

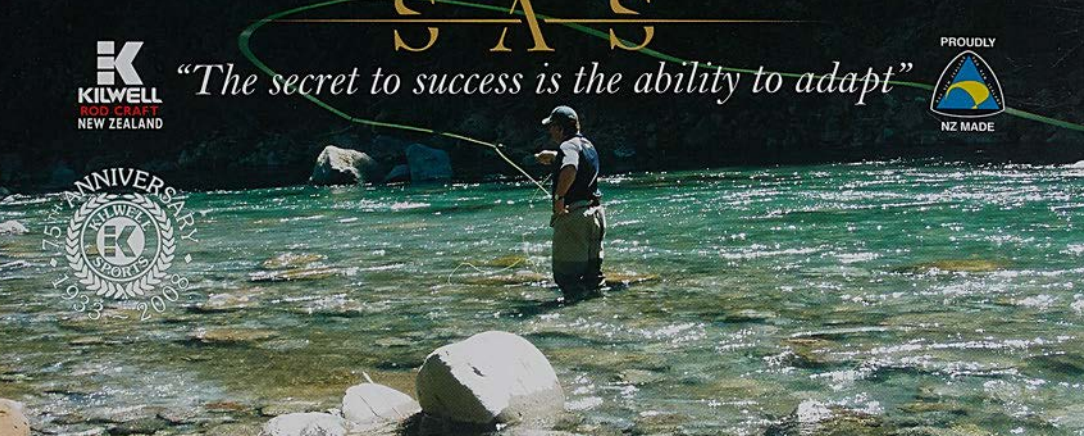
TARGET TAUPO

A newsletter for Taupo Anglers

APRIL 2008, ISSUE 57



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



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Garth Oakden - Field Testing Tonganiro River
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APRIL 2008. ISSUE 57

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Target Taupo

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Contents

- 3 Fishery Foreword
- 4 A Time of transition
- 9 In to the night
- 16 Minor amendments to fishery regulations
- 17 Preparing for winter
- 18 Understanding Taupo trout through genetics
- 20 A new era for Te Whaiau
- 23 DOC fishery summer fun
- 25 Poached trout - a timeless recipe
- 27 Postcodes
- 28 Controlling world champion fly fishermen
- 31 Three billy goats gruff
- 33 Real live didymo
- 36 The story behind "Ban-Bilt"
- 42 A new tomorrow
- 44 And still no didymo
- 46 Tongariro river flow changes
- 48 2020 Taupo-nui-a-tia
- 49 Tongariro willows dealt to
- 52 Smile - you're on camera
- 53 Fishing competitions - size does matter!
- 57 Children fishing days
- 58 Re-powering the Waipa hut
- 60 What's up?
- 62 Taupo Tails
- 64 A warning for anglers
- 65 Trout Centre Visitors
- 66 So you thought the lake was busy?
- 68 New fishery faces

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Fishery Foreward

By John Gibbs
Taupo Fishery Area Manager



Photo by:
Kim Alexander-Turia

WELCOME TO THIS ISSUE OF *TARGET TAUPO*. Well it's nice to know someone reads this message! After the last issue was published, in December 2007, I received a letter from legendary Taupo angler and fishing author John Parsons. John, quite rightly, took me to task for mis-spelling "Foreward" in the title as "Forward". He carefully explained, as only a professional writer could, the differences in meanings of the two words. Now all this may seem a bit pedantic, but John (a self-confessed pedant) made a valid point about professionalism which I totally endorse.

Several years ago I wrote a foreward for *Target Taupo* (but we called it an editorial then), titled "*telling it like it is*". The thrust of that story was that the Taupo Fishery Area team, as collectors and guardians of much of the information about the fishery, has a responsibility to present that information in the most open, honest and objective way it can. That requires careful and skilled analysis of technical and scientific data as well as other less-rigorous, but not necessarily less-important, information. Frequently the information is incomplete and it is important to be explicit about the limitations and qualifications of any analysis.

The Fishery team is a group of professionals who possess a wide range of scientific, technical and practical qualifications and skills. While each of us has a passion for the Taupo fishery, we must be careful to ensure that that commitment doesn't colour our understanding and presentation of information about it. This means that if the story is not good news, it must be shown that way. If the answer is uncertain, that must be qualified. If there are a range of possible explanations for a given situation, they should be identified.

Experience shows that at no point in the history of the fishery has it been in danger of "tipping over" due to a single factor. The reality has always been that fluctuations in fishery fortunes, both positive and negative, have been due to combinations of factors, rather than one single thing. While this makes identification of causes more difficult, it also cautions against silver bullet solutions. We are, after all, dealing with a natural population of fish in a natural habitat that is mediated by a huge range of natural and human-induced influences. Many of these interactions are subtle. No one will ever know all there is to know about the Taupo fishery and it is unrealistic to expect that there is an identified solution to every problem.

Which brings me to the topic of the moment. There is no doubt that the current size and condition of many trout is lower than the long-term average. The exact causes are not absolutely clear but the information that is available identifies the most likely. These are a shift in timing of spawning and therefore subsequent maturity, exacerbated by a decline in smelt availability and selective harvesting due to current angling practises and regulations. Articles in this and recent issues examine the background and current knowledge on this topic. There is also information on what we, as managers of the fishery, are doing to address the changes. I trust that you will read this carefully and assess it in the context of an on-going, responsive and professional management approach.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of a very special member of the Fishery team. Rob McLay is retiring in May after 35 years working in conservation. Most of that time has been in sports fisheries management and the majority of that has been with the Taupo fishery. Rob has been associated with this fishery since the construction days of the Tongariro Power Scheme in the 1970s. Highly regarded as an expert angler, he may be hanging up his DOC waders but I'm sure his fly rod won't be on the rack for a long time yet. We will miss his tremendous store of knowledge, practicality and ability to get directly to the crux of many issues.

A Time of Transition?

By Mark Venman
and Glenn Maclean
Mark is our Technical Support
Officer and part of the
research and monitoring team.
Glenn is our Programme
Manager, Technical Support,
and manages the research
and monitoring work done in
the area.

How good it was to finally get a decent Christmas/ New Year break and plenty of suitable days for boat anglers to get out. With anglers generally unable to blame the weather, the common feeling is that it was another average summer with lots of small and poor conditioned fish around. This article investigates what happened over summer and also predicts what sort

of winter's fishing we are in for.

The overall catch rate on Lake Taupo for the summer was estimated at 0.35 fish larger than 45cm per hour (1 fish every 2.9 hours). This is down slightly on the last two summers but still above the annual average of 0.3 fish per hour, and similar to the catch rate of recent years (figure 1). This catch rate is based only on fish that exceed the legal length, and so does not include the many undersized fish also caught by anglers during the summer months.

From our survey data that was collected over 47 surveys between November and March, a total of 240 fish were kept by anglers (34% of the total catch or one fish in three) and 147 legal sized fish were returned alive (20.8%) along with 319 undersized fish (45.2%). This very high proportion of undersized fish continues the trend of recent years. We need to be a little bit careful with this figure as often anglers have not measured their fish, rather looked at it in the water, decided it is marginal and chosen to release it quickly. That is great practice and don't change, but we do tend to underestimate the length of fish in this size range. Nevertheless there are once again a lot of fish around the current minimum legal length of 45cm.

As expected, the percentage of undersized fish was high in the months running up to Christmas but showed a slight decline between November and January as the fish grew. However, the percentage of undersized fish amongst the total recorded catch increased again during February before peaking during March. The likely explanation for this increase is the annual influx of juvenile fish from the surrounding rivers that enter the lake during late summer and autumn.

Of concern was the keeping of undersized fish this summer. During the 47



This page and overleaf:
Caleb Wyllie with some nice
conditioned fish he caught
this summer on Lake Taupo.
Photos by: Mark Wyllie

survey days, we encountered a total of 16 undersized fish that anglers had killed and kept. These undersized fish ranged from 410mm to 445mm in length. Keeping a fish close to 450mm we may, depending on the circumstances, accept as an accident but a fish that was only 410mm long? The reduced size limit we hope to have in place for the start of the new season will reduce the risk of taking undersized fish, but anglers must take more care. Please take the time to measure your fish properly (*Target Taupo* 56) and ensure that it is the correct length before knocking it on the head. Killing such small fish is a waste when in a few months this fish is likely to have grown another 10cm or more into a prime rainbow, and risks you may landing in deep water with one of our fishery rangers.

The 200 legal sized rainbows measured this summer averaged 487mm & 1.2kg which is the lowest they have been for some time. These fish also had an average condition factor of 37.8 which was down on recent years but similar to those trout kept during summer 2002/03. A condition factor less than 40 represents a poor fish and some certainly are, but many of the maiden trout (yet to mature) are much better than this. This reflects there are two groups of fish in the lake at present. Firstly there are the remnants of last years spawning population. These fish grew poorly last year and were tired even before they began their spawning migration. Compounding this is the lack of rain since before Christmas, which has delayed the return of many of these fish to the lake. Not surprisingly they are generally in a bad way and that they will probably die is not a bad thing at present, to take the pressure of the smelt population as it rebuilds.

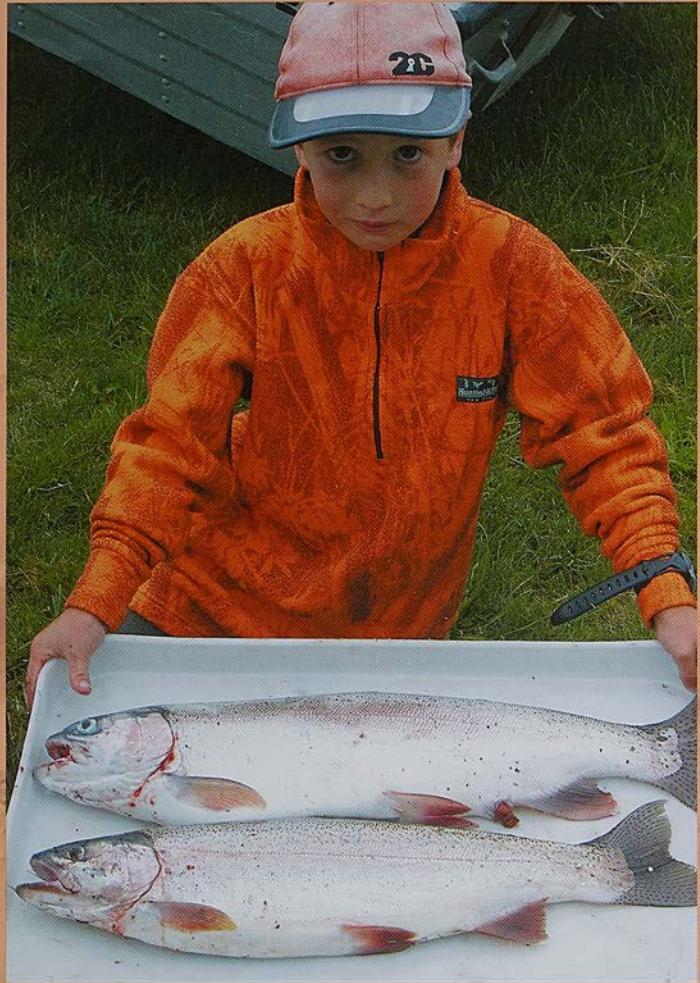
On the other hand many of the maiden trout we have seen on our surveys have been solid fish with the odd outstanding conditioned fish. The fact

that they are small is explained by the late spawning, but that they are in good condition suggests that conditions for growth have improved again. A twist at the moment is that due to the poor growth last year 15% of the spawning run through the Waipa trap last winter was less than 45cm in length, and as small as 375mm. This compares to less than 2% of the spawning population in a typical year. As a consequence when we see a small fish in the lake we naturally assume that they are maiden fish but this summer they may well be previous spawners. Typically Taupo trout don't grow after spawning and when they are in poor condition they are even less likely too, so if it was 375mm when it spawned then it still will be. The crux of this is that there are some small fish in poor condition, but if they are last years spawners then that is to be expected.

Secondly the conditions for good growth will not turn around overnight. The smelt population appears to have reached a low point last winter. Typically the control on the size of the smelt population is a lack of food and widespread starvation over winter. Even though conditions may have improved with the winter mixing of the lake the smelt population can only rebuild on the back of their spawning this spring and summer. So only now can we expect to see smelt numbers increasing and the condition of the trout hopefully reflecting this.

Thus although it may appear that things are still in relatively poor shape in terms of the size and quality of the trout, there is certainly an improvement over the same period last year.

However we are still faced with a large proportion of small young fish as a consequence of the later spawning. As discussed in recent issues of *Target Taupo* this is unlikely to change in the near future. As a result we are reducing the size limit from 45 to 40 cm, which all going to plan will be in place for



the new season starting 1 July 2008. As lake anglers are aware a significant part of their catch are often well conditioned fish of 43 or 44 centimetres in length which under the new limit they will be able to take. This will increase the harvest but protecting these fish achieves little, as most mature to run the river to spawn the following October or November when few anglers are fishing the river anyway. In fact increasing the harvest is likely to be desirable to reduce the pressure on the smelt population as

it recovers. As much as we think there are never enough fish, we may actually have too many trout given the current conditions

Furthermore at the moment, lake anglers are forced to only take fish 45cm in length and above which are likely to be the progeny of early running fish, as they have had longer to grow and are therefore larger. If we kept the limit at 45cm we are selectively removing these fish and removing the genetics of early running fish from the system. Who knows, by removing

SUMMER	AVERAGE SIZE & CONDITION SCORE
1997/98	4.0
1998/99	3.7
1999/00	3.7
2002/03	3.3
2003/04	3.4
2004/05	3.3
2006/07	2.9
2007/08	2.5

Table 1: Average scores for size & condition of fish caught during the summer months on Lake Taupo where data exists.

some of these later running smaller fish, we may be able to take the pressure off some of the larger earlier running fish and restore the balance towards an earlier run once again. Our latest genetics study will help determine whether there is actually a genetic difference between early and late running fish and whether it may be possible to manipulate the timing of the spawning runs.

Given all the talk about small and poorly conditioned fish it was not a surprise to see low satisfaction scores by anglers surveyed for the size and quality of the fish they were catching. Anglers rated the fish that they were catching on the lake this summer at 5 out of 10 (or 2.5 out of 5 on the old 5 point scale). The average score has been slowly declining over recent years and is significantly lower than the high scores given during the late 90's (Table 1) and below the 8 year average of 3.4.

In terms of how satisfied anglers were with their catch rate we would expect a value similar to the previous two years

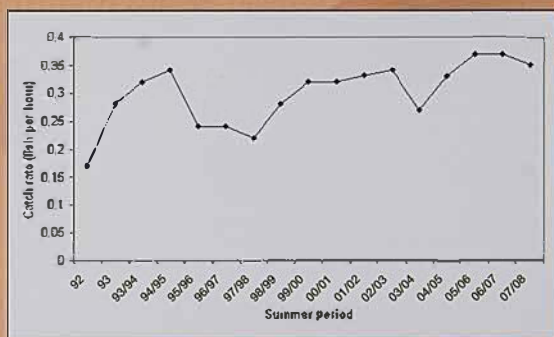
as the catch rate this summer was on par. Anglers rated their success at 5.3 out of 10 (2.7 on the old scale) which was lower than expected and below the 8 year average of 3.2. Strangely, the rating of angling success has gradually been declining since the late 90's despite a general increase in catch rates of legal fish during the same period. Perhaps the decline in size and condition is having a negative impact on anglers and adversely affecting the scores they provide?

Surely a low score for angling enjoyment would indicate that lake anglers are clearly unhappy at the moment. This summer, lake anglers rated their angling enjoyment at 8.9 out of 10 (4.5 out of 5) which was the same as last summer and similar to the annual average. Thus despite the fact that the fish are small or in poor condition, anglers are still enjoy their time out on the lake.

So what do we expect this winter on Taupo rivers? Well once again the main spawning runs on the Tongariro River are likely to occur late in the year from August to October or November. On the more northern tributaries the runs will follow a more typical pattern but given the lack of rain at present then we expect the real action is still several or more months away yet. Hopefully the young fish will continue to grow well in the lake so that the maiden fish in the run will be in generally better condition and larger than on average last season. However those previous spawners which survive from last winter to spawn a second time are really on the back foot and are unlikely to be great condition.

Time will tell but there is reason to be optimistic.

Figure 1: Catch rates of legal sized trout on Lake Taupo during the summer months since 1992



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Photo: Mike Davis



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Justin Hall of Auckland with a brand new Sage 590-4 TCR fly rod that he purchased the day after he took one out for a Test Cast with a Rio Grande #6 fly line. "This rod was just awesome and this is the first fish that I landed on it the first time I took it out. I also purchased a Sage 2560 fly reel to match the rod". – Justin Hall, customer, Sporting Life Turangi.

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Into the Night

By Dave Conley
Community Relations Officer
- Public Awareness
Tongariro-Taupo
Conservancy

One thing really stood out for me on the first visit I had to the River Walk at the Trout Centre. There was this chap whose photo appears repeatedly, beaming from behind a succession of VERY large trout. Next to each photo is the fish itself, mounted on the wall for posterity. These fish are very impressive, both Rainbow and Brown, and clearly the results of a fisherman who has learnt a thing or two about catching big fish. The man in question is John Milner, who I first came to know as my neighbour, as we would discuss fishing in much the same way as a boxing match, sparring across the fence about the virtues of fishing the wet-fly in the traditional style, versus the more modern technique of nymphing with indicator and heavily weighted nymphs.

These exchanges were usually one-sided affairs, as John extolled the virtue of the

sunken line with a passion uniquely his own, and I would beat a tactical retreat to consider the error of my ways. I am sure I read somewhere it was dumb to bring a knife to a gunfight....

The irony of the situation for me is that I have come to know John much better since leaving the neighbourhood, having regular contact with him in a working capacity through my involvement with the Trout Centre. John has been a pivotal figure in the development of the Trout Centre, and continues to make a tremendous contribution to the Trout Centre Society since stepping down as Society Chair in 2005.

Now, I have to be clear in my motivation at this point. Clearly, John knows a great deal about how to catch the denizens of the dark, as is evident in his results. I, on the other hand, have made only fleeting attempts at tackling the Tongariro after

dark, with mixed results to be fair! To say I was curious to learn what he may have to say on the topic would be something of an understatement. However, fishermen are famously reticent when it comes to divulging the secrets of their success, and I must admit to thinking John would be no different. After a good deal of time thinking about how I could formulate a plan to 'trick' him into giving me the good oil, the best I could come up with was, "why not just ask him?" Genius!

Armed with this cunning plan, I worked up the courage to 'pop the question', and John graciously obliged, and the following article was gleaned from a couple of very interesting chats I had with him at home. These chats were aided in no small way by a bottle of John's delicious home-grown Pinot Noir, named Paratiho after his homestead above Pukawa. My hope is this story, like the wine, does justice to a man with a deep and abiding passion for the fishery.

Obviously enough, we started at the start, and John described how George Ferris,

well known Canterbury fishing personality and author [*The Trout and I*] was his Scoutmaster in the early 1940's. George taught the Merivale Scout group to fly fish at the Selwyn River camping ground and this had an enormous impact on him as a youngster. The book was given to him by his then Scoutmaster, and so began a lifelong love for fishing the fly. Growing up as he did in Canterbury, and a dyed in the wool red and black man to this day, he first began to fish for browns in the Selwyn River. It was here that he first began to learn some of the nocturnal habits of the Brown, describing how during the day they would lie up in the network of canals which drained into the Selwyn. At dusk, they would mobilise seemingly en-masse, and venture into the river itself, where they became a more viable target for the fly.

For the next decade or two John was the scourge of Salmonids the length and breadth of Canterbury and Otago, with favourite haunts including the Hurunui outlet on Lake Sumner, and the Ahuriri,

Below: Proof that
John's advice works
Photo by:
Kim Alexander-Turita





Night patterns should be dark and bulky
Photo by: Dave Conley

Ohou, and Waitaki Rivers near Oamaru. It was the Waitaki that fuelled his enthusiasm for salmon fishing, and he concentrated his efforts largely on the salmon fishery. Brown trout did not completely slip from his radar, as sea-run browns were a frequent by-catch at the mouth of the Waitaki. Despite catching large numbers of salmon by day, they appeared to be virtually impossible to catch after dark. *"I never caught a single salmon at night, and Lord knows we tried hard enough. We caught a lot of sea-runs browns though, usually on a Yellow Dorothy!"*

His first visit to the Tongariro was immaculately timed to coincide with one of the great events in the history of the fishery. Whilst on a business trip in 1958 he arranged to visit an ex Oamaru friend now living in the North Island who had been extolling the wonders of the Tongariro fishery. John had decided on a day or two fishing the Tongariro. His

friend camped at the Downs Camp as it was then, which was the original camp at the Tongariro National Trout Centre, whilst John headed to Taylors Camp on Taupahi Road. After one and a half day of fishing, the 1958 flood occurred. John claims not to remember a great deal about the fishing before the flood arrived, other than suggesting the river reminded him of the Waitaki at Kurow, *"big water, good water"*, and it always inspired him to want to return. One abiding memory of the flood is of stranded Taupahi Road residents being rowed across the flooded road to the small settlement of Turangi by Rangi Downs, as the flooding was so severe there was no other way of getting about until the flood receded.

John came to the North Island in 1971 and was employed as CEO of LD Nathan's liquor division and had a great deal to do with the Rotorua International Hotel. Regular visits to Rotorua meant he devel-



John Milner (left) donating a 15-lb Brown Trout to Mike Nicholson, Educator for the Taupo for Tomorrow programme, caught with his favourite black rabbit.

Photo by:
Kim Alexander-Turia

oped an interest in fishing the Rotorua lakes, and Tarawera in particular. His interest in returning to fish the Tongariro was heightened by his contact with two people in particular. He had regular business contact with a keen flyfisherman from the United States called Bob O'Brien, who was an executive with the Jack Daniels Distillery. Bob had wanted to fish the Tongariro since he was a boy, and he and John made a plan to fish the river on Bob's next visit to New Zealand. Ray Legg, who is another fishing identity on the Tongariro, also happened to work at LD Nathan and provided John with an insight into what the river could offer.

When Bob and John finally made it down to fish the Tongariro, John says it took "just one trip and I forgot all about Tarawera". Bob was so impressed that he returned for 38 subsequent visits to fish the river with John, only missing his annual pilgrimage in the last couple of years as time inevitably caught up with him.

John describes the river in the early 70's as being "a big river with much more water than today. There was no way you could cross it, and we used boats to get around". Another key difference he sees is the relative strength of the fishing lobby as a political force. "The fishing lobby was much stronger then than it is now, and we need it to get strong again if we are to have a voice

around some of the challenges facing the fishery". By now he was fishing the river a lot, and had bought a caravan to stay in on his annual fishing trips. It was at this stage that he began to renew his interest in fishing for brownies at night, due in some part to another local identity, Jeff Sanderson. Jeff had a dingy on the lower river, which was where much of the best angling opportunities were in those days. Jeff would make John row the boat down to Dan's Creek, a by-pass on the lower river, and they would fish mouse patterns and large flies for the browns at night. Here John noticed the same behaviour he had seen as a boy on the Setwyn. The browns would hold up in the by-pass by day, before making their way into the main river at night to feed. A mouse (either live, dead or imitation) fished across the junction between Dan's creek and the main river was a sure fire way of catching them.

John's reminiscences about the lower river make a relative newcomer to the fishery like me somewhat sad to have missed seeing the river as it was then. He describes a lower river which ran some 10 feet below the level of the paddocks alongside it and had shingle beaches all the way to the lake. "Between 1971 and 1983-4 we fished below the Downs pool, nowhere else. The river was a series of big holes and runs which could hold more rods than they do now, and we caught an awful lot of fish. These were also the days of the 8 fish bag limit, so we used to can and bottle our catch to take home. Catch and release was not given any thought at all".

After moving to Turangi permanently in 1985, John started to turn his attention to the water closer to town. "Everyone fished bell out of the Hydro pool at night, so I thought I would go elsewhere." ssUsing his theory that Browns liked to hold in backwaters during the day, John found that a number of pools with backwaters attached to them were prime spots to target big fish at night.

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Photo: Mike Davis, Hunting & fishing New Zealand - Rotorua

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Sage Launch Combos		\$599.99
<small>(Includes Sage Reel, Rio Flyline and backing, Sage Rod/Reel Travel Case)</small>		
Sage Fli	4 piece	\$499.99
Sage VT2	4 piece	From \$649.99
Sage Z-Axis	2 piece	\$949.99
Sage TCR	4 piece	From \$1149.99
Sage ZXL	4 piece	\$1049.99



Big fish need feeding, this one had a 15cm fingerling inside it

Photo by:
Kim Alexander-Turia

Over the next few years Kamahi, Shag, Red Hut and Pouto pools all became regular haunts for John in his search for success at night. Each pool had a large backwater on them, and he thinks this is the real key to helping you decide where to find a good spot to try your luck. *"I owned Anglers Paradise over this time, and I used to print T-shirts to give to clients who caught a brown over 10 pounds. We printed 35 T-shirts in all and during our best year 15".*

Ultimately his tips for success on Browns are relatively simple. *"Essentially fishing the river hasn't changed much since I started. The key is to fish what you see. Go and do your research during the day before attempting to fish at night."* While this may seem self evident, what John stresses is the importance of looking at a pool with the intention of fishing it when it is dark and your sense of sight deserts you. *"You look for trips and traps in the wading, and you look at the skyline to give you an idea of where you need to cast at night".* It is also important to know how far to cast, rather than just the direction, and a simple system is to *"fish by numbers"* *When you are there in daylight count*

the number of pulls off the reel you need in order to reach the desired lie in the river. This way, when you fish at night you can be confident your fly is in the right place".

Another really crucial aspect of night fishing is timing. A familiar adage in all fishing is that dark moonless nights are best, and this certainly applies to fishing the river at night. No moon is best, but you can also have success before the moon rises if you are fishing on a moonlit night. John is adamant that the early part of the night is the best time too. Rather than fishing through to midnight, he would often be off the river by 10.30 pm, as in his experience the fishing is very slow after that.

When it comes to terminal tackle, John does not alter much from what is the tried and true Tongariro wet fly approach. A rod in 7-9 weight, with a sinking shooting head between 200 and 300 grain will suffice for most situations. As for flies, he definitely has one firm favourite, a small black rabbit tied in sizes 6-10. Tied with a short, compact body the fly will look much like a bully when wet. *"I have always believed it should be natural black too, not dyed.*

The natural seems to work better for me". Many night fishermen hold to the belief that flies for night fishing should have some bulk to them to help fish locate them. The theory is that a bulky fly is 'noisy' underwater as it wriggles in the current, in much the same way as a flag makes a flapping sound in a breeze.

Because you are fishing at night, your leader should be strong (10 lb breaking strain) and abrasion resistant.

You don't need to move far; rather you should concentrate on fishing your chosen water thoroughly and quietly, resting it for 10 minutes every 30 minutes. John achieves this by making 3 casts before taking a step downstream and repeating. The first cast is at 90 degrees to the current, and the fly is swung quite fast across the flow before being allowed to 'dangle' at the end of the swing. Most takes occur on the dangle with this cast, and can be a very soft 'sucking' take.

The second cast is made at a 60 degree angle and is allowed to swing more gently while being retrieved. This is John's favourite cast, as he has taken most fish with it, *"retrieving slowly as the fly swings/swims so you keep in touch with the fly. Large Browns can take incredibly gently and feel is the key. It almost becomes instinct with time, in that you sometimes sense a take almost before you have felt it".*

The last cast is designed to fish the shallow edge below where you are wading. It is made at a 25 degree angle, and the fly retrieved more quickly. Fish will often take this retrieve quite aggressively. As a general rule, John advises to *"strike at every bump, knock, anything you feel. Don't assume anything, as you will often be surprised that what you thought was a rock turns out to be a fish and remember your retrieve should pulsate like rabbit fur. At night all movements should be as quiet as possible and it is important your casting should be done as gently as possible".*

Having hooked your quarry, there are several key things John has to pass on in regards to landing them. In his experience the bigger fish will tend to go 'doggo' and lie on the bottom of a rapid or run, or after short upstream run they will make a determined bid to go downstream.

In both cases you should get out of the water and change angles on the fish. If they are doggo, try applying side strain in a number of directions without getting yourself upstream of the fish, and they will normally begin to swim upstream. *"The key then is to walk inland if you can, and the fish will just swim ashore. They can be quite silly like that! If you don't get them close before they decide to head downriver, that's when you lose them".* You get the distinct impression not many managed to get away though!

John doesn't fish the night much anymore, instead concentrating his efforts towards the daylight hours when the surety of his footfall is more assured. His enthusiasm for the topic seems endless though, and our conversation meandered for several hours, always returning to discussions about the fishery, and the changes John has seen over his many active years of fishing. We chatted about his theory that with softer/less water the browns will eventually dominate the Tongariro river, the perils of nymphing [he calls it float fishing!], and tips too numerous to mention.

This all leads me to reflect on what a great pastime fishing is, and the opportunities it provides to build indelible memories and lifelong relationships. Just having the privilege to share a few secrets, and hear a grumbled gent with a gravelled voice pass on just a portion of a lifetime of learning is truly rewarding for me.

It gets you to thinking he just may be right about how much things have changed, and yet we still have things pretty good all the same.

Minor Amendments to Fishery Regulations

By Glenn Maclean

Given that we were going through the process to amend the Taupo Fishery Regulations 2004 with regard to reducing the minimum legal length, this also provided the opportunity to include several minor amendments as well. For the most part these were about clarifying or refining the wording of particular regulations rather than any change in intent. However we have removed the cable length, line type and weight restriction on downriggers.

Definition of an artificial lure

It had been suggested that when jigging with 3 flies and a metal jig without a hook that the jig was in fact a lure under the definition and so the angler is technically breaking the regulations by using more than 3 flies or lures. Therefore the wording of the definition of an artificial lure is amended to include that it must have a hook.

Prohibited waters

This clarifies that the prohibition on fishing from the Taupo Wharf or Taupo boat jetties applies to Taupo Boat Harbour only and not other similar structures in the vicinity of Taupo township.

Restrictions on methods of fishing

This clarifies that berley or groundbait cannot be used to attract trout.

Note that this further reinforces that scented soft bait lures are illegal. Given the explosion in the popularity of soft bait fishing and rapid development of new techniques it can only be a matter of time before they are more widely used in freshwater. Currently we have no view on the appropriateness or not of scented baits and are taking an approach of watching to see what develops.

Restriction on lures

While the regulations have a definition for flyfishing with the intent that only flyfishing equipment can be used in flyfishing only waters, flyfishing waters were defined only by the need to use natural fly or artificial fly. The new wording requires that flyfishing equipment is used.

Restrictions on methods of fishing

When downriggers were legalised the regulations were written to limit the depth to which they could be used to fish to that consistent with what could be reached with existing methods at the time, including wirelines. The intent was to maintain the depths of the lake (greater than 35 metres) as a sanctuary for trout.

Recently, the results of a year long study using acoustic tags to record the depth at which Taupo trout swim found that they spend the vast proportion of their time within 20 metres of the surface. Therefore the trout population is vulnerable to all the angling methods and in reality there is no sanctuary in the depths. Furthermore jigging which has always been legal at Taupo has now gained a considerable following, and this method can reach deeper than 35 metres. This raised the question as to why downriggers should be limited in depth when other methods can go deeper and there is no biological reason not to allow this anyway. Therefore the restrictions on the length of cable, weighted lines and attached weight that can be used with a downrigger have been removed.

These changes have been endorsed by the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee and are currently in the process of being enacted. All going to plan they will be in place for the new fishing season on the 1st July 2008.

Downriggers are no longer limited to 40 metres of cable.
Photo by: Mark Venman





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 Line.

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The Real Deal.

Understanding Taupo trout through genetics

By Elizabeth Heeg
Elizabeth Heeg is a PhD student working under Dr Peter Ritchie at Victoria University

TROUT in the streams and rivers around Lake Taupo are easy to observe. After only watching for a few minutes you can start to understand how they move and how they interact with the current, maybe even how they feed. Spending long days fishing or snorkelling will tell you even more about how trout live their day-to-day lives.

all, it only takes a small piece of fin tissue to provide enough DNA for multiple studies. That means that we can catch and release trout from throughout the lake and catchment and take samples from individuals of all shapes and sizes without disturbing them too greatly. That also means we can look at hundreds of trout over the course of the study, which makes the results more powerful.

After extracting DNA, we will look at specific markers, which are particular regions of the DNA, to determine how trout throughout the Lake Taupo catchment are related to each other. We're currently hoping to include Lakes Otamangakau and Rotoaira in our analysis as well. Once we know the relatedness of trout we can start to investigate how those groups have formed, and potentially compare them to the trout populations in North America they were originally taken from more than 100 years ago.

Even if the lakes here were exactly like the rivers back in California that the trout came from, we're likely to see distinct differences between the New Zealand trout and California trout. If nothing else (that is without mutation or migration... or men with trucks and ships moving fish around), we'd expect to see genetic drift between separated populations. That's just different genetic sequence combinations becoming more prevalent in different populations due to mere chance.

There are also behavioural differences that can lead to genetic changes in fish that are all living within the same catchment or lake. Perhaps certain families of trout prefer to spawn in spring-fed streams to streams fed by run-off, or perhaps some trout prefer warmer tributaries. By comparing samples collected over many years we can also investigate how these dynamics change over



Elizabeth begins her analysis of the genetic makeup of Taupo trout
Photo by: Monica Gruber

However some aspects of a trout's life are more difficult to discern with the naked eye. How are those groups of trout swimming down river related? When it comes time to spawn, who do they choose for their mates? There are also many questions about their physiology that simple observation can't answer, especially the current burning questions about why the fish seem to be getting smaller and spawning later in the year.

I hope to find answers to some of these questions over the next three years using genetic tools as I complete my PhD research at Victoria University of Wellington in collaboration with DOC in Turangi.

There are many advantages to using genetics to study trout ecology. First of

time, and whether the same populations have been around the lake for long or if populations are rapidly changing. If it looks like certain populations have been established for many years, or that the populations are genetically very different, managers might decide not to mix those populations or move them since they could be locally specialized.

Luckily rainbow trout genetics have already been studied for years, so we know the locations of many genetic markers and how they look in other trout populations. We also know that there are specific genes that effect spawning time. We plan to look particularly at one of these genes, named clock, a gene originally isolated in fruit flies. The clock gene affects timing behaviours in everything from flies to trout to humans! If we find differences in the DNA sequence between fish who spawn at different times it will help us to figure out if current fishing practices, including the size limit, are selecting some fish and actually leaving fish which spawn later. Identifying any changes will help us to

understand how all trout, not just Taupo trout, might change over time and respond to environmental shifts, including angling and perhaps global warming. All rainbow trout are originally from North America, but have been introduced to every continent on Earth except Antarctica! This tough fish has successfully adapted to new environments all over the world including New Zealand. Part of that success is due to the trout's ability to respond and change rapidly (rapidly for a fish anyway) to new conditions, which might be why anglers are seeing changes in spawning time and size of trout over only the last few years. By analyzing their genetic differences in the context of changes in the environment we hope to understand how management can help keep the trout going in a way that's good for their survival, good for Lake Taupo, and good for angling.

As this project develops I will keep you up to date in future issues of *Target Taupo* with what I'm sure will be some exciting discoveries about the makeup of Taupo trout.



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A New Era for Te Whaiiau Trap

By Callum Bourke
Callum is a ranger in our field operations work

Top: Fishery rangers Nathan Walker, Harry Hamilton and Mike Hill reseat the R9's after 14 seasons
Photos by: Callum Bourke

This season is the start of a new era for the Te Whaiiau fish trap situated at Lake Otamangakau. After 14 winters of housing many a keen trap operator, our 1974 Classic caravan is finally moving on making way for a new custom made transportable cabin.

The old caravan has given us plenty of loyal service over the years and has handled everything the elements could throw at it, whether it was hurricane

force winds, snow storms, heavy frosts, freezing temperatures and even the odd eruption or two! I suspect there won't be too many trap operators that will be disappointed to see the caravan go. During a heavy frost our water then gas would freeze, and without a decent sleeping bag, so too would the trap operator! It wasn't unknown to wake to find ice on the inside of the windows and the like. So our new accommodation had to meet

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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 L.A reel, Cortland 555 Line.

Cortland 444 SL Precision® Tapers are an exciting new line of species specific fly lines designed to turn over flies perfectly, accurately, every time. Important new features of the Precision Tapers include (on some models) the availability of half weight line sizes, two tone for easy pickup identification and an exciting new taper design called the rocket2. Driven by the tremendous diversity of fly rod actions, fly anglers will now be able to more precisely match their fly line weight to their rod's action. A color change has also been included, indicating the maximum load point for easy pickup. Finally, Cortland, the innovator of the original Rocket taper, now introduces the Rocket2 taper design - more weight up front for directional stability, with a long front taper for delicate, precise presentations backed up by an extra long back taper for maximum aerialization.



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

The Real Deal

3 key requirements. It had to be warm, dry and comfortable, basically the 3 things our old caravan was not. When we looked at the options that were available in our price range, a transportable cabin seemed to fit these requirements best. After much discussion we settled on a cabin designed and built by Quality Caravans in Mount Maunganui. It will be 4.850m long by 2.450m wide and is on wheels thus towable. The external walls are made of powder coated sheets of long run steel and insulated with styro foam, the same materials used on similar huts in Antarctica.

The cabin will be dual wired with 240 Volt and 12 Volt capacities. This will allow us to run our lights, VHF base set radio, battery chargers and laptop off the 12V system which will be powered by two 6V deep cycle batteries connected in series and sustained by two 130 Watt solar panels. The 240 Volt system will be powered by a generator and used to provide back up to the 12 volt system should we need it but also to run our spotlight during floods. The aim is to keep generator use to a minimum as not only is it noisy but uses fossil fuels and is expensive to run due to the ever increasing costs of fuel. We want our cabin to be as energy efficient and carbon neutral as possible so using solar energy which is a renewable resource is definitely preferable.

Our cooking and heating will be run off 9 kg LPG gas bottles that will be located in an insulated box on the front of the cabin. Hopefully this will prevent our gas freezing during the regular frosts that Te Whaiau trap is famous for. Our water will continue to be sourced from the heavens and our beer will be chilled by the outside air and the Te Whaiau stream.

Not only is our accommodation upgraded this season but the trap structure has had some much needed maintenance as well. After 14 seasons of scouring by floods, one of bed logs was beginning to sink

on the true left side of the trap. These bed logs are one of the most important components of the trap as everything is built on top of these thick slabs of blue gum, and they need to be level and firmly locked in place to withstand the pressure placed on them by regular flood events.

After removing the old bed log we attached a wire mesh foot on the underside of the log then fitted it back into place with trusty old waratahs and number 8 wire. Some things never change. A trench was dug on the downstream side of the bed log to allow the foot to be buried and pinned down with several large rocks. When a flood occurs the debris blocks the upstream barrier of the trap creating a waterfall. This waterfall then drops into the pens and attempts to scour underneath the bed log. With the foot in place this holds the large rocks firmly in place and prevents any holes from developing.

As part of minimizing any damage during a flood before the trap is overtopped by rising flood waters the operator removes two out of every three bars along the downstream barrier. This helps release and spread the excess water instead of allowing it to churn up the inside of the fish pens. Once the bed log was in place the bottom RSJs (steel beams that hold our trap bars in place) were reinstated having previously being removed from the water for the first time in 14 years also and re galvanised.

It is a testament to the team who designed and built the original Te Whaiau trap as after 14 years the trap still functions very effectively and the site remains relatively unchanged even after some huge floods. With the new cabin being built and the trap restored to its original glory, Te Whaiau will be ready for another 14 years of fish trapping.



DOC Fishery Summer Fun

By Kim Alexander-Turia &
Mike Nicholson
Kim is our Programme
Manager, Community
Relations
Mike is our Educator for
Taupo for Tomorrow

The Tongariro-Taupo Conservancy Summer Programme has been running for 46 years. The summer programme is a chance for Department of Conservation staff and Tongariro Natural History Society volunteers to teach the public about their work and to

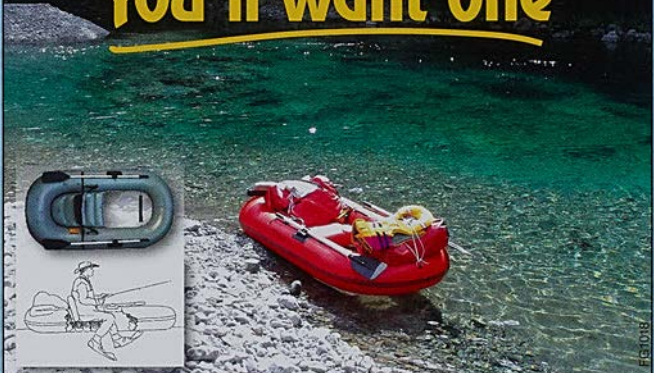
share their love of conservation. This year the Fishery team took part in a couple of initiatives.

Kids, Trout, Habitat
Rain, Rain, Rain! It certainly says something about the enjoyment to be had at the Tongariro National Trout Centre

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Top: John Gibbs gives
advice on echo sounders
while an eager angler from
Taupo takes notes

Photos by:
Kim Alexander-Turia



The kids still had fun in the rain
Photos: Supplied

when young people are beaming with happiness after working and learning in a downpour for the majority of the day.

January the 8th saw the first of our summer programmes kick off with a small but very enthusiastic group of children. Considering the spring and summer we have enjoyed this year, January 8th was one out of the box. It started to rain early and did not let up for the remainder of the day.

The day began with a tour of the centre and hatchery buildings with the children keen to find out just how ova (eggs) eventually become big beautiful rainbow trout. Despite the amount of water present, a key theme for the day was water quality and the children certainly appeared to enjoy the opportunity to get 'hands on' in the Waihukabuka Stream finding a variety of invertebrate life and testing the water for temperature and clarity. The role of the DOC fishery team was also explained to the children in a visual presentation which prompted them to use a variety of problem solving techniques.

All in all it was a fantastic day. The images

taken on the day seem to speak for themselves. Soaking wet, but certainly not beaten!

Lake Taupo Boat Fishing Seminar

These were held on a couple of glorious days in complete contrast with the Kids Trout Habitat weather. The Fishery ran two seminars this year at the Kinloch marina & the Tokaanu Wharf both were well attended with 130 people taking part. Every year it seems to get bigger.

It was a great opportunity for those new comers or visitors to the area to learn a bit more about shallow trolling, harling, downriggers and jigging from the experts. Also covered was lures and equipment to use, how to rig and fish each method as well as related information like how to make the best use of your echosounder, so as to improve your odds of success.

Keep an eye out this Christmas for the December 2008 issue of *Target Taupo* where the dates and venues will be advertised. Each seminar runs for a couple of hours and is free.

Poached Trout - A Timeless Recipe

by Jill Welsh
Jill is a ranger in our field operations programme and is responsible for compliance and law enforcement

I thought it might be interesting to go back fifty years and have a look at what sort of things fishery people (the 'goodies', and the 'baddies') were getting up to back then and how things have changed with time. So I headed over to the archives building and rifled through dusty old boxes to see what I could dig up.

I picked up a box, blew the dust off the top and gave it a few bangs on the floor to make sure any little residents had vacated. I began sifting through the files, and one in particular caught my eye. It was the name that got my attention - it was a familiar name, one that I have seen pop up more than a couple of times in the last two years. I made my way through mountains of ancient reports, often hand written and found some that dared back to 1958. I'll bet there are still more than just a few hardy anglers who remember what fishing was like back then.

When you talk to those who have been around for many years, things were a lot different then. Back in the 1950s when the Wildlife Service ran the fishery, they were but a few, really dedicated Kiwi blokes, and you can only imagine how harsh things were for them back then. Life was much simpler though. These were the days when real rangers did real ranging and men were sent far and wide to protect a relatively young fishery. The Wildlife Service employed strong, hard men - men with a passion for the outdoors in their souls who could cope with anything the outdoors threw at them. When they went out

ranging they meant business and if that meant they had to set up camp for days on end to achieve their goals, then that's what they did. One thing you will notice in this article that when talking about past rangers I always refer to men for it wasn't seen as a vocation for women back then.

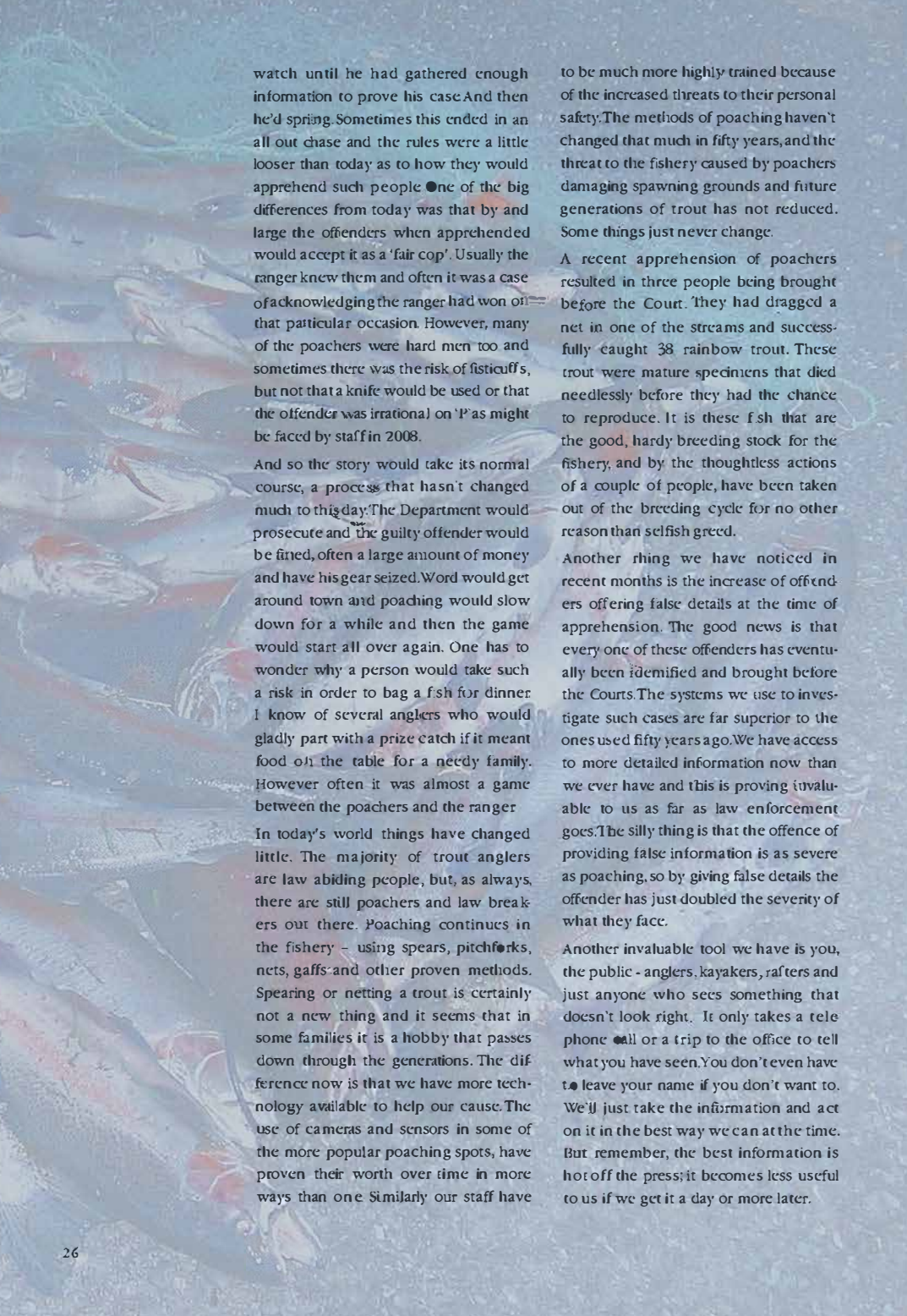
The Rangers had all the cunning and stealth that you read about in 'Special Forces' novels. Their work often took precedence over their home life and they camped rough in all sorts of weather for days at a time. They spent much of their time in general ranging on the lakes and rivers but more than a few hours waiting, just waiting for poachers to turn up.

The Taupo Fishing District came under the Rotorua Conservancy for the Wildlife Service, and all ranging and reporting was lead by the Conservator of Wildlife. Rangers were deployed on a regular basis to patrol and police the fisheries, sent out for a week or so at a time in an old Bedford truck or a trusty Landrover. For the really tough terrain they traveled on horseback.

They didn't have a lot on their side in the way of tools to protect themselves, no radios or telephones for communication so once they were out there they were pretty much on their own. They also lacked a lot of the back country equipment that we have available today, but what they did have though was a good old hardy swandri and bundles of knowledge of the terrain, the water ways, the likely methods of operation, and most of the time, the offenders they were dealing with.

So the rangers would go off into the scrub and set up camp in some strategic place and wait, and watch ... until some unsuspecting poacher happened along. Once the ranger had the poacher in his sights he would quietly sit and





watch until he had gathered enough information to prove his case. And then he'd spring. Sometimes this ended in an all out chase and the rules were a little looser than today as to how they would apprehend such people. One of the big differences from today was that by and large the offenders when apprehended would accept it as a 'fair cop'. Usually the ranger knew them and often it was a case of acknowledging the ranger had won on that particular occasion. However, many of the poachers were hard men too and sometimes there was the risk of fisticuffs, but not that a knife would be used or that the offender was irrational on 'P' as might be faced by staff in 2008.

And so the story would take its normal course, a process that hasn't changed much to this day. The Department would prosecute and the guilty offender would be fined, often a large amount of money and have his gear seized. Word would get around town and poaching would slow down for a while and then the game would start all over again. One has to wonder why a person would take such a risk in order to bag a fish for dinner. I know of several anglers who would gladly part with a prize catch if it meant food on the table for a needy family. However often it was almost a game between the poachers and the ranger.

In today's world things have changed little. The majority of trout anglers are law abiding people, but, as always, there are still poachers and law breakers out there. Poaching continues in the fishery - using spears, pitchforks, nets, gaffs and other proven methods. Spearing or netting a trout is certainly not a new thing and it seems that in some families it is a hobby that passes down through the generations. The difference now is that we have more technology available to help our cause. The use of cameras and sensors in some of the more popular poaching spots, have proven their worth over time in more ways than one. Similarly our staff have

to be much more highly trained because of the increased threats to their personal safety. The methods of poaching haven't changed that much in fifty years, and the threat to the fishery caused by poachers damaging spawning grounds and future generations of trout has not reduced. Some things just never change.

A recent apprehension of poachers resulted in three people being brought before the Court. They had dragged a net in one of the streams and successfully caught 38 rainbow trout. These trout were mature specimens that died needlessly before they had the chance to reproduce. It is these fish that are the good, hardy breeding stock for the fishery, and by the thoughtless actions of a couple of people, have been taken out of the breeding cycle for no other reason than selfish greed.

Another thing we have noticed in recent months is the increase of offenders offering false details at the time of apprehension. The good news is that every one of these offenders has eventually been identified and brought before the Courts. The systems we use to investigate such cases are far superior to the ones used fifty years ago. We have access to more detailed information now than we ever have and this is proving invaluable to us as far as law enforcement goes. The silly thing is that the offence of providing false information is as severe as poaching, so by giving false details the offender has just doubled the severity of what they face.

Another invaluable tool we have is you, the public - anglers, kayakers, rafters and just anyone who sees something that doesn't look right. It only takes a telephone call or a trip to the office to tell what you have seen. You don't even have to leave your name if you don't want to. We'll just take the information and act on it in the best way we can at the time. But remember, the best information is hot off the press; it becomes less useful to us if we get it a day or more later.

And so it seems that poached trout is a timeless recipe - for trouble, that is. With your help we can try to limit it. I don't think we will ever be able to stop it completely because there are always people who will try and help themselves, but if we work together we can substantially reduce the impact it has on our fishery and see those responsible pay the price for their wrongs.

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Post Codes and Rural Delivery Registration

By Storm Bestor
Ranger, Services

Over the years, we've had a lot of great feedback about *Target Taupo*. We've also had a lot of gripes from anglers when they don't receive their copy. At least this highlights that the magazine is appreciated by many of you. Sometimes it is our fault but often anglers have made it very hard for us, so I am going to explain why they are often not received.

Every year we create a database of over 10,000 names and addresses from the duplicates of your Adult Whole Season licence. This database is completed at the end of the season when the last of the season licences for the current season are sold, and used to mail out 3 issues of *Target Taupo* over the following year. So the details you gave when you bought this season's licence (2007/08) will be used to send you 3 issues over 2008/09. However too often the handwriting is illegible, and as much as we try and double check with the White Pages on the internet and the New Zealand Post website, we are just unable to make out the address. Others tend to write only half of their address, finishing off with the suburb, but not the town or city.

It is also essential to give us your full home postal address rather than your holiday home address. If you are in Rural Delivery,

as many holiday homes in this area are, then please remember you have to be registered for Rural Delivery with New Zealand Post to receive mail. The majority of the last issue that was returned to us were Rural Delivery addresses that were not registered and therefore not delivered.

It is also now a requirement from New Zealand Post that we have Post Codes so please make sure you have your postcode handy when buying your licence.

We get a lot of enquiries from families where the family holds a number of Whole Season licences between them but only require one copy of *Target Taupo*. However other families like to get all their copies so as they can take a copy to their bach, or send overseas to a family member or give to a friend. It's obviously tough for us to know which family wants one copy and which family wants a copy each. Therefore we take the approach of sending everyone on the new database a copy of the first issue for the season. After this if you only require one copy per household please pop us an email on fishinfo@doc.govt.nz to let us know and we can delete you off the database.

Happy reading and remember if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

Controlling World Champion Fly Fishermen

By Randa Hart
Randa was a controller in the
recent FIPS-Mouche world
flying fishing championship
and is a volunteer for the
Tongariro National Trust
Center Society

During the last week of March this year, I was one of the Lake Rotoaira controllers for the 28th FIPS-Mouche World Fly Fishing 2008 Championships in New Zealand. FIPS-Mouche is The International Sport Fly Fishing Federation founded in 1989 in San Marino and is part of the International Confederation of Sport Fly Fishing. The objective of FIPS-Mouche is *"To encourage the practice of Sport Fly Fishing throughout the world with the aim, within the Olympic ideal, to foster friendship and understanding among all people, and peace in the world, through sport"*.

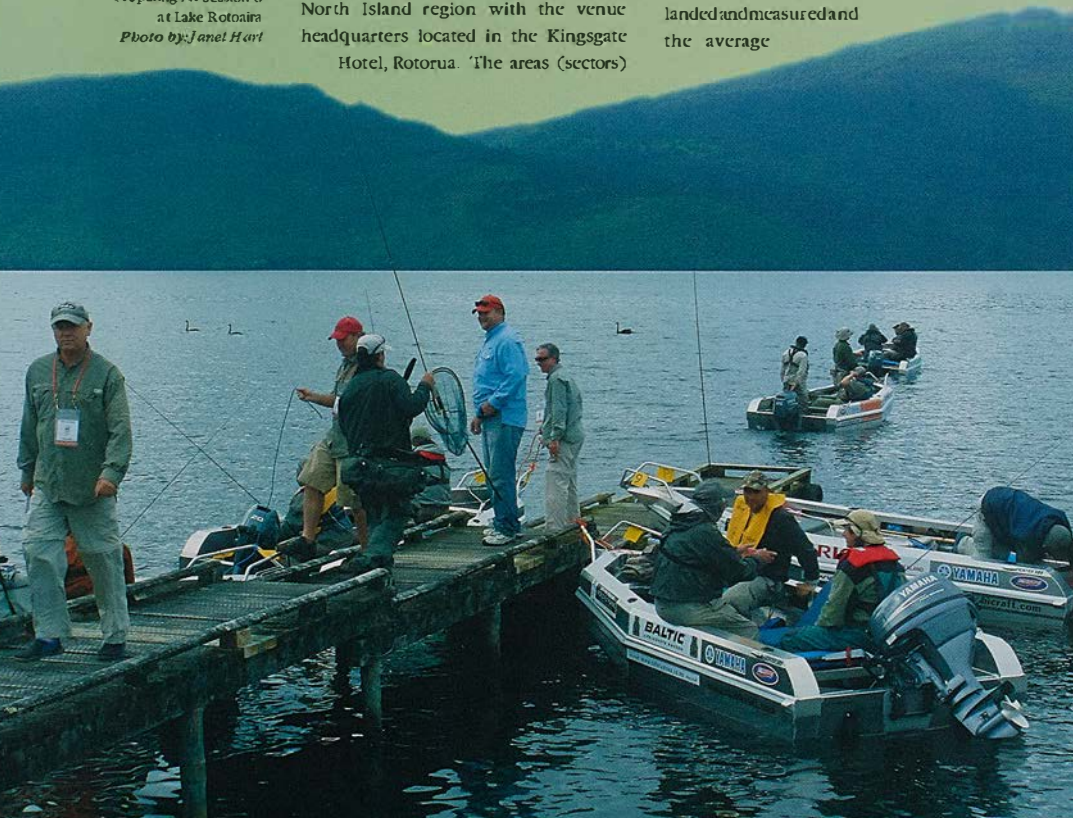
Every year the World Fly Fishing Championship is held in a member country and this year it was hosted in New Zealand by Sport Fly Fishing NZ (Inc). The Championship was held in the central North Island region with the venue headquarters located in the Kingsgate Hotel, Rotorua. The areas (sectors)

fished during the championship were the Waitohu, Waimakariri and Whanganui rivers and Lakes Ōtamangakau and Rotoaira.

There were 99 fishermen involved from 23 countries and each fisherman fished each sector for three hours. The controller's role was to ensure the competition rules were not broken, to measure, record and release the fish caught and helm the boat on the lakes. There were 10 boats on each lake during the championship and each boat had a controller and 2 fishermen per session.

The minimum qualifying length for fish during the Championship was 18 cm. One hundred points were awarded for each fish landed plus additional points added for the length of the fish. During the championship 4,270 trout were landed and measured and the average

Preparing for session 6
at Lake Rotoaira
Photo by: Janet Hart





Randal Hart, Controller,
Martin Droz 2008 FIPS-
Mouche Fly Fishing
Champion, Marek Walczyk,
2007 FIPS Mouche Fly Fishing
Champion.
Photos by: Janet Hart

length was 25.5 cm. One fisherman landed 98 fish. There were 272 fish landed and measured on Lake Otamangakau and 201 on Lake Rotoaira. The largest fish of the championship was 68.9 cm from Lake Otamangakau and the largest from Lake Rotoaira was 60.4 cm.

There were many fish lost before they were netted on Lake Rotoaira as their strength and agility was a real eye opener for a lot of the fishermen. When I explained they were wild fish, a lot commented they were the meanest, strongest fish they had experienced for a long, long time. I quickly learnt all fishermen mutter something when a good fish is lost. I now know what to say in five different languages when that happens.

I had the privilege to control the FIPS-Mouche 2007 World Champion, the new FIPS-Mouche 2008 World Champion and the 2008 South African Champion who were assigned to my boat on Lake Rotoaira. My boat also caught the largest fish on Lake Rotoaira. I certainly learnt a lot about lake fishing including how to find fish without electronic gear such as fish finders, how to make rapid fly line changes and why champion fishermen catch so many fish. They stay totally focused all the time and have absolute control of where and what their lures are doing. If a fly line / lure combination did not work after a short while they changed and they did not thrash the same piece of water for hours on end.

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Some of the fishermen didn't realize how deep Lake Rotoaira was until to late in their session. Guess where the fish were.

A mini competition developed between the controllers to get their boats positioned safely onto spot X first. Spot X was always chosen by the fishermen per the rules and no input was allowed from the controllers. The area between the island and the power station outlet became the favored spot X on the lake during the Championship

The Championship Team results were;

1st Czech Republic: 383 fish measured. Longest fish 54.0 cm, **2nd New Zealand:** 325 fish measured. Longest fish 62.7 cm, **3rd France:** 316 fish measured. Longest fish 58.5 cm.

The Championship Individual results were; **1st Martin Droz, Czech Republic:** 78 fish measured. Longest fish 54.0 cm, **2nd Juilien Dagutillanes, France:** 73 fish measured. Longest fish 58.5 cm, **3rd Tomas Starychojtu, Czech Republic:** 98 fish measured. Longest fish 51.5 cm.

Full team and individual results for the

championship and the sectors fished can be seen on website:

www.2008worldflyfishingchamps.com

The Taupo Fishery staff also played an active role on the lake sectors ensuring the anglers' gear was cleaned before it was used on each lake. This cleaning practice was readily accepted by the fishermen as they fully understood the importance of keeping a world class fishery free of unwanted plant or aquatic life.

I really enjoyed my time as a controller and have many fond memories of the experience. I didn't have to tell any tall fishy tales about how good the Taupo fish were as Lake Rotoaira said it all for me. They were still talking about the fishy Lake Rotoaira fish during dinner at the end of the championship. The general consensus was we are very lucky in New Zealand as the trout fishing is awesome, the rivers and lakes are so clear, the scenery is great and the people are very friendly. Let's be proud of that and keep it that way.

So remember to CHECK, CLEAN, DRY and enjoy tight lines.

Total Concentration
013 Lake Rotoaira
Photo by: John Murphy





Three Billy Goats Gruff

By Julie Greaves

The Red Hut bridge is a major link across the Tongariro River. It has been serving many anglers and walkers for some 40 years. Recently it was necessary to undertake some major repairs to maintain the bridge to DOC's safety standards.

Work to the Red Hut bridge included repairing two transoms, replacing all the hanger rods, building a new ramp and coating the cables with Noxyde surface coat. The repairs were part of a tender contract won by Hodgkinson Contractors 2006 Ltd who started work on the bridge in December. One of the specialities needed to work on these bridges was to be able to work at heights. Maurice, Steve and Rudi from Hodgkinson Contractors specialise in this particular sort of work.

Work commences underneath the bridge
Photo by: Julie Greaves

While replacing two of the hanger rods the contactors noticed that the bolts were starting to rust due to the tanalised timber used on the bridge. So while we had a qualified contractor in the area we got them to replace all the bolts as well.

A lot of this work meant that they had to access the bridge from underneath.

So under the bridge they hung on purpose built scaffolding, typical of a bit of kiwi ingenuity and because of the height, they were harnessed in. I think Steve drew the short straw, a brave job for someone with a strong stomach needed especially with a bit of sway and movement whenever someone trampled over the top.

It reminded me of the story of The Three



Billy Goats Gruff although Steve was much better looking than the troll in the fairytale. They would joke to passer bys and said they weren't allowed to cross unless they knew the password. I think they gave up when a group of about 80 children started marching across on a school tramping trip. Instead they ceased work for half an hour while the parents made sure only 10 pupils at a time crossed at once, as stated on the bridge loading signs.

Hodgkinson Contractors did a very professional job making sure the bridge was not out of action at any stage.

The Red Hut bridge continues to stand proud serving anglers and walkers - mind the trolls underneath.

Steve shows he has no fear of heights!

Photo by: Julie Greaves

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Real live didymo

By Dave Cade

For the past year 'Didymo Dave' has been involved in the education of many, many people in an attempt to lessen the risk of didymo being introduced to the Taupo area. Those of you who have visited the area are likely to have met Dave and experienced his passionate and sometimes unorthodox but highly effective advocacy on this issue. In recognition of his efforts we sent him to Queenstown to see the menace for real.

DIDYMO; The word sends shivers through the soul of any angler or fresh water user who understands the implications of it being introduced to their favorite waterway. But what is it like? Well in January this year I traveled to Queenstown to join up with Biosecurity NZ staff on a field trip to view didymo first hand in Central Otago, and to look at an aspect of didymo's most ominous threat, its ability to adapt to new environments.

Our host for the trip was Jeff Donaldson, a congenial character with a passion for the environment who has been involved with the didymo campaign nationwide since it was first discovered in 2004. He was for those of us who still live in didymo-free areas, a great source of practical hands-on information. Information which I attempted to fully harvest in the short time I was there.

There is a lot of misunderstanding locally

about whether didymo would grow in Lake Taupo, some people believing that it won't grow in still water. While this understanding is currently correct, observation of the wave line around the edge of any large lake highlights that this zone is anything but still. So it was with interest that we headed to our first stop, the rocks along the shore of Lake Wakatipu within easy walking distance of Queenstown. Here we found didymo plants, dark brown in colour with a healthy appearance. While it is accepted that didymo requires energy to grow which usually comes from flowing water, its presence in Lake Wakatipu and other South Island lakes demonstrates that this required energy can also be delivered by waves produced by a combination of wind and boating activities. If we applied the Lake Wakatipu situation to Lake Taupo then any exposed rocks from Kinloch marina to Taupo Harbour and down the eastern side of the Lake would appear to be

Top: Jeff Donaldson (left) and David Cade on Lake Wakatipu with live Didymo
Photo: Supplied

David Cade on the banks of the Hawea River with dead didymo that has dried into sheets
Photo: Supplied



prime habitat for didymo.

The Hawea River is the natural outlet from Lake Hawea. Our second stop was approximately 500m upstream of where the Hawea joins the Clutha which in turn is the natural outlet from Lake Wanaka. The Hawea is badly infected but again didymo demonstrates its unpredictability. At this site the edges and shallows of the river are totally clogged with didymo, extending out into the river until the current reaches 5 knots (approximately 2.5 metres per second) or greater, at which point it doesn't appear to grow. A jet boat ride on the Clutha enabled us to look at slightly different environments and again in water with a flow rate of 5 knots or greater it simply isn't there. That's pretty quick mind you. However whether this is because of the current per se or because a current of this magnitude will often be moving a lot of sediment is much less clear. The Clutha is a river of similar flow to the Waikato (but much greater sediment load) and didymo was not present in any deep water. During our time on the Clutha I managed to spot several trout

and they looked in good condition to me. However before you all get excited, I was amazed at the amount of dead didymo biomass flowing down the Clutha from the Hawea River. If we transferred this situation to the Tongariro River, didymo may not grow in certain pools but the volume of dead biomass flowing through those pools from infected sites upstream would severely disrupt your fishing through the constant need to clean your line, trace and flies.

Didymo's ability to adapt to different environments was very clear in the Clutha. Until now I had believed that it only grew on rocks but Jeff showed me sites where healthy plants were attaching themselves to Lagarosiphon (an introduced aquatic weed that is now a major issue in many places around NZ) and to the grass edges.

We also went for a jet boat ride up the Matukituki River which flows into the western side of Lake Wanaka. This river is one of those wide, braided rivers flowing from alpine country that are so common in the South Island. The riverbed is a con-

tinuously moving substrate and this movement of alluvial material downstream acts like a steel pad on the rocks. So although the Matukituki has tested positive for 2 years as has one of its tributaries and didymo could be transferred to another waterway through contact with its waters, it isn't visible in the river. This highlighted to me the need to clean gear between rivers in the North Island. Perhaps didymo wouldn't be visible in the first river it was introduced into, but this river could then act as the source to spread it to many other rivers where it had much more impact.

I returned to Taupo in a pensive mood. While I enjoyed my visit to Otago and the opportunity to associate with someone like Jeff, what I had seen really worried me. But after some reflective thinking I found my trip had in fact simplified the whole issue of didymo. There has been lots of discussion about how it might affect our area. Would it grow in the local rivers? What effect would the dead biomass have on drift feeding trout? How would it affect the fish? The answer to these and other questions is simple. We don't know. Because as I said at the beginning, didymo's greatest threat is its ability to adapt and what it does today is not what it might do tomorrow. **SO DON'T TRUST IT!** Instead of trying to guess how it might affect the area, let's channel our energies into keeping Lake Taupo and its tributaries **DIDYMO FREE** in case there is no second chance with this nasty.

Drifting didymo caught up shows just how unsightly this pest can be
Photo by: Glenn Maclean



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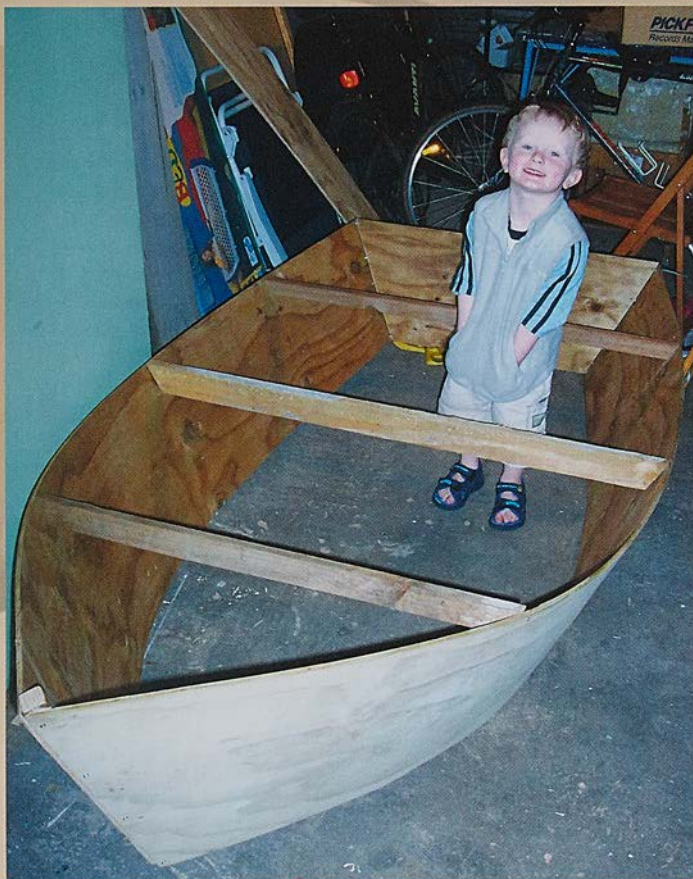
The story behind “Han-Bilt”

By Mark Veeman

Ever since moving to Turangi I have had a desire to own my own boat. As each summer went by I wished that I had bought one and so, after almost 5 years, I finally decided to have a good look. ‘Trudeme’ was the first port of call and I spent many a long night searching through pages of boats for sale searching for either an aluminium, wooden or fibreglass dinghy. Unfortunately many of the cheaper boats were either in Invercargill or Northland and so getting it back to Turangi would cost more than

the actual boat was worth.

As normally occurs, my initial search using the internet diversified into doing general searches on Google, and this is when I came across the idea of actually building a boat myself. The idea to begin with was a little daunting as everyone would build one if it were that easy, and so I spent a week searching the internet for both plans and ideas. Ideally I just wanted a boat suitable for my son and I that was also light enough to transport around and manage on my own. Several



Tommi watches it take shape
Photo by: Shon Joyce

Far right: Everything
stitched together
Photo by: Shar Joyce

designs of various punts were available and with their flat fronts seemed fairly easy to construct. However, I much preferred the v-shaped hulls as they look better but require a little more work. I continued searching several sites before finding some free plans of an 8ft (2.5m) Portuguesestyle fishing dinghy. Several of the other sites required you purchase plans but this guy gave clear instructions and dimensions and although they were not entirely complete the essentials were there. This article details the fun I had creating my own boat and gives some pointers to anyone considering building one themselves.

The next stage (reinforced by my partner Shar) was to set about working out how much the boat was going to cost, as there was no point spending a fortune if we could buy one already built for half the price with a motor and a trailer included. There was also some concern that I wouldn't be able to build it and so I wanted to prove everyone wrong. I started pricing out the treated plywood at the local ITM store and this was sur-



prisingly cheap. We thought about using marine ply as this was void free and therefore more suitable for bending but given the cost and the fact that it would need to be ordered from Auckland we decided on using 7.5mm CD H3 ply instead. I also had a quick look around for epoxy glues and managed to get some for a good price at Bunnings. So far I had barely spent \$100 but it still



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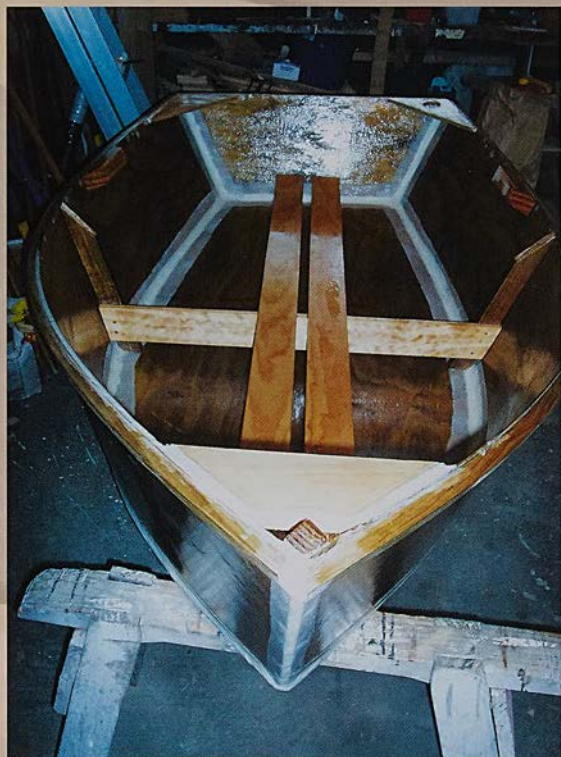
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looked nothing like a boat. Thankfully I already had several tools such as drills, jig saws and a number of clamps which helped keep the building cost down. The next stage was then to clear a building space in the garage which was a mission in itself

Once the dust settled, two saw horses sat proudly in the middle of the garage and the official project commenced. The first task was to mark out the shapes onto the plywood for the two sides and the transom. This was relatively easy thanks to the plans which also showed how to get the best use out of an 8ft sheet of ply. Next came the fun part of cutting out the two sides and the transom using a jigsaw which was easy given how thin the ply was. Having researched some tricks and tips previously on the internet, I then proceeded to create a water bath using some old lengths of timber and an old tarpaulin filled with water. This was used to soak the plywood for 2-3 hours before I proceeded to bend the ply to try and prevent it from splitting. As we had to go out that evening, I lay the two sides on top of the saw horses while they were still wet and then placed two heavy boxes on top to give the wood some of the curvature I required. They remained like this until the next day and when the boxes were removed they still assumed about 70% of the bend that I had created.

The next job was to cut a section of 25mm by 25mm timber to length, which was to be used to attach the two side pieces at the hull. The sides were then glued and screwed to this timber using stainless steel screws. One of the most important parts was ensuring that the ply didn't overlap and although this meant that the join appeared open it guaranteed that the boat would be aligned correctly at a later date. This was left to harden properly overnight. Later the next day and with some help from Shar, we managed to get the boat bent to the correct shape and screwed three temporary battens across the boat to help it keep its shape, before attempting to attach the transom board. Our son Tommi was already starting to show an interest in it as it vaguely resembled a boat.

Using a method known as "stitch & glue" we drilled holes in both the sides and the transom and proceeded to cable tie the sides and back together using some heavy duty cable ties. Although this method has been tried and tested it seemed wrong to drill lots of little holes in the boat at this stage. The next stage involved setting this on top of another sheet



Almost ready to paint
 Photo by: Sbar Joyce

of ply and tracing the outline to give us the shape for the bottom. This was then cut out using the jigsaw before slipping it under the boat shape to check for a sound fit. I then proceeded to drill holes in both the sides and the bottom every 20cms or so and cable tied the bottom onto the rest of the boat – it was definitely taking shape now.

With the boat completely stitched it was now time to glue it. This was the first time I had ever used epoxy glue and I was a little concerned that this would be all that would be holding the boat together once I cut off the cable ties. However I continued as I thought I could always turn it into a cheap sandpit for Tommi should it all go wrong. Using a small paint brush we pushed the epoxy in between the small gap created between the sides and the bottom completing the inside of

the boat first. The same was then done to the outside before leaving it to harden overnight.

Next came the job of cutting and removing the cable ties which was done tentatively as I was unsure whether the glue would hold. With the last cable tie removed the glue had done its job and the boat kept its shape nicely. Now that the ties were out we needed to fill the holes that they had left, and so a paste the consistency of peanut butter was made up using Epiglass epoxy resin and some wood filler powder. This was smeared into the holes and any crevices missed by the epoxy glue to create a fillet that was rounded all of the way around the inside of the boat. Once that had set the same was done to the outside to fill in any holes, and create a nice smooth edge for the dynel cloth. This is very easy to sand once dry to get rid of any imperfections and sharp edges.

While all this was drying I set about cutting out the quarter knees and rowlock blocks. These were glued and screwed into place to help keep the boat's shape and strengthen it. The rowlock blocks were also attached approximately 30cm towards the stern from where I was planning on sitting. These were screwed to give them additional strength as I would hate for one to break while out on the water. To provide further strength, the gunwales or rub rails were also attached. These were pre-soaked before bending to help prevent them from snapping and were clamped to the side of the boat while still wet to let them assume the desired shape. After a day I glued and screwed them to the plywood sides.

With the filler now dry it was now time to attach the dynel tape along the edges, both inside and out to further seal the boat and provide some additional strength. This involved painting the mixed epoxy resin onto the filler and then laying the cloth on top before applying another layer of mixed resin on top. Thanks at this stage



The boat gets christened, first fish off the boat
Photo by: Sbar Joyce

must go to Eric from Turangi & Lake Taupo Marine who gave me tips and pointers as I had never used many of these products before. Once the resin had hardened I started removing the temporary battens that had been holding the sides apart. This gave me better access to the inside of the boat for the construction of the seat.

The plans showed a different seating arrangement from what I had imagined and instead of three seats going cross ways as is the norm for small rowing boats, these seats ran lengthways from the front to the back with one brace across the middle of the boat to provide an anchor point for the seat and help keep the boat sides apart. Now this seat just looked wrong the first time I saw it but started growing on me the more I looked at it. It has the added benefit of allowing you to balance better within the boat if you have more than one person aboard or have got some heavy gear. Thus I decided to give it ago as I could always change it further down the track if it was really that bad. The seat itself is essentially two planks of wood that are spaced a few centimetres apart (for comfort) and were cut to fit inside the boat. Epoxy was then used to hold them in place.

With the boat essentially complete and

ready to paint I decided to give it several coats of epoxy resin to help waterproof it and harden the plywood. I started off with a thinned layer as the plywood was so dry before gradually adding less-thinned layers just as the previous layer had started to go tacky. This was done initially to just the outside but I thought that it would also make sense to do the inside also in the long term. We then sourced some exterior house paint (enamel based) and some undercoat as this was recommended as the boat was only going to be in the water for short periods, and was going to be stored at home under cover at all other times. The other option was proper boat paint but this was costly and a little over the top for such a small project.

Two coats of primer were applied to both the outside and inside of the boat before the inside of the boat was painted with two coats of an off white colour. It is was recommended as a pure white boat will always show the slightest bit of dirt and will also provide a lot of glare. The outside was finished in a royal blue colour which we applied using a roller to give the boat a nice finish and ensure decent coverage. The outside required three to four coats to give it the colour I desired and completed the Scottish theme!

Next job was to source some oars and we were lucky enough to get an old pair off a local builder who had recently acquired them and had no longer a need for them. With a cheap set of oar locks and a rod holder from the Warehouse we were almost set to go fishing! Choosing a name for the boat had always been on my mind but I didn't want to name her until I had tried her, just to make sure that she was actually going to float!

With all of the resin and paint applied the boat was a little heavier than I had intended and my next job was to borrow a trailer from a friend to transport it to Lake Kuratau for its maiden voyage. With boat on trailer and life jackets and lunch all ready to go I could sense the excitement along with my family of finally getting out onto the water in our own hand built boat!

Being nice and light she towed easily and we arrived at the lake with the boat still in one piece on the back. Launching was easy as we just lifted her from the trailer between the two of us and laid her on the sand. It really was an exciting time and thankfully the lake was calm. I carefully climbed in and got myself comfortable before inserting the oars and starting to row out into the lake and amazingly it floated really well. The only problem I had was that she turned really easily having a flat bottom, so at some stage I might add a skeg. I then came back to collect Tommi and take him out for a row and despite the oars being 8ft long he was still keen to give it a go himself.

Tommi takes over!
Photo by: Sbar Joyce

With fish jumping all around us I decided to do a bit of harling and so gave Tommi the rod to hold while I rowed around the lake. Unfortunately we didn't catch anything and so I dropped him off while I had another row around. Just as I was coming back to shore I hooked a nice rainbow and was able to make it back to the ramp for Tommi to help land it. He came rushing up to the boat with the landing net and was up to his chest before he knew it, managing to net the fish on the third attempt. Not bad for being just three and a half! I brought the boat in and we took pictures of the fish before releasing it. I then asked Tommi if he wanted to come on fishing and he raced away to get his lifejacket full of excitement and enthusiasm. Hopefully this is the start of a lifetime of enjoyment not only in fishing but also the outdoors for the wee man, and what a cool adventure we had in something that his very own dad had built.

Since the maiden voyage, the boat is now fully furnished with some Warehouse carpet and now rests happily on a garden trailer. We have yet to decide on a name for her but "Han-Bilt" is top of the list continuing with the Scottish theme! We have also just recently acquired an old 15ft fibreglass boat which is in need of some attention but I'll keep you updated on its progress in another edition of *Target Tau* #0.

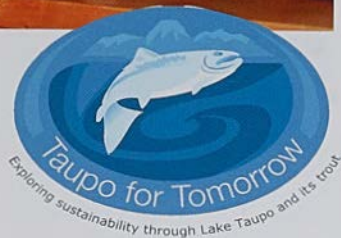


Mike Nicholson with local school Taupo Primary.
Photo by:
Kim Alexander-Turia



A New Tomorrow

THE TAUPO FOR TOMORROW LEARNING PROGRAMME IS UP AND RUNNING FOR 2008 AND REARING 'T O GO.



By Mike Nicholson

Firstly, thanks to Dave Conley who, in the absence of a full time educator during the latter half of 2007, did a wonderful job in maintaining the quality and continuity of learning experiences for students visiting the centre. Dave's passion for the Taupo trout fishery and his skill at engaging students enabled the programme to maintain its momentum during this time.

In 2008 the *Taupo for Tomorrow* programme gains further impetus with part

two of Wonderful Wai, *To Matou Moana'* (Our Lake), being delivered to year 5/6 students from local schools for the first time (schools that are located within the catchment area of Lake Taupo). Like us, the Taupo District Council are very keen to see stormwater education delivered to children who are likely to be future users and residents of this area. Importantly, TDC fully funds bus trips to the Tongariro National Trout Centre for local schools, meaning that all local students have the opportunity to learn about long term sustainability issues as they affect this area.

Genesis Energy continues to be passionate primary sponsors of the *Taupo for Tomorrow* programme. Their long term involvement enables the programme infrastructure to be developed and refined to best meet the learning needs of students visiting the centre, and a range of learning experiences is now available. Schools may choose a guided tour of the centre focusing on our iconic fishery, or take a more 'hands on' approach by testing water quality and searching for insects in the Waihukahuka

Taupo Primary students show off their work
Photo by:
Kim Alexander-Turia



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stream. Some schools are choosing to utilise the programme and resources for NCEA based study. Secondary students are able to gain a first hand understanding of Genesis's role as a hydro energy provider when looking at contemporary geographic issues.

As the year moves on many school groups will take the opportunity to introduce their students to the art of flyfishing. With the smoke house now re-located near the children's fishing pool, it can be expected that many young people will leave the site not only excited that they have taken their first step in a long fishing career, but feeling rather full as well. Fishing days are a great opportunity for students to observe the pride and commitment to the Taupo fishery demonstrated by the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society members. Without the assistance of the volunteers these days would not be possible. A big thank you must go on to them for their dedi-

cation and determination to introduce large numbers of young people to a legitimate and exciting outdoor recreation.

The Tongariro National Trout Centre provides an outstanding environment to focus learners on increasingly important messages such as sustainability and fresh water conservation. The trout themselves are the 'hook' that holds and sustains the student's interest leaving a real and lasting impression. The obvious delight apparent when learners come into contact with the trout is something to observe. Learning is fun, relevant, and hopefully, lasting. In this age of carbon footprints, global warming, water quality and quantity issues, the need for sustainable power generation; indeed the whole future of this planet then these are vitally important lessons.

As you can see the experiences available for students are diverse and wide ranging. It's full steam ahead for the *Taupo for Tomorrow* learning programme in 2008!

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And Still No Didymo!

By Glenn Maclean

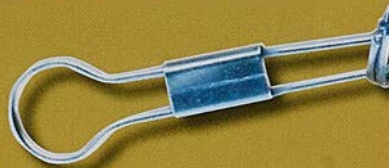
Four summers have come and gone since didymo was first discovered in the lower Waiau River in Southland, and despite all the doomsayers it has yet to reach the North Island. Maybe, just maybe we can win this one.

The momentum of the campaign to keep didymo out continues to build. When we first began in the central North Island in 2005, the task of getting anglers and other river and lake users on board seemed so huge as to be almost impossible. And plenty of people told us it was. However, with encouragement, New Zealanders have grasped the significance of the threat and the importance

of keeping didymo out. That is not to say that everyone is cleaning their gear, that is clearly not the case, but very few people now are not aware of didymo and the threat posed. That in itself is a huge step forward.

Personally I have met many anglers and other users over summer and I can't remember when I last met someone who was unaware of the issue. All sorts of mechanisms have been used to get the message across but our roving advo-

Above: Multi sports athletes like these Taupo Ironman competitors have embraced the need to CHECK CLEAN DRY
Photo by: Nina Manning





cate 'Didymo Dave' must take a lot of credit. Many of you reading this will have experienced his enthusiasm and novel approaches to jar us into taking this issue seriously, even if at first we were a bit reluctant.

Now the threat is being embraced by the whole community and there are all sorts of initiatives underway involving all sorts of users. For example the management of Taupo Airport have been working closely with the Central North Island Regional Group to develop messages for arriving visitors, emphasising the importance of cleaning their gear before using it here. Similarly local multisport organisers have required contestants decontaminate wetsuits as part of registration, going as far in some cases as being prepared to disqualify those who might refuse. These initiatives are having an impact. For example at one registration two still-damp wetsuits were dunked which had last been used in Lake Hawea, from the heart of didymo country.

Recently I was talking to a local fishing guide who was disappointed that an American client had managed to fly from the South Island into an eastern airport and make his way to Taupo with damp felt soled boots, without becoming aware of the need to clean them.

It was only when

the guide picked up the client's boots to put them in the boot of his vehicle and realised that they were damp, that he insisted the client throw his boots in his freezer and wear the guide's decontaminated boots instead. I understood Shane's disappointment but my response was much more positive, after all because of his vigilance the angler hadn't escaped the net. Ideally the angler will be picked up at the airport, if not when he books into a motel, or buys a fishing licence, or meets his guide or sits down for a meal at a local restaurant - the key is that he gets picked up somewhere and that is happening more and more.

There has been some unfortunate comment comparing the Central North Island fisheries with those in the Southern lakes and suggesting that because didymo does not appear to have had a major impact on these, then it will not be an issue here. Well with the greatest of respect to these fisheries, that's not comparing apples with apples. Not in terms of the biology of the fishery, or how anglers fish it or the scale of what is at stake.

The bottom line is if didymo occurs and blooms heavily in this area it will have a major impact on the Taupo fishery. There is no hiding from that! However what is unknown is whether it will bloom in this way. There is reason to believe that this area could be as severely affected as anywhere given the nature of the rivers. However there are also one or two possibilities, and they are only possibilities, to hope that it might not be this bad.

Short of it arriving we simply don't know the answer. Nobody does! It shouldn't be taken that didymo means inevitable disaster, by the same token to dismiss the risk is putting one's head in the sand.

The key is why take the chance? It is just plain dumb or lazy or both when for the want of each of us spending 5





Above: Dave Cade dunks wetsuits of competitors at the recent Kinloch Triathlon
 Photo by: Nina Manning

minutes to clean our gear after each trip we don't need to risk it. Don't look for reasons not to, just make sure your gear is always clean – that's the mark of a good angler.

To further emphasise this, the Central

North Island regional group has obtained 2,000 retractable zinger reels with a 'I Check, Clean, Dry' badge on them for anglers to wear on their flyfishing jacket. These will be free from local sport shops for anglers who demonstrate an understanding and commitment to cleaning their gear and sign a declaration to this effect. Not only do you get a useful tool to hang your forceps or clippers from, but also a badge demonstrating your dedication to your sport.

So this winter make sure you clean your gear. Throw your wading boots in the freezer, spray your neoprene waders down with 5% detergent and layout the rest of your gear to dry thoroughly. Even better make sure the person with you does it as well so no one slips through the net.

Our thanks to Robert A. Conaghan, Fishing Tackle Specialists for their help in organising these zinger reels at a very good price.

Tongariro River Flow Changes

Jarrod Dowler
 Environmental Manager
 Genesis Energy

Genesis Energy recommenced a nine week maintenance programme on Poutu Canal, during which time no water is being diverted from the Tongariro River at Poutu Intake (Figure 1).

The need for this work arose when a planned four month maintenance programme on Poutu Canal which commenced on 7 January 2008 had to be suspended on 3 February 2008. This occurred due to the shortage of electricity generation in the North Island and the need to maximise generation from the Tongariro Power Scheme.

Toward the end of January Genesis Energy was requested to generate from all available plant due to electricity shortages brought about by low inflows to New

Zealand hydro schemes, the dry weather, Taranaki Combined Cycle Station being out for maintenance, and closure of Pole 1 of the HVDC link. Initially this required maximum use of Rangipo Station, which was generating 60 MW for national demand during the day and backing off generation at night to between 30 and 40 MW's. A change from 30 MW to 60 MW is an approximate increase in water level of 130 mm at Turangi, which was ramped up and down over at least three hours, as per Genesis Energy's health and safety plan. Subsequently, this request resulted in the postponement of the whole maintenance work programme on Poutu Canal.

There have been several enquiries from the public about these fluctuating flows that occurred in the lower Tongariro

River during the maintenance programme. Normally when we alter the flow through Rangipo Power Station to generate more or less we also alter the amount of water diverted into Poutu Canal to buffer the flow and ensure there is no change in the flow in the lower Tongariro River. However, with Poutu Canal unavailable this ability is lost and operational changes at Rangipo are directly reflected in changes in the flow in the lower Tongariro River.

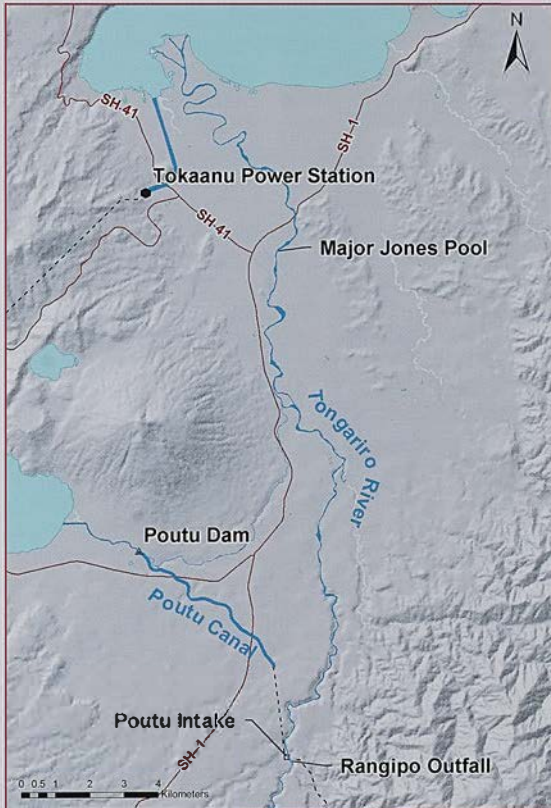
This is a known effect and was identified in Genesis Energy's operational and health and safety plan for the maintenance programme. Ideally the plan which we had agreed with DoC and other river users was to generate at a constant unchanging level through the

maintenance period, using only one of the two turbines available at Rangipo. In this way if a trip occurred with one turbine the flow could be immediately diverted through the other machine to maintain a constant flow. However, the power shortage took this option away. Under this scenario the plan allowed for increases/decreases in generation at Rangipo Power Station of 5 MW (megawatts) per half hour during times when users would be on the river. A 5 MW change equates to a flow change of approximately 2.5 m³/s (cubic metres per second) and a level change of approximately 45 mm per hour at Turangi (Major Jones Pool) and was designed to limit any surges. Greater rates of flow changes were allowable between 11pm and 2 am (which pass through the river before 5 am), before users are generally on the river.

Following the flow fluctuations in late January some concerns were raised in regards to potential juvenile trout stranding at this time of year. In response Genesis Energy has worked closely with the Department of Conservation to assess the matter and review the operational procedures. It has been agreed that the rate of recession (or fall) in the water level should be no more than 25 mm per hour during this period when juvenile trout are most vulnerable. This is the accepted rate of fall used around the world to minimise the risk of juvenile trout being left stranded, but still allows us to maintain critical electricity generation.

We will keep you informed if there is any change to the proposed maintenance activity but all going to plan we expect to reopen Poutu Canal, and for flows to return to their usual levels in the lower Tongariro River on approximately 25 May 2008.

Figure 1: Tongariro River from Poutu intake
Photo: Supplied by Genesis





2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia

By April Bennett
Coordinator for
2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia

What is 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia you are probably asking? 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia is a long term action plan for the sustainable development of the Lake Taupo catchment. Through a series of actions, it aims to protect key values or aspects of the catchment that the community identified as important. These values include having clean lakes and rivers that are free from pests and weeds and are good for trout fishing. A partnership of central and local government and tangata whenua is charged with undertaking these actions. The partners are the Department of Conservation, Environment Waikato, the Taupo District Council, Tawharetoa Maori Trust Board and the Department of Internal Affairs. Local environmental advocates, LWAG (Lakes and Waterways Action Group) also have an important role providing a link with the community and overseeing progress on the actions.

The actions are many and varied but examples include:

- **DIDYMO ADVOCACY** – The Department of Conservation has installed wash-down stations and is educating people, such as kayakers, boaties and anglers, about the risks of introducing didymo and how to stop it from spreading. Other agencies are also doing their bit. For example, last year the Tawharetoa Maori Trust Board temporarily closed road access to the upper reaches of the Tongariro River while a potential didymo

incurison was investigated. Both DOC and the Trust Board are working with others in central and local government industry and the community to keep didymo out of the Central North Island.

- **CLEAN STREAMS, RIVERS AND LAKES** – Environment Waikato has significant funding available through its Clean Streams programme to help farmers fence off streams from stock. EW has also developed rules to exclude livestock from water bodies in the catchment (including Lake Taupo and its tributaries), and to cap the amount of nitrogen leaching into Lake Taupo from surrounding land. They are currently going through the process of helping farmers to benchmark their properties, develop nitrogen management plans and gain resource consent for their farming activities.

- **BOAT SEWAGE** – The Harbour master maintains a number of facilities around Lake Taupo that boaties can use to responsibly dispose of their sewage and grey water. A brochure with the location of all the facilities can be picked up from the Harbour Master's office on Redoubt Road in Taupo. The facilities at the main Taupo wharf have also been upgraded, making them faster and easier to use.

The plan recognises that we all have an important role to play in protecting this taonga and the importance of a co-ordinated approach. For more information about 2020, visit www.taupoinfo.org.nz

Photo by: Dave Conley

Tongariro Willows Dealt To

By Glenn Maclean and
Kim Alexander-Turia

Twenty years of efforts by local hapu Ngati Turangitukua to address deep concerns over the state of the lower Tongariro River finally bore fruit this summer. Contractors working for them have successfully cleared a 20 metre swath of willows along both banks downstream from Delatour's Pool at the end of Grace Road.

Over the years willows originally planted to protect the banks have encroached further and further into the river channel. Twigs broken off from trees lodged on the bank and islands downstream and quickly sprouted. In turn these trees trapped sediment being washed downstream creating more bank which was colonised by new willow thickets. In

this way the river has rapidly narrowed over recent years so that at some points where it was 50 or 60 metres wide, it is now only 20 metres. This has made a huge difference to the capacity of the channel, the river spilling out of its banks at much lower flows than in the past. Now the adjacent land is flooded at flows as low as 60 cumecs and much of the erosive power of the river to keep itself clear has been lost.

To enable the work to proceed, clearing the willows was done under a consent granted by Environment Waikato and organised by Ngati Turangitukua using monies granted to them from the Tuwharotoa Genesis fund. The fund supports hapu to progress

Left and overleaf:
Clearing the willows on the
true left bank at the end of
Awamate road
Photos by:
Kim Alexander-Turia





environmental projects involving waterways, to promote projects to support the kaitiaki role of Ngati Tuwhaktoa and to facilitate the protection of waahi tapu. So the works that needed to be com-

pleted on the lower Tongariro River met a number of the group's objectives.

The work undertaken by Wanganui contractor Inframax involved felling the willows, swabbing the stumps so that they do not regrow, picking the fallen trees up with a grapple excavator and loading on to a Moxy truck. The truck, which can travel over rough terrain, then dumped the willows away from the river out of reach of potential floods. It can look a bit bare earth but it is very much a case of needing to break a few eggs to make an omelette, and they did a good job of minimizing the impact. More than 20 years ago the fishery team did similar work on the other eastern rivers and while it looked dramatic at the time, within a year it was difficult to see where we had been as the grasses and shrubs grew back.



Further down the river the banks are too soft despite the dry summer to use the heavy machinery, and the willows will be drilled and poisoned instead. An essential part of the operation is to minimize the number of small twigs left behind as each of these will shoot and develop into new trees if left, undoing the hard work. Therefore a key part of the work is follow up spraying over the next couple of summers.

Removing the willows has highlighted how much the river has encroached into the channel. In many places the old bank is evident 10 or more metres back from the current edge. It is likely over the next few years that the banks will erode as the roots rot away, which is a good thing as that is the river reclaiming its ability to carry flood flows.

Much of the debris in the river remains and in the short term there will be minimal impact on the juvenile trout.

Some of the big browns have lost their overhead cover but by next summer the grasses and shrubs will again provide shelter. A big plus for anglers is the ability to now easily walk along the banks and to actually be able to cast to any fish they see. It is still not easy to land them because there are still lots of debris in the river for these wily fish to tangle themselves around.

For Ngati Tūrangitukua Kaumatua Arthur Grace, it has been a long time coming but their continued efforts, lobbying and determination has finally seen a significant step taken to improve the health, and spiritual wellbeing of the lower Tongariro River.

Ko Tongariro awa e whangaitia te moana a Tia me ki te orange i a tatou a Ngati Tawharetoa whanui.

The Tongariro River is the life sustenance of Lake Taupo in fact it is the life blood of us all, Ngati Tawharetoa.

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Smile - You're on Camera!

By Ken Kimmins
Administration Manager
Tongariro National Trout
Centre Society

In this day and age security is an increasing concern for everyone and visitor car parks in particular have become a prime target for criminal activity. This risk is further increased at the car parks adjacent to State Highway 1, as is the case at the Tongariro National Trout Centre. During 2007 there were twelve incidents of theft from vehicles parked here and one vehicle stolen.

This has been an increasing concern for both the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society and the Department of Conservation. So now when you next visit the public car park at the Trout Centre you won't help but notice the impressive cameras that are now present. The high quality motion detector cameras record every movement that occurs in the car park and are especially designed to handle extreme weather conditions.

The local police support this initiative. As well as being a deterrent to criminal activity in the car park the cameras will provide invaluable information to the Police if a car is broken into and will of course provide the 50,000 visitors who come to the Centre annually with some

level of comfort, while they take time to enjoy the activities and sights of the Trout Centre.

Visitors of course still need to take all the necessary precautions when leaving vehicles unattended. Ensuring vehicles are locked, windows closed and valuable items are stored out of view are important precautions to follow in any situation.

Funding for this valuable initiative was received from Huckleberry's Sports & Charitable Society Incorporated and the cameras installed by Turangi Alarms and Aerials.

Ken Kimmins & local
Constable Mark Leathem
Photoby
Kim Alexander-Turia





Fishing Competitions – Size does matter!

By Mark Venman

Large fishing competitions such as the Kinloch and Taupo Fishing Club competitions are annual events with attractive prizes and are eagerly awaited by both local and visiting anglers. However, there are also numerous smaller events organised throughout the year by fishing clubs and similar groups that are all about a social gathering on the rivers or lake. All of these competitions not only take some planning by the organisers but if they involve an entry fee or significant prizes also require a permit from DoC before they can take place. As part of this permit the organisers are required to provide accurate information about the number, length and weight of fish caught during the competition. This information is useful as it complements

our other monitoring programmes and provides a snapshot of what anglers are currently catching at times when we may be focusing our attention on different areas of the fishery. Given the number of applicants and the number of fish weighed in, averages can be calculated and we can identify trends over the years and use this data alongside our other monitoring programmes. We have to be a little careful with this data as it is only the fish anglers choose to weigh in, not necessarily all the fish they catch, so there are potential biases that can occur. This article will examine fishing competitions in more detail by explaining how we view them, the role of the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee, and finally how we use them as an advocacy tool.

Firstly let's explain the role of the

Top: Weight counts too
Photo by: Peter Osborne

Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee. The committee comprises of representatives from the fishing guide associations, national angling interests, angling clubs and groups, Fish & Game NZ and DOC. There is also a position for the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board. These representatives are appointed by the Minister of Conservation and a fundamental role of the committee is to advise the Minister on matters affecting the Taupo Fishery. They also have a key role to advise and raise issues with the department as the managers of the fishery, and to facilitate communication between the department and anglers and keep anglers informed. The development of the policy regarding fishing competitions was a good example of how the committee works.

In this case we, as the fishery managers, put up a proposal outlining our views on the appropriateness or not of fishing competitions at Taupo, and suggested criteria to be used when determining whether individual competitions should be allowed. Over a series of meetings these were discussed and refined with the committee until collectively we agreed on the policy.


Briefly, we recognise that not all anglers support fishing competitions. However

they are valued and enjoyed by a significant number and so long as they do not unreasonably impact on the fishery or other anglers' opportunities then they are an appropriate use of the fishery. At the end of the day a big component of the fishery is about anglers enjoying their experience, and if some achieve this by taking part in a competition then, all other things being equal, why not?

Underlying this acceptance though are several key principles, not least that we do not allow a competition, where this is for private gain. We, also distinguish between what we nominally call "commercial" and "non-commercial" competitions. Non-commercial events are small scale work place, club or group of friends and the like which have a small entry fee and are about having a social day out. Commercial events on the other hand are the like the Kinloch competition which is run as a community fundraiser and where the organisers have a big prize list, charge a much larger entry fee but in turn pay a resource rental which goes back into the fishery. Currently commercial contests which might involve a catch of a 1000 or more trout are limited to two a year, to ensure the harvest is not excessive.

The data that we get back from the fishing competition organisers is a useful source of information about what the fish are like at that particular time. Although not all of the competitions have entries into the hundreds, good numbers of trout are normally caught and so can provide meaningful averages in terms of length, weight and condition factor. Sometimes these competitions are run outside of when we typically focus our attention on the lake. Between May and September there is at least one competition held each month and depending on the number of fish entered, this information supplies information about the lake fishery throughout almost the entire year.




In order to obtain a permit, organisers




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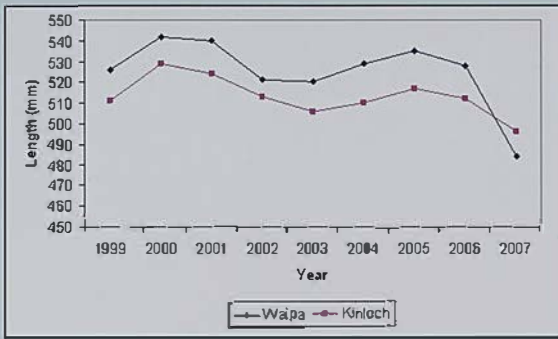


Figure 1: Average length of rainbow trout weighed at the Kinloch Fishing Competition during August and the average length of rainbow trout trapped in the Waipa Stream (Jan-Dec) since 1999

complete a form detailing where the competition will take place and when, what the prizes will be, entry fee and expected entrant numbers and the venue of the weigh in. This allows us to keep an eye on the waters being fished to ensure that anglers are obeying the fishing regulations while also telling us where the weigh in venue is, should we want to attend.

Following the competition organisers are required to submit the details of the competition catch. This data is analysed by the Technical Support team.

So what do we get from the data? Let's have a look at the Kinloch Fishing Competition held during August each year. With a sample size considerably larger than what we would expect for our summer creel surveys, the advantages of such a large sample early in the season cannot be underestimated. For example, there is quite a distinct correlation between the average size of rainbow trout caught during the Kinloch

competition held in August and the average size of rainbows trapped throughout that entire year in the Waipa Stream. In most years then, the average size of the fish in the competition can be used to estimate the average size of fish in the spawning run over the whole year.

Similarly, the average weight of trout also shows a close relationship between Kinloch fish and Waipa fish over the 9 year period (Figure 2).

This data also highlights that last year the trout didn't grow on in the lake as we would normally expect.

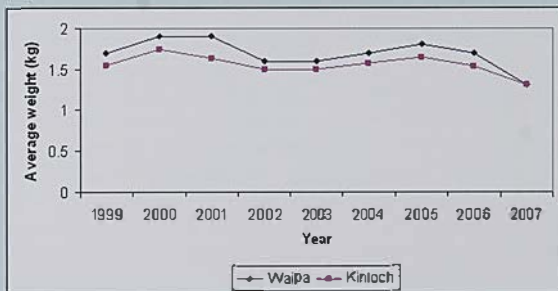
There are several benefits for us being on hand during fishing competitions, not least to have a presence in terms of compliance and law enforcement and keep an eye out for any undersized fish that may be weighed in. Although it may seem unlikely that an angler would bring in an undersized fish to a weigh-in being attended by us, it sometimes happens.

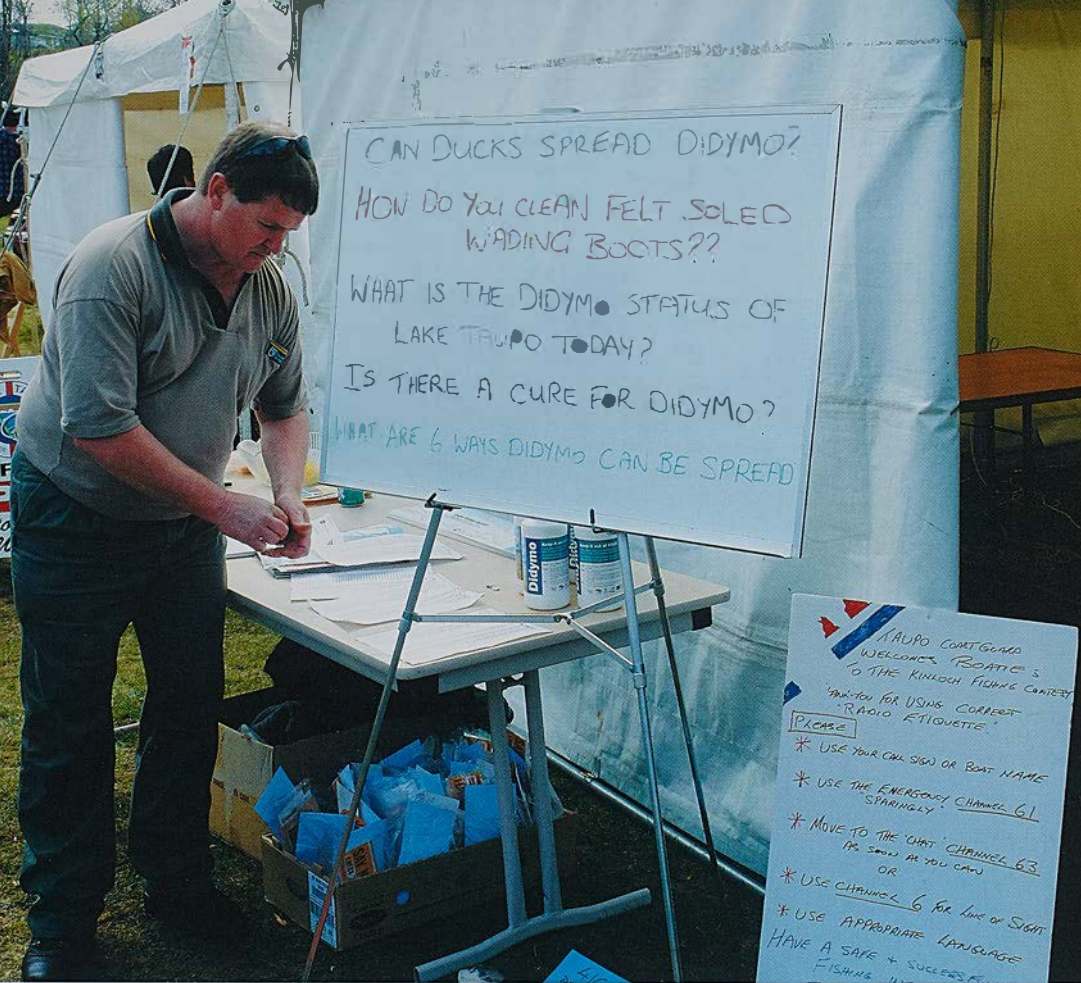
At the recent Motuopa fishing competition I was pleased to see a sandwich board at the weigh in saying that any anglers bringing in undersized fish would be instantly disqualified. This would police itself with family members or angling mates keeping an eye on each other and may prove more of a deterrent than the thought of being prosecuted by a fishery ranger!

Having a large group of people attending a weigh in is an easy way of targeting anglers with important messages. A good example of this was last year's Kinloch competition which I attended along with "Didymo Dave" Cade. Dave had the idea of displaying numerous trout and their condition factor to show the difference between a kelt with a condition factor in the low 20's to that of a fat prime maiden in the mid 50's. This was a big success and brought in people to talk about the fish and ask any other fishery related questions that they had.

While I attended to the weigh in part,

Figure 2: Average weight of rainbow trout weighed at the Kinloch Fishing Competition during August and the average length of rainbow trout trapped in the Waipa Stream (Jan-Dec) over the last 9 years.





Dave Cades spreads the word about didymo
 Photo by: Peter Osborne

Dave also set up a display outside the tent with handouts and prizes but also wrote several key questions on the whiteboard specifically related to didymo such as "can birds spread didymo?" and "how do you clean felt soled boots?" This was extremely successful as it caught the eye of everyone at the weigh in whether they wanted to avoid Dave or not! Dave also gave a quick spiel about didymo in a fun way and was well received. This was straight after my more serious presentation about the proposed changes to the current size limit. Being able to convey key messages to a number of people at such a large event certainly makes our

job easier, especially when almost all of them had an interest in fishing and our waterways in general.

I hope you continue to enjoy the numerous fishing competitions held on the lake throughout the year but perhaps now better understand what we hope to get out of them in the interests of the fishery and its anglers. If a fishery ranger is present at the next one you attend then feel free to ask us questions about the fishery. Just please make sure that your fish is long enough before bringing it to the weigh in as size does matter!

CHILDREN'S FISHING POND DATES

2008

The fishing pond at the Tongariro National Trout Centre will be open on the following days for 2008:

Sunday 27 April (School Holidays)
Sunday 01 June (Queens Birthday)
Sunday 13 July (School Holidays)
Sunday 17 August
Sunday 28 September (School Holidays)
Sunday 26 October (Labour Weekend)
Sunday 16 November

HOURS – The pond will be open between the hours of 9.30 a.m. and 3.00 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 8045 between 10am and 3pm (1 May to 30 November) and between 10am and 4pm. (1 December to 30 April) 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. However you may get your fish filleted and smoked on site, see below for details. Plastic bags for your fish can be purchased on the day for \$0.50 each.

FLY-CASTING TUITION FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS – For a cost of \$10 per per child and \$15 per adult you 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: 6 per session. Bookings for this prior to the day are essential.

RODS – Complete sets of gear are provided for all activities. No private or personal fishing equipment is to be used in the pond to avoid the possibility of disease being introduced, but you may wish to bring your own fishing gear for the advanced fly-casting lessons.

FISH FILLETING AND SMOKING – You can have your fish filleted, smoked and wrapped in foil ready to take home for a small donation.

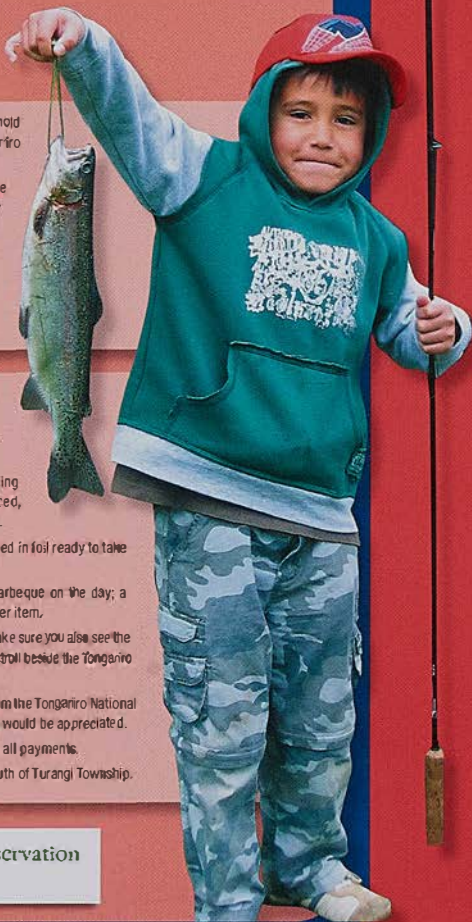
FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS – The Tongariro National Trout Centre Society run a barbeque on the day; a sausage sizzle is available and they also sell hot and cold drinks. Costs are from \$2 per item.

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 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.

PAYMENT OPTIONS – There are no EFTPOS or VISA facilities so please bring cash for all payments.

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





Repowering the Waipa Hut

By Callum Bourke

The Waipa fish trap is a 7 day 24 hour operation and a key component is the associated hut which enables our staff to work, eat and sleep in relative comfort. Recently we upgraded the Waipa hut power supply which now provides a reliable source of solar energy for the hut and also our PIT tag trout monitoring programme. Since May 2006 we have been implanting PIT tags (passive integrated transponder tags) into adult and juvenile trout in the Waipa Stream. Whenever a tagged fish passes through the trap a transmitter is activated logging the tag number and time the fish passed through the electric field. This information is then stored in a small computer at the trap shelter which we can access and analyze as required.

Previous to the recent upgrade, powering the PIT tag detector had proved problematic. The detector was run from

two large 12 volt batteries that were alternated every 4 days and recharged from solar panels situated on the roof of the hut. We found that the amount of sun hitting the roof was adequate during periods of high solar radiation. However in mid winter when the sun spent most of it's time low on the horizon and hidden behind nearby trees the charging efficiency rapidly became marginal, and the time to fully charge the batteries much longer. Basically it became very difficult to have fully charged batteries which were required to produce a reliable and adequate power supply. So our fishery scientist Michel Dedual started exploring alternative options.

The first step was to seek some advice on a durable solution from Michael Lawley from EcoInnovation, a New Plymouth based company specialising in renewable energy systems. One option was

Top: Ranger Nathan Walker makes the final adjustments to our new solar panels
Photo by: Julie Greaves

to install a micro hydro turbine. Initially this looked like a good option but it was difficult to locate a site with sufficient water head on the terrace where the trap is sited. This was a pity because otherwise it would have proved ideal. These systems use a very small flow falling through a length of pipe to create a continuous and almost maintenance free power supply.

Having discarded the micro hydro turbine option we came to the conclusion that the simplest, most cost effective and sustainable solution was to increase the solar capacity of the hut by adding more panels, and to run a power cable to the trap site. The disadvantage was that the hut is several hundred metres from the trap and transferring the power by cable risks significant transmission losses. However it was the only open site to erect panels anywhere nearby.

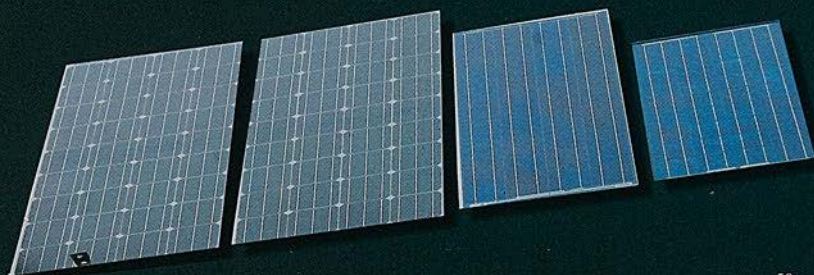
After completing an energy audit it was established that we would need a system that could provide 840 watts per day. This would be sufficient to run the pit tag detector including any transmission losses, three energy efficient lights and battery chargers for our VHF radio and cell phones and also include plenty of reserve capacity to allow for periods of inadequate solar radiation. Two 120 watt solar panels were added to the existing 80 and 50 watt panels giving us a total capacity of 370 watts. The panels were aligned on the roof of the hut facing north and tilted on a 40 degree angle to ensure maximum solar input. We opted for four 6 watt, 225 amp/hour deep cycle batteries that are connected in series. Due to the fact that we needed

a 300 metre cable to connect the PIT tag detector at the trap to the batteries in the hut, it was necessary to convert the system to 24 volts as opposed to 12 volts. Having the larger voltage capacity reduces the transmission losses from the cable which works out to be approximately 5% over the 300 metres. With combined storage of 900 amp hours, the capacity of the batteries is more than enough to compensate for such losses.

Another reason why we opted for 6 volt batteries is although they are slightly more expensive than the 12 volt deep cycle batteries, they will both last longer and are also much lighter. This is a serious consideration given we have to carry them over a kilometre to the hut site.

Both the panels and the batteries are controlled by a 20 amp regulator. The regulator is a device which basically enables the panels to charge the batteries. It also indicates the amount of solar radiation being generated at any time and the amount of energy being drawn from the system, such as when the hut lights are turned on. So the regulator is essentially the "brains" of the system that keeps the batteries topped up.

We have had this system up and running for several months now and it has so far proven to be reliable. I guess the big test is to see how it will cope during long periods of inclement weather which as you probably know is a frequent occurrence in the central plateau. Thanks must go out to EcoInnovation for their assistance in this project.



WHAT'S UP?

By Dave Conley

It has been a year since my first *What's Up*, and already it is time to sign off and pass the torch to John Webb. I have accepted a new role as Public Awareness Officer with the Conservancy team in Turangi, and while I am excited by the opportunity, I will miss the Trout Centre. This place really grows on you!

We ended the year with several large team jobs, and it was great to have all the extra help. The first big job was when we emptied the childrens' fishing pond and sent the fish away to Taranaki and Wellington. This involves several days of planning, preparation and fish catching before the fish are collected by Fish and Game for release down country. This year our fish were released in Lake Ngangana at Waitara, the Patea River at Stratford and Opunake lake in Taranaki, as well as a municipal pond in Wellington. There they provide much the same fun and experience for budding anglers as they had in Turangi.

The next big job was to clear some of the weed from the Waihukuhuka Stream (Hatchery Stream) which was threatening to choke the flow through the weir pond. An afternoon of effort put paid to the weed, as well as secured the team a bonus of fresh watercress. With normal flows resumed, many people have commented on just how many brown trout live in the stream. These fish are normally invisible under the raft of watercress.

In the hatchery our latest brood has grown well, and has now been graded and released in the raceways well ahead of schedule. The grading box has adjustable slats in it, which can be set to allow the smaller fish to slip through. In this way we graded out approximately 1000 surplus



Ranger Callum Bourke (left), with Turangi Rotary lending a hand
 Photo by: Kim Alexander-Turua

fish, which were released at Lahar Lake on Horopito station west of Tongariro National Park on behalf of Taranaki Fish and Game.

Another big highlight for December was a visit by Nic Valance and the Meet the Locals team. *Meet the Locals* is a collaboration between TVNZ and the Department of Conservation, and highlights the work DOC does around the country. They visited the Trout Centre to see what goes on with the *Taupo for Tomorrow* education programme. We were running our local schools programme, Wonderful Wai, on the day they visited, and it was a great day for all involved. You can catch *Meet the Locals* on Freeview Channel 6, or by visiting the DOC website. The Trout Centre will feature in the new series, which is due to air soon.

The new year started just as busily. We moved the old smokehouse around to the fishing pond, and work is ongoing preparing interpretation panels for it. We hope to subtly re-design it so it will be the centre-piece for fish smoking when we have fish-outs. There will be a few more of them in the future too, as the Trout Centre Society Committee, in conjunction with DOC, will trial holding fish-outs over summer commencing in 2009.

Top right: Dave Conley grading the fry
Photo by
Kim Alexander-Turia

Nic Vallance & film crew
with Dick Truebridge.
Tongariro National Trout
Centre Society Volunteer
Photo by:
Kim Alexander-Turia



Plans have been finalised for the new entry path into the trout centre, and it is hoped work will begin on it soon. This will be the first step in a major re-development of the site and structures, which will greatly enhance the visitor experience at the centre. The path is designed to reverse the current circulation pattern, so that visitors will enter over the weir pond on the Waihukahuka Stream and follow the stream down to the Tongariro River before being brought back to the River Walk building.

Most recently, we hosted a working bee with the Rotary Club of Turangi. Neil Groombridge arranged for a band of members to come down to the Centre, where they tidied up the potholes which dotted the paths around the centre. They also built a series of weirs on the outfall from the fish pass, making it a much more fish friendly area. It was a great example of many willing hands making light work, and showcases the value of volunteer groups in small communities like ours. Keep it up guys, I'll be watching with interest!



TAUPO TAILS



Whio on the Tongariro. Dan took this picture while fishing the Boulder Pool 2007. *Photo by: Dan Radie*



Mayfly Imposter. *Photo by: Jared Goedhart*



A nice rainbow trout caught jigging at Motuoapa Point by Samantha Poets. She out fished her dad this day seven to one. *Photo sent in by Carolyn Poets*



This 9lb brown was caught by Jens Muller-Buckland at lake Otamangakau, February 2008. *Photo sent in by Jared Goedhart, Sporting Life*

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 .



BBQ Trout in Foil with Lemon & Onion

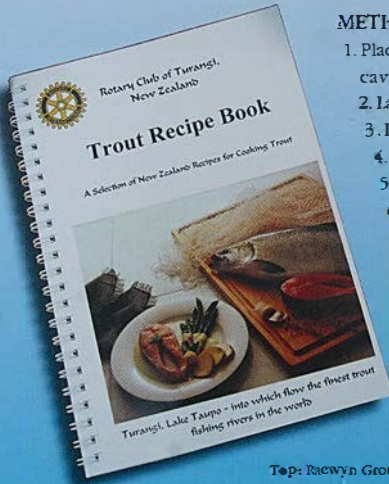
By Raewyn Groombridge

INGREDIENTS

- 1 fresh trout, with or without head, gutted and cleaned.
- Salt and pepper
- 1 onion sliced
- 1 lemon sliced or wedged
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1/2 cup sour cream

METHOD:

1. Place the onion and 1/2 of the lemon slices and the seasonings inside the cavity of the trout.
2. Lay out the trout on tin foil large enough to fold over and seal.
3. Fold up the edges and seal three sides.
4. Pour the wine through the remaining side and seal.
5. Cook on the grill for 20 minutes, turn and cook a further 20 minutes.
6. Check the skin peels back to tell if it's well cooked.
7. Peel back the foil and strip off the top layer of skin from the fish.
8. Turn the fish over and remove skin from bottom side also.
9. Lay the flesh on on a serving platter and decorate with the remaining lemon slices, onion from the inside the fish and a dollop of sour cream to complete the dish.



Top: Raewyn Groom
Photo by: Kim Alexander-Turia

The recipe for this issue of Target Taupo was taken out of a trout recipe book recently produced by the Rotary Club of Turangi. The book is a collaboration between Raewyn Groombridge, David Higgam and Gavin Common, and is sold locally to raise funds for local community projects. See 'what's up' in this issue of Target Taupo. The publication has been a huge success with 500 copies sold in the first six weeks.

If you would like a copy they are sold in Turangi at New World, Naylor's Bookstore, Sporting Life and the Riverwalk Visitor Centre at the Tongariro National Trout Centre or by emailing Neil Groombridge: ngroom@xtm.co.nz



A Warning to Anglers

By Julie Greaves

Following on from our story in *Target Taupo 56* "Access at Risk" we have now erected trespass warning signs at the Tauranga Taupo River.

The new Tauranga-Taupo angling access track was created in 1995 with the support of the land owners along the river. Because the 1926 Act right of way does not extend as far as the winter limit, access to this point is at the good will of these land owners. Part of the agreement was that anglers and the public were free to walk along the river margin but landowners requested that they did not take shortcuts across the rest of their lands. All in all a very generous offer on the part of the landowners, and one that many of us who enjoy fishing this river greatly appreciate.

However in recent months we have had regular reports of anglers taking their vehi

cles up Kiko Road and walking through the pine forest to the river. Other people are taking shortcuts through the forest from the Motuopa settlement and from the angling car park up to Maniapoto's Bend along the stop bank. This is trespass and if anglers continue then the fishing access will be put at risk.

To reinforce this message we have erected signs at the carpark off SH 1 indicating there is no access along the stop bank to Maniapoto's Bend. We are also erecting no trespass signs on Kiko Road in association with NZ Forest Managers who manage the adjacent pine forest.

Please stick to the walking track up from the carpark and enjoy the opportunity to fish this special river. Taking a shortcut will only put this opportunity at risk for everyone. We are working with Forest Managers to address non compliance - heed the warning.

Topic: A Warning to Anglers
Photography:
Kim Alexander-Turia



Top Notch Vistors to TNTC

By Kim Alexander-Turia

On the 10th January, the Minister of Conservation, Hon Steve Chadwick took part in a lahar path trip with Dr Harry Keys as part of the DOC's Tongariro Taupo Summer Programme. While she was in the area she took advantage of visiting the Tongariro National Trout Centre to meet with partners, Genesis Energy, Tongariro National Trout Centre Society and the Department of Conservation. The Minister was most impressed with the partnership that had developed between the three parties and noted that this was crucial in providing a wonderful learning experience for school groups participating in the 'Taupo for Tomorrow' learning programmes.

The Minister was also excited to see the plans for the redevelopment of The

River Walk Visitor Centre and the proposed new aquarium and who captive breeding area and other visitor facilities. Then on the 11th February, we had the pleasure of hosting Brian Corban, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Murray Jackson, Chief Executive, Mauteen Shaddick, General Council & Company Secretary and Bob Weir, General Manager Production from Genesis Energy. This was their first visit to the centre and, as with the Minister, they were impressed with the partnership and the success of 'Taupo for Tomorrow' Education Programme of which Genesis Energy is the primary sponsor.

Mike Nicholson the new educator gave a detailed visual presentation on the programme so that the Genesis Energy team could gain an appreciation for the engagement and enthusiasm demonstrated by students visiting the centre. It was also a chance to show them the plans for the redevelopment of the centre and promote the Taupo fishery in a wider sense, something the Tongariro National Trout Centre's natural and beautiful environment enables us to do easily.

Top: Genesis Energy team with Tongariro National Trout Centre partners

Photo by:

Kim Alexander-Turia

Below: (left to right), Mike Nicholson, Ken Kinmins, Rob Lester, John Gibbs, Paul Green, Minister of Conservation Hon Steve Chadwick, Bonnie Lawrence, Tracey Hickman & Eddie Tonks

Photo by:

Kim Alexander-Turia



So you thought the lake was busy?

By Mark Venman

Each summer between Christmas and early January we undertake a number of flights around Lake Taupo to count the number of boats. Although we are primarily interested in the number of boats fishing, over the last 7 summers we have also counted other boat users. The flights are made shortly after dawn and a gain mid morning on a series of days selected at random over the holiday break. This short article summarises the flight data from this summer and compares it to data from previous years to answer the age old question of "was it busier on the lake this summer"?

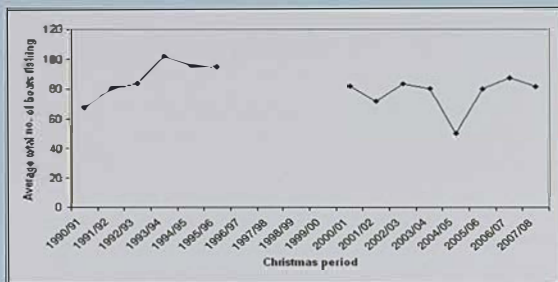


Figure 1: Average number of boats fishing on Lake Taupo during the Christmas / New Year period between 1990/91 & 1995/96 and 2000/01 & 2007/08

One of the key factors influencing the number of boats out is obviously the weather. For once we had a really good early summer, January was the driest in the Waikato for more than 100 years with 25% less rainfall than normal. Average temperatures were also above normal thanks partly to increase in sunshine hours this summer. The winds were also kinder during the Christmas / New Year period compared to recent years although they did pick up from February onwards. Overall though, the weather this summer provided for some excellent boating and fishing conditions.

As a result, it was not surprising that the average number of boats counted this summer was higher than the previous six summers, averaging 165 boats per flight compared to the annual average of 140 boats per flight. This includes other boat users such as water skiers, kayakers,

yachts, jet skis and also other boats being used for beach-based activities.

The number of "other" boat users excluding anglers reflected this trend and averaged 84 boats per flight on the entire lake. These types of boats were more than twice as common in the northern end of the lake where boats fishing tended to form the bulk of boats counted at the southern end. This increase in other users in part reflects the increased popularity of kayaks, but it was also noticeable that there were a lot more people camping in the Western Bays. Where boats are an integral part of being able to camp in a particular spot then they are counted as being in use even if tied up on the beach.

The average number of boats fishing (includes boats fishing while anchored at the Tongariro and Tauranga Taupo river mouths) was 81 boats per flight which was the 3rd highest out of recent years. However this was well below the peak calculated during summers 1993/94 through to 1995/96 where the average number of boats fishing ranged between 94 and 101. (Figure 1). The average number of boats fishing at anchor was just under the seven year average of three per flight.

Thus although the weather improved significantly this summer, the number of boats out fishing on Lake Taupo was not that high especially when compared with the peak years of the mid 90's. However what was noticeable was the increase in the number of other boat users on the lake this summer. Interestingly, anglers cited water skiers and jet skiers as their main detraction on the lake this summer with a combined total of 5.5% of anglers interviewed upset by their behaviour. Nevertheless, almost 74% of anglers (over 500 anglers) surveyed were happy with all aspects of being on the lake this summer. So if you thought it was busy over the Christmas break you were right!

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New Faces in the Fisheries Team



Photo by: Scott Wilson

My primary role as part of an innovative partnership between DOC, Tongariro National Trout Centre Society, Genesis Energy and Taupo District Council is to utilise the fantastic environment at the Tongariro National Trout Centre to deliver a range of increasingly important sustainability messages to our young people. This is a role and an opportunity I am really looking forward to.

MIKE NICHOLSON

I am the new Educator at the Tongariro National Trout Centre. I have taught for a number of years in the Waikato district, most recently teaching a year 8 class at Southwell School in Hamilton.

The move south is an exciting one, as it merges my passion for educating our young people and my love of the outdoors and conservation values. I have in the past spent much of my recreation time in the Taupo/Tongariro district. More often than not, this has involved deer stalking in the Kaimaniwa Ranges and Tongariro National Park. As a result I have developed a real affection for the Central Plateau area. I look forward to introducing my children to this wonderful region and all it has to offer.

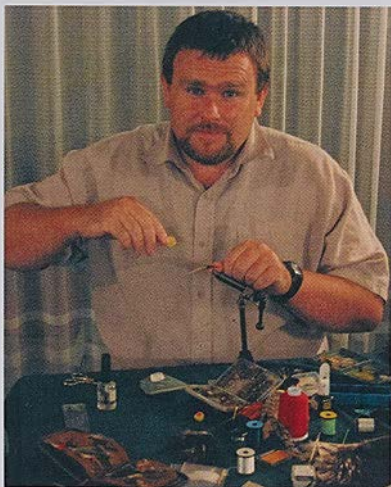


Photo by: Fay Webb

operations and projects, and particularly, raising awareness of the value of the fishery to the community as a whole.

So come down with the family and enjoy the TNTC or the multitude of rivers, lakes and forests that the region has to offer. Hopefully I will see you there! - and remember, say NO to Didymo.

JOHN WEBB

Due to the promotion of Dave Conley, the opportunity for me to be involved in the Impo Fishery Area as Community Relations Ranger - Tongariro National Trout Centre (TNTC) has arisen.

Although my background is in production forestry, an industry I was involved in for 20 years, I began working for the Fishery Area of the Department in 2007 on short term operational and TNTC contracts. In these roles I participated in a wide variety of tasks for the fishery.

I enjoy working for the Fishery as I have been an active fly angler and hunter in the Tongariro/Taupo area for many years despite only moving into the region with my family in late 2006. I see being able to contribute proactively to the management of one of my favourite pastimes as a wonderful opportunity.

This role will move me in new directions vocationally and involves day to day oversight of TNTC, contributing to

Fisheries Farewells

By Storm Bester

BYE BYE RENEE

When Storm was on maternity leave Renee Williams filled in her role. She has been a delight amongst the fishery team, always bubbly and happy.



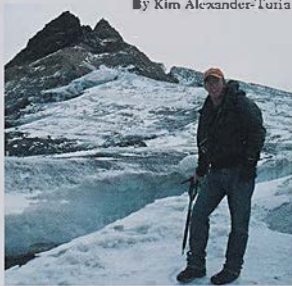
The Service team, Storm Bester (top left), Renee Williams and Carolyn Poole

This is just a short thank you and good bye to Renee who has been a wonderful saviour for me. She came and filled in for me while I went on maternity leave, though I'm not sure if she quite realised what she was getting herself into. Not only did she have to learn our old licensing system, but having just got used to that the new one was on the way. I had researched and done longyards trying to find a suitable system but I think Renee had the tougher job of figuring out how to use it. Like any new system it had its wrinkles to be sorted so Renee ended up running both the old and new systems simultaneously and coping with the change to a new season. Through it all as the rest of the staff remind me, she never lost the smile off her face despite plenty of reasons to.

When I got back to work a few months after having baby, she had it all sorted and Renee was teaching me my job again. For the next couple of months, Renee stayed on part time, job sharing with me so I could have the best of both worlds. It's not always easy job sharing, I think she got tired of all my notes and lists, but it was a pleasure to work with her.

Alas, not all good things can carry on forever, and I had to return to work full time again. So it is goodbye for now, and thank you for doing a wonderful job, and hope to see you back in May while I'm on leave.

By Kim Alexander-Turia



Swapping a flyrod for a ice axe
Photo by: Kaven Williams

FAREWELL DAVE CONLEY

They say that the grass is not necessarily greener on the other side of the fence but in Dave's case it was and he jumped that fence pretty fast.

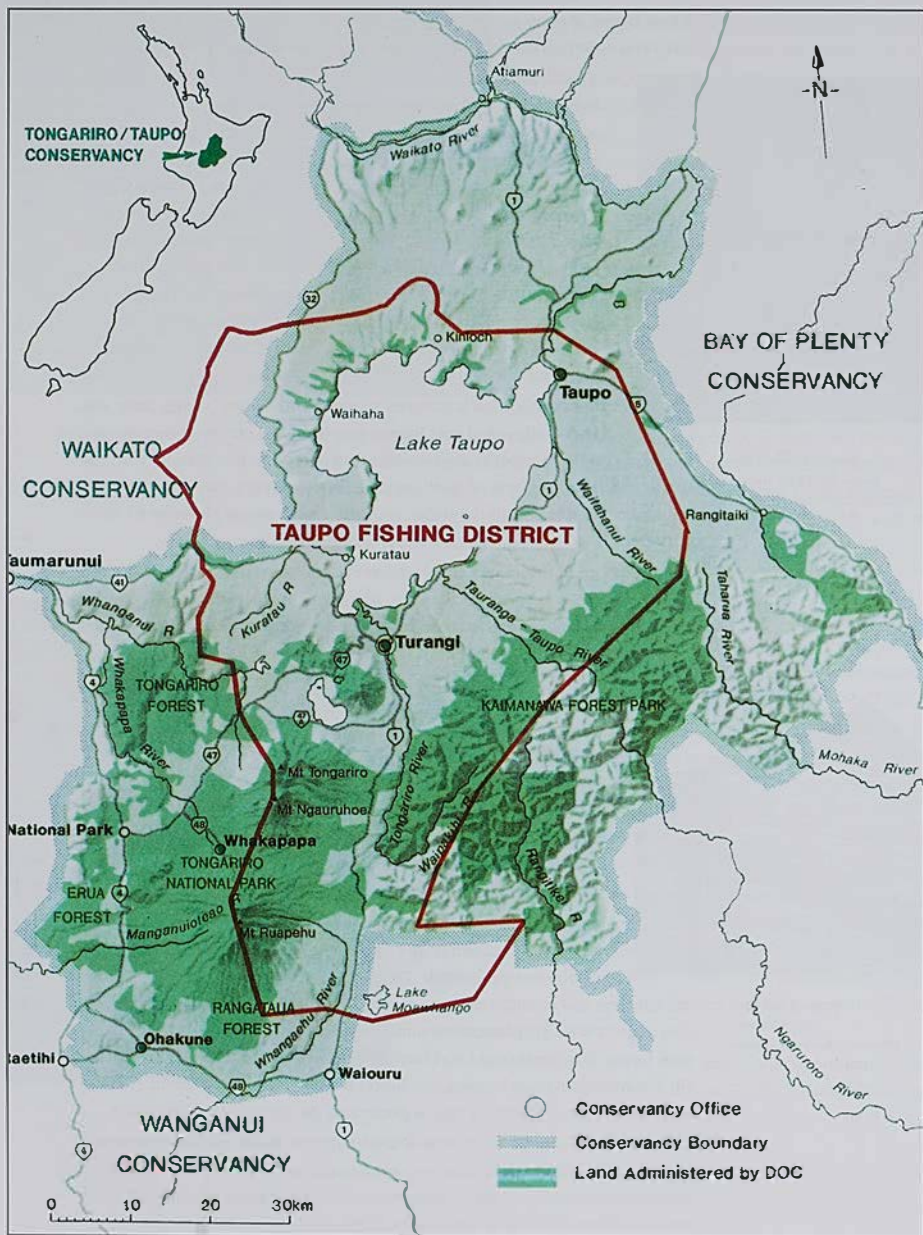
After many years with the Department, Dave Wakelin retired from the Tongariro-Taupo Conservancy office and Dave Conley was successful in filling his shoes as the new Community Relations Officer - Public Awareness.

Six months into his role as the Community Relations Ranger, Tongariro National Trout Centre, he was seconded to the Taupo for Tomorrow programme. Then Dr Petris resigned from her position as

the Educator and with Dave's background as a secondary school teacher he was able to assist with the programme until a new Educator was found. This process took longer than we thought and Dave stayed on in the role for over 6 months. He was instrumental in keeping the Taupo for Tomorrow programme running smoothly during this time, as well as overseeing the trout centre operations.

Dave's new role with the Conservation Support Team involves providing advice, support and media liaison to community relations staff over the three areas of the Tongariro/Taupo conservancy. It will be a great challenge for him and the Fishery team wish him all the best.

Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy

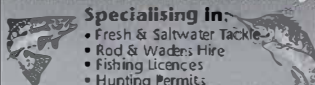


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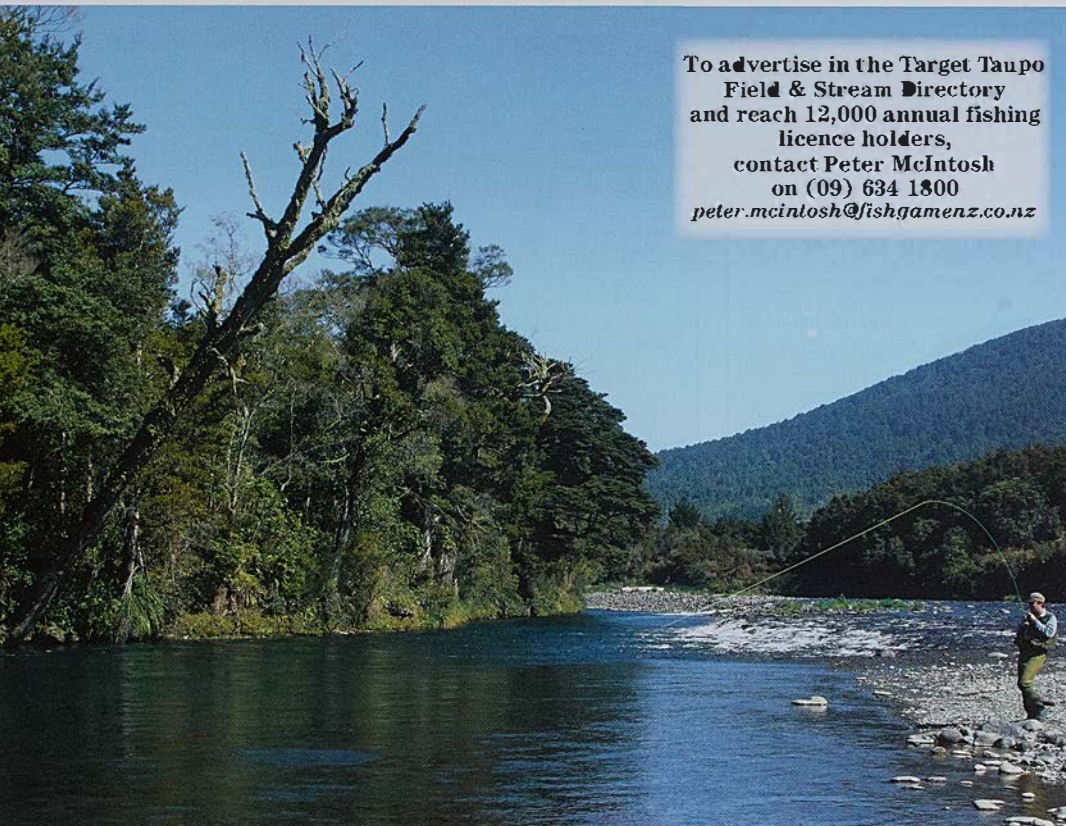
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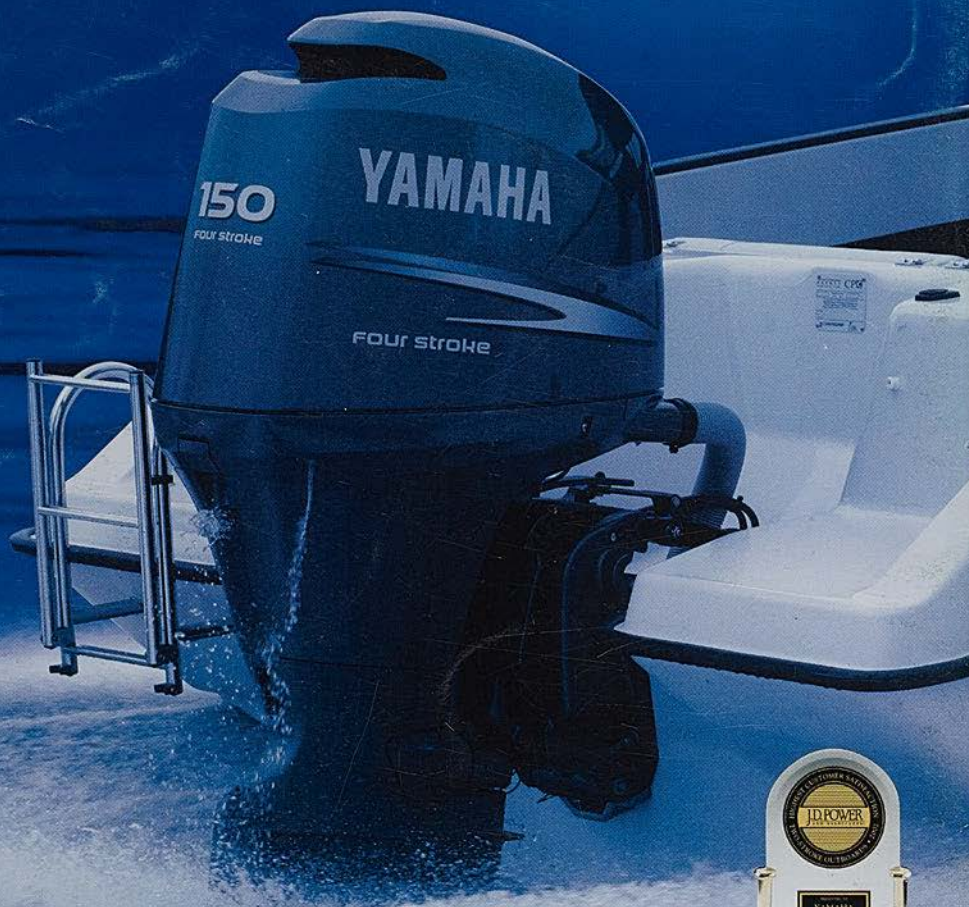
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PERFECT BALANCE



"JD Power and Associates (US) ranked Yamaha highest in Customer Satisfaction with Four Stroke Outboards, two years in a row"



THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES

Once again Yamaha leads the way...for many the new Yamaha 150 four stroke offers the most perfectly balanced boating experience available. Innovative and technologically superior, the Yamaha 150, a purpose built four stroke outboard offers clean running, superb performance, economy, and amazingly low noise levels...with no weight penalty over 2 stroke outboards. Join the four stroke revolution, choose from NZ's most comprehensive four stroke model range at your Yamaha dealer...today.



LOW EMISSION
4 STROKE

 **YAMAHA**