



# *THE FLYFISHER NEWSLETTER*

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June 2023

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## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

With flyfishing opportunities about to become more limited by the close of the season (30 th June) in many places, it is probably timely to revisit those spots which remain open and which, in many cases, are within a very comfortable drive from the North Shore.

Furthermore, these locations offer the chance for beginner anglers to catch their first trout and while none are of “trophy proportions”, the thrill of that contact and the bend in the rod, create a rush of endorphins which are accurately described as “feel good hormones!” Closest to home is the quarry lake adjoining Lake Pupuke which can be accessed both from Shea Terrace near North Shore Hospital and also from the extension of Northcote Road.

Lake Pupuke itself still carries stocks of Rainbow, Brown and Brook Trout but releases are now concentrated on the quarry lake where there are three annual releases, each of around 200 fish. Our junior club member and already accomplished angler, Daniel Carter, wrote an excellent article in an earlier copy of the club newsletter detailing techniques, flies, lines, etc. for this spot which any intending angler would well to read.

Slightly further afield but within an hour or two's drive is the Wairoa River at Clevedon which carries the closest population of wild rainbow trout to Auckland. Many years ago, trout were released into the river and in spite of the pressures of urban sprawl, weather events and a nearby quarry, the population has maintained itself by utilising spawning sites in the small side feeder streams and a few in the main river stem. Upstream from the Tourist Road bridge is probably the best area to try and from the end of McNicol Road, one can walk upstream along the riverbank to quite a few casting opportunities. Fish are not large but could be between 2 or 3 lbs.

To the west lie the sand dune lakes known locally as the Waiuku Lakes which are only about 10 to 15 minutes from Waiuku itself. The closest, formerly called "Thompson's Lake" and now known as Whatihua, is on the northern (right) side of the road to Kariotahi beach. Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game have recently stocked the lake with a further 200, 2 year old rainbows and provided permission is obtained from the local landowner (a polite request is generally all that is needed), the chances of "hooking up" are pretty good.

Finally, the other "Waiuku lake" is Parkinson's Lake which is on the raised sand dune area called the "Maio" just west of the little settlement of Otua. This lake is quite small and depending on water level can range between 1.5 to 1.9 hectares. It was once well choked by weed but the introduction of infertile carp has helped to reduce the problem. Fish and Game have also stocked this lake including a number of good sized brown trout.

This little lake represents my introduction to what has become a "love affair" with the gentle art of fly fishing. In the early 1970's, My buddy Adrian's father-in-law had been talking to us about his fly fishing passion, Greenheart rods, greased silk lines and home-made flies. The seeds were sown and in short order, I visited Tisdalls in Queen Street and purchased a "Blueline Robin Hood" 2 piece rod of fibreglass with a metal ferrule, a level floating line, a very basic reel and a handful of very traditional flies. Not long after, Adrian and his new wife, Kerry, shifted to Otua and a local told Adrian about Parkinson's Lake.

With enthusiasm levels sky high, my next visit saw Adrian and me heading up to the lake where fish could be seen rising everywhere! With shaking hands, I set up the gear, selected a "cochy-bon-du" fly and commenced casting. After a couple of shaky casts, my fly landed in clear water and almost immediately it was sucked under and "I was on!" Not much of a

fight but what do you expect from a 6 inch Rudd! However, that's not the point. My new lifelong addiction had been born. That is why Parkinson's Lake holds a very dear place in the piscatorial corner of my heart.

Dave Symes  
President.

## **FISHING REPORT**

### **Auckland / Waikato**

No reports but the annual Fish and Game stocking of our 'local water' has recently taken place and 2 year old Rainbows have been stocked into the Quarry Lake beside Lake Pupuke and Parkinsons Lake out at Waiuku. It is winter, and with this season our thoughts usually turn southwards to the Taupo area, but if you need that 'scratch itched' a visit to either of these Lakes can be very enjoyable.



*Trout being released into Parkinsons Lake.*

## **Rotorua**

All the Lakes are ridiculously high so shore based fly-fishing can be trickier than normal.

As a counter to that the Rotorua tributaries, which are running constantly higher than normal, are producing some very consistent fishing. With all the rain this year there have been numerous floods and as a result slips and bank collapses, particularly on the Ngongotaha. What this has meant is that the river is constantly carrying some colour. The plus to this is that it is allowing pools to ‘recover’ quickly after being fished. So if someone has just vacated your favourite pool, take the time to sit on the bank and rest it, have a coffee or a sami, and before you know it the fish will be back on the feed. Fly of choice right now, Glo Bugs.



*Neville with a beautifully coloured up Rainbow Jack from a Rotorua tributary. Photo courtesy of Neville Freeman.*

## **Taupo**

The cold weather has started to see some bigger runs of fresh fish into the Taupo tributaries, with the Hatepe and the Tauranga Taupo probably getting the most so far, but we are still early in the season and a LOT of fish are yet to run.

Flies that are getting best results for the nymphers are small naturals like pheasant tails, but with a little extra sparkle tied in, and of course the ubiquitous Glo Bug. A new fly being touted heavily by Sporting Life is the Slushi. I have yet to fish with one, or even physically see one. Every year there is a new 'super fly' in Taupo that is 'unbeatable' and 'all the fish want', the proof will be in the fishing and if it is still there in 3 years time. Fly Tying is an amazing source of enjoyment for many of those who get into it, and when you develop a 'new' fly that works it is immensely satisfying.

For the wet fly fans good reports continue to come in from the Tongariro and The Tauranga Taupo, but no definite fly seems to be working better than others.

## **Saltwater**

No reports from the salt unfortunately, but if you have been out please let us know at Club Night on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> .

## **Fishy Tales**

- If you do have a report, success story, or anecdote to share then just send it to [iconpromote@gmail.com](mailto:iconpromote@gmail.com) . Happy Fishing and Tight Lines – Freddy Da Fish.

## **SUBS**

**SUBS are now Due.**

At the AGM it was decided that we would return to our pre-covid Subscription Rates.

Adult – \$80 (full year)

Family – \$90 (full year)

Student – \$30 (Anyone currently enrolled in full time study, be it School, University, or Polytec)

- internet banking to the Club's bank account: North Shore Flyfishers Incorporated ASB A/c #: 12-3209-0190179-00 (please include your name and the word SUBS as a reference);
- Or by Cash on a Club Night.



## **LAST CLUB NIGHT**

Last month we had Johan Kok talking to us about his Saltwater sojourn into Tropical waters. It was a very enjoyable night and thank you once again Johan.

## **NEXT CLUB NIGHT – 20<sup>th</sup> JUNE 7.30 PM**

This month we have Peter Scott talking to us. Peter is an exceptionally experienced fly fisher and will be known to many of us as one of the original proprietors of Rod and Reel Fishing Store. Peter is now ‘retired’, when he is not representing New Zealand at international Fly Fishing Competitions, and living on the banks of the Whanganui River, where he can fish anytime he wants.

This is sure to be a very enjoyable evening and we look forward to seeing you there.

## **WHY WE FISH**

*The evolution of a fly fisher....  
At the beginning its about catching a fish  
Its then about catching many fish  
After this is accomplished, it's about catching a big fish  
At some point in time, most fly fishers have an epiphany and realize it's about "Being there"*

*U.N. Known*

## **CHANGES TO CONTACT DETAILS**

Committee members organising club trips and similar events are finding that the phone and email information that we hold for some members has become out of date. If you have changed your address, landline number, mobile number or email address in the last year or so and have not passed the new details on to NSFF, could you please advise Barrie Barnes by email, his email address is [barrie@flyfishinginxs.kiwi](mailto:barrie@flyfishinginxs.kiwi) .

## **FISHING BUDDIES SOUGHT**

The intention is to display a list of names of Club Members that are keen on finding a 'buddy' to go fishing with, either on a regular basis or just for a day. In essence it's a fly-fishing dating service...

<b>Name</b>	<b>Availability</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
Ron Blair	Anytime, has a 14.4 Marco with 60hp etec Evenrude for serious fishing Salt or Fresh	home 09 834 8841 mobile 0275 006 336 <a href="mailto:ron.blair@xtra.co.nz">ron.blair@xtra.co.nz</a>
Les Rose	Retired and is happy to take another person fishing during the week.	home 09 4183634
Graham Carter	Lives in Hamilton, keen on weekday / mid-week trips.	021 026 00437 07 855 1833
Lloyd Altham	Has 12' Pontoon boat /15 HP Honda. Available most time, but prefer weekdays.	Mob. 021 0295 9167 Home 09 420 3120 <a href="mailto:email-lloyd@skysupply.co.nz">email-lloyd@skysupply.co.nz</a>
Gary Bolstad	Keen to get out Stream, Lake or even Saltwater fly-fishing. Has both Fish & Game and Taupo season licences so keen to go almost anywhere. Retired so free to go most of the time.	Mobile 022 379 3070 <a href="mailto:gd.bolstad@gmail.com">gd.bolstad@gmail.com</a>
Derek Robinson	Retired available most times keen to do Waikato streams and most other things.	Ph 4437311 Mob: 0212 595 371 <a href="mailto:pamanddek@outlook.com">pamanddek@outlook.com</a>

## **CLUB TROPHIES**

**Brown Trout Trophy** – This is awarded to The Heaviest Brown Trout caught by a Club Member during the year – 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. Current holder is **Ron Blair**.

**Chain Snore Trophy** – A fun award given immediately after any Club Trip to the person who has done the 'funniest' thing over the weekend. If nobody has had anything like this happen it may be awarded to the worst snorer. Current Holder is **Russell Nelson!**

**Ian Hunt Memorial Trophy** – Heaviest Trout caught fly-fishing by a Club Member during the Pupuke Challenge Competition. A competition run every year to promote the Lake Pupuke fishery. This was not held this year due to Covid lock down. Current holder is **Lucas Bathurst**.

**I Love Flyfishing Trophy** – Awarded to the Club Member who has caught the most species of Saltwater fish fly-fishing over the year – 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. Current holder is **Johan Kok**.

**Rodd And Gunn Trophy** – This is the Club Competition which takes place over two days. One Day on a Lake and one day on a River.

The Lake part of the competition has its own Trophy, the **I Love Flyfishing Stillwater Trophy**.

### **QUOTABLE QUOTES**

*The judicious and perfect application of dry, wet, and mid-water fishing stamps the finished fly-fisher with the hall-mark of efficiency.*

*Francis Francis – The Way of the Trout 1867*



*Another Rotorua silver bullet for Neville. Photo courtesy of Neville Freeman.*



## **BROWN TROUT TROPHY” COMPETITION RULES**

Winning fish will be determined by weight.

Verification by partner where possible and/or by photograph.

Details to be provided to any committee member.

Competition period April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> . Prize awarded at AGM in April.

Winner’s name and weight of fish to be published in May club newsletter.

## **NSFF CLUB SALT WATER FLY FISHING COMPETITION RULES**

The “essence” of the competition is to encourage club member participation and in the process, to award a winner’s trophy to the individual who catches the greatest number of salt water species. It will run from 1<sup>st</sup> April in one year to 31<sup>st</sup> March in the next year with the trophy awarded at the following AGM. For the full rules please refer to the Club Website [www.nsff.org.nz](http://www.nsff.org.nz)

### **NORTH SHORE FLYFISHERS DVD LIBRARY**

*Over the years the Club has purchased some videos and been very fortunate in having a number more donated for Club Members use. There is almost certainly something there that will appeal to you. So if you would like to borrow one just let any Committee Member know (contact details are on the back page of this Newsletter).*

#### **Club Videos**

Flyfishing with Dave McLallan June 2015 (15 DVD’s)  
New Zealand FlyTying (with John Giacon) A Tight Lines Ltd Presentation (2 DVD’s)  
Tie A Fly with John Morton The Master Fly Tier  
Blue Water Fishing Techniques (ITM Fishing Show) Matt Watson  
New Zealand Trophy Waters (Volume 6) Bruce Masson A Deep Stream Production  
New Zealand Trophy Waters (Volume 7) Bruce Masson A Deep Stream Production  
Running Down The Man A Felt Soul Media Production  
Advanced Fly Casting Doug Swisher Essence of Fly Casting  
Chasing Silver (Tarpon fishing in Florida) Howard Films. Com  
How to Succeed on Reservoirs Part 1 Boat Tackle, Tactics and Flies  
How to Succeed on Reservoirs Part 2 Boat Tackle, Tactics and Flies  
How to Succeed on Small Stillwaters Part 2 Stalking Patterns and Techniques  
NZ Fly Fishing Adventures Going Remote Mike Kirkpatrick  
NZ Fly Fishing Adventures Going Remote Volume I Nelson District-Mike Kirkpatrick  
NZ Fly Fishing Adventures Going Remote Volume 2 West Coast-Mike Kirkpatrick  
NZ Fly Fishing Adventures The Distant Browns of Emerald-Mike Kirkpatrick

The Manic Guide to Fly Casting Rene Vaz  
 Fly Fishing in NZ  
 Stealth with a Fly-NZ Wilderness waters Dean Bell Fly Fishing  
 SoulFish 2 Global fly fishing Adventures with April Vokey and others  
 Gulf Harbour Outdoors with Geoff Thomas NZ fly fishing for Trout and Salmon  
 Salt Water Fly Fishing Game Fishing  
 Bugs of the Underworld Lisa Cutter  
 NZ Fly Fishing MP4s Youtube Video's (4 discs)  
 Snapper Secrets (vol 2)  
 Fly Fishing in NZ (fishing Clips from Mobil Sport on TV3)  
 How to Fish Rapala Lures  
 Essential Patterns with Oliver Edwards Vol 1  
 Fly Fishing For Reservoir Trout (at Pitsford) Bob Church  
 Trout Secrets with Geoff Thomas  
 Fishing in Fiordland  
 Wee Wets and Small Drys

### **CLUB TRIPS 2022 – 2023**

February –Ngongotaha River and Rotorua Lakes – FEB 2024  
 March – Lake Otamangakau – MAR 2024  
 May – Ngongotaha River and Rotorua Lakes –MAY 2024  
 June – Tongariro – Club River Fishing Competition – JUN 2023  
 July – Tongariro and Tauranga Taupo – JUL 2023  
 September – Tauranga Taupo – SEP 2023  
 November – Lake based Club Competition Trip –NOV 2023  
 December / January – Tuition weekend (Held if enough 'novice' anglers are interested)  
 December – Lake Otamangakau – DEC 2023

The NSF committee arrange various Club Trips over the year to different parts of the country. If you would like to be involved, or have an idea for a trip please let one of your committee know.

### **MAY CLUB TRIP TO NGONGOTAHA AND ROTORUA AREA - REPORT**

What a stunning Trip this was. The rains fell on the Monday before the Trip and flooded the river, and then they fell again on the Monday after the Trip and flooded the river again, but in between these floods it was almost perfect. Clear skies with cold mornings, no wind,

and this funny yellow thing shining down on us from above. Some of the older Club Members with longer memories told us it was something called the Sun.

The river was a perfect colour and there were plenty of Trout about. The only negative was there were plenty of other anglers about as well. The only time I have seen it that busy was on the one and only Opening Day that I fished.

Still, with the perfect water colour, the extra fishing pressure didn't stop everyone from getting into some nice fish.

An excellent Trip and as always thank you to everyone for making it such good fun.

### **CLUB COMP TRIP TO TURANGI**

This will take place over the weekend Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July, Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

This Trip doubles as both a Club Trip away to have some fun fishing the Taupo area as well as the Club River Competition. It is a very relaxed competition and only takes place on the Saturday of the Trip.

Last year we married the Competition together with a friendly inter Club Competition with the Auckland Freshwater Anglers Club. Lots of fun, lots of laughs, and even the odd fish or two caught, not a bad weekend away by anyones standards.

More info on the trip will be in a separate flyer to be sent out shortly but in the meantime if you might be interested in this Trip contact Maurice - 021 650 692 [maurice.p@newwayz.co.nz](mailto:maurice.p@newwayz.co.nz) or Barrie 021 925 006 [barrie@iloveflyfishing.kiwi](mailto:barrie@iloveflyfishing.kiwi)



*A great example of the benefits of  
'Swinging' in Turangi. Photo courtesy of  
Simon Hoole.*

## **FOR SALE**

Very old fly reels, 3 wooden and 2 bakelite.

Probably from 'Zane Grey's era!

Offers

Contact: Lloyd Altham

09 420 3120

021 0295 9167



## **JOKE OF THE MONTH**

A man was stopped by a game-warden in Yellowstone National Park recently with two buckets of fish leaving a lake well known for its fishing.

The game warden asked the man, “Do you have a license to catch those fish?”

The man replied to the game warden, “No, sir. These are my pet fish.”

“Pet fish?!” the warden replied.

“Yes, sir. Every night I take these here fish down to the lake and let them swim around

for a while. I whistle and they jump back into their buckets, and I take em home.”  
“That’s a bunch of crap! Fish can’t do that!” replied the warden in disbelief.

The man looked at the game warden for a moment and then said, “Here, I’ll show you. It really works.”

“O.K. I’ve GOT to see this!” The game warden was curious.

The man poured the fish into the river and stood and waited...  
After several minutes, the game warden turned to the man and said, “Well?”

“Well, what?” the man responded.

“When are you going to call them back?” the game warden prompted.  
“Call who back?” the man asked.

“The FISH,” the warden said sternly.  
“What fish?” the man asked.

### **FISH & GAME CALLS FOR SUPPORT TO FARM RECOVERY EFFORT**

Fish & Game is calling on anglers and hunters to reach out to farmers still cleaning up from the devastation of cyclone events earlier in the year.

Chief executive Corina Jordan says many landowners are still struggling to get their lives and livelihoods back on track.

"We've just had the Opening of the game bird season when traditionally thousands of Kiwis were welcomed onto farms to hunt.

"Many of our anglers also rely on the generosity of landowners letting them access fishing spots across private property.

"It'd be great to see that hospitality and goodwill shown by the rural community being repaid."

Jordan says she has been contacted by anglers and hunters, as well as Fish & Game staff, enquiring about how they could volunteer to lend a hand.



"We've been in contact with Federated Farmers and other primary industry groups and what's clear is that donations are still very much needed, as well as voluntary labour to assist with fixing farm infrastructure.

"Anglers and hunters who want to lend a hand to the ongoing recovery effort should reach out to the Rural Support Trust or register as a volunteer with the Farmy Army which is being coordinated by Federated Farmers."

Jacob Lucas, Nelson Marlborough Fish & Game officer, says angling and hunting volunteers have put in hundreds of hours helping with farm clean-ups across the region in the last two years.

"Everyone enjoys the day out, even though the task of removing debris from fences is hard work.

"But the mental weight that is lifted off landowners when they see tasks completed like their fences cleared is huge. It means they can focus on other jobs around the property or getting the farm operation back up and running."

Federated Farmers executive member and Wellington Fish & Game councillor Richard McIntyre says the support from the organisation is greatly appreciated.

"Anglers and hunters have a fair bit in common with farmers - a shared love of the outdoors, the land and the environment.

"There is still much more work that needs to be done to get these farms back on track. Mobilising some of the angling and hunting community to lend a hand would be greatly appreciated by farmers in affected areas."

More information on how to get involved in the cyclone recovery effort can be found on the Rural Support Trust website ( <https://www.rural-support.org.nz/Adverse-Events/Flood>) and Federated Farmers homepage ([fedfarm.org.nz](http://fedfarm.org.nz)).

## **TOOLS OF THE TRADE**

*Dave McLellan*

The person who claimed that size has nothing to do with performance was not talking about fly rods. In the very early days of fly fishing in England they used real may- flies which they put on a single hook attached to horse hair line that was tied to a long pole, and dapped over rising fish. There was no thought of casting a fly so the rods became extremely long

as they tried to reach the rising fish. Rods reached up to 30 foot in length and must have required great strength to hold them steady over rising fish. When someone came up with the idea of casting a artificial fly, rod lengths came back to a more manageable length, but they were still long, heavy, and cumbersome. Then split bamboo cane rods came on the market, and although still heavy they were about 50% lighter than solid wood rods. To get the weight down rods were made shorter, and shorter, and by about the 1940s most cane trout fly rods were down to about 10 feet in length. In America however they continued the quests for lightness by reducing the length, and rods of around 7 foot became common.

Then we had hollow fibreglass rods which were lighter, but manufactures found it difficult to give them a good casting action as they had the tendency to wobble, which made accurate smooth casts almost impossible. With the introduction of graphite as a rods building material all these problems were solved, as graphite was made strong, light rods, which did not wobble, but could be designed to give the angler almost any rod action they required.

The reason for this history lesson is simply this, if weight is no longer a major factor, then for the first time we can choose the ideal length rod for the job, and in my opinion the longer the rod the greater the line control, and better control simply equates to more fish. So the answer is simple, you use the longest rod witch you feel comfortable with. I have three trout rods which cover all my requirements, they are a 9 foot 5 weight for small streams, a 9'6" 6 weight for larger rivers and small lakes, and a 10' 7weight for larger lakes.

## **Q&A: ACTIVE DRIFTING VS DEAD DRIFTING**

<https://troutbitten.com>

*(This is an excellent site and well worth visiting – Ed)*

Here's another installment in the Q&A series. I've received a bunch of questions under this topic in the last few weeks, so here we go . . .

### **Question**

John Morrison emailed me.

Hello Dom,

In regard to underwater fishing, do you ever activate your dead drift? Whether on a nymph or a streamer, while dead drifting, do you ever move the nymph faster or jig it up? If you are dead drifting something like a Wooly Bugger, do you recommend moving across currents during the dead drift or swinging at the end?

**Answer:**

Thanks, John.

First, I'll say yes. I do all of the things you mentioned, and more, when trout won't respond to a great dead drift. Finding what else might convince trout besides what they should take is one of the most intriguing parts of fishing. And with a fly rod in hand, we have so many options that we always run out of time sooner than we run out of ideas.

So try it all. In my experience, trout respond more to smaller animations and minor movement. These often convert to solid takes more than big animations or major movements. But remember, everything works sometimes.

### **What's a Dead Drift?**

That said, what you are asking about are not dead drifts. I think it's important to understand the true meaning of the term and, more importantly, the look to the fly. Words matter, because they expand or limit our thoughts about the way we do things.

A dead drift means that the fly has no influence from us. Think about a dry fly, because it's easy to see. If the dry fly comes tight to the tippet, in moving water, it drags across the surface, going slower or faster than its surroundings or crossing currents. As soon as our tippet influences that fly, it is no longer a dead drift.

When fishing underneath the surface and trying for a dead drift, our goal is the same — we do not want to influence the fly unnaturally. [This objective, though, is far more complex](#), because fishing underneath must involve weight, either built into the fly or added to the line as split shot. So, trying to keep that weight from influencing the nymph or streamer in an unnatural way, while also dealing with mixed currents, is the fundamental challenge of achieving a good presentation underneath.

It's certainly possible, and the closer we get to the goal of having little to no effect on the fly, or appearing to have little to no effect, the more trout usually buy our presentation. Back to your question: Do I ever activate the dead drift? Sure, but at the point where I start deliberately moving the fly, I stop calling it a dead drift. And do I ever lead a bugger across currents or swing it at the end? Yes, but again, I don't call these motions a dead drift.

As soon as I influence the fly, I abandon the idea of dead drifting. The fly is now swinging, sliding, hopping, jigging or simply drifting. All of those motions might catch a trout, and I mix them in to see what works best for the moment.

## Last Call

Final point here . . .

I often say there is only one kind of dead drift — a perfect one. And everything else falls short. Lucky for us, trout still eat imperfect dead drifts, because of course, we are most often imitating living things with our flies. And living things move. So, by aiming for perfection in our dead drift, we end up with small imperfections that might very well make the fly look alive.

Fish hard, friends.

Enjoy the day.

Domenick Swentosky

TROUTBITTEN

[domenick@troutbitten.com](mailto:domenick@troutbitten.com)



*Barrie with a Tongariro Rainbow taken on the swing. Photo courtesy of Barrie Barnes.*

## **MENDING THE LINE : A FILM**

It's not often that a mainstream movie comes out with Fly Fishing as a central theme, like *A River Runs Through It*, so when they do come along it is often worth the watch.

This movie is about an Army Veteran from the Afghanistan war, suffering from both physical and mental injuries, trying to find his way back into a society that is very different from his military life.

It stars a powerful cast, including Golden Globe winner Brian Cox (*Succession*, *Troy*); Sinqua Walls (*Nanny*, *White Men Can't Jump*); Perry Mattfeld (*In the Dark*, *Shameless*); Emmy winner Patricia Heaton (*Everybody Loves Raymond*, *The Middle*); and Academy Award winner Wes Studi (*The Last of the Mohicans*, *A Love Song*).

I haven't seen this movie, but I will be keeping an eye out for its release here in NZ and doing an old fashioned trip to the 'movies' when it gets here.

## **WOW: THAT WAS FUN!**

*The following article is by Club Member Graham Little. He has been both fresh and saltwater fly-fishing for many years and has developed a wealth of experience and knowledge.*

We anchored about 200 meters off the north face of Hole in the Rock. Late, late morning. My then girlfriend and I were on holiday, so our first charter fishing trip had not been an early start. Gorgeous spring day, late November, flat calm, crystal clear water, I was about to begin fishing a large school of trevally and kahawai feeding on krill covering the couple of hundred meters before the Rock. The skipper was sorting me a spinning rod to use. But coming out I noticed a fly rod tucked into shelf.

I pointed to the rod, *what's that* I asked innocently. The skipper glanced up *it's a fly-fishing rod* he said offhandedly. *What do you do with it.* I asked even more innocently. He glanced up with a look that said what an idiot. *You catch fish with it.* I nodded *Can I use it?* I asked. Now he looked at me hard-like. I could see in his face, ... *oh shit this guy will break my rod.* We were staying at his lodge, so the look was followed by commercial acceptance. *Okay, he said, I will set you up.*

I looked over the gear. It was an 8 weight, Kilwell, with a double tapered floating line. He put about 8 feet of leader with a small silicone bait imitation with a tail which made the lure wiggle, he then mounted a small lead ball right above the hook. He explained, *You are not fishing for the fish you can see. They are specific krill feeding, very hard to catch. Cast,*



*let the lead take the lure down 6-10 feet. There are fish below the surface not krill feeding, they are the ones you are after. Use a short sharp retrieve. Then let the lure sink a bit. Like a wounded bait fish.*

We moved into the cockpit, my girlfriend had already made herself comfortable in a folding deck chair, sitting in the sun in her bikini. *I will have my morning coffee when you are ready*, she said. Facing aft, I moved to the right-hand corner of the cockpit, stripped line at my feet and got 30 or so feet in the air. It was not weight forward, but I was confident, I tightened the loop, double hauled, and shot another 30 feet into the school.

You have done that before. I smiled, yea, only been trout fishing about 30 years, My girlfriend burst out laughing, and said sweetly, *I will have my coffee now*. He looked at us both with a wry grin, you got me good. As he went into the cabin to get the coffee. So began a decade of a chartering association.

He was right about the technique. I got fish at least every third cast for well over two hours, all about 3-4 kilograms, landing about 6 fish an hour. I had been getting 4-5 kahawai for every trevally, then noticed the ratio had swung totally. I checked the lure, the tail paddles had been bitten off, kahawai liked the wiggle, trevs liked the straight lure.

Over the next 20 years I learned much about which fish like what sort of lure. Which included two snapper fly fishing world records. I also learned how to catch krill feeding fish, but those are stories for another day.

The skipper had kept couple of good trevs and disappeared to make sashimi with soy sauce dip. It was now hot, still, and very calm, we could see down 30 feet or so. I fished on for another hour.

Then it happened. *Holy shit*. I said. From where we were, past Dog Rock to Cape Brett near 2 kilometers to our right, was one school of fish. The skipper came out to share the sight. We could see below us, big snapper, a school of large kingfish went below the boat. A feeding marlin scattered the school, which reformed behind it. The skipper smiled, *welcome to the Bay of Islands Graham*.

Then, by Dog Rock, the school opened wide, and a fin appeared. The skipper whispered *there he is*. I glanced at him. *Been talk in the club (Bay of Island Sword Fish Club) there was a big Mako down by Waiwiri Rock. Looks like the excitement here has bought him north a bit.*

The school opened in front of the Mako and closed behind. He was not feeding, and the school knew, how they knew, I have no idea, but they knew. He nonchalantly meandered over to the boat. He turned to be side on with us.

I looked at the skipper, *game fish charter guys in the club who have seen him reckon 600 kilograms*. We both looked at this huge fish. *I would say that was pretty close*. The Mako then dived and disappeared. Biggest fish I have ever seen. Though few years later, out on 80-meter reef, I saw a 400-kilogram Mako jump 20 feet in the air.

That was quite a sight.

The skipper asked *you yet ready for lunch of fresh trevs sashimi*. I grinned from ear to ear. My girlfriend came and gave me a hug.

*Wow. I said, what a day.*

SWF, I was hooked.



*A summers days catch, mostly by flyfishing. Photo courtesy of Russell Nelson.*

## **IS TROUT FISHING DECLINING?**

By Tony Orman - Previously published in "NZ Trout Fisher" Winter 2023 issue.

As an angler and hunter and an observer on rivers and in the backcountry, even around town and even in the garden, I have noticed disturbing trends of declines in many species. Examples are insects, kingfishers, shining cuckoos. In the absence of scientific studies, it's called anecdotal.

Trout and rivers are just one part of the bigger picture, i.e. the total ecosystem. This article is not meant to be unduly pessimistic. It's intended to be a wakeup call to trout fishers to shed their apathy, to maintain and enhance the resource of rivers and trout and arrest the decline and reverse it.

Frankly it's a wake-up call to the "authorities" too - Fish and Game, the Department of Conservation, regional councils, government and cabinet ministers and a few others to boot.

It needs examination, thought, open minds and discussion and a will to rectify the situation.

Nevertheless, there is no one silver bullet that will fix it, which frankly is why nobody has. The solution is bigger than anglers. Bigger than Fish and Game. Bigger than agriculture, bigger than towns. It needs system changes, cultural changes within government, government administrations and even Fish and Game, the latter with a bigger vision and stronger advocacy.

I set about writing a discussion paper for the Marlborough Freshwater Anglers Club. The more I researched and delved deeper the more I unearthed. I imagined the paper might be a thousand or so words. It ballooned out to well over 10,000. Here is just a small segment.

One should be wary in jumping to conclusions that may be hasty. I have to admit I do less trout fishing than say ten years ago as I have discovered saltwater fly fishing for kahawai to be a diversion from trout. But in recent seasons, the Wairau River has been more and more disappointing. A classic chalk stream Spring Creek several kilometres north of Blenheim, holds far, far less fish than thirty years ago. The Goulter, once a magnificent stream is a mere shadow of its former quality of the 1970s and 1980s.

I remember about 1991 after a 20 year absence returning to a Wairau tributary Top Valley Stream and being dismayed at the reduced flow compared to 1970, the result of the valley now a monoculture of pines. Those pines have grown since, their water intake has exploded upwards.

In April last year when I visited, I was shocked to see the stream, once an important spawning stream and an excellent fly fishing water especially before Christmas, was bone-dry a couple of kilometres upstream from the road bridge.

Once it flowed all year round. I caught trout in the 1970s that were 2-3kgs and a friend Geoff took a splendid double figure brown trout. But that was years ago, not today.

The decline is stark and the outlook bleak.

### **Generational Amnesia**

In getting the dire situation over to much younger anglers, there's a hindrance in communication encountered.

The problem in convincing many, especially younger folk, is "generational amnesia" a term used by Mark Feldman in an excellent letter in 2017 to a national fishing publication. Mark wrote that the term describes the tendency for each generation to "forget" or depending on age, be not even born and therefore unaware of the experience of the generation that went before. Younger trout fishers, perhaps not even born in 1980 - 40 year olds now - just do not understand and realise the quality that once was there - and more importantly that it no longer exists.

I'm not alone in my concern. And some, far better qualified than myself, have expressed their alarm.

Twenty years ago, Wayne McCallum, North Canterbury Fish and Game's Environment Officer, wrote in the November 2000 issue of the magazine "Southern Fishing and Boating" about lowland trout rivers and said that "on careful study, there appears to be more than a problem. Rather the evidence points to a wholesale crisis."

Wayne McCallum's expert views received little or no comment. The impression was that Fish and Game and North Canterbury in particular, did not want to know about it.

### **There was "a state of denial"**

Wayne McCallum obviously felt the same. He wrote "perhaps the biggest factor in causing frustration is the failure to acknowledge the existence of a crisis at all."

Predictably Wayne no longer works for Fish and Game and at a guess probably left out of frustration.

## **Maruia River**

Several years ago, Bud, a friend and experienced fly fisherman, who had made regular annual trips over 43 years from the Wairarapa to the Maruia River in the Lewis Pass area of the South Island, reflected on his 2013 trip as his “worst ever” of 43 years. He meticulously kept a diary of his 43 annual fishing trips to the Maruia.

On his visit in late January, 2013, Bud caught his 424th (“catch and release”) trout. He had annually fished the Maruia for over 43 years - he was well acquainted with the river.

Bud’s assessment of the 2013 visit as “the worst fishing trip” he’d had in 40 years to the Maruia was based on in his words “fewest trout seen, in spite of the number of hours of hard work and in perfect conditions of clear sky, full sun, no wind, clear water and perfect water level”

Bud’s diary recorded this decline in fish numbers with extensive notes of falling numbers beginning Feb. 7, 2006 and the same comments of decline every year to 2013. Bud went on to say in his letter, “in 2013, it was such wonderful weather and easy casting and because wading/crossing was easier it was very pleasant. But it became clear that I was fishing water that once held numerous fish 20, 30 and 40 years ago, now held very few.”

“In all, my latest visit was characterised by glorious weather and beautiful water – but no fish. I bring this to your attention because in my home region in north Wairarapa, I have seen the same trend of declining trout numbers.”

And on the “state of self-denial” Bud told the Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game Council that “It seems to me to be wrong – and dishonest – for fish and game councils claiming the best fishing for years as some councils do. I understand selling licences has a need for income but that should not obscure the reality of the decline in trout numbers in many rivers. The Maruia seems yet another example of diminishing trout stocks.”

The reaction from the then Nelson-Marlborough Fish and Game was virtual silence. His letter was politely fobbed off.

Isn’t silence really denial?

## **Crisis Undeniable**



But Bud back then saw the situation as a crisis – needing attention and with questions that urgently need answering.

### **What are the causes?**

Increased dairy farming further up the valley? The use of agricultural chemicals and leaching? Pesticides such as DEW 600 applied for grass grub and known to be lethal to aquatic life? Extensive and successive aerial dropping of 1080 poison for an imagined possum pest? Had Fish and Game researched changes of bottom fauna and water chemistry changes with this intensive dairy farming or increased 1080? So many questions!

Bud said the answer to NZ rivers would not be found by denying the decline. “It’s up to Fish and Game to find it out,” Bud said at the time. And then he candidly added “otherwise Fish and Game is negligent, the fishery declines and Fish and Game’s income, i.e. licence money, will dry up.”

My assessment is that to some degree, the outlook of Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game has changed since Bud wrote his letter six years ago. With a change in managementship, Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game are now more alert and concerned. The evidence is showing up in drift dive surveys.

But what a pity the concern nationally was not shown over two decades ago when Fish and Game scientist Wayne McCallum sounded a loud public warning.

It must be born in mind that rivers or any ecosystem invariably undergoes cyclic changes. In the case of the Motueka River which I lived near for a decade, the cycle appeared to be four years, at one extreme numerous trout of a kilogram or slightly above and at the other extreme, fewer but larger individual fish. However Bud Jones’ diary over four decades shows an uninterrupted and undeniable decline.

It’s not only trout but koura and eels too. The whole freshwater ecosystem is under threat. Which invites the question, where is the Department of Conservation in advocacy for clean, flowing waterways which after all are the habitat of native fish?

Instead DOC has at times blamed trout as predators as the reason for declining native fish species instead of recognising habitat is the all-important issue.

### **Habitat**

Habitat is undoubtedly a key.

Trout habitat comprises the three requirements of environment (quality and quantity of flow), cover and food.

What seems unappreciated by local councils is that river flows and the aquifer, i.e. total water resource, is finite. Yet councils are still issuing consents for water takes. For example in Marlborough, the rapidly growing monoculture of vineyards in Marlborough is swamping valley floors. And pine forests for commercial forestry and the ludicrous carbon farming using pines is proceeding apace on hills and with central government's encouragement.

Then there is the vexed question of agricultural and horticultural sprays such as diazinon for grass grub.

In 2011, the EU implemented a ban on its use.

The US National Pesticide Information Centre (Oregon State University) says "studies investigating the toxicity of diazinon to freshwater fish have found diazinon to be moderately to highly toxic to freshwater fish on an acute basis".

Environment Canterbury (ECan) reportedly sprays rivers beds annually with Glyphosate a broad-spectrum systemic herbicide and crop desiccant and an organophosphorus compound, with inevitable damage to the soil structure, invertebrates and indeed the whole ecology.

Nitrates

Great research work in recent years by the NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers led by president Dr Peter Trolove has shown alarming levels of nitrates in Canterbury rivers. High nitrate levels are toxic to aquatic life, whether trout, young salmon returning downstream or native fish.

Again where is the Department of Conservation?

Nitrates are not only a health risk to fish and aquatic life but to humans where a Danish study of 2.7 million people revealed direct links with colorectal cancer. Canterbury and Southland - both with intensive dairying areas - have exceptionally high - world leading - colorectal (lower bowel) cancer rates. Nitrate leaching and run-off are directly linked to intensive dairying.

**Forestry**

Foreign corporates own some 80% of New Zealand's forest industry. More recent data is incomplete but foreign ownership appears to have further increased with government actively giving incentives to overseas investors to buy up large in New Zealand for carbon farming.

Clear felling of commercial lumber forests exposes whole catchments to any rains and subsequent runoff of silt and debris into streams, rivers and ultimately estuarine areas. Recent studies of the Marlborough Sounds revealed alarming levels of sedimentation - metres deep - with adverse effects on inshore ecosystems and fish numbers.

The same sedimentation occurs in streams and rivers when forests are clear-felled, smothering bottom fauna invertebrates and degrading trout and salmon spawning areas.

Sources point to one detrimental aspect being acidification. The pH level (degree of acidity) is important to both bottom fauna and subsequently trout. Alkaline streams support more abundant invertebrates. If the pH drops below 5.5 (increased acidity) then invertebrates are fewer and long term damage to the fishery, both native and trout, occurs.

According to another Google source, the basic rule for drinking pine is 10 gallons of water for every single inch of tree diameter. That means a 12-inch (30 cms) plant will absorb nearly 120 gallons of water. There are also records that average pine trees can absorb up to 150 gallons of water a day when there is unlimited water. One healthy 30 metre-tall tree can take 11,000 gallons of water from the soil in a single growing season. Think of thousands of trees in a commercial planting and the huge water extraction becomes obvious.

Another source says a pine tree uses 85 litres of water a day whereas a native tree, dependent on species, uses considerably less. Water from a pine forest with a "bare" pine needle forest floor has quicker runoff compared to a typical native forest area with shade-loving undergrowth. In a few words, native forest has a higher water retention factor leading to full and more consistent stream flows.

Anecdotal evidence points to streams much reduced in flow once monocultures of pines have been established. For example, long-time residents in the Marlborough Sounds have observed the same diminished flow after extensive monocultures of pine forests were established. I observed it in the Wairau Valley's Northbank area on tributary streams like Top Valley as I related earlier.

**Fish and Game should be advocating for:-**

(a) Better harvesting regimes (as practiced in Europe) should be implemented, i.e. (two cuts contour wise, 12 months apart be mandatory)

(b) Local council zoning of land should avoid extensive commercial forestry monocultures.

(c) Buffer zones (50 or more metres - perhaps 100m?) should be mandatory along all rivers and streams.

Marlborough has developed a monoculture of pine plantations and again this is expanding. Political factors such as government's short sighted "one billion trees" /carbon farming programme will intensify the monoculture. In early summer clouds of pollen can be seen. This has adverse health consequences for many humans; does it have health consequences for the ecosystem and in particular freshwater ecosystems? What can you do?

Become an active advocate. As a foundation member off the NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers and a life member, I get frustrated with the apathy. Too often the Federation has to implore anglers to stand for the executive. In the case of Fish and Game regions, cases occur where there's not enough nominations to fill the required council seats.

I get frustrated with professional fishing guides who after all, make money - profit - from the resource. Only one or two have shown interest to stand for the Federation's executive. One or two others are like "one night stands", here with a brief flirtation and then gone.

I get frustrated with a collection of fine writers who might pen magazine articles and have written books but who have never publicly advocated for the resource of clean healthy rivers.

It needs not just one or two who poke their head above the parapet. It needs an army of anglers to shed their apathy, writers to put their egos aside and to collectively crusade on behalf of water, rivers and trout and salmon.

And don't be afraid of politics because most of the threats are political in origin - it's simply "cause and effect," as my deerstalking, dry fly and political mentor the late John Henderson used to say.

Footnote; "NZ Trout Fisher" is a quarterly magazine that deserves the support of every trout angler. You can subscribe direct for NZ \$36.

Contact editor/publisher Peter Storey at <[peter@nztroutfisher.co.nz](mailto:peter@nztroutfisher.co.nz)>

The latest issue has a fine article “Confessions of a Salmon Angler” by NZFFA executive member Larry Burke plus articles on shore line wading, downstream fly lure on the Tongariro, a backcountry fishing tale, another by Serena McDonald “Beginning of a Journey”, Christchurch’s Avon River,, regular columnist Mel Hollis and more.



*Marlborough’s Top Valley Stream that once strongly flowed all year round is now dry in mid-summer. It was a major trout spawning tributary and an excellent summer season quality trout stream.*





*Kingfishers have declined in Marlborough. Is it symptomatic of an ailing overall environment?*



*Pine tree planting are rapidly taking over productive sheep and beef farms, Waihopai valley, Marlborough.*



*Top Valley was a year round flow and with good 2-3 kg brownies especially early season*

## **EDITORS NOTE**

### **CLUB TRIPS**

Two weeks ago we had the Club Trip to Ngongotaha / Rotorua. The weather and the fish played ball and a good time was had by all. But even if the weather had been rubbish and the fishing hard it still would have been fun. Club Trips are made by the people that go on them. You can be a vastly experienced fisher or someone just starting out, it doesn't matter, being on the water is still fun and being in the company of others with the same obsession as you even more so.

There are 3 different Trips to Turangi coming up over the next 4 months, why not give the organisers a call and book yourself a spot.

## FISHING FUNNIES

When squirrels come across an especially spectacular nut, they'll often gather and stare in amazement... very similar to how they're looking at you right now.



(Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of North Shore Flyfishers Incorporated)

## **MEMBERS FEEDBACK**

We, your committee, are always trying to give you what you want.

## **But are we??**

In order for us to do our job properly we need to have your feedback, positive or negative. For example, have you been on a club fishing trip? Did you enjoy yourself? What would you change, if anything? Club nights – what would you like to see more of? Less of? In short, talk to us.

The contact details of all your committee members are listed at the end of every newsletter. So if you have something on your mind let us know.

Thank you - Your committee

## **NSFF CLUB MERCHANDISE**

Cap – \$15.00 Inclusive of GST

Green or Beige, one size fits all, with embroidered badge.

Embroidered Cloth Badge - \$7.50 Inclusive of GST

Brushed Brass Metal Pin Badge - \$12.50 Inclusive of GST

If anyone is interested in purchasing these products please place an order at Club Nights.

**Meetings held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm:**  
**Birkenhead RSA, Recreation Drive, Birkenhead, North Shore City**

## **NORTH SHORE FLYFISHERS EXECUTIVE**

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