Council of Freshwater Anglers

Trout fisheries in NSW: are they under threat?

Policy and discussion paper

Contents

Council of Freshwater Anglers

The Council of Freshwater Anglers (NSW) Inc. is the largest freshwater fishing organisation in New South Wales representing in excess of 4,700 members. Since 1958 it has been the recognised body for freshwater anglers in this State, enjoying an effective relationship with government departments and national recreational fishing organisations.

We want your comments

We welcome comments on this document from anglers and other interested parties.
All opinions will be considered and our policy will be kept under constant review.
Before passing this document on to others please check the CFA website to make sure you have the most up to date edition.
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Please contact:
Council of Freshwater Anglers
PO Box 84
Sydney NSW 2001
Australia

Visit our website at www.freshwateranglers.com.au
Email address: cfa@freshwateranglers.com.au

The trout fisheries of NSW are under pressure from a number of directions. There is lobbying from some "conservationists" who see trout as a major threat to biological diversity in our rivers. There is also pressure from some managers in government departments who share some of those views and also believe that the scarce government funds and resources they have at their disposal should be devoted to improving the status of just our native fish species.

These are not new problems—there has always been opposition to trout from some quarters, but over the past few years the increasing need for urgent action to protect our natural environment has once again put trout under the spotlight. Recent changes to NSW Fisheries' trout stocking policies have also concerned anglers.

The Council of Freshwater Anglers is committed to understanding all viewpoints and agreeing a course of action that will ensure the best outcome for our recreational activity and the environment. We are not opposed to the "green" movement—few groups of people could claim such common commitment to the care of our natural environment as freshwater anglers and conservationists. But we believe that trout present less of a threat than the anti-trout lobby imagines, and that any damage caused in the past has been geographically and biologically limited and difficult, if not impossible, to reverse.

We also believe that the protection of biodiversity need not prevent maintenance and further development of the internationally-acclaimed trout fishery in NSW, especially considering its cultural and economic importance to many rural communities in the State.

The Council of Freshwater Anglers' policy on trout stocking

The CFA represents responsible anglers who are committed to conservation. We don't pursue our recreation if or where it will cause damage to the natural environment.

We support stocking of trout into declared trout waters where stocking is necessary to sustain a viable recreational fishery. We do not support translocation of native or introduced species if there is an adverse effect on biodiversity.

We believe that while there is evidence that trout have had an impact on some other freshwater animals, that impact has been relatively minor and geographically limited. In their present limited range of distribution, trout are not a major danger to biodiversity in NSW.

We do not argue for an increased distribution range for trout and if it can be proven that some restrictions of the current range is necessary, we accept such restrictions as long as there is proper consideration to minimise the impact on recreational angling.

Many changes have been made to our natural aquatic environment, including introduction of fish and plant species, changes to natural river flows, farming practices, pollution, dams and weirs, climatic change and numerous recreational uses. We believe that trout are one of the less harmful aspects of those changes and that any efforts to eradicate trout would be ineffective and a waste of resources that could be better directed to other conservation initiatives.

We believe that trout fishing is an extremely important part of our economy, especially in rural areas of NSW, and that the jobs and lifestyles in those regions should be protected.

Trout fishing has historical and social importance in our community which should be recognised, preserved and encouraged.

What has happened so far?

1880s

Trout are not indigenous to Australia. They were introduced into NSW in the 1880s and developed reasonably viable populations in a limited range of waters. Since the 1890s the NSW government has considered trout valuable enough to continue to breed and stock them in these waters whenever they have difficulty sustaining themselves.

Brown trout are native to Europe and rainbow trout to North America, but both species are an introduced species in many other parts of the world. In New Zealand, South Africa, the USA and South America, introduced trout species coexist with native fish and form an important recreational, tourism and aquaculture resource. To our knowledge, no country has implemented a ban on trout in its streams.

1890s

Trout stocking has been carried out by NSW government agencies since the 1890s. Regular stocking is essential for the viability of some marginal parts of the fishery and occasional stocking is required even in viable areas that are periodically affected by drought and other factors.

1990s

In 1998, under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 the NSW Scientific Committee declared the Booroolong frog to be a threatened species. Prior to this the Spotted tree frog had also been listed as a threatened species. These listings triggered a legislated requirement for NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to develop a recovery plan for each species. For both species, aspects of their distribution and biology were described, including the possibility that trout predation is a threat to their conservation.

Also in 1998, under the Fisheries Management Act 1994, the Fisheries Scientific Committee listed Macquarie perch as a threatened species. Aspects of its biology and distribution were discussed, including the possibility that competition with and predation by trout is a threat to its conservation. This triggered a requirement for NSW Fisheries to develop a recovery plan for Macquarie perch.

NSW Fisheries subsequently suspended rainbow and brown trout stockings in a number of areas including parts of the Goobaragandra and Turon Rivers where Booroolong frogs occur, and brown trout stocking in the Queanbeyan River and parts of the Murrumbidgee and Shoalhaven Rivers where Macquarie perch occur. The stocking bans applied more to the slightly more voracious brown trout than the rainbow trout—rainbow trout stocking continued to be approved in streams where Macquarie perch are found. A precise list of streams affected is difficult to determine as no "black list" was created—rather applications for stocking of some waters by acclimatisation societies were rejected. Stocking of translocated native species in these waters is also covered by the bans.

Decisions whether or not trout (or any other species) can be stocked are based on what is known as the "eight part test" used by NSW Fisheries when deciding whether or not to approve stocking of fish in NSW waters. Basically it uses eight questions to assess any possible disruption to the life cycle, viability, habitat and range of any species that might be affected by a proposed fish stocking.

We understand that perhaps a dozen streams were affected at the time of changes to stocking policy. Some of them are marginal trout waters, and others had not been stocked recently or are not considered good trout streams. However several high profile streams were certainly affected and lack of information on which streams might be, or might not be affected, led to widespread concern among anglers.

2001

In 2001 the Fisheries Scientific Committee also identified the introduction of fish to fresh waters outside their natural range as a "key threatening process". While this listing itself did not itself trigger any change to stocking approvals, it did trigger a requirement that NSW Fisheries develop a threat abatement plan for the key threatening process. That plan has not yet been written but it will require that social and economic considerations are taken into account.

2002

The ban on stocking eased in the last few months of the year, with stocking resuming in the Goobaragandra River under the authority of a permit issued by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, following an application by NSW Fisheries. The NSW Minister for Fisheries has stated that he will seek in the same manner to reverse bans on a few other streams.

2003

Despite the changes to stocking policy, stocking continues in most other areas—nearly 5 million trout and salmon were stocked in NSW in 2001-2002 and large stockings are expected in the coming year.

NSW Fisheries is working on a Stocking Management Strategy for the State, to be completed before the end of 2003. The pros and cons of trout stocking will be considered in that strategy. The draft strategy will be circulated for community input. Apparently this will be followed by the threat abatement plan relating to fish stocking being a key threatening process.

Is NSW Fisheries anti-trout?

Trout anglers sometimes feel that our trout fishery has declined over the years. We all have memories of days we caught a huge fish or two, but this can still happen in the Snowy Mountains, the Central Tablelands and New England districts. If you look through some of the old books and magazines written about trout fishing in NSW you will find that the typical daily catch of a few small-to-medium fish has probably always been the same. In fact, some of our best seasons may have occurred in the last couple of decades.

Under current fisheries management, despite the increase in fishing pressure and environmental problems, our trout fishing is possibly as good as it's ever been. The trout fishery is not a declining fishery that is not worth saving—it is a healthy, viable fishery. It should be further developed to provide recreation for the one million anglers in NSW and tourist anglers from outside the State, and for its economic benefits, especially to those people living in rural communities around the main trout fishing areas.

However over the past few years fishing pressure and anglers' expectations and hopes for the survival and improvement of the fishery have increased. In this climate, NSW Fisheries has often been accused of having an anti-trout agenda. Some anglers have had contact with NSW Fisheries staff who express the view that we would be better off without trout. There have also been periods in which there did not seem to be many fisheries managers that had a personal enthusiasm for trout fishing. Some anglers feel that the recent bans on stocking of some streams are the thin end of a wedge that would eventually lead to the loss of the entire trout fishery.

To many anglers the bans that became more widely known in 2002 seemed to arrive without warning and without explanation but these changes have been fairly complicated and have happened over a longer period than most anglers realise. For example, bans on stocking brown trout in some streams that contain Macquarie perch were introduced even before Macquarie perch were listed as a threatened species. Some other locations that NSW Fisheries decided not to stock (such as parts of the Murrumbidgee) had not been stocked for many years anyway.

NSW Fisheries has also been accused of acting without adequate consultation with anglers, but the bans were discussed with acclimatisation society stocking officers over the past few years and NSW Fisheries managers also discussed the issue at a number of Institute of Freshwater Anglers meetings. An article from NSW Fisheries about the Booroolong frog problem was published in an Institute of Freshwater Anglers newsletter. NSW Fisheries managers also discussed the issues at a public forum held at the World Fly Fishing Championships at Jindabyne a few years ago, and at other meetings of fishing clubs and acclimatisation societies.

Despite this, the perception persists among anglers that there wasn't enough consultation but this is probably the fault of the fishing organisations, clubs and acclimatisation societies in not disseminating the information amongst members, as much as it is the fault of NSW Fisheries.

Both the NSW Minister for Fisheries, Eddie Obeid, and the Director of Fisheries, Steve Dunn have made a number of public statements that there is no intention of a widespread ban on trout stocking in NSW. Indeed they have cited much evidence that the NSW Government is committed to a high quality, ongoing trout fishery. They point to the large investment in infrastructure, including two hatcheries, a management team that includes research, administrative and compliance staff and increased activities in many areas since the reintroduction of the recreational fishing licence. NSW Fisheries was also responsible for commissioning the 2001 study into the economic contribution of the trout fishery in the Snowy Mountains.

So why are we still worried?

The ban on stocking of some NSW streams was not well explained and aspects of it still seem open to argument. In their defence, NSW Fisheries points out that when species were listed as threatened, and trout were identified as one of the threats, NSW Fisheries was obliged under both the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and the Fisheries Management Act 1994, not to harm those threatened species or their habitats. Because stocking of trout into the known habitat of the species may be considered harmful, NSW Fisheries decided not to approve applications to stock those areas.

Nonetheless, the severity of the possible threat caused by trout and the degree of actions required by NSW Fisheries to meet their obligations under the legislation seem open to argument. While we don't doubt the expertise of the NSW Scientific Committee and Fisheries Scientific Committee scientists, proof of any loss of biodiversity caused by trout seems pretty thin on the ground. It is unlikely that more than 100 years of trout stocking in NSW is alone responsible for the demise of the Booroolong frog, which is disappearing from many areas where trout have never been stocked. Frog species are rapidly declining worldwide, and the possible causes include herbicide pollution, the virulent chytrid fungal disease, climate change and loss of habitat.

There is also little evidence of threats to fish species caused by trout in their present range. Only two

threatened fish species are affected by interaction with trout, trout cod and Macquarie perch, and their ranges overlap only partially with trout. The threats to native fish species occur in easily defined areas, and trout have succeeded in areas where few if any native species occur. Trout coexist with native species in many areas, especially in complex, protected habitats.

There is a fundamental issue lurking under this huge mess of arguments: that is the assumption that predation will lead to extinction. There is a difference between low levels of predation that don't have much impact on other species, and aggressive predation that totally overwhelms other species and leads to their extinction. No one would argue that a trout has never eaten a Booroolong frog, nor be surprised that one turns up in a study of the contents of trout stomachs, but such a discovery would not in itself prove that trout are causing the extinction of the frog—more comprehensive and extensive information would be needed before you could draw such a conclusion.

Not surprisingly this has been a particularly sore point with anglers...very small amounts of inconclusive evidence appear to have been used to prove the trout guilty of threatening some other species.

We do not argue with NSW Fisheries' plans to ban stocking in areas where native species are definitely threatened—but first we want to see credible evidence that such bans will reduce a real current threat and reverse past damage. We don't want a ban on trout when there should be greater attention to more complex threats to the freshwater environment.

Another concern is the lack of information on plans for any follow-up, scientific study or monitoring to gauge the effectiveness of any stocking bans—there are no known performance measures for the decisions being made. Detailed, long term monitoring of the affected streams and unaffected "control" locations is necessary to validate the decisions being made, particularly in light of the many confounding factors such as pollution, climate change, etc.

So, is NSW Fisheries anti-trout? Anglers will continue to draw their own conclusions, but at this stage we don't believe this is the case. However better communication is certainly needed from NSW Fisheries (and from the recreational angling groups) to explain to anglers the scientific reasons behind the changes, the effect of actions before they are applied, the progress of further research and the monitoring of results.

No matter how many assurances NSW Fisheries gives, many anglers will continue to be concerned that despite the current government's apparent acceptance of the importance of the trout fishery, environmental priorities and political imperatives could change, and in particular, lack of support for ongoing trout stocking could effectively spell the end of parts of the fishery.

Is threatened species legislation a threat to our fisheries?

The answer to this is an emphatic "no"! Threatened species legislation is designed to protect biological diversity and initiatives by the NSW government complement Federal biodiversity legislation and meet Australia's obligations under international UN-driven policies which protect global diversity.

Recreational anglers are likely to benefit enormously by improved conservation of all parts of our natural environment and there is every reason why we should support this legislation and indeed to use it aggressively to protect their recreational fishing interests. The following paragraphs summarise some of the structure of the legislation that affects us.

The Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 is the overarching legislation in NSW that provides a framework of regulation for conservation of biodiversity. It obliges government departments to take action if biodiversity is threatened, e.g. if a species is found to be threatened, relevant government departments must do everything in their powers to abate that threat.

The Fisheries Management Act 1994 is the main legislation in NSW governing the management of our fisheries and the activities of NSW Fisheries. The legislation contains threatened species conservation imperatives.

The NSW Scientific Committee and the Fisheries Scientific Committee were established under the legislation to advise on the best courses of action to conserve biodiversity. The committees were carefully constructed within the legislation to ensure their impartiality and their independence from political and commercial influence.

The NSW Scientific Committee is an independent committee under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and consists of 10 members appointed by the Minister for the Environment. The members of the Committee are scientists from the following organisations: Australian Museum; Entomological Society of Australia; NSW Agriculture; Royal Botanic Gardens; CSIRO; NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service; Department of Land and Water Conservation; University of NSW; Ecological Society of Australia.

Some of the principal functions of the Committee are the determination of species, populations and ecological communities to be listed as endangered, vulnerable or extinct under the Act; the determination of key threatening processes; and to keep the Schedules of the Act under review for the amendment or omission of the species, populations, communities and processes listed.

The Fisheries Scientific Committee was established under Part 7A of the Fisheries Management Act 1994, also as an independent body. The main functions of the Committee are related to: the listing of endangered species, populations or ecological communities, vulnerable species and key threatening processes; advising the Minister on the identification of critical habitat and reviewing draft joint management agreements and the performance of parties under the agreements.

At the time of writing this document, the Fisheries Scientific Committee members were: Dr Patricia Dixon (Chair), University of NSW; Dr Stuart Rowland, NSW Fisheries; Dr Philip Gibbs, NSW Fisheries; Dr Alan Millar, Royal Botanic Gardens; Dr John Paxton (Deputy Chair), Australian Society for Fish Biology; Dr Ron West, University of Wollongong; and Dr George Wilson, Australian Museum.

Once a species, population or ecological community is listed by the Fisheries Scientific Committee, the Director of NSW Fisheries must prepare a recovery plan for that species. Recovery plans are designed to promote recovery to a position of viability in nature. Once a key threatening process is listed, the Director must prepare a threat abatement plan. The aim of an abatement plan is to manage a threatening process in order to abate, ameliorate or eliminate the threat. Threat abatement plans must take into consideration the social and economic effects of any abatement action. The Committee reviews the prepared draft plans and the plans are placed on public exhibition and the community invited to comment on these draft plans. Once finalised, the plans are implemented by NSW Fisheries.

Do trout damage the environment?

Our environment has always been changing, both before and after Aboriginal settlement. The rate of change accelerated with the arrival of Europeans. Within the first few years of white settlement in Australia forests were felled, land was eroded, paddocks were stocked and fertilised, streams were polluted, diverted and dammed, wetlands were drained. Trout, and many other animal, fish and plant species, were introduced for food and sporting reasons. In hindsight, many of these activities were neither wise nor necessary.

Wherever practical, if it repairs our environment now or in the future, past damage should be reversed. Therefore it is important that we accurately weigh up what damage has been caused by trout and whether or not that damage can be reversed. If the damage has been minimal or can't be reversed, or if the benefits outweigh the disadvantages it is not justifiable to expend unreasonable resources to eradicate trout.

So what damage has been done? Scientific research has certainly shown that some native fish, specifically galaxiids, have been affected in a few alpine areas. Galaxiids are native species that are found mainly in alpine areas but also exist in lowland rivers, swamps and lakes. There are various species of galaxiids—some coexist comfortably with trout, others persist in reduced numbers and some, particularly some riverine species, cannot coexist with trout at all. Their habits and diet preferences are very similar to trout and hence they compete to varying degrees in the environment. Trout can also directly prey on galaxiids. If populations of galaxiids are recognised as threatened and it can be shown that stopping stocking of trout will result in their rehabilitation, the Institute of Freshwater Anglers supports that action. However we believe that before such action is taken, research should be shown which supports those initiatives, and that such research should specifically identify streams or sections of streams that will benefit.

There is also scientific research which shows that the natural range of some native species, especially Macquarie perch and trout cod, may have been affected by the introduction of trout. The Institute of Freshwater Anglers would support a review of that research to determine whether and where this is true, and would certainly not advocate continued stocking in such areas if such stockings prevented Macquarie perch and trout cod recolonising these areas.

There has been some overseas research into the effect of trout on invertebrate stream life. Once again, the Institute of Freshwater Anglers supports a rigorous review of research results to determine the relevance to Australian aquatic biodiversity and supports the conduct of further research if necessary.

To summarise: it is undeniable that the introduction of trout in Australian streams has had some environmental effect—what is not known is the extent and range of that damage, whether there is any practical way of reversing that damage and whether or not such actions would actually result in environmental repair. Most importantly, the benefits of any such actions must be balanced against the cultural and economic losses that will result from the loss of the trout fishery.

Translocation of species has occurred for millions of years. Seeds are blown from one continent to another by high altitude winds, animals and plants cross oceans on natural and man-made rafts, humans have taken animals from one side of the world to the other for food, sport and company. Given the dramatic changes that such introduced species can cause, it is hardly surprising that scientists and others fight to preserve the biodiversity of distinct habitats worldwide. If we could wind back the clock, none of us would introduce the rabbit to Australia, nor the carp, and we would agree with all measures that mitigate their adverse effects.

But numerous other species have been introduced. Humans and the dingoes are two examples of newly arrived species that have undeniably changed our environment—but any argument against their presence would be purely hypothetical. Sheep and cattle have also done enormous damage, but we could not succeed without their presence. Dogs and horses have provided both physical assistance and company. Many plants such as cereal crops have a benign effect on our environment, although they do take up space that native species could otherwise occupy. However, despite their sometimes adverse impacts, because we place such importance on these plant and animal species' other values, whether that be cultural, food, companionship or sport, we encourage their prosperity.

So when does it become necessary to eradicate an introduced species? Perhaps only when it can be proved that it has gone beyond bearable limits of predation or displacement of other species and is causing serious damage, and when it can be shown that eradication of the species would reverse, or even partly repair, that damage. And even then, only after the cost of eradicating the species has been balanced against its benefits to the economy. And lastly, once that cost has been compared with the benefit of spending that money on more urgent conservation measures.

We accept that strict controls, perhaps even freshwater "sanctuaries", might be necessary to protect biodiversity in some NSW streams and that this could mean that trout stocking is banned in those areas. If these initiatives are carefully researched and their overall biological, social and economic impacts are openly and correctly assessed they will have our support. But we will object to arbitrary closures and bans, without sound evidence, without consultation and without regard to the broader impacts on the community and economy.

The real threats to our fisheries

Changes to trout stocking policies pale into insignificance when compared to other processes that are impacting the freshwater environment and our recreational fishing.

Carp and ornamental fish

Carp were first introduced into our waterways in the 19th century and have caused havoc, not only to other fish species, but also to freshwater systems generally and to agricultural and domestic water quality. Carp now account for an astounding 99% of the fish biomass of many inland rivers, yet despite the obvious damage caused, NSW remains the only State in Australia that has not declared carp to be a noxious fish.

The ornamental fish industry continues to be a major threat to our waterways. Species that have been discovered in our streams and lakes in recent years include koi carp (a coloured variety of common carp), weather loach and tilapia, all of which were probably accidentally or deliberately released by ornamental fish enthusiasts. Import, breeding and sale of ornamental fish in NSW is poorly regulated and few efforts have been made to educate the industry and its customers about the threat caused by these species. There are numerous other species of ornamental fish kept in NSW that could cause massive damage to biological diversity if released into the wild.

In the face of such threats and such an overwhelming biomass of carp, removing trout from our waterways would have little beneficial effect on the biodiversity of our rivers, except perhaps to make more room for carp!

Carp now account for an astounding 99% of the fish biomass of many inland rivers.

Weirs, irrigation, clearing and habitat destruction

The NSW government has only recently begun to address some of the impediments to stream flow which affect fish migration and reproduction in NSW streams, and has not yet resolved the problems of over-allocation of irrigation water and the unsustainable levels of water usage by industries such as cotton farming.

Land clearing, sand and gravel extraction from river beds and banks, water extraction, sewage inflows, so-called flood mitigation works, weirs, de-snagging, overgrazing (and consequential silt, sand and gravel invasion) have all caused much greater damage to streams across the State than the introduction of trout to the limited range of streams and lakes they now inhabit.

Loss of angling access

Perhaps the biggest problem facing trout anglers in the next decade is loss of access to waterways. There are already many trout streams in NSW that are off limits to all but a few people who have privileged access. In some areas, farmers who once generously granted access to streams are being replaced by owners who purchase rural properties for lifestyle reasons and who wish to preserve their privacy and security. And not surprisingly, many other landowners are becoming wary of the increasing number of visitors and the risk of fires and other damage.

Changes to use of public lands that are regulated by water resources and national park regimes can also limit vehicle access and camping.

There is a real risk that streams that cannot be easily accessed by the general public might eventually not be supported by stocking programs, as it will be difficult for a government department to justify stocking waters that the public can't easily fish.

Anglers and angling organisations should consider protection of angling access as important as environmental protection. Unfortunately, however, there has been little action from anglers on this problem. Indeed, many anglers who already have their access organised take an "I'm alright Jack" attitude and even encourage limits on access to protect their own favourite fishing spots.

What you can do to defend the trout fishery in NSW

Getting our message across

Anti-trout viewpoints often get extensive coverage in the media. Those speaking out against trout often do so not only on supposedly environmental grounds, but also because they are generally opposed to the concept of recreational fishing. Their voices can get a sympathetic ear from governments that are grasping for the "green" vote, and from city dwellers that have decreasing contact with outdoor recreations and with the often difficult economic realities of rural life.

One example occurred in May 2002, when the Sydney Morning Herald published an anti-trout article by environment writer James Woodford titled "Fisheries Reels in a Noxious Predator". The article quoted John Paxton, a member of the Fisheries Scientific Committee as saying "I have always thought they [trout] are one of the most noxious species in Australia" and Kathryn Ridge, head of the Nature Conservation Council, as saying "We should be conducting a trout eradication program".

We understand that John Paxton's comments were his personal views and not necessarily the official view of the Fisheries Scientific Committee. But it is Ridge's comments that are perhaps more alarming. The Nature Conservation Council is a premier conservation organisation in this State and its work is appreciated by all conservationists, including freshwater anglers. It has rightly earned the respect and the ear of the NSW government. However in this case we believe that its position, as presented by Ridge, is misguided to say the least. It might not have been a good idea to introduce trout to NSW in the late 1800s, but at this stage, the damage they have done is limited and probably irreversible, compared to current threats to our freshwater biodiversity.

Freshwater anglers would disagree with most parts of the Sydney Morning Herald article, but unfortunately several million people have now read an article that is blatantly anti-trout. Anglers must make an effort to redress situations like this and speak out and argue for their own interests.

Anglers should not get sidetracked by confusing and hard-to-prove arguments about endangered species. They need to tackle the more important broader issues:

- The importance of trout fisheries as recreational and economic resources
- The relatively minor damage caused by trout
- The futility of attempting to reverse that damage
- The need to devote resources to more pressing freshwater biodiversity issues

Anglers should try to highlight the economic value of the fishery. In 2001, a survey by NSW Fisheries estimated trout fishing to be worth around $70 million to the economy of the Snowy Mountains and Monaro region alone. Thousands of jobs directly or indirectly depend on the fishery—tackle shops, motels, caravan parks, petrol stations, fisheries staff, cafes and restaurants, boat rental and repair businesses, fishing guides, and so on. The trout fishery attracts tens of thousands of visitors to the area each year. Rural communities desperately need this revenue and need the associated jobs.

Ask your politicians

Contact your local Member of Parliament and key people in other political parties in your area, asking them to confirm that they support a trout fishery in NSW. If you get a non-committal response, write again asking for a clear answer and a commitment to preserving the trout fishery.

Write to the NSW Premier, Mr Bob Carr, by email to bob.carr@www.nsw.gov.au or by letter to Level 40, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney 2000, or by fax to (02) 9228 3935.

Contact your local State Member of Parliament. Names and addresses can be found on the NSW Parliament website, www.parliament.nsw.gov.au.

Contact local and State government people in your area

Contact details for key local government people such as your shire president and councillors can be found in your local phone book or by calling your local shire/council offices. A complete directory of local government names and address can be found on the NSW Department of Local Government website, www.dlg.nsw.gov.au.

Lobby NSW Fisheries

Express your support for a viable, ongoing trout fishery to Mr Steve Dunn, Director, NSW Fisheries, 202 Nicholson Parade, Cronulla, 2230 and to the NSW Minister for Fisheries, Mr Eddie Obeid, by email at eddie.obeid@parliament.nsw.gov.au or by letter to Level 34, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney 2000, or by fax to (02) 9228 3722.

Alert your local community

Contact local business people, chamber of commerce members, local newspapers and other local business organisations. Make them aware of the value of trout fisheries to rural economies.