



FRESHWATER

WATFAA Newsletter

From the Editor

Welcome to the winter/spring edition of Freshwater. Thanks to the contributors for their articles on fishing the Blackwood River, native western minnows and furred leaders, which I definitely must try. We go fly fishing in Italy where a huge Tuscan brown trout comes out snapping from the depths, and Lee Jackson with club President Steve Parker share their New Zealand adventures. Despite low water levels and difficult weather they still manage to land some magnificent fish. Bretton Stitfold tells us of the considerable improvements to the Pemberton hatchery as a consequence of a Recfishwest grant to extend the roof covering to better protect the breeding ponds from summer heat. And thanks to Tom Meredith for his regular Technology Spot, this issue explaining GoPro Hero Video cameras in the first of three articles on how to make your own videos - such as was done when Marlin were feeding under the Busselton Jetty a few months ago! The CD compendium of WATFAA Freshwater magazines put together by Bruce Were with assistance from Bretton Stitfold is still producing historical gems through our 'From the Archives' section and in this issue, we hear about a days fishing on Waroona Dam in 1967.

Russell Hanley is stepping down from the Chief Editor position and we owe him a great deal for agreeing to take on the position at the beginning of 2014, and helping to make the important transition to the fine Freshwater magazine we have today. As well as saving the club time and money, the electronic format is popular, attracting new members to the club, and can be downloaded from the WATFAA website. Most of all though, Russell's presence has been felt through the many, interesting articles he has contributed, ranging from his regular descriptions of native fish species and informative stocking reports, to his insights into river care and catchment management and perhaps most enjoyable

of all, accounts of his many fishing experiences. I'm pleased to say that Russell remains a WATFAA member and will continue to contribute articles to Freshwater. Peter Taylor has kindly agreed to take over as Chief Editor, with Lee Jackson and Geoff Barrett remaining on the editorial committee. If anyone is interested in being part of the Freshwater editorial team, please get in touch and as usual, we are always looking for articles for the next issue, so do keep sending them in.

Editors

Russell Hanley
Geoff Barrett
Lee Jackson



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The Freshwater Journal is a seasonal periodical providing articles and other information of interest to club members, including advertisements from our valued sponsors. The journal contains official announcements, reports and information (including policy) from the current Council of WATFAA. The journal also contains a range of articles and opinions from club members and invited contributors. These articles and opinions which appear in the journal are selected (by the editor) because they are considered to be of interest to our members but the views expressed in those articles and opinions do not necessarily represent the policy or view of WATFAA.

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STOCKING REPORT

By Russell Hanley

I have recently stepped down from the role of stocking officer for WATFAA dams. That role will now be taken up by Stewart King so any queries about WATFAA dam stocking should be directed to Stewart.

I continue to represent WATFAA on the Freshwater Fisheries Reference Group (FFRG) which is the group convened by RecFishWest to provide the Department of Fisheries with recommendations for stocking of trout into public waters each year. The FFRG has held two meetings this year to discuss the opportunities for stocking of yearlings, broodstock and fry. Recommendations have been made to the Department of Fisheries. Yearlings are typically stocked into public waters in late May/early June but this year yearling stocking has continued until late July. As a consequence some of the yearlings stocked were of a larger size than is normally the case. A combination of a relatively mild (though dry) summer, and the new covering over the ponds at the hatchery has meant that this year 28,800 rainbow trout yearlings were available and there should be about another 1000 available later in the year. For the first time in some years there were also 1200 brown trout yearlings stocked and there may be several hundred more available later in the year.

Table 1: Distribution of yearlings for 2015

Location	Rainbow Trout	Brown Trout
Collie Gorge	0	
Donnelly River	3000	
Warren River	5000	
Blackwood River	4000	
Murray River	1500	
King River	0	
Preston River	0	
Serpentine River	1500	
Brunswick River	0	
Lefroy Brook	1300	900
Treen Brook		300
Logue Brook Dam (Lake Brockman)	1000	
Waroona Dam (Lake Navarino)	1000	
Glen Mervyn Dam	500	
Drakesbrook Dam	1000	
Big Brook Dam	1000	
Norrilup Dam	1000	
Harvey Dam*	7000	
Total	28800	1200

Note that Collie Gorge has not been stocked with yearlings this year. This is because the decision to test the viability of stocking rainbow triploid fry into the Collie led to stocking of the Gorge with 45,000 fry last year and the intention is to repeat stocking with triploid fry again this year. The aim is to test whether the stocking of triploid fry offers any advantages over the stocking of diploid fish. There are anecdotal suggestions that triploids grow faster than diploids but we have not got much reliable information from public waters stocking to support that idea. So the plan is to stock the Collie with triploid fish for a period of time and see whether the results do support the contention that the stocked triploids achieve faster growth rates relative to diploid fish. The addition of diploid yearlings this year to the Collie would therefore confuse the assessment of whether the triploid fish stocked as fry last year were successful and what their first year growth rates have been because any triploid fry from last year would be around yearling size now.

In general, stocking of rainbow yearlings is pretty much in line with that of 2014 and is based on assessment of whether or not that stocking has produced acceptable results – always a difficult task.

Members of WATFAA are encouraged to fill out their catch cards and submit them to the club record keeper. The records of what you catch and where you caught it in public waters can be useful information despite the small sample size.

There have been more yearlings stocked into the Serpentine because the initial feedback has been that the 500 stocked

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More News and Reports

last year did very well. On that basis there is an increase in the number of yearlings stocked into the river and fry will also be stocked into the Serpentine this year.

As in previous years there has been no stocking of the King, Preston and Brunswick Rivers. The Brunswick was considered but feedback from several members of the FFRG is that the water quality in the Brunswick has deteriorated to such an extent it is no longer capable of supporting trout. The King River remains off-limits because of concerns around the potential for impact on Balston's pygmy perch. The Preston remains off-limits because it is not listed on the schedule of waters suitable for stocking under the current Department of Fisheries stocking management strategy. Remember that the stocking management strategy is up for review this year and that will provide an opportunity to request that additional waters are added to the schedule of suitable waters for stocking.

With the new management rules in place, it is possible to fish on the Murray, Blackwood, Warren and Donnelly Rivers even during the closed season and this also includes any of the tributaries on these systems. In addition you can also fish through the closed season on Big Brook Dam, Logue Brook Dam, and Glen Mervyn Dam. All of these waters have been recently stocked with yearlings. Now when yearlings are first stocked into a water body they often shoal together and being hatchery fish are not yet wise in the ways of the world. In short, they are rather easy to catch and therefore it is important to avoid catching and damaging these young fish whenever possible. They are not legal size so cannot be kept and so if you see a shoal of these fish either avoid them altogether (the best approach) or make sure you are using single hooks (barbless or with the barb crushed down) and treat any fish caught with care. Return them to the water quickly.

Note that the Serpentine River below the falls is closed to fishing during the closed season 1st July -31st August. All the yearlings stocked have been placed in the river downstream of the falls and are off-limits until September 1st.

You are permitted to fish the Serpentine above the falls right up to the pipe-head dam but fish are no longer stocked in that section because it now dries out completely during summer.



ITEMS BEFORE COUNCIL- AS OF THE 1ST SEPTEMBER 2015

- **WATFAA REPRESENTATIVES on the Recfishwest - Fishing Associate Reference Group (FARG)**
- **RECISHWEST MEMBERSHIP AND WATFAA REPRESENTATION**
- **COTTAGE MAINTENANCE - NEW FRIDGES**
- **CLUB MERCHANDISE - CAPS BADGES etc.**
- **UPDATE OF WATFAA CONSTITUTION**

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Even More News and Reports

- STOCKING OF CLUB DAMS
- CLUB ACTIVITIES

VALE TONY HALL

By Leigh Mulgrave, on behalf of all WATFAA members who knew Tony

Tony passed away on 30 April 2015 following a 5 year battle with pancreatic cancer. Tony was a thorough gentleman with a wicked sense of humour, a consummate wordsmith and an accomplished Medical Scientist (Haematology). He was a passionate fly fisher and regular "Pemberton pilgrim". Fortuitously, Tony's "Member Profile" was published in the Spring 2014 edition of Freshwater. Condolences are offered to his wife Lindy and daughters Louise and Caroline.



Pemberton Hatchery

Roof Extension Update

by Bretton Stitfold

Members may recall an article in Freshwater (Feb/March 2014) about the proposed roof extension to cover all trout rearing ponds at the Pemberton Freshwater Research Centre (PFRC) or more commonly known as the Pemberton Hatchery.

Background

Over the summer months of 2012-13 a two week period of prolonged hot weather led to the death of more than 60% of the yearling trout held in ponds at the hatchery. These trout were to be used for both public and private stocking programs.

Hatchery staff observed that almost all the losses of yearling trout were in ponds covered by shade cloth, while most fish in ponds with a hard covered roof survived.



The old shade-cloth cover

During discussions about this issue with Craig Lawrence from Fisheries W.A. (who oversees the Hatchery, with Tony Church the Production Manager) we were told that funding to extend the hard roof to cover all the ponds had been requested for the last three years. The club therefore decided to take the matter up with a letter to the then Minister for Fisheries, Troy Buswell. Discussions with Andrew Rowland of Recfishwest the organisation that liaises with Department of Fisheries on behalf of recreational fishers suggested a letter sent via Recfishwest might have more impact.

The club duly sent a letter to Recfishwest pointing out that the loss of yearlings represented:

- substantial loss of recreational amenity for recreational license holders who pay money through annual licensing for the production and stocking of trout into public waters
- substantial financial loss to the hatchery as loss of income from sales to aquaculture, tourism operators, clubs and individuals reflects on the performance of the hatchery and could lead to negative views of hatchery viability
- substantial effects on tourism operators such as King Trout, Karri Valley, Golden Ponds where advertising of the ability for visitors to catch trout is a major marketing draw card.
- a negative flow-on effect to small towns in the region where trout are stocked through a reduction in visitors with loss of income for businesses supplying accommodation, food, fuel, tackle.

The loss of so many fish left a large hole in the normal supply of fish for stocking in 2013 and we forecast a downturn in catch rates of angling for trout for the near future.

Funds were subsequently approved and Tony Church went about getting quotes for the extension with the aim for the structure to be completed before the next summer. These were tabled and the contractor chosen

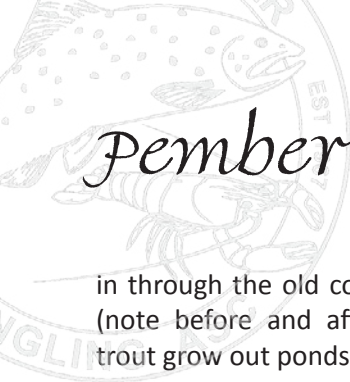
Works were commenced before last summer to complete the roof extension and in addition to that the net covers over the marron ponds were also replaced and improved. Some predatory bird species had been able to find a way

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Pemberton Hatchery continued...

in through the old covers to prey on the marron (note before and after pictures of covers over trout grow out ponds).

The cooling towers that are critical at times during the height of summer for cooling the water that flows into the trout ponds were also serviced.

The new roof was in place this last summer and the feedback from Hatchery staff shows the improvements have been effective with higher survival rates of the fish in the ponds that were formerly covered by shade cloth.

In conclusion, these improvements represent a substantial contribution toward securing the future of our fishery. Thanks are due to Andrew Rowland and his team at Recfishwest, and to Craig Lawrence, Tony Church and their staff at the Department of Fisheries.



The New Roof



The New Roof. Note the blue cooling tower

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Fly Fishing in Florence

A Roman Holiday

By Geoff Barrett



Sieve River Italy, nice deep runs but the brown trout were hard to find.

Rome has lured the tourist for 2000 years and I can see why, the Pantheon with its massive concrete dome and crumbling facades is indescribably beautiful, and then there is the ancient forum, an area about the size of a football field from which half of the world was run during the days of the Roman Empire. All of it must be seen but you know what, I'm rather embarrassed to admit that the event I was most looking forward to while in Italy was a day of fly fishing I had organised while we were staying in Florence.

The spring sun was already well into the sky when my guide picked me up from the hotel at 8.30am, and within half an hour we were winding through the green forested mountains that give Florence its beautiful setting. Interesting that much of this extensive forest is public land, open for hiking, mushroom hunting and fishing. Roadsigns with leaping deer indicate that deer hunting is also an option, while other signs identify areas that are set aside for fauna conservation, where no hunting is allowed.

A brief stop at the RostKafe for espresso and panini

(sandwiches) and we were back on the road. I had previously told the guide that I preferred small streams and dry fly, which gave me three options, all within an hour and a half drive of Florence. They were the Tevere River (dry flies and nymphs), the Lima River (mainly nymphs) and the Sieve River with (dry and nymphs). Low water levels and advice from the locals led us to the Sieve River, a tail race with nice runs and deep pools surrounded by farmland and crossed by a rail bridge with trains travelling at close to 200km per hour.

Two fishing licences were required, a regional licence for the Sieve River in Tuscany (€12) and a national licence (€10), both of which were purchased on the day at the local fly-fishing shop in a small town called San Piero a Sieve. A map is provided which marks out the parts of the Sieve River that are open for fishing. An interesting anecdote, a few days later while I was birdwatching with a guide on one of the smaller streams in Tuscany (which was full of trout), a ranger drove up to make sure we weren't fishing. Now I'm not certain what would have happened if I had been fishing but both the ranger and

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Fly Fishing in Florence continued...

the other big guy (who I presume was a landowner who had reported us) were agitated and speaking loudly, not one word of which was English. Judging by the stern looks and brightness of the badges which covered the ranger's uniform, I suspect that I would have felt the full weight of Italian bureaucracy. As it was, my guide responded with equal enthusiasm and we were allowed on our way.

Eventually, with my four-piece four-weight travelling rod in hand, I was flicking a delicate, nondescript dry fly into the shallows keeping the fly as close to the overhanging vegetation as possible. After a couple of hours I had not had a bite, nothing, we didn't even see any fish. I resorted to dropping a small brown bead head nymph about a foot below the dry, but still nothing, when out of a deep green pool came one of the largest brown trout I had ever seen, yellow fins spread and snapping at the nymph just as I retrieved from the water. My guide nearly dropped his cigarette and my hands were still shaking minutes later when we put cast after cast back over the same pool but the big, old brown had obviously seen us and was not

about to make the same mistake twice.

So with the day turning to afternoon, we drove further up the Sieve where the flow was faster and the river narrower and I immediately hooked a nice a nice brown trout. Although the rivers in Italy are stocked with browns (no rainbows), this only occurs every few years and so most of the fish seen are wild trout. The one I hooked certainly was wild, it lunged at the nymph as soon as it hit the water and danced across the surface, until it pretty much landed on the river bank at my feet. My first and only, beautiful Italian brown trout, about 25 cm, delicately spotted and glowing yellow in the afternoon sun.

Then that was it, the shadows were getting longer so we headed back to Florence. As my guide said, fly fishing in Italy can be hard work but it was a fun day and I would definitely recommend it if you ever visit Italy. The countryside is leafy green, filled with bird song and every vista has you reaching for your camera. I would say though, if doing anything that takes you off the well-worn tourist track, a guide is a very good idea.



My first Italian brown trout

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Native Freshwater fishes of South – West Western Australia

Western Minnow: *Galaxias occidentalis* Ogilby 1899.

by Russell Hanley

This article is the third in our series on the native freshwater fishes of our south west rivers. The previous articles in this series were about species that are rare in our waters. For this article we take a look at one of the more abundant species of our native freshwater fishes.

The Western Minnow is present in all of the drainages within 100km from the coast in a range from the Arrowsmith River (300km north of Perth) to the Waychinicup River (80km east of Albany). The species is common throughout its range and typically reaches sizes of about 9cm in length but can reach up to 19cm in length. The species is easily recognised by its long cylindrical shape and the single dorsal fin set well back on the body. The colour is tan to olive brown back and sides and there is usually a series of lighter and darker bars along the flanks although these bars can be quite pale and indistinct in some specimens. Like all members of the family Galaxiidae, this species has no scales.

The Western Minnow is a fast swimming species that occupies a wide range of habitats from fast flowing water, usually above and below riffles, rapids and water falls to slowing moving deeper pools. They can also be found in some freshwater lakes and wetlands (e.g. Lake Jasper). The species is able to tolerate brackish water and is quite common on salt-affected rivers such as the Collie, Murray and Blackwood.

Western Minnows commonly form small shoals and I have seen them in mixed shoals with fingerling trout on Nanga Brook. The minnows mostly feed on terrestrial insects but also eat small crustaceans. They are adept at taking floating insects from the surface and are sometimes caught by trout fishers using small dry flies. They will also readily attack a range of nymph and aquatic insect patterns and I have caught them with small nymphs while fishing for trout.

At the onset of the winter rains Western Minnows move up into smaller streams and flooded wetlands to spawn among flooded vegetation. Fish become sexually mature at the end of their first year of life and spawning is usually completed by end of September. Some fish survive to spawn in a second year and a very few make it to a third, fourth and even a fifth year.

The Western Minnow is widespread and is considered to be the most abundant native freshwater fish within its range. The fish is available commercially from a number of licenced breeders and has some popularity as a species for ornamental ponds.

Further Reading

Allen G.R., Midgley S.H. and Allen M. 2002. Freshwater Fishes of Australia. WA Museum. Perth



Galaxias occidentalis. Photo by Neil Armstrong. All rights reserved

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Furled Leaders

Old School

by Russell Hanley

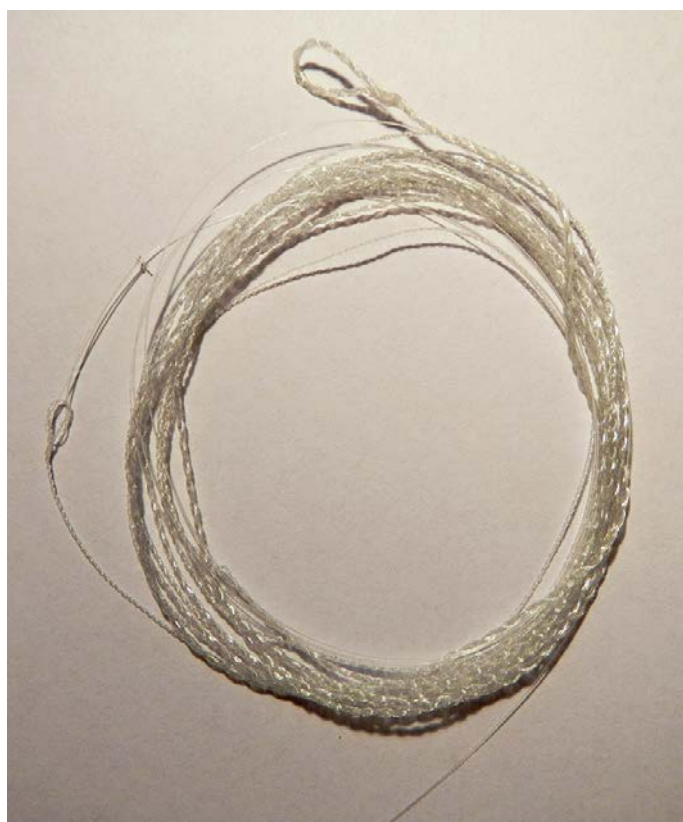
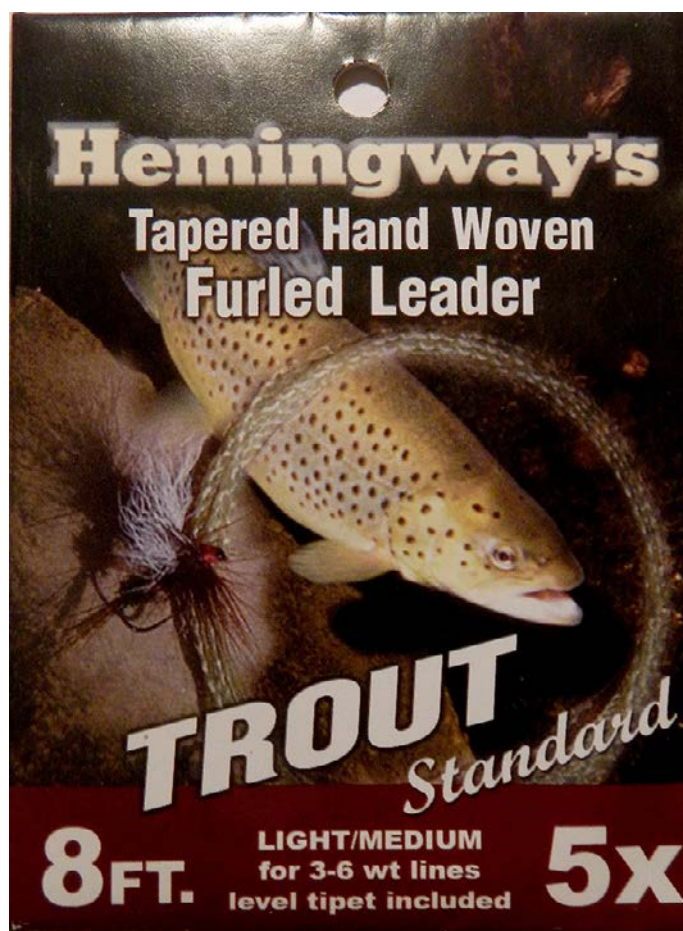
I recently bought some furled leaders to try after seeing Jonathan Barnes endorse them on a YouTube video. I had never heard of them so I first googled to find out more. They were originally made from either silk or horse hair and strands were hand-woven together to produce braided line of varying thicknesses, lengths of which were then knotted together to form a tapered leader. The modern versions use very long single lengths (30-100m) of either nylon monofilament or fluorocarbon and tapers can be produced without the need to knot together lengths of different thicknesses.

I bought some Hemingway 8ft monofilament (also available in fluorocarbon) furled leaders in 5x and 6x. They are knotless and have a loop on each end and come with a tippet already attached.

I have now tried one out on a couple of day fishing trips down on the Murray River fishing a duo NZ style with a nymph tied onto the shank of a dry fly.

So far, based on a limited experience I think furled leaders are pretty good. As a relative novice in fly fishing I have struggled with presentation at times. Usually when fishing for a day in fast water I find I always have knots mysteriously appear in the length of tippet and also in the leader - a consequence of poor casting technique and/or the wind I guess. Two solid days fishing with a furled leader and not one knot anywhere! These leaders are reputed to help with casting accuracy, distance and presentation because the elasticity in the leader helps with the transmission of energy from the rod. I certainly thought my casts were better, but perhaps I am finally just getting better at casting?

There is no doubt however that the leader has no line memory at all....no kinks and while you sometimes get a few twists in the leader when fishing in fast water these are easily removed and do not suddenly reappear. I also like the little loop at the end of the leader which makes it dead easy to tie on tippet using loop to loop so no more slowly cutting off lengths of your leader every time you change a tippet - although I could of course just get into the habit of making a loop in the end of a standard leader the first time I use it. Lastly the makers claim the elasticity



Furled Leader

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Furled Leaders continued...

in the leader is a definite advantage when trying to land a large fish and there is only leader and tippet between rod tip and fish. In this difficult period a sudden lunge by the fish can snap the tippet, most likely at the knot with the leader. Now while I did catch a couple of trout on each of my trips on the Murray there was no real test of the value of that elasticity in the leader from a surging fish as the fish I caught were small. One of the small fish I hooked on the Murray did manage to get tangled up in a branch in fast water and I think the stretch in the leader allowed me to keep a little pressure on the fish without putting too much strain on either the leader or tippet while I waded up to the obstruction and freed the fish.

I think the elasticity in the leader also helps when you get a fly snagged or caught in vegetation and you decide to try a short sharp tug to try and free it. You can make your own: <http://midcurrent.com/knots/a-case-for-the-furled-leader/> but unless you have a lot of time on your hands I suspect buying some is the better option. Furled leaders are about 50% more expensive than a standard tapered leader but as you are not likely to change them nearly so often it will probably work out cheaper in the long run.



Small trout that got tangled among branches in fast water

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Fishing the Blackwood River

An Undervalued Resource

by John McConigley



Ed Longville fishing a perfect rapid

The Blackwood River appears to be rather neglected by WAFAA members. This is somewhat hard to understand when the river is given close scrutiny and the wealth of fishing opportunities are examined.

Let's look at the pros and cons of this great river. Firstly, the cons:

There is little doubt that the fishing quality has fallen off in recent years, probably because of the decreased rainfall and hot summers. Another frustrating fact is that the fishing seems to occur in windows and outside these times you could swear there was not a trout in the river, but these windows can be found and exploited.

That's about it for the cons. The rest are all the pros:

- First and foremost is the vast length of the river that is available to fishing, from above Bridgetown right down to the Great North Road Crossing where you can catch trout and bream at the same time.
- The river flows through jarrah country and is far easier to explore along its banks than either the Warren or the Donnelly. The banks and riverbed are often open and easy to negotiate, and where the banks are scrubby they can usually be easily bypassed.

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Blackwood River continued...

- Access is remarkably good when you compare it to the Warren or the Donnelly River. Roads and tracks are plentiful along the river but a good map and a willingness to explore are high on the agenda.
- As with other rivers in the South West the banks of the Blackwood are public property and you can walk along them anywhere although landowners may not agree with you! And of course, you must obtain permission to cross a farmer's paddock to get to the river. That said there is so much public access that you need not hassle landowners anyway!



Typical Blackwood rainbow

So where do you start? Well, the Blackwood is ideally suited to fly fishing, unlike the Warren or the Donnelly which can turn a tranquil pastime into a rage induced day of frustration.

There are only rainbows present in the river and some redfin, although I have never caught one in the river. More of redfin later.

OK, you are all geared up to go - maps, fly rods, weather reports. You have picked your areas to explore. The only problem is when to go, and it is a big problem.

The Blackwood is the largest river in the South West and goes from a raging flood in winter to barely flowing in summer. It has many inflowing streams that add to its volume, so when the river is quite tranquil at Bridgetown it can be very high and unfishable down past Nannup.

The trick is to monitor the flow. This can be done on your computer at the Water Corp site and decide when the flow in your chosen area is low enough. The ideal is usually October/ November when the river has fallen substantially but is still clear. If you are too late the water turns a brown colour and the fish seem to vanish; well they do for me anyway. Consequently timing can be everything. A few years ago I fished with Neal Watson, who has a vast knowledge of this river. We fished the section above Nannup for one weekend under ideal conditions. The results were one marron on a nymph! The following weekend we thought we would punish ourselves and give it another try. Rainbows were everywhere and we caught about 18 up to three and a half pounds. Why the difference in a week? We don't know but we knew the water conditions were right and we persisted.

Other fishing windows can occur in the autumn as the river rises but fish can be caught all year round with knowledge and persistence.

The rainbows like the rapids and the fast water around logs and rocks. They strike readily when in the mood and generally feed all day when conditions are right. When the day is hot and the water quite low the fish seem to feed at dusk and dawn. I have not fished the river at night but feel that the fish probably feed all night and rest in the deeper spots during the day.

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Blackwood River continued...

What fly to use? The fish seem to like anything that moves, from tiny nymphs to large streamers. When the water is a bit high and or cloudy, large heavy flies are best and dark colours with a touch of red seem to have the edge. For lure fishing minnow patterns are hard to beat and you don't really need anything else.

The streams that flow into the Blackwood contain trout, Balingup Brook and St Johns Brook being two of the larger. Balingup Brook also has some quite large perch in the pools, but access is a problem because there is no right of way on the smaller streams. Perch are sparsely spread in the catchment and nowhere are they plentiful. Carp, actually large goldfish, are also in the system but rarely seen. Marron are noted throughout the Blackwood and camping bankside during the marron season is an enjoyable pastime.

One last tip. Fish the fast water thoroughly as the rainbows seem to have an incredible ability to feed in unbelievable torrents.

Good Fishing !!



Peter Ryall landing a fish at a nice rapid

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New Zealand

Lee and Steve's dry spell

by Lee Jackson



Figure 1 - Day 1. Upper Ahuriri. 6.5 lbs

Steve Parker and I organised another NZ jaunt for March 2015. We had spent eight months planning, dreaming and thinking of nothing else and by all accounts it was to be an amazing opportunity to catch some huge trout owing to the expected mouse plague. We were beside ourselves. However, the best laid plans and all that.....

We loaded up with supplies and drove through the Canterbury Plains to get to our first destination, the Ahuriri River, on the way to our end goal, the famous Maitai River. We were shocked to see how dry everything was. Rivers such as the Ashburton which we have fished before were almost non-existent and the drought wasn't limited to this part of the South Island. Wherever we went we were greeted with sights of bone-dry paddocks being watered by enormous booms over a kilometre in length and rivers and lakes on their last legs. The Tekapo River was completely dry and Lake Benmore's margins were nothing but stinking mud for half a kilometre before you even got to water. It was not a pretty sight.

As a result of the reduced flows, the evil Didymo has taken hold almost everywhere. The lower Ahuriri has in the past been one of the most productive and beautiful of rivers to fish but we were greeted with a sluggish Didymo-filled river full of dying salmon so we went to the upper section to see if it was any better. The upper Ahuriri valley is beautiful but it is known for being a wind tunnel and this day was no different. It looked like Mount Doom and the wind blowing

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New Zealand continued...

down the valley was vicious. My 6wt was struggling and Steve's 7wt was just coping. Spotting fish was difficult but one grey smudge ended up on the bank at 6.5lbs after inhaling a large stimulator as it was about the only thing you could see in the waves. I would like to thank Steve for taking this photo (Figure 1) and sacrificing his rod whilst stepping back to compose the shot. Lee one, Steve minus 10.

Seeing the state of the water here we decided to high-tail it to the Mataura in one push hoping that the weather had been kinder down there but not before stopping off at one of our favourite watering holes for a quick look - Lake Poaka. This lovely little lake just outside Twizel has some enormous and very wary trout in crystal clear water. However even that had suffered from low water. Determined to have a go anyway, we spotted a gentleman with a recognisable gait. I called out "David" and sure enough, David Gellatly turns around. No matter how far we travel, it is hard to get away from WATFAA!

Mataura River

We got to the Mataura at Garston on evening-fall and were greeted by an incredibly low and crystal clear river with lots of very spooky large fish. This was going to be a challenge but we were so excited.

Rain rain rain and more rain. We woke up to a raging river and not a trout to be seen. I did manage to pull a nice trout (Figure 2) from a small pocket of slack water which was enjoyed with a serving of field mushrooms and a glass of Pinot. Of course I waited for a little while until I ascertained if Steve was going to die or not from mushroom poisoning before trying them myself. We also must point out that this is one of only two trout that we kept for the whole trip and this was about the average size.

The section between Athol and Garston is regarded by many as one of the finest sections on the river but beware, it is hit hard. We knew that fishing had been really tough for some time but we were surprised to see so many guides also flogging this part of the river which has a lot of public access. There was an occasion where we informed a guide who turned up with his client that we had already fished the run he was looking at. He still proceeded to get the beginner to fruitlessly flog a section casting to a phantom fish.



Figure 2 - First Mataura Brown

Hoping that the river was going to subside as quickly as we had heard we headed off to the famous Nokomai Gorge. The river was still pushing through but we walked for two hours to get to a point where we could fish back up for the day although the incessant drone of people getting choppered in didn't help our confidence.

The river was still up and the flow was surprisingly strong and we were really amazed at the lack of fish showing. We had heard stories about the incredible numbers of fish in the Mataura but it seemed that they were not going to show.

Every report talks about fishing the Mataura with size 18 mayfly patterns and smaller but out of desperation we started with larger flies such as crane fly, blowfly and cicada patterns. Suddenly we were onto fish which we realised were all hugging the banks. A reasonable day but hard going.

The next day we tried the lower section of the gorge with better results as we were slowly cluing in to the river. No amount of reading beforehand can prepare you for the learning curve you need to go through when confronted by a new river. However, by the end of the day the rain started to get serious and we just had to find new water.

Aparima River

The Aparima was touted as being a big fish water with some large fish in the upper reaches. We got there at night and woke up to a cold wet day again. However, the river was a sight to behold.

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New Zealand continued...



Figure 3 - Didymo infested water

The riverbed was coated in thick slabs of slimy Didymo. Figure 3 shows a photo through some polaroids. We also netted for insects and several attempts yielded one miserly nymph. Not a good sign and as we expected we didn't see one single fish. Once again, we needed new water, after disinfecting our equipment as usual.

We holed up in Lumsden for a while to warm up and listen to tales of woe from other anglers. We could overhear the guides asking if anywhere was producing fish. The situation was dire. We were wet and dejected and once again the generosity of the New Zealanders came to the fore. We approached a caravan park owner and he was more than happy for us to use his facilities for free. See Steve's happy face with his new found friend. Even the blue sky showed through for a brief moment.



Figure 4 - dry at last, dry at last

Mavora Lakes

We decided to head up to the Mavora Lakes as the rivers still had too much runoff. Surely a bit of stillwater fishing could restore the balance. Perfect lakes with perfect drop-offs and not a sign of a fish. The most fascinating thing was the amazing toadstools lining the lake. It really is a stunning place but we were not having much luck. No time to waste, off to the next spot.



Figure 5 - North Mavora Lake - stunning



Figure 6 - These are not cartoon toadstools.

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New Zealand continued...

Mararoa River

The Mararoa runs out of South Mavora Lake and the water is clear and cold. It tumbles down a steep valley and the upper section is known to be mainly rainbows and the lower slower sections inhabited by Browns. We didn't care what colour we chased so long as we could see some. Given that the water wasn't affected by runoff to any great extent we were fairly confident. However we were sorely disappointed. Every single access point along the river was occupied by a guide and their clients. We couldn't believe it. Even the guides were hogging all the public access. We couldn't even get to the river!

We travelled a way down the river hoping to find something fishable but once again the Didymo had taken over and not just a coating on the bottom. Huge slabs of the stuff were floating in the water column and the shores were covered in great mats of the weed. Our dream trip was quickly turning into an expensive driving holiday.

Oreti River

One river I was really keen to try out was the Oreti, a famous big fish river, and it was quite close. The upper reaches use a beat system and it is first come first served. We got there to find the car-park empty. Joy of joys. To cut a long story short we saw a few fish which were all large but they were in an odd state. We believe they had seen so many fishermen that they were just not bothered anymore. We learned later from some guides that they take nobody up there anymore as it is hit so hard that by the time the end of the season comes around it is just not worth it.

The fish we saw were large but totally unresponsive. One beast was sitting in the river with part of its back out of the water so Steve assumed it was dead. Even so he put a fly over it to the point where the fly drifted over its back. Assuming it was dead he walked over and the fish bolted. Other fish we came across were like statues and we could literally walk up and touch them before they bolted. We also walked for miles up to the headwaters and spotted 1 trout the whole way. I'll try the Oreti again some day but it will be at the start of the season.



Figure 7 - 4.75lb on the Waikaia

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New Zealand continued...

Waikaia River

Figure 7 shows Steve finding his mojo again on the Waikaia River. This was to be the last river we fished on the trip and we had saved the best until last. The Waikaia rises in the Umbrella Mountains and the water is tannin stained but it is still clear and the fish tend to be darker and beautifully coloured because of this. Up to Piano Flat the river meanders at a fairly gentle pace and it an absolute pleasure to fish.

We were told the locals in the Waikaia pub that it was one of the worst seasons due to the lack of rain but even so it surpassed anything we had encountered previously. The weather had also settled and there was a chance of insects starting to show as there had not been a single hatch for 2 weeks. The water was now very low and very clear as can be seen from Figure 8 - a beautifully marked 4.5lb from very skinny water on a size 18 Dad's Favourite. Long leaders and delicate presentations became necessary.



Figure 8 - beautifully marked brown

We saw some enormous fish but they were understandably a little on the shy side and if the presentation wasn't good enough, off they went. On reflection I wished we had taken some time to stop and watch some of the trout more. We were constantly keen to see what was around the next bend and I believe we missed some good chances because we gave up on a fish too quickly.

Due to the lack of insects on the surface we took our second fish of the trip and checked the stomach contents. It was full of horned caddis, blow flies and hornets. Not a mayfly to be seen. We changed our patterns and the fish took them without hesitation. A few hours later we saw the only hatch of the trip and it lasted a whole



Figure 9 - stomach contents



Figure 10 - perfect blowflies

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New Zealand continued...

ten minutes. This river system is known for small brown mayflies and as they started to pop up I changed to another size 18 Dad's Favourite and nailed the beautiful 5.5lb specimen shown in Figure 11. It had a powerful tail and was as fat as could be. Trying to bring it in though was a challenge on a tiny fly and my landing net had broken on an earlier fish. The fight went on too long for my comfort and I could see the tippet fraying so I only had one option and that was to jump in and grab it by the tail - which I did.



Figure 11 - fat and gorgeous

The Waikaia is one of my favourite rivers encountered so far in New Zealand. It is very accessible and the locals are amazingly welcoming. We spent a few evenings chatting to people in the pub and it seemed on every lane, we encountered someone who wanted to just stop and chat. We found out interesting local customs like using a 12 bore shotgun to "catch" trout because "fly fishing just seemed a bit too hard"!

All in all a fabulous trip but we worked hard for every fish. One of the toughest seasons we have had and a lesson in understanding fisheries. There is no way you will crack it first time. It is going to take many more return trips to reveal the subtleties and nuances that take your fishing to another level.

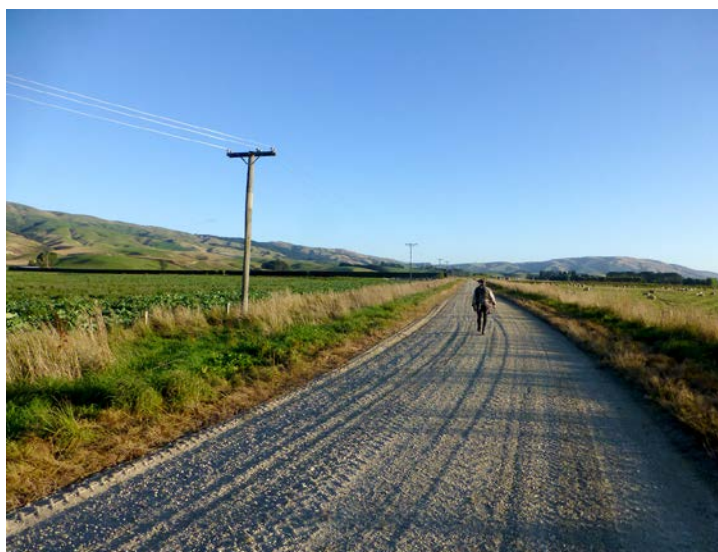
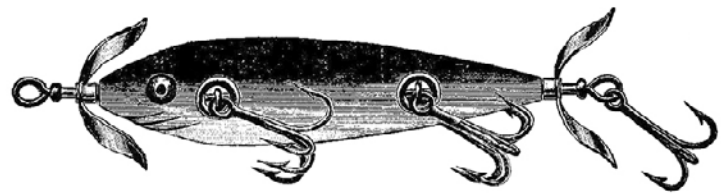


Figure 12 - Another long walk back to the car

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Bruce Were with some assistance from Bretton Stitfold has put together a CD compendium of all the WATFAA Freshwater magazines from April 1968 to December/January of 2013/14. Reading through these old magazines provides interesting insight to the activities of our club and a snapshot of life in Western Australia over nearly 5 decades.

We continue our browse through the old editions of Freshwater with an article that appeared in the November 1971 issue. The article provides a succinct description of the results of a day fishing Waroona Dam in 1967, a time when stocking of the dam had only just started. The author of the article is Neil Coy who many of you will know and/or recognise as the author of the only comprehensive guide (1979) ever produced on where to fish for trout in the SW of Western Australia. The conclusion that the spectacular early results of stocking dams is rarely sustained is noteworthy. The article is reproduced here exactly as it appeared in the original magazine.

THE GOLDEN IMP

It was a beautiful September day 1967 as the car approached the quiet backwater the covey of wild ducks glided out from the growth of rushes, took flight, swirling the surface in their wake. The water began to settle as the car stopped - all being still again while the angler surveyed the first full flood of the new dam.

A slight dimple appeared near the rushes, akin to the way a large trout finning its beat in search of slow moving morsels, on or under the surface, or was it just an insect rising?

The angler was sceptical as he slipped the Golden Imp into the end of the fine line. A stealth tread down to near the water edge verified, that indeed, this was a trout rising. As the spoon slipped into the deep run between the rushes, the fish showed again, and with two turns of the handle, all hell broke loose.

The almost forgotten initial lunge, of a good healthy rainbow, the anglers frantic manouvering in keeping it away from an old partly submerged fence post, two scorching runs that ended with mighty leaps the careful guiding into shore, resulted in the eventual grassing, and admiration of the 3 3/4 pounders sheening perfection.

This was the prelude to 3 hours of continuous action, resulting in 12 good fish netted (the limit then), the hunger of these uninitiated trout was to be compared with the anglers lust for full bag.

By the way of compensating all the lean days we know so well. With the encroaching dusk the angler called it a day, there were so many trout rising that the place seemed attuned to the noise of a full symphony orchestra. On heading his trusty steed for the house, the angler called in at a fishing mates home, so as to share the excitement of the thing with a sympathetic ear. After admiring and weighing the fish it was thought 29lbs in 3 hours was enough proof to judge the new dam ready.

We both agreed that the following Sunday was a must. Many of us thrilled to that first glorious season on Waroona Dam, to which recent W. A. trout angling owes so much. Since then the dam has faded, as all new dams do, and no doubt a few of us dream of a repeat performance in some other new water we have yet to uncover.

continued



Technology Spot

Make your own fishing film clips - Part 1

by Tom Meredith

The next three tech spot articles will feature three instalments explaining what is required to create a film clip. Starting with what you need to get you started (Hardware), Editing (Software) and a suitable medium to share the film (Platform).

As technology improves so does the affordability of technology that up to six years ago was too expensive and too complicated to use for the average punter to get started.

The introduction of GoPro Hero Video cameras to the market and the improved functionality & quality of the smart phone filming has meant it is possible to film some special fishing moments and share them with family and friends. Most of us are not thinking about being the next Nick Reygaert but it's nice to have something to capture those memorable fishing trips.

These days fishing shows are not confined to television. The websites You Tube and Vimeo now have hundreds of thousands of fishing films clips some of which are very relevant to those looking for instruction, a fishing guide to overseas fisheries or the usual viral quirky footage that some lucky user has managed to capture on film such as a Marlin feeding under the Busselton Jetty a few months ago. A lot of these videos simply would not have happened without the improved portability and increased functionality of video cameras and smart phones.



Do not be intimidated or think that it is too hard or fiddly. This is not the case.

To get you started on the filming of your fishing trips will require an outlay for the equipment unless you already have a point and shoot camera with filming functionality or a smart phone which has video capturing capabilities (Which is most these days). There are a number of cheap copied models of these small video camera and they start at the \$49 mark, then for a reputable brand such as GoPro the entry level camera starts at a touch under \$200. If you were to dip your toes in on this I would recommend an entry level reputable brand. The quality of the picture is good and the compatibility and user friendly functionality justifies the price. The more you pay the better the product. There is now 4K recording capabilities with GoPro, Ghost drift and other brands which provides the sharpest resolution yet however it costs almost four times the price.

It really depends on what quality you are happy with filming in. My recommendation is not to bother with filming in anything less than HD 720. Most smart phone cameras and most new cameras will satisfy this criteria.

The next hurdle is how do you wish to house the hardware and what is the intended use. Probably a waterproof housing is advisable if filming fishing sequences as water and cameras don't mix well. It is an added insurance policy and also provides the ability to film the potential release of your quarry after capture.

I recommend the camera being mounted to a chest strap or head strap to ensure you are free to use your hands. Especially handy if filming a solo fishing trip. The gorilla style camera mount is also a good option as it

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Technology Spot continued...

can mount the camera to almost any structure with its wrap able tripod arms.

Also it would be advisable to purchase a spare battery. Most of the cameras have a 3 hour battery life but it would be a shame to have run out of battery halfway through an epic fishing trip.

Last but not least a suitable compact camera bag to carry your equipment is also recommended to avoid losing or damaging equipment such as lens. Again we are talking a fishing context so keep in mind a waterproof ability or ways to waterproof your carry bag.

So the checklist of things to get started:-

- Versatile small HD video camera (GoPro, Drift Ghost) or normal camera with video recording functionality or smart phone
- Waterproof housing (Most of the small versatile camera)
- Mounting equipment/ Head strap / Chest strap
- Tripod (Gorilla is highly recommended)
- Spare Battery
- Camera bag

That's it for part 1!



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Fly of the Moment

SHUCKING CADDIS

By Lee Jackson



This is a pattern I've cribbed and adapted from a few sources. I tried shucking caddis where the shuck hangs off the rear but I like this version as it tends to catch bubbles of air which mimics the natural much more closely when it pumps the shuck with gas to rise. Caddis are the staple go-to for my general dry fishing. They are ubiquitous, easy to tie and easy to see in rougher water.

Hook: Size 12-16 regular dry fly hook
Thread: Olive
Body: Olive Dubbing
Wing: Elk or Deer Hair
Shuck: Poly Yarn such as Antron

Method:

1. After laying a base thread, tie a piece of the yarn at the bend of the hook as shown. Build up the dubbed body of the caddis.
2. Take one part of the yarn over the top of the hook and one below and tie off but not too tight yet.
3. Use a dubbing needle and pull back on the yarn and fashion a bubble that surrounds the body then tighten the thread to secure. Trim the yarn.
4. Tie in the hair wing, trim and whip.

A nice simple pattern and easy to tie.



1



2



3



4

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Member Profile

Keith Prout (married to Lindy who also likes fishing)

Many members of the club are unable to regularly attend our activities evenings or the various fishing events hosted at our cottage. So we have quite a few members who don't know much about each other. In this section of Freshwater a member selected from the membership database will tell us a little bit about themselves. Each member we approach will be asked to answer the same set of questions about themselves.

Where were you born and where did you grow up?

Born in Essex England but with father in Foreign Office lived in Fiji from age six till nine and then Isle of Wight at boarding school from eleven to fifteen while parents in Abadan, Persia. After three years at Ag College set sail to NSW for four years and then to Rhodesia for the next ten years. Spending more time in the army than at work and with a wife and new son in 1979 moved back to Australia and settled in Perth

Can you remember when you first became interested in fishing?

I started fishing at a local lake when I was five catching 3 inch roach on a bamboo pole with line attached to end, a minute hook and softened buckwheat as bait. In Fiji the local kids taught me to fish in the sea with a handline from the breakwater around the seaplane base at Laucala Bay where we lived.

On the north coast of NSW I bought my first rod and reel and used them to fish in the rivers and sea almost each weekend. Freshwater fishing in a big way only started in Rhodesia with bream and tiger fish in Lake Kariba and trout in Inyanga. I caught my best trout of 2 pound 12 ounces, caught at Lake Gulliver at about 6500 feet in 40Knot wind, wet fly on a Mrs. Simpson, still my favourite fly. Also the result of the early morning rise on the first morning of my honeymoon at Troutbeck Inn, Inyanga. Beautifully poached by the kitchen staff for breakfast and the wife is still married to me 40 years later.

Tell us your favourite fishing memory?

Probably my favourite fishing memory was a three day stay a Clover Cottages at Manjimup quite a few years ago now. Took the family, my sons were in their teens and I taught them to cast fly. They both did well, caught and released quite a few each, while my wife out fished us all with a small Celta Spinner. Kept a couple each day, smoked that night with a bottle or two of good red, one of my treasured family times.

What is the most unusual fish you have ever caught?

My most unusual catch was probably a small crocodile, caught on a kapenta bait fishing for tiger fish at Kariba, I sacrificed the hook.

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My best trout caught at Lake Gulliver at about 6500 feet in 40Knot wind.

continued





Member Profile continued...

Keith Prout

What kind of fishing do you like best and why?

I must confess to enjoying fly fishing, to be more honest I enjoy fly casting, I don't have to catch a fish. I can thrash the water for hours attempting the perfect cast, the right distance, landing the fly next to a floating leaf as gently as possible. One day I will get it right. Fishing generally I enjoy because it gets me out into the fresh air, onto or close to the water in the peace and quiet close to nature.

When did you join WATFAA?

I joined WATFAA just over a year ago.

Why did you become a member?

Mainly because I was retiring and was going to have more time available and the benefit of meeting new people and learning from their experiences.

What developments would you like to see in the freshwater fishing scene in WA?

I believe WA is way behind other states and countries in the promotion of fresh water fishing as a recreation and a source of tourist dollars. Though we have few fresh water containments and rivers compared to many states we must be one of the few that ban all sorts of recreational activity from a water source purely because it saves the Water Corporation dollars in maintaining the quality of drinking water. Most of the best easily accessible trout fishing in England is from water catchment lakes and I believe many of the best bass lakes in Queensland are similar.

WATFAA seems to be one of the few bodies attempting to do anything about this situation.





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