

Blanking the Bushmans

By
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The annual club outing to the Bushmans did not have many takers this year. Perhaps members know something the three who attended don't, because the fishing was unusually hard going. I had an inkling of what was to come some ten days earlier when I used the elections to steal a day on the Bushman's with Jan Korrubel. The river was in perfect condition but the fish were few and far between. It was a far cry from conditions some three weeks earlier when Piet Taljaard and his mates knocked up a cricket score.

Where do all those fish go? I don't know but what I can tell you is that by the time the club arrived they had well and truly went. I got some inkling of just how tough it was going to be when on Friday afternoon. I got in late so decided to fish the stretch from corner pool to the hatchery, the idea being to have something on the scoreboard when I met up with Mario and Graeme later. Corner pool or the honey hole as Warren calls it was empty and so was the pool above it and the pool above that. All three had yielded fish ten days earlier. So in desperation I went in search of Roger. Silly name really because roger is in fact a hen fish who lives in the hole scoured next to the second of the two big rocks in the run up to the hatchery. More importantly Roger is a bit of a slut who can always be relied on to go for your fly. And Friday night was no exception. So one up, I returned to Snowflake for a whiskey and to compare note with the other guys.

They had also had a slow day. Even though they had been fishing since about 9am they had only managed a couple of fish a piece and it seems both of them had caught Roger. They had spotted a couple of fish in spawning mode in the long pool above the cottage but could not get near without spooking them.

So on the Saturday I crept up to the tail end of that pool, the idea being that I would wade it thereby not spooking the fish. That was a silly idea as the result was I saw no fish. Marco tells me that when he tried again on the Sunday they were so skittish that even a leader alighting on the water was enough to spook them. So Saturday came up blank for me and so did Sunday. Marco and Graeme may have done marginally better. My Mate Mike Graham who joined us on Saturday caught a couple, I think. That is how bad it was. Pickings were so thin that no one was saying much. It got so bad that I was remarked that the trouble about a blank day is that there is nothing to embellish.

This is not to say that it was a write off as a weekend. It was not. The water was in perfect condition. The weather was great and the company equally so. I had brought along a Stealth 10' 3wt which turns out to be the perfect rod for the Bushmans. So I had a great weekend setting up complicated and perfect drifts with long leaders over fish that were not there.

Looking back I see we have never left the Bushmans outing so late in the season. So I have already booked next year, a full month earlier. Those who are interested please diaries the weekend 16 to 18 April. Remember that this outing can cope with six fishermen tops. This is on a first come first served basis and Marco has already got one of the remaining five slots.