

Gold Fossicking (recreational gold panning)

An introduction to gold in New Zealand and where you can go to enjoy recreational panning (no permit required).



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- [History and chronology of gold mining \[570 kB PDF\]](#)
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[Adobe Acrobat Reader.](#)

Before people go gold mining or panning, they usually need a mining permit from Crown Minerals, Ministry of Economic Development.

However, to make gold panning a more accessible experience, sixteen areas have been set aside in the South Island where anyone can freely enjoy recreational gold mining without the need for a mining permit. These areas are called gold fossicking areas and have been designated under the Crown Minerals Act 1991. Fossicking generally means searching for and collecting materials from surface of land or by digging by hand.

All the areas are suitable for gold panning and sluice boxing, and mining is restricted to hand-held non-motorised methods only. Some of the areas are equipped with picnic, barbecue and camping facilities and have good public access.

The areas are in the Nelson-Marlborough, West Coast and Central Otago regions and are all located in historic gold mining areas. Alluvial gold is present within all the gold fossicking areas, although the concentrations are often low. A number of the areas have been mined or prospected in the past but the gold has nearly been exhausted or does not justify commercial mining.

Location of gold fossicking areas

A map showing the general location of all the fossicking areas is available as a PDF file ( [\[171 kB PDF\]](#))

To view or print the PDF versions of this map you will require PDF viewing software: [Adobe Acrobat Reader.](#)

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Nelson-Marlborough and the West Coast

There are twelve designated areas in the Nelson-Marlborough and the West Coast regions. There are administered by the Department of Conservation from whom more information can be obtained.













Detailed maps of each area are available:

as PDF files from the table below

at the Department of Conservation offices located at Nelson and Hokitika

at the Ministry of Economic Development Library, 33 Bowen Street, Wellington

To view or print the PDF versions of these maps you will require PDF viewing software: [Adobe Acrobat Reader.](#)

Gold fossicking area	Location	Size (ha)	Facilities	Link to PDF
Aorere River A	15 km southwest of Collingwood	9.0	Picnic, swimming	 [199 kB PDF]
Aorere River B	30 km southwest of Collingwood	41.5	Picnic, swimming	 [199 kB PDF]
Lyell Creek	35 km west of Murchison	2.2	Picnic, camping	 [203 kB PDF]
New Creek	5 km northwest of Rotorua	9.9		 [205 kB PDF]
Louis Creek	4 km west of Howard	4.95	Interpretation panel	 [205 kB PDF]
Moonlight Creek	27 km north-northeast of Greymouth	14.0	Camping	 [371 kB PDF]
Nelson Creek	26 km east-northeast of Greymouth	5.25	Picnic, camping	 [192 kB PDF]
Jones Creek	0.5 km southwest of Ross	3.47	Picnic, camping, walkway, visitor centre	 [194 kB PDF]
Waiho River	Franz Josef National Park	17.5		 [215 kB PDF]
Shamrock Creek	14 km northeast of Hokitika	8.0	Picnic, camping, shelter, fireplaces	 [211 kB PDF]
Slab Hutt Creek	7 km southwest of Reefton	3.85	picnic, camping, fireplaces, walking tracks	 [216 kB PDF]
Stony and Britannia Streams	17 km northeast of Westport	6.4	Picnic, camping	 [338 kB PDF]

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Central Otago

There are four designated areas in the Central Otago region. The Queenstown Lakes District Council administers these and has more information.





Detailed maps of each area are available:

as PDF files from the table below

at the Queenstown Lakes District Council office

at the Ministry of Economic Development library, 33 Bowen Street, Wellington

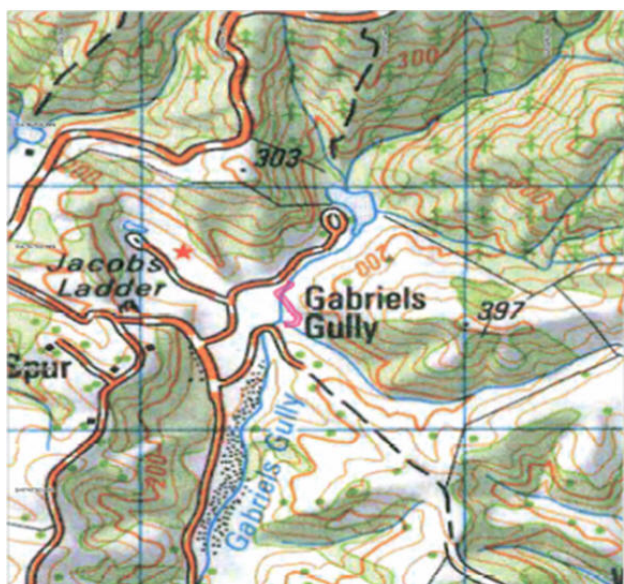
To view or print the PDF versions of these maps you will require PDF viewing software: [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#). A portion of the creek at

Gold fossicking area	Location	Size (ha)	Facilities	Link to PDF
Twelve Mile Creek	10 km west of Queenstown	11.5	Picnic, historic gold workings, camping	 [232 kB PDF]
Five Mile Creek	5 km west of Queenstown	9.9	Swimming, walking	 [232 kB PDF]
Arrow River	Arrowtown	10.0		 [232 kB]
Lower Shotover River	2.5 km from Frankton	9.6	Wildlife reserve	 [205 kB PDF]

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Gabriels Gully gold fossicking area

A portion of the creek at Gabriels Gully (see the map below) was set aside for recreational gold mining without the need for a mining permit on January 12, 2005 by the Ministry of Economic Development. The area is suitable for gold panning and sluice boxing, and mining is restricted to hand-held non-motorised methods only. Alluvial gold is present although the concentrations are low.



Further information

For further information on gold fossicking please [contact](#) Crown Minerals.