



Peter Shutt - South Canterbury | Friday, 14 November 2008

Briar eradication focus at Lake Alexandrina

THIS Saturday sees volunteers assisting the Lake Alexandrina Conservation Trust with further eradication of briar at the south end of the lake.

The day starts at 9.30am and you are reminded to bring stout footwear and clothing that will protect against briar prickles.

Spokesperson Mary Wallace suggests you may also need sunscreen.

A social occasion will be held at a south end hut at the conclusion of the effort. * * * * *

The Fairlie Lions' annual Lake Opuha fishing competition this Sunday promises to be even better than in previous years.

Good prizes are on offer and there are reports of some quality brown trout being caught from the lake.

Registration can be made at the lake edge (Bennetts picnic area - off Trentham Road), from 6am, and any postponement will be announced on Classic Hits and Port FM, with the day being then rescheduled for the following Sunday.

The purpose of the day is to encourage young participants to the lake, and make it a family event for all to enjoy. The entry fee is \$15 for adult anglers and \$6 for junior anglers (under the age of 18 years). Fishing licences are essential, and all boat safety requirements are expected. * * * * *

Don't forget to book your site to sell your unwanted fishing gear at the first ever Swap Meet conducted by the SC Salmon Anglers Association at Clandeboye Hall next Saturday. The day starts at 11am and is a `must do' for all anglers. * * * * *

A report in The Timaru Herald on November 13 that the road closure to Falstone on the west side of Lake Benmore's Haldon Arm, signals closure of public access to camp facilities along the road.

This must come as a bombshell to any campers who have pre-sited holiday gear in advance of Christmas.

It's claimed the road runs across private property and hence the closure, but the road has been there for decades and I doubt that more than a handful of people have ever been aware of this situation.

But that's not the point of my concern in raising the matter today. My concern is that there are legal ways to resolve this issue.

This is not a matter in which the public should be the pawns in what can only be perceived as a game of brinksmanship with Linz and the territorial local authority (TLA) who has responsibility for the provision and maintenance of public access where access is deemed to be legal.

I'm disappointed to note the road closure and hope, for the sake of anglers, boaties, and campers wishing access to the area, that common sense can prevail quickly.

As I write this I'm aware of a Christchurch family enroute to Falstone and their journey, if the newspaper report is correct, will be in vain and expensive.

If the issue is indeed a problem, it needs prompt legal resolution without procrastination - and should definitely not be allowed to create disruption of holiday plans for Joe Public. * * * * *

We all know that colour is a big consideration when choosing or making flies, and yellow is a time-honoured fish catcher.

Before Christmas the best success usually comes from yellow-bodied flies. After Christmas the trout tend to seek a darker body colour and green or red becomes the favoured colour as the season progresses * * * * *

North American anglers are in conflict with dam operators on the big rivers, and claim that many of the small

migrating fish are killed by turbines.

A further theory is that habitat along the tributary banks is being lost and that too is causing a loss of fish, along with the over-supply of fish from hatchery operations.

I tell you this only because much of the same opinion is held in New Zealand by Kiwi anglers.

The American study, although inconclusive, goes on to say that, "Chinook smolts didn't survive any better in the free-flowing Fraser system than a comparison hatchery group did on its journey through the dams in the Columbia system, of which the Snake River is a major tributary."

And the moral of all this is that we know so little about the problems migrating smolt face and even less about what happens to them at sea.

There remains a great need for in-depth salmon studies in New Zealand. * * * * *

Gisborne-Tatapouri Sports Fishing Club angler, Ray 'Poppy' Henry, 70, has proven he is not too old for the giants of the deep by catching the biggest blue marlin ever weighed in Australia.

In October it took him 100 minutes to bring the catch - a 490kg monster marlin alongside the boat.

Mr Henry made the catch on a Vanuatu-based game fishing charter boat, Ultimate Lady, at Mellish Reef, about 1000km east of Cairns, the Townsville Bulletin reports. * * * * *

An American report to be published in the November issue of the Annual Review of Environment and Resources finds that 90 per cent of the world's catch of forage fish is converted into fishmeal and fish oil.

Already, a staggering 37 per cent of fish landed around the world is made up of forage fish - small to medium-sized fish which are the primary food for larger fish, marine mammals, and seabirds.

The study authors have highlighted two main concerns: the net protein loss and the lack of management in forage fisheries.

The protein loss that occurs to generate many of our dinners is particularly concerning.

To produce one pound of farmed Atlantic salmon, for example, 3-5 pounds of fishmeal is needed.

Forage fish are highly nutritious and well-suited for human consumption. While livestock feed made from soy and other terrestrial plants is available, fishmeal is often a cheaper source of protein.

In developing countries, this cheap source of protein often still is consumed by humans and, according to the study, "the use of forage fish for animal husbandry competes directly with human consumption."

Additionally, forage fisheries are often overlooked by management agencies because of their seemingly abundance; few management plans exist for these fisheries.

But their importance in the foodweb and the ocean ecosystem makes their sustained abundance crucial for ocean health. The Institute for Ocean Conservation Science at Stony Brook University, formerly the Pew Ocean Institute for Science, is launching the Lenfest Forage Fish Task Force to address this issue, and plans to develop ecosystem-based fisheries management ideas by 2010.

The study was completed by the "Sea Around Us Project", which is a partnership between the University of Vancouver, British Columbia, and the Pew Charitable Trust, and was primarily funded by the Institute for Ocean Conservation Science at Stony Brook University.

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