

# TARGET TAUPO

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

JULY 2001, ISSUE 37



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JULY 2001, ISSUE 37

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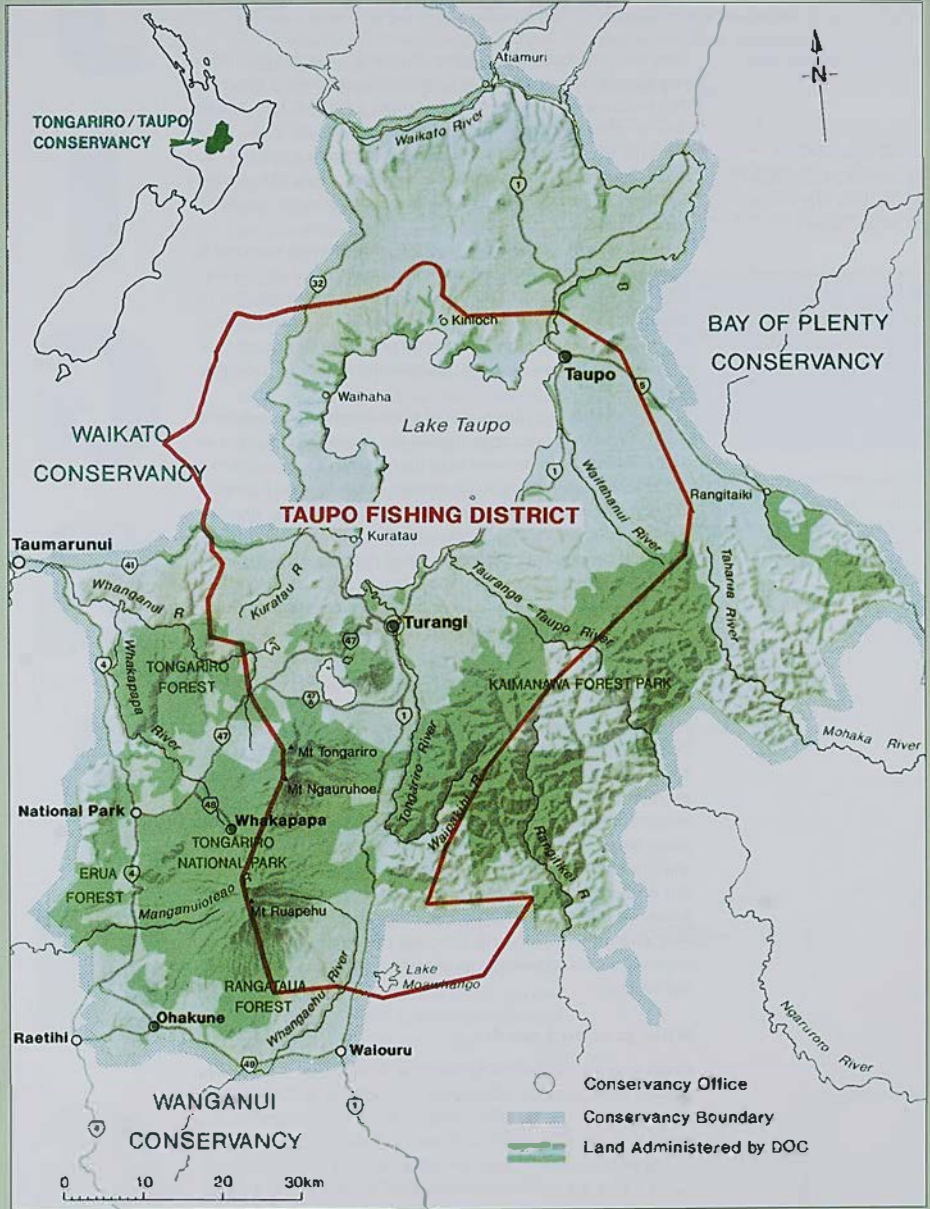
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Department of  
Conservation policy*



# Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy



# THE ART OF

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*By Glenn Maclean and  
John Gibbs*

*Glenn is the manager  
of the research and  
monitoring programme  
in the Area, and is editor  
of Tūngē Taupo*

*John is the Manager of  
the Taupo Fishery Area.  
He has fished Lake Taupo  
since the 1950s and his  
working involvement  
with the fishery  
management goes back  
to 1964*

Over the past decade the practice of jigging a lure has become a very popular way of angling in many fresh and saltwater fisheries. The technique had its genesis in freshwater angling in Lake Rotoiti over 40 years ago. Anglers would tie their boats up to the trees along the northern cliffs and cast a standard spinning lure into the depths letting it sink as far as possible before retrieving. The method was then known as "snapper fishing" and has evolved into jigging as we know it today.

Jigging has proven to be very successful in the Rotorua lakes and is widely practised. Yet at Taupo it continually surprised us how few people regularly fished this way, especially as those handful of anglers who did enjoyed outstanding success on occasions. Sure they kept it quiet but given that over 80 percent of Taupo angler are visitors to the area we expected these people to bring the technique with them.

This summer the word finally got out and suddenly large numbers of anglers on the lake were trying jigging and finding it worked just as well as elsewhere. In response to all the enquiries, in this article we describe the basics of how to jig at Taupo and discuss the biological implications and the legal requirements. In writing this we approached Taupo tackle manufacturer Colin Sangster and Tuangi guide Bill Grace who have quietly fished this way for quite some time. We appreciate how open these two very successful anglers were in passing on their advice and hard earned experience. Other anglers, in particular Gary Ramlose also contributed their experiences.

The first time we tried the technique was late in the afternoon at Whakaipo Bay. Fish after fish came to the boat in the last hour of daylight and it was two delighted anglers who headed for home. One of us who is as dyed in the wool deep trolling proponent as one is likely to meet kept muttering something about "this jigging has got some possibilities". The attraction wasn't the catch rate, though we certainly weren't complaining, it was the opportunity to catch prime fish on very light sporty tackle in almost total peace and quiet while drifting along the cliffs. As managers, the ability of anglers to fish deeper than current trolling techniques raises some issues which we will discuss in more depth later. However we are confident that many anglers will welcome the opportunities for an improved angling experience on the lake especially in late summer and autumn.

## What gear do I need?

Ideally your rod should be as light as possible with a fast action. Such rods are often called jig rods and are relatively stiff in the butt with the majority of the bend occurring through the tip third of the blank. However such an action is not essential if you are compromising with one rod to cover several situations. A purpose built jig rod is a little bit harsh for downrigging but with care it is quite useable. A much softer downrigging rod which bends from the butt to the tip makes it easier to load the rod on the downrigger so that on a strike the straightening of the rod will take up the slack created

by the line coming on of the clip and the hook remain set. It is less precise when jigging than a fast action rod but again it is still quite useable. In fact Colin prefers such a rod, using a long (2-2.4m) fibreglass rod with a parabolic action. The key in both instances is that the rods are very light and sensitive. Jig rods often come with a casting or trigger grip, a small plastic hook opposite the reel seat which makes it easier to hold and cast the rod with one hand.

Such light rods are ideally suited for using with small baitcasting (freepool) reels with about 150 metres capacity of the line of your choice. You may often be using quite light line so the reel needs to have a quality drag that yields line smoothly. Obviously the lighter the gear the more fun it is to use but the increased feel or sensitivity will also assist your success. Outfits don't come much lighter than the one in the accompanying photos which has so far proven more than a match for any trout in the lake.

There are several choices as to what sort of line you use. Firstly there is monofilament, typically in line weights between three and six kilograms. Four or five kilogram line is ideal as it is well suited to the light outfits used but still robust enough to handle the wear and tear. The finer the line the easier it will sink and the lighter the weights that can be used to jig with. However fine monofilament lines are very elastic and stretch under tension. This can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. When fighting a fish on a short length of line this elasticity helps cushion the fight and avoid sharp jerks. However when fishing in deep water the elasticity is such that it becomes very hard to feel what is happening on the bottom or to set the hook. This can be overcome by using one of the relatively new braided lines which do not stretch at all. These lines are very fine, very strong but also very expensive. When spooling even quite a small reel it can take many metres of braid to fill the spool, most of which will never be used. A tip is to fill the bulk of the spool with monofilament and finish with 100 metres of 4.5-5kg braid. This makes using braid a much less costly option. Some anglers also add a short length of monofilament to the lure end to overcome the lack of stretch when fighting fish close to the boat. Braid certainly increases your feel of what is going on at the bottom and often allows you to fish a lighter jig. However

much of its advantage is not realised in Lake Taupo as most jigging does not occur at any great depth. Braid is nice to use but it is not essential unless you intend to jig at depths greater than 35 to 40 metres.

### Suitable rigs

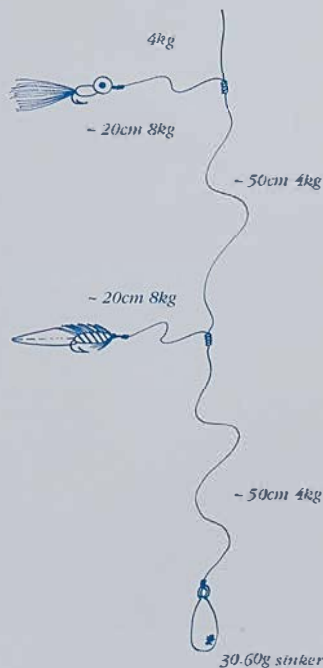
There are a variety of ways of rigging your lures which have been proven in Taupo. We are also aware that some rigs reflect that anglers are confused about the regulations here. In a nutshell you can jig anywhere you can legally troll.

In a nutshell you can jig anywhere you can legally troll. There is no weight restriction, you can use a weight rather than a jig to sink your line and you can use two hooked lures or flies (but not more). Be aware that jigging is not permitted in fly only waters eg within 300 metres of most stream mouths.

Jigging as practised in Taupo involves using a jig (lure) or weight on the end of the line with one or two flies suspended above from



Figure 1. Two popular rigs for jigging in Lake Taupo



droppers. If you use a jig with a hook attached then you may only use one other fly; if you use a sinker or other weight or a jig without a hook then you can use two flies. The basic rigs are shown in figure 1.

The idea is to use as light (small) a jig as possible while still retaining positive contact with the bottom. Small jigs are more effective on trout than larger ones. However if you're not sure when you have reached the bottom or are having to freespool large amounts of line to get to the bottom then it is necessary to change to a heavier jig. The amount of weight you use will vary depending on how fast the boat is drifting, the depth of the water and the gear you are using. Some anglers using braided lines go as light as 13 gram jigs though 18 and 25 gram lures are more commonly used. Jigs tend to be very similar in shape as they need to be heavier at the tail end so that they sink tail first. If they fall head first the trailing hook tends to tangle around the line. Favoured colours include green and gold, red, silver or grey. Remember that at Taupo any lure may have only one hook and that treble hooks are not permitted.

When using a sinker rather than a jig it is less critical that you use the smallest weight possible. Ideal weights are tear drop shaped sinkers of  $\frac{1}{2}$ , 1 and 2 ounces (14, 28 and 56 grams). These sinkers come with a loop at one end to attach to the line. If you use a sinker such as a ball sinker where you have to pass the line through the middle of the weight be aware that the continual bouncing of the weight on the bottom will abrade through the line unless you use a length of heavier monofilament or wire. Some anglers, including Bill Grace, use a jig without a hook which acts as an attractor but reduces the risk of losing the jig on the bottom.

Jigs or sinkers? Colin and Gary favour jigs on which they catch a significant number of their fish. Colin's view is that the fluttering fall of the jig imparts more motion to the fly above it. Bill prefers a jig without a hook and one fly while John and Glenn use a sinker and two flies. Up to you.

Even when using a hooked jig the majority of fish are caught on the fly. This is attached to a short dropper approximately 150 to 200mm long tied 0.5 to 1 metre above the jig or

weight. A tip originally from the Rotorua area is to tie the dropper out of monofilament twice as heavy as the trace so that the fly hangs out away from the line. Another option is to use a three way swivel. The trace should be approximately four or five kilo gram monofilament with both braid and mono mainline.

When using a jig the fly is nearly always a smelt imitation but the actual pattern does not appear too critical. When using two flies a good combination is a smelt imitation and a booby. The booby seems to elicit most of the strikes but interestingly using two boobies

appears less effective than using one and another pattern. A white booby is a reliable starting fly but as elsewhere some quite radical colours can also have their moments. The bottom fly should be approximately 0.5 metre above the weight and the top fly 0.5 metres higher

again. Another choice which doesn't appear to have been well explored is to use a soft rubber lure in place of one of the flies. These lures, particularly the "Mr Twister" pattern had a brief flurry of popularity for trolling at Taupo some 15 to 18 years ago.

## How to fish a jig

Jigging for trout is much more subtle than some of the jigging techniques used in salt water; There is no high speed retrieve or big lifting and dropping of the rod tip required. We have seen the technique described elsewhere as jigging rather than jiggling and this is a very apt description. All that is necessary is to have the jig bouncing and scuffing along the sand using a relaxed wrist action to lift it just off the bottom and let it flutter back again. Depending on your rod and line it may involve lifting the tip only 50 or so centimetres and back every few seconds so that the jig never stops moving. However if the rod action is very soft, the water deep and the line has a lot of stretch then the movement may need to be more extensive to achieve the same movement in the jig.

Fishing the jig involves freespooling the lure to the bottom. Once it hits the bottom clamp your thumb down on the spool and lift as described. Every few drops lift your thumb and check that the jig is still bouncing on the

We have seen the technique described elsewhere as jigging rather than jiggling and this is a very apt description.



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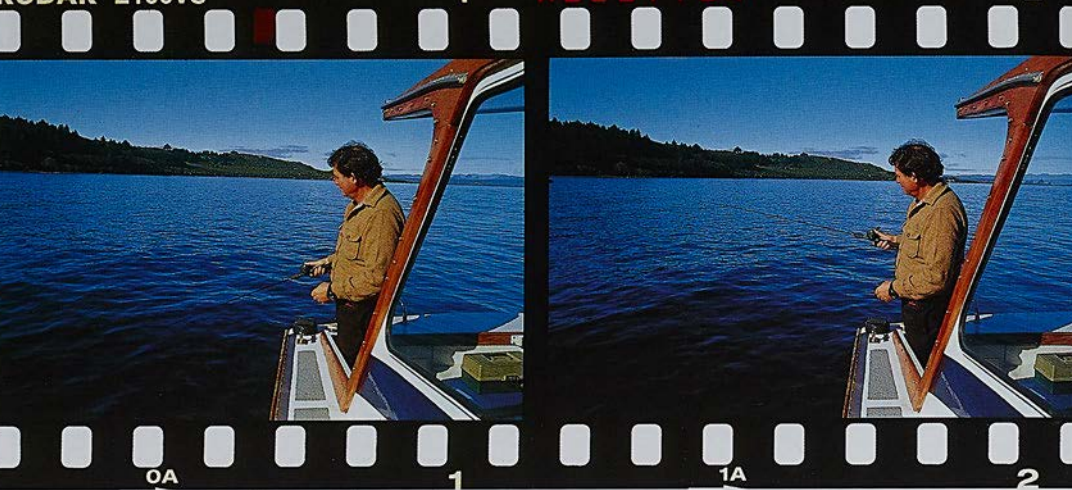
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*Jigging for trout is subtle in comparison to jigging in salt water. The rod tip is lifted only half a metre or so*

bottom by letting out line until the bottom is felt. Once the angle of your line is streaming out away from the boat past about 45 degrees wind up and repeat. Most strikes will come as a definite bump/s or tightening of your line while you are jigging it. However sometimes things just don't feel quite right. For example you lift but don't feel any weight in which case clamp down on the spool and give the rod an additional lift in case a fish is mouthing the lure. Similarly the strike can occur as you are letting line out, often signalled by the line speeding up. If you are not sure clamp down on the spool and give a short strike - if no fish is there nothing is lost but you may be pleasantly surprised. If you do hook a fish it is then a case of quickly putting the reel in gear. This may involve having to lift the rod at the same time to keep the line tight until you can wind.

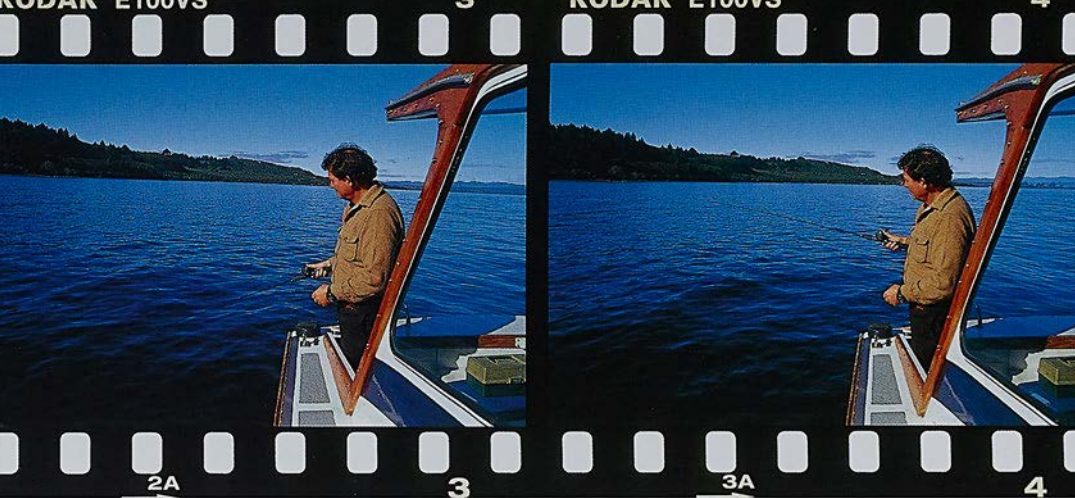
An important exception to this way of striking is if you are fishing at depth with monofilament. In this case there is so much stretch in the line that striking has little effect. Instead you are much better not to strike but to simply wind flat out until the line comes tight.

A common trait of hooked trout is to quickly come to the surface, even when hooked at depths of 30 to 40 metres. This may occur so fast that the angler can't feel any weight on the line and stops winding thinking the fish has been lost, at which point the fish does fall off. Keep winding flat out until the line comes tight or you can see the lure. Trout

fight very well on light tackle so be patient and enjoy the battle. A big advantage of such light gear is that young children can manage the rod much more easily than a lead line or the like.

#### **When and where to go.**

There are two common ways of jigging at Taupo - from drifting or from anchored boats. It is simpler from an anchored boat but consistent success depends on anchoring over a school of fish or in a location trout pass through regularly. Anchoring comes into its own though when it is too windy to drift successfully; if the fish are concentrated into a very small area: or if fishing into a gap in the weed beds. Effective use of a quality sounder, especially when deep trolling is a good way to locate concentrations of fish to drift and jig to. The main influence on the drift of your boat is the wind. Current is rarely an issue in Lake Taupo though if you dive in the lake you will realise it is often much more substantial than one would imagine. Therefore once you have decided on the area you want to fish it is a matter of running upwind and cutting the motor. It is often not quite as straightforward though as it seems. The wind direction often eddies around in response to nearby cliffs and gullies and many boats tend not to drift directly downwind depending on how the breeze catches the hull and superstructure. Similarly lightweight aluminium hulls catch the wind much more readily than heavier wooden and fibreglass hulls sitting deeper in



the water. If the wind is too strong and you drift too fast you will find it difficult to maintain contact with the bottom. Either wait for another day, anchor or try a sea anchor. This very useful accessory is much like a wind sock which when strung over the side slows the drift depending on how much water it catches and the size of the hole that the water must flow through.

Between January to late April, jigging is much more effective than at other times although good results can be had as early as September. The accompanying photos were taken in early July on a day when the jigging proved hard yet trolling

The key is therefore getting your lures in front of a trout in the first place.

with downriggers and leadlines was very steady. It is difficult to imagine the fish suddenly become less receptive to taking jigs especially when they are taking trolled lures very readily. So why does jigging get much harder in winter?

We have a theory for what it is worth that the way jigging presents the lures and flies to a trout is very effective at eliciting a strike at any time of the year. In other words if you put your lures in front of a trout it is likely to take them. The key is therefore getting your lures in front of a trout in the first place. At any time of the year trout tend to sit close to the bottom so

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Jigging: peaceful and relaxing



*Table 1: Average monthly depth of the thermocline in Lake Taupo. Data from "New Zealand Lakes", editors V.H. Jolly and J.M.A. Brown.*

Month	Average Thermocline Depth (metres)
December	25-28
January	32-36
February	33-35
March	32-35
April	38-40
May	42-46
June	50-55

fish. Under these circumstances jigging will draw numerous strikes often out-fishing nearby anglers who are deep trolling. However when the fish are spread out both all along and up and down the drop-off then only a few fish are likely to encounter a lure: jigging up and down in one place. In this case trolling is much more effective simply because the lures cover much more water and so more trout stumble across them. The distribution of trout in the water is linked to physical changes within the lake.

Typically the surface waters begin to warm in September. October and November are not until December that stable stratification occurs (a layer of warmer surface water lying over and not mixing with the cooler bottom waters). The temperature transition between the two layers is very defined and is called the thermocline. In December the thermocline is perhaps 25 metres deep but as the summer progresses the thermocline is pushed deeper until it is around 35 to 40 metres in April. As the surface waters begin to cool again in late autumn the density difference between the surface and bottom waters decreases and strong winds are able to push the thermocline even deeper. By June it is 50 to 55 metres deep and by the end of winter the whole lake is fully mixed again.

These zones of different temperature have a marked effect on trout distribution. In late summer the surface temperatures reach a maximum of around 20 degrees Celsius which the trout tend to actively avoid. Instead they concentrate around the thermocline in part at least because this is where their food, the smelt, also congregates. That is

why deep trolling with downriggers or wire lines which can fish at 30 metres depth is much more successful than other, shallow trolling methods at this time. As autumn

progresses the thermocline drops even further down where it is out of reach and the fishing characteristically goes through a very difficult spell. However with the onset of the first frosts the surface waters cool and once again become more attractive to the trout even though the thermocline may still weakly exist many metres below. Suddenly one depth is no more favoured by the trout or their food than another and leadlines fishing at 10 metres are just as successful as downriggers at 30 metres.

The key when jigging is to concentrate your efforts around the depths of the thermocline.

The key when jigging is to concentrate your effort around the depth of the thermocline as shown in table 1.

Let's follow a season through. In early spring when the lake is still mixed smelt move onto the sandy

shallow areas to spawn and many trout follow them in under the cover of darkness. Drifting across the deeper shallows in seven to 10 metres of water in the early morning can be effective before the fish move back over the drop-off. Any shallower and success appears to decline, perhaps due to the presence of the boat. One disadvantage is that these shallows may have areas of fine filamentous algae and weed which quickly covers the jig. Instead, use a weight and two flies and if necessary lengthen the distance between the weight and bottom fly or prospect for gaps in the weed. Some of these shallows are extensive and a useful approach can be to haul a fly until a group of fish are located and then start jigging. Obvious surface activity can also be an indication of lots of fish close to the bottom. This also applies even in much deeper water. Once the day brightens most trout retire



*One of the attractions of jiggging is fighting the fish on light tackle. The bend of this rod, held by John Gibbs is more characteristic of a down rigging rod than in those jig rod*

over the shelf though many remain within the top 10 to 20 metres which is why all trolling methods are equally productive through this period. The fish are more spread out than later in the summer but this is in part compensated by the fact that a new year class is available and numbers of legal sized fish are at their highest for the year. In early spring 15 metres is a proven depth to target, increasing to 20 to 25 metres with the development of stratification in December.

As we have mentioned jiggging comes into it's own in late summer and autumn when the key is to target depths between 30 and 40 metres. By May the trout are starting to spread out again and life gets much harder and will remain so until the following spring. This dispersal coincides with the mature fish making their spawning migration into the rivers which further reduces the numbers available. Many anglers revert to flyfishing at the river mouths or to trolling during this period. However if you want to keep jiggging there is no key depth but look for structures which trout and their prey are likely to dwell around, for example underwater reefs. It is a

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period when some wind is preferable to none at all so as much ground as possible can be covered. Some anglers have tried jiggging at much greater depths with limited success. It is more difficult and again the challenge is finding concentrations of fish.

●nce we have decided on what water depth to target where do we go? There are some areas around Lake Taupo, particularly at the southern end, where reasonable drifts across flat areas of suitable depth are possible but generally the lake bed shelves steeply down. It is a case of trying to drift along the drop-off or making a series of short drifts preferably from deeper to shallower water. These steeply shelving sites are not necessarily a disadvantage as it appears from the experiences of Colin, Bill and others that it may be easier to locate fish in these areas than over flat areas. ●ften trout are only occupying a small site within a large flat area whereas it follows that if fish are actively seeking a particular depth there will be many less suitable options on a steep face. It is also much easier to cover a range of depths in the course of a drift along the drop-off until the right depth is found.

Locating suitable spots is a case of trial and error but underwater reefs, prominent points which fish must swim around from one bay to another, deeper holes or clearings amongst weed beds and where the drop-off forms semi-enclosed bays are good starting points. Where water depths allow, the river mouths can also be good locations but please remember you must stay 300 metres off the mouth. This restriction is to give fly fishers a fair go and applies from the mouth of the river, not the white, yellow and black poles which simply mark the general location of the mouths. Many suitable jigging areas can be readily identified on a bathymetric map, which shows underwater contours, and located using an echosounder. If trout are present jigging tends to work immediately so if success doesn't come within a quarter to half an hour then it is probably best to try elsewhere. Many productive spots are very small and sometimes moving just 50 metres can make the difference between a blank day

and lots of success. Bill, who fishes nearly every day through summer, finds the fish are often in one place for a couple of days but then will move slightly. As soon as the fishing goes off he starts to drift, and so cover more water until he relocates the school. In this way he can follow the fish but for the rest of us who only go out every now and again we just have to take our chances.

We are aware of successful spots all around the lake which anglers have found the hard way and which we don't intend to name. However most are obvious places to try if you follow the advice above and you should soon have a few spots of your own. A GPS is ideal for recording and storing favoured locations for later visits.

### The downside of jigging

In many ways jigging appears to be a positive development in the Taupo fishery. It enables anglers to catch fish with light sporty equipment but without the expense of downriggers at a time of year when they typically struggle for success. The light rods and reels are also much more easily managed by children. However the method also brings a downside. Potentially the harvest of trout could be

significantly increased for two reasons. Firstly, anglers can fish to greater depths than possible by trolling. They could therefore exploit that component of the trout population which was previously out of reach. In reality though it appears that jigging is most successful at comparable depths to those reached by deep trolling methods. As a consequence we don't believe that this aspect is a major cause for concern.

Perhaps more critical is that jigging allows a whole new group of anglers to consistently catch fish in late summer and autumn when previously they caught relatively few using leadlines and the like. This is a busy period on the lake and potentially the harvest by this group could be many thousands of fish. Jigging at 30 or 40 metres, like other deep fishing methods, catches a greater proportion of young maiden trout, some of which will be less than the legal size limit and must be released. If catch and release is not

Perhaps more critical is that jigging allows a whole new group of anglers to consistently catch fish in late summer and autumn when previously they caught relatively few using leadlines and the like.





*Ideally undersized fish should be released without touching the fish. Fishery Manager John Gibbs demonstrates excellent technique*

correctly practised some of these fish may also die, effectively increasing the harvest. Current regulations are set to ensure sufficient fish survive in years of low productivity to ensure successful winter angling and spawning. An additional significant harvest would need to be factored into calculations to ensure the sustainability of the fishery was not threatened. This aspect is something we will monitor closely as jigging develops and if necessary may require some regulation changes further down the line.

It is fair to say that we have had a lot of very positive comment about jigging and very little adverse comment from lake anglers which indicates to us that they are comfortable with this development. However some river anglers are opposed, fearing the effect on the stocks of fish left to run the rivers.

This is a valid concern and it is essential that the trout resource is shared fairly between river and lake anglers. How lake anglers choose to utilise their share though is largely up to them. If concerns arise over an increased harvest in the lake and we need to further regulate to reduce the catch it will be for lake anglers to decide what is an acceptable approach.

For much of the year jigging doesn't set the world on fire. However in late summer and autumn when typically the fishing gets hard for most of us it does offer some very real opportunities. If the idea appeals give it a go.

*With special thanks to Colin Sangster and Bill Grace for freely sharing their hard earned experiences.*

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#### TIP FROM PETE

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## Waitahanui River Access

In late April a gate was erected across Blake Road at Waitahanui stopping access along the road from just above the Totara bridge. The department has received numerous calls and letters from anglers and the general public concerned at the loss of access along the remainder of the road to the Limit Pool on the Waitahanui River.

It was obvious from these calls that there is a great deal of misunderstanding about access rights and privileges on Taupo rivers.

Blake Road starts at SH1 as a public road. At the end of the public road it then passes through a short section of private land before entering a scenic reserve and then, for the last three or four kilometres, is Maori land managed as part of the Lake Taupo Forest. There is no right of public vehicular access over the sections crossing private land. The road's use in the past has always been by grace and favour of the landowners. As with any private land the owners can choose whether or not to allow people to use it and in this case a decision has been made to close the access.

Although there is no longer vehicle access to the end of Blake Road, there is still legally-

protected foot access for licensed anglers within 20 metres of both banks of the Waitahanui River from its mouth to its source, regardless of land ownership. This is part of the agreement between the Crown and Ngati Tuwharetoa ratified in the 1926 Maori Land Amendment and Maori Land Claims Adjustment Act which provides for general public access to and use of Lake Taupo, and for foot access for anglers to specified sections of the tributary rivers.

The riverbank rights of way are different from what is commonly known as the Queen's Chain in other parts of the country in that the Taupo ROWs don't change the underlying title of the land. It still remains in private, mostly Maori, ownership and anglers using these accesses should be aware of this and respect the land accordingly.

Because of the proximity of the Waitahanui River adjacent to the Blake Road gate there is insufficient room to realign the road outside the private land. However, a walking track is being formed to provide for continuous foot access for anglers along the left bank to the Pig Pool bridge and beyond.

*The gate on Blake Road*





Tongariro  
National Trout  
Centre Society

## Tongariro National Trout Centre Society Underway

More than \$250,000 is being raised by the new Tongariro National Trout Centre Society (Inc) to upgrade the old hatchery facility south of Tuangi and further enhance its advocacy role and reputation as a major tourist attraction.

*By Bob South*

A new committee was elected at the Society's inaugural meeting in late April, effectively transforming the previous Trout Centre Trust, which over the years contributed nearly \$280,000 to the Tongariro National Trout Centre (TNTC), into an incorporated society. Since then, the Society has formalised plans to purchase the Department of Conservation's obsolete workshop within the TNTC and turn it into an advocacy centre, complete with an auditorium and interpretative display area at an estimated cost of \$258,456.

The Society currently has funds of approximately \$77,000, inherited from the Trust. This money, plus \$70,000 pledged by DOC to the Society, a confirmed \$50,000 from the Tourist Facilities Grant Programme, and prospects of further support from the Lotteries Grants Board, will enable the renovation project to go ahead, hopefully before the end of the year.

The Society's committee comprises:

John Milner (chairman)

Bill Colston (treasurer)

Cherry Hewitt (secretary)

Graham Whyman

Scott Lee

Brent Pirie

Graham Hamilton

Bruce Robertson

Bob South

Eddie Tonks

Paul Green (DOC Conservator)

John Gibbs (DOC Area Manager Fisheries)

*TNTCS executives from left  
Brent Pirie, Graham  
Hamilton, Bill Colston,  
John Milner, Bruce  
Robertson, Graham  
Whyman, Cherry Hewitt,  
Paul Green, Scott Lee,  
Bob South and John  
Gibbs. Absent Eddie  
Tonks*



The establishment of the advocacy centre and auditorium is the first of several stages of development. Future projects earmarked for attention include the reconstruction of one of the old hatching camp huts and smokehouse, plus the employment of an advocacy centre educational officer.

The Society is also committed to increasing the number of visitors to the TNTC. Currently around 50,000 people visit the facility annually. With the erection of prominent State Highway 1 road signage, and the upgrading of the old workshop, the Society hopes to treble visitor numbers within a few years. Already the demand to visit the TNTC is escalating. In June, more than 120 children took advantage of one of the regular Children's Fishing Days now run by the Society. The 8 July Children's Fishing Day was fully booked (180 children) by Wednesday 4 July, while two busloads of school children now visit the Trout Centre each week during the school year. Another Children's Fishing Day is scheduled for 12 August.

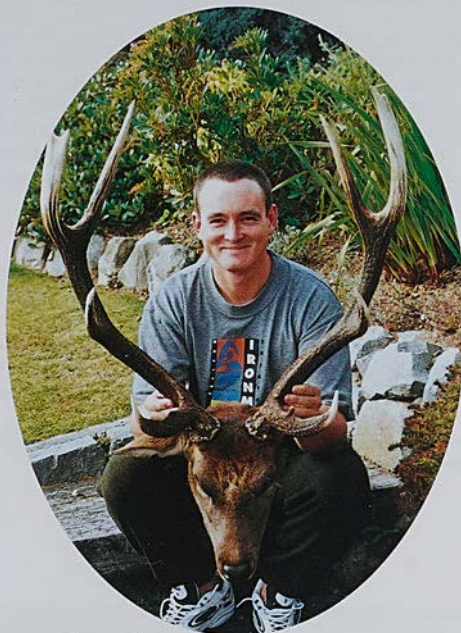
The Society's priorities beyond the development of the advocacy centre and auditorium include securing extensive sponsorship for the ongoing maintenance and future upgrading of the TNTC, as well as creating a solid membership base. An elaborate fundraising strategy for the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society is currently being put in place and a concerted membership drive is also underway. To date the response has been encouraging. Anglers, residents or visitors to Turangi interested in seeing the TNTC developed, promoted and maintained to internationally high standards are invited to become Society members. A small \$5 fee secures membership and will go some way towards ensuring the ongoing success of this valued educational and tourist amenity.

Updates of the Society's progress in promoting the TNTC will appear in *Target Taupe* as well as in regular newsletters distributed to members.

**Contact  
Mandi at  
DOC Turangi  
to book for  
the Children's  
Fishing Day  
on August 12.**

To join the Tongariro  
National Trout Centre Society  
please send your \$5 to  
**Bill Colston,  
106 Taupehi Rd,  
Turangi.**

## 2001 Sika Competition



*11 point Sika shot by  
Logan Frew July 2000.  
Photograph Vern Pearson*



*Bruce Lancaster's  
magnificent 18 point Red  
Stag. Photograph Vern  
Pearson*

On Sunday 17 June the eighth annual Hunters & Habitats Sika Competition was held at the Great Lake Centre in Taupo. While the number of heads entered this year was a little down, the quality was as high as ever and a good crowd enjoyed some excellent trade displays while viewing a wide range of game trophies from around New Zealand. The red deer trophies in particular were outstanding this year, with a number of East Coast heads rivalling some of the best ever taken in New Zealand's hunting history.

The winning sika head was a five and a half year old 11 pointer from the Oamaru area which scored 209 Douglas Score Points. This animal was shot by local hunter Logan Frew in July last year and was apparently his first mature stag! Second was a classic 8 pointer taken on Poronui Station by John Erceg, scoring just over 187 Douglas Score Points which also took out the coveted "Jim Marshall Memorial Trophy" for Judges' Choice. In all, nine sika heads scoring over 170 Douglas Score Points were entered into the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association (NZDA) record book.

Guest speakers included Garry Ottmann from Safari Club International (SCI) who spoke about the future of hunting in New Zealand, game management and SCI's new initiatives to have both the value of game animals and the social/economic benefits of hunting better recognised at a political level.

We congratulate Hunters & Habitats, the NZDA, trades people and sponsors on yet another great show.

2001 Sika Competition Winners

Sika Deer Section

Highest Douglas Score

2nd

3rd

4th

5th

6th

7th

8th

9th

10th

Most Hind Jaws

Most Unusual Head

Average Douglas Score

Judges' Choice (John Marshall Trophy)

Random entry in Sika Section

Random entry in all sections

Random entry in all sections

Prize

Headmount by Sika Country Taxidermy / Steve Wheeler Knife

Nikko Diamond 3x9-44 Scope

Stoney Creek Jacket

"Stoney Creek Blaze Vest, Torch, Stoney Creek Bag"

"Stoney Creek Blaze Vest, Torch, Stoney Creek Bag"

"Stoney Creek Blaze Vest, Headlamp, Gun Bag"

"Stoney Creek Blaze Vest, Compass, Gun Bag"

"Headlamp, Blaze Cap, Gun Bag"

Graf Brothers Video, Headlamp, Compass"

"Graf Brothers Video, Headlamp"

Vasco Scope

SL170 Spotlight

Lakeland Helicopters Flight

Air Charter Taupo

Araru Helicopters - Chantois Hunt

"Graf Brothers Video, Leidreiter's Tanning Kit"

Helisika Flight

Winner

Logan Frew

John Erceg

Andrew Philpott

Craig Milne

Rhett Clarke

Warren Martin

Winstone McNaie

Brian Cornish

Steve Palmer

Michael Thomas

M Cadogen

Kurt Kostyrko

Craig Osborne

John Erceg

Michael Thomas

Tom Lennon

Steve Brooke

Score

209 1/2

187 7/8

185 1/4

184

179 3/8

179

172 5/8

171 7/8

171

161 7/8

8 jaws

Non-Sika Species Section

Josh Bridgman Trophy (Best Show Head)

Nikko Diamond 1.5-6 x20 Scope

Bruce Lancaster

397 3/8

Judges' Choice (Red Deer)

Wheeler Knife

Bruce Lancaster

397 3/8

Judges' Choice (Fallow Deer)

Huntech Clothing

Scott Vartiainen

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— Peter Carty

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# Hemi Kingi

Hemi Kingi, Tongariro-Taupo Conservancy's Kaipapa Atawhai Manager, passed away suddenly on 9 April. The news of Hemi's death devastated all who knew him. The day before he had flown back from Uluru Kata Tjuta (Ayers Rock) National Park in Australia where he had spent four days at the invitation of aboriginal leaders advising on indigenous land issues.

Hemi's role in the conservancy was to develop and maintain relationships between DOC and iwi. In this regard he played a vital role supporting the management of the Taupo fishery, both as a DOC manager and latterly as a member of the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board. Another challenge was to increase staff understanding of tikanga Maori.

Hemi rose to the challenge and worked tirelessly to build more and more bridges. Recently the bridge building extended beyond New Zealand in his role as a World Heritage Site delegate at conferences and workshops in Fiji and Australia.

Hemi's love of rugby extended all the way to Ellis Park where he shared the stands with some of five greats of South African Rugby and even met Nelson Mandela. The reason for the South African trip, to meet his eldest son's prospective bride, was to have culminated in their wedding only two weeks after his death. His great knowledge and understanding of the past and his ability to share this with others was a real strength and played a major role in his World Heritage Site work.

Hemi started work as a plumber but his love of an intellectual challenge led him to Wellington where he served as a policy advisor for various government departments. Following a heart attack approximately eight years ago he returned to his beloved Ngati Tuwharetoa rohe and accepted a call from the late Sir Hemi Te Huhu that he should become the Kaipapa Atawhai Manager for the Tongariro-Taupo conservancy. In the six years he was with us Hemi struggled with his health but never let it reduce the amount of

work he took on either for DOC or for his iwi. Hemi influenced many of us with his knowledge, values, friendship, fun and vision. As part of the Department's Pukenga Atawhai training programme Hemi skillfully interwove his profound knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi as well as his grasp of the scriptures into a classically simple explanation of the two Treaty of Waitangi scripts, one in English, the other in Maori. His definitions of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi for inclusion in the conservancy's Conservation Management Strategy are so defining that it is likely they will be used in other plans as well.

He will be greatly missed by all of us.



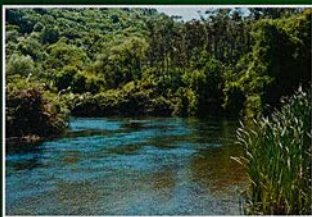




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for details

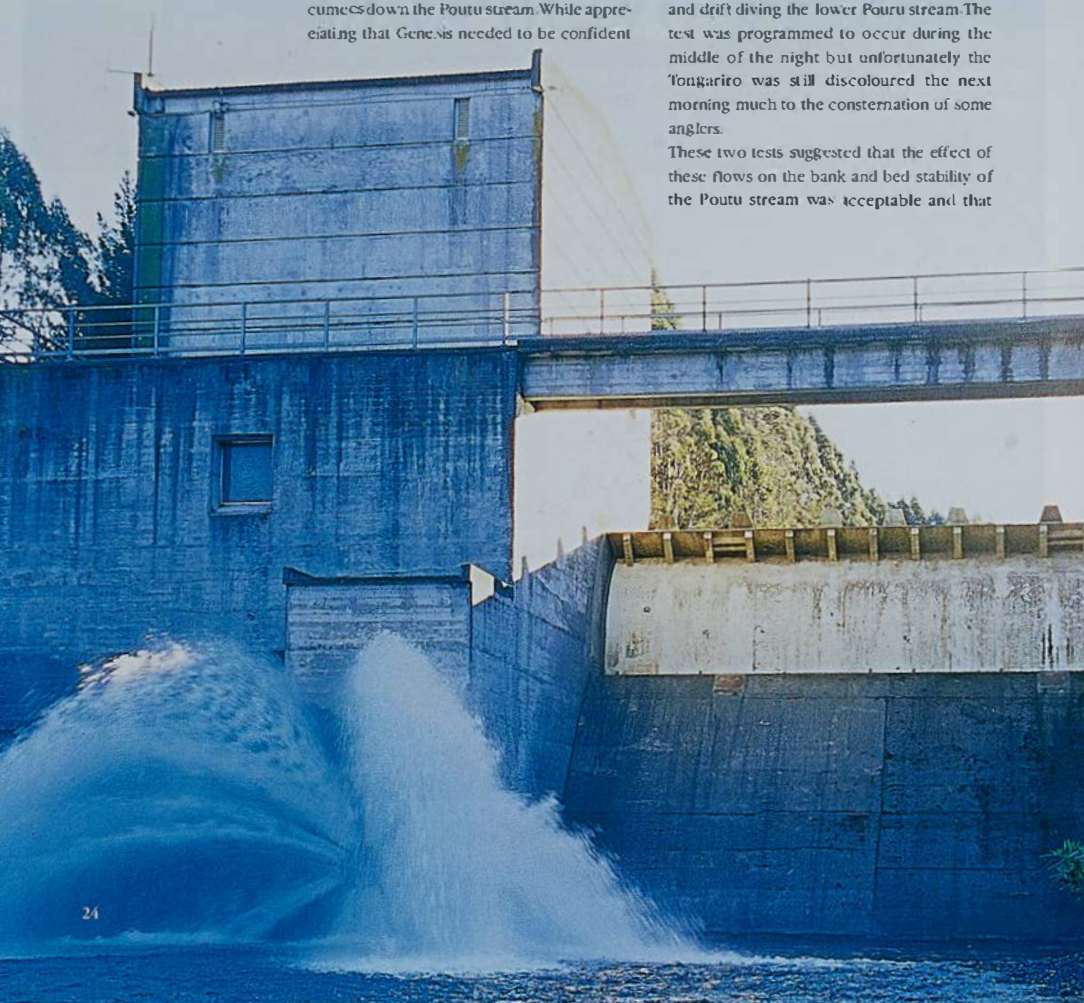
# Agreement over Poutu Drum Gate Tests

The Poutu drum gate is part of Poutu Dam at the eastern end of Lake Rotoaira. Opening the gate is an emergency action to discharge water down the Poutu stream should the water level in Lake Rotoaira reach such a level that it threatens the integrity of the dam structure. To date the gate has never had to be used in this way but it is now a requirement of the insurers of the structure that every year the operators Genesis Power Limited test the opening of the gates. Initially it was proposed to fully open the gates over a period of several hours which would release a flow of approximately 70 cumecs down the Poutu stream. While appreciating that Genesis needed to be confident

that the gates would work in an emergency we had grave concerns over the effects on the fishery of such a flow passing down the Poutu stream which normally flows at approximately 1.3 cumecs.

Previously in 1991 the gates had been tested following the installation of hydraulic rams. The gates were lowered so as to release flows up to 34 cumecs and the downstream effects of these flows measured. However no fisheries data was collected at this time. In April 2000 the test was repeated with a flow of 24 cumecs and a fisheries assessment undertaken involving both electric fishing and drift diving the lower Poutu stream. The test was programmed to occur during the middle of the night but unfortunately the Tongariro was still discoloured the next morning much to the consternation of some anglers.

These two tests suggested that the effect of these flows on the bank and bed stability of the Poutu stream was acceptable and that



the flows actually encouraged adult to run into the stream from the Tongariro river. However it is likely that the flows impact on the juvenile trout present and that these impacts may extend to the main stem of the Tongariro. For example the rapid fluctuation in flow which more than doubles in the Tongariro and then falls back again may strand the young trout living along the river edge.

Accepting that the tests do have to occur we asked if they could be undertaken between April and June before the main spawning occurs in the Poutu stream. We also asked that they be timed to coincide with a natural flood in the Tongariro so that the impact in the Tongariro was negligible. Genesis who have been working closely with us to minimise the environmental effects of the gate tests agreed to trial this approach and

on the 25 May undertook this year's test to coincide with a flood in the Tongariro. With the river high and in flood the additional flow was not noticed by anglers nor had any effect over and above that of the flood itself. Both Genesis and ourselves are comfortable with the result and have agreed the following conditions are appropriate to be included in the resource consent required for the ongoing annual tests.

That the:

- flow released be no more than 34 cumecs.
- test occur between 1 April and 31 July and coincide with a flood in the Tongariro River.
- test program occurs between the hours of 2400 and 0500.
- Department of Conservation, Environment Waikato and the public are notified prior to the test.



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# 1080 - Environmental Friend or Toxic Foe?

by Cam Speedy

Cam coordinates animal pest and threatened species management for the Tangaroa of Aotaro Conservancy. Cam and his team also oversee weed management and habitat monitoring.

This winter large areas of conservation land are being treated in the central North Island with 1080 poisoned baits to control possums. These operations have generated much debate about this method of pest control. Letters and phone calls from the public, together with a number of personal delegations to local DOC offices, have voiced strong opposition. The level of public interest has prompted us to publish the following article which discusses this controversial management tool.

It has also killed many good dogs, deer, stock and a variety of birds during that time, generating much opposition to its use. The debate over 1080 use has been vigorous, often emotional, facts have been misrepresented and still today there is much disagreement and misunderstanding about both the toxin and its use as a pesticide. Much of the fear about 1080 is very genuine; many New Zealanders are not comfortable with the large scale use of toxins no matter how safe they are claimed to be. The deaths of loved



1080 pellets. Photograph by DOC. Photo (thru); Wellington

Ask any hunter or dog owner what they think of 1080 and you will probably get a heated, negative response. 1080 kills mammals very effectively - especially dogs! Its properties as a pesticide have been utilised in New Zealand for nearly 50 years now with generally effective results in terms of short and medium term reductions in rabbit, possum and rat populations. But 1080

dogs, cherished game animals and native wildlife doesn't help the issue.

What follows is my own perspective of 1080 as a wildlife biologist. This is not my only perspective for I am a keen hunter, a wildlife enthusiast and a dog owner, but it is the biologist's perspective I see as being most important because wildlife management in New Zealand is in urgent crisis. I believe that

without 1080 and in the absence of alternative technologies, the wildlife treasure and the unique New Zealand environment in which that wildlife lives have a very tenuous future indeed. That wildlife includes those highly contentious "valued introduced species" such as deer, as well as the many very special and ancient species native to this land.

### What is 1080?

It is useful to first look at the toxin itself. 1080 is the laboratory number given to a compound known as sodium monofluoroacetate. It is a deceptively simple, naturally occurring plant toxin found at toxic levels in over 40 plant species on at least three continents. Deception is in fact the key to its active properties as a pesticide. Animal cells are deceived into thinking that fluoroacetate (the active ingredient) is indeed acetate, a common and vital compound in the biochemical makeup and functioning of animal cells. These cells try to convert fluoroacetate, as they do acetate, to other metabolites for use in energy production, but the attached fluorine atom blocks the process and stops cellular energy production. The animal simply runs out of energy, like cutting the fuel line in a car, and dies. Death in herbivores is usually of heart failure about one to six hours after ingestion of a lethal dose depending on the species, its age, size, the amount of toxin ingested, and even the individual animal itself. Different species have different tolerances to fluoroacetate, and hence require higher or lower doses to cause death.

Despite many claims, 1080 poisoning is quite humane for herbivorous animals. I have picked up poisoned possums in the field prior to death which are quiet and in a very dazed, almost comatose state. Unfortunately, predatory animals like dogs and cats (generally non-target animals) have a different metabolism from herbivores and experience violent nervous system effects which modify their behaviour prior to death. The dog deaths I have witnessed have been unpleasant to say the least. The loss of a close family or hunting friend is a disturbing and emotional experience and dog deaths contribute significantly to negative perceptions about 1080. The reality is that 1080 is not hard to kill dogs; they are an unfortunate by-kill. If the necessary notification proce-

dures required by law are followed and if dog owners are aware of the risks to their animals, dog deaths should be minimal. One of the major concerns expressed about 1080 is its fate in the environment. In the past pesticides like DDT have been banned after extensive use because they were found to be accumulating in the food chain, creating flow-on effects in the environment. More recently the Department of Conservation has seriously restricted the use of Brodifacoum, the active ingredient in most over-the-counter rodent baits and the very popular Talon™ and Pestoff™ possum baits, for similar reasons.

However, because 1080 is a very simple, water soluble, organic molecule it is completely biodegradable and is readily broken down by bacteria and other microorganisms in the environment. If an animal eats even moderate amounts of toxin and does not die, the toxin is quickly broken down in the liver, similar to alcohol in humans. Within a few days it is completely removed from the body in the form of harmless by-products. If baits fall into water, the toxin rapidly dissolves and is quickly diluted to very low concentrations, which are then broken down by microorganisms present in all natural streams and waterways. Nevertheless, people do get concerned about toxins in waterways and many hundreds of water samples have been taken for toxin analysis during and following possum control operations all around the country. In all recorded cases to date, the levels of fluoroacetate present have never even come close to the levels found in an average cup of tea. Yes, even tea plants have very small quantities of fluoroacetate in their tannins!

### 1080 from the skies

Many people accept that 1080 is a useful pest control tool but are opposed to the way it is applied. While ground application can safely deliver the toxin to the target animal within the target area, in many cases to control possums cost effectively over very large tracts of rugged and inaccessible terrain requires that the toxic bait be delivered by aerial application methods. This immediately poses the problem that large amounts of bait are available to non-target species. The bait must therefore be made in a way which reduces the likelihood of non-target interest.

A number of bait treatments have been developed over the years for this purpose. The dyeing of baits green makes them less attractive to birds whose colour vision is more focused at the red/orange end of the colour spectrum. That is why most forest fruits are so coloured. Baits are also made large (four to six grams) and pelletised to minimise crumbs and flakes which are easier for small birds to pick up and eat. If carrot bait is used it is now required to be carefully screened to take out the smaller pieces

(chaff) for the same reason. Baits are lured with cinnamon, a proven bird repellent which helps to mask the toxin but which makes the bait more attractive to keen scenting herbivorous and omnivorous mammals. Sowing rates have also been significantly decreased in recent years to reduce the amount of bait in the forest. Early 1980 operations used in excess of 30kg of bait per hectare. Modern technological advances in bait sowing buckets, navigational guidance systems and bait quality now allow

*Rugged and inaccessible terrain requires the aerial application of 1000 baits*  
Photograph DGC Photo Library, Wellington





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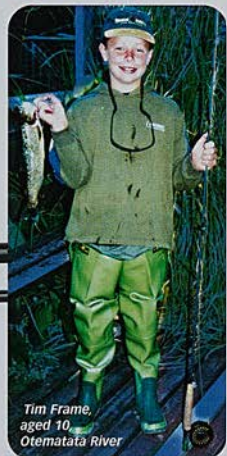


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successful operations at sowing rates as low as 2kg of bait per hectare. Unfortunately it is impossible to completely eliminate non-target deaths and a small number of non-target animals inevitably die in an aerial poison operation. This generates further concern and debate over such control methods. However it is important to understand that apart from two species of bat, New Zealand has no native terrestrial

bird and insect populations to thrive. This increase more than compensates for the small proportion of individuals from very select populations of non-target wildlife that are directly poisoned by 1080. In fact, the most common bird deaths occur in blackbird and chaffinch populations (both introduced species). Their capacity to have up to three clutches of up to four eggs per breeding pair each breeding season allows them to repro-



*Modern technological advances such as navigational guidance systems allow successful operations at very low sowing rates. Photo graphed DOC, Photo library, Wellington*

mammals. The menagerie of mammals in modern New Zealand forests are aliens as far as the native fauna is concerned, competing for precious food resources or, worse, directly impacting on them through predation. Removing these animals from the forest ecosystem therefore creates significant opportunity for the native fauna to return. In the growing season (spring/summer) following a successful winter poison campaign there is a sudden burst of activity from almost all native species. Reduced competition makes extra food resources available and reduced predation from possums and rats (the major predator for most insects and small forest birds) allows

duce very quickly in the favourable conditions created by removing possums and rats from the forest environment. The majority of our small native forest birds, such as tomtits and robins, also have this capacity to breed at very high rates in good conditions so again, even if one or two are poisoned, the following breeding season more than replaces any losses.

Unlike the small forest birds, the slower, breeding, longer lived specialist species such as kiwi, kereru, kaka and kokako have the capacity to be seriously affected by even small losses to poisoning. Fortunately, their life styles in the forest make them less likely to eat modern bait formulations and consid-



erable research using radio tracking of individual birds through aerial 1080 operations has shown these species are not at risk from aerial 1080 operations.

A good example of ecosystem recovery is the Mapara Wildlife Reserve in the King Country, which has been subject to three 1080 poisoning operations since 1988. Here it is very easy to see the benefits of possum/rodent poisoning campaigns to

control is required once the initial knock down has been achieved if we are to truly protect our native species and ecosystems.

### Effects on game animals

The poisoning of game animals is another major concern expressed about aerial 1080 operations. Deer and pig hunters are generally vocal opponents of 1080. Some deer die



*Nathus ibis populations thrive in the improved habitat following 1080 operations. Photograph DOC photo library, Wellington*

native wildlife. Kokako, kereru and other forest birds are thriving in almost offshore island abundance. Most of the areas with which I have been involved in the past few years are showing a similar response so far. There is now a wealth of research that supports observations of flourishing forest ecosystems following successful possum poisoning campaigns. Because the need to restore the forest habitat of our threatened native wildlife is increasingly urgent for many species, such outcomes are vital if many of these species are to survive. Unfortunately though, habitat recovery also increases the opportunity for forest pests to breed successfully, so ongoing maintenance

in every aerial 1080 operation where deer occur in the treatment area; that is a fact. But pig hunters need not fear for anything but their dogs. Research has shown that aerially applied 1080 possum baits are in fact an ineffective poisoning method against pig populations, even when anti-nausea drugs are included in the bait. This is because pigs have a strong ability to vomit when they feel any ill effects from food they consume. Any sub-lethal dose of 1080 remaining after vomiting up bait or poisoned animal carcasses is quickly metabolised and removed from the pig's body and the pig survives. Smaller (non-breeding age) pigs may die because they need a proportionately lower lethal dose,



*A sorry end for a wonderful stag.  
Photograph DOC photo library, Turangi*

but the rapid breeding capability of sows in the improved habitat more than compensates for the proportion of the population lost.

Kill levels of deer following some 1080 poisoning campaigns, on the other hand, can be very high with kills in excess of 80% being recorded. Again the level of kill varies greatly depending on such factors as deer species and the density at which they occur, the habitat quality, bait type and sowing rate. Sika deer living at higher densities appear particularly vulnerable to carrot bait, probably owing to their small size and their ground feeding habits. Previous control history (whether 1080 has been used before) can also influence the level of deer kill. But the fact remains that deer do die and sometimes magnificent animals fall victim as the accompanying photo shows.

It is however, important to keep the game kill in perspective. The level of kill may be high in some instances, particularly where deer density is high, habitat quality poor, deer condition down and winter conditions harsh. It stands to reason that hungry, nutritionally stressed deer will be more likely to pick up bait. In such situations a reduction in deer density is as positive for the deer as it is for the forest because it will bring the herd back more into balance with the capabilities

of the habitat it occupies. Where deer density is low and body condition good, kill rates are much lower and less significant.

In most forests, a sudden and significant reduction in possum and rat numbers together with some reduction in deer density will allow the forest ecosystem to improve markedly over the following few years. With improved habitat, those deer that remain will enjoy superior nutrition which will greatly improve their reproductive performance. A deer herd has the potential to double every three years in good habitat, so three to five years following a successful possum poisoning operation, deer density will be approaching pre-poison levels in most situations anyway. In situations where a herd was at densities which compromised habitat sustainability prior to poisoning (overstocked range) hopefully deer density will never be allowed to return to pre-poison levels. That is plain and simply just good game management! When repeat poisoning occurs (usually at six-seven year intervals) possum populations are generally still at moderately low levels so lower bait sowing rates are required. In addition, the surviving deer are enjoying a far higher level of nutrition, putting them under far less winter stress.

It is hard for any hunter to overlook the

despair they feel at seeing a deer rotting in the bush poisoned by some faceless possum control agency. But if you can focus on the longer-term benefits both to the forest and to the future improvement of deer quality and performance, it may be more tolerable. It is a fact that much of the central North Island deer habitat could produce better, more productive, sustainable game stocks if deer density were reduced and possums controlled. If ultimately the disease (bovine TB) levels in wild deer are reduced and the native wildlife like kereru, kaka, kiwi, bats and lizards does better. I believe the hunting experience will be enhanced for many hunters.

On the plus side for hunters, a private pest

control company is currently developing a deer repellent for possum baits and initial trials look very promising. It could be that within the next year, there will be possum baits available that will kill very few deer.

In the meantime, possum control agencies have an important responsibility to recognise the concerns and fears of hunters, dog owners, and those in our community uncomfortable with toxin use. Pest controllers need to build an understanding of such concerns and fears into each and every possum control operation and ensure operational procedures follow strict quality assurance standards for the safe and targeted use of toxins. In this respect I am heartened by the apparent commitment of the control agencies with which I deal to

embrace these principles and in the research that is underway to refine current techniques and find new possum control technology. There are those who will always see 1080 as a toxic foe. Others are starting to see for themselves that much of their concern is unfounded and that 1080 does indeed have longer term benefits as an environmental management tool in a New Zealand context. However 1080 use will probably always be a contentious issue. For me personally, having seen first hand the results of numerous operations, I sincerely believe that much of the wildlife and habitat I cherish in the New Zealand environment is doomed in my son's lifetime without such tools. I realise that many people do not share this view of what is perhaps our most cost-effective management tool, but the reality is we currently have few other options...

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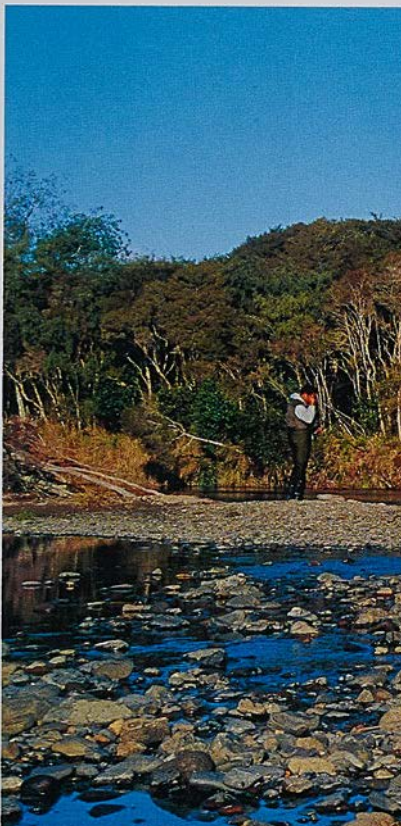
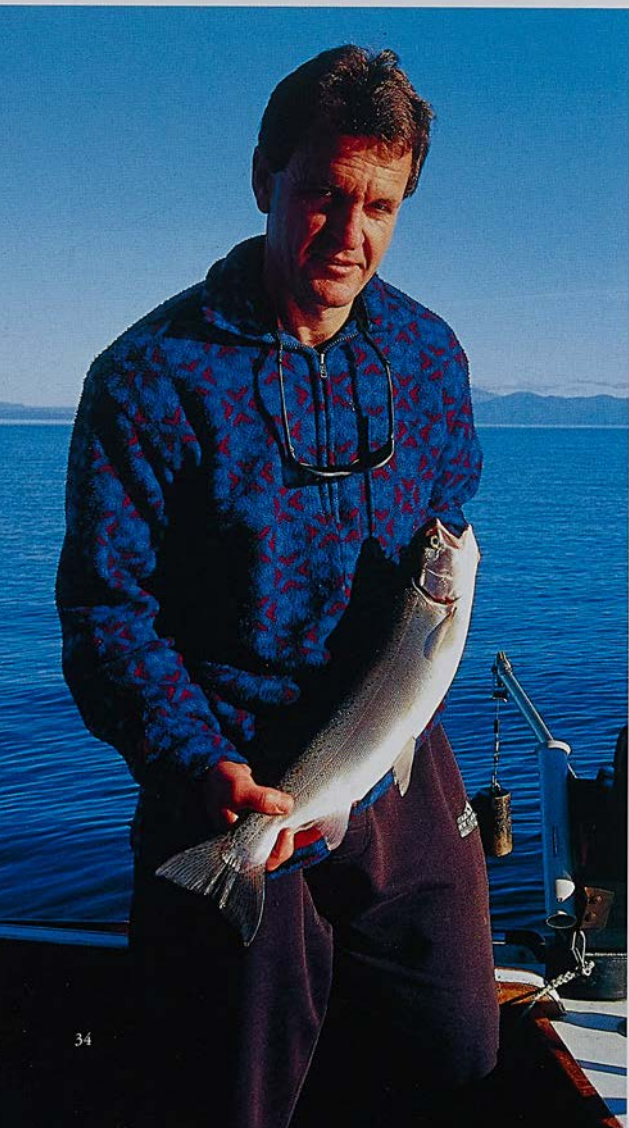
# Fishery Update

*Glen Mactean with a very well recovered previous spawner, typical of what anglers are catching at present*

In the March 2001 issue of *Target Trout* we discussed that this summer the lake fishery was dominated by unusually large numbers of fish which had spawned last winter. This reflected that many fish had survived from

the exceptional spawning runs last year coinciding with a small maiden (immature) population due to the effects of the July 1998 floods on spawning that year. In fact the maiden run wasn't as small as it first appeared but rather many of the fish were several months younger than is normal for this time of year. For example anglers were catching large numbers of fish less than the legal length well after Christmas. A consequence of this is that fishing guides are commenting that many of the maiden fish in the lake are still a long way off spawning.

Our predictions for an average fishing season on the rivers this winter and a catch dominated by fish making their second spawning migration have so far been borne out. The



average catch rate on the Tongariro River to the end of June was only 0.18 fish per hour (one fish for every 5½ hours of effort) compared with 0.20 fish per hour to the same time last year. The catch rate on the Tauranga Taupo was a little higher at 0.25 fish per hour (one fish every 4 hours) but not as high as the 0.33 fish per hour (1 fish every three hours) in 2000. The fishing has not been helped by the prevailing weather conditions which generally have not been conducive to stimulating the spawning runs except for a period of regular rain in May. During this period some very good fishing occurred such as that experienced by one Taupo angler we interviewed on the Tauranga-Taupo on the 29th May. He had kept three fish and released 26 others for seven hours of fishing.

Our escapement (spawning) counts of the number of fish in selected tributaries around the lake are consistent with the fishing. Counts in the Hinemania, Tauranga-Taupo, Wainarino and Waioatka rivers are approximately half of those last year. Similarly this year 565 rainbows had passed through the

Waipa trap on the upper Tongariro River to the middle of June compared to 849 this time last year. The brown run is 148 fish compared to 178 in 2000, the great majority only arriving in the last 6 weeks. These are the same fish you see when you poke around the lower river in January highlighting the length of time it takes these fish to run the river. Interestingly the rainbow males so far average 565 mm in length and 2.29 kg whereas the rainbow females are only 535 mm in length and 1.91 kg. These average sizes are compared with those for 1999 and 2000 in table 1. This table indicates that the males in particular are larger than normal. This reflects that most of the fish are big old fish with few young maiden fish to bring the average down.

Our surveys of anglers on the rivers also indicate that as expected the vast proportion of the catch are large, very well mended previous spawners. Most of the maidens we have seen are just over the legal length reflecting that they are likely to be young fish, the first of the 1998 year class to spawn. However in amongst the catch are occasional

*Action on the Tauranga Taupo river June 2001*



very large maiden fish of three to four kilograms which are likely that small component of the 1997 year class which did not mature

last year. Such fish were a feature of the catch by river mouth anglers in autumn, particularly at the Waimarino and Tauranga Estuaries.

*Table 1: Average length and weight by species and sex of fish through the Waipa trap for the period January to mid June 1999 - 2001*

	1999		2000		2001	
	Length (mm)	Weight (kg)	Length (mm)	Weight (kg)	Length (mm)	Weight (kg)
Brown female	591	2.66	600	2.85	543	1.74
Brown male	598	2.67	626	2.98	550	1.78
Rainbow female	510	1.77	541	1.98	545	1.91
Rainbow male	531	1.70	510	1.85	565	2.29

*Table 2: Average length and weight by species and sex of fish through the Te Whaiti trap for the period April to June 2000 - 2001*

	2000		2001	
	Length (mm)	Weight (kg)	Length (mm)	Weight (kg)
Brown female	529	1.86	587	2.49
Brown male	571	2.25	598	2.50
Rainbow female	560	2.25	567	2.35
Rainbow male	569	2.25	584	2.48

*The Te Whaiti Fish Trap (foreground), screens across the Whanganui outfall and the trap operators curatani*





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*Te Whaiatu fish trap  
© percaor Norrie Ewing  
with a 4kg female  
rainbow*

As in recent years the maiden fish are splendid condition, bright orange and with liberal fat deposits. Most of the previous spawners are also in very good condition to the point that they are now very difficult to distinguish from maiden fish. This reflects that conditions for growth continue to be very good in Lake Taupo. Some anglers have reported catching poor conditioned fish in the lake recently and asked whether this indicates that conditions have recently deteriorated. We think it is quite the opposite, whereas these fish would normally have died by late summer, this year they have survived albeit that they have not been able to put much condition on. Such are the rigors of spawning that in a typical year less than thirty percent of fish survive to spawn a second time.

Angler numbers on the rivers are similar to recent years except that angling pressure on the upper Hinemaiāia was much less before it closed at the end of May, reflecting that success was much harder to come by this year. As part of our year long harvest survey we fly the rivers three times through the day on a series of days chosen at random. Our highest count so far this winter was 88 anglers on the Tongariro river, 35 anglers on the Tauranga-Taupo and 153 anglers across all of the eastern tributaries. This compares to peak counts on the Tongariro of 121 over the 1990/91 season, 90 over the 1995/96 season and 167 last year and a peak count of 34 on the Tauranga-Taupo in 1995. It is noticeable that more anglers are once again fishing the upper Tongariro but the majority





are grouped around the Bridge and Waddell pool areas. If you are prepared to explore there is some 'good water' which is not getting much pressure particularly during the week.

The big question is whether the maiden fish will mature and run the rivers this winter. If they do then there should be some excellent late fishing. If they don't then with another nine months growth they will be very impressive fish come next autumn.

Looking further ahead last years exceptional spawning runs have been reflected by very large numbers of progeny. In early autumn the rivers were teeming with juvenile trout including many which had only just emerged from the gravels. A moderate flood in May had some obvious detrimental impact but at this stage the year class, the majority of which will mature in 2003 appears strong. At Lake Otamangakau the spawning run through the Te Whaiiau trap is also down on last year but the average size of the fish is up as shown in table 2. This is consistent with comments by our staff operating the trap

regarding the large number and superb condition of fish between three and four kilograms. However to date there have only been four fish over 4.5kg (10lb) which is disappointing but in keeping with the results reported by lake anglers over the summer.

## Dredging Lake TeWhaiiau and Canals

Genesis Power Limited have applied for a resource consent to dredge Lake TeWhaiiau, TeWhaiiau canal and Otamangakau canal in a repeat of the work last undertaken in 1996. This involved using a cutter suction dredge to remove sediment which was pumped into settling ponds and stock piled on the true right of Lake TeWhaiiau and true left of Otamangakau canal. Tight operating conditions applied to this work and monitoring at the time indicated only a very slight increase in turbidity levels immediately downstream of the work. Tracking of radio tagged fish in the vicinity of the dredge indicated no obvious avoidance which was also borne out by the success of anglers fishing close to the dredge and by the number of fish trapped upstream in the TeWhaiiau trap which was the highest recorded since trapping began in 1994.

Genesis propose to undertake the work in the same way this time and have discussed suitable conditions with us and other interested parties. They have agreed to avoid working close to the delta area in Lake Otamangakau over the peak fishing months of January to March and to cease operation over opening weekend of the duckshooting season. The work does not involve any dredging of Lake Otamangakau outside of the immediate delta area. We are comfortable with the proposed conditions and have supported their application to Environment Waikato for a consent to undertake the work expected to start later in the year. While the dredging may cause some short term inconvenience to those anglers fishing in Lake TeWhaiiau the deepening of the lake and canal should improve the fishing opportunities in the longer term.

# Dog Policy Update

In late January 2001 a public discussion document detailing how the Department of Conservation proposes to manage the potential impacts of dogs within Tongariro, Erua and Rangataua Forest Conservation Areas under section 26zz of the Conservation Act (1987) was publicly advertised and distributed. Some 100 copies of the document were distributed to various stakeholders and, upon request, to interested members of the public. The public had 40 working days to make written submissions which closed on 2 April 2001. A total of 11 submissions were received.

Table 1 provides a summary of the submissions received.

In general, most submitters were supportive of the proposal. Some suggested useful ways of improving the proposal to make it more practical and therefore workable and these have been taken on board. Two submissions opposed the proposal; one from hunters who felt the policy was unnecessary and bureaucratic; the other from a conservation NGO (non-government organisation) suggested the policy was not strong enough to protect conservation values from dogs and wanted a total ban on dogs, including dog exclusion buffer zones around all the conservation land involved.

Following consideration of the submissions the following recommendations were made to the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board at its April 2001 meeting and these were endorsed at its subsequent meeting in June 2001.

## Recommendations:

- That you note the nature of the submissions received on the discussion document;
- That you endorse a recommendation to the Minister of Conservation that all land within Tongariro, Erua and Rangataua Forest Conservation Areas be gazetted as "controlled dog area".
- That the following conditions be placed on dog use within these "controlled dog areas".
- That permits to enter these controlled dog areas only be issued for dogs that either are: certified as threatened species dogs and involved with bona fide threatened species management programmes; or have entered the National Kiwi Aversion Training Programme; and
- That are clearly identified by a brand, tattoo or other recognised identification system; and
- That are tied up at night unless involved in bona fide management work as part of the National Kiwi Recovery Programme; and
- That any dogs lost in the areas subject to this policy must be reported within 24 hours; and
- That the Department of Conservation reserves the right to decline a dog access permit to any dog owner if there are justifiable grounds for doing so.
- These recommendations will now be passed to the Minister of Conservation and if approved, the policy gazetted into law. The Department will then negotiate Kiwi Aversion Training at a nominal cost for local dog owners with a local contractor who has extensive hunting and dog handling experience.

Table 1: Analysis of Public Submissions Received on the Dog Policy Discussion Paper for Tongariro, Erua and Rangataua Forest Conservation Areas

Name of submitter	Type of submitter	Nature of submission	Wish to be heard in support?
ProHunt NZ Ltd	Hunting contractors who run dogs that have been through Kiwi Aversion Training Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kiwi Aversion Training has worked well for all their dogs and they support the basic policy</li> <li>Concerned that Conservancy needs qualified dog trainer and that dog owners have reasonable opportunity to have dogs put through Kiwi Aversion Training at minimal cost</li> </ul>	No
Jim Pattinger - Central Hunting Services	Hunting contractor/private hunter who runs dogs that have been through the Kiwi Aversion Training Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kiwi aversion training has worked well for his dogs and he supports the policy</li> <li>Concerned that 100 dogs per hunter will not work for many pig hunters (three is better to allow for training of a young dog)</li> <li>Need to get dogs to wear heavy collars for two to three weeks prior to training so dogs don't recognise electric collar</li> <li>Need for consistency between conservancies</li> </ul>	No
Tongariro National History Society	NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports policy</li> </ul>	No
Guide Dog Services, Royal NZ Foundation for the Blind	NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports policy</li> </ul>	No
Forest & Bird Protection Society (Taupo & King Country Branches)	NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintains dog use by recreational users is inconsistent with protection of the forest</li> <li>Maintains the risks of hunting dogs to kiwi and blue duck outweigh any benefit to the forest of removing pest animals</li> <li>Suggests Kiwi Aversion Training is not sufficient, thorough or well proven enough to justify risks to kiwi and blue duck</li> <li>Maintains all dogs should be prohibited from these forests except where they are used for threatened species work by qualified handlers</li> <li>Suggests there is a need for buffer zones around these forests from which dogs are also excluded</li> </ul>	Yes
Hunters & Habitats	NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agrees kiwi need to be protected from the danger of predation by dogs</li> <li>Maintains Kiwi Aversion Training Programme should be user friendly and not excessively expensive or restrictive</li> <li>Maintain feedback on success of the policy should be provided to hunters involved with the programme</li> </ul>	No
New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association, Taupo Branch	NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full support is given to the proposal</li> <li>Concerned that Police and Search &amp; Rescue dogs could pose a risk to kiwi and that these dogs should also enter the Kiwi Aversion Training Programme before working in these areas</li> <li>Kiwi aversion training needs to be accessible to local hunters</li> <li>Suggests greater public awareness of the risks dogs pose to kiwi and blue duck is required</li> <li>Suggests greater opportunity for voluntary involvement in kiwi recovery activity would help more people understand kiwi management issues</li> </ul>	No
John Harpham & Rosemary Peck	Private hunters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree that dogs should be kept out of areas where known dog predation of any endangered species is a threat</li> <li>Believe proposal is unnecessary in these areas and that it will encourage illegal use of dogs</li> <li>Believe current regime is adequate</li> <li>Suggest banning dogs is unreasonable and will alienate users</li> <li>Maintain all hunters known to the submitters have never seen or heard kiwi in these areas, or had dogs pass on or retrieve kiwi or blue duck, or seen sign of kiwi or blue duck nests</li> <li>Suggest 1000 poison and mustelids are biggest threats to these species</li> <li>Believe excluding dogs will result in greater pest problems</li> </ul>	No
Mance Gurney	Private dog owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports policy</li> <li>Maintains any dog which has undertaken the Kiwi Aversion Training programme should be permitted to enter the forest, not just hunting dogs</li> </ul>	No
Ruapahu District Council	Local territorial authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports policy</li> <li>Offer to make dog owner education material available to Ruapahu ratepayers and residents when they register their dogs</li> <li>Supports mandatory reporting of lost dogs</li> <li>Suggests DMC investigates use of radio collars to permitted dogs entering forest conservation areas so lost dogs can be tracked</li> </ul>	No
Conservation Action International Ltd	Wildlife consultant specialising in hunting dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breed selection is most important criterion to ensure permitted dogs do not harm wildlife. Farm bred heading dogs (border collies) are best, bird dogs and bulle-type killer dogs are highest risk</li> <li>Need to get respect of hunters for sound policy to make any policy work</li> <li>Four policy will increase illegal dog use</li> <li>Four dogs per hunter is most "functional" pack for hunting</li> <li>Believes massive clean-up of dogs is necessary and overdue</li> </ul>	No

## New Fishing Licence Fees

The 2001/2002 Taupo fishing season began on 1 July. Fees for all classes of adults' licences have increased this year, but those for children remain unchanged.

While all fees were held unchanged last year, the need for additional funding for managing the fishery meant that some increases were unavoidable this year. This resulted from increases in ownership costs as a result of recent asset revaluations, additional equipment required as part of a national radio network upgrade and staff costs. Significant new work will occur as a result of several major resource consent applications affecting the fishery. These include Genesis Power's Tongariro scheme, TrustPower's Hinemaiaia hydro stations, King Country Energy's Kuratau hydro station and Mighty River Power's Lake Taupo and Waikato River consents. Last year the Taupo fishery area incurred substantial unbudgeted expenditure owing to some of these consent proce-

dures and it is essential that financial provision is made this year for participation in processes of vital importance to the future of the fishery.

This year we will also be embarking on a major acoustic tagging programme to calibrate the Waipa Stream trout run with the total spawning run in the Tongariro River. A successful result will allow much better monitoring of trends in the Tongariro River runs and ultimately better management of the Taupo fishery. One-off research projects like this unfortunately create lumpy expenditure patterns that have to be funded as they arise as the fishery is unable to operate a reserve account.

The licence fee increases average 2.7% across the board and are split between the following categories (all GST inclusive):

licence	2000/01 Fee	2001/02 Fee
Adult Season	\$55.00	\$58.00
Adult Month	\$36.00	\$37.00
Adult Week	\$26.00	\$27.00
Adult Day	\$12.00	\$12.50
Child Season	\$10.00	\$10.00
Child Day	\$3.00	\$3.00

*Shirley Oates (left) and  
Mandi Goffin sort out the  
new seasons licences for  
distribution to our 125  
agents. Photograph Bob  
Hood*

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## Fishing Regulations Review

In the last issue of *Target Taupo* we signalled our intention to review the Taupo Fishing Regulations and invited anglers to submit their views. Since then nine anglers have responded with a range of suggestions for inclusion in the new regulations.

It is our intention to complete the review within this financial year which ends on 30 June 2002. In July / August this year we will formalise the process, which will include defined periods for submissions and analysis. The timeframes for this will be publicly notified in additions to information updates in the November issue of this magazine. The Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee also has a key role to play in the review as the formal representative of Taupo anglers and all submissions we receive will also be put in front of the committee.

This is your opportunity to influence the rules that govern your sport. You are welcome to send us your views at any time from now on. Please address your submissions to:

The Taupo Fishery Area Manager  
Department of Conservation  
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# Tongariro Protection Works Completed

The work to address erosion of the true left bank of the Tongariro River between Koura and Kutai streets as described in the last issue of Target Taupo was completed as planned in late March. This work involved placing large rocks to form a sloping revetment along 250 metres of eroding river bank. To undertake the work it was neces-

sary that it was likely that in the next flood the river would try to erode material from upstream to reduce the gradient. We were concerned that if the bund was completely removed and further down cutting occurred that the Hydro pool could be lost. In addition the removal of the bund risked disturbing the underlying sill which somehow has with-



## *The finished works*

sary to build a bund across the main river to divert the flow down the flood channel. This had the effect of temporarily raising the water level in the Hydro pool.

Once the work was completed the contractor began to lower the bund and return the flow to the main channel. Part way through this we became concerned that the shape of the river bed now downstream of the bund

stood everything the river can throw at it to date, unlike other pools in the river. As a consequence we asked that the contractor stop work and that the remainder of the bund be left so that in the next flood the river had scope to cut its own bed hopefully without effecting the Hydro pool. This meant that the water level remained high in the Hydro pool which did not please



*Following the flood in late May it is once again possible to wade the Hydro Pool*

all of the regular anglers, some of whom insisted the digger be bought back in. We were all in agreement that the water level should be returned to the height that it was prior to the work, we just disagreed about how to achieve this. Our offer was to wait for a significant flood and if that didn't lower the water height we would reconsider the use of a digger. In our view this gave two opportunities to get it right where as if the sill was mechanically excavated and the flood then scoured it lower the pool was lost for good. On the 25 May the river did flood and scour the sill down. A large amount of material was swept down the river and deposited in the reach adjacent to the repair works. Some of this material came from the sill which was cut down to its original height. As the flood receded the hydro pool reappeared as the pool of old. While this is a pleasing outcome we have to acknowledge feeling a little uneasy that the cutting down is not finished and that the pool may yet be lost. Lets hope this time we are wrong.



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**HOST**  
 ACCOMMODATION

# TFAC - Representing Taupo Anglers

*By Graham Whyman (TFAC)*

In the last issue of *Target Taupo*, Strato Cotslints gave a comprehensive review of the functions of the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee (TFAC). I would emphasise that although the appointments are nominated by organisations and clubs the appointees are by no means solely there to represent these organisations. We are spokespeople for all Taupo anglers. As the committee we are your voice to the fishery managers and should the subject be contentious, a direct line to the Minister of Conservation.

Strato and our chairman John Davis have been very active in this direction with the Trout Protection Bill but there are many more issues that have the potential to impact on the Taupo fishery. Water quality, hydro generation schemes (four directly affecting Taupo) and regulatory changes to name but three. To be effective as watchdogs your input is necessary. Please raise subjects important to you, the committee is always receptive and willing to discuss and if required advocate on your behalf. Written submissions to the committee are preferred to prevent misinterpretation but if you wish to communicate direct your representatives are listed below.

*Strato Cotslints* National fishing interests  
telephone (04) 472 7827, fax (04) 472 9982

*Chris Jolly* Taupo Commercial Launchmen's Association  
telephone (07) 378 0623 or email [chrisj@chrisjolly.co.nz](mailto:chrisj@chrisjolly.co.nz)

*John Davis* (Chairperson) Taupo Fishing Club  
telephone/fax (07) 378 2303

*Colin Patchett* Waitahanui Angling Improvement Association  
telephone (07) 378 4738

*Alan Simmons* New Zealand Professional Fishing Guides' Association  
telephone (07) 386 7574 or email [alan@fishnhunt.co.nz](mailto:alan@fishnhunt.co.nz)

*Graham Whyman* Tongariro and Lake Taupo Anglers' Club  
telephone (07) 386 8996 or email [sport.life@xtrem.co.nz](mailto:sport.life@xtrem.co.nz)

*Bryce Johnson* Fish and Game New Zealand  
telephone (04) 499 4767 or email [bjohnson@fishandgame.org.nz](mailto:bjohnson@fishandgame.org.nz)

*John Gibbs* Department of Conservation  
telephone (07) 386 9228 or email [jgibbs@doc.govt.nz](mailto:jgibbs@doc.govt.nz)



## Cleaning Fish

Many New Zealand waterways hold special cultural, aesthetic or historical values and there is little doubt that this particularly applies to Lake Taupo and its tributaries. There are few places that provide such a quality environment in which to participate and experience various recreational activities. With this in mind, it is always disappointing to find the unsightly and smelly decomposing remains of discarded fish guts on the riverbank or lake edge.

If you kill a fish for the table, either take the fish home intact or if you clean your catch while still out on the lake or river, place the remains in a suitable container and take that home with you.

The other benefit of taking the offal home is that burying fish offal and carcasses under the lemon tree, for example, is well proven to boost the production of lemons. Unfortunately, even if an attempt is made to bury the remains beside the waters edge, often it is not sufficient to prevent determined scavengers such as cats or dogs digging it back up.

In a related matter, several anglers have enquired as to whether it is acceptable to remove the head and/or tail while still out fishing on the lake or river, as they were concerned about regulations regarding the measuring of undersize fish. There is nothing in

the regulations to prevent anglers from doing this provided the fish exceeds the minimum length of 45cm. However a component of our monitoring involves recording details of fish kept by anglers. This includes fish that have been gutted as the fish length information is still of use, so we would prefer anglers to leave the head and tail on if possible.

Filleting a fish which is slightly undersize will make it difficult for us to prove that it was less than 45cm (but not impossible) and may well make us look very closely at everything else you are doing.

*Please take fish  
offal home with  
you*



By Mandi Goffin  
Mandi is Programme  
Manager for Community  
Relations and Licencing

*The Rainbow Runners'  
walk across the finish  
line.*

*From left John Gibbs,  
Stanley Booy, Errol  
Cudby, Collette Dedual,  
Pat Gibbs, Michel Dedual,  
Mandi Goffin (obscured),  
Bob Hood and Rob  
McLay (obscured). Not in  
the photo Sil Piua, Chris  
McMillan and Rouena  
Cudby*

## The Great Lake Relay

The 17 and 18 of February 2001 are dates remembered by quite a few members of the two DOC teams entered in the Great Lake Relay. This relay involves teams of between ten and 14 members walking or running around Lake Taupo in less than 24 hours. Over 4000 competitors took part this year including the DOC teams, the Rainbow Runners' from the Fishery Area and the Doctrinaires' from the Community Relations group within the Conservancy. Both teams suffered mental exhaustion weeks before the event, due to the constant banter and healthy competitive spirit that dominated lunchtime discussions.

A few relevant points worth noting-

The Rainbow Runners Manager/Organiser/Scheduler managed to miss his leg completely, so much for Stanley's organisational skills

Cellphone use and the emphasis placed on its importance for communication is dependent on service in remote areas

Port a loo's were a great commodity at the beginning of the event, but declined in popularity towards the end of the day,

The rain didn't appear to dampen anyone's spirit - the spirit was always willing, even if the body was occasionally on leave.

Who won? Certainly not the DOC teams but a great time never the less.

# FINISH

Photograph Karl Booy



# New Consents for the Kuratau Power Scheme

The owner of the Kuratau Power Scheme, King Country Energy Limited, has applied for new operating consents as required under the Resource Management Act 1991. The scheme, which was built in 1962, involves damming the Kuratau river at the site of a natural waterfall and diverting the water through a six megawatt station before returning the water to the Kuratau river. The dam has created Lake Kuratau, a shallow productive lake situated just northeast of the intersection of State Highways 32 and 41. The station is operated as a hydro peaking station, which means that the generation and therefore flow of water through the station are varied during the day to meet the requirements for electricity. The operation is very similar to that of the HIB station on the Hinemaiaia River and has the effect of causing the flow in the river below the station to fluctuate widely most days. In the case of the Kuratau river flows typically vary between 0.6 to 10 cumecs. The new consents propose to be able to vary the flow

through the station over a greater range than at present, though in reality these higher flows are only available during flood flows when the dam would otherwise be spilling. Therefore this condition is unlikely to cause any variation from the present flows in the lower river.

As with the Hinemaiaia we believe that the fluctuating flows adversely affect the trout fishery. In particular the areas which are optimum for spawning under one flow are no longer suitable under another flow. This is highlighted in both rivers by the large concentrations of spawning fish in the vicinity of the power station each winter, with many fewer fish spawning in the river downstream. This is contrary to other Taupo rivers where we encounter high densities of spawning fish along many kilometres of each river.

However a major difference between the two rivers is that in the Hinemaiaia the spawning fish collect in the bypass channel whereas in the Kuratau they collect immedi-

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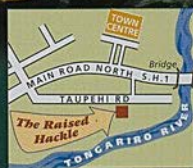
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ately below the station tailrace with many fewer fish in the bypass. Initially this was puzzling but in fact there is a simple explanation for this. In the Kuratau all the water from upstream of the dam passes through the station except during those periods when the dam is spilling. The water in the bypass comes from a spring at the base of the waterfall below the dam. Upstream of the dam the resident fishery in the river and its tributaries is characterised by large numbers of small trout. Clearly conditions are conducive for spawning but less suitable for growth to a large size. Juvenile rainbows have a propensity to migrate downstream and it appears that a significant number survive going either through the turbine or over the spill way and on to lake Taupo. When mature these fish attempt to return to where they were spawned but can only go as far as the station and so collect in the tailrace. The springfed bypass holds no attraction as this water is from a different source and lacks the flavours of their spawning ground.

In the case of the Hinemaiaia the water in

the bypass is a compensation flow released from the base of the dam. We can postulate that the fish which collect there were either spawned upstream or that they are attracted in there because the flows are stable. The resident trout fishery in the upper Hinemaiaia is much smaller than that in the Kuratau. Similarly the dam spills much less often and the few fish migrating downstream have to survive passing through the turbine. As a consequence the number of fish contributing to the Lake Taupo fishery which were produced upstream of the dam is likely to be very low and we believe the second option is a more likely explanation for the concentration of fish in the bypass channel. The dams on the Hinemaiaia have significantly reduced angling opportunity by reducing the number of trout available to anglers in the lake and river and necessitating a lower upstream limit and closed winter season where previously none was required. To address these losses requires a more natural regime in the lower river and the provision of a fish pass over BB dam so that spawning fish can access the Kakapo

*Lake Kuratau*





*Lake Kuratau is highly valued by a small group of Taupo anglers*

and Pahikohuru Streams as they once did. However in the Kuratau the losses are likely to be less. The lower river now produces fewer fish for lake anglers but this is in part offset by the recruitment of fish reared in Lake Kuratau. The lower river is closed to fishing over the winter months as are all the rivers in the west, but even when open attracts little angling activity (other than at the mouth). In addition Lake Kuratau provides an angling opportunity not available elsewhere in the fishery. A small number of anglers treasure the relative solitude and high catch rates for albeit smaller fish.

Improving the fishery in the lower river necessitates a natural flow regime. Unfortunately it is an all or nothing situation and a flow regime which fluctuates less but still widely is unlikely to provide any substantial benefit to the fishery. The other option, given that there are some benefits to the Taupo fishery from the current operation, is to seek to maximise these benefits to offset the loss in the lower river. Ideas suggested

include building an angling track along the lower river, looking at the issue of access and facilities around Lake Kuratau, willow control at the head of the lake and managing the lake level regime for the fishery and wild fowl.

It is early days and there are a number of affected landowners and other groups with a strong interest and involvement in the consent process. We will keep you informed on progress in future issues of *Target Taupo*.

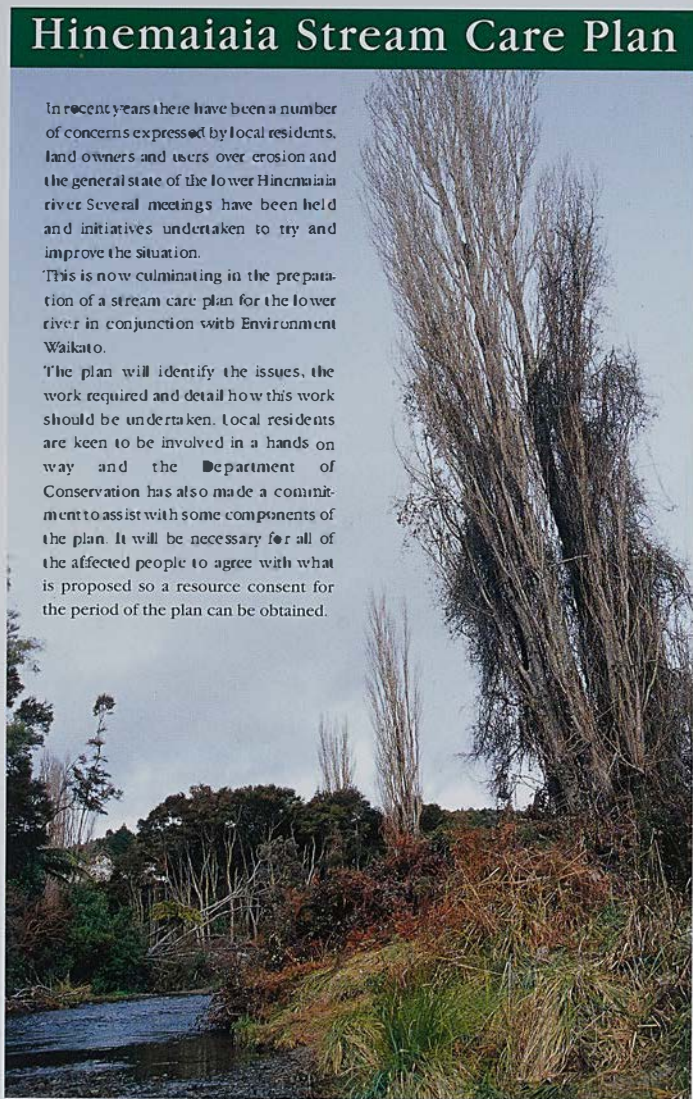
# Hinemaia Stream Care Plan

In recent years there have been a number of concerns expressed by local residents, land owners and users over erosion and the general state of the lower Hinemaia river. Several meetings have been held and initiatives undertaken to try and improve the situation.

This is now culminating in the preparation of a stream care plan for the lower river in conjunction with Environment Waikato.

The plan will identify the issues, the work required and detail how this work should be undertaken. Local residents are keen to be involved in a hands on way and the Department of Conservation has also made a commitment to assist with some components of the plan. It will be necessary for all of the affected people to agree with what is proposed so a resource consent for the period of the plan can be obtained.

*The removal of several large poplars which are about to fall will require the use of heavy machinery*



In this way once the initial discussions have occurred and agreement reached it should not be necessary to have to go through further debate each time some aspect of work as identified in the plan is undertaken. The sort of work envisaged is low key and involves such things as removing overhanging trees before they fall in, removal of snags in popular fishing pools and revegetation of eroding banks. Some of the work will require the use of heavy machinery for safety and practical reasons and the plan will iden-

tify when this is appropriate, how it shall be used and so on so as to minimise any impact on the fishery and surrounding banks and tracks. An initial draft of the plan will shortly be circulated by Environment Waikato to the interested parties and hopefully agreement on the bulk of the plan can be quickly reached in time for the first work to occur this summer. Those items on which agreement is not reached will be removed from the plan so as not to hold up its progress.



*It is proposed to cut leaning trees like this before they fall into the stream*

*Without any intervention, scenes like this will continue to occur on the Hinemalala River*



*Removal of selected snags will improve angling opportunities*



# Kinloch Development Decision Awaited

In June the Department of Conservation attended hearings before Environment Waikato and Taupo District Council to address an application by Island Properties for an extensive subdivision in Kinloch township.

The applicant's proposal was to undertake a subdivision to create 70 lots on a block of land which fronts Lake Taupo and which is bounded by the Whangamata and Okaia streams. A number of people objected to the original application including the Department of Conservation. Our concerns focussed on effluent and stormwater management, impacts on the reserves next to the development and the impact on spawning habitat for trout in the adjacent streams.

These issues were put before the Joint Hearing Committee along with an agreement from Island Property to fund an extensive restoration programme in the Whangamata Stream Reserve. The Developer also agreed to a fence on the property boundary to

exclude private access to public conservation land and made a commitment along with Taupo District Council, to an upgrade of the sewage treatment plant. This upgrade is particularly important as it will remove concerns held at the present time about the safe disposal of effluent and also provide for future growth in the Kinloch township.

There are also significant community concerns about the development and its impact on the surrounding environment and existing township. These concerns were put to the Hearing Committee by a large number of submitters. Without question this has had a significant influence on raising the quality of the development proposed.

At the time of writing, Environment Waikato has made a decision in favour of the subdivision. Environment Waikato's decisions relate to a bridge crossing of the Whangamata Stream, infrastructure works, water tanks and earth works. We are still waiting on the Taupo District Council decision which addresses the land use consents.

*The proposed development will occur on farmland on the true right of the Whangamata Stream (the grassy area to the left)*





# Red Hut Bridge Repaired

A programmed inspection of the Red Hut Swing Bridge (see VAMP article in *Target Tackle* issue 36) revealed a broken support beam or transom on the underside and a

defective metal hanger. A like for like replacement was recommended.

Harvey Steeds, a staff member with rope work, climbing and alpine rescue skills, and building contractor Gordon Hyde were engaged to undertake the work. Harvey swung under the bridge and took the damaged bits apart while Gordon cut and drilled the replacement transom. Les from Alpine Engineering, Turingi had made up a hanger for us and Gordon and Harvey refitted the components. Murphy was present of course, slipping in wrong sized bolts and putting too much galvanising in the odd hole, but his efforts were feeble and the bridge was re-opened by lunchtime.



Rather Harvey than us, Gordon Hyde looks on while Harvey Steeds replaces the broken transom.  
Photos Errol Cudby

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# Images of the Taupo Fishery

## Major Jones Pool - Tongariro River.

*"Major Jones: the name is synonymous with the greatness of the Tongariro River. Probably, if it were not so over-populated at the height of the season it would be everyone's favourite, and despite the number of rods it is still the first choice of many overseas and local anglers. It has so many attributes to make it a fisherman's dream come true. It has depth it is, by far, the longest pool on the river. Despite flood and drought it remains virtually changeless. Yielding fish to the skilled, it will still be kind to the inexperienced or inexperienced. It is an easy pool to wade.*

*The far or left-hand bank is a kaleidoscope of colour provided by native and exotic trees and shrubs. Major Jones is, simply, a great pool and I do not use the adjective lightly". Tony Jensen in Trout of the Tongariro published in 1974.*

Situated as it is in the middle of Hurangi it is hard to imagine that prior to 1920 the Major Jones Pool, like all others above the main road bridge, was rarely fished because access was so difficult. However by 1929 the pool was identified on a tourist map along with the Admiral's, Hatcher's, Duke's Camp (Duchess?), Tawaka (Red Hut?) and Dreadnought pools.

The Major Jones pool derives its name from Major Rhys Wykeham Jones who fished the pool with a 5.2 metre (17 foot) rod which he had previously used on the Spey in Scotland. Joe Frost described Major Jones in *Freshwater Admiral* by Vice Admiral Hickling "He must have been six foot two in his socks. His bantlebar moustaches were always getting tangled up in his line, he had a voice like a bull and he played his fish with the delicacy of a ship weighing its anchor in a hurry. I understand he originated from India and I should imagine he would be a fine sight on parade, monocle and all."

Major Jones was also known for his strong dislike of big brown trout which he maintained were cannibals and should be

destroyed for the benefit of the fishing. He paid local children to capture mice which he used at night, floated down the current into the deep pools to capture many large brown trout.

While many of the original pools that made the reputation of the Tongariro were lost for good in the 1958 flood the Major Jones has remained remarkably unchanged over the last eighty years. Vice Admiral Hickling regarded the pool as the finest on the river prior to the flood, if not the finest in the world. After the flood he wrote "It is still a very fine pool, although its beauty has been marred. Deciduous tree-trunks clutter up the fore-shore and the grassy bank at the lower end has been washed away".



Hickling describes how Alec Clark and his next door neighbour Henry Hickton would two or three times a day leave a notice on their front door "Back in 10 minutes", wander down the 30 metres in their carpet slippers and almost invariably end up with a fish. He also describes fishing the pool with a friend one cold but sunny morning and hearing a terrific splash: "*There's a big fish! we said together, looking up. And so it was, a 180 pounder. Across the river was a naked body swimming in the icy water; it was Moore Hunter, 80 if a day, taking his daily dip. Hurly chap's these New Zealand farmers!*"

The Major Jones has always been the providence of the downstream wetfly angler. In pre Tongariro Power Development days when the river was a lot larger and more boisterous than today, anglers fished with relatively crude sinking lines such as those made of silk or dressed with powdered lead or tar. These lines sank poorly compared to modern sinking lines yet the pool regularly

yielded limit bags. Interestingly Hickling (1960) shows the lies of the fish being principally on the inside of the bend out of the main current.

In the 1980's with the advent of nymph fishing anglers soon realised the very head of the pool was a good spot for this method but the majority of the pool remains too wide and deep for anyone other than the wetfly angler waist deep in the water. There is probably no other pool in the Taupo fishery which retains such a timeless feel about it. The line of anglers wading chest deep in their dark jackets and fishing their sinking lines could just as easily be 40 years ago.

Access to the Major Jones pool is via the swing bridge just upstream which most people know as the Major Jones bridge. However it is more correctly called the Birches swing bridge, so named after Bert and Effie Bolton's property which it originally adjoined on the true left bank.

*The Major Jones pool is truly world famous*



# Protecting Your Fishery

Life for a young trout in Taupo is a big challenge. It starts while still in the egg lying within the ventilated gravels of a spawning stream. This egg has to survive the effects of seasonal floods, being dug up by other spawning fish or disturbed through the activity of humans or animals in the stream bed. The young fish which emerges faces being swept away or stranded by floods, predation by fish and shags and perhaps most importantly competition from his brothers and sisters for food and a place to live.

The chances of surviving the 18 months or so before it enters the lake are slight. But that is not the end of the hazards. We then proceed to fish for it while as an immature fish in the lake or as a mature fish making its own spawning migration back up the river.

Those fish which overcome all these obstacles and the continuous barrage of hooks become the flag bearers for the Taupo fishery. They are incredibly important fish as the whole future of the fishery rests on them. For this reason the areas of the stream where they spawn are closed off to anglers so they can do their thing in peace.

Managing the fishery involves trying to maximise the angling opportunities while ensuring sufficient fish spawn to maintain the fish stocks for future years. Many of our regulations are designed to ensure that enough fish reach the redds. For example the

size and daily bag limits. Similarly much of our management effort goes into monitoring the productivity of the fishery and the impact of angling harvest to ensure the restrictions are appropriate.

However all of these efforts are of little avail if someone poaches those surviving fish out of the spawning stream. Not only are the eggs of the poached fish lost but many of those already in the gravels will have been crushed or disturbed. While all genuine anglers abhor such activities the angler who regularly exceeds the daily bag limit is also having a big impact. The bag limit is set to ensure sufficient fish survive to spawn, if it is regularly ignored then it follows there will be too few fish spawning.

As a consequence a lot of our effort also goes into controlling the illegal take of trout. Some of our activities are apparent to anglers, many though need to remain confidential for obvious reasons. Needless to say there will be a few of you reading this who might be surprised to know how closely your actions have been scrutinised.

Successful enforcement is not just confined to planned work programmes but also includes responding to activities reported by anglers. We know that many anglers are reluctant to pass on information or "dob in" fellow fishers. Often anglers stew and grizzle about things they see on the river or lake and only pass the information on at a later time, mindful that such situations can ruin a pleasant day. While this information can be used for planning future operations it is of limited value. However when calls are placed immediately an activity is noticed our chances of a successful apprehension are greatly increased. Any information we receive is in the strictest confidence so please let us know as soon as you see something untoward. There is a phone number on your licence which will put you in contact with a conservancy duty officer 24 hours a day. The duty officer will organise fishery staff to respond who often will wish to speak to you direct to confirm details so if you can please leave a contact number.



*Fish illegally netted June 2001. A waste and a threat to the Taupo fishery.*

This year there is a marked upturn in poaching activity on some Taupo streams after several very quiet winters. This is not unexpected. The quiet period reflected that we put a lot of effort and had a lot of success through the mid 1990's which acted as a major deterrent. However people are once again starting to visit known poaching areas. Just as our success acts as a deterrent we are well aware that it only takes a couple of groups to help themselves for the word to get around and encourage others to have a go. As a consequence we are again putting more resources into controlling these activities.

As part of this your assistance by providing information when you witness poaching activity will be greatly appreciated and a positive contribution towards looking after your fishery.

## IF YOU SEE ILLEGAL ACTIVITY

- Note specific details relating to the identity of the offenders, how many, who is doing what and any vehicle registrations.
- Do not approach the offenders. It just alerts them that they have been seen and they will either leave (to poach somewhere else some other time) or you run the risk of an ugly confrontation. Similarly do not touch or remove any set nets which significantly reduces our chances of apprehending the offenders.
- Call us immediately via cell phone or as soon as possible afterwards. If you carry a cell phone place the fishery phone number in its memory. During office hours call (07) 386 8607 or after hours and weekends phone 0800 362 418.

## Mighty River Power

### A Change of Approach

In the last addition of *Target Taupo* we identified a number of concerns about the process, conclusions drawn and outcomes suggested by Mighty River Power in its pursuit of resource consents to continue the operation of the Waikato hydro scheme. This concern was shared by a number of parties.

Since then Mighty River Power has proposed a new approach to identifying issues and resolving concerns regarding the operation of the scheme. The Department of Conservation's team has met on a number of occasions with Mighty River Power to agree on a new relationship for combining the generation and environmental needs of the Waikato system. A group has been set up involving environmental agencies including Fish and Game New Zealand, Forest and Bird and the Wildfowlers' Association. This group is currently in the process of identifying and clarifying environmental issues and looking at ways in which those issues can be best managed.

While the outcomes of this process are at this stage unclear the parties are now talking to each other and not across each other, which is a positive development. For the Department of Conservation, our perspective has not changed significantly and the concerns we originally raised about the scheme operation and its effects remain. However, there have been a number of alternative methods raised for resolving our concerns which must be looked at.

Anglers and game hunters with an interest in the protection of the river and lakes habitat around which much of your pursuits are based need to retain an interest in this project. As always these resource management processes take time to reach their conclusions but it remains important that the community is involved in determining critical outcomes. For more information on the Mighty River Power consents, people should contact Don Scarlett of Mighty River Power in Hamilton or one of our team here in Tūnangi.

# Lake Taupo Harvest Survey

## 2 0 0 0 / 0 1

The end of the 2000/01 fishing season also saw the end of the third year-long lake Taupo harvest survey, much to the relief of some staff. For the fisheries technical staff, however, much of the work is only just about to begin. Glenn, Ben, and Michel will now analyse the information obtained during the harvest survey and produce a comprehensive estimate of the number of trout caught and taken from the Taupo fishery over the 2000/01 season. To calculate the harvest we will first establish the average number of fish that anglers caught (and kept) per hour spent fishing from angler interview data, and how much effort anglers put into fishing estimated from the aerial counts of boats on the lake and anglers in the rivers. From these components, a total catch and harvest can then be derived. Other information obtained during the survey such as angler demographics and experience will also be summarised. Anglers were asked about their level of familiarity with the fishery, where they came from, whether they were guided, and so on. By comparing the results with past surveys in 1990/91 and 1995/96 we can assess trends in harvest which are likely to affect the sustainability of the fishery, and manage any impacts accordingly.

The survey placed considerable pressure on financial and staff resources. At some point every fisheries staff member has contributed to the survey. To improve the accuracy of the survey, the survey methodology required that many of the surveys were undertaken during public holidays or weekends, and as can be imagined at times this required a considerable effort from staff and compromise from their families. To give a better idea of the scale of effort involved, approximately 1600 angler interviews were done on the rivers, 750 at the river mouths and lake edge (many at night) and over 4000 interviews at the Lake Taupo boat ramps. Rangers also weighed and measured over 600 fish that anglers had kept during the season.

The Department of Conservation would like to thank and acknowledge all those who contributed to the success of the survey. Thanks to those anglers who gave a few minutes of their time to answer our questions. We appreciate that some anglers were interviewed several times throughout the year and some were almost as familiar with the questions as the staff! Lake Taupo charter boat operators played a significant role by providing information relating to over 500 trips and allowing us to place an identification sticker on their boats which enabled us to count them separately during the boat counts. This was the first time we had tried to estimate the guided harvest this way and the assistance we received from local guides has ensured the success of this approach.

Thanks also to Taupo Air Services for providing aircraft and pilots when we required. Changes to schedules were often made at short notice but no flights were missed owing to aircraft being unavailable. Finally, special thanks must be made to our Lake Taupo harvest survey staff, Rowena Cudby, Gordon Edwards and Bruce Abraham. Many of you will have met them on the boat ramps conducting interviews and almost all of the 4000 lake interviews were done by these staff. No thanks though to the weather. For the first time in many years we were regularly unable to complete scheduled flights owing to low cloud or fog. Just another example of the unusual weather patterns over the past 12 months.

Whilst the full harvest survey is only undertaken every fifth year, we will continue to monitor the harvest in the current and coming seasons with a smaller version of the full survey. This will be done as part of our usual licence checks. The results from the harvest survey report will be provided in a future issue of *Target Taupo*.

**T H A N K S**

## Team Profile

### JOHN CARMAN (below left)

This winter John is one of our trap operators, collecting data to give an indication of the spawning runs in the streams.

John was born and bred in Masterton and moved to Turangi four years ago with his partner Donna. In 1999 he obtained a six month summer contract with the DOC Tongariro/Taupo Area working in the track maintenance and weed programme. John returned for another term in the summer of 2000.

John enjoys learning about the area and seeing and doing things that a lot of people don't get to experience. He hopes to secure a permanent position within the Department.

Tramping, mountaineering, reading, travel and motorcycling are among his interests. He gets a few strange looks when he walks into work with his leathers and helmet on and even stranger looks when he rides his bike with his waders on. Apparently he has no other way of carrying them.

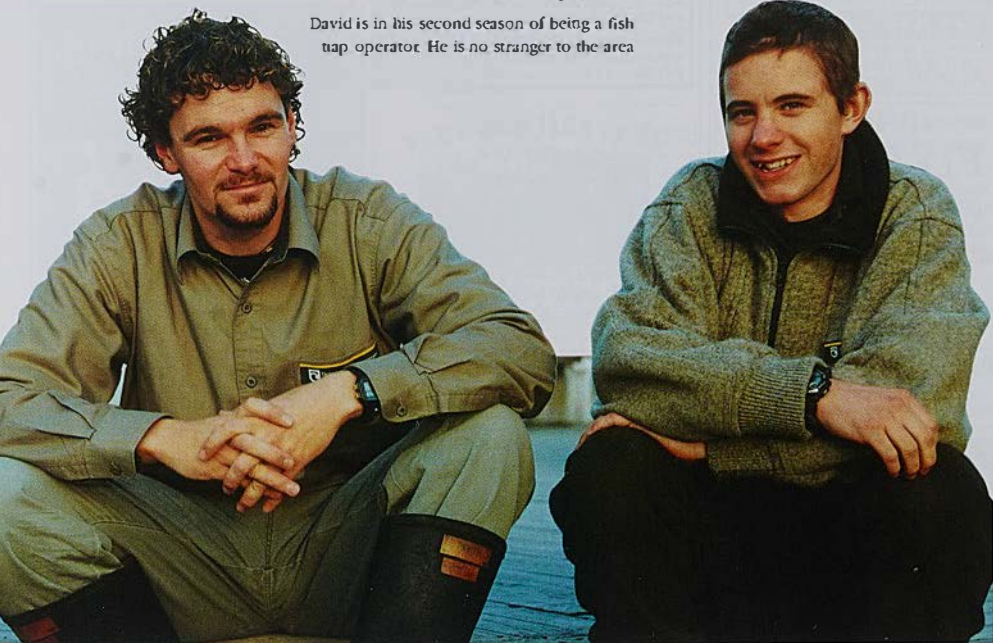
### DAVID McLAY (below right)

David is in his second season of being a fish trap operator. He is no stranger to the area

having been born and bred in Turangi. He enjoys the lifestyle and opportunities that are inherent to the job, and considers it an honour to be directly involved within the trout monitoring project. *"With a strong family interest in conservation and angling that extends several generations before me, it seems only natural that I continue the trend."* David assures us that amidst the peaceful and relaxing setting of the trap lies some fairly tense and tiring situations. *"Taming a flooding river can be somewhat of a challenge. It is not unusual to be working around the clock dealing with a few hundred fish and a rising river when the rains come."*

David's long term plans are to become an international pilot. He started his aviation adventures while still attending high school and gained his wings at the age of 18. David's professional aviation career will begin early next year where he will be based at Taupo.

In his spare time, David enjoys fishing, hunting, music, socialising and anything to do with aviation.



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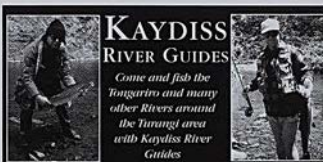
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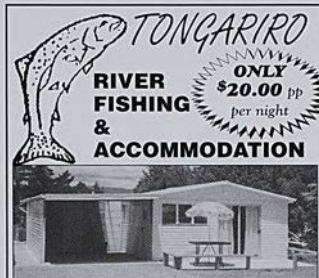


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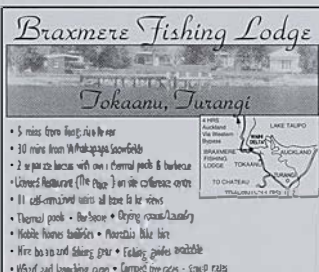
13 Perokuaranga Rd, Motuoa, P.O. Box 4, Turangi Phone: 07 386 7182  
18 Onuwhi Rd, P.O. Box 4, Turangi Phone: 07 386 8754  
Fax both camps: 07 386 7182



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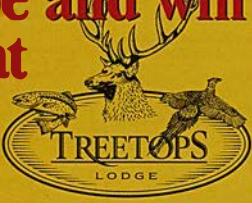
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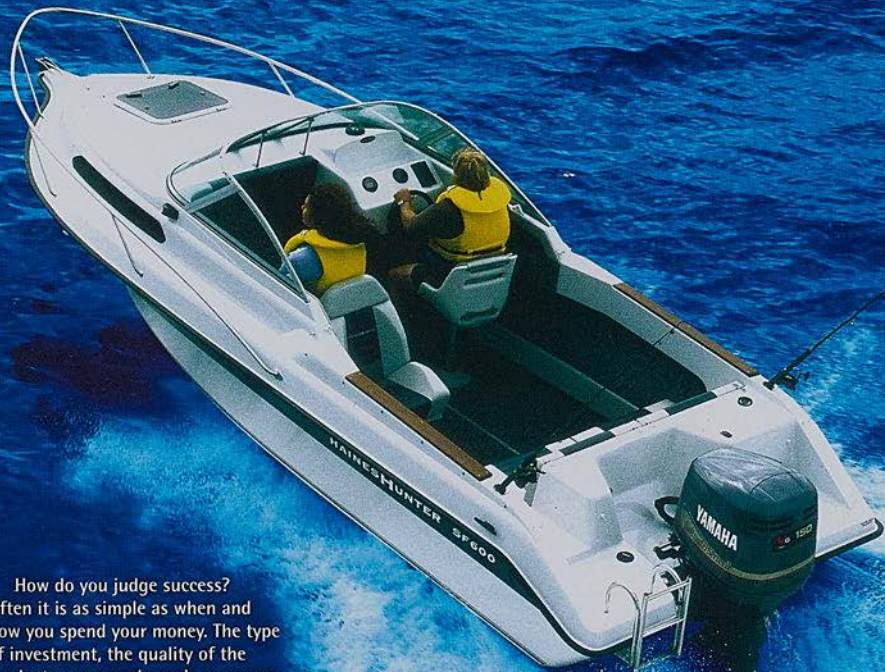
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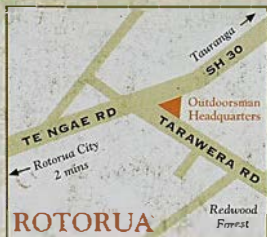
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