



Jindabyne Fishing Report – November 2011

Gents, Platypus Lodge provided once again the most pleasant accommodation for our group of five. After last years renovations, it now boasts a brand new white kitchen and new bathrooms. We heard that the main wooden deck facing Lake Jindabyne will be replaced shortly as well. So our trip was off to a good start!

Lake Fishing:

Another year, another big difference in the fishing experience between lakes Jindabyne and Eucumbene. In mid October 2011, the authorities released an enormous amount of water out of Lake Jindabyne over a two week period to flush out the river below the dam, resulting in a drop in water level in the lake from 85 to 78%, or over 2 metres vertical! Fishing in Lake Jindabyne was below par during our stay, possibly because of this environmental release – big fish in particular tend to stay away from the shallows for a while after such a big disturbance to their environment. I did however have one memorable session there late one afternoon, fishing in my “private bay” south of Hatchery Bay, catching and releasing six lively rainbows, from just-on legal size to about 2 pounds, in the space of an hour.

Contrasting this, the water level in Lake Eucumbene is still slowly rising, currently over 45%. The lake has not been at this level for eight years, so a lot of grass- covered ground is slowly going under, and the fish are there foraging close in. Reports of legendary catches are commonplace around the local tackle stores. We had more modest success, fishing mainly around Braemar Bay, an easy half hour trip from Jindabyne. Sometimes the fish were “on” in the morning, sometimes in the afternoon, so it was a matter of being there at the right time. We caught a few decent sized rainbows up to 2 pounds, and yours truly managed to catch the biggest fish of the trip, a 4 pound brown, on a black Clumsy (what else) around 2 pm one sunny afternoon.

River Fishing:

Water levels in the rivers we fished (Thredbo, Gungarlin, Moonbah) were medium high and clear. The Thredbo River still had some pods of late spawning rainbows in the usual spots. As Peter Johnson found out, they can sometimes be tempted to take a dry fly off the top! I tried it myself, and it worked for me, too. You live and learn. Apart from the rainbows, the Thredbo was “dry fly paradise”, with browns up to 3 pounds taking our various offerings, mainly Shaving Brushes, and the awkwardly named but very effective Rat-Faced McDougal. The fish seemed to prefer dry flies in darker colours. I had one “Red Letter” day on the stretch below the Ski Tube, catching and releasing eight lovely browns of between 1 and 2 pounds.

The lower beat of the Gungarlin, at the end of the powerline road, was initially a bit disappointing in that nothing much happened there before lunch. However, with sandwiches and cold beer devoured, the stretch above Teddys Creek yielded quite a few lovely rainbows of 12-14 inches, better than average for the Gungarlin. There seemed to be fewer but slightly bigger fish there this time.

Some members of our group went to the lower beats of the Moonbah, and reported rising fish, and also caught a few albeit not very large ones.

Encounters: The Good and the Bad

Cormorants, particularly the big black variety, seem to have a good season on both lakes and rivers. They are everywhere in numbers, and are of course protected by law, so I guess us fisherfolk have to live with them. Even so, witnessing a sparkling pool on the Gungarlin being efficiently raided by a group of five big black beasts, is a disturbing sight! Particularly as these guys are fishing there for a bit longer than just a day per season, as your average fisherman does.

Sloshing down the Thredbo River towards Thredbo Diggings, content after a days fishing in the wilderness, I suddenly became aware of two gentlemen rock-hopping upstream towards me. They wore waders but did not have fishing rods. But on their belts I noticed gleaming tomahawks and other dangerous looking implements. My initial concerns for my safety thankfully proved unfounded, as they turned out to be National Park rangers out to eradicate willows, blackberries and other pest species along the riverbank – a most welcome enterprise!

Cheers, Gerhard.