

Trout Fisher



167

SUMMER 2018/2019

\$9.90



Trout Fisher

Issue 167 of NZ's only trout fishing magazine, Summer 2018/2019

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COVER & HERE

Match the Catch (David Lambroughton/PWS)

Spring Creek jack (DL) / Sulphur Dun male (PWS)



ISSN 1173-1761 PRINT; ISSN 2230-6420 DIGITAL

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Under our noses

By ANDREW HARDING





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The Bill amends an out-of-date provision about how the various bits of fisheries law fit together. Because a number of Treaty Settlement Acts now contain fisheries provisions (in relation to marine fisheries), that legislation was added into the provision, along with the Fisheries Act 1996. That doesn't mean Treaty settlement legislation can now suddenly affect sports fish management. The effect on fisheries management is specific to each settlement, and determined by Parliament. So far no settlements have included sports fisheries management arrangements.

Turning now to the way the Bill can benefit sports fish.

I inherited 1983 regulations on noxious fish and fish passage barriers made under the old Fisheries Act. The regulations need review, but the Conservation Act doesn't allow that. The Bill enables the regulations to be changed. There would always be public consultation about changes.

The current law prohibits damage to a spawning site, and allows spawning sites to be closed to entry. That has not been enforced, partly because it is often hard to show whether and what caused damage. The Bill allows a more nuanced approach, including approving damage in very limited circumstances (e.g. a bridge in an inanga spawning area) and would allow regulations to define where spawning sites are and what activities would damage them. That should make it easier to protect spawning sites for both trout and indigenous fish.

The Bill also allows future regulations to manage activities that kill or injure indigenous freshwater fish, such as clearing water from stormwater drains and drainage pumps.

