

INLAND FISHERIES SERVICE



TASMANIAN WHITEBAIT FISHERY

REGULATORY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2011-2015

Introduction

The recreational whitebait fishery commenced in 1990. In 2006 a management plan was developed for the fishery which outlined aspects of the fishery's management for the period 2006-2010. Much of the information and over-arching principles remain relevant and unchanged. That plan will remain as a resource for the future management of the fishery but this plan will provide the basis for the management of the fishery for the next 5 years (2011-2015). This plan will be limited in scope to the regulatory aspects of the fishery. The *Inland Fisheries (Recreational Fishing) Regulations 2009* and *Inland Fisheries (Seasons and Waters) Order 1996* prescribe some aspects of the regulations, however, the licence provides the basis detailing other aspects such as waters open to fishing.

An annual licence is required to take whitebait and the cost may be at least subject to movement in the annual Consumer Price Index.

Fundamental Management Principles

The previous whitebait plan established some underlying principles for the management of the fishery which will be maintained in this plan. These are;

- a regional system of rivers open for fishing;
- a classification of river based on river size and fishing sustainability whereby large rivers (eg Derwent) are open every year whilst smaller rivers are opened and closed in alternative seasons, generally;
- a daily catch limit with a possession limit;
- 6 week fishing season.

Season and Fishing Times

The season is open for 6 weeks commencing on the 1 October every year. Whitebait can only be taken between the hours from sunrise and sunset.

Catch and Possession Limits

Under the previous plan the maximum daily catch limit was 1 kg. This maximum daily catch will be increased to 2 kg. This change will allow fishers to take advantage of an abundant whitebait run on any given day and maintain total harvesting constraints for the fishery's sustainability. Maximum catch per licence for the season will remain at 10 kg.

Waters Open to Whitebait Fishing

The schedule of waters open to whitebait fishing for the period 2011-2015 is provided below. Franklin Rivulet is not included in the schedule. The schedule follows on from the principles and schedule established in the previous plan. It remains illegal to take whitebait downstream of the seaward limit on any water. Above the seaward limit the entire length of a river is open

to whitebait fishing unless certain sections are specifically closed. Tributary streams remain closed.

Table 1. Schedule of rivers open and closed for whitebait fishing, 2011-2015.

Region	River	River type	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
			2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
North	Great Forester River	2					
	Little Forester River	2					
	Brid River	2					
	Tamar River	1					
South	Derwent River	1					
	Huon River	1					
North West	Rubicon River	2					
	Mersey River	1					
	Don River	2					
	Forth River	1					
	Leven River	1					
	Inglis River	1					
	Black River	2					
	Duck River	2					
	Montagu River	2					
West	Pieman River	1					
	Henty River	1					

Key Open Closed

Method of Fishing

The method of fishing remains unchanged. The opening of the whitebait net must not exceed 120 cm in circumference nor should any part of the whitebait net exceed 120 cm. The net cannot be fitted with a funnel, screen, valve or other device that impedes the escape of fish and must not be fitted with or used in conjunction with any wings or other structures that may divert fish into the net. The licensee must be within 8 metres of their net when fishing. The net can be held by hand or tied off to suitable vegetation or staked using a metal or plastic peg only. Natural vegetation cannot be used as a stake. The net must carry a tag showing the number of the whitebait licence held by the owner.

Fishing near Weirs

Whitebait fishing will be prohibited downstream and upstream of selected weirs to protect vulnerable aggregations or fish passing from a fish pass. Fishing will be prohibited 50 m below and 50 m above water gauging weirs on the Rubicon and Duck rivers. Fishing in the vicinity of the Forth River Weir is now permitted following modifications to the weir which has facilitated the passage of whitebait.

Other Regulatory Matters

All persons, except those who are 10 years of age or younger, require a whitebait licence to fish for whitebait. A whitebait licence does not permit the sale of whitebait. It is an offence for a person to have a whitebait net at or near an inland water unless the person has a whitebait licence and the particular water is open to whitebait fishing at the time.