

Natone Trout Ponds

Returning to Tassie for a short trip over Easter, and not catching much last time, I decided to investigate the Natone Fly Fishery. About 20km out of Burnie, it's not too far from where the ferry lands in Devonport. Their website was focussed on a Natone Lodge in QLD but finding an email address I found out they were just closed on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Best fly fishing was reported as 8-9 but as "hard to catch". Cost was per fish (no release), \$10 for a medium fish and \$20 for a large fish. Other forms of fishing (bait and spinner) are also permitted. No license is required.

Satellite view on right. Bottom dam is not referenced in the article, next is 'third dam', 'second dam' is near the red marker (where the hatchery is). 'First dam' is near the bed and breakfast marker.

Getting out there, the owners were out milking the cows. The first dam was closed for restocking. They had some fish food to berley fish and some fishing gear if required (food is cylindrical, about 5mmx10mm, and dark brown). The second dam, down past their own hatchery, generally has fishers at the wall so I headed up near the top. A third dam was above it, full of old timber. Assuming this was not stocked, I fished near the top of the second dam.



The banks were a little steep. Rigging up a nice Mrs Simpson, I set up to cast around some blackboy stumps, and promptly hooked a blackberry bush below me. A nice broad back broke the water by the stumps, and I cursed leaving my dries back in town. It looked like some midges or similar were hatching on the nice overcast day. I

tried some mud-eye patterns, and a light woolly buggy, but not much luck. Before returning the car for the daily greyhound expedition, I decided to see how the food pellets went.



They tended to float,



it took a few minutes before the slashing at the surface started.

Heading off, the other three fishers had one small fish between them. Turning down the offer for the first dam (I saw a big boil on my arrival), I promised to return after my cost-free fishing trip.

After stocking up on some dries the next day, I returned early and rigged up a midge. Getting back up the top, the sun was just reaching the water and a bit of frost, and clear blue sky. So, not much rising except a nice light brown platypus. Moving back around towards the wall, there were a few rises as the water warmed, but the berleying for a line fisher had drawn them away. The fisher was a regular Saturday fisher, 92, and for once not wetting a fly but landed a 5-6lb rainbow, apparently average for the lake, using worms and powerbait. I persisted on the second lake, tossing my midge around the oil slicks from the pellets, but with fish food and no rises I suspect one needs to make a 1cm dark brown bread fly to have luck. Offered the first dam again, I opted to return home early and come back a third time (maybe convincing the kids to come too), and if no rises on the second lake I would take up the smaller fish on the first lake.

Later, I bribed the kids into a road trip, and got out there around lunchtime. The first lake by now had been opened up, but we spent half an hour at the second one to set up and give it a try, with a couple of fishers already at the first lake. After discovering one kid's reel and some hooks were taken out of the car, and my phone and camera were back on the table, I rigged one telescopic with a soft plastic. A beetle fly wired to a pellet on my fly rod was set up for the second rig.

Nothing happened, so we packed up, watched the inevitable slash on the surface as we left, and moved to the first lake.



By this stage, we were the only ones left. We crossed the dam wall, and I let the kids throw some pellets on the water.



Fish were slashing away, so I re-rigged the fly/pellet on the telescopic spin rod (the remaining toy tie wire was lost on an earlier attempt with a soft plastic's hook – the fly was

much better at holding the wire and pellet in place).

Rationing the kids' pellets (and rocks), a few missed hits, and then it was swallowed and Luke brought in a good fish. The water dropped very steep, but managed to land it on a short shelf into the Loop net. Adam wanted us to catch him a fish, so I put Luke on duty again and

eventually we hooked another. Luke said he worked out a plan to walk with the rod to get the fish to my net! So, we paid the 2x\$10 for the medium fish, and went home for the kids' reward, and to clean the fish.

The first was a stocky 44cm, the other was 39cm.





I went straight to the CAA website, and downloaded the [Quirky baked trout recipe](#) (plenty of local mushrooms, cream, parsley and onions for the stuffing) and got started on dinner. We handed over the second fish in gratitude for some homemade raspberry jam, which apparently was quite nice.