

# Whopper trout caught at Tuai

by John Gillies

GIVE and take took on special meaning for Tuai resident and power-station employee Roha Lake.

He helped in the release of hatchery rainbow trout in Lake Whakamarino at Tuai, then less than a week later caught a 13-kilogram (28½ pound) brown trout less than 100 metres away in the same lake.

Mr Lake, a Wairoa Angling Club member, caught the 88-centimetre-long fish just before midnight, fishing at the tail-race, the outlet for the hydro-electric power station.

It took Mr Lake, a keen angler for more than two decades, just over 20 minutes to land the fish.

Fish and Game officer John Lucas said the catch enhanced the sports fishing reputation of lakes in the Eastern Fish and Game district.

The trout was to be featured in a leading fishing magazine, and word of the catch had spread quickly among the angling fraternity.

Lake Whakamarino, in particular, with its shallow depth and abundant food source, had a history of producing trophy fish.

But this fish was exceptional, even by its standards.

Mr Lucas said it was interesting that this was a wild, rather than hatchery-released, fish.

It showed the ability of the lake to produce exceptionally large fish.

Another interesting point was the excellent condition of the fish.

"It had a condition factor of 69, which is almost unheard of for a trout of that size. Its girth made it look a bit like a tuna."

Mr Lucas said Fish and Game staff would remove an otolith — a bone in the trout's ear which has "growth rings" like those of a tree — to find out the age of the fish. This would give a clear indication of its growth rate.

Mr Lake, a former Gisborne-East Coast rugby league representative prop who played for Wairoa Tigers, is having the fish mounted and it will be displayed in the Lake Whakamarino Lodge at Tuai.