

Inland Fisheries Service *Report to anglers*



June to August 2019

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Hot topics

2019 brown trout season opening a success

Well, the Tasmanian weather during August did not disappoint on opening weekend, with the usual mixed bag of wind, rain and snow, followed by a lovely day on the Sunday.

Once again, thousands of eager people of all ages and walks of life, ventured to their favourite spot to either try their hand at catching one of our world class brown trout, or enjoy the experience with family and friends.

In the Central Highlands catches were good considering the low water temperature of about 3 degrees. Woods Lake was as popular as ever, with Penstock Lagoon, Bronte Lagoon, Lake Echo and the Bradys' chain rounding out the waters of choice. A mix of brown and rainbow trout were caught. In the east, Tooms Lake, Lake Leake and Lake Crescent proved popular, with successful sessions at Lakes Crescent and Leake and more challenging conditions at Tooms Lake due to current water levels. In the north, Four Springs Lake and Blackmans Lagoon proved to be extremely popular, as did the Mersey River, South Riana and Pet dams in the north-west.

Overall, it was a fantastic weekend enjoyed by many. The signs are that it is going to be another great trout season in Tasmania, with fish hungry and in excellent condition. With so many waters performing during the opening, why not plan a trip soon?

New amenities opened at popular fishing waters

The Minister responsible for Inland Fisheries, the Hon. Guy Barnett MP officially opened the first amenities block at Penstock Lagoon on 21 June 2019 with the remaining facilities completed in time for the start of the 2019-20 trout season on 3 August. Toilets have been built at:

- Bradys Lake, main boat ramp;
- Bronte Lagoon, boat ramp;
- Four Springs Lake, southern end of the car park;
- Lake Augusta, boat ramp;
- Lake Sorell, Dago Point campground;
- Little Pine Lagoon, main boat ramp;
- Penstock Lagoon, boat ramp and the Ladies Walk area;
- Tungatinah Lagoon, boat ramp and
- Woods Lake, boat ramp.



John Diggle, Director of Inland Fisheries and the Hon Guy Barnett, MP Minister for Primary Industries and Water outside the amenity at the Penstock Lagoon boat ramp.

A correction to the Inland Fisheries Angling Code 2019-20

There is a mistake in the printed version of the Tasmanian Inland Fishing Code 2019-20.

On page 27 – it says:

Lake fisheries rules

- a minimum size limit of 300 mm
- a daily bag limit of 12 fish
- open to all fishing methods
- a season of 3/8/19 - 3/5/20

Examples: *Arthurs Lake, Bronte Lagoon, Lake Echo, Laughing Jack Lagoon, Meadowbank Lake, Pine Tier Lagoon, Wayatinah Lagoon.*

Bronte Lagoon and Meadowbank Lake **SHOULD NOT** be in the of examples. They have different rules.

Bronte Lagoon is **NOT** open to all fishing methods, but is fly and artificial lure only (all the other rules are right)

Meadowbank Lake has a minimum size of 300mm (with only 2 over 500mm), is open to all fishing methods, is open all year and a daily bag limit of 5 fish.

Meadowbank Lake is listed again, and correctly, in the *River and Lake Fishery Exceptions* table on page 31.

Bronte Lagoon is **NOT** listed again in the table.

The electronic version of the Code available for download from the website has been updated and can be accessed at <https://www.ifs.tas.gov.au/tasmanian-inland-fishing-code>.

Advice not to eat fish from the lower North Esk River

Public Health Services has detected per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) in fish (including eels) from the North Esk River downstream of Corra Linn Gorge.

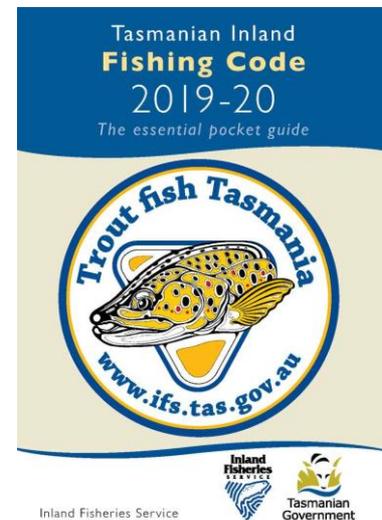
The North Esk River opened to fishing on Saturday 3 August and anglers are reminded of the advice from Public Health Services not to eat any fish, including eels, caught in this stretch of the river until further notice. The upper North Esk and nearby St Patricks rivers offer excellent alternatives where the fish caught may be eaten.

PFAS was detected in fish samples taken near the dog park in St Leonards and from near Corra Linn. PFAS was not detected in fish from upstream towards Blessington.

Although PFAS has not been proven to cause any specific human illnesses, the Australian Government recommends human exposure to them be minimised.

Public Health Services are following this precautionary approach to PFAS, working with other Tasmanian authorities to minimise the risks of exposure to food, soil and water containing elevated PFAS levels.

More information on PFAS can be found at: www.pfas.gov.au



list

Regulation Changes for 2019-20 Angling Season

World Fly Fishing Championship 2019

Regulation changes to certain lakes and rivers are being made to support the World Fly Fishing Championship 2019 later in 2019. The lake venues of Little Pine Lagoon, Penstock Lagoon and Woods Lake will be closed to fishing for the duration of the event from midnight on Sunday 1 December to midnight on Friday 6 December 2019 inclusive.

- The competition sections of the river venues will be closed to recreational fishing, from midnight on Sunday 24 November to midnight on Friday 6 December 2019 inclusive, these closures are:
- The Mersey River downstream of the Olivers Road (on the C 138) bridge to Hoggs Bridge (on the C 153).
- The Meander River downstream from the Huntsman Lake dam to Barretts Bridge, Long Ridge Road (on the C 166).

Season extension for some rivers

The Minister responsible for Inland Fisheries the Hon Guy Barnett recently announced a three-year trial, commencing in 2019, to extend the fishing season of the lower reaches of selected rivers into May. This extended season will mean each of the following sections of Brumbys Creek, the Macquarie, Meander and South Esk rivers will open on 3 August 2019 and close on 31 May 2020.

The waters are:

- Brumbys Creek downstream from Weir 1 to the junction with the Macquarie River,
- Macquarie River downstream from its junction with Brumbys Creek to the South Esk River,
- Meander River downstream from Strath Bridge (on the C735) to the South Esk River, and
- South Esk River downstream from the Storeys Creek Road Bridge at Avoca, to Beams Hollow upstream of Lake Trevallyn, delineated by a straight line between grid reference E506358 N5406426 and E506467 N 5406414 (but not Lake Trevallyn).

This matter was actioned from the Tasmanian Inland Recreational Fishery Management Plan 2018-28, the guiding document for managing Tasmania's recreational trout fishery.

Fisheries Performance Assessments (FPA)

Bradys Chain of Lakes – FPA Preliminary Results

During May – June 2019, we weighed, measured, tagged and fin-clipping 7,048 brown trout collected from the River Derwent fish trap at Lake King William and transferred them into the Bradys Chain of Lakes (Bradys Lake, Lake Binney & Tungatinah Lagoon). Of this total, 2 750 were adipose fin-clipped and released into Lake Binney with 750 released into Tungatinah Lagoon. The remaining 3 548 fish were tagged with a green numeric tag and released into Bradys Lake. These fish formed the basis for a fish population estimate and assessment for the system.

A follow up survey was conducted during 22-25 July 2019 to estimate the number of fish in the lakes and examine the length structure of the brown trout population. Data from the survey is still being assessed with results to be provided as they become available. The release of tagged trout into Bradys Lake will also provide us with a basic idea of fish movement within the system, and may be into Bronte Lagoon.

Pleasingly, the average weight for ‘resident’ (non-tagged and no fin clip), was similar to the transferred fish (i.e. tagged & fin clipped fish) (see table 1 and figure 1). The condition of fish was reasonable with most fish in fair to good condition.

Category	Description	Average	Count	Minimum	Maximum
Resident fish no-tag or clip	Weight (g)	515	226	30	1 220
	Length (mm)	365	226	142	478
Tagged and fin clipped fish	Weight (g)	540	88	230	810
	Length (mm)	369	88	283	446
Total all fish	Weight (g)	521	314	30	1 220
	Length (mm)	366	314	142	478

Table 1: Summary statistics for brown trout, Bradys Chain of Lakes, July 2019.

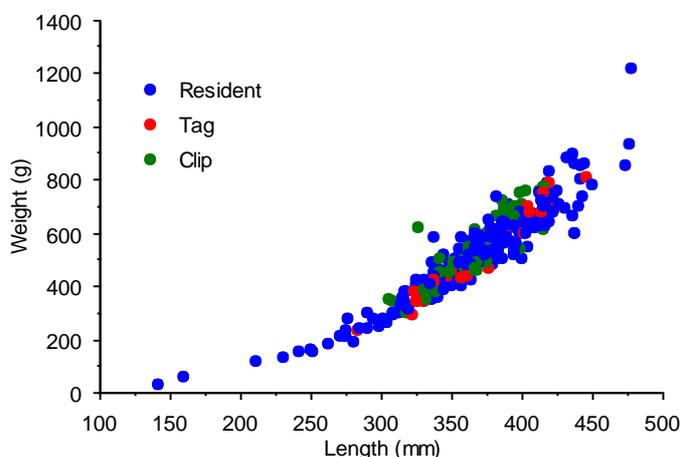


Figure 1: Length/weight comparison for resident, tagged and adipose fin-clipped brown trout, Bradys Chain of Lakes, July 2019.

There was evidence of recruitment of young fish into the fishery, with 9 percent of resident fish (i.e. fish without tags or fin-clips) being under 300 mm length.

While the total number of fish captured and the population estimate indicate the abundance of fish is moderately low, it was not quite as low as we had expected. Consequently, the outlook for the Bradys Chain of Lakes for the rest of the season looks good.

Our Officers will be checking angler's catches throughout the season to see how many tagged and fin-clipped fish are being captured. Anglers are also encouraged to report the capture of any tagged fish or fin clipped fish, by phoning or emailing the IFS. Contact - email: infish@ifs.tas.gov.au, Phone 1300 INFISH (1300 463474).

Blackmans Lagoon – FPA Preliminary Results

During 16-18 July, we undertook a FPA at Blackmans Lagoon to follow up on the 500 brown trout fin-clipped and transferred into the lagoon in early May 2019. These fish were sourced from Liawenee Canal and averaged 850 g. Over the two nights of the survey we set 80 box traps capturing 291 brown trout and 41 rainbow trout. Of the 291 brown trout captured, 29 were identified as having an adipose fin clip. Table 2 below shows the summary results for the average weight and length for both resident (non-clipped fish) and transferred fish (clipped). The average weight for resident brown trout was an impressive 1 739 g with an average length of 505 mm. Based on average weight and observed condition, even the transferred fish had started to put on weight. There were no signs of any 'resident' fish under 400 mm length, this indicates that there is no natural recruitment.



Fisheries Officer Christopher Bassano. Blackmans Lagoon is a favourite spot early in the season.

Category	Description	Average	Count	Minimum	Maximum
Resident fish no-tag or clip	Weight (g)	1 739	262	1 020	2 760
	Length (mm)	505	262	408	594
Tagged and fin clipped fish	Weight (g)	951	29	600	1 310
	Length (mm)	435	29	360	490
Total all fish	Weight (g)	1 660	291	600	2 760
	Length (mm)	498	291	360	594

Table 2: Summary statistics for brown trout, Blackmans Lagoon, July 2019.

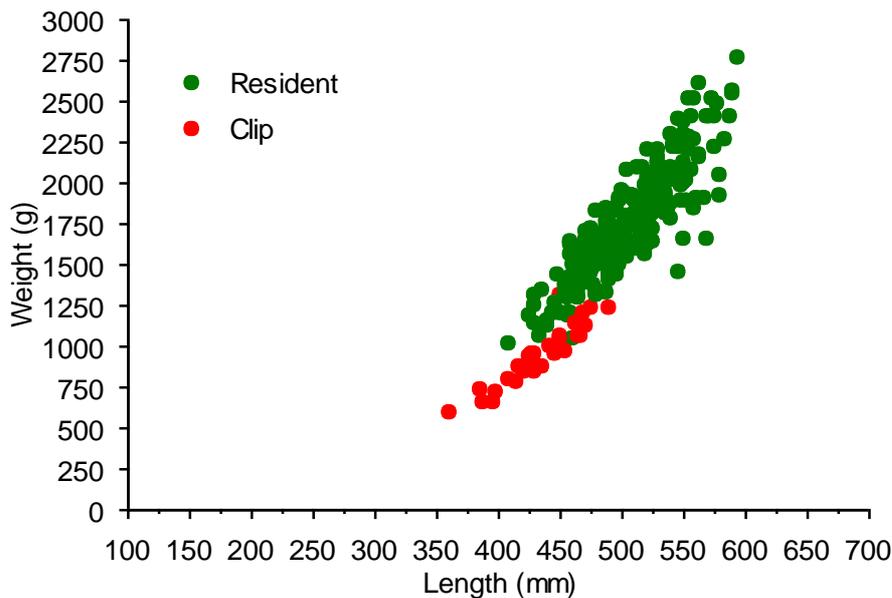


Figure 2: Length/weight comparison for resident and adipose fin-clipped brown trout, Blackmans Lagoon, July 2019.

There were 41 rainbow trout captured at an average weight of 1511 g and average length 453 mm. These fish consisted of two groups, those between 300-400 mm length that were stocked as yearlings during the closed season, and those stocked over the past two years as either adults, yearlings or fingerlings. All were in good/excellent condition.

In short, the Blackmans Lagoon fishery is performing well, with good numbers of larger, well-conditioned brown and rainbow trout available.

Curries River Reservoir

We did an assessment of the brown trout fishery at Curries River Reservoir on 26-28 August to follow up on the 1175 brown trout fin-clipped and transferred into the lagoon during the closed season. These fish had their adipose fin clipped, meaning they will be distinct from any 'resident' (unclipped) fish. This allows us to examine the population and look at the proportion of fin-clipped fish within the lake, as well as looking at how many of these fish make up anglers' catches.

The results of all three FPA's will help to determine future fish transfer numbers and regulations for each fishery into the future.

Anglers Access Program

River Access

Annual maintenance of river access infrastructure is underway and is being coordinated to be complete in time for the arrival of international visitors for the World Fly Fishing Championship 2019.

Maintenance will include upgrading signs on rivers targeted for extended seasons (Meander, Macquarie and South Esk rivers and Brumbys Creek).

In line with the recent state budget, work has commenced to extend the Anglers Access Program across priority rivers and lake in the State, with further updates to be provided as available.

Brushy Lagoon

The IFS recently completed road works at Brushy Lagoon to the eastern boat ramp. The works included slashing of roadside vegetation and grading of the road.

Four Springs Lake

Drainage work has been completed at the Four Spring Lake car park. Drains have been cleared to prevent water overflowing into the car park. The brass commemoration plaque that was removed over summer has been replaced.

Tooms Lake

MAST and IFS have jointly funded maintenance to the Tooms Lake boat ramp to coincide with low lake levels. Stumps and logs were removed from the vicinity of the ramp and the ramp extended with coarse gravel. The lake level on opening weekend was -2.6 m below the spillway. Boats were still able to launch with care however any further fall in the lake level will make launching impossible or difficult.



Removing log hazards from in front of the Tooms Lake boat ramp while the water level is low

Brown trout transfers and rainbow trout stocking



IFS staff member, Brett Mawbey, undertaking a wild adult brown trout transfer

We use adult wild trout transfers from Central Highlands' spawning runs to stock assisted fisheries. Experience has shown that stocking with smaller hatchery and triploid fish in larger waters is unreliable. In some years, few or no fish stocked reached the minimum takeable size.

Trap	Number of brown trout transferred
Liawenee Canal, yingina/Great Lake	11 997
River Derwent, Lake King William	10 663
Sand Banks Creek, yingina/Great Lake	1 718
Tumbledown Creek, Arthurs Lake	5
TOTAL	24 383

The three Arthurs Lake fish traps were set up on the 11 June and dismantled on 19 July 2019. The trap at Tumbledown Creek caught 3 093, Scotch Bobs Creek 798 and Hydro Creek 826. All fish, except the five from Tumbledown Creek, were counted and released upstream to spawn.

Rainbow trout stockings from Huon Aquaculture Company, Millybrook Hatchery, were completed in early June with 14 137 triploid rainbow trout released into public fisheries around the state.

Carp Management Program

Net repairs for the upcoming season

Over the last few months the level of Lake Sorell began to rise steadily, resulting in water starting to push back towards the marshes. This is perfect for the lead up to the start of the carp fishing season in October. The increasing temperatures and inflows from marshes should create ideal environmental cues, encouraging any



IFS staff member, Brock Cuthbertson, out of the winter weather undertaking gill net repairs

remaining carp to push inshore. Throughout June and July, the priority was to ensure all fishing gill nets and barrier nets were checked and repaired for any holes. This involved walking and repairing the 14 km of barrier net set around the margins of the lake, to stop carp from getting into prime wetland spawning sites. Several km of gillnets were also repaired and constructed in anticipation of warming waters and rain events. This included gillnets used in active fishing operations, and gillnets installed behind barrier nets to capture any carp which may breach the barrier net.

Fisheries compliance

Compliance statistics from 1/7/2019 to 19/8/2019

During this period the IFS achieved:

- 771 angling licence inspections
- 124 recreational vessel inspections under Marine and Safety legislation.
- 1 defendant convicted of 2 offences in the Magistrates Court.
- 8 offences detected and dealt with via Infringement or Conditional Caution notices.
- \$5014.86 in court fines.
- \$1008.00 in infringement notice fines.

For infringeable offences dealt with to date, 44% were by infringement notice and 56% were by conditional cautions.

Prosecution Offences

In Devonport Magistrates Court on 1 August 2019 Kerry James Davison, of Devonport, appeared on matters relating to the illegal taking of whitebait. Mr Davison was found guilty of exceeding the 2 kg daily bag limit, and exceeding the 10 kg possession limit. Mr Davison was found by our officers in possession of 37.9 kg of whitebait. He had also taken 6.15 kg from the River Forth in one day. The charges were laid as a result of a joint Inland Fisheries, Parks and Wildlife and Tasmania Police Operation conducted in November 2017. Mr Davison was convicted on both charges and was fined \$4 929, along with \$85.86 in court costs. During sentencing, the Magistrate referred to Mr Davison's actions as a serious matter. The Magistrate also said that people needed to fish within the regulations for the fishery to remain sustainable and acknowledged that the sentence was intended to provide a general deterrence to those who would also consider breaking the laws relating to the taking and possession of whitebait.

Offences dealt with in the Magistrates Court of Tasmania during the period are summarised in the following table:

Prosecution offences (Magistrates Court)	Number
Take excess whitebait	1
Possess excess whitebait	1
Total	2

Compliance operations have detected and dealt with 8 offences so far during the 2019-20 angling season:

- 7 committed under the Inland Fisheries Act 1995; and
- 1 committed under the Marine and Safety Authority Act 1997

Of the 771 angling licence inspections conducted, 99.1% of these people found to be complying with Inland Fisheries rules.

Boating safety continues to be a focus, with 124 vessels checked so far this angling season. Pleasingly, no safety offences have so far been detected, with the only offence being not displaying vessel identifying number.

Offences	Infringement Notice Offence	Infringement notice offences endorsed as Conditional Caution	Total	Detection Rate (total/number of checks undertaken)
Taking acclimatised or indigenous fish without an angling licence	1	2	3	0.38
Possessing assembled rod, reel and line without an angling licence	1	0	1	0.12
Not complying with Ministerial order about taking fish-closed water	1	1	2	0.25
Take more fish than allowed for water	0	1	1	0.12
Fail to display registration number	0	1	1	0.80
Total	3	5	8	

Club events, meetings and dinners 2019

June

- Anglers Alliance Tasmania, General Meeting
- Southern Tasmanian Licensed Anglers Association, annual general meeting and dinner
- Longford Fishing Club annual general meeting
- Kingborough Anglers Club

July

- New Norfolk Anglers Association, Dinner and Trophy Night
- Bridgewater Anglers Club AGM
- Van Diemen's Fly Fishers Club



The old and the new of IFS at the Longford Fishing Club AGM

Stocking April to July 2019

Water	Species	Number
Big Waterhouse Lake	Rainbow Trout	600
Blackmans Lagoon	Rainbow Trout	500
Blackmans Lagoon	Brown Trout	500
Bradys Lake	Brown Trout	3 409
Briseis Lake	Rainbow Trout	500
Bruisers Lagoon	Brown Trout	50
Brushy Lagoon	Brown Trout	1 903
Brushy Lagoon	Rainbow Trout	1 500
Camerons Lagoon	Brown Trout	50
Carter Lakes	Brown Trout	200
Craigbourne Dam	Brown Trout	1 243
Craigbourne Dam	Rainbow Trout	1 500
Craigbourne Dam	Atlantic Salmon	91
Curries River Reservoir	Brown Trout	1 175
Curries River Reservoir	Rainbow Trout	400
Dee Lagoon	Rainbow Trout	1 000
Four Springs Lake	Brown Trout	4 040
Four Springs Lake	Rainbow Trout	1 500
Lake Binney	Brown Trout	2 889
Lake Botsford	Brown Trout	200
Lake Crescent	Brown Trout	1 000
Lake Dulverton	Rainbow Trout	200
Lake Duncan	Brown Trout	30
Lake Kara	Rainbow Trout	524
Lake Leake	Brown Trout	1 050
Lake Leake	Rainbow Trout	2 013
Lake Lynch	Brown Trout	30
Lake Paget	Brown Trout	50
Penstock Lagoon	Brown Trout	3 022
Penstock Lagoon	Rainbow Trout	1 500
Pet Reservoir	Rainbow Trout	500
Pet Reservoir	Brown Trout	1 000

Water	Species	Number
Pioneer Lake	Rainbow Trout	400
Rocky Lagoon	Brown Trout	100
Second Lagoon	Brown Trout	100
South Riana Dam	Brown Trout	392
Tooms Lake	Rainbow Trout	1 500
Tooms Lake	Brown Trout	1 100
Tungatinah Lagoon	Brown Trout	750
Totals	Brown Trout	24 283
	Rainbow Trout	14 137
	Atlantic Salmon	91

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