

10 NOVEMBER 2023

## Important gold clams update: Lake Ōkātina re-opens for angling



We are pleased to let you know that Lake Ōkātina in the Rotorua region will be officially open from today (**10<sup>th</sup> November**) from **12pm** for angling from boats for three days a week Friday to Sunday 6:30am-7:00pm.

**However, please note Lake Ōkātina will not be accessible for boats until tomorrow 6:30am Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November after access to the boat ramp has been cleared.**

For shoreline fishing, waders will need to undergo washing as part of the new protections under the Controlled Area Notice (CAN). It should be noted that any fishers who have been in the Waikato River and lakes are required under law to appropriately check, clean and dry boats and equipment before moving to another waterway. Advice on this can be found [here](#).

Biosecurity New Zealand, which closed the lake to fishing in October, has established a permanent wash station on 338 Te Ngae Rd (SH30) at The Wash Place in Rotorua next to the Gull Service Station to enable vessels and trailers to wash down before entering the lake, which is also a legal requirement under the new CAN.

## What this means for anglers

### Rotorua/Bay of Plenty Lakes

- ALL vessels and trailers that have been in **the Waikato River within 30 days** must go to “The Wash Place” wash station (adjacent to the Gull Service Centre) to be

washed before going to any of the lakes in the Rotorua/Bay of Plenty lakes. This is in addition to the clam-specific Check Clean Dry requirements for all boats that have been in the Waikato River.

## Lake Ōkātina

- ALL vessels and trailers must be washed **on the same day** before going directly to Lake Ōkātina. This is in addition to the clam-specific [Check Clean Dry requirements](#) for boats that have been in the Waikato River.
- Lake Ōkātina is only open Friday to Sunday 6.30am- 7pm inclusive.
- Personnel from Biosecurity New Zealand , Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Te Arawa Lakes Trust, Rotorua Lakes Council, Ngāti Tarāwhai and/or Fish & Game New Zealand will initially be at the Wash Place from 6.30am- 6pm Friday-Sunday to help facilitate certification for access to the Ōkātina boat ramp.
- To enable the National Trout Fishing Competition to take place on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November, Okātina will be open for anglers between 6.30am-6pm. Anglers must obtain their certification at The Wash Place before going to the lake. Personnel will be at The Wash Place from 6.30am to assist.
- Overnight stays in vessels that are appropriately certified to be self-contained are allowed during the access times of the lake, Fri to Sun 6.30am to 7pm. Boats must be off the water by Sun 7pm.
- Please take extra care when launching at Ōkātina as the water level is very high.
- Signs outlining these requirements under the new CAN will be at Lake Ōkātina from 10 November. For information on the lake status, such as closures due to water levels, people should check with [Rotorua Lakes Council](#), [Bay of Plenty Regional Council](#), and [Te Arawa Lakes Trust](#).

## Before coming to the Rotorua Lakes/Bay of Plenty region from the Waikato region, please

- Ensure that you follow the clam-specific Check, Clean, Dry procedures for your vessel and trailer 48 hours prior to using The Wash Place wash station for access to any of the Rotorua Lakes.

“The Wash Place” wash station will initially be staffed from 6:30am-6pm Friday, Saturday and Sunday. This is to align with the opening hours of Lake Okātina (6:30am-7pm). Staff from Biosecurity New Zealand, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Te Arawa Lakes Trust, Rotorua Lakes Council, Ngāti Tarāwhai and Fish & Game New Zealand will be present at the wash station over the manned operating times.

A QR code will be on display along with a webpage to access a form which must be completed before entering the lake. In addition, staff at the wash station on Friday-Sunday will also offer a paper certificate to prove a vessel or trailer has been washed (as a backup to the QR code).

We are pleased to see these measures in place, which allow Biosecurity New Zealand to open the lake to fishing. It’s also great news for the upcoming National Trout Fishing Competition in the Te Arawa Lakes region from 16-18th November.

We will continue to advocate hard to ensure the interests of anglers are considered in all decisions, in particular, the need for Biosecurity New Zealand to focus resources at ‘ground zero’ at the Waikato River where the clams were first discovered to ensure we don’t face a similar situation in the future.

Here is a reminder about these invasive clams:

- Gold clams have been present in the Waikato River for 2-3 years
- They have the potential to outcompete native species for food and habitat
- They have been known to clog water infrastructure overseas

- While eradicating them from the Waikato River is unlikely, containment is possible
- Gold clams are classified as unwanted organisms under the Biosecurity Act, making it mandatory to Check Clean Dry after entering known infested waters.
- Extensive surveillance has detected their presence along a 99km stretch of the Waikato River, from Lake Maraetai downstream
- Early detection and local elimination efforts are crucial. If you come across a gold clam, please take a photo, note the location, and report your sighting to 0800 80 99 66 or online at [report.mpi.govt.nz](https://report.mpi.govt.nz).
- Please be aware that gold clams, while consumed in parts of Asia, are not safe to eat in New Zealand due to their filter-feeding behavior and toxin accumulation
- It is essential to practice the Check Clean Dry method when traveling and accessing rivers and lakes. New requirements have been introduced in the Waikato, including the need to soak absorbent gear, such as life jackets, in hot tap water at 55°C for at least five minutes to eliminate small, sticky juvenile clams that may be hard to see. Detailed Check Clean Dry requirements can be found [here](#).
- You can also download a printable fact sheet about gold clams [here](#).
- More information and updates can be found [here](#).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Corina Jordan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Corina Jordan**

**Chief Executive**

**New Zealand Fish and Game Council**