

Dean Bell's Blue Ribbon Wilderness Guides

Season Report 2010/ 2011



With snow in the forecast I thought it finally time to head indoors and chronicle the events and happenings of what transpired from last October to April. Yesterday I went fishing with a couple of friends, really not expecting to do too much in the way of fishing. Mayflies were coming off and rainbows were greedily looking upward. Much like the kid with his hand caught in the cookie jar I couldn't help myself. Hanging out with a good friend, alternating between fish was just great fun. As a guide you get somewhat removed from that scenario... I'd just like to say "I get it".

Season Past

Taking into account it was the summer that never arrived, the season that passed provided some outstanding sport for those that tackled the Fiordland area this past season. While others look at high water as hard work or wind as an obstacle, I see and sense opportunities. Some of our best angling was under some of the toughest conditions. Trout always are most active after heavy rains as food is more abundant in the higher flows which make them more vulnerable to our offerings. Under these circumstances I go out with the highest expectations. With the remainder of the South Island in flood and our rivers marginal even my expectations were exceeded when Jeremy Hermann landed the largest Brown I've guided in 17 years. Though only 30 inches in length, it was over-girthed some 4.5 inches at 19.5 inches and weighed a very impressive 14 pounds. I doubt that fish would have ever made itself available in such user friendly water in anything but the river conditions we had that day.



Beatle Abshagen 9lb Brown



Bernie Alpers 8.5lb Brown

Sherman cousins Mark and Steve also managed to get into double digit trout with a 10 pounder apiece. Yes, you are correct if you recognise the name. It is the same Mark Sherman that hogged the limelight last year with a couple of Donkeys that had been eating mice. He certainly gets his share of the biggest fish, simply because of two reasons. He goes where they are and he takes the opportunity when it presents itself.

Others in the heady heights with Trophy fish were Joe Potter, John Higgins, James Palmer, Mike McLean, Gary and Terry Butts, Tucker Gordon, Bernie Alpers and Nelson Ishiyama . Congratulations on those fine fish especially Terry Butts and her 8.5lb Brownie which if memory serves me right is the largest trout I've ever guided with a female angler. Not bad considering it was on a three weight.



Terry and Gary Butts with a couple of grand trout.

Season Ahead

All reports out suggest El Rodente is returning in full force for the coming season. Having gone through a major flowering in the spring of 2010 the beech forest in this area has mast with the seed drop occurring right now. Come spring we should again be inundated with mice. Many of you will be scratching your heads as you no doubt hear of the mice plague and the 7 year cycle of the beech mast. Beech masting, when Beech trees seed, occurs on average every 7 years, but that does not preclude it from occurring under favourable conditions at lesser intervals .A mild winter is the catalyst to kick the beech forest into flowering. This area had a partial mast in 2009 but this is forecast to be more widespread. The Department of Conservation is starting rat eradication next month in this area to combat the forecast explosion of them and their impacts on the native fauna.



At present my books are a little over half full for the coming season. Great dates are still available early and later in the season, with early being the best time to chase the biggest fish. Mid-season has limited availability.

To all those I guided this past season I thank you for the time you spent with me and I hope the memories of all those wonderful rivers and the trout that inhabit them are still as vivid as the day you were here.

Be grand in whatever you do and pursue and be forever kind to the planet.

Warmest Regards

Dean

Gallery - Thank you to all those who submitted photos.

