



Kapiti Fly Fishing Club

May 2022 Newsletter



This month's cover photo: This is a photo of the Otaki River looking upstream from Crystals Bend, photo taken by Malcolm Francis

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Club activities

Date	Event	Coordinator
Monday 23 May	Club Night – AGM	Malcolm
3 to 6 June	Club trip to Turangi – staying AFAC Lodge	Kras
Tuesday 14 June	Fly Tying workshop Waikanae Boating Club	Gordon
Monday 27 June	Club Night -Club Auction	Wayne
Tuesday 14 June	Fly Tying workshop Waikanae Boating Club	Gordon
15 to 17 July	Club trip to Turangi – staying AFAC Lodge	Malcolm
19 to 21 August	Club trip to Turangi – staying AFAC Lodge	Malcolm
16 to 18 September	Club trip to Turangi – staying AFAC Lodge	Malcolm

At this month's club meeting is on Monday 23 May AGM meeting starting at 7:30 pm followed by Quiz Night and light super

Presidents report



Well, this will be my last Presidents report as it is time to pass on the 'gavel' to the new incoming President, I have to say the past twelve months have been interesting and a challenge with the challenge of COVID-19 but at long last some form of normality has returned.

As I stated to my good friend Noel, its time to spend more time out there on the water chasing those whirley trout and let some of our younger members steer the ship. I have been very luck having a supper excellent Committee who have made an excellent contribution to ensuring that things keep ticking over, a **BIG THANK YOU** to: Greg our very able Secretary, Andrew our Treasure, a special thank you to Gordon who is always willing to put his 'hand up' and has made an excellent contribution to the Kapiti Women on the Fly. Then there are the rest of our great Committee, Michael, Wayne, Leigh, Kras, Steve and Leon, it's been a pleasure to work with you over the past year and I appreciate the support that you have provided.

Next month meeting we will be holding our Club Auction and the income gained from the auction will be used to support the clubs Kapiti Women on the Fly programme. So please join me in sorting out all your fly-fishing stuff and if you have some redundant gear that you have not used for a number of years its time to 'move it on' and if you are like me buy a new addition. Attached to this month's newsletter there is a copy of the Auction Registration form, if you have any items, please list them on the form and send it through to Gordon Baler at kiwifyfisher@gmail.com

If you wish to sale an item, you will need to place a reserve on the price, please make sure you indicate what you would like for the item, the clubs commission will be 20%. If you have an empty fly-box, remember the value of inserting a few of your favourite fly's as they will be of great value to the purchaser and increase the fly-box value. If you are like me, when you start going through your gear, I would suggest that you take a box of tissues, very handy for mopping up those tears as you say goodbye to an old treasure.

The review of the structure of New Zealand's Fish and Game continues to drag on and it looks like we will see a reduction in the number or Regional Councils, going from 12 to six with two Regions in the North Island and four in the South Island. We have a Council Meeting in June when we will most likely be provided with an update on the restructure, my thoughts are with our permanent staff who continue to provide licence holders with excellent support during this challenging period.

We have a club trip planned to fish the local rivers around Turangi on the weekend of 15 to 17 July, we have booked the Auckland Clubs Fishing Lodge that sleeps 7 anglers. If you are interested in joining me, can you please email me at malcolm1@xtra.co.nz or text me on 027 384 6596. I received an email from Noel Thomas who walked the TT last week and landed a number of fresh run trout, looks like we are in for a good winter season

Look forward to seeing you Monday evening, warm regards Malcolm

PS. The Auction form follows:

Kapiti Fly Fishing Club (Inc)

ANNUAL AUCTION

Monday 25th July 2022

AUCTION ENTRY FORM

***NOTE: Auction will be limited to 100 items.**

Viewing from 6.30 pm. Bidding begins 7.00 pm

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____
Address: _____

Lot No.	Description of item	Reserve \$ (if any)	Donated to club (tick)

Notes: Please enter a brief description of items for auction, using one line per lot submitted.

Text to Gordon Baker 0274946487 or email to Kiwifyfisher@gmail.com - by Wednesday 20th July.

You may enter a reserve for any item, a commission for the club of 20% will be deducted from the amount received even if the item is sold at the reserve price.

Please indicate if any of your items are donations to the club.

Goods may be delivered to Gordon Baker a few days before or brought to the club rooms by 6.15 pm on auction night.

NO MAGAZINES PLEASE!

If you have any inquiries, please contact Gordon Baker

Fly Casting Tuition by Gordon Baker

Club member Gordon Baker is available for one-on-one casting tuition. Gordon is a casting instructor with Flyfishers International (USA). He is available to help beginners get off to a good start and to assist more experienced members improve their distance casting skills. Although not yet an approved two-handed casting instructor Gordon is a keen learner willing to share new skills.

Email Gordon kiwiflyfisher@gmail.com or phone 0274946487 to arrange a suitable time for a lesson. There is no charge.

Mid-Week Fishing trips by Hugh

For those members who are lucky enough to be able to fish mid-week during the forthcoming season please confirm your desire to be included in the mid-week fishers email list to:

hugh.driver.nz@gmail.com

The emails are often sent out only giving very short notice to take advantage of the prevailing conditions and members availability, as an example the afternoon of day before the proposed trip.

If you are interested in participating on any mid-week fishing trips, please email Hugh Driver with your contact details and you will be added to the email list.

Fly Pattern of the Month –Copper John

Copper John



This pattern was created by American angler and fly designer John Barr in the early 1990"s. Although it has some challenges for a beginner fly tyer it is a very useful pattern. It can be tied in a variety of body colours and shapes to suggest stoneflies and mayflies.

Hook: **TMC 3761 or 5262262 size 10 to 16**
Bead: **Gold or Tungsten bead**
Weight: **Lead wire**
Tail: **Brown Goose Biots**
Body: **Copper wire, can use various colours**
Wing case: **Pearl flashabou/ thin skin**
Thorax: **Peacock Herl**
Legs: **Brown hackle fibres or rubber legs**

Please note that if the next fly-tying meeting is held at the Waikanae Boating Club at 7.30pm **Tuesday 10 May you will need to bring your club membership card.** If you haven't received yours yet you may do so at either the club or fly-tying meeting.

Feather Merchants (NZ) sponsor our fly-tying group. Go to their website www.flyshop.co.nz to see their wide range of top-quality tying materials, tools and flyfishing accessories.



Kapiti women on the Fly by Leigh Johnson



Jenny and a nice trout

WoTF trips to Hatepe and Turangi

June 24th to 26th (Friday is Matariki.)

July 28th to 30th

We are fortunate to have access to a lovely house at Hatepe with plenty of beds. The plan is to arrive on Thursday night or come for whatever period suits. Please don't think you're not good enough to join in. We're all learning together. Please book your bed now!

Central Plateau Women's Social Fly-Fishing Tournament, May 27th & 28th

This event is being hosted by the ladies of the Taupo Fishing Club, supported by Sporting Life Turangi and Tongariro River Motels (<https://fb.me/e/1n2WP3Gjl>)

I'll be there! As will another club member, Jenny Tracey. Jenny has lots of experience on the Tongariro. Me, only a little. This is a fantastic opportunity as we will be paired up with the best women anglers in the country, including the members of the NZ Fly Fishing team (the Fly Ferns) who are heading to the 2022 Women's World Champs in Norway in July.

Wellington WoTF Spring Workshop

Plans are forming for a regional weekend workshop in late November.

Please forward this message to any women you know who fly fish or would like to give it a go.

www.facebook.com/WomenontheFlyKapiti, www.instagram.com/kapitiwomenonthefly/ and at www.kapitiflyfishing.org/kapitiwomenonthefly.

I can be contacted at leigh@leighjohnsonnz.com.

Sight Fishing the Waikaia by Grant Cathro



Waikaia River

We have had a wonderful fishing trip for the last 2-3 months in the South Island. Lots of highlights and this story is from one of the 20 odd rivers that we fished. Firstly, you should know that I am a newbie, and before this trip I had landed one fish from a fish out pond, foul hooked and all, so not a lot of stream craft going on!

And one month into our trip I would characterize our fishing experiences as finding a likely looking bit of river and practicing casting for an hour or two and if lucky, fish on! So, we were in Southland and had really enjoyed fishing the Mataura in various spots up the Nokomai valley. We had returned to civilisation of sorts and were camped next to Mike, a fellow fisherman, in the Lumsden freedom camping area.

He had also fished the Mataura and was heading to one of his favourite spots on the Waikaia River. So, naturally we got the location and ended up next to him at the same spot!

The following day was windy, quite marginal really, and I was getting ready to nymph a nice run alongside the camper when Mike came along and asked if I wanted to come with him to see how he fished. Hard to say no at that point!

Mike's approach was sight fishing in shallow water, walking 2 to 3 kilometres up the river spotting fish and casting to them with a small dry dropper. Now Mike had some genetic advantages being 6 foot three and as I was struggling up the river up to my waist, he was strolling along thigh deep looking for fish from on high.

I mentioned that it was a foul day, very windy and we were walking directly into it and couldn't see anything with all of the ripples being blown up on the surface. At one point Mike said, "I normally would have seen 40 fish by now" and I just bit my tongue and concentrated on putting one foot in front of the other.

Mike left me to practice nymphing on a likely looking stretch and then came back to say there was a fish just up ahead! He gave me his rod which was all setup and let me have a few practice casts to check that I wouldn't break it!

The fish was a nice brown sitting in very shallow water only about 1 metre from the edge and under some trees. We worked our way to within 10 meters of it. Casting into the wind was a challenge but my first cast landed pretty much on its head, the second was wind assisted about 10 metres to the left, and the third right in front of it and the fish was on! However, I forgot to let the line go and the fish was off!

We continued up the river and saw another brown just sitting in a narrow ripple, almost half out of the water, happy as. I cast to this one with my rod and nymphing rig which drifted down to it, had a take, but I was so absorbed in the drama of the moment that I forgot to strike. No second chances this time!

Around the corner was a nice shallow pool where you could see the fish swimming on their beats. I had a few casts, then got tangled in the wind so Mike sighted a nice fish near the edge up ahead and caught it first cast! Fish are definitely bigger out of the water!

Last story, another 30 meters up the river we spotted an old grey bearded angler dressed all in camo in a tree 5 meters up a cliff, leaning out and casting furiously into a very deep pool below! Bloody Rambo I kid you not! Old man and the sea stuff. God knows what would have happened if he got one on.

I learned a lot from Mike, and his generosity in spending his day trying to get me on to a fish was really appreciated. Walking up the river sight fishing turned out to be much more interesting than blind nymphing a run, as you never know what is around the next corner!

PS. The next day was glorious, sunny, and calm, and I walked Leigh up the same stretch of river, and we spotted at least 40 fish! True Story.

Take a kid fishing by Greg du Bern

I recently travelled up to Tauranga to visit my son and my grandchildren, Oscar & Gene. Gene is very keen on fishing, so I promised him a fishing trip to catch a trout.

After breakfast we loaded up our spinning gear into the car and headed out to a place called McLaren Falls. There is a nice lake there with loads of ducks, swans, coots, and geese. We tried out a couple of places on the lake but Gene, who is only eight years old, was a bit scared of the black swans and didn't like being near them.

So, we decided to de-camp and try a canal that takes water from McLaren Falls to a power station down in the valley below.

We parked the car off the road and found that there was an unlocked gate for pedestrians to walk into the Ruahihi Canal. There was another angler fly fishing on the other side of the canal, but he was not doing any good. We got to a nice spot down on the water's edge and tried a bit of spinning. I put on a Mepps style spinner while Gene had a little soft plastic fish with a wagging tail.

To cut a long story short we didn't catch anything, but we did see some trout, so we knew that they were there. Later, another angler who had been fishing further up the canal, walked past with a nice trout in his net and said that he had caught two others and was taking this one home to smoke.

As it was getting on to lunch time and Gene had had enough fishing for one day, we agreed to try again the next day but get up a bit earlier and get out just after breakfast.

We arose just after the sun (a nice sunny start to the day) and had a quick breakfast and hit the road. This time we went straight to the Ruahihi Canal and walked up a bit further. I also took my bag of soft plastics to try something different. While we were fishing there were some trout rising and jumping a bit further along the canal, so we gradually moved along the canal towards where we saw the fish moving.

I had given Gene his spinning rod and reel for Christmas. It was an entry level rod but could cast lure quite well and Gene had been practicing his casting. Some of them landed in the grass, just out into the water but some of them flew out to the middle of the canal, certainly far enough to be seen by any fish passing by.

We tried a variety of lure shapes and colours until Gene settled for a little wriggle tail grub in a sparkly Reddy brown colour. I tied it on for him and off he went along the canal calling out that he had seen fish. I carried on fishing focusing on my efforts until I heard a panicked cry from Gene. Looking up, I saw his rod bending and a fish thrashing on the surface.

I dropped my rod and chased along the canal as fast as my old legs would let me to help Gene. He was doing a respectable job playing the fish with me calling out let it run if it wants to! Luckily, I had made sure that his reel line tension was not too tight, so the fish could take line if it felt like a run.

I soon realized that Gene had hooked a decent sized trout, so I was super excited to net it for him. The edge of the canal was not too deep, and he had managed to bring the trout to within a meter or so of the edge. As I went down to put my net in the water, I lost my balance and ended up in the canal with the fish! I was not wearing any waders, just street clothes, so I was getting a bit soaked.

However, in all the excitement I managed not to drown and get my net out in the water and calling out for Gene to lift his rod so the fishes head would come up. He managed to do this, and I got the net under his fish and into the net. Sighs of relief all round and a very excited eight-year-old on the bank. I did not know which was jumping more, Gene or the fish!

I clambered out of the canal with the trout in the net and walked dripping further up the bank. I asked gene did he want to take the fish home or put it back. Bit of a silly question for an eight-year-old as the answer was a firm, "Take it home to Mum".

So, I weighed the fish with my net, and it took the scale down to 6.5 lb. The trout was a rainbow hen in good condition, so I administered the last rights. We had photos after that, but we did not fish for much longer as the need to tell our tale and show the fish to the family became a priority.

We did see other trout cruising around the canal so I am sure that Gene will want to return to try his luck again. I gave him some additional soft plastic lures to try on future fishing trips and he kept the successful wriggle tail on his line.

I am sure that Gene is truly hooked for life on fishing!



Auckland Fly Fishing Anglers Clubs Lodge in Turangi

I'm the Secretary of the Auckland Fly Fishing Anglers Club (AFAC). We have a lodge in Turangi that we would like to promote. Would you be kind enough to share this information with your members?

AFAC would like to extend an invitation to financial members of your club to use our lodge in Turangi. The lodge is located in central Turangi with easy access to the Tongariro, Tauranga-Taupo, Hinemaiaia, Whakapapa, Whanganui Rivers, and many others.

We are currently offering the lodge for bookings to financial members of other fishing clubs. Our rates are **\$130 per night for the entire lodge (Sleeps 7)**.

We would love to have your members using our great facility and getting most out of the fishing experience in Turangi.

Please note that the club has booked the Lodge accommodation for a number of club trips, please refer to the Club Activity table for the dates. If you are interested in joining one of the trips, please contact Malcolm and book your bed.

Lessons without a rod by Nick Taransky

Nick expands his fishing knowledge while leaving his fly rod at home.

Can you catch a trout without a rod? Actually, yes you can. The age-old method of ‘tickling’ trout involved feeling for one in an undercut, and just lifting it out. But that’s not what this article is about.

Nine months ago, I moved from Australia to New Zealand. My house and workshop are literally above the banks of a trout stream. I can see fish feeding from the window pretty much every day. Aside from the obvious distraction from work to any trout angler, this probably sounds like heaven. But realistically, how long do you think it would take for the novelty to wear off for you?

For me, it’s been an interesting experience. I moved here in the middle of winter, so by the time the trout season opened, I’d already spent plenty of hours just walking the banks and observing fish. I’d gotten to know several of them as individuals and felt a little guilty fishing for even when I was finally allowed to.

Don’t get me wrong, I *have* fished for them, and educated quite a few, but they’ve also educated me quite a bit too. Some of these lessons have come while holding a rod, but many have occurred without one. I can still recall the times when I, like most anglers, wasn’t in the position I am in today, so maybe I can share some rod-less lessons. Here are my five top lessons learned without a rod.

1. Learning from someone else

While not strictly relevant to my recent experience, it’s worth starting out with this lesson, especially for beginners. Flyfishing isn’t straightforward to learn. There are so many skills needed to be regularly successful. Casting is a challenge in itself. But that’s only part of the story. Finding fish, stalking, wading, presentation, mending, retrieves, striking, and playing and landing fish, are only some of the tasks you need to combine to become a competent angler. While practice is essential, watching an experienced angler can be an invaluable way to come to grips with the individual elements, as well as putting them all together. I’m not suggesting a six-month apprenticeship before you’re allowed to try for yourself, but a day here and there dedicated to watching, without the temptation to rush off with the rod, can pay off in the long run.



Watching Miri is a lesson in heron-like stalking – and the result

I'd also extend this idea to include more experienced anglers when it comes to learning a new technique, or when utilising the services of a guide in an unfamiliar environment. I realise it's often considered a 'no-no' for a guide to actually fish, but I've learned crucial lessons from asking guides in Japan and Kiribati to demonstrate techniques, even if it led to them accidentally catching a fish or two ...

2. Locating fish

Even if, like me, you're a dedicated sight-fisher, the urge to have a cast or keep moving, can be too great to simply watch for the required period. This was really the first big lesson I learned at my new home. Usually, while carrying a rod, I would have a good scan and analysis of the water in front of me before moving on. This seemed to work okay; I spotted fish, and invariably spooked the odd one. But now, having spent more time on the water without a rod, I realise I'd been moving much too fast. Without the rod and the pressure to catch a fish, I've located far more trout, and spooked far fewer, by waiting and watching longer.

This has been reinforced in places where I now *know* there's a trout. Often, a short look won't reveal anything, but wait another two minutes and...there it is! This is particularly true of cruising fish on a beat, but it also works on fish on station that only show themselves occasionally. I think this is a reason why many of us have favourite 'honey holes' on streams we fish regularly: "I always find one here." Maybe that's because having seen one there before, we wait longer at these spots, and success becomes self-fulfilling.



Give them time. A previously invisible fish moves into the light

How long is long enough? That's a tricky question and it depends on all sorts of factors including the quality of the water in front of you. The method I've employed for my own fishing, is a minimum of an additional slow count to 30 when looking at marginal stretches of water, or 5 minutes extra on a really nice pool or section. The only time I'd spend longer, is if revisiting a place where I already know there's a trout I want to catch.

This extra time needs to be spent meaningfully though. It's much harder to notice slight movements if you are moving yourself, so stay still and in a concealed position. Try and get comfortable if you can – it's easier to stay a little longer that way. If you do need to move to get a different perspective or better angle with polarised glasses, do it s-l-o-w-l-y. Even when turning

your head, do it slowly! And really interrogate the water. Do some wide-angle stares, looking to pick up a hint of movement to home in on, and some broad scans. But also look really carefully along edges, shallower areas, or narrow chutes, where fish might have to pass from one deep section to another.

Also, remember that trout don't always reveal themselves in full profile. You'll have more time to recognise subtle movements of water and differentiate between wind, current and that all-important fish movement.

3. Observing fish behaviour

When holding a rod, once you've found a trout, the focus can shift very quickly to making a cast to it. It does for me anyway! On my rod-less adventures however, watching a fish for even a little while longer, has improved my strategies for catching them later. One example of this, is how the best browns often put themselves in the trickiest positions to cast to. However, if you wait long enough, you may find that once in a while, they venture out from their comfort zone to feed. You can take advantage of this knowledge to make an easier (or even just a possible) cast, rather than an all-or-nothing glory shot that's more likely to end in putting the fish down.



A brown rises amongst its impregnable logjam, but eventually, it may move out into a more fishable spot

So, when you find a trout in an impossible position, give it some time to betray the full extent of its feeding zone. Even if it doesn't, the extra time can be useful to work out alternative angles of approach for the best possible cast.

Aside from tactics for individual fish, standing with my hands in my pockets instead of holding a rod, has expanded my overall understanding of fish behaviour. Seeing the change in movement and position of semi-spooked fish – laying low for a short period and then resuming feeding (though often with reduced gusto) – has been informative.

It's also been useful watching how some fish love to rise, while others prefer to feed below the surface – even when the same food is available; not to mention the quirky behaviours of individual fish. It's also been really enjoyable.

Don't get me wrong, I still like catching fish. In fact, for me I think the built-up anticipation from watching fish without a rod, makes it all the more exciting when I have a rod with me.

4. Stalking fish

A truly astonishing rod-less revelation has been the improvement in my trout stalking. Watching my wife Miri has always been a positive example. She is incredibly patient, and moves like a heron when working a trout. Try as I might though, I've never been able to match her glacial approach. But without a rod and the lure of making that cast in haste, I've been able to stalk almost within touching distance of fish, and then watch them for as long as I want. From a fishing point of view, that's too close. But it does demonstrate what is possible in regard to approaching a trout and your desired casting location.

Without the pressure of catching fish, or any consequence from spooking them, I've been free to experiment with the limits of what spooks trout and what doesn't.

The lesson isn't a new one, but more a reinforcement. The key is low, and slow. (Or perhaps that should be lower and slower). Low means staying below silhouette level, preferably on hands and knees, or even on your stomach. (Yes, a little less risky in snake-free NZ!) Slow means really slow! Literally try to move so slowly that someone watching couldn't actually see you move. The heron example is an obvious one, because it obviously works for them! Even with limited or no concealing cover at all, I've been able to move to literally within an arm's length of trout.

The question for me has been, what to do after that? Do I stand up and spook the fish? I've had as much fun stalking back away from fish without ruining their day. It's trickier than moving towards them but possible, and I can go back to the workshop and still see them rising. Or once in a while, in the interests of science, I'll stand straight up in front of them, with the inevitable result!

5. Entomology and the fish's environment

In the past, I've been something of an entomologist by necessity only. I've fished a mix of generalist flies, and really only got interested in actual trout food and imitative patterns when the fish were rejecting my regular favourites. Over time, it became obvious that some waters were more demanding than others when it came to fly selection. Notably, places like the Monaro region in Australia, with large cruising fish in slow water, and the hard-fished central Pennsylvania limestone streams in the USA, have both proven particularly unforgiving in regard to having the right fly.

A common factor on these waters is diverse and abundant aquatic life, where quantities of individual food items are high enough for the trout to focus on one type to get a decent feed. In contrast, fish in some faster Snowy Mountains and similar streams seem happy to eat almost anything that passes by. Often, there isn't enough of one food item to provide a meal on its own.

Even without the need to become totally imitation-focused, when I moved to New Zealand, I made the decision to reboot my fishing around a relevant food approach, based on observation. So, I emptied out my fly box and have started from scratch. As much as they are great flies, out went the Red Tags and Royal Wulffs. It's certainly made me better prepared for tricky fish, which are the ones which give me the most satisfaction to catch, as well as feeling much more connected to the trout and their overall environment.



Water boatman – observation without a rod has taught me they are an important part of the early season diet of local trout

With the luxury of water on the doorstep, I've been able to spend more time walking up the river with sample dishes and small aquariums instead of a rod and fly boxes. It's still early days, but I'm enjoying the process as much as the actual fishing. For me, it's been much easier to have a dedicated rod-free session looking at the trout food present (as well as what the fish are actually eating) than trying to juggle a rod and fishing while turning over a few rocks.

Of course, I'm hardly paving the way on this. I'm in awe of books like Norman Marsh's 'Trout Stream Insects of New Zealand' and other similar works worldwide. These are fantastic references to apply when you visit a water, whether you have a landing net or entomology net in your hand.

The river here, being very slow by virtue of being slightly backed up by an old hydro weir, has led to some very selective fish and a fascinating 'laboratory'. Most fish fed heavily and steadily on water boatman before the season opened, and then moved on to red and green emerging midges early in the season.



The far bank is covered in willows, and the countless willow grub galls forming on the leaves in spring were a sign of things to come.

As soon as the grubs started to fall, nearly every fish was onto them and wanted nothing else. It's into March and they are still going

Summing up

All these lessons are possible to take in on actual fishing days, but for me, the absence of a rod has really driven them home. It has also made me enjoy my hours on the water more overall and made me appreciate the times when I do have a rod to catch a fish.

NZ's freshwater insects, worms, and snails under threat – report by Ruth Hill



Freshwater insects, worms, and snails - important food sources for many native fish and bird species - are under pressure, but scientists are divided over what this means for the overall state of our rivers.

Macroinvertebrates have been included for the first time in the annual river quality report by Land Air Water Aotearoa, a collaboration between councils, the Ministry for the Environment, and the Cawthron Institute.

Ten years of data shows populations of freshwater insects, worms and snails were "likely or very likely degrading" at two out of five sites being monitored.

Lead researcher Tim Davie, chief scientist at Environment Canterbury, admitted it was "disappointing", but he did not think the overall picture was bleak.

They respond to different things like climate, the amount of sediment and a lot of different things," Dr Davie said. "So, they're a better overall indicator (of the state of the ecosystem) but they do take longer to respond.

"We know that our river systems can take a long time for the macroinvertebrates to improve when you start doing things to improve them. "It was positive to see improving trends for the eight other water quality indicators, including clarity, turbidity, E. coli, nitrogen and phosphorus, Dr Davie said.

However, Victoria University water scientist Mike Joy said snapshot samples of chemicals from sites selected by councils were giving skewed results. "You can have what look like improvements because the amount of nitrate is going down in the water," Dr Joy said.

"And that's why the invertebrates are showing virtually the opposite [to the other results] because they have been wiped out - they can't survive because of oxygen depletion and their habitat being smothered by algae. That's the invertebrates showing the true story that the nitrates aren't showing."

Many areas were showing results which were "indeterminate" - neither worsening or improving - and that was because it was hard to spot trends over a ten-year period, Dr Joy said.

But for many of these sites there was 25 years' worth of data available. "And when you look at 25 years, then nearly all of them are declining."

Meanwhile, farming and irrigation and population pressure continued to degrade waterways, he said. "I'd love to know how anyone would expect it could be getting better when we haven't done anything to make it better."

Dr Davie said there was a lot of work going on trying to keep stock out of rivers and planting alongside rivers - but the flow-on effects for macroinvertebrates took longer.

He disputed Dr Joy's criticism of councils' being allowed to select their own testing sites. "It's not a perfect system but the site selection process is robust and there's a lot of hard work by freshwater ecologists behind it."

"If anything, councils sites are more representative of the worst, rather than the best water quality because they know which areas need improvement."

While there was 25 years' worth of data available for some sites, the report was looking at the situation nationally, which is why it only covered a 10-year period. "Furthermore, it's really only in the last 10 years that we've been doing much of this work to improve water quality, so that gives you a clearer picture of the trends."

Jenny Webster-Brown from the Waterways Centre for Freshwater Management said almost all water monitoring showed that around a third of rivers, streams, lakes, and groundwater had reduced quality due to human activities. Previous national reports had looked at things that could affect the ecosystems - but this new data gave the first robust statistical analysis of what was happening with the ecosystems themselves, she said.

"It's a canary in the coal mine situation. It's a clear indication that things are not right and if that part of the ecosystem is suffering, then other parts of the ecosystem will be suffering."

However, Professor Webster-Brown said New Zealanders could take "some encouragement that some of the things we do work." "But [it should] also galvanise us into action on some of those other things that aren't giving us the same positive message."

Recreation fishers in many parts of the country have witnessed first-hand the decline in river ecosystems. Ashburton man Matthew Hall, who has been fishing Canterbury's Rangitata River for 60 years, said it was "a different world" to when he was a boy.

"Thousands of salmon would come up the river from the sea each year to go to the spawning ground to spawn and sometimes there would be 50, 60, 100 caught a day," said the long-time member of the Fish and Game Council.

"Now you would be lucky if one or two were caught a day and sometimes you would go many days without one caught. The fishery is virtually gone."

The reasons for the decline were complex - irrigation, intensification of farming, and smaller snowfalls had sapped river levels, he said.

"It's not only fish. I've always watched the black billed gulls and the terns that nest there, and compared to when I was a child, their numbers are only a squeak to what they used to be," Mr Hall said.

"And it's all to do with the productivity of the rivers, they're just getting smaller and smaller.

Streamer presentation – glides and slides by Domenick Swentosky



Something inside the angler changes when we fish a streamer. Clip off the dry fly and swap out the nymph. Get rid of the notion that we're imitating a small helpless food form with a dead drift and start **moving** that streamer through the water. Bring it to life — that's our mindset. Make it dance. Swing it, strip it, jig it. Twitch, jerk, and manipulate the rod tip together with the line hand into every combination, because we're imitating a living, swimming baitfish with a motor for motion, right.

Sure. Sometimes trout respond best to fast or even erratic presentations. And I routinely advocate for trying everything with a streamer at the end of the line. But included in that bag of tricks is an assortment of subtle moves too. Rolling the bottom, gliding mid-current along a knee-deep riffle and slow-sliding off the bank — these manoeuvres are just as enticing and catch just as many trout as do flashy retrieves. But we tend to forget them. Or rather, we might not have the discipline to stay with an understated look for very long, because the modest stuff isn't as exciting as the razzle-dazzle.

This handful of subtle moves requires an angler with restraint and commitment. Otherwise, the rod tip and line hand are back to big motions and brash, bold movements in no time.

As streamer anglers, we should be careful that our want to move a streamer doesn't grow to obsession. Good streamer work requires a full set of skills and retrieves. And talented anglers know what they're doing — they perform these streamer skills and manoeuvres with purpose.

To cultivate that kind of intention, I argue that putting a name to the tactic at hand helps us to focus. And through this Steamer Presentations Series on Troutbitten, that's what I've done. Personally, I enjoy cycling through my favourite looks and retrieves to see what the trout want, because it keeps me cantered and immersed in the activity.

So, here's another pair of terms to add to the line-up: gliding and sliding.

Both of these allow the river current to do most of the animation to the fly. How the line and leader travel, either with or against the current, sets up the streamer's next move. And gliding and sliding is more about what you do with the attached line than the streamer itself.

It's Already Moving

If you're coming from a dead drift mindset — from fishing a lot of nymphs and dry flies — then you might think that your streamer is just dead drifting if you don't animate it. But this is rarely the case.

Streamers surely **can** be dead drifted, but it takes detailed attention to keep a large fly in one current seam, traveling at the speed of the water around it. More often, the material mass of a larger fly and the thicker tippets we tie to the eye of a streamer hook gather enough of the surrounding currents to put the fly in motion, at least a bit. And often, that subtle action is already enough movement to entice some trout.

Most of the materials that we build into a streamer have inherent motion as well. Feathers and fur, hackle and rubber legs all have enough wave and wiggle in the water to simulate life and stimulate a response.

The point is, your streamer is already moving, even before your first strip, jig or jerk. The nature of its construction creates movement. The method of delivery and the tackle used has it gliding or sliding without doing much at all.

Let's get to that ...

Glides

Streamers are fished with tension through the line and to the rod tip. We strip with the line hand or perform animations with the rod, and the fly moves. But after that motion, the leader continues to influence the fly.

Remember, no matter what style of fishing, wherever the tippet and leader is, that's where the fly is going next. Realize that a streamer tracks to the line, and it's probably not on a perfect dead drift.

Gliding the streamer is often what people mean when saying, "*I was just drifting' 'em.*"

Essentially, gliding is a way to guide the long fly through the river without crossing seams in a major way. We might cast up, glide down one lane, manipulate the path of the line to take the streamer to the left of the nearest rock, and then stall it in the pocket behind. That's gliding. Basically, we're in control of the fly without animating it much. Let the currents and the tension on the leader do the work.

Often, that's all you need. Cast. Glide. Watch it swoon. And hold on tight.

Slides

A glide that **crosses current seams** becomes a slide. This distinction is important, because one of the key things to plan out and recognize about any streamer presentation is whether the fly is holding one seam or making progress across multiple lanes.

A sliding streamer doesn't dart or pulse because we aren't adding any other movement beyond what the line and tension to the rod tip impart. We might strip to recover slack, but not so much as to animate the fly. Instead, we watch the line, leader and fly make progress sideways, taking the streamer's head across currents and ending up in a far different place than where it started.

Years ago, I developed what I call the slow slide while night fishing. Casting to the bank puts the night fly in the soft water next to the bank, while the leader lays in the faster currents away from the bank. Then, instead of stripping, I learned to allow the tension of the leader to turn the head of the fly down and across. And if I kept my rod tip mostly downstream of the leader and fly, the

fly would hold the soft bank seam for some time, drifting mostly downstream with a side profile to the trout but with enough tension to gradually, slowly, slide off the bank and finally into the main current. The slow slide is still my best producer after dark, and I work slow slides into daylight tactics with streamers a great deal.

Up, Up and Over

Glides start with a cast that is mostly upstream or up-and-across.

Slides can start with an upstream cast, with a cast directly across the stream, or anywhere in between.

But what happens when we cast downstream? With the flies downstream of our rod tip, swinging happens. And swinging is inherently different than what I consider glides and slides because of the **head position** of the streamer. Consider this ...

Swinging the flies has the head faced upstream and into the currents. (It takes a good bit of line manipulation and some introduced slack to make it be otherwise.) Sure, you can swing your fly across seams, and you might call that sliding. But what I call sliding mostly happens with the streamer's head facing somewhere between down and across.

Do It

The longer I guide, and the more I pay attention to my own trout fishing, the more I notice trends in the way we work streamers. Almost compulsively, we feel the need to move the long flies — probably too much.

My friend Bill Dell often says, *“Don't take it away from them.”* I like that.

Glides and slides are a great way to do it.

Fish hard, friends.

You may find the following link to a video clip that covers the series on the Streamers on the Mono Rig by Domenick Swentosky.

There are two parts to this video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFaOkEqTpU>.

Stuck inside? Get yourself a book and escape into the great outdoors by Zane Mirfin



Just some of the books in Zane Mirfin's fly fishing library

OPINION: Mid-winter is a glorious time to read books. With short days, long nights, and tucked up beside a roaring fire, there is nothing better than letting the imagination run wild and being drawn into another world through reading printed pieces of paper.

Ever since Gutenberg invented the printing press in @1440, there have been literally millions of books printed and read throughout the world.

Unsurprisingly, *The Bible* is one of the world's best sellers of all time while Adolf Hitler's 1925 *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) is probably one of the most vilified.

My own love of reading probably didn't kick in until late at High School at Waimea College. Bob Hart's Sixth Form History Class in the early 80's, really fired me up about reading historical books and one thing I always found amusing at the time was a history reviewer rightfully describing Hitler's hateful tome as the "half-baked output of a third-rate mind."

So, some books are good, and some are bad, but in the end, it is always in the eye of the beholder or reader.

Books are filtered and crafted by the author, generally having considerable thought and talent behind them as opposed to some of the unfiltered and plagiarised rubbish emanating on the internet and social media these days. For these reasons, I don't believe quality paper-based books will ever go out of style.

Reading is also good for the mind, being similar to what exercise is to the body.

One online article by Lana Winter-Hebert listed many good reasons for reading a physical book and these include mental stimulation, stress reduction, knowledge, vocabulary expansion, memory improvement, stronger analytical thinking skills, improved focus and concentration, better writing skills, tranquillity, and entertainment.

Everyone reads for different reasons, and I once questioned my wife Aimee on why she continued to read fantastical romantic paperback novels. Aimee gave me a great answer, telling me that "you read to learn, but I read to escape."

Fly fishing books have always been my escape and I have been fortunate to have amassed a great collection of fishing books over my lifetime. I have lots of hunting, outdoor, and saltwater fishing books too, but these fly-fishing books are among my most treasured possessions.

The late Bryn Hammond once described fly fishing as "arcane and esoteric to the un-initiated" which is absolutely true but there have been more books written about fly fishing than perhaps any other topic.

Fly fishers are addicts to their own sport, members of a cult, who speak almost another language whether describing technical aspects or detailing the sheer poetry of the pursuit and the beautiful places that trout inhabit.

My personal fly-fishing journey has taken me around the world to fish and guide, and I have been fortunate to have met and fished with some of the modern gurus of the sport.

I even own many of their books and carry many of their insights and observations in my mind that I have gained through reading and study. Some of these books are even autographed by my heroes, inscribed with personal messages that I cherish. It's good for the soul, but you can never own too many books.

Just lately, I was relocating bookcases into my downstairs office, even picking through what books to keep and what to shed. It was a big job, that took even longer as I stopped to flick through many of these epic tomes as I worked. I also added some inherited books, as yet unread, given to me by friends and acquaintances, and also some new old books obtained at the recent Founders Park Book Fair.

Held every year at Queen's Birthday Weekend, the book fair is a nine-day pre-loved book extravaganza, accessible to all for the price of a gold coin donation.

There are some great bargains to be had with many books only of real value to the purchaser. Alas, I never made it to the opening day event, arriving on Day Four to a heavily picked-over selection of fishing and hunting books but it was still a goldmine.



For about \$17 dollars I picked up some real classics, that included *Nymphing: A Basic Book*, a humbly titled 1979 epic by American Gary Borger who I once met at Bob Haswell's Lake Rotoroa Lodge many moons ago.

Borger and his book heavily influenced one of my local fishing and guiding mentors, Tony Entwistle, and in turn influenced how we all fish the South Island today with the concepts of strike indicators, long tippetts (fine terminal traces), and 'shot gunning' riffles. Best of all, my copy purchased at Founders for \$1, once belonged to the late R.M. (Rob) Maling, former Mayor of Richmond Borough, and father of my friend Kit Maling, current Tasman District Councillor.

I was so excited about my haul of books that I went back a few days later to check out more pre-loved outdoor books that are added daily to the Fair's offering, this time walking away with more classics worth about \$40, including a mint condition 1974 copy of *Trout with Nymph* by Marlborough's Tony Orman.

Other than actually being out in the wild, scoring a great book is the next best thing. One thing is for sure, I have plenty of reading to occupy long, cold, winter nights, and to learn and dream of new strategies in the river and on the hills over the warmer months ahead.

Best of all, it's possible to read multiple books at the same time of different genres and topics. Apart from fishing books lately, I've also been finishing off extensive reading about the life and times of Genghis Khan, who conquered the known world from the remote Mongolian Steppes, re-reading *Bulletproof Your Business* by Cantabrian Craig Rust, and enjoying Kiwi singing sensation John Rowles' cleverly titled autobiography *If I only Had Time*.

I'm also riveted lately to my bedtime chapter of an English translation of Ernst Junger's *Storm of Steel*, an incredibly insightful record of one German soldier's experiences in the trenches of the WWI European battlefields. What seems amazing to me, is that Junger and my grandfather Ash Mirfin, could well have been shooting at each other across the mud, barbed wire, gas fumes, and no-man's land.

Reading will never go out of style, whatever you may read or study. The potential is unlimited, and you can explore the world without ever leaving the comfort of your sofa. Reading can even take over from the active pursuit of fishing and hunting during winter.

So, I can sadly report that no animals or fish were harvested and eaten in the production of this week's Wildside column.



A number of our present Committee members will not be seeking re-election to the Committee at this year's AGM, we are looking for a new Treasure plus three Committee members.

Can please consider putting your name forward as a Committee Member, we need your ideas and energy to keep the club moving forward.

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If you have never seen a Kiwi in its natural environment (near natural) then I would recommend the Kiwi Night Encounter at Nga Manu, you will need to book as it is limited to 10 people each night.

Newsletter content with built-in links to other documents by Editor

Readers of our newsletter may not realise that when you see a name or wording underlined in an article, as an example [a Harvey leader](#) this is a link to another article where you can find more information. All you need to do is hold down your CTRL key and click on the words and the link will open.

*Newsletter copy to be received by
Second Monday of each month; your
contribution is welcome just send it to:*

malcolm1@xtra.co.nz

Purpose:

To promote the art and sport of Fly Fishing.

To respect the ownership of land adjoining waterways.

To promote the protection of fish and wildlife habitat.

To promote friendship and goodwill between members.

To promote and encourage the exchange of information between members.

Club meetings

You are invited to attend our club meetings that are held on the **Fourth Monday** of each month.

The venue is the **Turf Pavilion Sport Grounds**, Scaife Street, Paraparaumu,

Our **meetings start at 7:30pm** with fellowship followed by speakers of activities.

Club Committee meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month and the meetings are held at the Waikanae Boating Club and start at 7:30pm.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please remember that the club has two Five Weight 8'6" fly rods that members are welcome to use, just contact Malcolm Francis

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