



THIS ISSUE: FROM THE MECCA OF TROUT FISHING, THE ULTIMATE TROUT NEWSLETTER

- **IMAGES OF NEW ZEALAND**
- **THE JOHN PART REPORT**
- **QUOTES, COMMENTS, AND FISH**
- **REPORT: AN ADRENELIN ADVENTURE**
- **WHAT IS A "MOUSE YEAR".....AND WHY?**
- **STILLWATER STALKING IN NZ**
- **TRAVEL LOGISTICS - AIR**
- **MAY MEMORY PHOTO**

We are in the ninth year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on great fly fishing venues, trip reports and insights for our traveling fly fishers. We've been to most locations and pride ourselves on our ability to research new destinations. Whatever unbiased information on timing and locations we can provide comes at the same cost to you as booking direct – i.e., **NO EXTRA COST.**

IMAGES OF NEW ZEALAND

For those of us who have been fortunate enough to have visited New Zealand more than once, the answer to the question "what makes NZ so special" is difficult to answer in one sentence. There are so many aspects to the uniqueness of a fly rod visit to the land of the Kiwi. Of course, for the fly fisher, this is indeed the Mecca of trout



fishing where trophy sized trout (with an average of almost four pounds) are individually stalked and cast to in an environment that is pristine and truly spectacular. The fish, and the pursuit of those fish, thanks to numerous contributions from a number of anglers, is well documented in this newsletter that is dedicated to this ultimate trout destination.

The top guides provide the finest experience that can be found in the realm of trout fishing and are a joy to share the water with. The people have an exceptional "can do" attitude which makes traveling a pleasure in all parts of the country. And the variety of accommodations, ranging from the finest five-star resorts and fly fishing lodges to comfortable and welcoming farm or home stays, is exceptional.

John Landis took his first visit to NZ early this year. He captured a collection of photos (one of which is at above) which we simply call "Images of New Zealand" and they display the "feel" of the country through the lens of a fly fisher. A portion of Mr. Landis' collection can be viewed through this link: [Images Of New Zealand](#)

THE JOHN PART REPORT



How much experience and knowledge does it take to release more than 40 wily brown trout of over ten pounds? We're fortunate to have someone who has that knowledge and experience and is willing to share it in our newsletter and that person is John Part. John has been taking two trips a year to NZ for several years. He only goes in the early and late season and fishes with the guide that many consider, all things factored in, to be the very top guy in NZ. This is John's third report on his biannual trips. Of note, his report on his October trip did not include taking any double digit fish (it's not automatic).....he reported they did release

over 100 trout, most were 5 to 7 lbs and the largest was 8 lbs – but “no pigs this time.” However, his recent trip this April did include some pigs (photos above and below).

Some excerpts from John’s recent report, including some of the frailties of early and late season NZ weather: “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!



Next season is likely to be a 'mouse year' in many parts of the country. 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 recent 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.”

Note: John’s full report is available – if you’d like to see it, just hit reply and request - will send via e-mail.

QUOTES, COMMENTS, AND FISH

Angus Wilson, on his fourth time in NZ, was joined by Bill Lenehan who was on his first visit and did most of their photography. Bill (with rainbow at left below) commented on his first exposure to the wonders of NZ: “Trip was terrific, fishing was great and everything went off without a hitch. First time in NZ for me, now I know what everyone raves about! Fishing was exceptional.”



Bill and Angus (right, above and left, below) spent their time in and around Fiordland National Park mixing three days of camping with a stay in one of Fiordland’s famous lodges (above). For those who like to mix in some “roughing it”, most guides can arrange a few days of camping in the schedule (Bill and Angus did it on their own). Lots of pretty water!



Angus, stated, “This may have been my best NZ trip. Spectacular fishing, some 15-20 fish days, averaging around four pounds, most on dry flies.....some large fish of 8-9# hooked, but couldn’t get to the net.”

Shirley and Walt Sikes, along with Bert Otterson and Taylor, made their second NZ trip this year, and as they have done in the past combined some touring with their fishing along with a visit to Australia. Taylor, (left below) is new to fly fishing, this being her second endeavor. Her only other fly fishing experience was on their first NZ

trip so she has begun at the top of the fly fishing ladder.....she will have a hard time adjusting to the reality of other waters. This year, in addition to world class NZ and Aussie properties, they included a farm stay while fishing with a special Kiwi guide who's located in one of the less frequently traveled areas of the South Island. Dining is a treat at this farm stay – pictured at dinner is, l to r, Shirly, Bert, Taylor, and Walt. “The farm stay was truly one of the highlights. We felt like it was a relaxing visit with old friends. Clearly we would want to stay there again. A contrast to the high end places, but no less enjoyable,” commented Walt on the stay. Regarding his guide, Walt added, “He is without a doubt one of the best guides I have had anywhere, from Alaska to Africa. He was a joy to be with and I was sorry when my day with him was over at around 10PM. The river valley we fished was one of the most beautiful areas I have fished in NZ, and there are some tough comparisons in Fiordland. As for NZ overall, the friendliness of the people and the grandeur and beauty of the countryside is beyond compare. Yes, the fishing is great, but secondary to the other aspects.” That’s Walt, center below, with a nice brown and to the right, Bert tries to answer the question of “where are all the small fish” with his proof that there ARE some small fish.



Hefting some healthy browns below are Jeff Pisani and, in the blue visor in the center, his friend from South Africa, Jade Laird. Jeff and Jade split their time between the Fiordland Area and the northwest part of the South Island. Both were on their first NZ angling adventure and, as everyone does on their first trip, “on the learning curve” with regard to developing the skills needed in pursuing the most challenging and exciting trout fishing on the globe. As the photos attest, they responded well to the coaching of some excellent guides. Jeff alluded to some of the improvement in his fly fishing skills in his comments: “.....had a great trip. We really liked our guide where we began in Fiordland, he was patient and explained many of the differences between NZ fishing and fishing state side. We got into some fish, not many, but it was definitely a great scene in Fiordland. Fish were a lot spookier than I imagined and took us a while to get our casting down.....”



Jeff continued.....“enjoyed hanging out with the lodge operators up north. On our first day, we saw some fish, landed a couple, not high numbers, but average size 4-6 lbs....great guide.....Following day, had a great one. Double digit numbers netted, 4-6 lbs, casting had improved dramatically so was getting the fly where it needed to be on the first attempt. Next day.....guide put me over fish, got double digit eats, conversion rate wasn't high, landed 3-4 fish all in that 4-6lb range. The fish were amazing.....Jade fished to a couple 8-10 pounders and got them to eat, but didn't get the hook set. Really liked the set up, the stalk fishing and the discriminate brown trout. My kind of fishing and I definitely felt like I came out of this a better angler and can't wait to go back!”



It was a father-son NZ experience for the Chapin's last December. That's Roy III in the blue shirt above and son Roy to the right. They maximized their time by using helicopters to access waters either unreachable by foot or places that would have demanded a lot of leg work.

REPORT: AN ADRENELIN ADVENTURE



Almost every NZ trip has some tough fishing days mixed with great days. Brothers David and Dan Ellis had some of each on their trip last November, and one fish they will never forget. At left is Dan with that double digit brown. We asked Dan if he could relate the experience of taking that fish and here's the story....."Catching my big brown in New Zealand was an adrenalin adventure and a dream come true. David and I had been alternating casting to fish and I just happened to be on deck. Our guide was crouched on a bend on the opposite side of the river. He had spotted a fish on his side of the river and I had made several casts to the fish below the bank he was sitting on. All of a sudden, my guide said "cast up your side 50 feet and out about 6 feet." The fish was on the inside of the bend in not much more than a foot of water. The cast must have been right because on the first cast, I hooked him.

I knew immediately that I had a good fish as he ran up stream taking out a lot of line. The guide was very generous with his coaching on how to fight a large trout.....it was obvious he really wanted to land the fish. The fish charged down stream several times and I worked hard to keep control of my line.....each time, working him back upstream from me where I had a larger degree of control.

It took at least 15 minutes to tire the fish as he kept charging down stream and then coming back up. Occasionally, he would go into the deep water on the far side of the stream and just hold there. Several times we had a stand off with him holding in the deep current on the far side and me worrying about breaking him off with too much pressure. When we landed the brown, he was really tired and so was I. He weighed in at 10 1/2 pounds. I wanted to get him back in the river quickly so we revived him carefully before releasing him to breed and fight again another day.

This was a fish I will never forget. The day was overcast and we had periodic rain squalls. However, when the clouds broke you could see that we were in a beautiful valley with high mountains on each side. The fish, the country and the company make this an unforgettable experience."

WHAT IS A "MOUSE YEAR".....AND WHY?



The three double digit lunkers above have NOTHING to do with "mice years" – they were taken this season, the year before the predicted upcoming "mouse year." The photos on the left were contributed by Joe Potter and Dean Bell and the one on the right by Mick Maloney and Kevin Payne.

This year New Zealand's beech forests are expected to have the heaviest seed-fall in more than a decade according to the Department of Conservation. "It is expected the increased seed-fall will lead to an explosion in the numbers of rats, mice and stoats. Beech trees generally seed every four to five years but weather conditions over the last two summers - a cool summer followed by a warm one - appear to have triggered a bumper seed or 'beech mast' event," says the department.

"Past experience has shown that when a beech mast occurs, it leads to a dramatic rise in mice and rat populations, who feast on the plentiful seed all winter." Mice are prolific breeders. They average 10 to 12 a litter and with a gestation period of only 20 days can have several litters a year - at least. Conservatively, a female

mouse will produce 70 young a year. But in a beech forest seed-fall year with all the food, litters will probably well exceed that. So, potentially mice numbers explode massively. Trout - particularly brown trout - grab the opportunity to feed on this super-protein-rich prey. With that intake, trout pack on condition, growth and size and throughout the years in New Zealand, the super-pigs (fish of 15+ pounds) have been traditionally taken during “mouse years.” Here’s to hoping the Department of Conservation is correct!

STILLWATER STALKING IN NZ



I had a multi-day experience fishing Lake Brunner on my NZ trip this year – my first experience fishing stillwaters in NZ. You may have seen the photo essay on this adventure in one of our newsletters a few months ago. I thoroughly enjoyed the quality of the stalking experience this fishery provided and have four days fishing Brunner scheduled into our NZ itinerary for next year. The short version of why this is an exciting pursuit can be understood by picturing healthy 4 to 6 pound browns weaving their way through the tussocks and submerged tree trunks in the photo at left while you attempt to quietly place the cast to coincide with where the fish will be next. The full story of fishing Lake Brunner is available by clicking on this link to a photo essay.....[Stillwater Stalking Photo Essay](#)

TRAVEL LOGISTICS – AIR

We’ve made this trek from the West Coast of the USA to NZ over a dozen times and have found it to be a very comfortable trip using “lay-flat business class seats” on Air NZ. From San Francisco or LA, you board an early evening flight, have a pre-dinner drink, dinner, and a movie – then retire for a solid eight hours sleep, waking in time for breakfast before disembarking in Auckland. We arrive refreshed and ready for the next step – adjusting to the four hour time change is not a major issue. The AMEX Platinum Card has a “2 for the price of 1” deal on business class seats on Air NZ making the price less painful for the extra comfort. Of course, coming from the east coast would entail a daytime flight to SF or LA to make the connection. Flying coach has a more attractive price, but doesn’t offer the comfort of being able to “lay-flat.”

MAY MEMORY PHOTO

While in NZ this year, we shared time at a lodge with a pleasant Aussie chap, Col Sinclair. Col was a long time NZ visitor, often making the relatively short flight over the Tasman Sea more than once a year. Predictably, some of our evening discussions were focused on trophy brown trout. Col shared some stories of brilliantly copper colored browns from the Snowy Mountains in his native Australia. He followed up on my obvious interest in seeing one of these beautiful fish by sending over the photo at right of this 29 inch fish he took about a month ago. The fish in this area take on the copper hue when they make their spawning run from a lake into the adjoining streams.



If you’d like to see possible NZ itineraries, drop us an e-mail.

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,
Don Muelrath
Fly Fishing Adventures
www.flyfishingadventures.org
888-347-4896