



# Kapiti Fly Fishing Club

## May 2023 Newsletter

---

*You are invited to our next Club night on Monday 22 May  
when we will be holding the 2023 Clubs AGM*

---



**This month's cover photo: This is a photo was taken from the Major Jones swing bridge looking upstream as the sun rose one winters morning.**

**In this month's newsletter:**

- Page 2** Fly Casting Tuition by Gordon Baker
- Page 2** Mid-Week Fishing trips by Hugh
- Page 2** Double Haul Casting Clinic by Gordon Baker
- Page 3** Kapiti Women on the Fly by Leigh Johnson
- Page 5** Trout fishery 'under threat' by Laura Mills
- Page 6** More evidence that releasing hatchery-reared native fish is harmful by Chris Hunt
- Page 9** Some Days are Diamonds – Some Days are Rocks by Domenick Swentosky
- Page 12** How to get close to Trout by Tom Rosenbauer
- Page 19** How to Single Spey Cast by Loop Tackle
- Page 20** Sporting Life

**Club activities**

Date	Event	Coordinator
Monday 22 May	Club meeting – AGM	Wayne Butson
16 to 18 June	Tongariro and Tauranga -Taupo Rivers	Kras Angelov
Monday 24 June	Club meeting - Guest Speaker TBC	President
June-July date TBC	Hutt River day trip	Malcolm Francis
Monday 24 July	Club meeting – Guest speaker TBC	President
11 to 13 August	Tongariro and Tauranga -Taupo Rivers	TBC
Monday 28 August	Club meeting – Guest speaker TBC	President
15 to 17 September	Manawatu River	TBC
Monday 25 September	Club meeting – Guest speaker TBC	President
Sunday 1 October	Opening Day on Waikanae River	
13 to 15 October	Rangitikei River area	TBC
Monday 23 October	Club meeting – Guest speaker TBC	President
10 to 12 November	Tukituki and Waipawa Rivers	TBC
Monday 27 November	Club meeting – Guest speaker TBC	President

## *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](mailto: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](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.**

## *Double Haul Casting Clinic with Gordon Baker*

**On Sunday 11 June at 11:00am at the Mazengarb Reserve Gordon will be holding a cast clinic on Double Haul casting, a very important technique to learn when fishing large rivers.**

A skill that is not too difficult to learn - Double Haul casting should be an essential part of any angler's bag of skills.

Cope with wind, create tighter loops, increase line speed and achieve greater distances.

Absolutely essential for shooting and short head flyline.

Bring your fishing gear and appropriate clothing for the weather.

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

### **Activities**

**Kapiti Women on The Fly's** next event is a morning on the Hutt River, hosted by Hutt Valley Angling Club members. On June 11th, ladies from around the Wellington region will receive 'An introduction to successful methods on The Hutt River! 🎣'

### **Central Plateau Women's Social Fly-Fishing Tournament**

Several of our club members are registered for the now hugely popular annual women's social tournament in Turangi on 21/22 July.

The NZ Fly Ferns will make a major contribution to this event which will also be a fund raiser to assist the [NZ Fly Ferns](#) attend the Sports Fly-Fishing Ladies World Championships in Canada in September.

### **Kapiti Women on The Fly Workshop 2023**

Planning has started for the 2023 **WoTF Workshop** to be hosted at TALTAC in Turangi on **10/11th November**.

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](mailto:leigh@leighjohnsonnz.com) or visit [www.womenonthefly.nz](http://www.womenonthefly.nz).



April 2023 - Otaki River

## ***Winter Fly-Tying workshop by Gordon Baker***

Lat last year our monthly fly-tying stopped due to a lack of interest from members so a new initiative will offer members an opportunity to participate in an afternoon fly-tying workshop over four weekends, the last two Sundays in June and July.

Gordon Baker has created and will present each session. Join fellow members on **Sunday afternoons between 1 and 5pm at Te Ara Korowai, 8 Weka Road, Raumati.**

Refresh your skills and learn new ones, each session will focus on specific aspects of fly-tying. This is a perfect opportunity to get started in fly tying, each session will feature additional skills that utilise tying gear, as an example braided loops first then joining fly lines to backing.

**Sessions are limited to about 10 members.**

Please bring your fly-tying kit, there will be tools there for beginners. Tools and materials will be provided by our usual sponsor **The Flyshop.**

Please contact Gordon ([kiwiflyfisher@gmail.com](mailto:kiwiflyfisher@gmail.com)) to ensure your place.

### **Session One Sunday 18 June - The Basics - Ideal for beginners**

- Essential tools and materials.
- What trout eat. Different types of flies. Fly design and proportions.
- Basic techniques. Dubbing and dubbing loops. Tinsel and chenille bodies. Other bodies. Fur and feathers. Spinning deer hair.

### **Session Two Sunday 25 June - Lures and Streamers**

- Mainly Taupo lures. Various popular patterns and designs.
- Intruder and Tube flies

Details for the July sessions will be published in next month's newsletter.

### **Session Three Sunday 23 July - Nymphs**

### **Session Four Sunday 30 July - Dry Flies, Emergers, and Other Things.**



## ***Trout fishery 'under threat' by Laura Mills***

Fish and Game West Coast says the future of fishing and hunting is under threat from the Government's proposed law to replace the Resource Management Act.

The Natural and Built Environment Bill intends to remove recognition of the habitats of introduced sports fish, trout, and salmon. Fish and Game says the Government is making the change because some people are hostile towards introduced sports fish and game birds.

It says it will give developers, businesses, and councils the power to make unilateral decisions about rivers, lakes, and wetlands. The value given to areas for recreation and food gathering will have no legal recognition.

West Coast manager Dean Kelly said it was rushed and controversial legislation. Over the past couple of decades, the West Coast had a planning framework that balanced the recreational, environmental, and economic aspects of the region's natural resources such as water and wetlands.

But the new legislation had very few provisions for the 'recreational use' of public resources.

"Anglers and hunters through Fish and Game have been the unsung heroes of water-quality and wetland maintenance and enhancement over the last couple of decades and contribute more than their fair share to maintain and enhance the region's natural resources and access to them through their licence fees," Mr Kelly said.

The new legislation was "essentially 'giving-the-finger' to this contribution in favour of indigenous biodiversity and a preservation ethic."

"Often Fish and Game are a lone voice for the recreational value and use of the region's natural resources and our ability to continue to do so under the new legislation will be severely diminished."

Fish and Game has launched a campaign against the proposed law change at:

<https://fishandgame.org.nz/fish-and-hunt-forever>

***Editor: I would like to encourage all our members to sign up and join Fish and Game campaign.***

## ***More evidence that releasing hatchery-reared native fish is harmful by Chris Hunt***



**Spawning pink salmon clog a river in BC**

The impacts of rearing and stocking non-native fish into watersheds where they don't belong are well understood: undue competition for limited resources, hybridization, predation — the list goes on. In the American West, we've seen how introduced brook trout outcompete native cutthroat trout and eventually take over; or how rainbow trout mingle with native cutthroat trout during the spring spawn and produce a fertile hybrid that slowly eats away at native fish genetics.

But even attempts to boost fish native stocks by raising genetically “appropriate” native fish and then releasing them into watersheds where they are native might be causing harm to native fish born and reared in the wild. According to a new study led by Akira Terui, a biology professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, efforts to boost fish populations by introducing captive-bred fish of the same species into the wild has a negative effect on the native fish population.

The new study backs up assertions that, in the United States, efforts to boost, enhance or rebuild stocks of anadromous fish, like steelhead and salmon, by rearing and releasing native fish are generally fruitless and, in some cases, inflict more harm than good.

“The massive release of captive-bred native species (‘intentional release’) is a pervasive method to enhance wild populations of commercial and recreational species,” the study reads. “However, such external inputs may disrupt the sensitive species interactions that allow competing species to coexist, potentially compromising long-term community stability.”

Using long-term data gathered from salmon reared and released in the same streams as one of the foundational elements in the study, Terui's study shows that, over time, the continued “enhancement” of hatchery-reared fish created a less-robust population of fish.

“Stream fish communities showed greater temporal fluctuations and fewer taxonomic richness in rivers with the intensive release of hatchery salmon—a major fishery resource worldwide,” the study reads. “Our findings alarm that the current overreliance on intentional release may accelerate global biodiversity loss with undesired consequences for the provisioning of ecosystem services.”

The study took into account important factors, like salmon growth rate, competition and the carrying capacity of a watershed, and found that stocking hatchery-reared fish on top of a naturally producing fishery largely serves to destabilize the population.

“The destabilizing effect emerges because intentional release affects the balance of species interactions that underpins community stability,” Terui’s study reads. “The intentional release is externally controlled, and the number of releases is not subject to density-dependent regulation. Therefore, released individuals impose additional intra- and interspecific competition that interferes with the ecological process producing overyielding.”

Show the findings of this study to any salmon or steelhead conservation advocate on the West Coast or even north into western Canada and Alaska, and you’ll likely get an emphatic head nod and maybe even a sarcastic, “Well, duh.”

For years, power producing coops and government agencies have tried to rebuild or enhance salmon and steelhead in the Northwest simply by adding in hatchery reared fish, even when existing populations are generally healthy. In instances where populations are dwindling — e.g., Snake River salmon and steelhead — the problem isn’t that there are fewer fish. The problem lies with the overall habitat health, largely due to the fact that there are eight fish-killing dams lying between the Pacific Ocean and the natal spawning waters in the upper Snake Basin. Adding more fish has never worked, and for a number of reasons.

First, the habitat in its present state simply can’t support the numbers of hatchery fish introduced to the system. Second, the introduced fish are basically genetic clones — they lack the subtle natural triggers found in wild-born fish that contribute to the “portfolio effect,” or the ability of wild salmon and steelhead to survive and rebuild naturally because not all fish return to the rivers at exactly the same time. Some steelhead, for instance, start their migration up the Columbia River in July or August, while others wait until October. If one of those “runs within the run” is wiped out by, say, a hot spell that cooks them in the reservoir above Bonneville Dam, another “portfolio asset” of fish is set to come on the heels of the failed run. Hatchery fish don’t do that — they tend to migrate *en masse*.

Terui’s study does address the conservation angle, albeit modestly. And, as noted above, many conservation efforts (like stocking of hatchery-reared salmon and steelhead) don’t take a watershed’s overall carrying capacity into account.

“Indeed, non-negligible numbers of projects seem to release captive-bred individuals into unsuitable habitats with compromised carrying capacities,” Terui’s study reads. “Our analysis suggests that such programs could rather impair biodiversity without noticeable demographic benefit to the enhanced species. Pre-release examination and restoration of environmental capacity may be key to successful release programs with minimal impacts on other community members.”

Of course, that again illustrates the problem with salmon and steelhead in the Columbia and Snake basins — until the dams come out, salmon and steelhead will continue their slow, painful march toward extinction.

But Terui’s study, while germane to the overall challenges facing salmon and steelhead, likely better applies to instances where salmon populations are generally healthy. The study was



conducted in Japan on a number of historic Masu salmon streams, all independent of one another until they reach the ocean. There is a data set on these streams that stretches back to the 1950s that includes stocking records. According to the study, some streams receive stocked fish regularly, while others have been intentionally left alone. This, according to Terui, set the stage for a “natural experiment” to determine the effects of hatchery plantings atop existing fish.

“As predicted, stream fish communities showed greater temporal fluctuations at sites with the intensive release,” the study reads. “The effect was striking in its magnitude, almost doubling the (fluctuations) at the highest release level. Our analysis strongly supported the positive relationship between the (fluctuations) and the number of ‘effective’ releases

“As predicted, stream fish communities showed greater temporal fluctuations at sites with the intensive release,” the study reads. “The effect was striking in its magnitude, almost doubling the (fluctuations) at the highest release level. Our analysis strongly supported the positive relationship between the (fluctuations) and the number of ‘effective’ releases.”

In other words, population numbers, reproductive success and the overall health of the fishery was all over the map on streams where fish were regularly planted. “Control” streams that didn't have hatchery “enhancements” sported fisheries that were generally healthier and more stable.

Where could the results be put to work in the fisheries world? Consider the generally healthy populations of pink salmon in the north Pacific. Even though the fishery is healthy, the state of Alaska annually releases 1.8 billion pink salmon fry. Asian countries add an additional 3 billion fish.

The result? According to biological oceanographer Sonia Batten of Canada's Marine Biological Association, there might be too many pinks in the sea — the carrying capacity question raised by Terui's study could be coming home to roost. She told Phys.org in 2019 that the overabundance of pink salmon might be causing the every-other-year crashes of zooplankton in the North Pacific (not coincidentally, according to Batten, pinks return to spawn in greater numbers every other).

While it may seem like a harmless side effect of a very healthy fishery, consider, too, that sockeye, chinook, coho and chum salmon also depend on zooplankton while at sea, either directly as food or as their food's food. And, of course, other creatures depend on that healthy balance in the ecosystem, too — everything from orcas and salmon sharks to sea lions and humpback whales depend, either directly or indirectly, on zooplankton in the ocean.

While Terui's study is much smaller in scope, it does show just how connected the ocean's fisheries are, and how introducing more fish also introduces some level of biological chaos that might have impacts far beyond those initially intended.

Terui was joined in the study by Hirokazu Urabe of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Research Institute; Masayuki Senzaki of Hakkaido University; and Bungo Nishizawa of the National Institute of Polar Research based in Tokyo.

## ***Some Days are Diamonds – Some Days are Rocks by Domenick Swentosky***



Austin and I left at dawn. We crossed the wide river at a tail out and entered a dense forest of hemlock and sycamore trees. Walking through dew and morning shadows, we quietly moved downstream toward a favourite, brushy island section for one final fishing trip.

Austin graduated from Penn State a few days before our trip last week, and he's moving to North Carolina next week. And while many farewells in life are accompanied by a sincere "I'll be back soon," neither of us were willing to tell each other that lie. Sure, life may bring Austin back sooner than later. Or ten years from now I may be talking about a good friend whom I miss and haven't seen for a decade. It's hard to predict.

I like that. A good life is unpredictable. If you have enough lines in the water, something unexpected is bound to happen. We might label those events good or bad, but I for one am happy for the variety. I'm glad this life is full of surprises.

Austin and I walked a mile or more, catching glimpses of the alternating whitecaps and glassy flats just over the hillside to our left, until finally we scampered over that hill, ending up just downstream of an island and on the northern riverbank, staring into grey-green, flowing water, filled with hope and possibility.

Immediately, we shed our extra layers. At the truck, the air had been cold, but in the half hour of walking and stream crossings, the clouds gave way to a powerful sun. It burned off the residual haze and retired any remaining feelings of early morning. I commented to Austin that the sun was upstream of the fish too, and directly in their eyes (the worst of all possible scenarios, in my opinion.) And I started thinking about the bends in the river where we might escape direct sun if the fishing was slow.

I fully *expected* the fishing to be slow, but that's not what the river gave us. Instead, we were granted a day like I haven't seen for a long while. Every spot that should give up a trout gave up two. Average casting was rewarded with good fish. And dogged determination to adjust and perfect a drift at prime spots was rewarded with big fish — even a couple of Whiskeys. Hour after

hour, our day grew into something special. We fished alongside one another and took turns, visiting, talking of the past and the future, and remembering our few years of friendship without ever addressing it so directly.

Around 11:00 the caddis turned on, and trout responded. They began taking our upper tag nymphs, just like they're supposed to, and good fishing improved to excellent. Honestly, it was the kind of day where you get a little miffed when a likely spot doesn't give up a fish, the kind where you expect — you predict — the takes on your best drifts. Like a hanging curve ball as it approaches a clean-up hitter, you anticipate a future. And when you do swing and miss in a perfect seam, you can't help but shake your head and wonder how that just happened.

Austin and I wrapped up our day around 1:00 pm because life forced a conclusion. And I don't know that I've ever been so satisfied with a half day trip. Even in the best times, I'm always left wanting more. But this day? This farewell trip with Austin, was just right.

Charmed by the quality fishing, I planned a return trip three days later. I would pick up right where Austin and I left off, at the bottom of the run behind the low head dam. The caddis should be on by 10:30. And it wouldn't matter if the sun was in front of the fish or behind them. The fish would be easy. The same patterns would work, fished the same way. It would all turn out so well that I invited my friend Bill along.

Of course, I knew it wouldn't happen. I'm not that naïve, and I've fished enough to understand the truth. There are no repeats on a thing like this. Bill knew it too, but we hoped for the best and were open to the unpredictability.

We encounter better conditions. The morning was cloudy, it felt fishy and smelled good out there. But right away, we knew things were different. The fish were off. And an hour or so in, we'd both brought only a few smaller fish to the net. We began rotating through tactics and patterns. We moved upstream faster.

Then we were surprised by a herd of four anglers who front ended us. We continued moving upstream but were eventually surrounded by the herd. So, we picked up the pace. We covered more water and fished worse. Just a few more fish, and with only two hours left on the clock, Bill and I relocated four miles downstream.

In those final hours, I caught a few more trout, but the caddis never did turn on. At the end of my run, I walked the high bank to search for Bill. I found him nymphing a thigh-deep section of hard water, facing the far bank and casting with intensity.

I watched Bill fish from a distance. I paused and ate a sandwich, sitting on a grassy ledge mixed with underbrush that becomes brilliant goldenrod every fall. Life felt still for a while as I added another memory of fishing and friendship on this river.

I was just about to yell up to Bill, to point to my left wrist with the other hand, using the universal symbol for, "It's time.

But I didn't.

Instead, I sat and reflected on things that are and things that might have been. I thought of Austin and our friendship. I thought of Bill and the connections we all carry between each other. I stared

at the mud, and watched crawling beetles begin their season in the warm sun. I lost track of everything for a while and felt at peace. Then Bill broke the stillness.

“Whoa! There’s one.”

I’ve always said that the best rivers give you at least one chance at a really good fish every day, as long as you put in the time, fish honestly and fish hard. And even on a slow day, this river didn’t let us down.

*Some days are diamonds. Some days are rocks.  
Some doors are open. Some roads are blocked.  
Sundowns are golden, then they fade away.  
If I never do nothing, I’m coming back some day.*

— Tom Petty, “Walls”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BI0f8xv8B4w>

Being a musician, people often ask me about my favourite song. I’ve had many, and like a lot of good things, it changes once in a while. But Petty’s message in this song hits me hard, it rings true because this is how I understand life.

I try to give *everything* I have to *everything* I do. I’ve always lived this way; from the time I was a boy. Now I coach Little League baseball teams and I teach them to play the game with all of their hearts and souls, leaving nothing inside that they might later wish they’d given over to the game.

And when we lose, it *should* hurt. But only for a little while because the next chance to win is coming soon.

The beauty of this life is in knowing that the best things don’t come around every day, accepting that it’s all unpredictable and trusting that the bad things will be followed up with something better. You have to let it all happen, and at the same time get out there and make your own way.

A good life is 50/50. That’s just the way it goes. Not much turns out how you planned. There are ups, downs, highs, and lows. There are fears and joys, and somehow it all blends together in the end.

There’s something wonderful, calming and reassuring about that balance.

Fish hard, friends.

## *How to get close to Trout by Tom Rosenbauer*

*Strategies to consider before you approach the water.*



How you approach the water determines how many fish you might catch. Expert casting and perfectly tied flies mean nothing if you spook the trout as you walk and wade.

When I teach the advanced dry-fly fishing course at the School of Trout each summer on the Henry's Fork, one of the most important ideas I pass along to the students is that you should try to get as close as possible to the trout you are after—close enough to the fish to make an accurate cast, but not so close you spook them.

Everyone wants a definite answer to "How close can you get?" but there are no absolutes in this discussion. But I know from answering questions on podcasts, in fishing schools, and at fishing shows that these are honest and valid questions. People can cast well, and know how to tie on a fly, but the first step out of their vehicle is often still confusing and intimidating. Sometimes you make mistakes. Learn from them.

When you see fish rising, or when you approach a piece of water you suspect holds trout, there is always a judgment call between trying to get as close as possible so that you can make an accurate cast, and the idea that the closer you get to a fish, the more likely you will scare it. Every piece of water is different, and in truth every single fish is different in the distance at which they suspect your presence.

Fish don't always spook when they see you—sometimes they sense a difference in the surface of the water, and sometimes they hear an underwater sound that is not part of the background noise. One fish in a pool might be in fast water at the head, surrounded by bubbles and the noise of rushing water, and will let you get 20 feet away. A fish in the middle of the pool, where the surface is smooth and quiet, might not let you get within 20 meters. And to compound it further, that spooky fish in the

middle of the pool might let you close the distance to half that if it's just before dark, if it's feeding heavily, or if rain disturbs the surface. You are going to get it wrong, and you will spook fish. It's part of the game, so don't agonise over it. Move on to the next one.

One factor in bigger rivers is the smoothness of the water's surface, along with its velocity. On long, slow flats, working upstream seems to be a smarter option, because you will always be moving up behind the fish.

However, when you wade upstream you push more water because you fight the current, and pushing water makes more noise and creates waves on the surface that are sometimes not so apparent to you but extremely visible to the fish. These waves distort an ordinarily smooth surface and wiggle the edges of a fish's window in a way that is not part of the normal background movement they see. They know something is approaching long before they see anything above the water.

In this case, sliding downstream carefully, working with the current instead of pushing wakes upstream, can sometimes get you closer to a fish than sneaking up behind it. Of course, in a riffle any wakes you push are immediately dissipated in all the rough water around you, so it's seldom a concern in faster or riffled water. But on a smooth surface with slow current, you can push a wake 50 yards or more upstream of your position.

One mitigating factor in your ability to get close to trout is how eagerly they're feeding. When a fish is feeding every few seconds, you can get a lot closer, sometimes right on top of the fish. This is especially true in low-light periods, but they can be less spooky even in the middle of the day. I suspect it is their inability to focus much of their brain resources in avoiding predators when food is abundant—apparently the importance of getting food when it is abundant trumps the increased exposure to predators in the evolutionary winnowing of genes that get passed on to the next generation.

It could also be a vision factor, as perhaps when their brain is focused on tiny objects close to them in the water, trout do not recognize larger objects above the water. Empirically, you see this on some rivers like the Bighorn in Montana. This rich tailwater always has some kind of food drifting in the water column, and if you have fished there, you know that the trout are seldom bothered much by either wading anglers or drift boats. Unless you walk right on top of them, they continue to feed despite the tremendous commotion produced by hundreds of anglers passing by them each day.

You might suggest that this is a conditioning factor, fish seeing people day in and day out—but I don't think it is. The Battenkill is a river that also suffers from heavy boat traffic during the summer, in this case rafts of inner tubes and canoes manned by people looking to escape the heat of the summer in the Battenkill Valley.

The Battenkill is not a rich stream, offering up its insect hatches in fits and starts, and in my lifetime, I have watched it go from a river where fish would be out in the

open and occasionally feeding during the day to one where they stay hidden in the middle of the day and only come out to feed in the evening and early morning. Those fish may be conditioned to the heavy boat traffic, but as they are not as distracted by food all day long, they stay out of the way.

## Noise

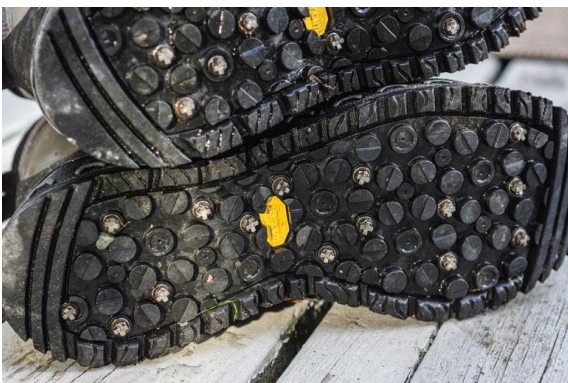
Sound waves move five times faster and four times farther in water than they do in air. This is a scary fact, because it seems like any little motion, we make in a river will alert wary trout to our presence. Luckily, there is more science behind this basic science. The most important part of this is that fish can be broadly grouped into two types with regard to hearing: generalists and specialists.

Specialists, which include carp, catfish, and shad, have a broader band of hearing, and can hear noises from much farther away. They can detect both particle motion and changes in pressure waves created by underwater sounds because they use both their inner ears and their swim bladders to detect noises.

Luckily, trout do not have the specialized structures of these other fish and use only what is called near-field hearing, which is based on particle motion as opposed to pressure changes, and the near-field component of noise decays rapidly.

In addition, structures in the water, like rocks and weeds, help ameliorate sound waves and any ambient noise in the water caused by riffles, and pocket water also masks the noises we make. Deep water also allows noise to travel farther because there is less interaction between the sound waves and the bottom.

So, if trout can only hear sounds from a few feet away, why do they spook when wading soles with metal studs are scraped along the rocks 15 meters away? This was the question posed by John Mosovsky in a paper titled "Understanding Bioacoustics to Catch More Fish," where much of my understanding of trout hearing discussed here came from.



Many people believe metal-studded wading boots spook trout. It seems logical, but science does not back this up, because trout can't hear this kind of noise from more than a few feet away.

And, when walking on slippery subsurface rocks, studs add a huge degree of safety and stability to the rubber soles.

I have been wearing metal studs on my wading shoes for many years, and I can't say that I have noticed trout any spookier when I am wearing studs than when I am

wearing felts. In fact, a number of times I have approached happily feeding trout to within 9 meters and scraped my metal studs on the rocks without noticing any change in their behaviour.

But I must stress that when I scraped my studs on the bottom, I was careful not to make any surface disturbances on the water at the same time. Trout are far more visually oriented than aurally oriented. I suspect that sloppy wading, pushing more visible waves on the surface of the water, or abrupt movements of your body above the water, due to studded soles being less stable than felt on some kinds of rocks, are far more risky for spooking trout than the noises you make.

But what about the lateral line? The lateral line system is a series of pores lined with specialized hair cells that are joined by a canal that runs almost the full length of a fish, especially in the head area. It allows fish to "hear" prey items in dirty water, one reason why streamer flies with bulky heads, lots of hackle, or deer hair are so effective in dirty water, because trout sense the vibrations in the water caused by these.

The lateral line system also allows trout to detect changes in current flow around their bodies to help them stay oriented properly in the current. But again, the lateral line system works on near-field particle disturbances. It is not like an early-warning system radar array. The trout can't detect your Muddler Minnow in dirty water from more than a few feet away. Thus, the lateral line system is not going to detect the scrape of a metal-tipped wading staff from more than a few feet away

### **Chain reaction**

Sometimes, a single fish in a spot can bolt up through the entire pool and spook every other fish living there. This makes intuitive sense, because a fish seeing another fish frightened enough to swim quickly to the security of deep water, or a riffle, or a log should raise the alarm.

I have seen cases where this is true, especially in the low, clear water of summer when you can see every stone on the bottom. You approach the tail of a pool, and you don't see the fish feeding just in front of a rock in the tail. It senses you and darts to the head of the pool, where deep, broken water makes it feel secure. As it swims to the head, you suddenly see a half dozen other fish follow it to the same place. You then wonder if it's even worth it to fish that pool.

Often it is worth a try. Some other fish in the pool might have been visually isolated from the ones that spooked. Perhaps they were tight to the opposite bank in a deep slot, or perhaps some were on the far side of a rock pile and did not notice the other ones bolting. I have sometimes watched a single fish spook up through a pool and swim right past other fish that were busily feeding and kept on feeding without missing a beat.





*Here is a trout's window looking upstream in very smooth water at an angler who is only 15 feet away. Note that the angler's body is visible, and the rod and fly line moving through the air are quite apparent. Photo: Tom Rosenbauer*

You can even play a fish through a pool, and despite the desperate struggles of the fish you have hooked, others don't seem to care. If it's a small fish you've hooked, bigger ones will often chase it and try to eat it. It's always good practice to try to lead a fish you have hooked away from places you suspect might hold other trout, but sometimes trout, especially big ones, call most of the shots, at least in the initial part of the battle, and you have to let them churn up seemingly good water. In that case, if you feel strongly that the pool holds more fish, it's wise to rest the pool by stepping away from the water, either moving to the shallows or sitting on the bank and giving it a 10- to 15-minute breather.



*If the trout moves into shallower water, the window is greatly constricted, and the angler now becomes a white smudge on the horizon. If the angler crouches down, he can also keep most of his profile out of the window. You can see why movement, more than anything else, spooks a trout—if the angler were not moving, he would look just like the clouds in the sky. Photo: Tom Rosenbauer*

In approaching trout, I know that you want some concrete answers so that you can stalk trout confidently in any situation. I don't have any easy answers, and if anybody tells you different, they haven't studied trout behaviour closely. My own observations that sometimes trout spook at the slightest insult while others seem to be more carefree are backed up by scientific studies.

A team of scientists in Canada studied a group of rainbow trout and found that in any given population, there are shy trout and bold trout. The shy trout retain long memories of predator threats and spook at the slightest hint of trouble. The bold individuals seem to forget these dangerous experiences within a couple of days and concentrate more on feeding than on avoiding predators. And like all things in nature, most trout in a population probably fall on a continuum between very shy and very bold.

A similar study of brown trout in Sweden gave further evidence to the fact that trout have individual personalities. When a novel object was released into an aquarium full of brown trout, some immediately investigated the object while others fled to corners of the aquarium in fright. You would suspect that the bolder trout, who fed more often, would be the most successful in the wild, but in the Swedish study when the fish were released into the wild, it was the shy individuals that grew most rapidly.

Of course, the relative success of a shy or bold trout probably varies with environment, and even in a single pool there might be places better suited to shy or bold fish. This is likely why wild populations continue to pass on genes of both the shy and bold personalities, because in any given year class, survival of the individuals that go on to reproduce varies with the interaction of a fish's personality and the environment it chooses.

### **Change Location or Change Flies?**

What should I do if I'm not catching fish? Should I change spots or change my fly pattern? This is a question that all of us face almost every time we're on a river, and if you think this is a conundrum only for novices, you are mistaken.

The choice you make here is one of those aspects that makes fly fishing—in fact, fishing in general—so fascinating and mysterious. But when you finally find something that works, it's a feeling of accomplishment that can make your day.

Much depends on how well you know a river. If you caught fish in a spot yesterday or last week or last month, as long as the water temperature or water level has not changed significantly, it might be best to stick with a place you know holds fish. However, you should temper this with the thought that the more time you spend casting over a pool, the greater the chance you have spooked the fish and put them off the feed.

But if you stay off to the side of the fish-holding water and have not ripped your line off the water a number of times, you may be able to fish the same place for an hour or more.



*Trout are less likely to spot you when approached from downstream, but it's still wise to keep your profile low and use background cover to your advantage. Photo: Tom Rosenbauer*

Riffled or deep water is best when you plan on parking yourself in one spot for any length of time, because fish feel more secure when the surface is disturbed, or the water is deep. If you are fishing over flat, shallow water, the meter runs quicker because fish there won't tolerate as much disturbance.

Regarding fly changes, if the water is below 10 degrees and no insects are hatching, you may want to stick with a fly you know should be successful longer than you would when the water is warmer and the fish more active.

This is because in cold water, you may have to place your fly in exactly the right place many times before you put it right in front of a trout that is not inclined to move. On the other hand, if water temperatures are between 13 and 18 degrees, trout should be aggressively feeding.

If you are sure, you have placed your fly in the right place with the right presentation more than a dozen times, it's time to try a new fly, or perhaps just alter your technique.

If you are fishing nymphs, try setting your strike indicator deeper or adding a heavier fly to your tippet in case you are not getting deep enough. If you are fishing dry flies, try adding a second, smaller fly as a dropper. If you are fishing streamers, change the angle you cast relative to the current, try a faster or slower retrieve speed, or try an erratic retrieve.

If you see insects hatching or laying eggs, my best advice is to keep moving until you find rising fish or a place where you get a strike in 10 casts or fewer with a nymph. With a hatch in progress, it's almost certain that trout will be feeding on insects somewhere, and it's amazing how fish respond to an insect hatch in one pool and not one just above it.

I can't tell you how many nights I have parked my butt on the bank of a favourite pool in the Battenkill in the evening, watching Hendrickson mayfly spinners fall to the water without a single trout responding to them, only to go to the office the next morning and discover that some of my fishing buddies were covered up with rising fish just a few miles downstream.

Even if you don't find rising fish, you might still try a dry fly or nymph in the faster water because fish may be feeding only on the emerging larvae below the surface, or they may be rising unseen in the riffles. Trout can make extremely subtle, almost hidden rises in riffles, and unless you are staring directly at a spot, you may miss them entirely

### ***[How to Single Spey Cast by Loop Tackle](#)***

This short video may be of interest to members how enjoy the winter fishing season on the Tongariro River, just hold down Ctrl and click on the link.

Al Peake breaks down the iconic Single Spey cast just click on the link below.

["How to Single Spey Cast"](#)

## 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

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)