

The Mighty Waipa Trout Fishing

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO



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Continued angler access – it's primarily up to you!

Less than 50% of the rivers in the Auckland/Waikato region are covered by esplanade reserves (the "Queens Chain"). But notwithstanding the presence or absence of an esplanade reserve, anglers are dependent upon landowner goodwill to fully enjoy angling opportunities.

Accordingly make sure you take the time to extend to landowners the common courtesies that you would expect:

- Ask their permission before you cross their land.
- **Don't**
 - * clamber over fences
 - * walk through crops
 - * disturb stock
 - * leave gates other than as you found them
 - * deposit rubbish
 - * take your dog onto a landowners property unless you square it away with them that it is OK to do so. Hydatids and sheep measles can pose a serious threat to a farmers livelihood; so leave your dog at home unless you're certain that the farmer doesn't object to it on their land.

In our experience very few landowners will refuse access to genuine anglers.



For further information

The pamphlets shown below contain more detailed information and maps pertaining to the various types of fisheries in the Auckland/Waikato region. These are available on the website and a hard copy available at the Auckland Waikato Fish & Game office.

- South Waikato Spring Creeks.
- Waitomo & Kawhia.
- Whanganui Headwaters.
- Coromandel Ranges.
- Waikato Rivers.
- Auckland/Waikato Lakes.
- Getting started in freshwater fishing.



Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game

156 Brymer Road, RD9

Hamilton

Telephone (07) 849 1666

aucklandwaikato@fishandgame.org.nz

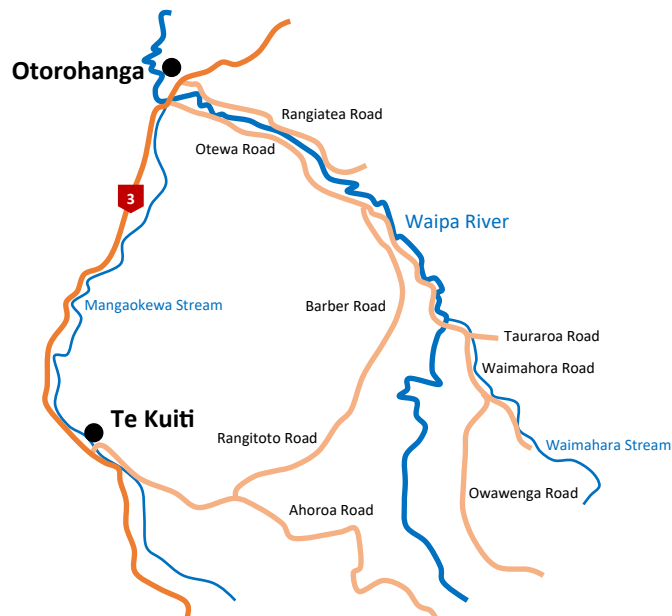
The Mighty Waipa

The Waipa is an extensive river system with superb fishing not only in the mainstem but also in the many streams that contribute to its flow. Both rainbow and brown trout are present in approximately equal numbers. The rainbows are resident fish that spend their entire lives in a short stretch of river. In contrast the brown trout are migratory spending the winter months in the Waikato River and then moving up into the Waipa headwaters during early December. This seasonal migration allows the brown trout to feed on the abundance of small fish that are present in the Waikato River and consequently the brown trout found in the Waipa headwaters over the summer months are often huge.

There is surprisingly little public water available in the Waipa fishery as most trout streams flow across private land. Nevertheless anglers have traditionally had a very good relationship with Waipa landowners and a polite request to cross private land will rarely be refused.

Some Waipa streams are slow to clear after heavy rain, but the Mangatutu Stream and the streams that flow from Mt Pirongia will clear quickly. In recent years, several large landslides have affected water quality in the mainstem of the Waipa but the river appears to be recovering quickly.

A copy of the current angling regulations is provided free when you purchase a fishing licence.



Waipa River

The Waipa is a large river that flows in a northerly direction from the Pureora Forest to the Waikato River at Ngaruwahia. Downstream from Otorohanga the Waipa is generally deep flowing and channelised but when flows are low there are rapids and shingle beds that can provide excellent spin and wet fly fishing. Good fishing can also be found at the mouths of small streams where trout often congregate in considerable numbers during summer.

Most angling occurs in the reach from Otorohanga upstream to Toa Bridge where the river flows across farmland and here there is superb water for anglers of all abilities. Long sections of riverbank have been planted in willows and these often shelter high numbers of trout. Wading is undemanding with shallow runs that allow anglers to cast beneath the overhanging willows or up into the deep pools. Access is via Rangiatea Road, Otewa Road, and Waipa River Road.

Walking upstream from Toa Bridge gives access to a 15kms stretch of backcountry fishing where the Waipa meanders through rough farmland and attractive patches of native forest. These waters can also be reached by crossing private farmland from Owawenga and Barber Roads, though this can involve a long steep walk. Further upstream, the river flows through a steep gorge with large boulders, rapids, and turbulent runs. This gorge can fish well but access is difficult.



Puniā River

Stalking large brown trout with the dry fly or nymph is the highlight for many anglers fishing the Puniu River, a popular fishery close to Te Awamutu with good access and over 20kms of fishing water.

The Puniu meanders across farmland offering relatively easy fishing with a good population of rainbows and large brown trout. Most fishing occurs in the middle and upper reaches where productive water can be reached from Wharepapa, Newman, Seafund, Bayley, and Ngaroma Roads. Generally access is across private land but in the middle reaches an access reserve extends 3kms downstream from Bayley Road and 3kms upstream to Ngaroma Road.

The headwaters can be reached across private farmland from Duncans Road. Here the Puniu is a small stream that flows across rough pastoral land with patches of native forest. There are usually plenty of trout and these waters provide a good alternative to the nearby Mangatutu Stream.

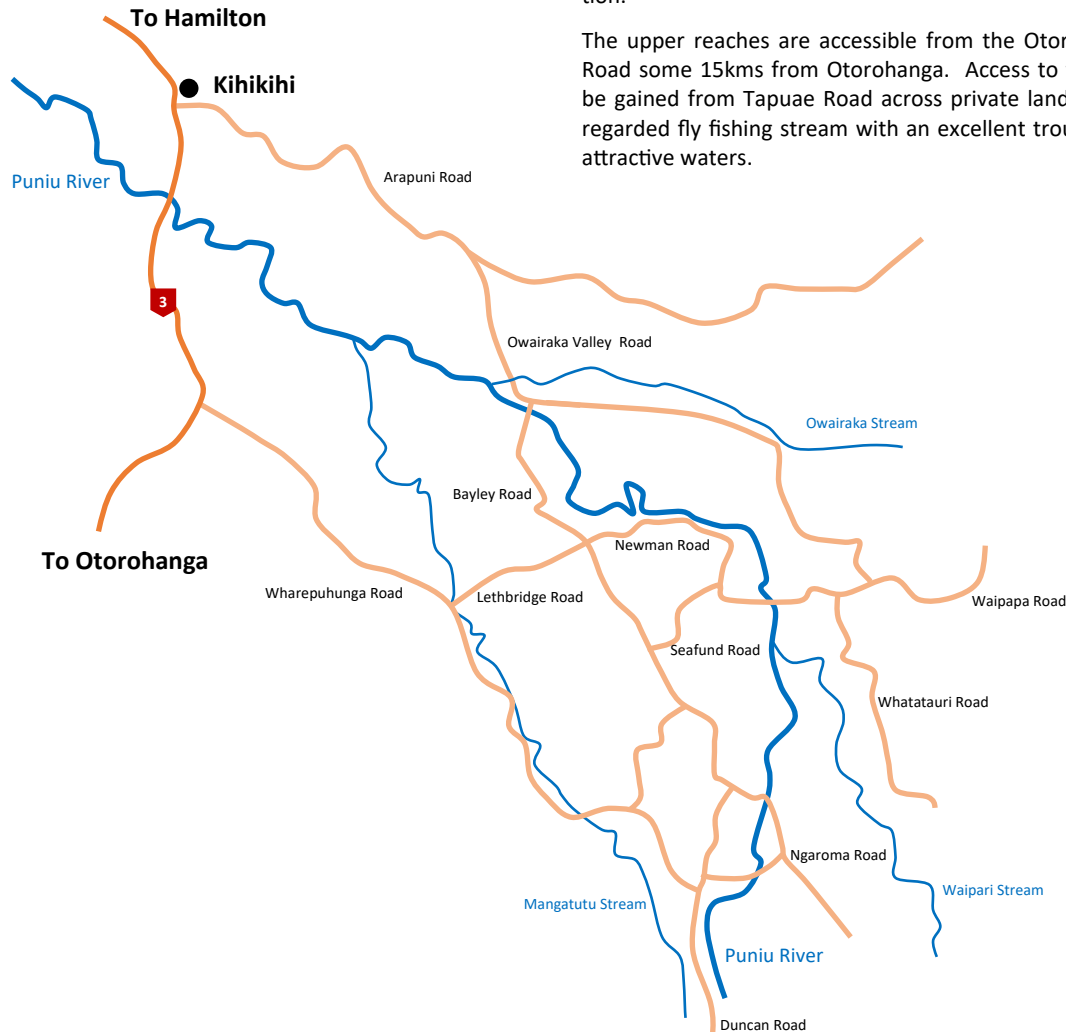
Small streams

There are many small streams throughout the Waipa that hold good trout populations and offer excellent small stream fishing. Popular small streams include the Oamaru and Ngutunui (Moakurarua tributaries), Mangauika and Mangawawa (Mt Pirongia Streams), Owairaka (Puniu tributary), and the Waimahora (Waipa tributary). Trout fishing water can also be found in the headwaters of the Mangapiko, Mangaohoi, Mangarapa, Waitomo, and Mangarongo Streams.



Waipari Stream

The Waipari holds some of the biggest rainbows in the Waipa headwaters. Although similar in size to the Mangatutu, the Waipari receives far less angling pressure because there is no direct public access. The Waipari is usually fished in the lower reaches above its confluence with the Puniu River. Access is across private farmland from Whatauri Settlement Road via Wharepapa Road. Further upstream the river flows through a series of gorges and fishing can be difficult. The upper reaches can be accessed from Ngaroma Road.



Moakurua Stream

The Moakurua has its source in the steep hill country to the west of Otorohanga and flows in a northerly direction across farmland before joining the Waipa River near Te Awamutu. The lower reaches are not attractive to anglers as they are sluggish and deep; however in the middle and upper reaches the Moakurua has a clear gravel bottom, mostly wadeable, offering good fishing waters. The middle reaches are accessible from the Otorohanga-Kawhia Road. Although the river is lined with willows, these are not so thick to stop spin fishing and indeed provide cover for a good trout population.

The upper reaches are accessible from the Otorohanga-Honokiwi Road some 15kms from Otorohanga. Access to the river can also be gained from Tapuae Road across private land. This is a highly regarded fly fishing stream with an excellent trout population and attractive waters.

Mangatutu Stream

A large stream with very clear water but the fish are often wary as the Mangatutu receives heavy angling pressure especially in the more accessible reaches. Public access is limited to the upper reaches and elsewhere landowner permission should be sought.

Below Leithbridge Road there is excellent water that is less heavily fished with access obtained by walking downstream from the bridge on Leithbridge Road or from private land on Wharepunga Road. Further upstream between the Leithbridge and Wharepunga bridges, the Mangatutu is a pleasure to fish with low clear banks and easy access that is suitable for anglers with slight mobility difficulties.

The upper reaches can be fished by walking upstream from the Wharepunga Bridge along the public access reserve which is on both sides on the river and extends up into the Pureora Forest. Access can also be gained across private land from Duncan Road. This section of the Mangatutu has plenty of pools, the occasional patch of willows, and an abundant trout population.

Recommended lures

Spin fishing – small spinners such as veltic and zed spinners.

Nymphs – hair & copper, halfback, pheasant tails, prince (size 10 to 14).

Dry fly – brown beetle imitations (October/November evenings), green beetle imitations (December/January), cicada (summer), royal Wulff (all season).

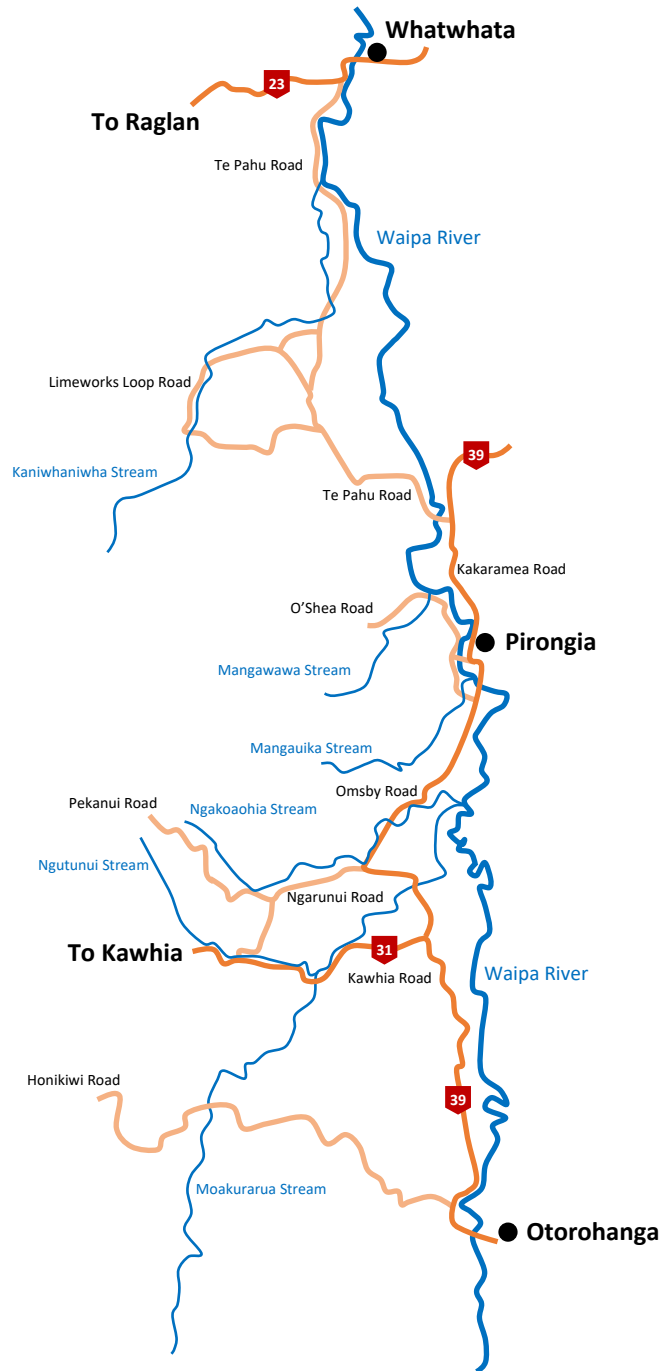


Kaniwhaniwha Stream

The Kaniwhaniwha is a delightful shingle and boulder stream that flows from the eastern slopes of Mt Pirongia through patches of bush and pastoral land to the Waipa River. It fishes well with dry flies especially in summer when algae can be a problem.

This stream is easily reached in 30 minutes from Hamilton or just over 90 minutes from Auckland using the Ngaruawahia – Whatawhata bypass. Most angling occurs in the middle reaches where the Kaniwhaniwha flows parallel to Limeworks Road. There is public access from Fillery Road downstream on the true left bank for 3 km; otherwise access is across private land.

Access to the upper reaches can be gained from a DoC track that runs alongside the stream from Limeworks Road into the Pirongia Forest Park. Here the Kaniwhaniwha is a small stream, nevertheless good fish can be found well upstream into the forest.



Ngakoahia Stream

The Ngakoahia is a large stream that flows from Mt Pirongia through long reaches of native forest, open farmland, and willow before joining the Waipa River. This stream provides excellent dry fly fishing especially during the summer months when cicada flies can be devastatingly effective.

Access to the Ngakoahia can be obtained from the Pirongia-Ngutunui Road which runs parallel to the stream for about 10 km. There is no public access and landowner permission should be obtained.

Mangaokewa Stream

Downstream from Te Kuiti, the Mangaokewa Stream is sluggish, turbid, and generally uninspiring for angling. In contrast, further upstream the Mangaokewa provides some of the most scenic fishing in the Waipa system. Although the water is often discoloured, there are usually good numbers of fish including some large brown trout – ideal water for spin fishing.

Access can be gained from the Mangaokewa Scenic Reserve, about 4 km south of Te Kuiti on State Highway 30, from where a track follows the stream upstream providing a good days fishing.

