

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name: BEN NEVIS

Lease number: PO 241

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

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Fish and Game Resource Report for the Ben Nevis Crown Pastoral Lease

Prepared by 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 Ben Nevis 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. Location

The Ben Nevis Crown Pastoral Lease is a large square shaped parcel of land located in the Nevis River Valley. The true left bank of the Nevis River defines the eastern boundary of the lease, while Doolans Saddle and James Peak define the northern and southern boundaries respectively.

The lease land comprises of high altitude rolling hill tussock grasslands with land developed for agriculture on the river flats. The Nevis River and tributaries contain high quality oligotrophic waters and a healthy invertebrate fauna dominated by Ephemeropteran mayflies.

3. Habitat values

The Nevis River and its tributaries contain sports fish spawning, juvenile recruitment, and adult habitat for Brown Trout and Brook Char. The amount of potential spawning habitat in the catchment is limited in area and concentrated in the reach above Nevis Crossing. Spawning and juvenile rearing habitat protection in this area is of high importance as the fishery is self-sustaining and therefore any loss of habitat could negatively impact on the quality of fishery.

A small number of Paradise Shelducks, Mallard Ducks, Chukor, and California quail inhabit the lease land. The modified flat land is preferred by duck species whilst scrubby relatively unmodified areas are favoured by Quail and Chukor.

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

Otago Region

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Most of the larger tributaries and the Nevis River itself currently have marginal strip protection to fairly high altitudes under the Conservation Act 1987.

4. Recreational Values

The Nevis River is an exceptional backcountry fishery targeted by large numbers of New Zealand and overseas anglers and mentioned in the Water Conservation (Kawarau) Order 1997 for recreational purposes, particularly fishing. The Otago Sports Fish & Game Management Plan similarly identifies the Nevis as a nationally important wilderness trout fishery.

Low numbers of game birds exist on the lease property with a small number of hunters utilising the resource annually.

5. Access

Access to the lease property is via a legal road, which allows access to the river in many places. A vehicle track, leaving the legal road at approximately (E471 N933), across the leased property is used extensively by anglers. This access is currently at the leaseholder's pleasure although we have no records of any issues arising from use.

6. Fish & Game Perspective

6.1 Habitat Protection

All marginal strips should become section 24 strips if they do not already have this status.

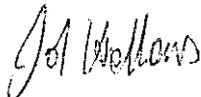
A covenant should be included on any land transferred to freehold, which prohibits any activities that may result in any loss of sports fish spawning and juvenile recruitment habitat in the Nevis River and/or tributaries of the Nevis River.

6.2 Access

A vehicular easement should be created along the vehicular track identified in 5 to facilitate angler ability to reach the river.

All legal roads, formed and unformed, should be preserved to allow for current and future access requirements.

Dated: October 11 2005



John Hollows
Environmental Officer
Otago Fish & Game Council