



Kapiti Fly Fishing Club

September 2018 Newsletter

Front cover photo

The Waikanae River the place to be on 1 October 2018

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PLEASE MAKE A POINT OF READING BOTH THE PROPOSED OTAKI KIDS FISH-OUT DAY AND THE TROUT AND ANGLING UNDER THREAT ARTICLES BEFORE MONDAY NIGHTS MEETING

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Date	Event	Contact person
Saturday 22 September	Fly Tying Workshop KDC Community Centre	Michael
Monday 24 September	Club Meeting -	Malcolm
Tuesday 25 September	Otaki Hunting and Fishing - Fly Fish evening	Malcolm
Monday 1 October	New Season Opens - Waikanae River	All

I would like to remind members that Sporting Life are our sponsor and you are encouraged to visit their website or contact them when you are next looking for a fly fishing item to purchase, Graham will give you a generous discount as a club member.



PRESIDENT REPORT

The Brown Trout is a delight to the eye, exciting to the mind, stimulating to the spirit and delectable to the palate.

In addition to its impeccable credentials in angling circles, the amazing Brown Trout often shows up in other currents of the mainstream of today's world. A fish that transcends the conventional concepts of an ordinary fish. A fish which means different things to different people and wears its mantle of distinction with grace and flair.

To the dry-fly fisherman, the Brown Trout is the wariest, wiliest, most fascinating, challenge, respected and best-loved trout of all.

To the musician Franz Schubert, the Brown Trout was inspiration. His enduring composition Die Forelle ("The Trout") is a masterpiece of charm and delight, rippling like a mountain brook in Schubert's native Austria.

Since the day I caught my first Brown Trout, I've caught many others. And learned something from them all—each adding to my respect for and enchantment with this superb sporting fish. The time is long overdue in acknowledging my debt to such a distinguished quarry.

The treatise is for all who esteem a magnificent creation of nature; for those who do their fishing in books as well as brooks. He who fishes for facts also reaps rewards. Hopefully, a better notion of what makes a Brown Trout tick will launch anglers on new adventures. To a growing legion of dry-fly fishermen, a better understanding brings a closer rapport with the noble brown; a reward savoured long after leaving the stream.

So, salute to *Salmo trutta*. To the Brown Trout, with appreciation, respect and love, these words come from the heart.

These words were borrowed from The Complete Brown Trout by Cecil E Heacox

With the start of the new season only a week away I am looking forward to revisiting my favourite places on the Waikanae river in the hope of meeting some old friends both on and in the water, the river looks in excellent condition.

At our club meeting on Monday night we will have Aaron and Ben from Otaki Hunting and Fishing plus Matt from Fish and Game, plus we have two important items of General Business. Hope to see you there, warm regards Malcolm

***You are invited to the next KFFC Club Night on Monday 24
September – come and meet the team from Otaki Hunting
and Fishing and Matt Kavermann from Fish and Game***

PROPOSED OTAKI KID'S FISH-OUT DAY 16/17 FEBRUARY 2019 BY MATT KAVERMANN FISH AND GAME



Overview

Wellington Fish and Game in conjunction with the Manawatu Freshwater Anglers Club (MFWAC) have successfully run kid's fish-out days at the Hokowhitu Lagoon in Palmerston North for many years. The day provides young anglers the opportunity to have a go at fishing and experience the thrill of catching their first trout. This day is also used to provide education on the importance of managing, maintaining or improving freshwater ecosystems to the wider community.

The MFWAC provides the person power to run the day, manning the registration desk and assisting young anglers. Fish and Game staff and Honorary rangers, along with Hunting and Fishing also provide people power on the day.

The Milson Lions in Palmerston North are keen supporters of the event and run a BBQ on the day as one of their fundraising ventures, providing food for the young anglers and their families.

An integral part of the planning is sourcing the trout. This being the largest financial outlay attributed to the day. In the Manawatu, 750 trout are delivered from the Ngongotaha hatchery in Rotorua at a cost of approximately \$7500. Much of this cost is provided for through funding from the New Zealand Community Trust (NZCT) and Pub Charities. Fish and Game, in conjunction with the MFWAC, who are an incorporated society, are responsible for submitting applications to these charities.

What do we Need?

A fish-out pond is being created adjacent to the canoe polo ponds at the Winstones Otaki aggregate quarry site. The pond has support from Winstones, the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC), Wellington Fish and Game, the Kapiti and Horowhenua fly fishing clubs and the Friend of the Otaki. It is expected that the pond will be completed this year.

The Wellington Fish and Game Council would like to enlist the support of the Kapiti and Horowhenua Freshwater Anglers Clubs, to establish an annual kid's fish-out day at the Otaki pond. Unfortunately, the Horowhenua club is not an incorporated society so has limited access to community funding. As such, funding would be applied for through the Kapiti club to run a kid's fishing event.

Would the Kapiti fly fishing club be interested in supporting this arrangement in getting a kid's fishing event off the ground?

GWRC have suggested holding the first fish-out day on the weekend of 16/17 February 2018, the same weekend as the kite festival which could make for a great family day out.

It is expected that 250 trout will be sourced for the day at a cost of approximately \$2500. Support would also be sought from local business to cover ancillary costs and the Wellington Fish and Game Council would financially support the event as well.

Timeframe

NZCT grants are submitted on the 15th of each month with the last date for submission to Pub Charities being the 7th November. Ideally submission would be made before the November dates to allow for processing.

Editor: The management Committee have agreed that subject to members approval that the Kapiti Fly Fishing Club will support the Otaki Kid's Fish-out Day, this will be tabled at the club meeting on Monday 24 September

TROUT AND ANGLING UNDER THREAT BY FISH AND GAME NEW ZEALAND

Trout and salmon are facing one of the most serious threats posed to them as a result of new legislation just introduced to Parliament.

The Indigenous Freshwater Fish Amendment Bill aims to provide better protection for indigenous fish such as galaxids, whitebait, eels, bullies, torrent fish, mudfish and other species. But the Bill also poses a serious threat to trout and angling.

It allows trout and salmon to be removed from particular rivers and lakes, even if they are significant trout and salmon fisheries. It could see trout being part of Treaty of Waitangi settlements with iwi.

The Bill also opens the possibility of allowing the sale of trout.

What can anglers do?

Fish & Game was not consulted on this Bill and it is vital anglers make their feelings known about it.

Write to the Prime Minister, other party leaders and your MP to tell them the Bill's attack on trout is unacceptable.

Go to <https://fishandgame.org.nz/threat-to-trout/new-page-3/> for advice on how to do this.

At the following link you can find a suggested letter

<https://fishandgame.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Draft-letter-to-MPs2.docx>.

Above all, make a submission to the select committee now considering the Bill.

The deadline for making a submission is 25 October.

If you would like advise on making a submission please go to this link:

<https://fishandgame.org.nz/threat-to-trout/make-a-submission/>

Anglers need to act now to stop the threat in its tracks.

What can you do?

We invite all anglers to write to their local MP and express their concern. **Have your say!**

Editor: This will be discussed at our club meeting on Monday 24 September

FAMOUS RIVERS, SILENT STREAMS BY TODD TANNER



We all have our favourite streams. For some folks, it's a pristine mountain creek dropping down through a remote, forested valley. For others, it's a pretty little stretch of water just past the edge of town, a place where they've fished a hundred times and, with a bit of luck, will fish a hundred more. Easy access helps breed familiarity, and familiarity builds intimacy; it's all about that personal, ongoing connection with the local landscape. And then, of course, there are the myriad anglers who enjoy famous waters like the Bighorn, the Beaverkill or the Madison. There's something special about those legendary rivers that pull hard at our centre of gravity and keeps us coming back year in and year out.

I also know a handful of people who will tell you that their favourite stream is whichever one they'll visit next. That can sound a touch glib, but like as not it's still accurate. Some anglers just love to stand in the water and cast, and the spot they're fishing is far less important than the fact that they're out of the house and wading deep into life

I do have a couple of prerequisites for any stream on my list of personal favourites. First, it has to hold trout. I don't begrudge bass lovers their liaisons - as a wise man once said, "to each his own" - but if I'm going to fall in love, it's going to be on a trout stream.

Second, those trout have to be wild. Stocked fish just won't do, which rules out all those famous eastern rivers where a hatchery truck turns what would otherwise be a fine smallmouth fishery into something akin to Trout Central.

Just so you know, I'm not overly picky when it comes to the species. Browns are great, as are rainbows. I love them all. Steelhead, too. But wild is key. And because I've been doing this fly-fishing thing for a while now, I like it when the fish are challenging. There's nothing wrong with eager trout, at least not for the first hour or two I'm out on the water, but a fish who pushes my angling envelope is ultimately way more interesting than his easy-to-catch cousin.

Then there's the stream itself. The water should be clean and clear, with decent temperatures, plenty of dissolved oxygen, and an optimal pH. And it should go without saying that the more mayflies, caddis and stoneflies, the merrier. Lots of bugs translates into lots of hatches, which means healthy trout and plenty of dry fly activity.

I also have a soft spot in my heart for spring creeks; in part because they're ideal habitat for trout and in part because genuine, honest-to-goodness spring creeks are awfully rare. If you live within a half day's drive of a spring-fed stream with plenty of trout and some degree of angling access, you should consider yourself incredibly lucky.

Oh, and there's one final requirement: natural beauty. Depending on where you fish, this could include snow-capped mountains, or meadows lit up with wildflowers, or majestic pines or cottonwoods or maples or redwoods all of which are a gift to the eye and a balm for the soul. Heck, as far as I'm concerned, at least half of our on-the-water experience involves drinking in the sights and sounds and smells that lift our spirits and restore our connection to the landscapes we cherish.

A couple of years ago, with the temps just upstream of freezing and gunmetal skies kicking out the occasional shot of light rain, I parked near an old gravel pit and picked my way through a quarter mile of scratchy, clinging sage down towards the river's edge. It was a gloomy day, and for a second or two I looked back up towards the darkness of the surrounding forest and wished I'd brought my bear spray. There wasn't another angler in sight - in fact, there wasn't much of humanity in evidence - and the late afternoon overcast seemed to hold the promise of grizzly bear cubs and unhappy mothers. Of course, a friend of mine had been attacked by a bear not more than a couple miles from where I stood, so maybe that bit of not-too-distant history was colouring my perspective.

Regardless, I didn't have any bear spray in the rig and with the river calling there wasn't much point in worrying about it.

The sage, rough barked and low, gave way to tall, slender grass close to the water's edge and I turned downstream and followed a well-worn angler's trail towards a series of pristine springs that pool together and feed into the river. The water upstream was insect-free, and I wanted to see if the moderating spring-water temperatures might not precipitate an early October mayfly hatch.

When I finally stepped into the river, the bottom was gravel - clean and bright - with the occasional weed bed waving silently under the surface in the slow-moving current. The water was shallow, and it stayed that way as I waded downstream and out toward the middle of the river. I wanted to be well clear of the north bank, which is where I thought I might find a few BWOs floating on the surface below the springs, and where I hoped to find a nice rainbow or two rising and filling its belly.

They were harder to see than I anticipated - or maybe it's just that my eyes aren't quite as good as they used to be - but the hoped-for insects were there, and so, thankfully, were the fish. Some of

those Idaho rainbows were small, maybe eight or ten inches, while others were twice that size, or more. They were in a pod, twenty or thirty different wild trout sipping and slurping mayflies in between the raindrops, feeding in water so clear that it took the dimples of precipitation and the slow rises of dozens of trout to give the surface texture; to make it all seem real.

In case you're wondering, it was real, and the fishing for the next couple of hours was truly outstanding. Of course, that's the Henry's Fork for you.

We all have our favourite streams. If there's a blessing to be a fly fisher, it's that, as times goes past, and the memories build, we begin to see the world around us more clearly and we come to appreciate the ever-shifting natural rhythms that infuse our angling. Freestone or tailwater, quick or slow, shallow & open or dark & mysterious, there's something special, something alluring and deeply personal, about the places we fish. As the future takes hold and gains substance, here's wishing you success on your favourite waters.

Editor: The photo use for this article is on of my favourite streams the Waikanae river, where your favourite stream?

NATIONAL WITHDRAWS SUPPORT FOR CONVERSATION FINES BILL – PUBLISHED BY ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT BUSINESS WEEK

National MPs have withdrawn their support for a new conservation infringement law following the extension of the regulatory regime to Fish and Game Council officers. The Conservation (Infringement System) Bill has been reported back from Parliament's Environment Committee with several changes including giving new powers to Fish and Game officers.

The Bill was introduced by National in February 2017 but did not receive its first reading until February this year. It was supported by all parties and ministers did express interest in the idea of extending the infringement system beyond Department of Conservation and regional council officers.

The omnibus bill amends eight conservation-related laws creating a regulatory framework for an infringement system. Currently there are only limited options for dealing with offences under this legislation either warnings or a prosecution before the courts. The Bill seeks to provide the DoC and local councils (in relation to reserves) with a more effective system of enforcement. It aims to ensure that penalties for offences are commensurate with the seriousness of the offence. The bill would provide for an infringement notice to be issued, as a midway point between a warning and a prosecution.

The infringement system would sit within the Summary Proceedings Act and Criminal Procedure Act, which provide the standard legal framework for infringement offences. Given the range of seriousness of offending within most conservation-related offences (e.g., killing a common protected bird or killing a kakapo are covered by the same offence provision), the system is designed to allow a warning to be given, an infringement notice to be issued, or a prosecution to be taken, with the choice depending on the seriousness of the case.

Not all current offences will have infringement notices as a compliance option, as they are considered to always be serious offences. That includes risking public safety when using firearms.

The Bill as amended by the select committee also gives infringement powers for fish and game councils. New Zealand has 12 regional fish and game councils and one national body (the New Zealand Fish and Game Council). These are independent statutory bodies that manage game bird hunting and sports fishing. The fish and game councils already have significant enforcement powers under the Conservation Act and the Wildlife Act.

The select committee's report says "It is rare for a non-government body to have the power to issue infringement notices. However, the fish and game councils are already well versed in managing their enforcement powers and therefore some of us recommend they also be given the power to issue infringement notices under the bill."

Safeguards would set out minimum requirements for the Fish and Game Council and the 12 regional councils to ensure powers are used appropriately. These powers include requiring suspected offenders to give information.

National said in the report it supported the new regime for DoC. However, extending it to Fish and Game officers "has serious ramifications with respect to the credibility, accountability and administration of the system that would ultimately undermine the Department of Conservation's ability to operate a fair and objective infringement system."

Fish and Game staff are not State sector employees and "not subject to the same codes of conduct and minimum standards as to integrity as departmental rangers."

BEAUTIFUL LIES BY RICK KEAM



Rick Keam looks at surface tension, buoyancy, and floatation in flies.

The physics of floatation has been understood since Archimedes cried "Eureka!" and leapt inspired from his bath. Objects float if they weigh less than the water they displace when they are fully submerged. The strength of their buoyancy depends on their average density relative to the density of the water.



A cicada beats its wings in the surface film

Yet Archimedes and his bathwater have been strangely absent from the dry fly mythology that developed from the late 19th century. The mayfly imitation supposedly rides so lightly that it is almost entirely *above* the water. It falls and settles gently and then sits up as perkily as thistledown. It is supported by the points of its hackles, the tips of its tail fibres and a small part of the heel of the hook, which does no more than slightly indent the surface.

In fact, even thistledown would not float if not for the physics of the water surface itself. Expressions such as ‘the skin of the water’ and ‘the surface film’ refer to *surface tension*. I have seen more than 20 scientific definitions of this phenomenon. To physicists, it’s all about molecular attraction and energy state and surface-area minimisation. Fly fishers need only know that although the water surface is not actually a membrane or film, it behaves like one. (Fishing writers sometimes wrongly call it ‘the meniscus’, which really means ‘crescent’. In liquids, a meniscus is just the tiny part of the surface film that curves upwards at the edge of a solid.)

The classic demonstration of surface tension involves floating a needle. Harry McClelland’s influential fly-tying manual *The Trout Fly Dresser’s Cabinet of Devices* (1898) advised readers to ‘Place a dry fly carefully on the surface of water, and in an upright or “cocked” position. Its “displacement” is very small indeed, little more than the bend of the hook being under water... The elastic skin will support the weight of the fly if it has been constructed to fall so gently as to not break through the skin of the water.’ Its weight is distributed ‘so evenly on the skin as to be easily borne up’, preventing the skin from ‘creeping’ over it.

Although McClelland described placing the fly carefully on the water, he claimed that it sits in the same way when it *falls* onto the water. His explanation was that its hackles ‘afford greater resistance to descent, and thus decrease the impetus with which the fly strikes the water. The split wings, acting like a parachute, also contribute to produce the same result.’ However, real-life parachutists know that however perfect their landing, it is anything but impact-free. And like parachutists, hooks have mass. The mass of a hook is related to its size and the gauge of its wire.

Physics tells us that when the diameter of a wire or fibre is doubled, it becomes four times stronger and 16 times stiffer. As a very rough guide, each stepwise increase in hook size (say #14 to #12) is usually associated with about a 20 per cent increase in mass. Yet the diameter, strength and stiffness of the supporting hackle and tail fibres does not increase proportionately.

More importantly still, a fly is constructed around a hook, not a straight length of steel, and a large part of the mass of any hook is concentrated in its bend. A small fly hook can certainly be placed so that it lies horizontally — bend and all — on the surface film. But in fly fishing the hook is not

placed on the water. It drops to the water, and as it drops it tilts down bend-first. For the classic dry fly, this is a major problem.

Spears and Springs

Although surface tension is enough to support a needle placed on the water sideways, it is not enough to resist the much greater force-per-unit-area of a needle placed (let alone dropped) *end-on*. And what are more like needle points than the tips of stiff hackle fibres dropping to meet the water surface more or less vertically, like those directly under the hook-shank.



1

This is true even of thistledown, which is all struts and no guts and perceived as having virtually no mass at all. The specimens that ride highest are those with fibres that are curved rather than straight: the thistledown settles on the water supported by the length of those fibres resting on the surface film.



2

If the fibres are straight, however, their tips sooner or later penetrate the film (Fig. 2). The thistledown then sinks until it is supported by those fibres that meet the surface at only a small angle. This is also true of the hackled dry fly.

Some photographs and illustrations purport to show a dry resting elegantly on water supported on the tips of its hackle and tails, and a small part of the lower hook bend. But they are beautiful lies. They capture only what happens when the fly is carefully and gently placed on water to produce the desired effect.

Trevor Foon once built a water-filled glass tank into which we cast and photographed a wide range of commercially and privately tied dry flies, using a mini-rod and leader. The results confirmed all the faults of the traditional design, and of various alternatives to it. Later we discovered it was unnecessary to actually cast the fly. For all practical purposes, the results are little different if it is simply dropped from a height of an inch or two. If anything, they tend to be more favourable than those in which it is attached to a leader. Any curve in a tippet, and any change in tippet-fly angle due to rotational slippage of the knot joining tippet to hook eye, can affect the angle at which a fly descends and lands and how it sits on the water.

Our own photographs show what occurs when three different fly patterns, selected because of their different structural features, are put to the test. All the flies had been pre-treated with silicone spray floatant three days previously, the period recommended to achieve maximum water-resistance.



3

We began with several heavily-hackled commercially-tied Royal Wulff's in various sizes. The highest initial float was provided by those in #16 (Fig. 3), no doubt due to the more favourable ratio of hook mass to volume of buoyant material.



4

However, despite moisture being carefully removed before each later descent, the flies quickly sat progressively lower (Fig. 4 & 5). For technical photographic reasons, the final image in the sequence shows a different individual fly.



5



6

But it is representative of what eventually happened with every Wulff: they floated with their bodies flush in the surface film (Fig. 6).



7

For contrast, we then tried a sparsely-dressed Black Spinner featuring premium hackle and stiff tails of moose hair. On first drop it floated high, with the mass of the hook bend supported by the tails, but the tips of the hackle well submerged (Fig. 7).



8

With each later descent it too sat progressively lower in the water until the body lay flush in the surface film (Fig. 8 & 9).



9

What about Palmers?

Even palmers are no exception. Take the famous Macquarie Red, devised by Tasmania's Max Christensen in the late 1950s. The pattern's success with active fish early in a hatch was attributed to its perceived high float, but in this respect the hook was equally important as the hackles.

Max used a #13 English mayfly hook. At that time, the 'long May' style was very long-shanked and proportionately narrow-gaped: total hook length was 3.6 or more times the width of the gape, depending on the manufacturer. The reduced gape meant the hook was significantly lighter than others of the same length, and the centre of mass was shifted further forward where the hackles could support it more directly.

Long Mays were later re-modelled with a shorter shank and wider gape and were only marketed in larger sizes. Since the death in 2013 of the last of the traditional English hook-makers, Vince Green of Sprite, even these have now disappeared. Commercial Macquarie's have for many years been tied on conventional long-shank dry fly hooks with a much wider gape and heavier bend. This does them no favours.

The test specimen was tied instead on a #14 Tiemco 5263. Although designated as a nymph hook, technological advances mean that it is no heavier than Max's original 'long May' hook. It differs only microscopically in hook length and gape, and it has the turned-down eye Max was on record as preferring if the option had been available to him.



10

The Macquarie floated high on its initial drop test (Fig. 10), but subsequently behaved like the other flies (Fig. 11 & 12).



11

To an angler some ten metres away this is not detectable, and the palmer's high visibility creates an illusion that it is riding higher than it really is. It could certainly be expected to stay afloat longer than standard flies, due to the greater number of supporting hackle fibres resting horizontally on the surface.

However, anglers wanting to ensure that their Macquarie's really do float high should carry several in their box and rotate to a fresh fly if the occasion demands.



12

Some anglers' preconceptions are so strong that they will resort to any excuse to dismiss all this. The hackles were inferior. The flies were poorly or wrongly tied or were not delivered gently enough. None of these objections are sustainable, and the experiment is replicable by anyone with a large glass bowl and an open mind.

In every case the same sequence of events unfolds. As any dry fly hits the water, the hook's lower bend penetrates the surface film. The depth of penetration relates to its velocity. This is greater than you would expect, even in what seem the most delicate touchdowns when viewed from casting distance.

Almost simultaneously, the tips of those hackle fibres located vertically underneath the hook pierce the film. They are followed by the tips of surrounding hackle fibres until most of the lower semicircle of hackle is submerged. The fly is then supported by its tails, by the rear two-thirds of its body, and by most of the length of those hackle fibres extending from the hook at an angle no more than 10–15 degrees below horizontal. These fibres support the hook because for most of their length they lie on the surface film, as opposed to spearing through it.

These near-lateral fibres function as cantilever springs. As the weight of the hook pushes them over much of their length against the tension of the water's surface film, deflecting them slightly, they store energy and push back.

The slight upward tilt of the fly towards the front of its body is produced not by front-end support alone, but also by the mass of the hook bend tilting the rear of the fly body down at an angle. The simple experiment of cutting off the entire lower hook bend will confirm this. Far from riding higher, as you might expect, a fly so amputated rides flush on the surface film.

Archimedes Rules

In reality, a fly's cantilevers only temporarily support the front part of its body fractionally clear of the surface. Within a few further casts and landings — despite vigorous false-casting — it slumps down with all its body resting on the surface. The entire lower semicircle of hackle is by then submerged, and the hackle support comes from those fibres lying horizontally in the surface film. In the most mechanically efficient alternative dry fly design, the parachute, all the hackle fibres lie horizontally in the surface film.

When that point is reached, Archimedes re-enters. Although the outstretched fibres help spread the load over more area, the normal laws of buoyancy prevail. Ultimately the fly floats if its average density (specific gravity) is less than that of water and sinks if its average density is greater than water. The density of water is rated at 1 gram per cubic centimetre and the density of steel at 7.8 grams per cubic centimetre. So floating flies need to trap as much air (density 0.00153 g/cm³ at sea level and 15°C) as possible. This can be achieved by using body materials that retain air because of a hollow or cellular inner structure, or because of the way they are applied to the hook, or both. Air

is also trapped between the dense hackle fibres immediately adjacent to the hook, and any dubbing fibres in the same area.

In fibrous materials the inevitable progressive displacement of air by water can be delayed by first applying floatant. But even this will not support the fly above the surface film. What it does extremely well is to greatly extend the time a fly will remain supported on or in the film.

Classic hackle dry flies have pretensions to be ballerinas, but in the end, they are flat-footed belly-floppers. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, they have caught countless billions of trout. The drowned hackle and even the hook bend may draw the attention of fish from a distance and perhaps also suggest a part-vacated nymphal shuck, particularly if the body eventually sinks right through the surface film and slants down at an angle.

In other words, viewed from underwater by fish, traditional dries may often be interpreted as emergers. If so, it has been achieved only by accident. Modern emergers are purpose-built to achieve a superior posture and image, and to reliably repeat it every time they are presented to a fish. But that is another story.

From the Fly Life Magazine Issue 91

5 BIG FISH FIGHTING TIPS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU CAST BY MATTHEW REILLY

Avoiding the walk of shame



Summer is glancing at the door, but it's not quite autumn. Streams are running low and bugs are flying—big ones that can be imitated with slabs of foam and deer hair. It's the height of terrestrial season in much of the country, and, along with pre-spawn windows and high-water events, when big bugs fly, anglers have a strong chance of tangling with big trout.

These windows of opportunity exist—and are targeted by anglers—because the ambient environmental circumstances create strong, targetable big fish patterns in much the same way that dropping barometric pressure and low light do. But there is more to hunting big fish than the mood and behaviour of the fish, themselves. Big fish are keen and powerful animals. There's a big difference between hooking and catching such a beast.

Often, an angler goes to great lengths to hook a big, wary fish, only to be caught unprepared when the fish executes evasive manoeuvres. The fish is either lost immediately or after several tense moments of reactive fish fighting, and the sudden excitement and fulfilment that comes with the hook-up turns to bitter pain and emptiness. Dignity and spirit, if not fly or entire rig, is lost, on top of the fish. Then comes the process of retying and getting back after it.

Most all who have danced with big fish know this walk of shame, and that it should be avoided at all costs. There is no sure-fire cure, but the best solution is a tactical approach and a pre-emptive analysis of the scene and possible ways a battle could transpire. Here are a few things to consider.

Rod Action

Though it may seem superficially insignificant, rod action plays a strong role in fish fighting. Your rod is your weapon in the fight, and its action will determine how much pressure you're capable of placing on the fish and how efficiently you can exert pressure without breaking your tippet.

For doing battle with large trout, I favour rods with a moderate action—those that flex into the mid-section yet have enough power in the mid- and butt-sections to lean on big fish. Large trout are long, and are capable of wide, sweat-spawning head shakes. This is when many fish are broken off. When engaged (read, bent) on a fish, a flexible rod tip acts as a spring to absorb shock, which helps with tippet protection and with keeping hooks in fish mouths. But remember that your power is in the mid- and butt-sections, not the tip. To move a fish, keep the tip bent, and engage the lower portion of the rod with side pressure from a low angle.

Identify challenges and obstacles

Generally, challenges and obstacles that present themselves during a fight come in two forms— heavy current and snags.

Heavy current gives fish the advantage because, when they move downstream, the current compounds their weight and strength, often resulting in break-offs. The only way to steal this advantage is by either earning a downstream angle on the fish by getting below it, or by quickly coercing the fish into slack, or slower moving current.

Regardless of how the fight does play out, heavy current can be an obstacle if moving downstream from the casting position is difficult to do quickly or at all. Consider this before making the cast. If getting downstream with a big fish isn't easily done, consider a different casting position. If it is, know your route, and safely execute it once the fish is hooked.

Snags are a bit more obvious of a challenge. Rocks, wood, and other in-stream structures can abrade tippet, cause slack, and facilitate lost fish. Scan the scene for these hazards and visualize what would need to happen should a fish head for cover.

Strong side pressure in the direction the fish is heading is the most efficient way of steering a fish. Often times, overhanging branches don't dip below the water's surface, but can still tangle fly line and threaten slack if a fish runs underneath them on a high rod angle. In this case, don't shy away from sticking your rod tip in the water. Conversely, in fishing rough pocket water with large boulders and crevices, or areas with a sharp bedrock bottom or mid-column logs, upward pressure might be needed to keep the fish buttoned.

Have a landing location goal

Taking into account the challenges and obstacles presented, you should have, before the hook is set, a goal for where you'd like to land the fish. If on foot, typically, this will be a piece of relatively shallow, soft water along the bank free of obstructions—a place where the fish has no imminent advantage.

Keeping this goal in mind throughout the battle will guide your actions and help to move the fish into a neutral position as quickly as possible.

Hook set direction

Big fish often inhabit some tough-to-present-to lies, particularly in places like southwest Virginia, where I fish and guide, where the streams are small and tree cover is heavy. When a big fish is spotted or presumed to be finning such a spot, consider how setting the hook will have to happen in order to successfully hook the fish and transition smoothly into the fight.

In almost every situation, a downstream hookset is optimal, as the fish will likely be moving upstream to take your fly. If overhead branches threaten to interfere with a high hookset, a horizontal hookset might be necessary.

Too many times, I've seen anglers work hard to get a fly in front of a fish, and, despite having thought through the required hookset angle pre-emptively, upon getting the eat, their instinct takes over, and the hookset sends the rod sweeping vertically into an overhead tree limb, which results in a poor hookset, a potentially damaged rod, and a rod tip pointed at a writhing, hooked fish. Break offs typically follow. To fend off this instinct, I find it useful to anticipate the eat on every cast and lead the fly with the rod tip in the direction that you need to set the hook.

Remember grace

Big fish are hard to handle. It's part of what makes them so coveted and elusive. When, at some point during your fishing career, you lose a big fish—and you will—laugh it off. Remember grace. It happens to everyone, and no one likes an angry angler.

Targeting big fish is a game of odds, and everyone that you can stack in your corner will improve the likelihood of successfully landing one. Being mentally prepared to fight a fish proactively, instead of reactively, is just as important as being in the right place at the right time. Don't neglect it.

TURANGI UPDATE BY NOEL THOMAS

Fishing wise it has been a slow winter for me here in Turangi. Have big runs of fish come through the system? Not that I have seen. Are they still to come? Hopefully. Fish are obviously trickling through the rivers and the fishing can be good if you can time the conditions, pressure drop, and increased flow are what you should be looking for and be prepared to move through the water trying to find where the fish are holding.

On the Tongariro from the Hydro pool down looks to be your best bet. Yesterday I saw a number of trout being landed from the Bridge pool but counted 14 anglers lining the bridge and lower bridge pool so the odds were firmly against the trout. Wet line (orange beaded Woolly buggler) or a Glo Bug seem to be the go to flies.

I have been avoiding the T/T this winter as the number of cars in the car park have just been crazy. The river below the rock wall is quite silty and trout don't hang around in those conditions. Where the water starts to clear the fish take a breather, but you need to be there early to get a spot. Unfortunately, there is often a guide in there who hogs the water till his clients have caught or scared any available fish. Normally you can beat a guide to good water by getting up early but not this guy. Mid-winter I saw him in position by 7.45am.

Last season everybody was talking about and going to the Hinemaiaia. This year has been a lot quieter with both less fish and less fisherman, but it is a nice river to fish and you can enjoy some solitude and watch the Kereru in the trees if the fish aren't cooperating. I fish a short leader here (2m) to split shot and then a 150mm tippet to a Glo Bug and it is important to keep control of any fish hooked because if they get any downstream momentum you can kiss them goodbye.

To get away from the crowds I have been poking around the Waiotaka with the same rig as I use on the Hinemaiaia. It has been enjoyable exploring new water, finding the crossing points and scouting the best lies. In past seasons the T/T has been my river of choice but the fishing does become a bit one dimensional if you continually fish the same river. Getting on to new water has its challenges and helps improve your skills.

Lake Rotoaira is now open but has been cold and windy so far this month. Lake Otamangakau opens 1st October.

Still plenty of fishing to be had in the Taupo district and the weather should only get warmer.

Cheers Noel

HOW MANY TIMES WRONG IN ONE ARTICLE? BY DAVID FARRAR

An article in The Spinoff on whitebait gets it wrong almost every time.

Whitebait season is here, and Forest and Bird is steaming mad about it. Why are we serving **endangered** fish in home kitchens and cafes alike?

They are not endangered. That is the 2nd most threatened category. They are declining, which is not even one of the three threatened categories.

*Set the nets and get out your gummies – it's whitebait season, and nothing tastes better than an **endangered** fish.*

Again, they are not endangered.

*Whitebait stocks are at **critical** levels.*

They are not critical either. That is the highest threat level (nationally critical). They are not in any of the threatened categories.

*Of the kōaro, giant kōkopu, banded kōkopu, shortjaw kōkopu and the inanga, four species are in **danger of extinction**.*

They are not assessed as being in danger of extinction. The categories at risk of extinction are critical (immediate high risk), endangered (high risk short term) and vulnerable (medium term risk).

The four species are declining which is at risk, but not threatened. At best you can say they might be at risk in the future.

*We're "sleepwalking towards a collapse", freshwater ecologist Mike Joy told NZGeo last year. Whitebait is the only **endangered** species you see on the average menu, something Forest and Bird's Cohen says is morally and practically wrong.*

They are not endangered. That is a specific category which they are not in.

*"We can't expect to profit off of these fish in a sustainable way. Profiting from an **endangered** species is just not sustainable."*

Again, they are not endangered. That is not my view. That is DOC's official classification.

I'm not actually against greater protection for whitebait. It just annoys me when terms are used incorrectly that have a specific meaning in conservation circles.

Editor: When we lived in Picton during the 1970s people were calling out that there needed to be some bag limit and size controls introduced on the Blue Cod before the Sounds were fished out. No one listened, and the result is that now there are very strict controls on fish take and size, too little and too late.

MAKING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR HARE'S MASK BY SOFT HACKLE JOURNAL



Processed olive hare's mask dubbing

I used to waste a lot of hare's heads. The masks, natural or dyed, feature a lot of shades & textures. I'd use up the reddish poll on a natural mask, pull some lug from the ears for the spiky guard hairs, clip the easy-dubbing cream from the cheeks, & the rest would pretty much go to waste. There was no uniformity of coloration in the flies tied from them, as it's nearly impossible to get the same blend of furs twice when you're picking it from a mask. And no two natural masks are exactly the same. But then I learned a simple process that allows ximum use of the mask, creating a perfect mix of uniformly coloured spiky dubbing.

Here's how:

Materials you'll need: a hare's mask; a quart jar (canning jar is perfect) with cap; a kitchen strainer; a paper coffee filter.

Using your spare fly-tying scissors, clip the whiskers from the hare's mask & save them for mayfly tails.

Clip the hair from the entire mask – bend the ears & train the short hairs away with the side of the scissors while trimming down the ears. Some shave the ears with a single edge razor blade, but I scraped into the hide too much while attempting it. The scissors will get it close enough to the skin with negligible waste. Once as much fur as possible is removed from the mask, worked into a pile on the table, mix all the fur together until fairly blended.

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Once you have removed as much fur as possible from the mask, worked into a pile on the table, mix all the fur together until fairly blended.

Fill the mason jar about 2/3 of the way full of warm water; mix in a few drops of hair conditioner; add dubbing; screw the lid on; shake for about 5 minutes.



Over the sink, pour the contents of the jar into a screened strainer & rinse with warm water. Press the mixture in the strainer to remove excess water, then place into a paper coffee filter and place somewhere to dry. As the mixture dries, break it up from time to time. When fully dry it may appear clumpy, but the puffs of dubbing are easily broken.

This process results in a surprising quantity of perfect, spiky dubbing, of uniform colour blend, the guard hairs evenly distributed throughout. No two natural hare's masks are alike. A few masks in natural colours will yield several shades that can be blended with others at the fly-tying vise to achieve desired colours. I also buy masks in the available dyed colours and process them the same way.



WEE SOFTIES AT THE BITTER END BY SOFT HACKLE JOURNAL



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

In NE Washington we're into a third week of daily temps ranging into the low 100's. There are a great number of forest fires burning in the region and some of them are very close. Lots of smoke in the air; the sunsets cooked to a bloody medium-rare. I worry about our ten acres of pine, thickly assembled like a thirsty army waiting beneath a hubcap-bright sun.

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

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

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

When the world is on fire it's good to live beside a river. You can fish. You can fish that last hour. If you are careful and do everything right there is time for one trout – maybe two on a good night. They are close, a long cast isn't required. But the presentation must be perfect, a barely perceptible whisper of a presentation, the wee softie placed well above the working trout. I'm down to the 6' 3wt glass, matched with the little Pflueger I acquired in 1963, a cooler year.

Though just long enough, the 12' leader is about as long as the 6-foot rod will comfortably handle. The 3-pound test tippet is as light as I dare go but is okay in the near dark. Considering the size of the trout heavier would be better, but any heavier brings noticeably fewer takes, even in low light.



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

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

I hope, as we go through another round of elections, that you will engage and hold prospective leader's feet to the fire regarding the effects of climate change. Past time we need to bring this issue to the fore. There is nothing more important. We fiddle and faff and catch the last trout at the bitter end. Or we assume sane stewardship of the living world. Not trying to overstate or be righteous, just trying to be real in light of things as they are.

A LEGIT WAY TO FISH BY KRIS MILLGATE



“I bet that guy is staring at you because you’re pretty,” says my son.

Since I haven’t brushed my hair, I bet that guy isn’t staring because I’m pretty. He’s staring because we’re minorities. Woman with child. No man among us. There’s no way we know what we’re doing.

But we do.

I efficiently back in my truck with the only Idaho license plate on this dirt road. Locals lose the Henry’s Fork of the Snake River to tourists in the summer. I’m parked between Utah and Washington. Texas two rigs over.

My son hides his iPad under his seat just in case anyone in this fishy crowd has hot hands for electronics. Then he scrambles out of the truck proclaiming he’ll dress himself. But he doesn’t.

He doesn't even know which set of gear is his. Passing a decade now, he's fished his whole life either on my back or in my boat. This is his first time in waders. He's almost big enough to fit in one of the spare pairs I've been saving for him. He says, "Why don't waders go to your neck?"

I tell him, "If water is up to your neck, you're not fishing, you're floating."

I unload two sets of waders and boots stashed among our mountain bikes in the bed of the truck. I have two rods, but only string one while finding my son's feet in neoprene booties and shoving them in wading boots before attaching gravel guards. The get up is too big. His smile is bigger.

"Rock guards are legit," he says. "I need these for all my shoes. Especially my school shoes because I get rocks in them at recess."

Stare-hard watches our circus with a scowl as the sun sets. He's the typical Henry's Fork angler. A bit heavy on weight and wrinkles. Head fringed in white hair. He's looking at us over magnified glasses. The kind aging eyes use to thread fly line through hook holes.

When I don't act bothered by his unwelcome, he closes in and opens up. He's from Washington. Been here a week. Based on his gripes, I can't figure out why he's still here. "No flies. No fish," he says looking at us like we don't belong.

But we do.

I know there are flies. I also know there are fish. I caught my largest Idaho fish ever, a 24" brown trout, on this water a few weeks ago. I'm still having flashbacks. There are fish in here for certain, but I keep that to myself and let my son cover the awkward pause of my silent reminisce.



"I wish there was a superhero that used a fishing rod," he says while turning away from stare-hard and aiming my rod case at geese like it's a shotgun. He continues to chatter like he has all day. He's a lot like me in that way. Thoughts spilling out as fast as they sprout, subject skipping with ease.

On our mountain bike ride earlier, we played genie. I wished for the banishment of all bad people. He wished for no Internet dead zones. We're both into video. Me for my job as a journalist. Him for his entertainment as a gamer. His devices, and mine, are now out of reach. We have fish to catch.

But we don't.

We watch from the bank. The surface of the water is flat. If a gulper rises, I'll see its head crack the calm. Stare-hard, ready well ahead of us, is already standing in the river, but he's not watching ripples. He's watching us. I hear a gulp upstream. Stare-hard can't hear it mid-river. I steer my son through knee-high grass and head upstream.

Stare-hard smiles. It's possible he's amused by my son's jig along the single-track trail. He's taking hip-hop during hockey off-season and he's grooving with excitement. But in all reality, stare-hard is probably smiling because he just realized we're not getting in the water next to him. I know better. He's of the no-dink-around crowd. We're here to dink around.

But we don't.

Five brown drakes drift by. Three trout heads rise. Game on. We're in. One rod between us. I place my son directly in front of me. His head is sternum high. I can watch well what fish are doing and still keep my son upright while he fascinates over a new sensation. "I feel like I'm in a bumble beekeeper suit," he says. "Nothing can get in my shoes and water compresses to the sides of my legs. It feels awesome."

I'm a lefty. He's a righty. This is good. I wrap my left arm around his chest, tighten his back to my front and guide his right-handed cast with my right arm. Right is my weaker cast. It won't take over like my left does. The softer touch works better for beginners. A few casts in and he want's freedom. I slowly release him from my hold. His brightly dotted emoji ballcap throws colour in the low light as he casts solo. His aim is true for short length. A fish rises to his fly. He's going to hook.

But he doesn't.

Doesn't matter. He casts again. I watch with all the wonder the moment is worthy of. He's got this. Fish or no fish. He's caught the magic and that's what matters. It's last light. It's my son's first wade. Stare-hard can stare all he wants. Maybe watching us will remind him why he really started wading way back when.

"When I grow up, I'm going to make my kid go wading with me instead of sitting around in the house playing video games," my son says. "This is legit."



Outdoor journalist Kris Millgate is based in Idaho where she runs trail and chases trout. Sometimes she even catches them when she doesn't have a camera, or a kid, on her back. And like her son said, she is pretty.

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 Monday of each month and the meetings are held at various member's homes and start at 7:30pm.

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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.

Newsletter copy to be received by Second Monday of each month, your contribution is welcome just send it to:
malcolmi@xtra.co.nz
