

# TARGET TAUPO

A newsletter for Taupo Anglers

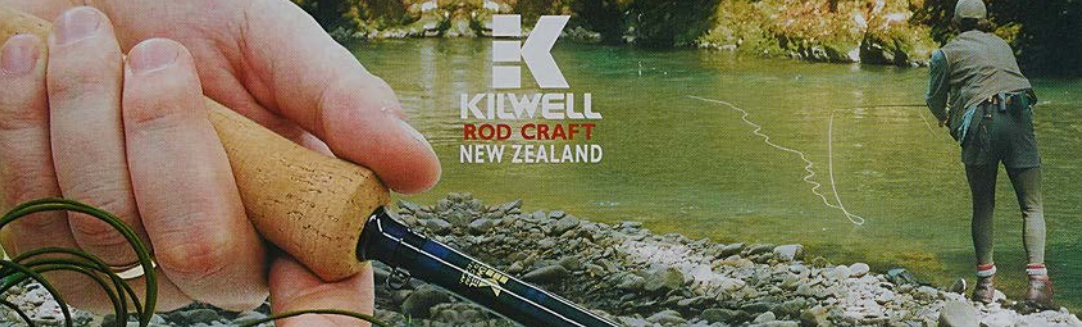
NOVEMBER 2006, ISSUE 53



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907	9'0"	7	2
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6	0.5"	7.0'	28.0'	6.0'	49.0'	41.0'	90.0'
7	0.5"	7.7'	27.0'	6.5'	53.8'	41.2'	95.0'
8	0.5"	8.3'	32.0'	7.0'	47.7'	47.3'	95.0'
9	0.5"	9.0'	31.0'	7.5'	47.5'	47.5'	95.0'

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# TARGET TAUPŌ

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**Front cover:** Glenn Maclean erects another sign to remind anglers to CHECK CLEAN and DRY, this year as part of the campaign to keep Ditchmore one of the Trout Islands.  
*Photo by: Kim Alexander-Turk*

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# Target Taupo

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# Fishery forward

By John Gibbs

Taupo Fishery Area Manager

## GREETINGS FROM THE TAUPO FISHERY TEAM

The Taupo fishery is facing some unique challenges. The recently completed 5 yearly harvest survey, reported in this issue, shows continuing high levels of use by a declining number of anglers.

Although total fishing effort, catch and harvest has declined from the peak of 2000/01, it is still the second highest recorded. At the same time there has been a considerable drop in the number of anglers, which is almost counter intuitive. What the data reveals is that individual anglers are fishing more often. In the previous survey there were 61,495 adult fishing licences sold and 755,500 hours of effort – an average of 12.3 hours per licence. In 2005/06, 44,395 adult licences were sold (a decline of 28%) and 703,000 hours fished. This averages 15.8 hours per licence, an effort-per-angler increase of 28%. Along with the increase in effort per angler comes a similar increase in trout catch per angler.

The great majority of Taupo anglers are visitors to the district (80%) and largely of domestic origin (75%). These proportions have changed little over time. The most recent tourist information for the Lake Taupo district shows a decline of 21% in the total number of visits by domestic visitors between 2000/01 and 2005/06. This is not too different from the drop in fishing licence sales over the same period and suggests that there is a relationship between changes in the number of visitors of all kinds and the number anglers using the fishery. While many things may drive the drop in visitor numbers in a region, it is clear from national trends that increased overseas travel and higher fuel prices have had a major impact on domestic travel. Not rocket science, I hear you say? But let's look more closely at the implications of this for the fishery.

Along with all other freshwater sports fisheries in New Zealand, management of the Taupo fishery is funded solely with revenue from anglers' licence fees. Simplistically then, the fewer licences sold the less revenue there is for managing the resource. While some management costs decline with reducing use, most don't as they are driven by external factors such as changes in habitat, land use, water quality and competition for use of resources. This creates a need for increasing monitoring and research as well as public awareness and advocacy to ensure fishery quality and sustainability.

Photo: Tony Roxburgh



Despite increases in licence fees, revenue has remained essentially static or even declined when inflation effects are considered. There has been a small but steady increase in the proportion of longer-term adult licences sold. It seems there may be a valid case for reconsidering the relative fees for longer-term licences in the light of the increasing fishery use by these anglers. We will be discussing this in more detail in a future article and encouraging debate through the Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee.

Once again there is a wealth of interesting and informative stories in this issue of *Target Taupo*. The abundance of small trout showing in spring catches promises great opportunities for lake fishing this summer. We hope you enjoy both.

## Fishery harvest results

By Mark Venman

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

Results of the 2005/06 season-long survey of the catch from the Taupo fishery indicate that anglers made a quarter of a million trips, fishing for over 700,000 hours to catch nearly 200,000 large trout. That is a lot of trout but what does this really mean for the fishery?

Historically, fishery managers and anglers were of the view that the size of the Taupo trout population was such that it couldn't be affected by the angling catch. Nevertheless some estimates of the annual trout harvest (fish killed) from the Taupo fishery were

made over the years using a combination of angler diaries, intuitive estimates and field checks, with estimates ranging from 440 to 1200 tonnes.

During the late 1980s, the Taupo fishery went through a well publicised decline, the reasons for which were not initially readily apparent to us. At the same time, Dr Martin Cryer undertook an extensive 2 year study of trout production in the lake. Cryer estimated the annual production of trout to be 540 tonnes in 1988 and 340 tonnes in 1989. These estimates were clearly incompatible with the earlier estimates of harvest but highlighted that

Anglers kept nearly 110,000 trout from the Taupo fishery last season  
*Photo: Norrie Ewing*





even a much smaller harvest could potentially be critical, and that an accurate estimate of harvest was essential.

In response, we undertook an intensive year-long assessment of angling harvest during the 1990/91 season using a stratified random sampling approach and direct field measurement of angling effort and catch. Aerial counts of anglers were used to estimate daily angling effort and anglers interviewed while fishing to determine their angling success over the survey day.

Results from the survey indicated an annual harvest of 113,000 trout or an estimated 175 tonnes. Such a figure was consistent with the previously estimated production figures albeit that it represented a high proportion of the annual trout production. This supported the hypothesis that the current harvest was likely to be having a major effect on the quality of the fishery and in response managers cut the daily bag limit from 8 trout to 3 in December 1990. This realisation that harvest could be critical highlighted the need to accurately measure the harvest on an ongoing basis. However, the logistics and costs of the 1990/91 survey prohibited undertaking the survey every year and so the decision was made to measure the harvest every 5 years.

A second survey was undertaken over the 1995/96 fishing season and repeated in an extended form over the 2000/01 and 2005/06 seasons. All but the lake edge fisheries (but including the Tongariro Delta) were measured during 2005/06.

This article presents the results of the 2005/06 survey and discusses the implications of these.

## Results

The total effort expended by anglers boat fishing on the lake and fly fishing on the Tongariro and Taurangi Taupo rivers over the 2005/06 season was estimated at 609,710 hours or an estimated 259,875 angler visits. These anglers caught an

estimated 169,600 legal sized trout at an overall catch rate of 0.27 fish per hour (1 fish every 3 hours 40 minutes). They kept 60% of these or 101,620 trout. Anglers also caught an additional 87,320 under-size trout which they were required to release so in total released 155,300 trout or 60.4% of their total catch. This highlights the importance of anglers practising sound release techniques which ensure the survival of the fish. Otherwise the actual harvest (fish killed) could be more than double the recorded harvest.

The resources required meant that it was not realistic to estimate the angling catch from the four smaller eastern tributaries (Waitahanui, Hinemaiaia, Waimarino & Waiotaka rivers) though the effort was measured using aerial counts. Assuming that the catch from these tributaries is proportional to the effort expended on them, then these tributaries account for an additional effort of 24,580 hours, a catch of 6,700 trout and a harvest of 4,015 trout. Similarly the decision was made not to measure the lake edge fishery (other than the Tongariro Delta) given its relatively small magnitude as identified during the 2000/01 harvest survey compared to the resources required to obtain accurate data. To estimate a catch, harvest and effort from this section of the fishery we instead assumed these comprised the same proportion of the total lake figures as was measured in 2000/01. This produces an estimate of the lake edge effort of 68,790 hours, a catch of 8300 trout and a harvest of 2985 trout.

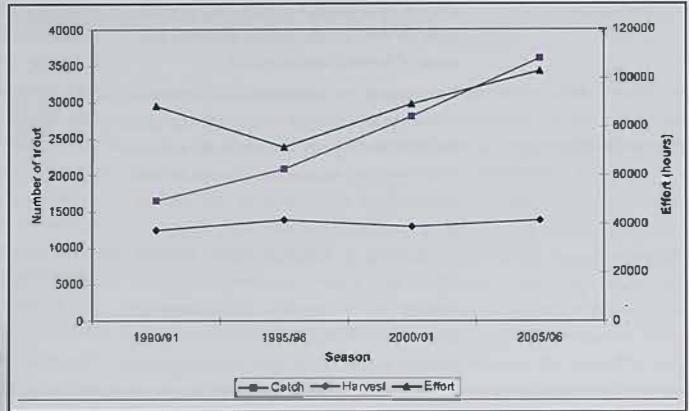
Overall, we estimate that for the 2005/06 season anglers expended a total effort of 703,080 hours across the whole of the lake and river fishery for a catch of 184,600 legal sized trout and a total harvest of 108,620 trout.

## River Fishery

Last season there was a small increase in the total effort (102,800 hours) expended by anglers on the Tongariro River, being the highest recorded over the 4 surveys



Graph 1: Estimates of effort, catch and harvest for the 1990/91, 1995/96, 2000/01 & 2005/06 harvest seasons on the Tongariro River



(Graph 1). The catch of 36,000 trout is also the highest recorded and an increase of 118% since the low point in the fishery in 1990/91. However the harvest was less than in 1995/96 and has remained relatively constant over the last 15 years ranging between 12,460 and 13,850 trout. This reflects the increased practice of catch and release in recent years which has offset the increasing catch.

A significant shift has been in the seasonal timing, the catch considerably higher during the latter part of the season (September-October) in comparison to 5 years ago. Almost 60% of the total Tongariro River catch was caught during these 2 months in comparison to 20% back in 2000/01. This is consistent with the pattern observed through the Waipa Stream fish trap. Approximately 70% of the annual rainbow trout run through the trap occurred after the 1st of September 2005 with the runs recorded during November and December being larger than those between June and August!

The decline in effort evident on the Tongariro River in 1995/96 was in a large

part caused by a significant drop in angler numbers in 1996 following concerns over the possible impacts of the 1995 Mount Ruapehu eruptions. Interestingly in both 1995/96 and 2000/01 the Tongariro River accounted for 55% of the total river fishing effort but this increased to 70% last season. The next most important river was the Taurangi Taupo which attracted 14% of the total river effort, a significant decline since 1995/96 when it attracted almost one quarter of the total river angling. The Waiahanui River has remained the third most popular river (10%) followed by the Hinemaiaia (4%), Waiotaka (2%) and Waimarino (1%) rivers. On the Tongariro River nymph fishing with a floating line continues to be the most popular method, probably because it is generally more successful (Table 1). Despite a slight swing back to the more traditional downstream wet fly fishing technique in 2000/01 this was only short lived and in 2005/06 nymph fishing once again accounted for 79% of the effort and 86% of the catch. These figures were very similar to the 1995/96 season.

Table 1: Angling effort, catch, harvest and catch rate by method for the Tongariro River 2005/06

Method	Effort	Catch	Harvest	Catch rate (fish/hour)
Nymph	81230	30775	11355	0.38
Wetfly	21555	5225	2470	0.24
Total	102785	36000	13820	
% Nymph	79	86	82.3	



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*Mike Stent, flyfishing guide and owner of The Fly & Gun Hunting & Fishing shop, Taupo.*



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Rob Melny counts anglers from the air to determine the angling effort on the Tongariro River  
*Photo: Rob Hood*

On the Tauranga Taupo River nymph fishing was even more dominant accounting for 90.3% of the effort. Interestingly though the catch rates for both methods are identical on this river. Overall anglers had an estimated catch rate of 0.29 fish per hour compared to 0.38 fish per hour on the Tongariro River (Table 2). On the Tongariro River guided anglers comprised only 3.6% of the total effort and accounted for 3.1% of the total catch compared to 14.1% of the total effort and 23.2% of the catch on the Tauranga Taupo River. This reflects local guides' preference for the Tauranga Taupo River as has been the case during previous harvest surveys.

### Lake Taupo Fishery

In 1990/91 the lake attracted 3.4 times more fishing than occurred on the Tongariro River, the proportion increasing to 5.4 in 2000/01 but decreasing back to 4.4 during 2005/06. These figures

highlight that while the Taupo river fisheries tend to have a very high profile, for the vast majority of Taupo anglers it is the lake that attracts them. In all anglers spent more than 450,000 hours trolling and jigging on Lake Taupo last season.

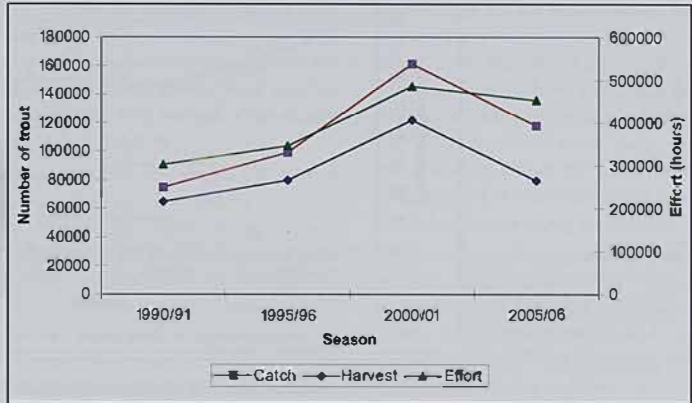
The catch of legal sized trout (>45cm) on the lake has increased from an estimated 75,000 in 1990/91 (when the size limit was 35cm) to a peak of 161,125 in 2000/01 before decreasing to 118,000 in 2005/06 (Graph 2). In part this trend reflects the increase in angling effort but also the general improvement in catch rates over this period. Given that the first survey coincided with the low point in the productivity of the Taupo fishery it is not surprising that catch rates have increased as the fishery rebounded. The year 2000 was an acknowledged peak in the Taupo fishery and in this sense, the increased catch at that time is not a cause for concern as it reflects that there were more fish available to be caught.

Table 2: Angling effort, catch, harvest and catch rate by method for the Tauranga Taupo River 2005/06

Method	Effort	Catch	Harvest	Catch rate (fish/hour)
Nymph	18190	5285	2240	0.29
Wetfly	1960	545	210	0.28
Total	20150	5830	2450	
% Nymph	90.3	90.7	91.4	



Graph 2: Estimates of effort, catch and harvest for the 1990/91, 1995/96, 2000/01 & 2005/06 harvest seasons on Lake Taupo.



However in 2005/06 the effort was similar but the catch rates were lower than in 2000/01 which is the major reason for the reduced catch. This very high level of effort at a time when the fishery is not as strong potentially increases the risk of overharvest.

fast summer anglers reported catching many small, well conditioned fish but it wasn't until we analysed the harvest data in full that we realised just how many undersized fish had been caught. The total number of undersized fish caught (<15cm) was estimated at 73,000 which was considerably higher

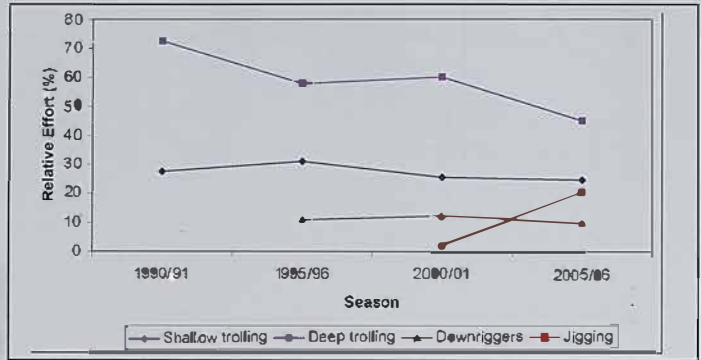
than the 50,400 estimated five years ago. It is possible that this reflects the impact of the late spawning in recent years and the fact that the fish are several months younger (and therefore smaller) than for the same time of year previously. This means a higher proportion of the trout are less than the legal size over the busy summer period.

The percentage of legal sized fish killed by lake anglers has continued to decrease from 87% during 1990/91 to 67.3% during 2005/06 and the importance of good releasing techniques cannot be overemphasised to minimise the overall harvest.

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Graph 3: Relative use (% of total hours of effort) of different fishing methods for non-guided anglers on Lake Taupo, 1990/91, 1995/96, 2000/01 & 2005/06



In all, the fisheries associated with the lake (including the lake shore) account for an estimated 79% of the total fishery effort and 74% of the total catch which is similar to the figures obtained during the 2000/01 season of 79% and 78%, respectively. Furthermore because the average fishing trip on the lake is only 2.1 hours long compared to 4.1 hours on the river, then this total effort actually represents the destination of 87% of all Taupo anglers.

Since 1990/91, two new deep fishing angling methods have been adopted by lake anglers. However the use of downriggers which increased between seasons 1995/96 and 2000/01 did not continue this season, with the lowest use being recorded out of the three survey seasons (Graph 3). The downrigger harvest was estimated at 12.3% of the total lake harvest, down on the 19.2% recorded 5 years ago.

Graph 3 highlights the rapid increase in the popularity of jigging over the last 5 years.

Jigging now comprises 20.4% of the total boat-based lake effort (Table 3) and accounted for one quarter of the total lake harvest during 2005/06.

This increase in the popularity of jigging has seen a corresponding decrease in other deep trolling methods (lead and wirelines) and for the large part, jigging has simply replaced these deep trolling methods as just another way to catch the same fish.

Shallow trolling (graph 3) also showed a slight decline in popularity over the last 15 years but was on par with 2000/01 and still responsible for almost one quarter of the total lake harvest.

#### Calculation of the total tonnage of fish harvested

The average weight of trout across the lake and rivers varies between locations and years. The lake fishery tends to be dominated by immature fish and so the average weight of trout caught by anglers is less than in the rivers where the fish are mature and on their spawning migration.

Table 3: Catch rates (fish per hour) effort, catch and harvest by method for non-guided anglers on Lake Taupo 2005/06 and the proportion of the total catch method comprises.

Method	Catch Rate	Season Effort (hrs)	Season Catch	Season Harvest	% total Effort	% total Catch
Shallow trolling	0.27	103286	27884	16739	24.6	26.6
Lead line	0.17	176708	29992	23063	42	28.6
Downriggers	0.30	41220	12195	8549	9.8	11.6
Wire line	0.33	12526	4152	3325	3	4
Jigging	0.35	85605	30355	17654	20.4	29
Spinning	0.22	1233	269	125	0.3	0.3
<b>TOTAL</b>		420578	104847	69455		
Mean	0.25					



In 2005/06, the average weight of trout kept and measured from the lake was 1.5 kilograms and across the rivers 1.8 kilograms. These figures were used to calculate the total tonnage of fish caught and killed (Table 4).

This calculation produced a total of 169 tonnes from the whole fishery compared to 256 tonnes in 2000/01. The figure is very similar to the 175 tonnes estimated for the 1990/91 season despite the fact that the measured effort is now 50% higher and the harvest 23% higher for the lake and Tongariro River components. This suggests that the assumption in the earlier estimate as to the contribution made by the rest of the fishery may be questionable. Therefore, so as to make a direct comparison with the earlier surveys, we compared the

the fish traps and the lack of mature fish running the rivers are not evident. In simple terms the harvest in the lake in particular was such in 1990 that the chances of a fish surviving to reach maturity were very low. There were still enough fish to ensure the sustainability of the fishery but there were clearly insufficient to make for happy river anglers.

A potentially serious issue is the high proportion (61% of the catch) of legal and undersized fish caught and released. If these fish are mishandled and die then the harvest could be twice as large as that calculated. If we are concerned about the risk of overharvest then the single biggest action we can take is to ensure anglers adopt effective release techniques.

At the end of the day there are many

Table 4: Calculation of the total tonnage of trout harvested from Lake Taupo and surrounding rivers during 2005/06 season.

	Number of trout	Average weight (kg)	Harvest (tonnes)
lake	88,330	1.5	132.5
Rivers	20,290	1.8	36.5
Total	108,620		169

measured harvest calculated for the lake fishery and the Tongariro River only. This indicates a harvest of 113 tonnes during 1990/91, 136 tonnes in 1995/96, 209 tonnes in 2000/01 and 144 tonnes in 2005/06 making the 2005/06 harvest for this part of the fishery the second highest behind the peak of 2000/01. These figures suggest that 2005/06 was an average season and similar to 1995/96, higher than the low point during 1990/91 and lower than the recent peak of 2000/01.

From a management perspective we are comfortable with this level of harvest. The total angling effort continues to be very high and potentially could have a significant impact in years of low trout production. However the combination of a lower bag limit, increased minimum size and increase in voluntary release is serving to keep the harvest to levels where it is not impacting excessively on the fishery. The indicators of overharvest present in 1990, such as the very low proportion of repeat spawners through

variables that affect the fishery which we cannot control. However angling harvest is a key factor which has had a major impact in the past and which we can influence. At times the harvest has been insufficient and the fishery characterised by large numbers of small, poorly conditioned fish. Conversely, as we have discussed it has also been excessive resulting in poor fishing for winter river anglers in particular. Therefore it is essential we keep the harvest within fairly tight bounds.

This survey is the 4th comprehensive assessment of harvest and each survey further increases our knowledge and understanding of this key aspect and in turn our ability to manage it. Thanks to everyone who gave a few minutes of their time when approached by a survey interviewer and to the local guides who in some cases we contacted many times. Logistically it is a big survey which is why we can only repeat it every 5 years but it's the only way to get this essential information in an accurate and reliable way.



## Ensuring little fish become big fish

By Julie Greaves  
Julie is a Ranger in our field  
operations programme

With the summer fast approaching many of us will be preparing to go out fishing on Lake Taupo. Most of the trout in the lake at this time of the year will be smaller, immature trout, some less than the minimum legal size limit of 45 centimetres.

Those of you who fish regularly over the summer months may have noticed that the numbers of undersized trout appear to have increased in recent years. The reason for this is due to the fact that the main spawning runs have been later as discussed in *Fishing Follows Recent Pattern* on page 28. Before the millennium the spawning runs were peaking around July and August, but we are now

experiencing peak runs in September, October and even November. As a consequence trout that migrate to the lake from the rivers to feed on the smelt will be a few months younger than in previous years, and that makes a big difference to their size. It is an often quoted figure but these fish are growing at 3cm a month. So a couple of months makes a huge difference to the size of the trout. Where as in the past most young fish reached the minimum legal size in December we now see large numbers of undersized fish still present through to February and March.

Figures from our recent harvest survey show that nearly two thirds of the total catch of legal and undersized trout is

Top: Ideally release the fish by leaving it in the water and using long nosed pliers to unhook it without touching the fish  
Photos Patricia Francis



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



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released. It is essential that we use the right equipment and techniques to release these fish so that they are not added to the total kill. Too often though, we see anglers using poor techniques that lead to unnecessary deaths. Fish that are released may not die immediately and anglers who practise poor techniques may not realise the impact they are having on these fish and the fishery as a whole.

Here are a few points to remember when releasing a trout so that they have a maximum chance of survival:



To measure a fish, leave it in the net and lay the net on the measuring board. Note the block on the board which against which the fish's head is rested

*Photo: Peirina Francis*

### Releasing Trout when boat fishing

- Once you have brought the fish to beside the boat, lean over the side and remove the hook using long needle nose pliers. Use a twisting action to remove the hook while the fish is still in the water, preferably without touching the fish.
- If this is difficult then use a net that is made of a soft knotless mesh. With the fish supported in the net and without touching the fish remove the hook

using long nosed pliers or forceps. Never let the fish flap around on the floor of your boat.

- If you have to handle the fish hold it gently upside down with wet hands. Trout lie much calmer in this position.
- NEVER put your fingers into the fish's gills or squeeze the fish.
- Do not throw a fish back into the water. Support the fish upright until it swims away.

### Releasing on the river

- Land the trout as quickly as possible to minimise its stress.
- Carefully bring the fish to the edge and while it is still in the water unhook it using long nosed pliers or forceps.
- If you have to use a net to control the fish, use a soft knotless type.
- Use barbless hooks as this makes it much easier to release the fish.
- NEVER kick a fish onto the beach or let it flap around on the rocks or sand.
- When releasing a trout support it in an upright position and facing into the current until it swims away.

Remember the best way of releasing trout is to leave the fish in the water and to unhook it without touching it.

### Equipment need to release a fish successfully

- A measuring board
- A soft knotless net
- Longnosed pliers or forceps
- Barbless hooks. You can squeeze the barb down with pliers.
- Effective tackle to minimise the fight time

### Measuring your fish

Don't be caught out! If you intend on keeping a fish that you have just caught then it is a good idea to measure it to ensure that it is the legal size. Too often we come across anglers that have kept





No! - handled this way this fish is doomed  
 Photo: Patricia Francis

an undersized trout because the angler either failed to measure it at all or has measured it incorrectly. Keeping an undersized trout is an offence to the Taupo Fishery Regulations and can lead to us seizing your fishing rod and tackle, and you may have to pay a costly fine.

The minimum size limit of trout in Lake Taupo and most of the tributary rivers is 45cm long from the nose to the fork or V of the tail. We have produced a measure which is an adhesive label, these stickers free and available from the DOC Turangi office. We will also be handing them out to anglers we check on the lake this summer. We recommend that you place the sticker so that the zero of the measure is flush with a vertical edge. To measure the fish it is then simply a case of sliding the nose of the fish up against the edge and seeing if the fork of the tail extends back past the 45cm mark. This makes it faster and more accurate to work out if the fish is undersized or not. To reduce the impact on the trout when measuring it (remember if it is undersized we need to release it) keep the fish in the landing net to restrain it. Ideally put the board on the side of the boat or even better still take the board to the fish while it is still in the water, and lay the

fish on it. This way the fish can be easily measured without taking the fish out of the water for a lengthy period of time.

Trout are easily damaged through their internal organs and gills. If a fish is bleeding from the gills through either being hooked or squeezed it will usually swim off but will die within a few hours. During the 2005-06 harvest survey we estimate a total of 108,620 fish were caught and killed. However a further 167,210 were caught and released. If these fish die due to poor handling, the harvest is more than doubled. We worry about poachers taking fish from spawning streams but potentially our impact could be greater if these fish don't survive because of our releasing techniques are rough.

If this happens the Taupo fishery would have to put more restrictive measures in place to ensure the sustainability of the trout population and to protect the fishery. This is not something that most of us would like to see happen. So next time you catch an undersized trout remember to handle it carefully so that it will have a good chance of survival and growing into a big fish, to be prized by future anglers.

## Dealing to Didymo

By Glenn Maclean

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

The campaign to keep didymo out of the central North Island was officially launched on 1 October 2006 at Lake Tarawera to coincide with the start of the new fishing season. Fish and Game, DOC and Genesis Energy staff who comprise part of the Didymo Action Group (DAG) along with Biosecurity NZ representatives, met anglers as they retrieved their boats from the lake and demonstrated how to clean their gear and boats to prevent the potential spread of didymo. To cap the message off the boat owner was then given a special didymo wash bottle to use next time and a free sausage.

The following Wednesday a launch was held in Tuurangi with many of the people that have assisted us to date. The display of roadside banners, wash stations and bins, spray bottles, sandwich boards and posters emphasised how serious this campaign is.

The crux of the campaign is that people need to clean their gear whenever they have used it in freshwater as a matter of

routine. No thinking about it – just do it. Didymo is just one of a whole host of nasties that could be spread by dirty gear. It is a pity that it has come to this but that is the world we live in. Whereas in saltwater we clean our gear as a matter of course to protect it from the ravages of salt, in freshwater we need to clean our gear to protect the rivers and lakes we treasure.

It's not difficult, in fact compared to cleaning your gear after a trip on the sea it is positively easy. Dunk your fishing gear in a bin of soapy water (at least 5% detergent) or spray it with the same solution and hang it up to dry. Lower the motor to drain, slop the soapy solution into the bilge or anywhere else that water may sit, tilt the boat up to dry and make sure the trailer has drain holes. Five minutes maximum compared to at least 20 minutes to clean the boat after a sea fishing trip. If you are a kayaker and don't like detergent because it makes your scat

The organisations behind the local campaign (Tomu te Hehehu, Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board, Mike Birch, NZ Recreational Canoeing Association, Steve Smith, Eastern Region, Fish and Game, Paul Green, Glenn Maclean, Nic Etheridge DOC, Tracey Hickman Genesis Energy)  
*Photo: Kim Alexander/Yorin*





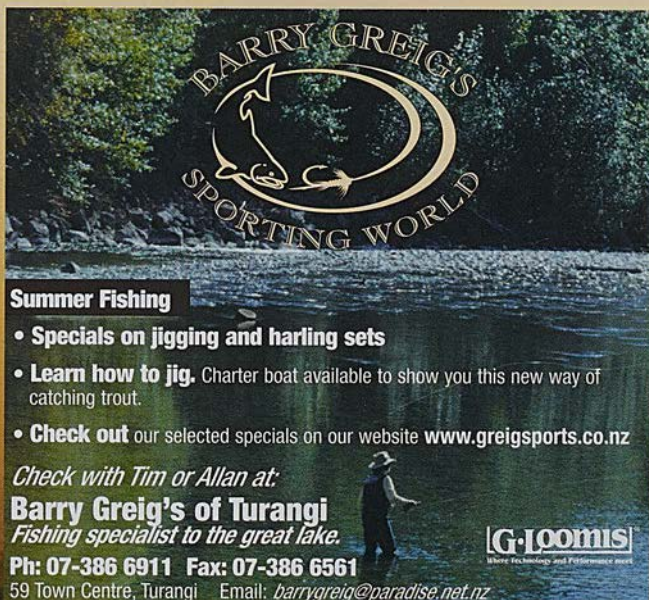
slippery then use household disinfectant, they are all equally effective.

Didymo is not something to be blasé about. The comment we hear again and again is that when people actually see it for real their whole attitude changes. Once people have experienced a didymo bloom they are in no doubt that we all have to do everything we can to keep it from spreading. It is ugly, suffocating and a nightmare for a river. Hopefully though, many of us will never get to see didymo because if we do it will be too late.

However it is not a lost cause. If didymo was that easy to spread it would be in the central North Island now. If each of us clean our gear after each time we have been on the river or lake we further reduce the likelihood of didymo or any other nasty getting here. The success of this campaign is about each of us adopting personal responsibility to make sure we do our bit. If you want to be considered a good angler then make sure you clean your gear. Encourage your friends to do the same, they are

much more likely to listen to you.

The campaign also focuses on intercepting high risk parties from the South Island before they venture into the rivers and lakes in this area. For example anglers who have fished in the South Island one day and then flown to the North Island to continue their fishing odyssey. The approach involves a series of initiatives to ensure that somewhere along the line travellers and their gear are intercepted. Wash bins are being provided to fishing related motels and lodges who have been enthusiastic about encouraging their guests to clean their gear when they check in. Similarly didymo cleaning stations with even larger wash bins have been sited at prominent local sports shops and places where they are readily accessible. Anglers buying a fishing licence are given a 'clean your gear' demonstration by staff and provided with a didymo cleaning bottle already filled with detergent. Local aerial operators have also been provided with the



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Clean Maclean demonstrates some of equipment that is available to anglers and commercial operators to ensure Didymo does not get to Taupo




Photo: Kim Alexander/Tiri




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characteristic yellow wheelie bin so that clients can clean their gear before and after each trip. On top of this fishing guides have been very proactive in ensuring their clients have clean gear and if need be can make use of the many wash bins around the area. The way in which local operators and residents have bought into the campaign has been very positive and all of a sudden keeping didymo out doesn't seem such an impossible task.

Big, bold roadside signs promoting the 'check, clean and dry message' will also greet visitors to the area this Christmas and if you are on the rivers or lakes you may well be approached by a staff member to talk about didymo. Show them you already practice good river hygiene and better still make it a goal to ensure that the people recreating with you do likewise.



# Rubbish on our rivers

By Callum Bourke  
Callum is a Ranger in our  
field operations programme

Many New Zealand waterways hold special cultural, aesthetic, recreational and historical values and there is little doubt that this applies particularly to Lake Taupo and its tributaries. Taupo is a special place and we are fortunate to be able to enjoy a wide range of recreational activities in such a beautiful environment. With this in mind, it's always disappointing to find unsightly and smelly discarded fish guts on the river bank or lake edge. Not only roting fish, but litter in general has become an eyesore, particularly on the banks of the Tongariro where discarded monofilament nylon seems to be everywhere.

If you kill a fish for the table, either take the fish home intact or if you clean it while still out on the river or lake, place the remains in a suitable container and take it home with you. When you get home, bury the offal and carcasses in the garden and watch those veges grow! Just remember to bury it reasonably deep or else those determined pets might decide to dig it up and leave a "present" on your doorstep. This is also the problem with

burying the guts on the river bank, sooner or later a dog or rat comes along and digs them back up. Some people think it's ok to throw fish offal into the lake as "the Koura will clean it up". Unfortunately this isn't the case and often the waste washes up on shore to rot.

Also, we recommend that you dispose of the offal immediately when you get home as the next time you decide to "wet a line" you do not want to be greeted with week-old fish remains when you dust off your fishing gear.

In relation to used nylon and litter, take it away and dispose of it properly. Nylon can take a long time to break down, depending on the type of line, surface area and exposure to UV light. If you leave that unwanted trace on the bank, be aware that even under constant exposure to sunlight it will still take months before it will start to go pale and brittle as it gradually breaks down.

No one wants to see our waterways polluted with rubbish, so we all need to make this small effort to preserve this special environment.

An unsightly scene on  
the waters edge  
Photo: Callum Bourke





## Scientists share secrets

By Michel Dedual  
Michel is our Fishery Area  
Scientist and an  
enthusiastic angler

In August I presented the results of the trout acoustic tracking experiment in Lake Taupo to the Australian Society for Fish Biology 2006 conference. The theme of the conference held in Hobart, Tasmania was 'Cutting-Edge Technologies in Fish and Fisheries Science'. The development of new technologies is always a topic at any gathering of scientists but on this occasion it was the primary objective of the conference.

The budgets for research and fisheries management are shrinking worldwide with increased pressure on governments to spend more money on other priority areas like education, health, and police. However at the same time the pressure on many fisheries is growing as the fish stocks decrease.

This combination provokes greater stress on fishery scientists to deliver. More than ever, scientists need to be innovative and their research applicable, tangible, and value for money. Professor Norm Hall

from Murdoch University summarized this situation very well during his presentation 'Hooked by the bottom line'. New Zealand scientist Pamela Mace representing the Ministry of Fisheries also made a plea for cutting-edge technologies to be more focused on answering assessment and management questions. Or put more simply, to ensure that science pays a dividend. Scientists need to think outside the square and find smart and innovative solutions to research and management questions, and hence the need for cutting edge technology.

The tools needed to face the above challenge can be classed in three categories. Some are refinements of existing techniques, others are completely new and some are combinations of several technologies.

In the first group the most talked about innovation is the development of the so-called 'chat tags'. The basic idea is to have tags that not only transmit a signal but also

Top: Two European carp  
caught in Australia  
Photo: Brendan Hicks



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

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Alton Perrie holding a koi  
*Photo: Brentan Hicks*

record the signals of another tagged animal when it is nearby. The most obvious application is to have both the prey and their predators equipped with such tags so that the predator-prey interactions can be studied. Chat tags also allow study of the behaviour of schooling animals. At present the size of the tags are too large to be used in trout studies but this may become possible in the future as any technology typically becomes smaller over time.

Completely new technology included the 'Ocean Acoustic Waveguide Remote Sensing (OAWRS). This is a new type generation of sonar that can instantaneously scan large chunks of the ocean and detect fish schools to study their behaviour and movements. As you read this, OAWRS is being applied in North Atlantic to study the schooling behaviour of herrings.

The last group of techniques involving combinations of existing methodologies provided the most fertile ground for the no. 8 wire approach to problems. It also highlighted that the limits of any technology can be extended further when combined with the right tools. The most

elegant example was a combination of acoustic tags equipped with a depth sensor and a GPS that were used to monitor an abalone (paua) fishery in Tasmania. The acoustic tags were attached to the suit of the divers collecting pauas and the data recorded used to calculate how long the divers worked to provide an estimation of the fishing pressure. At the same time the GPS was fixed to the boats used by the divers and the data collected used to determine the area fished. Understanding these two fishery parameters is key to making sound management decisions.

The development and application of more advanced technologies enable zillions of data to be captured and stored. However, to be useful these data need to be managed, accessible to all users, and available in the future. Things as simple as the format of data stored in computers may become a problem and must be carefully chosen. Scientists need to anticipate how the future computer will work. For example, Gordon Keith, a Tasmanian scientist, believes that future computers will



still use text separated by commas but that data in Excel format will become derelict. The Hobart conference also provided an opportunity to meet other scientists and colleagues and to identify potential for new collaborations between institutions and disciplines. Following the conference and accompanied by two colleagues from University of Waikato I was invited by the Tasmanian Inland Fishery Service to share in a day of their routine work.

Tasmania is from where brown trout were originally introduced to New Zealand. 'Tassie' has many lakes inhabited by brown trout but rainbow trout are not as numerous. Trout fishing opportunities have earned Tasmania a reputation as a fishing paradise and fishing injects millions of dollars in the economy each year. Tasmania's trout lakes and river fisheries have been managed by The Inland Fisheries Service since the 1860s. However, since the mid 1990s the Inland Service has had to also deal with a less glamorous fish species.

European carp were first discovered in Tasmania in 1975 and again in 1980 in

brought to the Inland Fisheries Service where it was identified as a European Carp. Several months later carp were also found in Lake Sorell, which lies a few hundred metres north of Lake Crescent, and is connected by a canal. Lake Sorell also supports a high-valued brown trout fishery.

European or koi carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) is a member of the family Cyprinidae, which contains about 1500 species worldwide. In many parts of Europe carp constitute a delicacy and are targeted by very dedicated and specialised anglers who form a group detached from the other coarse fish anglers. Carp get very large (> 20 kg) and are very cunning demanding patience, finesse, and perseverance from the angler.

European Carp are present in the North Island of New Zealand where they thrive in the Waikato River. In NZ European Carp are called koi carp. Koi carp is simply a bright orange patterned European Carp, which has been selectively bred for many hundreds of years in Asia. Unlike in Europe, carp in New Zealand are not sought after for their culinary qualities or the angling challenge. They are, however a target for bow hunters who hunt the flooded margins of the lower Waikato River.

Biological traits reveal that carp have the potential to rapidly become a nuisance if no natural predators are present. One female carp of 4kg can produce up to 1,000,000 eggs. Carp can live in water temperatures ranging from 4°C to 35°C, tolerate salinity as high as one-third seawater and survive in extremely low dissolved oxygen concentrations for several days.

Carp typically feed by sucking up the bottom sediments of still or slow moving water that has good stands of aquatic vegetation. They filter out invertebrates and organic material. The stirring of the bottom sediments associated with carp feeding causes a reduction of water clarity in lakes that disrupts the ecological chain and eventually affects trout. Carp have also been blamed for damaging stream beds, destroying fragile



Andrew Taylor from the Tasmanian Inland Service loads the 40kg nets used to block carp access  
Photo: Michael Deddai

several small lakes that were fortunately devoid of trout. The Inland Service managed to successfully eradicate these populations by killing everything using a poison called rotenone. However, in 1995 someone witnessed a sea eagle carrying a fish over Lake Crescent that supports a popular recreational trout fishery. The eagle was disturbed and dropped its prey, the fish



View of Lake Sorrell  
Photo: Michel Dedual

aquatic plants and introducing new parasites to trout.

The threat of carp pushed the Inland Fisheries Service to implement a Carp Management Program. The immediate and main objectives of this plan were to contain carp to their current known distribution in Lakes Sorrell and Crescent and to catch and kill as many carp as possible.

To contain carp in the lake system, fine mesh screens were placed at the southern Clyde River outlet to stop the carp moving into the river system. Regular surveys in rivers downstream from the two lakes have revealed that this has been successful in keeping carp out of the river system.

In the lakes gill nets and traps were initially



A net set in Lake Sorrell  
Photo: Michel Dedual

used to capture carp and in the early days hauls were impressive. The catch was further improved by using electric-fishing. A hi-tech electrofishing boat was used to muster carp and to push them into nets that were set round them. However as the carp population diminished it became necessary to further refine the techniques to improve their effectiveness.

We have seen that carp are well equipped to rapidly become a nuisance; nevertheless one trait of their behaviour makes them vulnerable. In spring carp congregate for spawning and when these sites are identified it becomes

possible to remove large numbers of fish at one time. The capture of the females is the key as several females with one male will produce many more progeny than several males with one female. To identify the aggregation sites the Inland Service came up with a cunning plan in 1997. The carp team implanted radio transmitters in male carp and tracked them to the spawning sites and females. These sites were then sealed off with nets and the fish rounded up and caught. This method was particularly reliable and has been the key to the program according to Mr Wisniewski the carp team leader. The success of the operation was such that two years later no adult female carp were caught in Lake Sorrell for over 18 months. However just when it appeared that the battle had been won, juvenile carp were caught in 2000 reflecting that one or more females had spawned the previous spring. The carp war will not be won until the last female is caught and this is the target that the Inland Service is aiming to achieve.

In August this year the goal was getting very close in Lake Crescent where very few female carp were caught, and where there now maybe less than 10 carp left. The effort is still very much on in Lake Sorrell where another measure was put in place to achieve the same goal. A massive 8.5 km long net fence that closes off access to spawning ground has been put in place. The Inland Service has also built a structure to make sure carp cannot move from Lake Sorrell to Lake Crescent.

Our visit proved to be a very interesting day! The determination of the Tasmanian Inland Service in their battle against carp is inspirational; good on you guys and good luck with your program!



# catch **MORE** trout!



## The annual **FREE** Lake Taupo boat fishing seminars will again be held over the Christmas holiday period.

It's a chance to learn from Taupo fishery staff how to fish the lake successfully and directed particularly towards holiday or beginner anglers.

### **The seminar will cover:**

- Lifecycle of trout
- Where and how to fish
- Boat fishing methods – harling, deep trolling & jigging
- Echosounders
- Handling and releasing trout
- Key regulations/etiquette on the lake

**Where:** Motuoapa (lake side of Motuoapa Motor Camp)

**When:** Wednesday 3rd, January 2007

**Time:** 10am -12 noon

**Bring:** Deck chair and sunscreen

*(Alternative date if cancelled – Thursday 4th, January, same venue and time)*

**Where:** Three Mile Bay reserve

**When:** Saturday 30th, December 2006

**Time:** 10am -12 noon

**Bring:** Deck chair and sunscreen

*(Alternative date if cancelled – Sunday 31st, December, same venue and time)*

Seminars are held outdoors. If the weather is poor, they will be cancelled and held the following day, same time and place. No bookings required.

Ring the Fishery Duty Officer, mobile 027 290 7758 to check for cancellations.

see **YOU** there!

## WHAT'S UP?

By Greg Robinson  
Greg is the  
Community Relations  
Ranger for the  
Tongariro National  
Trout Centre

Now that winter has been and gone and we've seen the end of the cold, the trout centre surrounds have brightened a lot. The spring flowers especially kowhai and waratah have really dragged in the bird life.

Over the winter we have had a few tasks on the go. As a working hatchery we have completed the collection of 5000 trout ova which will now be reared to provide fishing in the children's fishing pond in 2008. We also collected 20000 trout ova from the Hinemajiaia River as part of the programme to re-establish the spawning runs in the Pahikohuru and Kakapo streams upstream of HB Dam. The eggs were hatched in the incubators and in November they were released as unfed fry into the two streams.

During the winter months the old Waihukahuka trap (hatchery trap) was put back into operation to collect samples as part of our investigation into the genetic makeup of the different spawning runs in the fishery. This gave visitors an opportunity to watch fish being processed exactly as they are in our other traps where the public don't have such ready access.

We have also sited a refurbished smokehouse in the grounds. It will be in operation at various times during the year so visitors will be able to see, smell and maybe taste real smoked trout, done just as they have always been in the Taupo Fishery.

Along with the children's fishing days many school groups have also fished in the pond as part of the Taupo

Jim Baggot refurbishes  
the Smokehouse  
*Pōta Kōu*  
*Alexander Tūria*







Mea DePetris Educator shows the kids trout eggs  
 Photo: Kim Alexander-Yaria



for *Tomorrow* education programme. Well over 2000 children have caught their first fish this winter, several of which have been over 1kg.

An ongoing programme of weed removal below the main carpark will see the return of native plants in a small

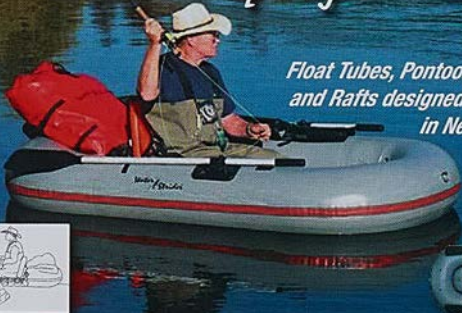
wetland area, which fits nicely with our advocacy role for water quality maintenance and improvement.



With spring here now is a good time to visit the Tongariro National Trout Centre, so pack a picnic and make a day of it.

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## Fishing follows recent pattern

By Glenn Maclean

**F**ishing success on the Taupo rivers this winter once again followed the pattern of recent years with the most consistent fishing recorded through July, August and September (graph 1). This was despite regular rain, particular in the early part of the season, which was contrary to recent winters and which we might have expected to encourage earlier spawning runs.

While fishing in the Tongariro slowed in October there was certainly some excellent fishing very late in the month coinciding with the first significant rain for some weeks. However despite the comment and perhaps our expectations our data did not indicate that fishing was particularly successful over the two weeks that the river flowed at a natural flow, as a consequence of maintenance works by Genesis Energy.

It is likely that the movement to spring spawning runs over the last decade was at least in part

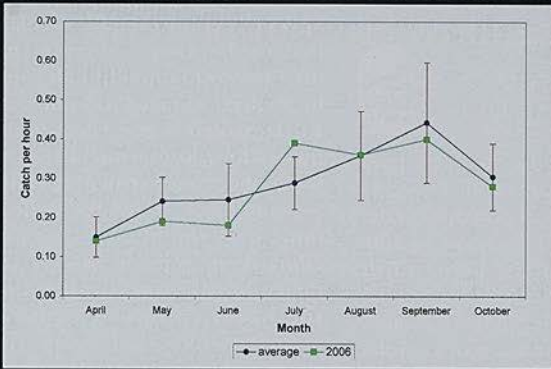
due to the very settled weather conditions which prevailed through early and mid winter in recent years. Without strong cues to make their spawning migration the trout held off running until late in the winter and as a consequence spawning also occurred later. Whereas in the past when spawning peaked in August and September and was largely over shortly after, in recent years large numbers of fish have spawned in October, November and even December. A consequence is that many of the offspring are several months younger than normal. This is reflected in several ways including the much higher incidence of trout in the lake after Christmas which are still smaller than the minimum legal size.

We had wondered that in a winter with more regular rain early in the season whether this would again stimulate more significant early runs. However the results this

There will be some very good fishing to be had on Lake Taupo this summer. Graeme Hunter, Kuratau, November 2006  
Photo: Rob Hood



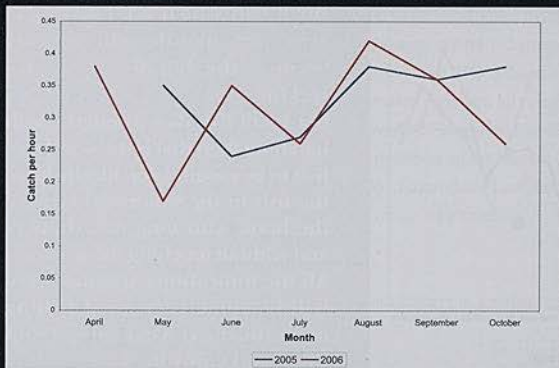




**Graph 1:** 2006 monthly catch rate estimates (per angler) and the average monthly catch rate (and standard deviation) recorded for the Tongariro River over the last 7 years.

season suggest that the spring runs are now firmly ingrained and independent of the autumn and early winter weather patterns. Perhaps this is a reflection of the age of the fish and that they simply are not ready to run any earlier. The shift to spring spawning is much less apparent on the other Taupo rivers and the Hinemaiaia and Waitahanui in particular still follow a traditional pattern. Interestingly the runs in these rivers which are largely spring fed and more consistent in their flow, are stimulated much more by strong onshore winds rather than rainfall. Such windy conditions occur frequently each autumn and winter so the runs have occurred as they always have, irrespective of the lack of

**Graph 2:** Monthly catch rate estimates (per angler) for 2005 and 2006 on the Tauranga Taupo River.



early season rain.

The Tauranga Taupo River which is the other river we monitor intensively appears to fall in between. While angling success is highly variable on this river, good fishing is much more likely to occur at any time of the winter season (graph 2) but the season now extends later.

We also drift dive the section of river immediately above the Ranger's Pool each month over winter and our counts and observations reveal that the fish in this river still follow what was the typical behaviour for spawning Taupo trout. That is many of the fish run in autumn and winter and then hold for several months in the upper pools, before actually spawning in August and particularly September.

Overall the average catch rate estimate for the winter on the Tongariro of 0.29 fish per hour represents a good year as reflected in graph 3.

This year the lower river was the place to target with an overall catch rate of 0.51 fish per hour for the section below the State Highway 1 bridge compared to 0.36 fish per hour between the bridge and the Red Hut footbridge and 0.24 fish per hour above.

The catch rate on the Tauranga Taupo River was identical to last season and represents an average year. These results on first inspection appear to be contrary to our counts of spawning fish in the other eastern tributaries which are all slightly below the long term average, and the run through the Waipa fish trap which to the end of October is down on last year (until we adjust the trap run to take into account trout which have passed during flood events it is difficult to make a precise comparison).





Each winter monthly counts of the spawning trout are made in the eastern tributaries

Photo: DOC

However what the catch estimates demonstrate is that fishing success is not directly proportional to the number of fish present. Essentially when there are fewer fish present the odds of any particular fish being caught are greater. There are a number of reasons for this including that when there are only a few fish then they are all in the prime lies which anglers know and target but the net effect is that proportionally more of them will be caught. From a management perspective this means that relatively small changes in the measured catch rate can represent big changes in fish numbers. However the difficulty is to measure such small changes with sufficient precision given the inherent variability associated with fishing. This is why we also use other monitoring methods such as fish traps and spawning surveys to complete our picture of the size of the fish population.

The average size of the fish kept this season on the Tongariro River was 532mm long and 1.81

kg which is fractionally smaller than the last couple of years. On the Tauranga Taupo the fish kept by anglers averaged 543mm and 1.84kg which is consistent with figures for recent winters.

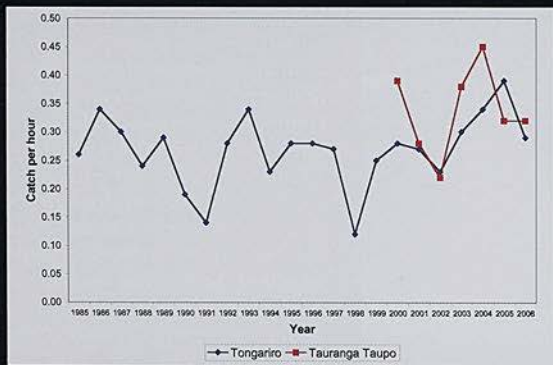
While the winter spawning runs are coming to an end the settled flows over recent months have allowed the aquatic insects to thrive in the river. On the few still balmy evenings that have occurred the evening rise is already going very well. So long as no major floods occur this should continue past Christmas. The fish largely comprise small immature trout and recovering kelts but catch rates are very high and it is a lot of fun. Just take care releasing the fish you don't want to keep, the juveniles in particular are key to the next generation of adult fish.

Out on the lake prospects look very promising for this summer with unusually high numbers of juvenile fish evident. These fish have dominated anglers catches recently and it is important they are carefully released as discussed in *Ensuring Little Fish Become Big Fish* on page 12 Often when we stop anglers they comment on these small fish in a disparaging or disappointed way but these small fish which are growing at 3cm per month will quickly become the big fish they are seeking.

If a small fish dies through rough handling then that is one less large fish to be caught later. Ideally leave the fish in the water and remove the hook with long nosed pliers and without touching the trout.

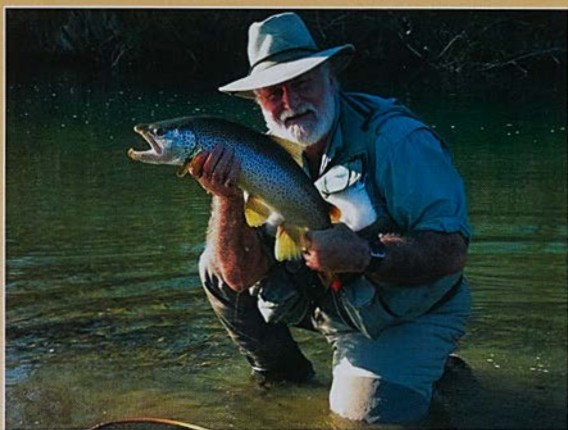
All the indications are that there will be some very good fishing over the next year so get out there and enjoy it.

Graph 3: Annual catch rate estimate (per angler) for the Tongariro River since 1985 and the Tauranga Taupo River since 2000.





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*I also really like the way they roll cast as I often use Spey casting techniques with a single handed rod, Rio Grand fly lines would have to be about the "floatingest" fly-line I have ever used and this makes pick up off the water very smooth and slick. Last but not least, the colour is perfect for New Zealand conditions."*

*- Chappie Chapman, fishing guide / identity / author*

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## The Tongariro Roll Cast clinic

By Ken Kimmins

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

An ominous weather forecast for the Taupo area did not put those anglers off who had booked to attend Herb Spannagl's roll cast clinic at the Tongariro National Trout Centre in Tutangi on Saturday 26 August. Demand for the clinic exceeded the 20 place maximum and participants came from as far away as Paraparaumu and Auckland to attend the day. All came well prepared with their fishing gear ready to learn.

If you have ever wished you could fish those fishy bits of water that are hemmed in with high banks, trees and blackberry then you should have been at this clinic. As Herb says *"this is the fly cast of the future for Tongariro style fishing" and "you will catch more fish more easily"*

The day commenced at Whakapumautanga Downs Learning Centre which is situated in the grounds of the Tongariro National Trout Centre, a mere hundred metres from the famous river that this cast

is named after Herb, who has fished the Tongariro River for 36 years and who has, been at the fore-front of introducing the Tongariro roll cast to Taupo anglers, started the days proceedings with an introduction and a video of the roll cast in all its five stages. Being all anglers, a relaxed and convivial atmosphere soon prevailed.

Participants enjoyed the opportunity after the video to ask questions and discuss the pros and cons of the cast before going to the clear waters of the nearby Upper Birch Pool for a demonstration. Here Herb showed the importance of the "Anchor" and "D-Loop" which are fundamental to all roll casting. The cast looked easy as Herb rolled it out time after time but clearly it is a complex cast with many parts to it that requires precision and good control in its execution. However, to the angler that masters it there are many significant advantages, other than the opportunity

Top: Herb Spannagl demonstrates the Tongariro Roll Cast to the seminar participants  
Photo: Kim Alexander-Tūria





to catch more fish. For this reason I believe the roll cast does have the potential, over time, to replace the overhead cast as the mainstay of fishing the large waters of the Tongariro River, provided people are prepared to persevere with it long enough to perfect it. It is definitely more difficult than the traditional overhead cast. Going by the distances that Herb was achieving, length of cast is not adversely compromised and as one participant commented to me "I have never seen a fly cast out so far". But as Herb points out the roll cast does not penetrate a headwind as well as the overhead cast so perhaps there is still a place for the reliable overhead cast in the future, given the strong winds that funnel down the Desert Road occasionally.

To prove the cast is not limited to a particular weight of gear, Herb demonstrated with three different rod weights.

All in all an impressive demonstration which put the group in an excited mood as they left the river to return to the Learning Centre for lunch.

Hearty \$5 lunch packs were supplied by the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society for those who wanted them, and most did. After an enjoyable sociable break everyone donned waders and moved to the Judges Pool for the last part of the day's programme; some hands on instruction.

Black clouds continued to gather overhead and rain threatened as Herb and his assistant George Johnson lined the twenty participants down the large section of the pool that was clear of other anglers. Each person then received one on one tuition on each of the cast phases. Herb strongly advises that when learning this cast don't try to perfect all five stages at once but instead start with phase one, perfect it and then move on to phase two and so on. As an observer I noticed a number of participants who by the end of the day appeared to be winning the battle and were producing some impressive D-Loops and putting good casts out on to the water. However, Herb warns that for this cast to become second nature one must practice, practice and practice some more so as to imprint it into muscle memory.

No one was deterred when the rain finally arrived and tuition and practice continued well into the late afternoon, when the days proceedings came to a close.

Look out for that cast the next time you are out on the Tongariro River and thank you Herb and George for sharing this knowledge. The funds raised on this day went to the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society who works in conjunction with the Department of Conservation in the development of the Tongariro National Trout Centre.

Instruction on the Tongariro Roll Cast was covered in issue 52 of *Taupō Target*.

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Photos: Kim Alexander/Tuta



## Know the rules

By Jill Larsen-Welsh  
Jill is a Ranger in our Field Operations Programme and is responsible for compliance and law enforcement

Over the winter Fishery Rangers have been conducting regular surveys on the rivers in the district. It has been pleasing to see that in over 2,150 checks most anglers have been abiding by the rules with a small percentage that were not able to produce their licence upon request, and four people taking undersized fish.

Between May and November this year there have been seven seizures of fishing gear that related to offences against the Taupo Fishery Regulations. In some cases offending had proven even more costly where Court proceedings have resulted in a fine as well.

Sticking to the rules is not hard and if you're not sure about something, then just ring us (07 386 8607) and we will be able to answer any questions you may have.

Now is a great time to refresh

your knowledge of the regulations. Even though the last major changes were in 2004, there are still many who are unfamiliar with them or who are new to the Taupo Fishery. The 2004 amendments saw several changes that are beneficial to anglers. For instance, did you know that you can use three single hooks on a jigging line or, that while you can only use one rod at a time, it is now quite legal to have another assembled rod sitting in the rod holder on your boat? It really does pay to have a look at the regulations now and then; a few of the basic rules are primed on your fishing licence and are helpful as a quick reference.

There are however, always a few people who blatantly ignore the rules and spoil the sport and recreation of other river and lake users. Fishery staff rely heavily on information passed on by the public and are happy to respond to calls of this nature;







but please report it at the time and not a week later.

Illegal fishing activities are a threat to our sport and large quantities of fish taken in illegal netting operations could have a severe impact on the fishery. Fishery staff run frequent covert operations to counter poaching, giving up their evenings to sit out in the elements for hours on end while other 'normal' people are wrapped up tight in the warmth of their homes! It's not all bad though, stopping some would-be poacher from taking 50 or 60 trout makes it all worthwhile.

If you happen to come across any indications of illegal activity, please give us a call. We operate a 24 hour duty officer for exactly this reason. The contact number is listed below and also printed on your fishing licence. Please do your bit and report any illegal activity immediately, as delays reduce the likelihood of us apprehending the offender. Stopping illegal activity is beneficial to us all!

With summer just around the corner, angling on the lake is on the increase. Fishery staff will be out conducting routine surveys and compliance checks so don't be surprised if you are approached by a ranger asking to see your licence and catch. As long as you know the rules and are following them there is nothing to be concerned about. Have a great day out and enjoy the fishing.

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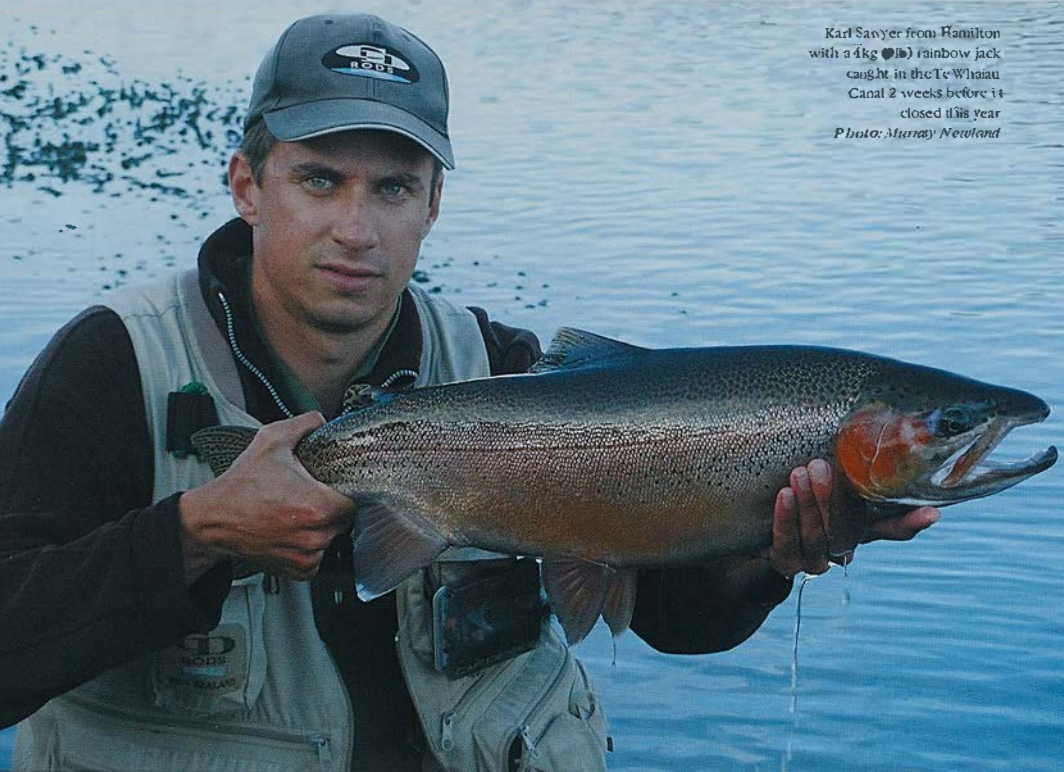
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# Trophy trout scarce



Karl Sawyer from Hamilton with a 4kg (9lb) rainbow jack caught in the Te Whaiau Canal 2 weeks before it closed this year  
Photo: Murray Newland

By Mark Venman

**A**t the end of 2005 we predicted that on the basis of our trapping results that Lake Otamangakau should produce a number of trophy sized rainbow trout over summer. However few such fish were reported and as this winter's trapping results confirm they were largely absent.

This winter was the 13th year we have trapped the run in the Te Whaiau Stream which is the principal spawning tributary for Lake Otamangakau. We also trapped the only other significant inlet stream, the Papakai Stream for the 11th successive year. Rainbow and brown trout are trapped in both streams to monitor the overall state and health of the trout population and identify trends over the years. This article summarises the results of this year's trapping programme and compares the data to previous years.

The Te Whaiau trap was operated from the 3rd of April until the 31st of August 2006. The trap was in flood at least once a month and was out of action for approximately 90 hours during the trapping season.

## Size of the spawning run

The actual number of upstream fish trapped and handled by fishery staff in the Te Whaiau Stream during 2006 was 1777 with the majority (1086) of these being rainbows. Due to the trap being overtopped every month, the totals were adjusted to



Table 1: Adjusted run of trout in the Te Whaitu Stream.

Species / sex	Actual number trapped	Adjusted total
Rainbow female	695	837
Rainbow male	391	439
<b>Rainbow Total</b>	<b>1086</b>	<b>1276</b>
Brown female	439	593
Brown male	247	305
<b>Brown Total</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>898</b>

incorporate those fish which bypassed the trap during these floods. Every fish trapped is clipped so by recapturing a sample of kelts as they return downstream after spawning we can determine the proportion of fish which avoided the trap (and have no clip), and adjust the actual totals to include these (Table 1).

Based on the adjusted run, the numbers of rainbow trout trapped during 2006 are down on the previous two winters but still the 5th highest out of the last 13 winters. The adjusted number of brown trout was also down on recent years but was similar to last winter's run (Graph 1).

### Timing of the spawning run

The main run of brown trout occurred between April and July with the peak month being May when 52% of the run occurred. Rainbow trout ran largely between April

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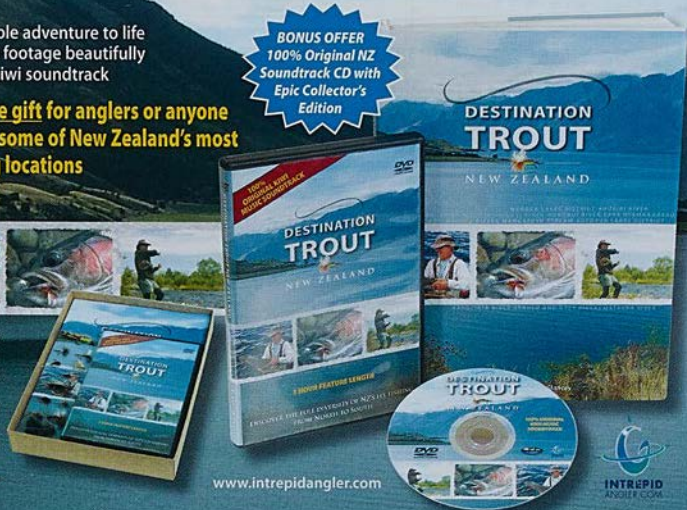
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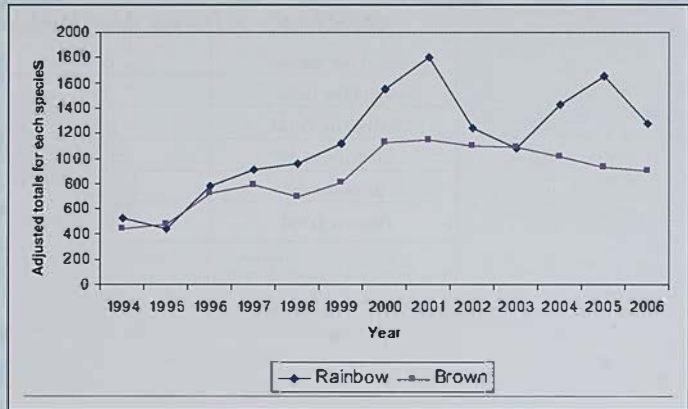
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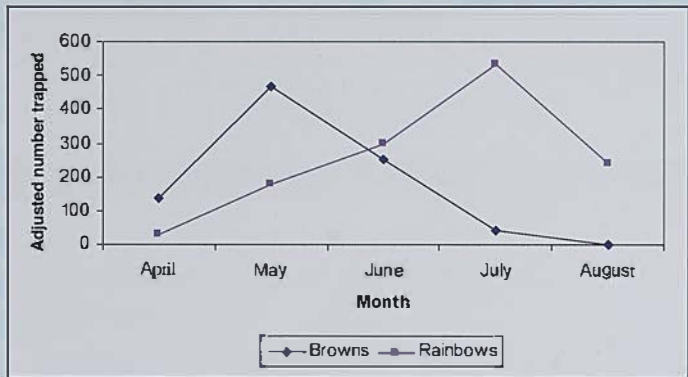


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Graph 1: Adjusted totals for rainbow and brown trout through the Te Whaiāu trap between 1994 and 2006.



Graph 2: Timing of the rainbow and brown trout runs in the Te Whaiāu during 2005.

and August with the peak run occurring during July. Such a narrow spawning period is typical of many trout populations but in complete contrast to the extended spawning which occurs in nearby Lake Taupo. Graph 2 shows how distinct the runs are for both brown and rainbow trout in the Te Whaiāu Stream.

### Sex ratio

Females dominated the run with the male:female sex ratio for both species at 1:1.9 during 2006. An adult sex ratio which favours an abundance of females often indicates a population of older fish that have spawned several times; this is consistent with the relatively high proportion of repeat spawners in Table 2. Spawning tends to be much harder on males which spend longer in the streams, often spawning with several different females and engaging in aggressive interactions with other males. As a result, females are more likely to survive the rigours of spawning and the sex ratio subsequently favours them.

Trout in Lake Otamangakau continue to grow once they have reached sexual maturity and after each spawning. Therefore trophy fish tend to be older trout which have made steady growth, rather than quick growing fish or fish which have delayed maturity as occurs in some other fisheries. From a management perspective it is therefore essential that the angling harvest is at a sufficiently low level that many of the fish can survive a number of years.



Table 2: Percentage of spawning events as determined by presence or absence of fin clips for both species from fish trapped during 2006.

Number of times spawning	Browns (%)	Rainbows (%)
1st	42.7	44.2
2nd	18.1	36.2
3rd	13.1	13.7
4th	8.2	3.4
5th	14.0	2.3
6th	2.2	0.2
7th	1.6	0
8th	0	0

Just under half of both trout populations were maiden fish spawning for the first time with overall percentages considerably higher than 2005. However as table 2 reflects there are some very old fish, particularly brown trout in the population. It is likely some of these browns are 10 or more years old.

### Size and condition

The average lengths, weights and condition factors of both species (Table 3) were down this winter in comparison to last winter but were similar to 2003. The slight drop in average size this winter could be a result of an increase in the number of younger, smaller fish present in the lake last summer.

Consistent with the lower average size, a total of just 5 trophy sized trout (>4.54kg or 10lbs) were trapped during 2006, all of which were rainbows. The heaviest rainbow trout trapped was a 740mm long female weighing 4.8kg (10.6lbs) with a condition factor of 42.8. The overall percentage of rainbows trapped greater than 4.54kg in weight

Table 3: Average length (mm) and weight (kg) of trout trapped in the White River Stream in 2006.

Species/ sex	Average length (mm)	Average weight (kg)
Rainbow female	589	2.5
Rainbow male	579	2.4
Brown female	550	2.0
Brown male	588	2.4

during 2005 was 0.5% which was similar to 2004 but down on the 20 fish (1.3% of the run) trapped in 2005 (Table 4). This is the disappointing feature of this winter's run. Last year 14% of the rainbow run was 3.6kg (8lb) or bigger and as we have discussed we would have expected these fish to continue growing last summer and a much higher proportion to have reached 'double figures'.

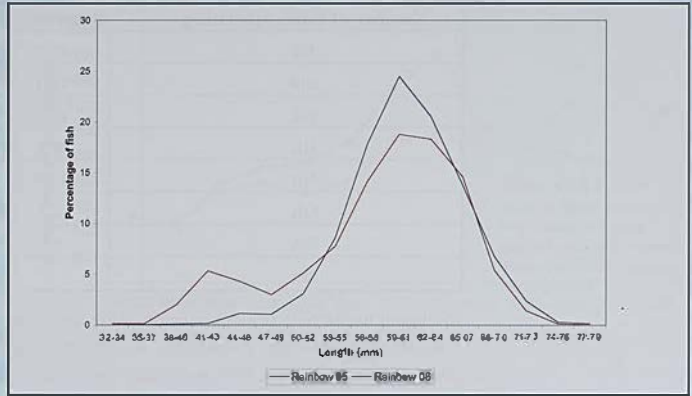
The heaviest brown trout trapped was a male measuring 640mm and weighing 4.2kg with a condition factor of 57.9. No brown trout greater than 4.54kg were trapped during 2006 which is consistent with recent years. The number of trophy sized browns has always been relatively low.

The fact that rainbow trout tend to grow to a larger size than brown trout is an interest

Table 4: Percentage of the population trapped in excess of 4.54kg (10lb) since 1994.

Species	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Rainbow	3.8	8.6	9.2	1	1	0.6	0.07	0.4	1.9	0.1	0.5	1.3	0.5
Brown	0.4	1.5	1.4	0.2	0.2	0	0.09	0	0.2	0.1	0	0.2	0
Number	17	45	50	10	9	5	2	5	23	2	6	20	5

Graph 3: Length distributions of male and female rainbow trout trapped during 2005 and 2006.



ing contrast with Lake Taupo where the reverse occurs, despite the two rainbow trout populations being very similar genetically. This highlights the role that the environment and food plays in determining the characteristics of the fishery.

The reason why so few fish reached 4.54 kg or bigger is not immediately

apparent. There are still a lot of old fish in the population and the smaller fish at least are making excellent growth, despite the much greater numbers of trout now in the lake. However we have recently obtained approval to use pit tags to follow the growth and survival of individual fish as discussed in recent issues of *Iwiwhetū Taupo*. As we track these fish over the next couple of years the reasons for the scarcity of trophy fish should become much more apparent.

Rainbow trout of each sex were placed into 2cm size classes according to their length.

The graph clearly shows that there is an increase in the percentage of smaller fish this year in comparison to 2005. Anglers commended last summer about the large numbers of smaller fish in the 1 to 1.5kg range and it is clear that the overall percentage of smaller fish amongst the catch has increased. It will be interesting to see what affect on the fishery these smaller fish have in future years as they mature.

Overall, the 2006 winter spawning season was another average year after a rather disappointing summer. Perhaps a warmer season combined with numerous fish in the 2 to 3kg range will provide some good sport this summer but it is likely the number of truly trophy fish will again be low.





# Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee

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

The Taupo Fishery Advisory Committee (TFAC) is a committee established by the Conservation Act.

## The function of the committee is to:

- Advocate Taupo sport fishing interests
- Facilitate communication between the department and anglers
- To keep anglers informed on matters affecting their interests
- Foster ethical standards of angling behaviour
- Consider and advise the department on freshwater and sport fishing matters within the Taupo District
- Make any representations that it sees fit to the Minister, or to the department or any other government agency or other organisation, on matters affecting the Taupo fishery, including national and regional policy statements, management strategies, management plans
- Liaise with New Zealand Fish and Game Council on matters of mutual interest relating to sports fish.

## The committee is made up of representatives consisting of the following:

(a) 8 members appointed by the Minister from persons nominated by the following organisations:

- Advocates for the Tongariro River Inc - (Bob Appleton)
- Moruoapa Fishing and Boating Club - (Currently no one appointed)
- New Zealand Professional Fishing Guides' Association - (Alan Simmons)
- Taupo Commercial Launchmen's Association - (Richard Staines)
- Taupo Fishing Club - (Richard Shrimpton)
- Tongariro & Lake Taupo Angler's Club - (Graham Whyman, - Chairman TFAC)
- Tongariro National Trout Centre Society - (Ken Kimmins)
- Waitahanui Angling Improvement Association - (Wayne Pattinson)

(b) A person from the Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board

(c) A person to represent national angling interests - (Strato Coltilinis)

(d) A person to represent New Zealand Fish and Game Council - (Bryce Johnson)

(e) A person to represent Tongariro Taupo Conservator - (John Gibbs - Taupo Fishery Area Manager)

Members appointed under (a), (b) and (c) have voting rights at meetings of the committee, and the other members of the committee are entitled to speak at meetings but not to vote.

Meetings are held at least 3 times a year. It's an important opportunity for the department and these representatives to get together and discuss issues affecting the Taupo Fishery.

If you have an issue or suggestion affecting the Taupo fishery that you would like aired with the committee, please contact one of these members.

TFAC - Kim Alexander-Turia  
(left), Wayne Pattinson, Strato  
Coltilinis, Graham Whyman,  
Richard Shrimpton, Alan  
Simmons, Bob Appleton, John  
Gibbs (missing), Richard  
Staines, Ken Kimmins &  
Bryce Johnson  
*Photo: Callum Bouike*



# Lake Otamangakau levels

By Glenn Maclean

As part of the renewal of consents for the Tongariro Power Development there was considerable research and discussion between Genesis Energy, the Department of Conservation and anglers to try and establish the most suitable operating levels for Lake Otamangakau.

The research identified that the optimum level for shoreline angling was 611.10 metres above sea level which is when the water is just lapping the bank-side vegetation. At this level there is a clear area between the inside edge of the weed beds and the shore which attracts cruising brown trout, but the level is not so high as to make wading difficult around the shore. Furthermore it was identified that, particularly when the inflows were low over summer, it was desirable to try and keep the lake at a high level to minimise the risk of the waters becoming too warm or deoxygenated. Therefore as part of the consents process the parties agreed a condition requiring Genesis Energy to use its best endeavours to maintain an average lake level of 611.10 metres.

In practice this condition has not met either party's objectives. In years where the level remained very constant the weed beds encroached closer and closer to shore reducing the suitable areas for cruising trout despite the ideal level. This year though, very high inflows early in the summer meant that for the rest of the summer the only way for Genesis Energy to achieve an average of 611.10 metres for the period was to keep the lake very low for the remainder of the summer. This had the beneficial effect of killing off the encroaching weed beds but the low

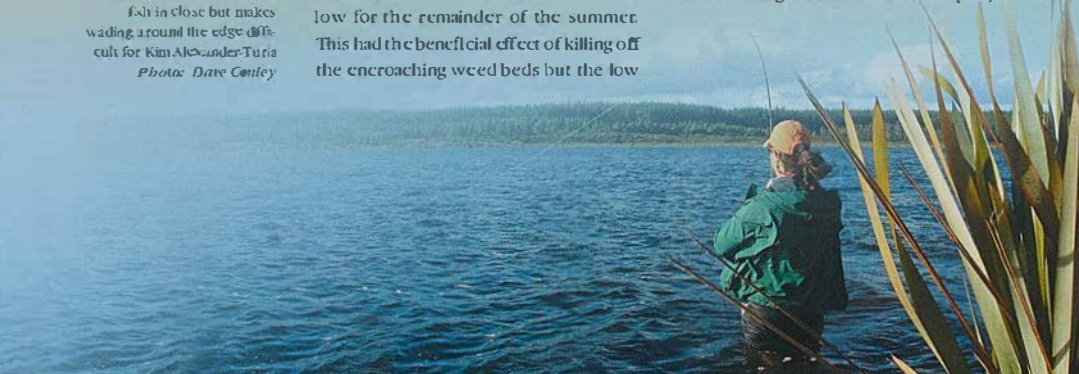
levels meant anglers couldn't take advantage of this. Furthermore it made setting of operating flows significantly more difficult for Genesis Energy. In reality the hydrograph indicates that while they met the objective as it was worded, for only a fraction of the summer was the lake actually at the desired level.

As a consequence of this we have agreed that this condition should be deleted. Instead we are working together to develop a management plan which includes an objective whereby the lake level is maintained close to 611.10 as much as possible over summer. This recognises that this is the ideal level for angling and also that monitoring over recent years indicates that this will be sufficient to ensure that dissolved oxygen levels are maintained during periods of low or nil inflows. It will also simplify the management of lake levels from an operational perspective.

As part of the plan we are looking at options to lower the lake level for a period over winter so as to control the growth of the weeds in the near shore zone. This would allow the exposed weed bed to be fished off and would also provide waterfowl access to the beds at a time when there is typically less food available. Because it will occur over mid winter there will not be any impacts on water temperatures or dissolved oxygen levels.

Sorting out the detail of the management plan is continuing but this is a good example of the constructive relationship between Genesis Energy Limited and DOC working to the benefit of each party.

A high lake level brings the fish in close but makes wading around the edge difficult for Kim Alexander-Turia  
*Photos: Dave Conley*







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## Waikari Track completed

**By Errol Cudby**  
Errol is Programme Manager  
Visitor Assets, responsible for  
angler facilities

After gestating for several years the 560m track linking the Admirals Pool Area with the Neverfail Pool track in the Waikari Recreation Reserve south of Turangi was spawned during September, and has since proven very popular with walkers and mountain bikers.

Initially the track was proposed to link fishing access along the left bank of the Tongariro River between Turangi and the Red Hut Bridge. However it was quickly recognised that it would be popular with other recreationalists as well because of its proximity to Turangi and DOC Recreation Planner, Peter Devlin was called in to design and specify the track which is being used as an example of best practise.

After the route had been explored and documented with a GPS, it was carefully set out with attention to gradient and formation and the boundaries taped to minimise disturbance to adjacent vegetation.

Following consultation with adjacent landowners, JRK Contractors were called to carry out the surgery. The team of seven men and machines, supported by Kernoban Contractors supplying materials when and where required, completed the operation in eight full-on days.

The closely marked route was traversed, cutting and removing larger trees and digging out smaller plants and planting them outside the formation. Next the duff layer was removed and dispersed

**Top:** The key players in the construction of the new track, Errol Cudby left, Keith Young, Les Tipplay and Ian Murrell.  
**Photo:** Kim Alexander/Turiti





The team using a motorised wheelbarrow to lay pumice on the new track.  
 Photo: Kim Alexander/aria

alongside the track, and pumice was brought in and spread, compacted and moulded. Steeper sections were crowned with a gravel metal/clay mix for grip and erosion protection. The northern end of the track required benching where it descends over a scarp and extensive drainage where it traverses a wet seepage area. This area caused the most trouble. An attempt to swallow one of the diggers in the jelly-like mud was averted by its mate coming to the rescue, digging and pulling it out. Drains and geotextile cloth under the track materials finally produced a solid walking surface.

Licensed anglers can now walk along both banks of the Tongariro between the Major Jones and Red Hut bridges. Access across private land at Kowhai Flat prevents

the public from making the round trip though other organisations are negotiating this aspect with the landowners.



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# It's time for a makeover

By Kim Alexander-Turia

**T**he River Walk Visitor Centre (RWVC) is situated at the Tongariro National Trout Centre (TNTC) just south of Turangi.

The centre was completed and opened to the public in 2003 and is designed to introduce visitors to the special world of trout, show how the fishery is managed and portray the history of fishing at Taupo.



Trainer Pieter-Jan Bontuijzen tracks visitors through the River Walk Visitor Centre to determine the amount of time people spend at each display.

Photo: Kim Alexander-Turia

Currently the interior of the RWVC mimics the path of a river as it winds its way past rock and boulders, with each turn of the river providing something new to see. The opening of the RWVC was the result of much hard work by the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society (TNTCS) and the Department of Conservation (DOC), who shared a vision to create an educational facility that would be an excellent addition to the existing complex. The TNTCS raised over \$500,000 to modify the old building and develop interpretive displays inside.

Three years in to its operation, an evaluation of the current displays has identified further opportunities to improve

the delivery of messages. We all get a bit tired some time and in need a bit of a makeover and that is exactly what the review was all about.

Sonia Frimmel was approached to complete a peer review and visitor based analysis of the centre. Sonia established her company, "What's the Story?" in 1998 to provide comprehensive interpretation solutions for people who want to bring their local heritage to life. It is a multi-disciplinary company that delivers a range of services from planning through to production. Other evaluation projects have included concept testing and completion surveys of the Aotaki Visitor Centre in Auckland and also a re-evaluation of the Whakapapa Visitor Centre.

Sonia's report has now been completed and was well received. It's now the job of the TNTCS and DOC as joint partners to look at her recommendations and implement them. As a first step a project team consisting of a project co-ordinator, interpreter, designer/architect and a technical expert has been set up to work with the recommendations to progress them further.

## SO WHAT DID THE REPORT SAY?

Without going into every detail it was interesting to note some of the survey results:

- 28% of those visiting the TNTC have been before
- The most popular display of the RWVC was the video on flyfishing
- The second most popular aspect of RWVC was the volunteers themselves. Visitors spent time at the reception desk talking to volunteers and their input in to the experience visitors have at the RWVC is critical.
- Almost everyone surveyed was happy with the focus of the displays but there



were some issues identified relating to content and style of presentation

- 30% of the visitors to the site did not visit the RWVC
- Some of the topics not covered currently but which visitors would like to see in the future are more on didymo, pests and weeds, water quality, more on history and actually finding out how to fish to name but a few!

The report confirmed some perceptions but the data collected did not support a

number of other views we held before hand, highlighting the value of getting an independent assessment of the facility and how it operates. It's an exciting time for both partners to stand back and look at the results but also to now develop a vision and a pathway to move the centre forward. The budget! It will take another round of huge fundraising effort by the TNTCS and contribution by DOC to implement any changes but if its worth doing its worth doing right!

In consultation with the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society a new brochure showcasing the Tongariro National Trout Centre has been developed and is called *Reel Trout*. It was specifically designed to go to information centres throughout New Zealand and to encourage visitors to the Centre. To obtain copies of the brochure please contact the Taupo Fishery Area office.

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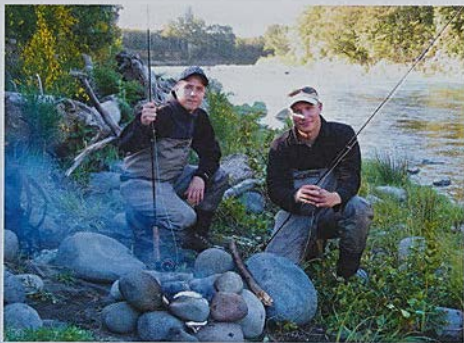
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# TAUPO TAILS

Peter and Petter from Sweden, cook their catch on the river Birches Pool.

*Taken by: Kim Alexander-Turia*

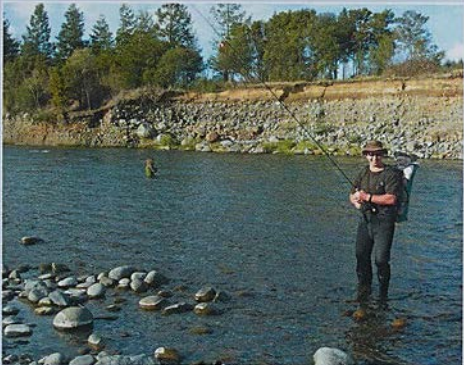


Shag eating a trout at the Major Jones Pool 7th September 2016 photo taken by Hayden Long. Australian angler.

*Sent in by: Peter Wilton - local fly fishing guide*

Kerry Corvid from Haurangi Auckland with his wife Julia and six month old Jacob in the back-pack at the Hydro Pool taken 14th September 2016. It pays to start them young. Jacob had already been up to Ladies Mile on the Taumangia-Taupo River in similar style.

*Sent in by: Ross Baker - Tongariro River Motel*



Caught at the Kuratau end of Lake Taupo on Labour Weekend by Tracey James of Taupo. She used a Kilwell rod with an Ahvry reel and with an orange with gold striped toy all purchased from Hoating and Fishing of Taupo.

Tracey is a beginner fisherwoman just out enjoying a days fishing with her Dad, Brian Golding, from Palmerston North. Tracey caught 4 good sized trout during the weekend which made an enjoyable few days for her.

*Sent in by: Brian Golding*

The second day of Lake Oramangakau opening Caught by Seven Dook of Taupo, drifting the weed beds in a boat, stripping woolly buggers.

*Sent in by: Dave Conley*



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



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# Whitikau log jam

By Callum Bourke

**T**he Whitikau Stream is the largest, most important tributary of the Tongariro River. It provides excellent spawning and rearing for trout each season, which we monitor closely through monthly escapement (spawning) counts, minnow trapping and electric fishing.

A section of the stream, which is popularly known as "The Grotto", is a narrow gorge situated between the Hautu and Rangipo prisons. Here the stream flows through a narrow slot within sheer ignimbrite walls and it is extremely susceptible to being blocked by log jams, especially after a decent fresh. In July this year, a sizeable blockage was discovered whilst undertaking a routine check. A large pine had fallen and wedged itself in the grotto subsequently causing the river bed to build up behind it, creating a 2.5 metre waterfall flowing through and over the mass of accumulated debris.

This was inhibiting fish passage through the grotto, as trout found it very difficult to swim and jump the necessary height, particularly when having to jump from the extremely aerated water caused by the waterfall. It is the same issue that causes cavitation when using an outboard in white water, there is no grip in the water. With access lost to approximately 9 kilometres of valuable spawning grounds above the grotto and the peak spawning months fast approaching, this log jam had to be removed as soon as possible.

Normally in situations like this the most efficient solution would be to use explosives. However due to the log jam's proximity to some high voltage power lines and the risk of damaging these with flying debris, this wasn't an option. Fortunately though, the blockage was in a section of the grotto that we could access relatively easily by cutting a track. This simplified matters considerably as

The original blockage, the key log at this stage is a half a metre under the white water  
Photo: Julie Greaves





we could get our chainsaws and equipment to the site without the need to wade or abseil. Once the track was cut, work started immediately with a team assigned to clear the bulk of the debris that had accumulated against the fallen pine. With this clear, we were able to manipulate the flow by removing rocks that had built up against the upstream side of the pine. In turn this encouraged the water to flow underneath the pine, and with a little help washing out more rocks and debris enabling us to access the main source of the problem.

After a few days to let the stream do its

work and erode the bed further, the large pine was ready to be removed. This wasn't going to be an easy proposition as the tree was in a precarious position and staff safety was a major concern. The job certainly required an experienced chainsaw operator who could handle these difficult circumstances. Fortunately in the fishery team we have Greg Robinson who has a forestry background and a wealth of experience in sawing trees of all shapes and sizes. With the safety brief concluded and the team ready in position, it was time to deal to this pine once and for all. Greg sure made it look easy; cutting the tree



Greg Robinson starts work on the log  
*Photo: Julie Coeaves*

Nearly finished, the original blockage was to the height of the handle of the chainsaw.

*Photo: Julie Greaves*



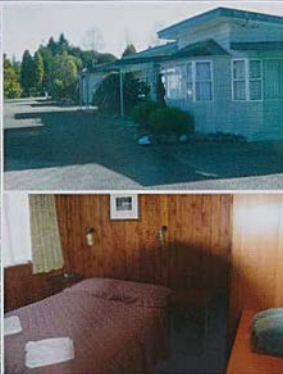
into rings which the team stacked on the bank so as to ensure that another blockage could not be created by these off-cuts downstream. After cleaning up a few more logs that became exposed as a result of the drop in stream bed level, the task was finally complete. The waterfall and massive pile of debris was substantially reduced allowing clear passage for hundreds of trout heading to their spawning grounds upstream.

It is pleasing to note that since the log

jam was cleared in August, the fish stocks upstream of the grotto have increased substantially. Escapement counts (drift dives) of a 3 kilometre section above the grotto, produced a count of 192 fish in August before the blockage was cleared, which effectively doubled one month later to 418 in September and then peaked at 490 in October.

A big thanks must go out to the team for an awesome effort! The question now is what we will find in the grotto next winter!

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Releasing a trout using  
the BogaGrip  
Photo: Mark Venman

## New tools to release trout safely

By Michel Desjard

The article on the effect of handling on fish welfare published in the last issue of *Target Tackle* stimulated much interest and feedback from readers. It is pleasing to see anglers thinking carefully about how they handle their fish as they release them so as to ensure the best for the fish.

Handling techniques may be further improved by using new tools. Last month a very affable and experienced angler who has been fishing the Tongariro River for more than 50 years introduced us to the BogaGrip® that eliminates any skin contact between the angler and the fish during unhooking. At first glance this

instrument looks more like a device that in the wrong hands, could be used to 'persuade' someone to reveal their secrets rather than a tool supposed to improve the welfare of a fish!

That device was developed in the United States in response to the growing concern about fish welfare during fishing competitions. During such contests the fish need to be weighed to decide upon the winner but they must also be released alive. These two requirements were met by developing the BogaGrip.

BogaGrip allows to hold the fish by the bottom jaw in one hand and to remove the hook with the other hand. The

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locking system of the instrument is made of stainless steel and very quickly adjusts to the water temperature, thereby not causing any thermal stress when in contact with the fish. Furthermore, stainless steel is very easy to clean and less likely to cause infection. The fish is held by the jaw which is the toughest part of the body and which is not covered by mucus to the same extent as the rest of the body. However perhaps the most important feature of this instrument is that it allows the fish to be kept in the water during the unhooking procedure.

To use this tool the fish is played until it can be brought close where it is then immobilized locking the BogaGrip on the lower jaw. With their free hand the angler then grabs a pair of long nosed pliers and unhooks the fish while the fish is still in the water. If the hook is set too deep don't hesitate to cut the line just above the lure. Fish are very good at rejecting foreign bodies and hooks and lures will be quickly spat out or ingested and imbedded in tissue growth without affecting the fish chances of survival.

No scientific trials have been carried out yet to compare handling mortality with and without the BogaGrip. However, there is no doubt that the trialling we did in the Tongariro River indicates that the fish remains very quiet when locked on the BogaGrip. We have no doubt that the lack of any physical contact with the fish will be beneficial for the welfare of the fish.

There are several similar tools on the market but they do have one downside, their price. However considering that 60% of all fish caught in Taupo are returned to the water, it is clearly essential to minimize the mortality of these fish if we are to maintain a healthy fishery. In the long run every angler will benefit one way or another if they do everything they can to ensure that the fish they choose to release or are required to let go survive the experience. In many cases these tools will certainly help achieve this.

Many thanks Raymond and happy grip.





## Joining in

By Kim Alexander-Turia  
 DOC staff host a visit to the Waipa Trap by some of the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society volunteers (Top left Mark Gosgrove, Larry Crawford, Eric Wilson,

Graham Hamilton, John Milner, Guy Marney, Kim Alexander-Turia, Ken Kimmins, Brian Battell and trap operator David Klee.

Photo: Starna Bester

It's been another busy year for the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society (Society) and its volunteers. The Society works in a successful partnership with DOC to promote trout fishing, the Taupo Fishery and the protection of the freshwater environment at the Tongariro National Trout Centre on the banks of the Tongariro River.

### RIVER WALK VISITOR CENTRE

The River Walk Visitor Centre, situated at the Tongariro National Trout Centre is a Visitor Centre run by the Society and its volunteers 364 days of the year, only closing Christmas Day. The hours of operation are from 10am to 3pm, 1 May to 30 November and 10am to 4pm, 1 December to 30 April. The Centre incorporates the history of fishing at Taupo, how the fishery is managed and the life-cycle of trout. Ken Kimmins, the TN'TCS Administration Manager, who looks after the volunteers says, *'the volunteers are very good the way they manage to fit the Society's work into their busy lives. This certainly helps me when it comes to organising resources for the visitor centre, fishing days and other activities'*.

### CHILDREN'S FISHING DAYS

The Society volunteers also run the very popular Children's Fishing days which are held monthly from April to November, 9am to 3pm. On any day upward of 16 volunteers are necessary as the summary of this year's days indicates.

These days are a chance for children between the ages of 6 to 14 years, to learn the art of fly-casting and to be able to catch their first trout. Each fishing day involves a number of dedicated volunteers in various roles from taking the bookings at the River Walk Visitor Centre prior to the day, to checking in the children on the actual day, supervising the children's waiting lines and then the actual fishing. The Society also runs a barbeque on the day where they sell anything from sausages, hot soup and cold

Dates	No. of Children Attended	No. Volunteers participating
Sunday, 23rd April	180	20
Sunday 14 May	190	20
Sunday 4 June	190	18
Sunday 9 July	247	20
Sunday 20 August	128	16
Sunday 24 September	195	20
Sunday 22 October	197	20
Sunday 19th November	130	16

drinks to raise funds for the Society. As you can it's a pretty full day for them!

### TAUPO FOR TOMORROW EDUCATION PROGRAMME

*Tauipo for Tomorrow*, whose primary sponsor is Genesis Energy, is a learning experience outside the classroom where students can experience hands on learning about freshwater and its sustainable use, trout ecology and fly-fishing. The programme is run full-time by Educator, Thea DePetris out of The Whakapumautanga Downs Learning Centre classroom which was opened in April 2006.

Teachers can choose from three programme options which are linked to the New Zealand Curriculum Framework. The programmes provide an opportunity to learn from professionals working at the heart of conservation management.

Thea who is a budding angler herself uses volunteers from the Society to teach students about aspects of fishing including how to tie flies, cast a flyrod and catch their first trout. *"They are an awesome reflection of how passionate people are about the Tauipo Fishery and this shines through with many of the volunteers helping me in a number of roles"* comments Thea. She enjoys watching the students become mesmerised by the enthusiasm of the volunteers talking about their favourite pastime. *"The education programme would not be as successful without the volunteers; they are a huge asset to the programme"*

The volunteers also assist the Tongariro National Trout Centre Ranger - Greg Robinson with the on site maintenance, most recently getting involved with planting native trees.



Brian Wills issues a certificate to a successful young angler  
Photo: Ken Kinnings





Val Raymond (right) & Jill Gunn at the River Walk Visitor Centre holding the recent Trust Power Award  
 Photo: Kim Alexander-Turta

Grey says "I seem to be at the bottom of the food chain with volunteer assistance as it's hard to steal them away from their education programme; she's prettier and bribes them with chocolate biscuits"

### SO WHAT DO THE VOLUNTEERS GET OUT OF IT AND WHERE DO THEY GET THE TIME?

Val Raymond and Jill Gunn both agree that it's about giving back your time to the community.

Larry Crawford says "I enjoy working with the other volunteers. The River Walk visitor's centre, Waibukabuka stream, viewing chamber, Learning Centre and the kids' fishing pond are fabulous assets to the town of Turangi. This wonderful area is visited by large numbers of local and overseas tourists and I have found real pleasure in being involved with all of this in the last 12 months. It is great to see the children at the fishing pond so proud of catching their own fish".

### THE AWARDS!

The TNTCS recently won the Trust Power Taupo District Community award winning the Heritage & Environment Section. The award came with a framed certificate and cheque for \$500.

The Society has also been awarded a Tongariro Taupo Conservancy Award for 2006. This award is given to individuals, groups or organisations that have made a significant contribution to conservation in this area through a single project or as the Society has over

many years. The award was presented to the Society on the 7th December at the Tongariro Taupo Conservancy Conservation Awards ceremony held at the Taupo Museum. The TNTCS Deputy Chairman Rob Lester says, "Without the volunteers, there would not be a Tongariro National Trout Centre Society. Their value to the facility cannot be estimated in dollar terms or time commitment. A common strand that defines this diverse group of socially committed individuals is a passion for preserving and enhancing our environment for present and future generations".

This successful partnership between DOC and the Society is a graphic example of the benefits that can be achieved for conservation by DOC working closely with passionate individuals in the local community. The Society has also been awarded a Tongariro Taupo Conservancy Award for 2006. This award is given to individuals, groups or organisations that have made a significant contribution to conservation in this area through a single project or as the Society has over many years. The award will be presented to the Society on the 7th December at the Tongariro Taupo Conservancy Conservation Awards ceremony held at the Taupo Museum. The TNTCS Deputy Chairman Rob Lester says, "Without the volunteers, there would not be a Tongariro National Trout Centre Society. Their value to the facility cannot be estimated in dollar terms or time commitment. A common strand that defines this diverse group of socially committed individuals is a passion for preserving and enhancing our environment for present and future generations".

This successful partnership between DOC and the Society is a graphic example of the benefits that can be achieved for conservation by DOC working closely with passionate individuals in the local community.

# Genesis Energy increases funding

By Thea DePetris  
Thea is the Educator at the  
Tongariro National Trout  
Centre, with a background in  
secondary teaching and pas-  
sionate about the outdoors



The Taupo for Tomorrow programme - a joint initiative between the Tongariro National Trout Centre Society, the Department of Conservation and Genesis Energy - keeps moving onward and upward.

The programme commenced in July 2004 and has grown from humble beginnings into the valuable learning resource it is today.

In April 2006 a Learning Centre was opened at the Trout Centre and named after the late Whakapunautanga (Jarkie) Downs, local Tuwharetoa Kaumatua. Thea DePetris was appointed as a part-time educator for the programme, but by July 2006 it was evident that a full-time educator was needed.

With the addition of the learning centre this year, schools now spend up to a full day at the Trout Centre. Thea found that if the programme was going to continue to grow she needed more time to spend with the students and also for developing the programmes. Key projects she has been working on this year include the development of *Taupo for Tomorrow's* website ([www.taupoformorrow.co.nz](http://www.taupoformorrow.co.nz)) and a NCEA component for secondary school students.

Genesis Energy was keen to sponsor the programme further and has increased funding of the educator position from part-time to full-time. Through their primary sponsorship, school groups are able to attend the programme at no cost.




Larry discusses different fly patterns to the children  
Photo: Thea DePetris



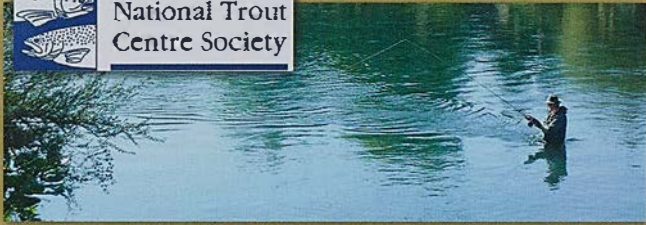


Bonnie Lawrence, Environmental Coordinator, Genesis Energy (left), then DePetris, Educator and students Tyla Warrender and Alex Conner measure cobbles  
 Photo: Kim Alexander-Turia





## Tongariro National Trout Centre Society



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

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## Hinemaiaia trapping successful

**By Robert Hood**  
Rob is a Ranger and part of the team that carries out our field operations work

The Hinemaiaia trap was once again installed and operated this winter to lift spawning trout above the HB Dam, in association with Trust Power Limited. After reviewing previous years operations it was decided to operate the trap continuously from mid July to mid September as this is when consistent numbers of spawning trout were migrating upstream through the bypass.

The target of 200 trout trapped, processed (clipped, weighed and measured) and transferred into the HB dam was achieved before the trap was removed (49 in July, 101 in August and 50 in September). It's possible more might have been caught and transferred but unfortunately in August a large spill over the dam forced the trap to be pulled out for a short time. Also at the end of the trapping period we held several fish to collect their eggs. The approximately 19000 fertilised ova were taken to the Tongariro National Trout Centre (TNTC) for hatching. In late November the unfed fry were transferred into the headwaters of the Pahikohuru and Kakapo streams

upstream of the HB dam to help re-establish the spawning runs in these streams.

The operation of the trap also provided an excellent opportunity to collect 50 fin samples as part of our investigation into whether there are any genetic differences between spawning trout in different streams.

During the trapping operation, operators recorded a number of dead trout that collected on the HB power station intake screens. Nearly all of these were spent (spawned) trout and of note was that 11 also had last years trap clip (so were transferred into the HB dam in 2005). These are fish which managed to return to Lake Taupo last year, presumably passing over the dam when it spilled in October before once again returning to spawn this winter.

On the practical side, a new removable and transportable roof was constructed for the caravan this year which certainly improved the comfort level for trap operators during wet weather periods.

**Top:** The fishery team drove the Hinemaiaia bypass to obtain mature trout to strip eggs from.  
**Photo:** Kim Alexander-Turua



# Goodbye Bob (Rob) Hood

By Kim Alexander-Turia

**I**t started with Rob McLay but then Rob Marshall arrived and it was confusing to have two Rob's so Rob Marshall became Bert. When Rob Hood arrived he became Bob but now Bob is leaving us and we are back to the original one and only Rob!

Bob Hood has spent the last 8 years in the Taupo Fishery, arriving in 1998 from the Horowhenua district where he was dairy farming. He has been fishing in the Taupo area since he was a kid and is a passionate angler today.

He has developed a huge range of diverse field skills over the years, the highlights for Bob being involved in the monitoring and research projects including the Harvest Survey, acoustic and radio tracking projects. Often field work is in isolated and arduous conditions, but Rob says while *"working in these places can sometimes be challenging, but it is also very rewarding. I think I'm very lucky to have worked in such a great location, helping a dedicated team manage such an awesome fishery"*.

In 2005 Bob was seconded to the NZ Sea Lion team which was monitoring Sea Lions in the Auckland Islands. He assisted scientists with monitoring and research projects and spent seven weeks living on Enderby Island. Although it was in the middle of

summer, weather conditions made for a very challenging but rewarding time.

The winter fish traps are one of the not so glamorous jobs in the fishery. So will Bob miss those freezing cold winter nights sleeping in a caravan or hut? Or the nights where it rains the whole night and you have to get the generator fired up so you can weigh and measure hundreds of fish before trying to secure the trap when it finally floods? Probably not. As Bob is tucked up next winter with the electric blanket on, listening to the rain on the roof, he will be thinking of his old fishery mates.

Bob says he will miss working with the small, skilled fishery team undertaking what is a unique role in DOC. However he is not completely leaving DOC; he has obtained a position as Programme Manager, Biodiversity Assets, Ruapehu Area and will be managing the threatened species work including Whio (Blue Duck), Kiwi and plants. He is looking forward to new challenges and the opportunity to manage and work with such iconic species in a World Heritage area. The Fishery Team wish him the best and his experience and commitment will be missed by all. And what will they call him at the Ruapehu office?

He thinks he will be called Rob.



Rob Hood at the Waipa Trap



## Fishing for the 'Wired Generation'

By Thea DePetris

Children and teenagers of today's world are wired, charged and hooked up. Through their constant use of different technological devices that bring the world to their fingertips, they have earned the nickname 'the wired generation'.

Computers, cell phones, digital cameras, iPods, satellite and cable television are all types of digital technology that have rapidly evolved since the 1980's. For each of these devices, an array of features like blogging, gaming, on-line shopping, email/text messaging and downloading exists, which have all led to a dramatic and swift change in the ways that people communicate and recreate.

According to a study conducted by Harris

Interactive and Teenage Research Unlimited (June 2003) the average 13-24 year old American spends a cumulative 50 hours per week talking on the phone, listening to the radio, surfing the internet and watching television. That's more hours than they spend at school.

The Guardian reported that 3 out of 4 children in the UK have access to the internet and out of those children, 1 in 3 will make friends with someone online. There are 7.5 million mobile phones owned by young people aged 10-19 and 1 pound in 10 of disposable income was spent by teenagers on mobile product services this year.

The consequences of this electronic bombardment cannot be ignored. For

Top: Thea & Students from  
Mamaku School  
look for natural caddis  
Photos: Kim Alexande-Turja



better or worse, it is certainly having a revolutionary impact on the way children are growing up. On one hand television, movie and the internet provide an awesome tool for learning, where answers can be found at a touch of a button. But on the other hand, this virtual world that is often dominated by excessive consumption and the pursuit of the latest and trendiest is strongly influencing the dreams and aspirations of 'the wired'.

Another obvious and worrying consequence of a wired youth is that they are spending less time in the outdoors. Activities like kicking a ball around with their mates at the park or searching for fish and other creatures in the local stream have become a thing of the past. Young people are now more commonly found battling the Fifa premiership league with a Tokyo-based teenager or conversing amongst an on-line chat group.

No longer do weekends equate to getting wet, muddy and cold. Camping, fishing, and tramping have become less common pastimes as a result of busier lives in a more urbanized world. As of June 2005, almost 3 million New Zealanders were living in urban areas

(2,956,700 urban dwellers or 72% of the total population of 4,098,300). The fear for many who are dedicated to conservation and the preservation of the natural environment is that without these experiences in the wild, it will be forgotten.

So does this mean that the young are all doomed to end up living in a Matrix type world where no boundary line exists between the virtual and real? A world where memories are the only lasting reminder of a landscape that had big, wide open spaces and crystal clear rivers? My answer to these questions is no.

One of the main reasons behind my answer is simply due to the number of programmes that enable New Zealanders to connect with nature. The education programme at the Tongariro National Trout Centre, *Taupo for Tomorrow* is one such programme that has been developed to keep children and teenagers in touch with the natural environment. *Taupo for Tomorrow* is all about increasing environmental awareness and sharing knowledge about trout, freshwater environments and sustainable resource use. The programme is designed to make learning fun, tactile and investigative. No matter how wired they are, students find catching their first trout or wading through the stream looking for insects an extremely exhilarating experience.

The wired technology is here but it does not need to be all consuming as long as opportunities like *Taupo for Tomorrow* are provided. Through positive, direct experiences with nature children will grow up into adults who have a desire to interact with the natural environment and do their part to look after it.

If you have a passion for the outdoors, fishing or the environment and would like to help out with the *Taupo for Tomorrow* education programme, contact *Thena* by emailing [tdpetris@doc.govt.nz](mailto:tdpetris@doc.govt.nz) or phoning 07 386 9246

Graham Hamilton Tongariro National Trout Centre Society volunteer with a young student after the catch  
*Photo: Thena DePetris*



# New Fishery Faces

JOEL HOUTHUIJZEN - TRAINEE RANGER

By Joel Houthuijzen

Joel is a Department of Conservation Trainee Ranger who has spent the last 3 months with the Taupo Fishery and is due to return in 2007.

I grew up in Gisborne until I was 19 when I went over to the United States with my older brother to work at a children's summer camp in California. At the Gold Arrow camp I was the fishing instructor/counselor, as fishing is a huge passion of mine. I did this for two summers and thoroughly enjoyed myself.

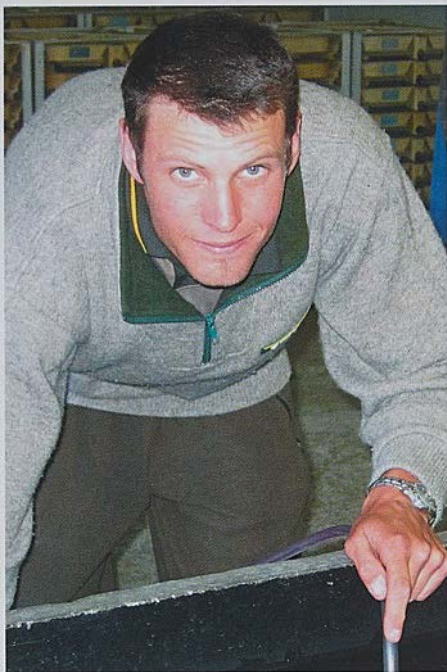
After summer camp I travelled into Canada on a one year work visa that allowed me to travel and work throughout the country. While I was there I targeted the salmon and steelhead running up the streams from Lake Huron. I also spent most of the Canadian winter out on the lakes ice fishing and catching lake trout, fresh water ling, pike and muskie.

When I returned from overseas I wanted to work for the Department of Conservation, as I had always spend a lot of time in the bush chasing deer, pigs and trout and I wanted to see the things that I enjoy preserved for future generations to come. So I decided to do the trainee ranger course in Nelson.

The trainee ranger programme is a one year course consisting of four months at Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) doing practical training and a bit of theory. Then a four month work placement with DOC (locations vary every year) and a further four months at NMIT to graduate. At the end of the course there are 8 positions for a two year period spread over New Zealand for the graduated trainees. As I looked through the list of the 8 areas there was one with the Taupo Fishery team that caught my eye.

I jumped at this opportunity because it's something I have wanted to get into for many years, dating back to when I helped out on a few kids fishing days at the Ngongotaha trout hatchery for Fish and Game and was hooked on trout work.

I am really looking forward to getting to know the staff better here and take on as many experiences on as I can in my next two years.



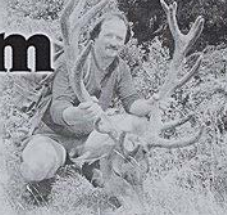
Joel vacuuming troughs at the Trout Centre

Photo: Kim Alexander/Taria



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