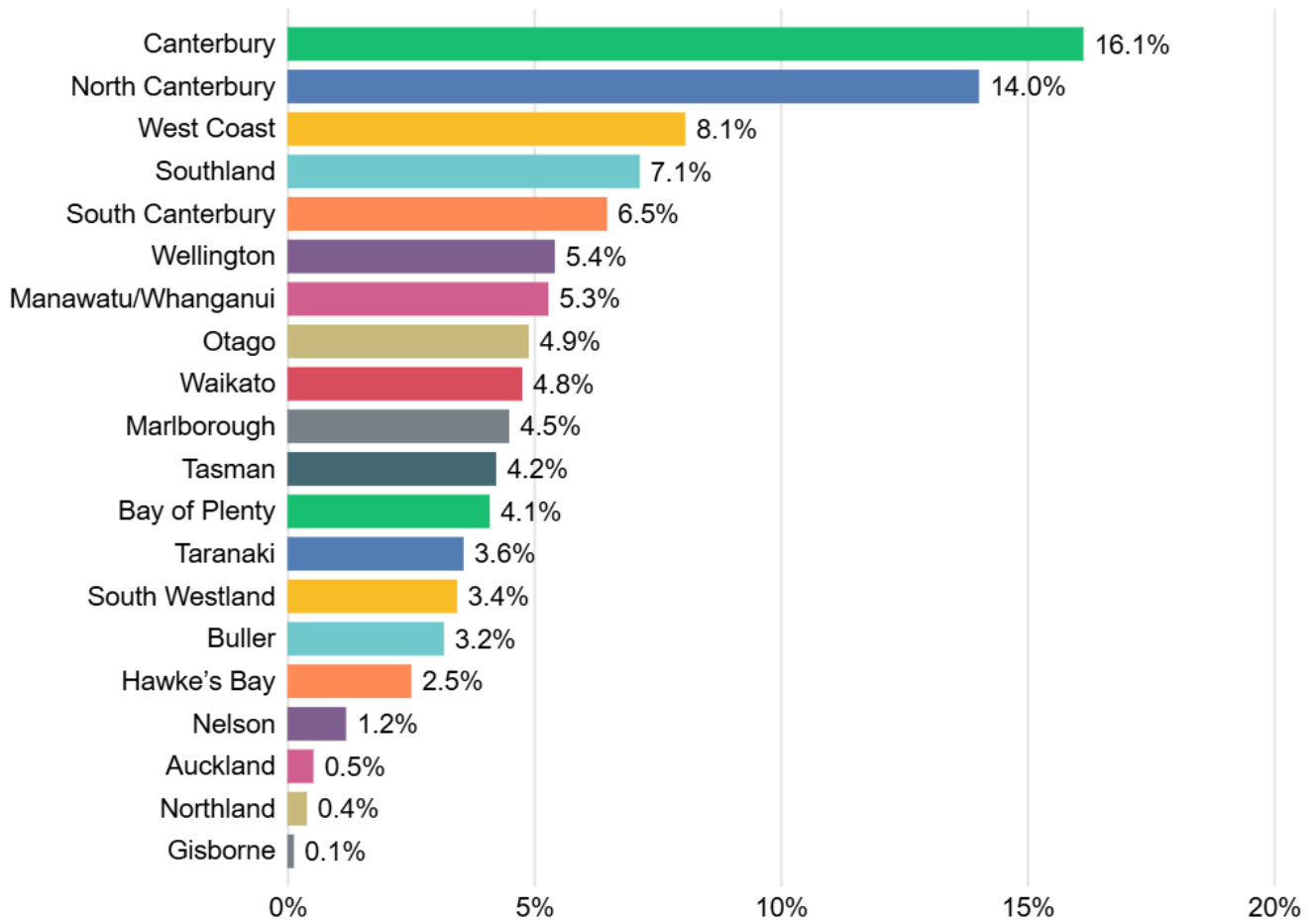
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
River 1	99.8%	449
River 2	43.6%	196
River 3	25.1%	113

269 individual rivers were named. The graph below shows the top ten rivers mentioned.



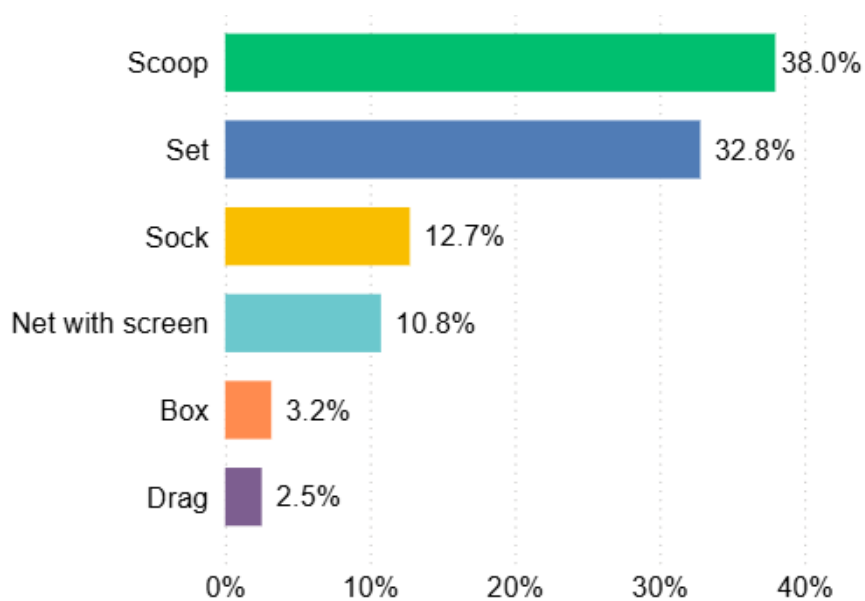
## Q7.B. Region where your river is located?

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0



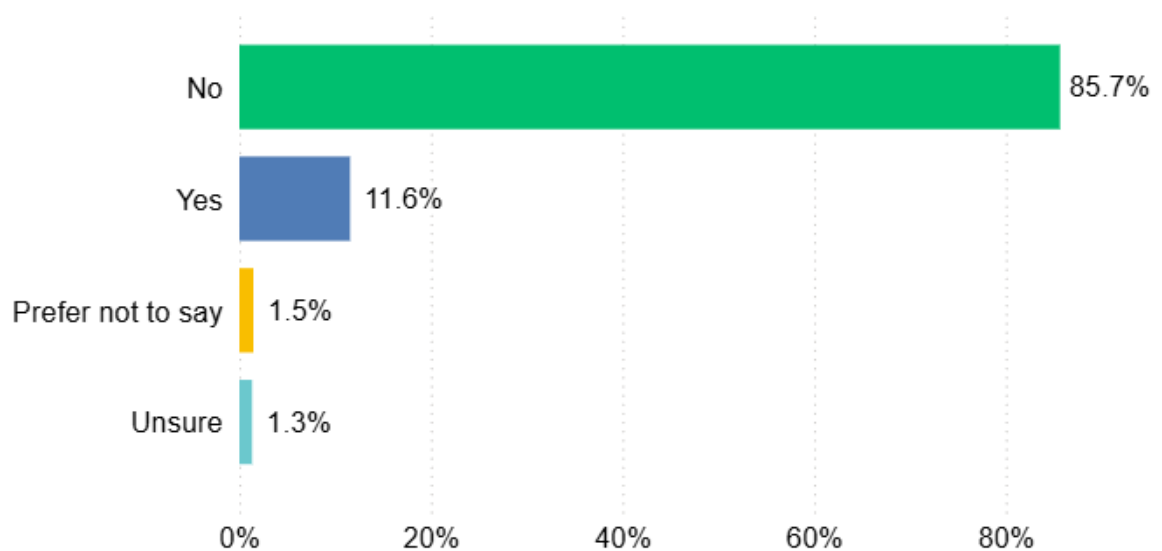
### Q7.B. What type of net do you use?

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0



### Q7.C. Do you fish from a registered stand on this river?

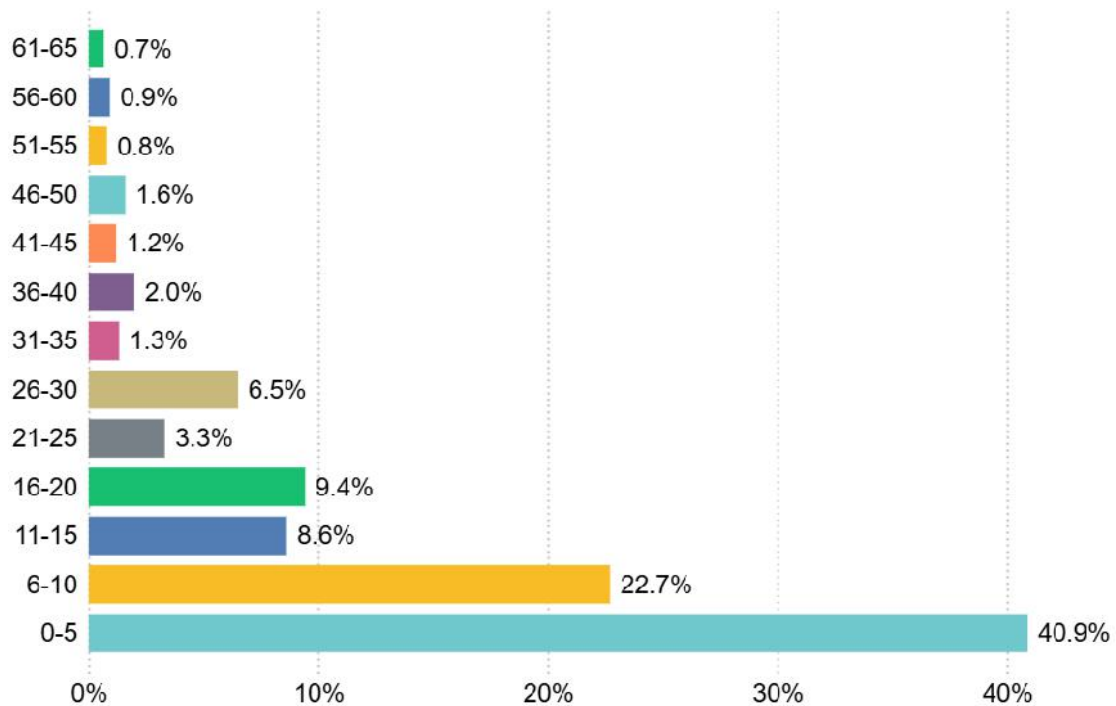
Answered: 450 Skipped: 0



## Q7.D. What is the average number of days per season you fish this river?

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0

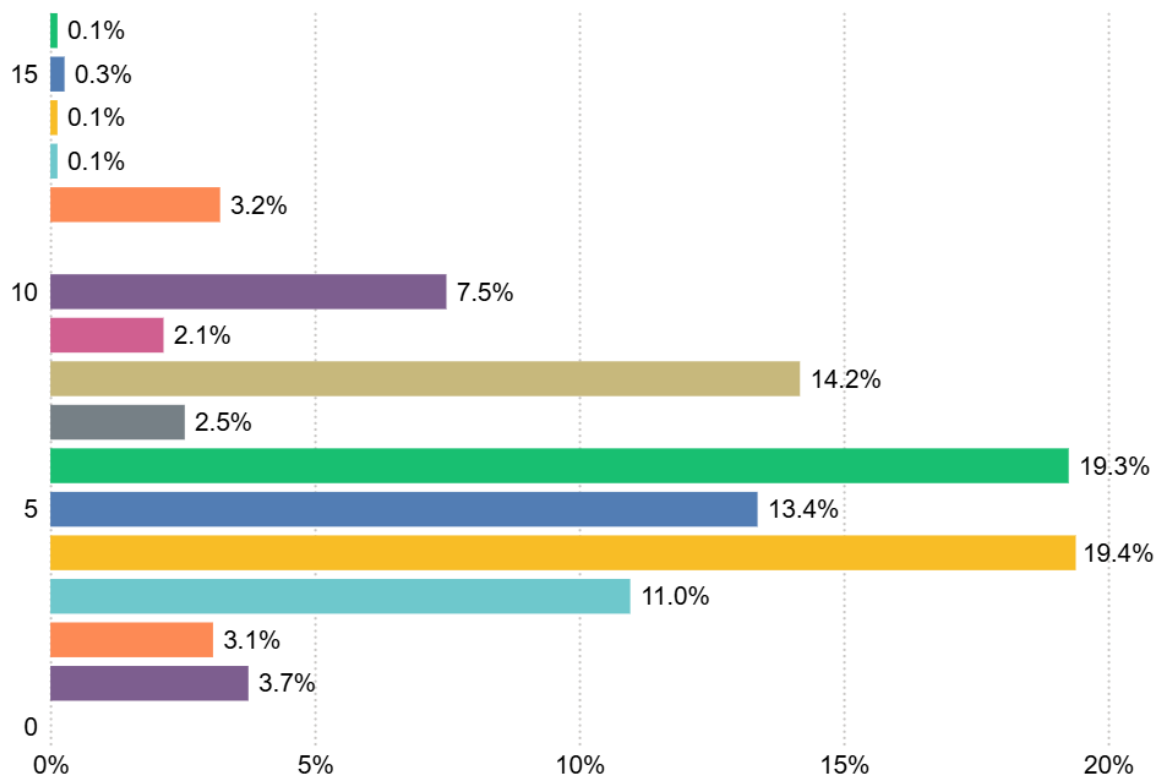
The average days fished is 13.



## Q7.E. What is the average number of hours per day you fish this river?

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0

The average hours per day fished is 6.



## Q8. Do you agree that the following things are needed to improve the whitebait fishery?

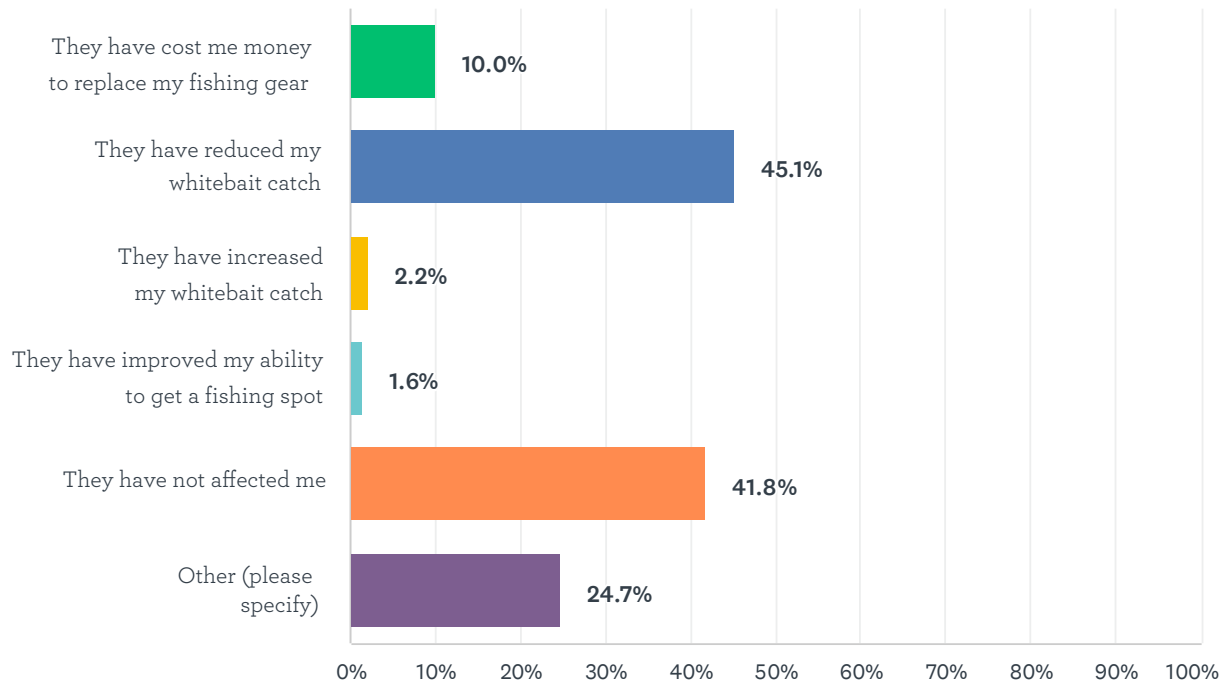
Answered: 450 Skipped: 0



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL
Better enforcement of the current regulations	8.7% 39	7.1% 32	22.9% 103	20.7% 93	40.7% 183	450
Introducing a whitebaiting licence	38.9% 175	16.9% 76	14.7% 66	12.9% 58	16.7% 75	450
Closing more rivers to whitebaiting	42.9% 193	26.9% 121	16.9% 76	7.6% 34	5.8% 26	450
Changing the current regulations	12.0% 54	8.9% 40	18.9% 85	24.2% 109	36.0% 162	450
Restoring adult fish habitats	2.9% 13	1.8% 8	16.9% 76	33.3% 150	45.1% 203	450
Restoring spawning fish habitats	2.4% 11	1.8% 8	16.7% 75	31.1% 140	48.0% 216	450
Placing a limit on daily catch	20.0% 90	17.3% 78	15.1% 68	18.7% 84	28.9% 130	450
Having commercial catch limits	12.2% 55	4.9% 22	10.7% 48	14.4% 65	57.8% 260	450
No improvement needed	38.9% 175	23.1% 104	28.2% 127	4.7% 21	5.1% 23	450
Banning the sale of whitebait	12.9% 58	12.4% 56	18.4% 83	11.6% 52	44.7% 201	450

**Q9. New whitebaiting regulations were introduced in 2021. How have these new regulations impacted your whitebaiting experience?  
(Tick all that apply)**

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
They have cost me money to replace fishing gear	10.0%	45
They have reduced my whitebait catch	45.1%	203
They have increased my whitebait catch	2.2%	10
They have improved my ability to get a fishing spot	1.6%	7
They have not affected me	41.8%	188
Other (please specify)	24.7%	111
Total Respondents: 450		

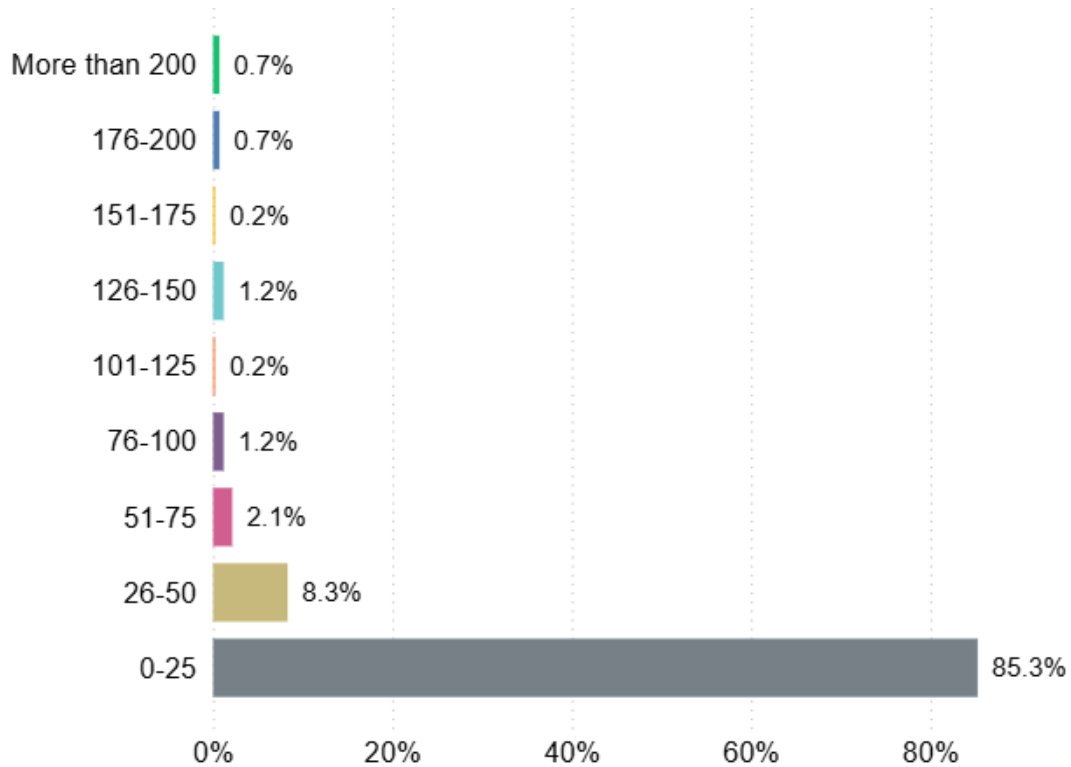
See 'Other' responses in Appendix.



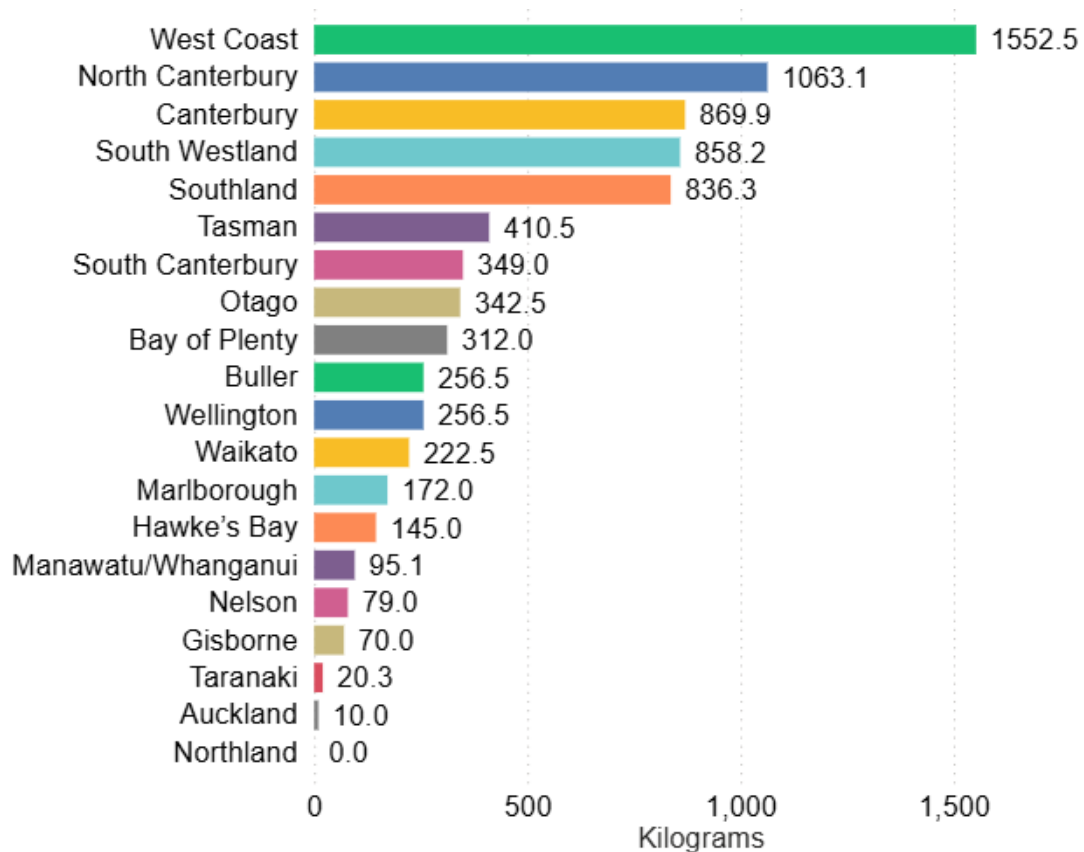
## Q10. Over the 2025 season, how much whitebait have you caught? (Approximate Kilograms)

Answered: 432 Skipped: 18

The average amount of whitebait caught was 18.8 kilograms. The total amount caught was 7,903 kilograms

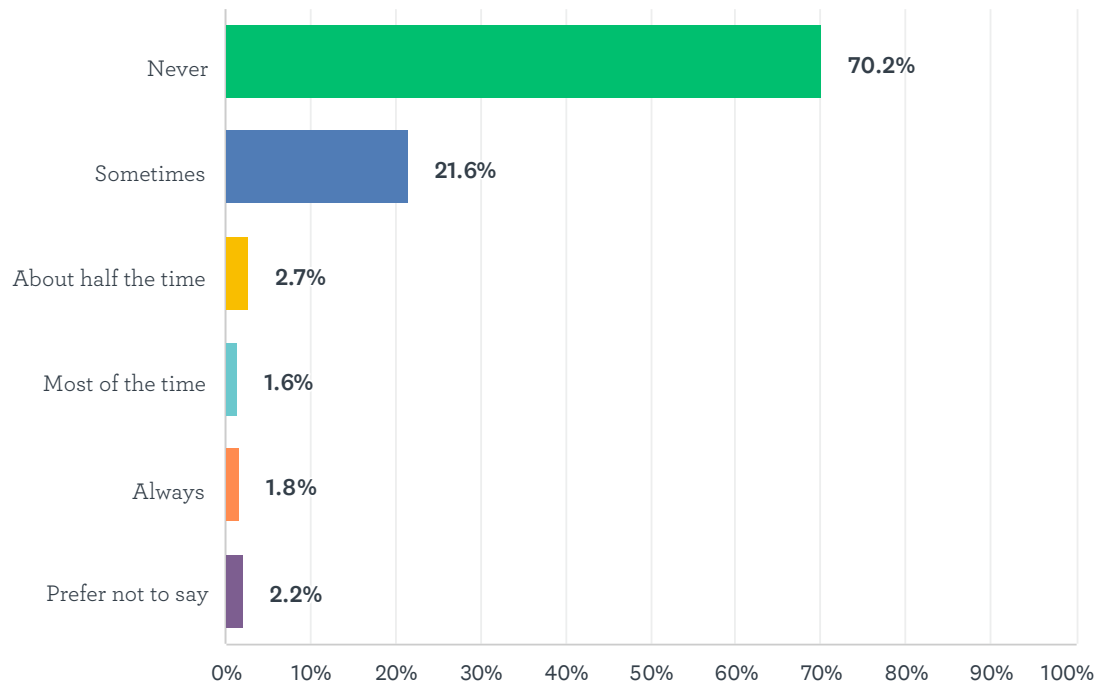


### Whitebait caught per region fished.



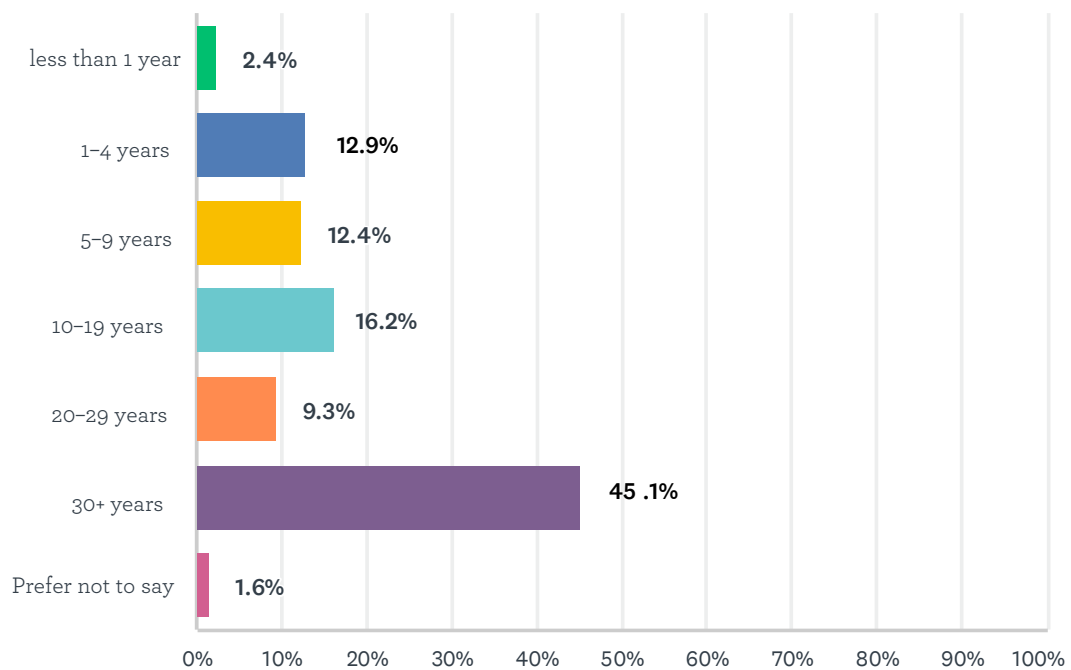
## Q11. Do you ever sell or trade the whitebait that you catch?

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0



## Q12. How long have you been whitebaiting?

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0



## Which age group are you in and how long have you been whitebaiting?

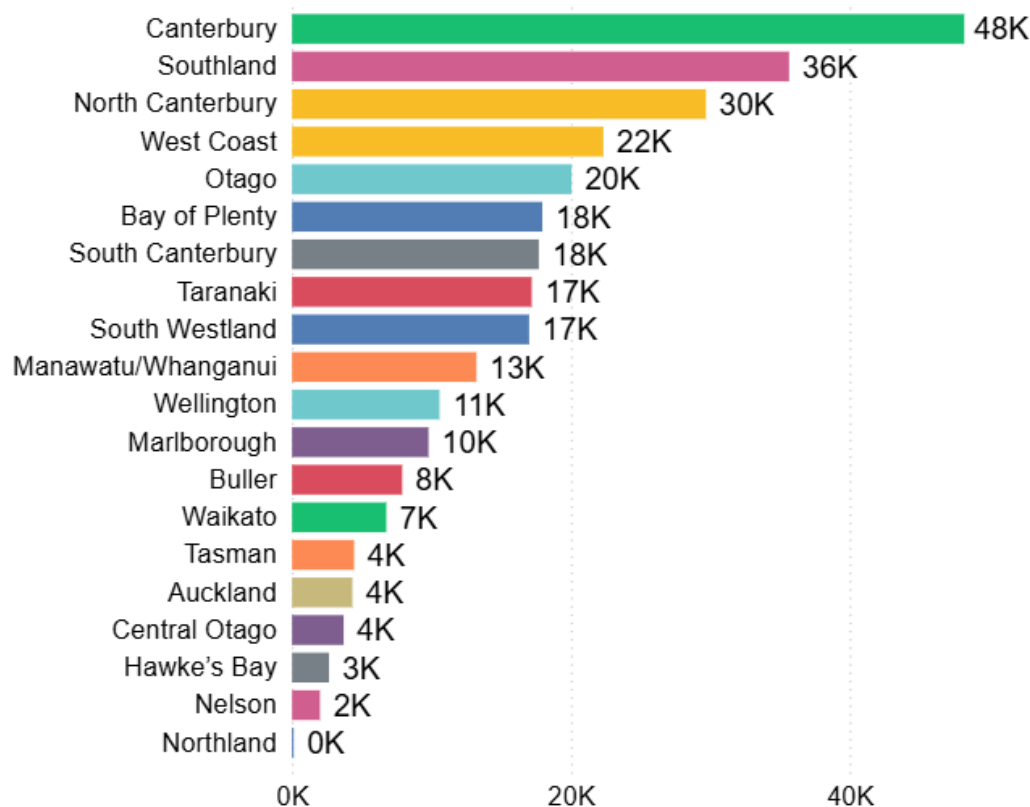
Age group	Less than 1 year	1-4 years	5-9 years	10-19 years	20-29 years	More than 30 years	Prefer not to say	Total
18-24	1	4	1	3				9
25-34		13	6	12	5	2	2	40
35-44	7	13	14	19	13	22	2	90
45-54	2	9	13	12	6	47	2	91
55-64	1	11	8	11	6	47	1	85
65-74		7	13	7	7	61		95
75-84		1	1	9	4	24		39
Prefer not to stay					1			1
Total	11	58	56	73	42	203	7	450

# Q13. In general, how much did you spend this season on accommodation, travel and food costs?

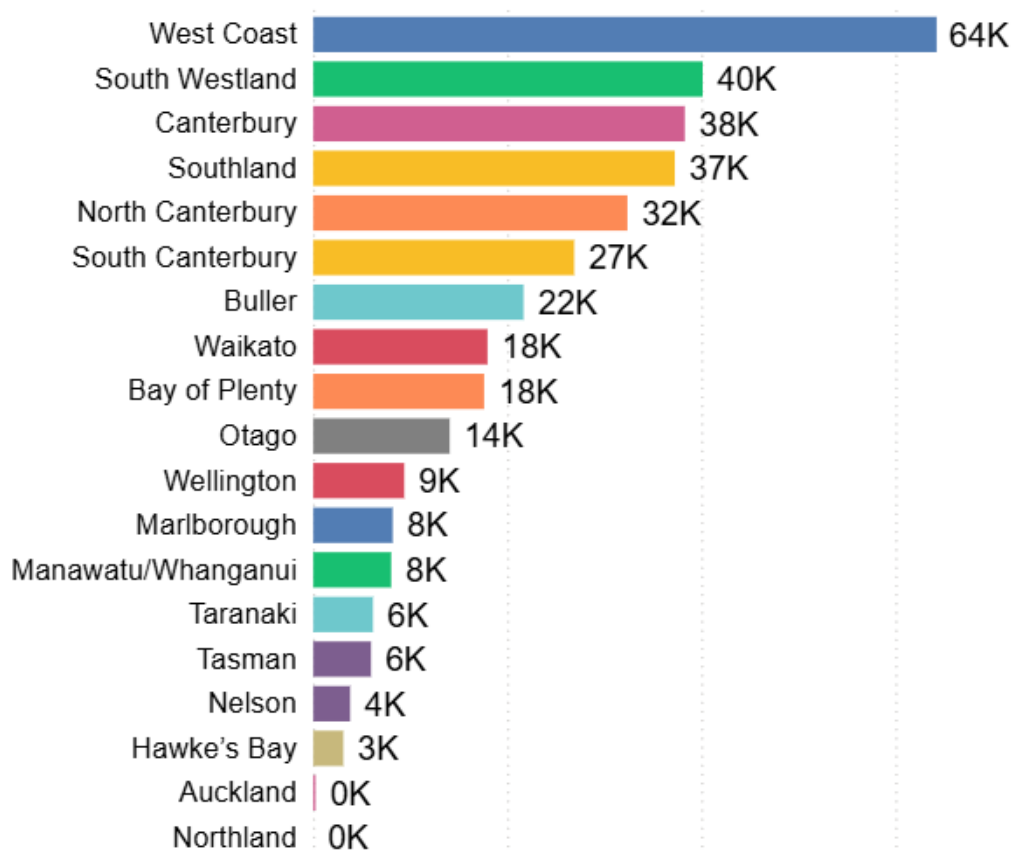
Answered: 424 Skipped: 26

Average money spent is \$788. Total money spent by whitebaiters is \$292,466.

Total money spent per region you live in outside of the whitebait season.

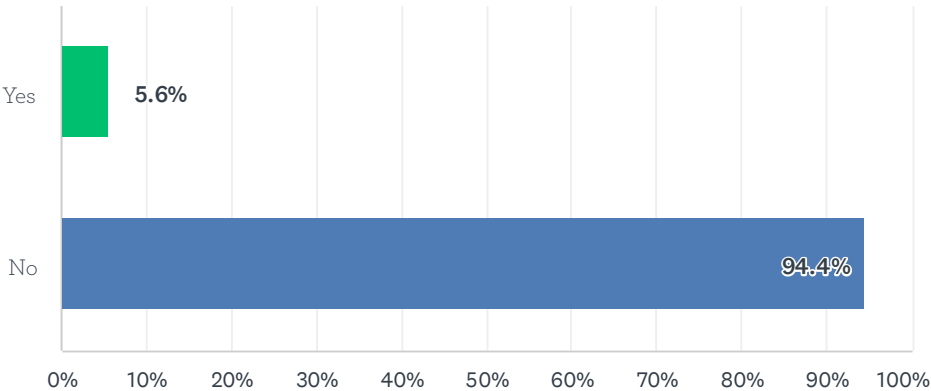


Total money spent per region fished.



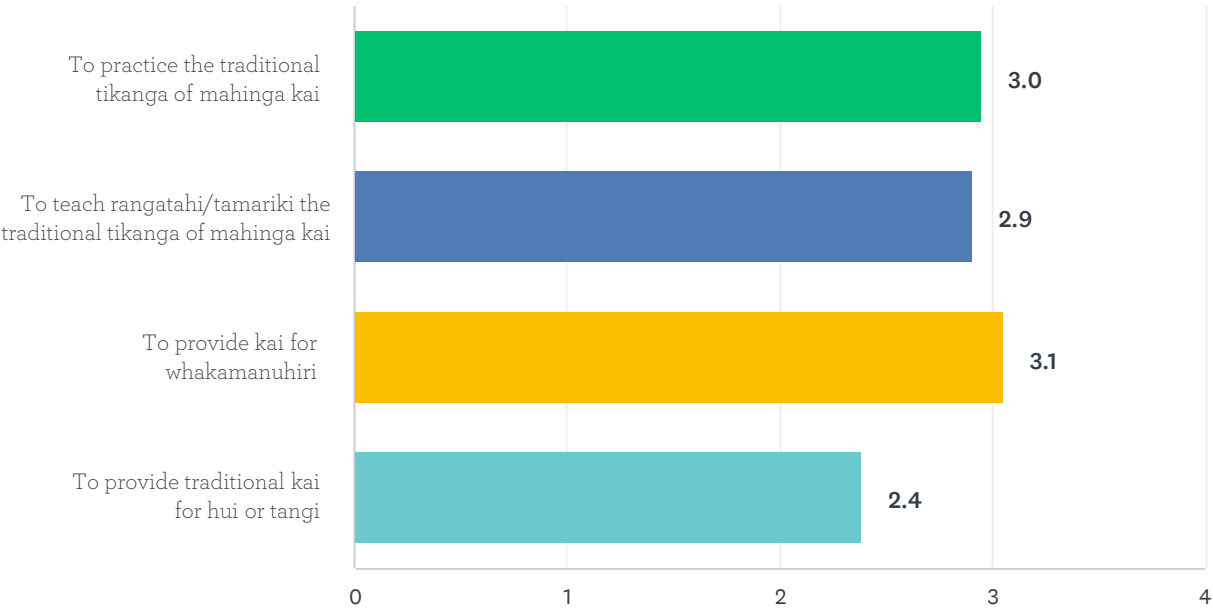
Q14. Do you whitebait under customary rights?

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0



# Q14. A. How important are the following reasons for carrying out your customary fishing?

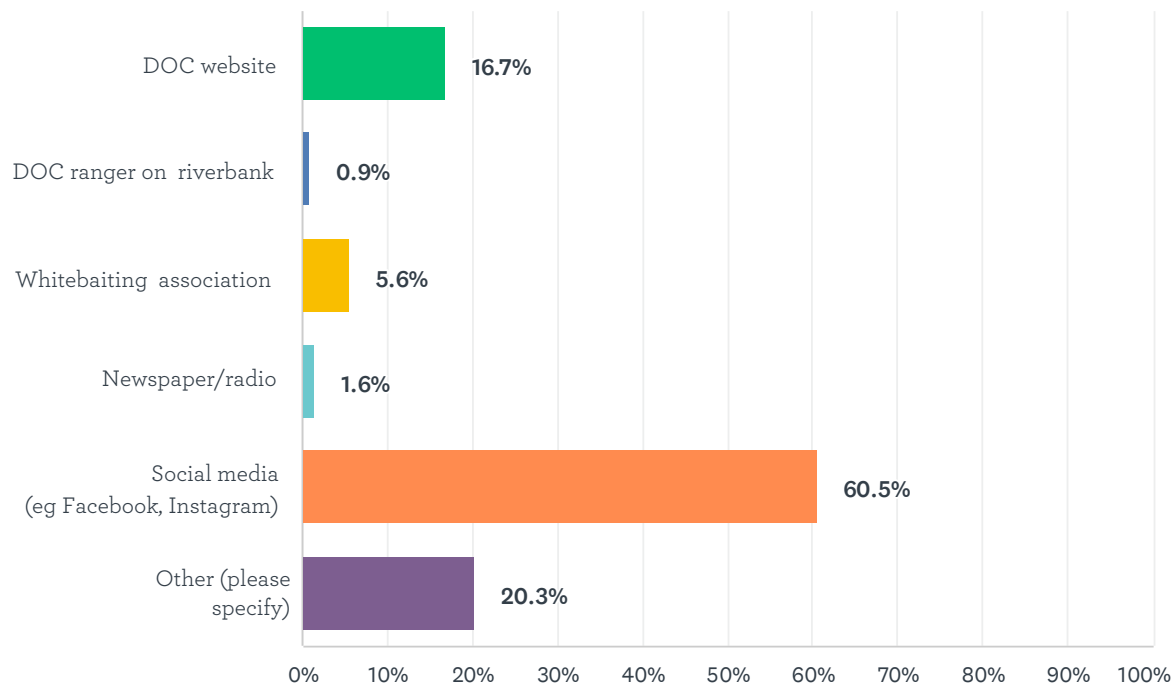
Answered: 25 Skipped: 425



	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	MODERATELY IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	EXTREMELY IMPORTANT	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHED AVERAGE
To practice the traditional tiknga of mahinga kai	12.5% 3	8.3% 2	4.2% 1	8.3% 2	54.2% 13	12.5% 3	24	3.0
To teach rangatahi/tamariki the traditional tikanga of mahinga kai	16.7% 4	0.0% 0	4.2% 1	25.0% 6	45.8% 11	8.3% 2	24	2.9
To provide kai for whakamanuhiri	12.5% 3	0.0% 0	8.3% 2	20.8% 5	50.0% 12	8.3% 2	24	3.1
To provide traditional kai for hui or tangi	24.0% 6	4.0% 1	12.0% 3	16.0% 4	36.0% 9	8.0% 2	25	2.4

## Q15. How did you hear about this survey? (Tick all that apply)

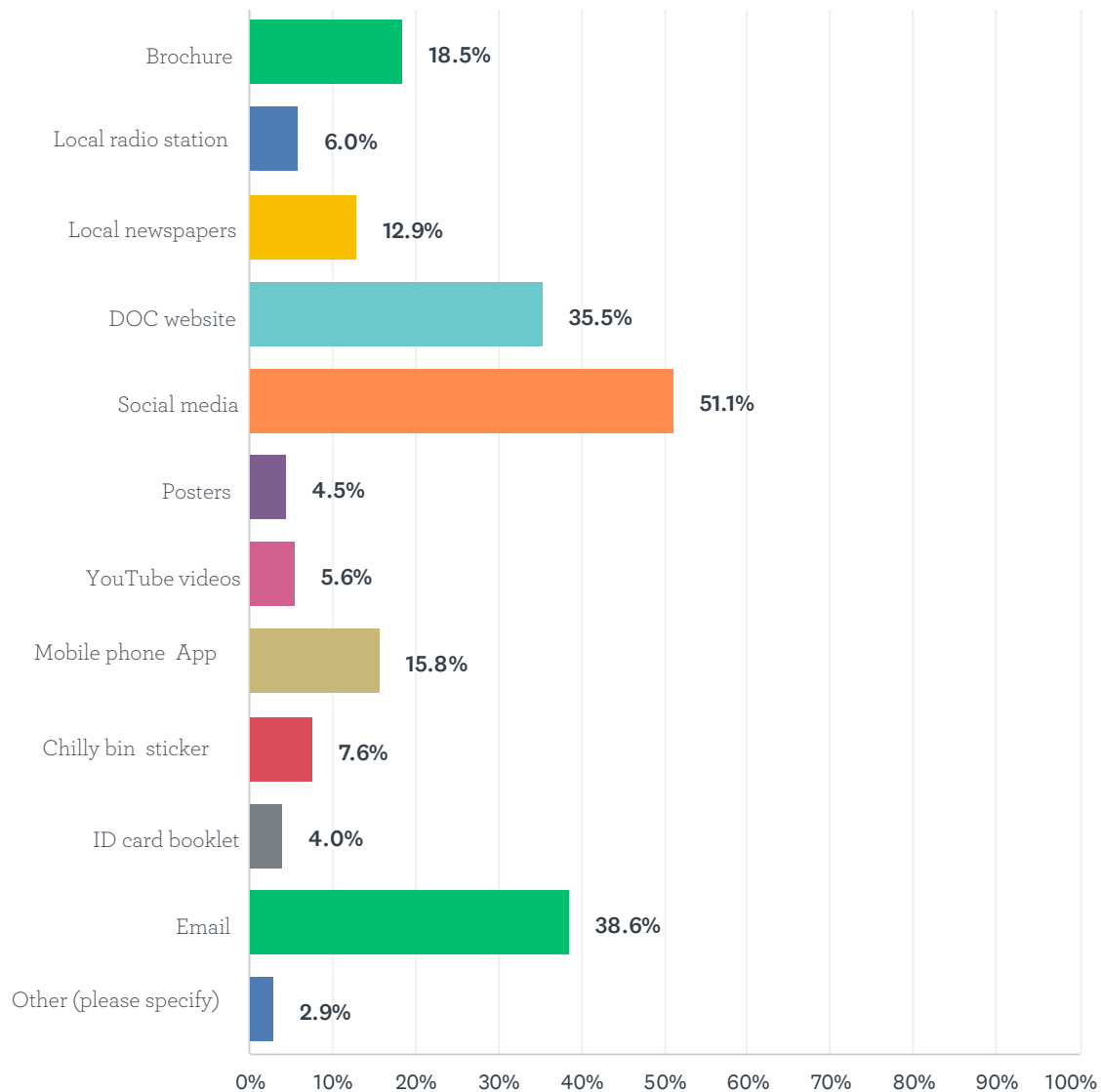
Answered: 448 Skipped: 2



See 'Other' responses in Appendix.

## Q16. How would you like to receive information about the whitebait fishery? (Tick all that apply)

Answered: 448 Skipped: 2





ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Brochure	18.5%	83
Local radio station	6.0%	27
Local newspapers	12.9%	58
DOC website	35.5%	159
Social media	51.1%	229
Posters	4.5%	20
YouTube videos	5.6%	25
Mobile phone App	15.8%	71
Chilly bin sticker	7.6%	34
ID card booklet	4.0%	18
Email	38.6%	173
Other (please specify)	2.9%	13
Total Respondents: 448		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	I couldnt care less about “the whitebait fishery, I dont even know what it is. Good luck in your future endeavours.	11/20/2025 7:53 PM
2	I would like to see a few rangers i see none every year	11/20/2025 7:39 PM
3	None	11/20/2025 4:11 PM
4	It would have been good to know that you were doing a survey so we could look out for it.	11/20/2025 8:51 AM
5	Petines.co.nz	11/19/2025 11:00 PM
6	none	11/19/2025 7:56 AM
7	None, doc sucks	11/18/2025 6:01 PM
8	None	11/18/2025 3:55 PM
9	Not you	11/13/2025 12:25 AM
10	I dont need information about the whitebait fishery, I'm very familiar with it alreadyRiverside	11/5/2025 8:19 AM
11	signage	11/4/2025 3:01 PM
12	Hunting and fishing book	11/4/2025 3:00 PM
13	whitebait association; direct email	11/3/2025 1:02 PM

Before submitting your response, do you have any additional information on how your whitebaiting experience could be improved?

Answered: 340 Skipped: 110

See responses in Appendix.

## Appendix

'Other' answer options:

Q9. New whitebaiting regulations were introduced in 2021. How have these new regulations impacted your whitebaiting experience?  
(Tick all that apply)

Answered: 450 Skipped: 0

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Weather has had more of an impact	12/5/2025 3:10 PM
2	The reduced time has allowed me to grt on with other activites. I don't miss the November fishing but the season should open 15 August. The closing date of 30 October is stupid and should be changed to 31 October.	11/27/2025 10:33 AM
3	with our bad weather, short season and work we hardly got too go at all	11/26/2025 4:47 PM
4	Affected my mental health reduced season is unfair need to bring November back in at least the first two weeks	11/24/2025 7:46 PM

5	No effect	11/24/2025 6:41 AM
6	As working a full time job it makes it harder to get out having the season nearly cut in half and the 2 months we do get spend a lot of the time in flood November has always been the best month for whitebaiting with warmer settled weather but that was taken away from most of us and a select few can carry on whitebaiting pretty unfear	11/23/2025 4:30 PM
7	November for all not one race	11/22/2025 7:32 AM
8	Sock nets should be banned on small rivers	11/21/2025 10:20 AM
9	Season is one month short needs to be for 3 months	11/21/2025 12:01 AM
10	Ban whitebaiting	11/20/2025 11:02 PM
11	They have reduced the amount of time I am able to enjoy whitebaiting	11/20/2025 10:38 PM
12	They have made me risk my life more with the short season as not much time to get the right conditions	11/20/2025 10:35 PM
13	They have taken away November	11/20/2025 10:26 PM
14	more people crammed into 8 wks so harder to get a spot	11/20/2025 9:48 PM
15	No real effect but probably should have adjusted my net. (Lol)	11/20/2025 7:51 PM
16	Good for buggeral poachers(no permits ) are all over the rivers now in november	11/20/2025 7:38 PM
17	They have lessened my catch rate and days fished	11/20/2025 7:21 PM
18	The month of September is near impossible to fish due to the weather and flooding on the West coast. Its dangerous to the fisherman and will one day catch someone out, especially those that have huts and shelters that they stay in. Remove September and give back even half a month of November.	11/20/2025 7:12 PM
19	2025 was my first whitebait season	11/20/2025 6:56 PM
20	Season is too short. Weather often disrupts fishing.	11/20/2025 4:56 PM
21	The weather is always better first 2 weeks in November. If you could start the season two weeks later and finish mid November for Buller as flooding and rain is an issue in September	11/20/2025 12:50 PM
22	We fish in a small stream, the season is very short and this year the weather was appalling and not not conducive to spending on the beach.	11/20/2025 8:50 AM
23	Its extremely unfair for me to be baiting with 3 meters of gobys and the fisherman in front of me aloud to use 6 meters. How is this fair?	11/20/2025 7:45 AM
24	You got to have one rule that applies 2 every body no use in having a season when some people are fishing out of season just because of there race	11/19/2025 10:03 PM
25	By shortening the season for some is racial act why?	11/19/2025 9:34 PM
26	Took the best whitebaiting month away from us	11/19/2025 8:17 PM
27	Season so short that river is unfishable due to rain most of season	11/19/2025 7:47 PM
28	I didn't know	11/19/2025 6:50 PM
29	Many people here breaking rules, the use of stands and sock nets everywhere now make it impossible for old people like me to find a place to fish and some people up river are catching huge amounts but not much for the rest of us. Also shorter season here means whitebait due to short season being during usual flood season in our area	11/19/2025 6:22 PM
30	There should not be a split season. Morsi shouldn't have an advantage over white people. Totally racism	11/19/2025 6:11 PM
31	I stopped whitebaiting	11/19/2025 4:42 PM
32	The reduced 60 day season and poor weather in South Westland reduced my ability to catch whitebait this season. I'd like to see it remain open through November for Scoop netting. Catches via scoop are significantly less than set nets so unlikely to impact the fishery.	11/19/2025 11:53 AM

33	Catch reduced due to limited access enforced by tangata whenua	11/19/2025 10:58 AM
34	Used to go in November	11/19/2025 8:16 AM
35	Losing to bait in November is not good. It's the warmest month to be on the water.	11/19/2025 6:33 AM
36	treat all New Zealanders the same. They sell 95% tax free in that extra 4 weeks. This is so wrong.	11/19/2025 5:51 AM
37	Feels wrong for the white people who stick by the rules regulations and then we not aloud to fish more the 62 days feel dumb needs to changed back to 15th august to 31st nov	11/19/2025 3:33 AM
38	More risk as I whitebait less than ideal conditions my season is shorter	11/18/2025 11:06 PM
39	I struggle with the customary rights as I know some that fish to sell and give minimal to the local Wai.... I think it's a joke when the give a pound of whitebait when they're catching hundreds of pounds	11/18/2025 10:05 PM
40	Worst season yet!! Reduced time and bad weather conditions resulted in loss of enjoyment to feed my family. It was bitterly cold way to often we NEED November back to really enjoy whitebaiting like we used to please.	11/18/2025 9:58 PM
41	Can't get out for the longer days of November. September also very unproductive so only 1 real month	11/18/2025 9:31 PM
42	I only cultural harvest in November .with my permit.	11/18/2025 8:29 PM
43	they are a total waste of space, fish don't really run until after labour weekend in most places, spring has cost us dearly in loss of fishing because of the wind and rain.letting the natives carry on fishing has created apartheid based on race,you might of gathered i'm not a fan of doc and their nonsense	11/18/2025 7:32 PM
44	Need the hole season back September October November	11/18/2025 7:14 PM
45	Limited fishing time	11/18/2025 7:06 PM
46	They have cut short the best part of my season by losing November which has always been the best month in Canterbury	11/18/2025 6:53 PM
47	With terrible weather conditions and short season I was very limited on catch	11/18/2025 6:41 PM
48	Less time out there for recreation	11/18/2025 6:22 PM
49	Our stand traditionally fished well early, and late in the season. Last 2 years, unfishable due to flooding	11/18/2025 6:18 PM
50	Reducing our season has impacted greatly. As the season is weather dominated of the allocated 2 months only 2 days were fishable. Speaks for itself don't you think!!!	11/18/2025 5:50 PM
51	More people not chilled	11/18/2025 5:35 PM
52	They have limited the amount of times I can fish	11/18/2025 5:24 PM
53	Same rules for everyone, should not be aloud to sell	11/18/2025 4:06 PM
54	sortening of the season is unnecessary as the weather controls	11/18/2025 3:38 PM
55	Less mental reset time due to shorter season	11/18/2025 3:15 PM
56	Season should go back to mid sept to mid nov for maori and pakeha	11/18/2025 1:58 PM
57	As season shorter less time to go out	11/18/2025 1:46 PM
58	Being pushed out of spots and unable to fish due to commercial operators. Rivers being blocked off so unable to fish behind them after working a full time job while these commercial operators fish all day. I reported to DOC and no one even turned up. The sale of whitebait NEEDS to be stopped everyone can still fish but there wont be the monetary value to the whitebait. More to be given and enjoyed for friends and family etc	11/18/2025 1:38 PM
59	Season cut to short and should run from October to November	11/18/2025 1:16 PM
60	The river doesn't clean up until November	11/18/2025 1:11 PM

61	They have made it harder especially when river flood alot and you miss time to whitebait	11/18/2025 10:54 AM
62	We get the worst weather in Canterbury over the months we have now and hardly get to fish due to floods	11/18/2025 10:52 AM
63	Weather	11/18/2025 10:47 AM
64	They have created so much Racism and hate	11/18/2025 9:09 AM
65	Box netters raping it all	11/18/2025 8:32 AM
66	Made it harder to find a fishing spot because of shorter season	11/18/2025 7:17 AM
67	The river was in flood most of the time if the season was September-mid November would be more fair	11/18/2025 7:15 AM
68	Difficult to find a fishing spot i	11/17/2025 6:56 PM
69	The miserable decision not to allow a full month of October is just stupid	11/17/2025 6:08 PM
70	Shorter season and bad weather limited opportunities to fish. To windy, heavy rain. Then beautiful two weeks after season finished.	11/17/2025 6:05 PM
71	Caused race based whitebaiting	11/17/2025 6:00 PM
72	Has made people more greedy and leaving there zones and fishing here on the west coast causing more fights	11/17/2025 5:59 PM
73	Losing days at end of season has dramatically reduced our catch.	11/17/2025 5:53 PM
74	Very terrible weather be nice to have original season back	11/17/2025 5:50 PM
75	Made it to hard to get to river in shortened season	11/13/2025 10:30 PM
76	Habitat for adults will have the biggest impact on whitebait	11/13/2025 2:39 PM
77	Shorter season has put more pressure on the rivers	11/13/2025 1:01 PM
78	Oh giddy assholes,that didn't take long to call New Zealand something else	11/12/2025 11:39 PM
79	The dates I feel are wrong as we all know the whitebait run in November so losing that month hurt the tummy for the kids!	11/11/2025 2:04 PM
80	In New Zealand it shouldn't matter what race you are. We all struggle with the fact that if you are Maori you can whitebait all year around. Oh its for the Whanau speech. I know of a 64kg, 120kg and a 150kg catch on the Oreti after the 31st October which was all sold straight away on the river bank. It's daylight robbery that we can only fish 1st Sept,-30th Oct yet others are allowed to continue. So much for protecting our hatchers etc . If your European you are at lost. Whats the point of having a season at all. BAND THE SALE OF IT. CANT SELL ANYTHINGELSE DROM THE SEA..	11/9/2025 2:57 PM
81	Need november	11/7/2025 1:07 PM
82	Limited my opportunities for fishing season too short for canterbury	11/5/2025 7:43 PM
83	No fishing in November greatly affects our success.September is no good for whatebaiting here and Oct/Nov where always our best .month's so we end up with poor catches	11/5/2025 6:04 PM
84	the change in regulations that were introduced in 2021 has affected me by making it harder to find a spot to fish because of the compression of the season. Also makes people to whitebait in unsafe condition because again the compressed season. s	11/5/2025 11:33 AM
85	The new regs introduced are a joke. They were introduced with no data and no justification. There are far too many whitebait in our rivers and more need to be harvested. When I look at the massive shoals of whitebait it is sickening knowing the the river they are in can not support that many mouths to feed. November needs to be reistated as a whitebaiting month and you nguys need to stop spreading wonky information to the public. Shame on you. You need to get in touch with reality. Hiding behind data research and survys pretending to do something important to justify your junkid employment roles is a disgrace e and	11/4/2025 8:33 PM
86	Making it a later in the season means we get alot more smelt the month or October isn't even worth fishing here so maybe the North Island could start in august to September	11/4/2025 4:56 PM

87	Season is too short. Bring back all of August.	11/4/2025 3:05 PM
88	The Waimak was only fishable for 11 days out of the 61 available in Sept plus Oct; it was in flood for the remaining 50 days. Oct plus Nov would be my preferred season duration	11/4/2025 3:05 PM
89	Makes it harder on smaller rivers to get a spot	11/4/2025 3:05 PM
90	Shortening the season has reduced my mental recharge time and made it harder to find a spot	11/4/2025 3:03 PM
91	Kaikoura whitebait generally get going in November	11/4/2025 3:02 PM
92	Losing six weeks and the best four of the season	11/4/2025 11:03 AM
93	More people out on my river meaning less spots to fish. More fights over spots. More druggies and unemployed people trying to make a quick dollar fishing every day. Local nga tahu fishing every day of the season for commercial gain.	11/3/2025 10:06 PM
94	Shortening the season has made whitebaiting very difficult due to unsettled weather, the season should include November	11/3/2025 9:07 PM
95	The new regulations have not altered my overall catch per season I just fish a similar number of days in the shorter season. What the new shorter season has ruined is the social aspect greatly November was always a great month on the river the days are long and warm and was the best month to take family and friends out to enjoy a day whitebaiting. Now with the shorter season there is noticeably more tension between whitebaitwrs on the river and the river is a lot busier every day now I used to regularly be the only person fishing the river mouth during week days this is now a thing of the past with the shortened season	11/3/2025 8:57 PM
96	I don't get time to go anymore as the short season is always bad weather	11/3/2025 5:18 PM
97	The should have brought in the commercial limit / laws around selling. If you need a licence and cannot sell trout. Why can you for whitebait	11/3/2025 5:02 PM
98	have to change my screen length when i fish off bank instead of stand	11/3/2025 4:24 PM
99	Reduced the days i can fish	11/3/2025 3:08 PM
100	the season is much shorter and there is less time to sped out with friends and family	11/3/2025 2:02 PM
101	There is not enough food for whitebait to eat they need crustations to grow properly.run off from roads contain copper killing freshwater shrimp. It is vital that we increase whitebaiting temporarily until the roads are runoff filtered so that there is enough food for whitebait to grow to there natural size	11/3/2025 1:50 PM
102	Shorter season means less days available to go whitebaiting over the period when high river levels dominate	11/3/2025 1:05 PM
103	Give us back November	11/3/2025 12:35 PM
104	They have reduced my time on the river, due to having a shorter season	11/3/2025 12:00 PM
105	Biggest impact was amount of days able to fish over a very wet spring with a flooded river this year	11/3/2025 10:50 AM
106	Can't get out as much with shortened season	11/3/2025 10:48 AM
107	With the change of regulations I have never seen so many people fishing out of season It's not getting policed like it should and people claiming Maori rights some are just inviting Maori friends down so they can fish	11/3/2025 10:45 AM
108	feff	11/3/2025 10:19 AM
109	They have made it harder to get a spot with people concentrated into a smaller time frame of a season	11/3/2025 9:20 AM
110	Created discord on the riverbank	11/3/2025 9:11 AM
111	They have ruined the experience as due to season timings. The river spends more time in flood than not during September and October.	11/3/2025 9:03 AM

## Q15. How did you hear about this survey? (Tick all that apply)

Answered: 448 Skipped: 2

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Family	12/7/2025 7:28 AM
2	Family	12/5/2025 3:11 PM
3	Sent from doc	11/27/2025 8:11 PM
4	Email from DOC	11/26/2025 9:02 PM
5	email received	11/25/2025 4:28 PM
6	F&G email	11/25/2025 2:58 PM
7	fish n game email	11/25/2025 6:22 AM
8	Fish & Game	11/24/2025 7:47 PM



9	Workmate sent it to me	11/21/2025 11:17 AM
10	Facebook	11/21/2025 6:58 AM
11	Got an email	11/20/2025 9:41 PM
12	A friend who knows I am a whitebaiter from way back.	11/20/2025 7:53 PM
13	I have my catch diarys which show the 2025 season was the best for 9 years	11/20/2025 7:24 PM
14	Local group of baiters	11/20/2025 4:18 PM
15	Daughter emailed it to us.	11/20/2025 8:51 AM
16	Email	11/19/2025 6:12 PM
17	Email	11/19/2025 10:15 AM
18	I	11/18/2025 9:31 PM
19	From a friend	11/18/2025 3:39 PM
20	Friend	11/18/2025 1:59 PM
21	Email	11/18/2025 1:42 PM
22	i really cant remember but i get emaild about it.	11/17/2025 10:30 PM
23	Email from DOC	11/15/2025 3:26 PM
24	email	11/14/2025 1:48 PM
25	Not you	11/13/2025 12:25 AM
26	emailed	11/12/2025 1:42 PM
27	fellow whitebaiter and friend	11/11/2025 6:37 PM
28	Email	11/11/2025 4:55 PM
29	Can't remember?	11/11/2025 2:42 PM
30	email	11/10/2025 12:31 PM
31	Received email	11/9/2025 2:57 PM
32	Email from previous year	11/8/2025 10:28 AM
33	by invitation	11/6/2025 4:12 PM
34	Direct contact from DOC	11/5/2025 7:45 PM
35	Through a friend - Word of mouth	11/5/2025 11:42 AM
36	direct contact with doc	11/5/2025 11:35 AM
37	You sent me the email.	11/5/2025 8:19 AM
38	can't remember	11/5/2025 6:21 AM
39	Email	11/4/2025 10:57 PM
40	Been contacted previously	11/4/2025 8:21 PM
41	e-mail	11/4/2025 4:06 PM
42	Email	11/4/2025 3:07 PM
43	Email	11/4/2025 3:07 PM
44	You emailed me	11/4/2025 3:06 PM
45	Email	11/4/2025 3:06 PM
46	You sent it to me	11/4/2025 3:06 PM

47	Email from DOC	11/4/2025 3:05 PM
48	Email	11/4/2025 3:05 PM
49	email	11/4/2025 3:04 PM
50	Email	11/4/2025 3:03 PM
51	Email	11/4/2025 3:03 PM
52	Email	11/4/2025 3:02 PM
53	Your email	11/4/2025 3:02 PM
54	Email	11/4/2025 3:01 PM
55	Email	11/4/2025 3:00 PM
56	email as past participant	11/4/2025 3:00 PM
57	Email	11/4/2025 2:59 PM
58	email	11/4/2025 2:59 PM
59	I was contacted by DOC	11/4/2025 2:59 PM
60	email	11/4/2025 2:51 PM
61	Direct contact from DOC	11/4/2025 11:04 AM
62	E mail	11/4/2025 4:49 AM
63	Survey	11/3/2025 11:16 PM
64	Email	11/3/2025 9:08 PM
65	Email	11/3/2025 8:58 PM
66	Got an email from doc	11/3/2025 8:44 PM
67	email	11/3/2025 5:20 PM
68	You emailed me	11/3/2025 5:02 PM
69	Email	11/3/2025 3:10 PM
70	You sent email	11/3/2025 1:51 PM
71	email	11/3/2025 1:50 PM
72	Email	11/3/2025 1:06 PM
73	Email	11/3/2025 1:06 PM
74	direct email	11/3/2025 1:02 PM
75	Email from previous times have competed it	11/3/2025 12:59 PM
76	Email	11/3/2025 12:54 PM
77	You notified me	11/3/2025 12:37 PM
78	Cant remember	11/3/2025 12:01 PM
79	Email notification	11/3/2025 11:32 AM
80	Previous surveys	11/3/2025 11:28 AM
81	you asked me to	11/3/2025 10:50 AM
82	Email	11/3/2025 10:45 AM
83	email	11/3/2025 10:30 AM
84	Emailed	11/3/2025 9:27 AM

85	Truthfully can't remember sorry	11/3/2025 9:21 AM
86	Email from DOC	11/3/2025 9:12 AM
87	Email from DOC	11/3/2025 9:08 AM
88	Email from Helen	11/3/2025 9:07 AM
89	On the survey group	11/3/2025 9:05 AM
90	Email	11/3/2025 9:03 AM
91	Emailed	11/3/2025 9:03 AM

## Q24 Before submitting your response, do you have any additional information on how your whitebaiting experience could be improved?

Answered: 340 Skipped: 110

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	In our area, I met lots of people who understood that the season ended 31st October and I still saw people fishing on this day. 2 complete months would take this error away.	12/5/2025 3:16 PM
2	I would like to see some protection or rules for scoop netting As more and more people are appearing on the river bank they just presume they can just jump in front of you and as close as they can get to you.also, sock netters setting up in front of scooters completely cutting of bait from scoopnets this was worse this season	11/27/2025 8:17 PM
3	A generous daily limit should be imposed. Some (semi-commercial) fishers are taking huge catches and selling it, reducing the catch for recreational fishers upstream from them. Having said that, my observation is that the whitebait fishery in the Waikanae River is healthy.	11/27/2025 10:41 AM
4	Consideration could be given to the banning of traps in all nets but more specifically sock nets which are often 'fished' (if you can call it that) from daylight to dark and generally by people doing it for purely commercial purposes.	11/26/2025 9:07 PM
5	the dairy farms upstream HAVE destroyed the river...full stop...fix that	11/26/2025 4:50 PM
6	The fishery need to be competently policed especially before and after the season on all rivers. Publicity needs to be given to the public regarding the rules that apply to customary rights. There are some who believe they can fish to the end of November under customary rights. I would prefer that all NZers can all fish in a well advertised season and that there are no additional rules dependent on race or ethnicity. I believe the season could also be extended for a further 2 weeks into November.	11/25/2025 4:37 PM
7	improve monitoring of whitebaiting	11/25/2025 3:00 PM
8	Leave it the way it is	11/25/2025 8:08 AM
9	A season licence for all whitebaiters may help fishing sustainability and improve monitoring.	11/25/2025 6:57 AM
10	only registered stands be allowed to sell bait traps in nets be banned I dont disagree with the right to customary fish but this is causing apatisium and should only be allowed for funeral/birthdays (tightening the rules around the issuing of these permits)	11/25/2025 6:26 AM
11	No	11/24/2025 9:00 PM
12	Give us until 15 th November.. the whitebait fishery has never been better and is in good health.. you are robbing us of our right to enjoy the outdoors ALSO STOP THE CUSTOMARY MOARI FISHING .. this is WRONG AND RACIST!!!	11/24/2025 7:50 PM
13	one rule for all. no customary rights. we are all one	11/24/2025 7:32 PM
14	Banning sale of whitebait and daily catch limits have to happen so future generations can enjoy whitebait	11/24/2025 6:44 AM
15	Give all New Zealanders back 15th of August to 30th of November	11/23/2025 4:34 PM
16	Stop the sale of whitebait!	11/22/2025 3:17 PM
17	Change the starting and finishing times to 15 September to end November At the moment why go to 30 October when it's 31 days in month All one race. Māori had customary rights because they didn't have a fridge or freezer why they hell do they need it now unless they want to make some extra coin. The rivers are not owned by any of us we are blessed to be able to get outside and enjoy freedom of choice. No change needed for net regulations. Rules around alteration to river flow by moving stones is dumb especially on our south Canterbury rivers. Starting and finishing times of day okay.	11/22/2025 7:33 AM

18	Remove the ability to sell whitebait please	11/21/2025 11:19 AM
19	By checking white baiters at the start and middle of the season. This will ensure that people follow the rules more.	11/21/2025 10:23 AM
20	I think banning the sale of white bait would benefit everyone ot will stop the greedy bugers taking more then they need and just going out white baiting just for profit, you can't sell any seafood with out a proper license so why can people sell white bait?	11/21/2025 8:55 AM
21	Return to the days of the season where it is the same for everyone - I.e. no extended season for ethnic groups.	11/21/2025 8:16 AM
22	No wings with in 500m of river.mouth , cut wings to 1-5m	11/21/2025 7:03 AM
23	Short season is often impacted by flood conditions where i fish. Daily limit and selling bait being limited would be beneficial in my opinion	11/21/2025 6:56 AM
24	Longer season, it's far too short	11/21/2025 5:34 AM
25	Having the season back in August to October	11/21/2025 1:58 AM
26	Season needs to go back to 3 months 2 months is not enough time.	11/21/2025 12:03 AM
27	Stop people baiting in the river mouth and the surf and selling it.Whitebaiting is supposed to be recreational so more policing should be done by DOC. LET EVERYONE BAIT IN NOVEMBER	11/20/2025 11:07 PM
28	Better control of the trout fisheries, 2-3 rivers in each region to be used as trout fisheries and all trout removed from all other rivers. Development of whitebait hatcheries across the country and release these juveniles in the headwaters/catchments of all rivers which are not part of the trout fisheries. Subsidies for fencing and plants for whitebaiters to develop riparian areas in the areas they fish. Return the season to as it was, and enforce the regulations more with harsher penalties for breaking these, ban the sale and trade in whitebait and impose stiff penalties, maybe a license to catch with a maximum kg for the season if you are found to exceed your maximum at any point in your possession (ie 50kg max for the season if you're found to have any more than this in your possession frozen or fresh, impose massive fines) Begin better monitoring and data collection of catches this can be achieved by asking fishermen/women to be honest and accurate to help gather the required information for the next 10 years or there may have to be a total ban on fishing for native freshwater species. I have seen good seasons come and go and believe it has more to do with river levels (frequency of floods, stability of levels) than anything else which I think means we really need to work on better protection of the catchment areas of our rivers and not sitting on our laurels that the riparian work we have done is enough, we can push to improve this by making them wider and introducing more species into the bank area which is frequently underwater from tidal or flood activity.	11/20/2025 10:46 PM
29	A longer season to allow more people to get out and enjoy it, focus on the sale and commercial side to reduce total catch not the recreational fishermen,	11/20/2025 10:42 PM
30	Adding in November	11/20/2025 10:40 PM
31	Banning shock nets as they catch and put stress on all fish that go in and are the most common net people leave in the water and walk away	11/20/2025 10:26 PM
32	Should have maximum daily limit imposed for example 5 litre bucket. That plenty for feeds and the freezer.	11/20/2025 10:09 PM
33	Allowing the sale of whitebait is madness. It means that some people fish all day every day, hog the best spots and get aggressive if you try to get that spot. It ruins the atmosphere on the river and encourages huge catches. Whitebait is a precious resource and no serious baiter that I know wants it sold. If DOC had the cojones to ban the sale you would get widespread support. If we were allowed to sell trout our rivers would be decimated in no time. Shortening the season has been good but there is hardly any enforcement on the Waikanae. Restoring habit is the best initiative of all and KCDC has done this on a section of the river. Great you are doing some research I totally support DOCs work.	11/20/2025 9:49 PM
34	Better weather and more annual leave lol	11/20/2025 9:48 PM
35	Ban customary fishing it's just there for beneficiaries to catch and sell for cash.	11/20/2025 9:31 PM
36	Remove customary Whitebaiting or if not they should be on the same rules during the white peoples season eg, 3 metres of screens not 5 metres	11/20/2025 9:30 PM

37	No thanks	11/20/2025 9:28 PM
38	I think the sale of whitebait, would be limited to pensioners. Definitely not beneficiary people. I think a season limit would be better than a daily limit, I work full time so have limited days to go whitebaiting . The customary permit creates massive division. One rule for all, as it stands I am being disadvantaged due to my race	11/20/2025 9:23 PM
39	Maybe check the guys baiting next to the flood gates at brooklands on the Styx river catching up to 20 litre bucket fulls of bait each time the flood gates open, maybe revisit ruling around flood gates. It was good to see some policing of regulations going on down the waimak mouth this year. It is a daily practice for some set netters to have 4 5 or even 6 screens out. Make only one season for all not extra month for some people	11/20/2025 9:11 PM
40	Return it back to the original length	11/20/2025 8:56 PM
41	Here Goes,,,,,ok i was an honorary whitebait ranger for eight years under Anita Spencer,,,,, we were told that the current season was only a trial and doc will reinstate the original season with consultation from white baiters,,,, why has this not happened,,,,, the 15th of August to the 15th of November should be reinstated,,,, you will find that there is a overwhelming response from white baiters out there that will agree with what I have said,,, lastly,,, I know this for a fact the permitted iwi who are catching white bait in their season are selling the white bait they are not donating it to iwi,,,,, permitted members of iwi are making thousands of dollars during their season I have seen fish crates a white bait come off the waimakariri river,,,, and it was all sold,,,,!!!!,,,,, why is Doc not monitoring this because it is a mockery of the permits,,,, you have a lot of non-maori non permitted white baiters calling the permits a mockery and is extremely racist,,,,	11/20/2025 8:01 PM
42	Scrapping the racist concept of allowing certain kiwis to fish before others.	11/20/2025 7:55 PM
43	Hey DOC Team, Just wrapping up our feedback after our second season on the registered stand 1135 at the South Branch of the Wanganui River. We had a great run this year! The South Branch is finally flowing properly after ages of being dry, and our catch jumped from 30 kg last year to 200 kg this season. It's awesome to see the river looking healthy and the bait running strong. But we have a huge problem with the season timing: September is brutal. We spent both September and October down there, and the weather on the West Coast is just too volatile in September for the last 4 years. We only managed 30 kg for the entire first month because the river was flooded more often than not, the conditions were terrible, no bait and it was genuinely dangerous. People lost gear (nets, trailers,day huts), and it's only a matter of time until someone loses their life out there. We seriously think you should consider swapping September for even half of November. The weather is far more settled then, fishers are happier, and the bait are running beautifully up clean, clear waters to their spawning grounds—plus a few for us! On a more positive note, the 6-metre net and screen limit for registered stands is bang on. We saw plenty of bait swimming into our net and loads going around us, so it definitely lets the fish through. However, we really need more DOC presence on our river. Our neighbour was well over the 6-metre limit, sometimes extending 15 to 20 metres out. That's just not on, and it undermines the rules the rest of us follow. Thanks heaps for looking at our submission. Cheers, Fred and Nat stand 1135 Wanganui river South branch	11/20/2025 7:55 PM
44	We need more feet on the ground i see a dozen nets on our local rivers daily shameless that they do not get taken to court for it	11/20/2025 7:40 PM
45	Nope	11/20/2025 6:57 PM
46	I think we are currently raping our waterways of whitebait, most whitebaiters do it for the money and not for the love of whitebait. I know of people who make in the thousands, and it makes me angry that recreational fishing has been drastically reduced because there are no longer any whitebait for us non sellers.	11/20/2025 6:03 PM
47	I'm quite happy with the current rules and regulations, but I think the season times should be changed to suit each region,	11/20/2025 5:54 PM
48	Definitely ban commercial sale, you can't sell seafood so why should whitebait be any different given their numbers and vulnerability.	11/20/2025 5:37 PM
49	I find it bizarre you don't need a license to catch and sell whitebait yet you need an expensive license to catch an introduced predator that's killing our native species (Trout)?	11/20/2025 5:02 PM
50	Longer season	11/20/2025 4:57 PM

51	Longer season required. EG I took most of this season off work to go whitebaiting. I ended up going about 6 times due to weather, floods, tides.... I am a shift worker so don't like to go weekends - unfair on those working monday to friday. Lots of bait run before and after current season, cant see harm in extending season. Also, 31 days in October, why end on 30th! I would like to see a rule of no campouts on river to secure fav spots. Most people are good but others take the mickey.	11/20/2025 4:26 PM
52	Have not seen doc anywhere i fish doing their job checking on whitebaiters for the 3rd year in a row now. It would be good to see a daily limit enforced to stop the people living on the rivers hogging/holding the top spots all season so everyone gets a fair turn fishing	11/20/2025 4:15 PM
53	It would be improved by having the end of the season at a later date, the seasons are changing, all fish spawn on seasonal conditions, it's not that there's a decline in the fishery, it's the movement of the season, I breed fish at home, and also see this season change with the gardens and trees, the earth is on an axis, the change is movement of the earth on the axis (hope this makes sense)	11/20/2025 2:46 PM
54	Shifting the 2 months from 1 September to the 15th of September until the 15th of November. The customary rights should be removed also i feel, how can we prove they aren't taking to on sell?	11/20/2025 1:37 PM
55	Improve/repair/replace the spawning grounds; stop polluting the waterways;	11/20/2025 1:13 PM
56	Mid Sept to mid November in Buller	11/20/2025 12:52 PM
57	Extend the season it's too short	11/20/2025 10:46 AM
58	Starting the season earlier	11/20/2025 9:32 AM
59	We need more physical presence from DOC. The current rules need to be enforced. Baiting out of hours. Gear needs to be measured. Even the people using 3 gobys, most are 1200-1400 in length. That also includes drag nets. Drag nets should really be banned, as they kill all species that enter our rivers. I also think it's extremely unfair to allow the iwi permit holders to bait with 6 meters of gear, in front of us, during our season. If you are behind them, you get completely blocked. Please change this rule. Suggestions: maybe reinstall honorary rangers to watch each river and report back to you. Maybe contact Tony (the old doc ranger) to see how he used to catch everyone baiting illegally. Maybe get access to the outdoor access camera at the mouth (it has night vision) and get someone to watch it, especially a week either side of the full moon, low tide, early mornings. Or during the day, an hour and half before and after low tide. Turn up in waders. Because of the lack of presence from DOC, the majority of baiters are now taking the piss. 85% of baiters at the mouth (north side) this season, would have baited illegally. Some of the iwi permit holders are currently down there (November) baiting with 7 meters of gear. I know people have rung and complained about it, but nothing happens. Please 🙏 please 🙏 Just enforce the rules that are already in place 🙏 And maybe change the rule, so everyone during September and October baits with the same length of gear. (Iwi and your average kiwi). Its so unfair. Everyone just says, well if they are aloud, then we will too. Look forward to seeing more of you next season 😊 P.s. I love your cover photo 😊 That gear must be the most photographed and complained about, set of gear, in history lol 😊	11/20/2025 9:04 AM
60	Our whitebaiting is very weather dependent. In October this year, there was only a few days when there was no wind or it wasn't raining. 1st November came along and the sun came out. Perhaps the season could be extended by 2 weeks. West Coast beaches can be pretty rough!!	11/20/2025 8:57 AM
61	On the Waimakariri River the extended season for the local Māori people has caused major problems people that have been friends for life went to school together now are fighting over whitebaiting spots etc Recommendation make the season the same for all people and get away from people holding the same spot for the season just because they leave a bucket holder in that spot it's a joke that turns to fights etc	11/20/2025 7:00 AM
62	No	11/20/2025 6:55 AM
63	The shorter season and shorter whitebaiting times are Abit sad. I would hate for them to be made even more less a season.	11/20/2025 6:33 AM
64	People will argue, but I think regulations are needed. People on the dole go down, fish and sell on Facebook etc. Don't agree with that	11/20/2025 6:29 AM
65	na it really depends on the people whitebaiting and the attitude reall	11/20/2025 2:02 AM



66	Bring back November fishing	11/20/2025 1:56 AM
67	Banning sock nets better policing by doc staff	11/19/2025 11:02 PM
68	Could the whole of new zealand have a 5-7 year ban on fishing for whitebait? While they are delicious, we won't have them left unless we replenish the stocks first, Also aren't two of the five majority species of whitebait critically endangered?	11/19/2025 10:14 PM
69	There's so many things that can be improved in the whitebait fisheries. All the information you gather u ignore anyway and never listen to the people that have spent more time on the rivers than you ever will. Whitebait run all year round when the conditions are right in each river . Give us back our old season length	11/19/2025 10:10 PM
70	Get rid of the racially based customary fishing rights we are one people, and we live in New Zealand	11/19/2025 9:38 PM
71	Season needs extended	11/19/2025 9:27 PM
72	Set a season catch limit to stop the "professional" white baiters that think they own the river and therefore create more space for true recreational white baiters to be able to enjoy their fishing, ban the sale of whitebait!!! Tax those that do it for greed and profit.	11/19/2025 9:16 PM
73	Give November back in the whitebaiting season	11/19/2025 8:19 PM
74	Move the season later and increase length. Prevent the pillage and tax free income of people catching huge amounts of whitebait for sale including on customary permits, ensure DOC actually polices the regulations	11/19/2025 7:51 PM
75	To have the opportunity to be involved in restoration projects	11/19/2025 7:48 PM
76	All new Zealanders should be treated the same. ONE RULE FOR ALL	11/19/2025 7:31 PM
77	Better monitoring for compliance at main rivers. People have been spotted whitebaiting after the season has closed.	11/19/2025 7:28 PM
78	Restrictions on customary rights fishing so it is not used for commercial and out of season commercial fishing.	11/19/2025 7:21 PM
79	We live on a stream in the hills. This year we saw a giant kokopu about 30cm long! Imagine if all the white bait got to grow up!	11/19/2025 6:52 PM
80	Make sock nets and whitebait stands illegal for recreational use. Also maybe extend the season into November for pensioners as we can't compete at present with fit young people who are catching large amounts to supplement their income.	11/19/2025 6:25 PM
81	No	11/19/2025 6:19 PM
82	Less people doing	11/19/2025 5:50 PM
83	Need to stop the sale. Also daily limits and enforcement of rules.	11/19/2025 5:19 PM
84	I use to whitebait with my father years ago. Back then, you would only see a few people out for a small feed of whitebait. Now it has turned into a tax free money making scheme. Ideally I'd like to see white baiting banned, how ever, I don't think this would happen. At the very least, harder regulations need to be made, to protect these fish. It is sad what has happened to this species. It's now all about monetary gain, rather than fish species conservation. DOC protect them.	11/19/2025 4:47 PM
85	Banning sock nets in small width river like the Avon and kaiapoi they take up a lot of the river leaving the white bait a slim chance of getting around they should be a West Coast thing where rivers are wide	11/19/2025 4:26 PM
86	Equal rights for everyone not this racist behavior for customary rights where are the moa. So many people are not policed and they don't use customary traditions to catch it	11/19/2025 3:16 PM
87	It should be the fishing season for all. People should not be allowed to fish outside the season because of their ethnicity or permit.	11/19/2025 2:53 PM
88	Banning the sale of whitebait you can't buy trout so why can you buy whitebait, or have licences for sellers and registered to control the sales, mostly tax free and not right	11/19/2025 1:57 PM
89	The season is wrong for the coast the month of September is usually unfishable due to the	11/19/2025 1:08 PM



usual spring rain flooding same for first two weeks of October, the first two weeks of November should be reinstated, also saw a lot of illegal fishing on Styx in Christchurch that went unpoliced which was very frustrating not a ranger in site for the ten days my wife and I were there.

90	Id like to see more enforcement. I see a lot of people using multiple nets and fishing at night	11/19/2025 12:27 PM
91	Change the season back to what it was and stop the so called bloody customary fishers from raping the rivers as they sit well up the rivers catching almost everything every day.DOC are looked on as a pack of dickheads around here couldnt catch a bloody cold.	11/19/2025 12:27 PM
92	Permit Scoop netting for all in accordance with Iwi rights. Mid August until the end of November .It has a low impact on the whitebait fishery compared to set nets and addresses the racial divide the Maori rights has brought about. I prefer scooping with whiteboards as it's more active and not passive like set netting. I aim to catch 2 to 3 kg a year to give some to my elderly mother and have some for my family through the year. This year the weather and river conditions were atrocious and I did not get out until the last 2 days of the season. I ended up with a meagre 700g. The old regs that included Nov would have provided me more opportunity to catch my goal amount.	11/19/2025 12:15 PM
93	Racial privilege has greatly reduced my enjoyment of whitebaiting. Threats and aggression are commonplace in the North Canterbury region. I feel often unsafe in a fishery that I've been in for over 60years. Young Maori are very threatening to older European people on the Ashley River.	11/19/2025 11:03 AM
94	Extend the season into November	11/19/2025 9:31 AM
95	I think the sale of whitebait by recreational fishers should be banned to align with all fishing rules. However it is important that Aunty or Koro who can't catch their own have access to a feed of whitebait if the want it	11/19/2025 9:25 AM
96	The major improvement that should be made is to stop customary rights as all it does is cause major friction between races. Two months extra for one race of people is not warranted as most of the bait gets sold.	11/19/2025 9:00 AM
97	Locals should be the only ones to fish our rivers (have a letter with address on it well at the river), whitebaiting every second year and extend the season back to what it was.	11/19/2025 8:40 AM
98	Ban the sale of whitebait, manage the fishery under fish and game and restore river quality	11/19/2025 8:19 AM
99	Ban sale of whitebait and more monitoring of illegal fishing	11/19/2025 8:18 AM
100	leave us alone	11/19/2025 7:57 AM
101	I agree with daily limit, but go back to start of Aug to Nov.	11/19/2025 7:32 AM
102	Extending the season back too including November too stop the division of people, most of the people I talk too about the customary fishing disagree with it, nz is 1 country and division of people is not acceptable,	11/19/2025 7:05 AM
103	Season middle of October to the middle of November	11/19/2025 6:46 AM
104	If we can't all bait in November no one should be allowed.	11/19/2025 6:36 AM
105	By banning the sale of whitebait, it would cut most people off our rivers... habbitat restoration, having a doc ranger stationed on the bigger rivers on a daily basis	11/19/2025 6:26 AM
106	Ban the sale of whitebait	11/19/2025 6:24 AM
107	Yes,yes,yes. I strongly are against the maori people having 4 weeks extra. Its only because everyone is to afraid to speak out over this issue. Treat us all as one. Take it back to as it was. Also I am against selling whitebait. No other fish can be sold. It would stop all the fighting etc. The whitebait population has increased over the last 10 years. I have fished for 30 years.	11/19/2025 6:00 AM
108	I would like to see the 2 months of whitebaiting, that being sept-oct moved to oct-november.My reason is we still get alot of flooding in the river around sept that reduces the season even further. Why does the season end on 30th of October and not 31st of October? Ridiculous.	11/19/2025 5:46 AM
109	I feel the majority of white baiters are good but the rules need enforcing more as this will stop conflict. Also for the sake of whitebait maybe go to a quota system like pāua or limit your daily take.	11/19/2025 3:57 AM

110	Bring back the old seasons or change season depending on river floods	11/19/2025 3:35 AM
111	Go back to the old rules before 2021. There is an abundance of Whitebait so need to enforce anymore laws	11/19/2025 1:58 AM
112	I think every river fishes different so the rules should be looked at differently on each river People should only fish the morning bait and tide and not sit at river all day	11/19/2025 12:08 AM
113	Allowing the November month to be open, having September shut, safer conditions, warmer water.	11/18/2025 11:08 PM
114	I live on the Waimakariri and love our river. I enjoy fishing and whitebaiting but struggle to find a spot to fish because of the fishermen have that fish for financial gain/greed. Whitebait should not be allowed to be sold	11/18/2025 10:12 PM
115	Thank you, yes, all of the whitebaiters keep mentioning and are very passionate about having the month of November reinstated as the preferred baiting season for many reasons. Would like to see October and November as the new whitebaiting season implemented for the year 2026. There were many people who couldn't even get out to bait this year and the enjoyment and fun that used to apply pre.2022 has gone.	11/18/2025 10:10 PM
116	Need November back stop sale of whitebait by non commercial. Those old bugger down river trying to make a quick buck think they own the place and ruin it for everyone with jobs. Old boy told me he was going to punch me out for taking his spot not my fault he slept in past sunrise illegally down river. This needs to be stoppped	11/18/2025 9:39 PM
117	Stop 1080. It must affect inland habitats.	11/18/2025 9:33 PM
118	Proper policing of whitebaiters in and around canterbury to stop the live in fishers monopolising the river mouth purely for they're own financial gain leaving recreational ,weekend fishers with limited space/or nil fishing opportunity	11/18/2025 9:30 PM
119	I go white baiting with the kids for family time, to have fun and teach them how to find food etc. each year it seems to be getting worse with less than friendly fellow white baiters who obviously have gang connections and think they own the river. I would like to see something put in place to stop the sale of white bait so you only take what you can eat yourself, so there is white baiting for generations to come	11/18/2025 9:28 PM
120	Making all abide by rules for river eg: fishing within the hours, not living/camping on river,or fishing with water behind screens	11/18/2025 9:05 PM
121	Yes. Please take away the 'customary rights' for the part Moari people which have always been aggressive for myself and my late husband when we fished as a weekend hobby. It's creating nasty racism and even though I have Moari blood I'm ashamed of the division. Stop living in the past and look to the future.	11/18/2025 8:38 PM
122	Just keep it easy for the part time social baiters and young family	11/18/2025 8:32 PM
123	No	11/18/2025 8:31 PM
124	I do not agree with the team fishing and the camping on spots. It frustrating when you work all week and want to go catch a nice feed for family on weekends and struggle to get a spot I can't catch a snapper and sell it so why is white bait different	11/18/2025 8:28 PM
125	Change the season back to when it was - August to November for EVERYONE !!!	11/18/2025 8:25 PM
126	Give us back at least half of November for the season to stay open, happy with the 1st September start	11/18/2025 8:22 PM
127	There is good money being made with whitebaiting and while I see the attraction, I feel this is a little excessive and not sure why banning selling it isn't the first port of call. I don't mind reduced the frame for whitebaiting. But it is a few who are taking a lot. I hope the new regulations have worked.	11/18/2025 8:20 PM
128	yes indeed putting the season from 15 august to 30 th november just as it has always been	11/18/2025 7:35 PM
129	Ban the sale of whitebait or some how control it	11/18/2025 7:31 PM
130	Whitebait season should be the same date times for everyone regardless of race or colour we are All New Zealanders More fisheries inspectors checking everyone not just at the river	11/18/2025 7:24 PM

mouths Season dates should not of been changed I have personally seen whitebait well into late February By limiting a daily amount (realistic amount ) allows for equal catchers for everyone and replenish whitebait stock This should also prevent scraps and fights at river mouths giving everyone a chance to catch fish

131	There should be one season for all kiwis / no different season dates	11/18/2025 7:20 PM
132	Please but the hole season back to how it was or Please let November be fished	11/18/2025 7:18 PM
133	Bring back august and November fishin	11/18/2025 7:17 PM
134	Yes certainly do, we are all New Zealanders there should be ONE rule re whitebaiting, it is just a joke at present. You stopped the ordinary kiwi whitebaiting in November which in South Canterbury ( when's snow has disappeared from mountains) was the best month for baiting.	11/18/2025 7:17 PM
135	Put the season back to original season . Ban sale of whitebait Regulate excessive stand permits from environment Southland	11/18/2025 7:10 PM
136	The fact that some people can have a longer season under customary rights is a complete joke, either we need a shorter season or we don't, I believe if it was that much of an issue that the season needs to be shortened then that should be for one and all. I also believe that in my 30 odd years of whitebaiting there is more whitebait around now than there ever has been, seasons have always been up and down due to weather and river conditions, shortening the season makes it harder for your average working kiwi to get out and catch a feed for their family and then to see people "customary" fishing a month either side of the season is an absolute kick in the guts. It should be all New Zealanders customary right to catch food for their family's.	11/18/2025 6:57 PM
137	The reduction of season length has had a big impact on baiters up river ( not at mouth). Those who bait at the Mouth have stayed and fished every tide, day and sometimes night, not wanting to miss any bait. This is a commercial venture and not in the spirit of " recreational fishing" as it is supposed to be. There were reliable reports of some baiters taking 100s of kg of bait, per week. Those of us up river sometimes spent many hours fishing for only 200gms, while there were reports of BIG runs at the mouth. A number of fellow fishers I know just gave up mid season as no bait was getting up river. We just want a fair go to have some fun and catch a feed to share. With the last 2 October's being effected by flooding in reality the season has been about 1 month. An extension of a couple of weeks into November would be great. Also a ban on fishing at the Clutha mouth and 1km upstream would give everyone a fair chance.	11/18/2025 6:57 PM
138	Commercial white baiting should require a license and quota same as any other commercial fishing	11/18/2025 6:52 PM
139	If there was terrible weather events causing flooding or other problems that cause seasons to be hard due to river conditions etc, then there could be consultation to increase things.	11/18/2025 6:44 PM
140	I truely believe there is no reason for whitebait to be available for sale, it's purely a money grab for people, cash and for a so called endangered species being aloud to sell in bulk on Facebook ect makes no sense at all.	11/18/2025 6:39 PM
141	The old timers that consistently stay on the beach to keep/hold spots dictate there own rules.	11/18/2025 6:33 PM
142	Go back to the old season dates 15 August to end of November	11/18/2025 6:24 PM
143	Personally, Change the dates back the way they were. This past two years the new dates have removed any chance for us to fish, due to flooding. Smaller streams had a bumper season. Many stands on the Matuara River are known as early/late season stands.... with that option removed, and the weather patterns, our stand doesn't fish at all.	11/18/2025 6:23 PM
144	Ban the sale Enforce regulations Set a daily limit. You harp on about them being endangered.... I wonder why. People are greedy,they only say they have a personal limit when they catch fuqall. Is it rocket science? No.... If you want to white bait then you should buy a license for the season. Which would entitle you to funding to enforce regulations We have fishing licenses for trout. Don't see why we don't for whitebait.	11/18/2025 6:18 PM
145	Return the season back to either August start date 14th or end date 14th November.	11/18/2025 5:55 PM
146	It would be nice to see doc in Force the rules in Canterbury like they do on the West Coast. Over here in Canterbury you never see doc enforcing the rules here like they do on the west	11/18/2025 5:41 PM

coast

147	Stop special rights for local iwi. Blanket the rules. Need rangers enforcing rules. Help river health asap	11/18/2025 5:37 PM
148	Make 1 rule for all . I am maori and dont agree with the permit customary right being able to whitebait early in season through the season and after the season . It's also a shame that they can use 5 gobys ahead of us whom can only use 3 . It should be same rules for all . We all use 5 or 3 . Same season duration and rules .	11/18/2025 5:37 PM
149	Stop out of season for all people	11/18/2025 5:36 PM
150	Increase the season length to the old season of three months because the weather systems are changing . Stop the Māoris from Fishing after the season. Stop the sale of Whitebait on social media,only commercial sales. Close the river mouths to help the whitebait get up the rivers .	11/18/2025 5:36 PM
151	Extend the season	11/18/2025 5:26 PM
152	Ban the sale of whitebait , reduced season again, ban whitebaiting for a few years to allow for recovery	11/18/2025 4:58 PM
153	Allow wider wings on rivers that are naturally wide, start targeting people blocking creeks like bates road in wanganui. Rang the hotline twice to report it, no action and the same turkeys had it blocked off ALL season. It's bullshit	11/18/2025 4:15 PM
154	Again, same rules for everyone. If the season is open for the Māori then only traditional methods of fishing should be aloud. Banning the sale would stop the greed and conflict at the rivers. Would also make it more fair for the weekend fisherman.	11/18/2025 4:08 PM
155	I personally believe that the whitebaiting and oyster season should be every second year for both recreational and commercial fishers to help repopulate	11/18/2025 4:04 PM
156	Needs to be a licensing system to fund the improvements and monitoring of local rivers , if I have to pay \$120 to fish for trout then white baiters should have to pay as well. Ensuring every person using the rivers pays their share	11/18/2025 3:58 PM
157	Revert back the original season.	11/18/2025 3:42 PM
158	Would like to see the season extended to 10 weeks Based around the full moon Starting 1 week before a full moon and finishing 1 week after a full moon ( 3 full moon cycles) Still with a majority of the season in September and October	11/18/2025 3:21 PM
159	Ban sock nets and ban sales please.	11/18/2025 2:31 PM
160	I think that registered stand holders should have to 15 August to 30th November and non registered stand have 1st September to 30th October as most rivers are in flood in these times and I believe because they pay a fee for stand should be giving a longer season	11/18/2025 2:26 PM
161	More people need to be checking up on spots as I seen people doing illegal stuff and even reported it multiple times but never seen someone come check	11/18/2025 2:09 PM
162	Stop maori fishing rights as its causing animosity at river and its not fair	11/18/2025 2:00 PM
163	Make the season 1 Sept to 15 Nov for everyone	11/18/2025 2:00 PM
164	Perhaps start the season 15th September to 15th november ,give the 31st day of October back,	11/18/2025 1:59 PM
165	Ban the sale of white bait and remove customary fishing rights. Simple. All registered stands can still fish as much as they used to but the ban of whitebait sale is for everyone they have had many good years catching hundreds of kilos and selling it. They knew the risks of policy changes when purchasing their stands. Whitebaiting should be able to be enjoyed by people of all ages and race. At this stage I wouldn't want to even allow a teenager or an older person go out and fish by themselves as too dangerous. People are assaulted verbally and physically every day. This will ALL stop if the sale of whitebait is band. Customary fishing rights is one of the most racist things that DOC have ever agreed to do. New Zealanders citizens should all be treated as one no matter age, race or sex.	11/18/2025 1:52 PM
166	Yes ban customary fishing, it's a bullshit rule that gets raped and pillage, they joke about it and don't give a dam stuff about the state of the fishery, also ban the sale of it, it's a native	11/18/2025 1:28 PM

species, no one can sell crayfish or other shellfish , should be the same for Whitebaiting . Ban the sale ban the sale ban the sale of it , would go a bloody long way to a recovering fishery ! Make it like paua you can only have a max number in your possession. And no commercial quotas either , gather it your self for yourself and immediate family and friends . Wake up it has to change as the habitats are dying along with the whitebait

167	By restoring the season back to original dates,	11/18/2025 1:21 PM
168	To be able to fish along with every other nzer instead of this dividing a nation with permits as this is causing arguments fights people being stood over and hurt...	11/18/2025 1:18 PM
169	Extend the season on the South Island East coast until the end of Canterbury Anniversary weekend	11/18/2025 1:13 PM
170	Put whitebait under MPI and introduce a quota system and crack down on illegal sales	11/18/2025 1:08 PM
171	No	11/18/2025 12:49 PM
172	Totally remove the customary rights or go back to the original season starting and finish period	11/18/2025 12:42 PM
173	Rivers need to be checked and NOT on a wet windy day when noone is out. That seamsto be only time you drive down beach to check	11/18/2025 12:40 PM
174	Given us back November that's when my river has the most bait.	11/18/2025 12:22 PM
175	Manawhenua consultation	11/18/2025 12:17 PM
176	Ban all sale of whitebait	11/18/2025 12:12 PM
177	It's disappointing to have lost the month of November it's the best and warmest month to go white baiting Would be better if only 2 months to be October and November	11/18/2025 12:11 PM
178	The season should not close until mid-November, or later. Little whitebait runs in September.	11/18/2025 12:02 PM
179	Can we look at stopping the sale off white bait it's a native species and catch limit put in place	11/18/2025 11:56 AM
180	Make the season the same for all NewZealanders. This customary rights thing is a rort 🤡 🤡	11/18/2025 11:33 AM
181	Ban the selling of whitebait	11/18/2025 11:05 AM
182	I would like to see the whitebait seasons made as seasons were we all whitebait at the same time. I feel customary right should be for all as we are one people that live in the same country.	11/18/2025 10:57 AM
183	More enforcement on the times nets are allowed in the water, how many nets people use and stopping people from reserving 'their spot' months ahead of the season and camping out the entire season on one spot	11/18/2025 10:55 AM
184	Put the season back to the original dates and make one rule for everyone no special Māori pass to fish out side of the dates	11/18/2025 10:55 AM
185	Put the season back to how it was like it was suppose to after 2 years	11/18/2025 10:54 AM
186	Make the season from 15th August to 15th November	11/18/2025 10:51 AM
187	Would like to see more people checking. The locals know when inspectors move to another location eg Blenheim down to east coast of Marlborough.	11/18/2025 10:48 AM
188	Ban fishers from selling their catch unless they are registered commercial fishers with quota, I cannot sell trout or game birds and these are not native to nz	11/18/2025 10:35 AM
189	Start the waitbaiting one month later and finish a month later.	11/18/2025 10:30 AM
190	No	11/18/2025 10:21 AM
191	A licence with a daily catch booklet provided so info can be recorded plus funds to be used for rebuilding natural whitebait habitat.	11/18/2025 9:48 AM
192	Equal white baiting rights for everyone once season over it's over no customary rights fishing. no selling and massive fines if caught selling. Different years have different months to white bait or give November back	11/18/2025 9:35 AM
193	Not let people use ing sock nets with traps in	11/18/2025 9:32 AM



194	In November, I went to opihi and watched those with customary rights pillage the river one guy catching 40 KG's a day for five days in a row. How can that be right? How can one race get something that another race can't ? This is one way to form division? you need to look at this law and change it. It is not right.	11/18/2025 9:12 AM
195	I noticed my catch increased at the end of October so I am presuming November would have been a good month if we were allowed to fish. 30th of Oct was my best day	11/18/2025 9:09 AM
196	Ban box netters they are banned on the west coast an they take more than a set net dose box netters reduce my catch rate this season and there are no rules for them that needs to change	11/18/2025 8:37 AM
197	Implementation of the rules already in place. There was a blatant disregard for fishing outside the season when the whitebait started to run after the season finished. Several people fishing- catching huge amounts- with no obvious consequences	11/18/2025 8:30 AM
198	Change the season back to what it was start of August- end of November or start of September- end of November This season there was only 3 days the river was low enough to fish and clear enough	11/18/2025 7:24 AM
199	enforcing the regulations .	11/18/2025 7:23 AM
200	Season was very bad because rivers in constant flood. Best weather in November. Change the season to October and November.	11/18/2025 6:14 AM
201	I'm happy with my whitebaiting experience overall. The only negative is 2 people came down to where I go and left all their ugly whiteboards down the river.	11/18/2025 6:06 AM
202	This season was my worst season thanks to the weather. Would much rather whitebait October November as weather is a bit more settled. White bait was in the river but due to weather conditions e.g. flooding or raining was unable to bait a lot of the time. Reason for poor white bait amounts caught.	11/18/2025 5:23 AM
203	No	11/18/2025 1:58 AM
204	Banning white baiting for 5 years would restore fish stocks back to the volume i once saw as a kid when the river in Opōtiki would go black from the large shoals I saw back then the river was alive with enormous schools of hearings and kahawai chasing the whitebait it's not just us that eats them and this would occur most days during the season our river back then was bountiful but now it's not like that anymore. So I think a five year ban would restore our rivers back to those times the fish stocks of kahawai and hearings would increase there fore so would others along the chain would increase and our fish stocks would return to how they used to be. Then I'd the open the season but you can only fish every second day and have a limit of 3.5 kilograms per catch any day your on the river that way our stocks would retain there volume ensuring future growth of our rivers an the overall health of our fish stocks.also ban the sale of whitebait locally but allow people to have an account to sell limited amounts per season to overseas buyers like china or Japan but you have to pay a sellers fee Kia Ora Nga mihi Shane Te Rito	11/18/2025 12:37 AM
205	Bring back the end of season but take away customary fishing stop people selling	11/18/2025 12:12 AM
206	less work more fishing	11/17/2025 10:32 PM
207	My family has been whitebaiting for at least 4 generations. Only catch enough for a few feeds each year. It total racist bullshit that the season has been shortened for some but if you have a small bit of maori blood in you you can get a longer season. ( especially since the moari are all about conservation) This year with the river in flood there was only a few day suitable. Even less when you have to work 6 days a week. There is more whitebait around than what there has ever been and it a lie its reduceding	11/17/2025 7:33 PM
208	Bus parked on river bank restricting other fishers access to river. Salt Water Creek North Canterbury	11/17/2025 6:58 PM
209	One rule for all whitebaiters. Don't base on race and make season the same for all.	11/17/2025 6:47 PM
210	Licencing and patrols of licencing would be impossible to enforce.	11/17/2025 6:27 PM
211	No	11/17/2025 6:15 PM
212	save em	11/17/2025 6:13 PM

213	Try treating all New Zealanders equally	11/17/2025 6:10 PM
214	Increase season length, give us back Two weeks of November as weather tends to settle then	11/17/2025 6:09 PM
215	Bring the season back to what it was. Do more policing of rules and regulations. Prosecute those breaking the laws. Do more research on the species.	11/17/2025 6:09 PM
216	Stop using maori as it confuses foreigners who travel here to fish and there shouldn't be customary rights as maori traditional stories say they arrived 500 years ago and Moriori traditional stories say 1000 years ago to New Zealand before sailing to the Chathams. The treaty of waitangi fails to take in to consideration of the 1835 genocide of Moriori	11/17/2025 6:06 PM
217	Change the season and make people fish there own zones they live in	11/17/2025 6:04 PM
218	Go back original starting and finishing times for regular whitebaiting season, there is plenty of whitebait	11/17/2025 6:01 PM
219	Get rid of customary rights one for all all for one	11/17/2025 5:51 PM
220	ban large sock nets on small rivers They catch huge numbers of bait including mature bait which are discarded dead during the sorting process	11/15/2025 4:01 PM
221	Adding November back into the season	11/15/2025 3:29 PM
222	Being able to sell whitebait that apparantly is endangered is ridiculous, No one should whitebait after season closed is fair. Too many abusing this, especially in South Canterbury	11/14/2025 1:53 PM
223	The 2021 changes to the season only took into account the south island. North of the Waikato the fish start their migration in July and are completed by Mid October every year so the current season unfairly punishes the northland rivers while allowing the South Island to fish the peak of the migration. Due to the nature of whitebait being the juvenial fish less than 5 percent of the eggs that hatch will survive until adults so the biggest impact on the species would be ensuring the adults have habitat with lower pollution. Catching the Juveniles only stops them being predated on by other species which have also been reduced in numbers by people so would make little difference. Not like the Snapper and Orange Ruffie where they catch the adults while sporning and by doing so not only kill the adult fish the millions of eggs also are killed. Mitigations:: Start the season North of the Waikato (maybe including) mid August and end it mid October.. Be more concerned about the success of the adults in the enviroment. For example planting out water ways in the catchment zones can only improve things but at the same time allowing Auckland city to establish a rubbish dump on the edge of a major water way in the centre of the country will undoubtable have a detrimental affect on all wildlife. Thankyou... Nick	11/13/2025 3:02 PM
224	Cut out the customary rights, we are all New Zealanders. Ban sock nets on all smaller rivers, and no sock nets within 300 metres of a river mouth. Allow the season to stay open until the 10 of November. All whitebaiters need a license. Revenue earned from the Licenses go towards habitat and policing the rules.	11/13/2025 1:08 PM
225	Not happy about the people fishing at the Taranaki stream flood gates with total disregard for the whitebait rules. I am sure they are utilizing there customary fishing rights but they are taking all the bait that are waiting for the tide to raise so they can swim over the flood gates.	11/13/2025 9:42 AM
226	I think the customary fishing is causing a huge divide amongst whitebaiters. I think the season should be 1 September until 30 November. not everyone manages to fish every day and the short season severely impacts people who work. only the retired and people on benefits, benefit this season. We have also given doc regular information on people blatantly breaking the rules and this has not been followed up at all. people caught hundreds of kilos after the season this year through knowing there are no consequences to be caught. and if they are. the fine is abysmal. I'm simply a middle aged man that loves whitebaiting with his mates, kids and family. and this experience is being ruined more every year. thanks for your time.	11/12/2025 1:48 PM
227	ban sock net traps.to many unattended,	11/12/2025 9:39 AM
228	ban sock nets and large set nets in small rivers	11/11/2025 6:39 PM
229	Stop commercial fishing	11/11/2025 2:49 PM
230	We lived in a multicultural country we should all have the same rights to collect food for our families	11/11/2025 2:07 PM

231	Day limits of about 5kg and not to be sold at all	11/10/2025 4:22 PM
232	Remove September from season and include November and remove the Māori rights unless they fish there traditionally method of fishing	11/10/2025 8:25 AM
233	Open season back up from 15th Aug - 30th Nov. And Closed to all after that. If people couldn't sell it. Then people wouldn't be greedy and then that would naturally bring the stocks back up	11/9/2025 3:00 PM
234	Change the weather ... hahaha .... It wasn't the best spring in the Taranaki	11/8/2025 10:31 AM
235	Ban the sale of whitebait that's what causes all the issues on the river .net type doesn't affect as why would you want 50+ kg a day if you couldn't sell it .	11/7/2025 5:32 PM
236	The waiarau nth Canterbury has always been a late starter so losing November has meant a big loss in our catch	11/7/2025 1:15 PM
237	Ban socknets with traps Introduce a licence fee to sell white bait and require buyers to buy only from licenced sellers. Change closing date to 31st Oct. Was an article in local paper where Police were reminding offenders that season ended on 31-Oct.	11/6/2025 4:21 PM
238	I definitely think there should be a total band on selling of whitebait, this season have seen unreal prices for selling it, it's easy money for crack heads and drug users, have heard of people getting abused and threatening on the rivers or spots to fish, The selling of it brings out greed and corruption, people breaking the rules to get it. I myself have never sold it it's always Been for food for my family, uncles, aunties and family members. This year has been my worst season mainly due to to work and wether,has been the worst wether we have had for quite a few years. Also we are all meant to be under one rule yet I see people still setting nets with screens on both sides of the net to heard the bait into the set net	11/6/2025 9:02 AM
239	Longer season as weather,sea conditions and flooding flows severely restrict the number of days that can be fished. I firmly believe that the 3 month season is self regulating.	11/5/2025 7:55 PM
240	If you are fixed on a 8 week season the make it October and November	11/5/2025 6:07 PM
241	we need to control the taking over of the rivers by selected fishers whose only aim is to catch and sell whitebait for a profit, we are now denied access to areas of the river these people believe they own or control. money for whitebait has taken the fun out of fishing on the river bank. You also need to reduce the season 1 week either end to further support the sustainability and improvement in the white bait industry. Greed and money are driving too many people	11/5/2025 3:28 PM
242	introduce expiry and yearly updates on stand claims	11/5/2025 11:44 AM
243	setting a minimum distance between scoop netters, thus eliminating the rule of the jungle of might is right, and enabling a space to be able to operate a scoop net without fear of striking a neighbour with the net or pole.	11/5/2025 11:42 AM
244	Return the season to its original and previous dates. For the last 20 years whitebait abundance has been improving, and this is mostly attributable to the agricultural industry protecting waterways that adult whitebait live in. Fishing pressure did not need to be reduced.	11/5/2025 8:22 AM
245	Yes, stop all customary rights as the are only doing it to make money. It should be one season for all. Stop dividing the country as it is racist enough now.	11/5/2025 7:46 AM
246	Amend the season to include November. Stop/reverse the dairy nitrate plague in Canterbury. Continue restoring/protecting wetland breeding habitat and adult galaxid habitat. Stop placing protections on invasive predators ie trout, great work is done in places removing trout from the system	11/5/2025 6:28 AM
247	One people one lot of rules currently DOC are dividing the country with the new Whitebaiting rules.	11/4/2025 11:00 PM
248	When will our full season be reinstated,,,I was an honorary whitebait Ranger for 8 years and in our last meeting we were told the current season was going to be a trial and then our normal / full season was going to be reinstated,,,why has this not happened,,,?!?!?! there is more white bait being court over the last 6 years along the east coast of the south island,,,than previous years,,,so reinstate our normal season,,,,!!!!!!	11/4/2025 9:15 PM
249	Stop thinking that you are trying to fix a fishery that is not broken. your medalling with the fishery is not helping it at all. Taking out particular cohorts of whitebait is detrimental to any	11/4/2025 8:50 PM



fishery. Anglers are now fishing more than they ever had to make up for the loss of the best moth November. If you had any idea of the amount of whitebait in our rivers, not your rivers, our rivers you would be shocked, shoals of over 1.5 tons doomed to starvation. They may as well be harvested to an extent to keep the numbers down, this will ensure healthy growth rates for less fish, to ensure they grow into adults to breed. I am from a scientific fisheries organisation. More is not sustainable. Everybody knows that you are not only operating without real data. You are also spreading propaganda to the people of NZ. They are not that stupid you know! Stop playing games before you get exposed for your rubbish management of a fishery that feeds our people, and is not in any sort of crisis. Come on, you know that don't you. I have worked on all aspects of inanga programs and research during my life. Leave the fishery alone! it can and is looking after its self. The only way you can do something positive for our fishery is protect the inland swamps the harbour the adult inanga. This is paramount to the well being of the species.

250	Yes the season is too short, The river was in flood every time there were good tides, No body caught much in the Waitotara river this year.	11/4/2025 6:59 PM
251	Longer fishing season, upgrading spawning areas, better off season river management	11/4/2025 5:59 PM
252	Moving the Northisland season to august to September would be good we only see smelt and gutty bait in October not even worth going out	11/4/2025 5:00 PM
253	More information on the types of whitebait in river systems.	11/4/2025 4:08 PM
254	I would like to see the season from 01 August - 31 October	11/4/2025 3:09 PM
255	Revert back to longer season and allow whitebaiting on the last day of October if you don't.	11/4/2025 3:06 PM
256	Please look at opening the season to end 30 November.	11/4/2025 3:06 PM
257	Didn't get round to going out this year for various reasons but may do so next year.	11/4/2025 3:06 PM
258	By more visibility of rangers during the season to control those who break the rules	11/4/2025 3:05 PM
259	Restore November for all whitebaiters. The closure for all but a few has created a significant division amongst whitebaiters as it is well known those who claim traditional rights sell their whitebait. Through this DOC has created two peoples in NZ. I am a third generation whitebaiter, It is gauling to see people much younger than me continuing to take large catches in November while I must stand on the bank and can only watch on. Due to a knee operation this season I could only whitebait for one day./	11/4/2025 3:04 PM
260	No	11/4/2025 3:03 PM
261	Thanks for this opportunity to answer this question and yes it would improve my season if we opened it in August and closed the 30th of August as I have noticed since the start or even 2nd week of October that the amount of Bellies / Gutties was more than 50% in most cases when I was scooping or set netting. When I was making my whitebait stand early August the Shoals swimming past where Huge	11/4/2025 3:03 PM
262	Season should be shifted back a month, October and November	11/4/2025 3:02 PM
263	Bad weather made for very limited fishing days this year (3) for me. Just managed enough for a fritter each for my wife and myself but happy with that.	11/4/2025 3:02 PM
264	I have been fishing the BullerRiver for over 50yrs. I use a scoop net and spotters so need good visibility. With seasons changing with global warming we are getting more flooding in the whitebait season which meant few days fishing. With such a huge catchment area the river takes 1-2 weeks to clear. Surrounding rivers are clear in 2 days! I got 8 days fishing and 4pound of bait for the season !! Worst ever result. Into November now and the river is settled and would be very fishable! This has been the situation for the last few years with each year getting worse! I agreed with shortening the season and starting 1st September but I strongly believe we need to be able to fish for the first 2 weeks of November. and then we may be able to catch enough for our friends and family. Keep working on improving the whitebait habitat. I believe there are plenty of whitebait but conditions have meant we can't fish. Thank you for reading this and hope it makes sense!!	11/4/2025 3:01 PM
265	A full two months season to avoid confusion with the season finishing on the 31st October.	11/4/2025 3:01 PM
266	I strongly believe that customary fishing before and after the official season is not conservation. The nets catch far more because no other nets are competing the whitebait	11/4/2025 2:59 PM

cannot get past on those points. I believe the weather has made it impossible for fishermen to catch it while the river was in flood and the longer seasons gave a better chance. The season might as well be lengthened again to help with this problem and stop defeating the purpose by allowing customary fishing which in truth for most of them is about making money. Even extending by 2 weeks into November would help the flooding issue.

267	Change the season back to what it was. I live in New Zealand, there is no such country called Aotearoa New Zealand	11/4/2025 2:59 PM
268	I would like to see the total ban of the sale of white bait It makes me sick seeing the amount for sale on Facebook marketplace	11/4/2025 2:59 PM
269	No, just need more time off.	11/4/2025 2:58 PM
270	Please bring back the season so we can fish through November,	11/4/2025 2:53 PM
271	More policing	11/4/2025 2:50 PM
272	Preventing people blocking off unused stands with fake/old nets . Some at Henley on the Taieri never use the stand but have gear sitting on it to protect 20/40/60m below their spot. Others use the gear on occasional weekends only but prevent access by leaving gear stretched across the stand.	11/4/2025 2:50 PM
273	October and November season please.Regards Stephen	11/4/2025 11:06 AM
274	I have been whitebaiting for 63 years, In my experience there is just as much around now as when I started. Bad weather for most of the season limited catches here this year.also I would like to see sock nets banned, people turn up at day break and put them in and leave them all day. I have only ever fished the in coming tide and then left the river, this is what my father taught me. It gives the bait after that better chance to bred.	11/4/2025 8:41 AM
275	Lengthen the season. Lost alot of fishing time die to river's flood and durty water Stop customary rights so everyone starts at the same time.	11/4/2025 6:14 AM
276	Yes have your staff trained up on regulations as there were a lot of people fishing 6 meters of screen plus the net ( my understanding is only aloud to use 6 meters of gear) and a lot of people fished stands to 6 meters without actually having a stand built which my understanding is to 6 meters you must have one built. I would like some feedback on these topics please. Thanks	11/4/2025 4:56 AM
277	Ban the sale and put a quota on the commercial fullas. If we only get 2 months start half way through September to half way through November or flag September and do October and November. Have doc rangers more on the rivers. Haven't seen one in over 10 years. Get customary permit holders checked as there's 2 fullas fishing in Canterbury who fish every day without a permit.	11/3/2025 10:11 PM
278	Ban the sale and rigorously enforce it	11/3/2025 9:17 PM
279	I have been fishing the same river for over 20 years the removal of the month of November has almost made whitebaiting impossible as the weather is always unsettled in October and the river temperature is very low. I have gone from reasonable catches, especially during full moon to catching very little. I feel the sale of whitebait should be banned to improve the stocks of whitebait and all sales should be monitored closely. It is not the recreational whitebaiters that are depleting stock it is the commercial and blackmarket whitebaiters. I feel I have been punished for being a recreational fisher.	11/3/2025 9:15 PM
280	The "coustomary rights" are a complete insult to the everyday kiwi who enjoys to go out whitebaiting in the weekend or after work. The cpustomary rights were never exercised in the old season so I cannot understand why they should be a thing now. End of the day we are all kiwis and should all have equal rights to the resource. I also cannot understand how catching whitebait for sale can be considered coustomary. I think the most effective change to regulations would be to ban the sale of whitebait and make it a part of the quota management system for commercial companies to sell. This would greatly improve attitudes and behaviour on the river if there was no money motive to catch whitebait and would also greatly reduce how much whitebait people would keep per season. I do like the idea of a daily catch limit but think it would be very impractical given how much variation exists in how whitebait is caught and stored in a days fishing ( think somebody who fishes a sock net and Keeps their bait alive all day versus somebody who scoop nets at the river mouth and bait is kept in a hip bucket) there would be no easy way to be able to measure to stay within limits while on the river	11/3/2025 9:06 PM

281	I do not like the customary rights privilege that applies to some people allowing them to fish outside of the season that the rest of us are restricted to. This defeats the purpose of the shorter season (which I agree with) that was introduced a few years ago	11/3/2025 7:25 PM
282	More ranging visits to rivers by DOC staff.	11/3/2025 7:17 PM
283	no	11/3/2025 5:49 PM
284	Longer season	11/3/2025 5:47 PM
285	We think that the white bait season could run from the middle of September until the middle of November as the first two weeks of September haven't been very productive over the last four years. If not willing to shift those dates then the season should finish on the last day of October, the 31 st.	11/3/2025 5:24 PM
286	The season is now to short	11/3/2025 5:20 PM
287	I shifted from the East coast to the West so while I returned to my stand on the Tairua river 3 x I caught little, I tried fishing in the upper Oporu estuary on one occasion without success although the bad weather we had over the season played a major part in my not fishing more	11/3/2025 5:11 PM
288	Ban the sale unless it's under permit and licenece	11/3/2025 5:03 PM
289	Need to ban sock nets. They are just reaping and pillaging the bait. It is not fishing but depleting stock for their financial gain. Gauze set nets should be standing at net at all times. Not sitting back reading book or in vehicle and not watching their net.	11/3/2025 5:01 PM
290	A few more bait would be good	11/3/2025 4:42 PM
291	This survey is about as pathetic as how short you fuckwits have made the seasons. The river has literally been in flood the whole season, there hasn't been 1 single day to fish within the legal season. the average person has no effect in the decline of whitebait, it's the farmers changing there course of waterways and installing floodgates to every drain and creek leaving their properties, how the fuck is whitebait suppose to bred if they have no breeding grounds anymore? Fuck that well blame it on the baiters and shorten their season, fuck you, fuck off you pen pushing cunts, put the season back to the way it was	11/3/2025 4:35 PM
292	use fisheries officers to manage the reg instead of doc	11/3/2025 4:28 PM
293	Need to see the presence of DOC rangers at the correct tide times	11/3/2025 4:06 PM
294	No more customery rights,equal rights for all. Stop the sale of whitebait,it breeds greed	11/3/2025 3:49 PM
295	As a Maori (over 60yrs), I am all for customary rights to fishing, but not using the modern equipment that enables the user a great advantage to acquire seafood in vast numbers or volumes. If it comes under 'Customary Rights', then customary equipment and practises should be adhered to from Boats, nets, rods, scuba etc. The word Kaitiaki is banded about by many Maori, many who also pillage and plunder the seas and coastlines. Better regulations need to be created around the permit system given out by Maori societies and penalties to reflect the severity of the damage being done. Our foreign guests who suddenly can't read or understand English or the rules regarding quantities and sizes also need to be punished, as the time of educating these people is over, there is ample information regarding the rules posted at various places and also online. The amount spent on fisheries enforcement is alot, and when people blatantly abusing the system are getting away scot free, it is frustrating for the majority of fishers that abide by the rules, many times the same people will repeat the same offence and get away with it repeatedly. Fishing to me and many of my friends and family is just that.. fishing, not catching..not taking.. just Fishing, thanks	11/3/2025 3:37 PM
296	I think the new rules around seasons have helped, the numbers keep improving but more needs to be done on habitat	11/3/2025 3:11 PM
297	Banning the sale unless you have a commercial license to sell	11/3/2025 2:53 PM
298	In our area the change to the start date has Severely impacted AI fisheries here with white bait season	11/3/2025 2:40 PM
299	3mth season like it use to be.	11/3/2025 2:19 PM
300	Please extend the season back to what it originally was before 2021, 8 weeks isn't long enough for the season. :-)	11/3/2025 2:10 PM

301	move back to the old season dates Remove customary rights and ban the sale of whitebait to align with all other fish stocks	11/3/2025 2:05 PM
302	Education on returning adult bait to the water as quickly as possible and don't take them home for your fowls or cat, that the spawners for future. More strict control on over length screens and fishing at night. Known fact that people 15kms up the Pates river block the entire river of with screens and have two notes out. On the Awakino not far up from the river mouth on the opposite side of the river to the highway 1 person in a boat puts out 3 nets and disappears for hours on end, a drone would help the DIC people immensely. If you with you can contact me on my email. Thanks	11/3/2025 1:56 PM
303	Change season to 1st october to last day of november or simply extend from september 1st through to end of november	11/3/2025 1:55 PM
304	Over time the weather and the seasons will change for me personally I would rather go whitebaiting in October and November I am sitting here today and the river and sea are perfect for whitebaiting but because I don't have customary rights I can't go whitebaiting so a season change would be a good thing nobody should be allowed to sell whitebait if i have a good day I give it away to several people who live around me who are not able to go whitebaiting and those people who are on the benefits who I know are selling and not declaring how much they make needs to stopped	11/3/2025 1:55 PM
305	More whitebait Less floods	11/3/2025 1:50 PM
306	Season needs to be longer than 60 days because at least half the available days are now lost due to discoloured waters and high river levels including flooding and unsuitable tide times or shocking coastal weather conditions.	11/3/2025 1:12 PM
307	There is a massive black market big money heaps poaching no one regulates it dam piss poor management really these are our native species	11/3/2025 1:08 PM
308	Can you fix the weather? 4 fine days for the season was a bit over the top!!	11/3/2025 1:04 PM
309	I barely got out this year due to bad weather in the weekends as I am unable to go during the week due to work, I believe there should be a limit for the average whitebaiter and a slightly higher one for commercial, I also think the timeframe should be extended so people who actually have a job and responsibilities have the opportunity to go if they can't for weather reasons	11/3/2025 1:02 PM
310	By giving back part of November it was always the best month	11/3/2025 12:42 PM
311	change the rules around sock nets in river mouths to allow scoop netters a fair go,commercial fishers are hogging the front not giving everyone a chance	11/3/2025 12:16 PM
312	The best and only real way to improve the whitebait fishery is to ban the sale of whitebait, no other fish species in NZ is able to be sold from the side of the road. If you only catch what you can use yourself then the problem of over fishing is sorted. How many times over the season do people tell of catches in the hundreds of kilos (over the west coast)?	11/3/2025 12:04 PM
313	Not at this stage.	11/3/2025 11:33 AM
314	The council have stuffed up the whitebait breeding banks of the Rangitaiki River by dumping truckloads of large rocks into the river. Doc should have been onto this!! Also this year you have shorted the whitebait season up, by the start of the season they had all ready run up the river! resulting in my worsted year ever.	11/3/2025 11:25 AM
315	Law makers not treat every river the same. No way can they compare my little stream to say the south Island rivers.	11/3/2025 11:16 AM
316	this survey was for my husband and myself wife Jennifer Fulton didn't use my stand but did pay for it and let someone else use it only because of safety reasons Graeme has Parkinsons, we didn't catch much this season but it's for enjoyment and they didn't seem to run in the Ngaruroro river, our biggest hurdle was getting to our spot since Cyclone Gabrielle has made it more challenging	11/3/2025 11:08 AM
317	This season has been very frustrating. So many people blatantly breaking the rules, so many people flaunting ridiculous catches, the kind of catches that no one in the right mind would take home if it was illegal to sell. We've had a group of locals scooping off of the Thornton wharf under the lights all night, months before the season even opened. Not a single person	11/3/2025 11:01 AM

down at the river enforcing rules, I can tell you right now DOC would've made a lot of money from fines if they had spent some time down at our local rivers this year..

318	I would recommend educating the whitebaiting whanau on the history of our Topanga and best practices for all for the survival of our Matamata	11/3/2025 10:50 AM
319	Information on river conditions would be useful For example flow, clarity, upstream factors affecting these.	11/3/2025 10:34 AM
320	It's hard to gain access to go casual white baiting people with stands and people who are there all season think they own the rivers and can be very confrontational maybe a limited season for stands could help	11/3/2025 9:40 AM
321	I think those selling whitebait should pay a license fee and be registered sellers.	11/3/2025 9:28 AM
322	Education about other species caught and not leaving them out of water	11/3/2025 9:26 AM
323	Weathet	11/3/2025 9:26 AM
324	DOC need to police every river and every person as an equal New Zealander otherwise any conversation about sustainably becomes irrelevant.	11/3/2025 9:25 AM
325	Do away with customary fishing, I'm a Maori and it's creating division, one people one rule for everyone	11/3/2025 9:22 AM
326	Would love the season to be slightly longer again, hard to find time nowadays to get enough time to fish in shortened season	11/3/2025 9:19 AM
327	No. Very poor catch this year, not many fish caught	11/3/2025 9:19 AM
328	The 2021 changes need to be reviewed. I fish on the westcoast on a registered stand. The major change was to limit the fishing gear to 6m. This rule was adopted from other parts of the country that havr very different rivers to the westcoast. This rule has significantly impacted my ability to fish and has de-valued my whitebait stand. This rule was put in place for the westcoast but at the same time the westcoast rules were not applied to other regions e.g. the ability to put screens outside of nets is allowed everywhere except the westcoast. I would lile to see the 6m rule removed for registered stands on the westcoast taking into account the typical river type on the westcaost that requires the ability to fish out further. In addition to this some of the more restrictive rules that the westcoast has put in place (before DOC changes) should be applied country wide e.g. screens outside nets and fishing gear paralel to the bank. It appears that the 2021 rule changges disproportionately affected the westcoast, the very region rhat has a good track record for preserving the fishery (self imposed tighter regulations and significantly larger catches). In short changes recomended are a allowing 1/4 of the river to be fished by westcoast registered stands (not an arbitrary 6m) and applying some westcoast rules to the rest of the country.	11/3/2025 9:16 AM
329	Due to the amount of rain during the current whitebaiting season and the high flow of our river we think the season should be extended into November when the weather is more settled	11/3/2025 9:15 AM
330	Go to the 31st of October. End of the month ??????.	11/3/2025 9:14 AM
331	Rangers need to talk to fishers and enforce the rules.	11/3/2025 9:13 AM
332	No to daily limits as you may only have 1 or 2 days good fishing days a season. Shortened season and weather events limit fishing badly. Focus needs to be on the breeding grou sand environment. I'm ok with customary rights fishing despite not doing it myself.	11/3/2025 9:12 AM
333	Weather played a big part on a poor season in the Buller Region as the weather was poor. We did not see Doc on the river in 50 days which was very poor on their behalf so perhaps they need to be more proactive in the season.	11/3/2025 9:10 AM
334	I feel digging the river in wairau on weekends not good for fishing	11/3/2025 9:09 AM
335	Shorter season, flooded rivers and river bed morphology helped contribute to a quieter than normal season. Customary fishers w/ multiple nets and 6m+ of screens in prime spots all season doesn't help.	11/3/2025 9:09 AM
336	Move the season from 1st of October to the end of November	11/3/2025 9:07 AM
337	I do not agree with the fact that if you are Maori you can fish under customary rights. I see the division on social media pages. If one can fish all should be able to.	11/3/2025 9:06 AM

338	Bi annually closed	11/3/2025 9:04 AM
339	Police the river for all the illegal baiting eg Using more than one net Baiting out of hours	11/3/2025 9:00 AM
340	Only want to stop the private sale, people wouldn't fish and catch as much if we did	11/3/2025 8:57 AM

## Survey instrument





Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## Perceptions of the Aotearoa New Zealand whitebait fishery in 2025

You are invited to participate in a survey on the perceptions of the Aotearoa New Zealand whitebait fishery in 2025. This research is being conducted by the Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai (DOC).

### What is the purpose of this research?

This research will gather data to describe the whitebait fishery in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2025. The data will help identify the issues of most concern to whitebaiters and inform future whitebait fishing practices. It will also build on the findings from the 2022 survey.

### Why have I received this invitation?

You are invited to participate in this research because you have some involvement with the whitebait fishery in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### What is involved in participating?

Your participation is voluntary and anonymous, and any identifiable data will be kept confidential. The survey involves answering questions about your personal perceptions and experience in relation to the whitebait fishery. Completing the survey should take around 5–10 minutes. You can withdraw from the survey at any time.

### What are the benefits of taking part in this research?

A potential benefit of taking part in this research is that you can choose to enter a prize draw to win a \$200 Hunting and Fishing voucher. The information gathered from the survey will also benefit the Aotearoa New Zealand whitebait fishery by providing direction to actively support a long-term sustainable fishery.

### Are there any potential risks involved in this research?

There are no risks to participants in the research.

### What if I change my mind during or after the survey?

You are free to withdraw at any time. However, because this is an anonymous survey, it will not be possible for you to withdraw your information once you have completed the survey.

### What will happen to the information I provide?

Any identifiable data will be kept confidential. Aggregated data with no identifying information will be kept long-term and may be shared with other researchers in an online repository in keeping with open science practices. Any contact information provided will be isolated from the survey data and will not be linked with any responses you provide. All raw and identifiable data will be



stored on DOC’s computer network in password-protected files.

If you have opted-in to the prize draw, the contact details you have provided for that draw, will only be used for that purpose. Once the prize has been drawn, those contact details will be deleted.

For more information, see the [DOC Privacy Statement](#) on the DOC website.

**Will the results of the study be published?**

The findings of this research will be used by the Department of Conservation for improving future whitebait fishery practices and regulations. The final research report will be available through the DOC website and in DOC’s engagement with the whitebaiting community.

**Who can I contact if I have any questions or concerns?**

If you have any questions about the research, please contact: [whitebait@doc.govt.nz](mailto:whitebait@doc.govt.nz).

Please read and complete the following statement of consent before starting the survey.

**\* Statement of consent** (please tick relevant box)

	Yes	No
I am aged 16 years or older	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have read the study information and understand what is involved with participating in this survey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
By completing the survey, I consent to participate in this survey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I consent to participating in the prize draw	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* Q1. What age group are you in?**

**\* Q2. What is your gender identity?**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Another gender
- ☐ Prefer not to say

\* Q3. What ethnic group(s) do you belong to? (tick all that apply)

☐ New Zealand European

☐ Tongan

☐ Māori

☐ Niuean

☐ Samoan

☐ Chinese

☐ Cook Island Māori

☐ Indian

☐ Fijian

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Other (please specify)

\* Q4. Which region do you live in **outside of the whitebait season?**

☐ Northland

☐ Wellington

☐ Canterbury

☐ Auckland

☐ Tasman

☐ South Canterbury

☐ Waikato

☐ Nelson

☐ Central Otago

☐ Bay of Plenty

☐ Marlborough

☐ Otago

☐ Gisborne

☐ Buller

☐ Southland

☐ Hawke's Bay

☐ West Coast

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Taranaki

☐ South Westland

☐ Manawatu/Whanganui

☐ North Canterbury

☐ Other (please specify)

\* Q5. What is your income?

☐ Less than \$20,000 per year

☐ \$100,000–\$120,000 per year

☐ \$20,000–\$40,000 per year

☐ More than \$120,000 per year

☐ \$40,000–\$60,000 per year

☐ Retired

☐ \$60,000–\$80,000 per year

☐ Unemployed

☐ \$80,000–\$100,000 per year

☐ Prefer not to say

\* Q6. How important are the following reasons for your whitebaiting?

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Social reasons (eg spending time with family and/or friends)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To meet other whitebaiters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To spend time alone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recreational reasons (eg disconnecting from work, spending time in nature)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commercial reasons (eg to make money/sell whitebait)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To feed myself and/or my family/friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* Q7.A. **In the 2025 season**, where have you been whitebaiting? (Please record **up to 3** rivers)

River 1

River 2

River 3

\* Q7.B. For each of your stated rivers, please answer the following questions:

	Region name	What type of net did you use?	Do you fish from a registered stand on this river?	What is the average number of days per season you fish this river?	What is the average number of hours per day you fish this river?
River 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
River 2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
River 3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

\* Q8. Do you agree that the following things are needed to improve the whitebait fishery?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Better enforcement of the current regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Introducing a whitebaiting licence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Closing more rivers to whitebaiting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Changing the current regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restoring adult fish habitats	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restoring spawning fish habitats	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Placing a limit on daily catch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having commercial catch limits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No improvement needed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Banning the sale of whitebait	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* Q9. New whitebaiting regulations were introduced in 2021. How have these regulations impacted your whitebaiting experience? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ They have cost me money to replace fishing gear
- ☐ They have reduced my whitebait catch
- ☐ They have increased my whitebait catch
- ☐ They have improved my ability to get a fishing spot
- ☐ They have not affected me
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q10. Over the 2025 season, how much whitebait have you caught? (Approximate Kilograms)

\* Q11. Do you ever sell or trade the whitebait that you catch?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ About half the time
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Always
- ☐ Prefer not to say

\* Q12. How long have you been whitebaiting?

- ☐ less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-4 years
- ☐ 5-9 years
- ☐ 10-19 years
- ☐ 20-29 years
- ☐ 30+ years
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q13. In general, how much did you spend this season on accommodation, travel and food costs?

\* Q14. Do you whitebait under customary rights?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## Perceptions of the Aotearoa New Zealand whitebait fishery in 2025

Hidden Page: Associated Costs

Q13.A. Over the 2025 season, did you pay for accommodation while whitebaiting?

☐ Yes

☐ No



## Customary Fishing

[illegible]





Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## Perceptions of the Aotearoa New Zealand whitebait fishery in 2025

### Communication

\* Q15. How did you hear about this survey? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ DOC website
- ☐ DOC ranger on riverbank
- ☐ Whitebaiting association
- ☐ Newspaper/radio
- ☐ Social media (eg Facebook, Instagram)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

\* Q16. How would you like to receive information about the whitebait fishery? (Tick all that apply)

☐ Brochure

☐ Local radio station

☐ Local newspapers

☐ DOC website

☐ Social media

☐ Posters

☐ YouTube videos

☐ Mobile phone App

☐ Chilly bin sticker

☐ ID card booklet

☐ Other (please specify)



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## Perceptions of the Aotearoa New Zealand whitebait fishery in 2025

### Prize Draw

\* Q17. If you have opted-in to the prize draw, the contact details you provide for that draw **will only be used** for that purpose. Once the prize has been drawn, those contact details will be deleted.

Would you like to enter the prize draw for a Hunting & Fishing voucher valued at \$200?

☐ Yes (please enter your email below)

☐ No

\* Q18. Are you willing to provide some details (email address) that could be used by the department to contact you for feedback on the whitebait fishery in the future?

Your contact details **will not be linked** to your survey responses or made public.

☐ Yes (please enter your email below)

☐ No

Q19. Please enter your email address here



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## Perceptions of the Aotearoa New Zealand whitebait fishery in 2025

### Additional Information

Before submitting your response, do you have any additional information on how your whitebaiting experience could be improved?

Thank you for completing the survey. Please click '**Done**' to submit your survey.

The findings of this research will be used by the Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai for improving future fishery practices and regulations. The final research report will be available through the DOC website ([www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)) and in DOC's engagement with the whitebaiting community.

If you have any questions regarding this survey, please send an email to [whitebait@doc.govt.nz](mailto:whitebait@doc.govt.nz).