

MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1 December 2023

Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board cancels all commercial boat events on Taupō Waters

Any public boating events on Taupo Moana with vessels which have previously been in the Waikato River will be cancelled by the Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board.

This comes after the recent Controlled Area Notice (CAN) put in place over a large section of the Waikato River, in order to help stop the spread of the invasive freshwater gold clam.

“We are attempting to reduce the spread of this invasive freshwater clam and ensure we uphold our responsibilities as kaitiaki,” says Rakeipoho Taiaroa, the Trust Board’s chief executive.

“We recognise this will impact on those event organisers and participants, and we sympathise with them. However we need to take a precautionary approach at this time until our understanding increases and we have confidence in the biosecurity measures necessary to prevent further spread.”

The purpose of this action is to protect the largest lake in Aotearoa from the freshwater gold clam (*Corbicula fluminea*), an unwanted overseas organism which was discovered at Bob’s Landing at Karāpiro in May 2023 and are now found as far south as Lake Maraetai through to Te Puaha o Waikato.

The Trust Board expects all users of our moana to comply with this Controlled Area Notice. Furthermore, it calls on all New Zealanders to work together to protect all waters from this unwanted pest.

The clam eats plankton and multiplies rapidly. This means it has the potential to compete for the same food source of our native aquatic life such as the kākahi and the koura. It has been known to cause damage to infrastructure such as water pipes and hydro stations. All attempts to eradicate the clam in similar overseas situations, have been unsuccessful.

Rules to protect our wai

In August 2023, Biosecurity NZ exercised its regulatory responsibilities to classify the freshwater gold clam an unwanted organism. This legal status means that it is now an offence to move the freshwater gold clams or any water which may contain it.

As of November 2023, Biosecurity NZ has issued a Controlled Area Notice (CAN) over the 14 Te Arawa Lakes and the Waikato River from the Whakamaru Dam to Te Puaha o Waikato (Waikato Delta).

This means that any wake boat which has entered into the Waikato River from Whakamaru Dam to Te Puaha o Waikato cannot go into any other body of water. This is because there is no satisfactory method of cleaning the bladder tanks inside such vehicles.

A wake boat is defined as any water craft with an internal tank or bladder that cannot be completely drained. All other watercraft need to be checked, cleaned and dry before entering any other body of water.

The CAN issued over Lake Ōkātina requires all boats to be cleaned at a designated wash station in Rotorua before entering, and there are restricted hours of entry.

The CAN issued over all 14 Te Arawa Lakes any boats which have entered the Waikato River within 30 days to be cleaned at a designated wash station in Rotorua before entering. There are no restricted hours of entry.

What CAN we do to prevent the spread of the Freshwater Clam?

- Comply with the Controlled Area Notices!
- [Report any sightings](#) of the Freshwater Clam using the embedded weblink or by calling **0800 80 99 66**
- Tirohia, Horoia, Whakamarokengia (Check, Clean, Dry) all boats, wetsuits, fishing equipment when coming out of the Waikato River from the Whakamaru Dam to Te Puaha
- Be considerate of our whānau up the awa

Where can I get more information about the Freshwater Clam?

- See our [previous statement](#) on the Freshwater Clam
- See the [MPI webpage](#) on the Freshwater Clam

How does the Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board issue permissions for events on Lake Taupō?

The Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board is the legal entity which holds the title for Lake Taupō, the Waikato River up to Te Toka a Tia and several of the lake's tributaries. It holds these titles on behalf of Ngāti Tūwharetoa iwi.