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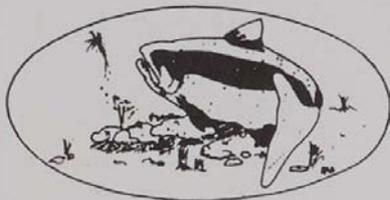
# TARGET TAUPO

A Newsletter for Hunters and Anglers in the Taupo Area



CONSERVATION

# SPORTING LIFE 86



## FISHING OUTFITTERS

The complete Fly Fishing Shop, specialising in outfitting you for the Tongariro and Taupo lakes and rivers.

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### Contact

**Taupo:** Phone Shamus (074) 42-816 Pilot or write to "Heli-Sika", Poronui, R.D. 3, Taupo, New Zealand.

**Auckland:** Phone Garth (09) 653-103 or Greg (09) 537-1231 or write to: P.O. Box 51-482, Pakuranga, New Zealand.



# TARGET TAUPO

**A Newsletter for Hunters and Anglers in the Taupo Area**

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July 1989



## CONSERVATION

*DEAR SPORTSPEOPLE,*

Taupo is in the centre of a sporting paradise. The trout fishery is world renowned, the deer hunting especially the sika herd is of national significance and the game bird resource is of regional significance. The Department of Conservation is privileged to manage these resources on behalf of the sportspeople who in this area currently number over 70,000 per annum.

In order to encourage good communication with all hunters and anglers in this district we have decided to produce this publication for you. Every four months we will bring you a range of information items which we hope will increase your interest and awareness of the opportunities that your impressive resource offers.

It is not the intention to compete with any of the angling or hunting magazines. The intention is to complement them by providing you with a variety of information specifically relating to the sporting opportunities that exist on the lake, its tributaries and in the Kaimanawas.

Editors Glenn Maclean and Cam Speedy are part of our team of key field managers responsible for the day-to-day management of the natural resource. Their practical experience and knowledge will, I believe, produce a publication of most interest to the active sports people. Discussion on the management of the resources will hopefully stimulate healthy debate on significant issues and this will lead to better decisions on future use.

Feedback on the approach and contents is essential in order to ensure the editors are lively and enthusiastic in their presentation. I hope you will supply this stimulation and that you find the publication interesting and helpful.

Good fishing and hunting.

KEVIN O'CONNOR  
DISTRICT CONSERVATOR – TAUPO

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## THE NYMPH FISHING ISSUE

In the 1970's keen anglers began to realise that upstream nymph fishing was a highly effective way of taking trout which had entered the Taupo rivers to spawn during winter. Initially the method of fishing was as practised on many New Zealand streams using small lightly weighted nymphs and carefully watching the end of the flyline to detect the take. Anglers soon discovered though that greater success could be had by using heavier weighted nymphs and in the turbulent waters of the Tongariro river, pieces of peacock quill, then polystyrene or wool, attached to the flyline-leader join made seeing the strike much easier.

In the continual quest for a more successful technique which intrigues most anglers, flyfishers experimented further with strike indicators made of many different materials and tried all sorts of different rigs. The extreme has been the development of rigs involving nymphs so heavily weighted that the end of the flyline pulls under unless supported by several polystyrene balls and which can only be fished by roll casting repeatedly.

In 1985 the Taupo Ward of the Central North Island Wildlife Conservancy Council first questioned whether some of the practices were no longer flyfishing but float fishing and not in the 'spirit' of the fishery. Over the next two years the concerns arose repeatedly, culminating in late 1987 with a paper by four prominent Taupo anglers who were all involved in the introduction of nymph fishing to the Taupo area. This paper called for 'restoration of traditional flyfishing methods and values to fly-only waters .... by revising the regulations accordingly' and was endorsed by the ward. The ward, who have a statutory responsibility to act as the anglers' representatives, called upon the department to investigate.

Less than 15 percent of anglers fishing at Taupo belong to angling clubs and the department sought to determine whether what the ward and constituent clubs were saying reflected what the majority of anglers felt. A small river-bank survey was carried out during the winter of 1988 and the results of this and comments made to staff during the annual Tongariro angling survey and elsewhere, showed that some current practices were causing concern to anglers.

Fisheries managers had to consider two issues when debating current nymphing practices.

- (1) Was the practice detrimental to the biological well-being of the fishery?
- (2) Did the practice detract from the experience the fishery should offer?

The response to the first question was NO. Managers believe that many more trout run up the rivers to spawn than are actually required to produce the maximum recruitment of fingerlings into the population the following year. Surplus fish may in fact reduce spawning success through redd superimposition, by interfering with spawning fish on the redds, or by inducing density dependent mortality amongst juveniles. The major advantage of such large runs of fish into the rivers is to provide angling opportunities.

Question two is far more difficult to answer. Traditionally anglers have adopted an attitude towards trout fishing which is a legacy of the 'purist' ideals developed in Britain over the past several centuries. Many of the same ideals still exist within the Taupo fishery yet many things differ from the situation in Europe and other anglers have adopted less conservative approaches towards trout fishing.

However, the underlying principle on which anglers share common ground is that Lake Taupo is a recreational fishery. The way in which the fish are caught is as important as the number or size of fish caught. Indeed, most anglers fishing at Taupo feel there is something special about catching a trout. For whatever reason this quality is a personal thing and for many anglers that they might catch more trout under different circumstances holds little attraction if this quality is compromised.

Existing regulations are written with the intent that at present flyfishing only be permitted on most rivers and at river mouths. That the rivers be restricted to fly only appears to be accepted by almost all anglers. Thus the questions become: what is accepted as flyfishing and are some of the current practices inconsistent with flyfishing?

Obviously anglers' interpretations of flyfishing will vary and no one definition will satisfy all anglers. Managers feel the definition should strike a balance between the desires of 'traditional' flyfishers and the sentiment that it should be possible for the majority of anglers to have a realistic chance of catching a fish.

We think a useful **working** definition of flyfishing at **Taupo** is: "The practice of fishing for trout using traditional fly casting techniques with a flyrod, reel, flyline and leader to fish flies which are either imitations of natural food or incite an aggressive response. These flies may either be presented downstream or allowed to drift naturally without additional weight or buoyancy other than that provided by the line or by the fly."

Applying this definition, the use of size 8 hooks onto which as much lead as possible is wound solely to act as a sinker is not 'flyfishing'. Neither is the use of a float which is necessary to support the end of the flyline when using such weights.

We considered the options which had been suggested by anglers with the intention of preventing the use of sinkers and floats but not restricting bona fide flyfishing methods. Any changes to the regulations had also to be readily enforceable.

A summary of the options considered:

**Retain the status quo.** This does not address the concerns which had been raised.

**Weighted nymphs restricted to size 10 or smaller.** A reduction to a maximum weighted hook size of 10 3XL would at least reduce the size of sinker which could be used. However, those anglers who had previously used size 8 hooks quite properly could still with a little care tie the same pattern and amount of weight on a size 10.

**Only one weighted nymph per leader.** Already adopted by many anglers, a disadvantage of this suggestion is that it would prevent anglers using as a second nymph many of the traditional and new patterns which incorporate the tying of wire into the body or as a wire rib, e.g. a size 14 pheasant tail nymph.

**Restrict the maximum weight of a nymph.** This achieves the desired result but practically is unenforceable.

**No weighted nymphs.** For waters such as the Tongariro this would make a mockery of the nymph fishing technique. The idea that using weighted nymphs is any less ethical than some wet fly practices is snobbery.

**Wool or yarn indicators only.** As strike indicators, these are among the most visible yet have little effect on ease of casting. However, woollen indicators will add little if any buoyancy to the end of the flyline preventing the use of large heavily weighted nymphs as sinkers.

**No strike indicators allowed.** Strike indicators are frequently superfluous when fishing small streams but an indicator ban would make it difficult to see the end of the flyline and so detect the take in the turbulent waters of the Tongariro. This would hardly affect the more experienced anglers but would make it far harder for novices or those of poor eyesight to catch fish. It addresses the concerns raised but its restriction of angling opportunity would be greater than desired.

**Limits on the areas which could be fished by each method.** Such segregation would probably alleviate some of the conflict between exponents of the two methods but does not solve any of the problems raised.

The consequence of this discussion was that fishery managers felt changes should be made to curb some nymphing practices which were not compatible with the spirit of flyfishing or the intention of the existing regulations. Such changes need not affect the anglers' ability to catch trout but should encourage a return to the art of flyfishing.

The department recommended to the ward:

1. A restriction limiting strike indicators to wool or yarn only.
2. A return to a maximum hook size for weighted nymphs of 10 3XL.

These recommendations were accepted by the ward and its member clubs with the proviso that the maximum weighted hook size be further reduced to 10 2XL. The department agreed to this reduction.

The discussion paper was also circulated to several other angling clubs, sports stores, local newspapers and interested anglers. The response has been overwhelmingly favourable, although we recognise that there are a group of anglers who feel the regulations are too restrictive and another group who feel we have not gone far enough. We are aware other groups would have liked an opportunity to comment which is in part why this magazine has been created to serve as a vehicle for similar discussions in the future.

In wording the proposed regulation changes to the maximum size of weighted hook, it was evident that no-one could define what the Redditch scale actually was. Reference to this scale was dropped and the maximum size of weighted hook defined as having a horizontal shank length of 17mm (including the bend but not the eye of the hook) and gap of 5.5mm. This compares to the existing dimensions of shank length 20mm and gap 7mm. There may well be particular makes of 'size 8' hooks which with a little manipulation fit within these dimensions.

Using 'Mustad' hooks, the most popular brand of hooks sold in Taupo, a type 9671 size 10 would be legal but a type 9672 size 10 would not. Neither style in size 8 would be legal.

A strike indicator would include any synthetic or natural yarn but not any other object or material attached to the line or cast except for colour dyes and line floatant preparations.

It was hoped that these regulations would be in effect for the start of the 1989-90 fishing season. However, this has not been possible and the regulations will NOT change before JULY 1 1990.



*The aim: an angler enjoying their Taupo experience.*

## GUEST EDITORIAL

Your licence buys you a lot more than the right to fish the fabled waters of Taupo. A whole season licence – fish or game – in particular gives you a voice in the management of this world class fishery and the game bird areas.

Since the mid 1970s, first on a trial basis and then confirmed by regulation, the fishery has been managed by the Wildlife Service and, more recently, by the Department of Conservation (D.O.C.) in partnership with anglers and game bird hunters.

The sportsperson's voice is co-ordinated through the Central North Island Wildlife Conservancy Council, a body charged with advising the Minister of Conservation on issues big and small relating to trout and game birds, and their habitat.

At the heart of the council's business are the licence holders. Grassroots opinion is important to the council, as it is from the anglers and shooters that most policies and improvements develop.

The council's territory extends (north-south) from Tokoroa to Waiouru and (east-west) from Raetihi to Wairoa and the East Coast.

In general terms the council is responsible for the interests of some 100,000 anglers and shooters who buy either Taupo or Rotorua fishing licences or game licences to fish and shoot within the conservancy.

That is a lot of licence holders, and their voice can be a powerful one.

To ensure fair and equal representation within the conservancy, the council has four wards – Waimarino, Taupo, Rotorua and Gisborne – East Coast. Each provides two representatives elected by their peers and confirmed at the council annual meeting.

The council sets policy and deals with political matters at the highest level.

The spade work for the policy setting is done at Ward meetings. Within these forums licence holder representatives put forward ideas which are discussed with the fish and game experts within the D.O.C. Some proposals can be dealt with simply, others require detailed investigation and reports before decisions or recommendations can be made.

The big issues are referred to the council for further debate, endorsement and action.

The strength of the Wards, and ultimately, the council lies in the rod and gun clubs. They supply the Ward members, and this is where the licence holders come in.

As a licence holder you can have a say in management matters, either by joining a club or getting in touch with a club and voicing your concern or idea.

It is a simple system but it works, and it's democratic too.

Your licence gives you the right to hunt or fish and, at the same time, offers you the opportunity to improve your sport.

The system is well proven, and your input is valued. Get in touch with a club member today. Better still, join a club.

Taupo members of the conservancy council are Mike Fletcher (home phone number 074-87505) and John Davis (074-82303).

**BY MIKE FLETCHER, CHAIRMAN – TAUPO WARD OF THE CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY COUNCIL**

## AUTUMN 1989 – “THE ROAR”

An Indian summer, spasmodic roaring activity, a lot of hunters, but plenty of deer, seem to have been the major features of the roar at Taupo this year.

2417 hunters obtained permits for Taupo District under the new 4-month district permit system, and combined with hunters on the private blocks, and in Kaweka Forest Park, it appears that the Sika especially were under as much pressure as ever this year.

As at 21/06/89, 549 returns had been received (22% of permits issued), recording in excess of 2700 man days hunting, and the harvesting of 527 animals (357 Sika, 161 Red and 9 pigs).

41% of diaries recorded at least one kill over the permit period showing that the animals were certainly there for the taking.

The earliest reported Sika “roars” were as early as 19/03/89 in the Waipakihi Valley, with occasional roars in the RHA over Easter which fell in late March this year. The characteristic “hee-haw” was still being heard along the Desert Road as late as 20/05/89. The Reds were going strong if not a little irregularly by April Fool’s along the Umukarikari Range, and in the head waters of the Waimarino River in mid-April one hunter reported “the best roaring activity he’s heard anywhere for years”.

The Reds certainly seemed to bounce back this year being the dominant species at high altitudes, especially on and around the “Tops” of the central Kaimanawas. The heads weren’t much but there were plenty of them. It is possible that population expansion from a very small gene pool has resulted in inbreeding but a lot of the animals are probably still young and next year may prove better for red trophies. Top gun took 12 animals for the four months. 7 Red and 5 Sika. A fine effort from a very regular New Plymouth hunter who obviously knows the spots in the Waipakihi Valley.

The winners of the Diary Prize Draw are as follows:

1st Prize of \$150.00 discount on air transport with Air Charter Taupo – A. Hartley of Ashhurst.

2nd Prize of \$100.00 worth of sporting goods from The Fly and Gun Shop Taupo – A. Scott of Turangi.

3rd Prize of ½ day’s guided fishing with Tongariro Guide Services Turangi – D. Bray of Kohimarama, Auckland.

Congratulations people, and thanks to everyone who responded to the hunting diary system. The animal management data received is invaluable, not to mention the information on protected species. We now have new records for kiwi, native bats, *Powelliphanta* snails, and blue ducks, as well as useful comments regarding track and facility conditions. The general conservation awareness among hunters is very encouraging.

Most of the negative comments on diaries were not about the lack of deer, but rather the vast number of people hunting them. We are very aware of overcrowding during the roar and are presently looking very closely at ways of addressing the issue.

The grubby individuals amongst you also came in for considerable flak from the many hunters who don't appreciate discarded rubbish in the natural environment of their hunting areas. We are doing our bit to try and relieve the chronic rubbish situation – but we need the support of ALL the users as well. TAKEITHOME PLEASE!

94 Deer Jaws were submitted for analysis from the RHA over the Jan – May period (including 7 x 8pt stags and 1 x 9pt). Some of you have the results and the rest will follow soon. Many thanks to those who made the effort. The number of young jaws was high, and the size of some of the jaws from mature animals was very impressive. These facts highlight the pressure the herd as a whole is under in the RHA, also the quality of the habitat in which it lives.

Overleaf is a graph showing the age distribution of 120 sika deer harvested from the RHA in 1988. The herd still shows a very healthy structure with 59.2% of animals harvested less than 4 years old. In 1987, 60.9% of animals harvested were less than 4 years old.

The sex ratios of the jaw sample for 1987 and 1988 were 1.23 males : female and 1.22 males : female respectively.

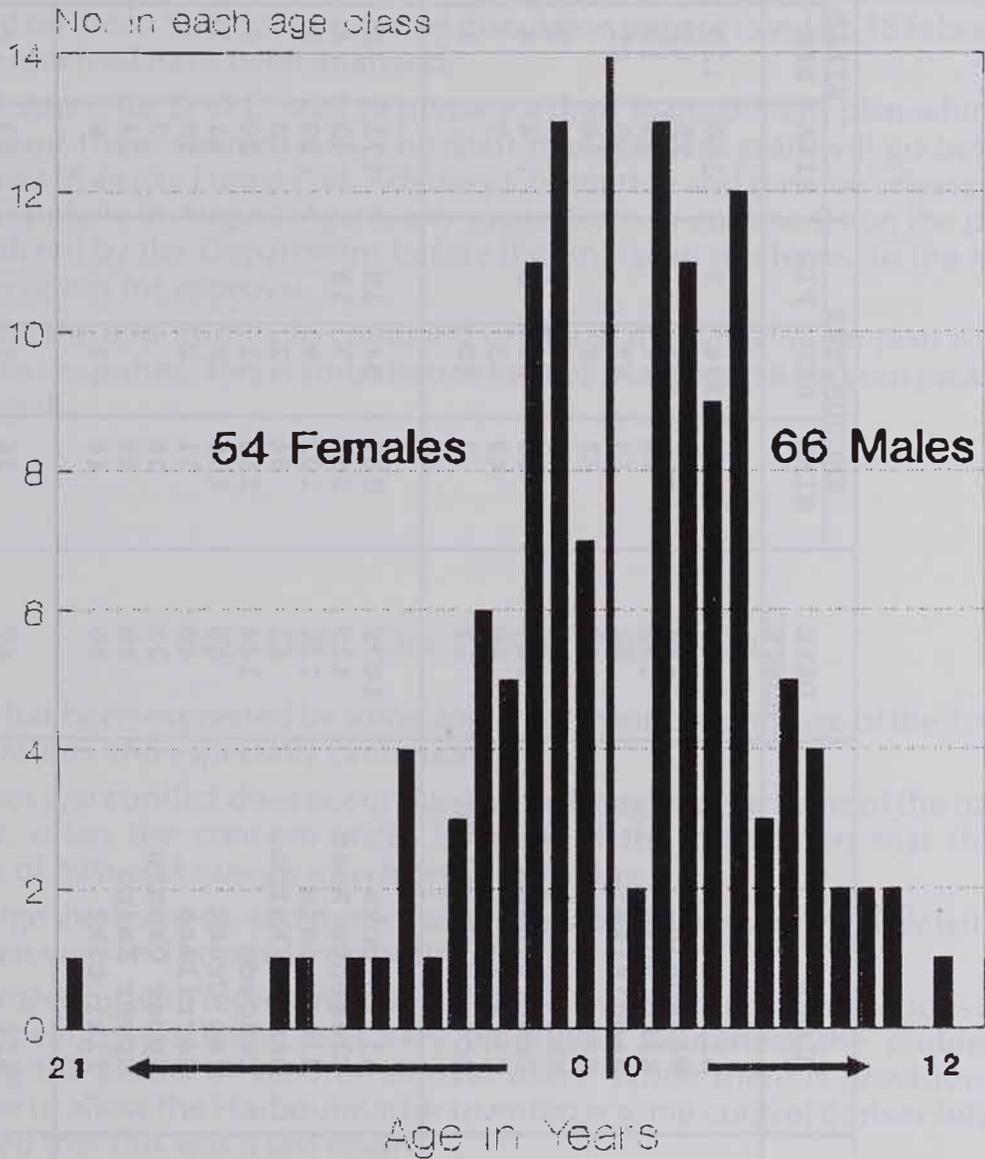
These figures combined with the hunter harvest data over the past 5 years suggest a stable population and hence, that recreational hunting alone is maintaining deer numbers at their present level within the Kaimanawa RHA.



*One of the better sika heads to come out of the Kaimanawa Ranges over the 1989 "roar". The heavy timber is typical of sika stags in the north-western catchments.*

# KAIMANAWA RHA

## Sample of Sika Harvest 1988



TAUPO DISTRICT - RECREATIONAL HUNTING SUMMARY  
 JANUARY - MAY 1989

AREA	BLOCK	DAYS HUNTED	ENCOUNTERS				KILLS			DAYS/ ENCOUNTER	DAYS/ KILL
			SIKA	RED	PIG	SIKA	RED	PIG			
Kaimanawa Forest Park	All Blocks	1197	449	324	3	120	125	2	1.5	4.8	
	Waipakihi	324	157	151		28	42		1.0	4.6	
	Kiko Road	132	96	37		23	13		1.0	3.7	
	Rangitikei	84	43	67		8	21		.75	2.9	
	Ngaruroro	87	62	8		18			1.2	4.8	
	Whitikau/Waiotaka	24	2	17	1	4	7	1	1.2	3.4	
	Desert Road	107	35	28	2	4	4	1	1.6	11.8	
	Tiraki	49	42	2		7			1.1	7.0	
	Access Corridor	11	7	10			1		.6	11.0	
	Kaimanawa Recreational Hunting Area	All Blocks	1072	867	54	18	171	19	3	1.1	5.5
		Clements Road	429	266	7	18	42	4	3	1.5	8.7
Hinemaiaia		111	102	9		22	2		1.0	4.6	
Oamaru/Kaipo		61	64	2		18			.9	3.4	
Cascade		144	113	21		20	9		1.0	5.0	
Jap Creek		65	105	9		11	1		.6	5.9	
Merrilees		46	31	2		10			1.4	2.8	
Upper Oamaru		33	36			7			.9	4.7	
Upper Kaipo		88	68			24			1.3	3.7	
Tiki tiki		50	46	2		9			1.0	5.5	
Rangitaiki	All	67	36	7		13	4		1.5	3.9	
Lake Reserves	All	8		2	2						

## **BITZ 'N' PIECES**

### *KAIMANAWA FOREST PARK'S MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW*

The existing management plan for Kaimanawa Forest Park is currently being reviewed.

The management plan is a legal document which sets out policies for management of the park and all activities which take place within it, and is current for a period of 10 years.

In November 1988, as a first step in the review exercise, a discussion paper was released outlining the major issues affecting users of the park and seeking public comment on these. Submissions on the discussion paper closed on 15 February and all those received have been analysed.

The next step is for D.O.C. staff to prepare a draft management plan which takes into account those submissions. The draft management plan will go before the Kaimanawa/Kaweka Forest Park Advisory Committee and then be released to the public, hopefully in August. Again, any suggestions or comments on the plan will be considered by the Department before the final plan is referred to the Minister of Conservation for approval.

Please take the opportunity to comment on the draft management plan when it is released to the public. This is your chance to have a say about how *your* park should be managed.

### *BOATING ON THE TONGARIRO*

Concern has been expressed by some anglers at the increasing use of the Tongariro River by rafters and especially canoeists.

Sometimes real conflict does occur due to the thoughtless actions of the paddlers. However, often the concern arises because of the perception that the mere presence of rafts and canoes interferes with fishing.

By and large this is not so, and there is scope for anglers to share the river with other users given care and goodwill on both sides.

A recent meeting with representatives of commercial rafting organisations and the N.Z. Canoeing Association was very helpful in examining the problem and explaining the points of view of all river users. While there is provision in the legislation to allow the Harbourmaster to enforce some control of river boating, it was agreed that this was a last resort.

Commercial rafting organisations presently restrict their operations largely to the upper Tongariro, from the Poutu intake down to the Blue Pool. Very rarely do they run the quieter reaches below Blue Pool, and then mostly with elderly, disabled or young passengers (they are prohibited from taking people 13 or under on the upper river). They are happy to further restrict their use of the middle reaches during the peak fishing season.

Canoeists, who are mostly private individuals, have agreed through their association, to discourage their activity below Blue Pool from June to August inclusive. They will also publicise this in their newsletters and magazines.

The Harbourmaster will erect advisory signs at both the Blue Pool and Poutu intake access points.

Anglers should give this agreement a fair trial and allow time for paddlers to become familiar with these voluntary restraints. Especially, try to be courteous and understanding in your encounters with paddlers. Your example will encourage them to respect your fishing opportunities and avoid interfering with them.

## LICENCE FEES

New fishing licence fees will come into effect from the start of the new season on 1 July.

From that date an adult's whole season licence will cost \$39.00, one month \$26.00, one week \$19.00 and one day \$7.00. Children's licences will cost \$5.00 for a whole season and \$1.30 for a day. All fees are inclusive of G.S.T.

The management of the Taupo trout fishery is required to be totally funded from licence revenue and the new rates have been set to achieve this. Expenditures include operational, law enforcement, administration and research costs. The budget for the coming 12 months is \$890,000 and has been endorsed by the C.N.I.W.C.C.

Taupo fishing licences will continue to be the cheapest in N.Z., despite this being the country's most heavily utilised trout fishery. For example, an adult whole season licence in an acclimatisation society district will cost \$44, one week \$22.00 and one day \$9.00. A child's season licence is \$9.00 and a day \$2.50.

D.O.C. is trying to establish a "revolving fund" to allow financial planning and budgeting over a longer term than the present one year. This will allow for a smoother pattern of licence fee changes and avoid the need for sharp increases during cycles of capital replacement or one-off work programmes.

## HUNTING PERMITS

Many of you will be aware that D.O.C. is going through a restructuring exercise this year. As part of this restructuring the Taupo office will be closing and we will all be moving to Turangi. If you could start directing your permit requests to the Turangi office you will hopefully run into the minimum of inconvenience. *Note:* If you ask for your permits to be stuck on the office door to be collected, please collect them! Also could you make sure you make your renewal requests well before your trip to allow us time to get your permit to you.

## PIG HUNTING

With winter upon us the annual pasture damage to farms along the Western Bays of Lake Taupo has started. Many farmers are not keen to have packs of pig dogs roaming their boundaries, but by fostering a good working relationship based on trust and reliability, some pig hunters get access to the Western Bay reserves through adjoining farms. The terrain is challenging and success is by no means guaranteed, but the dogs usually get a run. Pigs are becoming more numerous along

the northern boundary of the Kaimanawas too if you are into a change of scenery and some pleasant bush. The Clements Road area has been producing a bit of pork this year and the rooting in the Waiotaka and Whiti kau catchments is as obvious as ever. The area of most concern to us, however, is the Rangitukua Reserve on the western shore of Lake Taupo just north of the Kuratau river mouth. It's certainly worth a look, but watch your dogs over the bluffs!

## HUNTER DIARIES

The new 4-month district hunting permit was instigated to give you, the hunter, more freedom and less inconvenience. The diary system was designed to provide accurate data on a species by species, and catchment by catchment basis. Data which is stored and accessed in such a way that local D.O.C. staff can provide all hunters with up-to-date information on the types of animals they want to hunt, and where they can find them at different times of the year. We are also trying to give local hunting orientated businesses a direct avenue for advertising to their users.

Recreational hunters offer D.O.C. a large, consistent control force and with good information and good access they can offer considerable protection over the majority of the Kaimanawa Range. To keep the flow of quality information to you, we need you to complete your diary each season. Hundreds of diaries have not been returned and some of the comments coming back indicate a lack of trust by some hunters as a major reason. We must all throw off our old attitudes and work together if we are going to make any progress. The diary system is a chance for hunters to help themselves. There is no "hidden agenda." Well-informed hunters are more likely to be successful. Support the diary system!

# MOTHER NATURE DOES A BETTER JOB

Frequently we are asked how many trout the Department of Conservation releases each year into Lake Taupo, and whether maybe we shouldn't let more go to further improve the fishery.

Well, quite simply we don't release any. All trout in Lake Taupo and surrounding tributaries are of wild progeny.

Anglers wait in anticipation of the often excellent fishing which coincides with the large winter spawning runs of mature trout into the rivers.

These trout will be in varying states of readiness to spawn and determinedly move up past the anglers to reach the spawning areas above the winter fishing limits. This is why winter limits exist, so that the fish can go about their business undisturbed.

Courting begins as the fish move upstream and on reaching the spawning areas high in the main river or in the side tributaries, the fish pair up. Once on the spawning grounds the male establishes a territory but it is the female which selects the actual spawning site. She seeks coarse, uncompacted gravels through which there is a cool, clear flow of water. Here she will dig a nest or redd into the gravel and lay her eggs. The accompanying male fertilises these and the pair moves higher up the stream to repeat the process. Digging a new egg pocket just above the previous one effectively covers the first with discarded gravel.

After several weeks the eggs hatch into tiny fry about 20mm long and emerge from the gravel. The fry live in the small streams and on the very edges of the main river channel for several months, each occupying their own little area or territory. The fry rapidly grow into fingerlings whereupon they tend to shoal together and slowly move down into the main river channel.

After a few months these fish, as juveniles 100mm to 150mm long, migrate out into the lake where they live for the next couple of years. In the winter of their third or fourth year as mature fish of 450mm to 550mm long they repeat the cycle by moving back up the river to spawn. Having spawned, the trout drop back into the lake to recover from their ardours or if spawning has been too hard they die. Some adult trout recover from spawning the first time to spawn again the next year and occasionally for a third time.

Much of the recovery of these spent fish can be attributed to the life history pattern of smelt which in spring and summer move into the shallows to spawn. Massed in tightly packed shoals, they are easy prey for the weakened trout which rapidly regain condition. Many anglers take advantage of this 'smelting' experiencing excellent fishing in the shallow sandy bays and around the stream mouths.

Fishery managers and scientists believe as a consequence of this life cycle pattern that it is not the amount of food available in the lake, or the number of eggs laid which determines the size of the trout population, but the amount of nursery habitat present in the streams.

So many trout run up the rivers that, in areas of greatest density, many of the later fish are in fact digging up existing redds in an effort to find suitable spawning sites. However, many more fry still hatch than can be supported by the stream over the next few months.

The limiting factor appears to occur as the fish start to grow. Each fry selects a small area in the stream which can best provide its requirements of food, cover to hide from predators and preferred water velocities and temperature.

In each stream there are only limited areas which the fry find suitable so that individual territories are vigorously defended and the areas of optimum conditions occupied by the fittest or most aggressive fry. The surplus individuals must make their way in the less suitable areas where their chance of survival is greatly diminished.

Thus, as long as enough fry hatch to fill the nursery areas there is little benefit in any surplus. For maximum recruitment it is essential spawning is spread right through the winter months so as the fry develop and begin to move downstream leaving their individual territories, these become available to other later hatching fry.

Once the fingerlings enter the lake they are able to feed on the abundant smelt. Anglers associate smelt with the lake edge but acoustic surveys show dense bands several metres thick at depths of 30 to 60 metres across the whole lake. The trout don't migrate to the lake as soon as they hatch because for some reason they appear unable to survive in the lake until they are of fingerling size.

If there is not a shortage of food in the lake then why doesn't the department release more trout into the lake? The reasons are it is estimated that one kilometre of the Whitakau Stream, the major spawning tributary of the Tongariro River, produces as many trout in one season as does the National Trout Centre hatchery at Turangi. It is a much better use of resources to protect or enhance the nursery habitat as it occurs in each stream rather than release a few thousand extra fish. Anglers also perceive 'wild' trout as adapted to their environment and as prime, excellent fighting fish whereas hatchery rearing tends to select for slightly different qualities.

In most wild fish populations, mortality at all stages of development is extremely high. For example, Radway Allen in his study of production of trout in the Horokivi Stream, calculated natural mortalities beyond the end of the first year of life amounted to about 80% of what is remaining of the year class, each year.

The point is that while juvenile mortality in the lake does not appear to be the limiting constraint on population size, it is likely most juveniles do not survive to maturity. A release of a few thousand fingerlings would be unlikely to result in more than several hundred additional mature fish.

This emphasises the importance of protecting the existing nursery habitat in each stream through the preservation of the water quality and the monitoring and advocacy of wise land use practices.

As managers we are guilty ourselves of a negative impact in the quest to provide greater angler access in rivers and streams and are reaching a point where little new access is likely to be opened up.

In the future the best way to maintain or even increase the population size may be to explore ways of enhancing the extent and quality of nursery habitat. However, we need first to know more about the biology of the streams and the needs of juvenile trout. There are several examples overseas where poorly designed or researched 'improvements' have had serious detrimental impacts.

This approach to improving the fishery is only one of many possible directions which over the next few years will be investigated by managers and scientists.

However, as long as the fish are not limited by food in the lake, we are able to discard one very commonly suggested way of improving the fishery.

The release of additional fish species into Lake Taupo to act as food for trout is totally unnecessary and risks detrimental competition or other impacts with existing prey species and the introduction of potentially devastating fish diseases.



*Time this little one headed for the lake.*

## 1989 GAME SEASON

A fine calm opening weekend led to another disappointing shoot for the majority of hunters in the Taupo District this year.

The bags inspected showed a generally low dabbling duck (mallard, grey, shoveller) harvest; however, parts of the Waikato River shot well and a series of private ponds at Kuratau, again had the best shooting in the district with four shooters taking near their limits both days. These ponds highlight the rewards for hunters who are prepared to enhance habitat, control predators and supplement food supplies year round.

Some good bags of paradise shelduck were inspected, mainly on the larger stations such as Moarangi and Kuratau. The Reporoa area also shot well for "Parrie" hunters.

The bagging of ten Canada geese by one shooter on Lochinver Station shows the potential this species has as a quality game bird in Taupo District for those who are prepared to put in the required effort. The limit was lifted on Canada geese this year as a result of continued population expansion. An educative evening was also held pre-season to try and increase hunter interest in the geese. At least 56 geese were harvested during the season.

From 182 licences checked over opening weekend, a total of 1005 hours of hunting were recorded and 665 gamebirds inspected. This compares to the 1988 figures of 144 licences, 779 hours and 612 gamebirds. The 1988 and 1989 opening day bag averages were 4.15 and 3.65 birds/gun respectively.

Some reasonable night shooting was experienced over the opening weekend and the numbers of birds still visible around the district suggested the season as a whole was going to be a good one. Keen hunters continued to have good night shooting well into the season indicating that weather conditions played a larger role in the poor opening shoot than bird numbers. By early June, however, the evening flights had become considerably less productive.

Swan shooting improved at the southern end of the lake in mid June with heavy rain raising water levels in the more accessible swamps, encouraging the swan to utilise this habitat where they are more susceptible to hunting.

The end of the fire season and the consequent opening up of Timberlands pine forests in mid May gave shooters the opportunity to sample some excellent quail shooting in Kaingaroa Forest. The quail season continues until August 27 and permits are readily available at local Timberlands offices. Pheasant numbers also appeared to improve a little in the north and west of the district this year, a trend that will hopefully continue in the future.

The following data was collected over the opening weekend:

	1988	1989
No. of shooters	144	182
Hours of shooting	779	1005
Grey	150	179
Mallard	142	174
Shoveller	26	41
Paradise	268	252
Canada Geese	3	11
Swan	13	5
Pukeko	10	3
Dogs used	52	52
Birds lost	28	33

## SOMETHING FISHY

- The latest acoustic survey by Dr. Martin Cryer indicates that despite a decrease in the number of trout in the lake at this time of year (last July about half of all adult trout were up the rivers spawning), good concentrations of legal sized fish at reasonable depth were around Rangatira Point, Whakaipo Reef, Waihora Bay, Stump/Tokaanu Bay, and off Wharewaka Point.

A little bemusing were the dense patches of legal sized fish observed on the souther 5 km south west of Mine Point and 6 km east of Kuratau – both out in the middle of nowhere. Many trout in Taupo seem to lead an almost exclusively pelagic existence – much like tuna or mackerel in the open sea, and far removed from the romantic ideal of trout as a wary resident of rippling streams, partial to tiny flies and obdurate in their refusal of clumsy imitations.

- Children's fishing days at the National Trout Centre at Turangi are proving very successful this year with more than 500 youngsters catching a trout on 14 May. Future days are scheduled for 16 July, 27 August and 24 September. So if you are in the area, bring along the little ones for an hour or two. They will be shown how to obtain a licence and given casting tuition which they then put into practice to catch a trout to take home along with a certificate.

The hours are 9.00am to 3.00pm and the only requirement is that the children are between 6 and 14 years old and able to hold and control a rod. A barbecue or hangi will be available. All gear is provided and no other gear may be used to avoid the possibility of introducing disease.

- The 1926 Maori Land Amendment and Maori Land Claims Adjustment Act confers upon the holder of a current Taupo fishing licence, a right of way along most streams for the purpose of fishing. It applies only to FOOT ACCESS within one chain of either bank and does NOT provide for any vehicle access.

Ownership of the land bordering the banks of many rivers and streams, including the Tauranga-Taupo and Waimarino, is *private*. Vehicle access is provided through the goodwill of the owners, *not as any right*. Please respect their generosity by removing all rubbish and avoid creating new tracks and detours.

- Milling of pine trees on Justice Department land on the true left of the upper Tongariro around the Blue Pool has opened up vehicle access along the river. The Justice Department requests anglers do not drive up past the Blue Pool carpark or along the bank above the Boulder Pool. These are private tracks and if you choose to drive to the Whitakau Pool, accept that driving out may be a lot harder than driving in.
- Law enforcement officers have expressed concern over the number of anglers who are not carrying their Taupo fishing licence. Under Regulation 15 of the Taupo Fishing Regulations 1984 an angler is required to be able to produce their licence on demand.

A lot of time is required to process demands for licences to be produced, so please co-operate and allow our enforcement staff to get on with dealing with the more serious offences that threaten your fishery.

- A number of angling information signs are being prepared for the main Taupo fishing rivers.

Constructed of tough polycarbonate, the signs will be placed at the most strategic accesses on the Tongariro, Waiotaka, Waimarino, Tauranga-Taupo, Hinemaiaia and Waitahanui Rivers. Each sign will have a general fishing information panel as well as a large-scale map showing pool names, access roads and tracks, bridges, closed waters, restricted season limits, etc.

Visiting anglers especially, should benefit from the information on the new signs. It is expected the first will be put up on the Tongariro in July or August.

- A new aquatic plant, with the potential to cause serious inconvenience to water users, has recently appeared in some of the Rotorua lakes. Called water net (*Hydrodictyon reticulatum*), the plant is an alga, which was apparently brought into the country with commercial importations of aquarium fish.

Water net has the potential to form large floating colonies in still water and interfere with boating and swimming in sheltered areas. While not yet known in Taupo it seems likely it will reach here soon. Anybody finding free-floating, cylindrical, net-like algae growths should report them to the Aquatic Plants Section, MAFTech, Ruakura.

- Rumours that a loophole in the Taupo fishing regulations may allow people to fish in rivers which have a closed season are incorrect. Some anglers have been misinterpreting the intent of a proposed amendment to the regulations. They are apparently claiming that a loophole makes it legal to fish in those parts of Taupo rivers which are closed during the spawning season.

**However, the long-standing prohibition on fishing closed water remains in effect.**

The proposed amendment was merely intending to clarify the existing situation. D.O.C. will continue to enforce the closure and anglers should be careful not to put themselves and their gear in jeopardy by flouting the regulations.

In addition to those rivers that have a closed season for part of the year, there are a number of very important spawning streams which are permanently closed to fishing. These prohibited waters are also actively policed to protect spawning trout and anglers' future sport.

## **“HUNTING THE ROAR” – IS IT ALL IT’S CRACKED UP TO BE?**

You’ve saved all year for that helicopter flight into the remote blocks of the central North Island. You visited the area on foot in February and were impressed with the sign, so you have arranged to return in the hope of bagging a trophy Sika stag in April. But come the big day, you turn up at Taupo airport and you can’t find a spot to park your car! A dozen or more hunters are milling around waiting for their flights.

When you finally get to your destination there are already eight sleeping bags in the six bunk hut, and there are three other parties fly camped in the catchment.

Distant roars break the silence of the cooler nights while imitations bellow and squeal all day. The scene has changed a little since February.

This year’s roar was a busy one. Hunting seems to be enjoying increased popularity. Certainly flying in is as cheap as it’s ever been but for many, their trip this year was a little disappointing. The simple fact is that demand to hunt Sika over the roar period, out-strips the amount of easy country available. There are still areas which saw few hunters, but these areas, due to their steep nature, broken forest cover and subsequent dense regrowth of beech and lawyer, are very difficult to ground hunt anyway. So what can be done? A block system run on a ballot basis as is done in the Blue Mountains or on Stewart Island is one possibility, but this system could also mean that many hunters miss out. Policing such a system in the mixed land tenure situation of the Kaimanawa-Kaweka area would also prove difficult.

Hunters do have the “block” option on adjoining private land so maybe it is the Crown’s job to provide an alternative on public land. One thing is for sure, the hunter’s experience is compromised by overcrowding. It can also be dangerous. Maybe hunters should be looking at planning their major hunting trips away from the roar period? Spring hunting is just as productive and some would say it is easier, since you are looking for animals coming out on clearings, river flats and open tops, rather than bashing around in the bush after them. Sika stags especially seem to have a knack of finding the thickest, meanest patch of scrub from which to entice their ladies during the roar.

For the hunter who wants a trophy, Sika stags will often hold hinds well into June, but they are “polished up” anytime from mid March to late October and September can be an excellent month if the weather has been warm.

Unfortunately there are few hunting substitutes for that surge of adrenalin activated by a rutting stag up close. The roar has that special appeal, and the hunter after this buzz will always have to put up with many others seeking the same experience.

If the solitude or success you were looking for this roar was difficult to find, why not try the spring or even winter hunting. The action might be different, but the experience can be more rewarding in terms of “getting away from it all.” Think about it, and if you have any ideas, feel free to drop us a line.

## WINTER FISHING AT TAUPO

When the poplar and willow trees have lost their leaves and a freezing cold southerly pipes up the lake, anglers' thoughts turn to the winter fishing on the rivers.

This year should see an improved run of trout in the Tongariro. Last year's poor run had been predicted as the result of excessive juvenile mortality arising from the January 1986 flood. A mild autumn with little rain this year has meant few early runs and those fish entering the river have rushed quickly up to the spawning areas frustrating anglers. However, now that wintery conditions prevail, runs are occurring regularly and should continue through to October.

Most anglers are aware a falling barometer and rain often means a fresh run in the river, but in eastern rivers such as the Waitahanui, movement may also be stimulated by strong westerly winds even if not accompanied by rain. Later in the season runs can be expected to occur every few days independent of weather conditions.

In the larger rivers such as the Tongariro, a small run is unlikely to be spread through the whole river and fishing can still be hard. One successful technique is to become familiar with a couple of pools in each of the lower, middle and upper reaches. If you think the run should have just entered the river because, say, the barometer has fallen, fish your pools in the lower reaches. Similarly, if the weather has been settled for several days then begin in the upper reaches. If the fishing is poor then try a completely different stretch. It is surprising how many anglers fish just the same one or two pools every visit.

Familiarity with a particular pool and where the fish lie within it certainly increases success. Lies are not always where they appear on the surface and change from year to year. Time spent exploring the pool at the start of the new season is always well spent.

Similarly when fishing a pool mix the range of your casts rather than continually striving to reach the far bank. Many fish, especially early in the morning, will be lying in only a few centimetres of water at your feet. The first angler through the pool should try to fish the water without wading, which simply pushes the fish further across the pool. Particularly when the river is running higher than usual or a little discoloured try fishing some of the small runs and backwaters ignored by other anglers as they rush past on their way to the more popular pools.

With some knowledge of recent weather conditions an angler should be able to pick which rivers to fish. The Tongariro normally clears first after heavy rain and is fishable one to two days after the rain ceases. The Tauranga-Taupo and Waimarino take an extra day, fishing best while the water is still a little dirty. The Waiotaka takes three to four days to clear but is worth a try then as the fishing in the other rivers starts to slow. When the southern rivers are too dirty to fish anglers may still find the Hinemaiaia and particularly the spring fed Waitahanui fishable.

The nymph technique, using a small unweighted dropper, has proven highly successful but there is a tendency amongst anglers to regard this technique as always better than some of the more traditional Taupo methods. It is certainly the way to go when the rivers are running low and clear, but when the water is discoloured or on some of the snag infested small streams, a wet fly swum enticingly downstream may well produce more fish.

Once temperatures fall most anglers turn their efforts more towards the rivers and streams but some excellent angling particularly at night, is available at the river mouths during winter. Try either when the fish should be holding off the mouth awaiting suitable conditions to run, or anticipate when a run might be entering the stream. Just as the sun rises can also be a very productive and attractive period to fish, if not a little cold. One major satisfaction of stream mouth angling during the winter is that the fish caught are in peak condition.

Angling activity on the lake tends to be quiet during the winter but for those hardy anglers prepared to brave the conditions, good success can be had using five to ten colours of lead or a full wire line. Fluorescent orange, pink or green trolling lures work best. Acoustic surveying suggests the fish are well dispersed over the whole lake so be prepared to cover the water until you get onto them.

Our tips for the winter: try the stream mouths and smaller rivers. It will take several trips to familiarise yourself with the pools and techniques and be prepared to lose some flies, but if your visit coincides with a run the rewards may well exceed those of the Tongariro.

## MANAGER PROFILE



Dave Lumley is based in Turangi and as manager of the Kaimanawa Sector of Taupo District is responsible for the day to day management of Kaimanawa Forest Park and southern Lake Taupo lakeshore and river reserves.

Dave came to D.O.C. with a background in forest park management, having spent his earlier Forest Ranger training days with the environmental wing of the Forest Service, involved in animal and vegetation surveys within Tararua and Ruahine Forest Parks. He later spent five years based at Puketitiri controlling the northern sector of Kaweka Forest Park and in 1985 transferred to Turangi to take up a position as Second-in-Charge of Kaimanawa Forest Park.

When D.O.C. came into existence in 1987, Kaimanawa Forest Park and local scenic and recreation reserves were combined into one territorial unit known as the Kaimanawa Sector.

Dave is a keen hunter, fly fisher, and bird shooter and is heavily involved with local mountain safety and search and rescue groups.



John Gibbs is the Senior Conservation Officer responsible for the team which manages the Taupo fishery.

John has worked in the fishery over a period of 25 years. Much of his early fishery management training was spent at Taupo and he also worked in the area during an 8-year spell as a fisheries officer based in Rotorua.

After 6 years in trout and salmon management in the Southern Lakes region, John returned in 1982 to take over responsibility for the Taupo fishery.

Apart from his experience in New Zealand, John has twice visited the U.S. to study aspects of recreational trout and salmon management in that country.

John has more than a professional interest in the fishery. He is an accomplished angler and has fished at Taupo since his early boyhood. He is particularly keen to see anglers take an active role in issues relating to their fishery.

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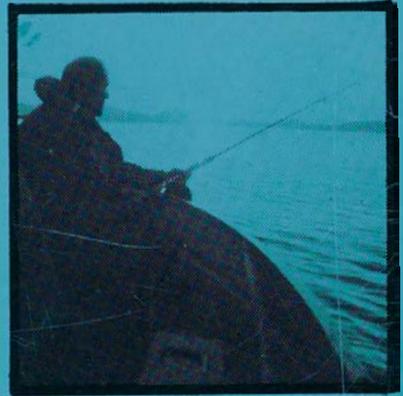
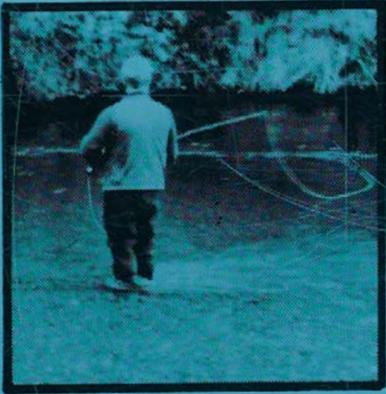


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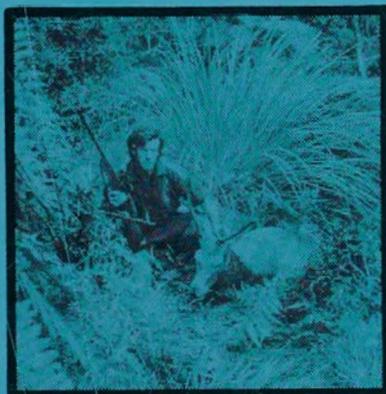
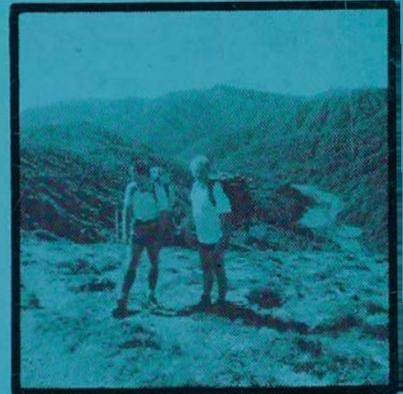
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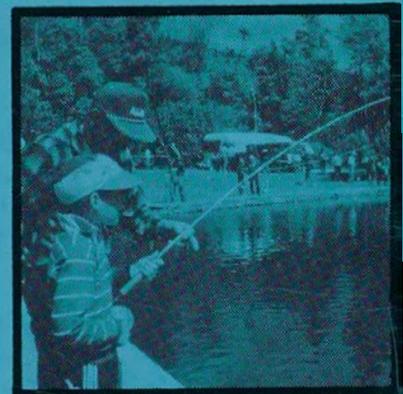
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