



# Kapiti Fly Fishing Club

## August 2022 Newsletter



**This month's cover photo: Hinemaiaia River looking downstream towards the river mouth, photo by Malcolm Francis**

**In this month's newsletter:**

- Page 2** Presidents Report
- Page 3** Kapiti Women on the Fly by Leigh Johnson
- Page 4** Fly Casting Tuition by Gordon Baker
- Page 4** Mid-Week Fishing trips by Hugh
- Page 5** Fly of the Month – Fly Tying for Beginners by Gordon Baker
- Page 6** September Auction items
- Page 8** Are Light Nymphs More Effective? Is Less Weight More Natural? By Domenick Swentosky
- Page 11** Brown and Rainbow trout, what's the difference? by Te Ara
- Page 15** A Brown Trout quirk by John Juracek
- Page 16** Teaching trout by Todd Tanner
- Page 18** Wee wets at the Bitter End from the Soft-Hackle Journal
- Page 20** The charming hamlet of Lordville by John Fedorka
- Page 23** The New Sporting Life Turangi

**Club activities**

Date	Event	Coordinator
Monday 22 August	Club night – Cancelled	Wayne
Tuesday 13 September	Fly-tying workshop – Focus will be on new tyers	Gordon
16 to 18 September	Club trip to Turangi – staying AFAC Lodge	Malcolm
Monday 26 September	Club night -Auction	Wayne

---

***This month's club meeting has been cancelled***

---

## *Presidents report*

Greetings my fellow chasers of things piscatorial.

For some reason fishing just hasn't featured into my thinking for this month as I have been run off my feet at work and I am clearing the decks for my retirement date of 15 September. What I have been doing is travelling around NZ attending our Union's Annual general Meetings and seeking out the local fishing experts.

Reports all over the country is that winter fishing has been very rewarding when a fishing trip has been scheduled outside of the heavy rainfall times. Those lucky enough to be in areas where the rivers have gravel bases, they clear quickly, and the increased flow gets the fish on the bite.

All of this has had me setting up promises on hosting future fishing trips when I will have more free time on my hand but what has been equally enlightening is the people who come out of the woodwork saying things like "now that you are retiring and will have lots of free time on your hands you can assist us in our work of getting.....". The truth is that if I said yes to all of these offers all I would be losing in my retirement is being paid! This will probably accord with the experience of a number of our older members when they also retired.

For many years it has been very rare for me to miss the season opening and close of the Ohau Channel and the Rotorua Lakes. This year my daughter asked if I could arrange accommodation for the first week of October for her and the grandkids. I of course said yes, who wouldn't leap at the chance of quality time with the young'uns'. I book the Welfare House in Taupo for the first week of October and then my wife reminds me of the season opening for Rotorua and I get my first real inkling of memory loss and confusion in old people (me!).

Leigh reports that the planning and funding of the Women on the Fly event in November is well on track and is generating a lot of interest and excitement. The club is hosting the event and we need to find BBQ chefs for the Saturday night so anyone who is a culinary genius on a BBQ please contact Leigh or Gordon to put your name down. The inter-club fly-tying competition is coming back and so we get a chance to deal to both the Hutt Valley and Wellington Flyfishers and to have bragging rights of the trophy. More details will be in this newsletter somewhere.

As I write this, we have just sent out a cancellation of our August Monthly Meeting because of lots of key officer absences and the loss of our August keynote speaker due to Covid. The good news is that being sick will not release peter from giving out all his secrets on the Rangitikei in September.

Hope you all stay dry, warm, and healthy and so it is adieu until next month.

Tight lines

Wayne Butson

## ***Kapiti Women on the Fly by Leigh Johnson***

A warm welcome to our new members.

Ruth McKenzie and Leigh enjoyed a long weekend at Hatepe in the company of Kathy Vinten (Hutt Valley) and Rebecca Taylor (Tauranga). We were joined on Thursday evening by Tracey Bellis and Heather Carrington (Taupo) for dinner and a fly-tying lesson. Fishing conditions were tough with all rivers in flood. However, the Hinemaiaia provided the best results, with four fish landed.

While in Turangi, Ruth purchased a new rod with assistance from Theresa Beilby from Sporting Life. Theresa is one of only three female professional guides in New Zealand and always provides great advice and local knowledge.

### **Wellington WoTF Spring Workshop - 26/27th November**

The exciting news is that Wellington Fish & Game has agreed to underwrite and support our weekend workshop on the Hutt River. The target audience is women who would like to give fly fishing a go, as well as those who wish to extend their skills and friendships.

The goals of the workshop are:

- To promote fly fishing as a sport beneficial for mental and physical well-being.
- To grow the female fly-fishing community in the Wellington region.
- To acquire and develop skills and grow the confidence of female anglers.
- Build community and friendships with other women fly fishers.
- Experience the outdoors & river conditions in a safe & encouraging environment.
- To promote competition/sports fishing and career opportunities in fly fishing.

We are currently looking for sponsorship and as many female presenters as possible for a programme covering topics from casting, rivercraft, modes of fishing, careers in the industry and competition fishing.

Ladies, please reserve this date for a fun weekend celebration with the opportunity to learn from experienced fly-fishing women.

You can find us at [www.facebook.com/WomenontheFlyKapiti](https://www.facebook.com/WomenontheFlyKapiti),  
[www.instagram.com/kapitiwomenonthefly/](https://www.instagram.com/kapitiwomenonthefly/) and  
[www.kapitifyfishing.org/kapitiwomenonthefly](https://www.kapitifyfishing.org/kapitiwomenonthefly).

I can be contacted at [leigh@leighjohnsonnz.com](mailto:leigh@leighjohnsonnz.com).

### ***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 [kiwifyfisher@gmail.com](mailto:kiwifyfisher@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](mailto: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.**



**Ruth McKenzie testing out her new rod at Sporting Life**

## Fly Pattern of the Month – Getting Started



With the current cost of flies there is no better time to get started and tie your own.

- Learn simple basic techniques.
- Use low-cost materials to produce standard fly patterns - that trout can't resist.
- Acquire skills that will help you to become a better fly tyer - able to tie any fly.
- Learn what tools you need to get started.
- Meet other club members who enjoy fly-tying.
- Tie flies that catch fish.

Bring any tools and materials you might already have. Phone Gordon (0274946487) or email [kiwiflyfisher@gmail.com](mailto:kiwiflyfisher@gmail.com) if you would like any further information about what's happening. It would be good too if you let Gordon know you're interested so he can ensure there is enough gear for everyone.

**Please note** that if the next fly-tying meeting is held at the **Waikanae Boating Club at 7.30pm Tuesday 13 September** 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](http://www.flyshop.co.nz) to see their wide range of top-quality tying materials, tools and flyfishing accessories.*



## **September Auction items**

At our Club meeting on 26 September, we will be auctioning off Graham Waters fly fishing gear including his boat, the proceeds from the auction will go back to Gloria and family.

The items listed below will be on display prior to the start of the meeting from 7:00pm, if you wish to review the boat prior to the meeting please contact Ralph Lane.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Item Description</b>
1	Body waders-Sierra stocking feet Large
2	Body Waders- lightweight size 8
3	Thigh waders
4	Boot leg warm- size 11ers
5	Hand net- new
6	Fishing jacket- XL
7	Fishing jacket- River Works medium
8	Fishing backpack- River Works as new
9	Mini spinning rod, reel, silver spool, line
10	Fly rod 9ft '10'
11	Jigging rod, Shimano reel, line
12	Fly rod 'Down Under', 9ft, 7/8
13	Spinning rod 'master' reel, line
14	Cane rod- 3 piece
15	Spinning rod, Shimano reel, line
16	Spinning rod, 'Strike', reel, line
17	Spinning rod, 'Okuma', reel, line
18	Fly rod 'Down Under', 9ft 5/6
19	Fly rod, Genesis, 5/6
21	Fly rod Trent 9ft
22	Surfcasting rod 'Monsoon'
23	Spinning rod and reel - old
24	Spinning rod 'Strike'
25	Boat rod, reel, line - Heavy 550
26	Reel, nylon line, 'aurora. Sea use
27	Reel, nylon line, 'Strike' surf reel
28	Trout reel, line, 'norstream'8/10
29	Trolling reel, line, 'Kilwell 200L
30	Fly reel and line- Taimer TL 6-8
31	Fly reel, line 'Taimer'- Performance 7/8
32	Fly reel, line 'Olympic 460
33	Fly rod 'Okuma 9ft 6/7 Steelhead in Tube
34	Spinning rod, reel Strike
35	Box fishing gear, lures, line
36	Fibreglass fly rod

## *Graham Waters boat needs a new owner and home*

The boat is 4m long and 1.4m beam in size. Two splits have been professional welded and sealed, the boat is registered.

The motor is an old 15HP Evinrude that has been regularly checked.



If any member is interested in having a look at the boat, please email Ralph Lane at [ralph.jill@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ralph.jill@xtra.co.nz) to arrange a day and time to view the boat.



## ***Are Light Nymphs More Effective? Is Less Weight More Natural? By Domenick Swentosky***

Here are two great things about nymph fishing: One, good drifts with a nymph catch trout in almost any river scenario. And two, there's an endless set of variables to play with.

The other fly styles — dry, streamer and wet fly, are easier to master. Dries, being surface located, challenge the angler in one plane, and the flies are most often visible. Likewise, trout seem a bit more forgiving on streamers and wets, because drag — or tension to the fly — can be part of the presentation.

For a nymph, as with dry flies, a dead drift is our most common objective. It's the baseline presentation from where deviations separate. And yet, fishing the unseen nymph, positioned in three dimensional currents, requires imagination, patience and a certain confidence that derives only from experience. Lots of it.

What's the nymph really doing under there? How is it affected by the currents? And is the attached tippet dragging the fly unnaturally across, over, up or out of the natural, one-seam drift that our picky trout are waiting for?

The challenge of nymphing is mercifully balanced by the frequency at which trout feed on these bottom dwelling food forms. So even if we get one in ten drifts just right, the rate at which we might fool fish makes this maddening quest for perfection more than worth it.

Simply put, nymphing is fun because it works — and because there's always a way to make it work even better.

Our nymphs require weight to get under the surface and down to the trout. And “how much weight” is a fundamental consideration — perhaps the primary factor — toward the goal of drifting nymphs naturally.

### **These Days ...**

If you're into anything long enough, you'll notice the trends. And you can watch dogged convictions shift, en masse. In an industry as niche as fly fishing for trout, the opinions of just a few influential anglers often shape the next metamorphosis.

So, it is with the nymphing game, as the current trend for lighter flies and lighter tackle has taken a strong foothold. But just a few years ago, the concept of anchor flies was driving weighty considerations in the opposite direction. (Just as many trout found the net, by the way.)

As with most things, real success with nymphs lies somewhere toward the middle of these extremes, and persistent success comes from a combination of both.

### **Yea or Nay**

So, are lighter nymphs more effective? Does using less weight allow a fly to look more natural?

Sure, sometimes. And at other times . . . no, not at all. The Troutbitten mantra of versatility on the water applies yet again. Because nymphing with lighter weight is just as often a liability as it is an advantage.

I'm on the water often enough to try everything. I've made enough casts and have caught so many trout that what keeps me interested more than anything is real, unbiased testing. So, when I hit a strong bite, or I finally find the code on a tough day, I like to change some element. Just as soon as I'm sure I have things going — when trout are coming to hand expectantly — I look to alter my method and test against that success. It could be my rig, my approach, or a water type, but most often I change just one thing at a time.

While nymphing, that alteration is often a variation of weight. Sometimes, the change is extreme, and sometimes it's moderate. But I'll remove or add enough weight to the system, through split shot or by changing the weighted fly itself.

And does that change my success? More often than not . . . no, my catch rate does not change much.

But keep in mind, success always starts with **how** we fish the rig.

Maybe you're better at fishing lighter than you are at fishing heavier setups, so more trout are fooled with a light rig in your hand. But be careful with conclusions. Because most often, it's how you fish the rig that makes all the difference.

### **How Much Does a Real Nymph Weigh?**

While this seems like a fair question, it's not a good basis for nymph design or split shot selection. Because the attached tippet, regardless of its diameter, presents a challenge. Our goal of dropping the nymph near the bottom and drifting it through the strike zone is at odds with the concept of tying our nymphs to match the weight of the real food forms.

Weight is often necessary to stabilize a nymph in heavy or complex currents, to fight the battle against dragging tippet or to punch through the first two-thirds of the water column in a reasonable time, following the cast. And though we may not want excessive weight that restricts the nymph's freedom to move with the flow, we also don't want the nymph tossed and pulled unnaturally by the attached leader.

In short, weight is necessary. And sometimes the required weight might be a lot more than you think.

Everything in this game is river conditional, so broad assertions are unwise. Don't assume that a successful rig in the headwaters will convert to water twice as deep and three times as fast.

### **Is Nymphing Light More Advanced?**

Here's another misconception I'd like to dispel. It does not take more skill to drift light nymphs. In fact, I believe it takes more skill to drift heavier.

The **casting**, however, can be easier with heavier nymphs.

Let's assume we're on a tight line or euro nymphing rig, although most of this discussion applies under an indicator as well.

Casting can seem easier with more of a load on the rod tip. Because we feel the flex — we feel the direction and have more control over the course of the flies to the target.

So too, that weight provides more feedback once the flies are underneath, and drifting with enough weight to flex the rod, just a bit, or to tick the bottom once in a while, provides a reference — an aid — to the angler about what the nymph is really doing out of sight and in complex currents.

With more weight, comes more control. That sounds easier, right?

However, . . . the angler must do the right things with that control. With greater contact and control, we are fully in charge over the course of the flies. It's a big responsibility. And it's up to us to simulate a natural drift. The angler, then, makes the decisions about depth, speed, and the action of the nymph. And we damn well better make it look right, or the trout will refuse it all day long.

By contrast, lighter weighted rigs allow for the currents to make more of the decisions for the course of the nymph. The angler has less control, makes fewer choices, and focuses on simply trying to keep excess slack out of the system.

For years, I've referred to these two concepts as leading the flies versus tracking the flies, and I've written a full series covering what I see as the cardinal choice for every nymphing angler. More weight or less? It sets up everything else.

No, fishing lighter does not require more skill. But does it look more natural?

That's up to you ...

### **Sell It**

Presenting natural, convincing, or looks-like-real-food drifts is the responsibility of every angler. And thank God for that.

Whether the flies are light or heavy, whether we're drifting weighted flies, drop shot or split. shot, it's our ability to adjust, to refine and endlessly improve that keeps us wading into a river anew with each trip.

It's why we love the nymphing game.

Fish hard, friends.

## ***Newsletter articles by Malcolm Francis***

One of the challenges I have as the Editor of this newsletter is finding articles that will be of interest to all our members, as what may be of interest to me may not be for you the reader. I would value you feedback on what you would like to see in the newsletter as I am open to your suggestions, so PLEASE pass on any ideas that you may have.

## ***Brown and Rainbow trout, what's the difference? by Te Ara***



### **Brown trout**

Brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) form the basis of most freshwater fishing in New Zealand.

From the late 1860s brown trout, from Europe, were introduced throughout New Zealand for fishing. They established themselves rapidly where they were released – and also spread by going out to sea and swimming up other rivers. In the early years they were very well conditioned. Some were so fat they looked like rugby balls and could weigh over 10 kilograms.

After the initial boom, average trout sizes dropped. Acclimatisation societies had set up hatcheries and continued to release small fish into the rivers for decades. The rationale was that there was competition from predators such as eels and shags, but research has since shown this to be a waste of effort, as natural spawning provides more than enough young fish.

### **Habitat**

Brown trout live mainly in rivers but are also found in diverse habitats from estuaries to subalpine lakes.

### **Feeding**

Brown trout are predatory fish that eat small aquatic insects and small fish. In flowing water, they tend to face upstream, feeding on drifting aquatic insects. In slow-moving pools, brown trout cruise looking for food. In lakes they cruise the shallow zone close to shore, feeding on small fish such as bullies, and invertebrates such as dragonfly nymphs and snails in weed beds.

Brown trout often hide under rocks and streamside vegetation, and immediately seek cover if they see movement on the riverbank. As a result, they are one of the most difficult freshwater fish to catch.

### **Chasing rainbow – or Brown**

One angler weighed up the pros and cons of fishing for rainbow or brown trout: 'The choice between the rainbow – often easier to hook and harder to land, and the brown – always harder to hook and sometimes easier to land, is a matter of taste and style, and there are no rights and wrongs in the matter.

## Features

The body form and behaviour of brown trout are adapted for living in rivers. For example, their pectoral fins are much larger than those of rainbow trout. This allows them to use the river flow to hug the riverbed, where the current is slower, and it takes less energy to stay in the feeding position.

In New Zealand brown trout often reach 800 millimetres and 5 kilograms. Most fish caught by anglers are smaller – typically 1–2 kilograms.

## Distribution

Brown trout are found south of the Coromandel Peninsula. They prefer lower summer water temperatures than rainbow trout do, and winter water temperatures over 11°C kill brown trout eggs.

## Life cycle

- The female lays several hundred to several thousand eggs in a small hole. These are fertilised by the male.
- After a month or two the eggs hatch, and the fry live in the gravel before emerging and feeding along stream margins.
- Adults spawn in early winter, usually in the headwaters of streams with gravel beds.

Adults usually survive spawning and spawn annually. Brown trout live for 8–10 years, although individuals up to 15 years old have been recorded in New Zealand.

## Sea-going trout

In the late 1800s and early 1900s it was thought that sea trout were a different species from riverine trout. But it has long been known that some brown trout live in estuaries and also go out to sea. Today it is accepted that riverine and sea trout are merely variants of brown trout.

Brown trout's colours can change depending upon the waterway they live in. Sea-run trout can be a bright silvery colour, brown trout from rivers tend to be golden brown, and those from lakes are a duller silver. All have black spots, and riverine browns also have red spots.

**Editors note: You will often see sea-run Brown Trout in the lower reaches of the Waikanae and Otaki rivers, when the trout first moves into the fresh water their vision is poor as they go through the process of adjust to living in freshwater.**



## **Rainbow trout**

Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) were first introduced to New Zealand in the early 1880s. They are descended mainly from Californian steelheads – rainbow trout that migrate to sea and spend most of their lives there. However, New Zealand rainbow trout do not migrate to sea.

### **‘It was a whopper’**

Anglers have long been notorious for their exaggerations. In 1888 a writer noted: ‘There are several kinds of trout liars. The liar of weights, who never catches more than half a dozen trout a day, but they can weigh anywhere from 8 lb to 10 lb. Then there is the liar of numbers, who always catches so many dozens in an hour and 28 minutes. And there is the liar of places, who knows hidden pools, dark and still, in the secret places of the rocks that are just boiling over with trout ... and you fish in them for eight mortal hours without a nibble.’

### **Distribution**

Rainbow trout are less widespread than brown trout. There has been virtually no natural dispersal.

Ova imported in 1883 by the Auckland Acclimatisation Society survived, and fry were released into local waterways. In 1892 the species was liberated in Lake Rotorua, and in 1897 in Lake Taupō.

Rainbow trout can tolerate higher water temperatures than brown trout: they are found in warmer waters such as the Kai Iwi lakes in Northland. They also occur in a few rivers.

### **Rivers: limited success**

Stocks were also released into many rivers, but they mostly disappeared. Nearly all the rivers where they did establish themselves flow into large lakes – in the central North Island, and the southern South Island.

It is not understood why rainbows have failed to become established in many waterways. Adding to the mystery is their presence in a few rivers that do not drain into lakes, such as the Pelorus and Rai in the South Island, and the Mōhaka in the North Island. These have very stable riverbeds, which may be a factor.

### **Taupō trout**

Soon after they were brought to New Zealand, rainbow trout grew very large in Lake Taupō, but then declined in size. The average weight of trout in one angler’s bag was 10½ pounds (4.8

kilograms) in 1911, but by 1918 it had dwindled to 4 pounds (1.8 kilograms). The early bonanza was probably due to the trout feeding on the then plentiful native fish.

### **Feeding**

Rainbow trout eat more and grow faster than brown trout. In rivers they feed in fast water, using energy to stay in the same place while feeding on drifting invertebrates. In lakes, rainbows tend to live in deeper water than brown trout and often feed on different prey – usually small fish, such as smelt in Lake Taupō.

This may explain why rainbow trout are bold feeders, more easily caught than the wary brown trout.

### **Features**

Rainbow trout may reach 750 millimetres and more than 10 kilograms in New Zealand. Fish of 600 millimetres and 2–3 kilograms are often caught, and fish weighing 4–5 kg are not uncommon.

Most rainbows tend to live for four or five years, although individuals up to 11 years old have been recorded.

### **Life cycle**

- Several hundred to several thousand eggs are laid in a small hole by the female and fertilised by the male.
- After 1–3 months the eggs hatch into alevins (fry with yolk sacs attached). These live in the gravel, feeding from their yolk sac.
- They then emerge as fry, about 25 millimetres long. By late summer they have reached 50–70 millimetres.
- As juveniles and spawning adults, they live in streams, where they are exposed to predators on the banks.
- Adults usually run upstream from a lake to spawn in late winter and early spring, in headwater streams with gravel beds. Not all rainbow trout survive spawning.

Much of the central North Island winter fishing is centred on rainbow trout running upstream from Lake Taupō to spawn in tributaries such as the famed Tongariro River.

## *A Brown Trout quirk by John Juracek*



### ***This habit, or lack thereof, of feeding brown trout is unique among all species.***

For the past several seasons I've been spending most of my fishing time pursuing brown trout. Free-rising brown trout. While so engaged, I've been reminded countless times of a feeding quirk particular to this species. It's this: Brown trout react to food according to their own whims and fancy, completely independent of its presence and abundance. Surround them with a good hatch, spinner fall, or stonefly flight, and brown trout might feed readily, might feed haphazardly, or maybe not at all. Give them a sparse hatch and it's possible for every brown in the river to be on the fin, taking anything that drifts nearby.

You just never know.

Other trout species don't act like this. Rainbows, cutthroat, brook trout—they all exhibit feeding patterns that pretty much correlate directly with the availability of food. When food's plentiful they can be counted on to eat it and eat it well. When food's sporadic, so too is their feeding. But not the brown trout. They feed according to their own schedule.

What implications does this behaviour have for fishing? For one, it suggests that patience is often going to be a key to success. Don't give up too soon if fish aren't responding early in a hatch. Brown trout can take what feels like forever to come on to a hatch. Even then, they frequently give the impression that rising is something of a bother, practically more trouble than it's worth (uh, easily acquired, abundant food?)

Who cares?

This quirk of feeding also means it's important not to pass judgment too quickly about your choice of fly or its presentation. Just because a rising fish fails to take your first cast (or fourth, tenth, even thirtieth) doesn't mean anything is wrong. Your fly may very well be right, your presentations perfect. Doesn't matter. Brown trout rise when they're good and ready.

Success then, at least for me, usually depends on figuring out the feeding rhythm of a given fish. Brown will often rise multiple times in succession and then go down for a period of time. This holds especially true for the largest specimens.

Observing how many rises occur in each go-round, the interval between those rises, and the length of time the fish goes down for will help you plan your casting. Naturally, you want your fly covering the fish at the most opportune time. And, stating the obvious, the execution of other elements of your presentation must be done well too.



I know that this sort of planning and fishing is not for everyone. That's okay. But if you're drawn to brown trout like I am, particularly *free-rising* brown trout, paying attention to their feeding behaviour is more than just an interesting sidelight. It's essential to their capture.

## *Teaching trout by Todd Tanner*



Once we've been fly fishing for a while, most of us find ourselves in a position where we know a fair amount about angling. We might not all be experts, but we're still pretty comfortable with the subject. We talk about it on a regular basis, we read articles and watch videos and share opinions with our friends and fishing partners until one day, pretty much out of the blue, someone actually asks for our help.

*What are they biting on? What fly should I use? How did you just make that cast?*

We answer as best we can, of course, and it's usually not until much later that we realize exactly what just happened. Instead of remaining a neophyte — a student of trout, always looking up to other anglers with more knowledge and experience — the world just shifted on its axis. Now we're something else; something different. Without even thinking about it, we just became a teacher.

Of course, there are good teachers and bad teachers and there's absolutely no guarantee that our first foray into teaching worked out well, or that we shared our knowledge effectively.

Some folks have an innate talent for explaining things to other people. Others don't. But like any other aspect of fly fishing, teaching is a skill that most of us can learn. And after more than 25 years of helping other fly fishers catch trout, I've accumulated a few pointers that can make a real difference the next time someone asks for your advice on the river.

One of my favourite quotes about teaching comes from Albert Einstein: "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough." Einstein was right. And the corollary is that if you can't explain it simply and clearly, you probably shouldn't be explaining it at all. So, my advice here is straight-forward. Stick to the questions you can answer with confidence. When someone asks you to teach something that's beyond your ability, be honest. Tell them that they'll need to look elsewhere for advice.

Another stellar quote came my way from a long-time teacher, who shared the following line with our class: “If you want to learn about owls, then go ask the mice.” I’d encourage you to think about that for a few second before you read any further.

“If you want to learn about owls, then go ask the mice.”

Let’s unpack that into two separate threads:

- First, it’s important for anglers to understand that everything is connected. As the naturalist John Muir once said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe." Your wading influences your casting and mending. Your ability to read water determines where you fish your nymph. Your skill at throwing an accurate reach cast is a primary factor when it comes to achieving a drag-free drift. Everything is connected to everything else and if you want your novice fisherman to succeed, then he or she should know that every element of their angling has an influence on every other element, as well as on their overall success.
- Second, answering a direct question with a direct answer isn’t always the best technique. If you’re trying to get people to really understand something, you want to encourage them to think about it on a deeper level; to go past the obvious. Sadly, way too much teaching is predicated on the idea that throwing information at the student is enough. It’s not. If you want folks to understand something, you need to engage them mentally by answering their question with another question, or by guiding them to a clue that will point them towards that special “Eureka!” moment.

For example, if I tell you that a fully emerged mayfly dun floats on the current with upright wings, you’re liable to hold on to that information for a solid 10 or 15 minutes before it fades away into oblivion. On the other hand, if I point out a mayfly and ask, “What does this little guy look like?”, then the answer — “A sailboat!” — makes a strong mental connection that can help you differentiate mayflies from caddis and stoneflies for the rest of your life.

Keep in mind that the human brain does really well with images, symbols, and stories, and less well with basic data. If you use a story to illustrate a point, or if you tie a technique to an image or a symbol, you’re liable to be more successful than if you simply offer a bunch of “how-to” information.

Over the years, any number of casting instructors have stressed the importance of the rod tip following a straight-line path during the cast. If you share that suggestion with someone just learning to cast, though — “Hey, make sure your rod tip stays in a straight line as you cast!” — the majority of people will look at you as if you have three heads and green hair.

You can almost see them think, “How is that even possible?”

But if you grab the rod with one hand, the end of the line with the other, and then show them how to make a bow and arrow cast, you can also demonstrate — in slow motion — how the flexing and then un-flexing of the rod tip allows the tip, and the line, to move in that straight line.

Or think about the neophyte who struggles with rod tip awareness, and who always feels like he has to turn his head to watch his rod and his line as he casts. What if you asked him one simple

question: “If you’re using a “key grip” or a “thumb on top” grip, does your thumb always point to the same place as your rod tip?”

And when he answers in the affirmative, you can ask him if it might make more sense to pay attention to his thumb than to the rod tip. (The answer, obviously, is “Yes!” — but we want him to figure that out for himself.

Or use the old “shadow animal” trick. Most of us have seen a friend create all sorts of neat shadows with a projector and a screen, or a flashlight and blank wall. After all, it’s not hard to use your fingers to form a bunny or a dog or a bird. So, when you’re trying to illustrate how important it is to wait just a second on a downstream hookset, why not use one hand to illustrate the trout’s mouth, and the other hand to show the path of the fly and the necessary timing? Visual aids don’t need to be fancy or complex to make a point. They simply need to be effective.

You can also help your students build on their occasional successes by teaching them to recognize patterns. When they catch a trout in a particular type of place — along an undercut bank, or where a riffle dumps into a pool, or the upstream cushion in front of a boulder — it sets the pattern. That’s when they need to start looking for similar spots to try their luck. Early pattern recognition is vital, as it frequently makes the difference between a good day and a slow day.

Finally, I’ll leave you to ponder a wonderful little quote, attributed by some to Yeats and others to Plutarch, that those of us who teach fly fishing should take to heart:

- “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

Truer words were never spoken. So, the next time someone asks for your help on the water, remind yourself that just sharing information isn’t enough. If you really want to be effective, you need to help kindle their passion.

### ***Wee wets at the Bitter End from the Soft-Hackle Journal***



Nero fiddled while Rome burned. The ship’s band struck up a tune while the Titanic surrendered to the cold Tao Sea.

In NE Washington we’re into a third week of daily temps ranging into the high 30’s. There are a great number of forest fires burning in the region & some of them are very close. Lots of smoke in the air; the sunsets cooked to a bloody medium rare. I worry about our ten acres of pine, thickly assembled like a thirsty army waiting beneath a hubcap-bright sun.

In addition to unrelenting high temperatures, the entire State of Washington is being visited by a plague of wasps. Never seen so many yellowjackets, & they've become aggressive in the heat. It's dangerous to sit outside on the porch – and too hot anyway.

The large mayflies of early summer are long gone – & the smatterings of wee mayflies disappeared with the onset of July's full moon. All that are left to get trout up & visibly feeding are the ever-present, reliable Spotted Sedge, their peak emergence season also past, though they will persist until the end of August, the daily emergence shrunk down to a spotty shooter at twilight.

The trout are edgy & light sensitive, not feeding until the evening sedge emergence gets underway. Even then, there aren't a lot of them showing – one here, a couple there – on the eddy seams trailing from the points. Having seen a fanciful assortment of imitation insects at this point in the season, & a good many of them hook-stung, the trout are hyper-wary, their lateral lines functioning as bare-wired bullshit meters so sensitive they can detect even the most innocuous ghost of a presence, & that sure to put them down.

When the world is on fire it's good to live beside a river. You can fish. You can fish that last hour. If you are careful & do everything right, there is time for one trout – maybe two on a good night. They are close, a long cast isn't required. But the presentation must be perfect, a barely perceptible whisper of a presentation, the wee softie placed well above the working trout.

I'm down to the 6' 3wt glass, matched with the little Pflueger I acquired in 1963, a cooler year. Though just long enough, the 12' leader is about as long as the 6-foot rod will comfortably handle. The 3-pound test tippet is as light as I dare go but is okay in the near dark. Considering the size of the trout heavier would be better, but any heavier brings noticeably fewer takes, even in low light.



A wee soft-hackle fly will turn the trick alright, though it must be the same size & profile as a natural sedge emerger. The Hares Ear variant pictured at above has been the choice fly lately. It is tied on a #14, 1x long hook, so it is about a standard #16. It is dressed with a bit of gold antron mixed with natural hares mask, the thorax dubbed over with straight hares mask. The colour closely matches a Spotted Sedge pupa – and it looks like a lot of other things too, including small mayflies. Hard to improve on the Partridge & Hares Ear, though the addition of gold antron to the dressing does make a killing version.

There is a lot of fire, and feet must be held to it. That one good trout in the evening is a fun & satisfying game, yet it is a game we are within sight of losing, and it may be the least of what we stand to lose – I hope you are aware dear readers. If you think eliminating world-destroying activities and policies will cause you to lose money & result in all of us living a lower standard of life, then you need to rethink that shit. I promise you the contrary.

## *The charming hamlet of Lordville by John Fedorka*

*Russian spies, murder, mayhem, and a fishing story; sort of.*



Traveling the mountain roads of the Delaware River Valley from Milford, Pennsylvania to Hancock, New York, Dad looks at his watch, puts his hand back on the wheel, and then checks his watch again before braking hard and muttering, “We have to do it.” Yanking the wheel and stepping on the gas, we accelerate past a sign that reads “Lordville Rd.”

From the fertile highlands of the upper Delaware River Valley down to the fabled river itself, we descend one of the more rugged roads east of the Mississippi. Our route is mostly vertical, steep, and narrow. There’s a tumbling brook on the right side descending the very green and mature deciduous mountainside. Pure Catskills, I think to myself, and wonder how two cars can safely pass one another on a road this narrow.

Other than our typical back-and-forth banter, Dad doesn’t let on about where we’re headed. He simply says, “You have to see this place.” Arriving at a stop sign, I immediately know what he means. Three stories tall, the first building on the right demands our attention with large three-over-three pane windows, four across each floor. “Lordville” reads the sign under the top left window, and I do a double take, focusing on the window second from the left on the third floor. And there she is: a cold, lifeless mannequin staring over the town and all who travel through.

“What do you think?” Dad asks.

I get the chills and goosebumps pop up on my forearms. “I hear the Twilight Zone theme song playing and I feel like we could get murdered with an axe at any moment.”

“Yes! Exactly!” Dad laughs.

She’s blonde and, depending on the season, wears anything from a Santa suit to a red, white, and blue, star-clattered baton-twirler outfit. Her left hand is almost always extended outward, ever so gently touching the window. One time she tried to sass me with one hand on the hip and the other to her lips.

There are six or so historic-looking structures with the four most prominent being a mansion, two old hotels, and the homestead house. The old town is full of curiosity-peaking clutter; an old

“magic bus” ice cream truck; more mannequins resting against exteriors of more vacant buildings or in trees; rusting antiques littering the town. One building was once surrounded by a beautiful white picket fence on which doll heads rested on every other picket until the fence finally fell over and decomposed.

If you’ve never been here, you’ll undoubtedly feel uneasy. Do the mannequins come alive at night? Has anyone been murdered in Lordville? Or perhaps more appropriately, *how many*? Is there a mass grave nearby or are the bodies dumped in the Delaware, to feed its massive brown trout? Another house has six charcoal and gas barbeques and I wonder if maybe the whole town is in on it, a cult that celebrates cannibalism and mannequin worship, perhaps.

Among Delaware River regulars—from famed fly-fishing guide Joe Demalderis to Friends of the Upper Delaware’s Jeff Skelding and Sherri Resti, to the Hancock public librarian—nobody seems to know the who, what, when, or why behind the infamous mannequin hotel. A favourite urban legend tells of an eccentric violin player and high-ranking Cold War-era Russian spy who defected to the United States in the mid-60s and traded secrets for asylum. Purportedly beautiful and blonde, his wife was poisoned by the very government he betrayed. The spy never recovered and instead celebrates her memory with mannequins throughout the town which he dresses according to season and holiday. Nobody can confirm any of this, but it’s said that on occasion, you can hear him crying her name, Svetlana, and playing the most melancholy music on his violin.



At Equinunk, Pennsylvania, a shared bridge is the last crossing before the east and west branches of the Delaware River converge to form the “Main Stem.” As we cross, Dad points out the fishing access and the good dry-fly water, explaining, “It will only fish well through mid-June on a good water year, otherwise the water warms, and you can exhaust the trout to death.” He also warns me that “there are a lot of rattlesnakes; I’ve seen at least a dozen or so since 1981.”

As with many of those first days fly fishing with Dad on the upper Delaware, I remember it fondly. I recall him opening his Richard Wheatley fly box and revealing a small catalogue of art. Whoever thought that fur and feathers bound to a hook could be so moving? That box, the sport, this town, and its mannequin, filled me with wonderment and magic like an attic or cellar door to a young child. We enjoy a riverside sandwich dinner and then dad coaches me to a smallish rainbow that I thought was 22 inches until I netted it.

Those Delaware trout do fight.

In the days since, I've introduced countless friends to both fly fishing and the hamlet of Lordville. A few years back, my wife and I headed there after work to enjoy some peace; her with book and wine, me with fly rod and flask. Pulling into the hamlet, I'm completely taken aback to see two men sitting on the homestead house porch to the left of the Mannequin Hotel. My wife grabs my arm and tries to stop me from putting the vehicle in park and engaging them.

"Babe, they're listening to the Grateful Dead with beers in their hands sharing a smoke. How dangerous can they be?"

With my head, partially out of the car I yell, "What's happening' fellas?"

"Hey, hey brother what's going on?"

"Man, I've been coming up here fishing with my father since I was 16 years old and I've got to ask, what's the deal with the mannequins?"

They bust up laughing, and now begins the long-awaited truth.

"You see, my mom bought them at an auction back in the early 70s and it's a funky family tradition that we dress them up with each passing holiday."

My heart sinks. "You wouldn't believe some of the urban legends. You're supposed to be a Cold War-era Russian spy turned U.S. asset, man."

My new friends bust up again and I force a chuckle. We make small talk a while longer but I'm eager to get in the river. We continue on our way, but not before they offer me a beer. I gladly accept, thanking them and they invite me back. Moving on, I turn to my wife, "All of these years, no murder or mayhem." She nods.

At the river, there are a good number of bugs hatching: various caddis, Cahills, Sulphur's, Isonychias, and golden stones. Looking upstream into the shallow riffles, I see six different fish working. No subtle sips or barely audible gulps; more like small boulders dropped into the water and three-foot splashes shooting up in the air. Fish are coming clear out of the water and takes are violent.

Sometimes the complex hatches can be insanity inducing but can also be a saving grace when you're without the fly. Though trout can get keyed in on a stage of the hatch or species of insect, when there are ten different bugs hatching you just need a good drift. They'll never turn down a well-presented Isonychia.

As the light dies down, so do the bugs and the fish begin casually taking flies, unlike the gusto of early evening. I see a distinct dimple in the foam line and have a good feeling. It takes me a couple of casts to get the right drift, but I hook him. A very large fish, he runs me across the river and into my backing, throwing in some aerial acrobatics for good measure. There's simply no stopping him, but I laugh in celebration.

As usual, the Delaware River trout make you earn it. I try for redemption a little while longer and my wife mentions she's getting hungry and the heavy fog that has rolled in seemed to turn the switch off, so I clip my fly. Content, I head back to shore, because it was never about the fish.

Walking up the bank and making our way over the bridge, I explain to her how I'm saddened that the mystery surrounding the mannequins is gone and it occurs to me that this may be the first time I'm clearing this bridge without goosebumps. And then she points out a ghostly figure walking on the other end of the bridge. I yell, "Hello." The fog doesn't waft around our visitor; he disappears into it. The hair on my neck stands up and the goosebumps are back. My wife clutches my arm.

Here's to another 20 years of murder, mayhem, and walking scared across the bridge.

## ***The New Sporting Life Turangi***

**[Visit website](#)**



Fishing outfitters to the world famous Tongariro River. Whether you're walking, tramping, mountain biking, rafting, hunting, fishing, boating or just enjoying the great outdoors, Sporting Life is there to make it more enjoyable.

### **We're New Zealand agents for:**

- Simms waders and accessories
- Redington fly rods reels and waders
- Magnum neoprene waders
- Kilwell fly rods
- Lampson fly reels
- Manic Tackle flies
- Rio fly Lines
- Primal fly rods
- OPST
- Category 3 flies
- Sage fly rods and fly reels
- Patagonia waders and wading boots
- Airflo fly rods and fly lines
- Scientific Anglers fly lines
- Manic Tackle flies
- Umpqua fly tying materials
- Scott fly rods
- Echo fly rods
- Loon Outdoors

Phone: 07 386 8996

Address:

Turangi Mall  
Town Centre  
Turangi



**Ngā Manu**  
NATURE RESERVE

**KIWI NIGHT  
ENCOUNTER**

**CALL  
04 2934131  
TO  
BOOK**

Share in the magical night world of kiwi !  
\$5 Discount for Friends of Ngā Manu

**1 ½ hour experience:**

- Adult (Age 16+) - \$35
- Child (Age 7 -15) - \$25
- Row of 5 seats - \$150

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](mailto: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*

**Contacts**

- President:** Wayne Butson  
Email: [Waynebutson@gmail.com](mailto:Waynebutson@gmail.com)
- Secretary:** Greg du Bern  
Email: [kffcsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:kffcsecretary@gmail.com)
- Treasurer** Ashley Francis  
Email: [ashleyfrancis.nz@gmail.com](mailto:ashleyfrancis.nz@gmail.com)
- Vice President** Leigh Johnson  
Email: [leigh@leighjohnsonnz.com](mailto:leigh@leighjohnsonnz.com)

**Past President** Malcolm Francis: ph. 06 364 2101  
Email: [malcolm1@xtra.co.nz](mailto:malcolm1@xtra.co.nz)

**Committee:** Kras Angelov  
Email: [krasimir.angelov@gmail.com](mailto:krasimir.angelov@gmail.com)

Ruth McKenzie  
Email: [ruthmcktravel@gmail.com](mailto:ruthmcktravel@gmail.com)

Peter Blaikie  
Email: [drpblaikie@gmail.com](mailto:drpblaikie@gmail.com)

Gordon Baker  
Email: [kiwiflyfisher@gmail.com](mailto:kiwiflyfisher@gmail.com)

**Club Coach** Gordon Baker  
Email: [kiwiflyfisher@gmail.com](mailto:kiwiflyfisher@gmail.com)

**Newsletter** Malcolm Francis: ph. 06 364 2101  
Email: [malcolm1@xtra.co.nz](mailto:malcolm1@xtra.co.nz)

