

High Country Trout – April 2019

Jason and I set off early Friday morning for the high-country outing. Unfortunately, some members were unable to make the outing at the last minute which left us with an almost endless list of water to explore and fish. Because of this, we decided to base ourselves in Adaminaby for the weekend instead of camping at Three Mile Dam - more on that below.

Arriving at Adaminaby and discussing our plans over a coffee at the bakery, Jason and I decided to head up the hill to explore some streams that we wouldn't normally fish in a weekend away. After a long but scenic drive, we pulled up to the stream with the relief that no one else was around and we'd have the water to ourselves (a great feeling!). With the sun shining and next to no wind, we rigged up our 3wt rods and headed upstream.

It didn't take long for Jason to be on the board, hooking onto and landing a nice rainbow on the second pool. After seeing it basically jump out of the water to take his black stimulator, I quickly changed up flies and put on an elk hair caddis and was quickly rewarded with a rainbow of my own on the next run. From there we both knew that we were in for a fun afternoon.





As we worked our way upstream, we were met with even better-looking water and found that most pools held fish. Lots of undercut banks, deep pools, long drifts etc. While we found the fishing to be technical (tight water, accurate casting etc) we were lucky to pull 2-3 fish out of some pools which made for an enjoyable day. All fish landed were rainbows with the sizes varying between tiddlers to 25-35cm. We counted around 30 fish landed between us for the afternoon with just as many missed or dropped. As the sun started to set, we hesitantly decided to pack up and walk back to the ute for the drive home, knowing we still have another 2 big days of fishing to come.





As previously mentioned, we decided to stay in Adaminaby instead of camping at Three Mile Dam as initially planned. When we arrived at the house, we were pleasantly surprised to find the wood fire well alight, and with a cold beer in hand, we certainly weren't roughing it. After dinner at the Snow Goose, Jason insisted we had to watch Dancing with The Stars as he couldn't miss the elimination final, so we headed back to the warm house for a quiet beer and rum in front of the fire.

After such a great day on the water, and a hot tip of some bigger pools downstream, we decided to head back to the same stream on Saturday. After marking out the area on Google Maps, we headed back up the hill and we set off on a significant hike through some amazing scenery and again was met with some excellent 'fishy' looking water. Jason and I couldn't contain our excitement after seeing some rising fish and quickly rigged up and began to hike down the valley to the first pool.

In the first pool, I missed a take from a very eager fish which launched itself at a stimulator. We thought we would be in for another amazing day of dry fly fishing but sadly it was not the case. As we worked upstream and fished every inch of water, we were unable to find any moving fish. We both worked through several fly patterns, tippet sizes and rigs to no luck. We worked through kms of winding water to finally sight 2 good size rainbows (Jason guessed around 30cm) sitting deep in a slow, almost still pool. After drifting several dry flies through with no interest, I tried a dry with a nymph dropper which eventually spooked the fish.







As the day was getting on and we had next to no interest from the fish, we decided to head back to the ute. Jason took the lead as we hiked out of the valley and walked through some of the thickest scrub I have seen but somehow found the track back out to the ute.



Checking my watch, we had covered approx. 14kms for the day and I certainly felt defeated. The thought of a shower, warm fire plus a beer and a meal at the bowling club couldn't have been more inviting and all went down a treat. Jason and I went over the day to work out why it wasn't as productive as the previous day but ultimately, we will never know. While it dampened our spirits, we were still excited to be able to get out and fish some amazing water and felt like the day was certainly not wasted.



With two big days of fishing under our belts, we decided to spend Sunday morning fishing some more familiar water on our way back to Canberra and after a coffee and bacon and egg roll at the Adaminaby Bakery (another plug!) we pulled up at the Murrumbidgee at Bolaro. For a change of pace, we decided to rig up the nymphing rods and attempt to Czech-nymph the faster pools downstream. While looking promising, the river was running low and clear which would have made any fishing difficult. While some runs looked promising, we were unable to find any fish, like the previous day we put it down to bad luck! With the wind picking up, and with Jason bothering a local brown snake, we decided to call it early and head back to Canberra.



Looking back on the weekend and reading reports that Three Mile Dam was fishing well after dark, it may have been worth spending some time there like we had originally planned. The Eucumbene River also looked to be in great shape, so it may have been worth a look as well, but hindsight is a wonderful thing. While it was only the 2 of us in attendance, I still see the weekend as a successful outing and would encourage members to look at attending the next one (I may even offer to organise/host next year) or at least getting up there yourselves to wet a line. We are certainly spoiled with having these options on our doorstep. – Luke.