



Kapiti Fly Fishing Club

October 2021 Newsletter



Are you planning to attend this year's Christmas Dinner on Wednesday 17 November at 7:00pm if so, please make sure you have registered with Greg du Bern as seats are limited.



This month's cover photo: Photo of the Waikanae River taken on 1 October where I saw more trout than actual anglers – photo taken by Malcolm Francis

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Club activities

Date	Event	Coordinator
Monday 25 October	Club night – Fishing Waikanae on the water	Malcolm
Sunday 7 November	McWilliams Shield competition Hutt River	Malcolm
Wednesday 17 November	Clubs Christmas Dinner – Waikanae Boating Club	Greg du Bern
Monday 22 November	Club night - Dan Brizzle and Hamish McDonald fishing the Manawatu River TBC	Malcolm

At this months club meeting on Monday 25 October, we will explore the challenges of fishing the Waikanae River and members are encouraged to share their secretes.

Presidents report

I woke on the morning of 1 October to what looked like a great day for Opening Day so headed out expecting to see a few anglers on the river enjoying Opening Day and the great day. Well, I was in for a surprise, arriving at the Greenway carpark and not another car in sight. The river looked in great condition and I soon spotted my first trout as I headed downstream to the Domain, I crossed over the bridge and then headed up-stream towards to Old Sate Highway Bridge stopping off at different areas to take a look along the river and not an angler to be seen.

During my walk I only spotted a total of seven trout reinforcing that the number of trout continue to decline, and it is easy to see why as there is a huge build-up of gravel throughout the river and a decline in habitat. Normally on Opening Day you would see a few anglers on the river but not today, thankfully as I was heading towards Cooke Park, I spotted two familiar faces walking towards me rods in hand, Wayne and Aussies were heading down to the Domain and then fishing back to their car. Not sure how successful they were but I hope they managed to hook one of the trout I spotted below Greenway carpark.

At the last Fish and Game Council meeting Matt Kavermann presented his report on the results of the Regions Drift Dive results and the report made for interesting reading, rivers like the Ruamahunga Moawhanga and Hutt have seen an increase while over our side of the Region we have seen a major decline. You only need to walk the Waikanae River and you can see why there has been a reduction in trout numbers, the build up of gravel has destroyed the habitat for both trout and our native fish.

I would like to thank all those member who participated in the Covid Survey that Greg sent out to all members, obtaining your feedback on the present Covid-19 restrictions was important so that the Management Committee could review the clubs policy. We have now received the clubs policy and decided that as long as we meet the required restrictions, we would formally meet under Level 2. Once the new Covid Lights System is introduced we will be easier moving forward and provide people with the opportunity of returning back to some form of normality in our lives.

One Wednesday 17 November at 7:00pm we will be holding our Christmas Dinner at the Waikanae Boating Club; you will be offered a three-course meal at a cost \$45.00 per person. Sue and I attended last year's dinner and we both were impressed with the excellent quality of the food and services, make sure you put your names down with Greg.

The committee is in the process of planning a few club trips for next year both weekend and one-day trips, if you have a favourite river or would like to explore new water, please let me or one of the Committee members know and we add it to the list.

At this month's Club night, I and other members of the club will share a few secrets on fishing the Waikanae River, so I hope to see you there.

In the meantime, enjoy your long weekend and take care,



Warm regards Malcolm

Fly Casting Tuition by Gordon Baker

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

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

Mid-Week Fishing trips by Hugh

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

hugh.driver.nz@gmail.com

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

If you are interested in participating on any mid-week fishing trips, please email Hugh Driver with your contact details and you will be added to the email list.

KFFC Covid-19 Strategy by Malcolm Francis

The KFFC Committee has agreed to modify the club's Covid-19 policy. This is driven by the negative impact that the current policy has on club activities and trips while Covid-19 Level 2 restrictions continue over an extended period of time. We discussed the result from the Members Survey and the majority of club members who responded to the survey supported a change to allow Club meetings, trips, and other activities to occur under Covid-19 Level 2 restrictions, provided that each event is managed in accordance with all current Government rules and guidelines at that time.

The committee would like to ensure that all club participants to KFFC events and activities are fully vaccinated and are willing to prove their vaccinated status on entry to any event, activity, or trip. If members are not fully vaccinated or unwilling to share their vaccination status with members, then the Committee requests that they do not attend Club activities until they are fully vaccinated and willing to prove their vaccination status.

This policy is to protect the public health of all club members and to ensure that members have the best protection from infection, with the additional aids of mask wearing, hand washing and social distancing. This policy will commence from 18th October 2021

Fly Pattern of the Month – The Emerger



Klinkhammer Special and May Fly Emerger

Emergers are an essential addition to any fly box. All aquatic insects go through this stage in their life cycles. They are particularly vulnerable in or near the surface and are very attractive to trout.

We will tie a Klinkhammer Special and a generic Mayfly emerger. These patterns are easy to tie and suit our zoom fly-tying sessions where one on one tuition isn't available.

- Hook:** TMC 2457 or 2487 and TMC 3769 or 9300 sizes 12-16
- Thread:** Black 6/0 or 8/0
- Body:** Dubbed fur or quill
- Wing:** White Poly yarn or calf body hair for Klinkhammer and duck, partridge, or similar feather fibres for the Mayfly.
- Thorax:** Dubbed fur
- Hackle:** Grizzly or brown

Please note that if the next fly-tying meeting is held at the Waikanae Boating Club at 7.30pm **Tuesday 9th November you will need to** bring your club membership card. If you haven't received yours yet you may do so at either the club or fly-tying meeting. If we are unable to meet there will probably be another Zoom meeting.

Feather Merchants (NZ) sponsor our fly-tying group. Go to their website www.flyshop.co.nz to see their wide range of top-quality tying materials, tools and flyfishing accessories.



Kapiti Women on the Fly by Leigh Johnson

Kapiti Women on the Fly held their second event on Tuesday 19th October. We met at Jenny Tracey's home on the Otaki River, where our small group was joined by two ladies who had never held a fly rod.

The two complete novices received an introduction into casting, while the rest of us spent time learning to read the water, line control and double hauling. (Thanks Gordon.)



Our next session will be a further casting class on the grass, after which we are planning a trip to the Hutt River.

You can contact me on leigh@leighjohnsonnz.com or follow our activities at www.facebook.com/WomenontheFlyKapiti

If you have a mother, sister, partner, daughter, or boss who is curious about fly fishing, please bring them to a club meeting or contact me directly at leigh@leighjohnsonnz.com.
Many thanks Leigh

Fly Rods for SALE by Aussie Perry

Composite Developments Fly Rod 8 Weight XLS a New Zealand made rod and in excellent near new condition.

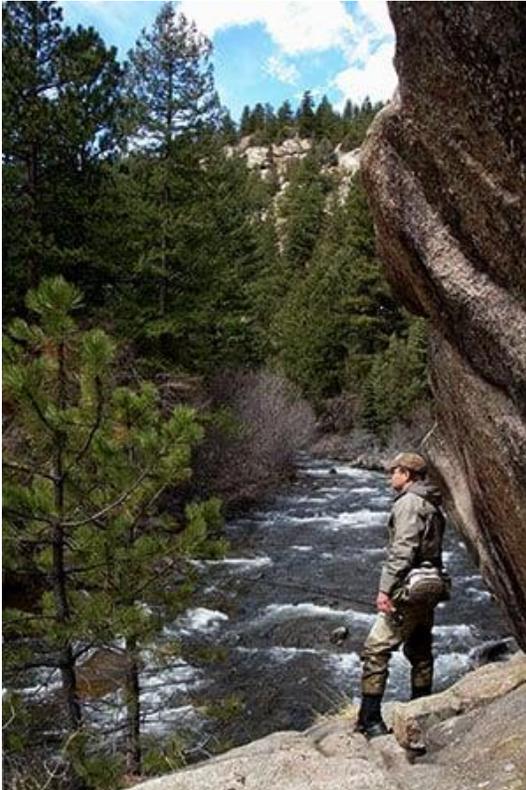
Comes with Okuma reel and 3 extra spools, the spools have three different sinking lines that would be great for river and lake fishing, can be viewed by arrangement.

Asking price \$600.00

Please contact Aussie Perry on 027 407 2160

“You’re a River” by Erin Block

“In a life properly lived, you’re a river. You touch things lightly or deeply; you move along because life herself moves, and you can’t stop it.”



The floods rearranged us. Drainage after drainage across the Front Range. Rains came down just like for Noah in the Sunday School song, and if you were of a religious bent, the prayers went up. But they just kept keeping on, anyways. Concrete buckled, crumbled like stale saltines into soup.

Driveways disappeared; gas lines broke, well-water turned to dirt. Roads closed because they weren’t there to be open anymore.

The rain began on September 9 and settled in like a head cold. Cordwood and Tonka trucks flushed down the canyon like fish in a toilet bowl.

A deer carcass clogged a culvert. Birds didn’t sing. All you could hear was water.

We ate through the freezer and pantry and drank through the booze. Rationed supplies like you read about in turn of the century adventure books—where someone always eats someone else, eventually. I tend to over-buy now. Stock up. Because you just never know. Same way as I never let my truck get below half a tank. Perhaps that comes from being raised protestant, always planning for the worst, hoping for the best. Or growing up in a state with long stretches of lonesome.

After a few weeks Gross Dam Road re-opened, winding down to South Boulder Creek and back up the canyon before switch backing Flagstaff Mountain on its descent into Boulder. It’s a popular section of the creek with anglers, there below the dam, staying open for most of the winter and only a short walk to access. And it has the most beautiful rainbows I’ve ever seen. My commute time doubled, the cabin’s roof started leaking around the chimney, and the driveway needed some fill dirt, but that was the worst of the floods for me. Which is to say, I was lucky.

Parts of the Gross Road were still missing, gnawed on the edges by rising water and debris. And gullies washed out at curves and draws, like when you leave the hose running in the driveway and return to a miniaturized alluvial fan, as if for a museum diorama you made off the cuff. It would be impressive if it wasn’t a waste.

I wondered what the fishing would be like when things got back to normal, whatever the new normal might be. Because I know everything that's come before continues. Memories, people, dreams—in one way or another there's always a "downstream." Always a scar if you know where to look. My mother even says there's dinosaurs in our dust.

It was over a year ago now that Highway 72 re-opened. With smooth pavement, solid yellow lines, ribbon cut by the governor. Yet high-water marks remain on roadside conifers. Grasses clump, wrapped around trunks like the beginning of a basket weaving, waiting for skilled and patient hands. The boat that was twisted in the same way was hauled away some time ago.

Access to the river re-opened too, and while there are lingering concerns about dispersion and construction pollution for populations in drainages farther north, my home waters seem okay. At least, things look the same. It was a bit like going home after things have changed on the inside—you've been divorced, grandpas have died, dogs have died; you've been remarried, you've lost your faith. *Things got rearranged.* But the front door's still there and still opens. And so, you walk in, just like you never left.

And the rainbows are still there and still gorgeous.

When I moved into this canyon my neighbour Tom came across the road to give me some Sears coupons. For a snow blower, he said, "you'll need it." And *as long as he was over*, he wanted to know why I didn't have a husband and warned me about bears that would break into the cabin at even the faintest smell of bacon. *Freeze your fat*, he said. *And get a man.*

His old-army-drill-sergeant bullshitting aside, the *one* thing of interest he said was that there used to be trout in the creek that runs between us, on his side of the road. It was a trickle then, mid-July, and I was sceptical. But a few years later when I picked up a fly rod for the first time, I remembered what he said. And wondered.

Late last spring I was walking my dog, taking a hard-right from the dirt road over the creek that was now wider with stretchmarks and scars, and back on to the hardtop, a shadow caught my eye from a pool off to the left. I've always kept in mind what Tom said and checked here for trout. It seemed promising yet never showed a thing. But standing there, that shadow turned into a handful of fingerling trout, feeding on a caddisfly hatch at the head of the run. *Private Property: No Trespassing* signs are posted, so I just look from the road. I'll never cast a fly to them, but each time I pass I check if they're still there.

I wonder where they came from, somewhere upstream. From a heritage-population of miner-placed trout, maybe, along this old supply road to Blackhawk and Silver City. Or a privately-owned pond, stocked just for kicks and giggles and grandkids.

In the canyons we were all touched by the floods, "lightly or deeply," as Jim Harrison writes of water. We were all rearranged. The wildlife and trout, too. And they remind me that though I'd like for rains to stop and creeks to stay in-banks, and for my well-laid plans to work as a corduroy road, slapdash getting me places I think I need to go faster than I know I should, "*life herself moves, and you can't stop it.*" All I can do is move along, and dodge debris when needed.

Keeping critters moving in rivers by Diane McCarthy

Expanding fish passage work on the Rangitaiki River to the rest of the Bay was the challenge put before Bay of Plenty regional councillors during a presentation by ATS Environmental director Kelly Hughes recently.



A section of the Rangitaiki River

Hughes was invited to address a Zoom meeting of the council's monitoring and operations committee during which he talked about his fish passage barrier remediation work in the region, primarily on the Rangitaiki River.

The project aims to allow native freshwater fish species to move from the ocean to their upstream breeding grounds.

During his presentation Hughes suggested the creation of a new role within the council for a fish care co-ordinator, to bring together work going on across the departments of the council and with other organisations such as the Department of Conservation and Fish and Game and also to promote engagement with iwi.

He said the role would also involve co-ordinating the more efficient use of available funds and talking to the road transport authorities about their obligations and contributions to fixing their structures.

"The regional council has historically done the assessment for free and the fix for free, and I think we're getting close to the time when that needs to change.'

"I think that would be easier to negotiate if we had a person dedicated to knowing what's going on where and to speak directly to consultants and engineers about doing the right thing on public roads, because we are primarily talking about culverts and the likes."

The report was the result of three or four years or more of surveys in the Bay, and funding that had come from the coastal catchments budget through the Rangitaiki River Forum which had so far resulted in 3570 fish passages installed in the Rangitaiki catchment on private and publicly owned structures.

Hughes estimated there were around 12,000 structures in waterways across the Bay. His findings in work on the Rangitaiki River, which is still in progress, showed 989 structures in the waterway, 50 percent of which posed barriers to fish either by being perched higher than the water flow or by having increased velocity of water flow through the structure.

These barriers could be remediated by floating ramps for swimming fish and mussel ropes for eels and banded kōkopu and the like, to overcome the lip of a culvert and baffles through the structure to create depth and rest pools. He said 99 percent of these barriers required low level fixes costing under \$200.



One of the floating ramps

Larger jobs such as tide gates, weir removal and larger urban culverts, which in some cases can be as long as 1.2 kilometres, can cost as much as \$30,000.

He said some specialist work was required that made it difficult to be carried out by volunteer community groups, although their help was welcomed.

Plans for future

Looking ahead, Hughes said he wanted to continue to remediate those structures identified as barriers in the Rangitaiki, gain access to survey structures not yet assessed on private farmland and forests and plan monitoring cycles with the regional councils and road transport authorities.

He also wants to expand the project and train people to build capacity for doing the assessment, the remediation and ongoing monitoring.

"We look forward to watching your work closely, because we know it's important to iwi, to everyone really in terms of allowing these little critters to go up and down their home space," said committee chairman Kevin Winters.

Nobody Home – Nobody Hungry by Domenick Swentosky



Steve fired one more pinpoint cast with his Sparrow to the edge of the seam, tucking it beyond the shade line and deftly driving enough slack upstream of the large dry fly to grant it the necessary freedom. Bobbing and weaving downstream, the Sparrow drifted for twelve feet. It was a damn fine cast, and I stood back to admire my friend's proficiency. This was his third delivery, all with seemingly identical presentations, because Steve had a plan from the beginning. I noticed that he added a little curve at the end of the last cast to place the leader's butt section parallel with the seam and gain another six inches of drift before drag set in. Artful stuff.

When the Sparrow skittered across the surface and into the sun, Steve drew a quick figure-eight in the air and finished with a lift of the rod tip that delivered his favourite dry fly directly to the palm of his hand. Another magic trick.

Steve turned to face me. I'd been watching from his offside — out of range for average casting angles. And now my friend grinned, shrugged, and waded my way.

"Nobody home," Steve said.

It was one of his favourite expressions about a river when a trout didn't eat.

"Nobody hungry," I countered.

We hit the riverbank, crossed the bridge and started a walk that would lead us over crunchy gravel before turning to dirt and ending in overgrown brush.

"Either one," my friend replied.

Nobody?

So, is there a difference between nobody home and nobody hungry?

Sure, there is.

And does it matter?

Sure, it does.

Nobody home means there are no trout in the slot you were fishing. And sometimes that's true.

I meet a lot of people who have trouble believing that trout are holding in the area they've chosen for the cast. I sympathize with that, because I've fished a lot of water over the years that held very few trout. But long ago, I learned one key trick to good fishing — believe in every cast. There's no point throwing the fly until you've convinced yourself that some trout exists. (The fisherman is eternally hopeful).

Nobody hungry suggests that a trout might be in the slot but he either isn't eating, isn't buying what you're selling, or he doesn't like the way you are selling it.

I tend to believe that nobody hungry is more often true. Usually, I think that one or more trout see my fly on every drift, or I wouldn't have put it there in the first place. (And the fisherman is eternally hopeful).

If you believe nobody is home, it makes good sense to move on and cover more water. Look for trout in other areas and test new waters. And if you believe nobody is hungry then you really have a few options. You can change flies, change presentations, or move on to find trout that *ARE* hungry.

So, which one is it? Nobody home or nobody hungry? I don't know. It's your river. But I wouldn't assume one or the other without a real good reason.

Fish hard, friends.



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How to build a better Euro-nymphing leader and detect more strikes by George Daniel



Forget tapers, go thin for the win

When I was learning nymphing in the 1990s, it was commonly said that 50 percent of all strikes went undetected by the angler. In other words, half the time a trout ate your fly, you didn't know it. Given the tools and approaches most often employed back then, I'd wager that estimate probably held water. But, more recently, technology—whether by producing advancements in fly rod construction and design or by facilitating an explosion in the exchange of ideas and information through online communication platforms—has driven a series of evolutionary jumps in fly fishing that have changed the way we fish.

This phenomenon is perhaps best exemplified by the ever-accelerating Euro nymphing craze, where advancements in fly rod design have dramatically changed how naturally and effectively anglers can present flies below the surface where, it's worth noting, trout do the vast majority of their feeding. Today's nymphing angler can improve greatly upon the 50 percent rule of yesteryear. In fact, I'd venture to say that a talented angler using the right tools and approach, can detect most strikes—perhaps as much as 90 percent.

The right approach

Such a level of success using Euro-nymphing techniques is achieved through the use of a customized leader that enhances your ability to detect strikes, one that is a modification of—or evolution of—a “traditional” Euro-nymphing mono rig. If you're not familiar with mono rigs, they involve using a very long leader which acts not only as your leader and tippet, but as your fly line, as well. That's right, no fly line. But how do you cast a fly rod without fly line? That's a good question. And so, before we discuss our custom leader formula for better strike detection, we should talk about modern Euro-nymphing rods.

The right tool

Although there is no shortage of rods designed specifically for Euro-nymphing, I define a Euro-nymphing rod as one that is long and has a soft tip. The soft (often very soft) tips these rods feature offer two important advantages. First, softer tips enhance strike detection as more strikes are seen and felt with softer tips. Second, and equally important, softer tips allow anglers to cast light rigs because they require so little mass in order to load the rod. Traditional action fly rods are designed to cast fly lines, which have significant mass—making it incredibly difficult to cast long, light Euro leaders or mono rigs with traditional fly rods.

Go thin for the win

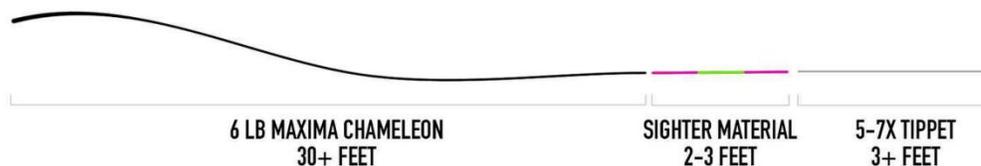
Most fly anglers are well-versed on the notion of slack. Depending on the situation and tactic being employed, an angler might want more or less slack in their fly presentation. Too little slack causes flies to move unnaturally in the water. Too much slack takes an angler out of touch with his or her flies, making hook sets and strike detection far more difficult. In the world of Euro-nymphing, slack is represented by sag. That is, the sag of your leader either between the tip of your rod and your flies, or between the guides of your fly rod. Any sag occurring within a Euro-nymphing rig both inhibits and delays strike detection. The less sag, then, the better. But, beyond using sound tactics, how do we reduce sag? The answer is by reducing mass.

The less mass hanging you have within and outside the guide of your fly rod, the less sag that occurs between you and your flies. The smaller the diameter of your line or leader, the less mass it will have. Smaller diameter lines also offer increased sensitivity, further enhancing strike detection. Many of today's top Euro-nymphing anglers are using ultra-thin Euro leaders, where the thickest part of the entire line/leader setup may not exceed a 4X diameter.

The leader I'm currently using for most of my Euro-nymphing is constructed using a very simple formula. You can also feel free to substitute any of the materials — as long as you remain focused on keeping your leader thin through the use of low diameter materials.

The formula

The leader I'm currently using for most of my Euro-nymphing is constructed using a very simple formula. You can also feel free to substitute any of the materials — as long as you remain focused on keeping your leader thin through the use of low diameter materials.



I don't use tippet rings with this ultralight system, as I feel that even the meagre weight of the rings may introduce hinging. Instead, form my connections with surgeon's or blood knots. If you prefer to use tippet rings, then go as small as possible to reduce mass.

To determine the length of the terminal tippet section, I guess at the average depth of the water I'm fishing and add 1-2 feet in length, to ensure the sighter material remains off the water. For example, if I guess the run, I'm fishing to be around 3 feet deep, I'll make my tippet section 4-5 feet long.

Wrapping up

Using smaller diameter materials doesn't just increase sensitivity, their lack of mass also allows your flies to sink faster and drift more naturally. In fact, when fishing this ultralight Euro leader, you might be amazed how little weight is required to drift nymphs deep in the water column. It's for this reason that, even when fishing bigger water for large fish, I'll often use 6X tippet.

If you find these thinner materials challenging to manage with your line hand, it may be best to start with somewhat larger diameters. Once you get the feel for things, graduate to thinner materials. Finally, take care to check local regulations to make sure monofilament-only rigs are legal on the waters you fish.

Grim picture of NZ waterways on World Rivers



Freshwater monitoring published this morning shows two-thirds of New Zealand River sites are ecologically impaired.

The Land Air Water Aotearoa project - a collaboration between central and local government, NIWA and the Cawthron Institute - has compiled results from more than 1500 sites in their new summary.

The release, timed for World Rivers Day 2021 today, found that poorer sites were generally in urban and pasture-dominated catchment areas.

"Our analysis shows that impaired ecological health is evident at almost two-thirds of monitored river sites in New Zealand," said project member and Cawthron Freshwater Ecologist Dr Roger Young in a statement.

"New Zealand's primary indicator of faecal bacterial contamination shows a similarly poor pattern with two-thirds of sites receiving undesirable grades for E. coli.

"The poorest results are found at sites in urban catchments, followed by pasture, then exotic forest. Unsurprisingly, the best ecological health is usually found in streams draining native vegetation."

An interactive map on the LAWA website shows the geographical spread of state and trend results against freshwater indicators in the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.

LAWA river quality lead and Auckland Council lead water scientist Dr Coral Grant said the results pinpoint where problem areas are.

"Exploring the LAWA website river quality map provides an overview of where the challenges are for each indicator," she said in a statement. "This reflects our findings that the poorest results are often found in the most modified environments."

"While urban rivers and streams make up only 1 percent of total river length in New Zealand, they flow through areas of significant land cover transformation and four out of five monitored urban waterway sites are showing signs of severe pollution or nutrient enrichment."

The policy statement for freshwater management requires every regional and unitary council, in consultation with its community, to develop a comprehensive plan for maintaining or improving the state of freshwater.

Hawke's Bay Regional Council chief executive and Ministry for the Environment Freshwater Implementation Group member James Palmer said over the coming years regional councils and unitary authorities will be working with communities to develop plans.

"While a lot of work has been done in many catchments across Aotearoa, it will take time and sustained effort to bring some of our more compromised rivers to a desired state.

"World Rivers Day seeks to raise awareness of the value of waterways and the threats they face to encourage improved stewardship. Here in New Zealand, we care deeply about the health of our waterways and the data released today by the LAWA project further reinforces how much work lies ahead to restore our rivers."

Land Air Water Aotearoa project chair Dr Tim Davie who is also the director of science at Environment Canterbury said there has been a lot of hard work going into improving freshwater quality.

But change has been slow to happen, and the results were "slightly disappointing."

The Full Pint Streamer by Domenick Swentosky



The Full Pint is one of the only permanent additions to my streamer box in the last few years. I test a lot of patterns against my confidence line-up, and very few flies make the cut. My box of long flies covers all the bases, really. And because I'm (mostly) a minimalist, I don't add anything that is similar to the other flies that I already carry.

But the Full Pint dazzled trout at the first dance. It had a big showing the first time out. Then, day after day when I set the hook on a swirl or felt the jolting stop of a large trout slam the fly in mid-strip, I marvelled at the Pint's effectiveness.

Trout eat it. What else can I tell you? Like my favourite Bunny Bullet Sculpin, trout commit more to this fly than so many others.

They don't just chase it. ***They want to eat it.***

The Full Pint is the two-hooked big brother of my Half Pint streamer. Inspired by the Moto's Minnow, I adapted colours and changed materials to suit my needs. Like all fly tyers, I used the materials and the look that I already had confidence in, added a little of this and took away some of that. I brought those confidence materials onto a streamer platform and whip finished.

So, when the Half Pint rose to the top of my streamer list on my home waters, I articulated it for some more aggressive trout — the ones that are on the hunt for something even bigger — fish that can handle a Full Pint.

Full Pint Streamer Recipe

Thread: White Uni Thread 6/0

Hooks: TMC784 or Gamakatsu B10 (size 4 rear and 2 at the front)

Connecting wire: Sanyo's Thin Intruder with 6mm red-orange acrylic bead

Weight: 15 wraps of 0.25 Lead Wire

Tail:	Tan Marabou
Body and Collar Dubbing:	Hareline Superfine Sulphur Orange
Body:	Mallard flank natural and Mallard dyed Wood Duck
Conehead:	Large Copper Cone front hook

Hooks

The Full Pint is about 3.5 inches long, with a Gamakatsu #2 on the front and a #4 on the back. That's right in the sweet spot of "big enough to catch the interest of the largest trout in the river," and small enough to hook average fish as well. So, it's a fun size to fish. Use larger hooks if you want to go longer, of course.

For a Half Pint you use just the single hook.

The junction of Sanyo's wire is stiff, allowing for the motion of the back fly to happen at the ring of the eye and not in the material of the junction. The hooks foul less with this type of articulation.

Conehead

Copper heads are the perfect match for the body colour of the Pint. Gold seems a little too bright. And I like the patina that copper takes on over time. Some days the flat dark copper of a well-used copper conehead makes all the difference. So don't throw away an old fly that's lost some shine.

The Bead

The 6mm acrylic bead is red/orange. I prefer plastic rather than glass because I believe lighter weight at the junction allows for more movement at the back half of the fly. I use these beads for articulation on many of my two-hooked flies. And on the Pint, it's the perfect contrast.

The colour of these beads is the same colour of the Nuke Egg patterns that work so well for me all winter long around here. It's a turn-on for trout, and there's no doubt about it. I know the bead draws strikes.

(On the Half Pint, I tie a hot orange thread band at the back of the fly, just before the tail. The mallard flank envelopes the hot spot, and the orange peaks through. It's a great look.)

Tail

Tan marabou matches the body. I like it full and a little longer than the shank of the hook. I know it's popular to add Flashabou or Krystal flash to the tail, and for a long time I included a couple strands of peacock herl (like the Moto's Minnow). But these days I mostly leave it off since I seem to do just as well without it.

Body and Collar Dubbing

The sulphur-orange dubbing is a good addition, and it's there to fill in space on the hook. Although dry fly dubbing may seem like an odd choice, I like the shimmer. It provides a subtle flash and a little contrast. It's also the same dubbing I encountered thirty years ago ...

Body

In my early teens, my uncle gave me some streamers that were tied by *his* uncle. They were two-inch long creations with three simple materials: a yellow-orange dubbing, mallard flank and copper wire. My uncle called the pattern a Spook. It took trout easily, and before I wore out the flies that were given to me, I created my own copies.

As an adult, I learned that the wild trout in my area were often in need of something with a wider profile. And when I first saw the Moto's Minnow, I immediately knew how to convert the confidence I had in the Spook to a new fly.

Marrying the designs of these two patterns proved to be a winner.

Building the body with pinched-in pieces of mallard flank allows me more control over the length of the fly than wrapping the feathers. I usually pinch in pieces around the shank for the back part of the fly, then I find feathers with the right length to wrap for the front half.



Mallard Flank — the main ingredient in a Full Pint

Most of the feathers are mallard flank that's dyed a wood duck colour. Natural mallard flank (a cream/white) is used for accent and to improve the mottled appearance that is a key trigger for trout.

Importantly, the dubbing is used again near the head — at the collar — to build up the body just below the level of the conehead. Then the final feathers of mallard flank are added. And a last bit of dubbing is wrapped for a finished collar.

The fly looks a little raggedy after the whip finish, but it simply needs all the fibers to blend together. And for this, a toothbrush is the right tool. Fluff it up and bring the fibers together. The river will do the rest.

It's a Full Pint

At my tying desk one night, I leaned back into the shadows bordering the radius of my desk lamp. I reached for the full glass of Southern Tier IPA. I took a long, satisfied drink and returned

the glass into the light of the lamp, directly beside the streamers I'd been tying. The head of the beer, mixed with the copper, yellow and tan of the liquid in the glass was the same colour scheme as the fly next to it.

Sometimes it takes decades for a good thing to fully develop. That night, my favourite streamer finally gained a proper name.

The Full Pint and the Half Pint are killers.



P.S. About the Half Pint

I've received a lot of inquiries about the Half Pint, since the day I published this Full Pint article. Honestly, the Half Pints in my box get more of a workout than their big brothers. Half Pints just seem to go down easier for a trout.

The Half Pint is, well . . . just half of the Full Pint. There are two things to consider.

First, I prefer a Daiichi 2461 #4 for the Half Pint, it's the perfect single hook streamer choice.

Second, I still want the red/orange colour at the rear of the Pint. because I strongly believe it's a trigger. Previously, I used a small orange bead hanging from the rear of the Half pint, threaded on a piece of Maxima Chameleon. Now, I simply add a hot orange thread band on the body, just in front of the tail. As described above, the mallard flank envelopes the hot spot, and the orange colour peaks through. I love the look.



Fish hard, friends.

Editor's note: If you are interested in tying this excellent lure you will be able to purchase the materials from the Fly Shop who sponsor our fly-tying materials each month. There is an excellent video on tying this fly, just copy the following address into your search engine.

<https://youtu.be/2ERstnHmwEk>

Roll on Spring by George Mismirigo

Sometimes when you go away fishing you just cannot help having that foreboding feeling, an uneasiness that maybe this latest trip should possibly be postponed. Before you leave home, you have kept an eye on the weather maps in the newspaper, listened daily to the radio reports for a week before hand, checked out the long-range forecasts and finally taken one last look at the river levels and flow metering for the region you intend to visit by logging on the web. Having done all of this and being satisfied that everything is perfect or as near as! All you have to do then is go away and have a good time, try to catch heaps of trout, and get over your exhaustion by sitting in the sun for an hour, with a mug of coffee and a sandwich to help revive the tired muscles.

On the other hand, should Mr Doubt be sitting on your shoulder, you can always call off your trip or postpone it, can't you? Well, the short answer to that question for me was, "No" not when I was meeting up with my mate George from the North Island. I hadn't seen him for over a year and having already delayed the trip previously by six weeks, due to a friend of his having an accident; it was down to having to go. So, the timing was wrong, the weather was wrong, and our choice of rendezvous was wrong too. We could have chosen Tahiti or Rarotonga, but we had agreed to meet up in Twizel and revisit the same spots in the Mackenzie Basin as last year.

The heavy rain from Dunedin to Oamaru had petered out by Duntroon and then changed to almost gale force winds from Kurow. Lakes Waitaki, Aviemore and Benmore were all over full, with metre high white caps breaking all over, but the brilliant blue sky with cotton wool clouds was starting to sweeten my day as I drove along the final straight towards the Mackenzie Country.

Pulling into Parklands Motor Camp, I recounted the tremendous week we had and all the fish we caught in 2008 and weighed up our chances of a repeat performance this visit. Walking up to the reception counter, I was only halfway through a warm greeting from Maree who co-owns the camp with her husband Graham, when George burst through the door, fishing rod in hand, looking resplendent in waders, jacket, and hat, all ready to go. Never mind any friendly or even formal greeting, his first words were, ***"Come on then, let's be off, I've been waiting for you all morning!"***

Quickly completing the registration form and paying for my room, I took two minutes to place a few things inside and then unhooked my wee boat. George enthusiastically pushed it round the corner of the building to the boat parking area and then climbed in the passenger seat of my wagon, his face showing a grin that stretched almost ear to ear.

The Tekapo canal basin was George's first choice of destination, so having only arrived not ten minutes earlier, I was driving off down the road in the company of my very chatty mate. The whole Mackenzie basin area is notoriously an extremely very dry one, producing some of the finest, record clips of merino wool in the country. Looking all around me as I drove, I couldn't miss the many pools of water lying in low areas and along the road edges, an obvious indication of long periods of heavy rain.

The Twizel River was higher than I have ever seen it and further down the road at Lake Pukaki, the indicator marker was showing the level at more than 10 metres above the same time last year, which by any standards was an awful lot of water! There was no easing of force in the wind by the

time we arrived at the basin and the vicious wind chill coming from the direction of Mount Cook, meant hoods needed to be tied down over our hats to keep them from blowing away.



Checking the wind!

Even with our backs to the wind we gave up after only an hour, the constant risk of being blown into the water from the rocks was too much, so we moved on in search of a more sheltered spot.

We drove to and then from the Haldon arm of Lake Benmore, over to Lake Ruataniwha and then took the back road to Lake Ohau, before retreating back to camp for some anti-freeze and a hot meal and hope for things to improve!

The next morning, I took off before dawn to the head of Lake Pukaki, it was much the same as our previous day, just with a little additional water added over night. I did manage to land the strangest looking brown trout that I have ever seen, but I put the ghostly grey/whitish-green semi-translucent appearance down to living in the unusual milky coloured waters. I collected George again later that morning after his extra beauty sleep; well, he is a couple of years my senior and we took off for another crack at Lake Benmore at the Haldon arm.

The ground where my vehicle had been parked the previous day was now covered by half a metre of muddy brown water, with this and the wind it was not the most inviting of places to be fishing, but by now we were starting to become a little desperate!

We flogged away for over an hour in the rain and wind, George using his heavy spinning gear and I a medium sink tip nymphing line on my fly rod. We fished from a point that runs out into the lake where both the Ohau and Twizel rivers enter, concentrating our casts into the clean water beyond the muddy stuff at the mouth. After frequent changes of my regular nymphs, I tied on the largest brass bead head, green stone fly I have in my box, #10 half-house brick just about, which under normal conditions turn the trout away at high speed.

Standing in the water just up to my knees, I lengthened out my fly line almost down to the backing in the faster water rounding the point. As I had tried every other type of retrieve imaginable, I just stripped in fast and undignified as if the line was red-hot. Suddenly a vigorous pull took a few metres of my line out again; I lifted my rod high and started working my reel as fast as I could go. A few minutes passed with only my mind's eye and imagination seeing what I had firmly hooked into, then it burst into the air from the drop off and did a series of magnificently exciting summersaults. A little while later a jack brown of 4lbs lay on the stones at my feet and it was a much better colour than the earlier trout from Pukaki.

The following morning, we intended to travel to the head of Lake Ohau, but the road was flooded at the junction, we turned around and drove along the Mount Cook towards Glen-tanner, only to come across part of a hillside beginning to slip over the road. After making a *555 call to the friendly police lady at HQ in Christchurch to report this, we drove on. Only to discover not more than five minutes later that our access to the head of Lake Pukaki was not good. By the time we

returned to the slip area it was marked with large fluorescent cones and a little further up the road, we saw a Works Infrastructure truck heading towards the damage, indicating to us that the system can work efficiently at times.

The final day we set off again towards Lake Ohau, but after getting through the junction this time, we still had to turn back at the end of the tar-seal due to large marker cones blocking our way. We returned to the Haldon arm of Benmore once more and had lunch before George braved the heavy rain again, while I read my book and caught up on my beauty sleep.

At some stage I noticed the silence, opening my eyes and looking out, that part of the lake was now a sheet of mirror glass, with both wind and rain having disappeared. I noticed fish movement close by where George was spinning and ran down to join him. Much to his annoyance, only three casts later, still having the large green stonefly tied on, I landed a nice hen rainbow of just over 3lbs.

Feeling a little bad for my mate by this time, I launched my wee boat and we started to troll. Within minutes George had a 2lb jack brown in the boat, it wasn't huge, but at least it was a fish for him. Moments later the wind came up again and having turned 180 degrees now, with a south-easterly blowing hard into the maximum flow being released from Ohau C power station. A 30-metre-wide series of pressure waves were being created in front of us, of around a metre or more high with breaking white caps. This made our return crossing back to the shelter and safety of the boat harbour an extremely exhilarating one, even if it was just a little bit scary. George and I have agreed to meet up again in 2010, but in the middle of summer next year!

On my way home I heard on the radio that excess water was being released at Benmore dam, having never seen this happen in all my years down here, I delayed a few minutes and went to investigate. I was rewarded with a spectacular display created by a huge volume of water hitting the concrete flume below the chute, filling the air with a fine mist spray that saturated the surroundings.

I was pleased to have seen it finally and it reminded me of some of the basic requirements that fishing is all about, which is, "Being in the right place at the right time!" Further down the road I reflected on our few days of winter fishing, it really could not have been much worse than what Mother Nature threw at us, heavy rain, floods, slips, closed roads, gale force winds, freezing frosts and snow. It may not have been the best of conditions, but we had a lot of laughs, we caught a few fish, and I am really looking forward to spring, for me it can't come fast enough now as I have done enough winter fishing for this year.

Wading through Custard

Falling flat on my face while out chasing trout at Blakely's Dam on the Maniototo, saw me taking a six week break from our most enjoyable of pastimes, while the physio got me mobile again. It is good to be back, and it was good to get the kind, cheeky and some not so polite words of support and encouragement. I watched some very good DVD's during my layoff, Casts that Catch Fish – to check on my casting skills. Once in a Blue Moon - for the sixth time, Tapam - float tube fishing in Central America for giant tarpon, with two absolute nutcases catching fish as large as their float tubes. ITU's Bones - bone fishing in a tropical lagoon and then re-running some of my old favourites, NZ Trophy Waters - volumes 1 through 5.

My first intended trip was to be a steady week, staying with a younger friend in the comfort of a holiday home in Omarama. Fishing Lake Benmore over autumn was going to be great and it ran through my mind again when I got the call from Mark, to say the hot water cylinder had burst at the house and we had to cancel, the custard was still forming. My reply was instant, "Cancel? No way, we can use my tent and camp!" After reassuring Mark that he would be fine just as long as he packed some thermals, we left our respected home bases to meet up at Sailors Cutting.

My first sight of Benmore told me there was something wrong and I mumbled to myself, "This looks like more Custard, not good at all!" As I pulled into the boat ramp at the cutting, I registered the lake was down about 2 metres by my reckoning, with only millimetres of water covering some very ugly rocks at the bottom of the ramp.

Large yellow & black signage indicated that weed spraying with "Diquat Aquagel" had been extensively carried out the week previous. Despite reassurances from the manufacturer and the US-EPA that this substance is completely safe, this fisher was not prepared to hang around for a week to test it. Looking at some of the milky white/grey residue, clouding around the edges of some parts of the bay at Pumpkin Point was enough.

Spending the last 12 years in premature retirement, living with the effects of chronic chemical poisoning from solvents used in the printing trade for 26 years, where I received similar assurances that it was doing me no harm! Such reassurances are hard to swallow these days, especially when a quick search on Google can provide numerous negative opinions! There are mechanical weed harvesters available around the world. Why they are not being used to bolster our supposed "**Clean Green & 100% Pure**" image is hardly surprising, as spraying is an easier and more economical option, and we all know just how cash strapped our generating companies are.

I drove back over the hill to Otematata to set up camp, gave my friend a call when I got there to tell him of our change of plan. Mark who is recovering from a motor accident, joined up with me and Bob Wright, a local mate who I have known for years, and we did a cruise of the shallows around the braided river mouth. We noted that the water had cleared in the lake and talked some about fishing, but our conversation that afternoon circled mostly around chemicals and the number of people that we knew of with health problems caused by them, in industry, agriculture and horticulture that are no longer with us! Unfortunately, that night was a bad one for my young friend, who despite his large physical stature and tough appearance, could not handle the autumn cold very well.

As I offered him a mug of morning tea, he told me that he was off back to civilization and within less than ten minutes, had packed his things and left. I guess not everyone is cut out for living under canvas during a cold Otago autumn for a week, or even one night!

Bob Wright arrived shortly after the dust had settled from Mark's spinning car tyres and we had a chuckle at being one down before we had even started our serious fishing day. I explained to Bob that a knock on the head in an accident can do that to someone and he replied, "**Yes, I know Mel, just look how nutty you are now from head butting all those low tree branches over the years!**"

You never look for much in the way of sympathy from a mate like Bob, or most mates for that matter, come to think of it. We drifted over most of the shallow areas of Lake Aviemore that day

and landed only brown trout between 2 to 3lbs. Very small nymphs' #16 - #18 caddis or pheasant tails and snail imitations worked their magic, although neither of us was overly impressed by the condition of the trout we hooked. All being long and thin and not what we would really have expected after a long hot summer, with abundant nymph and adult insect activity.

The next morning, I was warming my hands round a mug of tea when Bob turned up, saying "Ah, still here then, good to see the cold night hasn't sent you home?!" he laughed as I cautioned him not to choke on the mug of coffee, I handed him. Lake Waitaki was our intended area to explore that day and various spots around the lake produced similarly conditioned trout, as our previous day, but this time all trout were hooked on the damsel nymph.

More custard hit in early afternoon when a disastrous slip by Bob trying to lift an old, abandoned eel net over the side of the boat, ended up with one of my fly rods breaking, but that is what you get sometimes with boats, mates, eel nets and fly rods! I met up with another friend later that day, north island George and following a few hours of fishing, he helped me over my mild depression by taking me to the pub for a roast meal and a beer, bless him.

My last full day was spent drifting the margins of Lake Aviemore, around Parsons Rock, laying ambush to many fish during the morning, in the clear shallow waters over the deep green weed beds. I tried a selection of flies on these picky trout, a long leader/tippet, 2 or more rod lengths was needed, and the most effective fly was a #16 black bead head nymph, with four rubbery legs.

This little nymph hooked over ten fish for me, by my lifting it up from the weed beds as a trout cruised close or dropping it to either side of a trout sitting under overhanging willow branches. In the clear water the trout were visibly excited by the delivery of this fly and their immediate reaction upon sighting it was to quickly chomp down on it.

Just before lunch disaster struck again, dumping down the custard once more. I spotted a fine-looking rainbow coming towards me; I cast out the fly and reversing the electric motor, put the boat nicely under a large willow tree. Standing on the bench seat in wait, I saw the trout was close; a small twitch of my left hand and the rainbow was on. As it darted away from me it became aerial, summersaulting wildly, having to take up the slack line fast, I lifted my rod.

In a few seconds of slow motion, I heard a sharp crack and looked up, only to see about 100mm broken from the tip of my Sage Mk III. Although totally gutted and verbally remonstrating myself for my act of stupidity, it wasn't all bad, as I still had the trout on and brought it gingerly to the net and it was indeed the best conditioned 3lb trout of the week.

George knew the instant we met at the boat ramp during the afternoon that chronic depression was pending this time and in his gentlemanly fashion, helped me out of my gloom again later on that day after another few hours of fishing, by taking me to the pub once more for another meal and a much-needed beer.

Over our meal we considered the merits of herbicide spraying of aquatic weed and the huge scale of lowering a lake the size of Benmore. The many kilometres of shoreline would require tons of this chemical spray and if it will kill lake weed, it must surely kill the insects that live in this weed too? I cannot help but wonder if this may be attributable for most of the trout caught in the Waitaki lakes being of low condition factor!

This fisher does not have the answer, but I have my suspicions and doubts too about whether we should be using tons of toxic spray in our waterways. I certainly wouldn't put too much trust in the powers that be; after all, they did for many years try to tell us that Agent Orange did no harm to the Vietnam vets who were regularly showered in it – **Yeah right!**

Falling flat on your face and needing six weeks and a good physiotherapist to get over it before your return to fishing, where you break two fly rods in two days is enough custard for anyone, but you just have to wade through it and enjoy the high spots! Although, I am beginning to wonder now if fishing rods should come with a health warning, **"The use of this item may result in you injuring yourself!"**

Contrasting Winter Extremes!

Many of my fellow anglers will undoubtedly hang up their rods and put away the many bits and pieces of tackle they have over winter and be content to sit in front of a nice warm fire. Possibly a cup of coffee in hand or at best a glass of good whisky close by to sip away at while they read a good book or browse a magazine or delight in viewing a fishing DVD. On some really cold wet days I can be found doing that too and as a result, have most recently watched Hatch, The Source New Zealand, Iceland and Tasmania DVD's, all valuable viewing and superb quality, as well as reading two marvellous books!

Huckleberry Days by Garrett Evans and A fly fisher's life by Charles Ritz, both recommended to me by the author of the first. Garrett is a recent addition to our stream bashers fishing club, here in Dunedin, he holds a grasp of language that only a retired professor of literature can, coupled with the most wonderful sense of humour and the love of fishing & hunting. This comes through in his book and convinces me even more that you just have to be giving it a go winter or not.

The days are not all wet and windy over winter though and thankfully, some can turn out to be so good you almost forget that it is our coldest season. On a trip to Lakes Wanaka and Hawea in the company of north island George, after a brisk walk to the suspension bridge at the Blue Pools, we stopped off at a café in Makarora for hot coffee and cheese rolls. On our noisy approach to the counter, the lady smiled a greeting and asked, **"What are you guys on?"** not the conventional question of, **"What can I get you?"**

George pointed a finger at me for an answer and my reply back was, **"We are intoxicated by our surroundings and neither a sniff nor a drop of strong drink has been taken by either of us today, yet!"** We sat outside enjoying the sun and shared a few more laughs while our order arrived. When it did, we were not convinced by her expression that this lady believed us, but it really was the crisp clean air and the wrap around mountains that intoxicated us that day!

After just a short drive back to the Neck of Lake Hawea we decided to launch my boat from the gravel beach. There is no concrete ramp at this spot as the lake level fluctuates so much, but it is advisable to get out and have a good stomp around at the water's edge to find a solid spot. Especially at really low water levels when some very sticky spots can suck a 4x4 down to its axles. Leaving a very embarrassed driver with the prospects of calling a tow truck or possibly finding a

tractor operating in a paddock close by, either way it will hit your back pocket fairly hard, so be careful out there and check the ground out under you first!

We cruised for half an hour over to Silver Island, trolling heavy lures in the deep water, losing a couple to the submerged trees. Then round the back of the Island we nosed the boat into the mud at the mouth of a stream, spending the next hour or more casting an assortment of flies-streamers-lures to a number of very presentable, but totally uncooperative brown trout sitting in the shallows.

The next morning at 9.30am I met up with George in Wanaka this time. You would have thought that our glorious day was taken from the middle of summer, instead of winter as we launched my boat from another beach spot, this time at Glendhu Bay. After nearly two hours of casting at objectionable and uncooperative brown trout again. We thought the mouth of the Matukituki River would provide us with some action, other than just looking at trout looking back at us without any positive sign of a hook up.



George looks for the Matukituki

Two hours and more than half a tank of fuel later we turned back towards our launch spot. Not a sign of the river mouth or a fish, but we had enjoyed the whole trip and taken the opportunity to search out some interesting spots for another time. When I dropped George off at his vehicle, we looked at a map and laughed at missing the Matukituki River mouth. We had simply ignored the hard left turn at the point only minutes away from Glendhu Bay and agreed that we must have been too intoxicated by our surroundings again, because it had been such a magnificent day to be out on the lake.

Brass Monkey Fishing – Twizel and Tekapo

Now and again while away fishing, I find myself asking the question “Why am I doing this?” and sometimes an additional mumble comes out too, “Why here and why now in the middle of winter?” The answer that I normally come back with is simply that I must be crazy and especially so, being in a tent and camping out in a place like Twizel during winter!

I suppose that it all comes down to choices; we can choose to sit at home by the fire in the warmth and comfort of a well-padded recliner armchair, or, on the other hand, we can choose to do something just a little more adventurous. Then talk about it over a beer with a few friends or fishing club members afterwards, who will mostly smile at your stories, concluding with a majority agreement that you most definitely are crazy or stupid or perhaps even both!

I had to use a tent as dogs are not allowed in the motor camp cabins and for me it was the last chance this season to fish with my mate George from the North Island. He had been in Kurow for two weeks and made a short stop in Twizel, before starting his long haul back to Turangi/Taupo. Being in the company of another slightly crazy person is always fun and can be most interesting, as we jointly discuss how to remove ourselves from whatever tricky situation we happen to be in at the time.

Having been retired for a number of years George is usually a relaxed fisherman and normally doesn't even contemplate a morning start much before 9.30-10am. So, our first laugh of the day comes from his grumblings as we leave the caravan park at 7.30am. I told him he should be grateful to me for conceding a little as I did originally suggest 7am, but his expressions and funny colour that his face turned to over his mug of peppermint tea the night before, indicated that was just too much for him!

Driving in the half-light with a crisp frost glistening on the fence lines and roadside plants, while part of the sky puts on a vivid display of slowly changing colours, as the sun puts its nose over the mountains, is something very special to this area. Arriving in Tekapo township shortly after 8am, we took the turn at a sign indicating the nearest boat ramp and soon had another laugh, due to my getting completely lost.

Finding our way back to the main road, this time driving to the other end of town to where I knew there was a launch ramp; we put the boat in to Lake Tekapo. Our compass bearing read north 5 degrees and our heading stayed that way for the best part of an hour, with the outboard running at 4,000 rpm. Then I pulled into a sheltered bay so that we could warm up with a coffee and a cheese and onion puff. Comfort food on winter trips is very necessary, especially so with George, who for the last 30 minutes had buried his nose into the collar of his jacket and refused to answer any of my attempts at conversation!

We had chosen to search out this lake as we had never done it before, simply because we had not been prepared to risk it in my previous much smaller boat, during my nine years of ownership. As with so many lakes in the South Island, this one requires caution, as it is notoriously changeable with the wind blowing hard from the head of the lake at the north, it can turn it from flat calm to over 1 metre waves with white caps in just a few minutes.

Smaller than Lakes Wanaka and Hawea, Tekapo is still a huge body of water that offers all of the usual angling opportunities. Islands, plenty of bays, small and large with good drop offs and simply acres of flat areas for shallow wading, especially at the mouths of the Godley and Cass rivers. Looking all around us as we progressed to the head of the lake, we never really got the chance to forget that this is a high-country lake.

The whole surrounding area is very stark during winter, and you are constantly reminded about stories of old, where adventurers have left home base here and simply disappeared without trace. So, take plenty of warm clothing, food and hot drinks or a good portable cooker to boil the billy on, as hyperthermia is a very real threat over winter in the South Island and has even been known to strike the unaware during a summer cold snap, so be careful out there people!



At the Tekapo observatory on our way back to Twizel

High rainfall during the weeks prior to our arrival had coloured up the water, so spotting fish was not on, and tight lines were minimal, although two hardy shore anglers did hook up with a nice fish each at the mouth of the Cass. After having a good look around for most of the morning and having another laugh while managing to remove the boat from getting stuck on a large rock, we got back to the ramp about 1pm.

Lunch and coffee on the road enabled us to make good progress on our return and halfway along, we thought we would call in and have the rest of the afternoon on No Name Pond. Unfortunately, with all the repair work being carried out by Meridian Energy along the canal roads, our access was prohibited by barriers across the road and the work gang foreman was larger than both George and I put together, so we did not wish to argue with him or any of his crew over access. Consequently, our afternoon was concluded at the Ohau river mouth on the Haldon Arm of Lake Benmore, where a few fish were rising spasmodically and some were happy to take the small black, boggle eyed Woolly Bugger on offer to them.

At 6.30am the next morning I set out with just my dog Misty for company, as George would be packing up his caravan and need his beauty sleep. I had intended to fish the shallow, weedy regions at the head of Lake Pukaki, but soon discovered that I had used the wrong marker rock at the dam wall.

Consequently, all the shallow weedy areas were high and dry and a walk of nearly an hour was needed to get to the edge of the lake. Had it not been for the magnificent display of changing colours in the sky over the mountains, I think I would have taken a quick nap in the car before returning to camp. However, I chose to walk and had to be content with just that, as casting blind into murky water, in freezing conditions soon became unattractive to this fisher as the draw of a cooked breakfast grew stronger.

After saying farewell to George back at camp, I made my way along the road around Lake Ruataniwha to the launch ramp at Lake Ohau, spending the rest of the day searching out places of interest around the shoreline. As was the case at Tekapo, most of the water was discoloured, making fish spotting difficult or impossible, although the unusually flat calm surface of the shallows, at the mouth of the Hopkins River offered up some excitement from a distance.

That quickly turned to disappointment though as I soon discovered that what I thought were trout rising, turned out to be numerous gas bubbles breaking the surface. Following my normal plan of

turning off the main motor and switching to the electric outboard, I spent the next hour or more offering lures to fussy trout in the only piece of clear water around.

Travel the country, fish the rivers and lakes, then rest and reflect on memories made!!!

Thanks, Me



Enjoying a beer and sharing a few yarns with a friend is the best way to end a day!

Editor's note: Big thank you to George for his excellent contribution to the newsletter over the past three months and sharing his journey around some of the great areas of our wonderful country and his fishing stories, I hope our members have enjoyed this series.

Locals go batty as predator control spurs resurgence by Laurel Stowell

People in the small town of Owhango, south of Taumarunui, got all excited about bats after detectors found intense bat activity in their reserve.



Bat detectors in Ohinetonga Scenic Reserve recorded the activity in June, verifying the reports of new residents who said they had seen the tiny and critically endangered flying mammals.

A "spot the bat" evening is now planned for summer on a nearby farm where bats were detected. "The awareness now is fantastic. It could drive more people trapping in their own backyards. The interest is just amazing," Owhango Alive chairman Mark Fredericks said.

Owhango Alive is a group of locals who have been trapping predators in the reserve, village, and surrounding farmland since 2011.

New residents to the village reported seeing bats, while others who had lived there for years hadn't seen any. The Department of Conservation (DoC) was called in.

In June, Tongariro biodiversity ranger Luke Easton set four bat detectors in the 148ha Ohinetonga reserve, which borders Tongariro Forest. Bats are in semi-hibernation in winter, so it was a happy surprise when the recorders captured a lot of activity and "feeding buzz", despite nights of heavy rain and wind.

Predator control by Owhango Alive would have been protecting those bats, Easton said.

The recorders also picked up the squeaking of rats, a major predator of bats. Others are stoats, weasels, and cats.

Owhango Alive has 281 traps that are checked weekly by 12 people. Since 2011 they have caught 4400 rats, 400 hedgehogs and 340 mustelids (stoats and weasels).

This year they caught nearly 70 cats in traps. The cats were a huge danger to bats, Fredericks said. The trapping had also made for a "fantastic" increase in the number of whio on the Whakapapa River.

Bats are nocturnal, and usually start hunting about half an hour before dark. They are very fast and agile and hard to spot. The long-tailed bat (pekapeka tou-roa) and lesser short-tailed bat (pekapeka tou-poto) are New Zealand's only native mammals, and both are in danger of extinction.

Predator control is one of the most important ways to sustain them. They also need old forest with large trees to roost in and are thus vulnerable to habitat loss.

They returned to the same trees year after year, sometimes roosting in mobs of 300 and moving to a different tree every night, Tongariro community ranger Sarah Cull-Luketina said. Long-tailed bats feed on small insects like mosquitoes and sandflies, caught on the wing.

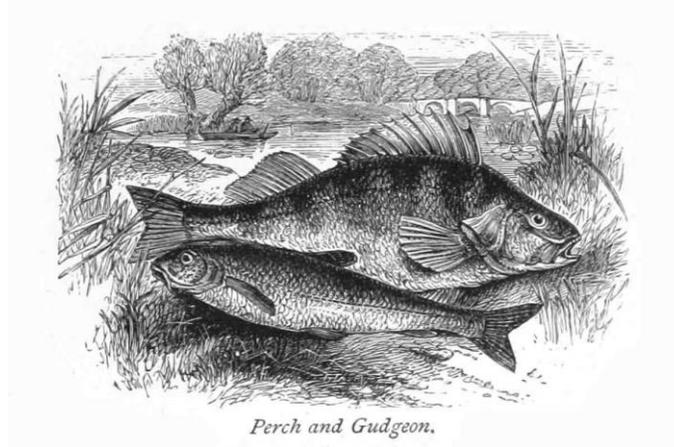
Their numbers could be increased with targeted pest control which will stop the bats going extinct in the medium to long term, DoC principal ecosystems science adviser Colin O'Donnell said.



Are you planning on attending this year's Christmas Dinner on Wednesday 17 November at 7:00pm if so, please make sure you have registered with Greg du Bern as seats are limited.



The Gudgeon King – A Coarse Fishing True Story Set in the Old Country by Allan Burgess



“Fishing with maggots may seem odd to many Kiwi anglers but Course Fishing is becoming increasingly popular here. In the “Gudgeon King” we find there are freshwater species other than trout and salmon”

Dad was the Gudgeon King by R.M. Redfern

My Dad was a fisherman. Well, not strictly speaking I suppose, since he earned his living in a large engineering plant in the Midlands, but one of his “interests” (my dad never had “hobbies” like ordinary mortals but moved with a total commitment between “interests”), was fishing. The fishing club was perhaps his longest surviving interest. He was a quiet, gentle, unassuming man of slight stature whom everyone liked and even perhaps looked out for where it was in their power to do so. This is an interesting tale set in a time when there was still rationing in Britain following on from WWII. Most people didn’t have much money to spend. The title of this piece “The Gudgeon King”, will become clear in due course. Perhaps surprisingly the Gudgeon is a surprisingly small freshwater fish.

By force of circumstances, he was educated to a level far below his capabilities, for which he was to suffer later in life. However, he was a perfectionist of no small merit; everything he did, he did to the best of his abilities, within his somewhat limited resources of material goods but with his quite exceptional intelligence. Fishing, with rod and line, was to prove a most elusive challenge and, I suspect, therein lay the source of his interest.

We sons, he had four, I being the eldest, or at least the elder ones (for I never remember the two youngest going fishing) were taken on his fishing expeditions from an early age. Woe betides us if we wanted to walk about and explore, for we would frighten the fish. We had to sit still, talk in muted tones, or go away but not go too close to any other fishermen. Whenever it was possible, we would be encouraged to fish also.

At first, we would share a “pitch” (a spot where one could stand on the bank that gave access to the water for rod and line). Naturally, we always wanted to fish exactly where Dad was fishing, and

he would get quite exasperated if we cast over his line so that we tangled, and both had to pull in to extricate the two lines and therefore waste fishing time.

My Dad never wasted anything. Fishing was an activity that was carried out at weekends and holidays and was precious recreation time that ordinary working people had had little of during the war and therefore was especially valued afterwards.

Only the Wealthy fished for Game Fish

This true story is set in the “Old Country” about 1946 or 1947. Mostly, he would fish the rivers, lakes, ponds, and canals that were available, buy a licence and a day ticket, and be able to be reached by bus or train. Catching something fishy (coarse fish naturally, only the wealthy fished for game fish, and we were brought up to believe in the dire consequences that were sure to follow if we dared to land a trout or salmon) was important as it provided the “sport,” but always the drive to catch something bigger was there. If the “big-un” was not possible, then catching anything would be better than nothing. If he caught nothing, then at least he had had a day in the countryside and he would be frustrated yet philosophical about it.

Catch and Release

Always the fish were gently handled and returned to the water, sometimes not immediately as it was well known that to release (or even worse to lose a hooked fish without landing it) resulted in scaring all the others away. So usually, the catch was kept in a “keep net” on the edge of the water until it was time to go home.

Dad tackled the sport in an entirely characteristic way. He imagined the fish, where they lay, how big they were and knew in his soul that they would always respond to something. What? and how? were the questions that kept him entranced. He meticulously studied the ways by which the fish might be tempted into biting his bait. A number of baits were used, from the humble earthworm that all boys (and a few girls) have used as fish bait since the beginning of time to bread paste and even on occasion hempseed (horror, but we did not know it was hallucinogenic and anyone could buy it by the pound in any seedsman’s shop) but mostly maggots.



Maggots

Maggots (known as “gentles” in more northerly locations of the British Isles), the larva of the bluebottle fly, were the bait that most fish seemed to like and (better still) could be attached to the hook whilst still alive and wriggling, would “stay on” during casting and were freely available from fishing tackle shops by the pint – neat! They were measured in a pint glass and were not expected to contain bran or other additives used to keep them dry and clean, hence “neat.”

Everyone knew that the fish carefully selected only the biggest and liveliest maggot so the night before the fishing expedition was used to select, after much study, the biggest and best into a separate tin for hook bait. The remainder was used to scatter into the water wherever one could fish, to attract the shoals.

Sometimes, it was believed, differently coloured maggots were more attractive than others and so selected ones were placed in dyes a day or so beforehand; green, red, orange, and yellow were common but other more subtle shades might also be used. Inevitably some of the maggots would pupate and these chrysalides were also occasionally used as bait. A single maggot on a small hook is one of the best baits for the diminutive Gudgeon.

Worms

Worms even came in forms that seemed more or less attractive to fish, little red wriggly ones being favoured over the more usual fat, sluggish, pink-coloured earthworm. Praised above all were “brandlings,” a smallish worm with bright-red and orange-coloured rings. Dad found them in a waste leather dump associated with a tannery factory fairly close to hand.

Bread-Paste

Bread-paste” was simply the centre from a few slices of new “white” bread (the “British Standard Loaf”) moistened with a little more water and then kneaded to render it plastic. Too much water meant it was sticky; too little and it did not form the soft, water-resistant but adhesive quality of a good paste. Small pieces of bread crust were used occasionally but did not “stay on” well.

Hempseed

Hempseed was boiled until the seedcase split and a small white rootlet emerged. It was used in this form.

Ground Bait

The piece-de-resistance amongst one’s armoury of weapons to catch fish was the “ground bait.” Many secret formulas were carefully manufactured for the material that one scattered into the water in order to attract shoals of fish. In essence, they consisted of bread scraps but might also contain wheat or barley (grain or pearl), bran, blood, fish scraps, chrysalis, chopped-up worm, maggots (added at the point of throwing-in) and many other magical ingredients guaranteed to give one an unfair advantage over the fish or other competitors.

All were wetted and mixed to give a mixture that would hold together for the purposes of throwing to the “swim” that you fished, and of a consistency designed to scatter in the water at the designated depth. Little cups formed from the ground bait would be filled with maggots and firmed into a ball before being throwing in. I remember that at one time an ingredient called “Asafoetida” was added but it remains to be a complete mystery and I saw no marked advantage in its use.

Fishing Contests

As well as private fishing expeditions, Dad belonged to a club, a branch of the works social club at Reynolds Light Alloys Limited. Clubs generally arranged “contests” about once a month during the fishing season with prizes of money or more usually goods in kind obtained via “contacts” at wholesalers. This might on occasions be items of household utility that would otherwise have

required “coupons” (the rationing system in force during the war period and for some time afterwards) before one could legitimately purchase such items as bed linen.

The last contest before Christmas was always a “Fur and Feather” with prizes of turkeys, geese, chickens, rabbits etc., although wine and spirits were also included. At this contest, everyone won a prize, even if it was only a spirit miniature.

Some thirty or forty enthusiasts, together with a few wives and children in fine weather, would travel by coach to fishing places, further from home than could normally be reached, in order to hold a contest. Starting before dawn on possibly a cold and wet day was the first challenge, but only a few would not turn up. Dad would be up in the early hours preparing sandwiches and flasks of tea before waking us to get ready. Dressed in many layers of clothes and topped, if required, with a “mac” (waterproof clothing; a “Macintosh,” a “Mackintosh” or maybe a “McIntosh”) and “Wellingtons” (rubber boots) we would struggle with loaded creels (or “baskets”) to the public bus and hence to the coach pick-up point.

Arriving at the River Severn, Avon, Hampshire Avon, or a remote canal, we would de-coach and possibly have to walk a further half mile or so to reach the “Water.”

At one place I especially remember we all had to cross the River Severn on a flat-decked ferry, crossing tethered to a wire stretched across the river with the aid of a running block and powered by the flow of the river against the steering paddle. The Public House (called I think “The Ferry Inn”) on the near side was an ancient structure that still functioned as an inn and served delicious, aromatic, bacon sandwiches with hot tea.

Prior to the arrival of the coach party, a few people would have arrived separately, by car, and they would already have “pegged” the river. Each site was marked with a numbered peg which was placed on all accessible spots where one could climb down the occasionally steep, slippery banks to fish into the river. Sometimes hindered by bushes and trees, sometimes by mudbanks or reedbeds. They were spaced so that each person could fish unhindered by other people for some five yards upstream and 20 yards down.

Occasionally there were sites that were deliberately not pegged as it was felt that they would provide an unfair advantage such as where a field drain joined the river and which became known as “the stink-hole” but frequently a gathering spot for fish or disadvantage, such as shallow stretches of water. Everyone would then pick a numbered ticket from a hat and after a time to allow setting up in your selected spot a whistle would signal the start of the contest.

After the chosen three- or four-hours duration of the contest, the whistle would sound again, and everyone would shout “all-out” and cease fishing.

The weighing committee would then come to each peg and weigh the catch on a spring balance, after which the catch would be returned (relatively) unharmed to the water. No fish were allowed to be retained. Generally, the total catch weight was taken as the measure of success but sometimes there would be special prizes such as “the biggest roach,” “the heaviest fish,” “the longest fish” etc.

The fly in the ointment was “Big Mac.” “Big Mac” Harvey (not his real name but the correct nickname) was the best fisherman in the club, far and away the best, and he almost always won the contests. A bull of a man, well-built and taller than most and having a strong physique. Powerful

features were capped with a close-cropped head on a thick, almost invisible neck. A “man’s man,” he was at home as the leader in every environment, whether in the “pub,” surrounded by cronies and hangers-on, downing beer in quantities that would have felled a lesser mortal whilst he never appeared any the worse for it.

Carrying the biggest creel, seemingly without effort, and organising the “draw” on the riverbank prior to the start of a contest. A loud voice and the power of his personality got through the essential business quickly. He was the closest approach to a professional freshwater fisherman; a member of several clubs, he fished a contest virtually every Saturday and Sunday. In fairness, he was also on the Committee of almost all the clubs and frequently he was the Secretary. With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to credit him with this behaviour in order that he could arrange contest dates to avoid clashes and, since the secretary always booked the coaches, it may be that he was able to benefit “on the side” also.

Taking Bets

Perhaps I do him an injustice, but he was not beyond a little “gamesmanship” from time to time if he could benefit (financially) from this. At each contest, he would run a “Book.” Probably illegal, but no one really minded, he would offer odds on the chance of people winning the contest – before the “draw” and clearly based on his assessment of the ability of the person being backed.

Every club had no-hopers that really only came along for the day out and they would either sleep or even pop along to the nearest pub, if there was one, after fishing for only a short time. These might be given odds of 33:1 or more. So, if they backed themselves for a pound then they stood to win 33 pounds (plus the stake) if they won. It could happen if they fluked a big one but, in reality, a highly unlikely event.

Better fishermen might get 10:1 or 5:1. Dad would be at the low-end of the range as he was not infrequently in the prizes (there would normally be at least ten). Big Mac smiled and paid out if he had to, he was never a piker and he always carried a roll of notes in his back pocket to pay-out. I would bet that he smiled all the way to the bank since he almost always won the contest himself.

This habit of his to always win became a bit of a downer for all the other members and eventually, this showed itself at an Annual General Meeting and the member’s votes with a rare show of unanimity, against Big Mac, to change the contest rules so as to impose “size-limit” regulations at all the contests.

Bigger fish tended to be loners and the chance of catching more than one was much decreased. So it was that others in the club stood a better chance of winning against the masters of this contest art. Each fish species had set size limits, for example, Roach (8 inches), Dace (6 inches), Chub (9 inches), Perch (8 inches), Bream (8 inches) and the diminutive bottom scavengers, Gudgeon (4 inches) and Daddy-ruff (4 inches) etc.

For each fish species the Water Board – a public body charged with the care of all aspects of water control in their area – had fixed a size below which it was illegal to take, remove and kill fish from the water. In size-limit contests, only fish over these sizes could be weighed in. This worked against the best fishermen as they depended for their success on rapid capture, removal, re-bait and cast techniques. But with most shoaling fish below the size limits, set deliberately high to protect the fish stocks, this skill was much less advantageous.

I vividly remember the contest when Dad hit on the winning combination. It was in a stretch of the River Avon a few miles above Stratford-on-Avon that the club leased from the landowner. A good fishing stretch of the river with lots of roach and a good mixture of other species, the pitches reasonably accessible but with old willows and a few bushes and rushes to provide cover – and snags for errant lines. Dad was situated a few pitches from “Big Mac” and quite quickly “Mac” was into a good shoal of roach. The air became slightly blue as “Mac” bemoaned the size-limit rule as most of his roach were slightly below size.

Dad caught a few roach when fishing a swim, a fair distance across the river, also undersize. On one occasion after he had unhooked a fish and was putting it into the keep-net his hook, which still had some maggot on it, dropped into the water at his feet and when he recovered it, he had caught a Gudgeon. A fat little roly-poly of a Gudgeon, not large, but above the size limit.

A Switch of tactics to target Gudgeon

Dad switched tactics and went for Gudgeon as fast as he knew how. As luck would have it the water close to him was full of both Gudgeon and Daddy-ruff.

Even the ruff, with a diminutive body, had a big head. For the best part of four hours, Dad fished like a madman for these Gudgeon babies. Bait the hook, lower in (casting was unnecessary), add a small knob of ground bait close to the float, strike (to set the hook into the fish), lift out, remove, and repeat. He stopped for nothing, not even a quick swig of cold tea that was the usual refreshment on these occasions.

Came the final whistle and there was the usual wait for the weighing team. I walked down the river to watch the weighing in progress as Dad was always keen to know what the opposition had. It was the usual mixed bag of fish but relatively few were able to be counted due to size. Typically, the total bag might have been several pounds but by the time the undersize were weeded out the final catch was around a pound or so. Eventually, they reached “Big Mac” who had a huge bag of roach.

Unfortunately for Mac most were undersized, and his temperature soared as more and more were rejected. He bad-tempered insisted that several that had been rejected were in fact “in” and insisted on re-measurement. The fish was laid on a rule with the mouth pressed against the upturned end of the rule and the tail stroked to the mark, the tip being the measure. Mac tried re-measuring with, I observed, a lot more pressure on the fish and a few had to be accepted on his measurement.

Whilst attention was on the spring balance Mac even tried stretching a few fish that had been rejected, but he desisted when he noticed that he was being observed. The final weight was several pounds (I cannot remember the detail), far and away the heaviest catch so far and everyone resigned themselves to another “Big Mac” win.

Dad was almost last to be weighed and by now most of the other men were following the progress of the weighing (it was illegal to leave your peg until you had weighed in). I remember the shouts of the men as Dad was next “come on ‘arry, wot you got.”

There was a laugh as he lifted his keep net clear of the water to reveal a bulging, wriggling mass of Gudgeon. Of course, almost all of them were over the size limit and could be weighed. If I

remember correctly there were over 8 pounds of Gudgeon and Daddy-ruff, more than twice as heavy as Big Mac's catch.

The Gudgeon King

Everyone was delighted, even Mac was apparently pleased that if he had to be beaten then Harry was the nicest guy to do it – and in this fashion. He clapped Dad on the back and congratulated “The Gudgeon King.” Dad grew several feet in stature, smiled delightedly and was the happiest man there. I think he even had a drink with Mac during the compulsory stop at the pub on the way home (we boys were not allowed into the licensed premises and usually sat out the stop, on the coach, with a soft drink brought out to us), something he almost never did, preferring to stay with us and drink his cold tea.

I cannot remember what the prize was, perhaps it was the bedsheets that we have a picture of him holding with evident pride. The story was re-told over the years and Dad always laughed with his quiet little chuckle of self-satisfaction that he had put one over “Big Mac” and was truly “The Gudgeon King.”



Gudgeon

This Is How It Ends: As old as the Southern Alps, kea are on the edge of extinction by Andre Vance

Almost half of New Zealand's bird species are extinct, and 80 per of those remaining are threatened. Can we reverse the decline?

A long, piercing beep prescribes the kea's fate.

For three minutes, a portable analysing machine has been measuring lead levels in the bird's blood.

As we wait, the young female stomps, bashes and bites at the cage holding her.

Beep, the machine spits out the results to ecologist Laura Young. The lead levels are too high for it to read.



Keas are regularly seen within Arthur's Pass village, often at dawn or dusk.

"[It] says high, which means that it's over 65 micrograms per decilitre. So, this one's definitely got lead poisoning in quite a bad way."

Young sighs. "That's a shame. Not many come back with 'off the chart'.

"It's quite an ominous sign for the first one of the day."



Laura Young captures a kea to test its blood for lead levels

Since daylight, Young has been searching Arthur's Pass village for the inquisitive mountain parrots. They are attracted to populated areas by the lure of human food. They swoop down from forested slopes with a flash of their vivid orange underwing, and an eerie screech. Māori named them for their long cry.

Of the three Young captured, all have acute lead poisoning, likely from chewing on roofing materials. Kea are attracted to the lead present in paint, flashings, and nail heads in many pre-1990s buildings.

The stultified creatures will be transported to the South Island Wildlife Hospital, in either Christchurch or Dunedin, for treatment. But the clinic was full and three more birds, trapped in the village the following day, had to be released.

"We've recaptured one who has previously been in the wildlife hospital, who we released into the wild and who then found his way back to the village," Young says.

“Unfortunately, there’s no space left in the wildlife hospital. So, we’re going to have to put these ones back and hope they are right for a while longer.

“The chances are high that these guys will have lead poisoning. It does make you pretty sad.

“But it’s an ambulance at the bottom of a cliff approach. What we need to be doing is not feeding kea and removing lead from the buildings where they hang out.”



A health check also involves taking weight and other measurements, and feather samples

Young bands, measures and weighs the birds, and gives them a general health check. She also takes feather samples for further research.



Young fits a tiny metal band allowing the bird to be tracking via a kea sightings database

A [kea sightings database](#) and other citizen science tools help experts understand what is happening to the population.

“There’s a consensus that kea are declining, particularly east of the Main Divide. People would suggest a noticeable decline, probably in the last 10 or 20 years. “It’s hard to get a population estimate when it’s such a highly mobile species. The most recent one is somewhere between 3000 and 7000.”

Kea are as old as the Southern Alps themselves.

Over the centuries, they have adapted and evolved, absorbing ecological and geographical change. But their greatest threat was the arrival of humans, and within a few years we may wipe out their existence altogether.

They belong to this land, originally from Strigopidae, a parrot superfamily that diverged from other parrots around the same time Zealandia was peeling away from Gondwana.

Kea are an ancient species, existing much longer than humans.

Dinosaurs, and ice ages came and went. The thrusting of tectonic plates formed the Southern Alps, and the geological changes inspired another split. The “proto-Kākā” evolved into the Norfolk and Chatham Kākā (both now extinct), the Kākā and the kea. The kākāpō is a relative.

Fossil records show the kea once populated the North Island, but the last ice age saw the subspecies divided again, this time by the Cook Strait.

The arrival of humans drove kea from lowland beech forests into the mountains. Although Māori hunted the bird for feathers and food, European settlers decimated the populations, with burn-offs and the introduction of sheep, deer, and goats, which grazed on the shrubs and berries they needed for food.

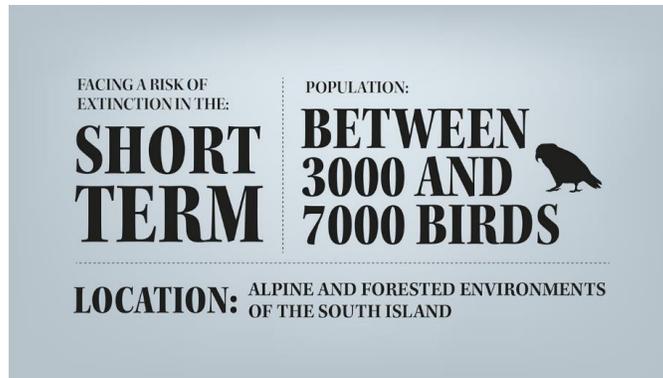


Once treated as a pest by farmers, the mountain parrot are now down to critical numbers.

Driven by hunger, the kea began to attack sheep (although mainly vegetarian, they will scavenge carrion). They pecked wounds and feasted on high-calorie fat, leaving the livestock vulnerable to fatal infection.

Angry farmers demanded a cull, and a 10-shilling bounty was placed on their beaks. The extermination programme lasted for 100 years, slaughtering an estimated 150,000 kea. Today, the kea is more likely to be shot by a tourist with a camera. But the risks are just as great.

“Curiosity certainly kills the kea in lots of different ways,” Young says. Their inquisitiveness draws the bird to tourist villages, like Arthur’s Pass, Aoraki /Mt Cook, Franz Josef, and Fox Glacier.



They both delight and frustrate humans with destructive antics, stripping wiper blades and window seals or snapping off antennae with knife-sharp beaks. It's a behaviour and intelligence that evolved to help them survive in the harsh alpine winters: they'll eat whatever presents.

Visitors, and some locals, use food to lure them in for that perfect Insta pic, which only encourages them to return.



Ashaa Hsieh watches a kea from her car in Otira Gorge

Because this food source means they don't need to forage, the juveniles have more time to get into trouble. "They like to hop on to roofs and pick the lead head nails, flashings and car wheel weights. Even up in the mountains, they eat carcasses shot by hunters with lead ammo, and get a big hit of lead," Young says.

The substance is sweet, and soft, so the rascally young birds love to chew, bite and lick it from old buildings. It gets into the blood system and over time is deposited in their organs and bones.

Lead settles in the birds' organs and bones and can make them sick and disorientated.

"Kea can get pretty sick with lead toxicosis, just like humans can. You don't always see obvious symptoms. Other times they're vomiting, stumbling around and being quite thirsty, going over to puddles and trying to drink lots of water from the road. Doing strange behaviours.

"The effects of lead poisoning probably makes them more susceptible to being hit by cars and having slow response times.

At least six Arthur's Pass kea die each year from ingesting lead, and those are just the ones found by researchers. Around 95 per cent of the young birds tested in Arthur's Pass village have toxic levels.



A poorly kea arrives at the South Island Wildlife Hospital in Christchurch

Kea can also react badly to human food. One death was recorded on the West Coast from chocolate poisoning. And like all of New Zealand's native birds, they are at risk from predators, and occasionally investigate rather than flee.

A report by former Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment Jan Wright estimated almost 80 per cent of native birds are either threatened with, or at risk of, extinction.

Humans have wiped out close to 50 species of native birds in New Zealand, and more than three-quarters are at risk. There are 23 species at risk of immediate extinction, including the orange-fronted parakeet (kakariki), Chatham Island black robin, New Zealand fairy tern and the white heron.

Since the arrival of humans 700 years ago, we've wiped out close to 50 species, among them huia, the South Island kokako, moa, and Haast eagle/pouākai

"Most forest birds are threatened these days, in some ways. We have no real concept of just how busy our forests used to be: there would have been zillions of different birds zipping around all over the place."



The Wildlife Hospital is a non-profit facility and is run and staffed by a team of volunteers. Habitat loss is a "blatant" cause of decline, he says. "We've cleared three quarters of the forest of New

Zealand and the birds that rely on forests, don't have them anymore. They've disappeared from places that are now prime agricultural country.

“The Canterbury plains ...used to be all native habitats for these birds... so not insignificant chunks.

“There was a corridor of bush from Christchurch, joining the Banks Peninsula with the Alps. Banks Peninsula was entirely covered in forests and there were ... kiwi, takahē kākāpō spread across the plains and linking up with the foothills.”



A predicted beech mast next autumn will increase the numbers of predators that prey on native birds.



These tiny bands are a crucial way to keep tabs on the health of the population

Introduced predators like mice, rats, hedgehogs, and stoats are ruthless exterminators of forest birds, killing an estimated 25 million each year. But browsing animals have also changed forests dramatically.

“Deer and possums cause the structure and the quality of the habitat to decline and that will influence things like food supplies and nest places,” O’Donnell says. “There are other threats as well. The common and German wasps... eat nectar sources that the birds require, and sometimes sting native species. It can cause death.

“Avian malaria is a parasitic disease that came from Europe. That causes death when they're under stress.

“It is a hard job for a lot of these birds all these threats, just finding food, a safe place to breed.”

New Zealand is home to over 200 native bird species, many of which are found nowhere else in the world.

Birds in our southern-most forests are facing a new onslaught in the next year: a beech mast in which most trees flower and produce seed.

Up to 250kg of seeds can fall in an area the size of a rugby field, a feast for native birds, but also rats and mice, which multiply in numbers. That drives a plague of stoats, which feed on the rodents, and native birds.

Habitat loss is another major threat to birds.

In the last decade, DoC has become adept at predicting mast event years, using climate modelling. Beech trees produce seeds when a summer is warmer than the preceding summer, they then flower and seed in the next summer.

Using these forecasts they plan predator control operations, including aerial 1080 drops.

“When we lose forest birds, we lose some pretty important things that go on in the forest,” O’Donnell says. “Flowers require birds, insects and lizards to pollinate them and reproduce. Birds do a really good job of dispersing fruits and seeds.

“If you want to keep healthy forests, birds have a role to play. There is a food web that should be in balance.”



A kea soars above Arthur’s Pass village

Melanie Mark Shadbolt is kaiwhakahaere (Chief Executive) of Te Tira Whakāmatangi, which works to provide mātauranga (knowledge) Māori solutions for biodiversity loss.

“We’re losing our identity,” she says. “You know, if we lost the kiwi, we are no longer Kiwis, are we?”

“Our language itself evolved from the sounds of the birds. If you were to go back and listen to the original te reo Māori it would sound very much like birds talking. “So if we lose our language, the animals that helped give us our stories, we lose all of that. We lose our culture. The way we operate as Māori is embedded in connections to nature.

“And for indigenous people, in particular, their livelihoods and their culture is going to be lost for our modern, Western society. I think we have downplayed that component.”

At the wildlife hospital vet Pauline Howard rehabilitates kea by injecting their pectoral muscles twice daily with edetate calcium disodium, or EDTA. It binds to the metal ions and the birds are given extra fluids to allow the lead to be excreted in the urine.

The chelation treatment can take weeks, and the staff work hard to keep the birds occupied. Howard, a volunteer like all the hospital's staff, loves to watch the birds leave.

"We are not animal hoarders," she says. "You can see that after a few weeks they really want to go.

"Sometimes [there is] quite bad, stereotypical behaviour. You can tell they're quite stressed, they'll start bouncing up and down. That means you need to do something to their environment to enrich it, make some toys, or change their cage around so that they're not quite as stressed."

The kea are released in remote valleys, at a distance from villages. But all too often the juveniles return. "Ideally, they would dislike the experience so much here [at the hospital], that they didn't want to be near people," Howard says. "But unfortunately, juveniles like being fed.

"There's no doubt that when you get kea near people it's not good for their health. They pick up lead, they get hit by cars. They eat inappropriate food."

Young has a simple solution: "don't feed kea, ever."

"Never leave your food in kea habitat because even if you're not actively feeding them, they're so clever they'll come and take your stuff anyway," she adds. "The more we interact with them, they become more and more curious, more investigative, and more susceptible to getting into trouble.

Unfortunately, the curious kea often return to human settlements in search of an easy meal.

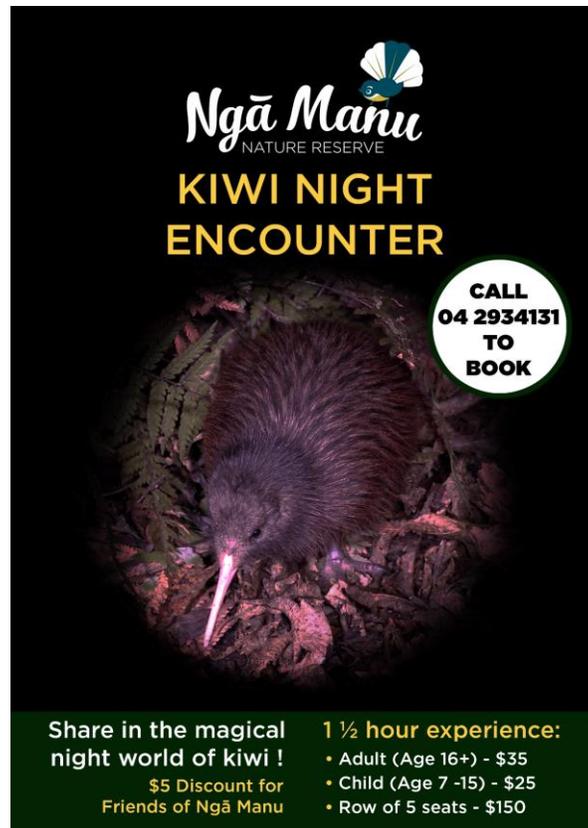
"Be careful when driving through places like Arthur's Pass village, Mount Cook, ski field car parks, where they're going to be standing in the road. Especially the young ones: they're just learning how to fly and don't have quick response times."

"People can do a lot to protect kea."



"Don't feed kea – ever," says Laura Young

Kea evolved in isolation over millions of years, and now holidaymakers are feeding them to death. Andrea Vance and Iain McGregor report for *Stuff's This is How it Ends* series.



If you have never seen a Kiwi in its natural environment (near natural) then I would recommend the Kiwi Night Encounter at Nga Manu, you will need to book as it is limited to 10 people each night.

Newsletter content with built-in links to other documents by Editor

Readers of our newsletter may not realise that when you see a name or wording underlined in an article, as an example [a Harvey leader](#) this is a link to another article where you can find more information. All you need to do is hold down your CTRL key and click on the words and the link will open.

*Newsletter copy to be received by
Second Monday of each month; your
contribution is welcome just send it to:
malcolm1@xtra.co.nz*

Purpose:

To promote the art and sport of Fly Fishing.

To respect the ownership of land adjoining waterways.

To promote the protection of fish and wildlife habitat.

To promote friendship and goodwill between members.

To promote and encourage the exchange of information between members.

Club meetings

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

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

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

Club Committee meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month and the meetings are held at the Waikanae Boating Club and start at 7:30pm.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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

Contacts

President: Malcolm Francis: ph. 06 364 2101
Email: malcolm1@xtra.co.nz

Secretary: Greg du Bern
Email: kffcsecretary@gmail.com

Treasurer Andrew Li
Email: andrewkate.kapiti@gmail.com

Vice President Wayne Butson
Email: Waynebutson@gmail.com

Past President Michael Murphy 027 591 8734
Email: mnkmurf@gmail.com

Committee: Leon Smith
Email: leonsmithplumbingltd@gmail.com

Steve Taylor
Email: staylorbuilder@gmail.com

Kras Angelov
Email: krasimir.angelov@gmail.com

Leigh Johnson
Email: leigh@leighjohnsonnz.com

Club Coach Gordon Baker
Email: kiwiflyfisher@gmail.com

Newsletter Malcolm Francis: ph. 06 364 2101
Email: malcolm1@xtra.co.nz

