

# On the Rise



## Catchment and Water Management Planning for Lakes Sorell and Crescent, and the Clyde River

The water resources of lakes Sorell and Crescent and the Clyde River are in demand from a wide range of competing users – including farmers for irrigation and stock watering, townfolk of Bothwell and Hamilton for domestic water supply, carp management requirements, commercial eel fishers, trout anglers, and other recreational users. The aquatic ecosystem, itself, also has specific water requirements that need to be considered in managing and allocating water resources.

In addition to these demands on the system, the drought conditions of the last few years have meant that the lakes have not refilled to their usual levels after the summer season. Low lake water levels have brought with them concerns for the health of the wetlands, water quality, and the native and recreational fish populations.

Now is the time to seek a balance between all these competing demands and to agree on a strategy for using, developing and conserving the lakes' resources which will ensure the sustainable management of the system as a whole.

*Lake Crescent with wetlands in the foreground*



The IFS has recently appointed a Project Officer – as part of the Lake Sorell and Crescent Rehabilitation Project – to begin work on catchment and water management plans for lakes Sorell and Crescent, and a water management plan for the Clyde River.

The water management plans – for lakes Sorell and Crescent, and the Clyde River – will be driven by the new *Water Management Act* (1999) which recognises three critical issues:

- 1 Australia's water resources are coming under increasing pressure and are rapidly becoming degraded. They need to be managed in a sustainable way now or they will not be viable in the future.
- 2 A reliable supply of clean water is critical to the future development and economic growth of the country.
- 3 Healthy riparian aquatic ecosystems are an important factor in maintaining good quality water. Aquatic ecosystems have specific water requirements, known as 'environmental water requirements', which also need to be considered in managing and allocating water resources.

The lakes Sorell and Crescent Catchment Management Plan will be prepared to provide a management strategy – incorporating all the land use and environmental issues – aimed at achieving a sustainable balance between using, developing and conserving the natural resources of the area. The Catchment Management Plan will include the lakes' water management plan, and together they will form part of the larger Derwent Catchment Management Plan, which is currently being developed by the Upper Derwent Valley Landcare Group and the Central Highlands Council.

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# Christmas Message from the Minister



I'd like to join with Greg McCrossen, Director of Inland Fisheries, to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a safe summer's fishing.

Like me, Mr McCrossen is concerned about public safety whilst boating. Together with Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) and the Tasmania Police, the Inland Fisheries Service will be making a point of checking boats and boaters throughout the summer months to ensure that they have the standard safety equipment on board.

I look forward to reporting next year on key projects of the Inland Fisheries Service, including

the development of the Western Lakes Management Plan and the Lakes Sorell and Crescent Rehabilitation Project, which involves the preparation of new water and catchment management plans for the area.

I'd like also to take this opportunity to commend the Service, and the Carp management team in particular, for their hard work this year in combatting the spread of carp in Tasmania.

David Llewellyn  
Minister for Inland Fisheries

## Catchment and Water Management Planning

...continued from page one

Development of the plans will rely heavily on community and stakeholder participation. They are intended to reflect the needs of the people who use and rely on the resources rather than applying a 'handed down strategy' that may have been adequate elsewhere. Therefore, local input is essential. An open, public consultation process is being planned which will involve public meetings, circulation of questionnaires and interviews with relevant interest groups. It is hoped that all interested parties will attend the meetings and/or contribute so that everyone's concerns for the water resources and the lakes catchment area can be raised and addressed.

For further information on the Project, contact Jenny Deakin, Inland Fisheries Service, on 6233 3960 or email [Jenny.Deakin@ifs.tas.gov.au](mailto:Jenny.Deakin@ifs.tas.gov.au). Information can also be obtained from the IFS website at [www.ifs.tas.gov.au](http://www.ifs.tas.gov.au) and regular updates on the project will be available in future issues of *On the Rise*.

# Tasmania's Giant Freshwater Lobster

The latest news regarding the world's largest freshwater lobster, Tasmania's endemic *Astacopsis gouldi*, concerns public awareness and attitudes. The species is classified as endangered under threatened species legislation, resulting in a recent ban on recreational fishing. Although this action is aimed at preserving remaining *A. gouldi* populations, compliance with the fishing ban and community participation in protecting the lobster and its preferred habitat, are required to ensure the long term viability of the species.

The good news is that the level of awareness and concern for the decline of the lobster has increased significantly amongst local communities and the general public in the North and North West of the State. This is due in part to the successful education campaign (funded under the Natural Heritage Trust and IFS) for the giant freshwater lobster, which has been running in the North for the past two years.

It seems that people are beginning to identify strongly with the lobster and there is a general desire to do something to halt its demise. Community groups such as Water-

watch, Landcare, Bushcare and Rivercare are already assisting – specifically in the recovery of habitat – and generally, in repairing damaged ecosystems and waterways. With this level of genuine community support, the job of the Inland Fisheries Service in protecting the lobster is made easier, and the future of the species seems promising although there is a long way to go.

The bad news is that illegal fishing is still a major threat to the species long term survival. Although the majority of people ceased fishing for lobsters when it became illegal several years ago, there is still a small minority putting increasing pressure on remaining populations. This pressure will severely limit the recovery of the species and is likely to heavily impact on populations that are established in remote areas.

The general public has a vital role to play in the reduction of lobster fishing by reporting any illegal activities to the IFS, Parks & Wildlife Service, Police or Bushwatch. Evidence may include baitlines (predominantly baling twine), ring nets and craypots – the main items used in the fishing – as well as floats in the water, ropes leading to the



Giant freshwater lobster (*A. gouldi*) confiscated from poachers at the Inglis River last year

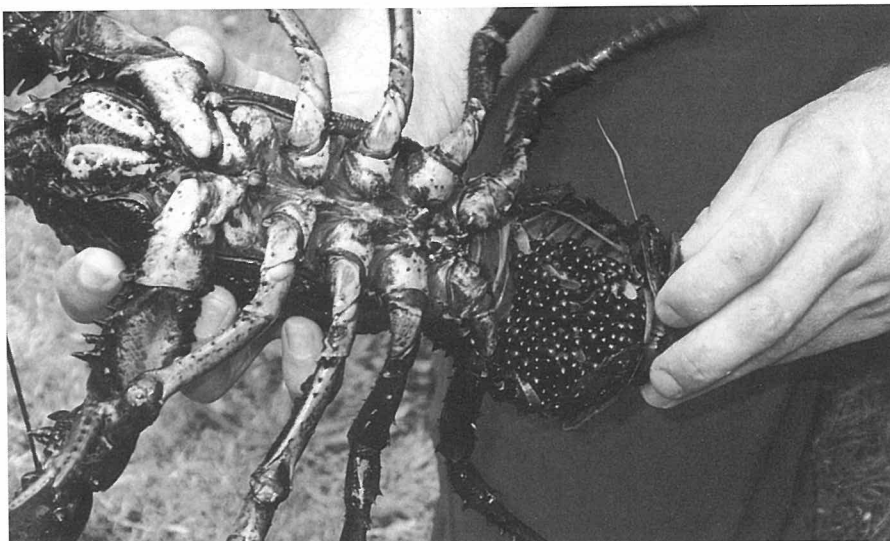
bank, baling twine or cord tied to trees and in the water. Please do not remove or touch these items – just report their presence to IFS or the other agencies mentioned in this article. Information about people being in possession of lobsters is also useful, considering that the maximum penalty for being in possession of a fish is \$10 000!

The fishing community in particular can assist by playing a monitoring role, observing poachers, and noting and reporting poaching activities. The speedy 'passing-on' of accurate information is vital. The area in which the illegal taking of lobsters occurs is vast and a delay of even 24 hours dramatically reduces the chance of a prosecution.

People to call include the Department of Inland Fisheries Lobster project officer on 0409 582 067, Ulverstone Inspector on 6425 7219, any Police Station and the Bushwatch hotline: 1800 005 555. All these contacts do not require you to state your name. Bushwatch will even give the caller a code to use when calling at a later date to follow up on any developments.

In conclusion, the same support shown by the general public for the recovery of the giant freshwater lobster in the State's northern catchments, is needed now to help stop poaching. The illegal taking of lobsters is a crime against society – and future society – should the species become extinct.

Confiscated female lobster, showing eggs under the tail



# Lakes Sorell and Crescent Rehabilitation Project

**The lake system of lakes Sorell and Crescent is an important inland water resource to Tasmania. It has supported a commercial eel fishery, significant recreational trout fishery, and hosts endemic fish and invertebrate communities in addition to important wetlands. The system has the added pressure of downstream water demands for irrigation and stock and domestic purposes, as well as multiple land uses surrounding the lakes including forestry and agriculture.**

To make matters worse, European carp have also been introduced to the lakes, posing a potential threat to water quality as well as the lakes' other ecological values. Furthermore, the continuation of unprecedented drought conditions in the catchment, with record low lake levels, has resulted in a severe decline in water quality, particularly over the past 12 months.

The Lakes Sorell and Crescent Rehabilitation Project, which was initiated by the Inland Fisheries Service in response to a marked decline in fisheries, wetlands and water quality of lakes Sorell and Crescent, is now well underway with about 18 months left to run. It aims to develop innovative techniques for assessing native fish, restoring water quality, protecting wetlands and controlling carp, as well as preparing new catchment and water management plans for the area.



**Golden galaxias (*G. auratus*) – a key focus for the lakes' aquatic fauna**

The Project has been designed to take an integrated approach to solving the current problems, with the key issues being investigated through a combination of monitoring, research investigations and on-ground works – coordinated under a series of overarching management plans.

The Project team includes five members appointed through the Commonwealth government's Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) who are investigating water quality, wetlands and aquatic fauna, and an additional State funded Water/Catchment Management Planner. They join the Lakes' Carp Management team whose efforts in controlling carp populations are assisting the Project goals by preventing further deterioration of water quality, wetlands and fauna of the lake system. The carp problem is being addressed specifically by a State funded Carp Management Program as well as a Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) research project.

The catchment and water management plans (see article, this issue) will result in a

new catchment plan for lakes Sorell and Crescent, and a water management plan for the Clyde catchment. Both of these will also form an important part of the catchment plan for the Derwent River, which is currently being developed by the Upper Derwent Valley Landcare Group and the Central Highlands Council.

When completed, the NHT component of the Project will deliver a series of reports on

water quality, wetlands and aquatic fauna, providing detailed technical advice on rehabilitation and protection of these values for direct inclusion in the catchment and water management plans. The reports will also deliver standard techniques and methodologies for monitoring water quality and other ecological values, and will establish a program for future monitoring until the lakes are restored to a healthy state.

## **Low water levels at Lake Sorell taken last summer**



## Lakes Sorell and Crescent Rehabilitation Project – Progress Report

### **Community consultation**

Opportunities for community involvement in the consultative stages of the catchment and water management plans are being planned. The Project team has begun networking with stakeholders and presentations have been given to angling associations, landowners and irrigators in relation to the scope and objectives of the Project.

### **Water quality**

The major progress in monitoring and evaluation to date has been in relation to water quality. Given the detailed historical data set available and the intensive study since April, a clear understanding of the relationship of water quality to lake level has been established. This information has already been applied to management decisions on water allocations for the coming irrigation season.

### **Wetlands and native fish**

Preliminary observations on the health of wetlands and native fish populations are encouraging. Large fish populations in both lakes have been observed, as well as significant regeneration of macrophytes in marshes following spring rainfall – despite the water being well below inundation levels for a protracted period of time.

### **Carp**

The risk from carp populations in both lakes appears to be diminishing with a steady decline in numbers over the past few years. Latest population estimates in Lake Crescent indicate that fewer than 600 individuals remain and in Lake Sorell the population remains too small to estimate. Another positive fact is that there has been no recruitment detected in Lake Sorell since the summer spawning of 1997/98 (which was very small) and none in Lake Crescent since 1996/97.

### **Capital works**

The capital construction phase of the Project has already been completed, with work on Mountain Creek erosion stabilisation and fish control, and the duplication of the Lake Crescent outlet capacity. Both tasks were completed on time, and all objectives were met. The Mountain Creek work has prevented further declines in water quality due to channel erosion, and has increased the Service's overall management control allowing increased capacity for releasing water from the system and enabling manipulation of the trout population to assist in the 'top-down' predator control of ecosystem characteristics. Duplication of the Lake Crescent outlet, meanwhile has allowed greater flexibility for water level management in order to meet the wide range of project objectives.

# Farm dams and fish passage – Status Report



*Cam River weir – the smooth flow over the submerged boulders (right half of picture) would make upstream passage of small fish difficult. Breaking up the flow with an array of large boulders that break the surface would make this barrier far more 'fish-friendly'.*

**Agriculture is a very important component of Tasmania's economy, and to operate efficiently the industry needs, as much as reasonably possible, a guaranteed supply of water. The very dry conditions in recent years have increased the demand for water storages – that is, dams – to provide a buffer against times of low supply.**

Although many dams are constructed off-stream, there are currently several thousand in-stream dams, with applications for the construction of more dams appearing at a steady rate. It is these in-stream dams that are of particular concern because they obstruct the free passage of fish along the waterways.

Species impacted by dams and weirs include the Tasmanian whitebait, jollytail, spotted mountain trout, climbing galaxias, mudfish, Tasmanian smelt, Australian grayling, freshwater flathead, shortfinned and long-finned eels, short-headed lamprey, pouched lamprey, yellow eye and sea mullet, giant freshwater lobster, freshwater shrimp and black bream.

Many of these species migrate between fresh and marine water to complete their life cycles, and it is these species in particular that are affected by in-stream barriers. Of these, whitebait are of greatest concern to the Service and the community. Adequate populations of some whitebait species are required not only to ensure the species' long-term survival but also to sustain the recreational whitebait industry.

Adults of whitebait species spawn in the rivers during periods of high flow and their eggs or larvae are washed down into the estuaries and the sea. The larval fish then make their way back up the rivers where they grow into adults and complete their life cycle.

In-stream dams often stop the whitebait in their tracks. The weirs cause mass aggregations of fish at their base, which



*Martin Mallen-Cooper making notes at Blythe River weir.*

*Smooth (laminar) flow around the edge of the Emu River dam, combined with high flow rate, makes this an impossible obstacle to most fish.*



often become stranded and are easy pickings for cormorants, seagulls, herons and whitebait fishers—resulting in extensive (and unsustainable) fish kills. For those that do get away, the area of stream habitat for spawning is greatly reduced, since habitat upstream of the dams cannot be used. This has led to a decline in native fish populations and the long-term prospects for some whitebait species are not great.

Applications to build farm dams must now undergo an approval process, which includes an assessment of the impact on fish passage. The Inland Fisheries Service has a representative on the Technical Advisory Committee to the Assessment Committee on Dam Construction (TAC-ACDC) to conduct this assessment and wherever possible, to ensure that new dams are made 'fish-friendly' by incorporating a fish pass into the design.

Unfortunately the solution to fish passage is not as simple as requiring each in-stream dam to have a fish pass on it. At this stage, there are still a number of questions that need to be answered, including: what is the best type of fish pass for a particular dam; what fish pass designs are most suited to the fish species found in Tasmania; and if a stream already has several dams on it, all without fish passes, does it make sense to require a fish pass to be built on a new dam on the same stream?

These issues were addressed at a national conference on weirs and fish passage, held in Sydney last August. However, both the fish species and the dams in mainland states are often quite different from those in Tasmania, so a direct transfer of ideas and technology is not always appropriate.

To help devise local solutions to local fish passage problems, a three day workshop was held in the north-west of the State in early November. It was attended by staff of Inland Fisheries and the Land and Water Conservation Branch of DPIWE, and was guided by Dr Martin Mallen-Cooper – a fish passage consultant from NSW.

The workshop visited several dams to assess possible solutions for fish passage and included ideas and discussion led by Dr Mallen-Cooper. Some of the weirs visited included stream-gauging weirs that could

# Western Lakes Management Plan Reference Group Workshop Outcomes

**The stakeholder Reference Group workshop for developing the Western Lakes Fishery Management plan was held on 11-12 October. The workshop was the first stage in a three phase consultation process, with independent facilitator Stephen Noga running proceedings.**

The workshop, which was designed to bring together stakeholders representing a wide range of views, contained the following participants:

David Clarke, Angler representative, NW Coast

Les Monson, Freshwater Anglers Council of Tasmania

Ashley Artis, World Heritage Area Consultative Committee

David Goss, Angler representative, Southern Tas

Dan Dempsey, Angler representative, Northern Tas

Brett Wolf, Trout Guides & Lodges Tasmania

Richard Dax, Tourism Council of Aust. (Tas Branch)

Jean Jackson (IFS) and Mike Driessen (DPIWE), Conservation Issues

Rob Sloane, Fisheries Management Issues

Chris Wisniewski (IFS), Fisheries Management Issues

Fisheries management representatives were selected by the Service for their specific areas of expertise, with all other members being nominated by their respective interest groups.

The role of the Reference Group was to develop a vision for the future management of the Western Lakes, identify relevant issues and discuss a range of management options to suit the vision.

In order to develop the vision, workshop participants were first asked to consider the Western Lakes fishery twenty years from now. There was general consensus amongst the

group on the need to preserve the unique wilderness values of the Western Lakes fishery; and the need to balance the requirements of recreational anglers with the conservation of the environment and its unique aquatic fauna, was a point that came through very strongly.

The workshop discussed a wide range of topics, such as angling seasons, bag and size limits, management zones, conservation, and protection of native species, boating, education, communication and wading, just to name a few. There was general agreement on most of these issues, which came as no surprise given the shared vision of reference group members.

The service is close to completing the Issues and Options Paper – arising from the Reference Group workshop – with the next step being a review of its contents by the Inland Fisheries Advisory Council, Parks and Wildlife Service and the Minister. Release of the Issues and Options paper is expected to be early in the New Year, with the draft plan being released mid year and the final plan in late 2001.

While this may seem a considerable amount of time, the Service is very conscious of the need to consult widely and importantly, to get it right. The success of this management plan is paramount if the Service is to secure funding for future management plans for the State's other fisheries.

It is up to you as an individual and interested angler to show your support for the process and make a thoughtful submission on how you think the Western Lakes should be managed for the long term future.

A summary of the Reference Group Workshop is available on the Service's web site, at [www.ifs.tas.gov.au](http://www.ifs.tas.gov.au). If you would like to discuss the process or specific issues, contact Rob Freeman on phone 62 333348 or email [robfi@ifs.tas.gov.au](mailto:robfi@ifs.tas.gov.au).



**Dr Martin Mallen-Cooper measuring the depth of the pools in the fish ladder on the Emu River.**

be removed or lowered without losing the stream-gauging abilities. Others, seen as important barriers to upstream movement of whitebait, were identified for removal or the addition of a fish pass.

A project – aimed at providing practical solutions to the impact of weirs on Tasmanian freshwater fish populations – was prepared, and recently received the 'green light' through funds provided the Natural Heritage Trust. The Weir Removal Project will be run by the IFS, in collaboration with Water Assessment Branch (DPIWE) staff.

The Project proposes to survey weirs throughout Tasmania and assess their suitability for removal or determine methods facilitating fish passage, and to remove selected weirs identified as having outlived their usefulness. The aims are to improve fish passage and sustain migratory freshwater fish populations; and to involve local communities in the process of identifying and removing weirs.

For further information about the Project, contact Warwick Nash, Inland Fisheries Service on phone 6233 3548 or email [warwickn@ifs.tas.gov.au](mailto:warwickn@ifs.tas.gov.au).

## Got an *Idea* but just haven't got the *Money*?

**Do you, or your Club, have an idea for a project that could be eligible to receive funding from the Fisheries Action Program? It could be a large State project or it may be an improvement to your favourite local fishing spot. This is the last year for the Fisheries Action Program (the aquatic part of the Natural Heritage Trust Program) – so don't miss out!**

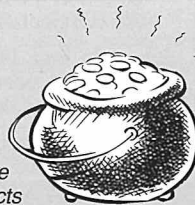
A call for projects will start in December and close in February. Projects must extend over one year. Assistance is available to develop ideas into a suitable project and preparing documents for funding application.

*Examples of some of the previously funded projects include:*

- Monitoring the distribution of introduced pests
- Rehabilitation of habitats
- Education projects
- Developing a charter boat plan and accreditation scheme
- Identification and removal of redundant weirs
- Fishcare Volunteers
- Sampling fish for heavy metal pollution

*Eligible projects are ones that address one or more of the following targets:*

- Restoring and protecting fish habitat



- Encouraging community participation in activities to improve fisheries ecosystems
- Controlling aquatic pests
- Ensuring that fishing is sustainable and responsible
- Raising awareness
- Promoting related research
- Habitat conservation

*Ineligible projects are ones that:*

- Provide personal gain
- Propose establishment of introduced fish or plants
- Contravene legal or planning requirements under State or Local Government law

For further information about the Program and assistance with the development of your idea or project, call Avril Brown, Fisheries Action Program, on 6233 2033 as soon as possible.

## OTHER THAN TROUT

A regular article on animals of interest to the angler

# Native Fish of Great Lake

by Andrew Harvey, Technical Officer

**Great Lake is the natural habitat of four species of native fish—the Great Lake and Shannon paragalaxias (*Paragalaxias electroides* and *P. dissimilis*) and the spotted and climbing galaxias (*Galaxias truttaceus* and *G. brevipinnis*).**

The Great Lake paragalaxias is endemic to Tasmania and is found only in Great Lake, Shannon and Penstock lagoons. It is a small, stout fish with a blunt head and rarely exceeds 55 mm in length. It is golden brown in colour with irregular brown speckled patches becoming more diffuse down the sides. It is a secretive, bottom-dwelling species that feeds on small aquatic insect larvae. Its life cycle is entirely in fresh water and it probably lives for two years. Spawning occurs in spring.

The Shannon paragalaxias is also endemic to Tasmania and is common around the rocky margins of Great Lake. It is also present in Shannon and Penstock lagoons. It is a small, bullet-shaped fish, with a long and flattened head. It is variable in colour, ranging from olive green to almost black on the back with dark blotches on the sides and olive-gold iridescence on the gill covers and belly. During the day it is found amongst cover around the lake margins, possibly feeding at night in more open water. Spawning occurs in summer with the larvae probably living in open waters for the first six months.

Both species are listed as vulnerable under the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*. The listing reflects their limited natural range and threats including water level changes, trout predation and introduction of exotic fish or fish from other waters.

The spotted galaxias, *G. truttaceus*, is a common species throughout Tasmania and also occurs in the south east and south west of mainland Australia. Both landlocked and migratory riverine populations are known. The landlocked populations of Great Lake spawn in spring, unlike migratory populations that spawn in winter or autumn. Adults display a number of distinctive markings. Haloed spots occur on the side and sometimes on the back. A dark bar behind the pectoral fins and black edges on the dorsal, pelvic and anal fins are consistent features. The fins are usually pale orange to bright orange-red in colour while the body colouration varies from brown to dark purplish-black. This species is one of the larger galaxiids, reaching 200 mm in length. It feeds on a wide range of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates.

The climbing galaxias, *G. brevipinnis*, also occurs throughout Tasmania and has both riverine and landlocked populations. It also occurs in south-eastern Australia as well as parts of New Zealand. Landlocked populations breed in spring and schools of juvenile fish can be seen in summer around the margins of the lake. The climbing galaxias is the largest of the Tasmanian galaxiids,

reaching 270 mm and commonly to 200 mm. The general colouration is medium to dark brown with a lighter background and belly. Markings vary from bold chevron-shaped bands to irregular blotches or spots. It has a large flattened head, undercut lower jaw and thick, fleshy fins. The species is an aggressive upstream migrant and is known for its ability to climb vertical waterfalls and rock faces. The fish is a generalistic invertebrate carnivore and feeds on a wide

variety of insects and other life forms. Riverine populations of both the spotted and climbing galaxias form part of the annual whitebait run.

While the spotted and climbing galaxias can survive in the presence of trout, the high population densities in trout-free waters indicate the effect of trout predation. Neither species is officially considered threatened, although their habitats continue to be fragmented and disturbed throughout their range.

Spotted galaxias, *G. truttaceus*



## Marine and Safety Tasmania

**The projects MAST proposed for Inland Waters this year are now complete. Those facilities that have recently been upgraded, are as follows:**

Johnstone Road (between Breona and Brandum Bay), Great Lake – the removal of large surface rocks from the ramp and the resheeting of this ramp with compacted gravel.

Brandum Bay, Great Lake – additional gravel has been placed on this facility to meet the waters edge.

Jonah Bay, Arthurs Lake – compacted gravel placed to the left of the ramp, widening this ramp for extra vessels to launch at any one time.

Arthurs Dam, Arthurs Lake – compacted gravel placed to the right of the ramp – widening this ramp for additional vessels to launch.

Todds Corner, Great Lake – removal of large surface rocks and the placement of compacted gravel, formalising the use of this ramp.

Strathgordon Bay is due to commence within the month with the removal of the concrete sleeper boat ramp to be replaced with a solid concrete ramp.



Arthurs Dam



Johnston Rd



Jonah Bay



Todds Corner

# NATIVE FISH NEWS

## Captive breeding update

Captive breeding trials for threatened galaxias species, which were described in the last issue of *On the Rise* have progressed reasonably well. Clarence galaxias spawned naturally in aquariums, Swan galaxias spawned in a large outdoor pond and eggs were also stripped from both species and fertilised in petri dishes. Only a small proportion of these eggs have developed successfully, with losses through unfertilised eggs and fungi infections. The first larvae of both species hatched in mid November and were 8-9 mm long. The challenge now is to get the tiny larvae feeding and to provide them with an adequate and constant food supply. They are currently being fed small live freshwater animals such as rotifers and microcrustaceans from the fertilising ponds.

*Captive breeding pond at Liawenee*



## Recovery plan funding continued

The ongoing recovery plan work on threatened fish is funded by the Natural Heritage Trust, along with in-kind funding from IFS and other stakeholders. The funding from NHT has been continued for the year Oct 2000-Sept 2001, although at a reduced level. The following year will be the final year of the current recovery plan.

## Regular monitoring surveys

As part of the recovery plan for five threatened galaxias species, all known populations of each species are visited at least once a year. Heavy rains and late snowfalls delayed surveys on the Central Plateau and East Coast this spring. Nevertheless, most populations were found to be doing well, with the exception of a Swan galaxias population, which remains under threat from predation by brown trout. Other recovery plan work includes: protecting populations from habitat degradation (e.g. vegetation clearing, drops in lake levels, damming) and trout invasion; searching for new population sites; captive breeding trials described above; and increasing public awareness of native fish and threatened species in particular.

*Filming Swan galaxias with Animal Hospital.*



# Fly Fishing around the Lakes

By Jim Ferrier

**Fly fishers have had a disappointing season to date. The weather has not contributed to consistent fishing with the regular arrival of inches of fresh water, snow and gales in the high country, resulting in a late season. However, the increase in water levels in some of the major storages is particularly welcome and we will reap the benefit later in the season.**

Arthurs Lake is a case in point. The level is up but the fish still seem to be confined to the deep water. The trollers, fishing two or three colours down, are being successful but fly fishers, who by the very nature of their techniques are rarely more than 2 metres from the surface, are struggling.

Each season, we watch with anxious anticipation for the first of the dry fly fishing in the emergence of stoneflies along the shores of the Lily Pond and the Opening at Arthurs Lake. It's not unknown for an angler to kick the saggs to start an artificial 'hatch' but even this highly reprehensible ploy has not served this season. Quite respectable falls of gum beetle also have been ignored.

Duns, in numbers, are at last being seen at Arthurs and Little Pine and for those of us who like to nymph fish 'on the drop', this is good news.

Little Pine has reported many tailing fish from first light. It almost seems that they know that the angler is there as they fossick around just under the rod tip. A very small green nymph with a tiny orange head, in the hands of a skilled angler, has undone some fish but the size and condition has been disappointing and they are not up to the expected Little Pine standard. Pressure is steadily mounting among the Little Pine regulars for a rethink of the bag limit and management strategies.

With the early opening of "The Gate", the Western Lakes and Nineteen Lagoons has seen the usual influx of anglers. Masses of water everywhere will mean good recruitment but catches have been lean. The backwater around Kaye and Ada are always worth a look especially at dawn but for the slovenly, that's an awful early start from town. There is a feeling that this area is just about to 'fire' and that it will be spectacular when it does.

Great Lake, particularly Tods Corner is usually reliable at this time of the year, and reports of beetle falls and big rainbows working the wind lanes are coming in. The degree of difficulty remains high with refusals the norm.

Four Springs continues to give up big fish in superb condition to the dedicated angler. The stocking policy for the future must be managed sensitively if we are to maintain the quality for which the Management Plan calls. Mudeyes, both natural and artificial, seem to be the best as is dawn and dusk.

Curries River Dam, after poor last season has 'fired' and some very nice fish are being caught. Again, dedication and perseverance have been the key. The Service's stocking policy appears to be working though this water continues to be one of the more difficult to fish.

As was said at the beginning, this season is late but this could change quickly and dry fly and nymph fishing could 'take off' with a bang and you may be sure that I, along with many others, will be there to enjoy the sport that the Highlands has to offer.

*Woods Lake (saddled galaxias habitat) at low levels in May 2000.*



# Around The Lakes – Trout Spawning Summary 2000

## Penstock Lagoon

Only a small number of rainbow trout were sampled, therefore, the figures shown should be read with care. However, while the average weight and length were down on last year, the average condition factor remained relatively stable.

Due to low flows, there has been no successful spawning of brown trout at Penstock

Lagoon for several seasons. As a consequence, supplementary stocking has been undertaken with 500 adult brown trout transferred from Great Lake and 6 000 advanced brown trout fry released in December 1999.

This year, all 37 rainbow trout sampled were tagged with a distinctive yellow IFS tag, just below the dorsal fin. Anglers have already captured nine of these tagged fish this season.

seasons, with significant gains in weight noted for most size classes.

All 1 409 brown trout caught in the new fish trap at Mountain Creek were tagged with a distinctive yellow IFS tag, just below the dorsal fin.

Only a very small number of rainbow trout spawned, therefore no weight or length data was collected.

## Tagged fish

Anglers who capture an IFS-tagged fish are requested to note the tag number, the date captured, species, and length and weight of the fish, and return these details to Tim Farrell at the Inland Fisheries Service.

Water	Species	Date	Sample	Ave length (mm)	Length range (mm)	Ave weight (g)	Weight range (g)	Ave Cond. Fact.
Great Lake	Brown Trout	20-24 May 2000	200 combined male & female	413	339-511	783	480-1340	1.11
Great Lake	Rainbow Trout	27-Sep-00	200 combined male & female	467	392 - 582	1072	650 - 1 900	1.06
Lake Sorell	Brown Trout	15 May-11 Aug 2000	1409 combined male & female	405	217 - 556	795	120 - 1 650	1.17
Arthurs Lake	Brown Trout	8-Jun-00	200 combined male & female	431	224 - 527	899	120 - 1 480	1.11
Lagoon of Islands	Rainbow Trout	13-Aug-00	200 combined male & female	487	362 - 603	1 328	650 - 2 150	1.15
Penstock Lagoon	Rainbow Trout	14 Sep & 5 Oct 2000	37 combined male & female	450	377 - 610	1 246	680 - 2 900	1.34

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Any comments, suggestions, contributions or ideas for articles would be most welcome and should be addressed to:

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## Lagoon of Islands

Very few brown trout spawned due to low water levels (no data was collected).

The rainbow run was very successful with a good number of fish observed spawning. All fish were in good condition, although the average size of rainbow trout in the lagoon has declined over recent seasons.

## Great Lake

A good run of mostly younger brown trout occurred in Liawenee Canal. This resulted in a moderate decrease in the average size of fish in the spawning run this year.

The number of rainbows spawning at Great Lake was down on previous years. However, the condition and average weight of fish were similar to previous years.

## Arthurs Lake

The spawning run at Arthurs Lake was very successful with good numbers of well conditioned brown trout spawning in Hydro Creek. Fish were of a similar length and weight as last season.

## Lake Sorell

An estimated 2000 brown trout spawned in Mountain Creek. In general the condition of fish has improved markedly over previous

## Lake Leake thank you

by Viv Spencer

**Sometimes things just happen, work is done without any fuss, nothing is said but I can assure you that people – in the know – appreciate the effort.**

A few months ago I called into Lake Leake. The lake was so low that I was able to see new cement work at the main boat ramp, just along from the dam. When I inquired, I was informed by Mr Alan Chivers, the Lake Leake caretaker, that the Northern Midlands Council had approved the ramp extensions and that the job was completed by Alan and the Works Supervisor, Brian Cox.

Alan said that when the lake was low last season, he'd had to retrieve two bogged vehicles. "That made the job worth doing."

I think all those who use the ramp in future will agree and 'thank you' for a job well done.

## Prosecutions

### Infringement notices

Offence	Number
Fish without a licence .....	1
Unattended set rod .....	1
Possession of assembled rod & line.....	1
Use excess rods .....	2
Take more than 1 kg of whitebait.....	3

### Court proceedings

Offences that were proceeded with by summons are listed below.

Offender	Location	Offences Summary	Total fine + costs (\$)
Paul Lawrence SMITH, Devonport	(Bells Parade, Mersey River)	Use net, Take whitebait	1 200-00
Paul Lawrence SMITH, Devonport	(Rubicon River)	Possess net, use net, possess net, use net, take whitebait	3 024-20
Simon Paul SMITH, Devonport	(Bells Parade, Mersey River)	Use net, Take whitebait	1224-20
Nathan John SMITH, Devonport	(Bells Parade, Mersey River)	Take whitebait	624-20
Amanda Rose HAMPTON, Devonport	(Bells Parade, Mersey River)	Possess net, use net, possess whitebait, take whitebait	924-10
Peter Elizabeth HAMPTON, Sulphur Creek	(Bells Parade, Mersey River)	Possess net, use net, possess whitebait, take whitebait	424-10
Phillip George THOW, East Devonport	(Bells Parade, Mersey River)	Possess whitebait	285-30
Trevor John EVERNETT, East Devonport	(Bells Parade, Mersey River)	Use net, take whitebait	524-20
Peter Warren George LAMBERT, Forest	(Deep Creek)	Take whitebait	785-30
Dean Thomas DAVEY, Deloraine	(Western Creek)	Unlicensed, assembled rod and line	235-66
Gerald David KELLY, Prospect	(Brumbys Creek)	Unlicensed	235-30
Horace Albert JAMES, Devonport	(Rubicon River)	Possess whitebait, use whitebait net	558-10
Edward Louis ARCHER, Bothwell	(Lake Sorell)	Fish commercially for eels on a public holiday	535-30
Leon Darrel CUBIT, West Hobart	(Lake Sorell)	Fish commercial for eels on a public holiday	535-30