

10 Easy steps to Brown Trout Fishing on the Lower Waikato River

- 1) Tackle-** A spin rod about 6' to 6'6" (2-4 kg weight) with spinning reel loaded with 3 or 4 kg nylon. Softbaits with paddle tails in a reasonable range of sizes, spinners such as black or copper tobys or zeds, (7g, 10g, 12g) and large streamer trout flies about size 4 (rabbits, woolly buggers etc) in dark colours like black or olive green. Use split shot on the nylon with flies to help them sink. A licence is also needed, plus landing net.
- 2) Right time-** Early morning or dusk into evening is good, but they can easily be caught all through the day.
- 3) Water level & Temperature-** Level in Huntly- anywhere between 7.6m to 8.4m at the Huntly power station is good- check the Environment Waikato river levels online. Water Temperature- 14° C to 19° C optimum- again see EW online.
- 4) Areas to fish from bank-** Outside of corners in the river, or wherever a swift current is close to bank, weedlines, under overhanging willow, behind obstructions.
- 5) How to spot them-** Repeated swirls on the surface in the same spot, bow waves as they chase small fish, whitebait schools jumping out of the water. Use polaroids during day.
- 6) How to get near them-** Quietly! Walk to edge carefully, don't drop gear down heavily, keep low profile and don't disturb the fishing area too much.
- 7) Casting-** Cast above and across the fishing spot starting with small casts. Let the lure swing downstream before retrieving back upstream close to bank or in current. Try different speed of retrieve, or even stop/start.
- 8) Catching-** Strike at every touch on your spinner or fly, if you hook up keep the rod up and adjust the drag so the trout can only take line when it runs. Try and bring fish back up to you after it jumps and splashes, and be careful when it's in close that tension is always on for those last runs.
- 9) Netting-** Have a landing net and net it head first, not from the tail end.
- 10) Quality Control-** Is it well over 30cm long? Decent sized ones are 40cm or more. If it fought well it's a good fish, if not fat they are best released to put on condition.
(A top condition brown below, caught by Sol Taplin)

