

Lake Karapiro

Lake Karapiro is the most accessible of the three hydro lakes with good public access from State Highway 1, five public boat ramps, and extensive walking tracks.

The upper reaches of Karapiro provide the main trophy fishery for the Auckland/Waikato Region – rainbows average 2kg, brown trout nearly 4kg. Fish of double figures (10lb+) are not uncommon. During October/ November, the fishing can be hot, especially after dark, as big fish feed voraciously on smelt. Over the summer months there is often a massive caddis fly rise in the evenings and again the fishing in the upper reaches can be spectacular.

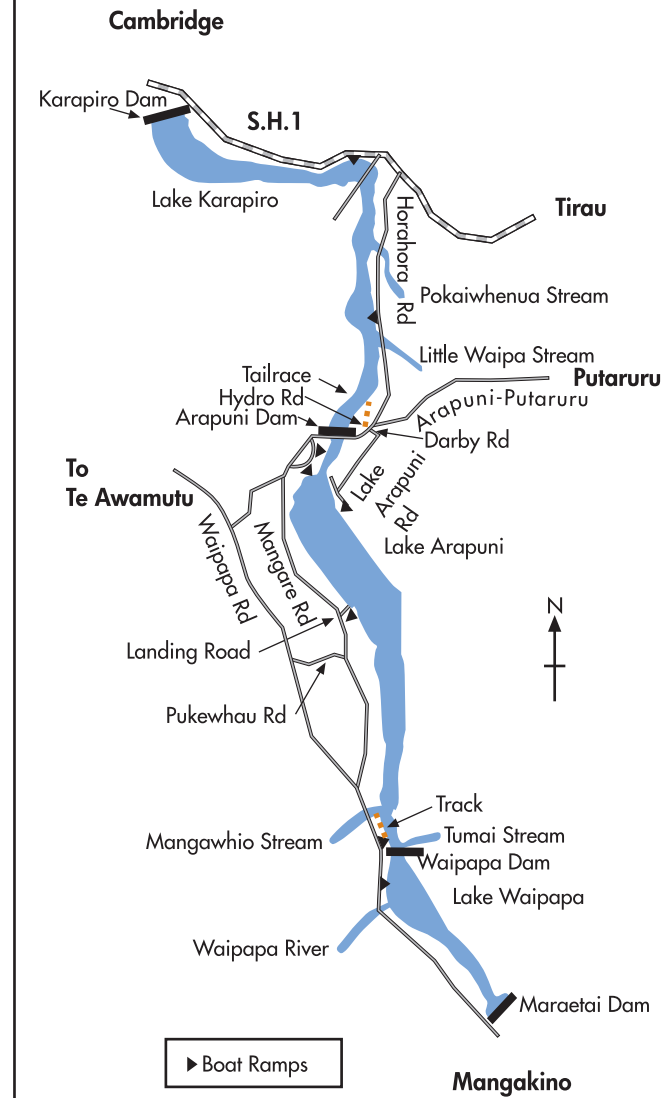
Access for shore based anglers can be obtained from Hora Hora Road. The stretch of water from the Little Waipa upstream to the tailrace can be very productive, especially for the evening rise. The mouths of the Pokaiwhenua and Little Waipa Streams are popular with anglers, although weed can be a problem at the latter. Spawning fish move up into the Pokaiwhenua Stream and the lower reaches, downstream from the falls on Arapuni Road, can provide excellent river fishing on large lake-run trout.

Trotting is popular in the main body of Karapiro. The boat ramp at the mouth of the Little Waipa Stream is recommended as it provides good access to the best fishing water. Generally the best fishing is upstream but it is an offence to fish from a boat in the tailrace (upstream from the white marker post) unless the boat is securely anchored.

All springs, rivers and streams entering Lake Karapiro are closed to fishing except for the Waikato River, Pokaiwhenua and Little Waipa streams. The spillway and tailrace of the Arapuni Dam are both open to fishing (see section on Arapuni Dam walkways).



Waikato Hydro Lakes



Lake Arapuni

Lake Arapuni is the most popular trout fishery in the Auckland/Waikato Region attracting anglers with excellent boat ramps, good catch rates, and great scenery especially in the upper reaches.

Most of the trout caught in Arapuni are rainbows averaging about 1.5kg with the occasional fish over 2.5kg. Only about 5% of the trout caught are browns, but they are often huge and Arapuni provides anglers with a real chance of catching a trophy.

Arapuni offers good trolling water although weed can be a problem in some places. There are five boat ramps located around the lake – the most popular of which are Jones and Arapuni landings at the northern end of the lake.

In the upper reaches, popular locations for the shore based angler include below the Waipapa Dam and the mouths of the Tumai and Mangawhio Streams. Access to the Mangawhio is by a walking track (1.5km) from the boat ramp about 1km below the Waipapa Dam. The lower reaches of the Mangawhio Stream, about 700m of water, are open all year. Access to the Tumai is by the Waikato River Trail starting from the eastern side of the Waipapa Dam. In the middle reaches, access to several beaches can be gained from Landing Road (metal road). In the lower reaches, the Arapuni Dam and Bridge are popular locations (see section on Arapuni Dam walkways).

All springs, rivers and streams entering Lake Arapuni are closed to fishing except for the Waikato River and the Mangawhio Stream.



Lake Waipapa

Lake Waipapa is favoured by those anglers seeking peace and solitude, enhanced by scenic surroundings of forests and towering bluffs. As the most isolated of the Waikato hydro lakes, Waipapa is little used for water based recreation other than for fishing.

Access to the lake is provided by a good boat ramp located at the northern end of the lake. The ramp has a reputation as being an unsafe place to leave a vehicle, but anglers can leave their car and trailer in the carpark next to the Waipapa power station.

Trotting is effective especially along the outer weed beds in the lower/middle reaches or along the cliffs in the upper reaches. The rainbows are smaller than those in Arapuni, but huge brown trout can still be expected. Waipapa is not stocked with hatchery-reared trout as it holds high numbers of wild trout.

The lower reaches of the Waipapa River, known as the Waipapa Lagoon, can only be reached by boat – albeit the entrance below the highway bridge may be impassable at low lake levels. This is productive fishing water often producing a high catch rate to anglers trolling or fly fishing from an anchored boat.

Shore based fishing is restricted to the northern lakeshore, the mouth of the Waipapa River and a small section of the Maraetai Dam tailrace. All springs, rivers and streams entering Lake Waipapa are closed to fishing except for the Waikato River and Waipapa River.



Arapuni Dam walkways

An extensive track system provides access to many fishing spots in the vicinity of the Arapuni Dam including popular fishing spots at Brandon's Pool and the Arapuni tailrace, spillway and headrace. These waters hold some of the largest trout in the region.

Access to the confluence of the tailrace and the spillway can be achieved from a track starting from the Arapuni Village that leads to a swing bridge across the river (alternatively park your car near the Arapuni Powerhouse and walk up the road to the swing bridge). Once across the swing bridge you will see concrete steps on the opposite side of the road. Walk up the steps and then around the transformer station where a gravel road leads down to the tailrace/spillway confluence. About 200m down this road, another road on the left leads to the headrace – this area is also open to fishing. The road down to the confluence is about 2km, and after 1.5km a track on the right leads to Brandon's Pool. As yet there are no tracks to these areas but you're welcome to find your own way.

The Waikato River Trail from Arapuni Road to the mouth of the Little Waipa passes many good fishing spots including productive water in the Arapuni Tailrace.

The Arapuni Bridge is popular with anglers who use light spinning gear with a small ball sinker and fly, which is bounced along the riverbed. After capture, trout are retrieved from the water by using a basket/net on a rope.

Arapuni Dam walkways

