

Two weeks ago, I returned to my favorite region, the Yelcho River and lake basin. This is an extraordinary area of southern Chile, and not just for its beautiful scenery and its endless forests and glaciers, but also for its incredible fishing. It is perhaps one of the very best fishing spots in the world. The issue here is how and with whom to go. It is not easy to get to Yelcho — there are usually few services and they are fewer still after the Chaiten volcano eruption. Today, its almost a totally unpopulated and isolated place.

On my recent trip, I could see that the fishing is like always. The quality of the fishing is beyond the imagination. Its posible to fish for Atlantic salmon, Chinook, Cohos, Brook trout, Rainbow trout, Steelheads, resident Rainbow, Sea-run Brown trout, and freshwater resident Brown trout.



You can fish will all kinds of flies: the incredible micro-nymphs in droppers, very small dries, terrestrial imitations, large flying insects, imitation Puyes, almonds, Pancoras, shrimp — a little bit of everything. It all depends on the place, but in reality its not easy to discern where, with what and when to fish. The rivers are fast flowing and with some dangerous white water sections or treacherous rapids. We recommend that you travel there on a program with trained or accredited outfitters that are knowledgeable about the region.

In the photo below, a small sample, a tremendous trout caught by Luigi, an Italian friend. While Luigi is not an expert fisherman, he managed to get this beautiful, 30 or more inches rainbow fish in Lake Yelcho. The trout fought very hard. Luigi had to almost close the brake, backing and running at various times, before his amazing surprise. He gave a fierce contest, trying as always

to avoid the unnecessary fight, then soon after returned the fish to the water. Still, it took almost 20 minutes to bring it to the boat to get this photo.

The Yelcho watershed has a lot of places to go: from the Futaleufu River, mountain lakes, and the lake and river of Yelcho of course, to a lot of very small rivers with excellent dry fly fishing, such as, among others, Malito, Espolon, Palena and Verde.

This is one of the most desolate regions of Chile, containing spectacular nature and flowing rivers from which its posible to drink waters pure like few places elsewhere. This is a region for those who look for the most pristine places on the planet. Without doubt, its also one of the places that all fly fishermen should know about if they seek something special, different, and rare.

Throughout my long past as a fisherman in Patagonia, I have caught a lot more like this one here, even bigger fish. I have had countless memorable experiences in my dear Yelcho.

by Francisco Castano