

## Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name: BEN AVON

Lease number: PO 251

### Fish & Game report

As part of the process of tenure review Fish & Game councils may provide advice on significant inherent values within the pastoral lease, and the information may be incorporated in the conservation resources report. The advice is part of the information gathered and assessed for the development of a preliminary consultation document.

The report attached is released under the Official Information Act 1982.

April

05



P0251/1

34



20 June 2000

Manager  
Knight Frank  
PO Box 27  
ALEXANDRA

Dear Sir

**TENURE REVIEW – BEN AVON STATION**

Please find attached Central South Island Fish and Game's Tenure Review Report on Ben Avon Station.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Scarf".

Frank Scarf  
Fish and Game Officer

*Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, game birds and their habitats*

**Central South Island Region**

32 Richard Pearse Drive, PO Box 150, Temuka, New Zealand. Telephone (03) 615 8400 Facsimile (03) 615 8401 Email: jgraybill@clear.net.nz



## TENURE REVIEW REPORT

**PROPERTY: BEN AVON**

**LOCATION: OMARAMA**

### 1. Brief Description of Property

Ben Avon, located 30 km west of Omarama, comprises some 8,385 ha of which about half is described as moderately steep – steep mountain lands.

The flats occupying the terrace lands adjoining the Ahuriri River have been developed through drainage and cultivation. To the west of the Birchwood Road, the gently sloping lands fronting the ranges have been developed through a combination of cultivation, oversowing, and topdressing. The remaining steep lands remain in unimproved pasture state.

The property is bounded by Longslip Station to the south and Birchwood Station to the north.

### 2. Rivers, Lakes, and Streams

Forming the eastern margin of the property, the Ahuriri River dominates the landscape. The river exhibits a mean flow of about 21.5 cumecs. Low flow usually occurs in July-September each year when the flow of the South Diadem recorder site immediately downstream of the property's southern boundary can be expected to recede to 8.5 cumecs.

Bordering the property with neighbouring Longslip the Avon Burn is a major tributary of the Ahuriri and makes up about 9 percent of the flows recorded at South Diadem.

Bisecting the property is the Birch Stream. This has an average flow of around 0.7 cumecs.

Included within the bounds of the Ben Avon lease is an area immediately north of Birch Stream which contains about 170 ha of wetlands, remnant ox bow lakes and glacial tarns (notably Ben Avon Pond and Horseshoe Tarn).

The other water body of note is Homestead Tarn located at the base of the mountain near the turnoff to the Ben Avon homestead. The surface area of the tarn is about 10 ha and similar in surface area to the Ben Avon pond.

*Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, game birds and their habitats*

**Central South Island Region**

3. Sportsfish Angling and Gamebird Hunter Values

3.1 Sportsfish

The Ahuriri River is nationally and internationally famous for its quality trout and angling experience. In recognition of its valued sportsfishery, a Water Conservation Order<sup>(1)</sup> for the river was gazetted in July 1990. This order acknowledges the outstanding wildlife habitat, fisheries and angler values associated with the river and requires that all lakes, tarns, lagoons, and streams be retained in their natural state. Under the Order the taking of water and dams on the river and its tributaries is either prohibited or strictly regulated.

A National Angler Survey<sup>(2)</sup> conducted by NIWA (National Institute of Water and Atmosphere Sciences) during the 1993/94 angler season records 4,478 angler days spent fishing the Ahuriri River. This is by far the most popular angling river in the Upper Waitaki basin; the next most popular being the Tekapo with 2,225 angler days.

The section of river bounding the Ben Avon lease contains some of the best angling in the Ahuriri. Deep pools containing quality fish stock separated by sections of faster flowing water provide optimum angling experience for the wilderness angler. Fish are typically 1-2 kg in weight although fish upto 5 kg have been recorded.

Avon Burn and Birch Stream are important spawning streams for sustaining the Ahuriri and the Lake Benmore trout fisheries. Trout spawning is known to occur well up both tributaries at least to the 800 m contour. Trout from Lake Benmore and the Ahuriri migrate upstream to spawn about May-August each year and return downstream about September-December. Fry hatch occurs about August and the juveniles tend to remain within the spawning/nursery streams until around October-November when they too start to move downstream to mature.

In the past the Homestead Pond has been stocked with trout but population survival is impacted by lack of spawning opportunity and natural recruitment. No attempts have been made to stock other tarns and ponds.

3.2 Gamebirds

Mallard and grey duck are present but paradise shelduck and Canada geese are the predominant gamebird species on the property. Grey teal, black swan, and shoveler are also present.

Reference: <sup>(1)</sup> The Water Conservation (Ahuriri River) Order 1990 NZ Govt. Gazette 2 July 1990.

<sup>(2)</sup> National Angler Survey

Canada geese numbers on the river and wetlands each winter average about 220. Gregarious by nature the birds mob into one predominant group and trade between the river and the other water bodies, notably the Ben Avon Pond. These birds tend to predate greenfeed crops in autumn and winter. To reduce the nuisance, hunters have been called in by the runholder to deal with problem populations.

Other than this, there is little gamebird hunter activity on the property. This is primarily due to the comparative remoteness of the property; the centres of gamebird hunters being centred on Kurow and more significantly Waimate.

Paradise shelduck are a grazing species also and like Canadas they too target greenfeed crops.

#### 4. Recommendation

##### 4.1 Access

The following access provisions are sought

- 1) Marginal strip along the Ahuriri River
- 2) Marginal strip along the Avon Burn
- 3) Easement for public access at southern boundary with Longslip Station (already provided for through Longslip tenure review)
- 4) Easement/marginal strip down Birch Stream from Road to Ahuriri River.
- 5) Access where river meets road opposite Quailburn Stream.

##### 4.2 Land Reserved to Crown

There is a case we believe to reserve the following lands to the Crown.

- 1) Those lands below the terrace extending from the Longslip boundary to about Map Reference G40:445413
- 2) Ben Avon Pond, Horseshoe Tarn, and their wetland margins.

F Scarf  
Fish and Game Officer  
19.6.00