

RAI RIVER

INCLUDING THE OPOURI RIVER

The Rai River is a medium sized tributary of the Pelorus River that mostly flows through farmland and has easy access. It is willow lined and is wadeable, often providing long gentle pools and runs that contain reasonable numbers of large brown and rainbow trout, with plenty of small rainbows in the riffles.

The Opouri River is a much slower flowing river, with long pools punctuated by short fast riffles. Here, large rainbow and brown trout are present in good numbers, and can be seen casually cruising the pools. The key for the angler is to move slowly, be well concealed, and apply finesse when casting. The patient angler will be rewarded with some great fish.

Trout are also present in the Tunakino, however it's best to speak with any landowners before crossing over land.



PELORUS RIVER FISHING ACCESS GUIDE



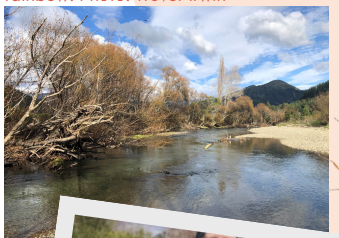
An access guide to fishing the Pelorus River: including access points to the Rai and Opouri



TACKLE TIP
Water depth and speed can vary quickly in both the Rai and Opouri, so be prepared to change the weight of your flies, lures, or softbaits often. The more you fish to the correct depth, the more fish you will catch. In the Opouri, the long slow pools are hot spots for cruising trout, so fly anglers should be prepared to fish with longer, finer leaders. Spin anglers should run with lures that enter the water softly.

WINTER FISHING
The Rai River is open all year, downstream of Carluke Bridge

v The Rai is a good winter fishing option. Photo Zane Mirfin
w Trevor Irwin with a Bulford bridge rainbow. Photo: Trevor Irwin



PELORUS RIVER

FROM THE SEA TO UPPER RIVER

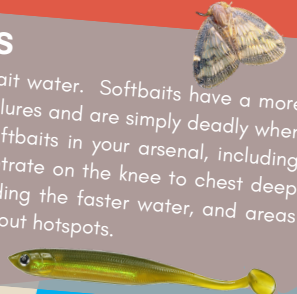
From beech clad headwaters to the Te Hoiere/Havelock Estuary, the Pelorus has variation to boot. Whether you're a seasoned fly fisher, a dedicated lure angler or have a penchant for using bait, you'll find water that suits your style in the Pelorus.

The Pelorus River downstream of the Rai River confluence is the most productive stretch of water in the catchment and is open to all methods of fishing, all year round. Here the river flows through much flatter, pastoral land and is characterised by wide slow flowing pools and runs with the occasional riffle. Small to medium sized brown and rainbow trout are normally abundant with some large trout present, particularly in the lower tidal reaches.

Being smack in the middle between Nelson and Blenheim, the Pelorus and Rai make for an attractive fishing option, and are the most accessible rivers in the region to catch wild rainbow trout in.

TACKLE TIP: SOFT BAITS

The mid to lower Pelorus is top softbait water. Softbaits have a more realistic action than traditional metal lures and are simply deadly when fished correctly. Have a range of softbaits in your arsenal, including different weighted jig heads. Concentrate on the knee to chest deep water that has a bit of current, including the faster water, and areas where bedrock is present - these are trout hotspots.



The willow lined mid-lower reaches are great places to fish, especially in summer.



TACKLE TIP

CICADA ACTION: during January to March, there is good cicada fishing in the lower river. A green cicada fly, size 8, is a good imitation of the local insects.



^ Martin de Ruyter hooked up in the mid Pelorus. Photos: Zane Mirfin

SPECIES PRESENT



UPPER PELORUS FISHING

The Pelorus River upstream of the confluence with the Rai River is a beautiful river characterised by clear water with long deep pools interspersed with runs and riffles. The Maungatapu Road follows the true left bank of the river upstream from the Pelorus Bridge for some 14km, offering access to the river in several places. Low numbers of rainbow and brown trout averaging around 2 kg are present in this section of river. The river here generally flows through pasture and forested land and is wadeable. From the Maungatapu Road end the Pelorus River headwaters, nestled amongst native bush in the Richmond Ranges, offer wilderness angling for another 15 km in very clear water for low numbers of mainly brown trout averaging 2-3 kg. The headwaters are well serviced by Department of Conservation tracks and huts.

TACKLE TIP

CICADA ACTION: during January to March, there is good cicada fishing in the lower river. A green cicada fly, size 8, is a good imitation of the local insects.

1. Te Hoiere Road

2.7 km from Havelock. Public access to river up and downstream off first bridge on the east bank only, and limited access to the river exists on the west bank off the second bridge.

2. Top of Twidles Island

2.3 km from Te Hoiere Road. Dry weather vehicle access only, not suitable for campervans or low vehicles. Gate locked in winter, foot access available all year round.

3. Kaiuma Road

6.6 km downstream of Daltons Bridge. Foot access only along track to river. To access river downstream to the sea contact Kerry Gates 03 574 2050.

4. Canvastown School

Vehicle track 500 metres to river. Watch for electric wires across track.

5. Wakamarina Valley Road

3.1km from SH6.

6. Kaiuma Road

400 metres downstream of Daltons Bridge. Follow fence line downstream.

7. Daltons Bridge

Vehicle parking over bridge downstream on the north bank. Foot access by bridge upstream on the north bank walking track and downstream on south bank.

8. SH6

400m upstream of Daltons Bridge, beside Daltons Culvert. Safe parking by gravel piles. A foot access track a further 300 metres upstream provides better bank access.

9. SH6 Hughes Creek

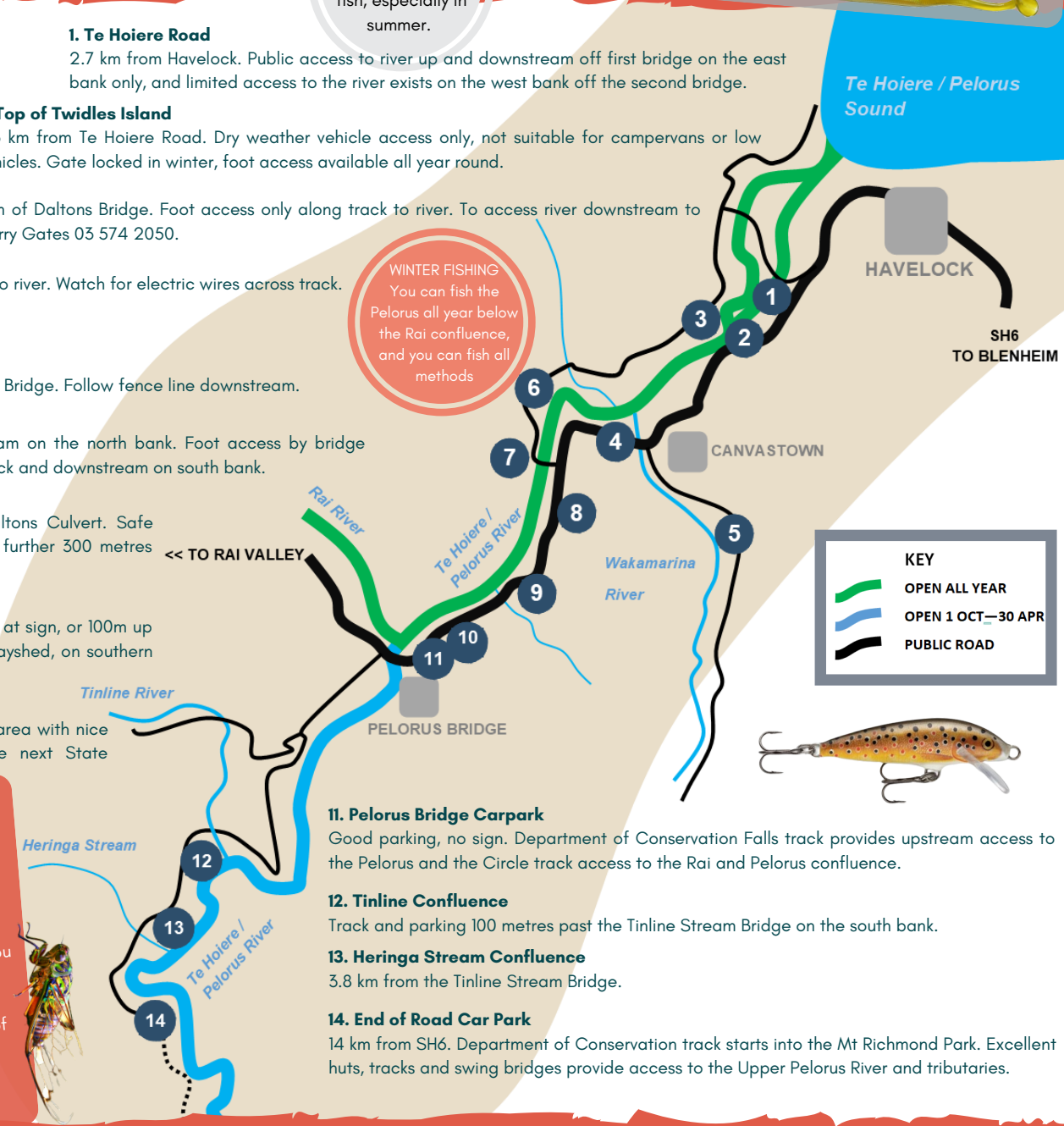
3 km from Daltons Bridge. Parking through gate at sign, or 100m up road on other side where indicated (track to Hayshed, on southern side of the road). Care required on busy road.

10. SH6 Totara Flat gravel extraction area

Vehicle access to river. There is a DOC picnic area with nice swimming hole immediately upstream on the next State Highway exit right.

WINTER FISHING

You can fish the Pelorus all year below the Rai confluence, and you can fish all methods



11. Pelorus Bridge Carpark

Good parking, no sign. Department of Conservation Falls track provides upstream access to the Pelorus and the Circle track access to the Rai and Pelorus confluence.

12. Tinline Confluence

Track and parking 100 metres past the Tinline Stream Bridge on the south bank.

13. Heringa Stream Confluence

3.8 km from the Tinline Stream Bridge.

14. End of Road Car Park

14 km from SH6. Department of Conservation track starts into the Mt Richmond Park. Excellent huts, tracks and swing bridges provide access to the Upper Pelorus River and tributaries.