

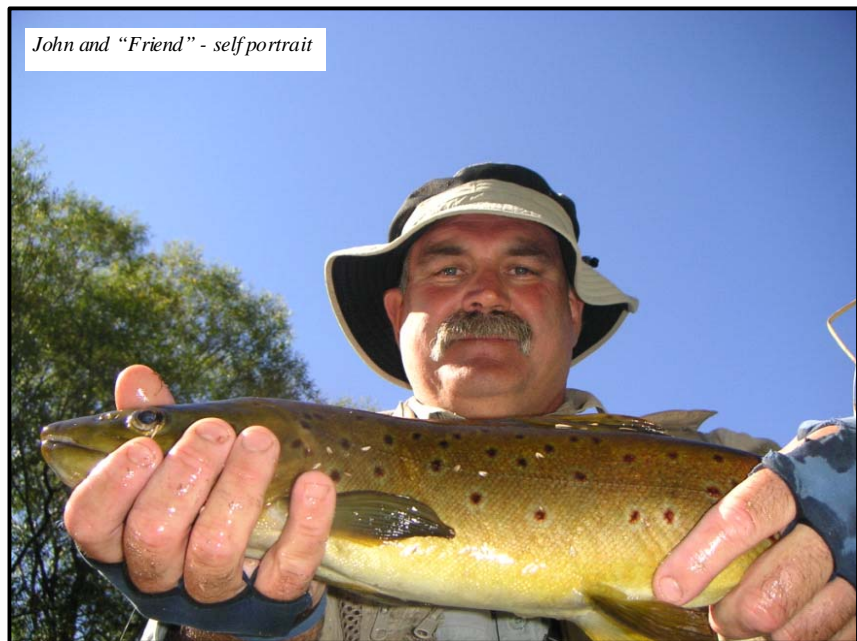
New Zealand 2007

While some members were thinking about a trip to Tasmania in February I was off to land of the long white cloud NZ. 9 days of exploring the top of the south island 1 man, a small van, food, a map, fishing gear plus the extra you always buy and no beer what am I saying some beer and a little gin and tonic.

I set off from Christchurch heading north to Hanmer Springs, great hot spa in the town and a pretty little town a bit like Bright, it was late afternoon when I got to the Clarence River fished until almost dark and caught three fish, it's always great to get that first fish under your belt. The next morning had a short fish before the sky opened up time to get off the mountain, so back to town for a spa.

It rained for almost two days which turned the rivers dirty, so thinking about what to

do over a great coffee I made the decision to find a lake with a river running out of it, hoping it would be clean. Off I headed to Lake Rotoroa, the stream looked a bit like Brumbies in Tassie, the lake looked superb but no fish, OK lets try the river back down stream to a fisherman's access point, on goes the fishing gear and down to a small sign and there it was Didymo warning "this stream is effected by Didymo". What



John and "Friend" - self portrait

surprised me was that the sign was less than A4 I was expecting big neon sign saying "keep out, rock snot in this stream", I promptly turned around and when straight back to the supermarket and purchase a bucket, scrubbing brush, bleach and disinfectant.

A friendly tackle shop owner said that another day should see the river start to clear, now I am telling you there is not much to do at Murchison apart from fishing, so it was off to Reefton not much better but rivers where clear the Jacks river, the Little Greys (very tea coloured) and the Greys itself.

I caught fish up to three pound in all the streams, but it was the Moonlight stream that I found the best for sight fishing, spooked a fish of double figures.

Greymouth for one night just to say Ive been there, then on to the Arnold River and Lake Brunner. The Arnold was running a banker, but tried in vein to get out to some fish but that was it to fast and limited access. Lake Brunner is a haven for water skiers like 50 or 60 boats, but had a great night at the local pub watching Aussie bet NZ, I kept very quiet.

Next two days I fished a small stream near Lake Brunner and had my best fishing, fish up to 4lb smallest was 2lb, clear water and sight fished all day. I love watching the take, in this case it was small black emerger and unweighted nymph.



Releasing another fine Brownie

Moving on to the Crooked River a clear blue coloured stream, nice runs, again fish about the three pound mark but I can say I was broken off by a 10lb fish in this river. There he was sitting over a rock which was about 1 metre in diameter and he covered the rock so you guess, the only problem was the climb down the 5m embankment over the very large rocks and if I was lucky enough to hook him how will I land him, you guess it I hooked up and within 5

seconds he and my two nymph rig where gone under a rock, I guess that's why their get so big.

The last day was a bit disappointing I thought there would be some fishable water near Christchurch, but every stream I looked on the map where low and dry, over all I had a good trip fished a lot of new water and had a great time.

Just be aware that if you intend on going to NZ rubber sole boots would be the go, felts soles I think will be banded the next year or so but it all mite be too late.

John Hawkins