



In a state absolutely blessed with world class public trout fisheries, it seems odd that there would be a demand for private fisheries. Yet the market for anglers seeking out private trout fisheries has been growing steadily for years. While some have come and gone, others have grown and developed into world class waters in their own rights. Currawong Lakes is one of these.

The lakes at Currawong were developed many years ago by previous owners – the result of which is now 3 well established lakes that hold a fantastic head of fish and provide a terrific wild trout fishing experience. These lakes are on the head waters of the Macquarie River, and as such have a marvellous mayfly hatch and the associated dry fly fishing. Now managed by Fiona King and Steven Housego, Currawong Lakes is entering a new phase in its development.

While the focus for besotted fly fishers like me is on the fishing, Currawong is also home to a world class bird hunting facility. In fact Currawong is the only wild bird hunt in Australia. The owners have invested heavily in birds and facilities, breeding quail, pheasant and partridge on the property. These birds are introduced

CURRAWONG LAKES

Neil Grose

into the wild long before hunters arrive, meaning that it is a hunt in every sense of the word. These birds have established wild populations as well (very similar to brown trout in our water ways), bringing hunters from all corners of the globe to test their skills. Add to that a magnificent clay target shooting facility (magnificent is an understatement) and Currawong soon reveals itself to be the ultimate sporting retreat.

Currawong is situated near Lake Leake (also a great fishery) on the mountain range that separates the midlands plains from the east coast. The property is around 500 metres above sea level, which generates a climate perfect for trout lakes. The lakes are deep enough so summer heat doesn't have a detrimental effect on the fishing and the fishery, and low enough in altitude to allow

some worthwhile fishing during the colder months. The grassy hills and open dry sclerophyll forest surrounding the lakes provide a wonderfully relaxing environment for visitors; angling and non angling.

The cabins at Currawong (there are 4 of them) are built and fitted out to 4 star level, ensuring a comfortable and relaxing stay. The cabins are set up in the bush and overlook the lakes, providing an expansive outlook over the whole valley. The cabins are thoughtfully placed, they are close enough to the lake to make for easy fishing access, and far enough away to allow anglers to roam without infringing on other visitors personal space. The emphasis is on self catering at Currawong, however with groups Fiona can arrange for meals to be provided. The facilities are extremely well suited to corporate or team building days, with the magnificent



Barbeque Lodge providing a wonderful centrepiece for lunches and evening meals right on the shore of Lake Currawong

But to the fishing. We were invited for a fish by new manager Fiona King, who has previously had managerial roles at the Central Highlands Lodge at Miena and at Tarraleah Lodge. We arrived on a pretty grey old sou' easterly after travelling down from Miena through the drizzle and fog. The wind was only slight with the odd gust, but the air was a tad cold. After the usual pleasantries with Fiona, we headed out to see what we could find. The fish and mayflies took no notice of our mild discomforts, and we were treated to a continual procession of targets to cast at. Most of the fish were sipping spinners blown out of the tussocks along the shore line – one of Bruce Gibson's parachute spinners did the trick. Nicole was top rod, while I was happy to simply snap off a few pics and enjoy the clean air, peace and quiet and then a healthy rainbow to finish off with. One can only drool at the possibilities of a warm evening with a gentle north wind – the spinners I saw hiding in the tussocks were amazing. Add to that some mud-eye feeders and even the most dour angler would get excited!

The fish we encountered were all in top notch condition, the browns we grassed averaged about 3 pounds, and there were bigger ones seen (and broken off!!) The fish are exactly what you would expect to find in the wild; fat, feisty and full of fight!

The top lake, Lake Currawong is a beautiful spot, and certainly my favourite of the 3. There are some terrifically fishy shores, with the added advantage of plenty of back cast room. The middle lake, Long Marsh Lake has a wide variety of fishing environments as well – this is where my chunky rainbow came from – gently sipping spent spinners along the ripple line. As we were heading out we saw some very healthy rises – but they will have to wait for next time. The bottom lake, Lake Macquarie, has the reputation of producing some of the biggest mayfly hatches in the state. This is brown trout only water, and has some great grassy shores on it as well. The east wind came in pretty cold and damp when we headed down to fish this lake, which meant we didn't spend much time sampling the water – I am sure a few well placed brown nymphs would have stirred some action.

One of the real attractions of Currawong is the 3 different environments that the lakes deliver. If the wind is wrong for one lake, it will be good on another – if the fish have finished rising in one spot, you can probably find them rising in another, or, failing that, you can retire to the BBQ Lodge for a cuppa, or lunch, or just have a relax until the fish get back on message!

Many Tasmanians feel that private fisheries such as Currawong are not meant for them, but this is really not the case. Accommodation rates are extremely reasonable, and include full access to the

whole fishery, making it a great alternative to other more densely populated fishing destinations. That is one of the inherent beauties of private fisheries – there are no madding crowds to contend with and you are free to roam without worrying about other anglers, or boats drifting in on you or those other little tense situations.

Currawong Lakes adds tremendously to the Tasmanian trout fishing scene, and compliments rather than competes with the wild public fishery. Its accommodation, trout fishery and hunting facilities are all extremely well managed, and with many options ranging from simple accommodation, self guided fishing, fishing with professional guides or being on a guided hunt, there is certainly a unique experience to be had for people of all persuasions. Check out Currawong Lakes website at www.troutfishtasmania.com.au or ring Fiona King on 03 6381 1148. If you enjoy it only half as much as I did you will have a fantastic time.

