

DIDYMO: HOPES FOR CONTROL DASHED

Biosecurity New Zealand announced in May that the chelated copper solution which NIWA scientists have been testing as a means of controlling the feared Didymo incursion will not be used in the Tongariro.

In August 2006, it looked from NIWA's research, commissioned by Biosecurity NZ, as if dosing Didymo infested rivers with a chelated copper solution would help to control it. It would target two key points in the biomass – its stalks and its growing points. Dr Christina Viegla, Senior Scientist at Biosecurity NZ, says scientists knew that Didymo would not be eradicated but hoped it would be controlled with the solution.

We have recently learned that chelated copper we had such high hopes for, would not suit the Tongariro or any other North Island rivers, because they flow too fast and are too

long for the solution to be effective. This came as a surprise to us, because when Dr Barry Biggs spoke to a public meeting we organised in August last year, trials were being carried out with chelated copper on different speeds of water flow, and signs were good.

Biosecurity NZ scientists lead the world in Didymo research, but all that has been found that is conclusive, says Dr Viegla, is that checking, cleaning and drying all gear that has been in water infested with Didymo in the recommended way will slow the spread. "That's our best defence against it," she says.



DIDYMOSPHEINA GEMINATA INCURSION IN THE NORTH ISLAND: A SIMULATION BY BIOSECURITY NEW ZEALAND

On 31st May 2007, in Taupo, under the umbrella of Biosecurity NZ's strategic response to an invasion by Didymo, regional action groups and each conservancy of the Department of Conservation in the North Island met to develop simple response and management plans.

Dr Mark Cosgrove attended on behalf of the Advocates. Others attending included South Islanders with technical backgrounds and the Central North Island Didymo Response Partnership Group.

Biosecurity NZ officials ran this exercise, recognising the need be prepared for an invasion of the hugely valuable trout fisheries around Lake Taupo.

Biosecurity NZ held a detection simulation in Taupo, to

- test and refine its existing response plan
- raise awareness in the North Island of the Didymo threat, and
- clarify responsibilities if a North Island outbreak occurs.

Mark Cosgrove's report:

The exercise centred around a simulated outbreak of Didymo in the Mangatepopo Stream, near Taurewa on State Highway 47. This stream, which starts on the southern side of Tongariro, passes alongside the Tongariro Crossing and eventually joins the Whanganui River. Thus its waters enter the Taupo catchment via the Otomangakau deviation.

As well as testing response strategies there were important outcomes which need to be made more public. The main point is that unless the river is small, there will be no treatment. Treatment with a solution of a copper chelate would not be considered if the river is too big (> 5 cumecs), too fast, too long, subject to drinking water use, or culturally sensitive. The only conclusion that can be drawn as far as the Tongariro River is concerned is that there is no possibility of the copper solution being used at all.

This finding is critical and should guide the Advocates' continued campaign to prevent an incursion".

FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Now that the Didymo control we had hoped for has been found unsuitable for rivers such as the Tongariro, (see lead article) it is more imperative than ever that there be a full scale drive to keep Didymo out of North Island waters.

To assist the Advocates continue our Didymo awareness Campaign the Pharasyn Trust has this month donated \$10,000 to the Advocates, half of which they have asked be put towards our part of the fight to keep the Tongariro Didymo free. This generous donation is very much appreciated, and we enclose with this newsletter a new Didymo awareness brochure which is the first of the initiatives to be funded from the Pharasyn money. Donations such as this are most heartening.

The Committee has been reviewing and updating our strategic plan, guided by Stuart Crosbie from 3 C Consultancy in Wellington. Stuart was elected to our committee at our last AGM and is assisting us to develop an analytical framework for determining the issues that we will become involved with. As a result of this review our new web site www.tongariroriver.co.nz which will be active from October, will be easier to navigate and hopefully, more succinct, as will our reporting to members. Mike Forret from iconcept in Hamilton is in charge of the website upgrade.

We are keen that the matters we focus on as Advocates reflect the concerns of members. Please let us know of matters that concern you with regard to the river and/or its environment. We would appreciate your feedback on the draft issues list and vision statement that feature elsewhere in this newsletter.

Please email us - email addresses of committee members are listed in this newsletter - or if you would prefer to write or phone the postal address is: The Advocates for the Tongariro River PO Box 335 Turangi and my phone is 07 386 6501

*Heather Macdonald
President*



FROM THE SECRETARY TREASURER...

Thank you for your continuing support. My special thanks to those of you who notify me of your change of mailing or email address, and to those who have the unfortunate but necessary task of passing on details of deceased members.

We are happy to have subscriptions paid by internet banking and our new website gives detail to enable this.

We are endeavouring to move towards electronic communication with our membership, wherever possible. Those who wish to receive this Newsletter and other communication from the Advocates by email should notify me.

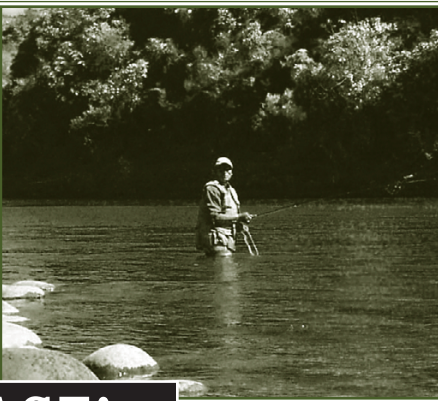
*Eric Wilson
Secretary/Treasurer*

≈ RIVER ACCESS ≈

The numbers of access points for walking and or fishing the Tongariro have diminished over the past few years. In some instances this has been as a result of the river flooding and taking tracks out, and in other cases property owners have erected trespass signs where there used to be tracks to the river.

In keeping with the findings of the 'Acland Report on Walking Access' issued earlier this year, the Advocates' Committee has met with representatives of the Taupo district Council and the Chair of the Turangi Community Board, Councillor Don Ormsby, in the hope of getting improved access.

COULD YOU BE A CARRIER?



THINK BEFORE YOU CAST!

Knowing there is no control for Didymo if it gets into the river means cleaning our gear has to become the norm. For example, it is no longer okay to fish the Tongariro in the morning and the Tongariro Taupo in the afternoon without cleaning your gear in between. Dedicated gear for use in one river only is another option.

Turangi fishing stores and motels have Didymo Cleaning stations (bins for dunking waders) and free spray bottles for your convenience. Do use them and please direct other river users to use them as well.

The current recommendation from Bio Security is to ensure you don't spread Didymo or other aquatic pests, wherever possible restrict equipment, boats, clothing and other items to exclusive use in a single waterway between cleaning.

IF YOU ARE MOVING ITEMS BETWEEN WATERWAYS, YOU MUST CHECK, CLEAN, DRY.

CHECK: Before you leave a river or lake, check items and leave debris at site. If you find any later, treat and put in rubbish. Do not wash it down drains.

CLEAN: There are several ways to kill Didymo. Choose the most practical treatment for your situation, and that will not adversely affect your gear (see below).

DRY: Drying will kill Didymo, but slightly moist Didymo can survive for months. To ensure Didymo cells are dead by drying, the item must be completely dry to the touch, inside and out, then left dry for at least another 48 hours before.

CLEANING NON-ABSORBENT ITEMS

- Detergent: soak or spray all surfaces for at least one minute in 5% dishwashing detergent or nappy cleaner (two large cups or 500 mls with water added to make 10 litres); OR

- Bleach: soak or spray all surfaces for at least one minute in 2% household bleach (one small cup or 200 mls with water added to make 10 litres); OR
- Hot water: soak for at least one minute in very hot water kept above 60 °a1C (hotter than most tap water) or for at least 20 minutes in hot water kept above 45 °a1C (It should be uncomfortable to the touch.)

ABSORBENT ITEMS REQUIRE LONGER SOAKING TIMES TO ALLOW THOROUGH SATURATION.

Felt-soled waders require:

- Hot water: soak for at least 40 minutes in hot water kept above 45 °a1C; OR
- Hot water plus detergent: soak for 30 minutes in hot water kept above 45 °a1C containing 5% dishwashing detergent or nappy cleaner; OR
- Freezing any item until solid will also kill Didymo.

Felt soles need special attention and the Advocates have taken the position that they should not be used at all. Laboratory tests have shown that felt soles on wading boots retained more live Didymo cells than leather boots, neoprene material, or rubber-soled boots because the felt soles can stay moist for months. Also, the decontamination agents don't penetrate very easily into felt, so it's recommended that felt-soled waders be avoided if possible. If used, they should be frozen or soaked in hot water (preferably with detergent).

To decontaminate felt soles, take the steps outlined above. A runner soled alternative is able to be hired from fishing shops.

New information is coming out all the time about how to clean gear, so please keep an eye on the Biosecurity site to keep up to date with new information emerge.
<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/pest-and-disease-response/pests-and-diseases-watchlist/didymosphenia-geminata>

ADVOCACY ISSUES

FOR 2007/08

Please give us your feedback

We are now in our fifth year as an organisation. The Committee is taking a fresh look at what the Advocates want to achieve, and how best to do this. Heather Macdonald has referred earlier in this newsletter to the review and planning being undertaken by the committee.

Feedback is now sought on the nine 'significant' and 'high' risk issues that the Committee considers need either a watching brief or advocacy action. Please let a Committee member know (see list of email addresses elsewhere in this Newsletter) whether your concerns for the river are picked up the issues listed below and your views on the proposed vision for the river:

"That the Tongariro River be restored and treasured as among the world's top 10 wild trout fisheries".

ISSUES:

- Didymo Prevention – advocate for North Island to be Didymo-Free
- River Management – lobby for plans & effective strategies
- Sustainability – policy to ensure that industrial use of water is not at the expense of recreational use
- Water Quality – lobby for river to be free of run off and storm water
- Fish Quality – watching brief on health, research and management
- River Access – advocate for more access points
- Water ownership – lobby to protect the status quo
- Lake Level – to meet the needs of both hydro and river channelling
- River Environment – advocate for regeneration of native fauna.

Stuart Crosbie leading a planning session with the Advocates committee, July 07.



TROUT SIZE

Some of us have been wondering for some time about what appears to be a reduction the size and condition of trout.

A report on minimum legal length of trout was presented at the June meeting of the Taupo Fishing Advisory Committee his year by John Gibb, Manager of the DoC Fishery. The report recommends that the minimum legal length of trout taken from the Taupo Fishery be reduced from 45cm to 42cm. The Advisory Committee accepted the report's recommendation, but before it becomes regulation, approval from a number of other bodies is needed.

The report contends that late spawning in recent winters has several implications, not least that the fish in the lake are now younger and therefore smaller compared with fish in the lake at the same time of year a decade ago. It is therefore considered that the current minimum legal

length may no longer be appropriate.

Extracts from John Gibb's report.

"While catch rates were generally very high last autumn for those anglers targeting fishing depths of 30 to 35 metres, it was very obvious that some of the small fish caught and released were dying despite very careful handling. This was probably a combination of the effect of depth and also warm surface waters. So while anglers were technically restricted to the daily bag limit of 3 trout, the actual unintentional harvest could have been significantly higher. Some anglers indicated they may well have stopped fishing earlier had they been able to keep 3 prime fish, but in order to obtain 3 such fish that were over the legal length they first had to catch and release a number of other smaller fish.

There is ... a theoretical argument that the current size limit tends to reinforce the late spawning, in that the lake

harvest selects for early spawned, larger fish while the later spawned, smaller fish are effectively protected.

Finally it is evident that so far this winter river anglers also have to release a significant proportion of their catch (20 to 30%) on the Taupo rivers. This is contrary to past years when almost all fish were larger than the limit, and it was never the intent that the size limit should impact on these anglers."

It is anticipated such a change (a limit in the order of 42cm) would significantly increase the number of fish available to anglers but still limit the harvest to a significantly lesser level than under a 35cm limit."

Advocates' Committee members would be interested in our memberships observations about size, condition and numbers of trout. The Committee is scheduling a meeting with DoC Fisheries scientists to discuss these matters and we will keep you informed.

ADVOCATES COMMITTEE

The following were members were elected at our AGM in April 2007

Ross Bakerross@tongarirorivermotel.co.nz
Robert Brace.....robert@bracelegal.co.nz
Mark Cosgrovemark@cosgrove.net.nz
Stuart Crosbie.....s.crosbie.3c@xtra.co.nz
Richard Kemp Vice PresidentRichard.kemp@izardweston.co.nz
Heather Macdonald President.....heather@turangi-nz.co.nz
Julian Proctorpatchrubber@paradise.net.nz
John Toogoodtoogood@cottonstore.co.nz
John Wheelerwheeler@reap.org.nz
Eric Wilson Secretary/Treasurer...ericandefwilson@xtra.co.nz
Tuatea Smallmanwongfu@xtra.co.nz

Please feel free to make contact with Committee members on river related matters.

FOR YOUR DIARY...

**LABOUR WEEKEND SEMINAR: SUNDAY 21 OCTOBER, 3.30PM
AT THE TONGARIRO BRIDGE FISHING RESORT SH1, TURANGI**

This will a public meeting held in conjunction with the NZ Freshwater Anglers Association. The guest speaker will be Shane Arden MP, the National Party Spokesperson for Biosecurity.

The topic is: What priority would a National-led government give to fresh water issues and what policy positions will it take on:

- recreational versus industrial use

- access
- ownership
- water quality
- keeping the North Island Didymo-free

Invite your friends, This promises to be a most interesting session.

Shane Arden has been supportive of The Advocates initiatives on Didymo, and has expressed some strongly held views in recent addresses.