# **SCIENCE & RESEARCH INTERNAL REPORT NO.127**

# THE FRESHWATER FISH DATABASE: A USER GUIDE FOR DOC USERS

by

Jody Richardson and Helen Adcock

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#### THE FRESHWATER FISH DATABASE

#### A User Guide for DOC Users

by

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This user guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the DOC copy of the NIWAR freshwater fish computer database, to enable users to access information correctly and efficiently. It contains information on the background of the data, and some guidelines on data interpretation and use, as well as several appendices of maps and database lists to assist users of the database.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The NIWAR (formerly MAF Fisheries) freshwater fish database is a comprehensive collection of site-specific fish records covering the whole of New Zealand, including Chatham and Stewart Islands. DOC now holds selected fields from the database on line. This user guide provides users with the information needed to extract and interpret data from the database.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

The freshwater fish database was established in 1977. The purpose of establishing a computer-based system was to ensure information on the occurrence and distribution of freshwater fish species did not get lost in forgotten files and personal notebooks, was systematically recorded and was able to be retrieved rapidly.

The first data to be entered were historical MAF Fisheries records and data from major museum collections; about 2300 records pre-date 1977. These records are numbered from for the South Island, and 55000-56000 for the North Island.

In 1978, a standard form (card) for data collection was designed (Appendix I) and distributed to all MAF Fisheries staff engaged in field work. Booklets of cards were also given to Fish and Game Councils, Regional Water Boards, other government departments, and private consultants, many of whom are active contributors to the database.

Only selected fields from these cards (numbering 1-9999) and the historical cards (>50000) are stored on the database; the card and catchment number, the location, date, and time, imperial and metric map references, and the species found. Where additional data exists on these cards, these are gradually being added to the database. About 1800 of these records have been upgraded to date.

After a review of the database in 1986, a new form was designed (Appendix II; start number 10000), and the amount of data stored on the computer was increased. All the data shown in Appendix II are able to be stored on the database (about 85 fields of information). In January 1992, the database held 9053 records, and the extent of national coverage (main islands only) is shown in Appendix III.

Nine fields of data for all 9053 records are held by DOC. These are: the card and catchment number, the location, date, and fishing method, NZMS 1 and NZMS 260 map references, and the species found and their abundance. An update of the entire database is to be provided by NIWAR every six months, including all new cards that have been entered, and all additional data that have been added to the database.

### 3. HOW TO EXTRACT DATA

The database is designed to be a user-friendly method of obtaining data from the NIWAR Freshwater Fisheries Database. A concise on-line help facility is available to assist with any problems you may encounter.

In addition to the nine fields taken directly from the database, several additional fields have been generated from the metric map reference to aid DOC users. These include ecological district (Appendix IV), land district (Appendix V) and DOC Conservancy (Appendix VI). The catchment number of each record is from "Catchments of New Zealand' issued by the Soil and Rivers Control Council, December 1956. Species lists, sorted on scientific and common name are contained in Appendices VII and VIII, respectively, and a list of fishing methods is contained in Appendix IX.

You can enter the database by selecting the option on your PC menu, which should have been set up by your LAN Administrator. If not, the database can be accessed by exiting to DOS, selecting the directory containing the appropriate files, and typing "RUNTIME START" at the C:/> prompt.

On entering the application, several introductory screens will appear. Hitting the <ENTER> key, and/or entering the required information at the prompt will take you into the application.

There is one screen of site information for each record, and another screen will display information on species present, and their abundance and number for each site. On entering the database the site information for the first record is always displayed, but this record may change when a sort is performed.

Data fields which are stored on the NIWAR copy of the database (but not issued to DOC) are still accessible to DOC staff through at normal charging rates. Requests for additional information should be addressed to Jody Richardson, NIWAR, Ecosystems Division, P.O. Box 11-115, Hamilton.

#### 3.1 How to use the menus

The up and down arrow keys will scroll the menu choices. When the required option is highlighted, hit to action that choice. Some procedures may take some time to complete, due to the size of the databases used by the application.

The <ESCAPE> key will return you to the main menu from any popup menus, but hitting the left and right arrows from any menu, or the key from the main menu will crash you out of the application, due to a bug in the dBASE IV software.

# 3.2 Menu options

#### 3.2.1 List species info

Each site may have any number of species associated with it, and this information is stored in a second database. When this command is actioned, a search will be performed on this database, and a new screen will appear, displaying the species information (name, abundance and number). Hitting the <ENTER> key will return to the main "site" database.

#### 3.2.2 Next record

Moves to the next record of the currently viewed database.

#### 3.2.3 Previous record

Moves to the previous record of the currently viewed database.

#### 3.2.4 Go to record no.

Prompts for a record number to go to. Record numbers are not constant. If a sort search is performed on the database, the first record after the command is actioned becomes RECORD 1, etc.

#### 3.2.5 Search records

When this command is actioned, a popup menu will be displayed, and the user must select the field to search on, e.g. CONSERVANCY. Another popup menu may then appear, requesting the information to search for within that field, e.g. NELSON/MARLBOROUGH. Some fields, such as SITE NAME, may require the user to type in the characters to search for. In this case, it is possible to search on a string, searching on SITE NAME for the string "LAGOON" will find "OKARITO LAGOON", "PUKEPUKE LAGOON", etc. If more than one record is found, then the records are subsetted into a smaller database for viewing, printing, etc.

This search facility only allows the user to search on one field at a time, but nested searches can be performed. For example, to find a LAGOON in the WANGANUI CONSERVANCY which contains BROWN MUDFISH, you would first search the main database on CONSERVANCY for WANGANUI. Then search the resulting on NAME for LAGOON, then finally search that on SPECIES NAME for BROWN MUDFISH. To return to the main database, action the command CLEAR. This resets the application to the first record of the main database. All the options on the main menu may be performed on subsets of data (except for the CLEAR command).

A second date field may be displayed in brackets beneath the main date field. This second date is the date that will be searched on, as IV will not accept blanks in a date field.

The SITE NAME of a site is not a unique identifier, i.e. a search for a site name may result in several records being found. The only unique identifying field for each record is the CARD NUMBER.

You should always search for SPECIES NAME on the smallest possible subset, as this search takes the longest amount of time to complete, and therefore it is more efficient to search on a smaller number of records.

#### 3.2.6 List site records

This command will display a screen showing card number, site name, catchment number, metric map, and metric map reference, for all sites in the currently viewed The arrow keys, the key and the and <PREVIOUS> keys will scroll the list. When you exit LIST, you will be returned to the record that is highlighted when you bit the key to exit.

#### 3.2.7 Print record

There are three options on the PRINT menu. The first option will print all the information for the currently viewed record. The second will print all the information for every record in the currently viewed database, starting at the first record, i.e. if a search results in a subset of five records, then actioning this print command will print all five records. The third option will print a summary for the currently viewed database, i.e. it will print the site name and the species present at that site, for every record in the current database.

There is a prompt before printing begins, which will ask whether the user wishes to print direct to the printer, or to a print file. The application has been set up with print codes for an OKI Microline printer. If this is the on-line printer (the printer attached to the PC used) then printing directly to the printer is the best option. However, if you wish to print the records on a laser printer, or incorporate the information in a report, then a print file can be created (FISH.TXT) which will be saved to a floppy disk on the A: drive of the PC. This file can then be retrieved into 5.1, and should be correctly formatted for the Courier or any other non-proportional (fixed-width) font. Some reformatting will be required for proportional fonts such as Times Roman.

A new print file is created each time a print job is sent to the A: drive, and this will overwrite any print file already on the disk, so if a job needs to be saved, you must rename it on the disk, transfer it to another drive (or directory), or use a different floppy disk.

Screen dumps can be performed by hitting <SHIFT> and SCREEN> together, and this information will be printed on the on-line printer, not sent to a print file.

#### 3.2.8 Sort records

A sort may be performed on any field from the popup menu, i.e. site name, card number, date, etc. and will be performed in ascending alphabetical or numerical order, depending on the field chosen.

### 3.2.9 Clear

This will reset the application to the first record of the main database. When a new search procedure is started, CLEAR must be performed to reset the application, or the search will only be performed on the currently viewed subset. Quitting the application has the same effect as actioning the CLEAR command.

#### 3.2.10 Quit

Closes all the database files and returns the user to the PC menu.

#### 4. DATA INTERPRETATION

Site-specific presence/absence data like the freshwater fish database must be used with caution, especially if your fisheries knowledge is not comprehensive. A species might not be recorded at a particular site on a particular occasion, but may occur at sites up or downstream, or seasonally. Data may need to be interpreted on a catchment-wide or stream-wide basis rather than by site. The collection date might also be an important factor to consider.

Most native freshwater fish species migrate to or from the sea during various stages of their life cycles. The absence of a particular species from a site may not be due to unsuitable habitat, but because it is the wrong time of year, or there is a blockage to migration downstream.

Species abundance data should also be interpreted with caution. Measures such as "abundant" or "common" are subjective descriptions noted by the observer, and not tied to any defined density measures. Numerical data are more objective, but the accuracy of numerical data depends on the fishing method and the species recorded. For example, bullies often sink rapidly after being stunned by electric fishing and are hard to scoop up with nets, particularly if the substrate is uneven. Often numerical counts will be followed by the comment "many more observed".

Other database factors that can cause misinterpretation might arise from typographical errors, data of doubtful quality, or misidentification of species. Before entering any data, NIWAR staff check each card, and query contributors if the data do not agree with current knowledge of species distribution and habitat.

A limited number of NIWAR staff can enter or change data on the database, and each card is double-checked before being merged into the database. Nevertheless, there will undoubtedly be some errors. If you find any, please inform Jody Richardson, NIWAR, Ecosystems Division, Hamilton.

Many of the older records are of dubious quality for two main reasons; most do not contain a complete species list, and many of the map references may be inaccurate as these were added after interpretation of the site description, which was often very sketchy. This particularly applies to cards numbered greater that 50000.

The fishing method will give an indication of how complete a species list is; methods such as "observation" or "hand net" will probably not give as complete a list as "electric fishing" or extensive use of traps and nets.

If you have any concerns about interpreting data from the database, you should contact Jody Richardson, NIWAR, Ecosystems Division, Hamilton for clarification.

#### 5. A FEW RULES ABOUT DATA USE

MAF Fisheries and DOC had a memorandum of agreement regarding use of data from the database (Appendix X). This agreement is shortly to be renegotiated with NIWAR. It is important to remember data are contributed by a large number of agencies, and no single organization can be said to own the information.

Under the memorandum of agreement, any database information used by DOC (published or otherwise) must include acknowledgment of the source of the data. Under no circumstances may data be given to third parties without the prior approval of NIWAR (please contact Jody Richardson, NIWAR, Ecosystems Division, P.O. Box 11-115, Hamilton). This is so we can ensure the contributor of that data is informed, and is agreeable to its release to another party.

NIWAR retains responsibility for maintenance of the database, including entry of all new data. DOC staff cannot enter any data directly onto the database; new data should be channelled through NIWAR. This will ensure consistency and continuity of the database, as well as ensure the data are available to all database users. DOC staff should thus make sure their data are properly recorded on database forms and forwarded to Jody Richardson, NIWAR, Ecosystems Division, Hamilton.

Periodically, we intend to review use and problems associated with the freshwater fish database. If you encounter any errors in the database, have problems extracting or interpreting data, or find the data is inadequate for the job, please document the problem and let the authors know. This will assist us to provide you with accessible, accurate, and practical freshwater fisheries information.

# APPENDIX 1 - ORIGINAL DATABASE CARD (1978)

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* Size, Peculiarities, Spew	ning, Juveniles, etc.			,				s must be fil	led in; ot	her section	ч
† Specimens Retained.						0910	ar sut	Sesirable.			

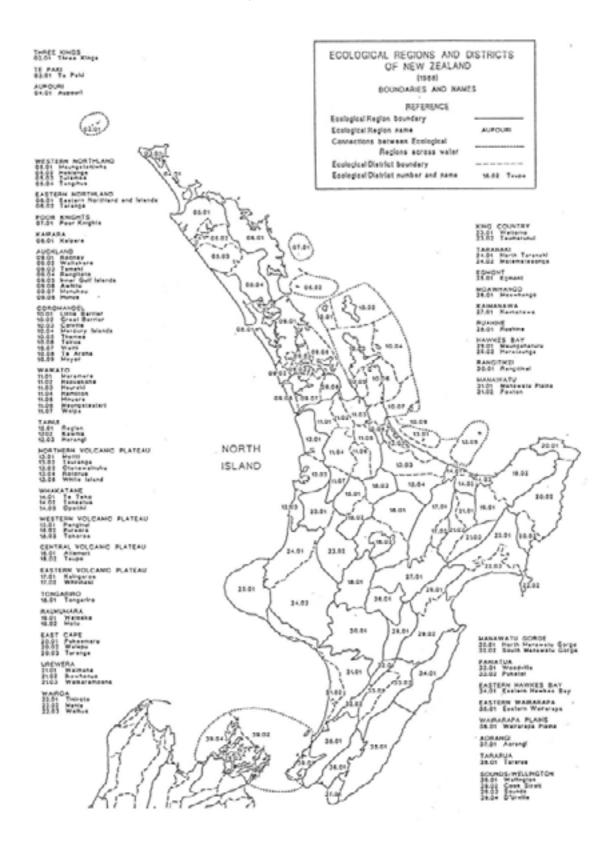
# APPENDIX II - REVISED DATABASE CARD (1986)

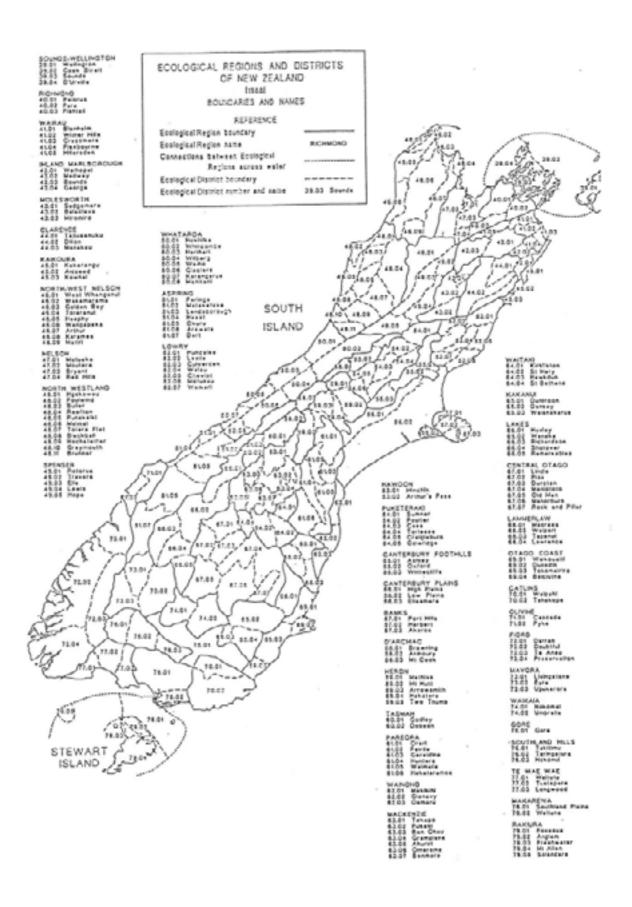
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HABITAT C		efm							
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Water		Average width (m)	7.4	Liverane	. 5	Maxim	um	Conductivity	ļ
Habitat type	(%)	Sell	Backwater	Pool Pool	Run	DEDIN	Ditta	Costs Torrent	Cascade
Substrate type	(%)	Mud	Sand 5	Fine	Coarse		Cobble 15	Bovider .	Bedrock
Fish	(%)	Substrate 5	Weed	gravel 10 Instream	Bank	10	Undercut	IO/head	
Catchment	(2)	Native 2.0	Exotic -	debris Harsi-	urpan		banks	shade 5 Pastoral	90
Rigarian		Native 3.5	Forest 20	Grass -	Expose	4	Servo 45		Positive.
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APPENDIX III - DATABASE COVERAGE FOR THE NORTH AND SOUTH ISLANDS, JANUARY 1992

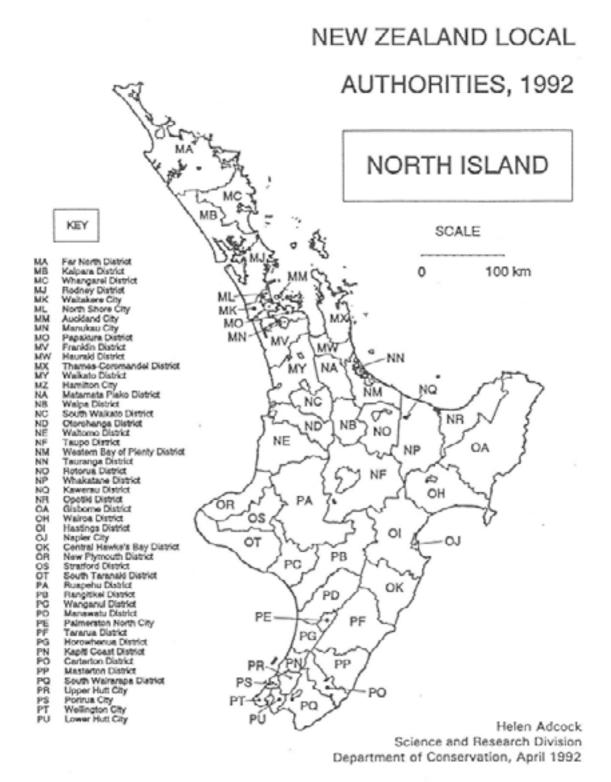


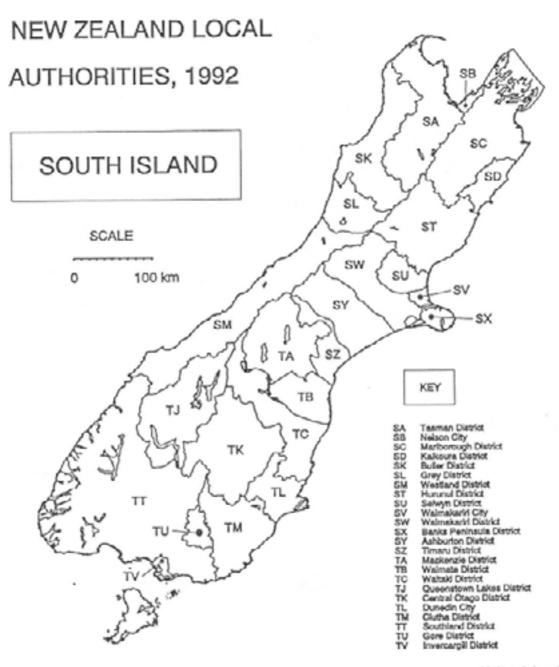
APPENDIX IV - ECOLOGICAL REGIONS AND DISTRICTS OF NEW ZEALAND, 3rd Edition, 1988





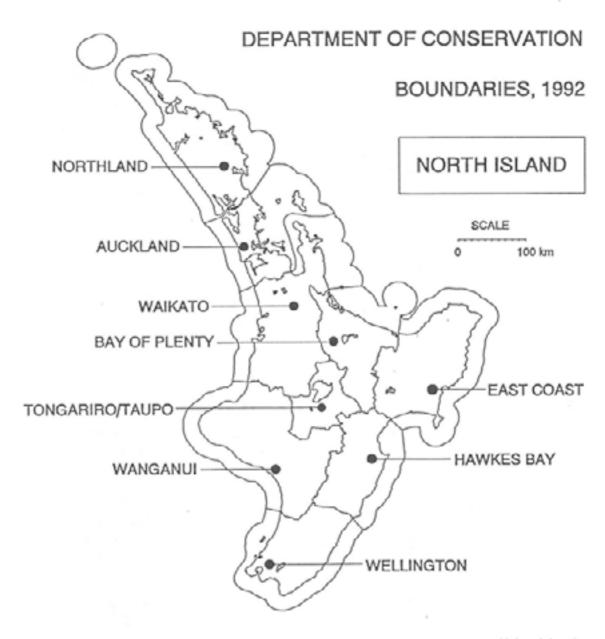
# APPENDIX V - LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF NEW ZEALAND, 1992





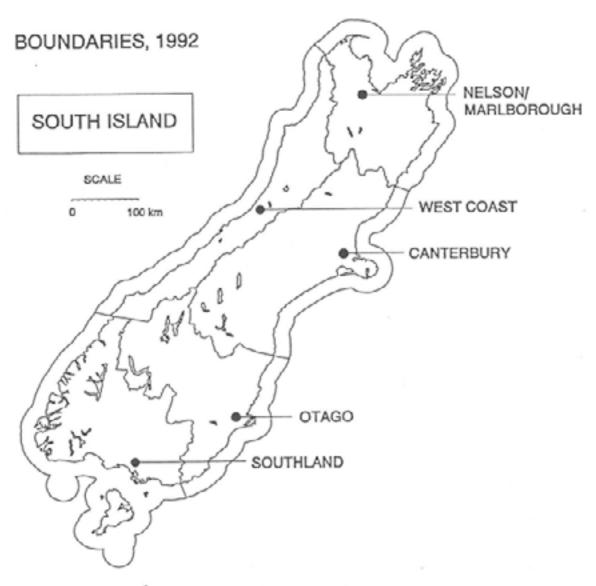
Helen Adcock Science and Research Division Department of Conservation, April 1992

# APPENDIX VI - DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION BOUNDARIES, 1992



Helen Adcock Science and Research Division Department of Conservation, April 1992

# DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION



Helen Adcock Science and Research Division Department of Conservation, April 1992

# APPENDIX VII - FISH SPECIES LIST (sorted on scientific name)

Scientific Name	Common Name	(N)ative/(E)xotic
Aldrichetta forsteri	Yelloweyed mullet	N
Anguilla australis	Shortfinned eel	N
Anguilla dieffenbachii	Longfinned eel	N
Anguilla sp.	Unidentified eel	N
Arripis trutta	Kahawai	N
Carassius auratus	Goldfish	E
Cheimarrichthys fosteri	Torrentfish	N
Ctenopharyngodon idella	Grass carp	E
Cyprinus carpio	Koi carp	E
Galaxias anomalus	Otago galaxias	N
Galaxias argentus	Giant kokopu	N
Galaxias brevipinnis	Koaro	N
Galaxias divergens	Dwarf galaxias	N
Galaxias fasciatus	Banded kokopu	N
Galaxias gracilis	Dwarf inanga	N
Galaxias maculatus	Inanga	N
Galaxias paucispondylus	Alpine galaxias	N
Galaxias postvectis	Shortjawed kokopu	N
Galaxias prognathus	Longjawed galaxias	N
Galaxias sp.	Unidentified galaxias	N
Galaxias vulgaris	Common river galaxias	N
Gambusia affinis	Mosquitofish	E
Geotria australis	Lamprey	N
Gobiomorphus basalis	Cran's bully	N
Gobiomorphus breviceps	Upland bully	N
Gobiomorphus cotidianus	Common bully	N
Gobiomorphus gobioides	Giant bully	N
Gobiomorphus hubbsi	Bluegilled bully	N
Gobiomorphus huttoni	Redfinned bully	N
Gobiomorphus sp.	Unidentified bully	N
Ictalurus nebulosus	Catfish	E
	Stargazer	N
Leptoscopus macropygus Leuciscus idus	Golden orfe	E
Marine sp.	Marine species	L
Mugil cephalus	Grey mullet	N
Mugil sp.	Unidentified mullet	N
Neochanna apoda	Brown mudfish	N
Neochanna burrowsius	Canterbury mudfish	N
Neochanna diversus	Black mudfish	N
		11
Nil	No species recorded	E
Oncorbynchus mykiss	Rainbow trout	
Oncorbynchus nerka	Sockeye salmon	E
Oncorbynchus tshawytscha	Chinook salmon	E
Paranephrops planifrons	Koura	N

Paranephrops sp.	Koura	$\mathbf{N}$
Perca fluviatilis	Perch	E
Poecilia latipinna	Sailfin molly	E
Poecilia reticulata	Guppy	E
Prototroctes oxyrhynchus	Grayling	$\mathbf{N}$
Retropinna retropinna	Common smelt	$\mathbf{N}$
Rhombosolea leporina	Yellowbelly flounder	$\mathbf{N}$
Rhombosolea plebeia	Sand flounder	$\mathbf{N}$
Rhombosolea retiaria	Black flounder	$\mathbf{N}$
Rhombosolea sp	Unidentified flounder	$\mathbf{N}$
Salmo salar	Atlantic salmon	E
Salmo sp.	Unidentified trout	E
Salmo trutta	Brown trout	E
Salvelinus fontinalis	Brook char	E
Scardinius erythrophthalmus	Rudd	E
Stokellia anisodon	Stokell's smelt	$\mathbf{N}$
Tinca tinca	Tench	E
Tripterygwn nigripenne	Cockabully	$\mathbf{N}$
Tripterygion sp.	Marine cockabullies	$\mathbf{N}$

# APPENDIX VIII - FISH SPECIES LIST (sorted on common name)

Scientific Name	Common Name	(N)ative/(E)xotic
Alpine galaxias	Galaxias paucispondylus	${f N}$
Atlantic salmon	Salmo salar	E
Banded kokopu	Galaxias fasciatus	N
Black flounder	Rhomboselea retiaria	N
Black mudfish	Neochanna diversus	${f N}$
Bluegilled bully	Gobwmorphus hubbsi	$\mathbf{N}$
Brook char	Salvelinus fontinalis	E
Brown mudfish	Neochanna apoda	$\overline{\mathbf{N}}$
Brown trout	Salmo trutta	E
Canterbury mudfish	Neochanna burrowsius	$\overline{\mathbf{N}}$
Catfish	Ictalurus nebulosus	E
Chinook salmon	Oncorhynchus tshawytscha	Ë
Cockabully	Tripterygion nigripenne	N
Common bully	Gobiomorphus cotidianus	N
Common river galaxias	Galaxias vulgaris	N
Common smelt	Retropinna retropinna	N
Cran's bully	Gobiomorphus basalis	N
Dwarf galaxias	Galaxias divergens	N
Dwarf inanga	Galaxias gracilis	N
Giant bully	Gobiomorphus gobwides	N
Giant kokopu	Galaxias argentus	N
Golden orfe	Leuciscus idus	E
Goldfish	Carassius auratus	Ë
Grass carp	Ctenopharyngodon idella	Ë
Grayling	Prototroctes oxyrhynchus	N
Grey mullet	Mugil cephalus	N
Guppy	Poecilia reticulata	Ë
Inanga	Galaxias maculatus	N
Kahawai	Arripis trutta	N
Koaro	Galaxias brevipinnis	N
Koi carp	Cyprinus carpio	Ë
Koura	Paranephrops sp.	N
Koura	Paranephrops planifrons	N
Lamprey	Geotria australis	N
Longfinned eel	Anguilla dieffenbachii	N
Longjawed galaxias	Galaxias prognathus	N
Marine cockabullies	Tripterygion sp.	N
Marine species	Marine sp.	11
Mosquitofish	Gambusia affinis	E
No species recorded	nil	L
Otago galaxias	Galaxias anomalus	N
Perch	Perca fluviatilis	E
Rainbow trout	Oncorhynchus mykiss	E
Redfinned bully	Gobwmorphus huttoni	N N
Rediffied bully	доошногрым ышиош	1.1

Rudd	Scardinius erythrophthalmus	E
Sailfin molly	Poecilia latipinna	E
Sand flounder	Rhombosolea plebeia	$\mathbf{N}$
Shortfinned eel	Anguilla australis	${f N}$
Shortjawed kokopu	Glaxias postvectis	${f N}$
Sockeye salmon	Oncorbynchus nerka	E
Stargazer	Leptoscopus macropygus	${f N}$
Stokell's smelt	Stokellia anisodon	$\mathbf{N}$
Tench	Tinca tinca	E
Torrentfish	Cheimarrichthys fosteri	$\mathbf{N}$
Unidentified bully	Gobiomorphus sp.	${f N}$
Unidentified eel	Anguilla sp.	$\mathbf{N}$
Unidentified flounder	Rhombosolea sp.	${f N}$
Unidentified galaxias	Galaxias sp.	${f N}$
Unidentified mullet	Mugil sp.	$\mathbf{N}$
Unidentified trout	Salmo sp.	E
Upland bully	Gobiomorphus breviceps	$\mathbf{N}$
Yellowbelly flounder	Rhombosolea leporina	$\mathbf{N}$
Yelloweyed mullet	Aldrichetta forsteri	${f N}$

# APPENDIX IX - FISHING METHODS

# Fishing method

**Angling** 

Box trap

Combination of nets

Combination of nets and electric fishing

Combination of nets and traps

Diving

Electric fishing, machine type unknown

Electric fishing, mains set

Electric fishing, packset

Fry trap

Fyke net, including minifykes

Gee minnow trap

Gill net

Hand net

Hinaki

Observation only

Other (dynamite, poison, spearing, releases, etc)

Plankton net

Push net

Seine net

Set net

Traps and electric fishing

Unknown method

Unknown type of net

Unknown type of trap

Whitebait net

#### APPENDIX X - MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

# MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT between MAF FISHERIES and DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

# **SUBJECT**

Access and use of the Freshwater Fish Database.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Fisheries created and maintains a computer based collection of site-specific freshwater fish records. Data are contributed by MAF Fisheries, Fish and Game Councils, regional councils, private consultants, interested individuals and government departments, including the Department of Conservation (DOC). Contributors may request that their data be kept confidential for up to three years.

Fisheries aims to treat the data as being of national interest and to encourage the widest possible use of the data. However, contributors' interests must also be protected.

DOC is to receive a subset of the database for internal use. This memorandum of agreement sets out the responsibilities of each department.

#### NATURE OF THE INFORMATION

The database is a collection of information from site-specific field observations. An NZMS 260 map reference pinpoints the site, and data include the fish species present and physical information about the site. The database consists of the field data sheets and computer files of the raw data.

#### FISHERIES RESPONSIBILITIES DOC RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. To update and maintain the database as required.
- B. To liaise with contributors concerning data collection and new developments.
- C. To ensure confidential data is protected.

- D. To issue DOC with selected fields from the database (database subsets) every six months.
- E. To extract additional data for DOC as required. Charges will cover actual costs of supplying the additional information based on current Fisheries charge-out rates for the staff involved.

#### **DOC RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. To ensure database information issued by MAF Fisheries is available to DOC staff.
- B. To ensure data issued to DOC is used responsibly.
  - Any presentations or documents (published or otherwise) shall include clear and prominent acknowledgement of the database to MAF Fisheries.
  - Data issued to DOC must not be released to third parties without prior consultation with MAF Fisheries.
- 25. To ensure collected by DOC is available for entry onto the national database, with usual contributor confidentiality rights.

#### **FINANCING**

DOC will pay MAF Fisheries an annual fee for their copies of the database subsets. The amount to be paid each year will be decided by joint agreement between the two departments.

#### REPORTING AND REVIEW OF AGREEMENT

DOC Science and Research Division and MAF Fisheries will report to each other annually on usage and operating problems with a view to optimising usage and operating effectiveness. This agreement may be reviewed and revised to the mutual satisfaction of DOC and MAF Fisheries at that time.