



INLAND FISHERIES COMMISSION
NEWSLETTER

Volume X1 No. 4

July 1982

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS DEVELOPMENT

The management plan for the Central Plateau has done much to bring about public awareness for the need to protect this area. There are some aspects of development which require further consideration. The problems of the area lie in the nature of the soil, the lack of vegetation, the harsh climate and the lack of adequate control of land useage. One third of the plateau is freehold and it is possible for leasehold subdivisions to be arranged.

The Lands Department and the Hydro-Electric Commission control two thirds of the perimeter of Great Lake and the remainder is freehold. Raising the level of Great Lake and the need to relocate shacks has caused a mini boom of shack construction around the lake. However, the boom has been stabilised and there are blocks available for anglers wishing to build shacks. One of the problems to be avoided is the wholesale subdivision of areas which are unsuitable for development. A committee, consisting of representatives from relative departments, has considered the future development of land in the Central Plateau, particularly for use by shack owners.

The Commission would not like to see shack sites developed against spawning streams. There were problems in this regard at some streams of Great Lake in the past which have now been removed by the elevation of the level of the lake.

The shack sites in the Jones subdivision are 1 500 square metres with a minimum width of 30 metres. Some areas, such as the wetter parts of Tods Corner, are unsuitable for development as shack sites because of poor drainage. The modern tendency is for shacks of high standard to be built and most with flush toilets.

MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS FOR LAGOON OF ISLANDS

The Associations have advised the Commission that their members would prefer a mixture of brown trout and rainbow trout in Lagoon of Islands. As the main spawning tributary (Mary Creek) does not run at the time when brown trout spawn, supplies of this species from other sources must be added to the water to maintain stock. The rainfall in Septemebr ensures that rainbow trout may spawn successfully in Mary Creek.

During the summer programme field staff placed new gravel in the creek, removed obstacles and created resting pools. These improvements to Mary Creek should improve spawning success for rainbow trout in this water.

BROWN TROUT SPAWNING RUNS

Spawning runs in highland creeks have been satisfactory. At Great Lake good runs occurred at Brandum Creek and an un-named creek at Tods Corner where fish 1.3kg to 2.3 kg were sighted.

LAKE KARA

The Commission proposes to assist the North Western Fisheries Association to dismantle the shelter shed at Lake Kara. The shed was extensively damaged by vandals earlier this year. It is a sad reflection on community standards that this action is necessary.

POACHING

The vigilance of Inland Fisheries Commission inspectors resulted in a number of prosecutions for taking spawning trout. Staff detected one poacher who, it is alleged, used a target pistol to take the fish.

ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

The allocation of funds from consolidated revenue to the Inland Fisheries Commission are to be considered at the same time as the allocation of funds to other departments and instrumentalities in the budget session of Parliament.

REVENUE IN VICTORIA

It is noted that in Victoria, the Freshwater Fisheries Section of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division, received a Government infusion of three million dollars annually and about \$800 000 was raised from the sale of inland angling licences.

SOIL CONSERVATION

The Inter Departmental Committee on Soil Conservation considered a programme to restore land which has been abused in the past. It was noted that there is little control exercised over clearing land which is privately owned because of inadequacy of the current legislation. Clearing of steep slopes often resulted in dispersive clay being washed away and causing problems in freshwater. The Committee recommended that rehabilitation be started near South Mount Cameron and on the west coast.

TYENNA AND STYX RIVERS

Members of the Commission inspected small weirs located on the Tyenna and Styx Rivers. The fish ladder on the Tyenna River was operating satisfactorily. On the Styx River there was no impediment to the movement of fish. The Commission also examined the Derwent River upstream from the Meadowbank Dam where there are some excellent stretches of water for trout fishing.

ASSISTANCE BY ANGLERS

Members of the Northern Tasmanian Fisheries Association have assisted Commission staff in caring for brown trout ova at the Corra Linn hatchery during the latter stages when the alevins are appearing.

LAKE DULVERTON

Further discussions between the Commission, National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Management Committee of Lake Dulverton considered the problem caused by weed in the lake. Brown trout died after the weed was cut and left on the lake. The west end of the lake near the highway was considered the most vital and weeds would be cut and removed from this part. Weed cutting will commence earlier in the season to arrest growth before the formation of seed heads. The matter will be reviewed following next seasons operation and it is thought that the compromise proposal of partially clearing the west end would alleviate the problem.

RUBICON RIVER MANAGEMENT

Records show that there were problems concerning the shortage of water in the Rubicon River long before 1958. With the increase of irrigation over the years and the extraction of more water during the summer period, the flow in the river has been severely depleted at certain periods of the year.

Many investigations have been carried out in respect of the

complaints in the Parkham area over the shortage of water for riparian usage. Special meetings have been called previously to discuss the usage of water, however, there was no evidence presented that the water shortage was caused by up-stream farmers taking water for irrigation, usually there was water entering the bush land north of the Bass Highway near the Elizabeth Town Bridge, but not in sufficient quantity to emerge at the Parkham end.

The Rivers and Water Supply Commission policy is to encourage farmers to build storages and to take the water during the winter months (May to November) and store it for their needs in the dry season. The farmers, both irrigators and riparian owners, take water from the river and if the flow is such that there is insufficient to meet the needs of both irrigators and riparian owners, the right to take water for irrigation is varied by restricting the taking in whole or in part so as to ensure that water is available to meet riparian needs. A person continuing to take water for irrigation in such circumstances, i.e. contrary to a variation order, is liable to prosecution. Likewise a person who takes water into storage during restricted periods may also be prosecuted.

The Rivers and Water Supply Commission is aware of and concerned with the problem of water shortage and its effect on stock and domestic needs, irrigation requirements and the need for sufficient water to enable the fish population to survive.

The Rivers and Water Supply Commission has in mind that each year according to seasonal variations, a time should be determined after which all irrigation should cease until replenishing rains occur, it considers that use of travelling-irrigators being restricted to stored water only would help overcome the more violent fluctuations in stream flow.

The meeting was called to discuss the matter generally and with a view to formulating specific policy in respect of the calculation of a "cut-off" date for irrigation.

A meeting to discuss the management of water in the Rubicon River was held at Dunoralan on 30 June. The Rubicon River is typical of many others in the State. The main problem area is between Elizabeth Town and Parkham. Apparently even though the river was flowing at the gauge near Elizabeth Town at all times last summer, property owners in the vicinity of the Avenue Road were receiving no water. It was claimed that up to two thirds of this water is lost through evaporation in a section of stream choked by willows in the Avenue Plain area.

The Rivers and Water Supply Commission bailiff and the local property owners had seen large numbers of trout die in pools when the Rubicon River stopped flowing last year.

Stream improvement (de-snagging or channelling) may alleviate the problem of water loss in the Avenue Plains area, but clearing willows and blackberries etc. should preferably be carried out leaving the existing stream banks intact; regions where the river has no defined course (spreads out over marshy flats), which require channelling, should be clearly defined and inspected in order to decide on the nature of improvements.

It would be advantageous to gauge the Rubicon River above and below the trouble area during this summer in order to clearly define the loss of water due to stream obstruction and water abstraction.

A downstream farmer discussed irresponsible and excessive irrigation by some upstream farmers. The Rivers and Water Supply Commission pointed out the inadequate fines and difficulties associated with prosecution of irrigation permit abusers.

There was general agreement that travelling - irrigators drawing directly from the river - were largely responsible for the flow stoppage on the Rubicon River last summer, and it was recommended that there should be a total ban on direct irrigation from the Rubicon River.

The Rivers and Water Supply Commission proposed that water should be drawn from the river (subject to permit requirements) during winter (May to November) and held in storage dams for irrigation in the drier months. It was agreed that whenever the river falls below a certain level (to be determined) all water abstraction (other than for riparian purposes) should be stopped. A 'certain level' was agreed as being more appropriate than a 'particular' day each year as it would depend on recent rainfall.

The main recommendations of the meeting were as follows:

1. A ban on direct irrigation from the Rubicon River (particularly the use of 'travelling-irrigators').
2. Water for storage dams to be drawn under the existing permit system, with irrigation from these dams.
3. All water abstraction to be stopped when the river falls below a certain level.
4. The water depletion in the Avenue Plains area to be investigated in more detail by the Rivers and Water Supply Commission.
5. If stream bank clearing is considered to be necessary for future management of the river, this should be conducted within the existing stream banks wherever possible.

PROSECUTIONS

Listed are recent court cases. Further cases are pending for hearing.

Court Date	Offender and Address	Nature of Offence	Fine	Costs	Penalty
18.5.82	Ivan HANSEN Mittagong	Unlicenced fishing.	15-00	15-10	
11.5.82	Kerry BARTELS Bridport	Assembled rod & line. Unlicenced fishing.	75-00	15-10	
15.6.82	Rex SAUNDERS Launceston	Disturbing spawning fish. Take fish other than rod. Take fish closed waters.	70-00	15-10	40-00
15.6.82	Stephen SAUNDERS Launceston	Disturbing spawning fish. Take fish other than rod. Take fish closed waters.	70-00	15-10	40-00
18.6.82	Graham TOMKINSON Lutana	Using more than one rod & line.	25-00	15-10	
6.7.82	Malcom Cameron BROWN New Norfolk	Unlicenced fishing. Falsely representing to be licenced.	100-00	15-10	
7.7.82	Leigh Michael PARKER Scamander	Using more than one rod & line.	30-00	15-10	



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