

Mountain Stream

Don and I were lucky enough to fish on this particular mountain stream in March following an invitation from one of the property owners who allow access to our members.

Anthony was very helpful when we arrived - taking us for a tour around various areas of the river on his property which can be fished.

The river is in two sections here - split by a large waterfall. The lower section is in steep country and is rarely fished due to the effort required to access it (and remains unfished after our visit). Above the waterfall the river is very easily accessible, as is a smaller tributary creek which flows into our stream.

This is a small river, often just ankle deep in the rapids, but with a regular series of pools, some shallow, but some quite large. The water was brown and dirty. There is also an abundance of trees and shrubs along the banks for most of the length we fished, as well as the consequent snags in the river - I lost about 7 flies through all manner of diabolical casting failure.



We started fishing at about 1030, moving upstream a few hundred metres. This was above the confluence of the small tributary, and the larger stream was even smaller here.

There was not a hint of a fish anywhere along here, above or below the surface and so we walked down stream towards the waterfall and fished back up. I fished back to the confluence with the smaller creek, and was almost convinced there was no life in that river.

About 1230 I stopped for a cold drink by a small pool and only then saw the silvery yellow side of a small fish happily rising in that pool. Better still was that there was a gap in the shrubbery around that pool to cast from, and two casts later a 10 inch rainbow was collected.

This was when I also discovered that the bottom of the river is covered with a healthy layer of soft mud which is at least knee deep. I was lucky to retrieve my boot.



Then, trout were rising in most of the larger pools. The trout were not terribly aware of movement on the bank of the river, the dirty water helped I guess. I sat on the bank for 20 minutes trying to cast through a fallen tree at a fish rising not three metres away from me, and the fish never cared at all about the commotion I made - kept feeding (until I caught it!). We collected 4 rainbows between 10 and 12 inches, and one brown of about 14 inches.



Two rainbows were from the tributary creek. The fish were all very lively and healthy looking. The thick vegetation, steep banks and deep mud made landing these fish especially challenging. I have attached a few pictures.

I had success with a small (size 16 maybe) Adams Parachute and a larger Royal Wulff.

The fish were quite greedy in their feeding, I found that if you could get the fly through the trees and shrubs and nicely into the bubble line, if a fish was there rising, they would take it first time, but if the fly was not well placed (say, to the side of the bubbles off in the still water, or in a tree) then they would not see it or would ignore it.

Overall a challenging, but rewarding day of fishing.

Peter Johnson.