
CURRAWONG LAKES - Trout Fishery and Game Park

Red spinner (*Atalophlebia australis*) is the tucker that really excites Macquarie River brownies. It comes as no surprise then to witness the biggest hatch of the season at its headwaters, Currawong Lakes mid November. Lake Long Marsh was where the action was and it wasn't brownies but rainbows of all sizes simply just 'going off their faces'! Any fly that slightly resembled a spinner was woofed down. What a morning we had!

But let me take you back to the previous evening when Chris and I had driven from Hobart, (2 hours drive) arriving mid afternoon. After an hour or so on the Midland Highway the peacefulness of Currawong and the welcome by hosts Scott and Sally Richardson was delightful. Scott hails from a timber background in the Fingal Valley and learnt his angling skills fishing the local rivers. Sally not far away from Campbell Town.

When you are visiting a place for the first time you have some preconceived idea what it will look like. Currawong Lakes surpassed this for me and can be described as expansive. Cabins are elevated on the forest fringe allowing spectacular views down the valley and across Lakes Currawong and Long Marsh. With at least 500m to the nearest cabin the serenity and seclusion was already working I was feeling totally relaxed. For anyone escaping the pressures of work I reckon this is the ticket.

Scott had fishing on his mind though. We chucked our bags inside we headed down to check out their lakeside anglers lodge. Within casting distance from the shore it is comfortably fitted out with outdoor BBQ, kitchen, large macrocarpa tables and free standing fire place. Whilst Currawong is a fishing retreat it could also double as relaxing venue for small corporate meeting/training weekends with a drop of fish'n tossed in. Ideal for de-stressing!

Lake Currawong has probably 3klms of shore line with a large dam and a number of inundated snaggy trees at the other end. In between are gently sloping grassy banks interspersed with some fishy looking bays and backwaters. Scott has a Hobart mate who ties a terrific mayfly emerger pattern that features a wing case tied from downy grey duck feather; it floats beautifully. There was not a lot of rises happening but eventually one showed and I dropped the offering about a metre upwind. There he goes again, a little closer and there he is, on! After some good aerobatics a fat little rainbow of 2lbs slid onto the grass, was quickly unhooked and released. There's nothing like the first fish of a trip and feeling the weight on the rod.

The fishing here is not dead easy, you still have to use a bit of cunning and guile to get hooked up and like the vagaries of highland lakes the weather can send the fish down. This afternoon was a bit like that with cool squalls blowing through so I tied on a mud eye pattern perfected by the

late Hughie Higgs of Lilydale. Bang, second cast the water erupted with the strike of a thumping fish I reckon of 6 - 7 pounds! Alas he was on and off but it demonstrated that other presentation/retrieval methods, including nymphs, can be practised and modified in these waters for use down the track.

Some sizzled steak and snags topped of with a nice bottle of red saw us well fortified and ready to hit the sack. Our cabin "Red Tag" was a two bedroom job with well appointed kitchen and very cosy lounge area with fire box. Swallows are nesting under the eaves and the view is to die for. We slept like logs.

Too good in fact and I missed my planned 5.00am start. What the heck, when you're on holidays 7 o'clock is OK! The couple of hours I put in before brekkie saw several nice rainbows landed and in the corner adjacent to the Lake Currawong dam at least four brownies were smooching amongst the reeds. Several casts yielded no result! I don't know about you but when fish are finning like this it's easy to get excited and when that happens, to me anyway, casts go every where they not supposed to – bugger, bugger, bugger! Time for breakfast.

Lake Macquarie, the lowest of the three was quite dirty due to the amount of fresh in recent months. Not a lot happening here so we turned our attention to Long Marsh. I reiterate, it is hard for me to remember such a wonderful hatch of red spinners that lasted several hours. Full credit to owners past and present for replicating conditions where this jewel of fly fishing is able to flourish. I could provide you with a blow by blow account of every fish landed however I'm sure you get the drift of what played out over the next few hours. Spectacular fishing!

Currawong Lakes and Wildlife Retreat is nestled in the east coast highlands between Lake Leake and Lake Tooms. It is situated on the edge of the Long Marsh water reserve and Tooms Lake conservation area. Anglers have the choice of fishing Lake Currawong, Lake Long Marsh or Lake Macquarie that are all annually stocked with hefty rainbow and brown trout. The latter is specifically a brown trout water.

Currawong will suit the beginner or the experienced angler with guiding/tuition and gear hire on hand. Loomis equipment is used exclusively.

So what are you waiting for, get on the blower and talk to Scott or Sally about some rest and relaxation that you won't forget in a while. (Ph. 03 6381 1148)

Quenton Higgs

TIGHT LINES