



(Note: This was Josh Luft-Glidden's second adventure in New Zealand. While this trip was almost exclusively about the fishing, he did find time to mix in a nature-oriented wilderness experience at one of NZ's finest eco-tour lodges).

I think it's safe to say that this was the trip of a lifetime! Across 12 days of fishing I landed a total of 154 fish, almost all taken stalking and sight fishing. There were some smaller fish taken from riffles, but the average fish was in the 3 to 3.5 pound range and around 20 inches.



Things started out pretty well in Te Anau. We spent the first day fishing a local river. It was pretty windy and my casting was a little rusty, but I still managed to pull in 6 fish (4 rainbows and 2 browns). 4 fish came on dry flies and two on nymphs.

The next day was pretty challenging in terms of conditions. Solid overcast all day and heavy rain in the afternoon. The river we fished was also thick with floating algae. Very little in the way of sight fishing that day, but we did manage to spot two rainbows cruising around a clear back eddy. They mostly hung out close to the main current, but would occasionally take a swing through the back of the pool. They were very hard to spot near the main current and the drift

would have been very difficult. So we set up an ambush at the rear of the pool. When one of the fish took its next trip around the back of the pool I fired a chernobyl ant at it. I sailed the cast a little and landed the fly on a rock, but it turned out for the best. As I pulled the fly in a little it landed in front of the fish like a terrestrial falling off the rock. My guide had just lost track of the fish and asked me "Where is the fish in relation to the fly?" I whispered back: "It's right there!" Just as the words left my mouth the rainbow snapped up the fly and I had my only fish landed for the day.

My final day in Te Anau also featured pretty challenging conditions. The wind blew us off the first river we tried, and had to scramble to find another spot. Once we settled in, the fishing actually turned out to be pretty decent. I landed another six fish that day. All of them browns. 4 on nymphs and 2 fish on dries.

I'm really glad that you managed to get me booked at Fiordland Lodge for the first two days of my stay in Te Anau. The food was absolutely out of this world. A true fine dining experience for every meal. I wish I had been able to get all four days there.

I'm also really glad that I was able to get those three days at the eco-tour lodge in between Te Anau and Murchison. I wasn't able to fish there because 10 inches of rain had fallen the day before I got there. So the river was high and off color. However, the hiking and kayaking was more than enough to hold my attention for the three days I was there. The rainforest around the lodge is absolutely amazing and I want to go back when the penguins are nesting there. I highly recommend the lodge for anyone who is interested in kayaking, birding, or just a wilderness experience in general.



When I managed to get up north the trip really took off like a rocket. This was my first time fishing in NZ with Scotty, and boy did he live up to the hype. The trip started off hot with a 23 fish day and never really slowed down. It didn't matter where we went, what conditions we faced, or how picky the fish were, we continued to run up the score. On my "worst" day there we were blown off the first two rivers we tried to fish, and didn't even really get started fishing until one or so. However, we still managed a 7 fish day with the majority of the fish taking cicadas on the surface in shallow water. I actually had to stop telling the other guests at the lodge how many fish I was catching because they were starting to get down on themselves. Leya and Jo loved it though. They started making bets on my daily total (I had two 20+ fish days and another two 19 fish days). I was even planning to take a helicopter trip my last day or two there, but by that point I was well over a hundred fish for the trip so we figured why bother?



The vast majority of the fish came on nymphs, but the ones I did catch on dry flies were very memorable. My favorite was a nice sized brown that we found happily feeding on the surface just off of a rock outcropping. My first cast at him was pretty good, and he looked at the fly for a good 15 to 20 seconds, following for at least 6 feet and refusing it three times. We figured that we had the right pattern, but he was probably looking for something a little smaller. We tied on a slightly smaller dry and I cast it out to him. It landed just to his left and he fed right as it approached. So I put it out there a few more times. Every cast was just a little too far inside, or he would feed to the other side as it approached. Finally after a couple of tries I managed to put it in a textbook

position about three feet in front of him. As the fly approached he took a natural off the surface about a foot in front of my fly. I thought I was out of luck again, but he came right back up and snapped up my fly! Unfortunately, my "waterproof" phone was a little less waterproof than advertised and I lost most of my pictures from the first half of my trip. Fortunately, we did manage to get a pic of my largest fish of the trip: a 7 pound brown that would have gone to 11 pounds or so in a NZ mouse year.

Josh Luft-Glidden