

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name : MINARET

Lease number : PO 274

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.

This report is released under the Official Information Act 1982.

Minaret Station Tenure Fish and Game Resources Report

Otago Fish and Game Council

August 2012

The following is a statement of sports fish and gamebird values provided for the purposes of a tenure review on Minaret Station, under the Crown Pastoral Lands Act 1998. This statement is prepared by the Otago Fish and Game Council on the basis of its existing historical knowledge and from a site visit to the station undertaken in July 2012.

Sports Fisheries

Brown trout migrate and spawn in the four main streams that bisect the station (Estuary Burn, Rough Burn, Bay Burn and Bells Creek) but only use the lowland sections immediately above the lake. Rainbows have been observed in the Estuary Burn upstream to the Gorge near the farm bridge that crosses the stream and are likely to migrate up the other streams but in low numbers.

The streams are subjected to regular flushing particularly in the spring which probably limits spawning success and hence why rainbow populations are low. Due to the intense nature of the streams and low flows during the summer they don't provide suitable adult habitat and therefore offer limited angling opportunity. Better flows in the Estuary Burn provide some early season opportunities but anglers generally fish the mouth and the lake shore.

Summary

The four main lake tributaries within the existing pastoral lease offer little angling opportunity but the lowland stream sections immediately upstream of Lake Wanaka are important for trout spawning and rearing, and recruitment to Lake Wanaka fish stocks.

Other Small Waterways

There are several other small mountainous creeks within the property boundary that enter the lake which trout possibly access but are only limited to the short sections immediately above Lake Wanaka when higher lake levels allow. They have little sports fishery values. They should be best protected for their native fish populations and water quality. In some cases covenants could be considered along their length for long term protection. *Point - Communication with doc over this could be beneficial.*

Snag Bay Lagoon

This lagoon is now listed as a Regionally Significant Wetland in Schedule 9 of the Otago Regional Council Water Plan. It holds a moderate population of brown trout and has been historically fished by anglers. It is fed by the Rambling Burn where fish spawn in the inlet and a short distance upstream. The nearby outlet only functions when the lagoon is full and appears to act as an overflow bypass for the Rambling Burn in higher flows. A roading culvert near the outlet prevents any movement of fish to/from the lake but with this could be adjusted simply if necessary in consultation with the land owners. Deer fencing does restrict angler access.

Otago Fish and Game request that public access to this wetland be made available, and that the culvert be modified to allow for fish passage to and from the lake.

Marginal Strips Roding and Existing Fencing

The lower sections of Rough Burn and Estuary Burn will probably qualify for marginal strips and there is already adequate fencing on their boundaries to restrict stock access.

On the lower Bay Burn current fencing restricts stock access and there is farm roading and a culvert at GPS ref E 1290510 N5077406. The box culvert has been designed for free flow which allows trout upstream access but from this point the stream starts to rise steeply. This stream is influenced by seasonal flows which will limit spawning success for the few fish that use it.

Bells Creek

The lower section of Bells Creek is more stable than the Bay Burn but of similar nature. It may not qualify for marginal strips. Fencing and a farm track cross the stream about 80 metres upstream of Lake Wanaka with no restrictions to migrating fish. A waterfall and start of a steep gorge at GPS ref E 1290210 N 5069213 is a natural barrier which trout can't navigate.

The section of stream from the lake fence to the gorge is captured within a small rough grazing paddock of bracken/grasses and manuka. If this paddock was heavily grazed or used as a stock holding area stream water quality would be affected. Some realignment of the fencing should be considered.

Lake Shore Fencing, Public Amenity and Access

The Lake Wanaka shoreline bordering the property is very popular with boaties and regularly visited by anglers in the warmer summer months. As the community population grows and boating increases the shoreline will get higher use. It will be important that land and stock management of Minaret Station does not impact on the amenity setting and that there is always a good vegetative lake shore buffer zone to facilitate this. Lake Wanaka is also experiencing algal growth (Lake Snow) which is believed to be the result of nutrient enrichment.

A large percentage of the lake shore has been fenced off but it is understood that the fence line may not be positioned along the surveyed marginal strip boundary. Some realignment would be useful. To the south of the property a large area of lake boundary is unfenced allowing stock direct access to the lake shore. It can be assumed this will be fenced in the future.

- Adjustments should be made to existing fences around the Snag Bay Lagoon to allow anglers access to the lagoon from Lake Wanaka, as mentioned above.
- The alignment of the lake shore fencing should be considered carefully to protect the lake shore buffer/vegetative zone for aesthetic values and public amenity and to filter nutrient runoff that could be contributing to "lake snow" algal growth in Lake Wanaka.
- The Otago Fish and Game Council should be given the right to access the property along the main farm track for management purposes.

- Consideration needs to be given to legal access on adjoining properties north and south, connecting to West Wanaka Station and to Albert Burn Station, particularly as these properties pass through tenure review.

Game Birds

The property provides habitats for gamebird species including Grey, Mallard, (their hybrid), Shoveler duck, and Paradise Shelduck but has very few wetlands. The largest and most important being the Minaret Bay Wetland. The Snag Bay lagoon is annually used by waterfowl for moulting. Game birds, especially paradise ducks, feed on the numerous pastures and are common during the stock feed out period over the winter.

Recreational Hunting

Game bird hunting opportunities are limited on the property but hunters have been invited by the station owner and on request. Access by boat can be difficult at times and is somewhat controlled by lake conditions. It is likely that tenure review outcomes will have little effect on the current situation.

We thank the owner for facilitating the visit to this property, and for his family's stewardship of the land over the years.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Wilson
Environmental Officer
Otago Fish and Game Council