

Trip Report: Lake Rotoma, 26th August 2009

Andy Connor

On Wednesday, four of us headed out early from Auckland to explore some more freshwater dive sites, namely the lakes around Rotorua. As well as myself and Jamie, there was Tom from Global Dive and Matt from the Dive Centre. With some local knowledge, we rendezvoused at Lake Rotoma around 11am, which coincided with a group from Bay of Plenty Polytechnic finishing their morning dives. We'd been advised that you get two completely different dives from the one site, by heading out to the left or to the right of a small rocky promontory. We all geared up and headed into the water for the first – visibility was great, well over 10m, a surprise for Tom who was expecting conditions similar to Lake Pupuke!

We headed out into the depths of the lake, the weedline quickly gave way to gravel, which then gave way to a fine yellow silt. At around 30m, we levelled off and followed the contours of the lake around, past the obligatory koura, to make a slow ascent up to the rocky promontory itself. Here the character of the dive changed completely, with the rocks providing some really interesting topography. Water was cold, around 11 degC on my computer and 40 minutes was plenty of time - so it was out to stand in the sun, warm up and try to avoid being mutilated too badly by the sand flies that were fairly rabid.



For our second dive, Matt led us out on the other side of the rocks, where after a short swim, we found the wreck that this site is famous for – small, but perfectly formed! After a few minutes at the wreck site, we continued along our way. This side of the rocks was definitely more silty, but visibility still was great – you just wouldn't want to plough into the bottom! Here and there we found the odd bit of timber and tires, as well as some tree branches and as with the previous dive, there were plenty of koura – feisty out of proportion to their diminutive size! Matt brought us back past the wreck, just time for a couple more shots.

And then it was back to the shallows - I really liked the way the sunlight was creating colours and shapes with the weed - and we were greeted by a big fat trout who zoomed around us for a few minutes before darted back out into deeper water. Breasting down the gear, we headed in to Rotorua for a late lunch before heading back to Auckland. Not a bad day out at all!

