

TARGET TAUPO

A newsletter for Taupo anglers in
the Tongariro/Taupo conservancy

APRIL 2007, ISSUE 54



Department of Conservation
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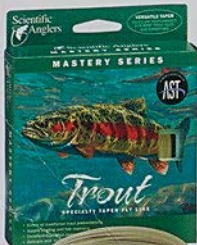


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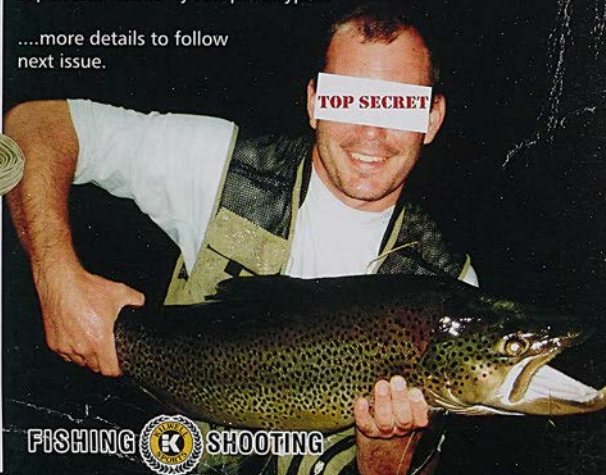
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Kilwell's "STIG" (product tester) poses with a handsome 16.5lb Jack.

It was neither confirmed nor denied whether he was using the new top secret Kilwell Fly rod prototype...

....more details to follow next issue.



FISHING SHOOTING

TARGET TAUPO

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Target Taupo

A newsletter for Taupo anglers

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Fishery Forward

By Carolyn Poots

Carolyn was acting Taupo Fishery Area Manager while John Gibbs was on extended leave. Carolyn is Programme Manager Service

GREETINGS FROM THE TAUPO FISHERY TEAM

For nearly 2 months I have had the opportunity to lead the Taupo Fishery Area while Area Manager John Gibbs took some well earned long service leave. It has given me a different perspective and more than anything I would like to thank the Taupo Fishery Area team for their dedication, passion and energy that they continually inject into managing this fishery. Every team member gives a lot to ensure the smooth operation and sustainability of the wild trout population in Lake Taupo and its tributaries.



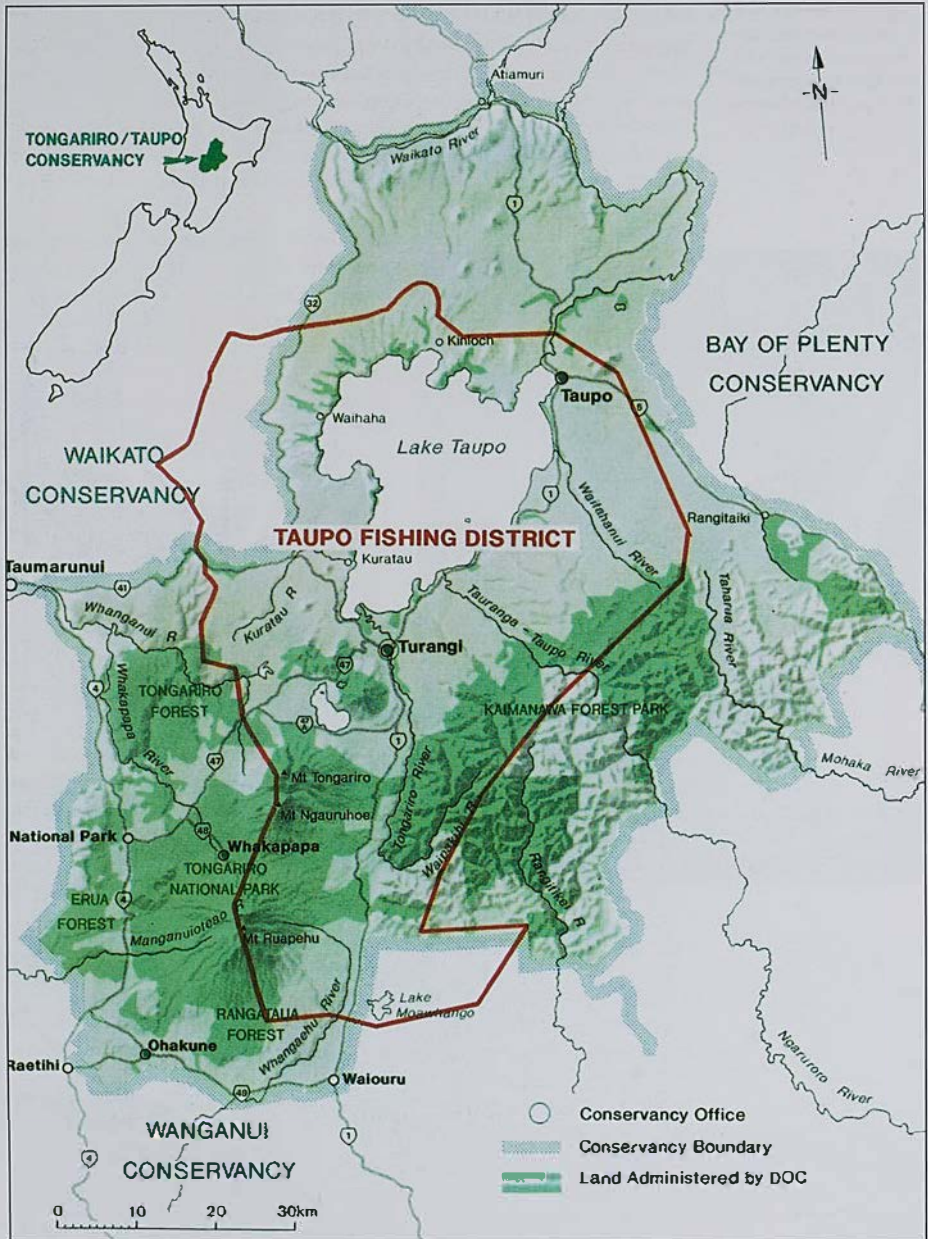
Photo: John Gibbs

Since the last edition the team has gone through some more staff changes. I need to make special mention of the retirement of Errol Cudby after more than 45 years involved in the research and management of trout and salmon in NZ. An amazing effort! These recent changes have meant we have lost valuable institutional knowledge as well as respected and valued team members. In response the team has adopted a new approach to how we go about our business and are rapidly moving forward, even though we are currently light on the ground. We have created our own personal vision "A Toanga Forever", which reflects a personal commitment to ensure the quality of the fishery now and forever, with underlying goals to complement this vision.

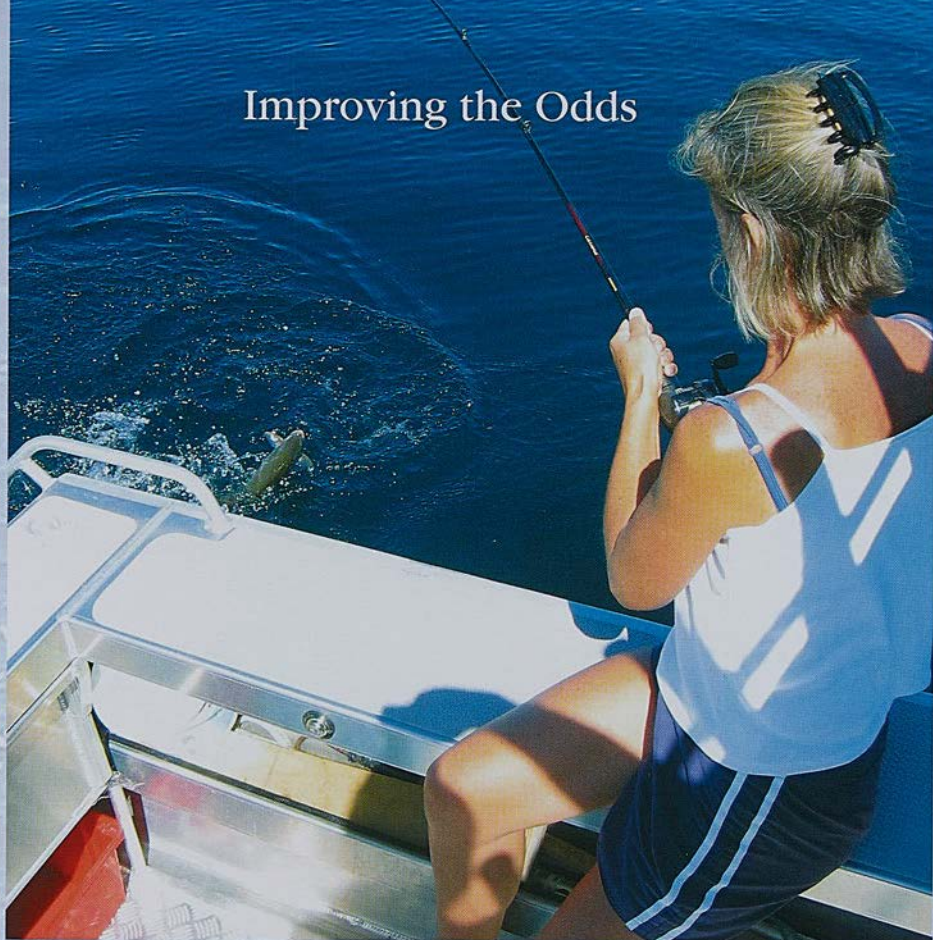
Rather than retrench we are proactively taking more on. It's a challenge and a big learning curve for our newer staff but also a huge opportunity to make their mark. So the training and staff development will continue to ensure projects are undertaken to the same high standard as they have been done in the past. This training will prepare us for our busiest period, winter/spring. The rain will arrive and the trout will begin to migrate into the rivers. We will increase the fish trap operations, escapement (spawning) counts will commence, ranger presence will move from the lake to the rivers, overt and covert compliance law and enforcement operations will continue as well as the day to day operations that it takes to run the fishery. We are also preparing for several more new recruits. This process will ensure the best possible 'fit' between the person, the job and the team can occur. So by the next issue of *Target Taupo* there should be some new faces to introduce and they can give you a snippet of their lives just as the team share their day-to-day work experiences.

I hope you enjoy this issue as much as we have enjoyed preparing it for you. I can say that I am proud and honoured to be part of such a diverse and committed team.

Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy



Improving the Odds



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

Last weekend a common scenario for this time of year repeated itself. The Coastguard radio traffic suggested the fishing was hard and most people were struggling to catch a fish. Yet off Waihora a family jigging was catching fish after fish. The other boats trolling nearby were getting frustrated, one could imagine them saying under their breath *"it is that jigging method, it should be banned"*. But it wasn't the method that was the key; if they weren't jigging this family would have run down riggers or even wire lines to get their lures down to the 30 to 35 metre depth they were targeting. Instead it was the knowledge that at this time of the year

the trout will be concentrated in this depth due to the water temperature.

If you are only an occasional visitor to Lake Taupo or just getting into trout fishing, it can be a real puzzle knowing when and where to go on the lake and what method to use to successfully catch a trout. After all there are 172 kilometres of shoreline and more than 616 square kilometres of water to choose from.

However by understanding and applying a couple of key principles, regular success can be relatively straightforward, at least as much as fishing ever is. In themselves these ideas are nothing clever but they are the key as the example above demonstrates.

Top: jigging deep in late summer is a very effective method.

Photo by: Glenn Maclean



Right depth, right place was the secret for success for Cam Maclean.

Photo by: Glenn Maclean

First and foremost your lure needs to be within a couple of meters of the bottom. As long as your lure is in the water you will catch an occasional fish, but as several of the top guides on the lake testify, running your lures close to the bottom is probably the single most important thing you should do to consistently catch trout. However the topography of the lake ensures that this is not quite as simple as it first sounds. If you have a look at a chart of the lake you will notice that there are areas of shallow flats around some of the shore particularly on the eastern side. The

lake then drops near sheer to over 100 metres in depth. In fact if you dive along these drop-offs and look over the edge your impression is one of looking down a steeply sloping wall that disappears off into the murky depths.

The significance of this is that the trolling path that keeps the lure close to the bottom along this drop off is very, very narrow. Twenty metres inside the ideal line and your lure will be dragging on the bottom, twenty metres further out and your lure maybe many metres up in the water column and in the middle of nowhere. However with

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After many years in the trade using / testing various brands of fly rods, I still come back to Sage. To me Sage is head and shoulders above any other fly rod. The Launch Series starting from around \$285 to the new Z Axis at \$985 – there will be a Sage rod to match your casting ability. Do yourself a favour and come in and test drive one now.” – Mike Davis, Co-Owner Hunting & Fishing Rotorua



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the use of an echo sounder following the ideal depth contour is not difficult. For example if your lure is running 20 metres deep then it is a case of trying to troll along in about 22 metres of water. If the sounder shows the depth getting shallower than this then it is a matter of turning away from the shore, similarly if the depth is increasing then turn towards the shore. A bathymetric or electronic chart which shows the depth contours is also useful to give you some advance warning of the likely twists and turns coming up.

The second key point is that the distribution of trout in the lake is determined by where their food is and by the physical conditions in the lake. More than 90% of the diet of rainbow trout in Lake Taupo is smelt and smelt are a pelagic species; that is they live out in the open waters of the lake. Therefore for the most part anglers need to target the depths beyond the drop off apart from a period late

each year. In about late October there is usually a spell of very settled weather where the lake goes glassy and over a few days the shallow margins warm slightly. This is the cue for adult smelt to come up out of the depths and onto the shallow sandy areas and into the stream mouths to spawn. Over the next few months there are large numbers of smelt along the sandy beaches and many trout feeding on them. It's a time of easy pickings for the trout but they also feel very vulnerable. When it is bright and calm they are exposed from above and instinct tells them to slide back into the sanctuary of the dark depths. As a consequence they tend to make use of low light conditions, moving up onto the shelf in the evening before retreating shortly after sunrise the next morning. However if it is overcast and a ripple remains on the water then they may feel much more secure and remain in the shallows all day.

Trolling with lead lines just doesn't get deep enough in late summer

Photo by: Glenn Maclean



When the trout are in the shallows in spring we can target them by harling or shallow trolling over the sandy flats. That is trailing a fly or lure on a fast sinking flyline or short (10 to 20 metres) length of lead line. This can be a very effective method but not surprisingly given what we have just discussed it is very much a method for the last hour of daylight or the first hour or two in the morning. Once the day brightens then it is usually more productive to switch to deeper trolling methods and target the drop-off. The exception being on grey windy days when harling may continue right through the day.

Shortly after Christmas harling becomes less effective even though smelt spawning continues through to March. This is when water temperature begins to play the major role in determining trout distribution.

In late winter Lake Taupo is usually an homogeneous body of water all of the same temperature. As the weather settles in to spring and air temperatures increase, so too does the temperature of the surface waters in the lake. By November there is usually a layer some 10 to 15 metres thick of warmer water floating on the cooler bottom waters.

As summer progresses the surface waters continue to warm, all the time becoming less dense until the density differences between the 2 bodies of water are such that they physically cannot mix. As the surface waters warm, they slowly become thicker so that by February the layer is 30-odd metres deep, 35 metres by March and 40 metres by April. By June the surface layer maybe 50 metres thick but by now the days are starting to cool and so too are the surface waters. As the winter progresses the water temperature and therefore density difference lessens, and the arrival of the wild winds of a mid winter storm that stir the surface waters up are usually enough to fully mix the lake again.

The zone of sharp temperature transition between the surface and bottom layer is called the thermocline. From January, the thermocline has a major influence on the trout distribution until the lake remixes in July or August. The exact depth will vary from month to month and year to year but generally we expect large concentrations of trout to be close to the thermocline over this period, particularly where the thermocline hits the drop-off. Remember the start of this

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story and the family targeting depths of 30 to 35 metres in early March?

The thermocline tends to be a zone where suspended material collects and the smelt congregate, and often the easiest way to detect it is to turn up the sensitivity of your echo sounder so it shows this band. However when you are jigging for example, the ideal is to drift up or down the drop off so you cover a range of depths. By noting the depth when you hook a fish you will soon narrow down the ideal depth range which is often only 2 to 5 metres wide.

However it is all very well knowing what depth the fish are likely to be at but the final piece of information we need is how to target that depth. It is important to realise that it is not just a matter of putting out more line to get deeper, the effect of the density of the line versus the friction or drag on it will limit the depth that any particular line can reach. Once the line reaches its maximum depth then releasing more line simply causes the extra line to trail back horizontally. The depth will also be

influenced by how fast you are moving, the faster you troll then the more drag on the line and the shallower it runs. To be sure at what depth your chosen method is fishing the easiest is to run along a sandy drop off and slowly come shallower until you are aware of the lure touching the bottom.

The following is a breakdown of the fishing depths of the popular angling methods.

Shallow trolling or harling A fast sinking flyline is usually down a couple of metres and 1 to 2 colours of leadline slightly deeper. Nevertheless this is a method for trolling on top the sandy shelf in 5 to 8 metres of water or when the fish are showing on the surface.

Lead lines With 10 colours out (100 yards) typically you will be trolling between 8 and 12 metres deep so target the 12 to 15 metre depth contour. With 20 colours you will be around 15 metres deep, not a lot of gain for an additional 100 yards of line out.

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but able to fish 25 to 30 metres deep depending on the density of wire used.

Downriggers Anglers tend to think of downriggers as a deep trolling method. However in reality they are a controlled depth method and can be used to target any depth between the surface and 35 metres deep.

Jigging With monofilament jigging works well to 40 or so metres deep and if braid is used the practical fishing depth is extended to 50 plus metres.

One thing you may notice is that lead lines which are the most popular trolling method used on the lake, do not go very deep at all. Over summer and autumn when the trout distribution is largely controlled by the depth of the thermocline the great majority of fish are out of reach of these anglers. It's as simple as that!

So we now know that the secret is to fish close to the bottom and that the optimum depth varies over the course of the year. Given the steeply shelving nature of most of the lake over the sorts of depths we might target, the suitable depth contour usually occurs along the drop-off and is a very narrow zone right around the lake.

Furthermore, different methods target different depths and we either have to change our method through the year in order to fish the ideal depth, or use a method like downriggers which allows us to fish a variety of depths. Let's put this all together using a seasonal breakdown.

Winter The lake is fully mixed and the trout can be at any depth. However there are few if any smelt in the shallows to attract trout into this area so by and large give harling a miss and concentrate on trolling along the drop off around the lake. All of the deep trolling methods including leadlines are equally successful but remember to target a depth contour appropriate for the method you are using so that your

lure is within a couple of metres of the bottom. In general trolling tends to be more productive than jigging, simply because the trout are spread out and trolling covers more water.

Spring Similar conditions to winter except that smelt are now spawning on the sandy shallows and trout will be moving into these areas particularly early and late in the day. Harling in the shallows at the change of light can be very successful but as a general rule when the day brightens it is best to revert to one of the deep trolling methods and follow the drop off. It is one of those things, try harling and if you are having success then stick with it, but if the fishing goes off then the likelihood is the trout have reverted to the depths and you need to follow them.

Summer Smelt are still in the shallows and if trout are observed in these areas then by all means try harling. However in general the thermocline is starting to be the major influence on trout distribution and the key is to go deep. By mid January the likelihood is that the trout are out of reach of lead lines and you need to be using wirelines, downriggers set for 25 to 30 metres or jigging in these depths. As the trout start to concentrate in a narrow band around the thermocline jigging comes into its own.

Autumn You need to be deep, simple as that. Find the right depth which is likely to be somewhere between 30 and 40 metres or more and the fishing will often be outstanding as current catch rates testify. After all the majority of trout are concentrated in a very narrow zone along the drop-off. However, harl or troll with leadlines and your catch is likely to be confined to a few tired old kelts.

So when you are heading out fishing, first work out the depth you want to fish, use a method that allows you to fish at this depth and then target this depth contour along the drop off. It's a basic recipe but it works.

Glenn Maclean & John Gibbs
answer questions after the
seminar is finished
Photo by: Kim Alexander
Turia



SUMMER FISHING SEMINARS

Any of you who have attended our popular summer fishing seminars which we hold over the Christmas break, will have heard much of what is written in the article *'Improving the odds'*. In addition we cover lures and equipment to use, how to rig and fish each method as well as related information like how to make best use of your echosounder, so as to improve your odds of success.

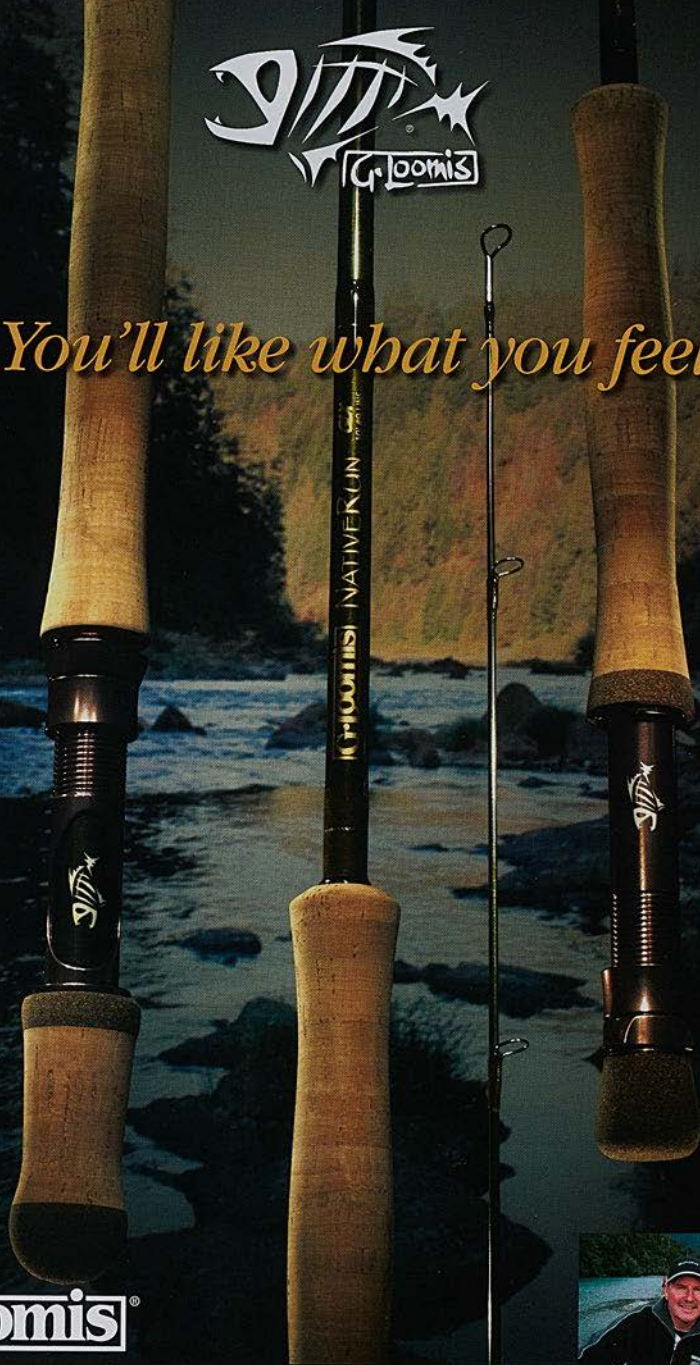
Last Christmas we held seminars at Two Mile Bay in Taupo and at Motuoaapa, the latter in particular very well attended. If you would like to hear future seminars keep an eye out in the December 2007 issue of *Target Taupo* where the dates and venues will be advertised. Each seminar runs for a couple of hours and is free.

Glenn Maclean at the
Motuoaapa Angling Seminar
Photo by: Kim Alexander
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Graeme Sinclair with his 11 pound South Westland brown trout caught on a G.Loomis 8wt GLX Rod, Shimano BioCraft 7/8 LA reel, Cortland 555 Line.



Man alive it's Errol Cudby

By Kim Alexander-Turia
Kim is our Programme
Manager, Community
Relations for the Taupo
Fishery Area

Errol is usually the one writing stories for *Target Taupo*. Updating anglers on a variety of VAMS (Visitor Assets Management System) issues such as new tracks, old tracks updated, clearing the angling tracks for winter and stream clearance in the Whanganui to name but a few. Now on his retirement after 45 years working with trout and salmon he finds himself in *Target Taupo* as the main player, and he is a little uncomfortable.

Errol started with the Customs Department in Wellington, February 1959. He was told it was a way to get ahead and that seemed pretty good to Errol. The position was similar to a trainee ranger role in DOC where you got to do a bit of everything. A highlight was learning how to smoke cigars and his favourite time was going out on the Dutch cruise boats where you could buy 50 big fat Willem II cigars for 1 pound 2 & 6. However Customs was too much office work for Errol, he was an outdoors man so when a job came up in the Marine Department in 1962 he took it.

The Marine Department administered the Fisheries Act and operated research laboratories in Wellington, Rotorua and Christchurch, where Errol was appointed to a vacancy in the technical field service. He worked all over the South Island completing investigations and reporting on fishery management problems involving trout and salmon. He and his colleagues would build and run fish traps and complete angler interviews on the rivers and lakes. So it wasn't much different to how we run the Taupo fishery today, just over a much larger geographic area.

Along the way in 1963 Errol went to the Royal NZ Navy to complete the traditionally elite diving course, and thus began a long association with bubbles flying past his ears.

During this time he would go back to Wellington to visit family and friends. He started to notice Elle who was the annoying younger sister of his mates he had gone to school with. She became not so annoying and actually pretty good looking after each visit and in



Top right: Errol's early diving days

Below: Glenrifle Salmon Trap, 1965

Photo by: Errol Cudby

1966 they married. Once married, Errol decided that he needed to settle down. The Marine Department offered him a job in Turangi as a technician working with a scientist on fishery aspects of the Tongariro Power Development Scheme.

The Tongariro Hatchery was run by the Wildlife Service and they allowed the Marine Department to establish a field station there. Errol arrived at the hatchery on April Fools Day in 1966 to set up the laboratory before the scientist arrived. The scientist, Charles Larsen from the USA duly appeared. He lived in the single man's huts at the hatchery and he also smoked cigars. Errol lived in town in one of the Marine Department houses.

Their brief was to look after anglers' interests in relation to any effects on the trout from the Tongariro Power Development Scheme. Because the Wildlife Service managed the Taupo Fishery, Errol and Charles Larsen were relegated to the distant tributaries such as Lake Rotoaira, Moawhango, Whakapapa and the Western Divisions.



Errol spent his time in the field working on sampling invertebrates, sedimentation, hydrology and minimum flows to predict the likely effects of the power scheme on the fish.

Charles Larsen left after a year and Errol stayed at the hatchery now mainly





Driving railway irons to support the trap barrier in day's pre Health and Safety.
Photo by: Errol Cuddy

working on Lake Rotoaira, studying the water quality, invertebrates and later the trout population. He worked under the direction of the scientist in charge of the Marine Department Research laboratory based at Rotorua. The scientist was Dr Geoff Fish and there were other aptly name people in the group; Dr Pike was another scientist and P Lenz a photographer Errol began to develop an interest in nominative determinism where the name belies the occupation

or activity, and with the help of others compiled a list of over 150 names and occupations over the years. The list is now in the care of Rowan Strickland of Cawthron Institute who was a founding member. It was during this time Errol had his first child, Logan born in 1968. It was the time of fathers not being present and although Errol was allowed to hold hands, at the crucial time he was kicked out and sent to the waiting room to sweat it out.



Errol sampling on Lake Rotoaira, 1969.

In the early 1970's the Marine Department was split and the fishery section now came under the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. It had two divisions, management and fishery research. Errol stayed in fishery research and continued to work on Lake Rotoaira. In 1971 Errol's second child was born, a daughter, Rowena. Times had changed and Errol was allowed to be present at Rowena's birth, he was excited to have a wee girl and said that after the Doctor gave her all her due injections he put the used needles in the mattress so in the end she looked like a dart board.

In 1972 an English scientist was appointed, and together they carried on studying the Lake Rotoaira trout population. The scientist didn't smoke cigars but he did do the unfortunate thing of smoking something else one night with

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Graeme Sinclair with his 11 pound South Westland brown trout caught on a G.Loomis Swt GLX Rod, Shimano BioCraft 7/8 LA reel, Cortland 555 Line.



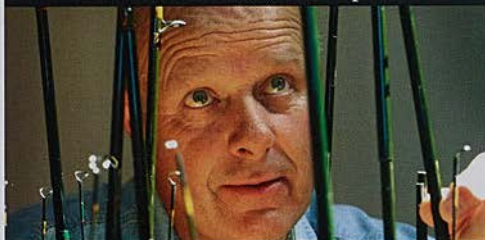
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too much red wine. Errol had to drive him to Taupo the next day for a meeting and he spent the entire trip vomiting out the window. Errol told him to stick to cigars in the future.

In 1972 Errol's third child was born, Neil. Errol was out fishing at the time and his wife had to find her own way hospital. Errol returned from fishing to find he had had a second son. The second son was very popular, Errol was not.

Errol and his scientist started to work on Lake Otamangakau as well as Lake Rotoaira. This required them to net the fish, gut them and record their diet and weight. The fish didn't go to waste and were smoked in an old smokehouse and given to local hospitals. The scientist became based in Rotorua for the next year and Errol remained at the hatchery responsible for 1-2 technicians and continued to collect data.

In 1975 the Fishery Research Division (FRD) employed female scientists who were keen to dive but the Navy would not train them because a lack of toilet facilities at the Naval base. So the FRD asked Errol, Kim Walshe and Graham Coates, who were fishery scientists at the time to design a suitable diving course to accommodate all future staff. Once the course was designed, Navy divers came on several of the courses, eventually approving their instruction and design. The State Services Commission approved the courses for all future Government divers. Errol continued to run future courses and estimates that he has trained 100+ divers in his time.

Around 1978 work was escalating to a wider area, from Taupunga to Wanganui and the Wanganui River eastward to Hawkes Bay. Turangi staff were responsible for monitoring consent applications for the use of waterways and investigating the likely effects on freshwater fish and sport fisheries. The investigation of the fish populations in the Manganuioteao River also began in 1978. A series of hydro electric schemes were proposed on the river, the last major unmodified river running off the central North Island mountains into the Wanganui River. The FRD recognised the significance of the river and initiated a study of the fish populations which involved almost all of its freshwater staff as well as the Wildlife Service and Fish and Game staff at different stages. Turangi staff were heavily involved and Errol was pleased to eventually follow the work up through two other departments to the eventual granting of a Water Conservation Order which prevents any major modifications to the water flow.

Errol was also involved in the famous 100 rivers study that involved a team of drift divers diving 100 rivers



Errol Cudby at his happiest
Photo by: Mark Yoncken

throughout NZ, counting trout and measuring habitat to establish a base of fishery flow requirements

In 1986 FRD closed the Turangi office and Errol was transferred to the environment section of the Wildlife Service, choosing to stay in Turangi. Then in 1987 Dr Martin Cryer began work with the Wildlife Service in Turangi on his acoustic survey of the Lake Taupo trout population, and Errol was appointed to assist with logistics and field work with which carried on into 1989.

The 1st of April 1987 was the day that the Department of Conservation began. After about a month the Turangi staff moved to the new Taupo office, traveling to and fro daily. When in 1988 the managers job at the Tongariro Hatchery, by now renamed The Tongariro National Trout Centre, became vacant Errol snapped it up even though it was regarded as 'half a job' - at least it might halve the travel he thought.

With the advent of DOC came the move toward 'user pays' for the previously

heavily subsidised hatchery-reared trout. By 1991 the full costs of rearing and transporting trout were being recovered from Fish and Game Councils (previously the Acclimatisation Societies) and orders and hatchery operations fell dramatically. This period coincided with the development of the Tongariro National Trout Centre as a visitor centre. Plans initiated by the Wildlife Service and shelved were dusted off and improved upon. Funding was sought and although the plan was modified and scaled back after the lack of funding, its implementation more than offset the decline in hatchery operations.

The TNTC development programme carried on apace during the late 1980's and early 1990's, the carpark by SH1 and a new public entrance was opened with a dawn service in 1991 as well as bright new interpretation signs along the visitor walkway and in the viewing chamber visitor centre. The River Walk track was built by prison inmates in 1992 and new public toilets were opened in 1993.



Erol's final drift dive down the Tongariro with fishery staff and Erol's son (left to right: Mark Venman, Callum Bourke, Mike Hill, Juice Greaves, Rob Hood, Erol Cudby, Michel Dedual & Logan Cudby)

Photo by: Kim Alexander-Turlia

Throughout there was a huge community involvement. The current Tongariro National Trout Centre Society grew from a group of representatives of Turangi service clubs, neighbouring land owners and fishing clubs. TALTAC ran the very popular fishing days and there was a lot of liaison with these groups.

The TNTC operation and development programme was one of many being run by the Taupo Fishery Area. All staff were involved across the board and Erol worked with his colleagues on their programmes as well. There were extensive compliance and law enforcement (CLE) operations in the spawning rivers during winter, operation of fish traps, monitoring of anglers and spawning trout, an ambitious programme to build and operate a fish trap in the highly mobile bed of the lower Tongariro River, research programmes, harvest surveys, track repairs and habitat improvement. There was variety, camaraderie and some worthwhile results. Erol wouldn't say it but he was a key member of these field activities, a real strength being his quiet relaxed manner and ability to pass on his extensive field skills.

In 1995 as a result of the Cave Creek tragedy, systems for improved management of buildings, structures, tracks and signs called 'Quality Conservation Management' was implemented which evolved to the current 'Visitor Assets Management System' (VAMS). This ensured that every asset is recorded on a national computer system with its location, measurements, relevant standards and a regular inspection schedule. Operators and administrators undergo rigorous training and their work is regularly reviewed. The walkway signs and structures at the TNTC were brought in to the system and it seemed a natural progression to give the VAMS work to the Hatcherly Manager.

The number of structures owned by the Taupo Fishery Area was much less than that of other areas. So another half job was added to Erol's and he became Programme Manager Visitor Assets responsible for managing, inspecting and maintaining the visitor assets and operation of the TNTC. In late 2005 it was identified that the TNTC needed a full-time Ranger based at the centre and Greg Robinson took over in early 2006 and later that year the TNTC operation and management was

DUCK HUNTERS, THE SEASON STARTS AT



Photo: Russ Millichamp

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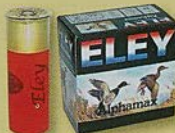
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allocated to the Community Relations programme. Errol concentrated on preparing consent applications, tendering documents and contracts, willow and aquatic weed control, assisting with research and monitoring programmes, CLE and field operations. There was a good variety of work but the managerial work required increasing amounts of time at his desk, in front of computers and at meetings and he began to feel as he had in the early 1960s at the Customs Department - restless for the outdoors. So it was time for Errol to retire.

Looking back Errol remembers a few stories he would like to share:

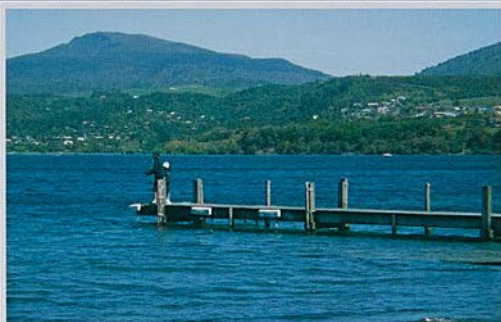
Like the horse that put its foot through the planking of the Red Hut Bridge and couldn't remove it so its young rider axed it to death and ran. The bridge was the responsibility of Dave Lumley then,

and he had to get a helicopter to lift the carcass on to a truck for removal to the dump.

The 'Hole in the Wall Gang' - Turangi Rotary got a local worker to build the wall beside the entrance path at the TNTC. He was laboriously slow so DOC hired Gordon Hydes and two helpers to assist. They worked through some atrocious conditions and completed it in two weeks, complete with a couple of holes in the wall where they entombed dead trout.

Then there was Christmas Eve 1995 when Errol worked until midnight with the president of Turangi Lions Club to complete painting of the building over the viewing chamber so it could be opened to the public after Christmas. The next day it and the kid's pond were flooded by the Tongariro River.

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Floods figure prominently for Errol. There were two within a week of each other in 1998 which took most of the wooden walkway at the TNTC where it ran alongside the Tongariro River. Errol found one section on the rocks near Te Hapua, half way down Lake Taupo. An eyewitness account from the Major Jones Bridge likening the scene to standing on a bridge above the Auckland motorway during rush hour as the sections of walkway floated past. He was quoted as saying *"and then I looked up and saw a pine tree standing upright and lurching about, coming straight for the bridge, I ran off, the tree went to the right and lurched over then came up and hit the sway wire and I thought the bridge would collapse"*.

The devastation of the 2004 flood at the TNTC, the damage to the Major Jones Bridge, getting the bridge repaired and keeping people off it also remains firmly in Errol's mind.

The electric counting chamber, on the Tongariro River at the TNTC was built in the mid 1960's when Errol first arrived. The Conservator of Wildlife was overheard telling his staff not to let those Marine Department buggers near it. However it was not long before Errol had to swim through the inlet and outlet tunnels in SCUBA gear to clear debris after a flood. This was just one of many examples that highlighted Errol was an

Errol say's good bye.



extremely skilled diver but he was also as some described a *'mad b.....d'* always prepared to take on challenges that others were less enthused about. After several floods it became necessary to pump tonnes of silt out of the chamber and the counting mechanism was found to be inaccurate. As a consequence the barrier and electrical equipment were removed and the concrete chamber filled with rubbish which became overgrown. Then in 1994 the area became a Kaupapa Wahine restoration project and the chamber was uncovered and excavated for visitors to view. An interpretation sign and safety fence were erected and prison inmates built an extension of the River Walk track past it. However once again it was short lived and in 2004 the big flood wrecked the fence, covered the inlet and partly filled the chamber. Once again it was filled in and the fence removed but Errol bets that in the way of these things that in about 2030 the chamber will be excavated and exhibited again.

Errol's family and his 3 grandchildren Ben, Jamie and Luke play a major part in his life, and he still has his passion for diving, hunting & fishing, cycling and motorcycling.

Errol leaves us with this favourite borrowed quote: *"life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body - but rather to skid in sideways, favourite beverage in one hand and cigar in the other; body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming "WHOO HOO, WHAI! A RIDE!"*

Well I must say Errol and I have had a few laughs writing about his life and I feel like I have barely scratched the surface with a number of unrepeatable stories. Errol's final words are *"Goodbye everybody thanks for the ride, keep up the good work and look after the lake"*.

Errol Cuddy! Man Alive!

Size is Everything

By Jill Larsen-Welsh

Jill is a Ranger in our Field Operations programme and is responsible for compliance and law enforcement

I've been out and about doing quite a lot of lake fishing over the last four months and like most anglers have found that there are still large numbers of undersized trout around. For every eight or so fish I catch I get one that is worth keeping, the rest put back to live another day. Maybe I'm just fussy about the quality of the fish I keep for eating but I really don't see the value in keeping fish in poor condition, and of course I can't keep fish that are smaller than the minimum legal length of 45cm.

Fishery rangers have conducted about 5000 angler surveys on Lake Taupo and Lake Oramangakau over the past year and have apprehended a number of people who have kept fish smaller than the legal size limit.

We must have heard every excuse for keeping 'that one that's a bit on the small side'. Some people keep small fish because they are bleeding from the gills, or they wouldn't recover when they were put back in the water, or they were OK when they measured them before or they simply like eating smaller fish for breakfast. Whatever the reason, if it's under 45cm it just has to go back!

The best thing to do is to get an accurate measuring device. Perhaps the most effective is a flat piece of wood with a stop at one end against which the fish's head is pushed. Put a line on the board at 45cm from the stop and if the 'v' of the tail extends past the line then it is legal. One advantage of this measure is that the fish can be measured while still in the net, minimizing the amount of handling if the fish then needs to be released. If you want to jazz it up put the DOC measuring sticker (you can drop into the DOC office in Turangi and get one of these) on the board.

One measure that is simply not good enough is the good 'old eye-ometer'. The eye-ometer doesn't work, particularly after a night out with the boys. Nor do we accept it as making a reasonable effort to ensure the fish is of legal size.

It's far better to be accurate about the minimum allowable length than get stopped by a ranger and be caught with an undersized fish in your possession. Getting caught can be costly in the long run, and it would definitely spoil your day when you have your rod seized.

The law says you have to release undersized fish - whether dead or alive - and the bottom line is that you cannot keep a trout under 45cm in length, no matter what!

So, keep a watch for anglers keeping small fish. Either give them a yell and let them know that what they're doing is irresponsible, or let us know and we can send someone out to deal with the problem.

I have found that on the whole, most anglers keep each other honest. There is nothing quite so disappointing as looking across and seeing someone blatantly disregarding the rules, which after all are there for good reasons. It only takes a few people to spoil a good thing so don't let others spoil your fishery. If you see something you don't think is right please give us a ring immediately on 027 290 7758. The number is on your licence but better still put it in your contacts list on your cell phone so it is always at hand.

Taking undersized fish impacts severely on the sustainability of the fishery on the whole. We need to put small fish back into the water to let them grow bigger for next year's harvest. Nobody gains if there are few fish left to mature; after all we all want to catch the big one!



Size is everything. Measuring your trout is important to ensure it is legal to take home.
Photo by: Glenn Maclean





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Still No Didymo!

By Glenn Mackean

Perhaps a more profound heading than you might first imagine. The reality is that after the summer of 2007, didymo still has not been detected in the North Island. The containment efforts to date have been like fire fighting; a lot of people reacting to the threat to do their best at short notice. A huge amount has been done but we all know there are holes in the current campaign. Even so it appears didymo has not reached the North Island. Something is working in our favour and suddenly it doesn't seem as inevitable as perhaps a year ago.

It's not a time to rest on our laurels but rather to take the opportunity to put in place a more strategic response and shore up the weak points. Similarly, those who have refused to clean their gear so far, because they believe didymo is coming anyway, need to lose this defeatist attitude and start making an effort (this is the polite version). The reality remains that if didymo gets into the central North Island rivers it is likely the impact will be huge, including on the trout fisheries and your ability to fish them. The key is to keep it out in the first place which means taking action



Mark Veeman and Dawn Tschujaschenko check for didymo in the Tongariro River
Photo by: Mrs Veeman

now. We all know about the threat but how many of us actually routinely clean our gear?

Over the summer a variety of different approaches were taken to spread the didymo message, working under the umbrella of the Didymo Action Group (DAG). Fishery staff distributed distinctive yellow wash bins and detergent to accommodation providers, aerial operators who fly clients into the back country and some fishing guides. Other larger bins for public use went to local sports shops and rafting and kayaking operators. The yellow bins have worked well though, as many operators have realised, it takes a lot of energy to keep promoting the message and encouraging clients to use them. The public wash stations have been less successful and for the most part we will probably move away from having these in local shops. Clearly, a lot of people are more comfortable about cleaning their gear at home. That's fine as long as you clean it somewhere. Instead, these shops provide a great opportunity to have eye catching posters and sandwich boards in front of the public. Local sports shops and others have also given the didymo message as part of selling fishing licences and tackle, and distributed didymo cleaning bottles.

The one-on-one contact has clearly proven the most effective way of getting the message across. As part of routine conversations such as during angler surveys, fisheries staff give anglers the message about didymo. It's hard work giving the message again and again in a way that captures people's attention, but there is nothing like having seen the impacts of didymo yourself to keep your motivation up. In mid November Glenn Maclean, Bubs Smith and Steve Smith saw didymo at it's worst in the Hawea River near Wanaka. It is a beautiful place and it was a spectacular day but it was soul destroying when we looked closely at the river. It's not about trout or fishing,

it goes much deeper than that and the fundamental values of clean, clear water and all that represents to us as New Zealanders. It's emotive stuff but it has that sort of impact when you see it.

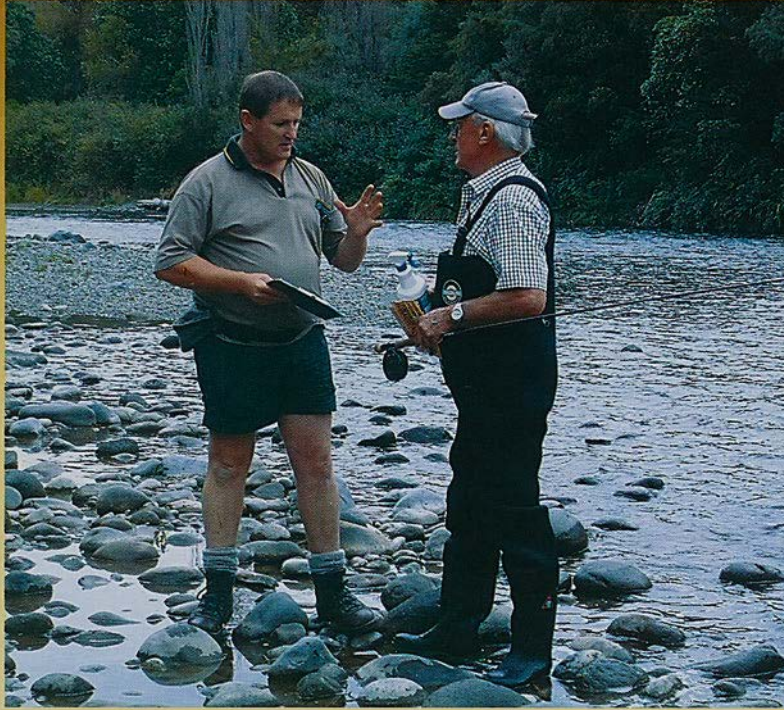
Given the effect it had on the three of us we decided to take our whole fishery team to the Buller River in Nelson in late December. Unfortunately major spring floods across the South Island had temporarily reduced the didymo biomass but we still saw enough to have a major impact on staff.

We also employed a contract staff member, Dave Cade who some of you will remember as one of our harvest survey interviewers. Dave has done a wonderful job walking the rivers and working around the lake contacting all and sundry, whether anglers, boaties, swimmers, water skiers - in fact anyone having contact with water. Any of you who have been approached by Dave will relate to the passion and enthusiasm with which he delivers his message, and there are few people who he does not get through to in one way or another. This message about 'Check, Clean and Dry' is one we can all deliver, it is hard work giving it again and again with energy and commitment but it is a hugely effective way of influencing others.

Mark Eames has also been employed on contract. He is one of New Zealand's top kayakers and has a great deal of credibility in the kayaking and rafting industries. One of the opportunities we have with this sport is that there are a few key sites that most people visit, either as a place to purchase equipment or for the experience offered. Mark's role extends over the whole of the North Island and is to work with these key sites to ensure they deliver the message, in this way potentially contacting the majority of users.

The third person employed on contract is Dawn Tschujaschenko. Dawn's role is more strategic and has been to develop the conservancy's response plan, that is

Dave Cade talks to an angler
from Wellington about
didymo
Photo By: Kim Alexander
Tuia



the plan to look after the values that are of particular significance to the department like blue duck for example. Dawn has also developed a protocol to ensure all DOC staff in the conservancy follow safe didymo practices as we go about our business. It's not quite as straightforward as you might think. Perhaps the best example is a major forest fire where we may well bring in staff and equipment from other areas. Wet hoses, wet pumps, water tankers - the potential is obvious. There are ways around it but the key is to have a very clear and practical protocol in place so that in the heat of a major fire (excuse the pun) the didymo risk is addressed.

Dawn has also coordinated much of our response on the ground including distributing posters and banners and organising much of the material that the rest of us give out. Her third role has been to provide support for Steve

Smith. Steve has taken on the role of coordinating the response across all of the North Island DOC conservancies, and also in supporting Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) to establish regional groups based on our central North Island DAG group. Obviously we can undertake all sorts of actions at a local level but the key to winning this battle is to keep didymo out of the North Island. This requires that practical anti didymo measures are occurring across the whole island. Steve along with Bubs Smith of Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board also sit on the Didymo Long-Term Partners Management Group working with BNZ to plan the longer term didymo response. This DOC coordination role is a big undertaking in itself but in reality represents a huge commitment from Steve given he is also performing his roles as the manager of Eastern & Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Councils.



Working closely with Steve highlights one of the side benefits to come out of this campaign. Our central North Island DAG group of Steve Smith (Eastern Fish and Game), Jarrod Bowler and Cam Speedy (Genesis Energy), Bubs Smith (Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board), Mike Birch (NZ Recreational Canoeing Association) and Glenn Maclean, Nic Etheridge and Dawn Tschujaschenko (DOC) would have been an unlikely alliance in the past. However the collective skills, resources and commitment has made for a very effective team. There are a lot of strong personalities but this has provided the energy to make things happen.

A key role of the group is to now complete a Didymo Response Plan. This is about looking ahead and strategically planning how we would respond to didymo being found in the North Island, in the Taupo catchment and in a particular river. It identifies high priority sites and the actions we would take under the different scenarios. For example if didymo was found in the North Island we might increase the signage on Taupo rivers, close the upper reaches of some rivers to angling or require users accessing a particular stretch to show their gear is decontaminated. The list of options is large and will be specific to each river. A big part of the plan is actually to put the actions in place before the situation occurs. For example the new signage would already be printed and we would have discussed and agreed management options with affected parties like commercial rafting companies.

Ultimately there is a significant risk that if didymo is detected in the North Island that it will be found on a Taupo river, simply because of the number of visitors who use these rivers and the very suitable habitat. In this case the actual response in the infected river will be coordinated by BNZ. However our plan will sit alongside and in particular

address what we might do on neighbouring rivers and the wider catchment.

There has been much made of chelated copper in the media as a possible eradication tool. If didymo is located first on a Taupo river and the use of chelated copper is a practical option then it will be used under emergency powers of the Biosecurity Act. Perhaps if didymo is detected early enough and is very localised then it will be possible to eradicate it, but it is a big call. Didymo can re-establish from a single viable cell and when you think that about a third of the flow of a river is through the gravel rather than over the bed then the chances of killing every last cell are not high. More likely chelated copper offers an option for control in high value sites but time will tell. So far in laboratory tests it is very effective at killing didymo while having low toxicity for invertebrates and fish and a trial application on an infected river in Southland is now underway.

There are two keys to chelated copper possibly being effective at eradicating didymo in this area. First it is essential we find any incursion while it is still at a microscopic level and in a small area. To this end Genesis Energy and DOC have combined in a surveillance programme to monitor high risk sites within the catchment every month. Similarly, and this is where you come in, it is essential Taupo anglers wash their gear whenever they move from one spot to another, even on the same river so you do not unintentionally spread an incursion further before it is detected. Treat every river as though it's infected, it just might be!

To keep people up to date with the latest news on didymo in this area the group through Mike Birch has also developed an easy to use website. Stick www.didymonews.org.nz on your favourite's page and refer to it regularly.

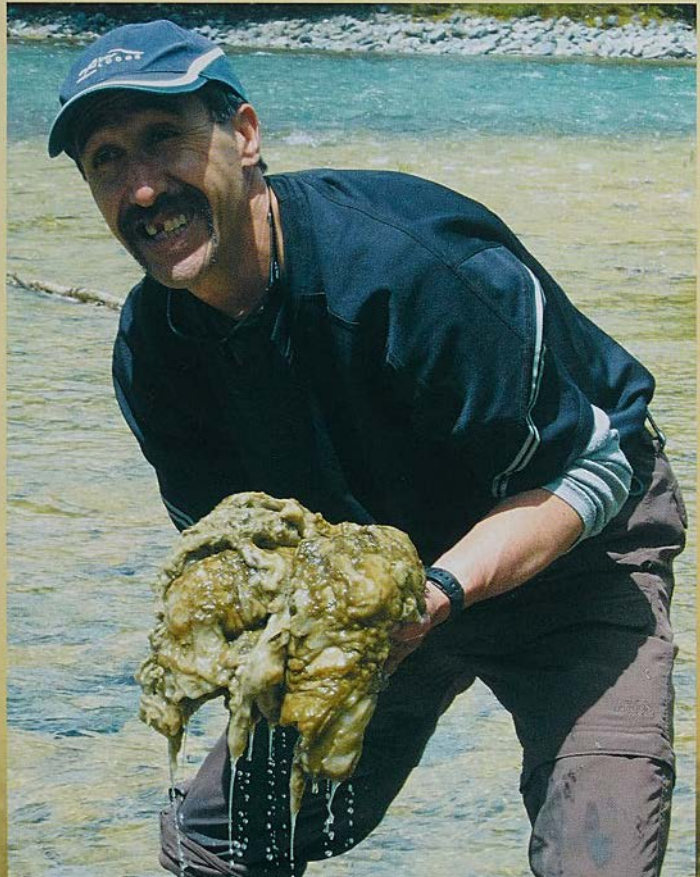
The other important point to flag is the

use of felt soled waders Recent research has shown these are almost impossible to clean effectively. The problem is that the detergent or whatever is used to kill the didymo cells does not penetrate right through the felt and viable cells remain close to the sole. Furthermore because the felts stay damp for so long, drying is not a suitable option to kill the didymo cells. If at all possible leave your felt soled boots in the cupboard and wear one of the rubber boots that are easier to clean and dry. Yes they may not be as easy to wade in but look at it this way. Shortly after the issue arose an indignam angler asked me if I had tried to wade in rubber boots and that it would be preposterous if he couldn't wear felt soled boots. My response was "you won't need felt soled boots once didymo arrives, it's like walking on carpet. You won't have much use for a

fishing rod either - your choice!"

If you do wear your felt soled boots the recommended cleaning method is to freeze them solid. This is a good practice for any boots, there is always the risk of didymo cells caught in the lining of the boots irrespective of whether they have felt soles or not. The other cleaning method is to immerse the boots in hot tap water (45 to 50 degrees) and 2% dishwashing liquid or nappy cleaner for 30 minutes.

So lots have happened, lots more are happening and so far so good. However the battle is only just beginning. Please play your part by cleaning your gear every time and encourage those around you to do the same. If you are visiting from the South Island this winter then leave your felts behind, the risk is just too great.



Mubs Smith with didymo in the Hawea River - imagine this in the Tongariro River
Photo by: Glenn Maclean

Catching trout is child's play
Photo by: Glenn Maclean



Summer holidays – only for some!

By Mark Venman
Mark is our Technical
Support Officer and
part of the research and
monitoring team

Winter is traditionally our busiest time with conducting river surveys, diving rivers, operating fish traps, protecting the spawning streams and so on. However summer is almost as busy especially over the Christmas/New Year period when most of you are out on Lake Taupo enjoying the start of your holiday! During this time we are busy pulling alongside boats to check licences and conduct angler interviews. We also conduct aerial counts of boats fishing on the lake to determine how busy the lake actually is and the level of pressure that the fishery is coming under. This article presents the results from the angler surveys and aerial counts conducted this summer, and compares them with previous years.

Angler surveys on Lake Taupo commenced on Labour weekend. Catch rates were good during November with an estimated 0.28 fish per hour (1 fish

every 3.6 hrs) although this was down on the 0.44 fish per hour (1 fish every 2.3 hrs) estimated for the same period last year. The fishing improved considerably during December with an overall estimated catch rate of 0.45 fish per hour (1 fish every 2.2 hours) before dropping slightly during January to 0.32 fish per hour (1 fish every 3.1 hours). However, the catch rate increased again during February to 0.39 fish per hour (1 fish every 2.6 hours) which probably reflects the entry of what were previously undersized fish into the legal population in the early part of the year. Overall, the estimated catch rate for the period November to February was 0.37 fish per hour (1 fish every 2.7 hours) which is almost identical to the same period last year and the joint highest catch rate of the last 16 summers (Figure 1).

Catch rates were also broken down by method and despite lead lines being the

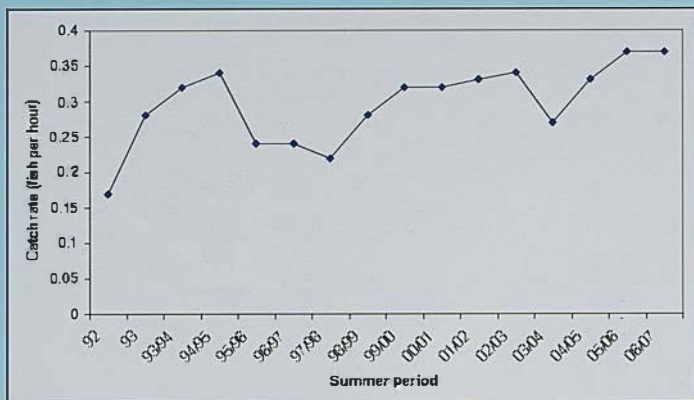


Figure 1: Summer catch rates for guided & non-guided anglers on Lake Taupo since 1992

most preferred method they actually produced the second lowest average catch rate with 0.24 fish per hour (1 fish every 4.2 hours). However, jigging was the next favoured method with almost 200 interviews producing an estimated 0.53 fish per hour (1 fish every 1.9 hours). Shallow trolling followed both in terms of popularity and catch rate with downriggers and wire lines making up the remainder with catch rates of 0.30 and 0.23 fish per hour, respectively.

Data collected from angler surveys during late October indicated a high percentage (57%) of undersized fish amongst the total recorded catch. This very high percentage remained throughout November dropping to 42% during December, 38% in January and 25% in February. This high incidence of undersized fish in the lake even after Christmas when traditionally they would have reached legal size, is the consequence of the later spawning runs in the rivers over recent winters. This has meant that these fish are effectively several months younger than normal. Given that they grow at about 3cm per

month then a couple of months make a big difference to the size of the fish.

It is also likely that the successful release of trout is most difficult over the late summer period. Our major study of the survival of fish caught by different methods in 1993 highlighted that the greatest mortality was associated with deep fishing methods which are the most successful at this time of year. The mortality is also likely to be exacerbated by warmer water temperatures. Therefore it may be that the current size limit is not achieving the saving of fish that was intended, in fact it may be increasing the harvest by causing anglers to keep fishing when much of what they are releasing is also potentially dying. To this end we have decided to undertake a review over the next several months of the current 45cm minimum size limit.

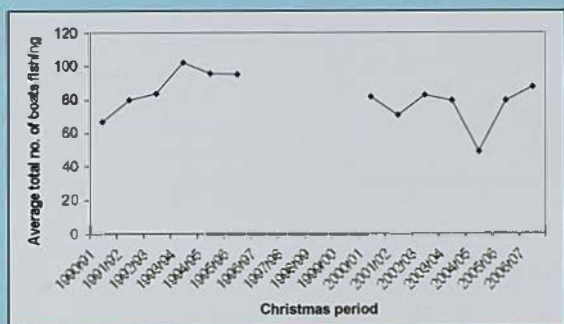
Overall, rainbow trout kept by anglers this summer averaged 500mm and 1.35kg which is very similar to fish measured and weighed during the summer of 2002/03. Anglers returned almost 65% of their total recorded catch which emphasises the need to return unsuitable fish to the water carefully with minimal handling.

Table 1: Average estimated catch rates by method for all Lake Taupo anglers between November 2005 & February 2007

Method	Catch rate (fish/hour)	Number of interviews
Downrigger	0.30	88
Lead line	0.24	244
Wire line	0.23	18
Jigging	0.53	196
Shallow trolling	0.43	124

As part of the licence checking and creel survey procedure, anglers were also asked three questions based on a 10 point Likert-type scale (where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent) relating to their satisfaction with their angling this summer. A 5 point scale was used previously but we moved to a 10 point scale this summer to help obtain a more precise figure for angler satisfaction. Questions were based on angling enjoyment, angling success/catch rate and the size and quality of the fish that they had been catching. Anglers rated the size and quality of the fish that they were catching this summer at 5.9, their catch rate at 6.1 and finally their angling enjoyment at 9 out of 10.

Anglers were also asked a final question about whether anything spoiled their fishing while out on Lake Taupo. Some 82% of lake anglers couldn't think of anything while the remaining 18% complained of bad manners amongst other boat users,



Graph 2: Average number of boats fishing on Lake Taupo over the Christmas period between 1990/91 and 1994/95 and 2000/01 and 2006/07.

overcrowding, jet skiers and water skiers and the weather. Only 1.1% of anglers complained about fish size and quality although many of the undersized fish were in great condition despite their smaller size (which is a good sign). Overall anglers were pretty happy this summer which has been the panem of recent years. Overcrowding was only mentioned by 1% of anglers interviewed indicating that this summer was not extraordinarily busy out on the lake. Nevertheless, aerial counts of boats fishing during the traditionally busy Christmas period were made to provide a

more accurate indication of how busy the lake actually was in comparison to recent years

Aerial counts of boats fishing on Lake Taupo were carried out from a fixed wing aircraft between Christmas and early January with flights scheduled for early morning and mid morning as this tends to be the busiest time of the day fishing wise. The weather during December 2006 was a little more settled than the previous two years but was still rather cold overall. However, the weather during the time of the flights was generally fine and calm this summer which allowed all of the scheduled flights to be successfully completed. As a result of this slightly better weather, anglers made the most of the holiday period with the average number of boats out fishing on Lake Taupo this Christmas the highest out of the last 6 summers and the 4th highest out of the 12 years that counts have been completed, dating back to the summer of 1990/91. At the northern end of Lake Taupo (north of an imaginary line between Motuwhaia Island and Hatepe), the average number of boats fishing this summer was 85 boats per flight, second only to the peak observed during the summer of 1993/94 when an average of 85.6 boats per flight were counted. A high average count was also made south of this line with 86.8 boats per flight being counted though this is considerably lower than the peak counts made in the south over the 1993/94 and 1995/96 summers.

The abundance of undersized fish throughout the summer is encouraging news for river anglers this winter. These fish which were protected from harvest should make a major contribution to the spawning runs this winter. However given their young age it is likely that they will not mature until late in the year, and once again we expect the peak spawning runs to occur in spring rather than the more traditional timing over winter. All in all it is looking good for river anglers but don't rush into it, the best fishing is still well away.

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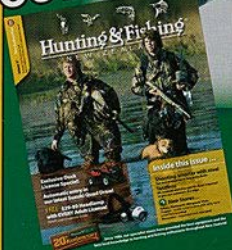
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Trout Centre to the Rescue

By Kim Alexander-Turia

On 10 January 2007, a major landslide occurred at Fish & Game New Zealand's Ngongotaha trout hatchery. The earth slide occurred adjacent to the Waimataa spring which supplies water to the hatchery. The event devastated the water reticulation system destroying pipe work, screens, and diversions and filling the head boxes.

As a consequence the site immediately lost water flow to the hatchery and rearing ponds. Fortunately the local DOC

fire store is sited on their property and they were able to enlist the support of the local field centre and conservancy staff. DOC staff used their fire pumps to pump water from the stream to some of the ponds thus enabling Fish & Game to keep the 110,000 fish alive in the short term.

What to do with the trout? It was pretty obvious that pumping water from the stream was a very short term solution and that the Ngongotaha hatchery was not going to be operational for some time. Steve Smith, manager for Eastern

Top: Lloyd Gledhill, Eastern Fish & Game Officer surveys the destruction at the Ngongotaha trout hatchery. Photo by: Eastern Fish & Game



Right: Devastation at the
Ngongotaha Hatchery
Photo by: Eastern Fish &
Game



Region of Fish and Game New Zealand approached the Taupo Fishery Area for assistance.

The Taupo Fishery Area responded to the request and immediately provided facilities at the Tongariro National Trout Centre (TNTC) to house all of Fish & Game's lingering and 2-year old trout stocks, some 110,000 fish. Fish & Game

commenced transporting the trout from Ngongotaha to the TNTC, a feat which took two days with many trips back and forth in their trout transporter, a truck of similar design to a milk tanker.

Steve Smith said *"while it was a genuine emergency situation, which necessitated some of our staff working for 30 hours on end, the end result was that*



Lloyd Gedhill on the Trout Transporter delivers the trout safely to the TNTC with help from ex-Community Relations Ranger Greg Robinson
Photo by Kim Alexander-Tunid

we lost less than 1% of the fish. There is no doubt that a very different outcome would have occurred if we had not received the support of the department as well as neighbouring landowners".

Steve further advised that it was conceivable that most if not all of the fish could have been lost which would have had a significant impact on the Rotorua Fishery for a period of 1-2 years, and this would have had consequent impacts on licence holders and the local economy.

The first transfer of trout back to the Ngongotaha Hatchery took place on 27 March. Trout will start to be transferred periodically back through into April. It is expected that the Ngongotaha hatchery will be repaired and back to full operations during this time.

One of the reasons the rearing ponds were built at TNTC in the 1970s was to provide a back-up and alternative

to Ngongotaha should some disaster strike. It is gratifying to see their value in this instance and the great response from the fishery team in readying the ponds at short notice to cope with this emergency. This exercise has also provided a valuable opportunity for our staff to work with people from another hatchery and to get experience with large-scale trout rearing once again. It was also great to again see the value that comes from working effectively with other agencies. Fish & Game had previously supplied 4,000 yearling fish to replace those we lost in the major floods of 2004, and in doing so enabled the children's fishing programme to proceed unaffected. In this case we were able to return the favour and reinforce the partnership between the two organisations which ultimately benefits all anglers.

This first group of trout head
back home from holiday,
Eastern Fish & Game Officers,
Lloyd Gledhill (on truck),
Mark Sherburn and Kim
Alexander-Turia
Photo by: Rob McLean



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Burrows Raceways

By Callum Bourke
Callum is a ranger involved in
all our Field Operations

At the Tongariro National Trout Centre (TNTC) we have three big rearing ponds outside that are an essential element of our trout rearing program. These days they are mainly used to raise juvenile trout for stocking our children's fishing pond each year, but also provide an important back-stop for the fishery if a major restocking program was necessary.

If you have visited the TNTC you may remember these ponds as big concrete troughs most of which are usually empty, but they are a much cleverer design than may first appear. The rearing ponds

go by the name of Burrow's Raceways, named after their American designer Roger Burrows. They were built in 1974 by the now-defunct Ministry of Works. At the time there was a need for the trout hatchery to raise a large number of trout to yearling age so they could be used to stock fisheries all around New Zealand. It was also believed that with the introduction of the Tongariro Power Development, these ponds could be used to replenish the Taupo Fishery and off-set any negative impacts the power development might cause.

Each rearing pond has two raceways, each

The raceways are able to hold
a huge number of fish
Photo by: Rob Melzay



Callum Bouke checks the vanes that direct the water around the raceways
Photo by: Kim Alexander-Turki



of which can hold up to 20,000 yearling trout, giving a total capacity of 120,000 fish if all three ponds are used. That is yearling trout, with younger fish many more can be held and currently we have 50,000 fingerlings in each of two raceways. The water in the raceways is piped from the headwaters of the Waihukahuka stream, providing a plentiful supply of cool, oxygenated water essential for healthy fish. Water is introduced through submerged jets at diagonally opposite corners causing the water to circulate smoothly around the raceways. Vertical curved turning vanes (baffles) are installed at each corner to further reduce turbulence and provide relatively straight flows and conversely few dead areas of water throughout the raceway.

These are important features as the continuous current simulates a moving stream environment whilst also making them self cleaning through grates in the bottom of the raceway. Excess feed and excrement are kept suspended and washed-out with a minimum of manual brushing. Because of the flow patterns and circular motion of the water, fish do not concentrate in specific areas of the ponds and the feed is carried over the fish repeatedly which assists them to feed. When all the raceways are operated at once there is quite a skill to

adjusting the flows, the volumes of water and hydraulic pressures involved are large, and if changes are made too quickly it is possible to blow the plumbing apart.

As an aside it is important that the wastes from the raceways do not pour directly back into the Waihukahuka Stream. To address this, the raceways all flow into a settling pond. In a case of turning a necessity into an asset this pond is also used for the children's fishing days but its primary role is as a settling pond.

Another important design feature of the raceways is that they have the ability to accommodate fish of a range of sizes from fingerlings to adults, and the velocity of the water can be adjusted depending on fish size.

As reported in this *Target Tauho*, currently the raceways are home to approximately 110,000 Rainbow Trout from the Ngongotaha Hatchery in Rotorua. Due to extensive damage to their water supply caused from a landslide, we are temporarily holding the fish until they get the hatchery back up and running. This unfortunate event has highlighted the importance of these raceways. They are not very pretty especially when they are empty, but nowhere else in the North Island, with the exception of Ngongotaha, is there capacity to rear this number of trout.



Summer tours begin at the Tongariro National Trout Centre

By Ken Kimmins

Ken is the Administration
Manager for the Tongariro
National Trout Centre Society

Those people who attended the guided tours of the Tongariro National Trout Centre at Turangi over summer, were treated to a most interesting and entertaining one and a half hours on the history, ecology and management of the Taupo fishery. It was an opportunity for people to come along and enjoy a relaxed amble through the Trout Centre's pristine natural surroundings beside the world famous Tongariro River. Accompanied by one of the Tongariro National Trout Centre

Society's knowledgeable volunteers visitors heard the amazing story of how and why the Taupo fishery evolved to become a world renowned wild fishery.

This is the first time the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society has run scheduled public tours at the Trout Centre. The tours were held on three consecutive Saturdays during January and were well patronised. The tour cost \$5 per adult and \$10 per family. Graham Hamilton, a tour leader, commented "I received some very positive feedback

Top: Tongariro National Trout
Centre Society guide Graham
Hamilton explains the work-
ings of a fish smoke house
Photo by: Ken Kimmins

from people on the value of the tour", so given the success of the tours the Society plans to continue to run more of them during public and school holidays.

The idea of the tours came about as a result of the strong interest a lot of visitors to the centre have in the Taupo fishery and DOC's management of it. The society felt there was a gap to fill and so decided to start running tours using volunteers to lead them, the money raised to be used to help further develop the site and to support the centre's *Taupo for Tomorrow* education programme.

The tour includes the hatchery building and rearing ponds, where 5000 rainbow trout are reared annually for the childrens' fishing days, the underwater viewing chamber, stripping pens, fish trap, fish-pass, smokehouse and the River Walk Visitor Centre and Museum. It was also an opportunity to feed the trout and to watch a film on the Tongariro River and to ask questions about the fishery. Of great interest was seeing large wild trout in their natural world and this tended to generate many questions about the life cycle of a trout and a trout's habitat.

John Milner, a past president of the society and one of the tour leaders, said "a common question people ask is what is the difference between a wild trout and a hatchery reared trout and are amazed to learn that the last release of hatchery reared trout into the Taupo fishery for stocking purposes was back in 1932, since then the fishery has been self sustaining". The tour guides also covered the rich and interesting history of the Tongariro National Trout Centre that goes back to 1927 when the hatchery was first built.

The society's volunteers who led the tours have been associated with the Taupo area and the society for many years and regularly fish the local waters and so have a huge amount of knowledge that they are willing to pass on to tour groups, including some very helpful fishing tips.

If you are interested in coming along to one of the society's next tours check out the website for details www.troutcentre.org.nz phone 07 386 8085 or e-mail troutcentre@reap.org.nz.

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An Average Year

By Mark Venuzuo

Each year as the days draw shorter and the frosts return, we embark on another winter of monitoring spawning trout fish in the Taupo rivers. Several different monitoring programmes such as fish traps, angler surveys and drift dives are used to help paint a detailed picture of what is happening to the population of wild adult trout across the region. This article presents the results of the 2006 winter season and makes some predictions for this coming winter.

The various fish traps are the first monitoring programmes to get underway during the winter months although the trap situated in the Waipa Stream, a tributary of the Tongariro River near Rangipo, is essentially operated all year round. The Waipa trap has now been in operation for a decade and has become an integral part of our operation.

Fish are trapped in the Waipa Stream on their way upstream to spawn and each fish is carefully measured, weighed, sexed and fin clipped by fishery staff, before being released upstream of the trap to continue on their spawning migration. A different fin is clipped each year to help identify how many times the fish has spawned and give an indication of the

fish's age. Spent fish or kelts are trapped on their way back downstream and are checked for the presence or absence of fin clips before being released downstream to hopefully recover in lake Taupo and spawn again the following year. This checking allows us to adjust the actual run of fish to account for those fish that were able to bypass the trap when it was submerged due to flooding. These flood events were more numerous than normal throughout 2006 with events being recorded resulting in the trap being out of action for approximately 10 days. Overall, fishery staff weighed and measured 3,758 rainbows and 415 browns during 2006 and these figures don't include the 1,700 spent fish also trapped and handled on their way back to the lake!

The adjusted run of rainbow trout was calculated at 4,751 which was the second lowest recorded since trapping began back in 1998. This was almost half the peak observed during 2004 and low in comparison to recent years. Similarly, the adjusted brown trout run was also low with the total for 2006 being the lowest since 1998 with just 420 browns being trapped. Numbers have shown a general decline over the last 4 years (figure 1).

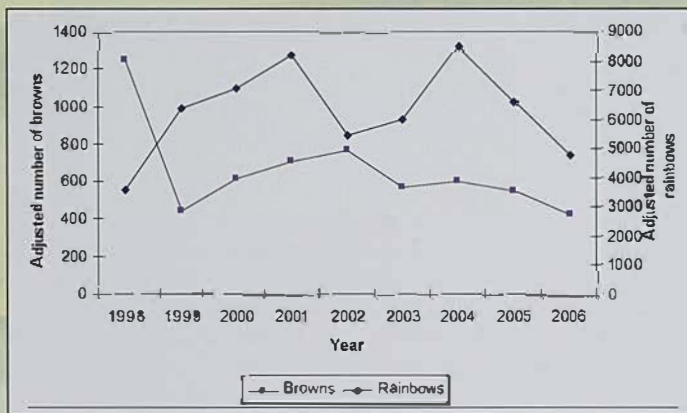


Figure 1: Annual adjusted trap run for rainbow and brown trout through the Waipa Trap 1998 to 2006.

Figure 2: Average length of trout trapped in Waipa since 1998.

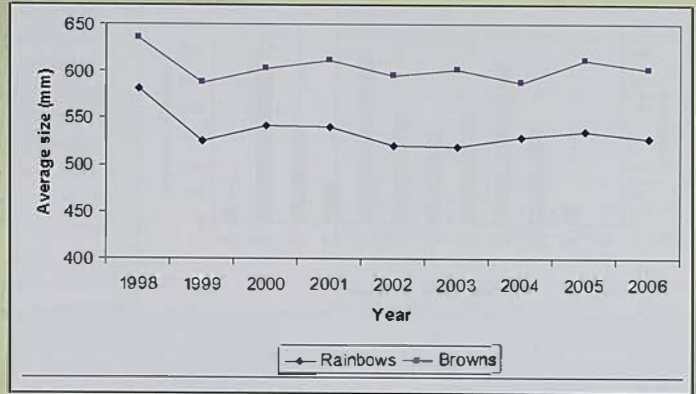
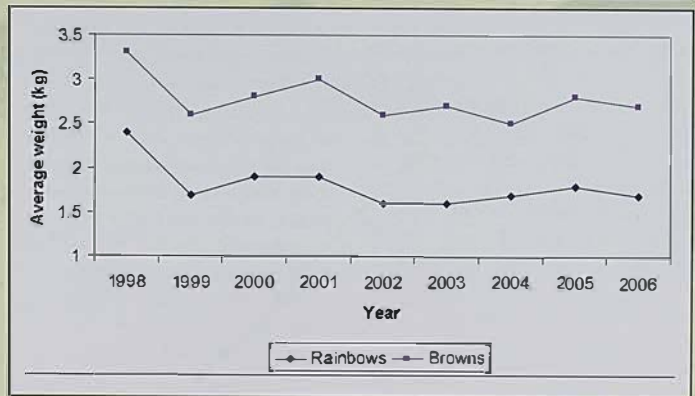


Figure 3: Average weights of trout trapped at Waipa between 1998 & 2006.



Rainbows trapped during 2006 averaged 528mm and 1.7kg (Figures 2 & 3) which is down slightly on those trapped during 2005 but on par with the long term average. Similarly, the average size of brown trout trapped was consistent with past years

Figures 2 & 3 highlight that 1998 was an exception in terms of fish size, the high average lengths and weights a result of impacts arising from the Mount Ruapehu eruptions of 1995 and 1996. This was likely a combination of many fewer fish present after the ash significantly reduced juvenile recruitment

from the Tongariro River in particular, and also that the direct ash fall into Lake Taupo appeared to affect the food chain in the lake. However, over the past eight years, the average lengths and weights of both brown and rainbow trout have returned to normal and remained relatively constant. Interestingly, the small increases and decreases that occur in one population of trout are mirrored in the other indicating that although the two species are quite different, when conditions are favourable then both species do well.

Only 1 trophy sized brown was caught

Table 1: Age structure of the population based on the presence or absence of fin clips from fish trapped during 2006.

Species	Maidens	2nd time	3rd time	4th time	5th time
Brown	82 (23%)	117 (33%)	76 (21%)	54 (15%)	31 (9%)
Rainbow	1609 (52%)	1016 (33%)	375 (12%)	91 (3%)	18 (1%)

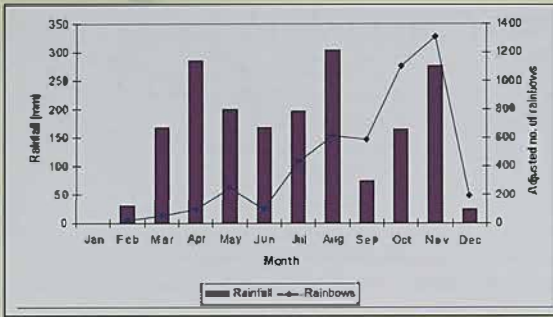


Figure 4: Timing of the rainbow trout run and monthly rainfall (Feb-Dec 2006).

this year, a female trapped during July. She measured 705mm and weighed 4.65kg and was spawning for at least the third time (approximately 5 years old). No trophy sized rainbows were trapped during 2006 consistent with past years.

Consistent with the 2005 run, half of the rainbow trout run whose maturity was identified were maiden fish spawning for the first time. One third were spawning for the second time, 12% for the 3rd time and 3% for the 4th time. Only 1% survived to spawn for an amazing 5th time. All of these figures are on par with both last years run and recent years and indicate good adult survival amongst rainbow trout.

Almost a quarter of brown trout were classed as maiden fish which is up on the 13% estimated for 2005. However, fish spawning for the second time formed the largest component accounting for one third of the run as occurred during 2005. Percentages of fish spawning for the 3rd to 5th time were similar to recent years and were again considerably higher than rainbow trout emphasising the longevity of the browns.

As has occurred over previous years, the rainbow trout run was spread over many months, with fish trapped over the whole period the trap operated between February and December. Despite a small peak during May after some decent rainfall in April, the runs of rainbow trout didn't really commence until July before building to a peak during November. A

drier than expected September saw the run plateau before a wet October got the fish moving again. November also saw a good run of fish with numbers higher than September indicating that the runs peaked during October and November 2006. Numbers decreased considerably during a dry December.

This late run, despite the regular rain early in the winter season confirms that the spawning run is now firmly established as a spring peak run, whereas in the past many of the trout ran in autumn though didn't actually spawn until spring. Running and spawning over a shorter period as they do now will take a lot less out of the migrating trout and may well contribute to the much higher incidence of repeat spawners (older fish) now in the population.

The main run of brown trout was much more concise with almost the entire run of fish trapped between the months of May and August. The run peaked during July as has been the pattern of recent years.

Thus overall, 2006 was an average season in the Waipa Stream with low numbers of browns and rainbows present although the average size was consistent with recent years.

Angler surveys on the rivers also form an important part of our monitoring during winter. Each angler encountered has their licence checked by the ranger and is then asked a series of questions pertaining to their catch that day which can then be used to estimate catch rates.

The Tongariro River has been surveyed since 1957 and provided some good angling opportunities throughout the winter of 2006 with an overall estimated catch rate of 0.29 fish per hour (1 fish every 3.4 hours). This is down slightly on the previous two winters but still above the long term average of 0.27, 1 fish every 3.7 hours (Figure 5). The variations in the average catch rate estimate from year to year appear only

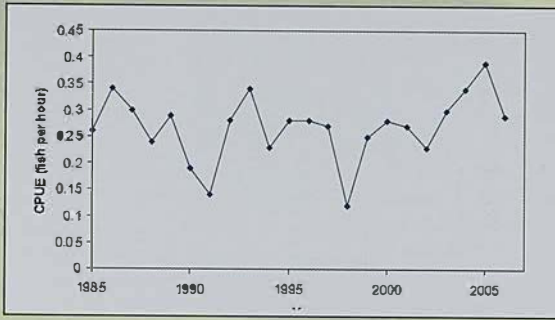


Figure 5: CPUE (per angler) for the Tongariro River since 1985.

small, but these small changes represent a significant difference in how anglers view their success.

Catch rates between April and June remained low this winter in comparison to recent years before increasing during July to 1 fish every 2.6 hrs (0.38 fish per hour). This is the highest catch rate for July out of the previous 6 years although this is probably a result of the slow start to the season. As discussed earlier, there were few fish being trapped in the Waipa Stream up until this point. Similar to recent winters the fishing remained very good over the following two months, which is recent years, before dropping away to 1 fish every 3.6 hrs (0.28 fish per hour) in October.

August and September were relatively dry months and the runs through the Waipa trip reflected this with the run peaking during November when some decent rain finally arrived. October also saw an increase in flows for approximately 2 weeks while maintenance work was being carried out on the Tongariro Power Scheme to return the flow to its natural state. Whether it was due to anglers not coming to terms with the bigger river or that the fish

were concentrated on running, catch rates did not reflect the increased fish numbers.

On the whole, the angler surveys supported an average season with good catch rates and average sized fish.

As mentioned earlier, drift dives or escapement counts were also carried out over last winter to help us determine the timing and size of the spawning runs in other eastern tributaries of Lake Taupo. Dives were conducted in the Hinemaiaia, Tauranga Taupo, Waimarino, Waiotaka and Whitikau streams between June and October. Each dive involves counting all of the fish seen over a known distance of river and occurred once a month on each river.

Overall, the escapement counts confirm that 2006 was, as on the Tongariro River, an average season for the majority of the rivers surveyed. The Waimarino, Waiotaka and Hinemaiaia rivers peaked during August and September while the Whitikau and Tauranga Taupo peaked slightly later during October (Table 2). As has been the pattern of recent years, none of the peak counts on any of the rivers came close to matching those calculated for the peak period of 1999-2001.

So that was 2006. Now we look forward to seeing what 2007 brings. There is good reason to be optimistic, results of our juvenile monitoring over recent years in the rivers and summer monitoring of the lake fishery suggest a very strong year class of young fish which will mature later this winter. But that is another story in this issue.

Table 2: Trout per kilometre by month in each of the rivers between June and October 2006.

Month	Tauranga/ Taupo	Whitikau	Waimarino	Waiotaka	Hinemaiaia
June	-	53	70	76	95
July	289	35	169	130	247
August	581	49	310	306	562
September	565	107	257	318	299
October	741	126	85	251	195

Angler access information

By Rob McLay

Rob is Programme Manager in charge of developing the Taupo Fishery Access register


In the early days of the Taupo fishery, the margins of Lake Taupo and its tributaries were largely held in private ownership and there was no public access as a matter of right for fishing or any other form of recreation. Trout populations had been established in New Zealand by the early European settlers for the express purpose of providing a recreational resource. The trout themselves were considered to be "public property" with no "ownership" by any individual but with the intent that every individual should have equal opportunity to fish for them if they so wished. However, gaining access at the time to fish for Taupo trout was at the discretion of local landowners and this led to an undesirable situation where different "deals" were being done in different places between landowners and anglers so that only those anglers with the wherewithal to negotiate such deals got to fish while others were excluded. A famous example which fortunately did not come to fruition is when noted American angler and

author of the day, Zane Grey, attempted to purchase the best fishing section of the Tongariro River, with the intention of excluding all anglers except his own family and associates.




Both the landowners, the large majority of whom were Ngati Tuwharetoa and the government, which was the manager of the fishery, recognised that this type of scenario was not beneficial to their interests in the future. They reached an agreement which culminated in the passing of The Maori Land Amendment and Maori Land Claims Adjustment Act 1926 (the 1926 Act). This Act among other things provided for public access to Lake Taupo and fishing access along sections of specified rivers, in exchange for a portion of the revenues that the government may receive for the use of those resources.

The 1926 Act continues to bind Ngati Tuwharetoa and the Crown (i.e. the government) to this agreement and that is the reason why the government (through the Department of Conservation) manages the Taupo Fishing District, not a Fish and Game Council as elsewhere in the country.


What is generally understood among anglers and the community is that there is public access around the shore of Lake Taupo and fishing access along the banks of the tributary rivers. Some folk know that this comes about because of the 1926 Act while others erroneously believe that the provisions relating to "Queens Chain" apply. What is not generally understood is that the access provided by the 1926 Act does not include all banks of all fishing rivers, does not include river and lake margins that were not in Maori ownership when the Act was passed and does not include sections of river bed that may have been specified but have since been revoked. An example of this is the


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Rob marks out tracks looking at locations for angler access
Photo by: Kim Alexander-Turra

stretch of the Waiootaka River that flows through Department of Corrections land whereby the access provisions were revoked to prohibit public entry through the prison.

The Taupo Fishery Area is now embarking on a project to define all of the legal fishing access provisions in the fishing District. The project will also identify all commonly used access ways or sites and define the legal status and ownership of these, and perhaps comment on whether such access use is appropriate. It is intended

that this information will ultimately be published in a form that is helpful as a guide to anglers that may be unsure just where they are allowed to go. It is likely that the information will be presented through signage, brochures or some other form of publication and also on the internet. In preparing this, we will be taking into consideration what has worked well with this type of concept elsewhere and will be seeking guidance and feedback from angling representatives on the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee.

It's been a busy time over the summer months at the Tongariro National Trout Centre (TNTC). From December 2006 to February 2007 approximately 14,237 people visited the centre.

Sadly Greg Robinson the Community Relations Ranger left us in January 2007 for the sea. Greg a commercial fisherman and his wife Yvonne bought the well known, Georges fish shop in Wanganui as a family business. Greg was with us for over a year, he was well liked by the visiting public & staff and his extensive skills and gentle demeanour will be sadly missed. We are currently in search for a new ranger for the centre and hope to appoint someone shortly.

Over summer the childrens' pond was cleared and cleaned with the trout left over from the successful children's fishing 2006 dates given to Fish & Game to run their own childrens' fish-out days in Wellington and Tainaki. It's important that the pond is cleared and cleaned at least once a year to avoid any break-out of disease. The trout that we had reared in 2005 were moved in to the pond late December in readiness for the childrens' fishing days for 2007 and for the Taupo for tomorrow education programme.

The smokehouse which was sited at the centre in 2006 was used for the first time where 40 trout were cold smoked for the Pukawa Marae opening on 18 November 2006. The trout were donated by DOC staff, keen fishermen and woman.

As reported in this *Target Taupo* we ran the Kid's Trout Programme over summer and we also assisted

Thea DePetris,
Educator (left),
Sue Morris, Major
of Ruapehu, Ken
Kimmins, TNTC
Administration
Manager, John Gibbs,
Taupo Fishery
Area Manager, Hon
Chris Carter, Paul
Green Conservator,
Bodie Tonks TNTC
President.
*Photo by: Kim
Alexander-Turfa*





The remaining trout are moved out after a successful children's fishing year, Callum Bourke (left), Greg Robinson (left), Crawford TNTCS Volunteer, Brett Gidby & Julie Greaves *Photo by: Kim Alexander-Turika*

Paramount Chief Tūmā te Heuheu DCMZM (Chairman of World Heritage Committee), Anne Marie Delahunt (Assistant Secretary, Parks Australia North) & Renee Kulaja, Elsie Wanijua (traditional owners Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park, singing a farewell song)
Photo by: Kim Alexander-Turika

Ngongotaha Hatchery with housing their trout in our rearing ponds.

On 18th January, while visiting to inspect the Lahar warning system, Minister of Conservation, Hon. Chris Carter took some time out on his way home to visit the TNTC and meet with Fishery staff, Paul Green, Conservator & members of the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society (TNTCS). He was certainly impressed by the partnership

between DOC and the commitment of the TNTCS in managing the centre.

On 15th February we hosted eight people from Micronesia who were here to attend the Pacific World Heritage Conference and on 20th February we hosted all of the Pacific World Heritage Conference. This is the largest group we have had with over 80 people in attendance from around the Pacific. This is a build up to the 31st Session, World Heritage Committee in Christchurch in June 2007. It was great for the Fishery staff to interact with people from the Pacific and showcase not only the TNTC site but the Taupo Fishery as well. Graham Hamilton, TNTCS volunteer attended and smoked trout, much to the visitors delight. Also on offer was wild venison kindly donated by Dave Ratcliff from Waipari Lodge. It was an evening to remember for all.

Finally it's work as normal at the trout centre with lots of mowing and weed eating to do this time of year. The children's fish-out days are due to start 15th April 2007.

There is always something new and exciting to see at the TNTC so bring the kids, pack a picnic and make a day of it.



Children's FISHING POND DATES

2007

The fishing pond at the Tongariro National Trout Centre will be open on the following days for 2007:

- Sunday 15 April (School Holidays)
- Sunday 13 May
- Sunday 03 June (Queens Birthday)
- Sunday 08 July (School Holidays)
- Sunday 19 August
- Sunday 30 September (School Holidays)
- Sunday 21 October (Labour Weekend)
- Sunday 11 November

FACILITIES

Parking space is adjacent to State Highway 1. While you are at the centre make sure you also see the underwater viewing chamber and The River Walk visitor centre. There is also a pleasant stroll beside the Tongariro River and plenty of picnic areas as well as BBQ facilities at the centre.

DONATIONS

The children's fishing days are run by a dedicated team of volunteers from the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society. The Society relies on donations to continue and your generosity would be appreciated.

FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS

The Tongariro National Trout Centre Society runs a barbeque on the day; a sausage sizzle is available and they also sell hot and cold drinks.

LOCATION

The location of the Tongariro National Trout Centre is SH1, 4kms south of Turangi Township.

HOURS

The pond will be open between the hours of 9.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. to children who have booked a particular time.

BOOKINGS

Numbers will be restricted to 30 children per hour. You will be given your start time when making your booking. Please arrive on time.

Bookings can be made by telephoning the trout centre volunteers at The River Walk visitor centre on (07) 386 8085 between 10am and 3pm (1 May to 30 November) and between 10am and 4pm. (1 December to 30 April) daily, or by email:

troutcentre@reap.org.nz

by website:

www.troutcentre.org.nz

or by fax:

(07) 386 8490.

AGE LIMIT AND CONDITIONS

Children aged six to 14 years (inclusive) who can hold and control a fly rod. Tuition is free. Tuition will be given by volunteers from the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society.

The total charge for participating in the Children's Fishing day is \$6.00. This charge includes a Child 24 hour licence and an administration cost. Children may bring their own Taupo District fishing licence but will incur a \$1.50 administration charge. They will then be assisted at the pond to catch a trout which will be weighed, measured and presented to them with a certificate to take home. No facilities are available for cleaning fish and these must be removed whole from the premises. Plastic bags for your fish can be purchased on the day for \$0.50 each.

ADDITIONAL FLY-CASTING TUITION OPTION

For an additional cost of \$6 your child can receive advanced fly-casting tuition. Suggested ages for this are 8+ years; sessions start at 11am and 1pm and last for about one hour. Limit 4 per session. Bookings for this prior to the day are essential.

RODS

Complete sets of gear are provided for all fishing activities. No private or personal fishing equipment is to be used in the pond to avoid the possibility of disease being introduced.



Summer Growth Affects Tracks

By Glenn Maclean

A combination of an unsettled spring and warm summer with regular afternoon showers has seen many of the angling tracks in the Taupo Fishery become badly overgrown. Maintenance of these tracks is from fishing licence revenue and as most tracks are only used by anglers over winter, we schedule the annual cutting and clearing to occur around Easter each year. However this year as a consequence of delays in the contract process the tracks are unlikely to be cleared until late April or early May.

In the meantime anglers can for the most part still make their way through the tracks. However the Taurangi Taupo had become almost impassable

in several places so we have re-cut the track ourselves. It is nothing flashy but just a temporary solution until the full track maintenance can occur.

As part of our business plan discussions with the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee they have suggested some tracks could be cut twice a year reflecting the increased summer angling that now occurs on some stretches of the Tongariro River in particular. We agree with this where anglers will benefit but flag we are not in the business of using angler's money to cut tracks just so the general public can go for summer walks. Committee members will suggest which tracks they think meet this criteria over the next few meetings.

Top: Ranger Mike Hill
clears the Taurangi-Taupo
track for Easter fishing.
Photo by: Julie Greaves

Hinemaiaia Barrier

By Julie Greaves
Julie is a Ranger in our
field operations and VAMS
programmes

The Hinemaiaia River flows into Lake Taupo halfway between Taupo and Turangi on the eastern shore. There are walking tracks along the river that anglers can stroll along to find a popular fishing hole.

Last month we had an angler who frequently visits this area report that a barrier across one of these tracks had been taken out and damaged. The purpose of this barrier was to stop vehicles driving upstream as this is a walking track only. The removal of this barrier had also exposed a hole in the middle of the track creating a hazard to any angler or walker.

This track is upstream of the State

highway one bridge on the true right. This land is not DOC land but part of Lake Taupo Forest administered by NZ Forest Managers. However because the track is very much an angler's access track on the river bank right of way, it was our responsibility to repair the barrier with the agreement of NZ Forest Managers.

Installation of a new barrier was successfully completed on a cold and wet March day. The barrier was probably removed to get to some large Kanuka for firewood so hopefully the new barrier will both protect the remaining trees and ensure a valued angling track is not damaged by vehicle use.

Ranger, Harry Hamilton
puts the final touches to
the barrier

Photo by: Julie Greaves





Summer Time - Kid's Trout Programme

By Kim Alexander-Turla

The Tongariro-Taupo Conservancy Summer Programme has been running for over 45 years. The summer programme is a chance for Department of Conservation staff and Tongariro Natural History Society volunteers to teach the public to about their work and to share their love of conservation.

Every year the Taupo Fishery Area team participates in the summer programme with its very successful Lake Taupo boat fishing seminars. However this year in consultation with Thea DePetris, educator at the Tongariro National Trout Centre's Taupo for Tomorrow education

programme, a Kid's Trout Programme was run to teach children about wild trout ecology, the importance of fresh-water environments and the ways in which these natural resources can be sustained.

The day started with pouring rain causing many of the other programme events to be cancelled. But we decided to push through and to our delight 23 children turned up for the day and an even more surprising 10 adults decided to also stay and take part with their children.

Run from the Whakapumautanga Downs Learning classroom at the trout centre,

Top: Kids take part in one of the trout activities

Photo by: Kim Alexander-Turla



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Kim Alexander-Turia (left),
Thea DePatris, educator with
the first group of kids to take
part in the summer
programme

Opposite page: Kids always
have fun in the rain
Photo by: Kim Alexander-
Turia



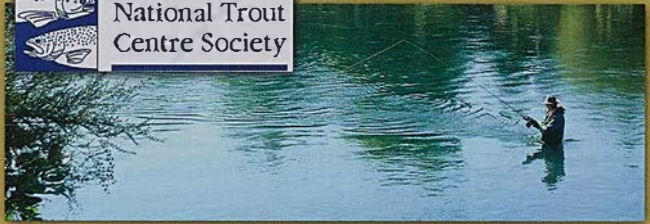
the programme started with an informa-
tive tour that gave children an insight into
the world of wild Taupo trout. Then it was
on to the learning centre to get out of the
rain and participate in an activity about
how the DOC manages the fishery. After
morning tea the children fed the fish at
the childrens' pond and the day finished

off with a team competition scavenger
hunt around the trout centre. By this point
it was hard to tell who was more excited,
the kids or the parents.

In the end the sun came out and it was
great day for not only the children but
their parents and something that we
hope to continue next summer.



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 to encourage respect for our environment.

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

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In Search of Didymo

By Julie Greaves

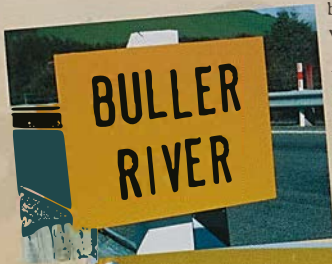
On the 18th of December 2006 the Taupo Fishery Team embarked on a journey to the South Island in search of the invasive threat *Didymosphenia geminata*. The aim of our trip was to get up close and personal with didymo and to see this encroaching pest in one of New Zealand's most valued waterways, the Buller River.

Joining our team was Dawn Tschujasehenko (Technical Support for didymo) Rob Hood (Programme Manager Biodiversity Assets, Ruapahu Area) and Nick Poutu (Technical Support Officer - Animal Pests). Our journey started early on Wednesday morning as we packed all 17 of us into two minivans destined for the mighty South Island. We clambered aboard the ferry from Wellington to Picton and as part of our adventure took the opportunity to talk to the other passengers about didymo. We asked if they had heard about this algae, and if so how much they knew about it and if they

did anything to ensure they didn't spread it. There was a mixed response, some visitors had heard nothing while others had known for a while and knew how to decontaminate their gear whether they were fishing, tramping or boating. An interview with the First Mate aboard the ferry Santa Regina also highlighted that he had a good knowledge of this topic. Upon arrival at Picton we discovered didymo signs at the local service station. It was great to see some signage though a little disheartening that the sign was about half the size of a sign advertising ice cream.

On the first night of our trip we stayed at the youth camp at St Arnaud on the shores of Lake Rotoiti where we met Neil Deans and Lawson Davey from Nelson - Marlborough Fish and Game. The next morning Neil and Lawson escorted us to the upper Buller River in the Nelson Lakes National Park. We were in search of the enemy - didymo. We didn't have to look far. Considering there had been a one in ten year flood event two weeks earlier, didymo was still very much present. We first saw didymo covering the river bed like a thick brown mat, even in the middle of the most turbulent flow. We all relished that chance to touch the algae. What I found astonishing was the thickness and texture of didymo. It was hard to pull away from the rocks and when rubbed between our fingers it was not slippery at all, remaining together like wet cotton wool. This tactile experience was helpful as there are native didymo look-alikes in the Taupo area and this characteristic will help distinguish between the two.

Because of the earlier flood the growth on the rocks was only 2cm long, but it was still very obvious. I can only imagine what it is like in its worst case scenario. When first established a single cell of didymo is microscopic. A number



PROTECT OUR WATERS
Help stop the spread of Didymo and other aquatic pests

CHECK Remove all obvious clumps from items that have been in the water.

CLEAN Soak and scrub all items for at least one minute with any of the following:

- hot (60°C) water
- 5% solution of household bleach
- 5% solution of salt
- 5% solution of no p dye cleaner
- 5% solution of a biological based cleaner
- 5% solution of dishwasher detergent

• 32°C solution at 200ml, a 5% solution is 500ml (two large cups), with water added to make 10 litres.

DRY If cleaning is not practical, dry items completely and then leave for at least 48 hours.

www.biosecurity.govt.nz



This waterway is infected with Didymo



Didymo up close and
personal.
Photo by: Kim
Alexander-Turina

of environmental factors influence the growth of didymo, many not fully understood yet, and it may take many months even years before a didymo bloom is obvious. Didymo attaches itself to the stream bed by stalks. The growing tip is brown but as the stalk lengthens the rest of the stalk which is dead material turns white. This creates long flowing streamers which break off and drift down the current, the appearance much like drifting toilet paper. Nice! It's a vicious circle because each tip is competing against others to get to the nutrients and light first and so they just keep growing and growing. This is why each stalk gets so long and such a huge biomass is produced.

Didymo was first confirmed in New Zealand in October 2004. The first visible blooms were identified in the lower Waiau catchment in Southland.

Then on Sunday the 28th of September 2005 Fish and Game Field Officer Lawson Davey stumbled across unusual looking algae on the upper Buller River. He reported this straight away and three days later the find was confirmed by Niwa as didymo. Fish and Game and other recreation users pushed for the Buller River to be closed for fishing as the 2005 fishing season was about to begin. This was unsuccessful so Fish and Game produced signs on all the popular angler access points just days before the river opened. Rafters and kayakers also did their part and set up wash stations on the sides of the river to decontaminate all their equipment.

On our trip we learnt that this find has had a huge impact on the surrounding communities, especially those based on recreation as the Buller River is very popular for fishing, rafting and kayak



Gleam Maclean cleans Julie Greaves boots after leaving the didymo infected Buller River
Photo by: Kim Alexander-Tarzia

ing. Lawson and Neil explained to us how amazed they were that didymo hadn't shown up on any of surrounding rivers. However just weeks later at the start of 2007, didymo was confirmed in the Takaka and Motueka Rivers in the Nelson region.

After a thorough wash down to decontaminate and rid ourselves of any didymo, Lawson and Neil took us further down to the lower reaches of the Buller where didymo was still growing strong. We shared ideas and information, discussed prevention and what strategies had worked or failed and what should be in place to stop the spread. It was great to hear their first hand experiences and hopefully we can benefit from the lessons learnt so far in the fight against didymo.

After fighting off the man eating sandflies and roasting under the Marlborough heat we were off again to our next destination, Havelock. Our last night was spent discussing the day and taking the chance to celebrate the festive season over dinner with a few drinks.

The next day was an early start back

to Picton and home again. We were delighted to see that Biosecurity New Zealand had staff dressed in bright vests walking around and approaching travellers waiting in their cars at the ferry terminal. Their aim was spread the check, clean and dry message, handing out information pamphlets and spray bottles.

So overall the trip was successful in many ways. It was extremely helpful for us to experience didymo up close as we can come back and describe to anglers and other recreational users about how it looks and feels. Having seen it for real certainly brings home the importance of doing everything we can to keep it out of the North Island.

It was also very beneficial to share ideas with Fish and Game staff about what was happening in their area. I nor only speak for myself but the whole team in saying that we came back with an even stronger commitment to promote the message to anglers and other freshwater users so that didymo does not reach the Taupo Region.

QUOTES

It was great to go to the South Island

and ACTUALLY SEE IT with my own eyes Once I had seen didymo it really bit home about how bad this stuff is! Even after watching TV news items, looking at leaflets, photos, videos ... there's nothing like the real thing.

You can't really appreciate the ugly side of things until you see it in real life. I came back from the South Island with a whole new view about didymo and determined not to let it get into the North Island, and especially the central North Island. I find myself more actively promoting the check, clean, dry message among all people I know that have anything at all to do with the waterways.

Jill Larsson-Wicks, Ranger Compliance and Enforcement

I experienced a range of feelings when I came into contact with the dreaded didymo. Firstly, I was surprised to feel the algae in between my fingers. I had never felt an alga that was so fibrous and difficult to break up. This would no doubt assist me in identifying didymo compared to other species. Secondly, it emphasised how badly this stuff is. The F & G boys had told us that they had had a 1 in 10 year flood only weeks before and yet it still blanketed the rocks completely! I am pleased I went on the trip as I now know what to expect if it

ever invaded our rivers though I would like to see it still bloom to really see how long this stuff really grows.

Cathrin Bourke, Ranger Field Operations

A very useful trip overall and beneficial to see, but particularly feel it. Does not feel as slimy as it appears - instead is more fibrous or pulpy especially once the water has been squeezed out. Is obviously very tenacious and even post flood events it is still present (as we witnessed). I have huge concerns about user (anglers, kayakers etc) complacency re cleaning equipment. Obviously would have major impacts on rivers and ecosystems if it gets into the North Island.

Rob Hood, Programme Manager, Biodiversity Assets (Ruapehu Office)

It was beneficial to see what didymo looks and feels like. It will help me identify it out in the field should it ever get here.

Mark Venema, Technical Support Officer

I just remember thinking what if my boots aren't clean, what if I was the one to bring didymo to the North Island and I just don't want to go near the stuff again.

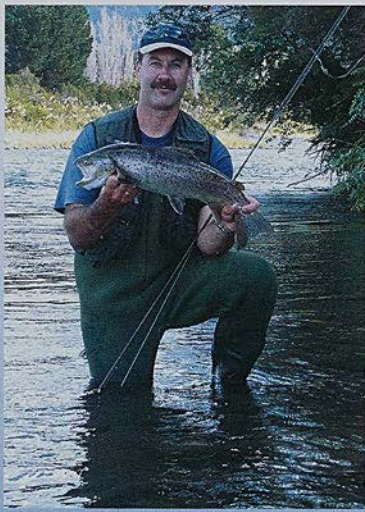
Glen Maclean, Programme Manager Technical Support

The Fishery Team visit the Buller River to view didymo for real.

Photo by: Bob & Gail



TAUPO TAILS



Steve O'Halloran from the Te Kaiti area, with a nice brown caught on the Tongariro River on a homemade rubber legged fly.



Ron removed these koura from a fish caught jiggling at Motutere over Christmas. There were nine koura in all and some were still alive. It's one of the mysteries of the Taupo Fishery why more trout don't actively feed on koura.

Photos by: Ron Hoadle

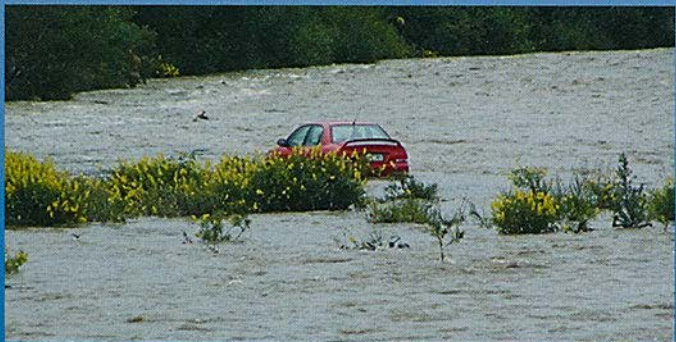
Caught by Rob McIay on his very big version of a Black Rabbit, called Oscar after his daughter's pet black rabbit. Caught in the Tongariro after dark, March 2007.

Photo by: Grant Unsworth



This flood in November 2006 peaked at 397 cumecs and landed this car in the Swirl pool.

Photo by: Tokaana Power Station Operator



If you would like to make contributions to Taupo Tails (letters, photos, anything of interest) please write to Kim Alexander-Turia, Taupo Fishery, Private Bag, Turangi or email Kim your contributions to kturia@doc.govt.nz.

Wairehu Canal Fish Salvage



The fish collect at the base of each drop structure.
Photo by: Mark Venman

By Callum Bourke

In February this year we undertook a fish salvage in the Wairehu canal which connects Lakes Otamangakau and Rotoaira. Under the minimum flow set for the Whanganui River, Genesis Power Ltd must maintain a flow at Piriaka between 1 December and 31 May of at least 29 cumecs or the natural flow, whichever is least. What this means is that often in late summer when the natural flows fall below 29 cumecs, Genesis must cease diverting water through the Western Diversion of the Tongariro Power Development. Normally water is diverted from the Whakapapa, Okupata, Tawhitikuri, Mangatepopo, Whanganui and Te Whaiiau streams into Lake Otamangakau and on through the Wairehu canal into Lake Rotoaira.

During these periods when the diversions are fully closed (and no water is entering Lake Otamangakau) there will be no water flowing out of Lake Otamangakau and down the Wairehu canal. This year Genesis utilized this opportunity to construct a play-hole for kayakers in the lower part of the canal,

which was also part of their consent requirements.

With the flow cut off the canal largely drains apart from some small pools at the base of each drop structure. Any fish in the canal tend to concentrate in these pools where they become stranded. If the flow is cut off for a long period the water quality in these pools slowly deteriorates until the fish die.

This year with the construction of the play-hole it was likely that the flow would be cut for several months so a team was despatched to salvage as many of the stranded fish as possible. The fish ranged from approximately 50mm to 300mm in size, and there were several hundred trapped in most of the pools.

By seining the pools at the base of the drop chutes, we were able to recover 747 fish which were released back into Lake Otamangakau. Hopefully some of these fish will develop into the 10 pound trophies that Lake "O" has become famous for. Thanks must go out to the salvage team for an awesome effort.

New Faces in the Fisheries Team

DAWN TSCHUJASEHENKO

Dawn Tschujasehenko, formally Kennedy (no one can understand why she didn't keep her maiden name) was born and raised in Victoria, Australia and made the big move to New Zealand with her husband, Terry, twelve months ago.

Dawn and Terry now live in Motuoapa and love the adventurous lifestyle that the Tongariro Taupo area has to offer: skiing, mountain biking, hiking, boating, fishing and swimming in the lake. Dawn is also a keen trail runner and aspires to complete one or two of the well known NZ Trail Running events.

Dawn has a community development - project management background, which has provided good grounding for her role with the Department of Conservation providing Technical Support as part of the Community Relations team. In this role Dawn has been responsible for coordinating the local didymo public awareness campaign and for the development of didymo management and incursion response plans at regional and conservancy level. She has also developed best practice cleaning protocol for DOC staff and contractors to ensure DOC fieldwork does not lead to the spread of didymo on the Central North Island.

Passionate about advocating the *STOP DIDYMO Check, Clean, Dry* message, Dawn is also looking forward to learning more about the Taupo Fishery and other NZ conservation initiatives.

Dawn Tschujasehenko

Photo by: Kim Alexander-Turk





Mark Eames
Photo by: Supplied

Mark has been contracted by DOC to advocate to and inform kayakers and rafters around the North Island about the risk of didymo and how to “check, clean and dry”. He also visits commercial kayak and rafting operators, retailers and manufacturers, distributing a kayaker’s information sheet and advocating best practice cleaning methods.

MARK EAMES

Mark Eames was raised on a sheep farm on the banks of the Rangitikei River and it was here that he learned to love rivers and all that they offer.

Mark developed a passion for running rivers in rafts and kayaks at a very early age and since then, has paddled professionally and recreationally all over the world, competing at an international level in freestyle (rodeo) kayaking.

“I believe New Zealand’s rivers are one of our biggest assets and I am passionate about keeping them pristine and in their natural state. The fight against the spread of didymo is a worthy battle, but will only be won with everyone’s support. I believe the river running community responds well to a personal approach.”



Dave Cade
Photo by: Kim Alexander-Turcia

DAVE CADE

If you have been out and about enjoying the Taupo Fishery this summer, you have no doubt come across Dave Cade, passionate Didymo Fishery Advocate, aka the ‘Blackberry Man’ (for his enthusiasm for picking blackberries and his generosity for giving them away).

Dave is no stranger to Taupo, having holidayed in the area all his life and eventually moving here with his wife and sons, aged 13 and 16, in 2000.

A keen fisherman, Dave enjoys harling in the early summer months, night fishing at the river mouths in the autumn and river fishing over the winter.

Dave plays the piano, is an avid reader and has completed the Round Lake Taupo Bike Ride, the Rotorua 2Timo Ride (twice), walked two half marathons and been a team member in the Round Lake Taupo Relay.



Julie Greaves

Photo by: Callum Bourke

NEW APPOINTMENT - JULIE GREAVES

The retirement of Enrol Cudby has left a gap in the Taupo Fishery team in managing Visitor Assets. A new position was created to fill this gap and I now fill the position as Ranger in Visitor Asset Management (VAMS) and Field Operations. This position is split 50% between VAMS, and Field Operations.

I have been employed with the Department for four years starting in the Turangi Taupo area in Biodiversity. This involved working in seasonal contracts for weed control.

I was drawn to the Fishery Area in 2005 as an angler surveyor for the harvest survey and haven't looked back since. It didn't take long until I became a full time ranger in field operations. The focus of my new position is taking key responsibility for supervising the maintenance of visitor assets e.g. angler access, structures and signs. I will also manage trout passage issues. With the field operations side of things it will be business as usual being involved in compliance and law enforcement, trap operations, monitoring and research projects. There will be a bit of training involved to become proficient in track and structure inspections but I am looking forward to learning these new skills and some new challenges.



Callum Bourke (right)

Photo by: Kim Alexander-Turta

NEW APPOINTMENT CALLUM BOURKE

Hi, I'm Callum Bourke and I am the new A2 Ranger, Field Operations for the Taupo fishery team. I started working for the fishery as a seasonal trap operator in 2003 before moving into a full-time Ranger position in 2005. My new role will involve overseeing some of our tasks and monitoring programmes out in the field and I am excited by the new challenges ahead. I am passionate about the Taupo fishery and a very keen angler with over 20 years experience fishing the district. I look forward to another big winter on the rivers and hope to meet you all soon. Hopefully this year I will catch that elusive 10 pounder!! *Yeab right!*

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