

ROTORUA ANGLERS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED



Fish of the month for June was Manuel Saiz with this
3.27 kg beauty from Lake Tarawera

AUGUST 2011



3 very happy Anglers with GT's from New Caledonia, see report in this issue.



OFFICIAL WEIGHMASTERS FOR THE ASSOCIATION

O'Keefes Fishing Depot	1113 Eruera St.	3460178
Bevan Lash	187A Ranolf Street	3489097
John McCarron	53 Rimuvale St	3461967
Roger Bowden	3 Rostrevor Place	3487816
Terry Wood	6A Holden Avenue	3455587
Eddie Bowman	34 Westbourne Ave	3485652

IF POSSIBLE PLEASE PHONE BEFOREHAND

The Club offers to its' members the following benefits:

- ◆ Friday night social evenings at the Clubrooms. Make fishing mates and plan trips! Organise flycasting tuition!
- ◆ Fortnightly Flytying nights. Tie your own flies!
- ◆ Monthly BBQ's, Potluck Dinners and Annual Prizegiving Dinner..
- ◆ Organised fishing trips most months. Learn new waters!
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- ◆ Fantastic library of Books, Videos and DVD's.
- ◆ Kids Fishouts.
- ◆ Monthly newsletter.
- ◆ 10% Discount at local Fishing Shops advertising in the newsletter!

ROTORUA ANGLERS ASSN. INC.

MISSION STATEMENT

To enjoy fishing first, to promote the development of all anglers to reach their full potential, and to respect and protect the environment.

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IN THIS NEWSLETTER**

EXECUTIVE & COMMITTEE 2010/2011

These are the new office bearers and committee elected at the AGM for the coming year. Welcome to the newcomers and thanks to the incumbents for supporting the club once again. (Area code for Rotorua is 07)

PATRON	Lew Sperry	
PRESIDENT	Wade Fleet	345 9913
VICE-PRESIDENT	Larry Ware	348 0388
PAST-PRESIDENT	Neal Hawes	348 1734
SECRETARY	Bronwyn Douglas	343 9329
TREASURER	Don Stotter	345 9222
CLUB CAPTAIN	Bryan Taylor	357 2216
COMMITTEE	Terry Wood	345 5587
	David Hieatt	348 9090
	Roger Bowden	348 7816
	Bill Piper	350 1002
	Peter West	350 1215
	Peter Finlay	021 2106164
	Manuel Saiz	0274 484171
	Nigel Wilkinson	349 0336
	Shaun Wyatt	349 6116
WEBSITE WEBMASTER	Eddie Bowman	3485652
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Roger Bowden	348 7816
TROPHY MASTER	Bevan Lash	348 9097
SUB-COMMITTEES (conveners)		
KIDS' FISHOUT	Terry Wood	345 5587
A-Z SCHOOL	Roger Bowden	348 7816
ACTIVITIES (Trips)	Neal Hawes	348 1734
(Flytying)	Shaun Wyatt	349 6116
SOCIAL	David Hieatt	348 9090
LIBRARY	Nigel Wilkinson	349 0336
BUILDING	Terry Wood	345 5587

Please feel free to contact any of the above if you have any queries, comments or items you may like to discuss.

Visit our website on www.rotoruaanglers.org.nz

Remember, Roger Bowden is always grateful for any contributions to the magazine. (email rogbrit@slingshot.co.nz or post to **3 Rostrevor Place**)

Thank you for your contribution to our club and we hope you have a very successful season.

Wade Fleet **President**

Presidents Report

Looking back at last year's results of the first kids fish out, I see the much the same information as you will read again in Woody's report. The weather was great, in fact fantastic, the rain thankfully subsided, we had great support, and to follow the theme from last year, I am also pleased to say we had a record turnout. A few shy of five hundred kids! This I guess was to be expected with again the start of the school holidays, and some great advertising-also a record on the BBQ with five hundred sausage's selling out before 1pm, Wow. Thanks to the volunteers who assisted so well. A special thanks to those who travel to help out.

A recent letter penned to a few organisations that are responsible for our waterways and specifically the weed cordons on the lakes in the area saw a great response from a few of the parties. Some of you may have seen, it's hard not to, the bright lights attached to these cordons. Eastern fish and game, and Environment Bay of Plenty listened to what you, the lake users had to say and are now taking steps to see what can be done to reduce the landside brightness of these lights. It is expected these changes will still ensure the cordons are clearly visible to those navigating the lakes at night, while ensuring the land based night users are not blinded.

With the AGM and prize giving almost upon us, we are again looking around for ideas and venues for the RAA prize giving. Quotes are coming in and we will let you all know very shortly on a venue and prices. And while on the prize giving, if you haven't already entered a category, it is not yet too late to get an entry in, remember there are some great trophies and prizes, and not to mention, a season fishing license is up for grabs.

Also I would like to remind you all of the AGM and to get you all thinking about standing for office. The committee is well supported at the moment and as you all know, our club cannot run without someone standing up and helping out with planning, ideas and of course the doing. A few of the roles do require your time and running around, but can also be very rewarding. I do encourage you to think about helping out at least once in your time with the club; with 150 members we technically have years of committees with us.

With the winter now truly settings in, I am seeing more and more members brave the cold nights to come down to the club. This is all good and in line with this, the fly tying evenings are still fortnightly and we should have a mulled wine on offer by the time you read this, so do come on down.

There will no doubt be thousands of visitors coming to Rotorua with the Rugby world cup; as I write only 51 days left. This will no doubt make some of our lakes and rivers a bit busier so it might pay to enjoy the solitude out there while we still have it.

Our friends at the Rotorua Coast Guard also have some courses coming up soon. Coastguard are our friends when we need them, and like most organisations at the moment, support and sponsorship is hard to find. It is not only very important to have the coastguard around, but also for you all as boat and water users to be aware of the rules, and not just for your safety. Please I do encourage those who have not yet attended a boat master/ day skippers and other related courses to get along. More details in the clubrooms and sent out via email.

Great fishing! Wade Fleet

REPORT ON EASTERN REGION FISH & GAME ACTIVITIES MAY/JUNE 2011

The June meeting of Eastern Region F&G Council concentrated mainly on the Operational Work Plan and finalizing the 2011-12 Anglers Notice.

Discussion of the OWP involves planning the year's activities to come within the annual budget, and so requires a certain amount of juggling in order to keep within that budget.

Apart from minor changes to the wording of a couple of the regulations for clarity, the Anglers Notice remains as for this year. Staff and Councillors are still working to try to make the regulations booklet more easily understood, but this is proving a little difficult and might not happen just yet.

Other business of interest to anglers:

Water quality: A significant and unprecedented event occurred in the Te Wairoa stream on the night of 24 May when what appeared to be a concentrated flow of algae came down the stream from L. Rotokakahi and resulted in a large kill of spawning trout in the stream. It appears that this may have been a natural event. Algal blooms are relatively uncommon on L. Rotokakahi, and any increase in these might reflect deterioration in water quality, which may be a significant issue in future. As far as I am aware there have been no further incidents, and trout are still being harvested in the Te Wairoa trap for hatchery purposes.

Angler access: Rob Pitkethley is still liaising with the CNIIC access subcommittee and Timberlands to try to gain better access to the Kaingaroa fishery, but things are progressing only very slowly and a solution acceptable to anglers is still some way away. While these negotiations are a little delicate, and we should do nothing to compromise them, I believe it is imperative that all affected anglers should continue to take every opportunity to voice your concerns to Timberlands, politicians (it is election year, remember), the Access Commission, and F&G.

Public awareness: ERF&G took part in the NZ boat show in Auckland in May. The stand, simply called "Fish Rotorua" was run jointly with Destination Rotorua, the goal being to encourage Auckland boaties to fish Rotorua lakes, and talk with the general public about F&G's advocacy for issues such as access and water quality. Staff report a busy 4 days with a steady stream of interested people through the stand.

2011-12 Licence fee: Council discussed and supported the proposed licence fee for the coming season of \$116 (a very modest increase of \$3) for Adult Whole Season.

Datawatch: During the first eight months of the season, 614 tags have been returned and entered into the database. Returns from the Tarawera tagging trial (monthly releases) have also been pleasing, and the resulting conclusions will be interesting.

The Te Wairoa trap is operating as usual and has seen a total of 245 trout in the first two months (cf 381 last year – perhaps due to the lower number of trout released in summer 2009, or just a seasonal difference?) Average weight is 2.41kg (up 70gm on last year), CF 46.04 (cf 42.62 last year)

April saw moderate numbers of fish running through the Ngongotaha stream trap, approx 200 rainbows and 100 browns.

In May, approx 70 rainbows and 100 browns, with a number of spent fish returning to the lake. The rainbows are still small for this time of year (as they have been for the past two seasons) but condition is much improved since summer.

Smelt PhD project: F&G continue to provide support for the smelt/trout project being undertaken by Jen Blair (Uni Waikato). Jen is looking for changes in growth both between and within all the Rotorua lakes and comparing these with a wide range of physical and biotic factors to look for key relationships. This could have real applications for creating an optimized liberation strategy to make the most of seasonal forecasts.

Winter surveys: The 2011 winter shoreline surveys for Lakes Rotoiti, Okataina and Tarawera are being undertaken at present. Angler perceptions appear very positive, with good fishing in April, May and early June. L. Rotoiti has produced some superb fish in very good condition. The weed spraying and boating restrictions in Ruato Bay have been very well received by anglers. L. Tarawera anglers are happy with the fish condition following last winter and summer's poorer quality catch (one regular Tarawera angler reports his best season for many years). L. Okataina has produced good numbers of excellent fish, although the weed cordon and flashing navigation lights have been a detraction for anglers.

Neal Hawes, ERF&G Councillor



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Tarawera Outlet- Closing Week 2011. by Wayne Smith

From the moment we arrived and set up camp on a nice sunny and dry Saturday, two things were obvious: the river level was up significantly higher and there were more fish in the river than we had ever experienced before in 22 years. It was simply stacked – not just around the bridge/camp area, but as we found out over the ensuing days, all the way down through the bush pools. But it did not make it any easier catching them!

Ian and I had the camp set up and were into the river around mid-day. Both of us getting hooked up reasonably quickly, but both suffering the same fate - mid-air releases. The fish were in top condition and prone to leaping - it looked like it would be a hard fighting visit. Notwithstanding our best efforts, we entered the lake for the early evening session still waiting to put a mark on the score sheet. Despite the lake being dead calm, it did not take too long and by 7.30pm we were heading into dinner with two each. We backed up in the post dinner session with another two each – all circa 5lb and giving very good fights. A satisfactory first day.

Day two, it was down through the bush to the Crater and the Shingles pool areas. The high water and extra flow made navigation somewhat more difficult than normal - with the crossings a little bit testing and/or just downright impossible. But where there is a will there is way. While the “sludge wading” through reeds was hard work, and pre-announced our arrival to everything downstream – we got over the other side of the crater island to fish our favourite pools. Ian could not miss all day - he hooked ten and landed four - but I couldn't help noting all the big ones got off and only the smaller 1.5 – 3lbs seem to come to the net (would definitely drag his average size down...). The evening lake fish was steady without being spectacular – 5 fish taken, four of them really fat 6lb+ beauties - the best at 7.5lb fell to Ian's rod.

Monday dawned warm and clear again and we concentrated fishing around the camp site pools. Both of us getting into 5 fish and landing 3 each during the day. The hook up rate was being obscenely generous by Tarawera Rivers' normal standards! The lake however seemed to be holding itself back. We were picking them up – but not with regular frequency. Interestingly, just about all of the fish we were catching seemed to be wild strain. We started to ponder and hypothesise (what else do you do fishing a lake at night!) – were we witnessing an earlier than usual wild fish run?: were they all in the river, so fewer were hanging out in the lake off the river mouth?; would we see a late run of hatchery fish later in our 10 night stay?

Also, most of the fresh lake fish that we kept for the smoker were full of snails - we hadn't seen them in such large numbers before - it was usually a diet of smelt we found to be the most popular, reflected in our standard night pattern that is a simply dressed lumo fly. I knew from a few days of lake boat fishing, with local guru Roger in the month prior, that the smelt numbers in the Lake were very high, leading to the improved fish condition. Were these lake fish sick of smelt? We could imagine the conversation: “Oh no! Not bloody smelt again – I'd die for feed of snails...” The dead calm lake was probably not helping either.

“A bit of a breeze would be good – that might bring them on a bit” was heard to be murmured more than once during some long slow spells.

After flogging the river most of the first 4 days, armed with deck chairs, a couple of beers and some snack food to keep the munchies at bay, we headed over to the jetty to introduce Ian to “heave and retrieve”. A very relaxing way to spend a quiet hour or two “recovering”. Blow me down, first time at it and the buggie goes and puts two on the jetty, while I get to watch. Was that black and white bug he had on taken for a snail? Mmmm – to much thinking so far on this trip and not enough answers...

Wednesday was dropsies day. Ian camped in the pool under the bridge and proceeded to long distance release 7 fish during the stint. While I failed to convert my single chance a bit further downstream. As the 7th fish disappeared to the depths, suddenly Ian was keen to revisit the heave and retrieve - so another hour on the wharf (with obligatory beers) followed by an hour pre-dark “out the front” on the lake, saw us both redeemed with nice 6lb rewards, backed up by one more each on lumo’s just after dark set in.

Then it all turned to shite. The breeze (read gale) arrived, as did the torrential rain and by 10pm we were tucked into our tent after a couple of fruitless hours flailing the water for no further action. It will be better tomorrow! It wasn’t. With torrential rain continuing, the start was put off as long as possible by tying a few replacement flies, replacing a line, tidying the “kitchen”. Eventually running out of excuses, I went fishing. Ian found a few more excuses than I did, and I was playing my third fish in quick succession and he still was not on the water. Regrettably the third fish was hooked elsewhere than in the mouth, the obligatory hook “snap off” failed, but was replaced by the snapping of the top rod section which made the subsequent beaching and release a tad difficult. Luckily it was not my good rod - but my son won’t be happy as it was his only rod. On return to camp I found the empty rum bottle was also the end of Ian’s excuses not to fish.

By Saturday the rain stopped and the ground and mini lakes all over the camp site started to dry out – helped by very gusty south westerly winds that would stay with us for the next 5 days. We battled manfully when we could – down river into the bush to get out of the wind, long sessions punching our lines upwind with the occasional hook up to keep us entertained. The “score sheet” swung back and forward – Ian getting a couple ahead, me pulling him back to even, then him pulling ahead again. It was not a serious competition – we would share fishing in same pool if things went slow - we would invite the other into the next spots first visited if it was their turn – as good fishing mates would do ...but there was a still a tally at the end of the day, and at any time either one of us would know who was ahead and by how many!

Continued on page 12. (to check out the funny bits)

Schedule of Events – August 2011

<u>8th</u>	Flytying 7pm. (Shaun Wyatt)
<u>9th</u>	Committee meeting 7 pm.
<u>14th</u>	Full Moon
<u>14th</u>	2nd Kids fishout day at Hatchery (Terry Wood)
<u>19th</u>	Potluck Dinner at Clubrooms, all welcome
<u>20th</u>	Newsletter cut off.
<u>21st</u>	Day trip to L Rerewhakaaitu (Bryan Taylor)
<u>22nd</u>	Flytying 7pm. (Shaun Wyatt)
<u>29th</u>	Bring and Buy (Neville Robinson ph 3456683)
<u>Friday Nights</u>	Club nights 5pm–7pm. All welcome

A warm welcome to new member's Graham Carter and David Keay

Second Kids Fishout Sunday August 14th

Yes it's the time for our club once again to host the children's fish out programme and, as usual, it is out at the Fish and Game hatchery, situated at Paradise Valley, Ngongotaha. We are calling for all volunteers to help out with this very worthwhile and satisfying club activity.

We request helpers turn up around 8.30 am. This children's pursuit is a very popular event, and our own community, along with visitors to Rotorua, enjoy this fly fishing experience. If you can spare the time to be there for the two sessions, or just either the morning or afternoon session, we would be very pleased to see you.

The programme involves teaching children the art of casting and fly fishing to catch their very own trout. The club needs up to 30 helpers with a variety of jobs to do. Key stations to cover are ; helping with the B B Q, selling children's licences, guides to officiate and give directions to the children through the various stations, and of course, helping the children catch their trout. We also need volunteers to help with the weighing, plus folk to help in the kitchen. Do come along even if you are not sure what to do. Everyone will be made thoroughly welcome.

Lunch will be served between noon and 1.pm. Soup and bread etc. thanks to our sponsors and Fish and Game who kindly support the club with on going generosity.

If anyone would like further information, please give me a call on
07 345 5587
cheers,
Woody, Club convenor.



RAFFLE WINNERS!

The amazing Pheasant Tail lodge <<http://www.pheasanttailodge.co.nz/>> will be welcoming our raffle winner very soon !! A great location, right close to the Whirinaki river. A special thanks to Vince and Cindy of the Pheasant Tail lodge for this fantastic prize of a weekend for two.

Located close to a winery, golf course, and a new mountain biking track in the Whirinaki Forest this is an ideal location for anyone wanting to head out that way. And of course is an ideal location for fishing the Horomanga and Whirinaki rivers. CONGRATULATIONS to **Bronwyn Douglas**, I am sure Vince and Cindy will look after you and Graham.

Second prize was won by **Nigel Wilkinson** - a \$30 Outdoorsman headquarters voucher is coming your way.

NEWSLETTER ON WEBSITE

Your newsletter editor (Roger Bowden) and website master (Eddie Bowman) have been working to put the Club's Newsletter in PDF format and an example of this is currently on the club's website www.rotoruaanglers.org.nz . If you wish to receive your future copies by email please indicate to the club's email address at rotoruaanglers@gmail.com This would result in considerable savings to the Club enabling us to pass on benefits to members, not to mention saving trees/planet.



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**Check out the website for details of the Fish of the month competition !
10% RAA member discount with membership card.**

.There were other entertaining moments.... (Tarawera Outlet Cont'd from p 9)

...me getting inextricably tangled in a tree down in bottom Crater pool – the rod tip sent in the release the flies did its' job- but then got caught up itself by the indicator and line – and took about 30 minutes of effort with sticks and net to beat the tree branch into submission (it was 9 foot above the river which was 6 feet deep and swift so not an easy retrieve!) ...and the bloody branch was water logged and simply would not break off. Full recovery of all gear was eventually made without breaking the rod tip. Once leader and flies were re-tied they were then lost on a rock on the next cast!

..Ian hooking and losing a fish along with both of his nymphs , the second of which somehow got snagged on the fish's back in the “release” frenzy – which we could clearly see as it launched itself clear of the water about 15 times, every three feet up the length of the crater pools.

... sneaking my way up to have a look at the top crater pool on the far side of island to find a pod of 50+ fish sitting in the top of the hole. The cast landed softly above them but 40 fish went in different directions at the same, and the remaining ten simply ignored the offerings as the 40 came back to rest. After repeating this effort on next three casts, I walked away. Impossible fishing!

...Ian leaning on a water's edge tree in bush down by the Shingles, dangling the last 12 inches of his leader (including his two nymphs) into the water over 3 unspookable fish sitting at his feet under the bank and hooking one large jack after 5 minutes of this “casting” – the indicator at the other end of his leader still sitting at his rod tip. What kind of “cast” do you call that Ian? Three yards later the fish was off and disappearing downstream - the indicator now 10 feet from the rod tip.

..meeting “Mr Tosser” – who I suspect was from a professional firm that would have been called Tosser, Tosser and F-wit. They arrived in by boat the day prior and had to be informed that the fishing they were attempting above the bridge in the sanctuary area was actually illegal. They revisited the following day and I was fishing to a “pod” of 6-8 fish in a hole down at the top of the raupo straight, when Tosser and his mate (perhaps it was F-wit himself?) waded in on the other side of river 6 feet away from them (instead of taking alternative path down the bush line) and went right past/through them sending them all down river. 30 minutes later they had re-settled back a little further downstream, and both Ian and I were now fishing down onto them when first Mr Tosser and then his mate (it must have been F-wit!) decided they had had enough further downstream and obviously walked/waded back upstream 6 feet away from them, again sending them all off downstream. While they did not respond to it, I'm sure the very rude and cynical exchange between Ian and I would have been picked up by the ears of Tosser and F-Wit as they retreated into the bush across the river. Hopefully they will learn some manners for next time. Yeah Right!

...Ian hooking up on the heave and retrieve on the jetty (again) – navigating the fish down to the shallow end for the netting, only to collapse in screaming heap of pain on the jetty “bloody cramp in my leg!”

The sight of the rod held high and him withering on his back with his free hand clasped to his thigh would have been a trip highlight, but it only got better as he struggled to his feet, picked up the net and then as he bent over to net the fish went head first into the lake to join it, amongst a raft of expletives.....for the record, the lake depth at that spot was not life threatening (to Ian) and the fish, while it avoided death by squashing, was eventually netted in a bent net, by a bruised and flustered ego! I simply choked on my beer and thanked him for what will be a very treasured memory.

So the fishing got harder as the wind blew stronger and more relentlessly. We struggled through to the final day – picking up the odd fish here and there, and of course enjoying the challenge of not being told what to do for 10 days...but in the end we did not even fish the river on the last day of the season. We were knackered!. The wind dropped right away, for at least 2 hours, and having picked up a couple of fresh lake 6lb's during a mid morning farewell "jetty and beer" session in the sun, we looked at the darkening and building clouds over the mountain and the fresh gales starting to rebuild down the lake from the west and opted for a dry pack up and we were on our way out of there by mid afternoon, a day early, as the first drops of rain started to fall...

For those numerically, statistically or scientifically minded/inclined (no it was not really a competition) : Most fish were released.

Ian's tally of 34 totalled 148lb, at average 4.35lb - including 16 from river at average 3.4lb and 18 from lake at average 4.8lb.

Wayne' tally of 36 totalled 163lb, at average 4.55lb - including 13 from river at average 4.35lb and 23 from lake at average 4.6lb

and we are still left wondering about the smelt, the snails, the high proportion of wild fish in the population and now ...is there a hatchery run swimming out front in the lake during June? Perhaps we should check that out....

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KIDS FISH OUT SUNDAY JULY 17TH 2011

A big tick and my admiration goes to club members and helpers who turned up, at our first Kids Fish Out for 2011. An all time record was achieved with 495 youngsters catching a Rainbow trout. The bright sunny day made very pleasant weather conditions for this event, even though there was a ground frost to start with. Our volunteers worked non stop throughout the usual lunch break trying to keep the back log moving ,before the afternoon session began. Indeed my gratitude for you all for being there. I will say that amongst everyone, your passion and tenacity putting in long standing hours, although some of you came for the morning session only , our club can be extremely proud of its presentation to the public in providing this fantastic childrens out door pursuit.

Special thanks to the folk who travelled from outside Rotorua ,with teams coming from Tokoroa, Whakatane and Taupo. Grateful thanks to the B B Q team, for achieving an all time record turn over with sausages. Thanks to the team who work in the kitchen, the folk who sell the licenses and the people who take care by directing, parents and children through the venue. If I have forgotten anyone my apologies, your contributions make our club noted and recognised for continuing this award winning programme so brilliantly.

The next KFO is scheduled for Sunday August 14th.. I leave with you, as your convener, my thanks for your gracious support with the on going success of this programme for our club.

Cheers Woody.



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Flashing lights at Lake Okataina Beach

A letter was written recently to the Harbourmaster, Coastguard, Eastern Fish and Game, and Environment Bay of Plenty, expressing concern at the highly invasive nature of the weed cordon lights to night time anglers. It virtually destroyed the solitude and unique nature of this very special fishing spot with extremely bright red and green lights flashing every few seconds. Roger Bowden penned the letter, which was written on behalf of the Rotorua Anglers Association.

We are pleased to report that some action has been taken by Hamish Lass of the Bay of Plenty Regional Council. We owe Hamish our sincere thanks for his valuable assistance, see his reply below;

Rotorua Anglers Assn.

Dear Sir

Lake Okataina Weed Cordon lights

Thanks for your letter regarding the navigation lights at Lake Okataina. While we do understand the need to have navigational lights that light the entrance and exit to the Weed Cordon we also realise that these light do not need to be as bright as they are at present.

The Lakes Harbourmaster has advised that the lights at the Cordon can be reduced to a less invasive level. The lights will be reduced to the lowest level for the model that has been installed before the 24/07/2011. This will then be monitored to see if the light level is suitable to night fisherman and if not then other means to lower light levels will be undertaken.

Regards

Hamish Lass, Biosecurity Officer, Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

TROPHY MASTERS REPORT

FISH OF THE MONTH FOR June 2011 was Manuel Saiz with a 3.27 kg rainbow from Lake Tarawera

Manuel wins a \$10 voucher from Hamills.

Don't forget to weigh in your fish!

Weighmasters are listed on page 3. or you can weigh your fish on registered scales with a witness.

Scales can be checked and registered at the Clubrooms on Friday nights.

You can even weigh and release your fish.

Trophymaster Bevan Lash

NEW CALEDONIA

10 JUNE – 18 JUNE 2011 **Roger Bowden**

After a very, laid back and relaxing flight of less than 3 hours, the outer reefs, blue lagoons and white beaches of New Caledonia came into view. We all remarked on the mild 20 degrees temperature and blue skies upon disembarking, little did we know it wasn't going to be like this all the time.

Etienne was outside the airport to meet us and whisk us away in his ute, this was easy!. Our surf camp was about 60kms up the coast, the drive was a little unnerving due to the left hand drive vehicle and rules, but otherwise very pleasant with an insight into another country. The terrain was rolling grassy hills with steeper mountains in the background, covered in bush/scrub. It appeared the main form of agriculture was beef farming.

Our surf camp was buzzing with people as it was a long weekend in New Caledonia and the camp was booked out by a large group from Noumea. Etienne helped John and Eddie set up their rods for the next day and the French chef cooked us the first of many great meals.

After raining overnight the first day was a little cloudy and windy, however fishing was on. Guide Etienne took us out the channel some 10kms to the outer reef for our first 'go' at the Giant Trevally. A point of interest near the reef was a large shipwreck, the next day we were to see another one further up the coast attributable to the same skipper. The sea was a much darker blue outside the reef and the 3 of us took our positions in line to begin casting our poppers/stickbaits. The rods we were using were heavy duty (20-30kg) with high quality spinning reels (Diawa dogfights and Shimano Stella) spooled with 80lb braid and screwed down drag settings. If you hooked a big G.T., a minimal of line was to be conceded or the fish would gain sanctuary in the reef and bust you off. This makes for an extreme fishing experience. John hooked the first G.T., which was a mini specimen but still pulled like a maxi. This gave us a taste of what was in store. I hooked the next fish from the raised section at the front of the boat, this was rather disconcerting as the boat was pitching in the swell and with very little gunwale height, I was sure I would be pulled overboard, however strong hands helped me down into the boat and I was literally dragged to the back of the boat by the power of this fish. It was like nothing I have ever experienced. With the drag set so tight and many instructions from guide Etienne I soon wrestled the fish in and we landed a magnificent G.T. of over 20kg. Then it was Eddie's turn to nail a nice G.T. which rounded off a great first day. We caught a couple of non target fish such as Coral Trout and Red Bass to provide some variety and John had a huge splashy strike on his popper, only to lose both popper and fish.

The next day was rather dismal with drizzly rain, and despite trying our hearts out, only John scored with a Spanish Mackerel, which was kept for the pot.

The next part of our adventure was to be played out at Nekweta surf camp, a further hour's drive up the coast. The scenery was quite different here, with much more vegetation and sandy beaches

. The beach here has quite a surf, due to a break in the reef and this has created a special environment for loggerhead turtles to lay their eggs on the beach. . The locals are passionate about conservation and have put tonnes of extra sand on the beach, planted lots of shrubs and trees, and place cages over each nest to protect the eggs from dogs and predators. The surf camp we stayed at was unique, with a thatched roofed bungalow and many native carvings. We were well looked after by Stephanie and Manu, with sumptuous meals of mud crab, and local fish, and even Rusa deer steaks shot by Manu's father.

The first day out from here was by far the best, weather and fish wise, and Manu took us well up the coast to an idyllic lagoon inside the reef, with beautiful clear blue water and coral bommies. We all caught huge Barracuda up to 20 odd kilos, Coral Trout, Red Bass and Cod. We even managed to get some chances at G.T's. John landed a superb specimen of over 20kgs and I landed two (the 2nd over 30kg's) both of which I broke rods on, apparently because I point loaded them when the fish was close to the boat and decided to go right under. My inexperience at playing big fish was showing, but a learning curve was developing with lots of helpful advice after the event. While out fishing many highlights such as sightings of large Green and Loggerhead turtles, Dugongs and leaping fish were constantly occurring.

After fishing we relaxed with a drink or two and relived the days events prior to another top restaurant class dinner (as with all nights of our holiday).

On the final days fishing after heavy rain all night, we woke to a strong off shore wind and clearer weather. We boated up the coast to the scene of our previous successful day and had a pleasant mornings fishing until the wind changed after lunch and the clouds moved in again. Eddie had an enormous strike on his popper, which he unfortunately missed and retrieved a very, mangled popper. John had a follow, take and spectacular aerobatic display from a large Barracuda which made his day. My day was made when a large shape appeared, shadowing my stickbait, then suddenly, a larger shape came up at lightning speed under the first and won the race to nail my lure. I was rapt to land a magnificent G.T. which was the icing on the cake for me, especially as I landed it without the rod breaking, maybe I am learning? Sadly the final GT. I hooked gained the sanctuary of a bommie and took my favourite stickbait with it, a green/yellow 140g Orion bigfoot. I hooked almost all of my fish on this lure so had become quite attached to it.

The exciting part about this type of fishing is the visual nature of skipping your popper or stickbait across the surface making great splashes like bait fish, and suddenly seeing a large shape appear behind it and nail it in a great spray of water. You then have to give the rod a strong sharp jerk to set the hook, not as easy as it sounds, the casting and retrieving are bloody hard work and the hook up quite hard to achieve. We missed quite a few G.T. chances, Roger 11 for 4 landed, John 3 for 2 landed and Eddie 2 for 1 landed.

There is talk of a return visit next year, particularly from Eddie, who declares he has unfinished business!!

Trout defended after Dairy Farmer criticism

Scientists are questioning statements made by outgoing Federated Farmers dairy chairman Lachlan McKenzie, likening trout to "the stoats of New Zealand's waterways".

The Kaharoa farmer told the organisation's annual conference in Rotorua dairy farms were not the only problem for New Zealand waterways as trout successfully competed against native fish and overfed on the invertebrates that kept algae levels under control.

It was part of a speech pushing farmers to question accepted truths and speak up about misconceptions that showed dairy farming in a bad light.

Otago University zoology professor Colin Townsend said trout could reduce stream insect grazing, leading to a "modest" increase in algae, but that could be a good thing.

"These extra algae have the effect of sucking up some nitrogen from stream water, so the trout actually make a small contribution to cleaning up the mess caused by nutrient run-off from farms."

But he said any small nutrient changes caused by trout were "swamped" by the nutrients entering streams from the land and by the effects of sediment entering waterways due to erosion by animal movement.

"Unless Lachlan McKenzie has witnessed trout emerging from streams and churning up the land with their big fat hooves, he will find it difficult to shift responsibility from cows to trout."

Waterways Centre for Freshwater Management professor Jenny Webster-Brown said trout were also a good water quality indicator and studying them could help identify problems.



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How to break a rod, and the GT that broke it (below) see back cover for the photo of the trip (New Caledonia) and read the report in this issue.





This photo describes hooking a GT in word picture form. Taken by Eddie Bowman