

# TARGET TAUPO

**A newsletter for Hunters and Anglers  
in the Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy**

JULY 2005, ISSUE 49



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

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8564	8'6"	6	4
906	9'0"	6	2
9064	9'0"	6	4
9073	9'0"	7	3
9073	9'0"	7	3
9073	9'0"	7	3
908	9'0"	8	2
9083	9'0"	8	3
958	9'6"	8	2
959	9'6"	9	2

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9055	9'0"	5	5
9064	9'0"	6	4
906	9'0"	6	2
907	9'0"	7	2
9075	9'0"	7	5
908	9'0"	8	2
9084	9'0"	8	4
959	9'6"	9	2



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WT	TIP	FRONT TAPER	BELLY	REAR TAPER	RUNNING LINE	HEAD LENGTH	TOTAL LENGTH
4	0.5"	5.5'	20.0'	25.0'	24.0'	65.5'	100.0'
5	0.5"	6.0'	20.0'	25.0'	23.5'	66.0'	100.0'
6	0.5"	6.5'	20.0'	25.0'	23.0'	66.5'	100.0'
7	0.5"	7.0'	20.0'	25.0'	22.5'	67.0'	100.0'
8	0.5"	7.5'	20.0'	25.0'	22.0'	67.5'	100.0'

**TROUT TAPER (WF)**

WT	TIP	FRONT TAPER	BELLY	REAR TAPER	RUNNING LINE	HEAD LENGTH	TOTAL LENGTH
4	0.5"	5.5'	21.5'	10.0'	53.0'	37.0'	90.0'
5	0.5"	6.3'	21.7'	11.0'	51.0'	39.0'	90.0'
6	0.5"	7.0'	22.0'	12.0'	49.0'	41.0'	90.0'
7	0.5"	7.3'	22.2'	13.0'	47.0'	43.0'	90.0'

**TROUT TAPER (DT)**

WT	TIP	FRONT TAPER	BELLY	REAR TAPER	TIP	TOTAL LENGTH
4	0.5"	5.5'	79.0'	5.5'	0.5"	90.0'
5	0.5"	6.3'	77.4'	6.3'	0.5"	90.0'
6	0.5"	7.0'	76.0'	7.0'	0.5"	90.0'

FISHING  SHOOTING

# TARGET TAUPO

**A newsletter for Hunters and Anglers  
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*Photo: Norrie Ewing*

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General enquiries and address changes email: [fishinfo@doc.govt.nz](mailto:fishinfo@doc.govt.nz)

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Contact Peter McIntosh: Telephone (09) 634 1800

Facsimile (09) 634 2948

Email: [peter.mcintosh@fishgamenz.co.nz](mailto:peter.mcintosh@fishgamenz.co.nz)

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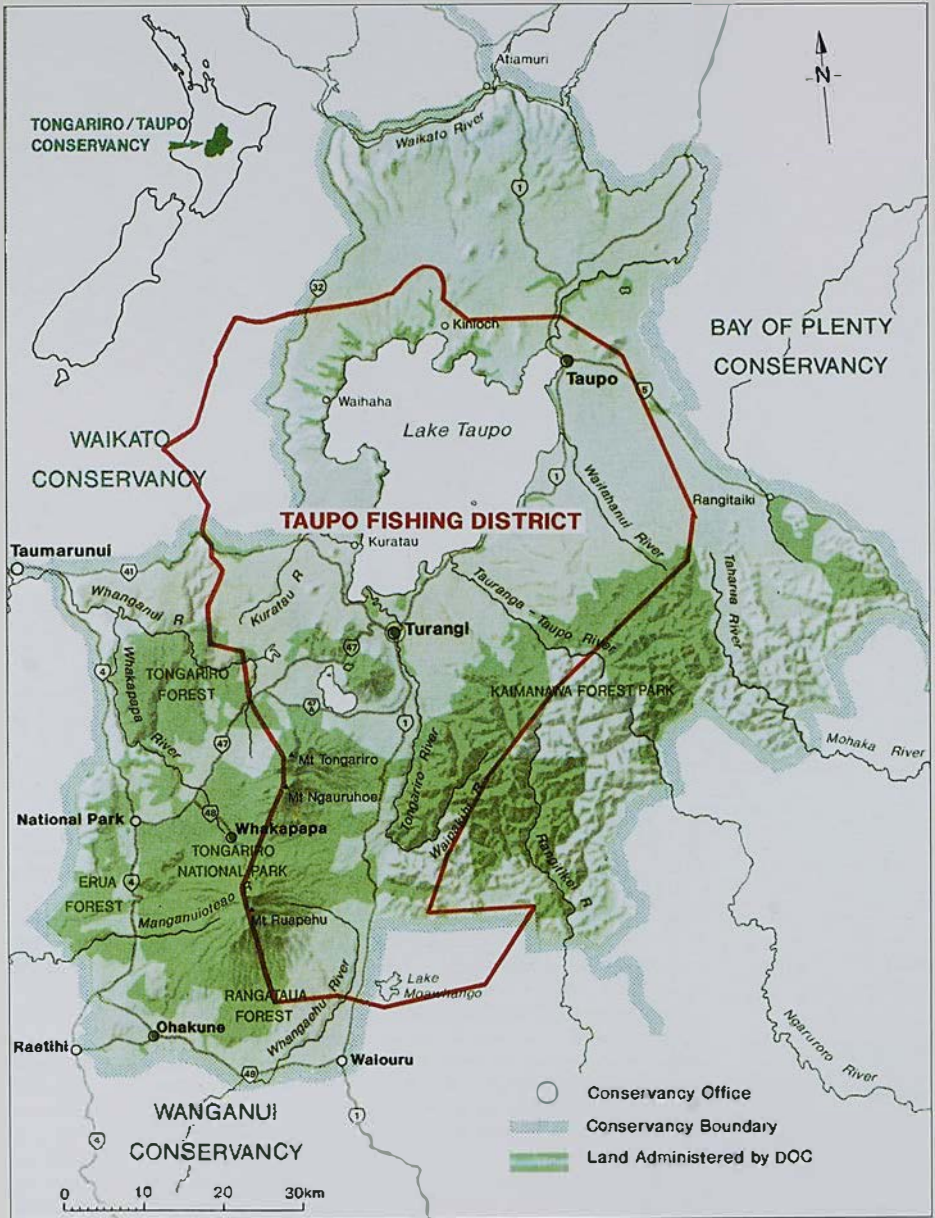
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# Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy





By Mark Venman

Mark is our Technical Support Officer and in this article he reviews the results from our catfish monitoring over the last few years

Above photo credit:  
Crown Copyright,  
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Conservation Te Papa  
Atawhai  
Photo: Glenn Maclean

**D**uring 2005, the Department of Conservation commenced its tenth consecutive season monitoring brown bullhead catfish (*Ameiurus nebulosus*) in Lake Taupo. Catfish have occupied the lake since their either accidental or deliberate introduction approximately 20 years ago, and their presence has caused some concern, especially amongst trout anglers. Concerns usually centre around whether catfish are threatening the trout fishery through competition for food or habitat. This article presents the results of the 2004/05 monitoring and looks at long-term trends in the catfish population.

#### How the monitoring is done

Between 1996 and 1999 sampling of catfish only occurred over the summer months between November and March. Two fyke

nets were used at each of three sites around the lake. However, the sampling methodology changed in 2000 and now occurs six times throughout the year. Three fyke nets are set at Waihi (southern Lake Taupo), Motuoapa (eastern Lake Taupo) and Whakaipo Bay (northern Lake Taupo) and are left overnight before removal the following morning. A proportion of each site's catch is processed to establish length, weight and sex. Diet analysis is also conducted to help identify patterns in food preference between different locations, time of year and size class of fish and any changes over time. This was done every year between 1999 and 2001 but now only occurs every three years. The gut contents of a small sample of catfish speared by scuba divers at the Tauringa-Taupo River mouth and from Pukawa are also included in the analysis.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH CATFISH IN LAKE TAUPO?



Above right: Monitoring of catfish is now done by setting 3 fyke nets at each of 3 sites around the lake. Photo: Jon Palmer

## Results from the monitoring

A total of 1524 catfish were caught during 2004 from 51 nets. This equates to an overall catch rate of 29.9 catfish per fyke net per night. Our sampling shows that catfish are most active when the lake warms up so the largest catches occur over summer. Therefore to compare trends in numbers over time we

will concentrate on data collected between November and March (Table 1).

The summer catch rates of catfish were highest during 1997-1999 when monitoring was just beginning. Sampling over more recent summers has shown that catch rates have been relatively low in comparison, with the exception of 2003 (Figure 1). The catch rate for summer 2004/05 was the lowest recorded since sampling began with an overall estimated catch rate of 12 catfish per net, per night. The calculation also included additional sampling done during late January at Waihi after a very low catch was made earlier that month. However, this did not significantly alter the final catch rate.

After the initial boom in the catfish population it appears that it has now stabilised at a lower level.

Year	CPUE (catfish per net)
1997-98	44
1998-99	56
1999-00	87
2000-01	18
2001-02	28
2002-03	26
2003-04	47
2004-05	12

Table 1: Catches of catfish over the summer months (Nov-Mar) between November 1997 and March 2005

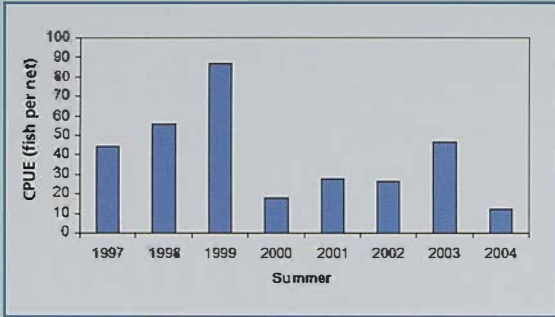


Figure 1: Summer catch rates of catfish between 1997 and 2004

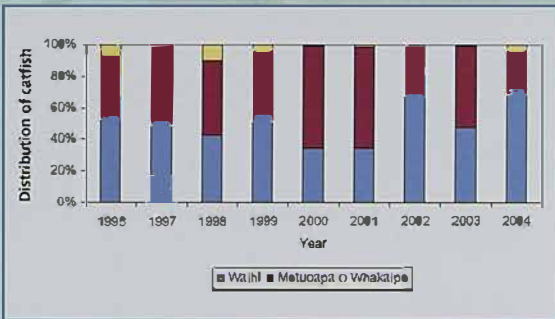


Figure 2: Distribution of catfish caught around the lake between 1996 and 2004

### Where are catfish found around the lake?

The areas where catfish were caught around the lake between 1996 and 2004 were also examined to identify any trends (Figure 2). Although catfish are known to prefer sites around the southern end of Lake Taupo, they can be found throughout the lake where suit-

able habitat exists. However, as the low catches at Whakaipo Bay demonstrate, much of the lake does not provide great habitat for catfish. In terms of catfish distribution, Waihi has become more favourable for catfish over recent years, producing almost three quarters of the total catch during 2004.

During 2000 and 2001 Motuoapa was the most favoured location, producing around two thirds of the total catch. Motuoapa was also quite popular during 2003 with almost 52% of the total catch. Overall percentages have not changed much outside of these peak periods.

Whakaipo Bay has always produced a small percentage of the total catch and this has varied from 0.5% to 9.8%, with this figure less than 5% since 1999. The overall percentage is still very small and probably reflects the lack of suitable habitat present in the northern half of the lake, which limits the number of catfish that can exist there.

### What are catfish eating?

Diet analysis involves sampling the gut contents of those fish weighed, measured and sexed and allows us to see whether specific sizes of catfish eat certain prey items or if certain food items are only consumed in one part of the lake or at one time of year.

Plant material formed the largest component of catfish diet, representing 21% of overall diet (Figure 3). This food peaks during November and could be due to the fact that plants may be producing new shoots with the arrival of spring. These tender young shoots may be more palatable than older

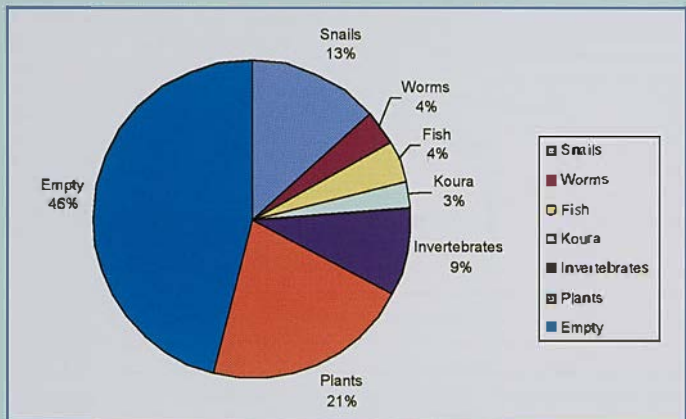


Figure 3: Percentages of food items obtained from catfish stomachs at all sites, between years 1999 to 2001 and in 2004



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Food item	Motuoapa	Pukawa	Tauranga-Taupo	Waihi	Whakairo
Snails	18	5	4	17	24
Worms	1	7	10	7	1
Fish	3	20	35	2	4
Fish eggs	0	0	2	0	0
Koura	2	23	5	2	16
Other invertebrates	5	7	18	12	20
Plants	25	20	16	27	10
Empty	47	18	10	33	26

Table 2: Percentages of food items obtained from catfish stomachs, by location, between the years 1999 to 2001 and 2004

Bullhead catfish can reach up to 500mm in length if conditions are right. This is one of the largest ever caught at Taupo during our monitoring, from Motuoapa in July 2004. Very few are caught over 370mm and this is probably because Taupo conditions are not suitable for growth.

Photo: Patrina Francis.

growth. Snails also form a significant part of the diet (13%), especially between March and November. It is possible that many of these snails are consumed along with the plant material. On the other hand, catfish may be attempting to eat the snails and simply consume plant material accidentally. Other invertebrates such as dragonfly larvae, midges, damselfly, mosquito larvae and caddis make up 9% of the diet, although this drops to 3.9% during July when fewer invertebrates are present during winter. Worms were also a popular choice again over the summer months with few being eaten during winter. The presence of koura (*Paranepheps planifrons*) in the stomach of catfish is highest between January and March but represents

just 3% of catfish diet overall.

Partially digested fish parts from goldfish (*Carassius auratus*), bullies (*Gobiomorphus cotidianus*) and smelt (*Retropinna retropinna*) were also found among the stomach contents. These accounted for just 4% of the overall diet and were much more common during January. This ties in with the spawning periods of both smelt and bullies when many of these small fish die and can easily be consumed by catfish roaming in the shallows during summer.

We have watched catfish feeding at night trying to catch smelt. Usually they react only when the smelt are very close, using their head



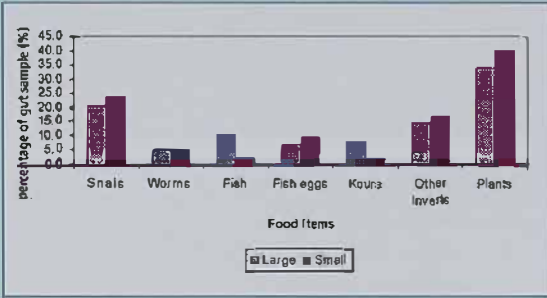


Figure 4: Percentages of food items found in two separate size classes of catfish between 1999 and 2004

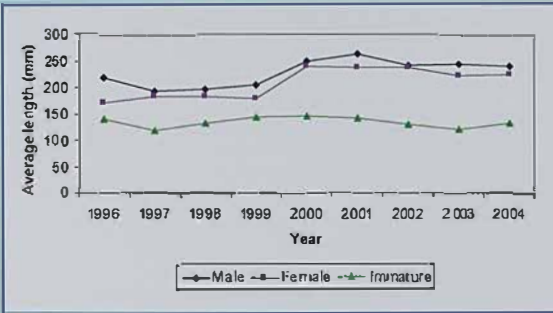
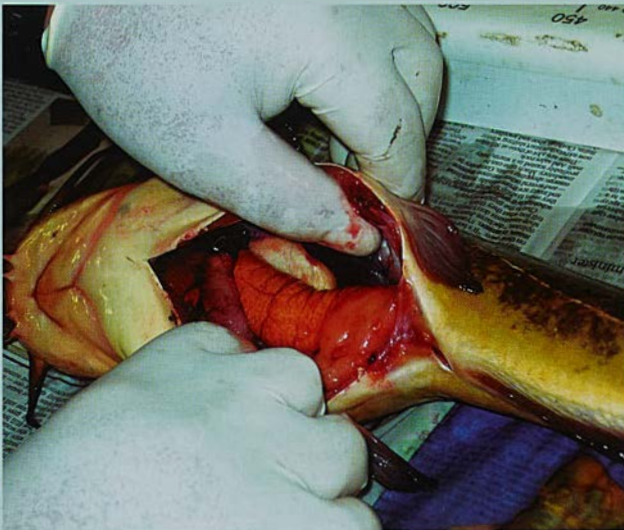


Figure 5: Average lengths of all catfish processed between 1996 and 2004



Above: Catfish are examined to establish length, weight and sex. Diet analysis is also conducted to see what they are eating  
Photo: Petrina Francis

try to jam them against the bottom in order to catch them. This is usually unsuccessful with a mobile fish like a smelt, and it is possible that most fish present in the gut samples were scavenged as they lay dead on the bottom, after spawning. So far, no juvenile trout have been found among the gut contents.

Diet preference in catfish is related to what food is present in their given choice of habitat (Table 2). Wide fluctuations in diet preference were found at the five sites and this is consistent with our observations of their feeding. For example, snails and plant material made up the largest component of catfish diet at Waihi, an area that is particularly weedy. However, fish and invertebrates made up the majority of catfish diet at the mouth of the Tauranga-Taupo River. Similarly, koura were more important to catfish at less weedy sites such as Pukawa and Whakaipo Bay.

Thus, it would appear that diet preference in catfish is clearly related to what food is present. This indicates that they prefer to scavenge instead of searching for one specific food item in varying habitats. It is also worth noting that freshwater mussels make up a large proportion of catfish prey, especially at Motuoapa and Waihi. Unfortunately these were grouped amongst "other invertebrates" and so their exact percentage could not be determined.

The relationship between catfish length and gut content was also examined to see whether they needed to be a specific size before they could consume certain prey items. Catfish were divided into two groups: less than 250mm in length and greater than 250mm, and the percentages of each food item identified, assigned to each size class (Figure 4). Small catfish appeared to consume slightly more plant material and a few more snails although it is still unclear whether these are being consumed together or separately. Smaller catfish also consumed slightly more invertebrates and fish eggs. Large catfish ate almost five times as many fish and over three times as much koura, which probably indicates that they do need to be slightly bigger before tackling large prey.

### Size & condition

Female catfish caught during 2004 were similar in terms of length and weight to recent years but were considerably longer and heavier than those caught during the mid to late 1990s. Fish caught in 2000 were longer and heavier than all other years (Figures 5 & 6).

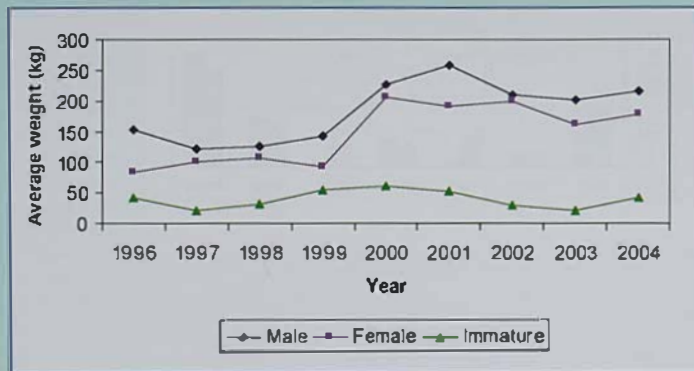


Figure 6 Average weights of catfish processed since 1996

Similarly, males caught during 2004 were similar to the previous two years but were heavier than those caught last year. The years 2000 and 2001 were also favourable for males with catfish caught during 2001 in particular, being longer and heavier than all other years.

The condition factor of larger catfish has not changed much over the nine year period.

Overall, length distributions of catfish caught during 2004 showed that there were few large fish in the top range (larger than 250mm) but there were reasonable numbers of small and medium-sized catfish in comparison to recent years.

Interestingly, there appears to be a lack of large catfish greater than 370 mm in Lake Taupo and it is possible that they stop growing at this size or that the conditions are not suitable to allow

them to grow larger like they do in the lower Waikato River, for example. This particular species of catfish can reach up to 500mm in length under favourable conditions. The fyke nets are large enough to accommodate catfish of this size but very few greater than 370mm have been caught.

### Sex ratio

Of the 537 catfish examined during 2004, 5.9% (317) were male, 38.4% (206) were female and 26% (14) were classed as immature. Overall, this produced a M:F sex ratio of 1.5:1. This was the same as 2003 and the highest since monitoring began in 1996. The number of sexually immature catfish caught in recent years has declined significantly since sampling began. Numbers peaked during 1997 accounting for almost 20% of the entire sub-sample. These fish produced some

The sampling site at Wbakaito Bay is some of the best catfish habitat at the northern end of Lake Taupo, but numbers remain low.  
Photo: Glenn Maclean



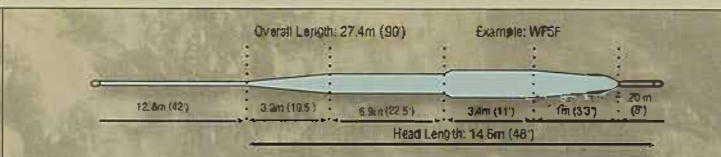


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of the smallest average lengths and weights on record. Since this peak, immature fish have dropped to between five to eight percent of the total catch before decreasing further to less than 3% during the past three years. This reduction in immature catfish could be due to two main factors; (1) the catfish population is maturing at an earlier age or size, and (2) poor recruitment and/or juvenile survival in recent years. If the catfish are maturing at a smaller size then this could indicate that conditions for growth are not as favourable as in earlier years and certainly over the last two years staff have observed several catfish that were sexually mature at a very small size.

### Conclusions

The catfish population within the lake is relatively stable with recent catch rates over the summer months being relatively low in comparison to the mid to late 1990s. The results at Whakaipo Bay highlight that much of Lake Taupo does not provide suitable habitat for catfish. Diet preference has been shown to be related to both location and fish size, indicating that these opportunistic omnivores (consume both plant and animal material) prefer to scavenge the



most abundant prey in their chosen habitat. It is also unlikely that they are removing large quantities of potential trout tucker. The main component of trout diet when they are in the lake is smelt and the fact that catfish scavenge and are not effective predators ensures that this major trout food source is not exploited. Although koura is consumed by rainbow trout, it remains only a minor component of their diet and competition with large catfish is unlikely given the trout's pelagic feeding behaviour. Based on the data presented in this article, catfish do not pose a significant threat to the trout fishery at present. However, ongoing monitoring is required to identify any changes that may occur in the future.

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# HELPING TROUT ACCESS THE WHANGAMATA STREAM



Clearing weed  
Whangamata Stream  
Photo: Norrie Ewing

**M**onkey musk weed (*Mimulus guttatus*) is an invasive weed present in the Whangamata Stream near Kinloch. Regular work needs to be done to clear the stream of this weed. If left the rampant growth of the weed blocks the stream destroying aesthetic values and impeding fish access to spawning grounds. With its fine gravel beds and cold spring-fed water, the stream makes ideal spawning habitat for trout.

Once again, as in other years, fishery staff recently spent time at Whangamata Stream using handtools to clear away musk weed. This will give a helping hand to Taupo trout and encourage them to make use of the stream for their winter spawning.



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Every month, usually in the first week of the month a report is posted on the DOC website by our technical team. It provides a brief overview of our monitoring work for the previous month with information on catch rates and the size and condition of the fish being caught. We also try to give a prediction for the following month's fishing. Before your next fishing trip, take a moment to read the report. It may influence where you decide to fish or when you will take your trip.

Here is the URL that will take you straight into this page of the website:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/Explore/Hunting-and-Fishing/Taupo-Fishery/006-Taupo-Fishery-Monitoring-Report.asp>

Or you can type in [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) and follow this guide:

From the main page, choose "Explore"

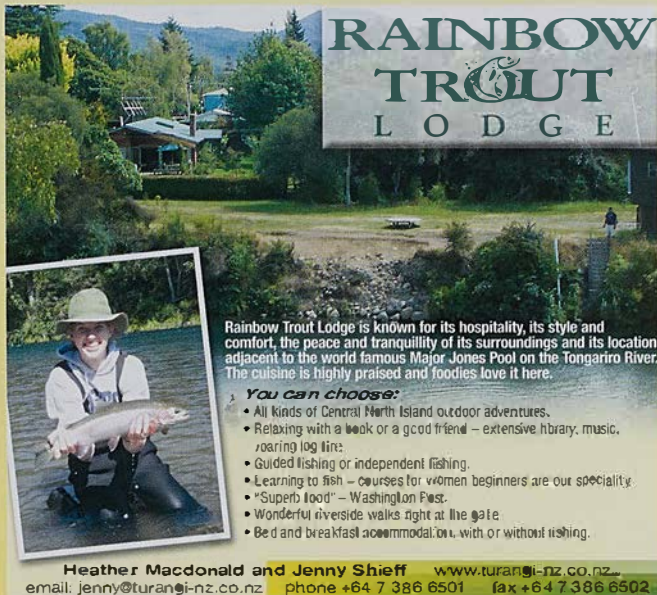
Then choose from the top menu "Hunting and Fishing"

On the left hand menu bar, choose "Taupo Fishery"

You will see a number of headings on the left hand menu bar, choose "Taupo Fishery Monitoring Report"

Why not add this to your "favourites" pages? Simply go up to the top of the screen, choose "Favourites" and "Add to favourites".

There is now no excuse not to have the inside word on what's happening with Taupo trout!



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Early winter fishing on the Tongariro River. John Bennison from Perth, Australia catches a 7lb rainbow trout under the supervision of guide, Peter Wilton.

Photo: Peter Wilton



# GOOD WINTER FISHING PREDICTED

In this article Glenn predicts good winter fishing this year on Taupo rivers, and also explains how the timing of the spawning runs have changed over the years.

by Glenn Maclean

Glenn is our Programme Manager Technical Support and manages the research and monitoring work done in the area

A count of the large trout in Lake Taupo undertaken in November last year did not make good reading but a repeat of the count in April indicated a major improvement in the fishery and bodes well for winter anglers

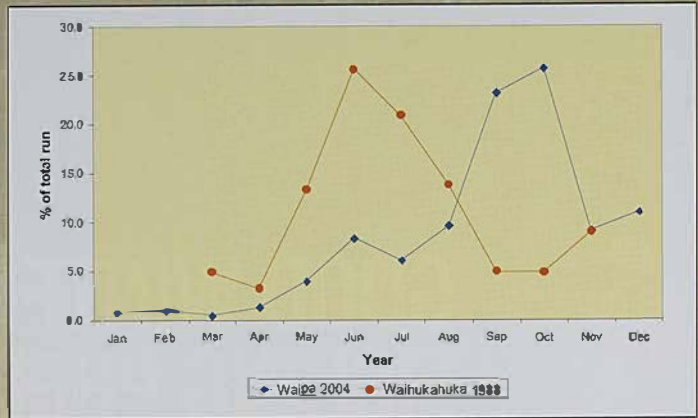
The November count was derived by using a sophisticated echo sounder to count the number of trout larger than 35cm, on a series of transects spread over the whole lake. The count was 60,000 large fish. This is as low as any November count since annual surveys began in 1988. However by April this year, this total had increased nearly 5-fold to 270,000 large trout. In earlier years it was difficult to undertake counts in late summer because the newly hatched schools of smelt clouded the echograms and made it difficult to identify the larger trout amongst them. As a consequence counts were not routinely done. However, our current machine has improved software which can highlight the trout and March/April counts have been done in the last 2 years. In all, we have 4 late summer counts since 1988, the previous 3 all showing a less than 2-fold increase in trout numbers over the summer period.

There are several reasons for the unusually large increase in numbers this summer. In part it was due to the poor weather prior to Christmas which prevented a lot of fishing.

Typically, spring is a time of high catch rates by lake anglers and high harvest, but instead, this year the vast majority of these vulnerable fish survived. However the main reason is the late spawning in recent years. Once again many adult fish were still up the rivers spawning at the time of the count last November and so missed being included. Even more significant is that the offspring from the previous winter's late spawning are younger than normal as a consequence of emerging from the gravels several months later than is typical. Whereas normally these fish have reached the threshold of 35cm in length to be counted in November, last year they were still smaller than this and so not included. It is this influx of young fish into the adult trout population that accounts for the dramatic increase in numbers.

A consequence of many of these fish being younger than normal is that it is likely that they will mature slightly later in the year than usual. As in recent winters we expect the peak spawning runs to occur over September and October. Originally the runs were delayed by a series of dry winters between 2000 and 2003. In any year the fish have to run the rivers and spawn but with the prolonged dry spells they held off for as long as possible. It was not a case that the fish couldn't physically negotiate the river

Graph 1: Proportion of the annual run by month through the Waihukahuka Stream 1988 and Waipa Stream 2004 (totals adjusted to account for fish missed in floods)



Left: Jim Toseland with his 11lb rainbow caught nymphing in June.

Middle: This beautiful brown trout was caught on the Tongariro River in July by Daryl Mooney from behind.

Right: Murray Tanks of Wellington with a 7.5lb rainbow taken in May. All photos courtesy of Sporting Life, Tuurangi.

but simply that the cues which stimulate their spawning migration did not occur. Last year was a more typical winter weather pattern with regular rain, but despite this the runs were again late. This indicates that the fish have now adopted a more late running behaviour, likely as a consequence of not being ready (sexually mature) any earlier.

Over the history of the Taupo Fishery there has been a significant shift in the timing of the spawning runs. Those of you familiar with the old angling texts will be aware of the frequent references to fishing at Easter with a stiff frost and the runs in full swing. Even in my early experiences of fishing here in the early 1980s I remember May as a very productive time, albeit that the runs would be milling off by the end of August. For much of my association with the fishery we have regarded September as the

month of peak spawning, reflecting that the fish have already run and collected on the spawning grounds by then. Now our peak monthly runs through the Waipa trap on the Tongariro for example, are in September and October. The shift in timing is best illustrated by Graph 1 which shows the monthly rainbow run through the Waihukahuka Stream (Hatchery Stream) in 1988 compared to the Waipa Stream in 2004 (both Tongariro River tributaries).

Such shifts in the timing of the spawning migration are not unexpected. Theory suggests that all things being equal the later spawning fish are likely to be more successful, as they dig up the eggs of the earlier fish and push the peak run later and later. In this case the prevailing weather has also had an influence. However all things



Table 1: Average monthly catch rates (per angler) estimated on the Hinemaiāia, Tongariro and Tauranga-Taupo Rivers 2005

never remain equal in nature and sooner or later a situation occurs which favours earlier spawned fish and pushes the timing of the run back earlier. There are numerous ways that this can occur but it could be as simple as early-hatched fry riding out late season floods that destroy all the later laid eggs still in the gravels. Interestingly this year it is apparent that

trap is on a par with last year which as Graph 1 shows was still in its early stages. Even so fishing has started well as reflected in the average catch rates recorded on our routine creel surveys over May and June (Table 1). In particular the Hinemaiāia and Waitahamui rivers have fished very well. Unlike other Taupo rivers the runs in these largely spring-fed rivers are stimulated more by strong


River	May (fish per hour)	June (fish per hour)
Hinemaiāia	0.47	0.43
Tongariro	0.37	0.28
Tauranga-Taupo	0.35	0.24

while the main runs are yet to occur there is a greater degree of early spawning evident. For example on an inspection of the Whitiākau Stream in early June we saw numerous redds and newly-hatched fry and these are already showing up in our monthly juvenile monitoring. It is much too early to be sure but it is possible we are seeing the first indications of a swing back to an earlier run. These changes in the fishery highlight the plasticity of rainbow trout; that as a species they are able to thrive under a wide range of different conditions. It also reinforces the need to maintain as wide a genetic base as possible within the population so that no matter what the prevailing conditions are, there is a component of the population that is well suited. This is a key element of the Taupo fishery and a major argument against attempting to manipulate its genetics. So far this winter the run through the Waipa

westerlies and sou-westerlies than by rain. As a consequence the timing of these runs has been less affected in recent years by the dry winters and the runs follow a more typical timing. The higher catch rates in May rather than June in the Tongariro and Tauranga-Taupo rivers reflect a flurry of success late in May on the back of some small fishes.

These are very good catch rates for early in the run and given the likely increase in numbers of fish running over the next few months, prospects look excellent. Once again we encourage anglers to think about planning a trip or two in September and October. The fishing will be at least as good as at present and probably a lot better with the added bonus of warm spring days and having to compete with fewer anglers (unless they all take notice of this). It is something to look forward to!









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# NEW SEASON'S FISHING LICENCE

by Petrina Francis

*Petrina is our Programme Manager/Community Relations. Here she discusses what happens to your licence fee.*

July 1st heralds the start of the new fishing season for the Taupo District and many anglers will already have purchased their new season licence.

This year the fees have increased in all categories with adult season licences now \$7300. An adult week licence will cost \$3300, and an adult 24-hour licence \$1500. Child licences have also increased to \$1100 for a full season and \$450 for a 24-hour licence.

Season licences are approximately 30% of total sales at Taupo. Sales have shown a slight decline over recent years, with the peak in the late 1980s at around \$2,000 per year. Over the last four years we have averaged 61,000. It is interesting to note though that adult season sales in the late 1980s were

approximately 16% of total sales and contributed \$133,000 to the total revenue for the year. Today they make up 23% of total sales with a contribution of approximately \$279,000. Obviously there has been a shift over the years with anglers buying full season licences in preference to several short term licences. However, this also

means that a large proportion of our sales are for adult or child 24-hour licences or adult week. With the introduction last year of the 24-hour licence, adult week sales took a big knock, with a whopping 46% of last year's sales being for adult 24-hour licences. Obviously some anglers found the 24-hour licence met their angling needs for a short fishing trip and opted to pay the lesser fee rather than buy a week licence. Clearly these short-term licences bought by people only spending a small amount of time at Taupo make up a significant component of the overall volume of licences sold.

This high proportion of short-term licences reflects that Taupo is a tourist centre and over 80% of anglers are visitors. However the backbone of Taupo licence holders are the 12,000 or

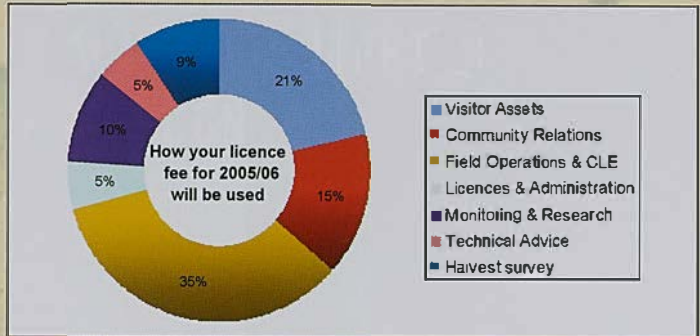
so who buy their season licence year after year. There could also be a number of other reasons for the decline in total sales. Child 24-hour licences were definitely impacted last year due to the fact that the children's fishing days could not be held at the trout centre after the February flood. Because the majority of Taupo anglers are visitors the cost of a licence is only a small proportion of their total fishing expenses, compared with travel, accommodation, etc. In the current economic climate it seems likely that many people are choosing to commit their discretionary income to longer-term investments like housing. This may well reduce their ability to afford fishing trips to Taupo and thus impact on licence sales.

*Obviously there has been a shift over the years with anglers buying full season licences in preference to several short term licences.*

Revenue from fishing licences last year was approximately \$1.5 million (GST exclusive). This is used solely to manage the Taupo fishery for anglers, as no money is received from central government. John Gibbs, Taupo Fishery Area Manager wrote an article in *Target Taupo* July 2004 (Issue 46) p.4546 entitled "New Licence Fees - Where Does the

Money Go?" He explored in depth the use of the revenue each year to manage the fishery. But in simple terms, when you pay your fee across the counter this year, how will the \$7300 be spent?

In this 2005/06 year, we have two major projects to accomplish. The first is the completion of the five-yearly harvest survey which provides critical data to help fishery managers estimate the number of trout caught and killed by anglers each year. The survey involves 4000-5000 interviews with anglers on the lake and rivers and 250 aerial counts by plane. The second project is the refurbishment of a classroom at the Tongariro National Trout Centre to be used by the education programme "Taupo for Tomorrow".



The above chart shows the split of your fee across all the major work to be done in the fishery over 2005/06, including the two projects mentioned above. Your \$73.00 season licence fee, once GST is subtracted, provides \$64.89 of available revenue towards the fishery.

#### **Visitor Assets (\$13.63 of your fee)**

Includes work on information signs, angling structures, maintaining access tracks and roads, clearing of willows, and maintenance of trout habitat and fish passage. This also includes operation of the Tongariro National Trout Centre and the large amount of staff time associated with a ranger on duty every day at the centre.

#### **Community Relations (\$9.73 of your fee)**

Includes 3 issues of *Target Taupo* delivered to season licence holders each year, brochures, publications, media and fishery advocacy, displays and development of the Tongariro National Trout Centre, maintenance of the DOC website and refurbishments to the new classroom at the trout centre. Also administration associated with the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee.

#### **Field Operations & Compliance and Law Enforcement (CLE) (\$22.71 of your fee)**

Much of the costs associated with this programme are in staff time, but also includes offence management, prosecutions and enforcement training as well as routine field work such as catfish surveys, smelt monitoring, juvenile trout monitoring, operation of the fish traps, angler compliance checks and surveys.

#### **Licences and Administration (\$3.24 of your fee)**

We have 120 agents throughout the North Island that sell our licences. This amount represents the cost of administering the licence system, sales commissions and printing and production of the licences, as well as administration of the permit system for fishing competitions.

#### **Monitoring and Research (\$6.49 of your fee)**

Design, analysis and reporting of monitoring and fishery research projects.

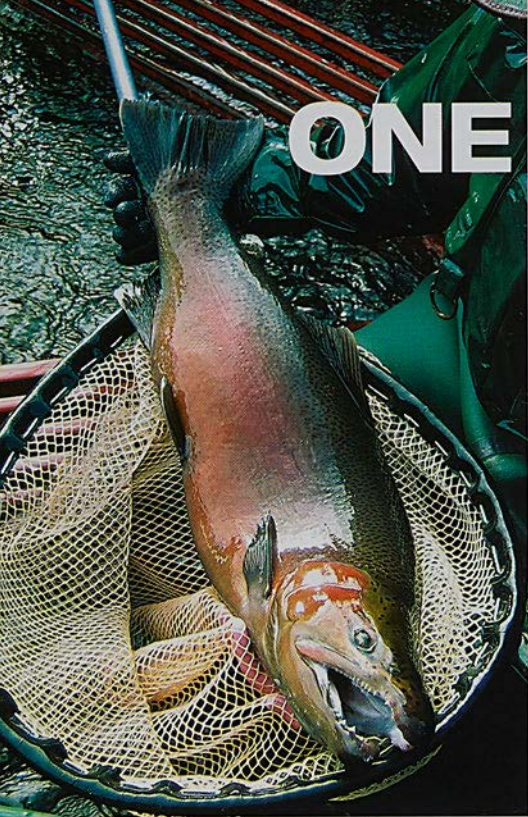
#### **Technical Advice (\$3.24 of your fee)**

Input into statutory processes such as resource consents, plans, and fishery management planning, as well as head office and ministerial support and servicing.

#### **Harvest Survey (\$5.84 of your fee)**

This is for completion of our special project for this year, the harvest survey. Due to the cost of this project it is only done every five years.

Anglers can feel very comfortable that the licence fee is being used wisely in ensuring the fishery is sustainable and in maximising their enjoyment of it. Season licence holders have the benefit of being able to enjoy the fishery year-round with excellent winter river fishing predicted and summer fishing on the lake. As a comparison, \$73.00 will buy you a year's subscription to a glossy magazine, one fill of your petrol tank at the service station, or a nice lunch for four out at a café. Most of us spend this or more on mobile phone calls or a SKY television subscription each month! Really, it is a small price to pay to ensure the fishery is managed well and to enjoy catching fish all year around in one of the best wild trout fisheries in the world!



# ONE BIG FISH!

To date, this is the heaviest fish to pass through our traps this year. Ranger Norrie Ewing couldn't believe it when he saw this big rainbow jack in the pen, and decided we really needed to get a photo of him! He passed through the Te Whaiiau trap at Lake Otamangakau, along with many other superb condition fish, on the 22nd of June after a spell of rain. At 735mm long and 5.6 kg (12lb 5oz) in weight he was a big fish for Norrie to handle, but we managed to quickly take these photos before he powered off upstream to spawn.



Photo: Petrice Francis

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## Walking access



- Track access along the Tauranga Taupo River is available between mid-November and Easter
- The track crosses various private property owners. It is not supposed to be used as a shortcut.
- To venture further up the river you will need to make your own way. This map indicates the access track and crossing points.
- Do not keep within the marked or on the marked track. Fishing the pools marked with a blue band and fish taking points.



For more information on the track please see the Department of Conservation website

# NEW WALKING TRACK ON TAURANGA - TAUPO RIVER IS A SUCCESS

by *Petrina Francis*

*Above: A sign in each car park provides information on the walking track. Photo: Petrina Francis*

*Below: Anglers should be aware that river crossings are necessary to reach the upper fishing pools. Photo: Rob Kirkwood*

The project to form a walking access track up the Tauranga-Taupo River from the State Highway 1 bridge was completed and blessed by kaumātua representing the private landowners on the 2nd of May. The new track has received praise from anglers and the local community, particularly for the standard of the track, the route and access it provides to good fishing water. As the photos illustrate, the marker poles on the track are easy to see and follow. Large signs

in both the new car park off State Highway 1, just south of the Tauranga-Taupo gate, and at the end of Tuki Street also show maps of the track and common pools. Recently the access road from State Highway 1 to the new car park became boggy due to heavy rain, and so work has been done to re-surface it. For your information, the following walking times for each section of the track have been estimated. Please note this is a brisk walk.







- From the State Highway 1 carpark to the Crescent Pool cut-off 12 minutes
- From the Crescent Pool to Maniapoto's Pool 10 minutes
- From the State Highway 1 carpark to the Rangers Pool 1 hour 5 minutes (the winter fishing limit is at the Rangers Pool)

We have been asked by some anglers if we will be providing a separate map for this track. In the last issue of *Target Taupo* (Issue 48) we provided a map of the river on page 29. Also the map is on the new signs in each of the car parks. Because it is so well marked and easy to follow there is no concern that walkers will not find their way once they are on the track and therefore, at this stage there is no intention to produce a separate map for the river.

Anglers are reminded that this new access track is at the goodwill of the private landowners. It is a walking track only, no vehicles, motorbikes, four-wheelers, or mountain bikes are to be used. Anglers should inspect the opportunity that has been provided to the excellent fishing on this river and follow the markers to ensure they don't trespass onto private property.



The new marker posts are easy to see and follow.  
Photo: Callum Bourke

Ranger Callum Bourke tidies up part of the new track.  
Photo: Julie Greaves



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# MORE FREE INFORMATION FOR ANGLERS

The Taupo Fishery Area team have produced two handy new brochures that are available free to anglers.

The first tackles the issue of angling manners or etiquette. With the river winter fishing well underway at Taupo, this brochure gives a helpful set of simple guidelines for generally agreed good behaviour when fishing. If implemented, anglers will not upset others and have an enjoyable Taupo fishing experience. It covers what to do if a pool is already occupied, if another angler hooks a fish and boating behaviour on the lake.

The second brochure provides tips for wading safely in the Taupo region. Every year anglers need to be rescued who have waded too far or too deep and either lost their footing and travelled downstream fast, or found themselves stranded without the confidence to return back

to where they entered the river. A fast and strong river such as the Tongariro can catch inexperienced and experienced anglers alike. The brochure gives tips on what to consider before entering the water, such as what you are wearing, where you are going to fish and what to look for when deciding on a stream or river crossing. There is a simple technique to remember should you fall into a river that will increase your chance of surviving the ordeal, as well as tips for wading at river mouths or the lake edge.

Also available for those wishing to fish the Tongariro River is an A3 sized map with pool names and angler access tracks.

If you would like a copy of these two new brochures or a copy of the Tongariro River map, please contact Petrina Francis, Department of Conservation, Taupo Fishery Area on (07) 386 92 59 or by email [pfrancis@doc.govt.nz](mailto:pfrancis@doc.govt.nz). We will happily post a copy of these out to you.



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The image shows the interior of a shop. There are several taxidermy mounts of deer and other animals on the walls. A counter is visible in the foreground, and there are shelves with various items in the background.

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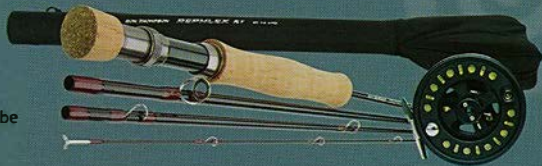
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# HAD YOUR LICENCE

by Glenn Maclean

A large part of the regular work done by the Fishery Area team is to conduct angler interviews and licence checks. These form what we refer to as "creel surveys". There are times when we encounter anglers who question how many of these are actually done, usually supported by the comment that they have been fishing for many years and have never seen a ranger

The reality is that considerable effort is put into our creel surveys. These surveys involve the collection of catch data, checking licences and looking for fishery offences. To make the data robust it is necessary to schedule surveys throughout the season, in different parts of the fishery and at different times of the day to sample the whole range of anglers and fishing conditions. Such a plan is also desirable from a law enforcement perspective as it ensures that all anglers have some likelihood of being checked.

Buying a licence is the way that anglers contribute to the cost of managing the fishery. In reality, fishing without a licence is free-loading on all the honest anglers who "pay their dues", so it is vital to the sustainability

of the fishery that this offence is minimised.

Approximately 230 surveys are conducted each year, usually of 4 hours duration each and spread over Lake Taupo and the inflowing rivers. On average a survey is conducted somewhere in the Taupo fishery every one and a half days. It makes sense that surveys on the lake occur over summer (84 planned surveys) and over winter on the rivers (148 planned surveys), as that is where the anglers are. On top of this there are additional checks programmed at short notice to deal with specific issues as we become aware of them.

The two tables below show the number of surveys conducted in a typical week.

We average approximately 15 interviews per completed survey which reflects that we don't just target the times and places of peak use. In other words, if someone tucks themselves away there is still a good chance of a ranger appearing alongside.

In all, over the 2003/04 season this resulted in 2583 interviews on Lake Taupo and the inflowing rivers, and 2146 interviews last season (2004/05). The numbers were less last season largely because of the poor weather before Christmas which prevented many anglers from fishing and also prevented us from being able to complete some surveys. The figures indicate that in any year about 5% of Taupo anglers are checked in the field.

So how many anglers do not have a licence? Of the 4,729 anglers checked over the last two seasons only 1.4% (64) did not have a current licence (3 anglers in every 200 checked). Some anglers may feel that we should have an even higher profile, but the figures speak for themselves: there are very few anglers prepared to take the chance of fishing without a licence. Given this satisfactory compliance rate, we feel it would be difficult to justify spending even more time and resources on rangeling. The current level of effort put into this work is clearly meeting our objective to ensure anglers fishing at Taupo hold a current licence.

Of course, every licence bought means a contribution to meeting the costs of managing

Day Type	Date	Part of lake and time
Weekdays	24 January	South morning
	26 January	North afternoon
	27 January	South afternoon
Weekend	29 January	North morning
	30 January	South morning

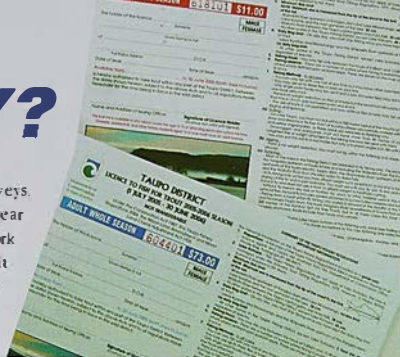
Table 1: Summer scheduled surveys on Lake Taupo, 24 to 30 January 2005.

Day Type	Date	River and time
Weekdays	20 June	Lower Tongariro morning
	21 June	Upper Tongariro afternoon
	22 June	Middle Tongariro morning
	23 June	Hinemaiaia
	24 June	Tauranga-Taupo
Weekend	25 June	Lower Tongariro afternoon
	25 June	Upper Tongariro afternoon
	25 June	Tauranga Taupo
	26 June	Middle Tongariro afternoon
	26 June	Hinemaiaia morning

Table 2: Winter scheduled surveys on Turepa rivers, 20 to 26 June 2005.

# CHECKED LATELY?

ing the fishery, including conducting creel surveys. Regular scheduling of surveys throughout the year will always continue, as part of the routine work the fishery team does. Who knows, this year it may be you who is stopped at the side of the river and asked to produce your Taupo District fishing licence!



## HINEMAIAIA TRAP AND TRANSFER PROJECT BEGINS FOR 2005

by Rob Kirkwood

Readers may remember an article in *Target Taupo* July 2004 (Issue 46) which described a project to trap fish from the Hinemaiaia River and release them above the HB dam. Our fish traps are usually operated to provide data on the size and condition of fish, and give an indication of the state of the spawning runs in the fishery. However the Hinemaiaia trap operates for another very important reason. This is to provide access for spawning trout to the waters above the HB dam and in particular to the Pahikohuru and Kakapo spawning streams. As part of the resource consents for TrustPower Limited to operate the Hinemaiaia Power Scheme, fish passage must be facilitated above the HB dam. This was achieved last year by trapping trout below the dam. Fish caught in the trap are weighed, measured and recorded as in our other traps, however they are then transported in a specially designed tanker above the dam and released. Last year this resulted in some trout successfully spawning in the Pahikohuru and Kakapo streams that flow into the dam. There was a detailed account of this trial in the last issue of *Target Taupo*

March 2005 (Issue 48).

This year, a decision was made to move the fish trap site further upstream to ensure that those fish trapped were indeed trying to get further than the dam wall. Unfortunately steep terrain on one side of the river made some sites too difficult to transfer fish easily to the tanker.

After some healthy debate and lots of sketch drawings, a plan was made to install a wire rope and winch system over the river to lift the equipment and fish. As the trap will be operated at two-weekly intervals until the end of September, the system needed to be quick and simple to install and remove.

In early June the trap was put in place approximately 200 metres downstream of the HB dam. When in operation it is manned 24/7 by a ranger who processes the fish and then uses the winch system to transfer them from the trap to a tanker to be transported and finally released into the dam.

So once again good old kiwi ingenuity shines through! The operation of this new fish transfer system will once again allow trout from the Hinemaiaia River to reach important spawning habitat above the dam.

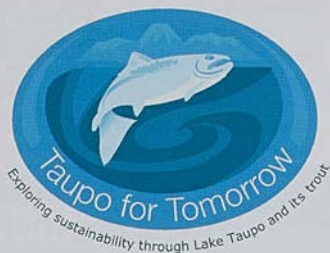
*The Hinemaiaia trap in 2005. The pulley system can be seen suspended over the trap.*  
Photo: John Gibbs



# NEW CLASSROOM FOR THE

by Petrina Francis

"Taupo for Tomorrow", the new education programme at the Tongariro National Trout Centre will have its very own classroom over the next few months.



*Fishery staff assist Advanced Tree & Arboriculture Services Ltd to clear the site at the trout centre for the classroom. Special effort was made to keep large native trees around the clearing, which soften the edges and look of the building, when it is in place.*  
Photo: Petrina Francis

**M**angawhero Lodge, a building that has been in the DOC Mangawhero camping ground at Ohakune has been moved to the trout centre to be used as a classroom. The building needs refurbishment to bring it up to specification for classroom use, including a new roof and deck, ranch sliders, windows and some minor changes to the internal layout.

The building was kindly offered to the centre by DOC Ruapehu Area Office, as they had decided to convert the land where the building was into a camping area. This gesture is greatly appreciated and all involved with the building in the past can be well assured it has gone to a very worthy cause and will be put to good use.

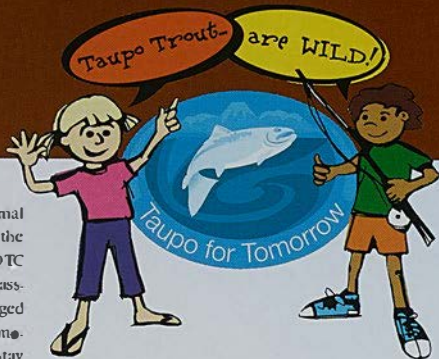
The size of the building is substantial with plenty of open classroom space and capable of accommodating up to 35 students at one time. With toilets and kitchen facilities, as well as an office for the teacher to use, the building makes an ideal education facility. The classroom will be situated next to the children's fishing pond at the trout centre, with a beautiful view from the deck out across the pond to the Waihukahuka Stream. This will give visiting children a learning set



*The education programme is made possible through a partnership between the Department of Conservation, Tongariro National Trout Centre Society and the primary sponsor, Genesis Energy.*



# TROUT CENTRE



ting that is very different from their normal school environment, which is one of the objectives of the programme. For LEOTC ("learning experiences outside the classroom") to be effective, it is acknowledged that outdoor situations need to be memorable and different, for the experience to stay with children in years to come.

Once the classroom is fully refurbished, school groups will be able to participate even in variable weather conditions, and enjoy a programme that is a mixture of both classroom learning and hands-on outdoor

activities by the Waihukahuka Stream and Tongariro River. Local support for the classroom has been great with Taupo Nui-A-Tia College students busy making beanbags for the room and the Year 9 Art Class constructing large papier mache displays of what lives in Lake Taupo to be hung from the ceiling. All this will help to make the classroom interior memorable for visiting schools and at the same time help to teach students the importance of the freshwater environment and trout to Lake Taupo.

The education programme at the centre is already well underway. Option 1 of the programme is a guided tour that teaches students about the life cycle of wild trout, the freshwater environment and how to protect it, threats to the wild trout fishery and the freshwater ecosystem, and the value of trout and fishing to the local area. Already this year 30 schools have been involved with this option. Option 2, a more comprehensive learning experience is currently being developed by the centre's Educator, Thea DePetris. This will involve hands-on activities such as water quality testing, analysing trout habitat, and role plays to depict resource use, and will utilise the new classroom once it is complete. So with plenty of schools already taking part, the future is very bright.

All enquiries regarding "Taupo for Tomorrow" and school group bookings can be made by contacting Thea DePetris on (07) 386 9246 or email: [tdepetris@doc.govt.nz](mailto:tdepetris@doc.govt.nz)



The lodge was cut in two in order to bring it through the trout centre. Although the route the removal trucks took was not the easiest, it meant minimal impact on areas of the centre that the public enjoy. Much thought was put into ensuring the least amount of damage was done to native vegetation and the aesthetics of the site.  
Photo: Petrina Francis



The future of the education programme will centre around the new classroom. With some refurbishment, it is hoped to have the building up to specification for classroom use by November this year.  
Photo: Hannel Scheiters



Department of Conservation  
Te Papa Atawhai



Tongariro  
National Trout  
Centre Society



# UNLOCKING THE OF PAPA KAI

by Mark Venman and Glenn Maclean

Photo opposite: Ranger, Dave Hart with a nice brown trout that passed through the Papakai trap in May.

Photo: Petrina Francis

Many of our monitoring programmes have a relatively high profile and anglers are very familiar with them. However one of the less well known is our operation of the Papakai Stream trout trap. Indeed most of you have probably never even heard of Papakai.

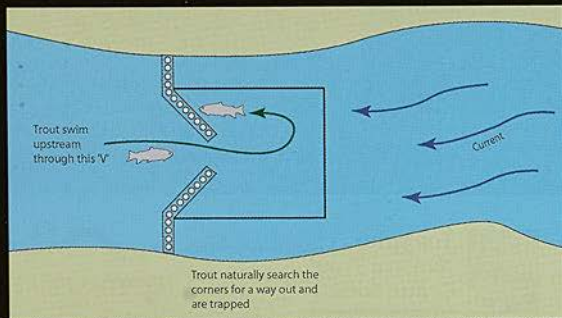
Many Taupo anglers are familiar with Lake Otamangakau and its reputation for producing trophy rainbow and brown trout, albeit that most are hard earned. Lake Otamangakau is the small hydro-electric lake situated on the north-western slopes of Mount Tongariro which was created in 1972 when the Tongariro Power Development was constructed. The lake was created by damming the Otamangakau Stream and in addition diverting the waters from five headwater streams flowing off Mount Ruapehu into it. Trout from these streams quickly established large populations in the lake which in the early years was renowned for its high catch rates of small fish. However in the 1980s the lake began to produce some very large rainbow trout, the largest a fish of 18lb (8.5kg) caught by Ron Burgin.

Initially we monitored the fishery by using catch data and making small releases of tagged fish to follow the growth of these trout. However it became clear that the secret to the production of the trophy fish was not so much that they grew rapidly but that they lived to a relatively old age continuing to grow right through their life. With the fishery coming under increasing angling

pressure and the risk that harvest would restrict the number of fish surviving long enough to become trophies we realised we needed to monitor this fishery much more intensively. As part of the new programme we established a trapping programme to identify and monitor trends in the adult trout population.

An inspection of all the possible spawning streams established that almost all the spawning run from Lake Otamangakau used the Te Whaiiu Stream. In 1994 we set up the Te Whaiiu trap which has operated every winter since and many readers will be familiar with the results which we have reported regularly in *Target Taupo*. While this stream attracts nearly all of the spawning run we were aware that a small number of trout used the Papakai Stream which enters the lower reaches of the Te Whaiiu Stream just upstream of the road bridge near Lake Te Whaiiu. The Papakai Stream is very small, in many places less than a metre wide and heavily overgrown with flax and sedges. Normally we wouldn't run a separate trap on this stream for the number of fish involved but its proximity to our Te Whaiiu operation provided the opportunity to run an additional trap as part of this programme. By the winter of 1996 we were comfortable that the Te Whaiiu trap was operating smoothly and the Papakai trap was established.

The trap used in the Papakai Stream is a cage designed to temporarily restrain upstream migrating fish so they can be weighed and measured before being released to continue their journey. This is different to the larger trap used in the Te Whaiiu Stream which is also designed to trap fish that have completed spawning and are returning to Lake Otamangakau. However, it works on a similar principle with upstream fish entering the pen through a 'v' entrance. Once in the pen



# SECRETS STREAM



the fish look into the corners for a way out and are unable to escape, the pen working in much the same way as a crayfish pot.

Every morning any fish caught are weighed, measured, sexed and fin clipped before being released upstream. Over the last nine years a total of 1837 upstream fish have been processed by fishery staff or an average of 200 fish per season. This compares to an annual average of 2150 trout through the Te Whaiau trap over the same period reflecting that the Te Whaiau Stream is much more important as a spawning stream attracting more than 90% of the total spawning run.

Brown trout dominate the runs in the Papakai Stream and generally account for approximately 90% of the total. On average 16% of the total brown trout run from Lake Otamangakau use this stream though in some years it can be as high as one fish in four. Thus, the Papakai Stream is an important source of recruitment for brown trout. On the other hand rainbows prefer to spawn in the larger and faster flowing Te Whaiau Stream and less than 2% use the Papakai.

The brown trout run begins in April, peaks in June and is normally complete by late July. Rainbows tend to begin one month later during May and peak over June and July.

The run of browns has generally increased over the nine year period and the number of rainbow trout trapped has also shown a

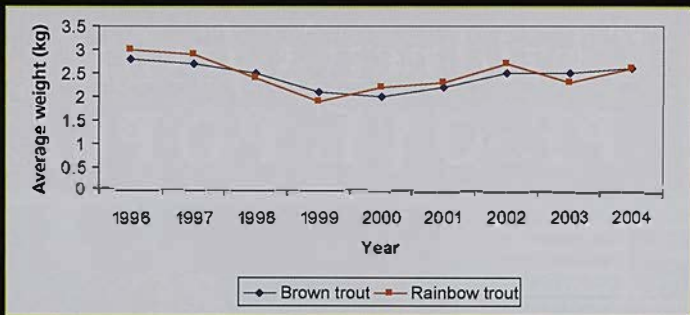
slight increase during recent years.

When processing fish at the Papakai Stream it is common to encounter large browns spawning for the third to fifth time. Some even make it to spawn for the sixth or seventh time though not surprisingly such old fish made up less than 1% of the Papakai population during 2004. These older fish have gained a large size by continuing to grow after each spawning but by the time they are 7 or 8 years old are generally in poor condition. Browns spawning for the first time are known as 'maidens' and made up less than 10% of the population last year. Such a low proportion reflects low recruitment which is balanced by exceptional adult survival with most browns surviving to spawn the following year. In part this is due to the less energetic lifestyle adopted by brown trout in the lake but also reflects that spawning in the Papakai Stream is much less demanding than in many other streams. It is a very short migration from the lake, spawning is over quickly and the fish are soon back in the lake feeding up large. Compare this to trout spawning in the Tongariro which may spend 6 months in the river and swim many tens of kilometres. Not surprisingly Tongariro trout take a lot more out of themselves and post spawning survival rates are much lower. Similarly, rainbows trapped during 2004 were mainly spawning for at least the second time (62.5%) with the remaining 37.5% spawning for the first time. Although numbers of rainbow trout are limited in this

*A view of the cage trap design.*  
*Photo: Petrina Francis*



Figure 1: Average weights (kg) of trout trapped in the Papakai Stream between 1996 & 2004



smaller stream, these figures would indicate both reasonable recruitment and good adult survival in recent years.

The average weight of both species of trout has remained relatively constant over the nine year period with a slight decrease observed during 1999 (Figure 1). It is impressive to see fish of 2.5 to 3kg in a stream you can jump over in many places.

The heaviest brown trout trapped in Papakai was a 5kg (11lbs) female during 1997 which measured 690mm with a condition factor of 55. The heaviest rainbow was a 4.35kg (9.6lb) male. So despite its small size, the Papakai Stream produces a reasonable run of sizeable trout each winter. Combined with the Te Whaiaiu

Stream, these two streams provide the only spawning areas for trout in Lake Otamangakau. It is a huge advantage to be able to trap the whole run because it means that annually we get a snapshot of the entire adult trout population. We know how many fish there are, how big and how old they are which is all key management information.

We now have 11 years of trapping data for the run in the Te Whaiaiu Stream and 9 years of data for the Papakai. Such a long period of robust data is very valuable and in association with ongoing trapping will allow us to identify future trends in the adult trout population and make sound management decisions for this special fishery.

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# Children's fishing days PROVE POPULAR



Tongariro  
National Trout  
Centre Society

by *Patrina Francis*

*The Tongariro National Trout Centre Society is DOGS community partner at the trout centre. Here Patrina briefly reviews achievements to date and plans for the future.*

*Right! This is how to put smiles on faces! Two young girls with trout caught on the fishing day held in June.*

*Below: Volunteers not only help the children catch their fish but also weigh and measure it and present each angler with a certificate.*

*Photos: Gordon Stevenson, Tongariro National Trout Centre Society*



The Tongariro National Trout Centre Society have held four very successful fishing days for children at the Tongariro National Trout Centre this year.

Held one day a month over the winter period, the days are an opportunity for keen young people to get a taste of fly-fishing

and learn about trout. Twenty anglers give volunteer support to the society on these days and assist each child to catch a trout. Included in this group are three local professional guides.

The public fishing days are always immensely popular and bookings are essential. There are still three more left for this year and we encourage families to contact the society and book in for the trout fishing experience. Children must be aged between 6 and 14, and they can either bring along their own Thubo District fishing licence, or buy one on the day for \$4.50.

Bookings can be made by contacting the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society on (07) 386 8085 or by email: [troutcentre@eap.org.nz](mailto:troutcentre@eap.org.nz)

**DATES REMAINING FOR 2005 ARE:**

- SUNDAY 14 AUGUST
- SUNDAY 25 SEPTEMBER
- SUNDAY 23 OCTOBER (LABOUR WEEKEND)



## TONGARIRO NATIONAL TROUT CENTRE SOCIETY NEWS

The society has also been busy with a number of other projects over the last year. A step forward was the appointment of Gordon Stevenson as manager. In this role Gordon actively seeks funding and sponsorship for projects at the centre and carries out administration duties for the 150 members of the society, including a regular newsletter and the introduction of members' evenings. This last year has seen the development of the society's website: [www.troutcentre.org.nz](http://www.troutcentre.org.nz). Although it is still under construction the basis of the site is there and it is already receiving a large number of hits. The society have a very strong band of 48 volunteers from the local community who assist with The River Walk visitor centre and have participated in working bees around the trout centre grounds. When visitors come through the trout centre, they are always impressed by the displays inside the visitor centre and often don't realise that the building was developed solely from donations and the people behind the counter are volunteers. The quality and enthusiasm of these volunteers is a credit to the society.

A huge achievement was the restoration of the children's fishing pond through a grant from the Lion Foundation. This work, done last winter, has allowed the fishing days to be run again this year, and already hundreds of happy children have participated. Considering the damage done to the site by the February 2004 flood, the centre is now looking great and is definitely a unique attraction for visitors in the Turangia area. The society has a number of future projects to work on that are part of a master plan for the trout centre. Displays to be funded include a smokehouse, freshwater aquarium, fish pass display, carpark and centre security and pathway lighting. The society also supports the education programme at the centre through a partnership with DOC and Genesis Energy, who are the major sponsor of the programme. There is plenty for the society to look forward to in the future. If you would like to become a member, please complete the coupon below. In the meantime, peruse their website or come by and visit them at the Tongariro National Trout Centre.



Tongariro  
National Trout  
Centre Society



The Society encourages and promotes public interest in trout fishing, an understanding of the Taupo fishery and trout habitat. The River Walk Visitor Centre has been developed to provide a modern learning experience about trout for visitors of all ages. Throughout the year Society volunteers publicise and conduct children's fishing days at the Centre to teach children to fish for trout and encourage respect for our environment.

To join the Society please fill in the form and include the annual subscription of \$25

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

Post to: Tongariro National Trout Centre Society, P.O. Box 73, Turangia

# Taking the Taupo fishery TO THE WORLD

*Dr Michel Dedual, Taupo Fishery Area Scientist recently travelled on a marathon trip to Europe as an ambassador for the Taupo fishery.*

*Far right the target for many overseas anglers, a typical wild Atlantic salmon of 10.5kg caught on the Sfordal River in central Norway. Wild Atlantic salmon are easily recognisable by the overall scarcity of black spots and the total absence of these below the lateral line.*

*Photo: Michel Dedual*

During June, Taupo fishery scientist **Dr Michel Dedual** criss-crossed over Europe to deliver talks in several languages on the diverse aspects of the Taupo fishery.

**M**ichel stopped first in Portugal at the Sixth Fish Telemetry Conference, where he presented the first results of the acoustic tracking experiment that was carried out last year on Lake Taupo (see *Target Taupo* Issue 45). This was the project to ascertain a picture of the movement and behaviour of trout in Lake Taupo. The conference attracted 186 speakers from all the continents of the world. It was obvious from the speakers that the most studied fish species were salmonids, but the Taupo experiment was the only one that described preferred depth and temperature as well as movements of wild rainbow trout in a lake environment. We also pioneered the way for others as the transmitters used at Taupo were developed in collaboration between the manufacturer Vemco Limited in Canada, and Michel specifically for this experiment. It was pleasing to hear that this type of transmitter is now the single best seller for Vemco. The excellent relationship and collaboration between the technology provider and those carrying out the experiment is a very efficient way to design new experiments in the future to improve our knowledge of the fishery.

The second stop was in Norway at Trondheim at the Fourth World Recreational Fishing Conference. This conference is a global arena and meeting place for the recreational fisheries sector. The conference targeted groups including representatives from government agencies, management agencies, the tackle trade business, angling tourism and multidisciplinary sciences. It highlighted trends, recent findings and interesting experiences across continents and within the angling community.

The aim of the conference was to highlight the significance of recreational fishing to the quality of life for people of all ages, independent of social and cultural background, to society, to ecosystems and economics. To strengthen and enhance the multiple benefits from recreational fishing, this conference focused



on the need to build new and develop existing partnerships, both across geographical, political, resource and mental boundaries.

In this arena Michel described the management structure and the challenges that the Taupo fishery is facing currently and will be facing in the future. It was a great opportunity to meet other fishery managers from all around the world who share common interests. It was also enlightening to realise how lucky we are in Taupo in comparison to many other places around the world, and that we must never become complacent.

At a third stop in Switzerland, Michel presented the Taupo fishery at the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Research with an emphasis on the description of the cohabitation of brown and rainbow trout at Taupo. This was of interest, because, since Switzerland and in other parts of Europe introduced rainbow trout are blamed for the reduction of native brown trout populations. However, the reasons remain unclear.

Finally he stopped in Belgium where he presented the Taupo fishery to the Belgian Federation of Anglers at Namur.

All in all, Michel was away for a month. "It was a real honour to represent and be an ambassador for the Taupo fishery", says Michel.



That's some serious **big fish** water.

*Way over there.*

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*but at least the wind's blowing.*

**Ha, if I can just get a little closer...**

*oops, too deep.*

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meet Mr. Woolly Bugger.**

*That's some Serious **big fish** water...*

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**SAGE**

## FROZEN FISH TRAPS



*Fish trap operators know it's cold when there is ice between the trap bars! Norrie Ewing took this photo at the Te Whāiaiu trap at Lake Otamangakau recently. The fettes have probably formed from water splashed onto the bars by fish caught in the pen. Temperature recordings are taken daily by the ranger on duty, and the two lowest to date this winter at this trap have been minus 8 and minus 10 degrees.*



## Waitahanui River cleanup

*Originally initiated by the late John Johnson, this is the result of a recent cleanup along the Waitahanui River by the Waitahanui Angling Improvement Association. A job well done, but disappointing that it was needed in the first place.*

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# NEW PROJECTS POSSIBLE THROUGH THE TONGARIRO ENHANCEMENT FUND

by Glenn Maclean

An outcome of the Tongariro Power Development (TPD) resource consents process was the establishment of the Lower Tongariro River Trout Fishery Enhancement Group between the Department of Conservation and Genesis Energy. The group is funded by Genesis Energy who match spending by DOC on the Tongariro River fishery up to a sum of \$40,000 per year (inflation adjusted) for the life of the consents. The group's objectives are to maintain and enhance angling access and facilities in the lower river, and to monitor and research how the fishery functions.

The group was set up late last year when the new consents became operational for much of the TPD and the first projects have been agreed and funded. Currently there are 3 areas of work which are being pursued over the next few years. The biggest project is trying to better understand the key influences on juvenile trout survival when they enter the lake at approximately 18 months old. This is the last major hurdle the fish have to overcome and the major determinant of how many adult trout are produced in any year.

It is already apparent that the larger the fish the better their chances of making the transition to life in the lake. But it is also likely that the timing of entry is critical as well. One of the advantages that the Taupo trout population has is that spawning is spread over most of the year which usually ensures that, at least, some part of the population can take advantage of suitable conditions. However, it makes it very difficult to monitor growth rates and timing of out-migration because there is no clear pulse of young fish of the same age to follow. Now technology has come up with a possible solution using Passive Integrated Transponders or PIT tags. This is the same technology used by shop retailers who put these tags on their stock so people don't walk out the door without paying. We described these in more detail in issue 47 of *Target Taupo*. This technology allows us to tag juvenile trout and follow the progress of individual fish as they pass close to special aerials which read the details of the tag. The difficulty has always been that to read these tags it has been necessary for

the fish to swim very close to the aerial but recent advances are extending the range of detection. Whether it will work in practice at the Tongariro Delta when the river is in flood for example is another question. A big part of this project in the first few years will be refining the methodology used. Essentially if we can successfully follow the progress of these fish into the lake and the survivors when they return, then it will soon become apparent what the key characteristics for survival are.

You may be thinking "so what, what can you change with this knowledge?" For example, if juvenile fish have to enter the lake by February to have any chance of survival then we can set regulations to protect the early spawning fish and exploit the later part of the run, the offspring of which are unlikely to be ready by this time. It is all crystal ball gazing at this stage but unlocking the secrets to juvenile trout survival would represent a huge step forward.

Our first step has been to use the findings from last season to purchase tags, the associated tag reader and a computer which we will trial later this year in the Waipa fish trap. This situation should be relatively straightforward and when we can get it to work smoothly there we will move into a trial in summer to try and detect fish moving through the Delta. This is likely to be much more challenging.

Also directly affecting juvenile survival is the use of flushing flows in the Tongariro River to manipulate the invertebrate community towards larger, more energetically valuable food items which allow the young trout to grow faster and therefore larger. This in turn means they have a better chance of survival in the lake. At least that is the theory, but now it is a case of trying to turn the theory into practical reality. As an outcome of the consents process Genesis Energy has set up a group to oversee a flushing flow regime. The group comprises periphyton expert Dr Barry Biggs of NIWA, invertebrate specialist Dr Russell Death of Massey University, hydrologist Jarrod Bowler of Genesis Energy and trout specialist Glenn Maclean of DOC. The group are working towards understanding how the system functions and responds



The Tongariro Enhancement Fund will assist with research on juvenile trout survival

to changes in periphyton (algae) and how we can manipulate the periphyton in a practical sense. In general periphyton growth is favoured by stable flows and as it increases this causes a shift in the invertebrate (insect) community from optimum food species like mayflies, caddisflies and stoneflies to smaller less energetically rewarding species like midges. Monthly monitoring over last summer has already increased our understanding but we are also funding an honours student from Massey University to assist. This research will quantify the relationship between periphyton biomass and

the nature of the invertebrate community in the Tongariro River, with the work funded through the enhancement fund.

The third project to be funded is the establishment of an access track between the Tongariro National Trout Centre downstream to the Stag Pool on the true left bank of the Tongariro River. In future years the fund will also be used to upgrade the tracks below the highway bridge but we are reluctant to undertake this work until Environment Waikato have completed their river works in this area and their associated tracking.

It is envisaged that research into juvenile trout growth and survival in the Tongariro River and improved tracking along the lower river will form the basis for funding projects under the enhancement fund in the next few years. Between these projects bring both immediate and long-term returns to Tongariro anglers that would not have been possible without the fund.



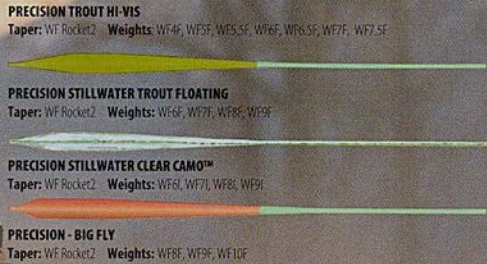
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Cortland 444 SL Precision<sup>®</sup> Tapers are a building new line of special specifically designed to suit the fly fisher's need for accuracy, easy cast, the Precision Tapers feature Cortland's revolutionary enhanced Duraflex<sup>®</sup> Overcoat. It is an entirely new formulation that dramatically increases durability and ensures that these lines will resist frequent wear features of the Precision Tapers include Tensoren<sup>®</sup> which the a variability of half weight in a cast, two tone fibre eye strip for 552 gram or 630 gram and new tape a design called the Blackie. We've never had a fly line manufacturer make quality fly lines designed to fly in the wind and all weather. This is why by the a tremendous demand for red action, fly anglers will now fly the able. Extreme durability made a then fly line weight by the cast service.



### CLASSIC SYLK

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Taper: JLT  
Weights: WF4F, WF5F, WF6F, WF7F



### 555 FLOATING FLY LINE MANGO WITH DYNA TIP

Are you looking for the 555 Sylk fly line for all water fishing. The 555 fly line is engineered on a braided nylon core with 555 coatings to create a durable line for cold water conditions plus the added benefits of a 1/2 inch floating wet section. Possibly the best all around floating trout fly line available.  
Taper: JLT  
Weights: WF4F, WF5F, WF6F, WF7F, WF8F, WF9F

Distributed by Douglas Johnson & Co Member of I.G.F.A.



# HUNTING PERMITS TO BE RENEWED ANNUALLY

Permits for hunting on conservation land in the Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy will now be renewed annually from July to June each year. This means they will be valid for up to 12 months, so need to be renewed less frequently. This change has been made to minimise the paperwork associated with the permit system. The following points relate to the new permit system.

- Pesticide summaries (information on where pesticides will be used) will be given at the time a permit is issued. These summaries will still be renewed on a 4 monthly basis March-June, July-October and November-February. If you require updated copies please write, email ([tteinfo@doc.govt.nz](mailto:tteinfo@doc.govt.nz)) or fax your request to us and we will post a copy. If you would like to be on our mailing list please forward your address details and we will post a summary to you each time they are updated. Please note that the summary is also now available on our website [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz).

*Below: Training to protect kiwi, blue duck and other birds from dogs is available through the avian aversion programme and has proved very successful for hunters and anglers keen to have their best mate in the outdoors with them.*

*Photo: Peter Morton, DOC*

## DOGS

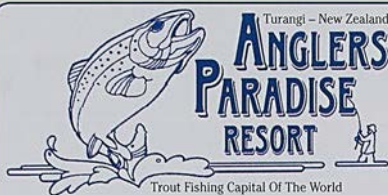
Hunters who wish to take dogs with them will be required to produce a copy of their dog registration certificate from the current registration year (July-June).

### Avian Aversion Trained Dogs

Staff will need to sight a copy of your dog's aversion certificate and your permit period will only cover the period of the aversion certificate, (if your aversion certificate is due to expire in the current permit year).

- The following is a list of DOC offices and agents where you can obtain Tongariro/Taupo hunting permits

- **Conservancy Office – Turangi**  
(no requests taken by phone, please fax, email, or post).  
Fax: (07) 386 7086  
Post: Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy, Private Bag, Turangi  
Email: [tteinfo@doc.govt.nz](mailto:tteinfo@doc.govt.nz)
- **Ruapehu Area Office**  
Fax: (07) 892 3814  
Post: Private Bag, Whakapapa Village, Mount Ruapehu
- **Ohakune Visitor Centre**  
Fax: (06) 385 00 11  
Post: PO Box 10, Mountain Road, Ohakune



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PO Box 130, Turangi.

E-MAIL: [anglers@reap.org.nz](mailto:anglers@reap.org.nz)

WEBSITE: <http://www.fishnhunt.co.nz/fishing/anglersparadise>

**FREEPHONE**  
**0800 500 039**  
Ph 07-386 8980  
Fax 07-386 7408

**AA HOST**  
ACCOMMODATION



- Fly and Gun Shop, Taupo
- Greenstone Fishing, Taupo
- Taumarunui Visitor Information Centre (cannot issue for dogs)
- Turangi Visitor Information Centre Piriaka Store, Piriaka

We hope you enjoy your hunting experience in the Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy.

*Please remember to identify your target*

### Avian avoidance and awareness training

Training for dogs to reduce the threat that they can pose to kiwi and blue duck is available through a bird avoidance (avian aversion) programme the Department of Conservation has developed.

The programme successfully teaches dogs to actively avoid kiwi and other birds. Blue duck live on or close to rivers and streams and ground-roost along stream edges. These streams and rivers are often popular routes for human travel, and increase the chances of a duck being disturbed or harmed by a dog working or walking along a riverbank.


Hunters and anglers who are keen to put their "best friends" through this inexpensive but effective training should contact:

**Jim Pottinger**


**Phone: (07) 892 2707**


**or email:**

**jimpottinger@ihug.co.nz.**




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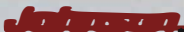
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# CHANGES IN THE FISHERY AREA TEAM



Gordon McKenzie giving his farewell speech to DOC staff on 11 May.

## GORDON MCKENZIE

The Fishery Area team recently farewelled Gordon McKenzie, who had worked for the area for almost 17 years. Gordon reported to Errol Cudby and worked in our Visitor Assets programme. This meant that he spent a large proportion of his time maintaining angler tracks, structures and signs, as well as assisting with the Tongariro National Trout Centre. Gordon had exceptional machine handling skills from his years of experience in both farming and forestry prior to working for DOC, and his capability for logging, clearing and heavy machinery use, including operation of a skidder, will be missed by the team. Gordon left to retire and we wish him all the very best for an enjoyable and happy retirement.



Much of Gordon's work centred around maintenance of angler structures and tracks. Here he completes one of the last tasks before his retirement - to place new netting on the Major Jones bridge deck.



Callum Bourke

## CALLUM BOURKE

With the loss of one valued team member, always comes the introduction of a new one, and during June Callum Bourke was employed as a permanent member of the fishery team in the position of Ranger, Field Operations. Callum has worked over the last two years as a seasonal trap operator for the team on a temporary basis, and this experience will assist him with the new position. Originally from the North Waikato, he comes from a family of keen anglers. Callum says that many hours were spent at the Kuratau and Whareroa river mouths over the years, where he first learnt to fly-fish with his grandfather Jack, who resides in Kuratau. As a consequence Callum has a strong affinity to the area and feels privileged to live and work in such a beautiful environment. Prior to joining the Taupo fishery, Callum studied at Lincoln University obtaining a Bachelor of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management degree, graduating in 2001. Like many young kiwis, he has been fortunate enough to travel overseas in recent years, visiting Ireland and the U.K, South America, Thailand, Holland and Australia, and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. "I am currently living in Turangi and plan to spend a lot of time fishing the Tongariro", says Callum. "I'm looking forward to meeting lots of anglers out on the river over the next couple of months".



## THEA DEPETRIS

**T**hea DePetris wrote the feature article in the last issue of *Target Taupo* (Issue 48) on the new education programme at the Tongariro National Trout Centre, "Taupo for Tomorrow". Thea has been based with the Fishery Area team now for several months as she develops the programme for schools. Her position has been made possible through a partnership agreement between Genesis Energy, who are the major sponsor of the programme, DOC and the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society. Thea is a keen outdoors person with a lot of multi sport and event racing experience. She has completed the Southern Traverse, and the One Day Coast to Coast among other events and is keen to pass on her love of the outdoor environment to young people. Thea has a Bachelor of Science with Honours from Franklin and Marshall University in Pennsylvania and a Diploma in Human Geography and Secondary Teaching from the University of Auckland. "The teaching position at the trout centre is really exciting", says Thea. "It gives me a real chance to make a difference and an opportunity to teach school children the importance of looking after the environment in New Zealand, and in particular, beautiful Lake Taupo and the trout fishery".



Thea DePetris

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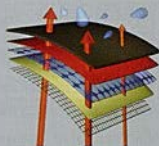


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# HOOK, LINE AND.... EARLOBE

by Mark Venman

After taking my son for his first meningitis injection at the local Tuangi surgery, I couldn't help but notice the amazing array and number of fishing flies mounted on a cork board hanging on the wall. The nurse confirmed my worst fears that all of these flies were in fact removed from various parts of angler's bodies ranging from fingers, hands, legs, ears and even the occasional rear end! Flies ranged from small glob-bugs to large wet flies with a couple of lake trolling lures also present! Based on the sheer number of flies removed from anglers, the act of hooking oneself or someone else accidentally must be a fairly common occurrence.

I remember conducting a routine angler survey on the lower Tongariro River with Ranger Harry Hamilton, not long after I had started with the fishery team. We encountered an Irish angler who had a large wet fly hooked right through the top of his ear. Amazingly, this crazy man had simply snipped off the leader and left the fly in place while continuing to fish. When asked the question, "Is there anything which detracts from your angling enjoyment?"

(which is a standard question asked on our surveys) he replied, "the loss of my best fly for the day" pointing to his ear. Not quite the response I was expecting!

With winter fishing now well underway on the rivers, it is timely to remind everyone about potential injury from fish hooks and how to avoid them. This advice is also handy for boat anglers. Fly-fishing from a boat in a cramped situation can put other passengers at risk. Even retrieving fishing gear too quickly can mean a lure or fly is flung through the air unexpectedly. You may hook the main lure on your rig against the rod, but dropper rigs can have two or three other hooks waving free.

There is a high probability that as an angler you will at some time be the recipient of a fish hook injury.

## How can you avoid being caught by a fish hook?

- Take care when passing behind someone casting. The angler may not be aware of your presence and will be concentrating on where the line falls in front of them more than what is potentially behind them. Give them plenty of room before walking behind to avoid being caught by their back cast.
- Take care when approaching a river mouth at night where there is a line of casting anglers. Once again, particularly in the dark, allow plenty of room before passing behind.
- If you are fishing with heavily weighted flies, a gust of wind can be all that is needed to blow your leader and fly towards you. Take particular care when casting with large or heavy gear. Wear a wide brimmed hat to cover your ears and glasses to protect your eyes during the day. Some anglers also cover their neck

*Just one of the hazards faced by fishery rangers in the field. The result of walking too close behind an angler cast in on the Tongariro River.*

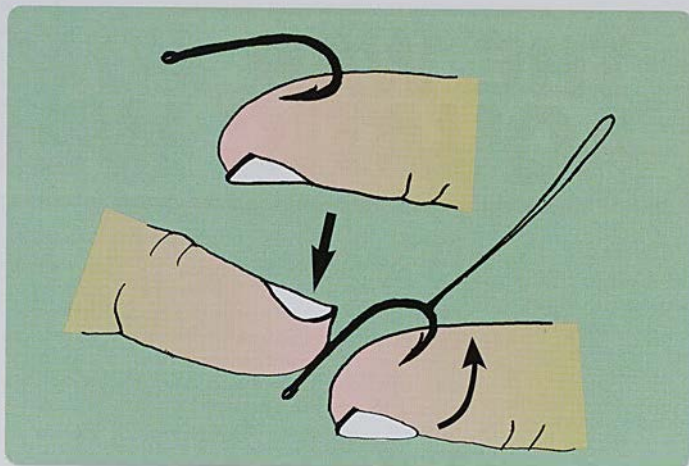
*Photo: John Gibbs*





*Beware of angler's backcasts!*

*Photo: Glenn Maclean*



to avoid a hook imbedding in the back or side of the neck.

- When releasing fish, use long nose pliers to remove the hook. This will mean less stress or potential injury to the fish, and lessen the chance of the fish moving quickly at the wrong moment while close to your hand, and causing a fishhook injury.
- Using barbless hooks will definitely make removing a hook easier!

### **What should you do with a fishhook injury?**

- If the hook is embedded in your face or eye you should seek medical attention immediately.
- Most hook injuries to the hand do not involve ligament or tendon damage, as the force of the hook usually only penetrates the skin and surface tissue. There are two simple methods that we can suggest for removal of the hook.

#### **• First technique**

Grasp the exposed end of the hook (its shank)



*This display of hooks and lures removed from anglers at the Turangi Medical Centre, says it all really!*

*Photo: Sbar Joyce*

and rotate and press the barb out through the skin. Cut the barbed end of the hook off with a wire cutter. Once the barb is gone, it should be easy to back the hook out of the wound. Apply a dressing to the wound.

#### **• Second technique (this may need an assistant)**

Loop a piece of nylon line around the bend of the hook where it is penetrating the skin. Grasp the shank of the hook and push the hook slightly in and away so that the barb disengages from the surrounding tissue. Press the eye of the hook down with a finger to keep pressure on the barb (and keep it disengaged). Use your other hand to give a quick jerk on the fishing nylon and the hook will pop out. (See the diagram above) Apply a dressing to the wound.

Keep an eye on the wound to detect any infection or deeper tissue damage. Once in the vicinity of a doctor or medical clinic, have the wound examined to be sure. Redness, swelling or significant discomfort could mean that the initial damage is more serious than you thought.

Always remember to keep your fishing tackle out of reach of small children who could be attracted to the bright colours and shapes, not realising the potentially sharp hooks. Wear protective gear when fishing, particularly if your casting technique leaves a bit to be desired! And stay well away from the backcasts of other anglers.

Have a safe and happy winter, fishing the rivers at Taupo.

# THE WAR AGAINST AQUATIC WEEDS

by Nick Singers

*Nick is a botanist and Technical Support Officer for the Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy. Here he provides a brief update on the aquatic weed situation in the Taupo catchment.*

*Reed Sweet grass (Glyceria maxima) is now starting to invade the Taupo catchment. Photo: Crown Copyright. Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai Susan M Timmins*

*Lake Kuratau is special as one of only two weed-free lakes in the Taupo District. Recent surveys show it is currently free of pest aquatic weeds, and monitoring will be done to ensure it stays that way. Photo: Petrina Francis*

The Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy undertakes weed surveillance to prevent new weeds from establishing and threatening ecological and recreational values. The emphasis is on early detection so that control can be most effective and cost-efficient. Many of the weeds the surveillance program targets are the worst, most damaging weeds in the world. In the Taupo catchment, particular emphasis is placed on looking for aquatic and wetland weeds. A review of the precarious situation we are currently facing with aquatic weeds in the Taupo area was made in the July 2004 issue of *Target Taupo* (Issue 46).



Sweet reed (*Glyceria maxima*) is a high priority surveillance weed for the Lake Taupo catchment, because it eliminates habitat for dabbling ducks and hampers access for fishing. This weed forms dense mats along the edges of waterways and lakes, smothering

native vegetation and preventing fish access up small spawning streams. It is now starting to invade the Taupo catchment. A recent survey confirmed that two infestations are now known, one at Whangamata Stream, near Kinloch, and the other in a wetland at the end of Grace Road near Turangi. The Conservancy now plans to undertake control to hopefully eradicate this weed from the Taupo catchment. Outside of Taupo it is commonly found along the Waikato River, downstream from the Mihinui bridge on State Highway 5, and is widespread in the Bay of Plenty region.

Lake Kuratau is one of the few lakes in the central North Island that is free of aggressive introduced aquatic weeds. A recent survey was undertaken around the boat ramp area and only native aquatic plants were found. This area will be regularly resurveyed in the hope of keeping Lake Kuratau free of introduced oxygen weeds.

Anglers can play a key part in helping to stop the spread of aquatic weeds. Always check your boat and trailer, particularly the rollers, rudd, motor and propeller to ensure you will not transfer a pest weed from one place to another. Even very small fragments can colonise new water bodies. Anglers should also check fishing gear such as waders, landing nets and downriggers.

**TO REPORT A SUSPICIOUS WEED CONTACT:**

**Department of Conservation**

**Tongariro Taupo Conservancy office (07) 386 8607**

**Environment Waikato, Freephone 0800 800 401**

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Go to: [tongariorivermotel.co.nz](http://tongariorivermotel.co.nz)

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Contact Ross on 07 386 8555

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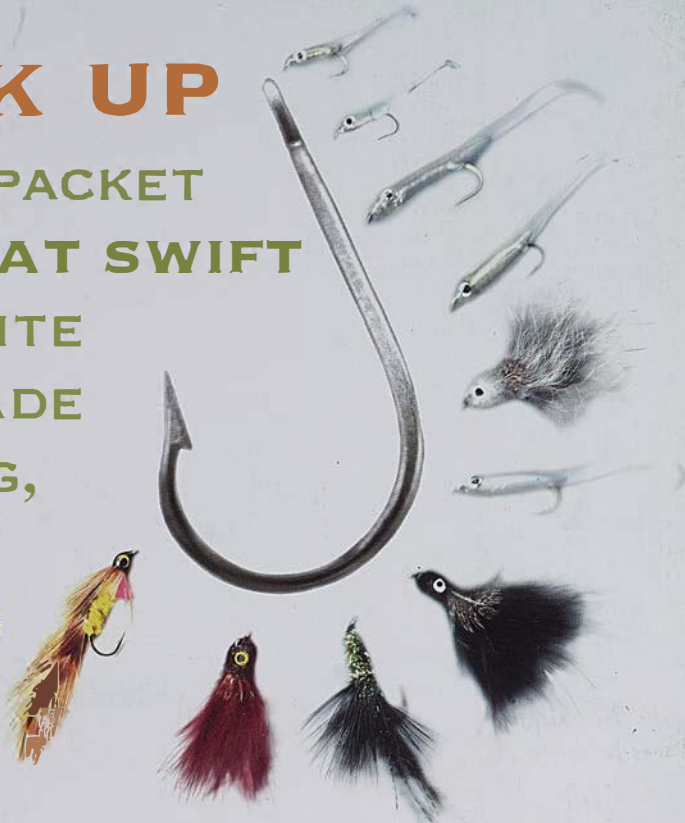
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