



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all members



Kapiti Fly Fishing Club

December 2020 Newsletter

This month's front cover: The Kapiti Fly Fishing Club would like to wish all member and their families a very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year

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Club activities

Date	Event	Coordinator
Monday 25 October	Club Night – BBQ Otaihanga Domain	Michael
Monday 8 February	Fly-Tying Workshop – Kapiti Community Centre	Gordon
Monday 22 February	Club Nigh - Jack Kós the Brown Trout Story	
TBC	Lower Ruamahanga	Michael
March dates TBC	Whanganui and Whakapapa	Malcolm
TBC	Titahi Bay Onepoto – Saltwater Fly-fishing	

You are invited to the next KFFC Club Night on Monday 25 January- Family BBQ and Fun and Games at the Otaihanga Domain you are welcome to bring along family members.

Meeting starts at 6:30pm looking forward to seeing you there

Presidents report

Well, as 2020 nears its end, it's been a time for me to reflect on the year and realise how lucky we are to live in Aotearoa New Zealand. Here we are, presently clear of community Covid and able to get out and enjoy our beautiful environment in a sport which also, apart from the actual fishing, provides huge benefits to both our physical and mental wellbeing.

I wish all of our members and families a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year and hope that you all get a chance to hit the water over the festive period.

It has been fantastic to see that we have gained a good number of new members since lockdown especially the new youth members, some of which by their fishing success, are already up there with the top guns so well-done guys.

Next year will certainly have its challenges, including in my view, a bigger socio-economic gap amongst us all so it really is a great time to be kind to each other and take the time to give family and friends a hug (even if its virtual!) and a little encouragement goes a long way. Also, I am very happy to just have a chat so call me on 0275 918734 if you want to.

We hope to see as many members as possible and family at the club picnic, which will be held on Monday evening January 25th at the Otaihanga Domain. A reminder email will be sent to you all mid-January. There will be a BBQ on and drinks for the kids plus some fun casting competition and it's a great to just come along and meet and chat with fellow members.

I was lucky enough to spend the day on Tuesday with Life members Hugh and Aussie and we hit the upper Manawatu. Whilst the fishing wasn't great (well, for me anyway) we had a lot of fun and to me, whilst I also like solo fishing, spending a day on the river with fellow members is what the club is all about.

Please take lots of photos over the festive season and please remember that we need more member input in this Newsletter (It is yours, after all) so please send a few photos and a short note about your trips, fly tying or other fishing experiences to Malcolm for the next publication. The most interesting photos aren't always about big fish and are great with people in them. So, get motivated and share your fun with the rest of us.

Well, that's certainly enough from me again enjoy the rest of 2020 and I look forward to seeing you again in 2021. Let's make it a great year!

Cheers

Michael



KFFC “Big Christmas Bash” 2020 by Nick Weldon

It will be with some relief that we say goodbye to 2020 and welcome in 2021 with all the hope and aspirations that the new year now promises.

So, this year’s club dinner was particularly poignant for two reasons, it was a good opportunity to chinwag with members, friends, and partners and secondly, we were at last able to award Aussie Perry his well-deserved and overdue Life Membership.

The dinner itself was held at the Waikanae Boat Club and was exclusive to the KFFC members. We must thank the WBC for allowing us to use their premises and bar staff at no cost to us. And we also need to thank the Galley Restaurant chef Alan and his assistant Emma for laying on a delicious three course meal. It went down a treat by all accounts.

Here are some photos of the dinner...



Well done Kim Haakman (in the above and photo below, in the foreground on the left) who came along even though she had very recently had a full knee replacement. Hence the crutch. Go well Kim.

And then there was Aussie who was clearly not sure why he was being asked to stand up and join Michael Murphy. Michael, our President, gave an excellent speech and then handed Aussie his framed Life Membership certificate. Aussie admitted to being speechless! Unbelievable!



A good evening by all accounts! Tight Lines and season's greetings to one and all.

Fly Casting Tuition

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

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

Mid-Week Fishing trips by Hugh

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

hugh.driver.nz@gmail.com

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

Isn't it the truth!

A politician visited a remote little rural town and asked the inhabitants what the government could do for them.

"We have two big needs," said the Town Mayor. "First, we have a clinic but no doctors."

The politician whipped out his cellphone, spoke for a while and then said, "I have sorted it out. A doctor will arrive here tomorrow.

What is your other need?"

"We have no cell phone reception at all in our town.

Bills Way – by Nick Weldon



Waikanae river during late November rains.

It might be Bill's Way but Bill's getting his feet wet!

Another exploratory trip by Hugh Driver



Lake Namunamu

I had work trip, so we organised for Stephanie to catch up with our daughter and 3 grandchildren in Wanaka. The work trip was postponed, and the forecast was for no rain! Not to miss an opportunity for further exploration, after dropping Stephanie off at the airport, I packed our old school bus motorhome and I headed north.

I stopped the first night at Vinegar Hill but as I already knew the Rangitikei was rather turbid, milo might be a good comparison! Bright and early albeit 100% cloud cover and threatening

rain I headed off to Lake Namunamu. This is a lake without any apparent inflowing or outflowing streams to the west of Huntersville, supposedly stocked annually by F&G Taranaki.

The foot access and use is at the courtesy of the landowners over a style and a 25 minute not gentle uphill climb along a forest access track and yes, I did say uphill, the track flattens a bit then drops a short distance to the lake which is set in a ring of native bush.

An old F&G brochure says the dinghies may be used but life jackets must be taken. The little tinnie leaked and was not very stable but adequate enough to row across the lake and drift with the variable breeze. A days fishing in very pleasant surroundings, albeit with a numb bum, but as <https://nzfishing.com/taranaki/where-to-fish/lake-namunamu/> says: *there is abundant insect life, but the fishing can be slow.*

Actually, what really surprised me was no sign of swallows or fantails. I saw about 6 fish rise, taking emergers, but I could not temp any one of them and I came away with a blank day – a bit like fishing the Waikanae really.

Note: The lake is closed public access for the months of December and January each year.

In the public mind there is probably no feature that comes more readily to mind than the ‘Old Fishing Hole by Jason Tucker



A lot of non-fishers think that is what fishing is about- going to a big, well-known hole, soaking bait, waiting for the fish to bite. I certainly spent a lot of my childhood believing this was the way to fish.

Especially once you get into fly fishing, you realize those big holes don't hold all the fish, and probably are some of the least interesting places for the fly angler. After all, fish on the bottom of that big hole aren't likely to rise eight feet through the water to hit your fly. Learning to identify fish holding water and cover on a small stream is just as important as you're casting and fly selection. It is especially important because you need to identify these spots from a distance, pick out the likely fish holding lies, so that you can stealthily approach the spot and present your fly. I can't tell you the number of times I have (and still do) failed to properly identify fish holding structure and blundered into a spot that was a great opportunity just waiting for my fly.

Holes. After demeaning them at the outset, it is time to redeem them. Holes hold fish, lots of fish, but it's not enough to approach one and start flogging.



The problem with holes is that a true hole will be too deep to fish a dry fly unless you see fish lingering near the surface feeding. This does happen, and if you run into that situation, by all means move into position and start casting.

More often you will find yourself happening on a hole with no perceptible action and will need a game plan.

There are four areas to concentrate on when you get to a hole: the tail-out, the margins, the head, and the hole itself.

If you're fishing from downstream, the tail-out is what you want to concentrate on first. I spent many a summer day observing big holes in rivers as a child. There was a bridge on a hole that we always fished. The bridge was in the middle of nowhere, not even on a road. I believe that landowner had the bridge repaired at some point, as it was in good shape. It was originally a stagecoach bridge in Michigan's logging days. It served an old hotel that used to be there. Nostalgia aside, I learned a lot sitting on that bridge soaking worms.

When we would walk out on the bridge it was common to watch thirty or more fish scoot for cover in the deepest part of the hole. The thing to do then was to sit still and wait for the fish to relax and return to their feeding lies. After ten minutes small fish would start to move back out into feeding positions. After twenty minutes they would start to feed again. After thirty minutes even the larger fish would become visible if they were going to feed. A lot of the prime lies were near the bank on the deep side, and also at the head of the hole, but a lot of fish would drift back to the tail-out and wait to feed.

So, when you are approaching a hole this is where you want your first cast to go. You'll want your fly to land where the colour changes from dark to lighter. The fish here may be sensitive to being cast over, so you don't want to cast too far into the centre of the hole and line the fish. Make a few casts to the tail-out and work the whole area from shallow too deep before moving onto your next target.

The next target is the margins of the hole. Typically, at least one side of the hole has a gradual slope to the bank. Fish that want to feed will often move out of the hole into water on that margin that is two to four feet deep in order to be within reach of the surface. That margin is often the most overlooked part of a hole, and one of the most productive. It can be one of your best chances at catching a big fish.

Fish in the margin also tend to be less line shy. You are targeting the colour change from clear, shallow water near the bank, to the darker water as it deepens toward the hole. Often fish will be holding right on the border between the clear and the coloured water.



The border between the clear and coloured water also often denotes a current break, with the faster current being in the dark water, and the clear shallow water running slow to still. You can usually get a good consistent drift down that darker water right next to the clear. If this doesn't work, an often-deadly tactic is to cast to the clear water right next to the dark. You will need to make sure your entire line is in that slower water, and that your fly is drifting right on the border of the faster darker water.

Often a fish holding in that deeper water can't resist sliding out to grab a fly that is lingering right next to the deeper water. This is great water for nymphing as well.

Head of the hole. Perhaps the most obvious spot to fish is where the current dumps into the hole. Fish that want the first crack at food floating downstream will be positioned here at the drop-off. If the hole is big enough there may be several good lies to hit. On a small stream it may just be one.

Some holes on small streams are small enough that you may be better off skipping the other areas and casting straight to the head of the hole if you think that is where the best fish will be. Some holes will be small enough that no matter where the fly hits a fish will move to take it. With experience you'll figure out whether you need to break a hole into its constituent parts or treat it as a single lie. Rising fish will always be your best indicator of where to cast.

The hole itself. I'll here define the hole as the deepest part of the hole, if that makes any sense. It is deep, dark water that is normally too deep to fish with a dry fly to fish resting on the bottom. Fish on the bottom of a hole are typically not interested in feeding on the surface. They will be resting, hiding, or feeding on nymphs drifting by. There won't be much you can do to interest them in the surface. If you can get a nymph down deep and get a good drift, you have a shot.

There are exceptions to this, such as when fish suspend to feed on emerging insects. A lot of fish will move to the other areas to feed, but some will suspend in the hole if the current is delivering food. I will always keep an eye out for fish feeding on the hole itself while not concentrating on it. If there is a strainer or brush on the surface, look for fish feeding on the leading edge of it where current concentrates drifting flies.

Another exception to this is that holes tend to be relative to the size of the stream you are fishing, and we are discussing small streams. On a small enough stream, a hole may be the size of a bathtub and be the very best spot to place a fly. They may be the only places that hold fish. Adjust your mindset to the stream you are fishing, and above all let the fish and the stream tell you how to fish it.



Runs. A run is a straight stretch of river with water deep enough to hold fish. If it has a stony bottom that produces a chop on the surface, so much the better. As a matter of fact, that surface chop is a better indicator of fish holding water than depth is.

You are looking for water that is just slightly too deep to see the bottom. A lot of runs are set up like stretched out holes, with deeper water at the top with a long taper to the tail-out. A good run will be consistently deep, have that chop, and hold fish from top to bottom. Fish in a run will be looking to feed and within reach of the surface.

I break runs into cast-lengths. Don't make the mistake of moving each cast up two to three feet at a time as the fly landing just behind a fish is a good way to spook it. Cast to a length of the run, then quietly move up to where you just presented the fly and repeat until you've reached the top. Often the tail of a run will be as good as or better than the head.



Outside bends. Outside bends are another personal favourite on a small stream. They often provide sufficient depth to hold fish, consistent current for a good drift, often coupled with an undercut bank the fish love for cover.

The fish will be hard up against that bank.

Don't ignore the inside margin; active fish will often slide to the shallow side to feed, so keep an eye out there. Fish from the inside out. Like a run, you'll want to dice up an outside bend into cast lengths, trying not to disturb the fish in the next cast zone upstream. If you catch a fish in the bottom drift, move up to almost where you caught that fish (provided no other fish are feeding there) and hit the next drift.

There will always be a line where the current is flowing next to slack water right on the bank. Your best drift will be as close to that slack water and the bank as possible. It may even be possible to reach cast and let your fly hang out in that slack water or accomplish it with an upstream mend. Sometimes that fly just hanging there is all it takes to make a fish go for it.

Jason Tucker writes the fine blog [Fontinalis Rising](#)

“My Christmas Trout” by Bob Romano



The current is surprisingly strong as I wade through the headwaters of Bonnie Brook. The water is clear, achingly cold. I can see through to the cobbled bottom.

This late in the season it is covered with a layer of sunken leaves. Their once bright rusts, reds, and golds have begun to fade. The banks are hidden under a recent fall of snow.

Although it's nearing the end of December, I'm hoping to find one last fish willing to rise to a dry fly. For this purpose, I've chosen a Royal Wulff, a pattern comprised of a cheerful combination of red silk and iridescent green peacock herl, with a white calf's tail for a wing. What better fly to bring a Christmas trout to the surface?

The air is damp, still. The sky is overcast, dull. I'm wearing a flannel shirt with a fleece pullover. My boots leave prints in the fresh coat of snow. After hiking along the side of the stream for the better part of an hour, I spot a brook trout, my first of the afternoon. The fish fins in place, no more than a shadow against the mottled bottom, but then I spy the white of its maw as the fish's mouth opens to take a nymph, or perhaps it's a caddis larva. I bend closer, the snow crunching under my boot. About to cast, the shadow evaporates.

In some ways, my life is like this mountain brook, like the water cupped from its current. Perhaps that is why I fish. For trout, like memories, are elusive. But with skill, a good deal of patience, and even more of luck, they can be held, if only briefly, cool and damp, before sliding back into the darkness. A poor substitute for traveling through time, I know, but we must make do.

While searching for my Christmas trout, I've been wading back through time, trying to remember the very first fish that rose to my fly. There was the huge carp with metallic-like scales and a handlebar moustache that inhaled a dough ball from the muddy bottom of a slow-moving slough. I recall a stringer of sunfish taken with earthworms dug from my father's tomato garden and the largemouth bass that chased a Hula Popper skittered across the surface of a pond as bats zigged and zagged in the twilight of a summer's evening. But it's that first trout taken on an artificial fly that remains as elusive as the fish in this little mountain rill.

Walking beyond a set of shallow riffles, I come upon a short run, deeper than most others this high up. There, in close against the far bank, under the exposed roots of an ancient hemlock, lies the memory I seek.

It's a few years after college. The Vietnam War has burnt its way through history like flames leaping beyond the grasp of the Fire Service. My hair is long. My language strident. My father does not share my disillusionment with our government, and we've had a rough few years.

After the last helicopter had taken off from the roof of our country's embassy, my father and I declared a truce, spending the night at the Atrium Lodge in Roscoe, New York and the following day on the Beaverkill River. Now, standing on the bank of this little stream, I can remember sitting back in a rocker on the hotel's stone porch, and later that evening, eating a steak in "Keener's Pool," the name given to the downstairs bar. I can recall feeling the presence of those golden-age anglers, men and women like Alfred W. Miller and his wife, Louise, aka Sparse Grey Hackle and Lady Beaverkill.

Having fished with flies for more than a year, I'd failed to raise a single trout, and had hoped that a pilgrimage to the celebrated Catskill river would improve my chances.

On that late-April afternoon so many years ago, my father worked a run a few hundred yards below a pool where I stood watching trout rising to early-season mayflies. Peering into the cold, clear current of Bonnie Brook, I once again watch him work a worm through his hook. Having yet to learn the names of mayflies or their imitations, I was having trouble selecting a fly similar to the dun-coloured insects that were struggling to rise from the river's surface. My father does not understand why I've given away my spinning gear. As foreign as my bellbottom jeans and the latest Beatles' album, he sees fly fishing as just another insult to a way of life he fought a war to protect.

Smoke from the cigarette clasped between his lips rises in a thin ribbon toward the overcast sky. My father raises the bail on his reel, and with a flip of the wrist, casts his line, dead drifting the worm through the adjacent set of riffles. It is a deadly form of fishing, one in which he is adept.

My father is wearing his dark blue baseball cap, the one with a red-and-white Dardevle spoon hooked to the bill. The little lure glistens as the sun momentarily slips through a crack in the wall of clouds.

Trout continue to rise throughout the pool where I'm standing. They're feasting on the big mayflies that float down the river like a naval flotilla, their grey sails tacking in the breeze. Making a sloppy cast, I resist the urge to look downstream, where I presume my father is catching his limit. A few moments later I strike too soon when a trout rises to my fly. My father eventually catches my eye. To my mind, his nonchalant wave mocks my ineptitude. Anger builds when my fly becomes tangled in an overhanging branch, but on my next cast, the grey pattern is lost in a sudden boil, the hook holding fast to a Catskill brown trout. I look for my father, but the brim of his cap shields his face.

For a moment, I'm back on Bonnie Brook. Snow has begun to fall, big soft flakes that hiss as they touch the surface. Bending to one knee, I look deeper into the little run, find that my father is younger than I remember, younger even than I am now. I watch his worm sweep in a graceful arc toward a pod of fish, which on that day, in that water, are ignoring worms, even those drifted with consummate skill and patience, while in the pool above him others choose to rise to a bushy fly cast in haste and with little skill.

The snowflakes are smaller now. They begin to stick to the sleeves of my fleece pullover. Lingering beside the little brook, I stare back down into its current where I find that my father has placed his rod upon a boulder, his back leaning against an oak tree. Looking closer, I'm startled to discover a smile spread across his lips, a smile which had been hidden from me for all these years by a dark blue cap with a Dardevle spoon hooked to its brim.

A Nod to Vince by Bob Romano

There was grass to mow and weeds to pick, tools to be polished and a shed that needed to be cleaned. Then there was a tractor with that flat tire and the moss growing on the siding along the north wall of our house—chores that kept me close to home last Saturday. The temperature had slowly risen into the eighties. The air had become saturated with a high level of water vapor. Later in the afternoon, I sat on our back porch. With a book in my lap, I was happily sailing toward the Land of Nod when my voyage was cut short by the repeated trills of a house wren that persisted in announcing his presence to any females in the vicinity.

Seeing as sleep was not an option so long as the little Romeo continued his amorous search for a willing Juliet, I decided to drive over to Bonnie Brook to see what I could see. As expected, summer grass rose to my shoulders while the water was as skinny as a fashion model's jeans.

The stretch I chose to wade was no more than six feet across. A tangle of barberry, bramble, and wild rose grew tightly on either bank. Overhead, the branches of the occasional swamp maple and white oak cast their shadows upon the meagre current. It hadn't rained for nearly two weeks. With riffles only inches deep and runs that held no more than a foot or so of water, my back porch was looking better and better.

I'd recently purchased a Royal Wulff line with a triangle taper that has always worked well with the little cane rod I'd purchased from Art Weiler back when he was still teaching high school. I hoped it would increase my ability to delicately cast a dry fly with the accuracy necessary to heighten my chances of winning a game of tag with the wild fish of this tiny brook in such low, clear water.

There are few sustained hatches on this wild trout stream, and for the first part of the season I was content to cast a pheasant-tail dry fly with a parachute wing, varying the size depending upon the fancy of the fish on any given day.

Listening to a catbird mew from inside a tangle of thorny branches, I stared down at the metal pillbox, with the words SUMMER SELECTION scrawled across the side. After a while, I plucked an ant from the modest array of terrestrial flies hooked into the foam ridges glued to the bottom of the little tin.

Fishing with terrestrials always brings to my mind Vincent Marinaro. I first read his now classic book, *A Modern Dry Fly Code*, while at college. Although much of what he wrote is now standard practice, back then he'd broken new ground. Many of the pages of my copy are dog-eared, with numerous passages underlined in pencil and the occasional exclamation point reflecting an Aha moment. To this day, I enjoy casting a Jassid pattern at least once each summer, but the Ant is my go-to fly this time of year.

My ant pattern consists of a bit of brown hackle between two humps of black dubbing without a parachute wing and lacking a post of any kind. It can be fished dry but can also be effective drifting freely under the surface, but without a parachute wing and post of any kind it's awfully hard to track.

Sure enough, after casting upstream, I had trouble following the fly's progress as it floated back over the sun-dappled riffles. When a fin flashed under the surface, the lithe cane bent forward. A moment later the fish threw the hook before I could react.

A few casts later, I again lost sight of the fly, but this time it was the white of a brook trout's mouth that gave it away. The brightly speckled fish fit nicely in the palm of my damp hand before slipping back into the stream.

Neither trout had broken the surface, and I assumed the fly had sunk, slipping under the current where the fish felt secure in taking it.

Around a slight bend in the stream, the current fell over a jumble of roots, flattening out for a few feet into a run a bit deeper than the riffles below it. Like a Haiku written by Basho that moment when a nine-inch rainbow trout rose to take the fly will remain with me for some time.

A set of gentle riffles slipped gently down the next hundred yards or so. Here and there were patches of darker water. It was from within these pockets, a few inches deeper than the those around them, that trout, mostly finger-sized, swung up from the cobble-studded streambed to strike at the black ant. For the next thirty minutes or so, I missed two or three for everyone released. It was as if the ant had some magical quality, luring the fish from their secret places.

Farther upstream, the current fell against a fallen limb that stretched over one side of the brook. Flipping the line over my right shoulder, I met resistance that prevented a forward cast. Turning, I discovered the wild rose that had grasped my fly. After a few choice words, and a number of minutes untangling my leader, I tried again. This time, I overshot the target, the ant tumbling through the streamside verdancy. To my surprise, the little fly bounced off a branch, onto a bush, and then a boulder before sliding down into the current that carried it along the edge of the limb where I once again lost sight of it.

The pull of good trout made setting the hook unnecessary. The fish fled under the limb taking my six-x tippet with it. With effort, I raised the heavy branch with one hand while urging the trout back into the current where it performed a pirouette worthy of Balanchine. A few moments later, I detached the hook from the jaw of a ten-inch trout with a crimson sash down its side. By then, all that was left of the ant pattern was a bit of dubbing trailing off the back of the hook.

They say Marinaro was a bit of a curmudgeon. At the very least, he didn't suffer fools gladly. Reading this story, he might certainly have grumbled, "What's all the fuss about?"

After all, although stream bred, the trout of Bonnie Brook do not have the cornucopia of aquatic insects that the brown trout of his Letort enjoyed and I'm sure he might have observed that the trout of my little brook are neither as selective nor as large as those he'd encountered. But maybe, just maybe, he might have grunted his approval. At least, I'd like to think so.

Editor's note: Vincent C. Marinaro wrote two Classic books his first book was the 'A Modern Dry-Fly Code,' he then wrote his well-known book 'In the Ring of the Rise' which focuses on the different types of 'Rise' and contains many stunning photos to compliment the text.

'No predators, plenty to eat': New Zealand struggles with plague of Peacocks by Eleanor Ainge Roy



A bird renowned around the world for its beauty has showed its ugly side by causing havoc on farms in New Zealand, eating crops, evading control efforts, and driving landowners to distraction.

The jade and green peafowl, commonly known as the peacock, has become naturalised in New Zealand after what New Zealand Birds Online calls ["benign neglect of birds kept for display"](#).

Preferring rugged and wild habitats, the peafowl has spread extensively around the warmer regions of the North Island, according to the Ornithological Society of New Zealand, and has also been recorded as far south as Christchurch and Dunedin.

But as the numbers of their natural predators such as possums, ferrets, stoats, and rats drop due to nationwide control efforts, peacocks are becoming increasingly destructive. Many local farmers have also unwittingly planted feasts for peacocks; seeding fields of maize, corn and clover which is beloved by the animals.

Farming accounts for around 5% of New Zealand's gross domestic product.

"They weren't a problem at all when there were plenty of predators around, but now they've got hardly any predators and plenty to eat," said Wanganui farmer Grant Adkins, a spokesperson for Federated Farmers in the region.

"They love rye grass and clover. They're happy to wander around and eat all the fresh, green shoots of all our pastures and crops – they do very nicely." Adkins estimates the number of peafowl is in the thousands in his district and says authorities have shown no interest in controlling their numbers, focusing instead on targeting pests like possums and rats.

According to NZ Birds Online, other large sightings include up to 100 birds spotted in a field at Orere Point, in April 2011 and more than 100 near Otane in the central Hawke's Bay in June 2016.

Farmers have tried to manage growing numbers by shooting the birds, but the task is difficult as the birds are clever and known to be “very wary in feral populations.”

No poisons have been certified for the specific use of peacocks. Once shot at by farmers, they learn to keep their distance. “Over a 12-year period, their numbers have increased hugely, and they are spreading further and further afield,” says Adkins. “There are thousands in the district. On the flats of my neighbours, I can see a group of 150 in one go, eating a lot of grass. The amount of feed they’re eating is feed our livestock can’t eat.”

They’re like blimmin ‘road runners’

Tony Beauchamp, an ornithologist, says New Zealand’s feral peacocks are a rare phenomenon globally, as the birds mainly live on the Indian subcontinent.

Knowledge about peacocks in New Zealand is scant, with the birds preferring to live in wild and remote regions of the country, and the government’s conservation efforts firmly focused on protecting native species. “Most people in New Zealand ignore introduced birds, it’s a New Zealand thing,” says Beauchamp.

“I think a lot of our farm management practices are encouraging higher numbers of certain introduced birds. In Northland, farmers have been planting maize for stock feed. But maize is absolutely dynamite for pest birds, they love moving into it.”

Beauchamp says ornithologists only began studying native birds with gusto in the 1960 and 1970s, meaning the country is “still playing catch-up” in its bird knowledge, perhaps leading to oversights in the study of introduced species. “I am not sure [peacocks] are very well understood,” says Beauchamp.

The New Zealand government has committed to completely eradicating invasive species such as rats, stoats, and possums by 2050. Trapping the unwanted species has become a mainstream hobby in New Zealand, helped by possum fur being valued in the fashion industry.

But as possum numbers drop, Adkins says peacock numbers have boomed. Possums, ferrets, stoats, and rats often eat the eggs of peacocks, which build nests on the ground.

“They’re pretty smart, as soon as one starts to move, they all run, they’re like blimmin’ road runners,” says Adkins. “And once they’ve learnt they’re being shot at; you won’t get within two or three hundred metres of them.”

Beauchamp agreed that peafowl in the wild were “extremely wary” and will keep a distance of 500 metres if they sense a threat.

Rod Smillie, Horizon regional council’s biodiversity, biosecurity, and partnerships manager, said he was “aware” of a population of wild peacocks in the region. “Peacocks do cause damage to pasture and crops,” Smillie said in a statement but added they were not included in the council’s pest management plan, which would be reviewed in 2027.

A spokesperson for the department of conservation based in Whakatāne said peafowl were “not a significant conservation issue.”

In the South Island, there have been isolated reports of peafowl escaping home enclosures, and Adkins is worried that left unchecked, the birds will spread around the country.

Editor's note: There is a large number of peafowl living in the Te Horo area and you will often see them in the paddocks by 'Marycrest' just before you pass through Te Horo, the 'eye feathers' of the male Peacock are excellent for fly-tying.

Hutt, Waikanae, and Otaki Rivers Sports Fish Monitoring Results 1999-2020 -by Matt Kavermann Senior Fish and Game Officer - Wellington

Introduction and methods

In 1999 a regional sports fish monitoring program was established to survey the abundance and distribution of brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) and rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) within the Hutt, Waikanae, and Otaki rivers. The monitoring program, established in response to the potential deleterious effects caused by river remediation and diversion works permitted under a resource consent granted to the Wellington Regional Council (WRC), aimed to explore the relationship between trout abundance and the frequency and extent of river control works, in particular cross-blading.

Cross-blading (also known as transverse-blading) is a river diversion method where the gravel is pushed from one side of the river channel to the other to alter the channel alignment (Westlake & Manolache, 2016). Death (1996) has found that substrate disturbance that can be caused by cross blading can remove both invertebrates and periphyton (a potential food source for invertebrates) thereby reducing a food source for trout and other higher-order species.

Moreover, the technique is particularly harmful to the natural river environment, compromising the preferred diverse habitat requirements of trout (Taylor, 2005) such as deep pools and riffles. Gravel extraction practices are another potentially detrimental flood control technique used to lower riverbed levels and manipulate river dynamics thereby eliminating deep pools and riffles. However, these practices can also be beneficial if engineers incorporate environmentally sympathetic instream habitat for all aquatic species.

The Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) Flood Protection Group acknowledged the likelihood of adverse effects from mechanical river diversion and flood protection work and since 1999 have worked with Fish and Game to assess trout abundance at core river reaches (Appendix 1) and to monitor the potential effects of permitted river works on the trout populations. While this work has historically centred around cross-blading and flood protection works on the Hutt, the proposed gravel extraction and river remediation work for the lower Waikanae river provides an excellent opportunity to look at how river engineering can improve aquatic habitat.

Improved aquatic habitat on the Waikanae would include a diverse range of habitat types including riffles, runs and meanders interspersed with deep pools as are often found in unmanipulated river reaches. Should this path of action be chosen by the GWRC Flood Protection Group it would be expected that all aquatic species within the river would benefit and this would be reflected in future drift sport fish monitoring results.

The regional monitoring program has established 15 core reaches (Hutt n= 8 [approx. 14 km], Waikanae n = 4 [approx. 3.7 km], Otaki n = 2 [approx. 4.7 km]) where trout abundance data is collected using drift-dive surveys (Appendix 2). The survey method requires divers to drift downstream, line abreast, within underwater sight of each other recording trout they encounter. Three to eight divers are required for the Hutt River depending on river width and water clarity compared with three on the Waikanae and five on the Otaki reaches.

Core site surveys were completed for the Hutt (26/02/2020), Waikanae (22/01/2020) and Otaki (09/3/2020) rivers with the timing of sampling similar to previous years (see Appendix 1). This year the section of the Waikanae river from Main road to Jim Cooke park was also surveyed in anticipation for the proposed gravel extraction works.

Drift dive data were examined and compared as mean number of trout observed per kilometre across all reaches within a river system. Additionally, route regression (Geissler & Noon, 1981) was used to estimate trends in population change (increases or declines) over 7-year periods across all reaches surveyed within each river system.

In 2020 water samples were again taken from a series of Hutt river tributaries to analyse the chemical signatures from each. These chemical signatures will be matched with those from juvenile trout otoliths (ear bones) which will help identify key spawning tributaries for the Hutt river and help with the overall management of sports fish within the catchment.

Further, Fish and Game staff undertook preliminary surveys to identify actual trout spawning activity within the GWRC region confirmed by the presence of juvenile trout in within waterways in the region. This fieldwork helps verify the accuracy of Fish and Game models identifying likely and confirmed trout spawning habitat and assist GWRC with improving the accuracy of their natural resources database.

Hutt River

Figure 1 shows a second year of decrease in the mean number of trout observed per km in the eight Hutt River reaches in 2020 (\bar{x} = 53 trout/km) compared with the previous years. Statistically, the mean number of trout observed was not significantly different to previous years as the variability in trout abundance across all surveyed reaches remains large (from 6 trout/km at Te Marua to 90 trout/km at Melling in 2020, Appendix 1). Of note this year was dramatic change in river temperature between the Kaitoke reaches and those further down. Water temperature at Avalon was recorded at 22°C, eight degrees warmer than at Kaitoke, 30 km further upstream.

Underwater visibility is often markedly different between the two sites as well with ranges exceeding 10 m often recorded in the more pristine waters exiting the Tararua Forest Park and diminishing to 5 m or less at Melling. This effect was less pronounced in 2020 with a fresh in the days leading up to surveys reducing water clarity at Kaitoke to levels similar to those recorded at downstream sites. The reduced visibility did not appear to hamper divers in the Kaitoke reach who recorded similar numbers of trout in in 2019 (n=19) and 2020 (n=21).

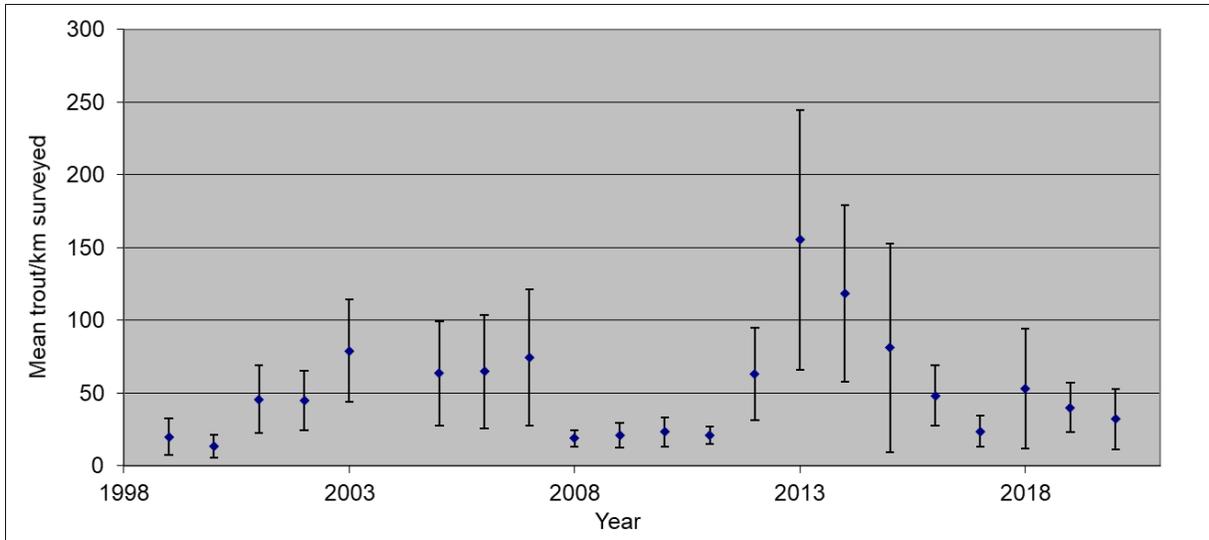


Figure 1. Mean number of trout surveyed during drift-dives within all reaches of the Hutt River. Error bars represent $\pm 95\%$ confidence intervals.

Corresponding to the fewer trout observed in 2019 and 2020, the 7-year abundance trends show a decline in the trout population within the Hutt river (Figure 2). The result is unsurprising given the diminishing abundance counts in six of the past seven concurrent years. However, casual observation of the data could suggest this is a cyclical trend that continues to mirror the decline of a decade ago and such observations are also noted anecdotally by anglers who have noted similar trends in angling success over time on the Hutt river. Ongoing monitoring will need to be undertaken to see if this casual observation is supported. Similarly, the impact of the Action for healthy waterways package (aimed at preventing further loss and degradation of freshwater habitats) on sports fish and their populations within the Hutt river catchment will need ongoing assessment.

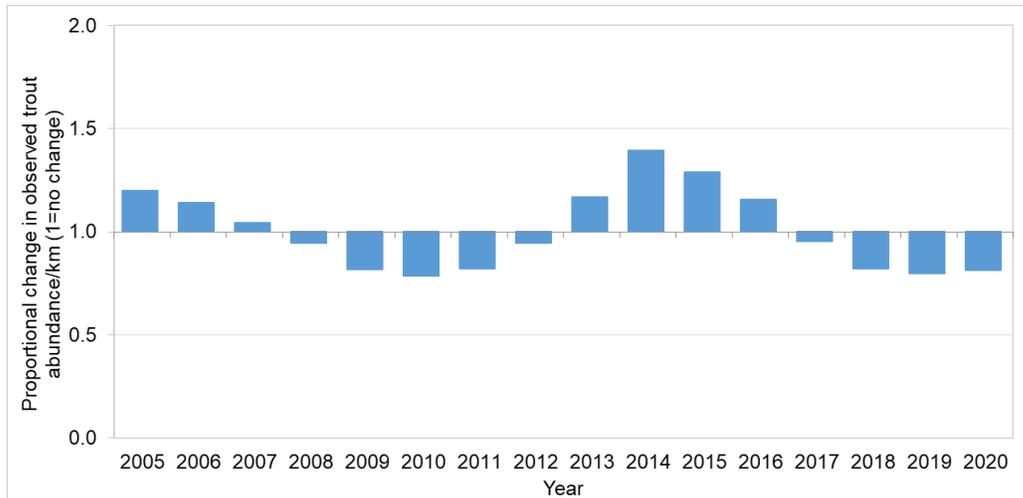


Figure 2. Moving 7-year trend bias-adjusted back-transformed means for surveyed trout/km from 8 reaches of the Hutt River showing a possible cyclical population trend.

Waikanae River

Pooled mean trout densities across the four reaches of the Waikanae River decreased again in 2020 to their lowest density ever recorded within the catchment. Trout were absent from the (Jim) Cooke Park reaches and only a single trout was observed between Main road and Jim Cooke park, though this is not a section of river normally surveyed by Fish and Game staff. The river level in 2020 was 40% lower than in previous years and anecdotal evidence from anglers suggest this may have contribute to the result with trout moving from the shallower reaches at Jim Cooke park to reaches with deeper pools further downstream.

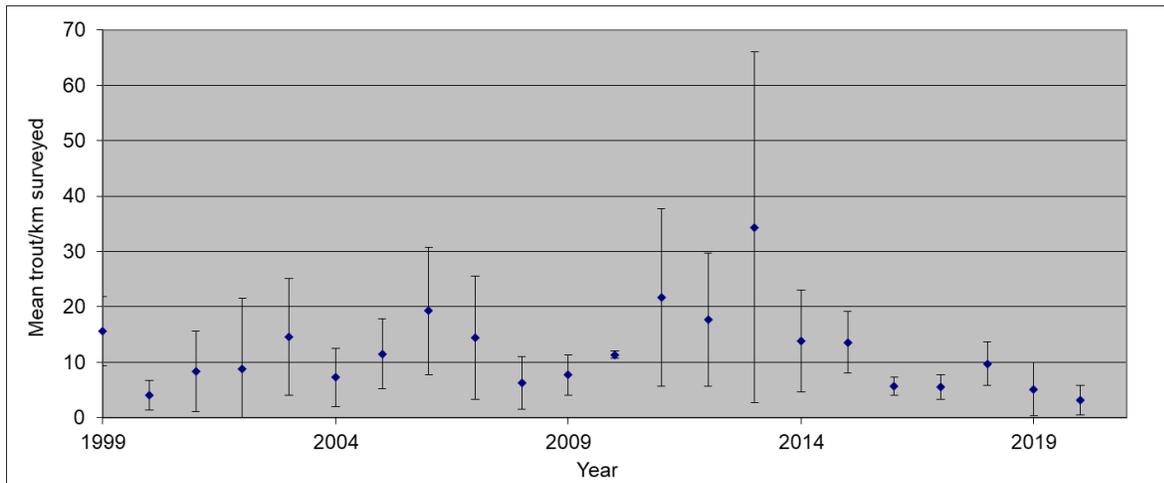


Figure 3. Mean number of trout surveyed during drift-dives within pooled reaches of the Waikanae River between 1999 and 2020. Error bars represent $\pm 95\%$ confidence intervals.

Like the Hutt, the seven-year trend in proportional change in trout densities in the Waikanae river show a declining trend with a fourth year of diminishing abundance counts (Figure 4). Once again, a casual observation could conclude a cyclic pattern similar to that of the Hutt but in a catchment supporting a much lower density of trout.

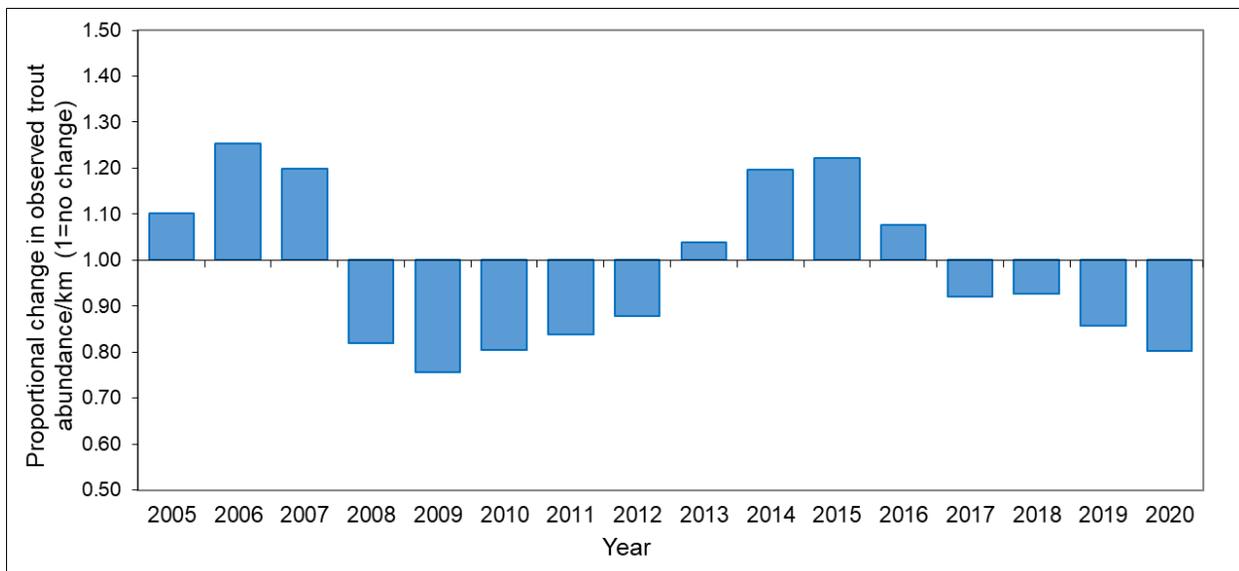


Figure 4. Moving 7-year trend bias-adjusted back-transformed means for surveyed trout/km from 4 reaches of the Waikanae River between 2005 and 2020.

Otaki River

Data from the two Otaki reaches show fewer trout were observed in 2020 with a mean of 4 trout/km observed (Figure 5). While the observations are not as low as in 2018, they are a decrease on results from 2019 and continue the trend of lower counts post 2014.

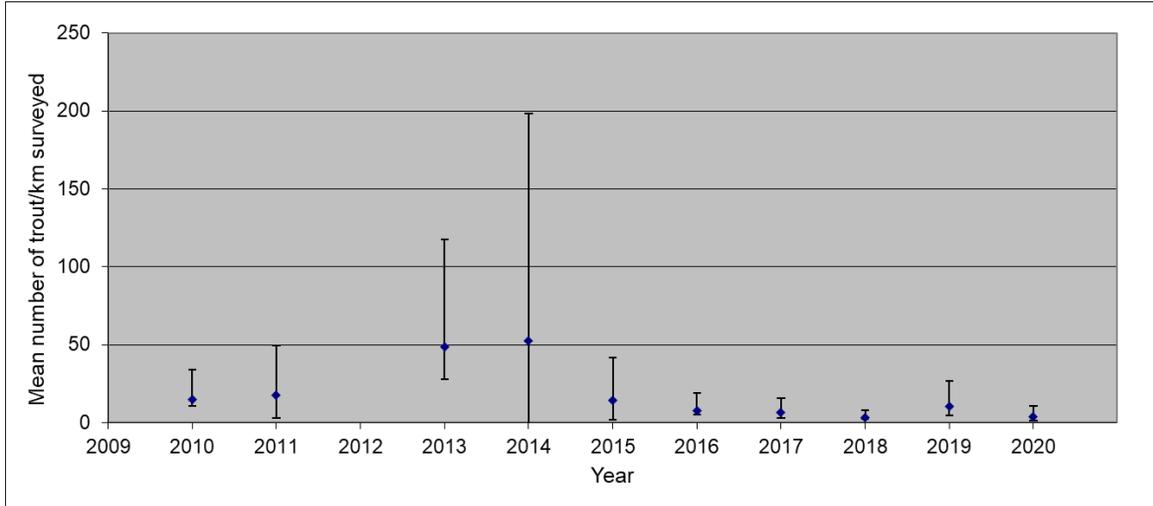


Figure 5. Mean number of trout surveyed during drift-dives within all reaches of the Otaki River. Error bars represent $\pm 95\%$ confidence intervals.

Proportional change in 7-year trends of trout densities remained positive despite the declining survey counts (Figure 6). However, as that the result is based on two sample points and should be considered within this limited context.

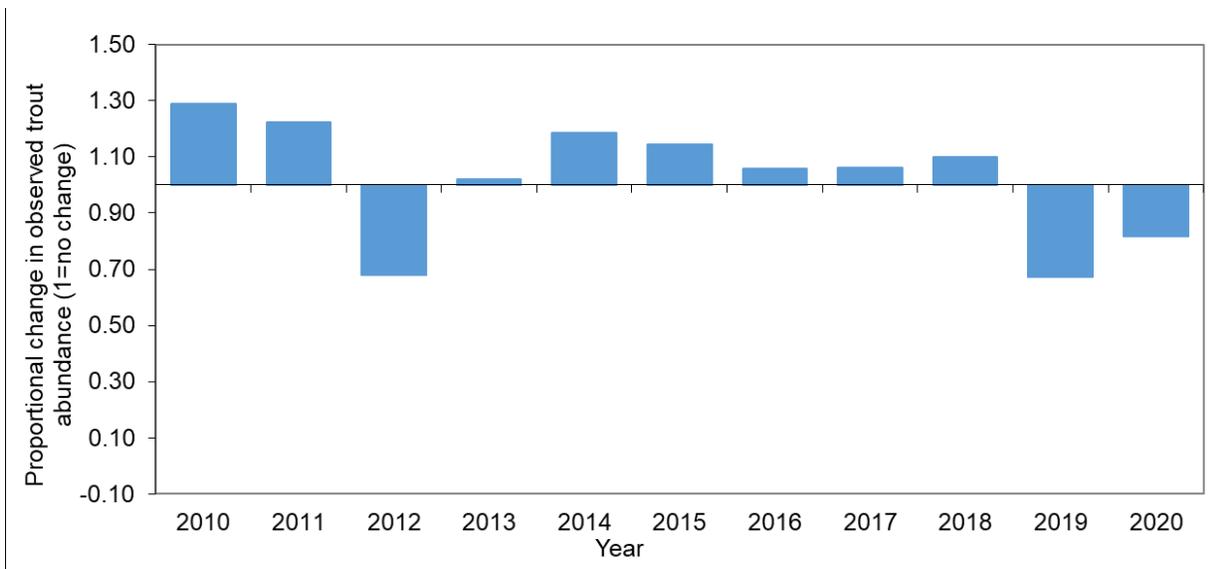


Figure 6. Moving 7-year trend bias-adjusted back-transformed means for surveyed trout/km from 2 reaches of the Otaki River.

Summer spawning surveys

The habitats of trout and salmon are protected under Section 7(h) of the Resource Management Act 1991 with waters being managed for spawning addressed in Schedule 3 of the Act. Protection of trout spawning waters is also addressed within the Greater Wellington Regional Council's Natural Resources plan.

Modelling by Fish and Game staff have indicated that the extent of spawning habitat for trout in the Wellington region may be far greater than is currently identified within Schedule I (Important trout fishery rivers and spawning waters) of the proposed Natural Resource Plan (NRP). As such, Fish and Game staff undertook a preliminary survey of various sites over summer to verify NRP accuracy and validate the spawning model.

Staff surveyed 25 sites where juvenile trout were present within the GWRC region confirming spawning activity in 14 of the 15 important spawning waters identified in Part B of Schedule I of the proposed Natural Resources Plan sampled. No juvenile trout were observed in the Otaki river drift dive reaches in 2020 though spawning activity has been recorded within the Tararua Forest park as recently as 2017 and juvenile trout have been observed in the Winstone quarry lakes.

Of importance was that juvenile trout were also discovered in three streams previously unidentified within the proposed NRP, Puffer creek, Plateau stream and Blaikie stream (above and below Maymorn road). A fourth previously unidentified stream, Cross creek, on the western edge of Lake Wairarapa was also proven to be spawning waters for trout. These streams have been identified as likely spawning habitat by Fish and Game modelling which has now been verified.

Spawning throughout the mainstem of the Ruamahunga and major tributaries of this catchment including the Waiohine and Waingawa were also recorded in 2020. Additional known spawning sites within this catchment have been published in other Fish and Game reports.

Discussion

20 years of data has been collected for the Wellington Fish and Game region's sports fish monitoring program for the Hutt, Waikanae, and Otaki rivers. The monitoring of trout populations within each river has been completed in part to look at the possible deleterious effects of in-stream river diversion work by the GWRC Flood Protection Group on trout population densities. While some sites such as the Hutt River are beginning to show some possible anecdotal cyclical trends, identifying drivers of population change over that time is not a simple process and more data is needed. The Wellington Fish and Game Council is addressing the need for more data through the otolith research program and will continue with the otolith research in the Hutt catchment this summer, along with further identification of trout spawning waters.

Data collected this year within each river system surveyed provides evidence that the trout populations have decreased across all rivers and that longer-term trend data based on 7-year data sets suggests similar declines. Once again, more monitoring will be needed to determine whether this is an ongoing trend relating to river remediation and diversion works or a cyclical trend based on other factors. Wellington Fish and Game staff will continue to closely monitor angling on the Otaki river and attempt to identify other factors for the ongoing low population counts.

The proposed 2020-2021 seasonal sport fish regulations for the three rivers are identified in Table 1 below. Otolith research and spawning surveys planned for the 2020-2021 summer will help to identify key spawning areas for the Hutt River. Outcomes from this research may have an impact on regulations with regard to fishing methods and size limits.

Table 1. 2020-2021 recommended sport fishing regulations including season, permitted fishing methods and daily bag limits per angler for the Hutt, Waikanae, and Otaki rivers.

River	Open Season	Permitted methods	Daily bag limits
Hutt River*	All year	Fly and spin fishing only	2 (max 450 mm)
Waikanae	1 Oct- 30 Apr	Fly and spin fishing only	1 (max 450 mm)
Otaki River and tribs upstream of Tararua Forest Park boundary	1 Oct- 30 Apr	Fly and spin fishing only	1
Otaki downstream of Tararua Forest Park boundary	All year	Fly, spin, and bait fishing	1. (max 450 mm)

* Bait fishing is permitted by child licence holder on the Hutt river.

Appendix 1: 2020 Drift dive survey core site data for the Hutt, Waikanae and Otaki rivers for the Wellington Fish and Game Council sports fish regional monitoring program.

River System	Reach	Reach Length	Date surveyed	Large brown trout <400 mm	Medium brown trout	Large rainbow trout <400 mm	Medium rainbow trout	Total
Hutt	Avalon A & B	1150	26/02/20	43	16	0	0	59
Hutt	Birchville	1400	26/02/20	52	7	0	0	59
Hutt	Kaitoki	1400	26/02/20	26	3	0	0	29
Hutt	Melling	1800	26/02/20	24	8	0	0	32
Hutt	Taita	1000	26/02/20	54	36	0	0	90
Hutt	Te Marua	1800	26/02/20	8	3	0	0	11
Hutt	Whakatikei	1400	26/02/20	27	15	0	0	42
Otaki	Below SH 1	2750	9/03/20	4	3	0	0	7
Otaki	Pylons	2000	9/03/20	7	4	0	0	11
Waikanae	Reikorangi	3700	22/01/20	6	9	0	0	15
Waikanae	Cooke Park 1	870	22/01/20	1	7	0	0	8

Waikanae	Cooke Park	22/01/20	2	5	0	0	7
Waikanae	Treatment 1	1000	22/01/20	8	1	0	9
Waikanae	Treatment 2	1250	22/01/20	7	12	0	19

Appendix 2: Verified important spawning waters in the Wellington Fish and Game region where juvenile trout were present in 2020.

Catchment	River or stream	Latitude	Longitude
Waikanae	Reikorangi	175.0799	-40.9053
Waikanae	Treatment 1 and 2	175.0689	-40.8878
Hutt	Kaitoke	175.1925	-41.0571
Hutt	Te Marua	175.1238	-41.0909
Hutt	Cooley's stream	175.1154	-41.1288
Hutt	Akatarawa river West	175.1084	-41.0632
Hutt	Akatarawa river East	175.1105	-41.0622
Hutt	Farm creek (Kaitoke)	175.1993	-41.0656
Hutt	Puffer creek	175.2246	-41.0747
Hutt	Rimutaka stream	175.2081	-41.0839
Hutt	Pakuratahi @ SH2	175.2016	-41.0794
Hutt	Plateau stream	175.1318	-41.095
Hutt	Blaikie stream	175.132	-41.0985
Hutt	Mangaroa river	175.0913	-41.1373

Lake Wairarapa	Abbots creek	175.2918	-41.1063
Lake Wairarapa	Cross creek	175.2528	-41.1666

Ruamahunga	The Cliffs	175.6398	-41.0485
Ruamahunga	Henly Lake	175.6857	-40.9516
Ruamahunga	Mt Bruce	175.6116	-40.7685
Ruamahunga	Waingawa road end	175.4952	-40.8809
Ruamahunga	Goose neck	175.4007	-41.0226
Ruamahunga	Waiohine above SH2	175.4868	-41.0608

Wainuiomata	Catchpool	174.9021	-41.3515
Wainuiomata	Golf course	174.9358	-41.3027
Wainuiomata	McRoberts	174.922	-41.323

Whanganui trip report by Hugh Driver

As we all know the weather this spring has been changeable with no two fine days in a row, nevertheless Noel, Wayne and I locked in a week away at this time of year. This is our 9th year, with the first two years into the Mohaka by helicopter; more recently our trips have been vehicle based and no less challenging.

This year the rivers were well up which made for different fishing conditions, some of it in conditions whereby it was hard to see the river, one was standing in, for the rain intensity. We nevertheless persevered; both Wayne & I had purchased new rain jackets as an earlier experience this year we had both got rather wet. We were able to keep much dryer until I stumbled of course falling forward!

I found the fishing somewhat harder this year in the conditions with our access being restricted somewhat with the rivers coloured and in flood. We all caught less fish this year and I thought in general they were smaller than last year however Wayne in particular was pretty happy with his 6lb Rainbow and 5lb Brown.

All the fish caught were in great condition - a few breakoffs and in my case I seem to be going through a phase of straightening hooks, surprising really as I use no more than 6lb tippet. Some of our successes as attached - I resorted to removing all security on my phone as continually wet screens makes it real hard to activate the camera.



The Pros and Cons of a Longer Fly Rod by Domenick Swentosky



The fly-fishing industry changes and grows. Advancing techniques and angler trends encourage companies to adapt and build new gear that suits those needs. Improvements in materials, like high modulus graphite, allow for the building of fly rods that were not possible a few years ago.

In my own decades of angling, average fly rods have gotten lighter and longer. Aside from our preferences for fast or flexy, anglers now have fly rod choices of eleven feet or more. These extra-long rods are now reasonable options for trout fishing. But years ago, a rod that long was unwieldy. It was too heavy and too flexible at the tip. Driven by the popularity of euro nymphing and tight line techniques, extra-long rods are offered in two through five weight options.

Ten footers are now quite standard. And many of them are excellent tools that fish well. Most of the two weights that I handle are built with a stiff enough butt section to handle the largest trout you're likely to encounter, and the long rods in four and five weights are light enough to cast all day. It's a good time to be alive.

In short, we're in the golden age of fly rods. And if you want something extra-long in your hands, you have many viable options.

However, just because you *can* buy a great rod that's ten-and-a-half or eleven feet long doesn't mean that you should. I've had friends who bought a long rod and have regretted their decision immediately. Likewise, I've met anglers who wish they'd chosen a longer rod.

So, if you're thinking about a new fly rod (and who isn't), it's helpful to understand the upside and downside of that extra length. Whether your intentions for the new rod are tight line tactics, streamers, dries, or a versatile tool that can easily tackle all of these, the advantages and disadvantages of extra length in a fly rod are important to understand.

Let's talk about it...

The good stuff

There's really one reason to buy a longer rod. Every viable advantage boils down to extra reach. Longer rods allow us to hold more line off the water. And whether that's a fly line or a Mono Rig, keeping material off the water allows for more contact and more control over our flies.

Remember, anything that touches the water drags. And anything that goes under the water drags even more. So if your goal is a dead drift, above or below the surface, the extra reach that a longer rod provides is always welcome.

Understand that an extra foot of fly rod allows us to reach further than just twelve inches. When you do the geometry, an extra foot of fly rod provides about three feet of extra reach at thirty feet. Devin Olsen did the math on this a few years ago, and it's still one of my favourite head-scratching facts.

So, it's the reach. That's the benefit of a longer rod. And there really is no other reason that doesn't come down to the distance gained by fishing a longer rod. It's easier to pick up a dry line for the next cast, because of the extra reach. It's easier to unbutton snagged nymphs, because of the extra reach. And it's easier to guide our flies downstream with that extra reach.

Some argue that a longer rod protects light tippets. And that's fair, but many shorter rods are also made with soft tips for protecting light tippets. That's been done for decades.

Keeping line off the water with the extra reach is helpful for drifting nymphs and dries, but it isn't as important with streamers, because we aren't concerned with a dead drift (usually). And it may not be so beneficial when using tactics that employ a lot of mending. In both of these situations, it might be helpful to have the rod tip closer to us and have that tip be a little more responsive.

Let's get to that next ...

Not so good stuff

While I listed just one main advantage of a longer rod (more reach), I'm about to list numerous disadvantages of extra rod length. But none of these downsides necessarily outweighs the upside of the extra reach gained with a long rod. Not at all. Because keeping line off the water is a very big deal.

Ideally, each angler finds her own points of compromise. Most of us want a rod that's as long as possible but still short enough to mitigate the following disadvantages.

Less accurate

Shorter rods are more accurate. That's a tough one to admit or even understand for some people, but it's true. I know — you're deadly accurate with your favourite fly rod. Right? If you've learned the nuances of your favourite tool, and your technique is solid, then you likely have the necessary accuracy. But you'd be even more accurate with a shorter rod.

With the tip of the fly rod further from your hand, that tip is more difficult to control. And where the tip goes, so goes the line, leader, and fly.

Movements amplified

The small movements we make with our rod hand — the slight twists and pushes of the wrist — are amplified through the length of the rod. And when the energy of those motions reaches the tip, the short, crisp motion we made with our casting hand results in a much larger movement at the tip.

You can demonstrate this easily with a visible test. Stand in casting position and move the rod-hand just one foot through its casting V. Now look up and watch the rod tip. It moves a lot more than twelve inches. Doesn't it? And the longer the rod, the greater is that distance.

So, our rod hand movements are amplified with longer rods. That's not always a bad thing. But for the discussion of accuracy, shorter rods lend you more.

Rod recovery takes longer

Fly rods are designed to flex and recover to a resting state. The best rods flex in all the right ways and then crisply return to straight, where they're ready to flex again. That's rod recovery, and it's the number one difference that I see in high-end rods vs low-end options.

Longer rods take longer to recover because, well . . . there's more rod that has to stop moving. And in my experience, you'll pay a lot to find an extra-long rod that recovers fast enough to be any good.

Rod recovery is also a big factor in the casting accuracy for any style of fly.

And it's even more critical while tight line nymphing. When we are in contact with the nymph, then everything our rod tip does is transmitted to the fly. At the end of our tight line cast, the nymph enters the water, and we gain contact with the fly. If it takes a few seconds for the rod tip to stop bouncing and fully recover, then that's three seconds of wasted drift (possibly more, if the trout are picky enough to reject the fly at distance).

Some of the worst rods on the market are cheaper offerings in the long range of ten or eleven feet or more. The soft tips on these rods take forever to recover, and they are whippy, flexy sticks, good only for lobbing and not casting.

In the trees

This disadvantage is probably obvious. But if not, a broken rod tip thwacked on a tree limb will make it so. I've ruined a few days this way for myself.

Long rods can be difficult to cast in tight cover. When I fish the backcountry, mountain streams, I prefer to fish dry flies. And my choice for thick cover is a seven-and-a-half or an eight-foot rod. If I do plan for underwater presentations in the mountains, I usually choose an eight-and-a-half or nine-foot option, for the extra reach and added ability to keep line off the water.

If you know where your rod tip is, you can cast any length of rod in any cover. But that's overstating the point. The reality is, in a mountain-laurel-choked brookie stream, swing distance for a fly rod is at a premium. And long rods can be a liability. Even on my home stream in the valley, which averages fifty to sixty feet across and is bordered by trees for most of its length, I prefer a rod slightly less than ten feet.

Jammed up

Casting a long rod in tight cover can be uncomfortable. And you might have to force your elbow tight to the body to get the rod tip in the right place.

Likewise, when fishing streamers, extra-long rods can be a liability. With streamers, we use the rod tip to lead the line and the fly on a path. With the rod tip further away, our options for the fly's path are more limited.

Imagine this: Cast up and across-stream to the bank. Now try to lead the streamer directly back to you. If the rod is eleven feet, then holding the rod to your right makes the fly track eleven feet to the right instead of back to your position. But if the rod is eight feet, then the fly tracks three feet closer to you. Extending this principle into real-world fishing quickly reveals the handicap of a longer rod for streamers.

Of course, for many anglers, a long rod is just part of their streamer fishing style. And any tool used well can be the perfect match. But when I'm fishing longer rods with streamers, I feel jammed up too often. My angles are too wide, and I want quicker, tighter control over the path of my fly through the water.

Load time and Loss of power

Long rods generally take longer to load on the backcast than their shorter brothers. Likewise, some power is lost with the extra length. Now, of course, you will find examples where one company's eleven-foot three weight loads faster and is more powerful than the next company's ten-foot three weight. But usually, longer rods have longer load times, and they feel less powerful.

For a good comparison, take one company's nine-foot four weight for a spin, and then try the same company's rod in a ten-footer. The difference is noticeable, and the contrast grows larger in rods over ten feet.

Versatile or specialised?

I choose versatile fly rods because I'm a versatile angler. Fish what works and be ready for anything — It's impractical to carry multiple rods every day, so my favourite tools are the ones that perform many tasks well.

There's a compromise, of course. And my own point of compromise leans toward tight line, Mono Rig, nymphing tactics, because that's what I spend much of my time doing. But my favourite rods are also ready to cast small dries, big nymphs, indicator setups, and streamers large or small.

For me, anything longer than ten feet is too limiting for streamers, and I don't like the way ten-plus feet of a fly rod loads with an attached indicator. All of these rods **can** perform the necessary functions, but how well do they do it? How long does it take for the rod to recover, so it's ready to make the next quick movement? Honestly, I feel handicapped with a specialized rod on the river.

On the other hand, I have friends who spend all their river time just tight lining nymphs. And they have no interest in streamers or dries. So, a specialised rod of eleven feet makes sense to them. (I still prefer the crisp action of a shorter rod).

It's a personal choice. So, consider your goals, understand the pros and cons of a longer rod, and then find your point of compromise. Have fun out there.

Fish hard, friends.

The trout of winter – Conjectures on life and fishing by Todd Tanner



I've been sitting here at the kitchen table, thinking, and I just realized that I haven't been fishing in a long time — more than a month — and that winter is here.

I live in the Rockies, not too far from the Canadian border, and winter is never very far from our consciousness; not even during those spectacular summer months when the sun shows its face for nearly sixteen hours a day. Most summer mornings you can walk outside and feel a hint of winter in the air; an echo of frost, a glimmer of snow up on the highest mountain tops, the sleepy embrace that seems to drop down from the pre-dawn sky and wrap itself around your heart. The first time you notice that frigid touch, it scares you to death. With time, it becomes a drug, and you can't imagine living without it.

I don't have to imagine it now, though. It's here. The snow sits outside my window with the inexhaustible patience of a boreal forest and it seems obvious that we need to pay just a bit more attention to what's going on around us. Every other animal does. Every deer, every coyote, every robin, every bear, every chipmunk — every single animal lives within the immutable rhythm of nature.

For some reason, though, we humans think that we're impervious, that the snow and the cold and the dark can't touch us through the thick down coat of civilization. I guess we all have our delusions. Maybe if you live in Dallas or Atlanta you can even afford them. Up here, in the shadow of glaciers, you have to be careful. Up here your delusions can kill you.

I have a tendency, especially during the summer months, to think of winter as a static thing; a great, frozen, unmoving period of sleep and rest and dreams. Winter isn't really like that, though. Few things in nature are unmoving and unchanging. The human mind draws comfort from the idea that things stay the same, that the way things were yesterday is the way they're going to be tomorrow. Unfortunately, most of the time we're really just grasping at the wind, pretending that life is predictable and orderly while we ignore the shifting reality around us. Life is change and while it slows down a bit during the winter, it doesn't ever stop.

On days when the cold bites, I take solace in this simple fact. It might not be until tomorrow, or next week, or next month, but winter's grip will loosen for a day or two, temperatures will rise into the thirties and forties, and the earth will shift and come awake under her cloak of snow. And when

it happens, I'll head to the river, find a place where the water flows slow and dark and deep, and begin to wade and cast. For trout.

Fly fishing is a summer game. Its rhythms are summer rhythms, quick and light and instinctive. It wasn't meant to be played in the cold and the snow. Unfortunately, my need sometimes grows beyond my sensibilities, and on days when winter pauses, offering a glimmer of spring, I can't always help myself.

I know the trout are there, in the same river where they swim during the summer, maybe in a deeper spot with a slower current, but still within reach. Like everything else around, them, they respond to winter by slowing down and riding it out, the need to swim and feed and reproduce subjugated by the cold. Still, they're alive, and life is an opportunist. At least that's what I tell myself, that's what I'm counting on, when I stand sausage-like in my waders and fleece and wool, hoping for a strike, some trout, for something magical to transport me back to the quick, happy days of summer.

The trout of winter are a different breed of fish, a distant relative of the familiar species we so admire during the warmer months. Their colours seem muted but metallic, the underwater equivalent of sullen winter skies. This could be an adaptation, a measure of camouflage against winter predators like mink and otter that prey on sluggish, cold-blooded fish. Then again, maybe the change is only in my perception, in the way the low angle of the sun and the distant quality of the winter light react with a trout's silvery side.

In the winter, a trout's characteristics change, too; sometimes in manners that would seem impossible to predict. Everyone knows that trout slow down, eat less, and expend less energy during the winter months. But then why do brown trout, the most nocturnal, secretive, deep-diving member of the family, suddenly eschew their normal habits and become a high-flying, acrobatic fish when hooked during the winter?

In the summer, maybe one in five browns will jump when they feel the bite of my hook. When snow covers the banks, though, fully three quarters will leap like they've been shot full of tarpon juice, like they've never jumped before and they're trying to make up for lost time. Yet the rainbows, those kangaroo-cloned rockets of summer, decide to fight deep and dirty when the temperature drops. I see these things over and over, but I can't explain them, and I don't understand them. Sitting here thinking, though, one thing becomes clear. We know so little, so very little. About fish, about life, about ourselves.

Fishing, at least for me, is like dirt, or cement, or epoxy. It fills the holes in my life. I fish when I'm happy, and when I'm upset; when I'm bored and when I'm busy. In the winter, I fish when I'm cold. It doesn't really matter as long as I'm standing in the river, fly rod in hand, the rhythm of the stream laid out for me to read if I'm able.

Winter rhythms are the hardest to discern because they're the most subtle. During the summer, everything is so obvious. Mayflies and caddis hatch in the cool of the morning and evening, clouds and rain and shadows offer protection for nervous fish, bright sunlight slows everything down.

In the winter, however, you're never really sure. Do you want the sun high and strong to warm the water, or do the fish prefer the obscurity of grey, sullen skies? Will the trout want a hearty meal of stonefly or a diminutive taste of midge? How deep is too deep? Your doubts grow and grow, and

the hardest thing is not that you don't know all the answers, but that you can't ever be positive you've asked the right questions.

Once in a while, a trout will take your fly and you'll have the satisfaction of making the right choice, a confirmation of your skill and heart and keen eye. Usually, though, you stew in the juices of self-doubt while your hands and feet and mind go slowly numb from the cold. Winter fishing is a little like that nebulous moment before you ask the new girl to dance. You could be in for the time of your life, but you better be prepared to accept — even to embrace — rejection.

Fly fishing is a solitary sport, best practiced alone. Winter can be the exception to this rule, however. It's not a good idea to be alone in a river where one slip can leave you a certain candidate for hypothermia. In the winter, a fishing partner can be a life saver.

I am a fisherman, though, and I fish whether or not I can find someone to come along. Even in the winter. Existence is full of risks, and I tell myself that knowledge and caution can keep me safe in frigid water, ice and snow. So far, I've been right — at least mostly. If they ever find me, cold and sodden, wedged under some ice-choked log jam, feel free to say, "I told you so."

Despite the danger, there is a purity to being the only person on the stream in the winter. Snow and cold protect you from contamination when you're on the water. The people who despoil — the litterers, the slobs, the polluters who care neither for themselves nor this beautiful treasure of a world — are kept at bay by the harshness of the surroundings. No cigarette butts, no Styrofoam worm containers, no beer cans. Just snow and water and sky. You are alive, alive in every important, meaningful way. You have to be careful, though. It can break your heart.

People are at risk, at risk in a way that trout never are, of losing their connection to the world around us. This is especially true in the winter.

We walk into a room and if it's too dark we turn on a light if it's too cold we turn up the thermostat. Suddenly our needs are met; we're warmed, coddled, illuminated by civilization. The danger is that we can lose the ability to understand, to intuit, to observe anything beyond the most base and obvious things around us. Standing in a stream with ice on the banks, ice in my guides, ice all around, I feel as if I've suddenly been freed from a box, a box that's been shut for so long that I've forgotten how to breath.

We wrap ourselves up in so many things, in texts and e-mails and jobs and deadlines and obligations and the people around us, that it's almost impossible to break free, to feel the weak afternoon sunshine of December or understand the mysterious natural rhythms of a stream. I envy the trout. They're never confused about who they are, or their ultimate purpose on this planet.

The last time I fished, back in October, was on the Henry's Fork. My brother-in-law Pat and I wandered around a stretch where the trout still rose freely regardless of the cool temps and the gleaming patches of snow on the bank. There was a breeze, too — cold and pure, out of the West — and in spite of the fact that the rainbows were gorging themselves on a blanket hatch of BWOs and midges, you had to want to be there. It was cold. Our fingers were numb, and our noses too, and our feet felt like frigid strangers. There are times, even with our warming climate, when winter arrives early in the high country and we get a glimpse of what the upcoming months have in store.

And now it's here. Now we are locked in winter's icy embrace, free to give in, or resist — or both — as the spirit moves us. With December here, and the Holidays growing ever closer, I'm drawn

back to remembrances of winters past, to the days when I post-holed in through knee-deep drifts and found a truth that far too many of us will never realise.

Snow. Cold. Ice. It matters not. The magic never really sleeps.

Taonga of Waikanae River to gain boost from Govt jobs – Kapiti News

Ninety-two jobs will be created in an \$8.5 million investment over four years to supercharge the environmental restoration of the Waikanae River.

The funding, from the Department of Conservation's Jobs for Nature scheme, is specifically focused on restoration through riparian fencing and planting, animal and plant pest control, sustainable land management, community engagement, education, and capacity building.

There will also be integrated provision of engagement, involvement, training, and employment.

"This ensures that iwi and other people can enter the programme at different levels, learn and understand what is required and what is possible, see if the mahi suits them, and build their involvement, skills, and employment options over time," Conservation Minister Kiritapu Allan said.

The new funding builds on the Waikanae ki Uta ki Tai (WKUKT) "mountains to sea" project established in 2019 to restore the river catchment's health.

Both initiatives are a partnership of Waikanae mana whenua Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai (ĀKW), Kāpiti Coast District Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council and the Department of Conservation. A goal of WKUKT is to create a long-term vehicle and legacy for the restoration of the Waikanae awa over decades.

"I am pleased that Jobs for Nature can support the aspirations of our Treaty partner Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai who are the mana whenua and kaitiaki of the Waikanae area," Allan said.

"This investment supports their aspirations as set out in their Kaitiakitanga Plan, which is designed to express the intergenerational values of their tupuna."

The new funding is to support work and employment in the Waikanae area and includes commitments to support development of ĀKW, including on iwi-owned land.

"Jobs for Nature projects not only provide opportunities for local communities but benefit the environment and ultimately all of Aotearoa New Zealand," Allan said.

Kāpiti mayor K Gurunathan said the investment came at a crucial time for both ecological and employment benefit. "We've never seen such a significant central government investment in conservation in Kāpiti, so this is huge win for the coast.

"This will supercharge work to restore our native ecosystem and provide an important employment boost. Half of the 92 jobs are earmarked for iwi and will provide opportunities at all skill levels. "The outcomes of this investment will help enhance the mana of our land and people. I can't wait to see this work begin."

Council biodiversity programme manager Rob Cross said, "This investment will take the tremendous efforts of volunteers and workers to another level in what is an important natural asset. "The Waikanae River catchment is a nationally important taonga and the potential for its ongoing improvement is significant. We can expect to see improved water quality, a thriving natural landscape and greater biodiversity as a result of this work."

Any thoughts on your newsletter by Malcolm Francis

After spending many hours pulling together the Kapiti Fly Fishing Clubs newsletter I sometimes wonder if you as a member enjoy the content of our monthly newsletter, I would be interested in hearing your thoughts.

As I gather the information over the weeks preceding its publication I try and find a wide range of interesting topics from within New Zealand and overseas. One of the greatest sources of information on fly-fishing comes out of America, which is reflected in this newsletter content, as an example the article on 'The Pros and cons of Longer Fly Rod by Domenick Swentosky' which I found really interesting to read. If you come across an interesting article that you think will be of interest to our members, please email it to me and I will include in the following months newsletter.

The best material for any newsletter is the stories provided by members, more so if they are accompanied by a photo or two. A good example of this is Hugh article on a recent Whanganui trip in this month's newsletter. A short overview of the fishing and a few photos is all that's needed, so keep this in mind when you are next out on the water.

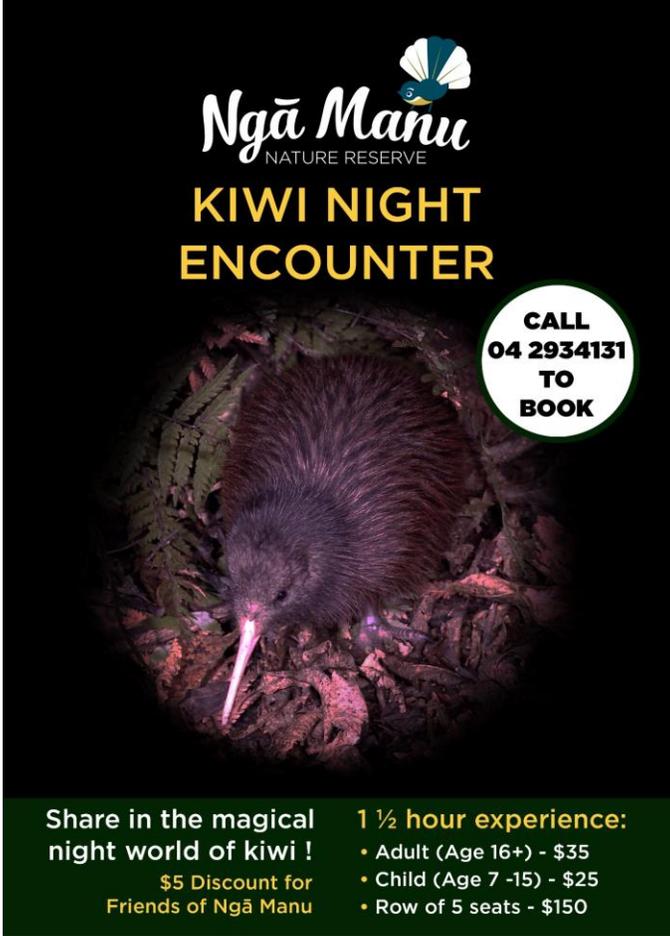
This summer I think we are going to see more New Zealand anglers out on our local waters and some of our well-known rivers within the Wellington Region, we have seen an increase in the sale of New Zealand residents licences. This is one of the benefits from the lack of overseas anglers heading over here to fish our pristine rivers and lakes, so remember if you are heading away on holiday don't forget to pack your fly-fishing gear.

The Brown Trout Story of New Zealand

Fly fisherman and historian Jack Kós delves into the backcountry and the archives as he explores the introduction of brown trout to New Zealand. One hundred and fifty years since the first ova was hatched out near the Avon River, The Introduction reveals the efforts that brought trout to New Zealand and the challenges faced moving forward.

<https://youtu.be/SUqrgGPMcO8?t=6>

I would like to take this opportunity of wishing all members and their family a very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year, look forward to seeing you on Monday 25 January. Warm regards Malcolm



The poster features the Ngā Manu Nature Reserve logo at the top, which includes a stylized kiwi bird icon. Below the logo, the text 'KIWI NIGHT ENCOUNTER' is written in large, bold, yellow letters. A central image shows a kiwi bird in its natural habitat, illuminated by a spotlight. To the right of the kiwi, a white circular call-to-action contains the text 'CALL 04 2934131 TO BOOK'. At the bottom, a dark green banner contains two columns of text: 'Share in the magical night world of kiwi !' with a '\$5 Discount for Friends of Ngā Manu' below it, and '1 ½ hour experience:' followed by a list of prices: '• Adult (Age 16+) - \$35', '• Child (Age 7 -15) - \$25', and '• Row of 5 seats - \$150'.

Since the last newsletter, the breeding Kiwi's at Nag Manu have produced two new young Kiwi chicks who have joined us at Nga Manu. The breeding Kiwis have now laid yet another egg which is fertile and if all goes well and it hatches it will stay with its parents.

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

malcolm1@xtra.co.nz

Purpose:

To promote the art and sport of Fly Fishing.

To respect the ownership of land adjoining waterways.

To promote the protection of fish and wildlife habitat.

To promote friendship and goodwill between members.

To promote and encourage the exchange of information between members.

Club meetings

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

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

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

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

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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

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