



In the Spotlight

The Macraes' Trout Hatchery - A Gold Mine for Trout!



'Bring the Kids Fishing Day' at the Macraes' Trout Hatchery was a great success. Photo courtesy of Peter Snow - Palmerston Anglers Club.

Located at the Macraes Gold Mine in the South Island of New Zealand is the Macraes' Trout Hatchery - an initiative between OceanaGold and Fish & Game New Zealand which raises approximately 10,000 to 12,000 rainbow trout annually for release into "put and take" fisheries (fisheries which have no natural spawning and are therefore not self-sustaining) throughout Otago, New Zealand.

How it started..

Built in October 2004, the hatchery began out of one man's passion for trout fishing. Gregg Caldwell, an OceanaGold employee and keen fisherman had heard that Fish & Games' hatchery in Wanaka was about to close. Gregg had the idea a hatchery could be built at Macraes utilising the water pumped from the Taieri river to the minesite. Armed with his idea Greg approached Macraes' senior management and Fish & Game where the concept was further developed and the decision made to go ahead.

And so, the trout hatchery was born. At that time, Gregg was a Process Operator but he later transferred to the Environmental team to help look after the hatchery. Gregg left the company at the beginning of 2006 to work overseas, but his legacy continues to live on.

Today...

Today, the hatchery fits in well with OceanaGold's existing tourism operations which include the Heritage & Art Park, and is enjoyed by the Macraes' employees who like to keep an eye on progress and help out with weekend and public holiday feeding and checking of the trout.

Day to day operation of the hatchery is the responsibility of OceanaGold's environmental team with Stewart Paul, Environmental Technician in charge of feeding, cleaning and maintaining the hatchery grounds and equipment. Fish & Game provide an overseeing role and visit about every 10 to 14 days to check on progress and to deliver more fish food.

OceanaGold Tours includes the hatchery as part of its standard mine tour and it's a popular place for schools and other groups to visit. OceanaGold holds an annual fishing day where the Lone Pine Reservoir, which is stocked with trout, is opened for fishing and also opens the reservoir for "Bring the Kids Fishing Day" events. The last event held on 3 November 2007 was a great success, attracting around 60 children and 30 adults. The trout proved to be a bit elusive though with only around 15 caught - the heaviest weighing in at around 1.2kg. On calm days numerous fish can be seen rising and cruising the shallow edges of the reservoir.



Fish & Game New Zealand's Ian Hadland and OceanaGold's Environmental Technician Stewart Paul observe some juvenile rainbow trout raised at the Macraes' Trout Hatchery.

Most recently, OceanaGold assisted Fish & Game when it came to purchasing a new fish transporter – which transports fish from the trout hatchery at Macraes to fisheries throughout New Zealand. The new transporter, a smart galvanised trailer with a stainless tank is said to be a major improvement on the previous aging unit which was heavy, awkward to load and used the pure oxygen supply uneconomically. It has been put to immediate work and is currently assisting this season's rainbow trout releases.

The Macraes' Trout Hatchery is another great example of OceanaGold's commitment to local community initiatives. Believed to be the only known trout hatchery located at an active mine site, the initiative exemplifies how creative thinking and a close partnership can result in a sustainable program, and one which is set to continue benefiting communities throughout many areas of the South Island of New Zealand for years to come.



Debbie Clarke, OceanaGold's Environmental Supervisor with the new fish transporter.



The Macraes' Trout Hatchery - a social partnership between OceanaGold and Fish & Game New Zealand