



Kapiti Fly Fishing Club

November 2021 Newsletter

This month's cover photo: Fishing a beautiful New Zealand stream by Harry Moores

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Club activities

Date	Event	Coordinator
Monday 22 November	Club night - Dan Brizzle and Hamish McDonald fishing the Manawatu River TBC	Malcolm
Tuesday 14 December	Fly Tying workshop – Stimulator Fly - WBC	Gordon
Monday 24 January	Club night – BBQ Domain	Malcolm
Saturday 29 January TBC	Kapiti Women on the fly workshop – Otaki Lakes	Leigh
Sunday 30 January TBC	Family Fishing event – Otaki Lakes	Malcolm

At this month's club meeting on Monday 22 November, Dan Brizzle and Hamish McDonald will take us on a journey of fishing the Manawatu River

Presidents report

I am struggling to keep up with 'TIME' not sure if it is an age thing, but I walked into Coastlands last week and there they were putting up Christmas Trees and yes there is only five weeks to go before Santa arrives and I have not made up my 'wish list' yet.

On Wednesday evening I was lucky enough to join a large group of our members at our Christmas function at the Waikanae Boating Clubs Restaurant, where we enjoyed an excellent meal and great fellowship. Big thank you to Greg, Nick, and Cath for organising the excellent meal and made sure that we all enjoyed the evening. If you are looking for a nice place to dine then I would recommend you try the Boating Cubs restaurant, all you need to do is ring and book a table and provide your membership number.



The Greater Wellington Regional Council are in the process of developing a new Fishing Lake at the Otaki lakes for the club to use for our Kapiti Women on the Fly and family fishing event at the end of January 2022 so please make a note of the dates, Saturday 29, and Sunday 30 January. The area has been marked out ready for the contractor to extend the existing lake.

At this stage Fish & Game have ordered 750 two-year-old trout and we are in the process of sending in funding applications, you will receive an update over the coming weeks.

I would like to pass on our clubs members condolences to Leon Smith and his family who sadly lost his dad last week after a very short illness, our thoughts are with you and your family.

As you will see from Michael report a number of our members headed over to the Hutt River to try and win the McWilliams Shield, I had the pleasure of joining Grant Cathro as his partner for the event. On drawing number 1 from the hat as our 'Beat' I was more than happy as in the past this section of the river always provided lots of fish and was confident, we would net a few fish, sadly no one told the fish as we both 'blanked.'

Our two guest speakers this month Dan and Hamish have spent many days and hours fishing the Manawatu River and know all the 'hot spots,' so I would recommend that you come along and join me at what will be a very entertaining evening.



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 Stimulator

The Stimulator



Created by American angler and frequent visitor to New Zealand Randall Kaufmann. Normally tied in larger sizes to suggest naturals like Stoneflies and Cicadas they can also imitate other insects when tied small. A high floating attractor dry fly that can draw large fish to the surface. Randall preferred the Green Stimulator for fishing here, but other colours (black, yellow, and brown) can also be successful.

<i>Hook:</i>	TMC 200R size 8-16
<i>Thread:</i>	Fire Orange 6/0
<i>Tail and wing:</i>	Elk hair light
<i>Rib:</i>	Fine gold wire
<i>Body:</i>	Yarn or dubbing to suit colour preference with palmered hackle.
<i>Hackle:</i>	Grizzly
<i>Thorax:</i>	Yellow goat or substitute

Please note that if the next fly-tying meeting is held at the Waikanae Boating Club at 7.30pm **Tuesday 14 December 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

A small group of women continue to meet regularly with our most recent class being a lesson on leaders and tippets, combined with more casting practice. Ruth and Leigh also joined in the recent McWilliams Shield competition.

Our next outing, a visit to a local river, is currently being arranged. Also, watch out for exciting news on the inaugural Fish-out Day for Women to be held on Saturday 29th January at the Otaki Lakes.

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

Or check us out at www.facebook.com/WomenontheFlyKapiti or on www.kapitifyfishing.org/kapitiwomenonthefly

Many thanks, Leigh

PS. I am working with Kras, helping with updates to the KFFC website, including creating a page for Kapiti Women on the Fly, which will have some content published by the time the newsletter comes out.

Fly Fishing tips – Clip it, unravel it, Retie it by Domenick Swentosky



The nymphing was good. Although trout ignored caddis on top, they were eager underneath, darting and swirling in multiple levels of the water column. An occasional wild brown trout broke the surface, but Dad and I knew better than to switch to dries. The rise forms were nothing more than the backs of trout poking through the surface after taking emergers a few inches underneath. It was a fun morning.

I stood midstream, watching rays of scattered sunlight highlighting a haze of pollen from budding plants. They'd finally found enough warmth to make a break for it in this late spring season, and the air had the sweet smell of blossoms, mixed with damp earth.

After a few perfect(ish) drifts in likely water with no takers, I brought in my line, clipped the tippet, and adjusted, creating the tag for my upper nymph a foot higher than it had been. As the trout grew more active, it seemed their swirls of activity were happening higher in the column.

I tied the knots and watched Dad fishing thirty yards upstream. A few good drifts, and Dad set the hook among the dancing caddis. But the hook found a rock underneath, rather than any trout's jaw. He waded a few steps upstream to get the rod tip ahead of the flies and then pulled. The flies popped out, followed the flexing rod tip and landed in a leafless tree limb. Dad's frustration showed as he now tugged the rod tip back down toward the water. A few pulls later, two nymphs and a Dorsey yarn indicator wrapped around Dad's rod tip and fouled up.

From his shaking head and dropped shoulders, I could tell Dad was into one hell of a mess.

He walked the rod back to the bank, laid the reel on a stone, peered through his glasses and started working on the muddle of line and tangled flies. I kept fishing but was distracted enough by Dad's struggles that I lost track of my goals. Five minutes later Dad hadn't moved, so I waded upstream to meet him.

"I know, I know," he said as I approached. "I should just cut the whole thing off and start over. But I *almost* have it."

Dad tugged on a dangling piece of line among the swirled mess of tippet. I walked up to him with my nippers in hand, grabbed the first nymph and clipped it off. As he began to protest, I clipped off the second nymph, then slid the indicator rubber band away from the line, storing each of them in the working box attached to my vest.

"Hey, come on, Dom," Dad objected. "I said I almost had it." But when I unraveled the line, tied the flies back on and reattached the Dorsey in about a minute, Dad nodded.

"Crazy how you do that so easily," he chuckled.

But that's what he always says.

I see this all the time, and it shocks me how many good fishermen think they're saving time by untangling a maze of monofilament and flies. They use forceps and fingernails. Some even carry needles specifically for the job of picking out would-be knots.

Most guys see their options as a pair of choices: either cut off the whole thing and re-rig with new lengths of tippet or try to salvage it all by spending enough time working the messy knots and tangles free.

But I promise you, there's a third option. And it's much better than the other two.

Snip off the flies. Remove any split shot, and take off the indicator, if one is attached. Get everything off the line, leader, and tippet, and it all works free pretty easily — usually. Fluorocarbon especially seems to have a magical ability to unravel in the face of even the nastiest mess, once all the attachments are removed.

It works. I promise. It saves material and time. Lots of it.

So, tie the flies back on with a Davy and wade back into the flow to fish among those dancing caddis.

Fish hard, friends.

The Perfect days Fishing by Greg du Bern



Have you ever dreamt of a day fishing when everything was right? Well, it happened to me one day on Lake Brunner in the South Island of New Zealand. I hired Brent Beadle to guide me for a day at the end of February 2009.

Brent picked me up at 08:00 hrs on a day that dawned clear and calm. It was only a short drive to the lake from my accommodation in Moana. At the boat ramp we set up my rod and dropped the boat into the water. We headed out to the eastern bays to fish the shoreline around an old river mouth. Brent suggested using an attractor dry on a dropper and a small nymph below on point. We fished light with 4-pound 5x tippet on a 6# Kilwell Matrix rod and double tapered floating line. He explained the plan of attack was for him to be on the oars and for me to cast in towards the shore.

Brent uses a 4m aluminium boat called 'Sneakuponum' to get around the lake and his technique proved to be a very successful and a deadly fishing method. Once we had arrived at a fishing location, Brent shut down the outboard and took up the oars to silently move the boat, while I was up the front in casting position. This gave me the maximum potential to catch the ample supply of brown trout available at Lake Brunner. Trout in Lake Brunner are all wild brown trout and range in size from 2-5 lbs, with an occasional 6.5lb or bigger, if you are lucky.

Lake Brunner is a natural lake with bush growing right down to the shoreline. A boat was the best way to cover the shoreline efficiently and effectively as wading or walking the shore would have

been almost impossible. The water was often quite deep close to the shore, so it was important to fish right up to the very edge of the trees and grass that line the lake as the trout patrol and lie up under the protecting overhanging vegetation. The locations fished were very beautiful with original bush as far as the eye could see.

We saw the occasional fish rise. We moved slowly towards where we saw the fish move. I cast under the trees and landed my fly about 10cm from the shore and ten seconds later the attractor fly disappeared. Brent shouted and I, being taken by surprise, gave a strike that would have been normal on the Tongariro but only separated my 4lb tippet losing both flies. I re-rigged my terminal tackle thinking 'I mustn't do that again!' Re-armed with the same setup I resumed casting and it wasn't long before another fish rose to my nymph and soon after that a beautiful brown was safely in the net. After some photos we released her back to the lake, and we moved out of the river mouth as the sun was now higher in the sky. We now had a chance to fish for sighted fish as we cruised down a beach and bay over a shallow gravel bed.

As we moved silently over the still water, we spotted several fish cruising the margins as well as some healthy-looking eels that seemed oblivious to our boat. Brent was expert at spotting fish and called out direction and range while I fired my flies to intercept the fish.

The sunlight was just right to spot approaching fish and one take was a real textbook exercise. The fish was spotted by both Brent and me, I cast in the fish's path, far enough ahead not to spook the fish, the fly and nymph lay in wait. The fish moved steadily towards the flies, I gave the nymph a bit of a twitch, the fish moved to the right towards the nymph slowly moving up, opened its mouth, and took the nymph, the indicator disappeared, I raised the rod, and the fish was on! What a blast to see all this happen and to catch such a great fish – fantastic.

We continued down the beach catching and releasing fish as we went, all sighted and cast for, until we got to a spot called the Duck Pond. This is a shallow area encircled by a sand spit. The area had been recently flooded when the lake had risen over a meter. There were plenty of fish in the lagoon and we caught three more fish, all were released.

About this time the wind started to come up from the west, so we decided to head for the opposite shore. We fished the western shore using the same technique as we did the eastern shore, but we found our success rate was lower. So, we decided to move over to some weed beds at the mouth of a river entering the lake and have some tea and lunch.

After lunch, we moved into the river estuary and fished up the shoreline where we found fish all the way up. There was no appreciable current here and we continued to steadily catch and release fish. They ranged in size from three to four pounds and were in good condition and fought well.

As we moved further into the river, the banks narrowed, and the water shallowed which showed a gravel bottom that was strewn with fallen trees and debris from floods. We started to spot fish again. We had great success using a cicada pattern as we could hear them singing in the bush around. The fish rose to the cicada in preference to taking the nymph and took the cicada with great confidence.

Again, we were casting to sighted fish that were cast for and watched as they came to the fly. One fish was lost as I struck too soon to the dry fly and the next fish to take; Brent counted one, two, three before I struck, this time with greater success.

Eventually we started to run out of water and beached the boat on a gravel bank. We donned our waders and boots and headed up stream. It wasn't long before we found more feeding fish and landed a couple more. Moving on up past some runs and snags, we came upon a pool full of feeding fish. There were two main runs into this pool, fed from an island upstream which split the river flow. About a third of the way down the pool, there was a large rock that caused a large eddy below and split the flow yet again.

On the island we saw some rare and beautiful kotuku, sacred white herons, which slowly took to the air as we approached. They were a gorgeous sight to behold and added something special to an already special day.

Throughout the pool we could see at least six feeding fish ranging in size from three pounds to four and half pounds. They were feeding actively, moving in and out of the runs. Some were dropping back in the pool and then moving back up again. We were unsure what they were feeding on, but we decided to stick to our successful cicada and nymph combination. But they proved to be not very productive and although I covered feeding fish, they ignored the flies but kept on feeding.

So, a change of pattern was required, and Brent decided to try a Royal Wolff dry fly and a nymph on point. It looked like the trout were taking some small cockabullies' because of the speed they were moving. Some of the lake fish had regurgitated some cockabullies' when had caught them and the fish were dashing in and out of the stream; it looked like they were chasing something. The nymph pattern looked the closest we had to a small fish.

We tried again, with Brent spotting for me, and I persistently covered fish until a fish took the nymph. We managed to land this one with some skilful netting from Brent once I had coaxed the trout into the shallows; a pretty three and half pound hen that was returned.

There was a larger fish, quite dark compared to the others, that Brent was keen for me to catch. And so, we continued to fish on and caught a lovely fish that fought very hard, taking me across to the other side of the river before going down stream into a fallen logs and trees below the pool and eventually the fish and I parted company.

Re-rigged once more, I continued to fish the pool with fish not being put off by two of their group being taken out of circulation. Eventually, persistence paid off and the large dark fish made a mistake and took my nymph. It was a solid fight but finally Brent scooped him up in the net. A cock fish around four and half pounds, a little past top condition and as he was so dark, maybe an old fish. We released him back to the pool.

I finally stopped fishing when I lost my flies, maybe on a low back cast. I must have been getting tired! All up, I landed eighteen fish this day and lost four others. It was a day to remember. Not just for the number of fish landed but the variety of methods and techniques used to fish with a combination of boat fishing, sighted angling and wading the river fishing upstream nymphs.

It was a magic day when everything came together: the weather, the water, the fish were hungry and just being in the right place at the right time. Also, having an experienced guide like Brent made a huge difference with his knowledge of the area and he put me in front of fish after fish.

A day to remember, a day hard to beat – a truly red-letter day.

McWilliams Shield competition on the Hutt river- Sunday 7th by Michael Murphy

Well, Sunday morning dawned calm but cloudy and with a forecast for a warm day ten intrepid club members turned up at the Moonshine Bridge car park at 0830 and full of anticipation of a great days fishing culminating in their winning the McWilliams shield.



Our casting maestro Gordon had done a great job of organising five beats on the river for the five pairs of anglers who then secured their beats after drawing numbers of discs out of Gordons hat.

Off we went, each team with a four-hour time limit during which each of us would fish for a thirty-minute period whilst the other acted as controller who was to measure the fish caught and ensure no illegal methods or other skulduggery was used.

The rules were simple with basically the one with the longest and most fish winning. Nothing complex at all

I was paired with Steve Taylor and as I knew that Steve had fished the river a bit, I was sure we were well placed to win. Our first piece of water was a Monty and full of confidence Steve started out with me following thirty minutes later. We saw no other anglers until near the end of our time.

With low cloud and a lot of glare on the water sight fishing was difficult and we saw no fish. Lots of casting, a few river crossings and with not even a take we headed back to our meeting point discussing how we could make up excuses for our abysmal fishing and sure that we would be well beaten.

Surprise, surprise we found that no fish had been caught and only a couple seen skiving off into the depths.

As it turned out, the moment we all ceased fishing the sun decided to make an appearance and it turned the heat up almost equalling the heat from the trusty Webber BBQ which was busy sizzling sausages along with Gordon's special precooked onion. It was all so yummy!

Other anglers, walkers, bike riders and numerous dogs all turned out along with the sun so whilst the sun had made an appearance making sight fishing easier it was likely all the fish would be scared off into the depths.



After listening to each other's lies and excuses and packing up the gear we all headed towards home very satisfied that at last we had managed to get a club trip away but wondering at our lack of success.

Ruth and Leigh who are busy promoting "Kapiti Women on The Fly" were not outdone by the men and a draw was declared- Nil fish for either. It was so good to have the ladies participating and I hope we see more ladies on the club trips.

We normally run the McWilliams shield on the Waikanae however due to the low fish count numbers we had made the decision to fish the Hutt this year. Were we wrong?

I certainly look forward to our next club trip.

Checking the point by Aussie Perry

On a recent fishing trip, we had to deal with very strong gusting wind making casting extremely difficult to put the line where we wanted to and not getting any results, so a change of place was required to fish the other side of the river with hopefully better shelter and line control.

On arrival at a place where I have had good success in the past, I chose to fish a wet line down a fairly rocky stretch with the line swinging into the side and getting snagged in the rocks a lot so what I usually do when this happens is to let out a few arm lengths of line then lifting the rod which pulls the fly out using the current so saving time by not having to tie on another fly.

At this stage I had not had a touch all day and time was getting short so I was pleased when the line ripped up tight to a nice fish which took to the air instantly and made its getaway but at least the fly was still attached so great I carried on and a few casts later had another solid hit with the same result.



Now I will get to the point of the matter.

When putting the fly back in my box at the car the reason was plain to see as the hook had no point, so I learnt a lesson that day.

Yes, it would pay to check the point guys.

Retreat to the river by Chris Hunt



For those of us who fish, the river is a refuge

At some point, all of us have to make a strategic retreat. We can't just keep pressing forward all the time. It's not practical.

Not to overdo the military analogy, but our lives are like one relentless campaign. There are times when we're charging full speed ahead, guns blazing. There are times when we're kind of in neutral, taking stock of the threats that face us. And there are times when, whether we like it or not, the threats become too great, or we're surprised by some sort of flanking manoeuvre and we're forced to take a few steps back, to retreat, even if it's just a bit, and even if it's strategic.

And for those of us who fish, the retreat is usually to the water, be it a river, a bonefish flat or even the local farm pond. The river is a refuge, a place where the threats can't touch us. It's the cathedral in the face of encroaching vampires. The bomb shelter. The impenetrable bunker.

I've had to retreat some over the years. Divorce. Financial stuff. Hell, even a flat tire drops you down a gear, you know. But now, for the first time in years, I'm in full retreat, running like hell for the river. I'm running so far and so fast that I won't stop until my fly line stretches out over the cold, foreign waters of southern Chile.

This time around, the emerald waters of Patagonia are my cathedral, because the vampires are bleeding me dry.

And it's been a slow suck, honestly. I didn't notice it at first, because it was subtle. Then it became ... less subtle. And then it delivered a haymaker right to the chin.

Such is life, right? One minute, you've got a plan and plan to execute the plan. The next minute you're trying to figure out what's going to happen next, and if you can survive the suspense.

And the first thought after getting up off the canvas is, "Jesus, I need to go fishing."

So off I go. And don't think I don't appreciate the fact that, during a time of crisis, I get to board a plane and some 24 hours later land in Santiago, one step closer to Patagonia and to its wild and

exotic trout. It's still fishing. It's still soul-replenishing. It's still a retreat — it just takes longer to get to. And the fish are bigger.

I remember, years ago, as a teenager in East Texas, my father's job was eliminated thanks largely to the plummeting price of oil -- he was a manager for a drilling company, and when the work was on, it was *really on*. But when a drilling company has rigs stacking up in the yard, it's the middle-management folks who get the axe first. And my dad got the axe — one day, we were a flourishing family of five with a ski boat parked at the lake and a nice pool in the backyard. The next, we were living hand-to-mouth.

To his credit, though, we kids never really noticed a huge difference. He immediately grabbed a job with a consulting firm that sent him all over the country -- a job he hated, by the way. But that was his "retreat." He had to take a job he didn't like so the rest of us could continue to matriculate, high school was upon me, and a spot on the varsity basketball team was there for the taking. My younger brothers were still in elementary school and junior high when that first forced retreat hit us.

A couple years later, my parents split — another retreat, and this one wasn't so easy to ignore. The cruel game of "pick a parent" was left to my brothers. I was old enough to strike out on my own.

But I remember, even then, arriving back home in Colorado from our "retreat" from Texas, that one of the first things I did was grab a fishing rod and disappear into the Rockies for a few days with my grandfather. That was my own retreat — a much-needed reminder that, when my soul needs mending, it's best done with my feet atop freestone boulders and cold, clear water running around my knees.

These days, on the downhill side of just about any life marker (age, career, etc.), the retreat is a bit more pointed. It starts with heartbreak and disbelief. Anger comes next. Then some shame for good measure. Finally, realisation.

And then, fishing. Because that's where the regrouping happens. That's where the map of a lifetime is spread out and a good bottle of Irish whiskey is placed on one corner, just to keep the winds of change from futzing with it any further. That's where the next plan gets made — between roll casts to a big brown who doesn't know I've spotted him hiding behind a rock across the river. The next advance, that plan gets made over cocktails at the lodge, where like minds commiserate and bigger brains than mine chime in with advice and, if I'm lucky, opportunity.

But it all starts with that necessary retreat, as unfortunate as it has to be. Often, we have to take that step back. We have to accept the things we can't control, no matter how sad and ill-timed they are.

I'm retreating to the Andes this time around — to rivers I've yet to fish. But they'll work as I make a new plan. The fish that swim in them, through no small sacrifice, will help knit a tattered soul, one that was frayed and tired, to be honest. Its loose ends were ripe for the tug, and when they were pulled, it unraveled, and it wasn't pretty.

But now ... I'm going fishing. And it's going to be all right.

Classifying streamers for easier fly selection by George Daniel



This simple system will help you choose the right fly more often.

Most of us benefit from having systems in place. This is true about almost any activity or pursuit, fly angling included. When variables arise, whether expected or unexpected, having systems in place allows us to methodically troubleshoot our way to a solution. And, if our system is well-designed, hopefully that solution is the optimal one.

Over the years, I've developed systems I use to solve any number of questions I encounter on the river: what rod to use on any given day, how to construct my leader, how to dress, and how to choose what fly pattern to tie on—including streamers.

There is no shortage of fly characteristics to consider when choosing a streamer—colour, size, the presence of flash or other features designed to attract fish, whether the fly is articulated, and more. All of these considerations matter. But, in truth, these characteristics exist in streamers of all shapes and sizes. It's rarely adequate to choose a streamer just because it's flashy, or articulated, or black.

Whether a trout takes a swipe at a streamer out of aggression or simply out of hunger, it's more likely to do so to a fly that's closer to its position in the water column (its "strike zone") and that is animated by the angler in a way that is appropriate given what we're able to ascertain about the trout's behaviour. In other words, *where are the trout and what are they doing?*

In my experience, the answer to this question is most often determined by a combination of factors: water temperature, water clarity, and what we can discern about fish activity.

Is the water extremely cold, leading to sluggish fish holding near the bottom—requiring you to fish deep and slow? Are the fish in pre-spawn mode, staging in the shallows—leading to aggressive fish that will attack a fast-moving fly in shallow water? Is it springtime, with hungry trout hunting along the riverbanks? Is the water off-colour, limiting the fishes' visibility—requiring you to slow the fly's action to give the fish more time to react?

As with all types of flies and methods of fly fishing, when fishing streamers, a fish is more likely to take a swipe at your offering if it is a *well-presented fly*. Whether a streamer is well presented is

most often determined by the depth of your fly in the water column and the type and speed of your retrieve.

Unlike when fishing dries or nymphs, however, the success of your streamer presentation is significantly impacted by which fly you choose. Some streamers are designed to sink faster than others, some to cut through the water with speed and grace, and some to move erratically—to imitate wounded prey and trigger a feeding response. How well you can present your streamer is determined, by and large, by what it's designed to do.

So, how do you choose the right streamer? If you're like me, you use a classification system—one that divides the world of streamers into three streamer types based primarily on sink rate (and thus the depth of your fly in the water column) and how it is meant to be fished (and the type and speed of your retrieve).

Jigs

Jigs are head-heavy patterns (often, but not always tied on jig-style hooks) that are designed to drop quickly in the water column and be fished with a slow retrieve. Patterns with dumbbell eyes (like a Clouser minnow) are examples of jig patterns. These flies' heavy heads serve two purposes. First, the weight helps the fly drop quickly into the trout's strike zone. Second, the weight on the front end helps create a jiggy "up and down" movement during the retrieve.

These patterns are often fished best with a floating or slow-sinking line where the fly's position in the water column (after sinking) is well below the level of the fly line. This separation in height between the line and fly helps create the "jiggy" up-and-down movement. It's also why regular floating lines work so well with jig-style streamers.

These patterns are *not* designed to be fished fast. Let the streamer sink well below the fly line, make a short strip that pulls the fly upwards toward the fly line, followed by a pause to allow the streamer to drop back. Then, repeat the process to keep the up-and-down presentation going. Think of jigging as slow grinding your pattern near the stream bottom.

In my experience, jigs work best when visibility is limited, and trout activity is low (e.g., during extreme cold weather conditions). My favourite cold season streamer approach employs a floating line, long 9', 2X leader, and a heavy dumbbell-eyed streamer pattern.

Swimmers

I classify swimmers as patterns designed to move quickly through the water with a fast or continuous retrieve. Often, the best swimmers are not bulky or are constructed of materials that shed water, allowing the fly to glide through the water with minimal resistance. What you don't want is a pattern containing materials that soak up water like wool. While water-absorbing materials like wool will help sink a fly, those flies also move sluggishly through the water (instead of gliding through it). If you've ever felt like you're stripping a wet sock through the water, chances are you were fishing a fly constructed out of water-absorbing materials.

Patterns like a traditional Woolly buggler (with or without a conehead) or the new Gamechanger-style patterns are good examples of swimmers. Swimmers are best fished with a fast retrieve high in the water column.

They're great choices when you want to fish tight to the bank—when you're trying to play takeaway with a large predatory trout hunting in the shallows. While these patterns can be fished with a floating line, often a slow sinking or intermediate helps keep the pattern below the surface during a faster paced retrieve.

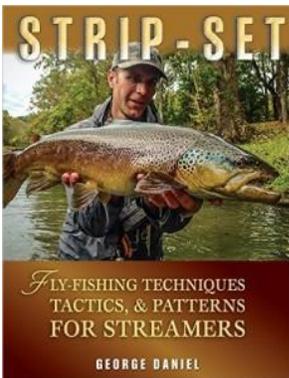
Hanging Streamers

While I more often find myself fishing swimmer and jig style streamer patterns, hanging style streamers have their place, especially when trout activity is on high alert. These streamers are often created with deer hair, which adds buoyancy.

Patterns like Tommy Lynch's Drunken Disorderly or [Kelly Galloups Zoo Cougar](#) are two examples of hanging style streamers. Due to their high buoyancy, these patterns are best fished using a sink tip or full-sinking line, as the weight of the line keeps these buoyant streamers anchored below the surface.

Your retrieve when fishing hanging streamers should be similar to when fishing jig-style patterns—a pause is needed to allow the line to sink below the streamer before the retrieve. The combination of the weighted line pulling downward and the buoyant nature of the streamer pulling upwards creates an erratic up-and-down motion, imitating a wounded baitfish.

Though fishing a sinking line and buoyant streamer does require some getting used to, this combination does an amazing job imitating wounded baitfish. As with swimmer-style streamers, hanging streamers work best when trout are actively hunting, especially during low light periods or when large predatory trout are on the hunt.



By lumping your streamers into these three types, you can effectively choose the right fly for almost any conditions.

What *type* of streamer you want to fish should be the first question you ask yourself. Once you've answered that, then you can worry about the little things in life—like colour or whether the fly has rubber legs, flash, a cone, or sculpin head, and so on.

Sprinkle in a bit of experience and local knowledge, and you'll be well on your way to choosing the right weapon.

Tips for tandem flies – doing it right when doing it together by Todd Tanner

What do Batman and Robin, Jagger, and Richards, Butch and Sundance, and Simon and Garfunkel all have in common? It's simple. They're famous collaborators where the sum of their partnership is greater than the individual parts. And that same symbiotic energy is evident in fly fishing, where two flies that work together will consistently outproduce one fly on its own.

Choosing flies that complement each other is relatively easy. You need to pick patterns that have contrasting strengths and rig them to maximize their effectiveness together. The four key characteristics that you should pay particular attention to are:

- **SIZE:** Is a fly large or small?
- **COLOR:** Is a fly bright or dull?
- **STYLE:** Is a fly realistic or impressionistic?
- **DENSITY:** Is a fly weighted and, if so, how heavily?

The basic premise behind tandem fly rigs is that the first fly catches and focuses the fish's attention and then the second fly closes the deal. Consequently, you'll want to rig your flies so that the fish see the larger, brighter, more impressionistic fly first, and then follow the larger fly with a smaller, duller, more realistic imitation.

Nymphs

When you fish two nymphs together, choose a large, weighted fly like a rubber legs or a woolly buggler for your lead fly, and then follow it with a smaller, more realistic pattern.

Always make sure that your trailer mimics a common local food item like a midge, scud, caddis, stonefly, or mayfly.

Dry fly

If you're prospecting with two dry flies, your front fly should be larger and more visible - think Royal Wulffs, Stimulators, Parachute Adams, etc. - while the trailer should be a smaller, more accurate imitation like a Sparkle Dun, an X-Caddis, or a Clear Wing Spinner. Don't worry if you have a hard time seeing your trailer fly. Keep your eye on the larger fly and set the hook if you see a rise within a foot or two.

Dry and Nymph combinations

It can really pay to fish dry flies and nymphs together, but you have to choose a dry fly that buoyant enough to support your nymph without sinking. Since you probably won't be able to see the fish take your nymph, treat your dry fly just like a strike indicator. If it disappears, set the hook.

Some tried and true dry fly – nymph tandems are:

1. Parachute Adams and a Pheasant Tail nymph
2. Elk Hair Caddis with a midge or caddis pupa.
3. Royal Wulff with a Prince nymph
4. Hopper with a Bead Head Hare's

The neglected Soft Hackle – simply one of the most effective flies ever created by Chad Shmukler



Partridge and olive quill soft hackle fly

Earlier this year, we published a blog post titled *Classic Flies are Classic for a Reason*. The gist of that post was that the patterns that have stood the test of time have done so for a reason and given such should likely have a place in your fly box. Soft hackle flies are one of those classics. I have met many fly fishermen for which they are an absolute staple, employed on the stream as often as a pheasant tail nymph or Parachute Adams. But I've met many more that don't fish them at all or only rarely do so, considering them sort of an oddity.



The Sparkle Soft Hackle Fly

The truth is, however, that soft hackles are one of the most effective styles of flies ever created, and one that should have a home in virtually every angler's arsenal. Soft hackle fly patterns date back over half a millennia. Think about that. What are the chances that a pattern that has persisted for over 500 years doesn't deserve some significant real estate in your fly box.

In their simplest form, soft hackle flies are little more than thread or herl wrapped around the hook shank with a sparsely palmered hackle at the front. There are more elaborate versions that extend this basic design concept, but even the most feature-packed soft hackle flies are relatively feature-less.

Their lack of complexity in no way translates to lack of versatility. Quite the contrary. Much like with the Woolly Buzzer, which is so well-loved by many an angler, there is virtually no wrong way to fish a soft hackle fly. They can be dead drifted, where they will do an excellent job of imitating an emerging insect trapped in the film, a spinner or even a dun.

They can be submerged and fished as you would a nymph, where the soft hackle fibers will dance and contribute to a buggy appearance. And they can be fished on the down-and-across-swing,

perhaps the most common and deadly method of presentation for soft hackle flies, daring a trout not to strike.

Soft hackle flies also beg to be twitched, "pulsing" their hackle fibers and imparting vitality to the fly. Twitch them during the aforementioned deadly swing to further up the pattern's effectiveness, twitch them while they float along the surface, bringing your dry fly to life and twitch them while you dead drift them under an indicator. You can even strip or swim them, too.

Finding the (almost) invisible potholes – Reading the Water by Domenick Swentosky



Smith had insisted that this river held big trout. And so, I made the trip. With a hundred things to do in a busy week, it would have been easy to win the internal argument to fish closer to home. But another part of me had surrendered to the explorer, to the seeker, to the stubborn believer that adventure is more important than restful sleep — and much more exciting than spending the day cleaning the truck or organizing the garage.

So, there I was. Staring at an unknown river that was a little up and perfectly greenish grey. The crisp fall day was cloudy and dim with the threat of rain — the kind of weather that most people groan about, but fishermen like us love to wake up to. In truth, the weather forecast was one of the driving factors to get me here. And on a Saturday morning, with no one else around, I was trophy hunting — hoping for a chance at just one big fish.

The lack of structure caught my eye. Sure, every river has its bends, its midstream rocks, its shelves, and gravel bars. But aside from the rocks, there wasn't much to hang your fly on. Really, it was the absence of wood that stood out to me. Recently, a once-in-a-century flood had come through this area — that's right, every one-hundred years, said the weatherman. And a careful look at the banks showed that many of the logs which had surely provided in-stream structure just a few weeks ago were now pushed up and strewn about in the floodplain, ready to decay and disintegrate into soil or be lifted by the next great flood — to be returned to the river and the trout once again.

These are the kinds of things you notice with age, with time, with experience. Seasons sewn into years teach all of us to slow down a bit and observe. And sometimes we learn more by seeing than by fishing.

But eventually, I had enough of all that. And I decided to target one of my favourite types of water for big fish. It's what I call a special bucket. My friend, Matt Grobe, called them potholes when he first pointed these features out to me. And as I waded into the water, I had my eyes on two prime potholes, just ten feet apart.

But what was I looking for? I'll tell you ...

Invisible? Nah

Every angler, any hiker or passer-by, can read the peaks. Everyone notices the white-water. And it's often obvious that the whitecaps are created by rocks that lie just upstream. Less understood are the minor waves, the rises and peaks in the current surface that roll downstream, mix together, and create what we mostly call runs or riffles.

It's the rocks. That's what creates those waves. Almost always, rocks of the riverbed push water up and create a wave above. At the depths we most often fish for river trout (I'll say here, under four feet) even a foot-tall rock creates a decent wave on the surface. And that's pretty easy to understand.



Photo by Josh Darling

Now, perhaps less obvious and less understood are the flat spots within the riffles, or the flatter spots within a glide. These are the tell-tale signs of a pothole below.

Just as the taller rock creates a surface wave, the pothole, bucket, or depression in the riverbed has a corresponding feature on the surface. It's a flatter, calmer piece of water — smoother than the surrounding surface currents. Is it harder to recognize? Sure, it is. It's also not as reliable of a sign. But quite often, if you find a calm piece of water, surrounded by mixed currents and minor waves, a pothole lies below.

Be careful what you're reading, though. The stall, or slower piece of water that lies just downstream of every rock, is not the same thing as a pothole — not at all. In fact, that slower stall is often shallower than the surrounding water. And yet, on the surface it can look very similar to

the potholes that we're looking for. How can you tell the difference? Fish more and give it time. Look critically. See what the foam does as it glides over a pothole. Look at the slightly different character of calmer water over a bucket vs calmer water in a rock stall. You'll see it. And no, it's not the kind of thing that a picture can show very well. After you fish something that you believe is a pothole. Go walk through it because that's a fool proof way of knowing the truth.

So, fish these slicks. Trust that trout are there. And know that some of the best fish in the river call these potholes home.

[READ: Troutbitten | Every Rock Creates Five Seams](#)

Yeah, it didn't happen ...

I should mention . . . I fished Smith's recommended river for about seven hours that day. And I had a shot at two good fish. Both were in the buckets. I moved one on a streamer, and I lost a nice trout on a stonefly fished with inch-long strips to break up a dead drift.

On the long drive home, I wondered if targeting the potholes all day was the best bet. But I won that argument with myself too. With very little wood or undercut banks, the rocks were my best features to target. I moved efficiently from one pothole to the next and stayed with my plan all day. I also had my chances — which, when big fish hunting, is a secondary success.

If nothing else, I refined my eyes for seeing the potholes and finding the special buckets. I got better at reading water, and I learned a new piece of river. That's a good day.

Fish hard, friends.



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

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

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

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

malcolm1@xtra.co.nz

Purpose:

To promote the art and sport of Fly Fishing.

To respect the ownership of land adjoining waterways.

To promote the protection of fish and wildlife habitat.

To promote friendship and goodwill between members.

To promote and encourage the exchange of information between members.

Club meetings

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

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

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

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

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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

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