

# Four and a half rivers in four days!

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Inspired by my brief foray into the Eildon region during Troutfest 22 I decided to make the most of my week off between jobs and return to this beautiful area for four more days of exploration.

The first thing I decided to do was take a slight detour through suburban Melbourne to visit Aussie Angler. This is a very impressive fishing shop split into distinctly fly and non fly stores. I bought some essentials and sought some advice, but it was getting too late to dawdle. I am definitely looking forward to spending a bit more time here at some stage in the future.



I arrived at the Rubicon's Boys camp around 1930 and once again car camped within earshot of the river. The next day I fished up from Boys initially to the hydro plant, catching the occasional brown and landing three large fish I initially thought were brook trout or hybrids.

Check out the photos and u guys decide – final conclusion was that they were spawning browns. Two of them were missing fins. The third was a bit bigger and appeared much healthier.



They were fun to catch, and were caught

legitimately, but I saw a quite a few, they were lethargic and probably could have been caught by 'scratching' if I had been so inclined.





After chatting with some staff at the hydro plant which is temporarily out of commission, I pushed on up the now much smaller Rubicon and caught a few small browns out of very small pockets. This was very steep, very hard work. Given it was still early I had a crack between Kendalls and Boys and I think got one more brown, and saw lots more “brookies” but with no joy on them. I see decided to make the most of the daylight and drove to The Pines campground on the bank of Big River.



After a very wet evening I walked down the road a ways before bush bashing down to the river bed just downstream of Burntbridge camping area. This was a terrible mistake as I ended up in a vast, semi gorgey slow moving area in which traversing the river was impossible. Up I went, then back into Burntbridge. Much more accessible and better fishing. I fished back up to The Pines and did catch a few rainbows but overall I just wasn't

feeling the  
vibe, suspecting  
much of this section  
of the river would  
have lent itself to  
euro-nymphing.  
It was still pretty early  
so I leapt into the car  
and drove to  
Jamieson, grabbed a  
coffee, and parked  
up the upper-upper  
Goulburn at  
Skipworth Reserve.  
Wow this, this is a  
beautiful spot and I  
was stoked to  
immediately start  
catching nice  
conditioned, but not  
huge, rainbows in the  
swift stuff right at the



camp itself. I continued to catch fish up this beautiful stretch of river right up to dusk. A particular highlight was the two sambar deer I spooked on the river bank. This river felt quite similar to some of the smaller rivers in the Wairarapa in NZ.



After a quiet night in this beautiful campsite I was really starting to feel a bit fatigued so I treated myself to some real coffee and a toastie in Jamieson's Cafe before heading north and then east towards Mt Buller and the upper Delatite River.



Cor, talk about different again! I parked in the Sawmill area and found myself on a very small, steepish mountain type stream with lots of bedrock, trees, and it turns out, trout! These were super hungry and in great condition. The highlight was watching them come up out of (relatively) deep clear water to hit my dry, especially in the tails of the pools. A bow and arrow cast could have been useful but I made do, and only lost a few flies to the overhangs.



I had driven over the Delatite lower down in farming country earlier, and I was keen for something a bit different so I drove back down and parked off Hearn's Rd. This was very different fishing, still lots of bedrock but much more coloured water, and deeper slower stretches. I found the fishing much more challenging than any previously, but just as I was getting frustrated I caught a nice brown. I also found a few riverside properties I would have been happy to own! I am sure there's lots more trout in this stretch than I found.

Next stop that evening was Alexandra and a \$5 shower at the showground followed by a parma at the Corner Hotel which was packed on a Thursday. This was my first clean and



real meal since Melbourne! Then on to Brooks River Reserve Campground for what I sensed would be a cold, cold night with the night very clear. Why only four and a half rivers? Well my last river was, technically, the Goulburn again, but so so different to two days earlier I have scored it again. I had taken some advice in the pub the night before about where to try my luck in the Goulburn below the pondage, and my initial plan was to fish from Breakaway to Gilmores and then somehow get back to the car. I was super keen but when I arrived at Breakaway on the Friday morning there was already someone fishing in the fog. Instead, I drove to



Gilmores, and despite the two other cars, so no other fishers so I began fishing upstream. I fished to two trout in the shallow reedy areas that were actively breaking the surface with back and tail. This got me excited for the technique Aussie Angler had suggested I use, which was a Royal Wulff or equivalent, followed 12 inches later by a tiny dry. Unfortunately I fished this technique unsuccessfully almost all the way to the Thornton Bridge where I met a successful angler using... stimmy-dropper! As soon as I

switched to hopper-dropper I was catching fish in the same waters this gentlemen had just fished, included a beautiful yellow and deeply speckled brown. My fish of the trip.





Whilst I was stoked, I was also lamenting all the amazing water I was the first to fish that day, only using the wrong technique. Next time! For those interested, the walk between Thornton and Gilmores Bridges is very manageable and is definitely justified by the quality of isolated fishing. Overall for a Friday I thought the river was quite busy, and whilst first on river probably did best, you could definitely fish soon after someone else and still do well. Overall this was a great way to spend four days, checking out four and a half rivers. Next time I intend to fish the Hoqua, Jamieson, more of the upper-upper Goulburn, and more of the Goulburn. I am going to save the very popular Steavenson for day trips as it is that much closer to our new home.