

## **Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review**

**Lease name: WALTER PEAK**

**Lease number: Ss 041**

### **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.

**March**

**05**



## Walter Peak Station Crown Pastoral Lease

### Resource Report prepared by John Hollows for the Otago Fish and Game Council

#### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to advise the Commissioner of Crown Lands on the sports fish and game values present on the land included in the Walter Peak Station Crown pastoral lease. The lease is being considered for land tenure review and disposal under the provisions of the Crown Pastoral Land Act. As well as habitat values the report covers angling and hunting values and associated access issues.

Information for this report has been researched and prepared by Otago Fish and Game Council staff.

#### 2. General Description

Walter Peak Station is a large parcel of land located on the shores of Lake Wakatipu. The property is mountainous with patches of native bush, large areas of tussock grassland and lesser amounts of developed agricultural land. The lease land contains lakes, rivers and small streams with fishery and game bird values.

#### 3. Sports Fish Values

##### *Lochy Catchment*

The Lochy River is a blue ribbon, fly-fishing only, backcountry fishery noted for its trophy-sized brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) and rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). The value of which can be identified in that only one fish per person is allowed under current regulations (South Island Sports Fish Regulations 2003-2004). The National Angler Survey (NAS) recorded 262 angler visits for the 2001 angling season.

The Lochy River, above Lake Nigel and Lake Ned, provides excellent spawning and juvenile brown trout habitat. However this provides no recruitment to the lower Lochy fishery due to Lake Nigel and Lake Ned having no surface outlet, making them essentially isolated water bodies (Figure 1). However, they are important independent fisheries as the lakes were stocked with Loch Leven brown trout (*Salmo trutta*). As a landlocked population these lakes may contain the only pure strain of this trout remaining in the world (Figure 2).

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

Otago Region

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The trout obtain a small size only due to the alpine environment, small water bodies and limited food resource. They do provide an angling experience with large numbers of small trout able to be caught.



**Figure 1.** Lake Nigel and Lake Ned, Lochy River Valley.



**Figure 2.** Juvenile Loch Leven brown trout from the Lochy River, upstream of Lake Nigel.

Juvenile brown trout were found in Cascade Creek (Figure 3) and these fish may be important for recruitment into the Lochy River fishery. Cascade Creek also provides some adult habitat. No sports fish were found in Killiecrankie Creek but it is likely they are present lower downstream nearer the Lochy River. Both these waterways contribute water of good quality and quantity for the Lochy River.



**Figure 3.** Cascade Creek

***Von Catchment***

The Von River has similar fishery values to the Lochy River and receives slightly more angler visits, possibly due to easier access (319 in 2001, NAS). As with the Lochy River, it is fly-fishing only with one fish per day. The Von River is outside the lease property, however, its tributaries may be important spawning and juvenile rearing habitat. Although no fish were identified in Station Creek, there are sections of good spawning gravels that may be utilised by fish from the Von River. White Burn and Black Spur Creek contains sports fish spawning gravels, juvenile rearing habitat and will provide fish for the Von River and the Lake Wakatipu fisheries. Rainbow trout were found in White Burn and brown trout were found in Black Spur Creek.

***Lake Tributaries***

No sports fish were identified in the Afton Burn during the survey although only the upper reaches were fished. Mckinlays Creek and Georges Creek contained brown trout in the lower reaches. Although there are some blockages lower down in these

lake tributaries, there is well-used spawning habitat for lake and river resident adult fish, along with juvenile rearing and some adult habitat in the lower reaches. The lower reaches of Afton Burn and Mckinlays Creek provide good angling opportunities early in the season.

Lake Wakatipu is the most visited lake in the Otago region (17702 visits in 2001, NAS) and tributary streams, such as those found on the Walter Peak property, are important to maintaining the lake fishery.

#### **4. Game Bird Values**

Paradise shelducks (*Tadorna variegata*) were noted on the Lochy River Flats and approximately 40 birds were noted on Lakes Nigel and Ned. These lakes are important for duck moulting sites but have limited hunting value due to the isolation of the river valley.

#### **5. Access**

There is a marginal strip on the Lochy River, which allows anglers to access the river via foot or by helicopter. In addition, there are farm tracks into the Lochy River Valley, which are accessed with permission from the farm manager or owners. There have been no issues in gaining access to the waterways on the property for management purposes.

#### **6. Fish & Game Perspective**

The marginal strips on the Lochy River, including Lakes Nigel and Ned, should become Section 24 marginal strips if they are not already. Cascade Creek, Killiecrankie Creek, White Burn, Black Spur Creek, Afton Burn, Mckinlays Creek and Georges Creek require Section 24 marginal strip protection to protect fishery recruitment and habitat values. The Von and Lochy Rivers are currently protected by the Kawarau Water Conservation Order (1997) for status as a fishery and recreational purposes, in particular fishing. This should provide adequate protection for fishery values in these waterways

The track that enters the Lochy River via the Afton Burn and Cascade Creek requires “vehicle access easement for management purposes” status for Otago Fish & Game staff or their successors.

Dated: March 3 2004.



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