

AN OLD SALT FINDS JOY IN FRESH WATER



BOB "Wallaby" Evans casts his line across the Murray River and his mind back to times when fishing was much more a chore.

An old salt of the eastern seaboard, he recalls his time aboard fishing trawlers, where the swells were high and the demands for a bumper catch even higher.

But it was his wedding nuptials — a catch of an entirely different kind — and the lure of a freshwater fishing that saw him finally settle at Khancoban, deep in the heart of Kosciuszko National Park.

Here he is a bushman who fastens his tired Akubra with safety pins and sets off for the quiet tributaries that slowly build to form Australia's longest river system.

There is a science to inland fishing, he says, but just as much luck too.

"You know you have a rainbow trout on the line by the way they fight," Wallaby said. "They put everything into it, they don't give up."

But then neither does he.

Many a local has pondered how this man could still be standing waist-deep in water in the middle of a cold winter's night.

But Wallaby says you have to ignore the biting cold if you expect the big brown trout to do the same.

"I was a commercial fisherman for years — you had to go where the fish were. It didn't matter what time it was — it was a 24-hour job."

There has been a frostbitten finger to deal with, the occasional misplaced foot and those tourists to contend with.

But it all pays off when the fish finally rise to the fly.

"That's what I come here for," says Wallaby. "That's when I feel alive."



Bob 'Wallaby' Evans fly fishing the Swampy Plain Creek, a small tributary of the mighty Murray River.
Picture: JASON EDWARDS



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KHANCOBAN

Over the coming days the *Herald Sun* will be travelling along the course of our mighty river. Follow reporter Aaron Langmaid and photographer Jason Edwards as they discover the people and places that make the Murray River so special.

Have a tip? aaron.langmaid@news.com.au

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