



Kapiti Fly Fishing Club

August 2023 Newsletter

At this months club meeting we will be showing the following film:

Artifishal is a film about people, rivers, and the fight for the future of wild fish and the environment that supports them. It explores wild salmon's slide toward extinction, threats posed by fish hatcheries and fish farms, and our continued loss of faith in nature.



In this month's newsletter: This month's photo is the winning photo used for this season Taupo licences, with Dion James holding a Brown Trout caught on Lake Otamangakau.

Newsletter Contents

Page 2	Presidents Report
Page 5	Fly Casting Tuition by Gordon Baker
Page 5	Mid-Week Fishing Trips Hugh Driver
Page 6	Kapiti Women on the Fly by Leigh Johnson
Page 7	Short trip to Turangi by Greg Du Bern
Page 9	Let the river go with the flow by Tom Kay
Page 12	14 Ways to Prevent Fish Mortality by Louis Cahill
Page 15	Freshwater Fishing Licences Enter New Era by Allan Burgess
Page 16	'National Partys Hunting and Fishing Minister idea Welcome'
Page 18	Electric Fishing – Fish & Game scientists research New Zealand rivers by Allan Burgess
Page 21	Spaces by Domenick Swentosky
Page 24	Sporting Life

Club activities

Date	Event	Coordinator
Monday 28 August	Club meeting – Guest speaker TBC	Graham
15 to 17 September	Manawatu River	TBC
Monday 25 September	Club meeting – Guest speaker TBC	
Sunday 1 October	Opening Day on Waikanae River	
13 to 15 October	Rangitikei River area	TBC
Monday 23 October	Club meeting – Guest speaker TBC	
10 to 12 November	Tukituki and Waipawa Rivers	TBC
Monday 27 November	Club meeting – Guest speaker TBC	



Presidents report

Turangi trip and next meeting

Well, it has been a bit colder since the last newsletter, and even more so at Turangi.

I hadn't had a line in the water since returning from our trip to the UK in early May, so the right arm was getting a little 'twitchy'. It needed to do something with a rod. Funny that – but I suspect it's a relatively common affliction amongst the fly-fishing fraternity.

The Turangi Trip

There were 9 of us that were in the club group that went to Turangi on the Friday morning 28 July. It had been a wild night with a very cold and snow-bound southerly blowing through, and snow expected on the Desert Road. After a pleasant drive up the island (I did not enjoy driving for a change), we all met at Brown Sugar in Taihape for a comfort stop and coffee of course. From there, the message was that Desert Road was still closed and we would likely have to go around the back through Ohakune/National Park. The heaviest falls of snow were apparent on the hills just before Waiouru around Hihitahi.

Those that left first found themselves, as expected, diverted at Waiouru, whereas those only a few minutes behind saw the sign change as we entered Waiouru and so were able to go straight on through – with obviously no oncoming traffic for half the journey. There weren't any obvious mounds of snow on the edge of the road from ploughs, so it was the freezing level that had kept it closed until that late in the morning.

We stayed at the Auckland Flyfishing Anglers Club house in Te Hei St. It is fully furnished with everything one could ask for, and very comfortable and warm and sleeps 7 in 3 bedrooms. Wayne and Hugh stayed at Wayne's in Pukawa.

After settling in and a quick bite of lunch, we all went out on the Friday afternoon to the river. It certainly was a bit cool, but not nearly as cold as perhaps we might have expected with the sun even coming out. We had 5 cars, so we were spread out on the river.

I took my team to the Log pool. It still has about half the river going down the true right branch, but unfortunately the river's latest changes have meant it no longer goes through the Braids, which used to treat me very well over recent seasons. That branch now cuts across about 1/3 of the way down to the Log on the track.

I had thought there would have been some fresh fish that might have moved up with the pressure drop before the southerly, but the fish we caught, and saw had been in the river a little while and didn't fight as we might have hoped. Also, they weren't big.

On Friday night we all got together at the house and had a communal curry and dessert, I would recommend that any future trips look to do the same if possible. It helped set the tone of the trip as everyone got together, enjoyed the company, and learnt more about each other. And Noah tied some flies, well he did every time we came back to the house! and he makes a great job of them.



Anyone for curry?

From left – Frank, Peter, Wayne, Hugh, Tony, Noah, Graham. Stuart and Ross missing. A couple of new members out of this lot hopefully.

Saturday again saw us on the river, this time I took my team up to the Blue pool as that is where the others had success on Friday. There were certainly more fish there and some of us had an excellent morning. Then back to the house for lunch, a catch-up, then to other pools.

The river hadn't had a fresh over 30cumecs since May, so the wading was treacherous, with some of us finding it very difficult, so our next pool was the Boulder Reach. It has a nice bottom and certainly held fish.



That night we were joined by Noel Thomas, a member who lives in Motouapa, for drinks and we adjourned to the RSA for a meal. The RSA certainly were appreciative of the extra custom, and some members stayed up late to watch a strange game where women very competitively did something with a round ball – some members fell asleep in front of the screen.

Sunday saw us hit the river again, I wanted to show my team the town pools, so we went to the Hydro. We had it to ourselves for a while, which was nice, but again it was hard work. Then we all met back at the house, packed up and most headed for home.

I stayed on with Wayne and Hugh and we again went to the upper river on both Sunday afternoon and Monday morning, where just before we were to come home, I again proved how

slippery the rocks were by falling in in barely moving water about thigh deep. But, yes, the water was cold going down into my feet and a shower was a lovely thing to get into back at Pukawa as we packed up to come home.

Altogether we landed 59 fish over the 3 days. I failed as a mentor as of my charges Noah landed 2 – even with his great flies and Ross blanked, but so did another four members. So that meant that the other members managed to land 57. I know that I lost more than I landed and that was true for the others, the nymph was certainly the method that was working – small naturals, and for some, glo bugs.

It was interesting that most were jacks – obviously they had run earlier and now I reckon they were waiting for the ladies. Maybe the girls have turned up with the small fresh this week – but unfortunately, I'm not there to check on the validity of that premise. The majority of the trout that were caught were 4lb or less, smaller than last year. But big fish are there as we were shown examples by other successful anglers.

Moving around was essential to find them and if they were there today, there was no guarantee that they would be there tomorrow. But that's fishing and the reason I love it – no guarantees – ever.

Altogether a great trip and I look forward to many more.

The August Meeting

For this month's meeting, we are going to show a film. It's from Canada and focused on salmon. But the lessons are there to see and for us to think about. Commercial interests are not in line with recreational fishing and fresh-water fish-farming is something I believe we have to keep out of this country. And right at the end – don't miss the implications of how a river recovers if left to itself.

Tight Lines



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.



Kapiti Women on the Fly by Leigh Johnson

Central Plateau Women's Social Fly-Fishing Tournament - July 2023



I and fellow club members Ruth McKenzie, Jane Inge, and Jenny Tracey joined 45 enthusiastic participants from across New Zealand on the Tongariro River. Despite the tough conditions, we enjoyed a great time filled with learning, fun, and making new friends.

A big shoutout to Jenny for her impressive victory in catching the largest fish during the tournament.

2023 Women on The Fly Workshop - 10/12th November

Following a very successful event last year, this year's workshop will be held at **TALTAC**. The weekend programme will consist of workshops, fishing and fun.

A steering committee has been formed, consisting of Greg du Bern, Gordon Baker, Leigh Johnson, Rachel McNae (Captain of the Fly Ferns), Marion Hall (TALTAC) and Betty Mani (Wellington Flyfishers Club).

As we are expecting up to 40 participants, we are looking for overflow accommodation.

If you have a house in Turangi we could use over the weekend of 10/12th November, please contact me.

More details on the programme and registration process will be released shortly.

Where to find WoTF?

Please follow our activities on this [Facebook Page](#).

There is also a private [WoTF Facebook group](#) that provides a safe space for women who fly fish, (or would like to fly fish) to share information, arrange fishing activities, and learn from each other about all things fly fishing.

Or contact me directly at leigh@leighjohnsonnz.com or visit www.womenonthefly.nz to register your interest.

A short trip to Turangi by Greg Du Bern

Both Gordon Baker and I headed off on Wednesday 9th August 2023 for a couple of days fishing on the Awa Tongariro and Awa Tauranga-Taupo. We left at a gentlemanly time of about 8:45 am, with Gordon doing the heavy lifting of driving, and we headed north to be at TALTAC by about midday to get into our room.

Our trip up was uneventful, I am pleased to say, and when we arrived, we got unpacked and rigged up for a few hours fishing on the Tongariro. Gordon rigged up his wet line rod and I my nymphing rod and we headed out to the Swirl Pool about which Gordon regaled us with stories of his novice fly-fishing family members hauling in multiple fish.

We arrived on the true left bank, which is on the main Turangi town side of the river, and started to fish from a high bank which was being eroded with each flood. Gordon and I headed down to the bottom of the pool where Gordon started to wet line down the tail of the pool while I wandered down to a fast run that looked like it should hold a fish or two.

Gordon managed to foul hook his first fish which took a while to land as it was retrieved tail first but was released once landed. After that he was successful in catching a decent fish on a silver bodied rabbit fly which took him on a tour of the pool before breaking off at the net. On examining his leader, he found that the knot was still in place at the end of his leader but that the break was at the eye of the hook, which is most unusual. Something must have damaged the tippet, maybe some sharp head varnish? Who knows? Not Gordon's day!

I was unsuccessful in my chosen run, but I did hook a log, losing all my terminal tackle with a break off. I headed upstream to find Gordon and his tale of woe. I tried nymphing from the high bank, but the casting was difficult due to high vegetation behind and an uncooperative wind downstream. No fish as a result.

Dejectedly, we strode back to the car to have an early dinner of take away Chinese from Turangi's legendary KY eatery, and to discuss plans for the next location over a cold beverage at TALTAC.

We decided to try our luck at the Tauranga-Taupo estuary. The weather was rainy with an onshore breeze that made it cold. I forgot to take my raincoat, but Gordon lent me his hoodie that helped to keep the wind out. I tried a floating line setup and Gordon fished the "heave and leave" Lumo Orange Glo-Bug without results. I had a couple of takes but neither of us were successful in landing a fish. I went to bed very early that night and slept really well, with the hope that a new day brings.

Gordon is a naturally early riser, so in the morning it was a nice cup of tea with a slice of honey toast and off to the Bridge (Troll Hole) Pool and fished both sides below the bridge as the water above the bridge already had five anglers. One fish was landed just below the bridge on the left bank - but not by us. We could see fish being caught above the bridge on the true right, so we went and had a look. Three anglers were there, all were Euro nymphing and all were hooking and landing fresh run fish, mainly three to four pounds. We spent some time chatting to them and examining their setups. An old Māori guy was using four split shots with two glow bugs off a triple swivel above and fishing Euro style with great success, catching fish while we were there.

It was an education in how to do it! So, after the Bridge Pool we returned to TALTAC for a protein packed breakfast of eggs, bacon, sausages, and toast. Thus, fortified and undeterred we headed to the next spot which was the Big Bend Pool.

There was an angler already fishing the sweet spot of the pool when we arrived, and Gordon asked this angler which way he is heading, upstream or down? To which he replied he was fishing where he was. It was, apparently, not a pool that you move about in because of the rocks. We did notice that this fellow already had two fish on the bank, one fish still gasping for oxygen which didn't go down well with us either. After a few attempts by Gordon to challenge his assumption, we decided to cut our losses and fish elsewhere in the pool, further downstream.

After a while of unsuccessful angling, the pool hog decided that he had had enough and moved away, so we moved up to fish towards the head of the pool.

The bottom of the pool nearer the head was less rocky that we had expected and had a nice single bank that gave access to a lovely deep run down the true right. After a while I managed to hook a hen on a chewable egg fly which gave an excellent fight but eventually came to the net. It was a deep fish and fresh, so I kept this fish to take home.

Gordon wet lined the top of the pool and got several takes. He hooked one fish, front and back, which eventually came in backwards - and was released.

We headed back to TALTAC for a late lunch of leftover Chinese, a short nap as we are getting on in age, before we headed out to fish the Tauranga-Taupo River mouth at night.

There was a cool southerly wind with occasional showers. I remembered my raincoat this time and it made a huge difference to keeping the wind and cold out. I used a floating line with an 8lb leader to a weighted Red Setter followed by a small lumo fly, while Gordon decided to fish a sinking line with an olive woolly-bugger and smelt flies. We walked out to the tip of the sand spit that runs down the true left of the river towards the lake. Where the water starts to run over the spit, I walked another 10 meters and started fishing while Gordon headed further along the spit. Gordon fished a floating line/medium sink 10ft leader set-up with Woolly Buggers.

After about four or five casts, I got a take but missed it. I thought, this is alright, it might be a good night. Then nothing happened for a long time. It was raining most of the evening, but the wind wasn't too bad. Then I got a fish on! It pulled line off as it sped away and gave some exciting runs in the dark, but eventually it came to the net and with my headlight on, I could see it was about 3lbs and silver. This one headed home as well. I did catch another fish after that, but it gained its freedom at the net when my Red Setter got caught in the net and the fish made a dash for it. Both fish took the lumo fly. I had about another four takes but missed them all. Then the rain turned to sleety/hail and the wind picked up and was extremely cold - icy. Time to go home.

I walked back to find Gordon in the car. He had walked back to try his luck off the boat ramp where there is a hole that holds fish over towards the true right bank. But there were other anglers there already, but he saw one angler catch a fish while he was there.

The next day was cold and windy. Back to the TT estuary again Friday morning but nothing doing and neither of us had any takes. We had a very nice (free) coffee at Liquorice Café

Motuoapa and afterwards had a quick look at the Waiotaka at the ford to see if there was any extra flow. There wasn't.

We then took the river access at 50 Te Herekieke Street to check out the Lower Bridge Pool and access to Swirl Pool. A cold southerly was running down the Tongariro which wasn't conducive to nymphing and so I took it easy that morning. Gordon was keen to suss out some locations in preparation for a Fire Service Competition in a few weeks' time. He had a few flicks on the true right bank of the Swirl Pool but found the wading difficult due to large slippery boulders and so we explored further downstream where we met other anglers carrying some nice fish and chatted to them.

After that we headed back to TALTAC to pack up and head home. I filleted, smoked and vacuum packed my fish when I got home and shared some of the fish with Gordon and whanau, which was appreciated by all. A most enjoyable outing with great company.

Greg du Bern & Gordon Baker

Let the river go with the flow by Tom Kay



Redcliffe Bridge, Hawke's Bay, post Cyclone Gabrielle

Rivers have been given room to flood safely in the Netherlands for two decades and an expert in New Zealand thinks we should be doing the same.

Forest and Bird freshwater advocate Tom Kay is touring the country, giving [Making Room for Rivers](#) presentations to communities and local government groups on how accommodating a river prone to flood (rather than hem it in with engineering) can help manage flood risk for communities, and preserve ecosystems.

We've taken space away from our rivers and they will take it back when they need it, he says. "Rivers aren't fixed things, they're trying to move and adjust all the time to everything that's happening upstream, or the sediment that's coming down, the gravels... the rainfall.

"And they're trying to adjust to that and to think that we are controlling the river is a bit of a myth."

Building stop banks higher and higher is foolish, and recent evidence shows this, he says.

“You only have to look back not very long through history and see every couple of decades, there's usually a big flood, in different towns, and we kind of forget that those floods have happened.”

“We say, build the stock banks higher put the river back where it was. And we do that and then we then we get hurt again. And we usually get hit harder.”

Taradale in Hawke's Bay was devastated recently by Cyclone Gabrielle, despite years of building stop banks higher and higher, he says. “That stop bank was still overtopped by the flood. And when we have higher stop banks, those waters behind the stop bank are flowing faster, they're deeper because the stop bank is higher.

“So, then when the water comes over that stop bank, or bursts through it or anything like that, it comes out of that channel with huge amounts of energy.” That energy was released to the flood plains of Hawke's Bay with catastrophic consequences, he says. The Dutch have a different approach.

“We talk about flood protection systems in terms of maybe a 1-in 20-year stock bank, or a one-in-100-year stock bank, that idea of a 1 percent chance every year that the stock bank will be over topped. “In the Netherlands, they talk about one-in-1000 years. They realised we can't just keep building these walls higher and higher.”

The Dutch retreated and gave rivers room to adapt, he says.

“Some studies that were done afterwards showed if you could lower the level of a flood in a river by 50 centimetres, you could reduce the potential, or the probability, of failure of the stop banks by 10 times. “So just that little bit of extra width to lower those floodwaters means that the likelihood of them bursting is just so much lower.”

It is pointless to keep throwing money trying to control something we simply can't control, he says.

“Stop banks, it's a bit like when you build a road and more cars come, you build stop banks, more people move in behind it, we develop in behind those stop banks, because we have this perception that they provide this level of protection that will just provide for every flood. And that's just totally untrue.”

Greater Wellington Regional Council appears to have got the message, he says, and it is giving the Hutt River back the space it needs. “The Hutt River has been squeezed through time it's been narrowed; it's had space and taken away from it and it's got stop banks lining it and a lot of people will be familiar with that.

“Greater Wellington Regional Council identified this pinch point in the river down at Melling, basically, the narrowest point and if the river overtopped the stop banks there it would do over a billion dollars' worth of damage.”

There are about 600 houses and five schools in the area, so “crazy amounts of damage would be done”, he says. The council bought properties along the river and intend to return it to nature, Kay says.

“This project should be starting this year; they've put in the consents to widen the river by 90 metres. They're going to build the stop bank higher on the on the Lower Hutt side as well. “So, it's sort of a combination of things, but they're also going to try and turn Lower Hutt back to face the river so that people remember that they live on a floodplain you know, and they connect with that river again.”

There is great potential to do this at much less cost with the great braided rivers of the East Coast, he says.

“We haven't developed really intensely, like we have, for instance, in Lower Hutt and Petone. And there's a lot of potential give some space back to the river there. And there's a lot of hope there. And there's huge potential then for fish and macro invertebrates and birds to have those areas back that they need to live, we've got 76 percent of our fish species are threatened.

“We've got so many threatened bird species, and groundwater levels are dropping, in these places they're going to get drier, you know, we could do great things to restore these ecosystems and kind of benefit everyone from an ecological perspective, but also from a flood resilience perspective.”

The cost of not doing this will greatly exceed the cost of planned retreat, he says. “The cost of insurance payouts from the Ashburton floods was something like \$40 to \$60 million.

“And then we had Nelson, and then we had Auckland, and then we had Cyclone Gabriel and the cost of that - \$9 to 14.5 billion Treasury has estimated - and I don't know if that includes the social cost, the disruption to people's lives, the anxiety.”

The time to act is now, he says, while flooding is front of mind around the country.

“There's never a cheaper time to retreat than straight after a disaster, because otherwise you're just throwing money into something again, that's eventually going to be taken away.”

“So, now's the time to transform our thinking and make some room for rivers.”

14 Ways to Prevent Fish Mortality by Louis Cahill



I'll Be Back to Catch You Again

The years we spend learning to cast and drift a fly or the thousands of dollars we spend on gear and travel are all wasted if we don't have fish.

With more anglers entering the sport every day, sport fish are heavily pressured and in grave danger. There are a lot of common mistakes that anglers make which contribute to fish mortality. Most are innocent and many don't show an immediate risk. With that in mind here are fourteen tips to help keep our little friends happy and healthy.

The 10 Second Rule

A fish's gills are remarkably efficient at collecting oxygen but the delicate membranes that extract the oxygen molecules rely on their buoyancy to keep the collecting surfaces exposed. Out of the water they collapse and are useless. This is to say the obvious, fish can't breathe out of water. It's easy to overestimate how long a fish can hold its breath.

The fact is a fish can't hold its breath at all because it doesn't have lungs. He is out of air as soon as you lift him from the water. Add to this that his metabolism is raging because he's been fighting for his life, and you have a pretty desperate situation. While you are trying to get that hero shot, he's dying. Use the 10 second rule and never keep his head out of the water for more than 10 seconds and give him a good 30 seconds before you lift him again.

Hold on Loosely

I can't tell you how many times I've seen guys squeeze a fish until its eyes pop out. Some guys just get so rattled holding a fish you'd think they never saw one. This death grip can cause serious internal injury especially to the heart. The trick is a nice loose grip. The tighter you hold a fish the more he will struggle. To control one, properly grip him just in front of his tail where there's nothing but muscle and let him just rest on a loose hand under the bonie part of his pec fins and gill plates. He will relax and the whole vibe will be nicer.

Barbless Hooks

Once in a while a fish will unbutton due to a barbless hook. That's just a fact of life but most anglers understand that they will hold hundreds, if not thousands, of fish in their life. Decreasing that

number by a few is not a crisis. The fact is that barbless hooks go a long way to reducing fish mortality from hook injuries. If you are fighting fish properly you will not lose many and if you aren't, fishing barbless hooks will teach you to fight fish smarter and you'll be a better angler for it.

Fight with Authority

The biggest mistake I see anglers make is not fighting fish with authority. Most of us are taught to play fish too long, exhausting them before they are landed. A fish that is fought with authority is landed fresher and released fresher. Keep a good angle on the fish and use good side pressure and you can put a lot more pressure on that fish than you think, and you will reduce the chances of an LDR (Long Distance Relationship).

Use a Landing Net

I should say that the most fish friendly landing method is to not touch the fish at all. When possible, instead of landing the fish I will bring him in and grab the fly rather than the fish, easing it out of his mouth and sending him on his way immediately. That's a great method but it doesn't always work. Sometimes the fly isn't where you can get at it, or the fish is too green, or too big, or you just want a photo. The next best thing is a net. A good quality catch and release net, (I like the rubber ones) is very friendly to the fish and a good long handle lets you seal the deal quicker. A healthy basket is nice too. No need to fold him double.

Protect their Head

Believe it or not, head injuries are the leading cause of fish mortality, even if you don't count the ones that get bonked. Fish's heads are not designed for hard surfaces. A seemingly benign blow to the head can end in a fish going belly up after 20 minutes or so. There is hard data on this. That's why it's a bad idea to beach a fish when landing it. If the bank is rocky a flopping fish is in mortal danger.

Never Beach a Fish

Dry land is no place for a fish, and they face several dangers. It is impossible to beach a fish without disturbing his protective slime. That slime keeps out a host of dangerous bacteria and parasites. The slime will regenerate but in the meantime the fish is vulnerable. Being on the bank also dramatically increases the risk of head injury, eye injury and oxygen deprivation. If you are by yourself and want to get a photo, find a sandy spot in the margin of the water where the fish can lie with one side submerged. Cover his face with a wet hand to settle him down. Lift your hand and shoot quick.

Always WET your Hands

Dry hands remove slime too. Many times, I've caught fish with fungus in the shape of a careless angler's hand. It's a simple thing to do. I dip my hands as a reflex action, almost as soon as I hook up.

Don't Dig Around in There

Once in a while a fish takes a fly deep. The best way to avoid this is not to dally on your hookset. Still, it's unavoidable and when it happens don't try to be Dr McCoy. Start digging around in there

and you'll end up saying, "he's dead Jim." cut the line and turn him loose, he'll spit it out. Flies are cheap.

Have a Coke on Hand

There's nothing like it! If a fish is bleeding pour a Coke down his throat and the bleeding stops instantly. If you missed my post on this you can read it ([here](#)).

Revive Before Release

You should always revive a fish before releasing it, especially after a long fight. Hold him in medium fast current where there is plenty of oxygen. Most fish are able to pump water across their gills without the aid of current but slack water has less oxygen than current. Just hold him gently under the pec fins and he'll go when he's ready. If he swims a few yards rolls on his side, go get him. He needs more time.

Look for Predators

An exhausted fish is easy prey. Before you turn the little guy loose have a quick look around. No need in feeding the otters, herons, or sharks, they do fine on their own. Chase those munchers off. That's a little tougher with the sharks but you can tow a fish to safer water, just watch your hands.

Don't Freeze them

I love winter fishing and in general it's better on the fish since the water holds more oxygen when it's cold but there is an added danger. Fish have no body heat and when it's below freezing the delicate membranes in their gills can freeze surprisingly quick. The colder it is the shorter the time you can safely keep them out of the water. Once it's below zero don't lift them at all and never, ever, put them on the snow.

Don't Beat them Up in the Heat

As water warms up it holds less oxygen. Trout can get highly stressed as water temperatures approach twenty degrees. The stress of a fight can raise their metabolism to the point that they just can't get enough oxygen. The effects can be lethal. When water temps are high head for high elevation streams or tailwaters. You'll be cooler and the fish will stay healthy.

Keep these tips in mind and your catch and release technique will be golden. Teach your friends and your kids these valuable practices and we will all reap the reward of a healthy and prolific fishery.

Freshwater Fishing Licences Enter New Era by Allan Burgess



Anglers on the Hope River Designated Waters Fishery

Freshwater Fishing Licences Enter New Era From 1 October 2023

The freshwater fishing season begins on October 1, and new licences are now on sale. Fish & Game NZ Chief Executive Corina Jordan says around 100,000 anglers are expected to go freshwater fishing throughout the country.

“Freshwater anglers are a passionate bunch, and the start of the new season is firmly on their calendars. “We expect a flurry of activity now the new season licences are on sale. We know people are keen to get out with family and friends, enjoy the outdoors, re-connect with nature and fish for food.”

While most angling takes place in the country’s easily accessible lowland rivers and lakes, this season will mark the introduction of a new management tool to better protect New Zealand’s more fragile fisheries, which are often located in the backcountry.

“The new Designated Waters Licence will see Kiwi anglers get a fairer share on some of the waterways that Fish & Game’s research has shown are subject to too much pressure – around two per cent of the country’s rivers.

“The new licence category will help us manage angling pressure by spreading angling effort around so that it isn’t concentrated in certain areas, which detracts from the angling experience and also has the potential to negatively impact the fisheries.”

Over the past ten years, Fish & Game has received increasing complaints from resident and non-resident anglers regarding overcrowding in a small number of fisheries that will now be managed through the Designated Waters Licence.

“Our research and monitoring show that a small percentage of non-resident anglers will intensely fish a local area, not only putting pressure on the fishery but also displacing other anglers. We’ve implemented this new fisheries management tool to help address that imbalance.”

In some fisheries, angler use has gone from a roughly 50:50 resident-to-non-resident split (in the early 2000s) to an 80:20 split favouring non-resident anglers. In most cases, pressure-sensitive fisheries now managed through the Designated Waters Licence, share common features. The

rivers have very clear water, offer excellent sight fishing, hold large average-size trout, have high scenic value, and are often located in a wilderness or backcountry setting.



Anglers on the Hope River Designated Waters Fishery

Jordan says that “with a majority of our non-resident anglers fishing our backcountry fisheries for four or fewer days, most anglers won’t be impacted by the change.”

“It’s important to note that only a small proportion of anglers contributing to unsustainable angling pressure will be affected by this change. We really appreciate and value overseas anglers, the contribution they make to the economy, as well as our organisation through purchasing licences, which helps us protect waterways.”

“Anglers can find out more about the Designated Waters Licence, as well as information and updates on the upcoming season on our website – www.fishandgame.org.nz.”

Editor’s note: A full season New Zealand residents licence will cost \$153.00 while the Non-resident licences will cost \$264.00 and there are specific conditions attached to the Non-residents licence.

‘National Party’s Hunting and Fishing Minister idea welcomed’

The National Party’s Plan for Hunting and Fishing, which was announced at the New Zealand Deerstalker’s Association Conference last weekend, is a major step forward for the rights of hunters and the management of game animals in New Zealand, says NZDA Chief Executive Gwyn Thurlow.

"Hunting and fishing are not merely pastimes," Gwyn says. "They represent integral components of our nation’s cultural heritage."

National’s proposal to establish a dedicated Minister for Hunting and Fishing demonstrates the party’s understanding of the profound impact that these activities have on our society. This dedicated role will serve as a strong representative for hunters and fishers and ensure the sector’s voice will be heard at the Cabinet table, he said.

Game Animals Recognised NZDA is pleased to see National’s commitment to formally classifying deer thar, chamois and wild pigs as game animals.

"The New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020 has determined these are valued introduced species alongside others such as trout and salmon. Unfortunately, there is a high degree of inconsistency across legislation and planning documents, which not only disregards the value of these animals to New Zealanders, but hinders their management, says Gwyn Thurlow. National's approach rightly recognises that hunters are the key to the future management of these animals and sets the stage for a more harmonious coexistence between conservation, commercial, mahinga kai and recreational activities."

The Sporting Hunters Outdoor Trust supported the NZ Deerstalkers Association's optimism over the National Party policy. Trust spokesman Laurie Collins of the West Coast described the idea as a "first ever" and therefore unique.

"If National become government, it will be a voice for the fishing and hunting public - a million plus Kiwis - at the cabinet table," he said.

Scare-mongering Laurie Collins said some individuals on television news had attempted scare mongering by claiming wild animals such as deer and goats were exploding out of control. One individual from the Gisborne area is employed by Landcare Trust, funded by two government departments - Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture.

"As such his views are not credible and simply a mouthpiece for the current government's anti-deer agenda fuelled by the coalition partner the Greens," he said. Laurie Collins said proper game management as practised overseas, ensures by selective harvesting, that animal numbers are kept within the carrying capacity of the habitat.

National has also proposed that game animals are not classified as pests.

Deer are a Resource Ever since 1930 and the infamous Deer menace Conference which classified deer from being a game animal to a pest, deer have been subjected to extermination campaigns from deer killing cullers to helicopter onslaughts and even poisons, he said.

"At last, under National's concept, wild deer might be seen as a resource, a valued asset and managed by game management instead of futile haphazard extermination tactics.

However, Laurie Collins cautioned that the Department of Conservation needed to undergo a significant culture change as it had been the main culprit in pushing extermination policies, anti-introduced fish and game attitudes and using eco-poisons on wild animals - usually on public lands - and even indoctrinating young school children that wild animals were pests.

"The pest syndrome has to go and be replaced by management and obviously National realises that" he said.

Laurie Collins said DOC's anti-deer policy was contrary to public opinion. In 2001 a Landcare Research study of public perceptions of "introduced" wildlife revealed 81 percent of the public favoured deer being managed as a resource and not "controlled" as a pest he said.

Electric Fishing – Fish & Game scientists research New Zealand’s rivers with technology by Allan Burgess



Electric Fishing technology used by Fish & Game

The effects of barriers to fish passage on native species and trout in Taranaki, and a recovering kōaro and eel population in Nelson/Marlborough are among the insights gained in an electric fishing research programme carried out by Fish & Game.

Fish & Game teams in regions including Otago, Central South Island, West Coast, North Canterbury, Nelson Marlborough, Wellington, and Taranaki have been sweeping rivers and streams with a pole that emits a low-voltage, high-current charge.

Fish drawn towards the charge are stunned temporarily and scooped up in a net. They are identified, weighed, and measured before being returned to the water. The electric fishing programme helps Fish & Game monitor populations of trout and salmon but also records native freshwater fish such as various species of galaxiids, koaro, kokopu, bullies, eels, torrent fish, lamprey, and koura.

They also note waterway conditions, macroinvertebrates, and barriers to fish movement. Data is entered into NIWA’s New Zealand Freshwater Fish Database for use by other freshwater scientists and to inform both regional and national policy.

In Taranaki, electric fishing surveys are monitoring the effects of barriers to fish passage for native species and trout and have highlighted a decline in water and habitat quality that occurs down the length of ring plain catchments.

Meanwhile, Fish & Game staff in Nelson and Marlborough, with assistance from DOC staff, are tracking a recovering koaro and eel population after native fisheries were annihilated by Cyclone Gita in 2018. Staff in the region have also found that increased climate-change-generated floods pose just as much, if not more, risk to native fish populations as they do to trout.

“Electric fishing is helping to protect New Zealand’s freshwater fish and rivers,” says Corina Jordan, chief executive of Fish & Game.

“It may sound unusual but it’s an effective way to keep watch on the state of our fish species, including indigenous populations, and the places they live. “These surveys support other research that shows native fish populations, as with juvenile trout, are at risk from the increased frequency and size of flooding.”

“Monitoring identifies waterways with declining water and habitat quality, and the effects of barriers to fish passage. “This important programme also sees Fish & Game staff connecting with local communities, landowners and partners.”

In Hawke’s Bay, Fish & Game staff plan to partner with other local agencies and iwi to resume electric fishing in small streams before Cyclone Gabrielle brought the monitoring programme to a halt.

Before Gabrielle swept in, Fish & Game in Nelson and Marlborough region was already tracking the recovery of native fish populations affected by Cyclone Gita in 2018.

Under the Resource Management Act, the management of physical resources must have regard to the protection of the habitat of trout and salmon. Fish & Game mostly uses electric fishing to confirm the presence of juvenile trout, a marker of successful spawning.

“Because juvenile trout stay within the stream their parents spawned in, any observation proves that trout spawning occurred somewhere within the reach or further upriver,” Jordan says. “The presence of trout means Fish & Game can advocate for that habitat, which benefits all aquatic life – native and valued introduced species.”

Electric fishing is also used to educate school and catchment groups about stream habitat and health. Fish & Game also shares data with agencies such as the Department of Conservation for resource consents and partners with universities on electric fishing monitoring projects.

“As river guardians, Fish & Game has been gathering and sharing data for over 30 years and will continue monitoring in future for the benefit of all freshwater fish species,” Jordan says.



Central South Island Fish & Game officer Hamish Stevens salvages fish from an irrigation scheme after it was dewatered for the winter, the fish were returned to the river afterwards.

Snapshot: Electric Fishing around the Regions

Hawkes Bay: Staff conducted electric fishing in small streams before Cyclone Gabrielle brought monitoring to a halt. There are plans to combine resources with other local agencies and iwi to resume electric fishing surveys in that region.

Taranaki: Electric fishing surveys have highlighted the effects of barriers to fish passage for native species and trout and show the decline in water and habitat quality that occurs down the length of ring plain catchments. Fish populations in Timaru Stream are being studied before and after the removal of a weir. Following the major flooding of Waiaua Stream, surveys found native redfin bullies and juvenile trout in tributaries, and juvenile eels recolonising the badly affected mainstem.

Wellington: Systematic electric fishing surveys during summer capture the presence of juvenile trout in reaches not subject to drift dive surveys, shedding further light on trout spawning and habitat. Juvenile trout have been found in 76 rivers and streams across all major catchments. Since Cyclone Gabrielle, Fish & Game staff are looking at the survivorship of juvenile trout to get a better idea of what recruitment might look like next year. Used as one measure of overall stream health in the region. Staff are astounded at the diversity of indigenous fish found within trout spawning waters, proving the work done to protect trout habitat is of real value to native species too.

Nelson-Marlborough: Fish & Game electric fishes three river systems each summer to assess the health of native fish populations after past adult trout releases aimed at rebuilding flood-damaged salmonid fisheries. Staff have found that increased climate-change-generated floods pose just as much, if not more, risk to native fish populations. Staff are tracking a recovering koaro and eel population after native fisheries were annihilated by Cyclone Gita in 2018.

Monitoring of other native fish includes dwarf and northern galaxiid and threatened migratory short-jawed kokopu.

West Coast: Staff electric fish Mawheraiti River tributaries annually, and recently began surveying New River. Data is occasionally shared with the Department of Conservation for resource consents.

North Canterbury: This summer Fish & Game surveyed habitat for endangered Canterbury mudfish, and staff have been on standby to salvage fish when rivers dry up due to drought, over-extraction, and irrigation system maintenance.

Central South Island: Electric fishing monitors salmon smolt, trout and native fish in New Zealand's most complex and largest fish screen system in the Rangitata Diversion Race. Staff survey catchments extensively finding native fish "almost everywhere" along with sports fish, suggesting the co-existence of valued introduced species and native fish is a sustainable ecological reality.

Otago: Staff electric fish survey 20-30 rivers and streams annually. This summer they included the Shag/Waihemo River, the lower Clutha River/Mata-Au tributaries, the Catlins and Owaka Rivers, Waters of Leith, Lindsays Creek, Silverstream, Kaikorai Stream and Thompson Creek. Electric fishing is also used to educate school and catchment groups about stream habitats.

Southland: Electric fishing is used to monitor fish populations and spawning success. It also contributes to the New Zealand Freshwater Fish Database which can provide insight into native fish populations and their distributions.

Editor's note: *In the past I spent time out with Matt and one of the Field Staff on the upper Waikanae River observing them while they carried out a brief survey on the life within the river including establishing fish numbers, if member are interested, I would be happy to see if we can organise Matt to come down to one of our meetings and demonstrate the process they use.*

Spaces by Domenick Swentosky



I push the clutch, cut the engine, and slowly coast the last fifty meters through the dim yellow of my parking lights, easing the truck through road dust that has circled up from behind me — now traveling faster than its cause and carried by a November breeze that will stay with me all night. The dirty brakes squeak as I steer the truck into a grassy patch where I've parked often enough to have created the slight depression of tire tracks. Someone mows this grass, so even at the very last of a dead-end dirt road, close to midnight, I feel like an intruder.

There's a single porch light reflecting off the water from a small house. It's far off but directly in line with the road, and I always feel compelled to cut the headlights as I round the bend and attempt to drift into this resting place — unannounced, as much for my own madness as for a courtesy to the owner of the lightbulb across the river. There's a secure, lit perimeter in the darkness over there — a break in the night and from whatever fears may come with it — and the happy tenant doesn't need two distant headlights mixing with the space of his porch light and raising questions on an otherwise peaceful and ordinary evening. We all take comfort in the limits of our spaces.

I quietly push the driver's door until it latches, closing it the way my grandfather taught me. Decades ago, while scouting for turkeys in the pre-dawn twilight, he whispered instructions to a young boy eager to understand the wisdom of his father's father. Pap's obsession was with a bird; mine is with a fish. Is there really any difference? We understood each other deeply, and every time I close the door like this, I think of him.

This night is black and much darker than most, with a moonless, cloudy sky hiding far away stars and galaxies from lighting my part of the earth. But in just a few minutes, my eyes begin to adjust, and the known space around me widens to about as far as I can reach into the damp air. I have my own small perimeter. I tighten the laces of my wading boots, then clutch the fly rod as my field of vision grows even wider from the miracle of another type of rod—and cones and retinas of some sort. I trust my eyes to see what they should out here, keeping the red lamp relegated mostly to knot-tying duties, and I accept the darkness beyond.

You can't use a light while night-fishing for trout. Something about the wariness of the species and all that, but it has just as much to do with them being on edge in *their* own space. They are jumpy. Darkness changes everything, and I think every animal feels it. The biggest brown trout (that's why I'm out here) often take up feeding stations in shallow bank-water or thin riffles hardly deep enough to cover their broad backs. Although they're swimming at the top of a fish-food-chain, they still have the good sense to spook when anything gets close, and maybe that's why they grow so big in the first place. Sometimes "close" is *very* close. I've had giant trout wait until I'm just a few feet away before bursting from their position, leaving a massive splash betraying their size and sending waves of adrenaline through my veins. And I want more. Aside from catching and releasing one of these trophies, spooking them is the next best thing, and I'm hoping for either event tonight.

I silently walk a few hundred slow meters through the shadows and the trees, bringing with me the moving circumference of space that is mine — or just to the edge of what I can see on this dark night. I navigate the familiar, lean path (first formed by a cautious deer and clumsily widened by a fisherman's footsteps), then veer to the right and start the descent. My unavoidable scramble down the steep, brushy hillside sounds like a siren, and I feel the alert of my unnatural presence going out to every nearby creature — living out their own space in the dark. Pausing at the water's edge, I collect my thoughts and whatever circumstances I can glean about my new space. And then I walk into the water.

Night fishing takes a special kind of crazy if you're going to last very long. You need the stealth of a predator and a knack for warding off the ominous feeling of being the prey. The eerie unease which creeps in as daylight fades can only be pushed back with the confidence of experience (or ignorance), and with a comfortable acceptance of the smaller perimeter.

The truth is, there is little to fear in the woods or the water at night. Do you want to know what's out here in the dark after midnight? Nothing. Seriously, it's startling how much nothing is going on. Maybe that's what part of our instinctual fear of the dark is — fear of nothing existing in those smaller known spaces and trying not to be too claustrophobic about it.

I walk upstream, tossing large black craft projects of feathers and fur, far out into the dark, well past the border of what I can see. The known space is wider now that I'm in open water; with no trees, branches or leaves darkening the shadows, and with the water reflecting the available light, I can see further than I could in the woods, and the water feels . . . safer.

My eyes eventually adjust, and my perimeter is as wide as it will ever be on this darkest of nights. But I also have other senses by which to navigate: the sounds of the water disclose more about my location than the muted forest, and after about a couple hours of slowly stepping, then casting — and stepping, then casting — I can hear that I'm directly across from my favourite run

— the reason I'm here. The heavy current washes away any silence left in the night as I move through and push against the forceful, cold water. I'm waist deep, bracing each footstep before taking the next and trying to get to the soft seam on the other side.

It's the perfect spot for a predator trout: a school-bus size bucket of swirling water trapped between the heavy chute and a rocky, woody bank; it's deep enough for daylight hiding, and shallow enough for nighttime feeding. I'm just above it now. Crouching to angle my cast under tree limbs that I can't see, I pause to take a drink from my water bottle, and I have a moment of awareness: I'm alone as I could ever be, well past midnight, in the dark, at a prime spot on a favourite river, with a chance for a legendary wild brown trout right in front of me.

So, I cast ...

Nothing.

Like so much of the dark space around me, nothing at all happens in this perfect water. After an hour of casting from every possible angle, and retrieving, drifting, swinging, and stripping, I allow myself to understand that this is another night where the line will not tighten with the surge of a fish at the end. It's been about a four-hour adventure, and for the first time I think about tomorrow, so I walk out.

I'm a half-kilometre upstream from where I scrambled down the riverbank, and it's only a few hundred more metres upstream through riffles and shallow bank-water to the truck. I'm casting into the water ahead of me now but moving quickly. My vigour for tonight's event is gone, and I'm really only half-heartedly filling in the moments between steps with hopeful casts that I doubt will produce. As a night fisherman, I've built a high tolerance for failure, redefining success by finding some novel value in stumbling through the dark, because on many most nights I'm dumbfounded by how fish-less this water seems to be. But I come back for the mystery, for the private solitude, and because I know what swims in this river. And because, once in a while, it happens.

About twenty minutes more of stepping and casting, then I smell the familiar muddy bank, and the space that I've been imagining grows clearer in my mind. It's a flat, wide bank where waves wash up like ocean tides often enough to keep it open. The scent of wet earth, crayfish parts and nymph shucks combine with the rest of my senses to fill the visual blank about where I am in this dark space. In the summer, the whole night would have been alive with the smell of wild lilac and dewy spruce, but on this cold, early-winter night, I mostly smell a dull, unremarkable dampness. It'll be that way until the temperature drops below freezing; then the air will dry up and take on the familiar, crisp, woody scent that will hang in my vest and in my memory for days.

I step into the sandy mud leaving only imagined footprints behind me in the dark. Then, through the tall grass, I see the shiny, mirrored reflections of my truck.

As I drive through the sound of rubber on dirt and small gravel, I notice from across the river that the porchlight is off. When my tires are pointed away, I flip on the headlights ...

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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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