

ROTORUA ANGLERS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED



Photo by Jim Spiers at Lake Rere Club day trip

October 2011



Above photo's from Piet Otto from the Rere Day trip, see his account inside



Photo's taken on the club day trip to Rerewhakaaitu in August, see reports from Bryan and Piet inside.



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!
- ◆ Calendar of Club events for next 12 mths
- ◆ 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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EXECUTIVE & COMMITTEE 2011/2012 **9999998/99**

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
SECRETARY	Shaun Wyatt	349 6116
TREASURER	Don Stotter	345 9222
CLUB CAPTAIN	TBA	
COMMITTEE	Terry Wood	345 5587
	Peter Finlay	021 2106164
	Manuel Saiz	0274 484171
	Nigel Wilkinson	349 0336
	Bryan Taylor	357 2216
	Piet Otto	350 2200
WEBSITE WEBMASTER	Eddie Bowman	3485652
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Roger Bowden	348 7816
TROPHY MASTER	TBA	
SUB-COMMITTEES (conveners)		
KIDS' FISHOUT	Terry Wood	345 5587
A-Z SCHOOL	Roger Bowden	348 7816
ACTIVITIES (Trips)	TBA	
(Flytying)	Shaun Wyatt	349 6116
SOCIAL	TBA	
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. Our email address is rotoruaanglers@gmail.com

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 — Rotorua Anglers Association AGM — **September 2011.**

When I read of other clubs struggling to exist and altering the constitution to facilitate new ways of attracting new members, I think how lucky the Rotorua Anglers Association is.

Our membership over the past few years has been constantly around 150 members, comprising of many individual as well as family memberships and this year is no exception. We have had three resignations but this has been matched by several new members joining- I am pleased to also report that a few of these have been junior members, who have already contributed to the club by attending and assisting at the kids fish outs this year.

Terry Wood yet again has managed this very important community activity superbly.

Programmes such as this receive tremendous publicity, not only within the Bay of Plenty but also throughout the country. It is for this reason we must thank Terry and all the volunteers for the tremendous efforts that all go into ensuring a fun day for all who attend, I continually enjoy wonderful feedback. A special thanks also to Mark Sherburn and the rest of the Fish and Game team for their continued support and acceptance of the way we run this event.

With the financial difficulties that we have seen around the world and closer to home, the increase in fuel prices and in living costs in general, we have seen a decrease in those attending our farthest trips this year. For the first time during my time with the club, we cancelled the Otomangakau trip this year due to poor numbers. This trip is usually well-attended, and at times attracts spouses as it is a really social trip. With this and others being such great trips we will continue to review the feasibility of long haul trips. You, the membership have spoken via our recent poll, that more local trips are wanted; this will be a focus for me over the next 12 months. Special thanks must go to Neal Hawes for co-ordinating the trips calendar and continuing to contribute in many ways, and to those who coordinated the trips themselves, thank you on behalf of the membership.

And of course you cannot fish without flies — Shaun Wyatt has continued to present a truly professional program with constant communications and images to entice tiers to the fly tying evenings. The demand this year has seen the usual decrease in fly tying evenings to monthly, remain fortnightly- this speaks for itself and for the efforts Shaun and the demonstrators put in. I thank him and the team for the time and skills they continue to share with us all.

Sharing of skills and techniques is an important aspect of our club and one such program continues to do so, the A-Z program. Roger has continued where he left off last year and again has ran a program that continues to get recognition from many of our sister clubs. The personalised approach that Roger brings certainly makes those attending feel most welcome- the time that Roger puts into the program should not be under estimated and from the committee and I, thanks again for helping to keep the club offering something special. This program certainly contributes significantly to the clubs learning and skills, not to mention the financial situation, another way we manage to keep our membership price down.

Roger continues to do great work with the club magazine, and since going to colour a few years ago, we have not looked back. The magazine is in many ways is the face of our club and trials to move it into the electronic era have been tested, the various feedback received has been beneficial and we now have another option to reduce some of the costs to the RAA and to those who may wish to change to electronics in the future. Roger commits huge hours into the magazine to make it what it is, thanks greatly, Roger.

Our Friday nights have remained a focal point of the club. For those of us that have not made it out onto the water for some time- the Fridays go a long way to ensure we are still aware of what happens around the waterways, what fish are caught where, and a great way to end the week.

Fridays will have a little extra entertainment with a recent addition to our arsenal, slideshows of photos you capture on your own or on club trip can now be shown in the background while the usual banter continues. We will show more fishing videos and this now means the A-Z attendees while watching fishing technique videos, no longer need to sit on each other's laps. The committee this last year actively solicited assistance, requested feedback and in many ways, went the extra mile to ensure the club fosters learning and a strong interest in fishing. We have not always agreed on issues or changes, but this I feel is a healthy and very important part of the club. We each aim to represent the various ages, interests and philosophies of our membership, and I thank each of them for contributing in this way, some aim to remain on committee while others will be moving on, I thank you all for an enjoyable past 12 months. And last but not least by any stretch, a very special thanks to Bronwyn, who like myself, has been very busy outside of the club with work and family, but has continued to support me, at times working late into the night to ensure club business was dealt with. I thank you also for remaining as secretary even after a change in working hours and your health issues put more demand on your free time.

Let it be known that thanks to the many programs and events that the Rotorua Anglers Association has been involved with this year, the club has had a very strong year financially, reversing our earlier forecasts. I believe we still need to remain prudent about our spending but feel the committee has left the club in a great position for yet another year. It has been a pleasure serving as president and I will continue to enjoy my time on the executive in the future.

Wade Fleet

PRESIDENTS REPORT

As the busiest time of our year closes for the committee and I, and the crazy season ramps up for us all, I am really looking forward to the lighter and warmer days. It is time to come out of hibernation and dust off your rods and reels, if the interaction with our weigh masters is anything to go by.

Our prize giving this year was lightly attended but considering the rugby and all the other activities, the 36 attendees was a good showing. I trust a pleasant evening was had by all. There were a few categories with no entries this year which opens the door to us all – next time you catch a trout consider a category it may fit into, and enter it with our trophy master. Remember you don't need to kill the fish, capture details and release it unharmed. A special mention to the two new members that also attended the dinner, David Keay and Rosalind Vance, we may see you take a prize next year?

The kids fish out last month was also lightly attended, by both prospective fisherpersons and initially by our team of helpers, but as the numbers of queuing kids fluctuated, so did our team, to make the day quite relaxing and stress free.

The fish were willing participants most of the time- short queues both on and off the trout pool ensured quick catch rates with quite a few large fish caught.

We now break for a month and hold the final fish out in November.

While on the topic of the Ngongotaha fish and game trout hatchery, Mark Sherburn has arranged for the club to assist in their liberation program with an introduction held at Rerewhakaaitu. where 5000 fish are planned to be released. Normally Mark and a few of his team clip and tag large numbers of fish, (in cold water I might add), and then transport them to their final home. This is a great opportunity for those of us that have no idea on what happens to get involved and put something back, and although only small numbers can contribute at a time, if numbers are greater than expected, we can arrange other programs, so do put your hand up.

As this report is written before the AGM, I am not sure if this will be my last report, but needless to say if I am still voted back in for another year, I am looking forward to another great year with some new faces on the committee. I will have a strong focus on getting you all out and fishing or participating in fishing related ventures so keep an eye on your email inbox and on the new notice board in the clubrooms for activities we can all participate in.

Warm regards
Wade Fleet
President RAA

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day;

- ◆ Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.
- ◆ Teach a man to fish and you can sell him enough fishing equipment to fill his garage.
- ◆ Teach a man to fish and unless he likes sushi, you will also have to teach him to cook.

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Re August 2011 A-Z Fly fishing School

“I have always wanted to fly fish but for one reason or another never quite got around to it. However now I have retired to Rotorua it seemed high time I got myself properly sorted to do so. It was my good fortune to purchase our new home from an ex president of the Rotorua Anglers, Grant Oakley, who in the brief time we met strongly recommended that not only should I join the club but that I should get onto an A-Z fly fishing school ASAP. It proved very sound advice. Having just completed the course I must admit to being even more highly motivated to get out on the water as often as possible and put into practice all that was taught. The course was all it was cracked up to be - and more. It was a fascinating learning curve and quite frankly I'm sorry it had to finish. However I have this pipe dream that the launching pad it has given me will hopefully result in one day, having my photo, complete with fish added to that impressive montage displayed on the club house wall. Fingers crossed. Meantime a very big thank you to Roger Bowden and his team for a fantastic course. It has been a privilege and pleasure meeting you all and sharing the course with such a wonderful bunch of people.”

You were an excellent tutor and mentor Roger and I am very grateful for the time that you and those other club members put into teaching us

Kindest regards.....David Keay

(see photo on Back cover)

*I can highly recommend the A to Z fishing course as it was the most rewarding and enjoyable course I think I have ever taken, it was strictly for pleasure and learning. Camaraderie quickly developed with the participants and instructors. The course was comprehensive, covering all basic fly fishing knowledge which was probably just as beneficial to the seasoned fisherman as to the rank amateur. Every thing was provided which for a total beginner who had never had a fishing rod in her hand was a real bonus. The course was packed full of information which was conveyed in a friendly manner. No question was treated as daft and time was taken to ensure the answer was fully understood. The instructors Roger and Peter and other members of the Rotorua anglers club who contributed to the course must have put in long hours of preparation which I am sure was appreciated by all. The course fee was excellent and I doubt if better value for money for a fishing course could be got anywhere else in the country. It is of little surprise to me that the A to Z is usually booked out well in advance. As a result of attending the course I am very interested in, maybe even enthusiastic about fly fishing. I have yet to catch a trout but I am confident that will come sometime after I get a rod and a fishing license.
Rosalind Vance*

Dear Roger,

A HUGE thank you for your sharing of your knowledge of fly fishing, trout and fly tying. I have always regarded fly fishing a graceful art, which also allows one to take in scenic landscapes.

It was far better to learn from your course rather than “tag along” with another fisherman which sometimes ends up with frustration and fewer invites.

I found your instructions and tutoring very comforting as you were very patient.

Yours Sincerely, Michael Bester

Lake Rerewhaaitu Club day trip report. Sunday August 21st

The August club trip to Rere was a day trip meeting at the Lake at 9 am. Because of the high level of the lake we decided to base the fishing at the Domain at Rerewhakaaitu, mainly because it could accommodate several shore based anglers, and also has good boat launching facilities.

The day started out frosty but fine with very light winds. Twenty anglers turned up and I thought it was going to be tough fishing, but we managed to catch 18 fish between us. I have to say it was the shore based anglers who did better than the boaties. I was pleased to see the less experienced anglers looking for tips and ideas from the more experienced.

All in all a very pleasant day on the water.

I hope everyone enjoyed it!

Convener Bryan Taylor.

Lake Rerewhakaaitu Club Day Trip Sunday August 21st

Thought I could share some news from Sunday.

I fished from the shore. It was white with frost, and extremely cold. Icy grass cracked underfoot. I fish mainly at night, in all kinds of weather, but this is the coldest I have been. After the first cast, I did a slow retrieve. At some point my line got stuck. I investigated the rod, and found that the wet line had frozen into the front eye, it was so cold. This is my first experience of this. A cyclist who came by and stopped for a chat, said he had experienced this too. I eventually got a hen of 400mm and 1kg, followed by a jack of 500mm and 1.5kg. Their stomach contents were: a small trout, dragonfly midges, and two honey bees, obviously picked off the surface.

Unfortunately I missed the other fellows, as I went home earlier. I had a cast at Okaro on the way, had a good strike, but missed him.

Piet Otto (see photo's inside front cover)

Schedule of Events – October 2011

<u>7th</u>	First day of school term 4
<u>11th</u>	Committee meeting 7 pm. (New committee)
<u>12th</u>	Full Moon
<u>14th</u>	First BBQ of new season at Clubrooms. All welcome.
<u>16th</u>	Lake Rotoehu club Day trip (Peter West)
<u>17th</u>	Flytying 7pm. (Shaun Wyatt)
<u>19th</u>	O'Keefes Flycasting with Rene Vaz 5 pm.
<u>20th</u>	Newsletter cut off.
<u>27th</u>	New Moon
<u>28th</u>	Bring and Buy (Neville Robinson ph 3456683)
<u>Friday Nights</u>	Club nights 5pm– 7pm. All welcome

PLEASE NOTE A CHANGE OF DATE FOR THE LAKE ROTORUA DAY TRIP FROM 20TH NOVEMBER TO 27TH NOVEMBER AS IT CLASHED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Kids Fishout report for 11th September.

Not anything like the usual turn out for past September's kids fish out's. Perhaps we can blame the rugby and the poor weather forecast that was predicted, and yes there was rain , sometimes heavy. Approximately 124 children attended, some came back to have another go. The club s volunteers were very low in attendance when we first kicked off ,and yet somehow we got though as the day progressed. Our tutors matched the needs as the young ones moved through the steps for catching a fish. Thank you one and all, especially the folk who came from outside the district to help. The children loved to see the weight of their fish on the white board that the Winn family have presented and displayed .

The Next fish out date is Sunday 13th November and it is the final one for the year. The schedules for 2012 have a slight change of dates to coordinate with the schools term holiday breaks. thanks again everyone,
cheers Woody

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.

XMAS RAFFLE TICKETS ARE NOW AVAILABLE

The very good prize is illustrated below, this has been generously donated by our members. It features a TCA. 9 foot # 8 weight 2 piece fly rod, complete with a fully lined rod tube. It is teamed up with a TCA. wide arbour, disc drag reel spooled with a Scientific anglers # 9 weight floating fly line and a neoprene reel bag. There is also a crafted wooden net to complete this classy outfit, which is ideal for the Rotorua area. 2nd and 3rd prizes are meat packs.

The tickets will be available at the clubrooms on Friday nights. Also if you can help with selling books please contact organiser Roger Bowden on 348 7816.



O'Keefes Anglers Depot and Manic tackle with Airflo and Lamson Reels, will present a Flycasting day 19th October 5.00pm at RAA Clubrooms.

- Flyrods and Reels to try.
- New products and SPECIALS on the day.

10% Discount with RAA membership card.
Check out the website for Fish of the month competition



Darryn and Janine Simpson

1113 Eruera Street, Rotorua, New Zealand
Telephone (07) 346 0178 Facsimile (07) 346 0178
Email: okeefesfishnz@xtra.co.nz

Committee Meeting



September

Matters arising

- Reid and Reynolds completed valuation inspection — awaiting the report
- TV purchased, Terry to arrange for Wall hanging.
- Geyslerland did not have a juniors rate for Prize giving, Wade set Junior price at \$15 following a discussion with some members and some committee — need to encourage juniors to attend if we can.

Building. Terry Wood

- a) Power point behind TV was the fuse- now operational.
- b) 42 inch Plasma TV purchased.
- c) Notice board been added to building
- d) Pictures/photos to be mounted on the middle beam facing front door

Flytying. Shaun Wyatt

Rainbow Springs open day attended by three members. Donation made to Club.

Dates for tying nights have changed and are different to calendar.

Kids Fish-out. Terry Wood

Report gone to magazine, 124 people through the gate, Low numbers of volunteers
1 more to go in November

Suggestion, - Charlotte W. happy to show people how to cook trout.

Library. Nigel Wilkinson

Stock take done of books. Archive questioned where is this kept, could be a project for incoming committee

Social

Eastern rises movie Friday 9th attendance was light, Rugby was also on, movie can run again if demand is there for it.

Potluck dinner well attended and enjoyed.

FISH OF THE MONTH Quentin Botha 4.46 kg. Brown from L Rotorua.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH Girl with fish taken by Larry Ware

Need new sponsor for Photo competition, decided that club would pay for it this year, Larry approaching a possible new sponsor for next year.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT A warm welcome to New Member: Jabel Martin (junior)

Fish Smoker was won by Gerry Neale in the paid up members before 31st July draw.

Out of Town Club Trips

As has been mentioned several times this next season we are going to try organising our 'Out of Town' Trips a little differently.

Over the past 2-3 seasons both the Mohaka and Manganui a Te Ao trips have been cancelled due to heavy rain and flooding. To hopefully get around this I have proposed we make these away trips a "floating date", that is we do not pre-book the accommodation but by keeping in contact with the Hosts, we book only 1-2 weeks out instead.

This would require us to have an up to date list of members who can go on short notice either on the weekend and/or during the week, there is no reason why we could not have two trips to each place if we get the numbers – ideally a minimum of 8, the TukiTuki can accommodate over 20. Generally the cost is approx. \$25.00 per night, (and we stay 2 nights) - plus food and transport. We would like there to be at least 2 people in each vehicle so that travel and food costs are shared.

I will be putting up a list on the notice board and would like all those who are reasonably positive they would/could go on these trips to give me all their contact details (or email me) so I can then start contacting the venues. If you have other locations with accommodation for at least 8 that you are familiar with where we could go as well, please let me know. These away trips are an extra bonus on top of the trips already on the calendar.

Larry Ware larry@artcity.co.nz work- 349 4794, home- 348 0388

Skill at the river side, lake edge or fly tying table, never came, nor ever will come to us, by any road, other than of practice.

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TROPHY MASTERS REPORT

FISH OF THE MONTH FOR August was Quentin Botha with a 4.46 kg Brown caught trolling in Lake Rotorua., c/f 38.9. (see photo below)

Quentin 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.



Sponsors of 'Trout of the Month'

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10% RAA member discount with membership card



Young Alice Mackintosh with her prize winning fish
Grand daughter of Don and Judy Stotter

ROTORUA ANGLERS ASSOCIATION
CUPS, TROPHIES AND AWARDS FOR 2010/2011

HAMMILS SPORTS LTD TROPHY – Heaviest Rainbow trout.

Ian Henderson 5.3 kg. L Okataina

JACK ENGLAND CUP – Heaviest Brown Trout **Quentin Botha 4.46 kg.**

BEAMISH-WHITE TROPHY AND HONOURS BOARD – Best condition factor Rainbow trout caught by any method. **Eddie Bowman 91.65 c/f**

DAVE ELLERY TROPHY – Best condition factor Brown trout

Nigel Wilkinson 55 c/f

CES TAYLOR CUP – Highest aggregate condition factor for bag of 4 trout caught on 1 day. **Neal Hawes 48.4 c/f**

O'KEEFES CUP – Heaviest trout caught on a club trip.

Joe Fleet 3.85kg. Brown Haumurana trip

WESTPAC TROPHY – Heaviest trout caught out of the district and not on a club trip. **Neal Hawes 3.3 kg. L Otamangakau**

RICHARD RANDALL MEMORIAL TROPHY—Heaviest Trout caught by a lady. **Carol Payne 2.9 kg. rainbow L Tarawera**

DOUG LYNCH MEMORIAL TROPHY – Best condition factor trout caught by a lady. **Jude Dawson 60.68 c/f**

KILWELL PRIZE – Heaviest trout caught by a junior.

Jessie Whitehead 2.6 kg.

HONEY MCGREGOR TROPHY – Best condition factor Rainbow trout caught by a junior. **Jessie Whitehead 44.6 c/f**

GERRY WATT MEMORIAL TROPHY – Best condition factor Brown trout caught by a junior. **Alice Mackintosh** (see photo above)

BAS JACKSON MEMORIAL TROPHY – Best Newsletter Article.

Ron Cole Rotoehu Trip December 2010 Magazine.

KEN NAIRN MEMORIAL TROPHY—Heaviest trout caught on 1 kg. line

No entries

PHOTO AWARD Best all round fishing photo. **Eddie Bowman**

IDLE HOUR BOOKS AWARD Closest average c/f. **Rod Ingram**

Don't go near the water. By Chris Currie

This is a brief account of a trip I had to Northern Cairns fishing for Barramundi. My son Marcus lives in Cairns and like myself loves hunting and fishing. He rang me in May suggesting I come over in June to go fishing for Barramundi in the Lakefield National park; about 6 hours drive north and inland from Cairns. We would be fishing the Normandy River and headwaters of the Merritt River. After much preparation and my insisting I get some knee high gaiters as a form of protection against snake bites, having had a close encounter on a previous trip, we set off at 5am on the 21st June. There are signs all along the highway warning to lookout for cattle grazing on the side of the road, and they are not kidding, hit one of the bulls and you would come to a very sudden stop. Wild pigs also feature. When we left the highway there was a two-hour drive on a typical dry dusty outback-Australian road. Along the way we saw more cattle, pigs, goanna's and the odd snake, dead and alive. We stopped and photographed a large Carpet Python crossing the road. November the previous year they had a pig cull, 3,000 pigs in a month, the cattle are being rounded up and sold. Both cause extensive damage throughout the park. The country throughout the park and along the way north is the same, tall grass, small gum trees and flat, flat, flat, if there is wetland or good water courses then you get variations in the vegetations and a lot more wild life.

We arrived around 11am and set-up camp on a spot by the Merritt River. The one instruction Marcus gave me was "don't go near the waters edge, as far as a Croc is concerned a good Kiwi is as good for lunch as a pig or any other wild life" With no specific plan in mind we just started fishing in the water directly down the bank from the camp. First cast Marcus had a small Barramundi, second cast another one, third cast, fourth cast and on it went. I hadn't been spin fishing for awhile so it took me a couple of cast to sort out the tree's from the water, once I did then it was all go, the water was jam packed with fish. Most were small, 1 to 2 kgs with the odd 3kg fish. Takeable fish have to be over 58cm which weighs in about 3.5kg. As we moved up river we saw evidence where we had disturbed a small croc so we knew one was in the water we were fishing, probably the very same hole we had stopped at. We fished it for some time and took a lot of fish out of it. For some reason Croc's and big Barramundi can co-exist in the same water, but no doubt the odd Barra becomes lunch. Towards the end of the afternoon Marcus caught a "taker" so dinner was sorted. By 5 o'clock we were all fished out. We reckoned we had landed between 25 to 30 fish and had hits and hook-ups on twice as many. I had also been reminded numerous times during the day to stay away from the waters edge.

During the day the landscape can be rather harsh, dry and repetitive. However in the evening and morning lights it takes on a completely different look, very picturesque and restful. With a scotch in hand and reflecting on a wonderful days fishing with my son, at that moment in time there was nowhere else in the world I would rather be. The next morning dawned bright and beautiful so we set off for a dose of the same as yesterday and that is exactly what we got, fish after fish

. Big Barra hit hard and fight hard, not for long but it is fast and furious. Any weakness in your gear and you will pay the price.

The previous day I had got a tangle so cut the braid and retied it with what I thought was a good solid knot. Not so, I hit a big Barra and it all parted company. After catching 10 to 15 small to medium fish we decided to try some different water so we headed off to fish down river in the bigger flow of water. Where we had been fishing was quite, in places narrow and slow moving water, here it was quicker and difficult to get to a lot of the water. We were casting as far across the river as we could, the locals do the same but they also fish under the trees along the riverbank using big metal lures on 15 to 20 kg braid and nylon. You have to use Heavy nylon traces otherwise the sharp teeth and gills wear it out in no time. We used a combination of soft baits and popper lures, using poppers was really exciting, Barra's would come from out nowhere and just smash them. We tried all different parts of the river, walked through scrub and long grass, fished through gaps in the trees just working the lures right by the bank, you would think it was a waste of time then out of nowhere a Barra would hammer the lure. We didn't see too many locals when we were fishing these parts of the river, I think they thought we were plain nuts. We certainly kept a very close eye out for "local" wild life, never actually saw any. By the end of the day we had covered a lot of river on both the Merritt and Normandy, caught about 25 fish along with numerous strikes and hook-ups.

On the third day we decide to go right up to the headwaters of the creek we were camped by. It turned out to be a most interesting morning, the course and outlook of the river changed as you rounded the next bend, the fish appeared to be in schools, when we struck them it was all on. Not big fish but a lot of sport. We got a reminder of the presence of croc's when we came across a number of mounds the females bury their eggs in. Little wonder we weren't seeing the presence of any other fisherman, I was being constantly reminded why you stay away from the waters edge. About 12 we headed back to camp most satisfied with the mornings fishing, 15 to 20 fish. That afternoon we decided to fish a stretch where Marcus had hooked some good fish the day before. I started in a hole right beside a popular camping spot. By now I was starting to work out how to get the bigger Barramundi, let the soft bait sink right to the bottom then quickly lift it off. After about 45 minutes and 10 barra's later I hit the big one, 63cm, what a thrill, had to drag it up a steep bank so I could release it. Couple of casts later and I got another one, not as big but still a taker. Here I could get down to the waters edge to release it, so shot down the bank quickly took the hook out, released the fish, got the line sorted then turned around to look at the river, took a second look and thought I don't remember that log being there, and what's that silver streak along the front side. At that point I thought I had better view this from higher up the bank, shot up the bank and when I looked back there was this croc lying just below the surface looking straight at me, the silver streak was the barramundi in it's mouth. Had I not thrown it back in I am quite certain I would have been it's next meal. At that point I broke out in a cold sweat and felt quite ill.

That croc had been lying in the hole I was fishing for over an hour watching me and waiting for just the right moment. When they say don't go down to the waters edge, they mean it. If you do sooner or later your number will come up.

However being the "mad" keen fisherman I am, once I composed myself I started fishing the hole again and caught a fish on the next cast and quite a few after that. I continued to fish there and the water just above it for another 45 minutes and never saw the croc again. We went back the next morning and caught several more takers and a lot of others, we never saw the croc but it was there, just waiting for another chance.

After 4 days we had fished our-selves to a stand still, caught around 100 barramundi, 5 of them takers. We had had a great experience and it was wonderful to be able to spend that one on one time with my son. As we were packing up Marcus nearly grabbed a handful of a huntsman spider which had decided to take up residence in one of the tent flaps. A stark reminder once again you have to be so careful out there; but I would happily do it all again. Next time we will try one of the lakes where the barra grow to over a meter long.



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