



Whitebaiting this year?

This year sees a reduced season with the whitebait season running from 1 September through to 30 October 2022.

The frequency of flood events has resulted in increased erosion of riverbanks putting some whitebaiter's huts at risk of falling into the river. Hut owners need to be responsible for their structures and take preventative action should they find themselves in this situation. And a friendly reminder - please look after the environment and take all rubbish with you when fishing finishes.

Staff will be visiting rivers across the region to ensure that consented standholders are complying with their resource consents. This includes ensuring stands are constructed to the specifications outlined in the standholders' consent, resolving any disputes that may arise regarding stand locations on the rivers and ensuring all stands, and associated equipment, are removed from rivers at the conclusion of the fishing season.

How people fish in the rivers is managed by the Department of Conservation under the Whitebait Fishing Regulations.

From the Little Wanganui River in the Buller to the Cascade River in South Westland there are:

657
consented stands

spread out over
23 rivers



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Water level radar sensor.

New tools for monitoring West Coast rivers

Water level radar sensors

Council's Hydrology Team is dedicated to monitoring rainfall and river levels across our vast region, from Karamea to Haast. Earlier this year, our Lifeline partners* funded the purchase of fifteen water level radar sensors. These sensors will provide a vital data collection tool to fill in the gaps in the monitoring network. The water level data from these sensors will be invaluable during flood events, helping staff understand how particular parts of the catchments are responding to the rainfall, where inundation may be imminent or infrastructure at risk. To date, three of the sensors have been installed at the Cobden Aromahana Lagoon, and the Styx and Crooked Rivers.

**Lifeline utilities are entities that provide essential infrastructure services to the community such as water, wastewater, transport, energy and telecommunications. These services support communities, enable business, and underpin the provision of public services.*

Velocity radar gun

A radar gun has recently joined the Hydrology Team's toolbox. The radar gun measures the velocity of flowing water in a river. The velocity is measured at set distances across the width of the river, and then using previously obtained surveyed cross sections, the Team do some maths and calculate the river flow from that. This method allows the team to safely gauge the flow when a river is in full flood, or where other methods do not work.



Velocity radar gun.

COMPLIANCE UPDATE

Measuring and Reporting Water Takes 2010 - Amended Regulations

New Government Regulations for Measuring and Reporting Water Takes came into effect in November 2010. This regulation change requires all water users with consented consumptive takes of 5 litres per second, or more, to provide Council with water usage data captured by data loggers/information recorders.

The staged rollout means that Consent holders must have their systems established and be reporting their data to Council by the following dates:

Water permit quantity	When must I comply
20 litres / second or more	By 3 September 2022
10 litres / second or more	By 3 September 2024
5 litres / second or more	By 3 September 2026

If you want to know more

A fact sheet is available on our website – www.wcrc.govt.nz and search 'Essential freshwater information sheets'.

An information letter has been sent to consent holders taking 20 litres/second or more.

Synthetic Nitrogen Reporting (NCAP)

New rules about the amount of synthetic nitrogen that can be applied to pastoral land of 20ha or more came into effect on 1 July 2021. The amount of synthetic nitrogen fertiliser that can be applied must not exceed 190kg of nitrogen/hectare/year, averaged across the grazed land area.

To comply with the new rules, dairy farmers are required to submit records of their synthetic nitrogen use to Council to be reported to the Ministry for the Environment. Councils across New Zealand have worked with Ballance and Ravensdown to develop a National Farm Data Reporting Platform to collect the required data.

The platform went live on 29 August 2022 with farmers notified if this is applicable to them.

If you have any questions about compliance matters please email wcrccompliance@wcr.govt.nz

Want to make paying rates easier?

Council has a number of options for paying rates, however, we do encourage ratepayers to consider setting up a direct debit payment. This assists with ensuring your rates payments are never late and gives you the option as to how you want to spread the payments – weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

Contact our Rates Officer to find out more on **0508 800 118**; or go to our website www.wcrc.govt.nz and search 'direct debit', fill in the form and return to Council.

Are you experiencing issues with paying rates?

Check out Council's Rates remissions and Postponement Policy. Go to www.wcrc.govt.nz

See if you are eligible for a rebate under the Government's Rates Rebate Scheme – www.govt.nz/getting-a-rates-rebate



QUICK FACTS

1500

Structures to be checked

854

Structures inspected since May 2022

Of the structures inspected

579 Low risk

86 Medium risk

189 High risk

Instream structures that are considered high-risk include features such as:

- Shallow or fast flowing water
- Structural overhangs
- Undercuts and drops

These factors can impede the movement of fish

Assessing structures for fish passage

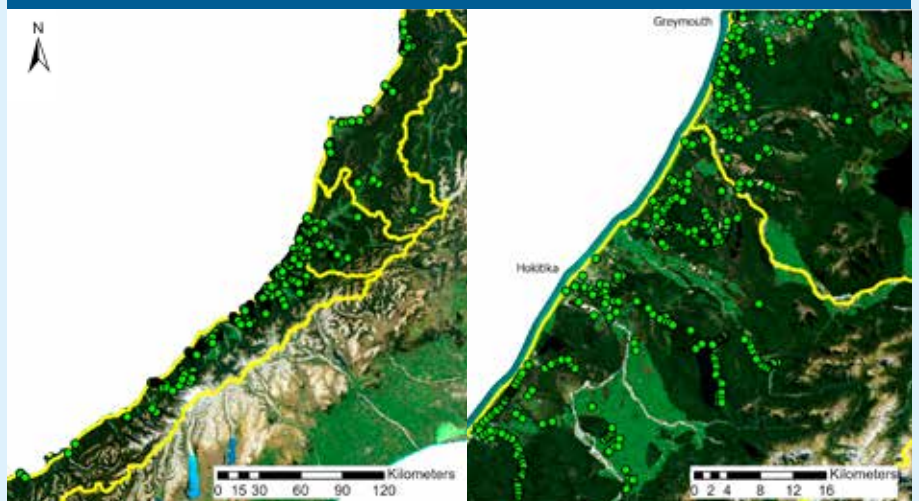
As part of a one-year project funded by the Department of Conservation (DoC), Council staff have been checking culverts, fords and bridges to determine if fish can migrate past them upstream. Council is aiming to inspect 1,500 instream structures across the region, identifying structures that impede fish passage, particularly in catchments that have high biodiversity and iwi value.

Where structures impede the upstream movements of migratory fish, the abundance and diversity of fish communities' deteriorates. For fish communities to thrive, ensuring fish can move past structures is as important as having quality water and habitat.

Initial catchment assessments have focused on roading corridors and reserves, DoC and Ngāi Tahu forestry land in the Chesterfield area, the Totara Valley and wider Greymouth areas. These areas include significant inanga spawning grounds and habitat along the coast. The Totara Valley catchment contains the Totara Lagoon, which is considered one of the most significant whitebait spawning sites on the West Coast.

Following the assessment of structures, Council is required to develop a Fish Passage Action Plan. This will prioritise structures requiring remediation.

Fish passage inspection sites



What can I do after a weather event when it has affected my land?

The West Coast is known for its weather events. This can impact landowners through washouts, bank erosion and the loss of structures.

Permitted activities for flood damage repair

Council has a range of permitted activities in the Regional Land and Water Plan that allows for recent flood damage to be repaired without a resource consent if the conditions in the rules are complied with.

There are permitted activity rules for:

- The repair of structures such as flood protection walls and groynes. One of the key conditions is that the structure is repaired to the same orientation as before the flood and is not increased in size by more than 10 percent.
- Bank reinstatement where the riverbank has been eroded by flood water. The main condition is that the bank is reinstated to the same dimension as what existed prior to the flood event. Works can only be undertaken on privately owned banks. Where the bank is a Council asset, permission needs to be sought.
- The removal of gravel or debris from around structures, and the removal of logs and trees from waterbodies, that have been deposited by the flood event.
- The clearance of drains which may have become blocked from debris or sediment.

We know that it can be a stressful time for landowners after an event. We are here to help. If you need assistance to clarify the permitted activity rules call us on **0508 800 118** and speak to a Consents or Compliance Officer, or email wcrccompliance@wcrcc.govt.nz

Establishing a rating district

After severe weather events where damage may occur to a property, or properties are threatened, we generally receive enquiries about assisting with funding options to undertake coastal or river erosion work on behalf of various ratepayers.

Council currently administers 23 rating districts from Karamea to Neils Beach. These flood, drainage and erosion protection works are funded on a 'user pays' approach recognising the West Coast's very small rating base. The infrastructure within each of these areas is funded by the individual rated properties within the relevant rating district. Often a long-term loan is taken out by Council with repayments made by the rating district over a suitable repayment term. Rating districts vary from very large schemes protecting major towns to small schemes protecting property and providing drainage solutions.

Council does not fund the building of floodwalls or seawalls for the benefit of individual properties as this cost would need to be paid for out of the General Rate raising issues of fairness to our wider ratepayers. Any commitment to a rating district needs to be considered by the Council and reviewed to ensure the debt is appropriate for the rating district's contributing ratepayers, and that debt is managed to prudent levels.

The advice from the Ministry for the Environment is to plan for a one metre increase in sea level rise over the next 100 years. We are also seeing an increase in the number and severity of extreme weather events. Unfortunately building walls is not always the best solution for the future.

There are several potential options for individual properties, or small pockets of properties, affected by coastal erosion or river flooding. These include:

- ▶ Individual protection works that can be carried out under the permitted activity rules in the Land and Water Plan or Coastal Plan, or where they do not meet the conditions of the permitted activity, application for a resource consent for such work can be applied for.
- ▶ Establishing a small rating district for yourself and immediate benefitting neighbours where the cost of the protection works are funded by the rating district via a loan. This approach requires Council support and would have to be considered through the various Council legislative requirements.
- ▶ Considering other adaptation options such as raising the primary residence, or raising services such as electrical circuits and fuse boxes.
- ▶ Considering options for relocating buildings away from the hazard in the longer term.