



# *THE FLYFISHER NEWSLETTER*

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February 2024

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## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

What an amazing summer so far! Beautiful weather on the whole, in sharp contrast to the summer we never had last year! Mind you, the high temperatures have also impacted fish activity in both the marine and freshwater environments. This time of the year would generally see a lot of “workup” action in the harbour and Gulf but it seems that the very warm water has discouraged the aggregations of pilchard and anchovy fry which form such an important component of the food chain supporting both larger fish and marine birds. An

old buddy of mine who has been netting these “whitebait” at Devonport wharf for the past 50 years tells me that a change to colder weather will see a resurgence of that activity. In the meantime, the kingfish, kahawai and trevally are conspicuous by their absence while the young penguins and terns are going hungry.

Similarly, lakes and rivers are very warm, particularly in the surface layers so trout are generally to be found either at greater depth than usual or in the fast flowing and oxygenated water where temperatures are more tolerable. It is in response to this phenomenon that my favourite spot, Lake Otamangakau is now closed for the month of February, traditionally the hottest summer month, to avoid the mortality of trout being caught and then released into these conditions.

However, I am now looking forward to the annual club trip to the “Big O” in March ( 7 th , 8 th and 9 th ). At this time of the year, one of the most prolific items of food in the lake are the teeming millions of damsel flies, the nymphs of which crawl out of the water to change into “squadrons” of red and blue adults.

Constant swirls and surface splashes are evidence of the trout “hoovering up” these unlucky insects. With that in mind, I have been attempting to create a fly which replicates these prey in both appearance and size, as closely as possible.

*Dave’s super realistic Damsel Flies! Photo courtesy of Dave Symes.*



My investigations have led me to a manufacturer called “ Sissi Royal” from where I have bought some tiny thoraxes and abdomens in green and brown. Using size 10, long shank hooks and mono eyes, I have tied what I consider to be a pretty good representation of the real thing. They are slightly larger than the naturals but anything smaller would really challenge my eyesight!

While in the fly tying mood, I also gave some thought to trying to mimic the immature pilchards and anchovies which I look forward to using, particularly off Devonport wharf when the annual runs of “whitebait” start.

For these flies, I use s/s hooks, dumbbell eyes of different sizes and bodies of silicone over an underbody of red chenille and reflective, holographic strips.

While firmer than the well known “softbaits”, they are very tough and resilient and should be able to withstand aggressive attacks from the target species.

The silicone is the usual Selley’s Translucent product which is incredibly sticky but shaping with fingers and/or an ice block stick dipped into some detergent works OK.

I’ll keep everyone informed regarding my success ( or otherwise ) with my fly experimentations and hopefully see you all at the next club meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> when our presenter will be Mark Hoffman, a very experienced and enthusiastic salt water (“swaffer”) fly fisherman.

Dave Symes - President



*Daves Silicon Specials, ready for use! Photo courtesy of Dave Symes.*

## **FISHING REPORT**

### **Auckland / Waikato**

No report for the ‘local’ water, which is bordering on a criminal offence when the Cicada are out.

## Rotorua

All the Rotorua river mouths are fishing extremely well, with big catches of good fish, as the Trout move into the cool water entering the lake from a variety of spring fed streams.

The Rotorua tributaries have good numbers of fish in them but with multiple long weekends in recent weeks they have been very heavily fished. Consequently the fish are quite spooky and a subtle approach is probably going to work best. That being said, a recent visit with fellow Club Member Kerry saw the big 'Bomb and Bug' work in those tight areas where getting down quickly was a necessity.



*Kerry ready to hit the Ngonga for a bit of wet wading. Well, almost ready, he did put some boots on.*

## Taupo

The Big O was fishing very well but is now closed until March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Lake Taupo has been giving some great results to the Jiggers, with one Angler boating well over 100 fish for 10 short visits of 2-3 hours each to the lake. The Trout were in good condition and mostly around the 3.5pd mark but pushing up to the 4.5pd on the bigger fish. This bodes very well for the winter runs!

The Tongariro is still getting fresh Browns entering and making their spawning runs but surprisingly there are very few Cicadas about.



*This photo is on Lake Rotoaira and is a bit special. If you look closely you will see Dave is fighting the fish by hand and using only the top third of a broken fly rod! And yes, he did land the fish. Photo courtesy of Roy Richardson.*

## **Saltwater**

Snapper are in the shallows again, particularly in the inner harbour, so for those of you new to a bit of Saltwater Fly now is a great time to give it a crack!

## **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.

## **LAST CLUB NIGHT**

Last December we had our very pleasant Christmas Function. A very enjoyable night.

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

This month we have Mark Hofman talking to us about Saltwater Fly fishing (Swoffing). Mark is an immensely experienced Swoffer and has written articles for a number of our favourite NZ fishing magazines. He also has his own Fishing Blog and You Tube Channel that may grab your interest.

It is sure to be an enjoyable evening and we hope to see you all there.

## **WHY WE FISH**

*“We may say off angling as Dr Boteler said of strawberries “Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling.”*

*Izaak Walton “The Complete Angler” 1653*

## **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 etc 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 **Allen French!**

**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. 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**. The winner of this years event is **Johan Kok**.

The winner of this years River section is **Simon Hoole**.

### **QUOTABLE QUOTES**

*“A trout’s brain is very small. It is sometimes said that dry fly fishermen pit their brains against those of the trout” No one has ever levelled a bigger insult at us.”*

*Dermot Wilson “Fishing the Dry Fly” 1970*

### **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 McLellan 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 – 23<sup>rd</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> FEB 2024  
March – Lake Otamangakau – MAR 2024  
May – Ngongotaha River and Rotorua Lakes – MAY 2024  
June – Tongariro – Club River Fishing Competition – JUN 2024  
July – Tongariro and Tauranga Taupo – JUL 2024  
September – Tauranga Taupo – SEP 2024  
November – Lake based Club Competition Trip – NOV 2024  
December / January – Tuition weekend (Held if enough ‘novice’ anglers are interested)  
December – Lake Otamangakau – DEC 2024

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.

## **MARCH CLUB TRIP TO LAKE OTAMANGAKAU**

I am proposing the weekend of 8<sup>th</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> March (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) with a number of us arriving on Thursday the 7<sup>th</sup>.

While it is predominately a boat fishery, the Te Whaiiau (inlet) canal which can be fished from the shore, and particularly the “holding” area immediately above the road bridge, offers a big range of casting positions.

Just be aware that with an altitude of some 2,000 feet above sea level, the conditions can go from warm and pleasant to bleak very quickly!

By March, the Trout are in ‘eating’ mode, with lots of insect activity, providing some fantastic fishing activity. The fish are in fantastic condition, big, fat and powerful, Our own Dave McLellan recently landed a 13pd Brownie!

Costs will be \$55 per person per night.

The Accommodation is your own little room with 2 beds, 1 for sleeping and the other for your gear.

There are shared cooking facilities.

I have “penciled in” 7 cabins at Tongariro Holiday Park so if anyone is interested, please let me know ASAP.

Dave Symes - Ph: 09 486-6257 - Email: [dssymes@xtra.co.nz](mailto:dssymes@xtra.co.nz)



*A small taste of what the Big O can offer. Photo courtesy of Peter Schierhout.*

## **TURANGI INTERCLUB COMP 17<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST**

The Club Competition Trip for River Fishing and the Interclub Competition with the Auckland Flyfishing Club is scheduled for August 17th. More information about this will be forthcoming closer to the event but if you would like to know more now please contact Allen French 021 1018 838 or [a\\_bfrench@hotmail.com](mailto:a_bfrench@hotmail.com)

## **JOKE OF THE MONTH**

### Two Ladies Talking in Heaven

1st woman: Hi! Wanda.

2nd woman: Hi! Sylvia. How'd you die?

1st woman: I froze to death.

2nd woman: How horrible!

1st woman: It wasn't so bad. After I quit shaking from the cold, I began to get warm & sleepy, and finally died a peaceful death. What about you?

2nd woman: I died of a massive heart attack. I suspected that my husband was cheating, so I came home early to catch him in the act. But instead, I found him all by himself in the den watching TV.

1st woman: So, what happened?

2nd woman: I was so sure there was another woman there somewhere that I started running all over the house looking. I ran up into the attic and searched, and down into the basement. Then I went through every closet and checked under all the beds. I kept this up until I had looked everywhere, and finally I became so exhausted that I just keeled over with a heart attack and died.

1st woman: Too bad you didn't look in the freezer---we'd both still be alive.

## **EASTERN FISH & GAME REEL LIFE JANUARY 2024**

### **Hot Weather Brings On The Action**

We seemed to completely miss summer last year, but it's back better, and hotter than before and with it comes some excellent fishing!

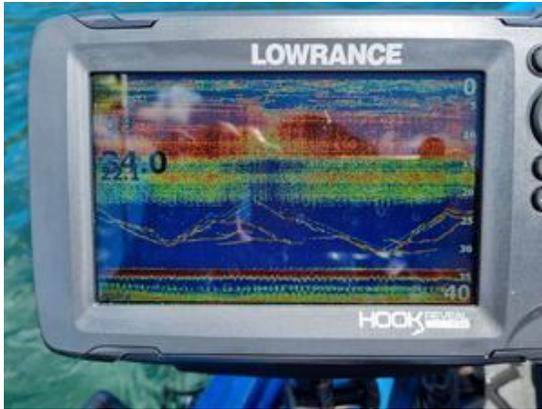
Lake Rotorua's stream mouth action is red hot at present with large pods of fish stacked up in the cool water inflows. Hamurana, Awahou, Waiteti and the Ngongotaha mouths are all worth visiting. Anglers have been making the most of excellent fishing since early January and it is likely this will continue through until at least the end of February if the weather stays hot.



*Above: Waiteti Stream mouth.*

Smelt flies, small nymphs and soft hackle wee wets fished on a floating line are all taking fish. Browns can be targeted by sight fishing – often off to the side of the main cooler flows and by using smelt or bully flies bounced on the bottom.

Cicada are singing loudly and it looks like we might get an exciting bumper year of dry fly action. Initially hatching cicada tend to sit high in the canopy, lowering and becoming more clumsy and vulnerable later in the season, particularly on wet days.



*Fish remain actively feeding at about the 20-meter mark during the day and can still be taken at shallower depths just after dawn.*

Lakes Rotoiti, Okataina, Rotoma and Tarawera continue to fish well to deep methods such as deep trolling, downrigging, soft bait and jigging. Okataina and Tarawera in particular are producing excellently conditioned fish.

### **Keep Them Wet!**



A reminder if you are intending to catch and release this summer keep fish wet one hundred percent of the time to maximise their survival. The use of a quality landing net is an important tool. If you want a photo, make ready with the camera first before lifting the fish from the water, and only have it out of the water for a few seconds at the most. As water temperatures increase trout are prone to increased stress.

### **Lake Okataina**

Lake Okataina is now open to boating access. An MPI (Controlled Area Notice, CAN) is in place, but the lake can be accessed between 7 days between the hours of 6.30 am and 7.00 pm. All boats wanting to use the lake need to comply with MPI's wash-down rules. Anglers are encouraged to [check out full details of the requirements here](#).

### **Datawatch Tagged Trout**

Tagged trout can now be entered online. Entries go into the draw to win one of 20 free whole-season fishing licences: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QCH5ZR6>

### **Eastern Region Fishing Diaries – All Lakes And Streams**

Fill in your fishing diaries here to help us manage the Eastern Fish & Game region. Participants go in the draw to win a \$100 voucher from Kilwell: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QRSD7D3>

Tight Lines - Mark Sherburn, Eastern Fish & Game

## AUCKLAND WAIKATO FISH & GAME REEL LIFE JANUARY 2024



*Above: Nina Juby on the Waihou River drift dive Jan 2024*

### **Waihou Is Full Of Good Fish**

Staff have just completed the [Waihou River Drift Dive](#), and the results were impressive, with literally hundreds of legal fish per kilometre of river.

This is a good sign for all the spring creeks, so the Waimakariri and Oraka should also be fishing well.

Most fish were on bends and where the water changes depth, so avoid the weed beds and go small.

We have posted some video from the dive on our [Facebook page](#) if you want to see exactly where the fish are.

The Blue Springs walkway is closed, but the river remains open for fishing as long as you stay off the track.

There is a fence up, but you can walk around it on public land. The divers spotted some large fish just on the other side of the fence.

This is a perfect time of year to get out there with the cicadas out in force and the warm water concentrating fish into higher elevation areas, so the Kaniwhaniwha, upper Waipa, Awakino and Whakapapa/Whanganui should all be fishing well.

### **Hot Weather = Fish Kills**

It is getting hot, and unfortunately, without oxygen limits on our rivers to protect fish, there will likely be fish kills somewhere in our region this summer.



Low dissolved oxygen (DO) is one of the biggest killers of fish on the North Island. Low DO events can be naturally caused, but the vast majority are caused by large quantities of organic matter washing off farms or from treatment systems, causing a biological reaction that uses up all the oxygen. We have recently had dead fish reported in Parkinsons Lake, similar to last year when a drain was cleared discharging large amounts of organic matter into the lake.

It is very important to report fish kills immediately so council staff can check the oxygen levels as soon as possible.

Even a couple of hours delay could prevent determining the cause of the event.

If you see dead fish or fish gasping for air at the surface, please contact the local regional council immediately.

A phone call is better than an email, but documenting the issue is critical to forcing the council to protect our waterways.

### **Council Contacts**

[Waikato Regional Council](#) - [online reporting](#) 0800 800 401

[Horizons Regional Council](#) - [help@horizons.govt.nz](mailto:help@horizons.govt.nz) 0508 800 800

### **NORTHLAND FISH & GAME REEL LIFE JANUARY 2024**

Recent changes to Wilsons Dam management look promising for a healthier reservoir ecosystem and fishery.

Marsden Point Oil Refinery is no longer drawing water from the reservoir which has resulted in it remaining at full capacity for the last two years. Previous to this, the harsh summers of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 saw the reservoir drawn down to very low levels.

*Right: An angler fishing a fly around the weed beds at Wilsons Dam.*

This exposed the submerged littoral vegetation which subsequently died off in the prolonged periods of low water levels.

These submerged plants are the basis of the food chain in the reservoirs and their absence greatly reduces the insect life in and around the water.



This is detrimental to trout survival as their food sources are significantly reduced and there is no cool water to retreat to. These low water levels were partnered with algal blooms which exacerbated the issue.

With the dam having been at full capacity for the last two years the littoral vegetation has made a recovery and is now well established in the shallows around the dam edges.

The insect life is thriving and the fish should be cruising and feeding in reach of anglers lines. Small streamer flies such as a Mrs Simpson or Woolly Bugger fished around the edges of these weed beds in the evenings is a good bet for targeting cruising fish.

A well-placed nymph such as hare and copper under a small indicator will also get results, as will the other methods such as spinning and bait.

Anglers are encouraged to report any fish caught to the Northland Fish and Game office, so that we can monitor the catch rate and condition of fish. This will enable the Northland Fish and Game Council to set stocking rates to maximise angler satisfaction.

Remember, if you catch a fish in Northland this season report the location, length, weight and fin clips (if any) to Northland Fish and Game and go in the draw to win a free 2024-2025 Adult Whole Season Licence.

The winner will be drawn in September 2024.

Tight lines

## **CAN THE TROUT HEAR YOUR BOOT STUDS**

*This article is taken from the Troutbitten Website. To see the full article and the video that goes with it go to <https://troutbitten.com/2024/01/24/qa-can-trout-hear-your-boot-studs-with-video/>*

This is a common objection to studded boots. The premise is fair. We give trout a lot of credit for being a wary species, and we make many mistakes that turn them off.

If you believe trout can hear studs on the rocks and you believe it bothers them, then I suggest not using studs. You can't let something like that take your confidence away.

However, I think concern about noise from studs is unwarranted. In most cases, I believe metal studs scraping on rocks doesn't scare trout, because they simply don't hear the sounds of our studs. And if they do, the way those sounds mix together with the river's soundscape, trout just don't care.

### **Would You Rather Fall In?**

What makes more noise? Studs on rocks or a stumbling angler with poor traction? Many trout waters are simply not wadable without some type of studs for traction. So an angler without studs fishes poorly by trying to push distances and not wading into great positions. The fishing not only falls apart, but the pure enjoyment of being on the river is minimized. That angler then stays home next time.

See what I mean? We need to get to the right spots to catch trout. Fly fishing is a limited range system. It requires good positioning to be successful with great presentations. So [we wade](#). But without good traction, we don't wade very much, we wade more tentatively or we don't wade at all.

The difference in traction from properly studded boots vs non-studded is night and day. I wade twice as hard and twice as far with studs in my soles. And I would never trade that assurance just to be a little quieter.

### **They Can't Hear It, and They Don't Care**

But let's get more to the point that the guys from your fly shop are making — that studded boots scare spooky trout . . .

I guess if that's true, then anglers with boot studs just wouldn't catch many trout. Right? I assure you that's not the case. Anglers all over the world wear boot studs, and they catch more trout than those without, because their approach is better, and they can fish harder.

Do trout hear the scraping of studs? Sure. In the softest water types, in slowest pools, yes. But in most rivers with mixed currents, I believe there's no way they hear the studs. I know this and believe it strongly, because I've tested it.

Try standing in a piece of pocket water. Now put your head underwater and hear how loud it is.

That . . . I have not done. But I have put a GoPro under there. Years ago, with my first GoPro, I filmed a bit of underwater footage — mostly the release of a few trout. And I was startled by how loud it was under the surface. I remember thinking there was no way that trout heard my approach in most water types.

There's a lot going on in a river. There are a lot of natural noises.

But sound travels faster under the water, right? Sure, but all sounds travel faster, not just the sound of scraping studs. So the sounds of currents sloshing and turning underneath dominate a river soundscape. In most parts of a river, it's a mess of noises down there, and it all gets blended together. I think trout don't hear the scraping of studs, just like we can't hear birds next to a busy four-lane highway and we can't hear the toenails of a squirrel on a nearby tree during windy days.

This question kept nagging at me since I published the [Grip Studs 1000 Day Gear Review](#), because I've grown weary of the speculation and theory without hard data. I think we all have.

So over my last few two days on the water, I filmed a dozen shots, in various water types, with a GoPro underneath. My son, Aiden, helped with some shots, and I filmed the majority with the GoPro sitting under the water, on a low tripod near the riverbed.

My tests were done from fifteen to five away, and you can see that I'm often just a foot away when I pick up the GoPro. In this short video, I didn't show anything further away than ten feet, because even in the slowest water, footsteps could not be heard. Rivers are noisy. And at the distances we fish (much more than ten feet away) trout cannot hear normal wading, let alone the scraping of boot studs.

Remarkably, I couldn't pick out even one instance of studs scraping on the riverbed. I'm sure the sound is there. I know studs scrape, because I've heard it myself in skinny water. But the sound of studs, in these videos, was buried by all the other noises underneath.

It's easier to distinguish the sloshing of wading than any sound from studs. Likewise, I was surprised how much more my voice carried under the water than almost anything else. Especially in the shallow stretches, my voice was sometimes clear enough to make out words.

The speed and chopiness of the current matters, of course. And we know trout are spookiest in the slowest sections of a river. So with quieter currents, footfalls will be heard sooner. In these tests, I quickly realized that trout can't hear anything but river noise in standard pocket water, so I started selecting the softest and slowest pools I could find. Those clips comprise most of the video above, but you still can't hear footfalls until they're close.

The idea that studs gripping to rocks is like "two rocks clinking together" is false. The natural sounds of a river dominate — even in the slow stuff.

The substrate of the riverbed matters too. Sandy bottoms or algae covered rocks don't permit much scraping, and they act as a carpet. In the tests from the video, I chose clean, rocky areas. The rocks averaged double the size of my hand and were fixed to the riverbed. I usually placed the GoPro in twelve inches of water with a more even surface, so that's the substrate you see. Again, there were no distinguishable sounds of wading until I got closer than five to ten feet. And I never heard studs scraping on rocks.

Don't believe it? Try this yourself? Take a GoPro or a modern phone with an IPX7 rating and record underwater. Seriously. Do this with someone wading nearby.

Still don't believe it? Do you think the microphones of a GoPro and a camera pick up something different than what a trout hears? Then dunk your head underwater and find out. Trout can't hear your boot studs — not in a river with any movement to it. So [stud-up those wading boots](#) and love your life.

Fish hard, friends.

**\*\* Donate \*\*** If you enjoy this article, please consider a donation. Your support is what keeps this Troutbitten project funded. *(Go to the website and)* Scroll below to find the Donate Button. And thank you.

Enjoy the day.

Domenick Swentosky T R O U T B I T T E N domenick@troutbitten.com



*An example of the quality of the maiden Rainbows in Lake Taupo. This one was taken last month by John C. Photo courtesy of John Cuthbertson.*

### **ROCK ADVENTURES ON FLY**

By Graham Little – *(A big Thank You to fellow Club Member Graham for these articles)*

We were up around Cape Runaway. We had driven ourselves to Waihou Bay and been picked up by the guide to go rock fishing somewhere just below the Cape. The guide knew a farmer and had permission for access. We had been told the name, but I do not recall. It was an interesting adventure, and we were excited, my girlfriend and me.

Driving along that Cape road is one of the truly beautiful stretches on NZ, beautiful little bay after bay, private, calm sea, white sands, bush surrounds, birds everywhere. No people. Such scenery matched only by the Coast Road, West Coast South Island, where I had been born and spent my early years as a lad before attending Canterbury University. My uncle had been Ranger in Punakaiki Camping ground and drove the Queen Mary Bus between Puni and Greymouth each day. I had spent several years holidaying over Christmas with my uncle and aunt. So I knew that area very well.

We turned off the road, drove over some farmland, then up a steep hill. The guide had a four-wheel drive, and stopped at a gate looking down where we were going. I looked at the driver, we could see the ocean, below, but before us was a mud road that was wet, it had rained soft rain all night before, clearly slippery, very steep. He glanced at me, *done this*

*before Graham.* I grimaced as my girlfriend checked her seat belt and tightened the straps, then laughed, she loved adventure in a way I did not. He could select the gearing and I watched as he selected lowest, and we began.

He did know what he was doing and was very skilled. But at times, as we twisted and turned our way down, he was on the inside, my girlfriend and I were looking straight down to the beach below. At the beginning, a good 200 feet. I judged there was no more than a foot of clearance, sometimes less.

We stopped at the bottom, he pointed to the beach we could see, with the rowboat, and the rocky islands just offshore. We were on a rocky ledge about ten feet above the water. And between us and the boat was a sort of bay, swirling ocean, with the ledge running around the bay, but very, very narrow. I just looked at him, and he and my girlfriend burst out laughing and off we went.

The boat got us to the island, about thirty meters offshore. The guide explained the hill we came down and the island are all part of a ridge that ran couple of kilometers out to sea, and the fish, especially big kings, patrolled the reef, as it held lot of bait fish. We settled at a good point on the seaward side of the island. Tide was high, water was clear, and fish everywhere. He burlied up hard.

I spent couple of hours landing several good-sized Kahawai, and finally landed a good-sized snapper who had come around nosy at all the commotion.

The water had gone cloudy, so I was forced to fish blind. I was using a small white clouser, with bead metal eyes. Casting was no more than dropping the line at my feet. Then it happened, a big swirl and fish scattered. I could see the guide's eyes light up. *They have arrived,* he said. *Then explained, kings do not come in this close until the water gets cloudy.*

He paused. *Low tide or near, only about 12 feet of water. I reckon they know they just do not need to take any risks. He shrugged, Ones we want are not stupid. What do you use for kings?*

I got out my Piper imitation flies I used for kings. They were metal, all beak and half a body. About two inches long, I used an irregular retrieve imitating half dead bait fish waiting to be gulped up. Been very successful with them in the back eddy on Tauranga harbor. He nodded, *That will do nicely.*

He looked around, *Before swapping, get me couple of those.* He pointed to a school off small Kahawai I had in fact been avoiding, no records at stake, so I was not fishing

generous, with ten kg breaking strain tippet. These small, 1- 2 kg Kahawai, were just a nuisance, just drop lure in school then reel in. I got him 3 fish in short order. Meantime, he had dug out his live bait lure set up and hooked up a small kahawai just off the rock. *Now set up your Piper imitation.* And we waited.

After about half an hour, I decided to have a cup of coffee. Settled comfortably with my cup and nibbles, when suddenly all hell broke loose. The Kahawai was now flapping on the rock, it had rushed up out of the water, A very big kingfish had its head to its fins out of the water chasing the bait. The guide was going berserk... *get the rod, get the rod, get the fucking rod.*

I was temporarily frozen in wonderment at all this. I then broke out of my amazement, got the rod, and promptly hooked up. I never saw the fish, but I had top drag, about 8 kg, and the way the fish ripped line of my reel, it was very big. It ran about 100 meters. Then all went dead. I tested with couple of lifts of the rod.

*Good one Graham. But I think he has wrapped you about a rock or tangled you in the weed.* I leaned back harder on my Sage 996, and sure enough, the lure came free, and I reeled in.

I fished patiently for another couple of hours, drifting the Piper imitation at varying depths, and among any school I could see. I had one more strike, again never saw the fish, but clearly a kingfish, but not well hooked, at least not well enough to hold it.

The afternoon wore on, time to go. Drive out was nowhere near as exciting.

We were staying in Opotiki. Nice restaurant, good meal, nice wine. Several Kahawai, one good snapper given to the restaurant owner, so we were treated like royalty.

Days do not get better than that.

*Graham Little*

## **REWILDING THE NORTH FOR WORLD WETLANDS DAY - WETLAND A PARADISE FOR WILDLIFE**

Source: Fish and Game NZ – *This article is not about fishing but it does highlight the work that is constantly being done out there by both Fish & Game, as well as the many Land Owners looking to leave their land better than they found it.*

The completion of the second stage of an ambitious project to rewild a once grazed Northland valley into a lush wetland has been celebrated with an event to mark World Wetlands Day.

The Underwood Wetland project near Dargaville commenced seven years ago in 2017 with an opening ceremony attended by then Associate Minister for Conservation, Nicky Wagner. The project has been a partnership led by Fish & Game New Zealand, and protects an area of precious native forest, wetland and river flats.

The 342-hectare area includes remnant kauri, hardwood forest and wetland, and river flats containing scatterings of kahikatea.

Sited along the northern and eastern frontages of the Manganui and Northern Wairoa rivers, it is home to threatened species, including the kauri snail, the North Island fernbird, marsh crakes and Australasian bittern. The creation of wetlands adjacent to these river margins is expected to create important habitat for spawning inanga (whitebait) and threatened eel populations.

The land was purchased from local farmers David and Gloria Underwood by a \$600,000 grant from the Nature Heritage Fund with \$55,000 from the Northland Fish & Game Council for survey costs in 2016. 300ha of the native forest was then classified as scenic reserve to be administered by the Department of Conservation. The remaining 40ha of grassed valley floor and surrounds was vested to Northland Fish & Game Council as Local Purpose Reserve for the development of a wetland.

Access work to create public tracks and to allow machinery into the property began in 2016. A series of ponds starting from the head of the valley were created as Stage 1 of the project. This was followed by a second stage in 2022, which saw a 210-metre-long and 4-metre-high bund wall created to block the valley floor and flood it, creating over 5ha of open water and vegetated shallows. It now features almost 10ha of pools and ponds with the remaining area being remnant native forest, native plantings, grassland and newly created access tracks.

The development work for the wetland has primarily been funded by \$122,000 from the Northland Fish & Game Council and the Game Bird Habitat Trust, who gave \$137,900 to fund the project. This totals \$259,900 of money derived from the sale of hunting licences going directly back into the creation of wildlife habitat. Costs for access to the property were shared with the Department of Conservation, and grants for plantings have also been received from Kaipara Moana Remediation and the One Billion Trees Programme for native plantings. Planting work has been completed by Fish & Game staff as well as a significant volunteer effort from hunters and other supporters of the project.

Fish & Game New Zealand Chief Executive Corina Jordan attended the event on Friday 2 February.

"There has been an ongoing pattern of net loss of wetlands in New Zealand. Overall New Zealand lost 5,761 hectares of freshwater wetlands between 1996 and 2018. It makes projects like this vitally important. Fish & Game's journey has always been about protecting, restoring and rewilding Aotearoa New Zealand's natural freshwater habitats and wildlife species.

"Fish & Game has been at the forefront of protecting New Zealand's freshwater for the past three decades with a dedicated spend of almost \$3 million per annum covering engagement in national and regional policy processes and work on the ground to protect and restore wildlife habitats. Approximately \$2.4 million has been invested from the sale of game licences and habitat stamp products for projects like the Underwood Wetland to protect, restore and create wetlands, mainly on private rural land, in partnerships between hunters and landowners."

Former Northland Fish & Game Manager Rudi Hoetjes championed the project over the years.

"This couldn't have happened without the Underwoods. They recognised how special the place was, that it was largely undeveloped, and they saw the potential to return it to its original forest and wetland. The majority of the Kaipara District is highly modified, so remnants like this are incredibly rare and valuable. The Underwoods sustainable management of the property meant that regeneration was underway before the reserve was created."

New Zealanders can apply for funding through the Game Bird Habitat Stamp Programme for the protection and enhancement of game birds or other wildlife habitat. From every game bird hunting licence sold, \$5 goes to the New Zealand Game Bird Habitat Trust. For example, in the 2022/23 hunting season, hunters contributed \$157,808 from game licences sold to be distributed by the trust as habitat grants. Since its inception in 1993, the trust has provided \$2.4 million in grants to nearly 300 projects with some 2,000 hectares of habitat either created, enhanced or re-instated.

Buy a habitat stamp with your game licence or purchase it from NZ Post and help fund habitat enhancement. To apply for these funds, see the Fish & Game Council website <https://fishandgame.org.nz/environment/nz-game-bird-habitat-trust/> for an application form and further details. Applications for Habitat Funds close on 30 June.

*Media Contact Maggie Tait 0273 469 570*

***About Fish & Game New Zealand***

*Fish & Game manages trout, salmon, and game birds to provide healthy recreation for Kiwis. We work to protect the environment that anglers and hunters have enjoyed as a tradition for over 150 years.*

*Fish & Game Chief Executive, Corina Jordan - 021 426 350*



*Stunning wetland created on private land.*

## DRY AND DROPPER TUITION COURSE – FEEDBACK SOUGHT

A few weeks ago the Club ran a Euro Nymphing Tuition Course on the Ohinemuri River in Paeroa. This was a single day course, drive down in the morning and back home that afternoon / evening. It was taken by Aaron West, a multiple New Zealand Fly Fishing Champion, and was greatly enjoyed by those who attended. The cost per angler was \$175 each, and the course was limited to 4 participants.

The Club is now looking at doing a similar course, possibly in February / March, but this time teaching **Dry and Dropper** fishing techniques. That is, fishing with a Dry Fly and a small nymph suspended below the Dry. Location and costs would be the same.

If this is something you may be interested in please let us know asap by contacting any of your Committee Members, emails and phone numbers are on the back page of this Newsletter.



*Students Allen, Barrie and Jaco with their Zen Fishing Master Aaron West, about to enter the Ohinemuri River for their Euro Nymphing Course. The course was a great success with a lot learnt in a single day. Photo courtesy of Lewis Peart.*

## **CASTING TUITION – FEEDBACK SOUGHT**

Another request for feedback and again if this is something you may be interested in please let us know asap by contacting any of your Committee Members, emails and phone numbers are on the back page of this Newsletter.

When we were based at the Milford Cruising Club we had Casting Tuition available for anyone who wanted it on the grass outside each summertime Club Night. The RSA is a great venue and they really look after us, but with others already using the fields nearby Casting Tuition can be problematic.

So, with this in mind, would anyone be interested in having Casting Tuition at a local freshwater site, probably Onewa Park at the foot of Onewa Road? At this point the Tuition would be by other more experienced Club Members.

From a personal perspective, I can say that my fly fishing success improved dramatically as I improved my casting.



*A small tight stream that at times requires some very accurate casting. Photo courtesy of Angus Frew.*

## EDITORS NOTE

On a recent visit to Rotorua fishing with Kerry, we both sat on the riverbank, well shaded by trees, eating our lunch. Normally this is quite a quick affair and its back off to chase some more fish, but this time it was different. We just sat there for some time and watched small Trout in the pool below us actively feeding, as well as a solid Brownie that drifted back underneath us and took up residence in less than a foot of water, probably only 2 rod lengths away.

I can't say what prompted us to just forget about fishing and watch nature unfold, but it is something quite joyous about this sport of ours, that it puts you in the most beautiful of surrounds and can give you the time to just sit there and enjoy them.

## FISHING FUNNIES

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Me: I got bitten on my walk by a  
Great Dane

Her: My God - imagine if it had  
been a small child

Me: I could have fought off a small  
child, Alice



(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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**North Shore Flyfishers Incorporated**