

## Recreational fishing in the ACT

Fishing is popular in the creeks, rivers and lakes of the ACT, the main angling species being Murray Cod, Golden Perch, Trout, Redfin and Carp. However, it must be conducted according to the *Fisheries Act 2000*. This Act helps maintain native fish populations which in turn help keep our waterways healthy. It also ensures that people can continue to enjoy fishing for many generations.

The public waters of the ACT are divided into three categories:

- Open Waters;
- Prohibited Waters; and
- Trout Waters.



## Open Waters

The following areas are classified as open fishing waters:

- Murrumbidgee River that lies within the borders of the ACT downstream from the junction with the Gudgenby River and from Angle Crossing upstream to the ACT border (500m);
- Molonglo River below Queanbeyan River; and
- Urban lakes (including Lake Burley Griffin, Lake Ginninderra, Lake Tuggeranong, Gungahlin Pond and Yerrabi Pond).

You may fish in open fishing waters all year round. If you catch Murray Cod or trout in these waters out of season (see over), they must be returned to the water with as little injury as possible.

Fish may be taken with either two attended (within 10m of you) fishing rods, two attended hand lines or one of each, with no more than two hooks on each line, supplemented by a landing net. Artificial, live or natural bait can be used, excluding fin fish (fish with fins) and frogs which must not be used as live bait. These have the potential to escape and breed in our waterways. It is illegal to dig for worms along river banks or in nature reserves.

## Prohibited Waters

Prohibited Waters protect threatened species, common fish species and important fish habitat. Fishing is not permitted in Prohibited Waters. These permanently closed waters are:

- Tidbinbilla River within the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve;
- Orroral River upstream of the Honeysuckle to Orroral management trail bridge, west of the site of the former Orroral Space Tracking Station;
- Cotter River catchment upstream of Bendora Dam wall, including Bendora and Corin reservoirs;

- Cotter River and reservoir above the Cotter Dam wall up to the junction with Pierces Creek; and
- Murrumbidgee River downstream of Angle Crossing to the junction with the Gudgenby River. This is a new closure to protect threatened Trout Cod and Macquarie Perch.

## Trout Waters

- Trout fishing waters include all public waters in the ACT that are not designated open fishing waters or prohibited waters.
- Trout waters are subject to a closed season of all fishing activity from the end of the long weekend in June (Queen's Birthday) to the beginning of the long weekend in October (Labor Day).
- Fishing for trout may only be undertaken with one attended (within 10m of you) fishing rod, with no more than two hooks per line, supplemented by a landing net.
- Only artificial baits (including lures and flies) may be used.
- Baited lines or hoop nets are prohibited.

## Protected fish

There are five species of fish that are protected in the ACT: Trout Cod, Macquarie Perch, Silver Perch, Two-spined Blackfish and Murray River Crayfish.

If you catch any of these species, you must immediately return them to the water with as little injury as possible. If the hook cannot be easily extracted, cut the line near the hook before releasing the fish. A fish has a better chance of surviving with a hook in its mouth than with a damaged mouth (refer to \*).

## Bag limits and minimum lengths

The bag limit is the maximum number of each species that can be caught per day or in your possession adjacent to fishing waters. Minimum lengths are measured from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail.

Species	Bag Limit	Minimum length
Murray Cod	2 with only one fish greater than 100 cm	60 cm
Golden Perch	5	30 cm
Trout (either species)	5	25 cm

## Closed seasons

There are closed seasons for Murray Cod and trout to allow fish the chance to spawn undisturbed. The closed season for Murray Cod is 1 September to 30 November inclusive.

The closed season for trout extends from the long weekend in

June to the long weekend in October (see Trout Waters).

\* If you catch Murray Cod or trout during their closed seasons, you must return them to the water immediately with as little injury as possible. You must also return any undersized fish with as little damage as possible.

## Distinguishing between species

It is more likely that people will now catch Trout Cod given a change in stocking location. Murray Cod and Trout Cod are similar but can be distinguished by the characteristics shown below. If you are unsure, return the fish to the water as quickly as possible.

### Trout Cod - totally protected

Head profile straight  
Upper jaw overhangs lower  
Body markings dark spots and irregular dashes or bars with few markings on forehead and snout.

Body colour generally blue-grey on dorsal (upper) surface becoming paler, almost white on ventral (lower) surface.

### Murray Cod - closed season September to November

Concave head profile  
Jaws equal or bottom jaw protrudes  
Mottled pattern extending onto forehead and snout. Can be finely speckled in larger fish

Minimum legal size 60 cm

Generally pale-green to creamy yellow, sometimes golden on dorsal (upper) surface, becoming paler more creamy -white on ventral (lower) surface. Larger fish sometimes display a blue-grey sheen.

## Yabby traps, hoop nets and baited lines

Enclosed traps such as bait traps, minnow traps and yabby traps (wire mesh, folding frame or 'opera house' type nets) are prohibited in public waters in the ACT. They kill platypus, water rats and tortoises. You can use these traps in private waters (farm dams) but you must seek the landholder's permission first. There is a much lower likelihood of encountering platypus and water rats in farm dams.

You can use up to 10 baited lines (no hooks) and five hoop nets for catching yabbies in open waters excluding the four nature reserves along the Murrumbidgee River (Woodstock, Stony Creek, Bullen Range and Gigerline Nature Reserves) where no hoop nets can be used. However, if you catch a Murray River Crayfish, you must return it to the water immediately. You cannot use baited lines or hoop nets in trout waters.

## General information

You do not require a fishing licence for recreational fishing in the ACT.

- Return all protected species to the water immediately.
- It is illegal for recreational anglers to sell their catch.
- You must not use gaffs, spears, spearguns, bows and arrows, poisons, explosives or firearms to catch fish in the ACT.
- Do not use live fish eggs or frogs as bait as they might escape and become an invasive species.
- Frogs and tadpoles are wildlife as specified in the *Nature Conservation Act 1980* and as such cannot be used for bait.
- Do not use live fin fish (fish with fins) as bait as they could escape and become an invasive species.
- Like most other parks and reserves in the ACT, the Murrumbidgee River Corridor is a No Bins area. Take your rubbish home and recycle or compost. Litter, dead fish, discarded line, glass and other rubbish are health hazards to the environment and people.
- You must not move fish from one water body to another without the written permission of the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.
- Removing the heads or filleting fish whilst adjacent to streams or lakes is prohibited.
- Please remove your rubbish and fishing line, and appropriately dispose of unwanted fish.

## Fishing from boats

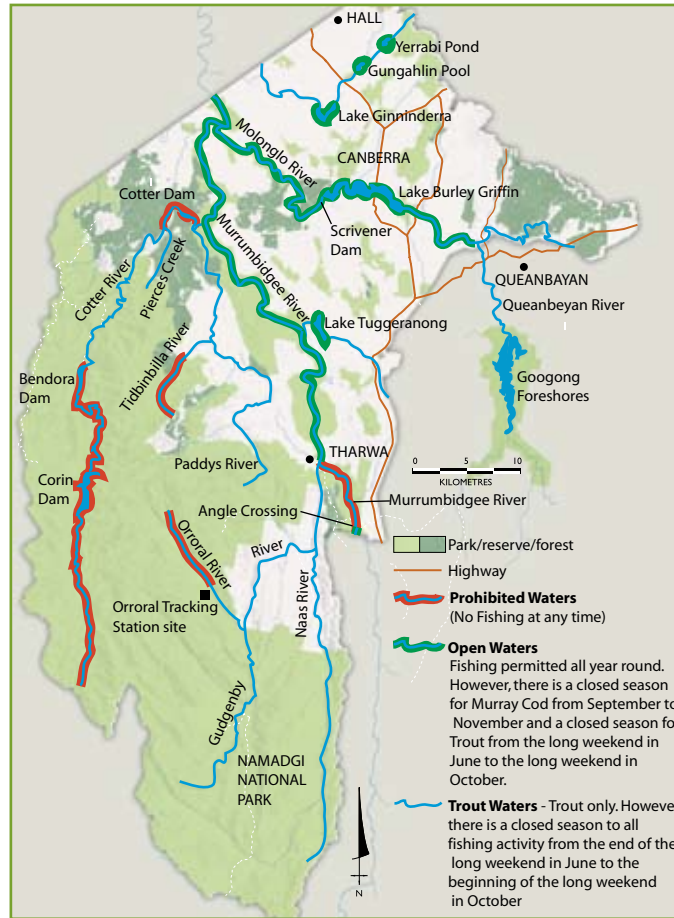
On Canberra's urban lakes and in the Murrumbidgee River you are not permitted to use any type of powered boat (including jet skis). However, you may obtain a permit to use electric powered boats on Lake Burley Griffin Ph: (02) 6271 2888, Lake Ginninderra, Lake Tuggeranong and Molonglo Reach Ph: 13 22 81. To use the Molonglo Reach Water Ski Area you must first obtain a booking. Ph: 13 22 81.

## Fishing at Googong Foreshores

Electric powered, sail and row boats and kayaks only are permitted. Fishing in Googong Reservoir is governed by NSW fisheries legislation and you will need a NSW general recreational fishing fee receipt (licence). A fee receipt (licence) is available from most tackle shops or contact the Department of Primary Industries on 1300 369 365 or [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au).



Illegal enclosed trap (left) and permitted unenclosed hoop net (right).



## Distinguishing features

### Macquarie Perch—totally protected

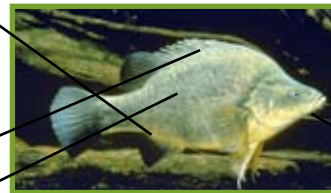
More than 35 transverse scales between the dorsal and anal fin.



Silver or blue-grey to black above, off-white below. Mouth extends to level with the front of the eye.

### Golden Perch

Olive to bronze above, yellow-white below. Forty or more transverse scales between the dorsal and anal fin.



Mouth extends to be level with the middle of the eye. Lower jaw protrudes in larger fish.

# Recreational Fishing in the ACT

Two-spined Blackfish—a protected species



Carp—an introduced species



Murray Cod—a nationally Vulnerable species



Murray River Crayfish—a protected species



Fishing at Lake Ginninderra



## Further information

If you catch a protected species, release it and report the capture to Canberra Connect. Report any illegal fishing activity to Canberra Connect. 13 22 81  
Website: [www.tams.act.gov.au](http://www.tams.act.gov.au)



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