

TARGET TAUPO

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

JULY 2003, ISSUE 43



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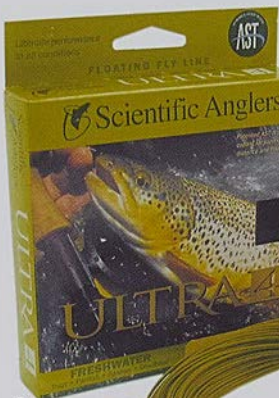
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TARGET TAUPO

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

JULY 2003, ISSUE 43

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Front cover: *Michel Dedual (left) and Dave Hart, radio tagging a rainbow trout at the Tongariro Delta.*
Photo: Glenn Maclean

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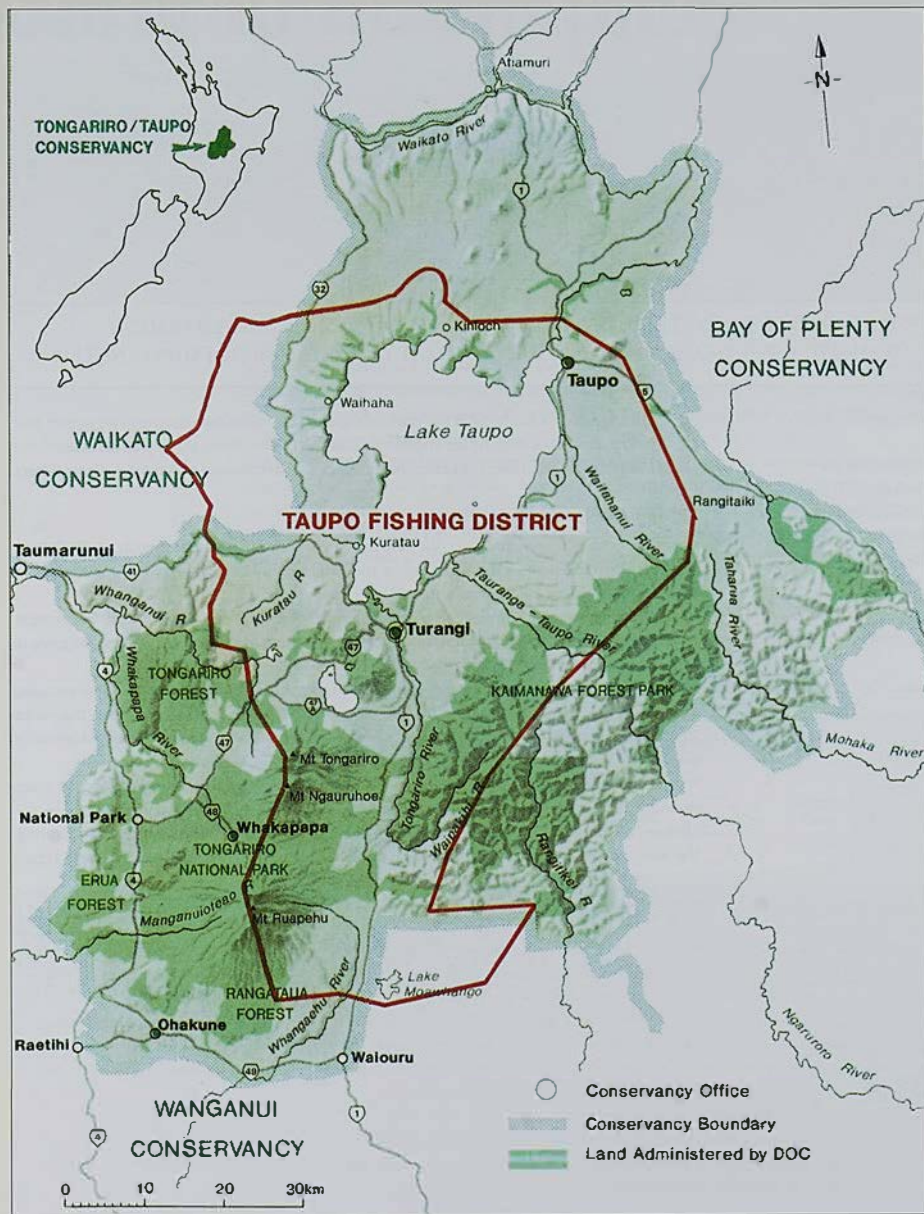
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Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy



Taking action to protect

THIS ARTICLE IS CONTRIBUTED BY THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, ENVIRONMENT WAIKATO, AND DEALS WITH AN ISSUE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO TAUPO ANGLERS.

By Angelina Legg

Angelina is the
Consultation and
Communication Advisor
for Environment
Waikato

Lake Taupo needs our help! While the lake's water looks clean and clear on those perfect blue fishing days, monitoring by Environment Waikato and NIWA shows that the lake is under threat from changing land uses in its catchment. This could have flow-on effects for our trout fishery.

Signs of the lake's decline

Scientific evidence gathered over the last thirty years shows that the health of the lake is declining. Development of the surrounding rural and urban land has increased the amount of nitrogen entering the lake through ground water and rivers.

Since 1994, we've seen more of the particulate form of nitrogen in the lake's surface waters. There are also increases in the amount of inorganic nitrogen in the bottom waters, just prior to winter when they mix with the surface.

Nitrogen is a staple food for plant life, promoting healthy, vigorous growth. The increasing amounts of nitrogen in the lake are feeding the growth of tiny free-floating algae in the water. More algae in the water reduces the water's clarity. We are also seeing more nutrient-dependent weeds and slimes growing in sheltered waters near lake shore settlements.

Potentially toxic algae have, for the first time in 2001 and again this autumn, bloomed unexpectedly in the lake, resulting in the issue of health warnings for Whakaipo Bay and Omori.

All these factors are unmistakable signs that the lake's health is slowly but surely deteriorating. The surrounding communities are becoming increasingly concerned. Residents now report

A LAKE THAT CHANGES WITH THE SEASONS

Because it is so deep, the way water (and nitrogen) behaves in Lake Taupo changes with the seasons. In the summer time, the top 40 metres of the lake is heated by the sun, forming a warm well-lit upper layer. This warm layer floats on top of a cool, unlit layer of water reaching down to the bottom.

The layering process is called thermal stratification. The density gradient or thermocline is the boundary between the warm light and cool dark layers. This acts as a physical barrier that stops many dissolved and floating substances from moving between the layers. Deep day-time trolling exploits the fact that rainbow trout often concentrate near the thermocline, where smelt are abundant and the water is relatively cool.

During the summer, inorganic nitrogen in the top well-lit layer of the lake is rapidly taken up by microscopic free-floating algae (also called phytoplankton). Algae use up most of this nitrogen, so that inorganic nitrogen levels in the top layer are lower over summer. However, inorganic nitrogen levels in the bottom layer remain higher because there are no algae growing in the darker water to use it up.

Dead algae from the top layer slowly settle to the bottom of the lake, taking particulate nitrogen with them. As the algae decay, the nitrogen is re-released back into the deep water. In this way, algae act as a one-way pump in the summer, moving nitrogen from the surface to deeper waters.

Lake Taupo water quality



their own evidence of declining lake health over the last few decades. Scientific studies and observations confirm these changes

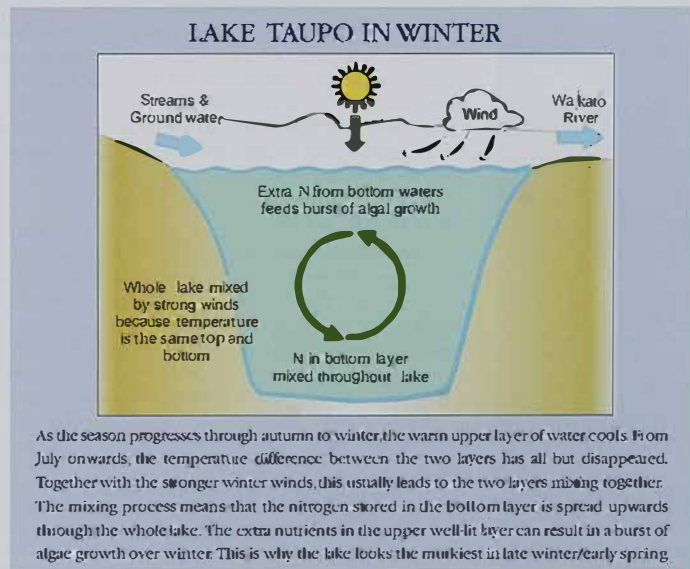
Because Lake Taupo is a complex and sensitive ecosystem, the changes we are seeing now are cause for concern. Overseas experience shows that in similar deep, low nutrient lakes, an increasing load of nutrients almost always results in increased algae growth and reduced water clarity. If left unchecked in Lake Taupo, this trend will be difficult to reverse.

The sustainability of the lake's internationally recognised trout fishery is dependent on its clear, clear water. An increase in algae may support more smelt in the lake, although benefits to trout would depend on where these smelt were. A significant increase in algae will also affect water clarity and at some point reduce the ability of trout to feed, ultimately reducing their growth and numbers. Any increase in weeds will also mean more snags, making life for anglers frustrating and unpleasant.

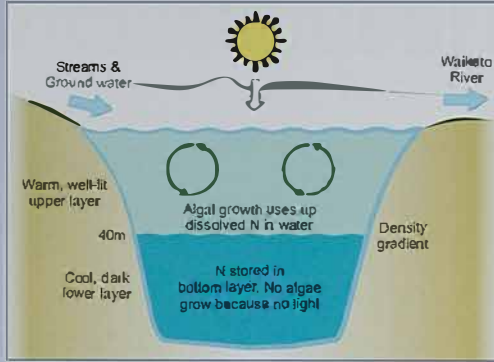
Taupo's changing catchment

Many long-standing Taupo locals are quick to agree that the way land is used around the lake has changed significantly over the last 50 years.

Back in the early 1900s, the catchment was covered with either tussock or bush. Only small



LAKE TAUPO IN SUMMER



With the approach of summer, the upper layer begins to warm. As soon as the lake stratifies again (forms layers), the winter growth of algae and the nitrogen they have accumulated falls to the lake floor and the seasonal cycle begins again.

concentrations of nitrogen entered the lake from rain and areas of bush. This meant the lake had extremely low levels of nitrogen, which limited the growth of nuisance plants in its waters. Land development in the 1950s saw the clearing and planting of large areas of pine around the eastern shores and the development of large farm blocks in the western basin.

To day, ground water draining from under pine forests, and water diverted into the lake from the Tongariro Power Development contains low concentrations of nitrogen similar to native forest. However, more intensive pastoral land has increased the amount of nitrogen entering the lake. Much has been done by landowners over the years to protect the lake from sediment, through extensive stream fencing and planting under the Taupo Catchment Control Scheme and creation of reserves. However, this hasn't addressed the increasing nitrogen from agricultural land.

The lake responds very slowly to the many biophysical processes that control the movement of nitrogen from the land. Because of the time lag between what happens on the land and its effect on the lake, it is only recently that the impact of the land conversion started in the 1950s has been evident. In addition to the growth in agriculture in the catchment, urban settlements close to the lake have contributed to an increase in nitrogen at the lake's edge. This in turn has encouraged growth of certain weed and nuisance slimes in shallow water. Older wastewater treatment systems weren't designed for nutrient removal, and studies show plumes of nitrogen leaching from septic tanks into the lake. More recent treatment systems remove much more nitrogen although smaller leaching plumes are still evident in places.

Time to take action

If we do nothing to change the way land is currently used in Lake Taupo's catchment, scientific modelling predicts the lake will get worse. In fact, even if we take action now, it's likely it will continue to show the effects of increased nitrogen for the next 20 years. This is because it takes several decades for ground water carrying nutrients from the catchment to actually reach the lake. Environment Waikato asked the Taupo community in October 2000 what standard of water quality they wanted for the future. The overwhelming response was to maintain the lake at its current high quality. To achieve this goal, Environment Waikato has worked with leading lake scientists to determine that we need to reduce the manageable sources of nitrogen to the lake by 20 percent. The manageable sources of nitrogen are leaching and discharges from urban and agricultural activities in the catchment.

Options for change

Environment Waikato is now working on a strategy to protect Lake Taupo, based on the need to reduce manageable sources of nitrogen to the lake by 20 percent. Over the last two years, they

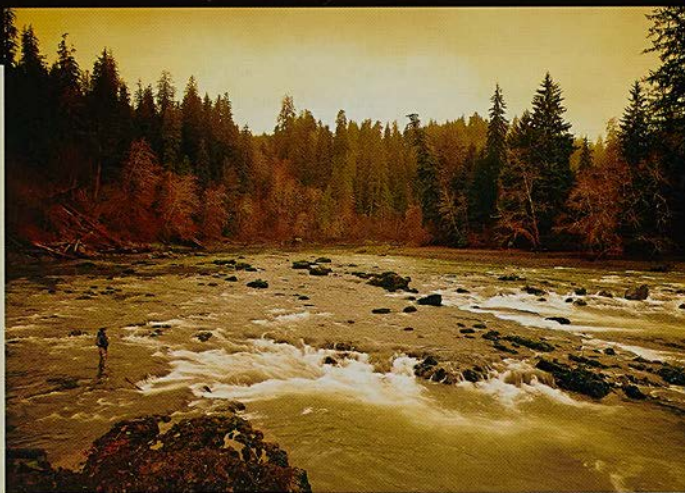


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Lake Rotongaitia south of Waitabamui

have been working with directly affected groups and the agencies responsible for care of the lake to determine the best ways to achieve this goal, while still supporting a healthy local community and economy. These groups include:

- Taupo District Council
- Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board
- Central Government
- Taupo Lake Care (farmer representative group)
- Economic authorities of Tuwharetoa
- Lakes and Waterways Action Group
- Department of Conservation
- 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia project members

The general land use changes needed to reduce the manageable nitrogen load by 20 percent could include:

- Ongoing upgrades to urban sewage treatment around the lake – Taupo District Council plans to upgrade the Turangi Wastewater Treatment Plant this summer
- Changes to farming practices in the catchment to control effluent and reduce nitrogen losses
- Conversion of some grazed pastoral land to alternative low-nitrogen land uses
- Upgrades to septic tanks around the lake.

Reducing the amount of nitrogen will be difficult. It will inevitably mean some changes to lifestyles and farming systems for many people who live and work in the catchment.

Working together on a draft strategy

Environment Waikato has already begun working through some of the challenges of the change with many of the directly affected groups and organisations. The Regional Council believes that the best way forward is in partnership with the agencies responsible for the care of the lake, and their communities.

Environment Waikato plans to release a draft strategy – Protecting Lake Taupo – later this year. The strategy will suggest a path forward to reduce the amount of nitrogen entering the lake. The regional council will be seeking a wide range of feedback from the local community and will be very interested to hear from all keen anglers, who are significant users of the lake and often have a watchful eye on its health.

Finding out more

To find out more about progress with the strategy and how to get involved, contact Environment Waikato's freephone 0800 800 401. You can also find information about the strategy and the lake's water quality on Environment Waikato's website at www.ew.govt.nz.

Looking at the big picture

Environment Waikato and Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board are also working together on 2020 Taupo-nui-a-Tia, a three-year project funded by Ministry for the Environment to develop a long-term action plan for sustainable development of the Lake Taupo catchment. Other key partners in the 2020 project are Taupo District Council and the Lakes and Waterways Action Group. The 2020 project addresses 14 different community values – two of these values, water clarity and quality, are being addressed by Environment Waikato's strategy to reduce nitrogen.

The 2020 project has recently established the 2020 Forum, a group that meets regularly and includes all interested sectors of the community. The Forum will provide community input into ranking the risks to the lake and its catchment, and will help with developing the action plan. To find out more about the 2020 project, check out www.taupoinfo.org.nz or contact Jennifer Pearson on 07 928 8777.



Tongariro River Radio tagging

by Rob Hood

Rob is a Ranger and involved with field operations

Last year we began a research project which involved radio-tagging rainbow trout and tracking their migration up the Tongariro River to their spawning grounds. The intention was to establish what proportion of the total Tongariro run used the Waipa Stream for spawning. The Department of Conservation runs a fish trap throughout the year on the Waipa Stream which provides an estimate of the number of fish using this stream. By knowing the total Waipa run along with what proportion this comprises of the total Tongariro run, we would be able to estimate the number of trout migrating up the Tongariro River each winter.

It became obvious early in the project, that for a variety of reasons, it was unlikely sufficient numbers of trout could be fitted with radio tags within the required timeframe to successfully complete the project and so it was decided to postpone the tagging until this year (see *Target Time* issue 30).

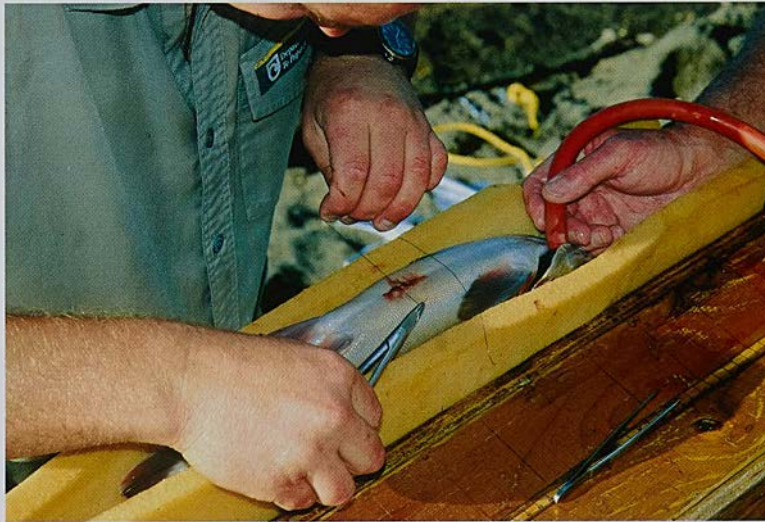
Healthy, mature trout are required for tagging

at the Tongariro Delta (river mouth) and as can be imagined, there is a high level of 'friendly' competition amongst fishery staff to catch the trout for tagging (like all good anglers, lots of lies and taks are told also). In the last week of April the project began and 15 trout were caught over two days, tagged and released. In mid-June a further 29 fish were tagged and released. Of note is that 22 of these were males, indicating it is still early in the spawning run. Typically the males run first and wait on the spawning redds for the females to join them.

The location (measured as the distance in kilometres upstream of the Delta) of the fish is monitored and recorded every few days and already some interesting behaviour has been noted. Following the first tagging, a number of the fish were close to the highway bridge within three days of being released. Since then these fish have in general steadily moved upstream covering several kilometres every few days. The trout then usually stop and remain in the same area or pool for several

Stitching a rainbow trout after insertion of the radio tag

Photo: Glenn Maclean





Mark Venman tracking a trout in the lower Tongarirua River

Photo: Glenn Maclean

A prime rainbow trout ready for release. Note the wire aerial behind the pelvic fins

Photo: Rob Hood

weeks. They may be spawning in these areas or simply resting up, time will tell. What is clear is that during the large flood of May 21-23 nearly all of the fish moved upstream, not down, despite the adverse conditions. Of most note is one trout which was in the Judges Pool at Ulam on 16 May and recorded at the Waipa hut (adjacent to the Tongarirua river) at 9am the next day, a distance of approximately 15 kilometres.

Only two of the first 15 trout tagged have yet to move upstream into the river and of the 15, three have been caught and the tags returned to us. It is interesting to note that two of these were caught within a few days of moving into the

river, one just after the flood near the SH 1 bridge (approximately 8 kilometres upstream) having not been tracked in the river prior. Tagged trout are easily recognised by the wire aerial underneath the fish and anglers catching a tagged trout should return the tag to the DOC office in Turangi with details of where and when the fish was caught. This way we know for certain what has happened to the fish. Anglers returning a radio tag will also go into a draw for one of ten 2004/05 whole season fishing licences.

Tagging at the Delta will continue in July until 65 trout have been fitted with radio tags. A further 35 trout will then be tagged above the Fence Pool to ensure there are a reasonable number of fish to follow in the upper river.

The tracking of these fish will continue throughout the next few months and the results will appear in future issues of *Target Taupo*.



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Photo taken from bank in front of property



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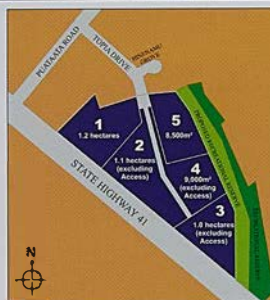
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Timing of the Tongariro trout

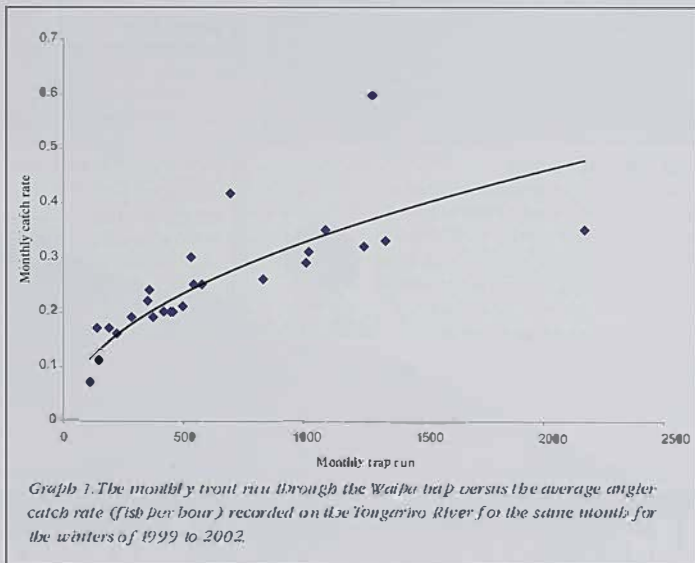
by Glenn Maclean

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

Photo: Mark Venman measures a brown trout in the Waipa trap

Angler catch rates are often used as an index of the number of fish present. As part of preparing our evidence for the Tongariro Power Development consents process it was necessary to try and establish that catch rates measured on the Tongariro River did in fact reflect trout numbers. One

approach we explored was to investigate whether there was any relationship between the number of trout trapped in the Waipa Stream, a tributary of the Tongariro, and catch rates measured during our angler surveys. Intuitively we expected the trap run should lag behind the catch rate reflecting that the





Waipa trap is 5 kilometres above the winter fishing limit and it is likely the trout would take additional time to reach the trap. Surprisingly though, the best fit came by comparing the monthly trap run with the average catch rate for anglers interviewed that same month. As graph 1 shows this was a strong relationship

Of note is that despite the best fit occurring between data for the same month, the two highest catch rates recorded (August and September 2001) were not reflected until October in the trap run when the largest monthly run so far occurred (2330 fish)

The shape of the curve is characteristic of similar studies overseas. The curve suggests that at low fish densities, proportionally more of the fish present are caught than when greater numbers of trout are present. This is likely to be linked to the fact that anglers target known 'lites' and at low densities a greater

proportion of the fish are likely to be in the good lies and so caught.

The relationship also suggests that relatively large changes in fish numbers will be mirrored by only small changes in angler catch rate. In this case fish numbers need to increase four fold in order to double the catch rate.

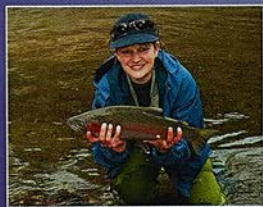
Many of you may have already grasped the significance of having established this relationship. By looking at the monthly run totals through the Waipa trap over recent years you can plan your visit to coincide with the peak fishing.

The monthly run through the Waipa trap over the last four years is shown in graph 2 (see page overleaf).

The graph reiterates what we have often written in *Target Taupo*. These days the fishing only begins in late June or July and the best is still to come. The data for 2000

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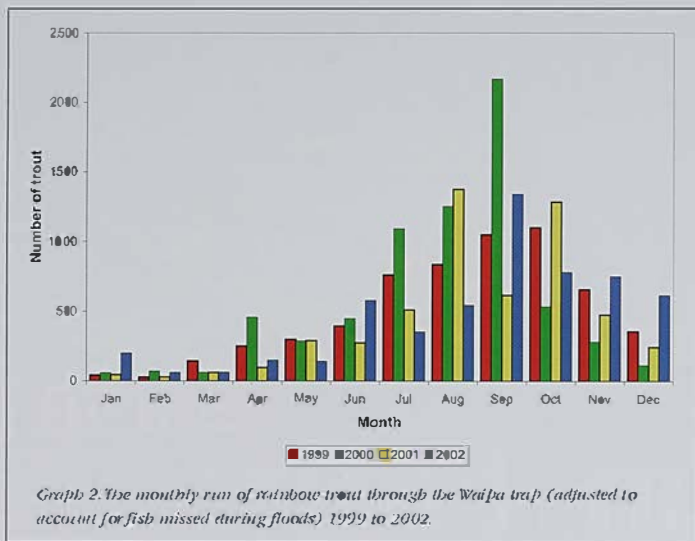


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The size of the monthly run through the trap reflects angling success in the Tongariro River

Photos: Glenn Madean

reflects the sort of pattern we expect in a typical winter of regular rainfall but as 2001 and 2002 show a dry winter may delay the run even further. The graph indicates that there are as many fish running the river in November as in May, and considerably more in some years. Our counts indicate that most anglers have

given away winter river fishing by August, well before the peak in fish numbers and angling success. The data clearly indicates anglers should plan their visits later to take advantage of the best fishing of the season. Coupled with balmy spring days it is an appealing prospect.



Wading safely

by Rob Kirkwood

Recently Taupo Fishery Area staff participated in a day of wader training on the Tongariro River. Periodically staff undergo training by Garth Oakden from Tongariro River Rafting to ensure that their skills of wading and river crossing are current and that, should they fall in, they can safely cope with any situation. This year has again highlighted the benefits of using a wading belt.

Wading in rivers and at river mouths can be a potentially hazardous pastime. Anglers can very easily get into situations where without knowing and demonstrating certain skills the likelihood of injury or even death is a very real outcome.

Wading safely is certainly not a mystery. Every day anglers wade in and out of rivers with ease and very few ever come to grief.

Here are some basic skills to be aware of:

Wading Belt - Wearing a wading belt tightly around your midriff or chest will increase your chances of floating. Wading belts work by stopping water entering your waders if you tip over and also by trapping a pocket of air around your legs. Without a wading belt, water may enter your waders and fill them up. An effective wading belt can be made of polyester webbing with a quick-release dive belt buckle.

Wading stick - Having an aid while wading is very effective. An old alloy ski pole from the local ski rental shop works just as well as a hand crafted masterpiece. Using a length of bungy cord helps keep the wading stick nearby. Personal preference will determine if you use the stick in a brace position upstream or down. High country musters from the Mackenzie Basin always use their hill sticks on the uphill side when crossing steep mountain rivers. They may not know how to fly fish but they sure have great balance.

Clothing - Wearing warm layers on your body will significantly decrease the chances of exposure if you happen to get completely wet. Try using fast drying polypropylene or merino wool thermals under your waders in the winter. Wearing a wading jacket over the top of your waders will limit the amount of water entering your waders if you do slip in. Using a fleece jacket or tight knit jersey for the same purpose also works well.

River Crossing - Crossing rivers such as the Tongariro requires caution, a reasonable amount of experience and a healthy respect for water. Identify obstructions in the water that may

This motley bunch of Tongariro/Taupo staff seem to be enjoying wader training run by Garth Oakden (centre right with rope)

Photo: Rob McLaw





Fishery Ranger Rob Hood in the correct position to float downstream

Photo: Rob McEay

become potential hazards if you slip in. Decide where it is safe to wade and where it isn't. Be aware of the runout below you, if you slip will you float downstream into a gentle pool or will you bounce your way down steep rapids? Pick out the entry and exit points when wading and be prepared to make minor adjustments to these if need be.

Polarised Glasses – Wear Polaroid sunglasses when wading. Most people know the benefits of these when spotting trout but even on a cloudy and wet day they cut the glare and allow you to also see any obstacles below the water.

Falling in – If you do fall then it needn't be all bad. While the following procedure can work without a wading belt, be aware that wearing a belt will greatly increase your chances should you lose your balance and slip while wading. If the current is not too fast then attempt to get back on to your feet as soon as possible. If the current is moving much quicker and you find yourself in an out of control situation then it is important to do the following things:

- Stay calm.
- Roll over on to your back.
- Get your feet downstream of your body (it is better to hit a rock with your feet than your head).
- Keep your toes out of the water (they naturally float).
- Use your arms in a manner that keep you in this position.
- When possible, use your arms in a sculling motion and kick your feet to propel yourself towards the edge.
- Go with the flow until you come to a suitable place to get out.

Course instructor Garth Oakden demonstrates how to swim in waders

Photo: Rob McEay

Falling in is a shock, particularly when it is cold and it is easy to panic at this point. The reason we jump in during our training is so that staff experience this initial discomfort but then realise that swimming down the river is no big deal if they stay calm. Over the years, even staff who couldn't swim, have managed just fine. So next time you fall in say you were taking the opportunity for some training!



Neoprene or Gore-Tex? – With the many types of waders on the market now, anglers are asking about the benefits of one over the other. In a wading situation a recent test by Garth Oakden and others proved that there is no difference between neoprene and breathable waders when floating down a river. In both cases a wading belt was used and excellent floatation was reported.

So stay safe while wading this season and if you don't own a wading belt then we recommend that you get one. It may be the difference between floating and sinking.

'To prance around in the water is a sure way of coming to grief'

Vice Admiral Hickling – "Freshwater Admiral", 1960.

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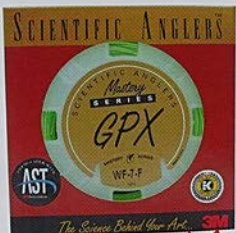
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THE UPS AND DOWNS OF JIGGING

by Glenn Maclean

With the increasing profile of jigging on Lake Taupo last summer there were a number of comments about the technique and its possible impact on the sustainability of the fishery. Some of the discussion was useful, but a lot of it is misinformed.

In this article we outline the issues surrounding the development of jigging as we see them. The ability for anglers to jig fish is not the result of a recent regulation change. The regulations have always allowed for this method but it is only in very recent seasons that Taupo anglers have begun to fish this way in significant numbers.

The concerns raised over jigging generally fall within one of the following:

1. The method is unsporting or inappropriate for the Taupo fishery
2. Jigging causes an increased harvest because anglers:
 - catch large numbers of fish which do not survive catch and release
 - can fish deeper than with other methods
 - can catch fish at a time of year when previously they struggled

An unsporting method?

This criticism is invariably raised by people with no experience of the method or a general abhorrence of boat-based fishing anyway. One exception was an angler who made his views very strongly to me when I stopped him on the lake and who was fishing with a wireline at the time

It is difficult to argue that the experience of

catching a trout on a light baitcasting rig is somehow less sporting than other accepted trolling methods. Indeed it would make for a lively argument as to whether the equipment is more sporting than some of the heavy weight fly fishing outfits seen on the Tongarito

Fish do not survive catch and release?

Despite all the wild claims it is unlikely that mortality of fish caught and released by jigging is any greater than other deep trolling methods and may well be less. The facts are that the fish tend to come to the surface more slowly than when caught on downriggers for example, and are nearly always hooked in the mouth. Our trial into the mortality

of fish caught by different trolling methods in 1993 showed the greatest mortality was associated with deep trolling methods. Even so the mortality was only 12 to 15%. There was some evidence that the rate at which the fish were brought to the surface had some influence on this, the faster they were brought up the greater the risk to them.

A criticism of jigging is that the fish are often blown when they come to the surface but in reality this occurs much less often than with downriggers because the fish tend to fight all the way to the surface. By contrast it is a feature of fish hooked on downriggers that the majority swim straight to the surface on being hooked. In general the two biggest causes of catch and release mortality are hook injury to the gills and throat and injuries caused by mishandling when releasing the fish. The first is less of an issue when jigging than with some other methods, e.g.

"The ability for anglers to jig fish is not the result of a recent regulation change. The regulations have always allowed for this method"



Gary Ramlose releases a fish caught jigging. With careful handling the fish will almost certainly survive.

Photo: Glenn Maclean

fishing floating flies on sinking flylines, because the trout are invariably hooked in the mouth. Mishandling fish when releasing them is a significant issue in the Taupo

fishery but independent of any particular angling method.

Jigging fishes deeper than other methods?

There is a concern that jigging can exploit that part of the trout population living deep in the lake which was previously inaccessible to other methods. Much of this concern is based on the fact that jigging can potentially be used to target trout at any depth.

"the two biggest causes of catch and release mortality are hook injury to the gills and throat and injuries caused by misbandling when releasing the fish"

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However, in reality, jigging is rarely practised in depths much greater than 40 metres (the effective limit for downriggers and wirelines) in part this is because it is very difficult to jig effectively deeper than this with monofilament lines because of the stretch in the line. A few anglers have gone to the expense of braided lines to overcome this but it also appears that in general it is not particularly productive to fish depths much beyond 40 metres.

Our angling data for late summer and autumn (page 3-4) which shows that the success of anglers jigging was on a par with

"the success of anglers jigging was on a par with other deep trolling methods"

other deep trolling methods, supports this observation. If it was advantageous to be able to fish deeper than 40 metres we would expect this to be particularly so at this time of year and reflected in the data.

Anglers can catch fish at a time of the year when previously they struggled?

This is not a commonly raised concern but we think is actually the greatest risk posed by jigging to the sustainability of the fishery. Most anglers either do not have the equip-

ment to fish deep in the lake (20 to 40 metres) or do not like using the downriggers or wirelines necessary. However, without using this gear, anglers struggle to consistently catch fish in the period from Christmas to mid-winter when the lake has stratified and the trout have moved deep. In reality the majority of anglers wets up on the lake after Christmas have only very limited chances of catching a fish because of the gear they are using.

Jigging opens up significant opportunities for these anglers to now be successful. They don't need spe-

cialised gear, it is a lot more appealing to use and if we are blunt about it, it is not a difficult method to learn and catch fish with. Potentially there are a large number of anglers who currently catch very little at this time of year who could become more successful. Clearly this would increase the harvest. At this stage it is not critical, in part because the number of people jigging is still relatively small though increasing. Over the summer of 2001/02, 10% of anglers we checked were jigging which last year rose to 16%.

This aspect is something we need to keep an eye on. Clearly jigging cannot be allowed to impact unreasonably on other angling opportunities. Conversely we are

"jigging cannot be allowed to impact unreasonably on other angling opportunities"

not going to restrict what is a more sporting method than most simply because some people don't like it. As a fellow manager commented, when asked what we were going to do about the fact that anglers were catching lots of fish jigging, "I thought that was what we are trying to achieve - that people going fishing actually catch fish".

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Circle hook trial

by Glenn Maclean

As mentioned in the previous article on jigging, one issue of concern to us is the survival of fish released which have been hooked in the gills or deep in the throat. Numerous studies have shown that the survival of deep-hooked fish is greatly reduced, which is borne out by our own experiences. For example

has died. This was a fish generously given to us by an angler but unfortunately rather harshly handled.

This has reinforced to us that releasing trout deeply hooked is in many cases a waste. Even though the fish appears not to be bleeding and swims away does not mean it is likely to survive.



Circle hooks (right) have already gained a strong following amongst salt water anglers

Photo: Glenn Maclean

we hold all of the trout we are radio tagging at the Tonguero Delta for at least 24 hours in special floating bags before we tag them to ensure they are going to survive. When we first trialled this approach last winter we held a number of fish which had been hooked deep but appeared fine after being unhooked. All but one of these died over the next few hours. As a consequence this year we are only holding lip hooked fish and of 46 held so far only one

However, it is a legal requirement that all under-sized trout are released, regardless of their state.

One angling method in particular that carries a significant risk of hooking the fish deeply is fishing with floating flies on fast sinking lines (sometimes called "heave and leave"). There are variations to how the fly is fished and retrieved which minimise the degree of deep hooking but nevertheless in



"Heave and leave" is commonly practised at river mouths like the Tongariro Delta

Photo: Glenn Maclean

our experience there are days when, with the best will in the world, many of the fish manage to get the fly right down. If the trout is to be taken home and eaten this is not an issue but often this method is used to make large catches, for example of prime fish collecting at the river mouths prior to making their spawning migration.

Currently among saltwater anglers the use of circle hooks is gaining prominence, partly because of their hooking efficiency in some situations and partly because these hooks invariably hook up in the jaw aiding the release of fish. Circle hooks are characterised by the point of the hook bending right round so that it faces the shaft or even fur-

ther. These hooks work best when the angler simply tightens on the fish rather than striking vigorously. Tightening the line is often described as causing the hook to roll into the corner of the mouth.

These characteristics of circle hooks would seem to make them ideal for "heave and leave" trout fishing. We expect that they would be very efficient at hooking, with hopefully the added advantage that the great majority of fish would be hooked in the mouth.

Therefore we have planned a trial to investigate these aspects of the use of circle hooks, initially concentrating on their use with buoyant flies like boobies. We were unable to source circle hooks of a suitable size in New Zealand but currently have a supply coming from the United States. It will take some time to complete the trial but we will keep you up to date with the results in future issues of *Target Taupo*.

All going well, circle hooks will represent a significant step towards reducing the mortality of fish caught and released by the "heave and leave" method. If successful we don't envisage that anglers would not be able to use existing hook patterns, but hopefully the hooking efficiency of circle hooks will be such that anglers choose to use them anyway.

This article has been contributed by Bob MacDonnell on behalf of the Advocates for the Tongariro River and reflects the views of the society.

Advocates for the Tongariro River make progress in co-ordinating river management action

In 2002 a group of concerned residents and anglers formally joined together to establish the Advocates for the Tongariro River, an incorporated non-profit society dedicated to the preservation of the Tongariro River environment and trout fishery.

This action came about in part from a submission by local land owner Virginia Church to the Parliamentary Select Committee for Local Government and Environment, which supported concerns of 600 people representing local Maori, residents, recreational users, tourism operators and anglers concerned at the state of several environmental aspects of the Tongariro River.

The negative effects of silt build up, river flow and diversion, the deterioration of the Delta wetlands and the over-abundance of willows required the establishment of an organisation to dialogue and lobby the various local authorities and central government, with a view to remedying these problems.

Advocates' President Mark Cosgrove says considerable work has already been done by committee members in making contact with the various organisations that have authority for the critical river issues.

"We've had very encouraging talks with Environment Waikato and a commitment from them to undertake various bank protection and channel clearing works in the near future, resource consents permitting. There has also been useful dialogue with electricity provider, Genesis Power, and other key parties. Perhaps the most exciting prospect so far is the possibility of establishing a management umbrella group to represent all key interest groups, including iwi, so decision making and action for the river can be unanimous, effective and co-ordinated," says Mark.

The Advocates believe all groups involved with the Tongariro River, despite their disparate agendas, share a common interest in the wellbeing and preservation of the river and world-renowned fishery.

"The Tongariro River is a national treasure that has very significant economic and cultural value for the whole country and our ultimate goal is to preserve that for future generations," says Mark.

More information about the Advocates of the Tongariro River Inc. (including membership details) can be made by contacting the society at PO Box 335, Turangi. Alternatively email to cosgrove@teap.org.nz.

Removal of instream debris has been proposed by Environment Waikato as part of channel clearing works



What's your plan?

by Rob Kirkwood

Rob is a Ranger and part of the team that undertakes much of our field work. Having recently shifted to Turangi from the South Island, he has a unique perspective on the problems facing anglers on their first trips to the Tongariro.

I am fortunate to visit the Tongariro on a regular basis and one of the many things I notice is the correlation between fly-fishing success and planning. I see expert anglers consistently taking fish and I also watch beginner anglers catch prime trout under the watchful eye of a professional guide. However I also see a lot of novice or visiting anglers getting frustrated by their lack of success. In many cases, some simple planning and preparation beforehand, such as sorting out the right tackle and how it should be used, would have made a big difference.

In order to succeed on the Tongariro this season make a plan. This is not a "how to fish" guide for the Tongariro but more of a "how to plan" guide. A guide to help novice anglers, or those visiting for the first time, get a head start when on the river this winter.

There are a lot of factors to take into account when making this plan. You'll be dealing with a fly box bursting with flies, floating and sinking lines, deep pools, shallow riffles, snags and boulders. There will be wind, sun and rain, high and low atmospheric pressure, full moons, variable river flows, competitive anglers, and last but not least, migrating trout.

So where do you start? It is easy to get overwhelmed by all the paraphernalia and factors associated with fly fishing. It needn't be that way. Let's take a look at some of the factors associated with preparing for a visit.

First and foremost, the key to catching Taupo rainbows migrating up the rivers to spawn is to get your fly close to the bottom. How are you going to go about this? Have you got the right gear and how should you use it? Fishing the Tongariro is quite different to other New Zealand rivers – if you have no

knowledge of how to fish here then get some advice beforehand!

Rod and Line

You need to decide what method you will use – will it be a floating line with nymphs or a sinking line with a wet fly? Is your rod and line suited to the conditions? Talk to other anglers and tackle shops about what to use.

When I first arrived I spent weeks discussing the pros and cons of ceramic rod and line weights with retail outlets, anglers and other fishery staff. In the meantime I continued to use my 5 weight until I made a decision. It became quite obvious that the 5

weight was too light for some of the big water especially while battling a fresh run trout, but I found that during the autumn when the river was clear and low, this rod performed well. I now own an 8 weight rod and 9 weight line and still struggle with its bulk and power. But when it comes to head winds, heavy bombs and lines, and long distances, which are all part of the Tongariro, this rod is in its element.

When wet fly fishing only the fastest sinking lines get to the bottom in the Tongariro.

Anything else is a waste of time so if you are unsure about whether your line is suitable, ask at a local sports shop.

In many cases, some simple planning and preparation beforehand, such as sorting out the right tackle and how it should be used would have made a big difference.

When wet fly fishing only the fastest sinking lines get to the bottom in the Tongariro.

Leader length

Leader length is also an important factor to consider. Suitable leader length is a simple yet overlooked ingredient that is vital to the success of catching trout. Short leaders on a sinking line will keep the fly down deep. Conversely long leaders on a sinking line will mean the weighted line is near the bottom but the fly swims aimlessly up towards the surface. When wet fly fishing using a sinking line, I would suggest starting with a short leader to be somewhere between 50 and 100cm.



Hiring local guide Bob Lambert ensured success for first time visitor Kevin McNamara of Whangarei

Photo: Glenn Macteen

When nymphing, long leaders with weighted nymphs will ensure your flies get down near the bottom. Short leaders, no matter how heavy the nymphs, simply can't reach the bottom. We regularly see anglers trying to nymph the Tongariro with leaders of little more than a metre in length and wondering why they aren't catching fish.

A simple rule of thumb for leader length when nymphing is to make your leader 1.5 times the depth of the water, so if the pool is 1 metre deep then the leader should be about 1.5 metres long. In the Tongariro where it is often difficult to determine the depth, a leader of 3 to 4 metres long is a good starting point.

Leader Weight

I often see anglers using leaders that are extremely heavy. I believe there is a misconception on the Tongariro that you must use heavy leaders in order to handle the powerful fish in big water. When adding leader weight to your plan then have a look at what other anglers are using or what the tackle shop staff can tell you. Look at using something ranging from 5 to 8 pound breaking strain. You can use slightly heavier leaders with larger wet flies but remember that when you are snagged on the bottom it is preferable to break your leader rather than your brand new shooting head.

Which Fly?

It is easy to get confused by the wide range of feather and fur available at a tackle shop but at some stage you need to add what types of flies you will use to your plan. I am lucky enough to see what patterns are being used out on the river, and the great thing is that there is nothing secretive out there. Nearly all effective patterns are readily available and relatively simple. There are a lot of great traditional patterns to use and a chat to other anglers or local sports shops is a good way to find out which patterns are more effective at the time than others. Many experienced anglers will tell you that the actual pattern is relatively unimportant and that the

key is how you present it to the fish.

When nymphing not only do you need a pattern that will catch fish but you will also need a weighted pattern to get it down deep. A very popular and effective method is to use a heavy weighted "bomb" with a smaller unweighted fly trailing about 30cm behind. This enables the lighter, more effective fly to get down deep to where the trout are lying. Always use an unweighted fly as your trailing fly - this is more effective than a second weighted fly because it drifts around naturally behind the bomb, and it is much, much easier to cast as well! When casting "bombs" slow your cast down and be aware that they have a tendency to hit you when you least expect it. As a consequence, always wear glasses to protect your eyes.

Where to fish

It's all very well having chosen the right equipment to use but without choosing a suitable site to fish it will be very unlikely that you will be successful. Take a look at where people are fishing and try to work out why they are in that particular spot. Many anglers are only too happy to chat on the bank and to point out likely lies and how to fish them. Similarly, local sports shops can be relied on to give good advice to visiting anglers. Another approach is to have a guide for a day. The knowledge learnt will often repay the cost many times over.

The Plan

It may seem that there are a lot of things to consider when making this plan and it would be fair to say that this is right.

No matter how or when you choose to fish it is important to think one thing at all times, and that is adaptability. Being adaptable will allow you to continue to understand and learn more about what you are doing and in return gain more fishing knowledge. The more knowledge you gain, the more exciting and straightforward your plan is going to be.

Always use an unweighted fly as your trailing fly..

...when you are snagged on the bottom it is preferable to break your leader rather than your brand new shooting head.

WHATEVER ELSE AS PART OF YOUR PLAN:

- Talk to other anglers
- Talk to local sports shops
- Read some of the texts on how to fish at Taupo

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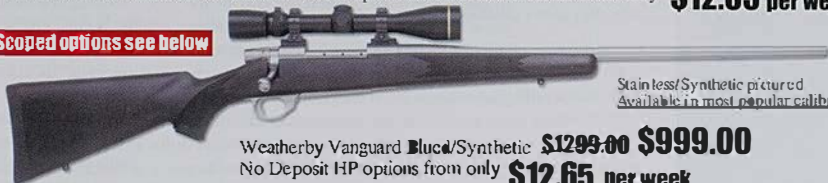
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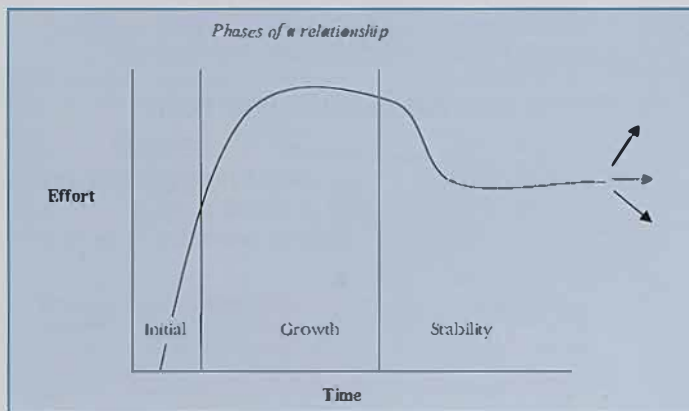
by Petrina Fritsch

Petrina is Programme Manager Community Relations for the Taupo Fishery Area. In this article she explains the importance the Taupo Fishery Area places on building community relationships

The Fishery Area team see themselves in the "growth" phase of community relations.

Once read on a card, "Life is like a teapot - what you put into it is what you get out". The same could be said of relationships. Relationships, or the development of interaction with others, forms an integral part of our lives. In exploring ways the Taupo Fishery Area can build and develop relationships with the community, it is useful to look at the structure of relationships and the phases that they go through

The Fishery Area team see themselves in the "growth" phase of community relations. The history of the fishery management has over the years provided a solid base of relationships with various community and iwi groups, such as the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society, the Turwhanotoa Maori Trust Board and the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee. However, we are committed to a new phase where we will be placing even more effort on strength-



As the diagram shows, in any new relationship, there is a tremendous initial effort over a short period of time, and this provides the basis on which to grow the relationship. Once this base is formed the "growth" phase kicks in and builds to a peak over a long period of time as we continue to develop and build the relationship. The next phase is the comfortable one, where the effort level drops as the relationship stabilises. At this stage, confidence has been built between the parties and there is an ongoing commitment to the continuation of the relationship. However, this is tempered with the fact that at some point, one of three things can happen:

- a) The effort could drop off completely, thus destroying the relationship
- b) The effort could remain stagnant and risk forming a "rut"
- c) Or we could enter a new cycle by initiating another high effort, high growth phase

ning not only existing relationships, but creating new ones as well.

The department's commitment is driven by our overriding objective to ensure the Taupo trout fishery remains a very high quality sustainable resource freely available for future generations to enjoy. Integral to achieving this goal is the support in all sorts of ways from various agencies, communities, anglers and individuals. Whether it is acknowledging the need to protect the habitat of trout in a statutory hearing, working with a landowner at a practical level, or school children valuing the need for clean water, it is all important to the long-term success of the fishery.

As a consequence we are currently looking at ways of creating awareness, building relationships and raising the profile of the Taupo fishery with all facets of the community - groups, clubs, schools, iwi, anglers, licence agents, vol-

unteers, the tourism industry, local and national government bodies and the general public.

Conservation of our fishery resource is everyone's business and connecting with communities in meaningful ways is vital if we are to achieve the right outcomes. The Taupo Fishery Area has already shown commitment to this goal by creating a specific community relations role within its team. This role is dedicated to a) building and strengthening existing relationships, and b) finding new ways for us to interact with the community including through the media; written publications; education programmes and the internet.

The Tongariro National Trout Centre is a valuable

tool. This centre is an excellent educational facility based in Tuangi, where people of all ages can come and have first hand contact with the fishery. In conjunction with the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society, we run children's fishing days for budding young anglers and provide a self-guided tour of our facilities including the trout hatchery. A new centre, "The River Walk" within the complex will be open to the public in the near future, which is a fantastic interactive display of the history of the trout fishery, its ecology and current management which has been put together by the TNCS Society and the department. The employment of a teacher for this facility next year to develop educational packages based around the trout fishery and consistent with the New Zealand education curriculum, will be a further significant step.

We also have this magazine, *Target Taupo*, which is an excellent communication tool with the angling community. *Target Taupo* is available free to all adult season licence holders, who make up approximately 20% of our total licence holders. However, of note is the fact that the other 80% are short-term licence holders who miss out - and so there is a much wider angling audience yet to be reached.

Our effort will also go into new initiatives which we hope will raise awareness of our work, current projects, research, issues and threats for the future. We will be looking at ways of reaching parts of the community that we have not focused on before. For example, we are currently developing the fishery component of the Department of Conservation website, and getting involved in community projects, such as stream care plans for the Hinemaitahi, Kuratau and Whanagama streams.

Feedback is very important, and these initiatives will be an opportunity for you to work with us as a team, to manage the amazing resource that is the Taupo fishery.

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WHANGAMATA RESTORATION PROJECT

by Dave Hah

*Dave is the Taupo
Fishery Area Ranger
based in Taupo*

Readers of *Target Taupo* will recall several articles over the years describing the restoration and revegetation of the Whangamata Stream near Kinloch. We last reported on the work undertaken in the stream in our July 2002 issue, where we focused on fish passage problems caused by the rampant growth of monkey-musk weed and efforts to control it both in the short and long term.

For those of you unfamiliar with the area, the Whangamata Stream is a small spring-fed tributary of Lake Taupo meandering down through Kinloch to where it flows out into Whangamata Bay. With fine gravel beds, cold spring-fed water and resistance to flooding, the stream provides ideal habitat for spawning trout despite its small size. However, there are threats to the quality of this stream, including changes in water quality and flow rate, rampant monkey-musk weed growth, and inappropriate streamside plantings which can block passage to spawning fish.

As a spring-fed watercourse, the flow rate of the stream is affected by historic influences on the water table, as well as present rainfall and land usage in the catchment area. Testing

of the Whangamata Stream by NIWA using carbon isotopes has determined a water age of up to 80 years old. While present flow conditions, which are certainly lower than they have been in past years, may be affected by current land use in the upper catchment, they may also be the result of land use and rainfall occurring decades ago. With the flow rate monitored by Environment Waikato, our efforts to protect and enhance the stream as a trout spawning habitat focus on water quality and fish passage.

Over the past 25 years the stream has been subject to extensive changes in riparian land management and appearance. Briefly summarised the stream was once bordered by open paddocks with water quality severely affected by bank-side erosion, lack of shading, silt runoff and stock trampling the spawning gravels. The stream was raised from grazing and a succession of planting programmes undertaken by the department (and its predecessor, the NZ Wildlife Service) and volunteer groups. Some of these worked well to improve in-stream qualities, while others proved ineffective or problematic. In many parts the plantings of native grasses and trees

*This area between the
Listland subdivision
bridge and lakeshore
will be addressed first in
the revegetation plan*





The Listland subdivision, with bridge over the Whangamata Stream in the foreground and barriers to prevent siltation from run-off in heavy rain

have provided effective erosion control and nutrient stripping, and the dappled shade has kept water temperatures cool and excluded nuisance weed growth. However other parts of the stream remain affected by rampant annual growth of the stream-logging monkey musk weed. Until fully excluded by revegetation projects this will require us to contin-

ue with a combination of chemical and manual removal methods. In addition to in-stream weed problems, the adjacent valley floor and escapment areas of the reserve sport a number of undesirable tree and weed species, which are either problematic in themselves or contribute to the lack of native species regeneration.

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This year the restoration plans for the Whangamata Stream Scenic Reserve have received a huge boost courtesy of Lisland Properties who are undertaking land development in the area surrounding the Whangamata Stream. As part of their development consents the company has provided for a capital injection of \$10,000 per annum over the next 10 years for the purposes of restoration and revegetation of the stream reserve.

Department of Conservation landscape architect Herwi Schelutis has provided a restoration and revegetation plan with input from DOC botanist Nick Singers, Taupo Fishery Area and Taupo Field Centre staff, and in consultation with the local community. Primarily the project focuses on the preservation of water quality and trout spawning habitat, with secondary objectives of enhancing the scenic reserve for recreational use including improved walking access through it.

With the large scope of the project and funding staggered over a 10 year period, the restoration work will occur in stages commencing at the lake edge and working up towards Whangamata Road. Initially the approach will involve removal of weeds between the lake edge and the Lisland subdivision bridge prior to native riparian,

valley floor and escarpment plantings. Removal of monkey musk weed in the stream to prevent annual regeneration will also be undertaken, as well as eradication of animal pests such as rabbits, hares and mustelids. The rough walking track presently in the lower reaches will be improved to DOC walking track standard and will eventually run from the lakeshore through to Whangamata Road. The weed removal and revegetation project will then continue above the Lisland subdivision bridge and include the removal of undesirable trees such as oaks and silver birch, while the exotic forestry trees will be harvested when mature.

With the project focusing on preserving water quality and trout spawning habitat the Taupo Fishery Area are pleased to be driving the project for the Department of Conservation. Once the project has advanced to the "hands on" stage the involvement and assistance of the local community and other interest groups such as schools and fishing clubs will be actively sought. All in all the project provides an exciting opportunity to make another advance in the long term restoration of the Whangamata Stream and its scenic reserve with benefits for the fishery, local community and indigenous plant and bird life.

In the absence of suitable riparian plantings, we have to clear monkey musk weed to prevent it spreading and blocking fish passage



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 **YAMAHA**

SUMMER FISHING

review

by Mark Voiman and
Glenn Maclean

Mark is the technical
support officer providing
technical advice and
oversight of the
monitoring programmes

Last summer fishery staff completed 48 surveys on Lake Taupo, checking a total of 920 anglers. The lake was divided into two zones, one north of Motutaiko Island and the other south of the island. A total of 23 and 25 surveys were carried out in the northern and southern zones respectively.

Surveys were distributed throughout October to March, based on a stratified random sampling design whereby the number of surveys scheduled in any month is determined by the known angling effort for that particular month. As a consequence greater numbers of surveys are carried out when anglers are more numerous such as over the Christmas holiday break.

Catch rates last summer

Every angler interviewed was asked details of how many fish they had caught and how long they had been fishing. From this data we can calculate an estimate of the catch rate. This is an estimate of success and in recreational fisheries is normally expressed as the number of fish caught per hour of angling effort.

For those readers with a statistical bent, there are two ways of calculating this. The "per day" estimate which is the total catch recorded divided by the total effort, and the "per angler" estimate where the catch rate of each angler interviewed is calculated and then the average of all these catch rates determined. These methods of calculating catch rate give similar, but rarely identical estimates and the correct method depends on the survey method used. Where anglers are stopped on roving creel surveys, such as our surveys on the lake (where the chances of being interviewed are proportional to fishing trip length) then the "per angler" estimate is statistically the most appropriate method to estimate catch rate. It has the added advantage that it is a more realistic summary of what the average angler experienced on the lake as extreme catches do not influence the estimate to the same degree as in the "per day" estimate.

Using the "per angler" estimate, the overall catch rate estimated for the lake last summer was 0.33 fish per hour. This is very much on a par with recent years (table 1).

Table 1. Average catch rate recorded for Lake Taupo, summer 1997/98 to 2002/03

Summer	Per angler catch rate (fish/hour)
1997/98	0.23
1998/99	0.26
1999/00	0.32
2000/01	0.32
2001/02	0.32
2002/03	0.33

A breakdown of the catch rate per month is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 indicates that the catch rates have remained relatively high over late summer which is unusual. Typically the catch rate tends to decrease in January as the trout move deeper into the lake and out of reach of many angling methods.

Table 2. Average catch rate (per angler) for anglers interviewed on Lake Taupo November 2002 to March 2003

Month	Catch rate (fish per hour)
November	0.33
December	0.42
January	0.26
February	0.26
March	0.38

Table 3. Average catch rate by method for anglers on Lake Taupo 2002/03

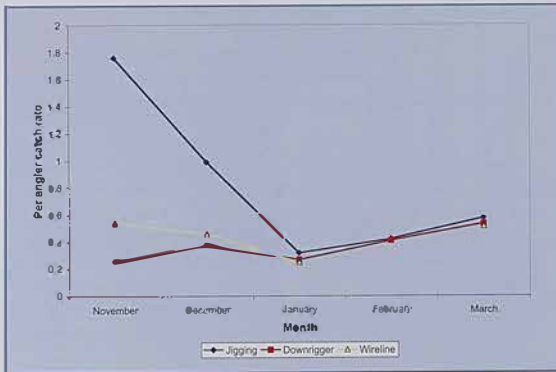
Method	Number of interviews	Catch rate (fish/hour)
Deep trolling - downrigger	107	0.40
Deep trolling - wireline	48	0.38
Leadline	348	0.18
Jigging	148	0.61
Shallow trolling	224	0.36

Table 3 provides a breakdown of success for each angling method. The high catch rates of deep trolling methods like downriggers and wirelines compared to leadlines reflects this movement of trout into deeper water out of reach of leadline anglers after Christmas.

What is characteristic in table 3 is the maintenance of a relatively high catch rate by shallow trolling (hurling) over the whole period and the impact of jigging. The shallow trolling catch rate estimate reflects the unseasonably late spawning last winter and spring and consequential very late return of kahis to the lake. Many of these fish only returned around Christmas. They tend to be very easy to catch as they concentrate around the lake edge and are busy feeding hard to regain condition. So in part, the high overall catch rate is an artefact of the late spawning last year.

The high catch rate by anglers jigging elicited a variety of comments over autumn with a number of anglers raising concerns over the perceived impact. This issue is addressed in greater detail in an article on page 18 of this issue. An interesting aspect is highlighted by breaking down the catch rate for the various deep fishing methods by month (graph 1).

Despite the common perception, jigging is no more successful overall than other deep trolling methods in late summer and autumn.



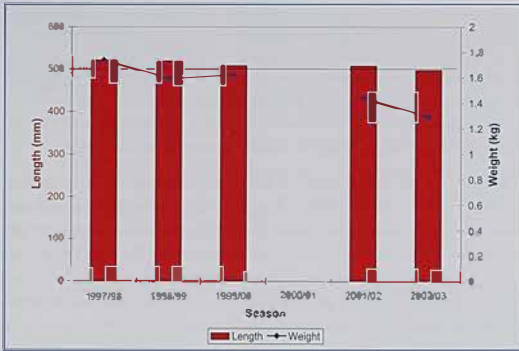
Graph 1. Monthly catch rate for downriggers, wirelines and jigging over 2002/03 summer



The high overall catch rate is instead a result of a few, obviously very skilled, anglers who did very well jigging in spring.

Size of the trout

A total of 677 legal-sized fish were weighed and measured by fishery staff, all but one of which were rainbow trout. The average size of the fish measured (length 498 mm, weight 1.29 kilograms) is slightly less than in recent years (Graph 2).



Graph 2. Average length (mm) and weight (kg) of rainbow trout measured on creel surveys on Lake Taupo 1997/98 to 2002/03

Note that no data was collected in 2000/01 when the year long harvest survey was undertaken.

The large size of fish in 1997/98 and 1998/99 reflected a boom in fish growth (but not numbers), as a consequence of short term changes in lake Taupo caused by the Mount Ruapehu eruptions in 1995 and 1996. The averages for recent years reflect more typical fish sizes. We do not view the slightly smaller size this year with any concern as the average is a little misleading. In reality anglers did not keep many of the larger older fish they caught as these were still recovering condition after arriving late back in the lake. This has the effect of lowering the average length and weight. In fact many of the maiden fish we saw over summer were in very good condition

and some of the fish we have tagged at the Delta recently have been superb specimens.

Angler Satisfaction

As part of the lake creel survey, anglers are asked four questions pertaining to their satisfaction with their angling experience. Questions are based upon how they rate their angling enjoyment, their angling success and the size and quality of the fish that they are catching. Anglers are asked to rate each of these on a scale from 1 to 5 (where one is terrible and five is excellent). Last summer anglers rated the size and quality of the fish that they were catching at 3.2, their angling success at 3.3 and finally their angling enjoyment at 4.6 out of 5. This is similar to recent seasons, the relatively low rating for size and quality likely due to large numbers of lean kelts in their catch. As occurred the previous summer, these fish were late in returning to the lake after spawning and did not have adequate time to recover before the busy Christmas period.

Anglers were also asked a final question about whether anything detracts or spoils their fishing while out on the lake. Some 81.3% couldn't think of anything. Of the remaining 18.7%, the largest complaint was regarding jet skiers, with lesser complaints about water skiers and bad boating manners on the lake. This was mainly due to other boat users not passing far enough behind boats trolling and on several occasions cutting off their lines.

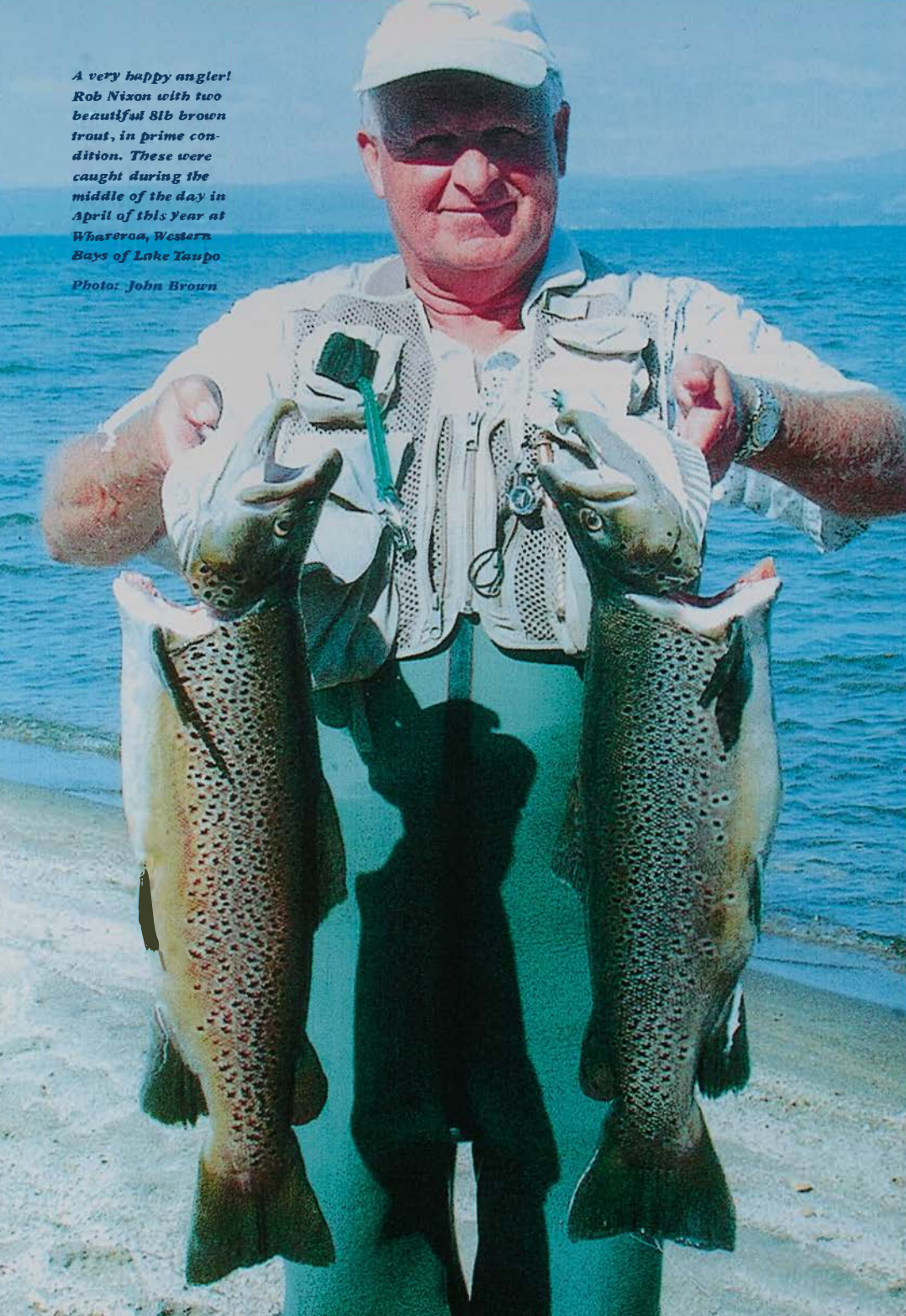
Licences to be produced

Over the summer, 40 anglers who were checked were unable to produce a licence at the time and were given one week to send their licence in. This equates to 4.2% of all anglers checked. Of these 40 anglers only two (0.2%) were subsequently found to be unlicensed. In other words 99.8% of anglers stopped on lake Taupo last summer held a current fishing licence - an excellent result.

Prospects for this winter

As our acoustic estimate last November and summer fishing results indicate, the trout population in the lake last summer was in reasonable shape. It is these fish which will run the rivers this winter to spawn. While it is unlikely to be an exceptional season it should be good overall. With the arrival of more typical winter weather all the rivers have had runs of fish. However as we found out when capturing fish at the Delta for our radio tracking experiment in mid June, the run is still very much in its early days. Twenty two of the 29 fish caught were males. Typically the males run first and then await the females to join them on the spawning grounds. Another feature of the 45 trout tagged so far is their generally large size and very good condition. They have certainly impressed some of our new staff not used to such fish.

*A very happy angler!
Rob Nixon with two
beautiful 8lb brown
trout, in prime con-
dition. These were
caught during the
middle of the day in
April of this year in
Wharevao, Western
Bays of Lake Taupo
Photo: John Brown*



Compliance and law enforcement news

by Dave Hart

Fishery Ranger Bob Kirkwood measures a fish at the weigh-in in Turangi for the Lake Taupo International Fishing Competition while Errol Cuddy looks on.

Photo: Brendon Matthews

Coinciding with the review of our fishing regulations is a review of the compliance and law enforcement model used by the department. Proposed changes include increased penalties for serious offending, the introduction of an infringement notice system for minor offences, and tiered levels of authority for our warranted staff. This will provide some specially trained and experienced officers with more powers to deal with certain offences, including limited powers of arrest. Included in this review are changes to the department's national policy on the use of honorary warranted officers (rangers). Having already completed our own review of the use of honorary rangers within the Taupo Fishery Area, we are now awaiting finalisation of this national policy. It is likely we will be seeking to reappoint a number of previous honorary staff and recruit new ones.



Headlining the national news on the 25th of May was an incident at the Waimarino River mouth where two men were gill netting for trout after dark. With the river receding from flood conditions, one of the pair became entangled in the net and drowned. The 28 year old cooffender faces prosecution.

Offences of this nature can have a serious impact on the sustainability of the fishery. Regular covert surveillance and law enforcement operations are undertaken by our rangers to detect offences and apprehend those involved. Anglers who believe they have observed a net in the water are asked to leave it undisturbed and to contact our office immediately. Our day and after hours contact numbers are listed at the end of this article and are also printed on the Taupo fishing licences.

Our staff working at this year's Lake Taupo International Fishing Competition held in April were pleased with the responsible behaviour of anglers involved. No undersized fish were weighed in as had occurred in the 2002 contest and no offences were observed by our rangers checking angler compliance on the water and for out of hours fishing. Also of note was an improvement in the overall quality of fish weighed in this year. While this may have been indicative of the condition of fish generally in the lake this year, we hope that it also reflects an acceptance by anglers that poorly conditioned keltis will not win prizes and killing them just for the sake of weighing something in, is simply a waste.



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AA HOST ACCOMMODATION



Ranger Rob Kirkwood interviews K Wakford about his angling success on the Tongariro River June 2003

Photo: Glenn Maclean

- Respect landowners' rights. Keep to foot access tracks and don't drive and park your vehicle where you shouldn't.
- Respect the river environments and take all your litter (including bits of mono/lamernet line) with you when you leave.

As always we encourage anglers to play their part in helping to protect the fishery they enjoy. If you see suspected illegal activity, please contact us as soon as possible in order for us to respond effectively. Our contact numbers are listed on your Taupo fishing licence and we suggest you programme them into your cell-phone memory for convenience:

During weekday office hours: (07) 386 8607
After hours: 0800 36 24 68 (0800 DOC HOTline)

With the winter fishing limits now in force and staff concentrating their efforts on the rivers for creel surveys and compliance checks, it is timely to provide a few reminders for anglers fishing the Taupo district rivers:

- Know where the winter fishing limits are and ensure you stay within them.
- ALWAYS CARRY YOUR LICENCE WHEN FISHING! Having your licence with you will prevent you the hassle of having to produce it to us later, or worse still, having your gear seized if we suspect you are unlicensed.
- Expect company in the pools and display the etiquette you would expect of others. If encountering poor etiquette from another angler, remember that they may be new to the sport and unaware of the "rules". A polite explanation is often all it takes to avoid a problem.



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Public access group visits

by Jobn Gibbs

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.

In January this year the government set up a group to study issues around public access to rural land. This was described by the Minister of Rural Affairs, Jim Sutton, as "...in response to concerns over the need to clarify and enhance the legal situation permitting to public access over private land and the foreshore of lakes and the sea and along rivers."

Mr Sutton also noted that the legal situation around the "Queen's Chain" is sometimes confusing, public understanding incomplete, and access over such land sometimes discouraged. "People have the impression that the Queen's Chain applies to all beaches and rivers and that simply isn't true" he said.

Access was a growing issue according to the Minister "There are more and more examples popping up of landholders restricting public access to previously accessible rivers, beaches, and mountain land. Sometimes access is allowed in return for payment. Sometimes the new regime is established by an overseas purchaser, although often it is a new New Zealand owner. All this is anathema to a lot of New Zealanders."

The specific purpose of the reference group is to review:

- Access to the foreshore of the lakes and the sea and along rivers;
- Access to public land across private land; and
- Access onto private rural land to better facilitate public access to and enjoyment of New Zealand's natural environment.

The group is chaired by John Acland and its other members are: Sally Millar, Penny Mudford, Claire Mulcock, Gottlieb Braun-Elwart, Bob Cottrell, Edward Ellison, Brian Hayes, Simon Kennett, Kevin Prime and Eric Roy. It is expected that the group will report to the Minister of Rural Affairs this month.

As part of their information gathering the group requested a meeting with the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee. This was held on 12 May and provided an opportunity for the committee members to express a range of views on fishing access, primarily in the Taupo district.



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While in the district the group met with a number of other local groups and individuals. I was fortunate enough to be one of those and was able to explain the unique arrangements under the 1926 Maori Land Amendment and Maori Land Claims Adjustment Act which provide for public access to lake Taupo and fishing access over Maori land to many of the inflowing rivers. The reference group showed a great deal of interest in this model and asked a number of questions about its practical application.

My impression is that the group had a very good grasp of the issues, from both the perspectives of recreational users and landowners. I'm certainly looking forward to their report and recommendations for the future.



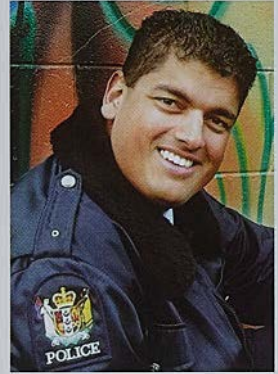
New Zealand
POLICE
Nga Pirihimana • Aotearoa

Turangi Police Community Constable Sunny Peeters has some more messages directed at security and safety issues of importance to anglers.

Hello again...

You may recall that in the December issue of *Tangeri* I mentioned that there were plans to improve visibility into anglers' carparks close to roads and improve signage in those that aren't so visible.

This has now been done and I am pleased to be able to say that there has been a marked reduction in the amount of thefts from vehicles in these parks. This is not due to just one factor but a combination of things, so thank you all for doing your part.



REMEMBER THE DOs and DON'Ts:

DO lock and secure your vehicle;

DO leave your vehicle in plain view of others where possible;

DO record and report any suspicious vehicles or persons;

DO set your alarm if installed;

DON'T leave anything of value in your vehicle or leave it in view from the outside

Remember also that if your vehicle is interfered with or you have property taken please report it to the Police. Even if nothing has been taken any information about criminal activity helps us to assess the "bigger picture" and act to reduce further offending.

It is my understanding that there are a lot of good fish being caught and I'm getting better at getting my share, so make sure you get stuck in and enjoy this area, as it really is among the top spots in the world as far as I'm concerned.

Thanks to those who emailed me after the last article. It is always good to get feedback and supportive suggestions. I welcome your comments and can be contacted on pcpeeters@xtra.co.nz. This is for feedback only and not to be used to report incidents or suspicious activity.

Tight lines to ya

Sunny Peeters

Images of the Taupo Fishery



VICTORY

*Victory "lifting her skirts"
in fresh conditions off
Rangatira Point about
1965*

Photo: Murray Taylor

In this article, one of an occasional series about people, places and things of historical interest in the Taupo Fishery, John highlights one of the best-known launches on the lake. In researching this article special thanks are due to Tony Orr, Murray Taylor, Charles Cox, and Karen Williams of the Lake Taupo Museum and Art Gallery.

by John Gibbs

Victory has a special place in the history of Taupo and especially the fishery. She is one of the few large launches built here, and apart from a few years away, still plying the lake's waters after 64 years.

Boat builder Jack Taylor relocated his family and business to Taupo in 1932 after the Napier earthquake left his previous premises on the inner harbour high and dry. Himself the son of a boat builder, Jack's two sons Godfrey and Ernie also took up the trade and the business operated as Jack Taylor and Sons on the Nukuhau side of the Taupo harbour. Just before World War II, Jack Taylor designed and built a beany 40 foot (12m) bridgedeck

er displacement launch. Unlike today's computerised drafting methods, this little ship's lines were designed by carving a scaled-down wooden half-model from which the final proportions and construction dimensions were derived. She was constructed of totara frames, jarrah ribs and kauri planks and built solely with hand tools. Launched in 1939, no doubt with the global conflict in mind, she was named Victory.

Victory has an unusually broad beam for her day of 12'6" (3.4m) and draws 3' (0.9m) with a deadwood keel. She sleeps 6 to 8 people and can take up to 24 passengers on day trips. Over the years she has been exten-

*Victory in the Taiaroa
harbour about 1945*

Photo: Murray Taylor



sively remodded but keeps her original style, having her bridge deckhouse lengthened and moved aft and the side decks widened with the addition of sponsons in 1969. In 1982 the main cabin was raised 250mm to give more headroom.

Not surprisingly for her age, Victory has outlived several engines and drive trains. Originally launched with a 40hp 20/40 Doman four cylinder petrol engine, mechanical gearbox and two piece bronze propeller shaft, she was re-powered with a six cylinder twin spark Glenifer engine (now in the Museum of Transport and Technology) in

1950. This was followed by a six cylinder Morris diesel and in about 1967 she was fitted with her present four cylinder 80hp Ford diesel. During her 1982 refit a single-piece 2" diameter stainless steel prop shaft and 2:1 hydraulic gearbox were fitted and she spins a three-bladed propeller giving a cruise speed of eight knots at 2100 rpm.

An interesting feature was the fitting of a small Morris Vedette petrol wing motor. This sat to port in the engine room running its own shaft and propeller and was used for trout trolling as the main engine would not run slow enough. Although the Morris has

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since been removed, the present owner is in the process of fitting a 12hp single-cylinder Yanmar diesel for the same purpose. Victory has shaft and chain linkage to the tiller running through a Bedford truck steering box with an auxiliary shaft in the transom for emergency steering. Because of the long and complex gear she can be busy to helm, especially in rough weather.

Internally the launch has a layout typical of her era. The aft cabin opening to the cockpit has two settee berths which can be used as doubles at a squeeze. Ahead of this is the saloon and raised bridgedeck with helm and controls to centre, the vertical dry stack exhaust to port and the engine under the sole. The skipper's bunk is starboard of the helm above the galley. A substantial galley with a 2-burner gas stove and oven, sinkbench and fridge are set to starboard and there is a good-size table and settees aft in the saloon. An unusual feature for a bridgedeck is the aisle between the engine room and the galley which gives an uninterrupted level passage from the cockpit to the forecabin. The forward cabin has one double and one single berth and the head is in the forepeak.

For the first 34 years of her life Victory was operated by Jack Taylor and later by his sons as a commercial charter boat on Lake Taupo

where she was well known by fishing parties and tourists. At one time a Stuart Turner two-stroke petrol engine powered a 24 volt generator which ran a large icecream freezer used to keep the catch fresh. During the Second World War many military personnel were hosted for day trips during rest and recreation breaks. Victory was the support boat for Margaret Sweeney when, in 1955, she became the first person to swim the length of the lake.

Murray Taylor, Jack's grandson and himself a charter skipper on the lake, remembers his grandfather making a helm chair suspended from old canvas fire hose so the 10 year old Murray could see out the hatch and steer the boat with his feet on lake crossings while Jack entertained the passengers.

Many regular fishing parties used to book Victory year after year. Charles Cox records one such group from the Hawkes Bay rugby union on their 21st visit in 1951 catching 119 trout. This group included the famous commentator Winston McCarthy. Victory also ferried students from Taupo Nui-A-Tia College to the Western Bays for their annual clean-up of anchorages and camp sites. It was on one of these trips, about 1965, that the photo below was taken in fresh weather off Rangatia Point.

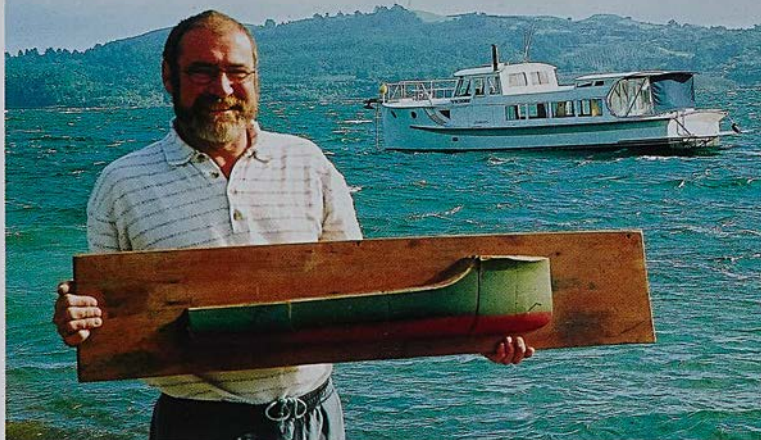
A very similar scene post-1982. Note the lengthened deckhouse, raised cabin head and side-deck spansons

Photo: Lake Taupo Museum and Art Gallery



Murray Taylor, the builder's grandson, holds Jack Taylor's original half-model from which Victory (background) was designed

Photo: John Gibbs



Victory was in the Taylor family until 1982 when she was sold to Taupo resident Pat Cox. In 1995 she left the lake for the first time when she went to an Auckland owner and she was used on the Hauraki Gulf until the present owner brought her back home to Lake Taupo in 2001. She is now moored at Four Mile Bay.

Victory's owner, Taupo helicopter pilot Tony Orr, is an enthusiast for bridgedeck launches. He looked at scores of different examples before deciding to buy Victory. Among the things that sealed his choice were her wide beam and spacious accommodation, as well

as her Lake Taupo pedigree. By the time you read this, the vessel will be out of the water undergoing a major refit. Tony is relining the cabins, fitting a shower in the head, a diesel wing motor and hydraulic steering and giving the hull a full overhaul and repaint.

Apart from the historical association with Lake Taupo, Victory is a classic in her own right. An enduring example of traditional design and boat building skill which we are fortunate to still have on the Great Lake and one which will be catching trout for decades to come.



The Tongariro National Trout Society

The centre is managed by the Department of Conservation in association with the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society. The role of the Society is to promote and foster public interest in, and understanding of, the Taupo fishery, other freshwater fisheries and freshwater ecology through development of the Trout centre wider promotion and education programmes.

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River works

planned for Tongariro River

Lower Tongariro works - it is proposed to control willows in the lower river by aerial spraying using new technology developed by Helicopter Services (BOP) Ltd

Photos: Glenn Maclean



The work proposed includes closing some of the flood overflow channels which will improve access to the end of Graces Road

Photos: Glenn Maclean



Environment Waikato as part of 'Project Watershed' is proposing to undertake a series of works to address flooding and erosion issues in the lower Tongariro River. Some of the works involve extending or creating new stop banks to control the flooding risk to Turangi township. Other works of more significance to the fishery, include the removal of limited amounts of gravel downstream of the highway bridge for use in the various works proposed, removal of some in-stream debris to clear the channel, willow control in the lower river and closure of some of the flood overflow channels.

Environment Waikato are expecting to lodge resource consent applications very soon. The department is working closely with the council, and expects that the impact on in-stream fishery values should be negligible from this work.

NEW REGULATIONS POSTPONED

New Taupo Fishing Regulations which were to be in force for the start of the 2003/2004 season have been deferred for another season. Following the completion of public submissions and local consultation last year, a draft proposal for the new regulations was sent to the department's legal division in head office to finalise their preparation and undertake the formal parliamentary process required to bring the new regulations into being. As part of this process, the department was required to seek comment from other government departments with a potential interest in the outcome. During this phase of consultation, the Ministry of Fisheries challenged the department on a number of jurisdictional issues and these concerns needed to be resolved before further progress could be made. The Ministry of Fisheries has no management, policy or regulatory functions with regard to the Taupo sport fishery.

Progress to satisfy the Ministry's concerns is being made but completion of this has not been achieved in time to allow the promulgation of the new regulations for the start of the new fishing season. Therefore, the existing regulations, which are familiar to Taupo anglers, will remain unchanged for one more season. These regulations are summarised on the fishing licence and the full detail of the regulations can be obtained in brochure form from the Taupo Fishery Area Office, Department of Conservation, Turangi, or viewed on the website at www.doc.govt.nz/Explore/Hunting-and-Fishing/Taupo-Fishery.

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TEAM PROFILES

Petrina Francis



Petrina Francis has joined the Fishery Area team as Programme Manager, Community Relations. Petrina and her husband have recently moved permanently to the Western Bays of Lake Taupo from Auckland, having spent several years commuting on weekends to this area.

Both are keen on the outdoors and enjoy the variety of experiences the region has to offer, including the beautiful tracks and walks, boating on the lake, and of course, the fishing opportunities. Petrina is particularly interested in the Tongariro National Park and has been a strong advocate for introducing city based friends to some of the stunning walks through the park.

Working with the fishery team is proving to be a great experience for Petrina, who admits having a keen interest in the local history of the trout fishery and what opportunities it has to offer in the future. "Working with the community is going to be an exciting challenge," Petrina says. "We are exploring ways to raise awareness of what we do and involve the community in our work. We have a really enthusiastic team who are passionate about the trout fishery, and I am looking forward to working with them and different community groups in the future".



Mark Venman

Mark filled the position of Technical Support Officer (formerly Fisheries Ecologist) in late March 2003 following the departure of Rob Marshall to Environment Waikato.

A New Zealand citizen, Mark moved to New Zealand after completing his Zoology degree at the University of Glasgow. After spending a considerable amount of his youth in Scotland, Mark has developed a particularly strong accent that you may have heard while being interviewed on the lakes or rivers this year!

Initially, Mark came out to New Zealand to visit many of his family, but after seeing how similar NZ was to Scotland, the size of the trout here and the conservation and management techniques being employed, he was convinced to stay and try and find suitable work.

Mark has been interested in angling from an early age and has fished many of Scotland's richest fishing grounds - especially up the west coast - in search of some large marine species such as cod and pollack. He is also a keen freshwater angler and although having caught several trout (small compared to NZ standards) his ultimate passion remains with pike fishing, a 15lb beast the best yet.

He also enjoys a variety of other activities including playing and watching soccer, tennis and motor sport. "Most of all though, I am looking forward to playing an important role in managing the fishery by providing technical advice and introducing new ideas learnt while working abroad and being able to apply them to one of the best wild fisheries in the world", says Mark.

TEAM PROFILES

Carolyn Poots



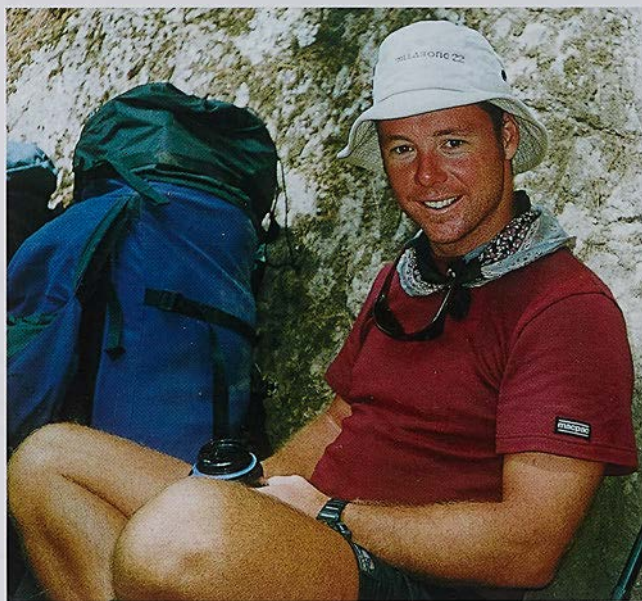
Carolyn recently joined the Taupo Fishery Area as Programme Manager - Service, replacing Jon Palmer. Carolyn moved from Mount Ruapehu with her husband Kerry and their two daughters, Michaela and Samantha. Carolyn and Kerry have based themselves at Motuoaipa and are enjoying the warmer climate and lower rainfall.

Carolyn has lived in the Tongariro area for the last 15 years, having spent the last four as part of the DOC team at the Whakapapa Visitor Centre. The fisheries operation is new to her but the fisheries team hold an amazing basket of knowledge and every day is another learning experience. Carolyn says "This will be a challenging and exciting job and I am looking forward to working with such a dedicated bunch of people".

Kerry and Carolyn plan to explore and enjoy Lake Taupo once they have completed building their family home. Fishing will be a high priority and trying new tactics to catch the big one. Carolyn, Kerry and the girls have always enjoyed water skiing on other lakes in the area and look forward to making the most of the varied opportunities Lake Taupo offers.

Rob Kirkwood

Rob joined the Taupo Fishery Area as a Ranger in late March of this year from the South Island. Rob most recently lived in Fox Glacier in South Westland, where he was the Chief Guide for Alpine Guides, a company specialising in glacier walking and alpine instruction.



Rob is a keen and active fly angler and has spent the last 18 years fishing predominantly in the Mackenzie Basin and South Westland areas.

When not fishing Rob and partner Paula spend time in and around the mountains. They have both travelled numerous times through Nepal and the Indian Himalayas, European Alps and more recently worked on glaciers in Norway. They like to use their spare time walking, climbing and ski touring and also enjoy the less strenuous pastime of growing vegetables and making great compost.

Rob comments "I am impressed by the size and condition of the rainbows here and very keen to get amongst them on the Tongariro this winter. I look forward to meeting some of you out on the river this season".

Changes to the Taupo Fishery Area structure

by John Gibbs

Nearly two years ago we began a review of the structure of the Area to ensure we had the most appropriate mix of staff roles to meet our priority needs. These were assessed against the requirements of the fishery management plan, the department's Statement of Intent which sets medium-term goals for the organisation, and a strategic review.

A number of areas for re-direction were identified, including the need to strengthen our capacity and skills in programme management, increase technical fishery skills and meet the challenge of involving communities in our work. A plan was developed that would see a general ranger position re-graded and allocated specific responsibilities along with the other three A2 rangers; the Licensing and Community Relations position dis-established and a new Programme Manager Community Relations created. The management of fishing licences would be moved into the existing service programme. And all this without any change in overall staff numbers.

As with most change, we envisaged a gradual process taking advantage of opportunities for reviewing positions as vacancies arose over the next 3 to 5 years. So much for that idea. Apart from an existing vacancy that we were carrying for financial reasons, we found ourselves with a further three positions becoming vacant as people moved on in the last six months. Changes in financial commitments with a wind down of the Tongariro Power Development resource consents process meant we were able to fill three of the four positions immediately and the final one from the beginning of July.

A busy schedule of recruitment and interviews over the last three months has seen us meeting all the objectives of the review and by the time this is published all positions will have

been filled. This follows the department's model for Area offices with the addition of a technical support group.

The programmes have defined areas of responsibility although all staff will work in most programmes at some time or other. Each programme manager reports to the area manager.

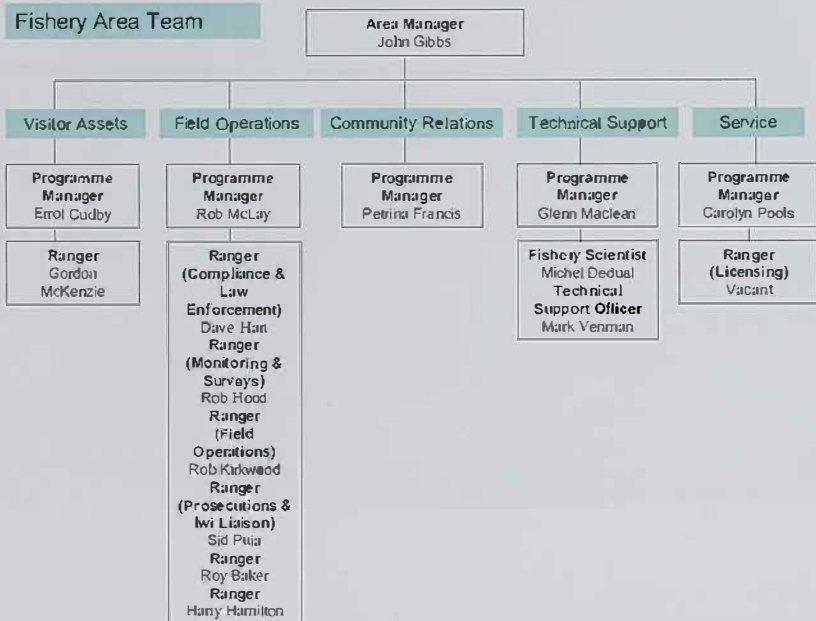
Line is the general operations group. This consists of three programmes: Visitor Assets responsible for the provision and maintenance of visitor facilities (anglers access tracks, roads, bridges, fish production at the Tongariro National Trout Centre, (TNTC)); Field Operations responsible for undertaking surveys and fishery monitoring, compliance and law enforcement and general field work; and Community Relations which undertakes public awareness, education and information services including the website, community involvement in the fishery and oversees the TNTC.

Technical Support provides our standalone scientific capability to undertake relevant fishery research, designs monitoring projects, produces reports to meet management information needs and gives technical advice to the other programmes and to conservancy, regional and head offices.

Service is the programme that manages the Area's infrastructure, assets, information systems and human resources, business planning, work scheduling, fishing licences and other permits.

So who does these things? The chart below shows the current structure and staff names in the assigned roles.

Elsewhere Petrina Francis has written about the new community relations programme and some of the things we will be engaging in in the future. We are looking forward to the new structure delivering an even better standard of management of your prized fishery.



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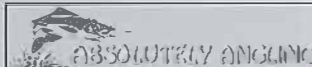
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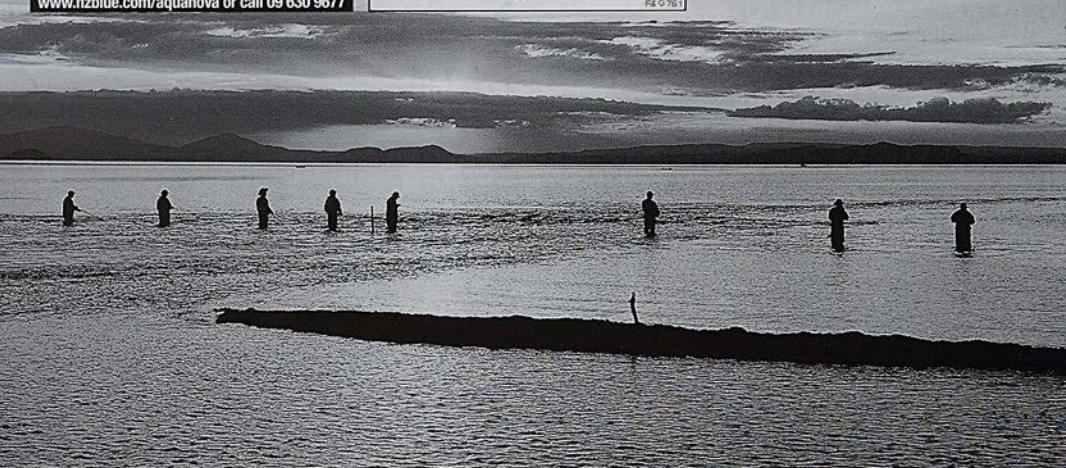
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