

TROUT

FISHER

YOU CALL THIS SPORT?
FABULOUS WHIRINAKI
THE NOVEMBER TRIP
TENKARA WAIOEKA





Welcome to Issue 126 of Godzone's only dedicated troutfishing magazine,
Kiwi owned and produced, bimonthly

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COVER

Belinda Thomas lands a great Whanganui rainbow (BT)
Guillaume Durand with a similar Waioeka rainbow taken on Tenkara tackle (Yvon Zill)

THIS PAGE

Waitahanui Evening (Andrew Christmas)

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In NZ, trout fishing guides use public property to make a living and should therefore, both logically and morally, be publicly accountable . . .

Licensed TO GUIDE

By **Peter Storey**

Yes, even at the risk of losing half my writers, I believe all practising trout fishing guides in the country should be licensed by Fish & Game NZ.

My reasoning is two-fold: firstly, because guiding uses public property commercially; secondly, because guiding limits the unguided angler's ability to fish. In short, there is currently no legal control over trout fishing guiding in New Zealand and there should be. Right now, nobody even knows how many there are.

That said, I have no issue with guiding itself. Most of the fishing guides I've met over the last 30 years are dedicated to their profession and among the top 10% in terms of angling proficiency. Whenever I think fishing guide, I invariably picture a fishing expert and a real character to boot. Exactly the sort of person I like.

I'm often asked why I do not guide and it's simply because I have no inclination to do so. Besides that, I do not have the right sort of personality to guide: I'm too inflexible; too intolerant; above all, too proud.

Many years ago a friend told me a story about a well-known Taupo fishing guide. Out on Lake Taupo one day, a client asked for a gin and tonic. No problem with that, but there was no ice on board and the client spat the dummy. So the guide radioed back to base and had some flown out.

I could never do something like that. Most likely I'd have given the man his money back and told him to get lost. Without question, guiding demands a service industry attitude and I do not have one. Yet somewhat paradoxically, I take my hat off to anyone who does and believe they provide a worthwhile service.

Except when it comes to exclusive access. That I find totally offensive. Here are people brought up in the Kiwi tradition of free access to trout fishing, who in most if not all cases were taught their trade free of charge, deliberately limiting licensed angler access for personal gain. Worse still they're ripping off their clients in the process, providing each with harder fishing as the season progresses by taking them to a limited number of wild trout fisheries, time after time.

In doing so they compromise every fishing guide in the country. If I were one, I would therefore take every step possible to protect the integrity of my profession and in particular, join some organisation that publicly disassociated itself from all guides who offer packages like this one to the right. From a purely practical viewpoint, if I didn't then surely my clients would be demanding similar service from me. Maybe, relating the sum involved here to the average daily guiding fee, exclusive access is *precisely* client expectation these days and membership of any professional guiding standards organisation is therefore seen as a limitation.

If so, then here's a way those guides who wish to, can avoid the exclusive access tar brush. Create a new organisation, if the New Zealand Professional Fishing Guides Association cannot make a clear statement of position on the subject.

Since trout are public property, New Zealand trout fishing management should logically include a licensed register of all practising fishing guides. By knowing how many guides there actually are, where, when and how they operate, we can then analyse what effect guiding has on New Zealand trout fishing and conclude what, if any, further legal measures need to be taken to protect the interests of the average licensed angler.

If Fish & Game NZ finds enough of us think the same after closing off its submission process on 4 July 2011 (<http://www.fishandgame.org.nz/Site/Features/GuideLicences.aspx>), democracy demands whoever the Minister of Conservation may be when the new legislation is drawn up, enforces it. Until then New Zealand trout fishing guiding will remain a law unto itself, the result will be more packages like this, and I for one firmly believe they're in nobody's long term interest.



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Fabulous WHIRINAKI

By **David Williams**



The top looked too shallow as I approached a great looking riffle, but then I noticed some attractive water by the far bank. This potential lie was only a few metres long and not that deep, so I was expecting a small fish and not what happened next.....

As soon as I cast into this small spot my indicator dived and a beautiful rainbow exploded out of the water. The fish then set off downstream at a great pace, tearing line from my spool, and quickly reached the next pool. The tension on the line increased rapidly and I prayed the hook would hold.

I desperately scrambled downstream after the trout and after some tense

moments it was finally on the bank, ten minutes later. After this great battle I gently released the wonderful 5lber.

Just a beautiful environment

The Whirinaki River offers fabulous fishing in central North Island. It is also a picturesque river with green grassy banks in several places. Rising in the remote Huiarau Range it flows for over 40kms before joining the Rangitaiki River, 15kms above Lake Aniwhenua.

I was fishing in the Whirinaki Forest Park, which is administered by the Department of Conservation and World

Heritage-listed (wow!). The Forest Park forms a boundary between the huge Kaingaroa pine forest to the west and Te Urewera National Park to the east. This is a beautiful very sparsely populated rural area with the nearest major village being Murupara. Petrol stations are very few and far between, so plan accordingly and don't run dry (as I nearly did!).

The original inhabitants of the Whirinaki Valley were believed to have been descendants of the great Maori chief Toi. Maori association with the Whirinaki Forest is historic and the right to take totara wood for meeting houses and carving remains. This was a timber milling area with three sawmills



On this river fish all the riffles methodically, because even the smallest area can hold a good trout . . .



at its peak, but by 1987 all logging had stopped. The forest has also been a traditional source of food and long-finned eels are still hunted today.

This was also one of New Zealand's most famous conservation battlegrounds, where people actively fought to save the magnificent native forest. There are awe-inspiring ancient hardwood podocarps including rimu, totara, tawa, kahikatea and matai which support rare birds including the North Island kaka and endangered native New Zealand falcon, the karearea. Long-tailed and short-tailed bats are also present but rarely seen. Several herds of wild horses occupy the forest.

They are gorgeous animals with shining chestnut coats, but always give them a wide berth when they are using the riverside tracks to move up and down the river to graze.

The water in this upper section of the river is small to medium sized and can be crossed fairly easily, particularly in low water conditions. There is a very good population of rainbows and some brown trout too. Average size is 3lb, but there are plenty of 5lb fish that are a real bonus.

What was going on

Next day, literally on my first cast, I

hooked into a 2lb rainbow and then another better fish ten minutes later — the trout were really interested today. After another fish within the same hour I finally figured out what was going on: a lovely, steady mayfly hatch was happening because occasionally I could see beautiful grey duns silently slipping out of the surface film, leaving their cases behind. As there were only a few visible duns, the rest must have been an underwater trout banquet!

What had caused such a great hatch? Well it was a few degrees cooler that morning, overcast and the barometric pressure was lower. Mayflies prefer not to hatch in bright sunlight

Fabulous WHIRINAKI



because their delicate wings can be damaged and the lower pressure makes it just a little easier to strike through the water surface. So conditions were just perfect for a sustained mayfly hatch and isn't nature just incredible! For me watching the mayfly life cycle in action was absolutely fascinating and I will be looking out for more cloudy conditions.

Pools and runs

Whilst riffles will be rewarding, do not ignore the pools on this river, even though some good ones are tricky to access because of heavy bank-side vegetation. If you are prepared to loose a few flies in the bushes, the potential

rewards are worth the effort in my experience.

Later that day I found a lovely long pool enclosed by bushes. As this was the deepest water within half a kilometre I reasoned it had to be prime holding water where a few trout (and possibly more) are guaranteed. Sure enough, after a few scratches from brambles(!) I was in position and soon connected with a spirited 3lb rainbow in this inaccessible pool. Boy these fish really fight hard for their size, with the bigger specimens making runs of twenty to thirty metres immediately after hook-up. Their strength and determination provide anglers with some memorable fights and

when you hook into a good fish be sure to run after it to keep it under control. These trout are masters of using the fast water and any handy boulders to get away, so unfortunately this can result in many self releases!

Boulder runs can also hold good fish because of the excellent shelter provided — with the fish often sitting on the bottom right under the rocks! I fished one particular run and the indicator drifted under slowly. As I struck I was sure this was a rock and tried to free the line, but five seconds later the “rock” started to move and the battle was on!

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Boulder runs can also hold good fish because of the excellent shelter provided — with the fish often sitting on the bottom right under the rocks! I fished one particular run and the indicator drifted under slowly. As I struck I was sure this was a rock and tried to free the line, but five seconds later the “rock” started to move and the battle was on!



Low light conditions

During summer the bright light and shallower water make trout more wary. Faced with this situation, use the low light conditions of early morning and evening to your advantage. I had some good illustrations of this when fishing the Whirinaki. One idyllic deep water pool looked barren of fish at midday, but when I returned that same evening three hook-ups came in quick succession. On another occasion I arrived at a shallow pool beneath trees at 0730 to see two good trout lazily cruising around. Although the pool was confined I managed to cast well upstream and let my line drift under the overhanging

branches. The take was violent and I was hooked into another great Whirinaki fighting fish. By 0900 all the fish in this shallow pool had disappeared into clever hiding places, so had I arrived later I would have walked straight past this excellent water.

Why are early mornings and evenings often the best time to spot trout — particularly browns? For their own safety trout need a secure lie that has some structure such as an undercut bank, submerged log, large boulder or overhead cover. This “holding lie” helps to protect against predators such as eels, shags and anglers. In low light conditions trout become less wary and

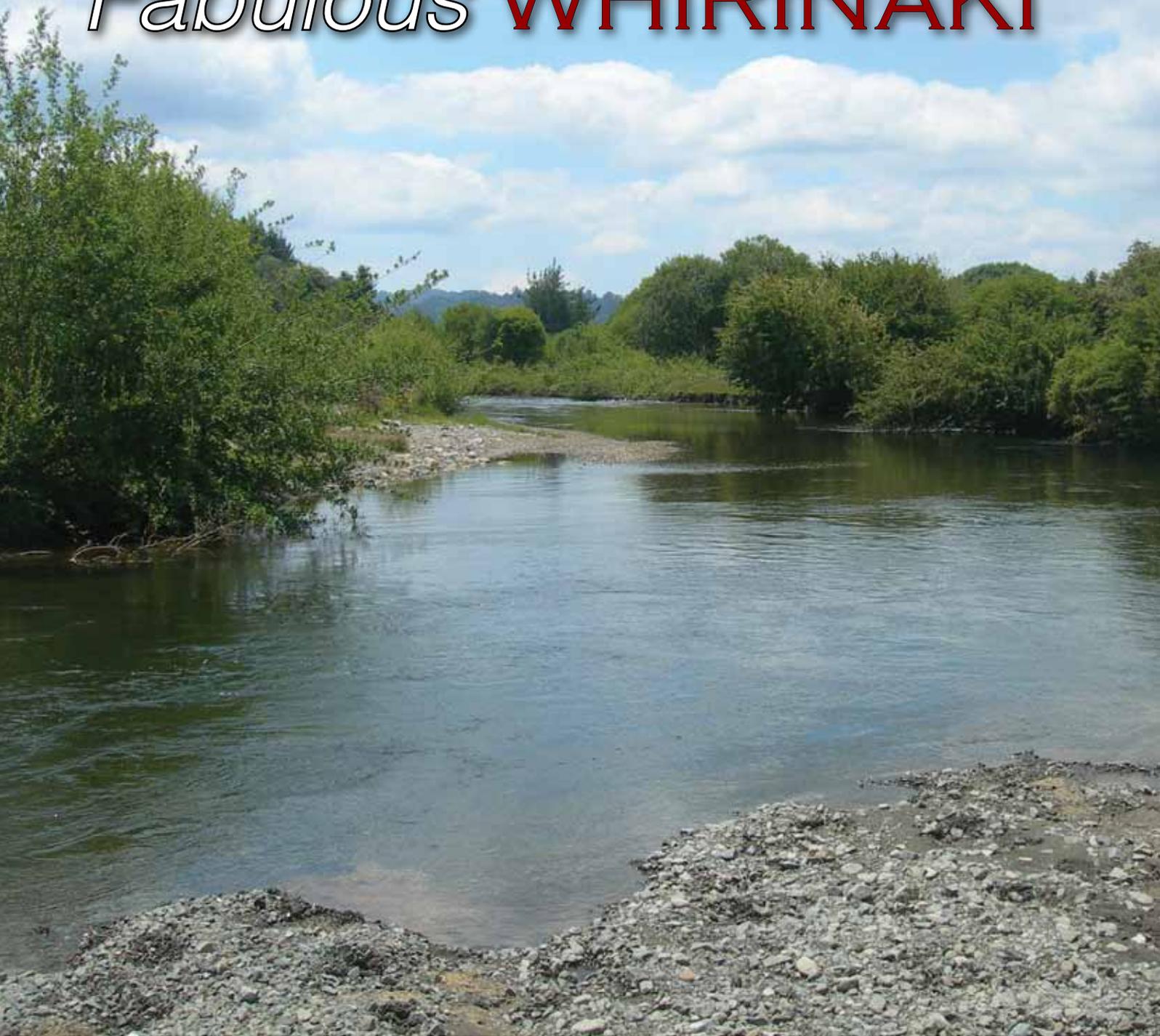
will leave their holding lie for more open water to search for food.

Techniques, tackle and flies to try

If there are good evening hatches make the most of it and fish at this time. The next morning the trout can be more difficult to tempt because of their evening feast. Keen observation and a stealthy approach will reap rewards in this moderately sized river. Look out for insect life and carefully scrutinise each stretch of water for fish and likely lies before making those all important first few casts.



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As the water is a mixture of riffles and pools, remember to adjust your leader length throughout the day. Longer leaders of 15 feet are needed in the deeper pools but a shorter ten foot leader can be used to systematically explore the shallower riffles. Be on your guard for immediate takes because the shorter leader and shallow water provide a more immediate presentation. A 6 weight rod is ideal on the Whirinaki – try the Temple Fork Outfitters BVK which is a real dream to use.

Open season is 1 October to 30 June, so there is plenty of time for excellent fishing. The Whirinaki is a tributary of the Rangitaiki River. During

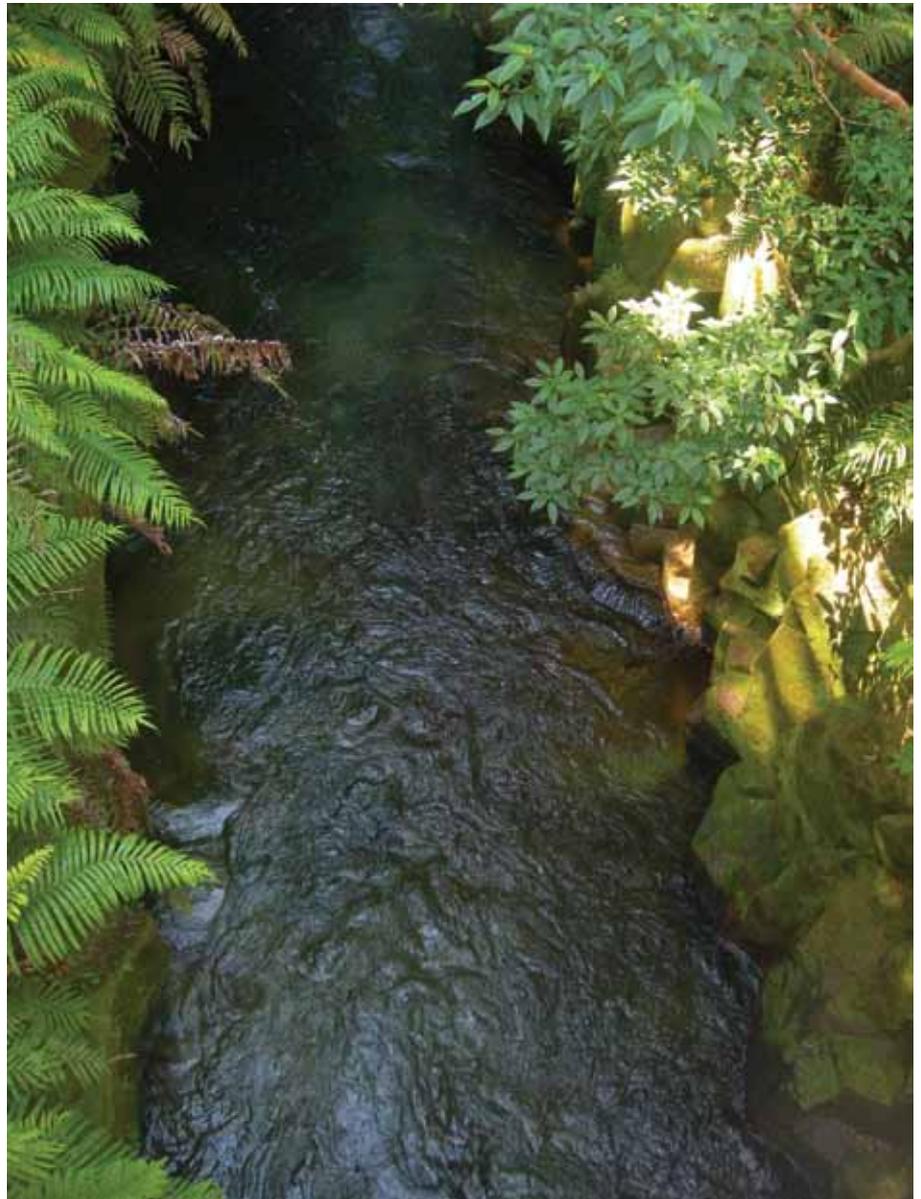
autumn (which is March to May in New Zealand) some great fishing is available because high numbers of fish run up the Whirinaki from the Rangitaiki to spawn. Sometimes large shoals can be located by fishing several pools quickly and because they are spawning fish, egg patterns or nymphs with a lot of sparkle will easily antagonise the trout into a take.

Nymphing and dry-fly rigs are best suited to this upper section of the Whirinaki and mayfly nymphs are my favourite on this water. For point flies Feather Merchants' Kaufmann's Flashback Pheasant Tail, Mighty Mite or Deleatidium nymphs in size 14s or

16s are excellent and a size 12 Sean's Magic Mayfly, in black, makes a great bomb. Try fishing the nymphs with the point fly tied onto a separate dropper. This allows the dropper nymph to hang independently and gives an excellent natural presentation.

A deadly technique for working the riffles is to use one of the mayfly patterns 30cms underneath a large terrestrial fly, such as a Royal Wulff or Stimulator. Use the big dry as a visible indicator and if it disappears strike immediately!





Access and accommodation

The Whirinaki Forest Park is about 90kms south-east of Rotorua. To reach the area from the south travel 45kms north of Taupo on SH5, turn right onto SH38 (which was originally surveyed in 1885) and travel through Murupara to Te Whaiti. Then follow signs to Minginui by turning south along Minginui Road and the Forest Park entrance is a further 7kms. Some of this journey is on gravel roads, so take care.

After turning into the Park there are several signs for other activities, but it is not obvious where the river and

fishing access is! So take a left at the main signpost and follow signs for the Whirinaki Gorge. This route takes you along River Road and there is a car park at the end which provides walking access to the Gorge (20 minutes) and other tramping tracks. There is some reasonable fishing downstream of the Gorge, but the track is narrow in this area.

By far the best access point is 4kms back from this car park through a metal pipe gate on the right. From here several kilometres of water can be fished upstream and downstream. The bush is thick in places and watch out for the electrified fence that runs alongside

the river downstream. There are good tracks beside the river providing excellent access to a lovely series of many pools and riffles, with only short walks between each fishable stretch.

There is another pull in off River Road 2kms back from the Gorge car park, but access here is more difficult because the water is quite deep on the River Road side. Other old access tracks from River Road are currently overgrown, but this has probably improved the quality of the fishing for those willing to explore further from the existing access points.

Upstream from the Gorge there are several kilometres of fishable water.

Fabulous WHIRINAKI



Trout numbers are lower in this section but average size is higher. As the river is smaller in places, accurate delicate casting — particularly to sighted fish — will maximise your chances. It is a one and a half hour tramp to a waterfall where there is an attractive pool which is unfortunately surrounded by high cliffs and very difficult to fish. Fishing further upstream from the falls is possible and there are stories of a few large fish being caught in this section.

There are three DOC campsites within the Forest Park and the easiest one to find is the Mangamate site next to the river and a lovely waterfall. There is also the Murupara Motor Camp which is

excellent and approximately 40 minutes drive from the Forest Park.

This is a remote area so before heading out into the forest review the weather forecast and stock up on food, water and fishing tackle. Check the river level using the Bay of Plenty Regional Council website: www.envbop.govt.nz. The course of the Whirinaki in this area can be seen on the NZTopo50 maps: BG39 Ruatahuna and BG38 Wairapukao.

Deceptive tranquillity

The fishing on the Whirinaki is high quality in a remote area of North Island where the bush is ancient and spectacular. The wild horses, birdlife and fascinating Maori history also make this a special and exciting place to visit.

Although the clear waters of the Whirinaki appear very peaceful, this is deceptive because plenty of ferocious rainbows lie in wait beneath the gentle riffles and in the sumptuous pools. When one of these rainbows hits your nymph, tranquillity is transformed to mayhem as the tremendously strong fish struggles and fights to get away. What a truly fabulous river this is . . .



PHOTOS, in sequence:-

The pool with the short lie of only a few metres (by the bushes on the left) where I hooked into the 5lb rainbow

Lovely rainbow from the fantastic Whirinaki and a great rod too

A lovely riffle holding plenty of fish

A tricky pool to access with bank-side vegetation, but very likely water

A good lie beneath the trees

Deeper water

The gorge

This page: smaller but sparkling clear water upstream



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Doug Masters was a very good trout fisherman — with a spinning rod. And he wasn't averse to letting people know it, or to making disparaging remarks about anglers whose preference was to use nothing but a fly rod. No-one could disagree that he had the right to do this, of course, and if it got a few backs up ... well, that's life.

Yet another argument was taking place when I arrived at the Club, and it was no surprise to see certain individuals at the heart of the debate. Something had happened on the river that had upset Doug, and he was laying down the law to Rufus. He should have known better, of course ... but why spoil a good argument? The noise level was rising to danger level when Pete banged on the bar and told everyone to simmer down; they were annoying the other patrons.

'Look, you lot,' he complained, 'Why don't you just organise a ruddy competition amongst yourselves and settle the matter once and for all?'

There was a moment's silence while the idea sank in, then Rufus grinned.

'Why not?' he agreed. 'What d'you reckon, Doug; you on for something like that?'

'Course I am,' Doug snapped back. 'Where and when?'

An immediate babble ensued when everyone began talking at once, but order gradually emerged as the details of the competition — the "Clash of Champions" — were thrashed out. It would be Rufus versus Doug, at the lake next Sunday, and the competition would run for two hours, from ten till midday. Ted and I were appointed as the official and impartial umpires because we were the "professional" men of Acotts Crossing: Ted would accompany Rufus while I would go with Doug.

Actually, it took longer to settle on the prize than it did the other details. Some extravagant ideas were floated — much to skinflint Doug's alarm — but the pair eventually agreed that the loser would simply buy the winner a drink at the bar and, more importantly, publicly acknowledge that the other angler was the better.

But when Sunday morning rolled around, so did a cold front. Freezing, squally showers whipped down the valley, churning the lake into a frothing, choppy mess of whitecaps. Doug didn't mind in the slightest, or so he said. These weather conditions, he proclaimed loudly, would surely stuff up any chance Rufus might have with a fly rod.

Rufus appeared equally unperturbed as he prepared his gear. 'This'll sort out the real anglers from the dilettantes, eh, chaps?' he commented. Doug just snorted.

A little later, watching Doug fishing, I began to appreciate just how good he was. Selecting sheltered positions and judging the wind's gusts, flicking out cast after cast and placing the lure precisely where he wanted it, retrieving over and between the weed beds — not that you could see them that well, but Doug knew his water — he easily demonstrated his skill with a spinning rod. Three fish came to the net in the first hour, each of which, at Doug's insistence, I reported to Ted by text message.

Ted didn't reply to the first two messages and it wasn't until



after the third, when Doug demanded that I specifically ask how many fish Rufus had caught so far, that a response came back: none. Doug whooped with glee.

'I knew it!' he laughed, 'I knew that flyfishing popinjay wouldn't be able to do anything in this weather. This'll teach him not to stick his elitist nose up in the air so far!'

With the weather still atrocious Doug fished on, even though he was no longer catching anything. He ignored my suggestion that even the fish had retreated to more congenial locations. No, the competition was on, and staying on, until the bitter end.

And as if to prove his point, Doug caught two more fish in rapid succession. Crowing with delight, he made me report these to Ted as well, and took it for granted that there would be no response. There wasn't, and I wasn't surprised either.

By the time we returned to the car park, Doug was glowing with pleasure. He must have been suffering, as I was, with frozen fingers and feet, and damp from condensation inside his raincoat, but he was convinced that Rufus would have failed miserably.

A few Club members had turned up to witness the end of the competition, but it was unanimously agreed that the announcement of the results should wait until we had all reached the shelter of the Club bar.

Once there, Doug impatiently issued the instruction: 'Go on, man: tell the people what our score was.'

'Five,' I announced, not looking at Rufus or Ted.

'Five, eh?' Rufus commented, pokerfaced. 'That's pretty



impressive, Doug, given the conditions today.'

'Of course it's impressive,' Doug smirked, 'In conditions like those, how else could you catch fish but with a spinning rod? It's all about science; physics. You've got to use the right tool for the job, and a spinning rig will do it every time.' He paused. 'And — ah — how many did you get?'

'Six.'

'Six!' Doug's voice squealed with disbelief. 'Pull the other one!'

'It's true, Doug,' Ted confirmed.

'In these conditions?' Doug yelled. 'When? How?'

'All in the last half-hour. Sorry, Doug, but you owe Rufus that drink,' Ted said.

'No I bloody don't,' Doug snarled, all good humour gone.

'Not until I know how he did it.'

'Dapping,' Rufus said quietly.

'What?'

'Dapping. I just put on a very long leader and let the wind flip the fly off and on the water, like insects falling. No casting required — and the trout couldn't resist.'

Doug's face turned oddly green.

'Spinning might be scientific, Doug,' Rufus grinned, 'but I add a bit of imagination to my physics.'

Doug sighed with bad grace. 'Oh, all right; I'll buy you that drink. Just the one, right?'

'Just the one,' Rufus agreed, grinning. 'Pete, bring out that one bottle of Moët I ordered, would you!'

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One of the major pluses of living
in the central North Island is the
ability to maximise the length and
quality of your winter fishing . . .

What's in THE TRAP

By **Peter Storey**

At the end of April the 2011 winter fishing season finally kicked off, here in Rotorua. Where fish had just tricked in over the month since the trap was re-installed, on that last weekend something made them begin to move in earnest. So much so that by the morning of 2 May, David Walmsley had to process 19 fish single-handed.

Te Wairoa trap catches all fish running that stream each year, other than when a major flood allows them to swim past. Fish & Game Eastern, currently aided by David and myself, measures every one of them and selects those above certain length for the Ngongotaha Hatchery. Their progeny stocks the Rotorua Lakes, and because of the collection time frame involved, 'Winter Fishing' in those lakes means April to August, when the main runs begin over at Taupo.

So that's what I mean above. Here in the central North Island our 'Winter Fishing' season basically runs right through the main 'off season'. By focusing first here in Rotorua and then in Taupo, it's possible to fish right through the complete off season, targeting the largest rainbows available.

Because the climate is generally more temperate up here, usually by mid-August it's also possible to be fishing for browns again and the Rangitaiki system is unquestionably the best place to start looking. Later in the month whitebait will begin moving into the Bay rivers and with them come sea-run browns and kahawai. We're just spoiled for choice!

As for now, however, it's Rotorua Lakes time and these fish are pretty good examples of what's running in Tarawera this year — the magnificent jack above is a previous spawner and the other, maiden. The hen on the centre pages is from Okataina, by the way, so this looks like a good average across the board. Notice all are tagged — perfect examples of the breeding programme hitting the mark with early-running fish.

While fish will be found everywhere, release points are the primary places to target and Belinda explains how to go about fishing them, if you're new to the sport. My only comment would be that the dirtier the weather, the more fish seem to run and the closer they'll come to you, *if you let them*.

Backing the mature fish up this year are a good number of maiden fish that are suddenly growing faster. The reason appears to be that the smelt population on which the fishery is based, is bouncing back too. As one Tarawera expert put it to me on 2 May: 'I have just spent the weekend at the lake and took a 3.7kg LP hen. This is the heaviest fish taken flyfishing since 2004. The fish seem to have made a dramatic increase in condition since Dec/Jan with some of the approx 45cm ZZ different month tags looking like little footballs.'

All-in-all then, it looks to me that we're in for a good Winter Season here in Rotorua and while this issue is on sale, the action will be at its peak . . .



Blokes & Boats

Talking Plenty with **DARYL FRENCH**



Boys and their toys, how often have you heard that cry? Well for us in the Trout fishing world there are plenty of toys to play with, gear for Africa to choose from, and so in this article I thought I would focus on boats. To the uninitiated they often look complicated things with rods poking out all over the place, sporting highly sophisticated electronics and multiple motors. In some cases this is exactly what they are and normally those craft belong to the professional ranks of the fishing guides of this world. One such boat belongs to Dan Basse of Taupo who runs the White Striker Chartering business. I have been out with Dan a few times and not only did we catch fish but he is always willing to share his knowledge on fishing which has been built up over many years as a professional guide.

I have been trolling myself for a long time on Lake Tarawera but with the

introduction of downriggers onto that lake some years ago, the days of my old Alvey 1:1 reel could be numbered. The downrigger (which is effectively just a large lead ball which you can drop precisely to any depth you like) has revolutionised trolling because it means you can target the fish very specifically with light tackle, and once you get a hook up you will be playing the fish on sensitive rods with only about 30 metres of light nylon out, as opposed to 200 metres of heavy lead or wire line, which has the effect of dulling down the fight considerably.

There are a few basic tips with this type of fishing and so I thought I would share some of the good oil.

You can spend a little or a lot on downriggers, from simple hand-operated to fully automatic, with built-in electronic depth setting and snag avoidance. I guess which you choose will largely

depend on your pocket and, perhaps more importantly, motivation.

Mount your downrigger on the opposite side to your trolling motor and if you can afford it get the automatic wind version where you just dial in the required depth and away you go. Use about 6lb fluorocarbon on your lines. Clip your first lure directly to the lead ball and the second lure about two metres above that. If you can it's good to have some backing spliced onto your nylon line where you are going to attach the clip as it helps to get a better grip.

I still favour the old fashioned *Tasmanian Devils* for this type of fishing as they impart a nice movement to the rig; often I will tie a large smelt fly about a metre above them, separated by a small swivel.

In summer and through Autumn, until the thermocline begins to rise, a good depth to fish at is between 95-120 feet,



"In summer and through Autumn, until the thermocline begins to rise, a good depth to fish at is between 95-120 feet, just above the bottom, at a speed of between 1.8 and 2.2 knots."

just above the bottom, at a speed of between 1.8 and 2.2 knots. Set the drag quite tight on deep lines but remember to loosen it up quickly after the strike. When the fish takes the rod will straighten up from its normal bent over position (as in the picture) but then it will bend over again as the weight comes on with the fish, so keep a vigilant watch.

When it comes to what fish you will catch on this method rainbows make up nearly 100% of the catch, but as you can see you will get the odd good brown like the one Dan is pictured holding.

However you don't always need a boat with all the gears as my friends that Ahie family found out. Now as you can see in the picture they look a pretty typical kiwi family with Joe, Sam and Father Mike, but when it comes to

their boat it's an out and out ski boat. Yes the pole, the wake board rack, the stereo, the fridge and even a dinning room table and no rod holders, no small motor and even no depth sounder. This family has been camping at Hot Water beach over the Christmas period for many years before I met them, and surprise-surprise, they had never caught a fish, although in their defence they hadn't done that much fishing. I agreed to come on board for a day with all my gear.

My side of the bargain was we had to catch fish and their side was lunch and a few cold ones were to be provided, on what was a perfect summer's day on Lake Tarawera. Well I certainly got the attention of the boys when I climbed aboard with 7 rods, two bags of



Blokes & Boats



fishing gear and a small pack filled with assorted this and that, including a large battery powered drill; more about that later. Faced with the no depth sounder situation my first course of action was to try a little *Glo bugging* off the cliff face, a little round to the right as you head out from the Landing. I did have the foresight to make sure Mike had got two anchors on board and so we could anchor up securely with no movement (very important for this type of fishing) and fish just as the bottom dropped away steeply casting our lines out in to the depths.

Sadly to say after an hour or so we had no luck and so on the next method. Again facing the absence of any technology apart from a very good stereo (good music by the way, guys) I chose to troll the shallows with fast sinking wet lines spliced to 10 metres of deep water express. This rig will get down to about 3-4 metres and so away we went close to the shore, following the drop off's and looking for the schools of smelt. Again we blanked and this time there was no escaping, it was well into a perfect afternoon, hot and still, and so we had to go deep. Out came my decades old trolling rods, rigged

up with about 20 colours (200 meters) of lead line and we headed across to Humphries Bay.

I knew the contours of the bottom pretty well here and, even though I had to err on the deep side (we only snagged up twice), we did catch fish; two fish, in fact.

Now in case you were wondering about why I needed a rechargeable drill, this is where it came into play. As Sam was playing the larger of the two fish we needed to get the other line in quickly and it was "drill time". I have a large circular piece of wood with two holes in it to match the two handles on my Alvey reels. The wood is attached to a drill chuck and the whole contraption neatly fits into the drill and rotates at a high speed, quickly retrieving the line once it is inserted on top of the reel Pretty neat eh !

At the end of the day all crew were happy. I filleted this fish and drank the beer, and we parted as a new set of friends.

Now you can have a boat somewhere in the middle of the last two I have discussed. The boat pictured with the little girl is your normal everyday run about, with just a few extra's — like rod

holders, little motor, depth sounder, and to make life very easy downrigger. Jeff Burns who owns this boat is new to fishing in New Zealand (being a good Canadian man) but for not too much expense has equipped it out very well.

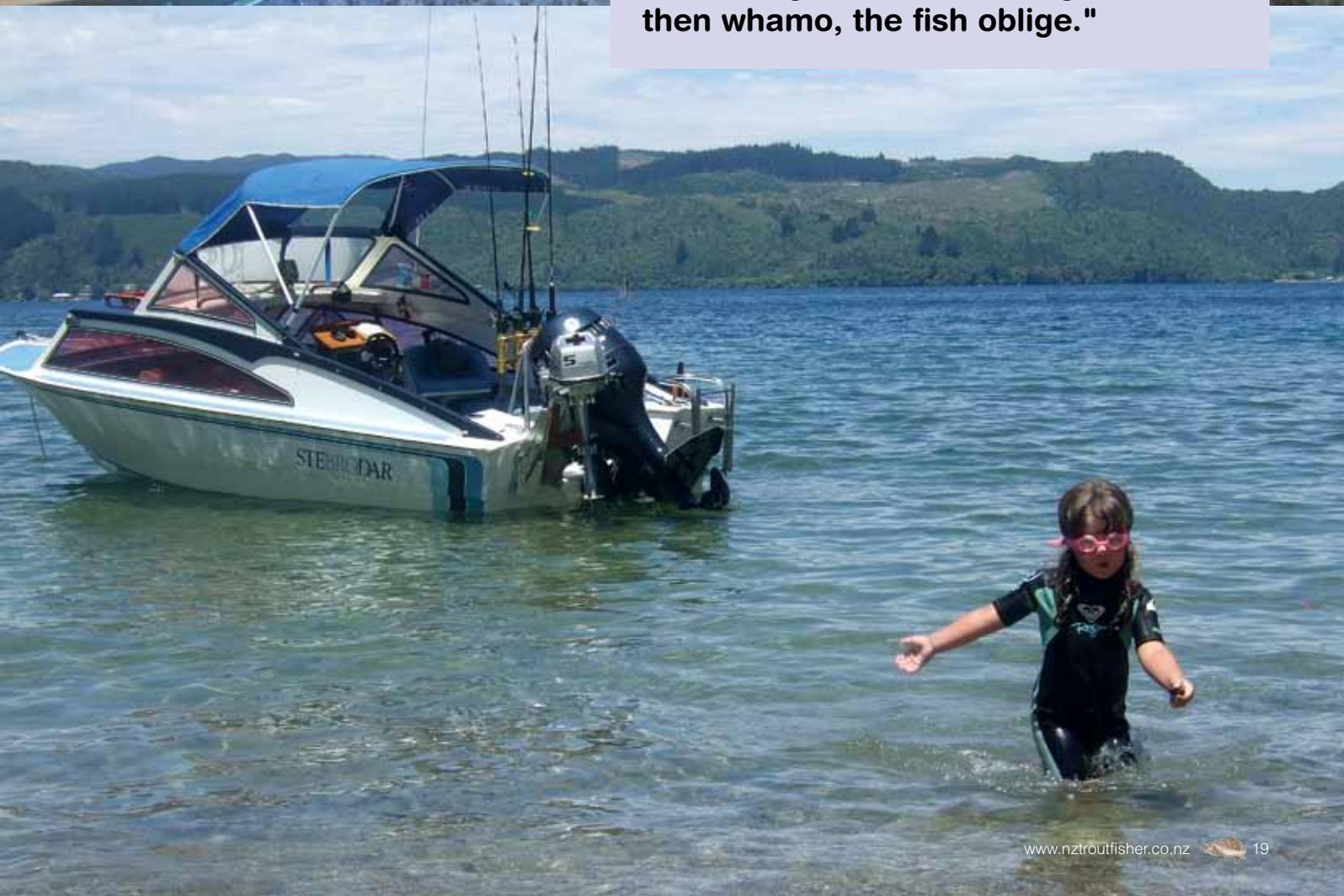
While fishing with him we did discover one additional fishing method, which after investigation is actually quite popular on Lake Taupo. What we discovered accidentally was that if while trolling you actually let the lines drop right on to the bottom, then bump them right along there with a large lure resembling a Koura, then whamo, the fish oblige. As you can see by the photo this fish had plenty of the real stuff in its stomach and so no wonder it fancied our offering.

As I am writing this we are already well into Autumn and it's getting a little cold and wet for the boat fishing, but no real frosts yet to bring on those runs of large spawning rainbows around the shores of the Rotorua Lakes bring on Winter I say.

French on Fishing
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"What we discovered accidentally was that if while trolling you actually let the lines drop right on to the bottom, then bump them right along there with a large lure resembling a Koura, then whamo, the fish oblige."



"Last year the best river in the district would have easily been the Hinemaiaia . . ."

WINTER'S COMING!

Talking Taupo with **Andrew Christmas**

Winter is slowly imposing itself upon us. The first dusting of snow is on local mountains and heavy frosts have us peeking through defrosted spots on our windscreens, in hope that it has not made us late for the day. This sort of weather reminds me of early morning fishing on spawning rivers in pursuit of the perfect brick of silver which has moved in from the lake during the night. I think we all know what it's like to be waking up to an alarm clock, missing breakfast, stumbling down a track over icy river rocks and attempting to string up a rod with freezing fingers in the dark, just to have the best crack at that favourite piece of water before anyone else. This is winter fishing.

Winter spawning runs could start trickling through anytime now; especially following solid rain, a run of cold mornings, or a drop in the barometer. Fish are spawning over a longer period these days instead of just the traditional June, July, August. So anglers should be capitalising on the extended period when some of these great conditioned trout can be targeted.

Taupo has been made famous for its spawning runs of big numbers of trout in the Tongariro, but it should now be looked upon as a fishery which produces a good number of fish all winter in many rivers. Angling pressure over the past few months in the Taupo fishery has been very low and with a few good floods, most rivers will have changed if you are one of these anglers who just comes down for the winter fishing twice a year. The successful angler will have used the low angling pressure on the river to get to know the new lies and access points, and will be prepared for those first spawning runs. It drives me crazy when anglers complain about the lack of fish, quality of fish and anything associated with their bad day. I can guarantee that any angler who knows the water has done just fine.

The lead up to winter has been very positive, with boat anglers enjoying some very good days on the lake using all methods of fishing, from harling early morning to jigging deep reefs during the day. Some very positive feedback from boat anglers concerning the fishery is that the good fish which are being

caught are throwing up smelt on the deck of the boat once netted. Okay, these fish are not huge right now but a good diet of smelt will help them pack on weight quickly.

Yes, that's the best news for the fishery — the return of the food source, the smelt. These fish that are giving boat anglers great sport now will progressively enter one of the rivers of Taupo, giving fly-fishers amazing sport. The roll on effect will benefit everyone in the end and even now, with this increased food source I am confident this season will see some very good pods of trout running the rivers and some very happy winter anglers.

The river mouth fishing has been just short of fantastic, with good numbers of fish hanging around the cooler water and deeper drop-offs, waiting for the right moment to run. The first fish to appear in good numbers at river mouths are the jacks and these are always a welcome sight for locals wanting bigger thicker fish for smoking. The jacks usually run the river first and set up camp in a good pool, waiting for the hens to make their way up slightly later.

This year has been an exceptional season for brown trout once again and most anglers have tangled with one or two of these beauties, be that in the river mouths at night or up the rivers in the day. I have recently put a big effort in at the Waitahanui river mouth and when the weather allowed, there were few mornings which did not produce brownies between 4 and 7lb. There are a lot of anglers out there who have not had much experience with Taupo brownies but are catching them quite regularly now. This has left many fisho's wondering why these fish have done so well in times when the fishery, generally, has been through some hard patches.

River mouth fishing can be very easy and a great way to start your fly fishing career, especially on the social scene. There are always fish coming in close so a long cast is not needed, tackle is as complicated as you want it to be and fly selection can be fairly rough, ranging from big *Glo Bugs* to *Olive Woolly Buggers*. Belinda Thomas has a great article on it in this issue, so I wont touch on it too deeply.



"Anglers are starting to catch the first silver spawning fish right now and although not in big numbers, their condition and fighting ability soon makes up for that . . ."



I suppose the big question to be asked is where to go this winter and when? Anglers are starting to catch the first silver spawning fish right now and although not in big numbers, their condition and fighting ability soon makes up for that. If I had to catch a fish tomorrow I would probably head to the Tongariro or the Waitahanui. There always seems to be the odd fish pushing into here and if you are lucky to be about when a stiff westerly is blowing, your chances will be doubled.

Last year the best river in the district would have easily been the Hinemaiaia,

which received huge solid winter runs. Famous for its big jacks which run early, I will be watching this river very closely in the next few weeks, as fish can move through here very quickly and in some cases they can be missed in a matter of hours. Last season the upper river limit was extended for anglers. This opened up all sorts of possibilities and a heap more angling, which in return made this treasure a very busy place indeed. The decision to do this in my opinion has its good and bad points. While it drastically put the river and its spawning trout under a lot of angling pressure, this

reduced angling pressure on others such as the Tongariro or Tauranga-Taupo. Every river needs some sort of individual management and a small river like this can only sustain a certain percentage of fish killed, as it only receives a certain number of spawning trout. In some cases it's the smaller things which we take for granted that really count, like releasing our trout if we do not wish to kill them. In recent discussions with DOC a lot of their public focus and relations is put towards educating anglers how to release fish, so they survive and recover well. I am 100%



behind them on this topic. In recent times I have seen some anglers showing no respect towards landed trout, using their boot to see them back into the river, as if they cannot be bothered bending over and getting their hands wet, to ensure the trout is well enough to swim by itself and regain strength.

The Tauranga-Taupo this year will again be a go-to river for a lot of anglers and maybe a few who in the past have overlooked it, due to its snaggy and short pools. Access into here is always limited and must be respected, but with everyone on the same playing

field it may be a case of the early bird catches the worm. After the huge floods we received in January this river has surfaced as one of the best. It now boasts some lovely long, deep pools which will be great holding water for many fish. Most of the snags have washed out to the lake or are caught up in areas you should not be fishing anyway — a drastic change to last year's mess, which claimed thousands of dollars worth of gear and equipment. This river has always had good runs of trout but with the lower section being such a mess, with no holding water, it

was hard for anglers to really connect with good numbers of fish. This year should be different!

The Tongariro, for many, is the only place to fish and this could be based upon its easy access, one's success, or just the charm this majestic water gives off. This winter will again see thousands of anglers, both local and visitors, try their luck at catching one of the most sought-after trout on one of the world's most famous rivers. The Tongariro has a huge reputation to live up to, but like any other river around the world, will also have those days which are just plain



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hard going. Planning your fishing trip around the weather will enhance your chances of having a great trip with plenty of action. So watch out for that bad weather which is good for nothing else except fishing. I am picking this year's spawning runs will be heavy and give anglers plenty to talk about back at the cabin on those cold nights while being warmed with whisky. Like all good things in life, however, effort must be put into making this happen.

"My advice to those fishing this winter is simple: be on time; move around a lot; change your techniques when nothing's happening for you; and most of all, keep an open mind to what may be holding in the next run or pool. Confidence is the key!

**Tight lines, be lucky,
Andrew Christmas."**

The Darker, **THE BETTER**

Talking Night Fishing with **Belinda Thomas**

Close your eyes for a moment. Take a deep breath of cold clear air. Open your ears to the distant sound of a morepork calling and perhaps the swish of a mate's fly line racing through rod guides near by. Feel the line in your hands, and the weight of the fly you are retrieving. Breathe again, take in the clear sky overhead, and smack!! Get walloped by a solid fish hitting your fly like a freight train, pulling line through your fingers as it races for cover.

By now your heart is racing as adrenaline kicks in. With a little management and some luck your line is on the reel. It feels like a heavy fish and a resounding splash far away confirms that you are in for a fight. It could be a trophy brown, or a rainbow, fat, fresh and ready to spawn, but you won't know until it is near the beach and you can light it with your head lamp. It's a rush. Potentially you can add near arctic conditions to this scenario, frozen fingers and a drippy nose, but as the days get shorter the opportunities for chasing fish in the dark more than make up for the lack of available daylight. Add to that the lure of the gravels and need to spawn experienced by these trout and you could have some truly spectacular fishing. For the purpose of this article I'm going to focus on those fish and on lakes in particular; fishing on warm balmy evenings in a bay smelling like a barbeque can wait for another time . . .





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FRESH & SALTWATER

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The Darker, **THE BETTER**



"If it is unclear whether the stream is flowing into the lake, and the fish are not to target fish, the presence of pumice or drift is an excellent indicator."

Given that a lot of our water closes during the winter this can also be a really social time to fish with trout and anglers congregating at the hot spots. The famous Picket Fence at the Waitahanui rip is internationally renowned, and there are spots of a similar ilk at the Rotorua lakes. What continues to impress me is the number of anglers accommodated side by side, with few tangles and even fewer squabbles. Should you wish to get away from the crowds then there are spots like Taupo's tiny Waipehi stream where you could be alone. Fishing shops and blogs are probably the best sources of advice as to which are fishing well, but any trickle of water discharging into a lake is a likely spot and has the potential to tempt spawning trout waiting to run. While far too many to mention individually, a number of these are remarkably small, and shouldn't be overlooked. And some of the Rotorua lakes have very little in the way of spawning streams at all, but have gravelly beaches that attract trout this time of year, or places where fingerlings were released and are called back to by some sort of genetic tom-tom drum.

Again, speak to your locals, and check regulations for closed water.

If you chose a busy spot then etiquette is similar to that in any winter fishery with side by side fishing, except that in contrary there is no obligation to cast and shuffle as you should on a river. At the lake edge holding station is more in order. An angler may chose not to move to land a fish, but if they do move then their spot is sacred and they should be able to return to it. When using a head lamp turn your head to the beach, and if you are lighting a lumo fly then cover it with your hand. Do unto others, especially those who may help you wrestle a lunger into the net.

The usual limitation to winter fishing is that of unsettled weather, strong winds and bitter rain. It should, however, be turned to your advantage. Fish love a winter fresh to run rivers or spawn and punching a line out into nasty weather could well be rewarded. I've fished in some appalling conditions far better suited for fireside red wine drinking and had a lot of fun. I might even (maybe, and one day, possibly) forgive Peter Scott for pinching a really great trout from me on a night just like that. A

few of us were fishing The Landing at Tarawera. The wind was howling from our right and waves were crashing about us. Standing ankle deep in the foamy water I got the fright of my life (again) and jumped about 6 feet in the air when a fish exploded just beyond my rod tip. Out of instinct I struck, and disbelieving struck again, then realised that it was Peter's fish as our lines had blown almost parallel to the beach and his was almost perfectly under my rod. It should be noted that Pete was in touch with his line and flies even in those conditions and because of that achieved a good hook up and landed that fish beautifully.

For some the prospect of throwing sharp hooks in the company of others in the dark is daunting, certainly I was little appeased by the fact that no-one could see my tangles and sloppy loops. The reality is that night fishing does wonders for your casting. In the daytime you can turn your body to see your line straighten out behind you before you before you power it forward. At night you feel your rod load and learn to let it do the work for you. Remembering to stop each cast high and pause is essential and becomes second nature. It's a

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The Darker, THE BETTER



lesson well learned and a little bit of rod design magic. And if you can feel that then including a single or double haul will follow.

The gear that you need is generally the same as in the day. For shallow water a floating line or slow intermediate keeps you off the bottom. These lines can come into their own in deeper water at night as well. As fish become bold under the cover of darkness they are also more likely to move through the water column to hit a fly and can be targeted at different depths. Vary the length of time you allow your line to sink, especially with visible lumo flies or bulky flies that push a bit of water and create

interest that way.

For drop-offs a shooting head puts you into the zone. In addition it can give you the extra distance that you sometimes need to target fish holding well out, sometimes in epic numbers. In saying that always fish to your feet, trout will follow a fly a long way before something says 'eat it!!'

Essential in both of these scenarios is pausing to let your fly sink, a little or a lot depending on your situation. Fish that take 'on the drop' or at the start of the retrieve can catch an angler unawares, so after a cast lands stripping in a metre or so straightens the line and tippet, giving the contact required for a

good strike and positive hook up.

The retrieve is a matter of situation, and regularly varying it is the best way of ascertaining what will work that night. Some flies lend themselves to a particular method of retrieve, but don't be surprised when breaking the rules is what works. The *Booby* is a night time classic. Fished on a heavy sinking line and short leader (about a metre), traditionally it is stripped in an arms length and left a few seconds to refloat before being stripped in again. This creates a lovely jagged swimming pattern imitating a vulnerable yet tasty morsel struggling to shelter on the lake floor. My favourite and top performer

"The retrieve is a matter of situation, and regularly varying it is the best way of ascertaining what will work that night."



is white dubbing with a chartreuse underlay and marabou tail. It's often taken by fish, but also serves to hold another fish-catching fly up, for example a more natural rabbit or smelt fly.

Big flies like the ever faithful *Fruit Salad*, thickly tied *Woolly Buggers* and other large patterns are typically fished slowly nearer to the bottom of the lake, using a figure of eight retrieve or slow strip. They imitate bullies or koura and takes can be very aggressive as trout attack a considerable meal. Hanging these flies or alternatively giving them some pace at intervals is quite natural and can incite takes.

And no night fishing scenario is

complete without the paparazzi lighting up lumos. *Doll Flies* and others of their ilk are tied with materials that glow temporarily when exposed to light. The length of exposure to the light source doesn't increase their glow, it is the intensity of the light that matters, and hence the use of camera flashes to impart a really stunning glow. A headlamp is a reasonable alternative and small LED torches work well. It's always amusing watching these tiny space ships being launched across rips and bays. Stripped fast they are deadly, but for some reason they are consistently good fish catchers, no matter how they are treated.

Should space permit then swinging flies across a rip where a stream enters a lake is another tried and true method of covering water and catching fish. Similar to river fishing, on bigger streams or those with a deep drop-off, a shooting head or faster sinking line is required and targets fish more accurately. For smaller streams an intermediate line or floating is what is required. At the end of the swing pause a little and then work your fly or flies back to your feet. And be ready!

If it is unclear where the stream is flowing once it enters the lake, and therefore where to target fish, then a piece of pumice or driftwood is

The Darker, **THE BETTER**

"Fishing at night is all a little surreal. Bird calls or traffic, a night sky full of stars or a howling gale, complete solitude or a team of others, it's all there."





an excellent indicator. Pretty much anywhere that you can cast to along that line could produce fish. A real hotspot is right in the main current where the stream enters the lake, but on many occasions it is well along a beach that best produces fish, or even right inside the mouth, for example at the Tauranga-Taupo river.

To that end and particularly in regards to safety, always visit water that you are unfamiliar with during the day to scope it out; otherwise, make sure to arrive in time to fish the change of light and complete your recce that way. Remember too, that both currents and drop-offs change, and that bays grow holes and other traps.

Not that you need to get wet. Disappointingly some anglers feel the need to wade in up to their necks to fish at night. Sometimes it is required but it's generally true that as night goes on and indeed until dawn, rainbow trout become braver and will come closer to the shore, and that by being out there you may in fact spook them from coming any closer. Fishing the change of light potentially

requires a deeper wade to get to those far off fish, but as night draws in shuffling back to shore is often best. Indeed there are times when laying a mere rod's length of leader on the water from dry land produces fish. It is the ultimate in stealth, requires some discipline, but blows your mind when it comes off and you have a surprised fish tearing line from your reel as it seeks freedom. Ruato Bay at Lake Rotoiti is legendary for schools of fish in close at night, but this can be true of almost anywhere at odd time, particularly if you are out at 5 am, or the first on the water.

Fishing at night is all a little surreal. Bird calls or traffic, a night sky full of stars or a howling gale, complete solitude or a team of others, it's all there. Wrap up warm. In Trout We Trust.

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Photos on pp 24_25 and 28 (left) by Kiyoshi Nakagawa; remainder by author.

". . . particularly in regards to safety, always visit water that you are unfamiliar with during the day to scope it out; otherwise, make sure to arrive in time to fish the change of light and complete your recce that way."

Catch & Release Time



Hawke's Bay anglers were lucky enough to have had their trout fishing season extended some 2 years ago, from the end of April to the new date of 30th June. Locals should be making the most of this great opportunity to fish the upper reaches of all our rivers, chasing fish as they move up-stream to spawn. Trout are in prime condition after a summer of feeding on terrestrials and nymphs. They will be showing magnificent colour, condition and are full of energy; often found in pairs, stamping out their territory.

This is the time of year when catch and release becomes so important. It's nature's time, when the trout mate and naturally re-stock our rivers. This process is so important to maintain good levels of trout, particularly because of more angler pressure, better angling techniques and the occasional big flood. So please, at this time of year, think about our fishery by practising and promoting catch and release.

Both photos were taken on the Maraetotara Stream, a small spring-fed creek east of Havelock North. They show visiting French fly fishing guide, Guillaume Durand, releasing a magnificent brownie. Fish are not plentiful so any hook up is a challenge to say the least and very rewarding.

For me sight fishing is a must. Walk very slowly, sit for a while and watch the likely pools and slow water runs. A very delicate presentation is required. This fish was caught on a size 14 mayfly imitation dropped about 2 feet below a small size 12 *Stimulator* dry fly. It was Guillaume's only fish that morning. The afternoon was spent painting my house, a reward for guiding him onto such a nice Hawke's Bay brownie. We were both thrilled with his catch . . .



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Winter is time to do a little fly tying and replenish the fly box. Think about creating a few new fly patterns maybe, or adding a bit of extra colour to what you already make.

If you are just learning, start by tying these three patterns: *Hare & Copper*, *Pheasant Tail* and *Caddis*. They are perfect first time flies before you progress on to tying more difficult patterns. Make beadhead nymphs in sizes 10, 12 and 14. Play around with a few wraps of lead wire to add weight. Then make the same flies without beads

in sizes 14, 16 and 18. Above all, don't be afraid to use your own home tied flies to catch your next season's trout.

As the Taupo winter fishing comes into full swing, anglers from all around the country will be making their annual winter fishing trip to the world famous Tongariro River, with the lure of hooking prime condition rainbows. Well don't we wish it was that easy? The last few seasons have been very difficult fishing, with the size and numbers of trout dropping considerable for the average angler,



RIVER FISHING NEW ZEALAND

With Guide Tony Hildesheim

- Hawkes Bay Trout Fishing Guide
- Ruakituri River Fishing Trips
- Saltwater Flyfishing.. Boat & Land Based
- Fly Casting Lessons

I treat the Tongariro exactly like any other river: do a lot of walking; cross over the provided bridges and go stalk out the trout; check out all the small water and any by-passes. It always takes me a half day or so to get tuned into where the fish are holding. Keep moving round and chat to other anglers. I do have my own personal view on the poor state of this rainbow fishery that is besides all the low lake levels, lack of appropriate food sources, etc . . .

The view is that over the last 4 to 8 years too many of the 5lb plus breeding

fish have been seen with a rope though their mouths, hanging from a fisherman's belt, destined for the dinner table. These magnificent fish were our breeding stock. Look how easy it is to catch trout on a *Glo Bug*. The survival rate of an egg/young trout is very low. We need more adult fish to produce much more eggs.

Nick Reygaert has just released yet another absolute stunning DVD, "The Source — Iceland". Even though there is not much chance I'll ever get to that country, the film is well worth seeing. For those of you who love back

country and fishing new waters, this is a film for you. Amazing scenery and fishing for five different species of fish. Really good winters day viewing. It's available at Guns and Tackle Napier or order from www.gin-clear.com.

See you out there doing it...

Photos: Guillaume Durand with Maraetotara Brown Trout (Tony Hildesheim)

Pests & Pines

By **Tony Orman**

Last season in Marlborough was a mixed one for me, with floods interrupting fishing opportunities, particularly in December. I suspect it was the same for most.

Marlborough and Nelson lack stillwater trout fishing opportunities. Nelson's Cobb Lake, Marlborough's Lake Argyll, and Lakes Rotoiti and Rotoroa are virtually the only stillwaters handy to Blenheim or Nelson.

I've lamented before the failure to release fish into the several sizeable water storage lakes associated with vineyard development. I've spoken to a few vineyard owners who would love to liberate trout but have been refused either by or both, Fish and Game or the Department of Conservation.

The access issue doesn't hold water because the vineyard owners would readily give permission to anglers who asked permission, which they should do in most trout fishing situations. Isn't Fish and Game's maxim "maximising angler opportunity"? New waters do just that.

DOC, just a few years ago, refused to allow rainbow liberations in one man-made lake created in the lower Waihopai because they reckoned there are no rainbows in Marlborough's Wairau River.

They are wrong. I've caught rainbows in the Wairau, just the occasional one but they are there. And Brian Bradford of the local Marlborough Freshwater Anglers' Club got a big rainbow a few seasons back. After all, who is running and managing the trout fishery — Fish and Game or DOC?

And just to prove the existence of rainbows, several anglers have told me of this season catching rainbows in the Wairau River.

Salmon seem to have been in better numbers in the Wairau River with fish anywhere from about 4 kgs to 6 kgs being caught. Are there more these days? Catches indicate so. Or are more anglers simply adapting and targeting salmon in the Wairau during March?

Talking of "maximising angler opportunity", I have a lot of time for a fish called the perch. It comes under — or used to — the trout fishing licence. But some, even in Fish and Game I suspect, see perch as a "pest" fish.

Unfortunately there are some within DOC who have a bias against any "introduced" species and even regard

trout as undesirable. Note the deliberate poisoning of trout in Wellington's Karori Reservoir, said to protect native fish. When I first started work in Wellington about 1956, as a teenager survey cadet, there were trout in the dam and the South Karori Stream then.

Over 50 years later DOC sees them as a pest. The trout have coexisted with native fish all that time. If there was no coexistence then the native fish would have been eliminated.

In searching for "pest fish" will DOC regard perch, a splendid sporting and eating species, as undesirable? I believe perch are a grand fish, great for youngsters to serve their angling apprenticeship on. Perch are wrongly maligned as harmful to trout. In rivers such as the Ruamahanga, Manawatu, Pomahaka perch and trout cohabit well. A study on an Otago lake (Maherangi) many years ago in response to angler opinion that perch numbers had degraded trout fishing, found quite the opposite. Trout benefited from perch because trout fed on perch fry and the shags tended to go for perch fry and fingerlings rather than trout.

What is needed is a massive mind shift which may be too much for those brainless bureaucrats in the corridors of power. Forget the terms "pest" and "extermination" and talk of "management." Management then embraces population management and harvesting or culling.

The whole topsy-turvy thinking of DOC is shown by the freshwater eel. Eels are indigenous yet DOC does not complain about commercial eeling which thrashes eel populations in almost every accessible waterway. Nor about commercial whitebaiting.

Both whitebait and eels should be "de-commercialised." Why does DOC ignore the commercially-motivated mass killing of indigenous species?

Fish and Game councils never seem to object to commercial eeling either, yet a study on a Canterbury river quite a few years ago showed removal of eels upset the inter-species balance and resulted in more but much smaller trout. I recall in the days before commercial eeling, of grand trout fishing and many monstrous eels in rivers. A bit of blood in the water and these big eels were nosing about. Yet the trout were big and many too.



Trout do not seem to adversely affect native fish or native fish can cohabit with them. I know of trout anglers fishing at night who have caught koaro on a dry fly in rivers such as the Hutt near Wellington. In Marlborough an angler recently caught a kokopu 26 cms long, night fishing for trout.

It is good that DOC are surveying populations of coarse fish. I have no time for those idiots who liberate rudd, tench and koi carp but nor have I any time for those idiot puritans who regard anything that originated from introductions, often over 100 years ago, as undesirable. They seek to turn the clock back to centuries ago; even before humans introduced themselves.

The eco-fundamentalist view is this is biodiversity — a term that is full of dangerous and senseless ramifications.



The fact is, we live in a 21st ecosystem with a new order of biodiversity.

Why do I seem harsh on the Department of Conservation? Well I, like you and other taxpayer Kiwis, are shareholders in the conservation business; in effect, their employers. DOC should be serving our interest.

I mentioned the December floods earlier. The December rains caused devastation that washed fences away with its silt laden torrents. Exotic forest plantations were damaged and logs and debris spewed into gullies choking them. It has puzzled me that while Fish and Game advocates have railed against "dirty dairying", they have ignored pine forests, the lack of native scrub and bush buffer zones along spawning creeks and the clear felling practices that expose whole hillsides to the elements.

Now don't blame forestry interests. They work within the laws and rules. Blame Fish and Game for not being vigilant and publicly highlighting the lack of foresight. Blame regional councils who despite preaching "clean, green" and employing resource planning staff, just don't always practice foresight with good environmental safeguards.

And talking of local bodies, the practice in Marlborough of spraying aquatic weeds in lowland drains and creeks is a shocker. I recently visited one little creek and below the water had been rendered into a desert, thus destroying habitat and food source for both trout and native fish.

Autumn is a busy time for me. The trout are there but the stags are roaring, kahawai and snapper are "on the bite." So many choices, so little time.

So it's into winter and there is some trout fishing to be had. I'll do some but on any cold days I'm likely to be at the fly tying vice. It's not that I need more flies, but I'll be seeking to develop some new angles. One theory is to tie up "hybrid flies" incorporating into one the best features of two patterns.

And given the ludicrous price of petrol, I find I'm fishing closer to home in the lower Wairau more often these days. The grass is always greener the other side of the fence but frequently we spend too much time driving for an hour or more, when nearer home we'd get more fishing time.

Photo: More and more Rainbows are turning up in Marlborough's Wairau River



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This book seeks to expose the myths and misconceptions about fishing for New Zealand's wild trout. It aims to give a better understanding on realistic expectations by the angler trout fishing throughout the rivers, lakes and streams of New Zealand. The Real Story on Trout Fishing New Zealand will give practical advice not only to the visitor but also the beginner, on casting and techniques, flies and fly patterns. It will help the angler to get the most out of the many experiences to be had in and on our waters.

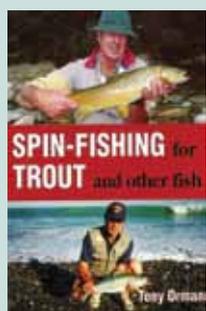
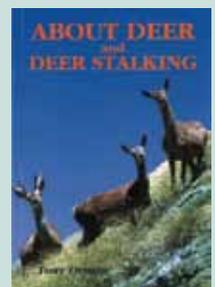
The moderately priced book is packed with sound advice, features a colour section and is laced with sketches and delightful, often wise, quotes from trout fishing literature. : \$19.95

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It's the only book available on spin-fishing. Many New Zealanders, particularly youngsters, use spinning tackle for trout fishing and often start their angling in that way. Almost exclusively past books have been and are still, devoted to flyfishing. Tony Orman's book will fill that gap.

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MINIMUM FLOW

Roving the Deep South with **Mel Hollis**

These photos trace the Tekapo River from the outlet of Lake Tekapo, through some of the mid region to the mouth where it joins up with the Twizel River, before flowing into the Haldon Arm of Lake Benmore.

They were taken in April this year, when every one of the lakes in the area was sitting at almost peak capacity. An area that was once a wonderful network

of braids, is now just a dusty wasteland where rubbish piles up as more and more people treat it with contempt, taking their lead from the power company, perhaps.

So much for your thoughts of a double-issue series of photos and articles on the river fishing this area then, Peter. There was simply no river to fish!

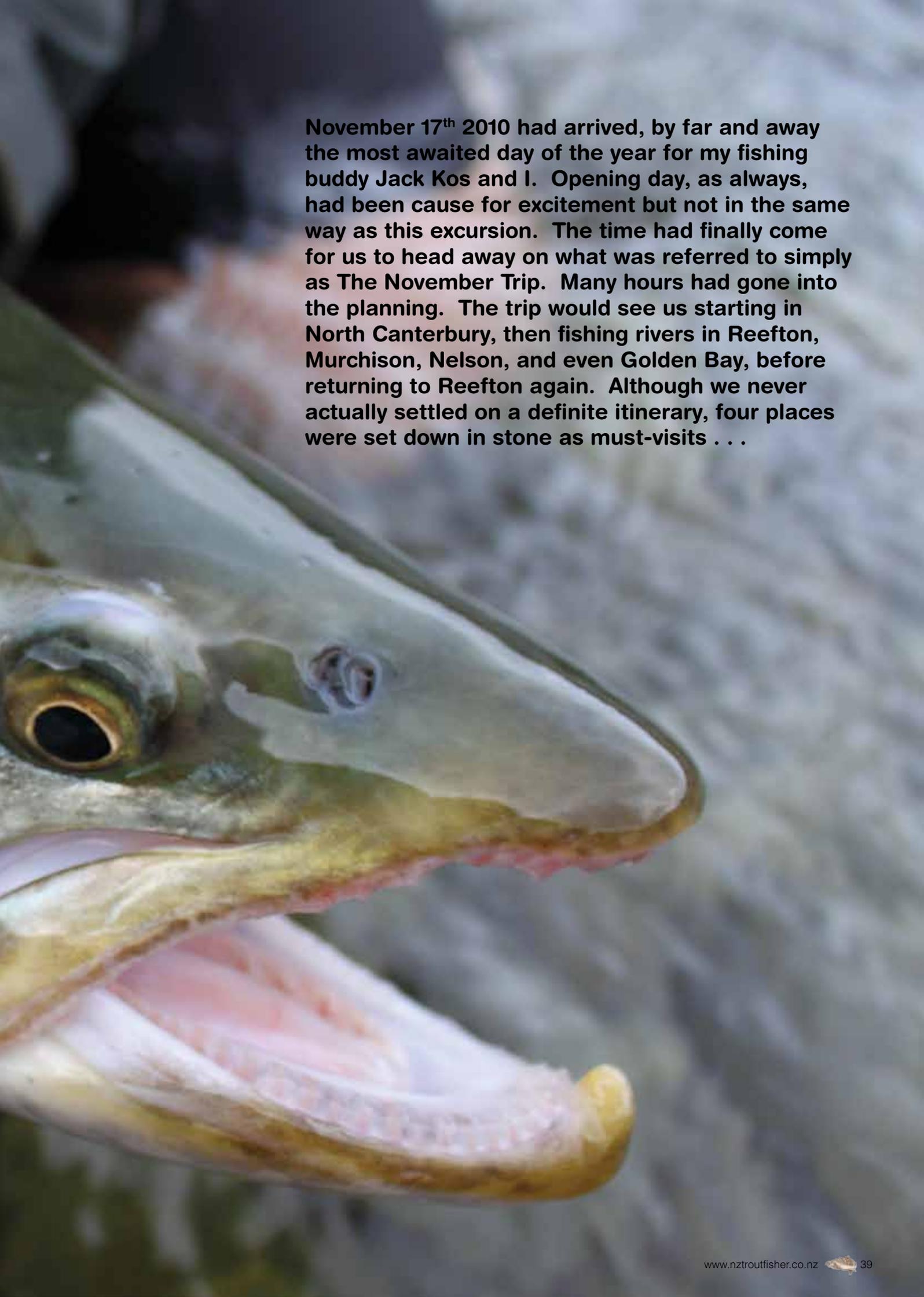
It is ironic that governments allow this to happen when just 30 or so kilometres north, DOC has spent millions on project river recovery for an area of the Tasman River.

The whole McKenzie Basin network of rivers, Mary Burn, Tekapo, Twizel, Ohau and Pukaki have been practically sacrificed to greed in the form of either power generation or irrigation.

The NOVEMBER TRIP

By **Andrew Hearne** and **Jack Kos**



A close-up photograph of a fish's head, showing its eye, gills, and open mouth. The fish is positioned on the left side of the frame, with its head pointing towards the right. The background is a blurred, light-colored surface, possibly water or a rock.

November 17th 2010 had arrived, by far and away the most awaited day of the year for my fishing buddy Jack Kos and I. Opening day, as always, had been cause for excitement but not in the same way as this excursion. The time had finally come for us to head away on what was referred to simply as The November Trip. Many hours had gone into the planning. The trip would see us starting in North Canterbury, then fishing rivers in Reefton, Murchison, Nelson, and even Golden Bay, before returning to Reefton again. Although we never actually settled on a definite itinerary, four places were set down in stone as must-visits . . .

The NOVEMBER TRIP



On the day of departure we left later than we usually would if it were just going to be a day trip, and arrived on the water at around 9am. Sure enough, as soon as we got out of the car we were both being chewed to pieces by sandflies. This was to be a familiar theme for the next week or so.

The day started with a fish being spotted close to the car, which responded to my offering by rising to the dry fly. I missed the strike. It wasn't the best way to kick off, but fortunately luck changed a short time later as we each brought a solid fish to the net from a pool not far upstream.

The rest of the day was spent fishing a tributary of the main river, as was planned. Although things were slow to start with, they livened up in the early afternoon as fish began responding to a healthy hatch.

Jack located a brown above feeding hard on a small side braid where I'd caught fish from on previous visits. I sat on the riverbank and caught the action on video as it confidently took a small parachute dry before fighting with the strength of a fish three times its size.

I dropped a fish a short time later at the tail of a pool where I had caught a big fish the previous season. This too was caught on video, although the

footage finished up being much less suitable for general viewing than the previous recording.

Fortunately the lost opportunity was soon forgotten when Jack spotted a really good-looking fish in a run further upstream. It moved to a *Parachute Adams* and a lengthy battle ensued, which saw me travel a long way downstream over several boulders and even taking a short swim before the big brownie was secured.

That was our first day of fishing complete. It had been a solid start. We decided at that point to head to Reefton where we would stay the night, and fish one of the local rivers the next day.



Day 2's river gets as much pressure as anywhere I know. It is notorious for its clear water and big fish that are hard to catch. After telling Jack this, and he responded by catching a fish with his first cast on this legendary

Photos:
Previous pages and left: Day 1 finally kicks off Jack's side braid feeder My 'swimmer'
Over leaf: Day 2 proved much harder Our Double
A satisfying end to Day 3



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The NOVEMBER TRIP



waterway. I was surprised to say the least, as well as a little jealous. I was certain this fish had spooked before he caught it. It must have been the secret fly he was using. It's an absolutely filthy creation, but it seems to work very well at times.

Plenty of fish were seen that day, but only one more would be brought to the net. It was a trout which required several fly changes before success, and a few nervous moments followed as it leapt all over the place during a spirited fight, before finally being secured for the customary photograph.

Day 3 saw us waking up in Murchison for what was the single most awaited day of the trip. The seed had been planted for us to return to this river one day late in the previous season when the two of us had fished there and seen several very big fish, including one absolute hog which Jack caught. We made sure we started early for this one; it was going to be a huge day and we wanted to make the most of it.

It turned out to be pretty tough going that day. Although we had limited success, we didn't see nearly as many fish as we had the previous season, and those didn't come easily. After a couple of false starts Jack eventually kicked the day off with a big old fish, one which would have been a mighty specimen the

previous season. Unfortunately the mice were not about this year, so this guy had dropped in condition slightly.

We dropped a couple of others before both catching fish simultaneously from opposite sides of a nice run, something we had never achieved before now.

Things went quiet after that and it remained that way for quite some time. Then, just as we were near to turning back for the long walk to the car we rounded a corner to see a fantastic piece of water which had four great looking fish lined up on the near edge, each about ten metres apart. All were sitting high up in the water and rising freely. It was truly a beautiful thing to see.

After an initial refusal to a *Royal Wulff* we caught two of the four fish, both of which took small *Klinkhamer* patterns confidently. It was a grand finish to a satisfying day.

Day 4 we elected to fish a river near Nelson which required less walking. The day before had been such a mammoth effort and had taken its toll on us.

This was another river we had been late in the previous season, when we were skunked. This time we managed three fish between us. This included the best looking fish of the trip, which was taken from one of the nicest settings

imaginable. It sat high in the water column sipping emergers, holding midway through a classically structured deep pool. Once again it was time for the *Hammer* to do its thing, and Jack placed his fly in exactly the right place. The fish obliged accordingly and solid contact was made. It was beautiful to watch.

Day 5 saw us on a new piece of water in Golden Bay. This was an unknown for us, and another of the compulsory stops.

Although two fish were brought to the net almost immediately, the rest of the day was a dud. We saw a few, skinny-looking fish over the course of the day, but most were sitting so deep in the deep green pools that they were largely inaccessible to us, so we were no threat at all.

We travelled back to stay the night in Reefton after that, stopping for a healthy dose of takeaway food on the way.

The next morning we got up for an early start on a large river we knew we would find a few fish. It didn't disappoint, and the fishing was red hot to begin with. Between us we had ten fish to the net before lunchtime. Strangely though, while we continued to see fish after lunch, they were all very still and uninterested in our offerings. I had the distinct feeling this part of the river had been fished already that day.



The NOVEMBER TRIP

By Day 7, it was time for another easy day. Energy levels were low, and chafing was well established by now on both of us. This day we fished another river near Reefton which was new to both of us, and after spending some time just trying to locate it, we soon started to find fish.

The first few were very cagey and spooked easily. It looked like we would be in for a tough time. Fortunately our confidence was restored when I had one come up for a *Blowfly*. I was sure it wasn't going to take when I laid the line out, but was pleasantly surprised. One of the goals for the trip was not to blank, and so far we were on track.

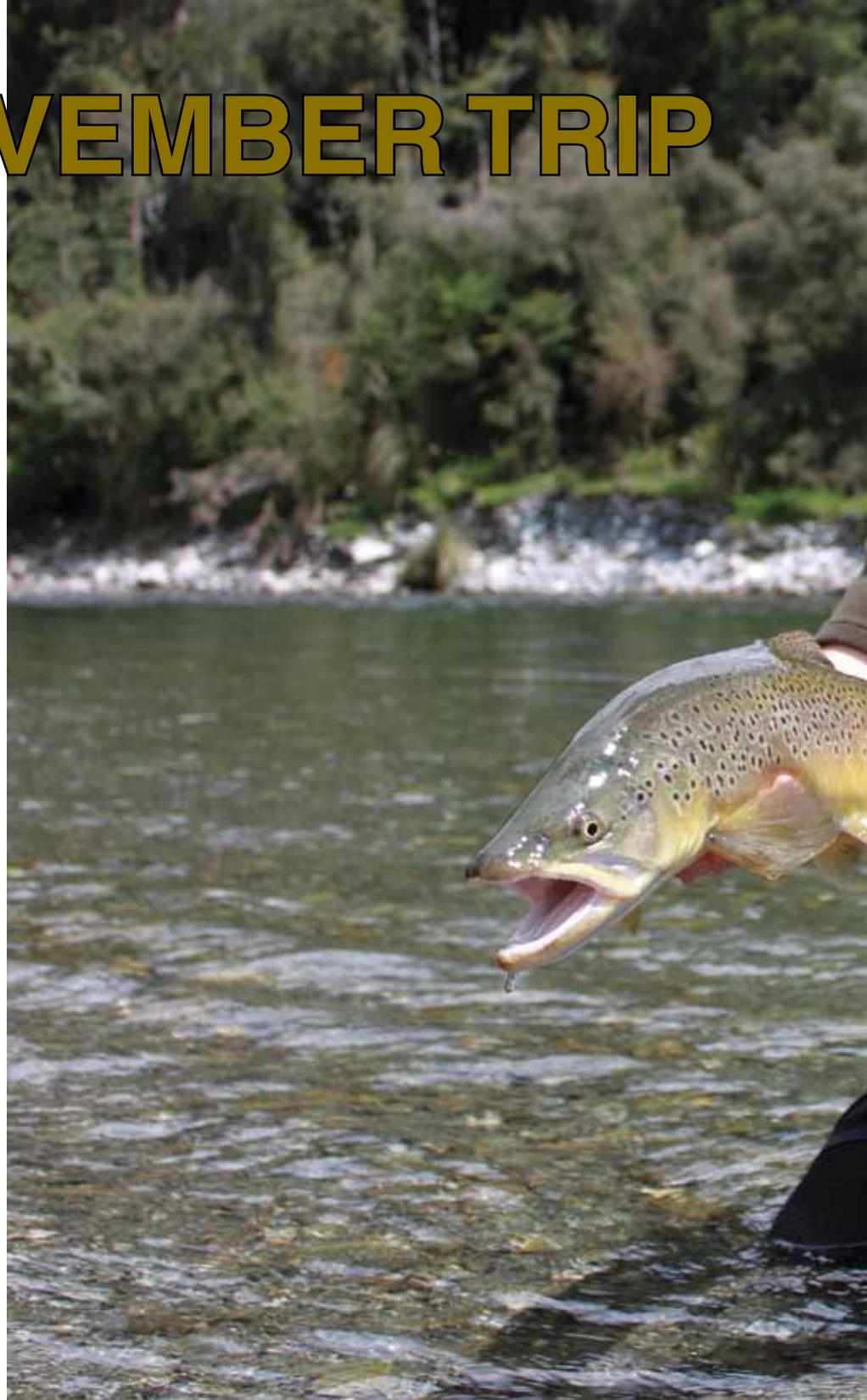
We found a magnificent pool on this river. Initially, it seemed to be empty of fish. That is, until we searched the run feeding the top of the pool, where a very nice fish was on station. Jack placed his custom-made *Klinkhamer* dry on the water in perfect line with the big brown and we both watched in awe as it lifted purposefully and sucked in the floating fly. He set the hook well and it was all on after that. This fish knew its environment very well and was soon amongst the white water, doing its absolute best to wrap the leader around the big rocks.

At one point the fish leapt right before me and I saw up close that it was a healthy specimen. It was a nice big fish. Jack managed to draw the fish down into the sanctuary of the pool to where there were no real obstructions. Then, for no apparent reason, the line parted and the rod straightened. Jack was somewhat burned by the incident. I could only sympathise with a situation I had been in many times myself. I wasn't about to cuddle him, so I just had to let him be. Sometimes silence is best, this was one of those times.

The rest of the day was tough, which only added to the frustration. That first fish was to be the only landed that day.

That night we met with an Austrian man by the name of Horst. He comes to New Zealand each summer and fishes the South Island.

Horst turned out to be a top bloke and a wealth of knowledge to boot. It seemed to us that Horst knows the South Island back country rivers better than most kiwi anglers do. He showed us pictures on his computer of the many great fish he has caught during his several trips to New Zealand, and even showed us a few of his secret locations



on his vast collection of Topomaps. The accuracy in which he described his fishing adventures was amazing. He is clearly very dedicated to the sport. We swapped stories with Horst for a few hours in his Unimog camper, which is actually more like a motel on wheels.

Last day we opted for a later start to the day, and following Horst's instructions, headed to another new piece of water near Reefton, which produced another nice fish.

After that it was time to return home. We had been on the road for over a

week and travelled many hundreds of kilometres, both in the car and on foot. It was time to recharge the batteries.

Although we possibly didn't appreciate it as much as we should have at the time, this trip is something we will remember forever. We caught some great fish, and great memories were made.

Now it seems The November Trip may become a permanent fixture on the angling calendar. A new and improved version is already being planned for next season . . .

Day 6: " . . . the fishing was red hot to begin with. Between us we had ten fish to the net before lunchtime."



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After reading Nick Taransky's article in Issue 123, maybe you also felt this style of fishing was best suited to small fish . . .

Tenkara

WAIOEKA

By **Yvon Zill & Guillaume Durand**

Yvon:

The river Guillaume Durand and I fished using Tenkara was the Waioeka and Opato Stream, in the northeast of the North Island. After the experience we are pretty sure that if we fished Tenkara in other rivers, the result would be the same.

At the time we fished the Waioeka, 13-20 February 2011, there were many "lace moths" falling in the river, and trout fed hungrily on that fly. With cicada also prominent we used Attractor styles in size 8 to 10, and sometimes with one or two nymphs under the dry.

About the tippet and leader, in small creek like Opato, we use one and a half rod length; sometimes less.

In medium sized river, and in order to have good drifts, two times the rod is our norm, but with this length you have to be a good caster.

Tenkara fishing is very stealth-orientated. There is never a line over the head of the fish, only leader and tippet.

We sometimes stalked very close to the trout, especially in creeks; the closest, about 3 or 4 metres. But in the Waioeka for example, we also came

close in some fishing condition (back eddies or close to a cliff with a deep on the other bank), but with our 12 feet Yamame rod and two time length leader and tippet we estimate to fish in the 10 meters range.

We also have HD quality videos where it's possible to see that with Tenkara it's possible to cast very accurately, in the centre of the river on a feeding line, or very close to a rocky bank where a trout is rising.





Tenkara

WAI OEKA

Guillaume:

This way of fishing is very exciting and I've never had so much fun before.

At the beginning we thought Tenkara was only for small or middle size trout in a little stream. But we had so much fun dashing after the fish that we tried to find big trout in both waters.

On the Waioeka it took sometimes 5 or 10 minutes to get close to the fish, slowly in the water or creeping on the bank, before casting the fly.

Some of the trout refused various dry flies, so we adapted and put a little nymph under the dry. We often caught the most educated fish like that.

With both browns and rainbows between 50 and 60 cm (around 2 kilos), we frequently had to run or swim to follow the fish. It was a lot of fun.

Without question Tenkara provides new sensations for flyfishermen. I am definitely coming back next season, for more Tenkara experience with big trout in New Zealand.

Yvon and Guillaume are both practising trout fishing guides in Southern France

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Guillaume Durand: postmaster@riviera-fly-fishing.com;
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