

## **Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review**

**Lease name: BEN OHAU**

**Lease number: PT 128**

### **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**



9 JUN 1999  
RECEIVED

61

8 June 1999

Manager  
Knight Frank  
PO Box 564  
TIMARU

Dear Sir,

**TENURE REVIEW – BEN OHAU**

Following discussions with other Fish and Game staff, I can confirm that nothing further can be added to our original submission prepared in April 1997 (copy attached).

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Frank Scarff".

Frank Scarff  
Fish and Game Officer



## TENURE REVIEW REPORT

PROPERTY: BEN OHAU STATION

LOCATION: TWIZEL

### 1. **Brief Description of Property**

Ben Ohau Station, located about 3 km NW from Twizel, comprises some 5,970 ha of improved pasture tussock grasslands. The topography is comparatively flat ranging in altitude between 490 m and 850 m, with less than 5% greater than 600 m, thus concentrated on the western margin of the property. The run is bisected by the Pukaki Ohau Canal. East of the canal the property is well endowed with public vehicle access.

There is no class VII or VIII lands within the property, the bulk being class VI with some class III and IV lands in the area east of the canal between Fraser Stream and the Twizel River.

### 2. **Sportsfish and Game Resource Information**

#### 2.1 **Rivers Lakes and Streams**

The property contains a number of small lakes upto 10 ha in area, including Twin Lakes, Loch Cameron, Lake Merino and Lake Poaka. In addition there are some sizeable wetland remnants of note along Fraser Stream and its tributary, Darts Bush Stream.

The Ben Ohau Wetland extending upstream from the canal along the Fraser for about 1.5 km is the most extensive. It is regarded as a particularly significant habitat area for a wide range of marshland, waterfowl, and wader bird species. Wetland areas around Lake Poaka also provides significant wildfowl habitat. All these areas are identified in the Proposed Mackenzie District Plan as sites of Natural Significance.

The Twizel River and Fraser Stream flow through the property. With a catchment area of 130 km<sup>2</sup> at Lake Poaka, the Twizel is the larger and has a mean flow of about 3.9 cumecs. Mean annual low flow is assessed to be around 1.8 cumecs

Comparative statistics for the Fraser are mean flow of 2.2 cumecs and mean annual flow of about 0.8 cumecs. Dry Stream also flows through the property but as the name suggests the stream tends to be ephemeral.

## 2.2 Sportsfish and Gamebird Species

### 2.2.1 Sportsfish

Rainbow and brown trout inhabit both the Twizel and Fraser. The streams are more noted for their spawning and nursery values rather than for the size and numbers of adult fish stock. However both streams are fished by angling adherents using dry fly spotting techniques. Such anglers are often into 'catch and release', with the 'high country angling experience' being more important than the success rate.

Lake Poaka supports a good stock of larger fish. With vehicle access to the lake edge, this water is popular with locals and visitors alike. Angling is also popular along the Pukaki Ohau canal.

A National Angler Survey conducted by NIWA (National Institute of Water and Atmosphere sciences) in 1993/94 angler season records 612 angler days spent fishing the Twizel River. This compares favourably with the Ahuriri (4478 angler days), the Tekapo (2225 angler days) and the Ohau River (636 angler days).

The Lake Benmore fishery is reliant upon rivers such as the Twizel, Tekapo, and Ahuriri which provide the spawning and juvenile habitat necessary to sustain that lake fishery. Trout spawning is known to occur well up the Twizel into the Duncan Stream. Unfortunately for the Fraser, the culvert under the canal is not well designed and tends to impede fish passage restricting Benmore spawning fish to spawn downstream from the crossing.

### 2.2.2 Gamebird

Mallard and grey duck, paradise shelduck and Canada geese are present throughout the area. Numbers are comparatively low and confined mainly to the wetland areas identified in 2.1 above.

Population concentrations of Canada geese has proved to be a major problem to high country farmers and Fish and Game. Ben Ohau Station is comparatively free of such nuisance populations and Fish and Game has received very few complaints of greenfeed and pasture crop damage.

Hunting has, and with runholder permission probably still takes place on the Ben Ohau wetland.

Although chukor are seen occasionally by thar and chamois hunters at higher altitudes in adjacent properties, it is unlikely that there are any significant numbers on Ben Ohau. Quail are also relatively rare.

**3. Recommendations:**

**3.1 Access**


We note from the Proposed Mackenzie District Plan that marginal strips already exist along Darts Bush, Fraser and Dry streams and the Twizel River. These provide unrestricted foot access to anglers and Fish and Game would wish to see these retained.

The property east of the canal is well served by existing roads. The 4 WD track down the true right bank of the Pukaki, together with sealed SH 8, Ben Ohau Road, Glen Lyon Road, and the Pukaki Canal Road, and the shingle Rhoboro Downs Road provides no shortage of vehicle access to the fishery resources in this part of the property.

In conjunction with Rhoboro Downs tenure review and the aspirations of Department of Conservation and other NGO groups, there may be a substantive case to establish vehicle access to Darts Bush Stream following the boundary between Ben Ohau and Rhoboro Downs stations. Fish and Game would support such a provision.

**3.2 Habitat**

The Proposed Mackenzie District Plan identifies three sites of Natural Significance, including the Ben Ohau wetlands (above and below the canal crossing), lake Merino and Lake Poaka. Fish and Game supports the habitat significance afforded these areas and advocates that the areas be reserved to the conservation estate, including fencing to exclude stock.

  
Frank Scarf  
Fish and Game Officer  
14.4.97

Attachments: Fig 1 - Recommended Marginal Strip, Public Access  
and Habitat Reserve Requirements