

Crown Pastoral Land Tenure Review

Lease name: MT ST BATHANS

Lease number: PO 116

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.

September

06



Fish and Game Resource Report for the Mount Saint Bathans 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 Mount Saint Bathans 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 Mount Saint Bathans Crown Pastoral Lease is a large parcel of land straddling the Dunstan Creek and Manuherikia River Valley catchments.

Dunstan Creek forms the Eastern boundary of the property for much of its length, although a narrow strip of land, encompassing the upper sections of the Rock Creek catchment, crosses the Saint Bathans Range down to the neighbouring Manuherikia River.

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

3. Habitat values

Dunstan Burn and its tributaries contain habitat for sports fish spawning, juvenile rearing and adult habitat for Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout and Brook Char. Most char are found in the smaller tributaries although some fish are found in the main stem. The upper river supports a very important rainbow and brown trout back country fishery. The largely unmodified landscape offers anglers superb scenery and is an important component of the backcountry experience. During summer low flows there

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

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is anecdotal evidence that sports fish leave the Manuherikia River and migrate to Dunstan Creek seeking refuge from elevated water temperatures and low flows.

Paradise Shelducks, Mallard Ducks, Chukor, Canada Geese and California quail inhabit the lease land with areas of good habitat for each of these species. In particular, Rocks Creek is a very important nesting ground for Canada geese.

4. Recreational Values

Dunstan Creek is an exceptional backcountry fishery favoured by resident and overseas anglers. The fishery produces some good sized trout, particularly early season in the lower reaches, and in the gorge sections.

The large numbers of geese present in the spring currently offer excellent hunting opportunities. It is likely that the numbers of geese in the Dunstan Creek catchment will increase over time as geese expand their range. There is no specific information on the other game bird species found in the property although anecdotal reports suggest there is some use.

5. Access

There are provisions for vehicle access up Dunstan Creek via a legal road and marginal strips. However, the formed track may deviate from the legal access in some places.

There have been some reports of gates being locked at times, thereby denying vehicle access to Dunstan Creek, although foot anglers have been granted access. However, this conflicts with reports from other anglers who have asked, and been granted permission for vehicle access by the lessee.

6. Fish & Game Perspective

6.1 Habitat Protection

All current 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 negatively impact on sports fish spawning, juvenile rearing, adult habitat and/or fish passage in Dunstan Creek or its tributaries.

6.2 Access

The formed track running adjacent to Dunstan Creek should be deemed legal road reserve where it does not fall within the boundaries of road reserve, marginal strip or crown land.

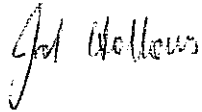
All other legal roads, formed and unformed, should be preserved to allow for current and future access requirements.

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

There should be access to area of freehold and crown land for management purposes by Otago Fish & Game staff.

Provisions should be made for the transportation of dogs and guns for recreational purposes over freehold land to land returned to crown ownership.

Dated: June 7 2005

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Hollows".

John Hollows
Environmental Officer
Otago Fish & Game Council