

# Manawatu River Fishery

Lower Reaches



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Wellington Region

The Manawatu River is a river of change over its 170km. It is very small where it emerges from the eastern Ruahine Range west of Norsewood, with virtually all its headwaters readily available to the angler as it passes through farmed rolling hill country. The river quickly becomes medium sized and then comparatively large after the Tiraumea and Mangatainoka Rivers join it at Ngawaparua, at SH2, before it disappears through the Manawatu Gorge to meet the sea at Foxton. This pamphlet describes angler access to the river between the Manawatu Gorge and Foxton Beach. A separate pamphlet provides access information to the river upstream of the gorge.

There are healthy populations of brown and rainbow trout throughout, with perch around Palmerston North and downstream. The majority of angling effort in the lower Manawatu River takes place between the gorge and Palmerston North. There is very good access to and along the river off the Palmerston North city walkway, however there are only a modest number of access points to the river upstream and downstream of Palmerston North.

Fishing opportunities are limited downstream of the Opiki Bridge (Rangitane Road) due to few access points and often discoloured water. With the right conditions the fishing can be as good as further upstream and in addition to trout and perch there are some non-sports fish species - e.g. mullet, kahawai and herring.

## **ATTENTION ANGLERS!**

Sections of riverbed covered by this pamphlet may be in private ownership, which means anglers do not necessarily have a right of access. Some landowners may have agreed to anglers having access along the riverbed without having to obtain permission first.

Please respect the privilege of access. Once you are on the river, stay within the riverbed and do not wander on to adjacent farmland without the express permission of the landowner. If

you require clarification around where you are legally entitled to go, please visit the Walking Access Commission website - [www.wams.org.nz](http://www.wams.org.nz) - and use the public access layers.

### **Conditions Of Access:**

- NO dogs. NO camping. NO fires. NO vehicles on the riverbed.
- Leave gates as you find them.

### **Please Note:**

Fish & Game has endeavoured to show where legal public access exists to and along this river. Because of a variety of factors beyond our control, this is a guideline only. The onus of avoiding trespassing on private land rests with the angler and, where doubt arises, landowner permission should be sought. If any difficulty occurs through the use of this information, please contact Wellington Fish & Game.

### **General Fishing Information**

All methods are suitable throughout the river and traditional bait fishing is particularly productive in the reaches downstream of Palmerston North where the river slows and there is also a good prospect of catching perch, mullet and herring. This part of the river is where spin fishing comes into its own and with experience can out-fish fly angling. Spoons (copper over black) and blade spinners (copper with black, green or red bodies) work best as will Rapalas in faster water and/or discoloured conditions.

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#### **1 Ashhurst Bridge**

On the Ashhurst side of the river, turn off SH3 on the upstream side of the bridge and there is a parking area with a short track to the river. This provides excellent access to a considerable length of water on the Manawatu River and also the lower Pohangina River. It is a great area to take the family fishing combined with picnics and swimming.

#### **2 Raukawa Road**

Raukawa Road runs off SH3, direct to the river, about 3km towards Palmerston North from Ashhurst. Park at the end of the road

ensuring you do not block any farm gates. Climb over the stile at the fence by the stop bank (sign posted) and walk directly to the river. Access along the river is permitted courtesy of Higgins Aggregates Ltd (downstream for approximately 2km) and Blackleys Construction Ltd (upstream for approximately 1.5km). Both these companies have gravel quarrying operations adjacent to the river and it is very important anglers do not wander through these areas. Please keep to the river's edge. If fishing upstream, it is possible during low summer flows for anglers competent at wading rivers to cross to the true left side.

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## Orrs Road

Orrs Road runs off Fitzherbert East Road, which runs from the Ashhurst Bridge to Aokautere. Drive to the end of Orrs Road and park about 100m past a big red barn that is on your left-hand side and before the gate (locked). Walk down the gravel track to the bottom of the river terrace and either turn right off the track and cross the paddock to the river to fish upstream or carry on about 1km on the gravel track to the river.

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## Te Matai Road

Access to the river is possible through Higgins Aggregates Plant at the eastern end of Te Matai Road. Anglers must call in to the plant office to check that access is okay and ask the best way to the river. Please be aware that this is a quarry where heavy machinery operates and where deep holes are being excavated. The quarry site is privately owned so please respect the access and report to Higgins any suspicious activity around their plant and machinery. Vandalism can be a problem and anglers can help by being vigilant.

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## Palmerston North

On the true right of the river between Riversdale Road (off the city end of Te Matai Road) and Maxwells Line there is a public walkway which runs for over 9km. Access to mid sections of the walkway is possible from a number of streets within the city - for example Ruahine Street, Albert Street, Fitzherbert Avenue, Dittmer Drive. The river can be fished using the walkway as access although much of the bank to the waters edge is steep and tree-lined.

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**Staces Road**

From Aokautere travel down Staces Road to its end. Park without obstructing any gateway, shut any gate you open, and walk across the paddock directly to the river. Alternatively, off Staces Road turn left into Pinfold Road, travel to its end, park without obstructing any gateway and walk directly to the river.

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**Maxwells Line**

Access is possible off the end of Maxwells Line in two places. First, travel to the end of Maxwells Line and go straight ahead over the stop bank to Paneiri Park, and park in the gravelled carpark 150m from the stop bank. Walk over the rough ground directly to the river - about 200m. Alternatively, turn right immediately before the stop bank, through gates onto the road that goes to the Palmerston North City Landfill. The gates at the entrance to this road are open from 7am to 4.30pm Monday to Saturday and 12 noon to 4pm Sundays and Public Holidays. Drive past the landfill entrance down to the Higgins Aggregates Plant (1.6km from the end of Maxwells Line) and call in to the plant office to ask the best way to the river and where to park safely. Please be aware that this is a quarry site where heavy machinery operates and deep holes are being excavated. The quarry site is privately owned so please respect the access and report any suspicious activity around their plant and machinery. Vandalism can be a problem and anglers can help by being vigilant.

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**Camp Road**

From the end of Camp Road park without obstructing any gateway and proceed directly to the river. Anglers are not permitted to fish upstream from the end of the road. There is only legal public access downstream from the end of Camp Road and this extends for about 1.8km to the NZ Pharmaceutical factory.

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**Karere Road**

Karere Road runs off SH56 3km southwest of Longburn. Travel to the end of the sealed road up and over the stop bank. From here the road becomes a gravel and dirt track which should only be used by two-wheel-drive vehicles when dry. Follow the track all the way to the river bed.

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**Jackeytown Road**

Jackeytown Road runs off SH56, 7km southwest of Longburn. Travel to the end of the road (just over the stop bank), park without obstructing any gateway, and walk directly, about 300m, across the paddock, through some trees to the river. Fishing downstream for about 700m is over private land (where access has been negotiated) then a marginal strip (public land) starts and progresses downstream for another 1.5km or so.

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**Opiki Bridge**

The Opiki Bridge crosses the Manawatu River on SH56 just 1.4km north of the small settlement of Opiki. Access to the river on the true right can be obtained by phoning Robert Brookes, 06 329 0087. The Brookes will explain how best to get to the river and where to park safely. The extent of this access covers about 500m downstream of the Opiki Bridge to about 4.5km upstream. This then links to the legal public access (1.5km marginal strip) leading toward Jackeytown Road (refer to Access 10).

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**Moutoa Conservation Area**

Whirokino Bridge (upstream access): Heading north on SH1, cross the Manawatu and immediately on the north side of the bridge turn right and drive up Whirikino Road about 1.7km. Before the road curves away from the stop bank go through a gate onto a track (only suitable when dry). Alternatively carry on along Whirikino Road to Vickerman Road and travel to the end. Park up and walk directly to the river. Do not use the formed track that links Kere Kere Road and Vickerman Road - this is private.

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**Matakarapa Road**

Whirokino Bridge (downstream access): Turn left off SH1 on the north side of the river and drive down Matakarapa Road to fish the area from the bridge to about 1.5km downstream of the boat ramp. Alternatively it is possible to park on the south side of the bridge where there is a rest area and walk downstream.

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**Foxton Beach**

Travel to Foxton Beach. Fishing for mainly non-sports fish species (mullet, kahawai, herrings) is popular at the boat ramp

and at the river mouth, and anglers also pick up the occasional sea-run trout (for which a licence is required). To get to the boat ramp turn left off Seabury Ave (the main road through Foxton Beach) into Linklater Ave then left into Hartley Street and the ramp is about 300m along. Alternatively, go to the end of Seabury Ave, turn left and follow the road around to the Foxton Beach Camp, turn left again just before the camp onto a well formed dirt road, go past the Yacht Club, and follow tracks out to the river mouth. Once past the camp you are driving on sand suitable only for four-wheel-drive vehicles.

*Access information online: [www.fishandgame.nz/access.org/wellington](http://www.fishandgame.nz/access.org/wellington)*

*Access online  
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the QR Code*



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