

2019-2020 Summer Newsletter



Summer has arrived – and with a vengeance - unseasonable warm temperatures, early showing of roses and early signs of an outstanding season – at least at the time of writing.



Your Executive

The Society' annual general meeting was held on Saturday 28th of September and the following members were elected to the Board:

President	Peter Baldwin
Vice President	Kim Miles
Members:	Paul Green
	Graeme Nahkies
	Paul Atkinson
	Peter Wilton
	Peter Canziani
	Errol Cudby
	Marion Hall

Past Presidents:	Rob Lester, Eddie Tonks
CEO	Bevin Severinsen
Ex-Officio	DOC representatives

Patron:	Sir Jerry Mataparae
Honorary Solicitor:	Wayne Chapman



Caption: Standing L-R: Graham Nahkies, Paul Green, Errol Cudby, James Cooper (DOC), Peter Baldwin, Peter Shepherd (DOC) Kim Miles, Bevin Severinsen (CEO)

Sitting L-R: Marion Hall, Peter Wilton, Paul Atkinson
Absent Overseas: Peter Canziani

The Board has overall responsibility for the efficient management of the Society. It sets policy, procedures and overall supervision of its operations.

The day to day activities, however, are delegated to our hard-working CEO, Bevin who works alongside DOC and liaises with other related organisations.

Members of the board also have supplementary duties, for example: Kim oversees finance, Paul Atkinson is in charge of children's fishing, Peter Wilton organises the museum and Graham Nahkies is our corporate affairs guru. Other members assist when required.

Whats Happening at the Troutcentre?

The summer school holidays are nearly upon us.

The Centre will be closed 25th December for Christmas Day.

Our School Holiday Kids fishing program will start on the 26th December and will run every day of the holidays until the end of January. No bookings are needed as places are on a first come first served basis. This year there will be spot prizes offered by our local sport fishing shops and for those that catch one of 5 tagged trout, a junior flyrod set will be offered up sponsored by our local Hunting and Fishing shop. The cost for this is \$45 per child and includes filleting and smoking.

There will also be a night tour run by DOC on the 17th January starting at 5.30pm. Our volunteer anglers will be operating our very popular \$10 kids fishing for the evening up until 9pm. There will also be a public \$10 fishing day on the 26th Jan, Auckland anniversary weekend. Bookings are essential for both of these events and are made by going to www.troutcentre.com/events



The Troutcentre is now part of the refillNZ network of businesses where visitors can refill their water bottles. This works well with families that are walking the Riverwalk and is our little bit to keeping the number of plastic water bottles out of our landfills.





What Do Trout Eat?

Hi my name is James. I run the aquarium and hatchery at the Tongariro National Trout Centre and I am a freshwater ecologist. Today I am writing about “What do trout eat?” For most of us we hope it is our lures and flies. But knowledge is power and the more you know about what a trout is looking for, the better your chances of them mistaking your lure or fly for dinner.



Obviously what they eat depends entirely on what is available, so habitat is a prime dictator of what they will be feeding on, for example, a trout in a river will eat more insects as there are few fish species that live in the rivers, however in the lake there are tons of smaller fish species and this makes up a large proportion of their diet.

What trout eat can be basically broken down into three groups, Fish, Insects and Other. I will start with the fish we have here in Lake Taupo; trout in other locations may eat a wider range of fish that aren't available here.

In Lake Taupo we have 3 species of native fish, the Common bully, the Koaro and the smelt. The common bully is a bottom dwelling fish, normally seen around rocky shore and can grow up to 15cm long. Due to their habitat they are easily able to hide away from a prowling trout and so make up only a small part of the fish trout eat.

The third species is the smelt, a small silvery fish that oddly enough smells like cucumber. These were released into the lake in 1934 to provide food for the trout after the koaro had been depleted and have been extremely successful, today making up 80-90% of what trout in the lake eat.



Since the introduction of trout, Koaro have become too rare to make up a major part of a trout's diet, except as juveniles when they look similar to smelt.

The final fish trout love to eat is... other trout. Yes trout are a little cannibalistic and very much enjoy eating smaller trout if given a chance. They also love to eat any trout eggs they can come across, as shown by the effectiveness of globug type flies.

The second category of trout food is insects. Trout in rivers rely on these small critters to provide the majority of what they eat. Insects can be split into terrestrial and aquatic types.



Terrestrial insects such as beetles, cicadas, grasshoppers and many other types including centipedes and spiders, which aren't technically insects but I'll include them here, are very often found in the bellies of trout. Terrestrial insects are often much larger than aquatic species and therefore provide a better energy source. During summer, many terrestrial beetles such as the Green manuka beetle and Grass grub beetle swarm in huge numbers and those unlucky enough to fall in the water are very quickly snaffled up by a waiting trout, similarly Cicadas are relished by any trout that sees one.

Many insects spend their youth as odd looking critters crawling around on the bottom of rivers and streams, there are many thousands of species but there are 5 main ones that people should be aware of: the Mayfly, Stonefly, Caddis flies, Dragon and Damselflies, Dobson flies.

Mayflies are interesting insects that make up a large proportion of invertebrate fauna, found in clean streams. These are generally flat bodied nymphs that spend their days grazing on algae growing on rocks. Stoneflies are very similar in appearance, however are more often predatory, and look completely different as adults.



Caddis flies are our most diverse group of stream insects and come in many forms, ranging from cased caddis with cases like small snails, rocky tubes or smooth silk cases, uncased caddis some of which are predators.

Dragon and damselflies are insects of slow water, often hiding in weed beds. They are generally larger than most other insects and are targeted by trout cruising the weed beds.

Dobson flies are our biggest freshwater insect, their larvae are often called toebiters and can grow to 4cm long. They are vicious carnivores and are even known to eat small trout. When these insects become adults they will swim to the surface, a vulnerable stage during which they are often eaten by trout; fishermen using small wet flies are often imitating this stage. When they reach the surface they will hatch out into their adult forms, but require a short period to allow their wings to dry before taking off. These insects normally time this so that they all come up at once - a safety in numbers approach - and during this time many fish are caught on dry flies.

The final category I have called "Other", for a good reason. These are things that don't fit into the previous groups, which include koura, rodents, frogs and birds.

Most people are familiar with koura, our freshwater crayfish. These guys are very plentiful in the lake and are often eaten by trout, especially at night. Unfortunately for the trout however, they get big and are well able to defend themselves as larger adults. Fortunately they are slow growing; it can take up to 15 years until a koura can successfully fend off a hungry trout.

Rats and mice are very often eaten by trout as they swim across water bodies. One trout caught in Otago was found to have over 25 mice in its belly and another had a 15cm long rat.

Near swampy areas such as around Motuoapa, frogs offer an easy and extremely nutritious meal for a large trout.

Ducklings are another favorite food, especially of larger brown trout, and many of the one legged ducks and seagulls you see around are victims of an over eager trout.

Fantails and sparrows too are often eaten, I have seen trout at the hatchery jump clear out of the water to try and take a fantail. So far I haven't seen one be successful, but it's only a matter of time.

Now you know a bit more about what trout are eating, you can use this information to increase your chances of catching one. The next time you are down at the rivers edge, pick up a stone and have a look at what is under it. Keep an eye out in the shallows as you wade out, observe what is in the grasses and trees around the river. Every little bit may help you.

James Cooper

Trout Fishing the Southern End

What weather we are having. All rivers at time of this report are low and clear. The trout are slowly looking up and dry fly fishing should improve .The evening rise is getting better with the insect life coming to the surface on dark. No two nights are the same, just keep trying and it will happen and you will connect. The fish are a mixture of mending ones but you will pick up a fresh one now and again. As long as we do not get any floods the fish will hang around in the rivers.

Paul Atkinson

Trout and 1080

Anti-1080 campaigners have turned their attention to trout anglers in an effort to spread misinformation – with some suggesting it kills trout, aquatic invertebrates and terrestrial insects. This is not true.

As passionate fly anglers and experienced trout fishery managers, the Department of Conservation Taupo Fishery Management Team understands the importance of clean water and a healthy aquatic environment. We are also well placed to comment on any impacts 1080 might have on trout.

Trout anglers in New Zealand can be assured there is no credible scientific evidence that establishes a link between the biodegradable, non-persistent pest control agent 1080 and a decline in trout numbers or quality, nor a reduction in aquatic invertebrates.

So, what happens to 1080 in waterways? Over 99.8% of a 1080 bait pellet is made up of harmless dyed cereal, sugar and flavor, and the remaining active ingredient is a salt, which begins to dilute immediately on contact with water. Where 1080 pellets inadvertently enter streams, the active ingredient leaches out to harmless levels within 24 hours, leaving the dyed cereal to break down more slowly. It is also important to note 1080 does not accumulate in the natural environment - it breaks down quickly leaving no residue.

Specific research carried out in four streams within the Grey Valley, West Coast (2006) confirmed no biologically significant impact from 1080 baits on aquatic invertebrates, even at rates equivalent to 10 x normal sowing rates. Fish are known to have exceptionally high resistance to 1080 and there are no examples of wild trout being negatively affected by 1080 in New Zealand.

New Zealand's Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) suggests there may be a minimal risk to people who eat trout within a 1080 drop zone. This recommendation is based on a theoretical exposure model that assumes a series of worst-case scenarios. How this model translates into practice is unknown but MPI state, *"... it is highly unlikely that the exposure model for trout consuming 1080 baits would eventuate in the environment."*

In locations where trout and other aquatic inhabitants are in decline, anglers should first consider the impact of unsustainable land and water management practices. To lump pest control in with issues such as land intensification, water abstraction and point source pollution, is misleading.

Taupo is a highly productive wild trout fishery with tributaries rich in aquatic invertebrates. The catchment benefits from an innovative approach to land management where good water quality is highly valued. It is a fishery where management decisions are informed by 25 years of robust fishery science. It is also a fishery where effective pest control operations using 1080 are a regular occurrence.

Facts about the impact of 1080 on freshwater can be found at - www.doc.govt.nz/1080

James Barnett
Taupo Fisheries Management Team
Department of Conservation

Here is a whimsical story all of us anglers can relate to (ed.):

Flies

(A horror story)

It was a shadow deep in the water close to the head of the pool. I did not see it at first. Finally I focused on it. The shadow of a fish? The broken edge of a rock? The waterlogged stump of a tree branch? It was an indefinable discolouring in the grey-green of the stream bed. I watched it for uncounted minutes, it did not change shape save for the refraction of light from the ever changing surface of the water. It was still. A stick.

Dismissing it my eyes drifted over each section of stream bed following an imaginary grid. Water-rippled shadows mocked me. Time passed. I could feel the sun's burn on my neck, the prick of a sand-fly bite on my hand. Only my eyes moved. I was standing close to a raised bank on the edge of the stream, invisible, my light brown shirt merging with the bush behind me, water rushing around my bare legs.

Nothing. The water clattered by, chortling at my impotence. Cicadas high in the trees behind me intent on procreation rasped their legs in a frenzy of ardour, somewhere close by in the periphery of my hearing a pheasant croaked, a dulcet tui called. Nothing moved in the depths.

This pool was designed by nature as a lure to attract a fisherman. Water, milk-tinged from recent rain, a good flow to carry food to hungry mouths; perfection. Somewhere close to me there had to be an unseen fish, its colours blending to its environment. Just as white smoke in the mist is betrayed by smell, a trout's superb camouflage is betrayed by its shadow on a sunlit riverbed. My eye roved again quartering the river, trying fruitlessly to peer into the shaded stream edges. Somewhere... Start again, back to the top of the pool, the muted shadow was still there, too deep to define. My eye moved on... and then back again; the quisling shadow had moved betraying the fish. Just a small movement, but enough. Time ceased. Something small and black spun in an eddy above the fish. The shadow faded and the fish took form as it drifted upward; just dimpling the surface, feeding and then descending down to the underworld. A jack, only its upper lip broached the surface but I had seen the sub-surface blush on the gill, the cruel hook of the jaw. A good fish, broad shouldered and strong.

I looked at my fly, a fat brown-black cicada made from deer hair spun and clipped with meticulous care to replicate nature. I let it fall from my fingers into the water to wash down stream and then with a twitch of the rod I cast just upstream of the fish. The fly plopped on the water just as a dying cicada

might, and then, carried on the current it drifted perfectly, sliding over the stones above the shadow. No reaction.

Again, another good cast, I mended the line so it left no tell-tale drag on the stream's surface, a perfect drift. I admired my cast but the shadow lay still.

Gently I retrieved the failed fly. Looking into my fly-box I selected a tiny Parachute Adams, black tail, the body a whisper of black fur, black wing made with a tight circle of black feather wound around a black post. Ready again, a third perfect cast, my lure landing as soft as a sigh over the stones and drifting free. The shadow moved, without effort it came to the surface showing its beautiful body, golden yellow, mottled brown and green; half a metre of raw power. With the lightest flick of its tail it moved to the fly, almost nudging it before gliding back down to its station deep on the stream bed. I dared to breath.

A fourth perfect cast. The fly, so small I could more sense it than see it, eventually came to rest, lying unmolested where the water quietened in the pool.

Time drifted as I continually changed my fly, a Royal Wulf failed to trouble the fish, a Dad's Favourite was treated with equal disdain. Every few casts the fly was changed. A Mayfly Emerger? A Caddis? In desperation, a Spent Spinner. While changing my fly I twice saw the fish rise sipping unidentified insects from the surface before gliding back to station. With each change of fly and each cast my hopes and pulse rose and then ebbed with the realisation of yet another rejection.

The clock ticked; I delayed leaving as long as I could but finally, knowing duty called, I had to go. Vanquished I began my long climb to the car that baked in the fierce sun on the gravel road above.

Richard Benefield

Children's Fishing in 2019

The school fishing this year has been very good with some great battles had. Total fish caught is 1106 with 66% being over legal size. The biggest was 1.522 kg. Great to see all children with wide smiles on their faces. A special thanks to all the volunteers for their efforts.

Paul Atkinson

Stories From Our Younger Clients

We get many letters and emails from school children relating their experiences by the pond. Here is a small sample:

“The Battle Against a Trout” by Richard

The line instantly goes straight. I get excited. The fisherman tells me to start reeling in the trout slowly. It’s quite hard to reel it in. It’s swimming strong – but I’m stronger!

The trout is getting close. The closer it gets to the edge of the pond, the harder it pulls. The rainbow coloured trout is really close to the edge. The energetic fisherman hands the long rod to me so he can get a gigantic net to catch the trout. The trout is close but he catches it. I feel accomplished. I did it! I caught my first trout!”

“The Titanic Trout” by Peter

The water is glistening like the moon; the sun is melting me like an ice cream and the patience is driving me insane. Line out, line in, line out line in, line out – wait, do I have something? Tugging on the line begins. A burst of excitement hits me. Finally! I start reeling my line in and letting it out. I repeat several times. Up it comes. What a catch!”

“Dear Trout Centre Staff” by Taika

Thank you for giving us a fantastic day! My favourite part of the day was when we got to go fishing and see the fish trap. I learned that trout need clean, clear and cold water to survive. I also learnt that Whio means its whistle. Thank you Brenda for showing us the body parts. The most interesting thing was that the jack has a hook on the end of its mouth.”

**Junior Members/Junior
Volunteers**

At a recent meeting the Board decided to look at establishing a sub-category of our Individual Membership – a Junior Member for children 16 and under. They receive their own card, can visit the Visitors Centre without having to bring an adult and can take part in specially arranged activities, for example, casting lessons and fly tying. Some of the older children can help out at public fish outs as “Junior Volunteers”. The details are still being worked out but keep an eye



on the Society website for more information.

The Society Needs YOU – and your friends!

The Society is having a membership drive in attempt to raise our numbers and attract support. As a carrot (or 'fly') anyone who joins between now and the end of June will have their membership valid to 30 June 2021. This essentially means that membership is free until the middle of 2020.

If you live in the area or are a frequent visitor, why not join our enthusiastic group of volunteers? Almost every week a school class visits or the pond is available for some 'ad hoc' fishing. Both activities are only possible if we have sufficient volunteers, not just as anglers but also for the necessary accompanying administration. Can you spare an occasional afternoon? Give Bevin a call at 386 8085

Finally from the editors:

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a very festive holiday. Please drive safely and come back in one piece.

Eds.

