

**FISHING TRIP TO THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS**  
**KEVIN AND JARED GOWEN MAY 24-28 2010**

My son Jared, who lives in Hobart and is in the Navy, and I had decided a couple of months ago to have a Snowy Mountains end of stream season trip together. The season closed in Tassie in April and doesn't open until August, so he was keen to come up and have a final run for the year, with the possibility of scoring a big brown.

We left early on Monday May 24 in my Discovery 2, headed straight to Cooma for late morning tea/early lunch, then out to the Gungarlin river for the afternoon. We followed the track down to the right from the powerlines junction and parked beside the river. It was a warm, sunny afternoon and the Gungarlin was running low and clear. After walking about a kilometer downstream and finding some lovely bends and



runs, we started back. The small rainbows that were so prolific a few weeks before were nowhere to be seen. No activity whatsoever, so after a couple of hours of fruitless searching we decided to head for our lodge in Jindabyne, unpack, then go out to Paddy's Corner for an evening fish. Not long after arriving in the almost dark, we saw someone hook-up at the end of the pool before the riffle into Paddy's. No joy for him though, as the wily fish broke off just at the net. Jared and I fished into the dark, but no joy for us either.

Next morning we were up early to be first on the Thredbo. Not early enough though. A group of spin fishermen were at the big spawning pool that's about a ½ hour walk down below the road bridge to Smiggin Holes. We had seen many big spawning browns on the way down to the pool but could get no interest from them with a range of flies.

## *Illawarra Flyfishers*

At the pool the spinners were casting at a group of spawners that were in full view of the bank. At the back of the spawners was a huge rainbow, obviously picking up stray eggs from the spawners.

Jared and I went to the tail of the pool, where we could see some other spawners down deep and the odd rainbow jumping. An hours fishing here, (and a full dunking for me when I slipped on a rock) again with a range of likely flies brought no result. We then noticed that the spinners had left so we moved up to near the head of the pool where there were two groups of spawning browns, one group with the big rainbow still in attendance.

I changed flies again and added to a glo-bug, a dropper of my Spotlight nymph. The Spotlight nymph worked very well last October at the season opening. It's a red plastic bead from a Spotlight store, a size 10 nymph hook, lead wire, pheasant tail, copper wire and peacock hurl up to the red bead. I've added a bit of flash on some to help in murky water. Jared had a few casts over the browns, but had no action. I cast above the group and let the flies drift down through them. No action. Several casts later I saw that the rainbow had moved and suddenly my line was streaking out towards the middle of the pool. A little pressure on the line resulted in a huge jump and splash from what Jared and I estimated as an at least 7 pound fish, hooked on the Spotlight nymph. The rainbow headed back towards me, resulting in a flurry of line retrieval, then raced downstream and chose a path between the reef in the pool and a rock at the end of the reef. After tearing past the rock, I thought for an instant that I still was in luck as my line was tight to the rod. No such luck. The fish flashed away down the pool. My leader was trapped in a cleft in the rock and took a deep wade to the reef and some strong encouragement for it to come loose. Ah well!!!

Jared and I couldn't take a trick that day, so in the late afternoon we headed, in falling rain, back to the car. The next morning, the weather had turned decidedly for the worst. Low cloud, driving rain, freezing cold. We decided to head to Adaminaby where we were booked at the Alpine Cabins for 2 nights. After unpacking, we drove to the old bridge area on the Eucumbene, where we soon saw many big spawning browns. The rain and cold caught up with us there, but we soldiered on.

I hooked a good rainbow on a stimulator in a deep pool, but lost it, then Jared caught another (43cm) on what he called a 'shaving brush'. Nothing was attacking the wets which we changed over to at various times. We headed back to the cabins in the late afternoon without adding to the score.

Early next day we went to the same area again. A few other fishers were on the river, but not near us. We waded up through an area of riffles, bends and pools, spotting groups of spawning browns and others waiting in holes and undercut banks for their chance to join the spawners. Jared and I split up to fish different areas. Not long after, casting over a group of very active spawners, I had a hook-up on a Royal Wulff.

## *Illawarra Flyfishers*

A 55cm buck gave me a short fight and was soon in the net. He must have been exhausted from all that spawning activity. We decided to go back to our starting point and fish the area again, as it had been several hours since we had started. Again, Jared and I split up, he fishing to several schools of spawners as well as deeper pools and I doing the same. He caught a smallish rainbow at the tail of a pool on a dry.

In the very late afternoon, we decided to head back to the cabins, but saw a new group of spawners in a fast run at the head of a shallow pool. Jared had several casts over and amongst them, using a dry, but with no luck.

While he was casting I changed my rig to a dry and tiny beadhead black nymph dropper. Now it was my turn and three casts later, the line went tight, the rod bent heavily and a big, active brown buck was on. He took me downstream for about 70 metres, through riffles, runs and corner pools before Jared netted him for me. My biggest trout yet—a 65cm, full of condition brown.

Next morning, our last few hours of fishing, we first went to near Providence Portal but it was like Pitt Street at lunchtime. There were over 8 cars and untold numbers of fishers, one of whom, against all recommended practice, was fishing in a fluoro orange jacket. We drove back up to the old bridge, but this time fished the area above (to the west) of the bridge pool. We saw a few fish but had no hook-ups.

It was a very pleasant 5 days away. Not prolific fishing, but those we caught were all good size. And, of course, it's always special to spend some time with your son.

