



On the banks of the Motueka River...

STONEFLY
LODGE

NEW ZEALAND



Stonefly Lodge - Newsletter April 2014

"Trophy Trout in "The Year of The Mouse" by Tony Orman in New Zealand, April 2014

This year New Zealand's beech forests are expected to have the heaviest seed-fall in more than a decade according to the Department of Conservation.

"It is expected the increased seed-fall will lead to an explosion in the numbers of rats, mice and stoats. Beech trees generally seed every four to five years but weather conditions over the last two summers - a cool summer followed by a warm one - appear to have triggered a bumper seed or 'beech mast' event," says the department.

"Past experience has shown that when a beech mast occurs, it leads to a dramatic rise in mice and rat populations, who feast on the plentiful seed all winter." Mice are prolific breeders. They average 10 to 12 a litter and with a gestation period of only 20 days can have several litters a year - at least. Conservatively, a female mouse will produce 70 young a year. But in a beech forest seed-fall year with all the food, litters probably well exceed that. So potentially mice numbers explode massively. Trout- particularly brown trout- grab the opportunity to feed on some super-protein-rich prey. With that intake, trout pack on condition, growth and size.

I first encountered the "mouse year" in the upper reaches of the Karamea River high in the South Island's northwest mountains 40 years ago. One eight pound (3.3 kgs) brown my companion caught on the first dusk had eight mice in it. Another trout - five pounds taken at midday - had five mice in it.

Lab studies have shown mice have little fear of entering water and in fact are very good swimmers. They don't hesitate to plunge into a pool. On that trip trout were not actively feeding during the day. The reality was, trout had full bellies after the banquet of mice the night before. Although mice tend to nocturnal, during the day, I found a deer mouse lure or a large dark streamer fly like a Woolly Bugger triggered a reaction and a smashing hit.

The diet of mice and big intake of protein results in prodigious growth in trout with tremendous body condition and small heads. I've spoken to friends who when killing the odd fish have discovered up to 12 mice in a belly and trout weights well into "double figures" -- in one or two cases as big as 15 pounds.

If you want to maximize your chance of a truly trophy trout, the year of the mouse is the time to fish New Zealand this year. The signs are there for it to happen this year!

Tony Orman, author and New Zealander, has been matching wits against and writing about New Zealand trout for over half a century. His first book Trout with Nymph in 1974 has been rated 'a classic' by critics. Since then he has written over 20 books. Tony has traveled extensively throughout New Zealand and has a close association with the fishing fraternity, fishing lodges, and guides, serving as a public relations marketing officer for several years with the NZ Tourist & Publicity Department.

For more details and photos on "Mouse Eating Trout" please see the 2005 article in Fish & Game which can be found on <http://www.bestofnzflyfishing.com/articles/mouseeatingtrout.html>.

Not all areas of native beech in New Zealand will flower at once but we do know that Stonefly guests who flew over the Kahurangi National Park this summer witnessed the forest in full bloom. Stonefly Lodge is offering some special deals for what may be a very special season.

Book early to save disappointment.

Tight Lines,
John and Kate Kerr
April 2014

All packages detailed in the newsletter are subject to availability.

PACKAGE DETAILS

STAY 7 NIGHTS FOR
THE PRICE OF 5

Package includes:

- 7 nights accommodation
- Breakfast and dinner each day
- 5 days guided fishing
- Use of all fishing gear

Cost: NZ \$4625.00 p/p twin share.
Valid: 1st October to 15th December 2014,
15th March to 30th April 2015.

STAY 5 NIGHTS FOR
THE PRICE OF 4

Package includes:

- 5 nights accommodation
- Breakfast and dinner each day
- 3 days guided fishing
- Use of all fishing gear

Cost: NZ \$3325.00 p/p twin share.
Valid: 1st October to 15th December 2014,
15th March to 30th April 2015.

To make a booking inquiry,
call John on +64 3 5224479,
or email info@stoneflylodge.co.nz



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