

Inland Fisheries Service

Report to anglers



November 2019 to February 2020

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Hot topics

Lake Sorell opens

On 8 February 2020, Lake Sorell was opened to the public and anglers.

This is a major milestone in the Carp Management Program (CMP) but it is not the completion of the CMP and further periods of closure will be required at times to achieve eradication.

Some things to know:

- The intense carp fishing effort has reduced the trout population but we expect it to rebuild naturally over the coming years.
- With lots of rocky reefs and shallow sections, anglers should be cautious while boating.
- Campgrounds and boat ramps are available at Dago Point, which will be the primary point of public access.
- Silver Plains Road is closed and boat launching is not possible from the Silver Plains boat ramp due to low lake levels.

Angling regulations:

- Season: Saturday 8 February 2020 to Sunday 3 May 2020
- Species: Brown trout, rainbow trout
- Fishing Methods: Artificial lure, fly fishing
- Minimum size: 300 mm
- Daily bag limit: 12 fish for both species combined

What to do in the unlikely event that you see or catch a carp:

- Report any carp sightings and captures to 0438 338 530
- Humanely kill any carp caught.
- Take carp to the IFS Lake Crescent Field Station 22 Laycock Drive Lake Crescent, and place in the bin provided.

This will be a great opportunity for anglers to reunite themselves with the lake and a chance for a new generation of anglers to experience Lake Sorell for the first time.

Lakes Sorell and Crescent Water Management Plan Review

The first consultative meeting held Thursday 13 February.

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The intent is to have a draft for public comment by March 2021.

Trout Fishing Photography Competition 2019-20

The Trout Fishing Photography Competition is back for 2019-20.

We want your best Tasmanian trout fishing photos. Enter photos of fishing families, anglers, scenery and, of course, trout.

1st Place: \$500, 2nd Place: 1 x pair Neoprene waders (Fly 'n Dry), 3rd and 4th Place: 10 x Lures (Hueys Lures).

Entries is free and will be accepted up until 5pm on Tuesday 5 May 2020.

Conditions apply - see [entry form](#)

You can submit up to 6 images with maximum size 5 MB each.

Images will be showcased and the winner announced at Trout Weekend 2020 (Sat 16 and Sun 17 May).

Download the [Entry Form](#), fill it out, attach your photos and email it all to us at photos@ifs.tas.gov.au

WFFC2019 30 November – 6 December 2019

We introduced temporary regulation changes for venues in the lead up and during the event, normal regulations were reinstated after the event.

The extension of the Meander River Anglers Access Project was completed ready for the competition.

Angler Advocates – We invited selected high profile championship anglers to stay on for one week of fishing with the IFS team, video interviews will be available on the IFS website as they are completed. This was supported by Tourism Tasmania activities to showcase Tasmania to the advocates.

2017-18 Survey of Recreational Fishing in Tasmania

Results of a recreational fishing survey undertaken by the Institute Marine Antarctic Studies covered both inland and marine recreational fishers was released 12 February.

The survey shows that recreational fishers spend \$168 million annually.

106 000 Tasmanians fish for recreation each year, 25% in fresh water. A report is available online.

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Clean Up Australia

We participated in corporate Clean Up Australia Day today. We focussed on Angler Access sites along the River Derwent. The section from New Norfolk to Gretna from the Lyell Highway and then back down along the Glenora Road returning to New Norfolk was done.

We also cleaned up the lake Crescent and Sorell boat ramp areas.

Anglers appear to be keeping the fishing locations relatively clean. The road side verges, where cars can pull over, provide focal points for people to drop off garbage.

We collected numerous tyres, mattresses along with household rubbish. Staff enjoyed the pleasant weather and the opportunity to try and make a difference to the litter problem.

Anglers Access

River Access

A new version of the Meander River angler access brochure is available.

It includes information on the access tracks developed for the World Fly Fishing Championship 2019. The tracks are upstream of Jackeys Creek and at new access at Porters Bridge.

On the River Leven, we engaged contractors to remove a large dead tree from the ford at Lowana Road. The tree was limiting access to the upstream end of Gunns Plains. The tree damaged the landowners pump and our contractors reinstalled it while on site.

At Hobbs Bridge on the River Leven, contractors completed follow up treatment of juvenile willow regrowth. AAT and the Friends of The Leven had previously cleared of willows and replanted natives.

Cumbungi at Four Springs Lake

We monitored and completed follow up control of cumbungi infestation at Four Springs Lake. On Friday 24 January, we inspected the nine known cumbungi infestation sites. We found 20 stems in total at four sites. We cut the stems below the water as this has proven to be a successful control method. We surveyed the remainder of the lake with no new infestations detected.

We will undertake a further inspection in 2021 or sooner if any new infestations are reported.

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St Patricks River Parking Upgrade

The IFS and Crown Land Services have upgraded the parking areas on the St. Patricks River at East Diddleum Road.

The new gravel parking areas provide safe and level parking on the western side of the river. They also prevent environmental damage to the riverbanks from off road vehicles.

Foot access for angling is permitted up and downstream of the bridge.

Stiles installed at Lake Sorell

In anticipation of the temporary re-opening of Lake Sorell, we installed a new stile at Interlaken Road providing access to Kermodes Marsh. At Kermodes Bay we installed two stiles on the lakeshore to assist access around the marsh at the high water mark.

Hatchery

Brook trout in Tasmania

We are undertaking surveys looking in the catchments of the four assisted brook trout fisheries, Clarence Lagoon, Lakes Plimsoll, Rolleston and Selina on the west coast. We are looking for evidence of natural recruitment and self-sustaining populations of wild fish that may be used to support these fisheries.

Recently, we completed the survey at Clarence Lagoon and adult fish up to 2.6kg exist, but there was no definitive evidence of natural recruitment through successful spawning. Limited spawning may take place, but not enough to sustain a viable fishery without assistance.

Brook trout naturally occur on the Arctic coast of Canada down the eastern United States. They prefer cold water and are sensitive to poor oxygenation and pollution. Although called 'trout, they are in fact, a char.

Since 1883, brook trout were stocked into a variety of fisheries around Tasmania. Brook trout failed to establish due to the dominance of brown trout. For this reason, the four established populations of brook trout are in lakes that are free from brown and rainbow trout. Brook trout are a sought after species amongst Tasmanian anglers and provide diversity to the Tasmanian recreational trout fishery.

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Pest fish

Redfin perch survey North East

We were recently contacted regarding the presence of Redfin perch (*perca fluviatilis*) in a private dam located in the states far north east. Redfin perch have not been previously recorded in this area of the state. Redfin perch are listed as a noxious species and are an undesirable pest fish that are a voracious feeder on a wide variety of invertebrates including other fish species. The potential to spread further from their range may have devastating effects. We have undertaken sampling with an electro-fisher in the outflow creek and within the nearby Ringarooma catchment. No redfin were recorded during a recent survey and it appears they may be contained within the farm dam. We are currently considering our options and further work will be required in the area to fully understand the potential risk.

Carp Management Program

Carp numbers dwindling in Lake Sorell



Jonah Yick and Rob Cordwell celebrate after catching the first carp for the 2019/20 season using the electro boat.

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We removed five carp from Lake Sorell from November to January despite intensive fishing. Two in November with the electro-boat. The rest in gill nets, two in December, and two in January. This is also the total number of carp caught for the 2019-20 season. We removed 34 carp for the same period in 2018-19.

We set gill nets over a wide area of the lake. Structure and habitat were a priority. We set most nests around the shallow areas in response to potential rising water temperatures and lake levels. Others we set in deeper water over the rocky reefs where carp have been known to favour.

Of the five carp caught, four were female and one was male. Males mature faster than females. They are caught first because of their drive to push inshore looking for spawning opportunities. It is likely that in the final stages of eradication will be female biased.

Carp Management Program staff were faced with some of the lowest catch per unit effort ever encountered, despite maintain the high netting effort during the peak weather conditions. The big drop in carp caught so far this season continues the trend of declining catch rates as the 2009 cohort is fished out.

In addition to gillnets, we use big fyke nets stitched into barrier nets, the boat electro-fisher, and backpack electro-fishers. The combination of all these methods ensure we are targeting all sizes of carp.

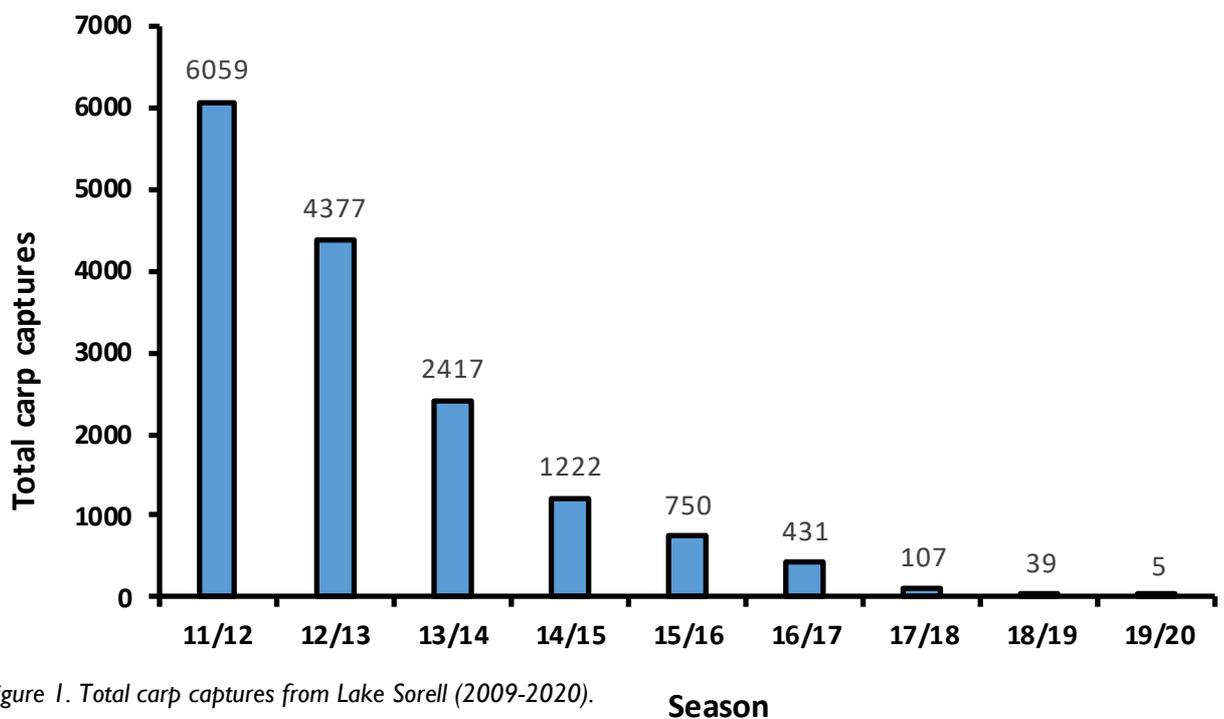


Figure 1. Total carp captures from Lake Sorell (2009-2020).

Juvenile carp surveys started in December. These will continue each month through until March. These surveys check for recent spawning events. Because of low rainfall over the winter and spring, the lake level began falling in October. By December, Lake Sorell was much lower than usual. This meant the majority of marshes were de-watered and the

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amount of available juvenile carp habitat was less. The December survey took three days. We surveyed twelve sites using the backpack-electrofishing and fine-mesh dip nets including Kermodes, Silver Plains, and Robertsons. Fine and standard mesh fyke nets were set in 15 sites around the lake. These target carp in the 30 to 100mm size range. There was no sign of spawning. However, we did find a healthy population of golden galaxias, shortfin eels, tadpoles, and aquatic invertebrates

As of the end of December, the spawning risk has dramatically decreased due to the loss of spawning habitat (de-watering of marshes) and falling lake levels. In January, it is expected that the small number of carp will begin to push back out into deep water, making them much more difficult to catch.

The past six months suggest that eradication of carp from Lake Sorell is close. We estimate that less than five carp remain. The Lake Sorell carp population is struggling. The Jelly Gonad Condition affects 50% of the remaining males. The average size of both males and females is small and there appears to be fewer males than females.



Brock Cuthbertson with the first carp caught in a trammel gill net for the 2019-20

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Compliance

Compliance Statistics from 1/7/2019 – 9/2/2020

During this period the IFS achieved:

- 2,174 angling licence inspections
- 157 whitebait licence inspections
- 345 recreational vessel inspections under Marine and Safety legislation.
- 3 defendants convicted of 35 offences in the Magistrates Court.
- 59 offences detected and dealt with via Infringement or Conditional Caution notices.
- \$30, 759 in court fines.
- \$7, 728 in infringement notice fines.

For infringeable offences dealt with to date, 46% were by infringement notice and 54% were by conditional cautions.

Prosecutions Matters to Date

On Tuesday 26th November 2019, Mitchell William GREY of Smithton appeared in Burnie Magistrates Court in relation to whitebait offences.

The offences took place on the Duck River near Smithton in September 2018. At this time Duck River was closed to the taking of whitebait.

Mr GREY pled guilty to taking and possessing whitebait without a whitebait licence, along with fishing in a closed water and possessing / using a non-permitted net.

Mr GREY was convicted on all charges and was fined \$1793 and ordered to pay \$85 in court costs. This penalty should serve as a warning to anyone choosing to disregard the strict regulations around the taking of whitebait.

Magistrates Court Offence Convictions

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

| Prosecution Offences (Magistrates Court) | Number |
|---|---------------|
| Take whitebait without a licence | 7 |
| Possess whitebait without a licence | 5 |
| Fail to comply with a ministerial order for taking of whitebait | 7 |
| Use non-permitted net | 7 |
| Take excess whitebait | 1 |
| Possess excess whitebait | 1 |
| Possess non-permitted net | 7 |
| Total | 35 |

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Infringement Notice Offence Convictions

Infringeable Offences dealt with during the period are summarised in the following table:

| 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 | 12 | 3 | 15 | 0.68 |
| Possessing assembled rod, reel and line without an angling licence | 5 | 4 | 9 | 0.41 |
| Not complying with Ministerial order about taking fish-closed water | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0.09 |
| Take more fish than allowed for water | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0.09 |
| Take undersize fish | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.05 |
| Use bottle/can as strike indicator | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.05 |
| Take excess whitebait | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.63 |
| Take fish by means other than rod and line | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.05 |
| Use excess rods | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0.09 |
| Fail to display registration number | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.29 |
| Fail to carry minimum safety equipment on vessel | 0 | 15 | 15 | 4.35 |
| Fail wear lifejacket | 7 | 2 | 9 | 2.60 |
| Total | 28 | 31 | 59 | |

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Club events, meetings and dinners

Anglers Alliance Tasmania 17 November 2019

Talk Trout Tasmania 22 November 2019

Bronte Fly Fishing School 9 January 2020

Penguin Angling Club 3 February 2020

North West Fly Fishers Club 11 February 2020

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|--------------|---|--------------|------------|
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