



## COPING WITH THE BIG DRY

During the recent dry weather, water levels in our rivers and in the Maitai Dam dropped significantly leading to water restrictions being put in place in both the urban and the rural catchments. Water restrictions are put in place, particularly in rural catchments, to minimise the impact of drought.

During restriction periods, residents who take their water directly from rivers and streams are required to stop using water for non-essential purposes including crop irrigation, garden watering, washing cars, houses, or driveways.

In areas where water is reticulated, water restrictions mean use of garden sprinklers may be affected. For the current status, check:

[our.nelson.govt.nz](http://our.nelson.govt.nz)



## WHY DO WE NEED WATER RESTRICTIONS?



### Natural habitat for fish and other aquatic life

Fish need a variety of flowing water to thrive. Pools, riffles and runs disappear as water levels drop, limiting feeding opportunities and trapping fish.

Some estuarine plants and animals need a mix of freshwater and saltwater so when flows are low, a saltier than normal environment will stress life in the estuary.

### Essential services

Freshwater dependent essential services include drinking and stock water, hygiene and health as well as firefighting.

### Drought and water shortages

By imposing water restrictions we can reduce or delay the possibility of having to find alternative supplies during prolonged water shortage periods.

### Sustainability

Reducing our water usage reduces the energy required to process and

deliver it to homes, businesses, farms, and communities, which, in turn, helps to reduce pollution and conserve fuel resources.

### Equality for river users

If upstream users use too much water, there may not be sufficient available for downstream users, especially during droughts.

### The groundwater-river flow connection

Reduced groundwater levels due to drought (or increased water take during drought) can cause the water levels and flows in lakes, streams, and other water bodies to drop. It can take a long time for groundwater reserves and water tables to recharge.

### Recreation

If water levels or quality drop due to drought, then swimming, kayaking and other recreational activities can be affected. Nuisance algae can bloom in warm dry periods.

## SOME TIPS FOR CONSERVING WATER

Conserving water is always important – it is better for our environment, and better for our pockets. Here are some tips to help you conserve water. Pick a few things that are easy to start on and that fit with your own lifestyle.

- Capture your shower water in a bucket and use it to water the garden.
- Don't leave the tap running while you clean your teeth, shave or wash your hands.
- Fix any leaking taps or outlets.
- Have short showers – this is one of the most effective ways of saving water.
- Only run your dishwasher when it is full or do your dishes in a basin so

- you can reuse the water on plants or for flushing a toilet.
- Flush the toilet less often or with less water.
- Do any garden watering first thing in the morning or last thing at night.
- Whether you live in the town or the country, installing a rainwater barrel or tank is a great way to conserve water for dry periods.

[nelson.govt.nz/water-conservation](http://nelson.govt.nz/water-conservation)



## FINDING THE ELUSIVE LAMPREY

The Lamprey, *Geotria australis*, is a unique species with a threat status of "nationally vulnerable".

Living most of its life at sea, it uses a sucker to attach itself to other fish, much like a leech. Lamprey spawn in freshwater, migrating into rivers from the sea to spawn in stream headwaters. Its life spans our waterways from the mountains to the sea.

Lamprey have occasionally been found in our region during fish survey work. We are interested in finding out more about their population and habitat.

Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council are working with NIWA to test identification kits to

detect the elusive lamprey.

The kits work by identifying lamprey DNA markers and pheromones in water samples are collected, so even if the fish aren't seen, their presence or absence upstream can be confirmed. We will be testing eight sites across the region during mid-February.



## DYNAMIC AND COMPLEX: THE GLOBAL WATER CYCLE

