

Tallowa Dam fish lift upgrade

February 2026

The Tallowa Dam fish lift upgrade is entering the final stages, with testing of the electrical and mechanical upgrades now underway.

The project commenced in late 2024 and has included upgrades to the fish lift electrical and mechanical components, as well as access walkways for ongoing maintenance. Once complete, Tallowa Dam fish lift upgrade aims to restore natural fish migration routes in the Shoalhaven River.

What work has been completed

- Upgrade of the access track, stairs, ladders and building a new crane pad so workers can safely reach the site and maintain the fish lift.
- Upgrade of the electrical system needed to run the fish lift. This includes replacing old cables, electrical boards and control systems so the lift can operate reliably.
- Installation of cranes to safely lift and move heavy equipment, such as valve and sections of pipe during maintenance works.
- Replacing pipes, valves and screens. These components play an important role in helping water flow properly, adding oxygen into the water and guiding fish into the fish lift.

What's next

Commissioning and testing of the new electrical system and automation that drives the fish lift will start this month. The testing will check functionality, automation, and safety features to ensure the system works as designed and can be monitored remotely. The fish lift is expected to be operational by **mid-2026**.



Please visit waternsw.com.au/Tallowa Dam before you leave home for the latest updates regarding access to Tallowa Dam.



New stairs and ladders make it safer for workers to access the site and maintain the fish lift. New cranes help safely lift and move heavy equipment during maintenance work. We've also replaced pipes, valves and screens in the lower fish lift area.

Tallowa Dam Road closure

Tallowa Dam has been **closed to the public** since July last year due to cracking on Tallowa Dam Road from multiple heavy rainfall events, approximately 1.5km from the dam crest. The road will remain closed for repairs by National Parks and Wildlife Service until late 2026.

For more information about the road closure, contact the NPWS Fitzroy Falls office on 02 4887 8244.

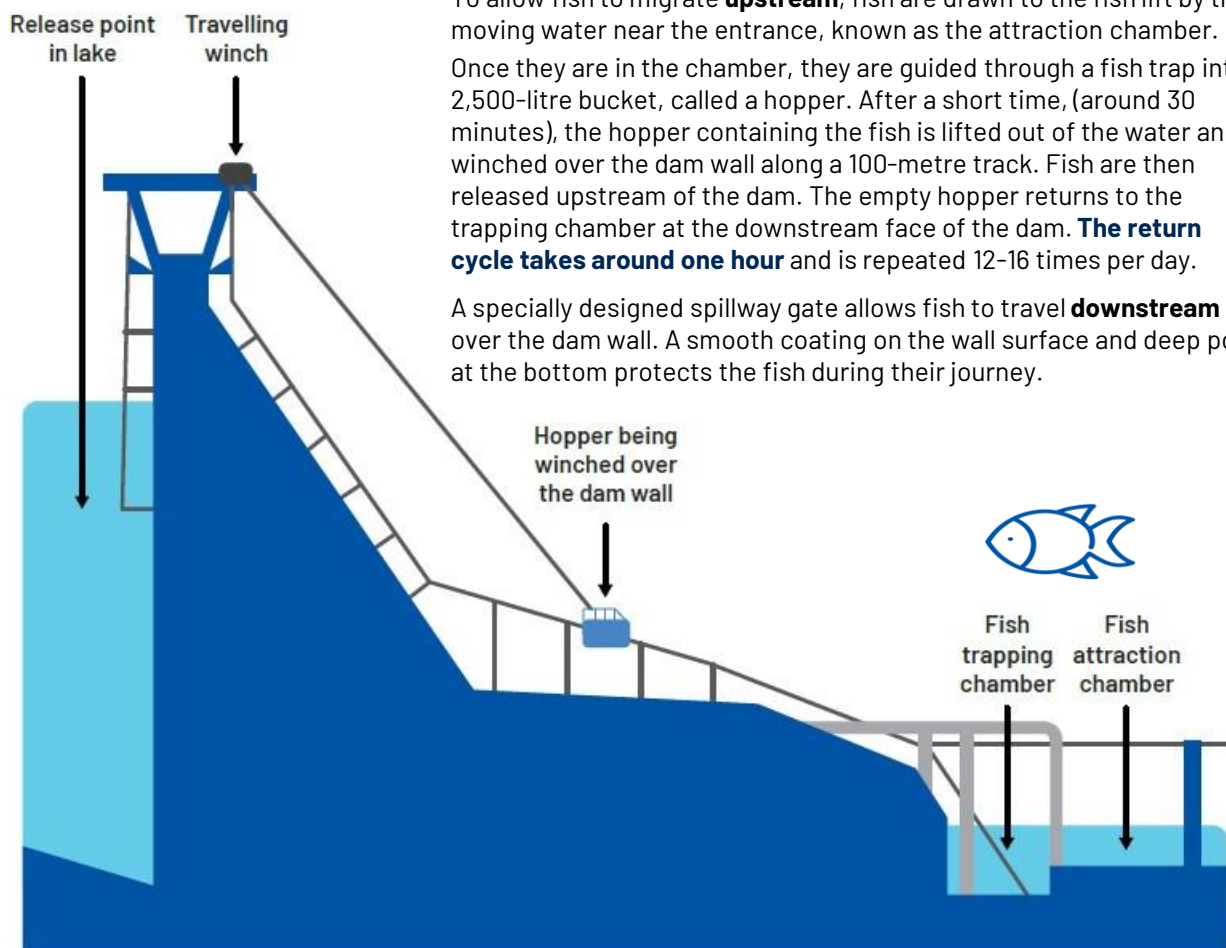
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How does a fish lift work?

To allow fish to migrate **upstream**, fish are drawn to the fish lift by the moving water near the entrance, known as the attraction chamber. Once they are in the chamber, they are guided through a fish trap into a 2,500-litre bucket, called a hopper. After a short time, (around 30 minutes), the hopper containing the fish is lifted out of the water and winched over the dam wall along a 100-metre track. Fish are then released upstream of the dam. The empty hopper returns to the trapping chamber at the downstream face of the dam. **The return cycle takes around one hour** and is repeated 12-16 times per day.

A specially designed spillway gate allows fish to travel **downstream** over the dam wall. A smooth coating on the wall surface and deep pool at the bottom protects the fish during their journey.



The Tallowa Dam fish lift upgrade aims to restore natural fish migration routes in the Shoalhaven River.

This project holds profound cultural importance for Jerrinja peoples, whose connection to the Shoalhaven River and its ecosystems runs deep.

The river is a living part of their cultural heritage, embodying connection to Country, ancestors, and the Dreaming. This project will help heal Country and reflects the shared commitment to preserving cultural values and the natural environment.

Contact us

For more information, visit waternsw.com.au/tallowa-fish-lift, contact WaterNSW via 1300 662 077 or email engagement@waternsw.com.au

