

Note: John Part has achieved a degree of notoriety for having released over 40 NZ browns weighing in excess of ten pounds. He takes two trips a year to fish with his special friend/guide, one in the early season and the other in the late season. We are fortunate that he writes a report for our newsletter on his trips, sharing his insights on his vast experience of successfully pursuing NZ's trophy trout. His last report from October's trip did not report taking a ten pound plus fish – although he did release over 100 fish, most in the 5 to 7 pound range with a large fish of 8 pounds. The report below puts him back on track with double digit fish and adds a few more ten pound fish to his collection.

THE JOHN PART NZ REPORT – APRIL 2014

Now that I am restored after my trip and flight from to England from NZ, and have some inkling of 'which way is up', here is my report.

I've just turned 75, and it feels like quite a milestone, along with one tin hip and one tin knee. In fishing I have to accept that I have probably had the best of what I am going to get. In this context I am just realising how great this latest trip was.

First, the late season weather pattern resulted in the usual mix of about one third of days lost to flooding. Four days were as good as you could expect to get in any world class brown trout destination, and four more days were exceptional; the sort of days that put New Zealand into a brown trout heaven all on its own.

We caught two 10 pounders, two 9 pounders, and six 8 plus pounders, as well as a good number of 7 and 6 pounders. I say 'we caught' because little, if any, of this would have happened without my guide of over ten years. His was the daily choice of river and beat, fly selection and advice on tactics as well as spotting the damn fish. All I did was to stumble up the rocks behind him, cast, set the hook and play them!

A little about this area of New Zealand sets the scene. The top third of the South Island is predominantly a brown trout fishery. The fish here behave like true brown trout, spooky, suspicious, moody and generally bloody minded. Elsewhere there tend to be an equal or greater numbers of rainbows, and all but the most prejudiced New Zealand rainbow fan would accept that these rainbows are less cautious and easier to catch. Their behaviour rubs off on the browns that share their water.

In this brown trout area, the rivers that flow East across the Canterbury plain tend to hold the majority of the big trophy double figure fish. There are double digit fish in the West flowing rivers, but they are fewer, and (by me) more prized. Due to conditions we had only one day on the big fish rivers, and my guide says I missed a monster by a hair's breadth. But that's what keeps you coming back for more. It was on this same river a few years ago that the guide and I saw the largest brown we had either of us ever seen, probably around 20 pounds, shouldering aside the salmon that were trying to share its pool.

As this was late in the season, and the fish had already 'enjoyed' a six months' season, we fished light. Four weight rods, four pound breaking strain tippet, and unweighted #16 nymphs. 10 and 9 pounders caught this way leave a special memory. As you know, each is spotted, stalked, cast to and caught. It's true hunting.

Next season is likely to be a 'mouse year' in many parts. Fly fishermen will come from far and wide to chase the dream of a lifetime brown trout, pumped up with rats and mice swimming the rivers to look for food. Maybe I will be lucky, maybe not. But this trip will live as a special memory for me, and probably for my guide also. I hope you can persuade more of your clients to share the magic that is provided by fishing with the "right" Kiwi guide.

John Part